



FARMERS' GRIEVANCE RECORDS REVEALING AND CONCEALING REPORTING CHANNELS, NUMBERS AND REMEDIES IN UZBEKISTAN

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23254050>

ABSTRACT

This article examines how public monitoring and accountability documents represent farmers' concerns in Uzbekistan. Critical analysis of nine core sources, supported by an inventory of 41 reports and records, distinguishes project grievances, administrative appeals, independent monitoring and international accountability cases. Identified concerns include irrigation, compensation, project benefits, payment for output, land security and effective recourse. Populations, count bases and outcome categories are not comparable. An irrigation project reported 80% resolution in three of four verified observations; among appeals examined by the agricultural inspectorate in 2025, 48.7% were satisfied and 51.1% received explanations. The article distinguishes complaint content, institutional visibility and verified remedies and proposes minimum reporting requirements. Complaint totals and closure rates alone cannot establish harm prevalence or redress effectiveness.

Keywords: *grievance redress; accountability; irrigation; land tenure; administrative data; Uzbekistan.*

JEL Classification: Q18, Q15, D73, K23

ANNOTATSIYA

Maqolada ochiq monitoring va hisobdorlik hujjatlari O'zbekistondagi fermerlarning muammolarini qanday aks ettirishi tahlil qilinadi. To'qqizta asosiy manba va 41 ta hisobot hamda qayd inventarizatsiyasi asosida loyiha shikoyatlari, ma'muriy murojaatlar, mustaqil monitoring va xalqaro hisobdorlik ishlari farqlanadi. Asosiy mavzular sug'orish, kompensatsiya, loyiha imkoniyatlari, mahsulot uchun to'lov, yer huquqlari va samarali javob olishdir. Manbalardagi aholi guruhlari, hisoblash asoslari va natija toifalari o'zaro mos emas. Sug'orish loyihasida hal etilganlik ko'rsatkichi to'rtta tekshirilgan kuzatuvdan uchtasida 80% bo'lgan; O'zagroinspeksiyaning 2025-yilgi ko'rib chiqilgan murojaatlarining 48,7% qanoatlantirilgan, 51,1% iga tushuntirish berilgan. Shikoyat mazmuni, ro'yxatga olinishi va tasdiqlangan huquqlarni tiklash alohida baholanishi kerak. Shikoyatlar soni va yopilish ulushi zararning tarqalishi yoki uni bartaraf etish samaradorligini mustaqil ravishda ko'rsatmaydi.

Kalit so'zlar: *shikoyatlarni ko'rib chiqish; hisobdorlik; sug'orish; yer huquqlari; ma'muriy ma'lumotlar; O'zbekiston.*

АННОТАЦИЯ

В статье рассматривается, как открытые документы по мониторингу и подотчётности отражают проблемы фермеров Узбекистана. Анализ девяти основных источников и реестра 41 отчёта и документа разграничивает проектные жалобы, административные обращения, независимый мониторинг и международные механизмы подотчётности. Выявлены вопросы орошения, компенсаций, доступа к проектной поддержке, оплаты продукции, земельных прав и действенного реагирования. Источники различаются по охвату, основаниям подсчёта и категориям результатов. В ирригационном проекте показатель урегулирования составлял 80% в трёх из четырёх проверенных наблюдений; из рассмотренных O'zagroinspeksiya обращений за 2025 год 48,7% были удовлетворены, по 51,1% даны разъяснения. Содержание жалоб, их регистрация и подтверждённое восстановление прав требуют отдельной оценки. Число жалоб и доля закрытых обращений сами по себе не устанавливают распространённость вреда или эффективность его устранения.

Ключевые слова: рассмотрение жалоб; подотчётность; орошение; земельные права; административные данные; Узбекистан.

INTRODUCTION

Grievance records are produced by institutional rules and reporting practices, rather than by representative surveys. Concerns may be settled informally, referred elsewhere, recorded as information requests or excluded from a project's remit. One dispute may generate several appeals. Administrative activity therefore cannot be equated with the distribution of agricultural problems.

In Uzbekistan, irrigation cooperation, land-contract security, gendered participation and digital farmer networks shape opportunities to raise concerns [2, 13, 16, 21]. This article asks which concerns public records identify, why reporting channels cannot be pooled and what evidence distinguishes a response from an effective remedy. Its central distinction is between the underlying problem, visibility through a particular channel and the result obtained. Better access may increase recorded complaints even as services improve; closure may provide information without repairing a loss. The study provides a bounded thematic account, not a national ranking or causal evaluation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on land contracts finds strong preferences for security; adaptation to insecure arrangements does not demonstrate approval [16]. Evidence from Samarkand indicates improved perceived tenure security alongside continuing expropriation concerns [12], while policy analysis identifies gaps between formal rights and implementation [1]. Informal water cooperation has heterogeneous benefits [21], and irrigation technology research identifies maintenance and monitoring weaknesses [9]. These findings explain potential sources of grievance but do not measure filing rates.

Women's restricted authority in water governance and selective participation in messenger-based farmer groups caution against treating formal or digital voice as representative [2, 13]. A labour-rights defender's biography illustrates the conditions of speaking up [15]. A non-peer-reviewed comparison of official communications, focus groups and online messages suggests that reported concerns vary by forum [14]; it motivates a hypothesis rather than proving an anonymity effect.

Accountability research separates information provision from collective voice backed by institutions able to respond [7]. Representation is associated with progress through development-bank grievance mechanisms, but selection into representation limits causal interpretation [8]. Together, these studies support analysing access, response and remedy separately, while preserving differences in grievance definitions, claimant populations and outcome categories.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purposive documentary corpus contains nine core sources: the World Bank Ferghana Valley irrigation report series; O'zagroinspeksiya's 2025 appeals table; three EBRD accountability cases; two independent cotton-sector reports; a road-project monitoring report; and an ILO account of harvest complaints [3–6, 10, 11, 17, 20, 22–24]. The wider inventory described in the study contains 41 records, including 21 monthly inspectorate tables for January 2025–September 2026. It is neither exhaustive nor probability-based; the initial search lacked a screening register.

The unit is a source-specific grievance statement, which may be a topic summary, aggregate outcome, explicit absence or allegation. Extraction records source, period, population, topic, channel, count, denominator, outcome wording and permissible inference. Farmer status is assigned only when explicit. Administrative records, monitoring accounts, accountability allegations and analytical inferences remain distinct. Multiple themes do not imply multiple cases.

The study's verification log reports 14 of 20 checks verified or corrected. Six checks covering parts of five sources remain incomplete: the 2020 irrigation report, cited pages of the 2024 EBRD assessment, the Uzbek Forum harvest report, water and payment sections of the Human Rights Watch investigation, and the road report. These claims retain their verification caveats. Administrative translations require specialist review; the inspectorate table's column order also requires visual confirmation despite its arithmetic consistency.

The coding frame covers 22 units, including population, topic, requested action, evidential status and institutional labels. Independent double coding has not been completed, so no reliability statistics are claimed. The manuscript describes supplementary inventory and coding files S1 and S2; those files are not included in this shortened article. Counts remain within their original populations and periods. Repeat contacts, referrals and in-person receptions are not interchangeable, and percentages are not silently converted into fractional cases.

ANALYSIS AND MAIN RESULTS

Reporting coverage and irrigation project indicators

The sources cover institutional workloads, individual projects, workers and escalated requests, without a common denominator of exposed farmers. In the Ferghana Valley project, recorded questions concern completion of irrigation wells and water availability, compensation for temporary bypass routes, and selection of demonstration-plot hosts; footbridges appear in the later report [23, 24]. These subjects distinguish service timing, compensation and benefit access without establishing injury in every case.

Table 1. Ferghana Valley grievance indicators [22–24]

Value date	Resolved	Count and reporting basis
1 April 2020*	80%	12; basis unstated

Value date	Resolved	Count and reporting basis
15 April 2021	80%	Not stated
18 June 2021	80%	6 for the reporting period
22 December 2021	100%	Not stated
15 June 2022	80%	15 described as a total

*The 2020 observation was not re-verified. Four subsequent observations were verified in the source study. The indicator's end target was 80%.

The rate equals its target in three of four verified observations, while the count changes from period-specific to apparently cumulative. Applying 80% to 12 or 6 yields 9.6 or 4.8 cases, so these counts cannot be assumed to be the indicator denominator. The 2022 report's 80% and total of 15 imply 12 resolved cases, yet its narrative says all appeals were resolved. It also reports no grievances related to resettlement-action-plan implementation [24]. These inconsistencies limit interpretation; they do not prove mishandling. Repeated topic wording across reports is not evidence of repeated complaints.

National administrative appeals

O'zagroinspeksiya's 2025 table covers individuals and legal entities, not farmers alone [17]. Its total reconciles: 1,327 appeals comprise 1,040 examined, 233 forwarded to other institutions, 35 terminated, 5 left without consideration and 14 pending. Another 121 sent to lower inspectorates fell outside the stated total. Repeat appeals (28) and duplicates (17) are subsets, not additional cases.

Table 2. Outcomes among 1,040 examined appeals in 2025 [17]

Disposition	Appeals	Share
Satisfied	506	48.7%
Explanation provided	531	51.1%
Rejected	3	0.3%

Percentages are rounded. "Satisfied" and "explanation provided" are administrative dispositions under the appeals framework [19], not measures of farmer satisfaction or verified redress. An explanation may resolve an enquiry without repairing material harm. The 37,247 in-person receptions reported separately cannot be added to written appeals. Monthly tables offer a potential disposition series but publish no topical breakdown [18].

Independent monitoring and escalated claims

The Uzbek Forum harvest report describes appeals over unpaid cotton and land-related threats, linking farmers' cash shortages to delayed picker payments [20]. Human Rights Watch and Uzbek Forum report arbitrary land-confiscation concerns despite long leases, threats associated with quotas and difficulties obtaining recourse [10]. These attributed accounts do not establish the legality of individual disputes or national prevalence. Their shared organizational involvement also means they are not independent samples.

Three requests concern the same agribusiness investment. EBRD Case 2023/09 involved confidentiality and a November 2024 compliance assessment; the manuscript reports continuing compliance review [4]. Case 2026/02 requested confidentiality because of feared retaliation and is examined with the first case [5]. Case 2026/06 alleges non-consensual termination and transfer of a livestock-farming plot and seeks investigation and possible compensation if violations are confirmed [6]. Registration demonstrates escalation, not proof of the allegations or the prevalence of similar unfiled disputes.

Across these channels, five domains emerge: water and service delivery; land and productive assets; payments and contracts; access to benefits and infrastructure; and institutional recourse. Coding must distinguish information requests from alleged service failures, threatened with realized losses, alleged debts from verified receipt, and decisions from implemented remedies. These domains form a typology, not a frequency ranking.

Labour complaints and limits of disclosure

The ILO account reports 283 labour complaints by the end of October 2024, concerning forced labour, working conditions and delayed picker payments [11]. Its figures of 37 resolved and 35 unresolved covers only 72 records, leaving 211 (74.6%) outside the published breakdown. Those 211 cannot be classified as unresolved, and the population is workers rather than farmers.

The road-project report records no land acquisition or compensation complaints by 31 December 2025 [3], a project-specific absence whose source passage was not re-verified. The EBRD assessment describes access to a client summary but not supporting evidence or complainants' views [4]; this passage also awaits re-verification. Zero counts, summary outcomes and registered allegations are different observations and cannot be combined into a common grievance rate.

DISCUSSION

A public grievance record depends on successive stages: experiencing a problem, knowing a channel, filing, registration and disclosure. Changes at any stage can alter totals independently of underlying harm. Zero complaints may mean few problems, low awareness, non-filing or disclosure limits. Channel opening dates, accepted languages, oral and anonymous access, and treatment of out-of-scope claims therefore belong in the data. The irrigation series shows that even one system can change its reporting basis over time.

Topic and requested action must be coded separately. Two water-related claims may seek a timetable and compensation for crop loss respectively. Retaining the institution's original labels alongside analytical codes makes terminology changes visible. Pseudonymous identifiers should link repeat contacts and multiple topics without inflating case counts.

Four outcome layers require separation: acknowledgement, administrative disposition, implementation and verification. Payment redress requires evidence that funds arrived; irrigation redress requires timely water during the relevant crop stage; land redress requires usable access. Claimant confirmation matters but is not sufficient alone, since settlements may be partial and people may fear contradiction. Conversely, dissatisfaction does not prove to be a violation. Confidentiality is essential when gathering feedback.

The study contributes a channel-sensitive thematic account and an audit of published indicators. It cannot identify topic suppression, national prevalence or the most severe concern. Publication frequency, complaint numbers, affected farmers and economic losses measure different things. The results warrant better reporting rather than conclusions about institutional performance unsupported by comparable data.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Public records reveal concrete concerns about irrigation, compensation, payments, benefits, land and recourse, but complaint content, institutional visibility and verified remedy must remain separate. Minimum reporting should disclose provenance and period; period or cumulative count basis; pseudonymous case identifiers; claimant population; original topic and

requested remedy; channel and process dates; decision and completed action; verification evidence and disagreement; and reasons for missing data.

Every reporting period should reconcile opening backlog, new and reopened cases, final dispositions and closing backlog, with traceable transfers. Resolution rates require explicit numerators and denominators. Closure should never substitute for evidence that an agreed remedy was implemented.

A next-stage study should define a bounded project-report universe, log missing periods, obtain de-identified registers and independently double-code Uzbek, Russian and English records. With case dates, survival analysis could treat open cases as censored and remedy, rejection, withdrawal and transfer as competing outcomes. A separate farmer survey in the same areas should measure experienced problems, awareness, filing decisions, non-filing reasons and outcomes with safeguards for respondents.

Three untested propositions guide that work: accessibility changes recorded grievance composition even when underlying problems remain stable; information-only dispositions are more common for timetable and eligibility enquiries than restoration claims; and the gap between closure and verified remedy varies by requested action and implementing institution.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The small purposive corpus is uneven across time and sector and relies heavily on English-language retrieval. Confidential material is absent, six verification checks remain incomplete, specialist translation review and independent coding are pending, and some identified literature remains unretrieved. Overlapping interviewees and repeated institutional wording limit independence across documents. Findings establish thematic convergence, non-national distributions, gender-specific filing rates, prevalence trends or causal redress effects. Completing verification and coding, then linking comparable registers to farmer-survey evidence, is necessary before stronger claims can be made.

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