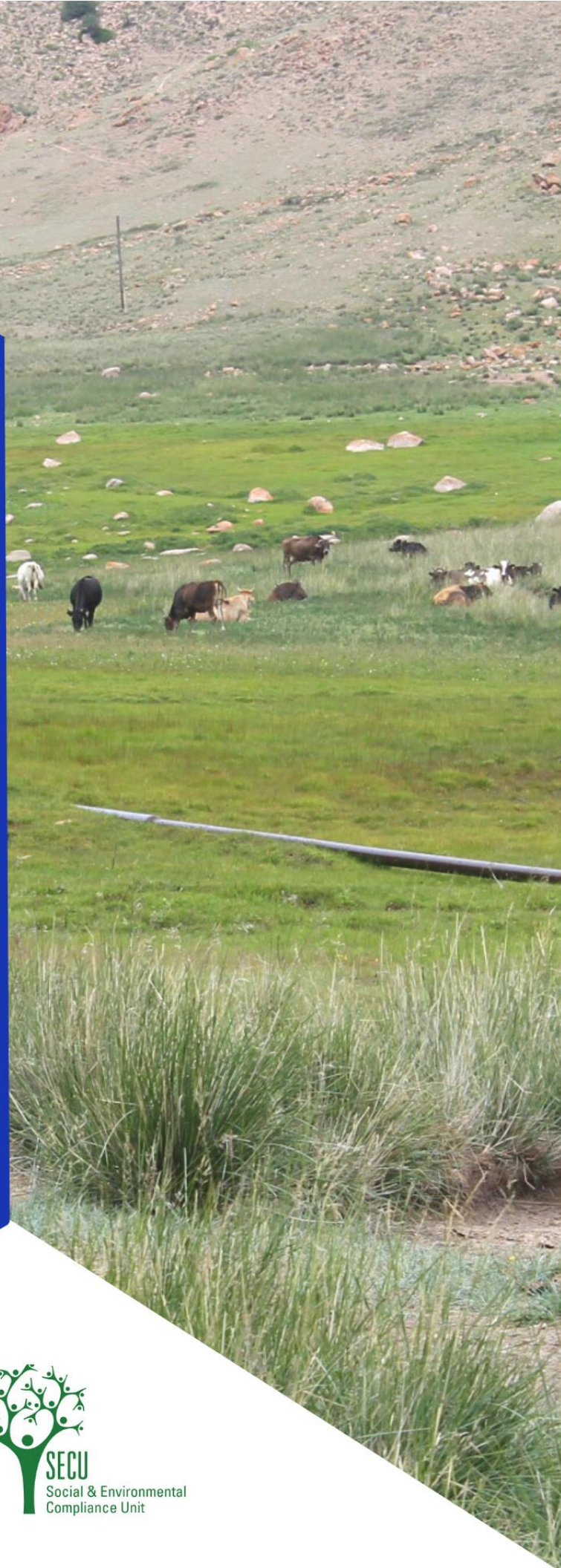


2021 Annual Report

Social and
Environmental
Compliance Unit
(SECU)

Office of Audit and Investigations



FOREWORD

We welcome you to the 2021 Annual Report for the Social and Environmental Compliance Unit located in the independent Office of Audit and Investigations, (OAI) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). You will see that SECU's portfolio of work continues to expand, geographically into new regions and countries, sectorally into new elements of UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards, and unpredictably in coping with the impact of COVID-19 on SECU's operations, on UNDP's development work, and on the communities for whom we hope to contribute to a better future.

What you see in this report is a team effort in all ways. We rely upon individuals, communities, and civil society to bring their concerns about the direction of a UNDP project to our attention. As a growing roster of staff members and consultants, SECU takes a team approach to bring to bear a unique group of experts to address community concerns. And SECU relies on UNDP staff and management to create a learning culture, welcoming independent analysis of their work with a view to delivering more sustainable projects and activities in the future by creating partnerships with the beneficiary communities.

This report is necessarily a brief summary of our work. We would welcome you to visit our website, www.undp.org/secu, to get an update on cases or simply to learn more about SECU, and always feel free to contact us.

The Social and Environmental Compliance Unit (SECU) at the independent Office of Audit and Investigations (OAI) of UNDP

ABOUT SECU

SECU's mission

The Social and Environmental Compliance Unit (SECU), located in the independent Office of Audit and Investigations (OAI) of UNDP, investigates allegations of non-compliance with the UNDP Social and Environmental Standards (SES) and other relevant policies from project-affected stakeholders, and recommends measures to remedy harm to the environment or affected communities.

UNDP established SECU to ensure accountability to individuals and communities, and to provide those affected by UNDP projects with an effective system of independently investigating alleged non-compliance with its social and environmental commitments.

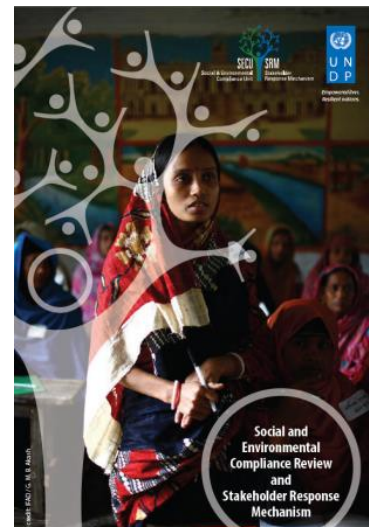
The purpose of SECU is to ensure accountability to those individuals and communities with whom we work. It is important that these voices are heard, and that UNDP has an opportunity to respond to the issues that they have raised.

Achim Steiner – UNDP Administrator

Overview of compliance review process

SECU processes each complaint in an independent, impartial, and transparent manner, following an established procedure for every case. First, SECU determines if the complaint is eligible according to the following criteria: Does the activity a) relate to a project or programme supported by UNDP, b) raise actual or potential issues relating to compliance with UNDP's social and environmental commitments, and c) reflect that, as a result of UNDP's noncompliance with its social and environmental commitments, complainants may be or have been harmed?

If the eligibility criteria are met, SECU then investigates whether UNDP is meeting its social and environmental commitments regarding the specific UNDP-supported activity. If non-compliance is found, SECU recommends



Click [here](#) for more information about SECU, SRM and the Compliance Review Process.

measures to bring UNDP back into compliance with the SES and other relevant policies. SECU's final report is submitted to the Administrator for a decision on follow-up to SECU's findings and recommendations. The final report is simultaneously provided to the complainants and released to the public.

Case Registry

For public access to a repository of case information, the SECU website includes a Case Registry that shows all registered cases, their status, and any public documents relevant to the compliance review. To access the case registry, please visit

<https://info.undp.org/sites/registry/secu/SECUPages/SECUSummary.aspx>

Team

The team is composed of one Lead Compliance Officer, one Head of Unit, three Compliance Officers, one Case and Policy Specialist, two Case and Communications Analysts and one Research and Outreach intern. The Unit is located within the Investigations Section of OAI, and is overseen by the Deputy Director, Head of Investigations under the Director of OAI.

Outreach

SECU Website

SECU is committed to transparent investigations. The SECU website provides all essential information about its operations. To ensure easy public access to a repository of case information, all registered cases and related documents are available on the [SECU Case Registry](#).

For more information on submitting a request or complaint, please visit our website at www.undp.org/secu

Outreach missions

SECU organizes regular outreach events with civil society organizations (CSOs) and communities in regions where UNDP has a significant portfolio of projects. These events are either in-person or virtual meetings with CSOs to explain SECU's mandate and how to access it. CSOs also have the opportunity to have one-on-one meetings with the SECU team to discuss specific issues.

Outreach Video

In order to reach stakeholders potentially affected by UNDP activities beyond in-person outreach, SECU has created a [video](#) with subtitles translated into ten languages that helps explain SECU's missions, mandate, and procedures to file a complaint. This video is available on our abovementioned webpage.



SECU's outreach video is available in 10 different languages.

Social Media

For more information about SECU, please visit our abovementioned website, our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/SECU.UNDP/ ; our Twitter account: www.twitter.com/SECU_UNDP/ ; or our LinkedIn account www.linkedin.com/company/undp-secu/about/

Our social media pages provide updates on SECU's activities and a platform for engagement with the public through messaging and post-sharing.

This Annual Report summarizes activities of the Social and Environmental Compliance Unit (SECU) for the 2021 calendar year. As such, the status of cases under investigation is described as of 31 December 2021.

HIGHLIGHTS 2021

The world is still experiencing the serious economic and public health repercussions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, reversing progress in global poverty reduction and human development. All the while, SECU continued with its mission to provide an effective system of independent and objective investigations of alleged violations of UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards (SES). As of December 31, 2021, SECU had 11 active cases, with two recent cases registered in November 2021 related to projects in Mozambique and UNDP's Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (PAPP). SECU also continued to make progress in its active cases conducting remote meetings and interviews, and thorough document reviews.

In 2021, SECU launched a formal review of its Investigation Guidelines and associated policies and procedures. The Review will result in a set of revisions to SECU's operational documents, which will be published for a public comment period. SECU also continued with its outreach activities including a virtual outreach event for Caribbean Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) with other international accountability mechanisms, the annual meeting of the Independent Accountability Mechanism Network (IAMnet), and a webinar with the Grievance Redress and Accountability Mechanism (GRAM) Partnership.

Lastly, SECU created and filled three staff positions in 2021, which will be instrumental in helping SECU achieve its mandate of generating lessons learned for the organization, ensuring accountability to project-affected communities, and promoting environmental sustainability in its programming.















Active cases as of 31 December 2021



*Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People

CASE ACTIVITY

Summary of case activity in 2021

Eligibility determination	Investigation	Monitoring	Closed
 Iraq  Palestine  Mozambique	 Myanmar  India  Kyrgyzstan  Colombia	 Malawi  Jordan  Cameroon  Mauritius	 Uganda  Panama  Republic of Congo

Eligibility determination

Case SECU0016 - Iraq

Funding Facility for Stabilization

Status: Eligibility determination

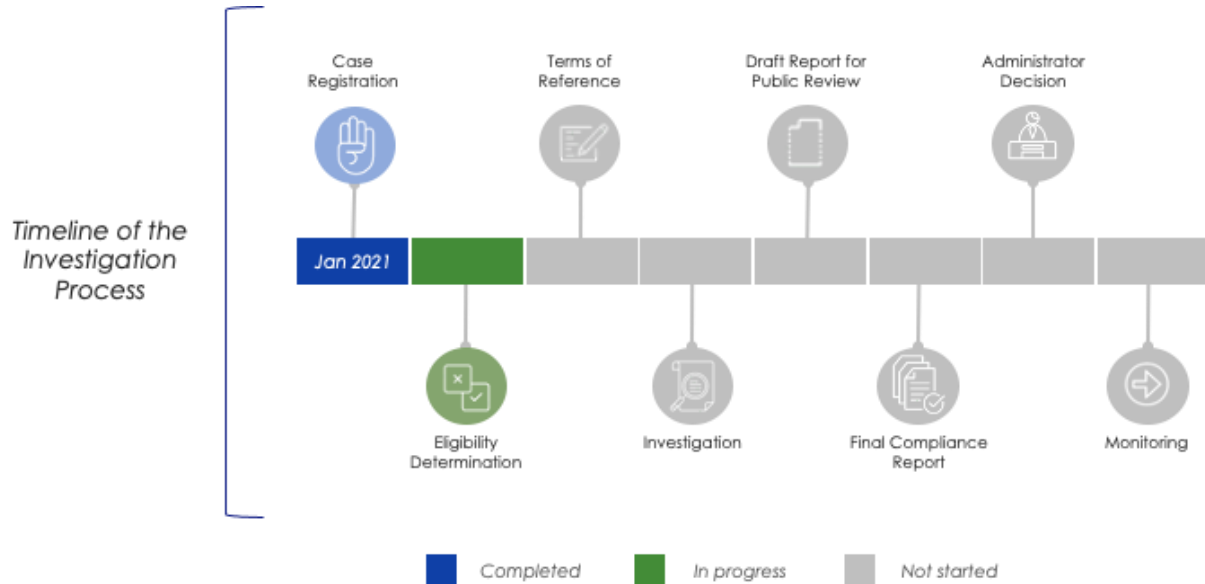


In January 2021, a resident of the city of Fallujah submitted a complaint concerning an infrastructure project supported by UNDP. The complaint stated that around 25 to 30 families were facing eviction from their homes in the city of Fallujah, near the Euphrates River, to make way for a sewage plant. According to the complainant, the families had been living on the land since 2003 and were encouraged by the Government to settle in the area as farmers. The complainant alleges that in January 2020 the families started receiving pressure from the provincial and subdistrict authorities to vacate the area. The complainant denied having received any offer of compensation or relocation assistance from the Government or from UNDP.

The eligibility determination was delayed because the UNDP Country Office implemented actions to address the complainants' concerns.

As of December 2021, SECU was confirming the information on the revised plans to finalize the eligibility determination.

Status as of 31 December 2021



Case SECU0018 - Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (PAPP)

PAPP
Transboundary Wastewater Management in Attil / Tulkarem Governorate Palestine

Status: Eligibility determination

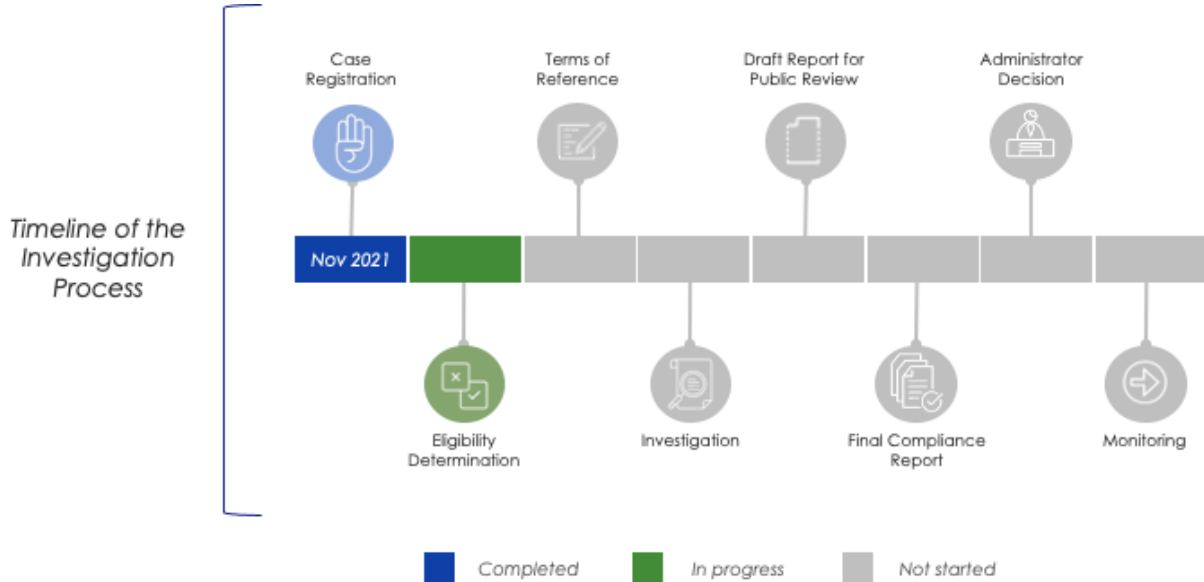


In November 2021, SECU received a complaint from a confidential source, regarding a project to build a transboundary wastewater management system in the municipality of Attil, in the Governorate of Tulkarem. The project is supported by UNDP's Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (PAPP).

The complainant claimed that their and their neighbors' properties would be negatively impacted because of the installation of the system. The complainant noted that in the context of the project a wastewater pipeline would be installed through their properties, for which they had not given consent or approval.

Following confirmation from the Special Representative of the Administrator for PAPP that the pipeline in question will be constructed along the main public roads, SECU determined the case ineligible in March 2022.

Status as of 31 December 2021



Case SECU0019 – Mozambique

Mozambique Recovery Facility

Status: Eligibility determination

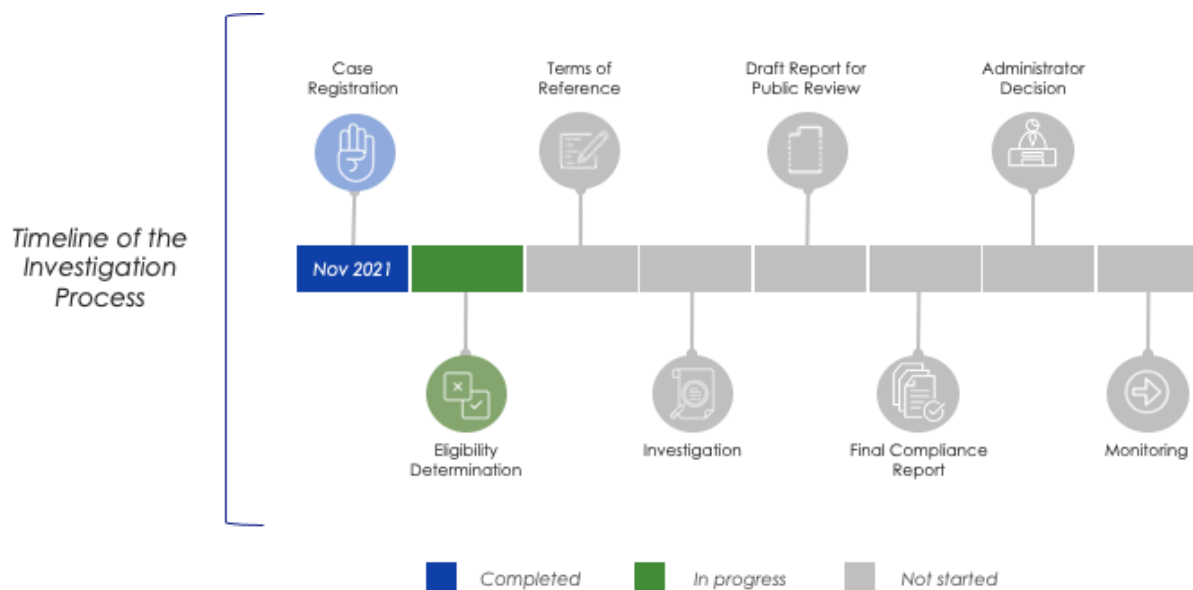


In November 2021, SECU received a complaint from Mr. Lukas Schiebe of LevasFlor, concerning the Mozambique Recovery Facility (MRF). MRF is a UNDP project in partnership with the Government of Mozambique for resilient post-disaster recovery, developed after the country suffered a series of devastating cyclones.

The complainant raised concerns about the UNDP's sourcing and tracing requirements for wood to be used in the construction of resettlement homes under the MRF.

As of December 2021, SECU was determining the eligibility of the case.

Status as of 31 December 2021



Investigation Phase

Case SECU0010 – Myanmar

Integrated Protected Area Land and Seascape Management in Tanintharyi (Ridge to Reef)

Status: Investigation ongoing



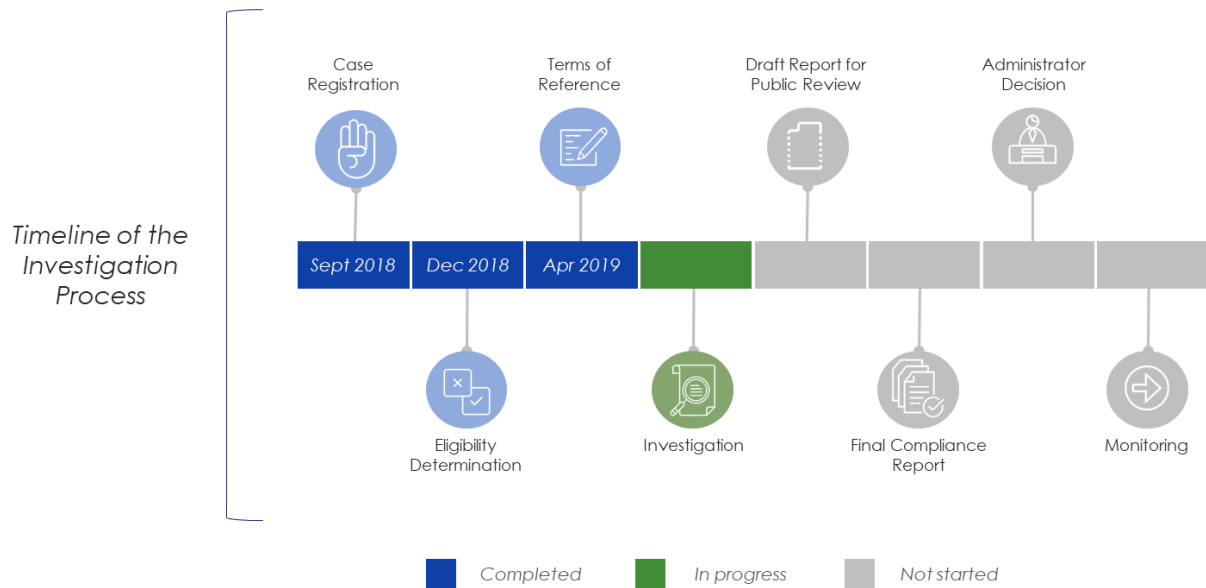
In August 2018, the 'Conservation Alliance Tanawthari' (CAT) filed a complaint on behalf of the Indigenous Karen communities in the Tanintharyi Region of Myanmar. The complainants alleged that implementation of UNDP's Ridge to Reef protected area project in Tanintharyi would violate their right to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) and the rights of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees to return to areas from which they were displaced by armed conflict. The complainants also claimed the project threatened to contravene the 'interim arrangements' of the National Ceasefire Accords agreed by the government of Myanmar and Ethnic Armed Organizations and failed to recognize Indigenous community-driven initiatives to protect indigenous territories.

In October 2018, UNDP Myanmar suspended the project indefinitely in response to the issues and concerns highlighted in the complaint. The SECU team traveled to Myanmar in July 2019 to conduct field visits and interviews with complainant communities and other stakeholders. A planned second trip to Myanmar was canceled in February 2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic spread. As a

result, the SECU team split the investigation into two phases in order to progress the case as much as possible.

In February 2022, SECU released the first part of the Investigation Report. Considering the current situation on the ground, SECU is not soliciting comments on this draft and is not issuing any deadline to receive feedback at this time. Other investigative activities are suspended until further notice.

Status as of 31 December 2021



Case SECU0014 - India

Enhancing climate resilience of India's coastal communities

Status: Investigation ongoing



In July 2020, a community represented by the Democratic Traditional Fishers Workers Forum, in association with Fridays for Future Andhra Pradesh, submitted a complaint to SECU concerning a Green Climate Fund (GCF) project implemented by UNDP. The project is designed to use community-based approaches to protect mangroves and other coastal resources as a means of protecting vulnerable communities from severe weather events brought about by climate change.

The complainants claim that the destruction of mangrove forests near the port city of Kakinada in Andhra Pradesh by the State Government is leading to loss of livelihoods and adverse environmental effects for local communities. The State Government of Andhra Pradesh seeks to build a housing project on the site of the destroyed mangrove forest area. The complainants claim that the destruction of the mangrove forest, which took place when India had been placed under lockdown to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, will not only render the fishing communities more vulnerable to the intensifying cyclones, but that the industrial city of Kakinada itself would be placed at greater risk.

On January 2021, SECU determined the complaint met the eligibility criteria for a Compliance Review. As such, the SECU team prepared the Terms of Reference in April 2021. Given the COVID-19 surge in the Spring of 2021 in India, SECU postponed a field mission and continues its investigation activities remotely. SECU aims to conduct a field mission in 2022 to meet with stakeholders.

Status as of 31 December 2021



Case SECU0015 - Kyrgyzstan

Socio-economic development of communities around radioactive sites in Kyrgyzstan

Status: Investigation ongoing



In September 2020, a group of Kadji Sai village residents in Kyrgyzstan transmitted their complaint through a representative asserting that the village's water supply system, rehabilitated as part of a UNDP project, does not provide clean and safe drinking water. As the system is the only source of drinking water for the village, complainants are concerned about being harmed by both contaminants in the water as well as additional costs of having to repeatedly buy bottled water or household filtration equipment that frequently clogs from excessive pollution-related residue.



Dirty water filter from the village of Kadji Sai

complainants are concerned about being harmed by both contaminants in the water as well as additional costs of having to repeatedly buy bottled water or household filtration equipment that frequently clogs from excessive pollution-related residue.

In December 2020, SECU determined that the complaint was eligible for a compliance review. SECU engaged a local engineer in Kyrgyzstan to assess the current condition of the water supply system in Kadji Sai. SECU will issue its draft Investigation Report in the Spring of 2022.

Status as of 31 December 2021



Case SECU0017 - Colombia

Sector Privado y Agenda 2030

Status: Investigation ongoing



In May 2021, SECU received a complaint from Amazon Watch on behalf of local NGOs representing the Siona of Buenavista and the Perla Amazónica communities in Colombia.

The complaint alleges that UNDP Colombia's project agreement with Geopark, a Latin American oil and gas company, violates UNDP's social and environmental commitments as Geopark has been accused of environmental and human rights violations. The complainants also claim UNDP failed to properly investigate the company prior to the agreement's signing. The complainants claimed that the agreement with Geopark conflicted with the Sustainable Amazon for Peace Project, a UNDP project in which the complainant communities are participants. The complaint further claims that UNDP failed to communicate the project prior to its approval to local communities in the region. The complainants say that the trust communities had in UNDP Colombia has been compromised because of this process.

In December 2021, SECU published the final Terms of

Reference for the investigation and began the investigation phase.

Status as of 31 December 2021



Monitoring Phase

Case SECU0005 – Malawi

Malawi National Registration and Identification System

Status: Monitoring



In October 2017, SECU received a complaint from Malawi related to the UNDP-supported Malawi National Registration and Identification System (NRIS) project. The complaint described a number of serious acts and misconduct committed by government officials, UNDP project implementation staff, sub-contractors and other stakeholders, against Registration Officials.

SECU issued a set of recommendations including ensuring that contractors are made aware of, and properly supervised to implement measures to comply with UNDP's SES. In March 2020, the Administrator issued his decision requesting to ensure all procurement processes include SES requirements, and that contractors are made aware of and supervised to implement relevant measures to comply with SES. Additionally, he requested to continue to bring all credible allegations of sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse to the attention of OAI for its

assessment, and ensure that measures required by SES around labour standards are applied to future UNDP projects as appropriate, including in the activities of sub-contractors; among other measures.

The SECU team is monitoring the implementation of the Administrator's decision. The NRIS project continues in Malawi with activity planned to register minors, though the project is delayed due to COVID-19. SECU continues to gather information to determine whether project activity is consistent with the Social and Environmental Standards (SES) and will post relevant monitoring documents to its registry as they become available.

Case SECU0007 – Jordan

Mitigating the impact of the Syrian refugee crisis on Jordanian vulnerable host communities

Status: Monitoring



In June 2018, an NGO based in Jordan filed a complaint regarding the construction of a waste management and transfer station in the Jerash area as part of a UNDP Jordan project to improve solid waste management. In December 2019, SECU issued its Final Investigation Report. The report found UNDP Jordan failed to conduct a thorough Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP).

The UNDP Administrator issued his decision in June 2020, establishing follow-up actions to respond to SECU's recommendations, such as raising awareness of all staff in the Country Office of the importance of UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards, and to ensure compliance across all projects.

The SECU team continues monitoring the implementation of the Administrator's decision. As of December 2021, UNDP Jordan was redesigning the project and developing the appropriate frameworks to ensure appropriate social and environmental risks screening; and free, prior, informed consent processes (FPIC). SECU will publish an interim monitoring plan in 2022.

Case SECU0008 – Cameroon

Integrated and Transboundary Conservation of Biodiversity in the Basins of the Republic of Cameroon

Status: Monitoring



In August 2018, Survival International, an international NGO focusing on Indigenous Peoples' rights, submitted a complaint on behalf of the Baka people living in the village of Zoulabot Ancien in Cameroon. The complainant claimed that, through UNDP project activity in the region, the Baka have been illegally evicted from their forest lands, both inside and outside the formally protected areas, among other concerns. In September 2020, SECU submitted the Final Investigation Report to the UNDP Administrator. SECU found that UNDP Cameroon did not screen project activities in a manner consistent with SES requirements or prepare an Indigenous Peoples Plan, among other findings.

The Administrator's decision in response to SECU's report directs UNDP Cameroon to reformulate the project to ensure full compliance with the Social and Environmental Standards. As part of this process, social and environmental risks will be fully screened and measures to mitigate identified risks will be put in place; the project will establish a grievance redress system; consultations with Baka and indigenous communities will proceed; actions plans such as the Indigenous Peoples Plan will be developed; and UNDP Cameroon's oversight capacity will be strengthened.

In April 2021, UNDP Cameroon and UNDP Management prepared a 'Management Response' indicating actions to be taken in response to each recommendation in the report. The SECU team is monitoring the implementation of the Administrator's decision based on the 'Management Response'.

Case SECU0012 – Mauritius

Mainstreaming biodiversity into the management of the coastal zone in the Republic of Mauritius

In March 2019, Aret Kokin Nu Laplaz (AKNL), an NGO Network located in Mauritius, submitted a complaint with SECU. The complainants asserted that the UNDP's project fails to protect Environmental Sensitive Areas and violates several of UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards, in light of the development permits being issued by the government.

In October 2020, SECU submitted the Final Investigation Report to the UNDP Administrator. SECU found that UNDP

Status: Monitoring



Mauritius understood the Social and Environmental Standard requirements; however, the analysis failed to reflect past experience in Mauritius with environmental incentives and heed the warnings on risk from the stakeholder consultations. In March 2021 the Administrator issued his decision in response to SECU's report, putting the case in the monitoring phase.

In June 2021, UNDP Mauritius prepared a 'Management Response' outlining actions to be taken in response to SECU's recommendations. These actions included hosting workshops and consultative meetings with project stakeholders to review the Wetland Bill, and revisiting the risk framework to ensure the project remains in compliance with the SES. The SECU team continues monitoring the implementation of the Administrator's decision.

Closed cases in 2020/2021

Case SECU0002 – Uganda

Business Call to
Action Alliance

Status: Closed



February 2016, an individual filed a complaint with SECU related to the global joint advocacy platform 'Business Call to Action Alliance (BCtA)'. The complainant claimed that the BCtA failed to properly screen a company as a partner, given its history of human rights and other violations. In February 2017, the BCtA Secretariat issued a Management Action Plan in response to the Administrator's decision and SECU's Investigation Report

In 2021, SECU determined that the Administrator's decision were completed. As such, SECU closed the case.

Case SECU0004 - Panama

Institutional
Strengthening of
the Ministry of
Foreign Affairs

In 2017, the Panama-based Ngäbe Bugle area organization M10: Movimiento 10 de abril filed a complaint with SECU related to the Barro Blanco Hydropower Project (BBHP), which has displaced indigenous communities in the region. Once the investigation process was completed, SECU issued recommendations that included ensuring respect for the

Status: Closed



UN Special Rapporteur's findings on indigenous rights, among other recommendations.

In response to SECU's report, the UNDP Administrator directed the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (RBLAC) and UNDP Panama to implement an Action Plan to follow up the report's recommendations. In 2021, SECU determined that activities in the Action Plan were completed as much as possible. As such, SECU closed the case.

Case SECU0009 – Republic of Congo

Integrated and Transboundary Conservation of Biodiversity in the Basins of the Republic of Congo

Status: Closed



In August 2018, Survival International, an international NGO focusing on Indigenous peoples' rights, submitted a complaint on behalf of six Indigenous Baka communities in the Republic of Congo regarding a GEF-funded and UNDP-implemented project supporting the creation of the Messok Dja protected area in the Congo Basin.

In November 2020, the Administrator issued his decision communicating the project's closure. Given that the closure of the project under investigation occurred, SECU closed the case. SECU will track the additional implementation steps requested by the Administrator in his decision, including as they relate to new project activities.

OUTREACH AND INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING IN 2021

Review of Investigation Guidelines

In 2021, SECU launched a formal review of its Investigation Guidelines and associated policies and procedures following best practices of international independent accountability mechanisms. The objective of the review is to revise SECU's operational documents based on lessons learned over its 7-year tenure to improve the implementation of SECU's mandate and deliver a mechanism fit for purpose.

To start, SECU organized a panel of experts to provide guidance and feedback for the proposed revisions to the Guidelines by SECU staff.

As of December 2021, SECU was in the process of incorporating the Panel's feedback into the revised Investigation Guidelines. Afterwards, the revised documents will go through a public comment period to incorporate feedback from any interested stakeholders. The final revised Investigation Guidelines will be sent for approval to the Director of the Office of Audit and Investigations.

Virtual outreach for Caribbean Civil Society Organizations

SECU conducted a virtual outreach event for Caribbean Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) with accountability mechanisms from the Caribbean Development Bank, the World Bank, and the Inter-American Development Bank. The event was conducted over two days and included sessions to explain the role of accountability mechanisms, the compliance review process, as well as more practical topics such as how to file a complaint. Over 20 participants attended the event.

Webinar for the GRAM Partnership



How to manage the relationship between a Grievance Redress Mechanism and parent organization

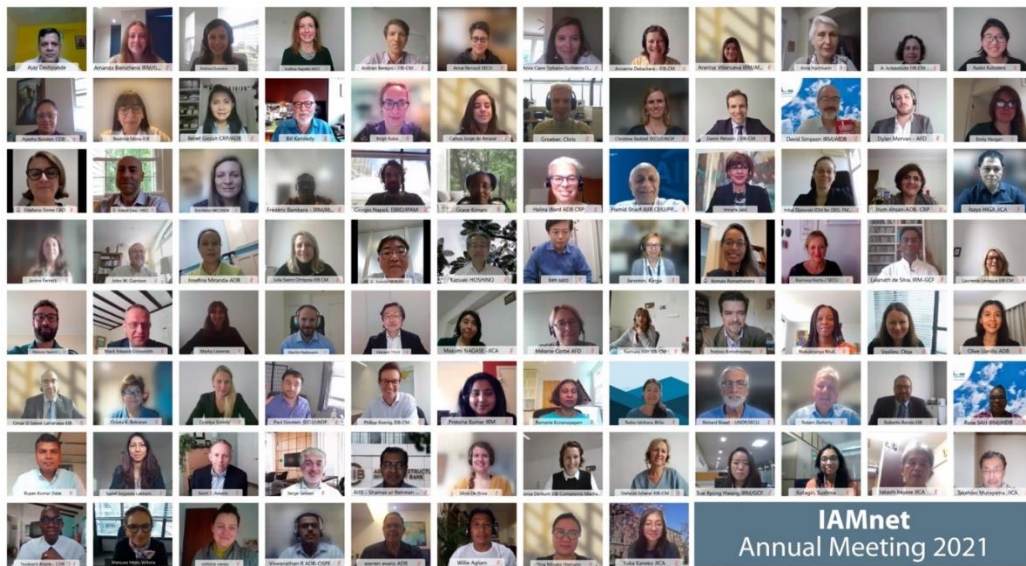
Wednesday | 8 December 2021 | 8AM ET/ 2PM CET/ 10PM KST

Follow the Independent Redress Mechanism to be updated on #GRAMpartnership discussions.



SECU led a webinar in December 2021 as a partner of the Grievance Redress and Accountability Mechanism (GRAM) Partnership, which offers leadership, a learning and knowledge platform and a meeting space to an increasing number of GRAMs that are emerging in different spheres. The webinar focused on the relationship between a grievance redress mechanism and its parent organization. The meeting was attended by over 60 participants including emerging grievance mechanisms in the UN community.

IAMnet Annual Meeting



SECU participated in the Annual Meeting of Independent Accountability Mechanisms Network (IAMnet). The IAMnet is a network of independent accountability mechanisms from international development organizations. Over four days, officers from the various accountability mechanisms discussed topics such as operational changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic and access to remedy in an IAM process. The event also included roundtables with CSOs to

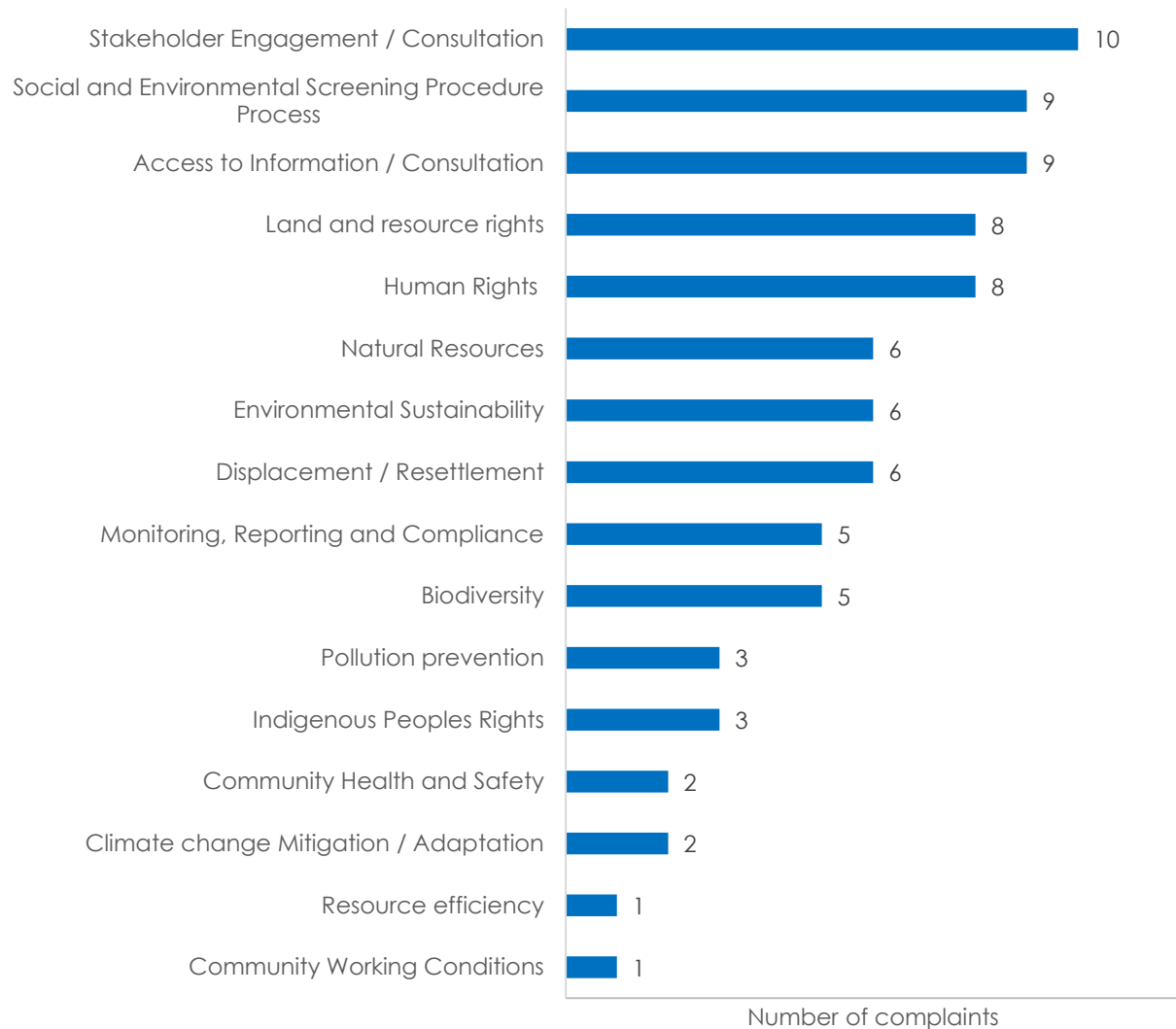
discuss COVID-19 impacts in accountability processes. SECU staff participated as moderators and panelists in several panels.

SECU is pleased to announce that it has been selected as the host of the 2022 IAMnet Annual Meeting, which we hope will take place in the fall in New York.

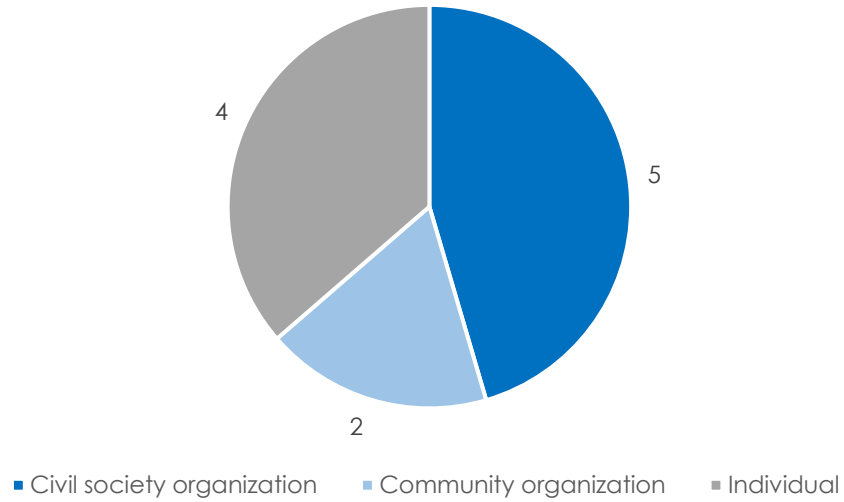
APPENDIX - OVERVIEW OF SECU'S PORTFOLIO

As of 31 December 2021, SECU had 11 active cases ranging in stages from eligibility determination to monitoring.

Main issues raised in complaints



Type of complainants



Main source of funding

