

PROJECT GRIEVANCE REDRESS MECHANISM

Agricultural Conflict Resolution and Sustainable Livelihoods Project

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Project Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) outlined in this document is designed to support the project proposal for "Agricultural Conflict Resolution and Sustainable Livelihoods (ACRES) in Matabeleland South and Masvingo Provinces. A Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) is an accessible and inclusive tool developed alongside the project's Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) and Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP). This GRM outlines the action plan for managing complaints and grievances. It is designed to be proportional to the potential risks and impacts of the project, ensuring the receipt and facilitation of resolutions for such concerns and grievances through a structured process and procedures. The GRM will utilize existing formal or informal grievance and dispute resolution mechanisms, supplemented as necessary by project-specific arrangements. It serves as a platform for targeted communities, affected stakeholders, project workers, and other involved parties to address any grievances related to the project. The project GRM will be managed by the Environmental and Social Specialist, with support from district and community structures.

Initiated after thorough consultations with the community during the proposal development stage, this project GRM requires community approval before implementation. It entails establishing grievance handling committees and systems as well as strengthening existing community grievance structures. These structures will be tested and refined before full implementation.

The ACRES GRM aims to empower communities by providing them with a voice in the project's implementation, fostering a sense of ownership. Additionally, it serves as a proactive tool for identifying potential risks, challenges, or unintended consequences of the project, allowing project managers to address issues promptly and mitigate risks effectively.

Feedback received through the GRM offers valuable insights into community needs, perceptions, and suggestions for improving the project's outcomes and sustainability. Furthermore, the GRM ensures a structured and transparent process for resolving issues fairly, with established communication channels keeping the community informed about the status of their grievances and the actions taken in response.

This initiative is dedicated to promoting transparency and inclusivity in addressing concerns and grievances from members of the affected communities. Upholding principles of fairness, respect, and responsiveness, the project aims to ensure that every voice is heard and every concern is taken seriously. By fostering open communication and collaboration, it seeks to strengthen community resilience and enhance the effectiveness of the ACRES project in Gwanda, Bulilima, Matobo and Mangwe, in Matabeleland South Province and Gutu in Masvingo Province.

1.1 Objective of the Grievance Redress Mechanism

The Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) are important for resolving conflicts, addressing concerns and fears and ensure agreements by aggrieved parties and aggressors for the benefit of the project. The AfDB requires that all Bank -supported projects put in place mechanisms that address concerns and grievances that arise in connection with a project. This Project GRM should facilitate the Project to respond to concerns and grievances of the project-affected parties related to the environmental and social performance of the project. The ACRES will provide mechanisms to receive and facilitate resolutions to such concerns. This section lays out the grievance redress mechanisms (GRM) for the ACRES. The GRM outline will be included in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) and will be disclosed with the rest of the ESMP. The final GRM should be based on a careful assessment of existing systems, which are currently implemented by other projects in projects sites and which the beneficiaries and all partners will agree on.

The GRM should be operated separately in GBV/SEAH and Child Protection Risk Action Plan, also for the ACRES workers and set out in the Labour Management Procedures (LMP). The latter will cater for labour-specific issues of direct and contract workers.

Overall responsibility for these GRM will be with the PMU, and it will cover all activities and sub-components of the ACRES.

2. OBJECTIVE

The main aim of this ACRES project grievance redress mechanism is to provide a convenient platform for community members and project stakeholders to express their concerns, feedback, and grievances regarding the project's activities and their impacts on the local environment, livelihoods, and well-being. The GRM seeks to achieve several key goals to effectively handle grievances and concerns within the community.

- Facilitate dialogue between the project and local communities in the project areas.
- Ensure inclusivity by providing a mechanism that allows all community members, especially those from vulnerable and marginalized groups, easy access to the grievance process.
- Recognize and protect the rights of project-affected people, ensuring confidentiality and inclusivity.
- Maintain transparency and accountability by offering clear guidelines and procedures for submitting and resolving complaints before they escalate into conflicts affecting project execution.

- Encourage community participation and feedback mechanisms, enabling stakeholders to actively participate in decision-making processes and contribute to improving disaster risk management strategies.
- Prioritize mediation and dialogue to foster constructive engagement between project stakeholders, including local communities and project implementers, aiming to resolve conflicts amicably and build trust among all involved parties.

In summary, the objectives of the project grievance redress mechanism is to promote trust, accountability, and inclusivity within the ACRES project's implementation framework, ultimately enhancing its effectiveness in addressing climate-intensified disaster risks in the selected implementing districts.

3. SCOPE

The ACRES GRM addresses a variety of pertinent issues related to the project, including environmental impacts, land use conflicts, socio-economic disruptions, discrimination in benefit sharing, violation of rules or cultural practices, and cultural heritage preservation. It focuses specifically on the impacts and risks stemming from the ACRES throughout its life cycle. Stakeholders involved or affected by the project, such as local communities, government agencies, and project implementers, are within the purview of this mechanism.

This framework will handle complaints and requests, which may include but are not limited to:

- Misconduct of project workers towards communities
- Gender Based Violence\Sexual Exploitation Abuse and Harassment (GBV\SEAH)
- Misconduct of project contractors
- Water and land pollution
- Damage to private assets, community, and public infrastructure
- Inappropriate waste disposal
- Environmental degradation
- Project implementation and operation issues,
- Social inclusion and labour issues,
- Livelihood and land issues,
- Cultural issues,
- Transparency and communication (SEP) complaints etc
- And other project related concerns.

While the GRM will impartially accept all complaints from affected communities pending investigation, but it will not address complaints:

- Arising from other projects in the area
- Related to government policy and institutions
- Of a criminal nature, which should be directed to the judicial system
- Involving complex labour issues covered by labour management Act
- Pertaining to contractors' contractual agreements.

4. STANDARDS

It's important for the ACRES grievance redress mechanism to comply with all relevant laws, regulations, and international standards.

4.1 National Legislation Standards (Zimbabwe):

- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations: The GRM will ensure compliance with EIA regulations that require projects to address community concerns and grievances.
- Environmental Management Act (EMA): The GRM will adhere to EMA guidelines, particularly regarding public participation and community engagement.
- Labour Relations Act: Further it will ensure fair treatment of workers involved in the project, addressing any grievances related to labour rights or working conditions.
- Promotion of Access to Information Act: It will provide access to relevant project information to affected communities, including details of the grievance redress mechanism.

4.2 Triggered AfDB ISS of 2023 (OS 1 and 10) that guiding the preparation of the GRM

The following African Development Bank (AfDB) Integrated Social Safeguards of 2023 (ISS) were triggered in the ACRES necessitating the preparation and implementation of a project Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM).

Operational Safeguard 1: Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risk and impact

The purpose of this safeguard is to guarantee that projects are both environmentally and socially responsible and sustainable. In relation to the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM), this means that it mandates the creation of a GRM to address any concerns and complaints related to project impacts, providing a structured platform for affected communities and all stakeholders to voice their grievances and have them addressed.

Operational Safeguard 2: Labor and Working Conditions

The objective of the safeguard is to guarantee that working conditions are safe and healthy, while also safeguarding the rights of workers. Establishing a GRM ensures that workers and community members

have a designated platform to voice their labour-related grievances, including any concerns about health and safety.

Operational Safeguard 3: Resources Efficiency, Pollution Prevention and Management

The goal for OS 4 is to minimize pollution and enhance the efficient use of resources. In relation to the GRM this safeguard establishes a mechanism for communities and other stakeholders to raise concerns about pollution and resource management. By providing a structured way for reporting issues, it ensures that environmental health and safety standards are upheld.

Operational Safeguard 4: Community Health, Safety and Security]- This OS recognizes the increase in community exposure to risks and impacts due to projects, activities, equipment and infrastructure therefore it addresses the health, safety and security risks on project affected communities.

Operational Safeguard 6: Habitat and Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources

The goal of this safeguard is to preserve biological diversity and encourage the sustainable management of natural resources. This safeguard requires that a GRM is created to provide a platform where stakeholders can raise concerns regarding the impact on biodiversity, ensuring that any environmental issues are swiftly and effectively addressed.

Operational Safeguard 7: Vulnerable Groups- Ensure that vulnerable groups and individuals are identified as early as possible in Bank Group operations and that engagement is meaningful, taking into account individuals' and communities' specificities, and delivered in an appropriate form, manner and language including affirming, respecting, and protecting the rights and interests of vulnerable individuals and groups throughout the lifecycle of the project or investment.

Operational Safeguard 8: Cultural Heritage- ensuring protection of heritage from the adverse impacts of project activities and support its preservation through addressing cultural heritage as an integral aspect of sustainable development. It promotes meaningful consultation with stakeholders regarding cultural heritage as a means to identify and address risks and impacts related to cultural heritage.

Operational Safeguard 10: Stakeholder Engagement and Information disclosure]- This OS acknowledges the importance of right to effective participation in decision making process during the project cycle. It requires openness and transparency during stakeholder engagement between the Borrower and project stakeholders to improve E&S sustainability of the projects, enhance project acceptance and make significant contribution to successful project design and implementation.

4.3 International Legislation Standards:

- United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs): The GRM shall be implemented in line with UNGPs, ensuring respect for human rights, including the rights of indigenous peoples and vulnerable groups.

- International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions: The GRM shall comply with relevant ILO conventions related to labour rights and standards.
- International Finance Corporation (IFC) Performance Standards: The GRM will adhere to IFC performance standards, particularly Performance Standard 1 on Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts.

Project specific documents

The GRM will be guided by the Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) with regards to adherence to regulations and AfDB Safeguards.

EMA and District level policies and procedures and International Standards

Further the GRM will adhere to the Zimbabwe gender policy and the gender strategy. The national and international legislation standards help in ensuring that the GRM is robust, equitable, and compliant with legal and ethical obligations.

5. PRINCIPLES

The Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) is designed to uphold effectiveness, fairness, transparency, and accessibility, ensuring it is easily accessible, transparent, and culturally appropriate, while also guaranteeing confidentiality and protection against retaliation for complainants.

Key principles guiding the GRM include:

Accessibility and Inclusivity: Efforts will be made to ensure the GRM is easily accessible to all members of local communities, regardless of language barriers, literacy issues, or other obstacles.

Transparency: The process for submitting, reviewing, and resolving grievances will be transparent and clearly communicated to all stakeholders from the outset. Information on how grievances are handled, the timeline for resolution, and the roles of different parties involved will be provided and made available upon request.

Accountability: Clear accountability mechanisms will be established to ensure grievances are addressed promptly and fairly. This includes assigning responsibility to specific individuals or entities for handling grievances and providing regular updates on their status.

Fairness and Impartiality: The GRM will treat all grievances impartially and fairly, irrespective of the identity or status of the complainant. Decisions on grievance resolution will be based on objective criteria, social inclusivity and principles of justice.

Cultural Sensitivity: The GRM will be culturally sensitive, respecting the customs, traditions, and beliefs of the local community. Interpretation services will be provided when needed, vernacular language will be used whenever possible, and consultation with community leaders and elders will be sought.

Timeliness: Grievances will be addressed promptly to prevent further harm and ensure swift resolution, with clear timelines outlined in subsequent sections. Feedback mechanisms will be in place to provide complainants with updates on the status of their grievances and any actions taken to address them.

Capacity Building: Provisions are included in the GRM for building the capacity of the local community and existing local grievance structures, district and national level inter-ministerial grievance committee, to effectively engage with the mechanism and understand their rights and responsibilities. This will be achieved through training workshops, educational materials, and opportunities for community participation in the grievance process.

Continuous Improvement: The ACRES GRM will incorporate a monitoring and evaluation component to gather feedback from stakeholders, enabling continuous improvements over time.

6. METHODS TO ACCESS THE GRIEVANCE REDRESS MECHANISM

For local communities to access the GRM, a number of procedures will be implemented. These are: -

Awareness and Communication: The project coordinating agencies PCUs and DPIUs will ensure that the affected communities and all stakeholders are aware of the existence and purpose of the project grievance redress mechanism. The ACRES interventions will be governed by relevant community structures such as the Dip Tank committees, borehole (water-user) committees, village business unit committees, rangeland committees and grassroot women led organisations. These grassroot structures will form part of the GRM structures and will be involved in the SEP and trained to handle local level complaints that have to do with their area of focus. The information will be shared through community meetings, whatsapp, sms, local radio, posters in vernacular, and any other opportunities that may arise. The awareness will include disseminating information on how the GRM works, its purpose, procedures and contact details.

Project structures at the national level will also establish their own inter-ministerial grievance committee to address operational and implementation issues as well as handling concerns/appeals escalated from the communities.

Clear Procedures: For people to access the GRM they will need to know the procedures and these will be clearly defined. The process for submitting complaints is outlined in section 10 below. Once the project commences information on designated contact persons, hotline numbers, or physical complaint boxes locations will be publicised.

Training and Capacity Building: Community members shall be provided with training on how to use the grievance redress mechanism effectively. This may involve workshops or training sessions to educate them about their rights, the process of filing a complaint, and what to expect after submitting a grievance. National level inter-ministerial committee will also be trained on the grievance mechanism and the issues they are likely to be handled. Each committee will designate an individual including one from each community who will receive special training on handling GBV/SEAH cases.

All the above steps will be implemented to encourage communities and all affected stakeholders to effectively access and utilize the project GRM as a way of ensuring sustainability.

6.1 GRM structures

The ACRES GRM will set up structures at National, District and Project Site (Community) level. It is recommended that the lead Project Coordinating Unit from the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries Water and Rural Development, guided by the Environmental and Social specialist establish an inter-ministerial national project Grievance Redress Committee (GRC) which will include the Environmental and Social specialist, the gender equality and inclusive (from Department of gender and women's affairs), a representative from the Environmental Management Agency (EMA) and another from Ministry of Youth Arts and Culture. The GRC will set the terms of reference and how the grievances will be handled and addressed.

A smaller sub-committee of the District Project Implementing Unit will be selected to handle grievances at the district level and those arising from the communities or escalated from the community levels.

The National GRC and the District GRM sub-committee may enlist technical specialists to help resolve issues if necessary. The composition of the committees will ensure a balance between men and women.

At project site level, during project implementation the District Grievance Mechanism sub-committee will facilitate establishment of project related intervention committees (should they not already exist) and these will be trained and mandated to also handle grievances and resolve conflicts within the communities in the project areas and project wards. In some of the community stakeholder engagements participants indicated that they would like conflict resolution mechanisms to be independent of the traditional hierarchies, but have the blessing of the traditional leadership, who may or may not be part of the committee. Regarding this issue there may be variance from one community to the other. Grievances that are not resolved at local level can then be escalated to the District Grievance sub-committees and further to the national level GRC if necessary.

For issues related to operations and implementations the involved stakeholders may present their complaints at district level national level based on the level they are operating at.

6.1 What to do when there is a conflict

The grievance mechanism procedures will be made simple and communicated to all beneficiaries and project affected people at the onset and project stakeholders. The complainants may submit their suggestions or comments in the form of a letter, an email, a text message, oral report, or phone call. The following process will take place when a grievance is received:

- i. The grievances must be registered with all details of the complainant, date, issue, site of conflict.
- ii. The grievance should be screened and handed to the appropriate grievance committee.
- iii. Grievance need to be investigated, and verified by the committee.
- iv. The committee will convene, consult and decide on appropriate course of redress.
- v. If complaint is not resolved at the given local level it may be escalated to the next level and if need be referred to a competent court.
- vi. At all levels feedback should be given to the complainant and tracking of the issues be done at all stages- i.e. monitoring, documentation and evaluation.

The PCU M&E Specialist from MLAFWRD shall help to track and monitor the grievance resolution processes and their outcomes by different levels of the GRCs. They will provide regular feedback to the complainants on the progress of the grievance redress process. Monitoring will track the progress of grievance resolutions and timeliness of grievance redress; follow-up grievances to ensure they are attended to; and document details of complaints received and the progress of resolutions. GRCs will provide information to project coordinating managers (PCUs) on the progress of implementation, and report actual and potential problems.

6.2 Environmental Management Agency Grievance procedure

Complaints about the environmental and social harms caused by the project/programme should be referred to the EMA and will be handled according to the grievance/Complaints Handling Procedures outlined in the Environmental and Social Policy (ESP) for EMA.

The ESP for EMA stipulates that all grievances should be handled according to the EMA Grievance Complaints Handling Procedure (GCHP). This GCHP provides a grievance mechanism for people affected or aggrieved by the way projects are implemented. Complaints are reported to the Director General (DG) as provided for in the EMA Act (Cap20:27) section 129 to 131. This section also describes the appeal system. Complaints are submitted in writing and delivered by post, or email or on the website. The DG will ensure that the complainant and the project inspector (employee of EMA responsible for the project)

are given adequate opportunity to make representations in the matter. The Director General may conduct an enquiry or set aside the decision or order appealed against. The decisions will be communicated to the inspector and the complainant. The grievances are also taken into account in the Agency's Monitoring and Evaluation. The Agency commits to ensure that complainants are not victimised or disenfranchised for raising grievances associated with the environmental and social safeguards of the projects or programmes.

6.3 Other Available Grievance mechanisms

Over and above the GRCs project beneficiaries will be made aware of other sources for seeking resolution of conflicts. Available national mechanisms for aggrieved parties

Labour Court

The labour Court was established through the Labour Act (Chapter 28:01) amended in 2019. Its function is to provide for the establishment and functions of the Labour Court; to provide for the prevention of trade disputes, and unfair labour practices; to regulate and control collective job action; to regulate and control employment agencies. For aggrieved parties the Labour court serves to secure the just and effective and expeditious resolution of labour disputes. The court considers industrial relations disputes that are referred to it; and hears all appeals of Adjudication Officers' decisions of the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) in all disputes arising under industrial relations and employment rights enactments and disputes based on employment laws.

Human Rights Commission

The Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) is a national human rights institution which was established under section 242 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe. It is operationalised by the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission Act Chapter 10:30 which was promulgated on the 12th of October, 2012. It is an independent Commission whose main mandate is to protect, promote and enforce human rights. It is responsible for receiving all complaints of alleged human rights violations that come to the Commission. Aggrieved parties may approach the commission if they believe their rights have been violated.

Gender Commission

The Zimbabwe Gender Commission, was established in terms of Section 245 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, and operationalised through the Zimbabwe Gender Commission (ZGC) Act (Chapter 10:31). The specific mandate of the Commission is derived from Section 246 of the Constitution whose provisions are listed as follows:

- To monitor issues concerning gender equality and to ensure gender equality as provided for in the Constitution;

- To investigate possible violations of rights relating to gender equality;
- To receive and consider complaints from the public and to take such action in regard to the complaints as it considers appropriate.

Anti-corruption Commission

Established in September 2005, The Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC) is an independent commission created to combat corruption and crime. It is established in terms of Chapter 13, Part 1 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe and the Anti-Corruption Commission Act of 2004. Its primary function is to combat corruption in the private and public sectors. It makes recommendations to the government and the private sector about increasing accountability, promoting integrity and preventing improprieties. Grievances that have to do with bribes or corruption risks may be brought to the anti-corruption Commission.

Further to the above complaints related to incidences of a criminal nature will be reported to the law enforcement agencies.

7. TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Ensuring transparency and accountability is crucial to instil trust among those affected, enabling them to believe that their voices will be heard and their grievances addressed. The following essential components for establishing accountability will be integrated into the GRM:

Community Engagement: Local communities have been and will continue to be engaged from the project's inception to understand their concerns, needs, and expectations.

Responsive Mechanism: Each District Project Implementation Unit (DPIU) will ensure that their GRM sub-committees promptly receive and respond to grievances, adhering to the recommended timelines for acknowledgment and resolution. Additionally, the sub-committees will report to the DPIU meetings on the complaints they have handled and their resolutions. Local community committees will be trained to record and report complaints, including how they were resolved and the timelines involved. To avoid overburdening the community committees, the recording forms will be simplified. The reports will be submitted to the District GRM sub-committees for forwarding to the E & M specialist.

Transparent Procedures: The GRM includes straightforward procedures for receiving, documenting, and addressing grievances. Assistance will be provided to communities in completing submission forms, particularly for individuals with limited literacy or language barriers.

Confidentiality and Protection: Complainants will be assured of confidentiality upon request, to foster openness and prevent retaliation. Measures will be implemented to safeguard the privacy and security of all involved in the grievance process. Specific complaints of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) or Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH) may be reported to designated focal representatives within the committees or subcommittees, or community. When deemed necessary, these representatives are required to involve DCUs, or relevant SEAH-related NGOs or police units, such as Victim Friendly Units (VFUs), and perpetrator's employer.

Documentation and Follow-Up: Thorough documentation of complaints and responses will be maintained to ensure accountability and transparency. A follow-up system will be established to gather feedback on grievance resolution and provide regular reports to stakeholders.

Feedback Mechanism: Communities will be given opportunities to provide feedback on the GRM's functionality through periodic review meetings or surveys to identify areas for improvement.

Independent Oversight: Independent oversight will be incorporated into the GRM to ensure impartiality and fairness, possibly involving local NGOs, community leaders, or other stakeholders.

Learning and Improvement: Individuals within local committees will investigate complaints and report to the larger team before resolutions are made. Tracking trends and addressing recurring issues will inform project planning and decision-making, with adjustments made as necessary to enhance responsiveness, fairness, and transparency over time.

8. TIMELINES

The ACRES GRM will be established right from the onset of the project. The process requires a systematic approach that prioritizes community engagement and procedural fairness. The proposed GRM will be presented to stakeholders at various levels. This process will address and resolve concerns regarding the scope of the GRM, the proposed structures, the mechanisms for addressing and resolving concerns, and any suggested improvements and variations. Feedback from these consultations will be used to finalize the Project GRM. Initially, conducting a comprehensive stakeholder GRM consultation process could take approximately 2-3 months. Updating the GRM may take another month. Implementing the mechanism, including training of the relevant committees and setting up communication channels, could require an additional 3-6 months. Overall setting up an effective Grievance mechanism will take 6- 9 months. This timeline allows for thorough planning, inclusive participation, and effective execution, ensuring the grievance redress mechanism's credibility and responsiveness to local and all stakeholder needs. In some districts the GRM may be earlier than the anticipated 6-9 months.

Complaints arising before the project's Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) is fully operational will still be received and may be used to test the system or expedite the establishment of committees. At the community level, the existing conflict resolution structures will be encouraged to operate as usual until the new system is fully established.

Once operating, the GRM shall ensure reasonable timelines for addressing complaints, prioritising swift and transparent resolutions while ensuring thorough investigation and fair treatment. A typical framework proposed from this GRM is i) acknowledging receipt of a complaint within 5 working days, ii) conducting an initial assessment within 10 working days to determine its validity and severity, and iii) resolving straightforward complaints within 30 working days, with more complex cases requiring up to 60 working days. Regular updates to complainants should be provided throughout the process to maintain trust and engagement with the community.

9. PUBLICISING GRIEVANCE REDRESS MECHANISM

To publicize the project grievance redress mechanism several strategies can be employed:

Community and PCUs, DPIUs Meetings: Meetings will be organized with the affected communities, the implementing ministries and other stakeholders at national and district level to introduce the grievance redress mechanism.

Local Media: various channels that include local radio stations, social media platforms and any other community channels will be utilised to publicise the grievance redress mechanism. Videos explaining the grievance redress mechanism and how community members and stakeholders can access it will be circulated on social media.

Community and National Stakeholder Workshops: Funds permitting workshops and training sessions focused on the grievance redress mechanism will be held to provide an opportunity for interactive discussions and clarification of any doubts. These workshops do not necessarily have to be stand-alone events; they can be combined with other ESMP activities to reduce costs and time.

Poster Distribution: Posters will be placed at community locations such as schools, markets, and community centres to raise awareness about the GRM. GRM pamphlets will be circulated to all stakeholders through Email and social media.

Local Partnerships: In different districts the project DPIUs will collaborate with local NGOs, community-based organizations, and government agencies to amplify the outreach efforts and ensure the project grievance redress mechanism reaches its target audience.

By employing a combination of these strategies, the ACRES grievance redress mechanism can be effectively publicized, ensuring accessibility and awareness among all stakeholders.

10. GRIEVANCE REDRESS MECHANISM PROCEDURE

10.1 Submitting a complaint

Grievances can be submitted through various channels such as oral submissions, written notes, audio voice notes, text messages, phone calls, email, and online forms. Each proposed grievance committee—at the national, district, and community levels—will have a designated focal person responsible for receiving and recording submissions. The committees will establish an email address at both the district and national levels and agree on contact numbers for grievance submissions. At the local level, it is expected that the contact numbers of focal persons will be widely shared to ensure accessibility for those needing to use them. All complaints will be registered, and the designated grievance mechanism committee personnel will complete a form (ANNEX1). The complaint should include relevant details, such as the nature of the grievance, date, location, and any supporting evidence. Special attention will be given to issues of GBV/SEAH, which will be handled differently as outlined below.

Reporting GBV and SEAH

The ACRES GRM will be delivered in a gender-sensitive manner, and will have a zero tolerance for GBV and SEAH cases. This mechanism will include dedicated hotlines, email addresses, and in-person reporting options at various levels—national, district, and community. Each reporting channel will be managed by trained focal persons to ensure that all submissions are received, recorded, and handled with the utmost confidentiality and sensitivity.

Victims who prefer may report to the Zimbabwe Republic Police Victim Friendly Unit for GBV support. Regardless, reports of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH) will be managed with the utmost sensitivity and urgency. This ensures that survivors receive the necessary support and that perpetrators are held accountable while maintaining confidentiality and

reducing the risk of retaliation. For government ministries and agency personnel, reports of GBV/SEAH may be handled according to the civil service procedures or the employer's policies.

10.2 Receiving a complaint

Upon receipt, the complaint is acknowledged promptly by the grievance handling team. A unique reference number is assigned to track the complaint throughout the process. The complainant receives confirmation of receipt and information on the expected timeframe for resolution. The complaint should be logged using the grievance log form (Annex 3).

10.3 Reviewing and investigating grievances

The grievance handling team conducts a thorough review and investigation of the complaint. This may involve gathering additional information, consulting relevant stakeholders, and conducting site visits if necessary. The team ensures impartiality and confidentiality throughout the process. In cases of GBV and SEAH, once a report is received, an impartial investigation process will be initiated. Investigations will be conducted by a specialized team, which may include representatives from relevant governmental bodies, NGOs, ZRP- VFU and/or legal experts. The investigation will follow a structured protocol to ensure fairness and thoroughness, including gathering evidence, interviewing witnesses, and assessing the credibility of the claims. The process will adhere to the principles of due process and respect for the rights of all parties involved.

10.4 Grievance resolution options and responses

After reviewing the complaint, the grievance handling team presents various resolution options to the relevant stakeholders. These options may include mediation, compensation, corrective actions, or policy changes. The team communicates the proposed resolution to the complainant and seeks their feedback before finalizing the decision.

The Zimbabwe Gender Policy and the National Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender Based Violence 2023-2030; and the AfDB OS are aligned with regards to decision on perpetrators of GBV /SEAH. Upon completion of the investigation, and confirmation of complaint, appropriate measures will be taken based on the findings. This may include disciplinary action against perpetrators, such as termination of employment or legal action, and support for survivors, including counselling, medical care, and legal assistance. The resolution process will be designed to ensure justice while safeguarding the well-being and dignity of survivors. All actions taken will be in alignment with the zero-tolerance policy towards GBV and SEAH, ensuring that such cases are addressed decisively and effectively.

10.5 Appealing the decisions

If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution, they have the right to appeal. An appeals process is in place to address grievances that remain unresolved after the initial review. Community appeals will be managed by the DPIU GRM sub-committee and only escalated to the national GRC if a resolution cannot be reached. The GRC may involve relevant technical experts and government legal professionals to ensure a fair and transparent resolution. Complainants choosing to appeal will be informed that the appeals process is final, and no additional resources will be allocated to the case. If the national GRC fails to resolve the issue satisfactorily, the complainant may seek recourse through national institutions mentioned earlier, such as the Human Rights Commission, Anti-Corruption Commission, Gender Commission, EMA, or even the Labour Court. The same process will apply to complaints at district and national level.

11. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following structure and roles and responsibilities are proposed for establishing a project grievance redress mechanism for the ACRES.

11.1 Structure of the Grievance redress mechanism

i) The Project Management Unit (PMU)

The PMU will have an oversight role mainly to provide resources and ensure that the GRM structure are established.

ii) National inter-ministerial Grievance Redress Committee (GRC)

- The GRC will be composed of E & S specialist and representatives from the other implementing ministries, including EMA and Department of Women Affairs and Gender members from the other implementing ministries.
- The E & S -will coordinate the committees. It will meet quarterly procedural and in between should there be complaints to resolve.
- The GRC will have a maximum of 7 people and a minimum of 5 people.

iii) District Grievance Redress Sub-committee:

- This sub- committee will be part of the DPIU and will be responsible for overseeing the entire grievance redress mechanism at district level.
- It will be comprised of a few members of the DPIU not exceeding 5 in total.
- Its composition must consider gender balance.

iv) Community Grievance Committees/Community Project Committees:

- The GRM will use local structures, such as rangeland committees and water users committees, who will receive training to handle project grievances from community members.
- Each committee will designate one or two members to receive and record complaints and convene the committee to address any received complaints.
- Committees will be representative, inclusive, and diverse to ensure fair representation and effective decision-making.
- In communities where specific disciplinary or conflict resolution committees, already exist, these structures can be adopted and trained to manage the project's grievance redress mechanism (GRM) instead of the project committees.

v) Community Focal person for GBV/SEAH:

- This position can be held by a community member nominated by the project community in liaison with the community leadership and (ACRES project leadership). The person will be a trusted member of the community, and one who is able to communicate by phone or other acceptable means in reporting complaints. The Community focal person will be trained through the project on the GRM and on handling GBV/SEAH complaints. This person may assist village project committees with other complaints if and when required.

11.2 Roles and Responsibilities

i) Project Management Unit (MoFEDIP)

- Support the implementation of grievance resolution processes.
- Ensure that resources are available for addressing grievances.
- Through the PCUs monitor the effectiveness of the grievance redress mechanism and compile final reports to the AfDB.

ii) The GRC (Inter-Ministerial)

- Develops grievance redress mechanisms policies and procedures.
- Provides oversight, guidance, and support to district and community grievance committees.
- Reviews and addresses escalated grievances that cannot be resolved at the local and district level.
- M&E compiles all complaints from local to national level on a monthly basis and shares with the GRC and PMU
- The GRC will handle national level complaints mainly to do with operations, and implementation as well as resource allocations among the PCUs.

- The GRC will designate one of its members to receive and handle GBV/SEAH complaints
- In addition, the GRC will handle appeals from the district and from the communities channelled through the District.
- Complaints will be received by the M&E specialist (MLAFWRD) recorded and channelled to the GRC for deliberating and resolution.

iii) District Grievance Sub-Committee

- Receives and document grievances from District Project Stakeholders that include implementation issues, operations, and observance of mitigation measures at the project sites.
- Investigate grievances through dialogue with relevant stakeholders.
- Facilitate mediation and resolution of grievances, aiming for consensus whenever possible.
- Provide regular updates to complainants and the DPIU on the status of grievances.
- Submit unresolved grievances to the GRC at national for further review and action if necessary.
- It will also handle complaints escalated from the beneficiary communities, directly or as appeals.
- Primarily it will encourage community complainants to deal with community level committees where possible.
- The Subcommittee will designate an individual who will deal with GBV and SEAH complaints.

iv) Community Grievance Committees/Project Committees:

- Receive and document grievances from community members.
- Investigate grievances through dialogue with relevant stakeholders.
- Facilitate mediation and resolution of grievances, aiming for consensus whenever possible.
- Provide regular updates to community members on the status of grievances.
- Submit unresolved grievances to the District GR sub-committee for further review and action if necessary.

v) Community Focal Grievance Focal Person (this could be an Agritex Officer working in the particular Ward or a person selected by community)

- Works across all grievance structures at community level (i.e. Dip, rangeland, water committees) but is the go to person for issues of GBV/SEAH
- Accelerates all GBV complaints to relevant authority, and facilitates investigations
- Files and documents all forms on GRM
- Advises the community Grievance committee on procedures.

To ensure the effectiveness of community-level grievance processes, the Environmental and Social (E & S) specialist will during the first 6 months of establishment of GRM work closely with the various committees. Additionally, the E&M specialist will assist in monitoring the process's effectiveness.

12. TRAINING

The training for the project grievance redress mechanism would involve several key components. Firstly, community members would need to be educated on the purpose and function of the grievance redress mechanism, ensuring they understand how it can address their concerns regarding the project's impacts. Secondly, training sessions would focus on effective communication and conflict resolution skills to facilitate constructive dialogue between community members and project stakeholders. Additionally, training would cover the procedures for submitting grievances, including documentation requirements and timelines for resolution. Finally, training would emphasize the importance of confidentiality and impartiality in grievance handling to build trust and credibility in the mechanism. Overall, the training would aim to empower local communities to effectively engage in the grievance process and ensure their voices are heard and respected throughout the project implementation.

Training on conflict resolution and administration of the GRM will also be provided to the liaison officer, and the various grievance committees so that they are able to dispense of their responsibilities.

12.1 GRM Budget

For GRM to operate effectively it should be supported by a budget that cover all operational costs. These would include setting up structures and training, awareness campaigns, investigations of cases, meeting costs and documentation. The table 6 below provides a template and budget guide that will require refinement.

Table 1: Proposed GRM Budget For 5 District Over 5 Years

	GRM ANNUAL ACTIVITY	BUDGET (USD)
1	GRM Awareness campaigns at National and District levels	20,000
2	Setting up and inducting the GRCs National and District level	15,000
3	Capacity building sessions for GRCs, setting up systems for receiving and addressing conflicts	20,000
4	Disclosure of the GRC and Processes	8,000
5	Field inspections for verification of complaints	20,000
6	Management meetings	7,000
7	Documentation/Reporting	5,000
8	Coordination and facilitation	10,000
	GRAND TOTAL FOR 5 YEARS	\$105,000

13. MONITORING, AUDITING AND REPORTING

The monitoring, auditing, and reporting processes for the GRM is crucial for ensuring transparency, accountability, and effectiveness. Monitoring involves regular assessment of grievance submissions, response times, and resolution outcomes to ensure grievances are addressed promptly and adequately.

Auditing entails periodic reviews of the grievance redress mechanism's procedures and compliance with established protocols and legal requirements, ensuring fairness and impartiality. Reporting involves documenting and communicating grievance data, trends, and outcomes to stakeholders, including community members, project partners, and relevant authorities, fostering transparency and accountability in grievance resolution efforts. Additionally, continuous stakeholder engagement and feedback mechanisms are essential to iteratively improve the grievance redress mechanism's responsiveness and effectiveness in addressing community concerns.

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14. ANNEX 1 Grievance Registration Form

ACRES Grievance Registration Form

Project Title: Agricultural Conflict Resolution and Sustainable Livelihoods Project

Date:

Name of Complainant: _____

Contact Information:

- Address: _____

- Phone Number: _____

- Email Address: _____

Description of Grievance:

- [Please provide a detailed description of the grievance, including relevant dates, locations, and any individuals or entities involved.]

Supporting Documentation:

- [Attach any relevant documents or evidence that support your grievance, such as photographs, videos, or correspondence.]

Resolution Sought:

- [Explain what outcome or resolution you are seeking through this grievance process.]

Signature of Complainant: _____ Date: _____

Please submit this form to the designated grievance officer at the following address:

[Address of Grievance Officer]

[Phone Number of Grievance Officer]

[Email Address of Grievance Officer]

Note: Your grievance will be handled in accordance with the grievance resolution procedures outlined in the ACRES Grievance redress mechanism. You will be informed of the progress and outcome of your grievance within a reasonable timeframe. Thank you for bringing your concerns to our attention.

15. ANNEX 2 Grievance Close Out Form

Project Title: Agricultural Conflict Resolution and Sustainable Livelihoods Project

[Project Grievance Redress Mechanism - Grievance Close Out Form]

Date:

Grievance Number: [Insert Grievance Number]

Name of Complainant:

Ward/District/National:

Contact Information:

Description of Grievance: [Provide a brief summary of the grievance as reported]

Actions Taken to Address Grievance:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Resolution Status: Tick the appropriate answer

- ☐ Fully Resolved
- ☐ Partially Resolved
- ☐ Not Resolved

Details of Resolution:

[Provide a detailed description of how the grievance was addressed, including any resolutions, compensation provided, or further actions taken]

Feedback from Complainant:

[Provide any feedback received from the complainant regarding the resolution process or outcome]

Lessons Learned:

[Summarize any lessons learned from this grievance process that can be applied to future project activities]

Approval for Close Out:

- ☐ Project Manager
- ☐ Grievance Officer
- ☐ Community Representative

Date of Close Out Approval:

Remarks:

[Provide any additional remarks or comments relevant to the grievance or its resolution]

Note: This form is to be completed and signed off by all relevant parties involved in the grievance resolution process before officially closing out the grievance.

16. ANNEX 3 Grievance Log Form

ACRES Grievance Log Form

Project Name: Agricultural Conflict Resolution and Sustainable Livelihoods Project

Date of Grievance:

Location of Grievance: [Specify the exact location, such as village, town, or GPS coordinates]

Grievance Raised By: [Name/Title of the individual or group raising the grievance]

Contact Information:

Nature of Grievance: [Brief description of the grievance, including any relevant details]

Impact of Grievance: [Describe how the grievance has affected the individual, community, or project]

Resolution Sought: [What outcome or resolution is the individual or community seeking?]

Actions Taken: [Record any actions taken by project staff or relevant authorities in response to the grievance]

Date of Response: [If applicable, indicate when a response was provided to the grievance]

Resolution Status: [Indicate whether the grievance has been resolved, is pending resolution, or requires further action]

Follow-up Actions Required: [Specify any follow-up actions needed to address the grievance]

Additional Notes: [Include any additional information or comments relevant to the grievance]

Signature of Grievance Handler:

Date: [dd/mm/yyyy]

Please ensure that all sections are completed accurately and thoroughly. This log serves as an official record of grievances raised within the project and will be used to track resolution progress and ensure accountability.

17. ANNEX 4 Grievance Resolution Form

ACRES Grievance Resolution Form

Project: Agricultural Conflict Resolution and Sustainable Livelihoods Project

Date: [Date]

Name of Complainant: _____

Contact Information: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Nature of Grievance: (Please describe the issue you are facing)

Date and Time of Incident: _____

Location of Incident: _____

Details of the Incident: (Please provide specific details about what happened)

Action Taken (if any) prior to filing this grievance:

Resolution Sought: (What outcome are you seeking?)

Supporting Documentation: (Please attach any relevant documents or evidence)

[Attach files]

Signature of Complainant: _____

Date: _____

For Office Use Only:

Date Received: _____

Received By: _____

Grievance Number: _____

Assigned Investigator: _____

Investigation Status: _____

Resolution Date: _____

Actions Taken to Resolve Grievance:

Outcome of Investigation:

Signature of Investigator: _____

Date: _____

Please submit this form to the Grievance Officer of the project or the designated authority. Your grievance will be addressed promptly and in accordance with the project's grievance resolution mechanism.

ANNEX 5 Grievance redress mechanism Leaflet

ACRES Grievance redress mechanism Leaflet

Project: Agricultural Conflict Resolution and Sustainable Livelihoods Project

We are committed to ensuring that the voices of our all stakeholders are heard and addressed in the implementation of our project. Your feedback and concerns are valuable to us, and we have established a grievance redress mechanism to address any issues that may arise during the project's execution.

What is a Grievance redress mechanism?

A grievance redress mechanism is a structured process for individuals or communities to raise concerns, complaints, or grievances related to the project. It provides a transparent and accessible way for stakeholders to express their feedback and seek resolution to any problems encountered.

How Does it Work?

1. **Submission of Grievances:** You can submit your grievances in writing or orally to the Grievance Focal Point identified in your community. Grievances can be related to any aspect of the project, including environmental impacts, social issues, or project implementation.
2. **Grievance Review:** Upon receiving a grievance, the Grievance Focal Point will review the complaint and acknowledge receipt within [specify timeframe, e.g., 5 working days]. They will then initiate an investigation into the matter to understand the root cause and identify potential solutions.
3. **Resolution and Feedback:** We are committed to addressing grievances in a timely and transparent manner. Once a resolution is reached, we will provide feedback to the aggrieved party, outlining the actions taken to address the issue.
4. **Appeals Process:** If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the grievance process, you have the right to appeal the decision. The appeals process will be clearly outlined in the feedback provided to you.

Confidentiality and Non-Retaliation

We recognize the importance of confidentiality and non-retaliation in the grievance process. Your identity will be kept confidential throughout the investigation, and we strictly prohibit any form of retaliation against individuals who raise grievances in good faith.

Contact Information

If you have any grievances or concerns related to the project, please contact the Grievance Focal Point in your community:

[Name of Grievance Focal Point]

[Contact Information]

[Office Address]

Alternatively, you can submit your grievance via email to [Email Address].

Your feedback is essential for the success of our project, and we are committed to working together with the community to address any issues that may arise. Thank you for your cooperation.

Grievance redress mechanism Team