

Communication Policy

1. **Objectives: The objectives of the communication policy of COAST developed for the staff and other stakeholders (particularly the partner organizations and beneficiaries) are as follows,**
 - a. To emphasize oral and in-person communication to increase mutual understanding.
 - b. To emphasize team building at all offices particularly within respective projects and working area.
 - c. To develop an effective and supportive supervision environment.
 - d. To enable the management and its governance rapid responsive.
 - e. To discourage unnecessary communication that creates pressure and uncomfortable situation in the working relationship.

2. **Open Communication but decisions through determined channel and supervisor**

- a. All communication mediums are open for everyone to be able to communicate with anyone in the organization. However, decisions need to be made through supportive supervision in order to ensure the right of the supervisors to express their opinion and to avoid biased decisions. This will train up the supervisors and increase self-realization.
- b. COAST has its own Complaint Response Mechanism and the Whistle Blowing Policy to address the complaints and grievance inside the organization. According to that all complaints are encouraged to submit to the closest layer instead of submitting to a higher layer. Dissatisfaction could be raised on any decision or judgment, but the closest layer should be given the opportunity to address the complaint first.
- c. Sometimes complaints are improperly shared through phone call, SMS or anonymous letters instead of proper submission. This type of communication might not be considered as a complaint.

3. **Complaint to Donor partner**

- a. Any communication to the donor partner or other external organization as a complaint submission by any staff might be considered as creating illegal pressure on the organization.
- b. The expected responsibility of the donor partner or external organization is to forward the complaint to the highest authority of the organization in case of this kind of communication received.
- c. Any third-party investigation or evaluation without the organization's prior approval will not be accepted. The government's law enforcing agencies will be an exception.

4. **Communication between Donor partner representative and PIU**

In some cases, field-level staff of donor partners closely work with the Project Implementation Unit (PIU) of the organization. The following clauses are intended to increase the responsibility and accountability of the PIU staff:

- a. The communication between the staff of PIU and donor partners should be limited to the project activities for the sake of progress monitoring.
- b. Suggestions and advice from the donor partners are welcome and it is expected to be limited within the project and given only to the respective Project Manager (PM). The PM has the right



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to express a different opinion and in that case the donor partner should communicate with the focal person or a concern official verbally or in written if necessary.

- c. On behalf of the organization only the respective PM, Project Accountant and Monitoring Officer are entitled for oral or phone communication with the donor partner. For any written communication with the donor partners they must have a prior and proper written approval of the concern official or Focal Person.

5. No written communication in the same office, exceptions

For the sake of team building and greater mutual understanding among the colleagues, the organization discourages written communication in same office along with the communication via third or higher officials. The exceptions include:

- a. Any different opinion, implementation of what might undermine the organization's interest.
- b. In case of greater disciplinary situation like monetary misappropriation, illegal relationship between male and female colleague, violence against women and sexual harassment.

6. Written communication is the last step, no unnecessary cc

- a. The encourages (1) verbal communication on what is possible to resolved in-person, (2) phone communications on the issues possible to resolve over phone, (3) written or email communications only in the cases what are not possible to resolve in verbal or phone communication.
- b. No cc to others in emails is encouraged if not firmly necessary to inform the issue.
- c. Written work instructions could be given by emails only when verbal and phone communication is not possible. Copying others should be avoided on the first place as it creates pressure on others.
- d. Copying others in confidential written communication, particularly mentioning failures in copied mails is equivalent to defaming by what a staff could be mentally upset.

7. When general comments are unexpected, be confirmed before documentation or prove

- a. Some staff pursue general comments in the meetings without providing evidential and confirmed information. No written communication should pursued nor any decision taken on this kind of general comments unless it is inquired and proved. Negative issues should be properly inquired and confirmed and if necessary it should be solved by Complaint Response Mechanism of the organization. Providing description based on general comments or rumor will be considered as disciplinary issue.

8. Defaming and imaginary persuasion are disciplinary issues

- a. Some staff talk negative things about colleagues derived from jealousy and doubt and some of them are rumor and imaginary that defame them. Any staff seeing this is going against the organization's interest should flag this through any medium of communication towards higher authority. It should be taken to even higher level if not addressed by the lower level.
- b. Disciplinary actions could be taken against anyone spreading the rumor instead of making proper communication. Because letting the rumor spread or provoking them is considered as defaming and disciplinary issues.



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c. Termination might take place if any involvement in this purpose is found.

9. Complaint and negative writing: Why patience is needed?

- a. Hold back for at least 3 hours before writing your complaint. Keep patience, reconsider the issue, take some advice from colleagues, and uphold the organization's interest during this period of 3 hours.
- b. It is advised not to write negative and instant reactions. Take at least one day or enough time to be stable enough to reply to this kind of communication.
- c. Please remember, your complaint or pursuit should be rational. If possible, make verbal communication directly with the concerned person and remove the tension.

10. Courtesy in phone calls

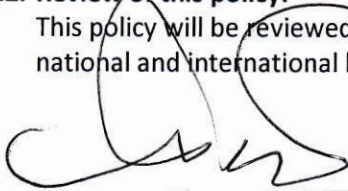
- a. During a phone conversation, first, inquire if the respondent has time to talk. If not, call later. In case of the senior colleagues, make an appointment first by sending an SMS or phone call.

11. Approved by the General Council and effective date:

The review of this policy has been approved unanimously in the 6th Annual General Meeting which was held on 6 July 2024 at COAST Principal Office, Dhaka, and be effective with no delay.

12. Review of this policy:

This policy will be reviewed by 2027 or earlier, if necessary, incorporating significant changes in national and international laws, policies, and human rights declarations.



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