



GRIEVANCE REDRESS MECHANISM

This Global Environment Facility (GEF) funded **Integrated Landscape Management to Secure Nepal's Protected Areas and Critical Corridors (ILaM) project** aims to support communities and government partners to conserve ecologically rich Terai Arc Landscape (TAL) of Nepal through sustainable management of forests and wildlife. The project has four interconnected components: 1) National capacity and enabling environment for cross-sectoral coordination to promote forest and landscape conservation – a national-level component to develop institutional and coordination capacity at all levels, to benefit planning and conservation of the overall TAL; 2) Integrated Planning for Protected Area Buffer Zones and Critical Corridors in the Terai Arc Landscape - support for improved planning for all seven corridors of the TAL and assessments to determine priority sites for intervention within a targeted sub-set of the landscape, the Banke-Bardia complex, including Kamdi and Karnali corridors; 3) Forest and human-wildlife conflict management for improved conservation of targeted protected area buffer zones and corridors in the Terai Arc Landscape – training and on-ground implementation of sustainable forest and wildlife management activities in the targeted Banke-Bardia complex, including support for community based natural resource management, mitigation of human wildlife conflict, and reducing the impacts of linear infrastructure on wildlife; and 4) Knowledge Management and Monitoring and Evaluation - to bring practitioners together from across the landscape, help develop a coherent vision of integrated landscape management, share resources and lessons learned across all levels of intervention and prepare the way for replication and upscaling of project results.

Primarily the intervention site is Banke-Bardia complex that includes Banke National Park and its buffer zones, Bardia National Park and its buffer zones, Kamdi and Karnali corridors. Project interventions are largely implemented by park offices, division forest offices, buffer zone user committees, community forest user groups and relevant non-government organizations. Ministry of Forests and Environment has established Project Management Unit (PMU) in Babarmahal, Kathmandu as a central entity of project operation and one field office in Kohalpur, Banke.

ILaM Project has set up a Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) based on the IPPF-ILaM¹. The objective of the GRM is to resolve complaints as quickly as possible and at the most local level possible through a process of conciliation; and, if that is not possible, to provide clear and transparent procedures for appeal. Two layers of GRM comprising of Grievance Redress Committee (GRC) at Project (PMU) and BZUC/CFUG level has been proposed to proposed concerns and grievances of the affected individuals, households and communities in a timely and satisfactory manner. A Grievance Redress Committee (GRC) at PMU consists of following team members.

1. Project Manager – ILaM (Based in Project Management Unit, Kathmandu)
2. Safeguard and GESI Officer – ILaM (Based in Field Project Office, Banke)

Likewise, Grievance Redress Committee (GRC) at BZUC/CFUG level consists of following team members.

1. Chairperson: BZUC/CFUGs
2. Member: Woman representative
3. Member: IP representative
4. Member: Disadvantaged groups representative as decided by BZUC/CFUGs
5. Member secretary: BZUC/CFUG secretary

The existing CFUGs and BZUCs are well recognized as inclusive organizations having long tradition of local dispute and grievance management. The project uses such "community capital" for resolving project related grievances. The project will provide some incentives (e.g., stationary support and provision of travel and food allowance if someone need to travel to division forest office, national park office and project office) to mobilize the CFUGs and BZUCs for grievance resolution. The CFUG/BZUC level GRC comprises five member's committee under the CFUG/ BZUC chairperson with mandatory representation of IP members, Women representative, disadvantaged community representative, and the secretary of CFUG/BZUC for hearing the complaints of different stakeholders and for finding an agreeable resolution. The secretary of CFUG/BZUC will act as member secretary of the GRC. The safeguard and GESI officer working in the project field office provides orientation to the GRC about process and procedures of GRM and conducts annual refreshers about the GRC at community level to ensure they understand how to file a grievance.

The Grievance Redress Mechanism's aim is to receive and respond to grievances, complaints, and suggestions raised by project stakeholders who may be affected by activities implemented by the ILaM project. All affected persons are to be made fully aware of their rights, and the detailed grievance redress procedures will be publicized through an effective public dissemination approach using print (brochure in Nepali, Tharu and Abadhi language) and electronic media and FM radio. The PMU will ensure that the IPs are made aware of the GRM and their entitlements and assured that their grievances will be redressed adequately and in a timely manner.

However, where IPs or the community are not literate in languages other than their own, special assistance will be sought from community leaders, CBOs, and NGOs having knowledge of their language, culture, or social norms, or having working experience among the IP community, who will help the IPs express their concerns, consult about mitigating measures, and explain to them the project and its potential impact on the IP communities. These additional measures will be detailed in the annual workplan and budget as necessary, to ensure that additional translations, consultations, or other steps are given the time and funding necessary.

A grievance redress mechanism will address legitimate concerns of affected individuals and groups who may consider themselves deprived of appropriate treatment under the project. Pursuant to WWF's Safeguards Integrated Policies and Procedures (SIPP)², GRM is mandatory which helps to resolve issues, improve mutual understanding, strengthen accountability, and provides better understanding for enhanced collaboration with stakeholders.

All grievances should be registered. All complaints submitted to GRC at BZUCs/CFUG and at PMU should be registered and the complaint should be assigned a unique tracking number upon its submission. Each GRC should maintain a secure database with full information on all submitted complaints and responses taken. The main database should only be accessible to the Safeguard and GESI Officer at the field project

¹ <https://www.mofe.gov.np/downloadsdetail/6/2018/67362203/>
² [3q04kgymw1_IPPF__PF__ILM_for_Securing_Nepal_s_PAs__Corridors.pdf \(worldwildlife.org\)](https://www.worldwildlife.org/publications/3q04kgymw1_IPPF__PF__ILM_for_Securing_Nepal_s_PAs__Corridors.pdf)

office, whereas territory based database (for each BZUCs, CFUGs,) should be maintained and handle by one assigned staff/person at BZUCs/CFUG to maintain the confidentiality of the complainant. This data is important to assess trends and patterns of grievances across the project regions and for monitoring & evaluation purposes.

The GRM will comply with the following requirements.

The GRM will have multiple uptake locations and channels. Project affected persons (PAPs) and groups can submit complaints or suggestions in person, via mail, email, phone, or complaint boxes located in BZUC offices, CFUG offices, BaNP, BNP, respective DFOs/SDFOs in project sites ILaM Field Office, Kohalpur, PMU, Kathmandu. These channels are locally appropriate, widely accessible, translated into local languages and publicized in written and verbal forms on all project communication materials, and in public locations (e.g. offices of BZUCs/CFUG/BZ-CFUCs). A reminder about the GRM should also be shared during every community meeting or consultation the project organizes.

- **The following complaint resolution procedures for the project have to be strictly observed, and dedicated personnel will be assigned to handle the grievances.** Responsible staff having adequate knowledge on IP issues and social analysis capacity will be assigned in project teams to investigate complaints and take appropriate actions. The procedures include a requirement to register all complaints, strict allocation of responsibilities, clear timelines for processing and handling complaints (e.g., responses to complaints must be provided within 6 working days (week) and or 10 working days for particularly complex complaints), and regular communication with affected persons and groups regarding the status of their complaints. To the extent possible, complaints should be handled at the lowest decision-making level, as close as possible to the complainant. Complaints that are beyond the Project scope should be conveyed to the complainants as well as the relevant project offices.

- **Complainants should be notified of their right to appeal the decision taken by the project team.** If complainants are not satisfied with the project's response to their grievances, they should be able to appeal the decision to the executive ministry². All appeals should be registered in the ministry and decisions should be taken within 15 days. Project affected persons and groups will also have a right to bring their grievance to the court at any stages, if they are not satisfied with the Project's GRM.

- At any time, or if the complainant is not satisfied with the Project's GRM decision, they may also use the grievance mechanism of the WWF GEF Agency.

- As this project is funded by the GEF, the complainant may also use the GEF's Conflict Resolution Commissioner as an alternative to any of those listed above.

Eligibility:

Who can make a complaint? Any community, group, or person who believes they have been or may be negatively affected by ILaM's failure to follow its Environmental and Social safeguard Policies in the implementation of project activity is considered an "Affected Party". Any Affected Party may file a complaint. Representatives filing a complaint on behalf of an Affected Party must provide concrete evidence of authority to represent them. Given that this project GRM is oriented towards direct dialogue and engagement among all parties, anonymous complaints will not be considered although complainants can request confidentiality. There is a risk that confidentiality may limit efforts to resolve complaints, and complainants will be informed if confidentiality is impeding the process. The ILaM GR Process is overseen by a team in ILaM Office in Kathmandu with support from ILaM field office, Kohalpur.

Grievances/Complaints/suggestions should be directed to any of the following means:

- Email: complaints.ilam@mofe.gov.np (Safeguards and GESI Officer, ILaM Project)
- Website: <https://ilam.mofe.gov.np>
- Post: Project Complaints, Project Management Unit (PMU), ILaM Project, Forestry Complex, Babarmahal, Kathmandu, Nepal.

- (Building: Department of Forest and Soil Conservation building/3rd Floor)
- Phone no.: 01-5909144

The Grievances/Complaints/suggestions should include the following information:

- Complainant's name and contact information
- If not filed directly by the complainant, proof that those representing the affected people have authority to do so
- The specific project, program or activity of concern including location
- Details about the harm that has happened or may happen as a result of the project, resulting in the person filing this complaint
- Any other relevant information or documents (e.g., date of event)
- Any actions taken so far (if any) to resolve the problem, including contact with ILaM
- Proposed solution
- Whether confidentiality is requested (stating reason)

The complaint can be filed either in English, Nepali or any of the local languages.

Grievance/complaints review process

Step 1 - ILaM GRC will assess the eligibility of the complaint and provide a response as to whether it is eligible, in accordance with the above criteria (within 6 business days after receiving the complaint).

Step 2 - If the complaint is eligible, the GRC will come up with a plan and define a timeframe to investigate the complaint. The team will then communicate this information to the Affected Party (within 6 business days after the completion of step 1 or 10 business days depending on the severity of complaint subjected to the GRC decision).

Step 3 - The team will then investigate the matter, with additional technical support as needed, including support from the field office in Kohalpur. Based on the results, the team will then work with the affected parties to develop and implement an action plan and timeframe of steps required to resolve any issues identified.

³ <https://www.lawcommission.gov.np/en/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/good-governance-management-and-operation-act-2064-2006.pdf>

Step 4 - A summary of the complaint raised, actions taken, conclusions reached, follow up plan and timeframe for completion will be documented and communicated as agreed between the parties. PMU will facilitate support to further clarify, assess, and resolve issues raised as needed, including if appropriate, engaging inputs from outside experts.

Monitoring:

Agreed action plans will establish timeframes for regular process monitoring towards resolution of the grievances/complaints. The GRC will coordinate the monitoring by organizing periodic checks – bringing together the affected parties and relevant technical advisors for meetings or other communication on the status of action plans, until they are completed. ILaM will assess the effectiveness of this complaint's resolution process on a semi-annual basis, and identify any needs for improvement.

Non- retaliation:

ILaM disapproves of and will not tolerate any form of retaliation against those who report concerns in good faith. Any ILaM employee who engages in such retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. PMU will take all feasible actions to protect complainants against retaliation. Anyone who has made a report of suspicious conduct of a ILaM employee and who subsequently believes he or she has been subjected to retaliation of any kind should immediately report it by the same channels as noted herein, or via the complaint mechanism of the IA (WWF-US) or the donor (GEF)

WWF GEF Agency Grievance Mechanism

Project-affected communities and other interested stakeholders may raise a grievance at any time to the WWF GEF Agency. Contact information of the WWF GEF Agency will be made publicly available.

A grievance can be filed with the Project Complaints Officer (PCO), a WWF staff member fully independent from the WWF GEF Agency, who is responsible for the WWF Accountability and Grievance Mechanism and who can be reached at: Email: SafeguardsComplaint@wwfus.org.

Mailing address:

Project Complaints Officer Safeguards Complaints,
World Wildlife Fund
1250 24th Street NW
Washington, DC 20037

Complaints may be submitted in the Affected Party's native language and should include the following information:

- Complainant's name and contact information.
- If not filed directly by the complainant, proof that those representing the affected people have authority to do so;
- The specific project or program of concern;
- The harm that is or may be resulting from the project;
- The relevant Environmental and Social Safeguards policy or provision (if known);
- Any other relevant information or documents;
- Any actions taken so far to resolve the problem, including contacting WWF;
- Proposed solutions; and
- Whether confidentiality is requested (stating reasons).

The PCO will respond within 10 business days of receipt, and claims will be filed and included in project monitoring.

Stakeholders may also submit a complaint online through an independent third-party platform at <https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/59041/index.html>

GEF Conflict Resolution Commissioner

Parties wishing to learn more about the service, raise an issue, file a complaint, or ask for facilitation are encouraged to send an email or write a letter to:
Mr. Peter Lallas
GEF Conflict Resolution Commissioner
E-mail: plallas@thegef.org (link sends e-mail)

Mailing Address:

Mr. Peter Lallas
Global Environment Facility
The World Bank Group, MSN N8-800
1818 H Street, NW
Washington, DC 20433-002

Contact Address

Integrated Landscape Management to Secure Nepal's Protected Areas and Critical Corridors (ILaM) project

Babarmahal, Forestry Department
Bagmati Province, Kathmandu, Nepal
Telephone: +977-1-5905144
Email: info.ilam@mofe.gov.np

Project Field Office

Kohalpur, Banke, Lumbini Province, Nepal
Telephone: +977-081-534239

GRIEVANCE REDRESS MECHANISM

Integrated Landscape Management to Secure Nepal's Protected Areas and Critical Corridors (ILaM) Project

Babarmahal, Kathmandu, Nepal

