Social and Environmental Compliance Unit and Stakeholder Response Mechanism
What is UNDP’s accountability mechanism?
Responding to community grievances for effective development impact

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) offers two distinct accountability approaches to respond to social and environmental concerns related to UNDP-supported activities.

1. **THE SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE UNIT (SECU)**

   SECU investigates alleged non-compliance with UNDP’s social and environmental commitments, including the Social and Environmental Standards and Screening Procedure, from concerned stakeholders and recommends measures to address the findings of its investigations.

2. **THE STAKEHOLDER RESPONSE MECHANISM (SRM)**

   The SRM helps project-affected stakeholders, UNDP’s partners (governments, NGOs, businesses) and others jointly address grievances or disputes related to social and/or environmental impacts of UNDP-supported activities.
If you believe a UNDP–supported activity has harmed, or is likely to harm, you, your community, or the environment, you may request help from UNDP’s Social and Environmental Compliance Unit and/or the Stakeholder Response Mechanism.

**AFFECTED PEOPLE HAVE A CHOICE:**

- **a** They can ask SECU to pursue a compliance review examining UNDP’s compliance with its social and environmental commitments;

- **b** They can attempt to resolve complaints and disputes through the SRM;

- **c** They can ask for both a SECU compliance review and an SRM-led dispute resolution process, in the order of their choosing.
Social and Environmental Compliance Unit (SECU)

RESPONDING TO CONCERNS RELATING TO UNDP’S SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS

SECU RESPONDS TO COMPLAINTS FROM INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES ALLEGING THAT UNDP MAY NOT BE MEETING ITS SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS IN ITS ACTIVITIES.
Policy Basis

SECU ENSURES COMPLIANCE WITH THE FOLLOWING COMMITMENTS:

• UNDP’s Social and Environmental Standards (SES)

• The Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP)

• Social and environmental commitments made by the UNDP in other policies

• Social and environmental commitments made by the UNDP in the context of a specific programme or project.
Who May File a Complaint?

Any person or community who believes the environment or their wellbeing may be affected by a UNDP-supported-activity may also file a complaint on behalf of affected communities or the environment.

A representative, such as a civil society organization, may also file a complaint on behalf of affected communities. People who file complaints may request that SECU protect their names and identities.

How Does a SECU Compliance Review Work?

SECU assesses each complaint in an independent, impartial, and transparent manner, following a specific procedure for every case.

People who file complaints may request that SECU protect their names and identities.
SECU DETERMINES IF THE COMPLAINT CAN BE ACCEPTED BY ASKING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

• Does it relate to activity supported by UNDP?
• Does it raise actual or potential issues relating to compliance with UNDP’s social and environmental commitments?
• Does it reflect that, as a result of UNDP’s noncompliance with its social and environmental commitments, the complainants may be or have been harmed?

IF THE COMPLAINT MEETS THESE CRITERIA, SECU WILL INVESTIGATE WHETHER UNDP IS MEETING ITS SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS.

SECU WILL THEN PREPARE A REPORT WITH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE UNDP ADMINISTRATOR TO CONSIDER.

These recommendations may include measures to ensure compliance with UNDP social and environmental commitments and/or address harm to the environment or affected individuals and communities.

THE REPORT WILL BE SHARED WITH AFFECTED STAKEHOLDERS AND MADE PUBLIC.
The Stakeholder Response Mechanism (SRM)

HELPING PARTIES RESOLVE DISPUTES
The Stakeholder Response Mechanism helps project-affected stakeholders, governments and other partners jointly resolve concerns and disputes. It is available when an Implementing Partner and UNDP project-level stakeholder engagement processes have not successfully resolved issues. UNDP Country Office management normally leads the Stakeholder Response process, although headquarters can also lead when appropriate.

The SRM can help facilitate discussions, mediate disputes, and undertake other activities to help affected people, government agencies, and other stakeholders resolve concerns.

Who May Request the Stakeholder Response Mechanism?

Any person or community potentially affected by a UNDP-supported project may file a request for a response from the SRM if concerns raised through standard channels for stakeholder consultation and engagement remain unresolved.

If there are concerns about the ability of the UNDP Country Office to respond fairly and effectively, individuals can directly file requests with the SRM at UNDP Headquarters. Requestors may request confidentiality for their identities.
How Does the SRM’s Dispute Resolution Process Work?
REVIEW:
Normally, SRM staff in the relevant Country Office will review requests for the local SRM and share them with the Headquarters SRM for additional input. When a request is filed to the Headquarters SRM, the Headquarters SRM staff will review any concerns raised about the involvement of the Country Office and decide how best to proceed.

DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY:
SRM staff will first determine if the request is eligible for the SRM:

• Does it relate to a UNDP-supported project?
• Have the requestors provided enough information to establish that they may be adversely affected by the project?
• Have the requestors attempted to resolve issues through Implementing Partner or UNDP project stakeholder engagement processes? (If the answer is no, the SRM can still accept a request if the requestor indicates a concern about going to the Implementing Partner or UNDP’s project management.)

ASSESS:
If the request is eligible, SRM staff will assess the potential for a response process to succeed. This may involve direct communication with the requestor, UNDP personnel and external stakeholders to learn more and explore ways to resolve the issues or suggest specific actions if the issues appear easy to resolve.

FACILITATE:
If dialogue and negotiation are deemed applicable, the designated SRM representative will propose a tailored process, seeking agreement among primary stakeholders on how to proceed.

CONCLUSION:
The involvement of the SRM will continue as long as the stakeholders believe it is beneficial, or until agreement is reached. If one or more stakeholders decides to stop participating, the SRM will decide whether to continue or to end the process.

REPORT:
If the requestor and other participants reach agreement, the SRM will submit a report summarizing this agreement to the relevant UNDP management, and to all participating stakeholders. If needed, the agreement summary will include a plan for monitoring implementation, and the SRM will issue one or more monitoring reports.
What to include in a Request for SECU or the SRM
THERE ARE NO STRICT FORMAT OR LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS. IT IS HELPFUL IF THE REQUEST INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

• Name, address, telephone number, and other contact information. If a third party, such as a civil society organization, is filing a request on behalf of an affected individual or community, the request should include evidence that the third party is working on behalf of the individual or community.

• Whether the requestors wish to keep their identity confidential, including any additional relevant information.

• Name, location, and nature of the UNDP-supported activity, if known.

• How the requestors believe they have been, or are likely to be, impacted by the UNDP-supported activity.

• A description of any other efforts taken, including communications with local UNDP personnel to resolve their concerns.

• For SRM submissions – the requestors’ interest in working with other stakeholders to resolve their concerns through dispute resolution.
Contacting SECU or the SRM with any complaints or inquiries
Visit our websites at **WWW.UNDP.ORG/SECU** and **WWW.UNDP.ORG/SRM** and explore our case registries to find out more information about us and our previous cases.

**EMAIL**

For SECU: secuhotline@undp.org  
For SRM: stakeholder.response@undp.org  
For either: project.concerns@undp.org

**POST**

Attn: SECU/SRM, OAI,  
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