



Bank Directive

Grievance Redress Service (GRS)

Bank Access to Information Policy Designation

Public

Catalogue Number

OPS5.06-DIR.143

Issued

5 May, 2021

Effective

5 May, 2021

Content

This Directive sets out the mandate and functions of the World Bank's Grievance Redress Service (GRS).

Applicable to

IBRD, IDA

Issuer

Vice President, OPSVP

Sponsor

Chief Environmental and Social Standards Officer, OPSSP

SECTION I – PURPOSE AND APPLICATION

1. This Directive sets out the mandate and functions of the World Bank's Grievance Redress Service (GRS).
2. This Directive applies to the Bank.

SECTION II – DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

As used in this Directive, the capitalized terms and acronyms have the meanings set out below.

- a) **Bank:** IBRD and/or IDA, whether acting in its own capacity or in the capacity as administrator of trust funds funded by donors.
- b) **Bank-financed Operation:** a government project or program financed by the World Bank.
- c) **Bank Financing:** a loan, credit, grant or a guarantee made by the Bank in support of a borrower's development project or program from the Bank's own resources or from trust funds administered by the Bank, or a combination of these, using IPF, DPF or PforR Financing.
- d) **Borrower:** Borrower or recipient of Bank Financing and any other entity responsible for the implementation of a Bank-financed Operation.
- e) **CESSO:** Chief Environmental and Social Standards Officer.
- f) **Complaint:** a Complaint submitted or referred to the GRS by one or more Complainants in relation to the preparation or implementation of a Bank-financed Operation.
- g) **Complainant:** the individual or individuals or their authorized representatives, that claim they have been or will be affected by a Bank-financed Operation, whose Complaints are received by the GRS.
- h) **Confidential or Confidentiality:** as defined in AMS 6.21A, "Information Classification and Control Policy."
- i) **DPF:** Development Policy Financing, as defined in Bank Policy, "Development Policy Financing."
- j) **ESF:** Environmental and Social Framework of the Bank, which consists of a Vision for Sustainable Development, the Environmental and Social Policy for Investment Project Financing and the ten Environmental and Social Standards.
- k) **Grievance Redress Council:** Reviews the GRS caseload and performance and provides oversight on specific high-risk cases, as necessary.
- l) **GRS:** the Grievance Redress Service of the Bank.

- m) **GRS Risk Classification:** the rating of High, Moderate or Low assigned to admissible Complaints by the GRS, based on the level of risk, urgency, severity and potential for escalation, considering the issues raised and the information available.
- n) **IBRD:** International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.
- o) **IDA:** International Development Association.
- p) **IPF:** Investment Project Financing, as defined in Bank Policy, “Investment Project Financing.”
- q) **LEGEN:** Environment and International Law Unit, Legal Vice-Presidency of the Bank.
- r) **Management:** the President or a Manager, or some or all of these persons, as applicable.
- s) **Manager:** a person identified as a manager in the Bank’s human resources system.
- t) **MD Operations:** the Managing Director of Operations of the Bank.
- u) **OPCS:** the Operations Policy and Country Services Vice-Presidency of the Bank.
- v) **OPSPF:** the Standards, Procurement, and Financial Management Department, OPCS.
- w) **OPSV:** the Vice President, OPCS.
- x) **President:** the President of the World Bank Group.
- y) **PforR:** Program-for-Results Financing, as defined in Bank Policy, “Program-for-Results Financing.”
- z) **PM:** Practice Manager of the World Bank.
- aa) **Project-level GM:** a project-level grievance mechanism as defined in the Environmental and Social Framework (ESF), specifically Environmental and Social Standard (ESS) 10 and ESS 2, or a program-level grievance mechanism associated with a PforR Program as referenced in the Bank Directive, “Program-for-Results Financing”.
- bb) **RD:** Regional Director.
- cc) **RSA:** Regional Environmental and Social Standards Advisor (previously called a Regional Safeguards Advisor (RSA) or Environmental and Social Standards Advisor (ESSA)).
- dd) **Staff:** persons holding an appointment under Staff Rule 4.01, “Appointment”.
- ee) **TT:** Task Team (headed by the Task Team Leader or TTL).
- ff) **TTL:** Task Team Leader.
- gg) **World Bank Accountability Mechanism:** as established on September 8, 2020 by Resolution No. IBRD 2020-0005/IDA 2020-0004, comprises of two constituent parts: the

Inspection Panel (as defined above) and the Dispute Resolution Service (as defined in Part III of the Resolution No. IBRD 2020-0005/IDA 2020-0004).

- hh) **World Bank Group or WBG:** The common name used for concurrent identification of all the WBG Institutions, being any one of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the International Development Association (IDA), International Finance Corporation (IFC) or the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA).
- ii) **World Bank Safeguard Policies and Procedures:** OPs 4.00, 4.01, 4.02, 4.03, 4.04, 4.07, 4.09, 4.10, 4.11, 4.12, 4.36, and 4.37.

SECTION III – SCOPE

A. Mandate

1. The World Bank Grievance Redress Service (GRS) provides a clear entry point, process and platform for individuals and communities to raise concerns directly to Management on environmental and social issues related to Bank-financed Operations.
2. The GRS facilitates communication between Complainants and the Bank and engages with Complainants to address grievances and identify solutions, in collaboration with TTs and PMs and with buy-in from Borrowers and other relevant stakeholders.
3. The GRS mandate covers any Complaint about existing or potential environmental and social impacts relating to a Bank-financed Operation. See Bank Procedure, “Grievance Redress Service (GRS)” for further information on the admissibility of Complaints.
4. The GRS is part of the Bank’s accountability system and complements the roles of Project-level GMs in Bank-financed Operations where they exist and the World Bank Accountability Mechanism.

B. Roles and responsibilities

5. The GRS is functionally separate from Bank TTs that are responsible for the preparation, implementation support and supervision of Bank-financed Operations.
6. **GRS Staff:** Administer the functions of the GRS. Under the GRS Manager, the GRS staff are responsible for:
 - a. managing the processing of Complaints, including:
 - intake and evaluation of Complaints to determine their admissibility;
 - facilitating communication between the Bank, Borrowers and Complainants to identify sustainable solutions to Complaints, in consultation with TTs, CESSO, RSA, PMs, LEGEN Chief Counsel and other Staff as necessary;
 - advising TTs on applicable Bank policies and procedures;
 - monitoring the implementation of agreed actions to resolve Complaints;
 - reporting to Management on progress towards resolution of Complaints;
 - closing Complaints when agreed actions are completed or when no solution can be reached.

- b. ensuring relevant Staff are informed of Complaints in a timely manner, including but not limited to Country Director, Regional Director of Strategy & Operations, Regional Practice Group Director, CESSO, RSAs, relevant PMs, TTLs, and LEGEN Chief Counsel;
 - c. preparing the annual report on the GRS and its activities;
 - d. supporting the role of the Director, OPSPF in escalating high-risk Complaints (as classified under the GRS Risk Classification) to the attention of the OPSVP and the Regional VP. OPSVP informs the MD Operations as needed;
 - e. identifying systemic issues for institutional learning purposes;
 - f. organizing training, outreach and information dissemination on the GRS.
7. **CESSO:** Provides advice to the GRS and TTs on Complaints as needed, particularly for high-risk Complaints (as classified under the GRS Risk Classification). Advises on the escalation of high-risk Complaints.
 8. **RSAs:** In coordination with CESSO, provide advice on Complaints to the GRS and TTs.
 9. **TTs:** Work with the GRS to find sustainable solutions to Complaints and process Complaints in a timely manner, including:
 - a. referring to the GRS all Complaints received by TTs within ten business days. This includes Complaints that are referred to the TT by other Staff;
 - b. engaging with the GRS to provide complete, accurate and up-to-date records and communications on Bank-financed Operations when the GRS is processing a Complaint; and
 - c. supporting Borrowers to implement solutions to resolve Complaints, as agreed with the GRS and Complainants.
 10. **Grievance Redress Council:** Reviews the GRS caseload and performance and provides oversight on specific high-risk cases, as necessary.

SECTION IV – FUNCTIONS

11. The GRS has the following functions:

A. Complaint Handling

- (i) processing of Complaints, including the intake, evaluation, solution-seeking, monitoring of implementation of solution, and closure of Complaints;
- (ii) working with TTs, Borrowers and Complainants or their representatives to identify sustainable solutions to Complaints consistent with the applicable Bank policies and

procedures, including providing support and guidance to PMs and TTs in developing proposals for resolving Complaints;

- (iii) escalating high-risk Complaints to Management as necessary, in consultation with CESSO.

B. Advisory Services

- (i) identifying systemic issues through analyzing data for institutional learning purposes.

C. Monitoring and Reporting

- (i) monitoring the status of Complaints received and the implementation of action plans for addressing Complaints;
- (ii) providing regular reports to Management on the status of GRS cases.

D. Information Dissemination and Outreach

- (i) conducting outreach and information dissemination activities to raise awareness of the GRS among Staff, project-affected people and other relevant stakeholders;
- (ii) conducting internal and external trainings and workshops to strengthen understanding of the GRS and its functions and to enhance capacity of Staff to identify solutions for complaints; and
- (iii) preparing and publishing an annual report.

SECTION V – EXCEPTION

N/A

SECTION VI – WAIVER

The Issuer may grant a waiver of any provision of this Directive in accordance with Bank Procedure, “Operational Policy Waivers and Waivers of Operational Requirements”.

SECTION VII– EFFECTIVE DATE

This Directive is effective as of the date on its cover.

SECTION VIII – ISSUER

The Issuer of this Directive is the OPCS Vice President.

SECTION IX– SPONSOR

The Sponsor is as stated on the cover.

SECTION X – RELATED DOCUMENTS

Bank Procedure “Grievance Redress Service (GRS)”.

Bank Policy “Operational Policy Waivers”, Catalogue Number OPCS5.06-POL.01, dated April 7, 2014.

Bank Procedure “Operational Policy Waivers and Waivers of Operational Requirements,” Catalogue Number OPS5.06-PROC.185, dated July 1, 2019.

Bank Policy “Personal Data Privacy”, Catalogue Number SEC4.05-POL.103, dated May 20, 2020.

Bank Policy “Access to Information” Catalogue Number EXC4.01-POL.01, dated July 1, 2015.