



OBSERVATOIRE DU SAHARA ET DU SAHEL
SAHARA AND SAHEL OBSERVATORY

GRIEVANCE MECHANISM GUIDE

JULY 2018

WHAT IS A GRIEVANCE MECHANISM?

It is an independent redress process that makes OSS more accessible toward populations who may be affected by its projects / programs or activities by providing a transparent, fair and effective system to respond to their concerns related to environmental, social or gender impacts.

WHY SET UP SUCH A MECHANISM?

Since its creation, OSS has strengthened its environmental, social and gender responsibility in order to guarantee positive results of its action. Thus, OSS is committed to ensure that its projects / programs or activities are implemented and executed in compliance with its environmental, social and gender obligations.

Despite all the measures undertaken by the OSS to avoid and minimize environmental and social risks related to its projects / programs or activities, these could although harm people or the environment. Therefore, OSS has put in place a grievance mechanism which will mitigate and redress these eventual situations.

WHO COULD FILE A COMPLAINT?

Any person or group of persons may file a complaint if affected (or at risk of being affected) by any OSS' supported-project/program or activity and related to environmental, social or gender aspect.

HOW TO FILE A COMPLAINT?

To file a complaint, please fill out the form available in the following languages: [Arabic](#), [English](#), [French](#), [Portuguese](#), and [Spanish](#).

The [Environmental and Social Complaints Handbook](#) provides more details.

Anonymous complaints are not accepted. However, the name of the complainant will be kept confidential if he/she makes an explicit request.

TO WHOM SEND A COMPLAINT?

Complaints should be transmitted:

- By email: doleances@oss.org.tn
- By post: Leader Yasser Arafat Boulevard, BP 31, Tunis Carthage 1080, Tunisia
- In person:
 - At the project/program executing entity level
 - OSS Headquarters (Yasser Arafat Leader Boulevard, BP 31, Tunis Carthage 1080, Tunisia)

WHAT INFORMATION SHOULD BE CONTAINED IN A COMPLAINT?

The filled-in complaint must provide the following information in order to facilitate redress process:

- Declare the identity of the author of the complaint;
- Identify the representative, if any, and provide evidence that s/he is authorized to represent the author of the complaint;

- Include the contact details of the complainant and, where applicable, the representative (address of residence and / or postal address, telephone number and / or address E-mail);
- Describe the project linked to the complaint;
- Describe how the action or omission of the OSS or its partner has caused or is likely to cause prejudice to the injured parties;
- Describe the actual and / or potential environmental and / or social impacts that led to deposit the complaint;
- Attach if possible element that can support the complaint (photo, video, statement, testimony etc.).

Complainants wishing to resubmit a complaint relating to issues previously dealt with by the Environmental and Social Committee must set out new evidence or circumstances justifying a re-examination of the case.

WHAT ARE THE LIMITATIONS OF THE MECHANISM?

In addition to anonymous complaints that will not be processed, the OSS will not deal with complaints about:

- Allegations of fraud or corruption (in this case, the file will be directed to the fraud reporting mechanism);
- Problems related to projects / programs or activities that are not executed or implemented by OSS;
- Requests of direct compensation;
- Cases brought before courts of appeal or similar bodies;
- Frivolous and malicious complaints.

WHO MANAGE THE GRIEVANCE MECHANISM?

The Environmental and Social Committee is the body responsible for the independent review of environmental, social and gender-related complaints that can't be resolved at the management level of project/program or activity.

The E&S committee is composed of:

- President of the Technical Committee for Social and Environmental Assessment;
- Responsible for gender policy;
- Responsible for the social component;
- Responsible for the environmental component.

HOW ARE COMPLAINTS BEING HANDLED?

A. Reception of the complaint

The Environment and Social Committee must acknowledge receipt of the complaint no later than 5 working days via the channels mentioned above.

B. Analysis, categorization and registration of the complaint

Within 7 working days from the date of receipt of the complaint, it is directly registered in the E&S complaints register. The information in this register includes (i) the date the complaint was received

and registered, (ii) the name and location of the project concerned, (iii) the subject of the complaint and (iv) the identity of the complainant and / or his prospective representative.

The complaint will then be categorized and transferred to the specialized committee.

C. Treatment of complaint by specialized component

Within 15 working days of the registration of the complaint, and after its categorization, the selected specialized committee will process and evaluate the resolution of the complaint.

- Treatment of environmental complaints
 - o Review of risks and evidence;
 - o E&S risk assessment and compliance with the E&S policy;
 - o Evaluation of environmental impact studies;
 - o Assessment of the relevance of mitigation actions;
 - o Update planned mitigation actions.
- Treatment of social complaints including gender
 - o Social risk assessment and compliance with E&S policy and gender policy;
 - o Evaluation of social impact studies;
 - o Assessment of the relevance of mitigation actions;
 - o Update planned mitigation actions.

The specialized committee will send a final report to the Upper Arbitration Committee.

D. Decision making

Within 10 working days of the processing and assessment of the feasibility of resolution of the complaint by the specialized technical committee, the upper arbitration panel which is chaired by the executive secretary working with the head of the specialized technical committee will make a final decision regarding the complaint.

E. Closing of the complaint and publication of the decision

Once the dispute resolution process was completed within four weeks, the OSS will record the report and all recommendations in the complaints register.

The OSS will also communicate its decision to the public via:

- OSS website;
- Executing entities websites.