



Stakeholder Engagement Plan

UGVS-REAP



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Stakeholder engagement Plan.

Effective community and stakeholder engagement plays a crucial role in the successful execution of the project. Throughout the entire project lifecycle, REAP will actively involve stakeholders in the decision-making process. In the development and execution of project activities, the project will seek input and feedback from communities and all relevant stakeholders. This will encompass their recommendations and opinions regarding activity design, implementation strategies, and endorsed measures for mitigating risks.

The design of REAP involved an extensive consultation process that engaged various stakeholders, ranging from local beneficiaries to regional and national actors. These stakeholders encompass groups, institutions, and individuals who could be directly or indirectly affected by REAP, possess an interest in its outcomes, or hold the potential to influence the project, either positively or negatively. In the context of REAP, this group includes central and state ministries, directorates, districts, blocks, universities, farmer producer organizations, MSMEs, cooperatives, youth, women, tribal groups, scheduled castes, marginalized communities, service providers, and IFAD. Additionally, potential stakeholders could comprise impacted communities, civil societies, and other organizations operating within the project areas.

Objective of Stakeholder Engagement Plan

The overall objective of this Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) is to define a program for stakeholder engagement, including public information disclosure and consultation throughout the entire project cycle. The SEP outlines the ways in which the project team will communicate with stakeholders and includes a mechanism by which people can raise concerns, provide feedback, or make complaints about project activities or any activities related to the project.

The SEP also sets out institutional arrangements to ensure effective engagement of project's stakeholders during project implementation. The project recognizes that the voice of vulnerable groups is important to project design and implementation and will make effort to ensure identified vulnerable groups are not adversely affected disproportionately during project implementation. The SEP sets out plans to ensure vulnerable groups will provide timely and meaningful feedback to project during design and implementation, and that they could participate in monitoring the project's risks and impacts management process – through participatory monitoring of activities that may affect them.

Stakeholder Identification Analysis

Method

In order to meet best practice approaches, the project will apply the following principles for stakeholder engagement:

- **Openness and life-cycle approach:** Public consultations for the project(s) will be arranged during the whole life cycle, carried out in an open and inclusive manner, free of external manipulation, interference, coercion, or intimidation.
- **Informed participation and feedback:** Information will be provided to and widely distributed among all stakeholders in an appropriate and accessible format; opportunities are provided for communicating stakeholder feedback, and for analysing and addressing comments and concerns.
- **Inclusiveness and sensitivity:** Stakeholder identification is undertaken to support better communications and build effective relationships. The participation process for the projects is inclusive. All stakeholders at all times are encouraged to be involved in the consultation process. Equal and inclusive access to information is provided to all stakeholders. Sensitivity to stakeholders' needs is the key principle underlying the selection of engagement methods. Special attention is given to vulnerable groups that may be at risk of being left out of project benefits, particularly households from poor and near poor categories, women, the elderly, persons with disabilities, displaced persons, and migrant workers and communities, and the cultural sensitivities of ethnic minority groups.

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

| Key Groups of Stakeholders | Key characteristics | Language needs | Preferred means of notification | Specific Needs (accessibility, audio-visual aid, meeting time, venue) |
|--|---|---|--|--|
| AFFECTED GROUPS | | | | |
| A. BENEFICIARY GROUPS WHO ARE POOR & NEAR-POOR/VULNERABLE | | | | |
| 1. Local farmers CONSTRAINT limited access to information | Live in remote areas Ethnic minority group | Local language (Hindi, Garhwali, Kumauni, Pahadi) | Home visit Leaflets Small group meeting at village level | Public meetings organized at places conveniently accessible (e.g. village level meeting hall) Meeting time convenient for consulted participants, particularly mothers. Avoid peak season (e.g. crop establishment, harvesting season). |
| B. BENEFICIARY GROUPS WHO ARE DISADVANTAGED | | | | |
| 2. Beneficiary women | Limited asset (land, animals, house type) | Local indigenous language for Ethnic peoples | Public loudspeaker Home visit | Meetings to be organized in small groups at places accessible and comfortable for them |

| | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| | <p>Limited home labor (e.g. seasonal migrant workers...)</p> <p>Limited job opportunity</p> <p>Have members with disability/ chronic disease</p> <p>Female-headed households, and</p> <p>Single mothers with dependent who may be busy with household work (e.g. childcare, cooking, income generation activities for daily Subsistence</p> <p>Very young parents with children</p> | | Media campaign | <p>(e.g. community house, village houses, or at their own house).</p> <p>Meeting time convenient for them (not affecting their daily subsistence activities)</p> <p>Individual meeting may be required with female facilitator (for women headed households and single mothers)</p> <p>Transport allowance provided if travel to meeting place affect their income generation</p> |
| 3. People with disability | <p>Could not travel to meeting places without support from their family members</p> <p>Hard of hearing</p> <p>Poor eye visuality/ Blindness</p> | Ethnic minority or Local Language | <p>Home visit</p> <p>Appropriate means of communication based on them impairment(s)</p> | <p>Use of sign language and other assistive tools, as required.</p> <p>Translation into local language if they are from ethnic minority groups.</p> <p>Providing transportation to the meeting venues; where possible, visit them at the home for</p> |

| | | | | |
|--|---|---------------------------|---|---|
| | | | | planned consultation; Meeting timing and duration based are suitable to participants |
| C. BENEFICIARY GROUPS WHO ARE FROM NON-POOR GROUPS | | | | |
| 4. Ordinary farmers CONSTRAINT Limited capacity in apply new farming technologies Difficulties in water use coordination at farm level Low yield | Ordinary people This group is diversified in terms of means of livelihoods (e.g. farming, nonfarm business, hired labor; wage workers, etc. | Local indigenous language | At workplace (health centers) Media campaign Leaflets | Health centers and meeting hall Consultation to be conducted during work |
| D. INTERESTED GROUPS | | | | |
| Government at central levels | Have well established communication and correspondence system in place | Hindi Language | Postal mail, emails, telephone | Provision of relevant technical information, documents on proposed project investments/ plans/ proposals |
| Government at provincial and district levels Women Union NGOs Media Other development Partners. | Have well established communication and correspondence system in place | Hindi and Local language | Postal mail, emails, telephone | Project leaflet Consultation meetings during project implementation Consultation meeting/ project progress update during project implementation |

Information disclosure

Sharing pertinent project information is essential for enabling project-affected individuals and other stakeholders to comprehend the risks, impacts, and opportunities associated with the project. The REAP will ensure that relevant stakeholders have access to crucial information, including:

- i. The project's purpose, nature, and scale.
- ii. The expected duration of project activities.
- iii. Any potential risks and impacts on communities, along with the corresponding mitigation measures.
- iv. The planned stakeholder engagement process.
- v. The grievance mechanism in place.

As part of the stakeholder engagement process, all pertinent documents related to a proposed investment or subproject will be made available. The disclosure of such documents will vary depending on the size and nature of the investment and the significance of associated risks and impacts. Examples of these documents may include subproject proposals, ESCMPs, among others.

The table 1 below list the identified stakeholders and details their engagement methods into the project cycle.

Stakeholder Engagement Matrix

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

| Stakeholder | Concerns | Engagement Method | Information to report and disclose and report back | Most valuable information to obtain | Frequency of engagement | Responsible | Timeline |
|---|--|---|--|---|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Center for Medicinal and Aromatic Plant | Research and learning | Events, research, and tours | Knowledge products, periodic reports | Implementation practices | Occasional | Thematic leaders in PMU | Implementation |
| Beneficiaries | | | | | | | |
| Agri Business start ups | Mentoring, funding, providing network access, technology support | Engagement in project implementation | Activities budgeted for enterprises | Business ideas, proposals, startup roster | Regular | Agri. Horti manager in PMU | Implementation |
| Students | Skill development, mentorship, trainings, support on idea testing | Engagement in project implementation | Activities budgeted for students | Research | Regular | Manager M&E in PMU | Implementation |
| MSME | Business growth, FPO promotion | Engagement in project implementation | Activities related to MSME | Working area and capacity | Regular | Manager Marketing PMU | Implementation |
| Youth | Participatory engagement: planning, implementation, and monitoring, ICTs, internships, scholarships, startups, incubation, entrepreneurship development, employment generation | Planning, implementation, and monitoring events, research | Activities related to youths | Youth status, priorities, needs, and provisions | Regular | Manager I&I | Planning, Implementation |
| Women | Participatory engagement: planning, implementation, and monitoring, Drudgery reduction, enterprises, | Planning, implementation, and monitoring events, research | Activities related to women | Women status, priorities, needs, and provisions | Regular | Manager I&I | Planning, Implementation |

| Stakeholder | Concerns | Engagement Method | Information to report and disclose and report back | Most valuable information to obtain | Frequency of engagement | Responsible | Timeline |
|---|--|---|---|--|-------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| | livelihood improvement | | | | | | |
| Marginalized communities and scheduled cast | Participatory engagement: planning, implementation, and monitoring, livelihood improvement | Planning, implementation, and monitoring events | Activities related to marginalized communities and SCs/STs/OBCs/PWD/Boksa/Tharu Jan Jaati | marginalized community's status, priorities, needs, and provisions | Regular | Manager I&I | Planning, Implementation |
| Tribal communities | Participatory engagement: planning, implementation, and monitoring, livelihood improvement | Planning, implementation, and monitoring events | Activities related to tribal communities | Tribal community's status, priorities, needs, and provisions | Regular | Manager I&I | Planning, Implementation |
| Traders and buyers | | | | | | | |
| Organic exporters | Safe food market | Multi stakeholder platforms (MSP), market | Market demand, price, and opportunities | Market stakeholders, issues, challenges, and opportunities | Regular basis | PMU and DPMUs | Implementation |
| Bio input producers | Ensuring bio inputs to the program areas | MSP, enterprises support and promotion | Bio input demand, supply, and quality status, potential production opportunities | Bio input demand, supply, and quality status, potential production opportunities | Regular | PMU and DPMUs | Implementation |
| Service Providers, start ups, and | Studies, research, technical assistance, and other | Through procurement | Status and opportunities | Status and opportunities | Need basis | PMU, DPMUs and Rural | Implementation |

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| Stakeholder | Concerns | Engagement Method | Information to report and disclose and report back | Most valuable information to obtain | Frequency of engagement | Responsible | Timeline |
|------------------------------|---|------------------------------|--|--|-------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Local to national level NGOs | Capacity building | Awareness, capacity building | Governance, transparency, technical assistance | Governance, transparency, technical assistance | Need basis | PMU, DPMUs | Design, planning, implementation |
| IFAD | | | | | | | |
| IFAD offices | Program design, missions (kick off, supervision, implementation support, mid-term review, and program completion), No objection as per provisions, regular capacity building and technical assistance as needed | Formal communication | PDR, IFAD policies and provisions | PDR, IFAD policies and provisions | Regular basis | PMU, thematic leaders | Design, planning, implementation, completion, and post completion |

Grievance Redressed Mechanism:

Institutional Structure.

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

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

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

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

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

The Government of Uttarakhand has a portal for registration of public grievances (<http://samadhan.uk.gov.in>). Each district has a phone number and a local helpline number too. The project will make communities aware of this portal and the systems for registering their grievances. Also the RDD conducts Social Audit of various schemes from time to time.

The Rural Enterprise Acceleration Project, through its Project Management Unit (PMU) at www.ugvs.in, ensures an effective grievance redressed system. The site prominently displays contact numbers, complaint wizards, and at the Community Livelihood Facilitators (CLFs) level, provision for complaint boxes or "Suchana Pat." This comprehensive approach empowers stakeholders to voice concerns, fostering transparency and timely resolution within the project framework

IFAD has a Complaints Procedure to receive and facilitate resolution of concerns and complaints with respect to alleged non-compliance of its environmental and social policies and the mandatory aspects

of its Social, Environmental and Climate Assessment Procedures. For more information, visit the IFAD webpage: <https://www.ifad.org/web/guest/accountability-and-complaints-procedure>."

Grievance Process.

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

GRM Monitoring and Reporting.

Monitoring and evaluating the stakeholder engagement process is essential, as it empowers the PMU to address identified issues and make necessary adjustments to the schedule and nature of engagement activities for enhanced effectiveness. Part of this process involves establishing a feedback mechanism to address stakeholders' information needs. Furthermore, the stakeholder engagement process will incorporate methods to assess the effectiveness of public consultation processes and the outcomes of these consultations, enabling the identification of areas requiring further action.

Within the PMU, environmental and social safeguards specialists are entrusted with ensuring the high-quality engagement of stakeholders throughout the project's duration. They are also responsible for communicating and reporting all stakeholder-related matters to the Project Director.

Monitoring the stakeholder engagement process involves several activities, including:

- Short-term monitoring during engagement activities to allow for real-time adjustments and improvements.
- A review of outputs at the conclusion of all engagement activities to assess the effectiveness of the implemented stakeholder engagement plan.

To facilitate the monitoring system, a set of key performance indicators for each stage of stakeholder engagement will be developed. The table below provides an example of these indicators and performance metrics, demonstrating the successful completion of engagement tasks.

Table performance indicators

| PHASE | ACTIVITIES | INDICATORS |
|--|--|---|
| Planning for Project | Share updates on Project activities | Posters displayed in allocated service centres by time specified |
| GRM, and other project specific documents Implementation | Share updates on GRM and other project specific documents activities | <p>Posters displayed in allocated service centres by time specified,</p> <p>Affected community stakeholders will have received and understand the information disclosed and attended the public meetings</p> <p>Communities feedback are recorded and well addressed</p> <p>No complaints about non-receipt of project specific documents received.</p> |
| | | |

Identifying impacts and concerns related to REAP is a pivotal aspect of stakeholder engagement that will span the entire project's life cycle. Therefore, the recognition of new concerns, impacts, and grievances as the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) and project advance will serve as a comprehensive gauge for assessing the stakeholder engagement process's effectiveness. The monitoring of the stakeholder engagement process, as outlined in the M&E action plan, will be conducted through two primary approaches.

Review of Engagement Activities in the Field

During the engagements with stakeholders the engagement team will assess meetings using the following engagement tools:

- Stakeholders database,
- Issue and Response table, and
- Meeting records of all consultations held.

Reporting Stakeholders Engagement Activities

Performance will undergo evaluation following stakeholder engagement sessions conducted in the field. When assessing performance, the following aspects will be taken into account:

- The nature, frequency, and distribution of materials disseminated.
- The location and timing of formal engagement events, as well as the level of participation, including specific stakeholder groups.
- The number of individuals attending public or formal meetings.
- The quantity and specifics of comments received, including the type of stakeholder and the details of the feedback provided.

- Meeting minutes, attendance records, and photographic evidence.
- The number and types of stakeholders reaching out to the REAP team via mail, telephone, or other communication means.
- Feedback received from government authorities, community leaders, and other project partners, which is then conveyed to the REAP.
- The number and types of feedback and grievances, along with the nature and timing of their resolution, and the extent to which feedback and comments have been addressed and resulted in corrective actions being implemented.

Reporting Back to Stakeholders

Maintaining stakeholder trust and keeping them well-informed about project progress necessitates transparent and timely reporting. The following reporting mechanisms will be implemented to share project updates and findings with stakeholders:

- **Regular Progress Reports:** The project team will prepare quarterly or bi-annual progress reports, detailing achievements, challenges, and upcoming activities. These reports will be shared with stakeholders and disseminated through multiple communication channels.
- **Community Meetings and Workshops:** Project team members will conduct regular community meetings and workshops to present progress reports in a clear and accessible manner. They will seek feedback and address stakeholder questions during these gatherings.
- **Stakeholder Engagement Forums:** Existing stakeholder engagement forums, such as town hall meetings or focus groups, will be utilized to provide updates and seek input on project progress and challenges.
- **Online Platforms and Project Website:** The project website and online platforms will serve as repositories for project reports, updates, and relevant documents. Stakeholders will have access to this information at their convenience.
- **Infographics and Visual Aids:** Visual aids, including infographics and charts, will be used to present key project indicators and achievements, enhancing understanding and engagement.
- **Feedback Consolidation:** Stakeholder feedback gathered through various channels will be compiled and addressed in subsequent reports. The project team will inform stakeholders about how their input influenced decision-making.
- **Executive Summaries:** For stakeholders who prefer concise information, executive summaries of progress reports will be prepared and distributed.

By actively involving stakeholders in monitoring activities and providing regular, transparent reporting, the REAP will nurture a sense of ownership, accountability, and mutual learning. These efforts will contribute to building stronger relationships with stakeholders and ultimately lead to more effective and sustainable project outcomes.

Feedback/complaint handling format

[illegible]