



United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)



Afghanistan Community Resilience and Livelihoods Project

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN (SEP)

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ARTF	Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund
CCAP	Citizens' Charter Afghanistan Project
CDC	Community Development Council
CIP	Cities Investment Program
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CRG	Community Representative Group
E&S	Environmental & Social
ESCP	Environmental & Social Commitment Plan
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
ESMP	Environmental and Social Management Plan
ESS	Environmental and Social Standard
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GIS	Geographical Information System
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
HH	Household
IP	Implementing Partner
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ITA	Interim Taliban Administration
LIW	Labor-Intensive Works
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MIS	Management Information System
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
EHS/OHS	Environmental Health and Safety/Occupational Health and Safety
PIU	Project Implementation Unit

PDO	Project Development Objective
PWD	Person with Disabilities
RAP	Resettlement Action Plan
REACH	Covid-19 Relief Effort for Afghanistan Communities and Households
SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Assault
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
SH	Sexual Harassment
TPMA	Third-Party Monitoring Agent
TPMP	Third-Party Monitoring Program
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Fund for Children
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
US	United States
WB	World Bank

INTRODUCTION

Project Background

The Afghanistan Community Resilience and Livelihoods Project (CRLP) promotes livelihood opportunities and improves access to essential services and productive assets for poor Afghans, in particular women in rural and urban areas. The proposed AF2, based on learning from the past 36 months of field experience, will expand the project's geographic coverage and introduce minor changes to component designs to support private sector engagement, support locally led climate adaptation, and deepen women's social economic inclusion the project's closing is proposed to be extended to June 30, 2027, This includes the provision of short-term employment and income to millions of Afghans while also improving access to basic services, such as clean water and sanitation. The Project will focus specifically on assistance to women and vulnerable groups, such as IDPs and persons with disabilities (PWDs). In addition, community-level systems and institutions for long-term resilience, sustainability, and inclusive development will be supported in order to promote citizen engagement and a more accountable, transparent recovery in Afghanistan. This is based on experience that shows the criticality of maintaining livelihood opportunities among rural and urban communities, while also investing in basic services and non-government local institutions and systems. This will help to preserve core development gains that have been made in Afghanistan in the last two decades. Through the intended investments, the Project aims to build community resilience and assist the country throughout the emergency to recovery, in order to reach a more sustainable development environment.

The second AF will scale up the CRLP geographically in rural and urban areas vulnerable to climate change and forced displacement; and introduce changes to project components to pivot from emergency support to medium-term resilience building, by prioritizing private sector engagement, support for locally led climate adaptation, doubling down on women's inclusion, and supporting host communities to cope with influxes of Afghan returnees. To reflect the transition from emergency response to a medium-term resilience-building approach that emphasizes private sector engagement, the PDO is revised to: "promote livelihood opportunities and improve access to essential services and productive assets for poor Afghans, in particular women, in rural and urban areas." To reflect the transition from emergency response to a medium-term resilience-building approach that emphasizes private sector engagement, the PDO is revised to: "promote livelihood opportunities and improve access to essential services and productive assets for poor Afghans, in particular women, in rural and urban areas."

The proposed Second Additional Financing (AF2) for the Afghanistan Community Resilience and Livelihoods Project (CRLP) will continue to provide short-term livelihood opportunities and deliver urgent essential services in rural and urban areas. Four main design changes are proposed in the AF based upon the experience of the past 36 months with the parent project and AF1: (i) geographical scale-up in rural and urban areas; (ii) increased livelihood opportunities for Afghan women through a new Women's Economic activities sub-component; (iii) heightened focus on climate resilience activities by increasing community awareness of climate risk mitigation and adaptation, and incentivizing the climate resilience-focused subprojects in urban areas; and (iv) support for the recent influx of returnees so that they may participate in project activities and

receive necessary assistance in terms of job opportunities and services in their areas of return.

The AF2 will extend the closing date until June 30, 2027. The aforementioned design changes are integrated into the existing project components as follows:

Component 1: Livelihoods Support and Climate Resilience Productive Assets in Rural Areas.

This component will continue to provide livelihood support and services through investments in community-level productive assets using a cash-for-work approach. The AF2 coverage will include around 1,875 rural communities in 39 districts in 21 provinces, including 5 new provinces (Badghis, Balkh, Daikundi, Ghor and Jawzjan). Coverage includes around 480 communities in 18 districts in 6 provinces in the CASA-1000 transmission line corridor of influence (CoI) within the country. This will bring the total rural coverage for the Project to around 10,500 communities in 133 districts in all 34 provinces of the country. The CASA coverage will be limited to communities within the CoI, while all communities are covered in the other rural districts..

While the primary focus of this Component will remain livelihoods support, lessons learned and community feedback from the parent project and AF1 inform proposed design adjustments to strengthen the impacts of community level productive assets on climate-resilience and economic productivity by: (i) revising the cost ratio for non-labor/ materials to a maximum 50:50; (ii) revising the minimum number of unskilled labor days per eligible household to 24; and (iii) prioritizing disaster risk mitigation and climate resilience in subproject design and selection. Consultations with community members, FPs and UNOPS have all indicated a distinct preference by the intended beneficiaries for more substantive, sustainable subprojects. Such subprojects, when also supporting disaster mitigation and/or climate resilience, would require higher material inputs, which would then also necessitate lowering the ratios for unskilled labor costs and would decrease the number of paid labor days available. The AF2 proposes to cover around 70 percent of households in rural communities, which on average would be 112 households per community. The Project will strengthen efforts to increase and monitor the participation of women as direct beneficiaries.

It is estimated that an additional 210,000 HHs will receive jobs through cash-for-work activities by creating over 5 million labor days, and 2.1 million people in these areas will receive services such as the rehabilitation of small-scale community assets (e.g., improved roads, protection walls, community drainage and water canals, agroforestry, and climate resilient infrastructure).

Geographic targeting in rural areas is based upon the following key criteria: (i) districts identified as highly vulnerable on a multidimensional vulnerability index (MVI) developed by the Poverty GP¹; (ii) rural communities that fall within the 2 km CASA-1000 corridor of impact that were not covered in previous rounds of the project²; (iii) equity in the geographic spread across the six regions of the country, (iv) creating synergies while avoiding duplication with the coverage of other World Bank and Asian Development Bank projects, (v) the availability of satisfactory performing facilitating partners, and (vi) inclusion of districts/provinces that have historically received the least coverage for development efforts over the past three decades.

¹ The MVI uses four dimensions: Displacement pressure, Livelihood stress and coping, Lack of access to basic services, Connectivity constraints using data collected for the Afghanistan Climate Vulnerability Assessment: Population and Mobility, IOM, March 2025.

² The expansion to CASA-1000 communities will ensure smooth implementation of the strategic CASA-1000 project by providing direct benefits (with a focus on electrification where technically feasible) to communities and supporting SEA/SH risk mitigation activities.

Component 2: Livelihoods Support and Services in Urban Areas. This component will provide livelihood opportunities for skilled and unskilled laborers and respond to urgent service delivery needs in urban areas through the provision and implementation of small-scale LIWs. A total of eight cities will be targeted through the AF2, selected based on several criteria. Priority will be given to cities that (i) lie along the COI of the CASA transmission route in Afghanistan (Mahmud Raqi, Bazarak, Mehterlam, Jalalabad/Bihsud, Kunduz); (ii) have high population density and a significant presence of returnees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), which contributes to substantial infrastructure and service gaps; (iii) are highly impacted by climate change, especially flooding; and (iv) have an adequate CRG/Gozars presence to support implementation and management. Based on these criteria, in addition to the aforementioned cities in the CASA-1000 COI, CRLP will continue its work in Kabul, Kandahar, and Baghlan Jadeed / Pul-i Khumri, which host large numbers of returnees and IDPs and thus face intensified pressure on already strained infrastructure and services, as well as poverty and unemployment. In addition, those cities are highly vulnerable to climate impacts, further compounding existing challenges.

Furthermore, the urban component will mainstream incentives for investments that strengthen resilience to climate change and disasters. Subprojects meeting eligibility criteria in the Project Operations Manual (POM) and communities identifying a qualifying investment will receive 20 percent additional financing for the LIWs to promote uptake and cover extra material costs.

The AF will directly benefit approximately 62,000 HHs by creating 2.8 million labor days. Approximately 1.9 million urban residents will benefit from improved services under LIW.

Component 3: Livelihoods Support for Women and the Most Vulnerable Households. This Component will consist of two sub-components, both targeting the most vulnerable households in the community, especially those excluded from the paid labor components under Components 1 and 2, but in the same rural and urban communities as covered by them.

- a. Social grants (Sub-Component 3a) will continue to be provided to households headed by women, disabled/ very elderly and drug addicted persons. Given lessons learned and the advantages noted of cash over in-kind packages, the social grants will take the form of cash in both urban and rural communities. Internal consultations indicated that beneficiary households preferred cash over the in-kind food packages, given the flexibility to use the funds for other needs, including access to medical services (transport costs to clinics and purchase of medicines) and debt repayment.
- b. The rural Women's Economic Activities (Sub-Component 3b), initiated as part of the AF1, will continue with adjustments to increase the size of asset transfers and provide additional skills training and market linkage support. The activity will target de facto female-headed households in rural communities that are covered by the social grants.

Components 1, 2, and 3 will continue to take a "whole-of-community" approach, targeting both host communities as well as any returnees and IDPs. The geographic areas selected for the AF have been chosen in part based upon the share of the population that is displaced (IDPs or returnees). The project aims to provide equitable delivery of assistance and services to all poor Afghans, and social cohesion and community dynamics will be monitored carefully by the project. Experience under the parent project and first additional financing shows success in inclusion of IDPs and new returnees, with no social conflict reported.

Component 4: Strengthening Community Institutions for Resilient, Inclusive Service Delivery, especially for Women.. This component builds the capacity of Community Development Councils and local communities for long-term sustainability and social resilience. It will continue to support Facilitating Partners' costs for activities related to community planning, implementation, monitoring and training on a variety of topics such as community mobilization, development planning, women's solidarity, and health awareness (through the WB/ARTF-supported health project). Importantly, communities will continue to be trained on disaster risk management and climate adaptation.

Component 5: Implementation Support. The CRLP Project Implementation Unit (PIU), with headquarters in Kabul and regional units around the country, will be financed under this component, as well as costs shared by UNOPS along with other UN agencies housed in the UNOCA compound in Kabul. This Component will cover the overall Project management and technical support, contracting and oversight of FPs for Components 1, 3 and 4, contracting and oversight of works contractors for Component 2, financial and procurement management, management information systems (MIS) and monitoring and evaluation (M&E), grievance redressal mechanisms (GRM) and Environmental and Social Standards (ESS), public communications and donor/ inter-UN liaisons.

Component 6: SEA/SH Risk Mitigation. A restructuring approved in October 2024 added Component 6 to support SEA/SH-related risk mitigation activities in communities located within the Central Asia-South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project (CASA-1000) corridor of impact that fall within the geographic scope of the CRLP.

UNOPS will implement the SEA/SH Action Plan and associated Accountability Framework in communities falling within the CASA-1000 corridor of impact in selected provinces as defined in the Project Operations Manual (POM). This includes time bound and resourced actions with plans and indicators for monitoring covering the key areas of: (i) initial assessment of SEA/SH risks under CASA-1000 and regular monitoring and adaptation of SEA/SH risk management plans; (ii) awareness raising of SEA/SH risk at community level; (iii) regular training of project workers on prevention of SEA/SH and on the Code of Conduct (CoC); (iv) management of the SEA/SH grievance mechanism (GM) through the Awaaz hotline and associated systems; (v) intake, case management, and referrals to GBV services following a survivor-centered approach of survivors reporting SEA/SH cases linked to the project; and (v) incident reporting to the Bank following Environmental and Social Incident Response Toolkit (ESIRT) procedures. UNOPS staff will continue to be assigned to the implementation and monitoring of the SEA/SH Action Plan, which will include a dedicated PSEA/GBV specialist. It has been decided that investigations will not be undertaken in this context given the risks. UNOPS will provide referrals to a minimum package of services (i.e. health and psychosocial support) for survivors utilizing the UN-managed referral pathway. UNOPS will be responsible for reporting any incidents of SEA/SH related to CASA-1000 promptly (within 48 hours after learning of the incident) to the Bank following the ESIRT procedures.

Project Management Structure

The Project management structure remains the same as the parent and additional financing (AF1) project. The parent project and AF1 has been implemented completely through non-government

actors. UNOPS is the primary implementing entity. UNOPS finances select NGOs and local urban contractors to deliver assistance to communities. Building on longstanding community development and urban operations in Afghanistan, the network of international and local NGOs as well as urban contractors that have prior Bank experience and recognized capacities on the ground (notably in community organization, planning and implementation of activities) is well known. This network of local NGOs and contractors have built trust with community elders and non-governmental actors over decades. This network of well-established NGOs and local contractors has been essential to delivering services quickly during this emergency. The AF2 activities will be based on this experience and will continue to be channeled through non-governmental institutions.

UNOPS has been responsible for overall coordination, procurement arrangements with local organizations and contractors; engagement with communities; fiduciary and environmental and social safeguards management; quality assurance; monitoring and reporting; and managing technical assistance activities of the parent and AF1 project and will continue to do the same under the AF2.

UNOPS has been implementing component 1 through the network of NGOs, building on lessons learned over the longstanding engagement in Afghanistan. Component 2 has been implemented by private contractors. Previous experience has shown that there is good contractor capacity at the local level. The local community and CRGs have been involved in the selection of interventions and oversight under the parent and AF1 projects. The same modalities will be used for the AF2.

UNOPS has been housing the Project Implementation Unit (PIU), which includes staff supporting several key functions: program and contract management, financial management, procurement, social mobilization and training, engineering, reporting, monitoring and evaluation, regional coordination, gender, grievance redress, and environmental and social risk management. The WB has been providing implementation support and supervision to ensure that the technical design is sound, activities are proceeding according to plan, and there is close coordination with other development partners. A coordinated approach is critical across the different actors and service providers so that basic services and livelihoods assistance reach those most in need quickly and effectively.

A Third-Party Monitoring Agent (TPMA) has been helping with the supervision of activities and has ensured that funds reach the intended beneficiaries and activities remain independent of ITA control. The WB has set up its largest TPMA in Afghanistan, covering fiduciary controls and project oversight as well as close monitoring on the ground. The existing TPMA uses digital platforms to enhance transparency and accountability. The TPMA will also cover the activities under the AF2.

The UNOPS PIU has been responsible for monitoring the activities implemented by the NGOs and contractors and reporting upon progress. UNOPS ensures that NGOs and contractors are properly trained on implementation arrangements, working closely with CRGs and communities. An Operations Manual sets the operating principles and procedures to be monitored and reported upon. The Manual will be expanded to cover the AF2.

CRGs have been helping with community monitoring, local accountability mechanisms, and grievance redress. CRGs have appointed monitoring and grievance focal persons who provide

regular reports about progress and citizens' feedback. CRGs will remain engaged in activities under the AF2.

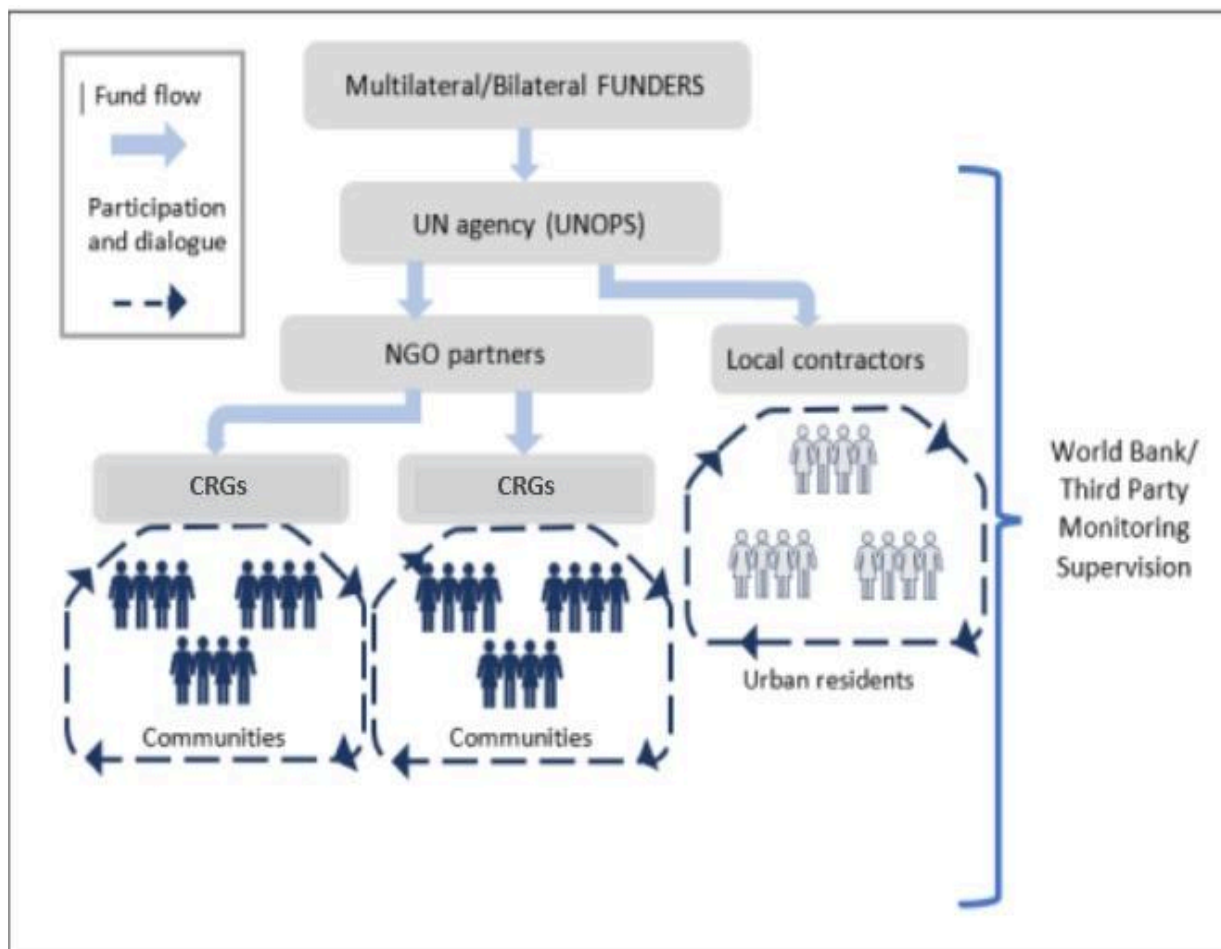


Figure 1: Institutional Arrangements

Key Social and Environmental Risk Mitigation Instruments

The parent and AF1 project entails several environmental and social (E&S) risks and potential adverse impacts. All risk mitigation measures are detailed in the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF). The ESMF from the parent and AF1 project has been updated for AF2. As outlined in the updated Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP), the updated ESMF includes Simplified Labor Management Procedures, Security Protocols as well as procedures for screening activities for E&S risks e.g., OHS/EHS (Environmental Health and Safety/Occupational Health and Safety) together with a template ESMP for construction activities, and will cover all activities of the parent project and the AF2. A separate Gender-Based Violence (GBV)/Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA)/Sexual Harassment (SH) Action Plan was prepared and updated for AF2.

Policy Requirements

The World Bank's Environment and Social Standard 10 (ESS10) sets out that a Borrower has to engage with stakeholders as an integral part of a Project's environmental and social assessment

and project design and implementation. The nature, scope, and frequency of the engagement should be proportional to the nature and scale of the Project. Consultations with stakeholders have to be meaningful and be based on stakeholder identification and analysis, plans on how to engage stakeholders, disclosure of information, actual consultations, as well as responses to stakeholder grievances, and reporting back to stakeholders.³

Purpose of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP)

This updated SEP defines a structured, purposeful, and culturally appropriate approach to consultation and disclosure of information, in accordance with ESS10. UNOPS recognizes the diverse and varied interests and expectations of project stakeholders and seeks to develop an approach for reaching each of the stakeholders in the different capacities at which they interface with the Project. The aim is to create an atmosphere of understanding that actively involves project-affected people and other stakeholders, leading to improved decision-making.

Overall, this SEP serves the following purposes, building upon what has been learned over the past 36 months from the parent and AF1 project:

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

Brief Summary of Previous Stakeholder Engagement Activities

During the implementation of the parent and AF1 project, activities have been prepared through and accompanied by stakeholder engagement. All implementers and informal community structures/CRGs and members of vulnerable groups from project-affected communities were informed and consulted on project activities. Information was disclosed in Pashto/Dari, English, and other respective local languages. Women, persons with disabilities (PWDs), the elderly, female-headed households, IDPs, ethnic minorities and other members of the vulnerable groups participated effectively and meaningfully in the consultative processes.

Key events, approaches, and methods used for information disclosure included community meetings in coordination with local leaders and CRG members, phone communication (SMS) - particularly for the female stakeholders, notice boards, and social media such as the CRLP Website and Facebook Page.

³ World Bank, Environmental and Social Framework. Setting Environmental and Social Standards for Investment Project Financing, August 2016.

UNOPS Website and AFCD X/Twitter. Consultations were held in 8,685 rural communities and in 10 cities. A total of 52,960 community consultations and spot checks have been conducted or are ongoing under Components 1, 2, 3 & 4 by all Facilitating Partners in rural and urban project areas. For example, for Component 2, 850 community consultations were conducted in the cities of Kabul, Kandahar, Herat, Jalalabad, Mazar-e-sharif, Kunduz, Bamyan, Khost, Ghazni, and Gardiz. During the community consultation and spot-check monitoring visits under the Parent and Additional Financing 1, the community feedback related to the project implementation are as follow:

1. The communities appreciated and were grateful for the implementation of the LIW and CFW projects. They are requesting the expansion of the Project and the coverage of more areas.
2. Under Component 1, communities requested that the sub-project cost ratio be adjusted from 80/20 to at least 50/50, allocating equal shares to labor and materials. This request was addressed in Additional Financing 2, where the sub-project cost ratio under Component 1 is revised to 50/50 in response to community requests.
3. Under Component 1, the communities requested that the duration of the sub-projects should be expanded from 28 days to at least 3-6 months to create more job opportunities for the laborers in rural communities. Based on the feedback, under the AF2, the days will be increased to 35 days per HH.
4. The community members appreciated the implementation of activities under Component 2 but requested that in the future, such activities shall be implemented through the CRGs. They further stated that the labor-intensive projects do not need heavy machinery and that the CRG members have sufficient experience in small infrastructure project implementation.
5. Women were interested in participating in the community consultation meetings and taking an active part in the decision-making at the Gozar and the CRG levels. Under the AF2, therefore, the rural expansion of activities will therefore focus again on areas that allow women's participation in the CRGs.
6. Female participants suggested that the Project should create job opportunities for women, as most of them are college graduates and currently have no job opportunities after the government collapse. And they requested literacy courses and capacity-building courses for girls who cannot go to school. Vocational training or sustainable projects for women were requested as they really need it because most of them are breadwinners of their families. Women in some areas suggested women's engagement in monitoring, surveying, and GRM. Under the AF2, a new subcomponent has been added to foster women's economic empowerment. The rural Women's Economic Activities (Sub-Component 3b), initiated as part of the AF1, will continue with adjustments to increase the size of asset transfers and provide additional skills training and market linkage support. The activity will target de facto female-headed households in rural communities that are covered by the social grants.
7. Most of the CRGs requested rehabilitation/construction of their irrigation canals. All CRGs requested water supply projects and long-term projects for their communities because climate change and drought have severely affected them, and now, they are faced with a

shortage of drinking water as well as agricultural water. The AF2 activities will therefore focus on climate change risk management and climate resilience.

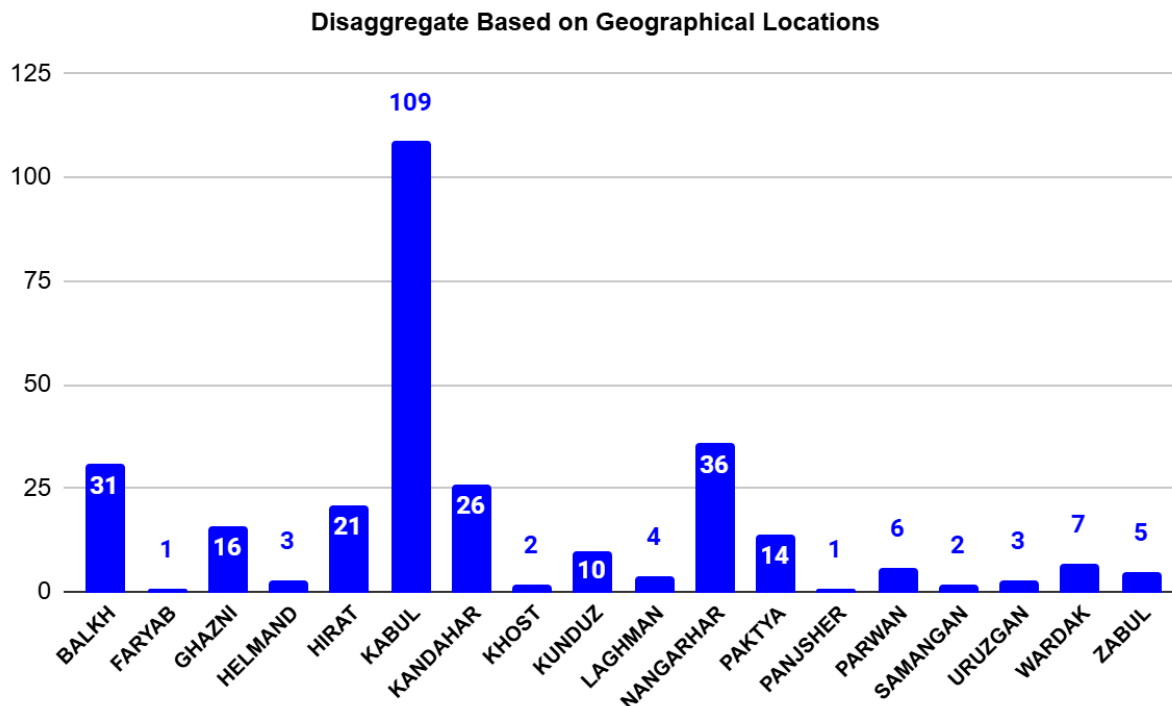
8. All CRGs requested power supply projects for their villages.
9. The community requested additional projects such as electricity, gabion walls, bridge construction, irrigation canals, school building, and drinking water.

According to community members, there are more eligible families for social grants, but due to limited budget, all the eligible families are not covered. Under the AF2, the social grants (Sub-Component 3a) will continue to be provided to households headed by women, disabled/ very elderly, and drug addicted persons. Given lessons learned and the advantages noted of cash over in-kind packages, the social grants will take the form of cash in both urban and rural communities. Internal consultations indicated that beneficiary households preferred cash over the in-kind food packages, given the flexibility to use the funds for other needs, including access to medical services (transport costs to clinics and purchase of medicines) and debt repayment.

Lessons learned from the implementation of the parent project have shown that Facilitating Partners require an increased budget for the implementation of environmental and social risk management, including stakeholder engagement. Similarly, Facilitating Partners require more frequent capacity building in E&S tasks. This will be included in the AF2 activities. In view of stakeholder engagement, under the parent project and AF1, the Facilitating Partners indicated difficulties in maintaining records of all stakeholder engagements due to the high number. Going forward, the Project team will assist Facilitating Partners in improving their record-keeping.

In view of the implementation of the grievance mechanism, a total of 1,026 cases/grievances under Parent Project have been received, and all of them have been resolved to the complainants' satisfaction. However, under AF1, a total of 297 cases/grievances have been received, and nearly 94.61% percent of these cases were resolved within the designated time frame of 30 days. The remaining (5.39 percent) cases/grievances are open and are referred to the relevant team members for follow-up and are currently under process. Out of a total of 297 cases/grievances, 228 are from C2 (LIW), 48 from C1 (CFW) and 21 from C3 (SG).

The table below indicates the number of cases/grievances received from different locations in the country.



The main issues reported by both males and females are labor and wage payments, subproject implementation, and subproject design. Previously, in the parent project, mostly the cases received were labor and wages. However, in AF1, beneficiaries' awareness and engagement in the subprojects have been significantly increased. Therefore, they raise concerns about subproject implementation and subproject design as well.

The Project manages 6 different uptake channels through which grievances are reported. The highest number of grievances reported in AF1 (289) was received through Awaaz-Afghanistan due to the easy accessibility and connectivity in the country. The reason for having the highest number of grievances through AWAAZ is due to the fact that it's a toll-free number and accessible all over the country with multilingual services in Awaaz. The remaining (8)grievances are received through CRL.Shekayat.

Out of the total of 297 cases, 268 of them pertain to grievances focused on various issues. Additionally, there are 10 cases classified as suggestions and 19 cases categorized as inquiries. Based on the content of grievances, 268 grievances have been classified into various categories. The highest number of complaints, totaling 92, are related to labor and wage issues such as delays in payments. There are also 10 environmental/OHS reported cases, predominantly focusing on safety tools and dust and water pollution. Additionally, there are 59 grievances concerning subproject implementation, addressing different issues such as the quality of materials, workmanship, and services on the ground. Subproject design accounts for 27 grievances, recruitment and staffing for 11, social issues for 16, stakeholder consultation for 15, financial management for 2, and misbehavior of staff for 16.

STAKEHOLDER MAPPING AND ANALYSIS

Stakeholder Mapping and Analysis

Stakeholder engagement is the interaction with, and influence of, project stakeholders to the overall

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

In view of the Project, 'affected parties' have been key beneficiaries, including poor and ultra-poor households in rural areas, women, female-headed households, IDPs, elderly people, and PWDs, as well as CRG members and other community members and leaders. Affected parties in urban areas include poor and ultra-poor households, women, IDPs, host communities, PWDs, female-headed households, NGOs and CSOs, UN agencies, construction companies in Kabul, Herat, Kandahar, Gardiz, Mazar-e-Sharif, Jalalabad, and Ghazni. For the AF2 activities, affected parties are similar with a few additional groups, such as returnees, NGOs or CSOs engaged in climate risk mitigation, and NGOs, CSOs or CBOs fostering women's economic empowerment. Important to note is that these 'parties' are mostly vulnerable, and they are beneficiaries of the Project, rather than being negatively affected by the Project. While not every affected party is also a beneficiary, it is crucial to disseminate information and continue to engage with all stakeholders on project modalities as well as on the selection criteria of beneficiaries in the affected areas.

Positively and Adversely Affected Parties

Effective consultations and other stakeholder engagements with the project-affected communities have been conducted by UNOPS and Facilitating Partners throughout the last 36 months and will continue, including for AF2 activities throughout the life cycle of the parent, AF1, and AF2 projects.

Table 1: Beneficiaries of Livelihoods and Basic Services

Stakeholder	Description
Rural community members and leaders	Rural community members are consulted about proposed project activities, selection of subproject activities, and eligible beneficiaries. The community undertakes several orientation meetings and mapping exercises to determine who are the poorest and most vulnerable in need of jobs and social grants. The elected member/s of a community under the CRG. They are democratically elected by all village residents.
Urban community members and leaders	Currently, the Communities in urban centers, including Kabul, Herat, Kandahar, Mazar-e-Sharif, Jalalabad, Gardiz, and Ghazni. A total of seven cities were targeted through the AF1. CRLP will continue to operate AF2 activities in Kabul, Kandahar, Jalalabad, Laghman, Kapisa, Panjshir, Kunduz, and Polikhumri.

Poor households and ultra-poor households in rural communities	Almost 70 percent of the rural population depends on agriculture. Crops are mainly rain-fed, which makes agriculture a vulnerable livelihood. Livestock levels have fluctuated due to droughts. Generally, droughts as well as flooding, and years of protracted conflict have resulted in high levels of poverty among rural households. These HH include returnees and <u>earthquake-affected communities</u> .
Community Representative Groups (CRGs)	The CRLP Components 1 to 4 engaged with Community Development Councils (CDCs) established under earlier projects and remobilized/ reactivated by the CRLP, during the Parent Project. With the dissolution of the CDCs, the roles and responsibilities earlier handled by the CDCs for the CRLP have since been reassigned to the Community Representative Groups (CRGs) for the AF1.
Urban host communities	Often, tension is reported between IDPs and their host communities. In most urban locations, IDPs meet host communities. It is therefore important to also attend to the needs of host communities.
Afghan returnees from Pakistan	In October 2023, the Government of Pakistan announced its decree “Illegal Foreigners’ Repatriation Plan” starting the deportation of undocumented Afghans in Pakistan to their country of origin. It is estimated that between 1.1 and 1.3 million undocumented Afghans presently residing in Pakistan are targeted. Between 15 September 2023 and 11 November 2023, the International Organization of Migration (IOM) reports that 327,400 individuals have already returned.
Poor households in urban communities	Urban growth has significantly increased in Afghanistan over the last couple of decades. In 2020, the WB recorded 3.4 percent of urban growth. The urban population accounted for over 10 million people in the country. This has come along with increased poverty, and many urban poor households are living in slums due to disorganized urban growth.
IDPs	Suffering from protracted conflict, Afghanistan has been subject to an acute internal displacement crisis. Since the US withdrawal from the country, more than 240,000 Afghans have been internally displaced. An estimated 3.5 million are displaced in total. IDPs often constitute the most vulnerable populations in urban as well as rural environments, given their lack of access to livelihoods, loss of homes, and lack of a social infrastructure.
Women in rural and urban areas	There is gender-specific protection and inclusion concerns particularly among rural and urban populations. In terms of livelihoods, women dominate in many aspects. Although women play a critical role in the maintenance of household livelihoods, they generally have less access to productive resources, services and

	<p>employment opportunities, contributing to a significant gap between men and women's productivity.</p> <p>Given the protracted conflict situation, there are serious GBV concerns across Afghanistan.</p>
Vulnerable households lacking abled bodied members in urban areas	The most vulnerable households lack any able-bodied members that could potentially participate in cash for work schemes. These include, for example, female-headed households, children-headed households, or households only consisting of elderly people.
Female-headed households	Given many men have died in the decades of conflict, a continuous increase in female-headed households has been recorded. This has resulted in changes in the intra-household roles. Female-headed households are more likely to be vulnerable.
Elderly people	Afghanistan has been named the worst country for elderly people to live in for several years. ³⁴ Elderly people have little access to economic resources, no pensions, and little access to services. Where communities cannot cater to elderly people, they belong to the poor societal groups.
Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)	PWD are particularly marginalized in Afghanistan. PWD are more likely to be excluded from participation and benefitting from public services.

Other Interested Parties

Stakeholder	Description
Community leaders	With formal administration systems in question under the present circumstances, community leaders including clan and religious leaders play a vital role in community entry and the attainment and social license to operate
UN agencies	A variety of UN agencies has continued to operate in Afghanistan and is engaged in humanitarian assistance as well as continuation of development activities. Agencies in the fields relevant for this Project include UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women, UN Habitat, UNFPA, and IOM.
NGOs and CSOs (including those	A variety of NGOs and CSOs exist throughout the country at national, regional and local levels. Many of them engage in sector work relevant for

⁴See HelpAge International's Global Age Watch Index:
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-foundation-elderly-index-idINKCN0HP2MC20140930>

working on climate resilience and women's economic empowerment)	This Project. For example, there are a variety of NGOs and CSOs concerned with issues of women empowerment and gender equality. NGOs and CSOs will play a crucial part in the implementation of the Project activities.
De Facto Authorities under the ITA	There are line ministries, urban municipalities and provincial directorates that need to be engaged for smooth implementation.

Disadvantaged / Vulnerable Individuals and Groups

The parent and AF1 project has been targeting disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals and groups. Components 3 and 4 make concerted efforts to reach women and vulnerable groups, while Components 1 and 2 include ultra-poor households. It is anticipated that the key disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals and groups include poor and ultra-poor households in urban and rural settings, women, female-headed households, elderly people, IDPs, and PWDs. However, vulnerability also depends on the specific context of a particular location, and is assessed based on particular activities as well. It therefore includes individuals that are war victims, nomadic communities, unemployed persons, illiterate individuals and others. Intersectionalities can particularly contribute to vulnerability, for example, where IDPs or PWDs are female and heading a household. Special attention is paid on a case-by-case basis on such intersectionality. The AF2 activities will target additional disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, such as Afghan returnees, and it will increase the focus of the Project on women.

Disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals and groups will be particularly catered for by stakeholder engagement modalities to ensure that information reaches those most disadvantaged, and that they are also consulted on project activities, risks, and impacts. This is particularly important, as the disadvantaged and vulnerable form a key beneficiary group of this Project. Women in Afghanistan are a distinct, vulnerable group. In community consultations, they have expressed a strong desire to work. While they were included in activities under the parent project, such as CfW and LiW activities, the proposed AF2 will provide greater opportunities for women to receive vocational training and undertake home production activities, including kitchen gardens, poultry-raising, and other food processing activities.

Summary of Project Stakeholder Needs

Table 2 Project Stakeholder Needs

Community	Stakeholder Group	Key Characteristics	Language needs	Preferred notification means (email, radio, phone, letter)	Specific needs (accessibility, large print, child care, daytime meetings, etc.)
Rural Communities	Community leaders and members	Their authority will and the strength of community leaders of other groups; leaders can have significant influence in the communities	Pashto/Dari and/or depend on the presence of regional languages	Community meetings, individual meetings, notice boards, social media, community radio, TV	They can also be used as a means to reach the broader public
	Poor and ultra-poor households	Depending on vulnerable livelihoods	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Community radio, community meetings, notice boards	
	CRG members	Experience in prioritization exercised and consultations	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Community radio, telephone, community meetings, individual meetings, social media	

	Women	Often not part of the decision-making structure, lower literacy rates	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Community radio, telephone, women's group meetings, notice boards	May require communication means that are independent of locality (e.g., mobile phone or radio). Gender disaggregated consultations, Inclusion in project benefits, and access to GBV services as required
	Elderly people	Vulnerable and little access to assistance	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Community radio, community meetings, notice boards, and community mobilizers to reach out	May require special assistance to attend community meetings, may not have access to electronic means
	PWDs	Often not included in decision-making processes, and more likely to be excluded from public services and participation.	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Community radio, community meetings, and other social media, depending on accessibility needs, community mobilizers will reach out	Consider working with NGOs focusing on disabilities to ensure full reach of PWDs, including through the use of media (e.g., Braille, sign language, etc.) and locations that are accessible and appropriate to ensure their participation
	NGOs and CSOs		Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Community radio, social media, mobile phone, and email	

	Female-headed households	Often not integrated in Communal decision-making processes, lower literacy <u>rates</u>	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Mobile phone, radio, and community mobilizers to reach out	Gender disaggregated consultations, inclusion in project benefits, and access to GBV services as required
Urban Communities	Community leaders and members	Deal with all concerns of the communities	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Individual meetings, community meetings, newspapers, emails, and mobile phones	Roles and responsibilities, including support in stakeholder engagements, information dissemination, and grievance redress
	CRGs	Experience in prioritizing community engagements and consultations	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Individual meetings, email, and mobile phone	Roles and responsibilities, including support in stakeholder engagements, information dissemination, and grievance redress
	Urban host communities	Can originate from different backgrounds	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Community meetings, mobile phone, internet/email, newspapers,	
	Poor and ultra-poor households	Potentially low literacy rate	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Community meetings, radio, and mobile phone	Cater for low literacy through radio communication
	IDPs and returnees	Lack of social cohesion/leadership	Pashto/Dari and/or regional	Community meetings, radio, and notice boards	

			languages		
	Women	Lack of decision-making power, lower literacy levels	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Community meetings with women's groups, specifically radio, mobile phone	Cater for low literacy through radio communication. Hold meetings at times when women are not engaged in duties
	Vulnerable households lacking abled bodied members in urban areas	Lack of decision-making power, lower literacy levels	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Community meetings, community mobilizers to assist, radio	Cater for low literacy through radio communication.
	Female-headed households	Lack of decision-making power, lower literacy levels	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Community meetings, community mobilizers to assist, radio	Cater for low literacy through radio communication.
	Elderly people	Unable to work, lower literacy levels	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Community meetings, community mobilizers to assist, radio	Cater for low literacy through radio communication.
	PWDs	Unable to work, lower literacy levels	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Community meetings, community mobilizers to assist, radio	Cater for low literacy through radio communication.
	NGOs and CSOs	Understand community voices, represent	Pashto/Dari and/or regional	Email, internet, radio, mobile phone, social media	Ensure that NGOs and CSOs from different backgrounds are considered for

		associations formed around community issues	languages		engagement
	Construction Companies	Good capacity	Pashto/Dari and/or regional, English	Email, internet, radio, mobile phone, social media	Ensure that companies from different backgrounds are considered for engagement
National Level	UN agencies, international NGOs, and bilateral donors		English	Internet/email	Preparation and implementation support, as well as training and capacity building
	National CSOs, NGOs	Good capacity	English	Internet/email, individual meetings, telephone	Preparation and implementation support as well as training and capacity building
ITA	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation	Good capacity	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Internet/email, individual meetings, telephone, and exchange of letters	To ensure the project is implemented based on the NGOs framework
	Ministry of Finance	Good capacity	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Internet/email, individual meetings, telephone, and exchange of letters	To ensure the project is implemented based on the NGOs framework
	Ministry of Economy	Good Capacity	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Internet/email, individual meetings, telephone, and	To ensure the project is implemented based on the NGOs framework

				exchange of letters	
	Kabul Municipality	Good Capacity	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Internet/email, individual meetings, telephone, and exchange of letters	Supervision of the construction works
	General Directorate of Municipalities	Good Capacity	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Internet/email, individual meetings, telephone and exchange of letters	To ensure support and facilitation through the provincial municipalities
	Provincial Governor's Office	Good Capacity	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Internet/email, individual meetings, telephone, and exchange of letters	Supervision of the construction works
	Provincial Municipalities	Good Capacity	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Internet/email, individual meetings, telephone	Supervision of the construction works
	Provincial Directorate of Rural Rehabilitation	Good Capacity	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Internet/email, individual meetings, telephone	Supervision of the construction works
	Provincial Directorate of Economy	Good Capacity	Pashto/Dari and/or regional languages	Internet/email, individual meetings, telephone	Supervision of the construction works

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Purpose and Timing of Stakeholder Engagement Plan

The four purposes of consultations and information dissemination in the CRLP, AF1 and the AF2 are: (a) understanding of the needs of the affected populations; (b) ensuring of coordination between all implementers and informal community authority structures / CRGs; (c) reception of feedback and comments as well as grievances from all stakeholders on project design and implementation; (d) provision of transparent and accountable mechanisms on all aspects of Project design and implementation; and (e) ensuring that members of vulnerable groups from project affected communities are able to participate fully in the consultation process and enjoy project benefits. To ensure this, a GRM is included below, which has been rolled out in all Project locations under the parent and AF1 project, and which will continue under the AF2 activities. A national Hotline number and information material for the Hotline is made available. It allows affected individuals and groups to report on project-related grievances or can provide comments and feedback.

Representatives of particular community groups have been consulted under the parent and AF1 project and will continue to be consulted for the AF2 activities. Strategies are employed to include smaller meetings, small FGDs to be conducted as appropriate, taking full precautions on staff and community safety. Where meetings are not permitted, traditional channels of communications such as radios and public announcements are implemented. Other strategies include one on one meetings through phones for community representatives, CRG members, NGOs/CSOs, and other interests' groups.

Given the current political context, stakeholder engagements with the interim Taliban administration (ITA) have been avoided to the extent possible. Engagements have been undertaken directly by the above listed implementers (UNOPS and FPs). Implementers focus on the CRGs as a key vehicle for information dissemination and consultations at the community level. Consultations with higher level partners have been undertaken directly by UNOPS and national NGO partners. This modality will also be applied for AF2 activities.

Plan for Information Disclosure

Information disclosure to the affected populations and beneficiaries has been relying on the following key methods: community meetings in coordination with local leaders and CRG members, phone communication (SMS), CRL Project Website, Facebook Page and notice boards. Community mobilizers ensure the inclusion of those with special needs for participation or communication. At the national level information has been disclosed mainly by email and through social media. Information is disclosed in Pashto/Dari, English or respective local languages. Local leaders and CRG members have been requested to inform communities in community meetings and through disclosure on social media – depending on whether the target locations are rural or urban. These modalities will be continued under the AF2.

Table 3: Plan for Information Disclosure

Project Stage	List of information to be disclosed	Methods proposed	Timelines: locations/dates	Target Stakeholders	Responsibilities
Project Desing	ESCP, SEP, ESMF (Including GRM)	Community meetings/telephone/notice boards	Amended instruments: October 2023 - January 2024 - June 2025	Rural and urban levels	PIU
		Email	Amended instruments: October 2023 - January 2024 - June 2025	Urban level	PIU
		Websites	Amended instruments: October 2023 - January 2024 - June 2025	Urban and national level	PIU
	Other relevant project documents and information	Community meetings/telephone/notice boards	Amended instruments: October 2023 - January 2024 - June 2025	Rural and urban levels	PIU
		Email	Amended instruments: October 2023 - January 2024 - June 2025	Urban and national level	PIU
		Websites	Amended instruments: October 2023 - January 2024 - June 2025	Urban and national level	PIU
Project Implementation	Activity – or site-specific ESMPs /, LMP, etc.	Community meetings/telephone/notice boards	Continuous	Rural and urban levels	PIU and FPs
		Email	Continuous	Urban and national level	PIU and FPs
		Website	Continuous	Urban and national level	PIU and FPs
		Radio	Continuous	Urban and national level	PIU and FPs
	Any project-related information (on activities, beneficiary selection, etc.)	Community meetings/telephone/notice boards	Continuous	Urban and national level	PIU and FPs
		Facebook Page	Continuous	Urban and national level	PIU and FPs
		Mobile phone	Continuous	Urban and national level	PIU and FPs

		Email/website	Continuous	Urban and national level	PIU and FPs
	GRM	Community meetings/telephone/notice boards	Continuous	Urban and national level	PIU and FPs
		Facebook Page/email	Continuous	Urban and national level	PIU and FPs
		Mobile phone	Continuous	Urban and national level	PIU and FPs
		website	Continuous	Urban and national level	PIU and FPs

Plan for Consultations

This plan lays out the overall consultative processes of the parent, AF1, and AF2 with their different stakeholders. In principle, the PIU and all FPs implementing sub-component activities, will continue to follow their existing participatory engagement and consultation methods, especially with affected communities and beneficiaries. These follow specific tools and methods of community consultations that partners have developed in their sectoral fields (e.g., in health, agriculture, cash for work, WASH etc.). However, throughout the procurement/bidding process, SEP-related activities are included, and FPs are called upon to budget for SEP-related activities that are under their responsibility.

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

Table 4: Plan for Consultations

Project stage	Topic of consultation	Suggested Method (by FP)	Target stakeholders	Responsibilities
Project Design	Overall Project activities and E&S risks and impacts	Community meetings, community mobilizers' assistance, email, and social media	Rural and urban level stakeholders	PIU and FPs
		Stakeholder meetings, email	National level stakeholders (UN agencies, NGOs/CSOs)	PIU and FPs
		Email	National-level stakeholders	PIU

Project Initiation and Implementation	Cash transfers	Community meetings, selected group meetings for cash transfers, and mobile phone	Rural and urban level stakeholders	FPs
	Community infrastructure work plans, prioritization exercises	Community meetings, community mobilizers' assistance, email, and social media	Rural and urban level stakeholders	FPs
		Stakeholder meetings, email	Urban and national level stakeholders	FPs
	Sub-Project Specific ESMPs E&S risks and impacts, and mitigation measures	Community meetings, community mobilizers' assistance, email, and social media	Rural and urban level stakeholders	FPs

Proposed Strategy to Incorporate the View of Vulnerable Groups

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

Most importantly, community mobilizers have been deployed, they are mostly recruited from the target communities. They have been providing special encouragement and assistance where necessary to vulnerable individuals, and groups and with that ensure that information reaches them and that they can participate meaningfully in consultations. The Community Mobilizers work closely with the CRG members in identifying vulnerable individuals and groups. Community Mobilizers will be rolled out in AF2 activity areas as well.

In view of promoting gender equality, especially for rolling out the new sub-component on women's empowerment under the AF2 activities, it is most important to engage women's groups on an ongoing basis throughout the lifetime of the project. Women voicing their concerns and contributing in the decision-making process on issues such as community infrastructure will continue to be encouraged, especially in various fora that predominantly consist of men. Community Mobilizers and CRG members (also consisting of female members) have proven to be an important asset in ensuring women's active participation. FPs have been similarly encouraged to deploy female staff, in particular where staff interfaces with community members.

GRMs are designed in such a way that all groups identified as vulnerable have access to the

information and can submit their grievances and receive feedback as prescribed.

Timelines

The CRLP Parent and AF1 Project duration is planned to be ended by 31 December 2025. It will be extended for another 21 months to allow the implementation of the AF2. Information disclosure and consultations have been relevant throughout the implementation of the parent and AF1 project so far and will continue throughout the entire life cycle of the AF2 Project.

Project design of the AF2 is based on national-level and urban and rural-level consultations of project-affected parties. Activities under each sub-component of the parent, AF1 project and the AF2 will continue to include consultations prior to commencement. This ensures a broadly inclusive selection of beneficiaries, transparency and accountability on project modalities, and allows community voices to form the basis for the concrete design of every intervention; consultations continue throughout the project cycle. Consultations for the AF2 activities have been held during the design and preparation phase of the AF2 since June 2025.

Review of Comments

Under the parent and AF1 project, the UNOPS and FPs implementing different sub-components of the Project have been gathering all comments and inputs originating from community meetings, GRM outcomes, SMS, emails and other communication modalities. The information gathered is submitted to the Social Specialists in the UNOPS PIU, to ensure that the Project has general information on the perception of communities, and that it remains on target. It is the responsibility of the UNOPS PIU and the different FPs to respond to comments and inputs, and to keep open a feedback line to the communities. For the AF2, these modalities will continue. Under the parent and AF1 project, training on environmental and social standards had been facilitated by the WB. Renewed training will be provided upon the commencement of the AF2 activities. The PIU will further roll out training to FPs and communities as per the ESMF capacity-building schedule.

This SEP has been providing the overarching guidelines for the rolling out of stakeholder engagements under the parent, AF1, and AF2 projects. The UNOPS PIU has been monitoring the capacity of the E&S staff of the different FPs and has recommended and implemented appropriate actions, e.g., refresher training. This will continue under the AF2.

IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS FOR STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Implementation Arrangements

Similar to the parent and AF1 project, the overall responsibility for the implementation of the SEP lies with the Project Manager in UNOPS through the PIU. The Project Manager will be overseeing the E&S team, who are part of the UNOPS staff. They form part of the Risk Management Unit inside the UNOPS PIU. The team is further supported by GRM Specialists and a Gender Specialist.

The Social and Environmental Specialists maintain a stakeholder database for the overall project and lead a commitment register. However, while the PIU oversees all coordination and disclosure-related consultations, the FPs implement the SEP at the rural and urban levels in their respective project

sites and report on their activities to the PIU E&S Specialists on a tri-annual basis. Where UNOPS implements activities directly or through construction companies, UNOPS is responsible for all local stakeholder engagement. The PIU E&S team undertakes field verification activities jointly with the IPs, at least every other month, or during planned events.

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

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

The designated Environmental and Social Specialists have clear ToR for day-to-day E&S management. The assigned Specialists conduct periodic site visits to ensure compliance and report to the higher management.

GRIEVANCE REDRESS MECHANISM

Objective

The objective of a Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) is to assist in resolving complaints in a timely, effective, and efficient manner. Project-level GRMs provide the most effective way for stakeholders to raise issues and concerns about the project that affect them. The GRM provides a transparent and credible process for fair, effective, and lasting outcomes. It also builds trust and cooperation as an integral component of broader stakeholder engagement, that facilitates corrective actions and helps the community to have ownership of the project. The GRM for the parent project was designed in accordance with the World Bank's ESS10 for the benefit of all project-affected persons, including a separate platform for labor-related complaints. The GRM also provides for the handling of grievances related to SEA/SH. The GRM will be continued under the AF2 and will be rolled out to the new areas of implementation.

Principles

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

- The GRM is well-publicized and known to all affected populations and communities covered by the CRL Project. UNOPS ensures that the GRM is widely publicized and will also conduct awareness campaigns in this regard among the affected communities. UNOPS briefs targeted stakeholders about the scope of the mechanisms, the safety of the complainant, the time of response, the referral, and appeal processes.
- Accessibility - The GRM system is clear, accessible to all segments of affected communities

living within the vicinity of the project and subproject sites or locations.

- The Mechanism allows for multiple avenues of uptake of grievances, such as the AWAAZ hotline number (410), the project website, the Facebook page, the email address, and the sub-project Grievance Redress Committees (GRCs).
- The system is sensitive to women, men, boys, and girls, as well as vulnerable populations, such as persons with disabilities, the elderly, displaced persons, and other marginalized groups.
- Confidentiality and prevention against retaliation.
- The GRM is designed to protect beneficiaries' and stakeholder' rights to comment and complain, and even raise their complaints to higher management if they are not satisfied with services or receive insufficient solutions. The mechanism facilitates their sharing of concerns freely, with understanding that no retribution will be exacted for their participation. To create a safe space, anonymous complaints are also allowed.
- The GRM provides for relaying regular information and feedback regarding the redressal of the grievance to the aggrieved.
- The Mechanism is responsive in redressal of grievances by facilitating resolution with the concerned actor in the implementing chain.
- The GRM is based on transparency and accountability. All complainants are heard, taken seriously, and treated fairly. The community and stakeholders are aware of the expectation from the project; the GRM procedures; understand its purpose, and have sufficient information on how to access it.
- The GRM has provisions to appeal if the grievances are not resolved satisfactorily. The GRM does not prevent access to judicial and administrative remedies.
- The Mechanism provides for prompt, time-bound redressal of grievances.
- For SEA/SH cases, three guiding principles of confidentiality, survivor centrality, and survivor safety are to be applied to specific cases of SEA/SH cases as per the World Bank's guidance. Reporting mechanisms enable complainants to report SEA/SH cases without being publicly identified, given the risk of stigma, reprisals, and rejection associated with sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment.

Description of GRM

The United Nations in Afghanistan has a well-established Grievance Redress Mechanism in place, Awaaz Afghanistan (Awaaz), which is implemented by UNOPS on behalf of various UN and humanitarian response agencies. Awaaz is a collective accountability and community engagement initiative that functions as a toll-free, countrywide hotline number (410) that affected populations can dial to access information and register feedback on humanitarian assistance programs. As a two-way communication channel, needs and priorities as reported on the ground are circulated to partners to help improve the quality of programming in Afghanistan. Awaaz is based on common principles, has processes and policies for receiving and handling complaints and feedback, as well as for data protection, and includes inter-agency referral mechanisms. It is designed to be accessible, collaborative, expeditious, and effective in resolving concerns. Awaaz has 16 multilingual operators (50% of whom are women) and has handled more than 590,575 calls since Awaaz took its first call in May 2018. Awaaz agents speak Dari, Pashto, Urdu, English and more. Establishing

referral pathways with clusters and partners, cases requiring attention are shared (in agreement with the affected person) in a timely manner, helping the humanitarian response to swiftly align its delivery to actual needs. More information about Awaaz can be found at Awaaz Afghanistan (<https://awaazaf.org>).

Based on the results of community consultations, three-tiered Grievance Redressal Committees have been established. The first tier is the GRT at the community level, the second tier is at the facilitating partners, and the third tier is the national level GRT, which would operate through UNOPS' mechanisms. There is a provision for appeals, and any aggrieved party is able to directly approach the national level GRT as well. The formation of the GRTs was done prior to the commencement of project activities based on consultations.

While the Awaaz and other existing mechanisms were leveraged for this project, in order to address other requirements of ESS10, the system was augmented for the purposes of this project in accordance with the principles given above and the following steps:

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

A help desk has been set up by the respective facilitating partners during the implementation of sub-project activities in an area manned proportionate to the nature of the activity. At the help desk, aggrieved parties can inquire about project activities, give suggestions, or they can file a grievance directly with the person manning the desk. Grievances can be filed in writing or verbally at the Help Desk.

Relevant assigned CRG members are available at each sub-project site. They are requested to accept formal grievances and ensure that avenues for lodging grievances are accessible to the public. The first point of contact for all potential grievances from community members is the CRG member. The CRG member is required to accept formal grievances, or they can guide aggrieved persons to the Hotline Operator's number.

The staff manning help desks, CRG members and those operating the toll-free hotline number is trained by the PIU for (a) the registration of a grievance; (b) the interaction with complainants; (c) appropriate responses to SEA/SH issues; (d) grievances of workers; and (e) Project components and Facilitating Partners (FP).

- **Step 2: Sorting and processing** – All grievances received are transferred to the GRM Focal Point at the respective implementation partner at local or national level and the PIU. The GRM focal point categorizes the complaint and forwards it to the responsible unit. The GRM focal point also records the grievance in the same format as used at the PIU.

- **Step 3: Acknowledgement and follow-up** – Within three (3) days of the date a grievance is submitted, the GRM focal point communicates with the aggrieved and provides information on the likely course of action and the anticipated timeframe for resolution of the grievance. The information provided to aggrieved also includes, if required, the likely procedure if the grievance had to be escalated outside the unit and the estimated timeline for each stage.
- **Step 4: Verification, investigation, action and documentation** – This step involves gathering information about the grievance to determine the facts surrounding the issue and verifying the validity of the grievance, and then developing a proposed resolution. Many or most grievances are resolved at this stage. All activities taken during this and the other steps are fully documented, and any resolution logged in the register. In case the grievance is not resolved at this stage, it is escalated to the next tier.
- **Step 5: Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting** – Monitoring refers to the process of tracking grievances and assessing the progression toward resolution. Each implementing agency maintains a grievance register and records all steps taken to resolve grievances or otherwise responds to feedback and questions. GRM data is collated and reported monthly at all levels.

The TPMA provides independent operational review of overall project implementation and project results, including the implementation of the SEP and GRM. The PIU synthesizes all reporting by TPMA and IPs, as well as its own findings, and produces an overall environment and

social progress report with a distinct section on stakeholder engagement in line with a template to be provided. The project provides for quarterly reporting.

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

GRM for SEA/SH grievances

SEA/SH-related grievances are handled through a survivor-centered approach. All grievance uptake channels can be used to report on SEA/SH issues. No grievance uptake mechanism can reject such grievances, and all personnel directly receiving grievances will be trained in the handling and processing of SEA/SH-related grievances. The Awaaz call center also includes support for safe and confidential reporting for incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). Any recipients of the grievance should, with the survivor's informed consent, report the case to one of the Project's formal grievance recipients. A survivor can ask someone else to act as a survivor advocate and report on her/his behalf.

Absolute confidentiality is maintained for all grievances related to SEA/SH issues. This means that

no information shall be disclosed at any time to any party without the informed consent of the person concerned. The survivor's consent is also sought for undertaking any action on the grievance. Under no circumstances should the survivor be pressured to consent to any conversation, assessment, investigation or other intervention with which they do not feel comfortable. A survivor can withdraw such consent at any time as well. If a survivor does not consent to sharing information, then only non-identifying information can be released or reported on. In the case of children, informed consent is normally requested from a parent or legal guardian and the children.

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

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

All SEA/SH incidents are reported to the World Bank in accordance with the informed agreement by the survivor within 48 hours.

MONITORING AND REPORTING

Involvement of Stakeholders in Monitoring Activities

The parent and AF1 project has been involving project stakeholders in the monitoring of project activities, including project performance as well as environmental and social risks and impacts. This will be continued under the AF2. The CRGs, which have been established at the community level by previous projects, are the key stakeholders serving in a monitoring function. Representing the community, the CRG members are able to represent the voices of the community on project performance and impacts from a local perspective through regular consultation meetings with the Project implementers (UNOPS and NGO/CSO partners) at the local level (using methods described above).

The Third-Party Monitoring Agency (TPMA) will continue to monitor project performance and E&S risks and impacts at all levels, including those of the AF2 activities. The TPMA submits monitoring reports directly to the UNOPS PIU and the World Bank.

Reporting Back to Stakeholder Groups

The above-listed plan for information dissemination to the project-affected parties also includes the information dissemination and disclosure of Project monitoring results. As under the parent and AF1 project, for the AF2 activities, the PIU at UNOPS, in close coordination with the other FPs, ensures that monitoring results on Project performance as well as E&S risks and impacts and implemented mitigation measures are made available to the above identified stakeholders at the local and national level. The implementation of the stakeholder consultation plan (see above), in turn, allows project-affected parties to react and voice their feedback with regards to the monitoring results. Information dissemination always includes information on the available Project GRM and its different channels to file a grievance or provide feedback.

Reporting to the World Bank

The UNOPS PIU will continue to provide tri-annual Project Progress Reports to the World Bank, including AF2 activities. These tri-annual Reports consist of project performance and results as per Project Component; financial and procurement information; E&S risks and impacts as well as mitigation measures applied, and additional E&S instruments prepared and implemented. The UNOPS PIU receives tri-annual inputs from its FPs prior to the preparation of the tri-annual Report and includes those inputs in the tri-annual Report. The tri-annual Report further contains a section on stakeholder engagement initiatives undertaken in the tri-annual, as per this SEP, as well as a section reflecting on the results of stakeholder consultations. A synthesis report and analysis of grievances filed under the Project GRM and the workers' GRM are included.

Estimated Budget

It should be noted that FPs' budgets include the costs of SEP implementation, in view of activity-specific stakeholder consultations and information dissemination. The project-level budget for the implementation of the SEP through the PIU is included in the overall Project budget. The source of funding is the PIU Project budget.

Table 5: Estimated Budget for SEP Implementation under the AF2

Stakeholder Engagement Activities	Quantity	Unit Cost, USD	# of months	Total cost (USD)
E&S Specialist,	1	USD 3,000	14	USD 42,000 included in HR staff costs
E&S Associates	7	USD 3,000	14	USD 294,000 Included in HR staff costs

GRM Associates	2	USD 3,000	14	USD 84,000 included in the HR staff costs
GRM, M&E case management process, database(Including running of hotline, record keeping, etc).		USD 70,000	14	70,000 for duration of Project
Operational Costs (Travel, Logistic Support, Security, Transportation & Accommodation).			14	included in ESMF staff travel costs
Communication materials (leaflets, posters)		USD 1000 per month	14	14,000
Trainings (Social issues, outreach, GRM, etc.) for PIU, FPs	14	USD 1000 per month	14	14,000
Total				USD 518,000