

# UNDP'S SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS & ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISM



Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.

## SES

The **SOCIAL & ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS** are integral to quality assurance and risk management in all UNDP programming. There are 10 key components to the SES.

Three cross-cutting principles that apply across all UNDP programmes and projects:

- 1 Human Rights**  
UNDP is committed to supporting universal observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.
- 2 Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment**  
UNDP Programmes and Projects will be gender-responsive in their design and implementation.
- 3 Environmental Sustainability**  
UNDP will ensure that environmental sustainability is systematically mainstreamed into its Programmes and Projects.

And **Seven Standards**, which are applied at the project level:

- 1 Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Natural Resource Management**  
Maintain and enhance the goods and services provided by biodiversity and ecosystems.
- 2 Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation**  
Ensure UNDP projects are sensitive to climate change risks and do not contribute to increased vulnerability.



**Social & Environmental Compliance Unit** **Stakeholder Response Mechanism**

ACCOUNTABILITY, transparency and positive impact are cornerstones of UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards (SES). News of the Standards - and the new Accountability Mechanism that helps ensure the Standards are met - is going global! More and more communities, NGOs, governments and other UNDP partners are requesting information about the SES and the Accountability Mechanism, and how they can be fully and practically applied.

The Accountability Mechanism has two branches: 1) the Social and Environmental Compliance Unit (SECU), which responds to claims that the standards are not being implemented adequately; and 2) the Stakeholder Response Mechanism (SRM), which provides a formal avenue for stakeholders to engage with UNDP when they believe a project may have adverse social or environmental impacts.

UNDP will be conducting outreach and raising awareness of the SES and Accountability Mechanism among a range of partners and stakeholders. Please [send us your feedback](#), questions and ideas for learning and information sharing!

## Affected people have a CHOICE

They can ask SECU to investigate UNDP's compliance with its social and environmental commitments; they can attempt to resolve complaints through the SRM; or they can request through a SECU review and an SRM process.

Download the form for submitting a request to SECU and/or to SRM: [www.undp.org/secu-srm](http://www.undp.org/secu-srm)

### 3 Community Health, Safety and Working Conditions

Avoid or minimize risks and impacts to community health and safety, with particular attention to marginalized groups.

### 4 Cultural Heritage

Ensure that Cultural Heritage is protected in the course of development activities.

### 5 Displacement and Resettlement

Avoid physical and economic displacement in UNDP projects.

### 6 Indigenous Peoples

Promote and protect indigenous people's rights.

### 7 Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency

Meet international standards for preventing pollution and using resources efficiently.



## Learn more about SES

SES Website  
[www.undp.org/ses](http://www.undp.org/ses)

Contact the SES team:  
[info.ses@undp.org](mailto:info.ses@undp.org)

## Learn more about the Accountability Mechanism

Download the [SECU & SRM Brochure](#) and share it with your contacts!

Visit the UNDP Accountability Website  
[www.undp.org/secu-srm](http://www.undp.org/secu-srm)

# SECU

The Social and Environmental Compliance Unit investigates allegations that UNDP's standards, screening procedures or other UNDP commitments are not being implemented adequately, and that harm may result to people or the environment. It is housed in the Office of Audit and Investigations (OAI), which functions independently from other UNDP operations. SECU is managed by a Lead Compliance Officer.

A SECU compliance review is available to any community or individual with concerns about the impacts of a UNDP programme or project. The SECU team is mandated to independently and impartially investigate valid requests from locally impacted people, and to report its findings and recommendations publicly. The UNDP Administrator decides what actions should be taken, if any, to respond to SECU's findings.

Compliance reviews may also be initiated by the UNDP Administrator and by SECU's Lead Compliance Officer, in the event a significant issue is identified.

The purpose of SECU is to ensure compliance with established institutional policies in the context of a specific project or programme. It does not assign blame to individuals or entities.

SECU seeks to ensure, through ongoing dialogue, that external stakeholders are aware of and know how to access SECU. SECU also works to increase awareness at UNDP of issues that have potential to cause non-compliance with UNDP policies and procedure.

## Learn more about SES

Visit the SECU Website  
[www.undp.org/secu](http://www.undp.org/secu)

Contact the SECU team:  
[secuhotline@undp.org](mailto:secuhotline@undp.org)

Follow [SECU](#) on Facebook!

# SRM

The Stakeholder Response Mechanism offers locally affected people an opportunity to work with other stakeholders to resolve concerns about the social and environmental impacts of a UNDP project.

SRM is intended to supplement the proactive stakeholder engagement that is required of UNDP and its Implementing Partners throughout the project cycle. Communities and individuals may request an SRM process when they have used standard channels for project management and quality assurance, and are not satisfied with the response.

When a valid SRM request is submitted, UNDP focal points at country, regional and headquarters levels will work with concerned stakeholders and Implementing Partners to address and resolve the concerns that have been raised. Given their relationships with local stakeholders, Country Offices are generally best positioned to lead the response to SRM requests. For more complex cases, UNDP regional and headquarters counterparts may be involved. UNDP may also seek agreement from requestors and other stakeholders to engage independent mediators to help resolve the issues.

When parties are able to agree on a path forward, SRM will assist in monitoring implementation of the agreement to ensure commitments are met and the issues are adequately addressed. In situations where the concerns have not been resolved, SRM will work with partners and stakeholders to explore alternative avenues for resolution.

## Learn more about SRM

Visit the SRM Website  
[www.undp.org/srm](http://www.undp.org/srm)

Contact the SRM team:  
[stakeholder.response@undp.org](mailto:stakeholder.response@undp.org)

Follow [SRM](#) on Facebook!

## Join our mailing list!

Get news and updates about the Accountability Mechanism, SES, and outreach and learning opportunities.

[www.undp.org/ses-get-involved](http://www.undp.org/ses-get-involved)