

**Department of Surface Transport (DoST)  
Government Technology Agency (GovTech)  
Department of Forests and Park Services (DoFPS)**

**Accelerating Trade and Transport in  
Eastern South Asia (ACCESS) Project- Bhutan**

## **STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN (SEP)**



March 08 2025

## Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>OBJECTIVE OF SEP .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS PER PROJECT COMPONENT .....</b>	<b>4</b>
3.1	METHODOLOGY .....	4
	COMPONENT 1 STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS (DIGITAL SYSTEMS FOR TRADE) .....	4
3.1.1	<i>Affected Parties</i> .....	4
3.1.2	<i>Other interested parties</i> .....	5
3.1.3	<i>Disadvantaged/vulnerable individuals or groups</i> .....	6
▪	<i>Summary List of Stakeholders identified for Component 1</i> .....	7
	COMPONENT 2 STAKEHOLDERS IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS (GELEPHU-TAREYTHANG ROAD) .....	8
3.1.4	<i>Affected Parties</i> .....	8
3.1.5	<i>Other interested parties</i> .....	9
3.1.6	<i>Disadvantaged/vulnerable individuals or groups</i> .....	9
3.1.7	<i>Summary List of Stakeholders Identified for Component 2</i> .....	11
	COMPONENT 3: STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION (INSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY STRENGTHENING) .....	13
3.1.8	<i>Affected parties</i> .....	13
3.1.9	<i>Other interested parties</i> .....	13
3.1.10	<i>Disadvantaged/vulnerable individuals or groups</i> .....	13
<b>4</b>	<b>STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM.....</b>	<b>14</b>
4.1	COMPONENT 1: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM.....	14
4.1.1	<i>Summary of stakeholder engagement done during project preparation</i> .....	14
4.1.2	<i>Summary of stakeholders 'needs and methods for engagement</i> .....	14
	COMPONENT 2: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM (GELEPHU-TAREYTHANG ROAD).....	17
4.1.2	<i>Summary of stakeholder engagement done during project preparation</i> .....	17
▪	<i>Summary of project stakeholder needs and methods, tools and techniques for stakeholder engagement</i> .....	19
4.1.3	<i>Proposed strategy to incorporate the views of vulnerable groups</i> .....	28
	COMPONENT 3: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM .....	30
4.1.4	<i>Summary of stakeholder engagement done during project preparation</i> .....	30
▪	<i>Summary of project stakeholder needs and methods, tools and techniques for stakeholder engagement</i> .....	31
<b>5</b>	<b>RESOURCES/BUDGET FOR IMPLEMENTING STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES .....</b>	<b>34</b>
5.1	IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENT AND RESOURCES .....	34
<b>6</b>	<b>GRIEVANCE MECHANISM .....</b>	<b>36</b>
	COMPONENT 1: DESCRIPTION OF GRIEVANCE MECHANISM (DIGITAL SYSTEMS FOR TRADE) .....	36
	COMPONENT 2 (GELEPHU-TAREYTHANG ROAD): DESCRIPTION OF GM .....	38
6.1.1	<i>GM Steps and description</i> .....	38
6.1.2	<i>Labour GM -Internal Grievances (during road constructions)</i> .....	42
6.1.3	<i>Labour and contractor/vendor related grievance</i> .....	42
6.1.4	<i>GM Steps and Procedures</i> .....	43
▪	<i>Monitoring, reporting and reviewing procedure</i> .....	44
	COMPONENT 3: DESCRIPTION GM- (INSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY STRENGTHENING) .....	44
6.1.5	<i>Grievance Redress Committee</i> .....	45
6.1.6	<i>Description of Grievance Mechanism (GM)</i> .....	45
<b>7</b>	<b>MONITORING AND REPORTING.....</b>	<b>47</b>
	COMPONENT 1 MONITORING AND REPORTING .....	47
▪	<i>Summary of how SEP implementation will be monitored and reported</i> .....	47

7.1.1 Reporting back to stakeholder groups .....	47
COMPONENT 2: MONITORING AND REPORTING (GELEPHU TO TAREYTHANG ROAD) .....	48
▪ Summary of how SEP implementation will be monitored and reported .....	48
7.1.2 Reporting back to stakeholder groups .....	49
COMPONENT 3: MONITORING AND REPORTING (INSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY STRENGTHENING) .....	49
▪ Summary of how SEP implementation will be monitored and reported .....	49
7.1.3 Reporting back to stakeholder groups .....	49

## List of Tables

TABLE 1. VULNERABLE OR DISADVANTAGED GROUPS	6
TABLE 2. STAKEHOLDERS BY COMPONENT 1'S SUB-COMPONENTS	7
TABLE 3. STAKEHOLDERS OF COMPONENT 2	10
TABLE 4. LIST OF CLUSTER A AND B STAKEHOLDERS	12
TABLE 5. VULNERABLE OR DISADVANTAGED GROUPS	12
TABLE 6. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN	14
TABLE 7. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN FOR COMPONENT 2 (GELEPHU – TAREYTHANG ROAD)	18
TABLE 8. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	26
TABLE 9. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN FOR COMPONENT 3	27
TABLE 10. INDICATIVE BUDGET FOR SEP IMPLEMENTATION (COMPONENTS 1 AND 3)	31
TABLE 11. INDICATIVE BUDGET FOR SEP IMPLEMENTATION (COMPONENT 2)	32
TABLE 12. PROPOSED GM TIME FRAME	33
TABLE 13. GRM STEPS AND DESCRIPTION FOR COMPONENT 1	33
TABLE 14. GM IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURE, STEPS AND DESCRIPTION	35
TABLE 15. GM STEPS AND DESCRIPTION	41

## Annexes

- Annex 1: Methodology of Stakeholder Identification
- Annex 2: Minutes of the Stakeholder Consultation held on Component 1
- Annex 3: Details of Public Consultation Meetings on Component 2
- Annex 4: Photo logs on Component 2 Consultations
- Annex 5: Feedback from Component 2 Consultations
- Annex 6: Sample Grievance submission forms/formats
- Annex 7: Sample Monitoring and Reporting Table on SEP

## Acronyms & Abbreviations

Acronym	Description
ACCESS	Accelerating Trade and Transport Connectivity in Eastern South Asia
AMC	Annual Maintenance Contract
BCCI	Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry
BES	Bhutan Ecological Society
BPC	Bhutan Power Corporation
BPL	Below Poverty Line
BTN	Bhutanese Ngultrum (currency of Bhutan)
CBO	Community-based Organisations
CIA	Cumulative Impact Assessment
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSOA	Civil Society Organization Authority
DAMC	Department of Agriculture marketing and Cooperatives
DoFPS	Department of Forest and Park Services
DoID	Department of Infrastructure Development
DoST	Department of Surface Transport
EHS	Environmental, Health and Safety
ERM	Environmental Resources Management
E&S	Environment & Social
ESS	Environmental and Social Standards
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
ESS	Environmental and Social Standards
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
GBV	GBV – Gender-Based Violence
GIS	Geographic Information System
GM	Grievance Mechanism
GMC	Gelephu Mindfulness City
GRP&B	Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting
GOI	Government of India
GRC	Grievance Redress Committee
GRM	Grievance Redressal Mechanism
GovTech	Government Technology Agency
G-SOC	Governmental Security Operation Centre
HR	Human Resources
HRD	Human Resource Development
ISP	Internet Service Providers
IRU	Indefeasible Right of Use
KII	Key Informant Interviews
Nu	Ngultrum (Bhutanese currency)

MoENR	Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources
MoICE	Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment
MoIT	Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport
NRDCL	Natural Resources Development Corporation Limited
NDI	National Digital Identity
NGEP	National Gender Equality Policy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NLC	National Land Commission
NLCS	National Land Commission Secretariat
NSW	National Single Window
Nu	Ngultrum (Bhutanese currency)
OHS	Occupational Health & Safety
OIPs	Other Interested Parties
PAPs	Project Affected Parties
PIU	Project Implementing Unit
PPA	Project preparation Advance
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PMU	Project Management Unit
RAP	Resettlement Action Plan
RCSC	Royal Civil Service Commission
RENEW	Respect, Educate, Nurture, Empower Women
RGoB	Royal Government of Bhutan
RSPN	Royal Society for Protection of Nature
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
TOT	Training of Trainers
WB	World Bank

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The Accelerating Trade and Transport in Eastern South Asia Project- Bhutan (ACCESS Bhutan) aims to increase the efficiency and resilience of trade and transport along selected corridors in Bhutan. The ACCESS Bhutan is expected to reduce trade and transport costs through (i) an increase in throughput at priority border points; (ii) a reduction in average travel time for vehicles along selected regional corridors, (iii) a reduction in annual fatalities on program corridors; and (iv) increase the number of people provided with improved climate resilient road access along regional corridors.

The ACCESS Bhutan comprises the following 3 components: (i) Component 1 – Digital Systems for Trade: Provision of digital solutions and automation, designed to eliminate manual and paper-based processes, resulting in faster border crossing times; (ii) Component 2 – Green and Resilient Infrastructure for Transport and Trade; (iii) Component 3 – Institutional and Policy Strengthening. The **Government Technology Agency (GovTech)** will implement Component 1, while Components 2 will be implemented by the **Department of Surface Transport (DoST)** of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport (MoIT). The net gains strategy of the Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) under Component 2 will be implemented by the Department of Forests and Park Services (DoFPS). Component 3 will be cross-cutting across all implementing agencies.

A brief description of each of these components is given below:

- **Component 1: Digital Systems for Trade.** This component focuses on improving Bhutan's trade facilitation through the Provision of digital solutions and automation designed to eliminate manual and paper-based processes, resulting in faster border crossing times. The sub-components are:
  - **Subcomponent 1.1: Implementation of National Single Window (NSW).** The NSW, a digital platform for trade, aims to bring together existing certificate, license, and permit-issuing services under one platform for an end-to-end service solution for businesses and traders.
  - **Subcomponent 1.2: Strengthening Digital Enablers** will pilot the following digital enablers and building blocks to support: (i) integration of the new national digital identification system (NDI) to facilitate traders, including smallholder farmers, in accessing digital trade and financial services; (ii) single source of truth (SSOT) to improve data accuracy, standardization, and exchange platforms to facilitate interoperability of digital trade-related data within and across borders; (iii) common digital enablers to support digital trade and logistics systems, such as business process reengineering and data analytics to support connected devices and networks; (iv) strengthening of protection/privacy measures for trade-related data; and (v) targeted technical advisory to strengthen cross-border payments.
  - **Subcomponent 1.3: Enhancing Cybersecurity** will support the strengthening of Bhutan's cybersecurity capacities to ensure secured implementation of digital trade systems, and to enable a safe transfer of data and goods across the regional trade corridors.
  - **Subcomponent 1.4: Improving Digital Connectivity and Data Resilience** seeks to improve digital connectivity and data infrastructure to facilitate resilient and reliable trade, including: (i) long-term competitive procurement of international internet bandwidth for the Government Network; (ii) improving last mile access to high-speed internet for targeted trade, agricultural, and logistics centers which remain unconnected; and (iii) enhancing the existing government data center by enabling a secure cloud computing environment and strengthening disaster recovery capabilities. (iv) Employing common security measures across critical government systems.

The ACCESS project will be implemented in selected corridors in Bhutan, with a focus on critical trade and logistics centres. The GovTech is currently using consulting services for the development of the NSW blueprint through engagement of individual consultants (3 National and two International).

- **Component 2: Green and Resilient Transport and Trade Infrastructure.** Enhancing regional corridors and trade gateways that serve as the backbone of the physical and economic integration of the region.
  - **Subcomponent 2.1: Enhancing Green and Resilient Road Connectivity:** Adopting a resilient and nature-positive approach to road construction, this component will support (i) **the construction of a 14 km road link with 4 bridges along the the Southern East-West Highway (SEWH) from Gelephu to Tareythang;** (ii) Implementing Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) and net gain strategy to guide habitat enrichment, elephant corridor development, and wildlife monitoring (iii) a phased investment approach through the preparation of the preparation of feasibility, detailed engineering and design, and Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) for the approximately 60 km missing link between Tareythang and Panbang road, in preparation for future construction; and (iv) Conducting a full-scale Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA) building on the preliminary CIA done during project preparation.
  - **Subcomponent 2.2: Strengthening Road Asset Management and Maintenance** will strengthen data-driven road maintenance by upgrading the Road Asset Management System (RAMS) and introducing a five-year Performance-Based Maintenance contract, ensuring climate resilience through targeted nature-based solutions.
  - **Subcomponent 2.3: Improving Multimodal Connectivity** will support pre-feasibility and feasibility studies for inland water transport (IWT) and rail, updating dry port assessments, and promoting climate-resilient logistics and private sector investments.
- **Component 3: Institutional and policy strengthening for transport and trade.** Technical assistance and capacity building for trade and customs modernization.
  - **Subcomponent 3.1: Project Implementation Support and Capacity Building of Implementing Agencies:** Support the provision of the relevant technical experts and specialists in, inter alia, procurement, environment and social safeguards, monitoring and evaluation, as well as domain knowledge experts.
  - **Subcomponent 3.2: Policy/Regulatory Support:** Provisions for technical assistance to support drafting of targeted policies, laws, and regulations to support cross-border digital trade and transport facilitation. National Surface Transport Policy and related regulations, and National Civil Aviation Policy and related regulations will be supported under the project. New frameworks and policies like Critical Information Infrastructure Protection under cyber security (sub- component 1.3).
  - **Subcomponent 3.3: Resilient and Sustainable Regional Infrastructure Planning Support:** This activity will support resilient and sustainable regional infrastructure planning and pipeline development, e.g., preparation of comprehensive feasibility studies with a focus on regional trade, assessment of future resilient and sustainable regional trade projects following good international practices.

It is important to note that the construction of a 14-km long road from Gelephu to Tareythang, under Subcomponent 2.1, is the only major physical activity involving civil works in the ACCESS Bhutan, while all other activities are primarily soft activities.

## 2 OBJECTIVE OF SEP

This Stakeholder Engagement Plan<sup>1</sup> (SEP) covers all three components of the ACCESS Bhutan. The overall objective of this SEP is to define a program for stakeholder engagement, including public information disclosure and consultation throughout the project cycle. The SEP outlines how the implementing agencies GovTech, DoST, and

---

<sup>1</sup> The SEP is prepared following World Bank's Simplified Template for Substantial and High Risk Projects, November 2023

DoFPS will communicate with stakeholders and includes a mechanism by which people can raise concerns, provide feedback, or complain about the Project and any activities related to the Project. The SEP also emphasizes methods to engage groups considered most vulnerable and at risk of being left out of project benefits.



### 3 STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS PER PROJECT COMPONENT

#### 3.1 Methodology

Stakeholder identification - It aims to identify all organizations, groups, and individuals who are directly or indirectly affected by the Project activities or who have a specific interest in these activities.

To meet good international practice and approaches, the Project will apply the following principles for stakeholder engagement:

- Informed participation and feedback: Information will be provided to and widely distributed among all stakeholders in an easily understandable format using local language and visual formats as needed. Opportunities are provided for communicating stakeholder feedback, and for analysing and addressing comments and concerns.
- Inclusiveness and sensitivity: Stakeholder identification is undertaken to support better communications and build effective relationships. The participation process for the projects is inclusive. All stakeholders at all times are encouraged to be involved in the consultation process. Equal access to information is provided to all stakeholders. Sensitivity to stakeholders' needs is the key principle underlying the selection of engagement methods. Special attention is given to vulnerable groups that may be at risk of being left out of project benefits, particularly women, the elderly, persons with disabilities, displaced persons, and migrant workers and communities, and the cultural sensitivities of diverse ethnic groups.

For the ACCESS Project, the stakeholders have been identified and analysed per project component and presented component-wise in the following sections. These stakeholders included affected parties (as defined in Section 3.2.1), other interested parties (as defined in Section 3.2.2) and disadvantaged/vulnerable individuals or groups (as defined in Section 3.2.3). A methodology followed for analysing the significance of stakeholders is given in **Annex 1**.

#### Component 1 Stakeholder Identification and Analysis (Digital Systems for Trade)

##### 3.1.1 Affected Parties

Affected Parties include persons, groups and other entities that may be subject to direct impacts from the Project. Specifically, the following individuals and groups fall within this category of Component 1.

##### Positively Affected Parties:

- **Telecom Operators** (e.g., Bhutan Telecom, Tashi Infocomm Pvt. Ltd). will benefit from infrastructure upgrades, including improved digital connectivity and establishing an active disaster recovery site in Bumthang, especially for Bhutan Telecom.
- **Internet Service Providers** (All 20 ISPs): Will benefit from improved bandwidth and last-mile connectivity expansions.
- **Traders** (linked to NSW): Will experience streamlined trade processes and reduced administrative burdens through the implementation of the National Single Window (NSW) platform.
- **Competent authorities/line agencies issuing Licenses, Certificates, Permits (LCP)**: These authorities, including those managing trade import/export processes, will benefit from enhanced digital systems facilitating quicker approvals.
- **Clearing and Forwarding Agents (CFAs)**: Will benefit from reduced delays and improved coordination with the NSW.
- **Financial Institutions**: Improved access to finance as digital systems streamline processes for property, trade, and business financing.
- **Revenue and Customs Agencies**: Trade facilitators will benefit from digital integration, improving efficiency at customs points.

- **Dzongkhags<sup>2</sup>, Thromdes, and Agriculture/Logistics Centers:** These regions and centers will benefit from improved digital connectivity and streamlined operations.
- **G-SOC & CIIP** - Establishment of G-SOC and development of CIIP will result in effective handling and management of cyber-related issues and as such it can also have some positively affected parties
- **All parties** involved will benefit from access to streamlined data-enhancing, data-driven decision-making processes.

### Negatively Affected Parties:

The project activities **will not negatively impact any groups or individuals**, as no construction activities are anticipated under Component 1. However, if there are minor construction activities, such as new telecommunications and connectivity installations (e.g., fiber optic cables), local communities and businesses located near these activities may experience temporary disturbances, including noise, restricted access, or disruptions.

### 3.1.2 Other interested parties

Other Interested Parties include individuals/groups/entities that may not experience direct impacts from the Project but who consider or perceive their interests as being affected by the Project and/or who could affect the Project and the process of its implementation in some way. The projects' stakeholders or other interested parties include the following:

- **Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (BCCI):** A business entity with a vested interest in the success of digital trade facilitation through the NSW platform.
- **Exporter Association of Bhutan:** Businesses reliant on streamlined trade processes are key stakeholders in the effective implementation of NSW.
- **Bhutan Power Corporation (BPC):** BPC is critical in providing the necessary infrastructure to support enhanced digital connectivity.
- **Department of Agriculture Marketing and Cooperatives (DAMC), Ministry of Agriculture:** A key government entity involved in enhancing agricultural trade systems that will benefit from improved digital connectivity and streamlined processes.
- **Bhutan National Digital Identity (Bhutan NDI), Druk Holding and Investment:** A company of DHI providing secure and verifiable identity related credentials to Bhutanese.
- **Other Government Agencies:**
  - 1) Ministry of Finance: Department of Revenue and Customs, and Department of Planning, Budget and Performance
  - 2) Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment (MoICE): Department of Trade; Internal Trade Promotion and Facilitation Division; and Export Promotion Division

---

<sup>2</sup> The administration in Bhutan is divided into three (03) divisions. These administrative units are:

- **Dzongkhag:** The primary subdivision and judicial districts are Dzongkhags in Bhutan. Bhutan has a total of 20 Dzongkhags. The Dzongkhag administration is headed by Dzongda. Dzongkhag Tshogdu are the elected local decision-making bodies at the Dzongkhag level. Dzongkhags are responsible for implementing government policies, maintaining law and order, and delivering public services to the local population.
- **Thromde:** A Thromde is an urban area or municipality in Bhutan. Thromdes are the administrative and economic centers within the Dzongkhags. Thrompon is elected representatives of Thromde/Municipality.
- **Gewog:** A Gewog is a rural administrative unit in Bhutan headed by the Gup, Mangmis and Tshogpas. Gewog Tshogdes are the elected decision-making bodies at the Gewog level. A Gewog is equivalent to a county or a group of villages. Gewogs are the primary administrative divisions of Dzongkhags and are comprised of at least five (05) or more Chiwogs. A chiwog is a village. A Tshogpa is the elected head of each Chiwog.

- 3) Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade
- 4) Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources: Department of Forest and Park Services
- 5) Royal Monetary Authority
- 6) Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport: Department of Infrastructure Development (DoID)

### 3.1.3 Disadvantaged/vulnerable individuals or groups

Disadvantaged/vulnerable individuals or groups are persons who may be disproportionately impacted or further disadvantaged by the Project compared with any other groups due to their vulnerable status and that may require special engagement efforts to ensure their equal representation in the consultation and decision-making process associated with the Project.

Within Component 1 of the ACCESS project, vulnerable or disadvantaged groups may include, but are not limited to, the following listed in **Table 1**.

**Table 1. Vulnerable or disadvantaged groups**

Vulnerable Group	Potential Barriers to Accessing Information or Project Benefits	Representative Organizations/Leaders
Elderly people	Limited digital literacy, lack of access to the internet or devices needed to interact with the National Single Window (NSW) or other digital services.	Royal Society for Senior Citizens Ability of Bhutan Society (ABS) Disabled Persons' Association of Bhutan (DPAB) Bhutan Stroke Foundation
Persons with Disabilities and their caregivers	Physical and digital accessibility challenges when interacting with digital platforms. Lack of tailored digital services to address their specific needs.	Ability of Bhutan Society (ABS) Disabled Persons' Association of Bhutan (DPAB) Draktsho Vocational Training Center for Special Children and Youth Bhutan Stroke Foundation
Women-headed households Women entrepreneurs Women traders Women clearing agents	Lack of digital literacy, limited time availability due to domestic responsibilities, and possible financial constraints in accessing digital services.	National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC) Respect, Educate, Nurture and Empower Women (RENEW) Bhutan Network for Empowering Women (BNEW) Bhutan Association of Women Entrepreneurs (BAOWE) Tarayana Foundation Include all women exporters through Exporter Association Women traders through BCCI Childcare support: Bhutan Early childhood education and development association (BECEDA) The Pema Secretariat
Rural and remote communities	Poor or unreliable digital infrastructure (internet connectivity), lack of digital literacy,	Dzongkhag Administration Local Government Administration

Vulnerable Group	Potential Barriers to Accessing Information or Project Benefits	Representative Organizations/Leaders
	and distance from service centers that can assist with NSW and other trade-related processes.	Bhutan Centre for Media & Democracy Tarayana Foundation RENEW Microfinance
LGBTI+	Risk of social exclusion and discrimination that may prevent equal access to project benefits or participation in stakeholder consultations.	Queer voices of Bhutan Pride Bhutan
Unemployed or low-income groups	Limited financial resources to access the technology or devices needed for digital engagement. Challenges in understanding complex digital systems or benefitting from project outcomes, such as improved trade facilitation.	Bhutan Youth Development Fund (BYDF) Nazhoen Lamtoen Department of Youth, MoESD (YVIA and Y-PEER youth networks) She Cycle (CBO)
Small-scale farmers and traders	Limited knowledge of digital systems and internet usage potentially prevents them from taking full advantage of improved trade processes and digital trade platforms.	Agriculture Cooperatives Agricultural/livestock farming/marketing groups Department of Agriculture Marketing and Cooperatives, MoAL Traders through BCCI

These groups may face significant challenges in accessing project benefits and engaging in stakeholder consultations. It is important to involve representative organizations and leaders to ensure their concerns are addressed, and they are included in the decision-making processes. Efforts will be made to provide targeted training, outreach, and support to overcome these barriers.

#### ▪ Summary List of Stakeholders identified for Component 1

Table 2 summarizes the list of stakeholders identified during the project preparation phase. Currently, the GovTech has hired consultants for NSW and IRU purposes. The stakeholder list will be updated based on the findings and recommendations of the consultants.

**Table 2. Stakeholders by Component 1's sub-components**

Sub-components	Stakeholders		
	Affected parties	Other interested parties	Disadvantaged individuals/Groups
Sub Component 1.1 Implementation of National Single Window (NSW)	Traders, clearing and forwarding agents, competent authorities (issuing licenses, certificates, permits), and customs officials.  Land/private property acquisition for infrastructure is <u>not anticipated</u> at this stage	Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI), Exporter Association of Bhutan Royal Monetary Authority Department of Revenue and Customs Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade (MoFAET)	Small-scale traders, small-scale exporters and importers of goods, rural traders, women traders, women clearing agents, women-headed households (limited digital literacy).

	of planning. Hence, there won't be any negatively affected parties or individuals.	Department of Trade Internal Trade Promotion and Facilitation Division Export Promotion Division Department of Infrastructure Development (DoID)	
Sub-component 1.2: Strengthening Digital Enablers	Traders, business owners of MoICE	Department of Trade. Internal Trade Promotion and Facilitation Division Export Promotion Division	Elderly people (limited digital access), Persons with Disabilities, rural communities, low literacy
Sub-component 1.3: Enhancing Cybersecurity	Traders, digital system owners (specific to hosted in GDC).	Bhutan telecom Tashi cell and other ISPs, other Government and Private Sector Agencies	Women-headed households, small-scale traders (at risk of digital exclusion due to cyber threats).
Sub component 1.4 : Improving Digital Connectivity and Data Resilience	Land/Property owners affected by Digital infrastructure.	Local Leaders -Dzongkhags and Thromdes Bhutan Telecom Telcos & Internet Service Providers (ISPs) Rural business – traders and vendors BICMA – (Bhutan Info Comm and Media Authority) Bhutan Power Corporation (BPC)	Rural communities- low literacy, low-income households, Persons with Disabilities (lacking access to connectivity).

## Component 2 Stakeholders Identification and Analysis (Gelephu-Tareythang Road)

### 3.1.4 Affected Parties

Affected Parties include persons, groups and other entities that may be subject to direct impacts from the Project. The following individuals and groups fall within this category of Component 2, specifically for the construction of the Gelephu – Tareythang road.

- **Landowners:** These are individuals or entities holding legal ownership of the land in the proposed right of way of the Gelephu – Tareythang road. Landowners may face direct land acquisition, resulting in the loss of land and possibly structures on it.
- **Land Users (Farm labor/Tenant Farmers/Livestock Rearers):** Individuals or groups who rely on land for their livelihood, without necessarily owning the land. Farm laborers and tenant farmers may lose their primary source of income and access to farmland due to the proposed land acquisition. Livestock rearers may face reduced grazing areas or disruptions in traditional grazing patterns.
- **Community Forest Users (and user groups):** These include members of the community who utilize forests for subsistence (e.g., firewood, fodder) or economic activities, often through organized user groups. The proposed road construction may require the acquisition of community forest land, leading to loss of livelihood or traditional practices.

- **Small Businesses / Shops / Restaurants:** Local businesses operating near the proposed road, providing goods and services. These establishments may experience temporary or permanent relocation, loss of clientele due to construction activities, or disruptions in operations.
- **Local Communities along the Proposed Road.** This group includes community members living along or near the project alignment who may be indirectly or directly affected by construction and operational activities. Construction activities may cause structural damage to nearby properties. Prolonged construction can lead to health and wellbeing issues due to increased dust and noise levels. Increased construction traffic may pose safety risks and congestion. Potential obstruction to accessing homes, schools, markets, and public services.
- **Local communities in areas at risk of Human Elephant Conflict.** Particularly communities who may experienced increased human-elephant conflict due to disruptions in the movement of elephants caused by the GT Road.
- **Communities providing services for Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy.** This will include community workers hired for clearing of vegetation, rehabilitating water holes, those providing voluntary services for building fences and sharing of information on elephant movements and raids.

### 3.1.5 Other interested parties

Other Interested Parties include individuals/groups/entities that may not experience direct impacts from the Project but who consider or perceive their interests as being affected by the Project and/or who could affect the Project and the process of its implementation in some way. The projects' stakeholders or other interested parties include the following:

- **General Public:** The general public in the project area who are not directly impacted by the construction but are interested in its outcomes due to potential regional or personal benefits.
- **Institutional Stakeholders:** Media professionals and academic institutions with an interest in observing, documenting, and analyzing the project's impacts.
- **Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) / Civil Society Organisations (CSOs):** Organizations advocating for environmental conservation, community welfare, or social justice. Their potential interests in the project include monitoring project impacts on biodiversity, forests, and ecosystems and Ensuring that community voices are heard and that mitigation measures are adequate.
- **Social Infrastructure (Schools/Colleges, Health Centres, Religious Organisations).** Institutions providing education, healthcare, , and spiritual guidance in the project region including places of worship and temples.
- **Government Bodies.** Local, regional and national government agencies with an interest in successful implementation of the project.

### 3.1.6 Disadvantaged/vulnerable individuals or groups

Within Component 2, the vulnerable or disadvantaged groups may include but are not limited to the following:

- **Women (Women-headed households, Single Mothers, Domestic Violence Survivors):** Women in these categories may face significant challenges in receiving compensation due to gender biases in property ownership documentation and the trauma they already experience as single mothers or survivors of domestic violence. Without explicit measures to ensure their inclusion, women-headed households might be excluded from compensation processes, leaving them economically and socially vulnerable. Moreover, displacement can exacerbate existing vulnerabilities by disrupting their access to support networks and livelihoods.
- **Elderly Persons with Disabilities:** Elderly individuals and persons with disabilities may encounter barriers in navigating compensation processes, particularly if documentation or mobility is required. Displacement could worsen their living conditions by disconnecting them from essential services, caregivers, and

familiar environments. They risk being left without adequate compensation or alternative accommodations without tailored support mechanisms.

- **Youth (Unemployed, Orphan, or in difficult circumstances):** Marginalized youth may be excluded from compensation if they lack formal land ownership or are unrepresented in decision-making. Displacement can lead to further instability, with limited access to alternative livelihoods or education opportunities. Engaging youth in targeted training programs and ensuring their eligibility for benefits is critical to prevent exacerbating their vulnerabilities
- **Households Below Poverty Line:** Poor households often lack the resources or knowledge to claim adequate compensation for displacement, leaving them at risk of deeper impoverishment. Loss of informal livelihoods tied to land or local markets can significantly impact their survival. Special outreach and simplified processes are essential to ensure fair compensation and support for livelihood restoration.
- **Landless households:** Landless households may be entirely excluded from formal compensation frameworks, relying on leased or communal lands for livelihood. Displacement threatens their economic survival unless alternative support measures, such as skills training or income restoration programs, are implemented. These households require targeted attention to avoid neglect in compensation schemes.
- **Households owning less than 1 acre of land in the Gewogs:** Small landholders risk losing economically critical portions of their holdings to road projects, with compensation often insufficient to sustain their livelihoods. Displacement can fragment their already limited land, reducing productivity. Compensation mechanisms must consider the disproportionate impact on smallholders to ensure fair and sustainable outcomes. For Thromde landholders, their land holding size will not be kept as a vulnerability criteria.
- **Community workers:** This will include community workers hired for clearing of vegetation, rehabilitating water holes, and those providing voluntary services for building fences. There is a risk of harassment, labor exploitation and exclusion of deserving workers during selection.
- **Socio-cultural groups:** An assessment of the socio-cultural groups as per World Bank ESS7<sup>3</sup> criteria conducted by the World Bank team has identified local groups in the project area who present degrees of self-identification as distinct, have unique customary practices, or distinct language/dialects. While these groups do not satisfy all four criteria of ESS7, they possess varying distinct characteristics that place them at risk of experiencing differentiated adverse impacts from the project and more limited than others in their ability to access project benefits due to smaller representation in decision-making, different language and cultural practices.

Consultations with socio-cultural groups conducted during the assessment reveal six major distinct socio-cultural linguistic groups of people in the project area: Lhotsham, Sharchop, Khengpa, Brami and Brokpa/Saktenpa, and Ngalops. Further, the Brokpas, Bramis, Khengpas, and Rais each have distinct identities and cultural traditions, but are gradually losing or have already lost elements of their traditional identity due to generational shifts and geographical distance from their ancestral villages, deities, and practices. This erosion may be attributed to increased intermingling with people from other regions and the blending of diverse socio-cultural groups, intermarriage, and adoption of widely used languages such as Lhotsamkha, Sharchopkha and Dzongkha.

In addition to the above, there are a number of smaller other socio-cultural groups such as Ngalongs from the West, Mangdip, Trongsap and Bumthaps from the centre, and Kurtoeps. The presence of these socio-cultural groups was validated during Local Government meetings conducted for the assessment.

This identification of socio-cultural at risk of losing their distinct languages, dialects, self-identification and cultural traditions is not exhaustive. During the project life-cycle, further assessments and meaningful consultations for identification of socio-cultural groups, assessing project impacts, inclusion in project benefits, and protecting their linguistic and cultural heritage will be conducted and this SEP will be updated accordingly.

---

<sup>3</sup> World Bank ESS7 on Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities

### 3.1.7 Summary List of Stakeholders Identified for Component 2

Table 3 below presents the list of identified stakeholders relevant to Component 2 activities.

**Table 3. Stakeholders of Component 2**

Sub-component	Project-Affected Parties	Other Interested Parties	Disadvantaged Individuals/Groups/Organizations
Subcomponent 2.1: Enhancing Green and Resilient Road Connectivity (Construction of Gelephu – Tareythang Road)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Landowners</li> <li>- Land Users (Farm labor/Tenant Farmers/Livestock-rearers)</li> <li>- Community Forest Users (and user groups)</li> <li>- Small Businesses / Shops / Restaurants</li> <li>- Community members along the Project alignment who could be affected by civil works – damages to property, noise, dust, traffic, access issues to properties / schools, etc.</li> <li>- Communities at risk for increased human elephant conflict due to the GT Road.</li> <li>- Communities involved in implementing biodiversity net gain strategy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- General Public</li> <li>- Local Journalists / Media</li> <li>- Academicians</li> <li>- Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) / Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) such as SNV Bhutan, Disabled Persons, WWF Bhutan, Bhutan Foundation, Bhutan Ecological Society (BES), Respect, Educate, Nurture, Empower Women (RENEW), Ability Bhutan Society, Tarayana Foundation, Draktsho, Royal Society for Protection of Nature, (RSPN), Lodern Foundation, SABA Bhutan.</li> <li>- Social Infrastructure - Schools /Colleges, Health Centres, Religious Organisations, etc.</li> <li>- Government Bodies</li> <li>- Dzongkhag Administration – Health, Education, Agriculture, Livestock, Planning (planning officers).</li> <li>- Thromde (Urban Areas)</li> <li>- Gewogs (Rural Areas)</li> <li>- Demkhong (Under Thromde)</li> <li>- Chiwogs (Under Gewogs)</li> <li>- Gelephu Mindfulness City (GMC) Management</li> <li>- National Land Commission (NLC)</li> <li>- Department of Planning &amp; Resources (Planning officers) MoIT</li> <li>- Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources – Department of Forests and Park Services (DoFPS)</li> <li>- Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources –</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Women – Women headed households, Single Mothers, Domestic Violence Survivors</li> <li>- Elderly Persons with Disabilities</li> <li>- Youth – Unemployed, Orphan, who have been in difficult circumstances</li> <li>- Households Below Poverty Line</li> <li>- Landless households</li> <li>- Households owning less than 1 acres of land in the Gewogs</li> <li>- Socio-cultural groups.</li> <li>- Community workers</li> </ul> <p>Royal Society for Senior Citizens</p> <p>Ability of Bhutan Society (ABS)</p> <p>Disabled Persons' Association of Bhutan (DPAB)</p> <p>Bhutan Stroke Foundation</p> <p>Draktsho Vocational Training Center for Special Children and Youth</p> <p>National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC)</p>



Sub-component	Project-Affected Parties	Other Interested Parties	Disadvantaged Individuals/Groups/Organizations
		<p>Department of Environment and Climate Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Natural Resources Development Corporation (NRDCL).</li> <li>- Government of India</li> <li>- District Forest Office, Sarpang</li> <li>- Office of Phibsoo Wildlife Sanctuary</li> <li>- Office of Royal Manas National Park</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	<p>Respect, Educate, Nurture and Empower Women (RENEW)</p> <p>Bhutan Network for Empowering Women (BNEW)</p> <p>Bhutan Association of Women Entrepreneurs (BAOWE)</p> <p>Tarayana Foundation</p> <p>Include all women exporters through Exporter Association</p> <p>Women traders through BCCI</p> <p>Childcare support: Bhutan Early childhood education and development association (BECEDA)</p> <p>The Pema Secretariat</p> <p>Queer voices of Bhutan</p> <p>Pride Bhutan</p> <p>Bhutan Youth Development Fund (BYDF)</p> <p>Nazhoen Lamtoen</p> <p>Department of Youth, MoESD (YVIA and Y-PEER youth networks)</p> <p>She Cycle (CBO)</p>
Subcomponent 2.2: Strengthening Road Asset Management and Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- None in this subcomponent. This subcomponent involves only soft activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MoIT</li> <li>- DoST</li> <li>- Department of Air Transport</li> <li>- Bhutan Civil Aviation Authority</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- None in this subcomponent.</li> </ul>
Subcomponent 2.3: Improving Multimodal Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- None in this subcomponent. This subcomponent involves only the preparation of transport studies. However, downstream construction activities will have</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ministry of Industry, Commerce, and Employment</li> <li>- Department of Trade</li> <li>- GMC</li> <li>- DoFPS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- None in this subcomponent</li> </ul>

Sub-component	Project-Affected Parties	Other Interested Parties	Disadvantaged Individuals/Groups/Organizations
	affected parties similar to Subcomponent 2.1		

## Component 3: Stakeholder Identification (Institutional and Policy Strengthening)

### 3.1.8 Affected parties

As Component 3 involves only capacity-building activities, the staff that will directly benefit from these capacity-building activities are identified as the affected parties. **Component 3 activities will not negatively affect any persons or groups.** The following individuals and groups fall within this category.

#### (1) Government Agencies (Skills gap and capacity building)

- MoIT and DoFPS as Technical Partner for Component 2 activities: As the lead implementing agency, MoIT will be directly involved in the skills gap assessment, implementing capacity-building programs, and policy and regulatory reforms.
- GovTech and their key technical partners, such as Department of Revenue and Customs, and Department of Trade: Responsible for implementing the digital systems component, GovTech staff will undergo capacity-building programs.
- Royal Civil Service Commission (RCSC): This agency is directly affected as the RCSC is the agency responsible for HR development and management of all civil services in the country. They develop competency frameworks and HR strategies for civil service.
- RGoB Officials - Civil Servants and Technical staff from various government ministries and departments will be the primary beneficiaries of the training and capacity-building initiatives.

#### (2) Stakeholders for the policy and Regulatory Reforms

- MoIT, Bhutan Construction and Transport Authority, Bhutan Civil Aviation Authority, Cabinet Secretariat, Office of Attorney General, Local Government, Bhutan Standards Bureau, etc., are the stakeholders involved in revising the policies and related rules and regulations. Bhutan Standards Bureau, an Agency that will be connecting to the National Single Window

### 3.1.9 Other interested parties

The projects' other interested parties/stakeholders include:

- Educational and Training Institutions in Bhutan;
- Any NGO and CSO advocacy groups involved in gender equality

### 3.1.10 Disadvantaged/vulnerable individuals or groups

The disadvantaged group relevant to Component 3 are given in **Table 5**.

- Women in Public Service who are often under-represented and face barriers to career development
- Government workers with disabilities.

**Table 5. Vulnerable or disadvantaged groups**

Vulnerable Group	Potential Barriers to Accessing Information or Project Benefits	Representative Organizations/Leaders
Women in Public Service	Often underrepresented and have difficulty accessing information. They may not be aware of the Project and may not be able to participate in the training programs. They face barriers to career development.	Ministries/Departments RCSC Thromde Dzongkhag
Communities	Access to technology, low literacy, low income	CSO/CBOs such as RENEW, Tarayana Foundation, Pride Bhutan, Queer Voices of Bhutan, Organizations for Persons with Disabilities

## 4 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

The stakeholder engagement program of the Project is presented component-wise in the following sections.

### 4.1 Component 1: Stakeholder Engagement Program

#### 4.1.1 Summary of stakeholder engagement done during project preparation

Under the ongoing preparation of the ACCESS project, Gov Tech has carried out several stakeholder engagement activities since February 2024. The engagement activities include stakeholder consultations.

A Visioning Workshop, facilitated by the WBG, was held in Thimphu on 6 and 8 February 2024, during which the stakeholders laid down the foundations of the BNSW program by elaborating suggestions for an overall Vision Statement and options for the key strategic decisions to be adopted by the RGOB.

Gov Tech organized a Stakeholder Consultation meeting on **September 20, 2024**. A total of 30 stakeholder participants attended the consultation meeting. The detailed minutes of the meeting are presented in **Annex 2**. Presentations made in the meeting included: an overview of the ACCESS Project focusing on Component 1, Kick-off meeting agenda for NSW, Improving Digital Connectivity and Data Resilience, Strengthening Digital Enablers, Cybersecurity Component, Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure. The meeting deliberated on the progress status of the Project; key issues related to the implementation of Component 1 of the Project were highlighted.

**From October 13<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024**, consultations with different types of business license holders (small, medium, large such as import traders, food (pickles, dried food), e-commerce business, women exporters, clearing agents, worker loaders, construction, wood-based industry, taxi drivers, and exporters), institutions such as BCCI, Export Associations, CSOs (RENEW, Tarayana Foundation, Bhutan Youth Development Fund), telecom and internet operators, RENEW Microfinance, and She Cycle (CBO) and government organizations (Department of Trade, Department of Revenue and Customs, Thromde, Sarpang Dzongkhag Officers (Agriculture, Livestock, RNR) and Royal Bhutan Police.

The key points discussed, and issues noted include:

- Easiness of business and trade in Bhutan, especially for women.
- Targeted skilling and capacity building of women
- Existing challenges for business, clearing agents and traders, especially women
- General gender issues and concerns in the community and skills and capacity of service providers.

#### 4.1.2 Summary of stakeholders 'needs and methods for engagement

Different engagement methods are proposed and cover different stakeholder needs as follows:

- **Formal Meetings (with structured agendas):** with government officials, ISPs, and traders, ensuring all critical topics for **NSW** and **digital enabler** implementation are covered.
- **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):** Targeted discussions with vulnerable groups (e.g., women-headed households and rural traders) to ensure their participation in the digital identity, last-mile connectivity and cybersecurity components.
- **Community Consultations:** Held with local communities to provide updates and gather feedback, particularly during the implementation of Sub **Component 1.4** in rural and underserved areas.
- **Formal Meetings:** Regular structured meetings with **MoIT**, **GovTech**, and other high-level stakeholders to align on project goals, particularly for Sub **Components 1.1 and 1.3**.
- **One-on-one Interviews:** Conducted with key business and government representatives for detailed input on trade facilitation and **NSW** design under Sub **Component 1.1**.
- **Site Visits:** Conducted in areas affected by **digital infrastructure installations** under Sub **Component 1.4**, involving local leaders and community representatives to assess on-ground progress.
- **Workshops and Training Sessions:** Held for stakeholders to build capacity in using the **NSW** platform and understanding **cybersecurity standards**, particularly for Sub **Components 1.2 and 1.3**.
- **Public Information Campaigns:** Disseminate key information through GovTech website, social media, BBS and other media houses, and flyers to raise awareness of project activities and engage broader stakeholder groups.

The Stakeholder engagement plan below outlines the engagement process and topics of consultation messages, including target stakeholders (**Table 6**).

**Table 6. Stakeholder Engagement Plan**

Project Stage	Estimated Date/Time Period	Topic of Consultation/ Message	Method Used	Target Stakeholders	Responsibilities
Project Preparation stage	October 2024 to June 2025	Introduce the Project scope and objectives Implementation Plans Stakeholder participation and consultations SEP process Affected parties Awareness of ESS – ESMF E&S impacts GRM process	Consultation workshop (structured agenda) Formal meetings Site visits Social media disclosure of project documents via website	MoIT (DoID) Department of Revenue & Customs, Royal Monetary Authority MoFAET Department of Trade Bhutan telecom Tashi cell and other ISPs Govt Divisions NGOs and CSOs <u>Disadvantage groups</u> small traders and vendors; small scale exporters and importers	Gov Tech, Consultants

Early Implementation Stage	2025-2026	Digital Literacy Training and capacity building for stakeholders on using the NSW, cybersecurity protocols, and the NDI integration for trade.	Workshops, training sessions (both in-person and online), dissemination of training materials in local languages, and social media campaigns.	Government employees, clearing agents, traders, telecom operators, financial institutions, and representatives of relevant groups.	Gov Tech PMU, and cybersecurity experts.
Mid-term Implementation	2027-2028	Monitoring and evaluation of project progress, feedback on digital enabler upgrades, connectivity issues, and social impacts.	Public meetings, mid-term review workshops, dissemination of progress reports, online feedback portals, surveys, interviews with local businesses and residents.	Local communities, traders, telecom operators, ISPs, rural businesses, civil society organizations, and vulnerable groups.	Gov Tech PMU
Project Completion	2031	Project closure, sharing of final outcomes, lessons learned, and discussion on the sustainability of the digital systems.	Final consultation workshops, public dissemination of final project reports, focus group discussions with key stakeholders, and media outreach.	All previously engaged stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, traders, and telecom operators.	Gov Tech PMU

Information will be disclosed to stakeholders in the following ways:

- **Project Documents:** The SEP, relevant E&S documents, and other key project materials, such as the Grievance Mechanism (GM) procedures will be disclosed in local languages through multiple channels. This includes **press releases** and uploads to the **Gov Tech project website** to ensure broad accessibility.
- **Consultation Meetings:** Regular consultation meetings will be held to provide updates on project developments covering all subcomponents. Particular attention will be given to stakeholders directly impacted by Sub - **Components 1.1 and 1.4**. Focus group discussions will be conducted with vulnerable groups to ensure their needs and concerns are addressed.
- **Printed Materials:** Information leaflets, brochures, and other educational materials will be distributed at local offices community centers, and during **workshops** and **site visits**. These materials, also in local languages will explain project objectives, timelines, benefits, and how to access the grievance redressal mechanism.
- **Public Information Campaigns:** Project developments and key milestones will be shared via **media outlets** and **social media** channels to ensure transparency, especially concerning **digital connectivity improvements** and **cybersecurity measures** under Sub - **Component 1.3**.
- All information will be disclosed in **Dzongkha** and **English** to ensure inclusivity, and targeted materials will be produced for vulnerable groups, addressing their specific needs.

- **Documentation** of stakeholder engagement will be published in a timely fashion through channels that are accessible to stakeholders. This documentation (based on Guidance Note 9.1 WB) includes the following, as appropriate:
  - Date and location of each meeting, with a copy of the notification to stakeholders;
  - The purpose of the engagement (for example, to inform stakeholders of an intended project or to gather their views on potential environmental and social impacts of an intended project);
  - The form of engagement and consultation (for example, face-to-face meetings, workshops, focus groups, written consultations, online consultations);
  - Number of participants and categories of participants;
  - A list of relevant documentation disclosed to participants;
  - Summary of main points and concerns raised by stakeholders;
  - Summary of how stakeholder concerns were responded to and taken into account as well as issues and activities that require follow-up actions, including clarifying how stakeholders are informed of decisions.

## **Component 2: Stakeholder Engagement Program (Gelephu-Tareythang Road)**

### **4.1.2 Summary of stakeholder engagement done during project preparation**

Several rounds of consultations were undertaken to prepare the SEP. The first round was undertaken during the scoping phase of the Project, from **18 to 24 July 2024**. This served to help better understand the local context, including the stakeholders present in the project area.

A second round of consultations was conducted from **30 August to 3 September 2024** during primary data collection, including information to inform the identification of risks and impacts associated with the project. As part of the site visit, key informant interviews and focused group discussions were undertaken with community members representing various demographics of the project impact area. This included women, adolescent girls, youth groups, NGOs, business owners, farmers/cultivators, teachers and healthcare practitioners.

The consultations served to assess current stakeholder understanding of the project, stakeholder engagement preferences, grievance tools currently being used, and strategies needed to ensure that vulnerable groups are able to access stakeholder engagement opportunities. Some of the key discussion points included, but not limited to, awareness about the Project, access to services, the profile of communities, gender norms and attitude in the community, , gender priorities related to the project activities, sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (SEA/SH) risks, facilities in the impact area, capturing the occupational profile of the communities, average income levels, discussions and opinions of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) / Community-based Organisations (CBOs), level of Project's engagement with vulnerable groups.

Additionally, the GMC Governor undertook an additional stakeholder consultation on 27 September 2024 at various locations in the Project area, such as in Gelephu Thromde, Umling Gewog and Gelephu Gewog. It is estimated that about 70% of the landowners in the Project area attended the consultations. Moreover, elected officials of the local governments attended. Landowners from nearby areas were also encouraged to participate in the consultations. Some of the key points discussed and issues noted, as enquired by the communities include:

- Disclosure about the Project and project details.
- Existing compensation mechanisms and valuation methods.
- Suggestions on whether the communities should sell their lands in anticipation of higher land rates due to the upcoming project.
- Resettlement options and locations for communities that will be affected.
- Further clarifications on compensation rates (based on market value and not the existing rate as given under Land Act 2007).
- Discussions on consideration of exceptional cases for benefits under the land acquisition and resettlement process.
- Concerns regarding low supply of water especially during the winter season.

- Queries regarding whether chuzhing (wet land) will be compensated with chuzhing.
- Concerns regarding disruptions in electricity supply due to bad weather and thunderstorms.
- Concerns regarding human-wildlife conflict, specially about the elephant destruction of crops.
- Queries regarding local employment opportunities due to the Project.
- Discussions and concerns regarding labour influx and limited human resources for handling the added burden on health facilities with the Project related developments in the area.
- General concerns regarding the high prevalence of alcoholism in the Impact area.
- Willingness to participate in, and faith in the development of the larger GMC vision.

A Final round of consultations was conducted from **2 to 4 December 2024** to share the findings of the draft SEP and ESIA with the communities, including potential environmental and social impacts, and to seek their feedback on the proposed engagement strategies and mitigation measures. These consultations covered all project areas within the Sarpang Dzongkhag. Separate meetings were conducted in the social impact affected by the project, including Chhuzangang, Tareythang, Umling Gewogs, and Gelephu Thromde. For Shershong, Samtenling, and Gelephu Gewogs, which are fall within a 2 km project radius, a single consultation meeting was held. Each consultation included two simultaneous meetings: one for community members, including local government officials and others with the marginalised groups without presence of government officials in the respective Gewogs, Thromde, or Dzongkhag.

In total, the **community** consultation meetings were attended by 305 participants, with 49% being female. Among the attendees, **81% were adults** (aged 25–59 years), 17% were elderly (60 years and above), and 2% were youth (aged 13–24 years).

Separate consultation meetings were conducted with **marginalized groups** across all directly and indirectly affected project areas. A total of **61 participants** attended these meetings, 65% of whom were female. The marginalized groups included elderly individuals (both men and women), youth, and persons with disabilities.

The public consultations engaged a diverse range of stakeholders from the project area. The high participation of women and the representation of various age groups highlighted the community's strong interest in contributing to discussions that impact their lives.

During the RAP data collection process from **January 7<sup>th</sup> to January 13<sup>th</sup> 2025**, project-affected persons and local governments were also consulted in terms of their area affected, collecting their socio-economic information and inventory listing. A summary of this, will be presented by the DoST and the consultants as a part of the RAP report.

A summary of the details of public consultation meetings to date is included in **Annex 3**, with a photo log from the consultations in **Annex 4**. Feedback from these consultations is presented in **Annex 5**.

#### **Consultations with socio-cultural groups:**

Consultations with socio-cultural groups including KIIs (Key Informant Interviews) and FGDs (Focus Group Discussion) were conducted by the World Bank team, assisted by the consultant translators from 28 October to 1 November 2024 as part of the ESS7 assessment. Participants for these consultations were identified through the list of affected persons provided by MoIT and in consultation with the relevant Local Government (LG) officials. Additional participants were sought to collect more wholesome data relevant for the determination of ESS7 (included influencers, vulnerable groups- elderly, youth, female headed households and persons with disabilities).

Four Local Government consultations, 42 KIIs and 11 FGDs were conducted for broadly identified groups - the Gups/Local Leaders; the Communities; elderly, youth, women, disabled, religious representatives in the communities; and CSOs/CBOs like RENEW and Tarayana. A table of these consultations is provided in **Annex 3**. Following the Guidance Note for ESS10: Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure, the stakeholder selection process ensured that project affected persons, both directly impacted due to physical and economic displacement as well as those indirectly impacted by virtue of their proximity to the proposed infrastructure sites, and project interested parties (local government, religious leaders, Community based organizations and CSO's) were consulted. FPIC protocols were followed, wherein prior information was provided to the respondents

regarding the objectives of the consultation, timing, venue and nature of the consultation both directly and indirectly through local representatives. In some cases, respondents opted not to attend the consultation themselves but sent a family member in their place. Prior to the KII or FGD, prior consent was sought to record and photo document the consultation. Where consent was not granted (2 consultations), only notes were taken. At the end of each consultation, respondents were informed on the ACCESS project (if they did not already know about it) and the point of contact for submission of grievances as required under ESS 10.

- **Summary of project stakeholder needs and methods, tools and techniques for stakeholder engagement**

The SEP shall apply to the entire project lifecycle. **Table 7** provides a detailed stakeholder engagement plan, including sequence, topics of consultations, and target stakeholders during the various stages of the Project implementation (described below). As mentioned above, the SEP shall be viewed as a “**living document**” to be updated regularly based on the emerging needs and patterns for engagement across various identified stakeholders. The World Bank and the DOST do not tolerate reprisals and retaliation against project stakeholders who share their views about the Project.

#### **Planning phase**

It includes processes like finalisation of the alignment, identification of lands, receptors and all sensitive receptors, acquisition of land, impacts to cultural heritage, approvals from relevant departments such as forest, environment and other, labour related approvals, contractual agreements and approvals from any international bodies as applicable.

Most importantly, the planning phase will include acquisition of land from landowners, who will be physically displaced, as well as communities who will be economically displaced and members who may lose access to their lands and community resources such as water bodies, community forests, cultural heritage and similar.

#### **Construction phase**

Construction would include development of land, setting up of camp areas, storage material area, construction works, movement and transport of construction material, including waste material. Others include labour accommodation and resting areas, warehouse (raw materials and finished goods), as well as QA/QC laboratory for material testing, administration / office buildings, OHC/first-aid room. Construction works may also restrict access of local communities to cultural heritage or disrupt local customs or practices. Construction works would also require security arrangements, arrangements with local fire depot, hospitals and similar. The construction phase would therefore need engagement with vendors / contractors, communities including vulnerable groups, local administration, workers (skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled), site management, HR teams and alike.

#### **Operation and maintenance phase**

The operation and maintenance (O&M) would need the project to procure Road Stability Control Certificate from authorised agencies on a routine basis, signing of Annual Maintenance Contract (AMC) with fire safety vendor, internal and external auditors. Stakeholders would include workers, technicians, general public, truck / tanker (logistics) companies, security personnel, specialists that would undertake inspection of integrity of road quality, safety requirements, underground and above ground pipelines, drainages, safety auditors, housekeeping staff, maintenance, human resources (HR), toll booth operators, EHS and similar managers for management of operations, communities, local authorities, as applicable.



**Table 7. Stakeholder Engagement Plan for Component 2 (Gelephu – Tareythang Road)**

Project Stage	Target Stakeholders	Topic of Consultation / Message	Method Used	Responsible Agency	Frequency/Timeline
Planning phase	All stakeholders	Project information disclosure	<p>Disclosure of information about the Project in locally understood languages of Regional and English (in that order):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Installation of informational boards near construction sites and local crossings, which include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schematic map of construction area.</li> <li>Timeframe/timelines for construction completion.</li> <li>Person/entity responsible for construction operations including contact details.</li> <li>Information about available GRM.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Consultation meetings, which include Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with each identified stakeholder to capture their inputs on the project.</li> <li>Meaningful consultations with disadvantaged/vulnerable groups (including socio-cultural groups) in a culturally, gender and inter-generationally appropriate manner</li> </ul>	DoST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Once, prior to start of construction</li> <li>Once every three months</li> <li>As per demand or request from specific stakeholders – conveyed through the consultation meetings, informing the PMUs through mails, messages, voice calls; or informing the DoST Regional/Field Office</li> </ul>
Planning phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landowners</li> <li>Land users</li> <li>Community forest users</li> <li>Community members</li> <li>Vulnerable groups</li> <li>Socio-cultural groups</li> <li>Existing road users including pedestrians and public</li> <li>Communities near camp sites</li> <li>Small businesses/Shops/Restaurants</li> <li>Thromde and Gewog local bodies</li> <li>GMC Management</li> <li>Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport</li> </ul>	Disclosure of management plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disclosure of technical management plans such as the ESIA, SEP and internal/external GRM that the project develops. Other plans including the Community Development Plan, Environmental Social Management Plan (ESMP), findings of the Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA), Resettlement Action Plan (RAP), Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) including potential impacts and corresponding management strategies.</li> <li>Disclosures to be undertaken by way of meetings with each stakeholder group, and combined stakeholder group meetings, as deemed relevant.</li> </ul>	DoST, Gewogs and Thromde administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Once, post the completion of management plan development, and prior to Project construction</li> </ul>

Project Stage	Target Stakeholders	Topic of Consultation / Message	Method Used	Responsible Agency	Frequency/Timeline
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department of Forests and Park Services (DoFPS)</li> <li>National Land Commission</li> <li>Royal Bhutan Police</li> <li>Health institutions</li> <li>Fire Fighting Services</li> <li>NGOs / CBOs</li> </ul>				
Planning phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local community</li> <li>Vulnerable groups</li> <li>Socio-cultural groups</li> </ul>	Sharing of Information on Local Employment Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is to be noted that road construction and infrastructure development are technical and domain specific. Engagement on local employment and contracting opportunities at site level closer to start of construction wherever it is feasible to engage service providers in unskilled or non-technical work. The contractors/vendors to be selected based on specific skill level and cost criteria.</li> <li>Information to be shared via local newspapers, media channels, and notices in the local labour office.</li> <li>Participatory community consultations relevant to the Community Development Plan</li> </ul>	DoST, Gewogs and Thromde administration	Prior to start of construction
Planning phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local community residing in the Project impact area</li> <li>Vulnerable groups</li> <li>Socio-cultural groups</li> </ul>	Sharing of information on health, safety and security	<p>Consultation with local community to understand their concerns, raise awareness of risks and opportunities and identify solutions for issues related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If migrant workers are engaged, during construction phase, there is potential for adverse impacts linked to in-migration.</li> <li>Access disruption to roads.</li> <li>Noise disturbance.</li> <li>Other issues or grievances including Human-Wildlife Conflicts</li> </ul> <p>The local community should also be informed about the GRM for the project.</p>	DoST, Gewogs and Thromde administration, DoFPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prior to start of construction phase</li> <li>Once every three months</li> <li>As per local needs of the community</li> </ul>

Project Stage	Target Stakeholders	Topic of Consultation / Message	Method Used	Responsible Agency	Frequency/Timeline
			<p>Consultations shall be undertaken via individual meetings with stakeholders.</p> <p>Ensure meaningful consultations with disadvantaged/vulnerable groups (including socio-cultural groups) in a culturally, gender and inter-generationally appropriate manner</p>		
Planning phase	Contractors, sub-contractors and workers	Sharing of information Occupational Health & Safety	Meetings and Toolbox talks to provide briefings on the tasks to be completed and the standards to be followed, for quality control and health and safety protection from potential hazards such as increased traffic, as well as dust and sand flying from carriers.	DoST, contractor representatives	Upon selection
Planning phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communities at risk of increased HEC</li> <li>Communities involved in implementation of biodiversity net gain strategy.</li> </ul>	Sharing of information on BMP, net gain strategy and opportunities for community workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disclosure of BMP and net gain strategy.</li> <li>Disclosures to be undertaken by way of meetings with each stakeholder group, and combined stakeholder group meetings, as deemed relevant.</li> <li>Consultations with potential community workers</li> <li>Ensure meaningful consultations with disadvantaged/vulnerable groups (including socio-cultural groups) in a culturally, gender and inter-generationally appropriate manner</li> </ul>	DoFPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prior to implementation of BMP and biodiversity net gain strategy</li> </ul>
Construction phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local communities</li> <li>Disadvantaged/vulnerable groups</li> <li>NGOs / CBOs</li> <li>Local journalists / media</li> <li>Social infrastructure – schools, health institutions, religious organisations</li> </ul>	Announcements and information related to construction activities	<p>Provide stakeholders, particularly receptors such as health institutions, schools, etc., with information on upcoming construction activities, potential impacts and disturbances such as:</p> <p>Movement of construction vehicles to help manage potential disturbances to traffic going to schools and emergency vehicles movement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Air and water quality and noise disturbance</li> <li>Other issues or grievances</li> </ul> <p>Announcements to be undertaken through local newspapers and media, newsletters and notices to local Gewog / Thromde offices.</p>	DoST	Ongoing, every month

Project Stage	Target Stakeholders	Topic of Consultation / Message	Method Used	Responsible Agency	Frequency/Timeline
			Ensure information is shared with disadvantaged/vulnerable groups (including socio-cultural groups).		
Construction phase	Contractors and equipment suppliers	Selection of Contractors and Equipment Suppliers	<p>The contractor / vendor selection and commercial approval process is prepared by the DoST procurement and approved by the head of procurement. An evaluation form shall be put in place to ensure that the vendor complies with all applicable laws covering environment, safety, labour rights including decent work conditions and remuneration, human rights (including child labour, forced or compulsory labour, non-discrimination). The form also checks if there has been any non-compliances, notices or fines by the regulator covering these aspects in the last few years. The Procurement head in tandem with the Human Resources will be primarily responsible for undertaking the procedures outlined for Contractor Selection and will be primarily responsible for undertaking the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A potential list of contractors that are reputed in the selected field of service will be developed by the regional Human Resources team.</li> <li>• An initial document request list to be sent to the contractors to obtain the requisite documents required to fill out the Contractor Screening Checklist.</li> <li>• The Contractor / Supplier Screening Checklist to then be filled out after thorough documentary review and any information gaps may be filled out based on the information provided orally by the contractor.</li> <li>• Thereafter, an evaluation of the contractor to be carried out based on their environmental and social (E&amp;S) performance including Environment, Health and Safety &amp;</li> </ul>	DoST	Upon on-boarding of contractors and engaging equipment suppliers

Project Stage	Target Stakeholders	Topic of Consultation / Message	Method Used	Responsible Agency	Frequency/Timeline
			<p>Sustainability competency of contractor, EHS policy and procedures, track record etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A background check of the contractor is also going to be carried out through public domain and contacting past clients to identify any reputational red flag issues.</li> <li>Thereafter, the contractor / supplier that ranks high in their E&amp;S performance and cost considerations will be selected.</li> </ul>		
Construction phase	Contractors, sub-contractors and workers	Sharing of information on Occupational Health & Safety	Meetings and Toolbox talks to provide briefings on the tasks to be completed and the standards to be followed, for quality control and health and safety protection from potential hazards such as increased traffic, as well as dust and sand flying from carriers.	DoST, contractor representatives	Daily, during construction
Construction phase	Contractors, sub-contractors and workers	Gender sensitisation programmes for contractual workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If contractual workers are engaged for project construction, or workers from the other villages are involved, training should be provided on required lawful conduct in local community and they should be apprised of potential legal consequences for failure to comply with law.</li> <li>Training should also cover workplace harassment prevention.</li> </ul>	DoST, contractor representatives	Prior to start of construction and ongoing every six months
Construction phase	Contractors, sub-contractors and workers	Awareness programmes and sensitisation campaigns for workers on communicable diseases	If migrant workers (including workers travelling from other counties) are engaged, awareness programmes and sensitization campaigns on communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS and other STDs, to be conducted for workers at the project site.	DoST, contractor representatives	Prior to start of construction and ongoing every six months
Construction phase	All stakeholders	Implementation of Grievance Redressal Mechanism (GRM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community information sessions, with specific activities to ensure participation of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.</li> <li>Worker information sessions.</li> </ul>	DoST, Gewogs and Thromde administration	Across entire phase

Project Stage	Target Stakeholders	Topic of Consultation / Message	Method Used	Responsible Agency	Frequency/Timeline
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Displaying telephone lines and numbers for recording grievances.</li> <li>• Setting up grievance boxes at Gewog / Thromde office, and even at the Chiwog levels if deemed necessary.</li> <li>• Setting up of grievance boxes at the site levels, including at the worker accommodation colonies.</li> <li>• Publicising through newspapers and local media regarding the grievance committee and details of committee members.</li> </ul>		
Construction phase	All stakeholders	Reporting to the public on social, environmental, health and safety performance and implementation of the action plans and grievance procedure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report on environmental, social, health and safety performance to be uploaded to project website and printed copies to be distributed among local community.</li> <li>• Report summaries shall be published in local newspaper.</li> <li>• Details of grievance procedures and committee members shall be provided in every report.</li> <li>• Pamphlets of good case studies, which indicate grievance resolution shall be published.</li> </ul>	DoST, contractors	Once a year
Construction phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities at risk of increased HEC due to disruptions in elephant routes caused by GT road construction</li> </ul>	Updates on risks, and implementation of BMP and net gain strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updates on risks of increased HEC due to construction of GT Road.</li> <li>• Reports on implementation of BMP and net gain strategy.</li> <li>• Use of community workers for net gain strategy</li> <li>• Community support in information sharing and implementing net gain strategy.</li> </ul>	DoFPS	Quarterly during implementation of BMP and biodiversity net gain strategy
Operations phase	All stakeholders	Implementation of Grievance Redressal Mechanism (GRM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community information sessions, with specific activities to ensure participation of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.</li> <li>• Worker information sessions.</li> <li>• Displaying telephone lines and numbers for recording grievances.</li> </ul>	DoST, contractors	Across entire phase

Project Stage	Target Stakeholders	Topic of Consultation / Message	Method Used	Responsible Agency	Frequency/Timeline
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Setting up grievance boxes at Gewog / Thromde office, and even at the Chiwog levels if deemed necessary.</li> <li>Setting up of grievance boxes at the site levels, including at the worker accommodation colonies during construction phase.</li> <li>Publicising through newspapers and local media regarding the grievance committee and details of committee members.</li> </ul>		
Operations phase	Local community residing in the project impact area	Informing about upcoming maintenance and repair work	Provide local community with updated information on project progress and any upcoming maintenance and repair work through pamphlets and local media / newspapers.	DoST, contractors	Across entire phase
Operations phase	Contractors, sub-contractors and workers	Gender sensitisation programmes for contractual workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If contractual workers are engaged for project operations, or workers from other areas are involved, training should be provided on required lawful conduct in local community and they should be apprised of potential legal consequences for failure to comply with law. These workers may be separate from those working in the construction phase.</li> <li>Training should also cover workplace harassment prevention.</li> </ul>	DoST, contractor representatives	Across entire phase, every six months
Operations phase	Contractors, sub-contractors and workers	Occupational Health & Safety	Meetings and Toolbox talks to provide briefings on the tasks to be completed and the standards to be followed, for quality control and health and safety protection.	Contractor representatives	Daily, during operational phase
Operations phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communities at risk of increased HEC</li> <li>Communities involved in implementation of biodiversity net gain strategy.</li> </ul>	Updates on implementation of BMP and net gain strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updates on risks of increased HEC due to construction of GT Road.</li> <li>Reports on implementation of BMP and net gain strategy.</li> <li>Use of community workers for net gain strategy</li> </ul>	DoFPS	Quarterly during implementation of BMP and biodiversity net gain strategy

Project Stage	Target Stakeholders	Topic of Consultation / Message	Method Used	Responsible Agency	Frequency/Timeline
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community support in information sharing and implementing net gain strategy.</li> </ul>		
Operations phase	All stakeholders	Reporting to the public on social, environmental, health and safety performance and implementation of the action plans and grievance procedure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report on environmental, social, health and safety performance to be uploaded to project website and printed copies to be distributed among local community.</li> <li>Report summaries shall be published in local newspaper.</li> <li>Details of grievance procedures and committee members shall be provided in every report.</li> <li>Pamphlets of good case studies, which indicate grievance resolution shall be published.</li> </ul>	DoST	Once a year



#### 4.1.3 Proposed strategy to incorporate the views of vulnerable groups

Vulnerable groups consist of people who may not be able to access Project information and articulate their concerns and priorities about potential Project impacts owing to certain barriers that disadvantage them. The barriers could be socio-political, limitations in access to ownership of resources, gender, age, or poverty as people influenced by these factors are not expected to or do not feel that they can have a “voice” or representation in public. The Project will conduct most of the engagement activities in Dzongkha. In addition, the disclosure materials will use as much of visuals and infographic as possible to facilitate stakeholders who are not literate and minimize language barriers. The stakeholder consultations and meetings will be gender-inclusive, taking into account the issues identified through participatory and gender-inclusive engagement. The engagement activities will be curated to provide for equitable representation of women and their concerns and seek to support the promotion of women’s participation in Project activities. This includes concerns and opinions of other vulnerable groups.

Taking these barriers into account, several measures will be used to remove obstacles to participation for vulnerable groups:

- **Focus groups for women**, led and facilitated by a woman in each Gewog / Chiwog / Thromde / Demkhong in the Project affected population, to introduce the Project and discuss any issues and concerns that the women may have regarding the Project development.
- **Focus groups for youth**, led by a youth facilitator in each village in the Project affected population.
- **Focus groups with socio-cultural groups**, led by representatives from the identified social-cultural groups in the project affected population.
- **School visits** to disseminate Project information and consult with school children and teachers about potential impacts and benefits. Information disclosure through schoolteachers and students is also an effective way to reach the broader community, especially women, as teachers are important influencers in the community and children often bring information collected from school to share with their families.
- **Household visits** will be undertaken on a case-by-case basis, particularly for people with disabilities, the elderly who have mobility issues, and other vulnerable people that are unable to attend community meetings, to ensure they are provided with the Project information and have opportunities to raise their questions and concerns freely without intimidation, discomfort, or ridicule.

While reaching out to different groups particularly vulnerable groups such as women, elderly and disabled, the Project team will make sure time and location of consultation are appropriate to their needs.

#### Information disclosure

One of the most important aspects of any consultation or engagement process is the process of information disclosure. This process is not only part of regulatory requirements but also a requirement of the investors / lenders in the project. The process of information disclosure can be undertaken in two manners, either voluntary disclosure or disclosure as part of the regulatory requirements.

While regulatory disclosure involves the provisioning of information as required by the authorities and agencies involved in the Project, voluntary disclosure refers to the process of disclosing information to the various stakeholders in a voluntary manner. The process of disclosure involves the provisioning of information in an accessible manner (a manner which allows for easy understanding, such as in the local language) to the various stakeholders in a project. This disclosure not only allows for trust to be built amongst the stakeholders through the sharing of information but also allow for more constructive participation in the other processes of consultation and resolution of grievances due to availability of accurate and timely information.

All relevant information such as local employment and training opportunities should be disclosed to the target stakeholders as early as possible.

Moreover, while undertaking the process of disclosure it is important that the Project and the contractors’ employees endeavour to refrain from creating false expectations. When possible, an attempt shall be made to disclose actual numbers, even estimates, wherever available.

This disclosure of relevant plans is to be carried out in a manner which would make the information available to the community in an accessible and timely manner.

### **Meaningful Consultations**

For identified socio-cultural groups, the project will ensure meaningful consultations in a culturally appropriate and gender and intergenerationally inclusive manner. These will ensure that representatives of the socio-cultural groups as well as community members are consulted through the project life cycle, allowing for sufficient time for their decision making processes, and ensuring effective participation in the design of project activities or mitigation measures that could potentially affect them either positively or negatively.

Meaningful consultations will build on existing customary institution, will be conducted as two-way process and will take into account different viewpoints and opinions while respecting traditional cultural approaches to consultations and decision making. The following measures may be taken to ensure consultations with socio-cultural groups are meaningful:

- Begin consultations early in the project planning process to gather initial views on the project proposal and inform project design;
- Encourage stakeholder feedback, particularly as a way of informing project design and engaging stakeholders in the identification and mitigation of environmental and social risks and impacts;
- Continue consultations on an ongoing basis;
- Ensure prior disclosure and dissemination of relevant, transparent, objective, meaningful, and easily accessible information in a time frame that enables consultations with stakeholders in a culturally appropriate format, in relevant local language(s) and understandable to stakeholders;
- Consider and respond to feedback;
- Support active and inclusive engagement with project-affected parties;
- Be free of external manipulation, interference, coercion, discrimination, and intimidation; and
- Be documented and disclosed by the Borrower.

### **Training**

Training shall be provided to all the staff at the Project level, in handling both internal and external stakeholders as per the modalities defined in the SEP, to allow for systemic engagement with stakeholders and avoid grievances. The training shall also cover understanding of grievance mechanisms, relevant to their exposure and responsibilities for managers, all other employees, contractors, and visitors, which shall include as a minimum:

- Expected behaviours and accepted practices when interacting with workers and stakeholders to avoid a grievance in the first instance.
- Routes available for workers to lodge grievances.
- Routes available for workers and other external stakeholders to lodge a grievance.
- Roles and responsibilities for handling and resolving grievances (including key internal and external stakeholder contacts), and
- Recording and tracking procedures.

### **Monitoring**

This plan should be revisited regularly to confirm that engagement activities and key messages/ themes are in line with any changes in Project characteristics, regulatory requirements and the context surrounding the Project. The mapping outputs, including stakeholder lists and engagement methods should be reviewed every three (3) months during construction to ensure they are all still relevant and appropriate and help meet the objectives set out by the Project.

Table 8 provides a list of performance indicators that can be used to guide the evaluation process. In instances where the performance indicators are not being met, appropriate corrective actions should be implemented.

**Table 8. Performance indicators**

Performance indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The proposed engagement activities set out in this Plan have implemented within given timelines.</li><li>• Regular reviews of this Plan have been conducted. This includes reviews of the stakeholder mapping outcomes, and the engagement activities described in this Plan. This should be based on ongoing stakeholder feedback.</li><li>• The Project has maintained records of:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Affected communities involved in engagement.</li><li>- Outcomes of engagement being considered in the ongoing design and construction as well as operations phases of the Project (i.e., mitigation measures in response to potential impacts).</li><li>- The sharing of Project benefits and opportunities, and</li><li>- Discussions with stakeholders.</li></ul></li></ul>

### Reporting

During the lifecycle of the Project, the performance of the SEP and GRM shall be reviewed on a bi-annual basis. For the review of the Project, the designated Project staff will prepare reports to be submitted to the Project management team and the Director General of DoST, on a quarterly basis. During the operations phase, the reports will be submitted on an annual basis.

## Component 3: Stakeholder Engagement Program

### 4.1.4 Summary of stakeholder engagement done during project preparation

The PMU consulted with the GovTech Agency, Department of Forest and Park Services under the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, Bhutan Construction and Transport Authority, and Departments under the MoIT and compiled a preliminary list for the capacity building program. This will be further discussed with these agencies and submitted to the PSC for approval. No stakeholder engagement activities were performed during the project preparation. A stakeholder consultation meeting will be held after finalizing and disclosing this draft SEP.

As for the policy and regulatory reform, MoIT has identified above listed policies and laws to be reviewed under the project. As is the requirement of the government for engagement of all relevant stakeholders in reviewing policies and laws, all stakeholders will be engaged once during the drafting and review of the policies and regulations.

Different engagement methods are proposed and cover different stakeholder needs as follows:

- **Structured Agendas:** Used for **formal meetings** with government officials (MoIT, GovTech, RCSC, Thromde, Dzongkhag) and other agencies on topics related to training and capacity building, and to align on project goal for component 3.
- **Consultations, formal meetings, and workshop** involving the key agencies responsible for policy and regulatory aspects.
- **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):** Targeted discussions with **vulnerable groups** (e.g., women in public service who are often underrepresented, civil servants in rural and remote areas, and government workers with disabilities)
- **Key Informant Interviews** with the projects' other interested parties/stakeholders (educational and training institutions in Bhutan, any NGO and advocacy groups involved in gender equality)
- **One-on-One Interviews:** Conducted with civil servants and technical staff on HRD strategy and Gender issues.
- **Workshops and consultation Meetings** held for stakeholders to present project progress, implementation status, and to discuss major issues.

- **Public Information Campaigns:** Disseminate key information through MoIT website media, social media, and flyers to raise awareness of project activities and engage broader stakeholder groups.

- **Summary of project stakeholder needs and methods, tools and techniques for stakeholder engagement**

The Stakeholder Engagement Plan below outlines the engagement process, topics of consultations messages, including, target stakeholders. Different engagement methods are proposed and cover different stakeholder needs, as stated below in **Table 9**.

**Table 1. Stakeholder Engagement Plan for Component 3**

Project Stage	Estimated Date/Time Period	Topic of Consultation/ Message	Method Used	Target Stakeholders	Responsibilities
Project Preparation stage	October 2024 to June 2025	Introduce Project scope and objectives Component 3 – Capacity Building Implementation Plans	Formal meetings – structured agenda email communications	Government Agencies (MoIT, GovTech, and other relevant agencies). Vulnerable Groups	Gov Tech, DoST, PMU
		HR development strategy. Consultation on training needs, gender inclusion, and policy reforms.  Feedback on proposed capacity-building activities, training modules        Policy and regulatory reforms required (skills gap and capacity needs)	KII – with Educational Institutes and CSOs/NGOs,  Disseminate key information through MoIT website, social media, and flyers to raise awareness of project activities  Formal consultations; workshops with key stakeholders	Other interested parties (Educational and Training Institutions (RIM, CST, IMS), NGOs and CSOs)       Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport (MoIT), Educational and Training Institution, Bhutan Standards Bureau	DoST, PMU
Early Implementation Stage	2025-2026	Training program rollout, digital systems training (NSW, cybersecurity), and gender-inclusive training initiatives  Grievances and feedback	GM issues and updates information through MoIT website, social media	Government Agencies (MoIT, GovTech, and other relevant agencies).	DoST, PMU

				<p>RGoB Officials (Civil servants and technical staff)</p> <p>Other interested parties (Educational and Training Institutions, NGOs and CSOs)</p> <p>Disadvantaged/ Vulnerable Groups</p>	
Mid-term Implementation	2027-2028	<p>Monitoring and evaluation of project progress, feedback on HRD and capacity building progress – Review SEP implementation Progress and achievements Training-related issues, and social impacts. Information disclosure</p> <p>Policy and regulatory reforms</p>	<p>Mid-term review workshops, dissemination of progress reports, online feedback portals, surveys, interviews with Government and other agencies Feedback from vulnerable groups. Key information through MoIT website, social media information through GovTech website, social media</p> <p>Mid-term review workshops Feedback from key stakeholders.</p>	<p>Government Agencies, RGoB officials, and other relevant agencies Vulnerable groups.</p> <p>Other interested parties – Educational and Training Institutions, NGOs and CSOs</p> <p>MoIT, Bhutan Construction and Transport Authority</p> <p>Bhutan Civil Aviation Authority, Cabinet Secretariat, Office of the Attorney General, Local Government</p>	PMU

Project Completion	2029-2030	Final review of capacity-building outcomes, sustainability of training initiatives, and future policy reform recommendations.	Final consultation workshops, public dissemination of final project reports. information through the MoIT website, social media, press release	All previously engaged stakeholders, including government agencies, employees, civil society organizations	PMU
--------------------	-----------	---	--	--	-----

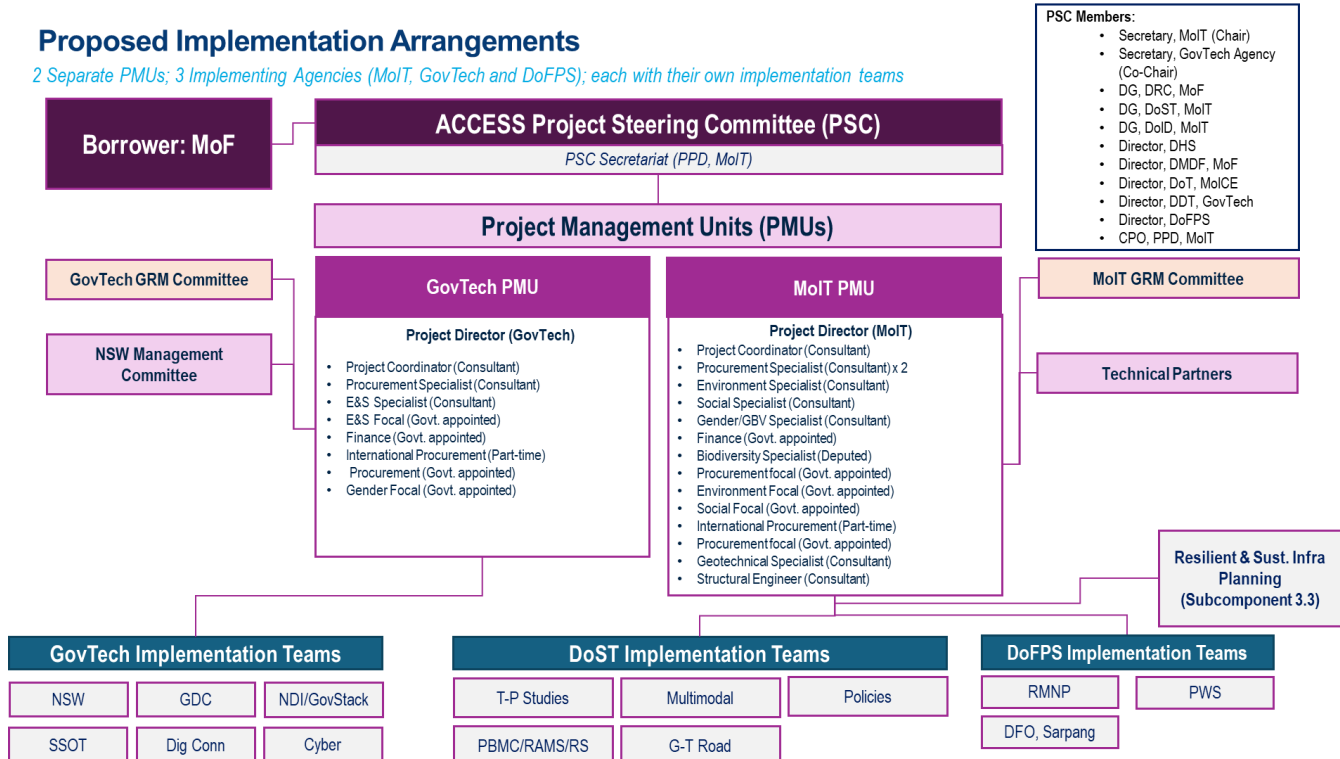
Information will be disclosed to stakeholders in the following ways:

- **Project Documents:** The SEP, relevant E&S documents, and other key project materials, such as the Grievance Mechanism (GM) procedures, will be disclosed through multiple channels. This includes **press releases** and uploads to the **MoIT project website** to ensure broad accessibility.
- **Consultation Meetings:** Regular consultation meetings will be held to provide updates on project developments, particularly for stakeholders directly impacted by **Components 3**. Special focus group discussions will be conducted with vulnerable groups to ensure their needs and concerns are addressed.
- All information will be disclosed in **Dzongkha** and **English** to ensure inclusivity, and targeted materials will be produced for vulnerable groups, addressing their specific needs.
- **Documentation** of stakeholder engagement will be published in a timely fashion through channels that are accessible to stakeholders. This documentation (based on Guidance Note 9.1 WB) includes the following, as appropriate:
  - Date and location of each meeting, with a copy of the notification to stakeholders;
  - The purpose of the engagement (for example, to inform stakeholders of an intended project or to gather their views on potential environmental and social impacts of an intended project);
  - The form of engagement and consultation (for example, face-to-face meetings, workshops, focus groups, written consultations, online consultations);
  - Number of participants and categories of participants;
  - A list of relevant documentation disclosed to participants;
  - Summary of main points and concerns raised by stakeholders;
  - Summary of how stakeholder concerns were responded to and taken into account as well as issues and activities that require follow-up actions, including clarifying how stakeholders are informed of decisions.

## 5 RESOURCES/BUDGET FOR IMPLEMENTING STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

### 5.1 Implementation Arrangement and Resources

The Project Implementation Arrangements are shown in Figure 1. Project Management Units (PMUs) of DoST and GovTech will be in charge of stakeholder engagement activities. The Social Specialist in the DoST PMU and the E&S Specialist in the GovTech's PMU are responsible for carrying out stakeholder engagement activities. A Project Implementation Unit (PIU) will also be established under the DoFPS, which will be responsible for stakeholder engagement activities related to human-wildlife co-existence.



**Figure 1: Project Implementation Arrangements**

The project's stakeholder engagement implementation arrangements are as follows:

DoST and GovTech will manage the project's E&S risks, including implementing the SEP through their PMUs. This engagement process should be given as much importance as the other project activities and guarantee resource availability.

To manage its engagements with the Project stakeholders and meet the objectives of the SEP, DoST for Gelephu-Tareyathang Road, will also use the services of an Owner's Engineer to supervise the construction works, including support for the implementation of SEP. They will depute suitable personnel at site or an existing staff with relevant skills. Additionally, the Project team at site should be trained on aspects of engagement with various key stakeholders, including the vulnerable groups, and the staff deputed/identified for SEP implementation should be assigned the responsibility of documenting and maintaining separate records of all stakeholder engagement activities undertaken during the Project lifecycle and providing updates to the corporate on the same.

The stakeholder engagement activities will be documented through PMUs.

The budget for implementing SEP for Components 1 and 3 is estimated at Nu.500,000.00 and will be met from the budget of the specific activities. The indicative budget is presented in **Table 10** below:

**Table 10. Indicative Budget for SEP Implementation (Components 1 and 3)**

Budget Category	Quantity	Unit Costs	Years	Total Costs Nu	Remarks
<b>1. Estimated staff salaries and related expenses</b>					
1a. Staff salaries	-	-	-	-	In project budget
1b. Travel costs	-	-	-	-	Indicative
<b>2. Events</b>					
2a. Consultation meetings, workshops feedback sessions with key stakeholders	Lump sum		1	300, 000.00	
<b>3. Communication campaigns</b>					
3a. Information brochures, posters, public announcements Project information TV, radio, social media	Lump sum		1	200,000.00	
<b>4. Training</b>					
<b>Total Stakeholder Engagement Budget:</b>				<b>500,000.00</b>	

The budget for implementing SEP for **Component 2** is presented in Table 11 below. A sum of Nu 3.1 million is proposed.

**Table 11. Indicative Budget for SEP Implementation (Component 2)**

Budget Category	Quantity	Unit Costs	Years	Total Costs Nu	Remarks
<b>1. Estimated staff salaries and related expenses</b>					
1a. Staff salaries	-	-	-	-	In project budget
1b. Travel costs	-	-	-	-	Indicative
<b>2. Events</b>					
2a. Consultation meetings, workshops feedback sessions with key stakeholders	Lump sum		6	2,400,000.00	
<b>3. Communication campaigns</b>					
3a. Information brochures, posters, public announcements Project information TV, radio, social media	Lump sum		6	700,000.00	
<b>4. Training</b>					
<b>Total Stakeholder Engagement Budget:</b>				<b>3,100,000.00</b>	

The budget estimate for preparing and implementing SEP is **USD 26,500** (Nu 2,252,500.00) as per the Project document. However, this budget will be updated before the implementation of this SEP.



## 6 GRIEVANCE MECHANISM

A Grievance Mechanism (GM) is a system that allows not only grievances, but also queries, suggestions, positive feedback, and concerns of project-affected parties related to the environmental and social performance of a project to be submitted and responded to in a timely manner.

The following time frame (**Table 12**) is proposed for responding and managing the grievances.

**Table 12. Proposed GM Time Frame**

Step	Process	Time frame
1	Receive and register grievance and acknowledgment of receipt	within 24 hours
2	Assess grievance	within one day
3	Assign responsibility	within 2 days
4	Development of response	within 7 days
5	Implementation of response if agreement is reached	within 7 to 10 days
6	Close grievance if agreement is reached.	within 2 days
7	Initiate grievance review process if no agreement is reached.	within 7 days after SI No 6
8	Implement review recommendations and close grievance	within 14 days
9	Grievance taken to court by complainant	-

### Component 1: Description of Grievance Mechanism (Digital Systems for Trade)

**Table 13. GRM Steps and Description for Component 1**

Step	Description of Process	Time Frame	Responsibility
GM Implementation Structure	<p>The GovTech has initiated the GM process by inviting concerns or grievances using a web link.</p> <p>The PMU of GovTech will be responsible for the implementation of GM. PMU and GM focal point will ensure close coordination with PMU of DoST and DoFPS implementing teams. GM personnel will be trained on survivor-centric SEA/SH response.</p>	<p>The specialist will be engaged within 2 months of project effectiveness.</p> <p>All grievances will be closed based on the timeframe given in Table 12.</p>	GovTech - PMU
Grievance uptake	Grievances can be submitted via the following channels: Grievances or concerns to GovTech using a link	The form is available online. So, grievances can be	PMU/ E&S Specialist/GRM Focal

Step	Description of Process	Time Frame	Responsibility
	<a href="https://forms.gle/URnpAiHssHeTsJud8">https://forms.gle/URnpAiHssHeTsJud8</a> Grievance submission online form will be designed	submitted at any time.	
Sorting and Processing	Any complaint received is collected, documented, logged, and ranked by risk level (high, medium, and low). Grievances will be categorized according to the following complaint types: Related to digital infrastructure installation, civil work, damage to property/land, community health and safety, etc. Complaint received is forwarded/shared with the PMU and agencies.	Upon receipt of the complaint	PMU/PIU/Local grievance focal point
Acknowledgment and follow-up	Receipt of the grievance is acknowledged to the complainant by email, letter, or voice call.	Within 2 days of receipt	PMU/Local GRM Focal
Verification, investigation, action	Investigation of the complaint is led by the PMU/ Divisions of GovTech The resolution is formulated by GRM Team and communicated to the complainant by email or letter. Response timeframe will vary, depending on the risk levels.	Within 10 working days	GRC/PMU/Local GRM Focal
Monitoring and evaluation	Data on complaints will be collected in GRM database and reported to Directors/Managers of Gov Tech every fortnight. Gov Tech Committee will have a quarterly GRM review, including the number of grievances received vs redressed and time required for redressal.	Weekly/ Quarterly	PMU/Departments/Local GRM Focal
Provision of feedback	Complainants will be informed of resolutions in writing. In response to anonymous grievances, the resolution will be published on a visible and accessible notice board at the PMU/PIU/Local Offices/Community Centre. The functioning of GRM will be discussed during community meetings.	Quarterly	PMU/Local GRM Focal

The GovTech will be responsible for monitoring and evaluation of the SEP implementation and shall take the lead role. The GRM will provide an appeals process if the complainant is not satisfied with the proposed resolution of the complaint. Once all possible means to resolve the complaint have been proposed and if the complainant is still not satisfied, then they should be advised of their right to legal recourse.

The GovTech Grievance Redressal will be sensitive to address Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/Harassment (SEA/SH) at the workplaces associated with project activities. Govtech GM will be linked with the overall Project's dedicated mechanisms on SEA/SH to handle sensitive and confidential complaints ensuring Accountability and Response Framework in line with the World Bank ESF Good Practice Note on SEA/SH. Reporting on SEA/SH incidents will follow the latest Environmental and Social Incident Reporting Toolkit (ESIRT) guidance.

## Component 2 (Gelephu-Tareythang Road): Description of GM

A grievance redress mechanism (GRM) will be established to receive and facilitate the resolution of complaints and grievances of project affected households and individuals in a time bound and transparent manner. The project specific GRM is not intended to bypass the government's own redress process, rather it is intended to address project affected people's concerns and complaints promptly.

The GM structure and steps are described in Table 14 and in the following sections.

### 6.1.1 GM Steps and description

**Table 14. GM Implementation structure, steps and description**

Steps	Description of Process	Time Frame	Responsibility
GM Implementation Structure (Local level)	<p>The DoST Regional Office in Sarpang will include a PMU team with the following personnel/committee responsible for GM implementation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chief Engineer, Sarpang District</li> <li>- Social and Environment Specialist from PMU</li> <li>- Representative of Dzongkhag Admin</li> <li>- Representative of the Department of Forests and Park Services</li> <li>- Representative of Affected Communities local government offices</li> </ul> <p>DoST's project official (on site) will be responsible for the implementation of internal GRM and will be responsible for undertaking verbal and written, as well as formal and informal complaints.</p>	<p>The Committee will be formed within 2 months after the Project's effectiveness.</p> <p>All cases at the local level including problems related to human-wildlife conflict, will be heard within the GM timeframe given in Table 12.</p>	PMU, DoST
GM Implementation Structure (National level)	<p>At the department level, a Grievance Redressal Cell shall be set up and will comprise a Grievance Head. The Director General shall act as the Grievance Head and shall hold the ultimate responsibility of resolving critical matters.</p> <p>A Grievance Resolution Committee will be established, comprising four members from the DoST, the Social Inclusion, Environment, and RAP focal officers, and within them, at least two (2) female representatives. The committee will ensure that the aggrieved person has an opportunity to present their concerns.</p> <p>The DoST office in Thimphu will include the following PMU team responsible for GM implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Project Director, PMU</li> <li>● Social Inclusion Focal Officer, PMU</li> <li>● RAP focal officer, PMU</li> <li>● Environment focal officer, PMU</li> </ul>	<p>The decisions on unresolved cases at the local level will be forwarded to the PMU at the national level and will be solved within 14 working days.</p>	PMU, DoST

Steps	Description of Process	Time Frame	Responsibility
Common grievances	<p>The range of possible grievances of the communities can be vast; however, the following common grievances can spur in most project phases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Issues related to land acquisition and compensation.</li> <li>- Risks to community, health &amp; safety (e.g., traffic).</li> <li>- Accidents (e.g., involving livestock).</li> <li>- Unethical behaviour by contractor personnel or their subcontractors.</li> <li>- SEA/SH risks</li> <li>- Noise/dust/air emissions or any other impact on environment caused by project or sub-contractors.</li> <li>- Issues owing to behaviour of the security personnel and general attitude of the local community.</li> <li>- Unpleasant odour.</li> <li>- Expectations of local employment and sourcing of material / services from local service providers.</li> <li>- Issues related to cultural conflicts or opportunity conflicts owing to presence of migrant workers in the community or in the nearby areas.</li> <li>- Any attempts to conceal the above.</li> </ul> <p>These issues are anticipated throughout the Project lifecycle and will be taken forward by DoST under the various Project activities.</p>	Through the Project lifecycle	PMU, DOST
Grievance uptake	<p>Grievances related to project can be submitted via the following channels.</p> <p>Weblink:  <a href="https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfXF8-Qow0-WsSto4EyuKtlw51TL0e5eJzWccgjFAifbKLopw/viewform">https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfXF8-Qow0-WsSto4EyuKtlw51TL0e5eJzWccgjFAifbKLopw/viewform</a></p> <p>Email: thinleyd@moit.gov.bt</p> <p>In-person: at DoST office in Sarpang. For written communication of complaints, a sample grievance form is included in <b>Annex 6</b> of this document.</p>	Will operate from 9 am to 5 pm (except on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays)	PMU
Sorting and Processing	<p>Any complaint received is collected, documented, logged, and ranked by risk level (high, medium, and low). Grievances will be categorized according to the following complaint types:</p>	<p>Upon receipt of the complaint -</p> <p>Receive and register grievance and acknowledgement of receipt within 24 hours.</p>	PMU

Steps	Description of Process	Time Frame	Responsibility
	<p>Low: straightforward issues may only need screening before proceeding to the next step (resolution options and response). Review of minor issues, especially those related to a complainant's request for information, can generally be handled easily by providing information on the spot.</p> <p>Medium: Less clear, more problematic, or repetitive issues, or group complaints may need a more detailed review prior to action. Staff involved in handling grievances may need to seek advice internally, and in some cases turn to outside parties to help in the validation process, especially in cases of damage claims.</p> <p>High: Complex issues with multiple parties may need investigation which can be organised internally, or the company may designate third-party experts to investigate when impartiality. If an extensive investigation is found to be necessary, it shall be initiated swiftly before circumstances change or the conflict escalates further. SEA/SH related grievances will be considered of high risk level. These complaints will be referred to the SEA/SH specific GM</p>		
Acknowledgment and follow-up	<p>All incoming grievances will be acknowledged immediately at the time of grievance being recorded. In case grievances are heard in site workers' meetings, they will be recorded after the meeting and consented to by the aggrieved in the form of signatures of individuals or representative of the aggrieved group. A formal confirmation will be assigned to each grievance with a complaint number (or another identifier), and a timeline for response to assure the complainant that the company is responding properly.</p> <p>If a complaint is received in person, it will be acknowledged on the spot, and DoST will explain up front what complaints are outside the scope of the grievance mechanism and what alternative avenues any employee/contractual worker can use to address these potential issues</p>	Within 2 days of receipt	PIUs

Steps	Description of Process	Time Frame	Responsibility
Verification, investigation, action	<p>The local PMU team will investigate and resolve the issue.</p> <p>Once a decision is reached,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicated back to the complainant via phone, letter, or in-person.</li> <li>Grievance Log is updated, and the case is marked as closed if resolved satisfactorily.</li> </ul> <p>If grievances cannot be resolved at the local level, it will be forwarded to the national level PMU.</p>	<p>Low: Resolved immediately through direct action or communication.</p> <p>Medium: within 7 days</p> <p>High: Within 10 to 14 days, depending on the escalation level.</p>	PMU Complaints Committee
Monitoring and evaluation	Data on complaints will be collected in GM database and reported to the Project Director PMU every fortnight. The PMU will have a quarterly GM review, including the number of grievances received vs redressed and time required for redressal.	Monthly	PMU/PIUs
Provision of feedback	Feedback from complaints regarding their satisfaction with complaint resolution will be collected quarterly	Quarterly	PMU
Training	<p>Training shall be provided to all the staff at the Project level, for handling of internal stakeholder grievances as per the modalities defined in the GRM. The training shall also cover understanding of grievance mechanisms, relevant to their exposure and responsibilities for managers, all other employees, contractors, and visitors, which shall include as a minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expected behaviours and accepted practices when interacting with workers and stakeholders in order to avoid a grievance in the first instance.</li> <li>Routes available for workers to lodge grievances.</li> <li>Roles and responsibilities for handling and resolving grievances (including key internal and external stakeholder contacts), and</li> <li>Recording and tracking procedures.</li> <li>DoST should ensure disclosure and accessibility through several channels/mechanisms (e.g., post, email, telephone, in-person, consultations, etc.) of its grievance handling and redressal process to all the employee's contractors.</li> <li>The regional office in Sarpang officer at the site level should hold employee/workers level meetings or any other form of communication to disclose the grievance mechanism.</li> </ul>	-	

Steps	Description of Process	Time Frame	Responsibility
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Social and Environment focals will undertake the sensitisation of the employees for grievance redressal.</li> <li>- Information on the types of complaints that fall under the ambit of this GRM.</li> <li>- Who can raise complaints, and</li> <li>- Where, when, and how grievances can be lodged.</li> </ul>		
Appeal Process	If the grievance still remains unresolved, the Complainant is informed about alternative avenues, such as regulatory authorities or legal recourse.		

The GRM will include provisions to receive and respond to queries and complaints by socio-cultural groups, by considering their traditional grievance redressal practices. Conflict resolution for socio-cultural groups follows a gradual, community-driven process with internal methods prioritized before engaging formal authorities. As per consultations with these groups, the most immediate consult for conflict is within the community (through elders) with cases then being forward to LG if the issues cannot be resolved at the first level. While developing the Project GRM, further consultations will be conducted with socio-cultural groups to identify and add provisions for receiving and addressing specific grievances.

The GRM will be sensitive to address Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/Harassment (SEA/SH) associated with project activities. It will be linked with the overall Project's dedicated mechanisms on SEA/SH to handle sensitive and confidential complaints ensuring Accountability and Response Framework in line with the World Bank ESF Good Practice Note on SEA/SH. Reporting on SEA/SH incidents will follow the latest Environmental and Social Incident Reporting Toolkit (ESIRT) guidance.

### 6.1.2 Labor GM -Internal Grievances (during road constructions)

This section provides the mechanism for internal grievances. The types of grievances that would be taken into consideration by the Project under the ambit of this GRM are as follows:

- Terms of appointment/employment settled and agreed upon prior to the start of the working day.
- Annual performance appraisal/confirmation process.
- Grievance pertaining to, or arising out of, disciplinary action or appeal against such actions.
- Grievances arising out of termination or dismissal.
- A grievance already settled during last six (06) months.
- A grievance related to any discontent or dissatisfaction with any aspect of DoST.
- Grievance Redressal Process for Internal Grievance.

DoST shall be committed to establish relevant communication tools and strategies in order to reinforce the department's commitment towards providing fair and equitable work opportunities to all employees including contractual workers hired by contractors. The objective of the grievance resolution process is to provide employees with an easily accessible mechanism for settlement of their individual grievances.

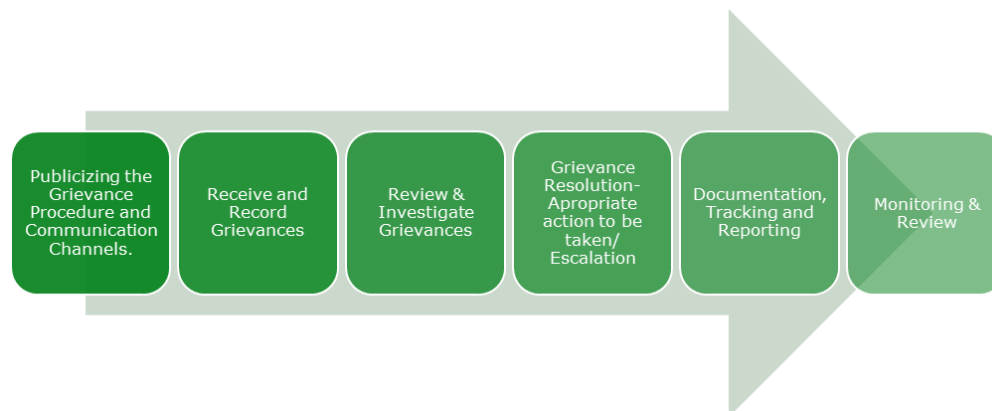
### 6.1.3 Labor and contractor/vendor related grievance

Labour is a critical issue and the availability of the same, both semi-skilled and skilled, is essential for the timely completion of construction and operational-related activities. A dedicated plan for managing contractors and

vendors shall ensure that the vendor complies with all applicable laws covering environment, safety, labour rights including decent work conditions and remuneration, human rights (including child labour, forced or compulsory labour, non-discrimination). The plan shall also include provision for checks if there have been any non-compliances, notices or fines by the regulator covering these aspects in the last few years. This shall be in view of the expected labour influx to the Project area, especially migrant workers from India and potentially other countries in the region. DoST's procurement head in tandem with the HR head will be primarily responsible for undertaking the procedures outlined for Contractor/Vendor Selection. The workers including the local and migrant workers (both national and international) are likely to have the grievances related to the following issues:

- Risk to health and safety of the labourers or workers hired by the Contractors/Vendors.
- Working condition of the labourers.
- Wage discrimination among the labourers.
- Timing of the payments.
- Inadequate facilities on site, including water supply and sanitation.
- Provident funds, insurances, workmen's compensation, adequate health facility related issues.
- Unjustified deduction from the wages.
- Minimum wage rates for the labourers.
- Extended working hours.
- Prevention and Protection of child labour from all working conditions.
- Interpersonal issues among workers.
- Issue of forced labour, and
- Gender based discrimination
- SEA/SH.

#### 6.1.4 GM Steps and Procedures



##### Step 1: Raising awareness about grievance procedure

##### Step 2: Grievance receipt and recording

The receipt and tracking of grievances will involve the following stages:

- Collecting and recording grievances as they come in.
- Registering them in a grievance log, and
- Tracking them to reflect their status and important details.

Keeping proper records will help to track cases, respond to grievances in a timely manner, check the status of complaints and track progress, measure effectiveness, and report on results.



The HR-Admin will coordinate with the personnel/departments responsible for corrective actions and maintain a record of progress (for example- open, pending or closed). An aggregated monthly report on the status of complaints will be maintained by the HR-Admin and submitted to the HR at the corporate level who will track the resolution status.

Grievances which are understood to be under the purview of other mandatory legal systems shall be redirected to the concerned authorities/departments.

### **Step 3: Reviewing and investigating grievances**

The HR-Admin responsible for grievance handling will organise the process to validate the complaint's legitimacy and arrange for investigation of details. To begin this process, the nature of the grievance shall be established to determine the measures needed for review and investigation. All grievances shall undergo some degree of review and investigation, depending on the type of grievance and clarity of circumstances:

### **Step 4: Grievance Resolution**

- Once a decision is reached, the same shall be communicated back to the aggrieved person through the contact information shared by the same through phone, letter, or in-person.
- The records within the grievance register shall also be updated and the case closed, when addressed to the satisfaction of the complainant.
- In case no decision is reached, the same shall also be communicated back to the aggrieved person.

If grievances are not addressed at the local/site level, the affected household or person can lodge a written grievance with the Grievance Redress Committee at the departmental/national level. All grievances which cannot be addressed at the local/site level will be forwarded to the Grievance Committee at the national level.

At all stages of the grievance process, the aggrieved person or a group, if not satisfied, is free to approach regulatory authorities and/or the courts for redress.

Grievances related to SEA/SH will be addressed through the SEA/SH specific GM that will be supported by a GM personnel trained on survivor-centered approach. GBV service provider will provide timely response and referral. Close coordination among the implementing agencies will ensure that SEA/SH incidents related to any component is addressed.

## **▪ Monitoring, reporting and reviewing procedure**

### **Institutional set up**

In order to manage its engagements with the internal stakeholders and meet the objectives of the GRM, DoST is required to ensure that this engagement process is given as much importance as the other activities as well as guarantee the availability of certain resources.

For the management of the E&S aspects of its operations, three entities will be responsible for various activities linked with the Construction and Operations phases of the Project, viz., DoST, EPC and O&M Contractors. However, the overall responsibility of implementation of the GRM lies with DoST, in close coordination with contractors, during the construction and operations phases. Suitable personnel should be deputed at site or an existing staff with relevant skills and understanding of E&S issues should be allocated responsibilities to implement the GRM for the Project. Additionally, the Project team at site should be trained on aspects of engagement with the staff deputed/ identified for GRM implementation should be assigned the responsibility of documenting and maintaining records of all grievances during the Project lifecycle and providing updates to the corporate on the same.

## **Component 3: Description GM- (Institutional and Policy Strengthening)**

The main objective of a GM is to assist to resolve complaints and grievances in a timely, effective, and efficient manner that satisfies all parties involved. Specifically, it provides a transparent and credible process for fair, effective and

lasting outcomes. It also builds trust and cooperation as an integral component of broader community consultation that facilitates corrective actions. Specifically, the GRM:

- Provides affected people with avenues for making a complaint or resolving any dispute that may arise during the course of the implementation of projects;
- Ensures that appropriate and mutually acceptable redress actions are identified and implemented to the satisfaction of complainants; and
- Avoids the need to resort to judicial proceedings.
- The GRM should be culturally appropriate and accessible social cultural groups, taking into account their customary dispute settlement mechanism.

### 6.1.5 Grievance Redress Committee

The MoIT adopted a Grievance Redressal Mechanism in 2017. A Grievance Redressal Committee consisting of six members has been established in the Ministry. This committee is chaired by The Secretary of MoIT. The main objective of this committee is to ensure the employees' problems are addressed quickly and satisfactorily with accountability and transparency. The GRM specifically deals with the problems faced by employees. The Ministry issued a framework guideline for the implementation of the GRM. The guideline covers the scope and management of the grievances. The existing GRM of the MoIT could be adopted to cover the Grievance Redressal arising out of the implementation of the ACCESS Project and can be extended to include Project-related activities.

As the project is beyond the MoIT, the ministry has established the Grievance Redressal Mechanism and any grievances can be submitted through their web page <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfXF8-Qow0-WsSto4EyuKtlw51TL0e5eJzWccgjFAifbKLopw/viewform>.

### 6.1.6 Description of Grievance Mechanism (GM)

The time frame proposed in **Table 12** will be adopted for responding and managing the grievances. **Table 15** below presents the GM steps and description.

**Table 15. GM Steps and Description**

Steps	Description of Process	Time Frame	Responsibility
GM Implementation Structure	The GovTech and DoST have initiated the GRM process by inviting concerns or grievances using a web link.	The MoIT GRC meets at least once a month.	PIU/PMU
Grievance uptake	Grievances related to project can be submitted using the link <a href="https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfXF8-Qow0-WsSto4EyuKtlw51TL0e5eJzWccgjFAifbKLopw/viewform">https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfXF8-Qow0-WsSto4EyuKtlw51TL0e5eJzWccgjFAifbKLopw/viewform</a>  Grievances or concerns to GovTech using a link <a href="https://forms.gle/URnpAiHssHeTsJud8">https://forms.gle/URnpAiHssHeTsJud8</a> Grievance submission online form will be designed	Within 1-2 days - based on the time frame given in Table 12.	PMU/PIU
Acknowledgment and follow-up	Receipt of the grievance is acknowledged to the complainant by email, letter, or voice call.	Within 2 days of receipt based on the time frame given in Table 12	PIU/PMU
Sorting and Processing	Any complaint received is collected, documented, logged, and ranked by risk level (high, medium,	Within 7 days of the receipt of complaint based	PIU/PMU

Steps	Description of Process	Time Frame	Responsibility
	and low). Grievances will be categorized according to the following complaint types: Complaint received is forwarded/shared with the IAs/Departments. SEA/SH complaints will be referred to the SEA/SH specific GM.	on the time frame given in Table 12	
Verification, investigation, action	Investigation of the complaint is led by the GRC/ Departments/Divisions of MoIT and GovTech. The resolution is formulated by GRC/GRM Team and communicated to the complainant by email or letter. Response timeframe will vary, depending on the risk level (detailed in Table 6 below).	Within 7 to 10 working days	PMU/PIU
Monitoring and evaluation	Data on complaints will be collected in GRM database and reported to Directors/Managers of the DoSTand Gov Tech every fortnight. The DoST/Gov Tech Departments/Committees will have a quarterly GRM review, including the number of grievances received vs redressed and time required for redressal.	Monthly	PMU/PIU
Provision of feedback	Complainants will be informed of resolutions in writing. In response to anonymous grievances, the resolution will be published on a visible and accessible notice board at the PMU/PIU/Departments/Local Offices/Community Centre. The functioning of GRM will be discussed during community meetings.	Regular basis	PMU/PIU

The GRM will provide an appeals process if the complainant is not satisfied with the proposed resolution of the complaint. Once all possible means to resolve the complaint have been proposed and if the complainant is still not satisfied, then they should be advised of their right to legal recourse.

The MoIT Grievance Redressal also includes Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/Harassment (SEA/SH) at the work places. The Project will have special measures in place to handle sensitive and confidential complaints, including those related to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/Harassment (SEA/SH) work place in line with the World Bank ESF Good Practice Note on SEA/SH.

## 7 MONITORING AND REPORTING

### Component 1 Monitoring and Reporting

#### ▪ Summary of how SEP implementation will be monitored and reported

The SEP will be monitored based on both qualitative reporting (based on quarterly progress reports) and quantitative reporting linked to results indicators on stakeholder engagement and grievance performance.

Several Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Component 1 will be monitored by the GovTech regularly, including, but not limited to, the following parameters:

- Number of consultation meetings (virtual) and other public discussions/forums conducted monthly, quarterly, and annually;
- Frequency of public engagement activities;
- Number of public grievances received monthly, quarterly, and annually and number of those resolved within the prescribed timeline.
- Number of reports/materials published/broadcasted in the national media.
- Number of trainings and workshops held for stakeholders, particularly on topics such as National Single Window (NSW) usage, cybersecurity, and trade facilitation
- Number of training and workshops held for women traders, women clearing agents, women's rights organizations and women entrepreneurs on topics such as National Single Window (NSW) usage, digital literacy, technology-facilitated gender based violence, SEA/SH Grievance mechanism, and trade facilitation

SEP reporting will include the following:

- Progress reporting on the ESS10-Stakeholder Engagement commitments under the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP)
- Quantitative reporting based on the indicators included in the SEP.
- Cumulative qualitative reporting on the feedback received during SEP activities, in particular
  - issues that have been raised that can be addressed through changes in project scope and design, and reflected in the basic documentation such as the Project Appraisal Document, Environmental and Social Impact Assessment, or SEA/SH Action Plan, if needed;
  - issues that have been raised and can be addressed during project implementation;
  - Issues that have been raised that are beyond the scope of the project and are better addressed through alternative projects, programs or initiatives; and
  - issues that the project cannot address due to technical, jurisdictional or excessive cost-associated reasons. Minutes of meetings summarizing the views of the attendees can also be annexed to the monitoring reports.
- Quantitative reporting based on the indicators included in the SEP. An illustrative set of indicators for monitoring and reporting is included in **Annex 7**.

#### 7.1.1 Reporting back to stakeholder groups

The SEP will be revised and updated as necessary during project implementation. The SEP will be periodically revised and updated as necessary in the course of project implementation. The PMU GovTech will provide quarterly summaries and internal reports on public grievances, enquiries, and related incidents, together with the status of implementation of associated corrective/preventative actions, will be collated by responsible staff and referred to the project managers. The updates and reviews will provide a mechanism for assessing both the number and nature of complaints and requests for information, along with the Project's ability to address those in a timely and effective manner.

The project team will prepare quarterly stakeholder engagement reports, summarizing key activities, engagement outcomes, grievances received and resolved, and updates on training and capacity-building efforts, including gender disaggregated data.

Stakeholders will be kept informed as the Project develops, including reporting on project environmental and social performance and implementation of the stakeholder engagement plan and Grievance Mechanism, and on the Project's overall implementation progress through GovTech websites, social media, and face-to-face engagements, including consultation meetings, site visits, and one-on-one interviews.

## **Component 2: Monitoring and Reporting (Gelephu to Tareythang Road)**

### **▪ Summary of how SEP implementation will be monitored and reported**

The SEP will be monitored based on both qualitative reporting (based on quarterly progress reports) and quantitative reporting linked to results indicators on stakeholder engagement and grievance performance.

Several key performance indicators for Component 2 will be monitored by the PMU under DoST regularly, including, but not limited to, the following parameters:

- Tracking the number of grievances received and resolved (by gender, male/female/non-binary).
- Apart from reviewing each grievance and analysing effectiveness, using complaints to analyse systemic deficiencies.
- Recognise patterns in the grievances the company receives, and how they are being resolved.
- Employees/contractual workers preference/feedback to any of the several channels to submit grievances.
- Whether there is a particular subgroup in the department raising complaints (for example, women/gender non-binary).
- Whether there is a trend in particular groups particular kind of complaints relating to construction, operations or accessibility or any specific issues.
- Effectiveness of different solutions in addressing various categories of grievances.
- Whether there are matters significantly affecting company policy or requiring legal review.
- Issues of cultural appropriateness and transparency.
- Whether the existing system meets requirements established by the Project as well as the expectations of all stakeholders.

SEP reporting will include the following:

- Progress reporting on the ESS10-Stakeholder Engagement commitments under the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP)
- Quantitative reporting based on the indicators included in the SEP.
- Cumulative qualitative reporting on the feedback received during SEP activities, in particular
  - issues that have been raised that can be addressed through changes in project scope and design, and reflected in the basic documentation such as the Project Appraisal Document, Environmental and Social Impact Assessment, Resettlement Plan, Biodiversity Management Plan or SEA/SH Action Plan, if needed;
  - issues that have been raised and can be addressed during project implementation;
  - Issues that have been raised that are beyond the scope of the project and are better addressed through alternative projects, programs or initiatives; and
  - issues that the project cannot address due to technical, jurisdictional or excessive cost-associated reasons. Minutes of meetings summarizing the views of the attendees can also be annexed to the monitoring reports.
- Quantitative reporting based on the indicators included in the SEP. An illustrative set of indicators for monitoring and reporting is included in **Annex 7**.

### **7.1.2 Reporting back to stakeholder groups**

The SEP will be revised and updated as necessary during project implementation.

Quarterly summaries and internal reports on public grievances, enquiries, and related incidents, together with the status of implementation of associated corrective/preventative actions, will be collated by responsible staff and referred to the project managers.

Stakeholders will be kept informed as the Project develops, including reporting on project environmental and social performance and implementation of the stakeholder engagement plan and Grievance Mechanism, and on the Project's overall implementation progress through the DoST websites, social media, and face-to-face engagements, including consultation meetings, site visits, and one-on-one interviews. This reporting back to the stakeholders will be quarterly.

## **Component 3: Monitoring and Reporting (Institutional and Policy Strengthening)**

### **▪ Summary of how SEP implementation will be monitored and reported**

SEP implementation will be monitored, and the implementation progress will be discussed at the quarterly GRM review. The DoST will be responsible for taking the lead role in monitoring and evaluating the SEP implementation. Monitoring indicators include (a) the number of consultation meetings held (at which communities or groups) and (b) the number of participants (gender disaggregated).

The quarterly review will also assess if community members are adequately informed of civil work schedule, installation of equipment, land use restrictions, and emergency plans. A number of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be monitored by the PMUs/PIUs on a regular basis, including, but not limited to the following parameters:

- Number of consultation meetings (virtual) and other public discussions/forums conducted monthly, quarterly, and annually.
- Number of public grievances received monthly, quarterly, and annually) and a number of those were resolved within the prescribed timeline.
- Number of reports/materials published/broadcasted in the local, regional, and national media.

### **7.1.3 Reporting back to stakeholder groups**

The SEP will be periodically revised and updated as necessary in the course of project implementation. The PMU DoST will provide weekly updates of the GM to the Project Director. The updates and reviews will provide a mechanism for assessing both the number and nature of complaints and requests for information, along with the Project's ability to address those in a timely and effective manner.

Stakeholders will be kept informed as the Project develops, including reporting on project environmental and social performance and implementation of the stakeholder engagement plan and Grievance Mechanism, and on the Project's overall implementation progress through the MoIT websites, social media, and face-to-face engagements, including consultation meetings, site visits, and one-on-one interviews.

## **Annexes**

Annex 1: Methodology of Stakeholder Identification

Annex 2: Minutes of the Stakeholder Consultation held on Component 1

Annex 3: Details of Public Consultation Meetings on Component 2

Annex 4: Photo logs on Component 2 Consultations

Annex 5: Feedback from Component 2 Consultations

Annex 6: Sample Grievance submission forms/formats

Annex 7: Sample Monitoring and Reporting Table on SEP

## ANNEX 1: METHODOLOGY OF STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

A review of secondary information sources, including GIS maps, was conducted, followed by a desk-based mapping exercise. The objective was to identify communities and other stakeholders within the Project area, along with agencies, institutions, and regulators critical to the Project

Once identified, the stakeholders were analysed. The significance of a stakeholder group is categorised considering the magnitude of impact (type, extent, duration, scale, and frequency) or degree of influence (power and proximity) of a stakeholder group and likelihood of the impact/ influence associated with the stakeholder group in the Project context. The magnitude of stakeholder impact/influence is assessed by taking the power/ responsibility and proximity of the stakeholder group. The magnitude of impact on the stakeholder group is consequently categorised as negligible, small, medium, or large. The likelihood of the impact on/influence of the stakeholder is assessed on a scale of low, medium, and high. The overall significance of the stakeholder group is assessed as per the matrix shown below.

**Table 1. Stakeholder significance matrix used for Component 2**

Magnitude of Influence / Impact	Likelihood of Influence on / by Stakeholder		
	Low	Medium	High
Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
Small	Negligible	Minor	Moderate
Medium	Minor	Moderate	Urgent
Large	Moderate	Urgent	Urgent

### Stakeholder Analysis and Significance

**High Influence:** This implies a high degree of influence of the stakeholder on the Project in terms of participation and decision making or high priority to engage with the stakeholder group.

**Medium Influence:** Which implies a moderate level of influence and participation of the stakeholder group in the Project as well as a priority level to engage the stakeholder which is neither highly critical nor are insignificant in terms of influence, and

**Low Influence:** This implies a low degree of influence of the stakeholder on the Project in terms of participation and decision making or low priority to engage that stakeholder group.

The intermediary categories of low to medium or medium to high primarily imply that their influence and importance could vary in that range subject to context specific conditions or also based on the responses of the Project towards the community.

The triangulation of influence and priority of various stakeholder groups also guides the engagement process with each. The extent of engagement with each stakeholder shall be determined by the level of influence and priority of each group. The following **figure** provides an understanding of the levels of priority for stakeholder groups.

The coverage of stakeholders includes any person, group, institution, or organisation that is likely to be impacted (directly or indirectly) or may have an interest/influence over the Project. Keeping this wide scope of inclusion in stakeholder categories and the life of the Project, it is difficult to identify all potential stakeholders and gauge their level of influence over the Project at the outset of the Project. Therefore, the Project proponent is advised to consider this stakeholder mapping as a live document which should be revised in a timely manner to make it comprehensive for any given period.



Figure 1: suggestive priority for stakeholders

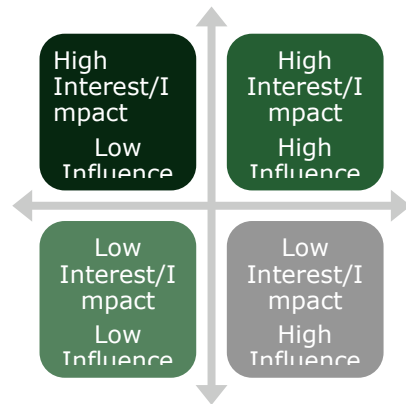


Table 2. Stakeholder Analysis

Magnitude of Influence / Impacts							
Stakeholder Group	Profile/Status	Potential Impact / Influence of the Project on this Stakeholder Group	Potential Impact / Influence of the Stakeholder Group on the Project	Expectations, Vulnerability and Key Concerns of the Stakeholder Group	Overall rating of Stakeholder Magnitude	Likelihood of Occurrence	Overall Stakeholder Significance
Project-Affected Parties							
Local Communities	<p>Landowners and Land Users (Farming Groups/Farm labour/Tenant Farmers/Cattle Rearers)</p> <p>- Based on information collected during the scoping visit, it was found that the proposed Project alignment will cut across four (4) administrative units, of which one (1) is an urban area or Thromde (Municipality) called Gelephu Thromde. three (3) areas are rural, called Gewogs – Gelegphu Gewog, Chhuzanggang, Umling and Tareythang.</p>	<p>- The impact of the Project on this group will be High since the Project construction will require large scale land acquisition, which will lead to physical and economic displacement.</p> <p>- The communities stand to lose their livelihoods and income.</p> <p>- With respect to employment, communities will have limited work opportunities during</p>	<p>- The influence of this group on the Project will be High since the communities will need to be compensated and/or relocated to areas that are most suitable to restore their livelihoods.</p> <p>- At the same time, the communities will have numerous grievances throughout the Project lifecycle, especially the</p>	<p>- The group will expect that the Project benefits them and their livelihoods, provides them with increased opportunities. The group will also expect that the Project will enhance transportation / access opportunities for movement of agricultural produce to nearest markets.</p> <p>- The group will expect increased local employment opportunities.</p>	Large	High	Urgent

Magnitude of Influence / Impacts							
Stakeholder Group	Profile/Status	Potential Impact / Influence of the Project on this Stakeholder Group	Potential Impact / Influence of the Stakeholder Group on the Project	Expectations, Vulnerability and Key Concerns of the Stakeholder Group	Overall rating of Stakeholder Magnitude	Likelihood of Occurrence	Overall Stakeholder Significance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Project area is inhabited by communities, who have their housing structures, farms (small to large), commercial establishments and other structures / resources that sustain living conditions.</li> <li>- Service, agriculture, cattle grazing, and small businesses are major sources of livelihoods of this group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the construction and operation phases, with the exception of small business owners / service providers for road and bridge construction.</li> <li>- Further, the new road is expected to enhance transportation and improve access to marketing of agriculture and livestock products. The road will help in faster delivery of farm inputs. Presently, many Chiwogs and Gewogs in the impact area do not have proper road access.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- construction phase.</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The group will expect to be engaged continuously by the Project, regarding all its developments, including construction and operations. This group will expect to be compensated as per market rates and / and resettled in areas based on their common preferences.</li> <li>-</li> </ul>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community Forest Users</li> <li>- Initial information collected during the scoping visit found that the Project study area has a total 20 Community Forests.</li> <li>- These forests are managed by local communities who also depend on these for their livelihoods.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The impact of the Project on this stakeholder group is identified as High, since it has been noted that several community forests are located in the Project impact area.</li> <li>- In addition, it is also anticipated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The influence from this group on the Project is High, as the reliance on Community Forest may have considerable impacts on their livelihoods and cultural beliefs, thereby, community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Some of the key concerns of the community forest users may include loss of access to community forests or complete loss of such areas. The communities may be concerned about loss of livelihoods.</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	Large	Medium	Urgent

Magnitude of Influence / Impacts							
Stakeholder Group	Profile/Status	Potential Impact / Influence of the Project on this Stakeholder Group	Potential Impact / Influence of the Stakeholder Group on the Project	Expectations, Vulnerability and Key Concerns of the Stakeholder Group	Overall rating of Stakeholder Magnitude	Likelihood of Occurrence	Overall Stakeholder Significance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- For example, communities in Umling Gewog were reported to be managing the Linger Community Forest and accessing it (reportedly about three to four acres) for teak and sandalwood. It is assessed that sandalwood is a high value forest product that could provide a considerable income source to the forest users.</li> <li>- The communities also reportedly rely on sources such as fuelwood, grazing, fodder and other.</li> </ul>	that the Community Forests may be of high cultural relevance to communities.	es may have grievances against the Project activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They will expect the Project to provide the alternative livelihoods.</li> <li>- These group may expect to be compensated and consulted with.</li> <li>- The group may expect that the Project may seek consent from them for accessing such areas.</li> </ul>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Small Businesses/ Shops / Restaurants / Private Taxis</li> <li>- Across the study area, numerous small shops and restaurants were identified, providing food, snacks, and daily use products. Especially in Gelephu Thromde, this being an urban area, numerous small shops, hotels, restaurants, cloth shops and other commercial properties were noted.</li> </ul>	- The impact of the Project on this stakeholder group is likely to be High since a number of these will need to be relocated, especially in Gelephu Thromde area.	- The influence of this group on the Project is expected to be Medium since the group may face losses or also benefit from the economic activities due to the proposed development works in Gelephu and surrounding area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This group will expect the Project to engage with them routinely, especially prior to land acquisition, and provide adequate compensations and alternate opportunities.</li> <li>- The group will expect that any local services for the Project shall be catered to by them.</li> </ul>	Large	Medium	Urgent
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vulnerable Groups</li> <li>- This group includes Women Headed Households,</li> </ul>	- This Project is expected to have a High impact on this group	- The influence of this group on the Project is Low, due to	- This group will expect additional support mechanisms to deal with	Medium	High	Urgent

Magnitude of Influence / Impacts							
Stakeholder Group	Profile/Status	Potential Impact / Influence of the Project on this Stakeholder Group	Potential Impact / Influence of the Stakeholder Group on the Project	Expectations, Vulnerability and Key Concerns of the Stakeholder Group	Overall rating of Stakeholder Magnitude	Likelihood of Occurrence	Overall Stakeholder Significance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior Citizens, Households Below Poverty Line (BPL), Persons with disabilities and adolescents, migrant workers from India and other countries.</li> <li>Rural households owning less than one (1) acre of land or landless households, urban small businesses (low income) run by women, PWDs, unemployed youth in rural and urban areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>due to their weaker capacities to deal with impacts that may be direct and indirect, such as health and safety considerations, worker influx, adaptation issues and other.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>their limited ability to raise concerns, poor access to resources and agencies to voice their opinions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project impacts, both direct and indirect. This group would need to be engaged on a routine basis, with due representation.</li> </ul>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fisherfolk</li> <li>Initial information reveals that fishing is not recognised as a primary occupation of communities. However, some communities are engaged in fishing activities, wherein fish catch is used for self-consumption and is sold locally.</li> <li>Fishing can reportedly be undertaken only by procuring a fishing license, which costs about 6000 Bhutanese Ngultrum (NU) and is valid for 6 months. Within this duration, the communities have no restrictions on the number of fish they can catch.</li> <li>However, fishing is not permitted during certain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The impact of the Project on this group is expected to be Low since fishing is not a primary occupation. Moreover, the construction works of the bridges are expected on river areas which are generally not accessible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The influence of this group on the Project is anticipated to be Medium since fisherfolk may have concerns regarding access to fishing areas, and issues linked to pollution of rivers during construction work, which may affect fish availability.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The group may expect the Project to engage and inform them in advance regarding the Project alignment, especially the areas where bridges are to be constructed.</li> <li>The group may have concerns of water pollution and impact on fish availability.</li> </ul>	Small	Medium	Minor

Magnitude of Influence / Impacts							
Stakeholder Group	Profile/Status	Potential Impact / Influence of the Project on this Stakeholder Group	Potential Impact / Influence of the Stakeholder Group on the Project	Expectations, Vulnerability and Key Concerns of the Stakeholder Group	Overall rating of Stakeholder Magnitude	Likelihood of Occurrence	Overall Stakeholder Significance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>periods, such as auspicious days, holy month, and after sun set. Further, communities are not allowed to fish for Golden Mahseer due to its cultural relevance. Fishing is allowed to be undertaken using rod and reel angling using fly fishing and spin fishing techniques with artificial flies or handling with artificial lures with one single, double or triple hook.</li> </ul>						
Government Bodies/Regulatory Authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thromde (Urban Areas) Gelephu</li> <li>Thromde is the area where the starting point of the proposed road alignment is located.</li> <li>The Thromde has six (06) Demkhongs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jampeling Demkhong</li> <li>Samdrupling Demkhong</li> <li>Sonam Gatsel Demkhong</li> <li>Rabdeyling Demkhong</li> <li>Tashiling Demkhong</li> <li>Namkhaling Demkhong</li> </ul> </li> <li>This is an urban area with numerous settlements, government offices, hotels, restaurants and other businesses.</li> <li>Administrative offices that are responsible for planning and execution of government activities, policy implementation and similar</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The impact of the Project on this group is categorised as Medium. The Project might cause impacts / damages to the Thromde infrastructure and communities and businesses alike, which will need the intervention of the administration.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The influence of this group on the Project has been categorised as High. This is because the Project will be needed to adhere to local requirements as set by the Thromde, which may be aligned to the demands as raised by stakeholders within the Thromde.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The stakeholder group will expect the Project to follow all local regulatory obligations. The group will expect to be consulted with for local planning measures and various other departments.</li> <li>The group will expect improved transportation and communication and improved market access for agriculture and livestock products and minimal negative impacts from the Project.</li> </ul>	Large	Medium	Urgent

Magnitude of Influence / Impacts							
Stakeholder Group	Profile/Status	Potential Impact / Influence of the Project on this Stakeholder Group	Potential Impact / Influence of the Stakeholder Group on the Project	Expectations, Vulnerability and Key Concerns of the Stakeholder Group	Overall rating of Stakeholder Magnitude	Likelihood of Occurrence	Overall Stakeholder Significance
	are located here.						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gewogs (Rural Areas)</li> <li>- The proposed road alignment will be cutting across four (4) Gewogs. These include:</li> <li>- Chhuzangang Gewog</li> <li>- Gelegphu Gewog</li> <li>- Umling Gewog</li> <li>- Tareything Gewog</li> <li>- Each of these Gewogs are further sub-divided into Chiwogs, which are local administrative units.</li> <li>- These play an important role in local governance, implementation of policies and local village level decision making.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The impact of the Project on this stakeholder group is assessed to be Medium.</li> <li>- The stakeholder group is of high relevance for Project planning since this group will engage closely with communities that may be affected by Project.</li> <li>- The group will need to intervene and manage local expectations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The influence of this stakeholder group on this Project is assessed to be High, since it involved in local management and administration of villages and local communities. The group will act as a direct platform for communities to share their concerns and expectations from the Project.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The stakeholder group will expect positive impacts from the Project. This includes generation of employment opportunities at the local level.</li> <li>- Timely disclosure of information pertaining to the Project activities.</li> <li>- Involvement in the formulation and implementation of the community development activities throughout the life of the Project.</li> </ul>	Medium	High	Urgent
Other Interested Parties (OIP)							
Institutional Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local Journalists / Media</li> <li>- This group includes local print media, TV channels, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Project holds no impact / influence over the local media. The influence of the Project has been assessed as Low. The Project will not affect this stakeholder group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is assessed that the influence of the local media on the Project will be Medium since these will cover all aspects of the Project, including its development contributions, any critical issues linked to E&amp;S impacts, displacement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The stakeholder group will largely expect the Project to adhere to all local and national regulations and will expect the Project to address any issues that may be linked to impact on communities and environment.</li> </ul>	Medium	Medium	Moderate

Magnitude of Influence / Impacts							
Stakeholder Group	Profile/Status	Potential Impact / Influence of the Project on this Stakeholder Group	Potential Impact / Influence of the Stakeholder Group on the Project	Expectations, Vulnerability and Key Concerns of the Stakeholder Group	Overall rating of Stakeholder Magnitude	Likelihood of Occurrence	Overall Stakeholder Significance
			ent issues, and other similar.				
	Academicians	- The Project is assessed to have no influence on this stakeholder group since this group largely undertakes research on existing issues and develops discourse. The stakeholder rating has been assessed as Low.	- The impact of this group on the Project is assessed as Medium. The group may hold a certain influence over the Project by way for undertaking detailed impact assessment studies on the environment and communities. These contribute to various developmental narratives and may have long term influences on the Project.	- The stakeholder group may expect the Project to bear in the mind local environmental and social nuances of the Project area that may be impacted. - The group may also expect the Project to engage with them given their strong knowledge of the local cultures and ecosystems.	Medium	Low	Minor
	NGOs	- The Project is assessed to have no influence on this stakeholder group since these largely assume the role of watchdogs, undertake research, and set guidelines that are widely accepted globally. The stakeholder rating has been assessed as Low.	- The impact of this group on the Project is also assessed as Medium. The group will have an indirect influence on the Project by way of its research works and assessment of various issues that are of importance to the communities and environment.	- The stakeholder group will expect to be consulted throughout the Project lifecycle, especially during the construction phase. - The group will expect that the issues raised by the communities and any other critical issues are considered and addressed by the Project.	Medium	Medium	Moderate

Magnitude of Influence / Impacts							
Stakeholder Group	Profile/Status	Potential Impact / Influence of the Project on this Stakeholder Group	Potential Impact / Influence of the Stakeholder Group on the Project	Expectations, Vulnerability and Key Concerns of the Stakeholder Group	Overall rating of Stakeholder Magnitude	Likelihood of Occurrence	Overall Stakeholder Significance
	Social infrastructure – Schools/Colleges Health Centres, Religious Organisations, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is assessed that the Project will have a certain level of impact on this group due to construction works and operational phase. This is more so linked to community health and safety, pollution issues, risks of accidents, and potential access issues.</li> <li>- The impact of the Project on this stakeholder group is assessed to be Low.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This stakeholder group will have some influence on the Project due concerns of impacts during the construction and operation phases. This is determined as Low.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The stakeholder group will expect the Project to consult with it during the planning phases. The group will also expect the Project to coordinate with it especially for issues that may be linked to community health and safety, and general access issues.</li> </ul>	Small	Medium	Minor
Government Bodies/Regulatory Authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport (MoT) – Department of Surface Transport (DoST)</li> <li>- The DoST is the main responsible agency for the Project coordination, planning and execution.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- None.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The influence of the stakeholder on this Project is determined to be High since it is responsible for the Project planning, planning and execution.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The group will expect the Project to be planned, constructed and made operational in a timely manner.</li> <li>- The group will expect the allocation of adequate funds for the Project's development.</li> </ul>	Large	High	Urgent



Magnitude of Influence / Impacts							
Stakeholder Group	Profile/Status	Potential Impact / Influence of the Project on this Stakeholder Group	Potential Impact / Influence of the Stakeholder Group on the Project	Expectations, Vulnerability and Key Concerns of the Stakeholder Group	Overall rating of Stakeholder Magnitude	Likelihood of Occurrence	Overall Stakeholder Significance
	Gelephu Mindfulness City (GMC) Management	- The impact of the Project on this stakeholder group will be High, as the Project falls directly under the GMC's scope of development of Gelephu into a developed city.	- The influence of the GMC Management on this stakeholder is High as they will provide all the necessary approvals, decisions and monitoring the whole process. -	- The expectation of this group from the Project will be the need for timely compliance to GMC's master plan. - The GMC will expect timely reporting and Project updates. -	Large	High	Urgent
	- National Land Commission (NLC) - This group is responsible for overseeing land management and administration in Bhutan. - They manage the land resources, ensuring that land administration is transparent, equitable, and in line with Bhutan's sustainable development goals. - This group will be responsible for the land acquisition for the Project and holds an important position in the Project development.	- The impact of the Project on this stakeholder is determined as Medium. The Project will need to acquire land, for which, it will need to closely coordinate with the NLC.	- The impact of this stakeholder on this Project is assessed to be Medium as they are responsible for acquisition of land which is critical for Project development. - The stakeholder group will also be responsible for ensuring that adequate compensation measures are in place, with timely payment of compensation, appropriate resettlement of displaced affected persons and any other issues or	The group will expect the Project to provide it with all land requirements information in a timely manner.  • The group will expect the Project to undertake the process of land acquisition and payment of compensations in a timely manner.	Large	High	Urgent

Magnitude of Influence / Impacts							
Stakeholder Group	Profile/Status	Potential Impact / Influence of the Project on this Stakeholder Group	Potential Impact / Influence of the Stakeholder Group on the Project	Expectations, Vulnerability and Key Concerns of the Stakeholder Group	Overall rating of Stakeholder Magnitude	Likelihood of Occurrence	Overall Stakeholder Significance
			grievances of communities are heard and addressed in a timely manner.				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Department of Planning &amp; Resources (Planning officers), MoIT</li> <li>- This group is responsible for coordinating, planning and budgetary processes. The group assists in development of policies and five-year plans which ensures the mobilization of funds and monitors the implementation of these plans.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Project will have no impact or influence on this group. This is assessed as Low. The Project has no implications on the functioning of this group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The influence of the stakeholder group on the Project is Medium as the group would provide all the necessary planning and monitoring the Project.</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The expectation of this group from the Project will comply with applicable requirements.</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	Medium	Low	Minor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources</li> <li>- Department of Forests and Park Services – This department is responsible to protect, conserve, utilise and manage forestry resources. The department also has oversight over community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The impact of the Project on this stakeholder is Low. The department is responsible for ensuring that the project confirms that impacts on natural uses and changes in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The influence of the stakeholder on the project is considered as Medium. The department is responsible for ensuring that the Project ensures that impacts on</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This stakeholder will expect the Project to comply all the regulatory requirements.</li> </ul>	Small	Medium	Minor

Magnitude of Influence / Impacts							
Stakeholder Group	Profile/Status	Potential Impact / Influence of the Project on this Stakeholder Group	Potential Impact / Influence of the Stakeholder Group on the Project	Expectations, Vulnerability and Key Concerns of the Stakeholder Group	Overall rating of Stakeholder Magnitude	Likelihood of Occurrence	Overall Stakeholder Significance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>forests and is an important stakeholder. Department of Environment and Climate Change – The department is responsible for overseeing Bhutan's commitment to sustainable development and carbon-neutral commitment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ecosystem services are managed by the project.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>natural uses and changes in ecosystem services are managed by the Project. The department will have an oversight on Project activities ensuring all regulatory requirements are adhered to.</li> </ul>				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Natural Resources Development Corporation (NRDCL)</li> <li>The NRDCL is responsible for managing and facilitating the availability of quality natural resource products towards developmental projects in Bhutan.</li> <li>This includes timber production, mineral production, commercial plantation, glulam production and joinery production.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The impact of the project on this stakeholder group will be Low since the NRDCL has no reliance on the project for its functioning. Moreover, the project will not impact the stakeholder either directly or indirectly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The stakeholder group will hold Medium influence over the project since the latter will require stones from quarries and similar material required for construction. Marketing of stones and operation of stone quarries is managed by the NRDCL.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This stakeholder groups will expect the project to adhere to the department's mandates such as sustainable use and procurement of stones from quarries, managing and balancing the local requirements in the impact area as against the requirements of the project for construction of roads and bridges.</li> </ul>	Medium	Medium	Moderate
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government of India (GoI) – Government of Assam</li> <li>The Project is very closely located to the Bhutan's national border with the state of Assam, in India.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The impact of the Project on this stakeholder group although not direct, holds the potential for significant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This stakeholder group may hold Low influence over the Project works, since it has no regulatory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The stakeholder group may expect the Project to keep them informed regarding the Project timelines and other associated</li> </ul>	Medium	Low	Minor

Magnitude of Influence / Impacts							
Stakeholder Group	Profile/Status	Potential Impact / Influence of the Project on this Stakeholder Group	Potential Impact / Influence of the Stakeholder Group on the Project	Expectations, Vulnerability and Key Concerns of the Stakeholder Group	Overall rating of Stakeholder Magnitude	Likelihood of Occurrence	Overall Stakeholder Significance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The two countries have a relatively open arrangement which allows the communities from the two sides to trade local products and goods. For example, large scale export of Betel Nut from Bhutan to India. Migrant workers also come from India.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- implications due to the high labour influx from India to Bhutan. The Project construction works may also have certain impacts on the Indian border, for example, through downstream flow of polluted water to the India side, or air pollution and even changes in wildlife movement, such as that of Elephants which may impact communities on the India side.</li> <li>- There may also be an impact on migrant workers from India.</li> <li>- The stakeholder significance is considered as Medium</li> </ul>	or related control over the Project.	risks which may impact the group.			

## ANNEX 2. MINUTES OF THE STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION MEETING ON COMPONENT 1 CONSULTATIONS

### ACCESS Project Stakeholder Meeting

Venue: Conference Hall A, GovTech Agency Date:  
20th September 2024 (2:00 - 5:00 pm)

As part of the World Bank Environmental and Social Standards (ESS) 10 requirement, the ACCESS Project will have to prepare and disclose the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP). SEP is one of the triggers for the project approval by the World Bank Board. The Environment and Social consultants hired for the project placed with the Project Management Unit (PMU), Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport (MoIT) plans to prepare SEP for Project Implementation Unit (PIU), GovTech Agency highlighting stakeholders' identification, record their views and concerns (directly and indirectly affected), stakeholder engagement methods, timelines, grievance redressal mechanisms, etc. The relevant stakeholders (participant lists) of PIU, ACCESS Project, GovTech Agency were called for a half-day meeting on 20th of September afternoon to sensitize on the project's activities and stakeholder engagements.

The presentation was categorized into four sections below:

SI	Topic	Presentation by	Agency
1	PPA Project Updates	Chedup Dorji	Component Manager, PIU, GovTech
2	SEP (stakeholder meeting objectives & outcomes)	Pema Cheizom	Social Consultant, PMU, DoST
3	National Single Window (NSW)	Reigzieng Om	Project Focal, PIU, GovTech
4	Connectivity & Infrastructure	Thuenzang Choephel	Project Focal, PIU, GovTech
5	Digital Enablers	Tshering	Project Focal, PIU, GovTech
6	Cyber Security	Dechen Chhoedon	Project Focal, PIU, GovTech

After the presentation, the floor was opened for discussion. The following concerns were raised:

Digital literacy of traders with respect to availing NSW services

1. Concerns were raised regarding the low digital literacy among small traders, which limits their ability to effectively use the National Single Window (NSW) services. To address this, the Tech and Industry Development Division (TIDD) at GovTech has planned to provide digital literacy training to the general public as part of the 13th Five-Year Plan (FYP).
2. Management of e-waste as a result of hardware (fiber optics and other items) replacements here will be e-wastes generated due to ACCESS project implementation, and the stakeholders raised their concerns on handling the problem. GovTech has already formed a task force to tackle national e-waste; the task force is to develop appropriate mechanisms to handle the growing need for e-waste in the country.
3. Poor internet or mobile services in rural areas - Rural digital service users will face issues with poor and unstable internet or mobile connectivity in rural communities. The GovTech to liaise with telcos and ISP providers to enhance the network stability.
4. Issues of payment gateways and services in existing G2C systems - Payment methods integrated into most of the G2C systems are currently unstable. This matter will be investigated during the NSW implementation, which will demand a stable payment method for cross-border payments and online trade facilitations.
5. Challenges of cross-border data sharing - The concerns about the risks and security of data sharing through

NSW were shared. This matter will be discussed and looked at during NSW implementation along with the Cyber Security Division.

6. Challenges onboarding women's participation in network connectivity & infrastructure-related projects - The concerns were shared by the project implementing teams on the hardship of onboarding women workers' participation especially relating to laying physical fiber optics connectivity. Since the connectivity and infrastructure activities are physically challenging and labor intensive, the Social Consultant was requested to look at alternative matrices to fulfill the gender equity and inclusivity demanded by the World Bank standards.

**Table 1: List of Participants - Stakeholder Consultation Meeting (GovTech Meeting Hall, 20 Sep. 2024)**

SL/No	Name	Gender	Designation	Agency
1	Kuenga Zam	Female	Director	GovTech
2	Kuenzang Namgay	Male	Asst. ICTO	GovTech
3	Pema Rabgay	Male	Program Coordinator, PMU	PMU, MoIT
4	Jamyang Tshomo	Female	PO	MOICE
5	Tshering Norbu	Male	CEO	NANO
6	Namgay Wangmo	Female	Manager	DHI, NDI
7	Dendup Tshewang	Male	Executive Engineer	Dept of Culture & Dzongkha Development, MoHA
8	Tshering Lhamo	Female	Trade/ Finance	Bhutan Exports Association
9	Tenzin Drakpa	Male	AROC	Corporate Regulatory Authority
10	Choki Lhamo Tamang	Female	AROC	Corporate Regulatory Authority
11	Kuenzang Tshokkyee	Female	Manager	Tashi InfoComm Pvt. Ltd.
12	Lhawang Norbu	Male	ICT	RBP
13	Namgay Wangchuk	Male	ICT	BPC
14	Jambay Dorji	Male	Dy. CRQO	BFDA
15	Pema Chezom	Female	Consultant	DoST, MoIT
16	Modhar Dhungyel	Male	Engineer	BCTA, MoIT
17	Birkha Gurung	Male	Sr. Planning Officer	NSB
18	Yangden Choden	Female	Asst. ICTO	NSB
19	Chabilal Dhital	Male	Chief MD	DGM, MoENR
20	Pema Dhendup	Male	Dy. CICTO	GovNETS, GovTech
21	Tshering Lhamo	Female	AIO	DOI, MOICE
22	Selden	Female	Principal Custom's Officer	DRC
23	Tshering		Dy. CICTO	GovTech
24	Dechen Dema	Female	SPO	GovTech
25	Nidup Gyeltshen	Male	Engineer	BSB
26	Sangay Choden	Female	Marketing Asst	DAMC, MoAL
27	Ugyen Chophel	Male	Exe. Engineer	DOE, MOENR
28	Peter Norkunas	Male	Consultant	ADL
29	Sangay Pelzang	Male	Dy. CICTO	GovTech
30	Chedup Dorji	Male	Dy. CPO	GovTech

### ANNEX 3. DETAILS OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETINGS ON COMPONENT 2

Date Period	Engagement Activity/Topic	Location	Stakeholder Participated
18 July 2024	Visual observations, consultations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gelephu Thromde</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Engineer, DoST</li> <li>Dy. Executive Engineer, DoST</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Research and Development Centre for Aquaculture, Department of Livestock, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MoAL)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Livestock Production Officer</li> </ul>
19 July 2024	Visual observations, consultations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gelephu Thromde</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dy Chief Urban Planner, Gelephu Thromde</li> <li>Survey Engineer</li> <li>Senior Urban Planner</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gyalsung Center, National Service Academy, Tareythang</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Head of Academy</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Primary Health Centre (PHC), Umling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health Care Worker</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chhuzanggang Gewog</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gewog Representatives</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tareythang Gewog</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Member and Former Chiwig Head</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Umling Gewog</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Member</li> </ul>
20 July 2024	Visual observations, consultations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Samtenling Gewog Office</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gewog Representatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mangmi</li> <li>Senior Gewog G.A.O</li> <li>Samtenling Chiwig Tshogpa</li> <li>Samthenthang Chiwig Tshogpa</li> <li>Chhokorling Dechen-Pelri Chiwig Tshogpa</li> <li>Dechen-Pelri Chiwig Tshogpa</li> </ul> </li> <li>Khenpagang Chiwig Tshogpa</li> </ul>

Date Period	Engagement Activity/Topic	Location	Stakeholder Participated
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gelegphu Gewog</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administrative Officer and Gewog Representatives               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perlithang Khaed Chiwog Mangmi</li> <li>Perlithang Khaed Chiwog Tshogpa</li> <li>Pemathang Chiwog Tshogpa</li> <li>Lekidthang Chiwog Tshogpa</li> <li>Dzomlingthang Chiwog Tshogpa</li> <li>Perlithang Khatoed Chiwog</li> <li>Gewog G.A.O</li> </ul> </li> <li>Gewog Office Driver</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gelephu Thromde</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Former Prime Minister of Bhutan</li> </ul>
21 July 2024	Visual observations, consultations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Namkhaling Demkhong, Gelephu Thromde</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Member</li> </ul>
22 July 2024	Visual observations, consultations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thimphu</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Land Commission Representatives               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chief land Registrar</li> <li>Land Registrar</li> <li>Survey Engineer</li> </ul> </li> <li>Survey Engineer</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thimphu</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dean of Student Affairs, College of Natural Resources, Royal University of Bhutan</li> <li>NGO Representatives               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Civil Society Organizations' Authority (CSOA)</li> <li>Tarayana Foundation – Rural Transformation</li> <li>RENEW – Gender Based Violence/Domestic Violence</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



Date Period	Engagement Activity/Topic	Location	Stakeholder Participated
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● RSPN</li> </ul>
30 August 2024	Workshop on Land Acquisition and R&B Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Gelephu Thromde Office</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Thrompon of Gelephu Thromde</li> <li>● Direct – National Land Commission (NLC)</li> <li>● DoST officials and local support team</li> </ul>
31 August 2024	Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Consultations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Gelephu Thromde Office and Samtenling Gewog Office, Gelegphu Gewog Office</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Representatives of Jampeling Demkhong, Namkhaling Demkhong, Samtenling Gewog</li> <li>● Village representative - Non-Formal Education (NFE)</li> <li>● Instructor, Facilitator – Early Child Care Development</li> <li>● Community Service Centre executive</li> <li>● NGO representative – Kidney Foundation</li> </ul>
01 September 2024	KIIs and Consultations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Gelephu Thromde Office</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● General Surgeon, Clinic Nurse at Gelephu Regional Referral Hospital</li> <li>● Chief Forestry Officer</li> </ul>
02 September 2024	KIIs and Consultations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Chhuzanggang Thromde Office and Hospital, Umling Gewog and Tareythang Gewog</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Principal at Chhuzanggang Primary School</li> <li>● Healthcare workers in hospital at Chhuzanggang Gewog</li> <li>● Principal of middle secondary school and Range Office, Royal Manas National Park</li> <li>● Gewog/Block Administrative Office, Community Forest and Principal of school</li> </ul>
03 September 2024	KIIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Regional Labour and Human Resource Office</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Labor Officer and Employment Counsellor</li> <li>● Superintendent of Police, (SSP, Division V, Royal Bhutan Police, Gelephu)</li> <li>● Sarpang Judicial Representatives</li> </ul>

Date Period	Engagement Activity/Topic	Location	Stakeholder Participated
27 September	Stakeholder Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gelephu Thromde Hall</li> <li>• Umling RNR Hall</li> <li>• Gelephu HSS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Lotay Tshering, Governor of GMC</li> <li>• Elected officials of the Local Governance (Gewogs and Thromde)</li> <li>• Landowners</li> </ul>

### Consultation Meetings with Communities – 02-04 December 2024

Public consultation meetings were held covering all the project Gewogs under the Sarpang Dzongkhag, The Meeting was attended by a total of **305 participants**, of which **49% were females**. Among the participants, **81% were adults** (25-59 years), 17% were elderly (60 years and above), and 2% were youth (13-24 years). A detailed list of participants is presented below as Annex tables below.

Public Consultation Meetings summary of participants

	Gewogs/Thromde	Venue	Date of Meeting	Nos of Participants		
				Male	Female	Total
1	Chhuzagang	Gup Office, Chhuzagang	03 December 2024	13	15	28
2	Shershong, Samteling, and Gelephu	Gelephu Meeting Hall	03 December 2024	48	50	98
3	Tareythang	Gewog Meeting Hall	02 December 2024	34	30	64
4	Umling	Gewog RNR Meeting Hall	02 December 2024	15	31	46
5	Gelephu Thromde	Thromde Meeting Room	04 December 2024	46	23	69
	<b>Total</b>			<b>156</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>305</b>
	<b>Percentage</b>			<b>51</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>

Age	Number of participants	Percentage
Youth (13- 24 yrs)	7	2
Adult (25- 59 yrs)	247	81
Elderly 60 yrs and above	51	17

### Consultations with Socio-Cultural Groups from 28 October to 1 November 2024.

This assessment was part of ESS7 conducted by the World Bank. The list of stakeholders consulted were communities (women, men, youth, elderly) in all the project areas, local government leaders of the respective areas, academicians, researchers, and officials from the Department of Culture and Dzongkha Development, CSOs, and national experts who completed former studies in this area.

Sl. No.	Thromde/Gewog	Demkhong/Chiwog	Total Kils	Total FGDs	Gender Ratio	Total participants
1	Gelephu Thromde	1.Namkharling Demkhong 2.Sonamgatshel Demkhong	12 (*1 Kil had 2 participants)	2	6F, 15M	21

2	Chhuzaggang	1.Barthang (Zambabi)	4	1	3F, 4M	7
3	Umling	1.Gaden 2. RiJoog	9	4	20F, 14M	34
4	Tareythang	1.Pemachholing 2.Tashichholing 3.Woongchilu 4.Yoedzergang	17	5	24F, 25M	51
5	LG meetings	All Gewogs and Thromde		4	4F, 13M	17
	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>42 (*1 KII in Gelegphu Throm had 2 participants)</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>57F, 71M</b>	<b>128</b>

#### ANNEX 4: PHOTO LOG ON CONSULTATIONS















## ANNEX 5: FEEDBACK FROM COMPONENT 2 CONSULTATIONS

S. N.	Issue/Concern/Demand Raised	Response/Action
1.	Disclosure about the Project and project details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detailed Roads and Bridges Project related information was provided, ensuring that the current project information was differentiated from the larger GMC plan.</li> </ul>
2.	Existing compensation mechanisms and valuation methods	<p>It was clarified that the compensation rates that will be provided will be based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Like-for-like land either within the village, Gewog or Dzongkhags, if available (in line with the Land Act of Bhutan 2007),</li> <li>Compensation at replacement cost. This will be defined by a market valuation study.</li> <li>Livelihood restoration support, and</li> <li>Options for resettlement to designated sites identified by the relevant government authorities.</li> </ul>
3.	Suggestions on whether the communities should sell their lands in anticipation of higher land rates due to the upcoming project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was shared that lands shall not be sold since the project has immense potential and the people will lose in the longer run if they sell of their lands right away.</li> </ul>
4.	Resettlement options and locations for communities that will be affected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was shared that resettlement options and locations are being identified and will be in the same Gewog as much as possible.</li> </ul>
5.	Further clarifications on compensation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing compensation norms entail land compensation from within the same local government jurisdiction but in GMC, land compensation can be given from any of the 20 Dzongkhags of Bhutan.</li> <li>New sites will be allotted based on the value of the land.</li> <li>Monetary compensation will be based on assessed market value and not based on the existing (PAVA) compensation rates which was set based on land value in 2022 and does not reflect the value of land in GMC at this moment.</li> <li>Tokenization system is also being developed which would be another compensation modality.</li> <li>Cultivated land compensation will be based on calculation of projected production value for a particular number of years until the new site becomes productive.</li> </ul>



S. N.	Issue/Concern/Demand Raised	Response/Action
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Structures/ houses will be compensated after thorough evaluation of its value and then either monetarily or a new structure of similar typology will be built in the new location. Relocation will only be done after the new location is made liveable.</li> <li>Principle of the acquisition is to give fair compensation and will make sure no one is impacted negatively.</li> <li>Exceptional cases or the outliers will be addressed separately by the task force.</li> <li>Such consultations will be held continuously as and when there are major breakthroughs in capital works so that everyone remains informed of what is happening.</li> </ul> <p>It was further shared that compensation will be done appropriately, fairly and swiftly. Compensation will be carried out based on the value of the land and adequate consideration will be made to protect the interest of the landowners in view of farming practices.</p>
6.	Discussions on consideration of exceptional cases for benefits under the land acquisition and resettlement process	<p>It was disclosed that exceptional cases, for instance if only a portion of landholding falls under the proposed site, semipermanent houses and similar will be considered on a case-to-case basis. Other responses included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No specific intervention currently required for semipermanent houses where families have been living for a long time, but as GMC grows, there will be a guideline endorsed that will set the minimum standards that everyone will have to abide by and that there will be adequate support coming their way to help the families attain those standards.</li> <li>If the remaining portion of land is deemed useful/beneficial for the landholder, they shall retain the land, but if the remaining portion of land is found to be not beneficial, the entire plot will be compensated.</li> <li>In the event that a portion of my land falls in the road plans, clubbing the remaining portion of land to an adjacent land which belongs to a relative will present a host of legal problems in the future and may not be allowed.</li> <li>Land acquisition works is an important part of any urban planning, it won't be one-size-fits all, acquisition will be based on a case-by-case basis and on the principles of fair compensation.</li> </ul>
7.	Question around any consideration for the emotional attachment that one might have to their land which has been handed down over generations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compensation will be done appropriately, fairly and swiftly. It will be difficult to entertain issues of emotional attachment with their ancestral land.</li> </ul>

S. N.	Issue/Concern/Demand Raised	Response/Action
8.	Concerns regarding low supply of water especially during the winter season	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Action pending. This will however be considered based on the ESIA management plan implementation.</li> </ul>
9.	Queries regarding whether Chuzhing (wet land) will be compensated with Chuzhing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compensation shall be carried out based on the value of the land more than any other factor. Adequate consideration will be made to protect the interest of the landowners, with consideration to keep their farming practices.</li> </ul>
10.	Concerns regarding human-wildlife conflict, specially about the elephant destruction of crops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ESIA has assessed the human-wildlife conflict conditions in the Project area and proposed measures to address this issue.</li> </ul>
11.	Queries regarding local employment opportunities due to the Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was reported that employment will be based on merit. However, based on ESIA management plans, local employment will be prioritised.</li> </ul>
12.	Discussions and concerns regarding labor influx and limited human resources for handling the added burden on health facilities with the Project related developments in the area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ESIA management plans have requirements such as health checkups for workers migrating to the project site. Moreover, engagement with health units has also been identified.</li> </ul>
13.	General concerns regarding the high prevalence of alcoholism in the impact area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is linked to the overall development in the social study area with increased employment opportunities and therefore increased engagement in other livelihood opportunities which may decrease alcohol addiction.</li> </ul>
14.	Willingness to participate in, and faith in the development of the larger GMC vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Project is thankful for the support of the communities in believing in the Government's larger vision of GMC for the nation's future and development.</li> </ul>

## ANNEX 6: SAMPLE GRIEVANCE FORM

Format 1. Grievance submission form

GRIEVANCE REGISTRATION #: /			
* Not mandatory fields. You can submit complaints anonymously.			
Date:	Time:	Filed by:	
In person:	By Phone:	Complaint received via:	By email: Other:
Complainant Name:*	Complainant gender:*(drop down) M / F	Complainant occupation:*	
Complainant contact (address, tel. number):*			
What is the best way to contact complainant? (drop down – phone/email/letter/in person)			
Preferred time of day to contact complainant:			
<input type="checkbox"/> The complainant is filing an individual complaint			
<input type="checkbox"/> The complainant is representing a group or a community - Name of the group or community: - Nature of the group or community: - Location/address:			
Description of the grievance:			
GRIEVANCE TREATMENT			
Date of the response:		Filed by:	
Proposed action(s) to remedy to the grievance:			
Complainants acceptance of the proposed action:			
GRIEVANCE CLOSURE			
Date of grievance closure:		Filed by:	

Ending of the grievance treatment:
Reference in Commitment Register:

DRAFT

## ANNEX 7: SAMPLE TABLE: MONITORING AND REPORTING ON THE SEP

Key evaluation questions	Specific Evaluation questions	Potential Indicators	Data Collection Methods
<b>GM.</b> To what extent have project-affected parties been provided with accessible and inclusive means to raise issues and grievances? Has the implementing agency responded to and managed such grievances?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are project affected parties raising issues and grievances?</li> <li>How quickly/effectively are the grievances resolved?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Usage of GM and/or feedback mechanisms</li> <li>Requests for information from relevant agencies.</li> <li>Use of suggestion boxes placed in the villages/project communities.</li> <li>Number of grievances raised by workers, disaggregated by gender of workers and worksite, resolved within a specified time frame.</li> <li>Number of Sexual Exploitation, and Abuse/Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH) cases reported in the project areas, which were referred for health, social, legal and security support according to the referral process in place. (if applicable)</li> <li>Number of grievances that have been (i) opened, (ii) opened for more than 30 days, (iii) resolved, (iv) closed, and (v) number of responses that satisfied the complainants, during the reporting period disaggregated by category of grievance, gender, age, and location of complainant.</li> </ul>	Records from the implementing agency and other relevant agencies
<b>Stakeholder engagement impact on project design and implementation</b> How have engagement activities made a difference in project design and implementation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Was there interest and support for the project?</li> <li>Were there any adjustments made during project design and implementation based on the feedback received?</li> <li>Was priority information disclosed to relevant parties throughout the project cycle?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Active participation of stakeholders in activities</li> <li>Number of actions taken in a timely manner in response to feedback received during consultation sessions with project affected parties.</li> <li>Number of consultation meetings and public discussions where the feedback and recommendation received is reflected in project design and implementation.</li> <li>Number of disaggregated engagement sessions held, focused on at-risk groups in the project.</li> </ul>	Stakeholder Consultation Attendance Sheets/Minutes  Evaluation forms  Structured surveys  Social media/traditional media entries on the project results

<p><b>Implementation effectiveness.</b> Were stakeholder engagement activities effective in implementation ?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Were the activities implemented as planned? Why or why not?</li> <li>• Was the stakeholder engagement approach inclusive of disaggregated groups? Why or why not?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of SEP activities implemented.</li> <li>• Key barriers to participation identified with stakeholder representatives.</li> <li>• Number of adjustments made in the stakeholder engagement approach to improve projects' outreach, inclusion and effectiveness.</li> </ul>	<p>Communication Strategy (Consultation Schedule)</p> <p>Periodic Focus Group Discussions</p> <p>Face-to-face meetings and/or Focus Group discussions with Vulnerable Groups or their representatives</p>
--	---	--	---