

**Scaling Up the Implementation of the Lao PDR Emission
Reductions Programme through Improved Governance
and sustainable Forest Landscape Management
(SU-I-GFLM)**

Grievance Redress Mechanism

System Description

Version 1.2

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Implemented by



giz Deutsche Gesellschaft
für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

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Introduction

A functioning, transparent, and accessible Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) is an essential part of ensuring compliance with the Project's Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS). The Project guarantees that communities which are affected or likely to be affected by the Project, will be informed about it (through FPIC 1,2,3) and that they have channels to raise their grievances, which may arise from Project activities. It is also accessible to other stakeholders, for example Project Owners, CSOs, private sector companies.

The GRM is to be disseminated at an early opportunity in the stakeholder engagement process (i.e. during FPIC 1) in a way that is easily understood by diverse stakeholders, including women, those who are illiterate, various ethnic groups, and other especially vulnerable people. The GRM guarantees that stakeholders are fully informed on how to register complaints, for anyone to lodge a formal complaint, complete contact detail must be provided. This GRM is consistent with international standards and Lao law (i.e. National Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanisms (NFGRMs)) and has been approved by the National level of the Lao Front for National Development (LFND), which is also responsible for the overall FPIC process.

Stakeholders should first use the GRM process as developed and implemented by the project (see details described in this document). If the problem is outside the scope of this grievance mechanism, as final option, grievant may use the GRM process by the GCF itself (i.e. GCF Independent Redress Mechanism, <https://irm.greenclimate.fund/>).¹ The Green Climate Fund (GCF) is an international organization that provides financial support for the implementation of this project.

GRM Principles

The GRM helps ensure and embrace the following principles and actions:

- Protect the rights and interests of the participants, beneficiaries, and stakeholders (hereafter, “stakeholders”) of the Project;
- Adequately and promptly address grievances that arise during implementation;

¹ Stakeholders will be informed of this option and any grievant who wishes to pursue this pathway may do so. In these cases, the Safeguards Team will inform the grievant how to register a complaint through the GCF Independent Redress Mechanism.

- Confirm compliance with the relevant Lao Government and GCF Safeguards on environmental and social issues.

Criteria for Eligible Grievances and Exclusions

A grievance or complaint received by the Consultant working as of the Project Safeguard Team (hereinafter referred to as the Project Safeguard Team) will not be eligible if it falls into any one or more of the following exclusions:

- A grievance or complaint regarding activities in which the Project had no (financial) involvement.
- A grievance or complaint regarding matters already concluded by any of the grievance mechanisms in place, unless the complainant has submitted new material information or evidence that was unavailable at the time the matter was previously considered.
- A malicious, frivolous, or fraudulent grievance or complaint.
- A grievance or complaint to gain competitive advantage.
- An anonymous grievance or complaint.
- A grievance or complaint regarding matters relating to the GCF's activities which are unconnected to a GCF funded project or programme, such as matters relating to administration and human resource management
- A grievance or complaint solely regarding the adequacy of the Project operational policies and procedures.

Note: Specific complaints related to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (S.E.A.H) issues reported to have occurred during project implementation will always be considered eligible and therefore investigated.

Confidentiality Measures

The GRM recognizes and respects a complainant's right to confidentiality (which extends to the confidentiality of an authorized representative when requested by the complainant, but subject to the Project Safeguards Team's consideration of the justification) including

confidentiality of identities and information provided to the Project Safeguards Team. This is ensured by the GRM, including a hotline to the Project Safeguards Team, which can protect the complainant's identity.

In situations where the name and identity of a complainant or representative may need to be disclosed to process the grievance or complaint or to provide redress, the Project Safeguards Team will proactively consult with the complainant and/or the representative and will only disclose such information with their consent. Pending consultations with the complainant and/or the representative regarding confidentiality, the SU-I-GFLM Safeguards Team shall keep the identities of the complainant and the representative, and the information provided by them to the Safeguards Team, confidential.

Submitting Grievances

If there is a problem or complaint regarding any program activity, the grievant has 3 options to submit a grievance as follow:

- 1) Submit the grievance to the Village Mediation Unit.
note: VMUs must send copies of any complaint they receive to the Project Safeguards Team within five days of receiving it.
- 2) Submit the grievance to an implementer of the project (District Staff).
- 3) Call the hotline operated by the Project's Safeguards Team (Number 020 977 66 673)

For non-Lao speakers it is expected that most grievant will use the VMU mechanism, which enables them to report in their local language. In case the hotline receives a call in an ethnic minority language, the Safeguards Team needs to make sure that a translator is made available.

Informing beneficiaries about GRM

The 3 options to submit a grievance are shown on the Poster (see Annex 2), which is provided to each village during the FPIC 1 process and which is to remain accessible to all villagers during the lifetime of the project.

In addition to options for filing a grievance, the following aspects are explained to beneficiaries during FPIC 1: GRM principles; Criteria for Eligible Grievances and Exclusions; confidentiality measures; GRM Steps after filing a complaint.

Grievance Redress Mechanism Steps

The designed structure allows grievances to flow through an internal process from the village, to the district level until the national level and the status of grievance resolution should also be reported back to the village level (see Annex 1). Concerns should be addressed at the closest appropriate level. Whenever a grievance is filed, a report on the grievance will be produced by the person receiving the grievance, utilizing a standard grievance template (see section below).

The report will be provided to the Project Safeguards Team², who will oversee the process, record of all grievances and report on grievances filed and ensure they are adequately addressed. As a first step, the grievance is to be discussed within the project structure (i.e. with DPMU, PPMU, NPMU or PSC). If it is not possible to address the grievance within the project structure, the grievance will be forwarded to the grievance redress mechanism according to the National Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanisms (NFGRMs), starting from VMU and handed on through the district, the provincial levels, in very rare cases up to the respective People's Provincial Assembly (PPA) or the National Assembly (NA).

The steps taken from the receipt of grievance to the resolution or grievance closure are outlined below:

Grievance Redress Mechanism Steps	Description
1. Receive and register grievance	Stakeholders submit their grievances through the available grievance channels as described above. All grievances are registered by the receiving entity using a grievance template (see chapter below). All grievances filed must

² In case the grievance is submitted by hotline, it is the Projects Safeguards Team themselves writing the report.

	be clearly documented and securely stored in the SU-I-GFLM cloud database with limited access to the Safeguards Team.
2. Acknowledge, assess, and assign	<p>The Safeguards Team must acknowledge receipt of the grievance to the grievant.</p> <p>As part of an internal assessment process the Safeguards Team must outline into the available template, how the grievance will proceed, assess the eligibility of the grievance, and assign organizational responsibilities to propose a response to the grievance.</p>
3. Preparation for a response	<p>The entity responsible for preparing a response (as assigned by the Safeguards Team 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. judicial grievance mechanism), or they could decide that the grievance is ineligible (see “Criteria for Eligible Grievances and Exclusions”).</p>
4. Agreement on response	<p>Based on the responses prepared in step 3, the Safeguards Team and/or other entities involved to resolve the grievance will meet with the complainant and other related parties within 10 days and try to reach an agreement that is acceptable to all parties.</p>
If complainant agrees on response, refer to step 5, if not, refer to step 6	
5a. Implementation of response	<p>The Safeguards Team will assign a relevant officer to oversee the implementation of the response to the grievance, monitoring its progress and the effectiveness of the response.</p> <p>All grievances filed must be reported to the NPMU using a standardized grievance template, including information on the status of all grievances.</p>
5b. Grievance resolved	If the response is successful, the grievance will be resolved and

and successfully closed	closed. The grievance report to the NPMU will be finalized and submitted by the responsible project officer, noting that the grievance has been successfully resolved and has been closed.
5c. Grievance not resolved	If the response is not successful, the project officer responsible for overseeing and monitoring the response will review the response to be implemented (step 6).
If complainant does not agree on response (step 4)	
6. Review	If no response can be met, the responsible safeguard specialist/project officer will review the grievance and consult for alternative response. 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	<p>Pending the result of the grievance review, grievances that cannot be re-solved within 1 month from the acknowledgement of the complaint will be either referred to a different system (e.g.: refer complaints to National Grievance and Complaints Mechanisms) or closed out.</p> <p>All grievances, including grievances that cannot be resolved, will be documented using a standard template, and reported to the NPMU safeguard representative.</p>

In addition to this regular process, there are (at least) annual visits by the national level of the Lao Front for National Development to a number of selected target villages within each province. As part of these Safeguards Assessment, the information on grievances submitted to the VMU is retrieved and assessed.

Template to Acknowledge, assess, assign a grievance, record the consultation with the grievant and the conclusion of the grievance

A) Information from the Grievant that should be included in the grievance template:

- Village Name
- District Name
- Name of individual(s) with concern
- Phone number of individual(s) with concern
- Date of complaint filed
- Location of the event or issue
- Description of the issue (including date of issue happening)
- Other parties involved
- Attachments (photos, maps, etc.)
- Preferred solution

B) Assessment by the Safeguards team

- Eligibility of the grievance (including explanation if not)
- Outlined procedure to resolve the grievance
- Organizational responsibilities to propose a response to the grievance

C) Notes of meeting with complainant to reach an agreement

- Response and solution proposed to the grievant
- Comments from grievant and parties involved

D) Conclusion: Could grievance be resolved?

Grievance Template to report to Safeguards Specialist at NPMU

See template above, responsible officer will not show the name of the grievant

Unresolved Grievance Report Template

See template above, responsible officer will however not show the name of the grievant

Grievance Process for Complaints Generated beyond the Village Level

In some cases, there may be individuals or agencies who wish to file a grievance but are not based in a village in the intervention's operating area. This might include advocacy groups (including environmental advocates), or individuals/groups who are affected by, but not in, a project site. Advocates and affected people may live in other countries. The Project GRM is fully accessible to them as well and the hotline number is published on the SU-I-GFLM website (su-i-gflm.org).

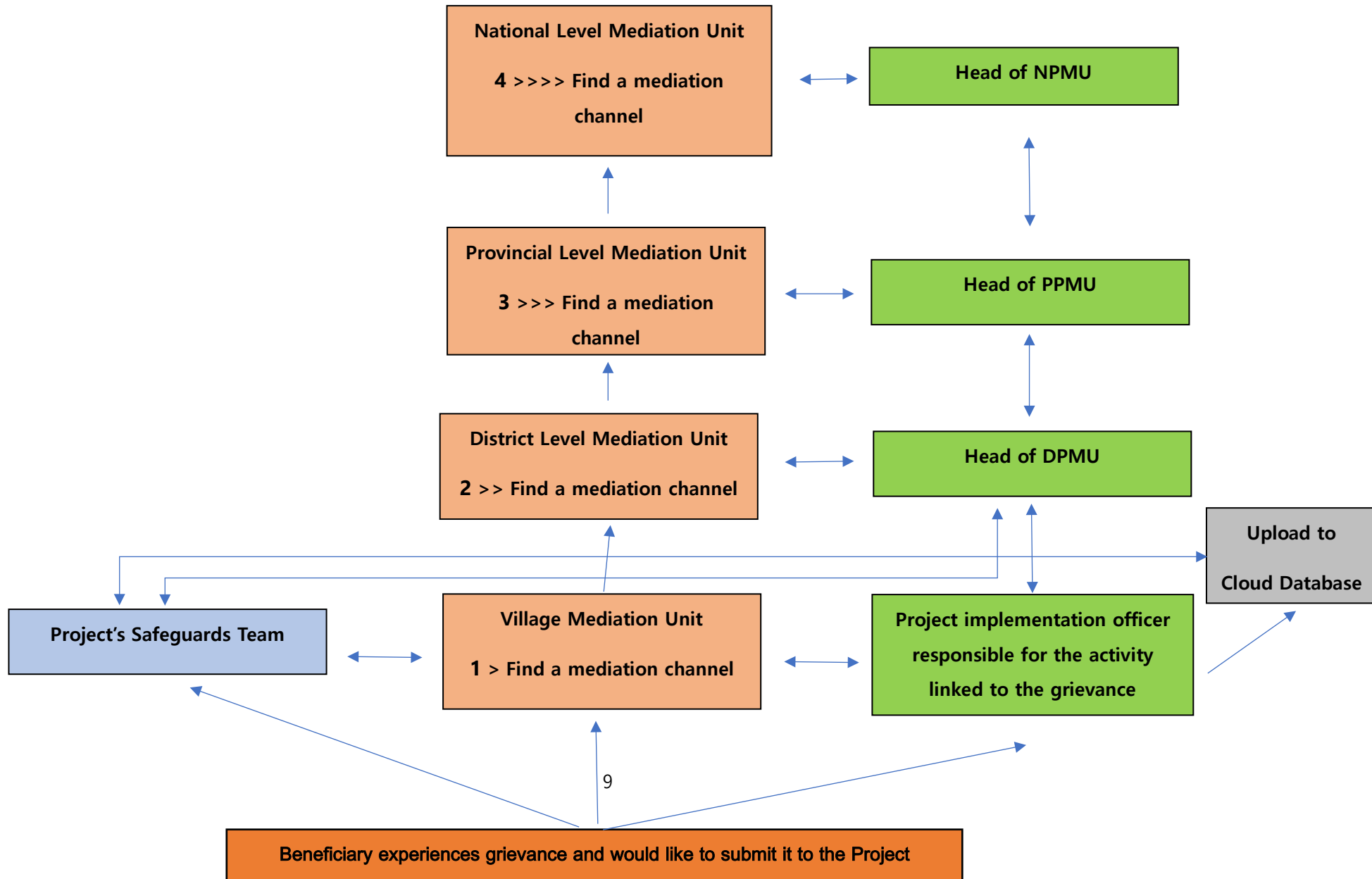
In these cases, the Project Safeguards Team will: 1) seek to mediate/resolve the grievance directly; 2) refer the complaint to the appropriate Lao government unit or department within the official mediation process; and/or 3) refer the complaint to the GCF.

Reporting to the GCF

The Project is committed to transparency and accountability concerning complaints, while also protecting the confidentiality of those involved. To this end, from 2019 its annual report includes a brief section documenting the number and nature of complaints received and how they were resolved. Identifying details of individuals will not be included.

Grievance Redress Mechanism for SU-I-GFLM

Project



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ຫຼື



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