



Guidance Note

Grievance Redress Mechanism for the Rise Up! Initiative



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Introduction and objectives

Rise Up! is an initiative led by RECOFTC in partnership with Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC). It is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and managed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) under the Resilient, Inclusive, and Sustainable Environments (RISE) grant challenge. The project will run from January 2023 to December 2024.

The Rise Up! Initiative addresses gender-based violence in community forests and community-protected areas so that women and men can be equal partners in managing natural resources. It works to enable women's participation and leadership in community-protected areas and community forests. It focuses on preventing and mitigating gender-based violence through attitude and behavior change, and network building.

The initiative is carried out in eight selected sites located in Kompong Chhnang and Pursat provinces, in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, as well as the Ministry of Women Affairs at both national and provincial levels.

This guidance note sets out procedures for submitting and managing the grievance redress mechanism of Rise Up! and serves as a community feedback mechanism. It addresses stakeholders' complaints about any negative consequences of the project's implementation. The issues may also relate to any failure to comply with the principles of the Environmental and Social Management Standard or to misconduct by project staff carrying out project activities.

The mechanism aims to establish an open channel of communication with those who consider themselves to have been affected during project implementation, improve transparency and accountability among project staff, help identify risks and problems that may arise during implementation, improve project activities through adaptive management, and monitor the implementation of activities.

Operational process and procedures of the mechanism

Eligibility

- Organizations, communities and other stakeholders may submit a complaint if they believe they may be or are experiencing adverse effects due to the executing entity's or members of the executing entity's failure to adhere to and uphold the project's principles, standards and procedures.
- Representatives (a person or a local organization) may submit a complaint on behalf of a community, project stakeholder(s) or affected group(s). When submitting a grievance, representatives are requested to provide their names, the names of their communities or organizations, and their contact information. Complainants' identities will be kept confidential. Anonymous complaints will also be accepted. The project takes all possible measures to protect individuals who expose misconduct within its activities and operations as well as those who are subjected to unjust or malicious allegations from any form of retaliation.
- A sample complaint form is available in Annex 1. Please note that use of this specific form is not mandatory. It merely lists out the information that will be required for appropriate interventions to be facilitated.
- Complaints filed after the official closing date of the project, which is 31 December 2024, will be considered if they are made within 18 months following the closing date. This is applicable in cases where the impact resulting from the project's activities was unknown, or could not reasonably have been known, prior to the official project closing date.

- Complaints pertaining to national laws, policies and regulations are outside the project scope. They will not be considered unless they are directly related to the project, RECOFTC or GADC.

Channels to submit complaints

This mechanism is accessible to all, including women, Indigenous Peoples and other marginalized groups in the project target areas.

There are various channels available for submitting grievances under this project. These include phone, email, social media platforms such as Telegram and RECOFTC Cambodia's Facebook Messenger, as well as in-person submissions.

National Committee

RECOFTC Cambodia
40 Norodom Boulevard
Sangkat Psar Kandal II Khan
Daun Penh, Phnom Penh

Email: cambodia@recoftc.org
Telephone: +855 23 998 784
Facebook Messenger:
RECOFTC Cambodia

Community Committee

Information will be made available after the Kompong Chhnang Community Committee and the Pursat Community Committee have been established

If the complaint is of a highly sensitive nature, or if the complainant wishes to remain anonymous, they should submit their grievance directly to the National Committee using the contact information provided above. Alternatively, they can submit their grievance to the RISE grants challenge grievance redress mechanism at the regional and global levels via email at RISEGRM@iucn.org.

Management committees

To respond to all complaints and issues effectively, the project is establishing grievance redress mechanism committees at the national and community levels.

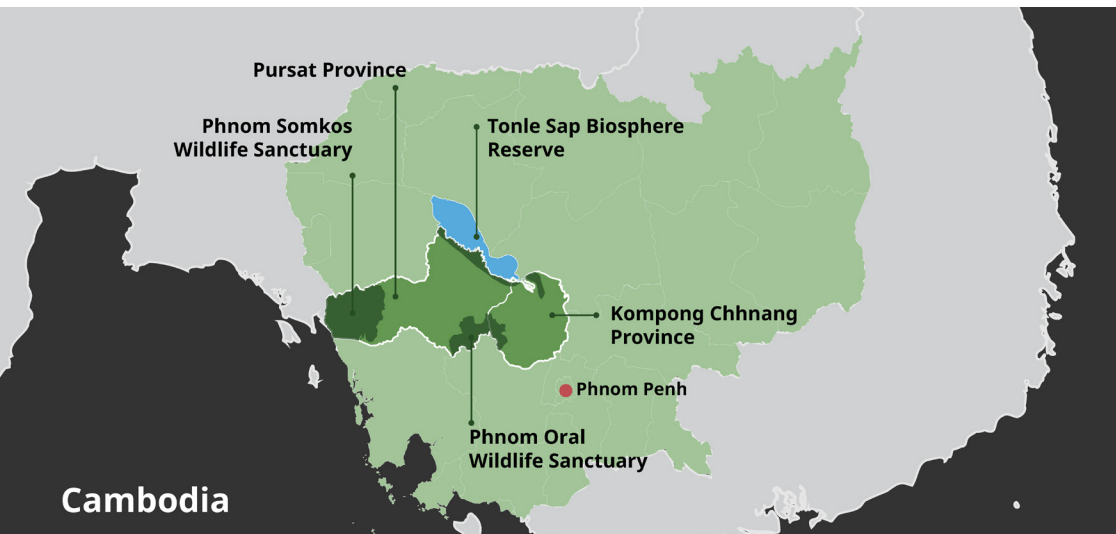
Issues will be resolved at the community level. Complainants will submit their grievances directly to the relevant community committee. If the issue is unresolved or if the complainant is dissatisfied with the community committee's solution, the issue may be referred to the National Committee.

The National Committee for the project's grievance redress mechanism is made up of five members – one project manager from RECOFTC, one project manager from GADC, and three representatives (including at least one woman) from government departments coordinating activities on the project site at the national and provincial levels. The National Committee meets quarterly as well as on an ad-hoc basis, depending on the need and the urgency. They review complaints, explore resolution possibilities and adjust project approaches and activities as appropriate.



The community committees for the project's grievance redress mechanism will be established within the existing management committees of each site – one in Kompong Chhnang Province and the other in Pursat Province. Each community committee will be composed of three members, at least one of whom must be a woman and/or from an Indigenous Peoples' group. The representatives will be respected community leaders able to read and write in both Khmer and the respective local language, and have prior experience in volunteering or coordinating projects and activities for non-governmental organizations.

The community committees will be responsible for receiving, investigating and resolving grievances with support from the National Committee. They will also be responsible for enabling responses to complainants and carrying out all necessary actions. The committees will meet quarterly, as well as on an ad-hoc basis, depending on the need and the urgency. They will review complaints and discuss resolution possibilities.



Procedures and information system

An information system will be set up to collect and organize complaints received through various channels. Once received, all complaints will be recorded in the information system and their progress will be documented until each complaint has been resolved.

If the complainant's contact information has been provided, the complainant will receive confirmation that their grievance has been received. The designated person in the National Committee or the designated person in the respective community committee will be copied. Within five business days, the designated person in the National Committee or the relevant community committee will inform the complainant if their complaint is eligible. To reach this decision, the respective committee will convene a meeting at the appropriate level and invite the appropriate project team members and/or committee members to evaluate the complaint.



If the complaint is eligible, the committee will investigate it further, consider resolutions, design and implement action plans and report on progress. The investigation may include field visits and interviews with relevant stakeholders. The minutes will be recorded and added to the grievance redress mechanism database. Please refer to the step-by-step process for managing grievances in Annex 2 for more.

Complainants' information and identities will be kept confidential. However, the following details will need to be provided:

1. Name of the complainant
2. Community or organization
3. Issue – what happened, where, when and who
4. Consent to release information of the complainant – yes or no
5. Contact information – telephone number and email address

Complainants may consider the following categories of issues:

1. Project staff misconduct and activities related to a failure to follow the Environmental and Social Management Standard principles and standards
2. Misuse of project funds, including fraud and corruption
3. Violations of policies, guidelines and procedures
4. Sexual exploitation, abuse of power/intervention and gender-based violence

Serious complaints or feedback – including any project-related gender-based violence or sexual exploitation and abuse – raised through the project-level grievance redress mechanism will be reported to the IUCN RISE grants challenge manager within 24 hours. IUCN will then notify the IUCN and USAID-led RISE advisory group.

In responding to complaints and issues related to gender-based violence, the assigned focal points of the grievance redress mechanism at the project level will adhere to a survivor-centered approach. They will ask for consent before referring complainants or survivors to services and respect survivors' rights, including their privacy and confidentiality, ensuring non-discrimination and safety of the survivors and complainants. The survivors will be given a referral list of gender-based violence services. The focal persons assigned to the national and community committees, as well as the project manager, will conduct safety planning for the survivors in consultation with a gender-based violence specialist. Project staff handling information on gender-based violence are trained to adhere to the survivor-centred approach and other practices detailed above.

Dissemination of the grievance redress mechanism

The project team receive training on the grievance redress mechanism as part of their orientation.

This guidance note is made available on the RECOFTC and GADC websites. The project team provides an overview of this mechanism to all stakeholders at project launch events and when conducting key activities, including trainings and community campaigns. It asks all stakeholders to review the overall mechanism and guidance note and make suggestions for improvement.

The note is made available in the Khmer language and information on the grievance redress mechanism is distributed to stakeholders at project sites when project activities are carried out.

Annex 1

Suggested complaint form

1. Name of the complainant

.....

2. Name of community/organization

.....

3. Address to:

Community committee (Please identify community name)

.....

National Committee

IUCN

4. Type of issue:

Project staff misconduct and activities related to a failure to follow the principles and standards of the Environment and Social Management System

Misuse of project funds, including fraud and corruption

Violations of policies, guidelines and procedures

Sexual exploitation and abuse of power/intervention

Others (Please describe)

.....

5. Issue and context (Please describe what happened, where, when and who)

.....
.....
.....

6. Suggestions or recommendations for a solution (if any)

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.....
.....

7. Consent to release complainant information:

Yes No

8. List of supporting documents and attachments (if any)

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.....

9. Contact information

Contact person's name

Telephone number

Email address

10. Date of submission

Annex 2

Step-by-step process for managing grievances

Step	National Committee	Community Committee
1. Intake and sorting	<p>The focal person files the complaint received using the internal intake form template (Annex 3) under its designated online drive/folder. It will be coded and sorted into a relevant category</p> <p>The focal person updates the committee on the receipt of the complaint by email with a link to the document.</p>	<p>The focal person files the complaint received using the internal intake form template (Annex 3) under its designated online drive/folder.</p> <p>The focal person updates the relevant community committee on the receipt of the complaint by calling a meeting.</p>

Step	National Committee	Community Committee
2. Eligibility	<p>The committee reviews the complaint and discusses and decides its eligibility within five business days.</p> <p>The focal person informs the complainant (if contact details are provided) that the complaint is eligible and confirms that the committee will investigate and report on the progress and actions.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>The focal person informs the complainant (if contact details are provided) that the complaint is ineligible and explains the details.</p>	<p>The relevant community committee reviews the complaint and discusses and decides its eligibility within five business days.</p> <p>The committee informs national-level focal points to update and seek any support required to investigate and resolve the complaint.</p> <p>The focal person informs the complainant (if contact details are provided) that the complaint is eligible and confirms the relevant community committee will investigate and report on the progress and actions.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>The focal person informs the complainant (if contact details are provided) that the complaint is ineligible and explains the details.</p>

Step	National Committee	Community Committee
3. Investigation	<p>The committee discusses and develops a plan to carry out the investigation to get a clear picture of the circumstances surrounding the grievance within 10 business days.</p> <p>This may include field visits and interviews with relevant stakeholders. Minutes will be recorded and added to the grievance mechanism database.</p>	<p>The committee discusses and develops a plan to carry out the investigation to get a clear picture of the circumstances surrounding the grievance within 10 business days.</p> <p>This may include field visits and interviews with relevant stakeholders. Minutes will be recorded and added to the grievance mechanism database.</p>

Step	National Committee	Community Committee
4. Action	<p>Upon completing the investigation, the committee identifies necessary actions to resolve the complaint and the timeline to carry them out.</p> <p>In this process, the committee may involve complainants or representatives of the complainants in the community in designing solutions and action plans based on their willingness and request (as requested in the grievance form).</p>	<p>Upon completing the investigation, the committee identifies necessary actions to resolve the complaint and the timeline to carry them out.</p> <p>In this process, the committee may involve complainants or representatives of the complainants in the community in designing solutions and action plans based on their willingness and request (as requested in the grievance form).</p>
5. Follow up and evaluation	<p>At the end of the first year of implementation, the committee reviews the registered cases and reflects on the process and improves the mechanism and the guidance note as needed.</p>	<p>At the end of the first year of implementation, the committee reviews the registered cases and reflects on the process, identifies capacity needs, and provides feedback to the National Committee for improving the mechanism and the guidance note as needed.</p>

Annex 3

Internal intake form template

Code	Complainant's name	Type of issue	Location from where the issue is being reported	Priority	Committee to review	Suggestions or recommendations for the solution (if any)	Consent to release information of the complainant	Contact information	Progress	Remark
001	Complainant 1	Question on the eligibility of use of project fund	XXXXX	Medium	Community Committee	To develop a poster in local language with information on the eligibility of expenses under the project in the communities and to give refresher training to staff	No	XXXXX	Resolved	



At RECOFTC, we believe in a future where people live equitably and sustainably in and beside healthy, resilient forests. We take a long-term, landscape-based and inclusive approach to supporting local communities to secure their land and resource rights, stop deforestation, find alternative livelihoods and foster gender equality. We are the only non-profit organization of our kind in Asia and the Pacific. We have more than 35 years of experience working with people and forests, and have built trusting relationships with partners at all levels. Our influence and partnerships extend from multilateral institutions to governments, private sector and local communities. Our innovations, knowledge and initiatives enable countries to foster good forest governance, mitigate and adapt to climate change, and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda.

RECOFTC Cambodia

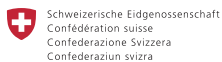
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