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# Report on the activities of the Independent Redress Mechanism

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## **Summary**

This report provides an update on the progress made with regard to the activities of the Independent Redress Mechanism (IRM). The reporting period is from 1 September 2018 to 31 December 2018. The document summarizes the activities of the IRM based on the work plan and budget of the IRM for 2018 adopted by the Board at its nineteenth meeting.

## I. Introduction

### 1.1 Background

1. The Independent Redress Mechanism (IRM) is mandated in paragraph 69 of the GCF's Governing Instrument. This paragraph states that "(t)he Board will establish an independent redress mechanism that will report to the Board. The mechanism will receive complaints related to the operation of the Fund and will evaluate and make recommendations." The IRM performs a key function within the GCF's accountability mechanisms. The Independent Redress Mechanism (IRM) reports directly to the Board and is subject to the decisions of the Board. It is independent of the Secretariat of the GCF.
2. The report on the activities of the Independent Redress Mechanism (IRM) provides an update on the progress made by the IRM. The report covers key priority initiatives identified in the Work Plan of the IRM for 2018, approved by the Board at B.19.<sup>1</sup> The reporting period is from 01 September 2018 to 31 December 2018.
3. The work plans of the IRM identified the following three overarching goals to help guide the work of the IRM for 2018:
  - (a) Operate the IRM (2018);
  - (b) Develop Procedures and Guidelines (2018); and
  - (c) Process Complaints and Reconsideration Requests (2018).

## II. Operating the IRM

### 2.1 Progress on operating the IRM

4. **The implementation of the work plan and budget:** The terms of reference (TOR) of the IRM requires it to consult with the Ethics and Audit Committee (EAC) on the implementation of its work plan, as appropriate. As decided by the EAC, quarterly reports were submitted by the IRM to the EAC regarding its work and the EAC provided valuable feedback.
5. **Staffing the IRM:** The IRM is fully staffed with three full time staff members, the Head of the IRM (appointed by the Board), a Compliance and Dispute Resolution Specialist and a Team Assistant.
6. The position of Team Assistant was suppressed at the end of 2018 and a new position of Registrar of the IRM was created to take its place. A new staff member has been recruited to fill this position and will take office from 15 February 2019. Until then the current Team Assistant will continue till the end of February 2019.
7. Two Advisors were contracted as limited term consultants in 2017 and 2018 to support the development of the IRM's procedures and guidelines and internal operating procedures. Their work was completed in 2018 and their services will not be needed in 2019.
8. The IRM has recruited two interns who will commence work in January 2019 for a period of six months.
9. **Supporting operating procedures for the IRM:** The IRM has developed and is piloting draft supporting operating procedures (SOPs) to efficiently and effectively implement the TOR

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<sup>1</sup> Decisions B.19/19 and B.21/10 respectively.

and the Procedures and Guidelines of the IRM when adopted by the Board (see section III 3.1 below).

## 2.2 Communications strategy

10. Outreach activities:

- (a) **Civil Society Outreach:** In November 2018, the IRM presented at a workshop targeting Financial Intermediary institutions in India and the region. The workshop was hosted by the Asian Development Bank and gathered accountability mechanisms from other AEs, and more than 30 FIs and CSOs representatives to exchange ideas on how to advance social and environmental due diligence and addressing complaints in this important and growing sector.
- (b) **Communications materials:** The IRM developed materials that would allow its users access to user-friendly information on the IRM. These include a brochure for complainants in Spanish, Arabic, French, Mongolian, and Vietnamese. The IRM has also drafted its 2018 Annual Report reporting to the Board and the public on its activities during the year.
- (c) **IRM participation in GCF Events:** The IRM participated in two Structured Dialogues - one in Dushanbe, Tajikistan in September 2018 and one in Grenada in November 2018- to provide information to AEs, NDAs and AOs on accountability, the IRM's mandate and work. The IRM also held sessions at GCF's Global NDA Conference and the Private Investment for Climate Conference in October 2018 highlighting accountability in both public and private contexts.
- (d) **In-reach:** Apart from presenting in regular new staff inductions, the IRM held a dedicated session for the Division of Mitigation & Adaption to increase awareness of social and environmental risks and discuss ways that these risks can be prevented and assessed through the project cycle. The participants agreed that the subject matter was timely and that more such sessions should be held throughout the year and with difference divisions. The IRM is planning to do so in 2019.

## 2.3 Providing advice

11. The IRM has continued to provide the Secretariat with advice on clauses in accreditation master agreements relating to grievance handling and redress mechanisms. The IRM also provided advice to the IEU and IIU on the new draft policies on sexual harassment and the Evaluation Policy.

## 2.4 Capacity building of direct access entities' grievance mechanisms

12. Further to the clinics conducted by the IRM at the Direct Access Entity (DEA) Workshops held in Songdo, one DEA requested materials from the IRM to share with its own staff and other DEAs in the Caribbean region. The IRM made these available. Additionally, the IRM has begun developing an online manual and web-based materials for use by grievance and accountability mechanism of DEAs to develop their capacity to handle complaints from project affected persons. It is envisaged that these materials will be made available via the IRM microsite in 2019.

## 2.5 Case management system (CMS)

13. A custom-built Case Management System (CMS) was provided for in the IRM Workplan and Budget that was approved by the Board at B.19. The CMS will enable the IRM to efficiently, effectively and timely manage complaints and reconsideration requests and analyse data relating to such cases so as to provide advice to the GCF Secretariat and the grievance mechanism of direct access entities based on the IRM's work. The IRM, together with the ICT Department of the GCF Secretariat is developing the CMS for the IRM. A vendor was competitively chosen and hired based on defined user requirements and technical evaluations. Design and implementation of the CMS is ongoing and is expected to be completed in May 2019.

## 2.6 Independent Accountability Mechanisms Network (IAMnet)

14. The IRM has continued to be active within the IAMnet community. It co-led a working group on collaboration among accountability mechanisms. This working group documented case handling arrangements made between accountability mechanisms in the context of parallel complaints and conducted a survey of such mechanisms to get a better understanding of the challenges and benefits of such collaboration. The results were presented to the IAMnet annual meeting held in Washington DC in November 2018 and were well received. The IRM has also been appointed to the Governance Committee of the IAMnet to help formulate governance reforms for the network.

# III. Developing Procedures and Guidelines

## 3.1 Procedures and Guidelines of the IRM

15. The Board, by decision B.13/24, requested the Head of the IRM to prepare, with the support of the Secretariat, for consideration by the Board, procedures and guidelines for the IRM (decision B.06/09, annex V, para. 14 (document GCF/B.06/18, annex V, para. 14)) "in close consultation with similar or equivalent mechanisms of accredited entities and other stakeholders". The IRM is giving effect to this decision.

16. Draft Procedures and Guidelines were presented to the EAC in mid-August 2017 for its preliminary consideration. The EAC approved the draft subject to revisions proposed by it in April 2018. The IRM then opened the draft for public consultation on 17 April 2018, with a deadline for comments set for 15 June 2018. The IRM conducted six webinars in May 2018 of an hour's duration each for NDAs and accredited entities to respond to questions on the draft and to seek feedback. Five webinars were also held for Board members, Alternate Board members and accredited observers in May 2018. Additionally, three informal consultations with GCF stakeholders and civil society were held in early June 2018 providing yet another opportunity for any GCF stakeholder to participate and provide feedback. These informal consultations were held under the auspices of accredited observers.

17. After the closure of the public comment period on 15 June 2018, the IRM collated all feedback received and revised the draft Procedures and Guidelines. The revised Procedures and Guidelines were introduced to the GCF staff at a meeting in July and their feedback received and incorporated. Copies of the draft were also shared with OGC and the Executive Director's office. A final revised draft was presented to the EAC for consideration on 8 August 2018 and the IRM has received and incorporated feedback from some EAC members.

## IV. Processing complaints and reconsideration requests

### 4.1 Complaints and requests for reconsideration of funding decisions

18. The IRM is now operational and able to process (a) complaints from persons adversely affected by GCF funded projects or programmes, and (b) requests from developing countries for reconsideration of funding denied by the Board.

19. During the period under review the IRM has not received any complaints or reconsideration requests.

20. During the period under review, the IRM commenced a preliminary inquiry into information received with regard to a GCF project alleging mis-categorization and the absence of free prior informed consent of indigenous people. The purpose of the inquiry is to assess if there is sufficient material to initiate proceedings (*suo moto*) under paragraph 12 of the IRM's TOR. The inquiry is still ongoing.

## V. Budget utilization for the reporting period

21. The utilization of the 2018 budget until 31 December 2018 is shown below:

### Independent Redress Mechanism Unit budget utilization as of 31 December 2018 (in USD)

Items	2018 budget	Actual	Commitments [3]	Sub-total	%
<b>Staff Costs [1]</b>					
Full-time Staff	574,824	628,724		628,724	109%
<a href="#">Consultants [2]</a>	133,996	101,987	13,271	115,258	86%
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>708,820</b>	<b>730,711</b>	<b>13,271</b>	<b>743,982</b>	<b>105%</b>
<b>Travel</b>	<b>78,000</b>	<b>26,080</b>	<b>32,598</b>	<b>58,678</b>	<b>75%</b>
<b>Contractual services &amp; Other Operating Costs</b>	<b>125,00</b>	<b>17,267</b>	<b>73,300</b>	<b>90,567</b>	<b>72%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>911,820</b>	<b>774,058</b>	<b>119,169</b>	<b>893,227</b>	<b>98%</b>

[1] Staff Costs includes staff salaries, benefits, staff training and development costs

[2] Consultants costs include consultants' fees, benefits and travel costs

[3] Commitments are orders issued or invoices received for 2018 but were not yet paid as at 31 December 2018