REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN

MODERNIZING THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM IN TAJIKISTAN (P173977)

Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP)

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List of Abbreviations & Acronyms

AS	Agency on Statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan
CEP	Committee for Environmental Protection
DEP	Department on Environmental Protection at the district or oblast level
E&S	Environmental and Social
ESA	Environmental and Social Assessment
ESCP	Environment and Social Commitment Plan
ESF	Environmental and Social Framework
ESMP	Environmental and Social Management Plan
ESS	Environmental and Social Standard
GFP	Grievance Focal Point
GOT	Government of Tajikistan
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
ICT	Informational Communication Technology
IDA	International Development Association / World Bank
IPF	Investment Project Financing
LMP	Labor Management Procedures
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MNSST	Modernizing the National Statistical System in Tajikistan Project
MoF	Ministry of Finance
NDS	National Development Strategy
NSDS	National Statistics Development Strategy
NSS	National Statistics System
O&M	Operations & Maintenance
OIPs	Other Interested Parties
PAPs	Project Affected Parties
PDO	Project Development Objective
PMU	Project Management Unit
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
SNA	System of National Accounts
TA	Technical Assistance
TOR	Terms of Reference
WB	World Bank

1. INTRODUCTION

The World Bank (WB) and Government of Tajikistan (GOT) are currently engaged in preparing Modernizing the National Statistical System in Tajikistan Project (MNSST) aimed to support Agency on Statistics under the President of Tajikistan in implementation of the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics for the period till 2030 adopted by the Government in November 2019. The project will upgrade the country's system of state statistics to effectively support the Government's aim to develop better economic and social policies based on evidence by: (i) providing reliable and high quality data; (ii) providing easy access to statistical data; and (iii) enhancing the use of administrative data resources and data developed by the private sector. It is envisaged that these actions will, inter alia, help the government better align public spending to strategic priorities, open space for private investment, and strengthen market institutions, which in turn, will contribute to more favorable conditions for faster private-sector led growth. The project will support the implementation of the NSDS-2030 over the next four years.

The project is consistent with the Country Partnership Framework for FY19-23 Objective 5: Improved Effectiveness of the Tax/Statistics Offices. The project builds on the results of the World Bank TAJSTAT Project II implemented in 2015 -2018 that significantly strengthened institutional capacity of the Agency on Statistics (AS) through development and implementation of e-reporting, development and piloting of electronic household books in two districts, enhanced methodology of data collection through CAPI technologies, preparation of required fundamental baselines for transition to the System of National Accounts - 2008 (SNA-2008), improved quality of data collections and statistical data user satisfaction.

Nevertheless, the statistical system in Tajikistan is lagging in implementation of the latest international statistical standards and methodologies, which are required to ensure the quality of produced statistical information in order to satisfy increasing needs of statistics users, such as decision makers from Government and international organizations, business community, NGOs as well as citizens in general. Particularly full implementation of SNA-2008 is necessary to ensure the quality of macroeconomic indicators as well as the quality of whole economic statistics in the country. The new Project includes related events to strengthen the AS capacity and ICT infrastructure, to improve statistical production, dissemination and data user satisfaction over the next four years.

1.1 Project Description

The **Project Development Objective** is to enable the Agency on Statistics to modernize statistical production, dissemination, and improve user engagement.

The following activities will be financed under the Project:

Component 1: Strengthening the Institutional Capacity of AS and Improving ICT Infrastructure

This subcomponent will finance the streamlining of the organizational structure of the National Statistics System in accordance with modernized and changed data collection, processing and dissemination systems, and the corresponding ICT infrastructure, creation of institutional management systems. Activities under this component include, inter alia, updating the legal and institutional framework governing data provider relations, data exchange protocols (legal as well as technical) between AS and providers/recipients of data in the government MDAs and external organizations or individuals (e.g.

private sector, international organizations, researchers, NGOs, etc.) within the framework of the NSS.

Subcomponent 1.1: Strengthening Institutional Capacity. It will introduce modern Human Resource Management systems to better manage staffing needs of the AS. It would modernize the business processes and the organizational structure that supports it across the AS and its provincial, district and sub-district offices. This is expected to result in retraining staff in the skills required to perform their duties under the new structure. The IT staff would have to be trained in using and managing the modernized software and hardware, including in cybersecurity and learning new programming languages to support the statisticians/economists on their special (ad hoc) data and computational requests. Also included is the improvement of personnel training and retraining system(s) within AS and NSS in general, the methods of statistical dissemination and user training strategy and development of relations with respondents and data users.

Open Data assessment of the AS statistical system and its implementation within the AS is an important aspect of modernization in this project. Broadly, Open Data hinges on a few requirements that have to be in place, before Open Data can be ready for implementation, such as: data policy & regulatory framework and its legislation; data timeliness; data accuracy; data transparency; and, easy and unrestricted access to as many data users as possible.

As part of this subcomponent, *statistics laws and associated regulations*, to be drafted and legislated, would include the open data dissemination regulation for AS and its liability for the use and reuse by others of AS' Open Data. This subcomponent would also develop a Data Policy for the AS regarding which data are to be 'Open' and which are to be restricted/confidential. Timely release of data and their accuracy are attributes that would improve as the business processes for data collection and production are re-engineered/streamlined, and the statistical methodologies get modernized and brought to international best-practice levels. Data transparency would be ensured through extensive metadata on the data itself, their provenance, what each data field means, the methodological notes on their computation, and notes on any interpolated data points.

Subcomponent 1.2: Improving ICT Infrastructure. It will support the establishment of ICT infrastructure in AS and in the Regional and District Centers as well as its inter-operability with that of the related agencies of NSS. Through software tools, this subcomponent will support modernization of the business processes of data collection, data processing, dissemination and data exchange. The ICT infrastructure upgrade will be driven by the data requirements of AS, such as censuses, household income and budget surveys, business enterprise surveys, agricultural, sectoral and administrative data, such as large volumes of data from the Civil Registry, Tax Committee, etc. In addition, municipal statistics and data from the Household Books in Jamoats would be digitized and brought within the central data warehouse in AS. It will also include setting up of a modernized Primary Data Center and its network connecting the Regional and District offices of AS, and a Secondary Data Center (as a backup facility for planned or unplanned outages in service in the Primary Data Center, as well as, financing the improvement of the physical facilities of AS' Data Center, purchase of IT equipment, and software applications development, where necessary. The location of the statistical archives is vulnerable to climate-related risks such as flooding. Thus, the project will include mitigation measures to ensure data recovery and backup to prevent data loss in the event of natural disasters. Part of the ICT modernization effort would be geared towards strengthening the data and network security at the data center (primary, secondary, and backup storage/archiving sites).

The project will also finance the modernization and improvement of the methods for presenting data and dissemination tools. Dissemination practices will be improved by compliance with international

standards in dissemination, collecting user feedback, supporting 'Open Data' principles for data & metadata access, implementing an open micro-data library, and producing analytical reports and visualization software tools. Improved statistics and processing systems will allow decision makers and researchers in the country to use data for analytical purposes as well as for new models for short-term and medium-term forecasting. Microdata (surveys) would also be accessible for download along with their survey metadata – survey methodology, sampling frames, questionnaires and other information that makes survey usage easier) through the data website. The datasets that would be downloadable would depend on the AS' data policy, and the data privacy safeguards that would be in place to provide data anonymization of personally identifiable information (PII), as well as data form business enterprise surveys in which business' proprietary data would be anonymized by suppressing, masking or obfuscating such data.

Component 2: Enhancing the system of statistical production, dissemination and data use

Subcomponent 2.1: SNA-2008 and statistical infrastructure. It will finance measures to improve the quality of statistical production in the system, particularly, improve national accounts in line with SNA 2008 requirements, improve the system of data collection and statistical surveys, compile a statistical register of enterprises and individual entrepreneurs, introduce a unified system of classifications, nomenclatures, harmonize registers and related changes in the legislative base of statistics and relevant ministries, and develop a methodology for incorporating "big data" into the statistical system. Implementation of SNA 2008 still requires several further improvements in process of production in all fields of economic statistics.

It will support the improvement of the quality and timeliness of the following statistical surveys, statistical work, and statistical areas: (a) sample household surveys (HBS, LFS); (b) integration of annual and quarterly statistics on enterprises; (c) periodical statistics data by economic activity; (d) national accounts and macroeconomic indicators; (e) price statistics; (f) foreign trade statistics; (g) demographic statistics; (h) municipal statistics; (i) agricultural, climate and environmental statistics; (j) social statistics and (k) statistics on social marginalization and others. In addition, the project will try to optimize the data collection processes in the country. It will bring in the system information from administrative system and "big data" and also improve where needed data collected through surveys and censuses. In doing so, will look not only into optimization of the data flows but also in the financial aspects of data collection and reduction of the respondent burden.

Subcomponent 2.2: Electronic data collection and improvements in data dissemination and use. It

will help to close key methodological gaps identified in the NSDS. Classifications and standards will be further revised and modified to align with international best practices. Questionnaire design and sampling methods will be improved. Statistical production will be improved by thoroughly updating national accounts, improving the well-being monitoring system, improving agricultural production statistics, and improving statistical methods, standards, and registers. The resulting data will include new indicators to enable disaggregation among subpopulations including women/men, age groups, disability, and other groups. The project will support the expansion of existing indicators related to gender, as well as the development and introduction of new gender indicators. The ICT-related activities that support the data collection and dissemination are described in Subcomponent 1.2 above.

Component 3: Project Management

This component will finance operating costs, i.e. reasonable costs for goods and services necessary for

daily coordination, administration and supervision of the project by AS. This includes project coordination, procurement and financial management, conducting a professional audit of project costs, operating expenses and purchased equipment.

Project planning and management will be through technical advisory services, training, operation costs, and the acquisition of goods. Successful implementation of the project requires a dedicated Project Management Unit (PMU) staffed with a project coordinator as well as specialists in financial management (FM), procurement, **environmental and social risk management**, ICT, human resources, and monitoring and evaluation. This component will provide funding for those functions and their implementation.

1.2 Environmental and Social Risk Ratings of the Project

The Project is being prepared under the World Bank's new ESF, which came into effect on October 1, 2018, replacing the Bank's Environmental and Social Safeguard Policies. The project must comply with the following Environmental and Social Standards (ESS) - ESS 1; ESS 2; ESS 3, and ESS 10. The reviews undertaken by the Bank have classified environmental and social risks as low and moderate respectively. Environmental impacts expected from the project are negligible and confined to minor rehabilitation for the installation of new equipment, disposal/recycling of electronic waste when equipment is replaced/repaired, and improvement of the physical infrastructure of statistical authorities. The key social issues relate to data collection and collation; ensuring its accuracy; meaningful analysis and interpretation; data dissemination /disclosure; and data privacy safeguards. These issues have been addressed as a part of the overall project design through investments in the following: i) consider and resolve the issue of discrepancies between data published by the AS and information received and used by other institutions; ii) ensure accurate and timely publication of data; and iii) facilitate more sophisticated analysis using anonymized micro-data, including by independent researchers engaged in policy-design. Publication of anonymized micro-data and administrative data files will allow third-party analysis and verification. At the same time, it is very important to manage expectations with these triangulations.

During implementation key social challenges are related to interagency compatibility, institutional competency, and data privacy. The project will invest only into the AS, while other state data producers (local governments, civil registry etc.) may face challenges, as they have to comply with updated statistical methodology, formats and ICT modules. Besides, access to the AS sampling designs is to be provided to other data producers to avoid creation of parallel partial statistical data. Increased methodological complexity and ICT modules will require more competent staffing, but due to low salaries this might be an issue that affect the project results. Primary data is produced at the sub-regional level, it is therefore a major task of local statistical offices to store micro-data and to prevent any unauthorized access to, or, losses of confidential information.

A particular challenge will be addressing the country's currently limited public access to updated official data, which stifles broad engagement in prioritizing and developing effective policies, as well as accountability for implementing those policies. With increasing methodological complexity, the issues of substantive differences and release timing differences will appear as well. Timely access to the same publications and releases should be secured so all users not only the government agencies, particularly at the regional/sub-regional level.

Towards addressing the social risks and in compliance with ESS10 on Information Disclosure and Citizen Engagement, the Government of Tajikistan/ the Agency on Statistics (AS), implementing agency, has developed the present Stakeholder Engagement Plan.

1.3 Purpose of the SEP

This Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) enables to identify elaborately different stakeholders and to develop an approach for reaching each group. In other words, it provides an appropriate approach for consultations and disclosure. These in turn are expected to create an atmosphere of understanding that actively involves project-affected people and other interested parties, reaching out to them in a timely manner, and that each group is provided opportunities to voice their opinions and concerns. Overall, SEP serves the following purposes: i) stakeholder identification and analysis; (ii) planning engagement modalities viz., effective communication tool for consultations and disclosure; and (iii) enabling platforms for influencing decisions; (iv) defining roles and responsibilities of different actors in implementing the Plan; and (iv) grievance redress mechanism (GRM).

1.4 Scope and Structure of the SEP

Scope of the SEP shall be as outlined in the World Bank's ESS10. The engagement will be planned as an integral part of the environmental and social assessment and Project design and implementation.

This document includes 8 chapters. The first chapter serves as an Introduction. It provides a brief about the project and the context in which the SEP is being prepared. Chapter 2 lists the regulatory framework in Tajikistan which provides a legitimacy for SEP. A summary of the consultations held so far is presented in Chapter 3. All the three chapters serve as a backdrop. Stakeholder Identification, Mapping and Analysis is elaborated in the Chapter 4. Stakeholder Engagement Plan is presented in the Chapter 5. Chapter 6 includes the Resources and Responsibilities for Implementing Stakeholders Engagement Activities. Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) follows in Chapter 7. Monitoring, documentation and reporting are presented in the last Chapter 8.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE, POLICY AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

This chapter provides details on the social policies, laws, regulations as well as guidelines that are relevant to the activities proposed under the Project. It also provides an assessment of the adequacy of the coverage on social aspects in the legislative and regulatory framework. Lastly, WB Environmental and Social Standard 10 on Stakeholder Engagement and Access to Information is described below.

2.1 Key National Sector Specific and Citizen Engagement Legal Provisions

As the fundamental law of the State, the Constitution defines the structure of the government, basic rights, liberties and responsibilities of its citizens, as well as the powers of the legislative, executive and judicial branches. Article 5 mandates that: The life, the honor, the dignity, and other natural human rights are inviolable. Human rights and freedoms are recognized, observed, and protected by the state. Article 12 guarantees that: The economy of Tajikistan is based on different forms of ownership: freedom of economic and entrepreneurial activity, equality of rights, and legal protection of all forms of ownership, including private property. Some key strategies, laws and regulations that have relevance for the project are presented below.

National Development Strategy (NDS) for the period of up to 2030 underlines the importance of obtaining relevant and reliable statistical data to make decisions for successful Project implementation, and demand was not simply for better statistics, but to expand the capacity to analyze and interpret statistics in support of evidence-based policy making to track the indicators towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) up to 2030 implementation.

National Strategy for Development of Statistics of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period of up to 2030 (NSDS) will contribute to achieve the Government's objectives on transforming the state statistics system into a high-level institution that will support development of evidence-based policy by providing reliable and high quality data, ensuring easy access to statistics and increasing the use of administrative data resources. It highlights four major development areas:

- 1) Strengthening of the institutional capacity of the Agency of Statistics;
- 2) Improving production of statistical data;
- 3) Improvement of the statistical dissemination and the dialogue with users;
- 4) Improvement of the physical infrastructure and automation of the data processing.

The project will support the implementation of the NSDS-2030 over the next four years.

As part of the implementation of the State Project on Development and Introduction of Information and Communication Technologies in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2018-2020, the AS is currently exchanging data offline with the following ministries and agencies of the Republic of Tajikistan: Ministry of Finance, Customs Committee, Agency for Social Insurance and Pensions, Tax Committee, State Committee for Land Management and Geodesy, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Internal Affairs, National Bank of Tajikistan; State Savings Bank "Amonatbank" etc.

The key legal document for official statistics in Tajikistan is the *Law on State Statistics*. This law regulates legal relations in the statistical activity, determines goals, rights and responsibilities of the state statistical offices, and also the order of organization of collection, processing, use, dissemination and protection of official statistics and official statistical accounting in the Republic of Tajikistan. It clearly defines the rights and responsibilities of key statistics stakeholders, including respondents, users, AS structures and statistical units of line ministries.

Law on Civil Service determines the organizational and legal basis of the civil service, the legal status and social guarantees of civil servants of the Republic of Tajikistan. Article 35 of the law regulate termination

of employment as a result of major changes in the organization or in instances when an organizational entity is merged or dissolved. The Law provides that in instances when certain job positions would be abolished, the redundant civil servants can be reassigned to other job positions. If transfer to another relevant civil service position is not possible, the civil servants are placed in the cadre reserve for one year and refresher training opportunities are offered.

Law on Freedom of Information is underpinned by Article 25 of the Constitution, which states that governmental agencies, social associations and officials are required to provide each person with the possibility of receiving and becoming acquainted with documents that affect her or his rights and interests, except in cases provided by the legislation. Based on this Law, the Project Affected People (PAP) have the right to access the Project related information.

Law on Personal Data Protection determines legal and organizational basis of the activities connected with collection, processing and personal data protection. It establishes grounds for the regulation of relations between owners, operators, and data subjects. The Law also clearly sets out rules for obtaining consent, notifying the data subject in case of the transfer of her/his data, as well as conditions for cross-border transfer.

Pursuant to Article 24 of *Law on Information*, owners, operators, and any related third parties are permitted to collect and process personal data in accordance with the procedure established by the Law on Information and other regulatory legal acts of the Republic of Tajikistan. Accordingly, the protection of personal data is also guaranteed by the state under Article 5 of the Law on Personal Data Protection. In this regard, measures should be taken for the prevention of unintentional and unauthorized diversion, copying, theft, loss, modification, forgery, disclosure, and/or destruction of personal data. Chapter 2 of the Law on Information establishes procedures for exercising the right to access the information.

Law on Appeals of Individuals and Legal Entities of Republic of Tajikistan contains legal provisions on established information channels for citizens to file their complaints, requests and grievances. Article 14 of the Law sets the timeframes for handling grievances, which is 15 days from the date of receipt that do not require additional study and research, and 30 days for the appeals that need additional study. These legal provisions will be taken into account by the project-specific Grievance Redress Mechanism.

The *Ethics Commission* was formed under the Agency on Statistics in 2016. This Commission headed by the AS Chairman enforces the implementation of the President's Decree # 591 dated 03.12.2015 on Civil Servants Code of Ethics. The Code regulates a set of norms, principles and rules for the official and out-of-service conduct of the civil servant, expressing the moral qualities of his professional activity and conduct at work and in the society and generally recognized moral human values, the moral requirements of society for a civil servant. A civil servant has no right to give preference and privileges to anyone on the basis of national, racial, sexual, linguistic, religious, political beliefs, education, social and property status and other grounds; s/he must show tolerance and respect for the customs and traditions of nationalities, take into account the cultural or other characteristics of ethnic and social groups, and promote inter-ethnic harmony. The Ethics Commission reviews the complaints and statements related to non-compliance with ethical norms and rules set for civil servants employed at the AS.

It should be noted that the *legislation related to land use and acquisition* is not applicable to the activities to be supported under the Project. Within Subcomponent 1.2 the Project will support rehabilitation and upgrade of ICT infrastructure. These activities are not expected to require land acquisition or impact any other land users because they will be implemented within the buildings and boundaries of the tax authorities.

Law on Public Procurement of Goods, Works and Services establishes general legal provisions on the government procurement of goods, works and services by any legal entities within the territory of the Republic Tajikistan. It regulates the procurement procedures carried out partially or completely from the state budget funds. Article 16 of this Law defines the right of complainants. Participants in the auction

procedures have the right to lodge a complaint to the tender commission with regard to the selection results before the decision of the tender commission is made. Participants in procurement procedures can also lodge a complaint to the procuring organization with respect to any decision of the tender commission during 10 days after publication of results of purchasing procedures.

Labor Code of the Republic of Tajikistan is the fundamental legislative act aimed at regulating all labor issues arising in the Republic of Tajikistan. This Code governs employment relationships and other relations, directly related, directed to protection of the rights and freedoms of the parties of employment relationships, establishment of the minimum guarantees of the rights and freedoms in the sphere of work. Article 7 of the Code prohibits discrimination and guarantees that all citizens have equal rights to work; discrimination in labor relations is prohibited. Article 22 of the Tajikistan Labor Code embraces the principle that all employees should be treated equally. Accordingly, employers cannot treat temporary and agency workers or part-time workers differently from the permanent employees unless justifiable grounds exist for the different treatment. Article 8 prohibits forced labor. Article 174 sets the minimum age at 15, however, in certain cases of vocational training, mild work may be allowed for 14 years old.

Articles 189-192 of the Labor Code regulate labor disputes between the employer and employee and working conditions provided by labor agreement (contract) and collective agreement and contracts. Section 5 of the Labor Code narrates the roles and responsibilities of employers and employees related to occupational health and labor safety.

List of International Treaties and Conventions related to Social Issues ratified by Tajikistan:

- Rotterdam Convention on Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure (1998);
- Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2006);
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
- Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women;
- Convention on Minimum Age for Admission to Employment (1993);
- Convention on Worst Forms of Child Labor (2005);
- Abolition of Forced Labor Convention (1999);
- Employment Policy Convention (1993);
- Labor Inspection Convention (2009);
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child CRC (1993)
- Tripartite Consultation (International Labor Standards) Convention, (2014); and
- Occupational Safety and Health Convention (2009).

Adequacy of the Legislative Framework on Social Aspects

The legal and regulatory framework at the national and local levels provides an adequate and appropriate enabling framework for implementing the key activities to be supported under the Project. Responsiveness to data users and complainants' inquiries/questions, and public accountability are adequately covered by the legal framework at different levels. The legislation highlights the importance of state's commitment to serving and ensuring citizen protection, in general, and the data users, producers and people to be affected by the project in particular. The laws on personal data protection, access to information, grievance redress, and ethics codes in place stipulate rules governing data dissemination services; and the national statistics modernization interventions to be implemented by the Project.

2.2 World Bank Environmental and Social Standard on Stakeholder Engagement

The World Bank's Environmental and Social Framework (ESF)'s Environmental and Social Standard (ESS) 10, "Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure", recognizes "the importance of open and transparent engagement between the Borrower and project stakeholders as an essential element of good international practice" (World Bank, 2017: 97). Specifically, the requirements set out by ESS10 are the following:

- "Borrowers will engage with stakeholders throughout the project life cycle, commencing such engagement as early as possible in the project development process and in a timeframe that enables meaningful consultations with stakeholders on project design. The nature, scope and frequency of stakeholder engagement will be proportionate to the nature and scale of the project and its potential risks and impacts.
- Borrowers will engage in meaningful consultations with all stakeholders. Borrowers will provide stakeholders with timely, relevant, understandable and accessible information, and consult with them in a culturally appropriate manner, which is free of manipulation, interference, coercion, discrimination and intimidation.
- The process of stakeholder engagement will involve the following, as set out in further detail in this ESS: (i) stakeholder identification and analysis; (ii) planning how the engagement with stakeholders will take place; (iii) disclosure of information; (iv) consultation with stakeholders; (v) addressing and responding to grievances; and (vi) reporting to stakeholders.
- The Borrower will maintain and disclose as part of the environmental and social assessment, a documented record of stakeholder engagement, including a description of the stakeholders consulted, a summary of the feedback received and a brief explanation of how the feedback was taken into account, or the reasons why it was not." (World Bank, 2017: 98).

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

For more details on the WB Environmental and Social Standards, please follow the below links:

www.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/environmental-and-social-framework/brief/environmental-and-social-standards and http://projects-operations/environmental-and-social-framework/brief/environmental-and-social-framework/brief/environmental-and-social-standards

3. PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

3.1. Key Stakeholder Meetings and Consultations

The AS and the World Bank has initiated a discussion on the project concept in mid-2020. The latest discussions carried on the Project content and project design occurred from November 2020 to February 2021 via virtual meetings with the stakeholders in Tajikistan. Details about the meetings and consultations held are presented Table 1 below.

Table 1. Stakeholder Consultations

Place and Method	Date	Participants	Key points raised
Dushanbe, face-to-face meetings, e-mail exchanges, phone consultations, webex discussions	November- December, 2020	Agency on Statistics Leadership, Departments on Planning and Reporting; Economic Analysis and International Relations; Organizing Documents and Information Flow; Legal Unit; Methodological and Local Statistical Outreach Unit	 Preparation of the social and environmental risk management documents by the AS with the WB technical support. Institutional GRM in place at the national and local levels E-waste management issues Regulatory and legal provisions for citizen engagement, labour management and environmental protection Organizational organigram Project expectations and anticipated E&S impacts
Dushanbe, WB virtual Mission	December 2020	Agency on Statistics Leadership, Heads of Departments	 Project Design Project components and priority activities ICT infrastructure modernization Use of administrative data COVID-19 related issues
Dushanbe, Presentation and consultation with key state stakeholders	February, 2021	AS management, head of management, departments and sectors of the AS, representatives of line ministries and agencies	A draft report on the level of satisfaction of users of statistical information was presented and feedback received from the AS and line ministries. Their comments and inputs have been incorporated in the final report and laid the foundation for the prioritization of the project
Public consultations on the ESF documents	March, 2021	Multi-stakeholder virtual workshop	 Social and environmental risk management documents prepared for the project by the AS. Institutional GRM in place at the national and local levels E-waste management issues Regulatory and legal provisions for citizen engagement, labour management and environmental protection

3.2 Lessons Learned in Engaging Communities / Stakeholders from Previous Projects

Community mobilization and involvement play important roles in ensuring relevance and ownership of interventions. The project draws on the stakeholder engagement experience under several

World Bank (WB) and other donor-supported projects ¹ to identify effective approaches to citizen engagement.

During the discussions with the WB ESF team members it was recommended that the project team should take into consideration the impact of COVID-19 on the project design, risks and indicators.

Annual user satisfaction surveys implemented during TAJSTAT II will be continued during Project. The major findings of the User Satisfaction Survey conducted in Dushanbe and 4 regions of the country in 2018 were as follows:

- 67% of respondents find it difficult or relatively difficult to access data in open sources, while 24.9% find it quite easily and very easily to access data;
- Key sources of official statistics are the AS official printed publications, the AS website, and publications /websites of international organizations. 80% of users refer to the AS website data as key data source;
- Over 50% of respondents assessed the volume of available open data insufficient, while over 40% respondents consider available data sufficient;
- 90% of respondents use official statistical sources during their analysis;
- Official statistics are mainly used to analyze innovations to make short-term decisions, analyze trends to develop long-term strategies, as well as the use of official statistics for research purposes.
- 44% of respondents were unsatisfied or moderately unsatisfied with official statistics available;
- Overall, 70% of respondents assessed the official statistics performance as satisfactory.

The results obtained have served as a baseline study to assess the key project indicators for the upcoming investments.

Feedback received from beneficiaries interviewed during Project preparation, especially urban statistical reporters noted improvements in the ease of filing statistical reports, as paper copies are no longer required to accompany e-submissions. E-filing is still less popular among statistical reporters in rural areas, who have limited access to the internet.

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¹ TAJSTAT I Project, Tax Administration Reform Project (TARP); TAJSTAT II Project

4. STAKEHOLDER MAPPING, SEGMENTATION AND ANALYSIS

As a direct beneficiary of the MNSS RT Project, the AS will benefit from strengthening internal capacity to institutionalize the use of modern technologies and methods for statistical accounting. Business processes will be simplified and reorganized, making operations more cost-effective and reducing administrative costs. The World Bank will provide advice and technical assistance to attract the international consultants to provide methodological support and the implementation of international statistical standards. The second group of beneficiaries is other producers of official statistics, as well as key users of statistical information and statistical units. This group will gain from a simpler, more transparent and efficient system of statistics and data dissemination. Enhancing automation will reduce the compliance cost and minimize the risk of corruption, helping restoring trust in official statistics.

ESS 10 recognizes two broad categories of stakeholders: Project Affected Parties and Other Interested Parties. **Project-affected parties** (**PAPs**) include those likely to be affected by the project because of actual impacts or potential risks to their physical environment, health, security, cultural practices, well-being, or livelihoods. These stakeholders may include individuals or groups, including local communities. They are the individuals or households most likely to observe/feel changes from environmental and social impacts of the project. The term "**Other interested parties**" (**OIPs**) refers to individuals, groups, or organizations with an interest in the project, which may be because of the project location, its characteristics, its impacts, or matters related to public interest. For example, these parties may include regulators, government officials, the private sector, the scientific community, academics, research institutions, women's organizations, media, other civil society organizations, and other groups.

4.1 Stakeholder Mapping

One of the key challenges will lie in mapping out comprehensively the stakeholder profile and the 'system' thereof. This would imply identifying various sub-groups of beneficiaries/actors/functionaries; soliciting their expectations (from the project) and ascertaining the issues and concerns. Results emanating from these enquiries will have to be adjudicated against the existing 'system' – policies, programs, legislation, institutions and service deliveries. For the purpose of convenience, stakeholders hence have been classified into four groups, including enablers (government ministries who make policies and strategies); direct beneficiaries (AS relevant departments and statistical units); indirect beneficiaries (other producers of official statistics, subjects of official statistics) and other interested parties such as IFIs, CSOs, researchers, and media. Table 2 below describes the mapping of the Program stakeholders.

Table 2. Project Stakeholders

ENABLERS/PARTNERS							
Ministry of Finance							
Central Apparatus	Department of						
International Relations							
Majlisi Oli/Parliament							
Majlisi Namoyandagon/Committee on I	egislation and Human Right	s					
Tax Committee							
Central Apparatus	Legal Support	Department of International Relations and					
	Department	Taxation					
Ministry of Labor, Employment and I	Ministry of Labor, Employment and Migration						
Labor Inspection							
Committee on Environmental Protection							

Department on Environmental	Department of Wa	aste	Department of Environmental Monitoring			
Regulation and Control	Management Con	trol	and Informa	and Information		
Ministry of Economy and Trade Deve	lopment					
Department of Investment Policy						
State Investments Committee and Im			ement			
Department of State Property	Department of Pri	vate		of Foreign Aid Coordination		
	Sector Support			ing of Projects		
Committee on Women, and Family A	ffairs - implements	gender	policy			
Regional and Local Executive Bodies	1					
Provinces			verning bodies	Local Environmental Offices		
		jamoat				
	DIRECT BENEF	FICIAL	RIES			
Agency on Statistics	T 1 1 0 00					
National Office	Regional Offices			District branches		
Ministry of Finance	1					
Department of Finance Statistics	1					
National Universities (Department of S	tatistics)					
Tajik State National University						
Statistical units/reporters	701 1 1 11		**			
Legal entities submitting regular	1	s sub	mitting regula	r		
statistical reports	statistical reports		DIEG			
N. (* 1D 1	INDIRECT BENE		ARIES	NA: 1 CYY 1/1 1		
National Bank	Ministry of Finance			Ministry of Health and		
	(Statistics Department)			Social Protection		
Ministry of Economic Development	Ministry of Justice	o/ N	Ministry of	Ministry of Labor,		
and Trade	Civil Registry		ndustry and	Migration and Employment		
and Trade			New	Wingration and Employment		
			Technologies			
Ministry of Energy and Water	Ministry of Intern		Ministry of	State Committee for Land		
Resources	Affairs		Education and	Management and Geodesy		
2100002000			Science	Tranagement and Seeses,		
Committee for Tourism Development	Local Developmen		Export agency	Banks (state and non-state)		
1	Committee		1 0 7	,		
Committee on Environmental	Customs Committee		Agency for	Agency for the		
Protection		S	Social Protection	Procurement of Goods,		
		a	nd Pensions	Works and Services;		
C	THER INTEREST	TED P	ARTIES			
International Financing Institutions a	nd International N	GOs				
IMF	IFC	A	ADB	Other IFIs and International		
				Organizations/Consulting		
				Firms		
CSOs, Think Tanks and other Data U		1				
Zerkalo, M-Vector, Strategic Research	NGOs	l A	Associations	Other professional unions		
Center						
Media	1			<u> </u>		
Print and broadcast – newspapers, TV	Electronic Media	– web s	sites, news	Social media – Facebook,		
channels, radio programs	agencies			Instagram etc.		

4.2 Stakeholder Analysis

Consultation meetings were held with different stakeholder groups. Project information were shared to evince their expectations and the issues/ concerns thereof. These consultations helped in, understanding not only the current functioning of the system but also in ascertaining the social issues likely to be addressed by the Project. The results so obtained were consolidated and the initial set of impacts likely to occur as a result of the Project interventions drawn. Consultations were held that covered a variety of stakeholders in order to identify gaps, risks, and potential actions. The Project beneficiaries and stakeholders will have different expectations from, and issues related to the Project.

Table 3. Expectations, Issues, and Concerns

	Program Affected Parties (PAPs)/Direct Beneficiaries							
1. Group/ Subgroup	2. Expectations from the project	3. Current Status	4. Concerns and issues	5. Significance of Risks	6. Enabling Conditions required			
Agency on Statistics (AS)	Improving data quality, improving ICT infrastructure and data dissemination, increasing confidence in official statistics, the transition to the National Accounts 2008	Within previous projects, many efforts were made to improve the quality of data, to raise public trust in official statistics	 There are barriers related to transition to the SNA 2008; Quality of official statistics does not fully satisfy the users; There is still a burden for statistical reporters to provide regular reports; Not all international standards of statistical accounting are harmonized and customized to the Tajik context; IT equipment is outdated; Administrative data is used insufficiently. 	High	 Develop and introduce specific software to transfer to electronic reporting and implement trainings for statistical reporters and administrators; Develop methodology and classification based on international standards of statistical accounting; Optimize existing statistical reporting forms to reduce the burden on statistical reporters, improve IT infrastructure, Conduct regular user satisfaction survey 			
Regional and district level statistical bodies	 Enhance the efficiency and capacity of regional and local statistical authorities, Effective use of ICT, Strict compliance with the legislation on official statistical accounting, Procure new PCs and other office equipment for Regional AS offices 	Regional statistical bodies oversee about 36 000 legal entities, and about 180,000 entrepreneurs Conduct household surveys at the local level	 Since more than 50 percent of local statistics have 2-3 employees, it is difficult to maintain the necessary skills to meet the growing demand for collecting quality information About a third of the offices do not have their own premises and lack modern office equipment and technologies; Technical capacity of staff is inadequate; Lack of analytical capacity and insufficient knowledge of modern computer technologies for analysis and investigation of cases not covered by statistical accounting for all reporting entities 	High	Integrate and enhance the automated information and analytical systems Develop a system of continuous training, mentoring and advanced training of employees. Effective GRM is in place			

Ministry of Finance (MoF)	Harmonization of SNA- 2008 with Government Finance Statistics (GFS) 2014	The MF has done some work on the implementation of GFS 2014 on the basis of GFS 2001, but the work has not yet been completed. Non-compliance of indicators as required by SNA 2008	 Additional resources and methodological assistance are needed to finalize the SGF 2014 in the context of the Republic of Tajikistan Incomplete compliance with the classification of state budgets for the full implementation of SNA 2008. No data disaggregation (not available) 	High	GFS 2014 implementation, software development and data exchange on disaggregated form
Statistical reporters (business entities - legal entities that submit a statistical report)	Reducing the cost of data reporting, with a focus on a full transition to electronic reporting; Improving statistical literacy of statistical units	About 36,000 legal entities submit a monthly statistical report, but not all reports have yet been converted into electronic format and enterprises, which account for 90.5% of the total number of economic entities, whose annual turnover does not exceed 1 million somoni.	 Data collection targets that are often unrealistic or overly burdensome need to be reconsidered. Asymmetric interaction between statistical bodies and the private sector undermines companies' confidence in official statistics and ultimately reduces profitability and investment growth. Low financial literacy among statistic reporters; Poor awareness on official statistic reforming among public at large; Limited awareness of statistical reporters on their rights and responsibilities, including noncompliance behavior habits spread out Poor ICT skills to submit electronic statistical reports. 	Substantial	Raising public awareness and disseminating easy-to-use tips on the use of ICTs. Develop and implement a statistical literacy course for statistical reporters and workshops on statistical accounting for their accountants. Design and prepare a series of TV commercials to raise public awareness.
		Project Affected	Parties (PAPs)/Indirect Beneficiaries		
Group/ Subgroup	Expectations from the project	Current Status	Concerns and issues	Significanc e of Risks	Enabling Conditions required

Tax Committee	Improve mechanisms for the exchange of information between state bodies and organizations; Compare data from the Statistics Agency with the data in the VAT return from the Tax Committee for companies engaged in the construction of real estate;	The Agency has the Single Window for registration of legal entities, as all legal entities must register and report on monthly basis with the Agency on Statistics or its branches in the fields. This registry is connected to databases of Tax Committee, Customs Committee and Social Protection Agency Data exchange agreements are signed and data in different formats are submitted on a regular basis However, a specific mechanism and format for data exchange has not been finalized		Data mismatch with the Tax Committee and other state agencies using the services of the single window and automated single interdepartmental network module; Technical and network errors in accessing relevant data; Lack of competent personnel to manage the database; Often data is exchanged unilaterally (from the AS to the TC) Data on entrepreneurship does not fully reflect production activities, there is no proper check on the quality of data. No disaggregated data as required by SNA 2008 The criterion for small and medium-sized businesses has not yet been approved	Substantial	Revise the data sharing agreement to take into account the scope of the format, deadlines, and methods of data reporting. Transition to an electronic method of collecting data on entrepreneurship. Generation of output tables on the disaggregated form. Development of a legal act on the criteria of small and medium-sized businesses
Customs Committee	Improve mechanisms for the exchange of information between state bodies and organizations	The Customs Single Window registry is in place and functions in its 52 offices. Legal entities engaged in importing and exporting goods are to be registered and pay relevant state duties. This registry is connected to databases of Tax Committee, Statistics Committee and Social	•	VAT return data mismatching against the Customs import/export turnover; Technical and networking errors in accessing the relevant data; Insufficient competent staff to manage the database. A need for development of a united approach to prevent risks of tax and state due noncompliance by economic entities	Substantial	Use of large-scale data-matching systems to detect inaccurate reporting between the state agencies

		Protection Agency.			
State Committee of Land Administration and Geodesy	Improving the mechanisms for the exchange of information between state bodies and organizations	When comparing and analyzing existing information, many questions arise	measurements of sown areas		Set up a regular data exchange
		Other I	nterested Parties/Enablers	1	
State Procurement Agency	Enhance the institutional capacity of the AS in the-procurement of goods, services, and works for training centers and data centers	Controls over the implementation of state procurement of goods, services and works by the state organizations Builds the capacity of state procurement staff Conducts international tenders and monitors the compliance to the national legislation	 Low penetration of technologies and lack of digitization in rural areas; Low investment attractiveness of the sector; Insufficient number of procurement staff countrywide; Maintains a separate registration database for national service and good providers 	Substantial	Preparation, disclosure and implementation of the Project Procurement Strategy for Development
Committee for Environmental Protection	Develop statistical forms considering climate change impacts, water resources and wastes produced. Negligible environmental risks are expected from the project as the physical works aimed at upgrading	The CEP mandate is to coordinate policies and investments on sustainable natural resource management, climate change mitigation and adaptation, environmental	 Scope and range of e-waste management technologies is inadequate; Lack of legal and regulatory framework on e-waste management; Limited number of licensed e-waste management providers in the country. Lack of reporting forms on climate change, ozone-depleting substances, waste, water cadaster, 	Moderate, considering the limited scope of statistical accounting of natural resources	Opportunities for environmental improvement can be seen in the improvement of e-waste processing and recycling; Increase good e-waste management practices;

	of the information and communication technology infrastructure at the AS offices	monitoring & awareness. It issues environmental permits and conducts environmental expertise for any civil works subprojects.	 biodiversity, indicators for the rational use of natural resources Lack of reporting forms on climate change, ozone-depleting substances, waste, water cadaster, biodiversity, indicators for the rational use of natural resources Lack of reporting forms on climate change, ozone-depleting substances, wastewater inventory, biodiversity indicators for the rational use of natural resources 		Development of the necessary classifiers and forms of statistical reporting
Ministry of Economy and Trade Development	Promote competitive business environment and reduce the shadow economy through improved quality of official statistic	Mandate is to forecast the macroeconomic indicators and trade development policy	 Decreased economic activities due pandemic situation; Interaction between the parties is needed to gradual exit of the business from the shadows into the legal sector and coverage of unreported activities in statistical accounting 	Substantial	To be represented in the Technical Working Group
Ministry of Labor, Employment and Migration	Labor risks are considered limited because all project workers, other than civil servants assigned for project implementation at the PMU are government by the mutually agreed labor contracts.	The Labor Inspection under the MoLEM has primary responsibility for overseeing labor conditions, occupational health and safety.	 Non-regular labor audits and inspections of state organizations are conducted; Use of forced labor or conscripted labor is prohibited in the project, including for equipment installation associated with upgrading of the ICT infrastructure at the AS. No measures to prevent Sexual Exploitation, Abuse/ Harassment (SEA/H) at work are included in labor contracts according to the national legislation. 	Low	Under the Project AS will develop and implement Labor Management Procedures (including measures on occupational health and safety and Code of Conduct for all project staff, consultants and workers) for the project.
Regional and local executive bodies	Details of the program along with the expected role and responsibility.	Do not know fully the program and the requirements thereof. Lack of capacity in terms of personnel.	Specific rules and regulations along with guidelines required on how to raise awareness of the statistic unity rights and responsibilities to enforce voluntary statistic compliance and to make program sustainable	High	AS has to interface and develop functional linkages to enable the program to take roots and to raise public awareness on new statistic reporting
		Otl	ner Interested Parties		
Group/ Subgroup	Expectations from the project	Current Status	Concerns and issues	Significanc e of Risks	Enabling Conditions required

National and international NGOs, research companies, associations, CSOs	Cooperate in terms of timely raising awareness of ongoing reforms and willingness to use the proposed modernized services for online statistical reporting; Have access to updated data and timely statistical publications available online and at the local level	There are wide range of service NGOs and business associations functioning in diverse sectors, though their partnerships with AS, and lobbying capacity & advocacy efforts are limited.	feedback is considered statistical commission. Poor knowledge about the methodology and accounting; Poor engagement of	NGO recommendations and ed by the interagency on; out and limited awareness on d standards of statistical NGOs in public consultations on, including response to user	Moderate	Partnership agreements with NGOs to provide outreach and capacity building services on (a) development and implementation of a public education campaign and training and educational programs for statistical reporters to improve statistical literacy; (b) Improving the transparency of statistics; and (c) improving and scaling up operations of the Contact Center. Engage NGOs in TPM activities.
Media	Cooperate in terms of timely raising awareness of ongoing reforms and promote statistical reporters' willingness to use the proposed modernized services for online statistical accounting.	Wide range of national and local media outputs are available, especially popular in rural areas where the internet access is limited.	outlets, as the AS has newspaper "HarfiOn Lack of media cover AS; Can play an importan	s with national mass media s its own state-owned national mor"; rage of the provisions of the nt role in promoting voluntary statistical reporting rule and	Substantial	Partnership agreements with to provide outreach and capacity building services on development and implementation of a public education campaign using multiple communication channels, including new media (social media, mobile) and mass media; updating and enhancing the AS website.

4.3 Disadvantaged and Vulnerable Groups

As per ESS10, it is particularly important to understand project impact and whether it create equitable opportunities accessible to the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups or disproportionately fall on them. These groups often do not have a voice to express their concerns or understand the impact of a project. In case of project, both men and women who lack of ICT skills/experience would be adversely impacted and not be able to utilize or benefit from the new AS processes or procedures towards transition from paper-based reporting to e-reporting. Especially, women statistical reporters who established a new entrepreneurial activity can be at a greater disadvantage in terms of ease of access and ICT knowledge to use the AS interface as compared to men due to generally lower level of literacy, experience and etc.

Other disadvantaged groups include disabled people, who may be physically challenged or handicapped in other ways. They would not be able to access, let alone use the e-platforms without help or special features for them.

Women employees of the AS may not benefit equitably by working in the organization due to the organizational culture, workplace suitability, working hours, etc. They may not have equal opportunity to promotions or be given performance incentives as compared to their male counterparts. Also, retention rates may be lower for women in key positions. Currently, a total of 502 civil servants work in the central office and regions of the AS, out of which 187 are women, including 34 women in leadership positions.

A listing of disadvantaged groups and/or individuals may be by the following associations and unions:

- a. Representatives of statistical units/reporters with low level of ICT skills/experience may be represented by the Small and Medium Business Association;
- b. Women representatives of statistical units can be represented by the Association of Business Women of Tajikistan;
- c. Disabled persons representatives of statistical units may be represented by the Association of Disabled People of Tajikistan;
- d. Women employees of the AS may be represented by the HR or labour union.

Ultimately the objective of engaging with the different categories of stakeholders above is to create an atmosphere of understanding that actively involves project-affected people and other stakeholders in a timely manner, and that these groups are provided sufficient opportunity to voice their opinions and concerns that may influence Project decisions.

5. STAKEHODER ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

5.1 Purpose and Timing of Stakeholder Engagement Program

The program interventions are countrywide; therefore, the project team needs to be strategic in designing the SEP. The program stakeholder engagement activities need to be streamed horizontally and vertically. The horizontal stream implies an engagement with stakeholders at the national level. Activities on the horizontal level are assumed to improve awareness and coordination of efforts in the statistical system of the country. Whereas, vertical stream implies the application of cascading mode which will allow the project to establish the communication with project-affected parties. As part of SEP the program will finance activities to improve the system of statistical reporters outreach and education: development and delivery of training courses and modules in different formats, which among other things, will promote and embed formal and regular consultation with taxpayers, civil society, and other stakeholders. The outreach and education activities will provide specific stakeholder groups with relevant information and opportunities to voice their views on topics that matter to them.

5.2 Proposed Strategy for Information Disclosure

AS public outreach approaches for informing and training statistical reporters and users will be expanded by development and delivery of training courses and modules in different format, including (a) development of electronic methods for statistical reports, conducting seminars on innovations in statistical methodology; (b) development of the statistical literacy course for users; (c) conducting Trainings of Trainers for different trainings; and (d) improving the quality of services for official statistical accounting entities and statistical units through increased automation and efforts to expand the coverage of beneficiaries to ensure the completeness of accounting.

The SEP and Environment and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) will be disclosed at the World Bank portal and the AS website. The AS website (http://www.stat.tj) will be used to disclose project related information in Tajik and Russian. The SEP will include enhancing the AS website and services for users. AS will create a Project web page on its existing website. All future project-related monitoring reports listed in the above sections will be disclosed on this webpage. Program updates will also be posted on the homepage of AS website.

Mass/social media communication

PMU Social Development Specialist (from AC staff or an external consultant) will be engaged during the program implementation in order to maintain close communication with stakeholders. The PMU representative will be responsible for posting relevant information on the dedicated AS website, social media channels (Facebook) and on information boards throughout the project's lifecycle. Social media channels will be used as much as possible to disseminate information as rates of social media use (especially Telegram and Facebook channels) appear to be high across users of statistical information in Tajikistan. The AS will also inform citizens about changes in statistical accounting methodologies and statistical tools through its magazine "HarfiOmor" and radio& TV programs.

Communication materials

Written information will be disclosed to the public via a variety of communication materials including articles in newspapers, brochures, flyers, posters, etc. A public relations kit will be designed specifically and distributed both in print and online form. AS will also update its website regularly with key project updates and reports on the project's performance in Tajik, Russian and English. The website will also provide information about the grievance mechanism for the project.

Information Desks

Information Desks in local statistical offices will provide residents with information on stakeholder engagement activities, project interventions, contact details of the focal point, etc. The focal point, in turn, will set up these information desks, either in their offices or other easily accessible places where they can meet and share information about the project with PAPs and other stakeholders. Brochures and fliers on various project related social and environmental issues will be made available at these information desks.

5.3 Proposed Strategy for Consultations

User Perception Reviews

The Project has been designed to support mechanisms for citizen engagement. It will finance periodic user surveys to facilitate independent feedback from a wide range of data users on the official statistics performance, data collection methods and disclosure approaches applied by the AS. Surveys will assess the level of services, the quality of interaction between statistical reporters and statistical authorities, the problems faced by statistical units and, accordingly, revise or adjust the interventions financed by the project. Beneficiary feedback mechanism, which is currently established in the AS Call Center, will also function as a grievances redress mechanism, allowing data-users to provide comments or lodge complaints. In addition, regular engagement with a wide range of stakeholders will be required as part of the planned outreach to statistical reporters, users. The statistical accounting policy review will also entail soliciting the views of stakeholders and decision-makers, be it within the government, the private sector, or civil society. Finally, envisioned activities include institutionalizing the use of surveys to collect staff opinions. Collected information will be used to implement targeted and timely interventions that address staff concerns while helping to improve information and services for statistical reporters and users. The Project will facilitate regular monitoring. Indicators, baselines and targets to measure citizen engagement processes and progress of user satisfaction are included in the results framework.

Consultative Workshops

To facilitate citizen engagement, the AS will be supported by an Advisory Board. The board may comprise of statistical reporters, users and official statistics producers and it will meet on a quarterly or semi-annual basis. The AS will share and consult with the advisory board on matters related to statistical reporting, provide them with regular briefs, and solicit their views on future envisioned reforms. The objective is to strengthen effective public consultations, incorporate the board's views into reform proposal, and thereby ensuring a proper implementation of reforms.

Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions will be primarily conducted with the women staff at the AS, to gather their perspective on their specific needs and issues that women encounter as they navigate the work environment. In a well-facilitated FGD, a discussion between participants is possible that enables to record voices expressing the risks, barriers and needs from their perspective. This forum will provide a more dynamic environment for women to express their viewpoints on the relevant issues. The results of the FGD will form part of a gender gap analysis by benefiting review of HR policies to promote equal opportunities and help increase female participation in all levels.

Grievance Redress Mechanism

In compliance with the World Bank's ESS10, a project-specific grievance redress mechanism will be set up to handle complaints and issues, and this will be integrated into the GRM country system that are available to citizens. Dedicated communication materials (specifically, a GRM brochure or pamphlet) will be developed to help residents become familiar with the grievance redress channels and procedures. Locked suggestion/complaint boxes will be posted in each region (district level) where the equipment will be installed, and PMU will maintain a grievance register in order to capture and track grievances from submission to resolution and communication with complainants.

Also, details about the Project Grievance Mechanism will be posted on the website. An online feedback mechanism will also function as a grievances redress mechanism, allowing data-users to provide comments or lodge complaints. Contact details of the PMU representative will also be made available on the website.

Currently, representatives of enterprises, organizations that submit a statistical report (statistical units) can contact the AS through the Call Center and by e-mail stat@tojikiston.com. It is expected that this approach will reduce the administrative burden on the AS when processing requests. It will also allow to communicate remotely with the AS, which is critical in the context of COVID-19 pandemic.

5.4 Proposed Strategy to Incorporate Views of Vulnerable Groups

Consultations will be carried out with representatives of Small and Medium Business Association, Business Women Association, Association of Disabled People, and accordingly design and suggest engagement mechanisms and frequencies, customized for these vulnerable groups. Focus group discussions dedicated specifically to vulnerable groups may also be envisaged as appropriate. This will continue throughout the Project life.

5.5 Timeline of SEP

Keeping the above in mind, following is the tentative work plan and timeline:

Table 4. Proposed tentative strategy for stakeholder engagement activities

Activity	Purpose	Stakeholders	Responsible	Timeline/ Frequency
Consultative meetings with an advisory board. Share and consult with the advisory board on matters related to Project implementation, provide them with regular briefs, and solicit their views on future envisioned reforms.	The objective is to strengthen effective public consultations, incorporate the board's views into reform proposal, and thereby ensuring a proper implementation of activities.	Statistical units, users	PMU	Quarterly or bi-annual
Usersatisfactionsurveys	To facilitate independent feedback from a wide range of users of statistical information	All stakeholders (disaggregated by gender to better tailor interventions)	PMU	Periodic/annual
Development and implementation of awareness campaigns	To address the shadow economy issues/ coverage of statistical units in statistical accounting	All stakeholders from private sector.	PMU	Continuously throughout project implementation
Implementation of AS Compliance Strategy	Engagement in the design of new/simplified policies and procedures to address risks related to the shadow economy and coverage of statistical units in statistical accounting	All stakeholders	AS with support of PMU	TBD
Focus group discussions	To learn about women's issues and needs.	Women employees of AS	PMU with support of HR and/or trade union.	During the first year of the project implementation.
Stakeholder awareness, education and consultations campaigns	To keep informed about the project achievements; to improve knowledge and skills in statistical methodology accounting compliance	All stakeholders Data users and statistical units/reporters	AS/PMU	Annual
Operational meetings	To implement the project components.	Provincial and district level departments of AS	AS/PMU	Quarterly

6. RESOURCES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR IMPLEMENTING STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

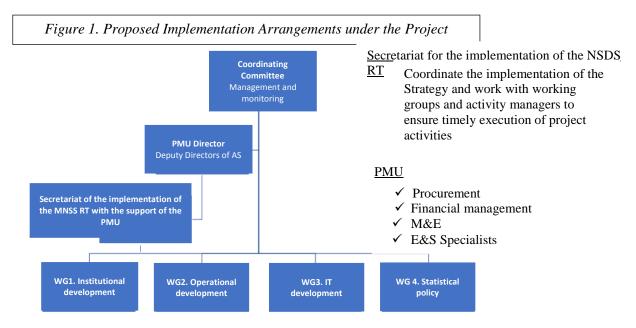
6.1 Resources

Agency on Statistics carries out its activities directly or through its territorial bodies (at province and district/city levels) in cooperation with other central and local public authorities, enterprises, institutions, organizations regardless of their forms of ownership and organizational and legal form.

The PMU to be established at the AS will serve as the central contact point for the SEP update, implementation and reporting. The PMU will recruit a Social Development Specialist and assign to him/her a clear role, responsibilities, and authority for the implementation and monitoring of stakeholder engagement activities and compliance with the ESS10. Based on the needs of the SEP, the stakeholder engagement budget will cover the following activities: staffing, travel, development of communication strategy, beneficiary survey, media coverage expenditures; printed outreach materials; workshops/sessions/events, training, GRM, etc. The estimated cost for implementing the SEP (~\$80,000) are covered in the project budget under Component 3.

6.2 Implementation Arrangements

The SEP implementation will rely heavily on the implementation arrangements of the Project (see below Figure 1)



For the purposes of the World Bank operation the Agency on Statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan (AS) will be the implementing agency of the Project. The Deputy Director of AS will be the Project Supervisor. Within this capacity, the Project Supervisor will serve as the focal point on Project implementation for the World Bank and other external partners; take operational decisions, exercise fiduciary responsibilities and ensure that Project implementation proceeds according to a Project Implementation Plan. He will also act as the Head of the Secretariat for the Implementation of the MNSS Project, which will have regular meetings to discuss implementation progress.

Implementation of each of the project components will be led by a senior official of the beneficiary institution as a Component Leader: strengthening the institutional capacity of the AS - First Deputy Director of the AS, subcomponent on improving ICT infrastructure, Deputy Director of the AS; Statistical Data Production Enhancement Component - AS Deputy Directors (Statistical Branch Supervisors). Local Consultants/Component Coordinators will support Component Leaders in implementation. Activities related to the development and implementation of sectoral legislation and statistical methodology will be largely carried out by the staff of the AS and other departments (National Statistical System) under the guidance of working groups to improve statistical accounting. Other working groups will be created depending on the effectiveness of the project.

At the implementation level, NSDS Implementation Secretariat will coordinate project implementation and work with the working groups and activity leaders to ensure timely implementation of project activities. AS staff from the central office and regional offices will be involved in the project implementation. Additional consultants and specialists will be engaged as needed.

To support the performance of administrative and fiduciary functions, the AS will hire a team of local consultants to form a Project Management Unit (PMU), which will ensure appropriate financial management, disbursement and adherence to the relevant procurement rules as it will be stipulated in the Loan Agreement and the Project Operational Manual (POM). PMU will also hire M&E Specialist to ensure adequate monitoring under the Results Framework and *Environmental and Social Specialists to ensure fulfillment of the environmental and social risk management responsibilities under the Project*. The AS will submit semi-annual project progress reports and provide updated information on the Program implementation to the Bank. The AS will be supported by international consultants on Twinning Partnership being currently onboard. The Bank's task team will monitor implementation progress during semi-annual project implementation support visits and share the results with donors.

6.3 Management Functions and Responsibilities

The PMU will take responsibility for and lead all aspects of the stakeholder engagement. In order to implement the various activities envisaged in the SEP, the PMU will need to closely coordinate with AS's departments/units/sectors, including Control and Office Work Departments, Legal Sector, Economic Analysis and International Relations Department and the Statistical Methodology and Classification Department, as well as the Call Center. The Deputy Director of the AS will act as the PMU Supervisor and will strategically oversee the implementation of the project, track progress and ensure the overall alignment of the project with the stated objectives and results. He will act as the liaison person for the World Bank Team on project-related issues. PMU will help the AS to perform tasks, including in interaction with stakeholders.

The PMU will facilitate stakeholder/citizen engagement through the creation of an advisory board. This board may comprise representatives of statistical units and will meet on a quarterly or a semi-annual basis. The AS, through the PMU, will consult with the board on matters related to improving statistics, brief them on latest actions, and solicit their views on future envisioned reforms. The purpose is to strengthen public consultations and secure the buy-in of stakeholders to ensure smooth and proper implementation of reforms. The roles and responsibilities of main actors are summarized in the Table 5 below.

Table 5. Responsibilities of key actors/stakeholders in SEP Implementation

AS/PMU	 Planning and implementation of the SEP; Leadingstakeholderengagementactivities; Management and resolution of grievances; Monitoring of and reporting on ESF performance to the World Bank. Disclose and implement Labor Management Procedures and Environmental and Social Management Plan. 	
The AS Main Department in GBAO region and Dushanbe	 Inform the PMU of any issues related to its interactions with stakeholders; Provide report on all complaints to the PMU GRM Focal Point. Transmit and resolve complaints caused by the project interventions in close collaboration with and as directed by PMU and by participating in the local Grievance Resolution Committee; 	
Main Department, departments and sectors of AS (district level)	 Monitor Project compliance with national legislation; Participate in the implementation of assigned activities in frame of project; Provide report on all complaints to the Regional GRM Focal Point; Participate in the local Grievance Resolution Committee; Make available the disclosed ESF documents and GRM procedures. 	
Main Computing Center AS (Call Center) data processing department	 Registering the e-appeals in the e-filing system; Participate in the implementation of assigned activities in the SEP. 	
Control and Records Management Sector	Registering the appeals;Provide report on all complaints to the PMU GRM Focal Point.	
Project stakeholders and beneficiaries	 Lodge their grievances using the Grievance Mechanism defined in the SEP; Help the Project to define mitigation measures. 	

7. GRIEVANCE REDRESS MECHANISM

7.1 Overview of Grievance Redress Mechanism

The main objective of a Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) is to assist to resolve complaints and grievances in a timely, effective and efficient manner that satisfies all parties involved. Specifically, it provides a transparent and credible process for fair, effective and lasting outcomes. It also builds trust and cooperation as an integral component of broader community consultation that facilitates corrective actions. Specifically, the GRM

- Provides affected people with avenues for making a complaint or resolving any dispute that may arise during the course of the implementation of projects;
- Ensures that appropriate and mutually acceptable redress actions are identified and implemented to the satisfaction of complainants; and
- Avoids the need to resort to judicial proceedings.

The PMU will set up a project specific GRM to address all citizen complaints and requests related to the project. Day-to-day implementation of the GRM and reporting to the World Bank will be the responsibility of

the PMU. The new Social Specialist will be the key focal point for GRM in the PMU. Project would encourage receiving complaints by a variety of channels, including anonymous complaints, at the different levels. The system and requirements (including staffing) for the grievance redress chain of actions – from registration, sorting and processing, and acknowledgement and follow-up, to verification and actions, and finally feedback – are incorporated in the GRM. To ensure management oversight of grievance handling, the <u>PMU Social Specialist</u> to ensure compliance with social safeguards obligations will be responsible for monitoring the overall process, including verification that agreed resolutions are implemented.

7.2 Grievance Resolution Process

Information about the GRM will be publicized as part of the Public/community communication (e.g. through websites, social media). Brochures and posters will be displayed in public places offices, project offices, AS outlets and notice boards, etc. Information about the GRM will also be posted online on the AS website. The overall process for the GRM will be comprised of six steps, as described below.

- Step 1: Uptake. Project stakeholders will be able to provide feedback and report complaints through several channels: contacting PMU by mail, telephone, email, social media.
- *Step 2: Sorting and processing.* Complaints and feedbacks will be compiled by the Social Specialist at PMU and recorded in a register. These are assigned to the respective individuals/agencies to address. They are expected to discuss/ deliberate with the complainant and arrive at a resolution, within 15 days of receipt.
- **Step 3: Acknowledgement and follow-up.** Within seven (7) days of the date a complaint is submitted, the responsible person/ agency will communicate with the complainant and provide information on the likely course of action and the anticipated timeframe for resolution of the complaint. If complaints are not resolved within 15 days, the responsible person will provide an update about the status of the complaint/question to the complainant and again provide an estimate of how long it will take to resolve the issue.
- Step 4: Verification, investigation and action. This step involves gathering information about the grievance to determine the facts surrounding the issue and verifying the complaint's validity, and then developing a proposed resolution, which could include changes of decisions concerning eligibility for mitigation, assistance, changes in the program itself, other actions, or no actions. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the process can include site visits, document reviews, a meeting with the complainant (if known and willing to engage), and meetings with others (both those associated with the project and outside) who may have knowledge or can otherwise help resolve the issue. It is expected that many or most grievances would be resolved at this stage. All activities taken during this and the other steps will be fully documented, and any resolution logged in the register.
- **Step 5: Monitoring and evaluation.** Monitoring refers to the process of tracking grievances and assessing the progress that has been toward resolution. The PMU will be responsible for consolidating, monitoring, and reporting on complaints, enquiries and other feedback that have been received, resolved, or pending. This will be accomplished by maintaining the grievance register and records of all steps taken to resolve grievances or otherwise respond to feedback and questions.
- **Step 6: Providing Feedback.** This step involves informing those to submit complaints, feedback, and questions about how issues were resolved, or providing answers to questions. Whenever possible, complainants should be informed of the proposed resolution in person (communicating by telephone or other means).

If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution, she/he will be informed of further options, which would include pursuing remedies through the World Bank, as described below, or through avenues afforded by the Republic of Tajikistan legal system. On a quarterly basis, the PMU will report to AS on grievances resolved since the previous report and on grievances that remain unresolved, with an explanation as to steps to be taken

to resolve grievances that have not been resolved within 30 days. Data on grievances and/or original grievance logs will be made available to the World Bank missions on request, and summaries of grievances and resolutions will be included in periodic reports to be submitted to the World Bank.

Grievance Logs will include at least the following information:

- Individual reference number
- Name of the person submitting the complaint, question, or other feedback, address and/or contact information (unless the complaint has been submitted anonymously)
- Details of the complaint, feedback, or question/her location and details of his / her complaint.
- Date of the complaint.
- Name of person assigned to deal with the complaint (acknowledge to the complainant, investigate, propose resolutions, etc.)
- Details of proposed resolution, including person(s) who will be responsible for authorizing and implementing any corrective actions that are part of the proposed resolution
- Date when proposed resolution was communicated to the complainant (unless anonymous)
- Date when the complainant acknowledged, in writing if possible, being informed of the proposed resolution
- Details of whether the complainant was satisfied with the resolution, and whether the complaint can be closed out
- Date when the resolution is implemented (if any).

The AS have GRM focal points at all central, oblast and district levels that will allow the project to address effectively all grievances raised at the grassroot level, which will have countrywide scattered pattern including those in remote areas. PAPs will have an option of submitting grievance to the PMU directly.

7.3 Monitoring and Reporting on Grievances

The PMU will be responsible for:

- Analyzing the qualitative data on the number, substance and status of complaints and uploading them into the project databases established by PMU;
- Monitoring outstanding issues and proposing measures to resolve them;
- Preparing quarterly reports on GRM to be shared with the WB.

Biannual reports to be submitted to the WB shall include section related to GRM which provides updated information on the following:

- Status of GRM implementation (procedures, training, public awareness campaigns, budgeting etc.);
- Qualitative data on number of received grievances (applications, suggestions, complaints, requests, positive feedback), highlighting number of resolved grievances;
- Quantitative data on the type of grievances and responses, issues provided and grievances that remain unresolved;
- Level of satisfaction by the measures (response) taken;
- Any correction measures taken.

7.4 World Bank Grievance Redress System

Communities and individuals who believe that they are adversely affected by a World Bank (WB) supported project may submit complaints to existing project-level grievance redress mechanisms or the WB's Grievance Redress Service (GRS). The GRS ensures that complaints received are promptly reviewed in order to address project-related concerns. Project affected communities and individuals may submit their complaint to the WB's independent Inspection Panel which determines whether harm occurred, or could occur, as a result of WB non-compliance with its policies and procedures. Complaints may be submitted at any time after concerns have been

brought directly to the World Bank's attention, and Bank Management has been given an opportunity to respond. For information on how to submit complaints to the World Bank's corporate Grievance Redress Service (GRS), please visit http://www.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/products-and-services/grievance-redress-service. For information on how to submit complaints to the World Bank Inspection Panel, please visit www.inspectionpanel.org.

8. MONITORING AND REPORTING OF THE SEP

The project will be monitored by the Coordinating Committee, headed by the Director of the Agency on Statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, which includes the Deputy Ministers of Finance, Economic Development and Trade, as well as the Chairman of the State Committee on Investments and State Property Management, and the Secretary of the Coordination Committee. The Coordinating Committee meets at least twice a year to review the progress of the Project, including activities funded by international financial institutions. The Chairman of the Coordinating Committee informs the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan twice a year about the progress of this Project.

The PMU will support monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities to track, document, and communicate the progress and results of the project, including monitoring of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan. M&E Specialist will be responsible for overall compilation of progress reports and results.

Feedback and grievances received through the beneficiary feedback mechanism will also be included in the semiannual reporting. The M&E Specialist will collate and analyze these outcome assessments and perception-based results and include them in semiannual reports to be submitted to the WB.

Annex 1. Complaints Handling Mechanism at the Agency on Statistics

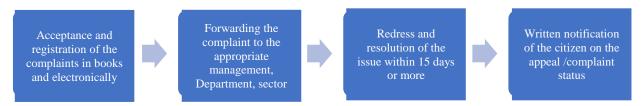
The AS considers complaints and appeals of statistical units/citizens in accordance with the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On Appeals of Physical and Legal Entities" (dated July 23, 2016 No.1339), which contains legal provisions on the established information channels for citizens to submit complaints, requests and grievances. Article 14 of the Law sets the timeframes for handling grievances, which is 15 days from the date of receipt that do not require additional study and research, and 30 days for the appeals that need additional investigations.

Citizens can file their complaints with the AS in three ways:

- 1. Written applications
- 2. Electronic applications through website: http://www.stat.tj; E-mail:stat@tojikiston.com
- 3. Phone calls through Call Center +992 (37) 221 22 91, 221 22 37

Control and Records Management Sub-Department at the AS Center Apparatus is responsible to file citizen written appeals, register them in the separate logs on statistical accounting of appeals of individuals and legal entities, and makes sure the customers' requests are addressed properly and in timely manner.

Briefly the process of the complaints considerations is indicated in the figure below:



Different appeals/complaints/inquiries are being registered in the separate logs. The sub-department employs two specialists who process citizens' complaints.

Below is the contact person directly responsible for receiving incoming letters and reverting back to citizens:

Davlatova Farogat, Leading Specialist of Organizing Document Flow and Office Work Control 17 Bokhtar Street, Dushanbe, 734025

Work phone #: 227-47-87 Mobile phone #: 907987252

In case if the complainant does not request for a reply within 2 weeks, the department sends it to him/her by mail.

In 2020, total of 122 complaints were received by the mentioned Sub-Department from legal entities and individuals. The citizens mainly asked for work admissions, confirmation of work experience, material and financial assistance, etc. Time for consideration of citizens 'complaints/inquires depends on the raised issue, some issues may be solved immediately, others within 15-30 days. Responses to citizens 'inquires/complaints are given in writing on the AS letterhead with the outgoing number. If the raised issue is resolved, it is being recorded in the logbook.

At the province/oblast and districts levels there are no such departments for receiving applications from citizens and statistical units, the designated specialists are responsible for this. Accordingly, the registration of complaints is carried out mainly by the secretaries of the heads of local statistical bodies, in accordance with the established procedure in separate logbooks, including the reception days of the leadership of the regional statistics bodies, initially they are considered unfairly by the heads or, on the instructions of the head, are considered by the deputies, based on the content of the complaints, they are sent by the employees of the management / department / sector of statistics. Depending on the scope and questions of the complaints, they

can be considered immediately and the applicants can receive an immediate answer, or within 15-30 days the complaints will be resolved and the answers sent in the appropriate order.

The table below indicates specialists responsible for registration and processing citizens and statistical units/reporters' appeals/complaints at the Central and Oblast levels:

№	Name	Position	Contact #	
Cent	Central Apparatus AS			
Cont	Control and Records Management Sub-Department			
1.	Nozim Ibrohimov	Head of Sub-Department	2217160	
2.	Davlatova Farogat	Leading Specialist	2274787	
Lega	l Sector			
3.	Qadamshoev Nodirsho	HeadofSector	2273638	
4.	Qadamov Salim	Leading Specialist	2273638	
Department of Consolidated Economic Analysis and International Relations				
5.	Nabizoda Abduvali	Head of Department	2212387	
Department of Statistical Methodology and Classification				
6.	Aminov Hamroqul	Acting Head of Department	2275958	
Mair	Main Department of the AS in Dushanbe			
7.	Aliev Zainullo	Secretary of the Head	2254466	
Main Department of the AS in GBAO				
8.	Sobirov Marod	Secretary of the Head	8352222634	
Main Department of the AS in Sogd region				
9.	Aliboeva Khosiyat	Head of the Department of Consolidated	8342256325	
		Economic Works, Social, Financial		
		Statistics and Registration of Enterprises		
Mair	Main Department of the AS in Khatlon region			
10.	Qurbonnazarova Sarvinoz	Head of HR Division	8322229106	

Call Center was established under Data Processing Department of the Main Computing Center of the AS, whose staff responsible for receiving all incoming calls and issues related to the methodology of statistical reporting, the procedure for electronic statistical reporting, deadlines for reporting, as well as complaints on statistical activities. The Economic Analysis and International Relations Department is responsible for receiving and processing electronic appeals of legal entities and individuals through the AS e-mail: stat@tojikiston.com. E-appeals are also registered. Appeals on official forms are sent to the Department on Organizing Document Flow and Office Work Control. Responses to electronic inquiries from individuals are provided within 3-5 working days.

At the level of regions, statistical reporting units or citizens can obtain information at the following numbers:

Region	Phone contacts
GBAO	8 3522 22634
Sogd	8 3422 55456
Khatlon	8 3222 22154
Dushanbe	8 372 254466

The AS also operates a Call Center: +99237 221 22 91, +99237 221 22 37

In addition to the above, citizens have an opportunity to meet directly with the leadership of the Agency on Statistics in accordance to the following schedule:

№	Officials of the AS	Working Day	Time for Citizens
			Visits
1.	Ms. Hasanzoda G.K., Chairman of the AS	Tuesday, Saturday	from 9:00 to 12:00
2.	Mr. Shokirzoda Sh.Sh., First Deputy Chairman	Monday	from 9:00 to 11:00

3.	Mr. Mirzoyon N.R., Deputy Chairman	Wednesday	from9:00 to 11:00
4.	Mr. Davlatzoda K., Deputy Chairman	Friday	from 9:00 to 11:00