

VIRGIN ISLANDS RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

# GRIEVANCE REDRESS SYSTEM (GRS)

## E-HANDBOOK



VIRGIN ISLANDS  
RECOVERY AND  
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

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# PURPOSE OF THE E-HANDBOOK

TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON THE GRS FOR THE PUBLIC AND TO PROMOTE THE USE OF THE SYSTEM TO LODGE COMPLAINTS.





# WHAT IS THE GRS

The GRS was created for members of the public (individuals, groups, organisations or communities) to officially complain about the work of the RDA including its staff, externally hired consultants and contractors regarding the plans or implementation of specific projects.





# WHAT LEGISLATION GOVERNS THE GRS?

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The GRS is a requirement under the Recovery and Development Agency Act (No. 1/2018) “The functions of the Agency shall be to establish public grievance redress system through online and offline options”.

## HOW DOES THE GRS HELP THE

**RDA?** GRS provides the RDA the opportunity to improve the planning and management of projects and pre-empt any future complaints by taking into consideration feedback given by the public.





## WHAT ARE THE GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES OF THE GRS?

PARTICIPATORY  
LEGITIMATE  
TIMELY  
ACCOUNTABLE  
INDEPENDENT  
JUSTIFIABLE  
FAIR &  
TRANSPARENT  
ACCESSIBLE  
COMPLIMENTARY/  
COMPATIBLE

### TRANSPARENT

GRIEVANCE FILING, AND DECISION MAKING IS OPEN TO OVERSIGHT BY THE PUBLIC.

### ACCOUNTABLE

RDA, AS A PUBLIC SECTOR BODY, IS RESPONSIBLE INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY FOR GRS DECISIONS MADE.

### PARTICIPATORY

THE PUBLIC CAN MONITOR AND INSPECT THE WORK OF THE RDA AND PROVIDE FEEDBACK PLUS RAISE GRIEVANCES THROUGHOUT THE PROJECT LIFE CYCLE.

### ACCESSIBLE

THE PUBLIC CAN EASILY REGISTER COMPLAINTS THROUGH VARIOUS PLATFORMS.

### FAIR & JUSTIFIABLE

GRS DECISIONS ARE MADE AGAINST CLEAR CRITERIA AND AN INDEPENDENT APPEALS PROCESS IS IN PLACE.

### TIMELY

DECISIONS ARE BOUND TO PUBLISHED TIMELINES.

### COMPLIMENTARY/ COMPATIBLE

THE GRS IS COMPATIBLE WITH VIRGIN ISLANDS LEGISLATION AND INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS INCLUDING THE RIGHTS TO ACCESS GRIEVANCE MECHANISMS OPERATED BY THE CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

### INDEPENDENT

THE RDA CAN CONSIDER AND DECIDE ON GRIEVANCES RAISED IN A MANNER INDEPENDENT OF ANY INTERESTED PARTIES INCLUDING THE STAFF DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SPECIFIC PROJECT.

### LEGITIMATE

THE GRS HAS BEEN DESIGNED BASED ON BEST INTERNATIONAL PRACTICES AND UNDERWENT A FORMAL INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL TECHNICAL PEER AND LEGAL REVIEW.



# WHAT TYPE OF COMPLAINTS WILL **NOT** BE CONSIDERED UNDER THE GRS?

**POLICY RELATED COMPLAINTS.** The RDA will therefore not be able to respond to any grievance that is related to policy or project prioritization decisions made by the Government. In such cases the Complainant will be referred to the appropriate Ministry.

**PROCUREMENT RELATED COMPLAINTS.** The RDA has separate procedures for contractors to appeal against procurement decisions, which are detailed in the Procurement Handbook. Once contracted, any dispute between the RDA and a contractor is regulated by the contract and will be addressed formally through the contract dispute provisions of the contract.



# WHAT ARE THE VARIOUS STAGES OF THE GRS ?

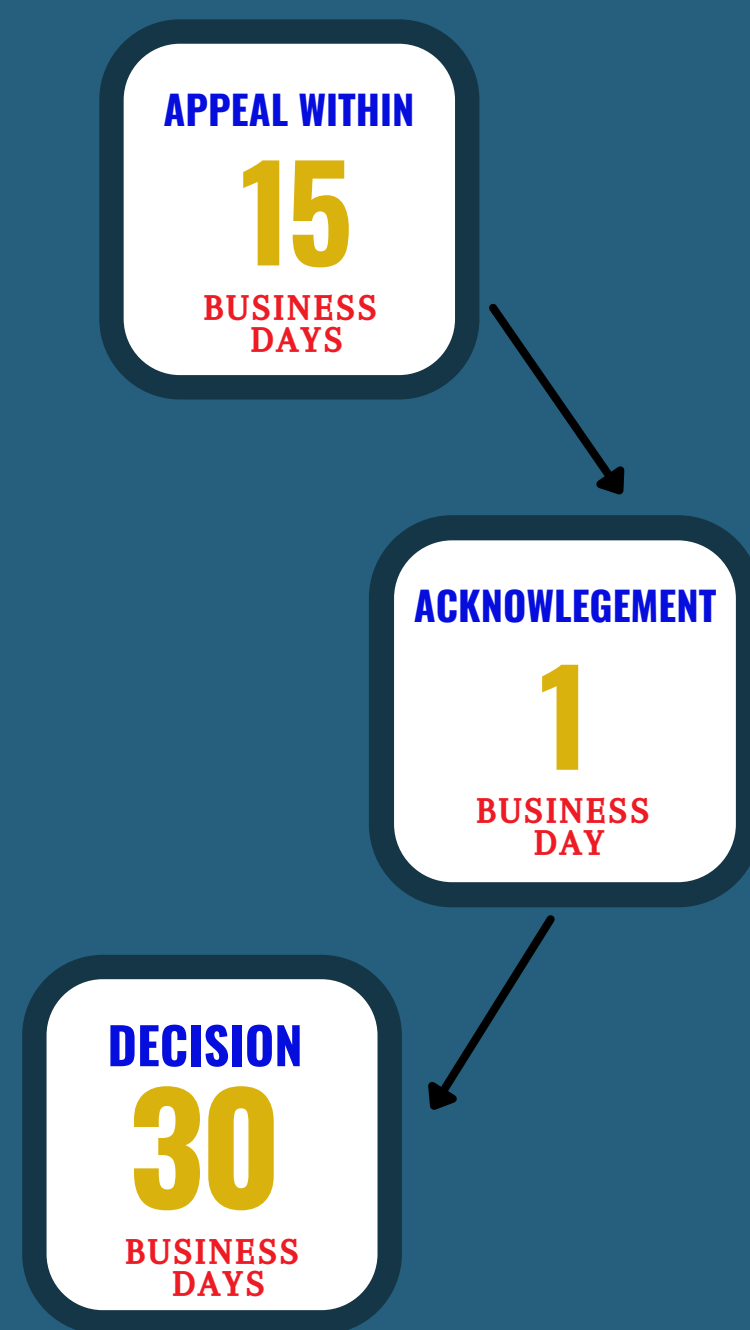
- Lodge a complaint on one of the many platforms (see page 9 titled 'HOW CAN COMPLAINTS BE MADE');
- Receive an acknowledgement and unique complaint registration number via a complaint notification letter within 1 business day of making the complaint.
- Receive an answer/decision within 30 business days of lodging complaint;
- Lodge an appeal within 15 business days of receiving the decision if not satisfied with its contents;
- Receive an acknowledgement of appeal via a notification letter within 1 business day of making the appeal; and
- Receive a letter outlining outcome of the appeal within 30 business days of lodging the appeal.



## LODGE A COMPLAINT



## LODGE AN APPEAL





# WHO ARE THE GRS PARTICIPANTS AND WHAT ARE THEIR ROLES?

PARTICIPANT	ROLE
INDIVIDUAL, GROUP ORGANISATION, OR COMMUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lodge a complaint relating to a RDA administered project</li><li>• File an appeal if not satisfied with complaint decision</li></ul>
RDA PERSONNEL	
HEAD OF ADMINISTRATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Receive and record complaints and appeals</li><li>• Disseminate notification and decision correspondence to complainant</li></ul>
COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gather information from various stakeholders</li><li>• Present case report for decision making</li></ul>
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Presents recommendation to CEO on complaints decision</li></ul>
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (CEO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Makes final decision on complaints</li></ul>
DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Presents appeals recommendation to Board for decision</li></ul>
RDA BOARD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Makes final decision on appeals</li></ul>

# WHAT OTHER MECHANISMS CAN BE USED BY THE PUBLIC TO LODGE A COMPLAINT ON THE WORK OF THE RDA?

## CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

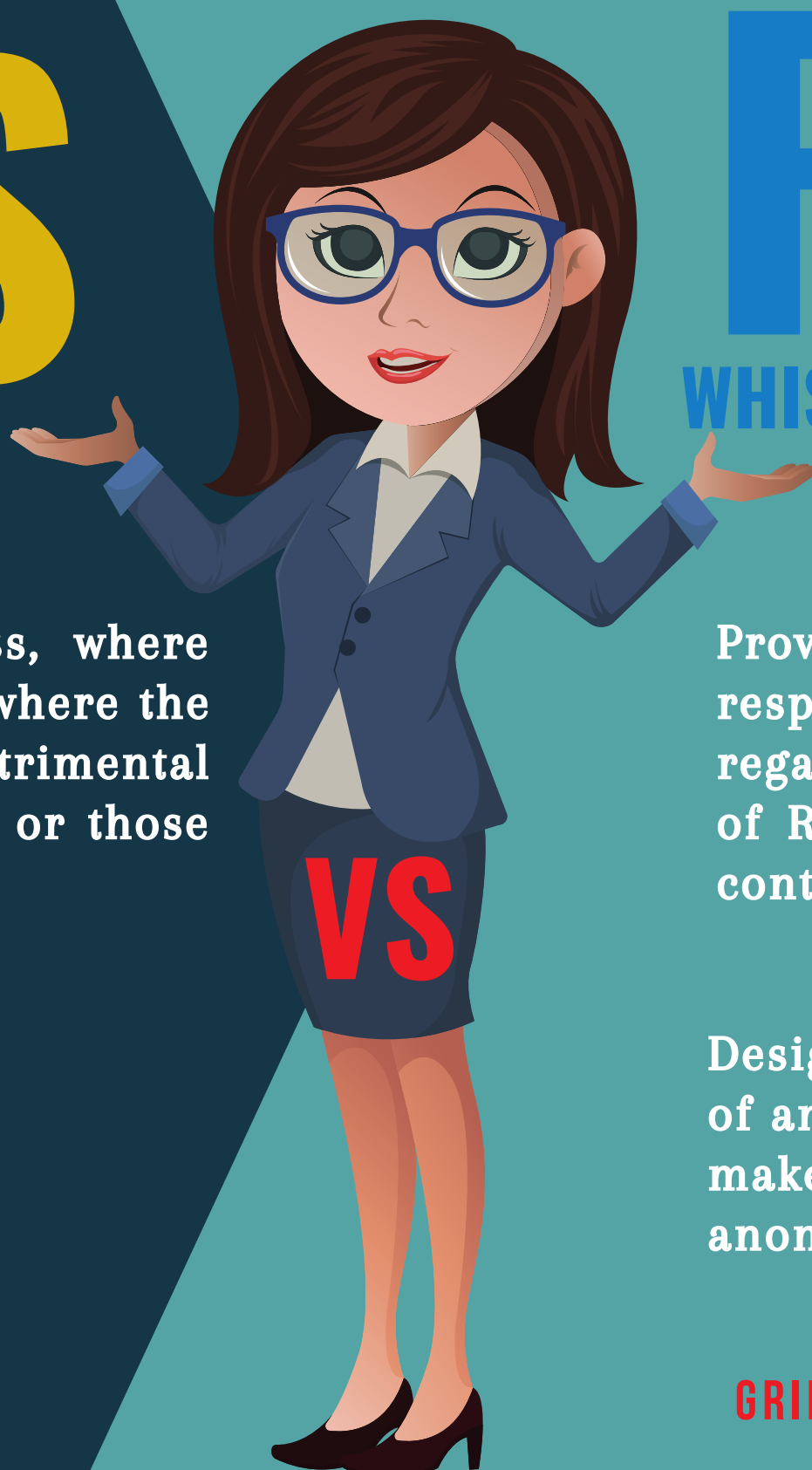
The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) has its own complaints and grievance redress system which the public can also use to lodge complaints regarding projects funded wholly or partly by loans or grants from the CDB. Grievances can be emailed directly to the CDB: [projectscomplaints@caribank.org](mailto:projectscomplaints@caribank.org).

## THE CDB ICA

The CDB's Office of Integrity, Compliance and Accountability (ICA) has an independent and confidential Whistleblower Policy. For more information see their website: <https://www.caribank.org/about-us/corporate-governance/whistleblowing-reporting>.

# GRS

Aimed at offering redress, where feasible, to complainants where the work of the RDA has a detrimental effect on the complainant or those whom they represent.



# VS

# RDA

## WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

Provides for receiving and responding to complaints regarding unethical behaviour of RDA staff, consultants and contractors.

Designed to protect the identity of any complainants wishing to make complaints anonymously.





## WHAT INFORMATION IS REQUIRED WHEN MAKING A COMPLAINT?

- Full name of Complainant, including the name of the group or community, if applicable;
- Address of Complainant;
- Telephone number for Complainant;
- Email address (if available) for Complainant;
- Nature of complaint (describe) and any additional information (such as photo, letter etc.) in support of complaint (if applicable); and
- Preferred method of communicating with the RDA.

# WHAT DOES THE INTERNAL REVIEW OF THE COMPLAINT ENTAIL?



**Depending on the complexity of the project and the extent of the complaint the review process could include the following actions:**

- Review of written RDA project documentation;
- Review of RDA policies, procedures and plans;
- Review of relevant correspondence;
- Interview of RDA staff responsible for managing the project;
- Interview of RDA contractors;
- Site visits;
- Meetings with the Complainant;
- Meetings with any other project stakeholders, including Lead Ministry and any other relevant Government department.



# WHAT DOES THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS ENTAIL?

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WHAT SHOULD  
HAVE HAPPENED

WHAT DID  
HAPPEN

WHAT CAUSED  
THE FAILINGS

WHAT DOES THE  
COMPLAINANT WISH  
TO ACHIEVE AS A  
SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME

WHAT ACTIONS CAN BE  
DONE TO  
RECTIFY ANY FAILINGS  
AND/OR REACH A  
SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME

When reviewing the complaint the RDA will take into consideration and analyse the above before making a decision.





# WHAT COULD THE COMPLAINANT EXPECT AS A POSSIBLE DECISION?

## COMPLAINT IS JUSTIFIED - ACTION TAKEN

The required modification to the project plan or implementation of the project has no significant or limited implications for the project. It can therefore, be actioned by the RDA.

## COMPLAINT IS JUSTIFIED - NO ACTION TAKEN

The complaint requires modifications to the project that would have cost, time or quality implications for the project that are not viable, reasonable or proportionate.

## COMPLAINT IS NOT JUSTIFIED

The RDA will explain to the complainant why there can be no deviation from the planned project.

## COMPLAINT IS NOT CONSIDERED

The complaint is a generic complaint or is disingenuous or malicious in nature.

## COMPLAINT IS OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF THE MANDATE OF THE RDA

The complaint will be forwarded to the Government Ministry or other relevant authority. The Complainant will be advised to follow up with the Ministry and relevant authorities.





# WHAT ARE THE GROUNDS FOR AN APPEAL?

A complainant can appeal a decision made by the CEO of the RDA but must provide a clear basis for the appeal and ensure that it is accompanied by all relevant supporting evidence.

## HOW IS AN APPEAL LODGED?

An appeal is made following the same process outlined for a complaint.



# KEY TERMS

**Appeal:** Right to appeal against the original decision of the RDA in response to the initial Complaint.

**Appeal Decision Letter:** The letter from the RDA Board to the Complainant to notify them of the outcome of the Appeal.

**Appeal Notification Letter:** The letter from the RDA to the Complainant to notify them that their Appeal has been received by the RDA.

**Complainant:** The individual, group, organisation or community that has a grievance that is lodged with the RDA.

**Complaint:** Any grievance formally lodged with the RDA by a Complainant.

**Complaint Decision Letter:** The letter from the RDA to the Complainant to notify them of the outcome of the Complaint.

**Complaint Notification Letter:** The letter from the RDA to the Complainant to notify them that their Complaint has been received by the RDA.

**Grievance:** A grievance refers to an issue, concern, problem or claim, whether actual or perceived, that affects the physical, social, environmental or economic conditions of individuals and or communities in the project area of influence. The grievance can arise at any stage in the project life cycle, from planning, through to implementation and the final handover.

**Grievance Redress System:** The system for the RDA to inform the public about how to lodge a grievance, and how the RDA receives, reviews and decides on how to or whether to offer a form of redress to any grievance lodged within an acceptable timeframe.



# GET IN TOUCH



**TELEPHONE: (284) 340 2605 OR 345 3383**



**EMAIL: [complaints@bvirecovery.vg](mailto:complaints@bvirecovery.vg)**



**WEBSITE: [www.bvirecovery.vg](http://www.bvirecovery.vg)**



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