



# Grievance Mechanisms Training Toolkit

Pre-Training Preparation Meeting

# Initial Meeting

# Initial Meeting Objectives

1. What are grievance mechanisms and why are they important?
1. What is the RA Grievance Mechanism standard and what will the training cover?
1. Discuss and agree the training plan



## Case study / temperature check

# Case study 1



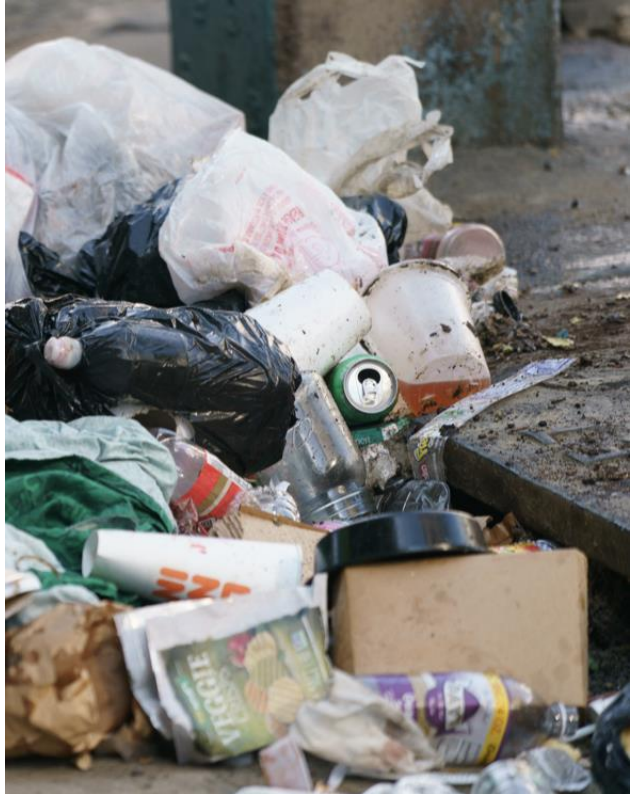
You live above a very annoying coffee shop:

- Loud music
- Smelly rubbish bins
- Staff won't help

But some of your neighbors go there all the time and like it.

**What can you do?**

## Case study 2



Waste stops being picked up in your area and smelly piles of bags start piling up in front of your house. It's been 2 weeks and you are worried about your family's health.

**What can you do?**

**What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear the term grievance mechanism?**



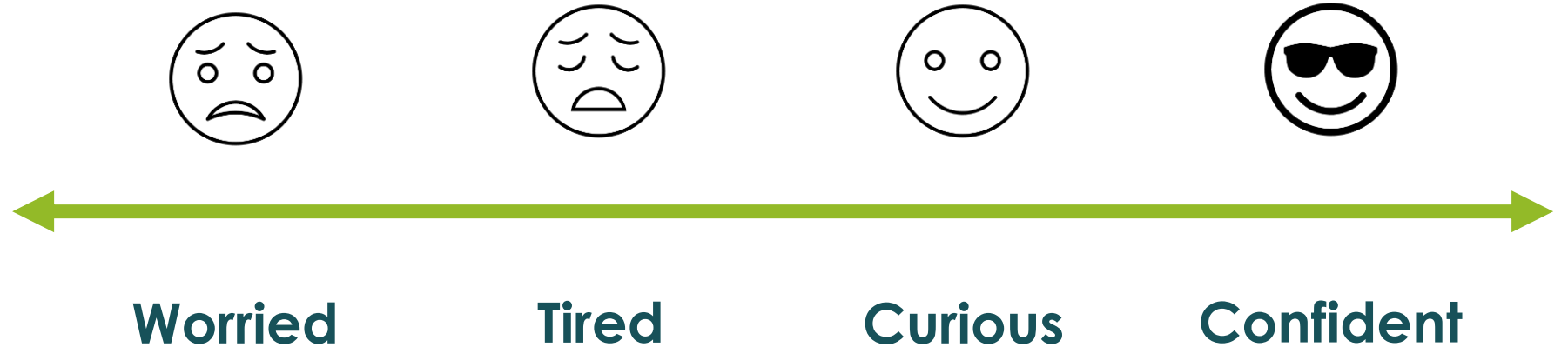
Confusion?



Confidence?

Something else? Why?

# How do you feel when you hear the term grievance mechanism?



Why?

**What are grievance mechanisms?**

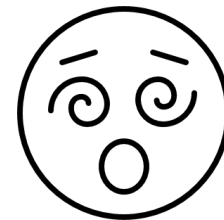
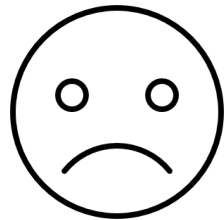
# What is a grievance?

“A grievance is **a complaint or concern** by any person about another person’s or organization’s actions or about its rules and policies that have or might negatively affected the complainant. “

Grievances must be:

- Taken seriously
- Investigated
- Where needed, remedy must be provided.

# What can workplace grievances look like?



# What can workplace grievances look like?

## Simple requests:

“I have not been provided with the equipment I was requested to use. Can it be provided?”

## Raising alarm on something potentially dangerous:

“A pesticide containers are not stored properly being a hazard to people at the farm and the environment.”

## Allegations and reports of mistreatment:

“My supervisor sexually assaulted me and keeps threatening me if I tell someone”.

# What is a grievance mechanism?

“**A process** through which individuals, workers, communities, and/or civil society organizations (including whistle-blowers) can raise their complaints of being negatively affected by specific farm or business activities and/or operations and get remedy.”



## Different Types of grievance mechanisms



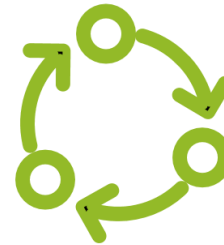
# What do grievance mechanisms consist of?

All grievance mechanism need the following:



## CHANNEL

What enables the communication to happen and flow in both directions?



## PROCESS

What are the steps that are taken after a grievance is submitted?



## GOVERNANCE

Who owns the mechanism and who is responsible for what? Who is responsible for reviewing and updating to improve effectiveness?

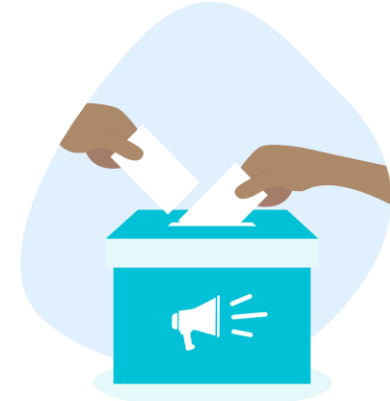
# What might grievance channels look like?



Conversation



Hotline or an app



Complaints box



Letter or an email

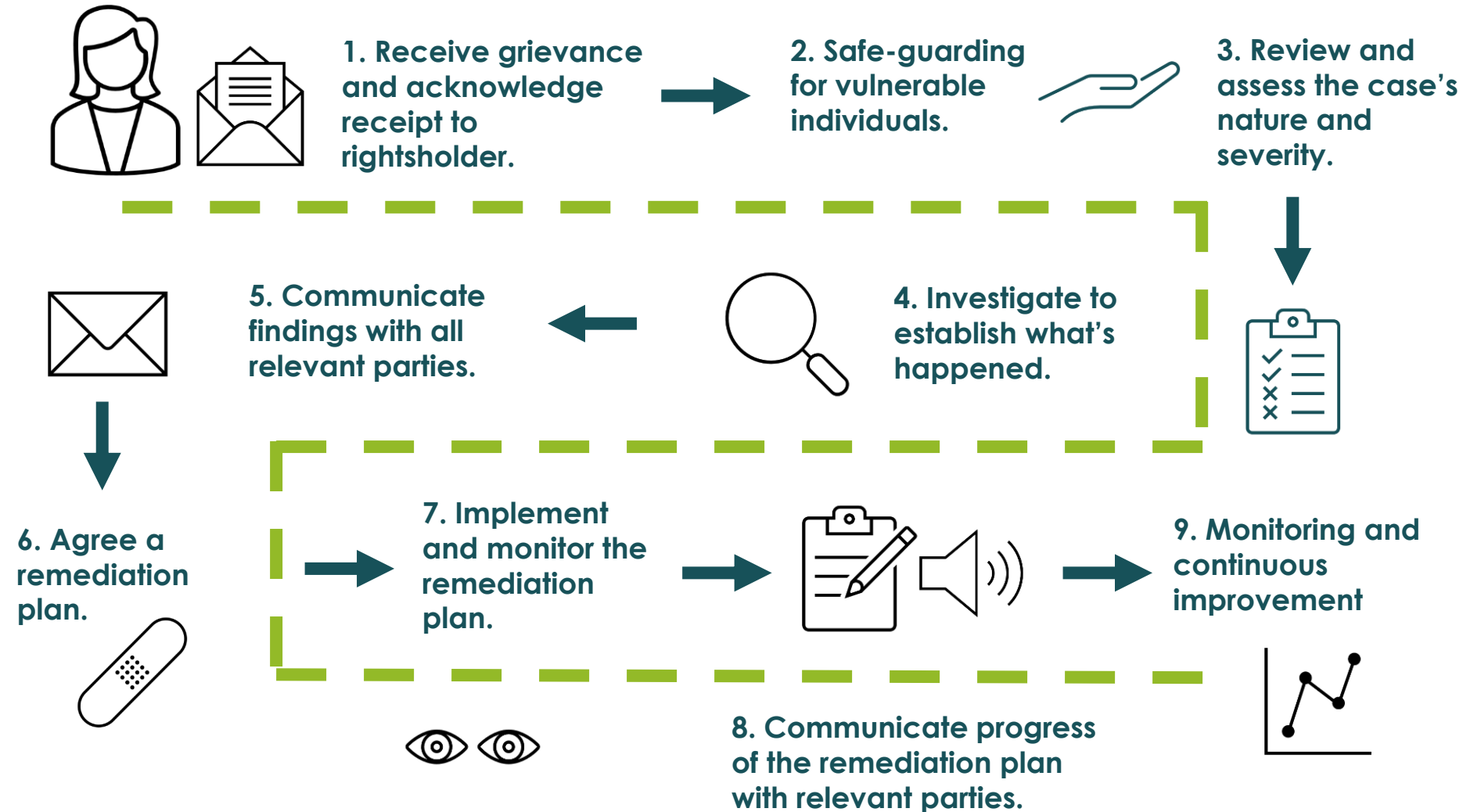


Phone call

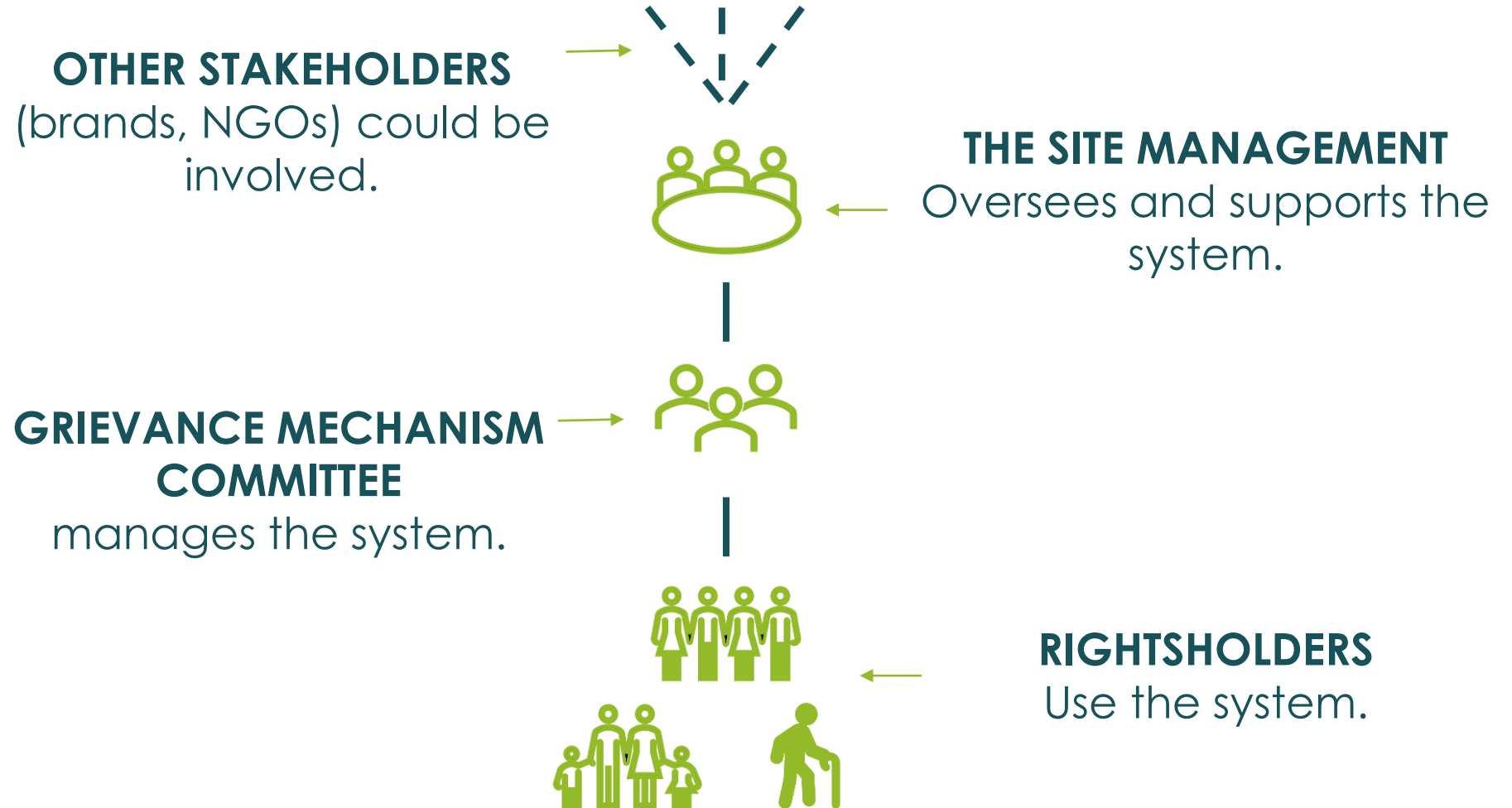


Trade Unions

# The RA grievance mechanism process



## Recommended governance for a certificate holder level grievance mechanism



# Myth busting quiz

## Quiz – true or false?

**You don't need to have a grievance mechanism if you don't have any grievances.**

**FALSE**

It is the grievance mechanism that enables grievances to reach you and be resolved.

## Quiz – true or false?

**Small workplaces don't need grievance mechanisms because everyone knows everyone.**

**FALSE**

Even small workplaces need grievance mechanisms to resolve sensitive or complex issues formally.

## Quiz – true or false?

**Receiving many grievances looks like bad performance to management, investors and buyers.**

**FALSE**

Quite the opposite! Demonstrating you know how to manage grievances effectively shows maturity and reliability to your business partners.

## Quiz – true or false?

**Grievance mechanisms can improve worker retention and decrease absenteeism.**

**TRUE**

If grievance mechanisms are implemented and used well, they can bring many other benefits by resolving issues early and stopping them from getting worse.

## Quiz – true or false?

**Addressing grievances is expensive.**

**FALSE**

Grievance mechanisms can be operated completely for free and they usually save you money by catching issues early and avoiding accidents, fines or legal fees which result from escalation.

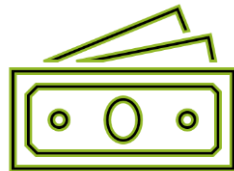
## Why are grievance mechanisms important?

# Why are grievance mechanism important?

## For affected rightsholder(s):

**To access a remedy** - reinstating something to the state it was in before a harm occurred.

For example:



**Swift payment of delayed wages  
as well as any accumulated debt  
as a result of said delay**



**Providing safety equipment where  
it wasn't provided and making  
sure it is always available**

# Why are grievance mechanism important?

## For workplaces / employers / business owners:

1. **Early alarm system** - Identifying problems before they become bigger or avoiding issues altogether.
1. **Better reputation and more stable relationships** – as a result of better trust and engagement with your stakeholders (employees, workers, buyers, etc.).
1. **Avoiding cost** – which might result from not complying with laws and leading to fines or litigation.

## Grievance mechanisms are important for business

“We value the labor stability that comes with having a working grievance mechanism, because workers are satisfied with their salaries and happy workers are productive.”

Operations manager

## Why is there so much focus on grievance mechanisms now?



# What is the Rainforest Alliance Grievance Mechanism Standard?

# Requirement 1.5 of the Rainforest Alliance's Sustainable Agriculture Standard

## Core Requirement

**Applicable to:** *Large farms part of a group, Group management, Individual certificates holders, Supply Chain Certificates holders*

**1.5.1** A grievance mechanism is in place that enables individuals, workers, communities, and/or civil society, including whistle-blowers to raise their complaints of being negatively affected by specific business activities and/or operations of any nature, including technical, social, or economic nature. The grievance mechanism may be provided directly through collaboration with other companies, or through an industry program or institutionalized mechanism and in accordance with the UNGPs. The grievance mechanism should be accessible, in local languages and also for those who cannot read or do not have access to internet. The grievance mechanism should include at least the following elements:

- A grievance committee with decision making power, with knowledge about the grievances, that is impartial, accessible, and gender sensitive.
- Grievance committee is formed by at least one member/worker representative
- The grievance mechanism has appropriate submission channels, for internal and external stakeholders, including workers, members, staff, buyers, suppliers, indigenous peoples, and communities
- Anonymous grievances are accepted and confidentiality is respected
- Human and labor rights grievances are remediated in accordance with the Remediation Protocol, and collaboration with the Assess-and-Address Committee and/or the Gender Committee/Person as appropriate, depending on the case
- Grievances and agreed follow up actions are documented, and shared with the persons involved within a reasonable timeframe
- Submitters of grievances are protected against employment/membership termination, retribution, or threats as a consequence of utilizing the grievance mechanism
- Assess-and-Address Committee (if applicable): see 5.1.1 Gender Committee/Person: see 1.6.1

# What are the key elements of Requirement 1.5?

- A grievance mechanism must be in place and must:
- Be accessible to all rightsholders
- Be governed by a grievance committee
- Have appropriate submission channels and accept anonymous grievances
- Provide remedy
- Document all grievances
- Protect those who use it from retaliation



# What is the rationale behind the RA Grievance mechanism requirement?

- Operating a functional grievance mechanism is **Core Requirement** 1.5.1 in the 2020 Sustainable Agricultural Standard.
- It is also **central to the Assess-and-Address process** of remediation, set out in Core Requirement 5.1.4 and in the Remediation Protocol.
- **Result of new guidelines and laws** which recognize continuous improvement cannot be achieved without effective grievance mechanisms.

**What will the training cover?**

# What will the training cover?



- What grievance mechanisms are and why are they important
- How to design and implement a grievance mechanism for your site's needs and meet the RA Requirement 1.5
- Roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders
- What to do if a grievance mechanism is already in place
- How to handle grievances and carry out remediation
- What do effective grievance mechanisms look like

# What is the training agenda?

## DAY 1:

### Understanding grievance mechanisms

- Grievances: what they are, what they can look like and who can raise them
- Grievance mechanisms: what are they and what they consist of, why are they needed and what benefits do they bring
- Different types of grievance mechanisms
- How to assess effectiveness

## DAY 2:

### Implementing and operating a grievance mechanism

- What is in the RA standard 1.5
- How to set up a grievance committee
- Stakeholder engagement
- Assessing your needs and designing your mechanism
- Grievance Procedure
- Remedy
- Promotion strategies

***Full of case studies, opportunities for discussion, tools and interactive learning.***

# What if a grievance system is already in place?

The training is suitable for every RA certified site, because:

## **Sites which don't have a grievance mechanism yet will:**

- Understand what grievance mechanisms are
- Learn how to design a grievance mechanism
- Implement a grievance mechanism

## **Sites which already have a grievance mechanism and a GM committee in place will:**

- Learn how to use multiple grievance mechanisms
- Learn to assess effectiveness of existing grievance mechanisms

## **All types of sites with any level of grievance mechanism maturity will:**

- Understand and learn how to meet the RA Grievance mechanism requirement
- Have an improved and functional mechanism in place

# Who should participate in the training?

## Grievance committee members

If a **grievance committee** is already in place, all members should participate.

In addition, at least one representative from each of the below departments should take part:

- **Management**
- **Human Resources (if applicable)**
- **Worker representative**
- **Trade union representative (If applicable)**

# What materials and preparation are required to deliver a successful training?

Copies of Grievance Guide for participants (group work)

Paper and writing utensils

Posters and promotional material

# Setting up a Grievance Committee

At minimum, the Grievance Committee should be composed of:

- 1) An appointed member(s) of management
- 2) A worker representative(s) selected by the workers



**Management representative**



**Worker representative**

# Grievance Committee Selection Criteria



KNOWLEDGEABLE



COMPLETED  
RELEVANT  
TRAINING



IMPARTIAL, NON-  
POLITICAL, FAIR  
& UNBIASED



APPROACHABLE,  
VALUED & ACCEPTED  
BY THE WORKERS



GENDER-SENSITIVE



HAS APPROPRIATE  
ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS



**Thank you**



# **A BETTER FUTURE FOR PEOPLE AND NATURE**

**RAINFOREST  
ALLIANCE**

# RAINFOREST ALLIANCE