

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE OFFICE OF ACCOUNTABILITY'S PROCESS FOR UPDATING ITS GUIDELINES

- *What is the Office of Accountability?*

The Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), which is the U.S. government's development finance institution, supports private sector development projects in many countries around the world. The Office of Accountability (OA) is an independent office within OPIC that addresses concerns, complaints or conflicts that may arise around the environmental or social dimensions of OPIC-supported projects.

The OA offers two primary services upon request: 1) It works with the parties to a conflict to help them resolve it, and 2) it conducts an investigation about how OPIC applied its relevant policies to the OPIC-supported project. The OA aims to provide these services in a manner that is accessible, fair, objective, and transparent.

- *What are the OA's operating guidelines?*

When OPIC established the OA in 2005, a set of internal operating procedures were drafted that have subsequently guided how the OA provides its problem-solving and compliance review services. These operating guidelines are contained in OPIC's Administrative Order 05-02.1, which can be accessed at <http://www.opic.gov/sites/default/files/files/Admin%20Order%20-%20Office%20of%20Accountability.pdf>.

- *Why are the OA's operating guidelines being revised at this time?*

The OA's operating guidelines have not been updated since they were drafted in 2005. Since then, the OA has processed several requests for service, and sister accountability mechanisms at other financial institutions have in total experienced a significant caseload. Although the OA's current procedures are largely consistent with those of its sister accountability mechanisms, there are areas where updating and clarifying them would be useful. An update after eight years is timely to take account of both the OA's experience and that of other accountability mechanisms, as well as to reflect recent trends in development finance.

- *What is the scope of the potential updates under consideration?*

The scope of the topics under consideration for updating is encompassed by the 2005 Administrative Order, referenced above. A draft revised set of operating guidelines will be posted on the OA's website, along with a summary of significant changes.

- *What are the major components of the update process?*

The update process will benefit from a variety of inputs including: 1) internal analysis of the OA's procedures compared to those of other accountability mechanisms, 2) a telephone survey of past users of OA services, 3) Washington-based workshops, 4) consultations with OPIC staff, 5) an in-country

consultation with project-affected communities, and 6) the upcoming on-line public comment opportunity.

- *How can I participate in the public comment opportunity?*

The draft revised procedures will be posted electronically on the OA's external website for a public comment period provisionally commencing in August, 2013. At that time, instructions will be provided for how to submit written comments.

- *After the public comment phase, what is the rest of the update process?*

Following the close of the comment period, 1) the comments received will be reviewed by the OA Director, 2) a revised guidelines document will be prepared and presented to OPIC's CEO and Board, and 3) the final version will be posted on the OA's website, currently scheduled to occur during the first quarter, 2014.