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# GRIEVANCE REDRESS SERVICE (GRS) ANNUAL REPORT 2015



## The Grievance Redress Service (GRS): Role, function, and process

**Role and function.** The Grievance Redress Service (GRS) is a management-led grievance redress mechanism, housed in the World Bank's Operations Policy and Country Services Vice-Presidency. Launched in 2015, the GRS receives complaints from project-affected people and communities who believe that a World Bank-funded project has caused, or will cause them harm. The service facilitates the response to such grievances by providing support to project teams to address the issues raised in a quick and effective manner. The GRS provides a single entry point to submit complaints directly to the World Bank, and ensures the Bank's responsiveness and accountability.

The GRS was created following a review of the safeguard policies by the Independent Evaluation Group, which recommended that the World Bank create a grievance redress and conflict resolution mechanism to complement the Inspection Panel. The GRS also closes the gap between project-level grievance redress mechanisms (GRMs) and the Inspection Panel in the Bank's accountability structure, to ensure that people may bring grievances directly to the attention of Bank Staff and Management and have them attended to in a timely manner.

The GRS may also receive complaints regarding procurement issues. Procurement-related matters are forwarded to the Bank's Procurement Practice Manager for resolution through the Procurement Complaint Handling System

The GRS is a flexible tool that addresses grievances of project affected people and communities by supporting World Bank task teams to assess the issues and identify solutions, so as to provide effective redress, within the boundaries of the project. The GRS reviews complaints that raise issues of compliance with Bank policies as well as those regarding matters not covered in such policies.



The task team retains ownership of the problem-solving process. However, the GRS remains involved to provide analytical and logistical support to the task team. GRS support to task teams may include actions such as:



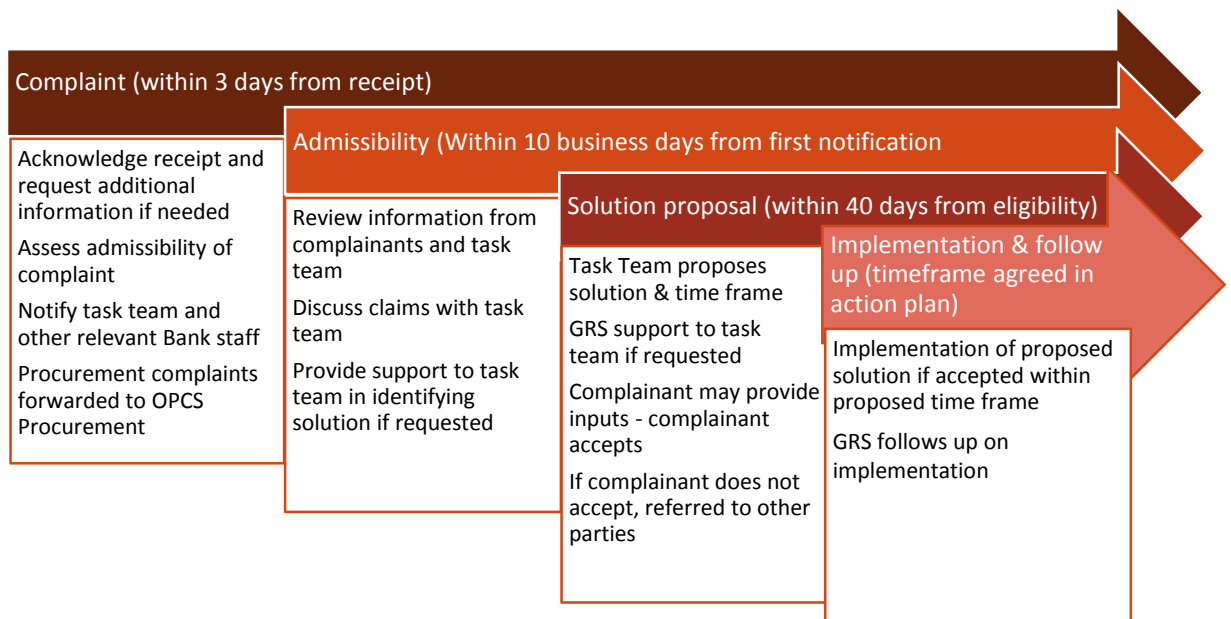
- analyzing the issues/concerns in the project context,
- advising on policy compliance and related issues,
- reviewing relevant documents,
- assisting the task team in engaging with communities throughout the process and in agreeing on a proposed solution,
- fostering dialogue between communities and the Bank,
- advising on possible solutions and best practices,
- advising on project level GRMs and best practices, and
- assisting in following up on the implementation of the agreed upon solution.

The GRS does not alter the role of the Inspection Panel. Project-affected people and communities continue to have the same access to the Panel, provided that they meet the criteria set out in the Panel Resolution. The GRS does not replace project-level GRMs where they exist; they remain the primary tool to raise and address project-related grievances in Bank-supported operations.



**The Process.** The GRS process is set forth in interim procedures approved in January 2015. Operating procedures are currently being drafted.

The process of receiving and processing complaints is laid out in Figure 1 below.



**Figure 1. GRS Complaint Process**

**Support to task teams in the absence of a formal complaint.** The GRS may also provide support to a task team when a letter describing grievances is sent to the task team directly rather than to the GRS. In such cases, the task team may contact the GRS, which provides the same type of support as under the regular process. In its first year, the GRS has been called upon to provide analytical support in a few such cases.

## Case Records and Data

As of December 31, 2015, nine months after launching its operations, the GRS has received 28 complaints – 16 on operational matters and 12 on procurement (see Figure 2).<sup>1</sup> Two complaints out of the 16 received on operational matters were submitted by NGOs. The GRS is also involved as co-facilitator in one mediation process.

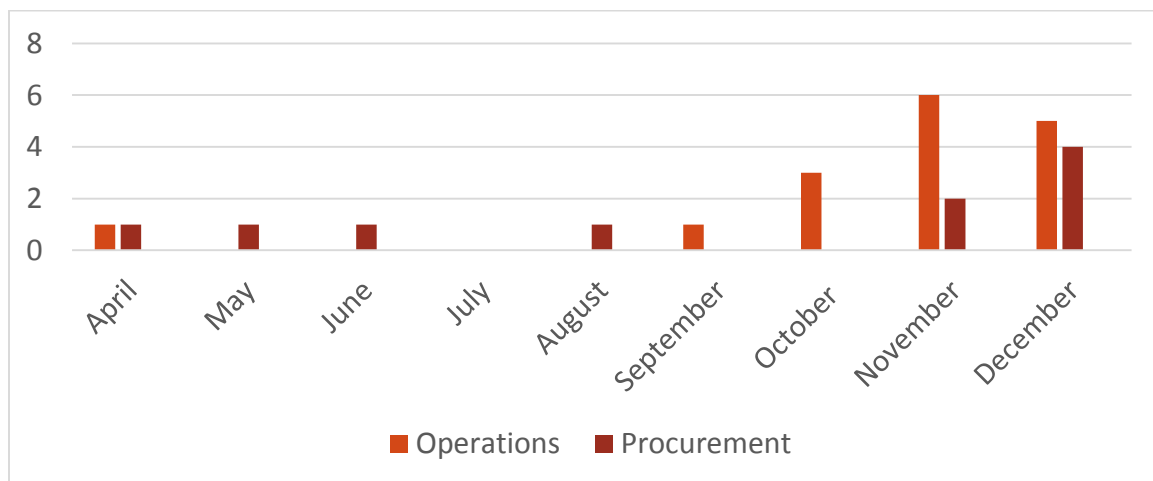
### 28 complaints:

- 12 on procurement
- 16 on operational matters
- 1 mediation facilitation

### 16 complaints on operational matters:

- 10 in progress
- 5 declared ineligible
- 1 closed for lack of information by complainant

**Figure 2. Complaints Received by Month**

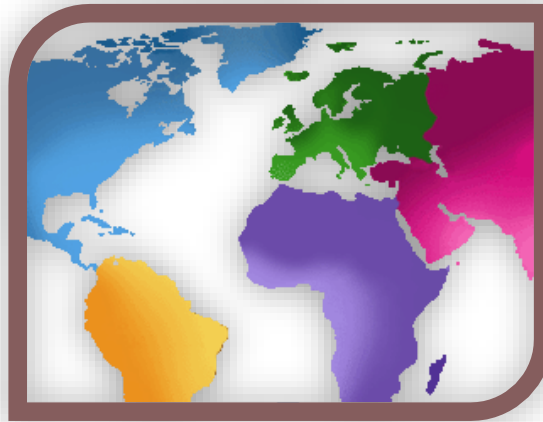


<sup>1</sup> The GRS 2015 Complaints Register is attached to this Report as Annex A.

## Geographical Distribution

The complaints were submitted from:

- South Asia (11)
- Africa (8)
- East Asia and Pacific (3)
- Latin America and Caribbean (3)
- Eastern Europe and Central Asia (2)
- Middle East and North Africa (1)



## Selected Cases

### Argentina Vega Flood Prevention and Drainage Project (P145686)

Received November 2015

Representatives of the *Consejos Comunes Consecutivos (CCCs)*, a local neighborhood representation body in Buenos Aires, raised concerns regarding alleged potential harm from the project as designed, as well as issues related to project information and participation. The GRS and the task team have worked jointly to understand the concerns and determine how best to respond. The task team requested the GRS to engage with the complainants. The GRS advised the task team on how to develop options to address legitimate issues raised in the complaints and engaged, in close collaboration with the task team, the complainants to address the points raised in the complaint. The task team provided clarifications on some activities planned under the project and highlighted which of the complainants' recommendations were incorporated into the project design. The GRS and the task team also proposed actions to address concerns raised about affected people's access to project information, such as translation into Spanish of some Bank project documents that are usually prepared only



in English. Through the continuous engagement of the GRS with the complainants, they eventually indicated that they were satisfied with the clarifications provided regarding the project and the case was closed.

### **Philippines Rural Development Project (P132317)**

Received November 2015

The project contains components that focus on road construction to connect farmers to local markets and compensation for people who are affected by the related road works. The complaint raised concerns about the project design and the related resettlement and compensation process.

The GRS engaged with the task team to determine the facts on the ground and advised the team on policy compliance aspects of the complaint, particularly in relation to the resettlement activities to be undertaken under the project. The GRS has also been in contact with the complainant to follow up on steps taken to address the issues of concern. The task team engaged with the implementing agency, and upon advice from the GRS, a Bank social specialist from the Philippines carried out a site visit to consult with the affected community, including the complainant. As a result of the complaint submitted to the GRS, the task team initiated a number of steps to address the complainant's concerns as well as those of other affected community members. Steps taken by the task team, in collaboration with the GRS, achieved good progress towards resolving this grievance. The Bank's social specialist visited the area and met with the complainant and other affected people. Meetings were also organized by the implementing agency to discuss the technical design of the farm-to-market road and its impacts on local residents. As a result of this dialogue, the technical design was reviewed in an effort to address residents' concerns and to minimize the impact of the land acquisition. The task team will ensure that the revised documents reflect the agreements reached with affected residents.

### **Philippines Participatory Irrigation Development Project (PIDP) (P088926)**

Received December 2015

The complaint was submitted by representatives of Irrigation Associations of the Upper Chico River area. It concerned delays in the implementation of the



Upper Chico River Irrigation System (UCRIS), supported under the PIDP, and potential impacts on water for irrigation and on income for farmers. The GRS engaged with the task team, which was already aware of, and working on addressing the issues presented by the complainants. Specifically, the GRS facilitated communication with the complainants and advised the task team to obtain a thorough understanding of the complaint and to enable sharing of information between the task team and affected communities. The task team acted promptly on this complaint so that the civil works critical to ensure irrigation of affected people's land could be undertaken. Irrigation began in early January and was completed in a few weeks. The task team also organized a meeting with the complainants and the implementing agency to discuss the project's remaining issues and options to address them. The meeting resulted in an action plan agreed upon by all participants, including the complainants. The GRS and the task team will monitor implementation of the action plan.

### **Bangladesh Clean Air and Sustainable Environment Project (P098151)**

Received December 2015

The complaint concerns accessibility by disabled people to pedestrian bridges being built to promote a smoother traffic flow in Dhaka. The GRS is in touch with the complainants and has advised the task team on related Bank policy requirements associated with the complaint, including the specific concerns regarding the bridges, as well as on how to engage with complainants. The task team has reached out to the complainants to discuss available options to address the mobility of disabled persons in relation to the project. The GRS facilitated these discussions between the task team and complainants on the issues raised, which were held in the World Bank's Dhaka office, including with respect to policy compliance matters raised in the complaint. Following the GRS' advice, the task team is carefully reviewing street crossings and mobility issues in each location where the project supported construction of pedestrian bridges and sidewalk improvements. The task team will also conduct a site visit together with representatives of the complainants and other affected people to explore possible practical solutions to ensure that people with disability may fully share the project benefits.





## **Kenya Water Supply and Improvement Project**

Received December 2015

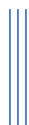
The complaint relates to the construction of the Northern Collector Tunnel Phase I supported under the Water Supply and Improvement Project. The complainants raised concerns that the construction of an underground tunnel for water supply could adversely affect underground aquifers, rivers, springs and swamps that support people and habitat. They also raised concerns about the availability of information and about consultation with local communities. The GRS engaged with the complainants and the task team to discuss the issues and understand the best way forward. The GRS identified with the task team potential actions to address concerns raised and requested the complainants' input on these. Such actions were discussed with the complainants, who considered that more needs to be done to address all concerns. They viewed favorably some of the actions proposed, such as the establishment of a panel of experts (POE) and the opportunity for affected people to provide direct input to the work of the POE.

## **Other Activities**

### **Mediation Process following Inspection Panel Investigation of Kenya Electricity Expansion Project**

The GRS is participating as co-facilitator, on behalf of Bank Management, in the mediation process initiated by the Complaints Mechanism of the European Investment Bank (EIB-CM) with respect to a complaint concerning the project's resettlement program. The complaint pertains to a project jointly financed by the World Bank and the EIB, and it was also subject to a Request for Inspection submitted to the Inspection Panel, which subsequently carried out an investigation.

The EIB-CM started the mediation process with the aim of fostering an agreement between the implementing agency, KenGen, and the complainants on remedial actions. The mediation is focused on the identification of issues to which the participating parties (i.e., the implementing agency and the complainants) commit to finding a mutually agreeable solution. In its Management Report and Recommendation in



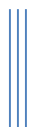
response to the Panel's findings, Management proposed that the Bank participate in the EIB-sponsored mediation process, given that the mediation's objective is a joint understanding about remedial actions. Management also identified proposed actions to address the Panel's findings and the mediation process is expected to shape these actions in a more specific manner, and to result in the complainants' endorsement of the proposed actions.

### **GRM Repository**

The GRS is contributing to the Bank-wide effort to review the Bank's approach to develop and evaluate project-level grievance redress mechanisms (GRMs) in Bank-supported operations. This work aims to establish a GRM Repository, which includes good-practice examples and resource materials from existing GRMs to inform experiences and practices at the project level and foster the generation of further knowledge in this regard. This ongoing review covers project-level GRMs in projects financed by the World Bank, other Multilateral Development Banks and the United Nations.

### **Outreach Program**

Outreach activities to make the GRS better known to Bank staff as well as communities affected by World Bank projects include internal training sessions; information meetings; external outreach to project affected people and NGOs; and international events. Internal training sessions on safeguard policies routinely include a short presentation on the GRS. The GRS has also held information meetings with Washington-based NGOs and with NGOs attending the World Bank's Spring and Annual Meetings to introduce the work of the GRS, answer questions and establish a dialogue with stakeholders. GRS staff also participated in the Multilateral Development Banks' multi-stakeholder engagement working group meeting in Luxembourg and the Law and Justice Week (LJW) in Washington DC, where the GRS was presented and discussed.



The GRS maintains internal and external websites and a central complaints database to monitor and track grievance redress progress, which is published on the GRS external website (<http://www.worldbank.org/grs>).

Since January 2015, the Project Appraisal Document (PAD) of all projects/programs financed by the World Bank include information for project stakeholders about available avenues to submit complaints on project related issues. This language mentions project level GRMs, the GRS and the Inspection Panel. The language included in the appraisal documents of Investment Project Financing operations reads as follow:

***Grievance Redress.*** *Communities and individuals who believe that they are adversely affected by a World Bank (WB) supported project may submit complaints to existing project-level grievance redress mechanisms or the WB's Grievance Redress Service (GRS). The GRS ensures that complaints received are promptly reviewed in order to address project-related concerns.*

*Project affected communities and individuals may submit their complaint to the WB's independent Inspection Panel which determines whether harm occurred, or could occur, as a result of WB non-compliance with its policies and procedures. Complaints may be submitted at any time after concerns have been brought directly to the World Bank's attention, and Bank Management has been given an opportunity to respond.*

*For information on how to submit complaints to the World Bank's corporate Grievance Redress Service (GRS), please visit <http://www.worldbank.org/GRS>  
For information on how to submit complaints to the World Bank Inspection Panel, please visit [www.inspectionpanel.org](http://www.inspectionpanel.org)*

Similar and program-specific language is included in the PAD of Development Policy Lending and Program-for-Results operations.



## Annex A

## 2015 Complaints Register

| No. | Date Received | Country                   | Project Name/Complaint  | Status as of December 2015                           | Comments   |
|-----|---------------|---------------------------|---|--|--|
| 1.  | 4/19/2015     | Jamaica                   | Increasing the climate resilience of the Negril coastline                 | Closed   | Complaint not related to World Bank-financed project – complaint is inadmissible |
| 2.  | 4/25/2015     | Pakistan                  | Second Sindh Education Sector Reform Program Project (P125952)            | Referred to Responsible Procurement Practice Manager | Procurement-related complaint  |
| 3.  | 5/27/2015     | Cape Verde                | Recovery and Reform of the Electricity Sector Project (P115464)           | Referred to Responsible Procurement Practice Manager | Procurement-related complaint  |
| 4.  | 6/09/2015     | Pakistan                  | Sindh Irrigated Agriculture Productivity Enhancement Project (P145813)    | Referred to Responsible Procurement Practice Manager | Procurement-related complaint  |
| 5.  | 8/25/2015     | Senegal, Mauritania, Mali | Alleged corruption in procurement practices                               | Referred to Responsible Procurement Practice Manager | Procurement-related complaint  |
| 6.  | 9/07/2015     | India                     | Rajasthan Road Sector Modernization Project (P130164)                     | Referred to Responsible Procurement Practice Manager | Procurement-related complaint  |
| 7.  | 9/17/2015     | Nigeria                   | EarthCare Solid Waste Composting Project (P112329)                        | Referred to Responsible Procurement Practice Manager | Procurement-related complaint  |
| 8.  | 9/20/2015     | India                     | National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project (P092217/ P144726/ P148870 (AF)) | In Progress  | Complaint alleges use of poor quality material for road construction             |



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|-----|------------|------------|--|--|---|
| 9.  | 10/06/2015 | India      | Tamil Nadu and Puducherry Coastal Disaster Risk Reduction Project (P143382)                    | In Progress  | Complaint raises issues regarding inclusion / selection of beneficiaries                              |
| 10. | 10/19/2015 | India      | Integrated Coastal Zone Management Project (P097985)   | In Progress  | Complaint raises issues regarding public consultation   |
| 11. | 10/23/2015 | Mongolia   | eHealth Project (P131290)  | Closed   | No further information received from complainants   |
| 12. | 11/01/2015 | Bangladesh | Notun Jibon Livelihood Improvement Project (NJLIP) (P149605)                                   | In Progress  | Complaint raises project design and implementation issues   |
| 13. | 11/09/2015 | Albania    | National Irrigation and Drainage Strategy (P121186)  | Referred to Responsible Procurement Practice Manager | Procurement-related complaint   |
| 14. | 11/09/2015 | Jamaica    | Community-based Landslide Risk Reduction Project (JSDF Grant) (P116471)                        | Closed   | Project is closed – complaint is inadmissible.  |
| 15. | 11/20/2015 | Pakistan   | Global Partnership Education Project Balochistan (P144454)                                     | Closed   | Allegations not under GRS purview – complaint is inadmissible   |
| 16. | 11/24/2015 | Kenya      | AFD Kenya Informal Settlements Improvement Project Co-Financing Technical Assistance (P150944) | Referred to Responsible Procurement Practice Manager | Procurement-related complaint   |
| 17. | 11/25/2015 | Argentina  | Vega Flood Prevention and Drainage Project (P145686)   | In Progress  | Complaint alleges lack of consultation and participatory processes in preparation and implementation. |
| 18. | 11/30/2015 | Morocco    | None   | Closed   | Complaint not related to World Bank financed project – complaint is inadmissible.                     |



|     |            |             |  |  |  |
|-----|------------|-------------|--|--|--|
| 19. | 11/30/2015 | Philippines | Rural Development Project (P132317)                              | In Progress  | Complaint alleges inadequate compensation for houses   |
| 20. | 12/02/15   | Pakistan    | Dasu Hydropower Project (P121507)                                | In Progress  | Complaint alleges conflict of interest in preparation of environmental assessment                                      |
| 21. | 12/07/15   | Kenya       | Regional Pastoral Livelihood Resilience Project (P129408)        | Referred to Responsible Procurement Practice Manager | Procurement-related complaint  |
| 22. | 12/09/2015 | Uzbekistan  | Energy Efficiency Facility for Industrial Enterprises (P118737)  | Referred to Responsible Procurement Practice Manager | Procurement-related complaint  |
| 23. | 12/09/15   | Bangladesh  | Clean Air and Sustainable Environment Project (P098151)          | In Progress  | Complaint alleges design of physical improvements for traffic flow do not meet requirements for disabled accessibility |
| 24. | 12/14/2015 | Kenya       | Kenya Informal Settlements Improvement Project (KISIP) (P113542) | Referred to Responsible Procurement Practice Manager | Procurement-related complaint  |
| 25. | 12/17/2015 | Philippines | Participatory Irrigation Development Project (P088926)           | In Progress  | Complaint alleges delays in project implementation resulting in loss of revenues for farmers                           |
| 26. | 12/18/2015 | Pakistan    | Sindh Skill Development Project (P118177)                        | Referred to Responsible Procurement Practice Manager | Procurement-related complaint  |



|     |            |         |  |             |  |
|-----|------------|---------|--|-------------|--|
| 27. | 12/18/2015 | Kenya   | Water and Sanitation Service Improvement Project (P096367) | In Progress | Complaint alleges northern collector tunnel may have adverse impacts on local water sources availability |
| 28  | 12/23/2015 | Nigeria | Growth & Employment Project (P103499)                      | Closed      | Complaint not related to harm from the project – complaint is inadmissible                               |





The World Bank is committed to ensuring that Bank-financed projects do not harm people or the environment. The objective of the Grievance Redress Service is to make the Bank more accessible for project-affected people and communities, and to help ensure faster and better resolution of project-related complaints.

For more information: <http://www.worldbank.org/grs>

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