Annex k Stakeholder engagement plan

K 1. Stakeholder engagement plan

**Introduction**

This Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) for the Africa Minigrids Program (AMP) in Zambia defines how the AMP will identify and engage key stakeholders, and integrate their inputs into project implementation and risk management. Implementation of this plan will provide stakeholders with meaningful access to dialogue and decision-making in the development and implementation of the project. By providing channels for all stakeholders, including the disadvantaged and vulnerable, effective stakeholder engagement helps to ensure understanding, acceptance, and ownership of the project, thereby strengthening its benefits and sustainability.

Stakeholder engagement is an end in itself, ensuring that no one is left behind and that disadvantaged and vulnerable project stakeholders have a voice in project development and implementation. It is also a means for improving project design, identifying and managing risks, and ensuring transparency, accountability and integrity. In this light, one important purpose of this plan is to provide a feedback and monitoring mechanism to ensure the project is achieving its intended results and identifies potential unintended consequences.

The development and implementation of the SEP is part of the UNDP Social and Environmental Safeguards (SES) requirements. Hence, the presented SEP will be reviewed and updated during the social and environmental assessment processes required for the development of the project’s Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF).

**Purpose and objective**

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 Zambia, 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 stakeholders 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 allowed 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.

**Project preparation**

As part of the project development phase, 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 share information about the ZMG Project, to seek first-hand information on baseline conditions and needs, and to scope out potential project activities and partnerships. The discussions also aimed to identify the gaps that the ZMG can work to fill, especially in the presence of several projects targeting energy access and renewable energy development financed by development partners besides UNDP and the GEF.

Last but not least, a stakeholder validation was organised in Lusaka (with presential and online attendance)

**Project inception and implementation**

The project will effectively engage the stakeholders involved in the project to get their support and guide the project implementation to achieve higher results.

* Project outreach proposed includes project website, media (print/audio-visuals), workshops, training, etc.
* The PMU and the Project Board will ensure that the Gender Action Plan recommended by the project is pursued and implemented. The various groups especially women will be engaged during the consultation meetings, prioritized to avail of the programme, and be included in the different capacity-building programs. The project will also ensure through the Off-Grid Task Force that the ZMG Project will be closely coordinated with the activities of NGOs, government bodies and development partners\
* Meetings, monitoring visits, surveys, and written communications will be used to receive feedback to continue the ongoing dialogue as well as during implementation.
* The project will follow a participatory approach in decision-making by engaging all the relevant stakeholders. Government agencies, NGOs, CSOs, and private sector actors will be actively involved during the project implementation.

A detailed list of stakeholders and their involvement in particular project outcomes and outputs are given in Box 22. The key indicator for the engagement of each group of stakeholders is their practical involvement in implementation and dissemination.

| **Category** | **Stakeholder or group** |
| --- | --- |
| *Government and public sector* | * Ministry of Energy (MoE) * Rural Electrification Authority (REA) * Energy Regulation Board (ERB) and other agencies * ZESCO Limited * Off-Grid Task Force * Other relevant ministries and agency, such as ZamStat (statistics); ZABS (standards); Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry |
| *Multilateral and bilateral development partners; Financial institutions* | * World Bank (Incl. ESAP project) * Power Africa, USAID * Sweden, BGFA * European Union (incl. IAREP project) * KfW (Germany) * African Development Bank (AfDB; incl. GCF-funded energy programmes) * Development Bank of Zambia; Pension Fund * Commercial banks |
| *NGOs, universities;* | * University of Zambia and other higher educational institutes * Vocational education and training institutes * Non-governmental organisation (women, youth, training, rural development) |
| *Business and sectoral associations* | * ZARENA (Zambia Renewable Energy Association) * SIAZ (Solar Industry Association of Zambia (SIAZ) * AMDA (Africa Mini-Grid Developers Associations * Zambia Cooperative Federation |
| *Direct beneficiaries* | * Minigrid customers (residential, small commercial/PUEl; public services, other) * Local community groups * Recipients of project’s training and awareness-raising |

The ZMG Project has not yet selected the specific localities for its planned pilot cooperative-led minigrids and associated productive use (Outputs 2.1). These localities will be selected from a list provided by MoWE at the inception of the project. At that point, the project will identify and connect with all local stakeholders, including both partners and beneficiaries.

**Engagement methods and communication mediums**

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*:

o 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.

o 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.

o 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 neighbouring 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 is 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 have easy access to stakeholders, and vice versa.

Although the mode of communication may vary according to task and participants, 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 opportunities, i.e. workshops, meetings, training 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 mean and encouraging their participation, noting the most socially and culturally acceptable language and method of communication for each group of stakeholders.

**Public disclosure of information**

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 the 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 the 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 voices heard and ensuring 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 developing participatory action plans at the 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, giving deliberate attention to the participation of diverse groups to listen to their voice and applying appropriate language that fit 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 a specific effort to make sure opportunities are created and accessed by women and other vulnerable groups while implementing institutional level capacity building training, policy level discussions, access to education and financial opportunities

**Responsibilities**

The PMU is primarily responsible for carrying out the specified stakeholder engagement activities. The stakeholders will be engaged while carrying out various assessments and studies, training, and workshop events.

**Monitoring and reporting**

The project stakeholders would be engaged at various levels to carry out the monitoring activities. Then the PMU will liaise with relevant Government agencies and other partners and collect data and monitor the activities regularly. The PMU will report back the results to the stakeholders at the earliest through letters or conduct meetings both individually as well as through engagement of all relevant agencies.

**Resources, responsibilities and timelines**

The size of the project does not allow for extensive stakeholder engagement measures or dedicated staff for this purpose. Stakeholder engagement will therefore form part of the broader interactions with project stakeholders. The frequency of communication will be guided by the specific level of stakeholder interest. Specific opportunities for engagement will coincide with anticipated outputs and the development phases for deliverables and milestones towards outputs. More deliberate consultation and engagement activities will be implemented for the two pilot projects and as part of the project monitoring and reporting activities.

At the national level, project-affected, marginalized and disadvantaged stakeholders have been identified, including persons with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups as per the list of stakeholder groups provided above in this document. This list will also be completed at the local level for the pilot sites.

There is no budget specified for SEP activities but has been included in the budgets of related outputs, notably the interfacing for training with the regional program, National Dialogue, Community of Practice, stakeholder consultation for pilot projects and extensive data collection for the monitoring of impacts.

**Stakeholder engagement plan**

| **#** | **Stakeholder category (alphabetically listed)** | **Type of Information (shared and collected)** | **Communication channels or methods** | **Frequency[[1]](#footnote-1)** | **Engagement** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Directly involved* | | | | | |
| 1 | State and local government; public agencies and sector entities | Info on project implementation. Permits and approval. Update on outputs and findings | Stakeholder project meetings; Training and info sharing; Participate in Board meeting and Advisory Committee | Very frequent | Partner  Involve  Consult |
| 2 | Developers and financial institutions involved in the project’s pilot(s) | Info on project implementation. Pilot project design, implementation and operation. Recipients of training and future implementers of innovative financing schemes and incentive mechanisms | Stakeholder project meetings; Training and info sharing. Participate in Advisory Committee Recipients of training and future implementers of innovative financing schemes and incentive mechanisms | Very frequent | Involve |
| 3 | Communities in pilot location | Info on project benefits and costs; conditions and ways of connection. Info on PUE and electric cooking. | Stakeholder meetings; surveys community meetings. Training and info sharing | Frequent during pilot design and | Involve |
| *Not directly involved* | | | | | |
|  | Academic and higher education community | Policy, regulatory, technology /industry and project developments. Training needs and training offerings consult | Emails, website, webinars, workshops, community of practice events, meetings, training events | Less frequent | Consult / Inform |
|  | Development Partner (general)  Industry groups (agriculture, fisheries, manufacturing)  NGOs and civil society | Policy, regulatory, technology /industry and project developments. | Progress updates, emails, newsletters, website, webinars, workshops, community of practice events, meetings, training events. Participate in Advisory Committee  Interviews with stakeholder representatives, Surveys, polls, and questionnaires  Participate in Advisory Committee. Interviews with stakeholder representatives, Surveys, polls, and questionnaires | Frequent | Inform |
|  | Developers and financial institutions not involved in the pilot project(s) | Recipients of training and future implementers of innovative financing schemes and incentive mechanisms. Policy, regulatory, technology /industry and project developments. Project developments. Update on outputs and findings. | Frequent | Inform  Consult |
|  | Communities in non-pilot location |  | Surveys, polls, and questionnaires, Meetings, workshops, and/or focus groups with specific groups. | Less frequent | Inform |

K 2. Grievance mechanism

**Project-level Grievance Redress Mechanism**

During the design and implementation of any project, a person or group of people may perceive or experience potential harm, directly or indirectly due to the project activities. The grievances that may arise can be related to social issues such as eligibility criteria and entitlements, disruption of services, temporary or permanent loss of livelihoods and other social and cultural issues. Grievances may also be related to environmental issues such as excessive dust generation, damages to infrastructure due to construction-related vibrations or transportation of raw material, noise, traffic congestion, decrease in quality or quantity of private/ public surface/ ground water resources during irrigation rehabilitation, damage to home gardens and agricultural lands, etc.

Should such a situation arise, there must be a mechanism through which affected parties can resolve such issues in a cordial manner with the project personnel in an efficient, unbiased, transparent, timely and cost-effective manner. To achieve this objective, a Grievance Redress Mechanism will be agreed upon during the Inception Phase. The design of the Grievance Redress Mechanisms (GRM) will be discussed at the project inception workshop and operationalized prior to the initiation of activities.

The Grievance Redress Mechanism will be designed to:

1. be a legitimate process that allows for trust to be built between stakeholder groups and assures stakeholders that their concerns will be assessed in a fair and transparent manner;
2. allow simple and streamlined access to the Grievance Redress Mechanism for all stakeholders and provide adequate assistance for those that may have faced barriers in the past to be able to raise their concerns;
3. provide clear and known procedures for each stage of the Grievance Redress Mechanism process, and provides clarity on the types of outcomes available to individuals and groups;
4. ensure equitable treatment to all concerned and aggrieved individuals and groups through a consistent, formal approach that is fair, informed and respectful to a concern, complaints and/or grievances;
5. to provide a transparent approach, by keeping any aggrieved individual/group informed of the progress of their complaint, the information that was used when assessing their complaint and information about the mechanisms that will be used to address it; and
6. enable continuous learning and improvements to the Grievance Redress Mechanism. Through continued assessment, the learnings may reduce potential complaints and grievances.

The GRM will be gender- and age-inclusive and responsive and address potential access barriers to women, the elderly, the disabled, youth and other potentially marginalized groups as appropriate to the Project. The GRM will not impede access to judicial or administrative remedies as may be relevant or applicable and will be readily accessible to all stakeholders at no cost and without retribution.

Information about the Grievance Redress Mechanism and how to make a complaint and/or grievance will be communicated during the stakeholder engagement process and placed at prominent places for the information of the key stakeholders.

All complaints and/or grievances regarding social and environmental issues can be received either orally (to the field staff), by phone, in a complaints box or in writing to the UNDP. A key part of the grievance redress mechanism is the requirement for the PMU to maintain a register of complaints and/or grievances received. The following information will be recorded:

1. time, date and nature of enquiry, concern, complaints and/or grievances;
2. type of communication (e.g. telephone, letter, personal contact);
3. name, contact address and contact number;
4. response and review undertaken as a result of the enquiry, concern, complaints and/or grievances; and
5. actions taken with the name of the person taking action.

**UNDP SRM and SECU**

In addition to the project-level and national grievance redress mechanisms, complainants have the option to access UNDP’s Accountability Mechanism, with both compliance and grievance functions.

The Social and Environmental Compliance Unit investigates allegations that UNDP's Standards, screening procedure or other UNDP social and environmental commitments are not being implemented adequately, and that harm may result to people or the environment. The Social and Environmental Compliance Unit is housed in the Office of Audit and Investigations and managed by a Lead Compliance Officer. A compliance review is available to any community or individual with concerns about the impacts of a UNDP programme or project. The Social and Environmental Compliance Unit is mandated to independently and impartially investigate valid requests from locally impacted people, and to report its findings and recommendations publicly.

The Stakeholder Response Mechanism offers locally affected people an opportunity to work with other stakeholders to resolve concerns, complaints and/or grievances about the social and environmental impacts of a UNDP project. Stakeholder Response Mechanism is intended to supplement the proactive stakeholder engagement that is required of UNDP and its Implementing Partners throughout the project cycle. Communities and individuals may request a Stakeholder Response Mechanism process when they have used standard channels for project management and quality assurance and are not satisfied with the response (in this case the project-level grievance redress mechanism). When a valid Stakeholder Response Mechanism request is submitted, UNDP focal points at country, regional and headquarters levels will work with concerned stakeholders and Implementing Partners to address and resolve the concerns. Visit [www.undp.org/secu-srm](http://www.undp.org/secu-srm) for more details.

* 1. Communication and knowledge management plan

The Project will also emphasize strong communications with a broader range of stakeholders. Key elements of the project’s communication strategy are outlined in the table below:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Key element** | **Relevant group** | **Means** | **Timeframe** |
| 1. Project governance meetings; PSC meetings and its Working Group meetings | All stakeholders that are members of the PSC or its Working Groups or are invited to attend | Meetings | Periodically, depending on PSC and Advisory Committee frequency of meetings |
| 2. Seminars/workshops and training events, including the Inception workshop, and final project workshop | National and sub-national government officials  Private sector; NGOs and CSOs | Workshop, meeting, seminar, training  On-the-job training  Budget: | Typically, workshops will be held to start up an activity and/or at the end to present results. The timeline of each activity is given in Annex D of the UNDP ProDoc |
| 3. Project documents, thematic reports and publications; Technical and other reports | Government departments and decision-makers at the national and subnational level;  Development partners  Research institutes and academia; individual experts; NGOs | Direct dissemination (e.g., email or hard copy/ USB-drive)  Access via website to reports and documents and database and info systems | Technical reports will typically be published at the end of an assignment (see Annex D of the ProDoc). |
| 4. Project knowledge capturing and info dissemination and two-way KM and info exchange with regional AMP project | Government officials  Financial and private sector  Development partners;  NGOs and CSOs | Online access;  Printed materials  Media | Thematic reports and knowledge products are published at the end of one or more outputs to provide a summary of findings, results, and lessons learnt |

The budget for workshops, training and information dissemination (printed materials, etc.), including engagement with the regional AMP is about USD 101,000 (not including consultancy or contracted services which are in separate budget lines).

1. Where Very frequent is likely to be ongoing or at least once a month, Frequent is likely to be monthly to quarterly, Less frequent: once or twice a year and Occasional: on an ad hoc basis, but with all general information readily available for access. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)