



Grievance Redressal Mechanism

for

Adaptation to Climate-induced Water Stresses through Integrated Landscape Management in Bhutan

**Project Management Unit
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Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources
Thimphu, Bhutan**

I. Project Brief

The Royal Government of Bhutan (RGOB) in partnership with Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation (BT FEC) is implementing a project titled “*Adaptation to Climate-induced Water Stresses through Integrated Landscape Management in Bhutan*” and it is funded by the [Adaptation Fund](#). The project aims to improve water management in the country and build resilience to the impacts of climate change. It focuses on water availability and uses throughout the watershed, sustainability and beneficiary participation. Specifically, the objective of the project is to build resilience to climate change and adaptive capacity of water stressed communities in the Dzongkhags of Paro, Tsirang and Dagana. It will be implemented in 13 Gewogs of these three Dzongkhags. These gewogs have been identified as priorities for the intervention under the government’s “water flagship programme” due to their specific vulnerabilities exacerbated by climate change that need to be specifically addressed through targeted water and agricultural adaptation activities.

II. About Grievance Redressal Mechanism

In our complex and interconnected world, conflicts, concerns, and grievances are bound to arise. As a result, Grievance Redressal Mechanisms (GRM) have evolved as an integral part of modern governance, corporate, and societal structures. The need for grievance redressal is to ensure justice, fairness, and accountability, which are fundamental to the functioning of any organized system.

During the project implementation, such as this, many stakeholders, including the communities living within the project areas can be impacted, directly or indirectly by the project activities. Due to the large number of stakeholders, especially the communities living within the project areas, a GRM that effectively collects and responds to stakeholders’ concerns, suggestions and complaints is necessary as an integral part of the project. It will provide a platform and access for all affected beneficiaries to lodge project implementation issues and complaints, and ensure unbiased confidentiality, responsiveness and accountability to their complaints. It takes into account the availability of customary dispute settlement mechanisms among the communities as for judicial recourse. The GRM aims to provide people who suffer adverse impacts from the project activities an opportunity to be heard and be assisted. Any affected party may file a complaint directly or through a representative with concrete evidence of authority to represent them.

However, the GRM acts as a problem-solving mechanism, not a legal process substitute. For the project's success, it is critical to address grievances promptly and effectively. Matters beyond the purview of this GRM shall seek judicial recourse.

III. Objectives & principles

Adaptation Fund GRM (AF-GRM) is designed with the following objectives:

- i. to provide an effective and efficient mechanism for settlement of conflicts or grievances.
- ii. to adopt measures to ensure a prompt settlement of grievances relating to the project activities leading to effective implementation of the project.
- iii. to ensure the resolution of grievances in a way that respects the rights and interests of all parties involved.
- iv. to promote a harmonious and inclusive work environment by addressing and resolving grievances effectively.

The AF GRM has been proposed based the following seven core principles to be adhered while dealing with grievances for its resolution.

1. Fairness: Grievances are assessed impartially and handled transparently.

2. Objectiveness and independence: The GRM operate independently of all interested parties in order to guarantee fair, objective, and impartial treatment to each case.

3. Simplicity and accessibility: Procedures to file grievances and seek action are simple enough that project beneficiaries can easily understand them.

4. Responsiveness and efficiency: The GRM is designed to be responsive to the needs of all complainants.

5. Speed and proportionality: All grievances, simple or complex, are addressed and resolved as quickly as possible in a constructive manner.

6. Social inclusion: Special attention is given to ensure that poor people and marginalized groups, including those with special needs, are able to access the GRM.

7. Accountability: Each grievance reported are resolved or escalated to the next higher level till its resolution and proper records are maintained at each level. Progress reporting of project activities should include a reporting on grievance resolution.

IV. Scope and Grievance Category

The AF GRM shall apply to 13 Gewogs in three Districts of Paro, Dagana, and Tsirang. It caters to beneficiaries of Semjong, Tsirangtoe, & Phuentsenchhu Gewogs of Tsirang Dzongkhag, Drujeygang, Lajab, & Tshangkha Gewogs of Dagana Dzongkhag, and Dhophshari, Luni, Lamgong, Doteng, Tsento, Shaba, and Wangchang Geowgs of Paro Dzongkhag.

The AF GRM will serve to redress grievance related to implementation of project activities in following **five categories**:

- (i) comments, suggestions, or queries;
- (ii) complaints relating to non-performance of the project;
- (iii) complaints referring to violations of law and/or corruption while implementing the project activities;
- (iv) complaints against authorities, officials or community members involved in the project management;
- (v) any complaints/issues not falling in the above categories.

However, the grievance affiliated with contractual disputes shall be addressed separately by the respective Executing Entity or the Project Implementing Units as per the existing process.

V. Grievance Registration

The following individual/ institution will maintain a grievance register each.

- Geowg Administration Officer (GAO)
- Dzongkhag Planning Officer
- Project Manager-Project Management Unit (PMU)

Any grievance shall be registered with the following information:

- Name and contact details of aggrieved party
- Type of communication channel used (phone, email, letter, in-person reporting)
- Time, date and category of grievance

VI. Grievance Redressal Processes

The Adaptation Fund grievance redressal process will broadly follow the grievance redressal mechanism processes as stated:

1. Receipt and Register Grievances

Any grievances related to the project activities can be reported through the concerned Tshogpa and Gewog Administration Officer to the Gewog Dzingsel Tshogpa (Gewog Dispute Resolution Committee). The channel for grievances submission can be either personal submission or through telephone, e-mail, telephone, in-person reporting. Such submission should be recorded in the Gewog by the Grievance Focal Officer (Gewog Administration Officer).

2. Sorting and Processing

It is anticipated that various types of grievances will be reported wherein different follow-up actions will be required. The grievances can be categorized into five types:

- (a) comments, suggestions, or queries;
- (b) complaints relating to non-performance of the project;
- (c) complaints referring to violations of law and/or corruption while implementing the project activities;
- (d) complaints against authorities, officials or community members involved in the project management; and
- (e) any complaints/issues not falling in the above categories

3. Acknowledgment and Follow-up

When a complaint is made or the grievance is reported, the relevant grievance focal receiving the complaint or grievances should acknowledge its receipt and should brief the complainant, informer or aggrieved/affected person about the grievance resolution process, provide contact details and, if possible, the name of the contact person who is responsible for handling the grievance.

4. Verification, Investigation, and Action

The concerned official receiving the grievance should gather adequate information about the grievance reported to determine its validity and resolving the grievance. Grievances that are straightforward (such as queries and suggestions) can be resolved quickly by contacting the complainant. Grievances that cannot be resolved by grievance receiving authorities/office at their level should be referred to a higher level for verification and further investigation. The concerned authorities/offices dealing with investigation should ensure that the investigators are neutral and do not have any stake in the outcome of the investigation.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation for GRM

The grievances should be monitored to track and assess the extent to which progress is being made to resolve them. The grievance data can be analyzed and evaluated to make policy and/or process changes to minimize similar grievances in the future. Record of each grievance submitted and its resolution should be considered as part of the progress reporting of the project activities.

Monitoring of the grievance redressal will be conducted semi-annually during the project period by the PMU.

VII. Terms of Reference of Grievance Redressal Committee (GRC)

- Analyze the grievances that normally occur and provide the remedial actions to avoid further occurrences/ escalations.
- Receive, register and review grievances in a confidential and sensitive manner, and acknowledge the receipt of the grievance and its resolution processes within 3 working days to the aggrieved person/ community.
- Investigate grievances, including gathering information, interviewing relevant parties, and collecting evidence.
- Make impartial recommendations for grievance resolution based on the information gathered.
- Maintain records of all grievances, investigations, and outcomes, ensuring confidentiality and data protection.
- Communicate the proposed resolution to the aggrieved party formally and maintain the record in the format provided in IX (a).
- Facilitate and monitor the implementation of recommended solutions and actions.
- If a grievance cannot be resolved, it must be immediately referred to the next level for its resolution and to avoid escalation.

VIII. Grievance Redressal Stages and GRC

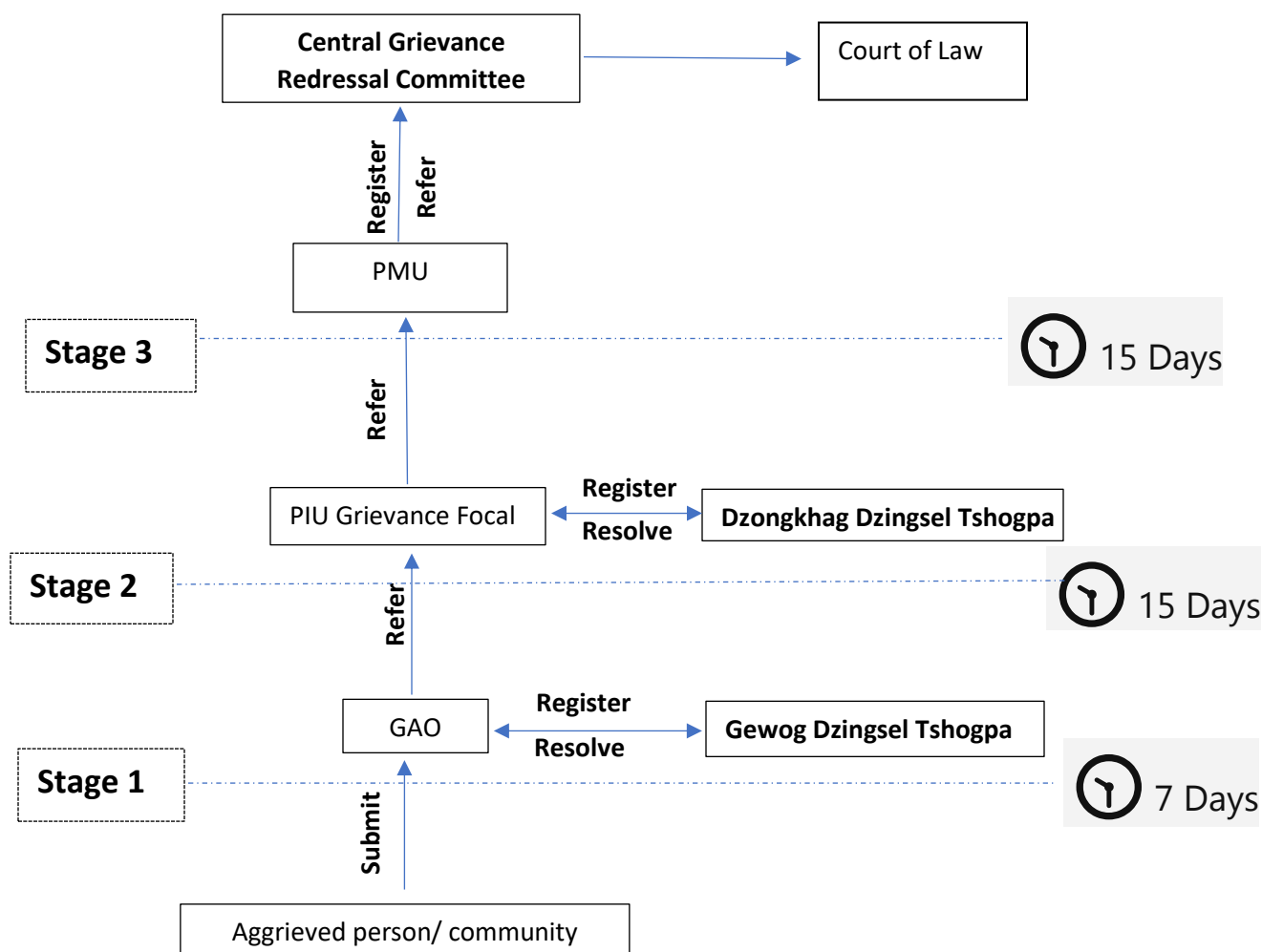


Table 1: GRM Stages and GRC Members

GR Stage 1: Gewog Dzingsel Tshogpa (Gewog Dispute Resolution Committee)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Gewog Administration Officer (GAO) shall register the grievances submitted by the aggrieved party, review and submit for resolution in the Gewog Dzingsel Tshogpa (GDT). • The Gewog Dzingsel Tshogpa shall investigate and render its resolution within the 7 working days of receiving the grievance. • In the event that the grievance cannot be resolved at the Stage 1, it shall be referred to Dzongkhag Planning Officer for its resolution at Stage 2. 	
GRC Members at the Gewog Dzingsel Tshogpa	
Position	Designation
Chair	Gup
Vice-chair	Mangmi
GRM Focal	Gewog Administration Officer
Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Relevant Chiwog Tshogpa (s) ○ Relevant Sector Head (s) ○ Project Focal Engineer
GR Stage 2: Dzongkhag Dzingsel Tshogpa (Dzongkhag Dispute Resolution Committee)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upon the receipt of grievance from Stage 1, the Dzongkhag Planning Officer shall register, review and call for Dzongkhag Dzingsel Tshogpa (DDT) to discuss and render its resolution. • The DDT shall investigate the grievance and render its decision within 15 working days. • In the event, the grievance cannot be resolved or the aggrieved party is not satisfied with the decision, it shall be referred to Stage 3 through the Project Management Unit. 	
GRC Members at the Dzongkhag Dzingsel Tshogpa	
Position	Designation
Chair	Dzongdag
Vice-chair	Dzongrab
GRM Focal	Dzongkhag Planning Officer
Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Relevant Gup(s) ○ Dzongkhag Environment Officer ○ Dzongkhag Gender Focal ○ Relevant Sector Head (s) ○ PIU Focal Engineer
GR Stage 3: Central Grievance Redressal Committee	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Project Manager shall register the grievance referred from the Stage 2, review and call for Central Grievance Redressal Committee (CGRC) Meeting aimed at addressing the grievance forwarded from lower levels. • The CGRC shall discuss and render its resolution within 15 working days. • In the event the aggrieved party is not satisfied with the decision of the PSC, the party can seek a judicial recourse. 	
Position	Designation
Chair	PSC Chairperson
GRM Focal	Project Manager
Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CGRC members as constituted

IX.Grievance Registration and Settlement Format

a. Table 2: Grievance Registration Format

Sl. No	Date of receipt	Channel of Submission	Gewog/Dzongkhag	Category of Grievance	Brief Description	Contact Information

b. Grievance Settlement Format

- 1. Name of the Parties involved with CID
 - a. Aggrieved party:
 - b. GRC members:
- 2. Brief of the grievance addressed (details containing nature of grievance, place of occurrence, grievance registry date)
- 3. Terms of settlements
- 4. Finalizing cost and payments (if any)
- 5. Confidential clause
- 6. Dates
- 7. Signature of both the parties on legal stamp