

Stakeholder engagement plan for programme implementation

1. Objectives of the stakeholder engagement strategy

Stakeholder engagement will be continuous throughout the implementation of the GCF programme. This stakeholder engagement strategy has been designed with the following objectives:

- To ensure there are opportunities for stakeholders to provide feedback, ask questions and raise concerns
- To ensure information sharing and disclosure
- To establish a culturally appropriate mechanism for filing complaints and grievances
- To foster strong programme-stakeholder relationships, including at the village level
- To ensure meaningful consultation and promote social acceptability of the programme

The social engagement strategy will focus primarily on stakeholder engagement with stakeholders that are not a part of the programme implementation arrangements and management units.

Info Box. Community Engagement Framework for the ER-PD

A Community Engagement Framework (CEF), developed within the context of the ER-PD, provides best-practice guidelines on how to work with rural communities, to ensure that ethnic minorities, women, and other vulnerable groups can meaningfully participate and benefit. It also specifies what actions must be taken in case that mitigation measures must be taken regarding ethnic minorities, resettled communities or households, communities or households losing access to resources, as well as any mitigation measures necessary to account for gender impacts.

CEF has been developed based on extensive consultations with stakeholders in the programme area, and the programme will utilize the framework to guide community engagement within the framework of the GCF programme and ensure that best practices are applied.

2. Stakeholder engagement process for programme implementation

For all activities implemented with villagers at the local level (e.g. land use planning and activities within Outputs 2 and 3), participation is voluntary and based on the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). FPIC agreements will be made with all participating villages prior to the implementation of interventions. PPMUs will mobilize specialized capacity, targeting the district and *kumban* levels, regarding training on FPIC principles and practices, and ensuring FPIC principles are appropriately applied for the programme's consultations. They will further be trained on gender and social inclusion, to promote the participation of diverse stakeholders, including women and members of different ethnic groups.

A communication and information dissemination plan will be elaborated within the programme's inception phase. Annual implementation plans will include information on planned stakeholder engagement.

Consultation, trainings and workshops

Consultations will inform stakeholders of the programme's progress, encourage feedback, support capacity building and implementation, raise awareness and validate findings. They will serve as an important tool to foster ongoing two-way communication throughout the programme from its inception until completion. The following considerations will be followed when designing consultations:

- Consultations will be conducted in a manner that is accessible and culturally appropriate, paying due attention to the specific needs of beneficiaries and others who may be affected by programme implementation (including gender, literacy, language or accessibility of technical information).
- The objective and the anticipated results of the consultation will be clearly stated.
- Consultation design will take into account the specific stakeholders targeted, and their context (interests, capacities, cultural background).
- Information provided in consultations will be transparent, easy to understand, promote inclusiveness and gender sensitivity.

- Suitable trainers and facilitators will conduct the consultations, including trainers who are trained in social inclusion and gender equality. Translation services should be provided for non-Lao speaking ethnic groups (when necessary).
- Transparent, accurate and consistent documentation and reporting will be required from all consultations. Attendance sheets should be collected from each meeting, along with meeting summaries and photos. A record of all consultations conducted within the framework of the programme should be managed by the programme management units, with reporting conducted by the NPMU.

Within each Activity, there are various actions and action inputs planned that include stakeholder engagement and consultations, with detailed actions described in Chapter 3 of the Feasibility Study, information on inputs provided within the Log Frame in Chapter 4 of the Feasibility Study, and detailed budgeting for stakeholder engagement within the financial and economic analysis Excel file (separate Excel file).

Reporting on stakeholder engagement

GIZ and MAF/DoF will provide regular updates on programme implementation, through various media sources (online, print, workshops, among others). Online communications and information-sharing will be promoted, including through a bilingual national REDD+ website hosting data, communication and educational materials regarding REDD+ (including the ER Programme). When appropriate, information will be presented in other local languages to reach diverse ethnic groups (see the Knowledge Management Plan in Annex 22u for further information).

Annual programme reporting will further provide an overview of consultations and workshops conducted, and will provide insight into upcoming events for the following year. In order to ensure the widest dissemination and disclosure of programme information, including any details related to applicable environmental and social safeguards, local and accessible disclosure tools including audiovisual materials such as flyers, brochures, videos and community radio broadcasts will be utilized in addition to other communication modes. Furthermore, particular attention will be paid to women, ethnic groups, illiterate or technologically illiterate people, and people with hearing or visual disabilities, people with limited or no access to internet and other groups with special needs. The dissemination of information among these groups will be carried out with the programme counterparts and local actors such as village and *kumban* leaders, producer associations, CSOs, Lao Women's Union, among other regional actors. For additional information refer to Chapter 12 of the Feasibility Study on programme monitoring and evaluation.

3. Incorporation of women and ethnic groups

Incorporation of women

A Gender Action Plan (GAP) has been elaborated (Annex 8b) to mainstream gender-related measures into the programme, ensuring that gender-related risks are avoided or mitigated, and to maximize climate and development co-benefits for both men and women. It pays special attention to women, considering that women are not a homogeneous group, and the additional challenges that women from different ethnic groups may face. The plan includes:

- Gender-responsive actions for all programme activities, as well as cross-cutting measures that address and strengthen the voice and agency of women in climate action within the context of the proposed programme. Timelines and responsibilities are indicated within the GAP.
- Gender-responsive result indicators and sex-disaggregated targets to be integrated into the programme's results framework.
- Presentation of gender-responsive development impacts.

The plan provides an overview of how women's engagement throughout the programme will be positively targeted, and how the programme will promote gender equality through all of its activities and within programme management (refer to the gender assessment and gender action plan for more detailed information).

Incorporation of ethnic groups

"Lao PDR has endorsed the *International Labour Organization Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples* (ILO 169, 1989) and *United Nations Declaration of Indigenous Peoples' Rights*

(UNDRIP, 2007) but the Government of Lao PDR (GoL) does not recognize the concept of indigenous peoples in its policies and legislation. Instead, the term “ethnic group” is officially used to describe its people, who are categorized into 49 broad ethnic groups. [...] Ethnic group diversity is reflected in a rich diversity of **ethnic languages**. Each ethno-linguistic family is divided into main ethnic groups and is further described through sub-ethnic groups. Some ethnic languages are only spoken languages, and do not have written forms.”¹

“The ER-Programme area is home to an array of inhabitants from diverse ethnic groups. The three major ethno-linguistic families in the ER Program area are the Lao-Tai, the Mon-Khmer, and the Hmong-Hmien. According to 2005 data, around 45% of the regional population belong to the Lao-Tai ethno-linguistic family, 30% to the Mon-Khmer, 15% to the Hmong-Mien and the remaining groups in the Sino-Tibetan compose the remaining 10%.² [...] Thus, these six Northern provinces are notable insofar as in this region, the Lao-Tai ethnic groups comprise less than half the population, whereas nationwide they comprise two-thirds of the population. Thus, other ethnic groups are more numerous in these Northern provinces (refer to Chapter 1 of the Feasibility Study and the ESIA (Annex 6a) for more detailed information)[...] Generally speaking, these groups tend to have lower rates of education, especially among girls and women, lower rates of self-reported land ownership, higher rates of poverty, and more food insecurity than Lao-Tai groups³.”

While the programme is anticipated to have largely positive impacts for these groups, if improperly implemented or if safeguards are not sufficiently in place there could be negative impacts on the livelihoods and wellbeing of ethnic groups in the programme region.

The socio-economic risks that may arise during the implementation of the programme will certainly be higher in some areas than others but are also likely to fluctuate over time. This underscores the requirement for site-specific Environmental and Social Management Plans and a programme Environmental and Social Management System that is based on adaptive management – see Annex 6b. The high percentage of non-Lao-Tai ethnic groups in the programme area requires a higher degree of risk management as per the GCF Indigenous People Policy.

Targeted participation and enhanced support for vulnerable ethnic groups

The programme will make sure that ethnic groups, especially particularly vulnerable groups, will benefit from the programme’s activities. Vulnerable households at the village level will be positively targeted through programme activities utilizing participatory approaches and providing necessary technical support and other inputs.

For the successful implementation of this programme, the specific situation of different ethnic groups, and in particular vulnerable households, are taken into account. The programme will finance measures that enable diverse ethnic groups to have better access to land, technical support for implementing good agriculture practices, sustainable land management (SFM, FLR, etc.), and green finance measures. Such measures include:

- FPIC and existing national laws and international commitments related to ethnic groups (and indigenous peoples) must be respected. FPIC processes will be initiated with all participating villages prior to the implementation of land use investments. FPIC agreements are mandatory to participate in programme activities.
- A participatory and inclusive approach will be applied that take into account regional and cultural diversity within the programme area. For example, Activity 1.4 allows for village land use planning to be based on participatory processes, where prioritized activities are identified based on the village’s priorities, context and differentiated vulnerabilities and needs.
- Programme staff and trainers will include male and female representatives from diverse ethnic groups. They will all receive training on gender equality and social inclusion within the context of the programme.
- Outreach, extension / technical support at the community-level, workshops and capacity building activities will be socially inclusive, aware of culturally diverse contexts and norms, and take into consideration local knowledge. Where necessary, the programme will ensure the availability of translators (either from within the community or from external sources, if necessary) to facilitate the

¹ ER-PD SESA Report 2017, p. 27

² Lao PDR Housing and Population Census 2005

³ ER-PD 2018, p. 33

dissemination of knowledge and information. Translation can be provided for oral workshops, extension materials and other programme-related materials (e.g. videos, radio programs, publications, etc.).

- Particular attention will be paid to women, ethnic groups, illiterate or technologically illiterate people, and people with hearing or visual disabilities, people with limited or no access to internet and other groups with special needs. The dissemination of information among these groups will be carried out with the programme counterparts and local actors such as village and *kumban* leaders, producer associations, CSOs, Lao Women's Union, among other regional actors.
- Opportunities for collaboration with other stakeholders (e.g. CSOs) will be sought out to strengthen stakeholder outreach and the engagement of various ethnic groups and vulnerable households. This includes local CSOs/ NGOs, the Lao Front for National Construction, and the Lao Women's Union.
- Alternative livelihood activities will be supported in the agriculture and forest sectors, where extension trainers will develop a strategy to target and engage highly vulnerable households and provide technical support in culturally-appropriate ways (see Activity 2.1). Livelihood interventions were identified as important to support the transition to low-carbon development pathways, based on REDD+.

4. Incorporation of stakeholder feedback into management decisions

Feedback and the results of consultations and workshops will be shared with the NMPU, PPMUs, DPMUs and NPSC as key information to facilitate decision-making from an informed point of view. Programme management will ensure proactive programme management and will respond as necessary, based on stakeholder feedback, to ensure the programme's implementation is on track and respects social and environmental safeguards.

The NPMU and PPMUs will include safeguard and M&E specialists, responsible for overseeing social and environmental safeguards.⁴ At the district level, a representative of the DPMU will be designated as the district safeguards and M&E officer and will receive training on safeguards and the programme's grievance redress mechanism. They will work closely with the safeguard and M&E specialists within the NPMU and PPMUs. They will ensure ongoing environmental and social management throughout the programme and will further cover measures related to stakeholder engagement.

During programme inceptions, planning documents, standard operating procedures, guidelines and management systems will be established or specified, where the safeguards expert will be responsible to ensure that they promote gender equality and social inclusion.

They will further be responsible for ongoing monitoring of social and environmental safeguards, ensuring that the programme is able to respond as necessary to any unforeseen changes. This includes closely coordinating with programme partners and PPMU/DPMU staff to ensure programme activities are conducted in an inclusive and equitable manner, closely overseeing the implementation of the gender action plan and environmental and social management plans.

⁴ A central function of these officers within the NPMU and DPMUs will be the monitoring and evaluation of programme activities, including safeguards and the operationalization of the programme's grievance redress mechanism. At the district level, the officer responsible for safeguards will not solely work on M&E and safeguards, but will support the NPMU and PPMU officers as necessary with reporting and data collection, and will support the management of district-level grievances. They will receive training on safeguards and the grievance mechanism, as well as gender and social inclusion.

5. Timetable

The following table provides information on key considerations and events during programme inception and implementation.

Table1: Timeline for stakeholder engagement activities

Activity	Programme Phase	Timeline*	Responsibility
Establishment of programme management units (NPMU, PPMU and DPMU)	Inception	Early 2020	MAF
Appointment of officers responsible for safeguard-related issues within DPMU, PPMU and PSC	Inception	Early 2020	NPMU
Integration of updated contact information for grievance mechanism	Inception	Early 2020	NPMU
Identification and training of staff and trainers for conducting community mobilization and sensitization	Inception	Early 2020	NPMU
Community mobilization and sensitization	Inception	Early 2020	NPMU, PPMU and DPMU in cooperation with government authorities
Ongoing stakeholder engagement events embedded in programme activities (training, awareness raising, land use planning etc.; refer to Chapter 3 for more detailed information at the activity and action level, as well as the detailed programme timeline in the excel workbook)	Implementation	2020-2029	NPMU, PPMU, DPMU
Periodic stakeholder update meetings and information dissemination	Implementation	2020-2029	NPMU, PPMU, DPMU
Regular monitoring and periodic reporting of programme implementation (as described in Chapter 12)	Implementation	2020-2029	NPMU, PPMU and DPMU responsible for monitoring and reporting, in cooperation with government authorities supporting programme implementation

**Assuming programme will start in mid-2020*

6. Resources and responsibilities

The implementation of the social engagement plan is seen as an important contributor to the programme's success. Long-term safeguards and M&E specialists will be embedded within the NPMU and PPMUs. They will oversee, guide and coordinate stakeholder engagement within the programme, and ensure the successful implementation of the gender action plan and ESMPs. Monitoring will be compiled by the NPMU safeguards officer.

Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the safeguards and M&E specialist in the NPMU include (among others):

- Liaison with all programme stakeholders
- Responsibility for overseeing programme communication and stakeholder engagement

- Dissemination of information about the grievance mechanism to programme partners, local communities, CSOs, among others
- Identification of local and provincial CSOs for collaboration on community outreach, information dissemination and other programme activities
- Mediation between the programme and the community
- Overseeing (implementing, monitoring and reporting) on the grievance resolution system
- Monitoring programme progress, including in achieving the ESMP and GAP, and ensuring adaptive management (as needed).

The responsibilities of the safeguard and M&E specialists in the PPMUs include (among others):

- Liaison with programme stakeholders at the province level
- Responsibility for overseeing programme communication and stakeholder engagement in their province
- Dissemination of information about the grievance mechanism to programme partners, local communities, CSOs, among others within the province
- Identification of local and provincial CSOs for collaboration on community outreach, information dissemination and other programme activities
- Mediation between the programme and the community for grievances filed at the provincial level
- Monitoring the grievance resolution system (in cooperation with the NPMU M&E specialist), with a focus on grievances filed in the province
- Supporting NPMU safeguard and M&E specialist for programme monitoring as required

The responsibilities of the DMPU officer responsible for safeguards include (among others):

- Overseeing programme implementation at the district level
- Liaison with programme stakeholders at the district level
- Programme communication at the district level (in coordination with the PPMU and NPMU)
- Dissemination of information about the grievance mechanism to programme partners, local communities, CSOs, among others within the district
- Mediation between the programme and the community for grievances filed at the district level in coordination with the PPMU and NPMU safeguard and M&E specialists (as requested)
- Supporting NPMU and PPMU safeguard and M&E specialists for programme monitoring as required

Budgetary implications

Safeguard and M&E specialists will be hired within the NPMU and PPMU. Their core responsibilities will be overseeing safeguards and programme M&E.

At the district level, a district officer will be appointed the responsibility of overseeing safeguards and will receive training on safeguards and the programme's grievance redress mechanism. They will have other tasks (i.e. will not only work on safeguards and monitoring), but they will support the safeguard and M&E specialists within the NPMU and PPMU as needed.

All costs have been integrated into the programme budget.

7. Stakeholder grievance mechanism⁵

Context of the stakeholder grievance mechanism

A grievance mechanism has been developed to acknowledge and address any negative impacts or complaints that arise as a result of the programme. Any grievances should be analyzed and mitigated as quickly as possible to avoid any tensions or conflicts. The grievance mechanism is cost-effective as it is integrated into the institutional mechanism of the programme.

The objectives of the grievance redress mechanism are to:

- Provide affected people an avenue through which they can voice their concerns and dissatisfactions;

⁵ Description adapted from the R-Package (2018) and ER-PD (2018, p.199-202)

- Create a platform in which stakeholders and village members can freely raise concerns and complaints to be effectively addressed;
- Demonstrate to programme stakeholders and villages that they play an important role in programme design and implementation;
- Follow up and report on efforts to take corrective action.

Existing feedback and grievance redress mechanisms in Lao PDR for REDD+

Under the national REDD+ policy framework, all stakeholders have the right to make requests, claims, complaints and requests for justice in accordance with the social and environmental safeguards measures and conditions; and transparency with respect to information, the distribution of benefits and responsibilities, legal and customary rights and participation in activities and processes.

Existing feedback and grievance redress mechanisms have been developed within the context of the National REDD+ policy framework and ER-PD process in Lao PDR. Such mechanisms have undergone detailed assessments and consultations within their respective processes.

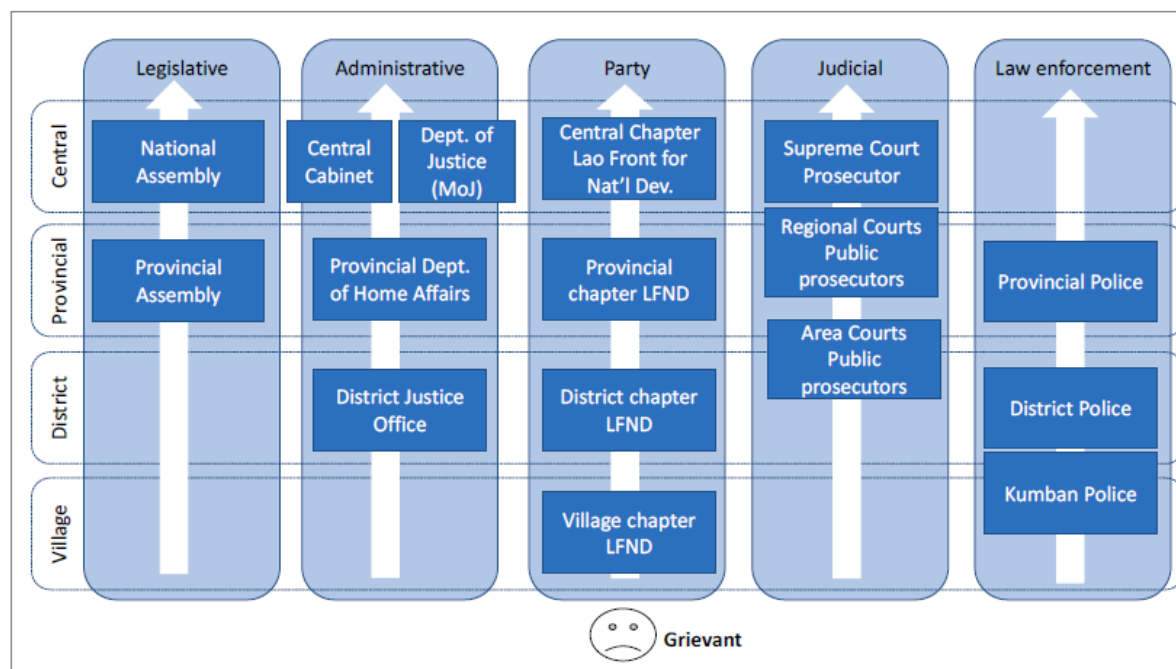
The existing Lao PDR national Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanisms (FGRMs) consist of several alternative mechanisms for registering grievances and feedback, and seeking redress. The type of grievance mechanism applied depends on various key considerations described in the following table.

Table 2: Overview of feedback and grievance redress mechanisms applied for REDD+ in Lao PDR

Type of Grievance Mechanism	Key Considerations
Traditional, customary complaint resolution processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Traditional dispute resolution mechanisms vary by ethnic group and are used to settle disputes based on customary law and traditions. ▪ E.g. Hmong are socially organized into clans and traditionally disputes are settled by the (male) clan elders. Other ethnic groups have different arrangements.
Village mediation units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Village mediation units are comprised of village authorities, including members of the local chapter of the Lao Front for National Development, and also may include customary leaders. They often deal with issues of land and family disputes among the villagers, such as divorces. If the dispute involves outsiders, or the village leadership, then resolution must be sought at a higher level.
Judicial system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Through national, provincial and regional courts together with law enforcement authorities ▪ This mechanism often is utilized when land rights are involved ▪ Six different Government law enforcement agencies are involved in enforcement of forestry-related laws and in bringing cases to the Public Prosecutor. The lead agency in enforcement of the Forestry law and the Wildlife and Aquatic Law is the Department of Forest Inspection (DoFI, under MAF).
Administrative system of Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ E.g. Going from the village to the relevant district office to the relevant provincial office, to the national ministry ▪ E.g. Going to the district Justice Office, Department of Home Affairs, then the Justice Department at the Ministry of Justice and, ultimately, the Central Cabinet
Party system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complaints can be registered with the Lao Women's Union or Lao Front for National Construction, then they can be filed at the central party cabinet ▪ The Lao Front has a legal mandate for awareness-raising, conflict resolution and promoting participation of all ethnic groups, and has representation at all levels of government from central to village-level.
Legislative system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ With appeals to the Provincial Assembly or National Assembly

Source: Adapted from ER-PD 2018, p. 199-201

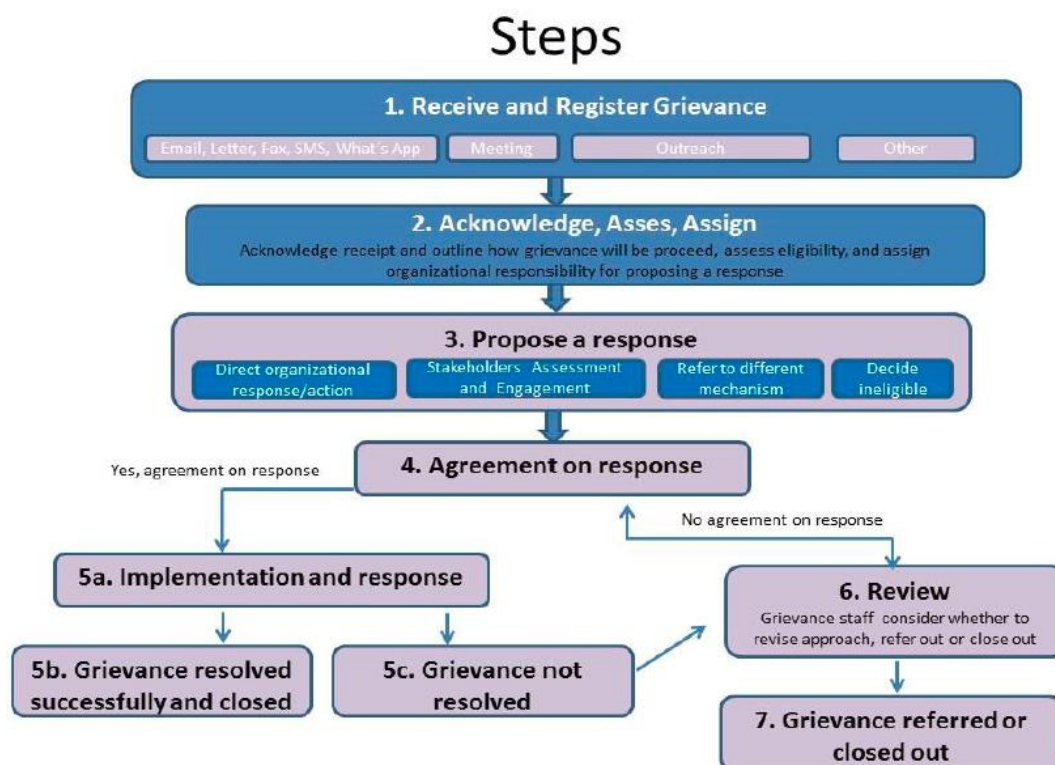
The following figure provides an overview of these mechanisms and key considerations for identifying which mechanism is the most suitable for the grievance (thematic topic, and level of Government). Accordingly, programme-related claims and complaints can be proposed, considered and resolved according to traditional customs, administratively, legally or legislatively according to the case in hand, and in accordance with the Law on Claim and Complaint Resolution. All stakeholders are able to file grievances and complaints through these official channels.



Source: ER-PD 2018, p. 201

Figure1: Options for grievance redress under REDD+

The following figure highlights the core steps to file and resolve a grievance with the programme's grievance redress mechanism (note – the mechanism is further described in regard to its application for the programme-specific grievance redress mechanism described in the next sub-section). The resolution of REDD+ claims and complaints must be consistent with the policies and laws of the Lao PDR and the relevant international conventions. The process must ensure the protection and promotion of the rights and interests of those affected by REDD+ activities. Improvements of the livelihoods of REDD+ stakeholders will be promoted with independence, transparency, equality, fairness, and neutrality. The various stages (of complaint resolution) must be recorded, including the participation and consultation of the relevant parties.



Source: ER-PD 2018, p. 202

Figure 2: Overview of grievance redress mechanism

GCF Programme grievance redress mechanism

The resolution of claims and complaints arising from the GCF programme shall be based on existing grievance and redress systems developed for REDD+ in the country (described above), as well as a programme-specific reporting mechanism to the NPMU, PPMU and/or DPMU, and the PPMU will include safeguard and M&E specialists hired to ensure the monitoring and fulfilment of safeguards for programme implementation. At the district level, DPMU will designate an officer responsible for safeguards, who will be responsible for overseeing grievances within their unit. The safeguard officer in DPMU will not work exclusively on safeguards; however, he/she will closely coordinate with the PPMU and NPMU safeguard and M&E specialists to support data collection, monitoring and support the manage grievance complaints received at the district level (i.e. filed to DPMU). All safeguard specialists and designated district officers will be trained on the grievance redress mechanism, as well as best practices to promote gender equality and social inclusion in a culturally appropriate manner.

The mechanism has been designed to address any complaints or grievances regarding the programme. It is designed to ensure that no individual or group is financially impacted by making a grievance or complaint. Any cost that may be associated with the preparation or issuance of a legitimate complaint or grievance (e.g. engaging a qualified person to assist the complainant) will be covered by the grievance mechanism (and has been integrated in the budget). Special efforts will be made to ensure the grievance redress mechanism is available for all people, and that women, ethnic groups or vulnerable persons and/or entities have equal access and bear no negative repercussions for filing any complaints or grievances.

The designed structure allows grievances to flow through an internal process from the district level to the national level, where more issues are expected to be addressed. Concerns should be addressed at the closest appropriate level (i.e. at district, provincial, etc.) Whenever a grievance is filed, a report on the grievance, utilizing a standard template, will be provided to the NPMU's safeguards and M&E specialist who will oversee the process, maintain a record of all grievances filed, report on grievances filed and ensure they are adequately addressed. If it is not possible to address the grievance within the programme structure (i.e. with DPMU, PPMU, NPMU or PSC), the grievance will be sent to a representative in GIZ's country office in Lao PDR. When considered necessary in particularly challenging situations, the GIZ country officer will transfer the case to the GIZ Ombudsman.

Info Box. CSOs role in supporting the programme's grievance redress mechanism

CSOs will play an important role in programme implementation, including through participation in capacity building events and trainings, awareness raising, and in supporting community outreach. They will further serve as key organizations to facilitate communication between local communities and the programme management units.

CSOs in the target provinces and districts will be trained on the programme's grievance redress mechanism and provided with informational brochures with contact information. This will ensure that they are familiar of the mechanism, key phone numbers and can support local villages / villagers to understand the grievance redress mechanism, and to file complaints and grievances.

The main steps of the programme's grievance redress mechanism are aligned with the steps identified for the ER-PD grievance mechanism, and are described in the Table below.

Table 3: Overview of the main steps within the programme-level grievance redress mechanism

Grievance Redress Mechanism Steps	Description
1. Receive and register grievance	Stakeholders submit their grievances to the representative in charge of safeguards (e.g. DPMU officer responsible for safeguards, PPMU safeguards and M&E specialist - see chart below). Grievances can be filed through e-mail, letter, fax, SMS, meetings, outreach events, or other written or oral formats. Local CSOs will also play an important role helping to facilitate complaint and grievance filing (see info box above). All grievances will be registered by the receiving unit (DPMU / PPMU / NPMU) using a standard template. All grievances filed must be clearly documented and securely stored.
2. Acknowledge, assess and assign	The programme specialist and/or officer in charge of safeguards at the respective level where the grievance has been filed (DPMU, PPMU, NPMU) must acknowledge receipt of the grievance. They must outline how the grievance will proceed, assess the eligibility of the grievance, and assign organizational responsibilities to propose a response to the grievance.
3. Propose a response	The entity responsible for proposing a response (as assigned by the programme officer in step 2), will then propose options to the complainant and any other related parties to address the grievance. This could include: i) direct organizational response/ action, ii) stakeholder assessment and engagement, iii) referral to a different mechanism (e.g. mechanisms identified in the previous sub-section, e.g. judicial grievance mechanism), or they could decide that the grievance is ineligible.
4. Agreement on response	Based on the responses proposed in step 3, the programme officer, representatives responsible for the investigation and proposal of response options will meet with the complainant and other related parties and try to reach an agreement that is acceptable to all parties.
<i>If yes agreement on response refer to step 5, if no refer to step 6</i>	
5a. Implementation and response	The programme specialist / officer in charge of safeguards will assign a relevant officer to oversee the implementation of the grievance, monitoring its progress and the effectiveness of the response. All grievances filed must be reported to the NPMU using a standardized template, including information on the status of all grievances.
5b. Grievance resolved and successfully closed	If the response is successful, the grievance will be resolved and successfully closed. The grievance report to the NPMU will be finalized and submitted by the responsible programme officer, noting that the grievance has been successfully resolved and has been closed.
5c. Grievance not resolved	If the response is not successful, the programme officer responsible for overseeing and monitoring the response will review the grievance the implemented response (step 6).
<i>If no agreement on response (step 4)</i>	

Grievance Redress Mechanism Steps	Description
6. Review	If no response can be met, the responsible safeguards specialist / programme officer will review the grievance with the safeguards specialist at the NPMU. Together, they will determine whether to revise the approach and propose other alternative responses, refer the grievance to another system (e.g. legislative, administrative, party, judicial, law enforcement, customary), or close out.
7. Grievance referred or closed out	Pending the result of the grievance review, grievances that cannot be resolved will be either referred to a different system or closed out. All grievances, including grievances that cannot be resolved, will be documented using a standard template, and reported to the NPMU safeguards representative.

The programme-level grievance mechanism is presented below. Through the mechanism, grievances can be filed at the: (1) district, (2) provincial, (3) national, (4) programme steering committee (PSC), (5) GIZ country office and (6) GIZ headquarters level. In addition to the proposed programme-specific mechanism, grievances can be filed through other mechanisms presented in the previous sub-section, as identified within the National REDD+ Program and ER-Program.

Level 1: The complaint should be submitted directly to the DPMU (unless the complaint is about the DPMU, in which case it should be sent to the PPMU or NPMU), who will share the filed grievance with the responsible officer in charge of safeguards within the DPMU. They will receive and begin processing the grievance. The complaint can be provided in writing or orally to the representatives. At this stage, the grievance will be registered by the DPMU safeguards representative, who will assign a suitable officer to investigate the grievance and propose a response.

A record of the grievance will be made utilizing a standard template and shared with the NPMU safeguard and M&E specialist to ensure a record and oversight of all grievances is kept.

DPMU in each district	Should respond in 10 working days upon receiving the reported grievance. <i>[Contact information for the DPMU officer responsible for safeguards to be included within 6 months of programme inception.]</i>
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Level 2: If the complaint cannot be solved at the DPMU level or the complaint is filed against the DPMU, the complaint should be submitted to the PPMU at the provincial level. The PPMU safeguards and M&E specialist will receive and begin processing the grievance. The complaint can be provided in writing or orally to the representatives. At this stage, the grievance will be registered and investigated by the provincial PMSU.

Record of the grievance will be made utilizing a standard template (or revising the existing template if the grievance had been previously filed at the district level) and shared with the NPMU safeguards and M&E specialist for their record.

PPMU in each province	Should respond in 10 working days upon receiving the reported grievance. <i>[Contact for PMSU safeguards and M&E specialist to be included within 6 months of programme inception]</i>
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Level 3: If the grievance cannot be solved at the PPMU level or the grievance is filed against the PPMU, the complaint should be submitted to the NPMU at the national level. The NPMU safeguards and M&E specialist will receive and begin processing the grievance. The complaint can be provided in writing or orally to the representatives. At this stage, the grievance will be registered and investigated by the NPMU.

Record of the grievance will be made utilizing a standard template (or revising the existing template if the grievance had been previously filed at the district level) and stored by the NPMU.

NPMU (national level)	Should respond in 10 working days upon receiving the reported grievance. <i>[Contact for NPMU safeguards and M&E specialist to be included within 6 months of programme inception]</i>
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Level 4: If the NPMU cannot address the grievance, the grievance will be sent to the programme steering committee (PSC), in particular the PSC representative responsible for safeguards. They will coordinate with the NPMU safeguards and M&E specialist to assess the grievance.

Programme steering committee	<i>Should respond in 10 working days after consultation with the NPMU safeguard officer. [Contact for PSC representative responsible for safeguards to be included within 6 months of programme inception]</i>
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Level 5: If the PSC cannot address the grievance, the grievance will be sent to the GIZ safeguards representative within the GIZ Lao PDR Country Office. They will coordinate with the PSC safeguards representative and the NPMU safeguard and M&E specialist to assess the grievance.

GIZ Programme Director	<i>Should respond in 10 working days upon receiving the reported grievance. They will consult with the NPMU and PSC safeguards officers. [Contact for GIZ Programme Director to be included within 6 months of programme inception]</i>
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Level 6: Only in particularly difficult cases will the GIZ Country Office for Lao PDR request the assistance of the GIZ Ombudsman. If transferred to the Ombudsman, they will follow their own internal protocol to address the grievance.

GIZ	To report potential fraud, misconduct and other crimes or rule violations, contact the GIZ Ombudsman via the following contact information (information as of January 30, 2019): Name: Edgar Joussen Email: ombudsmann@ra-js.de Telephone: +49 30 3151870
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Informal and customary grievance review

Customary practices of different community, ethnic and religious groups to manage conflicts have been integrated into the formal grievance mechanism. In some instances, grievance cases can be addressed in an informal manner by local communities under the direction of community or traditional leaders. The responsible officer for safeguards within the DPMU, PPMU or NPMU (depending on where the grievance is filed) will consider the opinions or recommendations of leaders from any informal redress mechanisms before making any decisions.

Grievance resolution

Once a grievance has been addressed and the party that filed the grievance has accepted the solution, an agreement should be signed by all involved parties. Records of all grievances made and addressed should be preserved in order to ensure continued compliance and a transparent grievance review mechanism.

Dissemination and awareness-raising for the grievance redress mechanism

As the grievance mechanism is instated in order to provide a platform for concerns to be voiced by any party, it is important that the method in which grievances can be made is effectively distributed to all stakeholders and community members within the programme area. Information regarding the grievance redress mechanism will be distributed to all stakeholders and communities through:

- Programme inception workshops
- Information sessions and village meetings, including the provision of information both orally and through informative materials
- Brochures regarding the programme's grievance redress mechanism (produced in Lao and local languages), distributed to diverse stakeholders including CSOs
- Programme webpage
- Included as part of other communication material that is designed and distributed during programme implementation