

**National Agency for Social Protection  
under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan**

**Innovative Social Protection System for  
Inclusion of Vulnerable People  
("INSON") Project**

# **STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN**

**Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
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## **Acronyms and abbreviations**

CLO	-	Community liaison officer
ESC	-	Employment Support Center
ESS	-	Environmental and Social Standards
GOU	-	Government of Uzbekistan
GRC	-	Grievance Resolution Committee
GRM	-	Grievance Redress Mechanism
KOICA	-	Korea International Cooperation Agency
MELR	-	Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations
MoF	-	Ministry of Finance
OIPs	-	Other interested parties
PAPs	-	Project-affected parties
PDO	-	Project Development Objectives
PIU	-	Project Implementation Team
RED	-	Regional Employment Department
SEP	-	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
VET	-	Vocational education and training
NASP	-	National Agency for Social Protection under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan
“INSON” centers	-	Center of Social Services “INSON” under the National Agency for Social Protection

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1. Since 2017, Uzbekistan has embarked on an ambitious program of economic and social reform. The World Bank's IDA resource allocation index, a measure of country policy and institutional quality, shows Uzbekistan has been the fourth strongest reformer over this period.<sup>1</sup> The Government of Uzbekistan (GoU) has liberalized the exchange rate and removed price controls, launched a major state-owned enterprise (SOE) reform program, raised fiscal transparency, ended forced and child labor, set up the building blocks of a modern social protection system, strengthened labor laws, and taken steps to liberalize the agriculture and energy sectors, amongst numerous other important reforms. The GoU's 2022-2026 National Development Strategy (NDS) renews the government's commitment to the economic transition.
2. Uzbekistan's economy rebounded strongly in 2021 from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic with a real GDP growth of 7.4 percent. The conflict in Ukraine has tempered economic activity in 2022, causing a sharp rise in the prices of fuel, food, and imported raw materials which led to an increase in the annual average inflation from 10 percent in 2021 to 12.3 in 2022. Trade disruptions due to sanctions on Russia and lower foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows have reduced Uzbekistan's consumption and investment growth. Despite these factors, real GDP grew by 5.7 percent in 2022, above the pre-pandemic average of 5 percent between 2000 and 2019, supported by strong remittances and exports. Strong remittance inflows, a public sector wage increase, and the continued expansion of social assistance contributed to an 11.4 percent rise in private consumption in real terms. Instead of falling sharply, remittance inflows for the first six months of 2022 were twice those in the first half of 2021, likely due to the ruble appreciation and the precautionary repatriation of savings by migrant workers.<sup>2</sup> On the production side, strong services growth (7 percent), construction (6 percent), and industry (5.2 percent) offset weaker agricultural output growth (3.6 percent).
3. Poverty declined to 14 percent in 2022 from 17 percent in 2021 (using the national poverty line),<sup>3</sup> supported by remittances, targeted social assistance, and labor income growth despite the income losses due to the pandemic. With a Gini inequality coefficient of 32,7 in 2022 (based on HBS) Uzbekistan's income inequality is among the highest in ECA after Bulgaria, Romania, and Serbia<sup>4</sup>. The NDS sets the ambitious goal of halving the poverty rate by 2026 and supporting Uzbekistan's transition to Upper-Middle-Income Country (UMIC) status by 2030. The pandemic caused job and income losses leading to an increase in the unemployment rate from 8.8 percent in 2019 to 15 percent in 2020. The rebound in economic activity reversed the pandemic effect leading the unemployment rate to decline to 9.6 percent in 2021 and the pre-pandemic level of 8.8 in 2022 (Uzbekistan Statistical Agency).
4. The Strategy for Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030 (SP Strategy) was adopted in July 2022. In line with the ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation (No. 202, 2012), the SP Strategy aims to develop a social protection system of about 65 programs aiming to provide a minimum floor of social protection for all.
5. Until the establishment of the National Agency for Social Protection (NASP), the implementation of social protection was fragmented across different ministries: the Ministry of Economy and Finance was responsible for social assistance and pensions and economic inclusion and entrepreneurship support programs, the Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction (MEPR) for passive and active labor market programs (ALMPs), the Ministry of Health (MOH) for social care services, long term care and disability assessment. NASP is now responsible for policy design and implementation regarding social assistance, social care services, disability inclusion agenda

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ida.worldbank.org/en/financing/resource-management/ida-resource-allocation-index>

<sup>2</sup> The share of Uzbek households receiving any remittance transfer fell from 7.8 percent in January 2022 to 2.7 percent in March 2022, but by July 2022 they rebounded to 9.4 percent according to data from the Listening to Citizens of Uzbekistan (L2CU) survey.

<sup>3</sup> A national poverty line based on per capita income has been defined based on the HBS with the World Bank support and adopted in 2022. Social benefit amounts and eligibility rules have been adjusted according to the official poverty line. The poverty line has been increased to 621000 UZS (around \$50 per person per month) in January 2024.

<sup>4</sup> WB Poverty and Inequality Platform, between 2019 and 2022.

and accessibility, and digitalization in the area of social protection and for implementing the SP Strategy.<sup>5</sup> The NASP is tasked to coordinate and oversee the work of several line ministries in cross-cutting areas such as the Ministry of Preschool and School Education (in the area of inclusive education), Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction (employment of vulnerable groups), Women’s Committee (in the area of GBV). The current NASP roadmap outlines the gradual acquisition of existing responsibilities over the next two years. NASP is also tasked with developing the social insurance law.

6. The Innovative Social Protection System for Inclusion of Vulnerable People (“INSON”) Project aims to improve the equitable access and quality of social care, activation, and GBV services by strengthening NASP’s capacity for the integrated provision of social services and benefits, including better respond to shocks as detailed in Figure 1. The introduction of alternative community-based modality to deliver social and activation services (the district-level TSSCs) and social service quality standards, along with the improved integration of the SP delivery system are expected to enhance the inclusion of vulnerable groups, increase their resilience to shocks (climate-induced and others), improve their well-being and labor market prospects.

### 1.1. Project Description

7. The “INSON” Project aims to improve the equitable access and quality of social services and benefits for vulnerable people in Uzbekistan.
8. The project consists of four inter-related components, each providing technical assistance and financing support to implement innovative, more inclusive, and better-quality social protection services and benefits in alignment with the national SP strategy and international best practice:
  - **Component 1. Strengthening the integration and shock responsiveness of the Social Protection System.** The objective of this component is to improve the inclusion and resilience of the extremely poor and vulnerable people through INSON centers’ improved capacity to assess needs, coordinate emergency support, and integrate the provision of social benefits and services. It will do so by supporting (i) the introduction of social work and case management services for complex cases (elderly, persons with disability, LIFA beneficiary families) and responding to multi-dimensional needs; and (ii) the introduction of climate adaptation elements in the design and delivery of social benefits and of mechanisms to make the SP delivery system more responsive to other covariate shocks.
  - **Subcomponent 1.1 Support the establishment of a well-functioning case management system.** The objective of this sub-component is to enhance the capacity of NASP and INSON centers to establish well-functioning case management system building on existing processes and infrastructure. The 5,000 social workers recently hired by INSON centers need to be trained and equipped with the right skills and tools to assess vulnerabilities and work at the mahalla level, especially those who perform as “social case managers”. The activities under this sub-component include: (i) the further development of the procedures and tools (comprehensive needs assessment, update local service supply mapping, referral systems) for social workers to manage complex cases of LIFA beneficiary families with available social services based on needs, building and expanding on the existing tools developed with support by UNICEF; (ii) piloting, evaluating and implementing across the country good practice IT solutions for single case files and their monitoring/follow up to support social case management processes and integrate them in the Unified SP IT platform (i.e. adapting the COMPASS prototype to local needs); (iii) support the upgrade and adoption by users (INSON staff, social workers and service providers) of the Unified SP platform, notably by expanding the functionalities (complaints management and business

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<sup>5</sup> Employment programs and regulations remained under the MEPR’s responsibility, while pensions are still under the Pension Fund under the MOF but might be moved to NASP in 2025.

analytics)<sup>6</sup> and the coverage in terms of number of SP programs served and in terms of socially vulnerable and climate vulnerable households registered; (iv) enhance the capacity of the NASP in-service training center, including equipment for a simulation center and technical assistance to establish partnership with university and VET institutes for social workers; (v) support the development of training material for the continuous training of social workers, assistant social workers as well as INSON and NASP technical and administrative staff; (vi) study tours to countries with well-established SP information management systems and social case management systems. The final aim of the Unified SP platform system is to include a single case file for each person in need of social services and benefits, that is shared by all agencies/service providers involved in the multidisciplinary intervention and that allows keeping track of the different supports. The Department of Social Work Methodology and the Digital Technology Implementation Department will be responsible to implement this sub-component.

- **Subcomponent 1.2 Enhance the capacity of the social protection system to adapt and respond to shocks.** The objective of this subcomponent is to support the development and implementation of the key building blocks for Adaptive Social Protection (ASP) to ultimately improve the resilience of vulnerable people to the ever more pressing climatic stresses (droughts, extreme heat, rainfall volatility) and sudden food and energy price increases. This sub-component will support the following activities: (a) the development of an ASP strategy coordinated with other relevant ministries and agencies (setting objectives, inter-agency arrangements, budget procedures, M&E); (b) the design of regulations, procedures, and operational guidelines to adapt SP programs and administrative tools (including the needs assessment) to climate induced and socio-economic vulnerabilities, in a multi-sectoral and integrated manner. These programs could be either new programs (for example, anticipatory cash transfers in light of a natural disaster), or they could be adaptation of existing programs whose implementation could be also financed through the Contingent Emergency Response Component (component 4) should this be triggered in case of an emergency. (c) The development of IT technical solutions to increase the use of the Unified SP Platform by actors involved in the response to emergencies and to expand its coverage to disaster prone areas covered; (d) the operating costs for the provision of information awareness on climate-related risks and short-term training for about 10,000 climate-vulnerable LIFA beneficiaries in rural areas to increase their resilience to climate change; (e) technical assistance to support the evaluation of the pilot of the revised targeting formula for LIFA benefits to better identify the extreme poor, its finalization and preparatory activities for the national roll out; (f) training for INSON and NASP staff on the implementation of the newly developed procedures for emergency response as well as capacity building activities for the other relevant government stakeholders, local authorities and communities involved in managing ASP programs. This sub-component will be under the leadership of the Social Benefits Department and the Department of Strategic Analysis, Design and Development of Social Protection Policies.
- **Component 2. Improving the equitable access and quality of social services for vulnerable people.** The objective of this component is both to improve the quality of social services (including social care, social and vocational rehabilitation, GBV and activation) for vulnerable people by developing quality and cost standards for social services, setting up a coordinated governance for multi-sectoral services for survivors of domestic violence, transforming the specialized VET schools for students with disabilities into resource hubs for inclusive education and labor market activation and to expand the access to social services for vulnerable people by piloting and gradually scaling up community-based territorial social service centers (now inexistent).

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<sup>6</sup> Including the integration of beneficiary registries administered by mahallas as the iron book, women and youth books the iron book, youth, and women books are registries of often one-time benefits administered by mahallas, established during the pandemic to complement existing social protection programs managed by the MOF and the MEPR.

- Subcomponent 2.1. Improving the quality of social services for vulnerable people including survivors of GBV.** The objective of this subcomponent is to support NASP develop the legal and regulatory framework to improve the quality of social services delivered at home, in community centers and in residential centers. The sub-component will finance *technical assistance activities* to: (a) develop quality and cost standards for social services and for assistive devices; (b) develop the legislation for the licensing and accreditation of social services providers; (c) develop the concept for alternative financing models for private service provider delivery and for co-payments; (d) develop guidelines for the adaptation of home spaces to the needs of low-mobile groups and people with disabilities; (e) strengthen the high-level policy coordination role of NASP to establish with relevant central and local government stakeholders a national, multi-sectoral action plan to end GBV; (f) strengthen the capacity of INSON staff to report and manage survivors of GBV (including through the development of standard operating procedures and improvement of the referral system); (g) strengthen the M&E tools and IT solutions for the collection, analysis and integration in the Unified SP platform of standardized data on social services (including GBV support services) to monitor demand, service take-up and follow-up actions. The subcomponent will also finance (a) the procurement of assistive devices compliant with the new standards; (b) the provision of training for INSON staff and for the GBV multi-sectoral task force; (c) the provision of psychological, legal specialists in 40 Women rehabilitation and Adaptation centers; and (c) the provision of awareness raising activities in communities with higher GBV incidence on women's rights to a life free of violence and on available support services for survivors of GBV. This sub-component will be under the leadership of the Department for Standardization with participation of Department for functional assessment of disability, Departments for development and monitoring of services for children and adults, Department of methodology of social work.
- Subcomponent 2.2. Pilot and gradually scale up community-based Territorial Social Service Centers (TSSCs) for vulnerable people.** The objective of this sub-component is to expand equitable (needs-based) access to social services through innovative community-based social service centers providing closer to the population. Other objectives include the contribution to the deinstitutionalization process and the introduction of public-private partnerships in social service provision. The subcomponent will finance: (a) technical assistance to develop alternative concepts of district-level TSSCs (including day care, temporary residence and caregivers support) based on local needs of different vulnerable categories, including persons with disabilities, older persons and caregivers; (b) capacity building of staff involved in delivering pilot services; (c) technical assistance to develop individual in-depth vulnerability assessments; (c) the operating costs, equipment and outsourcing of social service provision to a mix of private providers and NGOs to pilot TSSCs starting with the 12 districts where the regional rehabilitation centers are now located; (d) training of specialists for SVR services (including supported employment) through international experts; (e) an assessment of the effectiveness of the pilot TSSCs and development of a national roll out strategy; and (f) the operating costs, equipment and the social service provision for the gradual scale up of TSSCs to other 12 districts. This sub-component will be under the leadership Department for Development and Monitoring of Social Services for Senior Citizens.

Separate TSSCs are envisioned to provide social services for adults (persons with disabilities and older persons) and for families and children with disabilities. A detailed list of possible services is presented in Annex 2. The selection of services provided in the TSSCs will be made based on an assessment of local needs, capacity of local service providers and to test the demand and implementation of services underdeveloped in Uzbekistan such as the social and vocational rehabilitation (SVR) services, activation services for hard to serve vulnerable people and supported employment for persons with disabilities. A unit for the coordination of privately provided home-based care will also be included to test alternative modalities of home-based care which could be possibly rolled out for other units of homecare. TSSCs will closely coordinate with INSON centers:

INSON centers will be responsible for the eligibility determination and monitoring of publicly-financed social services and for referrals to existing service providers including the TSSCs, while the TSSCs will be responsible for the actual provision of a selected menu of social care, support and rehabilitation services. This sub-component will be under the leadership of the Department of Strategy with participation of Department for Standardization, Department for functional assessment of disability, Departments for development and monitoring of services for children and adults, Department of methodology of social work.

- **Subcomponent 2.3. Transforming specialized VET schools for students with disabilities into resource hubs and activation centers.** This subcomponent aims to support NASP in gradually transforming the existing four specialized VET schools for secondary students with disabilities into resource hubs to support the integration of persons with disabilities into the mainstream education system and centers for the provision of training and activation services. The subcomponent will finance technical assistance, equipment and the provision of activation services and supported employment for persons with disabilities. Specifically, activities will include: (a) an assessment of the role and impact of the existing four specialized VET schools with recommendations for NASP and the Ministry of Higher Education towards the development of an inclusive mainstream education system; (b) technical assistance to support NASP coordinate the design and implementation of inclusive education for secondary level VET students with disability; (c) organizational training to enable the VET centers is switch into resource centers; (d) the provision of orientation services and demand-driven professional training tailored to facilitate the access to jobs for graduates with disabilities; (e) supported employment, including reach out and awareness-raising among employers. This sub-component will be under the leadership of the Department for functional assessment of disability.
- **Component 3. Project Management and M&E.** This component will support the day-to-day management of project implementation, the M&E of its objectives and outcomes, and the capacity of the NASP research institute.
  - **Subcomponent 3.1 Project management.** The objective of this subcomponent is to strengthen the capacity of NASP to implement the activities under the 4 project components to ensure the effective administration and implementation of the project. Specifically, this subcomponent will finance the following activities: (i) the establishment and operation of a Project Implementation Unit (PIU), including operating costs; (ii) the development and implementation of an M&E system for the project; (iii) project communication activities (in addition to specific activities under each sub-component); and (iv) training and sensitization on issues related to violence against women for the PIU and key project implementers, particularly those who come into direct contact with project beneficiaries<sup>7</sup>. The PIU will comprise of existing technical staff and at least five newly appointed consultants including a PIU coordinator to support the day-to-day functioning of the project; a procurement specialist to oversee alignment with the Bank's rules and procedures; a financial management (FM) specialist responsible for implementation of the FM function of the proposed project including, flow of funds, budgeting, accounting, reporting, and auditing; a social expert; and an environmental expert.
  - **Subcomponent 3.2 Strengthening the M&E capacity for evidence-based policy making.** The objective of this subcomponent is to strengthen the M&E capacity of the research institute<sup>8</sup> subordinated to NASP to assess the effectiveness of social protection

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<sup>7</sup> This will include the establishment of codes of conduct for project personnel that includes prevention of all forms of VAWG in the workplace and within the project. In addition to receiving training on preventing and responding to VAWG and on the expected behavior, staff should be required to formally sign the code of conduct and abide by its rules during the course of their engagement with the project.

<sup>8</sup> Fourteen staff have been hired to work in the research center, 3 for every social protection area, mirroring the structure of NASP.



programs and their potential implementation bottlenecks to inform policy and programming decisions. The sub-component will finance: (a) NASP staff's training to collect, process and analyze qualitative and quantitative data, including for impact evaluations; (b) subscriptions to scientific journals and online libraries to create an SP resource library; (c) software licenses to conduct qualitative and quantitative research; (d) tablets and other IT equipment to support data collection. This sub-component will be under the leadership of Department of Strategic Analysis and Development of Social Protection Policy.

- **Component 4. Contingent Emergency Response Component (CERC).** This component aims at providing rapid access to non-committed resources of the project to support response to an eligible crisis or emergency, including natural disaster and climate change driven events, as needed. The component would have a zero-fund allocation. The operational manual for this CERC will specifically reference activities to be financed related to addressing the emergency, including emergency cash transfers.
9. The “INSON” Project is being prepared under the World Bank’s Environment and Social Framework (ESF). Per Environmental and Social Standard ESS10 on Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure, the implementing agencies should provide stakeholders with timely, relevant, understandable, and accessible information, and consult with them in a culturally appropriate manner, which is free of manipulation, interference, coercion, discrimination, or intimidation.

## **2. OBJECTIVE/DESCRIPTION OF SEP**

10. The overall objective of this SEP is to define a program for stakeholder engagement, including public information disclosure and consultation throughout the entire project cycle. The SEP outlines how the project team will communicate with stakeholders and includes a mechanism by which people can raise concerns, provide feedback, or make complaints about project activities or any activities related to the project.

## **3. SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS ACTIVITIES ON STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

11. The nature of the interaction between the state and civil society institutions, including non-governmental non-profit organizations (NGOs), can be seen as an indicator of the essence and level of development of civil society. The current system of interaction between state structures and NGOs in Uzbekistan is actively evolving. During preparation of the Project, Agency the Agency headed in key discussions with stakeholders.
12. One example can be associated with the statement of the President's Decree of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated March 3, 2021, No. 5012 "On Additional Measures to Support Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations, Ensuring Their Freedom of Activity, and Protecting Their Rights and Legitimate Interests." This Decree is aimed at further enhancing the role of non-governmental non-profit organizations as active participants and partners in the reforms being carried out in the country, strengthening the protection of their rights and legitimate interests, expanding the scale of state support, and creating favorable conditions for them.

### **3.1. Meeting with key stakeholders**

13. The nature of the interaction between the state and civil society institutions, including non-governmental non-profit organizations (NGOs), can be seen as an indicator of the essence and level of development of civil society. The current system of interaction between state structures and NGOs in Uzbekistan is actively evolving. During the preparation of the Project, Agency the Agency headed key discussions with stakeholders.
14. On February 18, 2024, the National Social Protection Agency held a meeting with representatives of non-governmental non-profit organizations. The event was attended by 12 representatives of NGOs. During the meeting, projects of relevant legislative acts aimed at establishing the status of disability among citizens, strengthening guarantees of the rights of persons with disabilities, as well as improving the system of providing citizens in need with prosthetic-orthopedic devices and

rehabilitation technical means, were discussed. Information about this meeting was officially published on the agency's website and on its official news channel to inform the community about the events conducted to receive more feedback directly from stakeholders (Please see Annexes 1 and 2).

15. Within the framework of the project preparation, on February 23, 2024, in cooperation with the World Bank, the National Agency for Social Protection held a roundtable discussion with representatives of NGOs. This discussion was divided into two parts: first part was devoted to the consultations with persons with disabilities and Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) about disability inclusiveness of different project components. The second part of this meeting analyzed necessary arrangements for the organization of the provision of social services by NGOs and other non-state actors. More than 25 active NGO representatives participated in the event, where discussions revolved around ensuring inclusivity, enhancing the quality of social services provided by "INSON" centers, and highlighting the significance of the non-state sector in implementing these services (Please see Annexes 3 and 4).
16. Additionally, within the framework of the project, on March 27, 2024, a consultative meeting was organized with representatives of non-governmental non-profit organizations, ministries, and departments of the Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as with the World Bank, to discuss Component 2. More than 60 active NGO representatives participated in the event, where the participants were briefed on the components and sub-components of the project, which may directly relate to the activities of NGOs. Special attention was given to Component 2: Improving Access to and Quality of Social Services for Vulnerable Population Groups (Please see Annexes 5 and 6).

### **3.2. Key issues resulting from these consultations.**

- I. Organizations of persons with disabilities pointed out the barriers for persons with disabilities to access the LIFA benefit. These organizations estimate that around 80% of persons with disabilities will need social assistance targeted to the poorest population. The disability benefit is considered already as revenue which covers the basic needs of persons with disabilities. Some additional LIFA criteria make it difficult for households with persons with disabilities to be qualified for LIFA benefits, such as the existence of a car or television. However, the limited amount of Disability benefits cannot cover all extra costs related to disability.
- II. It is necessary to clearly define each type of social service and draft quality standards for them. A clear distinction between the functions of social workers and social assistants should be made in corresponding legislation. The social worker should focus more on case management, understanding needs, revealing problems, counseling, and referral, while social assistants should focus more on care provision. Furthermore, it is necessary to clarify the notion of social entrepreneurship.
- III. There are no standardized instruments allowing to identification of the beneficiary by social service providers. Each NGO has its instruments for beneficiaries' profiles and plans – documents are not standardized. The participants stated the need for harmonization of beneficiary profiles between different stakeholders and providers.
- IV. Some vulnerable groups are not in the spotlight of social protection policies, such as persons having AIDS/Tuberculosis /drug consumers, and thus they are not reached by social workers who would need dedicated training. There have been developed dedicated specialized training encompassing also psychological support and a standard course is under development for these target groups. Training can take half a year.
- V. Currently, university training for social workers is mostly theoretical. Graduate programs should include practical training modules that could be developed in partnerships with NGOs in which they could intern and get specific experience with specific groups.
- VI. Specific services were mentioned as being particularly needed by persons with disabilities, as well as other groups:
  - **Socialization and daycare services are important for persons with disabilities (children and adults).** NGO reported providing support via daytime care centers where beneficiaries

(children, adults) come during the day and spend time so that parents can work or participate in daily activities. Older people can be engaged as volunteers at such daycare facilities. According to the provider, replicating such a center at the level of each district would bring significant change.

- **Current availability of home care for persons with disabilities is limited.** The time of care needed may vary, from 2, 8 to 24 hours of care, whereas at the moment it is possible to receive only 2 hours of care for the persons living alone. To create an inclusive environment, it would be needed for persons with different disabilities to receive support from social assistants via service providers as per their actual needs. Eligibility for such support should not be linked to criteria of whether a potential beneficiary has a car, for example.
  - **Vocational training is essential for persons with disabilities and may bring impressive outcomes.** As per an NGO providing such support, it is important to focus on persons' dreams and aspirations, not limit persons' options to a range of limited professions.
  - **Support services are needed to support people with disabilities attain employment, but also other vulnerable categories.** 2000 children with disabilities will graduate from boarding schools but do not have an enabling environment to work, dedicated support is needed. Day centers can potentially be connected to employment/adults could learn skills to promote their employment opportunities (like computer learning, and business hubs). Access to employment is an issue for other vulnerable groups as well, such as former inmates (who, combined with housing issues, may take up to 6 months to find employment) or persons suffering from drug abuse. Social enterprises may be explored as a measure.
  - **Legal support is also needed by persons with disabilities.** In the criminal code, we have the provision that the lawyer should be provided free of charge, but not in administrative cases, but persons with disabilities cannot afford to hire attorneys or lawyers to defend themselves in such cases.
  - **Careers of persons with high support needs are insufficiently supported to be able to be active members of society.** Services supporting parents of either children/adults with disabilities or of children beneficiaries of palliative care are missing. Mothers (predominantly) offer care and their care effort is also not accounted for as work experience.
  - **Hospice care is at the beginning of its development and training is essential.** First hospice was established, and social workers have an important role. Training modules were developed for them and tested. Psychological support is also key in the provision of the service (many children have received such support). The development of palliative care brigades is being discussed with NASP.
17. The second part of this meeting pointed out necessary arrangements for the organization of the provision of social services by NGOs and other non-state actors:
- a. **A clear cooperation mechanism between public providers, specifically INSONs and NGOs is needed for social service provision.** From the range of services provided by INSONs, an important part can be provided by NGOs. NGOs were mostly created based on the demand of persons needing specific services, and thus have specialized in particular types of support. INSON may deliver better services if it relies on such providers/NGOs.
  - b. **A formalized framework/platform listing all available social services would be useful, including all services provided by NGOs.** For example, in the case of TB beneficiaries, the person is entered into a platform and referrals to doctors are arranged within it, which makes work more efficient—especially considering that a lot of patients live in remote areas. However, internet coverage is an issue, or lack of phones for some vulnerable groups. Confidentiality of data is also an issue that needs to be considered for such a platform.
  - c. **Communication about the work carried out by NGOs needs to be enhanced to increase awareness and trust among public institutions/services and the general public.** NGOs/private service providers have highlighted not competing with government agencies. To ensure this is not the perception of the public sector, better communication by NGOs toward the public sector about activities developed and vulnerable groups

covered may be needed. Not all people who need social services trust private organizations, there is more trust in state institutions. However, if service provision from private providers would be mediated/backed by public institutions, more trust would be gained by the population in private providers. Moreover, the population has limited information on private services. People first refer to Mahallas which are also insufficiently informed.

- d. **Financing for social services is unpredictable.** The budgets are often allocated for other expenses. At the Khakim level, they are obliged to allocate funds for social orders, thus they prefer not to emit them. There are examples of NGOs that started working with Mahallas but had to stop their work because the financing was suddenly redirected. Central institutions can find other funding solutions.
- e. **Flexibility in the provision of social services may be considered.** A range of online social services may be considered/developed to be provided remotely, e.g., applications to help with shopping, reading, information, and provision of legal services.
- f. **There may be more people needing services for persons with disabilities than what official data suggest.** Parents may try to hide the actual diseases of their children and not disclose the disability of their child. Better screening of the population will reveal more persons with disabilities. It is necessary also to organize specific efforts to combat existing stigmas.
- g. **Engagement of social workers at the local level is essential, and they should be trained in specific problems of persons with disabilities.** Social workers should be available at the level of Mahalla and guide persons with disabilities with regard to benefits and services they need to access (how to apply, what to do, etc.). It is very difficult for people who live far from key institutions to reach the closest specialist (especially if they have mobility issues). Additionally, there are specific domestic violence issues targeting women, including women with disabilities, that can be identified and addressed by the social worker at the Mahalla level.
- h. **Education of children with disabilities and/or special educational needs should be inclusive, and children's choices should be enabled.** Children with disabilities and/or special educational needs should have the right to choose in regular schools – there are situations in which they could, even if they have cerebral palsy, etc. Many schools claim they are inclusive, but a study by the National Association of Persons with Disabilities revealed only 5 were adopted.
- i. **The efficiency of INSON will have to be assessed, and monitoring of their accessibility should be carried out.** An efficiency analysis would be needed after an estimated period of 2 years since the start of implementation. Furthermore, although there are good steps made to ensure accessibility of public institutions, there is a specific example of INSON that doesn't allow physical access to the first floor of the building to persons with mobility disabilities. Buildings dedicated to INSONs should be carefully selected so that they ensure an accessible environment, in order not to create negative attitudes toward INSON.
- j. **Simplifying the registration of national NGOs should be considered, especially if needed to ease the outsourcing of services to private providers.** The registration comes with the requirement of having regional offices, with separate bank accounts. This may be difficult for certain entities that don't have this opportunity. The possibility of simplifying was suggested by NGOs to enable service provision in the regions. Some organizations work in the regions but don't have regional offices. As per the Ministry of Justice, requirements for state registration as an NGO are general and refusals are explained.
- k. **Some difficulties are observed regarding the access of persons with disabilities to medical services.** In terms of healthcare, for referrals, a specific range of blood tests are required, but they are not available in all polyclinics. One may be required to go to several places for blood tests that should be easy to access and the relevance of which is unclear for the referral. The Ministry of Health is currently reviewing the process and will revise it if needed.

## 4. STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS

### 4.1. Methodology

18. To meet best practice approaches, the project will apply the following principles for stakeholder engagement:

- *Openness and life-cycle approach:* The regular reporting of the status of intermediate and PDO indicators will be the responsibility of the PIT but closely integrated into the broader NASP monitoring and evaluation responsibilities<sup>9</sup>.  
Public consultations for the project will be arranged during the whole life cycle, carried out openly, free of external manipulation, interference, coercion, or intimidation.
- *Informed participation and feedback:* Information will be provided to and widely distributed among all stakeholders in an appropriate format; opportunities are provided for communicating stakeholder feedback, and for analyzing and addressing comments and concerns.
- *Inclusiveness and sensitivity:* Stakeholder identification is undertaken to support better communication and build effective relationships. The participation process for the projects is inclusive. All stakeholders, at all times, are encouraged to be involved in the consultation process. Equal access to information is provided to all stakeholders. Sensitivity to stakeholders' needs is the key principle underlying the selection of engagement methods. Special attention is given to vulnerable groups that may be at risk of being left out of project benefits, particularly women, the elderly, persons with disabilities, displaced persons, migrant workers and communities, and the cultural sensitivities of diverse ethnic groups.

### 4.2. Affected parties and other interested parties

19. Affected parties include local communities, community members, other interested parties, and individuals who may be subject to direct impacts from the Project. Specifically, the following individuals and groups fall within this category:

- Applicants and beneficiaries of low-income family allowances;
- People with disabilities, including children;
- Caregivers;
- Unemployed;
- Elderly people;
- Vulnerable people and families registered in the Unified SP platform, including those in areas exposed to climate risks;
- Graduates of specialized residential institutions;
- Children deprived of parental care;
- Victims of domestic and gender-based violence;
- Single parents;
- INSON and NASP staff.

20. The projects' stakeholders also include parties other than the directly affected communities, including:

- Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction;
- Ministry of Preschool and School Education;
- Ministry of Health;
- Ministry of Economy and Finance;
- Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation;
- Ministry of Investments, Industry and Trade;
- Ministry of Justice;

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<sup>9</sup> Discussion is ongoing have the Research Institute in NASP responsible for reporting the RF progress, with the support of the PIT.

- Civil society groups and NGOs on districts, national, and local levels that pursue environmental and socio-economic interests and may become partners of the project;
- Social media platforms;

#### **4.3. Disadvantaged/vulnerable individuals or groups**

21. It is essential to understand whether project impacts may disproportionately fall on disadvantaged or vulnerable individuals or groups, who often do not have a voice to express their concerns or understand the impacts of a project. The vulnerability may stem from a person's origin, gender, age, health condition, economic deficiency and financial insecurity, disadvantaged status in the community (e.g. unemployed youth), dependence on other individuals or natural resources, etc. Engagement with vulnerable groups and individuals often requires the application of specific measures and assistance aimed at the facilitation of their participation in the project-related decision-making so that their awareness of and input to the overall process are commensurate to those of the other stakeholders. Within the Project, the vulnerable or disadvantaged groups may include and are not limited to the following:

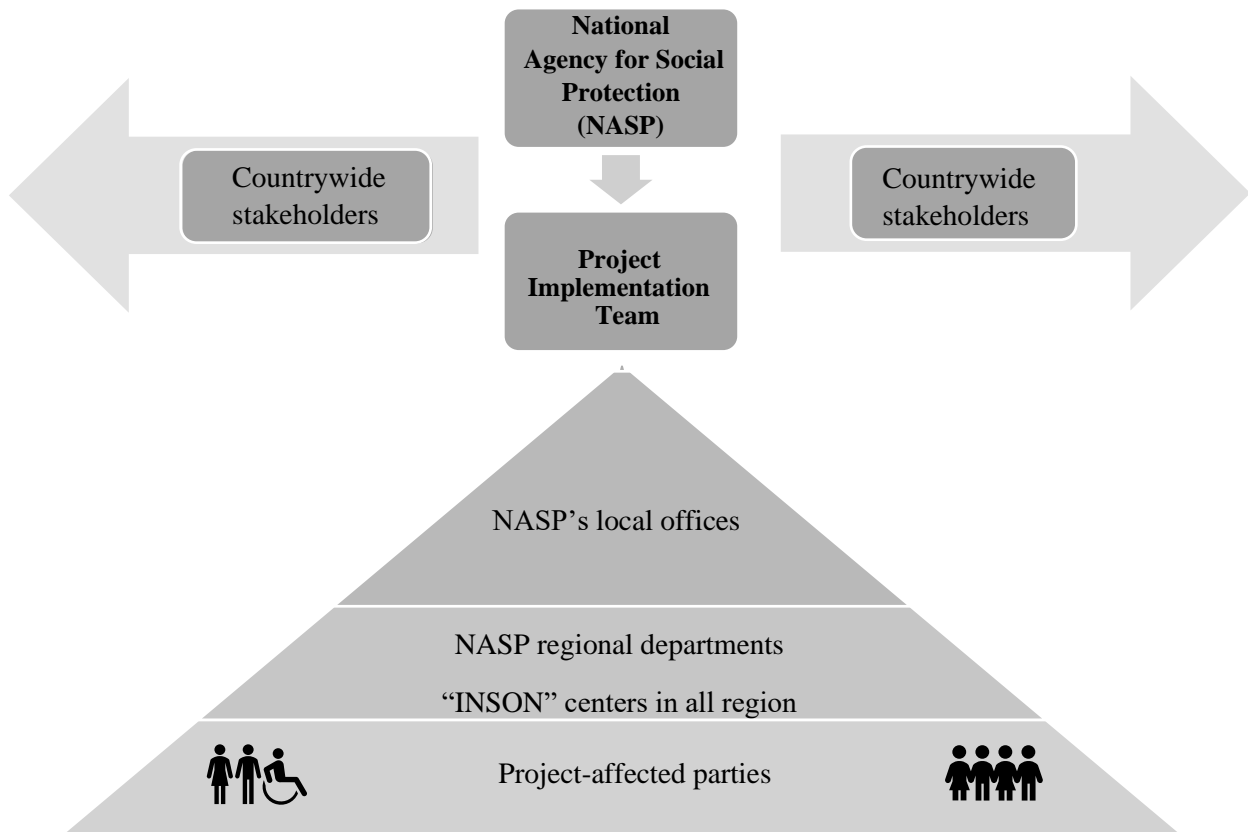
- Poor households and individuals;
- Elderly, pre-retirement;
- People with disabilities, including children;
- People with low mobility;
- Single parents with underage children;
- Women-headed households;
- Residents in areas with high risks of being affected by climate changes, natural disasters, and other emergencies;
- Unemployed youth;
- Graduates of residential institutions;
- Unskilled people;
- Survivors of gender-based or domestic violence;
- Unemployed.

22. Disadvantaged and vulnerable groups within the communities affected by the Project may be added, further confirmed, and consulted through dedicated means, as appropriate. A description of the methods of engagement that will be undertaken by the project is provided in the following sections.

## **5. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM**

### **5.1. Summary of stakeholder engagement done during project preparation**

23. The project interventions are countrywide; therefore, the project team needs to be strategic in designing the SEP. The project stakeholder engagement activities need to be streamed horizontally and vertically (Figure 1). The horizontal stream implies an engagement with stakeholders on a national level. Activities on the horizontal level are assumed to improve awareness and coordination of efforts in the social protection system of the country. Whereas, vertical stream implies the application of a cascading mode which will allow the project to establish communication with project-affected parties. Furthermore, the cascading approach will be applicable for capacity building at each project engagement level (regional departments, district "INSON" centers). Stakeholder engagement activities need to provide specific stakeholder groups with relevant information and opportunities to voice their views on topics that matter to them. The table below presents the stakeholder engagement activities envisaged under the project.



**Figure 1:** Schematic visualization of the stakeholder engagement process

24. The preliminary public consultation meetings prior the preparation of SEP was conducted in online format among in 10 regions of the Uzbekistan such as Republic of Karakalpakstan, Bukhara, Jizzakh, Navoi, Kashkadarya, Samarkand, Syrdarya, Surkhandarya Tashkent and Khorezm regions by the NASP’s staff on 27th March 2024. The Annex 5 and 6 below is presented by names of participants and the photos from the meeting. The meeting provided an opportunity to conduct formal and informal stakeholder meetings. Target audience: representatives of regional and local authorities involved in environmental and social activities under the Component 2 of the project (heads from the Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Uzbekistan). The oral presentation was done in Uzbek and Russian. Description of the project and its components; potential project planning activities, national environmental, social legislation and relevant WB requirements: identified social and environmental impacts and mitigation assures; safeguards documents need to be developed as part of the project for each subproject; grievance mechanism and project contact information for affected people and organizations; further stages of the project. After the discussion, the NASP’s Representative demonstrated a presentation with the participants and provided the Agency's phone number. If someone has any questions and needs necessary clarifications, participants in public consultations can contact the consultant directly or through the regional offices. Stakeholder consultations currently are ongoing in ten of Uzbekistan's regions that have been chosen for funding. Prior to the final appraisal, stakeholder consultations will be completed, and the stakeholders' views and concerns will be incorporated into the project design. Summary of conducted consultation meetings with stakeholders is provided below and minutes of the stakeholders meeting are summarized in the Annex 6.
25. Key issues resulting from these consultation meeting.
- To incorporate opportunities for computer skills training and digital professions, as the non-governmental organization (NGO) already has experience from the USAID project in training 2300 women in e-commerce, digital professions such as social media management, and targeted advertising.

- Proposed expanding access to social services by establishing an online platform for assessing psychological well-being.
- It is proposed to involve the deaf and mute individuals in the activities of this project to obtain a more detailed insight into the creation of conducive conditions.
- It is proposed to organize opportunities for creating an inclusive environment for individuals with disabilities. Additionally, it is suggested to establish a team of psychologists to provide psychological and social support at Oncological and Hematological Centers.
- At the INSON Centers, it is proposed to engage more female lawyers and psychologists to provide primary assistance.
- The recruitment of experienced experts in social work for training, who possess accumulated expertise and knowledge, is proposed. They express readiness for more effective collaboration with the INSON Centers, not only through grant programs but also by providing mentorship services and the expertise of seasoned social workers.
- It is proposed to offer remuneration for the activities of accompanying persons with disabilities upon the launch of the employment system for them.
- Establishing collaboration with the Tashkent Regional Office of the Agency to establish coworking centers with synergy with NGOs, as well as expanding medical-psychosocial services across all regions with the existing team of multidisciplinary staff consisting of doctors, psychologists, and social workers.
- The organization of mobile multidisciplinary teams to provide palliative care to cancer patients in Tashkent.
- Establishment of Health Centers to serve the improvement of mental health among vulnerable population groups.
- To include children with parents who have disabilities as beneficiaries of the project and develop a platform for calculating social benefits through an electronic portal.
- It is advisable to provide psychological assistance to parents of children with disabilities and organize workshops for parents on professional training for caring for children with disabilities.
- It is proposed to provide assistance in teaching individuals with disabilities English or Russian languages, or in training them for certain professions.
- It is suggested to focus on assessing the risk of continued violence and to consider this direction of activity by the Agency, perhaps within the framework of the work of social workers.
- It is proposed to introduce courses on tactile communication/translation into the INSON centers for families with deaf and blind individuals 2/3 times a week. Additionally, it is indicated that there is a need to conduct a census of this category of individuals, educate them in literacy in Uzbek language, and readiness is expressed to provide support as an expert.
- It is proposed to engage sign language interpreters in the activities of the Agency and local authorities, establishing a separate department for them. Grants for NGOs to train individuals with disabilities should be increased. Work with parents of children with disabilities should be initiated to broaden their perspectives and prevent discrimination and limitations for children with disabilities. Instead of preferential loans for entrepreneurs, the number of subsidies for expanding employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities should be increased. Additionally, marketplaces and shopping centers in every city or district should establish stalls selling products made by individuals with disabilities.



- A proposal has been put forward to implement a voucher system for direct allocation of funds for purchasing medication for specific categories of patients. This would enable them to independently purchase medications without having to visit outpatient clinics.
- It is proposed to create special comprehensive courses to prepare individuals for starting families with persons with disabilities. Additionally, there is a suggestion to create and showcase homes with universal design features to family members of individuals with disabilities.
- As an alternative assistance from the NGO, it is proposed to facilitate the opening of online stores and provide a free subscription for using the e-commerce platform for a year for 10,000 users. This initiative aims to save 10 million sums per user.

26. The overall objectives of SEP as stated in the ESS-10 are:

- To identify the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders and ensure their participation in the complete project cycle
  - Establish a systematic approach to stakeholder engagements that will help the Project identify stakeholders and build and maintain a constructive relationship with them, in particular, project affected parties
  - Assess the level of stakeholder interest and support for the project and enable stakeholders' views to be considered in project design and implementation
  - Promote and provide means for effective and inclusive engagement with project-affected parties throughout the project life-cycle on issues that could potentially affect them.
  - Ensure that appropriate project information on environmental and social risks and impacts is disclosed to stakeholders in a timely, understandable, accessible, and appropriate manner and format with special consideration for the disadvantaged or vulnerable groups.
  - Provide project-affected parties with accessible and inclusive means to raise issues and grievances and allow the Project to respond to and manage such grievances.
  - To devise a plan of action that identifies the means and frequency of engagement of each stakeholder.
  - To allocate budgetary and other resources in the project design, project implementation, and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) for stakeholder engagement and participation.
27. Thus, SEP provides an opportunity for an all-inclusive approach in project preparation, planning, implementation, and monitoring processes. It is geared toward ensuring meaningful and a wide consultative process guided by World Bank's Environmental and Social Framework (ESF), particularly ESS10.
28. Information disclosure and consultation processes will continue with affected parties, other interested parties, and vulnerable groups during (i) project preparation, (ii) project implementation, and (iii) project operational phases. A variety of methods such as group consultations, individual consultations, awareness-raising meetings/gatherings, and interviews through different offline and virtual mediums such as telephone calls, etc. and communication through printed (newspapers, banners & posters displayed in community locations and at government offices) and electronic & social media (Facebook, Twitter, Telegram, WhatsApp Groups, etc.), appropriate to the target audience, will be used for information disclosure and consultation.
29. During project preparation and planning, information related to project scope and schedule will be shared with project-affected persons and other stakeholders during consultations.
30. Information about each component and phase of the Project will be provided to the public through media briefings, targeted media articles, information sessions, television/radio programs, etc. The Project will also provide up-to-date information on the Ministries websites and on social media.
31. At the appraisal stage, safeguard instruments including the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) and SEP prepared for this project will be disclosed on the website of NASP and the World Bank's external website, after their clearance by the government and the Bank. Additionally, copies of the referenced documents will be kept at the NASP for public reference. Any changes to

the approved ESCP and SEP would have to follow the same clearance/ approval procedures and disclosure.

32. During project implementation, sub-project-specific safeguard instruments will be publicly disclosed in the country as well as on the World Bank’s external website. The documents and plans to be disclosed include:

- Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP)
- Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP)
- Monitoring activities undertaken as per ESCP and SEP
- Project quarterly reports and annual reports

33. Translations of the executive summary of all documents prepared by the project PIT will also be made available to the public through the website of NASP. Information can also be disseminated through digital platforms (where available) like Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp/Viber groups, and traditional means of communication (TV, newspaper, radio, phone calls and e-mails) with clear descriptions of mechanisms for providing feedback via mail and/or dedicated telephone lines. All channels of communication need to specify how stakeholders can provide their feedback and suggestions (Please see Table 1).

**Table 1.** Provides a plan for information disclosure during project preparatory, implementation, and operational periods.

List of information to be disclosed	Proposed methods	Time frame	Target stakeholders	Responsibility
<b>Project preparation and planning phase</b>				
ESCP & SEP including translated summaries.	Electronic copies published in Project websites & social media sites hardcopies available at NASP/WB Notice sent to all to direct interested parties to the NASP websites.	Before the commencement of the project.	The public includes eligible & vulnerable groups, government entities at the national, district, and divisional levels, and interested groups like media, NGOs, etc.	NASP working group  Research Institute NASP  In-service training center of specialists of the Social Protection System NASP  INSON centers  NASP regional offices  PIT

Project details, objective, duration, target population, selection criteria, and project implementation plans.	TV, radio, newspapers, websites, social media platforms, mobile phone text messages, Community meetings, public notice boards, posters, and leaflets.	Before the commencement of the project.	The public, including eligible & vulnerable groups, government entities at national, district, and divisional levels, and interested groups like media, NGOs, etc.	NASP working group Research Institute NASP In-service training center of specialists of the Social Protection System NASP INSON centers NASP regional offices PIT
Appeal & GRM process including GBV incidents.	Community meetings, public notice boards, posters, and leaflets.  Notifications based on WBB's Appeal Board minutes	Before the commencement of the project.	Eligible & vulnerable groups, and government entities involved in implementation.	NASP working group Research Institute NASP In-service training center of specialists of the Social Protection System NASP  INSON centers NASP regional offices PIT
<b>Project implementation phase</b>				
Eligibility criteria, procedures to submit applications, beneficiary needs assessment & proposals for livelihood support & bank accounts, validation, and monitoring processes.	Gazette, TV, radio, newspapers, website, social media platforms, mobile phone text messages, Community meetings, public notice boards, posters and leaflets.	During implementation on an ongoing basis.	Eligible & vulnerable groups, and government entities involved in implementation.	NASP working group Research Institute NASP In-service training center of specialists of the Social Protection System NASP  INSON centers NASP regional offices PIT
Progress reports of the project prepared by PIT & other partner agencies related to project performance.	Websites, social media, email, formal meetings, community meetings, DS level information boards.	Weekly, Monthly, quarterly & annual reporting	The public including eligible & vulnerable groups, government entities at national, district, and divisional levels, and interested groups like media, NGOs, etc.	NASP working group Research Institute NASP In-service training center of specialists of the Social Protection System NASP  INSON centers NASP regional offices PIT

Summary outcomes of consultation meetings, workshops, conferences, forums etc.	Websites, notice boards, community meetings.	Quarterly	Eligible & vulnerable groups, and government entities involved in implementation.	NASP working group Research Institute NASP In-service training center of specialists of the Social Protection System NASP INSON centers NASP regional offices PIT
Information on Help Desk, awareness on GRM & appeal processes reporting on GBV-related incidents and accessing GBV service provided.	Hotline short numbers: 102, 1259 – Ministry of Internal Affairs, 103- Emergency Medical Service Centers Direct contact with the Center Desk, SMS service, Divisional Secretariat, websites, social media, Community meetings, Notice Boards.	Continuous	Eligible & vulnerable groups, and government entities involved in implementation.	NASP working group Research Institute NASP In-service training center of specialists of the Social Protection System NASP INSON centers NASP regional offices PIT
Status/progress of grievance resolution.	Feedback to complainant – manual, or via SMS service	Monthly/ Quarterly	Eligible & vulnerable groups, and government entities involved in implementation.	NASP working group Research Institute NASP In-service training center of specialists of the Social Protection System NASP INSON centers NASP regional offices PIT

Awareness raising/capacity building training programs planned & conducted.	Website, progress reports, meetings, emails.	Quarterly	Eligible & vulnerable groups, and government entities involved in implementation.	NASP working group Research Institute NASP In-service training center of specialists of the Social Protection System NASP INSON centers NASP regional offices PIT
Project's key deliverables	Website, progress reports, emails	Monthly & Quarterly	Eligible & vulnerable groups, and government entities involved in implementation.	NASP working group Research Institute NASP In-service training center of specialists of the Social Protection System NASP INSON centers NASP regional offices PIT
Beneficiary feedback  Surveys	Telephone, mobile phone - SMS feedback.  Feedback from beneficiaries will be received by the department responsible for working with non-governmental non-profit organizations (NGOs) of NASP, as well as by the responsible staff members of the INSON Centers.	At registration, cash transfer, and for training and productive inclusion.	Project beneficiaries.	NASP working group Research Institute NASP In-service training center of specialists of the Social Protection System NASP INSON centers NASP regional offices PIT

## 5.2. Summary of project stakeholder needs and methods, tools, and techniques for stakeholder engagement

34. This initial SEP has been developed and disclosed before project appraisal as the starting point of an iterative process, to develop a more comprehensive stakeholder engagement strategy and plan. The amendments to this document will be introduced, as necessary. NASP will conduct further consultations with the public and project-affected stakeholders before project appraisal completion. An action plan for further consultations is currently being prepared.
35. The Project will ensure a wide range of consultation workshops are conducted with all relevant stakeholders prior to launching any activity allowing for inputs and necessary adjustments to implementation, as and when the situation allows. Different engagement methods are proposed and cover different stakeholder needs as stated below:

- **Public/community meetings** Prior to other activities, at the time of disclosure of the Social Assessment, Social Management Plan, and this SEP, NASP will organize project launch meeting on a national level. District/city employment support centers with the support of Regional Employment Departments will organize meetings in each district/city for mahalla leaders, PAPs, and other interested parties. Meetings will be open house events where ESCs will present information and people will be invited to make comments and express any concerns. Meetings in each of the district/city will also be organized on a quarterly basis.
- **Communication materials** Written information will be disclosed to the public via a variety of communication materials including brochures, flyers, posters, etc. A public relations kit will be designed specifically and distributed both in print and online form. NASP will also update its website regularly (at least on a quarterly basis) with key project updates and 27 reports on the project's performance both in Uzbek, Russian, and English. The website will also provide information about the grievance mechanism for the project (see next sub-section).
- **Mass/social media communication** A community or social media expert (from NASP/PIT staff or an external consultant) will be engaged in the Project during the project implementation to remain in close communication with stakeholders including PAPs, mahalla leaders. The CLO will also be responsible for posting relevant information on the dedicated NASP website, social media channels (Facebook, Telegram, etc.), and on information boards throughout the project's lifecycle. Social media channels will be used as much as possible to disseminate information as rates of social media use (especially Telegram channels) appear to be high across users of different ages and background in project-affected communities.
- **Information Desks** in each region and district will provide residents with information on stakeholder engagement activities, project interventions, contact details of the Focal point, etc. The focal point, in turn, will set up these information desks, either in their offices or other easily accessible places where they can meet and share information about the project with PAPs and other stakeholders. Brochures and fliers on various project-related social and environmental issues will be made available at these information desks.
- **Citizen/PAP perception survey** A perception survey examining citizens' experience and feedback about the project will be carried out twice during the project's lifecycle: once around the mid-implementation phase, and once towards the end of the project's implementation.
- **Training, and workshops** Training on a variety of social issues will be provided to NASP, PIT, REDs, and possibly relevant government or non-government service providers. Issues covered will include sensitization to inclusion/exclusion, labor issues, and gender-based violence risks.
- **Grievance redress mechanism** In compliance with the World Bank's ESS10, a project-specific grievance mechanism will be set up to handle complaints and issues, and this will be integrated into a country system on GRM that is available to citizens. Dedicated communication materials (specifically, a GRM brochure or pamphlet) will be developed to help residents become familiar with the grievance redress channels and procedures. Locked suggestion/complaint boxes will be posted in each ESC and Mahalla offices, and PIT will maintain a grievance register in order to capture and track grievances from submission to resolution and communication with complainants. The initial effort to resolve grievances to the complainant's satisfaction will be undertaken by Mahalla. There is also a mechanism for addressing issues through the following hotlines: 102, 1259 – Ministry of Internal Affairs, 103- Emergency Medical Service, Redirect through INSON Centers and Direct contact with Centers, and President portal 1000 or 0-800-210-00-00. If that is not successful in resolving grievances, they will be referred to a committee at the ESC. The mechanism is described in more detail in Section VII below, which includes a form that can be used to submit grievances. Grievances may be submitted anonymously, but in that case, it cannot be known if the complainant is satisfied with the resolution. NASP's website, posters, and leaflets will include clear information on how feedback, questions, comments, concerns, and grievances can be submitted by any stakeholder. It will also provide information on the way grievances will be handled, both in terms of process and deadlines.

### 5.3. Beneficiary Feedback Indicators

36. As part of the Strategic Framework for Mainstreaming Citizen Engagement (CE) in World Bank Operations, the Bank made a commitment to mainstreaming citizen engagement (CE) into operations. Accordingly, the Projects Results Frameworks must include at least one beneficiary feedback indicator to monitor CE throughout project implementation (as a PDO or intermediate outcome indicator); and Projects must report on beneficiary feedback indicators in Implementation Status and Results Reports (ISRs) by the third year of implementation or demonstrate credible progress towards reporting.
37. As such, the project has included the following Beneficiary Feedback Indicators to meet this Bank requirement (Table 2):

**Table 2:** Indicators included in the Results Framework (suggested)

Indicator	Definition	Source
Number of beneficiaries satisfied with provided service or training (Number)	Numerator: Number of beneficiaries that report they are satisfied with the service and training offered Denominator: Total number of beneficiaries responding to the satisfaction survey	Survey
Grievances addressed within a stipulated standard for a response	Numerator: Total number of grievances cases from the WBPS addressed in accordance to established protocol. Denominator: Total number of grievances cases received from the WBPS. Stipulated service standards for response times will be outlined in WBB GRM Manual.	GRM system

*Note: The SEP will be a living document and updated.*

38. This SEP (both in Uzbek and English languages), the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP), Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), and Labor Management Procedures (LMP) will be publicly disclosed on the NASP website <https://www.ihma.uz> and the Bank's system. Project documents including updates and details about the project Grievance Mechanism will also be posted on the NASP website. Printed material (manuals, brochures, posters, etc.) will be prepared and used based on identified needs. Uzbek and English languages will be used to disclose information on the project website.

### 5.5. Reporting back to stakeholders

39. The draft SEP is being consulted with key implementation partners and project affected parties and will be disclosed publicly prior to the decision meeting. The draft SEP will be updated with the feedback received and final version of the SEP will be disclosed by project Approval. The draft SEP can be emailed to relevant stakeholders requesting comments and suggestions and will also be published on the NASP's websites for public review and comments. The PIT will also seek to organize a one-day review meeting with community leaders, community organizations and CSO / NGOs working with vulnerable groups and to get their views and engagement. If significant changes are made to the SEP, the Borrower will re-disclose the updated SEP.
40. All comments received by the project will be reviewed by the PIT and any decisions made based on the comments made by the public and the stakeholders will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders after the review meetings. If the project had not been able to make any decision in response to public, stakeholder comments, same will be communicated to the relevant stakeholders with explanations as to why a decision cannot be made.

#### 5.4. Stakeholder engagement plan

**Table 3:** Stakeholder engagement plan

Subgroup	With whom	Channels of Engagement	Venue	Frequency	Engagement methods	Purpose
NASP	Other stakeholders	Official internal and external communications	—	Regularly	Project progress, budget and financing.	Sharing of information, reviews, clearance and seeking support.
	NASP	Written requests via official letters and emails	Virtual, visits, official meetings	As needed	Progress reports, official requests, and letters.	To keep informed the Financial Guarantee of the GoU.
NASP	Other stakeholders	Official internal and external communications	Meeting hall of the NASP	Regularly	The website, telephone, email, social media, leaflets, ads, posters, brochures, hand-outs..	To ensure beneficiaries with information about services providing during the project, involving into services for creating mechanisms.
Project Implementation Team at NASP (PIT)	All stakeholders	Stakeholder awareness and consultations campaigns	Internal or external event venues	Annual	Public/community meetings, seminars, face-to-face meetings with all project stakeholders.	To keep informed about the project achievements.
	Regional employment departments	Operational meetings	Meeting hall of the NASP	Quarterly	Monitoring reports, face-to-face meetings with regional employment departments.	To implement the project components.
	All stakeholders	GRM	PIT office	Regularly	The website, telephone, email, social media, leaflets, ads, posters, brochures, hand-outs.	To ensure beneficiaries are informed about the project level GRM.



Research Institute NASP	ESCs	Operational meetings	Meeting hall of NASP regional offices	Quarterly	Monitoring reports, Face-to-face meetings with ESCs and PAPs.	To implement the project components.
In-service training center of specialists of the Social Protection System NASP	All stakeholders including PAPs	PAPs consultations and outreach campaigns	Meeting hall of NASP regional offices or community premises	Semiannual	Public/community meetings, seminars, face-to-face meetings with PAPs.	To increase awareness, provide consultations and collect feedbacks.
INSON centers						
NASP regional offices	PAPs	Information desks	The front office at NASP regional offices	Regularly	Face-to-face meetings with PAPs. Leaflets, Posters, brochures, handouts.	To increase awareness and provide consultations.
Research Institute NASP	Project-affected parties	PAPs consultations and outreach campaigns	ESC office and community premises	Quarterly	Public/community meetings, face-to-face community meetings with mahalla representatives and PAPs. Participatory PAP needs assessment and subproject prioritization. PIT	To ensure inclusion of poor and vulnerable PAPs.
In-service training center of specialists of the Social Protection System NASP						
INSON centers						
NASP regional offices						
	Project-affected parties	Information desks	The front office at ESCs	Regularly	Face-to-face meetings with PAPs. Leaflets, Posters, brochures, handouts.	To increase awareness and provide consultations.
INSON centers	Project-affected parties	GRM	ESC office	Regularly	Face-to-face meetings, virtual and off-line.	To ensure beneficiaries are informed about the project level GRM.
NASP regional offices	Project-affected parties	Public forums campaigns	INSON centers NASP regional offices premises	Quarterly	Face-to-face community meetings, Participatory PAP needs assessment and subproject prioritization. PIU field reports on needs	To ensure inclusion of poor and vulnerable PAPs.

				assessment and subproject prioritization.	
Project-affected parties	GRM	INSON centers NASP regional offices	Regularly	Telephone, social media, leaflets, ads, brochures, hand-outs.	To ensure beneficiaries are informed about the project level GRM.

## 6. RESOURCES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR IMPLEMENTING STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

### 6.1. Resources

41. The National Agency for Social Protection will be in charge of stakeholder engagement activities.
42. The budget for the SEP is US\$ 0,62 MILLION and is included as a component of the project “INSON”.

**Table 4:** Estimated budget for stakeholder engagement activities for the project duration of SEP implementation

Budget Category	Quantity	Unit Costs	Times/Years	Total Costs (mln.\$)	Remarks
<b>1. Estimated staff salaries* and related expenses</b>					
1a. Salary	2	0,03	4	0,24	
1b. [E.g., travel costs for staff]	2	0,01	4	0,08	
<b>2. Events</b>					
2a. [E.g., organization of focus groups]	As needed			0,1	
<b>4. Trainings</b>					
4a. [E.g., training on social/environmental issues for Project Implementing Team (PIT) and contractor staff]	As needed		4	0,1	
4b. [E.g., training on gender-based violence (GBV) for PIT and contractor staff]	As needed		4	0,1	
<b>TOTAL STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT BUDGET:</b>				0.62	

Note: \*Salary costs can be indicative.

### 6.2. Management functions and responsibilities

43. The entity responsible for carrying out stakeholder engagement activities is NASP.
44. The stakeholder engagement activities will be documented as part of the Project progress reporting requirements, and as indicated in the project ESCP.

## 7. GRIEVANCE MECHANISM

### 7.1. Description of GM

45. The main objective of a GM is to assist in resolving complaints and grievances in a timely, effective, and efficient manner that satisfies all parties involved.
46. According to the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Appeals of Individuals and Legal Entities" dated September 11, 2017, appeals (applications, proposals, complaints, anonymous appeals) of individuals and legal entities shall be considered in accordance with the law, ensuring the timely and full consideration of appeals, adherence to equal requirements for appeals, realization of the rights, freedoms, and legal interests of individuals and legal entities, avoidance of bureaucratic and formalism in the consideration of appeals, and adherence to the principles of transparency in the activities of state bodies, organizations, and their responsible officials when dealing with appeals. Each state organization shall establish direct contact with the population in accepting appeals, ensure the protection of their rights, freedoms, and legal interests, ensure the effective functioning of the system for dealing with appeals, create conditions for the unconditional implementation of constitutional rights in the consideration of appeals, organize systematic monitoring and supervision over the consideration of appeals, establish procedures for registering, summarizing, systematizing, monitoring, and supervising appeals through the establishment of an electronic

information system, and widely use modern information and communication technologies in working with appeals. State bodies, organizations, and their responsible officials shall comply with the Constitution and laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan, seek solutions to ensure compliance with the requirements of full, comprehensive, and timely consideration of appeals, respect the violated rights and freedoms of individuals and legal entities, and protect their legal interests. When considering appeals, information about the personal life of individuals, the activities of legal entities, confidential information, and other information that may violate the rights, freedoms, and legal interests of individuals and legal entities, as well as other information that may be classified as state secrets or protected by law, shall not be requested or collected. State bodies, organizations, and their responsible officials shall not disclose additional information requested from individuals, legal entities, or other responsible officials of state bodies, organizations, or other persons, if the requested information does not contain state secrets or other classified information protected by law, does not harm the rights, freedoms, and legal interests of individuals and legal entities, and does not contradict social and state interests. If the requested information does not contain state secrets or other classified information protected by law and does not harm the rights, freedoms, and legal interests of individuals and legal entities, and does not contradict social and state interests, state bodies, organizations, and responsible officials shall provide the requested information within one day.

**Table 5:** Details of project GM

Step	Description of Process	Time Frame	Responsibility
GM implementation structure	GM can be submitted to the NASP complaints handling department, which will be directly reported to the responsible executant Communities and individuals who believe that they are adversely affected by a project supported by the World Bank may submit complaints to existing project-level grievance mechanisms or the Bank's Grievance Redress Service (Email: WB) Project-affected communities and individuals may submit their complaint to the Bank's independent Accountability Mechanism (email WB).	Regularly	NASP  WB
Grievance uptake	Grievances can be submitted via the following channels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• telephone hotline (+998 71) 239-59-23</li> <li>• web site: ihma.uz</li> <li>• Letter to Grievance focal points at local facilities</li> <li>• Complaint form to be lodged via any of the above channels</li> <li>• web site: ihma.uz</li> <li>• <a href="https://ijtimoiyhimoyaagentligi.taplink.ws">https://ijtimoiyhimoyaagentligi.taplink.ws</a></li> <li>• Walk-ins may register a complaint in a grievance logbook at a facility or suggestion box]</li> </ul>	Regularly	NASP
Sorting, processing	Any complaint received is forwarded to NASP, Logged in ihma.uz, and categorized according to the following complaint types: urgent, confidential/sensitive, etc.*	Upon receipt of the complaint	Local grievance focal points
Acknowledgment and follow-up	Receipt of the grievance is acknowledged to the complainant by NASP	Within 2 days of receipt	Local grievance focal points
Verification, investigation, action	Investigation of the complaint is led by NASP, proposed resolution is formulated by complaints handling department and communicated to the complainant's responsible executant	Within 10 working days	Complaint Committee is composed of responsible executant

Step	Description of Process	Time Frame	Responsibility
Monitoring and evaluation	Data on complaints are collected in complaints handling department and reported to responsible executant every 4 hours of the working day	4 hours of working day	Complaint Committee is composed of responsible executant
Provision of feedback	Feedback from complainants regarding their satisfaction with complaint resolution is collected complaints handling department	4 hours of working day	Complaint Committee composed of responsible executant
Training	Training needs for staff/consultants in the PIU, Contractors, and Supervision Consultants.	Quarterly	Complaint Committee composed of responsible executant
If relevant, payment of reparations following complaint resolution	Complaints may be submitted to the NASP at any time after concerns have been brought directly to the attention of NASP Management and after Management has been allowed to respond. For information on how to submit complaints to the NASP visit web site: ihma.uz	Regularly	Complaint Committee is composed of responsible executant

47. The GM provides an appeal process if the complainant is not satisfied with the proposed resolution of the complaint. Once all possible means to resolve the complaint have been proposed and if the complainant is still not satisfied, then they are advised of their right to legal recourse.
48. The World Bank and the Borrower do not tolerate reprisals and retaliation against project stakeholders who share their views about Bank-financed projects.
49. **Registering Gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse/sexual harassment GBV/SEA/SH related grievances:** When taking information and registering grievances of a GBV/SEA/SH nature the following steps will be strictly followed:
- No identifiable information on the survivor shall be stored in the Grievance Mechanism (GM)
  - The GM should not ask for, or record, information on more than the following related to the GBV/SEA/SH allegation:
    - The nature of the complaint (what the complainant says in her/his own words without direct questioning);
    - If, to the best of the survivor's knowledge, the perpetrator was associated with the project; If possible, the age and sex of the survivor; and, if possible, information on whether the survivor was referred to services.
  - The GBV/SEA/SH services provider will use its own case management system to respond to the case.
  - The above services will be offered even if a survivor does not wish to file a formal complaint or if the complaint is not related to the project before closing the case.
50. Ensuring Confidentiality and Obtaining Consent:
- Absolute confidentiality will be maintained for all grievances related to GBV/SEA/SH issues to prevent any risks of stigmatization and reprisals against the survivor.
  - This means that no information shall be disclosed at any time to any party without the informed consent of the person concerned. The survivor's consent will also be sought for undertaking any action on the grievance. Under no circumstance should the survivor be pressured to consent to any conversation, assessment, investigation, or other intervention with which they do not feel comfortable. In the case of children, informed consent is required from a parent or legal guardian and the children.

- A survivor can withdraw such consent at any time as well. If a survivor does not consent to sharing information, then only non- identifying information can be released or reported on.
- WHO Ethical and safety recommendations for researching, documenting and monitoring sexual violence in emergencies: [https://www.who.int/gender/documents/OMS\\_Ethics&Safety10Aug07.pdf](https://www.who.int/gender/documents/OMS_Ethics&Safety10Aug07.pdf) will be adopted.

51. SEA/SH incidents linked to project workers: Where SEA/SH grievances have been allegedly committed by project workers<sup>10</sup>, the grievance will also be reported and registered. The PIT social specialist will follow up and determine jointly with the GRM focal point of the respective partner agency (Village level, Divisional Secretary levels) the likelihood that the allegation is related to the Project. The PIT social specialist will follow up to ensure that the complaint was addressed appropriately, and the complainant was provided guidance on obtaining the services of the above-listed GBV service providers. The responsibility to implement any disciplinary action lies with the employer of the perpetrator, in accordance with the local legislation, labor laws, and employment contracts. The PIT social specialist will report back to the survivor on any steps undertaken and the results.
52. Reporting to World Bank: The GRM is required to inform the PIT Social Specialist within 24 hours of receiving the complaint. The PIT Social Specialist is required to notify the responsible staff of the Agency by sending the first draft of the ESIRT within 24 hours of receiving the details. If the incident is a severe one eg: sexual abuse, rape, or human trafficking, senior management and the VP of SAR must be notified. Survivor confidentiality should be always protected to prevent any risks of stigmatization and reprisals against the survivor. A corrective action plan must be developed to mitigate the risk of a similar re-occurrence and the PIT Social Specialist is required to monitor the implementation of the agreed actions.

## 8. MONITORING AND REPORTING

### 8.1. Summary of how SEP implementation will be monitored and reported

53. Monitoring reports documenting the implementation of the SEP, and other E&S measures and requirements, will be prepared by the PIT’s health and safety specialist hired under the project for submission to the NASP. These reports will also include a section regarding the management of grievances.
54. During the Project implementation phase, the ESS will prepare semi-annual and annual reports on the management of E&S issues; these reports will include an update on the implementation of the stakeholder engagement activities and include indicators in Table 4. Semi-annual reports will be used to develop the annual reports reviewed by the NASP director/project manager. semi-annual and annual reports will be shared with the World Bank.

**Table 6:** Stakeholder Engagement indicators to be documented in progress reports

<b>Engagement with Affected parties</b>	Number and location of different meetings with affected parties conducted when the situation allows
	Number of men and women that attended each of the meetings above
	Minutes of meetings, summarizing the views and comments of attendees, actions agreed upon with them, and the status of those actions will be annexed to the reports
<b>Engagement with other stakeholders</b>	Number and nature of engagement activities with other stakeholders, disaggregated by category of stakeholder (Governmental departments, private sector, UN agencies, CBOs)

<sup>10</sup> Project workers refers to people employed or engaged directly by the Borrower (including the project proponent and the project implementing agencies) to work specifically in relation to the project (direct workers) – Environmental and Social Framework, ESS2 – Labour and Working Condition, World Bank, page 31.

	Issues raised by stakeholders, actions agreed upon with them, and the status of those actions
	Minutes of meetings will be annexed to the semi-annual and annual reports
<b>Grievance Mechanism</b>	Number of grievances received from affected people, external stakeholders
	Number of grievances that have been (i) filed, (ii) resolved, (iii) closed, and (iv) number of responses that satisfied the complainants, during the reporting period disaggregated by category of grievance, gender, age, and location of complainant.
	Average time of complaint resolution process, disaggregated by gender of complainants and categories of complaints.

## 8.2. Reporting back to stakeholder groups

55. The SEP will be periodically revised and updated as necessary during project implementation. Semi-annual and annual summaries and internal reports on public grievances, inquiries, and related incidents, together with the status of implementation of associated corrective/preventive actions, will be collated by responsible staff and referred to the senior management of the project. The semi-annual and annual summaries will provide a mechanism for assessing both the number and nature of complaints and requests for information, along with the Project's ability to address those in a timely and effective manner. Information on public engagement activities undertaken by the Project during the year may be conveyed to the stakeholders in various ways: face-to-face and virtual meetings with individuals and when the situation allows; consultation events as the situation allows; updates on the project website and social media pages; as appropriate through electronic and print media etc. Feedback received through the GM will be responded to in writing and verbally, to the extent possible. Phone calls will also be used to respond to stakeholders whose telephone numbers are available.

### ANNEX 1. Name of participants in Consultation meeting with NGO at NASP

N_	Name, Surname	Position
1.	Abdurakhmanov Farkhad Pattakhovich	Deputy Chairman of the Association of Disabled People of Uzbekistan
2.	Mukhamedkhodjaev Aziz Salihovich	Specialist of the Disabled Environment of Uzbekistan
3.	Narpulatov Ergash Djuraevich	Chairman of the Blind Society of Uzbekistan
4.	Yarmukhamedov Shavkat Rinatlvich	Head of the Department of the Blind Society of Uzbekistan
5.	Abdullaev Kaiml Kadamovich	Chairman of the Disabled People's Society of Uzbekistan
6.	Egamberdiev Ghalibjon Abdiqadir ugli	Lawyer of the Society of Disabled People of Uzbekistan
7.	Omonturdiev Botir Toshtemirovich	Deputy Chairman of the Society of Disabled People of Uzbekistan
8.	Mustafaeva Shakhnoza Bayzakovna	Chairman of the disabled women's society "Friends" of the Tashkent region
9.	Shodieva Rana Odilovna	Deaf Society of Uzbekistan specialist
10.	Akramova Sofia Saidganievna	" SHAROIT PLUS " public association of disabled people
11.	Vladimir Zubenko	Head of the public association of people with disabilities in Tashkent
12.	Mukhamedkhodjaev Aziz Salihovich	Specialist of the public association of people with disabilities in Tashkent

### ANNEX 2. Consultation meeting with NGO at NASP





### **ANNEX 3. Name of participants on Consultation meeting with NGO at World Bank office**

Minutes of Stakeholder Consultations on E&S instruments in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

**Hosted by:** NASP

**Date:** February 25, 2024

**Venue:** Tashkent, Uzbekistan

**Number of attendants:** 25 persons from NGOs

**Objective:**

- ➔ To inform key stakeholders about the expected activities under the INSON Project and the measures taken to ensure environmental and social security. Disclosure of drafts of social and environmental assessment reports.
- ➔ To obtain stakeholders comments and feedback on the entire package of documents to be disclosed.

**Agenda:**

- 1) Welcome speech, Representatives from WB and NASP
- 2) Basic information about the scheduled activities under the INSON Project.;
- 3) Participants polling.

**Key issues resulting from these consultations**

- A. Organizations of persons with disabilities pointed out the barriers for persons with disabilities to access the LIFA benefit. These organizations estimate that around 80% of persons with disabilities will need social assistance targeted to the poorest population. The disability benefit is considered already as revenue which covers the basic needs of persons with disabilities. Some additional LIFA criteria make it difficult for households with persons with disabilities to be qualified for LIFA benefits, such as the existence of a car or television. However, the limited amount of Disability benefits cannot cover all extra costs related to disability.
- B. It is necessary to clearly define each type of social service and draft quality standards for them. A clear distinction between the functions of social workers and social assistants should be made in corresponding legislation. The social worker should focus more on case management, understanding needs, revealing problems, counseling, and referral, while social assistants should focus more on care provision. Furthermore, it is necessary to clarify the notion of social entrepreneurship.
- C. There are no standardized instruments allowing to identification of the beneficiary by social service providers clearly. Each NGO has its instruments for beneficiaries' profiles and plans – documents are not standardized. The participants stated the need for harmonization of beneficiary profiles between different stakeholders and providers.
- D. Some vulnerable groups are not in the spotlight of social protection policies, such as persons having AIDS/Tuberculosis /drug consumers, and thus they are not reached by social workers who would need dedicated training. There have been developed dedicated specialized training encompassing also psychological support and a standard course is under development for these target groups. Training can take half a year.
- E. Currently, university training for social workers is mostly theoretical. Graduate programs should include practical training modules that could be developed in partnerships with NGOs in which they could intern and get specific experience with specific groups.

**Specific services were mentioned as being particularly needed by persons with disabilities, as well as other groups:**

- Socialization and daycare services are important for persons with disabilities (children and adults). NGO reported providing support via daytime care centers where beneficiaries (children, adults) come during the day and spend time so that parents can work or participate in daily activities. Older people can be engaged as volunteers at such daycare facilities. According to the provider, replicating such a center at the level of each district would bring significant change.
- Current availability of home care for persons with disabilities is limited. The time of care actually needed may vary, from 2, 8 to 24 hours of care, whereas at the moment it is possible to receive only 2 hours of care

for the persons living alone. To create an inclusive environment, it would be needed for persons with different disabilities to receive support from social assistants via service providers as per their actual needs. Eligibility for such support should not be linked to criteria of whether a potential beneficiary has a car, for example.

- Vocational training is essential for persons with disabilities and may bring impressive outcomes. As per an NGO providing such support, it is important to focus on persons' dreams and aspirations, not limit persons' options to a range of limited professions.
- Support services are needed to support people with disabilities attain employment, but also other vulnerable categories. 2000 children with disabilities will graduate from boarding schools but do not have an enabling environment to work, dedicated support is needed. Day centers can potentially be connected to employment/adults could learn skills to promote their employment opportunities (like computer learning, business hubs). Access to employment is an issue for other vulnerable groups as well, such as former inmates (who, combined with housing issues, may take up to 6 months to find employment) or persons suffering from drug abuse. Social enterprises may be explored as measure.
- Legal support is also needed by persons with disabilities. In the criminal code we have the provision that the lawyer should be provided free of charge, but not in administrative cases, but persons with disabilities do not afford to hire attorneys or lawyers to defend themselves in such cases.
- Careers of persons with high support needs are insufficiently supported to be able to be active members of society. Services supporting parents of either children/adults with disabilities or of children beneficiaries of palliative care are missing. Mothers (predominantly) offer care and their care effort is also not accounted for as work experience.
- Hospice care is at the beginning of its development and training is essential. First hospice was established and social workers have an important role. Training modules were developed for them and tested. Psychological support is also key in the provision of the service (many children have received such support). The development of palliative care brigades is being discussed with NASP.

**The second part of this meeting pointed out necessary arrangements for the organization of the provision of social services by NGOs and other non-state actors:**

- A clear cooperation mechanism between public providers, specifically INSONs and NGOs is needed for social service provision. From the range of services provided by INSONs, an important part can be provided by NGOs. NGOs were mostly created based on the demand of persons needing specific services, thus have specialized in particular types of support. INSON may deliver better services if it will rely on such providers/NGOs.
- A formalized framework/platform listing all available social services would be useful, including all services provided by NGOs. For example, in the case of TB beneficiaries, the person is entered in a platform and referrals to doctors are arranged within it, which makes work more efficient. Especially considering that a lot of patients live in remote areas. However, internet coverage is an issue, or lack of phones of some vulnerable groups. Confidentiality of data is also an issue that needs to be considered for such a platform.
- Communication about the work carried out by NGOs needs to be enhanced to increase awareness and trust among public institutions/services and the general public. NGOs/private service providers have highlighted not being in competition with government agencies. To ensure this is not the perception of the public sector, better communication by NGOs toward the public sector with regard to activities developed and vulnerable groups covered may be needed. Not all people who need social services trust private organizations, there is more trust in state institutions. However, if service provision from private providers would be mediated/backed by public institutions, more trust would be gained by the population in private providers. Moreover, the population has limited information on private services. People first refer to Mahallas which are also insufficiently informed.
- Financing for social services is unpredictable. The budgets are often allocated for other expenses. At Khakim level, they are obliged to allocate funds for social orders, thus they prefer not to emit them. There are examples of NGOs that started working with Mahallas but had to stop their work because the financing was suddenly redirected. Central institutions can find other funding solutions.

- Flexibility in the provision of social services may be considered. A range of online social services may be considered/developed to be provided remotely, e.g., applications to help with shopping, reading, information, and provision of legal services.
- There may be more people needing services for persons with disabilities than what official data suggest. Parents may try to hide actual diseases of children and do not disclose the disability of their child. Better screening of the population will reveal more persons with disabilities. It is necessary also to organize specific efforts to combat existing stigmas.
- Engagement of social workers at local level is essential, and they should be trained into specific problems of persons with disabilities. Social workers should be available at level of Mahalla and guide persons with disabilities with regards to benefits and services they need to access (how to apply, what to do, etc.). It is very difficult for people who live far from key institutions to reach the closest specialist (especially if they have mobility issues). Additionally, there are specific domestic violence issues targeting women, including women with disabilities, that can be identified and addressed by the social worker at Mahalla level.
- Education of children with disabilities and/or special educational needs should be inclusive, and children's choices should be enabled. Children with disabilities and/or special educational needs should have the right to choose in regular schools – there are situations in which they could, even if they have cerebral palsy, etc. Many schools claim they are inclusive, but a study by the National Association of Persons with Disabilities revealed only 5 were adopted.
- The efficiency of INSON will have to be assessed, and monitoring of their accessibility should be carried out. An efficiency analysis would be needed after an estimated period of 2 years since start of implementation. Furthermore, although there are good steps made to ensure accessibility of public institutions, there is a specific example of INSON that doesn't allow physical access to the first floor of the building to persons with mobility disabilities. Buildings dedicated to INSONs should be carefully selected so that they ensure an accessible environment, in order not to create negative attitudes toward INSON.
- Simplifying the registration of national NGOs should be considered, especially if needed to ease the outsourcing of services to private providers. The registration comes with the requirement of having regional offices, with separate bank accounts. This may be difficult for certain entities that don't have this opportunity. The possibility of simplifying was suggested by NGOs to enable service provision in the regions. There are organizations that work in the regions but don't have regional offices. As per the Ministry of Justice, requirements for state registration as an NGO are general and refusals are explained.

Some difficulties are observed regarding the access of persons with disabilities to medical services. In terms of healthcare, for referrals, a specific range of blood tests are required, but they are not available in all polyclinics. One may be required to go to several places for blood tests that should be easy to access and the relevance of which is unclear for the referral. The Ministry of Health is currently reviewing the process and will revise it needed.

#	Name, Surname	Position
1.	Lutpullaeva Dilorom Gayratovna	National Association of Disabled Businesswomen of Uzbekistan
2.	Oybek Isakov	Association of Person with Disability
3.	Shodieva Guzal Uktamovna	Uzbekistan the deaf society
4.	Abdullaev Kamil Kadamovich	Society of Disabled People of Uzbekistan
5.	Abdullaev Kaiml Kadamovich	Society Against Cancer of Uzbekistan
6.	Alimova Vasila Sattarovna	Republican children social adaptation center
7.	Mirzarakhimova Khilola Abdukarimovna	“Inclusive life” community uniting of disabled people
8.	Tashev Kabin Ergashovich	“Mehribonlik” Tashkent society of Social Mutual Aid for the disabled

9.	Terepina Marina Nikolaevna	“UMIDVORLIK” Tashkent center for helping disabled children
10.	Makhmudova Gulnara Gulomnazarovna	“Businesswoman” Association of Businesswomen of Uzbekistan
11.	Ishankhodjaev Kamoliddin Nuriddinovich	National Association of Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations of Uzbekistan
12.	Bekmurodov Bobur Mansurovich	“Yuksalish” nationwide movement
13.	Khodjakhanova Munira Abdulkasrovna	“Ezgu Amal” public fund
14.	Djabbarova Guzal Telmanovna	“Kapalak Bolalar” NGO
15.	Nikitina Tatyana Sergeevna	“Intilish” Republican Information and Education Center
16.	Karimova Nodira Erkinovna	Republic “PROSPECTIVE GENERATION” social and information center
17.	Oliya Vladimirovna Ilmuratova	“Sustainable Life” international social-enlightenment center
19.	Shirinova Mavludakhan Rasulovna	“Sabr” Republican socio-economic development center
20.	Abdukadirov Gaffor Edson Cindy	OOO “Cheksiz Imkoniyatlar”

#### ANNEX 4. Consultation meeting with NGO at World Bank office

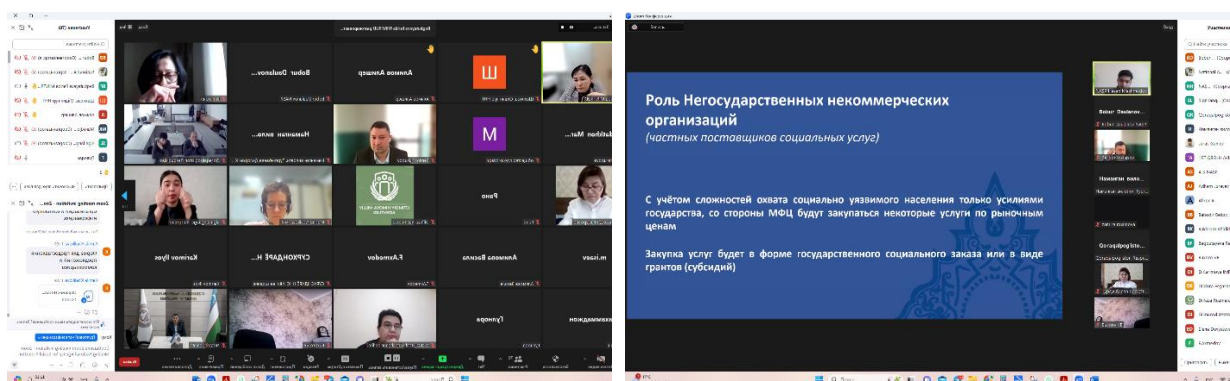


**ANNEX 5. Name of participants in Consultation meeting with NGO at NASP**

<b>#</b>	<b>Name, Surname</b>	<b>Position</b>
1.	Tashkhojaeva Ulmaskhon Khozhiakbarovea	Society of the Blind of Uzbekistan
2.	Ishankhanova Gulnora Amanovna	NGO Oila
3.	Rashidova Shirin	Nihol Center
4.	Ikhtiyarova Shakhnoza Makhmudovna	NGO Oydin nur
5.	Madbabaeva Muattar	Fergana regional branch of the Republican Center for Social Adaptation of Children
6.	Abidova Mukhai Rasulovna	Fergana regional branch of the Republican Center for Social Adaptation of Children
7.	Xusainov Qadam	Uzbekistan PWD Association Khorazm viloyat
8.	Yarmukhamedvo Shavkat	Society of the Blind of Uzbekistan
9.	Avazova Gulzoda Usmanovna	Denov district center for protection of social, economic and legal interests of women
10.	Begmatov Umid Tirkashevich	Istiqlol avlodi
11.	Bekmirzhev Mukhtor Lapasovich	"Dialogue" NNT
12.	Akhmedova Ezoza	Deaf Society
13.	Umarov Takhir Zhurabaevich	NGO Istiklol Avlodi
14.	Izzatov Dilmurod Tursunboevich	National association of non-governmental organizations of Uzbekistan, Tashkent city territorial division
15.	Tursunov Ergash Ismoil o'g'li	Disability Society of Jizzakh Region Paxtakor District
16.	Makhmudova Nargiza Kakhramonovna	NGO IYMON
17.	Gazieva Nargiza Charievna	NGO IYMON
19.	Karimov Ilyos Sattorovich	NGO Ezgu amal
20.	Karimova Zhamilakhon Vokhobovna	Charitable foundation "ZHAMILA" Fergana region
21.	Turdaliyev Botir Baxramdjanovich	NGO INTILISH
22.	Sviridova Natalya	Public Association "Yuksak Salohiyat"
23.	Alimov Alisher Botirovich	NGO "Anti-Cancer Society of Uzbekistan, Tashkent regional branch"
24.	Devyatova Elena Vasilievna	NGO RIOTS "INTILISH"
25.	Kuvatova Ziedullo Zhomboy ugli	Zhomboy Disability Society fog division
26.	Narzieva Samiya Akhralovna	Society of Disabled People of Navoi Region, Kanimekh District
27.	Yusupova Gulnora Tangirovna	"Ayol va shodlik" NGO
28.	Jorayev Adxam	Chairman of the regional branch of the Association of Disabled People of Uzbekistan, Syrdarya region
29.	Rakhmatullaeva Guzal Shukhratovna	TECHNO LAB PRO MCHJ
30.	Shamuratova Inobathon Salaevna	SOS Children's Villages
31.	Dadaboev Elmurod Mamatkhuzhaevich	Disability community Pop fog department
32.	Victoria Ashirova	Silver age, 60+
33.	Turakhodzhaeva Kamila Adkhamovna	Hospice Taskin

34.	Avezov Salamat Yuldasheviya	Karakalpak Republican regional branch of the public association of the Association of Disabled Persons of Uzbekistan
35.	Mallaev Bekzod Absamatovich	"Ezgulik" NGO
36.	Mustafayeva Shahnoza Bayzakovna	Toshkent region "DUGONALAR" NGO
37.	Tillaeva Nodira Doniyorovna	Public Association of Disabled People "INCLUSIVE SOCIETY" Tashkent
38.	Rajapova Ruzikhon Zhalolovna	Republican Center for Social Adaptation of Children Fergana Branch

## ANNEX 6. Consultation meeting with NGO at World Bank office



Minutes of Stakeholder Consultations on Component 2 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

**Hosted by:** NASP

**Date:** March 27, 2024

**Venue:** Tashkent, Uzbekistan

**Number of attendants:** 60 persons from NGOs

**Objective:** **March 27, 2024** At the initiative of the Agency and the World Bank, a meeting of non-governmental non-profit organizations, ministries and departments in the Republic of Uzbekistan and the World Bank was held to discuss the project “Innovative Social Protection System for the Integration of Vulnerable Groups of the Population” (“INSON”).

### 1. Opening of the meeting

The Head of the Agency's International Relations, Rating and Investment Department, S. Yusupov, welcomes the representatives of non-governmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and thanks them for their time to hold this meeting.

### 2. Presentation of the project by NAZS representatives

S. Yusupov introduces all participants to the reforms being carried out in the field of social protection of the population, the activities of the Agency, talks about the goals of the project “Innovative Social Protection System for the Integration of Vulnerable Groups of the Population” (“INSON”), its terms, and beneficiaries.

Participants were familiarized in detail with the components and subcomponents of the project that may directly relate to the activities of NGOs, in particular, attention was paid to Component 1. Strengthening the integration and response to shocks of the social protection system and Component 2. Improving access to and quality of social services for vulnerable groups population.

### 3. Introducing the concept of creating a Multifunctional Center for Social Services

The head of the consolidated department for the implementation of priority projects and information and analytical support of the Agency, **Kh. Makhmudov**, presented to the participants the concept of the

Multifunctional Center for Social Services, in particular, it was emphasized that the increase in the number of older people, the high proportion of people with disabilities, the increase in the number of orphans and large families, people in difficult life situations, the presence of cases of oppression and violence against women dictate the need to create a unified space for the provision of social services.

The speakers noted that the creation of the Center will serve to increase the creative potential, socialization and independence of vulnerable segments of the population in need of social protection, and will also serve to increase inclusive conditions and create an accessible environment. The types of services provided at the MFC were also presented, such as: social rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, support for employment and support for employed persons with disabilities, increased socialization of persons (children) with disabilities, day care for the elderly, work with children with Down syndrome, training in computer literacy, sewing skills, languages, caring for persons with disabilities, etc.

He further focused on the role of NGOs in the activities of the Multifunctional Center for Social Services, due to the difficulties of providing all social services and full coverage of the socially vulnerable population by the state, he noted that it is planned to **purchase social services of NGOs in the form of a state social order or in the form of grants (subsidies)**, in such directions as:

- Support for employment and support for employed persons with disabilities
- Training persons with disabilities, members of low-income families, victims of violence and others in computer literacy, sewing skills, languages, etc.
- Center for Children with Down Syndrome/Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Increasing the socialization of persons (children) with disabilities
- Training in caring for the elderly and persons with disabilities (including children with disabilities)
- Day care for the elderly.

At the end of his speech, the speaker called on representatives of all NGOs **to share their proposals** for activities and expanding the range of services provided by the Center, **noted the importance of each opinion and expressed hope for joint work within the framework of this component.**

#### **4. Exchange of views with representatives of NGOs**

S. Yusupov opens the question and answer session and asks representatives of NGOs to express their opinions and proposals on the Project.

M. Novikova of the World Bank notes the wide involvement of representatives of NGOs and organizations in this meeting and calls for active participation in providing comments and suggestions.

**training opportunities in computer skills and digital professions** in the sections of digitalization of social services and employment, as NGOs have within the framework of a project with USAID We already have accumulated experience in training 2,300 women in e-commerce, digital professions in SMM management, and targeting. As a second proposal, S. Tursunbaeva puts forward the idea of expanding access to social services through **the creation of an online platform for assessing psychological state**.

***For reference:** within the framework of the “Woman and Digital Economy” project, the foundation trained more than 2 thousand women from vulnerable segments of the population of the Tashkent, Jizzakh, Samarkand, Namangan regions and the Republic of Karakalpakstan in the basics of e-commerce and received certificates. Additional jobs have been opened, some participants have the opportunity to earn income and strengthen financial independence.*

V. Alimova, the head of the Republican Center for Social Adaptation of Children, expresses the opinion that all areas of the project are very relevant and asks in what form (conceptual or organizationally and financially developed) proposals should be provided and expresses readiness to provide proposals for various areas of providing social and legal services children, women, elderly people.

The representative of the Tashkent branch of the Society of the Deaf, Marie, thanks the organizers for providing the opportunity to express their opinions through sign language interpretation and the wide involvement of vulnerable segments of the population, including the deaf, in the activities of the Project; as a proposal, she puts forward an opinion on the inclusion of the deaf in the activities of this project.

In response S. Yusupov talks about creating an accessible environment in all Centers, as well as creating equal opportunities for deaf people to express their opinions through sign language interpretation.

I. Karimov, a representative of the Tashkent Hospice of the Public Foundation “Ezgu Amal”/student of the National University, notes the need to expand access to education at universities, the lack of sign language interpretation in educational processes and asks about the possibility of creating a barrier-free environment for people with disabilities, also proposes to create a staff of psychologists to provide psychological and social assistance in Oncology and Hematology centers.

S. Yusupov replies that at the moment joint work with psychologists is already underway, a staff of psychologists is being assigned to vulnerable segments of the population, work is underway to improve the qualifications of psychologists, social workers, supervisors, work has begun on creating training programs for social workers and in the future the possibility of providing psychological counseling will be considered assistance to the above categories of persons.

Representative of the Nihol Center I. Marupova talks about ongoing projects for women with disabilities, women with children with disabilities, women survivors of violence, research to identify their needs, provision of legal advice and proposes to **involve more lawyers and psychologists in the activities of the INSON Centers women for primary care** .

In response S. Yusupov talks about attracting women (60%-65%) as social workers and psychologists, based on the mentality and cultural characteristics of the country.

V. Ashirova, a representative of the initiative groups “Silver Volunteers” and “Silver Age,” notes that the Project contains a list of the majority of vulnerable segments of the population and that in recent years these services and social work have been provided mainly through the efforts of NGOs, not the state, and calls for involvement in training social workers experts with accumulated experience and knowledge and expresses readiness for more effective cooperation with Inson centers, not only through grant programs, but also through the provision of mentoring services and the services of experienced social workers.

WITH. Yusupov informs that the Agency operates a Center for Advanced Training of Social Workers, where seminars and trainings are held and they can establish cooperation with them.

An employee of the Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan F. Bekbutaeva asks how the activities of accompanying persons with disabilities will be paid or rewarded when the system of their employment is launched.

Representatives of the Agency S. Yusupov and D. Ergasheva answer that at the moment, support for persons with disabilities during employment is carried out through social workers and the NGO “Sharoit Plus”, and also that the Agency is working on developing a mechanism for this procedure and will soon. The draft document will be posted in the public domain.

A. Alimov, Chairman of the Tashkent regional branch of the NGO “Anti-Cancer Society of Uzbekistan,” asks whether he needs to cooperate with the Tashkent regional department of the Agency to create co-working centers with synergy with NGOs, proposes to expand medical and psychosocial services in all regions and expresses hope for further development of cooperation with Agency in this direction.

S. Yusupov explains that the range of medical and social services is different and includes many areas, and also informs about the possibility of cooperation between NGOs and the Tashkent regional administration.

A. Alimov adds that they have multidisciplinary staff consisting of doctors, psychologists and social workers.

*Suggestions submitted in writing:*

1. Organization of a mobile multidisciplinary team service to provide palliative care to cancer patients in Tashkent.
2. Organization of health centers for services to improve mental health of vulnerable groups of the population.
3. Training for employees of the Anticancer Society of Uzbekistan on the topic: “Social work among vulnerable groups of the population”



Representative of the International Women's Fund "Sharq Ayoli" S. Atabaeva proposes **to include children who have disabled parents as beneficiaries of the project and develop a platform for calculating social benefits using an electronic portal** .

In turn, S. Yusupov replies that the named category of persons is taken into account within the framework of the project, in particular, home care services are being introduced, work with the environment of persons with disabilities, and also informs that work has begun on the digitalization of social benefits, in particular the launch of a unified social register and work is underway to expand its functions.

The head of the Namangan branch of the NGO "Istikbolli Avlod" R. Nuriddinova informs the participants that the organization is engaged in providing legal and psychological assistance to vulnerable segments of the population and emphasized the importance of **working with parents of children with disabilities** , that they should **be provided with psychological assistance** , and also proposes **to organize groups of work with parents for their professional training in caring for children with disabilities** .

S. Yusupov replies that work is underway in this area and asks M. Novikova to correct whether this component is available within the project, to which M. Novikova responds that within the Project there is no specific component with this name and it is a cross-cutting topic, but The Project itself is precisely aimed at this and formats should be determined, perhaps working as groups, working with psychologists or within day care centers.

The head of the NGO "Inclusive Jamiyat" N. Tillaeva asks where training will be carried out for people with disabilities and informs that their organization provides this type of service and offers to assist in teaching people with disabilities English, Russian or any professions .

S. Yusupov replies that you can contact the nearest Inson Center on this issue and that the Monocenters and specialized courses provide training for people with disabilities.

D. Ergasheva adds that the Project provides for the provision of training services by NGOs within the framework of the Multifunctional Center for Social Services.

TETRATEK representative G. Ishankhanova suggests paying attention to assessing the risk of continued violence and considering this area of activity on the part of the Agency, perhaps within the framework of the work of social workers.

S. Yusupov replies that work has begun in this area to create case management, where conclusions will be given that will be taken into account when making decisions.

D. Ergasheva adds that the Project provides for a component for women victims of violence, where legal and psychological assistance will be available, it will be possible to apply to Rehabilitation Centers and expresses readiness to consider proposals within the framework of this component.

M. Akhmedov, a representative of the Society of the Deaf of the city of Tashkent, notes that he is an expert in helping deaf and blind persons and proposes to introduce courses on tactile communication/translation for families where there are deaf and blind persons 2/3 times a week, indicates what needs to be done taking into account this category of persons, teaching them literacy in the Uzbek language and expressing readiness to provide support as an expert.

Sh. Tillaeva, a representative of the NGO "Oydin Nur", proposes to involve sign language interpreters in the activities of the Agency and khokimiyats, opening a separate staff for them, increasing grants for NGOs for training persons with disabilities, establishing work with parents of children with disabilities in order to expand their worldview and prevent harassment and restrictions for children with disabilities, instead of preferential loans for entrepreneurs, increase the number of subsidies for expanding employment opportunities for people with disabilities; organize retail outlets for products made by people with disabilities in bazaars and shopping centers in every city or district.

Also, as a proposal, he puts forward the idea of introducing a voucher system for direct payment of funds for the purchase of medicines to certain categories of patients, so that they can independently purchase medicines without visiting clinics.

To which the head of the department of the Ministry of Health O. Zulpanov replies that it is impossible to introduce such a practice, since medicines are provided once a month free of charge, after assessing the condition of patients and it is necessary to regulate the doses of medicines by specialists.

Representative of the Association of Disabled Persons of the Republic of Karakalpakstan Zh. Ganiev proposes to create **special comprehensive courses to prepare for creating a family with persons with disabilities** , as well as **to create and show representatives of their families houses with a universal design** .

S. Yusupov replies that indirectly such work is done by the Committee of Women and Civil Registry Offices under the Ministry of Justice.

M. Kurbanova adds that the Agency's NGO Department is currently studying courses to prepare persons with disabilities for independent living and expresses its readiness to consider their proposals in this area. Representative of the International Women's Fund "Sharq Ayoli" S. Tursunbaeva offers, as an alternative assistance from the Fund, to provide assistance in opening online stores and provide a free subscription to use the e-commerce platform for a year for 10,000 users, which allows saving 10 million soums per year. each user.

*For reference: The Foundation is working on the startup "ANY MARKET". "Any market is a free innovative platform with a robot constructor for creating online stores and developing small and medium-sized businesses." The main goal of the STARTUP is to help achieve financial independence, discover new business opportunities through e-commerce, and also learn how to work on trading platforms by opening your own online store and website for your services for free.*

In addition, the speaker proposes to strengthen control over the implementation of the Presidential Decree of 2019 on providing prisoners with employment, through which the families of prisoners will be able to receive support and social security.

## ANNEX 7. Example Grievance Form

<b>Grievance Form</b>			
Grievance reference number (to be completed by GRM Focal Point):			
Contact details (maybe submitted anonymously)	Name (s):		
	Address:		
	Telephone:		
	Email:		
How would you prefer to be contacted (check one)	By mail/post: <input type="checkbox"/>	By phone: <input type="checkbox"/>	By email <input type="checkbox"/>
Preferred language	<input type="checkbox"/> Uzbek	<input type="checkbox"/> Russian	<input type="checkbox"/> other _____
Provide details of your grievance. Please describe the problem, who it happened to, when and where it happened, how many times, etc. Describe in as much detail as possible.			
What is your suggested resolution for the grievance, if you have one? Is there something you would like the Employment Support Center or another party/person to do to solve the problem?			
How have you submitted this form to the project?	Website <input type="checkbox"/>	email <input type="checkbox"/>	By hand <input type="checkbox"/>
	In person <input type="checkbox"/>	By telephone <input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify) <input type="checkbox"/>
Who filled out this form (If not the person named above)?	Name and contact details:		
Signature			
Name of Focal Point person assigned responsibility			
Resolved or referred to GRC1?	<input type="checkbox"/> Resolved	<input type="checkbox"/> Referred	If referred, date:
Resolved referred to GRC2?	<input type="checkbox"/> Resolved	<input type="checkbox"/> Referred	If referred, date:
<b>Completion</b>			
Final resolution (briefly describe)			
	Short description	Accepted? (Y/N)	Acknowledgment signature
1 <sup>st</sup> proposed solution			
2 <sup>nd</sup> proposed solution			
3 <sup>rd</sup> proposed solution			