



Complaints Handling Policy

Purpose The purpose of this policy is to enable any person associated with the Edmund Rice Foundation (Australia) to bring to the attention of the Board evidence of misconduct or a complaint against the organisation or anyone associated with it. It provides for protection of the person(s) disclosing the misconduct or making the complaint and enables investigation of the issue(s) raised.

Abbreviations	ERFA	Edmund Rice Foundation (Australia)
	ACFID	Australian Council for International Development
	Projects	All projects/programs which are funded partially or in whole by the ERFA
	Partner	Any organization which has an MOU or Contract with ERFA

Contact information

- General Manager – wjwilding@edmundrice.org
- Chief Executive Officer – awrywan@edmundrice.org
- www.erf.org.au or +61 7 3621 9649
- Australian Council for International Development (ACFID)
<http://www.acfid.asn.au> or +61 6 02 6285 1816

Implementation Plan

- Available on Foundation website
- Provided to all overseas Project Leaders for distribution to staff and volunteers

Related policies and/or legislation

- N/A

Related Forms Incidents, Complaints and Compliments Reporting Form (ICCF)



1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- enable all Management, Staff, Contractors and Volunteers of ERFA, any Overseas Partner Organisation which is party to a project agreement, or any individual associated with projects managed or funded by ERFA, to bring to the attention of the Board, evidence of misconduct or a complaint against the organisation or any individual(s) associated with it;
- provide protection for persons who disclose misconduct or bring forward a complaint;
- provide for the investigation of disclosures.

2. Definition of “complaint” as outlined by ACFID

The ACFID Code defines complaint as an 'expression of dissatisfaction' made to an organisation related to its product or its services.

In this policy “misconduct” means:

- corrupt conduct; or
- a substantial mismanagement of Foundation resources; or
- a serious breach of Foundation policy; or
- conduct involving substantial risk to a child or children, public health or safety or to the environment that would, if proved, constitute either a criminal offence or reasonable grounds for dismissing or terminating the services of a manager, staff member, or volunteer of ERFA or Overseas Partner Organisation who engaged in that conduct.

3. Complaints involving Child Protection

ERFA is committed to the safety and well being of all children. For complaints involving child protection, please refer to our Child Protection Policy and contact ERFA’s Chief Executive Officer.

4. Process for complaints handling in Australia

In Australia, ERFA provides four pathways for the lodgement of complaints or misconduct for all staff, partners and the general public. These are:

1. lodgement of a complaint on-line via the ERFA website; or
2. lodgement of a complaint via email or telephone (with details on the ERFA website); or
3. An opportunity to access a complaint form via a designated representative at each project; or
4. If not completely satisfied with ERFA’s response, the opportunity to lodge a complaint via ACFID.

ERFA will ensure that it regularly provides the opportunity for feedback and communication of the complaints handling procedure. This will be done via newsletters, public notices and at all professional development opportunities.



ERFA will adhere to the ACFID Code of Conduct Guidance for complaints outlined in D.6.1 and D.6.2 and maintain a register, along with a review by the General Manager and CEO for all complaints received.

Procedure

- a. In the first instance any complaint (verbal, electronic or hard copy) will be directed to the General Manager of ERFA unless it is an issue concerning the General Manager in which case the complaint should be made to the Chief Executive Officer.
- b. Any complaint against the Chief Executive Officer can be made to the General Manager, the Board Chair, or to the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID).
- c. The General Manager is required to report to the Board on all complaints received and ERFA's response to them.

5. Process for complaints handling Overseas

Overseas, for the projects and programs ERFA supports, there are three pathways for the lodgement of complaints or misconduct for all staff, partners and the general public. These are:

- 1) an opportunity to lodge a complaint on line via the overseas project website or ERFA website; or
- 2) an opportunity to access a complaint form via the Project Leader; or
- 3) for people unable to access electronic or hardcopy complaints a verbal complaint can be made to the Project Leader who will submit this to the General Manager of ERFA as required.

ERFA will ensure that it regularly provides the opportunity for feedback and communication of the complaints handling procedure. This will be done via newsletters, public notices and at all professional development opportunities

ERFA will adhere to the ACFID Code of Conduct Guidance for complaints outlined in D.6.1 and D.6.2 and maintain a register, along with a review by the General Manager and CEO for all complaints received.

Procedure

1. All complaints (unless against the General Manager) will be submitted directly to the General Manager via the agreed pathway.
2. Any complaint concerning the General Manager can be made to the Chief Executive Officer.
3. Any complaint against the Chief Executive Officer can be made to the General Manager or to the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID).
4. The General Manager is required to report to the Board on all complaints received and ERFA's response to them.
5. In the event that the complaint involves the General Manager then the complaint is to be directed to the Chief Executive Officer in confidence.

6. Protection of Complainants



A person who believes on reasonable grounds that a manager, staff member, or volunteer of ERFA or Overseas Partner Organisation has engaged in, or proposes to engage in, misconduct in their capacity as a representative of ERFA will not be discriminated against in any way for making such a complaint. The key principles are:

a. Impartiality

If an individual makes a complaint, it will be investigated in a fair and impartial manner. No judgments or assumptions will be made and no action will be taken until the investigation is complete, except in the case of a child abuse or any unlawful act where, in these instances, legislative and legal obligation will be observed.

b. Detailed Information

If a complaint is made against an individual, that individual's rights will be protected and he/she will be entitled to know detailed information about the substance of the complaint and will be given an opportunity to put forward his/her interpretation of the situation.

c. Confidentiality

Individuals can feel secure that if they do make a complaint it will remain confidential. The only people who will have access to information about the complaint will be the parties involved in the complaint and the person investigating.

d. Respect

The complaints management process will be conducted in a manner that is respectful of all parties.

e. No Victimisation

Individuals can be assured that if they make a complaint they will not suffer in any way as a consequence. ERFA's authorities will ensure, to the best of their abilities, that a person who makes a complaint is not victimised in any way.

f. Good Faith

It is expected that complaints are made in good faith and are not vexatious or malicious.

g. Timeliness

Each complaint will be finalised within as short a period as possible. Every effort will be made to ensure complaints are finalised within one month and complainants will be advised if the matter cannot be finalised within that timeframe.

Policy & Procedure Owner	CEO Office	
Approved By	Anthony Ryan, CEO	
Date Approved	Date of Last Revision	Next Review
18 June 2015	June 2015	June 2016