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# **grievance management guidance**

**summary document for disclosure to Corporate Human  
Rights Benchmark**

**august 2018  
submission to Corporate Human Rights Benchmark**

This guidance document draws heavily upon the 2015 IPIECA “Community grievance mechanisms in the oil and gas industry: A manual for implementing operational-level grievance mechanisms and designing corporate frameworks.” IPIECA is the global oil and gas industry association for environmental and social issues, covering both upstream and downstream. IPIECA’s members represent more than half of the world’s oil production.

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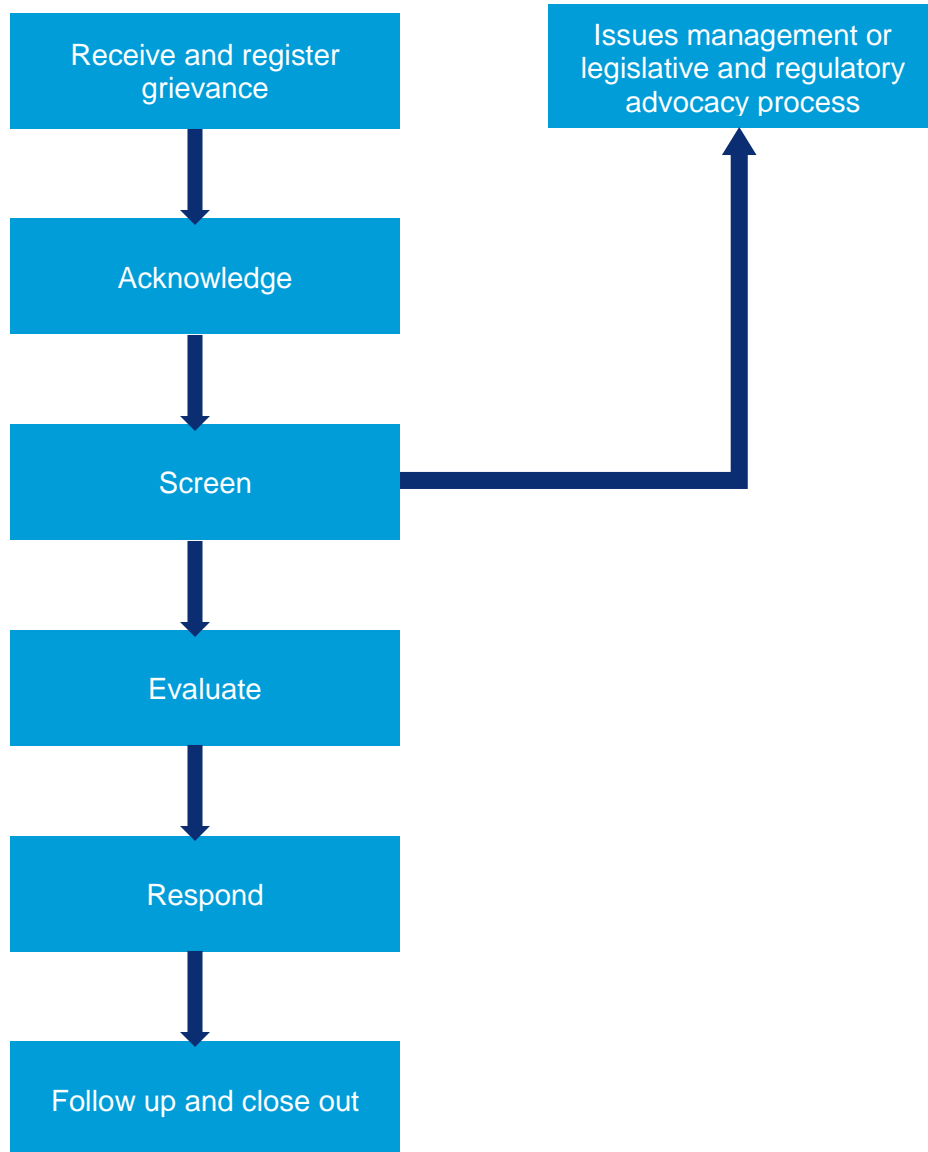
## **introduction and application**

This guidance is intended to assist operations-level social performance (stakeholder or community engagement) practitioners (“practitioners”) in the development and implementation of systems for managing the receipt and resolution of community comments and complaints. These systems are commonly referred to as “grievance mechanisms.” Use of a grievance mechanism may be seen as an alternative to other approaches, such as litigation, and can be an efficient method to facilitate resolution of community concerns and grievances.

Grievance mechanisms are most effective when they are tailored to a particular project, facility or business location (“business”) and its associated business context and risk management processes. The guidance in this document is intended to be used worldwide where the development, implementation or refinement of a grievance mechanism offers potential benefit to Chevron Corporation’s and its affiliates’ (collectively, “Chevron”) projects, businesses or facilities.

### 3 develop the grievance mechanism

The six common elements to grievance mechanisms are defined below. These can vary depending on the business. Several tools and templates are provided so that a business can customize them to meet specific needs.



**Figure 2: Grievance Mechanism Process**

### 3.1 Receive and Register

For a grievance mechanism to be effective, stakeholders must be aware of it and how to use it; and the grievance mechanism must be locally acceptable and accessible.

- 1. *Select fit-for-purpose receiving points.*<sup>1</sup>**
- 2. *Identify potential barriers to grievance mechanism access and adjust accordingly.***
- 3. *Define how the business will ensure stakeholders understand the process.***
- 4. *Determine how the process will manage confidentiality.***
- 5. *Define how to ensure consistency in information collection and registration.***
- 6. *Determine the timetables for managing grievances.***

### 3.2 Acknowledge

Once logged, grievances should be acknowledged in writing as soon as practical. Complainants should be told that their grievances have been received and registered. Without acknowledgement, complainants may assume their grievance submissions have been ignored.

- 1. *Define how the business will provide tangible acknowledgements.***
- 2. *Include next steps.***

### 3.3 Screen

Screening involves an evaluation and determination of the next steps.

Responses to minor complaints can often be provided immediately, but issues that are more complex may need additional evaluations.

- 1. *Screen for validity and priority.***
- 2. *Determine when to assign a grievance officer.***
- 3. *Consider allowing the grievance officer to close out minor grievances.***
- 4. *Build stakeholder empathy and respect for their time and opinions into the process.***

### 3.4 Evaluate

For grievances not resolved immediately, evaluation length, scope and scale can vary depending on the business and severity of the concern; this could range from review and fact-finding to a third-party resolution. Build flexibility into the procedure.

- 1. *Define how the business will clearly communicate evaluation steps to stakeholders.***

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<sup>1</sup> An "access point" is a method for submitting grievances to the company.

- 2. Determine how to instill stakeholder confidence in the evaluation process.**
- 3. Determine how you will find and document the facts.**
- 4. Describe how you will keep the complainant informed.**
- 5. Institutionalize use of something similar to the risk tool in the Resource section.**
- 6. Build organizational capability aspects into your procedure to ensure staffs have the requisite skills.**

### **3.5 Respond**

Clear, timely and accurate responses are important to maintaining stakeholder trust. Upon completion of the evaluation, the complainant should receive a response that is locally appropriate, fair and commensurate with the level of grievance. Work with Law in crafting a response, to ensure that legal privilege and confidentiality of company materials are maintained.

- 1. Determine how the business will leverage stakeholder engagement best practice to manage grievances.**
- 2. Decide who can approve and provide the company response.**
- 3. Ensure you address the root cause of the problem.**
- 4. Determine how and when the business will socialize or negotiate the resolution with the complainant.**
- 5. Define how the business will document the grievance resolution.**
- 6. Assess whether other stakeholders should know the outcome.**
- 7. Consider acknowledgement.**
- 8. Plan for allocation of compensation costs.**

### **3.6 Follow-up and Closeout**

After resolution has been reached, the decision should be communicated to the complainant and the remedy implemented (if applicable). Follow-up may identify gaps in the mechanism or areas that could be improved. If the follow-up monitoring indicates that the root causes of the grievance have been addressed and the resolution implementation is verified, the grievance can be closed.

- 1. Determine how and where to document outcomes and complainant satisfaction levels.**
- 2. Ensure that the case will be closed only when resolution has been implemented.**

### **3.7 Plan for Potential Impasse and Recourse**

Sometimes, companies and stakeholders can't agree on a remedy. If the stakeholder believes that the grievance is not resolved after the proposed remedy, the stakeholder may continue to pursue other remedies, as the company grievance mechanism does not foreclose stakeholder rights. Consultation with Law is important.



- 1. Evaluate use of third-party non-judicial alternate dispute resolution options.**
- 2. Consider when and how to agree to disagree.**
- 3. Partner with Law to determine recourse alternatives.**

### **3.8 Resource the Grievance Mechanism**

An effective grievance mechanism will require resources, a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities, trained staff and soft skills such as conflict resolution, communication, etc.

- 1. Designate appropriate personnel.**
- 2. Define roles and responsibilities.**
- 3. Assign grievance officer(s).**
- 4. Define a training program to support the process.**

## 5 operate and evaluate

Grievance mechanisms typically need to be adjusted, particularly early after launch. Thus, it is important to monitor the process closely to understand functionality, trends and performance.

On an ongoing basis, conducting periodic reviews of grievance mechanisms is powerful to identify opportunities for social and environmental performance trends and areas for improvement. These reviews will guide any needed adjustments, and performance should be communicated to the public, if appropriate, to demonstrate effective use of the mechanism.

### 5.1 Engage and Communicate

Grievance mechanisms are an integral part of the overall Stakeholder Engagement Process and Plan, and good communication is critical to grievance management. Alignment between the two is important to avoid duplicate effort and to ensure the mechanism is appropriate for the business context.

#### **1. *Include stakeholders in evaluating the mechanism.***

- Track external stakeholder feedback on use and effectiveness of the mechanism in the form of satisfaction surveys, input from town halls and feedback forms from complainants who used the mechanism. Ensure to demonstrate that stakeholder input is considered.

#### **2. *Keep stakeholders informed.***

- Continue to promote the grievance mechanism on a consistent basis internally and externally to ensure awareness. See the Appendix U: Stakeholder Engagement – Sample Tools for ideas.
- In some regions, publishing a report on the grievance mechanism's performance is expected. Statistics could include types of input, outcomes, time until resolution and identified trends. Public reports should be approved by Law and management.

## appendix d: design – attributes of grievance mechanisms

Common grievance mechanisms attributes are:

1. **Legitimate** – The process should be transparent and sufficiently independent to ensure that no party can interfere with fair conduct.
2. **Accessible** – The process should be publicized such that all community members can understand and have access to it, including groups who may face barriers to access, such as women and historically disadvantaged groups. Barriers can include language, illiteracy, bureaucratic form filling, cost, geographic distance and fear of reprisal.
3. **Predictable** – The process should be consistent, have a time frame for each stage, and be clear on the types of process and remedy that can and, more importantly, cannot be offered.
4. **Equitable** – Aggrieved parties must have reasonable access to sources of information, advice and expertise to properly engage in resolution on fair and equitable terms.
5. **Transparent** – The process and outcomes should be sufficiently transparent to meet public interest concerns without jeopardizing the identity of individuals.
6. **Rights compatible** – Process and remedies accord with globally recognized human rights standards (i.e., UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and International Labor Organization Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work).
7. **A source of continuous learning** – The process should identify lessons for improving the grievance mechanism and preventing future grievances and harms.
8. **Based on engagement and dialogue** – The process should be developed in consultation with stakeholder groups that may use it, and the process should focus on dialogue as the means to address and resolve grievances.