



RESILAND CA+: Tajikistan Resilient Landscape Restoration Project

PROCESS FRAMEWORK

**Prepared by
Project Implementation Group
of Committee for Environmental Protection under the
Government of the Republic of Tajikistan**

November 2021

Contents

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	2
INTRODUCTION	3
I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION.....	4
1.1 Project Objectives.....	4
1.2. Project Design and Components	5
II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK	7
2.1 World Bank Environmental and Social Standards	7
2.2 National Legal Framework and Policy.....	8
III. RIGHTS OF THE PROJECT AFFECTED PERSONS	12
3.1. Eligibility and Entitlements	12
3.2. Considerations for vulnerable groups.....	14
3.3. Project activity stages	14
IV. PARTICIPATION	15
4.1. Community mobilization and engagement	15
4.2. Community awareness raising.....	15
4.3. Drafting of management plans for SPNAs and communities	16
4.4. Other alternative sources	16
4.5. Monitoring and reporting	17
IV. POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES	17
V. PLAN OF ACTION.....	19
VI. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS	20
VII. PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS AND GRIEVANCE MECHANISM	22
7.1. Public consultation and participation during PF preparation.....	22
7.2. Public consultation and participation during project implementation.....	22
7.3. Grievance mechanism	22
VIII. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS OF PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS	25

List of Abbreviations

BD	Biodiversity
CAMP4ASB	Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Program for Aral Sea Basin
CAREC	Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia
CEP	Committee of Environmental Protection
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
ESSs	The World Bank's Environmental and Social Standards
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
FLR	Forest Landscape Restoration
GFDRR	Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery
GIZ	German Society for International Cooperation (<i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit</i>)
GoT	Government of the Republic of Tajikistan
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
ICARDA	International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas
ICSD	Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development
IFSAS	International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea
JFM	Joint Forest Management
LDN	Land Degradation Neutrality
LMP	Labor Management Procedures
LRM	Landscape Resilient Management
MEWR	Ministry of Energy and Water Resources
MMDAP	Mitigation Measures Developed in the Action Plan
NBS	Nature-Based Solutions
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NFI	National Forest Inventory
NFMS	National Forest Monitoring System
NTFP	Non-timber Forest Products
NWFP	Non-Wood Forest Product
PAPs	Project Affected Persons
PDO	Project Development Objective
PF	Process Framework
PIG	Project Implementation Group
PRT	Pasture Reclamation Trust (PRT) of the Ministry of Agriculture
PUU	Pasture Users Union
RBO	River Basin Organization
REFCA	Regional Engagement Framework for Central Asia
RPF	Resettlement Policy Framework
SENPA	State Enterprise of Natural Protected Areas
SFE	State Forest Enterprises
SFF	State Forest Fund
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SPNA	Specially Protected Natural Areas
VDP	Village Development Plan
COP	Co-management Plan

INTRODUCTION

This document presents Process Framework (PF) prepared for the proposed Tajikistan Resilient Landscape Restoration Project, in order to ensure the local communities, who have a stake, especially in protected areas, may participate in land and natural resources management through informed and meaningful consultations and negotiations to develop and implement perspective plans.

The objective of the Process Framework is to address the risks that may be caused by the project activities, like restriction on land-based resources and access to natural resources that cause a community or groups within community to lose access to resource usage, including legally designated protected areas, forests, or biodiversity areas to be restored in connection with the project.

The CEP has developed also a Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF), which has defined the procedures for: (i) acquiring land (after all technical alternatives have been exhausted), (ii) dealing with any residual impacts from land acquisition (i.e. identifying, establishing the valuation of, and compensating people that suffer economic losses or loss of private property), (iii) monitoring and verification that policies and procedures are followed, and (iv) grievance redress mechanisms.

The WB Environmental and Social Standard 5 (ESS 5) recognizes that project land buyouts and land-use restrictions can have adverse impacts on communities and people, including restrictions on access to legally designated parks and protected areas. ESS6 recognizes the importance of maintaining core ecological functions of habitats, including forests and protected areas and the biodiversity they support. It also recognizes the need to consider the livelihood of project-affected parties, whose access to, or use of, biodiversity or living natural resources may be affected by a project. The potential, positive role of project affected parties, in biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of living natural resources is also considered.

The project aims to contribute to the restoration, conservation and sustainable management of forests, rangelands, natural protected areas and landscapes that contribute to the climate change mitigation, adaptation, biodiversity conservation, improving the livelihoods of local people and mobilizing government and private funds (project deliverable). State Enterprises of Specially Protected Natural Areas (SPNAs) and the local population/private sector in the project area actively support and participate in the process of transformational change in the SPNA sector (final outcome).

SPNAs will be supported in the transformational transition from unsustainable use of forest resources to a low carbon and sustainable development path. Local communities/private sector will be actively involved in the project by sustainable land management under the Joint Forest Management (JFM) approach. Only if a sufficient number of JFM plots/participants cannot be found at a given site, permission will be given to apply a direct afforestation approach by the SPNAs. The project foresees support for reforestation and active (hard) regeneration and indirect (soft) regeneration.

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1.1 Project Objectives

The Project Development Objective (PDO) is to expand the area under sustainable landscape management by rural communities in selected sites/areas in Tajikistan, and to promote cooperation among Central Asian countries on the restoration of transboundary landscapes. The project aims to strengthen cooperation with neighboring countries at the regional level in key aspects of landscape management, including management of SPNAs, forestry, resource monitoring and data sharing.

The project aims to prepare institutions and support future landscape restoration efforts, such as legal frameworks capable to supply planting material for restoration, monitoring of natural resources, development of tax incentives for ecological services, etc. The project will support policy development and planning opportunities, as well as the implementation of investments in all sectors of the economy, focusing on degradation at the appropriate scale, generating income from natural resource services, and increasing the resilience of communities and infrastructure to be successful in implementing this approach.

Project districts/areas were selected based on a combination of criteria. An initial pre-selection of districts was made using the following criteria – poverty level, potential for integrated landscape restoration (including pastures, agriculture, water resources, forestry, biodiversity), regional and transboundary corridors and complementarity with initiatives financed by the government and donors.

When overlaid with the current location of the river basins, the potential project sites fall into the following river basins: a) Syrdarya, including the Zarafshon basin, covering three districts –Ayni, Panjekent, Gornaya Matcha (in Sughd Oblast on the border with Uzbekistan and Kyrgyz Republic); b) Large Pyanj, covering four districts – Vanj, Rushon, Shughnon and Murgob (in Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast, bordering the Kyrgyz Republic and Afghanistan); and c) Lower Kofarnihon, covering three districts – Shaaritzuz, Nosir Khusrav, Qubodiyon (in Khatlon Province, bordering with Uzbekistan and Afghanistan), as shown in the map below.

The following protected areas are proposed to be covered by the project:

Name of PA	Location	Year of foundation	Area (thousand ha)	Tasks of the organization
State Nature Reserve “Zorkul”	Murgab district, GBAO	14.03.2001	87.7	Conservation of rare animals, including the Bukhara mountain sheep, the Pamir mountain sheep (arkhar) and Indian goose.
Yagnob Nature Park	Ayni district, Sughd Oblast	2.05.2019	57.0	Protection and preservation of natural and cultural folk monuments.
Regional Administration of Tajik National Park in GBAO	Murgab, Vanj, Rushan, Shugnan districts, GBAO	20.07.1992	2200.0	Preservation of natural ecosystems and rare animals, including snow leopard, Pamir mountain sheep (Arkhar).
State Nature Reserve “Tigrovaya Balka”	Dusti and Jaykhun districts, Khatlon Province	4.11.1938	49.7	Preservation of riparian forests and rare fauna, including Bukhara deer.

1.2. Project Design and Components

The RESILAND CA +: Tajikistan Resilient Landscape Restoration Project consists of 3 (three) Components and 6 (six) Sub-Components, summarized below.

Component 1. Strengthening institutions and policies, and regional collaboration

- Sub-Component 1.1. Strengthening institutions and policies
- Sub-Component 1.2. Enhance regional **collaboration**

Component 2. Enhance Resilient landscapes and livelihoods

- Sub-Component 2.1. Reforestation and sustainable forest management
- Sub-Component 2.2. Integrated pasture management and restoration
- Sub-Component 2.3. Protected area management and biodiversity conservation
- Sub-Component 2.4. Landscape restoration and livelihoods

Component 3. Project management and coordination

The project aims to reduce vulnerability to climate change and increase community resilience through landscape restoration and livelihood improvement. Integrated landscape management includes sustainable and climate-resilient forest management, pasture management, biodiversity conservation, water management and climate-smart agriculture.

These measures directly contribute to climate change mitigation, community adaptation and resilience to climate change vulnerability. For example, the project will: a) promote a range of sustainable forest and pasture management practices; b) apply agroforestry techniques to diversify vulnerable livelihoods; c) support capacity building and training on climate resilient forest, pasture, water and agricultural practices; d) conduct forest and pasture inventory and support information management systems at national level; e) develop forest and pasture management plans that include provisions and guidelines for climate change adaptation and risk management; and e) apply climate-smart agricultural practices.

The project tests the landscape approach and makes strategic investments that are strictly consistent with SPNA development plans in targeted areas within that landscape. The project seeks to enhance sustainable economic growth and ecosystem services across the landscape. The scope and sequence of project activities are in line with the project's development objective.

Activities will focus on a logical combination of: (i) strengthening protection and management of natural resources in the forest landscape with zoning, boundary and land demarcation, registration of SPNAs; development of SPNA management plans that include subsidiary plans for ecotourism and non-timber forest products (NTFP) development; (ii) strengthening an enabling policy framework for ecotourism, NTFP value chain development and private sector participation; ((iii) community development, participation in the use and management of forest resources with the development of CPA management plans related to ecotourism and/or NTFP development; and (v) strategic infrastructure investments in improving linkages with the ecotourism sites, SPNA landscape and improving ecotourism and NTFP value chains.

There are 4 (four) SENPAs identified in the SPNA landscape for development and management within the Project: 1) Tajik National Park (bordering the Kyrgyz Republic), 2) “Zorkul” Special Nature Reserve in GBAO (bordering Afghanistan), 3) “Yagnob” National Park in the Zarafshon river sub-basin (bordering Uzbekistan) and key biodiversity areas in the Upper Syrdarya (bordering Uzbekistan), and 4) “Tigrovaya Balka” State Nature Reserve in Khatlon Province (on the border with Afghanistan).

This project activities, based on state priority and relative importance. The government has given priority to the Tajik National Park, which is part of UNESCO and it is necessary to design a Program for the SPNAs development by 2030 within the Strategy (Program) of National Protected Areas. Management Plan, Project activities related to ecological tourism has also priority areas of SPNAs.

Sub-Component 2.3 Management of SPNAs and biodiversity conservation. The Sub-Component will be technically led by SENPA as part of the CEP. The subcomponent includes the following key actions:

Priority SPNAs Management Plans

Management plans will be updated and prepared for the priority SPNAs in the selected project landscapes. Management plans do not exist for all SPNAs, and if they exist, they are outdated. The plans are critical investments for the effective management of SPNAs for the benefit of the country and the region. The plans will include standard elements – management measures, conservation and restoration measures, protection and enforcement, monitoring, education and awareness, stakeholder engagement, ecotourism and recreation, priority actions and associated expenses. Planning activities will include boundary mapping, spatial planning, economic and financial analysis and stakeholder consultations.

Implementation of SPNA management plans

Once the management plans have been prepared, SENPA and the relevant authorities of the individual protected areas will be responsible for their implementation. This will include activities such as establishment of the monitoring systems and protocols, including remote and field monitoring, such as cameras, traps, drones, surveys, etc. Other investments in the SPNA management include tourism facilities, signposts, protection infrastructure and restoration/ protection plans for about 10,000 hectares joined and around them. In the case of the Tajik National Park, the project will support the implementation of the government-approved Management Plan (for the period of 2021-2025).

Key activities that the project will support include: a) boundary demarcation; b) installation of information boards in places frequently visited by the local population and tourists; c) registration of sheep, Marco Polo, Capricorn and Snow Leopard, and analysis of their habitat; d) protection and improvement of the habitat of the main species, for example, bar-headed goose, Tibetan snowcock, argali, ibex, Snow Leopard and Bukhara deer; e) promotion of ecotourism and related activities; and f) publication of booklets, maps with tourist attractions, natural, historical and cultural sites.

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 World Bank Environmental and Social Standards

The WB's ESS5 recognizes that project-related land acquisition and restrictions on land use can have adverse impacts on communities and persons. Project-related land acquisition or restrictions on land use may cause physical displacement (relocation, loss of residential land or loss of shelter), economic displacement (loss of land, assets or access to assets, leading to loss of income sources or other means of livelihood), or both. This ESS applies to permanent or temporary physical and economic displacement resulting from the following types of land acquisition or restrictions on land use undertaken or imposed in connection with project implementation:

- (a) Land rights or land use rights acquired or restricted through expropriation or other compulsory procedures in accordance with national law;
- (b) Land rights or land use rights acquired or restricted through negotiated settlements with property owners or those with legal rights to the land, if failure to reach settlement would have resulted in expropriation or other compulsory procedures;
- (c) Restrictions on land use and access to natural resources that cause a community or groups within a community to lose access to resource usage where they have traditional or customary tenure, or recognizable usage rights. This may include situations where legally designated protected areas, forests, biodiversity areas or buffer zones are established in connection with the project;
- (d) Relocation of people without formal, traditional, or recognizable usage rights, who are occupying or utilizing land prior to a project specific cut-off date;
- (e) Displacement of people as a result of project impacts that render their land unusable or inaccessible;
- (f) Restriction on access to land or use of other resources including communal property and natural resources such as marine and aquatic resources, timber and non-timber forest products, fresh water, medicinal plants, hunting and gathering grounds and grazing and cropping areas;
- (g) Land rights or claims to lands or resources relinquished by individuals or communities without full payment of compensation; and
- (h) Land acquisition or land use restrictions occurring prior to the project, but which were undertaken or initiated in anticipation of, or in preparation for, the project.

The Process Framework (PF) defines procedures to allow the project affected persons (PAPs) to participate in determining the measures necessary to mitigate or minimize the effects of limited access to resources. As per the World Bank's Environmental and Social Standard (ESS) 5, the term "displaced persons" is synonymous with "project affected persons" and is not limited to those subjected to physical displacement. It must be noted however that project activities are not expected to result in physical relocation of persons or communities, and that any potential, temporary or permanent, land acquisition is covered by the RPF. In terms of this PF, PAP refers to those persons who lose "access to legally designated parks and protected areas resulting in adverse impacts on their livelihoods". The Project will need to assess who would be eligible for livelihood support based on the loss of access as a result of restrictions carried out under the project.

PF provides guidelines to develop Action Plans during the project implementation, which:

- Identify restrictions of access to natural resources in the proposed protected areas;
- Identify and quantify the impact that these restrictions may have on various segments of the local community;
- Identify participatory approaches to engage PAPs in SPNA project activities planning and implementation;
- Propose, implement, and monitor remedial measures to compensate the loss of these assets and the associated income;

- Provide grievance mechanisms to address any problems that may arise due to limited access to resources during the project implementation.

PF ensures that the views of people who can benefit from the project, especially vulnerable people such as women, are included in the planning process. Targeted activities will ensure that all PAPs participate in the process and receive adequate compensation and assistance.

ESS6 recognizes the importance of maintaining core ecological functions of habitats, including forests and protected areas and the biodiversity they support. It also recognizes the need to consider the livelihood of project-affected parties, whose access to, or use of, biodiversity or living natural resources may be affected by a project. The potential, positive role of project affected parties, in biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of living natural resources is also considered.

This ESS recognizes legally protected areas that meet the following definition: “A clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values.”

This ESS requires a differentiated risk management approach to habitats based on their sensitivity and values. This ESS addresses all habitats, categorized as ‘modified habitat’, ‘natural habitat’, and ‘critical habitat’, along with ‘legally protected and internationally and regionally recognized areas of biodiversity value’ which may encompass habitat in any or all of these categories.

Where the project occurs within or has the potential to adversely affect an area that is legally protected, designated for protection, or regionally or internationally recognized, the Borrower will ensure that any activities undertaken are consistent with the area’s legal protection status and management objectives. The Borrower will also identify and assess potential project-related adverse impacts and apply the mitigation hierarchy so as to prevent or mitigate adverse impacts from projects that could compromise the integrity, conservation objectives or biodiversity importance of such an area. In addition, the Borrower will:

- (a) Demonstrate that the proposed development in such areas is legally permitted;
- (b) Act in a manner consistent with any government recognized management plans for such areas;
- (c) Consult and involve protected area sponsors and managers, project-affected parties including Indigenous Peoples, and other interested parties on planning, designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the proposed project, as appropriate; and
- (d) Implement additional programs, as appropriate, to promote and enhance the conservation aims and effective management of the area.

2.2 National Legal Framework and Policy

Tajikistan has a well-developed environmental legal framework. The existing environmental legislation in Tajikistan includes laws and legal acts: (i) On Environmental Protection; (ii) On Specially Protected Natural Areas; (iii) On Environmental Impact Assessment; (iv) On Protection of Atmospheric Air; (v) On Environmental Audit; (vi) On Environmental Monitoring; (vii) On Protection and Use of Flora; (viii) On Biological Safety; (ix) On Fauna; (x) On Soil Protection; (xi) Wildlife; (xii) On Collection, Conservation and Rational Use of Crop Genetic Resources and (xiii) On Ensuring Biological Safety and Biological Protection and others.

The State Forestry Agency (SFA) has developed the *Forest Development Strategy (2016 – 2030)*, but this has yet to be adopted by the Government, so there is no dedicated funding for implementation. The Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy lists detailed activities along with specific targets, but lack of adequate investment and capacity means that most activities have not started, and targets remain unattained.

Tajikistan has adopted a participatory forest management approach – Joint Forest Management (JFM). JFM enables the local population – either individuals or groups – to become involved in forest management and support the rehabilitation of degraded natural forests over the long term. Since 2018 the required subsidiary regulations and by-laws are in place. State Forest Enterprises (SFEs or Lezkhoses) are now obliged to support JFM. The SFA, SFEs and forest users in previous donor supported areas have gained an understanding of JFM and are now able to share this approach more widely, paving the way for a national rollout. Due to contradictions between the Forest and Land Codes, areas with no forest cover are not considered for JFM. Resolving this issue would facilitate inclusion of new areas for JFM.

The *State Program for Specially Protected Natural Areas* for the period until 2015 is in place; however it is outdated. The main legislative act regulating activities in the field of SENPAs is the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On Specially Protected Natural Areas" adopted in the new edition of 2011, as well as the Forest Code and the Laws "On Environmental Protection", "On Wildlife", "On Protection and Use of Flora" and other legislative acts.

The biodiversity conservation and sustainable management in Tajikistan are also included in the Constitution and secured by the legislation. The *Law on Environmental Protection* of Tajikistan (2014) promotes the formation and improvement of environmental legislation, as well as the biodiversity conservation. *Biological Safety Law (2005)* regulating the activity related to the development, production, testing, export and release at the market and in the environment the genetically modified organisms, is aimed at ceasing the risk of negative impact of genetically modified organisms on human health, biological diversity, ecological balance and the environment state.

The Law of the Republic of Tajikistan «*On Environmental Protection*» (2014) defines the legal basis of state policy in the field of environmental protection and is aimed at ensuring resilient socio-economic development, guaranteeing human rights to a healthy and favorable environment, strengthening the rule of law, preventing the negative impact of economic and other activities on the environment, organizing the rational use of natural resources and ensuring environmental safety.

This and the other relevant laws, along with resolutions approved by the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, create a favorable legal framework for the environmental protection, as well as for the use and protection of the country's natural resources. They also provide observance of rights of any citizen to environmental safety, ecologically clean products, clean environment, access to environmental information, possibility to make investments (moral, material and financial) to improve environmental situation in the country.

Land Code (2016) governs the relations of land use and protection, land use and property relations, which arise from land plot acquisition or conveying land use rights. Chapter 6 of the Law determines compensation for land users and losses related to withdrawal of lands from circulation. According to the Articles 41 and 43 of the Land Code the land plot could be seized for the purposes of state or public needs but only upon equal compensation of realty, constructions and crops located on this plot. This compensation couldn't be less than the current market cost of such realty as the law states about the principle of compensation at the market price.

The Land Code requires that the institution which is interested in the land acquisition should justify the necessity of such acquisition and demonstrate that the plot of land should be seized and there is no alternative for the project implementation. The land plot could be seized in cases of need of construction of buildings and constructions or implementation of works of the state interest. If the project presents the interest of the state, the beneficiary of the project has to prepare a proposal on land acquisition required for the purposes of commencement of such acquisition. In accordance with the Law, the process of acquisition has to be completed and all people and households which were included into the project zone provided with the compensation before permission is granted to commence construction.

Law on Land Administration (2016) obliges the government authorities to map and monitor the quality of land, including soil contamination, erosion and logging.

Article 9 of Law of the Republic of Tajikistan «*On Specially Protected Natural Areas*» (2014) is dedicated to participation of public organizations and citizens in creation, protection and use of specially protected natural areas, while Article 18 of the current law regarding citizens' access to specially protected natural areas states the following:

“Specially protected natural areas, with the exception of areas with a strict protection system, are open to the public and are used by citizens for recreational, health, cultural and eco-tourism purposes. In specially protected natural areas, with the exception of areas with a strong protection system, the residence of a historically insignificant population is allowed, provided that the ecological balance of the territory is maintained.

Ecological tourism is carried out in the established time and on the pre-established routes according to rules of visit of specially protected natural territories determined by the authorized state body. The authorized state body or the organizations in charge of specially protected natural territories, in order to protect rare and endangered species of flora and fauna and their habitats, may prohibit ecological tourism in certain areas of specially protected natural areas.

Individuals and legal entities engaged in ecotourism must enter into an agreement with the authorities or organizations in charge of specially protected natural areas to ensure compliance with their system and the rules of ecotourism, route and other conditions.

Access to specially protected natural areas for the purpose of eco-tourism can be expensive. The amount and procedure for payment for ecological tourism in specially protected natural areas shall be established by the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan. Proceeds from eco-tourism in specially protected natural areas will be used to maintain, meet the goals and objectives of the system.”

SPNA Categories. Depending on the purpose of creation, features of the protection regime and use, the following categories of SPNAs are mentioned:

- state nature reserves;
- state nature parks;
- nature sanctuaries;
- state zoological parks;
- state monuments of nature;
- ecological and ethnographic zones;
- arboretum parks and botanical gardens;
- natural resort, health and recreation areas.

In accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Tajikistan other categories of SPNAs may be prescribed. Taking into account the ecological value, SPNAs can have international, republican and local significance.

On the territory of the state nature reserve, which has the status of a biosphere reserve, the following functional zones are envisaged:

- a central zone (core) is a zone with a strict protection regime intended exclusively to conserve biological and landscape diversity and to create conditions for the development of biogeocoenoses. Any economic activity is prohibited in the central zone, with the exception of scientific research and monitoring of natural processes;
- a protected (buffer) zone is an area of land that usually surrounds or borders the central zone, and is used for environmentally safe activities, including environmental education, recreation, ecological tourism, as well as scientific research;
- a transitional zone is an area belonging to other land users and used for environmentally oriented economic activities that do not harm the SPNA complexes and objects.

Powers of the authorized state agency. Among the powers of the authorized state agency are the following:

- implementation of a unified state policy in the field of SPNAs;
- organization of the SPNAs monitoring;
- implementation of the state control;
- development of programs and regulatory legal acts on SPNAs;
- suing for compensation for damage caused to SPNAs as a result of non-compliance with environmental legislation;
- performing other duties defined by the legislation of the Republic of Tajikistan.

Forestry Code (2011) regulates the protection, possession, sustainable use, and reproduction of forests in Tajikistan. It defines prohibited activities in protected forest zones and their regimes and conditions when undertaking allowed activities in the utilization zone of forests and their regimes. The present Code regulates forestry aiming at the rational use of forest resources, the protection and conservation of the natural environment and the promotion of the production of timber and agricultural products. Forests are declared to be common property of the people of Tajikistan and as such are owned by the state. All forests together form the "unified state forest reserve". Articles 6 and 7 define the competence of the Government and empowers local authorities ("hukumats") in regulating matters related to forest resource management.

Law on Wildlife (2008) regulates public relations in the protection, restoration, and reasonable use of wildlife; and establishes the legal, economic, and social framework for the protection and restoration of wildlife resources. Several by-laws are needed to be developed to determine the stock of bioresources, their rational use, assess the conservation of flora and fauna, and restore bioresources.

Law on Protection and Use of Objects of Historical and Cultural Heritage (2012, amended in 2017) regulates social relations in the field of protection, use, preservation and promotion of objects of historical and cultural heritage. Article 5 prohibits construction of new objects on the territory of objects of historical and cultural heritage without authorized permission, while Article 21 covers measures to be taken to restore historical sites and cultural heritage and their preparation for rehabilitation works.

The lack of a systematic approach to legislative activity and the slow pace of development of by-laws cause problems with the observance and implementation of laws. Sometimes the development and improvement of various laws is carried out in an unsystematic and uncoordinated manner, which leads to an imbalance in the system and discrepancies in terminology and principles, as well as to other legal conflicts and non-compliance with legal norms.

The SNPAs are important for fulfilling the obligations assumed by the Republic of Tajikistan in the framework of international conventions, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (1997), Convention to Combat Desertification (1998), Convention on Wetlands of International Importance as Habitats of Waterfowl (2000), Climate Change Convention (1997), Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (2000), International Trade Convention rare and endangered species of flora and fauna and their privates (CITEC, 2015). Being a member of Convention on Biological Diversity, Tajikistan has prepared National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) in 2016. However, implementation remains poor due to inadequate financing and technical capacity. PAs lack management plans, measures to prevent or reduce degradation, and opportunities for co-management with stakeholders. At the policy level, national biodiversity conservation legislation does not fully align with the requirements of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Convention on Migratory Species.

III. RIGHTS OF THE PROJECT AFFECTED PERSONS

3.1. Eligibility and Entitlements

Individuals and communities affected by the project activities are those who use natural resources in/from the designated communities of protected areas, forest and rangeland areas as well as any landscape being covered by the project activities in the project target areas. Likely access restrictions within this project are expected to be limited or regulated use of natural resources of reserves or protected areas, forests and rangelands. Project Affected Persons (PAPs) depend on access to natural resources of protected areas, using the resources for their livelihoods in accordance with the WB ESS 5, are proposed to meet three eligibility criteria:

- I. Those who have legal rights to land and/or natural resource use in protected areas (including customary land, traditional and religious rights recognized under the national laws and regulations);
- II. Those who do not have legal rights to land and/or natural resources at the time the cut-off date begins but have potential legal claim to such land or assets provided that such claims are recognized under the national laws and regulations or become recognized through process identified in the resettlement plan; and
- III. Those who have no recognizable legal right or claim to the land or natural resources they are occupying/using.

While developing the Biodiversity Management Plans and Plan of Action a part of the SIA, all rights and de facto uses of the land should be included to ensure a full inventory of potential impacts. The eligible PAPs living within or in the vicinity of the protected areas will be identified by participatory process to determine the exact number and scale of impacts to be compensated by the project. Special attention and priority will be given to vulnerable groups, including the poor, disabled, elderly and female-headed households. Non-local community members accessing the areas for illegal purposes such as logging and/or wildlife hunting are not eligible for project benefits. All PAPs must be consulted to identify project adverse impacts and, in a joint activity, to establish the eligibility criteria for mitigation or/and compensation measures. The project will work with PAPs and representatives of local community organizations, local leaders to define the eligibility criteria for project assistance and to define a cut-off date in a participatory manner, once they are identified.

Any illegal encroachment/seizure or exploitation of the natural resources of the protected area once the project commences will not be eligible for any type of livelihood -collateral or other assistance (in accordance with the WB ESS 5). Additional eligibility criteria for occupants or neighbors of protected areas needing special consideration related to livelihood will be discussed with relevant stakeholders and will be part of protected area management plan.

The PAPs who are entitled to compensation under the Project include:

- Persons whose structures are in part, or in total, affected temporarily or permanently by the Project;
- Persons whose residential or commercial premises and/or agricultural land (or other productive land) is in part, or in total, affected (permanently or temporarily) by the Project;
- Persons whose businesses are affected in part, or in total, (temporarily or permanently) by the Project;
- Persons whose employment or hired labor or share-cropping agreement is affected, temporarily or permanently, by the Project;
- Persons whose crops (annual and perennial) and/or trees are affected in part, or in total, by the Project;

- Persons whose access to community resources or property is affected in part, or in total, by the Project.

Anyone involved in clearly illegal, unsustainable, and destructive activities that undermine the objective of the Project, in this case, non-local community members accessing the areas for illegal purposes such as logging and/or wildlife hunting, are not eligible to benefit from biodiversity stewardship agreements. However, where such users can be identified, the Plan of Action should include mitigation of illegal activities as outlined in the table below.

Where land is to be acquired, titled or legalizable PAPs will receive compensation for land acquired by the Project at replacement cost as per the RPF/RAP prepared for the project. This will be in cash at replacement value or land-for-land with a combination of productive potential, location advantages, and other factors of which is at least equivalent to the advantages of the land taken to the satisfaction of the PAP (of equal size and/or productive value and be satisfactory to the PAP). Non-titled PAPs are not eligible for compensation for land but will receive compensation for assets attached to land and other assistance as required, in lieu of land compensation.

Households headed by single women with dependents and other vulnerable households will be eligible for further assistance to fully mitigate project impacts.

Compensation eligibility will be limited by a cut-off date to be set for each subproject and PAPs who settle in the affected areas after the cut-off date will not be eligible for compensation. They, however, will be given sufficient advance notice, requested to vacate premises and dismantle affected structures prior to project implementation. Their dismantled structures will not be confiscated, and they will not pay any fine or sanction. Forced eviction will only be considered after all other efforts are exhausted.

Eligibility Criteria and Mitigation Activities

Eligibility Criteria of PAPs	Type of Impact	Potential Mitigating Activities in Plan of Action
(1) People living within Project areas	Total or partial restriction on resource use for livelihoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoidance of inclusion of areas with community residences, or minimization of the impact to such areas • Proportional benefit sharing of and participation in management of the biodiversity stewardship agreement • Participation in community capacity development, skills development and ecotourism development • Support to improve livelihood opportunities promoted by the Project determined as beneficial by the community • Proportional benefit sharing in private sector engagement such as eco-tourism development • Inclusive consultation processes, including consultations with specific focus groups such as women, to ensure their views are adequately incorporated into benefits, mitigation measures, monitoring provisions, etc. • Availability of Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM)
(2) People living outside Project areas, but who rely on use resources inside the areas designated for biodiversity stewardship	Partial restriction on resource use for livelihoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of alternative resource use options involving participatory processes • Proportional benefit sharing of and participation in management of the biodiversity stewardship agreement • Participation in community capacity development, skills development and ecotourism development • Support to improve livelihood opportunities promoted by the Project

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportional benefit sharing in private sector engagement such as eco-tourism development • Availability of GRM
(3) People who live outside Project areas, but who belong to social groups with cultural or social assets inside areas designated for biodiversity stewardship	Partial restriction of access to cultural or social assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure continued safe access and realization of necessary rituals, protection of sites, and respect of cultural values • Availability of GRM • Include consultations to determine areas of use, access – so they can pinpoint areas of use

3.2. Considerations for vulnerable groups

Poor, disabled people, the elderly and women in villages are likely to be particularly vulnerable as they are often more dependent on agriculture, collection of forest products and have less diversified sources of income. To ensure that impacts on vulnerable groups are minimized, if not eliminated, the project will first provide them access to project-relevant information, including livelihood assistance, and second, community-based alternative livelihoods will ensure participation and involvement of vulnerable groups. To ensure women participate in the project, livelihoods support will be directed towards the affected household rather than just the affected person. Women will be able to apply for alternative livelihood assistance that they lead and manage.

Agriculture is the main sector of the economy. There are practically no enterprises related to the value chain of agricultural or forest products. There are also no timber enterprises or sawmills. As there are no employment opportunities in the area and especially in SPNAs, the local population is mostly dependent on subsistence agriculture. This obliges to determine the relationship rules with the local forest users. These relationships are expressed in the form of contracts with forest users. The contracts of JFM, pasture contracts, seasonal use contracts, etc., defining the individual rights of the user with regard to the acquisition of firewood, agricultural production, pastures, etc. are resources on which the local population depends. Thus, a number of forest products, such as cattle, hay, potatoes, onions, walnuts, cherries, etc., became the basis for forest management agreements. However, all residential areas located in the SPNAs have formal and informal access to these resources.

There are no official socio-economic data for the SPNAs territory. The local population is attracted for seasonal works. In other words, almost every household has its members collecting forest products. Therefore, forest resources represent an important source of income for people living in the protected areas and on their borders. Nevertheless, the number of households and their respective populations is much higher in the bordering villages than within the SPNAs.

In any case, forest resources play an important role in the socio-economic development of the region, especially in terms of employment. On the other hand, the population plays an important role in the collection and manufacture of forest products. However, the right to use the forest resources of the forestry enterprise entails certain costs.

3.3. Project activity stages

The project will undertake, in a consultative manner, activities to determine restrictions of access to illegal or/and additional activities in SPNAs and will assess impacts on local livelihoods in consultation with the affected persons and relevant stakeholders. The project will seek to avoid, and if not possible, minimize or mitigate impacts, such as phased implementation of measures. For example, maps of protected area delineation and consultations will be provided based on spatial planning so that the local population is fully informed about the protected area use demarcation. The project will ensure the introduction of any restrictions of access after the draft alternative livelihoods has already been initiated.

IV. PARTICIPATION

The overall objective of the restoration and mitigation measures is to compensate and diversify the livelihoods of affected persons suffering from protected areas resource limitation. The project will support the development of alternative livelihoods for PAPs. The development process of these alternative livelihoods will be in a participatory manner and will be based on equity and community-driven decision making. The goal will be to develop alternative livelihoods through a managed process, such as a plan to support the development of products and services for all paths to distribution.

4.1. Community mobilization and engagement

Community members facing access restrictions will be supported in mobilizing to identify viable participatory activities. This approach will help ensure that there is equality in the process and that all affected users, including vulnerable groups such as women, elderly people are able to participate and benefit from the alternative livelihoods provided by the project. Once eligible people to receive support due to resource constraints have been identified in the participation process, activities will be as follows:

- Assessment of the project stakeholders;
- Determination of trainings and capacity building;
- Determine mechanisms for co-management.

Communities or local populations will be fully involved, and their participation will be encouraged to identify alternative livelihood options that are culturally appropriate. Arrangements made by them with the participation of their local leaders who support the preparation of relevant materials for the project communication will be taken into account within the framework of the project.

Based on the information presented above, it is extremely important to:

- a) Consider beneficiaries (from villages and mahallas) as equal partners and stakeholders in the forest management;
- b) Comply with the information needs of beneficiaries with respect to vulnerable groups such as women;
- c) Approach different local organizations, which may have differing views from each other about managing restrictions of access to protected areas, forests, rangelands, etc.;
- d) Accept that community involvement is a time-consuming process and requires time, consistency and proper planning.

4.2. Community awareness raising

The project will provide guidance to facilitate participation with particular attention to local population to ensure the provision of culturally appropriate information. Awareness raising through information sessions before formal consultations begin, which require a form of public meetings, informational presentations, and dissemination of information materials, among other things.

The process of awareness-raising will entail the following:

1. Professional training at all levels of the organization;
2. Creating a more efficient work environment through improved working conditions in offices. Consultations will include meetings and focus group discussions to address potential issues related to the forestry impact and compliance with traditional practices that can be supported by the project. Communities will be informed of potential access restrictions in workshops, community meetings and focus groups to ensure women's participation. The result of collected information will be taken into account when developing activities and informational materials prepared for the project;
3. Capacity building of the SPNA enterprises by providing them with the necessary equipment.

4.3. Drafting of management plans for SPNAs and communities

The Management Plan (MP) is an important document according to which the SPNA is functioning. The management plan is developed for a five-year period (or 10 years) and must be regularly updated.

The current status of the SPNA management plans of the project areas is as follows: MPs were developed for the State Nature Reserve “Tigrovaya Balka” and the Tajik National Park (TNP) in GBAO in 2009, and for the State Nature Reserve “Zorkul” in 2012, all these three require revision and updating. The MP for “Yagnob” National Nature Park has not been developed yet, as the park was created recently, and some organizational documents have been negotiated until recently. The MPs for Zorkul and Tigrovaya Balka include measures related to limited access to the national resources of the protected areas, while TNP and Yagnob allow for regulated access to and use of natural resources.

Respectively, the Project supports revision and updating of MPs for State Nature Reserve “Tigrovaya Balka”, State Nature Reserve “Zorkul” and Regional Department of the Tajik National Park in GBAO and development of an MP for the National Nature Park “Yagnob”.

For the communities and households living near protected areas and other natural attractions, community-based nature tourism is an income opportunity.

Respectively, in the frame of the Project, small-scale tourism activities are organized in and around protected areas, where they will be coordinated with approaches to the management of protected areas, and in areas with established regional tourist routes and attractions, for example, in transboundary areas in the Zarafshon valley, Yagnob gorge, in the direction of Zorkul and around the Tajik National Park.

Development Plans

Given the fact that the project will strengthen landscape planning and the ability to manage natural resources, there are likely to be some limitations to access to forest resources that may affect local communities. Therefore, management plans for SPNAs will be implemented in consultation with communities, and it will be necessary to identify areas of constraint and alternative livelihoods, as already described in this document. The project will seek to integrate into wider community development plans to ensure that local planning considers the forest protection and any constraints that may occur. Experience to support staff the local authorities may be required to develop participation plans. Accurate and sufficient baseline information will be essential not only to provide a basis for planning, but also for effectively implementation management, monitoring and evaluation, as well as capacity building for the village and its members. In general, the development of SPNAs and integration into community action plans will require:

1. Consultations with the community and relevant stakeholders;
2. Determination of the limitations and consequences of these limitations, including alternative livelihoods, where relevant;
3. Strategic analysis of community development for both PIG and communities;
4. Assessment of current plans for SPNAs and communities, and whether/how they can be strengthened;
5. Selection and development of the project activities;
6. Establishment of the monitoring system to ensure the livelihoods of affected persons are restored, the SPNAs will be developed with the full participation of local communities to ensure the communities have access to express their opinions at the choice of project activities and investments.

4.4. Other alternative sources

Long-term successful implementation of the project will depend on collaboration with local communities on the SPNAs, as well as with local authorities in designing and organizing to ensure the restoration of local livelihoods.

The aim will be to identify alternative activities that are consistent with local natural resources, benefitting environmental protection and restoration, positive for improving the living standards of local people, preserving local traditions and aligning with local government development plans.

4.5. Monitoring and reporting

All eligible households affected by access restrictions as a result of project activities will be covered by the mitigation measures developed in the Action Plan. The community-based participatory forest management model includes four main stages:

- 1) To identify and establish representative institutions for the stakeholders (villages, mahallas, forestry management). To define the roles, responsibilities and rights of stakeholders in the forestry;
- 2) To negotiate and agree upon the issues of forest protection and management between the stakeholders to reach a consensus and cooperation of all stakeholders;
- 3) Implement collaborative management in accordance with agreed SPNAs, such as forest patrol and protection, forest products management, environmental forest service management and forest land planning;
- 4) Monitoring and evaluation involving all stakeholders;
- 5) Monitoring the status of SPNAs, as well as carry out activities on the landscapes restoration.

IV. POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Potential Positive Impacts

It is expected that the Project will have positive social and environmental benefits at local and national levels. At the local level, direct Project beneficiaries include communities and their members in targeted landscapes, and particularly: individual entrepreneurs, small, medium and micro-sized enterprises, community-based organizations, such as co-operatives, communal property associations, and community trusts. Benefits are expected to include improved access to skills training for business development, finance and markets, improved local governance, and subsequently more profitable community or individually owned businesses (for example in the tourism, agriculture, hospitality services and other sectors) and increased household income.

Benefits are derived from strengthened cooperation in managing ecosystems and overall better managed habitats. Casual labor and other livelihood opportunities will be created to benefit local communities.

Potential Adverse Impacts

It is not possible at this stage to determine the potential number of PAPs given that the project activities have not been identified as per the SPNA. The exact impact from restrictions will be determined based on identification of where and what specific projects activities will be implemented. However, potential areas have been assessed and any restrictions (for example to forest products, land use – firewood and fruits collections) that may be imposed can be managed or mitigated. Potentially affected communities will be involved in identifying any adverse impacts, assessing the significance of the impacts, and establishing criteria for eligibility for mitigation measures. This will be documented in a “Social Impact Assessment” (SIA) that will inform part of the Plan of Action. The SIA will capture direct and indirect impact, livelihood status, list the PAPs

and the impacts they are expected to experience, as well as vulnerabilities amongst PAPs and mitigation options and it will be completed prior to commencement of restriction.

The Project will conduct screening and assess potential project activities prior to the planning and implementation phases commence. This initial step allows for the choosing of the most suitable subprojects and provides a profile of any particular subprojects in terms of their strong and weak points, and how the latter can be improved. The Biodiversity Management Plan will be based on the biodiversity assessment as well as social, economic and institutional factors that are considered crucial for the successful implementation of project priorities. The BMP outline steps for identifying subprojects using spatial data, an evaluation matrix and field verifications.

Mitigation of impacts

Mitigation measures against anticipated social and economic impacts of Project activities will be developed under this Project in consultation with local communities in careful consideration of their needs. The mitigation measures shall follow the objective and requirements stated in ESS5 and ESS6 including livelihood restoration and sustainable management of living resources. The Project will work in close consultation with national, provincial and local governments, NGOs, local communities, Project Affected Persons (PAPs) and their community organizations. The local organizations include pastoralist and farmers associations, popular committees, village committees, traditional leadership, women, youth, elder councils and other community associations.

The Project will also ensure alignment of proposed mitigation measures with the requirements and stipulations of the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on Specially National Protected Areas, as well as in terms of EIA Regulations promulgated in terms of the Law on Environmental Impact Assessment which identifies a suite of activities, which “*could have a substantial detrimental effect on the environment*” as well as the World Bank Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) and the relevant Environmental and Social Standards (ESSs). The listed activities identified require an EA from the competent national or provincial authority prior to commencement of the activity.

While developing mitigation measures it is important to:

- Consider beneficiaries as equal partners and stakeholders in the management of forest resources for whom their views will be considered and respected;
- Observe beneficiaries’ information requirements of vulnerable members such as women; elderly, disables and orphans.
- Approach various local organizations (interest groups) that may differ from place to place and have different perspectives on natural resource management; and
- Recognize that engaging local communities is a time-consuming process and that it requires time, consistency and a good planning and should be integral part of the overall SEP process

Community members facing access restriction will be supported to mobilize themselves in order to identify viable livelihoods activities in a participatory manner. The approach will help to ensure there is equity in the process and that all affected users including vulnerable groups have the opportunity to become involved in and benefit from assistance provided by the Project. Once eligible people for assistance support due to land and resources use limitations are identified in a participatory process, activities will continue as follows:

- PAP assessment that will assist to map out their own resources and assets, identify and diagnose constraints and impacts due to access restrictions from household to community level, and identify the required support;
- Define the training and capacity building to sustain their affected livelihoods and way of transitions to alternative livelihoods; and

- Define of co-management arrangements and alternative livelihood activities to be supported including pertinent training.
- Give priority to employment of local people where possible;
- Identify and support the welfare and cultural identity of affected local communities;
- Create conditions for training and facilitate inclusion of PAPs in the various types of business that the project will promote:

Livelihood restoration and development activities measures could include the following, among others:

- Tourism: hospitality, marketing, tourism activities, services to the tourism industry (chefs, electricity technicians, etc.);
- Forest products: commercial forestry, veld and non-timber forest products;
- Agriculture: agronomy, post-harvest management, processing and commercialization;
- Business services: IT (consulting, services, software development and programming);
- Financial services (including insurance brokers, accounting and tax consultant firms); and advertising, communications and marketing; and
- Economic activities mostly relevant for women.

V. PLAN OF ACTION

The Plan of Action to be included in the Social Impact Assessment will describe the nature and scope of any restrictions, their anticipated social and economic impacts, the people eligible for assistance, and the specific measures to mitigate the impact. The Plan of Action is to be submitted for World Bank approval during project implementation and before any enforcement of restrictions. The Plan specifies the timing of the imposition of restrictions and describes the scope of and methods for monitoring the extent and the significance of adverse impacts and the effectiveness of measures designed to assist PAPs and maintain the sustainability of the conservation area. As a general principle, these arrangements should include opportunities for the affected population to participate in monitoring activities. A protected area management plan can serve as the Plan of Action, provided it adequately covers the appropriate topics.

The Plan of Action will be based on the PF process and prepared jointly with the PAPs and key stakeholders. The Plan of Action should include succinct descriptions of, but not limited to, the following:

- Description of agreed restriction with extent and time frame;
- Background of the socio-economic status of the community;
- Boundaries of the access restricted land/resources;
- Detailed description of social and economic impacts (social impacts assessment) that will be imposed on the community/stakeholders affected by access restriction;
- Impact mitigation measures to assist access restricted affected community/individuals/stakeholders with time bound and financial sources, including special measures concerning women and vulnerable groups;
- Roles and responsibilities of implementers, collaborators, community, stakeholders, etc. and capacity building plan (of the implementing agencies, community, stakeholders);
- Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM); and
- Result indicators and participatory monitoring and evaluation arrangements.

VI. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The Project implementation period is five years. The Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP) under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan will serve as the Implementation Agency for the Project. The CEP as the lead IA for the Project will be supported by and work closely with various beneficiary agencies:

- (i) Forest Agency for activities related to National Forest Inventory, forest management planning, afforestation, and JFM;
- (ii) State Enterprise of Natural Protected Areas for projected areas management planning and investments; and
- (iii) The State Committee for Land Management and Geodesy, primarily with its mapping unit, FAZO for natural resource inventories and general GIS services.

Cooperation between the CEP and these agencies will be set out in Memoranda of Understanding that define the roles and responsibilities of each institution and will be signed by project negotiations. Local NGOs will be recruited to implement community mobilization and engagement and awareness campaigns.

The CEP will implement the project activities and actions in accordance with the WB Environmental and Social Standards (ESSs) and in line with Project-developed ESF Documents. The CEP is responsible for compliance with all requirements of the ESSs and the WB-approved Project ESF documents even when implementation of specific project activities, measures and/or actions are carried out by other relevant agencies. The implementation of the project activities will also be in line and in compliance with the relevant national laws, norms and standards.

The CEP has also prepared a Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF), which has defined the procedures for: (i) acquiring land (after all technical alternatives have been exhausted), (ii) dealing with any residual impacts from land acquisition (i.e., identifying, establishing the valuation of, and compensating people that suffer economic losses or loss of private property), (iii) monitoring and verification that policies and procedures are followed, and (iv) grievance redress mechanisms.

In line with the PF and other ESF documents, the CEP will address the risks that may be caused by project activities, like restriction on land use and access to natural resources that cause a community or groups within community to lose access to resource usage, including legally designated protected areas, forests, or biodiversity areas to be restored in connection with the project.

The PF may be revised from time to time during Project implementation, to reflect adaptive management of Project changes and unforeseen circumstances or in response to assessment of Project performance conducted under the PF itself.

The CEP-IG has a team of specialists and consultants at the central level, as well as at the local for implementation of the project activities and the specific actions/measures required by the PF and the other ESF documents. The implementation and compliance with the PF and the other ESF documents throughout project implementation will mainly be supported and ensured by Project Field Coordinator, Protected Area Management Specialist, Forestry and Landscape Restoration Specialist, Natural Resource Management Specialist, Environmental and Social Risk Management Specialist, and Community Development Specialist as part of the CEP-IG. Semi-annual and annual reports will be submitted by CEP-IG to the World Bank throughout Project implementation.

Monitoring and Evaluation Arrangements

The objectives of monitoring implementation of the PF are to:

The CEP IG will ensure due diligence in monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the PF. The IG will report on Project performance based on the field visits and implementation reports to the Steering and Technical Committee of the Project.

Definitive indicators and milestones of success will be developed in a participatory manner. Indicators will form part of the Plan of Action and be used to determine the status of livelihood of affected communities. Indicators should align with result indicators under the Project to the extent possible.

The Plan of Action will be considered successfully implemented if affected individuals, households and communities maintain their project standard of living or improve on it, and local community support is built and remains supportive of the project.

Where Plans of Action are developed and implemented, an audit, proportional to the identified impact, will verify delivery of entitlements and mitigation measures as part of completion.

Indicative Process Framework Budget

The budget to implement the PF is estimated for each Plan of Action and but will be relative to the number of PAPs included. The Project has budgeted for inclusion of the Project GRM and general stakeholder engagement, wherefore some staff expenditures are not reflected in the PF, but PF implementation will be supported by project coordinated efforts.

At the SNPA level, the PF will be implemented by focal points assigned at the SNPA level who will report directly to the Protected Area Management Specialist. The focal points will be responsible for:

- Grievance Mechanism;
- Support in implementation of community participation in social impact assessment and development of the Plans of Action

The project budget must set aside to fund:

- Community capacity development, skills development and business incubation
- Development of alternative livelihood options/identification of alternative resource use options
- Support for benefit sharing in private sector engagement
- Facilitation of safe access for communities' rituals and protection of sites with cultural values
- Special investments made for PAPs with specific vulnerabilities to enable their participation and benefit in investments
- Awareness raising of impact of illicit use of natural resources.

Indicative costs for implementation of the PF are:

- Plan of Action USD10,000/area
- Implementation of mitigation measures TBD/site specific

VII. PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS AND GRIEVANCE MECHANISM

7.1. Public consultation and participation during PF preparation

During the project design, public consultations with community members and focus groups were held in all the preselected pilot districts and SNPAs with representatives of diverse range of stakeholders, in particular with representatives of the district executive authorities, rural jamoats, mahalla, employees of the forestry enterprise, SPNA enterprises, irrigation water users, pasture users and active women of the districts. The participants included also representatives from the SPNA surrounding communities in the preselected project target districts. These events started with presentation of the proposed Project, more specifically its objectives, components with sub-components as well as the proposed activities within the Project. To collect feedback, suggestions and comments of the participants on the ESF instruments prepared during project design, the CEP team conducted virtual public consultation at the national level on September 3, 2021 and community consultations simultaneously in three target districts (Ainy, Rushon and Qabodiyon) on October 28-29, 2021. During consultations the team presented the proposed mitigation measures described in RPF and PF. The documented relevant viewpoints, suggestions and the comments of the participants were incorporated into the PF and the RPF. The draft ESF documents were disclosed at the CEP website before public consultations to collect and incorporate the latest feedback of the stakeholders, end user beneficiaries, especially the SPNA surrounding communities.

7.2. Public consultation and participation during project implementation

During the project implementation the CEP IG will conduct community meetings and stakeholder consultations under the relevant project components and project activities.

Communities, populations and local authorities will be consulted on the benefits and potential impacts during the project implementation. Site specific environmental and social impact assessments will be conducted with target areas where potential impacts on local population, land and other resources are identified. At least two consultative meetings will be held.

The CEP activities, project impacts and mitigation measures will be presented during the first meeting. Thereafter, the second public consultative meeting will be held to determine if there is support for the project activities and mitigation plans.

During the consultation, detailed procedures will be outlined for each village to determine the potential impacts and possible support within the CEP. Further, a grievance mechanism will be set up for complaints so that affected persons can raise their concerns.

Representatives of local communities, women, and SNPAs will be included in the conflict resolution mechanisms. Outcomes of the consultations will be documented in periodic reports and submitted to the World Bank for review.

Updated social assessment is conducted during implementation to monitor the project positive and negative impacts and to receive feedback from the project-affected people. Monitoring is critical to ensure an appropriate level of resilient landscape restoration. Based on the social assessment results further measures shall be taken to ensure comprehensive expected benefits and mitigation of negative impacts. If necessary, additional activities for institutional strengthening and capacity building of SNPAs and local communities living in the project area shall be implemented.

7.3. Grievance mechanism

The Implementing Agency will ensure that a grievance mechanism for the project is in place, in accordance with ESS10 as early as possible in project development to address specific concerns about compensation, relocation or livelihood restoration measures raised by displaced persons (or others) in a timely fashion. Where possible, such grievance mechanisms will utilize existing formal or informal grievance mechanisms suitable for project purposes, supplemented as needed with project-specific arrangements designed to resolve disputes in an impartial manner.

Grievance procedures will be required to ensure that PAPs are able to lodge complaints or concerns, without cost, and with the assurance of a timely and satisfactory resolution of the issue. The procedures also ensure that the entitlements are effectively transferred to the intended beneficiaries. Stakeholders will be informed of the intention to implement the grievance mechanism. The GRMs are designed to comply with the national legislation as well as the international standards, they typically address both environmental and social issues. In accordance with ESS10, the project specific GRM accommodates the anonymous complaints as well.

It must be especially noted that under the WB ESS5, status of those without legal title is clearly defined. In accordance with this policy, those people who do not possess official legal title or judicial rights for the land use, but still use the state land are entitled to receive compensation, taking into account the investments they made into the state land, their labor and lost assets, but not for land ownership as in the case of a titled owner. Instead, alternative sites are allocated for their use, or other forms of assistance in lieu of land compensation, are provided to those informally using or occupying land to the project cut-off date.

The grievances and complaints can be addressed through the following levels:

To whom is the complaint filed	Form of submission	Complaint management procedure	Time for consideration of complaints
Local level: Local government authorities (district/jamoat / mahalla) and CEP-IG district Project Officers	Verbal, written, in electronic format	1. Register complaint/ proposal in the Log for registration of complaints and proposals; 2. Maintain and monitor the process of reviewing and responding to complaints; 3. Reporting monthly in writing to the CEP-IG, to the Social Development Specialist on the status of complaints received. If the issue cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant within 5 days, then it is taken to the next level. In the register of complaints and suggestions, a record is made about the solution of the problem or the decision to move it to the next level.	5 days
National level: CEP-IG Social Development Specialists	Written, electronic, through websites	1. Register a complaint in the Log for complaints and proposals; 2. Maintain and monitor the process of reviewing and meeting the complaints; 3. Consideration of the complaint may require additional verification	14 days <i>30 days for the appeals that</i>

		of the issue, including collection of additional documents. 3. Report on a monthly basis in written (depending on the nature of the issue) on the status of work with complaints.	need additional study
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If, after receiving a response from the CEP-IG, the complaint is not satisfied, the Conflict Resolution Commission (CRC) to be established by CEP-IG or local khukumat at the PAP request. The CRC will consist of at least 5 members, including 2 staff members of CEP-IG, representatives of recognized local NGOs / CSOs, reputable individuals (for example, a respected lawyer or professor), if available, and representatives of the participating site. Decisions made by the commission and agreed between all parties are legalized in the form of an order of the participating khukumats.

The CEP-IG's Social Development Specialist will function as the Secretary of the CRC and serve as national Grievance Focal Point (GFP) to file the grievances and appeals. S/he will be responsible for summarizing the number and types of all the complaints and issues received by the districts and possibly regions.

The complainant will be informed of the outcome immediately and at the latest within *5 days* of the decision.

The project affected persons can also file their complaints with the central apparatus of the CEP directly.

The timeline for the grievance processing is 15 days upon registration.

CEP/Environmental Information Center of the Committee:

- CEP website (<http://tajnature.tj/>)
- email info@tajnature.tj
- hotlines (+99237) 2354430 and (+992) 777162275 WhatsApp, Telegram and Imo
- official page of the Committee on the Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/tajnature.tj>

VIII. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS OF PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS HELD WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL

Three public consultations were held simultaneously on October 28-29, 2021 in Ayni (Sughd Province), Rushon (GBAO Province) and Qabodiyon (Khatlon Province) districts. The Process Framework (PF) was consulted upon along other E&S instruments, including ESMF, RPF, LMP and SEP. Total of 68 participants attended, including representatives of local governments, CEP branches, protected areas, women affairs and social departments, jamoat heads, dekhan farmers, NGOs and communities surrounding targeted projected areas.

As part of the discussions on the PF substance and proposed mitigation measures, the attendees raised the following concerns and recommendations:

- The Process Framework is a new environmental and social safeguards instrument, which will require guidance from the CEP/IG during implementation and action plan development.
- Forest user groups, local NGOs and surrounding communities should be actively engaged in updating or preparation of management plans, as well as in monitoring of their implementation.
- Participants also highlighted the relevancy of grant program activities to enable them to engage in income generation and livelihood development activities, as the access to protected areas and use of the natural resources will be strictly regulated. Grant activities should be supported by wide awareness campaign and technical assistance in grant proposal development.
- They also underlined the necessity to have the GRM focal points at mahalla/grassroot /PA level, so they will be able to provide feedback and file their concerns/complaints.
- They recommended to conduct ESF capacity building activities at the local level to comply with the WB ESF requirements.

Viewpoints, suggestions and the comments of the participants were incorporated into this PF.