

**COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
UNDER THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN**

**RESILAND CA+: TAJIKISTAN RESILIENT
LANDSCAPE RESTORATION PROJECT**

SOCIAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

October 2021

Table of Contents

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	4
1. Introduction.....	5
1.1 Project Background.....	5
1.2 Project Development Objectives.....	5
1.3 Project Components	5
1.4 Project Sites	9
1.5 Project Preparation.....	10
2. Social Assessment.....	11
2.1 Purpose of the Social Assessment.....	11
2.2 Approach and Methodology for Preparation of SA	11
2.3 Aspects of Social Assessment.....	12
2.4 Structure of the Report.....	13
3. Administrative, Policy and Regulatory Framework.....	15
3.1. Key National Social Legal Provisions and Citizen Engagement	15
3.2. National Gender Policy and Legal Framework.....	16
3.3 National Sectoral Legal Framework	17
3.4. International Treaties and Obligations.....	20
3.5 The Relevant World Bank Environmental and Social Standards	21
4. Social Baseline.....	25
4.1 Population	25
4.2 Economy	26
4.3 Food Security	28
4.4 Poverty and Vulnerability	29
4.5 Employment and Migration	29
4.6 Gender Equality	30
4.7 Covid-19 pandemic and its social-economic impacts	36
4.8 Afghan Refugee Crisis	36
5. Institutional Context.....	37
5.1. Institutions at the Central Asian regional level.....	37
5.2 Institutions at the national level	37
5.3 Institutions at the local level	41
6. Stakeholder Consultations	46
6.1 Stakeholder Mapping.....	46
6.2 Key Stakeholder Meetings and Consultations	47

6.3 Lessons Learned in Engaging Communities / Stakeholders from Previous Projects	50
6.4. Stakeholder Analysis	22
6.5 Disadvantaged and Vulnerable Groups.....	29
7. Social Management Framework (SMF).....	32
7.1. Potential Social Risks and Impacts	32
7.1.1. Positive Impacts	32
7.1.2. Adverse Impacts and Risks	32
7.2 Key Social Issues to be Considered during the Project Design	35
8. Implementation Arrangements for Social Management Framework.....	42
8.1 Project Implementation Arrangements	42
8.1.1. Project Coordination	42
8.1.2. Implementing Agency (IA).....	42
8.2. Roles and Responsibilities in ESF Implementation	44
8.3. ESF Institutional Capacity Building Activities.....	47
8.4. Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM)	47
LIST OF ANNEXES	48
Annex 1: Population data analysis - by the TRLRP project target districts.....	48
Annex 2: Socio-economic data of the TRLRP project target districts.....	48

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ALRI	Agency of Land Reclamation and Irrigation
CA	Central Asia
CAREC	Central Asia Regional Environmental Centre
CCAPs	Catchment Community Action Plans
CEP	Committee of Environmental Protection
CIGs	Common Interest Groups
CSA	Climate-smart- agriculture
DDP	District Development Program
DRS	Districts of Republican Subordination
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FUGs	Forest User Groups
GBAO	Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (Region)
GIS	Geographical Information System
GoT	Government of Tajikistan
HBS	Household Budget Survey
ICARDA	International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas
ICSD	Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MtDP	Mid-term Development Program
NDS	National Development Strategy
PA	Protected Area
PRT	Pasture Reclamation Trust under the Ministry of Agriculture
PMPs	Pasture Management Plans
PUA	Pasture Users Association
SA	Social Assessment
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SFA	State Forest Agency
SFEs	State Forestry Enterprises
SENPA	State Enterprise for Natural Protected Areas
SFF	State Forest Fund
SLMTJ	Sustainable Land Management Tajikistan
TRELLIS	Tajikistan Resilient Landscape Restoration Project
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WB	World Bank
WUA	Water Users Association

1. Introduction

1.1 Project Background

Tajikistan is committed to reducing landscape degradation through reforestation and afforestation. In 2018, Tajikistan along with five other Caucasus and Central Asian countries signed the Astana Resolution to restore about 2.7 million ha of degraded forest landscapes. Tajikistan specifically committed to restore 48,000 ha of degraded forest landscapes from 2018-2030. The National Development Strategy (NDS) 2030 addresses energy issues and aims to provide a reliable energy supply, which includes planting 1,000 ha, rehabilitating 2,000 ha and supporting natural forest regeneration on 8,000 ha of forests annually. Tajikistan's limited forest cover (about 3%) is diminishing rapidly due to overexploitation and uncontrolled grazing. For 70 % of the population, fuelwood is the primary energy source due to an inconsistent energy supply. Additional constraints in the sector include open access to resources, inefficient heating and cooking devices, and lack of land tenure security and forest ownership awareness. Land degradation is also a threat in protected areas. Currently, about 22% of Tajikistan is demarcated as protected areas and recreational zones, with limited use of natural resources or full prohibition across 2,500 hectares of land with valuable ecosystems. Due to inadequate financing and technical capacity, protected areas lack management plans, proper boundary mapping, and measures to prevent or reduce degradation, and opportunities for co-management with stakeholders.

Tajikistan is one of the countries, along with Uzbekistan and a few other countries to join later, under the RESILAND CA+ Program, which aims to increase the resilience of regional landscapes in Central Asia. As part of RESILAND CA+ Program, the Government of Republic of Tajikistan under the leadership of the Committee of Environmental Protection (CEP) supported by World Bank's Environment, Natural Resource and Blue Economy (ENB) Global Practice is preparing the Tajikistan Resilient Landscape Restoration Project (TRELIS) to be implemented over a five-year period.

1.2 Project Development Objectives

The goal of the RESILAND CA+ Program is to increase resilience of regional landscapes in Central Asia. The regional impact of the Program will be measured by aggregating the results of individual country projects and monitoring the results of regional activities

The Project Development Objective (PDO) is to increase area under sustainable landscape management in selected locations in Tajikistan and promote Tajikistan's collaboration among Central Asia countries on transboundary landscape restoration. This PDO is uniform across the RESILAND CA+ projects with sustainable landscape management practices differing based on the specific context and interventions financed in each country. In the case of Tajikistan, sustainable landscape management includes land use practices like agroforestry (intercropping with trees, shelterbelts); improved grazing land management through temporal enclosure and enrichment planting; plantations and reforestation, i.e., production-oriented plantations, tree belts for protection of catchments and erosion control; protected area management; soil fertility and water harvesting measures to support tree systems; and other relevant sustainable landscape management practices, Sustainable landscape management practices will be carried out by the government, SFE the private sector, and rural communities in the targeted locations, whose capacities will be increased to carry these out.

1.3 Project Components

Project activities are grouped into the following **three inter-related components**, which are further grouped into sub-components:

Component 1. Strengthen Institutions and Policies, and Regional Collaboration. This component will finance consulting services, goods and equipment to support the strengthening of national institutional policies and legal frameworks, developing of knowledge and skills of government, communities and other stakeholders for landscape management, and improving the capacities of government partners to operate effectively. Under this component, financing will be provided for activities to support regional collaboration efforts in order to contribute to landscape restoration that benefits both Tajikistan and the wider Central Asia region with which the country shares and contributes critical resources and infrastructure.

Sub-component 1.1. Strengthen Institutions and Policies. The objective of this sub-component is to develop an adequate policy and legal environment to restore and sustainably manage target landscapes in Tajikistan. The project will finance analysis, revisions and adoption of existing policy, legal and implementation frameworks for forests, pastures, and protected areas (PAs) to help align these with national and international obligations. Planned activities include development and implementation of Landscape Restoration Strategy and Action Plan, and Protected Area Strategy and Action Plan, Institutional Capacity Building activities.

Rehabilitation of SFE offices and selected Special PA units. In the project districts, financing will be provided for rehabilitation of field buildings and offices, provision of equipment, vehicles, and small machinery for SFE offices and selected Special PA units. The project will also finance the purchase and installation of office equipment including computers, tablets, furniture, etc., as well as field equipment such as binoculars, cameras, drones, field mapping equipment, uniforms, sleeping bags.

Strengthening research and knowledge management activities include i) research and analytical studies. ii) knowledge management; and iii) study tours and exchanges within the country, with neighboring countries, and further afield to other countries, building on WBG's presence in the region and globally, as well as other projects and initiatives.

Sub-component 1.2. Strengthen Regional Collaboration. The objective of this sub-component is to promote collaboration among Central Asia countries on transboundary landscape restoration given the critical need to address new emerging threats at the regional level, such as the impacts of climate change. The Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC) will execute this sub-component under a contract with the GoT given its regional mandate and capacities. CAREC will partner with other entities, such as FAO, UNDP, University of Central Asia, International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), and International Center for Biosaline Agriculture, to execute specific activities. In addition, the sub-component will also finance the management of a regional level M&E system for RESILAND CA+ to monitor, evaluate, and report on the Program's regional impact.

Component 2. Resilient Landscapes and Livelihoods. Overall, this component will finance works, consulting services, non-consulting services, goods, and grants for both government institutions and communities to implement a range of landscape restoration investments. To support the selection of investments, assistance will be provided for landscape restoration planning. All planning will encourage women's leadership, will follow citizen engagement mechanisms, and will be based on good practice principles for a landscape approach when reconciling different and often competing land uses. Funds for the implementation of community-based activities will be provided through the CEP IG directly to community groups/organizations as defined in sub-grant agreements based on the approved proposals and the achievement of agreed milestones.

Sub-component 2.1 Forest Restoration and Sustainable Forest Management. The Forestry Agency will lead on the technical aspects of this subcomponent, while the financial and procurement management responsibilities will remain with CEP. This subcomponent includes the following key activities:

National Forest Inventory. The project will finance a national-level systematic National Forest Inventory (NFI) using a low sampling density. Other relevant data will also be collected, e.g., evidence of illegal removals, erosion, forest fires, condition/species of pasture, etc., as required.

Forest management plans. The project will finance the preparation and implementation of sustainable forest management plans for 10 SFEs in the project sites. Development of plans at this scale for forestry will be coordinated with the PUU pasture management plans, since it will be critical to ensure that any proposed activities are not adversely affected by livestock encroachment into forest plantations.

Implementation of sustainable forest management plans. Once the plans have been prepared, SFEs will implement the plans. This will include carrying out silvicultural treatments such as assisted natural regeneration, grazing management, thinning, stand management, fire management, forest protection and so on. Fire management may be supported in Sharituz district, bordering Uzbekistan's Babatag Key Biodiversity Area (this can be coordinated and collaborated with Uzbekistan).

Afforestation and fuelwood plantations. State Forest Enterprises will carry out afforestation in approximately 4,120 ha (including 220 ha of fuelwood plantation) through JFM. JFM essentially involves leasing forest land to local people over the long term. The tenants rehabilitate and use their forest plots according to management plans, with SFEs advising on forest rehabilitation. Based on experience, SFEs will look to develop contracts primarily with Forest User Groups (FUGs) rather than individual households. FUGs will sign contracts for the land use rights with the SFEs for a period of at least 20 years. A suitably qualified organization will be contracted to mobilize participants and groups, develop plans and provide support to FUGs. There are several organizations in the country that have wide experience in facilitation of similar activities. Plans will be developed jointly by the SFEs with the FUGs for a consolidated area. Assessments and plans will be prepared of proposed locations, species to be planted, and risks and mitigation measures. will be established. Sub-grants will be provided to FUGs to carry out the afforestation works including for fuelwood plantations which will use fast-growing native species planted on both SFF and non-SFF lands, to supply growing demand of fuelwood,

Assisted natural regeneration. SFEs will further improve SFF land through assisted natural regeneration in 8,000 ha. SFEs will carry out activities which will include measures such as fencing to protect regenerating areas, soil improvement and enrichment planting to increase the quality and number of trees and/or species diversity.

Forest nurseries. The project will support two types of forest nurseries – those operated by SFEs and smaller ones at the household level. The project will finance semi-modernization measures in eight 8 SFE-operated nurseries in the project areas. This approach is preferred to a smaller number of hub nurseries given the dispersed geographical coverage of the project, and more location specific ecological requirements of each SFE. Building on the experience of JFM in the country, the project will also promote the development of private backyard nurseries to bolster seedling supply for Joint Forest Management (JFM) and afforestation, and as an income generation activity for rural households. A start-up grant will support nursery establishment with the purchase of initial inputs, e.g., seeds, fencing, small equipment. Nursery operators will be connected through a specific seedlings supply contract to boost motivation and ensure specific tree species seedlings. SFEs will monitor household-based nurseries. About 50 nurseries are expected to be established in the project sites.

Reforestation through Joint Forest Management. The project will look to develop contracts primarily with Forest User Groups (FUGs that are overseen by local mahalla committees). It is anticipated between 100 to 150 FUGs will be supported across the project districts. In addition to the contract, management and annual plans will serve as tools for forest management planning and monitoring of activities and results. The management plan will be developed for a five-year period and will specify long-term goals, such as the installation of an irrigation channel or diversifying a forest plot.

Sub-component 2.2 Integrated Pasture Management and Restoration. The Pasture Reclamation Trust (PRT) of the Ministry of Agriculture will lead on technical aspects of this sub-component, while the financial and procurement management responsibilities will remain with CEP. This subcomponent includes the following key activities.

Geobotanical surveys and pasture inventories. SCLMG has responsibility for monitoring pasture areas under the authority of the PRT. In the past, geobotanical surveys have been conducted and maps produced. The project will finance cadastral assessment of pasture resources and geobotanical surveys in the project districts, with data digitized for planning and monitoring purposes. Within this activity, the project will pilot the use of 'smart inventories' based on updated methods and statistical analysis.

Forage seed demonstration plots. Establishment of seed demonstration plots for native forage species in two project locations, each covering 100ha. These plots will be under the management of the PRT and serve to demonstrate the production of better-quality forage seeds, as well as to supply suitable seeds for forage production by PUUs and others.

Pasture/livestock Management Plans. To help slowing land degradation processes, the project will support sustainable pasture/fodder-based livestock production systems in selected areas. The focus of support will be PUUs, whether these are to be created or existing unions are to be strengthened. Where PUUs are to be created, these will be primarily at village and jamoat levels (and at district level, if needed, depending on resource use regimes). In the project districts, financing will be provided for the development and implementation of PMPs in line with the requirements of the Pasture Law. Investments could include: (i) infrastructure to access and use remote pastures, such as spot road improvements, stock watering points, shelters and stock-pens, and milk cooling equipment; (ii) small machinery to produce and harvest fodder; (iii) rehabilitation measures for degraded areas such as fencing, weed and shrub control, and re-seeding; (iv) inputs for supplementary fodder production such as seeds; (v) vaccinations and parasite control; and (vi) artificial insemination. Grant funds could also be used for training and for provision of office equipment and furnishings for PUUs. Plans may need to include arrangements for access to and management practices/rules for grazing areas that are beyond the jamoat boundaries, in other areas of the district, and even further if necessary. PUUs will be required to coordinate PMP preparation and implementation, closely with JFM planning and implementation to ensure that measures are in place to protect forest areas from livestock encroachment.

Sub-component 2.3 Protected Area Management and Biodiversity Conservation. This subcomponent will be technically led by the SENPA, as part of CEP. The subcomponent includes the following key activities.

a) *Priority PA Management Plans.* Management plans will be updated and prepared for selected protected areas in the project's selected landscapes. PAs include Tajik National Park (bordering the Kyrgyz Republic), Zorkul Special Reserve in GBAO (which borders Afghanistan) Yagnob National Park in the Zarafshon sub-basin (bordering Uzbekistan) and State Natural Reserve Tigrovaya Balka in Khatlon (bordering Afghanistan).

b) *Implementation of PA management plans.* Once the management plans have been prepared, SENPA and respective authorities of the individual PAs will be responsible for implementation. The project will support selected activities including a) establishment of monitoring systems and protocols including remote and field-based monitoring; b) interpretation of PA assets and attractions, and c) habitat restoration and conservation for key species; and d) general PA management. As part of PA management, the project will support the development of a rare species conservation plan to cover the four PAs.

Sub-component 2.4. Landscape Restoration and Livelihoods. The project will provide sub-grants to farmers organized as CIGs to implement small-scale livelihood investments based on Village Development Plans. CEP IG will provide the technical lead for this sub-component and oversee the management of sub-grants to beneficiaries.

Climate-smart crop production practices and technologies. The project will support crop land-based livelihoods, through sub-grants for sub-projects identified and selection in the above plans to groups of farmers that form common interest groups (CIGs), o Both will be eligible for grants to address degradation issues such as on-farm salination, erosion, and low productivity in ways that can increase income for members and reduce degradation impacts and increase climate adaptation. The focus will be the adoption of practices such as: a) diversification of agricultural/horticultural crops; b) improved crop varieties and biotechnology that reduce emissions; c) adoption of water-efficient crops and varieties, and cultivation methods; d) erosion control measures such as increasing vegetative cover along the sides of linear infrastructure such as roads and planting of shelterbelts; e) harvesting and processing of different crops, including cooling, storage; f) reduced tillage intensity and cover crops, crop rotation, perennial cropping systems, cultivation of deep rooting species; g) higher inputs of organic matter to soil, processing and application of manure. Activities and CIGs would be prioritized and identified during a participatory planning process and supported to prepare proposals. Project financed sub-grants to CIGs will not exceed US\$10,000 and will require a match of 5% if provided in cash, or 10% if provided in-kind as beneficiary contributions.

Component 3. Project Management and Coordination. This component will finance the operating costs of project management functions to be carried out by the Implementing Group within the Committee for Environmental Protection. Key functions include procurement, financial management, coordination, reporting, and monitoring and evaluation. The CEP IG will also be responsible for ensuring project compliance with environmental and social standards, attention to gender aspects, and citizen engagement for their respective components. The central CEP IG will be supported by project-financed province-level technical units with core staff in key areas such as pasture management, forestry and biodiversity conservation as needed.

1.4 Project Sites

Potential project sites fall in the following river basins and regions/oblasts of the country:

Oblast/Basin	Sub-basin	Project Districts
Sughd/ Syr Darya	Zarafshon	Ayni, Panjekent, K. Mastchoh
Khatlon/Vakhsh	Lower Kofarnikhon	Shahrituz, Nosir Khisrov, Qubodiyon
GBAO/Panj	Western Pamir	Vanj, Rushon, Shughnon
	Eastern Pamir	Murghab

Primary project beneficiaries are expected to be rural communities, private farmers and farmer groups, villages and village communities, including women and youth, and resource user groups (e.g., for pasture, forest). These communities and groups will benefit from technical and financial support to implement technologies and approaches that improve their livelihoods, increase their resilience, while also contributing to the restoration of ecosystem functions. Under Components 1 and 2, government agencies are expected to benefit from technical support and capacity building for integrated landscape planning. Staff in these agencies at both central and field-levels will also benefit from investments in improved equipment and infrastructure, improved and more accessible data to support timely decision-making related to landscape restoration. At the regional level, the main beneficiaries are governments of the five Central Asian countries, who will gain knowledge about landscape restoration and other solutions for emerging regional issues and will be provided with opportunities to create and foster partnerships around these issues of common interest.

1.5 Project Preparation

The project recognizes the significance of, and adopts the World Bank's Environmental and Social Standards, for identifying and assessing as well as managing the environmental and social (E&S) risks and impacts associated with this investment project. The reviews undertaken by the Bank has classified environmental and social risks as moderate and substantial respectively. In response, the Government of Tajikistan/ Project Implementation Group under the Committee on Environmental Protection (CEP), implementing agency, has developed several key instruments to address the same. They are: Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), including a Social Assessment (SA); Labor Management Procedures (LMP); Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF); Process Framework (PF); and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP).

2. Social Assessment

2.1 Purpose of the Social Assessment

The overall objective of social assessment study is “to better understand and address social development issues, including the requirements of poor and vulnerable sections and ensure accomplishing the outcomes – inclusion, cohesion, equity, security, decentralization and accountability. The project preparation recognized that the beneficiary profile is not homogeneous, rather, quite diverse comprising a number of sub-groups identifiable on the basis of their differential endowment, gender, ethnicity, different economic groups and other regional features. The challenge therefore lies in addressing the requirements of all social groups, with special attention towards the poor and socially vulnerable groups. Tajikistan is highly diverse on the socio-economic front which makes it challenging to develop a service delivery system which can respond flexibly to different needs. Also, there are multiple stakeholders to the project, who would have varying degrees of influence and impact on project activities and outcomes. This makes it necessary for the project to provide a framework for participation of all key stakeholder groups and solicit their contributions towards project design and delivery mechanisms. The social assessment helped in identifying key social development issues and to assess potential impacts of the project. This led to drawing necessary measures that the project is expected to take up to ensure inclusion and addressing equity in accessing project benefits, strengthening decentralized governance system. Broad elements of the SA include beneficiary assessment, stakeholder analysis, social impacts, institutional assessments and risks analysis.

Most elements of SA have been ingrained into ESMF, RPF and SEP, and essentially designed to provide inputs such as to influence the designing of the project. The ESMF outlines the background / context, the policy and regulatory framework, a brief description of the environmental impacts of possible sub-projects, Environmental and Social Assessment (ESA) procedures & guidelines, institutional arrangements, and consultations and disclosure procedures. The policy & regulatory framework includes also a section describing both measures, which will be used to ensure compliance with the national laws and WB requirements. Under the ESA procedures and guidelines, there are details on responsibilities for sub-project preparation, screening, appraisal, implementing and monitoring. These guidelines will assist in outlining what is required for the site-specific Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs). It includes guidelines for proposed small-scale construction sub-projects in the form of an ESMP checklist. Under institutional arrangements, the project will also support training and capacity building of sub-project beneficiaries and their consultants / contractors. So, this document, SA should be read in conjunction with other documents- ESMF, RPF and SEP.

This document and all other environmental and social instruments have been approved by the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and cleared with the World Bank (WB). It will be uploaded on WB’s external website and available locally through the development center. The ESMF has been translated into Russian/Tajik and further disseminated in such a way as to be available to central and local government agencies and community members.

2.2 Approach and Methodology for Preparation of SA

By conducting this SA, the intention was not to conduct a very comprehensive analysis and address all social related effects and potential risks, which might come when the project is launched. It neither attempted to apply forecasting models or empirical analysis. It rather tried to capture as much as possible the direct impacts, side effects and possible risks, which are predicted to happen as the result of implementation of this project. Nevertheless, mitigation measures towards minimizing the pre-defined risks are proposed here. Experiences of different donor agencies and development partners have been reviewed for the purpose of this SA. Special focus was drawn to past and ongoing projects within the scope of which border regions, cross-border cooperation, gender sensitivity, social cohesion, integrated water resources

management, basin-type management of natural resources, vulnerable population in geographically disadvantaged districts are covered.

During preparation of the SA the following research methods were applied: *desk review* of the available national regulatory and legal documents related for the environmental and social assessment; *screening of secondary socio-economic statistical data* available for the targeted provinces and districts, individual interviews with international and local experts, focus groups discussions, public meetings and consultations.

The primary sources of information for this SA were national legislation framework, inter-governmental agreements, regional cooperation frameworks, National Development Strategy of Tajikistan for 2016-2030, Mid-term Development Program for 2021-2025, various state- and donor-funded programs on sectoral development, e.g., forest restoration, Tajikistan Water Supply System, ongoing District Development Programs of the targeted districts. Secondary socio-economic data on the targeted districts was collected with the aim of analysis and incorporating into this study. This process has also entailed *national consultations* with direct project implementers, namely Committee of Environmental Protection and Agency for Land Reclamation and Irrigation, regional and district-level government authorities.

The CEP PIG staff conducted *field visits* to potential target districts and were assisted by the NGO Znaniye, the project preparation contractor, and local governments and community leaders to identify potential environmental and social risks and impacts of the proposed Project. Semi-structured *Focus Group Discussions* (FGDs) were held, where totally 877 participants (women comprise 48%) were from various regional and local government authorities. Representatives of different units of the regional and district governments' units participated, such as environment, forest management and forest recovery, transport, land reclamation and irrigation, land management, food security, agriculture as well as non-governmental stakeholders, like Water Users Associations, Pasture Users Groups/Unions, Water Basin Organizations, etc. As a supplementary source of information, *separate meetings with women* (kind of semi-structured FGDs) were conveyed in each of the targeted districts.

The *national stakeholder consultation* on the project design and components was held August 20, 2021. The *virtual public consultation* on the draft ESF instruments was held with key stakeholders from 10 districts in Dushanbe on September 3, 2021. *Additional field consultations* on the revised ESF instruments were conducted on October 25-27, 2021 in three target districts, including Rushon, Ayni and Qubodiyon.

2.3 Aspects of Social Assessment

2.3.1 Beneficiary Assessment

Assessment of the potential beneficiaries, based on primary data and available secondary data, comprising socio-economic profile of the project at national, regional and district, was undertaken in the assessment process, poor and vulnerable communities. The assessment covered current status of development in different aspects, local institutional and governance mechanisms and the local operational arrangements.

2.3.2 Stakeholder Analysis

Identifying stakeholders at different intervention levels, mapping their key expectations, expected impacts, issues and concerns as related to each stakeholder and the subgroups thereof.

2.3.3 Impact Assessment

Identifying positive and negative social impacts likely to occur for different sub-groups or beneficiaries as a result of project interventions; assessing and prioritize impacts based on their significance; and likelihood of measures (within the scope of the project) to minimize negative impacts and derive the maximum from positive impacts.

2.3.4 Institutional Analysis

Documenting the existing institutional and implementation arrangements, covering key actors, such as government departments, technical institutions, non-government agencies etc.

2.3.5 Risk Assessment and Analysis

The assessment and its analysis, from within and external to the project and specific measures required to address them. Identifying key issues to be addressed by the project and preparing a Social Management Framework (as a part of the ESMF) to address the same which includes; implementation arrangements, capacity building, awareness and application of information and education campaigns (IEC) etc.

2.3.6 Develop Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

Preparing a Monitoring and Evaluation System from social perspectives, based on the planned activities under the scope of the project.

2.3.7 Capacity Building Framework

Given that the objective is to mainstream environmental and social safeguards in planning and implementation, a robust capacity building plan for various levels of stakeholders would be prepared by the project.

2.3.8 Implementation Arrangements

Establish a clear understanding of the institutional requirements, roles and responsibilities for adopting and implementing the ESMF.

All the above have been dealt in depth in ESMF, SEP and RPF, we present in this report key salient features which have influenced the designing of the project.

2.4 Structure of the Report

This document consists of eight chapters, which provide guidelines for a framework for participation of all key stakeholder groups and solicit their contributions towards project design and delivery mechanisms. It describes how the identified key social development issues and social impacts assessed will be addressed by necessary measures that the project is expected to take up to ensure inclusion and addressing equity in accessing project benefits, strengthening decentralized governance system.

Chapter 1: Introduction and Project Overview

It introduces the project and gives an overview on project background, states the project development objectives and PDO indicators. It describes the project components and subcomponents. It also outlines the major project activities and planned approaches merged from social risks to be addressed.

Chapter 2: Social Assessment

This section describes the approach and methodology adopted in the assessment process and key stakeholders consulted during the process. It also includes the outline of the report structure.

Chapter 3: Administrative, Policy and Regulatory Framework

Relevant national and state acts and policies, legal framework and regulations that may apply during the implementation of the project are discussed in this section. It also covers the WB ESS provisions relevant to the project.

Chapter 4: Social Baseline

The social and economic characteristics of the country, regions and the target districts are discussed in this section to understand the social status of the project.

Chapter 5. Institutional Analysis

This section covers the existing institutional and implementation arrangements, covering key actors at the CA regional, national and local levels.

Chapter 6: Stakeholder Consultations

This section presents key stakeholders consulted and their concerns and expectations from the project in different aspects. This section basically presents stakeholders' perception and opinion, as well as the institutional analysis of engaged stakeholders at national, regional, district, sub-district and community levels.

Chapter 7: Social Management Framework

It provides the analysis of the expected positive and potential adverse impacts of the project on social aspects and presents the mitigation measures to be used to address them.

Chapter 8: Implementation Arrangements

The ESMF and SEP implementing optimal arrangements and required process flows at the project and sub-project levels are discussed in this section. It also describes the project-based GM structure and implementation.

3. Administrative, Policy and Regulatory Framework

In this section, some of the policies and legislations of the Government of Tajikistan are briefly discussed, that will have a bearing on the project. This is followed by a brief description of the project relevant laws, development programs and schemes being implemented by the Government of Tajikistan. Later, at the end of the section, the relevant World Bank Environmental and Social Standards are presented.

3.1. Key National Social Legal Provisions and Citizen Engagement

Law on Freedom of Information is underpinned by Article 25 of the Constitution, which states that governmental agencies, social associations and officials are required to provide each person with the possibility of receiving and becoming acquainted with documents that affect her or his rights and interests, except in cases anticipated by law.

Per the Law on Public Associations, a public association may be formed in one of the following organizational and legal forms: public organization, public movement, or a body of public initiative. Article 4 of this law establishes the right of citizens to found associations for the protection of common interests and the achievement of common goals. It outlines the voluntary nature of associations and defines citizens' rights to restrain from joining and withdrawing from an organization. August 2015 amendments to this legislation require NGOs to notify the Ministry of Justice about all funds received from international sources prior to using the funds.

Law on Public Meetings, Demonstrations and Rallies (Article 10) bans persons with a record of administrative offenses (i.e., non-criminal infractions) under Articles 106, 460, 479 and 480 of the Code for Administrative Offences from organizing gatherings. Article 12 of the Law establishes that the gathering organizers must obtain permission from local administration fifteen days prior to organizing a mass gathering.

Land Code contains basic provisions on land acquisition for public and state purposes. The Code allows the state to seize the land from land users for the needs of projects implemented in the interests of state and at the state scale, and describes methods, system and order of protection of rights and interests of persons whose land is subject for withdrawal for the purposes of the project and provides for the complex of compensatory measures to cover the land users' losses. The Regulation about an order of compensation of the land users' losses and losses of agricultural production, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan # 641, dd. 30th December 2011, establishes concrete and detailed order of reimbursement of the land users' losses.

Law on Water Users Associations defines the economic, organizational and legal basis for the activities of a water users association and is aimed at ensuring water conservation and efficient use of hydraulic structures in the service area.

Law on Physical and Legal Entity Addresses contains legal provisions on established information channels for citizens to file their complaints, requests and grievances. Article 14 of the Law sets the timeframes for handling grievances, which is 30 days from the date of receipt.

Labor Code prohibits forced labor (Article 8). The Labor Code also sets the minimum age at which a child can be employed as well as the conditions under which children can work (Articles 113, 67, and 174). The minimum employment age is 15, however, in certain cases of vocational training, mild work may be allowed for 14-year-olds (Article 174 of the Labor Code). In addition, there are some labor restrictions on what type of work can be done, and what hours of work are permissible by workers under the age of 18. Examples of labor restrictions include those between 14 and 15 cannot work more than 24 hours per week while those under 18 cannot work more than 35 hours per week; during the academic year, the maximum number of hours is half of this, 12 and 17.5 hours, respectively. These limitations are consistent with the

ILO Convention on Minimum Age. In addition, Law on Parents Responsibility for Children's Upbringing and Education makes parents responsible for ensuring their children not involved in heavy and hazardous work and they are attending school.

3.2. National Gender Policy and Legal Framework

The social and economic strategies of Tajikistan play crucial role in promoting gender equality and creating conditions necessary to achieve gender objectives formulated by SDGs. The National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan to 2030 and Mid-Term Development Strategy (2016-2020), unlike previous long-term and medium-term development strategies, contain 7 gender equality not just as a separate sub-section, but also define gender objectives and measures on their achievement in section on various sectors, for instance on effective governance, productive employment, improvement of business environment and the investment climate. Statistics Agency under the Office of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan actively develops gender statistics. In 2013, the Agency adopted its Program for the Development of Gender Statistics in the Republic of Tajikistan (2014-2015). It also introduced a webpage "Gender statistics" in its website, which has sections on legal and regulatory framework, analytical articles on gender issues, and database. In 2016, it added an additional page "Women Entrepreneurs" in this section, which is regularly updated.

The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan has taken a number of positive measures to promote gender equality. It particularly adopted the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence, State Program on Prevention of Domestic Violence in Tajikistan (2014-2023) and its Action Plan, ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and included amendments to the Land Code of RT aimed at ensuring equal access of women and men to land. Other measures include presidential grants allocated annually to support women entrepreneurs, as well as quotas for girls and boys from rural areas for admission to higher educational institutions, and so on. In 2014, the Government of Tajikistan adopted the National Action Plan of the Republic of Tajikistan to implement the recommendations of the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women along with the National Action Plan of the Republic of Tajikistan on implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 2122. In 2017, the Government established a governmental working group with a view to improving the national legislation on gender equality.

In line with the commitments related to Sustainable Development Goals implementation, while formulating and implementing gender policies, it is necessary to take into account the linkages between the three key priorities: 1) ensuring equal access to all types of resources (land, property, finance, education, information, etc.), 2) involving women in decision-making processes at all levels and across all sectors, 3) eliminating violence against women. Unfortunately, many of the programs that are being adopted do not take into account the existing problems in other sectors and, thus, do not use comprehensive measures to eliminate the causes of gender discrimination in these sectors. For example, overcoming obstacles to ensured gender equality in employment and mobility of women within the labor market depends directly on expanding access of women to education, acquisition of skills and knowledge, developing infrastructure for pre-school education and household services, transport communications¹.

Legislative, institutional and organizational frameworks for promoting actual equality between men and women are set in Tajikistan. However, effective implementation means, differentiated approaches depending on various target groups of women, means to empower women and girls in line with the Global Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals are poorly introduced.

¹ Third Shadow Report of NGOs of Tajikistan on implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 2018

The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan has stepped up political support and improvement of the legal framework in the field of gender policy, which include:

Name of Legal /Policy Act	Year
National Strategy for Enhancing the Role of Women in Tajikistan for 2011-2020";	2011
Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On Education;	2013
On the State Program for the Prevention of Domestic Violence in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2014-2023	2014
Action Plan of the State Program for the Prevention of Domestic Violence in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2014 - 2023	2014
The Law on Combating Human Trafficking and providing assistance to Victims of Human Trafficking	2014
The Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On the Protection of the Rights of the Child"	2015
Action Plan of the National Strategy for Enhancing the Role of Women in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2015-2020	2015
On the establishment and allocation of grants by the President of the Republic of Tajikistan to support and develop entrepreneurial activity among women for 2006-2025	2006
About the Concept of Family Development in the Republic of Tajikistan	2015

Implementation of national legislation on gender equality at all levels is an important condition for the full participation of women in life of society and will serve as an obligatory legal basis in all spheres of public life. Based on this provision, the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan instructed the Committee on the affairs of Women and Family under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and other ministries, departments and executive bodies of state power to develop and submit to the Government a draft National Strategy for Enhancing the Role of Women in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2021-2030, which was approved (30.04.2021 # 167).

The need to adopt the National Strategy for Enhancing the Role of Women in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2021-2030 is caused by the solution of a number of issues related to raising the status of women in society, including the intensification of their role, the lack of understanding by society of the need to ensure gender equality and the implementation of gender policy, the presence of stereotypes on the role and status of women in society, an imperfect legal framework, insufficient cooperation between state bodies and public organizations that protect the rights and interests of women, the presence of problems in the implementation of women's rights in the sphere of labor, economy, culture, politics and other spheres.

The Strategy defines the key directions of state policy on enhancing the role of women, it is aimed at implementing the principle of equality of rights and freedoms for men and women, creating equal opportunities for its implementation by women, ensuring equal representation of men and women in various spheres of activity, preventing and eradicating violence against women. The main goal of the Strategy is to create the necessary prerequisites and conditions for the full manifestation of the capacity of women in all spheres of social and economic life, the implementation of state gender policy, mechanisms for the implementation of constitutional guarantees of equality between men and women, the prevention and elimination of domestic violence, the development of women's entrepreneurship, and the improvement of women's education, ensuring their broad participation in public life and, thereby, ensuring sustainable development of the state.

3.3 National Sectoral Legal Framework

Tajikistan also has key policies and strategies which detail road maps for the country's short-term and long-

term development.

The National Development Strategy 2015-2030 prioritizes the development of “green economy,” and the Medium-term development program for 2016-2020 focuses on achieving the SDGs and adopting adaptation measures to climate change as transition to green economy. For the transition, forestry and agriculture are recognized as two of the key sectors. Some of the conditions identified for green economy include efficient economic management, careful use of natural resources and involvement of civil society institutions in monitoring, control and use of natural resources².

Table 1: Government regulations and state strategies³

#	Policy	Purpose	Responsible Authorities
1.	The Strategy for the Development of the Forest Sector for 2016-2030	Sustainable development of the forest sector to ensure a balance of ecological, economic and social functions of the forest, the implementation of which contributes to the solution of important aspects of the forest reform of Tajikistan.	Forestry Agency under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan
4.	Governmental Decree No. 793 validating the Program of Development of Gardening and Viticulture for 2016 – 2020. (2015)	Attraction of private sector investments is the key for the development of gardening and viticulture.	Multi-departmental
5.	Governmental Decree No. 724 Validating Programs of the Development of the Pasture of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2016 – 2020. (2015)	Improving the condition of grazing pastures and the provision of fodder crops (derived from seed). The role of Pasture User Units is described.	Ministry of Agriculture
6.	The National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period up to 2030	Strengthening forestry, agroforestry, co-management of forests, conservation of natural resources and management skills among resource users and supervisors	Multi-departmental, CEP

Social rights of citizens in environmental protection and monitoring are stated in below mentioned national Laws of the Republic of Tajikistan:

Sl. No.	Name of documents	Approval dates	Citizen engagement provisions
1	Law of the RT «On Environmental Protection»	2 August 2011.	The law defines the legal basis of state policy in the field of environmental protection and is aimed at ensuring resilient socio-economic development, guaranteeing human rights to a healthy and favorable environment, strengthening the rule of law, preventing the negative impact of economic and other activities on the environment, organizing the rational use of natural resources and ensuring environmental safety. Article 12 proclaims the right of citizens to live in a favorable environment and to be protected from negative environmental impacts. Citizens also have the right to

² NATIONAL REVIEW TOWARDS A «GREEN» ECONOMY IN TAJIKISTAN. Elaborated in preparation for the UN International Conference on Sustainable Development (RIO+20) <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1021tajikistan.pdf>

³ Tajikistan National Investment Plan for the Agriculture Sector Assessment of the Seed and Associated Systems of Tajikistan, 2020

			environmental information (Article 13), as well as to participate in developing, adopting, and implementing decisions related to environmental impacts (Article 13). The latter is assured by public discussion of drafts of environmentally important decisions and public ecological reviews. Public representative bodies have an obligation to take into consideration citizens' comments and suggestions.
2	Law of the RT «On environmental expertise»	16 April 2012	The law defines the principles and procedures of environmental expertise and is aimed at preventing harmful effects of planned economic and other activities on the environment and related social, economic, and other consequences of the implementation of the object of environmental expertise. The law defines two SESs, including governmental and non-governmental. The public/non-governmental ecological expertise of economic activities or other activities, the implementation of which can negatively impact the environment or population living in the relevant area, can be carried out by any public organization and citizen. They have the right to send the proposals to the responsible government bodies concerning environmental issues of implementing planned activities and to receive information on the results of the conducted SEE from relevant responsible bodies. The materials reflecting the public expertise delivered to the experts' commission should be taken into consideration in the preparation of the conclusion of SEE and decision making on the realization of the SEE object. Public ecological expertise is carried out under the state registration of application of public organizations. The registration can be done by local executive authorities (within seven days) in place where the expertise activities are planned. Public organizations, which are organizing the SEE, should inform the population of the initiation of the expertise and its results.
3	Law of the RT «On environmental monitoring»	25 March 2011	The law defines the organizational, legal, economic and social basis for environmental monitoring in the Republic of Tajikistan and regulates relations between public authorities, self-government bodies of settlements and villages, public associations and citizens in this area.
4	Law of the RT «On the protection and use of flora»	17 May 2004	The law establishes the principles of state policy of the Republic of Tajikistan in the field of protection and rational use of flora, defines the legal, economic and social framework in this area and is aimed at the conservation and reproduction of resources of flora.
5	Law of the RT «On animal world»	5 January 2008.	The law, regulating social relations in the field of protection, restoration and reasonable use of wildlife, establishes the legal, economic and social basis of the sector and is aimed

			at the protection and restoration of wildlife resources.
6	Law of the RT «On the collection, preservation and rational use of genetic resources of cultivated plants»	1 August 2012	The law establishes the legal framework for state policy on genetic resources of cultivated plants and their wild relatives, and regulates relations concerning their collection, conservation, research and rational use for the purpose of agricultural industry, food, environmental and biological security, research, breeding, educational activities, as well as the preservation of social, cultural and historical heritage for the present and future.

3.4. International Treaties and Obligations

Under the Republic of Tajikistan unified (monist) legal system, international agreements and treaties, once ratified or acceded to by the Government, have the same force as national legislation.

Tajikistan is party to several international environmental and social conventions and protocols. It has passed state laws to implement the terms of these international conventions, with the provision that, “If an international treaty to which Tajikistan is a party is inconsistent with this law, then the provisions of the international treaty shall prevail.”

International environmental conventions. In recognition of its global responsibilities, Tajikistan is a party to several international environmental and social conventions. The major ones are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Relevant International Environmental and Social Conventions

International Convention	Year of Accession
Rotterdam Convention on Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure;	1998
UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage	1997
Aarhus Convention (joined 2001); A related update is the Kiev Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers to the Convention on Access to Information on 21 May 2003.	2003
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;	
Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142)	1993
Convention on Minimum Age for Admission to Employment;	1993
Convention on Worst Forms of Child Labor	2005
Abolition of Forced Labor Convention	1999
Employment Policy Convention	1993
Labor Inspection Convention	2009

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child CRC	1993
Tripartite Consultation (International Labor Standards) Convention	2014
Occupational Safety and Health Convention	2009
Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW);	1993
International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.	2002

3.5 The Relevant World Bank Environmental and Social Standards

The World Bank Environmental and Social Framework sets out the World Bank’s commitment to sustainable development, through a Bank Policy and a set of Environmental and Social Standards that are designed to support Borrowers’ projects, with the aim of ending extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity.

The Environmental and Social Standards set out the requirements for Clients/Borrowers relating to the identification and assessment of environmental and social risks and impacts associated with projects supported by the Bank through Investment Project Financing. The Bank believes that the application of these standards, by focusing on the identification and management of environmental and social risks, will support Borrowers in their goal to reduce poverty and increase prosperity in a sustainable manner for the benefit of the environment and their citizens.

The standards will:

- (a) support Borrowers/Clients/Implementing Agencies in achieving good international practice relating to environmental and social sustainability;
- (b) assist Borrowers/Clients/Implementing Agencies in fulfilling their national and international environmental and social obligations; (c) enhance nondiscrimination, transparency, participation, accountability and governance;
- (d) enhance the sustainable development outcomes of projects through ongoing stakeholder engagement

There are ten Environmental and Social Standards, establish the standards that the Implementing Agencies and the projects have to meet through the project life cycle. The relevant ESSs to the Project are as follows:

ESS 1 - Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

ESS1 sets out the Client’s responsibilities for assessing, managing and monitoring environmental and social risks and impacts associated with each stage of a project supported by the Bank through Investment Project Financing, in order to achieve environmental and social outcomes consistent with the Environmental and Social Standards (ESSs).

The environmental and social assessment will be based on current information, including a description and delineation of the project and any associated aspects, and environmental and social baseline data at an appropriate level of detail sufficient to inform characterization and identification of risks and impacts and mitigation measures. The assessment will evaluate the project’s potential environmental and social risks and impacts, with a particular attention to those that may fall disproportionately on disadvantaged and/or

vulnerable social groups; examine project alternatives; identify ways of improving project selection, siting, planning, design and implementation in order to apply the mitigation hierarchy for adverse environmental and social impacts and seek opportunities to enhance the positive impacts of the project. The environmental and social assessment will include stakeholder engagement as an integral part of the assessment, in accordance with ESS10.

According to ESS1 the Client will manage environmental and social risks and impacts of the project throughout the project life cycle in a systematic manner, proportionate to the nature and scale of the project and the potential risks and impacts.

ESS 2 – Labor and Working Conditions

ESS2 recognizes the importance of employment creation and income generation in the pursuit of poverty reduction and inclusive economic growth. Borrowers can promote sound worker-management relationships and enhance the development benefits of a project by treating workers in the project fairly and providing safe and healthy working conditions. ESS2 applies to project workers including fulltime, part-time, temporary, seasonal and migrant workers.

The Borrower will develop and implement written labor management procedures applicable to the project. These procedures will set out the way in which project workers will be managed, in accordance with the requirements of national law and this ESS. The procedures will address the way in which this ESS will apply to different categories of project workers including direct workers, and the way in which the Borrower will require third parties to manage their workers in accordance with ESS2.

ESS 4 – Community Health and Safety

This ESS recognizes that project activities, equipment, and infrastructure can increase community exposure to risks and impacts. In addition, communities that are already subjected to impacts from climate change may also experience an acceleration or intensification of impacts due to project activities.

ESS4 addresses the health, safety, and security risks and impacts on project-affected communities and the corresponding responsibility of Borrowers to avoid or minimize such risks and impacts, with particular attention to people who, because of their particular circumstances, may be vulnerable.

ESS 5 – Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use, and Involuntary Resettlement

This ESS recognizes that project-related land acquisition and restrictions on land use can have adverse impacts on communities and persons. Project-related land acquisition or restrictions on land use may cause physical displacement (relocation, loss of residential land or loss of shelter), economic displacement (loss of land, assets or access to assets, leading to loss of income sources or other means of livelihood), or both. The term “involuntary resettlement” refers to these impacts. Resettlement is considered involuntary when affected persons or communities do not have the right to refuse land acquisition or restrictions on land use that result in displacement.

This ESS applies to permanent or temporary physical and economic displacement resulting from the following types of land acquisition or restrictions on land use undertaken or imposed in connection with project implementation:

- (a) Land rights or land use rights acquired or restricted through expropriation or other compulsory procedures in accordance with national law;
- (b) Land rights or land use rights acquired or restricted through negotiated settlements with property owners or those with legal rights to the land, if failure to reach settlement would have resulted in expropriation or other compulsory procedures;
- (c) Restrictions on land use and access to natural resources that cause a community or groups within a community to lose access to resource usage where they have traditional or customary tenure, or

- recognizable usage rights. This may include situations where legally designated protected areas, forests, biodiversity areas or buffer zones are established in connection with the project;
- (d) Relocation of people without formal, traditional, or recognizable usage rights, who are occupying or utilizing land prior to a project specific cut-off date;
 - (e) Displacement of people as a result of project impacts that render their land unusable or inaccessible;
 - (f) Restriction on access to land or use of other resources including communal property and natural resources such as marine and aquatic resources, timber and non-timber forest products, fresh water, medicinal plants, hunting and gathering grounds and grazing and cropping areas;
 - (g) Land rights or claims to lands or resources relinquished by individuals or communities without full payment of compensation; and
 - (h) Land acquisition or land use restrictions occurring prior to the project, but which were undertaken or initiated in anticipation of, or in preparation for, the project.

Experience and research indicate that physical and economic displacement, if unmitigated, may give rise to severe economic, social and environmental risks: production systems may be dismantled; people face impoverishment if their productive resources or other income sources are lost; people may be relocated to environments where their productive skills are less applicable and the competition for resources greater; community institutions and social networks may be weakened; kin groups may be dispersed; and cultural identity, traditional authority, and the potential for mutual help maybe diminished or lost. For these reasons, involuntary resettlement should be avoided. Where involuntary resettlement is unavoidable, it will be minimized and appropriate measures to mitigate adverse impacts on displaced persons (and on host communities receiving displaced persons) will be carefully planned and implemented.

ESS6: Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources

This ESS recognizes that protecting and conserving biodiversity and sustainably managing living natural resources are fundamental to sustainable development. Impacts on biodiversity can therefore often adversely affect the delivery of ecosystem services. ESS6 recognizes the importance of maintaining core ecological functions of habitats, including forests, and the biodiversity they support.

All habitats support complexities of living organisms and vary in terms of species diversity, abundance and importance. This ESS also addresses sustainable management of primary production and harvesting of living natural resources.

This standard aims to safeguard natural habitats and their biodiversity; avoid significant conversion or degradation of critical natural habitats, and to ensure sustainability of services and products which natural habitats provide to human society.

ESS 10 – Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure

This ESS recognizes the importance of open and transparent engagement between the Borrower and project stakeholders as an essential element of good international practice. Effective stakeholder engagement can improve the environmental and social sustainability of projects, enhance project acceptance, and make a significant contribution to successful project design and implementation.

The client will engage with stakeholders throughout the project life cycle, commencing such engagement as early as possible in the project development process and in a timeframe that enables meaningful consultations with stakeholders on project design. The nature, scope and frequency of stakeholder engagement will be proportionate to the nature and scale of the project and its potential risks and impacts. Stakeholder engagement is an inclusive process conducted throughout the project life cycle. Where properly designed and implemented, it supports the development of strong, constructive and responsive relationships that are important for successful management of a project’s environmental and social risks. Stakeholder engagement is most effective when initiated at an early stage of the project development process and is an

integral part of early project decisions and the assessment, management and monitoring of the project's environmental and social risks and impacts.

In consultation with the Bank, the Borrower will develop and implement a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) proportionate to the nature and scale of the project and its potential risks and impacts.

4. Social Baseline

4.1 Population

The Republic of Tajikistan is referred to the countries with rapidly growing population; it has reached 9,5 mln people (from them 49% are women, 40,6% - children under 18, and 66% young adults under 30) in 2020.⁴ Average number of resident populations in Tajikistan has increased from 6,1 mln. people (2000) up to 9,5 mln. people (2020), i.e., by 56 percent. Around 74 percent of the population resides in rural areas. Tajikistan population is very young; for the past 70 years the population number increased in 6 times. Annual population growth rate in the country varies within 2.1 – 2.5%. According to latest estimates, average age of the population is 25, and median age is 22.4.⁵

Table 3: Population of the provinces of Tajikistan according to census results

Name	Capital	Area A (km ²)	Population Census (C) 1979-01-12	Population Census (C) 1989-01-12	Population Census (C) 2000-01-20	Population Census (C) 2010-09-21	Population (C) 2021-01-01 ⁶
Tajikistan	Dushanbe	141,400	3,801,357	5,109,000	6,127,493	7,564,502	9,506,300
Khatlon	Bokhtar	24,700	1,220,949	1,701,380	2,150,136	2,677,251	3,425,500
Dushanbe	Dushanbe	100	500,966	605,135	561,895	724,844	880,800
Gorno-Badakhshan	Khorugh	62,900	126,783	160,860	206,004	205,949	231,400
Districts of Republic Subordination		28,500	757,976	1,083,043	1,337,479	1,722,908	2,215,500
Sughd	Khujand	25,200	1,194,683	1,558,158	1,871,979	2,233,550	2,753,100

Source: TajStat, 2021

Project areas/districts have been selected based on a combination of criteria. An initial pre-screening of districts has been conducted using the following criteria - poverty incidence, potential for integrated landscape restoration (incorporating pasture, agriculture, water, forestry, biodiversity), regional and transboundary corridors, and complementarity with government and donor-funded initiatives potential project sites fall in the following river basins: a) Zarafshon basin covering three districts – Ayni, Panjekent, and K. Mastchoh (in Sughd oblast, bordering Uzbekistan); b) greater Panj covering four districts – Vanj, Rushon, Shughnon, and Murghab (in Gorno Badakhshan Autonomous oblast, bordering the Kyrgyz Republic and Afghanistan); and c) Lower Kofarnihon covering three districts – Shahrituz, Nosir Khosrov, Qubodiyon (in Khatlon oblast, bordering Uzbekistan and Afghanistan). Below is the number of population by target districts:

Table 4: Population by Targeted Districts

Region/ Basin	District	Population	Females		Youth ages 14-29		Populati on Density	# of jamoats	# of villages
			in number	in %	in number	in %			
Sughd/ Syr Darya	Ayni	85033	42462	50%	28700	34%	16	8	62
	Panjekent	311270	151294	49%	104600	34%	84.1	14	
	K. Mastchoh	26651	13171	49%	9883	37%	7.1	2	54
Khatlon/	Shahrituz	133000	66100	50%	28454	21%	86.7	5	

⁴ TajStat, 01.01.2021

⁵ <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/tajikistan-population/>

⁶ TajStat, Annual publication on the total number of population as of 01.01.2021, page 11
https://stat.wv.tj/posts/August2021/macmuai_sumorai_aholi_01.01.2021_.pdf

Vakhsh	Nosir Khisrov	40643	20305	50%	15876	39%	49.1	3	31
	Qubodiyon	188340	96054	51%	60300	32%	104.5	7	43
GBAO/ Panj	Vanj	37078	17313	47%	18611	50%	7.8	6	57
	Rushon	26214	10369	40%	4930	19%	7.2	7	43
	Shughnon	39781	19410	49%	16228	41%	0.11	7	65
	Murghab	15895	8012	50%	4745	30%	0.4	6	11
TOTAL	10	903905	444490	49%	292327	32%		65	366

Source: District Khukumats, 2021

Based on the table above the largest densely populated districts are Panjekent, Qubodiyon and Shahrituz. The least populated mountainous districts are Murghab, Rushon and Kuhistoni Mastchoh. Female population in target districts is 49 percent in average, while youth population is 32 percent in average.

4.2 Economy

Three-fourth of population of Tajikistan reside in rural areas and the agriculture employs over 70% of population. This means the main livelihood for many people is agriculture and their income much depends on agricultural production (see Table 5 below). Exception is Murgab district, where the key area of local economy is trade, the other districts mainly engaged in agriculture and construction.

Table 5. Economic Capacity of Target Districts.

Region/ Basin	District	Key economic producing areas	Number of enterprises (cotton/food processing)	# of another SMEs
Sughd/ Syr Darya	Ayni	agriculture/construction	11	
	Panjekent	agriculture/industry	Not available	4347
	K. Mastchoh	agriculture/construction	1	15
Khatlon/Vakhsh	Shahrituz	agriculture/construction	5	n/available
	Nosir Khisrov	agriculture/construction	1736	3
	Qubodiyon	agriculture/construction	n/a	n/a
GBAO/ Panj	Vanj	agriculture/construction	2	20
	Rushon	Agriculture	1401	2
	Shughnon	Agriculture	18	54
	Murghab	Trade	0	12

Source: District Khukumats, 2021

The limited natural resources, particularly landscape creating tense situation in the rural Tajikistan. Latest incidents in Tajik-Kyrgyz border is one of the examples, where the root cause of the conflict is distribution and benefiting from natural resources. In the medium and long-term, the overexploitation of the pastures,

water resources, forests and other types of landscape at the targeted districts further deteriorates their restoration and sustainable use. The ten target districts under the present Project grow various varieties of crops, such as grain, potato, cotton, vegetable and fruits. In order to use landscape and water resources, associations of dehkan farmers, PUAs and WUAs should be established, where do not exist, or to strengthen their functioning, if they already operate.

Table 6. Statistical data on targeted districts, by population, household, pastures and crop land

#	Watershed	District	Number of jamoats	Number of villages	Population	Households	Women led HH	Women led HH, %	Pastures, ha	Pasture per HH, in ha	Crop land, ha	Crop land per HH, in ha
1	Kofarnigan	Qubodiyon	7	45	165241	30996	949	3%	23431.2	0.76	12271.1	0.40
2	Kofarnigan	Shahritus	5	40	115066	16878	1984	12%	54169	3.21	9045	0.54
3	Kofarnigan	N.Khusrav	3	27	35714	7660	0	0%	35824.15	4.68	5241.27	0.68
4	Zarafshan	Ayni	7	60	78314	17402	1694	10%	25398.41	1.46	2218.64	0.13
5	Zarafshan	Kuhistoni Mastchoh	2	21	15289	2517	267	11%	1905	0.76	1790	0.71
6	Zarafshan	Panjakent	14	135	264809	47241	4410	9%	24677.333	0.52	8897.4	0.19
7	Panj	Vanj	6	58	35493	4245	196	5%	1325.53	0.31	1535.91	0.36
8	Panj	Rushon	7	42	26210	5375	716	13%	10303.51	1.92	1445.9	0.27
9	Panj	Shugnon	5	48	30499	4921	561	11%	1062.59	0.22	1018.84	0.21
10	Panj	Murgob	6	19	15895	3567	610	17%	85025	23.84	30	0.01
Total			62	495	782,530	140,802	11,387	8%	263122	1.87	43494.06	0.31

Source: District Khukumats, 2021

The farms of Kuhistoni Mastchoh, Vanj and Shugnon districts have scarce agricultural land, respectively, 0.02ha, 0.02ha and 0.03ha. It shows first the limited access to land resources and secondly the limited availability of landscape resources. In the long run, the mentioned districts will face further deterioration in their production capacity, because they will not be able to expand their lands for farming purposes.

According to the Table above, the pastures per household in Panjakent, Shugnon and Vanj on average is 0.35 ha per household, which indicates the scarcity of the pastures in the mentioned districts. One can also see the limited land resources in Rushon, Shugnon, and Murgob, where on average 0.17 ha of cropland is available. To alleviate this, landscape restoration, recovery of new lands, better land management are critical to prevent worsening the situation.

Raising pasture yields depends vitally on a proper system of pasture management with the necessary resources to ensure maintenance and rehabilitation of pastures. The pasture management system in Tajikistan remains largely unchanged since Soviet times with the exception that the lowest rung in the management system (corporate farms) no longer has adequate resources for pasture upkeep. Although this system seems to cover many of the functions of a pasture management system, it is not well adapted to administering and maintaining a public good such as pastures in the post-independence period when over 90 percent of animals are held in household farms.

Payment for pasture use is made yearly in the form of a flat land tax. The proceeds of the land tax are distributed according to the tax laws of the country. Tax proceeds for use of pastures and hayfields are used for the protection and rehabilitation of pastures, for maintenance of soil fertility, for monitoring of pastures, etc. Pasture user groups/units are being established through donor supported activities, however no PUUs are in place in the target districts, despite of the high livestock rates in target districts. The nature of the pastures in the basins is mainly determined by the type and number of grazed livestock. These data are shown in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Livestock Capacity of Target Districts

Region/ Basin	District	Cattle, heads	Sheep/Goats, heads	Horses, heads	Yaks, heads	Pasture/livestock Management Plans Yes/NO
Sughd/ Syr Darya	Ayni	32514	131869	197		commission for the regulation of pasture use
	Panjekent	83784	198276	909	64	No
	K. Mastchoh	142751	126824	265	905	No
Khatlon /Vakhsh	Shahrituz	42118	87054	1090	n/a	
	Nosir Khisrov	18580	44412	455	n/a	
	Qubodiyon	49078	114381	1256	n/a	
GBAO/ Panj	Vanj	15576	37400	7	n/a	
	Rushon	10379	44193	3	873	No
	Shughnon	20261	34840	27	2560	No
	Murghab	20559	82388	72	20559	No

Source: District Khukumats, 2021

As the data above shows, the selected districts for the project are characterized by a high livestock population. At the same time, the density of livestock is higher in the districts of the Syrdarya basin and less in the Pyanj (GBAO). This specificity determines the state of pastures in terms of its yield, nutritional value of forage crops and the seasonality of pasture use. A characteristic feature of the pastures of the Syrdarya basin is that Panjakent hosts all types of pastures, and Kuhistoni Mastchoh only summer ones. There is no year-round pasture in all districts. The district of Panjekent has cattle driving tracks and recreation areas. The vast grazing areas of the Vakhsh river basin refer to the winter, and the Pyanj river basin - to the summer pastures.

4.3 Food Security

Tajikistan imports approximately 70 percent of its food due to insufficient domestic food production.⁷ Imports of wheat and barley mainly come from Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation. Imports accounted for 58% of Tajikistan's domestic wheat requirements and 81% of overall food consumption for 2012-2013. Without significant investments, the lack of arable land, a growing population and an insufficient domestic supply Tajikistan's dependence on food imports is likely to rise. High food prices in the last years have affected rural communities in Tajikistan significantly.⁸

Tajikistan has the highest malnutrition rate among the former Soviet republics (WFP 2017). In Tajikistan, about 18 percent of all children under 5 years are stunted, according to the most recent DHS (2017). Stunting

⁷ Tajikistan: Nutrition Profile, USAID, 2018

⁸ Tajikistan: Nutrition Profile, USAID, 2019

increases with age, peaking at 34 percent among children age 24–35 months. In general, rural children and children born to mothers with little education are more likely to be stunted. There is large regional variation in the prevalence of stunting, ranging from 19 percent in Dushanbe, to 32 percent in GBAO.

4.4 Poverty and Vulnerability

The poverty rate has improved during last two decades in Tajikistan declining from 53% in 2007 to 31% in 2015⁹. According to the Household Budget Survey (HBS) the national poverty rate dropped to around 30 percent in 2017. According to the official poverty estimates for 2015, Dushanbe has the lowest poverty rate in Tajikistan (20 percent) followed by Sughd (22 percent) while Khatlon (36 percent), DRS (37 percent) and GBAO (39 percent) can be deemed far poorer regions. Poverty and extreme poverty rates are much higher among rural (35 percent poor and 20 percent extremely poor) than urban populations (23 percent poor and 11 percent extremely poor). In addition, the poverty reduction rate since 2012 has been slower in rural areas than in urban areas. Overall, about 76 percent of Tajikistan’s poor population lives in rural settlements¹⁰.

Despite of the progress made in the social sector the country is facing challenges. Such challenges affect rural areas (the targeted districts) two-fold. Remoteness, prone to natural and man-made disasters, severe weather, poor health and education infrastructure cause additional bottlenecks to the targeted districts. Looking at such diverse range of challenges demonstrated, one can conclude that multidimensional poverty is more prevalent in the country than monetary poverty.

4.5 Employment and migration

Employment in Tajikistan is another socio-economic issue, provided the low-value wage in public sector and relatively higher paid jobs in private sector without proper social protection package. In rural areas of the country, informal employment and/or self-employment is also widespread, which means the risk to job insecurity is high. According to the official data collected by PO Znaniye from selected districts, which are summarized in below table, the unemployment rate is not high in eight out of ten districts.

High unemployment rates recorded in Kuhistoni Mastchoh and Murghob districts, constituting 15% and 25 % respectively (see Table 8 below). Available data indicates the large proportion of population migrating to other countries, particularly the selected districts of GBAO, where on average, migrants constitute 20% of the total population.

Table 8: Migration and employment data by the districts, people

Region/ Basin	District	Population	# of households	# of female headed HHs	% of female headed HHs	# of migrants	migrants, in %	# of employed people	# of females employed	# of unemployed	unemployed, in %	# of female unemployed	% of unemployed female of total unemployed
Sughd/ Syrdarya	Ayni	78314	17402	1694	10%								
	Panjekent	264809	98768		0%	3557	1.34%	5463	1911	1911	0.72%		
	K. Mastchoh	15289	4364	482	11%	356	2.33%	7560	3628	2150	14.06%	1032	48%

⁹ National Development Strategy of Tajikistan for 2016-2030. Page 14.

¹⁰ WFP (2019). Vulnerability and Resilience Atlas. Page 20.

Khatlon/ Vakhsh	Shahrituz	115066	26210	x		x		64253	18105	x		x	
	Nosir Khisrov	35714	8781	4900	56%	3552	9.95%	7642	3056	479	1.34%	56	12%
	Qubodiyon	165241	30996	949	3%	15034	9.10%	6311	2227	298	0.18%	x	
GBAO/ Panj	Vanj	35493	4261	x		4411	12.43%	14069	2753	2753	7.76%	645	23%
	Rushon	26210	5382	716	13%	6017	22.96%	7801	x	371	1.42%	138	37%
	Shughnon	30499	6135	725	12%	8003	26.24%	11270	720	417	1.37%		
	Murghab	15895	3666	644	18%	2636	16.58%	3185	1787	3986	25.08 %	2132	53%
TOTAL/AVERAGE:					5%	43566	5.57%	12755	1236	1.58	4003	32%	
								4	34187	5			

Source: District Khukumats, 2021

4.6 Gender Equality

In Tajikistan, half of the country's population are women. Therefore, achieving sustainable development in Tajikistan cannot be achieved without eliminating gender inequality, expanding the opportunities for women to exercise their rights, ensuring gender equality, and eliminating the key causes of gender discrimination. The basis of progress towards sustainable development and the achievement of de facto equality of women and men should be the expansion of the economic, political and social opportunities of women, the attitude towards women not only as a vulnerable group, but also as active participants in the transformations in society.

According to the Gender Gap Index of Global Report on Gender Equality, World Economic Forum¹¹ in 2021, Tajikistan is ranked 125 out of 156 countries in Global Rankings with overall score 0.65, with scoring lowest on women's economic participation and political empowerment:

- Educational Attainment: 0.94 (global average 0.95)
- Health and Survival: 0.96 (global average 0.95)
- Economic participation and opportunity: 0.57 (global average 0.58)
- Political Empowerment: 0.11 (global average 0.21)

Although, globally, Tajikistan received an average score 0.65, at the regional level among the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, Tajikistan is at the very bottom of the Global Ranking.

The Committee of Women and Family Affairs, being the central executive body, implements a state policy to protect the rights and interests of women and the family, creating equal conditions for the realization of their rights, achieving gender equality, expanding participation of women in solving socioeconomic problems, and management of state and public affairs. The Committee on Women and Family Affairs is of great importance in improving gender legislation. It is important to emphasize that the Constitution of the

¹¹The Report of 2021 covers 156 countries and ranks them according to the gap between women and men in four areas: health, education, economic participation and political empowerment to gauge the state of gender equality in a country. The report measures women's disadvantage as compared to men.

Republic of Tajikistan lays the foundation for the development of anti-discrimination legislation. In addition, the National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period up to 2030 contributes to the further development of gender legislation in the country.

This broad policy and legal framework for gender equality demonstrates the Government's commitment to Republic of Tajikistan implement the provisions of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and establish in Republic of Tajikistan legal framework for realizing gender equality in practice. It should be noted that in recent years it has become a tradition within the framework of international and national trade, economic and investment forums to hold individual events dedicated to women's entrepreneurship, in cooperation with business associations and development partners.

To improve women's access to economic resources, the Decree of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan "On the allocation of presidential grants for the development of entrepreneurial activity among women for the period 2011-2015" was adopted, the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan "On the establishment and allocation of grants of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan to support and develop entrepreneurial activity of women for 2016-2020", Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan "On the establishment and allocation of grants of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan to support and develop entrepreneurial activity of women for 2021-2025". Annually 2 million somoni are allocated from the state budget for the implementation of this program and strengthening the capacity of ministries and departments.

Despite the efforts of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and public associations to promote women to leadership positions and state guarantees outlined in the Law on State Guarantees, men dominate in decision-making structures. Representation of women in leadership positions and in public authorities is still minor. Women-managers are concentrated mainly in the lower and middle levels of the government. Representation of women in the Parliament in 2018 was about 19%, there are 22% of women - civil servants.¹²

According to the results of the 2020 elections, 8 women or 25.8 % were elected in the Majlisi Milli Majlisi Oli (Parliament) and 15 people or 23.8 % in the Majlisi Namoyandagon (Assembly of Representatives) the Lower Chamber, which is almost 6 % more than in the previous elections. The number of women in the Majlis of People's Deputies in the city of Dushanbe is 41.5 %, in the Khatlon region - about 35 %, in the Sughd region - more than 33 %, the GBAO - over 34 %, and in cities and districts of republican subordination - about 30 %.

As of January 1, 2021, out of 19,210 civil servants, 4,485, or 23.4 %, are women¹³. Currently, only one woman holds the post of the Minister in the Ministry of Labor, Migration and Employment of the Republic of Tajikistan and one woman is the Head of Executive Apparatus of President.

Existing segregation in the specialties that girls acquire in universities is not helpful to ensure increase of women in the government. With respect to specialties demanded in the government, there is an unequivocal prevalence of men. Share of girls involved in pedagogical specialties in higher educational facilities is up to 75.3%, 64.8% - in higher vocational educational facilities. In higher educational facilities within law faculties there are - 19%, share of girls in economic facilities is 28%, there are about 6% of girls in secondary vocational facilities. The lowest percentage of girls is enrolled in agriculture: 3% in secondary vocational schools, and slightly more - 5% in universities.

Gender stereotypes play negative role in the promotion of women to managerial positions, it is considered

¹² Ibid

¹³ Source - Committee on Women and Family Affairs under the Government of Tajikistan

that only men can lead, whereas women shall perform. Measures aimed to trigger public discussions in state media related to the new roles of men and women in society are poorly implemented.

Looking back in times, low salaries and the scarcity of jobs in rural Tajikistan used to drive over 800,000 people, mostly men, to migrate out of the country in search of employment. Over 95% of such migration is to the Russian Federation. Such high levels of male out migration resulted in substantial increase in women's responsibilities in agriculture, in addition to managing household tasks. Women's participation in the labor markets of formal and informal jobs is mainly due to multiple demands on their time and energy where no family, community, or state-run support services exist. Informal jobs are those not registered or properly accounted and do not provide an official working status or social protection (pensions and social support for children); they do, however, provide some flexibility and additional income, which is at times the main source of household income. This flexible and informal labor supply seemed to suit many production businesses that need low-paid workers, specially, agriculture. The outmigration of males in the agriculture sector led to increased involvement of female labor -- an increase in women's participation rates in the agriculture sector, either as self-employed or as agricultural wage workers.

The **role of Tajik women in agriculture**, thus, falls under three categories: (i) agricultural wage or daily workers, (ii) women managing kitchen gardens, and (iii) Dehkan (family-based farm) farmers. These roles may overlap, especially the role of women as caretakers, small agricultural producers within their homes, and visible role as wage or daily workers that are often not recognized in official statistical reports. In 2018, 69% of women in Tajikistan were officially employed in the agriculture sector, compared to 41% of men. Yet, based on subjective perceptions of study respondents as wage or daily workers, women make up over 80% of agricultural labor.¹⁴

Despite women's prominent role in agricultural production and, indeed, the feminization of the sector, there is little evidence that women have become empowered through it. A particular concern is the serious underrepresentation of women either as agricultural title owners or decision makers. While most agricultural workers are women (75%), the number of women-headed dehkan farms is significantly lower compared to men.

Table 9. Women Headed Dehkan Farms in Tajikistan (%)

Years	Number of dehkan farms	Share of dehkan farms headed (%)	
		Men	Women
2010	37958	88,8	11,2
2011	57372	89,4	10,6
2012	58313	89,7	10,3
2013	73806	92,2	7,8
2014	87594	98,0	8,0
2015	108035	87,0	13,0
2016	145107	78,6	21,4
2017	164631	80,8	19,2
2018	172668	81,3	18,7

Source: TajStat, Gender indicators of production activity of dehkan farms for 2010-2018

According to state official statistics, in 2015, 13% of dehkan farms were headed by women. It is noteworthy that over the past five years (2010-2014) the trend has been negative. However, in 2016, the share of women increased by 8,4%. Nevertheless, in the following years (2017-2018) there was again the tendency to the

¹⁴ A Study of Women's Role in Irrigated Agriculture in the Lower Vakhsh River Basin, Tajikistan, ADB, 2020

slight decline.¹⁵ Moreover, usually women head smaller dekhkan farms, where the number of participants does not exceed 10 people. This automatically results in lower crop rates.

Despite high participation in agriculture, women suffer from limited access to key resources such as land, credit and livestock, as well as information including technologies and management practices. These characteristics are similar to that of such developing countries where agriculture is underperforming. The jobs women hold have little protection, security, or earnings. Higher female participation is a sign of a wider spectrum of labor opportunities as well as greater sensitivities to economic, social, and political events and the growth of women's power as decision makers.

Access to Land. In Tajikistan, access to land has a specific legal meaning. There is no private land ownership, but individuals have the right to use land through land tenure. In this gender profile, "ownership" of land refers to land use rights that are conveyed to individuals whose names are included on land certificates and licenses. Rural households typically have small plots, or kitchen gardens, close to the house, and may also have access to other types of land plots, for example, independently held farmland (Dekhan farms) or presidential lands (land that was transferred to rural households through presidential decrees, in order to bolster the size of garden plots that were smaller than the national minimum). Although there has been significant gender sensitive reform of the Land Code and efforts to improve women's access to land in practice, the prevalence of traditions and customs mean that land certificates are most often registered only in the name of the male head of household. Women's lack of access to land is underpinned by several forms of inequality. Women often lack information about their rights to land as members of collective farms or about the process of land registration. Other women do not have the means, either financial or in terms of time resources, to undertake the registration process.

Despite their dominating role in agriculture, rural women lack access to land, finances, knowledge, and production inputs. Women do not have equal access to land in terms of land size. Legally, men and women have equal access to land,¹⁶ but actual possession by women is very low. Women have bureaucratic barriers in validating their land certificates and obtaining access to their land plots. Women are not excluded from possessing land in legal terms; however, in practice, they may be restricted in accessing and managing land, water, and other agricultural services. Some women received their land shares through the de-collectivization process or inherited from their parents. However, not all were able to get full rights to use the land. Many women still have their certificates with the farm manager who has the full right to decide on production and receive the benefit. The shareholders can legally take out their land from the large collective farms, but there are many uncertainties as to which land plot will be provided and obstacles in registering as entrepreneurs or Dehkan farmers.

Access to Water. Lack of access to land is often a fundamental cause of women's limited access to water. Thus, land reforms that distribute the right of land tenure among heads of farms or permanent agricultural workers (who are mostly men), result in women having fewer real rights to water, even though at the legislative level there is equal. Even if women have a legitimate right to land, cultural norms often impede their real control over the land and water resources, which are essential economic capital for further development, access to which determines the ability to participate in decision-making processes.

For rural women, the Water Users Association of Tajikistan (WUA) is one of the most important social assets, since they regulate the use of water for irrigation. Traditionally, irrigation water control is the "male"

¹⁵ According to information received from the Committee for Land Resources Management and Geodesy of the Republic of Tajikistan in 2018, there were 180 thousand dekhkan farms in Tajikistan, of which more than 30 thousand farms are women (16.7%).

¹⁶ "The economy of Tajikistan shall be based on various forms of ownership. The state shall guarantee freedom of economic activities, entrepreneurship, equality of rights, and the protection of all forms of ownership including private ownership [Article 12]...Everyone shall have the right to ownership and inheritance.... [Article 32]." Government of Tajikistan. 1994. Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan (amended 2003).

field of activity, and women are responsible for managing domestic water. Women, as a rule, do not actively participate in WUAs, even in regions with high levels of male migration and despite the significant role that women play in agriculture, including on farms and gardens. The absence of men in many rural areas, the increase in the number of female-headed households, and the “traditional and religious separation of women from other non-relatives” has created a situation in which women have to take a more active role in water management unofficially. According to data obtained from ALRI, in 2021 out of 347 WUAs, only 7 women are managing WUAs across the country.¹⁷

Women Role in Forestry. The gender aspect of forestry is not entirely understood. Sex-disaggregated data on employment in leskhozoes (forestry departments) and other enterprises engaged in forest products is limited and contradictory, possibly due to the use of various research methods. The Forest Sector Development Strategy stated the gender imbalance in employment in the forest industry; 92 % of employees are men. According to the FAO Forest Resource Assessment in 2008, there were only 23 women (2%) in the total number of employees (1,002) working in public forest institutions. Labor market statistics for 2015 show that the total number of people employed in “forestry” was 1,700, of which 200 (or 12%) were women¹⁸. According to latest statistics from leskhoz the number of employees decreased to 1,400, of which 170 (or 12%) are women¹⁹.

Women’s almost invisible role in forestry enterprises and research institutions does not mean that they are not engaged in forest activities in other ways. Rural women spend a significant amount of time collecting firewood for domestic fuel. In comparison, male household heads are usually responsible for buying firewood. Ecological organizations have noted that widespread deforestation has resulted in women and children spending more time collecting wood. In the case of some remote villages, women and children have to travel 2 to 4 kilometres for fuel, sometimes spending the night in the field. As a rule, women in forest villages engage in the informal collection of non-timber forest products, for home consumption and for sale, and this pattern is likely to be replicated across Tajikistan. In 2013, the sale of nontimber forest products, combined with ecosystem services, was estimated to value almost six million somoni. Dedicated research is needed for an enhanced understanding of the ways in which both women and men are engaged in the processing and sale of forest products.²⁰

Pasture Management. One of the most important issues facing women is limited recognition of their role in raising livestock, or the ways in which the roles are divided along gender lines. Since women have more limited access to land generally, it stands to reason that they also more constrained in accessing pastures. While women are well represented in PUUs (46.7% of all members), they are less visible in management roles. Fewer than a third of PUU management positions are held by women (31.4%), and there are only 7 female PUU leaders in total.²¹ Women’s success in raising livestock is dependent on their access to information and level of knowledge about running a farming enterprise, and their access to finance and to other key resources, such as veterinary and extension services and training.

Decision Making at Households. Conventionally, males conduct all the decision-making within Tajik households. However, due to male outmigration, women have become de facto heads of the household and decision makers. Land plots may be left to be operated by female heads, given for use of close relatives or rented out. In some cases, males formalize the land rights in the name of their wives to prevent additional problems during their absence. Male respondents assume that authorities may treat female farmers better, especially if the actual land rights owner is a seasonal labor outmigrant. This arrangement may be

¹⁷ Data obtained from ALRI in August, 2021

¹⁸ Labor Market 2016. Agency for Statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan

¹⁹ Data obtained from Leskhoz in August, 2021

²⁰ National Gender Profile - Tajikistan, FAO, 2016, <https://www.fao.org/3/i5766e/i5766E.pdf>

²¹ National Gender Profile - Tajikistan, FAO, 2016

considered beneficial to women, but men or other family members may still keep control and decision-making power. In practice, female Dehkan farmers make most of the production decisions alone or with the support of male family members, especially on buying quality seeds and fertilizers. At the same time, intra-household hierarchies among female members exist. Elder women are best positioned to make decisions that are accepted by other household members.

Access to Financial Services. Rural women are limited in their access to financial services and, except for those who own a farm (with a legal status), most do not have bank accounts. Some families with labor migrants use local formal and informal individual operators to transfer money. The reasons for families using such operators are related to accessibility and swiftness of transfers. If such solutions are not available locally, people may travel to the village or town centers to make the transfers via a bank branch.

As an alternative, women from the same neighborhood (mahalla), groups of relatives, or wage workers often form self-support groups, which help to accumulate necessary funds for urgent expenses. Such informal financial instruments allow women receive accumulated cash deposited by the group members and does not include any interest to be paid back. These groups consist of 10 to 15 members who are mostly colleagues at work such as teachers or hired workers and may be formed among several neighbors.

Access to Productive Resources and Information. Human, financial, and social capital constraints as well as traditions and norms hinder Tajik rural women access to new knowledge and skills. Although there are many different types of associations and groups in the agriculture sector, ranging from self-help groups to formal Dehkan groups, very few women participate in them. This is an unfortunate participation rate because these (informal and formal) groups deliver extension, training, and even credits.²² This is reflected also in women's use of new technologies and access to productive resources and information, which are lower than men. Female-headed households are also less likely to own their assets (instead they share equipment, or rent), and they use less inputs in their land. Constraints on women's access to and control over resources, such as technologies and inputs, limit the success and sustainability of development. Deep seated perceptions and social norms about male and female roles in the household and agriculture cast women as lacking skills and knowledge either as farmers or farm managers.²³

According to the Third Shadow Report of NGOs of Tajikistan on implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the following obstacles to implementation of gender policies and overcoming gender inequality are identified:

- ✓ Imperfect legislative base for promotion of gender equality and poor implementation of gender-based approaches into the sectorial legislation.
- ✓ Lack of mandatory gender expertise for newly elaborated normative legal acts.
- ✓ Limited and poorly developed institutional mechanism for implementation of gender policies.
- ✓ Lack of continuous monitoring and limited indicators system to track the implementation of the Law on State Equality Guarantees, promoting of women and change in gender behaviors patterns.
- ✓ Poor gender sensitivity among civil servants, working in different spheres. Institute for civil servants provides gender specific training, however these are not included into the retraining curricula for civil servants, limited number of civil servants are undergoing retraining, management of ministries as a rule are not enrolled by these special courses.
- ✓ Limited financial resources to promote gender equality and expand opportunities for women and girls.
- ✓ Poor prioritization to planned goals and implemented activities due to deficit in material and human resources

²² USAID. 2014. AgTCA Tajikistan: Agricultural Technology Commercialization Assessment. USAID Enabling Agricultural Trade project. June 2014.

²³ USAID. 2014. AgTCA Tajikistan: Agricultural Technology Commercialization Assessment. USAID Enabling Agricultural Trade project. June 2014.

4.7 Covid-19 pandemic and its social impacts

Since declaration of the official cases on 27 April 2020 and as of 19 October 2021, totally 17,086 people contracted Covid-19 virus, of whom 16,960 recovered and number of fatal cases in 124²⁴. The actual number may be higher, as not every sick person visits a doctor and/or take laboratory tests. The main negative impact of Covid-19 crisis was reducing the public expenditures on social sector. For instance, around 10% of planned expenditures were not fully funded due to decreased revenue collections to the state budget.

On February 9, 2021, the government finalized its National Deployment and Vaccination Plan (NDVP), which outlines Tajikistan's initial approach to vaccinating 70 percent of the population. The NDVP identifies health workers, older people, persons with chronic conditions and comorbidities, pregnant women, and essential government workers as key priority groups for the first stage of vaccination. These groups jointly account for 20 percent of the population²⁵.

4.8 Afghan Refugee Crisis

After the departure of NATO troops from Afghanistan in August 2021, the situation with refugee inflow arose in in GBAO and Khatlon regions, including border districts of Shohin, Farkhor and Pyanj. There are currently around 1,000 Afghan refugees in Tajikistan, who arrived after this summer and are temporarily settled in Rudaki district and Vahdat town. According to the Task Force on Emergency Situation, the expectation was around 50,000 refugees, but the actual number is far less. Though Tajikistan – as per Constitution – ensures equal social services for citizens, non-citizens and stateless people, the budgetary austerity in social sector cannot accommodate separate financial allocation for refugees. Some international organizations, mainly UNHCR, provides legal and advisory support to (Afghan) refugees, but also on their integration into Tajik society. Small grants are also provided for small-scale income-generating activities, like greenhouse, sewing shops, small business, etc. However, during last several years, the financial assistance to refugees for income-generating activities declined. Though *no Afghan refugees reside in ten targeted districts of the Project*, their integration into the Tajik communities is challenging. Social services (health care, education, social protection) are not provided from the state funding. Last but not least, the precautionary measures with Covid-19 pandemic also causes threats for Afghan refugees and apparently will require external support for their vaccination and other preventive measures.

²⁴ Official website of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population on Covid-19: www.covid.tj

²⁵ World Bank. Tajikistan Economic Update. 13 September 2021.

5. Institutional Context

5.1. Institutions at the Central Asian regional level

In Central Asia, there is a well-developed institutional network of regional organizations authorized to cooperate at the regional level. Until 2009, however, this cooperation focused mainly on water and environmental issues, and only rarely dealt with climate change issues.

The main structure within which regional cooperation is carried out is International Fund for saving the Aral Sea (IFAS), the founders of which are the heads of state of the region who created it in 1993. Within the framework of IFAS, there are working bodies - the Board and the Executive Committee of IFAS, the Interstate Water Coordination Commission (ICWC), which deal with cooperation in the use of water resources, and the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development (ICSD),²⁶ which is responsible for cooperation in environmental and sustainable development.

The activities of ICSD and ICWC IFAS cover climate change issues, including adaptation issues, and these bodies have their own specialized structural units at the regional and national levels. Cooperation and dialogue with IFAS and its structural units is supported by international organizations working in the region - UNDP, UNESCO, OSCE, EU, World Bank, ADB and others. Recently, the region has opened a sub-regional office of the UN Environment in Almaty, Kazakhstan, which works closely with the ICSD.

There are other organizations in the Central Asia region that carry out regional cooperation on climate change in mountainous areas. These include the Central Asia Mountain Partnership Hub, the Aga Khan Foundation, the University of Central Asia, the Alliance of Central Asian Mountain Communities, which contribute to the creation of a network of interaction in the countries of the region and organize discussions on mountain development issues.

The World Bank is initiating the creation of a Central Asia Regional Coordinating Committee on Climate Change, composed of senior representatives from the five Central Asian countries. This committee is seen as a platform for continuous coordination of regional work aimed at climate change mitigation and adaptation. The activities of this Committee are planned to be supported from the funds of the regional project "Program for Adaptation and Mitigation of Climate Change in the Aral Sea Basin", implemented by the World Bank in partnership with the Executive Committee of IFAS and Central Asia Regional Environmental Centre (CAREC).

There are a number of international public organizations in the region that are quite active in matters of climate change. Thus, CAREC is an organization that supports dialogue between governments and the international community, as well as implements a number of projects to combat climate change in the region.

5.2 Institutions at the national level

To create an effective system of governance strategic planning and sustainable socioeconomic development of the country and in accordance with Article 69 of the Constitution, the environmental institutional and management system has been established by the GoT which includes various state agencies. Tajikistan's current environmental institutional and management system includes the following institutions:

²⁶ The Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development (ICSD) was established in 1994 by a Decision of the Interstate Council for the Aral Sea.

- Parliament,
- Government Administration with its oblast and district level branches,
- Committee for Environment Protection (CEP) under the Government of Tajikistan,
- State Committee of Statistics,
- Ministry of Agriculture,
- Ministry of Energy and Water Resources,
- Ministry of Healthcare and Social Protection,
- Ministry of Economic Development and Trade,
- Ministry of Finance,
- Agency for Land Reclamation and Irrigation,
- State Committee for Land Use, Geodesy, and Cartography
- Tajik Standard Agency,
- Tajik Forestry Agency,
- Tajik Meteorological Service under CEP,
- Tajik Academy of Science and its research Institutes,
- Tajik Academy of Agricultural Science and its research institutes, and
- other specific state enterprises.

A brief description of key institutions and their role within the public administration is provided below:

The Committee on Environmental Protection Agency (CEP) coordinates all activities related to environmental protection among GoT and oversees natural resources use, land protection, subsoil, forests, water, and other resources. The decisions of CEP are considered mandatory for all legal entities and individuals. Currently CEP has a total of 400 staff of which about 50 in Dushanbe Headquarter.

The Parliament of Tajikistan plays a key role in determining policies, strategies and rules for sectors that may affect and be affected by environmental factors. It consists of two chambers - (Majlisi Namoyandagon), Lower Chamber, and (Majlisi Oli), Higher Chamber. The Parliament involves relevant executive agencies related to environmental and social risk management which overview relevant sectoral legislation with active role in endorsing supporting laws and regulations (sub-laws).

Several committees are of particular relevance:

- The Ecological Committee, which oversees environment-related legislation. Among 63 Parliamentarians, 6 are members of the Ecological Committee which work directly on environment-related legislation;
- The Education Committee, which oversees the Law on Environmental Education and laws regarding post-secondary education and professional (vocational) training; and
- Sectoral committees covering environment-sensitive sectors, for example Agriculture Committee, which will be essential to integrating environmental social risk management issues into agriculture, land use, water, and other policies.

The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) develops and coordinates agricultural and regional policy, strategic plans, state and sectoral programs in the agricultural sector. Beyond that, the Ministry oversees a significant segment of the economy that is vulnerable to climate change, land degradation, POPs, biodiversity and other areas. The Ministry has a total of 3.583 staff; 104 of them work in the central management unit, in Dushanbe.

Pasture management and maintenance of pasture roads in good and working condition is the competence of the **Pasture and Reclamation Trust'' (PRT) of the Ministry of Agriculture** of the Republic of Tajikistan. The PRT carries out its work together with the relevant structures of the district/city Hukumats, as well as the Makhalla Committees and Pasture Users' Units. Despite the fact that the Government of the country, every 10 years, revises and distributes seasonal pastures to pasture users, the vast majority of livestock keepers - the *population*, due to the lack of the possibility of driving animals to summer pastures, use near-village pastures, turning it to year-round use, which led to a deterioration in its condition. Due to the limited financial and technical capabilities, the PRT is not in a position to carry out appropriate measures for the superficial and radical improvement of pastures, as well as other restoration work in large areas. As a result, uncontrolled animal walking systems severely degrade the condition of rangelands, lead to inevitable losses in biodiversity and exacerbate soil erosion. One of the ways to stop these negative processes and correct the current situation is to improve pasture management methods through the consistent, pre-agreed, planned use of clearly defined areas of pasture on a community basis.

MoA also oversees the activities carried out by the Academy of Agricultural Sciences, which serves as the scientific and coordination centre for agrarian science in Tajikistan. The Ministry is also linked with the Tajik Agrarian University consisting of nine faculties. Both of these provide opportunities for applied research and knowledge transfer. The activities of the Academy of Agricultural Sciences are directly relevant to various environmental issues.

The Ministry of Economic Development and Trade (MEDT) is the government agency with task in overseeing the system of state economic planning and forecasting and facilitating the effective implementation of socio-economic development priorities in Tajikistan. One of the main tasks of this Ministry is to develop and implement economic development programs and strategies of the Republic of Tajikistan with the aim of reducing poverty and stabilizing socio-economic conditions. According to governmental regulations, the Ministry of Economy is to be included in all working groups that develop sustainable strategies, plans and budgets. Representatives of the Ministry are headed the editing group to prepare the country's National Development Strategy and the Poverty Reduction Strategy. The Ministry also monitors the implementation of the two strategies. Among its other roles, MEDT is one of the co-executive bodies of the National Action Plan for Climate Change Mitigation.

The Ministry of Finance aside from economic and financial functions is responsible to review and approve the budgets of state agencies including those related to the environment and climate change.

The State Committee for Land Use, Geodesy, and Cartography was established in 2011 and is responsible for developing land use policies and reforms. It is one of the main agencies being responsible for the enforcement of the Land Code. The Committee's functions include:

- Monitoring of land resources;
- State control on efficient use and conservation of land;
- Introduction of land inventory;
- State registration to legal land use;
- Promotion of rational ways of the land use;
- Definition of land tax and land use fees for violation of land legislation;
- Participation in decision-making regarding the rehabilitation of degraded land; and
- The preparation of documents for the distribution of land among various executive agencies.

In addition, the Committee oversees two institutes that conduct applied research relating to land use change, including land use inventories and mapping. The Committee has a main office in Dushanbe with approximately 70 staff and district level offices with nearly 200 staff.

The Committee for Emergency Situations and Civil Defense is the government agency with the task for disaster risk reduction and response and coverage of climate-induced natural disasters. The Committee

conducts reviews and analysis of disaster risk assessment in light of climate change, and it has a department that focuses on evacuation and re-settlement. In terms of facilities, the Committee has its headquarters in Dushanbe and representatives in every region and district of the country. The Committee has its own training facilities, and it offers in-service training for its employees. It also has its own chemical-radiometric laboratory. It participates in several CIS-wide initiatives to share good practice, and it has previously used international experts on an extended-term basis through technical assistance projects with good results.

The Agency of Land Reclamation and Irrigation (ALRI) is responsible for sustainable operation of the national irrigation system and the land reclamation. It also monitors the use of water resources, being responsible for the distribution of water to farmers for agricultural purposes and provides data on water consumption to the Committee of Environmental Protection. Finally, the Agency is in charge of the operation and infrastructure maintenance of irrigation and rural water supply. It has offices in Dushanbe and also oversees the Institute of Water Improvement.

Identified government institutions to be engaged in the project implementation are outlined in Table below. They are divided into categories based on at what administrative level(s) the institutions represent: national, oblast, and district authorities.

Table 9: Role of Government Institutions to be Engaged in the Project Implementation

Institution Category	National level	Oblast (region)	Rayon (district)	Role and Engagement
Government Administrations	Cabinet of Ministers	Governor's office	District and town administrations, including chairman's office	Approvals and strategic planning on land and natural resources management issues
Parliament,	Committee on social and family issues, health protection and environmental protection under Majlisi Namoyandagon (Lower Chamber of Parliament)			Contribute to analysis, revisions and adoption of existing policy, legal frameworks
Line Ministries and Agencies	Committee for Environment Protection	Oblast level Environmental Protection Department	Oblast level Environmental Protection Department	Implementing agency
	Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) Pasture Reclamation Trust under the MoA	Oblast Agricultural Department	District Agricultural Department	Supports project activities on preparation and implementation of pasture management plans
	Labour Inspection under the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment	Regional Department	District Department	Controls compliance to occupational safety norms and rules, labor conditions and rights

Institution Category	National level	Oblast (region)	Rayon (district)	Role and Engagement
	The State Committee for Architecture and Construction (SCAC)	Chief Oblast Architect	Chief District Architect	Controls compliance to the construction standards for social infrastructure and Local Master Plans
	State Committee for Land Management and Geodezy	Regional Department for Land Management and Geodezy	District Department for Land Management and Geodezy	Technical support and participation in pasture inventories, GIS and mapping support for resource planning, land certification Issues
	State Forestry Agency		State Forest Enterprises	Ensure protection, restoration, multifunctional and sustainable use of forest and hunting resources through control, regulation, and assistance
	State Institution of Specially Protected Natural Areas under the CEP		4 targeted Specially Protected Natural Areas	Will be engaged in implementation of Subcomponent 2.2, technical support on PA management planning
	Women and Family Affairs Committee	Regional/Oblast Department for Women and Family Affairs	District Office for Women Affairs	Support women engagement and GBV prevention and Gender Action Plan implementation support

Source: NGO Znaniye, Desk Review, 2021

5.3 Institutions at the local level

During the implementation of the Project in the targeted districts of Tajikistan, several stakeholders will be involved at the district level, namely local khukumats, State Forest Enterprises (SFEs or Lezkhoses), State Nature Reserves and at the subdistrict level - Water Users Associations, Pasture User Units, Forest User Groups, jamoats, and mahallas (communities).

District Khukumats are the local governments responsible for the following:

- (I) implementation of state policies and programs, ensure compliance with laws;
- (II) socio-economic support, to achieve the objectives set by the government (economic growth, inflation and employment rates, growth of agriculture, production and yields, poverty, etc.);
- (III) ensuring timely collection of taxes and payment of wages and pensions.

Tajikistan has adopted a participatory forest management approach – Joint Forest Management (JFM). JFM enables the local population – either individuals or groups – to become involved in forest management and support the rehabilitation of degraded natural forests over the long term. Since 2018 the required subsidiary regulations and by-laws are in place. *State Forest Enterprises (SFEs or Lezkhoses)* are now obliged to support JFM. The State Forest Agency, SFEs and forest users in previous donor supported areas have gained an understanding of JFM and are now able to share this approach more widely, paving the way for a national rollout. Due to contradictions between the Forest and Land Codes, areas with no forest cover are not considered for JFM. Resolving this issue would facilitate inclusion of new areas for JFM.

The project will cover four protected areas, including the following:

Table 1. Protected Areas in Target Areas

Name of PA	Location	Year of foundation	Area (thousand ha)	Tasks of the organization
State Nature Reserve “Zorkul”	Murgab district, GBAO	14.03.2001	87.7	Conservation of rare animals, including the Bukhara mountain sheep, the Pamir mountain sheep (arkhar) and Indian goose.
Yagnob Nature Park	Ayni district, Sughd Oblast	2.05.2019	57.0	Protection and preservation of natural and cultural folk monuments.
Regional Administration of Tajik National Park in GBAO	Murgab, Vanj, Rushan, Shugnan districts, GBAO	20.07.1992	2200.0	Preservation of natural ecosystems and rare animals, including snow leopard, Pamir mountain sheep (Arkhar).
State Nature Reserve “Tigrovaya Balka”	Dusti and Jaykhun districts, Khatlon Province	4.11.1938	49.7	Preservation of riparian forests and rare fauna, including Bukhara deer.

Source: State Enterprise on Natural Protected Areas (SENPA), 2021

The *Water Users Associations (WUAs)* unite the users of mainly irrigation water in rural communities with the purpose of coordinated and effective use of water. Under the Public Private Partnership, they play very important role in setting up the mechanism of water fee collection and water supply system maintenance. They closely and operationally cooperate with jamoats.

Off-farm irrigation systems are the entire irrigation and drainage infrastructure (canals, pumping stations, water intake structures, reservoirs for irrigation purposes, transformer substations, power lines, etc.), which are on the balance sheet of district, zonal and regional state administrations for melioration and irrigation. At this level, water resources management consists in taking water from water bodies and ensuring the supply of a given volume of water at the border of on-farm canals, drainage of excess water through the collector-drainage network to water intake.

The on-farm irrigation system is an irrigation infrastructure that was previously on the balance sheet of collective and state farms and after the land reform it is transferred to the balance of the Water Users Association (WUA), which must ensure its maintenance and operation without changing its functions. It is of great interest to us to improve the efficiency of water resources management in the on-farm irrigation system or an irrigation system of a WUA or a group of farmers that share water from separate canals or sources for irrigation.

On the territory of the pilot districts, there are 46 WUAs operating on a total irrigated area of 74.8 thousand hectares, taking into account the irrigated areas of the K.Matcha, Murghab and Rushon districts, where it is necessary to create new WUAs.

Table 11. Distribution of WUAs in pilot districts

River basins	Sub-basin zones	Districts	Number of WUAs	Irrigated area, ha	Main problems
Zarafshon river basin	Zarafshon	Panjakent	13	18133	Water loss and distribution problems, water meters, restoration of shallow water intakes
		Ayni	1	502	
	Fondarya	Ayni		443	Water loss and distribution problems, water meters, restoration of shallow water intakes
	Matcha	Ayni		2323	
		Mountain Matcha		3800	
Total for the Zarafshon river basin			14	25201	
Kofarnihon	Lower Kofarnihon	Shakhritus	10	12545	Salinization and waterlogging of lands, uneven distribution of water resources along the length of the canals
		N.Khusrav	5	9242	
		Kabodian	11	17656	
Total for the Kofarnihon river basin			26	39443	
Pyanj river basin	Vanj, Yazgulom	Vanj	4	2601	Water loss and distribution problems, water meters, restoration of shallow water intakes
		Rushon		2027	
	Shugnon	2	3525		
	Murgob		2036		
Total for the Pyanj river basin			6	10189	
Total			46	74833	

Source: ALRI, 2021

The main problems of WUAs in pilot districts are water scarcity associated with its inefficient distribution and use, as well as monitoring of water resources in WUAs.

Currently, taking into account the local socio-economic and environmental conditions and the synthesis of experience, various types and systems of water distribution have been proposed, which are detailed in the "Guide for Water Users Associations and Basin Organizations" prepared by Dr. Claude de Patoul, Landell Mills, with financial support European Union, 2019:

- On Demand: Water is available to the farmer anytime the intake gate or hydrant is opened. The amount of water for use is not limited, but the amount of water used is usually measured and paid;
- Continuous flow: Throughout the irrigation season, the farmer receives a small but continuous flow of water, which compensates for the daily evapotranspiration of crops.
- Partially on demand: water is made available to the farmer within a few days (usually 2-7 days) at his request. Water supply is often limited to a certain volume per hectare of irrigated area.

A more effective form of water resources management in the on-farm system of WUAs is the use of water circulation. The principle of water circulation is based on the delivery of water to farmers in turn from the irrigation system at a predetermined time and in acceptable volumes. While water circulation requires better management, this system improves the efficiency of water delivery and also provides a higher level of equity in water distribution to farmers (preventing water abuse by farmers along the upstream of the canal).

An irrigation system with a water rotation can be organized in different ways, taking into account local conditions (water scarcity, social organization, crop structure) and specific goals (saving water, increasing the production of specific crops).

Another important condition for improving water management is a system for monitoring the water used. Typically, in Tajikistan, various types of water measuring structures are used: a fixed channel with a hydrometric bridge and a water gauge rail on large canals, a water measuring flume on second-order canals. With the support of the WB, in the basin of the Lower Kofarnihon, a partial SCADA system is being implemented to automate the water metering system and transfer data to the information system. But, in most cases, both at the border of the WUA and at the outlets of dekhkan farms, there are no water meters and this, of course, does not contribute to a more economical consumption of irrigation water and the confidence of water users in the submitted acts of water acceptance, which are the basis for payment for the received water. Therefore, the development and improvement of water accounting in WUAs and dekhkan farms is of great importance for eliminating the above-mentioned disadvantages.

Pasture Law (2013) delegates management of pasture to local communities. Pasture users form *Pasture User Unions (PUUs)*, develop Pasture Management Plans (PMPs), and become collectively responsible for pasture management. There are around 430 active PUUs in the country. PUUs are proving to be an appropriate and potentially cost-effective system for the management of pasture, but areas for improvement and challenges remain; their operationality remains limited by issues of land tenure and financial viability, which do not provide a conducive environment for PUUs to operate optimally. Similarly, operationalizing the 2019 Pasture Law requires developing by-laws, environmental standards, and transfer of land use rights particularly to support PUUs. Pasture User Unions (PUUs) will act both as a driver and beneficiary entities of the present Project. Landscape restoration and pasture-related activities should engage the PUUs from the very beginning of project activities.

Table 12. Distribution of PUUs and FUGs in pilot districts

Region /Water Basin	District	PUUs	FUGs	JFM		WBO
				# of HHs	Hectares	
Sughd/Zerafshan	Ayni	5	0	48	38.77	
	Panjikent	0	0	82	211.01	
	K Mastchoh	3	0	5	16	
Khatlon Vakhsh	Shahritys	0	0	–	–	1
	N. Khusrav	0	0	–	–	
	Kabadiyan	0	0	–	–	
GBAO Pyanj	Vanj	0	0	220	1022	1
	Rushon	0	0			
	Murghab	6	0			
	Shughnon	0	0	671	2945	
	TOTAL	14	0	1026	4232,78	

Source: PTF, Ministry of Agriculture and State Forestry Agency, 2021

There are only 14 Pasture User Unions and no FUGs in the target areas. The total number of beneficiaries of the JFM is 1026 households, managing over 4 thousand hectares of forest area. There are two Water Basin Organizations are in place in Vakhsh and Payanj water basins.

Land degradation is also a threat in protected areas. Currently, about 22% of Tajikistan is demarcated as

protected areas and recreational zones, with limited use of natural resources or full prohibition of land with valuable ecosystems. Due to inadequate financing and technical capacity, protected areas lack management plans, proper boundary mapping, and measures to prevent or reduce degradation, and opportunities for co-management with stakeholders. Responsibility for monitoring and preventing land degradation is fragmented across sectoral ministries and agencies; expert capacity exists in the State Committee for Land Management and Geodesy to make, obtain and analyze remote sensing data, but a robust assessment is not possible without key geobotanical expertise and community involvement. Thus, no official synoptic maps (covering the territory of the Republic of Tajikistan) are available around land degradation, nor is there any data sharing platform to publish such maps.

Jamoats, the so-called self-governing bodies, are the last layer of the government administrative-territorial unit in Tajikistan. They report to the district/city government authorities. Under the present Project, 62 jamoats in ten districts will be covered.

Mahalla/community leaders are those who are esteemed people in their communities and who are considered as trustees. It would be impossible to implement activities, where mobilization of local people is a must. For this reason, starting from public awareness raising campaign till actual execution of activities, the Project should involve the leaders of mahallas/communities.

6. Stakeholder Consultations

6.1 Stakeholder Mapping

One of the key challenges will lie in mapping out comprehensively the stakeholder profile and the ‘system’ thereof. This would imply identifying various sub-groups of beneficiaries/actors/functionaries; soliciting their expectations (from the project) and ascertaining the issues and concerns. The stakeholders hence have been classified into two groups, including **project affected parties** (PAPs), such as CEP, subordinate structures, associations and farmers, and separately considered vulnerable groups, including women headed households, women farmers, youth and people with physical disabilities; and **other interested parties** (OIP) such as ministries, local governments, IFIs, CSOs, and media. Table 13 below describes the mapping of the Project stakeholders.

Table 13. Project Stakeholders

PROJECT AFFECTED PARTIES			
Committee for Environmental Protection Substructures			
State Institution "Specially Protected Natural Areas"	Climate Change Centre	Department of Environmental Monitoring and Policy	
Project Implementation Group			
Agency of Forestry under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan			
Forestry Department	International Relations Department	State Forestry Enterprises (SFE) (13 regional and district' SFEs in the Project area)	
Committee for Land Management and Geodesy of the Republic of Tajikistan			
"Fazo" Design and Research Institute	State Design Institute for Land Management "Tojikzaminsoz"	Land Cadaster and Management of Land Resources Department	
Regional and local executive bodies			
Local community/farmers and CBOs			
Rural communities, private farmers and farmer groups, villages and village communities, including women and youth	Resource User Groups, including Water Users' Associations (WUA), Pasture User Unions (PUUs), Forest User Groups (FUG)	Community- based ecotourism providers (households, groups of villagers, associations)	Individuals and groups, including local communities in target sites, likely to be affected by project impacts
Community members, small traders to be affected by land acquisition	Contracted workers		
Disadvantaged and vulnerable groups			
Women farmers, youth	Disabled people, who may be physically challenged or handicapped in other ways	Female headed households	
OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES			

Enabling Ministries, Agencies, Entities			
Committee for Environmental Protection	Ministry of Agriculture, Pasture and Land Reclamation Trust (Department)	Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Energy and Water Resources Department on Basin Water Resources Management
Agency for the Procurement of Goods, Works and Services	Ministry of Labor, Employment and Migration	State Investments Committee and Immoveable Property Management	Majlisi Namoyandagon Majlisi Oli (Parliament) of RT
Agency for Meteorology	Committee on Women, and Family Affairs	Tajik Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tajikistan	Committee of Emergency Situations of RT
International Financing Institutions, International NGOs and Interstate Partnerships			
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)	Food and Agricultural Organization	Asian Development Bank	European Union
KfW	Caritas-Switzerland	UNDP	The Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program
Other National and Local NGOs			
National Association of Dehkan Farms (NADF)	Sarob Cooperative	Agro-service Consulting firms	Other consulting firms
Employers Association	Environmental NGOs	Community Based Organizations	Association if Disabled and other NGOs
Media			
Print and broadcast – newspapers, TV channels, radio programs	Electronic Media – web sites, news agencies		Social media – Facebook, Instagram etc.

6.2 Key Stakeholder Meetings and Consultations

The Committee of Environmental Protection (CEP) and its team and the Inter-Ministerial Working Group established by Tajik Government held a number of meetings, consultations and discussions on the project design during February 2020 - June, 2021 to: (i) discuss the details of project activities with relevant state and non-state institutions; (ii) agree on the approach to project preparation; (iii) agree on fiduciary and safeguards requirements related to the project preparation; and (iv) address additional issues and guidance that were provided during the World Bank’s internal project concept note review meeting. During June-

August 2021 the national NGO Znaniye was recruited to support with project design and stakeholder consultations.

Details about the stakeholder meetings and consultations held during project preparation are presented Table 14 below.

Table 14. Stakeholder Consultations

Place and Method	Date	Participants	Key points raised
A World Bank mission visited Tajikistan	February 24-28, 2020	Deputy Ministers of Finance; Energy and Water; and Agriculture, as well as representatives of various government agencies, partner organizations and civil society organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope new project activities and agree on project preparation approach and timeline
Dushanbe, virtual webex discussions	February 1-10, 2021	Ministry of Energy and Water, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry Agency, Pasture Trust, Agency for Land Reclamation and Irrigation, State Land Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial meeting and discussion on project preparation process, timelines and requirements from the GOT side • Agree on the project development objective and project components • Detailing of all project activities, analyses of the pre-selected project target areas and regional cooperation activities
Dushanbe, virtual meeting	April -May 2021	PDT, WBG task team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of the social and environmental risk management documents by the CEP with the WB technical support.
Dushanbe, Email exchange, phone calls, meetings	June, 2021	CEP, ALRI, FA, members of interministerial working group, NGO Znaniye	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of E&S risk management instruments: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.Environment and Social Management Framework (ESMF); 2. Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF); 3. Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP); and 4. Labor Management Procedures (LMP).
Qubodiyon district (66 persons)	June 25, 2021	Field trips of NGO Znaniye, CEP subcontractor, - meetings with the districts' authorities, CEP and ALRI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization of bank protection works, rehabilitation of irrigation infrastructure for a sustainable supply of irrigation water, improvement of the condition of winter pastures.
Shahrituz district (71 persons)	June 27, 2021		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial support to WUAs through grant mechanisms, organization of courses on land and water use, as well as capacity building for employees of the Forestry Agency and Specially Protected Natural Areas.
Nosir Khusrav district (64 persons)	June 29, 2021		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of dams to improve the supply of irrigation water, planting forest shelter belts, organizing nurseries for reforestation.

Ayni district (44 persons)	July 2, 2021	local departments, and communities in 14 proposed target districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminating the causes of landscape degradation, improving the management of protected areas, attracting unemployed people in public works during the implementation of the project. 	
Panjikent district (76 persons)	July 4, 2021		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducting bank protection works, planting intensive gardens, rehabilitation of cattle-grazing roads, organizing training courses for obtaining grants. 	
Shahriston district (73 persons)	July 7, 2021		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partial restoration of pastures, organization of training on land and water use, creation of nurseries at household. 	
K. Mastchoh district (44 persons)	July 9, 2021		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involvement of women in public works during the implementation of the project, construction of bridges in places of mass cattle walking, organization of special groups for reforestation and their training. 	
Istarafshon (92 persons)	July 11, 2021		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminate flood threat in the area, reforestation, improve pasture management. 	
B. Ghafurov (59 districts)	July 13, 2021		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing irrigation water in Undji, Rukhaki and Goziyon Jamoats, restoration of the protective forest belt in Kholmatov and Ismoil Jamoats. 	
Asht district (67 persons)	July 15, 2021		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement of land reclamation, construction of bridges in pasture routes, carrying out bank protection works. 	
Vanj district (66 persons)	July 17 2021		Field trips of NGO Znaniye – meetings with the potential target districts’ authorities, CEP and ALRI local departments, and community leaders and activists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involvement of the population in public works during the implementation of the project, allocation of quotas for young people to study at the agrarian university in agro-forestry, organization of training courses on land use.
Rushon district (54 persons)	July 20, 2021			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organization of training courses for receiving small grants, creation of information centers for the prevention of flood risks.
Shughnon district (53 persons)	July 23, 2021			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organization of training courses for obtaining grants, the creation of special groups for tree planting, collection of medicinal herbs and wild fruits.
Murghab district (48 persons)	July 26, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organization of short-term courses to improve the potential of forestry specialists, specially protected areas and the “pasture users” trust. 		
14 focus group discussions were conducted in pilot districts	July-August, 2021	Various categories of social groups of women both in urban centers and rural areas, like female-headed households, female workers from jamoats, teachers,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural women are interested to be involved in public works during the implementation of the project, to be mobilized in groups/women’s groups for reforestation and other project activities 	

		nurseries, farmers and as well as women working for districts authorities and/or local state organizations in various fields.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need training courses on land use, water use, business plans and environmental issues, grant proposal design, establishing special groups for tree planting, collection of medicinal herbs and wild fruits. • When organizing PUUs, the main focus should be on attracting more women by establishing a minimum quota for women’s membership in PUU, FUG and WUAs to enable their participation in decision-making processes. • Involve women in the process of creating tree nurseries (cuttings, planting and other work); • Creation of women groups for collecting medicinal herbs and plants, organizing handicrafts; • Involvement of more women in the organization of ecological tourism, through different trainings, ect; • Creation of working conditions for women with disabilities at the community level; • Encourage female students to study in agro specialties in the universities • Supporting single women heads of households to access the grants and promote employment opportunities.
Dushanbe, Public consultations	August 20, 2021	Multi-stakeholder workshop 45 participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public consultations of the project design and components
Dushanbe, Public consultations	September 3, 2021	Multi-stakeholder workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public consultations of the draft ESF instruments
Public consultations Rushon, Ayni and Qubodiyon	October, 2021	Key stakeholders at the district level, including local governments, jamoats, resource user groups, local communities, mahalla leaders of PA surrounding communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public consultation on revised ESF instruments

6.3 Lessons Learned in Engaging Communities / Stakeholders from Previous Projects

Community mobilization and involvement play important roles in ensuring relevance and ownership of interventions. The project draws on the stakeholder engagement experience under several World Bank (WB) -financed portfolio of landscape and related projects across the globe and in Tajikistan, and from similar regional platforms ²⁷ to identify effective approaches to citizen engagement.

²⁷ As discussed in (i) IEG. 2021. The Natural Resource Degradation and Vulnerability Nexus: An Evaluation of the World Bank’s Support for Sustainable and Inclusive Natural Resource Management (2009–19); (ii) IEG. 2019. Two to Tango: An Evaluation of the WBG Support to Fostering Regional Integration; (iii) Implementation Completion and Results Report (ICR) of Tajikistan: Environmental Land Management and Rural Livelihoods Project (P122694, ICR00004451); (iv) ICR of Building Resilience through Innovation, Communication & Knowledge Services (BRICKS) (P130888, Report No. ICR00004839); and (v) ICR of the First Phase of the Central Asia Road Links Program (CARS-I) (P132270, Report No. ICR00004743).

The main lesson is that stakeholder participation at different scales is critical for building ownership and sustainability in landscape management approaches. Tajikistan Environmental Land Management and Rural Livelihoods Project (P122694 (ELMARL) highlighted the value of: a) CDD planning and decision-making in creating ownership among rural communities to take responsibility for interventions and maintain their livelihoods in sustainable ways; and b) engaging district-level decision makers in the review of community-level investments was critical for buy-in and helped elevate SLM and climate resilience issues to the district level. Ensuring participation across scales and sectors will continue to be important in this project particularly given the focus on landscapes in which there are multiple and often competing land uses and need to address potential conflicts. At the same time, it is important to recognize the challenges of participatory approaches where the transaction costs can be prohibitive and total agreement elusive. The project will build on the experience of ELMARL and other similar projects adopting a participatory approach for the development of CCAPs and sub-basin level landscape restoration plans. Stakeholder analysis and engagement will be critical to the development of various types of landscape-level strategies and management plans, e.g., forests, PAs. The project will also continue to work with an inter-ministerial working group at the central level (created during preparation) during project implementation.

Another lesson is that **capacity building at all levels, communication and access to information** are important for the widespread adoption of new practices. The involvement and commitment of government agencies at various levels and community organizations are important factors contributing to project success. People require the ability to participate and accept certain roles and responsibilities in landscape restoration and management. While CDD approaches as used in ELMARL and other projects in Tajikistan, have been effective in ensuring transparency and prioritizing local needs, significant capacity building was required of communities, local government and the implementing agency. Even with the capacity developed in the CEP since 2013, the project cannot underestimate the need to continue to build capacities of stakeholders, particularly in given the integrated approaches needed in landscape restoration and management and the absence of a formal extension service in the country. The project has included a range of capacity building activities that cover stakeholders from government, research institutes, and communities. The project is also investing in knowledge management generate, capture and make accessible information for land users and managers to improve SLM practices in support of landscape restoration.

During the discussions with the WB ESF team members, it was recommended that the project team should take into consideration the impact of COVID-19 on the project design, risks and targeted indicators.

6.4. Stakeholder Analysis

Consultation meetings (face to face, on-line, phone conversations, e-mail exchange, and field trips) were held with representatives of different stakeholder groups on national and local levels (please see Table 14 above for the details). Project information were shared to understand their expectations and the issues/ concerns thereof. These consultations helped in, understanding not only the current functioning of the system but also in ascertaining the environmental and social issues likely to be addressed by the project. The results so obtained were consolidated and the initial set of impacts likely to occur as a result of the project interventions drawn. Consultations were held that covered a variety of stakeholders in order to identify gaps, risks, and potential actions. Findings of the consultations are reflected in the SEP and should be also addressed in the Project Operational Manual. The Project beneficiaries and stakeholders have different expectations from, and issues related to the Project.

Table 15. Expectations, Issues, and Concerns

Project Affected Parties (PAPs)

1. Group/ Subgroup	2. Expectations from the project	3. Current Status	4. Concerns and issues	5. Significance of Risks	6. Enabling Conditions required
<p>Committee of Environmental Protection under the Government of Tajikistan</p> <p>Project Implementation Group (IG) under CEP</p>	<p>Successful implementation of the Project components – landscape restoration, effective pastures management, harmonization of legislation, strategies development, Capacity building of CEP’ and other agencies structures in the regions. All categories of stakeholders should receive expected benefits. The end result should be an increase in the living standards of people in the target areas</p>	<p>The CEP mandate is to coordinate policies and investments on sustainable natural resource management, climate change mitigation and adaptation, environmental monitoring & awareness. It issues environmental permits and conducts environmental expertise for any civil works subprojects</p> <p>IG was formed in 2013 to implement WB funded Environmental Land Management and Rural Livelihoods Project (P122694, 2013-2018), and Climate Adaptation and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID -19 impact - delay in financing and the implementation of the project components • Temporary local disturbances to biodiversity and living natural resources; habitat disturbances; soil loss related to planting activities; dust; and temporary, construction related, air or water pollution • Lack of qualified personnel at all levels, in the structures involved 	<p>Substantial</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a smooth and timely implementation of the Project components. • Timely financing technical equipment of implementing agencies. • Recruiting experienced specialists on the ground. • Establish effective cooperation between all stakeholders on the national and local levels • Development and implementation of ESMF, site specific ESMPs for small rehabilitation works

		Mitigation Program for Aral Sea Basin (CAMP4ASB) - 2016-2021			
Committee for Land Management and Geodesy of the Republic of Tajikistan	Successful implementation of the project components. Establishment of efficient land management. Basic information on landscapes is available in the Committee and its subordinate organizations (land area, level of their degradation, information on soil characteristics, on geobotany, relief, etc. and the committee is responsible for planning territories in terms of efficient use of land resources. In this regard, the Committee and its subordinate organizations are ready to play a more active role in the project implementation.	The central government authority, responsible for development and implementation of the public policy in the area of state land management, land cadastre, land surveying, mapping, state registration of immovable property and its rights, and state control over land use and conservation. Defines issues and opportunities for development of effective land management technologies to be incorporated into the project design	-Insufficient involvement of some agencies in the project implementation. -Land management should be based on reliable data. -Updating maps and information on soils and geobotany are catastrophically out of date. - Lack of appropriate information systems to ensure participation of all parties in the development process and to provide farmers and communities with the necessary information to support effective production and management of territories.	Moderate	For the Committee and its subordinate organizations: - capacity building of landscape management specialists; - training in innovative technologies, including remote sensing (monitoring the state of crops, determining the yield, determining the degree of land degradation and erosion, preparing soil maps, etc.); - training on new GIS technologies to improve landscape management; Technical support for mapping improvement: - Vehicles; -computers, unmanned aerial vehicles, GPS-receivers, plotters, scanners and other equipment; -software programs, etc.
Agency of Forestry under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan	Amendments to the Forestry Code (2011) On-the-job training for ALRI and SFE' personnel on landscape restoration Organization of the Forest Seed Center based on the Research Institute of Forestry. Renovation of ALRI and	The Forestry Agency performs the function of developing and implementing a unified state policy, normative, legal regulation and state administration in the field of forestry, forest resources, hunting, flora and fauna of specially protected natural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contradictions in legislation (land and environmental protection), which prevent adoption of enforcements stipulated by the Forestry Code. • Lack of specialists in forest protection and forest inventory • There is no forest seed center in Tajikistan. • No forest inventory has been conducted in the target area forestries in the last 30 years. 	Substantial	Improvement of forest legislation. Capacity building of the Agency and SFE specialists Training of specialists on forest protection and forest inventory at the Tajik Agrarian University.

	<p>SFEs field buildings and offices, provision of equipment, vehicles and small equipment.</p> <p>Conducting a national inventory of forests in the project areas</p> <p>Development and implementation of Forest Management Plan</p> <p>Afforestation and reforestation on an area of 2,386 hectares.</p> <p>Creation of industrial fuel plantation forests on an area of 550 hectares</p>	<p>areas, and also carries out economic functions of organizing the system and provides state control.</p> <p>Within the Project the Forestry Agency will lead the technical aspects of <i>Sub-Component 2.1: Reforestation and sustainable forest management.</i></p> <p>There are 13 State Forest Enterprises (SFEs) in the project target areas.</p>			<p>Upgrading of ALRI/ target SFEs offices technical base.</p> <p>Documentation and distribution of the best approaches and technologies for landscape management and restoration through WOCAT.</p>
Regional and local executive bodies	<p>Would like to know much more project details along with their expected roles and responsibilities in project implementation.</p> <p>Interested in successful implementation of the project components.</p>	<p>Responsible for socio-economic development of territories and development of business entities. District khukumats are also key actors in provision of local services, such as electricity, water, maintenance of road network, issuance of relevant permits and land allocation issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not know details of the project investments and the requirements thereof. Lack of capacity in terms of personnel. 	Moderate	<p>Engage them during project activities design and implementation, solicit their support in public outreach and stakeholder engagement</p> <p>Enroll their staff in capacity building activities</p>
Common Interest Group (CIG)	<p>Get access to grants to address degradation issues such as on-farm salination, erosion, and low productivity in ways that can increase income for members and reduce degradation impacts. The focus will be to encourage CIGs to adopt practices such as diversification of</p>	<p>Informal or formal groups established at the village level to advocate for their member rights, and to manage jointly the water use issues. Closely cooperate with ALRI. Sometimes conduct bank protection works having no expertise in this field. CIG will serve as key informants to design the</p>	<p>Lack of experienced specialists in CIGmanagement</p> <p>Shortage of machinery and mechanisms</p> <p>Low level of fees collection for water supply services and membership fees</p> <p>Inefficient maintenance and use of land and water resources</p>	Substantial	<p>Consult on their needs and challenges, which will be helpful during selection criteria setting and identification of scope of small grants</p>

	agricultural/horticultural crops, adoption of water-efficient crops and varieties, use of efficient irrigation technologies, environmental measures such increasing vegetative cover on irrigation channels and planting of shelter-belts.	land use management plans			
Pasture User Unions (PUU)	Development and implementation of the efficient Pasture Management Plans	Informal or formal groups established at the district or village level to manage common assets issues. The groups will serve as key informants to design Pasture Management Plans (PMP)	A large number of PUUs are not yet fully legalized, have no registration at the tax authorities and do not fully functional	Substantial	Take into account PUU needs and challenges during PMP development. Legalize PUU performance
Rural women groups, women farmers	To have access to the project benefits, investments, income generating activities and trainings	Women with no skills (school education only). Women engaged in seasonal works. Women with secondary vocational education. Single mothers/Female headed households.	Women comprise the overwhelming majority of the casual and temporary workers in agriculture. Women are often employed in lower-skill positions; they also face additional obstacles to acquiring permanent jobs due to childcare and family obligations. Working on temporary or casual basis with no formal contractual relationships, entails they have less job security and are less socially-protected. Wage discrimination may also occur, for example, by using commonly accepted norms for wages for men and women that are not related to actual productivity. Women are more vulnerable to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH) at the workplace that can also affect their job security, productivity, health, and well-being.	Moderate	In addition to mitigation measures included in the project LMP and ESMF, the project will raise awareness of labor standards, equity and non-discrimination requirements, SEA/SH risks and mitigation measures. These will also be included in project information materials, consultations and information campaigns
<i>Other Interested Parties</i>					
1. Group/ Subgroup	2. Expectations from the project	3. Current Status	4. Concerns and Issues	5. Significanc	6. Enabling Conditions required

				e of Risks	
<p>Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)</p> <p>Pasture Reclamation Trust Department</p>	<p>Pasture restoration and enhancement of their productivity</p> <p>Enhance capacity of existing seeds\seedlings producers, support dekhkan farms by modern equipment and machinery/techniques. Establishment of new farms for growing and further distribution of forage crops - Establishment of seed demonstration plots for native forage species in the project locations, each covering 100ha. Restoration of roads and bridges along the route of livestock</p>	<p>The MoA develops comprehensive sectoral and regional programs aimed at development of agriculture sector, food security, increase employment and rural incomes, maintain a stable level of prices for food products in the domestic market.</p> <p>The Pasture Reclamation Trust of the MoA is responsible for state control of pasture use and protection. Like all agricultural land in Tajikistan, pastures are under state ownership and mainly held by state agricultural enterprises, dekhkan farms and household farms.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely and effective targeted disbursement of funds • Lack of qualified personnel at all levels of the project implementation <p>Current agricultural challenges related to the project specifics are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of funding for restoration and maintenance of pastures and related infrastructure (machinery, feed warehouse) • Limited access to high quality seeds; 	<p>Substantial</p>	<p>Establishment of the project implementation group (IG) under the MoA</p> <p>Capacity building of all involved in the project implementation structures at the national and local levels, including the project implementation unit, employees of research institutes, laboratories, seeds producers, farmers - Pasture User Unions (PUU). Develop effective Pasture Management Plans (PMPs)</p> <p>Ongoing monitoring and technical support from the WB</p>
<p>Ministry of Energy and Water Resources</p>	<p>Successful implementation of the Project components, in particular application of Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) through integration of green and grey infrastructure to address flood management; and capacity building of relevant RBO to pursue integrated basin management</p>	<p>The central government authority that formulates and carries out the public policy and fulfils regulatory functions in the area of fuel, energy and water resources. It maintains water & energy cadastres; water resources databases and information system, inventory of hydraulic structures. Oversees several donor-funded projects on energy and water sector, including CASA 1000, Rural Water Supply and Sanitation.</p>	<p>The sector challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water management is carried out on basis of territorial administrative boundaries and not on the natural flow areas, preventing effective planning of water allocation and of development of water resources; • Inefficient pumping stations and high lifts with low O&M budgets limit sustainability of pump irrigation systems; • Increase in lands out of irrigation due to salinization; • Low salaries restrict recruitment of new, trained irrigation specialists. 	<p>Moderate</p>	<p>Include to the project design subprojects on smart water solutions and water management.</p>

		Facilitates the activities of the Interagency Working Group on Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation			
Ministry of Labor, Employment and Migration	Labor risks are considered limited because all project workers, other than civil servants assigned for project implementation at the PIU are government by the mutually agreed labor contracts.	The Labor Inspection under the MoLEM has primary responsibility for overseeing labor conditions, occupational health and safety.	Non-regular labor audits and inspections of state organizations are conducted; Use of child labor, forced or conscripted labor is prohibited in the project No measures to prevent Sexual Exploitation, Abuse/ Harassment (SEA/H) at work are included in labor contracts according to the national legislation.	Moderate	The CEP will develop and implement Labor Management Procedures (including measures on occupational health and safety and Code of Conduct for all project staff, consultants and workers) for the project.
Committee on Emergency Situations and Civil Defense of the Republic of Tajikistan	Gain new experience in flood management through construction and maintenance of nature-based solutions	It is the central executive body responsible for state policy in the sphere of management of emergency situations and civil defense, normative legal regulation, as well as the state services in emergency situations, peace and wartime, coordinating nation-wide, actions and military operations on civil defense	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize additional training to increase the capacity of personnel to apply the “Natural Solution” approaches to manage flood risk reduction; if necessary, strengthening the material and technical capabilities of the CoES services in the pilot areas of the project; <p>Assist in improving the population in case of emergence of emergency situations in the pilot areas of the project.</p>	Moderate	Active engagement in planning and implementation of Component 3 of the project
National CSOs, agrobusiness associations, women business associations, agro-consulting companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperate in terms of timely raising awareness and capacity building of farmers and seed producers on seed production innovations; Promote extension services and render support to players along the value chain; Facilitate feedback mechanisms to strengthen 	There are wide range of service CSOs, associations and consulting firms functioning in agricultural sector. Their institutional capacity is sufficient to facilitate the project activities in rural areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited donor and state funding; Beneficiary surveys results are not publicized and not used to enhance services; All gatherings and activities should be agreed prior implementation with local governments; Constant monitoring of CSO activities and funding received from donor organizations by the justice authorities; 	Moderate	Partnership agreements with CSOs/firms to provide outreach and capacity building services on (a) development and implementation of a public education campaign and training and educational programs for farmers; (b) creating a system to provide timely, high-quality advisory services to farmers;

	<p>relationships with project beneficiaries and project implementation unit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice the challenges faced by vulnerable farmers, with special attention to the needs of women and disabled 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor engagement of NGOs in public consultations on the agricultural reforming agenda; • Limited third-party monitoring (TPM) practices to assess the performance and verify the goods and services offered by the Government under the donor funded projects. 		Engage CSOs in TPM activities.
Media	<p>Cooperate in terms of timely raising awareness of ongoing reforms and project accomplishments; Promote farmers willingness to use the certified new seeds and seedlings and modernized methodologies to improve productivity and raise food security.</p>	<p>Wide range of national and local media outputs are available, especially popular in rural areas where the internet access is limited.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beneficiary Survey results have not been disclosed and disseminated; • High censorship on behalf of the state authorities; • Blocked public access to online resources of some media institutions. 	Moderate	<p>Partnership agreements with state establishments to provide outreach and capacity building services on development and implementation of a public education campaign using multiple communication channels including new media (social media, mobile) and mass media; updating and enhancing CEP website</p>

6.5 Disadvantaged and Vulnerable Groups

As per ESS10, it is particularly important to understand project impact and whether it create equitable opportunities accessible to the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups or disproportionately fall on them. These groups often do not have a voice to express their concerns or understand the impact of a project.

As part of a gender analysis, the project preparation team reviewed the Gender Assessment and Gender Action Plan for World Bank Group in Tajikistan (2020), Asian Development Bank's Tajikistan country gender assessment (2016), and other literature examining national policies, strategies, sectoral plans and programs. Tajikistan has several laws and strategies working towards gender sensitive policy – e.g., "On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women" (2005), National Strategy for activation of the role of women in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2011-2020 (2010) and the approved Presidential Grants for Women Entrepreneurs (2008-2011). However, these strategies have to be updated and revisited in context of (1) COVID19 and its disproportionate impact on women and (2) dependence on natural resources – timber and non-timber forest produce for livelihoods.

Women dominate in the agriculture sector, due to men labor migration, but their participation tends to be mostly informal, seasonal, low-wage, or unpaid. Human, financial, and social capital constraints as well as traditions and norms hinder women employment and leadership opportunities in the agriculture sector. Although there are many different types of associations and groups in the environmental sector, ranging from self-support groups to resource management groups, very few women participate in them. This is an unfortunate participation rate because these (informal and formal) groups deliver extension, training, and even credit. This is reflected also in women's use of new technologies and access to productive resources and information, which are lower than men. Female-headed households are also less likely to own their assets (instead they share equipment, or rent), and they use less inputs in their land. Constraints on women's access to and control over resources, such as technologies and inputs, limit the success and sustainability of development. Deep seated perceptions and social norms about male and female roles in the household and agriculture cast women as lacking skills and knowledge either as farmers or farm managers. Lastly, even though men are absent from their households and farms, this does not always translate into women's increase in decision making. The composition of extended rural households, other male relatives, migrant males still taking decisions for the farm, do not allow for meaningful assumption of a decision-making role for many women.²⁸

It should be noted that the level of participation of women in public life (community meetings, planning, decision-making and access to investments at the community level) in the pilot districts differs.

The results of focus group surveys of various social categories of the pilot districts revealed the following problems:

Focus groups with women working in government, education and health care sectors revealed that

- 83% of attendees have the opportunity to find a job answered;
- 86% answered that have the opportunity to place your child in preschool institutions;
- 84% answered that household income does not cover their expenses;
- 75% answered that they do not participate in decision making events at the community and jamoat levels.

A focus group survey with the participation of women heads of Dehkan farms, Water Users Associations and rural jamoats revealed the following problems:

²⁸ USAID. 2014. *AgTCA Tajikistan: Agricultural Technology Commercialization Assessment*. USAID Enabling Agricultural Trade (EAT) project. June 2014.

- everyone noted that they have the opportunity to find a job;
- 35% noted that they do not have such an opportunity to place your child in preschool institutions;
- 26% noted that household income does not cover their expenses;
- Almost all of the surveyed noted that they actively participate in community meetings, planning and decision-making at the local community level;

Among other problems, they highlighted are the following:

- limited access to irrigation water and limited access to drinking water, especially in Khatlon;
- limited access to pastures;
- lack of awareness about environmental issues
- limited access to electricity especially in wintertime (scheduled by 3 hours in the morning and 3 hours in the evening)
- lack of sufficient funds for basic needs;
- high rates of bank loans;
- limited availability of financial resources for starting and doing business.

Key points /recommendations were raised by women as follows:

- They are interested to be involved in public works during the implementation of the project, to be mobilized in groups/women's groups for reforestation and other project activities
- organization of training courses on land use, water use, business plans and environmental issues
- Organization of training courses for obtaining grants, the creation of special groups for tree planting, collection of medicinal herbs and wild fruits.
- Organization of language course on basic English for rural women to be able communicate with the tourists

Recommendations for ensuring the active and effective participation of women in community management, planning, decision-making and investment allocation:

- To conduct gender sensitization training at all levels
- When organizing pasture user unions, the main focus should be on attracting more women by establishing a minimum quota for women's membership in PUU, FUG and WUAs to enable their participation in decision-making processes;
- To involve women in the process of creating tree nurseries (cuttings, planting and other work);
- Creation of women groups for collecting medicinal herbs and plants, organizing handicrafts;
- Involvement of more women in the organization of ecological tourism, through different trainings, ect;
- Creation of working conditions for women with disabilities at the community level;
- Creation of short-term courses for women on writing business plans for receiving small grants;
- To encourage female students to study in agro specialties in the universities;
- supporting single women heads of households to access the grants and promote employment opportunities;
- Support for women in obtaining education (scholarships, quotas, etc.).

Other disadvantaged groups include disabled people, who may be physically challenged or handicapped in other ways. They would not be able to benefit from the project without assistance. They will be reached, consulted and engaged in project activities through NGOs promoting rights and interests of people with disabilities. Vulnerable households may be found with women headed households or elderly. However, the women-headed households are often the result of worker migration and would receive remittances while elderly citizens live with family members and therefore not considered vulnerable.

Project's Gender Related Activities

Activities to help reduce gender gap have been included in the project design for example through access to better jobs (by supporting women producers and entrepreneurs), access to financial assets (through small grants), and platforms to raise voice (encouraging women's participation in landscape management planning under Subcomponent 2.1). The analysis informed gender gaps related to landscape restoration and livelihoods and helped define actions and indicators in the project mainstreamed into the components and several results indicators.

The project well recognizes that women play a critical and significant role in Tajikistan's agriculture and livelihood development. Further corroborates that addressing the gender gaps is essential to accomplish fully the development objectives. In line with this, a need for a Gender Action Plan (GAP) is proposed to be prepared which would help in promoting women's socio-economic advancement and empowerment through interventions at both macro and micro levels. The ultimate objective of the plan is to ensure that the project is able to serve women's strategic and practical needs. Ensure that women are given an opportunity to participate in the project and are represented in key planning and management structures. Scope of the GAP, however, will be restricted to the project's boundaries and as mapped around project activities. The GAP will be prepared by the CEP/PIG with the help of external consultants within the first six months of project implementation.

7. Social Management Framework (SMF)

In this section, we discuss the positive and negative impacts likely to occur as a result of the project. In respect of the negative impacts, related issues/ challenges are identified and correspondingly, mitigatory measures drawn. Subsequently, in the next chapter, institutional and implementation arrangements to address the adverse impacts and maximize the positive benefits.

7.1. Potential Social Risks and Impacts

7.1.1. Positive Impacts

Rural communities and community-based organizations (PUUs, WUAs and FUGs) within the landscapes will be mobilized, trained, and receive grants for community-based pasture management, joint forest management, climate-smart agriculture, and small-scale ecotourism. These communities and groups will benefit from technical and financial support to implement technologies and approaches that improve their livelihoods, increase their resilience, while also contributing to the restoration of ecosystem functions. Within the landscapes' protected areas (PA), the project will improve the management capacities, and finance PA management and recreation/ecotourism to improve the management as further means of conservation and income generation.

Overall, the purpose of the Project is in line with priorities of the CA countries and their population. Upon successful initiation and implementation of the Project, there will be positive social impacts and effects at different levels (regional, country, district, community). It is envisaged to design and implementation of agreements, memorandums, action plans, bilateral and multilateral cooperation frames, which supposed to secure participatory approach and community driven development. People living in poverty, the communities prone to climate change impacts and natural disasters, women and adolescent girls, children, youth, ethnical minorities and other vulnerable segments of society will benefit from the Project implementation. The project will create employment opportunities, capacity building and training courses, technical assistance for starting up income generating activities for the institutions and people in need. Last, but not least, peace and security in bordering zones, good inter-country relationships on transboundary interventions, will be strengthened and social cohesion in CA+ shall be enhanced. This is much more needed considering the latest developments with neighboring countries.

7.1.2. Adverse Impacts and Risks

The project's interventions are unlikely to result in any adverse impacts. Project interventions will require extended interface with the local communities and government bodies. It is likely that project will have to address potential conflicts in order to bring together differing perspectives. This would mean that the project will have to develop appropriate strategies and implementation plans to ensure that the local communities are provided with an opportunity to participate in decision making and derive full benefits.

The following issues assume significance in the context of the project:

Access restrictions. The project activities may cause restriction on land use and access to natural resources that cause a community or groups within a community to lose access to resource usage, including legally designated protected areas, forests, or biodiversity areas to be restored in connection with the project. To address this risk, a Process Framework was developed during project preparation to ensure community participation. It will outline the ways local communities, who have a stake in protected areas, may participate in land and natural resources management through informed and meaningful consultations and negotiations to develop and implement perspective plans.

Land acquisition. Rehabilitation of resilient infrastructure may cause minor economic impacts and

resettlement impacts. Minor changes in existing alignment to increase the efficiency of existing infrastructure may require additional land and have impacts on livelihoods or source of income of the community. Since locations are not defined yet, the CEP/IG has prepared a Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF) to guide activities in this regard. The RF defines the procedures for: (i) acquiring land (after all technical alternatives have been exhausted), (ii) dealing with any residual impacts from land acquisition (i.e. identifying, establishing the valuation of, and compensating people that suffer economic losses or loss of private property), (iii) monitoring and verification that policies and procedures are followed, and (iv) grievance redress mechanisms. Where resettlement-related impacts will be identified, site-specific Resettlement Action Plans (RAPs) would be prepared by the CEP/IG in accordance with the RPF. Project activities that will cause physical and/or economic displacement will not commence until site specific RAPs acceptable to the Bank will be consulted upon and implemented.

Exclusion of locations. Choosing one location for agroforestry demonstration sites over others to attract investment in agribusiness and infrastructure for farmers and local communities can lead to some risk of dissatisfaction of stakeholders. In this regard, extensive consultations with public and private stakeholders on the location for the construction of the forest nursery and agroforestry sites will be conducted following the Project's Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP). Representatives of CEP and local authorities should organize a campaign to inform the public about grants for agroforestry demonstration sites among the target groups. CEP/IG will use existing information channels (local administrations of districts and rural districts, media, non-governmental organizations, mailing lists, social networks) to reach potential participants.

Exclusion of vulnerable groups. Some individuals or groups have limited access to a variety of opportunities and resources, such as women and young people having weak links with government because of their remoteness, lack of education or lack of interest in public life. Other participants may also suffer social isolation. The main contributors include income, employment status, social class, personal habits and appearance, religion and political affiliation. The risk will be prevented and/or reduced by conducting outreach and awareness-raising campaign in line with the project SEP. Training programs are expected to target younger groups of population who will be given priority access to these programs. Women headed and disabled households are expected to benefit from the support provided under the small grants program. They will be provided with technical assistance in the establishment of agroforestry demonstration sites and subsequent support during the implementation.

The risk of exclusion will be addressed to a large extent through Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) supplemented with community mobilization and an effective information and education campaign (IEC). Disadvantaged and vulnerable groups under the project are likely to include farmers in remote areas and women groups, especially women engaged in seasonal agricultural work, female-headed households and women farmers who by virtue of constraining social norms and social networks may find it harder to obtain information about the project benefits. SEP will envision measures to ensure that disadvantaged and vulnerable groups have equal opportunity to obtain information and benefit from project activities, as well as have channels for grievance and redress if negatively affected. Such activities will include tailored awareness and information campaigns including targeting women and mahalla-level meetings which community members of all backgrounds and remote areas can join, distributing information materials through multiple channels such as media, social media, and mahalla leaders, emphasizing the rules and principles of equity and non-discrimination for example in relation to employment opportunities in all training and consultation activities.

Labor risks associated with the rehabilitation and civil works, include exposure to hazardous materials and exposure to electrical hazards from the use of tools and machinery. As the construction activities will involve hazardous work, persons under the age of 18 will not be employed in civil works. The child labor risk is considered low because for civil works, no child labor is allowed based on the national legislation. Labor influx risk is considered low as the majority of labor will be locally hired with the exception of a few skilled workers. The labor camps will be small in size and no residential labor camps

are anticipated at this stage. There is a risk that the current practice of unaccounted working hours and lack of compensation for overtime will continue. The PIG will track the staff working hours by completing the timesheets and restricting overtime. Forced labor is expected to be minimal, as all contractors will be required to have a written contract with their workers materially consistent with objective of ESS2.

The CEP/IG has prepared Labor Management Procedures (LMP), which outlines the type of project workers, labour conditions and associated labour risks, as well as mitigation measures. Provisions will be also made to train and hire as many as possible workers from local communities where the activities are taking place.

Occupational Health and Safety risks maybe be caused by safety and health non-compliance at construction sites. The Contractors will have to follow Occupation Safety and Health rules, which include among others strictly implementation established norms and procedure H&S which depends on type on conducting works, usage of PPE, training activities and monitoring. In addition, all workers need to be introduced to working procedure with hazardous materials. Contractors have to provide workers with appropriate working conditions: PPEs, safe water supply, washing conditions, rooms for rest and etc.

Community safety. Inadequate lighting and fencing of construction sites inside of settlement areas can be dangerous for pedestrians and vehicles especially during the night-time. Increasing of traffic due to trucks and vehicles movements to construction sites may cause inconvenience for local population as well. In addition, some construction/rehabilitation activities will cause temporary blockage of household access. Untimely and inefficient disposal of solid waste and improper sanitary conditions generated by the construction workers at construction sites and labor camps may cause pollution of the surrounding environment and affect the health of local people. Moreover, a movement of heavy tracks may destroy or deteriorate conditions of roads inside settlements. The ESMF also includes emergency preparedness and response plans to manage natural or man-made hazards/incidents (floods, fires, etc.) in the intervention areas during both implementation and operational stages of the project.

Community Health. The COVID-19 pandemic also presents a risk to the project and the beneficiary communities due to increased interaction with stakeholders and interested parties from outside a particular location. The project will mitigate this risk by strictly following the World Bank Group Interim Note on COVID-19 and related WHO guidelines.

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH) risk is assessed as moderate mostly due to the status of national Gender-Based Violence (GBV) legislation, gender norms, and the rural location of most project activities. All the contracted workers have to take the SEA/SH training and sign the code of conduct. The SEP will also describe the project-specific Grievance Mechanism (GM) which will accept, review, and seek to resolve any project related concerns or feedback, and be easily accessible to project-affected parties and local communities, among other stakeholders. GM will have a special window to address SEA/SH complaints such as to ensure privacy and dignity of the affected persons.

Limited capacity in ESS application at the national and local levels (participatory planning, project management and oversight). Given that the Implementing agency and line ministries have limited capacity in ESS application, as well as the local government actors and local civil works providers have no experience in ESS implementation, training workshops will be provided on the project-related social risks management procedures (mitigating social risks, social screening, stakeholder engagement, SEA/SH, GM, LMP and PF implementation).

The project specific risks are to be viewed in the light of contextual issues as well. The contextual issues which may impact project implementation and outcomes to be considered during project implementation

include: (i) accessibility – to poor and near-poor people, specially, in rural and mountainous areas; (ii) equity challenges due to geographic, socio-economic, and inter regional disparities; (iii) fragility and conflict situation in some border areas; (iv) gender inequity – which could affect outreach to women in general and female headed households, in particular; (v) adequate and appropriate facilities provision and service quality; and (vi) regulation and governance, specially with regard to integrating forestry with other livelihood department activities.

Contextual challenges at border communities. Considering the recent geopolitical developments in Tajik-Kyrgyz border (during spring 2021) and Tajik-Afghan border (in summer 2021), the Component 1 will cause effects on people residing at those communities. During the implementation of the activities under the Component 1 and its sub-components, it is recommended to avoid ignorance of the socio-economic conditions of the targeted 10 districts, particularly those villages that live across the borders. Institutions and stakeholders – to be capacitated – should use participatory approach when entering regional cooperation frameworks and developing necessary strategies or plans for landscape restoration. When designing policies, strengthening institutions and enhance regional cooperation, districts, communities and public associations concerned will be affected as a result of the mentioned interventions and different consequences. Policies, respective stakeholders and regional cooperation arrangements might ignore the most vulnerable group of population, remote jamoats and/or villages bordering with neighboring countries. One of the pragmatic operation tools is to develop a risk log for registration of potential social risks and track on a regular (e.g. monthly, quarterly, etc.) basis. The risk log must pre-identify mitigating measures against each risk.

Regional collaboration for CA+ is becoming more and more important, considering the peculiarities – both political and social – of bordering regions of Tajikistan with Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan. The social effects and consequences of the regional cooperation will be having direct impact on Water Users Associations, Pasture Users Unions, private sector dealing with ecotourism, smallholder farmers and individual households. Joint trans-boundary landscape restoration plans and/or programs between two or more states may help targeted districts by involving their communities, civil society organizations, local authorities and other drivers. The recommendation is that when entering regional arrangements and cooperation frameworks, the interests and conditions of relevant communities residing in bordering zones should be taken into account. When citizens feel they are part of the joint discussions and planning, there will be less social risks, such as tension between communities and between nations. Regional educational events and workshops should include participation of representatives of civil society, who can, along with government officials, advocate for the benefits of disadvantaged people, vulnerable communities, women and children.

7.2 Key Social Issues to be Considered during the Project Design

Under this subsection, the components and sub-components of the Project are reviewed from the social perspective. Under each proposed project activities, key notes made, and relevant recommendations are proposed.

Component 1. Strengthen Institutions and Policies, and Regional Collaboration. This component will finance consulting services, goods and equipment to support the strengthening of national institutional policies and legal frameworks, developing of knowledge and skills of government, communities and other stakeholders for landscape management, and improving the capacities of government partners to operate effectively.

Sub-component 1.1. Strengthen Institutions and Policies. a) Strengthening policy, legal and implementation frameworks. The project will finance analysis, revisions and adoption of existing policy, legal and implementation frameworks for forests, pastures, and PAs to help align these with national and

international obligations. Areas for potential revision that would support new and innovative approaches to integrated landscape management will also be explored, e.g., for expanding the areas in which JFM can be implemented.

Landscape Restoration Strategy and Action Plan. The project will finance preparation of a national landscape restoration strategy and action plan. This activity will build on the results of the Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM).²⁹

Protected Area Strategy and Action Plan. There is no overall national PA strategy and action plan to guide the development and management of the PA system. Similar in scope to the National Forest Strategy and Action Plan, the strategy will define the intentions, priorities and measures for the reform and key development of the country's PA system for the next 15-20 years.

Anticipated social effects. When designing policies, strengthening institutions and enhance regional cooperation, districts, communities and public associations concerned will be affected as a result of the mentioned interventions and different consequences. Policies, respective stakeholders and regional cooperation arrangements might ignore the most vulnerable group of population, remote jamoats and/or villages bordering with neighboring countries. Considering the recent geopolitical developments in Tajik-Kyrgyz border (during spring 2021) and Tajik-Afghan border (in summer 2021), the Component 1 will cause effects on people residing at those communities.

Key recommendations. During the implementation of the activities under the Component 1 and its sub-components, it is recommended to avoid ignorance of the socio-economic conditions of the targeted 10 districts, particularly those villages that live across the borders. Institutions and stakeholders – to be capacitated – should use participatory approach when entering regional cooperation frameworks and developing necessary strategies or plans for landscape restoration. One of the pragmatic operation tools is to develop a risk log for registration of potential social risks and track on a regular (e.g. monthly, quarterly, etc.) basis. The risk log must pre-identify mitigating measures against each risk.

b) Institutional Capacity Building. The project will finance a range of important and necessary capacity building activities to improve and increase knowledge and skills of staff, as well as equip central and field units with essential equipment, materials, vehicles, and investment to improve working conditions. These activities will be elaborated during preparation and reviewed regularly during implementation to ensure that they remain relevant to staff of the participating institutions. As many other development interventions, the present Project sets forth capacity building and capacity development activities within its generic plan. It lists both soft and hard interventions for capacity building. Despite of this, it would be of paramount importance to conduct series of consultation meetings with beneficiary entities to better identify the needs and capacity gaps.

Rehabilitation and improvement of SFE offices, district-level Pasture Commissions and selected Special PA units. The project will finance the purchase and installation of office and field equipment, as well as vehicles to improve field operations of field and district units. For select offices, the project will finance the purchase of machinery such as tractors for field operations, as well the construction of living quarters for field staff. Initial estimates of requirements from the various government agencies have been prepared and will be elaborated during project preparation.

Anticipated social effects. Should the institutions be under the focus of the Project's interventions, the employees will benefit from learning new skills and knowledge on strategy developments, planning, management and implementation of activities aimed at landscape restoration. Undermining wider participation of relevant institutions and personal in trainings, workshops and supply of machineries might be undermined, which eventually affect the inclusiveness of the Project.

²⁹ ROAM provides analytical outputs on (i) land degradation and deforestation geospatial/ biophysical aspects and; (ii) economic modeling within a framework that assess the social, political and institutional readiness to implement large-scale restoration.

Key recommendations. The Project needs careful consideration in engaging relevant stakeholder and people in training activities as well as in provision of equipment and machineries for field work. Promotion inclusiveness, participatory approach and civic participation will lead to more democratic ways of policy design and decision-making, hereby reducing social intra-country and inter-country social tensions between nations, national minorities.

c) Strengthening research and knowledge management. The project will support a range of analytical and data generation activities to strengthen the country's research base and knowledge management for landscape management approaches. These activities include: i) research and analytical studies to be carried out in partnership with research and academic institutions on topics such as assessing drivers of land degradation, climate risk assessment, market development and access, PES feasibility assessment and piloting, ecological fiscal transfers; ii) knowledge management through support for platforms, such as Sustainable Land Management Tajikistan (SLMTJ), and dissemination focusing on exchange and learning and similar initiatives, and annual review meetings; and iii) study tours and exchanges within the country, with neighboring countries, and further afield to other countries.

Anticipated social effects. Should research works follow the guidance of Social Assessment, they will be including the (i) social issues; and (ii) key stakeholders. Drivers of land degradation are ordinary people, smallholder farmers, districts, pasture user associations and other relevant stakeholders and therefore excluding them in knowledge management activities would entail social exclusion of natural resources users, first of all landscapes. There are certain risks that research and knowledge management suffer from sound analysis and collection of evidences, and eventual dissemination of knowledge products among stakeholders and countries about environmental issues, climatic affairs and market situations.

Key recommendations. To set the operation of the above-mentioned activity in a way that can collect accurate data, process soundly and disseminate compelling data for evidence-based policy making, joint programming and implementation. To ensure data systematically collected, processed and disseminated, it is suggested to make efforts on enriching the existing data platforms (such as Data Management System, Forests Data and Management System, OSNOVA, GeoNode – web-GIS portal, etc) and enhancing the emerging databases, i.e. Sustainable Land Management Tajikistan. Regardless of the database system in place, the Committee of Environmental Protection, Forestry Agency, Agency of Land Reclamation and Irrigation and Ministry of Agriculture will have to make sure that information about landscape, forest area, operations of pasture and forest users, administrative mappings and GIS data are all incorporated and used appropriately.

Sub-component 1.2. Strengthen Regional Collaboration. The objective of this sub-component is to promote collaboration among Central Asia countries on transboundary landscape restoration given the critical need to address new emerging threats at the regional level, such as the impacts of climate change. This sub-component will help, *inter alia*, to manage shared resources, exploit economies of scale related to regional tourism, and facilitate collective action to address these and other common goals.

This sub-component will contribute to Regional Platform for harmonization of policies and capacity building programs related to interventions that provide regional and global public goods. It will support Tajikistan's participation in the implementation of several key regional activities identified by the five countries in the 2020 10-year Regional Environmental Program for Sustainable Development (endorsed under the auspices of the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development- [ICSD](#)), including: (i) exchange of experience, (ii) development of MoUs for facilitating border-crossing for ecotourism, (iii) development of MoUs for using common modern methods of inventory of flora and fauna diversity, (iv) development of a joint trans-boundary management plan for ecological corridors for migratory animals and protection of key species and habitats, (v) development of MoUs for using nature-based solutions for landscape restoration; (vi) development of a joint protocol of activities on protection and preservation of sites, as well as potential "Peace Parks"; and (vii) conducting regional fora, conferences, and symposiums.

The Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC) will execute this sub-component under a

contract with the GoT given its regional mandate and capacities. CAREC will partner with other entities, such as FAO, UNDP, UCA, and International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), to execute specific activities. CAREC will work with the countries to mobilize political commitment and support for activities that provide regional public goods.

Anticipated social effects. Regional collaboration for CA+ is becoming more and more important, considering the peculiarities – both political and social – of bordering regions of Tajikistan with Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan. The social effects and consequences of the regional cooperation will be having direct impact on Water Users Associations, Pasture Users Unions, private sector dealing with ecotourism, smallholder farmers and individual households. Joint trans-boundary landscape restoration plans and/or programs between two or more states may help targeted districts by involving their communities, civil society organizations, local authorities and other drivers.

Key recommendations. The overall recommendation is that when entering regional arrangements and cooperation frameworks, the interests and conditions of relevant communities residing in bordering zones should be taken into account. When citizens feel they are part of the joint discussions and planning, there will be less social risks, such as tension between communities and between nations. Regional educational events and workshops should include participation of representatives of civil society, who can, along with government officials, advocate for the benefits of disadvantaged people, vulnerable communities, women and children.

Component 2. Resilient Landscapes and Livelihoods. Overall, this component will finance works, consulting services, non-consulting services, goods, and grants. Both government institutions and communities will implement a range of landscape restoration investments. To support the selection of investments, assistance will be provided for landscape restoration planning.

All planning will encourage women’s leadership, will follow citizen engagement mechanisms, and will be based on good practice principles for a landscape approach when reconciling different and often competing land uses. CEP and Tajik organizations have considerable prior experience in participatory planning with both WBG’s and other donor-support projects. The participatory planning processes will build on lessons learned from the range of past and current projects and programs in rural development, as well as from natural resource management and climate resilience projects^{30,31}.

Participatory Catchment Community Action Plans (CCAPs) covering five to ten years will be developed. These plans will be more tactical in nature covering catchments identified in the diagnostic key areas for landscape restoration investments to be designed and implemented by government agencies and communities. The CCAPs will be translated into relevant planning instruments for implementation by local bodies, organizations or groups, e.g., pasture user unions, SFEs, FUGs, jamoats, Water User Associations (WUAs).

Anticipated social effects. Land degradation is one of the major causes of rural poverty, as well as one of its effects. This intervention shall improve the welfare of members of WUAs, FUGs, OUs and communities through technical assistance to building resilient landscapes and creating livelihoods. Such investments will entail short and medium-term job opportunities for the targeted districts. The land restoration planning process will engage women to play the leading roles and therefore, the social effects would be relatively higher. In materializing the five-year CCAPs, the targeted communities would benefit from activities such as bank protection activities and irrigation water facilities, which in turn, support relevant stakeholders to achieve better results. One of the immediate social effects of joint planning between nations is underpinning ‘seeds’ for peace and stability in conflict-prone areas.

Key recommendations. The stakeholders should break the cycle of poverty-causing of land degradation

³⁰ Caritas. 2019. Disaster Risk Reduction- Opportunities for sustained action to reduce vulnerability and exposure, Policy Brief TJ19-101.

³¹ GIZ. 2019. Integrative Land Use Management Approaches in Tajikistan.

and reduce poverty through sustainable land management, particularly in the drylands where the poorest, most vulnerable and marginalized people live.

Sub-component 2.1 Forest Restoration and Sustainable Forest Management. The Forestry Agency will lead on the technical aspects of this subcomponent, while the financial and procurement management responsibilities will remain with CEP. This subcomponent includes the following key activities.

1. National Forest Inventory. The project will finance a national-level systematic National Forest Inventory (NFI) using a low sampling density.
2. Forest management plans. The project will finance the preparation and implementation of up to 10 sustainable forest management plans for SFEs in the project sites. Preparation of the plans will build upon experience of earlier methods.³²

Implementation of sustainable forest management plans. This will include carrying out silvicultural treatments such as assisted natural regeneration, grazing management, thinning, stand management, fire management, forest protection and so on. Activities will include:

- a) *Afforestation and fuelwood plantation.* The Forest Agency will carry out afforestation in approximately 4,120ha (including 220 ha of fuelwood plantation) in the project districts.
- b) *Assisted natural regeneration.* SFEs will further improve SFF land through assisted natural regeneration in 8,000 ha. SFEs will carry out activities which will include measures such as fencing to protect regenerating areas, soil improvement and enrichment planting to increase the quality and number of trees and/or species diversity.
- c) *Forest nurseries.* The project will support semi-modernization measure in eight nurseries in project SFEs.
- d) *Joint Forest Management.* Based on experience,³³ the project will look to develop contracts primarily with Forest User Groups (FUGs) rather than individual households. FUGs will sign contracts for the land use rights with the SFEs for a period of at least 20 years.
- e) *Household-based forest nurseries.* The project will promote the development of private backyard nurseries to bolster seedling supply for JFM and afforestation, and as an income generation activity for rural households. A start-up grant will support nursery establishment procure initial inputs. The average size of such a nursery is expected to be 0.5 to 1.5 ha., and about 50 are expected to be established in the project sites.

Anticipated social effects. Considering the prevalence of poverty at selected districts, provision of small grants to households to small-scale forest nurseries and planting of seedlings would support people to source their livelihoods, sources of income and subsistence and thereby contributing to the larger forestation scale. Youth as a key agent of the development process can benefit from participation in reforestation activities and forests managements. An immediate social effect for people will be improved land condition, erosion-free lands and increased areas of fuel-wood plantations.

Key recommendations. In provision of assistance through small grants initiatives, it is recommended to involve unemployed women and female-headed households and unemployed youth, especially in districts where the share of female-headed households are relatively high (Nosiri Khisrav) and those district that have higher unemployment rates among women (K.Mastchoh and Murghab district).

Following the Focus Group Discussions conducted with local government authorities in 10 targeted districts, the participants requested assistance for intensive and semi-intensive orchards, processing of herbs and forest products, provision of machineries (e.g., tractors)³⁴.

Sub-component 2.2 Integrated Pasture Management and Restoration. The PRT of the Ministry of

³² Under the KfW supported project “Climate Adaptation through Sustainable Forestry in Important River Catchment Areas in Tajikistan” a methodology for the preparation of participatory forest management plans for SFEs has been developed. At present only Khovaling SFE, a project site for KfW has a such a plan.

³³ KfW supported project “Climate Adaptation through Sustainable Forestry in Important River Catchment Areas in Tajikistan” (add GIZ)

³⁴ Meeting minutes of the Focus Group Discussions in 10 targeted districts are available with the Public Organisation ‘Znaniya’.

Agriculture will lead on technical aspects of this sub-component, which includes the following key activities.

(a) *Geobotanical surveys and pasture inventories.* The project will finance cadastral assessment of pasture resources and geo-botanical surveys in the project districts, with data digitized for planning and monitoring purposes. Within this activity, the project will pilot the use of ‘smart inventories’ based on updated methods and statistical analysis.

(b) *Forage seed demonstration plots.* Establishment of seed demonstration plots for native forage species in two project locations, each covering 100ha.

(c) *Pasture/livestock Management Plans.* The project will support sustainable pasture/fodder-based livestock production systems in selected areas. The focus of support will be PUUs, whether these are to be created or existing unions are to be strengthened. Where PUUs are to be created, these will be primarily at village and jamoat levels (and at district level, if needed, depending on resource use regimes). In the project districts, financing will be provided for the development and implementation of up to 70 PMPs by PUUs in line with the requirements of the Pasture Law.

Anticipated social affects. Pastures conditions and impoverished pasture lands are likely to impact most heavily on people who are dependent on those lands. Geo-botanical surveys can identify along with digital assessments will support to select the optimal ways of managing pastures.

Key recommendations. Effective responses to climate change and depleted pastures will need to be identified in the pasture management plant and implemented collectively to ensure that the CA countries minimize any adverse impacts.

Sub-component 2.3 Protected Area Management and Biodiversity Conservation. This subcomponent will be technically led by the SENPA, as part of CEP, and includes the following key activities.

(a) *Priority PA Management Plans.* Management plans will be prepared or updated for selected protected areas. Potential PAs include Tajik National Park and Zorkul Special Reserve in GBAO (which borders the Kyrgyz Republic and Afghanistan), Yagnob National Park in Sughd and State Natural Reserve Tigrovaya Balka in Khatlon (bordering Afghanistan). Management plans are not in place for all PAs, and if they exist, they are outdated.

(b) *Implementation of PA management plans.* Support for implementation would include activities such as establishment of monitoring systems and protocols including remote and field-based monitoring, e.g., camera, traps, drones, surveys, etc. Other PA management investments include tourism facilities, signage, protection infrastructure, and plans to restore/protect about 10,000ha in and around PAs. Key activities the project will support include a) boundary demarcation; b) installation of information panels in popular places; c) census of Marco Polo sheep, Ibex and Snow Leopard and analyses of their habitats; d) protect and enhance habitat of key species; e) promotion of ecotourism and related activities; and f) publishing booklets, maps with tourist destinations, natural, historical and cultural sites.

Anticipated social effects. Setting boundary demarcation will reduce social tense and existing conflicts in dispute territories with Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan. Promotion of ecotourism will create job opportunities for unemployed population living in settlements located nearby protected areas (PAs). Regular field visits for monitoring purposes will give additional knowledge and awareness for national authorities and communities about conditions of areas within PAs, based on which can develop their plans and prioritized actions. Because the main cause of border conflicts is the resources (primarily, water, landscape), it would be more effective if the Project gets engaged closely with communities residing in bordering districts. Participatory approach in planning the project activities will emerge the people feel engaged and heard, thereby creating cohesion, understanding and mutual cooperation with neighboring communities. At the implementation stage, the cooperation and close engagement will guarantee success in operational affairs. People from all social backgrounds, particularly nationalities living in bordering zones, women and youth, people with special needs and disabilities, should be and remain as an integral part of the planning and implementation phases.

Key recommendations. At the time of developing PA management plans, civic participation and democratic principles of people-driven development should be applied. Distribution of duties and responsibilities between bordering countries (mainly Afghanistan and Kyrgyzstan) in PA management plans should be clear enough.

Sub-component 2.4. Community-level Livelihoods. The project will provide grants to groups of land users/farmers – Common Interest Group (CIG), rural households as well as to jamoats to implement small-scale livelihood investments.

(a) Climate-smart crop production practices and technologies. The project will support crop land-based livelihoods, through sub-grants for sub-projects identified and selection in the above plans to groups of farmers that form common interest groups (CIGs), o Both will be eligible for grants to address degradation issues such as on-farm salination, erosion, and low productivity in ways that can increase income for members and reduce degradation impacts and increase climate adaptation. The focus will be the adoption of practices such as: a) diversification of agricultural/horticultural crops; b) improved crop varieties and biotechnology that reduce emissions; c) adoption of water-efficient crops and varieties, and cultivation methods; d) erosion control measures such as increasing vegetative cover along the sides of linear infrastructure such as roads and planting of shelterbelts; e) harvesting and processing of different crops, including cooling, storage; f) reduced tillage intensity and cover crops, crop rotation, perennial cropping systems, cultivation of deep rooting species; g) higher inputs of organic matter to soil, processing and application of manure.

Anticipated social effects. Support to communities for livelihood improvement through grants will alleviate poverty of the rural people, who are employed in agriculture and farming. The Project aims at increasing efficiency of water use and crop cultivation, which will capacitate the farmers, interested groups and individual households to improve their food security, social welfare, nutrition status, etc.

Key recommendations. During provision of grants, it is recommended to consider the socio-economic status of beneficiaries, national minorities, vulnerable groups, particularly women and children, youth and those having the worst living infrastructure near Pas. Ecotourism is a promising area for the entire country, but the targeted 10 districts under this Project can benefit from active involvement in development of investment cases, business opportunities and low-cost production of national handicrafts to gain from tax exemptions.

8. Implementation Arrangements for Social Management Framework

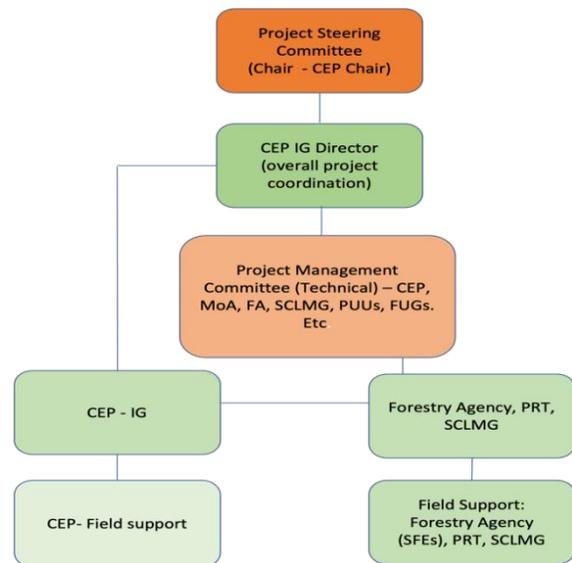
8.1 Project Implementation Arrangements

The ESMF, RPF and SEP implementation will rely heavily on the implementation arrangements of the Project.

8.1.1. Project coordination

Project Steering and Management Committees. A Project Steering Committee (PSC) will be established during project implementation and will include representatives of CEP, Forest Agency, PRT, SENPA, MEWR, SCLMG, relevant RBOs, Ministry of Finance and Economy, University of Central Asia (UCA) and representatives of PUUs and FUGs. Chaired by CEP Chairman, the PSC will provide oversight, coordination and guidance on project management. A Project Management Committee (PMC) will provide a technical level support and coordination and will be co-chaired by the IG coordinator. PMC will include Project Coordinator, technical specialists from the IA, project partners and other technical institutions relevant for project implementation. Details of these arrangements will be provided in the Project Operations Manual (POM).

Other Key Project Partners. The CEP as the lead IA for the Project will be supported by and work closely with various beneficiary agencies: (i) Forest Agency for activities related to National Forest Inventory, forest management planning, afforestation, and JFM; (ii) Pasture Reclamation Trust (in the Ministry of Agriculture) for pasture inventory activities and plans, and geobotanical surveys; and (iii) Protected Areas Enterprise for projected areas management planning and investments; and iv) the State Committee for Land Management and Geodesy, primarily with its mapping unit, FAZO for natural resource inventories and general GIS services. Cooperation between the CEP and these agencies will be set out in Memoranda of Understanding that define the roles and responsibilities of each institution and will be signed by project negotiations.



8.1.2. Implementing Agency (IA)

The project is implemented by the CEP, whose mandate is to coordinate policies and investments on sustainable natural resource management, climate change mitigation and adaptation, environmental monitoring, and awareness. Other three agencies SFA, PRT, SENPA will be technical leads for subcomponents 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 respectively, but main fiduciary responsibilities remain with CEP. For Component 1.2, CEP will contract the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC), given its regional mandate and capacities.

CEP Functions in Implementation and Staffing. The overall responsibility for project management will be with CEP and its Implementation Group (IG). The IG will be responsible for project coordination and will act as the lead agency. The CEP IG will be responsible for fiduciary management, environmental and social risk management, contract management and monitoring and evaluation and supervision of

implementation of project activities under Components 1 and 2. At the central unit of the IG, personnel will comprise: Project Director Chair, IG Director, project field coordinator and component coordinators. The project will support procurement, financial management, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) specialists, technical specialists (e.g., forestry, pasture, PA management, water resources, agriculture), and environmental and social/gender specialists. The appointed Project Director and the component coordinators will be civil servants who will be supported by local specialists.

CEP Field Support. At the local level, Project implementation will also be supported through project-financed field-based focal points located in seven of the 10 project districts.

Table 16. Government Partners and Functions in Project Implementation

Government Ministry/Committee/Agency	Division/Department/Other	Key functions in Project Implementation
Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP)	Implementation Group (IG) – Center and field focal points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IG reports to Chair of CEP who acts as Project Director • Overall project coordination and management • Implementation of Components 1 and 2 • Reporting to WBG on project implementation progress, including technical, fiduciary, E&S, and M&E aspects • Preparation and consolidation of workplan and budget
	State Enterprise for Natural and Protected Areas (SENPA) and selected PA management units	Operates as part of CEP. Technical support on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PA management planning, • Implementation of project-financed PA investments, • Participation in PMC • M&E tasks as allocated by CEP IG
Forestry Agency	Forestry Department	Technical support and oversight on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of forest management plans • Implementation of forest management plans including afforestation, forest nurseries, JFM with FUGs, and other activities as developed • Reporting on field implementation and M&E aspects as agreed with CEP IG
Ministry of Agriculture	Pasture Reclamation Trust (PRT) and district Pasture Commissions	Technical support and oversight on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of pasture management plans with PUUs • Implementation of pasture management plans by PUUs • Forage seed demonstration plots • Reporting on field implementation and M&E aspects as agreed with CEP IG
State Committee for Land Management and Geodesy (SCLMG)	FAZO (State Mapping Agency)	Technical support and participation in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geobotanical surveys and pasture inventories • GIS and mapping support for resource planning

8.2. Roles and Responsibilities in ESF Implementation

CEP will be main coordinating body and will be staffed with necessary resources and technical capacity to support overall ESF implementation. Role of CEP IG:

- Review and approve screening of the sub-projects with regard to WB E&S risk categorization.
- Coordinate acquisition of technical assistance for preparation of ESA documents in accordance with the World Bank's ESF requirements.
- Establish an ESF Team and organize training of ESF Team regarding World Bank's E&S assessment standards and procedures, consultation and disclosure requirements.
- Provide final review of ESA documents prepared by PIG and provide approval as per WB's ESSs requirements.
- Establish and ensure effective implementation of the grievance mechanism and coordinate with the regional branches, as well as monitoring and reporting;
- Collect and compile implementation reports from regional branches, and report to the WB on a regular basis regarding implementation of the ESMF and associated instruments (SEP, RF, PF, RPF, ESCP, LM Procedures, etc.).
- Undertake the screening process of the sub-projects regarding E&S risk categorization according to the World Bank's ESF requirements.
- Prepare ESA documents and present to CEP for final approval, CEP should have consolidated reports on all project activities.
- Report to the CEP IG as per implementation of ESIAs/ESMPs, SEPs, LMPs, PF, ESCP, RPF and GRM quarterly during construction stage and semi-annually during the implementation/operation stage.
- Report to CEP IG on records of chance finds, OHS accidents, received grievances, consultations.
- Perform monthly supervision of the implementation of ESMF, RF, RPF, PF, LMP, ESCP, site-specific E&S documents and any other ESSs requirements by their respective branches/regional Directorates (RDs) and Field Offices (FOs), and document performance, recommendations and any further actions required as part of overall project supervision reporting to the WB.
- Monitor and audit environmental and social issues at the sites (including OHS issues) through data collected from the site visits.

CEP field support staff will have the following roles and responsibilities:

- Implement the ESIAs/ESMPs, SEPs, LMPs, RPF, PF, BMP, relevant measures of ESCP
- Be open and responsive to concerns raised by affected groups and local environmental authorities regarding environmental and social aspects of sub-project implementation.
- Execute consultations with these groups during site visits, as necessary.
- Compile and present quarterly Monitoring Reports to the IG
- Inform central-level CEP IG promptly on the status of implementation of ESIAs/ESMPs and any anticipated changes to those
- Carry out regular stakeholder engagement in line with the SEP and report to IG regularly
- Ensure smooth and correct implementation of the ESIAs/ESMPs, SEP, LMP, RPF, PF, GM, BMP. Ensure that contractors implement ESMPs, BMP, LMP and other tools and ensure that ESS standards are followed
- Assist the central level IG for compiling and presenting regular monitoring Reports

Other Key Project Partners. The CEP as the lead IA for the Project will be supported by and work closely with various beneficiary agencies: (i) Forest Agency for activities related to National Forest Inventory, forest management planning, afforestation, and JFM; (ii) Pasture Reclamation Trust (in the Ministry of

Agriculture) Trust for pasture inventory activities and plans, and geobotanical surveys; and (iii) Protected Areas Enterprise for projected areas management planning and investments; and iv) the State Committee for Land Management and Geodesy, primarily with its mapping unit, FAZO for natural resource inventories and general GIS services. Cooperation between the CEP and these agencies will be set out in Memoranda of Understanding that define the roles and responsibilities of each institution and will be signed by project negotiations.

Site Specific Instruments to be prepared during implementation. A site-specific assessment will be conducted in accordance with the WB ESSs, and site-specific ESF instruments will be prepared as a result of such evaluation. These will be the responsibility of CEP IG E&S staff, supported by CEP IG field staff, local khukumats and jamoats. Table 17 indicates the process flow for the ESF instruments development:

Table 17: ESF Instruments Development Process Flow

Step 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The IG Environmental and Social Specialists supported field staff will conduct screening of the subprojects with regard to prohibited/excluded activities; b) If the subproject passes the screening for the list of prohibited/excluded activities, the IG Environmental and Social Specialists complete Environmental and Social Screening Forms; c) Based on the Checklists to determine the risk category;
Step 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) If the subproject requires a complete socio-economic profiling of Project Affected People (PAPs) and inventory of losses, it should be referred to the IG for further action. b) For <i>Substantial and Moderate Risk subprojects</i>, the IG Social Development Specialist notes potential social risks and indicates how they will be prevented/mitigated in the Social Screening Table
Step 3	If the subproject is selected for funding, the IG E&S Specialists supported by IG field staff, jamoats and khukumats will prepare ESF instruments (ESIAs, ESMPs, RAPs)
Step 4	The IG will disclosure of the draft instruments and organizes a public consultation, involving NGOs, community representatives, affected groups, etc. Formal minutes will be prepared to record inputs provided by the participants.
Step 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The subproject applicant will submit the full set of resettlement documents for consideration and further decision on funding; b. Upon approval of sub-projects, the IG/ will complete subproject appraisal and proceed with signing of the financing agreement with respective sub-project beneficiaries.

The implementation arrangements of the ESF instruments build on implementation arrangements in line with the WB's ESSs outlined in the ESMF, SEP, LMP, PF and RPF. Distribution of the responsibilities of all parties involved in the ESF instruments implementation is given in Table 18.

Table 18: Roles and Responsibilities during ESF Instruments Implementation

Responsible Party	Responsibilities
CEP/IG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the ESF plans with the WB and disclose them at the CEP website • Arrange for the government funding approval and disbursements for the resettlement plans implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement ESF instruments on site and provide regular reporting on implementation to the WB • Summarize and report on E&S performance to WB in regular progress reports. • Be open to comments from affected groups and local authorities regarding E&S risks during project implementation. Meet with these groups during site visits, as necessary. • Provide guidance to the construction contractor and engineering supervision firm to follow the resettlement plans requirements on site together with local khukumat focal points. • Coordinate and liaise with WB supervision missions regarding environmental and social risk management aspects of project implementation. • Conduct regular monitoring activities for the implementation of site-specific resettlement plans;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage GRM database and provide regular reporting on the number and substance of grievances
CEP IG field staff supported by local khukumats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize local disclosure of the final ESF instruments and arrange public meetings, involving NGOs, community representatives, affected groups, etc. Formal minutes will be prepared to record inputs provided by the participants. • Manage the grievance mechanism at the district level; • support implementation of E&S screening of project sites during project implementation.
Contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comply with the project’s ESF requirements • Develop, implement and report on Contractor’s ESF instruments; • Compensate or fix all damages occurred during construction (i.e. damages to crops, infrastructure) as set out in Resettlement plan/RPF and cleared with the IG. • Manage GRM at the contractor’s level
World Bank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the site-specific ESF instruments and provide no objections to the PIU. • Disclose final Resettlement plans on WB’s official website • Conduct implementation support and supervision missions in order to ensure that the Project is in compliance with WB ESSs.

The above table describes the optimal arrangements that build on responsibilities already in place to ensure that the ESF requirements are met for each project activity. These are based on the institutional structure at the time of preparing the ESMF. Should these institutional structures change, this will need to be reflected in the arrangements outlined.

The CEP IG will facilitate stakeholder/citizen engagement through recruiting local NGOs and community-based organizations. Recruited NGOs/CBOs will work with dehqan farms, WUAs, PUU, FUU, agribusiness representatives, communities, other NGOs and business associations to raise their awareness on the project components, brief them on latest plans and actions, and solicit their views on the project progress. The purpose is to strengthen public consultations and secure the buy-in of stakeholders to ensure smooth and proper project implementation. The roles and responsibilities of main actors are summarized in the Table 19 below.

Table 19. Responsibilities of key actors/stakeholders in SEP Implementation

Stakeholder	Responsibilities
CEP/IG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan, coordinate implementation and report on SEP activities; • Lead stakeholder engagement activities; • Redress grievances and manage grievance database; • Monitor and report on ESF performance to the World Bank. • Facilitate and implement the stakeholder awareness, education and consultations campaigns at the national level; • Consult, disclosure and implement site specific ESF instruments (ESIAs/ESMPs, RAPs, if needed).
CEP/IG field staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forward all Project relevant complaints to appropriate district GRM Focal Point or CEP/IG;
Supported by CEP district departments/khukumats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in implementation of assigned activities in the SEP • Provide report on all complaints to the district GRM Focal Point • Establish and facilitate the work of the Local Grievance Redress Group • Make available the disclosed SEP and GRM procedures.

CEP/Environmental Information Center of the Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register the appeals coming through website and hotlines (+99237) 2354430. WhatsApp, Telegram и Imo - (+992) 777162275 • Share a summary report on all project specific complaints to the IG GRM Focal Point.
NGOs/CBOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate and implement the stakeholder awareness, educational and consultation campaigns at the local level
Project affected parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lodge their grievances using the Grievance Mechanism defined in the SEP; • Help the Project to define mitigation measures.

8.3. ESF Institutional Capacity Building Activities

The ESF instruments requires special knowledge from the beneficiaries and all project participants at each stage of the project. To ensure the effective implementation of the project and a clear understanding of the requirements for environmental and social risks managements to comply with the new WB ESSs, an ESF Training Plan is proposed under this project. The program provides training in both general environmental policy principles of the World Bank, relevant national legislation, and in certain specific aspects relevant to this project. It is planned to conduct training and provide information on such topics as the introduction of ESMF, reporting on ESMF/ ESMP, as well as on specific topics such as the use of pesticides in agriculture, integrated pest management, handling, storage and dispose of chemicals.

CEP has experience in implementation of investment projects funded by various IFIs. Under these projects sets of training were provided as a part of capacity building. Nevertheless, taking into account specificity of the project, a wide range of planning activities it is essential to increase capacity of implementation agency to comply with the new ESSs requirements.

For the said purpose, within two months of the project launch, CEP will hire a Consultant with knowledge of the national environmental and social management requirements, as well as substantial knowledge of the provisions and requirements of the World Bank’s ESSs, who will develop training materials and trainings themselves. The training will include key WB requirements, national rules and procedures for E&S risk management, as well as case studies in this regard. All developed training materials, after the first series of trainings by the Consultant will be transferred to the Implementing Agency for further application.

8.4. Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM)

The existing national GRM regulatory framework and timelines will be utilized by the project to file project specific complaints. The timeline for the grievance processing is 15 days upon registration, and 30 days if cases require additional investigations and review.

Grievances can be filed at the following two levels:

Table 20. GRM levels

To whom is the complaint filed	Form of submission	Complaint management procedure	Time for consideration of complaints
Local level: Local government authorities (district) and IG/field staff	Verbal, Written In electronic format	1. Register complaint/ proposal in the Log for registration of complaints and proposals; 2. Maintain and monitor the process of	15 days <i>30 days for the appeals that need</i>

		<p>reviewing and responding to complaints;</p> <p>3. Reporting monthly in writing to the IG/PMU, to the Social Development Specialists on the status of work with complaints.</p> <p>If the issue cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant within 15 days, then it is taken to the next level. In the register of complaints and suggestions, a record is made about the solution of the problem or the decision to move it to the next level.</p>	additional study
National level: CEP/IG Social Development Specialists	Written, electronic, through websites	<p>1. Register a complaint in the Log for complaints and proposals;</p> <p>2. Maintain and monitor the process of reviewing and meeting the complaints;</p> <p>3. Consideration of the complaint may require additional verification of the issue, including collection of additional documents.</p> <p>3. Report on a monthly basis in written (depending on the nature of the issue) on the status of work with complaints.</p>	<p>15 days</p> <p><i>30 days for the appeals that need additional study</i></p>

LIST OF ANNEXES

Annex 1: Population data analysis - by the TRLRP project target districts.



Annex 1 Population data analysis - by the

Annex 2: Socio-economic data of the TRLRP project target districts.



Annex 2 Socio-economic data