

Building Trust: Strengthening Accountability and Communication in Development Finance



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What drives trust, or distrust, in development finance projects?

What we see: evidence from IPAM cases

Cases processed by IPAM/PCM from 2010 to 2025: **86**

Sectors: 11 across public and private

Including power and energy, municipal infrastructure, manufacturing and services, nuclear safety

Countries: 26

Including Ukraine, Jordan, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Azerbaijan, Mongolia, Croatia, Albania, Georgia

Submitted by: individuals (**28**), communities (**27**), non-affected organisations (**19**), affected organisations (**12**)

Stakeholder engagement concerns are identified at registration stage in around **65%** of cases



Communication gaps are a recurring feature

“The project proceeded without meaningful public consultation”

“The project level grievance mechanism is ineffective, lacks impartiality”

“Public opinion is not considered in the decision-making process”

“Stakeholder concerns are repeatedly disregarded”

“Lack of basic information sharing and engagement to understand the project’s impacts”

“Lack of transparency throughout the project”

Why things go wrong: core drivers

Timing

- Engagement happens, but too late or too early only.



Stakeholders feel excluded

Transparency

- Information is unclear or inaccessible.



Stakeholders feel confused, suspicious

Communication quality

- The way things are communicated is inconsistent or happens as a one-off.
- Technical documentation disclosed without non-technical summaries, translations, or context
- Public meetings focused on one-way information delivery rather than dialogue
- Incomplete stakeholder mapping



Misinformation starts filling gaps

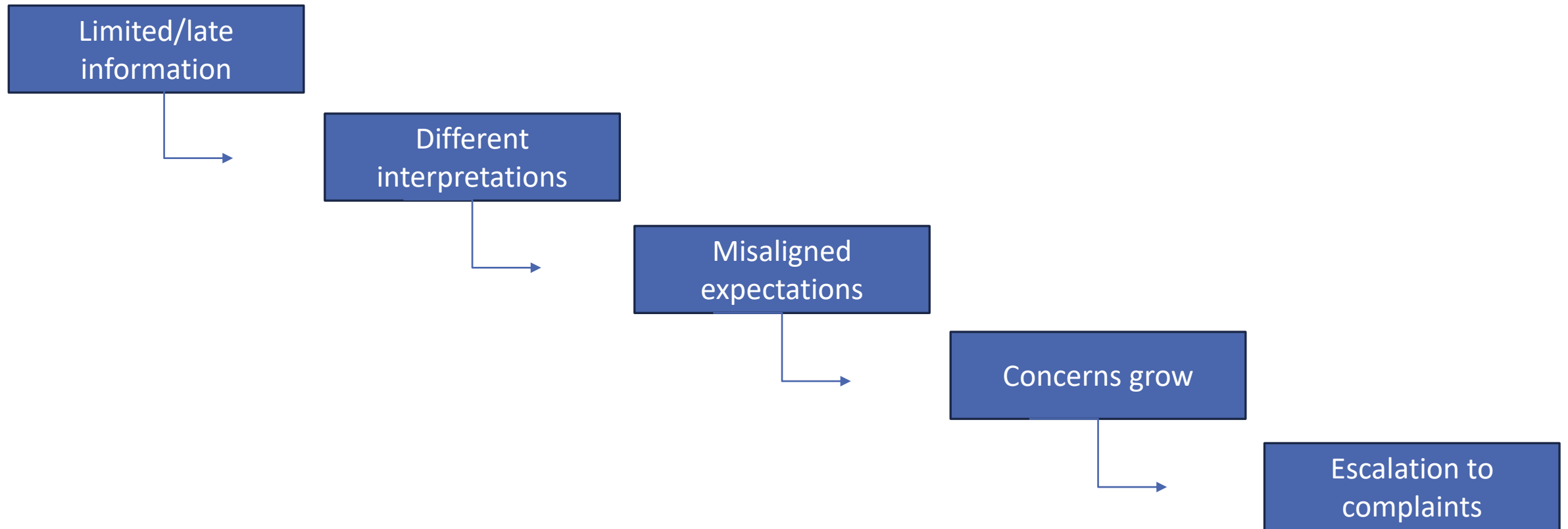
Weak project-level grievance mechanisms

- Mechanisms existed on paper but were not accessible, trusted, or responsive



Inadequate engagement becomes a driver of escalation

How it plays out: the escalation dynamic



How projects engage doesn't just shape perception, it shapes outcomes

Transactional approach

- Late consultation
- One-way communication
- Information gaps
- Escalation

What the model looks like:
“Decide, announce, defend”



Relational approach

- Early engagement
- Continuous dialogue
- Clear, accessible information
- Issues resolved early

What the model looks like:
“Meet, understand, modify”

Trust is built through process, not promises

- Systematic
- Formal
- Constructive
- Effective
- Inclusive
- Appropriate
- Meaningful consultation
- Timing
- Proportionate



- Permanent and integrated into the ESMS
- Documented
- Builds trust
- Enables and useful
- Embraces stakeholders' needs
- Adequate methods
- Two-way process
- Early stage and throughout the project
- To E&S risks



Let's continue the conversation!

Message me your questions or comments in the IAIA26 app.

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