About the AfDB

The African Development Bank Group (AfDB) is committed to reducing poverty in Africa and helping the continent achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, by implementing projects and initiatives that are economically and environmentally sustainable and that advance social development. We do this by investing in different government and/or private sector projects that support Africa's development objectives.

Setting High Standards

The AfDB applies some of the most rigorous social and environment standards and safeguards to the projects it funds throughout Africa. This helps to ensure that these initiatives and projects are implemented in a way that results in positive and sustainable outcomes for both people and the planet.

Despite our best efforts however, sometimes the projects we finance do not always go as expected and they may even cause direct or indirect harm to individuals, workers, communities and/or the environment. When this occurs, it is important that those affected reach out first to the project authority responsible for the project (if appropriate) or they may also contact the Bank or its independent complaints unit - so that they can attempt to address these grievances in a timely manner.

What is a Grievance?

A grievance is a concern or complaint that can be raised by those within a community who feel that they have been or may be affected by the circumstances around the design, construction, or implementation of a specific Project.

How to Raise a Grievance or Concern

Should you wish to raise a concern about a specific Bank project, you are encouraged to contact the Local Project Office, the Country or Regional AfDB office or the IRM at the Bank's Head Office.

Why Are Complaints Helpful?

Addressing complaints during the project cycle can minimize or even eliminate long-term negative impacts on communities and/or the environment. The Bank can apply the lessons learnt to strengthen their policies and procedures, and in the process reduce potential harm in future projects. It promotes good governance, transparency and accountability and gives a voice to all project affected people.

Reprisals and Retaliation

When someone files a complaint, they might be subjected to threats or harm. To ensure a safe space for complainants and their representatives, the Bank's Independent Recourse Mechanism (IRM) has adopted a zero-tolerance policy for retaliation against complainants which underscores that it does not tolerate retaliations against complainants or any other individuals involved in the complaints process and rejects any form of threat, intimidation, harassment, violence or discrimination based on the fact that they have exercised their right to raise concerns.

Complainants can therefore address their grievances in a safe space and request for confidentiality should they feel threatened.

Immeuble du Centre de Commerce International d'Abidjan (CCIA), 14th Floor
Avenue Jean Paul II,
01 BP 1387 Abidjan 01,
Côte d'Ivoire

irm@afdb.org
+ 225 27 20 26 29 00
https://irm.afdb.org

IRM INDEPENDENT RECOURSE MECHANISM
AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

Concerns about an African Development Bank financed project?

Your Voice Matters



IRM INDEPENDENT RECOURSE MECHANISM
AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK







Local / Project Office

A local / project-level grievance mechanism for affected communities is a process for receiving, evaluating, and addressing project related concerns and grievances from affected communities at the level of the Project.

All AfDB-funded projects will propose and implement a project-level grievance mechanism to facilitate resolution of such concerns and grievances. The structure and governance of these grievance redress mechanism may vary widely, but they should all be proportionate to the nature and scale of the potential risks and impacts of the project.

Benefits:

Local level grievance mechanisms when operating effectively, can offer the advantage of being locally based, timely (in terms of their decisions), and potentially a more sustainable way to settle issues within the framework of a project–community relationship. At the same time, they recognize the right of complainants to take their grievances to a formal dispute body or other external dispute-resolution mechanisms.

How to contact:

While specific details will vary from project to project, in general you should be able to contact officials at the local project office or work site and they should be able to provide you with the details on how to relay your concerns to the local/ project level grievance mechanism.

AfDB Country or Regional Offices

If you have difficulty locating the local project-level grievance mechanism or regional offices directly, you can also contact Bank officials at the country offices directly. These offices provide support and oversight of Bank-funded projects across Africa.

On receipt of a complaint, the Country Manager will ensure that the Complainant/s are aware of the existence of the IRM and its role in handling complaints, should they wish to submit a complaint there.

Benefits:

The country and regional offices work closely with the project implementation teams and have in-depth knowledge of projects in their regions. If warranted, they can engage with the project implementors bilaterally to verify if the complaint can be resolved through the local grievance mechanism. Alternatively, they will provide Complainants with information on the Bank's Accountability Mechanism, namely the IRM.

How to contact:

A link to a comprehensive list of the regional and country offices can be found on the IRM website:

bit.ly/afdb_offices

Independent Recourse Mechanism (IRM)

The IRM is the accountability mechanism of the Bank and handles complaints related to Bank-funded operations. It provides fair, independent and effective recourse to those who are, or may be adversely affected by AfDB-funded projects.

It also aims to identify potential areas through the complaint-handling process where the Bank can further strengthen its policies, procedures and/or practices in support of sustainable development, ensuring that "no one is left behind." Its overall goal is to improve projects, raise standards, minimize disputes, and enhance accountability for sustainable development.

Benefits:

The IRM is independent of the Bank's operational management and reports directly to the Board enabling it to be impartial in its actions and decisions and avoid potential conflicts of interest. The IRM has the specific mandate to provide fair, independent and effective recourse and remedy to individuals, workers, and communities who are negatively impacted by AfDB-financed projects. The IRM can offer complainants two different approaches to attempt to resolve their issues:

(1) compliance review which investigates claims of policy or safeguards non-compliance and the occurrence of harm related to an AfDB-related project; and

(2) problem-solving, which aims to resolve complaints through mediated dialogue between complainants and relevant project stakeholders.

Complaints can be submitted by mail, e-mail, text message, online complaint form, voice or video recording. Please visit: **https://irm.afdb.org**