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**URGE Complaints and Reporting Policy for Natural Capital Project**  
February 26, 2021

**This is what was found by NatCap URGE pod at the Natural Capital Project on policies for handling complaints, the reporting process, resources, and possible outcomes.**

- The Natural Capital Project is split across several institutions. As such, bias reporting falls under specific University policies and procedures. **The link(s) to the reporting policy at our organizations are here:**
    - [Office of the Ombuds](#)- Stanford University. Anonymous and confidential resource to discuss concerns/reports, offer resources and aid in addressing concerns through university. This information will be made visible to everyone in the near future (hopefully by putting it on the website: <https://naturalcapitalproject.stanford.edu/>)
    - [Diversity and Access Office Non-Discrimination and Resources Policies](#)- Stanford University. University-wide office that ensures University-wide compliance with federal, state and local regulations concerning non-discrimination and disability access.
    - [Reporting Bias Incidents](#) - University of Washington
    - Stanford Office of the Ombuds provides a publicly available [annual report](#)
    - [Ethics and standards of practice](#) Stanford Ombuds
    - [Reporting Suspected Misconduct](#) - University of Minnesota
  
  - **What mechanisms are available for reporting complaints, bias, microaggressions, harassment, and overt racism?**
    - **Who are the designated individuals/positions for reporting incidents?**

There are no designated individuals for reporting incidents, and this process will vary across institutions.
    - **Can reports be made online?** Yes, [Office of the Ombuds](#) , [Diversity and Access Office](#), [Reporting Bias Incidents](#), [Reporting Suspected Misconduct](#).
- Anonymously? Yes**

- **What resources are available for individuals reporting?**
  - [Reporting Discrimination Concerns](#) - Stanford University
  - [Discrimination Support and Resources](#) - Stanford University

### **Gaps and Opportunities**

While looking into complaint and reporting options for the Natural Capital Project, we identified a few key gaps. Namely:

- Because of its cross-institutional nature, NatCap is lacking a unified framework for reporting issues or filing complaints about individuals in other institutions. So while there are policies and clear pathways within each institution, it is unclear how someone would file a complaint about a colleague in another institution (for example from Stanford to the University of Washington).
- Likewise, NatCap bases much of its work on collaborations with multiple stakeholders, often including outside partners from local governments, community representatives, and other academic institutions, among others. It seems likely that these relationships include real or perceived unbalanced power dynamics, which could lead to issues that partners may wish to report. However, there is no formal framework for these outside partners to file complaints about NatCap member organizations or individuals.
- Finally, even within Stanford, NatCappers are spread across multiple departments (e.g. the Department of Biology and Woods Institute). While these individuals can all take advantage of the Stanford reporting pathways, there is no designated process for reporting issues within NatCap.

We believe that NatCap would benefit from developing:

1. An overview document for incoming NatCap staff and students describing the options available to them within Stanford's reporting structure. For example, during our research on complaints and reporting policies, a NatCap administrator directed us to the Stanford Office of the Ombuds, and suggested that NatCap should take steps to make "the ombuds contact info visible and obvious to everyone". We think this would be a great first step.
2. A policy for cross-institutional or cross-partnership complaints and reporting. Even an informal document designating a point person on the NatCap staff who was equipped to respond to such complaints would be an improvement over the status quo.