

Annex 7. Summary of consultations and stakeholder engagement plan

The aim of the programme, entitled "Scaling-Up Resilience in Africa's Great Green Wall (SURAGGWA)", is to achieve a major paradigm shift and simultaneously tackle land restoration, climate change and sustainable livelihoods, by strengthening ecological resilience and food security in eight Sahel countries recognized as the most vulnerable to climate change: *Burkina Faso, Chad, Djibouti, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal*. Its objective is to remove technical and financial barriers to increase resilience by (i) developing a bold agenda to scale up successful restoration practices with well-adapted biodiversity (local species of trees, bushes and plants); (ii) supporting the development of climate-resilient and low-emission non-timber forest products (including forage) value chains, benefiting the livelihoods of vulnerable communities and their food and nutrition security; and (iii) strengthening national and regional Great Green Wall institutions to ensure the sustainability of interventions.

This document sets out an overview of stakeholder consultations held during programme formulation as well as a plan for stakeholder engagement, including public information disclosure and consultation, throughout the programme cycle. To prepare a detailed programme proposal, consultations are essential so that activities are developed with input from all relevant stakeholders. It helps understand and consider the priorities and views of various groups and ensures country ownership of the programme. The involvement of all actors engaged in programme activities is necessary to develop effective programmes. Stakeholders include:

- Key decision makers and institutional “leaders”
- Parties who are affected by the decision or the action
- Parties responsible for the implementation
- Parties who might oppose the decision or action; and
- Parties who might facilitate or accelerate the process or its outcomes, experts.

This programme was prepared with the involvement of stakeholders through various consultations and meetings, which were held both virtually/hybrid format as well as in-country national-level consultations, and field-level safeguards and gender mission. While not all programme formulation team members were able to visit each country individually, these challenges were overcome through all-team preparation for country missions, ensuring coverage of key questions to inform the design of each component, as well as cross-cutting issues including gender/vulnerability considerations, implementation modalities, timeframe and budgets. Additionally, through the This created organizational challenges however, to the extent possible, these were overcome, and meetings were held with main stakeholders and other relevant entities. Engaging with stakeholders, capturing their vision, concerns and priorities allowed the programme proponents to consider the range of perspectives, address a series of issues (e.g., technical, strategic, and implementation-related), and prepare a proposal that is aligned with country priorities and local needs.

Stakeholder identification

Stakeholders were initially identified through discussions between the Nationally Designated Authority (NDA), which is the Ministry of Environment (MoEnv), the National Agencies for the GGW (NAGGW), and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) during the design of the preliminary programme concept during 2018 and 2019. National level consultations were held during the concept formulation stage, as well as benefitting from several GCF Readiness projects in Senegal, Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Niger among others that have informed the programme formulation. These initial discussions led to the identification of the ministries, departments, line agencies and other stakeholders that would likely be involved.

Subsequently, during programme formulation, the programme was subject to a second-round identification through virtual consultations and bilateral meetings held at country-level between FAO Representations and the NDA and NAGGW focal points, as well as through virtual consultations held directly with the NDA for Nigeria, Mali, Mauritania, and Senegal. Through the consultation process, national entities and other stakeholders were identified for programme implementation, including on management and technical leadership. Stakeholders were then identified for the implementation of programme components, through continued engagement with FAO Representations and the programme formulation team. These were the basis for the national-level in-person consultations held as part of the field missions undertaken by the programme formulation team between October and December 2022. Based on these prior consultations and based on further engagement during country field missions, Table 1 below lists key programme stakeholders, their roles, and responsibilities within the programme.

Table 1 – Key stakeholders and roles/responsibilities

KEY STAKEHOLDERS	ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES
Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO)	Accredited Entity (AE) and overall Executing Entity (EE).
FAO Sub-Regional Office	Programme Budget Holder (BH) and responsible for overall programme delivery and reporting.
FAO Country Representations (Chad, Djibouti, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Senegal)	Overall Executing Entity at country-level
National Agencies of the GGW	Component 3 - implementation of SURAGGWA Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) System, including remote-sensing and participation in National Steering Committee.
Pan-African Agency for the GGW	Component 3 - participation Regional steering committee and will raise awareness with all stakeholders involved
Ministry of Environment (MoEnv)	National Designated Authority (NDA) will raise awareness with all stakeholders involved and participate in the National Steering Committee.
Centres for Seed Research/Development (Centre National des Semences Forestiers)	Component 1: implementing partners, providing seeds and research for the provision of restoration seeds, and facilitation of dissemination
Department of Forest/Water Resources	Component 1 land restoration, quality assurance and restoration/ecological monitoring activities at local/site level
National Climate/Environment Research Institutes or Observatories	Component 3 - national ecological monitoring, and participation in SURAGGWA Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning System (MEL); participation in baseline and final surveys (to be defined at programme inception)
Local communities	Local communities will be directly engaged in the programme area selection through close stakeholder engagement, will provide feedback to the activities on a regular basis and participate in land restoration activities under Component 1, and value chain development activities under Component 2

NTFP Value Chain organisations (SMEs, producer groups, etc...) at national and regional-level (eg. NGARA)	Component 2: Provide technical training on processing (to be identified based on value chain and country at programme inception), and facilitate market access for higher quality NTFP production.
Financial Institutions at national and regional-level (eg. Attari Bank, West African Alliance blab la bla)	Component 2: Access to Finance develop and provide loans to programme beneficiaries against business plans developed
Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)/Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) including women's associations and groups	Component 1: Under the leadership of the PMU and in close coordination with MoEnv carry out land restoration work if selected. Component 3: Carry out local-level monitoring of land restoration and other activities

Stakeholder engagement during the programme formulation

In order to capitalize on the network of FAO Representations, the programme formulation team ensured constant dialogue with NDAs and NAGGW through the ongoing dialogue between each FAO Representation and the Nationally Designated Authority as well as the National Agency for the Great Green Wall, the programme formulation worked in close collaboration with GCF-SURAGGWA focal points designated by the FAO Representative in each country where implementation will take place, in addition to FAO focal points designated from the sub-regional office in Dakar (SFW), the FAO Regional Office in Accra (RAF) and the FAO Regional Office in Cairo (RNE).

In addition, the programme proposal was developed in consultation with regional-level and national-level stakeholders through a mix of virtual and in-person meetings, directly with the programme formulation team as well as ongoing dialogue with FAO Representation focal points that accompanied the programme formulation field missions. These consultations were held to ensure that the programme is designed appropriately and that it meets regional and national priorities¹ and local needs, and to identify activity priority areas and gaps, programme target areas, and main stakeholders.

At global and regional-level, the programme design team held key expert interviews with various national authorities, national and regional research institutions, private sector actors, as well as other UN organizations and technical and financial partners, including UNCCD, UNEP, WFP, Attari Bank, NGARA, IFAD (with ongoing dialogue with iGREENFIN team especially in relation to innovative finance and monitoring and knowledge management), CILSS and the Pan-African Agency for the Great Green Wall (PA-GGW) linked with the programme. The meetings held with these experts were key for developing a programme that is aligned with government priorities, and that leverages ongoing best practice and lessons learning not only from the previous Action Against Desertification (AAD), but other ongoing efforts in land restoration in the GGW area, NTFP value chain development, ecological monitoring and innovative finance. Engagement with these partners occurred both virtually prior to and after country missions, and where possible, follow-up face-to-face meetings were held during the programme formulation field missions. For the design of the carbon finance activities, the programme formulation team held expert interviews with regional bodies focusing on carbon markets such as the West Africa Alliance on Carbon Markets and ECOWAS, national authorities dealing with carbon market-related policies and evolving regulations, including Ministries of Environment and Agriculture, international initiatives and mechanisms

¹ Great Green Wall restoration and carbon sequestration targets, non-timber forest product development and marketing policy targets, climate change, with a resilience and gender focus

dealing with carbon credit projects in the forestry sector, NGOs involved with monitoring, reporting and verification activities in the sector and firms using technologies and data to enhance the monitoring of carbon sequestration from forestry projects. Engagement with these partners occurred both virtually and face-to-face, where possible, between September 2022 and May 2023. The feasibility study includes details from these expert interviews. Additionally, where possible virtual meetings were held with the programme formulation team, FAO Representation and Nationally Designated Authority (26 September 2022 Mali, 30 September 2022 Senegal, 4 October 2022 Nigeria, 5 October 2022 Djibouti, 12 October 2022 Mauritania), in order to inform the planning and stakeholder identification for country-level missions of the programme formulation team.

Consultations at the National Level

National-level stakeholder field missions included a mix of bilateral meetings and broad stakeholder consultations² in all eight countries (see Table 3 for more details). These consultations and bilateral meetings verified the technical feasibility of programme component activities and allowed to obtain feedback from stakeholders on all aspects of the programme. The following issues were discussed: climate rationale, relevant climate change adaptation and mitigation targets, the programme approach including the expected paradigm shift, as well as target area and programme area selection. Stakeholders agreed on needs to be addressed, targets, implementation arrangements and modalities, timeframe and budgets. In addition, the field missions engaged with national actors as well as relevant technical and financial partners (including IFAD, the World Bank, among others) to identify potential co-financing opportunities.

The national-level consultations were held in Senegal, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Chad and Burkina Faso (please see Appendix A for consultation outputs and participant lists). The main objective of the stakeholder consultations as part of the stakeholder engagement for SURAGGWA were to share key programme information with beneficiary representatives and others affected by the programme and to obtain their feedback to inform the final programme design. More specifically, the purpose of stakeholder consultations was to:

- a) Explain the objective and approach of the programme, as well as proposals on main activities and expected benefits, options for institutional set-up and implementation modalities, with particular attention to the general framework for stakeholder participation;
- b) Obtain feedback and suggestions from stakeholders, including groups at risk (see below), and others involved in the programme on the above-mentioned topics;
- c) Discuss potential environmental and social risks, as perceived by beneficiaries and others affected by the programme, and effective mitigation measures; and
- d) Identify implementation partnerships and other commitments for the different components and for the co-financing of the programme.

² The national stakeholder consultations were held in 6 of the 8 countries. National stakeholder consultations were not possible due to lack of availability in Djibouti and Mauritania. Close consultations were nonetheless held in Mauritania and Djibouti to inform the appropriate project design.

The results of the stakeholder consultations were used to refine and improve the programme design, particularly in areas related to the participation and capacity development of beneficiaries and their institutions, and to feed into programme implementation, environmental and social management (ESMP) and monitoring and evaluation plans.

The national consultations included a mix of plenary sessions to discuss transversal issues (including targets, programme area selection, gender, risks, implementation modalities) and break-out groups to identify critical bottlenecks, good practices, and potential implementation modalities per SURAGGWA component. The consultations allowed for a variety of stakeholders to express their opinions and provide important feedback to ensure that the programme is implemented with the flexibility necessary to adapt to the specifics of local conditions across the 8 countries.

A sample agenda, which was adopted in each country where a consultation was held, is presented below:

Hour	Agenda Item	Responsible
9:00 a.m.	Welcoming Participants	xxx
09 h10	Introduction of FAO	FAO-Representation
09h20	Introduction of NDA/NAGGW	xxx
09h30	Presentation of preliminary studies in country Presentation of the SURAGGWA programme and Q&A on the main objectives of the programme	xxx Mission Leader
10:00 a.m.	Plenary discussion	Facilitated by the Team
10h45	Presentation of the activity in sub-groups and selection of rapporteurs	<i>Facilitator</i> Component 1: mission member Component 2: mission member Component 3 : mission member
11:00 a.m.	Coffee break	
11h15 – 12h45	Subgroup discussions	
13h00	Lunch	

14h00	Presentation and discussion in plenary Component 1, 2 and 3	<i>A facilitator and rapporteur will be identified in groups.</i> 15 minutes for the presentation and 30 minutes for discussions
16h15	Plenary discussions on cross-cutting issues	Team Leader and the members of the mission
16h30	Conclusion and presentation of next steps	Team Leader
16h45	Closing remarks	xxxx, FAO-Representation
17h00	Coffee break	

A series of “non-structured” bilateral meetings were also held in preparation for and in follow-up to the national-level stakeholder consultations in all eight countries. These were systematically identified in consultation with the NDA and NAGGW and the FAO Representation focal points in order to ensure coverage along institutional profile (state to non-state actors, representatives of women’s and vulnerable groups, including private sector SMEs and financial institutions), technical area of coverage (land restoration, value chains, access to finance, restoration monitoring), and key potential implementing partners with proven experience in SURAGGWA programme components. The meetings gave meaningful direction on the design of programme objectives, expected outputs, components, and main activities of the programme (see Table 2 below).

Table 2 - Main topics of engagement by stakeholder group

Stakeholder Group	Main topics of engagement
NDA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land restoration targets, programme intervention zones, implementation modalities • GEF synergies and co-financing opportunities • Insights on NAGGW capacities, constraints and needs
Technical and financial partners with relevant programmes and projects ongoing and in pipeline (including UN, bilateral and other TFPs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons-learned/best practices across land restoration, NTFP value-chain development, innovative financing, and institutional capacity strengthening for NAGGW • Identification of co-financing opportunities
National Agencies of the Great Green Wall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of specific constraints and needs
Ministry of Environment/Dept of Forestry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land restoration approaches, costs, best practices, ongoing programmes and projects, pipeline activities • Potential role during implementation and for quality assurance, and capacity development of village-level restoration technicians
Ministry of Environment/Dept of Green Economy or Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of data, information, statistics on NTFP value chains; identification of key national strategies and priorities; gaps and critical bottlenecks identified

Research institutes/Dept on Seeds/Forestry seeds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of native species for restoration; certification; distribution channels; capacities to increase production; connections with informal seed systems
Ecological monitoring/research institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of current in-country capacities for remote-sensing technologies and ecological and restoration monitoring; • Information relating to technical and economic costs of programme activities to inform EFA • Identification of best practices in land restoration programmes and projects • Capacities for remote-sensing monitoring and analytical skills
Chambers of commerce/other private sector umbrella organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of constraints/bottlenecks in various NTFP value chains • Identification of private sector enterprises engaged along the production and value chain in NTFPs
Banks and other financial institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of constraints/bottlenecks in the design and implementation of agriculture- and NTFP-specific financial products and services • Identification of implementation partners for access to finance activities
NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land restoration capacities, including mechanical ploughing among other techniques • Farmer assisted natural regeneration and other restoration practices and approaches
Civil Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall Feedback on programme activities, considerations in relation to women, youth, vulnerable communities, pastoral communities and others in terms of programme risks and impacts
Private Sector Actors in NTFP value chains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback on specific constraints and opportunities in relation to NTFP production (specific to each priority value chain identified per country) • Identification of interested private sector actors to partner with the programme and beneficiaries to increase production of higher quality NTFPs

These meetings aimed to identify lessons learned and best practices from their operations and experience working in land restoration and value chain development activities. Additionally, bilateral meetings were held with research institutions to be able to ensure relevant, reliable and updated data would underpin the technical and economic feasibility of proposed activities; with civil society and non-governmental organizations to discuss both land restoration, as well as community needs and constraints as related to the programme objectives, including the identification of potential issues for consideration under the environmental and social safeguards, and gender. Key discussion areas with these organizations were on their work on land restoration, NTFP value chain development and the technical assistance provided to NAGGWs to be able to effectively coordinate, communicate and report on activities and progress made against GGW Initiative targets, in addition to meeting their Nationally Determined Contributions, and relevant national strategies and priorities.

The **overall outcomes of the stakeholder consultation during programme formulation**, including the country missions as well as the non-structured virtual bilateral meetings with stakeholders throughout

the formulation period, allowed for stakeholders to agree on the following critical areas to inform programme design:

- Agreement on overall land restoration targets under SURAGGWA (updated from figures in concept note)
- Agreement on criteria for programme area selection – mix of technical criteria, flexibility, community engagement and buy-in, leveraging ongoing activities for scale-up impact, risk and vulnerability criteria (including security, social, and other considerations)
- Agreement on NTFP value chains of priority
- Identification of stakeholder engagement considerations during programme implementation
- Identification and agreement in principle on co-financing (government and from other technical and financial partners)
- Identification of land restoration best practices and implementation partners: including the role and importance of approaches including farmer assisted natural regeneration, agro-forestry approaches, community engagement to ensure sustainability, including through “social fencing”
- Identification of constraints/bottlenecks and needs of NTFP value chain actors (please see “Private Sector Engagement” note in Appendix A for further details).
- Identification of constraints/bottlenecks and potential for partnership with financial institutions
- Identification of capacity needs of NAGGW and other partner agencies (including national research institutes or specialized environmental/ecological observatories) on monitoring, coordinating, communicating and resource mobilization for the Great Green Wall Initiative and other

Table 3

Country	Country Mission Consultations			Location
	Bilateral meetings	Country Mission Dates	Stakeholder Consultation date	
Burkina Faso	1. Hommes et Terres 2. SOS Sahel 3. Tree Aid 4. NAGGW 5. NDA 6. Grenier du paysan	20 – 25 November, 2022	23 November, 2022	Ouagadougou
Chad	1. NDA 2. NAGGW 3. SG Ministere de l’ Environnement 4. Centre Nationale de Recherche developpement (CERD) 5. ECOBANK 6. BCC 7. Banque Agricole 8. World Bank 9. AFD 10. European Union 11. African Development Bank 12. Action Tchadienne pour la Promotion de	26 November – 2 December, 2022	2 December, 2022	’Njamena

	la Gomme Arabique (ATPGA)			
Djibouti	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ministry of Environment 2. Ministry of Agriculture 3. World Bank 4. CERD 5. Cooperative de Yoboki 6. ONG EVA 7. Association Sividdo 8. Association des femmes d'Atar 9. Association Dadal 10. Association Adim 11. ADSS 12. Private sector in aviculture, goat herding and NTFPs 13. Private sector in production and multiplication of Boswelila 	14 – 18 November, 2022	na	Djibouti City
Mali	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NAGGW, 2. Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MEADD), 3. Banque Nationale Développement Agricole (BNDA), 4. Banque Malienne de Solidarite (BMS), 5. Nyesigiso, 6. Labosem, 7. APECAM (Assemblée Permanente des Chambres d'Agriculture du Mali) 8. AMCFE (Malian Association for Conservation of the Fauna and Environment) 9. FENAFER (Federation Nationale des Associations des Femmes Rurales du Mali) 10. CMDT (Compagnie malienne pour le développement du textile) 11. Malian Association for Conservation of the Fauna and Environment (MACFE), 12. DONKO (NGO) 13. Department of Water and Forests, Ministry of Environment 	27 November – 2 December, 2022	01 December, 2022	Bamako

Mauritania	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NDA 2. NAGGW 3. Pan-African Agency of the Great Green Wall (PA-GGW) 4. Direction de la Protection de la Restauration des Especes et des Milieux (DIPREM) 5. Direction de la Planification, de la Coordination et des Statistiques (DPCS), MEDD 6. Toogga (private sector NTFP) 7. Cabinet Nouvelle Vision (research expert on SMEs and private sector coaching) 8. GiZ PCRNT project team 9. Toogga Sarl 	20 – 26 November, 2022	na	Nouakchott
Niger	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NDA, 2. NAGGW, 3. Haute Commissariat Initiative 3N, 4. RECA, 5. CNSEE, 6. WFP, 7. Banque Agricole (BAGRI), 8. FISAN, 9. Yarda, 10. PIMELAN, 11. Sahara Sahel Foods, 12. RESAD (Reseau 13. Direction Generale des eaux et Forets, 14. Direction Generale de l'economie verte, 15. BNEE, 16. Secteur prive (miel, balanites, moringa), 17. GEF focal point, 18. Ministry of Water Resources, ICRAF, 19. CARE, 20. World Vision, 21. World Bank 22. Sahara Sahel Foods 	19 – 29 October 2022	27 October, 2022	Niamey
Nigeria	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NAGGW, 2. National Climate Change Council, 3. Access Bank, 4. Bank of Agriculture, Nigeria, 5. Department of Forestry (MoE), 6. Department of Climate Change (MoE), 	17 – 21 October, 2022	19 October, 2022	Abuja

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Department of Agricultural Land and Climate Change Management Services, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development 8. Innovations for Poverty Action 9. Plant a Tree Today Initiative 10. AFNALPA 11. World Bank ACREsAL project (TTL and PMU team) 12. Raw Materials Research and 13. Development Council, Dignity Finance and Investment (Microfinance) 14. Association of Flower Nurseries and Landscaping, Abuja 15. PIND Foundation 			
Senegal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NDA 2. NAGGW 3. Colleges des femmes (CNCR) 4. RIPOSTES project team 5. DyTAES 6. Attijari Bank 7. CBAO 8. DINFEL 9. Banque Agricole 16. Enda PRONAT 17. AFAO 18. Apix 19. World Vision 20. WeForest 21. AVSF 22. ISRA 23. UNDP 24. WFP 25. Centre de Suivi Ecologique (CSE) 26. Ministere Agriculture et elevage 27. Ministere Collectivites Territoriales 28. ISRA/PPZS 29. IUCN 30. UNISS 31. Hommes et Terres 32. Aaro-Shrub Alliance (ASA) 33. Trees for the Future 34. The Global Green Growth Initiative (GGGI) 35. Baobab des saveurs 36. Lionceau 37. Soreetul 	10-19 October 2022	13 October, 2022	Dakar

Consultations at the Local Level

Local level consultations were held in Senegal from 1-6 February 2023 with communities to: (i) ascertain community interest in the programme design (and related feedback); (ii) conduct ground verification of the baseline situation/conditions in the proposed programme areas; (iii) determine considerations to be made for gender, youth, ethnic minorities, and vulnerable persons; and (iv) ensure community understanding of associated environmental and social risks, preferred method of grievance redress, etc. The local consultation process is crucial for stakeholder engagement and safeguarding the programme, as it helps ensure that communities understand the programme, including associated risks, and are interested in participating. It also provides a feedback loop to the programme design and, later, during implementation. A summary of the consultations held from 1-6 February along with the related attendance sheets are provided in Appendix B.



*Consultations in Mbane with the Pomo Association
(Richard Toll) on 2 February.*

Consultations lasted between 1-2 hours, depending on the community, and involved breaking up into smaller groups for the purpose of fruitful discussion and exchange (when applicable). Representatives of the Peul people (one of the groups recognized in the ESMF Appendix 8) were also consulted. The places visited included:

- (i) **Parc National de la Langue to Barbarie, Grandiole** (with approximately 7 participants, of which 4 female);
- (ii) **Mbane, Pomo Association, Richard Toll** (with approximately 41 participants, of which 25 female);
- (iii) **Widou Village, Tessekere Forage** (with approximately 53 participants, of which 33 female);
- (iv) **Commune Mboula, Reserve Naturelle Communautaire de Koyli Alpha** (with approximately 18 participants, of which 7 female); and
- (v) **Commune Matam, Lougre Thiouly** (with approximately 58 participants, of which 52 female).



Consultations in Parc de la Langue de Barbarie on 1 February 2023

Outside of triangulation and ground-verification of baseline data and information used for programme design and safeguards, the major considerations and takeaways from the community consultations are as follows:

- **Tweaks to the programme design:** Feedback from communities provided further insight into how we might tailor Component 2 activities (NTFP value chains) to better support women involved, and this is now integrated in the design of the Component 2 activities. The feedback also highlighted opportunities for age-appropriate youth involvement. Under Component 1, it is suggested that the participatory land management planning involves support on land tenure and guidance on water resources management, in the absence of irrigation/pump interventions.
- **Synergies for implementation:** Community consultations identified which existing entities and groups could be useful for implementation/dissemination of information (for example, the GIE Ecogardes team met in Grandiole), and where capacity building may be needed. They also highlighted opportunities for building on existing land management plans (in relation to Component 1 activities), in areas where these plans were already existing/underway.
- **Capacity building support:** Existing management committees require capacity building in terms of (i) sustainability of the committees themselves – e.g. how to generate funds to finance their activities; (ii) updating land management plans; and (iii) formalizing, where relevant, tenure rights to support their ability to manage the lands. NTFP groups would like support on value-addition techniques (e.g. processing NTFPs into oils, soaps, powders, juices, etc.).
- **Concerns:** In some areas (e.g. Mbane, Richard Toll), soil salinization prompted people – particularly women – to move away from agriculture and gardening. Decreased water availability was an issue in almost every community visited, relating also to the shifting timing and intensity of the rains. In some areas, invasive species like Typha (e.g. reeds) were taking over nearby water sources (rivers, ponds, lakes). Many communities asked for support to provide fences for areas

not meant for pasture, though the programme is focused on social fencing rather than physical fencing. Likewise, every community expressed a need for water pumps to address irrigation issues. Given that the programme will not cover irrigation activities, the ESMF proposes ways for land restoration under Component 1 to incorporate training on water management practices for arid regions (including localized rainwater harvesting options).



Consultations (from left to right) in: Widou Village, Tessekere Forage (Louga); Commune Mboula, Reserve Naturelle Communautaire de Koyli Alpha (Louga); and Commune Matam, Lougre Thiouly

Complementarities: Supporting Consultations led by FAO's Land Tenure Team

The SURAGGWA programme focuses on improving the quality of highly and moderately degraded lands, which necessitates an understanding of land tenure and usage rights in the programme areas. The programme is designed to build on the principles of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries, and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT), and, therefore, consultations held by FAO's Land Tenure Team to support the recognition of land use rights and tenure rights within participating SURAGGWA countries are complementary to the programme. To this avail, effort in both Niger and Chad resulted in positive steps. Specifically:

- **Chad:** On 16 and 17 May 2023, FAO and OXFAM-Chad organized a 2-day forum for 150 civil society participants to prepare their recommendations for the national land policy under preparation in Chad.³ The forum brought together civil society actors from the 23 provinces of the country, including peasants and pastoralist organizations, women and youth representatives as well as paralegal associations. The workshop was part of the participatory process of preparing the land policy in Chad, and was the culmination of a series of consultation workshops undertaken in the three different agro-ecological zones of Chad. The Minister in charge of land affairs opened the forum by giving emphasis to the fact that more than 80 percent of the conflicts that end at the court level in Chad relate to land and that the "Land policy is more than urgent for the country to find solutions to these pressing challenges". The forum allowed the participants to discuss a stock-taking report on the land tenure situation in the country prepared by a team of experts after

³ FAO. 2023. *FAO supports a Civil Society Forum as part of the Participatory Process of Preparing a National Land Policy in Chad*. URL: <https://www.fao.org/index.php?id=118188>

a broad consultation and data collection process aiming at identifying the main themes for the land policy in Chad. The group work during the forum was organized around the following themes: 1) legislative and regulatory framework of land administration; 2) urban land; 3) rural land; and 4) land use planning. The results and recommendations of the forum will be presented to the multi-stakeholder committee in charge of preparing the land policy and the revision of the land code. The preparation of the land policy is a major step in the inclusive land reform process, initiated in 2018 with the review of the draft land code. This process is inspired by the [Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests \(VGGT\)](#) and the Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa.

- **Niger:** The preparation of the Land Policy has been a noteworthy participatory process led by a national multi-stakeholder committee, established in 2017. This preparation process included the organization of the "*États généraux du foncier*", a high-level forum that took stock of the land tenure situation in Niger. It also included mobilization and capacity building of more than 3000 national and local stakeholders who engaged in the process across the country and is now ready to support the implementation of the new promising land policy inspired by the VGGT principles and recommendations. FAO's Land Tenure Team presented the following videos on the process leading to the adoption of the Land policy in Niger on 9 September 2021:
 - Un processus participatif de préparation de la politique foncière au Niger: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4fS3cePiUI&t=5s>
 - A participatory process of preparing a land policy in Niger: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZACu_G65n8&t=40s
 - A new land policy for an inclusive land governance in Niger (social media version): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WmBGWYeby-Q>

Stakeholder engagement plan during the programme implementation

Consultation at all levels during implementation is good practice to ensure that potential negative impacts and concerns are adequately addressed during programme implementation. For the SURAGGWA programme, stakeholder engagement throughout the programme's life cycle is particularly important given that tenure and/or access to land and resources may be temporarily affected. This temporary restriction, if left unaddressed, may result in increased local conflict over resources. Additionally, without meaningful consultation and engagement, women and marginalized groups may otherwise be excluded as resources become more valuable throughout the programme lifespan. The SEP, therefore, serves an important role in risk mitigation.

Stakeholders will be engaged in programme implementation throughout its entire duration. The programme's gender-specific and safeguards-specific consultations and activities are detailed in the Gender Action Plan (GAP) and the Environment and Social Safeguards Framework (ESMF). Additionally, stakeholder consultations will include awareness raising for differentiated stakeholders (e.g. women, men, youth, etc.) to understand differentiated Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH)-related risks and mitigation measures.

Consultations will be held as follows:

1. **Yearly consultations with stakeholders**, led by the National Programme Coordinator and M&E Officer and with participation from the National Safeguards Specialist, at the time of the preparation of the Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWPB) – i.e., at the beginning of each programme Fiscal Year (FY). In essence, stakeholder engagement will be ensured under the aegis of AWPB review and preparation, supported by the outcomes of local consultations. Before becoming a final AWPB, all activities will be discussed, reviewed, and validated.

The AWPB will be presented by the CIU and reviewed by all stakeholders, including at the national, Governorate, and community levels. During these stakeholder engagement consultations, the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) – including relevant ESMPs prepared for sub-activities and the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) - and the Gender Action Plan (GAP) - will be shared with stakeholders and explained by the National Safeguards Specialist.

2. **Iterative consultations throughout the year, based on sub-project sites, during the quarterly field monitoring missions.** These consultations will be led by the M&E Specialist and the National Safeguards Specialist, with the support of (where needed) the Land Tenure Specialist and/or the Regional Safeguards Specialist. These consultations would occur during site visits, as needed, of the quarterly field monitoring missions, depending on the sub-project site and timeline. The National Safeguards Specialist will be responsible for communicating results of these stakeholder engagement activities back to programme-affected groups and broader stakeholder groups using various methods of communication (e.g. newsletters/bulletins, SMS messages, social and environmental assessment reports, sharing of the monitoring reports where applicable).

As part of the programme inception phase, and in preparation of the programme inception workshop, a stakeholder communication strategy, addressing the various stakeholders involved in the oversight, implementation or otherwise in the programme from the local-level to the national-level, will be prepared and put in place to address the following:

- a. Location of programme interventions; general information on programme objectives and programme-related risks and impacts; precautionary mitigation measures; grievance redress processes; etc.;
- b. Appropriate and effective types of communication methods to reach the target groups, including differentiated needs of vulnerable groups and preferred timing of communications and interventions;
- c. Emergency-communications procedures to inform the public in the instance of a programme-related emergency;
- d. Programme and emergency contact information.

The strategy will draw upon lessons learned from implementation partners, previous/concurrent programmes and projects, and will build upon existing engagement modalities from the Action Against

Desertification, and other related community engagement efforts, depending on country-context. The overall guiding principles for effective communications and outreach include:

- e. **Clarity:** the objective of communication and the audience must be clear.
- f. **Accessibility:** communication must be accessible with effective channels identified to make information available to all, particularly historically underserved and vulnerable groups.
- g. **Inclusivity:** the views of women and other relevant (and particularly vulnerable) groups (e.g. minorities, elderly, youth, other marginalized groups) will be taken into account and their participation will be facilitated by targeted communications, outreach, and feedback solicitation.
- h. **Actionability:** communication must indicate how audiences can move toward action or incite action directly; this may include designing a behavior change campaign and/or encouraging action during a health emergency.
- i. **Credibility:** communications must come from trustworthy sources, following the local standards for trusted forms of communication, establishing technical accuracy, transparency, coordination with partners, and communicating as one consistent message from an agreed-upon entity.
- j. **Relevance:** communications should be tailored to include only the most relevant content, specific to the audience. This requires knowing the audience, listening to the audience, tailoring the message to the audience, and then motivating the audience to take part in and provide feedback.
- k. **Timeliness:** communications must be timely, which means communicating what is known at the right time (rather than leaving stakeholders to speculate) and keeping a continuum of conversation.
- l. **Comprehensibility:** wherever possible, simple language is preferred, relating the message to the stakeholder's context using visual and local/familiar language.
- m. **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning:** communications must be iterative in nature and develop through a feedback loop provided by regular monitoring, evaluation, and incorporation of lessons-learned into future iterations.
- n. **Compatibility of Partner Communications:** ensure adequate exploration of the various communication functions and units of the implementing partners, including changes and how such functions would be relevant to the proposed programme.

A Note on Beneficiary Selection Approach: SURAGGWA uses a strategic approach for beneficiary selection that prioritizes communities most vulnerable to land degradation, those dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods, and groups with a demonstrated commitment to sustainable land management. The selection process is focussed on engaging smallholder farmers, pastoralists, and local cooperatives who are directly affected by desertification and have the potential to contribute to long-term forest restoration. Additionally, preference is given to communities that have experience with agroforestry, soil and water conservation, or traditional land stewardship practices, as their involvement can enhance programme success. Gender and social inclusion is also be key criteria, ensuring that women, youth, and marginalized groups have equitable access to programme benefits and decision-making roles. Furthermore, engagement with local authorities, customary landowners, and community-based organizations will help ensure that beneficiaries have secure land tenure, reducing the risk of disputes

and ensuring sustained participation. By prioritizing beneficiaries who align with ecological and social sustainability goals, the programme can maximize its environmental impact and long-term viability.

National-level consultations

Formal stakeholder consultation will take place at the beginning of each Fiscal Year (FY), under the aegis of the reviews of the AWPB under the National Steering Committee. These will be held during the last field mission prior to the annual AWPB. Participants will also include relevant Ministries, Governorates, and other concerned stakeholders. Details of the AWPB consultations for the FY are below:

FY1: At the beginning of the first FY, the AWPB will be produced by the CIU in consultation with relevant Ministries, implementing partners and other concerned stakeholders. At this time, the ESMF will be explained and discussed; the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) will also be presented and explained.

FY2-10: From year two of the programme, the AWPB will be composed of the previous year's complete report and a plan from the coming year. At the beginning of FY2, the AWPB will be presented by the CIU and reviewed by all stakeholders, including relevant Ministries, agencies, implementing partners, and other concerned stakeholders. The purpose of these AWPB consultations is to review the work undertaken in the previous FY, assess if activities are on track, validate results, and identify, if necessary, any modifications that need to be made. Stakeholder feedback for this is essential – community engagement feeds into this process. The new AWPB will then be prepared. The GRM and any Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs) will be presented and explained again (FY2) and validated at each consultation throughout FY 2-10.

At mid-term and terminal (depending on country phasing): At the beginning of FY at mid-term and FY at terminal, in addition to the regular annual report and AWPB preparation/feedback/review, FY at mid-term and FY at terminal will be of particular importance for the programme and for communities that will be called in to participate in the Mid-Term and Terminal Review Reports.

Community-level consultations

The CIU Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) focal person, together with the safeguards and gender specialist will hold consultations in target areas to support planning and monitor the execution of activities, as part of their field monitoring activities. In addition, these consultations will provide a space to discuss all programme activities. Importantly, the ESMF, GRM and GAP will be presented and explained (FY1). The GRM and any ESMPs will be validated at each consultation during FY 2-10. Therefore, community consultations will feed into the review and preparation of the AWPBs.

FY1: At the beginning of the first FY, the AWPB will be produced by the PMU together with the relevant communities and other concerned stakeholders. At this time, the ESMF, GAP and the

GRM will also be presented and explained. Communities will also be informed of the process and consultations will feed into the preparation of AWPBs.

FY2 -FY10: From year two of the programme the AWPB will be composed of the previous year's complete report and the plan from the coming year. At the beginning of FY2, the AWPB will be presented by the CIU and reviewed by all stakeholders, including communities. The purpose of these AWPB consultations is to review the work undertaken in the previous FY, assess if activities are on track, validate results, and identify, if necessary, any modifications that need to be made. Stakeholder feedback for this is essential – community engagement feeds into this. The new AWPB will then be prepared. The GRM will be presented and explained again (FY2) and validated at each consultation during FY 2-10.

At mid-term and terminal (depending on country phasing): At the beginning of FY at mid-term and FY at terminal, in addition to the regular annual report and AWPB preparation/feedback/review, FY at mid-term and FY at terminal will be of particular importance for the programme and for communities that will be called in to participate in the Mid-Term and Terminal Review reviews.

A tentative list of engagement activities is indicated in Table 2, with the understanding that these will be further refined and updated as part of the programme inception preparations and validated during the programme inception workshop. Emphasis is given to consultations to support the selection and prioritization of districts, communities, and beneficiaries. Several iterative discussions will be held with government officials; local leaders at the Governorate, District, and Community levels; private sector entities and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).

Table 4- Tentative List of Stakeholder Engagement Activities

Programme stage	Targeted stakeholders	Topics of engagement	Methods	Location and frequency	Responsible unit
Inception and implementation	National Steering Committee		Annual AWPB/Steering Committee meetings	Annual	CIU
Implementation	MEL Working Group	Feedback from quarterly activity monitoring from CIU, in relation to ESMF/GRM and identification of ES/gender issues to be escalated for management action	Working Group meetings	Bi-monthly	PCU

Programme stage	Targeted stakeholders	Topics of engagement	Methods	Location and frequency	Responsible unit
Inception and Implementation	Local leaders Communities CSOs Private sector	Identification of land restoration sites Presentation of programme sub-activities and beneficiary identification	Focus groups and key informant interviews; Information dissemination via phone, online, radio, flyers	Focus groups and interviews to be held in-person at decentralized and community-level; Additional outreach via web/phone/ etc.	FAO/CIU, implementing partners
Implementation	Local leaders; Communities; Implementation partners; Government	GRM and E&S considerations	Sensitization trainings	In person and/or online; Mobile, web, and paper-based posting of information	FAO/CIU
Implementation	Local leaders; communities;	Ongoing reporting for programme activity progress and community satisfaction	Focus groups & key informant interviews; KoboToolBox surveys (or in-person during quarterly activity monitoring)	In person with additional outreach KoboToolBox/paper-based; Quarterly activity monitoring	FAO/CIU, and implementing partners

With these considerations in mind, the following engagement methods are tentatively proposed (please see Table 5 below)

Table 5 - Engagement approach and examples of appropriate application

Engagement Approach	Appropriate Application (Examples)
Technological This includes correspondence via phone and/or email; a project website; social media sites; printed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish hotline for programme grievances, concerns, and information, OR utilize an existing hotline (ensuring that all programme-specific grievances are captured in the programme's grievance log); Distribute information to Government officials, NGOs, Local Government, and organisations/agencies; Invite stakeholders to meetings and follow-up; Present programme information and progress updates; Disclose the ESMF, ESMP, and other relevant programme documentation;

information on programme leaflets or signage; through ESMF and other relevant questions integrated in KoboToolBox	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share information door-to-door on programme activities; programme investment locations; programme disclosure; educational materials on E&S risks/impacts; • Highlight site-specific programme information
Face-to-Face This includes direct communication with affected populations, focus group meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share information on the timing of interventions; • Reach consensus on programme area selection; • Present programme information to a group of stakeholders and record feedback; • Hear stakeholders' views on targeted baseline information; • Build relationships with the communities.
Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) Box	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish site specific box for programme grievances, concerns. • Receive written complaints, suggestions, or feedback into GRM boxes. • Involve community committee into opening and solving complaints • List and document the types of GRM and complaints

The strategy will include a timeline concerning the implementation of communications activities as well as the expected turn-around time for responses to requests for information, among others. The transparency of this timeline will be important for programme accountability and the management of expectations. Delays should be reflected in an updated timeline that is easily available for all.

Disclosure

According to GCF and FAO policies on access to information, all safeguard instruments under this programme, including the ESMF and GAP must be disclosed online in the English and local language at least 30 days prior to GCF Board meeting and approval of the programme. Access to the documents must be possible for any locals (i.e. it must be disclosed locally in an accessible place) in a form and language understandable to key stakeholders. Such disclosure of relevant programme information helps stakeholders effectively participate. FAO is committed to disclosing information in a timely manner and in a way that is accessible and culturally appropriate, placing due attention to the specific needs of community groups which may be affected by programme implementation (e.g., literacy, gender, differences in language or accessibility of technical information or connectivity).

For moderate risk programmes like this one, FAO releases the applicable information as early as possible, and no later than 30 days prior to programme approval. The 30-day period commences only when all relevant information requested from the programme has been provided and is available to the public. FAO undertakes disclosure for all moderate risk programmes and projects, using a disclosure portal to publicly disclose all programme and project documentation related to environmental and social safeguards (e.g., ESMF, GAP, Indigenous Peoples Plans, and other relevant documents, as applicable). The website is: www.fao.org/environmental-social-standards/disclosure-portal/en/.

To ensure the widest dissemination and disclosure of programme information, including any details related to applicable environmental and social safeguards, local and accessible disclosure tools including audiovisual materials (e.g., flyers, brochures, community radio broadcasts) will be utilized in addition to the standard portal disclosure tool. Furthermore, particular attention will be paid to farmers, indigenous peoples, illiterate or technological illiterate people, people with hearing or visual disabilities, those with limited or no access to internet and other groups with special needs. The dissemination of information among these groups will be carried out with the programme counterparts and relevant local actors.

In relation to each Category B sub-activity to be funded under the Programme, FAO shall disclose fit-for-purpose environmental and social impact assessment, the Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP), and as appropriate any other associated information required to be disclosed in accordance with the GCF Information Disclosure Policy (Programme Disclosure Package). FAO shall disclose the sub-activity safeguards information at least 30 calendar days prior to commencing execution of any sub-activities that have been categorized as Category B, in English and in the local language (if not English), on its website and in locations convenient to affected peoples and provide the Programme Disclosure Package to the GCF Secretariat for further distribution to the Board and Active Observers and for posting on the GCF website. Within 180 days of the GCF Board approval of the Programme, FAO and the GCF Secretariat shall agree on a process to enable communication of any comments to FAO, including from the GCF Board members and Active Observers, on Category B sub-activities relating to the Programme Disclosure Package, and to take account of such comments in the finalization of such documents.

The above ESMF and the accompanying GAP will be disclosed in English and local national (on the websites of FAO, MoEnv, and GCF. Both documents will also be disclosed at the decentralized level in local language, prior to programme implementation.

Grievance Redress Mechanism

The grievance redress mechanism (GRM) is an integral programme management element that intends to seek feedback from beneficiaries and resolve of complaints on programme activities and performance. The mechanism for SURAGGWA depends on the country of implementation, as some countries will implement directly and others will involve FAO as the executing entity, however the process of grievance elevation and resolution is the same. Regardless of the EE, the GRM is designed to meet FAO and GCF requirements and, most importantly, draws upon existing, community-specific grievance redress mechanisms preferred by the local beneficiaries. The processes detailed below are meant to guide the development of each in-country GRM under the SURAGGWA programme.

FAO's Approach to the GRM: FAO is committed to ensuring that its programs are implemented in accordance with the Organization's environmental and social obligations. In order to better achieve these goals, and to ensure that beneficiaries of FAO programs have access to an effective and timely mechanism to address their concerns about non-compliance with these obligations, the Organization, in order to supplement measures for receiving, reviewing and acting as appropriate on these concerns at the program management level, has entrusted the Office of the Inspector-General with the mandate to independently review the complaints that cannot be resolved at that level.

FAO will facilitate the resolution of concerns of beneficiaries of FAO programs regarding alleged or potential violations of FAO's social and environmental commitments. For this purpose, concerns may be

communicated in accordance with the eligibility criteria of the Guidelines for Compliance Reviews Following Complaints Related to the Organization's Environmental and Social Standards^[1], which applies to all FAO programmes and projects.

Concerns must be addressed at the closest appropriate level, i.e. at the programme management/technical level, and if necessary at the Regional Office level. If a concern or grievance cannot be resolved through consultations and measures at the programme management level, a complaint requesting a Compliance Review may be filed with the Office of the Inspector-General (OIG) in accordance with the Guidelines. Programme managers will have the responsibility to address concerns brought to the attention of the focal point.

The principles to be followed during the complaint resolution process include: impartiality, respect for human rights, including those pertaining to indigenous peoples/ethnic minorities/vulnerable persons, compliance of national norms, and coherence with the norms, equality, transparency, honesty, and mutual respect.

Programme-Level GRM:

Consultations during programme preparation highlighted that potential programme-affected peoples, including ethnic minorities, would prefer to share the same Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM). Consultations also highlighted the preference for use of a hotline on which grievances could be made. With these recommendations in mind, principles for the programme-level GRM were designed. It is understood that the GRM may be amended to meet the needs of specific ethnic/religious minorities as the programme sites are determined in each country.

The programme will establish one or more grievance mechanisms at the field level (in each country) to file complaints, sensitive to the location wherein the programme is being implemented. Both (i) contact information and (ii) information on the process one must follow to file a complaint will be disclosed in all meetings, workshops, and other related events throughout the life of the programme in local languages and with images in areas of high illiteracy. It is also expected that all awareness raising material for distribution will include clear information regarding the process for filing grievances and key contacts. The programme will be responsible for documenting and reporting, as part of the safeguards' performance monitoring, on any grievances received and how they were addressed. All GRMs associated with SURAGGWA will cover the scope of the FAO GRM template included at the end of this document.

The Grievance Redress Mechanism for this programme includes the following steps:

- Following on preferences indicated in community consultations and building on existing GRMs, **minor grievances will begin processing at the local level**, and will sought to be resolved through traditional means of community discussion with the concerned parties and respected village elder(s). In instances where an ethnic minority is reporting a grievance and: (i) one respected village elder is chosen to resolve the grievance, then that elder must also be a member of the ethnic minority community (or the complainant can agree to have a non-minority elder as the person to resolve the conflict); or (ii) two or more village elders are chosen to resolve the grievance, then there must be at least 50% of minority representation amongst those elders. Even

^[1] Available online at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4439e.pdf>

at the local level, the grievances must be recorded in a logbook by the village elder or other individual responsible at local-level for grievance redress. The purpose of this is to ensure that grievances are being captured and responded to. The logbook will be made available, as needed, to the National Safeguards Specialist for the purposes of reporting on the functionality of the GRM.

- In instances whereby the claimant would prefer to have the grievance addressed directly through FAO, but does not have the ability to file a claim personally, the concerned person(s) will express the grievance (either orally or in writing) to the local implementation unit (i.e. FAO or contracted community organization). **The programme staff at local level who receives the complaint will be responsible for presenting/filing those complaints to the National Social Safeguards & Gender Specialist based in the country.** In instances where the claimant has the means to directly file a claim, they have the right to do so, presenting it directly to the National Social Safeguards & Gender Specialist based in the country, their contact details being specified in the GRM. The process of filing a complaint will duly consider confidentiality and anonymity (if requested by the complainant) as well as any existing traditional or ethnic dispute resolution mechanisms and it will not interfere with the community's self-governance system. Contact information will also be given for processing a grievance directly to the National Social Safeguards & Gender Specialist by phone.
- After the complainant files a complaint through one of the channels of the localized grievance mechanism, this complaint will be registered by the National Social Safeguards & Gender Specialist and screened for eligibility. If eligible, the complaint will be sent to the Regional Environmental & Social Safeguards Specialist in the Programme Coordination Unit (PCU) to track/capture the complaint in the programme's overall complaints log book. The confidentiality of the complaint must be preserved during the process.
- Eligible grievances will be addressed by the Country Implementation Unit (CIU) or the applicable institution, based on the information provided by the National Social Safeguards & Gender Specialist and/or the Regional Environmental & Social Safeguards Specialist. The Regional Environmental & Social Safeguards Specialist and National Social Safeguards & Gender Specialist in the related country will be responsible for recording the grievance and how it has been addressed, if a resolution was agreed.
- If the situation is too complex, or the complainer does not accept the resolution, the grievance must be sent to a higher level, until a solution or acceptance is reached.
- For every grievance received, a written proof will be sent within ten (10) working days; afterwards, a resolution proposal will be made within thirty (30) working days.
- In compliance with the resolution, the person in charge of dealing with the complaint, may interact with the complainant, or may call for interviews and meetings, to better understand the reasons.
- All grievances received, its response and resolutions, must be duly registered. Stored data, including documents and material related to SEA allegations, should only be accessible to authorized persons and must be stored safely to prevent accidental disclosure. Options for secure

data storage include locked filing cabinets; digital storage on a secure server, computer or laptop; and official cloud storage.

- All grievances of misconduct (such as allegations of fraud or other corrupt practices, harassment or sexual exploitation and abuse) by FAO programme or country office employees, and/or by others as a result of the programme activities, are to be submitted directly to the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) by: (i) the complainant via the OIG hotline; or (ii) if someone from the office happens to find out about a case (including the PSEA focal point), that person will contact OIG immediately. OIG is responsible for investigating allegations of misconduct.⁴ In case of a sexual exploitation and abuse grievance, OIG is responsible for referring the survivor to relevant services (medical, psychological, social, legal, etc.). SEA grievances are handled in a prompt and strictly confidential manner.
 - **Additional note on SEAH-related grievance management and GBV referral pathways:** FAO ensures that the programme personnel and the EEs will be trained on prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment to achieve maximum prevention of SEAH and GBV. Sensitization campaigns will be carried out to support and catalyze community-driven support measures against SEAH. The programme's Grievance Redress Mechanism will be reinforced to deal effectively with SEAH and GBV incidents (including the development of a procedure to accompany the GRM on SEAH to ensure survivor-centered mechanisms that are gender-responsive and ensure confidentiality, and sensitive and ethical complaint and grievance handling). Referral pathways for GBV will be established and professionals trained for their operationalization, FAO E&S and Gender specialist in monitoring the process. All SEAH and GBV activities will be inclusive, survivor-centred, and gender-responsive. In case of SEAH/ GBV incidents, the services for survivors will be carefully considered during the implementation.

Elevation Process:

National Social Safeguards & Gender Specialist (CIU level). The grievance could come in writing or orally (including over the phone) to the National Social Safeguards & Gender Specialist within the CIU. At this level, received grievances will be registered and screened for eligibility in the national grievance log. Screened grievances will then be sent to the Regional Environmental & Social Safeguards Specialist in the PMU, accompanied by an explanation of how the grievance was (attempted to be) resolved. In case the complainant does not accept the proposed resolution, they are informed of their right to escalate their grievance to the next level in the GRM. The complainant will be kept up to date on the progress throughout the resolution process.

Regional Environmental & Social Safeguards Specialist (PMU level). The grievance should come in writing from the National Social Safeguards & Gender Specialist within the CIU to the Regional Environmental & Social Safeguards Specialist in the PMU directly. The Regional Environmental & Social Safeguards Specialist will provide final confirmation of eligibility and proceed to address and resolve the grievance, if not already addressed and resolved at the country level. At the PMU level, a grievance log is maintained for

⁴ Ensure to inform project stakeholders that to report possible fraud and unacceptable behaviour including sexual exploitation and abuse, they can contact OIG by confidential hotline (online form & by phone): fao.ethicspoint.com, or by e-mail: Investigations-hotline@fao.org

the overall programme. In case the complainant does not accept the proposed resolution, they are informed of their right to escalate their grievance to the next level in the GRM.

Office of the Inspector General (OIG). If the grievance has not been solved and could not be solved within the CIU or the PMU, then the grievance must be elevated by the Regional Environmental & Social Safeguards Specialist (PMU level) to the OIG. On very specific situations or complex problems (e.g. SEAH), the assistance of the FAO Inspector General would be required, and those cases will be addressed following the procedures of OIG to solve the problem.

Resolution Process:

When there is agreement by the individual or group that brought the grievance to the resolution, then minutes will be drafted and signed by the parties involved. If a person is illiterate, appropriate alternatives must be identified. After implementation, new minutes will be signed stating that the grievance has been resolved satisfactorily.

RECIPIENT OF GREIVANCE	ACTIONS REQUIRED
National Social Safeguards & Gender Specialist (Country Implementation Unit)	Must register the complaint and send eligible complaints to the Regional Environmental & Social Safeguards Specialist in the PCU within 2 working days.
Regional Environmental & Social Safeguards Specialist (Programme Coordination Unit)	Must respond within 5 working days of receipt.
Office of the Inspector General	<p>Contact FAO's Independent Office of the Inspector General:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To report non-compliance with FAO's environmental and social management guidelines in case your grievance could not be resolved through the previously mentioned channels; • To report non-compliance with FAO's environmental and social management guidelines in case you have a good reason for not approaching the programme management (e.g., fears about your safety); • To report possible fraud and other corrupt practices, as well as other misconduct such as sexual exploitation and abuse. <p>By confidential hotline (online form & by phone): fao.ethicspoint.com</p> <p>By e-mail: investigations-hotline@fao.org</p>

Anyone, including members of ethnic group communities can make a complaint or appeal on any aspect of the programme's design and implementation. A complaint and grievance feedback form, as well as a pamphlet explaining the mechanism, will be developed under the programme in each country and

distributed in local languages to relevant ethnic/minority group communities for their use. Ethnic group community members will be clearly informed of the complaint and appeal channels (as described above) in community meetings and other forms of communication that are convenient to them. Information and communications technology and media tools should be used to disseminate information. All grievances, complaints, opinions, and suggestions which are provided by concerned people and/or organizations should be well documented.

To be practical and cost-effective, efforts should be made to resolve grievances at the lowest possible level; however, grievances may be brought straight to FAO's Office of the Inspector General and/or GCF if the complainant feels they may be subject to retaliation if they went to the local and national implementing partners. If the implementing partner and CIU does not adequately respond to the grievance, the escalation procedure outlined in the table above will be followed.

GCF Independent Redress Mechanism

The GCF has also established an Independent Redress Mechanism (IRM) under its decision GCF/B.16/20. The IRM has two main functions - those related to the reconsideration of funding decisions and those related to complaints from persons adversely affected by projects. It is guided by the principles of fairness, independence, transparency and responsiveness. The IRM contains modalities relevant for FAO as the AE as well as for the GCF. For contact details and methods of submitting complaints, please visit: <https://irm.greenclimate.fund/case-register/file-complaint>. A complaint with the IRM can be filed by:

- Sending it by mail or [email](#);
- Sending a voice or video recording;
- Filling out the online [complaints form](#).

A complaint can be filed in English, or in the local language of the complainant. Where possible, a translation should be provided in English. Otherwise, the IRM will attempt to have the complaint translated and respond in the language of the complainant.

The IRM lead receives the complaint and checks its eligibility. If found eligible, the lead reviews the situation and makes recommendation to FAO and national implementation agencies to take actions to bring the programme into compliance with policies and procedures of the GCF including social and environmental safeguards. The IRM may also recommend remedial plans to be implemented by the GCF, either itself or acting through its secretariat in conjunction with FAO. The IRM also includes the option to recommend the provision of financial redress to the complainants.

Complaints or grievances are not only an indicator of Programme activities insufficiently screened, but also provide a valuable source of feedback and information that can help to improve Programme delivery. All SURAGGWA programme stakeholders should therefore be actively encouraged to use the grievance mechanism. In addition to the complaints, all general requests for information should also be systematically recorded and answered. It is recommended the PMU and FAO team keep a log of such requests and periodically upload the provided responses to the related programme website.

Monitoring and reporting

The stakeholder engagement plan will be monitored by the M&E specialist and safeguards specialist in the CIU, with the Regional E&S Safeguards Specialist holding final responsibility for its effective implementation. The process and reporting mechanisms under the monitoring and evaluation system will be followed for all aspects of the SURAGGWA programme, including the monitoring and evaluation related to safeguards documents like the SEP, ESMF/ESMPs, Gender Action Plan (GAP), etc. Specific monitoring indicators/etc. for safeguards documents (including the SEP) are integrated into the overall M&E of the programme. The M&E specialist will report against these metrics during the planned quarterly field missions and when engaging with beneficiaries. This can be done through visual checks of the grievance logs, and any other mechanisms detailed in the ESMF (or subsequent ESMPs) following programme inception and during programme implementation.

The reporting of the stakeholder engagement plan will be part of the AWPB, and indicators from the ESMF will be integrated as part of the SURAGGWA MEL System and discussed during the MEL working group sessions.

FAO Grievance Redress Mechanism template

[The below is a suggested template for the GRM, to be adjusted and translated in local languages as per programme needs.]

Text in grey between brackets are annotations for filling in the GRM. It should be adapted/removed.]

Part A (for external distribution/ disclosure)

1. Main contact details

Do you have a grievance or suggestion about the project [TITLE]?

You can use any of the below channels free of charge to contact us. Your grievance will be handled confidentially by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

[The GRM must include multiple channels that are appropriate to the programme/project context, the below are some suggestions. The FAOR/Budget Holder is advised to revise and add as appropriate. If information on the programme/project was disclosed (requirement for moderate and high-risk programmes/projects), include the link to FAO's disclosure portal here.]

Phone:	[include as relevant]
--------	-----------------------

Email:	[include as relevant]
WhatsApp (including voice messages):	[include as relevant]
Suggestion box address:	[include as relevant]
Fax:	[include as relevant]

2. Purpose of GRM and guiding principles

This is the Grievance Mechanism for the office [X]/programme/project [TITLE], implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and [ORGANIZATION] between [DATE] and [DATE] at field level to file grievances related to the programme. Contact information and information on the process to file a grievance will be disclosed in all meetings, workshops, and other related events throughout the duration of the programme. In addition, it is expected that all communication and awareness raising material to be distributed will include the necessary information regarding the contacts and the process for filing grievances.

The programme/FAO will also be responsible for documenting and reporting as part of the safeguards performance monitoring on any grievances received and how they were addressed.

FAO is committed to ensuring that its projects and programmes are implemented in accordance with the Organization's environmental and social obligations. Concerns of non-compliance must be addressed at the closest appropriate level, i.e., at the programme management/technical level, and if necessary, at the FAO Country Office or Regional Office level. If a concern or grievance cannot be resolved through consultations and measures at the programme management/technical level, a grievance requesting a Compliance Review may be filed with the FAO Office of the Inspector General in accordance with the Guidelines for Compliance Reviews Following Grievances Related to the Organization's Environmental and Social Standards. Programme Managers will have the responsibility to address concerns brought to the attention of the officially designated programme grievance focal point.

The **principles** to be followed during the grievance resolution process include confidentiality, impartiality, respect for human rights, including those pertaining to Indigenous Peoples, compliance of national norms, coherence with the norms, equality, transparency, honesty, and mutual respect.

3. Who can file a grievance and how

Anyone can file a grievance or make a suggestion related to the programme/office. Your grievance will be handled confidentially.

To facilitate our comprehension of your grievance, please include as much information as possible. For example: what happened, who was involved, when did it happen...

4. From grievance to resolution

[Explain how grievance will be logged, handled and responded to by FAO and IPs and what the individual or group bringing the grievance can do in case no solution was found at programme/project level.]

The mechanism includes the following stages:

1. In the instance in which the individual or group have the means to directly file the grievance, he/she has the right to do so, presenting through the indicated channels of the programme/office (i.e.: email, mailbox, phone, etc.). The process of filing a grievance will duly consider confidentiality, and if requested by the individual or group bringing the grievance, anonymity as well as any existing traditional or indigenous dispute resolution mechanisms and it will not interfere with the community's self-governance system.

2. The individual or group bringing the grievance files a grievance through one of the channels of the grievance mechanism. This will be sent to the Programme or FAO Decentralized / Country Office Grievance focal point to acknowledge and log the grievance, assess whether it is eligible and determine responsibility for attempting to resolve the grievance in line with the processes agreed for the programme. The confidentiality of the grievance must be preserved during the process. For every grievance received by the programme grievance focal point, written proof will be sent within ten (10) working days; afterwards, a resolution proposal will be made within thirty (30) working days.

The Grievance focal point will also be responsible for recording the grievance and how it has been addressed if a resolution was agreed.

3. If the situation is too complex, or the individual or group bringing the grievance does not accept the proposed resolution, the Grievance focal point must be informed and they must send the grievance to the next highest level, until a solution or acceptance is reached.

4. In compliance with the resolution, the person in charge of dealing with the grievance may interact with the individual or group bringing the grievance, or may call for interviews and meetings, to better understand the reasons.

Resolution

Upon acceptance of a solution by the individual or group bringing the grievance, a confidential record will be maintained.

Review Level	Contact Details
Programme Level	[Indicate at least the name and email address. This can be the FAO country office details if the programme selects to use the country GRM.]
Next level	[Indicate at least the name and email address of the next highest level as applicable to the programme. For example this could be the FAO country office or regional office].
Higher level (only if it's strictly necessary to include a third level)	[Indicate at least the name and email address of the next highest level as applicable to the programme. For example this could be the FAO country office or regional office].
Office of the Inspector General (OIG)	<p>Contact FAO's independent Office of the Inspector General :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To report non-compliance with FAO's environmental and social management guidelines in case your grievance could not be resolved through the previously mentioned channels; • To report non-compliance with FAO's environmental and social management guidelines in case you have a good reason for not approaching the programme management (e.g., fears about your safety); • To report possible fraud and other corrupt practices, as well as other misconduct such as sexual exploitation and abuse. <p>By confidential hotline (online form & by phone): fao.ethicspoint.com</p> <p>By e-mail: Investigations-hotline@fao.org</p>

Part B (FAO-internal. To be uploaded in FPMIS together with Part A)

5. GRM positioning

[Describe how the programme/project GRM is positioned vis-à-vis country office and other existing GRMs, and why the programme has decided to use the GRM it selected or designed. Describe how the programme and office-level grievance logs will relate to each other. Note that Country Offices must annually report on the number of grievances resolved and addressed as part of the Country Annual Report (CAR) process.]

Note that grievances of misconduct (such as allegations of fraud or other corrupt practices, harassment or sexual exploitation and abuse) by FAO programme of country office employees are instead submitted directly to the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), which is responsible for investigating such allegations. If not already involved, please copy the PSEA focal point in the Country Office in case of sexual exploitation and abuse grievances.]

6. Communications plan

[Include the GRM in the programme/project communication activities. Questions that should be answered at a minimum: how will the GRM be communicated in local languages and during all meetings with programme stakeholders? Is an information brochure on the grievance mechanism available to users? Are feedback/grievance forms available to users?]

7. Capacity building

[Does the programme/office provide training on grievance management to the GRM focal point and programme team members? Does this include training on the intake and referral process for grievances related to sexual exploitation and abuse?]

8. Monitoring and evaluation

[Are regular internal reports on grievances/feedback produced?]

Grievances/feedback reports include data on: Numbers of grievances/feedback received; Compliance with agreed response times; Issues raised in grievances/feedback; Trends in grievances/feedback over time; The causes of grievances/feedback; Whether remedial action was warranted; What redress was provided? Recommendations/strategies to prevent or limit future recurrences.]

9. Budget

[Are adequate resources allocated for the grievance mechanism to be communicated, to the GRM focal point, and to function effectively, as well as for the M&E reports and potential remedies?]

10. Workers' GRM:

[Will the programme/project employ workers?]

It is recommended to use the programme GRM also for any grievances from workers employed through the programme, whether raised by individuals or a community. The GRM must allow all workers to raise concerns of violations of rights and entitlements as provided in collective agreements, employment contracts and human resources policies. If there are good reasons to instead use existing GRMs for these purposes, these may be supplemented as needed with programme-specific arrangements and be made readily accessible to programme workers. The FAO project grievance focal point must be made aware of any grievances received, even if an existing GRM is used for this purpose. Workers should be made aware that their grievances will be handled confidentially and that for any grievance related to misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse, they may contact FAO directly if they prefer (OIG). Please see annex 8 for an SEA complaint intake form. Grievances may be lodged anonymously if requested by the individual or group bringing the grievance. In any case, the grievance mechanism will be accessible to all direct and contracted workers, taking into account their different characteristics, for example, female workers, migrant workers, or workers with disabilities. It is good practice to have a male and female staff member available to receive and process grievances.]