# **STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE**

# **Management Response and Support to Country Offices for SECU Cases**

Updated 16 July , 2020

## Scope and Objectives of SOPs

Scope: SOPs to guide the management response and support related to SECU cases.

Objectives:

* Ensure support to COs involved in SECU cases
* Clear process with roles and responsibilities
* Ensure a proactive approach to managing risks while investigation is underway
* Ensure a corporate learning approach
* Ensure coordinated UNDP responses and proper documentation of the process

## Background on SECU

The [Social and Environmental Compliance Unit (SECU)](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/accountability/audit/secu-srm/social-and-environmental-compliance-unit.html) investigates alleged non-compliance with UNDP’s Social and Environmental Standards and Screening Procedures from project-affected stakeholders and recommends measures to address findings of non-compliance. SECU is a unit in UNDP’s Office of Audit and Investigations (OAI) and operates under the [SECU Investigation Guidelines](https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/operations1/secu-investigation-guidelines/).

In addition to UNDP’s compliance review process led by SECU, UNDP also has a Stakeholder Response Mechanism (SRM) that ensures individuals, peoples, and communities affected by projects have access to appropriate grievance resolution procedures for hearing and addressing project-related complaints and disputes. Complainants can request a compliance review and/or SRM process. Through the SRM, UNDP Country Offices, Regional Bureaux and Hubs and Headquarters collaborate in a thorough, good faith effort to resolve outstanding concerns to the satisfaction of all parties, and to document the results. Additional information on the SRM process can be found in the [SRM Overview and Guidance](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/operations1/stakeholder-response-mechanism.html).

Information on cases are made public through the [SECU Case Registry](https://info.undp.org/sites/registry/secu/SECUPages/SECUSummary.aspx) and [SRM Case Registry](https://info.undp.org/sites/registry/srm/SRMPages/SRMSummary.aspx).

## Key Roles and Responsibilities

* ExO: Liaises directly with OAI Director on any corporate issues/concerns related to the process. Administrator makes final decision on the SECU recommendations. ExO leads corporate communications and media response related to specific cases. Primary ExO liaison for both SECU and management response team will be the Deputy Chief of Staff.
* SECU/OAI: Reports directly to UNDP Administrator. Applies process per SECU Investigation Guidelines. SECU investigation teams engage directly with UNDP management through the specific Country Office or unit responsible for implementing the relevant project.
* CO: The Country Office is at the forefront of responding to SECU and is the primary point of contact for the SECU investigation team during the process.
* RBx Senior Management: Liaises with RR throughout, clears final submissions to SECU.
* BPPS Senior Management: Chief of Effectiveness Group informed throughout and escalates as needed within Bureau. Environment Finance Team Executive Director also engaged throughout for environmental vertical fund projects. BPPS clearance obtained prior to submissions to SECU.
* Management Response Team for the SECU case: Provides support to CO and ensures a corporate approach and response. Membership and particular roles/responsibilities to be identified and confirmed on a case by case basis and will include the following participation:
  + CO: RR and/or DRR, Project Manager and others, as delegated by RR
  + RBx: Help Desk and others identified by relevant RBx
  + BPPS: Relevant policy adviser(s) as needed, Environmental Finance team when project involves vertical funds
  + BERA: Communications, donor relations and partnerships
  + *Corporate SES Team*\*: SES policy team focal point to ensure consistency in policy interpretation and systems in place to track management responses and actions
* Communications and Media Response Team for the SECU case: Provides coordinated communications and media response for specific SECU cases. This response team follows separate guidelines and is not covered by this SOPs and is led by ExO Press Secretary in close collaboration with BERA’s Media Team and following the new Sign Off and Reputational Risk process (which is still to be approved) For SECU cases, in addition to relevant RBx and CO focal points, the team will include someone in the Corporate SES Team to ensure consistency in communication around SES policy requirements.

*\** ***Corporate SES Team*** *is proposed and these capacities are not currently in place. This team would, among other things, ensure overall coordination and support for SECU cases from a corporate policy perspective, ensuring consistent interpretation of SES requirements, consistent approach across all cases, and coordinated UNDP responses. The Corporate SES Team would not directly engage in programme/project implementation so brings a non-biased perspective in shaping corporate responses. Liaises with Executive Office to ensure they are notified when a complaint is received and updated on status throughout. The team would also maintain a database of all Management Actions related to SECU cases and their status.*

*As an* ***interim solution****, the BPPS Effectiveness Group, SES Policy Specialist, will provide this function for non-vertical fund (environmental) projects and the HQ Environmental Finance Team will play this role for environmental vertical fund projects, in close coordination with the BPPS Effectiveness Group team. If case load increases and existing capacities are not able to meet demand, ad hoc solutions will be identified on a case by case basis.*

*References in table below to the “Corporate SES Team” will be implemented through the interim solution until such a team is in place.*

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| **SECU/SRM Process** | **Management Action** | | **Responsible Focal Point** | **Deadline** | **Notes/ Templates** |
| **Registration of complaint and subsequent eligibility review by SECU**  *(documented in public case registry)* | 1 | **Notify ExO** of complaint registration or as early as possible | ***Corporate SES Team\**** | As soon as possible |  |
| 2 | Send **email** to Country Office, RBx Country Support, and Env Vertical Fund team (where relevant) to provide information on SECU (and SRM where relevant) and to clarify next steps in the process. | ***Corporate SES Team\**** | Within 3 working days of registration | Template |
| 3 | Organize **internal call** with CO, RBx, BERA, BPPS (including Vertical Fund team when relevant) to address questions, discuss background of complaint, agree on the membership of the SECU Case Management Response Team, roles and responsibilities, and next steps in process. | Convened by***Corporate SES Team\**** | Within 5 working days of registration | Standard agenda |
| 4 | Create internal **Teams** page for the case to be used by the Management Response Team to manage all relevant documentation | ***Corporate SES Team\**** | Within 5 working days of registration |  |
| 5 | Prepare a **Fact Sheet** to provide basic information about project, background on the complaint, timeline, etc. To be used as basis for internal/ external communications. | **CO Lead**, with inputs from Management Response Team | Within 7 working days of registration | Template |
| 6 | Compile project documentation and **respond to SECU’s requests** for information to inform eligibility determination | **CO Lead**, with support from Management Response Team | Within 14 working days of registration (or SECU’s deadline) |  |
| **Case determined not eligible by SECU**  *(made public in case registry; stakeholders notified)* | 7 | **No further action needed** for SECU. Risk/complaint may still be legitimate and needs to be managed or addressed through other processes. |  |  |  |
| **Case determined eligible by SECU**  *(made public in case registry; stakeholders notified)* | 8 | **Update ExO** of eligibility determination and any other updates | ***Corporate SES Team\**** | Within 1 working day of eligibility |  |
| 9 | **Notify key stakeholders** including donors, Project Board, and other key stakeholders | **CO RR,** with support or from Management Response Team (including BERA, RBx)  Environmental Finance Team to notify *vertical funds*, when relevant | Within 2 working days of eligibility |  |
| 10 | Prepare and agree on **Interim Action Plan**, to clarify proactive management actions/decisions to be taken during the investigation including:   * Decision on the status of project (e.g. project continuation, partial or full suspension, or cancellation) * Determination if case requires risk escalation (e.g. from CO to RBx, from RBx to Corporate Risk Committee) * Determination if communications plan needed (e.g. if media coverage) * Determination if mission is required at this stage * Other management actions (e.g. SES capacity building in CO)   SECU informed of any changes to the status of the project. Note that, except as provided for in Section 14/para 55 of SECU’s Investigation Guidelines which includes a provision for SECU to recommend interim measures to the Administrator to avoid significant irreversible harm, SECU is not involved in decisions on whether or not to suspend a project or project activities. | **Management Response Team**, consolidated and drafted by ***SES Corporate Team\****  Sign off by **RR or RBx** (whoever is identified Risk Owner). For cases that involve *vertical funds*, Environmental Finance Executive Coordinator also to sign off | Within 10 working days of eligibility | Template |
| **SECU INVESTIGATION** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Draft SECU Investigation TOR Shared for Comment**  *(made public in case registry; stakeholders notified)* | 11 | **Update ExO,** confirming next steps and flagging any potential issues. | ***Corporate SES Team\**** | Within 1 working day |  |
| 12 | Prepare and provide **consolidated UNDP comments** on draft TOR to SECU *(will be made public)* | **Management Response Team**, consolidated and coordinated by ***Corporate SES Team\****  Cleared by relevant RBx and BPPS (include Environmental Finance Executive Coordinator when relevant). Submitted to SECU by RBx or RR. | Within 10 working days of posting |  |
| **Final SECU Investigation ToR and Launch of Investigation**  *(made public in case registry)* | 13 | Revisit and update **Interim Action Plan** as needed (if it has been 6 months since last update, new information available, or recent press coverage). ExO and SECU informed of any changes to the status of the project. | **Management Response Team**, coordinated and drafted by ***Corporate SES Team\****  Sign off/approval by **RR or RBx** (whoever is identified Risk Owner). For cases that involve *vertical funds*, Environmental Finance Executive Coordinator also to sign off. | As needed | Template |
| **SECU Field Mission**  *(SECU coordinates directly with complainants and CO)* | 14 | **Facilitate SECU** organization of Field Mission | **CO Lead** | As requested by SECU |  |
| 15 | **Debrief** of SECU Field Mission with Management Response Team, invitation also to ExO | **CO Lead** | Within 7 working days of end of SECU mission |  |
| 16 | Revisit and update **Interim Action Plan** as needed (if it has been 6 months since last update, new information available, or recent press coverage). ExO and SECU informed of any changes to the status of the project. | **Management Response Team**, coordinated and drafted by ***Corporate SES Team\****  Sign off by **RR or RBx** (whoever is identified Risk Owner). For cases that involve *vertical funds*, Environmental Finance Executive Coordinator also to sign off. | Within 7 working days of end of mission | Template |
| **Fact-checking during various phases of investigation**  *(complainants and relevant UNDP CO may be invited to fact-check)* | 17 | **CO receipt of questions or preliminary text** from SECU to be fact-checked, to be shared on a restricted basis with Management Response Team and ExO | **CO lead** | Upon receipt | Note, in some cases a preliminary draft may be shared for fact-checking but this is not currently formalized in SECU’s SOPs. |
| 18 | Prepare and provide **consolidated UNDP feedback**t, focused only on fact-checking comments | **Management Response Team**, coordinated and consolidated by ***Corporate SES Team\****  Cleared by relevant RBx and BPPS (including Environmental Finance Executive Coordinator when relevant). Submitted to SECU by RBx or RR. | SECU’s deadline |  |
| **SECU Draft Investigation Report shared for public comment**  *(made public in case registry; stakeholders notified and invited to comment)* | 19 | **Notify key stakeholders** including donors, Project Board, and other key stakeholders | **CO RR,** with support or from Management Response Team (including BERA, RBx)  Environmental Finance Team to notify *vertical funds*, when relevant |  |  |
| 20 | Prepare and provide **consolidated UNDP feedback** on SECU Draft Investigation Report | **Management Response Team**, consolidated and drafted by ***Corporate SES Team\**** in close coordination with ExO.  Cleared by relevant RBx and BPPS (including Environmental Finance Executive Coordinator when relevant). Submitted to SECU by RBx or RR. | SECU’s deadline (TBD) |  |
| 21 | Revisit and update **Interim Action Plan** and already begin preparing for the final **Management Response and Action Plan.** ExO andSECU informed of any changes to the status of the project. | **Management Response Team**, coordinated and drafted by ***Corporate SES Team\****  Sign off by **RR or RBx** (whoever is identified Risk Owner). For cases that involve *vertical funds*, Environmental Finance Executive Coordinator also to sign off. |  | Template |
| **Final SECU Investigation Report**  *(posted in case registry and submitted to Administrator for decision)* | 22 | **Update ExO** on when final SECU investigation report is expected | **SECU**  **Management Response Team** |  |  |
| 23 | **Notify key stakeholders** including donors, Project Board, and other key stakeholders | **CO RR,** with support or from Management Response Team (including BERA, RBx)  Environmental Finance Team to notify *vertical funds*, when relevant | Within 2 working days of Final Investigation Report published |  |
| 24 | Upon request, **provide Administrator background information**, including latest Fact Sheet and Interim Action Plan for the case, and any other information as requested. | **Management Response Team**, as requested | Immediately |  |
| **Decision by Administrator and Management Action Plan**  *(made public in case registry)* | 25 | Final Administrator’s **Decision** submitted to OAI, accepting (or not) the final recommendations from SECU with relevant decisions and committing to elaboration of detailed action plan accordingly | **Administrator,** drafted by ExO | Within 7 working days |  |
| 26 | Detailed **Management Response and Action Plan** prepared for submission to SECU following Administrator’s decision and to be shared publically. Outlines management actions to be taken to respond to recommendations of SECU Report. Identified actions will need to be completed prior to closure of the case. | **Management Response Team**, coordinated and consolidated by ***Corporate SES Team\****  Cleared by relevant RBx and BPPS (including Environmental Finance Executive Coordinator when relevant). Submitted to SECU by RBx or RR. | Within 1 month of Administrator’s decision |  |
| 27 | **Update key stakeholders**, including donors, Project Board | **CO RR,** with support or from Management Response Team (including BERA, RBx)  BERA to notify donor HQ, when relevant. Environmental Finance Team to notify *vertical funds*, when relevant | Immediately |  |
| **Implementation and Monitoring of Management Action Plan**  *(reporting to SECU made public in case registry)* | 28 | **Annual report on progress** of implementation of the Management Response and Action Plan developed and provided to ExO, *Corporate SES Team* and SECU upon request | Coordinated by ***Corporate SES Team\****, with inputs from all responsible parties identified in the Management Action Plan, primarily CO team.  Cleared by relevant RBx and BPPS (including Environmental Finance Executive Coordinator when relevant). Submitted to SECU by RBx or RR. | Annually | *Corporate SES Team*\* to maintain overall database of all outstanding SECU management actions and status |
| 29 | **SECU team monitoring mission**, conducted as needed, determined by SECU | Support from **CO** to facilitate mission and respond to requests for information |  |  |
| **SECU Closure of Case** | 30 | Management Response and Action Plan completed. No further action needed. | Determination of closure made by SECU based on evidence provided in progress reports |  |  |

## Annexes:

1. Template email to CO (to be developed)
2. Template for Fact Sheet
3. Template for Interim Action Plan (internal)
4. Template for Final Management Response - Action Plan and Tracking
5. Guidance on decision-making and process for project closure/suspension (to be developed with BMS)