



## GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL MECHANISM (GRM)

Queries, Requests & Concerns – Get them resolved here

**Assam Agribusiness and Rural Transformation  
Project (APART)**



**Project Co-ordination Unit, ARIAS Society, Khanapara,  
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## **Guideline for Grievance Redressal Mechanism of APART**

1. Under APART, multiple channels are established by which grievances can be received by the project. These can be broadly classified as – Online -Services (e.g., Toll Free Helpline and via the Project web-platform) and Offline/Manual (e.g., By Post, In Person and at Compliant Centers/Drop-Boxes). For all grievances submitted through online mode, PCU reviews for sensitivity/confidentiality, assessment of any issues pertaining to Conflict of Interest for the office/personal prior to such grievances being channeled to the Grievance Redressal Officer (hereafter referred as GRO) at the district level.

2. In the processing of all grievances, APART follows international best practices including adoption of basic procedures such as acknowledging all grievances, assigning a central tracking number/ID for all grievances alongside basic service standards for response. APART has also established an operating procedure for the handling of unresolved grievances through a process of escalation – where unresolved grievances are transmitted to the next higher level –to OPIUs and then PCU. The PCU aggregates all grievances to a consolidated single database to monitor performance of PIUs with service standards and generate aggregated statistics on performance to be publically disclosed on the projects web-platform.

### **Flow of Grievances received through Manual Channels**

3. APART acknowledges the digital challenges in accessing Online e-Services particularly in reaching the target beneficiaries of the program. To this end –the offline/manual mode of GRM retains with a focus on improving the manual process to allow for efficiency in transactions related to a reduction in response times for each grievance. The process flow for grievances submitted offline/manual modes is depicted in below figure.

4. **Flowchart:** (See in the next page)



5. Service Standards for manual Channel

Level of addressing grievance	Action to be taken	Responsibility	Timeline
First level – District level	1. Grievance are received and registered manually on the grievance redressal register with a Sl. No.	MIS focal person of district implementing agencies/ ATMA/ DLCC.	Within 2 working days of receipt of grievances.
	2. Forwarded to the respective GRO of concerned implementing agency.	MIS focal person.	
	3. Grievances registered at ATMA are forwarded to concerned GRO of the district implementing agencies.	PD ATMA	Within 5 working days of receipt of grievances.
	4. Grievances registered at DLCC are forwarded to concerned GRO of the district implementing agencies.	Chairman of DLCC	
	5. Addressing the grievance.	GRO of the district level implementing agencies	Within 10 working days from the receipt of grievances.
	6. Sending reply of the grievance to the aggrieved person with a copy of information to DLCC, ATMA, GRO of OPIU and concerned division of PCU.		
	5. If cannot be addressed at the level of district implementing agencies, forwarded to the GRO at OPIU, with a copy of information to DLCC, ATMA and concerned division of PCU.		
6. In case of forwarding as mentioned above in Sl. No. 5, reasons for not addressing the grievance at the second level are explained.			
Second level – OPIUs at state level	7. Addressing the grievance.	GRO of the OPIU	Within 7 working days of receipt of grievances.
	8. Sending reply of the grievance to the aggrieved person with a copy of information to GRO of district implementing agencies, DLCC, ATMA and concerned division of PCU.		
	9. If cannot be addressed at the level of OPIU, forwarded to PCU with a copy of information to GRO of district level implementing agencies, DLCC, ATMA and concerned division of PCU.		
	10. In case of forwarding as mentioned above in Sl. No. 9, reasons for not addressing the grievance at second level are explained.		
Third level - PCU	11. Addressing the grievance.	Concerned division	Within 7 working

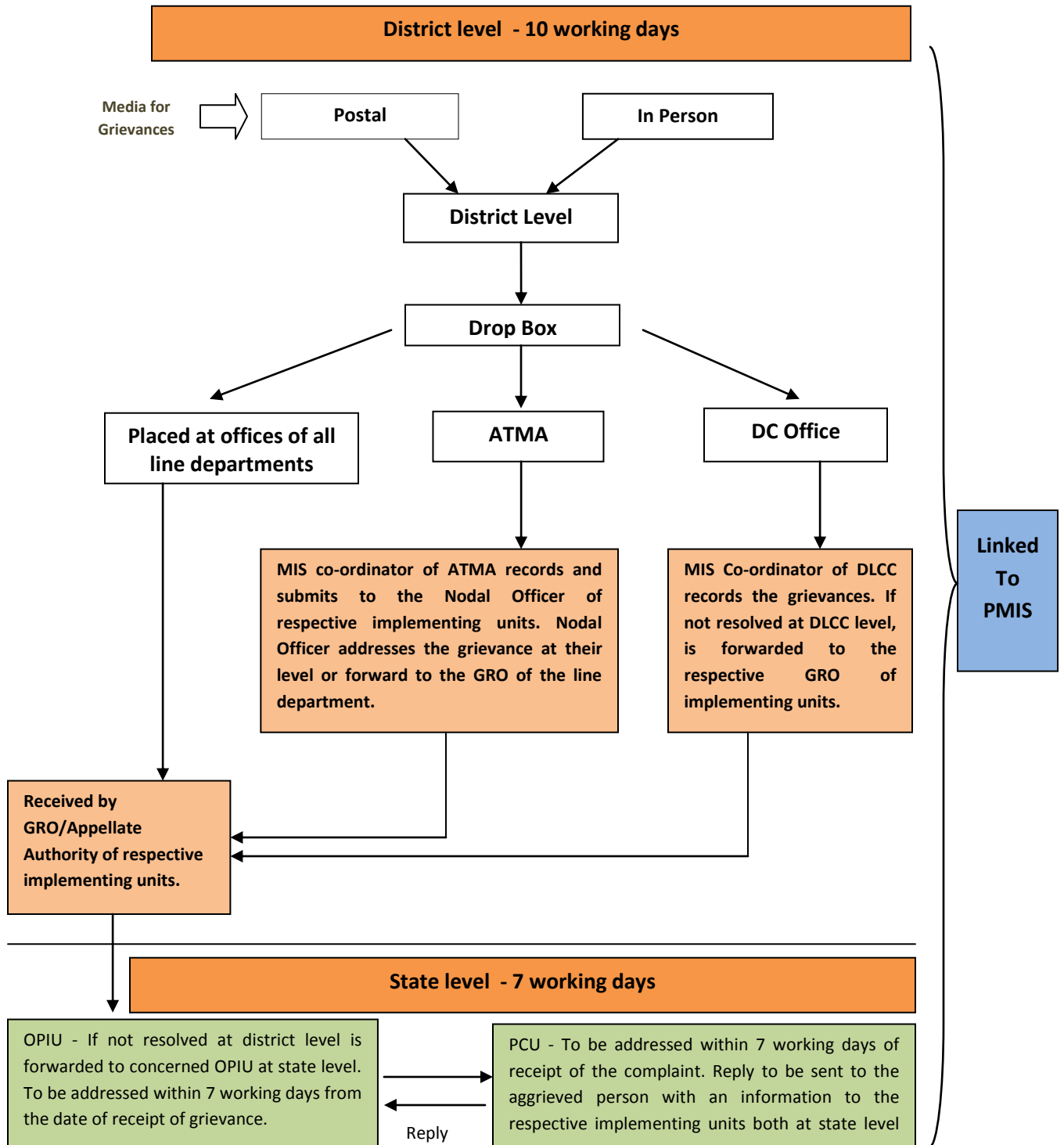
Level of addressing grievance	Action to be taken	Responsibility	Timeline
	12. Sending reply of the grievance to the aggrieved person with a copy of information to GRO of district implementing agencies, DLCC, ATMA and GRO of OPIU.	of the PCU.	days of receipt of grievances.

### **Flow of Grievances received through Online/ e-Services**

6. APART has adopted a multi-mode mechanism by which beneficiaries and other stakeholders can provide grievances on the project. The Online e-Services (e.g., Toll Free Helpline, and via the Project web-platform) provides an innovative platform to several GRM thereby extending the reach, accessibility and efficiency (e.g. transaction cost) of such modalities. A flow-chart for this process is highlighted in below figure. The web-platform of ARIAS Society is extended under APART to incorporate the online GRM web-form that permits citizens to submit their grievances online.

7. **Flowchart:** (See in the next page)

**ADDRESSING GRIEVANCES RECEIVED THROUGH MANUAL CHANNELS**



**Figure 2 : Flow diagram for manual mode of GRM.**

8. Service Standards for online channel:

Level of addressing grievance	Action to be taken	Responsibility	Timeline
First level – State level	1. Grievance received is automatically registered on the web portal of APART at PCU and a unique code is sent to the aggrieved person as an acknowledgment.	Webportal of ARIAS Society is managed by MIS Section.	Immediately
	2. Is automatically forwarded to the respective GRO of concerned implementing agency at the district level with a copy of information to the concerned division at the PCU, GRO at OPIU and DLCC.		
Second level – District level implementing agencies	3.Addressing the grievance.	GRO of the district level implementing agencies	Within 7 working days from the receipt of grievances.
	4. Sending reply of the grievance to the aggrieved person with a copy of information to GRO of district implementing agencies, GRO of OPIU, DLCC and concerned division of PCU.		
	5.If cannot be addressed at the level of district implementing agencies, is forwarded to the GRO at OPIU with a copy of information to DLCC and concerned division of PCU.		
Third level – OPIUs	6.In case of forwarding as mentioned above in Sl. No. 5, reasons for not addressing the grievance at the second level is explained by the GRO of the district implementing agency.	GRO of the OPIU	Within 7 working days of receipt of grievances.
	7.Addressing the grievance.		
	8.Sending reply of the grievance to the aggrieved person with a copy of information to GRO of district implementing agencies, DLCC and concerned division of PCU.		
Fourth level - PCU	9.If cannot be addressed at the level of OPIU, is forwarded to concerned division of PCU with a copy of information to GRO of district level implementing agencies and DLCC.	Concerned division	Within 5 working
	10.In case of forwarding as mentioned above in Sl. No. 9, reasons for not addressing the grievance at third level is explained.		
	11.Addressing the grievance.		

Level of addressing grievance	Action to be taken	Responsibility	Timeline
	12. Sending reply of the grievance to the aggrieved person with a copy of information to GRO of district implementing agencies, DLCC and GRO of OPIU.	of the PCU.	days of receipt of grievances.

9. **Training on GRM:** A comprehensive set of trainings on the GRM is designed covering the PCU and PIUs at the State and District. The training is designed cascading from the PCU that trains State Level PIUs Officials as part of the Social Safeguards Training. The PCU and State Officials joins the training sessions for the District Level PIUs to be conducted by DLCC. Service providers and ATMs also receives training on the GRM. Table below depicts the training schedule/requirement on the GRM:

Type of training	Level of training	Participants	Timeline
2-day Orientation on Social Management Framework (SMF) including Grievance Redressal Mechanism (GRM) & Citizen Feedback System (CFS)	State level	Key officials of OPIUs	Y1, Y3
	District level	Key officials from district level line departments.	
1-day sensitization workshop on GRM and awareness generation	State level	Service Providers (SPs) and Communication agency.	
1-day sensitization workshop for FPOs and IAs on GRM and CFS.	District level	SPs, FPOs, IAs.	Y3, Y4, Y5
1 day orientation of Social Audit Committee (SAC) members on Social Audit Manual including GRM and Citizen Feedback System.	District level	SPs and Social Audit Committee members	

10. **Information dissemination on GRM:** Raising awareness through a communication strategy is critical to the adoption and usage of the GRM. The following outlines this initial strategy including the rollout plan under APART:

(a) Preparation of display materials including the following – communication on the multi-mode channels by which citizens can submit a grievance including the process and procedure; information on accessing the online GRM(e.g., URL of the web-platform for ARIAS Society/APART project; Toll Free Helpline); providing information on the designation and contact details of GRO and



Appellate Authority for all implementing units both for state and district level and publishing the service standards including timelines for addressing grievances at a local level. Materials to be developed in local language

(b) Display communication materials at the project districts at prominent locations such as public places, community institutions, markets, construction sites, consultation sites, training sites, block offices under each cluster. This also includes District Administrative offices (DLCC), ATMA offices of the project districts, DICC offices of the project districts, concerned offices of the line departments at district level.

(c) At the State Level, all the OPIUs to display the designation and contact details of their concerned GRO and Appellate Authority both for the state level and for the district level in visible locations preferably in the entrances, notice boards, etc

(d) Awareness generation on GRM by the Service Providers in co-ordination with the Communication Agency.

(e) Developing IEC materials on GRM and display and distribution in project areas during consultations, demonstrations, at construction sites & markets, etc.

(f) IEC materials developed by the concerned implementing units to include the details of their respective GRO and Appellate Authority, website of ARIAS Society for APART and the toll free number.

**11. Nature of Grievances:** Given the diverse typologies of grievances/beneficiary feedback, APART classifies the grievances to reflect the components of the project including Procurement, Quality of Services, Construction, Entitlements, Financial, Social, Environmental, issues related to Addressing of Grievances. This are further sub-classified according to the type of grievance: Comments/ Suggestions, Queries, Non-performance of Project Obligations, Violations of Laws/ Corruption and Complaints of Project Staff/ Service Providers involved in project management.

**12. Conflict of Interest:** Grievances against district level implementing agencies, ATMA, DLCC and OPIUs are forwarded to PCU to handle conflict of interest within 3 working days of receipt of grievances. If the grievances require further investigation at district level, PCU forwards the grievance to the DLCC for impartial investigation within 3 working days from the receipt of grievances. DLCC sends the report of the investigation to the concerned division of PCU with 10 working days. Based on the investigation report, PCU prepares a reply and send to the aggrieved person within 7 working days from the date of receipt of investigation report from DLCC with copy of information to concerned DLCC. Grievances addressed by PCU are also entered into the PMIS.

**13. Arbitration:** If any beneficiary/citizen is not satisfied with the response of the grievance can register the grievance for further clarification either through online or offline. All the grievances requiring further clarification is forwarded to PCU within 10 working days from the receipt of grievance. PCU undertakes necessary investigation and sends a reply to the aggrieved person within 10 working days from the receipt of grievances.

**14. Accessibility of the aggrieved person:** Any beneficiary or citizen who has successfully submitted a grievance can verify the status of their grievance(s) at any time by referencing the acknowledgement number/unique tracking ID code provided to them at time of submission. All grievances submitted are

handled in the utmost confidence and the PCU/PIUs ensure non-disclosure of all personal information. This extends to additional arrangements for maintaining confidentiality at the request of the individual or where matters are considered sensitive. The project publically reports aggregated statistics on performance of PIUs via the ARIAS Society website.

15. **Confidentiality:** In case of online mode, if any beneficiary or citizen seeks confidentiality, name and address of the person is not accessible to anyone. There is an option for maintaining confidentiality in the design of the electronic GRM. Only E-mail ID and contact number of the person can be viewed.