

# The World Bank Inspection Panel

*Where your concerns are heard*



THE WORLD BANK

The Inspection Panel



# What **WHAT IS THE PANEL?**

The Panel was established in 1993 by the Executive Board of the World Bank. It is an independent complaints mechanism for people who believe they have been, or are likely to be, harmed by a World Bank-funded project. The Panel is composed of three members from different countries, selected for their multifaceted experience in development and their independence and integrity. Each member serves a nonrenewable five-year term. The Panel is supported by a Secretariat and is located at the World Bank's headquarters in Washington, D.C., USA. It reports directly to the Bank's Executive Board and is independent of World Bank management.



## HOW DOES THE PANEL PROCESS WORK?

*How*

Any two or more affected people, referred to as “Requesters,” may submit a complaint to the Panel. Through its process, the Panel assesses whether the Bank has complied with its internal policies and procedures designed to safeguard people and the environment. It also assesses whether any noncompliance has contributed, or may contribute in the future, to the harm described in the complaint. The Panel’s Operating Procedures (at [www.inspectionpanel.org](http://www.inspectionpanel.org)) explain the different stages in the Panel process, including how the Panel determines if a complaint is admissible and eligible for investigation.

The Panel process also provides opportunities for constructive interaction between the Requesters and the World Bank, with the aim of addressing and resolving problems to the benefit of all parties involved. All reports that are prepared, including the initial complaint, are made public, but the identities of the Requesters will remain confidential if they so request.

A summary of the Panel process is shown in the figure on the back cover.

## WHO CAN SUBMIT A COMPLAINT?

*Who*

Two or more affected persons in the country where the Bank-supported project is located can submit a complaint (formally called a “Request for Inspection”). It can be sent directly by Requesters or through a representative.



# What

## WHAT CAN REQUESTERS COMPLAIN ABOUT?

The Inspection Panel has addressed many different types of harm or potential harm to people or the environment in response to Requests for Inspection. Some cases have involved harm to people's livelihoods or environmental degradation resulting from infrastructure projects. The Panel has also considered projects involving forced relocation (for example, due to the building of a dam, road, pipeline, landfill, or power plant); projects affecting the rights and interests of indigenous peoples (such as customary land rights, sites of cultural significance, or livelihoods); and projects affecting the environment, cultural sites, and natural habitats (for example, from air and water pollution, stress on water sources, adverse impact on wetlands, deforestation, or loss of biodiversity).

Panel cases have also addressed the right of affected communities to meaningful consultation and participation in the planning and implementation of projects, including their access to information. All of these types of harm or potential harm are reviewed by the Panel within the framework of the World Bank's operational policies and procedures.

The Panel's mandate does not extend to issues relating to procurement of goods or services, corruption, or issues that the Panel has already addressed in a previous case, unless new evidence or new circumstances are presented. Issues related to suspected fraud or corruption, to misprocurement in a World Bank-supported project, or to Bank staff misconduct in relation to allegations of fraud and corruption should be reported to the Bank's Fraud and Corruption Hotline: [www.worldbank.org/integrity](http://www.worldbank.org/integrity).

The Panel's mandate covers projects financed by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank Group, in addition to Trust Funds managed by the World Bank. Complaints about projects supported by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) are dealt with by the Office of the Compliance Advisor Ombudsman (CAO). More information about the CAO can be found at [www.cao-ombudsman.org](http://www.cao-ombudsman.org).

## HOW TO SUBMIT A COMPLAINT?

# How

A complaint (the Request for Inspection) may be submitted by letter or email. Please note that it can be written by any citizen without the help of experts or lawyers. It should be signed and must include the information listed below.

- Your names (there must be two or more Requesters), and where you live. If you are designating an individual or an organization to represent you, their name, along with a signed statement that authorizes them to act as your representative, needs to be included.
- Title (if you know it) of the World Bank–supported project you are concerned about.
- Description of the harm that you—or the environment where you live—have experienced or the harm that you believe is likely to occur as a consequence of the project.
- A description—to the extent that you know—of why you believe the Bank has failed to follow its policies and procedures, and how that has resulted in harm (but please note that a Request for Inspection does not need to identify any specific Bank policies to be considered).
- An explanation of when and how you informed the Bank about your concerns and why you are not satisfied with the Bank’s response.
- If you wish, you can describe actions that would address your concerns.

English is the official language for the Panel process, but you can submit a complaint in your own language. It can be sent in hard copy to our mailing address (see Contact Information on the back cover) or electronically to [ipanel@worldbank.org](mailto:ipanel@worldbank.org).

A sample complaint form can be found on the Panel website at [www.inspectionpanel.org](http://www.inspectionpanel.org), together with other information about the Panel. If you have more questions, you may find answers on the website, or you may contact the Panel Secretariat directly by email or phone (see Contact Information on the back cover). The Panel Secretariat can also help you understand the basic requirements for a complaint to be admissible.

# What

## WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT AS A RESULT OF THE PANEL PROCESS?

### Submitting a complaint to the Panel may:

- Lead to action by World Bank management to correct the harm, either early in the process or as a result of a management action plan and Board determination and directive at the end of a Panel investigation;
- Lead to a determination by the Panel about whether violations of the World Bank policies and procedures were linked to the harm;
- Help draw attention to the harm or potential harm, generating lessons that may help avoid such harm in future Bank projects.

### Submitting a complaint to the Panel will not:

- Guarantee that harm being caused by a World Bank-funded project will be brought to an end or prevented, as the Panel is not a court of law with power of enforcement. However, the Panel reports directly to the Bank Executive Board, and Bank management has a responsibility to address and respond to the Panel's findings;
- Produce determinations of guilt or innocence of individual Bank staff members; rather the Panel examines issues of compliance by Bank management as a whole;
- Lead to an investigation of the borrower government, as the Panel investigates the Bank and not the borrower.

## WHY THE PANEL?

*Why* The mission of the World Bank is to help countries eradicate poverty and create shared prosperity. Development projects and programs are intended to bring about positive change, but their implementation involves risks. Despite everyone's best intentions, people or the environment can be harmed. The World Bank has policies to help avoid such outcomes, but even so, some problems may remain unrecognized or unaddressed. In such circumstances, one way for concerns to receive attention is if the citizens themselves speak out. Through a collaborative process, the Panel can help affected people be heard and have their concerns addressed.



## The 4 Phases of the Inspection Panel Process



## The Inspection Panel

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