

Community Engagement Charter

The template charter for post-operational settings: five principles of engagement, the operational commitments that make them real, and the review and signature blocks. Everything in blue brackets is yours to complete.

From Legacy Grievances and Historical Claims: A Guide to Post-Operational Dispute Resolution by Thomas Gaultier

The following templates are designed to be adapted to the specific jurisdictional, cultural, and operational context of each legacy site. They are starting points, not finished instruments. Practitioners should modify the content, add jurisdiction-specific requirements, and consult legal counsel before using these templates in formal proceedings.

This charter establishes the principles, commitments, and operational rules governing the engagement process between **[Proponent Name]** and **[Community Name(s)]** in relation to the resolution of historical grievances arising from **[site/operation name]**. It should be co-developed with the affected community, not presented as a finished document for approval.

Preamble

[Proponent Name] acknowledges that historical operations at **[site name]** have caused harms that were not adequately addressed during the operational phase. This engagement process is undertaken in good faith, with the objective of establishing a shared factual foundation, designing appropriate remediation and reparation measures, and building a durable relationship that serves the long-term interests of the community and the region.

Principles of Engagement

Truth-seeking. The engagement process begins with the establishment of a complete and honest account of what occurred, including commitments made and broken, harms caused, and benefits that did or did not materialise. Both parties commit to contributing all available information to this process.

Equity of participation. The community shall have access to independent legal and technical advisors, funded by the proponent, to ensure meaningful participation. The proponent shall not use Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs) or other legal instruments to suppress community voice.

Inclusivity. The engagement process shall ensure the participation of women, youth, elders, persons with disabilities, and any sub-groups within the community that have been disproportionately affected. Traditional authorities shall be included in a role consistent with their cultural and legal standing, without substituting for broader community voice.

Transparency. All studies, reports, and assessments produced during the engagement process shall be shared with the community in accessible formats and languages. No information shall be withheld on grounds of commercial confidentiality where it pertains to community health, safety, or environmental conditions.

Non-retaliation. No community member shall face any adverse consequence for participating in the engagement process or for raising grievances, regardless of the nature of those grievances.

Operational Commitments

Meeting locations and times shall be determined in consultation with community leaders and shall accommodate the needs of participants, including those in remote areas.

All meetings shall be documented. Minutes shall be shared with the community within **[number]** working days. The community shall have the right to designate its own note-takers.

An independent facilitator, acceptable to both parties, shall be appointed to manage the engagement process. The cost of facilitation shall be borne by the proponent.

A process-level grievance mechanism shall be established to address complaints about the engagement process itself, separate from the substantive grievance being resolved.

Duration and Review

This charter shall remain in effect for the duration of the resolution process. Either party may request a review of the charter at any point. Amendments require the agreement of both parties.

Signatures

[Space for proponent representative, community representatives, facilitator, and witnesses]



Agree the rules of the room before you argue about the harm.

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