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Note: this Standard will be subject to public consultation in Q1 of 2021 and may be revised beforehand

Standard on Grievance Mechanism

Introduction

Addressing complaints in a timely and effective way helps resolve conflicts, improves mutual understanding, strengthens accountability and provides a foundation for increased collaboration. This process will be available on WWF's public website (wwf.panda.org) and should be shared with stakeholders during the project design phase or at other appropriate interactions.

This standard fully updates the WWF Network Project Complaints Resolution Process established in 2016.

Requirements

1. Country- and Landscape-level Grievance Mechanisms

Each WWF office is responsible to develop and maintain procedures to enable individuals or groups impacted by WWF supported activities to raise and seek resolution to concerns and grievances about activities supported by WWF in that country. These procedures should be customized to respect the local context, for example, by considering localized cultural and linguistic needs and logistical constraints, as well as where possible support or supplement existing community complaints mechanisms. They must be communicated as needed to ensure that individuals and groups can easily find information about, understand, and be able to make use of the procedures.

The need for additional landscape/seascape-level grievance mechanisms will be established during the design phase of activities, and will be designed to best address risks identified and the particular social context. For high-risk landscapes/seascapes, landscape/seascape-level grievance mechanisms should always be established. Complaints received at this level must be escalated to the Country level grievance mechanism.

2. Global level - Independent Monitoring & Review Function (IMRF - Ombudsperson)

Grievances that cannot be fully addressed or resolved at landscape or country levels must be escalated to the Ombudsperson's office, which is intended to supplement localized grievance mechanisms. It provides an impartial mechanism for parties to resolve disputes through mediation. The grievance can be lodged by an affected party, WWF management, and/or WWF staff. All parties must agree to engage in dispute resolution.

All cases received by the office will be logged transparently in a case-management system. A case file will be opened, and stakeholders will be informed about the progress of their case. The office will review the complaint and assess whether it is eligible for their consideration and, if so, determine the most appropriate method to deal with the complaint.

Where **human rights abuses** are alleged to have occurred, the office where the incident is alleged to have occurred shall alert the IMRF even if the issue has been reported to a project or office level grievance mechanism. All relevant information (allegation, correspondence, etc) including the proposed management

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actions will be sent to the IMRF. The IMRF will monitor compliance by WWF management with proposed actions in the case file and report out routinely to the relevant WWF Board as well as WWF NET.

If the IMRF has received the complaint directly and a compliance review suggests there are human rights concerns, the IMRF will recommend actions for the WWF office to take, which may include a full investigation of the issue in coordination with local law enforcement agents.

3. Monitoring

Agreed action plans should establish timeframes for regular process monitoring towards resolution of the complaint. The Ombudsperson will coordinate the monitoring by organizing periodic checks – bringing together the concerned parties and relevant technical advisors for calls, meetings or other communication on the status of action plans, until they are completed. WWF will also assess the effectiveness of this complaints resolution process on an annual basis, and identify any needs for improvement.

4. Ensuring Compliance with this Process

The Ombudsperson shall ensure offices are aware of and understand this process and their responsibilities to comply with it.

5. Non-retaliation.

WWF strongly disapproves of and will not tolerate any form of retaliation against those who report concerns in good faith. Any WWF employee who engages in such retaliation will be subject to discipline up to and including employment termination. WWF will take all feasible actions to protect reporters against retaliation. Anyone who has made a report of suspicious conduct of a WWF employee and who subsequently believes he or she has been subjected to retaliation of any kind by should immediately report it by the same channels as noted herein.