



HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY



Forest
Foundation
Philippines

Let's grow together.

Forest Conservation and Human Rights

Forest Foundation Philippines is committed to respecting and promoting human rights in its grant programs and operations. Human rights are central to effectively, equitably, and sustainably achieve the Foundation's goal and target outcomes.

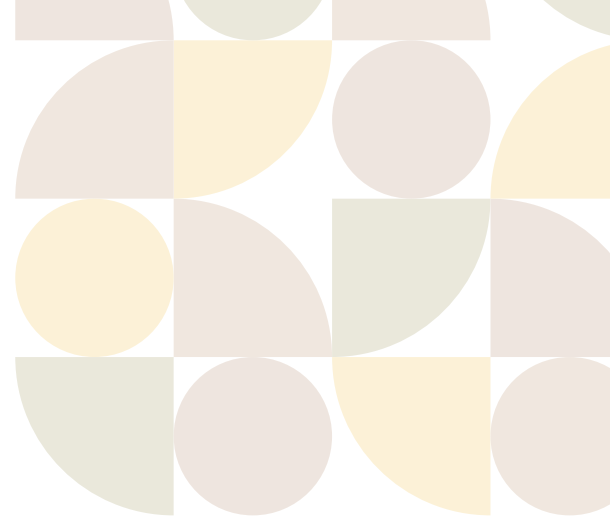
Forest Foundation commits to respect and promote human rights in accordance with the International Bill of Rights and the International Labor Organization's Declaration on the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

Forest Foundation's Human Rights Policies are embedded in its Operations Manual, Human Resources Manual, Grant Guidelines, and Environmental and Social Safeguards Guidelines covering diversity, environment, health and safety, staff relations, and partnerships.

Forest Foundation recognizes the importance of maintaining and promoting the fundamental human rights of its staff in its policies, grant programs, and operations by:

- Promoting a workplace free of discrimination and harassment;
- Providing fair and equitable salaries and benefits in accordance with the laws;
- Providing a safe and secure workplace; and
- Recognizing rights to freedom of expression.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS



Forest Foundation’s Environmental and Social Safeguards Guidelines (ESSG) integrates a systematic process to assess, evaluate, address, and manage environmental and social risks identified during project development and implementation, and in the Foundation’s operations, fund management, and reporting.

The Foundation’s ESSG provides safeguards to its key values as expressed in its performance standards on the following: (1) biodiversity conservation and sustainable forest management; (2) sustainable use of natural resources; (3) respect for the the Indigenous People’s rights stakeholder engagement, gender equality, labor and working conditions, fund management and disclosure, and private sector engagements. It ensures effective environmental and social management practices in all its grant programs, projects, and activities, focusing on:

- Contribution to ecological integrity and ensuring that its programs, projects, and activities avoid causing significant negative impacts to biodiversity and ecosystem services;
- Inclusive and meaningful participation of partners, and guarantee transparency and access to information;
- Recognition and respect to the indigenous peoples’ legal, customary, and traditional rights, particularly those related to forest land and its resources; and
- Compliance to international standards and Philippine laws that promote environmental justice, health and safety, and access to grievance mechanisms.

RESPECT FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RIGHTS, PARTICIPATION, AND CULTURE

Forest Foundation Philippines protects and respects the rights of indigenous peoples, provides for measures to ensure their meaningful participation, and recognizes, respects, and preserves their culture, knowledge and practices, consistent with international and national standards such as the The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and The Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997" (IPRA of the Philippines).

The Foundation puts emphasis on the following for all of its supported projects that will be implemented within ancestral domains:

- Projects are designed and implemented with the IP group's meaningful consultation and engagement, aligned with relevant plans and requirements, and considering the issues, needs, and risks shared;
- Consultations conducted follow each IP group's unique traditions and practices, together with any legal requirements;
- Projects have fair and appropriate benefit sharing mechanisms, particularly where natural resources from their ancestral lands and domains are utilized and when cultural heritage is used for commercial purposes; and
- Forest Foundation staff, consultants, grantees, and partners are capacitated on IP awareness, sensitivity, and relations.

PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Private sector engagement and partnerships shall be in pursuit of achieving the Foundation's core objectives, supporting its projects and grantees, and promoting the ESSG.

The Foundation engages and works with reputable private sector partners with a proven track record of sustainability, adherence to the rule of law, and respect for human rights. Private sector engagement and partnerships is guided by- and adheres to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the UN Framework Principles on Human Rights and the Environment.

COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES ON FOREST FOUNDATION FUNDED PROJECTS

Forest Foundation Philippines will recognize any adverse effect of its funded projects on a person or group within a community as a result of a failure on its part or its implementing partner to adhere to the ESSG in the project design or implementation.

Forest Foundation Philippines' grievance mechanism will effectively address and respond to questions, concerns, and issues on its programs, projects, and activities.

What is a grievance? It is a question, concern, or complaint related to a program, project, or activity led or supported by Forest Foundation Philippines.

Who may raise a complaint?

- **Project affected stakeholders** (individuals or groups that are affected or likely to be affected by the project);
- **Interested stakeholders** (those who may have an interest in the project and/or the ability to influence its outcome, either positively or negatively).

What types of grievances are covered? Those that concern or are related to a Forest Foundation Philippines' led or supported program, project, or activity. This may include concerns on project activity design and implementation, project implementation, project results and compliance with the ESSG. Forest Foundation Philippines shall evaluate all complaints received and will provide a response.

What types of grievances are not covered?

- Criminal activity
- Labor-related grievances
- Commercial disputes
- Government policy issues

For projects with their own grievance mechanisms, Forest Foundation Philippines may resolve a complaint if the complainant has already sought recourse from the internal grievance process and the proposed solution was not accepted.

COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES ON FOREST FOUNDATION FUNDED PROJECTS

How to submit a grievance/complaint?

A complainant may:

- Contact the designated Project Officer during office hours through his/her email address or mobile number; or
- Submit his/her concern by sending an email at reports@forestfoundation.ph or post to the Forest Foundation's office, with the following information:
 - Name
 - Address
 - Contact Number/Email
 - Description of complaint (who, what, where, when how)

What is the complaint review process?

Once the complaint is submitted, the Foundation will acknowledge receipt, with the assessment of the eligibility of complaint (based on the above) within 3-5 working days from receipt. If the complaint is eligible, the acknowledgement receipt will also specify the assigned contact person within the Foundation and a description of what the complainant can expect next, including a timeline.

In consultation with the complainant, and any necessary technical experts, the assigned contact person then investigates the complaint, which will form the basis of the proposal for complaint resolution. The proposal will be presented to the complainant. If the proposed resolution is accepted, Forest Foundation Philippines shall implement the resolution directly or through a third party. If the solution is not accepted, the complainant can present it for appeal or the complainant can seek recourse through another mechanism (e.g., a legal process).

How will the resolution be implemented and monitored?

Forest Foundation Philippines will review the complaint/issue regularly to ensure that progress is made towards a resolution. If no progress is made, the matter may be referred to for appeals. Once the complaint is resolved and no other action is required, or if the complainant does not accept resolution and chooses to engage in another process, the matter will be closed. The complainant would be asked to sign a statement to acknowledge resolution. Signing the statement does not prevent the complainant from raising the issue again, or seeking other avenues for reparation should the resolution not result in a permanent fix or the issue recurs. Forest Foundation Philippines may contact the complainant after closure to ensure no other problems have arisen.

COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES ON FOREST FOUNDATION FUNDED PROJECTS

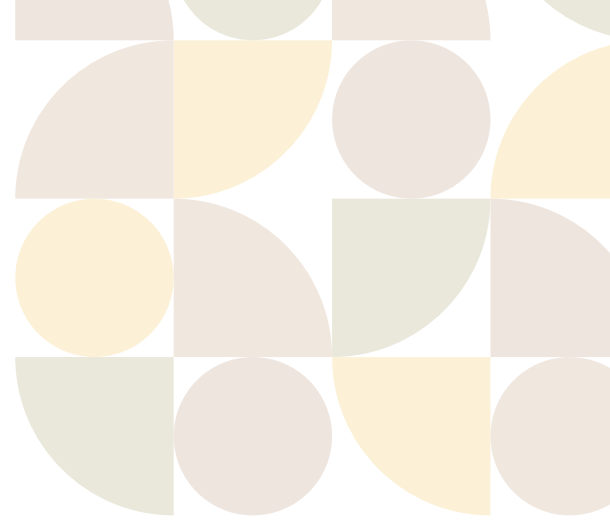
The complaint, process, and resolution (or none thereof) will be recorded and tracked by the Foundation, and will form part of the project's record. The process and outcomes will be evaluated by management as part of ongoing stakeholder engagement, risk assessment, and strategic analysis.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

The grievance mechanism encourages stakeholders to openly exchange views and concerns about Forest Foundation's operations, programs, projects, and activities. Confidentiality will be observed at all times to maintain confidence and ensure compliance with relevant laws. Complainants may wish to:

- ***Raise a concern in confidence:*** Details will not be disclosed when a complainant asks the Foundation to protect identity, and will remain secure with those staff investigating the complaint. However, the situation may arise where it will not be possible to resolve the complaint without revealing identity (for example, when evidence needs to be presented in court). In this case, the Foundation will discuss with the complainant whether and how best to proceed.
- ***Raise a concern anonymously:*** Complainants raising a concern anonymously need to provide sufficient facts and data to enable the Foundation to look into the matter without assistance. Forest Foundation Philippines will make every effort to evaluate anonymous complaints; however, anonymity may make it more difficult to investigate, protect the position of the complainant, offer and implement resolution, and give feedback.

OPERATIONALIZATION



Forest Foundation Philippines continues building on the effort it has established to take its support for forest conservation and human rights.

DEEPENING UNDERSTANDING AND ENHANCING IN-HOUSE CAPACITIES

Forest Foundation will meet its responsibility to respect human rights by implementing its Social Policies (including its Gender Equality Policy and Code of Ethical Conduct) and incorporating its principles in its grant programs, guidelines, and operations. The Foundation recognizes the importance of providing capacity enhancement activities on human rights for its staff, as well as its partners. The Foundation ensures that its special projects and new staff are properly oriented about the Human Rights Policy, including the due diligence process, through its Grant Guidelines and ESSG. By doing such, the Foundation enables the appropriate identification of potential impacts of its grants programs, projects, and activities on the rights of individuals or groups.

PERIODIC POLICY REVIEW AND UPDATING

The Foundation periodically reviews and updates its Human Rights Policy (including our Operations Manual, Human Resources Manual, Grant Guidelines, and Environmental and Social Safeguards Guidelines) to address emerging human rights issues relevant to the sector, further clarify its human rights commitments, and strategically communicate its approaches in managing impacts of its grant programs, projects, and activities on human rights.

The periodic review and updating of this Policy likewise reflects the Foundation's commitment to greater public transparency.



**2F Valderrama Building,
107 Esteban St., Legaspi Village,
Makati City, Metro Manila, Philippines 1229**

(+63 2) 8891 0595; (+63 2) 8864 0287

info@forestfoundation.ph

www.forestfoundation.ph