

Community-Based Complaints Mechanism Inter-agency vs Peacekeeping context

IASC Community-based Complaints Mechanism (CBCM) definition: The [Best Practice Guide on inter-agency community-based complaint mechanisms \(CBCM\)](#) defines an inter-agency CBCM as: “[...] a system blending both formal and informal community structures, *built on engagement with the community* where individuals are able and encouraged to safely report grievances – including SEA incidents – and those reports are referred to the appropriate entities for follow-up.” The inter-agency CBCM links the internal complaint and feedback mechanisms (CFMs) of participating organizations through agreed procedures called **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)** for the referral of SEA allegations to the relevant organization, and survivors to services to receive assistance.

The inter-agency CBCM is therefore **not** a new complaint and feedback mechanism (CFM), nor is it an office, a call centre, or any other physical “thing”. An inter-agency CBCM rather connects and complements the agency CFMs that already exist, while also linking to assistance referral pathways to ensure survivors receive assistance. Agreed referral pathways for complaints and victim assistance services, as part of SOPs, are the *bare minimum to speak of an inter-agency CBCM*.

The **aim** of an inter-agency CBCM is that a complainant can go to *any* complaint channel with a complaint about any organization and his/her complaint will reach the appropriate agency for investigation and follow up.

An inter-agency community-based complaints mechanism under the IASC definition is NOT managed by the community. The inter-agency CBCM is called “community-based” because it should be designed based on input from the community to make it responsive to the community’s needs. Under the IASC definition, the inter-agency CBCM is established and run by **trained personnel**.

! The IASC definition of an inter-agency CBCM is not to be confused with a peacekeeping CBCM program. In a peacekeeping contexts, a “CBCM” program is a community-led means of receiving allegations, conducting outreach and awareness-raising on reporting. The peacekeeping CBCM program is an informal structure through which the UN Mission can become aware of allegations raised by community members.

Relationship between the “CBCMs”: The peacekeeping CBCM program can be integrated in the inter-agency CBCM as one of the varied channels to learn of allegations. The SOPs on complaint referral in any integrated mission should link the peacekeeping CBCM to the inter-agency CBCM by offering clear instruction on how complaints received through the Peacekeeping program will be referred to the relevant agency for follow up. ***Stakeholders in integrated missions merely need to be careful of not confusing the two separate initiatives.***

Whether referring an allegation through an inter-agency CBCM, or CDT learning of an allegation through a peacekeeping CBCM program: All United Nations Secretariat entities, agencies, funds and programmes that have trained personnel to use the (electronic) Incident Reporting Form (eIRF/IRF) will use the form. Compliance with the IRF/eIRF is mandatory for Secretariat entities and participating entities from agencies, funds and programmes.