

Code of Practice on
Disinformation – Report of
Science Feedback for the
period September
2022–January 2023 (Baseline
Report)

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Executive summary

On Oct. 4th 2022, Science Feedback (SF) became the Code of Practice's first non-founding Signatory. Our motivation for joining was simple: we were, and still are, aiming to scale the impact of our work to promote credible information online.

Our participation in the Code has closely mirrored the rest of our organization's activities:

- Our verification work (also known as fact-checking), which focuses on content that claims to have scientific basis, has been used to inform our participation in the Crisis Response Subgroup, notably to discussions on the Covid chapter of these meetings.
- Our data and research work has fed into our participation in the Monitoring and Reporting subgroup, and specifically in the Structural Indicators working group.

Coming into 2023, we expect to keep working in these subgroups. In addition, we commit to be an active member of the Fact-Checking Working Group, which is to be set up in the coming weeks. In particular, we expect to put our organization's experience at the disposal of the Task Force when it comes to setting up and operating the common repository of fact-checked content.

We are looking forward to keep engaging with other Signatories, the Commission, ERGA and EDMO throughout 2023.

Guidelines for filling out the report

Baseline reports are detailing how Signatories have implemented their Commitments under the Code and provide the Qualitative Reporting Elements (QREs) and Service Level Indicators (SLIs), as they stand one month after the implementation. The baseline report should also include a comparison between the measures in place under the previous Code to the measures taken to implement the new Code. The measures taken to implement the new Code should be outlined per commitment in the dedicated field of the reporting template.

Reporting period

The reporting period to be covered in the baseline reports is from 16 December 2022 to 16 January 2023 for all Signatories. (The implementation period of the Code from 16 June 2022 to 16 December 2022 is followed by a one-month reporting period from 16 December 2022 to 16 January 2023.) Signatories shall submit baseline reports outlining policy updates and actions taken to implement the Code during the implementation period. Data, e.g. on the number of actions taken under a specific policy, should be reported on from the end of the implementation period (16 December 2022) until the cut-off date of 16 January 2023. In case specific data is not available for the first reporting period (from 16 December 2022 to 16 January 2023), please provide the monthly average based on the previous quarter, clearly outlining the methodology used in the relevant field. The submission date for baseline reports is January 31, 2023.

Adjusting the reporting template

Non-VLOPs can adapt the template to specific commitments and measures they subscribed to. This may include adapted wording for commitments, measures, QREs and SLIs. Non-VLOPs signatories will report only on commitments and measures they subscribed to and provide Member State-level data only if feasible.

Reporting per Service

When filling in a report for several services, use colour codes to clearly distinguish between services. At the beginning of the report, clarify what colour is used for which service.

Reporting in text form

Reporting in the form of written text is required for several parts of the report. Most of them are accompanied by a target character limit. Please stick to the target character limit as much as possible. We encourage you to use bullet points and short sentences. Links should only be used to provide examples or to illustrate the point. They should not be used to replace explanations or to provide data in the forms. All relevant explanations and data must be included in the table directly, in written form.

Reporting SLIs and data

Reporting on Service Level Indicators requires quantitative information to be reported in the reporting template. We ask you to report data in the format provided by the reporting template, not on external links.

Reporting on TTPs

If subscribed to Commitment 14, Integrity of Services, we ask you to report on each identified TTP individually. The number of identified TTPs may vary per service. Where more than one TTP are reported under the same action, clarify the reasoning in the methodology. Where input is not provided, keep the placeholder for the relevant TTP and explain reasons and planned remedial action. Additionally, as with all other SLIs, data can be provided per Member State for each individual TTP.

Missing Data

In case that at the time of reporting there is no data available yet, the data is insufficient or the methodology is lacking, please outline in the dedicated field (i.e. in the field about further implementation measures planned) how this will be addressed over the upcoming six months, being as specific as possible. Please also indicate inconsistencies or gaps regarding methodology in the field dedicated to methodology.

Attachments

We ask you not to enclose any additional attachments to the harmonised reporting template.

Uploading data to the Transparency Centre

After the submission of the baseline reports and the launch of the Transparency Centre website, all data from the reporting template must be uploaded to the Transparency Centre within maximum 7 days, allowing easy data access and filtering. It is the responsibility of the Signatories to ensure that the uploading takes place and is executed on time. Signatories are also responsible to ensure that the Transparency Centre is operational and functional by the time of the reports' submission, that the data from the reports are uploaded and made accessible in the Transparency Centre within the above deadline, and that users are able to read, search, filter and download data as needed in a user-friendly way and format.

V. Empowering Users

Commitment 18

Relevant Signatories commit to minimise the risks of viral propagation of Disinformation by adopting safe design practices as they develop their systems, policies, and features.

Measure 18.3 - As a non-platform organization carrying out *inter alia* research on disinformation, we adapted the Measure to reflect the fact that we do not have any decision-making power over product design.

Relevant signatories will invest and/or participate in research efforts on the spread of harmful Disinformation, will make findings available to the public and report on those to the Code's taskforce. They will disclose and discuss findings within the permanent Task-Force.

QRE 18.3.1

During the period: SF contributed to 1 public research effort: an [article](#) («How Google's Ad Business Funds Disinformation Around the World») published by ProPublica on October 29th 2022. SF's main contribution was the sharing of data containing misinformation; which ProPublica then checked for the presence of Google Ads. The results of the study were brought up in the Crisis Response Subgroup.

Upcoming: SF is leading a research project (which includes other fact-checkers) aimed at measuring the spread of disinformation on Twitter following the change in ownership. Results are expected to be published in early February 2023.

SF has also contributed data for a forthcoming report led by Avaaz.

VI. Empowering the research community

Commitment 26

Relevant Signatories commit to provide access, wherever safe and practicable, to continuous, real-time or near real-time, searchable stable access to non-personal data and anonymised, aggregated, or manifestly-made public data for research purposes on Disinformation through automated means such as APIs or other open and accessible technical solutions allowing the analysis of said data.

Measure 26.1			
QRE 26.1.1	<p>Existing: Science Feedback owns and maintains Open Feedback, a repository of fact-checks collecting data on misinformation claims, the URLs they appear in and the associated fact-checks. To prevent abuse, access requests to the data are reviewed manually and granted on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>An API access is available on demand. One-off data exports are also done on demand.</p>		
QRE 26.1.2	<p>A preview of the data points is available to the public on the https://open.feedback.org website. Technical API documentation is shared on demand with authorized users.</p>		
SLI 26.1.1 – e uptake of the tools and processes described in Measure 26.1	Methodology for user counts: manual count		
Data	Nr of users of public access		
	1 API user		
	3 manual data extraction requests		

VII. Empowering the fact-checking community

Commitment 31

Relevant Signatories commit to integrate, showcase, or otherwise consistently use fact-checkers' work in their platforms' services, processes, and contents; with full coverage of all Member States and languages.

Measure 31.3			
QRE 31.3.1	<p>Upcoming: With Open Feedback, SF already has experience building a repository of fact-checks. Pending the launch of the Working Group dedicated to fact-checking, and the decisions taken therein, SF stands ready to provide any of the following to help build an effective, actively-used repository:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - code, - technical specifications, - data taxonomy, - insights into governance and contribution models, - contacts within the fact-checking community. 		
Measure 31.4			
QRE 31.4.1	No progress or action to report as work on the repository has not started.		

VII. Empowering the fact-checking community		
Commitment 33		
Relevant Signatories (i.e. fact-checking organisations) commit to operate on the basis of strict ethical and transparency rules, and to protect their independence.		
Measure 33.1		
QRE 33.1.1	Existing: SF is an IFCN certified signatory and is a member of the EFCSN Wide Group. Upcoming: SF will apply to become an EFCSN Member.	
SLI 33.1.1 - number of European fact-checkers that are IFCN-certified		
	Nr of fact-checkers IFCN-certified	Nr of members of EFCSN
Data	Verified active signatories: 44 / Under renewal: 12 / Expired: 18 (EU member states + Council of Europe + Kosovo)	Accepting and evaluating applications starting Jan. 2023

VIII. Transparency Centre	
Commitment 34	
To ensure transparency and accountability around the implementation of this Code, Relevant Signatories commit to set up and maintain a publicly available common Transparency Centre website.	
Measure 34.1	
Measure 34.2	
Measure 34.3	
Measure 34.4	
Measure 34.5	

VIII. Transparency Centre	
Commitment 35	
Signatories commit to ensure that the Transparency Centre contains all the relevant information related to the implementation of the Code's Commitments and Measures and that this information is presented in an easy-to-understand manner, per service, and is easily searchable.	
Measure 35.1	
Measure 35.2	
Measure 35.3	
Measure 35.4	
Measure 35.5	
Measure 35.6	

VIII. Transparency Centre	
Commitment 36	
Signatories commit to updating the relevant information contained in the Transparency Centre in a timely and complete manner.	
Measure 36.1	
Measure 36.2	
Measure 36.3	
QRE 36.1.1 (for the Commitments 34-36)	SF will add the information contained in this report on the Transparency Center before the Feb. 7th, 2023 deadline.
QRE 36.1.2 (for the Commitments 34-36)	In its initial iteration, the Center will allow the general public to access general information about the Code as well as the underlying reports (and for the Center to be navigated both by commitment and signatory).
SLI 36.1.1 - (for Measures 34 and 36) meaningful quantitative information on the usage of the Transparency Centre, such as the average monthly visits of the webpage	As the Transparency Centre is not yet operational, no statistics can be shared.
Data	

IX. Permanent Task-Force

Commitment 37

Signatories commit to participate in the permanent Task-force. The Task-force includes the Signatories of the Code and representatives from EDMO and ERGA. It is chaired by the European Commission, and includes representatives of the European External Action Service (EEAS). The Task-force can also invite relevant experts as observers to support its work. Decisions of the Task-force are made by consensus.

Measure 37.1	
Measure 37.2	
Measure 37.3	
Measure 37.4	
Measure 37.5	
Measure 37.6	
QRE 37.6.1	<p>Existing: SF is an active participant in the Monitoring and Reporting Working Group (including the Structural Indicators subgroup) as well as in the Crisis Response Working Group.</p> <p>Upcoming: SF expects to become an active member of the Fact-Checking subgroup once it launches.</p>

X. Monitoring of Code

Commitment 38

The Signatories commit to dedicate adequate financial and human resources and put in place appropriate internal processes to ensure the implementation of their commitments under the Code.

Measure 38.1	
QRE 38.1.1	<p>Existing: SF has two representatives, including its President, directly involved in the various Code of Practice discussions, ensuring full compliance with relevant Commitments taken under the Code.</p>

X. Monitoring of Code

Commitment 39

Signatories commit to provide to the European Commission, within 1 month after the end of the implementation period (6 months after this Code's signature) the baseline reports as set out in the Preamble.

X. Monitoring of Code

Commitment 40

Signatories commit to provide regular reporting on Service Level Indicators (SLIs) and Qualitative Reporting Elements (QREs). The reports and data provided should allow for a thorough assessment of the extent of the implementation of the Code's Commitments and Measures by each Signatory, service and at Member State level.

Measure 40.2	
Measure 40.3	
Measure 40.4	
Measure 40.5	
Measure 40.6	

X. Monitoring of Code

Commitment 42

Relevant Signatories commit to provide, in special situations like elections or crisis, upon request of the European Commission, proportionate and appropriate information and data, including ad-hoc specific reports and specific chapters within the regular monitoring, in accordance with the rapid response system established by the Taskforce.

X. Monitoring of Code

Commitment 43

Signatories commit to produce reports and provide data following the harmonised reporting templates and refined methodology for reporting and data disclosure, as agreed in the Task-force.