

# Procedures: Access to Information Appeals Panel

- **Content:** Outlines the functioning of the Access to Information Appeals Panel.
- **Applicable:** IFC Staff
- **Effective date:** October 11, 2025
- **Approved by:**  
Vice President, Strategy and Operations Support  
Vice President and General Counsel, Legal, Institutional Risk and Governance
- **Sponsor:**  
Communications and Outreach (CCODR)

## I. PURPOSE

- 1.1. These Procedures set forth the instructions for the functioning of the Access to Information Appeals Panel established under the [IFC Access to Information Policy](#) (the Policy).
- 1.2. These Procedures apply to IFC and the Access to Information Policy Panel (as defined below).

## II. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1. **Access to Information Policy Advisor (AIP Advisor):** IFC's Access to Information Policy Advisor, who conducts the first level of appeals in accordance with Section IV.J (*Access to Information Policy Advisor*) of the Policy.
- 2.2. **Access to Information Policy Panel (AIP Panel):** The Access to Information Appeals Panel selected in accordance with the Policy.
- 2.3. **Board:** The Board of Directors of IFC.
- 2.4. **Chair:** The AIP Panel Member collectively chosen by the Members to act as Chair of the AIP Panel for a Meeting.
- 2.5. **Meeting:** Any single meeting or series of meetings, whether in person or virtual, convened by the AIP Panel to consider appeals under Section IV.K (*Access to Information Appeals Panel*) of the Policy as provided in these Procedures.
- 2.6. **Member:** Each individual member of the AIP Panel, and any alternate as may be required by the Secretariat, in each case as selected in accordance with the Policy. [See the Access to Information Policy: Appeals Process website](#) for membership.
- 2.7. **Personal Data:** Any information relating to an identified or identifiable individual. An identifiable individual is one who can be identified by reasonable means, directly or indirectly, by reference to an attribute or combination of attributes within the data, or combination of the data with other available information. Attributes that can be used to identify an identifiable individual include, but are not limited to, name, identification number, location data, online identifier, metadata and factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of an individual.
- 2.8. **Policy:** The International Finance Corporation Access to Information Policy, dated January 1, 2012, as may be amended from time to time.
- 2.9. **Restricted Information:** Non-public information classified as Official Use Only (e.g., policies and procedures, intranet sites and kiosk announcements), Confidential or Strictly Confidential Information, in accordance with the [WBG Directive on Information Classification and Control](#).

- 2.10. **Secretariat:** The IFC Communications and Outreach Department, in its capacity performing the responsibilities of the “Secretariat” as described in these Procedures.
- 2.11. **Staff:** A person(s) holding an appointment under Staff Directive 4.01, "Appointment.”
- 2.12. **Terms of Reference:** IFC’s Access to Information Appeals Panel – Terms of Reference substantially in the form attached hereto as Annex A (or as may be amended) and the relevant letter of appointment as applicable.
- 2.13. **Vice-Chair:** The Member collectively chosen by the Members to act as Vice Chair of the AIP Panel for a Meeting.

### III. MANDATE

- 3.1. **Mandate.** The mandate of the AIP Panel is to consider appeals against decisions by the AIP Advisor that denied requests for information.
  - a. The AIP Panel’s scope of review is limited to whether the AIP Advisor had a reasonable basis for his or her determination.
  - b. The AIP Panel does not consider appeals of decisions made by the Board to not disclose the requested information.
  - c. In fulfilling its mandate, once the Secretariat transmits an appeal to the AIP Panel, the AIP Panel reads and applies the Policy as written, using the ordinary meaning of the words, absent an express interpretation to the contrary issued by the IFC General Counsel or the Board, or as the Policy has been amended by the Board.
  - d. The AIP Panel will either uphold or reverse the AIP Advisor’s decision.
  - e. The AIP Panel’s decision is final.
- 3.2. **Criteria for Admitting an Appeal for Consideration.** The AIP Panel considers an appeal only when the appeal meets the following criteria:
  - a. The requester received a negative decision from the AIP Advisor;
  - b. The appeal was submitted in time before the AIP Panel (i.e., within 30 calendar days of notification of the AIP Advisor’s decision); and
  - c. The AIP Panel has authority to consider the appeal as per Paragraph 3.1 of these Procedures.
- 3.3. **Mandate Admitting or Dismissing an Appeal in its Entirety or in Part.** The AIP Panel may admit or dismiss an appeal it receives through the Secretariat in its entirety or in part. An appeal may be admitted and/or dismissed in part if the application raises multiple matters that require partial admission and/or dismissal.

- 3.4. **Dismissing an Appeal without Consideration of the Merits.** The AIP Panel will dismiss any appeal that fails to fulfill the criteria for admitting an appeal for consideration set forth in Paragraph 3.2 of these Procedures.
- i. The Secretariat will inform the AIP Panel in writing when an appeal does not satisfy the criteria.
  - ii. Even if the Secretariat does not inform the AIP Panel that an appeal does not satisfy the criteria, the AIP Panel may nonetheless decide that the appeal fails to satisfy the criteria, in which case it will dismiss the appeal.
- 3.5. **Basis for Consideration and Decision.** Upon admission of an appeal in accordance with these Procedures, the AIP Panel reviews the appeal on its merits. Such consideration and decision will solely be based on:
- a. the AIP Panel's mandate as set out in these Procedures; and
  - b. the documents of record, including, for example, those listed in Paragraph 5.2 of these Procedures.

#### IV. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF AIP PANEL MEMBERS

- 4.1. **Membership.** The AIP Panel consists of three Members. If an alternate is selected in accordance with the Policy, and is available at such time, the alternate may serve as a Member of the AIP Panel at the request of the Secretariat.
- 4.2. **Discharge of Duties.** The AIP Panel discharges its roles and performs its responsibilities pursuant to the Terms of Reference, the Policy and these Procedures. Unless otherwise stated in these Procedures, Members are subject to the policies and procedures applicable to IFC Staff, including the [Principles of Staff Employment](#), Staff Rule 3 General Obligations of Staff Members, WBG Directive on Public Statements of Staff, [WBG Directive on Information Classification and Control](#), and IFC Directive on Information Access, Sharing and Classification.
- 4.3. **Confidentiality.** In drafting their decisions, AIP Panel Members pay due regard to IFC's policies and procedures related to Restricted Information and Personal Data. Specifically, AIP Panel Members ensure the text of their decisions does not include Restricted Information or Personal Data they obtained through or as result of their role as AIP Panel Members. The Secretariat reserves the right to redact any Restricted Information or Personal Data that may have been inadvertently included in an AIP Panel decision. Restricted Information provided to the AIP Panel, regardless of its form, may not be copied, replicated or further disseminated, including as part of a Panel decision, without IFC's prior written consent. The AIP Panel Members must destroy all documents received during the discharge of their functions as soon as the Meeting for which they received the documents ends, in accordance with these Procedures and/or at the direction of the Secretariat.

- 4.4. **Conflicts of Interest.** Conflicts of interest of AIP Panel Members are governed by the provisions set forth in the Terms of Reference and the Principles of Staff Employment.
- 4.5. **Restrictions on World Bank Group Employment.** AIP Panel Members are not eligible to accept any other Staff appointments during the period of their assignment with the AIP Panel, except for appointments to appeal bodies of other members of the World Bank Group with equivalent policy on access to information.

## V. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SECRETARIAT

- 5.1. **Role and Function:** IFC Communications and Outreach Department serves as the Secretariat of the AIP Panel and performs all Secretariat functions recognized under these Procedures or otherwise necessary for assisting the AIP Panel in the exercise of its mandate and the discharge of its duties and responsibilities. In fulfilling this function, the Secretariat:
- a. informs the AIP Panel:
    - i. of appeals received by IFC addressed to the AIP Panel in accordance with the Policy;
    - ii. on matters of IFC policy and governance, including any amendments of the Policy approved by the Board and any interpretation of the Policy issued by the Board or the IFC General Counsel that are applicable to the appeal under consideration by the AIP Panel;
    - iii. of the Meetings to be scheduled and the manner in which they will be held;
    - iv. of the necessary logistics for the AIP Panel to carry out the Meeting;
    - v. of the need for any alternate Member(s) to the AIP Panel to act as a Member during any Meeting, in coordination with the Chair; and
    - vi. in case the Secretariat requests that they carry out any activities in addition to the core activities explicitly stated in the Terms of Reference.
  - b. performs the following:
    - i. transmits the relevant documents, as indicated in Paragraph 5.2 of these Procedures, to the Members through IFC email, or any other economical, efficient and secure means of communication as decided by the Secretariat;
    - ii. retains all original documents related to the work of the AIP Panel, as well as arranges for the appropriate distribution of copies and filing; and
    - iii. publishes the decisions of the AIP Panel, the timing and manner for which is determined by the Secretariat.

- 5.2. **Documents Transmitted to the AIP Panel (Documents of Record).** The Secretariat transmits each appeal to the Members of the AIP Panel in a time reasonably prior to the Meeting. The Secretariat prepares a transmittal memo, which may include, inter alia, information about applicable policy (see Paragraph 5.1(a)(ii), information concerning whether the criteria set forth in Paragraph 3.2 have been met and the documents to be considered by the AIP Panel, which will typically include:
- a. the original request for information;
  - b. any response from a third party related to the original request for information;
  - c. IFC's response to the requester communicating its decision to deny access to information requested;
  - d. the requester's appeal filed before the AIP Advisor;
  - e. the AIP Advisor's decision on the appeal;
  - f. the requester's appeal filed before the AIP Panel; and
  - g. if applicable, any other information the Secretariat deems relevant after consultation with the relevant IFC departments and the AIP Advisor, including, but not limited to, formal interpretations of IFC policy and procedures from the IFC General Counsel.
- 5.3. **In camera Review.** In some instances, certain documents may be provided to the AIP Panel only on IFC premises, for in camera review, on a confidential basis.
- 5.4. **Communication to the Requester.** The Secretariat notifies the requester in writing of the AIP Panel's decision.

## VI. MEETINGS

- 6.1. **Frequency.** Meetings are held in response to appeals received as notified by the Secretariat. The AIP Panel will hold Meetings as often as needed to respond to appeals in a timely manner.
- 6.2. **Form of Meeting.** The AIP Panel Meetings are held virtually unless the Secretariat recommends that the AIP Panel meet in person. The AIP Panel may also request to meet in person to decide on appeals. In such cases, the Secretariat may decide whether the efficient and economical conduct of the proceedings warrant holding Meetings in person or by other means. The Secretariat makes and/or informs the AIP Panel of the necessary arrangements (e.g., travel arrangements; reservation of facilities, including video conference where convenient) for such Meetings in good time, all in accordance with relevant WBG policies and procedures for travel and related arrangements.
- 6.3. **Selection and Role of Chair and Vice-Chair for Each Meeting.** The Members of the AIP Panel choose one Member to act as the Chair and one Member to act as Vice-Chair at the beginning of each Meeting and for the duration of each Meeting.
- a. The Chair:

- i. organizes the AIP Panel Meeting and conducts the related Meetings, which may be done virtually or in person depending on the circumstances specified in Paragraph 6.2 of these Procedures; and
  - ii. presides over the AIP Panel deliberations and acts as the official channel of communication with the Secretariat for the relevant AIP Panel Meeting.
- b. The Vice-Chair acts as Chair in the Chair's absence or in case the Chair is unable to act.
- c. Neither Chair nor Vice-Chair have any special voting rights with respect to decisions.

## VII. AIP PANEL DECISIONS

- 7.1. **Timing of Decision.** The AIP Panel will endeavor to respond to the requester via the Secretariat within 60 days of receipt of the appeal, unless additional time is required because of the scope or complexity of the appeal. In case additional time is needed, the requester will be notified via the Secretariat.
- 7.2. **Majority Decision.** The AIP Panel makes all decisions by a majority vote of Members; provided, however, if only two Members are available for a Meeting, such decision will require a unanimous decision of the two available Members.
- 7.3. **Justification for Decisions.** Each Member of the AIP Panel provides input towards finalizing the written decision of the AIP Panel for each appeal, indicating the AIP Panel's decision and justification for either upholding or reversing the decision of the AIP Advisor. Any AIP Panel Member may issue a dissenting opinion in their discretion and deliver it to the Secretariat.
- 7.4. **Available Remedy.** If the AIP Panel reverses a decision to deny access, the AIP Panel's decision will list the information to be provided to the requester. No remedy other than making the requested information available to the requester may be awarded.
- 7.5. **Communication of Decision to the Secretariat.** The Chair communicates the written decision of the AIP Panel to the Secretariat.

## VIII. COMMUNICATIONS

- 8.1. **Means of Communication.** Members of the AIP Panel may communicate directly with each other and with the Secretariat. Communications transmitting information regarding appeals and related documents are designated as "Strictly Confidential" and transmitted through a manner deemed by the Secretariat as secure, in accordance with IFC's policies and procedures relating to information security, including those outlined in section 4.2 of these Procedures.
- 8.2. **No Direct Communications with Requesters.** Members of the AIP Panel may not communicate directly with requesters. All communications concerning an appeal (e.g., conveyance of decisions) or any other matter is directed through the Secretariat.

- 8.3. **Public Statements.** Any AIP Panel Member making a public statement concerning his/her AIP Panel work must comply with the relevant policies and procedures of IFC Staff, including those outlined in section 4.2 of these Procedures.
- 8.4. **Communications of the Chair.** When the AIP Panel has convened a Meeting, the Chair is the official channel of communication between the AIP Panel and Secretariat. The Chair communicates all decisions taken by the AIP Panel to the Secretariat in accordance with Paragraph 7.6 of these Procedures.

## IX. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

- 9.1. **AIP Panel Expenses.** Consistent with the Terms of Reference, IFC reimburses each AIP Panel Member for time and reasonable expenses directly incurred in the carrying out of the above-mentioned responsibilities, as requested by IFC, in line with relevant IFC policies and procedures. AIP Panel Members may ask questions or request confirmation from the Secretariat for an answer before their incurrence.
- 9.2. **Daily Fee.** In addition to receiving reimbursement for expenses reasonably incurred, Members of the AIP Panel receive a daily fee, as indicated in their respective letters of appointment, for the equivalent of each eight-hour day of work performed in connection with the discharge of their functions as Members of the AIP Panel. Each AIP Panel Member individually submits claims for said daily fees to the Secretariat within seven (7) calendar days from the relevant date of completion of work (e.g., completion date of an AIP Panel Meeting, or completion date of travel on authorized IFC business).
- 9.3. **Travel arrangements.** If the Secretariat determines that AIP Panel Members are required to travel on authorized IFC business under these Procedures, AIP Panel Members follow the WBG Procedure on Official Travel Expenses – Payment and Reimbursement. The Secretariat assists AIP Panel Members with travel arrangements.
- 9.4. **IFC Property.** All materials produced or acquired by the AIP Panel as part of their functions and these Procedures remain the property of IFC. IFC retains the exclusive right to publish or disseminate in all languages reports and works arising from the above-mentioned materials.
- 9.5. **Changes to the Operating Procedures.** Changes to these Procedures do not affect any cases pending before the AIP Panel and are applied only to cases for which the Secretariat receives an appeal after the date of such revision.
- 9.6. **Reservation of Privileges and Immunities.** Nothing in these Procedures is an express or implied waiver of IFC's privileges and immunities under its Articles of Agreement, international conventions, or any applicable law, nor does it provide any contractual or other rights to any party.

## **X. EXCEPTIONS**

- 10.1. Any exceptions from the application of these Procedures require the approval of the Vice President, Strategy and Operations Support and the Vice President and General Counsel, Legal, Institutional Risk and Governance.

## **XI. EFFECTIVE DATE**

- 11.1. October 11, 2025. Procedures are applicable to any appeal for which the AIP Panel has not issued a decision.

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Questions concerning these Procedures should be referred to the Sponsor.

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