



South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP)

Plastic free Rivers and Seas for South Asia (P171269)

Stakeholder Engagement Plan

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1. Introduction & Project Description

The menace of plastic waste that pollutes land, flows into river systems and, ultimately into oceans, poses national, regional, and global threats to development. The qualities that make plastic useful—lightness, durability, strength, versatility and low production costs—have resulted in fast growing demand, but mismanaged plastic waste has also created a mounting global ocean pollution crisis. The global production of plastic is currently estimated to be around 300 million tons per year, while plastic pollution in the marine environment alone (including beaches) estimated at 9.5 million tons with 1.5 million tons ending up in the ocean annually. The impact of marine plastic pollution has far-reaching economic, ecological and health impacts. The annual global damage of plastics to marine ecosystems is estimated at US\$13 billion per year. As a result, marine plastic waste has been acknowledged as one of the main global environmental challenges in recent years and the movement to combat marine plastic litter has accelerated in 2019.

The South Asia Region is the third largest contributor to plastic waste globally with an estimated doubling by 2050 unless action is taken. The Maldives aside, all South Asia's coastal nations are among the top twenty most polluting nations ranked by the volume of mismanaged plastic waste. Modelled estimates of floating micro-plastic (<4.75 mm) and macro-plastic (>4.75 mm) abundance (items per square kilometer) suggest that the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem, the ocean system that touches South Asian ocean-facing nations, is in a category of ocean regions with the highest plastic concentration. Plastic waste "leakage" from high mountain states in the upper river watersheds travel and contribute to the accumulation downstream. Following current trends, the amount of mismanaged waste (including plastic) across South Asia is projected to rise from 334 million tons per year in 2016 to 661 million tons by 2050. This will adversely impact the region's ocean ecosystems and sustainable development more broadly.

India dominates the region in plastic processing capacity, estimated at over 20 million tons per year by 2020. The industry includes 15 large polymer suppliers, about 200 equipment manufacturers, and over 30,000 more specialized micro- small, and medium sized plastic packaging processing units employing 3 million people. India is becoming a key market worldwide for plastics processing and polymer conversion with exports to the United States, UAE, Germany, China, and Bangladesh, and is a net importer of plastics largely from China, South Korea, the United States, Thailand, and Japan. Other SAR countries have downstream plastics production primarily by micro-, small, and medium sized plastics processing units. Enterprises producing plastic bottles for water distribution are even found in small non-industrial countries like the Maldives.

Several South Asian nations have banned single use plastics. According to the UN, about 127 countries (of 192 reviewed) have adopted some form of legislation to regulate single use plastic bags, ranging from outright bans to progressive phase outs to laws that incentivize the use of reusable bags. Over 5 trillion plastic bags are produced per year and take an estimated 1,000 years to decompose. SAR has many such examples. Sikkim introduced a ban on plastic bags as early as 1998, and Bangladesh in 2002 was the first country in the world to introduce a ban or national restriction on single use plastic bags, followed by India (initiated in 2002, starting with New Delhi), Bhutan (2005, renewed with greater enforcement in 2019), Afghanistan and Nepal (2011), Sri Lanka (2011), and Pakistan (2013 municipal level ban). The Maldives introduced a ban on single use plastic bags on Bodufolhudoo island in 2016, and established a national steering committee in 2019, mandated to advance the phase out of single use plastics by 2020. While such policy instruments have had initial positive response in many countries, due to a lack of enforcement, a failure to regulate plastic through its life cycle, too many exemptions, too few manufacturer limits, an absence of cost-effective alternatives, and growing

but fragmented effort on public education and behavior change, these policy initiatives have not yet produced the desired results, that is a decrease in the use of plastic.

Project Description

The Project Development Objective (PDO) of the Plastic free Rivers and Seas for South Asia (PRS) project is to strengthen innovation and coordination of circular economy solutions to plastic pollution flowing into South Asian Seas. The project consists of three main components totaling US\$40 million from IDA that will be implemented over a period of five years in all eight countries in South Asia – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. A summary of activities is provided as follows.

Component 1. Supporting Competitive Block Grant Investments to Reduce Plastic Waste:

The objective of this component is to identify, verify and invest in circular plastic economy solutions and facilitate the exchange of knowledge and awareness of these solutions. The rationale for this component is four-fold: First, South Asian nations could benefit from knowing the range of existing and new solutions and innovative approaches being undertaken in their nations and across the region to assist transitions to a more circular plastic economy; Second, they could also benefit from witnessing how block grant investments to select organizations can help accelerate this transitions, opening up the possibility of these nations to assist a variety of organizations within their own countries beyond this initial pilot, in national transitions to a more circular plastic economy; Third, the RBG investment recipient themselves will not only be able to demonstrate impact in a short time, but also will serve as case studies and good practice examples of what could be further scaled and replicated across South Asian nations. The project will identify innovative and cutting edge, replicable solutions that could be adapted and serve as demonstrations. Fourth, the selection of country-level RBG recipients will be undertaken in consultation with national level authorities and prioritize those recipients that complement the World Bank’s country-level (that is, national) engagements on reducing plastic pollution. The component will be supported through two subcomponents.

Component 2. Leveraging Public and Private Sector Engagement and Solutions: The objective of this component is to facilitate the region’s transition toward a more circular plastic economy through the improvement of regional and national strategies, policies, action plans and standards based on better analytics and through public-private sector engagement, dialogue and collaboration. To this end, the component will provide support to develop and/or improve national and regional plastic pollution mitigation strategies and action plans, policies and industry standards; and, provide technical and other support to relevant institutions to identify, prioritize, collect and analyze lifecycle data and identify data issues and gaps. As an important follow-on from the SACEP-led Regional Marine Litter Action Plan for the South Asia Seas, SACEP member states requested that SACEP support each Ministry of Environment to develop and/or improve country-level ‘National Marine Litter Action Plans’ to address plastic pollution that leaks into rivers and seas. The development of national action plans, while led by national ministries authorized to do so will get support from SACEP and will complement, and be coordinated with, other country dialogues and advisory work financed by other sources. Country national action plans will help to identify key areas for circular plastic economy investment, including the specific focus areas and selection of RBG recipients of each country (component 1) and where existing policies are failing. Moreover, given that there is no clear methodology being used by South Asian countries to measure the current amount of plastic pollution generated and amounts reduced from mitigation measures (policies and investment), the project will fill this gap and aim to develop coordinated approaches. This methodology will also support the project in measuring its impact on plastic waste/pollution reduction and linked to the M&E Unit discussed in Component 3. The component would also support the convening of public and private sector decision-makers to discuss and agree on mainstreaming circular plastic economy solutions and approaches. This component will be undertaken through two proposed subcomponents.

11. Component 3: Strengthening Regional Integration Institutions: The objective of this component is to strengthen regional organizations' capacity to coordinate and to support their member-states to better deliver on solutions to mitigate plastic pollution that flows into rivers and seas across South Asia and transition to a more circular plastic economy. To this end, the component would build SACEP's institutional capacity to better achieve its mandate by supporting the institutional strengthening of SACEP and its ability to collaborate with other regional organizations and institutions. The component supports two subcomponents.

Implementing Partner

The project will be implemented by a Regional entity created by SAR member states, the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP). SACEP is an inter-governmental organization established by Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in 1982 to promote and support protection, management and enhancement of the environment of the region.

2. Regulations and Requirements

National Requirements

The project will be supporting grants and activities across the SAR. As part of the sustainability framework of the project, all subprojects and activities shall be consistent with the national environmental framework on environmental impact assessment; environmental standards for air, water, and land; occupational safety and health; labor and working conditions; and community safety. All eight participating countries national legislations enacted to regulate EIA processes and those EIA processes require to undertake public consultations. For Example:

In Afghanistan, the Government's regulation on environmental impact assessment is based on the Environmental Act of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (Gazette No. 912) dated 23 Jadi, 1384 (25 January, 2007). The NEPA, as an independent institutional entity, is responsible for coordinating and monitoring conservation and rehabilitation of the environment, and for implementing this act. Article 16 and 17 of Chapter 3 of the Environmental Act describes the process of preparing a preliminary assessment, an environmental impact statement and a comprehensive mitigation plan to be conducted by the proponent of each project. Article 21 mentions public consultation is required for all the projects.

In India, the Government's EIA Notification of 2009 sets out the requirement for environmental assessment in which the public consultation was set as a pre-requisite.

The Pakistan Environmental Protection Act, 1997 (PEP Act) provides for two types of environmental assessments: initial environmental examinations (IEE) and environment impact assessments (EIA). EIAs are carried out for subprojects that have a potentially significant environmental impact, whereas IEEs are conducted for relatively smaller subprojects with a relatively less significant impact.

In Sri Lanka, the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) procedure for major development projects - regulations published in Government Gazette Extraordinary No 772 June 23, 1993 and in subsequent amendments; and the provisions for EIA is contained in Part IV C of the NEA, which requires the submission of an IEE or EIA report in respect of certain "prescribed projects". These are specified in Gazette Extraordinary No 772/22 of 23 June 1993.

World Bank Requirements

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).

3. Brief Summary of Previous Stakeholder Engagement Activities

- Fifteenth GC of SACEP and 6th IMM of SASP held on 6th November 2019 to adopt the project concept

Fifteenth Meeting of the Governing Council of SACEP and sixth Intergovernmental Meeting of the Ministers of South Asian Seas Programme held in back to back on 6 November 2019 in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The Ministers of Environment and Senior Officials from ministries of Environment of SACEP member countries viz. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka were participated at the Governing Council meeting. One of the agenda items of this meeting was Plastic free Rivers and Seas for South Asia project and SACEP prepared and submitted a working paper containing information on this project to the Governing Council for its consideration for adoption. After having a detailed discussion at senior officials meeting, it was decided to forward the working paper to the Governing Council for adoption. Subsequently, the 15th meeting of Governing Council of SACEP endorsed the SACEP's collaboration with the World Bank and their development

partners to formulate and implement a regional project on Plastic free Rivers and Seas for South Asia involving SACEP as an implementing agency for the benefit of the South Asian Region.

- COP 25 of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

In sideline with the 25th meeting of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held from 2 to 13 December 2019 in Madrid, Spain, SACEP Delegation including Director General had bilateral meetings with Environment ministers and senior officials of Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Bhutan. During those bilateral meetings, SACEP delegation briefed three country delegations separately on the Plastic free Rivers and Seas for South Asia project where they have reaffirmed their fullest support for successful implementation of the project.

- First National Stakeholder Consultation Meeting - Maldives

A stakeholder consultation meeting on Plastic Free Rivers and Seas of South Asia Project was held on 19th January 2020 in Male', Maldives back to back with the Maldives national level stakeholder consultation on solid waste management policy. Various stakeholders including government, private sector, Civil Society, Hoteliers, NGOs were participated at this one-day consultation meeting. During the consultation Participants were able to identify possible Stakeholder Groups, Stakeholder in each group, other interested parties, ongoing complementary activities, priority areas, etc. Representatives from SACEP, World Bank as well as the Minister and officials of Ministry of Environment, Maldives were also participated. SACEP has introduced the project to the participant and requested their feedback on possible stakeholders' involvement in implementing this project.

- High-level meeting with Hon' Minister of Environment, Maldives

SACEP delegation comprising Director General and Senior Programme Officer had a formal meeting with Minister of and the senior officials of Ministry of Environment, Maldives on 20th January at the Ministry of Environment, Male'. During the meeting, SACEP briefed minister and the senior officials on the proposed Plastic free Rivers and Seas for South Asia project and Hon' minister assured their fullest support in implementing the project.

- Second National Stakeholder Consultation Meeting – Sri Lanka

Second National Stakeholder Consultation meeting for Plastic free Rivers and Seas for South Asia project was held on 11th March 2020 in Colombo, Sri Lanka with the participation of additional secretary, Ministry of Environment and Wildlife Resources, Sri Lanka and 44 participants representing government, private sector, NGOs, plastic recyclers, media, academia and civil society. SACEP has extended invitations to about 60 participants covering above sectors and 44 were participated and few others regretted as they were unable to participate due to prior commitments. The meeting started at 9 am with welcome addresses made by Dr. Abas Basir, DG SACEP and Mr. A.H.L.D Gamini Wijesinghe, Addl. Secretary on behalf of the Ministry of Environment and Wildlife Resources and continued until 4.30 pm. SACEP made presentations on the project and its components, ESA, ESMF and SEP. In the Afternoon, last session, participants were requested to identify possible stakeholder groups and stakeholders under each group as a group work session.

Participants were actively engaged during the questions and answers sessions. An excerpt of the discussion is given below and full report is in Annex D of ESMF.

Q - What is the mechanism and process for applying to Block Grants?

A - SACEP will publish call on its website (www.sacep.org) and on printed media with details and procedure for applying to Block Grants.

Q – Do you have required political blessing and commitment to implement this project?

A – Yes, during the 15th meeting of Governing Council of SACEP, ministers of environment from eight countries pledged their support and adopted a decision by requesting SACEP to expedite the process with the World bank.

Q – Sri Lanka has already initiated an action to develop a national plastic waste management action plan. Now the first draft has been finished, and the final draft would be submitted to the cabinet for the approval. That action plan would be the strategy for managing the plastic waste in Sri Lanka. Will the implementation of the national action plan be benefited by this project and will you be able to consider the national action plan in the criteria of screening Block Grants applications?

A – Yes, implementation of National Action Plan will be benefitted as activities of this project including Block Grants would be complemented to it. Some of the criteria set among others are that the proposals have to meet the national environmental laws and regulations.

Q - Private sector in Sri Lanka are doing a lot more things such as design, projection, recovery and increasingly we look for partnerships specifically the government and the civil society with media, academia and so on. How private sector can involve in this project?

A - Private sector can bring innovative ideas as a solution for this problem and can apply for Block Grants to implement those ideas. The project will establish public-private partnership where the private sector can participate and give their ideas. In this way, private sector can directly participate in the project.

Q - Waste management is a mandate of the local authorities. In this project, is there a special focus on giving block grants for local authorities?

A – The project does not permit to transfer money to governments. This is a WB funded project and WB has its own process of engaging with governments directly. This does not mean that government agencies can't participate in implementing this project. There are many other activities other than block grants in which the government entities can participate. For example, in our monitoring process for block grants, we do it through our NFPs. This project establishes an enabling environment for the implementation of national action plans through private sector engagement, public – private partnership and public involvement. The project will be supporting the governments in implementing national action plans and policies by partnership.

Q - Regarding single use plastic, if somebody is collecting single use plastic, recycling and again making the single use product so, are you going to discourage the activity?

A – We are not discouraging it, but under this project those type of proposals will not be considered as eligible proposals. Those types of activities categorized under the negative list. Reason for that is though single use plastics can recycle many times, no one can assure that 100% collection of those re-produced single use plastic for recycling again.

As suggested during initial consultations, SACEP will continue to review various national plastic waste management action plans that are implemented or will be implemented by the SAR countries. The project may consider prioritizing support to initiatives or innovations already listed or endorsed in the country plastic management plan.

From the support manifested by the private sector during the consultation, SACEP will also continue to solicit partnerships with the private sector particularly on screening technologies that will may supported by the project. SACEP will continue to review the procedures on its ESMF including the

criteria for the negative list with feedbacks from the private and government partners to ensure project's environmental sustainability.

4. Stakeholder Identification and Analysis

This SEP is developed to enable participation of stakeholders and ensure that project design, approaches and activities are implemented in a participatory and inclusive manner, and in ways that minimize potential environmental and social risks.

Based on the information/feedback received during the national stakeholder consultation, following groups of stakeholders considers as key stakeholders who are or will be informed and consulted throughout the project.

- Government ministries and allied agencies responsible for Environment, Water including rivers, Marine, Fisheries, Health and Tourism sectors in eight South Asian countries. These ministries and agencies are the direct and indirect beneficiaries of this project. SACEP will also work with other agencies including but not limited to the agencies addressing marine litter and solid waste more broadly – both that feature plastic waste management and reduction.
- Private Sector whose activities involve 3R and would reduce plastic pollution and provide a demonstration effect for SAR nations on replicable and scalable solutions and innovations that measurably reduces the stock of plastic pollution and its flow into South Asia's rivers and seas. This includes social innovators, entrepreneurs, students, designers, businesses, materials makers and change makers or collaboratives – any group of individuals or institutions that have innovative and creative ideas and/or solutions for turning the tide on plastic pollution. SACEP would also engage with an ICT platform that transparently showcases grantees, monitors progress and enables them to share knowledge and know-how across geographies.
- Civil Society Organizations/NGOs that focus on environmental protection/conservation; work with waste pickers; undertake clean-up activities related to plastic pollution; promote behavior change or design and roll out public awareness campaigns using innovative approaches including art, plays and other modalities considered effective to reach various audiences; or, implement innovative and targeted grass-roots and national campaigns (radio, TV, youth-led, etc.) to promote awareness of the problem and local solutions, among others.
- Academia and research organizations can offer innovative solutions to reduce plastic waste and promote the development of educational partnerships across the region.
- Waste picker organizations/groups, especially since waste pickers are informal workers and face a lot of stigma. Waste pickers are also often poor or are vulnerable groups such as women, youth and minority groups. Informal Sector representing individual waste pickers or groups and small-scale waste recyclers
- Women and Vulnerable Groups such as youth, minority or indigenous groups, and informal workers who engage in plastic waste picking and recycling. When selecting the recipients of competitive grants (Component 1), priority will be given to women and other vulnerable groups.
- Media who have presence across the region and having distribution channels (TV, radio) with wide reach and process proven record of success in development of communication strategies to educate wide spectrum of societies on the use of single use plastics,

microplastics, etc. SACEP will also engage with Discover Channel or National Geographic to reach millions across the region through their platforms and to expand Parley for the Ocean's Ocean School to Sri Lanka.

- UN agencies like the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and UNDP which are providing technical assistance on various environment issues in the region and work closely with the governments as well as other organisations to protect the environment.

Project implementation will focus on strengthening innovation and coordination of circular economy solutions to plastic pollution that finds its way into rivers and empty into the marine environment. This will require well specified and enabling policies, incentives, education, behavioral change at the producer and consumer levels. Policy formulation and implementation are often vested with government. Under the project component 4(a), the project will review existing policies and standards from across the region (and assess why they succeed and fail), identify good practice policies from outside the region and develop a set of recommendations specific to each SAR nation that with revision could improve public policy and standards, and identify incentive and fiscal mechanisms to help correct market inefficiencies, overcome poor incentives to recycle plastics or to explore alternatives, and facilitate investments which provide solutions.

5. Stakeholder Engagement Program

Table 1 summarizes the project stakeholders. Both regional and national level stakeholder engagements will be carried out as described in this section. The list of stakeholders will be updated with the information of other national and regional stakeholder consultations to be conducted in future as stipulated in Table 1.

Regional Engagement

The project's engagement strategy and approach will include among others: i) regular consultations with key stakeholder ministries and agencies of eight participating countries to inform the design, content and activities of the project, ii) transparent feedback and grievance redress mechanisms to ensure that stakeholder needs and requirements are accommodated, or clarified during meetings and workshops when these are not addressed sufficiently. The project will convene a regional meeting with participation of government, private sector, NGOs from all eight countries and other relevant regional organizations before commencing project activities to inform them on various activities to be implemented under the project and get their feedback. Similar meeting will take place once a year throughout project implementation period. Those regional organizations are:

- The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) is an inter-governmental organization aimed at strengthening regional cooperation and sustainable development with the Indian Ocean region through its twenty-two member states and nine dialogue partners. It has a mandate to convene Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Heads of State. It is at the MOFA and Heads level that currently, the marine plastic pollution agenda currently resides (in terms of national and regional policy) and therefore IORA will be involved as an important project partner. IORA is formally involved in the IDA supported project via an MOU between SACEP, the proposed Recipient and implementing agency, and IORA.
- The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) is a specialized agency of the United Nations that focuses on environmental issues. UNEP has been providing technical assistance support to SACEP since its very inception, including on conceptualizing and incubating SAR's Regional Seas

program, which is led by SACEP for the South Asia Region. UNEP will serve as an important project partner, continuing to provide TA to SACEP, and joining the Bank in advising SACEP on institutional strengthening and capacity building programs.

- The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) launched a global competitive grants program funded with \$2m from the Swedish government to accelerate meeting UN Sustainable Development Goal #14 (Oceans) <https://www.oceaninnovationchallenge.org/>. It's first competition, launched in January 2020, focuses on soliciting innovative and transformative proposals from public, private and civil society organizations that could 'counter to scourge of ocean pollution'. Curbing plastic waste and particularly, marine plastic litter is a key theme. UNDP will be an important learning partner for the project, given the IDA project will administer a SAR-wide competitive grants platform to address.
- Parley for the Oceans (PARLEY) launched the world's first scalable model (initiated in the Maldives in the South Asia Region) that intercepts plastic waste from the ocean (discarded ghost fishing nets, marine plastic litter) and upcycles this plastic waste in partnership with select Fortune 500 companies and brands (Adidas, American Express, for example) into eco-friendly commercial products. PARLEY pioneered an end to end solution: educating young people at their in-country and grassroots 'ocean schools' on the problem of plastic waste, organizing youth into youth-led waste collection teams, transforming plastic waste into ocean plastic thread, and in partnership with major brands, using that ocean plastic thread to create consumer goods. Parley would be an important knowledge partner for the project, assisting the project in replication of end to end solutions.
- Alliance to End Plastic Waste (AEPW) is a not for profit consortium of 40 private Fortune 500 companies involved all aspects of the plastic supply chain, from oil extraction, plastic manufacturing and use. AEPW established a US \$1.5B fund to be invested over five years to address the challenge of plastic waste that ends up in the environment, particularly the oceans. While AEPW prioritized Southeast Asia as its preferred geography during the 2019 APEC Summit, the South Asia region was also considered and important region for their engagement. With its level of financing, AEPW could become a meaningful project partner, supporting SACEP's proposed 'plastic pollution and waste reduction sustainability fund' that could ensure SACEP-led regional activities continue and accelerate after the IDA project closes.
- The International Water Management Institute (IWMI) is a non-profit, scientific research organization focusing on the sustainable use of water and land resources in developing countries. IWMI is the lead center for the CGIAR Research Program on Water, Land and Ecosystems (WLE). CGIAR is a global research partnership for a food-secure future.

National Engagement

National level stakeholder consultations will be conducted in all eight participating countries with the participation of governments, private sector, NGO/CBOs, academia and media to disclose and inform about the project objectives, components, expected outcomes. These consultations will be continued throughout the project implementation. During 1st six months after the project appraisal, the focus of the consultations would be to inform and broaden the identification of stakeholders. It also expecting to get feedback from the stakeholders on a good understanding/mapping of key stakeholders and

stakeholder groups in each country, share any important ongoing work happening in countries that can be considered for coordination with and complementarity to the regional work.

The future consultations during the project implementation will focus on knowledge dissemination, joint programming especially for data or behavior change, etc. The project will also have an online platform by which stakeholders can continuously be engaged.

Publication (Information Disclosure)

Documentation and information about the update of project activities and the results of consultations with stakeholders will be published by SACEP in SACEP web site www.sacep.org

Table 1: Project Stakeholders

Type	Stakeholder	Role	Engagement Strategy	Engagement Timeline
Project affected parties	Afghanistan National Environment Protection Agency (NEPA)	Serves as Afghanistan’s environmental policy-making and regulatory institution. It’s role is to regulate, coordinate, monitor and enforce environmental laws.	- High-level meeting with ministries during scoping mission	- within 6 months after project appraisal
	Afghanistan Ministry of Energy and Water and allied departments/authorities	Regulates water resource (including irrigation) and energy infrastructure construction	- Surveys, interviews, FGDs	- 1 st to 2 nd year of project implementation
	Bangladesh Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and allied departments/authorities	Prepares plans, policies and programs to ensure sustainable environment and forest through conservation of ecosystem and biodiversity; controlling environmental pollution; addressing climate change; research, floristic survey and development of forest resources	- Consultations, interviews, workshops with agency representatives	- 1 st to 2 nd year of project implementation
	Bangladesh Ministry of Water Resources and allied departments/authorities	Regulation and development of rivers and river valleys. General policy and technical assistance in the field of irrigation, flood control, anti-water-logging, drainage and anti-erosions. All matters relating to irrigation, flood forecasting and warning, flood control, flood control works, causes off floods and damage caused by floods to irrigation projects, embankments, etc.	- Regular meetings/ discussions with stakeholder groups - Electronic and Print media to create awareness disseminate information, press release	- 1 st to 5 nd year of project implementation - 1 st to 5 th year of project implementation
	Bhutan National Environment Commission	Develop, review and revise environmental policies, plans and programmes Formulate, review and revise environment related Laws/Acts and monitor enforcement of the same mainstream environment into the country’s developmental policies, plans and programmes Promote environmental awareness amongst all levels of Bhutanese society, including dissemination of environmental policies, strategies, acts, rules, regulations and standards through print, audio visual and other appropriate means	- Policy review, gap analysis and formulation of new policies - 1 st National stakeholder consultation in Kabul, Afghanistan - 1 st National stakeholder consultation in Dhaka, Bangladesh - 1 st National stakeholder consultation in Thimphu, Bhutan	- 3 rd to 5 th year of project implementation - Within 6 months after appraisal - Within 6 months after appraisal - Within 6 months after appraisal
	India Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and allied departments/ authorities including Central Pollution Control Board, National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management	Nodal agency in the administrative structure of the Central Government for the planning, promotion, co-ordination and overseeing the implementation of India’s environmental and forestry policies and programmes including its lakes and rivers, its biodiversity, forests and wildlife, ensuring the	- 1 st National stakeholder consultation in New Delhi, India	- Within 6 months after appraisal

		welfare of animals, and the prevention and abatement of pollution.	- 1 st National stakeholder consultation in Male', Maldives	- Completed on 19 th January 2020
	India Ministry of Earth Sciences and allied departments/authorities including NCCR, NIOT and NICOIS	Mandated to provide services for weather, climate, ocean and coastal state, hydrology, seismology, and natural hazards; to explore and harness marine living and non-living resources in a sustainable way and to explore the three poles (Arctic, Antarctic and Himalayas).	- 1 st National stakeholder consultation in Kathmandu, Nepal	- Within 6 months after appraisal
	Indian Coast Guard	Undertaking coastal clean-up activities and celebrating international coastal clean-up day	- 1 st National stakeholder consultation in Islamabad, Pakistan	- Within 6 months after appraisal
	Maldives Ministry of Environment and allied departments/authorities including WAMCO	Formulate policies, regulations and standards needed for the implementation of legislation related to environment, climate change, energy, water, sanitation, sewerage, and meteorology	- 1 st National stakeholder consultation in Colombo, Si Lanka	- Completed on 11 th March 2020
	Nepal Ministry of Forest and Environment and allied departments/authorities	Responsible for formulating and implementing policies, regulations and standards related to environment and forest		
	Nepal Ministry of Energy, water Resources and Irrigation and allied departments/authorities	Mandate to plan, develop, maintain, operate, manage and monitor different modes of environmentally sustainable and socially acceptable irrigation and drainage systems from small to larger scale surface systems and from individual to community groundwater schemes.		
	Pakistan Ministry of Climate Change and allied departments/authorities including EPA	Cabinet-level ministry concerned with climate change and environment		
	Pakistan Ministry of Water Resources and allied departments/authorities including FFC, IRSA, PCIW and WAPDA	Develop the country's water resources and provide visionary leadership role in National Water Policy formulation and implementation		
	Sri Lanka Ministry of Environment and Wildlife Resources and allied departments/authorities including MEPA and CEA	Cabinet ministry oversees environment		
	Sri Lanka Ministry of Mahaweli, Agriculture, Irrigation & Rural Development – Irrigation Sector and allied departments/authorities	Responsible for formulation & execution of Policies, Programs and Projects related to the Ministry and institutions Comes under the Ministry purview, development of Water Resources and Irrigation Facilities, River Basins and Irrigation Systems Management Including Operation and Maintenance Conservation and Protection of Water Sources and Irrigation Systems and Control of Pollution of Water sources and ensure quality of Water		

	<p>Private Sector including social innovators, entrepreneurs, students, designers, businesses, materials makers and change makers or collaboratives – any individuals or institution that has an innovative and creative idea and/or solution for turning the tide on plastic waste in all 8 participating countries</p>	<p>Reducing the consumption of single use plastic products; Recycling, reusing, and upcycling existing plastic waste; Reducing accumulated plastic waste in landfills and the environment through recycling and upcycling; Changing consumer behaviors, or retail and wider business practices; Implementing alternative business models and optimizing supply chains; Introducing new materials fit for a circular economy or that offer sustainable alternatives to fossil fuel-based and non-recyclable plastics (i.e. plastic sachets); Adopting the Parley A.I.R. strategy of Avoid (reduce and replace), Intercept (retrieve and recycle) and Redesign (create new materials and new industry standards) successfully rolled out in Maldives with Adidas and other corporates. Supporting regionality via transboundary collaboration, replicability across geographies, or other modalities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consultation meetings - Meetings, consultations, FGDs, workshops - Contracting activities to them under Block Grants - Electronic and Print media to create awareness disseminate information, press release - New opportunities for business-academia collaboration will open and will complement the existing programs of the Innovation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - within 6 months after project appraisal - 1st to 5th year of project implementation - 3rd to 5th year of project implementation - 1st to 5th year of project implementation - 3rd to 5th year of project implementation
	<p>Civil Society Organizations/NGOs including Parley for the Oceans (PARLEY), Alliance to End Plastic Waste (AEPW), etc.</p>	<p>Undertake clean-up activities related to plastic pollution, design and roll out of a regional public awareness campaigns using innovative approaches including art, plays and other modalities considered effective to reach various audiences; innovative and targeted grass-roots and national campaigns (radio, TV, youth-led, etc.) to promote awareness of the problem and local solutions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consultation meetings - Meetings, consultations, FGDs, workshops - Contracting activities to them under Block Grants - Partnership for clean-up activities - Partnership for public awareness activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - within 6 months after project appraisal - 1st to 5th year of project implementation - 3rd to 5th year of project implementation - 2nd to 5th year of project implementation - 2nd to 5th year of project implementation

	Academia including universities	Mapping and forge educational partnerships that would tap region-wide educational content with other partners and design and deployment of new and/or existing educational materials targeting students; development of edu-tech games (via hackathons or other suitable youth-focused effort) to mobilize young people to create youth-inspiring content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consultation meetings - Meetings, consultations, FGDs, workshops - Contracting activities to them under Block Grants - Partnership for design and development of educational materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - within 6 months after project appraisal - 1st to 5th year of project implementation - 3rd to 5th year of project implementation - 3rd to 5th year of project implementation
	Informal Sector representing individual waste pickers or groups and small-scale waste recyclers, etc.	Collection of plastic waste, recycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meetings, consultations, FGDs, workshops - Contracting activities to them under Block Grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1st to 5th year of project implementation - 3rd to 5th year of project implementation
	Women and Vulnerable Groups (for example, waste pickers associations, youth, and minority groups)	Collection of plastic waste, recycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meetings, consultations, FGDs, workshops - Contracting activities to them under Block Grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1st to 5th year of project implementation - 3rd to 5th year of project implementation
	Media who have presence across the region and having distribution channels (TV, radio) with wide reach	Development of communication strategies to educate wide spectrum of societies on the use of single use plastics, microplastics, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consultation meetings - Meetings, consultations, FGDs, workshops - Partnership to develop communication strategies and undertake media campaign 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - within 6 months after project appraisal - 1st to 5th year of project implementation - 2nd to 5th year of project implementation

other interested parties	Afghanistan Municipalities	Provide municipal services, for instance, recreation, cleaning parks, sanitation, and garbage collection	-High-level meeting with ministries during scoping mission	-within 6 months after project appraisal
	Afghanistan Ministry of Health and allied departments/authorities	Apex body for formulation and administration of the rules, regulations and laws relating public health		
	Bangladesh Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock and allied departments/authorities	Preparation of schemes and co-ordination of national policy in respect of fisheries. Meet the demand of animal protein by enhancing production, productivity and value addition of Fish and Livestock products	-Consultations, interviews, workshops with agency representatives for data/information availability and sharing	-1 st to 5 th year of project implementation
	Bangladesh city corporations/municipalities/local governments	Removal, collection, and disposal of wastes; maintenance and cleaning of public streets		
	Bangladesh Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism and allied departments/authorities	Responsible for the formulation of national policies and programmes for development and regulation of Civil Aviation and the regulation of the Bangladeshi tourism industry and the promotion of the Bangladesh as a tourist destination	-Meetings/discussions on data/information sharing	-1 st to 5 th year of project implementation
	Bhutan Ministry of Health and allied departments/authorities	responsible for management and development of health reforms in the country		
	Bhutan Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs and allied departments/authorities	Nodal ministry for governing the local governments		
	Indian Ministry of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries and allied departments/authorities	Responsible for matters relating to livestock production, preservation, protection and improvement of stocks, dairy development and also for matters relating to the Delhi Milk Scheme and the National Dairy Development Board. It also looks after all matters pertaining to fishing and fisheries Development Board		
	India Ministry of Tourism and allied departments/authorities	Nodal agency for the formulation of national policies and programs and for the co-ordination of activities of various Central Government Agencies, State Governments/UTs and the Private Sector for the development and promotion of tourism in the country		
	India state urban development departments, municipal authorities	Collection, transportation, treat and disposal of waste		
Maldives Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture and allied departments/authorities	Formulation and implementation of policies to ensure the development and sustainable management of Marine and Agricultural Resources of the Maldives			

Maldives Ministry of Tourism and allied departments/authorities	Nodal agency for the formulation of national policies and programmes and for the co-ordination of activities of various Central Government Agencies, State Governments/UTs and the Private Sector for the development and promotion of tourism in the country.		
Maldives Government owned public companies/State Trading Organisations including MTCC, MACL, STO, STELCO, MWSC, MIFCO and Fenaka Corporation Limited	STO is a public limited company with an 82 percent stake owned by the government. Its subsidiaries include the Allied Insurance Company, Fuel Supply Maldives, Maldives Gas, Lafarge Maldives Cement, the Maldives National Oil Company and the Maldives Industrial Fisheries Company		
Nepal Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration and allied Municipalities	Nodal ministry accredited with the role of coordination, cooperation, facilitation and monitoring and evaluation of activities undertaken by local governments; regulation and management of the civil service in the country		
Pakistan Ministry Food, Agriculture Livestock and allied departments/Authorities including Fisheries Development Commissioner and Marine Fisheries Department	Responsible for policy, planning and coordination with provincial fisheries departments and other national and international agencies such as Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission		
Pakistan Ministry of Maritime Affairs and allied departments/Authorities	Central administrative authority of the Government of Pakistan primarily assigned to facilitate the ports and shipping industry of Pakistan by providing policy guideline to encourage port development and growth in shipping while maintaining safety standards		
Sri Lanka Ministry of Fisheries of Aquatic Resources and allied departments/Authorities	Responsible for formulating and implementing national policy on fisheries and aquatic resources development		
Sri Lanka Ministry of Tourism and Aviation and allied departments/authorities	Apex body for formulation and administration of the rules, regulations and laws relating to tourism		
Academia, NGOs/CSOs that focus on nature conservation, health etc. in all eight participating countries	Helping to maintain healthy environment		
UN agencies such as UNEP, UNDP and other regional organizations like IORA, IWMI	Technical assistance and capacity building		

The project will promote and support circular economy plastic waste streams which will involve a range of stakeholders across the region, including public sector organizations, community groups, and private sector entities. Project activities will include strengthening stakeholder platforms; collaborating with civil society groups to reduce plastics leakage at the community level; behavior change and awareness raising campaigns and challenge grant competitions; and development of regionwide youth-led movements for change, among other things.

6. Roles, Responsibilities and Resources for Stakeholder Engagement

The implementation of SEP will be funded by SACEP under the project. To ensure full integration of stakeholder engagement into project implementation, the institutional arrangement for the SEP will follow the project's overall implementation arrangements. In this case, the Project Implementing Unit (PIU) formed by SACEP will engage and work with stakeholders to establish and maintain good working relationships. In addition, a dedicated Environmental and Social Impact Specialist will be hired to monitor implementation and updating of the SEP and ESCP.

Table 5 Financing needs

Expenditure Items	Estimated Amount (USD)	Source
Hiring of Environmental and Social Specialist	42,000	Project component 3
Hiring of Stakeholder Engagement Specialist	42,000	Project component 3
Regional meeting with participation of government, private sector, NGOs from all eight countries and other relevant regional organizations	300,000	Project component 1
Engagement with regional organisations	5,000	Project component 2
Engagement with direct and indirect Stakeholder Ministries, Allied Departments/Units	45,000	Project component 2
National Stakeholder consultation in Afghanistan	35,000	Project component 2
National Stakeholder consultation in Bangladesh	30,000	Project component 2
National Stakeholder consultation in Bhutan	30,000	Project component 2
National Stakeholder consultation in India	55,000	Project component 2
National Stakeholder consultation in Nepal	30,000	Project component 2
National Stakeholder consultation in Pakistan	35,000	Project component 2
National Stakeholder consultation in Sri Lanka	10,000	Project component 2
Engagement with electronic and print media	15,000	Project component 1
Printing, stationary and equipment	10,000	Project component 1
Grievance Redress Activities	150,000	Project component 1
Total	834,000	

The PIU headed by a project director and other officers including environment and social specialist is responsible for many tasks including i) project operation and implementation, ii) management and reporting on the Results Framework, iii) implementing the Environmental and Social Standards (ESSs) in accordance with the ESF, and iv) coordination. In other words, the PIU manages the project's budgeting,

technical, fiduciary, safeguards, documentation and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities. It will work to:

- Provide stakeholders with the latest information and update on the progress of the project
- Provide guidance on the complaints mechanisms and procedures described in this SEP
- Ensure that activities and consultations are inclusive and can be accessed both in format and location

7. Grievance Mechanism

SACEP will prepare and adopt a Policy pertinent to the Grievance Mechanism (GM) proposed for this project and will include the following key principles:

- Stakeholder engagement is vital toward ownership and sustainability of project initiatives and outcomes; thus, stakeholder feedback, including complaints, need to be heard
- Complaints shall be addressed promptly and transparently, and without retribution to the complainant
- The process of receipt, investigation, and resolution of complaints shall be fair, consistent, and respectful
- Complaints and grievances shall be resolved at the lowest possible level for resolution

Mechanisms to handle complaints will be provided for stakeholders and other interested parties to raise questions, comments, suggestions and/or complaints, and/or provide any feedback from all activities funded by the project. The GM may be used by i) project beneficiaries (i.e., direct or indirect beneficiaries of the project), ii) project staff including consultants, and iii) other interested parties who may use the GM to raise any concern in relation to the project.

The GM will be managed by the PIU establish under SACEP. Complaints may be submitted at any time during the implementation of the project. The PIU will provide the following channels where stakeholders can make a complaint:

- **Feedback page on SACEP website.** The feedback page on SACEP website can be used as feedback module, where users could send their feedback, including complaints, anonymously. SACEP will take note of these feedback and act on/resolve.
- **Dialogue with PIU Staff.** The PIU is also access points for receiving complaints. PIU staff receives the complaint and evaluates if the issue is relevant to the project and could be resolved informally (which is the usual case for low grievance risk). If it can, the staff takes measures/advises steps to resolve the complaint. The staff records the complaint, complainant, discussion, and resolution/outcome. The document shall be signed by the PIU Lead and the complainant. Copies shall be provided to the complainant and to the PIU. If the issue cannot be resolved informally, the staff shall advise the complainant to lodge a written complaint.
- **Written Complaints.** A project email address will be established prior to project launch. The complainant may lodge a written complaint within 20 days from the date of observing/experiencing the condition that gave rise to the grievance. The document shall state the nature of the complaint and the grievance. Receipt of complaints will be acknowledged with an action plan on next steps including arrangement for a grievance meeting.

The PIU is responsible for recording all complaints (informal and formal), creating and updating a complaints database, and tracking the progress of complaint resolution until completion.

The GRM will be appropriately trained to handle potential GBV complaints following a survivor-centered approach.

The Grievance Meeting. The PIU headed by Project Director and other officials including Environment and Social Specialist shall convene its meetings to:

- State the purpose of the meeting
- Introduce everyone and explain each one's participation in the meeting
- Explain that the content of the meeting is confidential
- State that a decision regarding the complaint shall be made after the meeting, and that the complainant shall be notified in writing
- Describe how the meeting shall be conducted
- Give the complainant the opportunity to describe the exact nature of the complaint, and state the reasons for the grievance
- Allow the presentation of any statements made by witnesses
- Ask the complainant on any suggestion to solve the problem
- Summarize the main points made, and highlight any issues that need to be investigated further. Investigations will be completed within one month after receiving the complains. National level, SACEP NFP will assist in investigating and at regional level SACEP will do the investigation.

Meetings can be held at country level and regional level where necessary.

Records. The Human Resource and Administration focal person shall record the entire process, which includes:

- The nature of the grievance
- The written grievance statement
- Highlights of the grievance meeting
- Supporting documents of the meeting
- The written statement of the decisions
- Outcome of implementation of the decisions

Appeal. The complainant has the right to appeal the decision of the project management committee. The appeal must be made in writing, within 20 days of receipt of the decision. The purpose of the appeal is to provide an independent view of the complaint, and to review the decision. The Appeals Committee consisting GD, SACEP, Project Director and representative of World Bank, constituted by the Project Steering Committee, shall receive the written appeal, convene the grievance appeal meeting, decide on the appeal, and advise the complainant in writing on the outcome of the appeal¹.

If the complainant does not accept the outcome of the appeal, the case will be closed. The complainant may seek redress through the courts. SACEP shall regularly report to the donor on the number of complaints received and resolved, not resolved, or referred to a third party.

World Bank's Grievance Redress Service

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

Monitoring

Monitoring will be done by SACEP through PIU establish under SACEP. There will be a trained Stakeholder Engagement Specialist recruited to the PIU to coordinate and facilitate monitoring activities. SACEP will develop a monitoring framework to assist PIU. This will include close coordination with SACEP's NFPs which are ministries of environment of each member countries and will use best available IT based solutions as well.

Reporting back to the stakeholder groups

- Provide stakeholders with the latest information and update on the progress of the project
- Provide guidance on the complaints mechanisms and procedures described in this SEP
- Ensure that activities and consultations are inclusive and can be accessed both in format and location

Reporting to the World Bank

Mid-year and annual progress reports on project activities will be available at the Project office and published on SACEP Website (www.sacep.org).

Bi-annual reporting will be prepared and submitted by SACEP to the World Bank to regularly monitoring environment, social, health and safety (ESHS) performance of the project. Mid-year reporting on the project progress will be consolidated in an annual reporting format.