

INDEPENDENT GRIEVANCE REDRESS SERVICE

The independent grievance redress service (IGRS) is a service offering for public and private sector institutions that serves as an institutional level grievance redress mechanism for addressing and tracking complaints in relation to the operations of climate change projects and other programs.

Within the scope of the IGRS, we provide complaints handling, advisory, and monitoring and reporting services.

About us

We are an international advisory organisation that specialises on environmental, social and governance (ESG) safeguards and international climate finance, with a niche expertise on land use, stakeholder consultations including with Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) and REDD+ .

Unparalleled experience

Established in 2013, we've supported:

- 25 national governments in addressing safeguard related challenges, including setting-up safeguard systems and grievance redress mechanisms;
- multinational corporations throughout their carbon credit purchase process, from initial due diligence to overall monitoring and reporting;
- the world's largest climate funds (GCF and GEF) in addressing safeguard related challenges, including designing and updating their safeguard systems and safeguard policies;
- ratings agencies (Calyx Global) in building and implementing their ESS and SDG ratings process and
- private and public sector actors access climate finance through the GCF as a key service provider to their project preparation facility, specialising on ESG safeguard and grievance redress mechanism (GRM) compliance.

Diverse view and network

In addition to our core team of international legal and grievance redress specialists, we are supported by an international [roster](#) of 100+ of the world's leading safeguard and GRM experts on all continents. Our global vetted network of experts cover all UN languages, and have track record experience in all UN regional groupings.

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Our services

The IGRS offers 3 key features, all presented in a secure web-based platform that allows simple presentation of findings and action hub for our clients:

1. Complaints-handling

As a problem-solving mechanism, the IGRS works with complainants to resolve any issues quickly and effectively through a collaborative process that aims to deliver long-lasting and sustainable solutions to stakeholder concerns. As such, the IGRS is an avenue for project-affected people to raise environmental and social issues if they believe project related activities have or are likely to adversely affect them. It also serves as an effective tool for the early identification, assessment and resolution of project-related issues and risks.

The IGRS facilitates problem-solving of grievances by engaging with project-affected people to understand and address their concerns, conduct necessary investigations, facilitate formal meetings between the institution/project and the complainant and work with the institution/project to identify sustainable solutions.

Access to the IGRS is available through a public website (under development), available in three languages, that includes information on how to file a complaint with the IGRS and produces informational material to broaden awareness of the IGRS.

2. Advisory services

The IGRS analyses complaints across thematic areas (see Table 1) to identify systemic issues and lessons learned for each of our clients, with the objective of fostering improvements to new and existing operations in relation to environmental and social risk management. These are documented in a yearly report, along with the overall statistical information on grievances raised in the year. The IGRS also provides advice on best practices and materials for the wide dissemination of information in relation to accessing the IGRS by project stakeholders.

3. Monitoring and reporting

The IGRS monitors the implementation of agreements reached between complainants and the projects. It provides quarterly reports on the status of complaints and a monthly log of active cases on its website (presented on a secure web-based platform that allows simple presentation of information).

In providing these services, we consider and apply best in class environmental and social safeguards (10 areas and 56 sub-areas- Table 1)¹, as it would relate to the IGRS's scope of work.

Table 1- ESS areas and sub-areas

ESS AREA	ESS SUB-AREA
LABOUR RIGHTS	Working conditions
	Workers' rights (including non-discrimination and equal opportunity)

¹ We identified these areas and sub-areas by mapping the environmental and social requirements of international and project level standards, and then triangulated the key areas and sub-areas. Standards examined included: the IFC, the World Bank, the UNDP, CCB, ACR, Gold Standard, Social Carbon, and Fair-Trade Climate.

	Forced labour
	Occupational safety and health
	Child labour
	Workers organization
	Workplace grievance mechanism
	Contractor/third party workers
	Primary supplier workers
RESOURCE EFFICIENCY	Pesticide use and management
	Hazardous materials management
	Water usage
	Resource efficiency
	Pollution prevention
	Waste management
	Fertiliser use and management
COMMUNITY HEALTH, SAFETY AND SECURITY	Impact on ecosystem services that impact affected communities
	Security related issues
	Community Health and Safety
	Infrastructure Design and Safety
	Emergency Preparedness and Response
	Risk Associated with Influx of Project Workers
LAND RIGHTS AND INVOLUNTARY RESETTLEMENT	Recognition, protection and fulfilment of land tenure rights
	Avoid, minimize and mitigate physical and economic displacement
	Prohibited forced eviction, allowing evictions in exceptional circumstances only
BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF NATURE	Land and soil conservation
	Conservation and restoration of natural forests and their ecosystem services
	Protection and conservation and restoration of biodiversity and habitats
	Management of ecosystem services
	Protection and management of water resources
	Exotic and invasive species
	Biosafety and genetic resources
	Sustainable and legal management of living natural resources
	Endangered and protected species
	Legally Protected Areas
HUMAN RIGHTS AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES	Full and effective participation of indigenous peoples- and FPIC
	Lands, territories and natural resources subject to traditional ownership or under customary use
	Recognition of the distinct identity and rights of indigenous peoples
	Recognition and respect of human rights

	Recognition and respect traditional knowledge
CULTURAL HERITAGE	Legally protected cultural heritage areas
	Protection of Cultural Heritage
	Critical Cultural Heritage Areas
	Intangible Cultural Heritage
	Chance Find Procedures
TRANSPARENCY, PARTICIPATION AND BENEFIT SHARING	Disclosure and dissemination of all relevant information
	Identification of relevant stakeholders
	Meaningful stakeholder engagement/full and effective participation
	Distribution of benefits carried out in a fair, transparent, and accountable manner and are based/adopted on mutually agreed terms
ACCESS TO JUSTICE	Dispute resolution mechanism is available to all project affected stakeholders, including indigenous peoples
	Dispute resolution mechanism is aligned with international principles (accessible, rights compatible, legitimate, predictable, transparent, and equitable)
GENDER EQUITY	Gender integration
	Gender responsiveness
	Promotion and enhancement of gender equity and women's empowerment

Why do we need IGRS?

In response to various commitments and requirements, public and private institutions need to set-up institutional level grievance redress mechanisms that are designed and managed to the highest international standards and best practices, including guaranteeing the following principles: transparency, integrity, accountability, accessibility, responsiveness, efficiency and proportionality, cultural appropriateness, rights compatible, confidentiality and anonymity, and impartiality and independence.

However, most public and private institutions lack dedicated in-house technical expertise and capacity to set-up and manage an independent grievance redress mechanism.

The IGRS has been designed in alignment with international standards, and specifically ensures institutions are able to offer a GRM in compliance with the principles, requirements and guidance of any relevant funding mechanism including:

- ✓ The Green Climate Fund;
- ✓ The Adaptation Fund;
- ✓ The International Finance Corporation;
- ✓ The World Bank;
- ✓ The Integrity Council-Voluntary Carbon Market (IC-VCM); and
- ✓ Project level standards, including the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Standards and Gold Standard.

The IGRS complements project-level grievance mechanisms and does not impede the access to the independent redress mechanisms of relevant financing entities (if relevant) or to judicial or administrative remedies that may be available in the respective countries.