



Government of Nepal

Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport (MoPIT)

Department of Roads

Development Cooperation and Implementation Division

**Accelerating Transport and Trade Connectivity in Eastern South Asia – Nepal Phase 1
Project (ACCESS)**

Upgrading of Butwal-Gorusinghe Road Section of East-West Highway



Grievance Redress Mechanism for Local Communities

January, 2024

A. Background

The Government of Nepal (GoN) is working towards accelerating economic development, reducing regional imbalances and addressing inequalities in the country. Recognizing that access to efficient transport and trade system is a key determinant of economic opportunity and service delivery. The government has requested World Bank funding to support the improvement and expansion of the East-West Highway, starting with the Butwal- Goringhale section. The World Bank's support for the Project will be part of Accelerating Transport and Trade Connectivity in Eastern South Asia –Nepal Phase 1 Project (ACCESS¹ – Phase1). The main objective of the Project is to support the more cost-efficient and resilient movement of goods and people within and across the borders of Nepal along the East-West Highway on the western side – which is key to access India's western seaports and thus for economic growth. The Department of Roads (DoR), under the Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport (MoPIT), is the implementing agency for transport and road related activities, the Ministry of Industries, Commerce, and Supplies (MoICS) will implement the trade-related activities, while the Ministry of Forests and Environment (MoFE) will lead the development and implementation of green resilient highway concept and strategy.

This ACCESS project has different components, the trade component of the program aims to enhance efficiency of cross-border trade by upgrading of trade facilities such as land ports at critical location. The project will also support resilient and green infrastructure development along the East West Highway corridor that serves as the backbone for Nepal's physical and economic integration with the ACCESS sub-region. Under this program, the GoN, through the Department of Roads (DoR), intends to upgrade the Butwal –Goringhale road section (50km) of East-West Highway from 2 lanes to 4 lane road as part of second component. During project implementation, the major construction activities tend to generate community concerns and complaints on environment, social, and fiduciary issues that can be addressed through consultation as planned in Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP). The SEP outlines the key consultation activities with local communities and is focused on disclosing relevant information about the project and creating constructive dialogue between DoR and the communities including both interested parties and project affected community members on matters relating to the project throughout the life of the project.

A Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) has been included in the SEP and describes the process by which DoR will receive, investigate, and resolve complaints and grievances from local communities throughout the project life cycle. . The SEP outlines a two-tiered grievance redress mechanism (Committee, which based in the PIU will be headed by the PIC at the local level and Project Coordinator of PCU -DoR-DCID, will be headed by the departmental level or central level grievances (GRM) with supported by the Social Development Expert at the PCU DoR-DCID received through online GRM portal of DoR-DCID. The provisions for receiving grievances, processing, finding resolution, and reporting back to complainants in a timely and culturally appropriate manner. The GRM includes a sequential escalation procedure of complaints if the complainant remains unsatisfied with the resolution and seeks to appeal.

¹ In the original ESIA, the project has been referred to as “Bangladesh, Bhutan, India Nepal Regional Transport and Trade Facilitation Program” (BBIN/Nepal Phase I).

. This note elaborates on the project GRM at the local level and describes specific steps for uptake and resolution of legitimate project-related complaints. It also outlines steps and strategies to be taken to publicize the GRM among the stakeholders utilizing the appropriate and effective means of communication such as using FM Radio and developing social media page of project and disclose separate mobile number with dedicate focal persons and notify during stakeholder consultation meeting at pre-construction phase. The GRM is built on the experiences of an existing GRM used by DoR in its projects. Based on experience, major construction activities tend to generate community concerns and complaints on environment, social, and fiduciary issues.

The focal person (PIC) of existing project GRM also is responsible addressing GBV and CSEA/SH-related grievances and the gender/ social development expert of PCUs DoR-DCID will oversee GBV/SEA/SH and CSEAH related complaints. The project will place its uppermost priority on handling and managing the GBV/SEA/SH and CSEAH related grievance by maintaining full confidentiality of the survivor. The PCU- DCID-DoR and PIC will put in place necessary mechanisms for confidential reporting with safe and ethical documentation of GBV/SEA/SH and CSEAH issues at the centre and the project site office at the local level. Although the first receiver of the grievances in relation to GBV/SEA/SH and CSEAH will be the E&S staff of the project site office, the project will also assign a female staff to respond the SEA/SH and CSEAH receiver case and the staff will be trained on managing and handling such grievances.

The project is committed to operate a responsive and functioning Grievance Redressed Mechanism (GRM) to address concerns and complaints of beneficiaries and project stakeholders by adopting an understandable and transparent process that is culturally appropriate and readily accessible to all the segments of affected communities. The project's GRM will be operationalized by the PIC at no cost to complainants and guarantees that there will no retribution for people who lodge complaints on project activities.

B. Purpose and Objective of the GRM

This GRM is prepared in compliance with the World Bank's Environmental and Social Standard 10 on Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure and is designed to enable stakeholders to raise project-related grievances and complaints with project authorities and to receive fair and timely resolution of such complaints. The main objectives of the GRM are:

- Provide affected people with avenues for lodging complaints or resolving any dispute that may arise during the project lifecycle.
- Ensure that appropriate and mutually acceptable redress actions are identified and implemented to the satisfaction of complainants.
- Avoid the need to resort to judicial proceedings as far as possible.
- In the case of indigenous people and vulnerable people, adopt culturally appropriate and accessible means by which they can lodge complaints about redress through their customary dispute settlement mechanisms.

C. Scope and Grievance implementation procedure

The GRM applies to activities implemented by the DoR-DCID and its contractors under Component 2 of the ACCESS; and primarily aims to uptake and resolve complaints including grievances related to SEA/SH and CSEAH that may result from the activities related to the road. The procedures for lodging complaints and grievances provided in this note is intended for project-affected persons, local communities, and stakeholders within the area of influence of the road. Contractors as well as design and supervision consultants are obliged to cooperate and support DoR-DCID through the uptake, assessment and resolution of grievances and complaints linked to their activities. The scope does not include community requests for projects to DoR and its contractors for social responsibility projects, and labor matters. A separate workers GRM will be established and will be dedicated for labour-related complaints. Whilst DoR encourages local communities to use this GRM to seek redress, complainants may utilize other existing mechanisms and facilities provided by the laws of Nepal. The project will develop a written grievance procedure/manual in consultation with project impacted parties and stakeholders. It will incorporate the following steps:

- Means and ways to inform and educate stakeholders about GRM procedures

D. Broad categories of complaints and grievances

Based on similar project experiences and the nature of the proposed project activities, it is expected that a number of broad categories of grievances may become imperative as the project proceeds through implementation to closure. They include:

- a. **Administrative concerns:** queries and complaints in relation to the behaviour or conduct of project and contractor staff, or unfair project procedures and practices.
- b. **Design concerns:** queries in relation to the design of sections of the roads and other related infrastructure.
- c. **Involuntary resettlement and compensation:** land acquisition, physical displacement, and economic displacement, compensation, and livelihood issues in relation to the road.
- d. **Environment, health and safety:** impacts of project activities on the immediate built and bio-physical environment, health and safety of the local population. These may include complaints related to speeding construction vehicles, incidents, excavation, and open pits, ponding of nearby farms and homes as well as noise and environment pollution.
- e. **Stakeholder concerns:** such as complaints about GBV SEA/SH related issues, workers related issues, exclusion from project benefits or lack of inclusion in stakeholder consultations.

E. Organizational framework

The road Project Manager is responsible for overseeing the resolution of grievances at the road project site level. The senior engineer of the project will be designated as the focal point at the road project site office for recording and resolution of grievances received at the site office.

A GRM Committee has been formed on 24th January 2024 and comprises six members. The GRM is chaired by Project Manager and the members include, a dedicated engineer (the focal person), and representatives from each of the five local government bodies (Butwal Sub-

Metropolitan City, Sainamaina Municipality, Kanchan Rural Municipality, Banganga Municipality and Buddhabhumi Municipality) within the project area of the BG Road project. Annex 1 provides an example the current grievance process flow.

The ACCESS PCU Project Coordinator at the DCID Branch in Babarmahal will oversee the overall management of the project GRM supported by Social Development Expert. The focal person at the DCID branch office in Babarmahal will be designated to receive and manage grievances received at the central level, who will be a project engineer. The PCU, including the Social Development Expert, Environmental Specialist, Occupational Health and Safety Specialist, and Gender Specialist, as well as project engineers, will provide support in investigating grievances and developing options for resolution.

F. GRM management process

Below is a step-wise sequence of how the GRM will function:

Step 1: Receive, register and acknowledge the grievance

The complainant can register complaints/grievances at:

- The road project office is located at Butwal Rupandehi District. A senior project engineer at Project, with an additional responsibility for this GRM, will serve as the focal person at the site office to receive, record, screen and submit project-related complaints to the Project Manager for decision. In addition to manual options, complainants may choose to lodge complaints through dedicated phone lines (071-591879) and email address: “roadprojectbgc@gmail.com” for receiving grievances. Grievance forms will be available at the project site offices and on DoR websites <https://grms.dor.gov.np/> for complainants to submit written grievances (see Annex 2).
- The Construction Supervision Consultant’s (CSC) office. The CSC will have a dedicated phone number, email address, and/or social media account for receiving, screening and submitting the relevant grievances to the Project Manager. CSC environmental and social experts and community mobilizers will also facilitate and support the affected persons and parties throughout the GRM process.
- . A senior project engineer will be designated as the focal person for recording and addressing the grievances received at the DCID branch office in Babarmahal. Grievance forms will also be available to submit written grievances.

Other ways include at the road division offices at Butwl and the BG road contractor’s office. Alternatively, the complainant will be able to submit complaints via the DoR GRM portal located at DoR GRM website, accessible here: www.grms.gov.np. There is also a dedicated telephone number (01- 5903753) and email address (dgdor@dor.gov.np).

For grievances provided in-person, where possible the grievance will be addressed and resolved immediately, in consultation with the contractor as required, with the details of the grievance and resolution recorded. If the grievance cannot be immediately resolved, the focal person will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and provide the complainant a schedule by which the complaint will be addressed.

The focal point for grievances will be responsible for recording and acknowledging that the grievance has been received and for advising the complainants of the expected time for

resolution. For grievances provided via the GRM portal, phone or email, acknowledgement of the grievance will be given to the complainant within 48 hours with information on next steps including expected time to receive a response. The focal point will provide acknowledgement to the complainant. The grievance officer, who is responsible for reviewing all grievances received via the DoR web-based GRM portal, will forward all ACCESS-related grievances to the focal person at DCID and Project site as appropriate..

Grievances received at the BG Road site office will initially be recorded in paper form using a grievance register and will be later moved to a digital form using excel. The focal point at DCID and project office or CSC will record all grievances received via a GRM table in excel.

Step 2: Investigate and evaluate grievance

Where possible, grievances will be resolved at the point they are received. The Project Coordinator at DCID and the Project Manager at project site will determine the legitimacy of the grievance through a rapid assessment. The focal point at project sites will seek to resolve the grievance and where not possible, will forward the grievance to the GRM committee for investigation, or the CSC as required. The GRM committee will undertake fact finding and fact checking.

Based on investigations, the GRM Committee will develop options for redress, and will provide recommendations to implement, through CSC where appropriate. In some cases, the Project Manager will confer with the Project Coordinator at DCID when developing options.

Step 3: Respond to grievance

The various options developed in Step 2 will be evaluated based on cost implications and reputation. The complainant will be contacted, and the options for resolution will be discussed. The options will be discussed with the complainant within 14 days or months of submitting the complaint. Following discussions with the complainant, the agreed option will be selected, and resolution of the grievance will be communicated, and then implemented. Where the complainant does not select any of the options discussed, the GRM Committee will discuss again and where required will escalate to the Project Coordinator or Project Director. For grievances which require a longer period of time to address, the complainant will be informed of progress of grievance on a regular basis. The complainant also has recourse to the state judicial system at any stages of grievance redress process.

Step 4: Close-out/follow up

Once the solution has been implemented, the focal point through CSC will inform the complainant that the solution has been implemented and confirm that the complainant is satisfied with the solution. The focal point will close off the grievance with sign off from the Project Coordinator. The grievance will also be closed in the register with details of how the grievance was resolved.

G. GRM monitoring and reporting

The focal point, upon receipt of a grievance, will record the grievance into an excel **Grievance Log**, using the same format for recording grievances as used under the Strategic Road Connectivity Trade Improvement Project (SRCTIP). The Grievance Log will also serve as a

quick way to ensure follow up that the dialogue is constantly maintained with the complainant. At the local level, the focal point will initially record the grievance into the grievance register (paper-form) and will later record in a digital (excel) format. The focal point will also be responsible for monitoring the GRM, ensuring that all received grievances are being addressed and their status updated in the Grievance Log.

The focal point will be responsible for preparing and providing a monthly GRM report which will be part of the agenda for regular project review meetings and will also be provided to the World Bank. The monthly report will include the following indicators:

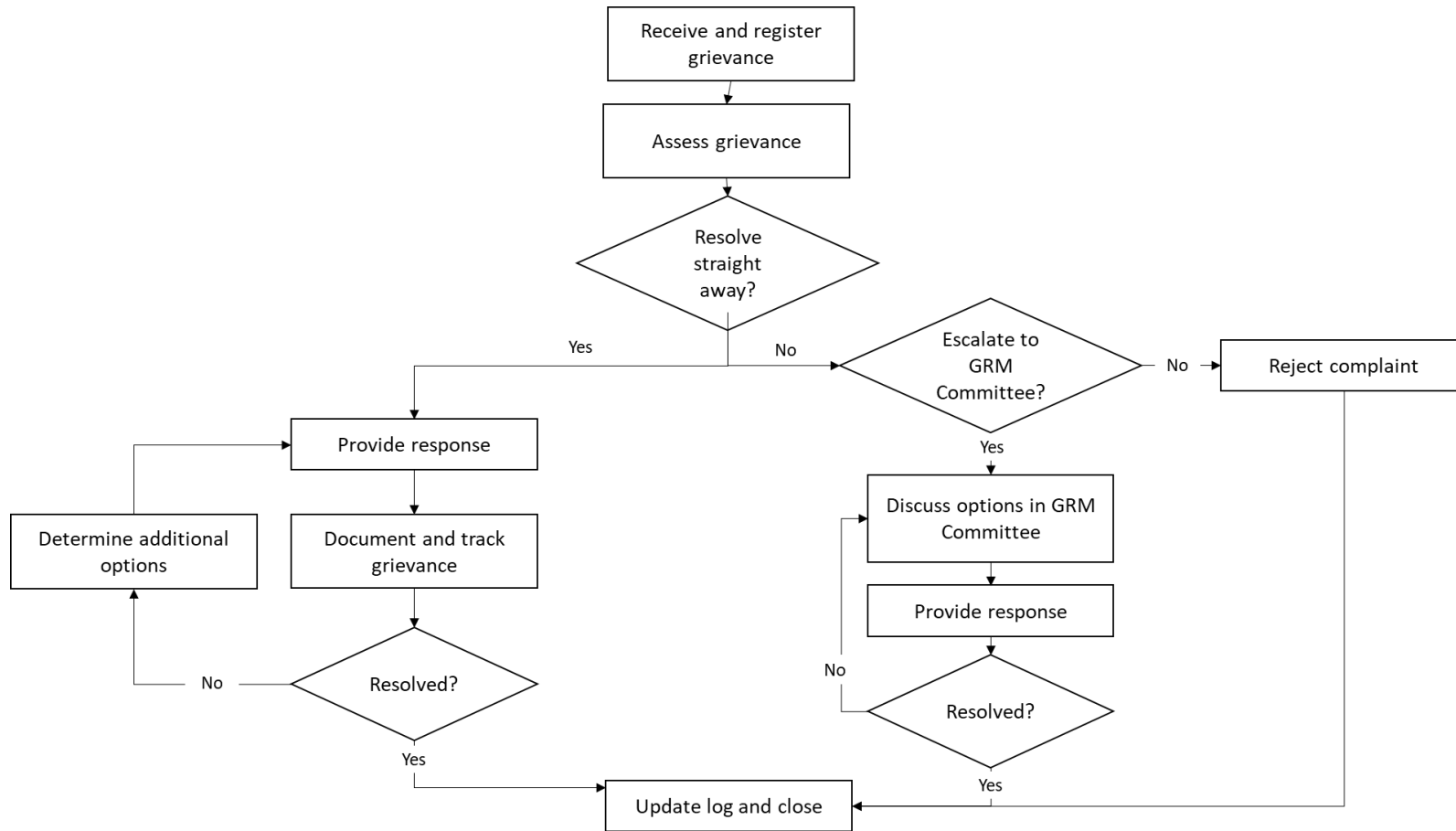
- Open cases at the beginning of the month
- New cases at the beginning of the month
- Closed cases at the end of the month
- Open cases at the end of the month
- Average response time from registration of complaint to agreement with complaint and close
- Number of complainants expressing satisfaction with the GRM
- Number of complaints per category

The Project Coordinator will ensure that all grievances including their resolution measures are communicated to the public.

H. Disclosure of the GRM

Prior to commencement of construction activities, the DoR-DCID/Project/CSC will initiate community sensitization and disseminate information about this GRM in all project-affected communities. Multiple channels for information dissemination will be used. The BG road project site office and the DCID branch office will publish notices in the local newspaper, and will broadcast on local FM, by the end of March 2024, with information on how stakeholders can submit ACCESS project-related grievances. The information about the provision of GRM has already been dispatched in project affected respective municipalities/rural municipalities including wards' notice board. The project office plus relevant municipal and ward offices, will also later prepare and display signs with project information including how to submit questions and grievances in relation to ACCESS, including focal and nodal persons, and relevant phone numbers and email addresses.

Annex 1: Grievance Flow Chart



Annex: 2 Grievance form and close-out template

Grievance Form PART 1 - Contact and Details	
Complaint number :	
Date: Recorded by:	
Complainant details (Tick the box for anonymity <input type="checkbox"/>)	
Name: Category [community/ contract worker/ supplier/ contractor]: Telephone number: Address: Preferred method of contact:	
Grievance Log PART 2 - Description of grievance(s)	
Describe the grievance below.	
Mode of communication (written/ verbal/ meetings/ mediator): Date of grievance: Date of acknowledgement:	
Signatures	
Recorder: Claimant: Date:	
Grievance Closed Out PART 3 - Resolution	
Describe the steps taken to resolve the grievance and the outcome.	
Department: Mode of communication for reply (meeting/ written/ verbal/ display): Date closed:	
Signatures	
Complainant: Project representative: Date:	