



United National Office for Project Services (UNOPS)

Afghanistan Community Resilience Project

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN (SEP)

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ARTF	Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund
CCAP	Citizens' Charter Afghanistan Project
CDC	Community Development Council
CIP	Cities Investment Program
CSO	Civil Society Organization
E&S	Environmental & Social
ESCP	Environmental & Social Commitment Plan
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
ESMP	Environmental and Social Management Plan
ESS	Environmental and Social Standard
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GIS	Geographical Information System
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
HH	Household
IP	Implementing Partner
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ITA	Interim Taliban Administration
LIW	Labor-Intensive Works
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MIS	Management Information System
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
EHS/OHS	Environmental Health and Safety/Occupational Health and Safety
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
PDO	Project Development Objective
PWD	Person with Disabilities
RAP	Resettlement Action Plan
REACH	Covid-19 Relief Effort for Afghanistan Communities and Households
SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Assault
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
SH	Sexual Harassment
TPMA	Third-Party Monitoring Agent
TPMP	Third-Party Monitoring Program
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Fund for Children
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
US	United States
WB	World Bank

INTRODUCTION

Project Background

The Afghanistan Community Resilience Project will provide short-term livelihood opportunities and deliver urgent essential services in rural and urban areas. This includes the provision of short-term employment and income to millions of Afghans while also improving access to basic services, such as clean water and sanitation. The Project will focus specifically on assistance to women and vulnerable groups, such as IDPs and persons with disabilities (PWDs). In addition, community-level systems and institutions for long-term resilience, sustainability and inclusive development will be supported in order to promote citizen engagement and a more accountable, transparent recovery in Afghanistan. This is based on experience that shows the criticality of maintaining livelihood opportunities among rural and urban communities, while also investing in basic services and non-government local institutions and systems. This will help to preserve core development gains that have been made in Afghanistan in the last two decades. Through the intended investments, the Project aims to build community resilience and assist the country throughout the emergency to recovery, in order to reach a more sustainable development environment.

The Project will provide a total of 1.1 million households or 7.5 million Afghans with livelihoods and income. An estimated 9 million Afghans in some 6,200 rural communities and eight cities will benefit from services essential to meeting basic human needs. The Project will be financed by an Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) recipient-executed grant of US\$270 million. Implementation is planned for two years.

Project Components

The main objective of the Project is to provide short-term livelihood opportunities and deliver urgent essential services in rural and urban areas. The Project components are as follows:

Component 1: Emergency Livelihoods Support and Services in Rural Areas

This component will provide assistance in the form of cash-for-work and support for the rehabilitation of small-scale basic infrastructure services such as clean water, sanitation, or tertiary roads. The Project will finance a menu of labor-intensive community subprojects including: construction/maintenance of climate-resilient water infrastructure, water canals and drainage; terracing; maintenance and basic tertiary road access; sanitization of community and public places; environmental and natural resource protection activities such as tree planting and agroforestry, and food (grain) storage facilities.

Building on earlier community development experience, poor households will be provided on average 30 days of work, benefitting approximately 828,000 poor rural households or 5.8 million Afghans. Target beneficiaries include those who were identified as the poor and the ultra-poor as part of the Citizens' Charter Afghanistan Project (CCAP) and Covid-19 Relief Effort for Afghanistan Communities and Households (REACH) planning process, which would allow activities to move rapidly once started.

This component will also preserve 18 years of investments through repairs and maintenance of critical works such as flood management walls and terraces to prevent devastation from natural disasters and climate change.

The geographical coverage will remain flexible based on the situation on the ground. However, it will prioritize areas of highest need and those areas not yet covered by other projects and humanitarian actors. This component will initially cover rural communities that have completed their beneficiary mapping and planning process through previous community development interventions but have not yet received services due to the deteriorating security situation over the past year.

Component 2: Emergency Livelihoods Support and Services in Urban Areas

This component will provide livelihood opportunities for unskilled and semi-skilled labor and respond to urgent service delivery needs in urban areas through small-scale Labor-Intensive Works (LIWs). The LIWs will be selected based on local priorities identified through Community Development Councils (CDC) and community consultations in the target cities. The project will be based on strong community involvement in the oversight and implementation of the civil works. The LIWs will take a “whole of community” approach, targeting urban host communities and IDPs in order to mitigate potential tensions between the two communities. Targeted beneficiaries will be individuals from poor households, including vulnerable groups and members of minority groups.

The geographic scope will initially be limited to selected cities and their peripheries which: (i) have witnessed a high influx of IDPs; (ii) were part of the Cities Investment Program (CIP) and the EZ-Kar Project, where similar LIWs programs were successfully being implemented in early 2021; and (iii) are hubs of economic and private sector activity. Potential cities include Kabul, Herat, Kandahar, Khost, Mazar-e-Sharif, Jalalabad, Bamyan and Taleqan. The approach would be kept flexible in order to target areas based on evolving needs in the country. LIW are proposed to be delivered through private sector contractors in order to help preserve local civil works implementation capacity.

LIWs would provide on average 60 days of work per beneficiary over a period of two years, directly benefitting approximately 140,000 IDP and poor local urban households and reaching 980,000 Afghans overall.

Component 3: Social Grants for Women and the Most Vulnerable in Rural and Urban Areas

Given that not everyone is able to benefit from cash-for-work and labor-intensive work programs, for example women or vulnerable households lacking able-bodied members that may have difficulty working outside the home, this component will provide approximately \$2,000 on average to each community to be used to assist the most vulnerable groups in the form of food/grain banks support, cash or livelihood activities. Beneficiaries will include female heads-of-households, persons with disabilities, and the elderly. Lists of these chronically vulnerable households already exist which will help expedite rapid delivery of assistance to communities. Through this component, approximately 104,000 vulnerable households or 728,000 poor Afghans will be assisted.

Component 4: Strengthening community institutions for inclusive service delivery especially for women

Investing in Community Development Councils (CDCs) and local communities is critical for long-term sustainability and building social resilience and cohesion. Underpinning the above-mentioned interventions, this component will support mobilization of communities and trainings in selected areas. It will include providing support to communities for activities related to mobilization, planning, implementation, and monitoring. These activities will complement UN and WB interventions for health, nutrition, and food security, by raising community awareness of available services, helping to identify beneficiaries, and assisting with information and knowledge campaigns related to healthcare services, vaccinations, nutrition, food assistance, and the importance of girls' education. Supporting CDCs will also build strong accountability mechanisms at the community level for monitoring of activities and resolving grievances.

Finally, working with CDCs is especially important as an entry point for supporting women. Afghan women are seeing their access to livelihoods and services hindered, due to social and mobility restrictions. CDCs have provided a forum for women to engage, receive information, and access services in health, nutrition, education, and livelihoods assistance. Without CDCs, there is no local mechanism for UN agencies or NGOs to identify and reach poor women or the most vulnerable.

Component 5: Implementation Support

This component will support the costs of the selected UN implementing partner (UNOPS) to manage and oversee the program, including technical support, training, monitoring and reporting upon results. This component will finance: (i) general management support (indirect) costs for the implementing partner; (ii) direct project management and supervision costs required to support the implementation of the project; (iii) project monitoring, evaluation and coordination at the regional level; (iv) project tailored MIS and GIS system to promote transparency and accountability; (v) independent audits of project activities, if required; and (vi) the establishment of a Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM).

Beneficiaries

The Project will provide livelihoods and income to a total of 1.1 million households or 7.5 million Afghans. An estimated 9 million Afghans in some 6,200 rural communities and eight cities will benefit from services essential to meeting basic human needs.

Table 1 Estimated Number of Beneficiaries of Livelihoods and Basic Services

Component	Estimated Number of Direct Livelihood Support Beneficiary Households (HHs)	Estimated Direct Livelihood Support Beneficiary Population	Estimated Total Population Benefitting from Basic Services
Emergency Livelihoods Support in Rural Areas	828,000 HHs	5.8 million	6.5 m
Emergency Livelihoods Support in Urban Areas	140,000 HHs	980,000	2.5 m
Livelihood Social Grants for women and the most vulnerable	104,000 HHs	728,000	

Total	1.1 million HHs	7.5 million persons	9.0 million persons
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Project Management Structure

This program will be implemented completely through non-government actors. UNOPS will be contracted directly by the World Bank. UNOPS will then finance select NGOs and local urban contractors to deliver assistance to communities. Building on longstanding community development and urban operations in Afghanistan, the network of international and local NGOs as well as urban contractors that have prior Bank experience and recognized capacities on the ground (notably in community organization, planning and implementation of activities) is well known. This network of local NGOs and contractors have built trust with community elders and non-governmental actors over decades. This network of well-established NGOs and local contractors will be essential to delivering services quickly during this emergency.

UNOPS will be responsible for overall coordination, procurement arrangements with local organizations and contractors; engagement with communities; fiduciary and environmental and social management; quality assurance; monitoring and reporting; and managing technical assistance activities.

UNOPS will implement component 1 through the network of NGOs, building on lessons learned over the longstanding engagement in Afghanistan. Component 2 will either be directly implemented by UNOPS, or through local private contractors engaged through open competitive bidding. Previous experience has shown that there is good contractor capacity at the local level. The local community and CDCs will be involved in the selection of interventions and oversight.

UNOPS will house the Project Implementation Unit (PIU), which includes staff supporting several key functions: program and contract management, financial management, procurement, social mobilization and training, engineering, reporting, monitoring and evaluation, regional coordination, gender, grievance redress, and environmental and social risk management.

The WB will provide implementation support and supervision to ensure that the technical design is sound, activities are proceeding according to plan, and there is close coordination with other development partners. A coordinated approach is critical across the different actors and service providers so that basic services and livelihoods assistance reach those most in need quickly and effectively.

A Third-Party Monitoring Agent (TPMA) will help supervise activities and ensure that funds reach the intended beneficiaries and activities remain independent of ITA control. The WB has set up its largest TPMA in Afghanistan, covering fiduciary controls and project oversight as well as close monitoring on the ground. The existing TPMA uses digital platforms to enhance transparency and accountability.

The UNOPS PIU will be responsible for monitoring the activities implemented by the NGOs and contractors and reporting upon progress. UNOPS will ensure that NGOs and contractors are properly trained on implementation arrangements, working closely with CDCs and communities. An Operations Manual will set the operating principles and procedures to be monitored and reported upon.

CDCs will help with community monitoring, local accountability mechanisms and grievance redress. CDCs have appointed monitoring and grievance focal persons who provide regular reports about progress and citizens’ feedback.

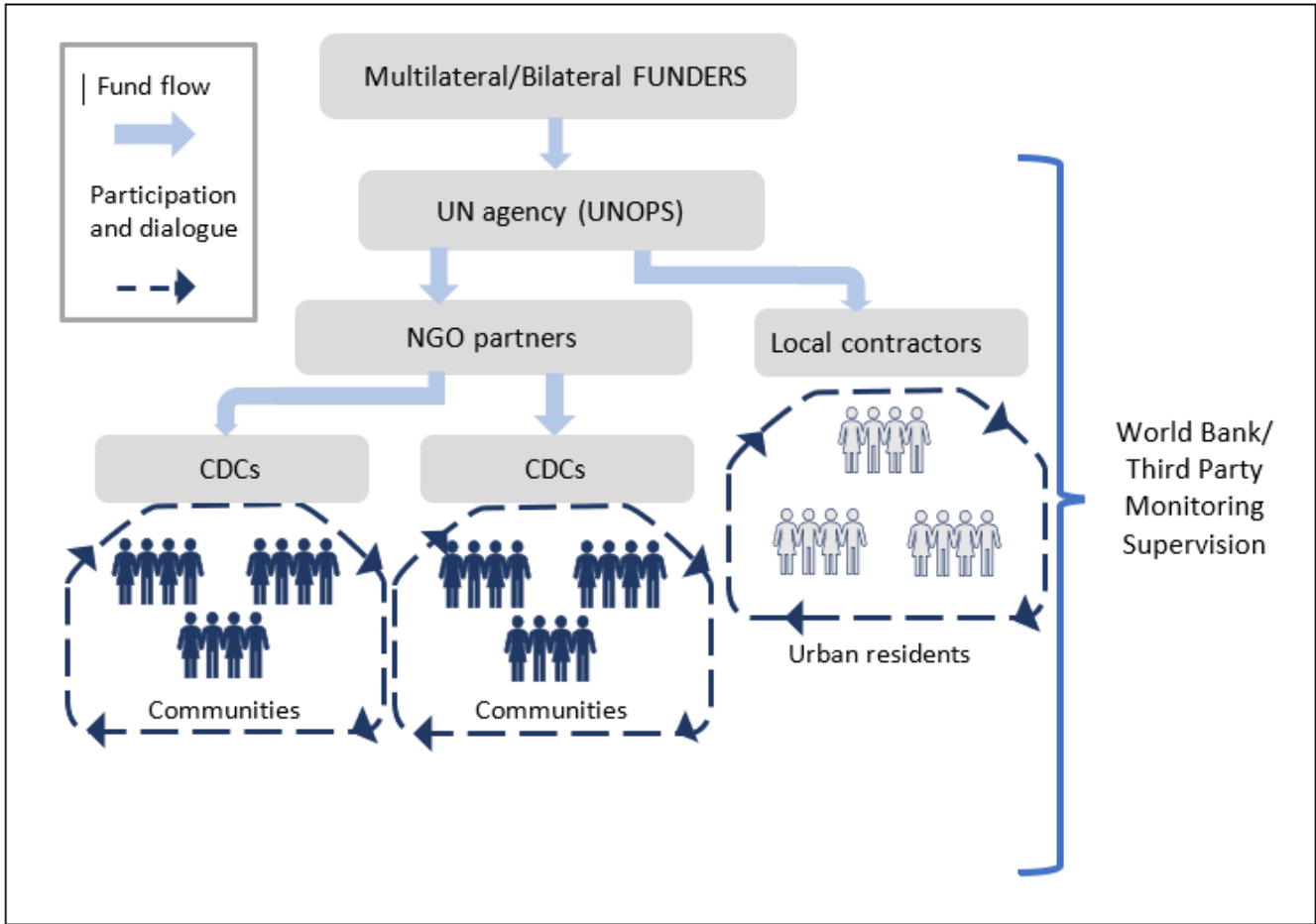


Figure 1 Institutional Arrangements

Key Social and Environmental Risk Mitigation Instruments

The Project entails several environmental and social (E&S) risks and potential adverse impacts. All risk mitigation measures will be detailed in the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF). As outlined in the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP), the ESMF will include a Gender-Based Violence (GBV)/Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA)/Sexual Harassment (SH) Action Plan, Simplified Labor Management Procedures, Security Protocols as well as procedures for screening activities for E&S risks e.g., OHS/EHS (Environmental Health and Safety/Occupational Health and Safety) together with a generic ESMP for construction activities.

Policy Requirements

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

Purpose of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP)

The SEP defines a structured, purposeful and culturally appropriate approach to consultation and disclosure of information, in accordance with ESS 10. UNOPS 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).

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

Stakeholder Mapping and Analysis

Stakeholder Mapping and Analysis

Stakeholder engagement is the interaction with, and influence of project stakeholders to the overall benefit of the project and its advocates. 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.

In view of the Afghanistan Community Resilience Project, ‘affected parties’ will likely be key beneficiaries, including poor and ultra-poor households in rural areas, women, female-headed households, IDPs, elderly people and PWDs, as well as CDC members and other community members and leaders. Affected parties in urban areas include poor and ultra-poor households, women, IDPs, host communities, PWDs, female headed households, NGOs and CSOs, UN agencies, construction companies in Kabul, Herat, Kandahar, Khost, Mazar-e-Sharif, Jalalabad, Bamyan and Taleqan. Important to note is that these ‘parties’ are mostly vulnerable, and they will be beneficiaries of the Project, rather than being negatively affected by the Project. While not every affected party will also be a beneficiary, it is crucial to disseminate information and continue to engage with all stakeholders on project modalities as well as on the selection criteria of beneficiaries in the affected areas.

Positively and Adversely-Affected Parties

Effective consultations and other stakeholder engagements with the project-affected communities will be conducted by the PIU and implementing partners throughout the Project’s life cycle.

Stakeholder	Description
Rural community members and leaders	The elected member/s of a community under existing CDC which is headed by a Community leader. They are democratically elected by all village residents.
Pastoral nomadic communities	The Kochi ethnic group are pastoral nomads, most of whom have settled nowadays in the northwestern areas of Afghanistan.
Urban community members and leaders	Communities in urban centers, including Kabul, Herat, Kandahar, Khost, Mazar-e-Sharif, Jalalabad, Bamyan and Taleqan
Poor households and ultra-poor households in rural communities	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.
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

	<p>in an estimated 90 percent of villages in rural Afghanistan and most major urban cities.</p> <p>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.</p>
Urban host communities	<p>Often tension is reported between IDPs and their host communities. In most urban locations, IDPs meet host communities. It is therefore important to also attend to the needs of host communities.</p>
Poor households in urban communities	<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 due to disorganized urban growth.</p>
IDPs	<p>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.</p>
Women in rural and urban areas	<p>There are gender-specific protection and inclusion concerns particularly among rural and urban populations. In terms of livelihoods, women dominate in many aspects. 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.</p> <p>Given the protracted conflict situation, there are serious GBV concerns across Afghanistan.</p>
Vulnerable households lacking abled bodied members in urban areas	<p>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.</p>
Female-headed households	<p>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.</p>
Elderly people	<p>Afghanistan has been named the worst country for elderly people to live in for several years.² 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.</p>

² See HelpAge International’s Global Age Watch Index: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-foundation-elderly-index-idINKCN0HP2MC20140930>

Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)	PWD are particularly marginalized in Afghanistan. PWD are more likely to be excluded from participation and benefitting from public services.
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Other Interested Parties

Stakeholder	Description
Community 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
UN agencies	A variety of UN agencies has continued to operate in Afghanistan, and is engaged in humanitarian assistance as well as continuation of development activities. Agencies in the fields relevant for this Project include UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women, UN Habitat, UNFPA, and IOM.
NGOs and CSOs	A variety of NGOs and CSOs exist throughout the country at national, regional and local levels. Many of them engage in sector work relevant for this Project. For example, there is a variety of NGOs and CSOs concerned with issues of women empowerment and gender equality. NGOs and CSOs will play a crucial part in the implementation of the Project activities.

Disadvantaged / Vulnerable Individuals and Groups

The Project will focus on targeting disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals and groups. Component 3 and 4 will make concerted efforts to reach women and vulnerable groups, while Component 1 and 2 include ultra-poor households. It is anticipated that the key disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals and groups include poor and ultra-poor households in urban and rural settings, women, female-headed households, elderly people, IDPs, and PWDs. However, vulnerability will also depend on the specific context of a particular location, and will be assessed based on particular activities as well. It is therefore expected that it also includes individuals that are war victims, nomadic communities, unemployed persons, illiterate individuals and others. Intersectionalities can particularly contribute to vulnerability, for example where IDPs or PWDs are female and heading a household. Special attention will be paid on a case-by-case basis on such intersectionalities.

Disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals and groups will be particularly catered for by stakeholder engagement modalities to ensure that information reaches those most disadvantaged, and that they are also consulted on project activities, risks and impacts. This is particularly important, as the disadvantaged and vulnerable form a key beneficiary group of this Project.

Summary of Project Stakeholder Needs

Table 2 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.)
Rural Communities	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 regional languages	Community meetings, individual meetings, notice boards, social media, community radio, TV	They can also be used as a means to reach the broader public
	Poor and ultra poor households	Depending on vulnerable livelihoods	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Community radio, community meetings, notice boards	
	CDC members	Experience in prioritization exercised and consultations	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Community radio, telephone, community meetings, individual meetings, social media	
	Women	Often not part of decision-making structure, lower literacy rates	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Community radio, telephone, women group meetings, notice boards	May require communication means that are independent of locality (e.g. mobile phone or radio) Gender disaggregated consultations, Inclusion in project benefits and access to GBV services as required
	Elderly people	Vulnerable and little access to assistance	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Community radio, community meetings, notice boards,	May require special assistance to attend community meetings,

				community mobilizers to reach out	may not have access to electronic means
	PWDs	Often not included in decision-making processes, and more likely to be excluded from public services and participation.	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Community radio, community meetings, other social media, depending on accessibility needs, community mobilizers to reach out	Consider working with NGOs focusing on disabilities to ensure full reach of PWDs, including through use of media (e.g. Braille, sign language, etc.,) and locations that are accessible and appropriate to ensure their participation
	NGOs and CSOs		Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Community radio, social media, mobile phone, email	
	Female-headed households	Often not integrated in communal decision-making processes, lower literacy rates	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Mobile phone, radio, community mobilizers to reach out	Gender disaggregated consultations, inclusion in project benefits and access to GBV services as required
	Nomadic pastoralists	Possible nomadic movement patterns, low literacy	Kochin	Mobile phone, radio, community meetings, community mobilizers to reach out	Specific language requirements, cater for low literacy through radio communication
Urban Communities	Urban community leaders and members	Deal with all concerns of the communities	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Individual meetings, community meetings, newspapers, emails, mobile phones	Roles and responsibilities including support in stakeholder engagements, information dissemination and grievance redress
	CDCs	Experience in prioritization and community engagements and consultations	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Individual meetings, email, mobile phone	Roles and responsibilities including support in stakeholder engagements, information dissemination and grievance redress

Urban host communities	Can originate from different backgrounds	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Community meetings, mobile phone, internet / email, newspapers,	
Poor and ultra poor households	Potentially low literacy rate	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Community meetings, radio, mobile phone	Cater for low literacy through radio communication
IDPs	Lack of social cohesion / leadership	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Community meetings, radio, notice boards	
Women	Lack of decision-making power, lower literacy levels	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Community meetings with women's groups specifically, radio, mobile phone	Cater for low literacy through radio communication Hold meetings at times when women are not engaged in duties
Vulnerable households lacking abled bodied members in urban areas	Lack of decision-making power, lower literacy levels	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Community meetings, community mobilizers to assist, radio	Cater for low literacy through radio communication
Female-headed households	Lack of decision-making power, lower literacy levels	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Community meetings, community mobilizers to assist, radio	Cater for low literacy through radio communication
Elderly people	Unable to work, lower literacy levels	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Community meetings, community mobilizers to assist, radio	Cater for low literacy through radio communication
PWDs	Unable to work, lower literacy levels	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Community meetings, community mobilizers to assist, radio	Cater for low literacy through radio communication

	NGOs and CSOs	Understand community voices, represent associations formed around community issues	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Email, internet, radio, mobile phone, social media	Ensure that NGOs and CSOs from different backgrounds are considered for engagement
	Construction Companies	Good capacity	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages, English	Email, internet, radio, mobile phone, social media	Ensure that companies from different backgrounds are considered for engagement
National Level	UN agencies, international NGOs, bilateral donors		English	Internet/email	Preparation and implementation support as well as training and capacity building
	National CSOs, NGOs	Good capacity	English	Internet/email, individual meetings, telephone	Preparation and implementation support as well as training and capacity building

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Purpose and Timing of Stakeholder Engagement Plan

The four purposes of consultations and information dissemination in the Afghanistan Community Resilience Project are: (a) understanding of the needs of the affected populations; (b) ensuring of coordination between all implementers and informal community authority structures / CDCs; (c) reception of feedback and comments as well as grievances from all stakeholders on project design and implementation; (d) provision of transparent and accountable mechanisms on all aspects of Project design and implementation; and (e) ensuring that members of vulnerable groups from project affected communities are able to participate fully in the consultation process and enjoy project benefits. To ensure this, a Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) is included below, which will be rolled out in all Project locations. A national Hotline number and information material for the Hotline will be made available. It allows 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 ITA to contain virus spread. Representatives of particular community groups will be consulted. Strategies will be employed to include smaller meetings, small FGDs 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 interim Taliban administration (ITA) will be avoided to the extent possible. Engagements will be undertaken directly by the above listed implementers (UNOPS and NGO partners). Implementers will focus on the CDCs as a key vehicle for information dissemination and consultations at the community level. Consultations with higher level partners will be undertaken directly by UNOPS and national NGO partners.

Plan for Information Disclosure

Information disclosure to the affected populations and beneficiaries will rely on the following key methods: radio broadcasting, community meetings in coordination with local leaders and CDC members, phone communication (SMS), and notice boards. Community mobilizers will be deployed to particularly ensure the inclusion of those with special needs for participation or communication. 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. Local leaders and CDC members will be requested to inform communities in community meetings and through disclosure on social media – depending whether the target locations are rural or urban.

Table 3 Plan for Information Disclosure

Project Stage	List of information to be disclosed	Methods proposed	Timelines: locations / dates	Target Stakeholders	% of target population reached	Responsibilities
Project Design	SEP, ESMF (including GRM), RPF	Community meetings / telephone / notice boards	April 2022	Rural and urban level	5%	PIU
		Email	April 2022	Urban level	30%	PIU
		websites	April 2022	Urban and national level	20%	PIU
	Other relevant project documents and information	community meetings / telephone / notice boards	May 2022	Rural and urban level	10%	PIU
		email	May 2022	Urban and national level	30%	PIU
		websites	August 2022	Urban and national level	20%	PIU
Project Implementation	Activity – or site specific ESMPs / RAPs , LMP etc...	community meetings / telephone / notice boards	Continuous	Rural and urban level	20%	PIU and IPs
		email	Continuous	Urban and national level	30%	PIU and IPs
		website	Continuous	Urban and national level	20%	PIU and IPs
		Radio	Continuous	Rural and urban level	20%	PIU and IPs
	Any project-related information (on activities, beneficiary selection etc...)	Community meetings / telephone / notice boards	Continuous	Rural and urban level	20%	IPs
		radio	Continuous	Rural and urban level	20%	IP
		Mobile phone	Continuous	Rural and urban level	20%	IP
		Email/website	Continuous	Urban and national level	30%	PIU and IPs
	GRM	community meetings / notice boards	Continuous	Rural and urban level	20%	PIU and IPs
		radio	Continuous	Rural and urban level	20%	PIU and IPs
		Mobile phone	Continuous	Rural and urban level	20%	PIU and IPs
		website	Continuous	Urban and national level	30%	IP / PIU

Plan for Consultations

This plan lays out the overall consultative processes of the Project with its different stakeholders. In principle, the PIU and all IPs implementing sub-component activities, will follow their existing participatory engagement and consultation methods, especially with affected communities and beneficiaries. These will follow specific tools and methods of community consultations that partners have developed in their sectoral fields (e.g., in health, agriculture, cash for work, WASH etc.). However, throughout the procurement/bidding process, SEP-related activities will be included, and IPs will be called upon to budget for SEP-related activities that are under their responsibility.

The GRM is another means of consultation, as complaints received will be filed, assessed and responded to (see below).

Table 4 Plan for Consultations

Project stage	Topic of consultation	Suggested Method (will be refined by IP)	Target stakeholders	Responsibilities
Project Design	Overall Project activities and E&S risks and impacts	Community meetings, community mobilizers assistance, email, social media	Rural and urban level stakeholders	PIU and IPs
		Stakeholder meetings, email	National level stakeholders (UN agencies, NGOs/CSOs)	PIU and IPs
		Email	National level stakeholders	PIU
Project Initiation and Implementation	Cash transfers	Community meetings, selected group meetings for cash transfers, mobile phone	Rural and urban level stakeholder	IPs
	Community infrastructure work plans, prioritization exercises,	Community meetings, community mobilizers assistance, email, social media	Rural and urban level stakeholder	IPs
		Stakeholder meetings, email	Urban and national level stakeholders	IPs
	Sub-Project Specific ESMPs / ESIAs / RAPs	Community meetings, community mobilizers assistance, email, social media	Rural and urban level stakeholders	IPs
	E&S risks and impacts and mitigation measures	Stakeholder meetings, email	Urban and national level stakeholders	IPs

Proposed Strategy to Incorporate the View of Vulnerable Groups

The PIU and IPs ensures that women, PWDs, elderly, ethnic minorities and other members of vulnerable groups participates effectively and meaningfully in consultative processes and that their voices are not ignored. This may require specific measures and assistance to afford opportunities for meetings with vulnerable groups in addition to general community consultations. For example, women may be more outspoken in women-only consultation meetings than in general community meetings. Similarly, separate meetings may be held with young people, PWDs or minority groups. Further, it is important to rely on other consultation methods as well, which do not require physical participation in meetings, such as social media, email or SMS, to ensure that groups that cannot physically be present at meetings can participate.

Most importantly, community mobilizers will be deployed, mostly recruited from the target communities. They will provide special encouragement and assistance where necessary to vulnerable individuals and groups and with that ensure that information reaches them and that they can participate meaningfully in consultations. The Community Mobilizers will work closely with the CDC members in identifying vulnerable individuals and groups.

In view of promoting gender equality, it is most important to engage women's groups on an ongoing basis throughout the lifetime of the project. Women voicing their concerns and contributing in the decision-making process on issues such as community infrastructure should be encouraged, especially in various fora that predominantly consist of men. Community Mobilizers and CDC members (also consisting of female members) will be an important asset in ensuring women's active participation. IPs are similarly encouraged to deploy female staff, in particular where staff interfaces with community members.

GRMs are designed in such a way that all groups identified as vulnerable have access to the information and can submit their grievances and receive feedback as prescribed.

Timelines

The Afghanistan Community Resilience Project is planned for a duration of 2 years. Information disclosure and consultations are relevant throughout the entire life cycle of the Project. Project design will therefore be based on national-level and urban and rural-level consultations of project affected parties. Activities under each sub-component will include further consultations prior to their commencement, to ensure a broadly inclusive selection of beneficiaries, transparency and accountability on project modalities, and allow community 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 March and April 2022. This SEP will be updated during the implementation phase, based on in-depth consultations in the project area.

Reviews of Comments

The UNOPS and IPs implementing different sub-components of the Project 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 Social Specialists in the UNOPS PIU, to ensure that the Project has general information on the perception of communities, and that it remains on

target. It will be the responsibility of the UNOPS PIU and the different IPs to respond to comments and inputs, and to keep open a feedback line to the communities. Training on environmental and social standards facilitated by WB will be provided soon after the Project becomes effective to ensure that all the staff from the PIU, and the different IPs are equipped with the necessary skills.

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

IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS FOR STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Implementation Arrangements

The overall responsibility for the implementation of the SEP lies with the Project Manager in UNOPS through the PIU. The Project Manager will be overseeing one Environmental and one Social Specialist, who are part of the UNOPS PIU staffing table. They form part of the Risk Management Unit inside the UNOPS PIU. The team is further supported by a GRM Specialist, a GBV Specialist, and a Stakeholder Engagement Specialist. The Stakeholder Engagement Specialist, in particular, supports the Social Specialist in overseeing all SEP-related activities and will provide continuous expert inputs into the refinement of the SEP.

The Social and Environmental Specialists maintains a stakeholder database for the overall project and leads a commitment register. However, while the PIU will oversee all coordination and disclosure-related consultations, the IPs implement the SEP at the rural and urban levels in their respective project sites and report on their activities to the PIU Social Specialist on a monthly basis. Where UNOPS implements activities directly or through construction companies, UNOPS will be responsible for all local stakeholder engagement. The PIU Social Safeguards Specialist undertakes field verification activities jointly with the IPs – at least every other month, or during planned events.

Each IP identifies dedicated staff responsible for the implementation of the SEP within the organization. Staff names are submitted to the PIU Social Safeguards Specialist. Selected staff must have ample qualifications to implement the SEP, as stipulated by the terms of reference for the position in the IPs' HR system. IPs also commit to communicate the stakeholder engagement strategies for their respective sub-components internally.

IPs who contract local companies for construction work, or local NGOs or CSOs for the implementation of their activities submit plans to the Social and Environmental Specialist at the PIU. The Specialist verify the implementation of those plans during field visits.

Both the designated Environmental and Social Specialist shall have clear ToR for day-to-day E&S management. The assigned Specialists shall conduct periodic sight visit to ensure compliance and report to the higher management.

Grievance Redress Mechanism

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 will be designed in accordance with World Bank's ESS10 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.

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 affected parties.

- The GRM would be well-publicized and known to all affected population. The implementing agency will ensure that the GRM is widely publicized and will also conduct awareness campaigns in this regard among the affected communities. 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 segments of affected communities, living within the vicinity of the project and subprojects sites or location.
- 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, three guiding principles of confidentiality, survivor centricity 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.

Description of GRM

The United Nations in Afghanistan has a well-established Grievance Mechanism in place, Awaaz Afghanistan (Awaaz), which is implemented by UNOPS on behalf of various UN and humanitarian response agencies. Awaaz is a collective accountability and community engagement initiative that functions as a toll-free, countrywide hotline number (410) that affected populations can dial to access information and register feedback on humanitarian assistance programmes. As a two-way communication channel, needs and priorities as reported on the ground are circulated to partners to help improve the quality of programming in Afghanistan. Awaaz is based on common principles, has processes and policies for receiving and handling complaints and feedback, as well as for data protection; and includes inter-agency referral mechanisms. It is designed to be accessible, collaborative, expeditious, and effective in resolving concerns. Awaaz has ten multilingual operators (50% of which are women) and has handled more than 201,412 calls since Awaaz took its first call in May 2018. Awaaz agents speak Dari, Pashto, Urdu, English and more. Establishing referral pathways with clusters and partners, cases requiring attention are shared (in agreement with the affected person) in a timely manner, helping the humanitarian response to swiftly align its delivery to actual needs. The Awaaz call center also utilizes a short code (specifically, 7575), which anyone can use to send a free SMS with feedback, a question, or a complaint. More information about Awaaz can be found at Awaaz Afghanistan (<https://awaazaf.org>).

Based on the consultations which would be conducted, two-tiered Grievance Redressal Committees would be established. The local level GRC would operate in the field with Implementing partners. There would also be a national level GRC which would operate through UNOPS’ mechanisms. There would be a provision for appeals and any aggrieved party would be able to directly approach the national level GRC as well. The formation of the GRCs would be done prior to the commencement of project activities based on consultations.

While the Awaz and other 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 the respective implementing partners during the implementation of sub-project activities in an area manned proportionate to the nature of the activity. 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.

Relevant assigned CDC members will also be available in each sub-project site. They will be requested to accept formal grievances and ensure that avenues for lodging grievances are accessible to the public. The first point of contact for all potential grievances from community members may be the CDC member. The CDC member will be required to accept formal grievances; or they can guide aggrieved persons to the Hotline Operator's number, the Help Desk or Suggestion Box.

The staff manning help desks, CDC members and those operating the toll-free hotline number would be trained by the PIU 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 respective implementation partner at local or national level and the PIU. 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 PIU.
- **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 TPMA will provide independent operational review of overall project implementation and project results, including the implementation of the SEP and GRM. The PIU will synthesize all reporting by TPMA and IPs, 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.

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. The Awaaz call center also includes support for safe and confidential reporting for incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). 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 SEA/SH Action Plan will list 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 PIU Social Specialist 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 GBV 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 informed agreement by the survivor within 48 hours.

Monitoring and Reporting

Involvement of Stakeholders in Monitoring Activities

The Project will involve project stakeholders in monitoring of project activities, including project performance as well as environmental and social risks and impacts. The CDCs, which have been established at the community level by previous projects will be the key stakeholder serving in a monitoring function. Representing the community, the CDC members will be able to represent the voices of the community on project performance and impacts from a local perspective through regular consultation meetings with the Project implementers (UNOPS and NGO/CSO partners) at the local level (using methods described above).

At this stage it is also anticipated that a Third Party Monitoring Agency (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 UNOPS PIU and the World Bank.

Reporting Back to Stakeholder Groups

The above listed plan for information dissemination to the project-affected parties also includes the information dissemination and disclosure of Project monitoring results. The Stakeholder Engagement Specialist at the UNOPS PIU, in close coordination with the other implementing partners, 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 local and national level. The implementation of the stakeholder consultation plan (see above), in turn, will allow project-affected parties 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.

Reporting to the World Bank

The UNOPS PIU will provide quarterly Project Progress Reports to the World Bank. These Quarterly reports will consist of project performance and results as per Project Component; financial and procurement information; E&S risks and impacts as well as mitigation measures applied and additional E&S instruments prepared and implemented. The UNOPS PIU will receive monthly and quarterly inputs from its Implementing Partners prior to the preparation of the Quarterly Report, 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.

Estimated Budget

The below table presents an estimated budget for the implementation of the SEP. It should be noted that IPs' budgets 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 PIU. The source of funding is the PIU Project budget.

Table 5 Estimated Budget for SEP implementation

Stakeholder Engagement Activities	Q-ty/per years (months)	Unit Cost, USD	# of years	Total cost (USD)
Social Safeguards Specialist and Stakeholder Engagement Specialist (PIU)			2	included in PIU staff costs
GRM, M&E case management process, data base (Including running of hotline, record keeping etc.)			2	GRM costs included in ESMF budget
Operational Costs (Travel, Logistic Support, Security, Transportation & Accommodation).			2	included in ESMF PIU staff travel costs
Communication materials (leaflets, posters,)	12	1,000.00 Per month	2	24,000.00
Radio broadcasts, social media (twice per year)		15,000.00 Per year	2	30,000.00
Connectivity cost	12	2,500.00 Per month	2	60,000.00
Trainings (Social issues, outreach, GRM, etc.) for PIU, IPs		25,000 per year	2	50,000.00
Subtotal				164,000.00
Contingency 5%				8,200.00
Total				172,200.00

