

# African Union Commission

## Building Institutions and Systems to Harness and Realize Agenda (BIASHARA) 2063 (P180117)

**DRAFT**

### Stakeholder Engagement Framework (SEF)

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## **ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYM**

AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
E&S	Environmental & Social
ESCP	Environmental and Social Commitment Plan
ESF	Environmental and Social Framework
ESS	Environmental and Social Standard
FMP	Free Movement of Persons
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
GRS	Grievance Redress Service
GTI	Guided Trade Initiative
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
OIP	Other Interested Party
PAP	Project Affected Person
PBC	Performance-Based Conditions
PDO	Project Development Objective
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
SAATM	Single African Air Transport Market
SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SEF	Stakeholder Engagement Framework
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
SH	Sexual Harassment
SOP	Series of Projects
TA	Technical Assistance
WB	World Bank

# INTRODUCTION

## Background

The proposed Building Institutions and Systems to Harness and Realize Agenda (BIASHARA) 2063 Project is the second in an ongoing engagement to support the African Union (AU) through targeted investments to build the capacity of the African Union Commission (AUC) to facilitate continental integration. The project will support technical advice and institutional support of the AUC and the Secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) measures to advance the implementation of three key Agenda 2063 priorities namely, the AfCFTA; the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM); and the Free Movement of Persons (FMP).

The World Bank's Executive Board of Directors approved the Support for Capacity Development of the African Union Commission and other African Union Organs project (P126848) in 2014. The Bank approved Additional Financing in 2018, with a revised project development objective (PDO) namely, to "Strengthen the AUC's capacity to facilitate regional integration results and transformation through enhanced institutional efficiency". The Project will be closed on June 30, 2023. The proposed new project would deepen the implementation of ongoing activities and more substantively support the AfCFTA Secretariat to advance implementation of the AfCFTA.

The World Bank's Environmental and Social Standard 10<sup>1</sup> recognizes the importance of open and transparent engagement with all project stakeholders, based on the recognition that effective stakeholder engagement can improve E&S sustainability of project activities, enhance project acceptance, and implementation, and allow stakeholders to contribute to project design. The key objectives of stakeholder engagement include a) an assessment of the level of interest and support of the project by stakeholders to promote effective and inclusive engagement with all project-affected parties and b) to ensure that project information on E&S risks and impacts is disclosed in a timely and understandable way.

This Stakeholder Engagement Framework (SEF) was adopted as the specifics for creating a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) were not available. Given the continental coverage and unknown geographical scope of the project at this stage, a stakeholder engagement planning Framework that sets out the principles to be followed for the later stage preparation of contextualized stakeholder engagement plan (SEP) in a manner consistent with the requirements of ESS10 was selected as the most appropriate instrument to be developed prior to project appraisal.

The SEF guides the development of a SEP, as soon as specific stakeholder groups, locations and activities are known. The SEF outlines the principal stakeholder engagements for the AUC activities. It defines legal and policy requirements in regard to stakeholder engagements, lists stakeholder engagements that have already been undertaken, provides a stakeholder analysis of all relevant project-affected parties, and lays out the means of dissemination of information to different parties as well as means and ways to continue to consult different stakeholder groups throughout the project cycle. Furthermore, it contains a monitoring plan for the implementation of the SEF. The SEP will be prepared prior to Project Effectiveness.

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<sup>1</sup> The World Bank, Environmental and Social Framework (ESF), 2018.

## Project Development Objective

The Project Development Objective (PDO) is to improve the operational effectiveness of the AUC and the AfCFTA Secretariat in implementing Member States commitments to enhance regional integration and intracontinental trade in Africa.

## Project Components

The Project will support implementation of key activities related to three priorities under the AU's Agenda 2063 - the AfCFTA, SAATM, and FMP. Selected Performance-Based Conditions (PBCs) will incentivize achievement of key results required to advance the outcomes in these three areas, for instance to leverage efforts such as the GTI in participating countries. The project will also support institutional reforms underway at the AUC as well as improvements in skills, policies, and tools for Financial Management (FM), Human Resource Management, Procurement, and IT. The project consists of two components:

### **Component 1: Improved Regional Integration through Free Trade and Movement of People and Air Connectivity**

*Sub-Component 1.1: Deepening the Institutional Framework for Regional Integration and Free Trade in Africa (Results-Based).* Under this sub-component, PBCs will finance results that accelerate the capacity of the AfCFTA Secretariat to assist African countries' efforts to expand intracontinental trade and free movement of peoples, including the implementation of the AfCFTA's GTI in participating countries. The sub-component will also finance incentives aimed at advancing AUC stewardship of SAATM and FMP.

*Sub-Component 1.2: Technical Assistance to Support Implementation of AfCFTA, SAATM, and FMP (Input-Based).* This sub-component will finance investment in knowledge, advice, capacity building, and partnership to enable the implementation of the three Agenda 2063 priorities.

### **Component 2: Institutional Capacity Strengthening to Implement Agenda 2063**

*Sub-Component 2.1: Supporting AUC to Achieve Agenda 2063 (Results-Based/PBCs).* This sub-component will finance PBCs to incentivize results that enable transformation of key management functions at the AUC to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and value for money.

*Sub-Component 2.2: Support to core managerial functions of the AUC, AfCFTA Secretariat, and continental initiatives for building capacity to implement Agenda 2063 (Input-Based).* This sub-component will finance Technical Assistance (TA) to strengthen Human Resources (HR), FM, Procurement, ICT, and Project Management functions at the AUC and AfCFTA. It will also support activities of the Specialized Technical Committees to improve capacity in FM and Public Administration in collaboration with relevant continental bodies.

## **Institutional Arrangements**

The Office of the Director General of the AUC will lead project implementation. A Project Coordinator from the previously implemented World Bank project leads the existing Project Implementation Unit (PIU) under the Directorate of Resource Mobilization, and a Financial Management and Procurement Specialist are attached to it while also undertaking other AUC functions. Going forward, the AUC would have to designate FM and Procurement Specialists for the project to ensure faster processing of transactions and leadership of capacity building activities supported by the project. While the AUC will continue hosting the PIU, the AfCFTA will host a mini-PIU to spearhead the implementation of AfCFTA related activities. The AfCFTA already has a Procurement Specialist and a FM Specialist with experience implementing Bank-financed projects. The PIUs will further be responsible for procurement of goods, consultants and non-consultancy services and for FM of the respective resources provided to the PIU and the AfCFTA mini-PIU. The AUC Finance Directorate will be responsible for the overall financial management of the project through its External Resources Management Division.

The project implementing entity will ensure that the technical assistance activities are implemented in compliance with the requirements of the World Bank's Environmental and Social Framework (ESF), as will described in the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP).

## **Objectives of the SEF**

This SEF will apply to all components of the project. It aims at facilitating stakeholder engagement throughout the Project's life cycle and across the two project components.

The objectives of this SEF are:

- To identify project stakeholders, their priorities, and concerns.
- To identify strategies for information sharing and communication to stakeholders as well as consultation of stakeholders in ways that are meaningful and accessible throughout the project cycle.
- To specify procedures and methodologies for stakeholder consultations, documentation of the proceedings and strategies for feedback.
- To establish an effective, transparent and responsive grievance mechanism for the project.
- To develop a strategy for inclusive and meaningful stakeholder participation in the monitoring of project impacts, documenting, reporting and dissemination of results among the different stakeholders.

## **REGULATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS**

Stakeholder engagement is an inclusive process conducted throughout the project life cycle to support the development of strong, constructive, and responsive relationships that are important for successful management of a project's environmental and social risks. The World Bank's Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) includes Environmental and Social Standard (ESS) 10, "Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure", which recognizes "the importance of open and transparent engagement with the project stakeholders as an essential element of good international practice". ESS10 also provides

that effective stakeholder engagement can significantly improve the environmental and social sustainability of projects, enhance project acceptance, and make a significant contribution to successful project design and implementation.

The application of these standards, by focusing on the identification and management of environmental and social risks, will support Recipients in their goal to reduce poverty and increase prosperity in a sustainable manner for the benefit of the environment and their citizens. The standards will:

- a. support Recipients in achieving good international practice relating to environmental and social sustainability;
- b. assist Recipients in fulfilling their national and international environmental and social obligations;
- c. enhance non-discrimination, transparency, participation, accountability, and governance; and
- d. enhance the sustainable development outcomes of projects through ongoing stakeholder engagement.

Stakeholder engagement is also provided for in the various forms of respective national legislation including the constitutions and legislation on environmental and social impact assessments and audits. The instruments unanimously advocate for meaningful involvement of project stakeholders in decisions that affect them, participatory planning, and transparent grievance management mechanisms.

### **AUC and AfCFTA's Stakeholder Engagement Policy Framework**

The African Union Commission (AUC) has a stakeholder engagement policy that aims to involve stakeholders in decision-making processes, improve communication with them, and build partnerships for development. The policy recognizes stakeholders as entities or individuals who are affected by or have an interest in the AUC's work. It establishes principles of stakeholder engagement such as transparency, inclusivity, responsiveness, and accountability, and outlines approaches to engagement such as consultation, collaboration, and co-creation. The AUC's stakeholder engagement policy identifies feedback as an important component of engagement and emphasizes the need for timely and effective feedback mechanisms. The AUC uses various feedback mechanisms such as public consultations, surveys, focus groups, and partnerships with civil society organizations to gather feedback from stakeholders. The AUC also has a dedicated feedback mechanism on its website, where stakeholders can submit comments, suggestions, and complaints.

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) also has a stakeholder engagement framework that aims to ensure that all relevant stakeholders are engaged in the implementation of the agreement. The framework recognizes stakeholders as those who have an interest in the AfCFTA's objectives, including government entities, private sector organizations, civil society groups, and academia. The framework establishes principles of stakeholder engagement such as transparency, inclusivity, and accountability, and identifies approaches to engagement such as dialogue, consultation, and collaboration. The AfCFTA stakeholder engagement framework recognizes the importance of feedback and establishes mechanisms for stakeholders to provide feedback on the implementation of the agreement. The framework outlines mechanisms for stakeholder engagement such as consultations, forums, and surveys, and recognizes the importance of using digital platforms to facilitate engagement.

Overall, both the AUC and AfCFTA stakeholder engagement policies aim to ensure that stakeholders are involved in decision-making processes and that their interests are taken into account.



## STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS

The Project stakeholders are individuals or groups (parties) that can be affected by the project outcomes, either directly or indirectly and both positively or negatively (Project-Affected Parties (PAP)). The identification of the stakeholder groups that are likely to influence or be affected by the proposed project components either positively or negatively and organizing them according to the potential impacts of the activities on them.

Project stakeholders can be classified based on: a) their roles and responsibilities in the project; b) the influence/interest in the project; c) whether they are direct or indirect beneficiaries.

The stakeholder engagement requirements for this Project, however, are limited to stakeholders that participate in the institutional capacity development (AUC, AfCFTA, and other implementing units), as there is no direct contact with local communities and disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. As the Project does not finance any physical investments, there are no anticipated risks and impacts related to land acquisition, restrictions on land use and involuntary resettlement. Likewise, since the activities under each component focus on institutional reforms, there will be no or limited probability for having activities that require any direct interaction with wider communities.

### Direct beneficiaries

1. AUC Secretariat
2. AUC Office of the Director General
3. AUC Directorate of Partnerships Management and Resources Mobilization
4. AUC Directorate of Management and Information Systems
5. AUC Directorate of Human Resource Management
6. AUC Directorate of Operations Support Services
7. AUC Office of Strategic Planning and Delivery
8. AUC Directorate of Office of Internal Oversight
9. AUC Directorate of Finance
10. AUC Directorate of Information and Communication
11. AfCFTA Secretariat
12. Infrastructure and Energy Directorate/SAATM
13. Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development/FMP

### Indirect beneficiaries

1. National African institutions relevant for trade and free movement of people
2. AfCFTA's GTI participating countries

**Table 1 Summary of Stakeholders Identification**

Stakeholder	Category Department	Mandate/Role	Interest	Project Affected Party		Language needs	Preferred notification means (Emails, Phone, Letters)	Specific needs (accessibility, large print, daytime meetings)
<b>Direct Beneficiaries</b>								
AUC Secretariat	Multilateral Organization	Undertaking day to day activities of the union	High	PAP		Language translators	Meetings, email, phone, internal memo,	n/a
AUC Office of the Director General	Directorate	Programme coordination, Implementation of policies and reporting	High	PAP		Language Translators	Meetings, Email, phone, internal memo	n/a
AUC Directorates	Directorate	Coordinate efforts of resource mobilization	High	PAP		Language Translators	Meetings, email, phone, internal Memo	n/a
AfCFTA Secretariat	Free trade area	Undertaking day to day activities	High	PAP		Language Translators	Meetings, email, phone	n/a
SAATM	Project/initiative	Unification of air transport market	High	PAP		Language Translators	Meetings, email, phone	n/a
FMP	Project/initiative	Free Movement of Persons	High	PAP		Language Translators	Meetings, email, phone	n/a
<b>Indirect Beneficiaries</b>								
National African institutions relevant for trade and free movement of	National organizations, departments, institutions	Promotion of free trade and free movement of people	High	PAP		Respective National Language(s)	Meetings, Formal letter, email, phone	n/a

Stakeholder	Category Department	Mandate/Role	Interest	Project Affected Party		Language needs	Preferred notification means (Emails, Phone, Letters)	Specific needs (accessibility, large print, daytime meetings)
people								
AfCFTA' s GTI participating countries	National governments, institutions, organizations	Promotion of free trade	High	PAP		Respective National Language(s)	High-level Meetings, Consultation with relevant ministries, engagement with regional economic communities, partnerships with national government agencies, Formal letter, email, phone	n/a

## **STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM**

Stakeholder engagement refers to the process of interacting and working with stakeholders identified as relevant to the project to come up with new concepts, identify challenges and discrepancies and how to address issues that may rise. This assists the realization of stakeholder needs and expectations for effective implementation of project components.

The Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEF) and the SEP, which will be prepared, are used to formulate schedules, strategies and general plans to ensure there is effective, meaningful and inclusive participation of project affected persons throughout the entire project life cycle. It consists of planning on how consultations will take place, developing the layout and how issues raised will be addressed and responded to in a transparent, meaningful, timely and inclusive manner. The importance of this is to provide an effective outline of activities to be undertaken within a given timeframe to ensure effective stakeholder involvement and improve the project's sustainability and development benefits. The SEF outlines how consultations are to be carried out and the scope of work to be achieved. The SEP will be an update of the SEF new developments and issues that may arise. The SEP may be updated throughout project implementation. This may include the techniques to be used in the engagement of stakeholders to address stakeholder concerns and enhance project ownership.

The SEF describes the timing and methods of engagement with stakeholders throughout the life cycle of the project as agreed between Bank and Recipient. The SEF also describes the range and timing of information to be communicated to project-affected parties, as well as the type of information to be sought from them.

The SEF includes a description of the project with its anticipated environmental and social impacts, as known at the time; a list of the stakeholder groups identified; the proposed stakeholder engagement program (including topics stakeholders will be engaged on, how stakeholders will be notified, the methods of engagement, list of information/documents that will be in the public domain, languages they will be available in, length of consultation period, and opportunities to comment); indication of resources required and the responsibilities for implementing stakeholder engagement activities; and a summary description of the grievance mechanism.

### **Purpose and Timing of Stakeholder Engagement Program**

The objectives of information dissemination and consultations under the Project are: (a) reception of feedback and comments as well as grievances from all stakeholders on project design and implementation; b) feedback on capacity gaps and challenges; c) feedback on potential environmental and social risks and impacts and mitigation measures; d) provision of regular information to stakeholders related to project implementation progress and any other emerging issues throughout the project cycle and e) provision of transparent and accountable mechanisms on all aspects of the project implementation.

The ESCP and this SEF will be publicly disclosed to ensure that everyone is informed about social and environmental risks and respective mitigation measures.

This section outlines some of the proposed methods of stakeholder engagement throughout the project cycle. Stakeholder engagement will be undertaken on a continuous basis to inform the project affected persons of project activities and plans and will employ appropriate strategies to ensure effective and meaningful disclosure of information to enhance increased access to project information. Different engagement methods are proposed and cover different needs of the stakeholders.

### **Proposed Strategy for Information Disclosure**

Information disclosure to all potential stakeholders will rely on the following key methods: correspondence by phone/mail, memos, virtual meetings, letters, website, email, and leaflets. Information will be disclosed in English or French or the respective national language, where appropriate.

**Table 2 Strategy for Information Disclosure**

Information to be disclosed	Target Stakeholders	Messages/ Agenda	Methods of Communication	Time Table: locations / dates	Responsibility
<b>Project Preparation</b>					
Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP)	AUC  AUC Office of the Director General  AUC Directorate of Partnerships Management and Resources Mobilization and other Directorates  AfcFTA Secretariat  SAATM  FMP  National African institutions relevant for trade and free movement of people  AfcFTA' s GTI participating countries	Present the Project – objectives, rationale, components, benefits and beneficiaries, Implementation arrangements.  Indicative implementation schedule and period, project contacts.  Describe Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM).  Present stakeholders identified and describe approach to stakeholder engagement.  Sets out measures, actions, plans	Correspondence by phone/email  Memos  Meetings (virtual)  Letters  Telephone	During project preparation  All relevant offices	AUC  AfcFTA Secretariat

Information to be disclosed	Target Stakeholders	Messages/ Agenda	Methods of Communication	Time Table: locations / dates	Responsibility
Project information	AUC AUC Office of the Director General AUC Directorate of Partnerships Management and Resources Mobilization AfCFTA Secretariat SAATM FMP	Email message to advise stakeholders of disclosure and where to access the disclosed documents.  Disclosure of Project documentation in a culturally appropriate and accessible manner	Upload on websites  Email copies to key individuals and organizations.	During project preparation and throughout implementation  All relevant offices	AUC AfCFTA Secretariat
<b>THROUGHOUT THE PROJECT</b>					
Quarterly, annual progress reports	AUC AUC Office of the Director General AUC Directorate of Partnerships Management and Resources Mobilization AfCFTA Secretariat	General information on project, activities  Updates to Project instruments  Inputs into Project activities  Grievance Mechanism	Email  Website  One to one meeting	Throughout project implementation  All relevant offices	AUC AfCFTA Secretariat

Information to be disclosed	Target Stakeholders	Messages/ Agenda	Methods of Communication	Time Table: locations / dates	Responsibility
	SAATM FMP				
Information on GRM	AUC AUC Office of the Director General AUC Directorate of Partnerships Management and Resources Mobilization AfcFTA Secretariat SAATM FMP National African institutions relevant for trade and free movement of people AfcFTA' s GTI participating countries	Maintain website with contact box for people to submit questions.	Websites Phone	Throughout project implementation  All relevant offices	AUC AfcFTA Secretariat





## **Proposed Strategy for Consultation**

This plan lays out the overall consultative processes of the project with its different stakeholders. It will be refined in the SEP.

**Table 3 Strategy for Consultation**

Topic of Consultation	Target Stakeholders	Expected outcomes	Suggested Method of consultation	Timetable: location and dates	Responsibility
Project Preparation					
Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP)	AUC Office of the Director General	Inputs into Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM).	Correspondence phone/email	One off activity as part of project preparation	AUC  AfcFTA Secretariat
Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP)	AUC Directorate of Partnerships Management and Resources Mobilization and other Directorates		Inputs into stakeholders' identification and approach to stakeholder engagement.		
	AfcFTA Secretariat		Telephone	All relevant offices	
	SAATM			Frequency: one time	
	FMP				
	National African institutions relevant for trade and free movement of people				
	AfcFTA' s GTI participating countries				
Final Project design / overall project activities	AUC Office of the Director General	Inputs into project design- objectives, rationale, components, benefits and beneficiaries, Implementation arrangements.	Correspondence phone/email	One-off activity as part of project preparations	AUC  AfcFTA Secretariat
	AUC Directorate of Partnerships Management and Resources Mobilization and other Directorates		Meetings (virtual)		
	AfcFTA Secretariat		Telephone	All relevant offices	
	SAATM	Inputs into indicative implementation schedule and period,		Frequency: one time	
	FMP				

Topic of Consultation	Target Stakeholders	Expected outcomes	Suggested Method of consultation	Timetable: location and dates	Responsibility
	National African institutions relevant for trade and free movement of people  AfCFTA' s GTI participating countries	project contacts.			
<b>THROUGHOUT THE PROJECT</b>					
Project design / overall project activities	AUC Office of the Director General  AUC Directorate of Partnerships Management and Resources Mobilization and other Directorates  AfCFTA Secretariat  SAATM  FMP  National African institutions relevant for trade and free movement of people  AfCFTA' s GTI participating countries	Inputs into project activities	One to one meeting, Email, Meetings (virtual)  Meetings (virtual) with organizations	Throughout project implementation  All relevant offices  Minimum frequency: quarterly with all groups	AUC  AfCFTA Secretariat
SEP and GRM	AUC Office of the Director General  AUC Directorate of Partnerships Management and Resources Mobilization and other Directorates  AfCFTA Secretariat	Updates to Project E&S instruments  Inputs into activities  Grievance Mechanism Maintain website	Email, Phone  Meetings (virtual) with organizations	Throughout project implementation  All relevant offices	AUC  AfCFTA Secretariat

Topic of Consultation	Target Stakeholders	Expected outcomes	Suggested Method of consultation	Timetable: location and dates	Responsibility
	SAATM FMP National African institutions relevant for trade and free movement of people AfCFTA' s GTI participating countries	with contact box for people to submit questions.		Minimum frequency: quarterly with all offices	
M&E	AUC Office of the Director General AUC Directorate of Resource Mobilization and other Directorates AUC Office of Strategic Planning & Delivery AfCFTA Secretariat	Inputs into monitoring and evaluation of project	Email, Phone Meetings (virtual)	Throughout project implementation All relevant offices Minimum frequency: quarterly	AUC AfCFTA Secretariat

## Engagement with Disadvantaged and Vulnerable Groups

The engagement requirements will be limited to stakeholders participating in the institutional capacity development i.e., there is no direct contact with communities including disadvantaged or vulnerable groups.

## Timelines

Information disclosure and consultations are especially relevant throughout the early stages of the project, but also throughout the project cycle. Activities under each Component will include further consultations prior to their commencement to ensure transparency and accountability on project modalities, and to allow stakeholder voices to form the basis of the concrete design of every intervention and consultations will continue throughout the project cycle.

## Review of Comments

The PIUs will compile all comments and inputs originating from the consultations to ensure that the project has general information on the perception of stakeholders and their concerns, and for the Project to remain on target. It will be the responsibility of all implementers to respond to comments and inputs, and to keep open a feedback line to the communities.

Training on environmental and social standards facilitated by WB will be provided soon after the project becomes effective to ensure that all implementing staff are equipped with the necessary skills.

## ESTIMATED COSTS

Both, the PIU in the AUC Secretariat and the mini-PIU in at the AfCFTA Secretariat will be in charge of managing and implementing the SEF in accordance with their respective activities. Adequate resources for the implementation of stakeholder engagements will be covered by the budget assigned under the Project Management activities.

**Table 4 Indicative Budget for implementation of SEF**

Stakeholder Engagement Activity		%	Total Cost (USD)
<b>Environment and Social experts</b>			
E&S focal persons at AUC Secretariat PIU (50% of time for implementation of SEP for 5 years)			Staff costs
E&S focal persons at AfCFTA Secretariat mini-PIU (50% of time for implementation of SEP for 5 years)			Staff costs
<b>Consultation and disclosure</b>			
Consultation sessions			10,000
Establishment and maintenance of website			10,000
Translation Services			20,000
<b>Grievance redress mechanism</b>			

Stakeholder Engagement Activity	%	Total Cost (USD)
Dissemination of information on GRM		5,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>45,000</b>

## **GRIEVANCE REDRESS MECHANISMS (GRM)**

### **Background**

The AUC has a grievance mechanism that allows stakeholders to submit complaints or grievances related to its policies, programs, or initiatives. The mechanism is designed to ensure that complaints are handled in a fair, transparent, and timely manner. The AUC has established a dedicated unit responsible for receiving and processing complaints and grievances, and it has developed procedures for handling and resolving complaints. The mechanism also ensures that complainants are provided with information on the progress of their complaints and the outcome of any investigations or resolutions.

Similarly, the AfCFTA has established a dispute settlement mechanism to address disputes and grievances related to the implementation of the agreement. The mechanism is designed to ensure that disputes are resolved in a fair, transparent, and timely manner. The AfCFTA dispute settlement mechanism includes a range of procedures, such as consultation, mediation, and arbitration. The mechanism also includes provisions for the establishment of dispute settlement panels and the enforcement of their rulings.

Overall, both the AUC and AfCFTA have established grievance mechanisms to ensure that stakeholders can submit complaints, disputes, or grievances related to their policies and programs. These mechanisms are designed to ensure that complaints are handled fairly and transparently, and that stakeholders are provided with information on the progress and outcome of any investigations or resolutions.

### **Purpose**

Since the activities under each component focus on institutional reforms, there will be no or limited probability for having activities that require any direct interaction with wider communities. Hence, there would be no grievances expected from communities including vulnerable groups, but from project workers. The GRM presented here therefore applies for all project workers, including those contracted directly by the AUC and the AfCFTA Secretariat, as well as other potential implementing partners (e.g., contractors providing trainings, research etc).

The existing GRM under the AUC and AfCFTA secretariats will be strengthened by the Project to provide a formal process for managing complaints from workers (employees, and partners) as provided under ESS10 and ESS2 of the WB's Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) and the participating states national requirements.

The objectives of the GRM shall include:

- i. Ensure prompt, consistent, and respectful receipt, investigation, and response to complaints.
- ii. Identify and manage workers grievances and concerns and thus support effective risk management.
- iii. Ensure proper documentation of complaints and implementation of actions.
- iv. Contribute to continuous improvement in performance through lessons learned.
- v. Ensure compliance with laws and regulations and reduce exposure to litigation.



## Grievance Process for Workers

Potential workers' grievances include demand for employment opportunities; labor wages rates and delays of payment; disagreement over working conditions; and health and safety concerns in work environment. Handling of grievances should be objective, prompt and responsive to the needs and concerns of the aggrieved workers. Different ways in which workers can submit their grievances to their employer should be allowed, such as submissions in person, by phone, text message, mail and email. The grievance raised should be recorded and acknowledged within one day by the employer/contractor. While the timeframe for redress will depend on the nature of the grievance, health and safety concerns in work environment or any other urgent issues should be addressed immediately. Where the grievance cannot be addressed within a reasonable timeframe, the aggrieved worker should be informed in writing, so that the worker can consider proceeding to the national appeal process. The mechanism will also allow for anonymous complaints to be raised and addressed. Individuals who submit their comments or grievances may request that their name be kept confidential.

### Direct workers

The Project will have a compact but effective grievance system for direct workers employed by the AUC and AfCFTA. The PIUs, where all the direct workers are concentrated, will hold periodic team meetings to discuss any workplace concerns. The grievance raised by workers will be recorded with the actions taken by PIUs. The summary of grievance cases will be reported to the World Bank as part of the regular report. Where the aggrieved direct worker wishes to escalate their issue or raise their concerns anonymously and/or to a person other than their immediate supervisor/hiring unit, the worker may raise the issue with responsible authorities, where relevant.

### Contracted workers

Contractors (e.g. research organizations or other sub-implementers) will hold monthly team meeting with all present contracted workers at site to discuss any workplace grievances. Any grievances raised will be recorded with the actions taken by the contractor. The summary of grievance cases will be reported to the respective PIU as part of contractor's periodic report. If contracted workers wish to escalate an issue, they can report directly to the respective PIU. The contracted workers will be informed of the grievance mechanism at the induction training session prior to the commencement of work. The contact information of the PIU will be shared with contracted workers.

### Grievances related to SEA/SH

To avoid the risk of stigmatization, exacerbation of the mental/psychological harm and potential reprisal, the grievance mechanism shall have a different and sensitive approach to SEA/SH related cases. Where such a case is reported, the grievance recipient will be responsible for the recording and registration of the complaint. A Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA)/ Sexual Harassment (SH) complaint cannot be rejected by the employer. All potential first recipients of SEA/SH cases will be trained in the guidelines for empathetic, non-judgmental listening to a survivor when recording a complaint.

Confidentiality: Anyone handling the SEA/SH related grievance must maintain absolute confidentiality in regards to the case. Maintaining confidentiality means not disclosing any information at any time to any party without the informed consent of the person concerned. There are exceptions under distinct circumstances, for example a) if the survivor is an adult who threatens his or her own life or who is directly threatening the safety of others, in which case referrals to lifesaving services should be sought; b) if the survivor is a child and there are concerns for the child's health and safety. The survivors need to be informed about these exceptions.

Informed Consent: The survivor can only give approval to the processing of a case when he or she has been fully informed about all relevant facts. The survivor must fully understand the consequences of actions when providing informed consent for a case to be taken up. Asking for consent means asking the permission of the survivor to share information about him/her with others, and/or to undertake any action (for instance investigation of the case). Under no circumstances should the survivor be pressured to consent to any conversation, assessment, investigation or other intervention with which she does not feel comfortable. A survivor can also at any time decide to stop consent.

Where possible, the consent form can be used (in cases of direct person-to-person reporting). By signing this form survivor can formally agree (or disagree) with the further processing of the case. The form will clearly state how information will be used, stored and disseminated. If a survivor does not consent to sharing information, then only non-identifying information can be released or reported on.

All reporting will limit information in accordance with the survivor's wishes regarding confidentiality and in case the survivor agrees on further reporting, information will be shared only on a need-to-know-base, avoiding all information which may lead to the identification of the survivor and any potential risk of retribution.

Data on SEA/SH cases recorded should only include the nature of the complaint (what the complainant says in her/his own words), whether the complainant believes the perpetrator was related to the project and additional demographic data, such as age and gender, will be collected and reported, with informed consent from the survivor. If the survivor does not wish to file a formal complaint, referral to available services will still be offered even if the complaint is not related to the project, that referrals will be made, the preference of the survivor will be recorded and the case will be considered closed.

Referrals are a process through which the survivor gets in touch with professionals and institutions regarding her case. Services can include health, psycho-social, security and protection, legal/justice, and economic reintegration support. The grievance recipient will instantly provide the survivor with contacts of the available referral services in the respective area. If the survivor wishes for any assistance with transport or payment for services, the grievance recipient will provide allowances. Referral services are provided even in cases, where the survivor opts to not pursue the case through the GRM or through legal channels.

The grievance will be reported to the employing agency of the alleged perpetrator with the consent of the survivor. The PIU will follow up and ensure that the violation of the Code of Conduct is handled appropriately, e.g. the worker is removed from his or her position and employment is ended. The responsibility to implement any disciplinary action lies with the employer of the perpetrator, in accordance with local labor legislation, the employment contract, and the code of conduct

## **Monitoring**

Effectiveness of the workers' GRM should be monitored on a regular basis. This is important because it helps find solutions to challenges as they arise and dealing with them promptly. The PIUs will maintain a log with all grievances reported and their respective status. As part of stakeholder engagement and consultation, involving the views of the workers for whom the Grievance Mechanism is designed will be part of the monitoring activities by both PIUs.

## World Bank Grievance Redress Service

Individuals who believe that they are adversely affected by a World Bank (WB) supported project may submit complaints to existing project-level grievance redress mechanisms or the WB's Grievance Redress Service (GRS). The GRS ensures that complaints received are promptly reviewed in order to address project-related concerns. Project affected communities and individuals may submit their complaint to the WB's independent Inspection Panel which determines whether harm occurred, or could occur, as a result of WB's non-compliance with its policies and procedures. Complaints may be submitted at any time after concerns have been brought directly to the World Bank's attention, and Bank Management has been given an opportunity to respond. For information on how to submit complaints to the World Bank's corporate Grievance Redress Service (GRS), please visit <http://www.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/products-and-services/grievance-redress-service>. For information on how to submit complaints to the World Bank Inspection Panel, please visit [www.inspectionpanel.org](http://www.inspectionpanel.org).

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Inclusive and participatory monitoring and evaluation is also necessary to minimize misconceptions and misunderstandings about the Project and maintain a positive perception about it.

Stakeholder Engagement monitoring involves collecting data, assessing the level of engagement and using insights from the data collection to adjust strategies and tactics for engaging effectively with stakeholders. This will be responsibility of AUC Secretariat PIU in collaboration with the mini-PIU at the AfCFTA Secretariat.

Monitoring will verify:

- i). Compliance and effectiveness of the SEP
  - a. Number of stakeholders engaged and consulted during the planning and implementation of the project
  - b. Level of participation and representation of different stakeholder groups in the stakeholder engagement process
  - c. Feedback and satisfaction levels of stakeholders regarding the quality and effectiveness of the stakeholder engagement plan
  - d. Number of grievances or complaints received from stakeholders related to the stakeholder engagement process
- ii). Compliance and effectiveness of the application of the recommended E&S standards,
  - a. Percentage of environmental and social standards and guidelines that have been implemented in the project
  - b. Number of environmental and social non-compliances or violations identified and addressed through corrective actions or sanctions
  - c. Number of trainings or capacity-building programs provided to staff and stakeholders on the application of recommended standards
  - d. Number of assessments or evaluations conducted to measure the effectiveness of the application of recommended standards
- iii). Compliance and effectiveness of the implementation of the workers' GRM.
  - a. Number of workers who have submitted grievances through the mechanism
  - b. Percentage of grievances submitted through the workers' GRM that have been resolved satisfactorily and in a timely manner
  - c. Number of follow-up actions or improvements made in response to workers' grievances and feedback
  - d. Level of awareness and understanding of the workers' GRM among workers and management staff.

Annual reviews of the project and the implementation of the E&S instruments will be conducted at the end of each year. The monitoring reports for E&S implementation will be prepared by the AUC Secretariat PIU and will be used as a monitoring and review tool to track effectiveness. In the review process, the PIU and the mini-PIU at the AfCFTA Secretariat will play the lead role in coordinating the process with key stakeholders.

## Management Functions and Responsibilities

Adequate institutional arrangements, systems and resources will be put in place to monitor the implementation of the SEP. The main monitoring responsibilities will be with the AUC PIU. This will be led by the Project Manager. The PIU Project Manager will be overall responsible for the implementation of the SEP, as well as for monitoring and inspections for compliance with the SEP.

The Project's M&E Plan will include monitoring indicators for the measurement of the performance of the SEP.

The PIU will collect all reporting, as well as its own findings, and produce an overall progress report, which will contain a distinct section of stakeholder engagement and which will be provided to the World Bank. The project will follow a quarterly reporting cycle. These quarterly reports will further be shared with all stakeholders, as defined in the SEP.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

The programme will establish and maintain a database and activity file detailing all consultation, disclosure of information and workers' grievances collected throughout the program, which will be available for review on request. Stakeholder engagement shall be periodically evaluated by the PIU. The following indicators will be used for evaluation:

- i). Quarterly workers' grievances received, speed of resolution and how they have been addressed; and
- ii). Level of involvement and participation of stakeholders including project affected people (disaggregated by gender).
- iii). Incidents and accidents

## Reporting

The PIU will prepare and regularly avail important information on the project status to stakeholders (based on information need) including project implementation progress, actions on commitments made to various stakeholders and any new or corrected information since the previous report. The Table below outlines some of the reports, target audience, method of correspondence and timelines.

**Table 5 Methods and frequency of reporting to stakeholders**

Reporting Party	Reporting Method	Stakeholder	Reporting Information	Frequency
AUC PIU	Official Correspondence Correspondence by email or postal mail Website and social media	All stakeholders	Project progress Plans for next steps Issues and changes	Quarterly

