



Guidelines for Implementation of Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS)

Enhancing Productive and Sustainable Food Systems in Bhutan for Environmental Benefits and Gross National Happiness (FSP)

**GEF-8 Food Systems Integrated Program (FSIP) Project
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1. Introduction

Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) are important parts of project implementation to ensure that activities are carried out responsibly and sustainably. ESS help projects identify potential environmental and social risks early, and take measures to avoid, reduce, or manage any negative impacts while enhancing positive benefits.

In line with the standards of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), ESS provide a structured approach for screening risks, assessing impacts, and implementing mitigation measures such as Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs). They also ensure that projects comply with national laws and international standards.

ESS further promote inclusive participation of all stakeholders, especially vulnerable groups, and strengthen transparency and accountability through proper consultation and grievance redress mechanisms. By integrating safeguards throughout the project cycle, ESS support better project planning, effective risk management, protection of the environment and communities, and long-term sustainability of project results.

2. Principles of Environmental & Social Safeguards

The principles of ESS provide the foundation for ensuring that projects are environmentally sustainable, socially inclusive, and ethically implemented. The key principles are:

Do No Harm Ensure that project activities avoid causing harm to the environment, communities, and individuals. Where impacts cannot be avoided, they must be minimized and mitigated.
Prevention and Precaution Anticipate potential risks early and take preventive action. Apply the precautionary principle where there is uncertainty, especially in environmentally sensitive areas.
Sustainability Promote long-term environmental protection, social well-being, and economic viability. Ensure that project benefits are sustained beyond the project period.
Mitigation Hierarchy Follow a structured approach: • Avoid impacts • Minimize impacts

• Restore affected areas • Offset residual impacts (if necessary)
Stakeholder Engagement and Participation Ensure meaningful, inclusive, and culturally appropriate consultation with all stakeholders, including local communities, women, and vulnerable groups.
Equity and Inclusion Promote fair distribution of project benefits and avoid discrimination. Pay special attention to marginalized and vulnerable groups.
Transparency and Accountability Maintain openness in decision-making and implementation. Ensure clear communication and access to information.
Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) Establish accessible systems for stakeholders to raise concerns and seek timely resolution of complaints.
Compliance with Laws and Standards Adhere to national regulations (e.g., environmental laws, labor laws) and international safeguard policies (e.g., GEF, FAO).
Adaptive Management Continuously monitor, evaluate, and adjust project activities based on feedback, risks, and changing conditions.
Protection of Biodiversity and Ecosystems Conserve natural habitats, protect biodiversity, and maintain ecosystem services.
Respect for Human Rights and Cultural Heritage Ensure that project activities respect human rights, local customs, traditions, and cultural heritage.

3. FAO's Environmental and Social Standards

The Framework for Environmental and Social Management (FESM) sets out nine ESS standards to guide the identification, prevention, minimization, and mitigation of potential environmental and social risks and impacts arising from programmes and projects.

All programmes and projects supported by GEF/FAO are required to comply with the applicable provisions of the nine Environmental and Social Standards.

ESS 1 – Biodiversity conservation and the sustainable management of natural resources.

FAO's ESS 1 emphasizes that sustainable and resilient development relies on the protection of biodiversity, restoration of ecosystem services, and sustainable management of natural resources. It recognizes that biodiversity and ecosystem services are interconnected and essential for supporting agrifood systems, livelihoods, and human well-being.

ESS 2 – Resource efficiency and pollution prevention and management

ESS 2 highlights that resource efficiency and pollution prevention are fundamental to sustainable development. FAO projects are required to follow good international practices, while integrating climate change mitigation and adaptation to improve efficiency and strengthen resilience.

ESS 3 – Climate change and disaster risk reduction.

FAO's ESS 3 focuses on identifying, reducing, and managing risks arising from climate change and other multiple hazards. It guides efforts to strengthen resilience by enhancing the adaptive capacity of vulnerable communities and their agrifood systems.

ESS 4 – Decent work

FAO's ESS 4 emphasizes the promotion of decent work in line with international labour standards. It focuses on preventing child labour, forced labour, and all forms of exploitation, recognizing that safe and fair working conditions are essential for achieving food security and reducing poverty.

ESS 5 – Community health, safety and security

FAO's ESS 5 focuses on safeguarding community health and safety by avoiding, minimizing, and mitigating risks associated with project activities. It places special

emphasis on protecting vulnerable and marginalized groups, while occupational health and safety of workers is addressed under ESS 4 on Decent Work.

ESS 6 – Gender equality and prevention of gender-based violence

FAO's ESS 6 ensures that projects do not reinforce gender inequalities and instead promote gender equality and women's empowerment. It aligns with UN principles, including "leave no one behind," and supports inclusive, equitable development.

ESS 7 – Land tenure, displacement, and resettlement

FAO's ESS on land and resettlement prohibits forced evictions and requires that any affected persons receive fair compensation, assistance, and benefits in a timely manner, prior to the start of project activities on the acquired land.

ESS 8 – Indigenous Peoples

FAO's ESS 8 recognizes the vital role of Indigenous Peoples' knowledge, traditions, and food systems in addressing global challenges such as food security and climate change. It emphasizes that sustainable development efforts must respect and include Indigenous Peoples to effectively support natural resource management and poverty reduction.

ESS 9 – Cultural heritage

FAO's ESS 9 promotes the protection and preservation of cultural heritage in its programmes, in line with international conventions and legal frameworks. It also recognizes farmers' rights and the importance of traditional knowledge of farmers, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities in conserving and developing plant genetic resources.

4. Key steps to introduce Environmental and Social Safeguards in the project

All projects supported by major development partners are required to comply with safeguard standards, including Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS), Gender, and Grievance Redress Mechanisms (GRM). These requirements, ensure that project activities are planned and implemented responsibly. The application of these safeguards helps to identify and manage potential risks, prevent or minimize adverse impacts, and enhance positive outcomes for communities and ecosystems. It ensures that projects do not harm people, wildlife, or the environment, while promoting social inclusion, gender equity, transparency, and accountability.

The project *"Productive and Sustainable Food Systems in Bhutan for Environmental Benefits and Gross National Happiness"*, under the GEF8 Food Systems Integrated Program (FSIP), aims to transform Bhutan's food systems into sustainable, regenerative, and inclusive

systems that are nature-positive, resilient, and pollution-free. It focuses on ensuring affordable and safe food, reducing poverty and malnutrition, empowering women and children, creating employment, and promoting environmentally sustainable practices.

The project is classified as having a moderate risk level, and therefore requires a robust Environmental and Social Safeguards management system to ensure that all activities are implemented in a manner that avoids, minimizes, and mitigates potential adverse impacts. This includes systematic risk screening, preparation and implementation of site-specific Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs), compliance with national regulations and donor safeguard standards, meaningful stakeholder engagement, and the establishment of an accessible Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM). These measures will help ensure that project interventions do not cause harm to people, ecosystems, or livelihoods, while promoting inclusive, equitable, and sustainable outcomes.

The following approaches outline how Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) will be systematically introduced and integrated into project implementation to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Royal Government and donor agencies. These approaches emphasize early risk screening and categorization, integration of ESS into project design and planning, preparation and implementation of site-specific Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs), adherence to national laws and international safeguard standards, capacity building of implementing agencies, inclusive stakeholder engagement, and the establishment of effective monitoring, reporting, and Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) systems to ensure accountability and continuous improvement.

The ESS implementation clearly defines *roles, responsibilities, and actions* at each level, rather than remaining only a policy concept. This means:

Who does what:

- Project management level (PMU): sets ESS policies, provides tools/templates, ensures compliance with donor and national standards.
- Field/project officers (Project officers/focal): conduct ESS screening, identify risks, prepare and implement site-specific ESMPs, and report on compliance.
- Local stakeholders/communities (Beneficiaries): participate in consultations (including FPIC where relevant), apply safeguards, provide feedback, and raise grievances through GRM.

At what level:

- Strategic level: policy alignment, risk categorisation, and approval of safeguards frameworks.
- Project level: integration of ESS into project design, budgeting, and planning.

- Site/activity level: actual implementation of mitigation measures, monitoring, and reporting.

The ESS implementation workflow outlines the sequence of activities to be followed during implementation:



4.1 Environmental and Social Safeguard Screening

Purpose

- To identify and categorize potential environmental and social risks of project activities at an early stage.
- To determine the level of assessment and safeguard measures required for effective risk management.

How to conduct ESS risk screening

The following procedure will be followed to conduct the risk screening:

Step 1: Baseline Information Template

Item	Details
Name of the activity	
Description of the activity	
Dzongkhag	
Gewog / Chiwog / village	
GPS / location description	
Implementing agency / office	
Proposed start date	
Estimated duration	
Land ownership (Private/Community/Government / Forest land / Not yet confirmed	
Total estimate of the activity	

Step 2: Eligibility Screening Template

Sl. No	Eligibility question	Yes/No	Remarks
1	Is the activity located in a protected area core zone, critical habitat, or known migratory route of threatened species?		
2	Will the activity involve involuntary land acquisition or compulsory loss of land/assets?		
3	Will the activity significantly damage natural habitats, wetlands, or ecologically sensitive areas?		

4	Will the activity involve prohibited clearing of government forest land or work in an area where forest clearance cannot be obtained?		
5	Will the activity require physical displacement without prior consultation, compensation, and approved safeguards measures?		
6	Will the activity adversely affect cultural or religious heritage in a way that cannot be avoided?		
7	Will the activity involve child labour, forced labour, or unsafe working conditions that cannot be controlled?		
8	Will the activity likely create severe community safety risks that cannot be mitigated?		
Decision: i. If Yes to any eligibility question, the activity should not proceed at this site unless relocated or redesigned. ii. If No to all, proceed to detailed screening This reflects the ESMP requirement that activities in PA core zones, critical habitats, and activities involving involuntary land acquisition should not proceed and must be screened out or shifted to alternative sites.			

Step 3: Environmental and Social Screening Checklist Template

Sl. No.	Screening question	Yes/No	Risk level L/M/H	If yes, explain the risk
ESS 1: Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources				
1.1	Is the site inside or near a protected area, biological corridor, forest edge, wetland, or other sensitive habitat?			
1.2	Could the activity affect wildlife habitat, breeding areas, migratory routes, or important biodiversity areas?			
1.3	Will the activity increase pressure on forests, pasture, water sources, or other common natural resources?			
ESS 2. Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention				

2.1	Will fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, veterinary drugs, or cleaning chemicals be used?			
2.2	Will the activity generate solid waste, liquid waste, effluent, manure, packaging waste, or hazardous waste?			
2.3	Is there a risk of soil, water, or air pollution from farm inputs, waste disposal, processing, or construction?			
ESS 3. Climate Change, Disaster Risks and Resilience				
3.1	Is the site located on a steep slope, landslide-prone area, flood-prone area, or hazard-prone zone?			
3.2	Could slope cutting, excavation, or drainage changes trigger landslides or erosion?			
3.3	Will the activity increase climate vulnerability of people, land, water, or infrastructure?			
ESS 4. Decent Work				
4.1	Is there any risk of child labour, forced labour, or discriminatory hiring?			
4.2	Are workers likely to face unsafe conditions, injury, disease, or inadequate PPE?			
4.3	Will workers be provided safe drinking water, sanitation, first aid, emergency response, and decent accommodation where relevant?			
ESS 5. Community Health, Safety and Security				
5.1	Could nearby communities be affected by dust, noise, traffic, emissions, wastewater, or waste?			
5.2	Could construction sites, processing units, or machinery expose the public to injury or safety hazards?			
5.3	Could transport of materials or machinery create road accidents or damage to public/private property?			
ESS 6. Gender Equality				

6.1	Could the activity exclude women, female-headed households, youth, elderly persons, or persons with disabilities from benefits or participation?			
6.2	Could women face unequal access to land, inputs, training, equipment, or decision-making?			
6.3	Is there risk of GBV, SEAH, harassment, or conflict involving workers and communities?			
ESS 7. Land Tenure, Restrictions on Land Use, Displacement and Resettlement				
7.1	Could the activity result in loss of land, structures, crops, trees, grazing access, or livelihood access?			
7.2	Are there non-title holders, tenants, informal users, or customary users who may be affected?			
7.3	Will any household be physically displaced, temporarily relocated, or lose shelter/storage/other structures?			
ESS 8. Indigenous Peoples / Vulnerable Communities				
8.1	Is the activity located in or affecting communities with distinct cultural identity, customary institutions, or traditional livelihood systems, such as Brokpa communities?			
8.2	Could the activity affect customary grazing rights, tsamdro use, or traditional resource access?			
8.3	Is Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) required for this activity?			
ESS 9. Cultural Heritage				
9.1	Is the activity near a lhakhang, chorten, nye, sacred site, burial site, heritage structure, or culturally important landscape?			
9.2	Could excavation, earthworks, demolition, or construction disturb known or unknown cultural heritage?			

9.3	Has a chance-find procedure been included for excavation or land development works?			
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4.2 Risk Categorization

The risk categorization will be based on the professional judgement of the assessment team, taking into account both the severity of potential impacts and the likelihood (frequency or recurrence) of the identified risks. This process will also consider the scale, duration, reversibility, and sensitivity of the affected environment and communities, including vulnerable groups.

Where necessary, the assessment team shall ensure full compliance with relevant national laws and policies, as well as the ESS standards of FAO and GEF. The assessment process shall also be guided by the provisions of the Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) to ensure that all identified risks are evaluated, managed, and mitigated effectively.

The following criteria can be used to assess the risk:

Risk level	Impact criteria	Assessment criteria	Assessment decision
Low risk	Minimal impacts, easily mitigated, no significant safeguards concerns	Low likelihood Less severity	Activity may be implemented as planned
Moderate risk	Manageable impacts requiring planned mitigation and monitoring	Moderate likelihood level Moderate severity level	ESMP required
High risk	Significant impacts requiring detailed assessment (ESIA), strong mitigation, and strict compliance	High likelihood level High severity level	ESIA required. The activity may be rejected if the required mitigation measures are not implemented.

4.3 Site-Specific Environmental & Social Safeguard Management Plan

Purpose

A site-specific ESMP ensures that project activities at a particular location are implemented in a safe, responsible, and compliant manner. The plan should have appropriate and workable mitigation measures to the risk with high and moderate levels identified in the risk

screening activity. The mitigation measures should be locally driven, safeguard-compliant, and adaptive over time.

Risk Mitigation Measures Plan

Each gewog shall prepare a site-specific ESMP for activities identified as having moderate and high risks through the screening checklist. The ESMP shall include detailed and practical mitigation measures for each identified risk. These measures should be developed through root cause analysis and active community engagement, ensuring the incorporation of indigenous knowledge and local consent. All mitigation measures shall be guided by the mitigation hierarchy—Avoid, Minimize, Restore, and Offset, to effectively manage and reduce potential environmental and social impacts.

Name of activity	Type of risk identified	Level of the risk	Proposed mitigation measures	Responsibility	Time line	Monitoring indicator	Proposed Budget	Remarks

The monitoring indicators should be **SMARTIES (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound, Inclusive, Equitable and Sustainable)**, to ensure effective tracking and accountability. Each indicator should clearly define what is to be measured, use quantifiable or verifiable data, be realistic within the project context and available resources, align with project objectives and safeguard requirements, and include a defined timeframe for achievement.

4.4: Monitoring of ESS

ESS monitoring is a systematic process to ensure that project activities are implemented in compliance with the mitigation measures and standards outlined in the site-specific ESMPs. It involves regular tracking of defined indicators, verification of compliance, and timely identification of gaps or emerging issues. Where necessary, corrective actions are identified and implemented to ensure that project implementation remains environmentally sound, socially inclusive, and accountable.

Monitoring Template

Project Activity	Mitigation Measure	Monitoring Indicator	Means of Verification	Status of ESS implementation	Issues faced during implementation	Corrective action

Guidance for Use:

- **Project Activity:** Specify the activity being implemented at the site.
- **Mitigation Measure:** List the specific mitigation action from the ESMP.
- **Monitoring Indicator:** Use the indicator defined in the ESMP.
- **Means of Verification:** Methods to be used (Field observation, photos, records, attendance sheets, etc.)
- **Status of ESS implementation:** Explain how the mitigation measures were implemented and its effectiveness
- **Issues faced during implementation:** Describe the challenges faced during the implementation of ESS mitigation measures
- **Corrective action:** If the mitigation measures are found to be ineffective, additional corrective actions should be recommended and implemented.

4.5: ESS Reporting Process

ESS reporting is the process of documenting and sharing the status of safeguard implementation in a project. It provides regular updates on compliance with ESMP measures, monitoring indicators, and adherence to standards. The reporting process highlights achievements, identifies gaps or non-compliance issues, and outlines corrective actions taken, thereby ensuring transparency, accountability, and informed decision-making for effective and responsible project implementation.

Field officers are required to submit ESS compliance reports on a semi-annual basis. These reports will enable the PMU to consolidate and incorporate ESS performance and compliance information into its mid-year and annual project reports.

a. Basic Information

Project Name	
Project Location (Dzongkhag/Gewog)	
Reporting Period	
Report Prepared by	
Date of Submission	

b. Status on Activities Implemented

Activity	Location	Status and progress update	Issues and challenges faces

c. Status of ESS Compliance

Activity	Risk Identified	Mitigation Measure	Monitoring Indicator	Compliance Status	Description of non-compliance issue (if any)

d. Overall ESS Performance Status

In addition to reporting on ESS risk management compliance, the report should also provide a comprehensive update on the implementation of other key social safeguard components, including stakeholder engagement mechanisms; Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC); grievance redress mechanisms (GRM); and gender equality and social inclusion (GESI). This section should highlight the progress made, key activities undertaken, level of participation of different stakeholder groups and how they have contributed to the project implementation, especially vulnerable and marginalized communities, issues or challenges encountered, and the measures taken to address them, thereby ensuring that the project remains inclusive, transparent, and socially responsive.

Stakeholder Engagement Mechanism (SEM)

- Summary of stakeholder consultations conducted
- Participation of key groups (including vulnerable groups)
- Key issues raised and how they were addressed
- Evidence of inclusive and meaningful engagement

Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) (if applicable)

- Communities requiring FPIC (e.g., indigenous or vulnerable groups)
- Process followed to obtain consent
- Documentation of consent and decision-making process
- Any concerns or conditions raised by communities

Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM)

- Status of GRM establishment and accessibility
- Number and types of grievances received
- Resolution status and timelines
- Any unresolved or escalated cases

e. Challenges and Lessons Learned

- Key implementation challenges
- Institutional or field-level constraints
- Lessons for improving ESS implementation

f. Recommendations and Way Forward

- Corrective actions required
- Improvements in ESS systems
- Plan for next reporting period

**Stakeholder Engagement Mechanism
(SEM)**

1. Background

The Stakeholder Engagement Mechanism (SEM) in project management is a structured process for identifying, consulting, and collaborating with individuals, groups, and communities that are affected by or have a role in the project. It ensures that stakeholders are informed, their views are heard, and their feedback is meaningfully incorporated into project planning and implementation. By promoting inclusive participation, transparency, and mutual trust, the mechanism helps to minimize risks, address concerns early, and enhance the effectiveness, sustainability, and ownership of project outcomes.

2. Purpose

The following are the purposes of SEM:

- Ensure inclusive, transparent, and meaningful participation, including Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) of affected communities.
- Improve project design and implementation by integrating stakeholder inputs, respecting community decisions, and managing social risks early.

3. Key Objectives

The goals are to:

- Provide timely, accessible, and understandable information to stakeholders to support informed decision-making.
- Facilitate continuous consultation, active participation, and FPIC processes where required.
- Ensure inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups, respecting their rights and voices.
- Integrate stakeholder feedback and consent outcomes into project planning and decision-making.
- Promote equitable benefit sharing, social inclusion, and cultural respect.
- Link with Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) for transparent and timely issue resolution.

4. Stakeholder Engagement Mechanism Processes

i. Stakeholder Identification

The first step in the stakeholder engagement process is the identification of all relevant stakeholders who have a role, interest, or influence in the successful implementation of the project. This involves mapping key stakeholders from communities, local government institutions, government agencies, civil society organizations, private sector entities, and other relevant groups. Particular attention is given to ensuring diversity and inclusiveness so that all affected and interested parties are adequately represented. As part of this process, vulnerable and marginalized groups, including women, poor households, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, and households located in remote areas, are specifically identified

to ensure that their voices, concerns, and priorities are effectively considered throughout project planning and implementation.

ii. Stakeholder Analysis

Following stakeholder identification, a stakeholder analysis is undertaken to better understand the interests, influence, and potential contributions of each stakeholder group. The analysis assesses the degree of influence stakeholders may have on project decisions and outcomes, their level of interest or stake in the project, and their capacity to contribute to project implementation through technical expertise, financial resources, local knowledge, or social networks. The process also considers the urgency of engaging particular groups, especially those who may be significantly affected by project activities or whose participation is critical to project success. The findings from the stakeholder analysis help determine appropriate engagement approaches, communication methods, and participation mechanisms tailored to the specific roles, expectations, and needs of different stakeholder groups throughout the project cycle.

iii. Stakeholder Mobilization

Following stakeholder analysis, stakeholders are mobilized to participate in project planning, implementation, and monitoring activities. A stakeholder engagement plan is prepared to define the objectives of engagement, the stakeholders to be consulted, the timing of engagement activities, and the methods to be used. Appropriate engagement approaches are selected based on the characteristics and needs of different stakeholder groups, including community meetings, focus group discussions, household visits, surveys, workshops, and other consultation methods. Information on the purpose, schedule, and venue of engagement activities is communicated in advance to ensure broad participation and adequate preparation by stakeholders. Special efforts are made to facilitate the involvement of vulnerable and marginalized groups so that their perspectives are effectively represented in the decision-making process.

iv. FPIC (If applicable)

Where project activities may affect vulnerable groups or communities with distinct cultural identities, a Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) process is undertaken in accordance with applicable safeguard requirements. The process begins with the identification of potentially affected communities and relevant local institutions. Adequate and culturally appropriate information about the proposed activities, including their potential benefits, risks, and implications, is shared with communities well in advance of any decision-making process. Communities are given sufficient time and opportunity to discuss, deliberate, and make informed decisions without coercion, manipulation, or undue influence. Throughout the process, local customs, cultural values, traditional governance systems, and community decision-making practices are respected. Consent is sought voluntarily and documented

appropriately to ensure that community views and decisions are fully recognized and incorporated into project planning and implementation.

v. *Consultation Processes*

Stakeholder consultations are conducted throughout the project cycle to ensure that stakeholders remain informed and have opportunities to contribute to project planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Consultations are organized at regular intervals based on an agreed engagement schedule and are adapted to the needs, availability, and circumstances of different stakeholder groups. A variety of consultation methods may be employed, including face-to-face meetings, virtual consultations, workshops, and public information sessions.

Field validation and fact-finding missions provide opportunities for focused engagement with local communities, including women, youth, vulnerable households, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups through targeted focus group discussions and community consultations. To facilitate broader public participation, online surveys, feedback forms, and comment portals may also be used where appropriate. In addition, bilateral meetings are conducted with key government agencies, development partners, civil society organizations, and other relevant stakeholders to discuss project-specific issues and gather technical inputs. Stakeholders are also engaged through participation in technical meetings and review sessions during project design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation to ensure that their views and recommendations are adequately considered in project decision-making processes.

vi. *Feedback documentation*

All feedback received through consultations, meetings, surveys, grievance mechanisms, and other stakeholder engagement activities is systematically documented and maintained as part of the project records. Key issues, concerns, recommendations, and suggestions raised by stakeholders are recorded to ensure that stakeholder perspectives are accurately captured and considered. The project team documents the actions taken, responses provided, and decisions made in relation to the feedback received, thereby promoting transparency and accountability in the engagement process.

The documented feedback is regularly reviewed and analyzed to identify emerging issues, stakeholder priorities, and opportunities for improving project implementation. Where relevant and feasible, stakeholder inputs are incorporated into project planning, design, implementation, and monitoring activities. This continuous feedback loop helps strengthen stakeholder trust, improve project outcomes, and ensure that project interventions remain responsive to the needs and expectations of affected communities and other stakeholders.

vii. Monitoring and Reporting

The implementation and effectiveness of stakeholder engagement activities are regularly monitored to ensure meaningful participation and continuous improvement of the SEM. Records are maintained on all stakeholder engagement activities, including the number and type of meetings, consultations, workshops, focus group discussions, and other engagement events conducted throughout the project cycle. Participation data are systematically collected and analyzed, with information disaggregated by gender, age, and vulnerable groups where applicable, to assess the inclusiveness and reach of engagement efforts.

Key issues, concerns, recommendations, and commitments arising from stakeholder consultations are documented and tracked, along with the actions taken to address them. The progress and outcomes of stakeholder engagement activities are periodically reviewed and reported as part of the project's monitoring and reporting system. Information on SEM implementation, stakeholder participation, key feedback received, and follow-up actions undertaken is incorporated into project progress reports, including semi-annual and annual reports, to promote transparency, accountability, and adaptive project management

5. Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) Process

i. Purpose of FPIC

The purpose of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is to ensure that affected communities have the opportunity to make informed, meaningful, and voluntary decisions regarding project activities that may affect their lands, resources, livelihoods, cultural heritage, or way of life. FPIC recognizes and respects the rights of communities to receive complete and understandable information about proposed interventions before decisions are made and project activities commence.

FPIC also serves as an important mechanism for safeguarding customary rights, traditional knowledge, cultural values, and livelihood systems that are integral to community identity and well-being. By promoting open dialogue, mutual respect, and inclusive decision-making, the FPIC process helps build trust between communities and project proponents, enhances transparency in project implementation, and strengthens accountability for social and environmental commitments. Ultimately, FPIC contributes to more equitable, sustainable, and community-supported development outcomes.

ii. When FPIC is Required

Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is required when proposed project activities have the potential to directly or indirectly affect vulnerable people, local communities with distinct cultural identities, or vulnerable groups whose rights, livelihoods, resources, traditions, or well-being may be impacted. FPIC is not merely a consultation process; it is a

mechanism that enables affected communities to make informed and voluntary decisions regarding activities that may influence their lives, lands, resources, or cultural heritage.

FPIC should be applied whenever project interventions may affect community access to land, forests, water resources, grazing areas, or other natural resources that are essential for livelihoods and traditional practices. It is also required when project activities may result in social, cultural, environmental, or economic impacts on communities, including changes to customary resource use, traditional knowledge systems, sacred sites, or cultural heritage. Similarly, FPIC is necessary when activities could lead to physical or economic displacement, restrictions on access to natural resources, or changes in land-use practices that affect community welfare.

Particular attention should be given to vulnerable groups, including women, persons with disabilities, elderly persons, poor households, remote communities, and other marginalized populations who may be disproportionately affected by project activities or face barriers to participation in decision-making processes. In such cases, engagement approaches should be culturally appropriate, inclusive, and accessible, ensuring that all affected groups are able to understand project information, express their views freely, and participate meaningfully in decision-making.

The FPIC process must be undertaken before key project decisions are made or activities are implemented. Communities should be provided with adequate information on the nature, scope, benefits, risks, and potential impacts of the proposed activities in a language and format that they can understand. They should also be given sufficient time to deliberate through their own customary institutions and decision-making processes without coercion, intimidation, manipulation, or undue influence. The outcomes of the FPIC process should be documented and incorporated into project planning and implementation to ensure that community rights, interests, and concerns are fully respected.

iii. Key Principles of FPIC

The FPIC process is guided by a set of fundamental principles that ensure the rights, interests, and well-being of affected communities are respected throughout project planning and implementation. These principles promote meaningful participation, transparency, accountability, and respect for local cultures and decision-making systems.

- a) **Free** means that communities are able to make decisions voluntarily and without coercion, intimidation, manipulation, undue pressure, or influence from project proponents, government agencies, or other stakeholders. Community members must have the freedom to express their views, raise concerns, and make decisions according to their own customary processes.

- b) **Prior** means that engagement and consultation take place sufficiently in advance of any project approval, decision-making, or commencement of activities. Communities should be provided with adequate time to understand the proposed intervention, discuss it internally, seek clarification where necessary, and reach decisions through their established governance and decision-making structures.
- c) **Informed** means that communities are provided with complete, accurate, understandable, and culturally appropriate information about the proposed project. This includes information on project objectives, planned activities, expected benefits, potential risks and impacts, mitigation measures, grievance mechanisms, and the rights of affected communities. Information should be shared in local languages and through communication methods that are accessible to all community members, including women and vulnerable groups.
- d) **Consent** means that communities have the right to approve, reject, or propose modifications to project activities that may affect them. Consent should be obtained through legitimate and representative community processes and should reflect the collective views of affected stakeholders. The outcome of the decision-making process should be respected and appropriately documented.

iv. FPIC Implementation Process

Step 1: Preparation

The FPIC process begins with careful preparation to ensure meaningful and culturally appropriate engagement with affected communities. This involves identifying the communities and stakeholders that may be affected by the proposed project activities and understanding the local governance and decision-making structures, including the roles of Gups, Tshogpas, community leaders, and other relevant institutions. During this stage, clear and accessible information materials are prepared in local languages to help communities understand the proposed activities, potential impacts, benefits, and their rights under the FPIC process.

Step 2: Information disclosure

The second step of the FPIC process involves providing affected communities with clear, accurate, and comprehensive information about the proposed project. Communities should be informed about the project's objectives, planned activities, expected benefits, potential risks and impacts, and any measures proposed to address those impacts. Importantly, communities must also be informed of their rights throughout the FPIC process, including their right to ask questions, seek clarification, express concerns, propose modifications, and accept or refuse the proposed activities.

Information should be shared in a manner that is understandable, accessible, and culturally appropriate. Depending on the local context, this may include community meetings, visual presentations, posters, storytelling, demonstrations, local language materials, or other communication methods that are familiar to community members. The objective is to ensure that all affected persons, including women and vulnerable groups, have sufficient information to make informed decisions regarding the proposed project activities.

Step 3: Consultation & Dialogue

Once information has been disclosed, inclusive consultations and dialogue are conducted with affected communities to gather their views, concerns, and recommendations regarding the proposed project activities. Engagement may take place through community meetings, focus group discussions, household visits, and other appropriate consultation methods. Special efforts are made to ensure the meaningful participation of women, youth, vulnerable households, and persons with disabilities. Communities are also provided with sufficient time to discuss the information internally, consult among themselves through their customary decision-making processes, and reach informed decisions without external pressure or influence.

Step 4: Decision-Making

The community should be given adequate time to discuss the proposed project and make decisions through their customary and traditional decision-making processes. Any decision reached must be voluntary, free from coercion or undue influence, and collective where community consensus is required. The outcome of the decision-making process should be properly documented indicating whether consent has been granted, granted with specific conditions, or withheld.

Step 5: Documentation

All consultation and decision-making processes should be properly documented to ensure transparency and accountability. This includes maintaining records of meeting minutes, attendance lists, key concerns raised by community members and agreements reached during consultations. Where consent is obtained, it should be formally recorded through signed consent forms, community resolutions, or other culturally appropriate documentation endorsed by the community.

Step 6: Implementation & Follow-Up

During project implementation, all conditions agreed upon through FPIC process should be fully respected and integrated into project activities. Continuous engagement with the affected communities should be maintained to ensure transparency, build trust, and address emerging issues. Communities should have access to a GRM to raise concerns or complaints,

and regular monitoring should be conducted to ensure compliance with FPIC agreements and commitments made during the consultation process.

DOs and DON'Ts

DOs

- Use local language and simple communication
- Respect culture and traditional institutions
- Ensure inclusion of vulnerable groups
- Provide adequate time for decision-making

DON'Ts

- Do not rush the process
- Do not influence or pressure decisions
- Do not ignore dissenting voices
- Do not proceed without consent (where required)

The following forms and tools will be used to implement and document the FPIC process in a consistent, transparent, and accountable manner:

Form 1: FPIC Consent Form

2. Basic information - Project activity: - Location (Gewog/Village): - Date:
3. Project information Were you explained on the following aspects of the project activity - Project goal and objectives - Purpose of the proposed project activities - Benefits to community of the proposed activities - Potential risk the proposed project may cause - Proposed mitigation measures of the risks - Community's roles and responsibilities during the implementation - ESS plan of the proposed activities - Monitoring and reporting of the activities - Budget allocation and management of the proposed activities
4. Decision process - Did you understand the benefits of the project activities? - Do you have any concerns about the project? - Did you given the opportunity to consult and discuss with other community members?

- Were you given adequate time to make your decisions? - Did you make this decision freely, without any pressure?	
5. Decision	
I/we agree to the proposed project activities and give my/our consent to carry out the activities.	I/we have some reservations and do not give our consents to the proposed project. However, we are open for discussion.
Name and Signature	Name and Signature

Form 2: FPIC Meeting Minutes

The minutes will provide a comprehensive record of the discussions, key issues raised, decisions made, and agreed actions, including responsibilities, timelines, and any conditions attached to community consent. They will also capture participation details (including gender and vulnerable groups) and serve as an official reference for transparency, accountability, and follow-up.

Meeting Minutes Template

Date of meeting	
Number of participants	Male: Female: Youth People with Disability:
Discussion agenda	
Discussion procedures	
Key concerns raised	
Responses provided	
Decisions taken	
Way forward	
Endorsed by	Local government: Community members

6. Monitoring and Reporting of FPIC implementation

FPIC Monitoring

- *Inclusive and Informed Participation*
Ensure all affected groups, including vulnerable populations, are meaningfully consulted and fully understand the project information.
- *Free and Prior Consent*
Confirm that consent is obtained voluntarily, without pressure, and before any project activities begin.
- *Compliance and Follow-up*
Monitor that agreed conditions are respected during implementation and that concerns are addressed through the GRM.

Monitoring template

Project details	Activity: Dzongkhag: Gewog/Chiwog: Monitoring date: Monitoring officer:
Monitoring checklist	i. Participation & inclusion - Were all affected groups consulted: - Were women and vulnerable groups included: ii. Information disclosure - Was complete project information shared: - Was information provided in local language: iii. Free & Prior Consent - Was consent obtained without pressure: - Was FPIC conducted before implementation: iv. Documentation - Are consent forms and meeting minutes available: - Are conditions/agreements clearly recorded: v. Compliance with agreements - Are project activities aligned with agreed conditions: - Are commitments to communities being fulfilled: vi. Grievance and follow up - Are communities aware of GRM:

	- Any grievances reported:
Summary assessment	i. FPIC compliance status: ii. Key issues identified: iii. Corrective action:
Validation	Project officer: Community representative:

FPIC Reporting

- *Consent Status and Participation*
Clearly report the outcome of FPIC (agreed, conditional, or not agreed) and participation details, including inclusion of vulnerable groups.
- *Key Issues and Agreements*
Summarize major concerns raised by communities and any conditions or agreements made.
- *Follow-up Actions and Compliance*
Report how concerns are addressed, status of agreed conditions, and any grievances raised through the GRM.

Reporting template

Section	Details	Description
Basic Information	Dzongkhag: Gewog/Chiwog: Village/Location: Project/Activity: Date:	
Participation	Total Participants: Male/Female: Vulnerable Groups:	
Information Disclosure	Summary of information provided: Method used:	

Consent Outcome	Type of consent agreed	
Key Issues Raised	Issues raised in the course of the discussion	
Actions Taken / Response	Type of responses provided and actions taken	
Follow-up & GRM	What follow up actions taken and GRM status	
Validation	Community Representative: Local Leader (Gup/Mangmi): Community Worker:	

Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM)

1. Background

A Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) is an essential component of project management, particularly in development and environmental projects, designed to provide a structured and transparent process for stakeholders to raise concerns, complaints, or feedback related to project activities. It ensures that affected individuals and communities, including vulnerable groups, have accessible and safe channels to voice issues regarding environmental, social, or operational impacts.

The GRM enables early identification and resolution of issues, helping to prevent conflicts, reduce risks, and improve project performance. It promotes accountability and trust by ensuring grievances are addressed in a timely and fair manner, and is integrated throughout the project cycle in line with national and international safeguard standards.

2. Purpose

The following are the purposes of the Grievance Redress Mechanism:

- Provide a channel for complaints and feedback from stakeholders
- Resolve issues early to prevent conflicts and risks
- Promote transparency and accountability in project implementation

3. Objectives

The following are the objectives of Grievance Redress Mechanism:

- Ensure timely and fair resolution of grievances
- Improve project implementation through stakeholder feedback
- Strengthen trust and accountability between project and communities

4. Scope and Eligibility of the GRM

The GRM is available to all project stakeholders, including beneficiaries, local communities, vulnerable groups, women, youth, indigenous and marginalized communities, project workers, contractors, suppliers, government agencies, civil society organizations, and any person affected directly or indirectly by project activities. Grievances may relate to environmental, social, economic, labour, health and safety, gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, project implementation, or any perceived negative impacts arising from project activities. Anonymous complaints will also be accepted where sufficient information is provided for investigation.

5. Guiding Principles

The GRM is anchored on the following principles

Principles	Description
Legitimacy	The project shall use the GRM framework as the formal document to manage grievances related to the project.
Accessibility	It shall be open and accessible through various reporting channels to all stakeholders, including the staff, partners, women, youth, and vulnerable groups and communities.

Predictability	It shall provide clear steps, guidance, redressal timeline and next step of action
Fairness and Impartiality	It shall provide fair, just and unbiased investigation procedures and redressal mechanism respecting all parties involved.
Confidentiality and Protection	It shall protect the identities and ensure that reporters do not face retaliation or any other forms of discrimination.
Transparency	Maintain proper records of grievance received, redressed and communicates resolutions openly while protecting classified and sensitive information.
Respect for Human Rights	All grievances shall be handled in a manner that respects human rights, dignity, cultural values and customary practices.
Non-Retaliation	No complainant shall face retaliation, intimidation or discrimination for raising concerns.
Gender Responsiveness	The GRM shall ensure safe and equitable access for women and vulnerable groups.
Cultural Appropriateness	Traditional and local dispute resolution mechanisms may be utilized where appropriate and consistent with project objectives.
Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities	Information and grievance channels shall be made accessible to persons with disabilities through appropriate communication methods and reasonable accommodation.

6. GRM Requirements and Standards

6.1 GRM Focal Person

GRM Focal Persons shall be designated at the Project, Dzongkhag, and Gewog levels to facilitate the effective implementation and coordination of the Grievance Redress Mechanism. The GRM Focal Person shall be responsible for:

- Receiving and acknowledging grievance and logging and tracking cases in the Grievance Registry;
- Conducting preliminary assessments in coordination with relevant stakeholders and project teams;
- Reporting progress to the Project Management Unit (PMU).

6.2 Suggestion/Complaint Box

- A sealed and clearly labeled suggestion or complaint box shall be placed at the PMU Office and all field offices (Gewog Office).
- The box shall be positioned in a location that is easily accessible and visible to visitors and stakeholders.
- The GRM Focal Person shall be responsible to regularly check and clear the box to ensure timely collection of grievances for timely redressal.

7. GRM positioning

The GRM process for the project will follow the following hierarchy:

Level		Role of members
Level 1 Project level	Project level	Chair: Secretary GRM focal: PPD Members: Selected members from the NTF
	Dzongkhag level	Chair: Dzongdag GRM focal: District Environment Officer/ District Planning Officer Members: District Agriculture Officer District Livestock Officer District Environment Officer District Legal Officer
	Gewog level	Chair: Gup GRM focal: Gewog Administration Officer Members: Gewog Agriculture Officer Gewog Livestock Officer Mangmi Tsogpa of representative village
Level 2: FAO Representative in Bhutan	If the complaint has not been solved and could not be solved at level 1, the National Project Coordinator (NPC) will elevate it to the FAO Representative in Bhutan. the FAO Representative must respond within 5 working days in consultation with FAO's Representation and Project Team. Contact details: FAO Representative in Bhutan e-mail: FAO-BT@foa.org Tel: +975-2322424	
Level 3: Project Steering Committee	If the complaint has not been solved and could not be solved at level 2, the FAO Representative in Bhutan may elevate it to the Project Steering Committee (PSC). The response must be sent within 5 working days after the meeting of the PSC. Contact details:	
Level 4: FAO Regional Office for South Asia and the Pacific (RAP)	If the complaint has not been solved and could not be solved at level 2, the FAO Representative in Bhutan may elevate it to the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP). The response must be sent within 5 working days in consultation with FAO's Representation. Contact details: Regional Representative Tel: (+66) 2 6974000	

Level 5: FAO Inspector General	For very specific or complex problems, the FAO Regional Representative may request the assistance of the FAO Inspector General. Contact details: (+39) 06 570 55550 By email: Investigation-hotline@fao.org By confident hotline: (+39) 06 570 52333
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8. Grievance Redress Process

The project Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) shall be designed and implemented in a culturally appropriate, accessible, and locally responsive manner to effectively address the needs, concerns, and grievances of all project-affected persons and stakeholders.

The GRM process will comprise three tiers:

- i. Project level – Project GRM Committee
- ii. Dzongkhag level – District GRM Committee
- iii. Gewog Level – Gewog GRM Committee

8.1 Gewog-Level Grievance Management

Each project Gewog shall establish a Gewog-level Grievance Redress Committee (GRC) and designate a GRM Focal Person to receive and manage grievances. Grievances may be submitted through multiple channels, including in person, by telephone, email, written submission, or through an authorized representative.

Upon receipt of a grievance, the GRM Focal Person shall register the complaint in the grievance register, acknowledge receipt to the complainant, and provide information on the GRM process, eligibility criteria, and expected timelines for grievance resolution. The GRM Focal Person shall conduct an initial assessment to determine whether the grievance is related to project activities and falls within the scope of the GRM.

Where the grievance is deemed eligible, the GRM Focal Person shall notify the complainant that the grievance has been formally registered and referred to the Gewog-level GRC for review and resolution. The complainant shall also be informed that a decision or response will be communicated within two weeks of the receipt of the grievance, unless additional time is required due to the complexity of the case.

The GRM Focal Person shall serve as the liaison between the complainant and the GRC and shall be responsible for maintaining grievance records, monitoring the progress of grievance resolution, and providing regular updates to the GRC until the grievance is resolved and closed.

The GRM focal point, with the consent of the GRM chair, will convene the GRC meeting. The participating members will sign the minutes of the meeting. The focal point will relay the decision to the aggrieved person via phone, SMS, or social media, and then follow up with an

official written document. If the GRC is not able to decide on an appropriate outcome, it may choose to refer the grievance to the next level.

The written Grievance can be submitted in the grievance form – Form 1

8.2 Dzongkhag- and Project-Level Grievance Resolution

Grievance resolution at the Dzongkhag and Project Management levels shall follow the same procedures established for the Gewog-level GRM. Upon receipt of an escalated grievance, the respective GRC shall review the complaint and determine its relevance to project activities. Where necessary, the Committee may seek additional information or clarification from the lower-level GRC, the complainant, contractors, implementing partners, or any other relevant individuals or entities to facilitate an informed and fair resolution.

Once a grievance has been reviewed, the Committee shall communicate its decision and proposed corrective actions to the complainant within the prescribed timeframe. If the complainant accepts the proposed resolution, the grievance shall be considered resolved and closed.

The GRM Focal Person at each level (Gewog, Dzongkhag, and Project Management) shall maintain a secure and confidential record of all grievances and their resolution status. The grievance records shall include, at a minimum, the date of receipt, complainant details (where disclosure is permitted), nature and category of the grievance, actions taken, date of GRC review, decisions made, date of communication to the complainant, implementation of corrective or remedial measures, verification of resolution, and date of closure. These records shall be maintained in accordance with applicable confidentiality and data protection requirements.

8.3 External Appeal and Escalation Mechanism

If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision of the Project Steering Committee, the grievance may be escalated to the FAO Representation in Bhutan. If resolution is still not achieved, the grievance may be referred to the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP). For grievances involving non-compliance with FAO Environmental and Social Standards, fraud, corruption, sexual exploitation and abuse, or serious misconduct, complainants may directly contact the FAO Office of the Inspector General (OIG) without first approaching project management where there are legitimate concerns regarding confidentiality or personal safety.

Form 2: Grievance Registry Form

9. Roles and Responsibilities of the GRM Committee

The committees shall undertake the following roles:

- a) Ensure the resolution of grievances in a transparent, impartial, timely, and objective manner.
- b) Follow the GRM procedure, prioritize, and resolve the grievance objectively, at the earliest possible time, or within 15 (30) working days.

- c) To adequately confirm whether the grievance is project-related, consult the lower level GRM committee, the aggrieved person or party, and the third party if required.
- d) Maintain a quorum of at least three members during GRM committee meetings.

10. Roles and Responsibilities of the GRM Focal Person

- i. For every grievance received by the project GRM focal point, written acknowledgement will be sent within ten (10) working days to the aggrieved person or party.
- ii. Maintain a grievance log of all grievances received, and record of all meetings and outcomes of GRCs.
- iii. Inform the aggrieved person or party of the GRC resolution within 3 days of the meeting.
- iv. Inform the GRM focal at the next level if a grievance is being escalated and submit written documentation of discussions with the aggrieved person/party and minutes of meeting and decision of the GRC.
- v. Organize briefing sessions to train new GRC members on the GRM process, considering the possibility of member transfers throughout the project.
- vi. Follow monitoring protocols and submit timely reports to Project Management and assess implementation of corrective actions as directed by the GRC.
- vii. Ensure that the confidentiality of the aggrieved persons is maintained by not disclosing personal details and ensure compliance with the grievance procedure for gender-related grievances.

11. Worker Grievance Mechanism

The project GRM shall also serve as the grievance mechanism for all project workers, including direct workers, contracted workers, consultants, temporary workers and community workers engaged under the project. Workers may raise concerns regarding working conditions, occupational health and safety, discrimination, harassment, wage payments, labour rights, contractual obligations, and workplace misconduct. Worker grievances may be submitted confidentially or anonymously. Male and female focal persons shall be available where feasible to receive worker grievances. All worker grievances shall be recorded and addressed in accordance with FAO Environmental and Social Standard 4 on Decent Work.

12. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

The GRM Focal Person shall be responsible for monitoring and reporting on the implementation and effectiveness of the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM). Regular grievance reports shall be maintained and shall include, at a minimum: the number of grievances and feedback received, compliance with established response and resolution timelines, types of issues raised, trends and patterns of grievances over time, underlying causes of grievances, actions taken to address complaints, and the status of grievance resolution.

The reports shall also assess whether remedial measures were required and implemented, whether satisfactory redress was provided to complainants, and identify lessons learned,

recommendations, and preventive measures to minimize the recurrence of similar grievances in the future.

An annual GRM report shall be prepared and submitted as a minimum reporting requirement, including a nil report where no grievances or feedback have been received during the reporting period.

13. Capacity building and Awareness

All nominated GRM Committee members and GRM Focal Persons shall receive training on the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) prior to assuming their responsibilities. Refresher training shall be provided periodically, and newly appointed or replacement members shall be trained as soon as practicable following their nomination.

The training shall cover the roles and responsibilities of GRM Committee members and the GRM Focal Person, grievance handling procedures, decision-making criteria, documentation and record-keeping requirements, communication of decisions to complainants, implementation and monitoring of remedial actions, and reporting requirements. Training shall also include procedures for tracking, monitoring, and evaluating the effectiveness of the GRM process and outcomes.

Where relevant, training shall further cover applicable laws, regulations, policies, and standards to support informed and consistent decision-making. Specialized training shall be provided on grievance intake, confidentiality, survivor-centered approaches, and referral mechanisms for Gender-Based Harm (GBH), Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA), and Sexual Harassment (SH) related complaints.

14. Communications Plan and Disclosure

To ensure accessibility and transparency, the GRM process will be disclosed on the MoAL and MoF websites and on the six project Dzongkhag Websites. The GRM process translated in Dzongkhag will also be posted on the Gewog Office and disseminated through Gewog and Chiwogs Social media networks.

At the field level, all District Agriculture and Livestock Officers will sensitize project communities about the GRM through sensitization briefings in the local language. Once sensitized, the Local Government, Gewog Agriculture and Livestock Officers will in turn further disseminate the GRM information to their respective communities.

The GRM forms will be translated into *Dzongkhag* and will be readily available at the *Gewog* Office or maintained with the respective *Tsogpas* of each *Chiwogs*. The MoAL shall adhere to the project's Stakeholder Engagement Plan to guarantee that all stakeholders are aware of GRM processes.

Form 3: Grievance Status Form

15. Budget

The PMU shall allocate adequate resources for the implementation and strengthening of the GRM. This shall include budget provisions for capacity-building and training of GRC members and GRM Focal Persons, translation of GRM procedures and materials into local languages where necessary, and dissemination of GRM information to project stakeholders and communities through appropriate communication channels, including information materials, community awareness activities, and social media platforms.

Form 1: Grievance Submission Form

i. Complainant Information

Item	Details
Name (optional)	
Contact details (optional)	Phone / Email / Address
I wish to remain anonymous	☐ Yes ☐ No
I am willing to be contacted for follow-up	☐ Yes ☐ No
Preferred mode of response	☐ Phone ☐ Email ☐ Written Letter ☐ In-Person
Date of submission	(DD/MM/YYYY)
Relationship to the project	☐ Project Staff ☐ Youth/Women/Vulnerable Group Beneficiary ☐ Community Member ☐ Other (specify): _____
Project/Program involved	(Name or location of the project or activity)

ii. Description of the Grievance

Describe the issue clearly, including what happened, when, where and who was involved.

(Attach additional sheets or documents if necessary)

iii. Impact

How has this issue affected you, your work, or your community? (Describe briefly.)

iv. Efforts to Resolve

Have you previously discussed this issue with any PMU or field office staff or committee?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, provide details: (Name, position and outcome)

v. Preferred Outcome

(Optional) Please share how you would like to see this issue resolved.

vi. Additional Information

Any other details or evidence you wish to provide (e.g., documents, photos, witness statements).

Signature (optional): _____

Date: _____

Form 2: Grievance Registry Form

Purpose of the Registry

The **Grievance Registry** is a confidential record maintained by the **GRM Focal Person** to ensure every complaint or concern is properly logged, tracked and resolved.

It also enables PMU and donors to monitor the effectiveness of the grievance mechanism and ensure accountability.

Data Management and Confidentiality

The GRM Focal Person ensures that all records are stored securely (both hard and soft copies).

Access is restricted to authorized staff only.

An anonymized summary of grievances will be shared with management, donors and relevant stakeholders during quarterly or annual reporting.

Grievance Registry Template

Case ID	Received Date	Complainant Name/Code	Contact No	Type of Grievance	Brief Description	Assigned To	Action Taken	Status	Resolution & Date	Remarks

Form 3: Grievance Status Form

Case ID (if any)	
Status	Open: Complaint received, under initial review.
	In Review: Investigation ongoing.
	Resolved: Corrective action taken and accepted.
	Closed: Case finalized and recorded.
	Referred: Forwarded to external authorities or management for further action.