



Accountability Mechanism

ADB is sensitive to negative impacts from its projects and has a transparent and consensus-based system for dealing with complaints

The Asian Development Bank's (ADB's) Accountability Mechanism is a two-phase process for dealing with complaints that is designed to be accessible and user-friendly for people adversely affected by its projects. The Mechanism, which replaced the cumbersome inspection function in 2003, aims to boost ADB transparency, improve the quality of its projects, and enhance the development outcome. Information on the Mechanism is now available in 22 languages.

Under the system, people adversely affected by an ADB-assisted project can initially file a complaint with the Office of the Special Project Facilitator (OSPF), headed by the Special Project Facilitator (SPF). That then triggers the consultation process, under which project stakeholders try to resolve the dispute.

The transparent, inclusive, and user-friendly nature of the Accountability Mechanism has encouraged more public participation. In a little over 4 years, OSPF has received 12 complaints compared to eight inspection requests on four projects in 8 years under the old system, of which only two went through the inspection process.

Projects that have been the subject of complaints include the Melamchi Water Supply Project (MWSP) in Nepal; Southern Transport Development Project (STDP) in Sri Lanka; Sixth Road Project in the Philippines; Community Empowerment for Rural Development Project in Indonesia; Chashma Right Bank Irrigation Project (Stage III) in Pakistan; Khulna–Jessore Drainage Rehabilitation Project in Bangladesh; Rural Electrification, Distribution, and

Transmission Project in Nepal; National Highway Development Sector Investment Program in Pakistan; Assam Power Sector Development Project in India; GMS Mekong Tourism Development Project in Viet Nam; Urban and Environmental Improvement Project in Nepal; and the Phnom Penh to Ho Chi Minh City Highway Project in Cambodia.

Consultation

The consultation process is designed to find a way for project stakeholders to reach a common understanding over a dispute in an effort to resolve a problem at an early stage. They include ADB staff, the complainant, executing agency, and developing member countries' governments or private project sponsors.

The SPF has an array of informal and flexible tools to try to iron out problems, from meetings with stakeholders, to organized consultations, mediation, and fact-finding reviews. The SPF reports directly to the ADB President and recommends necessary actions.

The consultation process is sensitive to the needs of people adversely affected by projects who often belong to vulnerable groups and live in remote areas. Nongovernment organizations (NGOs) often play a valuable role in helping to bridge the gap by assisting people who have no access to the Internet or even written information.

OSPF has developed an illustrated field guide on the consultation process that is now available in 14 languages. In over 4 years, 81 orientation sessions have been held at

The consultation process is sensitive to the needs of people adversely affected by projects who often belong to vulnerable groups and live in remote areas

Responsiveness Recognized

ADB's transparency and responsiveness to complaints and concerns about its operations have been recognized by One World Trust, the United Kingdom-based nongovernment organization, which ranked ADB in second place in its 2007 Global Accountability Report of the world's most powerful organizations.

The report measured transparency, participation, evaluation, and complaint and response mechanisms.

One World Trust rated ADB as one of the top three performers among all 30 assessed organizations, achieving high scores in all four dimensions of accountability, including 100% in transparency and 81% in overall accountability.

ADB headquarters in Manila, Philippines, and in a number of other member countries. OSPF has conducted six feedback sessions on lessons learned, and 12 training-workshops on complaint handling in several member countries. It also developed a checklist to identify potentially complaint-prone projects.

Compliance Review

People who are adversely affected by a project during its formulation, processing, or implementation can file a request for a compliance review, alleging violations of ADB's operational policies and procedures.

A three-person Compliance Review Panel considers the request and, if it is found to be eligible, the panel seeks authorization from ADB's Board of Directors to conduct an investigation. The panel makes recommendations on remedial action to ensure compliance. The requester and ADB Management are given an opportunity to comment on the panel's draft report before the panel finalizes its report.

The review process seeks to engage stakeholders, including civil society groups, and to be transparent and user-friendly.

Among projects that have gone for review, the panel determined that the request in the STDP in Sri Lanka was eligible. In its investigation, the panel found lapses in compliance with several ADB operational policies and procedures, including involuntary

resettlement, and environmental and gender considerations. The panel recommended that ADB Management take actions to ensure project compliance and to improve development effectiveness. These actions were approved by ADB's Board of Directors, and the panel is currently monitoring their implementation. The panel is also monitoring implementation of remedial actions approved on the Chashma Right Bank Irrigation Project (Stage III) in Pakistan.

In the case of the Melamchi Water Supply Project in Nepal, the panel found the request for a review to be ineligible. The panel's annual monitoring reports are issued to ADB's Board and are posted on the panel's website (www.compliance.adb.org).

Filing a Complaint

Any group of two or more people, who feel they have been adversely affected by a project in their country, can file a complaint with the SPF. This can include an organization, association, society, or other groups of individuals.

A complainant can also file a request for a compliance review if the complaint is ineligible for consultation, if the complainant finds the consultation process unhelpful, or if the consultation process is at an advanced stage and there are serious compliance concerns.

The identity of complainants is kept confidential, if requested. ■

Contact Information

Asian Development Bank
6 ADB Avenue
Mandaluyong City
1550 Metro Manila
Philippines
[www.adb.org/
accountability-mechanism](http://www.adb.org/accountability-mechanism)

Office of the Special Project
Facilitator
Tel +63 2 632 4825
Fax +63 2 636 2490
spf@adb.org
www.adb.org/spf

Office of the Compliance
Review Panel
Tel +63 2 632 4149
Fax +63 2 636 2088
crp@adb.org
www.compliance.adb.org

Some Matters Not Eligible for Complaint

- Those unrelated to ADB actions or omissions in the course of formulating, processing, or implementing ADB-assisted projects
- Decisions regarding procurement of goods, services, and consulting services for ADB-assisted projects
- Those related to an ADB-assisted project for which a project completion report has been issued
- Those related to fraud and corruption in ADB-assisted projects and by ADB staff