

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN

Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL)

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN (SEP)

For

**Emergency Agriculture and Food Supply Project
(P174348)**

July, 2020

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Acronyms

ARIA	Agricultural Research Institute of Afghanistan
ARTF	Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund
AP	Affected Person
AWCRP	Agro-Water Management and Climate Resilience Project Community
CDC	Development Council
DAP	Di-Ammonium Phosphate
DAIL	Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
ERRPs	Emergency Response and Recovery Plan
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
ESMP	Environmental and Social Management Plan
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GRC	Grievance Redress Committee
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
ISE	Improved Seed Enterprise
IPF	Investment Project Financing
IA	Irrigation Association
IDP	internal displaced people
MAIL	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
MUDL	Ministry of Urban Development and Land
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
NEPA	National Environmental Protection Agency
NWARA	National Water Affairs Regulation Authority
NPMU	National Project Management Unit
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
OHS	Occupational Health Safety
OFWMP	On Farm Water Management Project
PAPs	Project Affected Person
PAI	Project Area of Influence
PSEs	Private Seed Enterprises
PMU	Project Management Unit
RPMUs	Regional Project Management Units.
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SBU	Strategic Business Units
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
TA	Technical Assistance
WUAs	Water Users Associations



Preliminary Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP)
July 16, 2020
Emergency Agriculture and Food Supply Project
(P174348)

1. Introduction/Project Description

COVID-19 pandemic is already imposing a large social and economic burden on Afghanistan. As of June 12, 2020, the Ministry of Public Health reported 22,890 confirmed cases of COVID-19, the diseases caused by the new coronavirus, in the country, with cases reported in all 34 provinces. While the number of confirmed cases and deaths is relatively low compared to nearby countries, Afghanistan is extremely vulnerable to rapid spread of the virus due to limited access to information. The Agriculture sector is largely dominated by smallholder farmers, who have limited access to productive assets and are vulnerable to shocks such as COVID-19 or production shocks. The sector is largely dominated by smallholder farmers as 60 percent of the farms are smaller than 1 ha and 90 percent are less than 5 ha. Household-level data show that a significant portion of arable land remains underutilized, mainly for lack or poor management of irrigation water. Most of the cultivable land receives less than 400 mm of rain per year and annual rainfall is highly variable. Smallholder producers are specifically vulnerable to shocks because they have limited access to improved technologies, production practices, and extension services while natural resources such as land, pastures, and forests are poorly managed. Loss of export market shares can be attributed to the declining productivity of aging orchards and vineyards; lack of new planting; and the capture of these shares by new market entrants that are more competitive on cost and quality.

The proposed COVID-19 emergency response operation will mainly:

The Project responds to the food security and reduced income challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis by: (i) **increasing local food production** with an initial emphasis on wheat, key staple crop for the country; and (ii) creating COVID-era short-term employment to **rehabilitate productive irrigation infrastructure and support sustainable watershed development** for longer term water availability for food production and resilience. It also mitigates the economic impact of the crisis by **supporting micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs)** in critical domestic food supply chains, including—but not restricted to—wheat and flour.

Project Description:

The project is structured around the following three components: (A) Productive agricultural water systems; (B) Critical commercial food supply chains; (C) Project Management. The project also includes a fourth Component (D) for Contingency Emergency Response.

Component A: Productive agricultural water systems (US\$65.7 million)

Component A supports increased production capacity in irrigated and rain-fed areas that are primarily engaged in grain production. It comprises two subcomponents: (i) Rehabilitation and improvement of irrigation schemes to improve irrigated agriculture productivity; and (ii) Watershed management and rainfed agriculture support for dryland farming through the development of productive assets and use of climate smart practices. This component will contribute to the COVID-19 emergency relief effort by creating short term employment opportunities (more than 6 million person days) for unskilled labor in rural areas. It will also support the recovery and resilience pillars of the COVID-19 response by establishing

irrigation and watershed-related assets for medium-term improvement of agricultural productivity, and strengthening climate adaptation, increasing the resilience of agriculture systems to climate change impacts (e.g. water scarcity and temperature increases).

It will be implemented in areas across the country, selected on the basis of criteria that include security, demand by the community, readiness for implementation, prospect for increased water and land productivity including sufficient average rainfall for watershed areas, clearance of area from land mines, absence of social disputes and conflicts, and proximity (clustering of sites). The project will use the available designs for irrigation schemes that were completed under the On-farm Water Management Project. Additional sites will be identified, and designs established during the first six months of the project implementation period. The selection criteria are further specified in Annex 4 and the process will be described in the project operation manual (POM).

Subcomponent A.1: Rehabilitation and improvement of Irrigation schemes (US\$38.6 million)

Subcomponent A1 will contribute to the emergency response to the COVID-19 crisis through short-term employment generation. The construction activities under this subcomponent are expected to generate 1.6 million person days of unskilled labor demand during the two-year implementation period. It will also contribute to the recovery and resilience phases of the crisis response: activities will lead to increased production of the main staple food crop (wheat) with improved water use efficiency and strengthened production system resilience to climate variability.

This subcomponent will finance goods, non-consulting services, civil works, technical assistance (including project technical staff) and training for the design and rehabilitation of selected irrigation schemes and for the improvement of water management and agronomic practices. A total of about 45,000 hectares would be rehabilitated through 180 traditional schemes with an average command area of 250 ha each. Main activities include: (i) participatory design of rehabilitation and improvement works for a socially inclusive and technically efficient scheme; (ii) establishment and strengthening of irrigation associations building on the traditional *Mirab* system to improve management of the water distribution; (iii) canal cleaning, construction of small hydraulic structures and canal lining for improved water conveyance and distribution efficiency; (iv) training of farmers on improved on-farm water and soil fertility management practices¹ and integrated pest management; and (v) provision of planting material for diversification crops and kitchen gardens kits targeting female farmers. Communal structures of particular use to women, like washing areas, water access points, cattle trough and canal crossings will also be provided based on the needs identified by the female community members. Jointly, these activities –rehabilitation and improvement of irrigation schemes, improved management through strengthening irrigation association and introduction of improved water and soil management practices— serve as climate adaptation and resilience-building measures, leading to improved water use efficiency, strengthening resilience of irrigated production systems under climate change and risks of increased water scarcity.

Subcomponent A.2: Watershed management and rainfed agriculture (US\$27.1 million)

Subcomponent A2 will contribute to the emergency response to the COVID-19 crisis through short-term employment generation. The construction activities under this subcomponent will generate a requirement of 4.1 million person days of unskilled labor during the two-year implementation period. It will also contribute to the recovery and resilience phases of the crisis response through watershed development to secure increased water retention capacity in treated areas, and support agroforestry and diversification into less water-intensive horticulture crops.

¹ Improved water and soil fertility management practices will increase soil carbon sequestration and above- and below-ground biomass growth, thus contributing to climate resilience as well as climate mitigation.

This subcomponent will finance goods, non-consulting services, civil works, technical assistance (including project technical staff), and training, for the design and implementation of improved soil and water management and conservation activities in selected catchment areas across the country. A total of about 45,000 ha will be targeted including pastureland, agricultural land and forested land. Improved agronomic practices, and soil and water conservation structures would help reduce soil erosion and improve infiltration of rainwater. Main activities include: (i) establishment of community-based committees to develop participatory watershed management plans for improved productivity and climate-resilience of dryland production systems and conservation of natural resources; (ii) rehabilitation of degraded and eroded land using simple techniques like contour line bunds and trenches and reforestation; (iii) construction of small structures like water harvesting tanks and gabion structures in gullies; (iv) training farmers on improved rainfed agriculture and dryland farming practices like conservation agriculture and agro-forestry, using demonstration plots; and (v) provision of planting material for diversification to increase value addition and improve nutrition outcomes at household level with specific emphasis provided on women's kitchen gardens. Jointly, these proposed activities will improve soil and water management in targeted watersheds, enhancing resilience and adaptation of agro-ecosystems and agricultural production systems to climate change and induced risks (e.g., dry spells or water scarcity)²

Component B: Critical Food Supply Chain Management (US\$26.4 million)

This component will support and strengthen critical commercial food supply chains for food crops with a strong—but not exclusive—focus on wheat. Critical food supply chains are those that have a significant contribution to the nutritional intake of Afghan households, and which have been impacted by the COVID19 crisis or concurrent shocks. Given the dominance of wheat flour in the nutritional basket in Afghanistan, there will be an initial focus on wheat and flour.

It will support uptake of wheat production by distributing improved wheat seed to farmers, in time for the immediate 2020/2021 cropping season. It will also further strengthen the supply chain for seeds, building the capacity of the private sector and relevant government institutions, and support technical assistance and investments at the community level and SMEs in the food supply chain impacted by COVID-19.

Subcomponent B.1: Seed Production, supply and emergency distribution (US\$16.4 million)

The impact of the COVID-19 crisis on smallholder households has been high, resulting in reduction of purchasing power at the household level. The high price of wheat flour, coupled with this reduced purchasing power may lead to consumption of local seed by vulnerable rural households, a common and rational coping mechanism. Hence, it is expected that the most vulnerable farmers will not have enough quantity of seed to plant on their land which could further impact their food security situation, livelihood, vulnerability and poverty in the upcoming harvest season and beyond. Reduced demand for seeds in turn is threatening the sustainable operation of the nascent seed producing SMEs in Afghanistan.

Subcomponent B1 will contribute to the emergency response to the COVID-19 crisis by emergency wheat seed distribution in time for the 2020/2021 cropping season to replenish the stock of seeds lost to the farming community, and to avert reduced wheat production scenario. The seeds would be purchased from about 100 domestic seed producing SMEs in Afghanistan bridging the seed demand gap from government

²The proposed activities, that is, capacity building for improved natural resources use, and improved rainfed and dryland farming like conservation agriculture and agro-forestry, and rehabilitation of degraded and eroded land- have a significant potential to increase current soil carbon stock, and above- and below-ground biomass growth, thus contributing to climate resilience of the agro-ecosystem as well as climate mitigation.

fiscal constraints that is threatening their continued operation. It will thus contribute to sustaining the capacity of commercial seed producing SMEs in Afghanistan.

Seed provision will help farmers utilize the 2020/2021 planting season that starts in October (Year 1 of project implementation) and give an immediate boost to the domestic production of wheat, the country's top staple crop. The 280,000 farmers supported will be selected based on criteria detailed in the Project Operations Manual. Each farmer will receive 50 kg of seeds to be used per one acre (two Jeribs) of land. The project will finance 60 percent of the seeds cost (70 percent for women-headed households) and the totality of the transport cost. Given the time constraints, for 2020/2021 planting season, a direct contracting approach will be followed, and the procurement will be completed by the National Procurement Authority. For the 2021/2022 season (Year 2), the subsidy will cover the equivalent of 50 percent of the cost of 50 kg of seeds (60 percent for women-headed households). Distribution of seeds through a voucher system was successfully piloted under the former World Bank financed Afghanistan Agriculture Inputs Project, and this modality will be adjusted for potential scale-up in Year 2. This would allow the distribution of seeds through established private companies and thus build a direct commercial relationship between the farming community and these companies.

This sub-component will also support the key actors along seed supply chains - to ensure timely and quality production and availability of improved and certified seeds for smallholder farmers. The Project will finance targeted technical assistance and limited operational costs to support: (i) ARIA to produce breeder wheat seed; (ii) Improved Seed Enterprise (ISE) to produce and disseminate quality foundation seed; (iii) PSEs to strengthen market linkages with farmers and establish 350 demonstration seed plots; and (iv) Directorate of Seed Certification (SCD) at MAIL to strengthen seed certification and seed quality awareness.

Sub-component B.2: Support for food processing and distribution (US\$10.0 million)

Subcomponent B2 will contribute to the emergency response to the COVID-19 crisis by supporting SMEs to address supply chain disruption issues and introduce COVID-19 and food safety compliance measures to source, process and market agricultural products. This would enhance food supply response and help maintain affordable food prices. It would also support the recovery phase by building capacity, resilience, and coordination of key actors to strengthen the wheat and other commodity value chains. Activities that will be supported include:

Grants and technical assistance to private sector for critical food value chains. Grants would be provided to commercial agri-businesses and SMEs in critical food value chains disrupted by COVID-19 to improve increasing productivity, quality, and capabilities to bring more food to market at affordable prices. Grants could be channeled through private sector associations where there is a critical mass of value chain actors in the same chain requiring investment support to overcome supply chain disruptions caused by COVID-19. Given the centrality of wheat flour for providing food security during the pandemic phase, the Wheat Flour Mill Association could be supported, inter alia, on increasing wheat flour availability and wheat fortification to complement the on-going WFP program. Technical assistance will also be offered to SMEs in value chains to assist them to forge market linkages with domestic suppliers where COVID-19 has disrupted their raw materials and assist with COVID-19 compliance for their processing and market activities. Assistance will be provided through service providers and, where available, sub-sector associations.

Support to strengthen the policy, institutional, and coordination framework for critical food value chains.

The project will also support strengthening the policy, institutional, and coordination framework for critical food value chains that would support well-functioning food supply chains. This could include, inter alia,

implementation of the Wheat Fortification Regulation (2018), technical assistance on subsector food safety policies, regulations, and practices, and support for coordination and market platforms that improve supply chain linkages, information on supply and prices, and other market information.

Communal supply chain Infrastructure. This sub-component will contribute to COVID-19 recovery phase and beyond. Given the centrality of distribution and logistics in the functioning of all food supply chains, this subcomponent will finance goods, works and technical assistance for the establishment of local community storage and primary processing centers. These facilities would strengthen community preparedness and resilience to market-related and climate-induced shocks (e.g., drought, floods, locust outbreak) and can help prevent food loss, which is an important pillar of food crisis management strategy. Local storage facilities and primary processing centers will primarily be set up in wheat-rich areas, and crops besides wheat will be able to avail themselves of these facilities. This activity will finance the establishment or upgrade of: (i) about 1,000 low cost, village level small storage and primary processing facilities, replicating the successful model of the National Horticulture and Livestock Project; and (ii) about 30 modern, medium sized storages and primary processing centers across 5 regions. These facilities would be established and managed by individual farmers and community groups. The construction work for these facilities will be carried out by CDCs through appropriate arrangements that will be outlined in the CDC manual of the project.

Component C: Project Management (US\$7.9 million)

This component covers the cost of project management and monitoring. It will finance project staff, consultant services, operational costs and procurement of goods for a Project Management Unit (PMU) established within MAIL that will have overall responsibility for project implementation, including the fiduciary and safeguards aspects, monitoring and evaluation, audits, and the preparation of the Project Completion Report. As per MAIL request, this subcomponent will also finance a technical assistance contract with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to provide technical advice as well as monitoring and evaluation services using remote sensing tools. Technical assistance from FAO will be a small contract of around US\$ 600,000 to help the MAIL team with specialized aspects of remote sensing, monitoring and evaluation, capacity building. The same as it was the case under OFWMP, this arrangement is to be decided by MAIL and no further step is required the decision-making process.

Component D: Contingency Emergency Response (US\$0 million)

This zero-cost component is included in the Project to enable a rapid mobilization of funds in the event of an eligible crisis or emergency following an adverse natural or man-made event.

2. Objectives of Stakeholder Engagement Plan

ESS10 of World Bank's ESF requires the government to prepare and implement a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP). Stakeholder engagement is an inclusive process conducted throughout the project life cycle to ensure that consultation and communication, including grievance redress. The overall objective of this Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) is to define a program for stakeholder engagement, including public information disclosure and consultation, throughout the inception, construction and operation phase of the proposed projects. The SEP outlines the ways in which the implementing agency, CDCs and contractors will communicate with stakeholders and includes a mechanism by which people can raise concerns and provide feedback about Implementing Agency (MAIL), the contractors, and the project itself. The SEP is a

useful tool for managing communications between the implementers of a project and its stakeholders, including beneficiaries.

The detailed objectives of the SEP can be summarized as follows:

- Outline the stakeholder engagement requirements of GIROA legislation and World Bank E&S Standards
- Provide guidance for stakeholder engagement, including the timing and methods of engagement with stakeholders throughout the life cycle of the project.
- Identify key stakeholders that are affected, and/or able to influence the project
- Describe the measures that will be used to remove obstacles to participation, and how the views of differently affected groups will be captured.
- Identify effective ways and methods to disseminate project information as per needs of the stakeholders
- Guide CDCs, IA, contractor and the supervision consultant building mutually respectful, beneficial and lasting relationship with stakeholders
- Establish project-level grievance redress mechanism(s)
- Define roles and responsibilities for the implementation of the SEP

Communicating early, often and clearly with stakeholders helps manage expectations and avoid risks, potential conflict, and project delays. The involvement of the local population is essential to the success of the project in order to ensure smooth collaboration between project staff and local communities and to minimize and mitigate environmental and social risks related to the proposed project.

3. Stakeholder Identification and Analysis

Project stakeholders are defined as individuals, groups or other entities who:

- (i) are impacted or likely to be impacted directly or indirectly, positively or adversely, by the Project (also known as “affected parties”); and
- (ii) may have an interest in the Project (known as “interested parties”). They include individuals or groups whose interests may be affected by the Project and who have the potential to influence the Project outcomes in any way.

Cooperation and negotiation with the stakeholders throughout the Project development often also require the identification of persons within the groups who act as legitimate representatives of their respective stakeholder group, i.e. the individuals who have been entrusted by their fellow group members with advocating the groups’ interests in the process of engagement with the Project. Community representatives may provide helpful insight into the local settings and act as main conduits for dissemination of the Project-related information and as a primary communication/liason link between the Project and targeted communities and their established networks. Verification of stakeholder representatives (i.e. the process of confirming that they are legitimate and genuine advocates of the community they represent) is an important task in establishing contact with the community stakeholders. Legitimacy of the community representatives can be verified by talking informally to a random sample of community members and heeding their views on who can be representing their interests in the most effective way.

3.1 Methodology

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

- Openness and life-cycle approach: public consultations for the project(s) will be arranged during the whole lifecycle, carried out in an open manner, free of external manipulation, interference, coercion or intimidation;
- Informed participation and feedback: information will be provided to and widely distributed among all stakeholders in an appropriate format; opportunities are provided for communicating stakeholders' feedback, for analyzing and addressing comments and concerns;
- Inclusiveness and sensitivity: stakeholder identification is undertaken to support better communications and build effective relationships. The participation process for the projects is inclusive. All stakeholders at all times encouraged to be involved in the consultation process. Equal access to information is provided to all stakeholders. Sensitivity to stakeholders' needs is the key principle underlying the selection of engagement methods. Special attention is given to vulnerable groups, in particular women, internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees, pastoral nomads (Kuchis), persons with disabilities, youth, elderly and the cultural sensitivities of diverse ethnic groups and those living in remote or inaccessible areas.

For the purposes of effective and tailored engagement, the project stakeholders can be divided into the following core categories:

- **Affected Parties** – persons, groups and other entities within the Project Area of Influence (PAI) that are directly influenced (actually or potentially) by the project and/or have been identified as most susceptible to change associated with the project, and who need to be closely engaged in identifying impacts and their significance, as well as in decision-making on mitigation and management measures;
- **Other Interested Parties** – individuals/groups/entities that may not experience direct impacts from the Project but who consider or perceive their interests as being affected by the project and/or who could affect the project and the process of its implementation in some way; and
- **Vulnerable Groups** – persons who may be disproportionately impacted or further disadvantaged by the project(s) as compared with any other groups due to their vulnerable status³, and that may require special engagement efforts to ensure their equal representation in the consultation and decision-making process associated with the project.

3.2 Affected Parties

Affected Parties, project beneficiaries and other parties that may be subject to direct impacts from the Project. Specifically, the following are the estimated project beneficiaries:

- Formal Water Users Associations (WUAs), Informal Water Management Bodies (Mirabs), Farming Communities (male and female), Community Development Councils (male and female CDC members), Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), and villagers and communities in the vicinity of the project's planned activities who will be the recipients/beneficiaries of the project.
- COVID-19 infected people; people under COVID-19 quarantine; and relatives of COVID-19 infected people;

The identification and design of the proposed irrigation and watershed schemes need a robust stakeholder engagement process during implementation.

3.3 Interested Parties

Interested Parties include stakeholders who may not experience direct impacts from the project but who consider or perceive their interests as being affected by the project and/or who could influence the project and the process of its implementation in some way. Specifically, this category will include the following individuals and groups:

- The local population who can benefit indirectly from the project
- Afghan Public in targeted urban and rural areas as well as key social institutions such as village councils, women's groups (Public Awareness Campaign), academia/ universities, and etc
- Ministry of Finance and other government agencies including the Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), National Water Affairs Regulation Authority (NWARA), and provincial and local government institutions.
- Provincial government institutions at regional level involved with the project stakeholders and playing key role in preparation and implementation of the project. This include provincial governor, provincial MAIL including Home Economy Directorate and gender unit of the ministry, MRRD, NEPA and Directorates of Women Affairs (DoWA), AWCCI (Afghan Women Chamber of Commerce and Industries.
- MRRD, NEPA and including Home Economy Directorate and gender unit of the ministry, MRRD, NEPA and Directorates of Women Affairs (DoWA), AWCCI (Afghan Women Chamber of Commerce and Industries.
- Women Directorates.
- Residents and labors, contractors and sub-contractors, and individual in the area of the project;
- Local, regional and national level civil societies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with an interest in areas of agriculture irrigation schemes, watershed and may have in-depth knowledge about the environmental and social characteristics of the scheme area and the nearby populations, and can help play a role in identifying risks, potential impacts, and opportunities for the Borrower to consider and address in the assessment process.
- Media and other interest groups, including social media & the Government Information Department

3.4 Vulnerable People

Disadvantaged or vulnerable individuals or groups, who often do not have a voice to express their concerns or understand the impacts of a project. In the present context, this would include women especially female Headed households, who for cultural reasons have low mobility and are hard to reach, any nomadic community, disabled and any displaced (internally or externally) families among the Project Affected Families (PAFs). Special efforts will be taken to disseminate project information to these groups and to ensure their inclusion in the stakeholder engagement process.

The vulnerable groups may include and are not limited to the following:

- Elderly
- War victims;
- Persons with disabilities and their caregivers
- Low-income families/extreme poor and especially female headed households
- Nomadic communities/farmers
- Women, particularly women-headed households or single mothers with underage children;

- The unemployed persons;
- Illiterate individuals;
- Internally Displaced People (IDPs), returnees
- Patient with chronic diseases
- Daily wage earners working in informal economy
- Potential new social assistance beneficiaries

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

4. Stakeholder Engagement Program for the Project

Due to the emergency situation and limited opportunities to conduct meetings due to COVID-19 and lockdown, no dedicated consultations beyond Government authorities have been conducted so far.

This Stakeholder Engagement Plan as well as the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) that will be prepared under the project will be consulted on and disclosed. The project includes considerable resources to implement the actions included in the Plan. A more detailed account of these actions will be prepared as part of the update of this SEP, which is expected to take place within 30 days after the project effectiveness date. The SEP will be continuously updated throughout the project implementation period, as required.

4.1. Summary of stakeholder engagement done during project preparation

The speed and urgency with which this project has been developed to meet the growing threat of COVID-19 in the country (combined with recently announced government restrictions on gatherings of people) has limited the project's ability to develop a complete SEP before this project is approved by the World Bank. This preliminary SEP represents a starting point of an iterative process to develop a more comprehensive stakeholder engagement strategy and plan. It will be updated periodically as necessary, with more detail provided in the first update planned after project approval. Stakeholders will be kept informed as the project develops, including reporting on project environmental and social performance and implementation of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan and the grievance mechanism. In terms of consultations with stakeholders on the project design, activities and implementation arrangements, etc., the revised SEP, expected to be updated within 30 days after the project effectiveness date as mentioned above, and continuously updated throughout the project implementation period when required, will clearly lay out:

- Type of Stakeholder to be consulted
- Anticipated Issues and Interests
- Stages of Involvement
- Methods of Involvement
- Proposed Communications Methods
- Information Disclosure
- Responsible authority/institution

Table 1. Summary of Stakeholder Consultations During Project Preparation

Project stage	Topic of consultation	Methods used	Timetable: Location and dates	Target stakeholders	Responsibilities
Preparation	Project design	VC meetings/calls	On need basis, donor and public institutions' offices	Development donor, implementing agency and ministry of finance	MAIL
	Sectoral and Institutional Context	Interviews Discussions	On need basis, public institutions' offices	Development donor, implementing agency and ministry of finance	WB team
	Project implementation arrangements	Discussions / VC / Consultation	Daily	implementing agency and ministry of finance,	MAIL
	Design of COVID packages	Discussions	On needs bases	Implementing agencies, International and National Organizations	WB team and MAIL

The section that follows describes stakeholder engagement activities that will be implemented by the IA (MAIL) from here forward. It includes activities related to the upcoming project phases as well as the on-going routine engagement.

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

A precautionary approach will be taken to the consultation process to prevent infection and/or contagion, given the highly infectious nature of COVID-19. The following are some considerations for selecting channels of communication, in light of the current COVID-19 situation:

- Avoid public gatherings (taking into account national restrictions or advisories), including public hearings, workshops and community meetings;
- If smaller meetings are permitted/advised, conduct consultations in small-group sessions, such as focus group meetings. If not permitted or advised, make all reasonable efforts to conduct meetings through online channels;
- Diversify means of communication and rely more on social media and online channels. Where possible and appropriate, create dedicated online platforms and chatgroups appropriate for the purpose, based on the type and category of stakeholders;
- Employ traditional channels of communications (TV, newspaper, radio, dedicated phone-lines, and mail) when stakeholders do not have access to online channels or do not use them frequently.

Traditional channels can also be highly effective in conveying relevant information to stakeholders, and allow them to provide their feedback and suggestions;

- Where direct engagement with project affected people or beneficiaries is necessary, identify channels for direct communication with each affected household via a context specific combination of email messages, mail, online platforms, dedicated phone lines with knowledgeable operators;
- Each of the proposed channels of engagement should clearly specify how feedback and suggestions can be provided by stakeholders.

Table 2 summarizes the different needs of the stakeholders and different engagement methods for each group. The strategy for stakeholder engagement takes into consideration the limitation posed by the COVID-19 crisis and relies more extensively on online and virtual tools (TV, radio, phone, websites) to accommodate the need for social distancing.

Table 2. Summary of Stakeholder Needs and Preferred Communication Means

Stakeholder group	Key characteristics	Language needs	Preferred communication means (e-mail, phone, radio, letter)	Specific needs (accessibility, large print, child care, daytime meetings)
Affected Parties				
COVID-19 infected people (male and female) and People under COVID-19 quarantine	Wide range of people that are affected by COVID-19	Local languages, English	SMS messaging, radio, phone	
Legible households	In urban and rural areas	Local languages, English	Via CDCs, posters, community radio, TV, social media	
CDCs both male and female members, Irrigation Associations, Mirabs	In urban and rural areas	Local languages,	Social organizers postings, TV/radio, phone calls, e-mails	Special instructions from health workers, hand hygiene and personal protective equipment (PPE)
Communities		Local languages, English	Social media group postings, TV/radio, phone calls, e-mails	Information and educational materials
Social organizers engaged in providing social assistance either at centers for social work or through home visits	Staff of distributions centers for social work engaging directly with vulnerable groups	Local languages	Written instructions, trainings	OHS measures, hand hygiene and PPE, extra safety measures, such as social distancing
Other interested parties				

Stakeholder group	Key characteristics	Language needs	Preferred communication means (e-mail, phone, radio, letter)	Specific needs (accessibility, large print, child care, daytime meetings)
Province-level institutions		Local languages	Official channels of communication	Coordination, information dissemination and engagement at provincial level
Civil society groups and NGOs that pursue environmental and socio-economic interests and may become partners of the project	Non-for-profit organizations on regional, national and local levels that pursue environmental and socio-economic interests and may become partners of the project	Local languages	E-mails, social media platforms, websites	Donor funding to contribute to emergency response procedures
Social media platforms	Users of Facebook, Instagram etc., active internet users	Local languages, English		Reliable information sources, timely updates on distribution of good and legibility of households
Vulnerable and disadvantage groups				
Retired elderly and people with disabilities	Aged people of 65+, unable to work, physically and mentally disabled people staying at home	Local languages	Social organizers, elders in the community to reach out to the elderly and disables	
Women		Local language	Design online and in-person surveys and other engagement activities so that women in unpaid care work can participate; consider the literacy levels of women while developing communications materials	Ensure that community engagement teams are gender-balanced and promote women's leadership within these; consider provisions for childcare, transport, and safety for any in-person community engagement activities.
Potential new social assistance beneficiaries and Daily wage earners working in informal economy	Persons who may become socially vulnerable and need assistance due to the COVID-19 circumstances – informal workers, dependents of seasonal workers/workers that would usually earn money abroad, etc.	Local language	Information on offered temporary social assistance packages through CDCs, printed materials through the social mobilizers, TV/radio/newspapers, social media group postings	Emergency assistance scheme to weather the impacts of COVID-19 for the most vulnerable, possibility of submitting request to the CDCs

Purpose and Timing of Stakeholder Engagement: The IA (MAIL) will involve stakeholders as early as possible and will continue the engagement throughout the mobilization and implementation stages until the project is eventually closed.

4.3. Proposed strategy for information disclosure and consultation process

Strategic communication will be a key component of the SEP. It is critical to communicate clearly to the public what will be delivered under the COVID support package, who will be responsible for delivery of the package and when. Changes to response interventions will need to be announced and explained ahead of time and be developed based on community perspectives. Responsive, empathic, transparent and consistent messaging in local languages through trusted channels of communication, using community-based networks and key influencers and building capacity of local entities (such Irrigation Associations, Mirabs, CDCs, community committees, Maleks) is essential to establish authority and trust.

In terms of methodology, it will be important that the different activities are inclusive and culturally sensitive, thereby ensuring that the vulnerable groups outlined above will have the chance to participate in the Project benefits. This will include an outreach program for the public and media on the distribution of the COVID package. In addition, information will be disseminated through information boards of CDC and social organizers, as well as through TV and radio.

The project will finance the development and implementation of a robust communications strategy and full-scale awareness-raising campaign supported by a working group from MAIL communication staff. The objective is to ensure that every Afghan citizen is aware of the COVID-19 socio-economic relief effort (which comprises efforts by the project and humanitarian agencies).

For stakeholder engagement relating to the specifics of the project and project activities, different modes of communication will be utilized:

- Policymakers and influencers will be reached through weekly engagement meetings with religious, administrative, youth, and women's groups. These will be carried out virtually to prevent COVID 19 transmission.
- As part of Citizen Engagement strategy, the project will conduct public awareness campaigns and beneficiary stratifications survives in the project areas.
- Individual communities will be reached through alternative ways given the social distancing requirements via social mobilizers. Women's groups, youth groups, training of peer educators, edutainment, social media, ICT and mobile communication tools can be used for this purpose.
- For public at large, identified and trusted media channels including: broadcast media (television and radio); print media (newspapers) trusted organizations' websites; social media (Facebook, etc.); text messages for mobile phones; hand-outs, brochures, billboards in community and health centers, municipal offices, etc., will be utilized to tailor key information and guidance to stakeholders and disseminate it through their preferred channels and trusted partners.

This Stakeholder Engagement Plan will be disclosed on the World Bank's website and on the MAIL and social media page. Furthermore, information prior and during project implementation will be made available through brochures in local languages in the districts and urban areas where activities will be conducted. The national social medias will be used to disclose information about the project and information will be transmitted through TV and radio, mainly in local languages. IA through the Local Authorities will be responsible for the project launch and disclosure of the SEP, GRM and other required

documents so that the community is made aware of channels to bring out their complaints or concerns. All views and feedback will be recorded. A preliminary strategy for information disclosure is as follows:

Project stage	Target stakeholders	List of information to be disclosed	Methods and timing proposed
Project Preparation	Government entities; local communities; vulnerable groups; NGOs and academics, CDCs; media representatives; Agriculture and others	Project concept, E&S principles and obligations, documents, Consultation process/SEP, Project documents- ESMF, ESCP, GRM procedure, update on project development	Dissemination of information via dedicated project website, VCs broadcasting (for those who do not have smart phones) including hard copies at designated public locations; Information leaflets and brochures; and meetings, including with vulnerable groups while making appropriate adjustments to formats in order to take into account the need for social distancing.
Implementation of public awareness campaigns	Affected parties, public at large, vulnerable groups, public and community workers, farmers, , government entities, other public authorities	Update on project development; the social distancing and communication strategy	Public notices; Electronic publications via online/social media and press releases; Dissemination of hard copies at designated public locations; Press releases in the local media; Information leaflets and brochures; audio-visual materials, separate focus group meetings with vulnerable groups, while making appropriate adjustments to consultation formats in order to take into account the need for social distancing
During preparation of ESMF, RPF and ESMP	People under COVID-19 quarantine, affected people; neighbouring communities; Irrigation Associations (IAs), , Farmers, community workers; other public authorities; district & Provincial councils; District/Divisional Secretaries; civil society organizations, Religious Institutions/bodies.	Project documents, SEP, relevant E&S documents, GRM procedure, regular updates on Project development	Public notices; Electronic publications and press releases on the Project web-site & via social media;; Dissemination of hard copies at designated public locations; Press releases in the local media; Consultation meetings, separate focus group meetings with vulnerable groups, while making appropriate adjustments to consultation formats in order to take into account the need for social distancing (e.g., use of mobile technology
During project implementation	COVID-affected persons and their families, neighboring communities to laboratories, quarantine centers, workers at construction sites of community	SEP, relevant E&S documents; GRM procedure; regular updates on Project development	Public notices; publications and press releases on the Project web-site & via social media; Dissemination of hard copies at designated public locations; Press releases in the local media; Consultation meetings, separate focus group meetings with

	workers, farmers, government entities, District and provincial councils; IAs and CDCs		vulnerable groups, while making appropriate adjustments to consultation formats in order to take into account the need for social distancing
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5. Resources and Responsibilities for implementing stakeholder engagement activities

5.1. Resources

The IA (MAIL) will be in charge of stakeholder engagement activities. The mitigation measures of the social and environmental impacts of project will be also estimated and included in the project budget. The budget will need to cover staff costs related to communication and grievance management.

Budget: Under the Project Component C: Project management has a budget of 7.9 million USD which will cover the cost of activities under SEP, hiring GBV service provider, staffing, consultants and development of communication and GRM activities. Specific SEP budget will be prepared and included in the revised SEP.

5.2. Institutional Arrangement

The project will be implemented by Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MAIL) through the institutional arrangements described as follows. A Project Management Unit (PMU) headed by a National Project Director and staffed by qualified individuals mostly those worked for the previous relevant projects will be established. The PMU will comprise a team of subject matter experts who will closely work with the government staff in Kabul and provincial offices. The PMU will also consist of specialists in Financial Management, Procurement, M&E, Environmental and Social Specialists, Grievance Handling Specialist and Gender. In Kabul, the PMU will be stationed in the head office established under the On-Farm Water Management (OFWMP) in MAIL compound. The PMU will use all the facilities and equipment of the OFWMP in the key target regions and where appropriate take advantage of the National Horticulture and Livestock Project facilities that is set for closure in August 2,2020.

Under the previous Project Preparation, an international safeguards advisor and local safeguard specialist have already been hired.

Once the project is approved, additional dedicated staff to process the grievances and work on expanded GRM reach and appropriate protocol and will also be hired. The stakeholder engagement activities will be documented through quarterly progress reports, to be shared with the World Bank. It is important to mention that the PMU have the qualified social experts who would be directly responsible for the updating/implementation of the SEP.

6. Grievance Mechanism

The main objective of a Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) is to assist to resolve complaints and grievances in a timely, effective and efficient manner that satisfies all parties involved. Specifically, it provides a transparent and credible process for fair, effective and lasting outcomes. It also builds trust and cooperation as an integral component of broader community consultation that facilitates corrective actions. Specifically, the GRM:

- Provides affected people with avenues for making a complaint or resolving any dispute that may arise during the course of the implementation of project activities;
- Ensures that appropriate and mutually acceptable redress actions are identified and implemented to the satisfaction of complainants; and
- Avoids the need to resort to judicial proceedings.

6.1. Description of GRM

MAIL will use and upgrade the existing Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) established under OFWMP project. The GRM team is responsible to address the citizen complaints and requests in connection with the emergency project.

6.2 Venues to register Grievances - Uptake Channels

A complaint can be registered directly through the following modes and, if necessary, anonymously or through third parties:

- By introducing hotline number. A toll-free number (150) is already established under OFWMP which will be used under this project.
- By e-mail, MAIL will create an official email addresses for receiving the grievances. The email address will be disseminated to all stakeholder and project beneficiaries in the project area
- By compliant registration form which would be available on agencies websites, GRCs at district and provincial and central level.
- Walk-ins and registering a complaint on grievance logbook
- Once a complaint has been received, it should be recorded in the complaints logbook or grievance Excel sheet–based grievance database.
- The grievance management databases will be integrated into project MIS system

6.3 Grievance for Gender-Based Violence (GBV) issues

There will be specific procedures for addressing GBV including confidential reporting with safe and ethical documenting of GBV cases. Multiple channels will be in place for a complainant to lodge a complaint in connection to a GBV issue. Specific GRM considerations for addressing GBV under the project are:

- The GBV Services Provider will be hired to establish a separate GBV GRM system,
- The GRM operators are to be trained on how to collect GBV cases confidentially and empathetically (with no judgment).
- The GRM system will establish multiple complaint channels, and these must be trusted by those who need to use them.
- No identifiable information on the survivor should be stored in the GRM logbook or GRM database. The case records will be with Gender department which is the member of GBV committee for a specific time.
- The GRM should not ask for, or record, information on more than three aspects related to the GBV incident:

- The nature of the complaint (what the complainant says in her/his own words without direct questioning);
- If, to the best of complainant’s knowledge, the perpetrator was associated with the project; and,
- If possible, the age and sex of the survivor.
- The GRM should assist GBV survivors by referring them to GBV Services Provider(s) for support immediately after receiving a complaint directly from a survivor. This will be possible because a list of service providers will already be available before project work commences as a result of their prior mapping.
- The information in the GRM must be confidential—especially when related to the identity of the complainant. For GBV, the GRM should primarily serve to: (i) refer complainants to the GBV Services Provider; and (ii) record resolution of the complaint.

Data Sharing: The GBV Services Provider will have its own case management process which will be used to gather the necessary detailed data to support the complainant and facilitate resolution of the case referred by the GRM operator. The GBV Services Provider should enter into an information sharing protocol with the GRM Operator to close the case. This information should not go beyond the resolution of the incident, the date the incident was resolved. Service providers are under no obligation to provide case data to anyone without the survivor’s consent. If the survivor consents to case data being shared the service provider can share information when and if doing so is safe, meaning the sharing of data will not put the survivor or service provider at risk for experiencing more violence.

The procedures to address GBV will be reviewed and more information will be provided in the updated SEP.

7. Monitoring and Reporting

7.1. Involvement of stakeholders in monitoring activities

Involvement of the stakeholders in monitoring is mandated by the project and it will be carried out to ensure that the mitigation plans are regularly and effectively implemented. The monitoring system will be conducted at three levels. At the NPMU level monitoring, to ensure that the plans are being effectively implemented. At the field level, more frequent monitoring will be carried out by the relevant staff, together with local government, the CDCs (responsible for implementation and monitoring), relevant practical indicators to enable effective monitoring will be identified by project staff in close liaison with the MAIL and the CDCs during consultations on possible impacts of sub-project activities and during the preparation of ESMPs. Finally, the project will engage firms to conduct external monitoring as third party validation on an annual basis.

Monitoring report comprise of details together with other observations collected from various stakeholders (e.g. representatives of the DAIL, CDCs, PMRRD, Provincial NEPA, local government officials in sub-project districts, local NGOs and contractors etc.) together with of project activities status will prepare on monthly basis and will be circulated among the stakeholders.

External Monitoring: an independent annual technical monitoring will be conducted by an entity acceptable both to the WB and the Government.

7.2. Reporting back to stakeholder groups

The SEP will be periodically revised and updated as necessary in the course of project implementation in order to ensure that the information presented herein is consistent and is the most recent, and that the

identified methods of engagement remain appropriate and effective in relation to the project context and specific phases of the development. Any major changes to the project related activities and to its schedule will be duly reflected in the SEP.

Quarterly summaries and internal reports on public grievances, enquiries and related incidents, together with the status of implementation of associated corrective/preventative actions, will be collated by the designated GRM officer, and referred to the senior management of the project. The quarterly summaries will provide a mechanism for assessing both the number and the nature of complaints and requests for information, along with the Project’s ability to address those in a timely and effective manner.

Information on public engagement activities undertaken by the Project during the year will be conveyed to the stakeholders in the following manner:

- Publication of a standalone annual report on project’s interaction with the stakeholders.
- Monitoring of a beneficiary feedback indicator on a regular basis. The indicator used will be:
 - o Percentage of public grievances received within a reporting period (e.g. monthly, quarterly, or annually) and number of those resolved within the prescribed timeline.

Further details on the SEP will be outlined in the updated SEP, to be prepared and disclosed within 30 days after the project Effectiveness Date.

#	INDICATOR	RESPONSIBILITY
1	Percentage of public grievances received within a reporting period (e.g. monthly, quarterly, or annually) and number of those resolved within the prescribed timeline. Sex- disaggregated data should be provided	MAIL
2	Number of channels and frequency of information provided to stakeholders on COVID benefits	MAIL