



## GRIEVANCE MECHANISM TOOLKIT

A practical guide for implementing grievance mechanisms in different sectors.

# MESSAGE FROM CAO

Effective grievance mechanisms are an essential part of accountability and provide initial access to potential redress. They are important for communities impacted by private sector operations, and important for companies in every sector and local context.

If your company has committed to positive and respectful engagement with the communities impacted by your operations, then functioning and trusted grievance mechanisms are essential elements of your corporate strategy and procedures. Effective grievance mechanisms are also essential for companies to demonstrate the commitment and value they place on meaningful, ongoing stakeholder engagement. So getting them right, no matter what your business, is critical.

In the preparation of this toolkit, it became evident that there are several good grievance mechanism guides available. They emphasize background and theory, and are often geared toward large companies in the extractives sector. They also spend a lot of time on conceptualizing what a grievance mechanism should look like. These are all important elements, but this toolkit doesn't duplicate this good work.

Instead, the purpose of this toolkit is to provide practical templates and guides for companies on how to establish a grievance mechanism. It pulls together some of the work already done on grievance mechanisms into an easily digestible format. It also aims to fill some gaps in the literature by providing guidance for small and medium-sized companies that may not be able to provide the staffing and resources for managing grievance mechanisms that a large extractives company would. The focus of this toolkit is therefore on company-led grievance mechanisms. While there is new work being done in the arena of community-led grievance mechanisms, this toolkit has been developed in the context of CAO's mandate to improve the environmental and social performance of IFC and MIGA projects. This toolkit should therefore not be used to the exclusion of new and robust methods of community/company engagement.

We hope IFC and MIGA find this toolkit useful as an instrument for helping their clients enhance the effectiveness of existing grievance mechanisms, as well as implement best practices in the creation of new grievance mechanisms. Further, we trust that this toolkit will serve as a best practice guide to those tasked with consulting on, designing, implementing, and assessing grievance mechanisms.



Osvaldo Gratacós,  
Vice President, CAO



Photo by Felix Davey/CAO



Photo by Felix Davey/CAO

# ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit is useful for:



## MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS

---

- Learn the importance of management's role in ensuring that grievance mechanisms are working well by providing the right incentives to staff to implement and run them.
- Explore tools that can help management find the right staff and use data gathered from grievance mechanisms to assess and address risks, strengthen operations, and improve relationships with communities.



## DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

---

- Design, implement and run a grievance mechanism that becomes a well-respected resource that is used by the community and provides critical feedback to improve operations and manage risks.
- Troubleshoot challenges as they arise, using grievance mechanism case studies and tips learned from years of experience in the implementation of grievance mechanisms.



## EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

---

- Learn from examples in different sectors of how grievance mechanisms can be used, and how to overcome common barriers.
- Download templates that are designed to provide an additional resource for companies struggling to implement and manage grievance mechanisms, as well as a means to assess what aspects of already existing mechanisms might need improvements.

# TOOLKIT CONTENTS

## Business Case for Grievance Mechanisms

---

### Purpose, Design & Implementation

1. The Purpose and Goals of this Toolkit
2. Why Are Grievance Mechanisms a Good Company Investment?
3. Issues to Consider When Establishing a Grievance Mechanism
4. Building a Good Grievance Mechanism
5. Making a Grievance Mechanism Work
6. Putting the Process into Practice: A Grievance Mechanism Case Study
7. Closing the Loop: Using Grievance Mechanism Feedback to Improve Business Practices

## Tools & Resources

Grievance Mechanism Roles and Responsibilities for Company Staff and Contractors

Terms of Reference for a Grievance Officer and Community Liaison Officer

Publicizing a Grievance Mechanism and Providing Access

Sample Complaint Acknowledgement Letter

Grievance Mechanism Assessment

Managing Common Barriers to Implementing an Effective Grievance Mechanism

Troubleshooting for Grievance Mechanisms

Sample Community Grievance Mechanism Procedure

---

## Case Studies

An Agricultural Producer in a Rural Area Where Small-scale Farming is the Norm

An Existing Chemical Plant in a Densely Populated Industrial Zone

An Oil and Gas Exploration Project in a Densely Populated Rural Farming Area

A Mining Exploration Project in a Moderately Populated Rural Area with a Complicated Legacy, Under New Ownership

A New Port Facility in a Remote And Rural Area with a Large Indigenous Population

[\*\*CLICK HERE\*\*](#)

TO ENTER THE TOOLKIT SITE



The Office of the Compliance Advisor Ombudsman (CAO) is the independent accountability mechanism for the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), the private sector members of the World Bank Group. CAO reports directly to the President of the World Bank Group, and its mandate is to assist in addressing complaints from people affected by IFC/MIGA-supported projects in a manner that is fair, objective and constructive, and to enhance the social and environmental outcomes of those projects. For more information, see [www.cao-ombudsman.org](http://www.cao-ombudsman.org).

**ADDRESS**

Office of the Compliance  
Advisor Ombudsman (CAO)  
2121 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20433 USA

**TEL** + 1 202 458-1973  
**FAX** + 1 202 522-7400  
**EMAIL** [CAO@worldbankgroup.org](mailto:CAO@worldbankgroup.org)  
**WEB** [cao-ombudsman.org](http://cao-ombudsman.org)



Published in 2016

The information in this toolkit is for reference purposes only and is meant to serve as a guide for users that want to develop a grievance mechanism. CAO, in consultation with experts in this field, prepared this toolkit to serve as a starting point for users to develop a grievance mechanism that addresses local conditions and capacity. As with any guide, successful implementation depends on many factors beyond what can be read in a document, and CAO takes no responsibility for the success of implementation of this guide in a particular context, nor does it endorse any grievance mechanism that has been established through the use of this guide.

The findings, interpretations and conclusions expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Executive Directors of the World Bank Group or the governments they represent. CAO does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this work. The boundaries, colors, denominations, and other information shown on any map in this work do not imply any judgment on the part of CAO concerning the legal status of any territory or the endorsement or acceptance of such boundaries.

