



**TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
AUTHORITY (TVET A)  
AFGHANISTAN SECOND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (ASDP-II)**

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**Grievance Redress Mechanism Manual**

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**September 1, 2018**

## Table of Contents

1. Introduction .....	1
1.1 Background and Context .....	1
1.2 Objectives of GRM .....	2
1.3 Purpose of GRM Manual .....	2
1.4 Meaning and Definition of GRM .....	2
1.5 Advantages of GRM .....	3
1.6 Principles .....	3
1.7 Limitations/Risks to GRM .....	4
2. Grievances and Types of Grievances .....	5
2.1 Grievances .....	5
2.2 Characteristics of Grievances .....	5
2.3 Types and Sources of Grievances.....	5
2.4 Categories of Complainants .....	7
2.5 Broad Categories of Complainants.....	8
2.6 Analysis of Grievance/W's of Grievance Handling .....	8
2.7 Grievances Handling Principles .....	9
3. Grievances Management Machinery/Processes and Procedures .....	11
3.1 Components of a Grievance Resolution Mechanism.....	11
3.2 Complaint Uptake/Receipt of Grievance.....	11
3.3 Grievance Recording, Acknowledgement and Referring .....	11
3.4 Screening for Eligibility and Classification of Complaints .....	12
3.5 Complaint Assessment and Response at Site/TVET Level (1st Tier).....	13
3.6 Complaint Assessment and Response at Central Program and TVETA Level.....	13
3.7 End-line Resolution and Closure.....	14
3.8 Registry and Database System .....	14
3.9 Follow-up and Feedback Mechanism.....	14
3.10 Steps for Investigating a Grievance.....	15
3.11 Time-frame of Grievances Handling.....	16
3.12 Flow Chart of GRM Process.....	17
4. GRM Management Structure/Institutional Arrangement .....	18
4.1 Prime Responsible Bodies.....	18
4.2 ToRs/Responsibilities of Site/Institute GRCs .....	18

4.3 ToRs/Functions of Central GRC at Project/TVETA Level .....	18
4.4 GRC Structure and Constitution .....	19
4.4.1 GRC Structure at Site/Education Facility Level .....	19
4.4.2 GRC Structure at PED Level.....	20
4.4.3 GRC Structure at Program and TVETA Level.....	20
4.5 GRC Member Requirements .....	20
4.6 PROCEDURE, PERIODICITY AND ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS .....	21
5. Cross-cutting Themes/Issues.....	22
5.1 Informal, Formal and Legal Handling of Grievances .....	22
5.2 Grievance Prevention.....	23
5.3 Privacy and Confidentiality.....	23
5.3.1 Benefits of Confidentiality .....	23
5.4 Protection from Victimization.....	23
5.5 Gender and Grievances .....	24
5.6 Communicating GRM.....	24
5.6.1 Communication Channels and Methods.....	24
5.6.2 Aspects of GRM Communication Plan .....	24
5.6.3 Information in Publicizing Grievance Management Procedures .....	25
5.6.4 Messages of Communicating GRM .....	25
5.7 Operational Costs and Allocating Fund for GRM.....	25
5.8 GRM at TVETA Governance System.....	26
5.9 Operationalization and Capacity Building .....	26
5.10 Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting.....	26
6. ANNEXES.....	28
Annex-1: Grievance Registration Form .....	28
Annex-2: Grievance Decision Form .....	29
Annex-3: Grievance Information Form (for center) .....	31
Annex-4: Grievance Logbook for TVET Institute .....	33
Annex-5: Grievances Report Format.....	34
Annex-6: GRM Database Sheet.....	35
Annex-7: Simple Evaluation Survey Questions.....	36

## Acronyms

ANIM	Afghanistan National Institute of Music
APs	Affected Persons
ASDP	Afghanistan Skills Development Project
CBOs	Community-based Organizations
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GoV	Government of Afghanistan
GRC	Grievances Redress Committee
GRM	Grievances Redress Mechanism
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGOs	Non-governmental Organizations
NIMA	National Institute of Management and Administration
PAPs	Project Affected Person
PDO	Project Development Objectives
PED	Provincial Education Directorate
SMS	Short Message Service
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
TVETA	Technical Vocational Education and Training Authority

## 1. Introduction

People are adversely affected (or about to be affected) by a development project, which raises grievances and dissatisfaction about actual or perceived impacts in order to find a satisfactory solution. These grievances, influenced by their physical, situational and social losses can emerge at different stages of project life cycle from designing, implementation and operation of project facility. Not only should affected persons (APs) be able to raise their grievances and be given an adequate hearing, but also satisfactory solutions should be found that mutually benefit both the APs and the project. It is equally important that APs have access to legitimate, reliable, transparent, and efficient institutional mechanisms that are responsive to their complaints. Grievance redress mechanisms (GRMs) are institutions, instruments, methods, and processes by which a resolution to a grievance is sought and provided. Grievance Redress Mechanisms (GRMs) are critical tools for promoting transparency and accountability, reducing corruption, improving service delivery and enhancing overall project effectiveness in interventions and government programs. It set processes and tools for social accountability, acceptance and take concerns to remedy the harm posed by the development interventions. A number of mechanisms are available to aggrieved parties to access redress. They can be complex and diverse, internal and external. A formal grievance redress mechanism (GRM) is a system by which queries or clarifications about the project are responded to, problems with implementation are resolved, and complaints and grievances are addressed efficiently and effectively.

### 1.1 Background and Context

The Afghanistan - Second Skills Development Project (ASDP II) has been effective since June 12, 2013, and underwent a Level I restructuring in June 2017. The restructuring reflected a policy shift with regard to Human Capital Development from the Government of Afghanistan (GoA), culminating in the establishment of a Human Capital Committee (HCC) in October 2016 to address binding constraints in skills development. In light of this policy shift, the GoA requested the ASDP II to realign remaining resources, emphasizing (a) improving the relevance of Technical and Vocational Education and Training education to future labor market needs, (b) enhancing quality of teaching and learning by assessing and upgrading the competencies of TVET teachers, and (c) supporting institutional capacity building and overall systems strengthening. To respond to the new strategic priorities of the GoA and operationalize the reform agenda, the PDO was revised “to improve Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) teacher competencies and curriculum in selected priority trades”. The 2017 restructuring also introduced results-based financing (RBF) to support activities under the reform agenda, while allowing one additional year to bring original activities to an orderly completion by June 30, 2018.

The GoA’s renewed commitment to the Human Capital agenda is reflected in a number of high level policy actions. First, the GoA has prioritized youth unemployment as a critical policy challenge and has intensified dialogue with development partners to move this agenda forward. Second, to streamline institutional capacity to deliver on the Human Capital Development agenda, the GoA has established a standalone TVET Authority (TVETA) based on Presidential Decree No. 11 dated April 21, 2018. The mandate for vocational education has been transferred from the

Ministry of Education and Deputy Ministry of TVET to a newly established TVETA which has been tasked to oversee the coordination and implementation of TVET policy. In light of the recent developments, the Ministry of Finance has requested a Level II restructuring on June 13, 2018.

## 1.2 Objectives of GRM

The key objectives of the GRM are;

- To ensure that grievances, complaints and concerns are addressed and resolved in a fair, transparent and easily accessible manner in stipulated timeframe in order to achieve the goals of restoring positive relationships with affected persons/households and communities.
- To be responsive to the concerns/complaints of beneficiaries and to address and resolve their grievances;
- To serve as a conduit for soliciting inquiries, inviting suggestions, and increasing community participation;
- To collect information that can be used to improve operational performance and service delivery;
- To promote transparency and accountability.
- To deter fraud and corruption and mitigate project risks.
- To enhance the project's legitimacy among stakeholders.

## 1.3 Purpose of GRM Manual

This document describes the procedures that will be followed by the TVETA to address complaints or concerns submitted by people who may be benefitted or impacted by ASDP-II interventions. It intends to provide clarity and predictability on how complaints will be received, assessed, sorted, and resolved, and monitored. Specific activities are described for each of these steps. The manual is intended for GRM implementers, project staff and persons wishing to file grievances and complaints or express concerns.

## 1.4 Meaning and Definition of GRM

Grievance redress mechanisms (GRMs) are institutions, instruments, methods, and processes by which a resolution to a grievance is sought and provided. Grievance Redress Mechanisms (GRMs) are critical tools for promoting transparency and accountability, reducing corruption, improving service delivery and enhancing overall project effectiveness in interventions and government programs. It set processes and tools for social accountability, acceptance and take concerns to remedy the harm posed by the development interventions. A formal grievance redress mechanism (GRM) is a system by which queries or clarifications about the project are responded to, problems with implementation are resolved, and complaints and grievances are addressed efficiently and effectively.

## 1.5 Advantages of GRM

- Provides project staff with practical suggestions/feedback that allows them to be more accountable, transparent, and responsive to beneficiaries.
- Helps in building trust between citizens and government/service providers.
- Grievance-related data provides management with insights into the effectiveness of the program output.
- An effective GRM can help catch problems before they become serious or widespread, thereby preserving the project's funds and its reputation.

## 1.6 Principles

Grievances are managed and resolved in formal ways and means laid in grievance redress mechanisms and relevant country laws and regulations. Grievances are handled directly between the grievant and the GRC at different levels depending on the classification and categorization of a complaint and will be recorded in the database. This will increase the likelihood that complaints/grievances can be addressed in a harmonious manner, which in turn will facilitate the promotion of a more stable operational environment. The favored approaches which are used are conciliation, negotiation, mediation, arbitration and adjudication. All these approaches are applied based on the intensity and satisfaction of the grievant person and must follow the principles that best guide the entire process of complaint handling. The principles that guide the GRM's procedures and by which their performance should be evaluated are;

- **Accessibility:** Easily accessible to persons who wish to submit a grievance, complaint, or concern and with assistance provided to persons who face barriers such as language, literacy, awareness, cost, or fear of reprisal
- **Predictability:** A clear procedure with time frames establishing for each stage and clarity on the types of results that can and cannot be delivered
- **Fairness:** Processes that are widely perceived as fair, especially in terms of access to information and opportunities for meaningful participation in the final decision
- **Rights compatibility:** Consistent with applicable national and international standards and without restriction of access to other redress mechanisms
- **Transparency:** Transparent processes and outcomes that meet the public interest concerns at stake
- **Capacity:** Implemented with adequate technical, human, and financial resources
- **Feedback:** Serves as a means to channel citizen feedback to improve project outcomes for the people

### 1.7 Limitations/Risks to GRM

An initial survey of the beneficiary institutes and discussion with key relevant personnel was undertaken in March, 2018 about the GRM functioning and understanding. This survey provided core information and the following gaps and finding were identified;

- There is lack of core understanding on the basic concept of GRM and GRC which has resulted into weak support from leadership in terms of GRM implementation
- The GRC established, are traditional type for example the grievances are mainly managed by the student union in ANIM
- There is no proper recording and registering system of grievance
- Each GRC should be comprised of a female member
- There is an urgent need of training on GRM for the beneficiary institute



## 2. Grievances and Types of Grievances

### 2.1 Grievances

Grievances are any complaints, suggestions, concerns and query about the way a project or program is being implemented and or any complaint relating to environmental, social safeguards, gender issues and any other technical and administration components/activities. They may take the form of specific complaints for damages /injuries, concerns about routine project or program activities, or complaint regarding adverse or negative impact and threats related to gender inequality. People are adversely affected (or about to be affected) by a development project, which raises grievances and dissatisfaction about actual or perceived impacts in order to find a satisfactory solution.

### 2.2 Characteristics of Grievances

The grievances are characterized based on the reality, its genuine occurrence and have received some sort of harm and the beneficiary feels dissatisfaction or show unwillingness to a decision or action. It is categorized as follow;

- **Factual:** When it is genuine and the grievants feels that some of the rights are violated, property is damaged or lost, compensation was not given, services are not provided properly, or benefits promised by the project have not been given by the project proponent, it becomes factual grievance.
- **Imaginary:** The grievant felt aggrieved when organization does not respond to his requests or concerns and it is not real, although it is lodged in good faith to be satisfied, this is the case of an imaginary grievance.
- **Disguised:** The basic requirements of the beneficiary may be attended to but psychological needs such as need for recognition and consultation, proper consideration, incorporating views in project intervention, such as that of minority or marginalized group may not be taken care of. These cause disguised grievances.
- **Vexatious and Frivolous:** Grievances lodged must be genuine. There may be some instances where complaints may be determined to be vexatious or frivolous in nature. Making a vexatious complaint may be considered an act of misconduct.

### 2.3 Types and Sources of Grievances

#### 1. Environmental Safeguards

- Pollution creating nuisance to community/individuals
- Damage to vegetation and biodiversity
- Noise pollution
- Depletion and use of resources

- Waste generation

## **2. Social Safeguards**

- Resettlement/Dislocation of population
- Land acquisition and disputes
- Loss of livelihoods and livelihood restoration
- Damage to or loss of property/assets
- Conflict arising over resources distribution and opportunities
- Public health and safety
- Inconvenience to community/individuals due to construction and operation of TVET facility
- Community/individuals concerns over the project designing and implementation
- Labor related issues such as child and forced labor delay in payments, unsafe working place, compensation etc.
- Conflicts, discrimination and political influence in TVET facility
- Pupils abuse and harassment

## **3. Gender and Women's Issues**

- Gender based violence (GBV)
- Gender inequality
- Neglecting women's right
- Lack of specific services to women
- Lack of secure and peaceful environment for women at workplace
- Privacy and socio-cultural issues.
- Sexual harassment.

## **4. Administrative and Managerial**

- Unsatisfactory managerial performance
- Bad working conditions
- Deficiencies/erratic provision of services
- Personal factors that create seizures among employees
- Negative implications of organizational and policy changes
- Economic loss and benefits
- Control over power
- Non-merit base recruitment and promotions
- Admissions and taking exams

## **5. Services at TVET Facilities**

- Non-availability of services in TVET schools and complexes and dormitories
- Poor operation and maintenance of TVET institutes
- Delay in provision of utilities and basic needs to facility users
- Lack of academic services
- Teaching quality and education system

## **6. Project Components**

- Negative influence over the project resources
- Awarding scholarships and training opportunities to teachers
- Hiring and firing of staff
- Teachers teaching quality
- Procurement of goods and services
- Delay in financial flow
- Corruption and misuse of resources

## 2.4 Categories of Complainants

### **1. Project Affected Persons (PAPs)**

This is the group that is directly affected and have experienced serious consequences by the project implementation. Grievance from PAPs must be given priority and remedial actions must be taken promptly.

### **2. Beneficiaries**

Community and individuals that are benefited could have concerns on the projects or use of TVET facilities. They must be consulted and their views and grievances must be incorporated into project design and operation.

### **3. Pupils and Students**

The ultimate user of the TVET institute or school are pupils and students. This is the key target group of development interventions. Grievances and suggestions could be constantly lodge by this group.

### **4. Community and Community Representatives**

The nearby community can receive inconvenience from the construction and operation of TVET facility. Special consideration should be given to make a harmonize relationship with them to enhance the outcome of development output.

### **5. Staff and Administration**

The project and TVET staff at all levels can have complaint on different issues. The grievance resolution will help in running the administration efficiently and smoothly.

## **6. Institutions**

Various institutions from diverse background such as NGOs, CBOs, CSOs, Government organizations can file the complaint and suggestion or query on matters of common interest, which needs to be tackle to build trust and cooperation.

## **7. Labors/Workers**

Labors are sensitive to violation by contractors and safety/incidents issues. Their rights must be protected and secured.

### **2.5 Broad Categories of Complainants**

- **Individual:**

When the grievance is lodged by a single individual or institution

- **Group/Collective:**

When many individuals or institutions have and face the same issue e.g. student union, staff union

### **2.6 Analysis of Grievance/W's of Grievance Handling**

When receiving a grievance, it needs to be systematically assessed and evaluated in context of its occurrence, validity (factual or imaginary), options available for resolution and satisfaction of aggrieved person. The following guiding steps and questions are necessary to be considered, when filing a grievance.

- **Situation**

Interpreting the occurrence of incidents/complaint reason, by asking the questions;

- Who is involved? Identifying key stakeholders/parties
- What it happened? Interpreting the incident exactly in its nature
- When did it happen? Writing the time and date the incident happened/complaint raised
- Where did it happen? Location and space of the incident

- **Contention**

Assessing the validity and degree of grievability, whether the complaint lodged is factual or imaginary;

- Why is it grievable? Investigating the complaint validity in its reality

- **Remedy**

Identifying the resolution options to remedy the conflictive situation;

- What is needed to remedy the situation? Action to be taken and resources needed
- **Consent/Satisfaction**

The main aim of the GRM system is, to satisfy the aggrieved individual/group. If the aggrieved person/group is not satisfied with the action taken, then the grievance mechanism is meaningless. Therefore it is vital to seek the satisfaction of the complainant.

- Is the aggrieved person/group satisfied with the resolution, if not, why?

## 2.7 Grievances Handling Principles

Grievances handling requires a set of rules and principles, in the light of which, the grievances are resolved and decisions are made and actions are taken. If these principles are not considered, then the processes and decisions are meaningless and will have negative outcomes and will cause losing the trust of stakeholders. The principles to be followed are;

- **Validity:**

Assessing the actuality of complaint, whether the complainant is affected or not

- **Privacy and confidentiality:**

Keeping the complainant identity confidential and sensitive information to be released in secrecy

- **Impartially:**

The proceedings and the committee members must stick to the issue, partiality must be avoided

- **Legality:**

All actions taken must be in the premises of legal and formal procedures

- **Action oriented:**

The decisions and actions to be taken should be feasible and effective

- **Satisfactorily:**

The decision made to the extent possible must be acceptable to the grievant

- **Appeal:**

The right of appeal is available to the complainant to the successive level of GRM and so on to the court.

- **Security/Fear of Reprisal**

The complainant must not feel any fear of reprisal due to lodging the complaint

- **Timeliness:**

The grievance resolution process should function in a timely manner and the committee is bound to resolve the issue within the specified period of time

- **Fair and Transparent:**

The grievant has the right to access the information and proceedings of decision making

- **Function Promptly and Speedily:**

Justice is delayed, justice is denied. Responding quickly without any reason for delay, before minor disagreements develop into more serious disputes

### 3. Grievances Management Machinery/Processes and Procedures

#### 3.1 Components of a Grievance Resolution Mechanism

Grievances are resolved in sequence, however priority, seriousness, time-sensitivity and feasibility of its resolution will be considered for preference for which a proper and clear procedures will be in-placed. A grievance resolution mechanism can be broken down into the following primary components;

- Receive and register a complaint.
- Screen and assess the complaint within the appropriate forum.
- Formulate the response based on the assigned forum decision.
- Select a resolution approach based on the forum instructions.
- Implement the instruction in regards to the complaint. .
- Settle the issues.
- Provide feedback to the complainant through the most appropriate mechanism.
- Follow up on the actions taken to resolve the received complaints and track the actual status post complaint resolution.
- Learn from the experience and communicate back to all parties involved.

#### 3.2 Complaint Uptake/Receipt of Grievance

Staff and GRC members has the primary role in resolving complaints as part of their day to day activities (ToR) as they interact with the beneficiaries and stakeholders. Various channels are used and each uptake channel has its own added value and limitation, which needs to be taken to taken to consideration, to ensure it is responding to different situation. . Uptake channels for receiving complaints should be accessible, and should ensure privacy of the complaint. . Complaints can be submitted through various channels, which are;

- Phone (specific number for complaints uptake **0745100396** which will be handled by the Environment and Social Safeguards staff of the Project)
- E-mail (email address for complaints uptake: [complaint.tveta@gmail.com](mailto:complaint.tveta@gmail.com))
- Written Submission of complaints form to GRC member, assigned Focal Point and the designated complaint boxes)

GRC members who receive complaints verbally must be registered in the log book. Anonymous complaints can be accepted. Information on these various channels, to submit complaints will be publicly displayed on communication materials.

#### 3.3 Grievance Recording, Acknowledgement and Referring

On the spot resolution is encouraged through an informal process. However, both the informal and formal process would be recorded. Whereas, the formal procedures are needed to follow with a submitting a written grievance redress form. Grievance registration/serial number will be assigned to each complaint that will help the complainant and committee to synchronize the complaint with the database after the complaint is resolved. For this maintaining a centrally held grievance register

is key and all the information from grievance form must be write down on it. All complaints that cannot be responded to on the spot will be remitted to GRC who will take 7 days to assess them and will provide a written response to the complainant in the Grievance Decision Form. It is important to acknowledge receipt of complaint by signing register/complaint log by the grievant or handing over a receipt and informing of the next steps that will take place. Options are:

1. The complaint falls under the mandate of TVET institute and resolution can be offered immediately according to the request made by the complainant. The response will describe how and when resolution will be provided by TVET-GRC and the name and contact information of the GRC member responsible for it.
2. The complaint falls under the mandate of TVET institute but various options for resolution can be considered and/or extraordinary resources are required. The response will invite the complainant to a meeting to discuss these options in case the complainant is willing to do so.
3. The complaint does not fall or partially falls under the mandate of TVET institute. The response will indicate that the complaint has been referred to the GRC at PED or TVETA level, which will continue communications with the complainant.

#### 3.4 Screening for Eligibility and Classification of Complaints

It is crucial that at first, a grievance must be screened with the information to determine its eligibility, once it is ensured that the complaint is related to TVET A, it will be further screened to ensure it is recorded in its appropriate category and most importantly prioty is set based on the nature/seriousness of the complaint. However It is strongly advised to give complainants the benefit of the doubt and engage in a conversation before deciding to reject a complaint. If the complaint is rejected, the complainant is informed of the decision and the reasons for the rejection, and the complaint and the reason for rejection should be recorded for future reference.

#### **Eligible Complaints:**

- The complaint pertains to the project component , organization and TVETA activity.
- The issue raised in the complaint fall within the scope of issues, the grievance mechanism is authorized to address, however cases relevant to TVET A, which are outside their jurisdiction will be referred to relevant sectors in the government e.g. legal, and security.
- The complainant has standing to file.

**Ineligible Complaints:** may include but limited to the following. Complainant will be given clear explanation for the rejection, to ensure are well informed, so they can peruse other channels, should they wish you to. ;

- The complaint is clearly not project component-related and outside of the organization and TVET A.



- The nature of the issue is outside the mandate of GRM and TVET A. however they will be advised on other external alternatives, Other government procedures and mechanisms are more appropriate to address the issue
- The complainant has no standing to file

### **Classifying complaints in terms of its seriousness:**

If the initial assessment established the eligibility of the complaint to be pursued, a further assessment is recommended of the *seriousness* of complaint-classified in terms of high, medium, or low-and its impacts on both the complainant and project/organization. Assessing the seriousness of a complaint is not easy, as it could be subject to biases. The criteria to assess the seriousness of the complaint could be;

- Severity of the problem
- Potential impact on the well-being of an individual or group
- Potential impact on the project
- Public profile of the issue

Assessing the severity of a require additional data collection through field visits to the sites, facts finding, discussions, and interviews with complainants and other relevant persons or groups and cross-checking the information already provided.

### **3.5 Complaint Assessment and Response at Site/TVET Level (1st Tier)**

TVET institutes and schools are the birth places where the users of the facility, staff and nearby community can raise grievances. GRCs at institutes must be fully aware of lodging and responding to grievance and showing enough commitment to the well-functioning of GRM system through bill boards, leaflets and awareness sessions. GRC at site level will assess and investigate the nature and cause of grievance and will reach to a balanced decision in the presence of grievant. Grievances which are not fall under the mandate of site GRC or the grievant is unsatisfied with the decision made, will refer complaint to the PED or ASDP/TVETA. GRC will keep all the record and documents of the complaint and will hand over Grievance Decision Form to the complainant taking a copy of form signed by the complainant.

### **3.6 Complaint Assessment and Response at Central Program and TVETA Level**

ASDP-2 and TVETA is the 3<sup>rd</sup> tier and point of grievance resolution. Grievances lodged here or referred from the site/institute will be investigated in detail and the cause of its non-resolution at site. Complainant will be invited to a meeting to discuss various options for resolution of complaints. GRC at center will recommend action on grievance in presence of grievant. All the discussion and proceedings held, will be properly recorded and filed. The complainant will receive feedback using the standard format or through any channels of communication. If the complainant is still unsatisfied with action taken or when it does not fall under the mandate of TVETA his case will be referred to an appropriate body.

### 3.7 End-line Resolution and Closure

It is the beginning of the process of independent mediation, when an agreement is not reached with complainant and he seeks other resolution mechanisms. Complainant is offered the options for the independent mediation and arbitration such as ombudsman institutions. When the mediation option and decision made is accepted to the grievant, the case is closed, and if grievant is not satisfied with the outcome, he then can lodge and adjudicate the case in the court of law. All supporting documents of proceedings needed to achieve resolution should be part of the file related to the complaint. This is the scenario of serious complaint case, when all possible resolution approaches are failed to solve the issue.

### 3.8 Registry and Database System

All complaints received will be entered into a central database system that will allow complaints to be tracked and monitored. All grievances will be recorded on Grievance Logbook at each site and in center. The information provided by the database is expected to help the project team to improve the mechanism and better understand and address the social impacts of the project.

The database will include and show;

- Number of complaints received disaggregated by gender
- Different categories of complaints (e.g. related to construction, administration, scholarship, etc)
- Percent of complaints that have been resolved
- Percent of complaints that have not been resolved
- Percent of complaints that have gone to mediation and adjudication
- Percent of complaints that are pending with the relevant departments.
- Showing the issues and sites/institutes most complaints circle around
- The database will provide detail account of the resolution process and the final decision that was made.

A report has to be submitted by the site/institute to the center in the end of each month on the prescribed format.

### 3.9 Follow-up and Feedback Mechanism

It is important and urgent to provide an acknowledgement of outcome to the complainant by the GRC. The complainant has the right of feedback and provision of information on the proceedings processes/steps in handling his/her grievance. The anonymous complaints acknowledgement and follow-up to him/her is not possible, however the outcome can be indirectly conveyed to him/her on various communication channels such as displaying on notice board, information brochures, newsletters, a message circulation etc. The means of follow-up and outcome/solution should be recorded in the database and reporting format for reporting to the appropriate authorities. The following options are best suited for follow-up and feedback in general and in particular case a specific mean can be used;

- Handing over of Decision Form
- Message/SMS
- E-mail
- Phone Call
- Displaying notification on notice board for anonymous complaint
- Circulation of information via e-mail, newsletter and SMS for anonymous complaint

### 3.10 Steps for Investigating a Grievance

Grievances are problems and can arise in any workplace, construction and operation of social facility and infrastructures. It is very important to make sure they are dealt with fairly and consistently, and may require an investigation. A properly conducted investigation allows an administration and project management to fully consider the matter and then make an informed decision on it. Ensure that all discussions during this process are fair, appropriate and above reproach. When investigating a grievance the following key points to be consider;

- An investigation is a fact-finding exercise to collect all the relevant information on a matter.
- An investigator should have clear guidance on what exactly they are required to investigate, and how their findings should be reported.
- The investigator should gather and document what the issues of the matter are, consider what evidence may be available and relevant, and how it may be collected.
- Whenever possible the investigator should not be involved in the issue being investigated by other mechanisms.
- Document and sign the investigation format and statements of the grievant and respondent.
- A potential grievance should be fully investigated before it is filed and grievance procedure should be explained to the individuals/parties involved.
- The investigation process will take time based on extent and seriousness of a complaint, within 1 to 7 days.

#### **Points to be consider in getting the facts from grievant:**

- Remind the grievant of all the facts to be released for the fair investigation of the process
- Document and take notes of comments and statements
- Ask questions for clarification or additional information
- Ask the member what other avenues they have explored to try and resolve the matter?
- What action are they requesting?
- What expectation do they have for the outcome?
- Make sure expectations are realistic
- Maintain confidentiality of the proceedings

### **Points to be consider when interviewing the respondent/defender:**

- Remind the respondent/defender on the complaint received and procedures of GRM.
- Introduce and interpret the GRM procedures to be a management process and it is not act of victimization or guilty findings.
- Give him time and opportunity for clarification and defend.
- Do not blame or accuse the respondent during investigation and fact-findings.
- Convince the respondent on the outcome of grievance findings and implications.

### **Process of Investigating and resolving a complaint:**

- Receive and organize adequate information on the case through appropriate procedure
- Analyze and verify the nature of complaint and eventually refer to the appropriate
- Committee process the complaint and take decision
- Keep proper record of resolved complaints

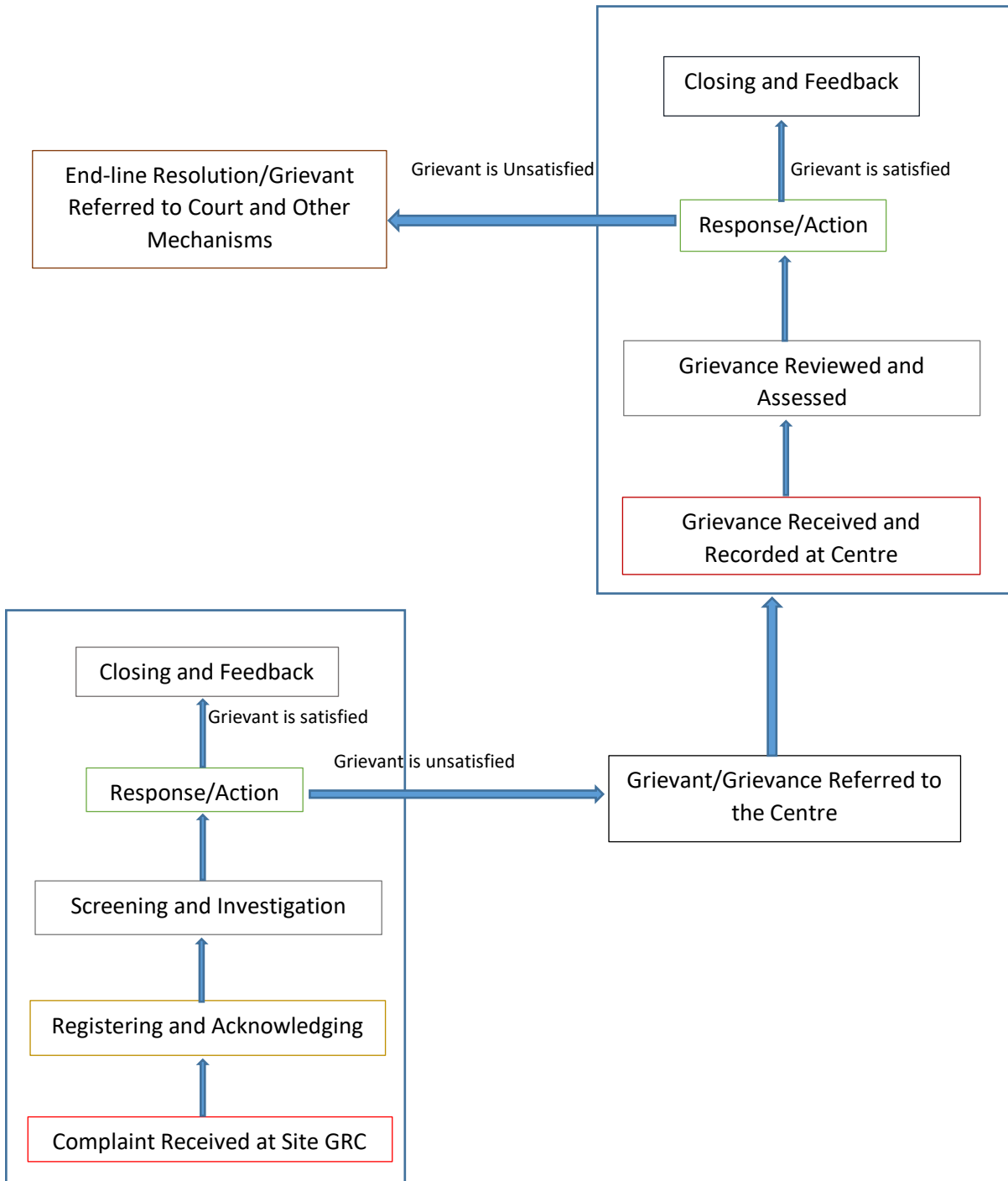
### **3.11 Time-frame of Grievances Handling**

Grievances resolution is a time bound process and the committees at all levels are required to resolve the issues within the specified period of time. Delay in grievances resolution constitutes another grievance. Any delay can cause minor disagreements to develop into more serious disputes. Grievance be handle promptly at the lowest level of GRC and administration having the authority to adjust the grievance or action which is mandated to them. The entire grievances must be resolved within maximum time period of one month of grievance reporting and recording subject to availability of adequate information about a complaint. The time period of resolving a complaint depends on seriousness and urgency of a complaint. Here we have three steps for redressing the grievances

- Institute level ( simple and routine grievances which will be in limitation of institute, will be redresses timely or within a week )
- PTVETD level ( the PTVETD will focus on grievances which are delivered from institutes and the decision is higher from their management, will be redresses within 2 weeks)
- Central TVETA level ( the central management will assess all cases specially main and series grievances, will be redresses within a month)

It is to be known that the central management has the authority of several assessment and final result.

### 3.12 Flow Chart of GRM Process



## 4. GRM Management Structure/Institutional Arrangement

### 4.1 Prime Responsible Bodies

The ASDP/TVETA management will be responsible for the operation of this GRM and the Social and Gender Specialist from the ASDP-2 will be the principal focal point of GRM management and operation at project level. GRCs at center and at TVET institute/school level are the authorized bodies for grievances handling and each member of GRC will be the grievance focal point. One committee member will be prime focal point administering and managing GRM activities for six months on rotation basis. Responsibilities include maintaining the grievance redress process, including the procedures; registration of complaints; outreach and external communications; tracking performance and monthly reporting.

### 4.2 ToRs/Responsibilities of Site/Institute GRCs

- Operationalize and maintain the grievance redress process abiding by the rules and procedures set out in GRM manual and in relevant national legislations/ law.
- Investigate and analyze the grievances and complaints scenario based on all available facts/information and ensure fairness and confidentiality.
- Finding alternative and best solution way for the issues to make decision sound and acceptable to all
- Ensure all complaints regardless of its nature, type, and seriousness are recorded in the designated logbook.
- Instruct relevant departments or authorized person responsible for implementing the decisions and monitor the implementation of given instructions.
- The GRC member shall refrain from participating in GRC Meeting, if the complaint is against the member himself or herself.

### ToRs/Responsibilities of Site/Institute GRCs secretariat

- Institute admin manager who is assigned as GRC member (Secretary) will handle site GRC secretariat activities.
- Up-take and register of complaints with full details and requirements.
- Arrange meeting for grievance resolution and dissemination of decision to the complainant and authorities
- Record the committee decision , Inform and giving feedback to complainant on grievance outcome
- Refer and assist the grievant to upper GRC when grievance is not resolved or complainant is not satisfied with decision
- Prepare and submit regular reports on schedule, to the ASDP-2 and TVETA management

### 4.3 ToRs/Functions of Central GRC at Project/TVETA Level

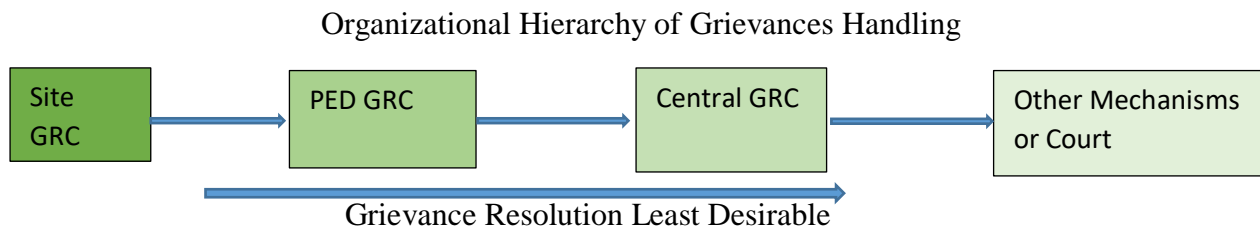
- GRC shall guide and address all grievances related issues within the Authority to ensure fair and prompt resolution to grievances in a stipulated deadlines;

- Publicize the existence of the GRM and the procedure for using it to ensure effective implementation of the GRM
- to ensure that all grievances related actions are in line with the policies, laws and other existing rules and regulations;
- The Committee shall thoroughly study and discuss the complaint and propose for a decision including further enquiry into the matter if need arises;
- Assessment of alternative and best solution for the issues
- Instruct relevant departments or authorized person responsible for implementing the decisions and monitor the implementation of given instructions.
- Track and document efforts at grievance/dispute resolution and their outcomes.
- Review of receipt and disposal of grievances during the meetings;
- To ensure strict confidentiality for the complaints received and discussion made during the meeting; and

The GRC member shall refrain from participating in GRC Meeting, if the complaint is against the member himself or herself.

#### 4.4 GRC Structure and Constitution

GRC will function at 3 tiers/order system at site/institute level, PED and TVETA level. GRCs will constitute of members from administration and relevant stakeholders. Grievances handling and processing will takes place in sequence due to the dissatisfaction of grievant with the outcome. Each committee member will be the grievance focal point. A principal grievance focal point from administration will manage and administer the grievance for six months on rotation basis, shifting the responsibilities to the next member.



##### 4.4.1 GRC Structure at Site/Education Facility Level

- One member from Institute/School management
- One member from male/female students (should be involved only in the matters related to students)
- One member from community or School/Institute Management Shura
- One member from female staff or teacher representing as a gender focal point
- One member from NGOs/CSOs or School management when these organizations are not available

(The committee is chaired/supervised by the Head of Institute/School)

#### 4.4.2 GRC Structure at PED Level

- Two members from PED staff
- One female staff from PED or female teacher from a school representing as a gender focal point
- One member from community or School Management Shura
- One member from NGOs/CSOs

(PED manages all types of education services in the provinces, the GRC established by anybody and in any structure will represent to as a whole. The committee is chaired and directed by the PED Director)

#### 4.4.3 GRC Structure at Program and TVETA Level

- ASDP-II Project Director as a committee member
- Environmental & Social Safeguard Specialist of ASDP-II as a committee member
- Chief of Technical Teacher Training as a member of committee
- Chief of Student Affairs as a member of committee
- Director of Plan and evaluation as a member of committee
- Gender Officer/Representative of TVETA as a member of committee

(The TVETA director will have a role to facilitate and oversight the committee or any high ranking official on behalf of him)

#### 4.5 GRC Member Requirements

GRC members should be competent, problem solvers, having analytic skills and easy reachable to the grievant. GRC must abide by all GRM and administrative principles and the members need to qualify the following requirements;

- Must be willing to devote a significant amount of personal time to work on grievances and attend applicable meetings
- Must use logic and evaluate grievances from an outside, neutral viewpoint
- Must never let personal feelings affect decision making
- Must be willing to seek advice from qualified sources if needed
- Must be willing to keep the best interest of the complainant and institute as a top priority
- Must develop the same traits and skills as those of an advocate. Grievance committee members represent and argue facts and issues through the steps of the process as well as research the merits of the grievance
- Must keep accurate and thorough records for each grievance throughout the grievance process
- Must consist of an odd number of members to break a tie vote
- Keeping privacy and confidentiality of the complainant and protect from victimization



- One GRC member will be the central focal point from the institute administration that will administer and manage the grievances (registering and filing system) for six months on circulation/rotation basis
- One member of the committee will be from the student of the last year e.g. 14th or 12th grade, introduced by the student, not member of student union.
- If a member of the Grievance Committee is connected with the grievance of the aggrieved individual, the concerned member of the Grievance Committee shall not participate in the deliberations regarding that individual's case.
- If the aggrieved person happens to be a member of the Grievance Committee, then he/she shall not participate in the deliberations as a member of the Committee when his/her representation is being considered.

#### 4.6 Procedure, Periodicity and Attendance at meetings

- The Grievance Committee will meet as and when required. However, it is necessary to hold a meeting once in a week at site and twice in a month at center. It may meet on ad hoc/irregular basis or more frequently at the instance of the Chairman or at the request of the other members to discuss the various issues received.
- At least three members of the Grievance Committee shall be present in a meeting.
- Minutes of meeting/outcome of decisions will be circulated to the concerned members and bodies.
- The progress on taking actions will be followed in the subsequent meeting and special emphasis will be given to pending concerns/issues.

## 5. Cross-cutting Themes/Issues

### 5.1 Informal, Formal and Legal Handling of Grievances

Grievances as trend are liked to resolve informally, settling the dispute with the direct supervisor or an authorized person in-charge of. When grievant is not satisfied of the outcome or grievance need to be formally handled, then the formal procedures must be adopted. Legal handling of complaint is the later stage, where law implications are considered at ombudsman or court. The ASDP-2 will apply three modes in the redressing and resolution of grievances which will be informal, formal and legal.

#### **Informal Process:**

It may be decided to respond to a complaint through an informal process where the complaint lends itself to local and direct resolution and;

- the complaint is of a minor nature or if it is of a more serious nature, the committee considers that it is appropriate to do so and the complainant agrees;
- the complainant wishes the matter dealt with informally and the manager considers this appropriate in the circumstances;
- A complaint has arisen from lack of, or unclear, communication.

Providing a written response to the complainant outlining the action taken is advisable. An informal process may be formalized at any point where the grievance committee considers it appropriate, particularly where an informal process has been unsuccessful and will be prevented through awareness. The steps taken to resolve the complaint should be documented (recorded and registered) by the committee.

#### **Formal Process:**

It is the requirement that the grievance be submitted in writing using a grievance form. The grievance committee will review the grievance to determine whether it is valid, imaginary or vexatious and initiating the formal procedures of grievance resolution with appropriate documentation. Three possible outcomes may occur at this stage of the process;

- The GRC may determine that no valid grievance exists
- The grievance may be resolved
- The grievance may not be resolved and it will be remitted to the next step/tier or court in the process

#### **Legal Process:**

Each grievance resolution process needs to follow the country rules, regulations and procedures. Grievances such as crimes, land title issues, violation of rights, squatting etc. comes under the mandate of law enforcement authorities, public prosecutions, judiciary and other mechanisms. Grievant should be assisted in legal issues handling by the project team. The end referral body for grievant is court of law and other formal mechanisms in the country.

## 5.2 Grievance Prevention

Grievances cannot be avoided entirely, but much can be done to reduce them to manageable numbers and reduce their impacts. Grievances do occur and dealing with them is part of the organizational activities and routine work plan. The first step to grievance management is grievance prevention. The ways of grievance prevention are;

- Providing sufficient and timely information to stakeholders
- Conducting meaningful stakeholders consultations
- Building capacity for project staff and GRC members at all levels

## 5.3 Privacy and Confidentiality

All persons involved in the complaint handling process must observe confidentiality, unless otherwise authorized or required to disclose information. The identity and personal details of complaints will only be disclosed to those involved in the resolution of grievance. The complainant's details should be optional in case someone ask to register grievance anonymously and the outcome should be communicated in a way that can keep privacy.

### 5.3.1 Benefits of Confidentiality

- Assists the investigative process by encouraging complainants and witnesses to be forthcoming in their evidence
- Reduces the likelihood or opportunity for evidence to become compromised
- Reduces the risk of untested or unsubstantiated allegations being circulated outside of the complaint process
- Helps in developing and maintaining confidence in the process
- Allegations may carry the risk of a claim of defamation especially if confidentiality has not been maintained properly
- Protects form victimization and reprisal

## 5.4 Protection from Victimization

GRCs and administration needs to be aware that victimization of individuals or parties involved in a particular matter may occur. Administration and GRCs should make it clear to the persons involved that victimization is not tolerated. Victimization should not be confused with the natural consequences of a properly applied GRM processes. A person who claims the application of GRM procedures to be victimization should be counselled about due processes. The grievant has the right of protection from victimization and reprisal due to lodging the complaint and when appropriate evidences are not provided or difficult to find.

## 5.5 Gender and Grievances

Special attention will be given to gender issues and gender mainstreaming has to be centrally focused in the GRM. Complaints lodged by gender is on priority and prompt action is needed to be taken without any excuse to delay. Each committee at all levels, will have a female member and will be the key focal point for gender related issues and complaints. Privacy and confidentiality will be ensured of the female complainant in the entire process of resolution. The gender disaggregated data will be available for tracking and monitoring of gender associated issues and progress on actions/outcome.

## 5.6 Communicating GRM

A policy or process for addressing complaints cannot be effective if nobody knows about it and therefore grievance procedures should be put into writing, publicized, and explained to relevant stakeholder groups. People should know where to go and whom to talk to, if they have a complaint and understand what the process will be for handling it. It should be provided in a format and language readily understandable to the local population, direct beneficiary/users of facilities, project staff and/or communicated orally in areas where literacy levels are low. It should not be too complicated to use nor should it require legal counsel to complete the grievance process.

### 5.6.1 Communication Channels and Methods

The ways and means through which GRM procedures are communicated, is dependent on the scope of projects, types of stakeholders, geographical location of projects, beneficiary characteristics and feedback etc. The best channel to be used as the one, which transfer the encoded message to the receiver, with high impact and feedback and of low cost. The method used should be simple and that best illustrate to the conditions. The common channels to be used are;

- Public disclosure at each site through printed materials e.g. flyers, grievance forms
- Organizing GRM events and briefings
- Articles written in newsletter on grievance resolution
- Training sessions and staff capacity building
- Interpersonal communication/Face-to-Face meetings
- Circulation of complaint specific e-mail
- Circulation of GRM representatives contact details
- Using digital modality such as webpage
- Opinion survey regarding the GRM functioning
- Site visits

### 5.6.2 Aspects of GRM Communication Plan

Introducing the GRM requires planned actions and the aspects to be considered when designing a GRM communication plan. The aspects are;

- who are the target groups receiving information on the GRM existence
- what information to convey

- framing of message to deliver information effectively
- who is responsible for conveying the information and who can help doing it (multipliers)
- what timeframe is necessary to communicate about the GRM

### 5.6.3 Information in Publicizing Grievance Management Procedures

Stakeholders should have easy access to the information sources and the contents of information in the publicity materials or verbal communication should be sufficient and enough. There should be no gap in provision of information and the publicizing sources should be easily accessible. The following information components are necessary to be included while publicizing grievance management procedures;

- What project-level mechanisms are (and are not) capable of delivering and what benefits complainants can receive from using the project or organization grievance mechanism, as opposed to other resolution mechanisms
- Who can raise complaints (affected persons)
- Where, when, and how complainants can file complaints
- Who is responsible for receiving and responding to complaints, and any external parties that can take complaints from grievant
- What sort of response complainants can expect from the project or organization, including timing of response
- What other rights and protection are guaranteed (compensation, protection from victimization)

### 5.6.4 Messages of Communicating GRM

- Grievances can help improve project policies, systems and services delivery
- Grievances will be treated confidentially, and complainants will not be victimized for
- Grievant has the legal right to lodge complaints upon experiencing any discomfort and dissatisfaction by project activities
- Grievances management improve the system and build trusts among the stakeholders
- Grievances lodging and resolution is a sense of pride to all

### 5.7 Operational Costs and Allocating Fund for GRM

GRM design and implementation costs can vary significantly depending on the type, scale and scope of the GRM. It must be keep in mind that the mechanisms should bear least cost on project as well as on the complainant. Resources to cover the operational costs of the GRM will come from ASDP-2. The basic low-cost GRM models include a suggestion box, website, email, etc. Text messaging SMS systems provide an easy and cost-effective way for beneficiaries to engage with project staff and management, even from remote locations. The cost and complexity of GRMs increases with the number of potential uptake locations, therefore choosing uptake locations strategically based on project goals and interventions sites. GRMs for projects that serve a large number of beneficiaries, tend to be more complex and costly. The project should allocate funding for;

- Assessing context, resources (human, financial, technological) and capacity for GRM
- Conducting a needs assessment to determine GRM's scope and scale
- Staff time developing a GRM (e.g. drafting operating procedures, guidelines and manual, and standalone publications for GRM staff and users)
- Training for GRM staff and costs for facilitators
- Developing a comprehensive communications strategy to launch and publicize GRM
- Monitoring and evaluating grievance-related data
- Site visits/Inspection

### 5.8 GRM at TVETA Governance System

TVETA is mandated with regulating and managing TVET education and can play a key strategic role in preventing and managing the grievances. It is the authorized body for; to develop any set up, formulate and endorse procedures and policies, oversee and track interventions within its governance system. GRM needs to be officially protocolled, certified and maintained by the TVETA. The decision making and taking actions are subjected to its relevant departments for approval. Hence it is crucial, that the TVETA role should be on highest for, to support the mainstreaming and maintaining of GRM in its governance system and functions and without strong commitment from the top, the grievance mechanism is likely to be ineffective or underutilized. The TVETA and ASDP-2 will support one another in the implementation and management of GRM.

### 5.9 Operationalization and Capacity Building

The arrangement for the operation and maintenance of GRM will be led by the Safeguard Management Unit and supervised by the ASDP director and TVETA senior management. Monthly meetings will be convened, whereas ad-hoc meetings will also be held based on the seriousness of complaints and issues. Working plans will always be developed for the GRM at all levels in collaboration with TVETA relevant departments and school management. Training sessions will be launched on safeguard issues and GRM to staff and members of grievances committees.

### 5.10 Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

It is necessary to monitor and evaluate the overall performance of the grievance mechanism throughout the project lifecycle. The goal of this level of monitoring and evaluation is not only to improve the system, but also to improve the organizational performance, commitment and competency. Emphasis should be on the participation of stakeholders, effectiveness of GRM and on the resolution of grievances.

#### **Monitoring:**

GRM monitoring will involve assessing the progress that is being made to handle grievances. Monitoring to track timely feedback and appropriate responses to the complaints; enhance the GRM outcomes and gaps are identified and filled. The project team will gather data on specific indicators and discuss progress with users and stakeholders as a part of commitment to joint learning and continuous improvement. Monitoring will be conducted by the safeguard

management unit and performance indicators will be presented on three different outputs; resolution of grievances, participation of users and effectiveness of GRM. A visit to the site/institute should be ensured once in a month. And in TVET A regular monitoring will be done twice a month including sharing the result with the management.

### **Evaluation:**

GRM evaluation involves analyzing grievance data and making policy or process to improve the grievance handling process. The ASDP-2 and TVETA are the bodies responsible for steering the GRM to success. Lessons learned will be gathered from the process and subsequently using those to improve the GRM. Besides the qualitative indicators, use of general inquiries for evaluation of annual output against the expectation of GRM users. Some possible questions to pursue more qualitative statements about the functioning of the GRM as a whole are listed as Annex # 7. Important elements of evaluation include;

- General awareness of the mechanism, whether it is used and by whom
- Types of issues addressed
- Ability of the mechanism to resolve conflicts/grievances early and constructively
- The actual outcomes (impacts on project operations, management strategy and benefits for stakeholders)
- Efficiency
- Ability to accomplish its stated purpose and goals
- Stakeholder's consultation and view

### **Reporting:**

Annually and bi-annually, the GRM will be made available to the public and stakeholders, a report describing the work of the GRM, listing the number and nature of the grievances received and processed in the past six months and in a year, a date and description of the grievances received, resolutions, referrals and ongoing efforts at resolution, and status of implementation of ongoing resolutions. The level of detail provided with regard to any individual grievance will depend on the sensitivity of the issues and stakeholder concerns about confidentiality, while providing appropriate transparency about the activities of the GRM. The report will also highlight key trends in emerging conflicts, grievances and dispute resolution, and make recommendations regarding:

- (a) Measures that can be taken by the ASDP-2 and TVETA to avoid future harms and grievances;
- (b) Improvements to the GRM that would enhance its effectiveness, accessibility, predictability, transparency, legitimacy, credibility, and capacity.

## 6. ANNEXES

### Annex-1: Grievance Registration Form

#### Grievance Registration Form

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Registration No (by Office):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Institute/School:** \_\_\_\_\_

Complainant Name:

Father name(optional):xxxxxx

Student/Employee ID (optional): .....	Designation: .....
Gender: .....	Location: .....
Email ID: .....	Contact No: .....
Address: .....	

(Please submit this form duly filled in & signed to the Grievance Redress Committee (GRC) member, or place it in the designated complaint box provided in all TVET facilities)

.....

<b>Registration No (by Office):</b> 0087 _____	
Student/Employee ID (optional): .....	Designation: .....
Location: .....	
Grievance's Subject: .....	Grievance Received By: .....
Grievance in brief:	
.....	
.....	
.....	
.....	
.....	
.....	
.....	

I/We, the complainant/s herein declare that:

(A) The information furnished herein above is true and correct, and

(B) We have not concealed or misrepresented any fact stated in aforesaid columns and the documents submitted herewith.

Signature of the Complainant/s: .....



**Grievance Decision Form**

**Grievance Registration Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of TVET School/Institute:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**General Information**

Name of Grievant: .....

Type of Grievance: .....

Date Grievance Lodged: .....

Date Grievance Decided: .....

**Result of Grievance Redressal**

Please describe the type of grievance, what the committee decided, and how. (Include specific details)

**Grievance Summary:**

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**Discussion of Meeting:**

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**Summary of Resolution/Decision/Recommendations from GRC:**

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**Grievance Redress Committee Members**

1: Name: .....Position: .....Signature: .....

2: Name: ..... Position: .....Signature: .....

3: Name: ..... Position: ..... Signature: .....

4: Name: ..... Position: .....Signature: .....

5: Name: .....Position: ..... Signature: .....

**Agreement and Consent of the Grievant to the above Decision**

I ..... agree/disagree with the decision taken.

Name..... Signature.....Date.....

**Status of Grievance:**

1. Resolved

2. Unresolved

**Referral** (mention the body): \_\_\_\_\_

(Note: Original form to be kept and a copy to be sent to complainant)

Annex-3: Grievance Information Form (for center)

**Grievance Information Form**

Institute/School: ..... District: ..... Province: .....

Date: ..... Place of Registration: ..... Registration No.: .....

**Contact details of the complainant:**

Name: ..... Age: ..... Gender: .....

Address: .....

Phone No: ..... Email Address: .....

**Category of complainant:**

- Affected person
- Mediator for affected person
- Civil organization / Service Organization
- Other (specify)

**Summary of grievance:**

.....  
.....  
.....

(Attach letter or a petition / documents as submitted)

**Category and Type of Complaint:**

1. Category: .....

2. Type: .....

**Source of complaint: (To be ticked):**

Letter		Telephone		Fax		Email		Verbal		Complaint box		Other (specify)
--------	--	-----------	--	-----	--	-------	--	--------	--	---------------	--	-----------------

**Attachments:** 1) \_\_\_\_\_ 2) \_\_\_\_\_ 3) \_\_\_\_\_

**Prepared by:** .....

**Date:** .....

Annex-4: Grievance Logbook for TVET Institute

**Technical Vocational Education & Training Authority**

**Afghanistan Skills Development Project**

**Grievance Logbook for TVET Institute/School**

**Name of TVET School/Institute:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Reg. No</b>	<b>Complainant's Name, Address and Phone</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Date of complaint</b>	<b>Complaint Description</b>	<b>Type of Complaint</b>	<b>Complaint Uptake Channel</b>	<b>Decision Taken by Committee with date</b>	<b>Feedback of complainant</b>	<b>Remarks</b>

Annex-5: Grievance Report Format

**Technical Vocational Education & Training Authority**  
**Afghanistan Skills Development Project**  
**Grievance Report for Month/Quarter**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Institute: \_\_\_\_\_ Submitted By: \_\_\_\_\_

Complaints Received (No)	Complaints Discussion	Complaint Resolved	Complaints Rejected	Complaints Pending	Complainant Response	Complaints Referred	Remarks

Annex-6: GRM Database Sheet

Afghanistan Second Skills Development Project													
Grievance Redressal Registration and Monitoring Sheet													
Details of Complaints Received								Details of Redressal Activities					
S.No	Regd.No.	Institute/School	Location	Complainant Name & Address	Date of Complaint	Grievance	Type of Grievance	Details of Redressal Processing	Ractification of Issues			Grievant Satisfaction	Remarks
									Not Commenced	In Progress	Resolved		
								First Tier					
								Second Tier					
								Third Tier					
								First Tier					
								Second Tier					
								Third Tier					
								First Tier					
								Second Tier					
								Third Tier					
								First Tier					
								Second Tier					
								Third Tier					

### Annex-7: Simple Evaluation Survey Questions

1. Is the system making a difference and if yes, how?
2. What are the gaps? What is and what is not working? The evaluation has to address analyze the efficacy of all components of the GRM: types of responses that are more effective and can build trust with the stakeholders.
3. How effective is the system in resolving ASDP related issues for pupils and students, staff, gender and indirect stakeholders? What actions would increase effectiveness?
4. How does the GRM facilitate identifying deeply rooted conflicts and grievances e.g. persistent, recurrent or unresolved conflicts? What kind of actions can be taken to address these root causes?
5. What kind of demonstrable change is the GRM producing in the ASDP-2 and TVETA program, for the program management and for the stakeholders?