

Stakeholder Survey 2021: Independent Redress Mechanism (IRM)

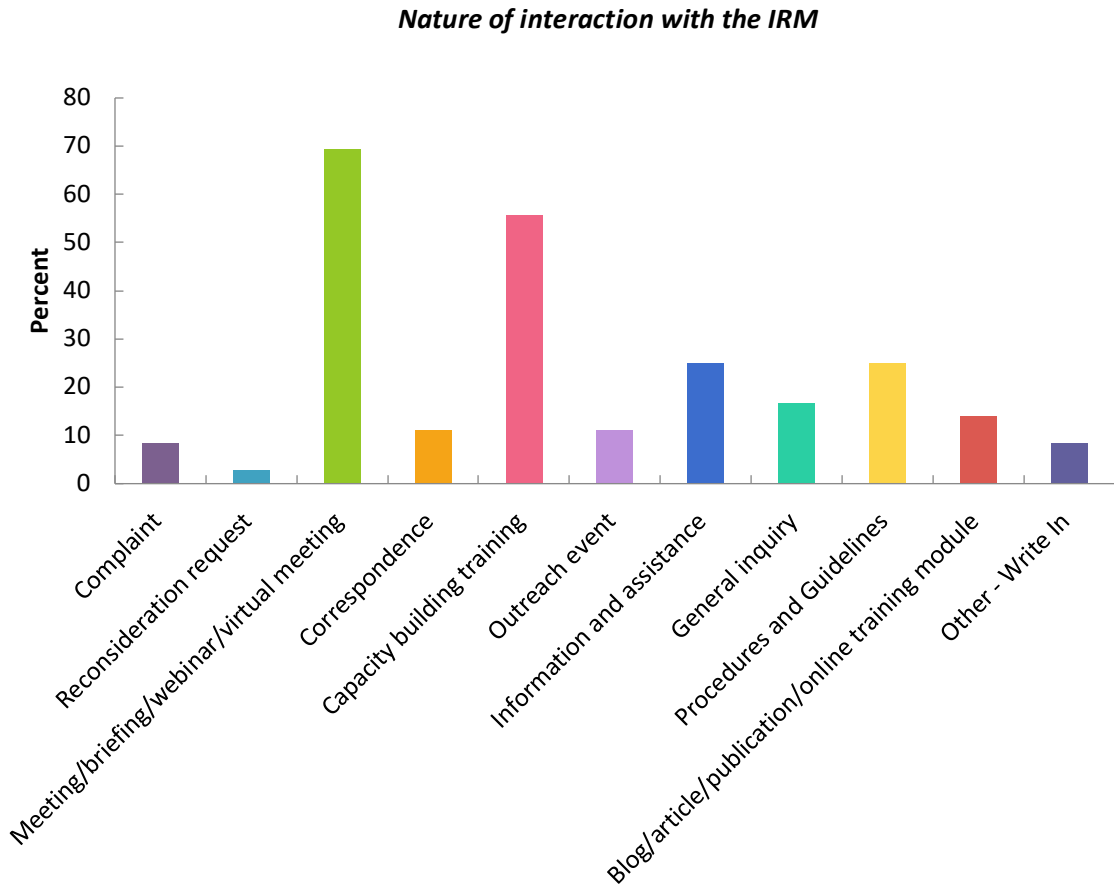
Responses report

In April 2021, the IRM sent out a survey to various stakeholders who have interacted with the IRM (including complainants, requesters, civil society representatives, accredited entities, GCF colleagues, and others). The purpose of the survey was to evaluate the IRM’s performance and identify areas that needed improvement. 38 people responded to the survey.

Identity of respondents and nature of interaction with the IRM

The 38 people who responded came from a range of different stakeholder groups, with the majority being from grievance mechanisms of direct access entities, civil society representatives, and independent accountability mechanism representatives. GCF Secretariat and Independent Unit staff also responded, as well as complainants, requesters, a national designated authority representative, an accreditation panel member and a staff member of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights.

The nature of the respondents’ interactions with the IRM are illustrated in the graph below:



Ratings

The IRM asked respondents to rate their interaction with the IRM against five qualities according to a sliding scale of five (where 1 is poor and 5 is exceptional).

	1 (Poor)	2	3	4	5 (Exceptional)
Fairness	0	4 (11.4%)	7 (20%)	15 (42.9%)	9 (25.7%)
Transparency	0	4 (11.4%)	7 (20%)	14 (40%)	10 (28.6%)
Responsiveness	0	3 (8.6%)	5 (14.3%)	16 (45.7%)	11 (31.4%)
Timeliness	0	4 (11.1%)	11 (30.6%)	12 (33.3%)	9 (25%)
Effectiveness	1 (2.9%)	3 (8.6%)	5 (14.3%)	17 (48.6%)	9 (25.7%)

The majority of respondents rated IRM as a four across each quality, with five (exceptional) as the second most chosen option across each quality. One respondent rated the IRM as one (poor) against the quality of “effectiveness”. There were no other ratings of one (poor) given. 20% or more of respondents gave the IRM a rating of three (fair) against three qualities: fairness, transparency, and timeliness.

Positive comments

Respondents were asked whether there was something that stood out for them as being particularly positive in their interactions with the IRM.

Of the 31 respondents that commented on this question, 11 commented positively on the outreach or capacity building workshops and trainings. The capacity building workshops were said to have “elicited indepth understanding of the resource persons to the diverse circumstance and resolution tools available”, that the “capacity building training was well organised and prepared”, and that the “interaction provided opportunity to learn and share the practices among the participants. Such interaction/peer learning/meeting really adds value to my organization basically in the area of complaint processing/resolving and GRM”. The outreach workshops were also said to have been a “very useful and interesting way to understand mechanism of work of IRM” and that “the IRM outreach event organizers and facilitators were culture-sensitive and understanding”.

Eight respondents commented on the IRM’s timeliness and responsiveness, commending the IRM for its “quick response”, its “responsiveness and transparency”, “prompt access to the IRM Head”, the “IRM’s speedy response to inquiries” and the IRM’s overall “responsiveness to clarifications and inquiries”.

Eight respondents commended the IRM for its professionalism, its commitment, its willingness to share knowledge within the sector, and the in-depth knowledge of its staff. One respondent also commended the IRM for advocating for interns within the GCF and for supporting other GCF wide efforts and collaboration.

One indicated that the question was not applicable and two indicated that they had not dealt directly with the IRM.

Value add of the IRM

The respondents were also asked what they thought the value-add of the IRM was, based on their interactions with the IRM.

The responses to this question were varied, with some repetition of what was mentioned in response to the other open-ended questions. Many respondents commented on the value added by the IRM's capacity building mandate, and the knowledge sharing that is taking place between the IRM and the grievance redress mechanisms of direct access entities. One respondent also commented on the usefulness of the IRM's first advisory report on preventing sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment in GCF projects. In general, respondents agreed that accountability mechanisms such as the IRM increase the accountability of financial institutions and provide a formal and useful avenue for communities and people affected by projects to complain.

Challenges identified

In attempting to understand the reasoning behind the 20% and above ratings of three (fair) for fairness, transparency and timeliness, the IRM has reviewed the comments that were made in response to the question concerning the biggest challenges that respondents faced, to see whether those comments shed light on the reasoning behind the fair ratings given, and any other lower ratings given.

The only specific comment made that could be interpreted as a critique regarding timeliness is a comment that a concern was raised with the IRM and that this concern was not addressed. The IRM was distressed to read that a concern had not been attended to, and immediately sought to identify the respondent and the specific concern referred to. It transpired that a concern had been raised following the IRM's outreach workshop in Mongolia, and that this concern had gone unanswered. This was an oversight due to the correspondence having gone to an intern's account, and due to an intervening holiday, and the issue not having been picked up after the holiday. The IRM immediately reached out to this person on receiving this feedback in the survey. It turned out that the concern was regarding poor construction of a building that had nothing to do with the GCF and was based on a misconception of the IRM's functions and role in the mind of the respondent. In future, the IRM will ensure that all correspondence following outreach events is sent to the IRM's official email account which is monitored by a number of IRM staff members.

Regarding transparency and fairness, four comments were made regarding language barriers, with suggestions that the IRM should make information available in other languages. The IRM does already have its complaints brochure available in 14 languages and does utilize interpreters for its outreach events where language support is needed. However, the IRM recognizes that more can be done to ensure that information about the IRM is available in other languages, and the IRM is looking into options for the translation of its website into the six UN languages.

Comments were also made regarding the IRM's visibility on the ground, with respondents commenting that "the IRM needs to be more visible and result-solution-orientated", that "better outreach to those in the ground to know the presence of IRM is key", that "the GCF direct beneficiaries in the given countries need to be aware of the IRM and its functions" and that the "IRM needs to have more on the ground detailed information on the GCF-program activities". One respondent also commented that the IRM "is not known among policy makers and decision makers". While solutions to some of these concerns are being developed by the IRM, solutions to others are in within the purview of the Secretariat and the Board. For example, the lack of information about GCF funding and branding in project information disseminated

on the ground is a matter that has to be rectified by the Secretariat and the AE concerned. The IRM takes note of these concerns regarding visibility and has identified possible ways to address these issues within its purview in the last section of this report, including solutions and actions it is developing together with the Secretariat.

The only other challenge identified related to the IRM’s capacity building efforts. One respondent commented that the “training syllabus was too lengthy and it was quite difficult to concentrate fully along with the routine hectic jobs. Missed live interaction, as in such trainings/courses lots of learning skips during online sessions.” The IRM also received many positive comments relating to its capacity building courses (see below) and has some ideas for how to address the different needs of participants in the last section of this report.

To summarize the feedback regarding challenges, of the 30 respondents that commented on this question, half of the respondents (15) indicated that this question was not applicable or that they haven’t faced any specific challenges in their interactions with the IRM, four indicated that their accredited entity didn’t yet have any GCF projects under implementation or that they were still in the process of establishing their grievance redress mechanism and so hadn’t faced challenges yet, four indicated that language barriers were the biggest challenge faced, four responses referred to challenges regarding the visibility of the IRM, particularly on the ground where projects are located, one respondent indicated that the IRM was not responsive to his/her needs without providing details of the nature of the issue, one respondent commented about the lengthiness of the training (see above), and one respondent didn’t raise a specific challenge but suggested that periodic workshops to exchange experiences with accredited entities would be nice.

IRM actions taken in response to the survey

The IRM has developed an action plan in response to the feedback raised:

Issue identified in the feedback	IRM Action
Language constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IRM’s Procedures and Guidelines allow for complainants to submit complaints in any language. Where the complaint is submitted in a language other than English and the complainant cannot provide a translation, the IRM will have it translated into English.¹ • The IRM’s Procedures and Guidelines also provide that all publicly disclosed IRM reports relating to a grievance or complaint will be translated into the local language of the complainant.² • The IRM has constituted a Roster of Translators/Interpreters and makes provision in its annual budget to hire a translator and interpreter to support IRM cases where the complainant and/or other relevant stakeholders don’t speak English. • The IRM has been investigating the feasibility of making its website available in all six UN languages through an automated translation service. The IRM plans to implement this in the second half of 2021.

¹ Paragraph 28 of the Procedures and Guidelines of the IRM, available at: <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/procedures-guidelines-irm.pdf>.

² Paragraph 79 of the IRM’s Procedures and Guidelines.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For workshops and webinars where language support is required, the IRM has been hiring professional interpreters to provide simultaneous interpretation. • The IRM will include in all Terms of Reference for new staff and consultants that knowledge of another UN language is an advantage, and knowledge of any other language spoken in an area where GCF projects and programmes are being implemented is desirable.
<p>Poor visibility of the IRM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IRM has recently hired two part-time consultants – a High Level Communications and Social Media consultant. These consultants will help the IRM to improve its communications strategies and increase its visibility. • The IRM has been raising the issue of both the GCF’s and the IRM’s visibility with various divisions within the GCF Secretariat, including the Division of External Affairs, the Office of Portfolio Management, and the Office of Risk Management and Compliance. In these discussions, the IRM has urged the GCF to improve its monitoring and enforcement of legal obligations in the contracts that AEs sign requiring them to publicize the GCF and IRM to local stakeholders. The IRM has also advocated for GCF logos to be present on site, and for project names to be consistent across GCF, AE and executing entity websites and materials. The IRM has also urged the GCF to ensure that AE websites and reference material clearly state that the GCF is funding the project, and that contact details of the GCF are provided. • In relation to portfolio monitoring in particular, the IRM has advocated for, and managed to secure the inclusion of the following additional question in the Annual Performance Report template: “Provide information on how the GCF Independent Redress Mechanism, as well as the AE’s GRM (e.g. contact details, accessibility, and basic procedures of such mechanisms), is brought to the attention of executing entities, people, and beneficiaries in the project target area and the public in accordance with the relevant ESMS/ESIA.” • The IRM is also coordinating a working group within the GCF to discuss and brainstorm ideas on increasing transparency, particularly in relation to programmes, for which there is generally less information publicly available. • The IRM has also recently upgraded its website to make it more user-friendly, and to provide more detailed information on IRM cases through dedicated case pages. • The IRM developed a prioritization list for targeted outreach, which prioritizes areas for outreach workshops where there are high risk GCF projects. This approach aims to ensure that, at the very least, people living in high-risk project areas know about the IRM and how to access it.

<p>Length of training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IRM has received mainly positive feedback on the comprehensiveness of its training but recognizes that the length of the training may be problematic for people with other commitments. The IRM has made the modules easier to navigate and to save progress, so that participants can complete the modules in their own time. The IRM is also making improvements to its online modules this year and will look for other opportunities for reducing length and/or improving the usability.
<p>Need to foster exchanges with AEs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2019 the IRM established the grievance redress and accountability mechanism (GRAM) partnership with other relevant organisations. The GRAM partnership offers leadership, a learning and knowledge platform and a meeting space to an increasing number of GRAMs, particularly those of AEs. The IRM hosted the GRAM partnership's first webinar in April 2021 and is developing the first good practice note on how to design a "fit for purpose" GRM.