



**The Republic of
Uzbekistan State
Committee on Forestry**

**Uzbekistan Resilient Landscapes Restoration
Project**

P174135

**STAKEHOLDER
ENGAGEMENT PLAN**

Tashkent, Uzbekistan

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Acronyms and abbreviations

CA	- Central Asia
SCF-IRED	- State Committee on Forestry - International Relations and Ecotourism Development
CLO	- Community Liaison Officer
EC-IFAS	- Executive Committee of International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea
ESCP	- Environmental and Social Commitment Plan
ESF	- Environmental and Social Framework
ESIA	- Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
ESMF	- Environmental and Social Management Framework
ESS	- Environmental and Social Standards
GBV	- Gender-Based Violence
GM	- Grievance Mechanism
GHG	- Greenhouse Gas
GOU	- Government of Uzbekistan
GRC	- Grievance Redress Commission
GRS	- Grievance Redress Service
LFCC	- Low Forest-Cover Country
LDN	- Land Degradation Neutrality
M&E	- Monitoring and Evaluation
MOA	- Ministry of Agriculture
MOF	- Ministry of Finance
NDC	- Nationally Determined Contribution
NSC	- National Steering Committee
OIPs	- Other Interested Parties
PA	- Protected Area
PAPs	- Project-affected Parties
PDO	- Project Development Objectives
PIU	- Project Implementation Unit
RESILAND UZ	- Uzbekistan Resilient Landscapes Restoration Project
SCF	- State Committee of Forestry
SEA	- Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SEP	- Stakeholder Engagement Plan
SH	- Sexual Harassment
SOP	- Series of Projects
UN	- United Nations
WB	- The World Bank

I. INTRODUCTION

Drylands in Central Asia are one of the most rapidly degrading and climate-vulnerable areas in the world. A mix of natural arid conditions and increasing anthropogenic pressures, such as converting land to intensified commercial agriculture, logging, and pasturing, have led to land degradation, erosion, and loss of vegetation cover (forest degradation has been ongoing for at least one century in Uzbekistan). This, in turn, has affected the productivity of agriculture, the resilience of transport/infrastructure, and the potential for tourism development, while increasing the fragility of the region. The region is increasingly exposed to intense weather events and natural disasters, which further degrade the landscapes, the living conditions, and the economic opportunities of people. Climate change impacts are expected to worsen the condition of countries' natural resources and the overall resilience of their populations and ecosystems.

Forest degradation has been ongoing for at least one century in Uzbekistan. Deforestation along mountainous rivers has caused formation of mudflows and destruction of irrigation systems. Moreover, climate change in Uzbekistan is progressing and may only worsen in the future: moisture availability may decline and consequently the probability of receiving reasonable crop harvests in non-irrigated lands will decrease, as well as fodder biomass in pastures. In combination with increasing anthropogenic load, it will result in increasing the pressure on natural pastures, their further degradation and withdrawal of non-irrigated (dry) lands from economic turnover. In this context it becomes a necessity to find alternative methods of business, which could generate income for the people under conditions of current climatic change and restore normal condition and functions of ecosystems of drying zones for further sustainable use¹.

Uzbekistan is a low forest-cover country (LFCC), with 3.68 million ha of land covered with forests ("forested land"), corresponding to 8.6% of the land area. The main function of nearly the entire forest estate is protection of soil and water; the wood production function is negligible. The largest forest areas (estimated to more than 3 million ha) are located in cold desert areas and consist mainly of low saxaul forests, which have the characteristics of woodlands than forests. Forests are likely to be significantly impacted by climate change but can contribute to increase resilience and reduce vulnerability of social systems and ecosystems in the country. Researchers expect that even small changes in temperature and precipitation could greatly affect future forest growth and survival in Uzbekistan.

In accordance with the Resolution No.70 of the United Nations General Assembly, adopted at the UN Summit on Sustainable Development in September 2015, the Government of Uzbekistan has adopted national indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - a Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No.841 from 20 October 2018 "On Measures for Implementation of National Sustainable Development Goals and Targets for the Period up to 2030". By this decision, Uzbekistan approved national sustainable development goals, targets and indicators for the period up to 2030, including target 15.3 in the area of land degradation neutrality (LDN). The voluntary LDN target adopted by Uzbekistan is "*By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world*".

The Uzbekistan Resilient Landscapes Restoration Project (RESILAND UZ) comes under the umbrella of a regional RESILAND Central Asia (CA) + program, the objective of which is to increase the resilience of regional landscapes in Central Asia. The Program will comprise analytics and advisory (funded by Bank Budget and Bank-executed Trust Funds such as PROGREEN), country projects, and a GEF-financed project. The Program will include at least three countries (Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyz Republic) and support activities with regional spillovers, namely (i) improved connectivity and integrity of natural resources across borders, (ii) increased resilience of key regional infrastructure prone to the impacts of land degradation (e.g., roads, railways, and dams), and (iii) increased resilience of transboundary communities benefitting from more productive landscapes and livelihood opportunities. The Program will also help establish a regional platform for high-level dialogue to support harmonization of policies and approaches between countries on landscape restoration, designed as a subcomponent of the UZ RESILAND project. The subcomponent will be executed by the Regional Environment Center for

¹ <http://www.fao.org/3/k9589e/k9589e17.pdf>

Central Asia (CAREC), which will be contracted directly by the Project implementing agency (GoU, State Committee on Forestry/SCF).

A regional program on landscape restoration and management is considered the most effective approach to making a difference in the region, as opposed to individual country-specific projects. Since transboundary areas are hotspots for land degradation and poverty and restoring land can provide a dual benefit of increased productivity and improved livelihoods, and address risks to communities and infrastructure, regional cooperation is needed to harmonize approaches and harness the ecological and economic benefits across shared corridors. In this context, national approaches would not be as effective in affecting landscape restoration. A regional program is also aligned with the countries' changed vision of addressing the degradation of regional public goods by coming together as one region.

The Uzbekistan Resilient Landscapes Restoration Project is a key instrument for the implementation of the 2020 Presidential Decree No 4850, that brings the Government of Uzbekistan (GoU) sustainability agenda into action. The Uzbekistan Resilient Landscapes Restoration Project budget will amount US\$150 million of which a US\$142 million credit and a US\$8 million PROGREEN grant. The overall objective of the Project is to support Uzbekistan's global commitments on LDN, and Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to Greenhouse Gas (GHG) mitigation. It will support Uzbekistan's commitment under the 2018 Bonn Challenge to restore 500,000 hectares of degraded land by 2030 and additional 500,000 hectares with the support of the international community, and the 2018 Astana Resolution on reinforced cooperation on landscape restoration in Central Asia.

The Project will be implemented by the SCF over a five-year period. The geographic focus of the Project are six transboundary corridors² that traverse Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, with Project-financed activities taking place on the Uzbek side of the corridors. Landscape restoration will bring significant economic value in support of the GoU economic development agenda from direct, indirect, and global benefits, for e.g., income from forest and non-forest products and nature-based tourism; food from agroforestry and horticulture; revenues from concessions, taxes, and permit fees; livelihoods and farm/non-farm jobs; avoided losses and reduced maintenance costs of infrastructure; flood control; reduced health costs due to reduced air pollution; and global benefits from reduced carbon emissions and biodiversity conservation. Nature-based tourism and ecotourism are high priorities for the GoU, with ambitious plans for further development of the sector for economic development in the provinces; the project will strongly support these aspirations as part of the interventions in protected areas (PAs) and as livelihood options outside PAs. The Project will also provide an opportunity for the GoU to reinforce its status as a leader in Central Asia on the green agenda.

² For the purposes of the project, *transboundary corridors* are geographical spaces that provide connectivity between landscapes, ecosystems, and natural or modified habitats, ensuring the maintenance of ecosystem services. The corridors connect a mosaic of different land uses – protected areas, forests, pastureland, degraded agriculture lands, and irrigated land.

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project will be implemented by the SCF over a five-year period. The geographic focus of the Project is six transboundary corridors that traverse Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, and project-financed activities will take place on the Uzbekistan side. The corridors span across degraded border areas within the provinces of Jizzakh, including the Zaamin National Park/PA in Zaamin district; Samarkand, including the Zarafshan National Park/PA in Jomboy and Bulungur districts; Surkhandarya, including the Bobatag/Key Biodiversity Area and Uzun forest in Uzun and Shurchi districts; Namangan, including the Pop forest in Pop district; Syrdarya, including the Qolqansir forest in Syrdarya district; and Kashkadarya, including the Kitab and Shakhrisabz forests in Kitab and Shakhrisabz districts.

2.1. Project objectives

The Project is part of the RESILAND CA+ Program, whose goal is to increase resilience of regional landscapes in Central Asia. The regional impact of the Program will be measured by aggregating the results of individual country projects and monitoring the results of regional activities. Accordingly, the Project objectives and indicators are harmonized across the RESILAND CA+ country projects. The objective of the Project is to increase area under sustainable landscape management by rural communities in selected provinces in Uzbekistan, and promote collaboration among Central Asia countries on transboundary landscape restoration. Project activities are grouped into the following four inter-related components, which are further grouped into sub-components.

2.2. Project components and activities

Component 1: Strengthen Institutions and Policies, and Regional Collaboration. This component will finance consulting services, goods, training and workshops, and operating costs. Sub-component 1.1 will support the development of an appropriate policy and reform of the legal and institutional framework to restore and sustainably manage forest landscapes in Uzbekistan. It will develop the country's first National Forest Inventory (NFI), which will serve, among other, to enhance planning capacities in support of Uzbekistan's LDN and NDC targets. Sub-component 1.2 will support the development of an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Platform for FLR and forest management within the Forest Design Institute (O'rmonloyikha) of the SCF, in support of data-based decision making on forest and landscape management planning, including afforestation, reforestation and other FLR investments. Sub-component 1.3 will promote Uzbekistan's collaboration with Central Asia countries on transboundary landscape restoration by setting up a Regional Landscape Restoration Platform for policy and strategy harmonization, and for addressing new emerging climate threats at the regional level. *The regional spillovers of this component are related to cross-fertilization of knowledge and harmonization of policies, standards, technologies, and consistency in evaluation methods for transboundary landscape restoration across Central Asia countries.*

Sub-component 1.1: Strengthen Institutions and Policies. The sub-component will be implemented at the national level, focusing on SFF lands, PAs of various categories, and forested landscapes under other legal tenure categories/sectors. The targeted provinces will serve as pilots for policies and legislative measures and for implementation of pilot integrated land-use plans. The following five groups of activities will be supported:

- a) Enabling policies and legal framework for FLR and forest management: development of a unified policy and institutional reform for forest landscape management, harmonization of the legal framework on forests and landscape management through drafting of a comprehensive Forest Code, reflecting the wider role of forests in landscapes, and development of a national strategic plan (a master plan and an action plan) for FLR, forest management, and approaches for collaborative management with communities and user groups to address FLR. These deliverables will be submitted to the government for approval.
- b) Planning and implementing the first NFI: Setting up Uzbekistan's first NFI and a National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS) to provide data for decision-making on forest and landscape management and restoration. The NFI would provide reliable information on the state of Uzbekistan's forests and forest land to be used for policy modifications, future related policies and management of forests, and reporting on climate commitments. The NFMS will be a data platform on which the NFI will be presented, along with measurement, reporting and verification

(MRV) functions to produce high-quality, reliable data on forests.

- c) Strengthening the scientific research base in FLR: Strengthening the capacity of the Forest Research Institute and conducting targeted applied field research work.
- d) Creating human capacities for monitoring, planning, and implementing FLR and forest management: this includes: (a) training of trainers in technical training schools and on-the-job training of technical and operational staff of the SCF and other entities engaged in forest and wildlife management and hunting, on objectives and methods for FLR; (b) training of relevant community organizations on scoping, planning, and implementation of FLR based on their needs and priorities; and (c) developing educational curricula on FLR to be incorporated into the formal education curricula of the Tashkent State Agrarian University (TSAU)—Uzbekistan’s institution for bachelor and master education in forestry. Training will be provided to female SCF staff to become strong candidates for managerial positions, and to women at the central and leskhoz levels.
- e) Refining national LDN targets: reviewing Uzbekistan’s stated LDN targets and refining them based on new information from the NFI/NFMS on the degradation status, including submission of a revised communication document for government approval. The Project will specifically address the adaptation measures of ecosystems, as specified in the NDC of Uzbekistan, in particular the restoration of forests in mountain and piedmont areas; and the conservation, restoration, and maintenance of ecological balance in the protected nature territories.³

In the first two years of implementation, the Project will support the forest policy review process; provide support in harmonizing legislative texts; prepare, launch, and implement the first NFI; operationalize the NFMS, develop an applied research agenda tailor-made to the needs of the Project; and outline the capacity building program. In the last 3 years of implementation, the NFI system will be in place; the FLR Strategic Master Plan will be developed; the new Forest Code will be introduced; a functional FLR monitoring system will be in place; and necessary capacity will be developed.

Sub-component 1.2: Develop an ICT Platform for Forest Landscape Restoration and Management. Establishing an ICT Platform for FLR and forest management within the Forest Design Institute as a two-way forest management information system that: monitors afforestation, reforestation, natural regeneration forests, and forest land use changes; a disaster response information platform; forest big data with mobile application; and a decision support tool that produces tailor made recommendations on a set of forest-related subjects for decision making, planning, and monitoring of forest restoration and management operations, and disaster response and preparedness actions. This sub-component will benefit from the technical support of Korea Forest Services (KFS), which has experience in the development of such ICT platforms. The sub-component will also finance the development of user-friendly guidelines for the Platform, purchase relevant ICT equipment for the SCF Forest Design Institute, and onboarding of SCF and leskhoz staff through training, including a specific focus for female staff. The new ICT Platform will also facilitate baseline mapping of NBT sites.

Sub-component 1.3: Strengthen Regional Collaboration. The objective of this sub-component is to promote Uzbekistan’s collaboration with Central Asia countries on transboundary cooperation and landscape restoration, given the critical need to address emerging threats at the regional level, including impacts of climate change. Activities supported under the sub-component will be designed in support of the RESILAND CA+ Program, and enable better governance and management of shared resources, exploit economies of scale related to regional NBT, and facilitate collective action to address these and other common goals. It will allow countries to come together to address challenges, find regional solutions for shared challenges faced by multiple countries, and thus promote global public goods. It will finance a Regional Exchange Platform that will host: (i) semi-annual meetings of RESILAND CA+ implementing entities to discuss program progress, (ii) annual fora for ministries responsible for forests, landscape restoration, and environment to discuss landscape management and restoration trends and actions, and (iii) annual fora for the broader cross-section groups of stakeholders engaged in landscape

³ See [INDC Uzbekistan 18-04-2017 Eng.pdf \(unfccc.int\)](#).

restoration, including non-government entities, prominent regional organizations, private sector, and development partners. The Platform will allow for a two-way dialog between government and non-government actors on technologies and approaches to landscape restoration, including knowledge exchange.

The sub-component will support the implementation of several key regional activities identified by the ICSD in its 10-year Regional Environmental Program for Sustainable Development, including: (i) development of an MoU for facilitating border-crossing for NBT in PAs and unique natural sites shared between countries, (ii) development of an MoU for using common modern methods of inventory of flora and fauna diversity, and ecosystem condition among transboundary corridors, (iii) development of a joint transboundary management plan for ecological corridors for migratory animals, and transboundary cooperation agreements for addressing issues of protection of key species and habitats, including PAs from fires, invasive species, etc., (iv) development of a protocol for using nature-based solutions, including erosion control and tree planting along roads to increase resilience of infrastructure; and (v) development of an MoU for the designation of a transboundary ‘Peace Park’ between countries along the lines of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Peace Forest Initiative (2020).⁴ A regional online database will be established and hosted at the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC, <http://centralasiacimateportal.org>) to store and publish data and publications on sustainable landscape management and restoration. The implementation of this sub-component will be phased by focusing during the first 8 months of the Project on the establishment of an overarching governance structure composed of implementing entities of the RESILAND CA+ projects, and then begin to implement the sub-component work plan.

Component 2: Enhance Resilient Landscape Management and Livelihoods. This component will finance works, consulting services, non-consulting services, goods, enterprise development matching grants, training and workshops, and operating costs. Sub-component 2.1 will develop robust forest and tree-based intervention packages to deliver production, service values, and restoration, leading to enhanced and sustainable forest landscapes in the Project corridors. Sub-component 2.2 will incentivize communities within the corridors to engage in landscape restoration and management practices by enhancing resilient livelihoods and improving the incomes of beneficiaries in target areas. It will do so by providing financial and non-financial services to existing and new enterprises. *The regional spillovers of this component are related to improved connectivity and integrity of natural resource across borders (including biodiversity), increased resilience of key regional infrastructure such as roads and railways, and increased resilience and reduced fragility of NRM-based livelihoods of corridor communities.*

Sub-component 2.1: Enhance Tree-based Landscape Restoration and Management. The main activities supported under this sub-component will include⁵: (i) *ecological site classification*: development of a three-tier land electronic Geographic Information System (GIS)-based unit classification system as a decision support tool, including for aligning species with site characteristics that will link with and support integrated land use plans for Project corridors; (ii) *production-oriented interventions* with protective/restoration benefits; and (iii) *ecosystem service-oriented interventions* in support of rehabilitation, restoration⁶ and protection, eco-structures, biodiversity, and a Green Wager Program. Model nurseries will be supported to ensure supply of quality seedling stock for restoration activities. Given the structural constraints of climate, soils, and topography, all restoration and tree-based interventions will aim to generate both production and service values concurrently, and where possible, allow flexible management to facilitate responses to future changes in physical growing conditions and/or changing demand for products and services. Involved actors’ different levels of access to resources of land, finance, time, and skill levels will inform the type and scale of any intervention.

Restoration activities are expected to have a positive impact on water balance in project areas as enhanced tree cover will add to improved water retention capacity of soils. Furthermore, recognizing that water

⁴ URL: <https://www.unccd.int/news-events/unccd-ready-welcome-countries-new-peace-forest-initiative>.

⁵ Areas of [plantations](#) to be supported were selected using the new World Bank Rating System for Project Resilience, based on sites’ climate projections, hazard exposures, impacts, and risk mitigation measures. Interventions will be prioritized according to the main drivers of degradation in each area and their relative impact.

⁶ Using IUCN’s Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology. URL: <https://www.iucn.org/theme/forests/our-work/forest-landscape-restoration/restoration-opportunities-assessment-methodology-roam>.

management is key for landscape restoration, all activities will include a strong focus on efficient water usage and harvesting techniques, including rainwater harvesting, use of hydrogels, etc., and on hydrology, to minimize surface soil loss, flooding, and siltation. Where possible, riparian tugai forests will also be restored to stabilize water course banks. The choice of species and sites for tree-based interventions will be guided by ecological site classification to ensure optimal water use efficiency. Simple physical, biological, and mechanical measures to control grazing and fire management will be considered as part of landscape restoration. Emphasis will be placed on engaging women, youth, and other marginalized groups as well as the private sector in activities. The Green Wager Program⁷ will be based on participatory integrated land use plans developed for the relevant sites with the technical support from the SCF Forest Design Institute and will be implemented through the engagement of local organizations and communities to participate as daily wagers, or through community assistance programs, in activities that contribute directly or indirectly to restoration of corridor landscapes. See Annex 2 for further details on the Green Wager Program, which will also be elaborated in the Project Operations Manual (POM).

The sub-component will be implemented in a phased manner during the five-year project period. In the first 18-24 months of implementation, it will be implemented in select regions, districts, and villages/clusters together with preparatory activities for at scale implementation in years 3 to 5.

Sub-component 2.2: Enhance Resilient Livelihoods and Value Chains. The main activities under this sub-component are formation and strengthening of livelihood groups and enterprises; carrying out market assessments to identify demand-driven livelihood activities; providing business training and supporting business plan development to form the basis of proposals for matching grants provided under this sub-component; and providing downstream business development support, the establishment of linkages and collaboration with commercial banks, private sector associations, and other development programs that provide credit-based financial services and support infrastructure and digitalization for sustainability.

Technical assistance and capacity building support will be carried out under the sub-component that will focus on enhancing existing/current natural resource-based or linked livelihood activities and creating new types of livelihood activities, including NBT-based livelihoods and local economic development activities. The Community Operations Manual (COM), which will be annexed to the POM, will list potential livelihood activities under each of the above categories based on a market assessment. Priority will be given to value addition of forestry and natural resource-related activities and promoting value chain development. The sub-component will support the costs of Technical Assistance Partners (TAPs), which will consist of NGOs and specialized firms and Community Business Agents (CBAs). A system of matching grants will be established for enterprise development to provide the working capital needed to start-up or expand livelihood activities as identified in the business plans of community-level business enterprises, both individual and group-based. Implementation of activities will be followed by business development support and promotion of linkages between community enterprises and markets/private sector, and support climate-smart value addition and value chain development.

The sub-component will be implemented in villages/clusters of villages situated within or adjacent to PAs in the six project corridors and follow a two-track implementation approach to support: (i) improvements or expansion of existing enterprises wherein the Project Implementation Unit (PIU) will work with the relevant lezhoz, regional government agencies, and ongoing enterprise support programs to provide ‘light touch TA’; and (ii) formation of new group-based enterprises belonging to community members who are poor and vulnerable to impacts of land degradation and climate change. During the first 6-8 months of implementation, the PIU will recruit regional-level livelihood specialists, engage TAPs and CBAs, organize orientation workshops for local government officials and stakeholders, prepare the implementation plan, conduct a baseline study/market assessment in target villages, and develop a preliminary Monitoring Information System (MIS) to monitor the component. From month nine onwards, both tracks will be supported by providing robust TA and business development support to both existing and new enterprises. The COM will be prepared to guide the implementation of the sub-component.

⁷ There is no universal definition of a green wager program. For the purpose of this project, the Program will provide livelihood opportunities to communities, especially youth and women, to enhance job creation and community engagement in afforestation, reforestation, and other greening activities for landscape restoration.

Component 3: Enhance Protected Areas and Nature-based Tourism. This component will finance works, consulting services, non-consulting services, goods, training and workshops, and operating costs. It will promote sustainable land and natural resource management practices through improved management of the Zaamin National Park and Zarafshan National Park and sustainable NBT. *The regional spillovers of this component will be improved conditions for regional NBT development and biodiversity conservation. These PAs are also significant carbon stores, providing sequestration benefits.*

Sub-component 3.1: Improve Protected Area Management. The sub-component will finance improved protection and management of two PAs managed by the SCF - Zaamin National Park (Jizzakh) and Zarafshan National Park (Samarkand).⁸ Management plans of the PA will be updated and improved where needed and two new visitor centers – one in each park - will be established to help attract, inspire, engage in dialog, and educate a growing number of tourists in both parks and communities residing in the vicinity of the parks, as well as other investments to be defined in accordance with the latest Management Plans. These could include: (i) additional visitor facilities such as new or rehabilitated hiking trails, scenic viewpoints, observation platforms, picnic areas, and campgrounds; (ii) PA management infrastructure such as small park buildings (headquarters, ranger outposts, staff housing, etc.) and improved physical demarcation or signage; (iii) equipment that could include vehicles, field equipment, and office equipment; and (iv) incremental recurrent costs for PA management activities specific to project implementation, such as office and field supplies, field rations, fuel, support for park auxiliaries (such as community volunteers) if any, boundary maintenance, and equipment maintenance during the expected five-year project life.

Sub-component 3.2: Enhance Nature-based tourism. The sub-component will promote environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient forms of NBT, targeted both on domestic tourists and a potentially growing number of international visitors. The investments will be made within or adjacent to SFF lands, such as Bobotag and Uzun (Surkhandarya), Pop (Namangan), Qolgansir (Syrdarya), and Kitab and Shakhrisabz (Kashkadarya) and national parks in Jizzakh, Samarkand, Surkhandarya, Namangan, Syrdarya, and Kashkadarya provinces. Activities will complement the ongoing World Bank-financed Medium-Size Cities Integrated Urban Development Project (MSCIUDP, P162929) by upgrading ‘gateway settlements’⁹ and creating rural-urban tourism corridors to realize increased and sustainable levels of tourist visitation. The types of investments that could be considered under include, but are not limited to improved basic infrastructure, trail systems, picnic and camping areas, and appropriate recreational facilities that promote sustainable natural resource uses, baseline mapping of promising NBT sites, connecting smaller settlements to trails to promote sustainable natural resources, diversify activities and potential for economic development, in combination with private sector engaging activities under the Project. The sub-component will also finance NBT promotion activities focused especially on the planned project corridors, and NBT-related technical studies.

Both sub-components will finance training and TA, specifically related to PA management and NBT, for park rangers and other PAs staff and qualified personnel that manage PAs, as well as for forest enterprises in their preparation of NBT-related business plans, *leskhoz*, NGOs/industry associations, private companies, other entities which might establish co-management agreements with SCF for specific land parcels, and community-based providers of NBT services. A specific focus on women will be included in the training and TA. The component will be implemented in a phased manner to allow for on-the-ground investments to be carried out after key planning studies are completed. A green design visitor center in each of two project-supported National Parks will be undertaken in the first 18 months of the Project. Similarly, new NBT investments in and around SFF land will be based upon recent or updated strategic studies, technical designs, and management planning documents to help ensure their success and sustainability. Training events, courses, and TA consultancies will be specified during Year 1 of project

⁸ Within the five-year project timeframe, it is expected that these two PAs will qualify to be added to the IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas, the first in Central Asia. URL: <https://iucngreenlist.org/>.

⁹ For the purposes of Project interventions, the ‘gateway settlements’ are defined as typical peripheral small towns or villages located in the areas adjacent to natural areas that share similar characteristics (economic, administrative, territorial development, natural resource management, and other). They function as entry points to nature-based touristic sites (natural habitat, forests, mountain trails, lakes/water reservoir-based and other natural or farm-based recreational areas); often provide accommodation, goods, and services to eco-tourists, and have a significant mutual impact with the surrounding areas. The gateway settlements, as such, are integral parts of NBT value chains.

implementation and delivered through the duration of the Project.

Component 4: Project Management and Coordination. Component 4 will finance consulting services, non-consulting services, goods, equipment, training, incremental operating costs, and other eligible expenses associated with project implementation. A PIU will be established within the State Committee on Forestry - International Relations and Ecotourism Development (SCF-IREC) to coordinate implementation, project management, coordination and reporting tasks, including preparation of annual work plans and budgets, procurement activities, financial management (FM) of project funds, hiring of external auditors, knowledge management, development and maintenance of a project communication program, grievance redress mechanism, and M&E and reporting. The PIU will also be responsible for citizen engagement, ensuring project compliance with and monitoring implementation of Environmental and Social Framework-related issues. and that due attention is given to gender aspects as per Project design.

2.3. Environmental and social risks of the project

The RESILAND UZ is being prepared under the World Bank's Environmental and Social Framework (ESF). Under the ESF, projects such as RESILAND UZ must comply with ten Environmental and Social Standards (ESS) in investment project lending financed by the Bank. ESS 10 on Stakeholders Engagement and Information Disclosure, requires the implementing agencies to 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 Standard also requires a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) to engage with the stakeholders which forms this document. The SEP details the stakeholders relevant for the project and the project's arrangements to be engaged with them during the implementation. Before presenting the results of stakeholder engagement, the project development objective and components are enumerated in the following sections.

2.4. Scope, objectives, and structure of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan

The SCF will engage with stakeholders throughout the project life cycle, commencing such engagement as early as possible during the project preparation 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. The objectives of this SEP are to:

- Identify stakeholders who are indirectly or directly affected by and/or interested in the project;
- Outline modalities for information dissemination and stakeholder engagement activities, including their purpose, frequency, and location during project preparation and implementation;
- Promote and provide means for effective and inclusive engagement with project-affected parties throughout the project life on issues that could potentially create an impact;
- Define the roles and responsibilities of different actors to implement and monitor these activities;
- Elaborate on the blueprint for a functional grievance redress/beneficiary feedback mechanism;
- Ensure that technically and culturally appropriate project information on environmental and social risks and impacts is disclosed in a timely, understandable, accessible format.

The process of stakeholder engagement will involve the following, as set out in this SEP:

- (i) stakeholder identification and analysis;
- (ii) planning the strategy, timing and how the engagement with stakeholders will take place;
- (iii) disclosure of information;
- (iv) consultation with stakeholders;
- (v) addressing and responding to grievances; and
- (vi) involvement of the local population is essential to the success of the project in order to ensure smooth collaboration among project staff and local communities and to minimize and mitigate environmental and social risks related to the proposed project activities..

III. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

3.1. Relevant National Laws and Regulations

The key national legislation for consultations and stakeholder engagement is the regulations relating to access to information, any legal requirements related to public consultations plus existing channels for grievances.

Constitution

The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan (adopted on December 8, 1992) includes a chapter on Economic and Social rights of the citizens. According to it everyone is entitled to: “Have the right, both individually and collectively, to submit applications and proposals, and to lodge complaints with competent state bodies, institutions or public representatives. Applications, proposals and complaints shall be considered in the procedure and within the time-limit specified by law” (Chapter VIII, Article 35).

Environment, Community Health and Safety

The national ESA procedure is regulated by the Law "on Environmental Expertise "(2000), updated on 14.09.2017, and Cabinet of Ministers Resolution № 541 of 07.09.2020: "On Approval of the Regulation on State Environmental Expertise". The Regulation includes information on the procedure for mandatory public discussions and hearings on draft environmental impact assessments for proposed activities belonging to Environmental Impact Categories I and II prior to the State Environmental Expertise.

Public participation in ESA process. The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan (arts. 50.55) lays the foundation for the participation of citizens and public associations in environmental management. Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan of 09.12.1992. (updated on 18.04.2018) "On nature protection" in Articles 12-13 regulates the right of citizens to unite in public organizations for nature protection, to request and receive information about the state of the environment and measures taken for its protection, as well as the authority of NGOs established. Legislation in the field of ecology and environmental protection provides for public participation as a) an individual citizen or a group of citizens; b) through citizens' self-governance bodies and c) through non-governmental non-profit organizations.

Direct participation of non-commercial environmental protection organizations is envisaged in the course of EE of documentation for construction of new and reconstruction of existing facilities for management purposes. In particular, Article 27 of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Nature Protection", as well as Article 23 of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan of 2018. "The SEE law enables NGOs and citizens to carry out public EE in any area of activity that needs to be justified by independent groups of specialists at the initiative of the NGOs themselves and at their own expense or on a voluntary basis. The public expertise may be carried out independently of the state ecological expertise. It is prohibited to hinder the implementation of public EE. It is established that the conclusion of the public EE is of a recommendatory nature. In addition, during the SEE, the organization-customers of its implementation are obliged to publish an announcement of the environmental impact assessment and information of its results in the media, in cases where the authorized bodies include the object of construction in the list of important objects.

Consultations in the process of Land Acquisition and Resettlement. Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan №-5491 (August 5, 2019). The Decree “On Additional Measures to Unconditionally Guarantee the Right of Ownership of Citizens and Business Entities” governs the procedures, mechanism of making decisions on the seizure of land for state and public needs which is (i) allowed only after an open discussion with interested parties whose land is planned to be withdrawn, as well as assessing the benefits and costs;

On November 16, 2019, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the “Regulation on the procedure for seizure of land plots and providing compensation to the owners of real estate objects located on the seized land plot”. This Regulation determines the procedure for the seizure of a land plot for the State and public needs. According to this resolution: (i) both local municipalities (khokimiyats) and investors may initiate land seizure following the procedures provided in the regulations; (ii) if there is a need to withdraw the land plot, an open discussion is to be held with the participation of the khokimiyat representatives and investors and owners;

Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan #ZRU-410 dated September 22, 2016 on introduction of amendments and additions to the law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “**On Labor Protection**”. The purpose of this Law is to regulate relations in the field of labor protection. Labor protection legislation consists of this Law and other legislative acts. If an international treaty of the Republic of Uzbekistan establishes rules other than those provided by the legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan on labor protection, then the rules of the international treaty are applied. This Law applies to:

- employees who are in labor relations with enterprises, institutions and organizations (hereinafter referred to as organizations), as well as with individual employers;
- students of higher educational institutions, students of secondary specialized, vocational educational institutions, students of other educational institutions undergoing industrial practice;
- military personnel recruited to work in organizations;
- citizens doing alternative service;
- persons serving a sentence under a court sentence during the period of their work in organizations determined by institutions for the execution of punishment, as well as persons who are subject to an administrative penalty in the form of administrative arrest, persons involved in other types of work, including those organized in the interests of society and state.

Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan #UP-5041 dated May 11, 2017 "**On establishment of the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Forestry**". Determine the main tasks and areas of activity of the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Forestry:

- implementation of a unified state policy in the field of forestry, aimed at the comprehensive expansion and rational use of forest resources;
- development of proposals for the improvement of forestry legislation and the implementation of effective control over its observance;
- organization of effective management of the forest fund and protected natural areas, creation, reproduction, protection and protection of forest plantations, rational and careful use of forests;
- development and implementation of measures to prevent desertification, reforestation and protective afforestation in the republic, organization of work to create anti-erosion plantations on mountain slopes, in ravines and on waste lands;
- maintaining strict accounting and studying the forest fund, fauna and flora, introducing the achievements of science and advanced experience into the practice of forestry;
- protection of forests from fires, pests and diseases, illegal logging and other violations of forest legislation;
- organization of the development and implementation of a unified system of certification and standardization of planting material for ornamental plants;
- expansion and development of associated economic activities in forestry, implementation of measures for the production of seedlings, collection of medicinal herbs, organization of production and deep processing of agricultural products, beekeeping products, fish farming, animal husbandry, production of consumer goods;
- attraction of grants from international financial institutions to the industry, wide development of ecological tourism;
- organization of training, retraining and advanced training of specialists with higher and secondary specialized education in the field of forestry.

Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan #PP-2966 dated May 11, 2017 "**On organization of activities of the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Forestry**". In pursuance of the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated May 11, 2017 #-5041 "On the establishment of the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Forestry" and in order to effectively organize the activities of the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Forestry.

Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan #ZRU-445 dated September 11, 2017 “**About appeals of individuals and legal entities**”. The purpose of this Law is to regulate relations in the field of appeals of individuals and legal entities to state bodies and state institutions, as well as to their officials. This Law also applies to organizations with state participation and citizens' self-government bodies. This Law does not apply to:

- applications, the procedure for consideration of which is established by the legislation on administrative responsibility, civil procedural, criminal procedural, criminal executive, economic procedural and other legislative acts;
- mutual correspondence of state bodies, as well as their structural divisions.

The main principles for considering appeals are:

- legality;
- timeliness and completeness of consideration of appeals;
- uniformity of requirements for appeals;
- observance of the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of individuals and legal entities;
- inadmissibility of bureaucracy and red tape when considering appeals;
- transparency of the activities of state bodies, organizations and their officials when considering appeals.

Reception of individuals and representatives of legal entities is carried out by the head or other official of a state body, organization. For this, special structural subdivisions can be created in state bodies and organizations, officials responsible for reception are determined. Heads or other authorized officials of state bodies may organize off-site personal receptions of individuals and representatives of legal entities, as well as public receptions. Reception of individuals and representatives of legal entities is carried out on the established days and hours according to the reception schedule. Off-site personal receptions of individuals and representatives of legal entities, as well as public receptions, if necessary, may be held outside the reception schedules. A public reception can also be carried out by visiting courtyards (apartments), other premises and places.

If the resolution of the issues raised during the reception does not belong to the powers of the state body, organization or their official, then the relevant officials should explain to the applicant which body or organization should be contacted to resolve the issues set forth in the appeal.

During a personal reception, by decision of the head of a state body, organization and with notification of the applicant, special technical means (audio and video recording, as well as photography) may be used. When applying orally, an individual must present a document proving his identity, and a representative of a legal entity must present a document confirming his authority and proving his identity, with the exception of applications received during a public reception.

Oral appeals can also be submitted using information and communication technologies in real time, including through helplines, "hot lines" of state bodies, organizations and through videoconferencing.

Terms of consideration of appeals. The application or complaint is considered within fifteen days from the date of receipt by the state body, organization or their official, who are obliged to resolve the issue on the merits, and when additional study and (or) verification is required, the request for additional documents - within up to one month.

In cases where for the consideration of applications and complaints it is necessary to conduct an inspection, request additional materials or take other measures, the terms of their consideration can be exceptionally extended by the head of the relevant state body, organization, but not more than one month, with a message about this addressing.

The proposal is considered within a period of up to one month from the date of receipt by the state body, organization or their official, except for those proposals that require additional study, about which the individual or legal entity who submitted the proposal is notified in writing, within ten days.

Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan #PP-4850 dated October 6, 2020 "On approval of the concept of development of the forestry system of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030". The main objectives of the Concept are:

- introduction of rules and procedures for leasing and public-private partnerships based on the principles of a market economy in order to ensure the protection, conservation, restoration, cultivation and rational use of forests in the Republic of Uzbekistan;

- combating desertification, creating forests in order to prevent desertification in the Aral and Aral Sea regions;
- establishment of environmentally friendly, waste-free production in forests by attracting foreign investments into the industry;
- introduction of innovative technologies in forestry activities;
- a gradual transition to the practice of self-sufficiency through the introduction of a market economy mechanism in the organization and management of forestry;
- increasing the tourist potential of forests.

Approaches Concepts. When implementing the Concept, the following approaches are used:

- systematization and improvement of the regulatory and legal framework - implementation of international norms, codification of forest legislation, calculation of the economic potential of forests, the introduction of assessment mechanisms when allocating them for lease;
- rational use of the part of the forested land area of the forest fund, assessment of the effectiveness of work on afforestation, combating desertification;
- lease of forest lands, ensuring the transparency of the rules and procedures of public-private partnership with their effective and rational use;
- improvement of the monitoring system of the state of forests, formation of a fund of information resources;
- the creation of forests based on the soil and climatic conditions of the territory of the republic, the comprehensive expansion of the forest fund, the introduction of innovative technologies in the implementation of measures for their protection;
- organization of ecotourism routes and the necessary infrastructure for the development of ecotourism;
- widespread introduction on the lands of the forest fund of the results of scientific research in the cultivation of plants resistant to salinity and drought;
- participation in the events of the international community for the development of the forestry industry and the fight against desertification.

Forest management on the basis of public-private partnerships and improvement of the system of lease relations create opportunities for individuals and legal entities to receive stable socio-economic benefits from forest lands and resources.

Improving the system of social support for forestry workers. In order to effectively fulfill the tasks and obligations entrusted to forestry, it is necessary to strengthen their material and technical base. Wherein:

- forestry workers are fully provided with stamps, special clothing, working tools, communications, transport and technical equipment;
- events are held annually to celebrate the "Day of the Forester". Also, in order to stimulate those who have contributed to the development of the forestry field, an honorary title and a badge are established.
- Improvement of the system of training scientific personnel in the field of forestry

Joint activities are being carried out to increase the potential of higher educational institutions and research institutes that train forestry specialists. At the same time, to ensure a close connection between forestry and research institutes, the following measures are being taken:

- revision of the quota for admission to the relevant higher educational institutions, taking into account the needs of forestry;
- revision of sectoral curricula taking into account advanced modern scientific and practical experience;
- introduction of the practice of financing contract payments for students studying at the Faculty of Forestry of the relevant higher educational institutions at the expense of forestry funds;
- in order to increase the scientific potential of the Scientific Research Institute of Forestry, an increase in the admission quota for basic doctoral and doctoral studies and the development of a system of material incentives for them;

- in order to attract to work and stimulate gifted young scientists and specialists, the implementation of measures to improve their living conditions;
- development of targeted programs aimed at sustainable development of forestry, increasing its productivity in the most important areas of forestry development in cooperation with science and industry;
- restoration and organization of the student scientific community under the guidance of research assistants;
- promoting the importance of forestry and the beneficial properties of forests to young people, including the regular organization of forestry and environmental groups in schools.

Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan #PP-4960 dated January 21, 2021 "**On measures to develop science and stimulate research in the field of forestry**". In order to implement the Concept for the development of the forestry system of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030, ensure the integration of science and production, stimulate research work, as well as improve the system of training personnel with advanced foreign experience that corresponds to the level of international standards in forestry.

Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on guarantees and freedom of information access as of April 24, 1997 #400-I governs the relations arising in implementation process of constitutional right of everyone freely and to unimpeded seek, receive, research, to transfer and distribute information.

Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on principles and warranties of freedom of information as of December 12, 2002 #439-II. The main objectives of this Law are to ensure compliance with the principles and guarantees of freedom of information, the exercise of the right of everyone to freely and unimpededly seek, receive, research, disseminate, use and store information, as well as ensure the protection of information and information security of the individual, society and the state.

Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the appeals of individuals and legal entities as of December 03, 2014 #378 governs grievance redress procedure in Uzbekistan. This Law obliges state authorities to deal with appeals and provides clear framework to handle the case. The appeals can be in the form of applications, proposals and complaints and submitted in three ways: oral, written and digital format. The application or complaint shall be considered within fifteen days from the date of receipt in the state authority, which is obliged to resolve the issue on the merits, as well as require additional study and (or) check, a request for additional documents - up to one month. No project specific GM is warranted under the national legislation. However, it is allowed to apply to: a) conciliation commission; b) Labor Inspection under the Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations; and c) court.

3.2. World Bank Environmental and Social Standard on Stakeholder Engagement

The World Bank's ESF came into effect on October 1, 2018. The ESF includes =ESS 10, "Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure", which recognizes "the importance of open and transparent engagement between the Borrower and project stakeholders as an essential element of good international practice". ESS10 emphasizes that effective stakeholder engagement can significantly improve the environmental and social sustainability of projects, enhance project acceptance, and make a significant contribution to successful project design and implementation. ESS10 applies to all projects supported by the Bank through Investment Project Financing. The Borrower will engage with stakeholders as an integral part of the project's environmental and social assessment and project design and implementation. According to the World Bank's ESF (June 2018), 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 the 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 taken into account, or the reasons why it was not.

A SEP proportionate to the nature and scale of the project and its potential risks and impacts need 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). For more details on the WB Environmental and Social Standards, please follow the below links: www.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/environmental-and-social-framework/brief/environmental-and-social-standards.

IV. STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1. Stakeholder Mapping and Analysis

ESS10 recognizes two broad categories of stakeholders: “Project-affected parties” and “Other interested parties”. The latter includes “*those likely to be affected by the project because of actual impacts or potential risks to their physical environment, health, security, cultural practices, wellbeing, or livelihoods. These stakeholders may include individuals or groups, including local communities*”. They are the individuals or households most likely to observe changes from environmental and social impacts of the project. Project affected parties are described below.

- **Project-affected parties (PAPs)** – persons, groups and other entities within the project area of influence that are directly or indirectly, positively or adversely affected (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. PAP include
- **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 that may require special engagement efforts to ensure their equal representation in the consultation and decision-making process associated with the project(s).
- **Other interested parties (OIPs)** – individuals/groups/entities who consider or perceive their interests as being affected by the project and/or who have the potential to influence the project outcomes and the process of its implementation in some way.

4.2. Stakeholder identification: project-affected parties

One of the primary goals of the SEP is to identify stakeholders on which the project interventions can have positive and negative impacts on people’s live and sustainability of livelihoods. The primary project-affected parties will be farmers, livestock owners, and herders individually and as community groups who will benefit directly from improved forestry and agroforestry production on land they own or lease and through increased employment opportunities. The project interventions are aimed to bring positive impacts but some of activities may have temporarily or permanent impacts which need to be mitigated.¹⁰ Thus, a list of key stakeholder groups has been identified by the SCF as:

- Farmers and dekhkans
- Livestock owners
- Herders
- Local villagers and/or communities
- Rural family entrepreneurs
- Small rural entrepreneurs

4.3. Stakeholder identification: other interested parties

“Other interested parties” (OIPs) refers to individuals, groups, or organizations with an interest in the project, which may be because of the project location, its characteristics, its impacts, or matters related to public interest. These parties may include numerous government ministries and agencies as SCF operates with many different government bodies and the given project will affect them directly or indirectly.

OIPs will be SMEs engaged in processing of the increased products made available as well as their customers. As importantly, will be society at all levels, who will benefit from improved ecological service values, including soil, water, and biodiversity conservation, delivered from sustainably managed forest landscapes. At the same time, national, regional, and local forestry institutions will benefit from an enhanced resource base under their stewardship with new opportunities also for research, education, and training. The details of other interested parties are following:

- Leshozes (State forest enterprises)
- National, regional and local forestry institutions
- Tourist firms
- Entrepreneurs in tourism sector
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Ministry of Water Resources
- Ministry of Tourism and Sports
- Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations

¹⁰ Potential environmental and social impacts are described in the Environmental and Social Management Framework.

- Ministry of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction
- Ecology and Nature Protection Committee
- Ministry for Support of Mahalla and Family
- Meteorological Service Center
- Cadaster Agency
- Khunarmand Association
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Tashkent State Agrarian University
- UNESCO
- CAREC

4.4. Disadvantaged and Vulnerable Groups

As per ESS10, it is particularly important to understand project impact and whether it create equitable opportunities accessible to the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups or disproportionately fall on them. These groups often do not have a voice to express their concerns or understand the impact of a project. RESILAND UZ activities are intended for direct and indirect coverage of most vulnerable groups of the population, such as low-income households, remotely located communities, women and the youth who are beneficiaries of expected improvements in general economic conditions. Besides, the design of project activities will be directly focused on vulnerable groups in several ways: (a) it is planned to employ local labor for works on establishment of agroforestry and landscape restoration activities such as protective plantations, production-oriented plantations, production of goods and services using trees and shrubs etc. Local communities will be main actors: farmers and individual farms that can employ necessary labor; (b) women and the youth will take part in works on establishment of plantations and agro technical tending of plantations, this will allow them not only to earn income and to improve their economic wellbeing, but also to distract from undesirable and illegal actions if they remain to be unemployed. According to the Labor Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan articles #77 and #241, employment is allowed from the age 16. To prepare young people for work, it is allowed to hire students of general education schools, secondary special, vocational educational institutions to perform light work that does not harm their health and moral development, does not interfere with the learning process, in their free time - upon reaching the age of fifteen from written consent of one of the parents or one of the persons replacing the parents.

Examples of hazardous work activities prohibited for children include work:

- (a) with exposure to physical, psychological or sexual abuse;
- (b) underground, underwater, working at heights or in confined spaces;
- (c) with dangerous machinery, equipment or tools, or involving handling or transport of heavy loads;
- (d) in unhealthy environments exposing children to hazardous substances, agents, or processes, or to temperatures, noise or vibration damaging to health; or
- (e) under difficult conditions such as work for long hours, during the night or in confinement on the premises of the employer

Taking into account these above mentioned requirements, teenagers above 16 years old may be employed to carry out undemanding and unskilled works, such as manual weeding, watering and potentially harvesting.

The Project will allow for vulnerable groups of the population to be able to express their views and concerns on the UZ RESILAND project. Interaction with these parties will be in the form of meetings and public consultations, disclosure of information, introduction of the grievance redress mechanism at local level where the Project activities will be implemented.

Besides women and the youth, the category of vulnerable groups will include poor segments of the population and disabled persons for whom it will be difficult to come to the venues of meetings and public consultations. Owing to this, convenient venues and small target meetings will be organized for vulnerable groups where they will feel comfortable to ask questions and raise issues. Vehicles will be provided for transportation of residents of remote areas to nearest venues of meetings. If required, contacts with medical institutions in project areas will be established to obtain information about marginalized groups and most effective methods of interaction with them. All factors preventing vulnerable groups from participation (for example, language distinctions, unavailability of transport for

participation in activities, accessibility of venues where activities take place, physical limitations, insufficient understanding of the consultation process) will be addressed by means of solution of all problematic issues by PIU consultants, local SCF representatives and direct beneficiaries – designated managers of the regional/district administration.

4.5. Stakeholder mapping

The basis of stakeholder mapping is the level of interest and interaction with the project. Accordingly, stakeholders will be gathered in the following groups:

- Direct Stakeholders,
- Indirect Stakeholders,
- Other Interested Parties.

Table 1. Stakeholder mapping for RESILAND UZ

Types of stakeholder	Direct stakeholders		Indirect stakeholders	Other interested parties
	Internal direct stakeholders	External direct stakeholders		
Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCF territorial departments, • Participating leshozes • Provincial and district khokimiyats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project-affected parties • Communities living in the project areas • Disadvantaged and vulnerable groups • Directly involved public administrations at Provincial and District Levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities living in project districts • Indirectly involved public administrations at National, Provincial and District Level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private Sector • Non-Governmental Organizations • Academic Institutions • Media • Donors
Types of Engagement	Coordination	Consultation and Cooperation	Exchange of Information	Dialogue
Activities in Project implementation process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular and continuous communication • Meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation activities like meetings, focus group discussions, surveys and interviews • Disclosure process and participation • Grievance Mechanism • Official correspondence • Website, social media, announcements, media information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disclosure process and participation • Grievance Mechanism • Official correspondence • Website, announcements, media information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dialog actions (interviews, phone calls, correspondence) • Disclosure process and participation • Grievance Mechanism • Website, announcements, media information

In addition to the groups in the table and the vulnerable groups they contain are among the stakeholders of the project. The impact of the project on some people is greater due to both project dependent and independent reasons. For this reason, people who are more affected by the related project components in each stakeholder engagement program will be defined as dependent vulnerable groups.

4.6. Stakeholder Segmentation/ Prioritization

The identified project stakeholders were segregated by their areas of influence. The stakeholders of high and substantial significance are described in the table below.

Table 2. Stakeholder segmentation

Stakeholder	Level	Description	Area of influence	Interest	Influence
SCF	National	SCF is a state body engaged in managing of forest fund land. The SCF is responsible for the implementation of forest policy and oversees the leshozes.	Provide oversight and control of disbursement of project funds to the project implementing unit (PIU). Monitor compliance of financial reporting of project funds by the PIU.	High	High
SCF territorial units (regional/ province level forestry departments)	Region	Responsible for the implementation of forest policy at local level and oversee the leshozes.	Provide support and coordination of activities implemented within the region.	Moderate	High
Region/ Province administration	Region	Responsible for managing local budget and economic development of the respective oblast.	Provide support and coordination in stakeholder engagement and grievance redress within oblast. Responsible for oversight and coordination of activities implemented within the region/province.	Moderate	High
District administration	Local – district	Responsible for managing local budget and economic development of the respective district.	Provide support and coordination in stakeholder engagement and grievance redress within district.	Moderate	High
Leshozes (State forest enterprises)	Local	Leshozes are key in implementing forest policy objectives. They have territorial responsibilities on the State Forest Fund land, generally at a district level.	Responsible for the implementation of project activities.	High	High
Regional and local forestry institutions under the SCF	Local	Specialized state forest enterprises producing medicinal plants, specialized forestry stations, state forest hunting facilities and stations managing protected areas with different legal status (national reserves, national natural parks, biosphere reserve).	Engagement in the implementation of some of the project activities.	Moderate	Moderate
NGOs	National	Oversee transparency, fairness and inclusion of project interventions.	Safeguarding policy and referral pathway strengthen guidance counselors.	High	Substantial
Project-affected parties	Local	Individuals who are looking for	Participate in project activities on paid basis	High	Low

		[additional] income opportunities including those who may have lost their job/income as a result of the crisis.			
Disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals or groups:	Local	Individuals/groups who may have less opportunities to benefit from project activities.	Participate in stakeholder meetings to highlight special needs of vulnerable groups	Moderate	Low

V. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY AND PROGRAM

The project interventions are mainly focused on six regions, Jizzakh, Samarkand, Surkhandarya, Namangan, Syrdarya and Kashkadarya oblasts; therefore, the project team needs to be selective in designing the SEP. The program for stakeholder engagement is straightforward. Most interactions are expected to be performed via the PIU, which will organize and coordinate SEP activities. All affected parties reserve their rights to interact directly with local authorities and the World Bank. Stakeholder engagement activities need to provide specific stakeholder groups with relevant information and opportunities to voice their views on topics that matter to them.

5.1. Purpose and timing of stakeholder engagement program

The project interventions are countrywide, on the Uzbekistan side and along transboundary corridors adjacent to Tajikistan; therefore, the project team needs to be strategic in designing the SEP. The project stakeholder engagement activities need to be streamed horizontally and vertically. The horizontal stream implies an engagement with stakeholders on a national level. Activities on the horizontal level are assumed to improve awareness and coordination of efforts in the forestry sector of the country. Whereas vertical stream implies the application of cascading mode which will allow the project to establish the communication with project-affected parties.

5.2. Proposed strategy for information disclosure

Multiple consultative workshops will be held in each provincial capital cities with stakeholders, where a representative sample of directly affected and other interested parties along with vulnerable groups will be invited. These platforms will be used to gather input on the project design and would also serve as information disclosure forums.

The SEP will also be disclosed on World Bank and SCF website. Currently SCF website (<http://www.urmon.uz>) is being used to disclose project related information in Uzbek and Russian. The SEP will include enhancing the SCF website. The SCF will create a webpage on the Project on its existing website. All future project-related monitoring reports listed in the above sections will be disclosed on this webpage. Project updates will also be posted on the homepage of SCF website. An easy-to-understand guide to the terminology used in the social reports or documents will also be provided on the website.

Mass/social media communication

PIU Communication and Stakeholder Specialist (from SCF staff or an external consultant) will be engaged on the project during the project implementation in order to remain in close communication with stakeholders. The PIU representative will be responsible for posting relevant information on the dedicated SCF website, social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, Telegram, etc.) and on information boards throughout the project's lifecycle. Social media channels will be used as much as possible to disseminate information as rates of social media use (especially Telegram and Facebook channels) appear to be high across users of different age and background in Uzbekistan.

Communication materials

Written information will be disclosed to the public via a variety of communication materials including articles in newspaper, brochures, flyers, posters, etc. A public relations kit will be designed specifically and distributed both in print and online form. SCF will also update its website regularly with key project updates and reports on the project's performance in Uzbek, Russian and English. The website will also provide information about the grievance mechanism for the project (see next sub-section).

Information Desks

Information Desks in each region and district will provide residents with information on stakeholder engagement activities, project interventions, contact details of the focal point, etc. The focal point, in turn, will set up these information desks, either in their offices or other easily accessible places where they can meet and share information about the project with PAPs and other stakeholders. Brochures and fliers on various project related social and environmental issues will be made available at these information desks.

Disclosure

In accordance with requirements of World Bank ESS 10, SCF will make SEP publicly available, including all information on potential social and environmental risks and impacts on RESILAND UZ. The information will be posted on the website of SCF (<http://www.urmon.uz>), in social media (Facebook, Telegram, Twitter or Instagram), in republican and local mass media (newspapers, posters, radio and television). The information will contain a note that comments on the suggested SEP and suggestions for its improvement are definitely welcomed. SEP will be presented in an accessible form and in clear language comprehensible to the population and stakeholders so that they had an opportunity to make a full-fledged contribution to the development of the project and mitigation measures. The documentation will properly analyze basic risks and impacts of the project with the level of details sufficient to inform the processes of engagement with stakeholders.

5.3. Proposed strategy for consultation

Consultative workshops

To facilitate stakeholder engagement, the PIU will be supported by an advisory board. The board may comprise of stakeholders and it will meet on a quarterly or bi-annual basis. The PIU will share and consult with the advisory board on matters related to project components, provide them with regular briefs, and solicit their views on future envisioned reforms. The objective is to strengthen effective public consultations, incorporate the board's views into reform proposal, and thereby ensuring a proper implementation of reforms.

Focus Group Discussion

Focus group discussions will be primarily conducted with the women staff at SCF, to gather their perspective on their specific needs and issues that women encounter as they navigate the work environment. In a well-facilitated FGD, a discussion between participants is possible that enables to record voices expressing the risks, barriers and needs from their perspective. This forum will provide a more dynamic environment for women to express their viewpoints on the relevant issues. The results of the FGD will form part of a gender gap analysis by benefiting review of HR policies to promote equal opportunities and help increase female participation in all levels.

Grievance mechanism

In compliance with the World Bank's ESS10, a project-specific grievance mechanism (GM) will be operationalized to handle complaints and issues, and this will be integrated into a country system on GM that are available to citizens. Dedicated communication materials (specifically, a GM brochure or pamphlet) will be developed to help residents become familiar with the grievance redress channels and procedures. Locked suggestion/complaint boxes will be posted in each State Committee of Forestry (project province level) offices where the equipment will be installed, and PIU will maintain a grievance register in order to capture and track grievances from submission to resolution and communication with complainants. The mechanism is described in more detail in Section 7 below.

Also, details about the Project Grievance Mechanism will be posted on the website. An online feedback mechanism will also function as a grievances redress mechanism, allowing data-users to provide comments or lodge complaints. Contact details of the PIU representative will also be made available on the website. The mechanism is described in more detail in Section 7 below.

5.4. Proposed strategy to incorporate the view of vulnerable groups

Consultations will be carried out with representatives of Ministry for Support of Mahalla and Family, Businesswoman Association and accordingly design and suggest engagement mechanisms and frequencies, customized for these vulnerable groups. Focus group discussions dedicated specifically to vulnerable groups may also be envisaged as appropriate. This will continue throughout the Project life.

5.5. Tools and Techniques for Stakeholder Engagement under Covid Situation.

With the outbreak and spread of COVID-19, people have been mandated by national or local law, to exercise social distancing, and specifically to avoid public gatherings to prevent and reduce the risk of the virus transmission. Government of Uzbekistan has taken various restrictive measures, some imposing

strict restrictions on public gatherings, meetings and people's movement. At the same time, the general public has become increasingly aware and concerned about the risks of transmission, particularly through social interactions at large gatherings.

The SEP strategy will not be deferred but rather designed to be fit for purpose to ensure effective and meaningful consultations to meet project and stakeholder needs. Adoption of below listed recommendations will be subject to the evolving COVID-19 situation in Republic of Uzbekistan, and restrictions put in place by the government. The PIU will:

- Review the country COVID-19 spread situation in the project area, and the restrictions put in place by the government to contain virus spread;
- Assess the associated potential risks of virus transmission in conducting various engagement activities;
- Avoid public gatherings (taking into account national restrictions), including public hearings, workshops and community meetings, and minimize direct interaction between project agencies and beneficiaries / affected people;
- If smaller meetings are permitted, conduct consultations in small-group sessions while observing the principle of social distancing. If not permitted, make all reasonable efforts to conduct meetings through online channels, including webex, zoom and skype meetings;
- Be sure that all PIU members articulate and express their understandings on social behavior and good hygiene practices, and that any stakeholder engagement events, if conducted, be preceded with the procedure of articulating such hygienic practices.
- Diversify means of communication and rely more on social media and online channels. Where possible and appropriate, create dedicated online platforms and chatgroups appropriate for the purpose, based on the type and category of stakeholders;
- Employ traditional channels of communications (TV, newspaper, radio, dedicated phone-lines, public announcements and mail) when stakeholders do not have access to online channels or do not use them frequently. Such channels can also be highly effective in conveying relevant information to stakeholders, and allow them to provide their feedback and suggestions;
- Employ online communication tools to design virtual workshops in situations where large meetings and workshops are essential, given the preparatory stage of the project. Webex, Skype, and in low ICT capacity situations, audio meetings, can be effective tools to design virtual workshops. The format of such workshops could include the following steps:
 - *Virtual registration of participants*: Participants can register online through a dedicated platform.
 - *Distribution of workshop materials to participants, including agenda, project documents, presentations, questionnaires and discussion topics*: These can be distributed online to participants.
 - *Review of distributed information materials*: Participants are given a scheduled duration for this, prior to scheduling a discussion on the information provided.
 - *Discussion, feedback collection and sharing*:
 - Participants can be organized and assigned to different topic groups, teams or virtual “tables” provided they agree to this.
 - Group, team and table discussions can be organized through social media means, such as webex, skype or zoom, or through written feedback in the form of an electronic questionnaire or feedback forms that can be emailed back.
 - *Conclusion and summary*: The chair of the workshop will summarize the virtual workshop discussion, formulate conclusions and share electronically with all participants.
- In situations where online interaction is challenging, information can be disseminated through digital platform (where available) like Facebook, Twitter, Telegram groups, Project weblinks/ websites, and traditional means of communications (TV, newspaper, radio, phone calls and mails with clear description of mechanisms for providing feedback via mail and / or dedicated telephone lines. All channels of communication need to clearly specify how stakeholders can provide their feedback and suggestions.
- In situations where it is determined that meaningful consultations that are critical to the conduct of a specific project activity cannot be conducted in spite of all reasonable efforts on the part of the client supported by the Bank, the project team will discuss whether the proposed project

activities can be postponed by a few weeks in view of the virus spread risks. This would depend on the COVID-19 situation in the country, and the government policy requirements to contain the virus spread.

- In line with the above precautionary approach, different engagement methods are proposed and cover different needs of the stakeholders as below.

5.6. Summary of Stakeholder Engagement Done During Project Preparation

Since March 2021, State Committee on Forestry (SCF) together the World Bank team (WB) held a number of meetings with GoU state executive agencies interested in RESILAND UZ, their subordinated institutions and representatives of public organizations. SCF management expressed interest in forestry and landscape restoration and introduction of innovation farmer and community - centered agroforestry methods that will combat land degradation process, facilitate adaptation and mitigation of climate change.

During the meeting with representatives of the SCF, the planned scope of activities under RESILAND UZ was discussed in detail and geographic locations were suggested. The geographic focus of the Project is six transboundary corridors that traverse Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, and project-financed activities will take place on the Uzbekistan side. The corridors span across degraded border areas within the provinces of Jizzakh, Samarkand, Surkhandarya, Namangan, Syrdarya and Kashkadarya. The latest several discussions carried on the project design occurred in June, August and September 2021 via virtual meetings with the stakeholders in Uzbekistan. In September 2021 the SCF carried out preliminary consultation on the draft ESMF and SEP.

The project ESMF, SEP, LMP were publically disclosed to and consulted with stakeholders as identified in SEP, such as the regional branches of SCF, specialized entities within SCF (UrmonLoyikha, the Forest Research Institute, etc.), Ministry of Tourism and Sports, SCEEP, Ministry of Agriculture, etc. The main objective of the consultation is to present the anticipated risk and impact categories of the project and to describe the process of Environmental and Social assessment and management according to the WB ESF standards and national legislation. The local disclosure of the ESMF summary content, with SEP and LMP content, was published on SCF website in the local language. In this environment, a letter of invitation was sent to conduct virtual public consultations in mid-September 2021. Closer consultation workshops with other interested parties, community members, local makhalla citizens, community activists as identified in SEP should be made in stages prior the design of specific subproject interventions under Components 2 and 3. For more information about public consultation please see Annex 1 below.

5.7. Stakeholder Engagement Program

PIU under SCF supervision will engage with stakeholders throughout the project life cycle, commencing such engagement as early as possible in the project development process and within a timeframe that enables meaningful consultations with stakeholders on the project design. The nature, scope and frequency of stakeholder engagement will be proportionate to the nature and type of works and RESILAND UZ subprojects, potential risks and impacts.

Stakeholder engagement is an inclusive process conducted throughout the project life cycle. If it is designed and implemented correctly, it will support the development of close, constructive and responsive relations which are important for successful management of environmental and social risks of the project. The engagement with stakeholders is most effective when it is initiated at an early stage of the project design and is an integral part of early design solutions as well as assessment, management and monitoring of environmental and social risks and impacts of the project.

If decisions about public gatherings, venues and timing of meetings are not adopted yet, stakeholders can find information about the project in local newspapers, on television and in social media (Facebook, Telegram, Twitter, Instagram). Stakeholders can get acquainted with materials on the project and express their opinions in the SCF or relevant khokimiyats of six provinces which will be responsible for providing information on RESILAND UZ, accepting and handling complaints and suggestions. The

Environmental and Social Management Framework/Plan (ESMF/P) and/or the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) will be included in the package of project materials for information of stakeholders.

The project will carry out targeted stakeholder engagement with vulnerable groups to understand concerns/needs in terms of accessing information and services and other challenges they face at home, at workplaces and in their communities. The details of strategies that will be adopted to effectively engage and communicate to vulnerable group will be considered during project implementation. In the course of public consultations, the procedure for vulnerable groups to express their opinions will be established, each opinion will be included in minutes for the purpose of subsequent analysis and introduction of amendments into corresponding documents: ESMF/P, SEP, LMP, ESCP, etc. The following measures will be taken to remove obstacles to participation of vulnerable groups in consultations: (a) accessible venues and small targeted meetings will be organized for these groups to feel more comfortable about asking questions and raising issues; (b) vehicles will be made available to deliver residents from remote areas to nearest venues of meetings; (c) the Grievance Mechanism will be established.

Keeping the above in mind, the following types and stages of the stakeholder engagement process will guide the preparation of the stakeholder engagement program with detailed time-bound activities. A stakeholder engagement should be ensured at various stages (impact assessment, land use planning / restrictions, project implementation and construction) of the project to provide Information sharing, Consultation and Collaboration.

Table 3. Types and stages of stakeholder engagement

STAGE		INFORMATION	CONSULTATION	COLLABORATION
Impact Assessment	Goals/principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanation of environmental and social impacts of the project to the stakeholders • Giving open and prompt responses to questions coming from stakeholders • Announcement of measures taken against environmental and social 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefitting from the knowledge and views of the stakeholders in the identification of environmental and social impacts of the project • Getting feedback from the participants about disclosed ESIA • Realization of sustainable stakeholder engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion of feedback given by stakeholders into the environmental and social impact assessment • Inclusion of feedback from the stakeholders into the application process of the project
	Tool/methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement meeting with the community • Written, visual and audio announcements • Preparation of ESIA documents and their disclosure • Official letter to the institutions • Website • Annual Environmental and Social Progress Reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct of survey, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews in the context of the ESIA fieldwork study. • Channels of feedback during the process of disclosure: telephone, e-mail, website, and a designated office worker. • Grievance mechanisms • Official correspondences with institutions and organizations. • Monitoring and Evaluation of field study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of final document and its disclosure: website

Land impacts (restrictions, land use regulations)	Goals/principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing methods and processes of land use and restriction/regulations with stakeholders • Prompt and open response to stakeholder questions • Informing individuals who face new restrictions / regulations because of the project • Stages and progress of preparation of land use planning process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting views and information from stakeholders on the preparation of process framework of affected individuals • Identification of entitled individuals / communities • Getting feedback from stakeholders on the disclosed PF documents • Securing sustainable participation of the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion of feedback from the stakeholders into the planning process of the project • Inclusion of feedback from the stakeholders into the application process of the project
	Tools/methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public meetings • Written, visual and audio announcements • The preparation of PF documents and its disclose in websites, public areas and institutions • Sending an official correspondence to Institutions • Sending official letters to the communities who will be engaged in land use planning • Web site • Annual Environmental and Social Progress Reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct of survey, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews in the context of the PF fieldwork study. • Channels of feedback during the process of disclosure: telephone, e-mail, website, and a designated office worker • Grievance mechanisms • Official correspondences with institutions and organizations. • Monitoring and Evaluation of field study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of final document and its disclosure: website • Project implementation unit
Project Implementation	Goals /principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanation of the project's participation principles and methods to the stakeholders • Stakeholder engagement activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Securing the stakeholder feedback on the disclosed SEP documents. • Securing sustainable participation of the community • Regular Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion of feedback from the stakeholders into the engagement process of the project • Inclusion of the activities in the project application that are related to the M&E

	Tools /methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement meeting with the community • Written, visual and audio announcements • Communication with mahallas / villagers • Preparation of the SEP document and its disclosure • Sending an official correspondence to Institutions • Project web site • Environmental and Social Progress Reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Channels of feedback during the process of disclosure: telephone, e-mail, website, and a designated office worker • Grievance mechanisms • Complaint record and closure forms • Official correspondences with institutions and organizations. • Examination of the grievance records under the M&E process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of final document and its disclosure: website • Internal and external M&E reports
Construction, agroforestry, landscape restoration activities	Goals /principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announcements of the measurements on public health and safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting and promptly responding to the grievances of the public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elimination of the problems that were subject of the public questions
	Tools /methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written, visual and audio announcements • Communication with mahallas / villagers • Project web site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grievance mechanisms • Monitoring & Evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project implementation unit

VI. RESOURCES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR IMPLEMENTING STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

6.1. Implementation Arrangements

The PIU under the SCF will shoulder full responsibility for engaging with the stakeholders. Social Development Specialist and Stakeholder Engagement Specialist recruited from the market will steer the SEP in the PIU. Key entities like regional departments and leshozes will also play an advisory and information support role. In order to implement the various activities envisaged in the SEP, the PIU will need to closely coordinate with SCF’s internal departments/ units such as Press-service of SCF, Department for appeals. The PIU will be headed by a Project Coordinator who will be responsible for day-to-day strategic oversight of project implementation, monitor progress and ensure overall project alignment with stated objectives and results, including effective and efficient disbursement of project funds as per Project legal agreement. The Project Coordinator will act as focal point for communication with the World Bank team on project related issues, and will report to the Chairman of the SCF.

6.2. Roles and Responsibilities

The PIU under SCF will be responsible for carrying out stakeholder engagement activities, while working closely together with other entities, such as local government units, media outlets, individual farmers, etc. The stakeholder engagement activities will be documented through biannual progress reports, to be shared with the World Bank. The nature of the project requires a partnership and coordination mechanisms between national and local stakeholders.

Table 4. Responsibilities of key actors/stakeholders in SEP Implementation

Actor	Stakeholder Responsibilities
PIU with support of SCF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and implementation of the SEP and other relevant plans; • Leading stakeholder engagement and public consultations activities; • Management and resolution of grievances; • Coordination/supervision of contractors (if any) on Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) and SEP activities; • Monitoring of and reporting on social performance to Government and the World Bank.
Regional / district khokimiyats and SCF territorial departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform PIU of any issues related to their engagement with stakeholders; • Inform about complaints to the PIU Grievance Mechanism Focal Point; • Transmit and resolve complaints caused by the project interventions in close collaboration with and as directed by PIU and by participating in the local Grievance Resolution Committee; • Informational support to implementation of various plans (e.g. SEP, Labor Management Plan, etc.).
Project-affected parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invited to engage and ask questions about the Project at public consultations meetings and through discussions where it is of interest or of relevance to them; • Lodge their grievances using the Grievance Mechanism defined in the SEP; • Help the Project to define mitigation measures;
Other project stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with PIU regarding project design; • Raise concerns to help the project to be inclusive.

6.3. Estimated Budget

A tentative budget for implementing the stakeholder engagement plan over five years is reflected in Table 5. The stakeholder engagement activities featured above cover a variety of social issues, which may be part of other project documents, so it is possible that they have also been budgeted in other plans. However, the table below summarizes all the stakeholder engagement activities in one place for better coordination and monitoring. PIU will review this plan every six months to determine if any changes to stakeholder classification or engagement are required. If so, the plan will be updated, and a new revision distributed. The budget will be revised accordingly.

Table 5. Stakeholder Engagement Plan – Estimated Budget (5 years)

Stakeholder Engagement Activities	Unit Cost, (USD)	Q-ty	Total cost (USD)
Stakeholder engagement and communication specialist	1,000	60 months	60,000
Travel expenses of staff (cost per year)	1,000	Per year x 6 regions	30,000
Communication materials (leaflets, posters, PR kits)	5,000	6 regions + 1 center	35,000
Project press conferences	1,000	2 times	2,000
Hotlines for GM / GM boxes and Information desk			10,000
Subtotal			137,000
Contingency			13,000
Total			150,000

VII. GRIEVANCE MECHANISM

7.1. Description of Grievance Mechanism

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

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

The PIU will operationalise a project specific GM to address all citizen complaints and requests related to the project. Day-to-day implementation of the GM and reporting to the World Bank will be the responsibility of the PIU. The new Social Specialist will be the key nodal officer for GM in the PIU. Project would encourage receiving complaints by a variety of channels, including anonymous complaints, at different levels – details in section 9.2 and 9.3. The system and requirements (including staffing) for the grievance redress chain of action – from registration, sorting and processing, and acknowledgement and follow-up, to verification and action, and finally feedback – are incorporated in the GM. The more sensitive grievances such as Gender-Based Violence (GBV) including Sexual Exploitation and Abuse / Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH) are described in section 7.4 separately. To ensure management oversight of grievance handling, the PIU M&E will be responsible for monitoring the overall process, including verification that agreed resolutions are implemented.

7.2. Grievance resolution process

Information about the GM will be publicized as part of the Public/community communication (e.g. through websites, social media). Brochures and posters will be displayed in public places offices, project offices, SCF outlets and notice boards, etc. Information about the GM will also be posted online on the SCF website. The overall process for the GM will be comprised of six steps, as described below.

Step 1: Uptake. Project stakeholders will be able to provide feedback and report complaints through several channels: contacting PIU by mail, telephone, email, social media, sms and telegram messaging.

Step 2: Sorting and processing. Complaints and feedbacks will be compiled by the Social Specialists at PIU and recorded in a register. These are assigned to the respective individuals / agencies to address. They are expected to discuss/ deliberate with the complainant and arrive at a resolution, within 15 days of receipt.

Step 3: Acknowledgement and follow-up. Within seven (7) days of the date a complaint is submitted, the responsible person/ agency will communicate with the complainant and provide information on the likely course of action and the anticipated timeframe for resolution of the complaint. If complaints are not resolved within 15 days, the responsible person will provide an update about the status of the complaint/question to the complainant and again provide an estimate of how long it will take to resolve the issue.

Step 4: Verification, investigation and action. This step involves gathering information about the grievance to determine the facts surrounding the issue and verifying the complaint's validity, and then developing a proposed resolution, which could include changes of decisions concerning eligibility for mitigation, assistance, changes in the program itself, other actions, or no actions. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the process can include site visits, document reviews, a meeting with the complainant (if known and willing to engage), and meetings with others (both those associated with the project and outside) who may have knowledge or can otherwise help resolve the issue. It is expected that many or most grievances would be resolved at this stage. All activities taken during this and the other steps will be fully documented, and any resolution logged in the register.

Step 5: Monitoring and evaluation. Monitoring refers to the process of tracking grievances and assessing the progress that has been toward resolution. The PIU will be responsible for consolidating, monitoring, and reporting on complaints, enquiries and other feedback that have been received, resolved, or pending. This will be accomplished by maintaining the grievance register and records of all steps taken to resolve grievances or otherwise respond to feedback and questions.

Step 6: Providing Feedback. This step involves informing those to submit complaints, feedback, and questions about how issues were resolved, or providing answers to questions. Whenever possible, complainants should be informed of the proposed resolution in person (communicating by telephone or other means).

If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution, she/he will be informed of further options, which would include pursuing remedies through the World Bank, as described below, or through avenues afforded by the Republic of Uzbekistan legal system. On a monthly basis, the PIU will report to SCF on grievances resolved since the previous report and on grievances that remain unresolved, with an explanation as to steps to be taken to resolve grievances that have not been resolved within 30 days. Data on grievances and/or original grievance logs will be made available to World Bank missions on request, and summaries of grievances and resolutions will be included in periodic reports to the World Bank. Grievance Logs will include at least the following information:

- Individual reference number
- Name of the person submitting the complaint, question, or other feedback, address and/or contact information (unless the complaint has been submitted anonymously)
- Details of the complaint, feedback, or question/her location and details of his/her complaint.
- Date of the complaint.
- Name of person assigned to deal with the complaint (acknowledge to the complainant, investigate, propose resolutions, etc.)
- Details of proposed resolution, including person(s) who will be responsible for authorizing and implementing any corrective actions that are part of the proposed resolution
- Date when proposed resolution was communicated to the complainant (unless anonymous)
- Date when the complainant acknowledged, in writing if possible, being informed of the proposed resolution
- Details of whether the complainant was satisfied with the resolution, and whether the complaint can be closed out
- Date when the resolution is implemented (if any).

The SCF will offer its district and local channels. The PIU will enable (i) local level offices, (ii) district level as GM focal points. By this arrangement, the project will be able to address effectively and efficiently all grievances raised at grass root level, which will have countrywide scattered pattern including those in remote areas. To manage the project GM, it will include following successive tiers of extra-judicial grievance review and resolution:

- The first tier will be the village local self-governments at the grassroots, who are responsible for helping members of the community and other social work (conflict resolution, overall community upkeep, etc.). They have the primary responsibility for identifying the households and/or individuals requiring social assistance. Unresolved grievances will be elevated to Grievance Redress Commission (GRC).
- PAs will have an option of submitting grievance to PIU directly. This will be the second tier, which will form a GRC under leadership of PIU and includes one or more senior district and local level office managers and one village leaders. GRC will resolve issues that could not be resolved by local government or those that came directly. The GRC will deal with issues before referring to the legal recourse.

To promote the transparent and efficient implementation of the project, the PMU will accept and investigate queries from any Project-affected parties, including anonymous queries.

Table 6. Grievance Redress and Feedback Mechanism

To whom is the complaint filed	Form of submission	Complaint management procedure	Time for consideration of complaints
<p>THE FIRST LEVEL Office of local SCF offices Address: [tbd] Tel.: [tbd] Fax: [tbd] E-mail address: [tbd] Officer responsible for maintaining the GM Log: [tbd]</p>	<p>Verbal Written In electronic format</p>	<p>1. Local SCF offices register complaint/proposal in the Log for registration of complaints and proposals; 2. Maintain and monitor the process of reviewing and responding to complaints; 3. Monthly they are reporting in writing to the PIU, to the Social Specialist on the status of work with complaints.</p>	<p>3days</p>
<p>THE SECOND LEVEL GRC at PIU level PIU SCF: [tbd] Address: [tbd] Tel: [tbd] Fax: [tbd] E-mail address: [tbd] Officer responsible for maintaining the GM Log: [tbd]</p>	<p>in written form in electronic form</p>	<p>1. PIU office registers a complaint in the Log for complaints and proposals; 2. Maintain and monitor the process of reviewing and meeting the complaints; 3. Consideration of the complaint may require additional verification of the issue, including collection of additional documents. 3. Report on a monthly basis in written to the SCF (depending on the nature of the issue) on the status of work with complaints.</p>	<p>5 days 15 days</p>

7.3. Monitoring and reporting on grievances

The PIU will be responsible for:

- Analyzing the qualitative data on the number, substance and status of complaints and uploading them into the project databases established by PIU;
- Monitoring outstanding issues and proposing measures to resolve them;
- Preparing quarterly reports on GM to be shared with the WB.

Biannual reports to be submitted to the WB shall include section related to GM which provides updated information on the following:

- Status of GM implementation (procedures, training, public awareness campaigns, budgeting etc.);
- Qualitative data on number of received grievances (applications, suggestions, complaints, requests, positive feedback), highlighting number of resolved grievances;
- Quantitative data on the type of grievances and responses, issues provided and grievances that remain unresolved;
- Level of satisfaction by the measures (response) taken;
- Any correction measures taken.

7.4. Handling of sensitive grievances

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) including Sexual Exploitation and Abuse / Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH) issues require some additional measures:

- Gender sensitivity will be sought in the employment of Stakeholder engagement and communication specialists who will work in the region.
- Stakeholder engagement and communication specialists will be informed about GBV issues.
- In addition to the socio-cultural characteristics and non-violent communication ways in the training of workers, GBV will also be on the agenda. Worker training will include the following information on GBV:
 - Definition of violence against women in national and international documents,
 - Types of violence (physical, sexual, economic, emotional),
 - Legal sanctions.
- The grievance mechanism will be accessible and ensure confidentiality of personal information.
- Information activities will be carried out to inform women about the mechanism. The following types of information are presented in these studies:
 - Women's rights
 - Self-protection in cases of violence and sexual abuse
 - Emergency phone numbers
 - Contact information of the institutions and organizations they can apply to
 - Grievance mechanism and privacy policy
- The confidentiality principle of the grievance mechanism will be repeated in all information materials.

The project will utilize additional mitigation measures proportional to risk. The contractor will be responsible for developing the workforce management procedure, health, and safety plans as well as SEA/SH protocols which will apply to their own and subcontractor employees who work on the Project. These procedures and plans will be submitted to SCF and PIU for review and approval before the contractors are allowed to mobilize to the field of construction. All contractors will be required in the contract to commit against the use of child and forced labor, introduce mitigation measures against SEA/SH, and SCF/PIU staff in charge of contractor supervision will monitor and report the absence of forced labor and cases of SEA/SH. All personal data and complaints received by the GM will be treated in a confidential manner, unless the complainant consents to the disclosure of their personal information. Specially, confidentiality of sensitive issues and complaints related to SEA/SH raised by communities will be followed.

7.5. Grievance uptake channels

A grievance can be submitted through the following channels:

Table 7. Channels for accessing information and submitting grievances¹¹

Description	Contact details
Grievance Redress Committee – 1 st tier	district and local SCF offices
Grievance Redress Committee – 2 nd tier	Project Implementation Unit
Grievance Redress Responsible person at SCF	Islamov Zafar Tahirovich
Address:	Universitet street, building #2, 100163, Tashkent, Uzbekistan
Telephone:	+99871 2630756, +99871 2630824
Hotline:	+99871 2630756
Fax:	+99871 2630756
E-mail:	murojaat@urmon.uz
Web-platform:	https://urmon.uz/
Social media platforms:	
Anonymous complaints are also entertained by any of the above channels	

¹¹ Contact details will be updated as soon as the PIU will be established

7.6. Existing GM at SCF

Along with the World Bank requirements on development and implementation of grievance mechanism for each Bank finance project, a grievance redress procedure is also required according to national legislation. In Uzbekistan a grievance redress procedure is regulated by the law “On Citizens’ Applications” and the “Law on the order of submission of appeals of physical and legal entities” (#378, December 03, 2014). Moreover, the SCF provides an internal grievance mechanism for physical and legal entities to raise reasonable workplace concerns. The grievance mechanism procedures are described in the following local regulations as well: *Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “About appeals of individuals and legal entities” #445 dated on 11.09.2017.*

7.7. World Bank Grievance Redress System

Communities and individuals who believe that they are adversely affected by a project supported by the World Bank may also complaints directly to the Bank through the Bank’s Grievance Redress Service (GRS) (<https://www.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/products-and-services/grievance-redress-service>). A complaint may be submitted in English, Uzbek or Russian, although additional processing time will be needed for complaints that are not in English. A complaint can be submitted to the Bank GRS through the following channels:

- By email: grievances@worldbank.org
- By fax: +1.202.614.7313
- By mail: The World Bank, Grievance Redress Service, MSN MC10-1018, 1818 H Street Northwest, Washington, DC 20433, USA
- Through the World Bank Uzbekistan Country Office in Tashkent: 107B Amir Timur Street, Block C, 15th floor, 100084, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, tashkent@worldbank.org, Tel. +998 71 120-2400

The complaint must clearly state the adverse impact(s) allegedly caused or likely to be caused by the Bank-supported project. This should be supported by available documentation and correspondence to the extent possible. The complainant may also indicate the desired outcome of the complaint. Finally, the complaint should identify the complainant(s) or assigned representative/s and provide contact details. Complaints submitted via the GRS are promptly reviewed to allow quick attention to project-related concerns.

In addition, project-affected communities and individuals may submit complaints to the World Bank’s independent Inspection Panel, which will then determine whether harm occurred, or could occur, as a result of the World Bank’s non-compliance with its policies and procedures. Complaints may be submitted to the Inspection Panel at any time after concerns have been brought directly to the World Bank’s attention, and after Bank Management has been given an opportunity to respond. For information on how to submit complaints to the World Bank Inspection Panel, please visit www.inspectionpanel.org.

VIII. Monitoring and Reporting

8.1. Involvement of stakeholder in monitoring activities

The ESCP and SEP require regular consultations with stakeholders to obtain feedback on the effectiveness of facilitation measures and gather suggestions for further improvements. The results of stakeholder engagement will be reported back to stakeholder groups, PSC at the SCF board meetings and if needed other communication channels. Such can include media, written reports, press-releases etc. These consultations will also be used to gather information about the project's progress in meeting the results indicators as noted in the project results framework. The bi-annual ESCP compliance monitoring reports would be prepared and submitted by the PIU Environment and Social specialists throughout the project life. The PIU will also submit bi-annual reports on the project progress to the World Bank.

8.2. Reporting back to stakeholder groups

The bi-annual report will provide relevant information to be included in the Project ISR Reports. The project also supports the SCF's efforts to increase its capacity in communications and outreach by hiring experienced communications professionals to design and implement training on project components, education campaigns, and provide feedback loop.

Annex 1: Minutes of Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement meeting

Uzbekistan Resilient Landscapes Restoration Project (P174135) (UZ RESILAND)

Venue: State Committee on Forestry's administrative building, Tashkent Region

Date: September 24, 2021

Public Consultation: Disclosure the Environment and Social Management Framework

Presented by: Sobirjon Umarov, Head of Department Resist of Desertification and Drought

Stakeholders:

- The State Committee of Forestry (SCF),
- Zomin National Park (ZNP),
- The State Committee of Ecology and Environment Protection (SCEEP),
- The State Committee for Tourism Development (SCTD),
- Ministry of Water Resources (MWR),
- Ministry of Investment and Foreign Trade (MIFT),
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI),
- Ministry for Support of Mahalla and Family (MSMF),
- Tashkent State Agrarian University (TSAU) and others.

Discussed main topics on the PC:

Project description and its components; potential planning project activities, national environmental, social legislation and relevant WB ESS's requirements. Identified social and environmental risks and mitigation measures. Components of ESMF: SEP and LMP, the role of each stakeholders; labor requirements and risks associated with it, the resources necessary to address labor issues. GM; assistance to vulnerable and rural households involved to the project.

After the presentation the participants raised the following questions:

#	Questions	Answers
1	SCTD: Is it possible to install turnstiles at the entrances to national parks as part of the project?	The feasibility study of the project is underway and the issue is still open. We are also interested in installing turnstiles and creating a holistic database system for visitors and monitoring of forest plantation.
2	CCI: Whether private entities will be involved in this project?	One of the main requirements of the project component is the involvement of private entities in the implementation of the project. So, private entities can build guest houses or offer other assets. Also, as part of the project we will involve the local population in business activities.
3	SCTD: The expected impact of the project on the local population.	During the initial study, no impact of the project on settlements that are not expected to be relocated was identified. Possible impact of the project on land users, such as farmers and other users. After a detailed project design and completing the Feasibility Study it will be clear exactly what the impact will be. If affected persons are identified, the bank's ES standards will necessarily be implemented.
4	MWR: Whether the project is expected to have an impact on water bodies?	Yes, of course, when creating new forest plantations, which are 30 thousand hectares of industrial forests, 70 thousand hectares of forests, total is 100 thousand ha, we will ask your ministry to provide all possible assistance in the irrigation of seedlings. We are also considering the option of water accumulation in the mountainous areas; such a technique is used in world practice.

Photos:



List of attended stakeholders:



UZBEKISTAN RESILIENT LANDSCAPES RESTORATION PROJECT
ЎЗБЕКИСТОН ЛАНДШАФТЛАРИНИ БАРҚАРОР ТИКЛАШ ЛОЙИҲАСИ

ИШТИРОКЧИЛАР РЎЙХАТИ/
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Жой/Place SCF meeting hall

Сана/Data 24/09/21

№	Ф.И.Ш/ Name, Surname	Иш лавозими/ Position held	Телефон/ Telephone	Имзо/ Signature
1.	Заҳрадуллаев Абдуваҳид	Ўрмон хўжалиги давлат инспекцияси бошқаруви раиси	97 773 2991	[Signature]
2.	Ғиёсов Собиржон	Ўрмон хўжалиги давлат инспекцияси бошқаруви раиси	97 743 7705	[Signature]
3.	Ибраҳимов Мирқасим	Шаҳар вазири	80.3471441	[Signature]
4.	Кенжаев Шохмурод	Савдо-салабот палатаси раиси	80 112 3400	[Signature]
5.	Ориқуллов Сейитхам	Суб ҳудуд вазири	946894320	[Signature]
6.	Абдураҳманов Марғабдулло	Савдо-салабот палатаси раиси	99-095-0046	[Signature]
7.	Қаримов Марта	"Ўрмон хўжалиги" ДТД	30 - 010 - 84 - 02	[Signature]
8.	Тулатова Н.	Ўрмон/суб. раис	97 - 535 4147	[Signature]
9.	Абдураҳимов А.	—	80 940 30 94	[Signature]
10.	Мирзинова Мақсудия	ЎББ консалтинг, менажер	97 772 32 18	[Signature]
11.	Ғаманова Ғиёсовна	—	98) 3088838	[Signature]



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17.	Эрашев Аҳмад	Биолог хўжалиги	(91) 657 43-37	[Signature]
18.	Шаматов Саитсар	Ўрмон хўжалиги	(91) 343-0222	[Signature]
19.	Ҳаризиев Фароқ	Ўрмон хўжалиги	99 051 1987	[Signature]
20.	Раїмов Мамаубея	WB consultant	87 782 33 11	[Signature]
21.	Раҳмонов Шавкат	МУВТ	99.815 43 99	[Signature]
22.				
23.				
24.				
25.				
26.				

Annex 2: Sample registration card of individuals and legal entities

Number:		Question:	
Applicant:			
Address:			
Date of receipt of the appeal:		Number of applicants:	
Form of appeal:		Number of sheets:	
Admission form:		Duplicate/repetitive:	
Type of appeal:		Date and number of previous appeals:	
Control type:			
Summary of the appeal:			
The executive who signed the resolution (assignment):			
Executive resolution (assignment):		Deadline:	
Content division:		Performer:	

The status of the appeal		
Date of submission	Where sent	Number and date of the reply letter
Extended date:		By whom:(signature)
Date of reply:		
Summary of review results:		
Taken out of control (by whom):		Performer's signature:
Data:		Date of completion:
Indication of violation of the deadline for consideration of the appeal:		

