

**FCPF Readiness Fund: Guidelines for Establishing Grievance and
Redress Mechanism at the Country Level**
(R-PP v. 6 draft Revised (April 20, 2012))

Component 1a.(National Readiness Management Arrangements) of the R-PP template (version 6) provides as follows:

“ 7. Propose a feedback and grievance redress mechanism (an FGRM), to be operational early in the R-PP implementation phase:

Transparent information sharing and consultations with stakeholders are the foundation of REDD-plus activities in countries and the implementation of the R-PP. The complexity of issues and diversity of stakeholders may lead to numerous questions, inquiries, and potentially grievances about the REDD-plus strategy or process. A feedback and grievance redress mechanism is part of the country's REDD-plus management framework. Such a mechanism needs to be available to stakeholders early in the R-PP implementation phase, in order to be ready to handle any request for feedback or complaint that stakeholders may have about Readiness activities.

A grievance redress mechanism is a process for receiving and facilitating resolution of queries and grievances from affected communities or stakeholders related to REDD-plus activities, policies or programs at the level of the community or country. Typically, these mechanisms focus on flexible problem solving approaches to dispute resolution through options such as fact finding, dialogue, facilitation or mediation. Designed well, a feedback and grievance mechanism should improve responsiveness to citizen concerns, help identify problems early, and foster greater trust and accountability with program stakeholders. Additionally data on complaints or feedback can be used to improve program performance. Effective feedback and grievance mechanisms may be particularly helpful in the context of integrating REDD-plus work under R-PP components, including component 1 (Organize and Consult), 2b (the REDD-plus strategy), and 6 (Monitoring and Evaluation). Review of the performance of REDD-plus institutional arrangements, participation by stakeholders, and implementation of the REDD-plus strategy occurs under component 6, which this feedback and grievance redress mechanism should help support.

Grievance mechanisms are not substitutes for legal or administrative systems or other public or civic mechanisms. They do not remove the right of complainants to take their grievances to other more formal recourse options. Ideally local feedback and grievance processes will have been accessed, but may not have provided adequate resolution. Alternatives to more formal grievance mechanisms also may prove useful and can be considered (e.g., a dialogue-based multi-party dispute resolution).

A number of resources are available on this topic, including the IFC and World Bank notes listed in Annex A.

In this component, the country is asked to provide its proposed process for how it will develop, utilize, and institutionalize an effective feedback and grievance mechanism. This mechanism should be capable of addressing requests for information and complaints associated with the country's REDD-plus strategy in component 2b, its consultation and participation process laid out in component 1c, its monitoring and evaluation in component 6, or otherwise. Note that a country should strive to have available a single feedback and grievance mechanism to handle REDD-plus concerns at any given local or national level, and avoid duplication to meet different program requirements.

For countries operating under the UN-REDD Programme, this proposed mechanism should adhere to the principles and standards outlined in the UN-REDD Programme Guidelines on FPIC and the UN-REDD Programme Guidance on National-level Grievance Mechanisms (forthcoming).

This section of the R-PP should include proposals to:

a) **Conduct rapid assessment of existing formal & informal feedback and grievance redress mechanisms:** Propose to conduct an assessment of what options already exist at the local or national level could be modified to put in place an accessible, transparent, fair, affordable and effective grievance redress mechanism for issues arising under a REDD-plus regime.

This assessment also should consider the appropriate level to build on to provide redress. For example, perhaps building on local level existing systems in proposed REDD-plus pilot project areas, or at the regional level where clusters of activities would occur, or building on an existing national grievance mechanism.

b) **Develop a framework for the proposed feedback and grievance redress mechanism:** Propose a study or other activities to define the structure, functioning and governance of such a mechanism, taking into account customary grievance approaches where feasible. The proposal should indicate steps that will incorporate the best practice for creating grievance mechanisms, which includes public dialogue and consultation with stakeholders. This consultation process will ensure that the goals of the mechanism are clear to all stakeholders and that the design reflects the particular cultural or legal context in the country. The proposal should also provide a central location for feedback by stakeholders asking for information or clarifications, or reporting problems encountered in implementation of REDD-plus programs. It serves to put stakeholders in contact with the appropriate officials and processes.

As background for consideration, the grievance redress process usually includes six steps – grievance uptake; grievance sorting and processing; acknowledgement and follow-up; grievance verification, investigation and action; grievance monitoring and evaluation; and feedback/communication.

Effective grievance redress mechanisms should address concerns promptly and fairly, using an understandable and transparent process that is culturally appropriate and readily accessible to all segments of the affected stakeholders, and at no cost and without retribution or impeding other administrative or legal remedies. Effective grievance redress mechanisms are also typified by a number of characteristics, such as multiple grievance uptake locations and multiple channels for receiving grievances; prompt, clear, and transparent processing guidelines (including reviewing procedures and monitoring systems); the availability of a variety of dispute resolution approaches for flexible response to specific grievances; and an effective and timely system for informing complainants of the action taken. If appropriate, the grievance mechanism should provide special provisions for women, and the youth.

c) **Describe how information sharing and consultation on the proposed mechanism will occur:** Include how public dissemination of results of any studies or discussions of proposed grievance arrangements would be conducted. A number of approaches should be considered in the initial consultation with stakeholders regarding who will be responsible for addressing feedback received and resolving grievances brought to the mechanism. The methods of resolving disputes should be addressed as well, and may include: information sharing, fact-finding, mediation and negotiation.

It is good practice for this component to:

- Assess previous experience, and determine the highest level of decision making authority in the country at which a REDD steering group should be created in order to be effective. Describe in the workplan how to inform and engage the higher levels of political authority.
- Design the role of the highest REDD governance body such that it is in a position to coordinate and influence actions and programs of forestry and other relevant sectors. Draw an organogram illustrating the hierarchical levels and interconnections between the various bodies.

- Define clear roles and mandates for these bodies, to facilitate coordination among them.
- Propose to strengthen existing coordinating bodies/mechanisms, rather than create new entities, unless existing bodies are not effective.
- Identify policies and laws that need to be reviewed or reformed to allow for successful collaboration.