

WWF Bhutan has established a mechanism to receive and respond to complaints raised by stakeholders who may be affected by WWF Bhutan conservation activities. This mechanism is a fundamental part of WWF's Social Policies and Safeguards.

Addressing complaints in a timely and effective way helps resolve issues, improves mutual understanding, strengthens accountability and provides a foundation for increased collaboration.

WWF Network's Environmental and Social Safeguards and Policies

1. WWF Statement of Principles on Indigenous Peoples and Conservation
2. WWF Policy on Poverty and Conservation
3. Conservation and Human Rights Framework
4. WWF Gender Policy
5. WWF Guidelines: Prevention of Restriction of Rights and Relocation & Resettlement of Indigenous Peoples, Tribal and Local Communities (pending approval).
6. WWF Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework (ESSF)
7. Other relevant WWF policies and safeguards developed and communicated to WWF Network

WWF Social Policies and Safeguards can be found at: [\(https://wwf.panda.org/our_work/people/people_and_conservation/wwf_social_policies/\)](https://wwf.panda.org/our_work/people/people_and_conservation/wwf_social_policies/)

Eligibility: Who can make a complaint?

Any community, group, or person who believes it is or may be negatively affected by WWF Bhutan's failure to follow its Social Policies and Safeguards in the design or implementation of a WWF Bhutan project activity is considered an "Affected Party". Any Affected Party may file a complaint. Representatives filing a complaint on behalf of an Affected Party must provide concrete evidence of authority to represent them.

Given that this project complaints resolution process is oriented towards direct dialogue and engagement among all parties, anonymous complaints will not be considered, although complainants can request confidentiality. There is a risk that confidentiality may limit efforts to resolve complaints, and complainants will be informed if confidentiality is impeding the process.

Complaints Filing Process

The WWF Bhutan Complaints Resolution Process is overseen by a team in WWF Bhutan office. Complaints should be directed to any of the following means:

Email: pc@wwfbhutan.org.bt

Post: Project Complaints Officer, Post box 210, Kawajangsa, Thimphu, Bhutan.

Phone: 975-2-321407/323528/323316

The complaints should include the following information:

- Complainant's name and contact information.
- If not filed directly by the complainant, proof that those representing the affected people have authority to do so.
- The specific project or program of concern including the location.
- The harm that is or may be resulting from the complaint.
- The relevant WWF social policy provision (if known).
- Any other relevant information or documents (e.g. date of event).
- Any actions taken so far (if any) to resolve the problem, including contact with WWF.
- Proposed solution.
- Whether confidentiality is requested (stating the reason).

The complaint can be filed either in English or Dzongkha.

Complaint review process

Step 1:

WWF Bhutan Project Complaints Team will assess the eligibility of the complaint and provide a response as to whether or not it is eligible, in accordance with the above requested information (10 business days after receiving the complaint).

Step 2:

If the complaint is eligible, the Project Complaints Team will come up with a plan and define a timeframe to investigate the complaint. The team will then communicate this information to the Affected Party (10 business days after Step 1 is finalized).

Step 3:

The team will then investigate the matter, with additional technical support as needed, including support from the field offices. Based on the results, the team will then work with the affected parties to develop and implement an action plan and timeframe of steps required to resolve any issues identified.

Step 4:

A summary of the complaint raised, actions taken, conclusions reached, follow up plan and timeframe for completion will be documented and communicated as agreed between the parties. WWF Bhutan will facilitate support to further clarify, assess, and resolve issues raised as needed including, if appropriate, engaging input from outside experts.



Monitoring

Agreed action plans will establish timeframes for regular process monitoring towards resolution of the complaint. The Project Complaints Team will coordinate the monitoring by organizing periodic checks – bringing together the affected parties and relevant technical advisors for meetings or other communication on the status of action plans, until they are completed. WWF Bhutan will assess the effectiveness of this complaint resolution process on an annual basis and identify any needs for improvement.



Non-retaliation

WWF Bhutan strongly disapproves of and will not tolerate any form of retaliation against those who report complaints in good faith. Any WWF Bhutan employee who engages in such retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. WWF Bhutan will take all feasible actions to protect complainants against retaliation. Anyone who has made a report of suspicious conduct of a WWF Bhutan's employee and who subsequently believes he or she has been subjected to retaliation of any kind should immediately report it by the same channels as noted herein.



WWF Bhutan Project Complaints Team Members

1. Conservation Director
2. Operation Director
3. Senior Program Officer, Living Landscape
4. Program Officer, B2C2 Landscape
5. Communication Manager
6. Monitoring, Evaluation and Safeguards Manager
7. Senior Grants/Administration Officer