

## Africa Mini-grid Programme in Niger

### Stakeholder Engagement Plan

#### Table of Contents

1	Introduction .....	3
1.1	Project description .....	3
1.2	Project location .....	4
1.3	Potential social and environmental issues .....	4
2	National Regulations and International Requirements .....	5
3	Stakeholders' Identification .....	5
3.1	Public Sector Entities .....	5
3.2	Renewable Energy Private Sector associations and Companies .....	6
3.3	Financial Institutions and other Development Partners Institutions .....	6
3.4	Educational Institutions .....	6
3.5	NGO and Local Development Associations .....	6
3.6	Local communities .....	6
3.7	Additional groups to be further defined during implementation .....	6
4	Stakeholder Consultation and Engagement during PPG Development .....	7
5	SEP Development: Strategy for Stakeholder Engagement during Project Implementation .....	8
5.1	Purpose and objectives .....	8
5.2	Engagement methods and communication mediums .....	8
5.3	Public Disclosure of Information (PDI) .....	9
5.4	Diversity, inclusion and gender-balance .....	10
6	SEP Implementation: Resources, Responsibilities and Timeline.....	10
6.1	Responsibilities .....	10
6.2	Resources .....	10
6.3	Timeline .....	11
7	Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) .....	14
8	Monitoring and Reporting .....	14

#### Acronyms and Abbreviations

AfDB : African Development Bank

ALG : Liptako Gourma Development Authority

AMP : Africa Minigrid Programme

ANERSOL : National Agency for Solar Energy

ANPER : Niger Agency for the Promotion of Electrification in Rural Areas

ARSE : Autorité de Régulation du Secteur de l'Energie

BOAD : West African Development Bank

CNEDD : Conseil National de l'Environnement pour un Développement Durable

ESMF : Environmental and Social Management Framework

GMG : Green Mini Grid

Gon : Government of Niger

GRM : Grievance Redress Mechanism

IDB : Islamic Development Bank

M&E :Monitoring and Evaluation

MG : Mini Grid

MTF : Multi-tier Framework

NELACEP : Electricity Access Expansion Project

NESAP : Niger Electric Solar Access Project

PAYGO : Pay As You Go

PDAE : *Plan Directeur D'accès à l'Electricity* (Master Plan for Electricity Access)

PPG : Project Preparation Grant

PPP : Public Private Partnership

SECU : Social and Environmental Compliance Unit

SEFA : Sustainable Fund for Africa

SEP : Stakeholder Engagement Plan

SES : Social and Environmental Safeguards

SRM : Stakeholders Response Mechanism

## Stakeholder Engagement Plan

### 1) Introduction

The purpose of developing a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) for the Africa Mini-grid Programme (AMP) national project in Niger (hereinafter referred to as the 'AMP in Niger' or 'the project') is to support the identification of key stakeholders and undertake the consultations required throughout the project cycle, i.e. project design during the Project Preparation Grant (PPG) stage, and project implementation during its 4 years' duration. The development and implementation of the SEP is also part of the UNDP Social and Environmental Safeguards (SES) requirements. Hence, the presented SEP will be reviewed and updated during the course of the social and environmental assessment processes required for the development of the project's Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF).

#### o Project description

Electricity supply is highly dependent on cheap electricity imports from Nigeria and expensive diesel-based domestic generation. Niger's energy mix is dominated by hydropower imported from Nigeria. Electricity imports accounted for 73% of total supply in 2017; 79.8% in 2018 and 77.3% in 2019 and 2020. National production is mainly based on expensive fuels, representing 17.3% of the mix energy in 2019. . The share of solar energy was only 0.9%, although the government of Niger wants to boost national production considerably. However, there are no subsidies given by the Government of Niger's (GoN) to the national utility for their national on-grid homogenized tariff which since 2020 reflects the costs (set by law). NIGELEC only gets its fuel tax-free to nourish its diesel generator. Solar energy accounts for 0.9% of Niger's energy mix which should increase with the GoN's will to do so. The 2027 planned 130MW hydropower plant in Kandadji should further contribute to GoN's efforts to increase the RE share in its energy mix. National electricity capacity today represents only 272MW (excluding mining companies IPP) with an import capacity of 194MW. The existing national grid has hence a limited capacity in addition to be fragmented with 4 grids across the country that are not connected to each other.

Niger's electricity demand should grow by 10% per annum in the coming years - one of the highest in the world. Growing population and low electricity access rates are the main levers of this increase. The electricity access rate is one of the lowest in Sub-Saharan Africa at around 19.5% based on a Multi-Tier Framework (MTF) survey done in 2018 (15.8% are connected to the national grid of NIGELEC). In addition, discrepancies are relatively high between urban and rural areas; the latter having only about 1% access rate.

Quite some efforts have been made lately to improve the electricity access rate, especially in rural areas and through green minigrids (GMG):

Improve the legal & regulatory framework and create a conducive environment to promote access to electricity and the promotion of green minigrids (GMG), incl. via programmes/projects such as NELACEP (World Bank), SEFA (AfDB), etc. However, a clear MG delivery model including the tariffication aspects is not yet available in this relatively nascent GMG market in Niger. The Plan Directeur d'Accès à l'Électricité (PDAE) for 2021-2025 identified clear criterias for rural localities which should benefit from MGs for their electrification (about 400 MGs). No National Dialogue is yet in place around MGs.

Promote the development and management of green & hybrid minigrids in rural areas in Niger, especially via a variety of MG feasibility studies supported by development partners in collaboration with ANPER such as Power Africa, Liptako-Gourma Development Authority (ALG), World Bank, AfDB, etc. as well as the construction of MGs itself. So far, end of April 2022, 14 MGs have been installed, out of which 10 by the Government (financed by Exim Bank of India), 1 by Plan International and 3 by private sector developers (1 offering a containerized MG solution). Other MGs are in the pipeline or under construction especially via the World Bank's NESAP project (7MGs with 2 Mauritanian companies who won the bid to electrify a total of 11 villages), ANPER itself (2 MGs), Plan International (9MGs with women-led multi-functional platforms) as well as IsDB, BOAD, etc. However, there is not yet one or multiple MG business models that are agreed upon. So far, these MGs adopt various business models more or less financially sustainable and not clearly supported by any relevant regulatory framework yet. A PPP concession model has been tested and a recent shift towards an affermage/leasing model seems to operate. While tariffs offered by the private sector were calculated based on the potential payment capacities of vulnerable rural populations, they still remain higher than the tariffs of the national utilities. Import duties exemption have been granted for some solar MG equipment but are not considered sufficient by the local developers asking for VAT tax exemption on top. Despite all the efforts made by the Government and its partners through these projects, local private developers still lack sufficient capacities to promote the MG industry due to various risks: limited technical competencies,

lack of financial capacities, missing suitable financial mechanisms provided by financial institutions in the country, limited payment capacities of very poor rural households in Niger, a conducive regulatory framework not yet available, MG profitability not yet clear, etc.

Some financial mechanisms have been put in place to support rural electrification (e.g. via the NESAP project) incl. PAYGO for SHS and productive use, a dedicated credit line for local solar entrepreneurs available at partnering financial institutions but so far with a relatively high interest rate (in discussion since). An additional major hurdle lies in the low purchasing power of rural households across Niger unable to either access finance or to pay back their loans (incl. PAYGO mechanisms). As such, Plan International partnered with MFI Capital Finance to provide guarantee lines for end-users to access inter alia solar ancillary equipment for productive use. As such, the future World Bank's HASKÉ project should offer some subsidy for solar ancillary products to rural end-users (households, productive use) (World Bank, n.d.).

The objective of the project is to increase energy access in rural area by reducing the cost and increasing the commercial viability of renewable energy mini-grids.

This project approach is participatory and collaborative, capitalizing on synergies between the various interventions of different stakeholders, in order, together, to contribute to available, reliable, affordable energy access and more greener energy in rural areas in Niger and to develop the market for clean mini-grids supported by the private sector.

The project is having five (5) components which are:

#### Component 1 – Policy and regulation

It aims to foster stakeholder ownership of a national mini-grid model and the adoption of appropriate policies and regulations to facilitate investments in low-carbon mini-grids.

#### Component 2: Innovation of business models with the private sector

It aims to develop innovative business models based on cost reduction are implemented, with enhanced private sector participation in the development of green mini-grid.

#### Component 3: Scaling up financing

It aims to set up financial sector actors ready to invest in a series of low-carbon mini-grids and concessional financial mechanisms to encourage large-scale investments.

#### Component 4: Digital, knowledge management

Digitization and integrated data are appropriated by stakeholders, in the development of the local mini-grid market. Knowledge, awareness and networking opportunities in the mini-grid market are known by stakeholders, including likings with international best practices

#### Component 5: Monitoring & evaluation

### ○ Project location

Activities under the AMP in Niger will be implemented at the country national level. Niger accounts for 8 regions.

Through SNAE and PDAE, about 400 rural localities will benefit from mini-grids. With the support of technical and financial partners, ANPER has already carried out several feasibility studies. ANPER has already defined a set of criteria for the selection of localities to be electrified. The AMP project has reinforced these criteria following relevant exchanges with the stakeholders. Hence, the exact location for the pilot projects sites under the AMP Niger will be identified during the first year of project implementation.

### ○ Potential social and environmental issues

The SESP has identified the following principles and project-level standards as relevant to the project:

- Programming Principle 2: Human Rights

- Programming Principle 3: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
- Programming Principle 5: Accountability
- Project- level Standard 1: Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Natural Resource Management
- Project- level Standard 2: Climate Change and Disaster Risk
- Project- level Standard 3: Community Health, Safety and Security
- Project- level Standard 4: Cultural Heritage
- Project- level Standard 5: Displacement and Resettlement
- Project- level Standard 6: Indigenous Peoples
- Project- level Standard 7: Labour and Working Conditions
- Project- level Standard 8: Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency

Detailed analysis of the above is presented in the project's SESP and ESMF.

## 2) National Regulations and International Requirements

In Niger the following laws and decrees the rules of environmental and social impact assessment of a project and the process include stakeholders' consultations.

Decree N°2019-027/PRN/MESU/DD of January 11, 2019, related to the implementation of Law N°2018-28 of May 14, 2018, determining the fundamental principles of environmental assessment in Niger and defines the steps and administrative procedures for Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIA), of any project or activity likely to have impacts on the environment.

Law N°2008-37 of July 10, 2008 amending and supplementing Law N°61-37 of November 24, 1961, regulating expropriation for public utility and temporary occupation and implementing decree N°2009-224/PRN/MU/H of August 12, 2009, setting the terms of application of the specific provisions of Law N°61-37, referred above, amended and supplemented by Law N°2008-37, referred above, relating to the involuntary displacement and resettlement of populations, specifies the rules relating to the declaration of public utility and the setting of compensation for expropriation.

In addition, the project will adhere to the relevant international obligations on public consultation and disclosure requirements related to the social and environmental assessment process, established by the Guidance Note of the UNDP Social and Environmental Standards (SES) for Stakeholder Engagement. By preparing this SEP, the project also meets the requirements of the GEF's Environmental and Social Safeguards Policy regarding stakeholder engagement.

## 3) Stakeholders' Identification

As part of the PPG development process, the project team identified several groups of stakeholders.

- **Public Sector Entities**
- Ministry of Energy and Renewable Energy
- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of Plan
- Ministry of Gender promotion and Child Protection
- Ministry of Technical and Vocational training
- Ministry of Environment (National Bureau for environmental and impact evaluation)
- Ministry of Industry and Youth Entrepreneurship
- Niger National Agency for Rural Electrification (ANPER)
- National Agency for Solar Energy (ANERSOL)
- Niger Electricity Company (NIGELEC)
- Energy Sector Regulation Authority (ARSE)
- Environmental Council for Sustainable Development (CNEDD)
- Investment Fund for Food Security in Niger
- National Agency for Information Society (ANSI)
- Access to Energy Services Promotion Project for local development (PPASE-DEL)
- Niger Agency for Investment Promotion and Strategic Project (ANPIPS)
- Accelerating Electricity Access in Niger (Haské Project)

- Local Collectivities
- Renewable Energy Private Sector associations and Companies
- Professional of Solar Energy Association (APE-Solaire)
- Mayaki Trading
- Hi Tech Solutions
- Prima Froid and Energy
- La Sahélienne de Génie Electrique
- Africa Green Tec
- Gimafor
- Benalya
- Yandalux
- Tabbat Namaste
- Bingazol
  
- Financial Institutions and other Development Partners Institutions
- World Bank
- African Development Bank
- Power Africa
- ORABANK
- SONIBANK
- BSIC
- SAHFI
- Capital Finance
- Mata and Matassa Investing
- UNDP
- World Food Programme (FAO)
- European Union Delegation in Niger
  
- Educational Institutions
- School of Mine, Industry and Geology (EMIG)
- University of Niamey
- School of Vocational training
  
- NGO and Local Development Associations
- Plan International Niger
- Niger Market Garden Federation
  
- Local communities

Local communities of relevance to the project can be categorized into two groups: communities in pilot locations and communities in non-pilot locations. Representatives of each group will be identified when the location for pilots is selected. Both groups will be further studied during the site assessment to be conducted during project implementation.

- Additional groups to be further defined during implementation
- Direct beneficiaries
  - Academics, educational institutions and vocational training centers
  - Financial institutions
  - Solar energy private sector
  - Investors
- Indirect beneficiaries

- Industry groups (agriculture, fisheries, manufacturing)
- Non-governmental Organization (NGOs) and private working on relevant projects and initiatives
  - Africa green Tec: has implemented and operating one mini-grid. In the process of developing and operating 50 mini-grid.
  - NGO Plan International: Has implemented one mini-grid and retroceded to ANPER. Is implementing several mini-grid mainly focused on productive use (mills) in Maradi and Tahoua region.
  - Prima froid and electricity, Tabbat Namaste and Bingazol, Private entrepreneurs have been supported by SEFA project to capacity building and develop feasibility studies for green mini-grid.
- Other groups of beneficiaries and affected persons
  - Workers unions
  - Women
  - Youth
  - Children
  - Disabled population
  - Human rights activists
  - Land rights activists
  - Minority and vulnerable groups

#### 4) Stakeholder Consultation and Engagement during PPG Development

As part of the PPG development, and in addition to the desk review and data collection exercise, the PPG team of National and International Consultants identified key stakeholders and engaged with them in a series of in-person and online meetings. The purpose of these meetings was to discuss the project objective, the suitability of the proposed strategy to the present needs of Niger and its alignment with national plans and ongoing market development. The discussions also aimed to identify the gaps which the AMP can work to fill, especially in the presence of several projects targeting energy access and renewable energy development financed by development partners other than the UNDP.

After the launching workshop of the PPG, by visio conference held on 7 april 2022 in Niamey, stakeholders' consultation has been carried out through Visio conference at national and international level. Other local consultation for data collection have been carried out by the national consultant.

However, the PPG International Team leader Consultant were able to perform a field mission to conduct the national validation workshop with the support of the national consultant and also seized the opportunity to meet additional stakeholders. Hence from april to june 2022, the following consultation meetings were conducted:

- 1) PPG Inception Workshop with stakeholders, organized and coordinated by UNDP with the support of the local Consultant.
- 2) PPG validation workshop with stakeholders organized and coordinated by UNDP with the support of the local Consultant.
- 3) Visio conference meetings with the following institutions:
  - Ministry of Energy and Renewable Energy
  - Niger Agency for Rural Electrification – ANPER (IP)
  - National Agency for Solar Energy = ANERSOL
  - Energy Sector Regulation authority - ARSE
  - World Bank
  - African Development Bank
  - NGO Plan International
- 4) Local meetings
  - Ministry of Energy and Renewable Energy
  - Ministry of Gender promotion and Child Protection
  - Ministry of Technical and Vocational training

- Ministry of Environment (National Bureau for environmental and impact evaluation)
- Niger National Agency for Rural Electrification (ANPER)
- National Agency for Solar Energy (ANERSOL)
- Investment Fund for Food Security in Niger
- Access to Energy Services Promotion Project for local development (PPASE-DEL)
- World Bank
- Professional of Solar Energy Association (APE-Solaire)
- Mayaki Trading
- Hi Tech Solutions
- Prima Froid and Energy
- La Sahélienne de Génie Electrique
- Africa Green Tec
- SONIBANK
- SAHFI
- Capital Finance
- Mata and Matassa Investing
- World Food Programme (FAO)
- European Union Delegation
- School of Mines, Industry and Geology
- Niger Market Garden Cooperatives Federation

The dissemination of project information during PPG consultations constituted the presentation of PowerPoint slides to stakeholders, followed by an exchange of additional information by e-mail, as required. Initial comments and feedback from participants in the meetings and workshops were summarized in the PPG Inception Report (issued in October 2020). The comments and recommendations from stakeholders and the UNDP review team shaped the updated project strategy which has been presented to stakeholders at end of the PPG phase to obtain final comments on the design and validate the overall project strategy before submission to GEFSEC.

## 5) SEP Development: Strategy for Stakeholder Engagement during Project Implementation

### ○ Purpose and objectives

Unlike grid-connected power plants, the successful operation of mini-grids requires continuous collaboration between operators and end-users. In the design of the pilots under the AMP in Niger, it is important to understand the needs and priorities of ESPs, but also the needs and priorities of the communities in which the mini-grids will be located, to obtain the necessary local support and ensure sustainability and longevity of the intervention.

Furthermore, the enhancement of the commercial viability of solar PV systems depends on the level of flow of information between stakeholder from the private sector and decision makers in the public sector. This flow will guarantee that the decisions made are well-informed and constitute the best use of resources to serve the best interest of the country and beneficiaries. The flow will also guarantee that investors, developers and ESPs are actively engaged in the development of regulations governing the energy sector before they become legally binding and are given the opportunity to utilize their technical expertise in the formulation of national plans and laws aiming to increase energy access rates and elevate the living conditions for populations in the rural areas.

Hence, this SEP is developed to ensure tripartite engagement of public entities, private sector actors, and representatives of beneficiaries and potentially affected communities in all stages of pilot development and overall project implementation.

### ○ Engagement methods and communication mediums

Notwithstanding the COVID-19 restrictions and social distancing recommendations, different types of engagement mediums is possible inside Niger. The following list presents the main engagement mediums to be utilized by the project team during implementation to ensure continuous engagement and active participation of stakeholders.

- 1) In-person meetings:
  - Consultation workshops: These workshops will have a pre-structured agenda which will be designed to present a specific result/report and discuss with stakeholders the best way forward. These workshops will also be an opportunity to gain consensus from stakeholders on a specific action plan prior to proceeding with implementation. Therefore, stakeholder consultation meetings and workshops are included in the project design as part of the main activities to be carried out by the consultants in charge of each output.
  - Interviews and focus group: These will be conducted with different groups of indirect beneficiaries, with special attention to ESPs and NGOs, to overcome their generally low participation capacity and ensure that their input is integrated in the different stages of project implementation. The Project Manager will be responsible for ensuring that these interviews and focus groups have been conducted by the responsible consultants, as appropriate.
  - Community based consultations: These consultations will focus on the pilot locations to identify and discuss stakeholder concern within the community environment, but will also extend to neighboring villages and communities. The SES Officer will be responsible for conducting these consultations on a regular basis and reporting to the Project Manager and M&E Officer per the project's ESMF.
- 2) Written communication:
  - Emails: Email communication is widely used in Niger to provide direct access to individuals and representatives of organizations. Emails will be used as the main tool for organizing meetings, i.e. sending invitations to participants, sending the meeting minutes after the meeting, etc.
  - Letters: Being the formal method for communication and conveying messages between public parties, letters will be requested by the project team and provided by the relevant authority, as appropriate.
  - Survey forms: Several activities under the project implementation strategy constitute undertaking a needs assessment or other types of analyses, with some requiring a survey to collect information. The responsibility for the surveys is that of the consultant undertaking the analysis. However, the SES Officer will be responsible for supporting the project consultants with the sampling process and surveying procedure to ensure that the results are as representative and inclusive as possible.
  - Project brochures and manuals to present the results of specific studies and outcomes of certain activities.
- 3) Online meetings and phone calls: Virtual communication is sometimes preferred since it is quicker and easier compared with email and letters, and a viable alternative to in-person meetings. Online applications and telecommunication tools will be used throughout project implantation to facilitate the work and ensure the project team has easy access to stakeholders, and vice versa.

Although the mode of communication may vary according to task and participants, yet all consultations and engagement activities will be undertaken with the goal of ensuring full participation of relevant stakeholders, whereby all participants will be provided sufficient notice to prepare well and provide input for the project. Moreover, the AMP in Niger project will also use all possible opportunity, i.e. workshops, meetings, trainings and awareness events, to promote diversity and gender balance. Balanced representation of relevant stakeholders will be ensured by reaching out to both men and women and different groups through appropriate communication means and encouraging their participation, noting the most socially and culturally acceptable language and method of communication for each group of stakeholders.

- **Public Disclose of Information (PDI)**

Project-affected, marginalized, and disadvantaged stakeholders at the pilot location will be identified during site selection and assessment, including persons with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups as per the list of stakeholder groups provided above. For each group, the following assessments will be conducted as part of the stakeholder engagement activities, taking into account their involvement in each project component:

- Identify limitations for understanding project information and participating in consultation process (e.g. language differences, lack of transportation, accessibility of venues, disability, etc.)
- Develop measures to support and accommodate engagement, e.g. provide information in accessible formats, choose convenient locations for consultations, ensure venues are accessible, provide transportation to meetings, change time of meetings to accommodate needs, provide facilitation and explain complex issues and terminology,

provide support workers for assisting participants with disabilities, provide simultaneous interpretation (including sign language).

On the national level, methods to receive feedback and to ensure ongoing communications with stakeholders (outside of a formal consultation meeting) will be developed as part of the project's knowledge management and dissemination plans (to be developed as part of the implementation of Component 4).

- Diversity, inclusion and gender-balance

The inclusion of women and other relevant groups will be made possible through enhancing opportunities, improving access to resources, making their voice heard and ensure respect for their rights. The process of identification of these groups and their representatives and engaging them through the various project activities, is achieved using two approaches:

- 1) Conducting context specific gender analysis using gender and mini-grid analysis framework and develop participatory action plans at community level at locations where pilot projects and productive use will be supported. The analysis will be sensitive in scheduling community level meetings selecting appropriate time and location, give deliberate attention to the participation of diverse groups to listen to their voice and apply appropriate language that fit to the audience level. It will also explore the existing status of the different groups their roles, responsibilities, opportunities, and deprivations and seek participatory solutions in their engagement as consumers and actors at various levels of the mini grid value chain.
- 2) At every stage of the project implementation the project team will make specific effort to make sure opportunities are created and accessed by women and other vulnerable groups while implementing institutional level capacity building trainings, policy level discussions, access to education and financial opportunities. The project team will also track progresses through routine monitoring and supervision based on a checklist of indicators which are formulated at the inception phase of the project. In addition, the project will communicate the steps for appealing grievance in and subsequent redress mechanisms in case complaints arise from this group. All in all, maximum efforts will be exerted to make communications between beneficiaries which includes women and other relevant groups with the project to be built in spirit of mutual understanding, positive relationship, and partnership for successful implementation of the intervention.

## 6) SEP Implementation: Resources, Responsibilities and Timeline

- Responsibilities

As part of the management arrangement, the project will hire a SES Officer to oversee the implementation of the ESMF and continuous review and update of associating studies, including the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) and the Gender Action Plan (GAP). Hence, the SES Officer will be the responsible person for SEP implementation, collaborating with the project's M&E Officer and reporting directly to the Project Manager (PM).

Before each activity starts, the SES Officer will have approved the detailed plans ensuring the responsibilities. For example, Component 1, outcome 1, indicator 6 reflects that the stakeholder engagement plan will be done via the online tools that will be designed through a "consultative process involving key stakeholders (i.e. relevant ministries, local authorities, rural populations, private sector, media, etc.)". Similarly, each component/outcome/indicator will reflect the appropriate inclusiveness as the projects advances.

- Resources

The fees for the SES Officer is accounted for in the project's budget. Moreover, the project budget for each component allocates an amount for expenditures on training, workshops, conferences, etc. Expenses under this category are expensed to the UNDP-GEF under an independent budget code (75700) and include allocation of funds to ensure proper consultation of stakeholders from the different groups throughout project implementation. Based on the work requirement during implementation, the project may hire a qualified Community Liaison Officer to undertake all or portions of the stakeholder engagement activities. This may include, where necessary, community facilitators/assistants who are able to work in local languages (where relevant, ideally from the same ethnic group/culture).

○ Timeline

The timeline for stakeholder consultation on specific project activities will follow the overall work plan for the project. Furthermore, additional consultations will occur as part of conducting the mid-term review and terminal evaluation missions. That said, the SES Officer shall develop a schedule for regular visits and calls with different groups of stakeholders to ensure continuous engagement from project start to end.

Before each activity starts, the SES Officer will have approved the detailed plans ensuring the timeline provides a schedule outlining dates/periodicity and locations where various stakeholder engagement activities, including consultation, disclosure, and partnerships will take place and the date by which such activities will be undertaken to the extent possible. For example, for Component 1, Output 1.2 “Mini-grid policies and regulations” will include the consultation and disclosure with national stakeholders in Year 2 and 4 to gather their inputs/concerns into the design of those. Similarly, each component/outcome/indicator will reflect the appropriate inclusiveness as the projects advances.

The following table presents the preliminary SEP developed during PPG development, noting that:

- 1) Sites selection will be done with the support of ANPER in charge of rural electrification and which has already set criteria for site selection. Nevertheless at the time of selecting the sites for the pilot projects, further assessments will be conducted, providing more details on the project stakeholders and allowing further consultations to take place during Year 1 of project implementation, i.e. prior to the on-site installation works. The SES Officer will be responsible for conducting these studies, in collaboration with technical consultants to be responsible for specific activities and studies.
- 2) The assessment of the participation capacity of the various groups of stakeholders influenced the project design and strategy. For example, a new output has been introduced to help establish and capacitate mini-grid industry associations to enhance and promote active participation by the private sector in mini-grid sector planning and development. Similarly, the AMP strategy emphasized the need to include SES assessments in the site selection processes to overcome the low participation capacity by local communities in the baseline.

**Table 1. Preliminary SEP for the AMP in Niger (to be updated at the time of site selection for the pilots, i.e. as part of updating the safeguards for the project)**

#	Stakeholder Group	Role/Relevance	Interest in the project	Influence on the project	Participation capacity	Perception of problem
1	State and local government authorities, i.e. public sector entities	Project partners and co-financiers	As partners to the UNDP, the public sector has been involved in project design, and is expected to plan a key role during implementation.	High	High	Will require skills, activities and measures new to their usual practice and scope of sectors.
2	Private sector associations, and ESPs involved in the project's pilot(s)	Project partners and direct beneficiaries	Given the nature of the mini-grid sector in Niger and the proposed hybridization activities, the private sector is crucial for project success.	High	Moderate	Lack of certainty in the market nationally to de-risk investment
3	Development partners	Co-financiers	The project is designed to build upon ongoing work and collaborate with development partners to avoid work-duplication to the extent possible.	Moderate	High	Will require skills, activities and measures new to their usual practice and scope of sectors.
4	Communities in pilot location	Direct beneficiaries and affected persons	End-users of electricity to be generated from the pilot projects.	High	Low	New set of problems for some and opportunities others.
5	Academics, educational institutions and vocational training centers	Direct beneficiaries	Recipients of training and future implementers of the academic certification programme.	Moderate	High	To be determined
6	Financial institutions and small investors	Direct beneficiaries	Recipients of training and future implementers of innovative financing schemes and incentive mechanisms.	High	High	Lack of certainty in the market nationally to de-risk investment
7	Developers and ESPs not involved in the pilot project(s)	Indirect beneficiaries	Affected by project outcomes and potential beneficiaries of replication.	Moderate	Moderate	To be determined
8	Industry groups (agriculture, fisheries, manufacturing)	Indirect beneficiaries	Affected by project outcomes and potential beneficiaries of replication.	Low	Moderate	To be determined
9	Communities in non-pilot location	Indirect beneficiaries	Affected by project outcomes and potential beneficiaries of replication.	Low	Low	To be determined

10	NGOs and civil society groups	Indirect beneficiaries	Especially the groups working on energy access, climate change, renewable energy development, etc.	Moderate	Moderate	Disadvantaged groups are usually left behind/outside of the project benefits (i.e. women, poor, disabled, indigenous...)
11	Other groups	To be identified as part of the site selection assessment for the pilot(s) location.			To be determined	

## 7) Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM)

The risk assessment conducted as part of developing the SESP for the project indicates that there is a likelihood of reprisals and retaliation against stakeholders. The AMP in Niger intends to follow a policy of zero tolerance for such actions and develop possible preventative and response measures specific to the circumstances together with relevant stakeholders. Measures may include respect for confidentiality; adjustments to means and timing of communications, meetings, transportation; use of trusted intermediaries, interpreters, facilitators and other consultants; clear response protocols for notification, reporting, and support for protection strategies.

Furthermore, and as part of the project's compliance with the UNDP SES requirements, the project shall ensure setting up a suitable Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM). This includes a procedure for stakeholders and affected communities to express their grievances and communicate their concerns and recommendations to the project team, as well as a procedure for the project team to address these grievances by taking the necessary actions, i.e. providing clarifications, opening investigations, or making changes to the project's implementation plan as may be required.

In the area of ensuring open communication on grievances, the project intends to implement the following measures:

- 1) As part of the effort towards digital transformation in the mini-grid sector, a hotline will be created for stakeholders to use for questions, recommendations and grievances. The phone/mobile number for the hotline will be displayed on the sign carrying the name of the pilot projects.
- 2) Two boxes will be installed at the pilot project sites. The first will be placed inside and the pilot boundaries while the second will be located outside the project boundaries. These boxes will be checked on a regular basis by the project's M&E officer to check for new comments from stakeholders or affected persons.
- 3) The phone numbers for the project's M&E and SES Officers will be displayed at several central locations around the pilot location, i.e. community centers at villages receiving electricity from the pilot project(s) and nearby villages as appropriate.

The responsibility of responding/addressing the grievances received will depend on the nature of the grievance. Nevertheless, the SES Officer will be responsible for following up until actions are taken to close a grievance, including communicating with relevant persons and/or authorities on behalf of the project. Further details on the GRM will be developed during Year 1 of project implementation and prior to starting the work on the pilot project(s).

In addition to the developed GRM, stakeholders will be informed of the availability of UNDP's Accountability Mechanism (Stakeholder Response Mechanism, SRM, and Social and Environmental Compliance Unit, SECU) as additional avenues of grievance redress.

## 8) Monitoring and Reporting

As project information changes, the SEP should be reviewed and modified accordingly to ensure its effectiveness in securing meaningful and effect stakeholder participation. Hence, the SEP presented in this documents will undergo continuous review and development by the project's SES and M&E Officers throughout the project lifetime. Similarly, the scope and focus of the SEP will be modified to reflect the lessons learned from the implementation of SEP in Niger, but also in other national projects participating in the Regional AMP. Equally important is the review and update of SEP procedure based on the feedback that would be received form the project team and stakeholders.

The continuous review and update of the SEP will be implemented as part of the implementation of the overall M&E plan for the project (Annex 5), as well as the operationalization of the M&E systems developed under Component 4.

Before this activity starts, the SES Officer will have approved the detailed plans ensuring the following:

- The Monitoring and Reporting involves project stakeholders (including target beneficiaries and project-affected groups) or third-party monitors in the monitoring of project implementation, potential impacts and management/mitigation measures.
- The Monitoring and Reporting describes how and when the results of stakeholder engagement activities will be reported back to project-affected and broader stakeholder groups. Examples include newsletters/bulletins, social and environmental assessment reports; monitoring reports.