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|  | DRAFT Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) |  |

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| **Project title:** Conservation and Sustainable Management of Lakes, Wetlands and Riparian Corridors as Pillars of a Resilient and Land Degradation Neutral Aral Basin Landscape Supporting Sustainable Livelihoods  |
| **Country:**  Uzbekistan  | **Implementing Partner:** State Committee on Ecology and Environmental Protection  | **Execution Modality***:* *Assisted* NIM |
| **Contributing Outcome (UNDAF/CPD, RPD, GPD)***:* **Contributing Outcome**  **UNDAF/UNDP Outcome:** By 2020, equitable and sustainable economic growth through productive employment, improvement of environment for business, entrepreneurship and innovations expanded for all.  |
| **UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Category:**Moderate | **UNDP Gender Marker:** GEN2 |
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| **Public Consultation/Disclosure Notice** |
| Date: **XXXX** |
| The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is requesting feedback on the attached draft Environmental and Social Management Framework and associated Social and Environmental Screening Procedures for this project.Comments and questions can be sent to the following address: |
| United Nations Development Programme**Physical Address**: **Tel**: **Fax**: **Email**: **Website**:  |
| **The last date for receiving of comments is XXXX** |

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# Executive Summary

This Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) has been prepared for the submission of the UNDP project proposal “Conservation and Sustainable Management of Lakes, Wetlands and Riparian Corridors as Pillars of a Resilient and Land Degradation Neutral Aral Basin Landscape Supporting Sustainable Livelihoods” to the GEF. Its purpose is to assist in the assessment of potential environmental and social impacts. The Framework forms the basis upon which Environmental and Social Management Plan(s) will be developed, so as to ensure full compliance with the requirements of UNDP’s Social and Environmental Standards. The ESMF will be implemented by the State Committee on Ecology and Environmental Protection and overseen by the UNDP Project Manager, the Task Leaders and Local Project Coordinators and a team of qualified experts. The management measures will be monitored throughout the duration of the project.

Preliminary analysis and screening conducted during the project development phase via UNDP’s Social and Environment Screening Procedure (SESP) identified potential social and environmental risks associated with project activities. The screening procedure established that the project falls under Moderate Risk category and that the identified potential social and environmental risks’ impacts are manageable through identified mitigation measures detailed in the Screening Template, included in **Annex 6** to the UNDP/GEF Project Document.

This ESMF identifies the steps that will be followed during the inception phase of the project:

1. Preparing and implementing Strategic Social and Environmental Assessment (SESA) associated with the development of the Integrated Water Management Framework. Preparing an Environment and Social Management Framework (ESMF) in case that the management measures cannot be fully addressed by SESA.
2. Targeted assessments associated with the development of Pastures management plans, Forests management plans and Land use management plans. Management measures to avoid and where not possible to minimize any potential social and environmental risks will be included in these plans.
3. Site specific screening based on SES requirements, associated with the implementation of SLM measures and land restoration measures.
4. Scoped ESIA associated with the infrastructure/construction activities in the PAs.

This ESMF has been developed on the basis of the risk screening during SESP to specify the processes that will be undertaken by the project for the additional assessments of potential impacts and identification and development of appropriate risk management measures, in line with UNDP’s Social and Environmental Standards (SES). This ESMF also details the roles and responsibilities for its implementation and includes a budget and Monitoring and Evaluation plan.

# Abbreviations and Acronyms

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| AWP | Annual Work Plan |
| BAU | Business as Usual |
| CBO | Community-based organization |
| CC | Climate change |
| CPD | Country programme document (UNDP Uzbekistan) |
| CTAESMFESMPGAAP | Chief Technical AdvisorEnvironmental and Social Management FrameworkEnvironmental and Social Management Plan Gender Assessment and Action Plan |
| GEF | Global Environment Facility |
| GRM | Grievance Redress Mechanism |
| IP | Implementing Partner  |
| IBA | Important Bird and Biodiversity Area |
| KBA | Key Biodiversity Area |
| KM | Knowledge management |
| LDN | Land Degradation Neutrality |
| M&E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| MTR | Mid-term review |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| PIMS | Project Information Management System |
| PIR | Project Implementation Review |
| PMU | Project Management Unit |
| PPGRP | Project Preparation GrantResponsible Party |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SECU | Social and Environmental Compliance Unit |
| SES | Social and environmental standards (UNDP) |
| SESAESIA | Strategic environmental and social assessmentEnvironmental and Social Impact Assessment |
| SESP | Social and environmental screening procedure (UNDP) |
| SOP | Standard operating procedure |
| STAP | GEF Scientific Technical Advisory Panel |
| TBD | To be determined |
| TE | Terminal evaluation |
| TOR | Terms of reference |
| UNPDF | United Nations Partnership for Development Framework |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNDP CO | United Nations Development Programme Country Office |
| USD | United States dollar |

# Introduction

This Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) has been prepared for the UNDP-supported project “Conservation and Sustainable Management of Land Resources and High Nature Value Ecosystems in the Aral Sea Basin for Multiple Benefits”.

UNDP is the GEF Agency for the project to which this ESMF applies.

## Project description

The objective of the project is to enhance the resilience of the ecosystems and livelihoods in Lower Amudarya and Aral Sea Basin (LADAB) through land degradation neutrality (LDN) compatible integrated land-water management in the productive landscapes around PAs and KBAs/IBAs. The four components proposed by this project have been designed within available GEF and co-financing framework to address the corresponding drivers of land, water degradation and biodiversity decline, which are directly linked to the diminishment and loss of lake, wetland and riparian biodiversity in this arid landscape. The project will deliver Global Environmental Benefits using a participatory approach that ensures promotion of women, youth and vulnerable groups and equitable participation opportunities . This will result in the establishment of an integrated water management framework linking “water saving agriculture” on 1,050,910 ha of irrigated land in LADAB landscape with the sustainable management of the minimum and the maximum ecological flows, required to sustain 957,260 hectares of lakes, wetlands and riparian zones; participatory Sustainable Land Management (SLM) measures applied to 100,000 ha of pastureland, tugai and tauranga forest ecosystem and halting habitat degradation; extension of the PAs national system’s coverage, to include 9 additional KBAs/IBAs, through the legal designation of 3,094,600 ha new PAs which, coupled with an expected 20% increase in the management effectiveness of the exiting PAs and a guaranteed minimum ecological flow to sustain the deltaic water bodies, will cumulatively result into stabilized population of the key indicator species and the ecological integrity of a chain of watered lands along the Aral coastline, crucial for preventing desertification and loss of biodiversity

Targeted sites**:**

The targeted project site is the Lower Amu Darya and Aral basin (LADAB) landscape which covers approximately 10,000,000 million hectares in the southern and southwestern portions of Uzbekistan.The LADAB landscape is administratively covered by portions of three provinces: Karakalpakstan, Khorezm, and Bukhara. The project is focusing on the Amu Darya basin approximately from the Dengizkul Lake in the Alat District of Bukhara Province, downstream to the river’s termination in at the former Aral Sea, in Moynaq district, Karakalpakstan. The Lower Amu Darya river basin includes areas of intense irrigated agricultural lands. The greatest concentration of irrigated lands are around the cities of Alat-Karakul (home to more than 200,000 people), throughout Khorezm region (home to nearly 1.8 million people), and in the former Amu Darya delta region, covered by multiple districts in Karakalpakstan region (where virtually all of the 1.8+ million people living in Karakalpakstan reside).

The targeted regions and districts host most of the life-supporting natural ecosystems, wetlands, lakes and riparian zones of the Amudarya Basin. In addition, these territories are occupied by the most degraded rangelands in Uzbekistan (encompassing desert pastures of which between 40-78% are under varying degrees of degradation) and irrigated areas of which 81% are affected by salinization.

The project’s four components including Outcomes and Outputs are presented below:

1. Coordinated water management as basis for LDN and conservation

Component 1 of the project will address unrationalized and unsustainable use of water resources, the negative impacts of which are exacerbated from climate change risks. A collaborative framework for water management will be developed, in an integrated way, involving multi-stakeholders engagement, considering agriculture needs but also the necessary ecological flows needed for the preservation of lakes wetlands and riparian zones in Amudarya basin and delta.

**Outcome 1.1**Improved water management for resilient ecosystems and sustainable livelihoods.

Under this Outcome, the project aims at providing a water management framework aligned with the Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) principles, covering the entire LADAB landscape. Evidence based policy and institutional provisions for sustainable management of maximum and minimum ecological flows to lakes, wetlands, and riparian zones will be developed. The project’s work will link the provision of adequate supply of water to lakes, wetlands and riparian zones to “water saving agriculture” measures.

**Output 1.1.** Revised norms of volume and timing of water supply through key hydrotechnical facilities developed and adopted. Main focus: (i) Multi-stakeholder Task Force and Multi-stakeholders Committee set up with presence of relevant ministries and water users; (ii) Ecologically justified science-based norms of water volumes and supply timing developed for key areas important for agriculture and KBAs; (iii) New “Concept on Water Release to Lakes, Wetlands and Riparian Zones” developed. (iv) Finalized agreement between the State Committee on Ecology and Environmental Protection and the Ministry of Water resources drafted and formally approved, and norms of volumes and timing of water supply consulted and adopted.

**Output 1.2** Integrated Water Management Framework and LDN-compatible and climate-smart water management plans. The project will focus on: (i) Integrated Water Management Framework developed with practical recommendations for a sustainable water use on 1,050,910 ha irrigated agricultural of the LADAB landscape including the regions of Bukhara, Khorezm and Karakalpakstan; (ii) Within the broader Integrated Water Management Framework, the project will develop and implement four LDN compatible gender sensitive and climate smart *Integrated Water Management Plans* at the target districts level (Alat and Karakul in Bukhara region and Amudarya and Moynaq in Karakalpakstan region) covering a total of 112,180 ha irrigated agricultural land. With these district level plans the project will effectively demonstrate water saving measures in the irrigated land and farming measures that do not deplete soil condition. Good practices demonstrated at district level, including tailored approaches that include the perspective on the differentiated ways men and women use and have access to, natural resources, are expected to be scaled up at LADAB landscape level through the Integrated Water Management Framework practical replication and scaling up actions.

1. Sustainable land management for Land Degradation Neutrality in the target landscape

Component 2 of the project aims at sustainable land management practices in production landscapes surrounding lakes, wetland and riparian ecosystems. The intervention aligns with the Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) principles and will focus on the buffer zones of selected protected areas sites, in close collaboration with local governments and neighbouring communities with the aim of reducing land degradation and pressure on Protected Areas (PAs) and KBAs/IBAs (Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas).

**Outcome 2.1** Practical improvement in soil and vegetation condition management and new livelihood opportunities created for local communities in line with LDN checklist.

In order to prevent, mitigate and restore land degradation, the project will deploy multi-stakeholders participatory approaches to set regional Land Degradation Neutrality ( LDN) targets in Karakalpakstan and develop long-term spatial and land use management plans at district level in the targeted 4 districts in Bukhara and Karakalpakstan regions.

**Output 2.1.** LDN progress assessment for Karakalpakstan completed; regional LDN targets confirmed, future actions developed and monitoring systems proposed; LDN action plan updated

This Output will build on the knowledge generated during the National LDN Target Setting Programme and will identify, test and calibrate different LDN metrics in Karakalpakstan region. With the project support, baseline values for the three global LDN indicators: Soil Organic Carbon (SOC), Net Primary Land Productivity (NPP) and Land Cover and Land Cover Change (LCC) will be validated for Karakalpakstan region, progress assessed and targets identified. Based on the LDN National Target Setting recommendations, the LDN global indicators may be complemented by other indicators for example: the Bonitet score; Normalised Difference Snow Index (NDSI), Land Salinity Index (mainly for the irrigated areas) and the Integrated indicators “Assessment of the degree of desertification”.

**Output 2.2** Integrated land-use spatial planning in four priority districts developed and under implementation in line with LDN principles.

Under this output the project will develop 4 integrated land use planning, in a participatory manner, bringing together the relevant stakeholders . The project will build on the ongoing trend to gradually transfer planning and development of local policies from the national to district and local authorities. The integrated district level land use plans will be facilitated by district level inter-sectorial Integrated Spatial and Land Use Planning District Committee (ISLUPDC) in the four targeted districts Alat and Karakul (Bukhara province) and Moynaq and Amudarya (Karakalpakstan province) consisting of local divisions of State Committee on Land Resources, Geodesy and Cadastre (Goskomzemgeodezkadastra), Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Water resources, State Committee on Ecology and Environment Protection, district authorities, PAs managers, local communities’ representatives, farmers (daikhan farms, individual farmers), women groups.

**Output 2.3** Improved management of pastureland by local communities in 4 priority districts.

The project will use GEF resources to support the development of pasture management plans for approximately 90,000 ha of pastures through several activities, implemented in partnership with forestry enterprises, local authorities (khokymiyats) and local communities in the four targeted districts, in the PA/KBA/IBAs production zones and surrounding landscapes and rangelands under different degrees of land degradation. lements of the tactical grazing management relevant to the specific context will be adopted for preventing, reducing, restoring degraded pastures in the demonstration project areas together with the owners of the land (who may be either the state forestry enterprises or local authorities) and together with local communities (leasing the land), supported by project’s national/international expertise. Trainings and round table meetings with farmers (implemented within Output 4.1) will increase their knowledge and skills on sustainable pasture management practices - pasture rotation, access to veterinary services, selecting optimal livestock breeds fodder production and Phyto melioration techniques.

**Output 2.4** Innovative land restoration supported at most degraded areas

Within the framework of the Output 2.4 the project’s focus is on targeted land restoration options in highly degraded areas around PAs/KBAS/IBAs, addressing different types of land degradation: salinization, erosion and desertification.

The project will further identify innovative solutions to advance integrated land-water management through the organization of the *Aral Sea Innovation Challenge* to promote business solutions, innovative technologies, policies, regulations and financial instruments aiming at improving land governance and reversing land degradation in the Aral Sea Region. The proposed process is aligned with the key priorities of the UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) 2016-2020 (“ Environmental Protection to ensure sustainable development”) and it aligns with UNDP’s efforts to promote a sustainable, transparent and equitable use of natural resources and good agricultural practices and incentives by improving farming and water use efficiency.

**Output 2.5** Community forest use in riparian corridors in four priority districts developed and under implementation

The project will work with local resource users to develop and implement four community-based forest management plans in key areas of riparian corridors for approximately 10,000 ha tugai and turanga forests, and the implementation of proposed activities will be done in collaboration with the state forestry enterprises and local communities. It is important to save existing forest range while creating new shelterbelts by replenishing missing rows of trees. To promote natural renewal of tugai and turanga forests specific methods shall be implemented. Application of community forestry model in creating forest plantations will serve for sustainability purposes.

1. **Conservation of globally significant Aral Sea Basin biodiversity**

The project’s work under Component 3 will focus on addressing direct drivers of biodiversity degradation, to protect globally important biodiversity, habitats and species, through PAs system expansion and targeted support in strengthening the management effectiveness of some of the key existing PAs. The project will use GEF resources for targeted investments in spatial and land use planning in the surrounding geographies of the PAs, as a critical step in ensuring that the PAs are well integrated in the sustainable management land use and agricultural practices, and that buffer zones and corridors will be appropriately mapped and delineated on the ground and that this information will be integrated into the LDN compatible spatial and land use planning.

**Outcome 3.1** Lake, wetland, and riparian corridor KBAs secured through strengthened protected area estate

The project will aim at the creation of five (5) new PAs that will increase the coverage and legal protection of globally significant biodiversity (IBAs/KBAs) coverage hosting key species in Aral Sea region and will improve the management effectiveness of existing protected areas under the project scope.

**Output 3.1.1** Under this output, the project will implement the groundwork and support the creation of five (5) new protected areas with a total area of 3,094,600 ha: the National Park “South Ustyurt", the National Park "Central Kyzylkum", the Reserve "Sudoche system of lakes"(on the basis of the existing refuge with an area of 50,000 ha), the refuges "Mejdurechye of Akdarya-Kazakhdarya" and "Akpetki". All of these sites are either IBAs or Ramsar sites. The creation of the new PAs is aligned with the priorities in the new NBSAP (2019-2028), which aims at expanding the protected area system representativity and improving management effectiveness of existing PAs.

**Output 3.1.2** Improved management effectiveness of theexisting PAs through PA regime compliance and enforcement, zoning, patrolling, research, species-focused conservation activities.

Under this output, the project will focus on strengthening PAs capacities for management, research and monitoring, patrolling and legal enforcement. Through increasing the management effectiveness of the PAs system, in perfect alignment with the NBSAP 2019-2028, the project will strengthen the Government’s ability to improve the status of biodiversity and ecosystem services. The targeted PAs are: Kyzylkhum State Reserve; Lower Amudarya Biosphere reserve; Saygachy State Refuge; Dengizkul Lake State Refuge; Sudochye Refuge.

**Outcome 3.2** Lake, wetland and riparian corridor biodiversity mainstreamed in sustainable land-use

The project will use GEF resources to improve the biodiversity mainstreaming in the surrounding geographies of the targeted PAs and IBAs/KBAs by ensuring adequate PAs zoning based on spatial and integrated landscape planning (under Output 2.2) and demonstration of sustainable agricultural practices in production landscapes (under Outputs 2.3;2.4; 2.5) that will maximise livelihoods opportunities without undermining biodiversity. To reduce or eliminate possible conflicts, the project will employ participatory approaches and will involve local communities. By proactively supporting the local communities to develop local revenue-generating activities, making use of the natural features of the local landscapes and biodiversity, the project can significantly strengthen community support to the existence and sustainable functioning of the nearby PA.

**Output 3.2.1** PA buffer zones and corridors identified, planned and mapped through integrated district land use management plans (coordinated with Output 2.2) and implemented with supporting regulations.

The project will support the identification and delineation of core areas and functional zones for two new PAs: Southern Ustyurt National Nature Park (IUCN II) and Central Kyzylkum National Park (IUCN II) and the establishment of a conservation zone within the existing Kyzylkum State Reserve (IUCN Category I).

**Output 3.2.2** Training and capacity strengthening of local environmental inspectorates and border security

The project will support delivery of trainings to all target PAs as well as the overarching PA management authorities. The effective implementation of activities under component 3 are expected to ensure that, compared to the 2020 baseline values, the GEF METT scores[[1]](#footnote-1) for the individual target PAs on average increase by approximately 20%. The training sessions will be organized by the Centre for Retraining and Advanced Training of Employees, working in the field of Environmental protection, under the State Committee on Ecology and Environment protection.

**Output 3.2.3** Sustainable livelihoods supported in KBA buffer zones and corridors (e.g. fast-growing plantations as alternative to logging; cattle grazing rotation and use of distant pastures).

The project will support private sector, rural entrepreneurs and will work with the Council of Farmers, Dekhan Farms and Households to create awareness on the benefits of LDN/SLM measures and jumpstart investments into sustainable pastures, forests management and land restoration measures.

The Council of Farmers is managing a State Fund to support farmers, based on the resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan April 26, 2018 No. PP-3680 “On Additional Measures to Improve the Activities of Farmers, Dekhkan Farms and Owners of Private Lands”. The Fund will spend $38 million worth soft loans disbursed through three main banks: Microcredit Bank, Agro Bank and Halbank supporting innovative activities in agriculture sector, introduction of new types of agricultural products and technologies, implementation of state programmes and other projects conducive to agricultural activities in the country. In partnership with the Council of Farmers the project will set up a MicroScheme to support small and midsize economically active farmers’ access to financing of sustainable land management measures. The contribution from the project could provide for the total or partial payment on the interests on the loan, technical assistance for the development of the business plans and bank applications and technical guidance for further implementation of SLM measures in the field.A series of regulations will be also supported by the project in order to strengthen the state subsidy system for farmers who are implementing Sustainable Land Management measures.

1. **Component 4:** International Cooperation and knowledge management

This component combines cross-cutting project activities aimed at increasing awareness and technical knowledge. There is increasing awareness, understanding, and political will in Uzbekistan to address the water management problems linked to the Aral Sea ecological disaster, including improving the management of irrigation water drawn from the Amu Darya river.

**Outcome 4.1** Increased level of awareness and technical knowledge among local communities about LDN and key biodiversity values of the Aral Sea Region in connection with the water use patterns

This outcome will focus on prioritised issues, aiming at building a critical mass of understanding of the issues under the project scope: e.g. Land Degradation Neutrality, Integrated Land use Planning, Sustainable Land Management, Protected Areas and key biodiversity values, wetland ecosystem services etc and awareness gaps as identified by the baseline awareness questionnaires conducted at PPG stage. Several trainings seminars have been included under this outcome in order to improve to some extent the local natural resource users’ and managers’ knowledge on LDN and Sustainable Land Management (SLM) measures, wetland ecosystem services, ecotourism and sustainable water management. A wide array of communication products will be developed and disseminated to local farmers and local authorities, through awareness, trainings and information events coupled with farmers school fields in targeted project districts.

**Output 4.1.1** Education and awareness raising campaigns for local resource users about key biodiversity values and sustainable land-use management regimes and regulations.

Work on this output will include i) an awareness component to promote information and knowledge exchange and increase awareness and ii) a training component entailing a suite of workshops and education events aiming at strengthening the technical knowledge of farmers and natural resource users, local authorities and water managers on biodiversity friendly practices in production zones.

**Output 4.1.2** Awareness campaign for sustainable water use targeting decision-makers at local and regional levels

The project will be supported by a PR/media specialized company to tailor an awareness raising campaign and communication messages to relevant decision makers in water sector, at national, local and regional levels.

The project will design and implement a targeted awareness campaign for local and national water and agriculture management authorities (ministries, BISAs, ISAs, other agencies) emphasizing the importance of equitable water releases among multiple water uses and the importance of maintaining the integrity of the lakes, wetlands and riparian areas in the Amudary Basin. The campaign will include seminars and conferences, online outreach tools and will seek to attract media partnerships for targeted TV and radio broadcasts.

**Outcome 4.2** Uzbekistan’s cooperation inthe international environmental programming for the Aral Sea basin strengthened

The project’s work under this outcome will seek to support Uzbekistan’s capacity and participation into regional cooperation in the Aral Sea Basin. Water negotiations in the Aral Sea Basin are complex and often difficult and failure to achieve consensus may have bearing on the common cooperation agenda in the region. Strengthened technical capacities for effective participation into the regional water management and development cooperation agenda is considered very important by the government representatives. Institutions such as International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea IFAS and its various platforms helped prevent conflicts.

 **Output 4.2.1** The Government, scientific community and NGOs supported (e.g. through preparation of science-based technical papers, communications/negotiations with other Aral Sea basin countries, and international advice where relevant) in developing and negotiating decisions on the Aral Sea basin at the international level.

Under this output the project technical experts will develop a series of analytical reports to strengthen the technical knowledge and capacity of the participating country representatives in different regional negotiations and meetings organized by the IFAs, that will also showcase the project’s demonstrated best practices and will disseminate the knowledge generated on sustainable water management, different analysis and estimations on the needed water releases to maintain the integrity of Amudarya delta’s lakes and, and on the importance of an integrated land/water management in arid areas.

**Output 4.2.2** Donor/private sector/Government platform on replenishing the UN MPHSTF functions resulting in agreed new projects/activities focusing on integrated approaches towards water resource management and climate-smart land and resource use.

Under this output, the project will support participatory multi-stakeholder dialogue and programming workshops focusing on integrated water resources management and development of project concepts to be submitted for funding under the UNMPHSTF. The project will contribute to multi-stakeholders dialogue for sustainable national programming through the IFAs and UN Multi-Partners Human Security Trust Fund for the Aral Sea (UNMPHSTF) and will organize 5 education and awareness Water Diplomacy seminars in cooperation with the IFAS and the experts of the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy in Central Asia (UNRCCA)[[2]](#footnote-2) , targeting government officials representing Uzbekistan in regional negotiations, NGOs, Academia, Women Groups etc. The seminars will showcase the project experiences and will provide a platform for moderated participatory dialogue and learning on different topics including (i) gender sensitive, participatory and sustainable water management issues in the context of climate change and progressive land degradation (ii) mainstreaming integrated LDN compatible water-land management into regional programming and (iii) water diplomacy in the context of Aral Sea Basin.

**Component 5: M&E**

**Outcome 5.1** Project results properly monitored and evaluated

**Output 5.1.1** Set of monitoring activities implemented

During the project implementation the M&E will be conducted following GEF and UNDP guidelines and according to the M&E plan described in Section V of this project document. The main tasks of the M&E plan include an inception conference/workshop and report, annual monitoring of indicators in the project results framework, annual project implementation reports (PIR), ongoing monitoring of environmental and social risks and implementation of SES requirements, supervision missions, updating GEF core indicators and METT (at midterm and project end), monitoring of Global Environmental Benefits, ongoing monitoring of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan and the Gender Action Plan, Project Board meetings, oversight mission by the UNDP-GEF team, mid-term and terminal GEF7 Core Indicators and METT updates, an Independent Mid-term Review (MTR) and an Independent Terminal Evaluation (TE), project final conference. The Project Manager will ensure the collation of all the project evaluative knowledge and information, supporting the project’s adaptive management, and final project report.

## Purpose and scope of this ESMF

This Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) has been prepared to assist in managing the potential adverse social and environmental impacts associated with activities of the proposed project activities in line with the requirements of UNDP’s Social and Environmental Standards. The implementing partners of the project and the project management unit (PMU) will monitor the ESMF implementation, starting with Project Inception stage to ensure the environmental and social risks and impacts are fully assessed and management measures are in place prior to the implementation of the relevant project activities.

The ESMF forms the basis upon which the Implementing Partner/Responsible Party will develop their specific Environmental and Social Management Plan(s) ESMP, to ensure that significant adverse environmental and social impact mitigation and management measures are implemented and monitored as required. It identifies the steps for detailed assessment of the project’s potential social and environmental risks, and for preparing and approving the required management plans for avoiding, and where avoidance is not possible, reducing, mitigating, and managing the identified adverse impacts of this project.

This ESMF will be publicly disclosed in line with UNDP’s Information Disclosure Policy and SES. At this stage, not all the activities have been fully specified in terms of specific locations and interventions, and as such they cannot be fully assessed for all the potential social and environmental risks and impacts. This ESMF has been therefore prepared to set out the principles, rules, guidelines, and procedures for screening, assessing, and managing the potential social and environmental impacts of the project as they are developed and designed.

## Potential Social and Environmental Impacts

During the PPG phase, the project has been reviewed against UNDP SESP (2021 version). The analysis identified a range of potential social and environmental impacts associated with the project activities. The SESP template (Project Document Annex 6) details the applicable specific environmental and social risks. The significance of each risk, based on its likelihood of occurrence and extent of impact, has been estimated as being either low, moderate, or high. Based on the significance of these individual risks, the project has been allocated an overall SESP risk categorization rating of Moderate.

**Moderate Risk:** is defined by UNDP’s SES[[3]](#footnote-3) as “*Projects that include activities with potential adverse social and environmental risks and impacts that are limited in scale, can be identified with a reasonable degree of certainty, and can be addressed through application of standard best practice, mitigation measures and stakeholder engagement during Project implementation.”*

The following Moderate Risks have been identified during the SESP:

**Risk 1.** The Project supported Integrated Water Management Framework for LADAB landscape could result in limitation of access to water resources.

**Risk 2:** The modification of land use and natural resources management regimes through the planning/implementation of sustainable land management (SLM) measures (e.g. forests, pastures, agricultural lands), envisaged to be implemented in support of long-term sustainability could affect access and use of resources by local communities, including the rural poor and women.

**Risk 3:** Project developed plans, once implemented, may have a negative impact on the use of natural resources and/or the critical biodiversity habitats and species.

**Risk 4**: Expansion of PAs system could lead to potential limitations or restrictions of the use of natural resources. Strengthening management of existing PAs, such as improved PAs zoning, strengthening the sanctuaries’ protection regimes, and/or creation of ecological corridors could further restrict access to and use of biodiversity resources by local communities, affecting livelihoods.

**Risk 5.** Land restoration measures intended to reduce threats to critical habitats and environmentally sensitive areas could potentially end up harming them.

**Risk 8:** Small scale construction site associated with the monitoring station in South Ustyurt and installation of observation towers in the existing PAs may have negative impact on critical habitats and species.

**Risk 9:** Enforcement of PAs regime and/or wildlife corridors, following applicable environmental norms and legislation could pose risks of conflicts between rangers and local communities engaged in traditional livelihoods and practices.

**Risk 10:** Government resource management authorities may not have the capacity to fulfill all aspects of their mandate, and rural resource users may not have the capacity to claim their rights, which could potentially lead to the violation of human rights.

**Risk 11**: The expected project impacts of the conservation of endangered and threatened species, restoration of degraded land, and sustainable management of forest and pasture resources could be sensitive to changing climatic conditions in the future**Risk 12:** The project may fail to ensure that labor rights, especially of vulnerable groups, are respected by local subcontractors. There could be risk of forced child labor at project sites.

**Risk 12:** Project activities involving local/field interventions and close engagement with local communities may inadvertently contribute to the spread of COVID-19.

**Risk 13:** The project may inadvertently contribute to potential perpetuation of discriminations against women. There are lingering disparities between men and women, particularly in rural areas and in the patriarchal cultures of some of the ethnic minority communities, which could be inadvertently replicated.

**Risk 14:** The project may fail to ensure that labor rights, especially of vulnerable groups, are respected by local subcontractors. There could be risk of forced child labor at project sites.

**Risk 15**: Expansion of PAs system and/or improved zoning could lead to risk to endangered species.

Two Low Risks have been identified during SESP:

**Risk 6** The project activities focused on re-planting (native) tree species along riparian forests strips could have unforeseen ecological consequences.

**Risk 7:** The project supported demonstration activities may inadvertently be implemented at/in proximity of significant cultural and historical significance sites.

A synthesis of the key project activities with potential social and environmental impacts is shown in Table 2 below. This table is supported by the more detailed information on project-specific risks contained in the SESP (Project Document Annex 6).

**Table 1:** Summary of activities and potential risks and benefits

| **Project activity** | **Potential social and environmental risks** | **SESP references (see SESP in Annex)** | **Social and environmental Benefits** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |
| **Integrated Water Management Framework** * **Output 1.1**
* **Output 1.2**
 | **Economic displacement** The project will develop an Integrated Water Management Framework **(Output 1.1/Output 1.2)** covering the entire irrigated areas and system in Lower Amudarya and Aral Sea Basin (LADAB) landscape; within this framework, the project will further support a plan that will prioritize Gov investments into hydrotechnical facilities, titled “Investment Plan for Review and Optimization of Hydrotechnical Facilities”.The water management planning framework may result in some modification to the enjoyment of human rights or potential economic displacement of individuals living near or otherwise using territory included in the targeted area.**Water planning framework may have negative impact on the use of natural resources**  The project’s work under Outcome 1.1 includes the development of a plan (“Investment Plan for review and Optimization of Hydrotechnical Facilities”) for prioritizing the government’s investments into the modernization of hydrotechnical facilities (dams, reservoirs, sluices) in order to consider ecosystem needs and improved water management and releases, to establish optimal water supply for critical wetlands/lakes. During the assessments and designing the optimal water distribution scenarios among multiple water users and designing improvements measures of the hydrotechnical facilities, there is the risk of failing to properly plan for maintenance/improvements of these facilities for the management of maximum flow management leading to a potential risk of flooding the adjacent arable lands. The “Investment Plan “ will be part of the Integrated Water Framework.  | **RISKS**Risk 1 /ModerateRisk 10/ModerateRisk 13/Moderate**SAFEGUARDS TRIGGERED** SES Principle 2 HUMAN RIGHTS SES Principle 3 GENDERSES Principle 5 ACCOUNTABILITYSES Standard 2 CLIMATE CHANGESES Standard 3 COMMUNITY HEALTH, SAFETY and SECURITY SES Standard 5 DISPLACEMENTSES Standard 8 POLLUTION PREVENTION and RESOURCE EFFICIENCY | The project will be linking “water saving agriculture” with provision of minimum ecological flows to endangered lakes, wetland and riparian zones in Amudarya and Aral Sea Basin.The project will provide for improved water management for 1,050,910 ha of irrigated arable land in LADAB landscape, based on an initial demonstration of “water saving agriculture” on 112,800 ha in the four targeted districts. The lakes, wetlands and riparian corridors in the LADAB landscape provide ecosystem services, such as climate regulation and air quality, as well as maintaining biodiversity |
| **Land use planning and SLM activities** * **Integrated LDN land use plans**
* **Pasture management plans, Forest management plans**
* **SLM measures in buffer and production landscapes**
* **Integrated Water Management Plans**

**Output 2.2****Output 1.2****Output 2.3****Output 2.4****Output 2.5****Output 3.2.3** | **Economic displacement** The project will promote integrated landscape planning in the 4 priority districts in PAs productive zones. At pilot districts level, the project will develop 4 Spatial Integrated Land Use Plans in 4 priority districts Amudaya and Moynaq districts in Karakalpakstan and Alat and Karakul districts in Bukhara region, under **Output 2.2.**The project will further develop pasture management plans in these districts, on 90,000 ha in the PA/KBA/IBAs production zones under **Output 2.3.** In addition, 4 community-based forest management plans in key areas of riparian corridors for approximately 10,000 ha tugai and turanga forests, and the implementation of proposed activities will be done in collaboration with the state forestry enterprises and local communities under **Output 2.5**.Under **Output 1.2** the project will develop 4 Integrated Water Management Plans in the priority districts (Output 1.2)The targeted areas were selected at the PPG stage (Annex 22: Target Landscape profile and Annex 24: Proposed SLM activities/Project document) however their exact delineation on the ground will be validated with georeferenced data support, during the expert land usemapping and assessments (**Output 2.2.)** and will be re-confirmed during the consultations with the forestry enterprises, local authorities sand local communities during the first year of the project implementation .When modifying existing resource use and management regimes, there is always a possibility of some modification to the enjoyment of human rights or potential economic displacement of individuals living near or otherwise using territory included in the targeted area. **Project planning may have negative impact on the use of natural resources** The project’s work under **Output 1.2**. will result in approximately 112,180 ha of irrigated land under sustainable water management; The risks considered are related to potential inadequate planning for water and SLM measures e.g. although the water management planning will indicate the technology to be used and will recommend SLM practices (such as crop rotation; biodrainage; agroforestry measures) in order to reduce water wastage and improved resource efficiency, there is the risk that these measures will lead to increase of natural resources (e.g. choice of water irrigation technology would lead to increase water consumption); another example would be the inadequate planning for tugai/tauranga forest regeneration that may harm surrounding nesting/feeding areas of rare or endangered species.**Project SLM activities in buffer zones designed to reduce threats to critical habitats may end up harming them** The above-mentioned plans, encompass Sustainable Land Management (SLM) measures that when implemented may pose several risks to the surrounding landscape. In addition, under the Output 2.4 the project will implement land restoration measures on degraded land. Although the environmental risks are considered moderate, limited in scale and with the likelihood of being reasonably managed, and the sites are at sufficient distance from the protected areas, there will be nevertheless minor changes to the farm landscape; The project will be supporting improved management of agricultural lands, pasture resources, and sensitive ecosystems encompassing Key Biodiversity Areas.**Project supported SLM measures could be vulnerable to potential climate change impacts**Adverse impacts of extreme climatic events (drought; sand and windstorms; seasonal floods) may affect project’s interventions in the field and the livelihoods of local communities living in the target areas, despite the project’s sustainable land management measures grounded by scientific principles and participatory mechanisms to enable stakeholders to adapt the management of natural resources to any given context and threats. | **RISKS**Risk 2/ModerateRisk 3/ModerateRisk 6/Low(safeguards not triggered)Risk 7/Low (safeguards not triggered)Risk 10/ModerateRisk 11/ModerateRisk 12/ModerateRisk13/ModerateRisk12/ModerateRisk 13/ModerateRisk 14/ Moderate **SAFEGUARDS TRIGGERED** SES Principle 2 HUMAN RIGHTS SES Principle 3 GENDERSES Principle 5 ACCOUNTABILITYSES Standard 1 BIODIVERSITY&NRMSES Standard 2 CLIMATE CHANGESES Standard 3 COMMUNITY HEALTH, SAFETY and SECURITY SES Standard 5 DISPLACEMENTSES Standard 7 LABOUR AND WORKING CONDITIONSSES Standard 8 POLLUTION PREVENTION and RESOURCE EFFICIENCY | The integrated land use planning will promote sustainable land and natural resources management model, based on LDN philosophy avoid/reduce/restore land degradation. 90,000 ha pastures and 10,000 ha riparian forests (tugai and Tauranga forests in the lower Amudarya delta) will be under sustainable management plans, aligned with the local forestry plans. 120,180 ha of irrigated areas under sustainable water management plans aligned with local government investments in the irrigation sector. Innovative restoration techniques, supported/promoted by the project will lead to 1,500 ha of restored degraded agricultural land. Targeted support to forest and lake ecosystem restoration, in return, will remove the erosion risk of crop fields and pastures. Carbon benefits will accrue as soil carbon is restored and forest regenerates. The project has been designed using the UNCCD LDN Checklist *(please see Annex 28).* The ecosystem management benefits will be mostly associated with the rationalized and efficient use of water resources for improved management of land, forests, conservation-important lake, wetland and riparian |
| **Small scale construction activities in PAs****Output 3.1.1****Output 3.1.2**  | **Potential negative impact on critical habitats at the construction sites in PAs** The disturbances at the sites associated with the construction of a small monitoring station in South Ustyurt and installation of observation towers in the existing PAs, may have negative impact on critical habitats and species.**Potential failure to ensure labour rights**The project may fail to ensure that labor rights, especially of vulnerable groups, are respected by local subcontractors. | **RISKS**Risk 8/ ModerateRisk 13/ModerateRisk 14/Moderate**SAFEGUARDS TRIGGERED** SES Standard 1 BIODIVERSITY AND NRMSES Standard 3 COMMUNITY SAFETYSES Standard 7 LABOUR AND WORKIGN CONDITIONS  | The envisaged station in South Ustyurt (new PA) will serve as a field infrastructure for scientists and reserve inspectorate after the protected area becomes operational. Research and species conservation targets will be refined based upon the results of the inventoriesThe installation of observation towers in all the targeted existing PAs, will enable stationary monitoring and detection/rapid interventions in case of potential fire hazards. |

# Legislation and Institutional Frameworks for environmental and social matters

This section provides a preliminary review of the policy, legal and institutional (PLR) framework related to the potential risks and benefits of the proposed project and prospective activities to be implemented with the use of the funding received. The PLR framework underpins how social and environmental safeguards will be addressed and respected. The preliminary baseline analysis will be further expanded during the project inception stage, when a full Strategic Social and Environmental Assessment (SESA) will be conducted, in order to address a full range of analytical and participatory approaches that aim to integrate social and environmental consideration into policies and plans supported by the project (i.e. “upstream” activities). As necessary, SESA recommendations will be implemented through a management plan (ESMF) that outlines the required assessment of targeted “downstream” activities.

## National legislation, policies and regulations

The main baseline policies, laws and regulations related to the use of natural resources are the following:

**Water management**

The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan of 6 May 1993, No. 837-XII **"On water and water use",** with subsequent amendments (1997-2020), is the main national legislative act in the field of water regulation. The key issues regulated by the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On water and water use" are: (i) competences of public authorities and management bodies in the field of water regulation (ii) participation of non-governmental non-profit organizations and citizens in water management (iii) water management: coordination (intersectoral) and (iv) water management: defining general and special water use and water consumption regimes, issuance of permits. Furthermore, a large number of decrees and resolutions adopted in recent years (2017-2020) led to significant changes in institutional and legal platforms in the country. Water issues are also addressed in land and forestry legislation and other laws on groundwater resources, nature protection. In the recent years, Uzbekistan has implemented significant environmental reforms, prompting the need of harmonization of the water related legislative and normative acts with the legislation on environmental protection.

Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan of October 30, 2019, No. UP-5863 "On approval of the Concept of environment protection of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030", it is the most important document that will address some of these coordination aspects and the most relevant for the project.

The **Roadmap for the Implementation of the Concept for the Development of Water Resources Sector** of the Republic of Uzbekistan (2030) referred at as “The Concept” was approved in 2020 and the related regulations are estimated to be finalized by 2022. The Concept is particularly relevant to the project, and it outlines the most important measures for the development of water management in the country: (i)  Improving the financial sustainability of water management through the denationalization and decentralization of water management, commercialization of water management organizations, the introduction of outsourcing mechanisms, including public-private partnerships (ii) A phased increase in the level of coverage by water users of the costs of water supply. At the moment, payments by agricultural producers for water delivery services are insignificant (they cover only a small part of delivery costs) and do not have a direct link to the volumes of its consumption (iii) Administrative reform in the water sector, introduction of modern management methods that are consistent with the market principles, increasing the role and participation of water users, other stakeholders and the public in water management. It will provide for a clear delineation of institutional mandates of the main state agencies and structures in the water sector (iv) The introduction of transparent and effective principles for the distribution and redistribution of rights to receive water. The water distribution system will be based on transparent and applicable user rights to receive water in the form of long-term quotas and permits for special water use. In addition, it is planned to create a fair and transparent system for exchanging water rights or their parts (if, for example, a farmer does not need to use his quota, he can choose to sell it to a buyer, usually a farmer who needs more water) (v) Technological modernization of hydraulic structures and pumping stations, ensuring their safety, reducing water losses in irrigation systems, reducing energy costs for water delivery. Modernization will be funded through the state budget and through private investments (vi) Creating effective incentives for the rational use of water, introducing energy and water-saving technologies in the water sector, optimizing the structure of water consumption. It is proposed to use various tools that stimulate the use of water-saving technologies and increase the efficiency of water use (vii) Development of scientific and innovative potential in the water sector, improvement of the training system for the water sector (viii) Improving the system of forecasting and accounting for water resources, improving the quality of data and their availability to ground effective decision making.

**Land management**

**Land Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan.** The "Land Code" is the main law on land use, land holding and land planning in agricultural sector, which was adopted on April 30, 1998, by the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Adoption of this new code was driven by the development of various forms of economic activities and ownership, liberalization of the economy and other factors. The main objectives of the Land Code ensure, land regulations in the interests of present and future generations, scientifically sound, rational use and protection of land, increase of soil fertility, conservation and improvement of the environment, creation of conditions for equal development of all forms of economic activity, protection of rights of legal entities and individuals to land plots, as well as strengthening the rule of law in this area. The Code includes 14 Chapters and 91 Articles. Under this law, agricultural land is land provided for agricultural needs or intended for such purposes.

**Decree of the President of Uzbekistan "On measures to improve monitoring of the conservation and rational use of lands, enhance geodetic and cartographic activities and streamline the maintenance of state cadastres"** (May31, 2017, No.УП-5065). The decree of the President of Uzbekistan sets out key objectives and areas of activity of the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on land resources, geodesy, cartography and state cadastre: (i) ensuring the implementation of unified state policy on the rational use and conservation of land, geodetic and cartographic activities, implementation of systematic state control over the rational use and conservation of land, as well as state geodetic supervision of strict compliance with the relevant legislation; (ii) development and implementation of state programs to improve soil fertility, rational use and conservation of land, preparation of proposals on key directions of state policy in the field of land management, land use and soil fertility improvement; (iii) participation in the development of land use forecasts and plans, as well as promising land use patterns; (iv) monitoring of agricultural lands, crops sowing and growing using unmanned aerial vehicles, ensuring the functioning of satellite navigation systems using geodetic data and cartographic materials, etc.

**Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Farming".** The law establishes the organizational and legal principles of farms' creation, their rights and obligations, their relationship with other legal entities and individuals. A farm is an independent business entity with the rights of a legal entity based on the joint activities of members of a farm engaged in agricultural commodity production using land plots granted to it on a long-term lease. Land plots are provided to farms through bidding process on the basis of tenancy for a period of up to fifty years, but not less than thirty years.The size of the land for farming is determined on a case by case basis by the authority providing the land, taking into account local conditions and the number of a given farm members. A farm, in the manner and on the terms prescribed, may lease additional land for agricultural production.

**Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Dehkan Farms".** The law establishes the legal basis for creation, operation and liquidation of dehkan farms, regulates their rights and obligations, their relations with other legal entities and individuals. Dehkan farm - is a family based small-scale farm engaged in the production and sale of agricultural products based on use of personal labor of family members on a personal plot of land provided to the head of the family for lifetime inheritable possession. The size of a land plot provided for a dehkan farm is determined based on the availability of land resources. The decision to provide a land plot for dehkan farming is made by a district authority (hokim). Family of each member of an agricultural cooperative (shirkat), an employee of other agricultural and forestry enterprise, institution and organization, as well as the families of teachers, doctors and other specialists living in rural areas, are provided with plots of land for dekhkan farming on a lifetime inheritable possession basis, the size of which, including the area occupied by buildings and courtyards, is up to 0.35 hectares on irrigated and up to 0.5 hectares on non-irrigated (rain fed) lands, and up to 1 hectare on non-irrigated (rain fed) lands in steppe and desert areas

**Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Pastures**" (2019). The law defines the pastures as lands with natural vegetation cover that is used as livestock feed. They are divided into desert, semi-desert, sub - mountain, mountain and lowland pastures, provided and not provided with water. Pasture use and conservation management is carried out by the Cabinet of Ministers, local authorities, as well as by specially authorized state bodies. According to the law, pasture users may establish associations for joint use and conservation of these lands. Pastures are provided to legal entities and individuals for permanent possession, lease and temporary use by decisions of hokims. On the lands of the state forest resources pastures are used by permission of state forestry authorities. The Law emphasizes the need for a rational use and protection of pastures (art 7) and calls for the participation of local communities and pasture users in the sustainable pasture management through restoration and protection measures (art 14) and underlines the importance of training, networking and capacity building for pasture users in sustainable pasture management techniques such as rotation grazing, conservation, restoration methods.

**Law on Forest** (Law of Uzbekistan No.475 of April 16, 2018.) lays down priority areas of the state policy related to conservation, protection, reproduction, restoration and use of forests. The Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan of August 23, 2019, No.4424 "On measures for efficient use of forests in Uzbekistan" sets out the parameters of the state program on development of forestry for 2020-2024, including: for Republic of Karakalpakstan - creation of forests on the area of 2 million ha; creation, based on signed contracts, of field-protecting afforestation on irrigated lands of agricultural enterprises on the area of 1,210 ha; for Bukhara province - creation of forests on the area of 45,000 ha; creation, based on signed contracts, of field-protecting afforestation on irrigated lands of agricultural enterprises on the area of 1,110 ha.

**Main policies**

**Strategy for development of agriculture in Uzbekistan for 2020-2030**  with a specific focus on the rational use of natural resources and protection of environment, provide for expansion of forest by 20% in 2021, in 2025 and 2030 by 25% and 30% respectively.

**The Concept of the development of forestry until 2030-**  It is expected that the Concept will be approved by a special Decree of the President during May-June of 2020. This document will define goals, objectives and priority areas of mid-term and long-term forestry development in Uzbekistan and will serve as a foundation for development of programs for further development of the forest-based sector.

**Concept of environmental protection in Uzbekistan until 2030 , introduces a** moratorium on cutting valuable wood species that are not included in the state forest resources. This moratorium will stay in force until December 31, 2020. The Concept's roadmap provides for the expansion of areas of forest plantations on Uzbek part of the dried-up Aral seabed to 60% of its territory by 2030, as well as increasing the area of the state forest resources covered with forest to reach 4.5 million ha.

**Road Map for Combating Desertification and Drought** 2019-2023 was adopted in compliance with the Resolution of the President of Uzbekistan of February 22, 2018 and approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan on April 26, 2019.

**Bukhara green barrier** provides for green shelterbelts on more than 200 000 ha in Bukhara province during 2018-2020.

**Biodiversity and Protected Areas management**

**Law "On protected areas"** (2004) is the main law that regulates the organization, protection and use of protected areas. The law sets out the following categories of protected areas in Uzbekistan: state reserves; integrated (landscape) nature reserves; natural parks; state natural monuments; territories for conservation, reproduction and restoration of individual natural sites and complexes; protected landscapes; territories for managing individual natural resources. The existing classification of protected areas considers the recommendations of IUCN and allows the creation of a unified ecological network of protected areas of various regimes that provide an opportunity to merge environmental and economic interests. The Law is implemented by a suite of Regulations.

**Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Measures to enhance PA's Public Administration"** (No.4247 of March 20, 2019) was adopted iin order to increase PA management efficiency and ensure their further development. According to this Resolution, state reserves and Lower Amu Darya State Biosphere Reserve have been transferred to the system of State committee on Ecology. Approved Roadmap sets out plans for expansion of PAs through establishment of five new PAs in 2019–2022: Southern Ustyurt State Seserve (1.4 mln. ha), State reserves Beltau (188.3 thousand ha) ), Akpetki (587.7 thousand ha), and Akdarya-Kazakdarya Interfluve (22 thousand ha), as well as the Sudochye lake system state reserve (from 50 to 88 thousand ha) on the grounds of Sudochye state reserve. The Resolution also mandated the establishment of the Main Directorate of Biodiversity and PAs under State committee on Ecology.

**Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No.3286 of September 25, 2017 "On measures for further enhancement of the system of protection of water bodies"**  forbids illegal clearing of riverbeds and strengthening their banks, extraction of non-metallic minerals to prevent the negative impact of these activities on the environment. Water conservation zones and riparian corridors are designated as protected landscapes. The established area of water conservation zones along rivers in Uzbekistan is 155 416.5 ha.

**Main policies**

**National Strategy for Biodiversity and Action Plan 2019-2028** (CMR No. 484 of June 11, 2019). The strategy provides, as one of its priorities, for expanding the area of PAs to 12% of the country's territory and creating a unified biodiversity monitoring system with the reference ecosystems of state reserves at its core. The first phase of Strategy implementation (2019-2023) includes establishment of 5 PAs in Karakalpakstan.

**"Concept of environment protection of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030"** (No.УП-5863 of October 30, 2019). The Concept sets out measures for conservation of biodiversity and its protection from anthropogenic impact and other negative factors, as well as expansion of PA area. The Concept implementation is expected to increase the territory of I-V category PAs by 12% by 2030. Concept Roadmap for 2019-2021 lays out measures for protection and reproduction of biological resources: Increasing the area and density of forest plantations and improving their quality; Implementing activities to bring the total area of I-V category PAs to 7% of the territory of the country; Introducing IT in maintenance of state cadasters of animals and plants, PAs and their monitoring.

**"State Program for development of Aral Sea region for 2017–2021"**  plans tourist infrastructure facilities with new routes and a network of stationary and seasonal tourist accommodations through active involvement of local communities in the territories adjacent to Lower Amu Darya Biosphere Reserve, Lake Sudochye, Forest hunting enterprise Kungrad, and State forest hunting enterprise Kazakdarya. Implementation of planned forest protection measures on the dried seabed of Aral Sea will reduce salt and dust transfer, contribute to restoration of tugai forests and strengthen the system of PAs in Amu Darya Delta**.**

**UN Multi-partner Human Security Trust Fund for Aral Sea region in Uzbekistan (MPHSTF)** (November 2018 - December 2023) covers Karakalpakstan and Khorezm province of Uzbekistan and uses the concept of human security as its program focus. The main objective of the Trust fund is the development and implementation of Unified strategy for assisting the Aral Sea region together with donor organizations based on assessment of needs in the region. MPHSTF is funded by international donors and financial institutions, Government of Uzbekistan, individual donations, business community contributions and etc. Generated funds will be allocated for implementation of projects/programs within the framework of Unified development strategy for Aral Sea region.Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan pledged $ 6.5 million contribution to the Trust fund, $ 2.0 million of which has already been transferred. EU Delegation allocated $ 5.0 million. (<http://aral.mptf.uz/site/news/page111.html>).

**Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

The voluntary LDN target adopted by Uzbekistan, with the support of the LDN Target Setting Programme, is the following “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”. LDN assessment indicator is the proportion of land that is degraded (irrigated and non-irrigated) out of the total land area.

The Government of Uzbekistan has adopted the national indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – through a Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan "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 until 2030, including the target 15.3 in the area of land degradation neutrality (LDN). The Decree provided for the setup of a Coordination Council on the Implementation of national goals and targets in the field of sustainable development, ensuring inter-sectoral coordination and an integrated approach to achieving the SDGs. In addition, the Road Map was adopted and is being implemented for: a) setting up a development concept for each SDG for the period of 2030 and an annual action plan for implementation of SDGs; b) developing a system of indicators for implementation of SDGs; c) monitoring and reporting on the implementation of national SDGs starting from 2019.

**Climate Change**

Uzbekistan’s Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) (2017) sets climate change adaptation as a priority in several areas. This includes considering adaptation in the agriculture, water management, and social sectors, as well as applying ecosystem-based adaptation to efforts such as mitigating the impacts of the Aral Sea disaster and adaptation of strategic infrastructure and production facilities. The INDC outlines the country’s planning process to strengthen adaptation and mitigation actions including political measures, implementation of climate actions, development of scientific research and education, and inception of systems for monitoring and evaluation (the latter specific to mitigation).

**Legislative mandates**

The main institutional mandates are distributed at different levels: (i) Legislative: Legislative Chamber and Senate of Oliy Majlis of Uzbekistan and Province and district Councils of People’s Deputies. (ii) Public administrative bodies: Administration of the President and Public Administration Bodies at province, district and city levels( khokimiyats) (iii) Line Ministries and State Committees (iv) Local self-governance bodies (village and mahalla assemblies). At the local level, the Councils of the People's Deputies (the ‘Councils’) and *khokims* (governors), appointed by the President, constitute the basis of the government in the regions, districts and towns. Local governments (*khokimiat*) are subdivided into regional (*viloyats*), district (*rayons*) and city administrations.

Relations between different levels of government are primarily regulated by the Constitution of Uzbekistan (1992) and the Law on Local Public Administration (1993). Inter-relations between central and local bodies are characterized by subordination, mutual cooperation and strict separation of functions and powers. In the system of organs of executive power, hierarchical centralization prevails. In the implementation of their administrative functions, the organs of local government are subordinated to higher ones (i.e. regional-district-city). The majority of management decisions are enacted, and public services are provided, by local governments according to the principle of vertical branch subordination (i.e. national ministry – principal branch department in a regional *khokimiat* – the respective office in district or city *khokimiat*). The *khokims* of regions, districts and cities are the highest officials of the respective regions, districts and cities. They act simultaneously as heads of representative and executive organs in their territories.

The land administration sections of the regional (*viloyat*) administrations, reporting directly to the *khokim*, are responsible for the administration of land cadasters, addressing land use conflicts and formulating long‐term development strategies. Local government institutions also maintain information on the state of the environment within their respective territories (regional, district). Local government in Uzbekistan is further supplemented by self-governing community organizations - mahallas[[4]](#footnote-4) - in *auls* (villages)[[5]](#footnote-5), *kishlaks* (rural settlements) and cities. The structure and functioning of these mahallas are primarily regulated by the Law on Community Self-Governments (1999).Nature protection, including ownership and use of land, subsoil, water and other natural resources; use of fauna and flora; protection of the environment; ecological security; regulation of protected areas; protection of historic and cultural monuments; and scientific research – falls under the joint authority of central and local government institutions.

Agricultural development – including support of agricultural production; planning of the use of agricultural lands; and transfer of agricultural lands (with the exception of state land) falls under the direct executive authority of local government. Administration of the rangeland and forestland (state land) falls under the responsibility of the State Committee on Forestry, coordinating the activities of local forest enterprises, forest experimental stations and hunting enterprises. Water management falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Water Resources, coordinating the activities of Basin Irrigation System Authorities (BISAs) consisting of: Main Canal Management Organization (MCMO) and Irrigation System Authorities (ISAs). The Irrigation System Authorities (ISAs) have direct contractual responsibilities with Water Users Associations (WUAs). The Water Users Associations (WUAs) are non-profit, non-government associations consisting of farmers themselves. Responsibilities of WUAs are the organization of the rational use of water (delivered by BISAs/ISAs) and farm-level Operations and Maintenance (O&M) of the irrigation and drainage system.

## International Conventions

Uzbekistan has ratified the following International Human Rights Treaties:

* International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
* International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
* International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
* International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
* Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
* Convention on the Rights of the Child and the involvement of children in armed conflict
* Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (signature 27 Feb 2009)

Other International Conventions:

Uzbekistan fulfils its commitment to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the framework of the following International Conventions and Treaties**:**

* UN Convention on Biodiversity (UNCBD, 1992) - First international convention on sustainably use and conservation of biodiversity. Uzbekistan joined on May 6, 1995.
* UN Convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa (UNCCD, 1994). Uzbekistan signed on December 7,1994, ratified on August 31, 1995.
* Convention for protection of world cultural and national heritage UNESCO (1995). Uzbekistan ratified on December 22, 1995.
* Convention on international trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora (CITES) (1973). Uzbekistan ratified on April 25, 1997.
* Convention on wetlands of international importance especially as waterfowl habitat (Ramsar) (1972; Uzbekistan joined in 2002) aimed at conservation and rational use of wetlands, by which is meant their sustainable use for the benefit of humanity through practices that are compatible with conservation of natural ecosystems. Uzbekistan joined on August 30, 2001. Dengizkul lake (project site) in 2001 was included in the list of Ramsar reservoirs as wetland of international importance especially as waterfowl habitat.
* Convention on conservation of migratory species of wild animals (Bonn) (CMS, 1979) aimed at conservation of species migrating by land, sea and air and their habitats along the whole migration route. Uzbekistan joined on May 1, 1998.
* Central Asian mammal initiative (CAMI) and relevant work plan were adopted by CMS countries at the 11th International conference of the parties in 2014. Through this initiative aimed at strengthening conservation of migratory mammals in Central Asia, the Convention seeks to provide the platform for coordinated and consistent measures to reduce the main threats to survival of migratory species.
* Agreement of conservation of African-Eurasian migratory waterbirds (AEWA) (1995). Uzbekistan signed on December 12, 2003.
* Memorandum of understanding on measures for conservation of thin-billed curlew *Numenius tenuirostris* (1994);
* Memorandum of understanding on measures for conservation and restoration of Bukhara deer - *Cervus elaphus bactrianus* (2002);
* Memorandum of understanding and action plan for conservation, restoration and sustainable use of saiga - *Saiga tatarica* (2006).

## Institutional Framework

Table 2: Institutional framework and legislative mandates

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Government AGENCY/department/committee**  | **WATER, LAND, BIODIVERSITY RELATED RESPONSIBILITY** |
| Committee on Agriculture, Water resources and Ecology of the Senate of *Oliy Majlis* | Committee on Agriculture, Water resources and Ecology of the Senate of *Oliy Majlis* performs mainly parliamentary functions such as lawmaking and control. This legislative function implies that the committee considers and draws conclusions on draft laws submitted by the Legislative Chamber of *Oliy Majlis*, drafts resolutions and other regulatory legal acts of the Senate in the areas of agriculture, water resources and ecology. |
| Committee on Agriculture and Water resources | Committee on Agriculture and Water resources issues of the Legislative Chamber of *Oliy Majlis* is mainly responsible for drafting legislation in the areas of agriculture and water resources. |
| Committee on the issues of Ecology and Nature protection | Committee on the issues of Ecology and Nature protection of the Legislative Chamber of Oliy Majlis is mainly responsible for drafting laws in the area of nature protection. |
| State Committee on Ecology and Environment Protection (*Goskomekologia*) | The State Committee on Ecology and Environment Protection (*Goskomekologia*) is accountable to the Senate of *Oliy Majlis* of Uzbekistan. Its primary responsibility is to develop, regulate, and coordinate the implementation of, all environmental legislation and policies in the country. The *Goskomekologia* is the focal point for implementation of the CBD in Uzbekistan. It has a number of regional branches, one in each of the 12 regions of Uzbekistan as well branches in the city of Tashkent and the Republic of Karakalpakstan. The heads of the regional *Goskomekologia* are appointed by the Chairman of the national *Goskomekologia*, with the consent of the regional administration head. The regional *Goskomekologia’s* chairmen report directly to the Chairman of the national *Goskomekologia.* |
| Ministry of Water Resources  | The Ministry of Water Resources coordinates the water sector in Uzbekistan. A reorganization in 2003 resulted in a transfer from a provincial and district administrative scheme to a water basin set-up in which irrigation and drainage systems are managed by 10 basin irrigation system authorities (BISAs), where each BISA is structured according to main irrigation canals and divided into irrigation system authorities (ISAs). Another reorganization in 2018, resulted in the creation of 13 Basin Authorities (BISAs), each BISAs administrative territory coinciding largely with the district territories.  |
| Basin Irrigation System Authorities (BISAs)  | BISAs operate the water infrastructure in the river basins such as water reservoirs, dams, water intakes (gravitational and pumps), and riverbed protections The Basin Irrigation System Authorities (BISAs) are responsible for allocation of available water resources to the Irrigation System Authorities (ISAs).The main basin management authorities in the project targeted areas are the following: |
| Amu-Bukhara BISA  | Will play important role in supporting the achievement of Component 1 outputs. It will help in ensuring timely water release for irrigated lands and KBAs within Bukhara province.Head: Fayzillaev Erkin BahshilloevichPh: (65) 225-09-35E-mail: ab.havza@minwater.uzAddress: Bukhara city, B.Nakshband Str., 297/1 |
| Left-bank-Amudarya BISA | Will play important role in supporting the achievement of Component 1 outputs. It will help in ensuring timely water release for irrigated lands and KBAs within Khorezm province.Head: Urazov Atahan YakubbaevichPh: (62) 223-14-05E-mail:  xz.havza@minwater.uzAddress: Urgench city, M.Khorazmy Str. 1st block, 1 |
| Niznedaryinskiy department under BWMA "Amudarya" (former Nukus hydrounit)  | Formerly known as Nukus department, is responsible for operation of Takhiatash hydro technical facility, manage river water intake facilities for Han-yab and Jumabaysaka canals, controls all water intakes from river section between hydro post Kipchak and Aral Sea (283 km section). This is a key partner under the project providing data on the water management situation in project areas. Will play important role in supporting the achievement of Component 1 outputs.info@amudarya.org |
| Irrigation System Authorities (ISAs)  | ISAs operate at canal levels and drainage networks in the irrigation systems, operate the pumps and deliver water to the Water Users Associations (WUAs). |
| Water users Associations (WUAs)  | These are non-profit, non-governmental associations members consisting of farmers. The principle of the administration of WUA us based on free election. In the project’s targeted areas there are two type of WUAs: (i) administrative-territorial WUAs, set up in 1999 as a result of the liquidated unprofitable shirkats (collective farms) and (ii) hydrographic WUAs, resulting from the memberships of farmers sharing the same water sources (canals/aryks) and irrigated areas.  |
| **Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (ICWC)** | One of the main Interstate Institution responsible for transboundary water management. It is comprised of senior water officials from each riparian country, responsible for water allocation, monitoring, and water use, and other issues in the region. The ICWC was established as a result of the Agreement signed by the Central Asian countries in 1992 on joint management of interstate water resources. The Basin water organization “Amu Darya”, the Scientific Information Center (SIC), and the ICWC Secretariat are the executing bodies of the ICWC.  |
|  **International Fund for Saving Aral Sea (IFAS)** | Inter-state institution, serving as a platform for dialogue to improve cooperation between the countries on the efficient use and management of water resources, and improving socio-economic and environmental situation in the Aral Sea basin |
| Ministry of Agriculture | The Ministry of Agriculture is the executive body responsible for the development and implementation of agricultural policy and agricultural markets. Local branches of the ministry are involved in land allocation and planning at local level. |
| The Council of Farmers, Dekhan Farms and Owners of Households Lands | The Council of Farmers was established in 2012 and supports the development of legislative proposals in farming agriculture, strengthening material and financial base of farmers and ensuring protection of the rights and interests of farmers, including their relationship with the state bodies, vendors and service organizations and legal courts. The Council conducts public control over reorganization and creation of farms, and allocation of lands to farmers and supports farmers consulting centers, rendering legal and economic assistance to farmers. The Council of Farmers is mandated to provide several types of financial support to farmers (2018 resolution of the President no 3680). The Council manages a National Fund “On Additional Measures to Improve the Activities of Farmers, Dekhkan Farms and Owners of Private Lands”, to support innovative activities in agriculture sector, introduction of new types of agricultural products and technologies, implementation of state programmes and other projects conducive to agricultural activities in the country. |
| State Committee on Land Resources, Geodesy, Cartography and National Cadastre (*Goskomzemgeodezkadastr)* | The State Committee on Land Resources, Geodesy, Cartography and National Cadastre (*Goskomzemgeodezkadastr*) is responsible for coordinating the implementation of land use and land management legislation, regulations and programmes. The committee is also responsible for coordinating the surveying, mapping and maintenance of the national land cadastre database |
| State Committee on Forestry  | The State Committee on Forestry is responsible for coordinating the implementation of forest and forest management legislation, regulations and programmes, realization of the priorities under forestry policies and enforcement of legislative regulations.  |
| Local level | At the **local level**, the Councils of the People's Deputies (the ‘local councils’) and *khokims* (governors), appointed by the President, constitute the basis of the government in the regions, districts and towns. Local governments (*khokimiat*) are subdivided into regional/province level (*viloyats*), district (*rayons*) and city administrations[[6]](#footnote-6). The local and regional authorities are responsible for land allocation and planning at local level.  |
| Community level  | Local government in Uzbekistan is further supplemented by self-governing community organizations - mahallas[[7]](#footnote-7) - in *auls* (villages)[[8]](#footnote-8), *kishlaks* (rural settlements) and cities. The structure and functioning of these mahallas are primarily regulated by the Law on Community Self-Governments (1999). “Mahallas” enforce the execution of district authorities’ orders for management, distribution and monitoring of natural resources among rural communities.  |

## UNDP’s Social and Environmental Standards

UNDP’s Social and Environmental Standards (SES) in effect as of 1 January 2021, underpin UNDP’s commitment to mainstream social and environmental sustainability in its programs and projects to support sustainable development, and are an integral component of UNDP’s quality assurance and risk management approach to programming. Through the SES, UNDP meets the requirements of the GEF’s Environmental and Social Safeguards Policy.

The objectives of the SES are to:

* Strengthen the social and environmental outcomes of Programs and Projects
* Avoid adverse impacts to people and the environment
* Minimize, mitigate, and manage adverse impacts where avoidance is not possible
* Strengthen UNDP and partner capacities for managing social and environmental risks
* Ensure full and effective stakeholder engagement, including through a mechanism to respond to complaints from project-affected people

UNDP uses its Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) to identify potential social and environmental risks and opportunities associated with all proposed projects. All project components are screened, including planning support, policy advice, and capacity-building, as well as site-specific, physical interventions. Activities that will be completed under project co-financing are also included in the scope of the assessment.

Projects are required to comply with [UNDP’s Social and Environmental Standards (SES](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/operations1/undp-social-and-environmental-standards/)). The SES are an integral component of UNDP’s quality assurance and risk management approach to programming. This includes the [Social and Environmental Screening Procedure](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/operations1/undp-social-and-environmental-screening-procedure/) ( Project Document SESP, Annex 5). The SES underpin UNDP’s commitment to mainstream social and environmental sustainability in its Programs and Projects to support sustainable development. Through the GEF Accreditation Process, the SES are acknowledged to be consistent with the GEF’s Environment and Social Standards. The objectives of the standards are to:

* + - Strengthen the social and environmental outcomes of Programs and Projects
		- Avoid adverse impacts to people and the environment
* Minimize, mitigate, and manage adverse impacts where avoidance is not possible
* Strengthen UNDP and partner capacities for managing social and environmental risks
* Ensure full and effective stakeholder engagement, including through a mechanism to respond to complaints from project-affected people.

The SES are an integral component of UNDP’s quality assurance and risk management approach to programming. This includes the Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (see the completed SESP for the project in Annex 4 to project document).

Table 3: Key Elements of UNDP Social and Environmental Standards (SES)​

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ​​​​Programming Principles | ​Project-Level Standards | ​Procedures and Accountability  |
| **Principle 1**: Leave No One Behind**Principle 2**: Human Rights [**Principle 3:** ​Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment](https://info.undp.org/sites/bpps/SES_Toolkit/SitePages/Gender%20Equality%20and%20Women%27s%20Empowerment.aspx)[**Principle 4:** Sustainability](https://info.undp.org/sites/bpps/SES_Toolkit/SitePages/Environmental%20Sustainability.aspx) and Resilience**Principle 5**: Accountability  | ​Standard 1:  [Standard 2:](https://info.undp.org/sites/bpps/SES_Toolkit/SitePages/Standard%202.aspx) Standard 3: Standard 4: Standard 5: Standard 6: Standard 7: Standard 8:  | Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Natural Resource Management​Climate Change and Disaster RisksCommunity Health, Safety and SecurityCultural Heritage[Displacement and Resettlement​](https://info.undp.org/sites/bpps/SES_Toolkit/SitePages/Standard%205.aspx)[Indigenous Peoples](https://info.undp.org/sites/bpps/SES_Toolkit/SitePages/Standard%206.aspx)Labour and Working Conditions Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency | * [Quality Assurance](https://info.undp.org/sites/bpps/SES_Toolkit/SitePages/Policy%20Delivery.aspx) & Risk Management
* [Screening,](https://info.undp.org/sites/bpps/SES_Toolkit/SitePages/Policy%20Delivery.aspx) Assessment and Management of SES Risks and Impacts
* [Stakeholder Engagement](https://info.undp.org/sites/bpps/SES_Toolkit/SitePages/Stakeholder%20Engagement.aspx) and [Response Mechanism](https://info.undp.org/sites/bpps/SES_Toolkit/SitePages/Response%20Mechanisms.aspx)
* [Access to Information](https://info.undp.org/sites/bpps/SES_Toolkit/SitePages/Access%20to%20Information.aspx)
* [Monitoring, Reporting](https://info.undp.org/sites/bpps/SES_Toolkit/SitePages/Monitoring%2C%20Reporting%20and%20Compliance.aspx)**,**[Compliance review](https://info.undp.org/sites/bpps/SES_Toolkit/SitePages/Compliance%20Review.aspx)
 |

Where projects are rated as being High, Substantial or Moderate Risk, some form of social and environmental assessment is required, together with the identification of management mechanisms to mitigate identified risks. The assessment must be commensurate with the magnitude and severity of foreseen risks.

The nature of the assessment will vary according to the type of risk foreseen. Where potential impacts are foreseen from “upstream” project activities, such as those involving planning support, policy advice and reform, or capacity building, they are typically assessed using forms of Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA). Risks and impacts associated with projects that have a physical footprint (“downstream” activities) are typically addressed through an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) or targeted on-the-ground assessments.

The SESP was finalized during the project preparation, as required by UNDP’s Social and Environmental Standards (SES). The SESP identified 13 risks that could have potential negative impacts in the absence of safeguards. Based on their likelihood and impact the category of each risk has been estimated, resulting in 11 Moderate risks and 2 Low risks.

The screenings also indicate that three Programming Principles and five Project Level Standard have been triggered due to ‘moderate’ risks:

* Principle 2: Human Rights
* Principle 3: Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment
* Principle 5: Accountability
* Standard 1: Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Natural Resource Management
* Standard 2: Climate Change and Disaster Risks
* Standard 3: Community Health, Safety and Security
* Standard 5: Displacement and Resettlement
* Standard 7 Labour and Working Conditions
* Standard 8: Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency

Full details on the risks and categorizations is contained in the SESP Template annexed to this ESMF. *A summary of the risk significance under each SES principle and standard, and the project-level safeguard standards triggered by each project is shown in Table 6 below.*

Table 4: Summary of safeguards triggered based on screening conducted during project preparation

| **Overarching Principle / Project-level Standard** | **Risk rating** | SES Requirement |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Principle 2 : Human Rights | **✓****Moderate** | **SESA, SESP (Targeted assessments), Training** |
| Principle 3: Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment | **✓****Moderate** | **ESIA,GAP**  |
| Principle 5: Accountability | **✓****Moderate** | **SESP SESA****Training** |
| Standard 1: Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Natural Resource Management | **✓****Moderate** | **SESA/ESIA, SESP, Training**  |
| Standard 2: Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation | **✓****Moderate** | **SESA/ESIA SESP** |
| Standard 3: Community Health, Safety and Security | **✓****Moderate** | **SESA/ESIA SESP**  |
| Standard 4: Cultural Heritage  | **n/a** |  |
| Standard 5: Displacement and Resettlement | **✓****Moderate** | **SESA/SESP** **Targeted assessments****Site specific screening**  |
| Standard 6: Indigenous People | **n/a** |  |
| Standard 7: Labour and Working Conditions  | **✓****Moderate** | **ESIA SESP** |
| Standard 8: Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency  | **✓****Moderate** | **ESIA**  |
| **Number of risks in each risk rating category:** |  |
| **Moderate** | 12 |  |
| **Low** | 2 |  |
| **Total number of project risks** | 14 |  |
| **Overall Project Risk Categorization** | **Moderate** |  |
| **Number of safeguard standards triggered** | **9** |  |

## Gaps in policy framework

The Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) will include further analysis of the legal and policy frameworks that apply to the project, identifying gaps and strategies to enable the project’s policy-level activities to operate with.

# Procedures for Screening, Assessing and Managing Social and Environmental Impacts

In accordance with UNDP SES policy, the Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) has been applied to the project during the project development phase. Under this policy, a SES principle or standard is triggered when a potential risk is identified and assessed as having either a ‘moderate’, ‘substantial’ or ‘high’ risk rating based on its probability of occurrence and extent of impact. Risks that are assessed as ‘low’ do not trigger the related principle or standard.

In accordance with the SES, and due to the Moderate overall Risk category, social and environmental assessments, including the identification of management mechanisms to mitigate identified risks must be undertaken. The required procedures are outlined below:

* **Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA)**

A Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) will be undertaken during the following:

**Output 1.2** Integrated Water Management Framework

A SESA approach will be applied to the development of the Integrated Water Management Framework (IWMF), such that potential social and environmental downstream impacts arising from the development of subsequent (i) guidelines on revised irrigation norms, (ii) Integrated Water Management Plans at district level, (iii) policy directions, are considered as an explicit part of plans/policy/guidelines development. This will encompass potential climate change risks on water allocation among multiple water users including potential safety risks water users and potential limitation on livelihoods. These measures will be explicitly described in the ESMF. An ESMF will be the result of the SESA.

In case the Integrated Water Management Plans at district level will be developed before the IWMF then these plans will be developed based on scoped screening and appropriate on the ground assessments determined as necessary for the given district level water management plan.

The SESA will be carried out by independent experts in accordance with UNDP’s SES policy and the [UNDP SES Guidance Note on Assessment and Management](https://info.undp.org/sites/bpps/SES_Toolkit/SES%20Document%20Library/Uploaded%20October%202016/UNDP%20SES%20Assessment%20and%20Management%20GN%20-%20FInal%20Nov2020.pdf) to identify and assess social and environmental impacts associated with the proposed regulations in a participatory manner with stakeholders as follows:

* 1. Identify social and environmental priorities to be included in planning and policy processes
	2. Assess gaps in the institutional, policy, and legal frameworks to address these priorities
	3. Identify potential adverse social and environmental impacts associated with policy options
	4. Engage decision makers and stakeholders to ensure a common understanding and broad support for implementation
	5. Formulate policy and institutional measures needed to close policy and legal gaps, address institutional weaknesses, and avoid adverse social and environmental impacts.

The SESA will evaluate the effect of the Integrated Water Management Framework (IWMF) and the subsequent policy directions, on a broad, cross sectoral basis with the aim of making policy decisions and other upstream actions more sustainable. Information and strategies identified will inform decision making and will be used to guide assessments of downstream activities (e.g. implementation of the integrated water use plans; implementation of the proposed revised irrigation and water norms; the new Concept/Guidelines on the guaranteed minimum ecological flow to lakes and wetlands in Lower Amudarya reaches; legal amendments to the Water Code etc).

The SESA will be comprised of a concise report that summarizes the main findings and results of SESA, including (a) SESA stakeholder engagement process; (b) Key social and environmental priorities and issues associated with chosen planning activities; (c) Institutional arrangements for coordinating integration of social and environmental issues into chosen plans, policy amendments; (d) Legal, regulatory, policy, institutional and capacity recommendations to address any identified gaps for managing the social and environmental priorities and implementing applicable social and environmental policies; (e) Results of assessment of social and environmental risks/impacts associated with the implementation of the project-supported planning and guideline/legal and policy amendments (f) identification of measures (e.g. policies, institutional strengthening, governance reform) to address and manage anticipated adverse social and environmental risks and impacts, including a summary Action Matrix ; and (g) where applicable, final or advanced draft of ESMF as framework for managing social and environmental risks during implementation of the proposed regulations and plans, and legal amendments supported by the project.

As a high-level document, the SESA is based on the broad scope of envisaged high-level project activities. As such, work on the SESA will commence during the first six year of the project implementation.

* **Targeted Assessments and site-specific screenings**

Targeted assessments (followed by site-specific screening as necessary) will be undertaken during the development of the i) Integrated Spatial and Land use Plans; ii)Pastures management Plans; iii)Forests Management Plans and iv) Integrated Water Management Plans (if not covered by SESA) as follows:

**Output 1.2** LDN-compatible and climate-smart water management plans (if not covered by SESA).

**Output 2.2** Integrated land-use spatial planning in four priority districts developed and under implementation in line with LDN principles.

**Output 2.3** Improved management of pastureland by local communities in 4 priority districts.

**Output 2.5** Community forest use in riparian corridors in four priority districts developed and under implementation

The project will develop these plans by applying targeted feasibility/risk assessments (including climate-related risks and vulnerabilities) and subsequent site-specific screening , in the targeted areas in order to identify, prevent and mitigate potential economic displacement and negative impact on the critical habitats. Site specific measures will be designed as needed and included in these plans.

The water use plans, land use plans, pasture management plans as well as forest management plans, are expected to ensure livelihood improvements and environmental sustainability during and beyond the project period.

If confirmed via site-specific screening, the risk of economic displacement will be managed by integrating all elements of a **Livelihood Action Plan** into the respective plan for the given site.

Additional Site-specific screening

**Output 1.2** LDN-compatible and climate-smart water management plans (if not covered by SESA).

**Output 2.2** Integrated land-use spatial planning in four priority districts developed and under implementation in line with LDN principles.

**Output 2.3** Improved management of pastureland by local communities in 4 priority districts.

**Output 2.5** Community forest use in riparian corridors in four priority districts developed and under implementation

The pastures and forests and land use management plans (developed under these outputs) include the risk management measures that have been identified via the targeted assessments at the selected sites level during the development phase of these plans.

Now, during the implementation phase of the SLM measures included in these plans , the demonstration sites will be individually screened with the SESP and based on the results, appropriate site-level assessment ( potential ESIA as necessary) will be conducted, in order to identify, prevent and mitigate potential negative impacts on the critical habitats . These assessments, however, would not result in the ESMP because the Pastures/Forests and Land Use plans would have already encompassed the necessary mitigation measures and would act as ESMPs.

**Output 3.2.3** Sustainable livelihoods supported in KBA buffer zones and corridors (e.g. fast-growing plantations as alternative to logging; cattle grazing rotation and use of distant pastures).

Under this output competitive low-value grants will be issued to local entrepreneurs and small and midsize farmers. A screening mechanism will be built into selection process to ensure due diligence is applied for private sector partnership and businesses being supported by the project (included in the Project Document under Output 3.2.3).

**Output 2.4** Innovative land restoration supported at most degraded areas

The risks will be managed through site specific screening for land restoration activities.

The project will apply site specific feasibility/risk assessments (including climate-related risks and vulnerabilities) and if needed an appropriately scoped ESIA will be applied, to identify, prevent and mitigate potential negative impacts on the critical habitats . The land restoration measures are expected to ensure livelihood improvements and environmental sustainability during and beyond the project period.

The targeted demonstration areas for SLM activities were selected at PPG stage and preliminarily consulted with local authorities, forestry enterprises and some representatives of local communities. However, these sites need to be re-confirmed during the inception period and finally validated by georeferenced data that will be developed Output 2.1. and under Outputs 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5.

Steps for all the site-specific screenings under Outputs 2.4 and 3.2.3:

For all the SLM and land degradation measures that are not included under the plans ( i.e. pastures and forests management plans) the following will apply:

First, the fully detailed proposals will be reviewed against the criteria of the Exclusion List (below). Sub-projects or activities will be deemed ineligible for the project if they:

* Involve conversion or degradation of natural habitats;
* May cause measurable adverse impacts to critical natural habitats;
* Risk the introduction of invasive alien species;
* May negatively affect endangered species;
* Involve physical or economic displacement of people;
* Do not comply with technical norms and standards;
* Purchase, use or store harmful pesticides or hazardous materials;
* Involve forced labor/ child labour;
* Are likely to create any impact that would be categorized as “High” or “Substantial”

Second, the SLM sub-projects that have passed the exclusionary criteria will be individually screened with the UNDP SESP template and with the LDN Checklist (See Annex 28 Project Document).

After the screening with the SESP and LDN Checklist, according to the risk categorization of each site and based on SES requirements, a targeted assessment and associated management plan will be further developed if required. (Please see SES Guidance).

The screening procedures (described above) will apply to the implementation of select measures under the Output 2.4 and Output 3.2.3.

Screening will be done in line with SES Principles and Standards and LDN Principles (please use LDN Checklist Annex 28 Project Document).

In summary, upon validation of the final location of each demonstration site, all sites and activities will be first reviewed against the criteria of the Exclusion List. Then, will be individually screened with the SESP template, in order to determine the level of assessment and management measures required. The demonstration activities should not commence prior to this processes and until the assessments have been conducted and the necessary management measures are in place.

* **Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA)**

Prior to the commencement of any of the selected site for PAs infrastructure the sites will be reviewed against the criteria of the Exclusion List (below). Sub-projects or activities will be deemed ineligible for the project if they:

* Involve conversion or degradation of natural habitats;
* May cause measurable adverse impacts to critical natural habitats;
* Risk the introduction of invasive alien species;
* May negatively affect endangered species;
* Involve physical or economic displacement of people;
* Do not comply with technical norms and standards;
* Purchase, use or store harmful pesticides or hazardous materials;
* Involve forced labor/ child labour;
* Are likely to create any impact that would be categorized as “High” or “Substantial”

Second, the sites that have passed the exclusionary criteria will be individually screened with the UNDP SESP template and with the LDN Checklist (See Annex 28 Project Document).

After the screening with the SESP and LDN Checklist, according to the risk categorization of each site and based on SES requirements, a site-specific environmental and social impact assessment (ESIA) will be conducted in accordance with UNDP’s SES policy and the [UNDP SES Guidance Note on Assessment and Management](https://info.undp.org/sites/bpps/SES_Toolkit/SES%20Document%20Library/Uploaded%20October%202016/UNDP%20SES%20Assessment%20and%20Management%20GN%20-%20FInal%20Nov2020.pdf). This applies to the following outputs:

**Output 3.1.1** Grounds established for protected area estate expansion securing the integrity of lake, wetland and riparian KBAs in Aral Sea region, through completion of feasibility studies, mapping and inventory, zoning regimes, management and financial planning.

Each ESIA will be developed and carried out by independent experts in a participatory manner with stakeholders. The ESIA will further identify and assess social and environmental impacts of the project and its area of influence; evaluate alternatives; and design appropriate avoidance, mitigation, management, and monitoring measures.

1. Per the SES, the ESIA will assess project activities at the scale deemed appropriate for compliance with the SES.
2. The ESIA will identify environmental and social sensitive receptors within the activity’s area of influence.
3. It will address all relevant issues related to the SES Overarching Principles and Project-level Standards, as identified in the project’s SESP and any other issues identified in the course of the ESIA.

The output of the ESIA will be an ESIA report and an environmental and social management plan (ESMP) for each activity. The ESMP will define desired social and environmental management outcomes and specify social and environmental indicators, targets, or acceptance (threshold) criteria to track ESMP implementation and effectiveness.

Based on the findings of the ESIA, the ESMP will include a spill prevention and management plan, an occupational health and safety plan and any other plans required for SES compliance including potentially a Livelihoods Restoration/Action Plan. Any institutional and capacity gaps identified during this process will be addressed through the training that will be conducted for the specified activities.

Additional specifications

Infrastructure development in the PAs ( field station in South Ustyurt and observation/monitoring towers in each PA) will be designed in an ecologically sensitive manner and apply best practices in low-impact, ecologically sensitive design and construction. Moreover, PAs infrastructure will be developed/scoped in accordance with specific national legislation and norms. Additional restrictions may apply for example:

* Ensure that constructions are located at least 100 metres away from the existing streams, rivers, water sources and no discharge from such establishments should follow their path into nearby water bodies.
* Minimize area of ground clearance. Avoiding sensitive alignments, such as those which include ecologically sensitive areas.
* In order to safeguard the loss of the aesthetic values of the landscape, use of eco-friendly design, local architecture and materials will be encouraged.
* Observation towers should maintain adequate distance from the nesting areas and canopies
* Design of the observation towers should be eco-friendly, with the use of local materials
* Installation of appropriate and adequate number of signages.

The project will ensure that national working standards (Labour Code) are respected for all the project activities. The requirements of the Standard 7 (7.1 and 7.3) as per the SESP (Risk 14) are to be applied in an appropriately-scaled manner based on the nature and scale of the project, its specific activities, the project's associated social and environmental risks and impacts, and the type of contractual relationships with project workers.

The management procedures will be that specific requirements of the terms and conditions of the employment will be established, that will:

Comply with minimum age requirements set out in International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions or national legislation (whichever offers the greatest protection to young people under the age of 18) and keep records of the dates of birth of all employees verified by official documentation

Check the activities carried out by young workers and ensure that children under 18 are not employed in hazardous work, including in contractor workforces. Hazardous work will normally be defined in national legislation and will be likely to include most tasks in construction and several in agriculture.

Assess the safety risks relating to any work by children under 18 and carry out regular monitoring of their health, working conditions and hours of work

Ensure that any workers aged 13-15 are only doing light work outside school hours, in accordance with national legislation, or working in a government-approved training programme

Ensure that contractors have adequate systems in place to check workers’ ages, identify workers under the age of 18 and to ensure that they are not engaged in hazardous work, and that their work is subject to appropriate risk assessment and health monitoring

* **Other relevant plans and procedures**
* Livelihood Action Plan (for Biodiversity/Pas work above, if needed): If determined necessary by targeted assessments at project sites, a Livelihood Action Plan will be developed, in case the project activities will cause directly or indirectly, economic displacement whereby the livelihoods of individuals or communities are restricted, partially, or fully, in their access to land or resources to support their economic well-being. These action plans will address beneficiary participation in economic displacement decision-making, adequate (full and fair) compensation and assistance, as well as risk management to ensure that livelihoods are at least as good as prior to the program implementation and that the livelihoods of poor and marginalized are improved. The plan will include independent monitoring procedures, clarification of land rights consistent with applicable law, and outline capacity, training, and development actions targeting beneficiaries’ livelihoods. It will ensure that UNDP SES requirements, best practice standards, and mitigation measures are being met, such that Program activities involving economic displacement cannot proceed until completion of livelihood action plans that are site-specific. Where impacts on the economically displaced population are minor, an abbreviated action plan may be developed that establishes the eligibility criteria for economic compensations for the affected persons.
* **Overall project SESP updates**

During implementation, the project will be re-screened with the UNDP SESP:

1. as prescribed by the project’s SESAs and targeted assessments/management plans;
2. when determined necessary by the Project Manager (after consideration of the advice from PMU staff with responsibility for safeguards), the Project Board, or UNDP; and/or
3. when project circumstances change in a substantive or relevant way.
* Throughout all safeguards procedures, the project’s **SEP and GAAP** will be followed and updated as needed based on the screenings, assessments and management plans.

Stakeholder Engagement Plan: Fair, inclusive and gender-responsive stakeholder engagement will be essential for final design of the project, ensuring equitable involvement and inclusion of women, men, youth and elderly people. The Stakeholder Engagement Plan will enable project officers to ensure that selection is carried out in synergy with the related legal and policy governance structure and that the implementation and selection procedures meet the required norms and standards. The plan will specifically consider how to engage marginalized and vulnerable groups equitably and meaningfully (women, women headed households, youth, elderly, rural poor, ethnic minorities and/or any other group deemed to be vulnerable) within the project areas. The plan will also provide terms of reference and modalities for managing stakeholder engagement in project activities at each site and with each community.

Gender Analysis and Action Plan (GAAP): The Gender Action Plan was developed based on a gender analysis of the conservation and sustainable management of land resources factors and high value ecosystems in the Aral Sea region for multiple benefits. The purpose of the GAAP is to promote the conservation and sustainable management of natural resources in the Aral Sea Basin by reducing gender gaps identified in natural resource use and access to resources and services, as well as participation in natural resource management. Addressing gender gaps and inequalities is necessary for women in the pilot regions of Uzbekistan to live in a safe environment and enjoy equal rights and opportunities with men and achieve commensurate results. To achieve this goal, the GAAP proposes gender sensitive activities to address the unequal access to and control over natural resources; unbalanced participation and involvement in decision making in environmental planning and management at all levels and unequal access to socio-economic benefits and services. The gender plan includes targeted activities deployed with the aim of ensuring the equitable participation of women at three levels: as project beneficiaries, as active promoters of LDN/SLM measures and at decision making level. The gender activities will be implemented and supported by dedicated gender consultant and by the project team.

# Institutional arrangements and capacity building

## Roles and responsibilities for implementing this ESMF

The roles and responsibilities of project staff and associated agencies in the implementation of this ESMF is as follows. This ESMF does not cover the roles and responsibilities associated with implementation of the subsequent ESMPs and/or stand-alone management plans; those will be defined for each management plan that is developed in the project inception phase, as required per this ESMF.

**Implementing Partner:**

The Implementing Partner: for this project is the State Committee on Ecology and Environment Protection (SCEEP). The Project will be nationally implemented (NIM) in line with the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between the Government of Uzbekistan and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), signed by parties on June 10, 1993.The Implementing Partner is the entity to which the UNDP Administrator has entrusted the implementation of UNDP assistance, specified in this signed project document along with the assumption of full responsibility and accountability for the effective use of UNDP resources and the delivery of outputs, as set forth in this document.

The Implementing Partner is responsible for executing this project. Specific tasks include:

* Project planning, coordination, management, monitoring, evaluation and reporting. This includes providing all required information and data necessary for timely, comprehensive and evidence-based project reporting, including results and financial data, as necessary. The Implementing Partner will strive to ensure project-level M&E is undertaken by national institutes and is aligned with national systems so that the data used and generated by the project supports national systems.
* Risk management as outlined in the Project Document, SESP, ESMF, SESA, ESMP.
* Procurement of goods and services, including human resources;
* Financial management, including overseeing financial expenditures against project budgets;
* Approving and signing the multiyear workplan;
* Approving and signing the combined delivery report at the end of the year; and,
* Signing the financial report or the funding authorization and certificate of expenditures.

Responsible Party: The Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC) was identified as the Responsible Party for the implementation of Component 4 (Knowledge Management). The selection of the RP was discussed and agreed between the SCEEP and UNDP. CAREC is an independent, non- political and not-for profit international organization with regional mandate to assist the Central Asian government, regional and international stakeholders in addressing environmental and sustainability challenges. Considering that the RP will be mainly involved in the implementation of Component 4, specific tasks in the ESMF implementation will include-as relevant:

* Project planning, coordination, management, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting (relevant for assigned component of the project).
* Ensuring all requirements of UNDP’s SES and national regulatory/policy frameworks and relevant international standards have been addressed (e.g. mitigation of identified adverse social and environmental impacts). Ensuring SESP implementation and integration Human Rights based principles in the training modules, as relevant.
* Providing all required information and data necessary for timely, comprehensive, and evidence-based project reporting, including results and financial data, as necessary. This will include ensuring that project-level M&E is undertaken by national institutes and is aligned with national systems so that the data used and generated by the project, supports national systems.
* Risk management with respect to Social and Environmental Standards, as outlined in the respective ESMPs (as relevant for the assigned component).
* Procurement of goods and services, including human resources.
* Financial management, including overseeing financial expenditures against project budgets.
* Hold responsibility and accountability to UNDP for overall management of the project, including compliance with UNDP SES.

**Project stakeholders and target groups:** The project will work with existing multi-stakeholder partnership mechanisms and establish new partnerships where necessary to ensure project target groups are involved in the design, implementation, and monitoring & evaluation of the activities in their communities. Local government units having jurisdiction over the project landscapes will designate project-level focal points. The focal points will be seconded through part-time arrangements and funded through government cofinancing contributions, providing support for project activities at the local levels.

**UNDP:** UNDP is accountable to the GEF for the implementation of this project. This includes oversight of project execution to ensure that the project is being carried out in accordance with agreed standards and provisions. UNDP is responsible for delivering GEF project cycle management services comprising project approval and start-up, project supervision and oversight, and project completion and evaluation. UNDP is also responsible for the Project Assurance role of the Project Board/Steering Committee. UNDP’s role includes:

* provision of oversight on all matters related to safeguards.
* informing all the stakeholders and right-holders involved in, or potentially impacted, positively or negatively, by the GEF-financed projects, about the UNDP’s corporate Accountability Mechanism (described below).
* ensuring that the Compliance Review and the Stakeholder Response Mechanisms are operational during the lifetime of the projects.
* ensuring adherence to the SES for project activities implemented using funds channelled through UNDP’s accounts, and undertake appropriate measures to address any shortcomings.
* Verifying and documenting that all UNDP SES requirements have been addressed.
* Providing technical guidance on implementation of this ESMF and administrative assistance in recruiting and contracting expert safeguards services (as required), and monitoring adherence of each project to the ESMF and UNDP policies and procedures.

**Project organisation structure:**

Project Board: The Project Board (also called Project Steering Committee) is responsible for taking corrective action as needed to ensure the project achieves the desired results. In order to ensure UNDP’s ultimate accountability, Project Board decisions should be made in accordance with standards that shall ensure management for development results, best value money, fairness, integrity, transparency and effective international competition.

* Provide overall guidance and direction to the project, ensuring it remains within any specified constraints.
* Address project issues as raised by the Project Coordinator.
* Provide guidance on new project risks, and agree on possible mitigation and management actions to address specific risks.
* Agree on Project Coordinator’s tolerances as required, within the parameters set by UNDP-GEF, and provide direction and advice for exceptional situations when the Project Coordinator’s tolerances are exceeded.
* Advise on major and minor amendments to the project within the parameters set by UNDP-GEF.
* Ensure coordination with various government agencies and their participation in project activities.
* Review combined delivery reports prior to certification by the implementing partner.
* Address project-level grievances.
* Review the final project report package during an end-of-project review meeting to discuss lessons learned and opportunities for scaling up/replication.
* Monitor implementation of this ESMF and compliance with national and international regulations, and UNDP social and environmental standards.
* Decision making for the adoption of necessary measures including full integration of management measures within project Outputs and annual work plans.
* Establish and support GRM mechanism to address any grievances.

**Fig. 1 Project Organization Structure**

**Project Organization Structure**

**Responsible Party**

**Project Board/Steering Committee**

**Development Partners**

**Executive**

*Project Director nominated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment Protection*

**Beneficiary Representatives**

*Regional and district level authorities; BISAs; Council of Farmers; Forestry enterprises; Water Users Associations; livestock farmers; Dekhan associations; NGOs;*

**Project Assurance:** *UNDP*

*Three tier Project assurance (country, regional, global):*

*UNDP Programme Manager (CO)*

*UNDP Regional Technical Advisor*

*UNDP Principal Technical Advisor*

**Implementing Partner**

*State Committee on Ecology and Environmental Protection*

PMU

Project Manager

Project Administrative/Financial Assistant

International Chief Technical Advisor

**Component 1**

Task Leader/Water Specialist

National and international experts

**Component 2**

Task Leader/Land Specialist

National and international experts

**Component 3**

Task Leader/PAs

Specialist

National and International experts

Technical advisory groups (TAG)

Team A (Integrated Water Management)

Team B ( LDN/Land Use Planning)

Team C (Protected Areas)

*UNDP, State Committee on Ecology; Ministry of Water Resources; Ministry of Agriculture; State Committee /Forestry; State Committee/Cadaster*

**Component 4**

Task Leader/KM Specialist

National and International experts

Field coordinators/Local project support

The composition of the Project Board must include the following roles:

1. **Project Executive**: an individual who represents ownership of the project and chairs the Project Board. The Executive is normally the national counterpart for nationally implemented projects. The Project Executive is the State Committee on Ecology and Environment Protection.
2. **Beneficiary Representatives**: Individuals or groups representing the interests of those who will ultimately benefit from the project. Their primary function within the board is to ensure the realization of project results from the perspective of project beneficiaries. The Beneficiary representatives are:
	* 1. Regional, district and local level authorities and community level self-governing bodies(mahallas).
		2. Basin Irrigation Systems and Irrigation System Authorities (BISAs/ISAs); Council of Farmers;
		3. Dekhan farms; private livestock farmers; Water Users Associations
		4. Forestry enterprises, PAs administrations; NGOs.
3. **Development Partners**: Individuals or groups representing the interests of the parties concerned that provide funding and/or technical expertise to the project. The Development Partners are:
	* 1. UNDP Deputy/Resident Representative (DRR)
		2. State Committee on Ecology and Environmental Protection
		3. Ministry of Water resources
		4. Ministry of Agriculture
		5. State Committee on Forestry
		6. State Committee on Land Resources, Geodesy, Cartography and National Cadastre
4. **Project Assurance:** UNDP performs the quality assurance role and supports the Project Board and Project Management Unit by carrying out objective and independent project oversight and monitoring functions. This role ensures appropriate project management milestones are managed and completed. The Project Board cannot delegate any of its quality assurance responsibilities to the Project Coordinator. UNDP provides a three – tier oversight services involving the UNDP Country Offices and UNDP at regional and headquarters levels. Project assurance is totally independent of the Project Management function.

**Project extensions**: The UNDP-GEF Executive Coordinator must approve all project extension requests. Note that all extensions incur costs and the GEF project budget cannot be increased. A single extension may be granted on an exceptional basis and only if the following conditions are met: one extension only for a project for a maximum of six months; the project management costs during the extension period must remain within the originally approved amount, and any increase in PMC costs will be covered by non-GEF resources; the UNDP Country Office oversight costs during the extension period must be covered by non-GEF resoruces.

**Project Management Unit**: Project management services including safeguards monitoring will be delivered by the Project Management Unit, staffed as follows: The Project Manager (PM) has the authority to run the project on a day-to-day basis on behalf of the Project Board within the constraints laid down by the Board. The Project Manager is responsible for day-to-day management and decision-making for the project. The Project Manager’s prime responsibility is to ensure that the project produces the results specified in the project document, to the required standard of quality and within the specified constraints of time and cost and aligned with the SES requirements and management plans ( ESMF and ESMP etc). The PM will be supported by a Project Financial and Administrative Assistant, who will assist in project planning, revisions and budget execution documents, contracting of national / local consultants and project personnel in accordance with UNDP procedures and national legislation requirements. The technical aspects of the project will be supervised by an International Chief Technical Advisor, who will work closely with the project specialists and the team of national and international experts and will provide technical inputs into SESA. The PM is supported by 4 Task Leaders and 4 Field Coordinators (one in each targeted district), ensuring the implementation of SESP and SESA/ESMF and risk managemnt plans, implementation of environmental and social safeguards and SESP updates, raising awareness about project-level Grievance and Redress Mechanism (GRM). The proejct team will be supported by specialised safeguards experts/company with the specific technical assessments and capacity building activities, aligned with SES requirements.

In adition the Gender consultant will provide technical support services on the project and monitoring of safeguards. (Project Document Annex 8: O*verview of technical consultancies).*

## Capacity Building

The relevant qualified project technical experts and the specialists with expertise in social and environmental safeguards will be engaged to support the technical assessments and development of management plans as well as ad-hoc targeted assessment needed for any undefined activity, and the subsequent development of ESMPs and any stand-alone management plans. These experts will offer an induction session for Project Management Units (and implementing partners, as needed) on safeguards responsibilities and approaches.

The UNDP-GEF Unit will provide advice to project teams as needed to support the implementation of this ESMF and the preparation, implementation and monitoring of social and environmental management plans/measures.

The Project Steering Committee will have the final responsibility for the integration of ESMF/ESMP/stand-alone management plan(s) in the execution of the project. The integration of those plans will need to consider particular institutional needs within the implementation framework for application of the ESMP, including a review of the required budget allocations for each measure, as well as the authority and capability of institutions at different administrative levels (e.g. local, regional, and national), and their capacity to manage and monitor ESMP implementation. Where necessary, capacity building and technical assistance activities will be included to enable proper implementation of the ESMP.

# Stakeholder engagement and information disclosure

Discussions with project stakeholders, including local communities at project sites, commenced during the project development phase. A list of the stakeholders that were engaged in these consultations has been Annexed to the Project Document (Annex 15: Stakeholders consulted during project development). The project also has an individual Stakeholder Engagement Plan (including a template for the Process Framework) and Gender Action Plan, which is annexed to the Project Document ( Annex 14: Stakeholders Engagement Plan and Annex 16: Gender Analysis and Gender Action Plan). These Plans will be followed to ensure that stakeholders are engaged in project implementation and particularly in the further assessment of social and environmental impacts and the development of appropriate management measures. The Project Stakeholder Engagement Plan will be updated during project implementation based on the assessments and management plans conducted in line with this ESMF, as needed. Potentially affected stakeholders will be engaged during the implementation of this ESMF.

As part of the stakeholder engagement process, UNDP’s SES require that project stakeholders have access to relevant information. Specifically, the SES (SES, Policy Delivery Process) stipulates that, among other disclosures specified by UNDP’s policies and procedures, UNDP will ensure that the following information be made available:

* Stakeholder engagement plans and summary reports of stakeholder consultations
* Social and environmental screening reports with project documentation
* Draft social and environmental assessments, including any draft management plans
* Final social and environmental assessments and associated management plans
* Any required social and environmental monitoring reports.

As outlined in the SES and UNDP’s Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP), the type and timing of assessments and management plans vary depending of the level of social and environmental risk associated with a project as well as timing of the social and environmental assessment.

This ESMF (and the project SESP) will be disclosed via the UNDP website in accordance with UNDP SES policy. The subsequent project ESMPs or stand-alone management plan(s) will also be publicly disclosed via the UNDP website once drafted and finalized and adopted only after the required time period for disclosure has elapsed.

These requirements for stakeholder engagement and disclosure will be adhered to during the implementation of this ESMF, and the subsequent implementation of the resulting ESMPs and any stand-alone management plans.

# Accountability and Grievance Redress Mechanisms

## UNDP’s Accountability Mechanisms

UNDP’s SES recognize that even with strong planning and stakeholder engagement, unanticipated issues can still arise. Therefore, the SES are underpinned by an Accountability Mechanism with two key components:

* 1. A Social and Environmental Compliance Review Unit (SECU) to respond to claims that UNDP is not in compliance with applicable environmental and social policies; and
	2. A Stakeholder Response Mechanism (SRM) that ensures individuals, peoples, and communities affected by projects have access to appropriate grievance resolution procedures for hearing and addressing project-related complaints and disputes.

UNDP’s Accountability Mechanism is available to all of UNDP’s project stakeholders.

The Social and Environmental Compliance Unit (SECU) investigates concerns about non-compliance with UNDP’s Social and Environmental Standards and Screening Procedure raised by project-affected stakeholders and recommends measures to address findings of non-compliance.

The Stakeholder Response Mechanism helps project-affected stakeholders, UNDP’s partners (governments, NGOs, businesses) and others jointly address grievances or disputes related to the social and/or environmental impacts of UNDP-supported projects.

Further information, including how to submit a request to SECU or SRM, is found on the UNDP website at: <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/operations/accountability/secu-srm/>

## Project-level Grievance Redress Mechanisms

The Implementing Partner will establish and implement, as described in the Project Document, a transparent, fair, and free-to-access project-level Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM), approved by stakeholders, which will be put in place at the start of implementation. Interested stakeholders may raise a grievance at any time to the Project Management Office, the Executing Agency, Implementing Agency (UNDP), or the GEF.

**The mandate** of the GRM will be to:

(i) receive and address any concerns, complaints, notices of emerging conflicts, or grievances (collectively “*Grievance*”) alleging actual or potential harm to affected person(s) (the “*Claimant(s)*”) arising from Project.

(ii) assist in resolution of Grievances between and among Project Stakeholders; as well as the various government ministries, agencies, and commissions, CSOs and NGOs, and others (collectively, the “*Stakeholders*”) in the context of the Project.

(iii) Conduct itself at all times in a flexible, collaborative, and transparent manner aimed at problem solving and consensus building.

**The functions** of the GRM will be to:

(i) Receive, Log and Track all Grievances received.

(ii) Provide regular status updates on Grievances to Claimants, Project Board (PB) members and other relevant Stakeholders, as applicable.

(iii) Engage the PB members, Government institutions and other relevant Stakeholders in Grievance resolution.

(iv) Process and propose solutions and ways forward related to specific Grievances *within a period not to exceed sixty (60) days* from receipt of the Grievance.

(v) Identify growing trends in Grievances and recommend possible measures to avoid the same.

(vi) Receive and service requests for, and suggest the use of, mediation or facilitation.

(vii) Elaborate bi-annual reports, make said reports available to the public, and more generally work to maximize the disclosure of its work (including its reports, findings, and outcomes).

(viii) Ensure increased awareness, accessibility, predictability, transparency, legitimacy, and credibility of the GRM process.

(ix) Collaborate with Partner Institutions and other NGOs, CSOs and other entities to conduct outreach initiatives to increase awareness among Stakeholders as to the existence of the GRM and how its services can be accessed.

(x) Ensure continuing education of PB members and their respective institutions about the relevant laws and policies that they will need to be aware of to participate in the development of effective resolutions to Grievances likely to come before the GRM.

(xi) Monitor follow up to Grievance resolutions, as appropriate.

Further details regarding requirements for the GRM are included in Terms of Reference for developing a Grievance Redress Mechanism, in Section 9.4.

**7.Budget for ESMF Implementation**

Funding for implementation of the ESMF is included in the Project budget. The estimated costs are indicated below. Costs associated with the time of Project Management Unit coordinating the development and implementation of this ESMF and UNDP CO support are not shown.

Table 5: Breakdown of project level costs for ESMF implementation

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Description** | **Cost, USD** |
| **Carrying out SESA/ESIA and targeted assessments** |  |
| Contractual services (carry out SESA, ESIA/ESMP, targeted assessments and site-specific procedures as needed) | 20,000 |
| Chief Technical Advisor (technical support) | 3,750  |
| Gender Consultant | 3,000 |
| Travel expenses  | 5,000 |
| Audio-visual and print production (for communicating ESMP issues) | 2,000 |
| SESA/ESMP public consultations | 5,000 |
| **Sub-total:** | **38,750** |
| **Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the ESMP and other management plans** |  |
| Chief Technical Advisor (technical support) | 3,750 |
| Gender Consultant | 3,000 |
| ESMP trainings during project implementation | 4,000 |
| **Sub-total:** | **10,750** |
| **TOTAL:** | **49,500** |

# Monitoring and evaluation arrangements

Reporting on progress and issues in the implementation of this ESMF will be documented in the project quarterly reports and annual project implementation reports (PIRs). Until the ESMPs and stand-alone management plans are put in place, UNDP CO will be responsible for compiling reports on the implementation of this ESMF, for reporting to the Project Board/Local Coordination Committees. Key issues will be presented to the Project Board during each committee meeting.

Implementation of the subsequent ESMPs and stand-alone management plans will be the responsibility for the individual project management teams, and other partners as agreed upon and described in those future plans.

The ESMF monitoring and evaluation plan is outlined below in Table 7:

Table 6: ESMF M&E plan and estimated budget

| **Monitoring Activity & Relevant Projects** | **Description** | **Frequency / Timeframe** | **Expected Action** | **Roles and Responsibilities** | **Cost (per project, excl. staff time** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Track progress of ESMF implementation  | Implementation of this ESMF coordinated for each project, and with results reported to each Project Board meeting ( Project Board meets at least 2 times a year) | Quarterly (until ESMPs and management plans are in place) | Required ESMF steps are completed in a timely manner. | Project Manager with support from the Project UNDP Administrative and Financial Associate | None |
| Assessment of targeted “upstream” activities/SESA and development of the management plans (depending on the complexity of issues) or identification of specific management measures to be incorporated in the project documentation (SESP updated). | SESA will evaluate potential social and environmental effects of policies, plans supported by the project in a participatory manner.  | First year of the project implementation | Required ESMF/or other management plans completed in a timely manner  | Project Manager with support from the Chief Technical Advisor, project qualified specialists and external service providers. | None |
| Targeted screening and assessments of various “downstream” activities and development of reports and management plans. Development of ESIA and ESMP as needed.  | Carried out in a participatory manner, in-depth analysis of potential social and environmental impacts, as well as identification / validation of mitigation measures, drafted in participatory manner | Years1-3 and of project implementation | Risks and potential impacts are assessed with support of external consultants and participation of project team and stakeholders; management actions identified and incorporated into project implementation strategies. | External service providers With guidance from UNDP, Project Manager, Local Field Coordinators, Chief Technical Advisor, Project Specialists , Gender and Project UNDP Administrative/Financial Associate.  | USD 20,000 |
| Implementation of mitigation measures and monitoring of potential impacts identified in targeted assessment(s) and per the subsequent ESMP  | Permanent and participatory implementation and monitoring of impacts and mitigation measures, in accordance with ESMP (to be prepared together with targeted assessment) | Continuous, once SESA and ESIA are completed and ESMP is in place | Implementation of ESMP; participatory monitoring of targeted assessment findings (i.e. identifying indicators, monitoring potential impacts and risks); integration of ESMP into project implementation strategies.  | UNDP CO and RP/IPProject ManagerLocal Field CoordinatorsInternational Chief Technical Advisor UNDP Administrative and Financial Associate oversight by UNDP CO, Project Board | TBD, based on targeted assessment. |
| Development of targeted assessment and report, and livelihood restoration plan as needed;  | Carried out in a participatory manner, targeted analysis of potential livelihood impacts establishment/ enhanced management, as well as identification / validation of mitigation measures, drafted in participatory manner | Years 1-3 of the project implementation | Potential impacts related to economic displacement around PAs are assessed with support of external consultants and participation of project team and stakeholders; targeted assessment report completed; if justified based on findings of targeted assessment, a livelihoods action plan will be developed; management actions will be identified and incorporated into project implementation strategies. | External service providers (environmental and social)With guidance from UNDPProject ManagerLocal Field CoordinatorsChief Technical Advisor UNDP Administrative and Financial Associate |  |
| Implementation of management measures and monitoring of potential impacts identified in targeted assessmentImplementation of Process Framework | Permanent and participatory implementation and monitoring of management measures, in accordance with findings of targeted assessment (and livelihoods restoration plan if developed) | Continuous, once assessment is complete and management plan is in place | Implementation of stand-alone management plans; Implementation of Process Framework; participatory monitoring; integration of management plans into project implementation strategies | Project Manager oversight by UNDP CO, Project Board/Local Project Coordination Committees Local Field Coordinators  | TBD, based on assessment |
| Learning | Knowledge, good practices, and lessons learned regarding social and environmental risk management will be captured regularly, as well as actively sourced from other projects and partners and integrated back into the project. | At least annually | Relevant lessons are captured by the project teams and used to inform management decisions. | Project ManagerCommunication Specialist | None |
| Annual project quality assurance | The quality of the project will be assessed against UNDP’s quality standards to identify project strengths and weaknesses and to inform management decision making to improve the project | Annually | Areas of strength and weakness will be reviewed and used to inform decisions to improve project performance | UNDP CO, with support from Project Manager and UNDP Administrative and Financial Associate | None |
| Review and make course corrections | Internal review of data and evidence from all monitoring actions to inform decision making | At least annually | Performance data, risks, lessons, and quality will be discussed by the project steering committee and used to make course corrections | Project Board  | None |
| Annual project implementation reports  | As part of progress report to be presented to the Project Steering Committee and key stakeholders, analysis, updating and recommendations for risk management will be included | Annually | Updates on progress of ESMF/ESMP will be reported in the project’s annual PIRs. A summary of the avoidance and mitigation of potential social and environmental impacts will be included in the program annual report, sharing best practices and lessons learned across the program. | UNDP CO, UNDP-GEF RTA, Project Manager | None  |
| Project review | The Project Board will consider updated analysis of risks and recommended risk mitigation measures at all meetings | Twice annually  | Any risks and/ or impacts that are not adequately addressed by national mechanisms or project team will be discussed in Project Board meetings Recommendations will be made, discussed, and agreed upon. | Project Board,Project Manager | None |

# 9.Annexes

## SESP Template *(please see Annex 6, UNDP/GEF Project Document)*

## Indicative outline of Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP)

# An ESMP may be prepared as part Fof the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) report or as a stand-alone document.[[9]](#footnote-9) The content of the ESMP should address the following sections:

# (1) Mitigation: Identifies measures and actions in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy that avoid, or if avoidance not possible, reduce potentially significant adverse social and environmental impacts to acceptable levels. Specifically, the ESMP: (a) identifies and summarizes all anticipated significant adverse social and environmental impacts; (b) describes – with technical details – each mitigation measure, including the type of impact to which it relates and the conditions under which it is required (e.g., continuously or in the event of contingencies), together with designs, equipment descriptions, and operating procedures, as appropriate; (c) estimates any potential social and environmental impacts of these measures and any residual impacts following mitigation; and (d) takes into account, and is consistent with, other required mitigation plans (e.g. for displacement, indigenous peoples).

# (2) Monitoring: Identifies monitoring objectives and specifies the type of monitoring, with linkages to the impacts assessed in the environmental and social assessment and the mitigation measures described in the ESMP. Specifically, the monitoring section of the ESMP provides (a) a specific description, and technical details, of monitoring measures, including the parameters to be measured, methods to be used, sampling locations, frequency of measurements, detection limits (where appropriate), and definition of thresholds that will signal the need for corrective actions; and (b) monitoring and reporting procedures to (i) ensure early detection of conditions that necessitate particular mitigation measures, and (ii) furnish information on the progress and results of mitigation.

# (3) Capacity development and training: To support timely and effective implementation of social and environmental project components and mitigation measures, the ESMP draws on the environmental and social assessment of the existence, role, and capability of responsible parties on site or at the agency and ministry level. Specifically, the ESMP provides a description of institutional arrangements, identifying which party is responsible for carrying out the mitigation and monitoring measures (e.g. for operation, supervision, enforcement, monitoring of implementation, remedial action, financing, reporting, and staff training). Where support for strengthening social and environmental management capability is identified, ESMP recommends the establishment or expansion of the parties responsible, the training of staff and any additional measures that may be necessary to support implementation of mitigation measures and any other recommendations of the environmental and social assessment.

# (4) Stakeholder Engagement: Summarizes and links to project Stakeholder Engagement Plan or outlines plan to engage in meaningful, effective and informed consultations with affected stakeholders. Includes information on (a) means used to inform and involve affected people in the assessment process; and (b) summary of stakeholder engagement plan for meaningful, effective consultations during project implementation, including identification of milestones for consultations, information disclosure, and periodic reporting on progress on project implementation. Require documentation of consultations (summaries including presentations, key points raised and responses provided, participation lists). Include information on project grievance mechanism (below) and on UNDP Accountability Mechanisms (SRM, SECU).

# (5) Grievance redress mechanism: Describes effective processes for receiving and addressing stakeholder concerns and grievances regarding the project’s social and environmental performance.

# Describe mechanisms to provide stakeholders and potential affected communities avenues to provide feedback or grievances, and receive responses, with regard to the implementation of specific activities, policies, or regulations.

# (6) Implementation action plan (schedule and cost estimates): For all four above aspects (mitigation, monitoring, capacity development, and stakeholder engagement), ESMP provides (a) an implementation schedule for measures that must be carried out as part of the project, showing phasing and coordination with overall project implementation plans; and (b) the capital and recurrent cost estimates and sources of funds for implementing the ESMP. These figures are also integrated into the total project cost tables. Each of the measures and actions to be implemented will be clearly specified and the costs of so doing will be integrated into the project's overall planning, design, budget, and implementation.

## Sample Terms of Reference: Project-level Grievance Redress Mechanism

Source: Guidance Note on Stakeholder Engagement, UNDP Social and Environmental Standards (SES), October 2017

**I. Mandate**

The mandate of the GRM will be to:

Receive and address any concerns, complaints, notices of emerging conflicts, or grievances (collectively “*Grievance*”) alleging actual or potential harm to affected person(s) (the “*Claimant(s)*”) arising from Project.

Assist in resolution of Grievances between and among Project Stakeholders; as well as the various government ministries, agencies, and commissions, CSOs and NGOs, and others (collectively, the “*Stakeholders*”) in the context of the Project.

Conduct itself at all times in a flexible, collaborative, and transparent manner aimed at problem solving and consensus building.

**II. Functions**

The functions of the GRM will be to:

1. Receive, Log and Track all Grievances received.
2. Provide regular status updates on Grievances to Claimants, Project Board (PB) members and other relevant Stakeholders, as applicable.
3. Engage the PB members, Government institutions and other relevant Stakeholders in Grievance resolution.
4. Process and propose solutions and ways forward related to specific Grievances within a period not to exceed sixty (60) days from receipt of the Grievance.
5. Identify growing trends in Grievances and recommend possible measures to avoid the same.
6. Receive and service requests for, and suggest the use of, mediation or facilitation.
7. Elaborate bi-annual reports, make said reports available to the public, and more generally work to maximize the disclosure of its work (including its reports, findings, and outcomes).
8. Ensure increased awareness, accessibility, predictability, transparency, legitimacy, and credibility of the GRM process.
9. Collaborate with Partner Institutions and other NGOs, CSOs and other entities to conduct outreach initiatives to increase awareness among Stakeholders as to the existence of the GRM and how its services can be accessed.
10. Ensure continuing education of PB members and their respective institutions about the relevant laws and policies that they will need to be aware of to participate in the development of effective resolutions to Grievances likely to come before the GRM.
11. Monitor follow up to Grievance resolutions, as appropriate.

**III. Composition**

The GRM will be composed of:

[Name of Implementing Partner] as the Secretariat and either:

1. A standing GRM Sub-Committee [made up of x, y, z PB members],

and/or

1. Ad hoc GRM Task Teams in response to specific requests for grievance.

The GRM Sub-Committee will be balanced in composition (government and non-government) and should not include any PB members with a direct interest or role in the grievance/dispute.

**IV. [Name of Implementing Partner]**

In its role as GRM Secretariat, [Name of Implementing Partner] will perform the following core functions:

* Publicize the existence of the GRM and the procedure for using it.
* Receive and log requests for dispute resolution.
* Acknowledge receipt to the requestor.
* Determine eligibility.
* Forward eligible requests to the PB for review and action.
* Track and document efforts at grievance/dispute resolution and their outcomes.

**V. Project Board/GRM Sub-Committee/GRM Task Team**

The Project Board/GRM Sub-Committee and/or GRM Task Team will perform the following core functions:

* Take direct action to resolve the grievance/dispute (e.g. bring the relevant parties together to discuss and resolve the issue themselves with oversight by the PB).
* Request further information to clarify the issue, and share that information with all relevant parties, or ensure that a government agency represented on the PB took an appropriate administrative action to deal with a complaint.
* Refer the grievance/dispute to independent mediation, while maintaining oversight; or
* Determine that the request was outside the scope and mandate of the PB and refer it elsewhere (e.g. Ministry of Justice and Police or to the courts).

**VI. Communicating a Grievance**

(i) Who can Submit a Grievance?

A Grievance can be sent by any individual or group of individuals that believes it has been or will be harmed by the Project.

If a Grievance is to be lodged by a different individual or organization on behalf of those said to be affected, the Claimant must identify the individual and/or people on behalf of who the Grievance is submitted and provide written confirmation by the individual and/or people represented that they are giving the Claimant the authority to present the Grievance on their behalf. The GRM will take reasonable steps to verify this authority.

*(ii) How is the Grievance Communicated?*

The GRM shall maintain a flexible approach with respect to receiving Grievances in light of known local constraints with respect to communications and access to resources for some Stakeholders. A Grievance can be transmitted to the GRM by any means available (i.e. by email, letter, phone call, meeting, SMS, etc.). The contact information is the following:

[Implementing Partner to add address, phone number, fax, etc.]

To facilitate communications with and between the GRM and potential Claimants, the GRM will receive support from the PB members’ institutions, local government, and civil society organizations

*(iii) What information should be included in a Grievance?*

The Grievance should include the following information:

the name of the individual or individuals making the Complaint (the “Claimant”).

a means for contacting the Claimant (email, phone, address, other).

if the submission is on behalf of those alleging a potential or actual harm, the identity of those on whose behalf the Grievance is made, and written confirmation by those represented of the Claimant’s authority to lodge the Grievance on their behalf.

the description of the potential or actual harm.

Claimant’s statement of the risk of harm or actual harm (description of the risk/harm and those affected, names of the individual(s) or institutions responsible for the risk/harm, the location(s) and date(s) of harmful activity).

what has been done by Claimant thus far to resolve the matter.

whether the Claimant wishes that their identity is kept confidential.

the specific help requested from the GRM.

However, complainants are not required to provide all of the information listed above. Initially, the complainant need only provide enough information to determine eligibility. If insufficient information is provided, the GRM has an obligation to make a substantial, good faith effort to contact the complainant to request whatever additional information is needed to determine eligibility, and if eligible, to develop a proposed response.

**VII. Logging, Acknowledgment, and Tracking**

All Grievances and reports of conflict will be received, assigned a tracking number, acknowledged to Claimant, recorded electronically, and subject to periodic updates to the Claimant as well as the office file.

Within one (1) week from the receipt of a Grievance, the GRM will send a *written* acknowledgement to Claimant of the Grievance received with the assigned tracking number.[[10]](#footnote-10)

Each Grievance file will contain, at a minimum:

1. The date of the request as received.
2. The date the written acknowledgment was sent (and oral acknowledgment if also done.
3. The dates and nature of all other communications or meetings with the Claimant and other relevant Stakeholders.
4. Any requests, offers of, or engagements of a Mediator or Facilitator.
5. The date and records related to the proposed solution/way forward.
6. The acceptance or objections of the Claimant (or other Stakeholders).
7. The proposed next steps if objections arose.
8. The alternative solution if renewed dialogues were pursued.
9. Notes regarding implementation.
10. Any conclusions and recommendations arising from monitoring and follow up.

**IX. Maintaining Communication and Status Updates**

Files for each Grievance will be available for review by the Claimant and other Stakeholders involved in the Grievance, or their designated representative(s). Appropriate steps will be taken to maintain the confidentiality of the Claimant if previously requested.

The GRM will provide periodic updates to the Claimant regarding the status and current actions to resolve the Grievance. Not including the acknowledgment of receipt of the Grievance, such updates will occur within reasonable intervals (not greater than every thirty (30) days).

**X. Investigation and Consensus Building**

Within one (1) week of receiving a Grievance, [Implementing Partner] will notify the PB/**GRM Sub-Committee (GRM SC)/GRM Task Team (GRM TT)** and any other relevant institutions of the receipt of the Grievance.

[IF THE PB, RATHER THAN A PRE-DESIGNATED GRM SC OR GRM TT IS THE PRIMARY BODY RECEIVING COMPLAINTS: The PB will identify a specific team of individuals drawn from the PB and/or their respective institutions to develop a response to the Grievance. The names of these individuals will be made available to the Claimant.]

The designated PB members/GRM SC/GRM TT will promptly engage the Claimant and any other relevant Stakeholders deemed appropriate, to gather all necessary information regarding the Grievance.

Through the PB members/GRM SC/GRM TT, the GRM will have the authority to request from relevant Government institutions any information (documents or otherwise) relevant to resolving the Grievance and avoiding future Grievances of the same nature.

As necessary, the PB members/GRM SC/GRM TT will convene one or more meetings with relevant individuals and institutions in [national capital], or elsewhere in [name of country] as needed.

The objective of all investigative activities is to develop a thorough understanding of the issues and concerns raised in the Grievance and facilitate consensus around a proposed solution and way forward.

The PB members/GRM SC/GRM TT will procure the cooperation of their respective staff with the investigation.

At any point during the investigation, the PB members/GRM SC/GRM TT may determine that an onsite field investigation is necessary to properly understand the Grievance and develop an effective proposed solution and way forward.

**XI. Seeking Advisory Opinion and/or Technical Assistance**

At any point after receiving a Grievance and through to implementation of the proposed solution and way forward, the PB members/GRM SC/GRM TT may seek the technical assistance and/or an advisory opinion from any entity or individual in [country] or internationally which may reasonably be believed to be of assistance.

**XII. Making Proposed Actions and Solutions Public and Overseeing Implementation**

The PB members/GRM SC/GRM TT will communicate to the Claimant one or more proposed actions or resolutions and clearly articulate the reasons and basis for proposed way forward.

If the Claimant does not accept the resolution, the PB members/GRM SC/GRM TT will engage with the Claimant to provide alternative options.

If the Claimant accepts the proposed solution and way forward, the GRM will continue to monitor the implementation directly and through the receipt of communications from the Claimant and other relevant parties. As necessary, the GRM may solicit information from the relevant parties and initiate renewed dialogue where appropriate.

In all communications with the Claimant and other stakeholders, the GRM will be guided by its problem-solving role, non-coercive principles and process, and the voluntary, good faith nature of the interaction with the Claimant and other stakeholders.

**XII. Monitoring and Evaluation**

Bi-annually, the GRM will make available to the public, a report describing the work of the GRM, listing the number and nature of the Grievances received and processed in the past six months, a date and description of the Grievances received, resolutions, referrals and ongoing efforts at resolution, and status of implementation of ongoing resolutions. The level of detail provided with regard to any individual Grievance will depend on the sensitivity of the issues and Stakeholder concerns about confidentiality, while providing appropriate transparency about the activities of the GRM. The report will also highlight key trends in emerging conflicts, Grievances, and dispute resolution, and make recommendations regarding:

1. Measures that can be taken by the Government to avoid future harms and Grievances.
2. improvements to the GRM that would enhance its effectiveness, accessibility, predictability, transparency, legitimacy, credibility, and capacity.

**XIII. Mediation**

For the option of independent mediation, mediators on the roster/panel should have at least the following qualifications:

* Professional experience and expertise in impartial mediation.
* Knowledge of [project type and activities in the country] and the region, including an understanding of indigenous and tribal culture and practices.
* [National and local language, as appropriate] proficiency.
* Availability in principle for assignments of up to 20 days.
* Willingness to declare all relationships and interests that may affect their ability to act as impartial mediators in particular cases.

If mediation succeeded in resolving the dispute or grievance, the outcome will be documented by [Implementing Partner] and reviewed by the Task Team. If it is unsuccessful, stakeholders will have the option to return to the PB members/GRM SC/GRM TT for assistance.

**XIV. Without Prejudice**

The existence and use of this GRM is without prejudice to any existing rights under any other complaint mechanisms that an individual or group of individuals may otherwise have access to under national or international law or the rules and regulations of other institutions, agencies, or commissions.

1. GEF capacity scorecards for protected areas [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Established in 2007 to enhance dialogue and build confidence among the five CA countries [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. UNDP SES, page 47. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Refers to a community of people residing in a specific territory - mahallas may vary in size from 150 to 1,500 families. In cities, mahallas are generally established by the residents of a particular residential quarter or suburb. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Localities with over two thousand inhabitants which are situated in the vicinity of industrial or construction enterprises, railway stations or other important ‘objects’ [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Tashkent however has a special status, as its local government operates independently of the regional authority. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Refers to a community of people residing in a specific territory - mahallas may vary in size from 150 to 1,500 families. In cities, mahallas are generally established by the residents of a particular residential quarter or suburb. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Localities with over two thousand inhabitants which are situated in the vicinity of industrial or construction enterprises, railway stations or other important ‘objects’. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. This may be particularly relevant where contractors are being engaged to carry out the project, or parts thereof, and the ESMP sets out the requirements to be followed by contractors. In this case the ESMP should be incorporated **as part of the contract with the contractor,** together with appropriate monitoring and enforcement provisions. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Oral acknowledgments can be used for expediency (and also recorded), but must be followed by a written acknowledgment [↑](#footnote-ref-10)