

Armenia: Fourth Public Sector Modernization Project (PSMP4) PI76803

# **Stakeholder Engagement Plan**

## **(SEP)**

**December 13, 2021**

# Contents

- Contents** ..... 2
- Abbreviations and Acronyms** ..... 3
- 1. Introduction**..... 4
- 2. Project Description**..... 4
  - 2.1 The Third Public Sector Modernization Project (PSMP3)** ..... 4
  - 2.2 Fourth Public Sector Modernization Project (PSMP4)** ..... 5
  - 2.3 Implementing Agency and Implementation Arrangements** ..... 11
  - 2.4 Prior Stakeholder Engagement Activities carried out under PSMP4 so far**..... 11
- 3. Stakeholder Identification and Analysis**..... 12
  - 3.1 Key Definitions** ..... 12
- 4. Stakeholder Engagement Methodology** ..... 15
  - 4.1 Key Principles** ..... 15
  - 4.2 Summary of Project Stakeholder Needs and Methods, Tools, and Techniques for Stakeholder Engagement** ..... 15
  - 4.3 Stakeholder Engagement Plan** ..... 17
- 5. Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM)**..... 19
  - 5.1 General principles**..... 19
  - 5.2 Intake and Record**..... 20
  - 5.3 Review, Investigation and Resolution of Grievances** ..... 20
  - 5.4 GRM Log** ..... 21
  - 5.5 Close out and Follow up of Grievances** ..... 21
  - 5.6 Handling of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH) Issues** ..... 21
  - 5.7 Communicating GRM to the Project Stakeholders**..... 21
- 6. Monitoring and Reporting of the SEP** ..... 22
- 7. Resources and Responsibilities for Implementing Stakeholder Engagement Activities**... 22
  - 7.1 Management Functions and Responsibilities**..... 22
  - 7.2 Resources**..... 23
- 8. SEP Implementation Risks**..... 24

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

AI	Artificial Intelligence
API	Application Program Interface
CMU	Country Management Unit
CPC	Competition Protection Commission
CPF	Country Partnership Framework
DPMO	Deputy Prime Ministers Office of the Republic of Armenia
EKENG	E-Governance Infrastructure Implementation Agency
ENPV	Economic Net Present Value
EU	European Union
FM	Financial Management
G2B	Government to Business
G2C	Government to Citizens
GoA	Government of Armenia
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
GRS	Grievance Redress Service
HR	Human Resources
HRMIS	Human Resource Management Information System
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction Development
ICT	Information and communication technology
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
mGOV	Mobile Government
MLSA	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia
Mol	Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Armenia
MoJ	Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia
MTAI	Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure of the Republic of Armenia
PGO	Prosecutor General's Office
PMG	Project Management Group
PMO	Prime Minister Office of the Republic of Armenia
PSMP 3	Third Public Sector Modernization Project
PSMP 4	Fourth Public Sector Modernization Project
RA	Republic of Armenia
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
SJC	Supreme Judicial Council of the Republic of Armenia
SRC	State Revenue Committee of the Republic of Armenia
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WB	World Bank

## 1. Introduction

1.1 The following Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) is developed to describe proposed stakeholder engagement activities within the framework of the Fourth Public Sector Modernization Project (PSMP4) P176803, which will follow successful implementation of Third Public Sector Modernization Project (PSMP3). The project supports modernization and digitization of public sector activities and is anchored on the Government's newly adopted Digitalization Strategy. This SEP outlines the project's citizen engagement strategy and the action plan that will feature mechanisms for enhancing multi-stakeholder dialogue and inclusion throughout project preparation and implementation.

**Proposed Development Objective:** The project development objective is to improve the efficiency of and access to selected administrative services for businesses and citizens.

### Purpose of the SEP

1.2 The purpose of the present SEP is to outline the key stakeholders of the PSMP4 project and its associated action plan, identify the methods of stakeholder engagement and establishment of a constructive dialogue between the parties, and introduce responsibilities in the implementation of stakeholder engagement activities. The intention of the SEP is to ensure broad and active participation of stakeholders and establish an atmosphere of constructive and timely dialogue throughout the project preparation and implementation process.

1.3 Specifically, SEP serves the following purposes:

- stakeholder identification and analysis;
- planning of inclusive engagement modalities and effective communication tools for consultations, enabling stakeholders' views to be taken into account;
- ensuring that appropriate information on the PSMP4 activities is disclosed to stakeholders in a timely, accessible and appropriate manner, including in term of format and disclosure;
- defining roles and responsibilities of different actors in implementing the SEP;
- defining the project's Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM);
- providing feedback to stakeholders; and
- monitoring and reporting of the SEP.

1.4 This draft SEP will be disclosed and open to feedback and consultation. Feedback from stakeholders will be incorporated in the final version of SEP.

## 2. Project Description

### 2.1 The Third Public Sector Modernization Project (PSMP3)

2.1 The Republic of Armenia (RA) received 21.0 million USD financing from the International Bank for Reconstruction Development (IBRD) funds for the implementation of the Third Public Sector Modernization Project, according to the Loan Agreement dated November 18, 2015. The project supported the roll-out of the previously tested innovations and includes the following components:

**Component 1: Public Financial Management Information Systems:** This component is intended to support the Borrower's implementation of public financial management reforms and change management processes related to public expenditure and budget preparation and execution.

**Component 2: e-Governance Solutions for Improved Service Delivery:** This component is intended to support the Government of Armenia's e-Governance policy and institutional reforms and e-Governance platforms and services enhancement through, the design and implementation of an interoperability platform to obtain data integration and interconnection across the Borrower's key line

agencies , the carrying out of investments on IT systems architecture, design, deployment, hardware, and software, including the provision of technical assistance required therefore and etc.

**Component 3: Capacity Building and Small Capacity Building Interventions:** This component is intended to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Civil Service Council (CSC) and Armenian Academy of Public Administration (AAPA), through the transfer of skills to both entities on the management of information technology, evidence based decision making, and consultation and citizen engagement, the revision and systemization of CSC's existing civil service training system and etc.

**Component 4: Project Management:** This Component is intended to cover the cost of project management activities, mainly related to project implementation, procurement, financial management, monitoring and reporting, development of the technical requirements/specifications based on the input provided by the project's stakeholders for procurement documents and monitoring of the procurement process, and advisory services to agencies which implement project activities. This component also includes the activities related with training, financial audit, monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

2.2 The governmental entities that directly benefited from the Project, included:

1. Prime Minister's Office
2. The RA Ministry of Finance (MoF),
3. The RA Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA),
4. The RA Ministry of Justice (MoJ),
5. The RA Prosecutor General's Office,
6. The RA Police,
7. The RA State Commission for the Protection of Economic Competition (SCPEC),
8. Civil Service Office (CSO) of the Staff of the Prime Minister of the RA,
9. E-Governance Infrastructure Implementation Unit (EKENG).

2.3 The closing date of PMP3 is 30 November, 2022.

#### **2.2 Fourth Public Sector Modernization Project (PSMP4)**

2.4 Following on the activities of PSMP3, the Government of Armenia is preparing a Fourth Public Sector Modernization project (PSMP4) to be conducted from 2022 to 2028. The proposed PSMP4 with an indicative budget of US\$36 (out of which US\$30 IBRD/IDA financing) comprises four components: (i) Modernization of Public Administration, (ii) Digital Service Delivery, (iii) Data Management and Digital Infrastructure, (iv) Project Management.

2.5 The proposed project is anchored in the Government's newly adopted Digitalization Strategy which emphasizes that the development of advanced technologies plays a decisive role in the competitiveness, security, and living standards of the state.

2.6 The project has three technical components and a project management component. The three technical components encompass a more uniform change set that further resolve issues of stability, efficiency, and promote ongoing innovation within a broadly interoperable GovTech infrastructure. Component 1 will focus on modernizing the public administration. Component 2 will support digital service delivery by introducing several unified information systems, improving access and raising the efficiency of public services provided by the central and local governments. Component 3 will improve and strengthen data governance/management, cloud computing, cybersecurity, and Artificial Intelligence (AI). Component 4 will support project management to ensure timely and successful implementation. The proposed components of the project are detailed below:

## **2.6.1 Component I: Modernization of the public administration**

- I. The objective of this component is to improve efficiency and service delivery offerings of the civil service administration, the newly established Ministry of Interior (Mol), and the MoJ. The component will have three sub-components that are focused on improving internal efficiencies of the public administration. The sub-components will focus on i) modernizing the civil service, ii) digitalization of databases and business processes under the MoJ and judiciary, and iii) supporting the Mol, a newly established agency, to deliver civilian services formerly under the responsibilities of the police.

### Subcomponent I.2: Electronic justice and court systems

1. The Project will fund key activities to improve the efficiency and compliance of justice services and judicial processes. This subcomponent will support the following activities:
  - a. Digitization of National Archive documents and business processes, to establish a comprehensive digital archive with large, expansive, data processing and storage capabilities and digital document scanning, data entry, retrieval, and document storage services. An electronic system for the National Archive in the MoJ will be established, which will facilitate the internal procedures necessary to carry out service delivery and benefit all users of justice archive services nationwide. It will establish an electronic archive and digitize, at a minimum, the following key services: the Civil Status Act Registration, the State Register of Legal Entities, legal expertise.
  - b. Digitalization of each phase of the criminal justice process and procedures, starting from crime report submission to law enforcement bodies, case creation, investigation, trial, appeals, sentencing, sanctions, and archiving of the case.
  - c. Integration of e-criminal cases<sup>1</sup> to e-systems on court procedures and sanctions, ensuring the interoperability of those systems. This activity will support the means for relevant state agencies (investigative agencies, prosecution, penitentiary, probation, and compulsory enforcement services) to access the electronic criminal justice system within all levels of the GoA. The full digitalization of criminal justice procedures will facilitate a more uniform judicial process nationwide, ensure timely and quality implementation of criminal-procedural functions, and ensure the compliance of all procedures and actions of responsible agencies and officials with relevant laws, legal principles, and international commitments.

### Subcomponent I.3: Support in modernizing systems of the new Mol

2. The Project will support the new Mol in meeting the demand for online citizen services. Higher productivity of this Ministry will play a significant role in reducing the service gap and enhancing the productivity of the economy.
3. As a newly established institution, the Mol will need support in technical capacity building. The Project will fund the following activities under this subcomponent:
  - a. Procurement of software and hardware solutions based on an initial review of the needs in capacities and systems, which will be the legacy of previous systems.
  - b. Digitalization and modernization of internal operations and capacity building. The Project will support the development and implementation of a plan for modernization of relevant databases and services, focusing on digitalization, data infrastructure, cybersecurity, data protection, and technical capacity building. The Migration and Passport Service of the Mol will acquire an interoperable data infrastructure interlinking various internal services (migration flow, passports, visas, asylum etc.).

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<sup>1</sup> E-criminal case management was initially developed under PSMP3. Activities under PSMP4 cover its further integration with the e-court system.

## Component 2: Digital Service Delivery

4. This component will fund improvements in the central and local government digital public service delivery. Digital business processes will indirectly result in better transparency and mitigate corruption risks in service delivery process. Digitalization will enhance access to and engagement with services for all citizens, including in remote regions and among vulnerable groups. Central government service delivery improvements will also address the current challenges of the tax and customs administration through the expansion of services in electronic formats and multi-channel service delivery. There will be three sub-components.

### Subcomponent 2.1: Central government digital public service delivery through modernized Tax and Customs Administration Systems

5. This subcomponent will improve the efficiency of revenue mobilization. The Project will finance the core systems of technological interoperability, including commoditized hardware, software, and cloud services, which are essential for long-term service delivery. Standards-based progressive web application development in all services will lay the foundation for mobile service applications. Mobile services, in turn, will improve outreach to citizens, including to marginalized citizens in underrepresented demographics. The addition of kiosks for service deployments will extend outreach even further to citizens without access to personal computing and mobile devices. These improvements will help the central and local governments to garner a larger pool of revenue by improving tax service accessibility. This subcomponent will also support climate considerations by reducing the use of natural resources for paper-based communications and time spent on tax-related activities by both the taxpayers and the administration, which will reduce the GoA's carbon footprint. The Project will fund modernization of tax and customs administration systems, including:
  - a. Enhancements and upgrades of a web-based taxpayer personal tax account card system to strengthen single self-service accounting for managing tax liabilities and taxpayer returns. This introduces a single self-service account for managing tax liabilities and returns from a progressive web application, eliminating the need for manual intervention. Tax liabilities and debit amounts will be more convenient and simpler to calculate, and automated software processes will transfer the debit amounts submitted by taxpayers through tax returns to a single account.
  - b. Implementation of accessible tax services through multi-channel self-service applications, including at service kiosks in local municipalities. The E-Services Platform and Mobile Tax Application for individuals will improve the quality of services provided by the SRC, enabling more accessible service delivery to marginalized, alter-abled, and non-technical citizens.
  - c. Upgrade of the e-invoicing system to a web-based version using modern architecture. This will include the development of progressive web applications engineered to operate on desktop, tablet, and mobile phones that will enable self-service for invoice submissions, validations, adjustments, and cancellations and will enable the SRC to iterate rapidly and make simple and understandable mobile applications available to the taxpayer.
  - d. Upgrade of the self-declaration system by engineering a mobile application and payment terminals to make the process simpler and more accessible. This will allow citizens to re-calculate and confirm the amount of income tax they have paid through annual declarations as necessary. The Project will also allow the option to submit declarations through a mobile application or payment

terminals to make the process simpler and more accessible.

- e. Digitalization and modernization of existing software and electronic hardware computing systems and implementation of new software and hardware systems at the SRC Data Center. This will resolve issues with quality, data processing capacity, storage, retrieval, network transfer, support resolution, uptime, and cybersecurity.

Subcomponent 2.2: Central government digital public service delivery – Other Central Agencies

- 6. The subcomponent will fund digitalization of a wide range of public services in central government agencies, supporting the re-engineering of databases and business processes to promote long-term interoperability of data with better access controls, storage, processing, data structure, and computing infrastructure. GovTech reforms will also facilitate making public services more accessible and affordable to lower-income and vulnerable segments of the population.
- 7. The selected public services will establish improved databases, registers, and data processing platforms. These will use a common data document-based structure enabling whole-of-government interoperability. An enhanced and extended government document flow system will be established and a single integrated data storage platform created for core operations and public services. Common standards will ensure the development of progressive web applications to offer citizens a practical step-by-step user experience that will eliminate bureaucracy and facilitate citizens' participation in public decision making. Service providers will require certification of their use of certain databases, programming, and application delivery processes to ensure compliance, similar to the United States' FedRAMP2 criterion model. As an example, each service will offer a single sign-on across the whole of government services; a user experience available in the web browser via desktop, laptop, mobile, and in the kiosks offered by the Government; and a process workflow that enables the end-user to complete a specific task that is separate from others within the system. Each task will correspond to a particular business logic required to complete government requirements for any number of scenarios (tax, certification, payment, registration). This subcomponent will finance:
  - a. Roll out of a coherent concept of digital ID, digitization of historical paper-based records into new storage, data processing, and computational infrastructure; implementation of AI pilot models of analytical decision-support systems; development of progressive web applications for multi-channel mobile, desktop, and kiosk service delivery; data center modernization for current and anticipated capacity and computation improvements; and implementation of a data analytics, machine learning (ML), and AI.3 The funding and focus on these activities supports the overarching activity within the central government mentioned in the next point.
  - b. Digitalization of a large number of public services at the central level, based on the criteria of readiness and impact, including support for business process reviews, enhancements, and upgrades to database, storage, and computing infrastructure.
  - c. Establishment of a designated direct hotline for GBV/DV-related calls. Administering a direct, accessible, and specialized GBV hotline under the MLSA, using trained and designated staff, and conducting robust nation-wide communications and gender outreach campaigns could help improve the access to, effectiveness, and efficiency of GBV services, making them more citizen-centric and responsive to the needs of the beneficiaries.

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<sup>2</sup> The Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program (FedRAMP) was established in 2011 in the United States. The goal of the system is to provide a cost-effective, risk-based approach for the adoption and use of cloud services by the federal government.

<sup>3</sup> Import and export data analytics with linkage to the production, pricing calculation of the products, and price fluctuation will be available for citizens.



### Subcomponent 2.3: Local government digital public service delivery

8. The sub-component will support select local governments with re-engineering databases, data infrastructure, and computing systems to better align business processes with central agency processes. The Project will fund digitalization to ensure seamless service delivery to citizens and businesses. Supporting the local digital economy will also help to promote regional socio-economic development. A standardized information infrastructure is essential for the long-term growth and short-term service interoperability among municipal, regional, and national sectors within the government. Such reforms will help to prevent the fragmentation, lock-in, and siloing of information and therefore foster interagency accountability and fiscal policy reforms. The activities will be implemented through pilots in order to observe implementation challenges. The Project will finance the following activities:
  - a. Upgrading of computers and other hardware, training of municipal staff, and development of progressive web applications for multi-channel mobile, desktop, and kiosk service delivery (including by private sector operators); implementation of modern digital infrastructure technologies that leverage economies of scale, including commodity infrastructure<sup>4</sup> among similar platforms and systems being deployed in sub-national governments; these activities form the subset and basis of one core activity within the scope of local government service delivery improvement – presented under the next point. This will include design of a system for gathering data regarding early warning systems for timely alerts of climate-related disasters, which will include developing systems in the municipalities devoted to disseminating information and immediate mobilization of resources and personnel during climate-related risks. All new equipment/hardware will correspond to the highest standards of energy efficiency.
  - b. Digitalization of several local public services, including business process reengineering of back-office processes, with an mGov approach to public service delivery; the selection of services will be based, as in Subcomponent 2.2, on readiness and impact.

### Component 3: Data management and digital infrastructure

9. This component aims to strengthen the foundation of the digital system, by enhancing the ICT backbone of the GoA to address the issues with data governance/management, cloud computing, and cybersecurity, and to enhance government-wide decision-making support using AI in areas capable of support large data pools for analysis. The component will optimize the use of available public sector data in support of the Project's objectives of greater efficiency and accessibility of services, by providing a whole of government approach to the data management and digital infrastructure sectors.

#### Subcomponent 3.1: Hybrid cloud

10. This subcomponent will enhance the efficiency, security, stability and operability of digital infrastructure. The project will support the government on diagnostic and policy formulation on cloud computing through technical assistance activities. The project will be financing the following activities:
  - a. Preparation of a cloud readiness assessment to inform policy on a hybrid cloud;
  - b. Preparation of a data classification report to guide the policy on hosting government data on the government cloud, and public cloud;
  - c. Development of a cloud assessment framework to screen, authorize, and accredit/certify/pre-

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<sup>4</sup> Commodity infrastructure refers to devices that are relatively inexpensive, widely available, and interchangeable with other hardware of their type.

- qualify cloud service providers suitable for hosting government data; and
- d. Establishment of a disaster and climate change resilient data recovery center and backup sites. The latter will also help minimize the impact of climate risks and disaster-induced (for example, flood or earthquake) interruptions and data losses. The energy efficiency performance of the data center and backup sites will comply with internationally recognized good practice guidelines. The data center and backup sites will have enhanced insulation and improved efficiency of cooling systems and cooling agents with lower global warming potential.

#### Subcomponent 3.2: Cybersecurity

11. This subcomponent aims to improve the resilience to cyber threats of the Government's digital infrastructure and assets. The Government has issued a decree to develop a cybersecurity strategy. The project will support the decree by providing technical assistance to the government in assessment, policy formulation, and monitoring of cybersecurity. It will finance the following activities:
  - a. Carrying out of a cybersecurity assessment of existing hardware and software in targeted areas;  
Preparation of an institutional assessment of coordination of cybersecurity functions within the GoA;
  - b. Organization of knowledge exchanges with peers on cybersecurity arrangements;  
Strengthening of cybersecurity in vulnerable areas as identified in the assessment;
  - c. Delivery of training;
  - d. Creation of data storage infrastructure for interoperable data with access control lists; and
  - e. Implementation of a unified threat management system that automates integration across data centers.

#### Subcomponent 3.3: Data science, ML, and AI in GovTech

12. This subcomponent focuses on increasing the efficiency of citizen engagement, service delivery, and cybersecurity through providing an integrated modern approach to the generation and use of data for decision making and service delivery. The government is using AI in the State Revenue Agency for improving efficiencies in tax collections. Based on this experience, the project will support expansion of the use of AI in other domains through TA on the whole-of-government approach to the overall architecture, proof-of-concepts, and capacity building. The Project will finance the following activities:
  - a. Development of an integrated data fabric architecture concept for the whole-of-government approach to AI;
  - b. Piloting of the AI concepts in targeted areas;
  - c. Training and capacity building on AI; and
  - d. Iterative innovation, research, and development using low-cost and high-impact AI systems.

#### Component 4: Project management

13. The objective of this component is to provide support for project implementation, including Project management, coordination, development of institutional capacity, and absorption of the Project-supported reforms. The Prime Minister's Office (PMO), with the support of Project Management Group (PMG) will coordinate implementation, including fiduciary aspects, knowledge management/communication, citizen engagement, and gender considerations; and will monitor

implementation of environmental and social requirements. The grievances will be addressed by a specialized department in the PMO. This component will finance the remuneration of Project management staff, consultants to support the PMG in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and other areas, office equipment and operations, training in subjects related to Project management, financial audit of the project, translations of Project related documents, awareness raising of project activities and other costs directly related to the Project management agreed with the Bank.

### **2.3 Implementing Agency and Implementation Arrangements**

2.7 The institutional and implementation arrangements for the project will largely remain the same as those for PSMP3.

2.8 The project will be implemented under the leadership of the Public Sector Reform Commission (PSRC), which has been in place since the PSMP1 and will continue to serve as the project's management board or steering committee. The PSRC will be headed by the Deputy Prime Minister/ Chief of PM staff, who is also the Project Director. PSRC members include senior officials from the Prime Minister's and Deputy Prime Minister's Offices, different ministries directly involved in the project, and the Project Manager. The PSRC will provide political support and strategic guidance for project activities important FM and procurement documents; ensure that adequate provisions for the project are made in the national budget; resolve inter-agency coordination issues; and assist in building support for and overcoming resistance to reforms.

2.9 Day-to-day project implementation will be carried out by a small PMG headed by a Project Manager, who will report to the Project Director (Deputy Prime Minister/ Chief of PM staff). The PMG will support to PMO, which will be responsible for: 1) technical and administrative support for project implementation, 2) FM, 2) procurement, 3) compliance with environmental and social safeguards requirements, 4) M&E, 5) support/guidance on development of technical requirements and specifications for procurement documents based on inputs provided by the project's stakeholders, and 6) advisory services to agencies that implement project activities. EKENG will be in charge of supporting PMG and beneficiary entities in shaping the terms of reference and specifications for all ICT related procurement (hardware, software, systems). EKENG will also support/advise in the acceptance of all the deliverables under ICT contracts. In many cases EKENG will also act as a member of bid evaluation committees.

2.10 The Project Manager will be hired by the PSRC and will be financed by the project. The Office of the Prime Minister will provide office space for the PMG, and the project will cover its operational costs. PMG staff will be composed of consultants hired to work full-time or part-time on the project's implementation. Aside from the Project Manager, the current staff under PSMP3 include a procurement specialist, and part-time FM specialist and accountant/full time FM (with responsibilities of FM and accountant). An additional procurement assistant and an additional ITC specialist position will be added for PSMP4.

2.11 A number of specialized agencies will participate in project implementation as clients/beneficiaries. Their roles will be to provide technical requirements and specifications for the systems or other activities to be financed through the project, to review consultant and vendor outputs, to organize acceptance testing of IT software and hardware, and to utilize the project outputs that correspond to them. These entities will not directly manage project funds, with FM and procurement functions being carried out by the PMG. However, they will be accountable for the expected results of their respective activities to ensure ownership of the goals of the reforms beyond getting their activities funded.

### **2.4 Prior Stakeholder Engagement Activities carried out under PSMP4 so far**

2.12 PMG has been engaging with different stakeholders in previous iterations of the project. As many activities will be carried over from PSMP3, stakeholders largely remain the same, with already established

channels for communication. This includes the citizen feedback platform that was developed to enable feedback to inform project activities. The platform facilitates the dialog with citizens, providing them an efficient and comfortable channel for communication. A unified system for citizen feedback on public services and a call center are important tools for strengthening citizen engagement and accountability of service providers.

2.13 In developing the PSMP4 project, PMG had virtual and face-to face consultation meetings with different stakeholders involved the process, including representatives from Prime Minister's Office, Deputy Prime Minister Office (DPMO), State Revenue Committee (SRC), Civil Service Office (CSO), Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Ministry of Finance (MoF, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Corruption Prevention Commission, General Prosecutor Office, RA Police, Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure (MTAI), E-Governance Infrastructure Implementation Agency (EKENG), State Commission for the Protection of Economic Competition and other relevant governmental entities. The proposed project scope for PSMP4 was outlined following meetings with various government counterparts, and potential beneficiaries.

### **3. Stakeholder Identification and Analysis**

#### **3.1 Key Definitions**

3.1 Stakeholder engagement of the project includes the activities to be initiated by the Project implementers to ensure meaningful participation of all stakeholders throughout project preparation and implementation. It is intended to raise the inclusiveness and transparency of the project among the different stakeholders.

3.2 Project stakeholders are defined as individuals, formal or informal groups and organizations, and/or governmental entities whose interests or rights will be affected, directly or indirectly, by the project, both positively and negatively, who may have an interest in project implementation, and who have the potential to influence the project outcomes in any way.

3.3 As per the World Bank's Environmental and Social Framework, Environmental and Social Standard (ESS) 10 on Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure, stakeholders may be categorized into:

**3.3.1 Affected Parties:** These are persons, groups, and other entities within the Project Area of Influence (PAI) that are directly influenced, actually or potentially, by the -project-affected parties may have been identified as most susceptible to change associated with the project. These parties need to be closely engaged in identifying impacts and their significance and decision-making on mitigation and management measures

**3.3.2 Other Interested Parties:** These are individuals, groups, and other entities that may not experience direct impacts from the project but who consider or perceive their interests as being affected by the project or who could affect the project and the process of its implementation in some way.

**3.3.3 Vulnerable Groups:** These are persons who may be disproportionately impacted or further disadvantaged by the project compared with any other groups due to their vulnerable status. Vulnerable groups may require special engagement efforts to ensure equal representation in the consultation decision-making process associated with the project.

3.4 The project has multiple stakeholders from different governmental entities, potential consultants, civil society, IT community and the general public. For the purposes of this SEP document, stakeholders who are likely to be directly affected by, and involved in the implementation of the policy, are classified as:

**3.4.1 Affected Parties.** The ministries and other Governmental entities which are associated with the project and are project stakeholder entities/affected parties include but are not limited

to the MoJ, newly created MoI, SRC, National Archive, etc. Local communities, community administration offices, and courts are project stakeholders as well. All citizens/potential users of digital services, civil service employees and applicants, as well as diaspora representatives are also project-affected parties.

**3.4.2 Other Interested Parties** are those who do not experience direct impacts from the project. Those group include other government institutions that may be involved in various ways in project implementation, the IT community of Armenia (e.g. Enterprise Incubator Foundation (EIF), Union of Advanced Technology Enterprises (UATE), Union of Employers of ICT in Yerevan, Union of Information Technology Enterprises (UITE), Impact Hub Yerevan etc.), potential consultants (e.g. IT companies, start-ups, M&E consultant company, etc.); bi- and multilateral agencies (e.g. UN through SDG lab, USAID supporting community consolidation and citizen engagement processes in Armenia, UNDP supporting the government to advance the open governance agenda, EU supporting Judicial Reforms, Institutions’ Strengthening and Good Governance in Armenia, etc.), the media, CSOs (e.g. Communities Finance Officers Association, Taxpayers Rights Protection NGO, Armenian Lawyers’ Association, National and Regional Chambers of Commerce and Industry, etc.) and the general public.

**3.4.3 Vulnerable Groups:** As per its definition, the project will not negatively impact any disadvantaged group. However, potential social risks relate to the inclusiveness of digital services provided and/or enhanced with the support of the project. Potentially vulnerable and disadvantaged persons of the project may include the groups/people that cannot fully utilize the e-services that are envisaged by the project. Those groups/people may include the elderly, who do not use modern technologies or have limited access to it, persons with disabilities and limited mobility, persons living in rural, remote areas, ethnic minorities who lack proficiency in the national language, migrants and displaced persons who by virtue of limited social networks may find it harder to obtain information about the benefits of the project, or persons and households lacking connection to high-speed internet and/or the required skills to use digital services. The project will mitigate these risks by undertaking inclusive consultations and enabling the extension of digital services and skills training to remote and rural locations in order to ensure broader and more inclusive access to the project benefits.

**Table 1: Main stakeholders per Project Components and Sub-Components**

Components	Subcomponents	Target Stakeholders	Other interested parties
<b>Component I: Modernization of the public administration</b>	<i>Subcomponent 1.1: Modernization of the civil service</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Civil servants of the MoJ and newly established MoI</li> <li>▪ Civil Service Office</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All the other governmental entities and civil servants (and applicants) subject to modernization of the civil services</li> <li>▪ Consultants to be involved for component implementation</li> <li>▪ Bi- and multilateral agencies (e.g. EU supporting good governance in Armenia)</li> <li>▪ The media</li> <li>▪ Public in general</li> </ul>
	<i>Subcomponent 1.2: Electronic justice and court systems</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ National Archive and its staff</li> <li>▪ Courts in Armenia</li> <li>▪ MoJ</li> <li>▪ The Civil Status Act Registration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Court and national Archive users</li> <li>▪ Other Governmental entities using National Achieve, Civil Status Act Registration or State Register data</li> </ul>

Components	Subcomponents	Target Stakeholders	Other interested parties
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The State Register of Legal Entities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigative agencies, prosecution, penitentiary, probation, and compulsory enforcement services</li> <li>CSOs and associations (e.g. Armenian Lawyers' Association, Armenian Helsinki Committee, Transparency International, etc.)</li> <li>Bi- and multilateral agencies (e.g. EU supporting good governance in Armenia)</li> <li>Public in general</li> </ul>
	<u>Subcomponent 1.3: Capacity building in the Mol</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Newly established Mol and its staff</li> <li>The Migration and Passport Service of the Mol</li> <li>MTAI</li> <li>RA Police and the NSS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Other Governmental entities</li> <li>Public in general</li> <li>Bi- and multilateral agencies (e.g. EU supporting good governance in Armenia)</li> </ul>
<b>Component 2: Digital Service Delivery</b>	<u>Subcomponent 2.1: Central government digital public service delivery of the Tax and Customs Administration Systems</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministry of Finance</li> <li>SRC</li> <li>Tax and customs-payers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Future tax-payers and Public in general</li> <li>Bi- and multilateral agencies (e.g. EBRD through Business Support Office in Yerevan)</li> <li>Local CSOs (e.g. National and Regional Chambers of Commerce and Industry; "Citizen, Taxpayer, Business Rights Protection" NGO, Mantashov" Entrepreneurs Union, Taxpayers Rights Protection NGO, etc.)</li> </ul>
	<u>Subcomponent 2.2: Central government digital public service delivery – Other Central Agencies</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public service users</li> <li>GBV/DV victims</li> <li>Enterprises</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CSOs dealing with GBV/DV cases (e.g. National Association of Social Workers (NASW))</li> <li>Bi- and multilateral agencies (e.g. World Vision Armenia dealing with child right protection)</li> <li>Media</li> </ul>
	<u>Subcomponent 2.3: Local government digital public service delivery</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local governments and local communities</li> <li>Local public service users/public in general</li> <li>Local community residents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community-based organizations and CSOs (e.g. Union of Communities of Armenia, Communities Finance Officers Association, etc.)</li> <li>Bi- and multilateral agencies (e.g. USAID, Eurasia Partnership Foundation (EPF), GIZ)</li> <li>Media</li> <li>Consultants to be involved for component implementation</li> </ul>
<b>Component 3: Data management and digital infrastructure</b>	<u>Subcomponent 3.1: Hybrid cloud</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GoA and its staff</li> <li>Public in general/ all citizens/potential users of digital services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultants to be involved for component implementation</li> <li>IT Community (e.g. Enterprise Incubator Foundation (EIF), Union of Advanced Technology Enterprises (UATE), Union of Employers of ICT in Yerevan, Union of Information Technology Enterprises (UITE), Impact Hub Yerevan etc.)</li> </ul>
	<u>Subcomponent 3.2: Cybersecurity</u>		

Components	Subcomponents	Target Stakeholders	Other interested parties
	<u>Subcomponent 3.3: Data science, ML, and AI in GovTech</u>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Media</li> </ul>

## 4. Stakeholder Engagement Methodology

### 4.1 Key Principles

4.1 In order to meet best practice approaches, the project will apply the following principles for stakeholder engagement:

*4.1.1 Openness and life-cycle approach:* stakeholder engagement activities will be arranged during the whole life-cycle of the project, carried out in an open manner, free of external manipulation, interference, coercion or intimidation;

*4.1.2 Informed participation and feedback:* information will be provided to and widely distributed among all stakeholders in an appropriate language (Armenian) and format; opportunities are provided for communicating stakeholders' feedback, for analyzing and addressing comments, suggestions and concerns;

*4.1.3 Inclusiveness and sensitivity:* stakeholder identification are undertaken to support better communications and build effective relationships. The participation process for the projects is inclusive. All stakeholders are encouraged to be involved in the consultation and discussion process, to the extent the current circumstances permit. Equal access to information will be provided to all stakeholders.

### 4.2 Summary of Project Stakeholder Needs and Methods, Tools, and Techniques for Stakeholder Engagement

4.2 Strong stakeholder engagement is a precondition for the effectiveness of the project. Three general vectors of stakeholder engagement under the project will be carried out as follows:

4.2.1 Consultations with stakeholders and feedback collection throughout the entire project cycle

4.2.2 Awareness-raising activities on the project activities and its progress

4.2.3 Engagement and consideration of the needs of vulnerable groups in project-related activities.

4.3 Generally, the following stakeholder engagement activities are proposed:

#### 4.3.1 Consultations with stakeholders and feedback collection

- Correspondence by phone/email and one-on-one meetings: The PMO/PMG will maintain regular contact with the different stakeholder governmental entities to introduce, share and collect feedback on the project-related activities. These interactions will be conducted through phone calls, emailing, online platforms or one-to-one meetings. The relevant documents, which refer to other stakeholders e.g. TORs, were circulated among the respective stakeholders as draft and final documents for their collaboration and comments aimed at further improvement of the documents.

- Formal meetings, roundtable discussions and forums: Before the project’s launch and during its entire cycle, the PMG will organize formal meetings with project stakeholders as listed in Table I above. The meetings may be organized in person or through online platforms. The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Consultant Company will be responsible for organization of at least one roundtable discussion and/or forum with the project stakeholders during each reporting year (see more about M&E Consultant company responsibilities in Section 7 – “Resources and Responsibilities for Implementing Stakeholder Engagement Activities”).
- Survey and M&E feedback collection tools: The project will finance periodic annual taxpayer satisfaction surveys to facilitate independent feedback from a wide range of taxpayer segments on their experience with services, specifically including vulnerable groups (e.g., people with disability and elderly). The surveys will gauge the satisfaction level of citizens, the quality of taxpayer-tax official interaction, challenges faced by businesses and citizens, and suggestions of how to improve services. The respective interventions financed by the project will be revised or fine-tuned accordingly. The survey results will be published/publicly discussed. In addition, to conduct baseline, mid-term assessments and final evaluation of the project, the M&E will apply different stakeholder engagement tools aimed at feedback collection that will include, among others, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussion (FGDs), survey among the stakeholders, town-hall meetings, etc. The feedback and insights the M&E Consultant will gain through various feedback collection mechanisms, will be shared with the PMG regularly to further improve the project interventions.
- Established Grievance Redress Mechanism: GRM will be maintained throughout entire project lifecycle (see more section 5 “Grievance Redress Mechanism”).
- Training, seminars and capacity building activities of relevant staff of governmental entities on the introduced new technologies and tools: The PMO will ensure that relevant staff of governmental entities are introduced and trained on the new technologies and tools. To do so, the PMO/PMG will include awareness-raising and training provision requirements in the ToRs of the Consultant Companies responsible for the update/introduction of new technologies. In addition, the PMG will include additional requirements on the provision of awareness-raising and training to the vulnerable groups and/or people with disabilities working in the respective governmental entities. These requirements may include but are not limited to additional hours of training for elderly staff, organization of training in disability-friendly locations, etc.
- Engagement and consideration of the needs of end-user vulnerable groups in project-related activities: The project will ensure that the needs of the vulnerable groups as end-users are duly incorporated into the final design of the products to be developed/introduced for broad public usage. The solutions to address specific needs of vulnerable groups will include, among others, the functionality of final products in case low-speed internet is used, voice assistant solutions for the blind, availability of the products in languages used by ethnic minorities, etc. The PMG will include the requirements to reveal, assess and address specific needs of the vulnerable groups in the ToRs of the Consultant Companies responsible for the update/introduction of new products designed for broad public usage. In addition the Consultant on M&E (hired by PMO for PMG) will organize subsequent focus group discussions with the representatives/CSOs representing vulnerable groups to ensure that vulnerable groups are empowered to voice their needs.
- Usage of the already established citizen feedback platform: Under PSMP3, an already established citizen feedback platform operating under www.gnahatir.am domain, was developed enabling Feedback from citizens which may inform project activities. The



platform facilitates the dialog with citizens, providing them an efficient and comfortable channel for communication. A unified system for citizen feedback on public services and a call center are expected to significantly strengthen citizen engagement and accountability of service providers. This platform will be used under PSMP4 to collect feedback from the citizens related to project activities. The project will measure citizen engagement and its effectiveness through a beneficiary feedback indicator in the results framework: % increase in the citizen satisfaction (disaggregated by gender) with selected services.

#### **4.3.2 Awareness Raising and Capacity Building Stages**

- Disclosure of project-related documentation and/or press releases in the local and national media: The PMG will ensure that respective project-related documentation and other relevant information is disclosed in a timely manner and is accessible to the key stakeholder and other interested parties (see more in “4.4 Proposed Strategy for Information Disclosure sub-section). Generally, audit reports, project monitoring and evaluation reports, public notices, procurement notices, electronic publications and/or press releases on the project’s activities will be disseminated through [www.gov.am](http://www.gov.am) website or on other open-source websites (e.g. [www.devbusiness.un.org](http://www.devbusiness.un.org), [www.gnumner.am](http://www.gnumner.am)).
- Publications on official websites and/or media materials and news on online press, and/or social media pages: The PMG will use opportunities to publish project-related information, press releases, and news through local and national media and/or different social media pages and/or [www.gov.am](http://www.gov.am) website or on other open-source websites (e.g. [www.devbusiness.un.org](http://www.devbusiness.un.org), [www.gnumner.am](http://www.gnumner.am)), as long as various media outlets make those types of opportunities available.

### **4.3 Stakeholder Engagement Plan**

**Table 2: Main stakeholders and proposed stakeholder engagement activities**

<b>Target stakeholders</b>	<b>Project stage</b>	<b>Topic of consultation / message</b>	<b>Method used</b>	<b>Responsible for implementation</b>
<b><u>Government Entities</u></b>	Preparation Implementation Operation	Project information – scope, timeline;  GRM	Correspondence by phone/email; one-on-one meetings; Formal meetings, roundtable discussions and forums; Established Grievance Redress Mechanism and Citizen feedback platform  Awareness-raising, training, seminars and capacity building activities of relevant staff of governmental entities on the introduced new technologies and tools.  M&E activities aimed at feedback collection	PMO/DPMO/PMG  Service providing consultants  M&E Consultant

Target stakeholders	Project stage	Topic of consultation / message	Method used	Responsible for implementation
<b><u>Civil society, IT and professional community</u></b>	Preparation Implementation Operation	Project information – scope, timeline; Stakeholder engagement opportunities; Grievance mechanism procedure;	Formal meetings, roundtable discussions and forums; Disclosure of Project –related documentation; Established Grievance Redress Mechanism and Citizen feedback platform; public notices;  M&E activities aimed at feedback collection	PMO/DPMO/PMG  M&E Consultant
<b><u>Public in general, including vulnerable groups</u></b>	Preparation Implementation Operation	Project information – scope, timeline; Stakeholder engagement opportunities; Grievance mechanism procedure;	Publications of materials on online press and/or official websites and/or social media pages; Awareness raising events, e.g. forums, conferences, etc.  Grievance Redress Mechanism and Citizen feedback platform; public notices;  FGDs with the representatives of vulnerable groups/CSOs representing their interests  M&E activities aimed at feedback collection	PMO/DPMO/PMG  M&E Consultant

**4.4 Proposed Strategy for Information Disclosure**

The following principles will be applied when disclosing information on project activities:

- The project will ensure that information to be disclosed is comprehensible and easily accessible and will be delivered to the stakeholders in a timely and accessible manner,
- Information disclosure processes will be initiated at the very beginning of the project and will be continued through the entire circle of its implementation,
- Diverse information portals will be used for information disclosure including but not limited to the official websites/social media/ news outlets, etc.

Information Disclosure Preliminary Strategy is presented on Table 3.

**Table 3. Information Disclosure Preliminary Strategy**

Project stage	Target stakeholders	Information to be disclosed	Methods and timing proposed
<b>Preparatory work for project implementation</b>	Government entities (DPM Office, EKENG, MoJ, Police, etc.); other donor organizations working in the area, other stakeholders	Project purpose and coverage, SEP, GRM procedure, update on project development	Dissemination of information via <a href="http://www.gov.am/">www.gov.am/</a> / public notices and electronic publications via online websites/social media/press releases; direct emailing

<b>Project stage</b>	<b>Target stakeholders</b>	<b>Information to be disclosed</b>	<b>Methods and timing proposed</b>
<b>Project implementation stage</b>	Government entities (DPM Office, EKENG, MoJ, Police, etc.); other donor organizations working in the area, other stakeholders; Potential Consultant Companies; Public in General	Project purpose and coverage, SEP, GRM procedure, update on project development  Tendering opportunities  Progress and achievements of the project	Dissemination of information via <a href="http://www.gov.am">www.gov.am</a> / public notices and electronic publications via online websites/social media/press releases; direct emailing  <a href="http://www.procurement.am/">www.procurement.am/</a> UNDB Online website(s) ( <a href="http://www.gnumner.am">www.gnumner.am</a> , <a href="http://www.devbusiness.un.org">www.devbusiness.un.org</a> , etc.)
<b>Project completion and closure</b>	Government entities (DPM Office, EKENG, MoJ, Police, etc.); other donor organizations working in the area, other stakeholders;  Public in General	Progress reports, GRM reports, SEP monitoring report, project monitoring and evaluation reports, Audit reports	Dissemination of information via <a href="http://www.gov.am">www.gov.am</a> /public notices and electronic publications via online websites/social media/press releases; direct emailing upon necessity. Disclosure of project related documents such as audit reports on <a href="http://www.gov.am">www.gov.am</a> website.

## 5. Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM)

### 5.1 General principles

5.1 The main objective of a GRM is to help resolve complaints and grievances in a timely, effective, and efficient manner that satisfies all parties involved. The early identification and understanding of possible complaints can help to further improve the project activities. The GRM will ensure that the project beneficiaries and stakeholders have an outlet through which they can be engaged in the project implementation, raise concerns and grievances, and provide PMG with practical suggestions/feedback on project activities allowing them to be more accountable, transparent, and responsive.

5.2 The following core principles are embodied in the GRM: 1) Grievances will be treated confidentially, assessed impartially, and handled transparently. 2) The project beneficiaries may use a range of contact options (telephone number, e-mail address and postal address, etc.). The GRM is accessible to all stakeholders. 3) The GRM is designed to be responsive to the needs of complainants. 4) All grievances, simple or complex, will be addressed and resolved as quickly as possible. The action taken on the grievance will be swift, decisive, and constructive 5) The GRM includes a protocol and dedicated awareness-raising of all staff involved of safe and confidential handling of grievances related to sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (SEA/SH).

5.3 The data gathered through the operation of GRM will be used not only to address the complaints and grievances arisen during the course of project implementation, but also to contribute to the continuous improvement of the project performance through the analysis of trends and lessons learned.

5.4 PMG will build on already existing GRM mechanism, which exists under the Prime Minister's Office and is managed by the Department for Reception of Citizens and Discussion of Petitions. The Grievance intake will be done through [www.e-request.am](http://www.e-request.am) Unified Portal for Online Requests run by e-Governance Infrastructure Implementation Agency (EKENG). The existing mechanism responds to all types of citizen concerns and feedback about the project, and direct project-specific grievances to PMG. Data on citizen

concerns and the resolution of grievances are collected to promote greater accountability and responsiveness. PMG is responsible to verify that grievance redress mechanism is properly advertised, that all project-related grievances are responded to and addressed within an established timeframe, and that all grievances are recorded in a consistent manner.

## **5.2 Intake and Record**

5.5 The focal point (FP) for the GRM is the Project Manager who is in charge of receiving, screening, recording and documenting all the complaints.

5.6 Project stakeholders and beneficiaries dissatisfied with project-related activities can give their feedback or convey complaints at any stage of the process. There are multiple channels for grievance intake. Citizens can file a request or a complaint through an electronic platform [www.e-request.am](http://www.e-request.am), track the case, and apply for a meeting with a relevant official. There is also a dedicated email [hotline@gov.am](mailto:hotline@gov.am) and phone numbers 1-17 (calls are free of charge) and +374 (10) 527-000 (for overseas calls).

5.7 The Project Manager will also check project's general email – [info@psmp.am](mailto:info@psmp.am) and any grievance and feedback received through this email will be registered in the GRM log and handled as per the project's GRM procedure.

5.8 In the Governmental entities that are involved in project implementation procedure (e.g. MoJ, SRC, Ministry of Finance, Police, etc.) local focal points will be designated to receive, proceed and transfer the grievances and feedback to PMG.

5.9 The grievances received through local focal points or other channels, e.g. forwarded by other government entities, by WB, CSOs, etc. will equally be recorded in the grievance log and handled as per the project's GRM procedure.

## **5.3 Review, Investigation and Resolution of Grievances**

5.10 While the Prime Minister's office receives grievances on all government-related issues, project-specific grievances will be forwarded to PMG. Anonymous feedback and complaints will be also allowed, recorded and reviewed as long as that it raises any legitimate concern related to project activities.

5.11 Based on the need other members of the project team can be involved in the reviewing process to assist the Project Manager in the final decision making. Case Review cannot take more than 5 working days after the registration.

5.12 All complainants should be contacted within five working days of presenting a case to be informed of the final answer/resolution or regarding the status of the case. PMG will prepare a response, which will be delivered by the Prime Minister's Office. In special cases where a resolution cannot be provided in five working days (when more time is needed for additional information and involvement of other stakeholders) the complainants will be informed about the additional time required for their case, which according to the RA Law on Freedom of Information cannot be longer than one month.

5.13 Responses can be either oral or written, depending on whether the grievance was received orally or in writing. Regardless of its form, the claimant and the response should be registered. The response at least should include the following information: a) acceptance or rejection of the complaint, b) if rejected, the reasons for the rejection and possible referrals, if any, c) if accepted, the next steps and timeframe for the resolution.

5.14 In the framework of the current project the possible approaches to complaints resolution can include: a) mediation through traditional institutions and/or governmental organizations, b) direct negotiations

and dialogue between the applicant and the relevant agency or agencies; c) facilitated negotiations through a third party; d) investigation of a complaint through review of documents, field investigation, and/or interviews of different parties; e) referrals to other judicial and administrative processes. Depending on the nature and the severity of the complaint/s, PSMP Project Manager in consultation with project team should identify and decide on an approach for grievance resolution.

#### **5.4 GRM Log**

5.15 PSMP Project Manager will maintain a GRM log (IT-based or manual). A complaint by any channel should be recorded in the complaints logbook or grievance excel-sheet/grievance database. The grievance log will clearly show summary of question/grievance/feedback received, date and name/contact of complainant if available, date of response, status of resolution, and next steps or pending actions.

#### **5.5 Close out and Follow up of Grievances**

5.16 A grievance is closed out when no further action can be or needs to be taken. The grievance cannot be closed out, until the response has not been communicated with and approved by the Complainant. If the Complainant is satisfied with the outcome, then the grievance is closed out and is being registered in the Grievance Register as Resolved case.

5.17 The GRM will provide an appeal process if the complainant is not satisfied with the complaint's proposed resolution. Once all possible means to resolve the complaint have been proposed and if the complainant is still not satisfied, they should be advised of their right to legal recourse.

5.18 If the Complainant rejects or appeals twice with the same claim, then the closure status of the complaint is being recorded and entered into the Grievance database as unresolved. The grievance can be closed also in cases where the attempts to contact the Complainant have not been successful for 30 days following receipt of formal grievance. These cases are registered as abandoned.

5.19 As per the Republic of Armenia's legislation, project affected people may at any stage refer to court. Opening a Court Case means stopping all the activities regarding the grievance within the project GRM system. Once the case is opened, only decisions made by the Court are becoming obligatory both for the Applicant and the project.

#### **5.6 Handling of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH) Issues**

5.20 The SEA/SH risk of the project activities have been screened and assessed as low. The GRM will be sensitive in terms of receiving and handling of SEA/SH grievances, putting in place mechanisms for confidential reporting with safe and ethical documenting of GBV issues. Further, the GRM will also have processes to immediately notify the World Bank of any GBV complaints, with the survivor's consent, strictly keeping his/her confidentiality.

#### **5.7 Communicating GRM to the Project Stakeholders**

5.21 Feedback and GRM information will be communicated to the stakeholders during public consultation meetings, roundtable discussions, and other project events. All project-related printed materials such as brochures, booklets, posters (if available), will also present information on GRM including contact information to submit feedback or grievances. Feedback and GRM-related information will also be disseminated through all project disclosed documents and press-releases.

## **6. Monitoring and Reporting of the SEP**

6.1 This Stakeholder Engagement Plan will be periodically reviewed, updated and improved in order to ensure that the information presented herein is consistent and is the most recent, as well as to ensure that the identified methods of stakeholder engagement are efficient and appropriate to the existing situation and context. The SEP will be updated to reflect any major changes to the project related activities and to its schedule, if any.

6.2 The activities performed under this SEP are subject to monitoring and evaluation (M&E). All stakeholder engagement activities will be tracked and documented, the progress and results of the stakeholder engagement activities will be reflected in progress reports submitted by PMG to the World Bank. The internal monitoring of the stakeholder engagement activities will be carried out by PMG.

6.3 Feedback and grievances received through the Program grievance mechanism will be filed and included in progress reports. Summaries and internal reports will reflect up to date information on stakeholder engagement within a reporting period (e.g. monthly, quarterly, or annually), as follows:

6.3.1 Information on stakeholder engagement activities, including consultation meetings, round table discussions, forums, etc., reporting number of participants, number of press materials published/broadcasted in the local, regional, and national media/or on official Government platform etc.

6.3.2 Information on the operation of the online portals, including information on the documents disclosed, number of visits to the web-sites, number of received feedback, etc.

6.3.3 GRM-related information, including number and the nature of complaints and requests received, number of addressed grievances, average time of grievance resolution, etc.

6.4 SEP implementation progress will be documented through annual progress reports, to be shared with the World Bank.

## **7. Resources and Responsibilities for Implementing Stakeholder Engagement Activities**

### **7.1 Management Functions and Responsibilities**

7.1 The PMG is led by the Project Manager and comprises procurement, financial management, and professional IT staff (the structure of the PMG is still tentative). PMG will be in charge of implementation and oversee of the project and stakeholder engagement activities. PMG Project Manager will be a focal point and responsible for the implementation of stakeholder engagement activities, its monitoring, and reporting.

7.2 Generally the PMG is responsible to implement the SEP, as detailed in the SEP activities table (Table 2) above, and to comply with the timelines specified in that document. The PMG will have overall responsibility to update, adopt, and implement Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP), including various engagement mechanisms, their tentative timelines, roles and responsibilities, and resources allocated for implementing the SEP activities.

7.3 As PMG has limited human resources to carry out all the SEP activities as described in the SEP activities' table, the PMG will delegate some of its responsibilities to the project's Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Consultant Company to be hired under the project. Project Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Consultant Company is hired from the very beginning of the project and generally is responsible for baseline and mid-term annual assessments, as well as final evaluation of the project.

7.4 The PMG will ensure that all the relevant SEP implementation requirements are reflected in the TOR developed to hire an M&E consultant. During the procurement phase, the PMG will ensure that the

Consultant has sufficient and relevant expertise in designing, implementing, and documenting stakeholder engagement activities. This may include but is not limited to the preparation of clear and accessible information materials, organization of all types of events detailed in SEP, recording and documenting outcomes of the consultation process, and preparation of a detailed report of stakeholder engagement activities, etc.

7.5 Overall, PMG will be responsible for overseeing and ensuring the quality of the SEP activities delegated to the Consultant Company. The Consultant Company will report on the progress of the respective stakeholder engagement activities through annual reports to be submitted to the PMG and the Bank. The monitoring and reporting of the SEP activities carried out by the Consultant Company should comply with the requirements of the “5. Monitoring and reporting of the SEP” section of this SEP.

## **7.2 Resources**

7.6 The stakeholder engagement activities described in this document are a core part of the project implementation. The financial resources required for the SEP implementation will be covered through Component 4 (Project Management) of PSMP4. A budget line for the implementation of Stakeholder Engagement Plan activities will be added to the project budget.

7.7 The implementation of stakeholder engagement activities is one of the important part of PMG staff members’ job responsibilities and no additional reimbursement lines will be designated for coordination of stakeholder engagement activities under this SEP.

7.8 The activities to be funded under stakeholder engagement will include organization of consultation meetings or round table discussions (renting halls, transportation, coffee-breaks, etc.), development of printed materials (information leaflets, brochures, posters, etc.), and salary for consultants, etc. As the main stakeholder engagement activities will be carried out through the consultant companies, the respective budget for SEP implementation will be formed during the project implementation, based on proposals received by the Consultants covering lines related to the SEP implementation.

7.9 It is estimated that the budget required for SEP implementation will make approximately \$30,000 which includes costs related to organization of at least one roundtable discussion and/or forum with the project stakeholders during each reporting year (to be organized by M&E consultant), organization of formal meetings with different stakeholders by PMG upon need (renting a space, coffee-breaks), preparation and dissemination of information leaflets and brochures (if required), costs related to stakeholder engagement activities’ monitoring and reporting (to be part of M&E consultant company’s budget) (Table 4).

**Table 4. Approximate estimation of the budget required for SEP implementation per each FY**

<b>Budget lines</b>	<b>FY2022</b>	<b>FY2023</b>	<b>FY2024</b>	<b>FY2025</b>	<b>FY2026</b>	<b>FY2027</b>	<b>Total</b>
I. Organization of roundtable discussions and/or forums with the project stakeholders, organization of formal meetings with the stakeholders upon need (space, transportation, coffee-breaks)	\$3500	\$3500	\$3500	\$3500	\$2500	\$2500	\$19000



2. Preparation and dissemination of information leaflets and brochures	\$700	\$700	\$700	\$700	\$700	\$1500	\$5000
3. SEP implementation monitoring and reporting	\$700	\$700	\$700	\$700	\$700	\$1000	\$4500
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,900</b>	<b>\$4,900</b>	<b>\$4,900</b>	<b>\$4,900</b>	<b>\$3,900</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$28,500</b>

7.10 The SEP will be continuously updated throughout the project implementation period, as required.

**8. SEP Implementation Risks**

8.1 Stakeholders’ engagement is essential for this project and based on the current situation risks related to that are low. The general risks associated with the SEP implementation may be due to insufficient information and involvement of all stakeholder groups due to COVID-19 Pandemic imposed restrictions. The key approaches and mechanism of the implementation of SEP is highly dependent on COVID-19 situation in the country and the established regime of quarantine.

8.2 Currently, COVID-19 restrictions are gradually being removed, in line with the progressing vaccination of the population. However, if the future situation requires, alternative ways may need to be adopted to manage consultations and stakeholder engagement in accordance with the established regime of quarantine to prevent the virus transmission. These alternate approaches that will be practiced for stakeholder engagement may include having consultations in small groups if smaller meetings are permitted, else making reasonable efforts to conduct meetings through online channels (e.g., webex, zoom, skype etc.), diversifying means of communication, chat groups, dedicated online platforms/ mobile apps (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp groups, project weblinks/websites etc.).

8.3 Usage of online/remote engagement tools may be beneficial for inclusion, as more people located in different and remote areas, including people from Diaspora, will be able to join and participate in project-related activities. Accordingly, the project will incorporate social media and web platforms, as well as virtual meeting tools, to disseminate information and conduct seminars and consultations related to the project.

**Final notes**

8.4 The draft SEP will be disclosed, disseminated both in Armenian and English to key stakeholder groups, and consulted in country. Feedback received on the SEP will be incorporated and recorded in the final SEP version. SEP will be disclosed and publicly available throughout implementation of the project, both in Armenian and English.