

GOVERNMENT OF HIMACHAL PRADESH

**Integrated Project for Source Sustainability and Climate Resilient Rain-fed Agriculture in
Himachal Pradesh**

**Stakeholder Engagement Plan
11 December 2019**

Himachal Pradesh Forest Department

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Executive Summary

The Himachal Pradesh Forest Department is the implementing agency for the World Bank supported, Integrated Project for Source Sustainability and Climate Resilient Rain-fed Agriculture in Himachal Pradesh (IDP), henceforth the Project. The project development objective (PDO) of IDP is to improve upstream ecosystem management and increase agricultural water productivity in selected Gram Panchayats of the State of Himachal Pradesh. The Project has 4 components: Component 1 Sustainable Land and Water Management, Component 2: Improved Agricultural Productivity and Value Addition; Component 3: Institutional capacity building for integrated watershed management; and Component 4: Project Management. The Project will be implemented in 428 Gram Panchayats of 10 Districts of the State, with financing from the World Bank. These districts are: Shimla, Solan, Sirmour, Bilaspur, Hamirpur, Mandi, Kullu, Chamba, Kangra & Una.

As part of the World Bank's Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) and implementation of the Environmental and Social Standards, especially ESS 10 on Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure, HPFD has prepared a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP). The main objectives of the SEP are to adopt a systematic, transparent and participatory approach to stakeholder engagement and information disclosure, and maintenance of positive stakeholder relationships, monitoring of stakeholder feedback and implementation of an accessible and responsive grievance redressal mechanism. The SEP also aims to facilitate stakeholder feedback and engagement on project design and implementation, including on identification and mitigation of environmental and social risks and impacts.

The SEP will act like a guiding tool and framework for managing communications and engagement between HPFD and its stakeholders for the Project. The SEP has been adapted to the nature and scale of the project and its potential environment and social risks and impacts. The SEP takes into account the existing institutional and regulatory frameworks/acts of the Government of India (GOI) and the Government of (GoHP) as well as the requirements of the Environmental and Social Framework (ESF), 2016 of World Bank.

The SEP includes multiple channels and mechanisms of engaging with the stakeholders, including Publications, website, telephone, public consultations and meetings, participatory assessments and surveys, GP RMP planning and existing channels of citizen's engagement of the GOHP. Differentiated measures will be adopted to engage with vulnerable and disadvantaged households, including focus group discussions, inclusive beneficiary identification in the GP RMP, inclusion amongst beneficiary groups, and lower thresholds for cost sharing for individual benefits. Other project-related information will be shared with the primary stakeholders in locally understood languages where necessary. All ESS plans and documents will be disclosed on the project's websites.

The Environment and Social Assessment (ESA) and ESMF preparation exercise conducted by the HPFD involved participatory approaches, especially consultations, public meetings, focus group discussions, and in-depth interviews with the key project stakeholders. This included potential project beneficiaries and residents in project GPs, farmers, Gram Panchayat representatives and officials, pastoralists and transhumant (Gaddis and Gujjars), as well as Women's self-help groups. These consultations also included disadvantaged and vulnerable population groups, especially landless and marginal farmers, women headed households, scheduled caste households, tribal households. Meetings and Consultations were also held with the state departments of Forests, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Rural Development and the Science and

Technology to understand the scope of their participation and sectoral interventions under the project, and the potential social and environmental risks and issues involved.

The SEP identifies the main stakeholders of the projects as: i) *Positively affected Project Beneficiaries*, mainly relevant community organizations, GP user groups, Gram Panchayats, farmers groups/cooperatives, joint forest management committees (JFMCs), and women's groups; ii) *Disadvantaged and Vulnerable Households*, such as landless and marginal farmers, transhumant nomadic groups (Gaddis and Gujjars), scheduled castes households, scheduled tribes, women headed households, disabled households as well as households designated below the poverty line; iii) *Potentially negatively affected groups*, such as vulnerable households donating land for community infrastructure or households facing temporary access/use restrictions from new grazing pastures, fodder plots and plantations; and iv) *Other Interested stakeholders* such as HPFD as well as line departments of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Horticulture, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, and Science and Technology. Private partners involved in agribusiness and value chain development as well as NGOs associated with forestry, agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, natural resource management and rural development are also important stakeholders of the project.

The SEP includes a range of interventions to engage with the key stakeholders, throughout the project implementation period. These include participatory and inclusive process of preparing the GPRMPs, capacity building of community user groups, tracking inclusion of vulnerable groups, disclosure of project documentation, SEPs and the ESF plans on project's websites, periodic meetings with the GPs, periodic review meetings at the District level, regular updates from the Social Extension Officers, and training of community organizations, extension staff and GP officials and representatives. Project Information and updates regularly shared through websites, newsletters and other stakeholder engagement events.

The HPFD, project management unit (PMU) will be responsible for implementing the SEP through the Environment and Social Experts at the State Level, the District Project Officer at the Districts, and the APO in the block, and the social, forestry and agriculture extension officers who will be directly engaging with the key stakeholders. Local level project implementation units will be supported to effectively engage with primary stakeholders throughout project implementation.

The Project will establish a Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) with the aim to respond to queries or clarifications or complaints about the project and address complaints/concerns and grievances of the stakeholders. The GRM will focus on corrective actions that can be implemented quickly and at a relatively low cost to resolve identified implementation concerns, GRM will also serve as a channel for early warning, helping to target supervision to where it is most needed and identify systemic issues.

The project will be conducting an external review of the ESF implementation progress and impacts, including the implementation of the SEP. External agencies/resource persons will be engaged to carry out this audit/review in the 3rd and 5th year of the project. The District Office and Block Office will be engaged in monitoring and reporting on SEP implementation, especially through the Assistant Project Officer. The SEP will be periodically revised and updated as necessary in the course of project implementation, to ensure that the information presented is consistent and is the most recent, and that the identified stakeholders and methods of engagement remain appropriate and effective in relation to the project context and specific stages of the implementation. Any major changes to the project related activities and to its schedule will be duly reflected in the revised SEP.

Stakeholder Engagement Plan

1. Background

The Government of Himachal Pradesh (GoHP) is preparing the Integrated Project for Source Sustainability and Climate Resilient Rainfed Agriculture (IDP) in 428 Gram Panchayats of the State, with financing from the World Bank. IDP carries forward the ideas and learnings of H.P. Mid Himalayan Watershed Development Project (HPMHWDP)¹. Stakeholder and beneficiary engagement mechanisms that emerged during HPMHWDP will be leveraged to create holistic engagement strategies for continuous interactions with all stakeholders. The project addresses the overall problem that water sources in Himachal Pradesh are contributing below their potential to economic growth by addressing three underlying drivers: (i) forest degradation, excessive run-off and soil erosion, and low aquifer recharge; (ii) low livestock, land, and water productivity and limited value addition; and (iii) limited capacity for integrated ecosystem management. Project investments are expected to support improved management of upstream lands and increased agricultural water productivity. Long-term project impacts are expected to include increased supply of water from perennial water sources, institutional reforms for integrated ecosystem management, and reduced GHG emissions and increased climate resilience. Critical assumptions (and associated risks) include the willingness and capacity of community members to engage with the HPFD on integrated watershed development planning and implementation; the interest of farmers in adopting new farming technologies and crops; the accessibility of markets for new crops; and the willingness and capacity of HPFD staff to integrate greater community involvement and upfront planning into forest management. To address potential risks in case these assumptions are not met, the project design includes intensive farmer outreach with additional training opportunities for female farmers; grant financing to incentivize adoption of more climate-resilient technologies and crops; and training and technical assistance to support HPFD staff in adopting more participatory and evidence-based methods.

2. Project Description

Project Development Objective. The project development objective (PDO) of the proposed Integrated Project for Source Sustainability and Climate Resilient Rain-fed Agriculture (IDP) is to improve upstream eco-system management and increase agricultural water productivity in selected Gram Panchayats of the State of Himachal Pradesh. The project will have the following PDO indicators:

- Survival rate of seedlings planted with project support (Percentage)
- Share of participating farmers adopting climate smart agriculture practices (Percentage, gender disaggregated)
- Increase in farm area under higher efficiency irrigation in targeted GPs (Percentage)
- Share of target beneficiaries with rating “Satisfied” or above on process and impact of project interventions (Percentage, gender disaggregated) [Citizen Engagement Indicator]

Project Components and Interventions. The project comprises the following Components and sub-components:

¹ This project started in the year 2005 and completed on 31st March 2017. HPMHWDP exhibited increase in real income by 20.70%, increase in biomass production by 46.25%, increase in yield of Wheat, Maize & Milk by 25.92%, 28.94% and 10.72% respectively. Under Institutional strengthening a total of 3,098 Self Help Groups (SHGs), 6,977, Users Groups and 5,967 Common Interest Groups (CIG) were established.

Component 1: Sustainable Land and Water Resource Management: This component promotes participatory and sustainable land and water management through financing the planning and implementation of upstream investments in selected micro-catchments. Site-specific Gram Panchayat resource management plans (GP-RMPs) will be prepared within each micro-catchment to specify detailed activities by location and GP. In parallel to the GP-RMPs, a network of hydrological monitoring stations will be established within the watershed to monitor the quality and quantity of water on a continuous basis, to assess the potential impact of project interventions, whilst laying the foundation for future water budgeting, and hydrological modelling to identify the highest priority sites for future activities. Hydrological watershed modelling in conjunction with landscape analysis can help identify the most critical sites to prioritize investments to ensure the greatest impact for source sustainability and water quality. The main implementers and beneficiaries will be HPFD staff and relevant community organizations such as sub-groups of the GP user groups set up (or strengthened, where appropriate) under the project. The component will include a combination of technical assistance (TA), investments, and partnerships with other agencies. This support will lead to improved forest cover (and hence carbon capture), increased water and sediment regulation, reduced erosion, and improved community participation (including women, youth, and disadvantaged groups) in and benefits from sustainable land and water management that are expected to serve as a model for other states through the Lighthouse India approach (see Component 3).

Component 2: Improved Agricultural Productivity and Value Addition. This component would support interventions in downstream areas where the primary (existing or potential) water use is for irrigation in agriculture. It would seek to augment the use of irrigation as a principle strategy for shifting from low-value cereal production to climate resilient crop varieties, higher-value fruit and vegetable production but would do so with a focus on increasing climate resilience and water productivity to maximize the financial returns for water use. The project will not duplicate other areas of support but will seek to leverage additional support from other government programs and projects, particularly that of the agriculture, horticulture, and animal husbandry departments. Key interventions include infrastructure to increase high-productivity water utilization (drip and sprinkler irrigation) – essential elements of CSA – plus the necessary primary and secondary distribution systems. The project will only work in downstream areas where upland/ proximate interventions are being implemented. This component will also support the identification and development agricultural value chains. It will establish a Value Chain Development Cell (VCDC) within the PMU that will: (i) coordinate and monitor the overall implementation of this component, and (ii) manage consultant contracts between the PMU and qualified support entities, such as NGOs, consulting firms, and research institutes that will implement many of the component activities. Alignment with the relevant line departments (e.g., agriculture, horticulture, and animal husbandry) will be ensured through the project steering committee. In addition to improving local livelihoods, the proposed activities will reduce pressure on forests and contribute to increased carbon sequestration and reduced erosion and are expected to be of interest to other forested states, with outcomes showcased through the Lighthouse India approach under Component 3. (The proposed matching grants will be managed under a single scheme with appropriate ‘windows’ and distinct procedures governing the provision of grants to group assets and private assets.)

Component 3: Institutional capacity building for integrated watershed management. The long-term objective of this component is two-fold: firstly, to support a more comprehensive and holistic approach to managing the state’s water resources while recognizing competing uses both within HP and downstream in other states, in particular Punjab; secondly to facilitate better alignment of institutional mandates for Integrated Watershed Management (IWM) and strengthen the HPFD’s institutional structure and capacity for improved service delivery. In the short term, this component will focus on building the institutional capacity of the HPFD as they key government institution responsible for managing roughly two-thirds of the state’s land

area and identifying possible future reforms through a comprehensive IWM institutional assessment. It will also produce and share knowledge on these critical topics through a Lighthouse India approach.

Component 4: Project Management: This component will support the project management function, including key staff and operational costs. The project management entity will be in the form of a PMU, although at least in the medium-term financing will be required for staff on secondment from other Departments and externally recruited staff in areas with skillsets outside the current bureaucratic capacity. A key example is agribusiness for which few existing staff of Departments have the required expertise. It would also support the project monitoring and evaluation functions as well as grievance redress apparatus, and project communications and outreach including the contribution to Lighthouse India by which project lessons can be shared with other States.

Project Implementation Area. The project will be implemented in 428 selected GPs in 32 Development Blocks of the ten districts of Shimla, Solan, Sirmour, Bilaspur, Hamirpur, Mandi, Kullu, Chamba, Kangra & Una. The project area shall be covering three out of the four major agro-climatic zones of the State namely Shivalik hills, Mid-hills & the High hills. The key stakeholder beneficiaries of the project include Gram Panchayats, farmers, groups cooperatives including women groups, pastoralists and transhumant. Women, the poor and scheduled population comprises the vulnerable/ disadvantaged section of the local communities. Several backward Gram Panchayats shall be included in the Project area. The stakeholders are primarily engaged in agriculture and horticulture with supplementation from livestock-based activities. The transhumant includes Gaddis & Gujjars who are totally dependent on forest for rearing their livestock.

Implementation Agency. The Himachal Pradesh Forest Department is the main implementing agency for the HPIDP project. A PMU will be established under the HPFD along with divisional offices to oversee project activities at the District level. The PMU and divisional project offices (DPOs) will include technical specialists from a range of other departments to ensure a full complement of technical competence across the range of sectors. The project will seek to leverage existing programs (e.g. KVK) and public sector providers such as the extension and research systems and agreements will be reach between agencies to this effect. Activities at the village level will be implemented by the GPs to promote direct community/beneficiary participation. A project steering committee will be established chaired by the Additional secretary to *inter alia* review annual workplans and facilitate coordination across Departments.

3. Applicable legal and regulatory framework and World Bank ESF

The SEP takes into account the existing institutional and regulatory frameworks/acts of the Government of India (GOI) and the Government of (GoHP) as well as the requirements of the Environmental and Social Framework (ESF), 2016 of World Bank as mentioned below:

- The Environmental Impact Assessment Notification (EIA), 2006 (including all amendments to date), notified by MoEFCC, GoI
- The Right to Information Act 2005,
- The Himachal Pradesh Public Services Guarantee Act 2011
- ESS 10: Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure, ESF 2016, World Bank

The *Environmental Protection Laws* mentioned above establishes the right of citizens to live in a favorable environment and to be protected from negative environmental impacts. Citizens also have the right to environmental information as well as to participate in developing, adopting, and implementing decisions related to environmental impacts. The provisions of environmental law provide the assurances for public hearing during the process of project planning and ensure the public discussion during implementations.

Public representative bodies have an obligation to take into consideration citizens' comments and suggestions. In the context of involuntary resettlement, the Land Acquisition Act, 2013 maintains the ethos and culture of public participation through social impact assessment. The *Right to Information Act, 2005* provides for setting out the practical regime of right to information for citizens to secure access to information under the control of public authorities, in order to promote transparency and accountability in the working of every public authority. The *Himachal Pradesh Public Services Guarantee Act 2011* provides legally enforced right to select services related to- Grazing Permits, Compensation for injuries or loss of life of domestic animals and humans and grant of timber distribution rights to the right-holders within a stipulated timeframe based on applications received from the citizens. In addition, there are several other acts and policies that touch upon public participation and engagement between citizen's and governments. Some of the key ones are: National Environment Policy 2006, Panchayat Raj Institutions 73rd Amendment Act, 1992, Joint Forest Management Policy 1993 (revised Feb 2000), Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act 1996, and the State Participatory Forest Management Policy 2000

The World Bank's Environmental and Social Framework sets out the World Bank's commitment to sustainable development, through a Bank Policy and a set of Environmental and Social Standards that are designed to support Borrowers' projects, with the aim of ending extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity. The Environmental and Social Standards set out the requirements for Borrowers relating to the identification and assessment of environmental and social risks and impacts associated with projects supported by the Bank through Investment Project Financing. The Bank believes that the application of these standards, by focusing on the identification and management of environmental and social risks, will support Borrowers in their goal to reduce poverty and increase prosperity in a sustainable manner for the benefit of the environment and their citizens. The ten (10) Environmental and Social Standards establish the standards that the Borrower and the project will meet through the project life cycle. ESS 10, "Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure", recognizes "the importance of open and transparent engagement between the Borrower and project stakeholders as an essential element of good international practice" (World Bank, 2017: 97). Specifically, the requirements set out by ESS10 are the following:

- "Borrowers will engage with stakeholders throughout the project life cycle, commencing such engagement as early as possible in the project development process and in a timeframe that enables meaningful consultations with stakeholders on project design. The nature, scope and frequency of stakeholder engagement will be proportionate to the nature and scale of the project and its potential risks and impacts.
- The Borrower will maintain and disclose as part of the environmental and social assessment, a documented record of stakeholder engagement, including a description of the stakeholders consulted, a summary of the feedback received and a brief explanation of how the feedback was considered, or the reasons why it was not." (World Bank, 2017: 98).

A Stakeholder Engagement Plan proportionate to the nature and scale of the project and its potential risks and impacts needs to be developed by the Borrower. It needs to be disclosed as early as possible, and before project appraisal, and the Borrower needs to seek the views of stakeholders on the SEP, including on the identification of stakeholders and the proposals for future engagement. If significant changes are made to the SEP, the Borrower has to disclose the updated SEP (World Bank, 2017: 99). According to ESS10, the Borrower should also propose and implement a grievance mechanism to receive and facilitate the resolution of concerns and grievances of project-affected parties related to the environmental and social performance of the project in a timely manner (World Bank, 2017: 100).

4. Summary of Stakeholder Consultations and Engagement, to date

The Environment and Social Assessment (ESA) and ESMF preparation exercise conducted by the HPFD involved participatory approaches, especially consultations, public meetings, focus group discussions, and in-depth interviews with the key project stakeholders. This included potential project beneficiaries and residents in project GPs, farmers and livestock rearers, Gram Panchayat representatives and officials, pastoralists and transhumant (*Gaddis and Gujjars*), as well as Women's self-help groups. These consultations also included disadvantaged and vulnerable population groups, especially landless and marginal farmers, women headed households, scheduled caste households, tribal households.

The Project has identified the disadvantaged and vulnerable people as landless and marginal farmers, transhumant nomadic groups (*Gaddis and Gujjars*), scheduled castes households, scheduled tribes, women headed households as well as households designated below the poverty line. These households are more constrained than others to access benefits from the project and participate more fully in the planning and consultations. Consultations held as part of the ESA process saw large scale participation from the communities, and these disadvantaged and vulnerable groups were part of all the consultations. Special consultations were also held with transhumant as well as tribal households. Special Consultations were also held in many backward Gram Panchayats and Tribal Villages. Before the consultations, relevant information in local language was shared with the communities in order to give them information on the project objectives/activities and seek their feedback and concerns/issues with respect to project components. The engagement needs of these disadvantaged and vulnerable groups are reflected in measures adopted by the project which are summarized in the sections below

Meetings and Consultations were also held with the state departments of Forests, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Rural Development and the Science and Technology to understand the scope of their participation and sectoral interventions under the project, and the potential social and environmental risks and issues involved.

List of Stakeholder Consultations

Date	District	Village	Consultation Participants
26/09/19	Kullu	Bandrol	Farmers and Village Residents (about 35, 20 males and 15 females), including GP Members, vulnerable households, & government officials
26/09/19	Kullu	Talogi	Farmers and Village Residents (about 25, 15 males and 10 females), including GP Members, vulnerable

			households, & government officials
27/09/19	Kullu	Bajaura	Farmers and Village Residents (about 42, 30 Males and 12 Females), including GP Members, vulnerable households, & government officials
28/09/19	Mandi	Kathog	Farmers and Village Residents (about 40, 30 Males and 10 Females), including vulnerable households, GP Members & government officials
28/09/19	Mandi	Tikker	Farmers and Village Residents (about 50 participants, 27 males, 24 Females), including vulnerable households, GP Members & government officials
29/09/19	Chamba	Banet	Farmers and Village Residents (about 60 participants, 45 males, 15 Females), including vulnerable households, GP Members & government officials
29/09/19	Chamba	Kudnu	Farmers and Village Residents (about 90 participants, 55 males, 35 Females), including vulnerable households, GP

			Members & government officials
30/09/19	Una	Beriyan	Farmers and Village Residents (about 30 participants, 15 males, 15 Females), including vulnerable households, GP Members & government officials
01/10/19	Una	Kharyalta,	Farmers and Village Residents (about 50 participants, 15 males, 35 Females), including vulnerable households, GP Members & government officials
01/10/19	Una	Sohari	Farmers and Village Residents (about 30 participants, 10 males, 20 Females), including vulnerable households, GP Members & government officials
02/10/19	Bilaspur	Malraon,	Farmers and Village Residents (about 35 participants, 15 males, 20 Females), including vulnerable households, GP Members & government officials
02/10/19	Bilaspur	Doodiyan	Farmers and Village Residents (about 35 participants, 18 males, 17 Females), including vulnerable households, GP Members & government officials
03/10/19	Bilaspur	Padyalag	Farmers and Village Residents (about 40 participants, 22 males, 18 Females), including

			vulnerable households, GP Members & government officials
03/10/19	Hamirpur	Taal	Farmers and Village Residents (about 50 participants, 12 males, 38 Females), including vulnerable households, GP Members & government officials
04/10/19	Hamirpur	Mehal	Farmers and Village Residents (about 44 participants, 24 males, 20 Females), including vulnerable households, GP Members & government officials
05/10/19	Shimla	Bagri,	Farmers and Village Residents (about 20 participants, 8 males, 12 Females), including vulnerable households, GP Members & government officials
05/10/19	Shimla	Mundu	Farmers and Village Residents (about 50 participants, 37 males, 12 Females), including vulnerable households, GP Members & government officials
06/10/19	Solan	Jhajha,	Farmers and Village Residents (about 47 participants, 30 males, 17 Females), including vulnerable households, GP Members & government officials
06/10/19	Solan	Dangeel	Farmers and Village Residents (about 52 participants, 27 males,

			25 Females), including vulnerable households, GP Members & government officials
07/10/19	Solan	Hinner	Farmers and Village Residents (about 40 participants, 25 males, 15 Females), including vulnerable households, GP Members & government officials

5. Stakeholder Identification and Analysis

The main project implementers and beneficiaries will be relevant community organizations such as sub-groups of the GP user groups set up (or strengthened, where appropriate) supported under the project, the direct beneficiary households, the Gram Panchayat as well as the HPFD. The key stakeholders of the Project include Gram Panchayats, farmers groups/cooperatives, joint forest management committees (JFMCs), pastoralists and transhumant, as well as women's groups and women producers. The disadvantaged and vulnerable households especially landless and marinal farmers, women headed households, disabled households, scheduled tribes especially the transhumant and scheduled castes are also key stakeholders. These and other key stakeholders who will be informed and consulted about the project are summarized below.

Positively affected Project Beneficiaries: The project will be implemented in 428 selected GPs in 32 Development Blocks of the ten districts of Shimla, Solan, Sirmour, Bilaspur, Hamirpur, Mandi, Kullu, Chamba, Kangra & Una. In these 428 GPs, the key project beneficiaries include farming communities (especially small-scale farmers), including women, disadvantaged groups as well as nomadic/ transhumant/ pastoral communities, who will benefit from improved access to irrigation water, climate smart extension services, and markets as well as the future reductions in land degradation. Women, and the community at large, and local and migrant labor will also benefit from employment opportunities in nursery and plantation activities and the development of high value agricultural value chains and Non-timber Forest Products (NTFPs). Community members will benefit from training on improved production and post-harvest practices, and basic business skills, as well as technical and financial support to invest in sustainable value chain development. Improvements in fodder availability as a result of the Component 1 investments will particularly benefit women and Scheduled Tribes, as they are most involved with livestock management. Further, every GP has quite a few landless laborers who often migrate to other places in different seasons in search of work. Their participation in implementation and management of resources and assets would provide them income generating opportunities.

Disadvantaged and Vulnerable Households. The Project has identified the disadvantaged and vulnerable people as landless and marginal farmers, transhumant nomadic groups (*Gaddis and Gujjars*), scheduled castes households, scheduled tribes, women headed households, disabled households as well as households designated below the poverty line. The transhumant includes Gaddis & Gujjars who are totally dependent

on forest for rearing their livestock. The State has also identified a list of backward Gram Panchayats, some of which are included in the Project area proportionately to ensure that the positive spill-over effects emerging from the interventions proposed under the project. These vulnerable households are more constrained than others to access benefits from the project and participate more fully in the planning and consultations. No adverse project impacts will fall disproportionately on these especially vulnerable groups, and adequate safeguards have been included.

Negatively affected households. (Potential adverse impacts): At this stage, the project does not identify any directly affected population groups mainly because the project does not include any land acquisition or the potential to cause involuntary physical resettlement or relocation. Any intervention or construction activity that requires involuntary resettlement impacts and relocation will not be included in the GPRMP and excluded from project support. However, small scale, local level infrastructure planned and prioritized by the communities could involve very small scale of land donation, which needs to be managed to avoid the potential for adverse impacts, especially on vulnerable households, following the due diligence provided under ESS5. The ESMF includes a resettlement policy framework (RPF) to address and mitigate any adverse social and economic impacts arising from voluntary land donation, and includes specific screening, documentation and mitigation measures to ensure voluntariness and non-coerciveness of the land donation process. Interventions on new grazing pastures, fodder plots and plantations may also involve temporary access/use restrictions that may adversely affect some households. Such interventions will be screened for adverse impacts on traditional use and customary rights, and when needed suitable mitigation action plans will be prepared and implemented by the beneficiary groups, GPs and HPFD.

Other Interested stakeholders (including government departments): The Himachal Pradesh Forest Department will be the nodal department along with the line department viz; Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Horticulture, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Department etc. will be the main stakeholders from the State. All department officials expressed interest in convergence modalities. Forest department officials wanted to explore opportunities to take forward lessons learnt from previous project projects. These officials would be interested to pilot and demonstrate climate resilient farming, climate change adaption methods, and training of beneficiaries groups in good agriculture practices. The project will also increase the skills and capacity of the HPFD, the Gram Panchayats and other government officials. Private Partners involved in agribusiness and value chain development as well as NGOs associated with forestry, agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, natural resource management and rural development would be interested to partner the project.

Summary of Stakeholder Needs. The engagement needs of these key stakeholders are summarized in the table below

Stakeholder Group	Language Needs	Preferred notification means (e-mail, phone, radio, letter, etc.)	Specific needs (accessibility, large print, child care, daytime meetings, etc.)
Existing CBOs of farmers, joint forest management, watersheds, agriculture and animal husbandry	Hindi and Himachali	Through phone, letter and CBO leaders as well as social mobiliser, Gram Panchayat Representatives and local NGO representatives	Meetings held in Panchayat Office or largest revenue village in the GP.

Women farmers and women headed households, women's federations	Hindi and Himachali	Through self-help groups, social mobiliser, Gram Panchayat Representatives and local NGO representatives	Meetings aligned with meeting schedule of self-help groups, village federations and other CBOs; within their habitations
Disadvantaged and Vulnerable Households, including landless and disabled households.	Hindi and Himachali	Through self-help groups, social mobiliser, Gram Panchayat Representatives and local NGO representatives	Special Meetings organised with advance notice organised at suitable timings and in accessible places;
Transhumant nomadic groups, Tribes	Local Tribal Language	Through tribal community leaders and social mobilisers	Special Consultation meetings at times favoured by the tribal groups within their habitations
Gram Panchayat Elected Leaders and Officials	Hindi & Himachali	Official notification from HPFD and RD	Meeting with advance notice to all the elected GP members and key GP officials along with CBO leaders and NGO representatives and other village level workers of line agencies
Departments of Forests, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Science and Technology	Hindi and English	Official notification from HPFD and RD	Meetings held with suitable advance notification in block level office of HPFD.

5. Stakeholder Engagement Program

Purpose and Objectives. The main objective of the SEP is to establish a systematic approach for stakeholder engagement, maintain a constructive relationship with them, consider stakeholders' views, promote and provide means for effective and inclusive engagement with project-affected parties throughout the project life-cycle, and ensure that appropriate project information is disclosed to stakeholders in a timely, understandable, accessible and appropriate manner. The SEP also aims to facilitate stakeholder feedback and engagement on project design and implementation, including on identification and mitigation of environmental and social risks and impacts. Other objectives of the SEP are: i) to ensure that stakeholders understand how the project is likely to affect them; maintain continuous engagement and manage stakeholders' expectations; Ensure prior disclosure and dissemination of relevant, transparent, objective, meaningful and easily accessible information in a timeframe that enables meaningful consultations with stakeholders in a culturally appropriate format, in relevant local language(s) and is understandable to stakeholders; Consider and responds to feedback; Support active and inclusive engagement with project-affected parties; Ensure that consultation(s) is/ are free of external manipulation, interference, coercion, discrimination, and intimidation; and Ensure consultation (s) is/are documented and disclosed by the IDP project.

The scope and details of the SEP have been customized to the moderate risk profile of the project, which will not cause any physical relocation or land acquisition, and the anticipated concerns of the project stakeholders who may be affected by or are interested in the project.

Information Disclosure and Engagement Methods

The final draft of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) will be re-disclosed on the projects website and shared with all the District and Block Development Offices as well as the targeted Gram Panchayats. The SEP will be disclosed and publicly accessible throughout project implementation period. All updated versions will also be re-posted on the project portal.

IDP will use various methods of engagement that will be used by the implementing agencies as part of their continuous interaction with the stakeholders. The method of engagement will be constantly reviewed or its appropriateness, outreach and impact, as well as inclusivity.

Ensuring the participation of vulnerable individuals and groups in project consultations will require the implementation of tailored techniques. The vulnerable groups identified by the project include the rural population, people living with disabilities, women, and disadvantaged youth. Attention will be given to the vulnerable groups to ensure that they are not denied project benefits. This will be done by focus group discussions, monitoring participation rates, undertaking beneficiary assessments, using online platforms to allow access to otherwise disadvantaged groups, and ensuring that at least 30% of participant trainees are females. The table below summarizes the variety of methods that would be used for information disclosure to reach all the key stakeholders. A summary description of the engagement methods and techniques that will be applied by project developer is provided below. The summary presents a variety of approaches to facilitate the processes of information provision, information feedback as well as participation and consultation.

Table 1: Methods/Tools for Information Provision, Feedback, Consultation and Participation

Method / Tool	Description and Use	Contents	Dissemination Method
Participatory Surveys and Assessments during village planning	These surveys will be used to identify stakeholder priorities, concerns and feedback, including vulnerable households	Identification of concerns, priorities of village communities	Implemented in All project villages
Printed Material including newsletters, leaflets, brochures, fact sheets	Used to convey information on the Project and regular updates on its progress	Information on the IDP, GRM, SEP and project components and interventions	Distribution through post, distribution, and handouts as part of consultation meetings, awareness campaigns, discussions and meetings with stakeholders.
Project Website	Easily accessible information on Project status.	Project achievements, announcements of planned activities, changes, and overall progress.	Information shared with project offices and target GPs through printed leaflets
Periodic Consultation Meetings at Gram Sabha, Block and District Office	These meetings will be utilised to review project implementation progress in target villages, and hear stakeholder feedback	Stakeholder Feedback, Grievances, Implementation Progress Issues	Advance Notification for Meetings
Dedicated telephone line	designated telephone line used by the public to obtain information, make enquiries, or provide feedback on the Project.	Any issues that are of interest or concern to the direct project beneficiaries and other stakeholders.	Telephone number disseminated through websites and printed materials
Surveys, Interviews and Questionnaires	The use of public opinion surveys, interviews and questionnaires to obtain stakeholder views	Questions targeting stakeholder perception of the Project, associated impacts and benefits, concerns and suggestions.	Soliciting participation in surveys/interviews with specific stakeholder groups. Administering questionnaires as part of the household visits.

Feedback & Suggestion Box	A suggestion box can be used to encourage project affected persons to leave written feedback and comments about the Project.	Any questions, queries or concerns, especially for stakeholders that may have a difficulty expressing their views and issues during public meetings.	Appropriate location for a suggestion box should be selected in a safe public place to make it readily accessible for the stakeholders. Information about the availability of the suggestion box should be communicated as part of Project's regular interaction with local stakeholders.
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Strategy and differentiated measures for Vulnerable Groups

The project will be implementing differentiated measures to include the feedback of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups during the stakeholder engagement process under project implementation. These disadvantaged and vulnerable people are: landless and marginal farmers, transhumant nomadic groups (*Gaddis* and *Gujjars*), scheduled castes households, scheduled tribes, women headed households, people with disability, as well as households designated below the poverty line.

These main measures are presented below.

- a) identification of these disadvantaged and vulnerable households, as part of the participatory assessment exercise that will be undertaken in the GPRMP planning process;
- b) Dedicated consultations with vulnerable households during GP RMP planning, as well as during periodic review with the GPRMP;
- c) inclusion amongst beneficiaries of individual benefits as well as common assets and demonstrations,
- d) inclusion in user groups and suitable local work/labor opportunities.
- e) Participatory planning and Implementation of animal husbandry focused interventions, especially targeting the transhumant nomadic groups (*Gaddis* and *Gujjars*);
- f) Differential, and lower, cost sharing requirements for vulnerable households in accessing individual benefits related to agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry;
- g) Screening and mitigation planning to ensure vulnerable and disadvantaged groups are not adversely and disproportionately by project interventions.

Stakeholder Engagement Strategy during Implementation

Table: Engagement during Implementation
Component 1 - Sustainable Land and Water Resource Management

Target stakeholders	Information to be disclosed	Tools of engagement & mode of disclosure	Frequency	Responsibilities
HPFD staff and relevant community organizations such as sub-groups (user groups) of the GP user groups Partnerships with other agencies communities including women, women, youth, and disadvantaged groups.	The GP-RMPs will be available in local language in the Gram Panchayat office. The Forest Department officials and extension workers will display information related to vulnerable households and distribution of agriculture assets, beneficiary contribution, etc. prominently in the villages covered across targeted GPs.	The PMU will develop GP-RMPs through a participatory process led jointly by the HPFD, Gram Panchayats and community user groups and which will ensure the active inclusion of women and disadvantaged groups. The hydrological models will enable the preparation of more holistic catchment area treatment (CAT) plans to improve ecosystem management and water quality and quantity based on available hydrological and sediment load modeling	Every year	DPOs and PMU, HP-FD

Component 2: Improved Agricultural Productivity and Value Addition

Small and marginal farmers Vulnerable households qualified support entities officials from relevant line departments (e.g., agriculture, horticulture, and animal husbandry)	Information regarding common infrastructure such as power-tillers or household assets such as rain water harvesting tanks or micro irrigation. Pertinent information about benefit sharing mechanism.	Through the DPO's office and through extension workers. Information will be disclosed in local language. Door-to-door visits, audio-visual tools, leaflets, etc.	Every quarter	DPOs and PMU, HP-FD
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Component 3: Institutional capacity building for integrated watershed management

Agriculture extension workers Social extension workers	Trainings and capacity building exercises	Circulars and government orders	Every six months	HP-FD, Agriculture Department
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6. Roles, Responsibilities and Resources for Stakeholder Engagement

The HPFD, project management unit (PMU) will be responsible for implementing the SEP through the Environment and Social Experts at the State Level, the District Project Officer at the Districts, and the APO in the block office, and the social, forestry and agriculture extension officers who will be directly engaging with the key stakeholders. Local level project implementation units will be supported to effectively engage with primary stakeholders throughout project implementation.

IDP and implementing agencies will arrange necessary training associated with the implementation of this SEP that will be provided to the members of staff who, due to their professional duties, may be involved in interactions with the external public, as well as to the senior management. Specialized training will also be provided to the staff appointed to deal with stakeholder grievances as per the Public Grievance Procedure. Project contractors and selected representatives will also receive necessary instructions for the Grievance Procedure.

8 Grievance Mechanism

Institutional Structure. The Project will establish a Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) with the aim to respond to queries or clarifications or complaints about the project and address complaints/concerns and grievances of the stakeholders. The GRM will focus on corrective actions that can be implemented quickly and at a relatively low cost to resolve identified implementation concerns, GRM will also serve as a channel for early warning, helping to target supervision to where it is most needed and identify systemic issues.

The institutional arrangement for the GRM will be established as following:

- a) Project Grievance Officer. The Executive Director of the HPFD will be the ex-officio, senior most official to act as the Grievance Officer for the whole project. The ED will hold quarterly reviews of the functioning of the GRM.
- b) State level Grievance Officer. Social Expert.
- c) District level Grievance Officer. The District Project Officer (DPO) will be the nodal Grievance Officer at the District Level responsible for receiving, tracking and resolving grievances from the stakeholders
- d) Status of Grievances received and resolved will be track through the project MIS as well as monthly progress reports from the Districts and Blocks.
- e) HPFD will be issuing an office order and necessary notifications to establish and operationalize the GRM for the project.
- f) The

Grievance Channels. Project beneficiaries and stakeholders will be able to submit their grievances, feedback and inquiries to the Project through multiple channels that are summarized below.

- a) State Government Portal. The existing mechanism of State Government portal for citizen's grievances and enquires will also cover the Project. HPFD receives regular inputs from this portal on grievances that are to be addressed by the HPFD.
- b) Project specific Portal. Project will maintain a portal with dedicated mechanisms for receiving stakeholder grievances. All grievances, feedback and queries received through the project portal will be collated and compiled by the State Social Expert and included in the progress report. The portal will also provide relevant information on the multiple channels that can be used for submitting grievances to the project.
- c) Grievance Registers. Grievance Registers will be maintained at District/Block levels to record, track and report on the inflow of stakeholder grievances, enquiries and feedback. The Grievance Registers will help with monitoring and evaluation of the functioning of GRMS.

Grievance Process. All grievances, enquiries and feedback received through the multiple channels will be tracked through a grievance log that would be maintained through the MIS. Grievances will be directed to the competent nodal grievance officer at the state, district, and block levels for resolution, with recommended timelines. The concerned Grievance Officer will be responding to the grievance/query through phone calls, meetings and letters, in order to resolve the issues. If needed site visits will be undertaken to appraise the exact nature of the stakeholder concerns. The Complainant will be made part of the grievance resolution process and kept updated of the resolution process through phone calls and formal letters. Information material on GRM will also inform the stakeholders about grievance escalation hierarchy that would help the complainant to escalate any unresolved issues to higher level officers, as well as the existing state level GRM channels of government portal and grievance committee chaired by the district collectors. The grievance redress process will be a continuous, transparent and participatory process that would be an integral part of the project's accountability and governance agenda.

GRM Monitoring and Reporting. The functioning of the GRM will be monitored by the Social Expert in the SPMU and the ED. Status and function of the GRM will be documented and shared by the Social Expert in the SPMU through periodic reports and review meetings. GRMs will also be tracked through the project MIS. Regular GRM Review Meetings will held chaired by the ED and convened by the Social Expert of the SPMU. The Social Expert will be responsible for presenting status of all matters/grievances received during the last quarter/month, and the action taken to resolve them. The GRM mechanism will be notified to the public and stakeholders within the 1st 6 months of project effectiveness. The project website will be posting the status of the GRM status periodically on the website of the project.

Grievance Redress Service of The World Bank. In addition to seeking to resolve their grievances through the GRM established at the government level, “communities and individuals who believe that they are adversely affected by a World Bank (WB) supported project such as this operation may also submit complaints to the Grievance Redress Service (GRS) established by the World Bank. The GRS ensures that complaints received are promptly reviewed in order to address project-related concerns. Project affected communities and individuals may also submit their complaint to the WB's independent Inspection Panel, after having brought the complaint to the World Bank's attention through its GRS. Information on how to submit complaints to the World Bank's Grievance Redress Service is available at <http://www.worldbank.org/GRS>. Information on how to submit complaints to the World Bank Inspection Panel is available at www.inspectionpanel.org.

9 Monitoring and Reporting

Monitoring. The Social Expert in the PMU will be responsible for coordinating all M&E activities and ensuring that data and information from all field offices are produced and collected on time and are of sufficient quality. A web-based project management and monitoring platform to integrate the information coming from different sources and levels will be utilized. Beneficiary communities will be supported with tools and technology to support the implementation of the GPRMPs, as well for providing feedback and grievances. Separate tracking will be done on vulnerable and disadvantaged households.

The project will be conducting an external review of the ESF implementation progress and impacts, including the implementation of the SEP. External agencies/resource persons will be engaged to carry out this audit/review in the 3rd and 5th year of the project. The GPRMPs will be engaged in monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the GPRMP and will be providing regular feedback to the District Project Office. The Assistant Project Officer will be providing regular updates on implementation of the SEP.

The SEP will be periodically revised and updated as necessary in the course of capacity building program implementation in order to ensure that the information presented herein is consistent and is the

most recent, and that the identified stakeholders and methods of engagement remain appropriate and effective in relation to the project context and specific stages of the implementation. Any major changes to the project related activities and to its schedule will be duly reflected in the SEP.

Reporting. The main instrument for reporting on SEP implementation will be the Bi-annual ESF implementation progress report, which would cover implementation of the ESMF, ESCP as well as the SEP. The biannual report will be based on regular monthly and quarterly updates from the block and district units, and these will include public grievances, enquiries and related incidents, together with the status of implementation of associated corrective/preventative. These periodic updates will provide a mechanism for assessing both the number and the nature of complaints and requests for information, along with the Project's ability to address those in a timely and effective manner. The project will be using newsletters and communication campaigns/products on the GRM and the SEP status.

The SEP update will cover key indicators related to stakeholder meetings, GP meetings, grievances received and resolved, enquiries received, participation of vulnerable people in project activities, stakeholder facing events and publications.

9. Budget

A lumpsum of INR 60 lacs has been kept to cover the costs related with publications, communication material, engagement of resource persons/consultants and organization of stakeholder engagement and meetings. Additional resources from the communication, consultancy and training budget will be used for implementing the SEP.