Independent Recourse Mechanism's Strategic Plan 2021-25: Summary

Recourse (rɪˈkɔːs) *noun* 1. a source of help in a difficult situation.

Our Vision

Our vision is to provide a **safe and trusted space** for affected people to bring forward their concerns about Bank-financed projects at the IRM without fear of retribution, and to create a **positive culture** within the Bank **that values the complaints** of stakeholders and seeks to learn from them in order to i**mprove** projects, **raise** standards, **minimize** disputes and **enhance** sustainable development outcomes for all.

Our Purpose

To provide **fair, independent** and **effective recourse** (including remedy) for individuals and communities who believe they are negatively impacted by AfDB projects, and through the complaints-handling process, **identify** potential areas where the Bank can further **strengthen its policies**, procedures and/or practices in support of **sustainable development**.

Our Core Values

Independence and Impartiality: We are independent, evidence-based, and impartial in all of our engagements which helps us to earn the trust of our stakeholders.

Equality: We seek to be fair and just in all our engagements with stakeholders - respecting human rights and treating all parties to a complaint equitably and with the utmost dignity and respect.

Accessibility: We strive to ensure that our services are open and accessible to all potential users, removing potential barriers so we are inclusive to all – especially those most vulnerable in our society.

Transparency: We aim to be clear and transparent in our communications with users of our services and publicly share information about our processes, the progress of our cases, our own performance (both the good and the bad), and the recommendations we make, while always respecting the need for personal privacy and confidentiality.

Diligence and Professionalism: We commit to providing timely, high quality work based on robust professional standards, effective dialogue with our stakeholders and well-defined (predictable) processes that focus on continuous improvement and making a difference.

IRM Objectives	Strategies
To provide complainants with a recourse mechanism that is recognized as being **informative, predictable** and **fair**, and is **trusted by all** of our diverse stakeholders.	• Provide timely and effective assessments, investigations and follow-up of complaints. • Make practical recommendations to redress harm and rectify non-compliance. • Improve stakeholders' understanding of IRM's functions and complaint handling processes. • Clearly communicate to all on the outcomes of our complaint-handling processes
To **use knowledge** and **insight** obtained from complaints, to **influence** internal **reforms** at the Bank, address **systemic** issues, and **improve** the manner in which the Bank identifies, prepares, appraises, implements, monitors and exits projects.	• Identify systemic weaknesses in Bank's processes and practices that impede compliance. • Work with management to address stakeholder complaints to achieve better outcomes. • Provide relevant recommendations and advice to help improve the Bank's practices.. • Analyze data gathered on complaints to identify trends and potential areas of concern.
To **ensure** that **impacted** individuals and communities are **aware** of, and have **access** to the IRM and its services, and have the necessary **information**, **support**, and **advice** to initiate, track and **manage** their **complaints**.	• Build awareness in impacted communities about Bank's policies/ safeguards, and the IRM. • Support individuals to submit complaints - providing them with access to necessary resources • Improve the knowledge of Bank staff about their obligations in making stakeholders aware of IRM. • Monitor the effective application of the Bank's Disclosure and Access to Information Policy. • Ensure that complaint process is culturally appropriate, gender responsive and equally accessible to all. • Establish partnerships with relevant groups (NGOs, business groups, bar associations, trade unions, etc.)
To continue to **evolve** and **improve the IRM** and its **effectiveness** by **implementing** the **recommendations** of the 3rd IRM Policy Review..	• Respond and implement the recommendations of IRM policy review with the assistance of the Inter-Departmental Working Group
To help the Bank **build capacity** among its borrowers and clients and provide general resources and training on how to develop and manage effective **operational-level grievance mechanisms** to better respond to stakeholder concerns and issues of sustainability.	• Develop public training and resource material for the Bank's borrowers and clients on how to better develop and manage operational grievance mechanisms. • Serve as an information resource on building and maintaining effective grievance mechanisms. • Make link between operational grievance mechanisms & more successful/sustainable projects.
To be a model of an **accountable** and **sustainable** office whose **performance** is open to stakeholder scrutiny and whose systems, structure and culture **enable** capable, professional and **engaged** IRM **staff** to work together to achieve its objectives.	• Attract, develop and retain a capable and engaged workforce. • Develop a positive and productive culture that supports innovation and 'failing forward'. • Improve IRM systems and processes focusing on stakeholder needs and consistency of service. • Strengthen our governance frameworks to ensure accountability and performance. • Seek feedback to improve our performance and pay attention to the users' perspectives.

KPIs

- Complaint processing times (targets)
- Stakeholder satisfaction/ trust scores
- IRM recommendations accepted by Board and Management
- Effectiveness measures of knowledge products and learning events
- Growth in IRMs digital footprint/ online presence
- Monitoring results of AFDB's efforts to highlight IRM at project level
- Number of complaints submitted to office. (# per approved projects)
- Number of 'strategic' connections with CSO groups and other key stakeholders
- IRM accessibility initiatives (i.e. info available in multiple languages, etc.)
- Recommendations implemented (%) according to the IDWG action plan.
- # of people/PIUs accessing our online resources on establishing effective grievance mechanisms
- Staff engagement survey scores
- Stakeholder Advisory Council in place
- IRM's performance against SDGs.