



Fiji Tourism Development Project - Vanualevu

Grievance Redress Process and Mechanism

Purpose

Primary Objective:

The primary objective of the Grievance Mechanism (GM) is to establish a structured process for addressing complaints and grievances that may arise during the implementation of development projects. This mechanism is designed to provide affected persons (AP) with a transparent, accessible, and fair system to raise their concerns, seek resolutions, and ensure accountability within the project framework.

Rationale:

Development projects, by their nature, can have significant impacts on communities, the environment, and social well-being. It is inevitable that conflicts, misunderstandings, and grievances will arise. Therefore, having a robust grievance mechanism is essential to maintain trust, uphold project integrity, and ensure that issues are addressed promptly and fairly, thereby mitigating any potential adverse effects on the project and its stakeholders.

Background

Need for Accountability:

Development projects often involve various stakeholders, including local communities, contractors, and government bodies. The potential for grievances to arise is high due to the diverse interests and impacts involved. A formal grievance mechanism is necessary to provide a reliable way for individuals to voice their concerns and seek redress. This ensures that the project remains accountable and that any negative impacts are addressed efficiently.

Inclusivity and Gender Sensitivity:

The GM places a strong emphasis on inclusivity and gender sensitivity. It recognizes that different individuals may have different needs and preferences when it comes to reporting grievances. For example, some may prefer to report issues to a female

representative, particularly in cases involving gender-based violence, sexual abuse, exploitation, or harassment (SEAH). The mechanism ensures confidentiality and prioritizes the safety and sensitivity of all complainants.

Processes

Step-by-Step Grievance Handling:

1. Filing a Complaint:

- Affected Persons (AP) can file complaints directly or through representatives such as village heads, chiefs or community representatives/advisors.
- Complaints can be filed at any designated uptake point, providing flexibility and accessibility for all stakeholders.
- Among others, these uptake points include,
 1. Verbal or in-person visits to any project or subproject offices/construction sites or community leaders' offices,
 2. Calls or SMS to a dedicated line and mobile number,
 3. Mail and
 4. Online platforms such as the Project website,
 1. email and
 2. social media accounts.

2. Logging the Complaint:

- Upon receipt, the Environment & Social Specialist logs the details of the complaint in the GM register.
- The identity of the complainant is kept anonymous if requested, but the nature and specifics of the grievance are thoroughly documented.

3. Initial Resolution:

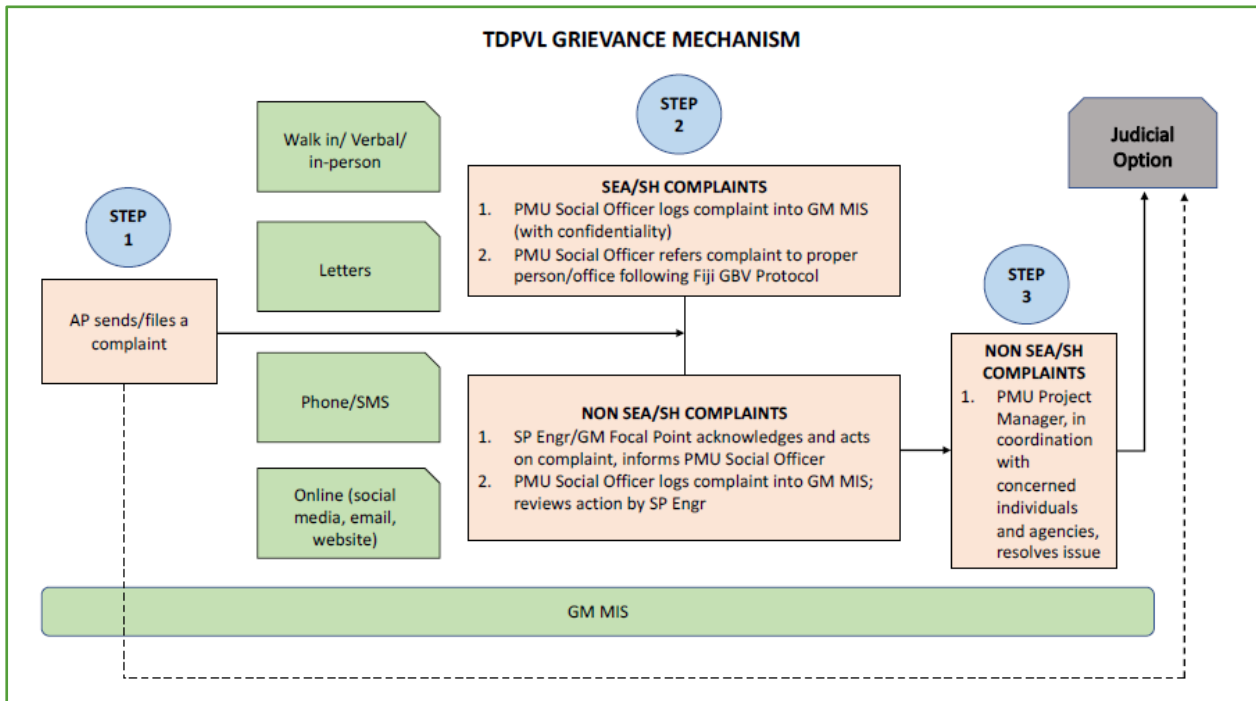
- Non-SEA/SH (Social and Environmental Assessment/Safeguarding and Harassment) grievances are addressed within two weeks.
- Complaints involving SEA/SH are referred directly to the PMU (Project Management Unit) social officer for specialized handling.

4. Escalation for Complex Cases:

- Grievances that cannot be resolved within the initial two-week period are escalated to the PMU project manager.
- The PMU project manager collaborates with relevant stakeholders to develop a resolution, aiming to resolve the issue within an additional two-week period.
- Regular updates are provided to the affected persons to keep them informed of the progress.

Judicial Option

- If unresolved, or at any time the complainant is not satisfied, he or she can take the matter to the appropriate judicial option including the court. The figure below sets out the process to resolve any project related grievances.



Levels of Resolution:

- **Contractor Level:**
 - This level addresses grievances specifically related to contracted workers.
 - If a grievance is not resolved within seven working days, it is escalated to the PMU social officer.
- **PMU Level:**
 - The PMU social officer handles grievances escalated from the contractor level.
 - If the grievance remains unresolved within seven working days, it is further elevated to the PMU Project Manager.
- **PMU Project Manager Level:**
 - The PMU Project Manager takes final responsibility for resolving grievances within seven working days.
 - This level ensures that all necessary resources and stakeholders are engaged to achieve a resolution.

Conclusion

The Grievance Mechanism is a vital component of development project management, ensuring that all stakeholders have a clear and accessible process for addressing grievances. By providing a structured and sensitive approach to handling complaints, the GM helps maintain project integrity, fosters trust, and ensures that the rights and concerns of affected individuals are respected and addressed promptly.

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This comprehensive approach to grievance redress ensures that every voice is heard and that issues are resolved in a fair and timely manner, ultimately contributing to the successful and harmonious implementation of development projects.

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