



COMPLAINTS POLICY

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Note: This Policy was developed and approved by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) for internal use. It is believed to be an accurate reflection of the legislation and other regulatory requirements at the time it was approved. It should not be incorporated into or used by other organisations without permission.

Policy statement

Receiving feedback and responding appropriately to complaints are important parts of IIED's accountability. They help us identify where our work, conduct or systems may have fallen short and support learning and improvement in the quality and integrity of our work.

IIED takes complaints seriously and will seek to handle them fairly, sensitively and within a reasonable timeframe, taking account of the nature and complexity of the matter. IIED will not tolerate retaliation against a person for raising a concern in good faith.

Scope

This policy applies globally to IIED's work and activities. A complaint may be made by any funder or partner organisation, community or individual with whom we work, or any member of the public, including an individual, company or other entity, in the UK or elsewhere.

This policy forms part of IIED's wider framework for raising and responding to concerns. It should be read alongside IIED's policies and procedures on:

- safeguarding;
- anti-fraud, bribery and corruption;
- whistleblowing; and
- workplace concerns, including grievance and anti-harassment and bullying procedures.

Some concerns received through the complaints process may fall wholly or partly within one of these other policies. IIED will assess the nature of the concern and determine the most appropriate process for handling it. A person raising a concern is not required to identify the correct policy or procedure before contacting IIED.

Where a concern engages more than one policy or procedure, IIED will determine how it should be handled and whether the relevant processes should be coordinated.

As appropriate, IIED will inform the person raising the concern how the matter will be handled. The information IIED is able to provide may be limited by confidentiality, data protection, safeguarding, legal, employment or investigative considerations.

Definitions

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of IIED's work or services, or about an action or failure to act by IIED or its staff or related personnel. Related personnel may include trustees, consultants, volunteers, delivery partners and others acting on IIED's behalf.

A complaint must concern a matter for which IIED is responsible or over which it has a reasonable degree of control or influence.

Complaints may include, but are not limited to:

- concerns about the quality or delivery of IIED's research, programmes or other work;
- concerns about the conduct or behaviour of IIED staff or related personnel;
- an alleged failure to follow an applicable process or meet a stated commitment.

A complaint does not normally include a general enquiry, request for information or a purely contractual or commercial dispute. IIED may direct such matters to an appropriate person or process where appropriate.

Informal resolution

Where appropriate, concerns may be raised directly with the relevant IIED member of staff or team and addressed informally. This can often provide the quickest and most effective means of resolving a concern.

Informal resolution may not be appropriate where the concern is serious or sensitive, relates to possible misconduct or wrongdoing, or where the person raising it does not feel able to approach the relevant individual or team.

A person may make a formal complaint without first attempting informal resolution.

Making a formal complaint

Formal complaints should normally be made in writing and submitted by email to complaints@iied.org.

The complaints inbox is monitored by the Chief Operating Officer and Director of People. Information will be shared with others where this is reasonably necessary to assess or handle the matter.

The complaint should, where possible, include:

- the complainant's name and contact details;
- a brief description of the concern;
- relevant dates, people, locations or supporting information;
- any steps already taken to resolve the matter; and
- the outcome sought.

IIED recognises that some people may not be able to submit it in writing. Requests to make a complaint in another way will be considered where reasonably practicable.

IIED may consider anonymous complaints. Its ability to assess, investigate or respond may be limited if insufficient information is provided or there is no means of contacting the complainant.

Initial assessment and referral

IIED will normally acknowledge receipt of a formal complaint within five working days. The Director of People, the Chief Operating Officer or an appropriate person nominated by either of them will arrange an initial assessment to determine:

- whether the matter falls within this policy or should be handled under another IIED policy or procedure;
- whether any immediate action should be considered;
- whether further information is required;
- who, if anyone, should consider or investigate the matter;
- whether there is any actual or potential conflict of interest; and
- what information can appropriately be provided to the complainant.

IIED may decide not to investigate, or not to continue investigating, a complaint where, for example:

- it falls outside IIED's responsibility or reasonable control;
- insufficient information has been provided to enable meaningful consideration;
- it substantially repeats a complaint that has already been considered and no material new information has been provided;
- it is made in an abusive, threatening or otherwise inappropriate manner;

- the passage of time makes fair or meaningful consideration impracticable; or
- another process, organisation or authority is better placed to consider it.

This does not prevent IIED from taking action where information received identifies a safeguarding, legal, financial or other material risk.

Matters involving external authorities or proceedings

Where a matter is being considered by a regulator, law-enforcement agency, court or other competent authority, IIED may pause, limit, adapt or discontinue its own process, taking account of the circumstances and any legal or regulatory obligations.

This does not prevent IIED from taking safeguarding, risk-management, employment or other action that it considers appropriate. IIED may seek legal or specialist advice in determining its approach.

Related policies, guidelines and documents

Anti-fraud, bribery and corruption policy

Anti-harassment and bullying policy

Grievance procedure

Safeguarding policy

Whistleblowing policy

Version history

Version No.	Date (MM/YYYY)	Updated by	Reason
1	09/2021	Chief Operating Officer	Policy creation
2	09/2026	Chief Operating Officer	Scheduled update