

**Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture  
National Agency of Public Registry**

**STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN**

**for**

**Georgia Resilient Agriculture, Irrigation, and Land  
Project**

(Draft)

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## **Acronyms**

AF	Affected Family
AH	Affected Household
DGA	Digital Governance Agency
E&S	Environmental and Social
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
ESMS	Environmental and Social Management System
ESF	Environmental and Social Framework
ESS	Environmental and Social Standards
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FIG	Farmers Initiative Group
GA	Georgian Amelioration
GNERC	Georgian National Energy and Water Supply Regulatory Commission
GRAIL	Resilient Agriculture, Irrigation and Land Project
GRC	Grievance Redress Committee
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
ICCs	Information Consultation Centers
IDI	In- Depth Interview
LMP	Labor Management Procedure
LMA	Land Management Agency
NAPR	National Agency of Public Register
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
MCSY	Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth of Georgia
MEPA	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture
MoESD	Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MoF	Ministry of Finance
O&M	Operation and Maintenances

SME	Small and Medium-Sized
PAP	Project Affected Person
PAI	Project Area of Influence
PIU	Project Implementation Units
PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
RAP	Resettlement Action Plan
RDA	Rural Development Agency
RPF	Resettlement Policy Framework
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
WUO	Water User Organization

# 1. Introduction/Project Description

## 1.1 Introduction

The potential of agriculture in Georgia to contribute to achieving green, sustainable, and inclusive development is clear; years of focused policy interventions and investments in this sector have started to bear fruit. Despite some successes and potential opportunities, several challenges still remain, that are preventing growth in the agriculture sector.

A recent World Bank review of the agriculture sector in Georgia has identified a critical opportunity to improve the targeting and effectiveness of support to the agriculture sector, especially for smallholder farmers and agribusiness, by addressing deep-seated constraints jointly across two key inputs to the agriculture sector: water and land, and by moving toward a joint and integrated investment approach for the agricultural, water, and land sectors.

Based on the above, the Government of Georgia with the purpose to improve resilient agricultural production in selected project areas; and strengthen national irrigation and land management capacity, has requested financing of \$150 million from the World Bank for implementing the Resilient Agriculture, Irrigation and Land (GRAIL) Project.

The Project comprises of three components briefly described below with the emphasis on the delivery of civil works, technical assistance and institutional development and support to the Project administration.

**Component 1: Resilient irrigated agriculture** - will finance feasibility studies, civil works, and associated measures for modernizing physical water storage, irrigation, and drainage infrastructure; Will target on-farm agriculture support programs to enable farms to purchase technologies for better crop production; Accelerate competency of relevant agencies for enhancing agriculture service delivery; Support to upgrade operational performance of GA and relevant service centers and/or support to establish Water User Organizations (WUOs) in GRAIL schemes; Support the design and implementation of a revised irrigation tariff policy; Establishing a new Hydrological and Agricultural Informatics Program within MEPA.

*Subcomponent 1.1: Irrigation & drainage infrastructure rehabilitation and modernization;*

*Subcomponent 1.2: Irrigated agriculture and value chain development;*

*Subcomponent 1.3: Improved performance of irrigation service delivery.*

Important part of Component 1 of the Project is facilitating creation and development of Water User Organizations (WUO), which will be among the key stakeholders of the Project. Supported by the ongoing World Bank funded Georgia Irrigated Land Markets Development Project (GILMDP), the government has taken positive steps by approving the 2017 Irrigation Strategy and the 2019 Law on Water Users' Organizations, where GA assumes the role of bulk water supplier to local level organizations, which operate local facilities and supply individual farms. The GRAIL project will build on the lessons from GILMDP by continuing to support the already established central WUO Support Unit, regional units with sufficient operational budget and ongoing training and study tours. In addition, the project will focus on (a) providing early stage training and

technical support to farmers in irrigation command areas of intervention at the design stage and encouraging water users to contribute to infrastructure design, work monitoring, and feedback on supervision of works; (b) investing in knowledge, awareness, and information campaigns to ensure farmers understand the WUO law and its benefits, costs and their roles and responsibilities, and (c) providing farmers with ongoing engineering, water management, and related support in the early years of WUO formation to ensure they can grow confident to take control of operation and maintenance activities for their field channels and tertiary networks.

**Component 2: Improved Land Management Capacity** - will provide investment, regulatory and operational support to optimize land management and land administration systems, monitoring and development of the land and real estate markets, as well as strengthening of land valuation and taxation policies, and practices.

*Subcomponent 2.1: Improved agricultural land management and monitoring;*

*Sub-component 2.2: Enhancement of land administration service delivery and building digital governance infrastructures;*

**Component 3: Project management** - will finance project management activities for Components 1 and 2, including coordination and technical supervision of the implementation, financial management, procurement, monitoring and evaluation and progress reporting, communication.

**Component 4: Contingent Emergency Response** - establishes a disaster response contingency funding mechanism that could be triggered in the event of an eligible crisis or emergency, such as a natural disaster involving a formal declaration of a national or regional state of emergency, or a formal request from the Government of Georgia in the wake of a disaster, a health pandemic, or other types of disasters such as armed conflict.

The Project will be implemented by two Project Implementation Units (PIUs) the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture (MEPA) and National Agency for Property Registry (NAPR). MEPA will be in charge of Component 1 - the regulation and promotion of agricultural development as well the irrigation sector and Sub-Component 2.1 - Improved agricultural land management and monitoring, through Land Management Agency; NAPR will host Digital Governance Agency under MoJ and will provide implementation support for IT activities under Sub-Component 2.2 - enhancement of land administration service delivery and building digital governance infrastructures.

The Project will explicitly have a Citizen Engagement indicator which will measure the percentage of members of the Farmers Initiative Group (FIG) reporting that FIG meetings are effective in incorporating their feedback in the decision about irrigation works and services. This will be measured semi-annually through questionnaires among FIG members.

## 1.2. Project Overview

Under the Sub-Component 1.1. Irrigation & drainage infrastructure rehabilitation and modernization project objective is to rehabilitate 5 irrigation systems, 1 existing reservoir and 1 drainage system. The civil work activities will be implemented in 5 regions of Georgia: Kakheti, Shida Kartli, Kvemo Kartli, Mtshketa-Mtianeti and Samegrelo- Zemo-Svaneti.

### 1.3 Summary of potential environmental and social impacts

Potential environmental and social impacts of the project, which may need to be paid particular attention to as part of the stakeholder engagement activities, include:

- Potential impacts on landscapes and views due to civil work activities
- Erosion and topsoil loss due to land clearing and vegetation removal and/or excavation, impacts on soil due to blasting, tower installation, machinery operations, opening borrow pits or other excavations to acquire fill material and/or tower failures
- Potential impacts on air quality due to movement of vehicles and equipment, earthworks, open piles of topsoil and spoil, and the operation of combustion engines and/or operation of transmission lines
- Noise, dust, waste generation and traffic disturbance from construction vehicles and machinery
- Biodiversity impacts as the project entails risks to birds and bats, and particularly raptors, as the transmission line corridor is near an important migratory flyway and includes other potentially sensitive bird/bat areas
- Land acquisition and land use restriction impacts; (Because these are rehabilitation works, resettlement is very unlikely to happen. Land acquisition and land use restriction impacts will be compensated)
- Occupational and community health and safety risks, including those related to dam safety;
- Social tension or conflict related to sharing of water resources across communities or farmers;
- Economic impacts, such as loss or damage to crops, loss of trees, structures, or other assets may also occur because of these works, as well as restrictions to access to plots, safe crossing for people, cattle, etc.

### 1.4 Purpose of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan

The Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) for the Resilient Agriculture, Irrigation and Land (GRAIL) Project is developed in accordance with the World Bank requirements. The objective of the SEP is to effectively engage with all stakeholders under component 1 and 2, who have an interest in or may be affected by the Project.

The involvement of the local population, SME agribusinesses and farms as well as all other interested parties is essential to the success of the project, to ensure smooth collaboration between project staff and local communities, minimize and mitigate environmental and social risks related to the project, as well as expand project benefits to all targeted beneficiaries including ones that may be traditionally vulnerable, disadvantaged, disproportionately affected by the project activities.

The purpose of the present SEP is to outline the target groups and methods of stakeholder engagement and the responsibilities in the implementation of stakeholder engagement activities, under Component 1 and 2. The intention of the SEP is to activate the engagement of stakeholders in a timely manner

during project preparation and implementation phase. Specifically, SEP serves the following purposes:

- i. stakeholder identification and analysis;
- ii. planning engagement modalities and effective communication tools for consultations and disclosure;
- iii. defining role and responsibilities of different actors in implementing the SEP;
- iv. defining the Project's Grievance Mechanism (GRM); and
- v. providing feedback to stakeholders;
- vi. monitoring and reporting on the SEP.

The SEP seeks to define an appropriate approach to identify relevant stakeholders and achieve their full engagement. The goal of this SEP is to improve and facilitate decision making process and includes active involvement of stakeholders and other parties. The SEP is a useful tool for managing communications between PIUs and its stakeholders.



## 2. World Bank Requirements

The World Bank's Environmental and Social Framework (ESF)'s Environmental and Social Standard (ESS) 10, "Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure", recognizes "the importance of open and transparent engagement between the Borrower and project stakeholders as an essential element of good international practice" (World Bank, 2017: 97)<sup>1</sup>. Specifically, the requirements set out by ESS10 are the following:

- "Borrowers will engage with stakeholders throughout the project life cycle, commencing such engagement as early as possible in the project development process and in a timeframe that enables meaningful consultations with stakeholders on project design. The nature, scope and frequency of stakeholder engagement will be proportionate to the nature and scale of the project and its potential risks and impacts.
- Borrowers will engage in meaningful consultations with all stakeholders. Borrowers will provide stakeholders with timely, relevant, understandable and accessible information, and consult with them in a culturally appropriate manner, which is free of manipulation, interference, coercion, discrimination and intimidation.
- The process of stakeholder engagement will involve the following, as set out in further detail in this ESS: (i) stakeholder identification and analysis; (ii) planning how the engagement with stakeholders will take place; (iii) disclosure of information; (iv) consultation with stakeholders; (v) addressing and responding to grievances; and (vi) reporting to stakeholders.
- The Borrower will maintain and disclose as part of the environmental and social assessment, a documented record of stakeholder engagement, including a description of the stakeholders consulted, a summary of the feedback received and a brief explanation of how the feedback was considered, or the reasons why it was not." (World Bank, 2017: 98).

A Stakeholder Engagement Plan proportionate to the nature and scale of the project and its potential risks and impacts needs to be developed by the Borrower. It has to be disclosed as early as possible, and before project appraisal, and the Borrower needs to seek the views of stakeholders on the SEP, including on the identification of stakeholders and the proposals for future engagement. If significant changes are made to the SEP, the Borrower has to disclose the updated SEP (World Bank, 2017: 99). According to ESS10, the Borrower should also propose and implement a grievance mechanism to receive and facilitate the resolution of concerns and grievances of project-affected parties related to the environmental and social performance of the project in a timely manner (World Bank, 2017: 100).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/837721522762050108-0290022018/original/ESFFramework.pdf#page=111&zoom=80>

### 3. Summary of Prior Stakeholder Engagement Activities Relevant to the Project

MEPA and NAPR has active engagement experience with their stakeholders. During preparation of the detailed design for the rehabilitation of Kvemo Samgori and Zeda Ru on-farm irrigation system, several consultation meetings with farmers were organized in relevant villages. Key components of the project design were presented at the meetings, and feedback from farmers were considered to the extent possible.

*Table 1: Summary of prior stakeholder engagement activities relevant to the project*

<b>Date &amp; Location</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>Format and Objectives</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
15 November 2018 Sagarejo, Iormughalo	Iormughanlo - 11 Farmers; - 7 Mayor's representatives; Sagarejo - 7 Farmers; 3 Mayor's representatives	Awareness meeting with the farmers' group Discussions around the participation of the farmers in detailed design, construction and improvement of on-farm WM.	The farmers' participation in designing process, construction and improvement of WM within on-farm area.
11 April 2019 Sagarejo, Iormughalo	Water User Council g-33 (Duzagrama, Iormughanlo, Lambalo, Tulari). - 5 Water users; - 2 Village Mayor (Administrative Units); - 1 Assistant of Village Mayor (Administrative Unit); - 1 GA Service Centre's representative	Meeting with the members of WU Council; Discussion about the status of designing process and general approaches of designers; Discussions around the participation of the WU Council in preparation of the detailed design	The Council members were ensured that mentioned issues will be considered at its maximum extend and in line with the Project scope.
3 April 2019 Sagarejo, GA Service Centre;	Meeting with the members of WU Councils; Discussion about the status of designing process and general approaches of designers; Discussions around the participation of the WU Council in preparation of the detailed design	Water User Council – 1g-16g (Sagarejo, Tskarostavi, Ninotshmindia) - 4 Water users; - 1 village Mayor (Administrative Unit); - 1 Specialist of local administration (Administrative Unit); - 1 GA Service Centre's representative.  Water User Council – 17g-30g (Giorgitsmindia) - 2 Water users; - 1 village Mayor (Administrative Unit); - 1 GA Service Centre's representative	The measures of building close cooperation between all parties for the implementation of the field survey were set up and agreed.
24 June 2021  Sagarejo, GA Service Center  Iormughanlo, Public	Awareness Seminar for the Initiative Groups  Identification of the farmer initiative groups and awareness of on-going	Sagarejo - 6 Water users/Farmers (from the areas/villages: Sagarejo, Ninotshiminda); - 3 Mayor's representatives; - 1 representative of the local	The participants of the meeting expressed the readiness to become members of the initiative groups and gave their consent in written form

Center	<p>Rehabilitation Works</p> <p>Meeting with the Farmers and the Mayor's representatives in the admin.units.</p> <p>Identification and renovation of the initiative groups</p> <p>Provision of the updated information about on-going Rehab.works of on-farm network (Kv.Samgori System area) and the importance of farmer initiative groups' engagement in the Rehabilitation Consultation activities</p>	<p>legislative body ("Sakrebulo")</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3 GA Sagarejo Service Centre's representatives;</li> <li>Iormughanlo</li> <li>- 4 Water users/Farmers (from the villages: Iormughanlo, Duzagrama, Tulari, Lambalo);</li> <li>- 3 Mayor's representatives;</li> <li>- 1 GA Sagarejo Service Centre's representative;</li> </ul>	
27 December 2021 Sagarejo, House of Culture;	<p>awareness of on-going Rehabilitation Works</p> <p>Meeting with the Farmers' Initiative Groups/other farmers and representative of the Construction Company.</p> <p>Provision of the updated information about on-going Rehabilitation works of on-farm network (Kvemo Samgori System area) and farmer initiative groups' engagement in the Rehabilitation Consultation/discussion</p>	<p>Sagarejo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 26 Water users/Farmers;</li> <li>- 1 Mayor of Sagarejo Municipality;</li> <li>- 1 Chairman of the local legislative body (Sakrebulo);</li> <li>- 1 Representative of the local administration (villages);</li> <li>- 1 Deputy Head of GA SC;</li> <li>- 1 Representative of GA SC</li> </ul>	

Kvemo Samgori is a modern on-farm irrigation system with closed pressurized pipes and different kinds of hydrants. Active communication is maintained with the local landowners during civil works, which sometimes leads to adjusting type and locations of hydrants per farmers' demand. The PIU is also conducting intensive trainings to the farmers on Operation and Maintenances - O&M related issues. Training also covers issues related to grievance mechanisms: on how to identify, collect and handle the complaints through multiple channels of intake. The construction companies also hold a grievance log and have installed grievance boxes.

PIU continues constant communication with population, which is mainly conducted by Supervision Consultant, together with the construction company. Usually, meetings with local population are conducted to raise their awareness of the Project and the existing Grievance Mechanism. Throughout the implementation of the project, no written grievances had been communicated with PIU or other involved parties. Therefore, PIU had decided to employ other approaches to raise awareness of the population on the existing mechanism for communicating and addressing concerns related to civil works. This mechanism is implemented by PIU regularly.

## 4. Stakeholder Identification and Analysis

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

1. are impacted or likely to be impacted directly or indirectly, positively or adversely, by the Project (also known as ‘affected parties’); and
2. may have an interest in the Project (‘other 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 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/liaison 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) remains an important task in establishing contact with the community stakeholders.

To meet best practice approaches in order to identify project stakeholders, the following principles for stakeholder engagement are used:

- Openness and life-cycle approach: public consultations for the project will be arranged during the whole project life cycle, 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; (Template of the feedback form is attached to this SEP Annex 1)
- Inclusiveness and sensitivity: stakeholder identification undertaken to support better communications and build effective relationships. The participation process for the projects is inclusive. All stakeholders are encouraged to be involved in the consultation process, to the extent the current circumstances permit. 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, youth, elderly, persons with disabilities, and the cultural sensitivities of diverse ethnic groups.

The Project has stakeholders from government, private sector, citizens of the certain region/village and a range of other interested parties. For the purposes of effective and tailored engagement, stakeholders of the proposed project 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. These will include, among others:

- SME agribusiness and their employee workers;
- Small and medium scale farmers;
- Other actors involved in agricultural value chains (processors, storage operators, technology, farm input, and machinery suppliers) and their workforce;
- All individuals or companies likely to engage in agricultural land transactions as well as holders of land rights (owners or lessees);
- People who may be affected by land acquisition (people losing assets and/or private land and/or access to common resources due to project's land requirements);
- People residing in the project areas (if any people living along the sites, where civil work activities have to take place), including vulnerable population, such as Persons with Disabilities, Internally Displaced Persons (IDP), and ethnic minorities'
- Communities and general public, who may be potentially affected by the project activities.

The expected number of project beneficiaries are expected to be around 36,000. This will be clarified further once the scope of works, i.e. the irrigation schemes and the area to be rehabilitated by the project will be finalized in the first year of implementation. This will depend on the feasibility studies and designs on the short-listed schemes. Approximately 95 percent of beneficiaries across the selected irrigation schemes will include smallholders with less than 1 hectare (Ha) farm plots. These comprise farmers, low-income households, women, and youth. Out of this, approximately 16,500 are registered female landowners, thus around forty five percent of beneficiaries are expected to be women, benefitting from irrigation services as well as from support for on-farm production and productivity as well as value chain development. All component 1 activities have been designed in a way to ensure proactive engagement of women and women's groups, ensuring equal benefit. Improved irrigation service delivery is expected to provide a range of benefits to these social groups. These include livelihood opportunities and jobs in irrigated agriculture and decreased vulnerability to droughts and floods.

**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. This will include among others:

- Georgian Amelioration (GA) including its regional service centers;
- Agriculture Information Consultation Centers (ICCs);
- Georgian National Energy and Water Supply Regulatory Commission (GNERC);
- Government agencies active at various levels in the process of legalization of privately-owned land parcels: Sakrebulo, Gamgeoba, Registration Offices and Property Rights Recognition Commissions;
- Civil Works Contractor;
- Civil Society Groups - NGOs and Associations operating in the sector, such as the Georgian Farmers Association (GFA); in areas with IDP population, NGOs working on IDP issues will be included in stakeholder engagement; in ethnic minority areas, NGOs working on ethnic minority issues will be consulted;
- Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture (MEPA);
- Rural Development Agency (RDA) under MEPA;

- Land Management Agency (LMA) under MEPA;
- National Agency of Public Register under MoJ;
- Digital Governance Agency (DGA) under MoJ Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia (MoESD);
- Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth of Georgia (MCSY);
- Ministry of Finance (MoF);
- Ministry of Justice (MoJ);
- Court of Georgia

**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 status and/or that may require special engagement efforts to ensure their equal opportunity to benefit from the Project, as well as equal representation in the consultation and decision-making process associated with the Project. These include among others:

- Female Farmers
- Persons with Disabilities
- Vulnerable Affected Households and Families (AH/AF)
  - AH/AF from rural areas
  - AH/AF of remote and high mountain regions
  - AH/AF from ethnic minority areas
  - AH/AF from conflict/buffer zones
  - AH/AF from IDP settlements
- Poor and unemployed households and families
- Youth - as persons between the age of 18 and 29

Where other affected parties, interested parties, and vulnerable groups are identified in the course of project implementation their needs will also be taken into consideration and reflected in the SEP.

Two of the shortlisted irrigations schemes are expected to have particularly large populations of vulnerable groups. Tiriponi scheme in Shida Kartli region is the largest irrigation scheme among the shortlisted schemes and is located near the conflict zone. Shida Kartli region also has one of the largest number of IDPs who fled Tskhinvali region as a result of the 2008 war. In total, there are 75 IDP settlements, with almost 17,000 IDPs in Shida Kartli.<sup>2</sup> The settlements that are located close to the Tiriponi irrigation scheme include Karaleti, Shavshvebi, Berbuki, and Khurvaleti. The living conditions in these settlement are poor. Residents have little access to social and health infrastructure, such as kindergartens and ambulatories, and lack of access to agricultural land. Some of the settlements also face drinking water and sanitation issues.<sup>3</sup> The largest post-2008 war settlement is Tserovani, in Mtsketa-Mtianeti region, but it is remotely located from the Narekvavi irrigation scheme.

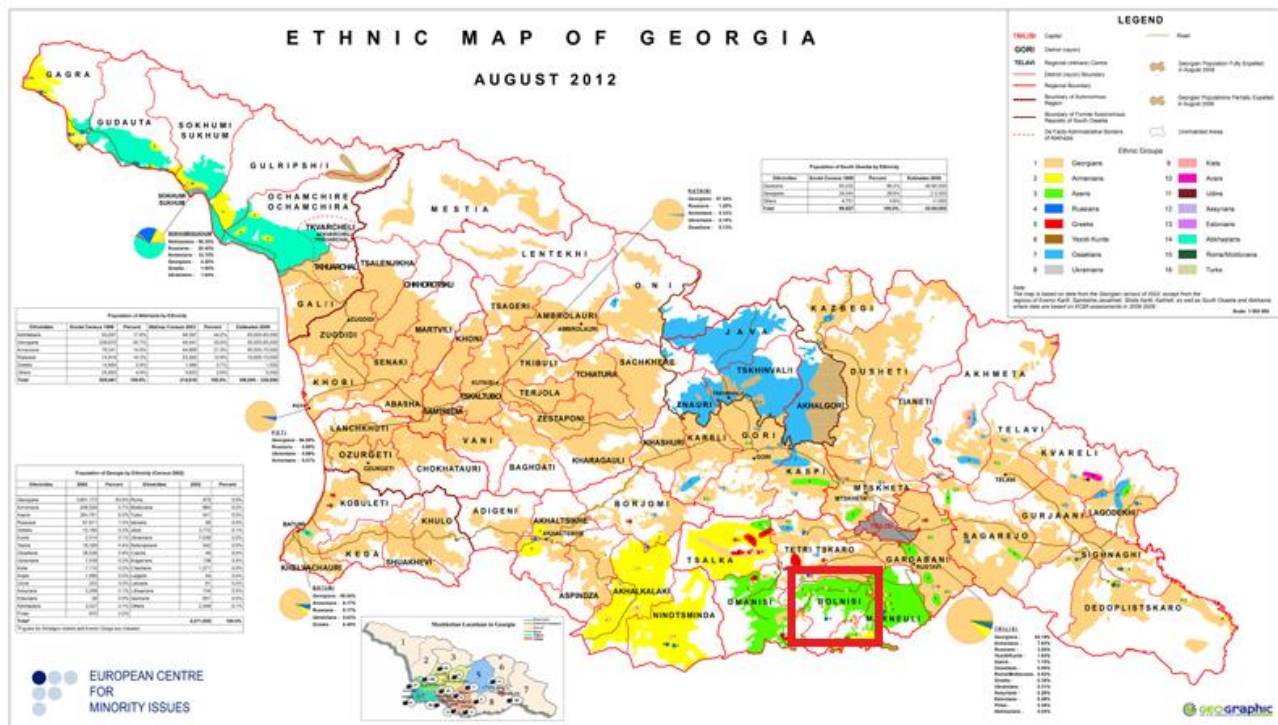
Zeda Arkhi irrigation scheme is located in Bolnisi population. Of around 56,000 inhabitants of the

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<sup>2</sup> Institute for Development of Freedom of Information *Statistics of IDP settlements and the number of IDP families provided with accommodation (2009-2015)* <https://idfi.ge/ge/number-of-provided-living-areas-for-idps>

<sup>3</sup> GeoWel Research *Baseline Survey of the IDP Settlements and their Neighbouring Communities in Kvemo Kartli and Shida Kartli* [https://geowel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/idp\\_research\\_geowel\\_2010\\_full\\_eng.pdf](https://geowel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/idp_research_geowel_2010_full_eng.pdf)

municipality, according to the latest census, around 60% are ethnic Azerbaijani.<sup>4</sup> The ethnic map of Georgia below shows where ethnic Azerbaijanis (colored in green) reside across the country.



Youth in ethnic minority regions are generally good in communicating in Georgian, but in older generations, the knowledge of Georgia is limited. The Stakeholder Engagement Plan will take this into account.

Of around 125 thousand Persons with Disabilities officially registered in Georgia, 10% live in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region, 9% live in Kakheti, 8% in Kvemo kartli and 7% in Shida Kartli. As no disability-specific survey has been conducted in Georgia, the actual number of people who qualify as disabled may be higher. Georgia uses a traditional approach to grant disability status, focusing on the medical model and ignoring a more comprehensive assessment of social needs and function. Such an approach, therefore, likely underestimates the disability levels in the country and affects the policies developed. Moreover, the medical model may lead to legal exclusion. For example, regarding autism or Down syndrome, the state grants disability status only if it can be demonstrated that the individual is unable to perform the same tasks as his/her peers. Because it is difficult to demonstrate this among the very young, opportunities for helping children mitigate the diagnosis are missed, and help is provided too late. The Law of Georgia on Medical and Social Examination has provisions on social approach in defining disability. Nevertheless, the actual procedure to grant disability status does not reflect the provisions in the law, requiring people go through medical examinations to obtain “medical proof” to qualify for state support. The state system assumes that all persons with disabilities will seek out an such an assessment. Georgia doesn't have standard designs to ensure public water and sanitation points are disability inclusive. However, for irrigation projects, this might not be as relevant as for water and sanitations projects.

<sup>4</sup> National Statistics Office of Georgia, *2014 General Population Census, Demographic and Social Characteristics*, <http://census.ge/en/results/census1/demo>



## 5. Stakeholder Engagement Plan

The SEP envisages that consultation meetings will take place with relevant interested parties prior to the Project Appraisal as well as after the project commencement, on an as-needed basis.

Consultation and engagement activities are required to address project stakeholder suggestions, ideas or concerns. Variety engagement techniques will be used to build relationships with particular stakeholders, gather information and consult with various parties, considering the Components and Sub-components of the project. Below listed are some of the techniques PIUs will utilize to engage with relevant stakeholders:

*Table 2: Engagement techniques during the Project cycle*

<b>Project Stakeholders</b>	<b>Engagement Technique</b>	<b>Appropriate application of the technique</b>
<i>Component 1: Resilient Irrigation Agriculture</i>		
Affected Parties	Phone Calls/SMS other applicable techniques; Consultation Meetings; Focus Group Interviews; Periodic surveys for members of the Farmers' Initiative Groups (FIG)	Distribute general information of the project with main accent on component 1; Present Draft Project Documents. ESMF and RPF; Socio-economic assessment; RPF Screening process; Targeted audience, meetings might be either online or face to face; Record Minutes of meetings and take photos; Give everyone possibility to comment and share feedback; Facilitate meetings with presentations and/other communication methods Collect the survey results FIG members to inform the Citizen Engagement indicator in the Project's Results Framework
Other Interested Parties	Correspondence /Official Letters, Consultation Meetings	Distribute general information of the project to Government officials, local authorities, civil society groups, relevant governmental agencies applicable to the Component 1 (MEPA, GA –service centers; ICCs; RDA; GNERC); Targeted audience, meetings might be either online or face to face; Record Minutes of meetings and take photos; Give everyone possibility to comment and share feedback; Facilitate meetings with presentations and/other communication methods
Vulnerable Groups	Phone Calls/SMS other applicable techniques; Consultation Meetings	Distribute project general information to vulnerable groups equally considering their status of vulnerability; Present Project Framework docs. ESMF and RPF



<b>Project Stakeholders</b>	<b>Engagement Technique</b>	<b>Appropriate application of the technique</b>
<i>Component 1: Resilient Irrigation Agriculture</i>		
		Targeted audience, meetings might be either online or face to face; Provide the necessary translation in ethnic minority regions Record Minutes of meetings and take photos; Give everyone possibility to comment and share feedback; Facilitate meetings with presentations and/other communication methods
<i>Component: 2 Improved Land Management Capacity</i>		
Other Interested Parties	Meetings about the Project implementation; In-Depth Interview	Collecting and assessing information for Component 2 from relevant Government agencies, local authorities, civil society groups, relevant governmental agencies applicable to the Component 2 (MEPA, LMA, NAPR, DGA)
All Project Affected Parties	Update information on the PIU website	Present information and updates about the program. Disclose relevant project documentation and one-pagers, annual reports and impact assessments Share relevant social media promotions, digital campaigns and video materials.
All Project Affected Parties	Printing Materials	Permanently distribute Project booklets / sub-project leaflets and other printing materials with project updated information

Records of all public consultations and its outcomes will be kept and short descriptions (one-pagers) will be created. (Sample of the Records template is attached to the SEP Annex 2). Engagement with stakeholders will continue throughout the lifecycle of the Project, and records of environmental and social issues raised, and complaints received during consultations, field visits, informal discussions, formal letters, etc., will be followed up. The records will be kept in the PIUs project offices. The project will ensure that the different activities for stakeholder engagement, including information disclosure, are inclusive and culturally sensitive.

Measures will also be taken to ensure that the vulnerable groups outlined above will have the chance to participate and benefit from project activities. This will include among others, affected household-outreach through SMS, telephone calls, social media etc., depending on the social distancing requirements, in communities with high concentration of these groups. Where face-to-face meetings, consultations, Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) or In-Depth Interviews IDIs were

conducted effort will be made to conduct them in convenient locations accessible by public and private transport, and in buildings accessible to persons with disability. If the meetings have to be conducted the poorly accessible locations (ex. High mountain regions), support from local government in transportation arrangement will be needed or the meetings might be conducted virtually. PIU Team and the GA will provide organizational and logistical support of the consultation meetings, also insure that outreach and consultation activities are age-and gender-balanced and conduct tailored outreach if women, youth-led agribusinesses or farms belonging to a potentially disadvantaged group are underrepresented in such events. For this purpose, PIU Team and contractor organizations will include in their information dissemination plans civil society groups such as women's associations, associations for persons with disabilities, minority groups, etc., as relevant in the particular region.

For engagement with all stakeholders and utilization of relevant mechanisms, MEPA has developed the below matrix, which showcases, each program, target stakeholders, methods and topics of engagement, period of communication.

Table3: Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Target stakeholders	Topic(s) of engagement	Method	Frequency	Relevant project sub-components	Project Activity
<p><i>SME Agribusinesses and Farms;</i></p> <p><i>Other actors involved in agricultural value chains;</i></p> <p><i>Individuals or companies likely to be engaged;</i></p> <p><i>Communities potentially affected by the Project.</i></p>	Introducing Project Framework Documents – ESMF and RPF;	Information is provided through the consultation meetings	On draft ESMF and RPF preparation stage	<p><b>Component 1.</b> <i>Sub- Component 1.1.</i> Irrigation &amp; drainage infrastructure rehabilitation and modernization</p> <p><i>Subcomponent 1.2.</i> Irrigated agriculture and value chain development</p>	<p><i>Activity 1:</i> Farm and agribusiness modernization and commercialization in project areas</p> <p><i>Activity 2:</i> Gradual increase and roll-out of increased irrigation tariff</p> <p><i>Activity 3:</i> Support to farmers to reduce water and climate stress for agriculture</p>
	Introduction of Project Information-Component 1;	Feedback received and responded during consultation meetings	On Regular bases depending on the specific of the particular sub-component		
	Communication with Local Government to distribute information about the program;	Information is collected through the FGDs	RPF Screening stage	<p><i>Subcomponent 1.3.</i> Improved performance of irrigation service delivery</p> <p><i>Subcomponent 1.1.</i> Irrigation &amp; drainage infrastructure rehabilitation and modernization</p>	
	Receiving Feedback about the project development;	Stakeholder Engagement Meetings	Project Preparation Stage		
<p><i>Farmers Initiative Groups (FIG)</i></p>	Collecting information on Socio –Economic Assessment on Sub-Component 1.1	Short surveys	Annual		All activities under Subcomponent 1.1.
	Nominating GRM Focal point and/or Stakeholder Representative				
<p><i>Farmers Initiative Groups (FIG)</i></p>	Measuring to what extent FIG meetings are effective in incorporating their feedback in the decision about irrigation services				
	Providing information on project design, digitalization of service delivery, M&E capacity, and study tours,	Information is provided through the stakeholder engagement meetings	On Regular bases depending on the specific of the particular sub-	<p><b>Component 1.</b> <i>Subcomponent 1.2.</i> Irrigated agriculture and value chain development</p>	<i>Activity 2:</i> Accelerating competency of RDA for EU accession & enhancing agriculture service delivery

Target stakeholders	Topic(s) of engagement	Method	Frequency	Relevant project sub-components	Project Activity
<p><i>Agricultural Investment Center (ICCs);</i></p> <p><i>Georgian Amelioration (GA);</i></p> <p><i>Ministry Environmental Protection and Agriculture (MEPA).</i></p>	<p>introduction of digital farm advisory services;</p> <p>Discussions about the draft version of the Project and relevant sub-components;</p> <p>Receiving Feedback about the project sub-components and proposed activities;</p>	<p>Process takes place during the various discussion platforms: round tables; face to face meetings; etc.</p> <p>Project Information Meetings</p>	<p>component</p> <p>Through the project, preparation, implementation and monitoring Phase</p>	<p><i>Subcomponent 1.3:</i> Improved performance of irrigation service delivery</p>	<p><i>Activity 1:</i> Comprehensive investment program to improve GA functions</p> <p><i>Activity 4:</i> Support to upgrade operational performance of relevant GA service centers and/or support to establish WUOs in GRAIL schemes</p> <p><i>Activity 5:</i> Establishing a new Hydrological and Agricultural Informatics Program (HAIP) within MEPA</p>
<p><i>Land Management Agency (LMA under the MEPA)</i></p> <p><i>Digital Governance Agency (DGA under NAPR)</i></p>	<p>Discussion of Sub-Component Activities;</p> <p>Receiving in-depth analyze and feedback about the project sub-components and proposed activities;</p>	<p>Project Preparatory Meetings;</p> <p>In Depth Interviews;</p> <p>Stakeholder Engagement Meetings;</p>	<p>Before the project commencement date;</p> <p>On the project, preparation stage.</p> <p>On Regular bases depending on the specific of the particular sub-component</p>	<p><b>Component 2</b> Improved Land Management Capacity</p> <p><i>Subcomponent 2.1:</i> Improved agricultural land management and monitoring</p> <p><i>Sub-component 2.2:</i> Enhancement of land administration service delivery and building digital governance infrastructures</p>	<p><i>Activities for 2.1</i></p> <p>Creation of multi-purpose land information system; Enhancement of the Farm Registry for Georgia; Piloting of national land consolidation strategy; Design and piloting of the agricultural land mass valuation methodology and system</p> <p><i>Activities for 2.2</i></p> <p>Integrated Registration Property System and E-services Enhancement (Phase II);</p> <p>Effective development and deployment of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI).</p>

## 6. Resources for implementing stakeholder engagement

The budget for planned stakeholder engagement activities for the GRAIL Project

<b>Planned Activities</b>	<b>Tentative Budget (GEL)</b>
Project printed materials	31,000
Updating information on PIU Web-site	10,000
Organizing Focus Group Interview with potential Stakeholders and Beneficiaries	15,000
Organizing In Depth interview with relevant Stakeholders	15,000
Organizing discussion platforms and meetings within in the Project sub-component activities	20,000

## 7. Grievance Redress Mechanism

### 7.1. GRM Process

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.

The Grievance Resolution Mechanism (GRM) addresses grievances in an efficient, timely and cost-effective manner, that arise in the Project under Sub-Component 1.1. either due to actions by MEPA or the contractor/sub-contractors employed by MEPA, from affected communities and external stakeholders. A separate mechanism is developed to address worker grievances. (The process is described in Labor Management Plan (LMP)). MEPA is responsible for managing the GRM, but many of the grievances on the Project will likely relate to the actions of the Contractor and so will need to be resolved by the Contractor. MEPA with the support of the Implementation Consultant will administer the GRM process deciding whether they or the Contractor is responsible and determining the best course of action to resolve the grievance. The Implementation Consultant will support MEPA to monitor grievance resolution being undertaken by the contractor.

The project GRM deals with the issues of land and other assets acquisition (e.g. amount of compensation, suitability of residual land plots, loss of access roads, etc.) as well as the losses and damages caused by rehabilitation works, and any direct or indirect environmental and social impacts. Therefore, the grievance redress mechanism has to be in place by the time MEPA starts preparation of RAP, ESIA and shall function until the completion of all civil work activities and beyond till the defect liability period ends. PAPs and other potential complainants should be fully informed of the GRM, its functions, procedures, timelines and contact persons during consultations meetings and other stakeholder engagement activities.

All grievance related correspondence will be documented and the grievance resolution process will be systematically tracked. The grievance logbook template is presented and attached to this SEP (Annex 3).

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 the projects;
- Ensures that appropriate and mutually acceptable redress actions are identified and implemented to the satisfaction of complainants;
- Supports accessibility and transparency in handling complaints and grievances;
- Manages time factor (avoids the need to resort to judicial proceedings (at least at first).

Complaint and grievances are divided in this manner:

- Complaint: an expression of dissatisfaction that is related to an impact caused by a project activity, which has adversely affected an individual or group. The interests of an individual or group wants a proponent or operator (or contractor) to address and resolve it (e. g. problems

related to dust deposition, noise or vibration). A complaint is normally of a less serious nature than a grievance; and

- Grievance: a claim raised by an individual or group whose livelihood, health and safety, cultural norms and heritage are considered to have been adversely affected (harmed) by a project activity which, if not addressed effectively, may pose a risk.

Typical grievances under sub-component 1.1 might relate to:

- Land acquisition and physical displacement;
- Civil work damages;
- Environmental impacts; and
- Direct and/or indirect social - economic impacts.

As a Governmental Structure, the grievance practice at MEPA is based on the General Administrative Code of Georgia. As part of the project, MEPA will modify the GRM practice to allow a PAP (Project Affected Person) to complain about any decision about concerns regarding the project. All types of grievances will be recorded by the GRM. Anonymous grievances will also be accepted, recorded, and investigated to the extent feasible.

GRM will include following Steps:

**Step 1:** Submission of grievances either in writing via through telephone hotline/mobile, mail, social media (FB etc.), website, grievance logbook via a contractor organization and directly to the MEPA. The GRM will also allow anonymous grievances to be raised and addressed.

**Step 2:** Recording of grievance, classifying the grievances based on the typology of complaints and the complainants in order to provide more efficient response, and providing the initial response immediately as possible. The typology will be based on the characteristics of the complainant (e.g., vulnerable groups, persons with disabilities, people with language barriers, etc.) and also the nature of the complaint.

**Step 3:** Grievance can be investigated in five stages, namely:

- PIU's RAP team will maintain a system for logging grievances. PIU SSC will set up registry for complaints;
- In the first instance, PAP's can lodge a grievance and resolution will be attempted at an informal level with the involvement of relevant Project entities (for instance design, cadastral, evaluation) or local representatives within ten 10 days after submission of the grievance. Such grievances will still be recorded in the grievance logbook;
- If still unsettled, the PAP's can submit the complaint with PIU who has 15 days to decide on the case;
- If still unsettled, the PAP's grievance will move within 15 days to a Grievance Resolution Committee (see the details on the Committee below) which has 15 days to decide on the case;
- At any stage of the process the PAP is free to submit the case to the appropriate Georgian court of law.

PIU will establish the Land Acquisition Grievance Resolution Committee consisting of the representatives of PIU, MEPA, land valuation / acquisition consultant(s), and concerned PAP's. Where relevant, the committee will consult the village / community leaders and authorities in order

to facilitate the resolution of grievances. PIU representatives on the Committee can include a legal team member, Engineers, Social Safeguard Consultant, Regional Coordinator, Project Manager and the Deputy Project Director. When relevant, the committee consults with community leaders and representations in order to finalize actions. This committee will review and discuss the received grievances internally, take decisions as to how to resolve them, implement a solution, and inform the PAP about compliant result and closure.

## 7.2. Closure of Grievances

A grievance will be considered “resolved” or “closed” when a resolution satisfactory to both parties has been reached, and after corrective measures has been successfully implemented. When a proposed solution is agreed between the Project and the complainant, the time needed to implement it will depend on the nature of the solution. However, the actions to implement this solution will be undertaken within one month of the grievance being logged and will be tracked until completion. Once the solution is being implemented or is implemented to the satisfaction of the complainant, a complaint closes out form will be signed by both parties (MEPA - PIU Team and the complainant), stating that the complainant considers that his/her grievance is closed. The grievance then, will be archived in the Project Grievance database. A detailed grievance logbook will be maintained and submitted to the World Bank team.

In certain situations, however, the Project may “close” a grievance even if the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome. This could be the case, for example, if the complainant is unable to substantiate a grievance, or it is obviously speculative or fraudulent. In such situations, the Project’s efforts to investigate the grievance and to arrive at a conclusion will be well documented and the complainant advised of the situation. PIU team will not dismiss grievances based on a cursory review and close them unless the complainant has been notified and had the opportunity to provide supplementary information or evidence.

## 7.3. Grievance Records and Documentation

MEPA will nominate a GRM Focal Point to manage a grievance database to keep a record of all grievances received. The database will contain the name of the individual or organization lodging a grievance; the date and nature of the grievance; any follow-up actions taken; the solutions and corrective actions implemented by the Contractor or other relevant party; the final result; and how and when this decision was communicated to the complainant.

Supervisor and construction companies in their monthly monitoring reports will provide information on grievance management. Grievance monitoring and reporting will occur in MEPA’s six-monthly and annual public reports. (Annex 4 Report Form on Public Grievance).

## 7.4. GRM Focal Point Contact Information

The point of contact regarding grievance management and the local stakeholder engagement activities is the PIU GRM Focal Point:



Description	Contact Details
Project Implementing Unite	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture -MEPA
To:	GRM – Focal Point – Sophie Berishvli
Address:	6Marshal Gelovani street, Tbilisi 0159, Georgia
E-mail:	Sophiko1@hotmail.com
Website:	<a href="https://mepa.gov.ge/">https://mepa.gov.ge/</a>
Telephone:	599270049

Information on the Project and future stakeholder engagement programs will be available on the PIUs website and will be posted on information boards in affected villages in the Project area. Information can also be obtained from the GRM Focal Point.

Six-monthly E&S reports that document the implementation of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) will be disclosed on the PIU website and made available in the local town halls.

## 8. Monitoring and Reporting of the SEP

Monitoring reports documenting the environmental and social performance of the Project during rehabilitation will be prepared by the PIU Team for submission to MEPA management and to the World Bank. These reports will include a section regarding stakeholder engagement and grievance management. Table 4 proposes a comprehensive set of indicators related to SEP performance at this stage.

*Table 4: SEP Indicators to Be Documented in Progress Reports*

<b>Engagement with PAPs</b>
Number and location of formal and informal meetings with PAPs
Number and location of community awareness raising activities or meetings
Number of men and women that attended each of the meetings above
Number, location, attendance and documentation of the meetings held with the municipalities and communities or other stakeholders
For each meeting, number and nature of comments received, actions agreed during these meetings, status of those actions, and how the comments were included in the Project ESMP.
Minutes of meetings of formal meetings and summary note of informal meetings will be annexed to the report. They will summarize the view of attendees and distinguish between comments raised by men and women.
<b>Engagement with other stakeholders</b>
Number and nature of engagement activities with other stakeholders, disaggregated by category of stakeholder (Governmental departments, municipalities, NGOs)
Issues raised by NGOs and other stakeholders, actions agreed with them and status of those actions
Minutes of meetings will be annexed to the six-monthly report
Number and nature of Project documents publicly disclosed
Number and nature of updates of the Project website
Number and categories of comments received on the website
<b>Grievance Resolution Mechanism</b>
Number of grievances received, in total and at the local level, at PIU Level, disaggregated by nature of Grievances, Actions takes and etc.
Number of grievances received from affected people, external stakeholders
Number of grievances which have been (i) opened, (ii) opened for more than 30 days, (iii) those which have been resolved, (iv) closed, and (v) number of responses that satisfied the complainants, during the reporting period disaggregated by category of grievance and its subsequent development.
<b>Workers Grievances</b>
Number of grievances raised by workers, disaggregated by gender of workers and worksite
Number of worker's grievances (i) opened, (ii) open during more than 30 days, (iii) resolved, (iv) closed, and (v) number of responses that satisfied the workers, during the reporting period disaggregated by category of grievance, gender, age of workers and worksite.
Profile of those who lodge a grievance (gender, age, worksite), by category of grievances.

The reporting on Environmental and Social activities conducted by PIU and the Supervision and Monitoring Consultants during the rehabilitation phase will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the ESMP.

During the Project development and rehabilitation phase, the PIU Team will prepare brief monthly reports on E&S performance for PIU Management which will include an update on implementation of the stakeholder engagement plan and include indicators in Table 4. Monthly reports will be used to develop quarterly and annual reports reviewed by senior PIU managers. The quarterly and annual

reports will be disclosed on the Project website and made available in the Town halls of the project affected Municipalities.

Six-monthly E&S reports will be prepared and submitted to the World Bank during the rehabilitation period. A section on stakeholder engagement will be included in these reports which will include an update on implementation of the stakeholder engagement plan and include indicators in Table 4.

## 8. Involvement of stakeholders in monitoring activities

The Project provides several opportunities to stakeholders, especially Project Affected Parties to monitor certain aspects of Project performance and provide feedback. Grievance Resolution Committees in each of the affected Municipalities will allow PAPs to submit grievances and other types of feedback. Citizen/PAP surveys at the project mid-point and end stages will also allow PAPs to provide feedback on project performance. Furthermore, frequent and regular community meetings and interactions with PIU Team, especially local GRM focal point, will allow PAPs and other local stakeholders to be heard and engaged.

PIU Team and its focal point will report back to PAPs and other stakeholder groups, primarily through public meetings in project affected Municipalities and/or Villages. Minutes of meetings will be shared during subsequent public meetings. Feedback received through the GRM will be responded to in writing and verbally, to the extent possible. Sms' and phone calls will be used to respond to stakeholders whose telephone numbers are available. Key Project updates will be posted on MEPA's website. If necessary, social media will also be used to report back to different stakeholders.

## 9 Summary of the Initial Consultations with Stakeholders on ESMF and RPF

Note: Once the draft SEP Document is approved by all the parties, public consultation meetings shall take place.

## Annexes

### Annex 1. Feedback Form

<b>Stakeholders Category:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Affected Party <input type="checkbox"/> Other Affected Party <input type="checkbox"/> Vulnerable Group			
<b>Institutional affiliation of feedback provider:</b>			
<b>Date of feedback:</b>			
<b>Name of the Project:</b>			
<b>Name of the creditor/grant recipient:</b>			
<b>Name of responsible person for feedback responder (if any):</b>			
Feedback Nature	Comment	Concern	Respond to Feedback

## Annex 2. Records of Public Consultations

Institutional Affiliation of Stakeholder: -----

Place and format of the consultation: -----

Consultation Date -----

Number of participants -----

Number and category of vulnerable group members (if applicable) -----

Topics Discussed:

- 
- 
- 
- 

Questions raised:

- 
- 
- 
- 

Feedbacks received:

- 
- 
- 

Comments –

- 
- 
- 

Concerns -

- 
- 
- 

Stakeholder Representative:

PIU/ Representative:

Contractor/Supervision Company:

### Annex 3. Grievance Logbook

<b>Name of reporter:</b>			
<b>Institutional affiliation of reporter:</b>			
<b>Date of report:</b>			
<b>Name of the Project:</b>			
<b>Name of the creditor/grant recipient:</b>			
<b>Name of responsible person for grievance resolution (if any):</b>			
<b>Grievance Nature</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Actions Taken</b>	<b>Subsequent Developments</b>



Annex 4. Report Form on Public Grievance

<b>Designated GRM Officer</b>	<b>Name of Reporter if not Anonymous</b>	<b>Nature of Complain</b>	<b>Actions Taken/Redress Made</b>	<b>Subsequent Developments</b>	<b>Total # of Grievances</b>	<b># of Redress Grievances</b>