



GREEN  
CLIMATE  
FUND

Independent  
Redress  
Mechanism

# 2021

## Setting Standards

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Independent Redress Mechanism –  
2021 Annual report



## SETTING STANDARDS

### Independent Redress Mechanism – 2021 Annual Report

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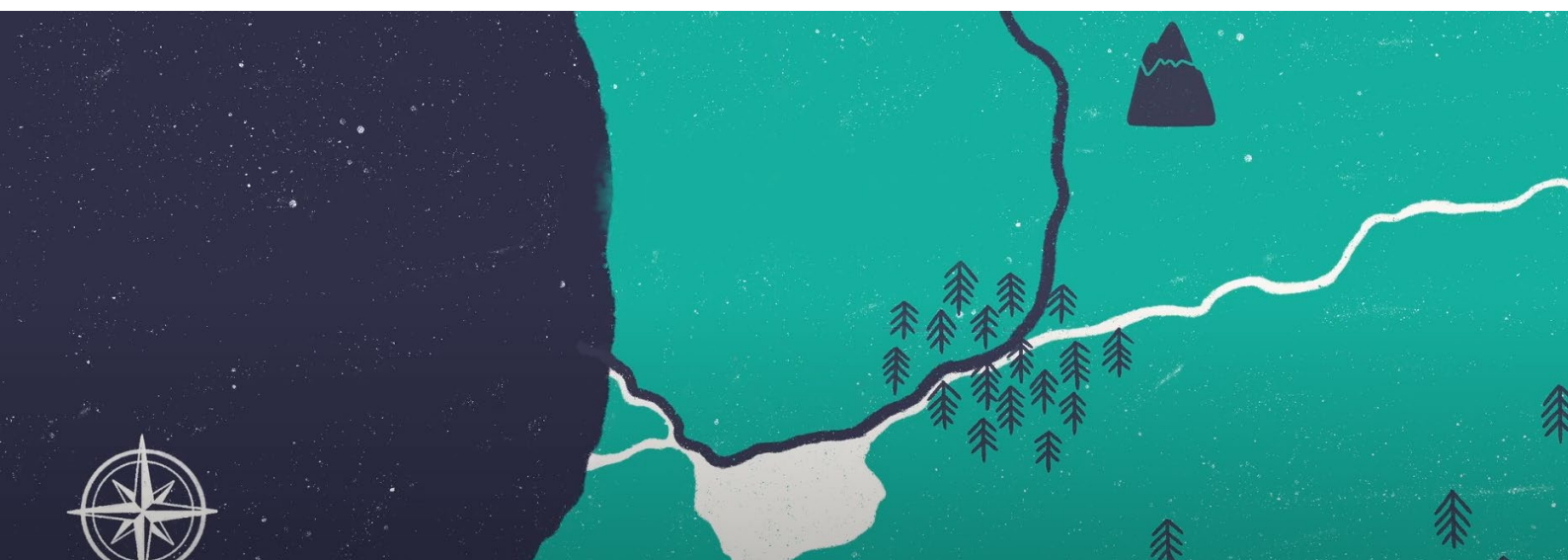
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Independent Redress Mechanism**

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# MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIRS OF THE BOARD

We are happy to note that the IRM has successfully implemented its 2021 work plan and has made innovative adjustments to respond to the Covid-19 challenges.

Most heartening is the fact that the IRM has become a global good practice standard setter, being acknowledged as such by numerous civil society organisations, academics, and peer accountability mechanisms. The 2021 report details these achievements and highlights various aspects of the 2021 work plan and its implementation. We note the growing number of staff of the grievance redress mechanisms of direct access entities that have been trained by the IRM. We also note the increasing number of civil society organisations for whom the IRM has conducted outreach. More challenging grievances are reaching the IRM, and we are confident it will deal with them fairly and expeditiously. We take great pride in having shepherded the Board Guidelines for the Consideration of IRM Case Reports through the Board – again another standard setting document that other multilateral development agencies and funds can emulate.

We hope that next year the IRM will significantly increase its visibility to the public and the Board, among others through the recruitment of a Communications Associate for which the Board provided funding in the IRM's budget adopted at B.29.

We wish the IRM well and assure the IRM of our ongoing support for implementing its mandate

**Jean-Christophe Donnellier & Jose De Luna Martinez**

Co-Chairs of the Board of the GCF in 2021









# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



The Independent Redress Mechanism (IRM) plays a critical role in the Green Climate Fund's accountability framework.

The GCF's investment portfolio has grown exponentially in 2021, and more and more projects and programmes have entered the implementation phase. With this change, the roles of the risk management unit and portfolio management unit of the Secretariat as well as that of the IRM and the other two independent units have further grown in importance. While GCF Accredited Entities provide the first line of defense, the Secretariat and the independent units provide the second and third lines of defense with regards to GCF funds. They ensure that projects and programmes risks are assessed and managed proactively; that GCF portfolio is implemented in a manner free of corruption and fraud; and that adaptive management measures are taken as necessary to deliver on scope, on time and on budget.

In the last five years the IRM has established itself as a leading mechanism and as one that sets global good practice standards in many areas. The Secretariat is supporting the IRM in its work. The Secretariat is providing the IRM with infrastructure and support services, and the Office of General Counsel has provided legal advice when requested. In the Morocco case concluded in 2021, the IRM resolved the disputes through mediation and problem solving enabling the project to be implemented while addressing the grievances. In policy matters, the IRM and the Secretariat has collaborated to navigate challenges in a mutually supportive manner. The GCF and its stakeholders can be justly proud of the IRM's achievements in which we can all share.

With a challenging year ahead as the world continues in its fight to contain the pandemic and address the pressing challenge of climate change, we look forward to continued engagement with the IRM and to increasing accountability in our work.

**Yannick Glemarec**  
Executive Director, GCF







# MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF THE IRM



This is the last Annual report that will be issued before the end of my term as the first Head of the Independent Redress Mechanism of the GCF. I am immensely proud of the IRM's achievements over the past five years. These achievements have only been possible because of the continuing support of the Board, the Ethics and Audit Committee, the Secretariat, the Independent Integrity Unit and the Independent Evaluation Unit, civil society actions including accredited observers, accredited entities, the accreditation panel and other GCF stakeholders. The support of other accountability and redress mechanisms forming part of the IAMnet should also be acknowledged.

As a result of all this support, the IRM is now widely acknowledged by civil society, peer accountability mechanisms and by multilateral institutions and academia as a leading mechanism and as one that is setting new global standards in the field. This recognition is evident in published reports, academic writings and institutional papers. Additionally, the IRM has continued to address the grievances of project affected people, including complex cases and has trained the grievance redress mechanism (GRM) staff of GCF's direct access entities to do so as well. One lasting legacy the IRM has created is trained GRM personnel in dozens of developing countries with basic knowledge of establishing and operating a GRM and successfully handling grievances and complaints.

As I face this final year of my watch as the Head of the IRM, I look forward to the five-year review of the IRM and to consolidating our successes and improving on them. My priority task this year will be to ensure that the IRM staff are well trained and ready to carry on the good work of the IRM and to ensure a smooth and efficient handover to my successor in office.

**Lalanath de Silva**  
Head of the IRM, GCF



# WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED IN FIVE YEARS

Our mission is to provide recourse to affected people in a way that is **FAIR, EFFECTIVE and TRANSPARENT.**

The Independent Redress Mechanism (IRM) addresses complaints by people who believe they are negatively affected or may be affected by projects or programmes funded by the Green Climate Fund (GCF). The IRM also accepts requests for reconsideration from developing countries whose funding proposals have been denied by the GCF Board. The IRM aims to provide recourse to affected people in a way that is fair, effective and transparent, and enhances the performance of the GCF and its projects and programmes.

Since its establishment in 2016, the IRM has benefitted from and put in practice innovations in the field of accountability and redress, even as it continued to build up its own operations and procedures. In 2017, the IRM's Terms of Reference (TOR) were updated by the Board; in 2019, the IRM succeeded in formalizing its Procedures and Guidelines (PGs) and having them adopted by the Board; and in 2021, the IRM enabled the Board to issue the very first guidelines to facilitate Board consideration of IRM reports on reconsideration requests, grievances, or complaints.

Each milestone further solidifies the foundations for the successful operation of an independent redress mechanism. The procedural framework of the Supporting Operating Procedures (SOPs), the acquisition of a tailored Case Management System and the creation and maintenance of an "Ecosystem of Grievance Redress Mechanisms" among the GCF's Accredited Entities allow the IRM to process complaints and reconsideration requests systematically, consistently, transparently, legitimately, and fairly.

FIGURE 1. THE IRM IN THE GCF STRUCTURE



The Board of the GCF is composed of 24 Board members – 12 from developed countries and 12 from developing countries.

The IRM reports to the Board, and actively consults with the Ethics and Audit Committee (EAC), a sub-committee of the Board.



As the tenure of the first Head of the IRM comes to a close in October 2022, the previous 5 years demonstrate the significant achievements of a young, but effective grievance mechanism, benefitting both the projects of the GCF, and potentially affected people and other stakeholders. Grievance mechanisms like the IRM provide a forum for resolving disputes relatively quickly and fairly and can help to avoid project delays and costs associated with conflict. Grievance mechanisms also provide a cost-effective method for reporting complaints, learning lessons through them and a structure for accessing a fair hearing and appropriate remedies.

As a priority, the IRM as an independent unit, enables the GCF to be faithful and accountable to its own policies and procedures, especially those dealing with environmental and social safeguards, gender and indigenous peoples. In delivering its mandate, the IRM is guided by principles of fairness, equity, independence, transparency, effectiveness and justice.

As a recognition of the IRM's many achievements, the IRM's practices as codified in its TOR, Procedures and Guidelines and its Supporting Operating Procedures and Board Guidelines were cited 21 times (out of 69 indicators) as good international practice in a **publication** by 11 civil society organizations specializing in grievance redress work.<sup>1</sup> A November 2019 technical assistance study by the Asian Development Bank on **"Regional: Developing an Accountability Framework for Financial Intermediaries"** and funded by the Peoples Republic of China Poverty Reduction and Regional Cooperation Fund cited the good practices of the IRM and adapted much of the IRM's Procedures and Guidelines as part of the recommended template for such mechanisms in the Asian region.<sup>2</sup> **The Report of the External Review of IFC/MIGA E&S Accountability, including CAO's Role and Effectiveness** (2020)<sup>3</sup> and the African Development Bank (AfDB)'s **Third Review of the African Development Bank's Independent Review Mechanism** (2020)<sup>4</sup> cite the good practices of the IRM multiple times recommending them for adoption by the IFC and the AfDB. As evinced by these and other assessments, including a self-assessment conducted by the IRM against indicators proposed by the Access to Remedy Project of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR),<sup>5</sup> the IRM has been an international standard setter among redress mechanisms. Of these achievements, the GCF can be justly proud. As we look forward to the five year review of the IRM that falls due after September 2022 and to the next five years of the IRM's life, we hope the Board would build on these achievements, and pave the way for even more improvements in complaint handling and reconsideration requests at the GCF.

<sup>1</sup> Accountability Counsel, BIC, CIEL, SOMO, CEMSOJ, Gender Action, Green Advocates International (Liberia), IDI, IAP, Jamaa Resource Initiatives, and Urgewald. (2021). *Good Policy Paper: Guiding Practice from the Policies of Independent Accountability Mechanisms*. Accountability Counsel. <https://accountabilitycounsel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/good-policy-paper-final.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Lakshminarayanan, P. (2019). *Safeguard Compliance and Accountability Framework for Investments Supported by Financial Intermediaries*. Asian Development Bank [https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/project-documents/53140/53140-001-tacr-en\\_0.pdf](https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/project-documents/53140/53140-001-tacr-en_0.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Anon. (2020) *Report of the External Review of IFC/MIGA E&S Accountability, including CAO's Role and Effectiveness*. World Bank <https://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/578881597160949764/External-Review-of-IFC-MIGA-ES-Accountability-disclosure.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Anon. (2020). *Third Review of the African Development Bank's Independent Review Mechanism*. Savanas E Enseadas – LDA. [https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/2020/09/18/eng\\_revised\\_draft\\_report\\_on\\_the\\_3rd\\_irm\\_review.pdf](https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/2020/09/18/eng_revised_draft_report_on_the_3rd_irm_review.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (n.d) *Accountability and Remedy Project*. Retrieved December 29, 2021 from <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Business/Pages/OHCHRAccountabilityandremedyproject.aspx>



FIGURE 2. THE IRM PLAYS FIVE ROLES IN ORDER TO ACCOMPLISH ITS MISSION.



### RECONSIDERATION REQUESTS

Addressing requests from developing countries for reconsideration of Board decisions denying funding to a project or programme



### COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

Addressing complaints and grievances from persons adversely impacted by projects or programmes of the GCF



### ADVISORY

Recommending reconsideration of GCF policies, procedures, guidelines and systems based on lessons learned from IRM cases and from good international practice; providing guidance to the GCF's readiness and accreditation activities based on best practices



### CAPACITY BUILDING

Strengthening the capacities of accountability and redress mechanisms of direct access entities (DAEs) of the GCF



### OUTREACH

Providing education and outreach on the IRM's work to stakeholders and the public and to staff at the GCF

# 2021: NAVIGATING THE PANDEMIC

As with other institutions, the Covid-19 pandemic continued to impact the manner in which the IRM conducted its operations. The staff of the IRM have transitioned back to working full-time at the GCF Headquarters in South Korea, having successfully adapted its events and activities to virtual forums, and facilitated, for the first time, a virtual mediation process in the resolution of one of its cases. The challenges of working remotely are mitigated by having clear Terms of Reference, detailed procedures, a custom-built CMS and being able to remotely access GCF's operations including HR and benefits management, procurement, and payments. In this regard, a special word of thanks is due to the ICT, Division of Support Services and Human Resources divisions of the Secretariat for its excellent services to the Fund, including the IRM.

**Notwithstanding the continued uncertainties of the pandemic, the IRM is pleased to report that it has managed to deliver on its mandate and all the commitments made in its 2021 Work Plan and Budget<sup>6</sup>.** In recognition of the IRM's mandate to raise awareness and knowledge of the mechanism amongst key stakeholders, the Board of the GCF approved the IRM's proposal<sup>7</sup> to bring on a full-time Communications Associate from 2022 onwards. In addition, the IRM offered virtual capacity building trainings across multiple regions and introduced a new advanced training on Company-Community Mediation. The IRM plans to build on these activities in the coming years, continuing to operate its virtual (and when permissible, in-person) outreach and capacity building events and trainings.

Like in the previous year, continued restrictions on travel have resulted in travel-related budget underspending, and also fortuitously, in a dramatically reduced carbon footprint of the IRM<sup>8</sup>. However, the IRM also recognizes the importance of case-related travel, especially the need to connect with stakeholders on a personal level in the context of problem solving and mediation. Having worked collaboratively with the Secretariat to adhere to the strictest levels of safety and security protocols, in the most challenging cases, the IRM used a hybrid approach for handling complaints through virtual and in-person convenings.

<sup>6</sup> Green Climate Fund (2020) ) Independent Redress Mechanism Work Plan and Budget for 2021 (GCF/B.27/09). <https://irm.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/gcf-b27-09-independent-redress-mechanism-work-plan-and-budget-2021.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Green Climate Fund (2021) Independent Redress Mechanism Work Plan and Budget for 2022 (GCF/B.30/10). <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/gcf-b30-10.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> See Appendix III: Carbon Footprint Report



# IRM ROLE AND FUNCTIONS: PROGRESS REPORT



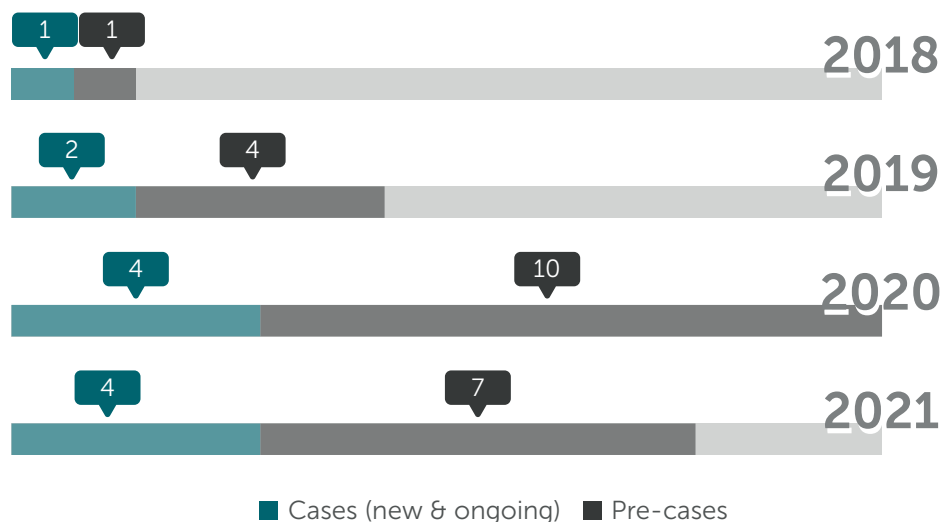
## PROCESSING COMPLAINTS AND REQUESTS FOR RECONSIDERATION

In 2021, the IRM did not receive any requests from developing countries, for reconsideration of decisions by the Board denying funding to project proposals. On the other hand, the IRM has continued to receive a steady number of complaints from project affected persons.



In 2021, the IRM received two new complaints, processed 2 ongoing complaints and considered 7 pre-cases. A pre-case is a communication from an external party to the IRM that is registered in the Case Management System as a pre-case and may or may not mature into a complaint. In comparison, in 2018, the IRM received one request for reconsideration of a funding proposal and considered one pre-case. In 2019, the IRM processed one self-initiated inquiry and one complaint, and considered four pre-cases. In 2020, the IRM received three new complaints, processed one ongoing complaint and considered ten pre-cases.

### Complaints & Requests



### FP001: Building the Resilience of Wetlands in the Province of Datem del Marañón, Peru<sup>9</sup>

The IRM continues to monitor the outcomes of its 2019 preliminary inquiry into FP001, Peru. A preliminary inquiry is an early phase of an IRM self-initiated investigation. A self-initiated investigation is a proceeding initiated under para 12 of the IRM's Terms

<sup>9</sup> Independent Redress Mechanism of the GCF (n.d.) C002 Peru FP001: Building the Resilience of Wetlands in the Province of Datem del Marañón, Peru. Independent Redress Mechanism. <https://irm.greenclimate.fund/case/c0002>

of Reference (TOR) if the IRM receives information from a credible source that a GCF project or programme has or may negatively impact a community or person. The IRM concluded its preliminary inquiry into FP001 in early 2019, determining that there was prima facie evidence that the conditions set out in para 12 of the IRM's TOR for initiating an investigation were met. The IRM however agreed not to initiate proceedings under that paragraph in view of an undertaking given by the Secretariat on 1 May 2019 to implement several remedial actions.

The IRM has continued to monitor the implementation of these undertakings in 2021. Out of the four undertakings provided by the Secretariat, three have now been completed - the issuance of guidance on Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) requirements, and on risk categorization for projects involving Indigenous Peoples, and the completion of a legal assessment/opinion examining the potential impacts of the creation of the Áreas de Conservación Ambiental (ACA) on collective land rights of indigenous people who are part of the project. The IRM continues to monitor the fourth undertaking – which is for the GCF Secretariat to ensure that the consent documentation submitted by the AE for the establishment of the ACA is complete and compliant with the guidance. The IRM received a progress report from the GCF Secretariat on 30 June 2021 and 15 December 2021 indicating that there had been no update regarding the establishment of the ACA due to the Covid-19 restrictions that have not allowed the project to organize participative processes and consultations. The Secretariat has granted an extension of the project period through 2023, and the IRM will continue to monitor progress on the fourth undertaking until the ACA is established. Notwithstanding delays in this fourth action item, within a relatively short timeframe, significant institutional and project-level improvements have been made based on the recommendations of the IRM, thus averting a dispute that might otherwise have lingered and escalated to become a reputational risk to the GCF.

### FP043: The Saïss Water Conservation Project in Morocco<sup>10</sup>

In August 2021, the IRM closed its complaint relating to FP043, following a satisfactory, mediated, and participatory dispute resolution process including complainants and relevant stakeholders. The complaint, received in February 2020, raised concerns regarding the alleged insufficiency of the community consultations conducted and the alleged lack of information provided to complainant(s) and others affected by this Project.

The complaint was declared eligible for further processing, and in June 2020, the parties agreed to engage in a problem-solving process. The Covid-19 pandemic, and more specifically GCF-wide restrictions on travelling to Morocco, resulted in delays in the processing of this case. Nonetheless, in 2021 the IRM was able to facilitate a series of virtual meetings with the different parties and helped organize an in-person meeting between project affected people (including the complainant), Moroccan authorities, and staff of the IRM and EBRD. The meetings resulted in the signing of a problem-solving agreement and the complainant communicated their satisfaction with the outcomes of the process. The complainant further requested the proceedings be terminated, with full understanding that the IRM would not be involved in the monitoring of the agreements reached by the parties. With that, and with the consent of all parties involved, the IRM declared the case to be closed.

<sup>10</sup> Independent Redress Mechanism of the GCF (n.d.) C003 Morocco FP043: The Saïss Water Conservation Project. Independent Redress Mechanism. <https://irm.greenclimate.fund/case/c0003>







## FP146: Bio-CLIMA: Integrated climate action to reduce deforestation and strengthen resilience in BOSAWÁS and Rio San Juan Biospheres<sup>11</sup>

In June 2021, the IRM received a complaint relating to FP146. The complainant(s), while welcoming the objectives of the project, alleged that the project would harm indigenous and Afro-descendant communities as 1) prior to the approval of the project, there was no proper consultation with communities, including no free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC); 2) the project will lead to environmental degradation and attacks by armed non-indigenous settlers; 3) the Accredited Entity's actions do not seem to comply with the GCF's policies, especially on participation and information disclosure; 4) the GCF Board conditions placed on the project, especially relating to the implementation of FPIC and to the selection of independent third party monitor(s), will not be defined and complied with effectively; and 5) the executing entity will not fulfil its obligations in the implementation of the Bio-CLIMA project (more details about the complaint can be found in the eligibility determination report). The complainant(s) requested confidentiality, and the IRM is granting confidentiality in accordance with its TOR and PGs and as a result of its own continuous retaliation risk assessment. The complaint was declared eligible by the IRM on 21 July 2021, and the case is proceeding, starting with the Initial Steps phase, where the IRM is exploring the options of problem solving and compliance review, with the complainant(s) and other stakeholders.

## FP018: Scaling-up of Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) risk reduction in Northern Pakistan<sup>12</sup>

A third formal complaint was received in August 2020 but has been suspended at the request of the complainant(s). Through discussions with the complainant(s) it emerged that the primary goal of the complainant(s) at this stage was to obtain more information about the GCF project, and upon receiving information about the GCF's Information Disclosure Policy and the procedures for requesting information from the GCF Secretariat, the complainant(s) requested that the complaint be suspended pending the outcome of the complainant(s) utilizing the request for information processes. The complainant(s) is at liberty to re-activate the complaint at a later date, if the complainant(s) wishes. The IRM will not report on this case in future reports unless it is re-activated by the complainant(s).

## Pre-cases<sup>13</sup>

The IRM processed 7 pre-cases in 2021. A pre-case is a communication from an external party to the IRM and information received by the IRM that is registered in the Case Management System as a pre-case and may or may not mature into a complaint. The list of the IRM's pre-cases, accessible in the Case Register, contains a summary of all the pre-cases registered in the IRM's Case Management System as of 31 December 2021.

<sup>11</sup> Independent Redress Mechanism of the GCF (n.d.) C006 Nicaragua FP146: Bio-CLIMA: Integrated climate action to reduce deforestation and strengthen resilience in BOSAWÁS and Rio San Juan Biospheres Independent Redress Mechanism. <https://irm.greenclimate.fund/case/c0006>

<sup>12</sup> Independent Redress Mechanism of the GCF (n.d.) C005 Pakistan FP018: Scaling-up of Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) risk reduction in Northern Pakistan Independent Redress Mechanism. <https://irm.greenclimate.fund/case/c0005>

<sup>13</sup> Independent Redress Mechanism of the GCF (n.d.) Case Register Independent Redress Mechanism. <https://irm.greenclimate.fund/case-register#>



## Overview of Grievances Received and Processed by Accredited Entities with the GCF for the Calendar Year 2020:

In consultation with the IRM, the Secretariat revised the Annual Performance Report template for the 2020 calendar year pertaining to activities related to grievance redress mechanisms of AEs that are implementing GCF projects. Annual Performance Reports are submitted by Accredited Entities and document progress on project activities and objectives. At the IRM's suggestion, the 2020 Annual Performance Report queried Accredited Entities on (i) activities undertaken to disseminate information about accredited entity or project-level grievance redress mechanisms as well as the Independent Redress Mechanism of the GCF and (ii) the number, status and description of grievances reported. As this is self-reported data, the IRM cannot guarantee the accuracy of responses or draw any conclusions on the nature, operations or functioning of individual grievance redress mechanisms.

In the first year of collecting and analyzing this data, the IRM notes that in 2020, accredited entities reported receiving 275 complaints or grievances. Of these, 245 have been marked as resolved and 30 are still pending. Grievances have been recorded by both International Access Entities and Direct Access Entities and cover a wide range of issues including access to information, impacts to environment, property, land, livelihoods, and selection of beneficiaries. Grievances are submitted by various stakeholders such as community members, indigenous peoples, contractors, and local businesses.

The IRM is encouraged by the reporting on grievances handled by accredited entities, demonstrating in a practical sense what the 'Ecosystem of Grievance Mechanisms' could achieve in expanding access to remedy and recourse. The IRM continues to collaborate with grievance redress mechanism colleagues in international and direct access entities, to build capacity and improve the operation of mechanisms at every level.



## ADVISORY

The IRM is mandated to recommend to the Board reconsideration of policies, procedures, guidelines and systems based on lessons learned from the IRM's work and from good international practice and provide guidance to the GCF's readiness and accreditation activities based on best practices.<sup>14</sup>

In 2021, The IRM developed terms of reference for an advisory report concerning its mandate to entertain requests for reconsideration of funding proposals. Since the IRM's establishment, it has received only one such request for reconsideration, which was subsequently withdrawn. In accordance with the IRM's Supporting Operating Procedures, the draft terms of reference were sent to the Secretariat and accredited observers for comment. Based on comments received from the Secretariat and the Office of General Counsel (which commented independently from the Secretariat), the IRM decided to abort the advisory report, and instead decided to include the relevant issues in submission to the five-year review of the IRM due in 2022.

In 2021, the IRM also worked collaboratively with the other two Independent Units, the Independent Integrity Unit (IIU) and the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU), and the

<sup>14</sup> Green Climate Fund. (2017) Decision of the Board on updated Terms of Reference of the Independent Redress Mechanism (Revised). Independent Redress Mechanism of the Green Climate Fund. <https://irm.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/bbm-2017-10-decision-board-updated-terms-reference-independent-redress-mechanism-revised.pdf>

Secretariat to provide advice and feedback on a range of policy documents. The IRM also provides advice on the development of Administrative Instructions (AIs) for GCF staff when called upon to do so, and when appropriate.

## Guidelines to Facilitate Board Consideration of IRM Reports

While adopting the Procedures and Guidelines (PGs) of the IRM at B.22 in February 2019, the Board of Directors of the GCF requested that the Head of the IRM to consider options on how to facilitate the Board's consideration of reports from the IRM. The IRM prepared and presented the *Guidelines to facilitate Board consideration of IRM reports on reconsideration requests, grievances or complaints* at the 29<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board. The Guidelines were adopted and issued by the Board on July 13, 2021.<sup>15</sup>

The Guidelines promise that the Board will (i) expeditiously consider the IRM's case reports, and decide on an outcome; (ii) base its decision on the IRM's report; (iii) consider the report fairly, in an unbiased fashion with a view to providing redress, when appropriate; (iv) provide a summary of reasons given by Board members if and when it disagrees with the findings or recommendations of the IRM and to make them public; and (v) include IRM case reports in the Board annual reports to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties.

The GCF is the first financial institution to adopt such guidelines for its Board, acting as a beacon to other institutions with regard to enhancing due process in grievance processes and promoting accountability and transparency.

## CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT OF DIRECT ACCESS ENTITY GRIEVANCE MECHANISMS

One of the key new functions entrusted to the IRM by the Board in the updated 2017 TOR is that of capacity building for the grievance redress mechanisms (GRMs) of Direct Access Entities (DAEs). The GCF currently has 71 Direct Access Entities and all of them are expected to have a grievance redress mechanism at the institutional level. However, the IRM's research had shown that such GRMs, in the case of some DAEs, were either non-existent, weak or lacked capacity. The Board mandate to the IRM is critical in ensuring that GRMs are in place, and appropriately structured, so that accountability exists at all levels and smaller conflicts and disputes at the project level can be addressed properly by DAEs.

In 2021, the IRM offered three regional workshops of three weeks each to the GRM personnel of DAE's located in Asia Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa regions. The workshops were conducted for the Asia Pacific Region in September/October 2021, Latin America and the Caribbean in October/November 2021 (with Spanish translation); Africa in November/December 2021 (with French translation). In total, over 46 participants representing over 29 direct access entities participated in the three courses.

The IRM's virtual curriculum, paired with interactive and live discussions, provided participants with the opportunity to fully immerse themselves in the basics of operating and managing a grievance redress mechanism. Participants who successfully completed the online learning modules and who attended all sessions received a certificate from the IRM, the Consensus Building Institute, and the Harvard-MIT Public



<sup>15</sup> Green Climate Fund. (2019) *Procedures and Guidelines of the Independent Redress Mechanism. Independent Redress Mechanism of the Green Climate Fund*



GCF has around  
**71 DIRECT  
ACCESS  
ENTITIES.**

Disputes Program. The workshops received positive feedback from the participants and were rated as being informative and comprehensive. Having concluded three consecutive regional trainings in 2019, 2020 and 2021, the IRM has now completed trainings for a majority (59%) of Direct Access Entities. In 2022, the IRM will consolidate the training into a single global workshop for interested grievance redress mechanism personnel.

Additionally, in December 2021, the IRM successfully convened an advanced virtual workshop on mediation for grievance redress mechanism personnel of DAEs who had completed the basic GRM training. The course *"Company-community mediation in complex environments"* introduced participants to the fundamentals of company-community mediation – analyzing conflicts and/or challenges and the range of possible approaches to resolving them; developing clearer and more constructive mediation mandates; better monitoring and evaluation of individual mediations; and continuous learning from experiences for systemic improvement. The course was delivered over a series of 4 sessions on behalf of the IRM/GCF by Professor Brian Ganson and Kate Kopischke, globally recognized leaders and trainers in the study and practice of company-community mediation processes.

**Still from a video case study, developed by the IRM, for a workshop on Company Community Mediation (December 2021)**











## COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH

Under paragraph 16 and 17 of the Updated Terms of Reference, the IRM has a mandate to provide education and outreach on the IRM's role and work to stakeholders and the public, including the staff of the GCF<sup>16</sup>.

The IRM migrated its website (<https://irm.greenclimate.fund/>) to a new and improved GCF platform in January 2021. The IRM's new website includes an updated public register of cases, which is integrated with its Case Management System, as well as individual case pages, which contain detailed information on individual cases including translated versions of the IRM's website in 6 languages. In furtherance of the IRM's goal to provide outreach and education amongst stakeholders and the public, the IRM Workplan and Budget 2022 called for the creation of the new position of a Communications Associate, to lead the implementation of the communications strategy. The IRM expects to recruit and onboard the Communications Associate in the first quarter of 2022.

In 2021, the IRM hired two part-time consultants: 1) a high-Level Communications Consultant to advise on the revision of the IRM's communications strategy and, subsequently, the development of a multi-year Communications Workplan and outreach campaigns; and 2) a Social Media Consultant to support and implement the social media component of the overall communications strategy. Through these consultancies, the IRM has greatly enhanced the capacity and reach of its communications. In particular, the IRM expanded its presence on social media through its Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn accounts, increasing the number of interactions with stakeholders and the public.

Given the travel restrictions occasioned by the Covid-19 pandemic, the IRM continued to conduct its 2021 outreach activities virtually. The IRM hosted a total of four outreach events in 2021, each of which are described in more detail below. For the first time, the IRM participated in-person at the United Nations Climate Conference or UNFCCC COP 26 in Glasgow, participating in two side-event panels related to mediation in conflicts

<sup>16</sup> Green Climate Fund. (2017) Decision of the Board on updated Terms of Reference of the Independent Redress Mechanism (Revised). Independent Redress Mechanism of the Green Climate Fund. <https://irm.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/bbm-2017-10-decision-board-updated-terms-reference-independent-redress-mechanism-revised.pdf>





involving indigenous people and accountability in climate finance. During COP26, the IRM also conducted several liaison meetings with government officials, civil society actors and accredited entity staff.

### Central Asia

The IRM hosted an outreach event for civil society participants from the Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan in January 2021, in partnership with the Association for Human Rights in Central Asia. The event was hosted online on Zoom with pre-recorded presentations in Russian to reduce technical challenges and allow sufficient time to engage in meaningful dialogue and discussions.

### Middle East and North Africa<sup>17</sup>

In April 2021 the IRM, together with the Arab Watch Coalition, hosted an online outreach workshop for civil society participants from four Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region countries, namely Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia and Jordan. The workshop was well attended with engaged participation. The workshop was simultaneously interpreted into Arabic, and resource materials were also translated into Arabic and shared with participants.

### West Africa<sup>18</sup>

The IRM hosted two online outreach workshops with civil society participants based in West Africa, partnering with Natural Justice and Oxfam International. In September and October, the IRM hosted two online outreach workshops for over 120 civil society participants based in 15 West African countries namely Mauritania, Mali, Senegal, the Gambia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Nigeria. Simultaneous interpretation and translation of materials into French was made available during both events.

### COP 26<sup>19</sup>

The IRM participated, for the first time, in the United Nations Climate Change Conference in November 2021 (UNFCCC-COP26) in Glasgow, UK. The IRM presented in a hybrid format (with one staff member present in-person in Glasgow and the rest of the team joining virtually from Songdo) for two side events. One side event was hosted in partnership with the One Ocean Hub and the Strathclyde Centre for Environmental Law and Governance at the University of Strathclyde, and the other in partnership with the GCF's Independent Evaluation Unit and Independent Integrity Unit. The IRM also liaised with government officials, Accredited Entity staff and civil society in Glasgow. Through its participation in COP26, the IRM successfully raised awareness about the role and work of the IRM, particularly with regard to mediation in the context of indigenous people and their spiritual and cultural beliefs and perspectives.

### Inreach to GCF Staff

In addition to its external communications, the IRM continued its series of virtual inreach events (i.e. events for GCF colleagues) called the IRM's Dialogue and Learning Forum. The goal of these events is to foster collaboration, trust and understanding within the GCF and its staff and to encourage institutional learning. The IRM has hosted three such events in 2021.

<sup>17</sup> Anon. (2021, April 13). MENA region participants find out how Asha submitted a complaint to the IRM. Independent Redress Mechanism. <https://irm.greenclimate.fund/news/mena-region-participants-find-out-how-asha-submitted-complaint-irm>.

<sup>18</sup> Anon. (2021, November 02). Defending Rights and Accessing Remedy. Independent Redress Mechanism. <https://irm.greenclimate.fund/news/defending-rights-and-accessing-remedy-learnings-conversations-civil-society-based-west-africa>

<sup>19</sup> Anon. (2021, December 22). The IRM at COP26. Independent Redress Mechanism. <https://irm.greenclimate.fund/news/irm-cop26-discussing-accountability-and-dispute-resolution-climate-projects>

IRM has  
**18**  
MEDIATORS,  
**23**  
SUBJECT  
EXPERTS and  
translators

# WORKING WITH PARTNERS

## INFORMATION APPEALS PANEL

The Heads of the three Independent Units at the GCF make up the Information Appeals Panel (IAP) established under the GCF's Information Disclosure Policy (IDP) and related Board decisions. Information disclosure requests which are made to the GCF Secretariat under the IDP and which are denied, may be appealed to the IAP. In 2021, the Information Appeals Panel did not receive any information appeals. From 4 June 2021 to 3 June 2022, the Head of the IRM will function as the Chairperson of the IAP, after which, the Head of the IIU will assume that office in rotation.

## ROSTER OF EXPERTS

The IRM continues to maintain three rosters of subject experts, mediators and translators to assist it in its work, particularly in relation to case investigations. On its rosters, the IRM currently has 18 mediators, 23 subject experts, and translators for a range of languages including Spanish, French, Arabic, Mandarin, Russian, Portuguese, Turkish and Farsi. The IRM will continue to recruit for its rosters of experts and mediators on a rolling basis until it has sufficient expertise in all key areas identified.

## INDEPENDENT ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISM NETWORK

With Board approval, the IRM joined the Independent Accountability Mechanisms Network (IAMnet) in February 2017. IAMnet is a community of practice for accountability mechanism practitioners. There are over 20 accountability mechanisms of international financial institutions and multilateral and bi-lateral development funds, and a significant number of the grievance redress mechanisms of the current accredited entities are members of this network. The IRM will continue to actively participate in IAMnet, including attending its annual meeting and serving on working groups to develop good practices, collaborate on outreach activities, and implement governance reforms. The IRM actively participated and made presentations in the IAMnet's XVIII annual meeting which took place virtually between 27-30 September, 2021 and was convened by the Complaints Mechanism of the European Investment Bank. Over 140 staff members of Independent Accountability mechanisms participated in the virtual meeting.

## STRENGTHENING THE GRAM PARTNERSHIP

In 2019, the IRM formed the Grievance Redress and Accountability Mechanism (GRAM) partnership to offer leadership, a learning and knowledge platform and a meeting space to an increasing number of GRAMs (especially the staff of Grievance redress mechanisms of the GCF's Direct Access Entities) that are emerging in different spheres. In 2021, the IRM hosted a series of 4 virtual GRAM Partnership webinars,

providing increased opportunities for accountability practitioners to share their insights and learnings:

**1<sup>st</sup> GRAM Partnership Webinar:** In April, the IRM convened the first GRAM Webinar for the year, on the topic “How to Establish a Fit-For-Purpose Grievance Redress and Accountability Mechanism<sup>20</sup>”, addressing the ever-present concerns about setting up and managing a grievance redress mechanism within certain financial constraints.

**2<sup>nd</sup> GRAM Partnership Webinar:** In July, Accountability Counsel, a civil society organization, hosted the second GRAM webinar on the topic “Known, Available, and Safe: Best Practices for Promoting Accessibility for Local Communities and Addressing Retaliation Risks<sup>21</sup>” drawing from the varied experience of different civil society organizations working in the field of accountability and redress.

**3<sup>rd</sup> GRAM Partnership Webinar:** In October, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) – Access to Remedy Project hosted a webinar on the topic of “Designing and Administering Effective Grievance Mechanisms.” The event was attended by nearly 100 participants from grievance mechanisms, civil society organizations and research institutes.

**4<sup>th</sup> GRAM Partnership Webinar:** In December, UNDP Social and Environmental Compliance Unit hosted a webinar on the topic “Managing the grievance redress mechanism and parent institution relationship.”

## THE FUTURE: LOOKING AHEAD TO 2022



**Handling cases:** The IRM’s case load continues to see an increase in numbers and complexity. The IRM looks forward to receiving updates on the monitoring phase of its self-initiated inquiry into FP001 and hopes to conclude processing the complaint received regarding FP146 from Nicaragua. The IRM stands ready to receive any new complaints and/or reconsideration requests in 2022.



**Capacity building:** The IRM will continue to offer its training for DAEs in company-community mediation. Having successfully trained a majority of DAEs on the basics of setting up and operating a grievance redress mechanism, the IRM plans to consolidate its regional workshops into one global training. Aside from having adequate trainings and materials, the IRM will facilitate a community of practice in the field of Grievance Redress Mechanisms and will assist the grievance redress mechanism staff of DAEs and other AEs to improve their skills and exchange knowledge and information on handling complaints from project affected people. The IRM will also continue to support DAEs by

<sup>20</sup> Anon. (2021, August 23) GRAM Community of Practice Gains Practical Knowledge Independent Redress Mechanism <https://irm.greenclimate.fund/news/gram-community-practice-gains-practical-knowledge>

<sup>21</sup> Anon. (2021, November 25) Enhancing our Knowledge, Design and Administration of Effective GRMs. Independent Redress Mechanism <https://irm.greenclimate.fund/news/enhancing-our-knowledge-design-and-administration-effective-grievance-mechanisms-gram-community>



providing access to an expert consultant to provide tailored advice on specific topics identified to help strengthen their grievance redress mechanisms.



**Outreach:** The IRM will continue to conduct virtual outreach events in 2022 and will seek to expand its accessibility amongst relevant stakeholders. The IRM plans to host four virtual outreach events in 2022 and has also budgeted for increased collaboration with civil society in reaching grassroots communities. The IRM will welcome to the team a full-time Communications Associate who will lead on the implementation of the communications strategy.



**Lessons Learned:** The IRM will prepare, as appropriate, advisory reports in 2022 for presentation to the Board. The IRM will participate in the first 5-year Independent Review of the Mechanism, which will evaluate the IRM's procedures, operations and activities over the past five years and propose recommendations for improvements. The IRM will also continue to work collaboratively with the other two Independent Units and the Secretariat to provide advice and feedback on a range of policy documents. The IRM will also continue to push for greater transparency in relation to project information, and continue to model best practices in information disclosure.

## CONCLUSIONS

Over the past five years, the IRM has achieved the following:

1. Prepared for Board adoption an updated terms of reference, procedures and guidelines and guidelines for Board consideration of IRM reports. These have set international good practice standards in dozens of areas of grievance redress and complaint processing. It has led to the IRM being recognized as a leading mechanism among multilateral and bi-lateral agencies;
2. The IRM has processed several complaints related to GCF projects and has recruited and trained staff to address these complaints competently, fairly, and expeditiously. In particular, the IRM has put in place 21 modules of supporting operating procedures that function as an internal manual for IRM staff on the various functions and mandates of the IRM;
3. The IRM has trained over 100 staff of direct access entities of the GCF in how to establish, operate and successfully address grievances and complaints that are filed with their grievance redress mechanism (GRMs). Many such complaints are being dealt with by these GRMs and are now being reported to the Secretariat in Annual Progress Reports. As a lasting legacy, the IRM has developed and publicly made available an online course on strengthening GRMs and has provided the staff of grievance redress mechanisms of direct access entities with a three week virtual course on the basics of establishing and operating a GRM and on company-community mediation in complex environments. Additionally, the IRM has provided the Accreditation Panel with detailed guidance on best practices in evaluating GRMs of candidate AEs and has made presentation to the Panel on that subject.

4. The IRM has produced internal advice to the Secretariat and the Accreditation Panel covering dozens of key topic areas. The IRM has produced a formal advisory on preventing sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment in GCF projects and programmes and made key recommendations which were accepted and incorporated by the Secretariat and the Board into the GCF's revised policy on sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment and the environmental and social policy.
5. The IRM has conducted over a dozen outreach events for over 100 civil society organisations in developing countries and has produced and disseminated information in over a dozen languages. The IRM has also published a triennial Newsletter that is disseminated to GCF's stakeholders about the IRM's activities. The IRM has regularly and timely filed Annual Reports, and Activity Reports with the Board and provided Quarterly Reports of its work plan and budget to the Ethics and Audit Committee and annually worked with the Budget Committee to develop its budgets.
6. The IRM acquired a state of the art case management system and all its complaints have been recorded and processed using this system. The system captures numerous data points for analysis in IRM reports.
7. The IRM has continued to be a member of IAMnet and actively participated in the work of global standard setting and information exchange among redress mechanisms. In this context, the IRM established the GRAM partnership with other accountability mechanisms, civil society organisations, UN agencies and private sector entities to provide leadership to the second generation of GRMs. The GRAM partnership now counts more than 100 members and a growing number of partners as well. The GRAM partnership is fostering a community of practice on GRMs and providing information exchange and knowledge sharing to dozens of GRMs.

The IRM is confident that it is ready to meet future challenges associated with handling complaints and requests for reconsideration and the discharge of its other mandates with the support of the Board, the GCF Secretariat and other IRM stakeholders, including accredited entities and their grievance redress mechanisms, and civil society organisations.









# APPENDIX 1

## BOARD APPROVED WORK PLAN AND BUDGET FOR 2022

Please visit this link:

<https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/gcf-b30-10.pdf>

# APPENDIX 2

## INDEPENDENT REDRESS MECHANISM BUDGET 2021

### BUDGET EXECUTION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2021 (IN USD)

	2021 APPROVED BUDGET	ACTUAL EXPENDITURE TO 31 DECEMBER 2021	BALANCE	% SPENT
<b>3.1 Staff, Consultants and Interns Costs</b>				
3.1.1 Full-time Staff	845,959	671,587	174,372	79%
3.1.2 Consultants & Interns	164,705	38,968	125,737	24%
<b>Sub-total: Staff, Consultants and Interns</b>	<b>1,010,664</b>	<b>710,556</b>	<b>300,108</b>	<b>70%</b>
<b>3.2 Travel</b>				
3.2.1 General	40,864	5,858	35,006	14%
3.2.2 Travel associated with complaints/ request	62,289	6,331	55,958	10%
<b>Sub-total: Travel</b>	<b>103,153</b>	<b>12,189</b>	<b>90,964</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>3.3 Contractual Services</b>				
3.3.1 Professional Services	119,119	103,580	15,539	87%
3.3.2 Operating costs	83,950	47,513	36,437	57%
<b>Sub-total: Contractual Services</b>	<b>203,069</b>	<b>151,093</b>	<b>51,976</b>	<b>74%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,316,886</b>	<b>873,838</b>	<b>443,048</b>	<b>66%</b>
<b>Shared cost allocation</b>	<b>78,585</b>	<b>78,585</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Grand total (1+2+3)</b>	<b>1,395,471</b>	<b>952,423</b>	<b>443,048</b>	<b>68%</b>

# APPENDIX 3

## IRM TEAM CARBON FOOTPRINT

Since 2019, the IRM has been collecting data on its carbon emissions from air travel. With the impact of Covid-19, the IRM's 2020 total carbon emissions dropped by about 90 per cent compared to 2019. In 2021, there was a slight increase in travels related to complaints handling, which resulted in a 10 per cent increase compared to the 2020 emissions.

Despite the significant cut in travels, the IRM has continued to deliver on its mandates effectively and efficiently, such as by training more GRM staff of the GCF's DAEs, inviting more civil society organisations to its outreach workshops, and regularly communicating with its stakeholders. The IRM has certainly noticed some difficulties, especially in building trust with its stakeholders and actively engaging with workshop participants, but the IRM hopes to overcome these barriers by implementing its communications strategies in 2022.

YEAR	TOTAL CARBON EMISSIONS (T)	IRM'S FUNCTIONS					STAFF RECRUITMENT AND BENEFITS (%)
		COMPLAINTS HANDLING (%)	RECONSIDERATION REQUESTS (%)	OUTREACH (%)	CAPACITY BUILDING (%)	ADVISORY (%)	
2019	61	0	0	36	30	0	34
2020	7.4	0	0	32	0	0	68
2021	8.1	17	0	26	0	0	57





# APPENDIX 4

## IRM TEAM PROFILES



**LALANATH DE SILVA**  
HEAD OF UNIT

Dr. Lalanath de Silva is the Head of GCF's Independent Redress Mechanism. Lalanath has extensive experience in legal affairs, with more than 30 years of service as a practicing lawyer. In Sri Lanka, he supported the Ministry of Environment as a legal consultant, and was a member of his country's Law Commission. Lalanath previously worked at the Environmental Claims Unit of the UN Compensation Commission in Geneva, and served as Director of the Environmental Democracy Practice at the World Resources Institute (WRI) in Washington DC. As a member of the Compliance Review Panel of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), he led the review of multiple compliance cases. Lalanath has a PhD from the University of Sydney, a Master of Laws from the University of Washington, and graduated from the Sri Lanka Law College as an Attorney-at-Law.



**PACO GIMENEZ-SALINAS**  
COMPLIANCE AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION SPECIALIST

Paco Gimenez-Salinas, born in Spain, is a lawyer by profession specialized in alternative dispute resolution with a focus in mediation. He has participated in cases handled by the Compliance Advisor Ombudsman (IFC) as an external facilitator, as well as in cases managed by the Independent Consultation and Investigation Mechanism (IADB) in the role of its consultation phase coordinator. In México, he spent several years working in the field of community mediation. Amongst other experiences, he has participated in the design and facilitation of several major multi-party dialogues around issues such as air pollution reduction strategies, the impacts of dams and windmill fields, the strengthening of conflict resolution systems of land tenure related conflicts, etc. Paco has undertaken post-graduate studies in the fields of conflict resolution at the University of Barcelona, political analysis at the Mexican University CIDE and community-company mediation at the University of Cape Town.



**PREKSHA KRISHNA KUMAR**  
REGISTRAR AND CASE OFFICER

Preksha Krishna Kumar is a researcher and communications specialist, with wide-ranging experience relating to accountability and redress mechanisms. She previously worked for an international human rights advocacy organization based in New York, supporting dozens of frontline communities in their efforts to access information and redress. Over the course of her career, Preksha has been immersed in the policies, practices and impacts of development finance institutions – working with diverse stakeholders in countries such as India, Colombia, Malawi and Kenya. A data nerd, Preksha supported the design and creation of a civil society-led database of 19000+ development projects, breaking down complex financial flows and investments and facilitating access to early, verifiable and actionable data. Preksha comes to the IRM with enthusiasm and a commitment to building and maintaining fair, effective and transparent processes for accessing remedy and reconsideration. Preksha holds a B.A. from Sarah Lawrence College, New York, with a focus on Development Economics and Spanish Literature.



**SUE KYUNG HWANG**  
TEAM ASSISTANT

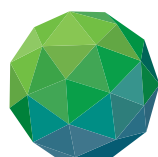
Observing a sudden transition of her countryside hometown in Ulsan, South Korea, to a highly industrialized one, Sue Kyung grew up wanting to study the environmental consequences of rapidly sprawling cities in developing countries. After studying International Affairs and Environmental Studies at the George Washington University, she pursued her master's degree in Water Cooperation and Diplomacy, a joint programme held at University for Peace (Costa Rica), IHE Delft Institute for Water Education (Netherlands), and Oregon State University (U.S.), to learn how countries manage water resources that are not naturally bound by artificial borders. Her past work experiences involve preparing a database of livestock carbon emissions and using it to educate the public for climate action in a local community in Costa Rica. Sue Kyung served as the IRM's intern in 2020 and rejoined the team as the IRM's Team Assistant in April 2021.











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