



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
**Smallholder Competitiveness Project SACP)**  
Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) Manik Mia  
Avenue, Sech bhaban, Dhaka- 207

## **Grievance Redress System (GRS)**

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## ACRONYMS

BADC	Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation
BARI	Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute
CSA	Climate Smart Agriculture
DAE	Department of Agricultural Extension
DAM	Department of Agricultural Marketing
DD	Deputy Director
DPD	Deputy Project Director
DGRO	District Grievance Redress Officer
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FG	Farmers Group
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GOB	Government of Bangladesh
GFP	Gender Focal Point
GRC	Grievance Redress Committee
GRO	Grievance Redress Officer
GRS	Grievance Redress System
HVC	High value crop
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IGRS	Integrated Grievance Redress System
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
PD	Project Director
PMU	Project Management Unit
PO	Producer Organization
PSEA	Protection of Sexual Expectation and Abuse
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
SACP	Smallholder Agricultural Competitiveness Project
SH	Sexual Harrassment
TA	Technical Assistant
UAO	Upazilla Agriculture Officer
UGRO	Upazilla Grievance Redress Officer

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## 1.0 Background of the Project

### 1.1 Introduction

Given increasing population pressure on land, the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) has recognized that the expansion of high value crop production, processing, value addition, marketing and consumption can offer an important pathway to sustainable economic development and future poverty reduction opportunities for Bangladesh. The agriculture sector is taking an increasingly major role in this performance, accounting for approximately 16% the agricultural GDP and emerging as a major growth driver in the last two decades showing an incremental GDP growth rate as compared to the fisheries or crops sectors.

The SACP project is funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Through a direct partnership with MoA which is the mandated agency for agriculture development in the country. SACP supports the Government's strategic master plan of transforming agriculture in Southern Bangladesh. The project is implemented by the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) of the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) from 2018 and will be completed in 2024. The SACP project is being implemented in 11 districts covering 30 Upazilas (The total population is 7,018,218 representing 1,246,021 households) in the Southern Region of Bangladesh, 250 unions selected based on the targeting criteria. The Project Development Indicators include (1) benefit at least 250,000 rural households or 1,400,000 people<sup>1</sup>, i.e. one-fifth of the population through smallholders' responsiveness and competitiveness in high-value crops production and marketing of fresh and/or processed products; (2) increase sustainable production intensification and improve women's dietary diversity score; (3) increase farmers' incomes and livelihood resilience through demand-led productivity investments, crop diversification and increased market linkages; and (4) New and existing technologies researched, developed and adapted to agro-ecological constraints. The project would be implemented by five agencies (DAE, DAM, BADC, BARI, and FAO).

In view of Gender equality and women empowerment though women represent about half of the Bangladesh population, their social status remains unrecognized and deprived, especially in rural areas. Rural women belong to the most deprived section of the society facing adverse conditions in terms of social oppression and economic inequality, a visible majority of them being extremely poor. Those are socio-economic conditions, family conditions, and psychological reasons. They have no resources, self-confidence, bargaining power, freedom of choice, and support to coping ability within the family. Economic and educational condition is very poor. Women are not recognized for their role in household economic conditions, and they do not have access to decision-making issues either in the family or at the community level.

### 1.2 Rationale of the Project

The SACP project seeks to promote climate resilient productivity growth, enhance market access, and improve risk management among smallholder farmers and Agro-

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<sup>1</sup>The average people per household in the project area is 4.6%

entrepreneurs, by providing support for climate smart production systems, farmer empowerment and commercialization. The Smallholder Agricultural Competitiveness Project (SACP) has been designed to focus on strengthening agriculture competitiveness, sustainable technical support services/ facilities, identification of market opportunities and linking these to applied research, development and extension programme to support small farmers, improving access to income opportunities of high value crops (HVCs) through multi-stakeholder platforms, developing market linkages, and supporting individual and group organizational capacity to participate in agricultural value chains. The project envisages playing a significant role in improving current practices at their own field.

The GOB recognizes the potential for the country to increase the value of high value crop productions and processing through more sustainable management and in doing so, improve the lives of poor, subsistence farmers. Several key sector-wide challenges necessitate government intervention and investments to enable responsible private-sector-driven growth. These include (i) the absence of an effective regulatory framework for managing post-harvest and processing sector; (ii) limitations in the basic public infrastructure necessary to enable private sector investment; and (iii) limitations in both public and private sector capacity for improved agriculture management and optimal productivity.

To overcome these challenges and enable private sector investment, Bangladesh can learn from both regional and global experience and good practices for investing in post-harvest governance reforms. Global experience highlights the need to first establish a core public sector governance framework, including agreed sectors vision, coherent policy, and enabling legal framework, to enable the design, piloting, and implementation of post-harvest activities supported by adequate institutional capacity building. The latter entails first and foremost building the institutional capacity to implement an effective management system to address the de facto uncontrolled, open access system for private entrepreneurs. The project will foster a market-led transformation of agricultural production, while ensuring that the supply response to growing demand is sustainable, inclusive, safe, and environmentally conscious. To this end, the project will improve the ecosystem for value chain development by financing key infrastructures, and access to market, and financial products and services, capacity building and knowledge. Climate resilient production systems will be developed through the promotion of appropriate climate smart agriculture (CSA) practices, improved storage and processing.

The project is designed and will be implemented taking into consideration the different gender roles. The project will actively pursue the participation of women and young across all project components.

### **1.3 Project Components**

Component 1: Enhanced production of HVC and technology adoption;

Component 2: Processing and marketing of HVC;

Component 3: Climate Resilient Surface Water Management;

The Technical Assistance (TA) component.

## 1.4 Project Objectives

Increasing farmer income and livelihood through demand-led productivity investments, crop diversification and increased market linkages.

## 2.0 GRS and its objectives

The SACP is to facilitate the program and its activities to the target people as well as all relevant stakeholders in a participatory and translucent manner. In compliance with the Government and IFAD requirement the project is carried out its policies, standards and safeguards through grievance redress system (GRS).

The GRS is intended to ensure appropriate mechanisms are in place to allow individuals and communities to communicate the project authority directly and file a complaint. Also resolve the relevant issues that affect the sustainability of the program related to the rural women, men and young. GRS also taking into account the risk management of the project.

## 2.1 Scope of GRS

The grievance redress committee shall address the grievances/complaints on the development work under the project, environmental, social, health and safety issues, and gender-based violence issues (may occur in case labor force or any other) during implementation of project activities. The nature of Grievances/Complaints which may be envisaged to be received by the Grievance Redress Officers at different levels of project implementation can be enlisted but not limited to as follows:

- Complaints related to organizing/prioritizing/selecting/mobilizing of farmers and formation of groups;
- Complaints regarding the modality, nature and value of matching grant;
- Selection of POs/Farmers for demonstrations/ training;
- Procurements (Goods, Works, Services);
- Any sorts of construction work under the project;
- Grievances related to the fund flow and disbursement, bill pay etc.
- Process and quality service delivery etc.
- Selection and prioritization of Consultancy Firm/Processors/Entrepreneurs;
- Selection of candidates for higher studies and foreign training;
- Selection and funding subprojects;
- Selection of entrepreneurs/farmers for matching grants;
- Complaints about women movement (in the community, market) due to social stigma/barrier;

**Note:** GBV related grievances/cases will be dealt by the assigned GBV Focal Person (FP) of each PIU who will follow the separate PSEA/SH guideline and its prescribed format.

## 3.0 Grievance Redress Committee (GRC) (not based on seniority)

Four level bottom up GRC system will be established in this Project by SACP, **with a gender balanced representation** from beneficiary, civil society, elected public representatives and project proponents as appropriate. The GRS does not seize the liberty of the complainants to go to the court at any stage of the grievance resolution process. GRC structures shall be as follows:

GRC Level	Committee Members	Role
Upazila Level Committee	Upazila Agriculture Officer (respective)	Chairman
	Assistant/Sub assistant Engineer, BADC (respective)	Member
	Marketing Officer, DAM	Member
	Junior Monitoring and reporting specialist	Member
	Female word councilor/member (Local Government)	Member
	Representative of Civil Society (respective)	Member
	Additional Agriculture Officer/Agriculture Extension Officer	Member Secretary
District Level Committee	Deputy Director, Agriculture Extension Department	Chairman
	Executive/Assistant Engineer, BADC	Member
	District Marketing Officer, DAM	Member
	Junior Monitoring and Reporting Specialist	Member
	Selected representative of local government (women)	Member
	Representative of civil society	Member
	District Training Officer/Additional Deputy Director	Member Secretary
Regional Level Committee	Additional Director, Agriculture Extension Department	Chairman
	Superintendent/Eecutive Engineer, BADC	Member
	Chief Scientific officer, BARI	Member
	Deputy Director, DAM	Member
	Selected representative of local government (women)	Member
	Representative of civil society	Member
	Deputy Director, Office of the Additional Director	Member Secretary
PMU Level Committee	Project Director (PD), SACP	Chairman
	Component Director, BADC	Member
	Component Director, DAM	Member
	Component Director, BARI	Member
	Project Management Specialist, SACP	Member
	Gender, Social Inclusion and Nutrition Specialist, SACP	Member
	Deputy Director (DPD), SACP	Member Secretary



**The assigned committee may co-opt any member as and when required.** Complaint box will be opened by the authorised person and checked e-complaints status any other day and resolved it based on severity of incidents and required time (time frame is in page 10). The member secretary will take place the responsibility to initiate/organise meeting and accordingly investigate, result based prudent decision and place feedback to the complainants.

#### **4.0 Assessing Grievance by Aggrieved Persons and by Tiers**

The GRS will be accessible to all members of the community, including women, senior citizens and other vulnerable groups with focus on the small ethnic communities and agriculture dependent households. Culturally-appropriate communication mechanisms will be used at all project sites both to spread awareness regarding the GRS process as well as complaints management. SACP will establish the following, prior to commencing project implementation activities including identification, planning and design:

- Any person can access PMU website or office to record grievances and write a formal letter in the name of Project Director, PMU. The person can also visit the PMU office in person and log complaints;
- The PMU Office will maintain an electronic database that will provide a summary of complaints received and their resolutions;
- Apart from the electronic database that will be maintained at the PMU level, a manual register and complaint box of all complaints and actions taken will be maintained at each project sites and locations. GRS sign boards on which Complainant numbers (Conveners phone numbers) will also be displayed at project intervention sites;
- Grievance Focal Point (GFP) will also be chosen from local offices at each location of project activity;
- The PMU and the local offices will discuss the GRS in the forum of any meeting/orientation/workshop/training (except single issue based program) to inform the stakeholder within the project area. Contact address, phone number, email address and web address of PMU will be disseminated to the people through displays at the respective Upazila and District offices;
- The PMU officers will log and record complaints with date of receipt onto the complaint database and inform their environmental and social specialist;
- The PMU staff and/or upazila/district level officers, will investigate the complaint to determine its validity and relevancy, and to assess whether the source of the problem is due to project activities, and identify appropriate corrective measures;
- The PMU will inform the Complainant of investigation results and the action taken;
- The PMU will review with the help of respective office, the complainants'



response on the identified mitigation measures, and the updated situation;

- The PMU will undertake additional monitoring, as necessary, to verify as well as review that any valid reason for complaint does not recur.

Confidentiality and professionalism for all complainants would be ensured strictly and that no actions will be taken against innocent people. Additionally, complaints against project staff will be handled neutrally and transparently for the system to be credible. Each of the Upazila/District/Regional level offices under SACP, will designate one officer, as the Grievance Redress Officer (GRO), who will receive and redress complaints relating to the project matter. The names and contact details of these officers will be published on the website of PMU and keep available to the PIUs.

## **5.0 Grievance Resolution Procedures**

### **5.1 Grievance Redress System (GRS)**

Grievances are issues, concerns, problems, or claims (perceived or actual) that individuals or community groups want to address and be resolved by the Project. The grievance mechanism is a locally based, project-specific extra-legal way to deal with and resolve complaints and grievances faster and thus enhance project performance standards in terms of social management. The project SACP (Smallholder Agricultural Competitiveness Project) under the Ministry of Agriculture will establish the GRS to answer queries, receiving suggestions and addressing complaints and grievances during planning, design, implementation and execution of the project activities. All other actors will also rely on GRS to address issues coming from the beneficiary communities and other stakeholders affected directly and indirectly by civil work and policy interventions under this project during the span of the entire project cycle. Identification and addressing the relevant grievances and complaints will resolve issues and create new approaches to achieve the project goals. Though the GRS is a mechanism of redressing grievances and is designed to address environmental and social problems identified during the project implementation, it will also manage issues that emerge at field level and that has significant implications for effective implementation of the project interventions.

The project intends to implement a robust and responsive five tiers Grievance Redress System (GRS) by putting in place specific persons who shall be entrusted with the responsibility for the same, with provisions of online tracking and monitoring of the deliverance on this score. In case some conflicts arise between stakeholders (though not very likely) or in case some stakeholders are deprived of participation or in case some stakeholders are adversely affected by any project activity, the aggrieved person will be able to complain and get remedy.

First Tier of GRS: An officer will be designated as Grievance Redress Officer (GRO) at the upazila level who will be the first level contact for an aggrieved person. On a fixed date of every month, the Grievance Redress Officer (GRO) will visit the farmers /FGs/FBS where

individuals/community will approach him/her. UAO will act as Appellate Officers for first tier at upazila level. This will be in addition to complaint book/box kept at the office which will be entertained by the Grievance Redress Officer (GRO) the same day at the field level. Each upazila will have information board with the name of the Grievance Redress Officer (GRO) and Appellate Officer at upazila, district & divisional level along with the cell phone numbers of concerned officers. The concerned Upazila Grievance Redress Officer (UGRO) will prepare a monthly report on these cases, and submit to the District Grievance Redress Officer (DGRO). The upazila offices (UAO) of the DAE will respond to the complaints and resolve cases on monthly basis and only those requiring higher level attention will be forwarded to the District level or PIU level.

Second Tier of GRS: An Integrated Grievance Redress System (IGRS) will be established at the district level that will register user complaints using various mediums written, mobile or web-based complaints and address them in a time bound system. The project will commit itself for proactive disclosure and sharing of information with the key stakeholders, including the communities/beneficiaries. Most grievances are expected to be resolved at this level including appeals. District level Officer (DD) will act as Appellate Officer for second tier at district level. Complaints/appeals not resolved at Upazila & District level and those requiring higher level attention will be forwarded to the Regional level or PMU at Dhaka.

Third Tier of GRS: At Regional level an Integrated Grievance Redress System (IGRS) will also be established, where regular register of user complaints using various mediums written, mobile or web-based complaints and address them in a time bound system. Similar to second tier, the project will disclose and share information with the key stakeholders, including the communities/beneficiaries. Most grievances are expected to be resolved at this level including appeals. Regional level Officer (Additional Director) will act as Appellate Officer for 3rd tier at regional level. Complaints/appeals not resolved at Upazila, District & Regional level and those requiring higher level attention will be forwarded to the PMU at Dhaka.

Fourth Tier of GRS: As the fourth tier, PMU will have a central grievance redress committee at the PMU at Dhaka which will have mainly oversight and monitoring role. The project will have a communication strategy focusing on efficient and effective usage of print and electronic media, bill boards, posters, wall writing, and adoption of any other method suiting local context, logistics, human and financial resources. As part of GRS, a Grievance Redress Cell (GRC) will be set up at PMU office. PD or DPD/CD (on behalf) of SACP would be the Appellate Authorities to decide upon the appeals not resolved at first, second & third tiers. At this tier, members from DAE and MoA will be included. All the names of the officers relating to grievance redress will be displayed on the project websites.

The Grievance Redress Officer and the Appellate Authority for the redress of the grievances for the components at different levels, along with the time period stipulated for addressing the complaints finally are given below. The contact details will be disclosed on the project websites and will be updated regularly.

## 6.0 The Grievance Redress Process and Timeline

The grievance process, responsibilities and timeline have been proposed as discussed in the table below:

Tiers of GRS	Nodal Person to Contact	facilitation by Project	Time frame
<b>First Tier:</b> Upazila Level Grievance Redress Committee (ULGRC) headed by UAO	It will be the first level of contact in specific grievance related to the issues described in clause 1 of this GRS guideline.	The committee will maintain a Community Information Board to record the grievance, contacting and facilitating the aggrieved person to redress.	15 calendar days
<b>Second Tier:</b> District Level Grievance Redress Committee (DLGRC) headed by DD.	The grievance will be forwarded to the Director.	Only after exhausting the first tier, the aggrieved person can appeal to the second tier. The aggrieved person can attend the hearing in person. The Deputy Director (DD) will be responsible to ensure that there is no cost imposed (such as for travel, etc.) on the aggrieved person.	30 calendar days
<b>Third Tier:</b> Regional Level Grievance Redress Committee (DLGRC) headed by Additional Director (DAE)	The grievance will be forwarded to the Additional Director.	Only after exhausting the 2nd tier, the aggrieved person can appeal to the third tier.  The aggrieved person can attend the hearing in person.	45 calendar days
<b>Fourth Tier:</b> PMU, SACP under the Ministry of Agriculture	The grievance will be forwarded to the Project Director at the PMU.	Only after exhausting the first, second & third tier, the aggrieved person can appeal to the 4th tier.  The aggrieved person can attend the hearing in person. The respective district level officer will be responsible to ensure that there is no cost imposed (such as for travel, etc.) on the aggrieved person if the person belongs to the vulnerable groups, the project will assist the PAPs with travel and accommodation costs if needed.	60 calendar days

<b>Fifth Tier:</b> Independent Institutions such as Anti-Corruption Commission, Human rights	Independent Institutions and the Judiciary will remain as an option for an aggrieved person and/or community in case that the other tiers have not been effective.	Only after exhausting the first, second, third and fourth tier.  GRS does not seize the liberty of the complainants to go to the court at any stage of the grievance resolution process	As per established laws of Bangladesh
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### 6.1 Grievance and Redress System through cell phone

In addition to the proposed GRS, SACP intends to setup a Grievance and Redress (G&R) system that will use the ICT platform to register grievances and provide notifications back to the concerned person. The underlying platform will be a web-enabled, mobile phone connected MIS system that will be based upon the open source platform.

### 7.0 GRS Documentation

To ensure impartiality and transparency, hearing on complaints at the GRC level will remain open to the public. The GRCs will record the details of the suggestions and complaints, and their resolutions in a register, including registration details, resolution process and the closing procedures. The following documentations will be maintained for GRS:

- Suggestions or Complaints Application Form
- Suggestions or Complaints Registration Book
- Resolution Book
- Closing Book

(Sample formats of the above are attached in Annexure-1 and Annexure-2)

Annexure-1

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Smallholder Competitiveness Project (SACP)  
Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)  
Manik Mia Avenue, Sech bhaban, Dhaka-1207

**Suggestion or Complainant Application Form**

Receipt No: .....

Complainants Subject: .....

Name of Complainant:

Father's/ Husband's Name:

Mother's Name:

Complete address: Village/Road/Para Name: ....., ..... Holding No: .....

Ward .. Pourashava .....

Number District

:

Upazila

.. E-mail: .....

Mobile No.

**Sueeestion or Complaint Description:**

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

Complaint's Expectation:

Complaint's Signature:

Date

Received by

**Annexure-2**

**ii) Suggestions/Complaints Registration Book format**

Upazila:				District:				Division:				
Sl No.	Date of Receive	Name of Complainant and NID	Gender	Father's/Husband's Name	Complete Address	Name of project	Main Objection/Suggestion	Complainant's story and Expectation with Evidence	Previous Records of similar Grievances (if any)	Signature of Complainant	Signature of the Recorder	Remarks

**iii) Resolution Book format**

Upazila:				District:				Division:				
Sl No	Case No.	Name of Complainant and NID	Complainant's story and Expectation	Name of project	Date of Hearing	Date of Investigation (if any)	Result of Hearing and Field Investigation	Decision of GRC	Progress of (Pending, solved)	Agreements Or Commitments	Signature for Recorder	Remarks

**iv) Closing Book format**

Upazila:				District:				Division:			
Sl No.	Case No.	Name of Complainant and NID	Decisions and Response to Complainants	Name of project	Mode and Medium of Communication	Date of Closing	Confirmation of Complainants' Satisfaction	Management Actions to Avoid recurrence	Signature for Recorder	Remarks	

*Amir*  
16.02.2023

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