

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

NGOs and CSOs Capacity Support Project in Afghanistan

**PRELIMINARY
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN (SEP)**

May 2022

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACBAR	Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief and Development
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CDC	Community Development Council
CHSS	Community Health, Safety and Security
CO	Country Office
DFA	Department of Foreign Affairs
ESHS	Environment, Social, Health and Safety
E&S	Environment and Social
ESS	World Bank's Environment and Social Standards
ESCP	Environmental and Social Commitment Plan
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
IP	Implementation Partner
ITA	Interim Taliban Administration
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LMP	Labour Management Procedure
LVG	Low Value Grant
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
PMU	Project Management Unit
QIP	Quick Impact Project
SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SH	Sexual Harassment
SMS	Short Message Service
SECU	UNDP's Social and Environmental Compliance Unit

SES	UNDP's Social and Environment Standards
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
SRM	UNDP's Stakeholder Response Mechanism
ToR	Terms of Reference
TPMA	Third-Party Monitoring Agent
ToT	Training of Trainers
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Fund for Children
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
USD	United States Dollar

1 INTRODUCTION/PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1.1 Project Background

The Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) Capacity Building Support Project in Afghanistan will enhance capacity of non-governmental implementation partners in delivering quality basic services to the most vulnerable in the communities. This includes addressing the challenges that NGOs and CSOs are facing and simultaneously supporting them to curve their civil society space and participation in medium to long term. The Project aims to target both operational NGOs to enhance basic service delivery, and CSOs especially those who are women-led and advocates for women's rights, as well as supporting and advocating for persons with disabilities. Capacity building support will be provided in parallel to NGOs/CSOs implementation of agreed activities, which will also facilitate on-the-job learning. This project targets NGOs and CSOs who have operational and programmatic capacity to quickly outreach and engagement with the vulnerable communities to design the interventions based on the community needs and implement on time. The selection criteria are composed of eligibility criteria to indicate which NGOs and CSOs are eligible, and priority criteria to prioritise NGOs and CSOs (or clusters of NGOs/CSOs where relevant) and implement Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) with small grants (Low Value Grants). This will facilitate kick-starting of NGOs and CSOs operations on the ground and keeping their staff, while QIPs will support local communities' access to basic services, social protection, and other livelihoods opportunities.

The Project will build capacity for a total of 200 – 250 NGOs and CSOs across the 8 regions and 34 provinces of Afghanistan. Implementation is planned for 24 months.

1.2 Purpose of the SEP

The purpose of preliminary Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) is to identify different stakeholders and develop an approach for reaching each of the sub-groups. In simpler terms, it provides an appropriate approach for consultations and disclosure. These in turn are expected to create an atmosphere of understanding that actively involves project-affected people and other interested parties, reaching out to them in a timely manner, and that each subgroup is provided opportunities to voice their opinions and concerns. Overall, SEP serves the following purposes: i) stakeholder identification and analysis; (ii) planning engagement modalities viz., effective communication tool for consultations and disclosure; and (iii) enabling platforms for influencing decisions; (iv) defining role and responsibilities of different actors in implementing the Plan; and (iv) grievance redress mechanism (GRM).

This is to notice that this preliminary SEP will be subject to stakeholder consultation. The revised SEP that includes information on the consultation held will be disclosed as per the timeline in the environmental and social commitment plan (ESCP).

1.3 About the Project

The main objective of the Project is to enhance the capacities of registered national and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and select civil society organization (CSOs) to improve their effectiveness and accountability. The Project comprises of four components which will be implemented over 24 months.

Component 1: Mapping & Capacity Strengthening of select NGOs and CSOs. The objective of this component will be to provide capacity strengthening support to select NGOs and CSOs. This support will

be informed by a comprehensive overview of the NGOs and CSOs currently operating in Afghanistan. Through the rapid mapping and needs assessment, the project will identify and mobilize the relevant CSOs and NGOs to train, to be selected based on transparent eligibility and priority criteria. The Project will only work with organizations where women are not prohibited to participate, as workers and recipients of aid/services (see *infra* – Entry Criterion of Access, ECA). This component will comprise three sub-components: a) Mapping exercise to screen the landscape of national/local NGOs in Afghanistan today; b) Rapid Needs assessment to inform the strategic capacity building plan and the elaboration of shared standards; and c) The delivery of capacity-building will include three sub-activities: (i) direct provision of training; (ii) hands-on support on-the-job training; and (iii) and production of self-instruction handbooks and kits to promote self-study.

Component 2: Provision of operational support grants to select NGOs and CSOs. The objective of this component is to provide cash awards to select NGOs/CSOs to support their capacity to deliver, by helping them to reactivate their operations, retain key staff and implement quick impact projects in support of the most vulnerable populations. Typically, operational support grants aim to support core funding, boost organizational capacity and solicit development solutions for which no repayment is required. This component will prioritize women-led organizations and local NGOs and CSOs that serve the most vulnerable and marginalized populations.

Component 3: Development and Coordination of NGO platform(s). The objective of this component is to strengthen the dialogue and coordination structures of the NGO sector that exist at national and provincial levels. This component will follow a two-pronged approach: (i) design of the platform(s) based on stakeholders' consultations to agree on objective, vision statement, structure, operating procedures; and (ii) development and deployment of the platform(s).

Component 4: Implementation Support. This component will allow the lead implementing partner to manage and oversee the program.

1.4 Project Beneficiaries

Targeted beneficiaries amount to 300 NGOs and 100 CSOs for capacity support and 150 NGOs and 50 CSOs for operational support grants in 34 provinces across the country. A total of 2,400 persons (through 3 technical and 3 generic/ management trainings) trained.

These include NGOs/CSOs that support delivery of critical services in the area of Health, Education, Food Security, and Livelihoods to the most vulnerable and marginalized groups, including ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities (PWDs), and women and girls. The Project will support NGOs/CSOs that support women and girls' rights and their empowerment in addition to women-led NGOs and CSOs. Through the rapid mapping exercise and based on the eligibility criteria and priority criteria of the NGOs and CSOs that provide services to the most vulnerable communities and aim to achieve tangible results linked to the needs and priorities identified by the communities, the NGOs and CSOs would be selected for the capacity strengthening support. The Project will provide cash award to select NGOs and CSOs to support their capacity to implement QIPs with a ceiling of up to USD 40,000 (or Low Value Grants – LVG). This will facilitate kick-starting of NGOs and CSOs operations on the ground and keeping their staff, while QIPs will support local communities' access to basic services, social protection and other livelihoods opportunities.

While the selection of QIPs to be funded through small grants will be identified during project implementation, initial estimates indicate approximately 400 NGOs/CSOs employees in 8 regions across the 34 provinces will ultimately benefit from operational support grants.

1.5 Potential Environmental and Social Risks and Management Measures

1.5.1 Environmental Risks

Potential environmental risks are considered low given that the project is designed to provide technical assistance in the form of capacity strengthening and grant support to CSOs and registered local NGOs. The Project has no physical footprint and the LVGs and livelihood activities will be limited in scope and are envisaged to not pose environmental risks requiring mitigation measures. There is expected to be positive environmental impacts from this project based on the support for capacity building and livelihoods initiatives which will support communities, CSOs and NGOs with skills for income generation which will prevent over exploitation of natural resources which could potentially occur without the intervention of this project in the current times.

1.5.2 Social Risks

The social risks and impacts are moderate, given that it is the aim of the project to enhance the capacities of NGOs and CSOs to improve their performance and effectiveness. The Project's adverse social risks and impacts are: i) exclusion and discrimination of potential beneficiaries (NGOs and CSOs); ii) risk of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (SEA/SH); iii) risk of non-compliance of labor and working conditions; iv) risk of data insecurity on private information; v) risk of spreading of communicable diseases especially Covid 19; and (vi) potential security threats to project staff and participating NGOs/CSOs is a contextual risk to be considered; . Overall, the project will have significant positive benefits in the form enhanced capacity of the local NGOs and CSOs in delivering essential services in the areas of agriculture, health, education, livelihoods, and social protection which are required in Afghanistan.

1.5.3 Environmental and Social Instruments

1.6 The Project entails certain environmental and social (E&S) risks and potential adverse impacts. The project is assigned a Moderate Risk rating based on the environmental and social risk classification procedure. E&S risk mitigation measures will be detailed in the de facto environmental and social management plan (ESMP) comprising - Labor Management Procedure (LMP), COVID19 infection prevention measures, security risk management measures according to UN protocol, SEA/SH action plan, and negative list of activities. As outlined in the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP), these plans will be developed and implemented to ensure consistency with the relevant ESSs (ESS1, ESS2, ESS4, ESS10), UNDP's SES and acceptable to the association. The E&S requirements/obligations mentioned as part of the plans are to be incorporated in the grant agreements, responsible party agreements and consultancy Terms of Reference. Scope and Structure of the SEP

Scope of the SEP shall be as outlined in the World Bank's ESS10. The World Bank's Environment and Social Standard 10 sets out that a Borrower has to engage with stakeholders as an integral part of a Project's environmental and social assessment and project design and implementation. The nature, scope and frequency of the engagement should be proportional to the nature and scale of the Project. Consultations with stakeholders have to be meaningful and be based on stakeholder identification and analysis, plans

on how to engage stakeholders, disclosure of information, actual consultations, as well as responses to stakeholder grievances, and reporting back to stakeholders.¹

In addition, the project applies UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards (www.undp.org/ses), including commitments and requirements related to meaningful, effective, and informed stakeholder engagement.²

This document has 9 chapters which are outlined below:

- Chapter 1- This chapter serves as an Introduction. It provides a brief about the Project and the context in which the SEP is being prepared.
- Chapter 2 - A summary of the consultations held so far is presented in Chapter 2.
- Chapter 3 - Chapter 3 lists the regulatory framework UNDP (including WB ESF requirements on stakeholder engagement), which provides legitimacy for SEP. Stakeholder Mapping and Analysis is elaborated in the chapter
- Chapter 4 – Presents the stakeholder mapping and analysis
- Chapter 5 - Provides the Stakeholder Engagement program
- Chapter 6 - Details the resources and responsibilities for implementing the SEP
- Chapter 7 – Presents the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM)
- Chapter 8 – Details the Monitoring and reporting component of the SEP
- Chapter 9 - Presents the estimated budget of the SEP.

2 Brief Summary of Previous Stakeholder Engagement Activities

UNDP Afghanistan (AFG) has consulted representatives from fifteen CSOs³ from Mazar, on the current challenges, opportunities and needs. Consultations were also held with women's group, women business owners, and CSOs in Kandahar to better identify their needs, challenges, and opportunities. Initial consultations were also held with the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief and Development (ACBAR). Through other ongoing project interventions, UNDP AFG is also engaging directly with the communities on prioritization of needs and engaging beneficiaries (including marginalized and vulnerable groups, people with disabilities, elderly and women) of livelihoods interventions, support to women-led Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and enhanced service delivery through infrastructure rehabilitation and provision of solar energy. Through the Banking and Private Sector-led Community Resilience initiatives, UNDP has also held extensive consultations with the Afghan private sector, including the banking and micro finance institutions sector, women-led businesses, technical experts as well as donors. In the elaboration of a joint initiative on health and livelihoods, UNDP has held consultations with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) and through the implementation of various initiatives on health under the Global Fund, is closely engaged with the stakeholders in the health sector, including NGOs/CSOs and relevant authorities at Kabul and provincial level. UNDP is also part of the Food Security and Agriculture Cluster and the Cash and Voucher Working Group, where United Nations (UN) agencies and humanitarian partners, including NGOs and

¹ World Bank, Environmental and Social Framework. Setting Environmental and Social Standards for Investment Project Financing, August 2016.

² UNDP, Social and Environmental Standards (www.undp.org/ses), 1 January 2021 version.

³ March 8, 2022

CSOs are engaged for a harmonized approach to delivery of critical support. Consultations were also held with the Head of the Inter-Cluster Coordination Team to better understand the needs and challenges of the NGO/CSO partners (currently 201 with operational capacity⁴). The inputs were reflected in the development of the proposed approach and activities of the Project.

Table 1. Previous Stakeholder Consultations

Place	Date	Participants	Key points raised
Mazar	8 March 2022	15 NGOs/CSOs involved in social cohesion and project implementation, UNDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many CSOs need support for capacity building in terms of finance management, human resource management, and results-based management. • Need for access to funding to be able to operate in legal aid, women's empowerment, health, education, and children's rights. • Expressed the need to develop a longer-term relationship with the UN as implementing partners. • CSOs also need support to improve their data collection capacity with new tools such as artificial intelligence (AI) or just simple tools such as survey monkey. Further, many CSO needs to improve their ICT capacity, to address the restricted mobility women face. • Improve and contribute to girls' education by organizing teachers and educated women to teach young girls. • Support for innovation and technology in many different areas, including digital marketing for women-led businesses, providing data scholarships for young girls to learn virtually and teaching smart community agriculture using innovative approaches. Technology and innovation are some of the key areas in which CSOs would like to receive support.
Kandahar	29 November 2021	Women MSME representative, NGO/CSOs (including CDCs) (18 F; 7 M), UNDP, UN Women, FAO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The constraints and opportunities for women entrepreneurs and civil society activists, particularly the legal aid providers were discussed.

⁴ Operational capacity is defined as the potential ability of organizations to access affected populations and deliver humanitarian services if needed. The number includes NGOs/CSOs currently receiving and delivering on the Afghan Humanitarian Pooled Funds, and those implementing the Humanitarian Response Plan. (October to December 2021, OCHA)

Place	Date	Participants	Key points raised
Kandahar	29 November 2021	Traders and CDC representatives (about 40 M), UNDP, UN Women, FAO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The barriers for the promotion of trade and industry and essential service provision to the citizens were discussed.
Kabul	19 April 2022	ACBAR Director, UNDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of ACBAR and changes since post-August 15. Ongoing support and operational capacities of ACBAR, including mapping Needs and challenges of NGOs/CSOs in AFG and ACBAR network members Ongoing discussions/plans for support on NGO/CSOs in AFG to strengthen coordination Coordination structure, capacities of ACBAR (5 Regional Offices and 1 Office in Kabul)
Kabul		UN Women, UNFPA, UNDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion on upcoming initiatives and joint proposals on NGO-CSO capacity building support Areas of coordination /coherence required
Istanbul	8 November 2022; 5 December 2022	Afghan Private sector Commercial Banks, IFIs, MFIs UNCDF, UNDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current constraints and challenges in the banking and financial sector, payments Proposed immediate solutions to safeguard the banking and payments system and address the liquidity issues Need to stronger engagement for MFIs for jobs/livelihoods and MSME support in communities
Istanbul	28 February to 2 March 2022	Afghan Private sector Commercial Banks, IFIs, MFIs, UNCDF, UNDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Validation of proposed solutions in support of banking and financial sector in AFG Proposed solutions for a private sector led recovery in AFG
Kabul and Mazar	28-29 March 2022	Afghanistan Women Chamber of Commerce & Industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AWCCI changes since August 2021 Support for operations and capacity building of its existing staff Support to conduct data collection & research on women businesses across Afghanistan Assistance for women entrepreneurs in the northern region through AWCCI

Place	Date	Participants	Key points raised
Doha	29-31 March 2022	UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA, UNDP, IOM International NGO/CSOs USAID, Gates Foundation WB Ministry of Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priorities of Health sectors in Afghanistan • Challenges of NGOs/CSOs face including areas of support required in the delivery of health services, including a greater role for community health service delivery (and how to reach remote areas) i.e. community health workers and mobilizers • Need to update BPHS, EPHS, under Sehatmandi
Kabul	8 April 2022	EU, UNDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU's current support to ACBAR on development of CSO roadmap • Need for a coordinated approach from partners/donors on NGO-CSO support in Afghanistan
Kabul	21 April 2022	UNDP, Asia Green Hut Organization (AGHO), Afghan Planning Agency (APA), Keenly Humanitarian Assistance for New Afghanistan Organization (KHANAO), Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium (HRRAC), Afghan Women Skills Development Center (AWSDC), Afghanistan Independent Rehabilitation Organization (AIRO), Afghanistan Independent Rehabilitation Organization (AIRO) and Search for Common Ground (SFCG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues with the DFA in implementing certain programs, such as the women's peace museum work aimed at engaging women in peacebuilding and conflict resolution in one district. • Need to learn negotiation skills, especially for working in a strict Islamic Shariya context. • Need to learn the Islamic way of implementing programs with a do-no-harm approach and improve abilities when it comes to surveys, data analysis, online software for data collection, organisational development and coaching, proposal writing and financial capacity including learn about social enterprise and social marketing skills. • Explore strategic and tactical options for how to market development, peace and conflict resolution concepts to the DFA.

3 Regulatory Framework

3.1 World Bank ESF Framework on Stakeholder Engagement

The World Bank Environmental and Social Standard (ESS) 10, “Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure”, recognizes “the importance of open and transparent engagement between the Borrower and project stakeholders as an essential element of good international practice” (World Bank, 2017: 97). Specifically, the requirements set out by ESS10 are the following:

- “Borrowers will engage with stakeholders throughout the project life cycle, commencing such engagement as early as possible in the project development process and in a timeframe that enables meaningful consultations with stakeholders on project design. The nature, scope and frequency of stakeholder engagement will be proportionate to the nature and scale of the project and its potential risks and impacts.
- Borrowers will engage in meaningful consultations with all stakeholders. Borrowers will 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, and intimidation.
- The process of stakeholder engagement will involve the following, as set out in further detail in this ESS: (i) stakeholder identification and analysis; (ii) planning how the engagement with stakeholders will take place; (iii) disclosure of information; (iv) consultation with stakeholders; (v) addressing and responding to grievances; and (vi) reporting to stakeholders.
- The Borrower will maintain and disclose as part of the environmental and social assessment, a documented record of stakeholder engagement, including a description of the stakeholders consulted, a summary of the feedback received and a brief explanation of how the feedback was taken into account, or the reasons why it was not.” (World Bank, 2017: 98).

A Stakeholder Engagement Plan proportionate to the nature and scale of the project and its potential risks and impacts needs to be developed by the Borrower. It has to be disclosed as early as possible, and before project appraisal, and the Borrower needs to seek the views of stakeholders on the SEP, including on the identification of stakeholders and the proposals for future engagement. If significant changes are made to the SEP, the Borrower has to disclose the updated SEP (World Bank, 2017: 99). According to ESS10, the Borrower should also propose and implement a grievance mechanism to receive and facilitate the resolution of concerns and grievances of project-affected parties related to the environmental and social performance of the project in a timely manner (World Bank, 2017: 100).

For more details on the WB Environmental and Social Standards, please follow the below links:

www.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/environmental-and-social-framework/brief/environmental-and-social-standards and <http://projects-beta.vsemirnyjbank.org/ru/projects-operations/environmental-and-social-framework/brief/environmental-and-social-standards>

3.2 UNDP’s Social and Environmental Standards Requirements Related to Stakeholder Engagement

The UNDP Social and Environmental Standard (SES), Part C, on Social and Environmental Management System requires meaningful, effective and informed participation of stakeholders in the formulation and

implementation of UNDP programmes and projects. Stakeholder engagement is an ongoing process that may involve, to varying degrees, the following elements: stakeholder analysis and planning, disclosure and dissemination of information, consultation and meaningful participation, dispute resolution and grievance redress, ongoing reporting to affected communities and stakeholders, and inclusion of stakeholders in monitoring and evaluation.

Stakeholder analysis and engagement is to be conducted in a gender-responsive, culturally sensitive, non-discriminatory and inclusive manner, ensuring that potentially affected vulnerable and marginalized groups are identified and provided opportunities to participate. Measures are to be undertaken to ensure that effective stakeholder engagement occurs where conditions for inclusive participation are unfavorable.

Meaningful, effective and informed stakeholder engagement and participation is to be undertaken that seeks to build and maintain over time a constructive relationship with stakeholders, with the purpose of avoiding or mitigating any potential risks in a timely manner. The scale and frequency of the engagement should reflect the nature of the activity, the magnitude of potential risks and adverse impacts, and concerns raised by affected communities.

Meaningful, effective and informed consultation processes in UNDP programmes and projects aims to identify priorities of stakeholders and provide them with opportunities to express their views at all points in the programme and/or project decision-making process on matters that affect them and allows the programme and/or project teams to consider and respond to them.

Consistent with UNDP's Information Disclosure Policy, UNDP is also committed to ensuring that relevant information about UNDP programmes and projects is disclosed to help affected communities and other stakeholders understand the opportunities, risks and impacts of the proposed activities.

UNDP ensures that information on programmes and/or project's purpose, nature and scale, and duration, and its risks and potential impacts, is made available in a timely manner, in an accessible place, and in a form and language understandable to affected persons and other stakeholders, including the general public, so they can provide meaningful input into programme and/or project design and implementation.

For more details on UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards, please follow the below link:

<https://www.undp.org/SES>

4 STAKEHOLDER MAPPING AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Stakeholder Mapping and Analysis

ESS 10 recognizes two broad categories of stakeholders: 1) those likely to be affected by the Project because of actual impacts or potential risks to their physical environment, health, security, cultural practices, well-being, or livelihoods (project affected parties), and 2) other interested parties. Stakeholders for the project are categorized accordingly and summarized below

For the NGOs and CSOs Capacity Support Project in Afghanistan, 'affected parties' will primarily be the targeted beneficiaries, specifically the selected NGOs/CSOs and networks.

4.2 Project-Affected Parties

Table 2. List of Project Affected Parties

Stakeholder	Description
NGOs and CSOs selected for support	<p>The NGOs and CSOs with proven track record of providing services to the most vulnerable communities in the sectors of education, health and livelihood opportunities would be eligible for the capacity building support. NGOs/CSOs selected for support will be key partners in the project and its delivery, including through delivery of small grant funded QIPs to be implemented by the NGOs/CSOs.</p> <p>NGOs/CSOs that support rights of women and girls and their empowerment including the women-headed NGOs and CSOs would be prioritized for the capacity building support and small grants.</p>
NGO Networks	Services of NGO networks such as ACBAR would be used in negotiations/ access/advocacy and coordination in implementing the activities defined primarily in in Output 1 of the Project.
Project Workers	Project workers (including project workers from UNDP, contractors, responsible parties, grantees) may also be affected given potential impacts and risks related to the delivery of the project. Labour Management Procedures and workplace grievance mechanisms will be in place.

4.3 Other Interested Parties

Table 3. List of Other Interested Parties

Stakeholder	Description
World Bank	As the donor for the project, the World Bank is a key stakeholder in the project.
UN agencies	Several UN agencies have continued to operate in Afghanistan and are engaged in humanitarian assistance as well as continuation of development activities. Agencies in the fields relevant for this Project include UNICEF, UN Women, UNFPA, UNOPS and IOM.
Interim Taliban Administration (ITA)	The ITA and their central and provincial authorities are interested parties and can influence this project.
Other networks	Several network agencies have continued to operate in Afghanistan and are engaged in humanitarian assistance as well as continuation of development activities. Networks in the fields relevant for this Project include Afghan Women Network, Afghanistan Civil Society Forum - Organisation, Afghan Humanitarian Pooled Funds, Southwestern Afghanistan and Balochistan Association and their member organizations.
Other donors	Donors including USAID and EU have previously provided capacity strengthening support to NGOs/CSOs and are also looking to continue the support.
ACBAR	Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief & development (ACBAR) being a national, independent NGO has been providing a platform for information-sharing and networking for a number of national and international NGOs in Afghanistan. ACBAR will play a crucial role for coordination and GRM functionality and can be a custodian agency for maintaining of project data after project completion.
Steering Committee	The Project will also include a Steering Committee to be comprised of ACBAR, other networks, UN agencies.

Community members and leaders	With formal administration systems in question under the present circumstances, community leaders including clan and religious leaders play a vital role in community entry and the attainment and social license to operate. The elected member/s of a rural community under existing CDC which is headed by a community leader. They are democratically elected by all village residents.
CDCs	CDCs are community-based organizations, composed equally of men and women democratically elected by their communities. These non-governmental bodies have been operating in Afghanistan for over 18 years. There are over 35,000 CDCs established in 361 districts in all of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces, providing the main participatory platform for service delivery in an estimated 90 percent of villages in rural Afghanistan and most major urban cities. CDCs could serve as useful entry points for creating safe spaces for women. CDCs have been found to effectively engage women to address their concerns and priorities in rural communities. Women have received essential livelihoods assistance and improved education, health and nutrition services through their participation in CDC subcommittees.
Host communities	Often tension is reported between IDPs and their host communities, typically in urban locations. It is therefore important to also attend to the needs of host communities.

4.4 Disadvantaged / Vulnerable Individuals and Groups

The Project will focus on targeting support to NGOs and CSOs working for the disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals and groups. The vulnerability factors will inform the eligibility criteria, prioritization of provinces, selection of QIPs to receive small grant funding, and performance/monitoring indicators. Intersectionality can particularly contribute to vulnerability, for example where IDPs or PWDs are female and heading a household. Special attention will be paid to such intersectionality in the consideration of NGOs/CSOs targeted for support as well as the QIPs to receive small grant funding.

Table 4: Engagement of vulnerable persons and groups

No.	Vulnerable Group and Individuals	Characteristic/Needs	Preferred Needs of Notification/Consultation	Additional Resources Required
1	Persons with Disabilities (PWD)	PWD are particularly marginalized in Afghanistan. PWD are more likely to be excluded from participation and benefitting from public services.	Individual and group consultations, leaflets and information through information cell	Mobilize external resource agencies who work with all these target groups
2	Women and Girls	There are gender-specific protection and inclusion concerns particularly among rural and urban populations. In terms of livelihoods, women dominate in many aspects.	Individual consultation. Deploy a dedicated female liaison officer to the information cell. Use specially designed print media.	Meetings to be held only during holidays at convenient time

No.	Vulnerable Group and Individuals	Characteristic/Needs	Preferred Needs of Notification/Consultation	Additional Resources Required
		<p>Although women play a critical role in the maintenance of household livelihoods, they generally have less access to productive resources, services and employment opportunities, contributing to a significant gap between men and women's productivity. Given the protracted conflict situation, there are serious GBV concerns across Afghanistan.</p>		
3	Persons living below poverty line	<p>Almost 70 percent of the rural population depends on agriculture. Crops are mainly rain-fed, which makes agriculture a vulnerable livelihood. Livestock levels have fluctuated due to droughts. Generally, droughts as well as flooding, and years of protracted conflict has resulted in high levels of poverty of rural households.</p> <p>Urban growth has significantly increased in Afghanistan over the last couple of decades. In 2020, the WB recorded 3.4 percent of urban growth. The urban population accounted for over 10 million people in the country. This has come along with increased poverty, many urban poor households living in slums</p>	Community radio, community meetings, notice boards, community mobilizers to reach out	May require special assistance to attend community meetings, may not have access to electronic means

No.	Vulnerable Group and Individuals	Characteristic/Needs	Preferred Needs of Notification/Consultation	Additional Resources Required
		due to disorganized urban growth.		
4	IDPs	Suffering from protracted conflict, Afghanistan has been subject to an acute internal displacement crisis. Since the US withdrawal from the country, more than 240,000 Afghans have been internally displaced. An estimated 3.5 million are displaced in total. IDPs often constitute the most vulnerable populations in urban as well as rural environments, given their lack of access to livelihoods, loss of homes, and lack of a social infrastructure. Due to the low level of education prevalent amongst the affected persons, this Group focusses on informal sector business and other activities.	Individual and group consultations, leaflets and information through information cell	Need special attention through dedicated community engagement specialist
5	Population living in hard-to-reach places	Rural population (% of total population) in Afghanistan was reported at 73.97 % in 2020, according to the World Bank collection of development indicators, compiled from officially recognized sources. Most of these population reside in hard-to-reach places with no access to basic services.	Community radio, community meetings, notice boards, community mobilizers to reach out	Mobilize external resource agencies who work with these target groups
6	Ethnic and Religious Minorities	Afghanistan is made up of various ethnic and religious groups with a number of ethnic and religious minorities living	Community radio, community meetings, notice boards, community mobilizers to reach out	Mobilize external resource agencies who

No.	Vulnerable Group and Individuals	Characteristic/Needs	Preferred Needs of Notification/Consultation	Additional Resources Required
		in a precarious condition post takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban in August 2021. These groups usually comprise of individuals with low level of education and are reluctant to participate in consultations.		work with these target groups
7	Vulnerable households lacking abled bodied members in urban areas	The most vulnerable households lack any abled bodied members that could potentially participate in cash for work schemes. These include, for example, female-headed households, children-headed households, or households only consisting of elderly people.	Individual and group consultations, leaflets and information through information cell	Use community groups to disseminate information
8	Female-headed households	Given many men have died in the decades of conflict, a continuous increase in female-headed households has been recorded. This has resulted in changes of the intra-household roles. Female-headed households are more likely to be vulnerable.	Individual consultation. Deploy a dedicated female liaison officer to the information cell. Use specially designed print media.	Meetings to be held only during holidays at convenient time
9	Elderly People	Afghanistan has been named the worst country for elderly people to live in for several years. Elderly people have little access to economic resources, no pensions, and little access to services. Where communities cannot cater for elderly people, they belong to the poor societal groups.	Community radio, community meetings, notice boards, community mobilizers to reach out	Use community groups to disseminate information May require special assistance to attend community meetings, may not have access to electronic means

No.	Vulnerable Group and Individuals	Characteristic/Needs	Preferred Needs of Notification/Consultation	Additional Resources Required
10	Pastoral Nomadic or Kuchis Communities	<p>Kochi is a social group who rove over all Afghanistan. According to the national assessment the majority of Kuchis live in absolute poverty. Only around 20% of Kuchi communities have access to safe drinking water.</p> <p>Kuchis have formed elected Kuchi cDCs (KCDCs). There are several Civil Society organizations working with nomadic kuchi herders to promote their livelihood, education and delivery of healthcare service.</p>	Community radio, community meetings, notice boards, community mobilizers to reach out	Mobilize external resource agencies who will work with these target groups

4.5 Summary of Project Stakeholder Needs

Table 5. Project Stakeholder Needs

Community	Stakeholder Group	Key Characteristics	Language needs	Preferred notification means (email, radio, phone, letter)	Specific needs (accessibility, large print, child care, daytime meetings etc.)
Provincial Level	Selected NGOs and CSOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection based on assessment of eligibility criteria and priority criteria • Experience in working with most vulnerable communities in prioritized provinces 	Pashto/Dari and/or the third official languages in areas where the majority speaks them.	Email, internet, radio, mobile phone, social media, individual meetings	Ensure that smaller NGOs and CSOs from different backgrounds are considered for engagement
	Organizations working for women's rights including women led NGOs and CSOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in working with women and girls including their empowerment • Track record of working of women headed NGOs and CSOs 	Pashto/Dari and/or the third official languages in areas where the majority speaks them.	Community radio, telephone, women group meetings, notice boards	<p>May require communication means that are independent of locality (e. g. mobile phone or radio)</p> <p>Gender disaggregated consultations, Inclusion in project benefits and access to GBV services as required</p>
	Vulnerable Communities	Vulnerable and little access to assistance	Pashto/Dari and/or the third official languages in areas where the majority speaks to them.	Community radio, community meetings, notice boards, community mobilizers to reach out	May require special assistance to attend community meetings, may not have access to electronic means
	CDCs	Experience in prioritization exercised and consultations	Pashto/Dari and/or the third official languages in areas where the majority speaks them.	Community radio, telephone, community meetings, individual meetings, social media	They can also be used as a means to reach the broader smaller NGOs and CSOs including support in stakeholder engagements and information dissemination.

Community	Stakeholder Group	Key Characteristics	Language needs	Preferred notification means (email, radio, phone, letter)	Specific needs (accessibility, large print, child care, daytime meetings etc.)
	Community Leaders and Members	Their authority will depend on the presence and strength of community leaders of other groups; leaders can have significant influence in the communities	Pashto/Dari and/or the third official languages in areas where the majority speaks to them.	Community meetings, individual meetings, notice boards, social media, community radio, TV	They can also be used as a means to reach the broader smaller NGOs and CSOs including support in stakeholder engagements and information dissemination.
Regional Level	NGO Network - ACBAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of existing network in mapping the NGOs and CSOs • Experience in providing coordination support in other similar projects 	Pashto/Dari and/or the third official languages in areas where the majority speaks to them.	Community meetings, individual meetings, notice boards, social media, community radio, TV	They can also be used as a means to reach the broader smaller NGOs and CSOs. Roles and responsibilities will include support in stakeholder engagements, information dissemination and grievance redress
	Other Agencies operating at regional level	Use of existing network in mapping the NGOs and CSOs	Pashto/Dari and/or the third official languages in areas where the majority speaks to them.	Community meetings, individual meetings, notice boards, social media, community radio, TV	They can also be used as a means to reach the broader smaller NGOs and CSOs and in information dissemination.
National Level	UN agencies, international NGOs, bilateral donors	Established UN, NGO and donor coordination mechanisms, including ACBAR	English	Internet/email, ACBAR, UNCT	Preparation and implementation support.
	National CSOs, NGOs	Good capacity	English	Internet/email, individual meetings, telephone	Preparation and implementation support.

Community	Stakeholder Group	Key Characteristics	Language needs	Preferred notification means (email, radio, phone, letter)	Specific needs (accessibility, large print, child care, daytime meetings etc.)
	Other Agencies operating at national level	Good capacity	English	Internet/email, individual meetings, telephone	Preparation and implementation support.
	Consulting Firm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualified staff in carrying out capacity needs assessment • Experience in developing capacity building plan • Proven track record of implementing capacity building support to NGOs and CSOs 	English; Pashto/Dari and/or the third official languages	Internet/email, individual meetings, telephone	Preparation and implementation support as well as training and capacity building

5 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

5.1 Purpose and Timing

The SEP defines a structured, purposeful, and culturally appropriate approach to consultation and disclosure of information, in accordance with ESS 10 and UNDP's social and environmental standards (SES). UNDP recognises the diverse and varied interests and expectations of project stakeholders and seeks to develop an approach for reaching each of the stakeholders in the different capacities at which they interface with the Project. The aim is to create an atmosphere of understanding that actively involves project-affected people and other stakeholders leading to improved decision making.

Overall, this SEP will serve the following purposes:

- Define a plan for stakeholder engagement, including information disclosure and consultation, throughout the project lifespan
- Stakeholder identification and analysis
- Planning engagement modalities through effective communication, consultations and disclosure
- Provide enabling platforms for influencing decisions
- Define roles and responsibilities for the implementation of the SEP
- Define reporting and monitoring measures to ensure the effectiveness of the SEP and periodical reviews of the SEP based on findings
- Elaborate on the Project Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM)

The purposes of consultations and information dissemination in the NGO and CSO Capacity Support Project in Afghanistan are: (a) mapping the NGOs and CSOs across the country to understand the current situation which will be critical to design both immediate and mid-term interventions; (b) conducting a needs assessment by category of NGOs and CSOs in order to develop a strategic NGOs and CSOs capacity building plan as well as common standards; (c) supporting NGOs and CSOs to implement QIPs with small grants to help them operationalise on the ground and support local communities access to basic services, social protection and other livelihoods opportunities; (d) design and provide capacity strengthening support to NGOs and CSOs; (e) engage, build, and strengthen dialogues with NGOs and CSOs to consolidate their efforts in reactivating NGOs and CSOs' operations, and; (f) enhance coordination structures on NGOs and CSOs at both national and provincial levels, tapping into the existing coordination body and also coordinating with other efforts made by UNCT. To ensure this, a Grievance Redress Mechanism is included below, which will be rolled out at the regional and national level. Efforts will be made to collaborate with existing channels of grievance mechanism available at the provincial level and route it to the Project's regional and national level mechanism. This will allow affected individuals and groups to report on project-related grievances or can provide comments and feedback.

In consideration of Covid-19 restrictions, the project will follow World Bank guidelines on community consultation under Covid-19. This means effective and meaningful consultations to meet project and stakeholder needs and adhere to the restrictions put in place by the Interim Taliban Administration (ITA) to contain virus spread. Representatives of particular community groups will be consulted. Strategies will be employed to include smaller meetings, small focus group discussions to be conducted as appropriate taking full precautions on staff and community safety. Where meetings are not permitted, traditional channels of communications such as radios and public announcements will be implemented. Other strategies will include one on one meetings through phones for community representatives, CDC members, NGOs, CSOs and other interests' groups.

Given the current political context, stakeholder engagements with the ITA will be avoided to the extent possible. Engagements will be undertaken directly by the above listed implementers (UNDP and ACBAR including NGO partners). Implementers will focus on the NGO network as a key vehicle for information dissemination and consultations at the regional and provincial level. Consultations with higher level partners will be undertaken directly by UNDP and national NGO partners.

5.2 Plan for Information Disclosure

Information disclosure to the NGOs and CSOs (beneficiaries) will rely on the following key methods: email, internet, radio, mobile phone, social media and individual meetings. Support from CDCs and community members and leaders would also be explored as a means to reach the broader smaller NGOs and CSOs and in information dissemination. At the national level information will be disclosed mainly by email and through social media. Information will be disclosed in Pashtu/Dari, English or respective local languages.

Table 6 Plan for Information Disclosure

Project Stage	List of information to be disclosed	Methods proposed	Timelines: locations / dates	Target Stakeholders	Responsibilities
Project Design	Draft Project Document discussion (including SEP and GRM) and to seek feedback and opinions from stakeholders	Community meetings / telephone / notice boards	April 2022	NGOs/CSOs coordinating structures at national level and in major provincial capitals	UNDP CO
		Separate consultations with women groups, including online	April 2022	NGOs/CSOs coordinating structures at national level and in major provincial capitals	UNDP CO
		Email	April 2022	Select NGOs/CSOs	UNDP CO
		Websites – ACBAR, WB, UNDP	April 2022	National and Regional Level	UNDP CO
	Final Project Document and action items including (LMP with	Inception workshops	May 2022	National and Regional Level	UNDP CO
		Separate Inception workshops for women groups	May 2022	National and Regional Level	UNDP CO

Project Stage	List of information to be disclosed	Methods proposed	Timelines: locations / dates	Target Stakeholders	Responsibilities
	simplified CHSS plan)	Email	May 2022	select NGOs/CSOs	UNDP CO
		Websites - ACBAR, WB, UNDP	June 2022	National and Regional Level	UNDP CO
Project Implementation	Eligibility criteria in selection of NGOs/CSO – discussion and feedback	Steering Committee meetings / telephone / notice boards	June 2022	National and Regional Level	PMU/UNDP
		Email	June 2022	National and Regional Level	PMU/UNDP
	Draft NGO/CSO mapping and selection criteria	Stakeholder meetings / telephone / notice boards/separate meetings for women groups	As needed	National and Regional Level	PMU/UNDP
		Email	As needed	National and Regional Level	PMU/UNDP
		Websites - ACBAR, WB, UNDP	As needed	National and Regional Level	PMU/UNDP
	Any proposed substantive revisions to Project Document or Plans	Stakeholder meetings / telephone / notice boards/separate meetings for women groups	As needed	Selected NGOs and CSOs	PMU/UNDP
		Steering Committee meetings / telephone / notice boards	As needed	National and Regional Level	PMU/UNDP
		Email	As needed	Selected NGOs and CSOs	PMU/UNDP
		Websites - ACBAR, WB, UNDP	As needed	Selected NGOs and CSOs	PMU/UNDP
	Information about QIPs	Stakeholder meetings /	Continuou s	Local affected people	PMU/UNDP and Grantee

Project Stage	List of information to be disclosed	Methods proposed	Timelines: locations / dates	Target Stakeholders	Responsibilities
		telephone / notice boards			
		Radio	Continuous	Local affected people	PMU/UNDP and Grantee
		Mobile phone	Continuous	Local affected people	PMU/UNDP and Grantee
		Email	Continuous	Local affected people	PMU/UNDP and Grantee
	GRM	Community meetings / notice boards	Continuous	Affected people	PMU/UNDP
		Project worker/staff training and inception	At inception and continuous	Affected people (project workers)	PMU/UNDP
		Radio	Continuous	Affected people	PMU/UNDP
		Mobile phone	Continuous	Affected people	PMU/UNDP
		Website - ACBAR, WB, UNDP	Continuous	Affected people	PMU/UNDP
	Training need assessment	Selected NGO/CSO meetings / telephone / notice boards	As needed	National and Regional Level	PMU/UNDP
		Separate meeting with selected women headed NGO/CSO	As needed	National and Regional Level	PMU/UNDP
		Email	As needed	National and Regional Level	PMU/UNDP
	Training modules	Selected NGO/CSO meetings	As needed	National and Regional Level	PMU/UNDP
		Separate meeting with selected women headed NGO/CSO	As needed	National and Regional Level	PMU/UNDP

Project Stage	List of information to be disclosed	Methods proposed	Timelines: locations / dates	Target Stakeholders	Responsibilities
		Tele Conference	As needed	National and Regional Level	PMU/UNDP
	Citizen engagement indicator with satisfaction survey	Community meetings / telephone / notice boards	As needed	National and Regional Level	PMU/UNDP
		Separate consultation meeting with women groups	As needed	National and Regional Level	PMU/UNDP
		Email	As needed	National and Regional Level	PMU/UNDP
		Websites – ACBAR, WB, UNDP	As needed	National and Regional Level	UNDP CO
		Steering Committee meetings / telephone / notice boards	As needed	National and Regional Level	PMU/UNDP
		Handbooks and kits (self-instruction)	Selected NGO/CSO meetings	As needed	National and Regional Level
		Separate meeting with selected women headed NGO/CSO	As needed	National and Regional Level	PMU/UNDP
		Email	As needed	National and Regional Level	PMU/UNDP
	Small grants	Selected NGO/CSO meetings	As needed	National and Regional Level	PMU/UNDP
		Separate meeting with selected women headed NGO/CSO	As needed	National and Regional Level	PMU/UNDP
		Email	As needed	National and Regional Level	PMU/UNDP

5.3 Plan for Consultations

This plan lays out the overall consultative processes of the Project with its different stakeholders. In principle, the PMU and ACBAR including other partners implementing activities underlined in the output, will follow their existing participatory engagement and consultation methods, especially with beneficiary NGOs and CSOs. These will follow specific tools and methods of community consultations that partners have developed in their sectoral fields (e.g., in health, agriculture, etc.). However, throughout the mapping process, SEP-related activities will be included, and ACBAR and other partners will be called upon to budget for SEP-related activities that are under their responsibility.

The GRM is another means of engagement with beneficiaries/stakeholders, as complaints received will be filed, assessed and responded to (see below).

Table 7 Plan for Consultations

Project stage	Topic of consultation	Suggested Method (will be refined by PMU)	Target stakeholders	Responsibilities
Project Design	Overall Project activities and E&S risks and impacts	Community meetings, email, social media	NGOs/CSOs coordinating structures at national level and in major provincial capitals	PMU and Responsible Parties (RPs)
		Stakeholder meetings, Steering Committee meetings, email	National level stakeholders (UN agencies, NGO Network, NGOs and CSOs)	PMU and RPs
		Email	National level stakeholders	PMU
Project Initiation and Implementation	Mapping exercise	Community meetings, email, social media	National, Regional and Provincial Level stakeholders	PMU and RPs
		Stakeholder meetings, email	National level stakeholders (NGO Network, NGOs and CSOs)	PMU and RPs
	Small grants	Community meetings, selected NGOs and CSOs for small grant transfers, mobile phone	Selected NGOs and CSOs	PMU
	E&S risks and impacts and mitigation measures (de facto ESMP comprising LMP, COVID	Stakeholder meetings, email, social media	Selected NGOs and CSOs	PMU and RPs

Project stage	Topic of consultation	Suggested Method (will be refined by PMU)	Target stakeholders	Responsibilities
	infection prevention measures, security risk management measures, SEA/SH actions, and negative list of activities)			
	Capacity needs assessments and capacity-building plan	Meetings, email, mobile,	Selected NGOs and CSOs	PMU
	Co-ordination amongst NGOs and CSOs	Stakeholder meetings, email	National, Regional and Provincial Level NGOs and CSOs	PMU and RPs
	GRM	Mechanism set up	Selected NGOs and CSOs including NGOs and CSOs at the national, regional and provincial level	PMU and RPs

5.4 Timeline

The Project is planned for a duration of 24 months. Information disclosure and consultations are relevant throughout the entire life cycle of the Project. Project design will therefore be based on national-level and regional level consultations of NGOs, CSOs and networks of NGOs. Activities under each output will include further consultations prior to their commencement, to ensure transparency and accountability on project modalities, and allow stakeholder voices to form the basis for the concrete design of every intervention; consultations will continue throughout the project cycle. Initial consultations will be held during the design and preparation phase of the project, in April and May 2022. This SEP will be updated during the implementation phase, based on in-depth consultations with the various stakeholders.

5.5 Reviews of Comments

The UNDP and IPs will gather all comments and inputs originating from community meetings, GRM outcomes, SMS, emails and other communication modalities. The information gathered will be submitted to the SES Specialists in the PMU, to ensure that the Project has general information on the perception of the stakeholders, and that it remains on target. It will be the responsibility of the PMU and the IPs to respond to comments and inputs, and to keep open a feedback line to the stakeholders. Training on environmental and social standards facilitated by World Bank will be provided soon after the Project becomes effective to ensure that all the staff from the PMU, and the IPs are equipped with the necessary skills.

This SEP provides the overarching guidelines for the rolling out of stakeholder engagements. The PMU will monitor the capacity of the E&S safeguards staff of the IPs, and recommend and implement appropriate actions, e.g., refresher trainings.

6 RESOURCES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE SEP

The overall responsibility for the implementation of the SEP lies with the Programme Manager in UNDP through the PMU. The PMU along with the Programme Management Specialist will be supported by the SES Specialist, Community Engagement/GRM Specialist and Gender Specialist in the implementation of the SEP at the national level. In the sub-national/regional level, UNDP will leverage its capacities in the eight regional offices/hubs in the implementation of the Project, including the Area Managers who are heading the sub-offices, and the National Programme Officers. In addition, UNDP will provide oversight and assurance capacity through its Afghanistan Country Office, including a SES Specialist. Additional UNDP CO, regional and global social and environmental safeguards oversight capacity will be made available to the project as needed.

The Programme Manager, Programme Management Specialist and the SES Expert will form part of the Risk Management Unit inside the UNDP PMU. The Community Engagement/GRM Specialist, in particular, supports the SES Expert and Gender Specialist in overseeing all SEP-related activities and will provide continuous expert inputs into the refinement of the SEP.

The Community Engagement/GRM Specialist maintains a stakeholder database for the overall project and leads a commitment register. However, while the PMU will oversee all coordination and disclosure-related consultations, ACBAR (including other NGO network) will support the PMU in coordination and implementation of the SEP at the national and regional levels in their respective operational areas and report on their activities to the PMU SES Expert on a monthly basis. Where UNDP implements activities directly, UNDP will be responsible for all local stakeholder engagement. The PMU SES Expert undertakes verification activities of the selected NGOs and CSOs jointly with the responsible parties – at least every other month, or during planned events.

IPs (including responsible parties, grantees and contractors) will identify staff responsible for the implementation of E&S measures, including this SEP. Staff names are to be submitted to the PMU SES Expert. IPs also commit to communicate the stakeholder engagement strategies to their respective networks and internally.

7 GRIEVANCE REDRESS MECHANISM

7.1 Objective

The objective of a Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) is to assist in resolving complaints in a timely, effective and efficient manner. Project-level GRMs can provide the most effective way for stakeholders to raise issues and concerns about the project that affect them. The GRM provides a transparent and credible process for fair, effective and lasting outcomes. It also builds trust and cooperation as an integral component of broader stakeholder engagement, that facilitates corrective actions and helps the community to have ownership of the project. The GRM for this project is designed in accordance with World Bank's ESS10 and UNDP's SES for the benefit of all project affected persons, including workers and other stakeholders. The GRM would also provide for handling of grievances related to SEA/SH.

The GRM provides an avenue for stakeholder engagement and the management of social and environmental risks and impacts. However, it is not a substitute for proactive outreach to stakeholders

to inform them about the Project, seek their input, and respond to their suggestions and concerns regarding social and environmental benefits, risks and impacts.

UNDP corporate Accountability Mechanism (www.undp.org/secu-srm) provides additional recourse for complainants who are not satisfied with the response they have received from the Project GRM or who are concerned about an adverse response if they raise concerns with the Project GRM.

7.2 The Project will consist of two Grievance Mechanisms (GMs), which are: i) workers GM and Project GM. If the project GM is not suitable to deal with Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH), then a third GM will be established. The project workers, including NGOs/CSOs Workers will use worker GM to raise workplace concerns. The worker's GM is detailed in the labor management procedures (LMP). Principles

The project-level GRM would be designed in a culturally appropriate way so as to effectively respond to the needs and concerns of all parties involved.

- The GRM would be well-publicized and known to all stakeholders. The implementing agency will ensure that the GRM is widely publicized and will also conduct awareness campaigns in this regard among the selected and wider network of NGOs and CSOs. Implementing agencies will brief target stakeholders about the scope of the mechanisms, the safety of the complainant, time of response, the referral and appeal processes.
- Accessibility - The GRM will be clear, accessible to all levels of NGOs and CSOs based at national, regional and provincial level.
- The Mechanism would allow for multiple avenues of uptake of grievances.
- The system would be sensitive to women, men, boys and girls, as well as vulnerable populations such as persons with disabilities, elderly, displaced persons and other marginalized groups.
- Confidentiality and prevention against retaliation.
- The GRM would be designed to protect beneficiaries and stakeholder's rights to comment and complain, and even raise their complaints to higher management if they are not satisfied with services or receive insufficient solutions. The mechanism would facilitate their sharing of concerns freely with understanding that no retribution will be exacted for their participation. To create a safe space, anonymous complaints will also be allowed.
- The GRM shall provide for relaying regular information and feedback regarding the redressal of the grievance to the aggrieved.
- The Mechanism shall be responsive in redressal of grievances by facilitating resolution with the concerned actor in the implementing chain.
- The GRM would be based on transparency and accountability. All complainants will be heard, taken seriously, and treated fairly. The community and stakeholders will be aware of the expectation from the project; the GRM procedures; understand its purpose, have sufficient information on how to access it.
- The GRM will have provisions to appeal if the grievances are not resolved satisfactorily
- The GRM would not prevent access to judicial and administrative remedies.
- The mechanism would provide for prompt time-bound redressal of grievances.
- For SEA/SH cases, guiding principles of confidentiality, survivor centricity, non-discrimination, respect, access to services and survivor safety are to be applied to specific cases of SEA/SH cases as per the World Bank's guidance. Reporting mechanisms will enable complainant to report SEA/SH cases without being publicly identified given the risk of stigma, reprisals, and rejection associated with sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment.

7.3 GRM Structure for NGOs support project

The Project consists of a three-tiered GRM system with Grievance Redressal Committees (GRCs) would be established.

GRCs will be comprised of NGOs/CSOs at regional level, NGOs/CSOs at national level and UNDP- PMU GRC. It is proposed that the regional and national level GRCs would be operated by the NGOs/CSOs networks with support from UNDP Provincial Hubs and Kabul. There would be a provision for appeals and any aggrieved party would be able to directly approach the national level GRC or directly to the UNDP-PMU central office as well. The formation of the GRCs would be completed prior to the commencement of project activities.

The complainants will have the option to report their complaints/feedback to the following committees:

NGOs/CSOs coordinating structures or networks at regional level GRC (8 regions). The members will comprise, networks Head, networks Secretary, UNDP Provincial Hubs and female activists. The grievance focal point (GFP) to be appointed will be responsible to maintain record of grievances in a logbook. If the issue cannot be resolved at the regional network level, then the GRC will immediately escalate it to a higher level, i.e., either to the GRC at the national networks level and/or directly to the UNDP-PMU central office. Each network (NGOs and CSOs) will have a complaint box and the network GRC to check the box at least once a week or if they know a grievance has been put. The person(s) can put a complaint anonymously. If they wish, individuals or groups can also hand a complaint to the network Committee. The regional networks GRC will address complaint/feedback within 10 days.

NGOs/CSOs networks at national level GRC (i.e., ACBAR and CSOs network). The timeline for complaint registration at national networks level is 10 days. The NGOs/CSOs level GRC will consist of members from ACBAR, CSOs network at national level and UNDP national Hub (Kabul). Ideally, there should be an equal number of men and women

UNDP-PMU level GRC. The GRC members will comprise UNDP-PMU-manager, social development expert and gender and SEA/SH expert. The timeline for complaint resolution at the UNDP-PMU central office level will be 15 days upon receipt of the complaint. The complainant will be informed of the outcome immediately and at the latest within 5 days of the decision.

7.4 Channels for submitting the requests:

Stakeholder can submit their grievances regarding any element of the project without any restriction through a variety of means as listed below:

- Suggestion Boxes: Will be in a visible place in each of the regional offices (NGOs and CSOs), and at the NGOs/CSOs networks at national level (ACBAR and CSOs network).
- Personal Visit: Complainants can personally submit his/her grievance to one of the relevant Grievances Redressal Committees (including oral or written communications received during field meetings).
- Telephone Hotline: The complainant can report his/her grievance verbally to a dedicated telephone hotline (the number of which will be disseminated in the Project areas).
- Petition: Complainant can submit his/her written petition directly to one of the grievance handling committees (NGOs/CSOs at regional level, NGOs/CSOs at national level and UNDP- PMU GRC).
- Email: Those complainants can also send their grievances to emails address that will be disseminated in the Project area.
- UNDP website (complaints and inquires).

UNDP will also explore grievance uptake channel already in existence to boost the grievance mechanism proposed, including the uptake channel at regional and national level under ABADI Programme and partners (responsible parties), the UNDP AFG Country Office GRM and CHM, and the channels under ACBAR (linking with the NGO Code of Conduct Observance Committee). While the existing mechanisms would be leveraged for this project, in order to address other requirements of ESS10, the system would be augmented for the purposes of this project in accordance with the principles given above and the following steps:

- **Step 1: Uptake** – Project stakeholders will be able to provide feedback and report complaints through several channels. The aggrieved party must be able to select the most efficient institution, the most accessible means of filing a grievance, and must be able to circumvent partial stakeholders in the Project, which may be implicated in the complaint. He or she must further be able to bypass some grievance channels that are perceived as potentially not responsive or biased. The means to file a grievance would include a toll-free hotline, SMS, email, filling up grievance forms, verbally, sending a letter, to implementing agencies, via the implementing institutions' websites, helpdesks and collection boxes stipulated for walk-ins at the sites of project activities. Anonymous grievances can also be raised. All uptake channels should permit for grievances in Dari and Pashto as well.

A help desk will also be set up by ACBAR during the implementation of activities at the regional level. At the help desk, aggrieved parties can inquire about project activities, or they can file a grievance directly with the person manning the desk. Grievances can be filed in writing or verbally at the Help Desk.

The staff managing help desks and those operating the toll-free hotline number would be trained by the PMU for (a) the registration of a grievance; (b) the interaction with complainants; (c) appropriate responses to SEA/SH issues; (d) grievances of workers; and (e) Project components and Implementing Partners.

- **Step 2: Sorting and processing** – All grievances received will be transferred to the GRM Focal Point at the PMU by the Implementing Partner/ACBAR. The GRM focal point will categorize the complaint and forward it to the responsible unit. The GRM focal point will also record the grievance in the same format as would be used at the PMU.
- **Step 3: Acknowledgement and follow-up** – Within three (3) days of the date a grievance is submitted, the GRM focal point will communicate with the aggrieved and provide information on the likely course of action and the anticipated timeframe for resolution of the grievance. The information provided to aggrieved would also include, if required, the likely procedure if the grievance had to be escalated outside the unit and the estimated timeline for each stage.
- **Step 4: Verification, investigation, action and documentation** – This step involves gathering information about the grievance to determine the facts surrounding the issue and verifying the validity of the grievance, and then developing a proposed resolution. It is expected that many or most grievances would be resolved at this stage. All activities taken during this and the other steps will be fully documented, and any resolution logged in the register. In case the grievance is not resolved at this stage, it would be escalated to the next tier.
- **Step 5: Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting** – Monitoring refers to the process of tracking grievances and assessing the progression toward resolution. Each implementing agency would

develop and maintain a grievance register and record of all steps taken to resolve grievances or otherwise respond to feedback and questions. GRM data would be collated and reported monthly at all levels.

The Third-Party Monitoring Agent (TPMA) will provide independent operational review of overall project implementation and project results, including the implementation of the SEP and GRM. The PMU will synthesize all reporting by TPMA and Implementation Partner, as well as its own findings, and produce an overall environment and social progress report with a distinct section on stakeholder engagement in line with a template to be provided. The project provides for quarterly reporting.

- **Step 6: Providing Feedback** – This step involves informing those who have raised complaints, concerns or grievances the resolutions to the issues they have raised. Whenever possible, complainants should be informed of the proposed resolution in person, which gives them the opportunity ask follow-up questions. If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution, he or she will be informed of further options. The GRM would not prevent access to judicial and administrative remedies. Each complaint must be closed within thirty (30) days of receipt - either resolved, withdrawn or escalated.

7.5 Grievance Redressal Committees Terms of Reference

The formed Committee will have the following tasks to perform:

- To receive and register all incoming grievances into the Grievance Registration Book (grievance logbook and central grievance excel-sheet).
- To analyze the grievances in order to understand the nature of grievances and an appropriate way to deal with them
- To categorize all incoming grievances
- To refer the analyzed grievances to the related committees/entities for resolution, and complainants, if they wish to come forward should be able to explain
- To follow up on the grievances with the responsible committees/entities to speed up the process and reach the result (timeline based)
- To hold periodic Grievance Redressal Committee's meeting, as required
- To feed the result back to the complainant
- To check the complaints box and address the incoming complaints.

7.6 GRM for SEA/SH grievances

SEA/SH related grievances are handled through a survivor-centered approach. All grievance uptake channels can be used to report on SEA/SH issues. No grievance uptake mechanism can reject such grievances, and all personnel directly receiving grievances will be trained in the handling and processing of SEA/SH-related grievances. Any recipients of the grievance should, with the survivor's informed consent, report the case to one of the Project's formal grievance recipients. A survivor can ask someone else to act as a survivor advocate and report on her/his behalf.

Absolute confidentiality would be maintained for all grievances related to SEA/SH issues. 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 would also be sought for undertaking any action on the grievance. Under no circumstances should the survivor be pressured to consent to any conversation, assessment, investigation or other intervention with which they do not feel comfortable. 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. In the case of children, informed consent is normally requested from a parent or legal guardian and the children.

Data on GBV cases recorded will only include the nature of the complaint (what the complainant says in her/his own words), whether the complainant believes the perpetrator was related to the project and additional demographic data, such as age and gender, will be collected and reported, with informed consent from the survivor. The GRM provides for offering the survivor referral to pre-identified GBV Service Providers in the area. Services can include health, psycho-social, security and protection, legal/justice, and economic reintegration support. This would be offered even if the survivor does not wish to file a formal complaint or if the complaint is not related to the project before closing the case. The simplified Community Health, Safety and Security (CHSS) Plan will incorporate measures to assess and manage risks related to SEA and SH and will include a list of referral services in the different Project areas.

Where SEA/SH grievances have been allegedly committed by a Project worker, the grievance will also be reported to the respective employing agency. The PMU SES Expert will follow up and determine jointly with the GRM Focal Point of the respective partner the likelihood that the allegation is related to the Project. The Gender Specialist will follow up and ensure that the violation of the Code of Conduct is handled appropriately. The responsibility to implement any disciplinary action lies with the employer of the perpetrator, in accordance with local labor legislation, the employment contract, and the code of conduct. The GRM focal point will report back to the survivor on any steps undertaken and the results.

All SEA/SH incidents would be reported to the World Bank in accordance with the project Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP). UNDP-PMU will notify the World Bank of any incident, including SEA/SH incidents within 48 hours after taking notice of the project-related incident. They will provide incident investigation report to the World Bank within 45 days from the time of incident was reported to the World Bank.

The SEA/SH Action Plan will be a part of the ESMP to be prepared by the UNDP within 30 days after the effective date. The action plan will include prevention and mitigation actions including information dissemination strategy targeting workers and communities, GBV service providers and Response Protocol. The Project Operations Manual (POM) will also include procedure on SEA/SH related grievances. The ESCP also includes commitments to finalize SEA/SH Action Plan to be prepared within 30 days after the effective date. The LMP discuss and determine ESS2 related SEA/SH considerations.

7.7 Capacity Building/ Awareness

The dedicated Community Engagement/GRM focal point will conduct capacity building and awareness raising of the GRCs and relevant staff. The Community Engagement/GRM focal point will train, the national GRCs (networks), as well as regional GRCs (NGOs and CSOs). The Community Engagement/GRM focal point and the GRCs will be responsible to disseminate the GRM information in the project areas to inform stakeholders/beneficiaries about GRM service. GRM Reporting

The project will also continuously monitor the functioning of the GRM, and the types of complaints registered, as well as beneficiary feedback.

The UNDP-PMU Community Engagement/GRM focal point will provide updates on grievances registered in the grievance logbooks and central GRM excel-sheet.

The quarterly report will include following GRM details:

- How many complaints were received from communities (men and women)?
- Of the grievances (not suggestions or inquiries or comments), what category of grievance raised most frequently (#1, 2, and 3) with most frequent sub-categories included
- What category of grievance raised the least frequent (# 1, 2, and 3)?
- Of each Grievance category, which sub-categories have the most grievances?
- Report number of Grievances by regions

8 MONITORING AND REPORTING

8.1 Involvement of Stakeholders in Monitoring Activities

The Project will involve project stakeholders in monitoring of project activities, in particular ACBAR and NGOs/CSOs receiving support will be directly involved in monitoring of stakeholder engagement activities.

At this stage it is also anticipated that a TPMA will be deployed in order to monitor project performance and E&S risks and impacts at all levels. The TPMA will submit monitoring reports directly to the UNDP PMU and the World Bank.

8.2 Reporting Back to Stakeholder Groups

The above listed plan for information dissemination to the stakeholders also includes the information dissemination and disclosure of Project monitoring results. The Community Engagement/GRM Specialist in the PMU will ensure that monitoring results on Project performance as well as E&S risks and impacts and implemented mitigation measures will be made available to the above identified stakeholders at the provincial, regional and national level. The implementation of the stakeholder consultation plan (see above), in turn, will allow the key stakeholders to react and voice their feedback with regards to the monitoring results. Information dissemination will always include information on the available Project GRM and its different channels to file a grievance or provide feedback.

8.3 Reporting to the World Bank

The PMU will provide quarterly Project Progress Reports to the World Bank. These Quarterly reports will consist of project performance and results; financial and procurement information; risk management progress, including progress on implementation of the LMP and simplified CHSS Plan. The PMU will receive monthly and quarterly inputs from grantees and responsible parties prior to the preparation of the Quarterly Reports and will include those inputs in the Quarterly Report. The Quarterly Report will further contain a section on stakeholder engagement initiatives undertaken in the Quarter, as per this SEP, as well as a section reflecting on the results of stakeholder consultations. A synthesis report and analysis of grievances filed under the Project GRM and the workers' GRM will be included.

9 ESTIMATED BUDGET

The below table presents an estimated budget for the implementation of the SEP. It should be noted that budgets for grantees, contractors, and responsible parties should include the costs of SEP implementation, in view of activity specific stakeholder consultations and information dissemination. The budget presented here concerns the Project level implementation of the SEP through the PMU. The source of funding is the Project budget.

Table 8 Estimated Budget for SEP implementation

Stakeholder Engagement Activities	Q-ty/per years (months)	Unit Cost, USD	# of months	Total cost (USD)
SES Expert (National), Community Engagement/GRM Specialist (National), Gender Specialist (International) (PMU)				Included in PMU staff costs

Stakeholder Engagement Activities	Q-ty/per years (months)	Unit Cost, USD	# of months	Total cost (USD)
GRM, M&E case management process, data base (Including running of hotline, record keeping etc.)	12	1,000.00 Per month	24	24,000.00
Operational Costs (Travel, Logistic Support, Security, Transportation & Accommodation).				Included in PMU staff travel costs
Communication materials (leaflets, posters,)	12	500.00 Per month	24	12,000.00
Radio broadcasts, social media (twice per year)	2	15,000.00 Per year	24	30,000.00
Connectivity cost	12	2,500.00 Per month	24	60,000.00
Trainings (Social issues, outreach, GRM, etc.) for PMU, Ips	2	20,000 per year	24	40,000.00 + integral to Project's capacity building activities/budget
Subtotal				166,000.00
Contingency 5%				8,300.00
Total				174,300.00