FRAMEWORK FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE NOTE

ESOP 2: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT
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ESOP 2: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
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<tr>
<td>CAR</td>
<td>country annual report</td>
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<td>COIN</td>
<td>Country Office Information Network</td>
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<td>ESIA</td>
<td>environmental and social impact assessment</td>
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<td>ESMF</td>
<td>environmental and social management framework</td>
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<td>ESMP</td>
<td>environmental and social management plan</td>
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<td>environmental and social operational pillars</td>
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<td>ESS</td>
<td>Environmental and Social Standards</td>
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<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations</td>
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<td>FESM</td>
<td>Framework for Environmental and Social Management</td>
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<td>FPIC</td>
<td>free, prior and informed consent</td>
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<td>FPMIS</td>
<td>Field Programme Management Information System</td>
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<td>GCF</td>
<td>Green Climate Fund</td>
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<td>GEF</td>
<td>Global Environment Facility</td>
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<td>GRM</td>
<td>grievance redress mechanism</td>
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<td>IFAD</td>
<td>International Fund for Agricultural Development</td>
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<td>LTO</td>
<td>lead technical officer</td>
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<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>monitoring and evaluation</td>
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<td>OCC</td>
<td>Office of Communications</td>
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<td>OIG</td>
<td>Office of the Inspector General</td>
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<td>PWS</td>
<td>Publications Workflow System</td>
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<td>SEP</td>
<td>stakeholder engagement plan</td>
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<td>UNDRIP</td>
<td>United Nations’ Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People</td>
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1. Introduction

This guidance note supports the implementation of the Environmental and Social Standards (ESS) that sit at the heart of the Framework for Environmental and Social Management (FESM) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

The nine ESS embedded in the FESM are supported by two environmental and social operational pillars (ESOP): ESOP 1 (screening, assessment and management of environmental, climate and social risks and impacts) and ESOP 2 (stakeholder engagement, information disclosure, and grievance, conflict resolution and accountability mechanisms). This guidance note provides further details on how to address the requirements of ESOP 2 during the design and implementation phases of projects.

The guidance note recognizes the diversity of FAO’s project portfolio. The requirements described in this document should be applied in proportion to the scope, size and risk classification of the project. Section 2 describes how stakeholder engagement, information disclosure, and grievance redress mechanisms (GRMs) fit in the FAO project cycle. Section 3 provides specific guidance on stakeholder engagement. Section 4 elaborates on the minimum requirements of GRMs, while Section 5 provides guidance on disclosure.

The annexes to this guidance note provide various resources, including proposed templates for a GRM and stakeholder engagement plan (SEP) and a cover page for disclosed documents.

2. ESOP 2: basics and requirements

2.1 Stakeholder engagement, information disclosure and grievance redress mechanisms in the FAO project cycle

FAO’s project cycle consists of the following phases: (i) identification, (ii) formulation, (iii) appraisal and approval, (iv) implementation and monitoring, (v) evaluation and (vi) closure. Stakeholder involvement in project planning promotes local ownership, strengthens project integrity and design, and helps create relationships that may contribute to constructive problem-solving if difficulties or challenges arise. Early and iterative stakeholder engagement helps build good faith and mutual trust, and contributes to sustainable development outcomes that extend beyond the project. While environmental and social risks should be monitored throughout the project cycle, specific requirements apply during the identification, formulation and implementation (including inception) phases. These requirements are summarized in Section 2.2, Section 2.3 and Section 2.4.

1 A guide to the project cycle is available for FAO users at http://intranet.fao.org/faohandbook/area/projects/guide_to_the_project_cycle/ (FAO internal link).
2.2 ESOP 2 during the project identification phase

Figure 1. FAO’s project cycle – the identification phase

Source: authors’ own elaboration.

Requirement:
- complete the stakeholder engagement matrix in the concept note form in FAO’s Field Programme Management Information System (FPMIS).

During the identification phase, the scope and approach of the stakeholder engagement process are determined. This includes early screening and identification of likely stakeholders in the concept note in FPMIS, and especially stakeholders who may be affected by the project. Consultations with key stakeholders (individuals and groups) should be undertaken early on to identify priority issues, as well as environmental and social opportunities and risks that are of concern to stakeholders. Local communities should be consulted regarding the opportunities and risks of the project. It is recommended to design and implement the GRM (either a GRM developed specifically for the project, or the GRM of FAO’s Country Office) during the identification phase (if possible).

2.3 ESOP 2 during the project formulation phase

Figure 2. FAO’s project cycle – the formulation phase

Source: authors’ own elaboration.

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2 If working with Indigenous Peoples and local communities, please consult the guidelines regarding free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) referenced in the FESM, as well as national legislation.
Requirements:

- design (and preferably implement) the project-specific or Country Office GRM;
- for low-risk projects: update the stakeholder engagement matrix completed during the identification phase (first part of the SEP template);
- for moderate- and high-risk projects: complete the full stakeholder engagement plan (SEP) template; and
- publicly disclose the project document/funding proposal, including all annexes concerning safeguards.

During the project formulation phase, projects must develop a SEP and a GRM (see the templates in Annex 1 and Annex 4). The SEP and GRM should be put in place as early as possible, and at the latest during the implementation phase, when the project becomes operationally active. As soon as the project document/funding proposal is finalized, it must be publicly disclosed (see Section 5 of this guidance note).

Following the initial scoping and identification of key issues and stakeholders, and early consultations during the identification phase of the project, a further in-depth analysis and stakeholder consultations should generally be carried out before the project is formally approved. During the consultation process, well-organized interest groups may be vocal and influential, while poor and vulnerable groups – which may be affected more than others by the adverse impacts of certain projects – may be unable to make their voices heard. To ensure equal and fair access to the process, extra efforts should be made to ensure that vulnerable and marginalized groups are not disadvantaged.

For moderate- and high-risk projects, stakeholders should be able to consult project documents and safeguard instruments. This information is to be disclosed in a timely manner, in an accessible location and in a format and language that is easily understood by all stakeholders (see Section 5 for comprehensive guidance on the disclosure of project information).

Another crucial aspect of the project appraisal/approval phase is the development of a project-specific GRM. Section 4 provides more information on FAO’s requirements for project- and programme-level GRMs. A project-specific GRM should be proportionate to the risk and complexity of the project/programme activities.

### 2.4 ESOP 2 during the project implementation and monitoring phase – inception

The requirements during the inception phase include:

- disclose any additional relevant documents;
- put the SEP in place, and update if necessary;
- put the GRM in place and inform stakeholders on how to file grievances; and
- monitor activities and related safeguards requirements.
The project should be flexible enough to conduct consultations throughout its lifecycle. Often, project designs are not completely finalized for all parts of the project before it is approved. Therefore, local stakeholders should be consulted even during the project’s implementation phase. Stakeholders affected by the project should be given regular progress reports and updates on project activities that concern them, such as the implementation of mitigation plans or the provision of community benefits under the project.

The project’s SEP should ensure that key stakeholders are involved in the monitoring of the implementation of the project. Stakeholder representatives, including those of groups affected by the project, may be included as members of monitoring committees and bodies. This is particularly important for projects with significant potential adverse social and environmental risks and impacts. Mechanisms that allow stakeholders to verify monitoring results should be developed and put in place.

### 3. Stakeholder engagement

#### 3.1 Stakeholder engagement during project development

*Quality engagement with national and local actors is vital for ensuring that projects and programmes in countries or regions are appropriate, effective and sustainable (International Fund for Agricultural Development [IFAD], 2014, p.18)*

This section discusses stakeholder engagement during the project identification and formulation phases. The annexes to this document offer a number of stakeholder engagement tools; additional tools can be found in *FAO approaches to capacity development and programming: processes and tools. Learning module 2* (FAO, 2015a).

Effective stakeholder engagement can play a major role in minimizing the risks of exclusion and lowering the probability that local conflicts (e.g. over the use of natural resources) are created, perpetuated or exacerbated. Stakeholders are all individuals, communities, institutions, organizations or groups that have a direct or indirect interest in the project and/or are affected by it. FAO aims to ensure meaningful, effective and informed participation of stakeholders in the formulation and implementation of projects and programmes, and is especially committed to engaging those groups that are most affected by the project/programme.
Stakeholder engagement can help to:

- identify and prioritize needs and opportunities emerging from the national and local context;
- identify potential positive or negative impacts of an intervention;
- gather innovative ideas;
- encourage national/local involvement in project/programme identification, formulation, implementation and monitoring;
- identify potential partners; and
- monitor project/programme results and ensure that they meet national/local expectations (FAO, 2015a)

**Box 1. Meaningful stakeholder engagement**

Based on international good practices and on the experiences of development organizations and financial institutions, meaningful stakeholder engagement has the following characteristics:

- Processes are designed to be flexible, adapting and responding to national and local conditions and activity requirements.
- Project budgets include resources for stakeholder engagement activities, including salaries or fees for qualified staff and/or consultants with appropriate expertise.
- Engagement begins early enough to identify key issues and influence decisions.
- Information is presented in understandable and culturally appropriate formats and local language(s).
- Communication flows two ways, giving all sides the opportunity to listen, exchange views and have their concerns addressed.
- Where community norms and practices do not encourage or allow the active participation of women in meetings or gatherings, efforts are made to ensure that their voices, needs and concerns are heard and incorporated into planning.
- Processes are inclusive; they take into account the fact that women and men, and members of different ethnic, economic and social groups may have different needs and perspectives, as well as different approaches to engaging and decision-making.
- Engagement activities are free from coercion or manipulation.
- Meetings are well documented to keep track of the disclosed information, the groups and individuals who have been engaged, when and where meetings took place, key issues raised, commitments and agreements, and how stakeholder concerns have been addressed.
- There is a clear and mutually agreed upon process for timely reporting of actions taken, with clarifications regarding further steps.

3.2 Project identification – stakeholder identification

Stakeholder identification: why and when

Stakeholder identification and analysis is the process of determining which stakeholders need to be involved and when, their different interests and needs, the relationships between them and ways in which they can support the proposal. The project team should consider all risks that may be caused by the project to both target groups and non-beneficiaries who may be affected by the project. In addition, the team should also evaluate any risk that other stakeholders, such as implementing partners or enabling agencies, could pose to the success of the project, and determine how the project will mitigate such risks. It is especially important that the project’s selection of implementing partners is informed by an understanding of their level of commitment and capacity.

Once these elements are understood and incorporated in the stakeholder engagement matrix in the project concept note form in FPMIS, a SEP should be developed. No single type or format of a SEP will accommodate all projects. Indeed, the contents of a SEP depend on various factors, including the nature, scale, location and duration of project, the diverse interests of stakeholders, the scale of the project’s potential positive and adverse impacts on people and the environment, and the likelihood of grievances.

The different stakeholders (be they individuals, groups or institutions) should be identified and mapped as early as possible during the identification phase, indicating their degree of interest in the project, how they may (positively and/or negatively) influence the success of the project, the power relations between them, and the potential environmental and social risks and impacts of the project on the target groups and other stakeholders. The project’s target groups (including workers, if the project will generate employment) should be consulted about the opportunities and risks of the project. If needed, a more in-depth analysis may be conducted during the formulation stage.

The SEP should include all information known at this stage. Annex 1 provides an indicative outline (which may be adapted to accommodate specific projects).

Types of stakeholders

The project may present different risks for different stakeholders, depending on their sex, age, ethnicity, disabilities, employment status and other relevant sociodemographic variables. These and other variables interact (intersectionality), which amplifies projects’ risks and opportunities for stakeholders. The stakeholder engagement process should be as inclusive, participatory, representative and gender-sensitive as possible. Adequate engagement modalities and approaches should be adopted to ensure that all participants, including traditionally marginalized people or groups, can express themselves freely and confidently. Additionally, the stakeholder analysis should be conducted through a gender and intersectional lens, so that the project design takes due account of the benefits and risks that the project may present for different groups (e.g. men and women).

It is important that the project evaluates the types of stakeholders present in the project area(s). According to the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) (2014), the following stakeholders should be identified:

1. **key stakeholders**: the institutions, organizations or networks that play a direct role in the project or programme (e.g. as enabling agencies, service providers, clients or users), and without which the project or programme cannot go ahead;
2. the potential **lead agency/agencies** for all project goals, components and activities;
3. **primary stakeholders**: the institutions, organizations or networks that have a direct interest or will be directly affected (positively or negatively) by the project at the national, subnational (e.g. provincial, district) and local (subdistrict, village) levels. Primary stakeholders can also be key stakeholders. The interests and attitudes of primary stakeholders should be assessed, particularly their likely stance towards the project (e.g. supportive, neutral or negative) and their potential role in scaling up the positive outcomes of the project in future;
4. **secondary stakeholders**: the institutions, organizations or networks that are likely to have an interest in the project and its outcomes, and in the innovations and learning that it will generate, but are not directly affected by it. Secondary stakeholders can also be key stakeholders, although this is less common. Again, their interests and attitudes towards the project should be assessed.

5. **other implementing partners** at all levels: for example institutions, organizations or networks that may need to provide services (e.g. capacity building), ensure the direct implementation of activities, organize supporting activities, etc.;

6. **other stakeholders**: to be identified by asking: Who is left out? Who loses power or resources? Whose interests and perspectives are ignored?; and

7. what are the current **relationships and horizontal coordination mechanisms** between the lead agency and other implementing partners? What additions, changes or differences should be introduced to support the project? (IFAD, 2014, pp. 27–28).

**Exceptional requirements**

If the project triggers certain safeguard standards, this may influence the stakeholder engagement process. For example, if the project triggers ESS8 on Indigenous Peoples, the project should adhere to the principles of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC). If the project triggers ESS9 on cultural heritage, effective participation and engagement can play a direct role in the identification of cultural heritage within a project/programme area (see the guidance notes for ESS8 and ESS9).

### 3.3 Project formulation – stakeholder consultation

Building on the stakeholder pre-identification and mapping conducted during the identification stage, the stakeholder mapping and analysis may be conducted in a more comprehensive and in-depth manner during the formulation stage, if required. The analysis will be proportionate to the scope, size and risk classification of the project. It will also inform the choice of implementing partners and include a capacity gap assessment and capacity development plan to ensure delivery capacity and reduce project-related risks.

Conduct **meaningful and effective consultations** and collaboration in a culturally appropriate manner. Meaningful, effective consultations are free of external manipulation, coercion, discrimination and intimidation, and respond to the different needs and interests of marginalized and disadvantaged groups in an inclusive and gender-sensitive manner. Stakeholder engagement modalities and approaches, particularly those for engagement with community members, should take into consideration language and cultural issues (e.g. employing facilitators who speak local or indigenous languages, or splitting communities into groups of women, men and youths, to encourage women and young people to express themselves freely), capabilities (e.g. literacy levels) and accessibility (e.g. avoiding times when women are busy with domestic tasks such as cooking, delivery sites that are perceived to be risky for women or peak seasons when farmers are particularly busy). Stakeholder engagement should be based on the prior and timely disclosure of relevant, accessible and understandable information, be free of charge and provide appropriate timeframes for stakeholders to evaluate the information and provide comments.

**It is mandatory** for moderate and high-risk projects, and recommended for low-risk projects, to complete the elaborate **stakeholder engagement plan** (SEP) template (see Annex 1 for an indicative outline). The length and scope of the SEP should be proportional to the nature and scale of the project activities and their potential environmental and social risks and impacts. The SEP should be disclosed early to seek stakeholders’ views and allow for changes according to their needs, cultural norms, etc. Alternative templates with the same scope as Annex 1 can also be used, if preferred.

The methodology for consultation depends on the stakeholder type and profile. For example, some stakeholders may have access to email and the internet, while others may need to be contacted in person, in a local language. The findings of the SEP are detailed in a document that resource partners and project evaluators can review.
Early in the formulation stage, potential project activities and areas – and therefore potential target groups – may not yet be fully identified. Still, stakeholder consultations then provide project formulators with meaningful information about local realities, which may be applicable to similar contexts when the exact project target areas will be defined. Additionally, stakeholder consultation is an iterative process that does not end at the project design phase. The project will regularly engage with and consult stakeholders (including target groups) throughout the entire project life, so that stakeholders can provide input and feedback regarding project implementation, for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) purposes as well as for risk assessment and for the identification of mitigation mechanisms.

**Consultations must be documented properly**, particularly if the project must apply the principles of FPIC.3 FAO implements FPIC as an Indigenous Peoples right and as a best practice for rural dwellers, forest peoples, fishers, farmers and local communities.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Table 1. Elements of stakeholder engagement and the project cycle</th>
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<td>Stakeholder mapping and analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prior information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stakeholder engagement plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appropriate forums and methods/ meaningful consultations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Documentation, disclosure and feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inform about grievance redress mechanisms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stakeholder engagement and feedback during project implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and completion</td>
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Source: authors’ own elaboration.

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3 Free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) is a specific right granted to Indigenous Peoples recognized in the United Nations’ Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which aligns with their universal right to self-determination. FPIC allows Indigenous Peoples to provide or withhold/withdraw consent, at any point, regarding projects impacting their territories. FPIC allows Indigenous Peoples to engage in negotiations to shape the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects (FAO, 2023).
4. Grievance redress mechanisms and conflict resolution processes

4.1. Grievance redress mechanism

As per the FESM, a grievance redress mechanism (GRM) must be prepared and implemented for all FAO offices, programmes and projects, regardless of the funding source and risk level (see FAO, 2022a). The GRM guidance and templates provided in this guidance note (see Annex 3, Annex 4 and Annex 5) should be used by FAO staff and by any implementing partners, contractors and subcontractors, as the GRM requirement applies to the entire scope of the project. Alternative templates that cover the same scope may also be used, if there is a good reason to do so. Some projects fulfill the GRM requirement with a community feedback mechanism or other channels through which the project receives feedback, including grievances. In those cases, the project should ensure that the mechanism adheres to this guidance note.

Principles of the GRM

GRMs are a communication channel between the project beneficiaries and other stakeholders, and the programme/project team.

GRMs must be accessible, collaborative, expeditious and effective in resolving concerns through dialogue, joint fact-finding, negotiation and problem resolving. Key underlying principles include confidentiality, impartiality, respect for human rights (including those of Indigenous Peoples), compliance with national norms, coherence with norms, equality, transparency, honesty and mutual respect.

GRMs are usually designed to be the first line of response to stakeholder concerns that have not been addressed through proactive stakeholder engagement.

Box 2. Basic components of grievance redress mechanisms

A GRM should contain the following basic elements:

- channels through which parties affected by a project can make their grievances known to the project and/or to FAO (e.g. in person, by phone, via a text message, mail or e-mail, or through a website);
- a grievance log where grievances are registered, dated and maintained in a database; a designated person should take note of key steps in the log;
- publicly advertised procedures, clarifying how grievances can be presented and how long it takes to acknowledge, respond to and resolve grievances; these procedures should also detail what happens if the aggrieved party is not satisfied with the proposed solution; and
- transparency about the grievance procedure, governing structure and decision-makers.

Source: authors’ own elaboration.

Specifically, a project GRM:

- serves as a mechanism for the timely resolution of issues that are directly linked to project activities, thus preventing the escalation of problems into social conflicts; and

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4 See Annex 4 of this guidance note for a proposed outline of a project-level GRM.
serves as an accountability mechanism that allows people who are directly or indirectly affected by a project to seek remedy.

More generally, a good GRM may contribute to the overall functioning of a project by:

- informing decision-making, as part of a project management system: beyond simply recording grievances, a GRM encourages the creation of a feedback loop; and

- informing a project’s monitoring and evaluation process, thereby contributing to institutional learning: this implies that a suitable and meaningful indicator on the GRM’s effectiveness is included in a project’s monitoring and evaluation system, and that the GRM’s functioning is discussed during supervision missions.

**Box 3. Principles of good design and implementation of a project grievance redress mechanism**

- A good GRM is proportional to the project and its context-related risks.
- The GRM procedures to submit grievances should be kept simple and easy to understand.
- The sustainability of the mechanism should be ensured.
- Marginalized and disadvantaged groups (including women and Indigenous People) should be involved in the design of GRMs to promote accessibility, uptake and accountability and ensure a victim-centred approach. Steps must be taken to ensure that potentially affected people understand and agree to how their grievances and/or feedback will be processed, and how they will be informed of the results.
- The GRM should be easily accessible, including for groups in vulnerable situations.
- Actions should be implemented to raise awareness about the GRM (e.g. by distributing communication material).
- Confidentiality and professionalism should be ensured.
- Good recordkeeping should be ensured.

*Source: authors’ own elaboration.*

**The role of grievance redress mechanisms in decentralized offices and in projects**

Decentralized offices (including Country Offices) should appoint a safeguards and grievances focal point, register the name of the focal point in FAO’s Country Office Information Network (COIN), and develop an office-level GRM. Alternatively, an existing (interagency) GRM may be used.

Projects and programmes should appoint a project-specific focal point for grievances. They can either develop a project-specific GRM or make use of an existing Country Office GRM. If the latter option is chosen, this must be mentioned explicitly in the project document. A summary of how the Country Office GRM operates must also be provided, and its relationship with the project should be described. In addition, the project should budget for project-specific GRM-related activities, especially for outreach and awareness raising among potentially affected parties. The project must design and implement the GRM as soon as possible; the mechanism should be designed at the latest before the approval of the project, and implemented at the latest when the implementation phase begins. It is good practice to keep the GRM operational for at least six months after the closure of the project.
Grievance redress mechanism and implementing partners

For project activities that are delivered by parties other than FAO, FAO must still ensure that potentially affected stakeholders have full access to the project/Country Office GRM. In cases where there are multiple delivery partners, an explicit (and written) agreement must be reached on how to reach out and receive feedback, as well on how grievances will be processed. Ideally, the programme/project should have one centralized GRM. The procedures and channels should be as simple and clear as possible to all stakeholders. Even if a grievance arrives through a parallel channel, it must still be logged internally by FAO in the grievance monitoring system at project and/or country level. Finally, GRMs must be up and running as soon as possible, and at the latest when the project becomes operational; indeed, the design and implementation of the GRM should be one of the first actions undertaken by the project team.

Scope of project GRM vis-à-vis the role of the Office of the Inspector General

A project GRM deals with grievances about the project’s effects on beneficiaries and other parties. With such a broad scope, a GRM must be designed to receive grievances through multiple channels, in various languages and about many issues. For example, if a project generates employment, workers should be able to file grievances about working conditions through the GRM.

All grievances about misconduct (such as fraud or other types of corruption, harassment or sexual exploitation and abuse) by employees of FAO projects or Country Offices should be either submitted directly to the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) by the complainant, or forwarded to OIG by FAO colleagues in a prompt and strictly confidential manner. OIG is responsible for investigating allegations of misconduct.

While grievances that do not concern misconduct should normally go through the project GRM first, a matter can be brought directly to OIG if the complainant(s) has/have a good reason for doing so (e.g. out of fear that reporting through the GRM would lead to irreversible harm or risk their safety). However, ultimately, FAO would inform the project managers of the grievance, as part of the resolution process. Additional information on the direct use of OIG channels can be found in FAO’s Guidance for Compliance Reviews (FAO, 2015b).

Any project-related grievance that is received through a channel other than the GRM should be recorded in the project GRM, to guarantee that records are complete if/when the project team and/or Country Office becomes aware of the grievance. Projects should establish a grievance log for this purpose, with the responsibility for keeping the log assigned to a suitable project member (or Country Office staff member). Confidentiality must be guaranteed.

4.2 Step-by-step guide: the grievance redress mechanism in the project cycle

Designing a grievance redress mechanism during the project identification and formulation phase

(Sub)regional/Country Office GRM

The (sub)regional or Country Office GRM must include various communication channels e.g. an FAO email address, telephone number and mailing address, at least one physical box to leave notes and, where relevant, an internet page with a messaging facility and links on social media to submit messages (see Annex 4 for the GRM template).

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5 Project stakeholders should be informed that they can report instances of fraud or unacceptable behaviour (including sexual exploitation and abuse) through the OIG’s (confidential) hotline (online and by phone, see www.fao.ethicspoint.com, or via email to investigations-hotline@fao.org).
Project GRM

The project should design a project GRM (including a budget), and if possible implement this mechanism, during the formulation phase. A description of the GRM must be included in the project document, using the template included in FAO’s standard project document (Annex 4 to this guidance note) – unless there is good reason to use an alternative template covering the same scope.

The performance and effectiveness of project GRMs must be reviewed regularly, as part of regular project supervision and implementation support processes. The inclusion in the project’s M&E system of well-chosen indicators reflecting the GRM’s effectiveness can facilitate this review.

Grievance redress mechanism – budget

The project’s budget should include provisions for the implementation of the GRM, proportional to the project’s scale and identified risks. A budget of around USD 10,000 is recommended for medium-sized projects. Small projects can rely on the existing GRM at Country Office level, provided that this GRM is adapted to the specific project. Funds should be allocated for:

- human resources (a share of the focal point for the GRM);
- the development of communication material about the GRM throughout the project lifecycle (in local languages and adjusted to the context);
- awareness raising activities, training and missions/field visits; and
- GRM channels (hotline, cell phones, sim cards, mailboxes, etc).

The project must design the GRM as soon as possible and at the latest before project approval, and implement it as soon as possible and at the latest when the implementation phase begins.

Project implementation: putting the grievance redress mechanism in place

Once the project funds are available and core staff members have been hired, the project must put the GRM in place. This entails:

- re-assessing existing GRM channels and persons responsible for handling grievances;
- clarifying mandates, responsibilities and protocols, including identifying the project’s grievances focal point (if necessary, modifying the project team’s terms of reference);
- specifying how the project will monitor and report on the GRM’s performance and effectiveness, for example by providing the following information: the number and types of grievances received (required under the country annual report [CAR] exercise), the time taken to resolve grievances (a written acknowledgement of receipt should be sent within ten working days, a resolution proposal within 30 working days), the resolution rate of grievances (required through the CAR exercise), the frequency of reporting to the project’s management (e.g. quarterly, semi-annually), etc.
Communication material about the GRM channels must be prepared in local languages and should be distributed to all stakeholders throughout the project cycle. Key information that must be provided includes:

- which GRMs are available (including FAO’s own grievances reporting procedures), and why they are important;
- who can raise grievances (individuals, communities and other stakeholders who may be affected by the project), and who cannot;
- the channels through which grievances can be filed (ideally, these channels are identified in consultation with local communities to ensure that they are effective and accessible to different target groups);
- who is responsible for receiving and responding to grievances;
- the maximum time for the various steps of dealing with grievances, as described in the project document (e.g. acknowledging the receipt of a grievance). A written acknowledgment that the grievance has been received should be sent within ten working days; a resolution proposal should be presented within 30 working days;
- how complainants are protected from retaliation (whistle-blower protection measures), and a description of the GRM’s victim-centred approach (with its key principles of safety, confidentiality/privacy and informed consent); and
- what types of responses and which benefits can people expect from using the GRM.

It is important that project stakeholders, and particularly target groups, understand the different options they have for communicating their grievances. They should also be aware of where they can get help and advice about whether and how to communicate a grievance, including information regarding whistle-blower protection measures and confidential reporting channels. Continuous information campaigns about the GRM (in local languages) should be promoted by the project management unit, implementing partners, and service providers; such campaigns should aim to reach all target communities, for example at meetings, through posters, publications or local media. Proactive outreach and trust-building, especially with marginalized and higher-risk communities, will be essential.

**Box 4. Improving GRM effectiveness through engagement with potentially affected stakeholders**

- Engage local leaders to encourage the use of the project GRM by different target groups, especially vulnerable ones.
- Provide assistance and/or dedicated access points to persons with disabilities.
- Devise culturally and politically sensitive approaches for Indigenous Peoples and local communities, in collaboration with their organizations (including as part of FPIC processes). This can be done through traditional village-based conflict-resolution structures, if these structures are deemed inclusive and equitable.
- Appoint and train female focal points for local grievance redress, to receive and handle grievances from women (especially regarding issues such as exclusion, discrimination and violence).
- Raise awareness about existing gender-related rights (e.g. gender-based violence, land rights, inheritance laws, etc.) and protection services, and ensure that adequate and separate spaces for women are created where they can safely express their grievances.

*Source: authors’ own elaboration.*
4.3 Receiving and resolving grievances

The GRM has now been designed and embedded in the project structure and decision processes, with a budget and formal roles and responsibilities. If a grievance is now received, the following three-step process will be followed:

**Step A:** receive and register grievances
**Step B:** acknowledge, assess and resolve grievances
**Step C:** monitor, analyse and report grievances

**Step A. Receiving and registering grievances**

All grievances received must be classified, prioritized and registered in the grievance log in line with the project’s GRM operational guidelines. Where possible, the grievance log should also capture grievances made via informal or traditional systems. To this end, local grievance focal points should be trained; these focal points should be given standard forms to record grievances in writing and pass them on to the project grievance focal point, who will register the grievances in the log.

Many grievances may be resolved informally on the spot by service providers or local grievance focal points. Nevertheless, these partners should be encouraged to inform the project staff about such informal resolutions, so that they can be recorded in the project grievance log.

**Step B. Acknowledging, assessing and resolving grievances**

Different grievances must be treated in different ways. Some can be resolved quickly on the spot, while others will need to be assessed and/or dealt with at a higher level.

**Acknowledging grievances**

For every grievance received, a timely acknowledgement should be sent to the individual or group bringing the grievance. It is good practice to send this acknowledgement within three days of the project grievance focal point receiving the grievance, and at the most within ten working days. The acknowledgement should take the form of a letter, email or phone call, with a clearly identified point of contact, a brief description of the process that will be followed and a tracking number. The grievance must be recorded in the project’s grievance log, which could be a simple Excel sheet (see Annex 5 for a grievance log template).

**Assessing eligibility**

In this step, it is verified whether the grievance is indeed related to the FAO project. Any grievance that regards the FAO project must be admitted.

The decision on eligibility is only meant to trigger an initial assessment and response. It is not an admission that the project has caused an impact, or a commitment to provide the individual or group bringing the grievance with any specific form of redress. It is often better to use a relatively low barrier to entry with a quick response as to whether a grievance is eligible, especially for high-priority grievances.

**Finding a resolution**

Once a grievance is assessed as eligible, it must be determined whether the grievance can be resolved immediately through relatively simple actions, or whether it is complex enough to require additional assessment and/or action by other parties.

Many grievances can be resolved at project level, through straightforward actions (e.g. by implementing a small correction in a project activity or by making information more accessible to a community). In other cases, a further assessment involving other parties, and potentially an extended process of information collection and dialogue, will be necessary. Partners should be encouraged to inform the project staff of all grievances received, however minor and including those resolved informally on the spot, so that they can
all be recorded in the project grievance log. This ensures that the log captures the nature and status of all grievances related to the project. Grievances that cannot be resolved at project level should be transmitted by the project grievance focal point to the next level in the GRM (e.g. the FAO Country Office GRM). Grievances related to misconduct (such as sexual exploitation and abuse) must be referred immediately to OIG without assessment or attempts to resolve the situation at project level.

**Seeking agreement on the proposed resolution**

The GRM focal point is responsible for communicating the proposed resolution to the individual or group that brought the grievance. A resolution proposal should be presented within 30 working days, in writing or orally if that is a more effective means of communication (e.g. by phone or in a meeting), in a language that is easily understandable to the complainants. The response should include a clear explanation of why the resolution is being proposed, what the proposed resolution would be and what further choices there may be, given the proposed resolution.

If the complainants agree with the resolution, minutes are drafted and signed by the parties involved. If the complainant is illiterate, appropriate alternatives must be identified. After implementation, new minutes will be signed stating that the grievance has been resolved satisfactorily.

If an agreement is not reached or if the complainant does not agree that the grievance is not eligible under the GRM, the grievance must be transmitted to a higher level through the steps defined in the GRM. The next step after the GRM focal point is typically the FAO Country Office (see the template in Annex 3).

Once it is clear that an agreement has been reached through the GRM, the case is marked as closed in the grievance log. All supporting documents should be part of the file related to the grievance.

**Step C. Monitoring, analysing and reporting grievances**

**Monitoring and reporting on GRM performance**

All grievances must be logged in the project grievance log, which should be shared with the FAO Country Office as the data are needed for annual reporting.

An absence of grievances does not mean that a project does not have any problems, on the contrary; it may mean that the GRM system is not working. A record of solved grievances is a good sign of a well-implemented programme/project.

Regularly reviewing the grievance log improves management oversight over a project’s GRM. It brings key risks and issues to light, helps formulate adaptive/corrective measures and facilitates the identification of good grievance redress practices and lessons learned.

Regular reports on the functioning of the GRM should be provided to the public, including information such as the number and type of grievance received, the share of grievances solved, the share of grievances solved within a specific timeframe, the share of grievances that have gone to mediation or have been referred to a third party, and the satisfaction rate of complainants. These reports should take into account the requirement of confidentiality and not disclose any information that could identify the complainant. Reports may be published on the project’s website, if there is one.

The project’s grievance redress data and reports should also feed into FAO project supervision missions and implementation support processes. FAO’s supervision team will draw on the reports prepared by the project team (and by third party monitors, if available) and will carry out further analyses through site visits and consultations with target groups to validate the reports’ findings. Performance or implementation issues will be discussed with counterparts in the government to agree on specific remedial actions and on any implementation support to be provided by FAO. For projects at an advanced stage of implementation, the focus should also be on compiling and disseminating best practices and lessons learned.
5. Information disclosure

5.1 Definition of information disclosure

Information disclosure is defined as making information accessible to interested and affected parties. Communicating such information in a manner that is understandable to stakeholders is an important first (and continuous) step in the process of stakeholder engagement. All other activities, from consultation and informed participation to negotiation and resolution of grievances, will be more constructive if stakeholders, including affected communities, have accurate and timely information about the project, its impacts and any other aspects that may have an effect on them.

Box 5. Good information disclosure practices

The following are good practices for the disclosure of information that any FAO project/programme should adhere to:

- Ensure that the personal data of beneficiaries or other stakeholders is not published (see FAO Administrative Circular 2022/06 on the Organization’s data protection policy [FAO, 2022b]). Failure to comply with the prior informed consent requirement would result in considerable legal and reputational risk to FAO.

- Disclose information to stakeholders early, prior to decision-making. As a minimum, explain the next steps and be clear about which project elements are fixed and which can be changed or improved upon, based on consultations and participatory inputs.

- To the extent possible, disclose objective information and be open about the project/programme.

- Design information disclosure to support consultations – where appropriate, treat the disclosure of project and environmental and social information as an integral part of stakeholder consultations. Give people the information they need to participate in an informed manner. Crucially, leave sufficient time between the provision of information about the benefits and disadvantages of the project (or changes to project operations and their implications) and the start of consultations.

- Provide meaningful information, in a format and language that is readily understandable and tailored to the targeted stakeholder group. The aim is for the information to enable people and organizations to form informed opinions about changes that will affect their lives. This may mean that information must be provided in different formats, to meet the needs of various audiences.

- Ensure the accessibility of information by considering how the intended recipients will best receive and comprehend the information.

- Disclose information at both the national and the local level. Examples of disclosure channels at the local level include printed documents attached to community announcement boards, emails to community leaders and key stakeholders, slides at the end of project presentations in the field, radio announcements, press releases, local television, the internet and social media.

Sources:


5.2 Disclosure of information when environmental or social standards are triggered

The timely disclosure of relevant, accessible information on programme activities is an important part of the project, including stakeholder engagement.

The disclosure of programme and project information helps stakeholders participate effectively in project consultations. Before the appraisal formally begins, FAO should disclose information on the environmental and social risks of programme and project activities. This information should be relevant, understandable, accessible and considered culturally appropriate by the stakeholders. Due attention must be dedicated to the specific needs of every person, male or female (e.g. literacy level, gender, disabilities, differences in language, accessibility of technical information or connectivity), in the groups affected by the project.

All moderate- and high-risk FAO projects must disclose information related to environmental and social risks and impacts. Low-risk projects are not required but still encouraged to do so. National or local legislation may lay down disclosure requirements that must be complied with.

- For a moderate-risk programme or project, FAO will release the information as early as possible, and no later than 30 days before the start of the implementation of the project.
- For a high-risk programme or project, FAO will release the applicable information as early as possible, and no later than 60 days before the start of the implementation of the project.

If the project triggers ESS8 on Indigenous Peoples, complete and easily understandable information on the likely potential impacts shall be disclosed to the indigenous communities involved. Sufficient time and, where needed, support (e.g. the community may need legal or technical advice to better understand the implications of a proposed project) shall be provided to enable the community to carry out internal deliberations. Information should be disclosed in accordance with Indigenous Peoples’ traditions and customs, in a language they know and in an environment and in formats they can relate to.

If the project triggers ESS9 on cultural heritage, FAO programmes and projects should determine, together with affected stakeholders, whether the disclosure of information regarding cultural heritage would jeopardize the safety or integrity of this heritage or endanger the sources of information about it. In such cases, sensitive information may be withheld from public disclosure (see FAO’s Administrative Circular 2022/06 on the Organization’s data protection policy [FAO, 2022b]). If communities affected by project activities choose to keep the location, characteristics or traditional use of cultural heritage a secret, FAO must put in place measures to maintain confidentiality. The Organization will respect customary practices that have been enacted and maintained by communities to restrict access to certain specific aspects of cultural heritage or withhold information about it.

Specific guidance for projects funded by the Green Climate Fund

For projects funded by the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the following disclosure deadlines should be observed (GCF, 2016):

- for category B projects (moderate-risk projects for FAO), an environmental and social impact assessment (ESIA) and an environmental and social management plan (ESMP) should be submitted at least 30 days prior to the decision by the accredited entity or the GCF board, whichever is earlier; and
- for category I-2 programmes (projects with intermediaries), an environmental and social management framework (ESMF) should be submitted at least 30 days before the decision by the accredited entity or the GCF board, whichever is earlier.
Translating these stipulations to FAO's risk classifications, the deadlines for GCF-funded projects are:

- **moderate-risk**: at least 30 days before the GCF board meeting;
- **low-risk**: no advanced disclosure is required; however, the Environmental and Social Management Unit of the Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment (OCB) strongly recommends disclosing the final project document.

**RetentionPolicy**

Project documents are kept online in the disclosure portal for at least five years after the end date stipulated in the document. After this period, the document will be archived in the Publications Workflow System (PWS) by the Office of Communications (OCC).

**5.3 Steps to disclose information related to FAO projects**

For moderate and high-risk projects, the project document (including any annexes related to environmental and social safeguards) must be published on the FAO disclosure portal as one document, in its final version only, and in pdf format.6

Section 5 has set out the minimum standard for the disclosure of information regarding FAO projects. In practice, information may need to be disclosed through various channels and in various formats. The following requirements must be observed:

- **Accessible information**: stakeholders should be able to readily access information regarding assessments and management plans. While local regulations might stipulate that environmental assessments should be accessible in government offices, this may not be sufficient to ensure that local stakeholders can access the information. Other means of dissemination may need to be considered, such as posting on websites, public meetings, meetings with local councils or organizations, reporting in newspapers, on television and via radio, flyers, local displays, direct emailing, etc.
- **Appropriate form and language**: all information must be disseminated in a form and language that is tailored to and readily understandable by the target stakeholder group. Summary information from assessments and management plans may need to be translated and presented in various formats (e.g. written, verbally). The following factors should be taken into consideration when identifying appropriate forms of disclosure: the level of technical detail of the information, local languages and dialects, levels of literacy, gender roles and local methods of disseminating information. A general request for feedback on project documents may not be the most appropriate format to share information and solicit input from stakeholders. Rather, the material may need to be presented in a contextual manner, such as by presenting options with key information and questions designed to solicit feedback. Various forms of proactive disclosure may be used in addition to posting information on the internet, including radio broadcasts, brochures, community postings, SMS, oral presentations, etc. It is vital to ensure that appropriate communication methods are devised to reach potentially marginalized and disadvantaged groups.

**Specific guidance for projects funded by the Global Environment Facility**

The disclosure of information about projects funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) happens at two levels:

- in the FAO disclosure portal, accessible to all users: the OCB–GEF funding liaison officer has the responsibility to upload project document and safeguards related documents with support from the OCB communications team;

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6 [FAO's disclosure portal can be accessed at](https://www.fao.org/environmental-social-standards/disclosure-portal/en/)
• to key national/regional stakeholders (in the national language, if different from English), through any means available to FAO’s Country Office/Subregional Office/Regional Office (including on the FAO website, FAO’s disclosure portal, project preparation grant validation workshops and targeted emails to key stakeholders). This is the responsibility of the lead technical officer (LTO) and budget holder.7

Specific disclosure guidance for GCF-funded projects

The disclosure of information related to FAO–GCF projects entails the following steps:

1. The LTO must obtain clearance from the Environmental and Social Management Unit of funding proposals and documents related to environmental and social topics.8
2. Translate disclosure documents into the country’s official language(s), and relevant parts into Indigenous Peoples’ languages as well. Make sure to include all relevant environmental and social assessments/instruments, and request clearance from the Environmental and Social Management Unit of the disclosure package.
3. Disclose the project information in a single pdf document on FAO’s disclosure portal;9 on the website of FAO’s Regional/Country Office(s) and/or on national website(s), if relevant (this requires sending a request to OCC); and choose a location close to the project beneficiaries where the printed document will be available to those who do not have access to the internet.
4. Notify GCF of the disclosure and share the disclosure form with them (see Annex 7).

5.4 Hiding confidential information and personal data

FAO must ensure that the personal data of beneficiaries or stakeholders are not published without their consent when disclosing a project’s ESS documents. Failure to comply with the prior informed consent requirement would result in considerable legal and reputational risk to FAO.

According to FAO’s Administrative Circular 2022/06 on the Organization’s Data Protection Policy (FAO, 2022b), personal data means any information relating to an identified or identifiable individual. Personal data would normally include (but are not limited to) names, email addresses, phone numbers, postal codes, job titles, identity numbers (e.g. of passports and social security cards), financial information and medical records. Personal data cannot be disclosed publicly without consent. Any personal data of beneficiaries and stakeholders must be removed from the disclosure documentation, unless they have given their consent for publication.

If the project triggers ESS9 on cultural heritage, the following provisions of the United Nations Model Approach to Environmental and Social Standards for UN Programming on confidentiality and restricted access by communities must be observed (United Nations Environment Management Group, 2019):

a. Determine, together with stakeholders, whether the disclosure of information regarding cultural heritage would jeopardize its safety or integrity or endanger sources of information, and withhold sensitive information if this is the case.
b. If communities affected by programming activities keep the location, characteristics or traditional use of cultural heritage secret, implement measures to maintain confidentiality.
c. Respect customary practices enacted and maintained by communities that restrict access to certain specific aspects of intangible cultural heritage or information about it.

7 Disclosure to national/regional stakeholders must also meet the 30/60 days deadlines prior to endorsement. The budget holder may choose the most appropriate means of disclosure (including the publication of the project link on FAO’s disclosure portal).
8 If the funding proposal or ESMF includes subprojects (including simply activities that require an ESIA once their location has been determined), then GCF requests that the ESIA or ESMP for these subprojects/project activities is disclosed.
9 Allow approximately seven days for clearance in FAO’s PWS, as project documents can only be made available on the FAO disclosure portal once PWS has created a URL for the document.
5.5 Publications Workflow System requirements

To facilitate the approval of the document in the PWS, the following requirements should be met:

Cover page
Disclosure documents must include a cover page:

- after the title, add the date (the year is sufficient); and
- below the date (and before the partner logos) insert the following sentence: “This document is intended to be used solely for the purposes of FAO project disclosure”.

Always include “Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations” and the date (the year is sufficient) at the bottom left of the cover page.

Annex 6 provides an example format for the cover page.

Logos
The document must comply with FAO’s policy provisions on the use of logos. The FAO logo must be inserted in the correct size and position (the emblem diameter should be 20 mm). It should be the first element in the top left-hand corner, with a sufficient margin between the logo and the title. The use of other logos (of donors etc.) must be cleared by FAO’s copyright team. Country flags cannot be used in FAO or joint FAO publications (please contact the FAO Document Repository or FAO’s copyright team for further details).

For the use of the GEF logo, see the brand guidelines on GEF’s website (GEF, 2023). For the use of the GCF logo, see FAO’s policy provisions on the use of logos.

The three-line blue FAO logo (see Figure 4) must be placed in the top left corner of the cover page, and the GEF logo (see Figure 5) must be placed in the bottom left corner of the cover page.

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10 This document is available to FAO users.

11 FAO Document Repository can be contacted via email at document-repository@fao.org, while the copyright team can be contacted at copyright@fao.org.

12 The three-line FAO logo is available to FAO users on the Organization’s intranet.
Some examples of the use of logos in project documents include the following:

- For the use of the FAO and GEF logos, see this project document.\(^{13}\)
- Partners’ logos (government) should be placed in the top right corner, see these examples for South Sudan and China.\(^{14}\)
- For other logos (e.g. in the case of a joint agency project or a project with external funding sources), clearance should be obtained from the copyright team. Requirements depend on the logo in question and on possible copyrights agreements. Some partner logos can be placed in the top right-hand corner, with the three-line FAO logo on the left (see this example with the logo of the World Wildlife Fund).\(^{15}\)

**Photo credits**

All photos should be credited as per FAO’s publishing guidance (FAO, 2017). For example: © FAO/author’s name.

**Maps**

Any maps appearing in the document should have a disclaimer and sources, as prescribed by FAO’s copyright team.\(^{16}\) See this document on a project in Madagascar for an example.\(^{17}\)

**Other sources**

Any sources cited in the project document should be referenced correctly. Sources for boxes, figures and tables must be inserted underneath the item as a full bibliographic reference. This format must be applied: [Author]. [Year of publication]. [Publication title]. [Series title]. [Place of publication], [Publisher]. [DOI (or PDF URL)].\(^{18}\)

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15 The three-line FAO logo is available to FAO users on the Organization’s intranet.
16 The guidance document is available to FAO users on the Organization’s intranet.
References


Annex 1.

Stakeholder engagement plan – template

This annex presents the elements that should be included in minimal and comprehensive stakeholder engagement plans (SEP); the exact components of the SEP will depend on the project’s scope and activities.

Minimal stakeholder engagement plan (low-risk projects)

The minimum requirements for a SEP are to identify likely stakeholders, the dates of consultations (concluded and planned) and a summary of the main findings and overview of how these findings were incorporated into the project (see Table A1). Such a minimal SEP is sufficient for low-risk projects.

Table A1. Minimal stakeholder engagement plan

<table>
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<th>Stakeholder name</th>
<th>Stakeholder type</th>
<th>Stakeholder profile</th>
<th>Stakeholder engagement methodology</th>
<th>Consultation findings (for past consultations)*</th>
<th>How the findings were incorporated into the project</th>
<th>Expected timing (for future consultations)</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Include any feedback that demonstrates to what extent affected groups and individuals understand how the project may affect resources, knowledge and heritage; any issues relating to the need for confidentiality; information on existing or potential conflicts arising from different views regarding the project; any views of affected stakeholders on how project risks can be addressed, including on proposed mitigation measures.

Add a paragraph on the capacity of the project to disaggregate beneficiary data by sex, age, disability and other relevant sociodemographic variables.
Comprehensive stakeholder engagement plan (moderate and high-risk projects)

Moderate- and high-risk projects are required to develop a more comprehensive SEP. The following is a suggested outline (based on International Finance Corporation [IFC], 2007):

1. Introduction

The project objectives are [X]. The project will implement activities in the following areas: [X, include maps if relevant]. The stakeholders identified are listed in Table [X] [refer to the matrix above]. The project’s main target beneficiaries include [X]. The below is a comprehensive stakeholder engagement plan.

2. Regulations and requirements

The regulatory and donor requirements pertaining to stakeholder engagement that apply to the project include: [refer to the relevant text in the environmental and social management framework, or, if not included there, summarize requirements here e.g. requirements regarding public consultation and the disclosure of project information, international obligations, the requirement of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC), customary norms and procedures, the role of customary authorities, etc.].

3. Project stakeholders

The following are key stakeholder groups who will be informed about and engaged in the project (based on stakeholder analysis): [describe the individuals or groups who are directly and/or indirectly affected by the project, have interests in the project that make them stakeholders or have the potential to influence project outcomes or operations].

4. Summary of any previous stakeholder engagement activities

Stakeholder engagement activities undertaken so far include the following: [X]. The information disclosed to stakeholders includes the project document and [X]. Disclosure was done in the following formats and languages: [e.g. orally, brochures, reports, posters, radio announcements, etc.], and was disseminated through the following channels [X].

Individuals, groups and/or organizations that have been consulted include [X]. Key issues discussed and key concerns raised include [X]. The project has responded to issues raised by [changes to activities, commitments or follow-up actions]. The activities are reported in the following documents: [X], and the project will report back to stakeholders by [X].

5. Stakeholder engagement programme

The stakeholder groups described in Section 4 will be provided with the following information about the project: [e.g. the project document including the grievance redress mechanism (GRM)]. This information will be made available in the following formats and languages: [X], and through the following channels: [e.g. newspapers, posters, radio, television, brochures, leaflets, posters, non-technical summary documents and reports, visual displays in information centres and exhibitions, etc.].

Methods that will be used to engage with and/or consult each of the stakeholder groups identified in Section 4 include: [e.g. interviews with stakeholder representatives and key informants; surveys, polls and questionnaires; public meetings, workshops, and/or focus groups with specific groups, using participatory methods; other traditional mechanisms for consultation and decision-making, etc.].
The views of women and other relevant groups (e.g. minorities, older people, youth, other marginalized groups) will be taken into account and their participation facilitated by [X].

Activities that require prior consultation and FPIC from Indigenous Peoples/local communities include [X]. The Indigenous Peoples Plan and FPIC protocols that apply are [X].

The project includes the following methods to receive feedback and to ensure ongoing communication with stakeholders (outside of a formal consultation meeting): [description of the GRM, etc].

Other engagement activities that will be undertaken include [e.g. participatory processes, joint decision-making or partnerships with local communities, non-governmental organizations or other project stakeholders, benefit-sharing programmes, stakeholder-led initiatives, training and capacity building/support programmes].

6. Timetable

As summarized in Table [X], the project has developed a schedule with dates/periodicity and locations where various stakeholder engagement activities, including consultation, disclosure and partnering will take place.

7. Resources and responsibilities

The specified stakeholder engagement activities will be carried out by [FAO/implementing partner]. The budget and other (human) resources allocated towards these activities are [e.g. a safeguards specialist, stakeholder engagement facilitator, etc].

8. Monitoring and reporting

The following project stakeholders/third-party monitors will be involved in the monitoring of project implementation, potential impacts and management/mitigation measures: [X].

The results of stakeholder engagement activities will be reported back to stakeholder groups through [e.g. newsletters/bulletins, social and environmental assessment reports, monitoring reports, etc].
Annex 2.
Stakeholder analysis and mapping – guidance

The following are recommendations (not obligations) for stakeholder analysis and mapping.

What is stakeholder analysis?
Stakeholder analysis is a tool to identify the needs and concerns of different stakeholders. It can help:
- gain better understanding of local realities (including of social, institutional and cultural dynamics) and build consensus;
- communicate the scope, benefits and impact of a proposed project and expectations in terms of participation or involvement of target groups, affected communities and other stakeholders; and
- design relevant, inclusive and responsive interventions, and promote ownership by target groups and other stakeholders, including governmental actors.

The process
Stakeholder analysis requires:
- endorsement by local authorities so that they can help mobilize communities, especially those in the margins of society;
- an adequate facilitation process; and
- accurate recording of the views and decisions of stakeholders.

Organizing stakeholders
The stakeholder mapping matrix in Figure A1 can be used to organize stakeholders according to their interests and power levels, and to inform the engagement strategy based on the quadrant in which a particular stakeholder is placed.

Figure A1. Stakeholder mapping

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Power</th>
<th>Interest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engage closely and influence actively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(minimum effort)</td>
<td>Keep informed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Power** measures stakeholders’ ability to help or have an impact on the project.

**Interest** measures stakeholders’ support or opposition to the project’s goals and objectives.

- Stakeholders with a high degree of power and interests that are aligned with the project’s purpose are critical to the success of the project. These stakeholders include immediate decision-makers and opinion leaders i.e. the people whose opinion matters; they form the primary audience.
- Stakeholders with a high degree of interest in the project but low power, or with high power but low interests, should be kept informed about and satisfied with the project. Ideally, they should be supporters for the proposed programme or policy change. This is the secondary audience.
Box A1. Further reading on stakeholder analysis and mapping


Annex 3.
Suggested grievance processing and referral pathways

Figure A2. Suggested grievance processing and referral pathways

FAO GRIEVANCE REDRESS MECHANISM
REFERRAL PATHWAY

After each step, the project grievance focal point informs the complainant of the process.

This implies, at a minimum:
- Acknowledging receipt of the grievance; and
- Preparing a resolution if the grievance is about the project, or
- Explaining alternative referral pathways in case the grievance is about misconduct and the complainant does not accept the resolution.

Source: authors’ elaboration.

Note that donors (e.g. GCF) may impose specific requirements; pathways may also be influenced by the specific project context. Hence, variations to these pathways are possible.
Annex 4.
Grievance redress mechanism – template

This annex presents a suggested template for the project GRM, to be modified and translated into local languages in accordance with project needs.

The text in grey between brackets should be removed, and these spaces should be filled out with the correct project information.

Part A (for external distribution/disclosure)

1. Main contact details

For a grievance or suggestion about the project [TITLE], use any of the below channels to contact us (free of charge). Your grievance will be handled confidentially by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

[The GRM must include multiple channels to communicate grievances; the below are suggestions. If information on the project was disclosed (a requirement for moderate- and high-risk projects), include the link to FAO’s disclosure portal here.]

Table A2. Suggested communication channels to file grievances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Channel</th>
<th>[provide, if relevant]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>[provide, if relevant]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>[provide, if relevant]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WhatsApp (including voice messages)</td>
<td>[provide, if relevant]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location of a suggestion box</td>
<td>[provide, if relevant]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax</td>
<td>[provide, if relevant]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Purpose of the GRM and guiding principles

This is the grievance redress mechanism for the office [X]/project [TITLE], implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and [ORGANIZATION] between [DATE] and [DATE] at field level, through which grievances related to the project can be filed. Contact information and information on the process to file grievances will be disclosed in all meetings, workshops and other related events throughout the duration of the project. In addition, all communication and awareness raising material that will be distributed will include the necessary contact information and information regarding the process for filing grievances.

The project/FAO is responsible for the documenting of and reporting on any grievances received and how they were addressed, as part of the safeguards performance monitoring.

FAO is committed to ensuring that its projects and programmes are implemented in accordance with the Organization’s environmental and social obligations. Concerns about non-compliance with these obligations must be addressed at the nearest possible level, i.e. at the project management/technical level or, if necessary, at the level of the FAO Country Office or Regional Office. If a concern or grievance cannot be resolved through consultations and measures at the project management/technical level, a grievance, requesting a compliance review, may be filed with the FAO Office of the Inspector General, in accordance with FAO’s guidelines for compliance reviews (FAO, 2015). Project managers have the responsibility to address concerns brought to the attention of the official project grievance focal point.
The **principles** to be followed during the grievance resolution process include confidentiality, impartiality, respect for human rights (including those pertaining to Indigenous Peoples), compliance with national norms, coherence with norms, equality, transparency, honesty and mutual respect.

3. **Who can file a grievance**

Anyone can file a grievance or make a suggestion related to a project/office. All grievances must be handled confidentially.

Provide as much information as possible about the grievance, for example what happened, who was involved, when did it happen, etc.

4. **From grievance to solution**

[Explain how grievances will be logged, handled and responded to by FAO and implementing partners, and what the individual or group bringing the grievance can do in case no solution is found at project level.]

The mechanism includes the following stages:
1. An individual or group files a grievance through the designated channels of the project/office (e.g. via email, in a mailbox, by phone, etc.). The process of filing a grievance must offer confidentiality and, if requested by the complainant, anonymity; it should not interfere with existing traditional/indigenous dispute resolution mechanisms or with communities’ self-governance systems.
2. The grievance is sent to the grievance focal point of the project or FAO Country Office, which acknowledges and logs the grievance, assesses whether it is eligible and determines who is responsible for resolving the grievance in accordance with the processes developed for the project. The confidentiality of the grievance must be preserved during the process. Receipt of every grievance should be acknowledged in writing within ten working days; a resolution proposal should be presented within 30 working days. The grievance focal point must record the grievance and how it was addressed, if a resolution is agreed upon.
3. If the situation is too complex, or if the individual or group bringing the grievance does not accept the proposed resolution, the grievance must be sent to the next higher level, until a solution is reached.
4. The person in charge of dealing with the grievance may interact with the individual or group bringing the grievance, or may organize interviews or meetings, to better understand the reasons behind the grievance.
5. Once the proposed solution is accepted by the complainant, a confidential record of the complaint is drawn up.
**Table A3. Review levels and contact details**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Review level</th>
<th>Contact details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project level</td>
<td>[Indicate at least a name and email address (these can be the contact details of the FAO Country Office, if the project uses the country-level GRM.)]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next level</td>
<td>[Indicate at least the name and email address of the next higher level that applies to the project, for example the FAO Country Office or Regional Office].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher level (only if it is strictly necessary to go to a third level)</td>
<td>[Indicate at least the name and email address of the next higher level that applies to the project, for example the FAO Country Office or Regional Office].</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Office of the Inspector General (OIG)                                      | Contact FAO’s independent Office of the Inspector General:  
|                                                                             | - to report non-compliance with FAO’s environmental and social management guidelines, if the grievance was not resolved at lower levels;  
|                                                                             | - to report non-compliance with FAO’s environmental and social management guidelines, if there is a good reason for not approaching the project management (e.g. fears about safety); or  
|                                                                             | - to report possible fraud and other corrupt practices, as well as other types of misconduct such as sexual exploitation and abuse. |
|                                                                             | The Office of the Inspector General can be contacted:  
|                                                                             | - through the confidential hotline (through the online form, or by calling free-of-charge worldwide phone numbers with interpreters available 24 hours a day, see https://secure.ethicspoint.eu/domain/media/en/gui/109199/);  
|                                                                             | - via email (to investigations-hotline@fao.org or inspector-general-office@fao.org); or  
|                                                                             | - by mail to:  
|                                                                             | Office of the Inspector General  
|                                                                             | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations  
|                                                                             | Viale delle Terme di Caracalla  
|                                                                             | 00153 Rome, Italy |

**Part B (internal to FAO, to be uploaded in FAO’s Field Programme Management Information System [FPMIS], together with Part A)**

5. **GRM positioning**

[Describe how the project GRM relates to the GRM of the Country Office and other existing GRMs, and why the project has decided to use the specific GRM selected or designed. Describe how the project and office-level grievance logs relate to each other. Note that Country Offices must report on the number of grievances resolved and addressed annually, as part of the Country Annual Report (CAR) process.]
Note that grievances about misconduct (such as allegations of fraud or other corrupt practices, harassment or sexual exploitation and abuse) by FAO project of Country Office employees must be submitted directly to the Office of the Inspector General, which is responsible for investigating such allegations.

6. Communications plan
[Include the GRM in the project communication activities. Questions that should be answered include, as a minimum: will the GRM be communicated in local languages and during all meetings with project stakeholders? Is an information brochure on the GRM available to users? Are feedback/grievance forms available to users?]

7. Capacity building
[Does the project/office provide training on grievance management to the GRM focal point and project team members? Does this include training on the receipt and referral process for grievances related to sexual exploitation and abuse?]

8. Monitoring and evaluation
[Does the project produce regular internal reports on grievances/feedback?]

[Grievances/feedback reports should include information on: the numbers of grievances/feedback received; compliance with set response times; issues raised in grievances/feedback; trends in grievances/feedback over time; the causes of grievances/feedback; whether remedial action was warranted; which type of redress was provided; recommendations/strategies to prevent or limit future recurrences.]

9. Budget
[Are adequate resources allocated to the communication of the GRM, to the functioning of the GRM and of the GRM focal point, to monitoring and evaluation reports, and to the formulation and implementation of remedial actions?]

10. Workers’ access to the GRM
[Will the project employ workers?]

[It is recommended to use the project GRM for any grievances from workers employed through the project, whether raised by individuals or a community. The GRM must allow all workers to raise concerns of violations of rights and entitlements as provided in collective agreements, employment contracts and human resources policies. If there are good reasons to use existing GRMs for these purposes, these may be supplemented with project-specific arrangements and be made readily accessible to project workers. The FAO project grievance focal point must be made aware of any grievances received, even if an existing GRM is used for this purpose. Workers should be made aware that their grievances will be handled confidentially and that for any grievance related to misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse, they may contact FAO’s OIG directly, if they prefer to do so. Grievances may be lodged anonymously, if preferred by the individual or group bringing the grievance. The grievance mechanism must be accessible to all direct and contracted workers, taking into account their different characteristics, for example female workers, migrant workers or workers with disabilities. It is good practice to have a both a male and female staff member available to receive and process grievances.]

References:
### Annex 5.

**Suggested grievance log template**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of occurrences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form of communication (e.g. by phone, via email, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of the complainant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact details of the complainant (e.g. phone number, email address)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of the first contact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the complainant submitting the grievance on behalf of an affected party (yes/no)?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social/environment/sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment/labour and working conditions outside of scope grievance?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender of the complainant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details of the grievances (e.g. location)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status of the grievance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex 6.

Template for the disclosure of project information (cover page)

The following is an example of a cover page for the project disclosure document (the logo of the Global Environment Facility [GEF] should be removed if the project is not funded by the GEF):

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

[Project title (indicate the country/countries, if not included in the project title)]

[FAO project symbol]

Project document and environmental and social safeguards annexes

[Month, year]

This document is intended to be used solely for the purpose of the disclosure of information on FAO projects.
Annex 7.

Template for the disclosure of project information for GCF-funded projects

Project disclosure documents for projects funded by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) should follow this format:

Project: ________________________
Project risk classification: ___________________
Disclosure of relevant project information helps stakeholders understand the risks, impacts and opportunities of a project.

1. The information was released:
   A. Date:_____________________
   B. Location(s): _______________
   C. Language:_________________
   D. Disclosed to whom:__________
   E. Means of disclosure:_________

2. Has there been any response to the disclosed information that warrants changes to the proposed mitigation measures?

   [ ] No   [ ] Yes

If yes, specify changes:
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________

CERTIFICATION
The project’s lead technical officer, [name], confirms that the above information is correct.

Date ______________________
Signature_________________