



Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP)

Climate Proof Water4Food Project – South Sudan

Project Duration: 2026–2028

Prepared by: Plan International (lead agency), in partnership with AfDB and regional stakeholders

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full Meaning
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
AfDB	African Development Bank
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
CSA	Climate-Smart Agriculture
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
CfH	Coalition for Humanity
PSHEA	Protection from Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
PI	Plan International
PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
FSL	Food Security and Livelihoods
UN	United Nations
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization

Executive Summary

The Climate Proof Water4Food (W4F) Project (2026–2028), led by Plan International in partnership with the African Development Bank (AfDB), aims to enhance climate resilience in agriculture and water systems in Unity State, South Sudan. The project targets over 116,000



farmers and 49,000 community members, with a focus on women and youth, through climate-smart agriculture and solar-powered water infrastructure.

This Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) outlines how the project will engage stakeholders to ensure inclusive, transparent, and accountable implementation. It aligns with AfDB's environmental and social safeguards and promotes local ownership, sustainability, and conflict sensitivity.

Nine priority environmental and social (E&S) issues guide the engagement strategy: labour influx, land disputes, waste management, agrochemical use, community health, gender inequality, exclusion of vulnerable groups, climate-related risks, and coordination challenges. These are addressed through targeted consultations, capacity building, and risk mitigation measures.

The SEP emphasizes participatory engagement at all levels. Community-level activities include inclusive consultations in local languages (Nuer, Dinka, Agnuak), separate focus groups for women and youth, and culturally appropriate communication tools. Institutional engagement involves coordination with government ministries, local authorities, and development partners through platforms like the WASH and FSL Clusters.

A Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) will be established to provide accessible, confidential, and timely resolution of complaints. Monthly project summaries and updates will be shared through community meetings, noticeboards, and digital platforms to ensure transparency and accountability.

Plan International and its local partner, Coalition for Humanity, will lead SEP implementation, supported by government stakeholders and service providers. Contractors will be required to comply with environmental and social safeguards, including proper waste management and adherence to the GRM.

A phased exit strategy will ensure sustainability through local ownership, water tariffs, institutional integration, and technical training. A dedicated budget of USD 81,985 supports all SEP activities, including stakeholder mapping, consultations, information sharing, and monitoring.

This SEP is a critical tool for ensuring that the W4F project is inclusive, responsive, and sustainable, contributing to long-term resilience and peace in Unity State.

Introduction & Context

The Climate Proof Water4Food (W4F) project will take place in South Sudan and Ethiopia over three years, expected from 2026 to 2028. In South Sudan, the project will be implemented in the Rubkona and Mayom counties of Unity State. In Ethiopia, the project will be implemented in the Gambella Region. The project's objective is to increase adaptation to



extreme weather events and climate change within the agriculture and water sectors, leading to increased food production, increased food security and increased access to water and sanitation.

The project has been designed for climate-smart gender transformative agriculture and climate-resilient gender transformative WASH. Main development outcomes include (1) applying innovative, state-of-the-art technology to strengthen integrated water and flood management, to strengthen the availability of multi-purpose water services for households and agriculture; and (2) promoting and supporting the implementation of climate-resilient agricultural practices, strengthening the agricultural value chains and introducing and ensuring access to climate-resilient agricultural inputs.

The project will contribute to the adoption of climate-smart agricultural (CSA) practices of 116,000 farmers, increasing food production and strengthening the livelihood of 88,000 young women and men. It will also establish or reconstruct 7 solar-powered water systems coupled with 6 integrated flood management systems both supporting the transition to CSA by making 224,000 cubic metres of additional water available as well as ensuring access to drinking water for 49,000 people.

The project and its consortium will be led by Plan International South Sudan. Plan International is an international humanitarian and development organization operating in more than 80 countries to advance the rights of children and youth, with a special focus on equality for girls and a clear strategy to mitigate the negative effects of climate change. The project is the result of a collaboration between Plan International South Sudan, Ethiopia, Denmark, and Spain along with the Ministries of Finance, Agriculture, Water, and Energy at all levels, as well as local NGOs and research institutions in South Sudan and Ethiopia.

Rationale for stakeholder engagement

A Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) is a structured document that describes how a program or project will identify, interact, communicate, and manage relationships with its stakeholders during the project. It guarantees responsibility, openness, and inclusivity while fostering a sense of trust and ownership among those impacted.

For the Water4Food (W4F) project in Unity State, South Sudan, and the Gambella Region, Ethiopia, to be successful and sustainable, effective stakeholder engagement is essential. Every level of implementation will be informed by the opinions of partners, government



counterparts, and impacted communities thanks to the project's inclusive, participatory approach. To ensure local ownership, identify hazards, and comply with AfDB's environmental and social safeguard standards, engagement will start with early consultations. Maintaining consistency with national goals and bolstering institutional capacity for long-term management will need regular communication with line ministries, county and woreda administrations, and regional water bureaus.

Through organized consultations, water user committees, and feedback systems, the initiative will involve farmers, pastoralists, women's, girls, youth associations, people with disabilities, religious leaders and representatives at the community level. In targeted areas impacted by recurrent flooding, intercommunal conflict, resource competition and relocation, this will improve social cohesiveness, encourage fair access, and lower protection risks. Local media, traditional leaders, and civil society organizations will be enlisted to promote accountability, enhance transparency, and increase public understanding of food security and water use.

To prevent duplication, optimize synergies, and facilitate seamless humanitarian–development transitions, humanitarian and development actors—such as UN agencies, non-governmental organizations, and other AfDB-supported programs—will be involved through collaborative planning and coordination forums. Involving private sector players like solar specialists, contractors, Agri-input providers, and microfinance organizations can help communities access markets, generate local revenue, and guarantee that water systems are operated and maintained at a reasonable cost.

The SEP will use a variety of approaches that are specific to the context and accessibility requirements, including focus groups, surveys, grievance redress procedures, community forums, participatory design workshops, and stakeholder coordination platforms. To ensure responsive delivery, monitoring and learning will use feedback loops to adjust to operational challenges, conflict dynamics, and climate shocks. The effort will provide sustainable water and food outcomes for both host and refugee populations, as well as create trust, lower risks, and promote peace by integrating stakeholder engagement throughout the project cycle.



Priority Environmental and Social Issues that necessitate stakeholders' engagement

1. Labour Influx and Community Cohesion: Influx of skilled and unskilled labor may lead to social tensions, cultural disruption, increased demand for local services, and potential rise in diseases.

Land Use and Ownership Conflicts: Reclaimed floodplains and resettlement areas may trigger disputes over land ownership and usage.

3. Waste Management and Pollution: Lack of proper waste disposal infrastructure, especially for agro-chemical containers and construction debris, poses risks to soil and water.

4. Agrochemical and Pesticide Use: Risks of unsafe pesticide use due to lack of regulation, training, and protective equipment.

5. Community Health and Safety: Stagnant water from flood-control structures may become breeding grounds for disease vectors.

6. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Women face barriers in land ownership, decision-making, and access to resources.

7. Vulnerable Groups and Social Inclusion: IDPs, youth, and persons with disabilities may be excluded from project benefits.

8. Flooding and Climate Resilience: Seasonal flooding affects livelihoods, infrastructure, and access to services.

9. Stakeholder Coordination and Governance: Multiple actors (government, NGOs, UN, communities) involved in implementation.



Stakeholder Mapping & Analysis

Stakeholders Affected by the Programme (Primary beneficiaries & vulnerable groups directly impacted by interventions)

Table 1: Stakeholder Mapping and Analysis

Stakeholder Group	Interest in Project	Level of Influence	Engagement Strategy & Approach
Frontline actors (project participants, community-level structures, opinion leaders)	Very high – directly benefit from agriculture & WASH interventions	Medium	Active participation in planning, community mobilization, feedback mechanisms
Direct participants: Women, men, and youth affected by flooding, conflict, and food insecurity	Very high – improved agriculture, WASH, and livelihood opportunities	Medium	Capacity building, inclusive committees, gender- and youth-sensitive approaches
Indirect participants: Children and youth benefiting from improved services	Medium – improved nutrition, water, education	Low	Child/youth-focused services, inclusion in awareness campaigns
Local leaders in Unity State (chiefs, community representatives)	High – local authority, gatekeeping community acceptance	Medium–High	Dialogue, advocacy, grievance redress, participatory planning

Decision-Making Stakeholders (Government institutions, duty bearers, and regulatory authorities)

Table 2: Decision Makers in stakeholders Engagement

Stakeholder Group	Interest in Project	Level of Influence	Engagement Strategy & Approach
Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security	Very high – mandate for agricultural resilience	High	Policy coordination, technical guidance
Ministry of Water and Irrigation	Very high – mandate for water resources & irrigation	High	Strategic collaboration, joint monitoring
Ministry of Environment and Forestry	High – environmental sustainability, climate resilience	High	Compliance with environmental standards, co-planning



Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs & Disaster Management	High – disaster risk reduction & response	High	Coordination on humanitarian linkages
Ministry of Finance and Planning	High – oversight, resource mobilization	High	Strategic steering, financial oversight
Ministry of Animal Resources and Fisheries	High – resilient livestock systems	High	Integration of dual-use infrastructure
Directorate of Land and Public Utilities	Medium – land allocation, utilities oversight	Medium–High	Regulatory engagement, land-use planning
Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC)	High – coordination of relief & rehabilitation	High	Joint planning, monitoring, reporting
Local government structures (county & payam leaders, chiefs)	High – local implementation & acceptance	High	Establish county-level taskforces, community mobilization
International organizations (FAO, IOM)	High – technical support & coordination	High	Joint programming, technical partnerships
Development partners (AfDB, donors)	High – financing, oversight, accountability	High	Regular reporting, joint missions, knowledge sharing

Stakeholders to Create Additional Value (Partners who may enhance scale, sustainability, or innovation)

Table 3: Stakeholders that can create additional value

Stakeholder Group	Interest in Project	Level of Influence	Engagement Strategy & Approach
University of Juba – School of Agriculture	Medium – research, innovation	Low–Medium	Research collaboration, piloting CSA practices
ASARECA (research on climate-adaptive seed varieties)	Medium – innovation & technology transfer	Medium	Regional research partnerships, capacity building
Private sector (agribusiness, WASH tech providers, solar/irrigation suppliers)	Medium–High – business opportunities	Medium	PPPs, supply chain strengthening, farmer linkages
Local NGOs & INGOs	High – community mobilization, service delivery	Medium	Partnerships in training, advocacy, social cohesion
UN agencies (FAO, WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF)	High – complementary programming	High	Joint interventions, resource sharing, refugee–host inclusion



Faith-based & community-based organizations	Medium – strong local trust & legitimacy	Low–Medium	Community mobilization, awareness campaigns, BCC support
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Findings

PI had discussions with community representatives, government line ministers, NGOs, and the UN agency (IOM). The discussions took place at both the state and national levels. PISS has also participated in a consultation meeting for development partners organized by AFDB. Key findings of these engagements are:

- There are similar agriculture and WASH interventions by other NGOs and IOM in the project locations. PI should avoid duplication of efforts. In this regard, PISS will form a coordination forum at the state level, propose locations of project interventions, giving due emphasis to avoid duplication of efforts
- The project locations are flood prone. Hence, PISS should consider project interventions that are climate resilient, as the locations are flood prone. In this regard, PI has crafted interventions that are climate-smart and will implement interventions considering the local situation

The local leaders in Unity state acknowledged that there is a considerable need for agriculture and WASH interventions, and humanitarian and development partners should support in addressing it.

Budget

Plan International South Sudan has developed a budget of USD 81,985 for the implementation of the SEP. This budget will support SEP facilitation and implementation throughout the project. While this allocation is managed by the Plan International project coordination unit for implementing and monitoring the SEP, other line ministries -including the Ministry of Environment and Forestry and the Ministry of Agriculture may also dedicate budgetary resources to strengthen stakeholder engagement as part of the overall project costs.

A tentative budget for the SEP is presented in Table XXX. This table will be updated to include all stakeholder activities, such as workshops, training sessions, program reviews, and monitoring activities.



Risks, Impacts and Mitigation

Effective stakeholder engagement must take into account the wider technical, economic, social, and environmental risks that could affect both participation and project outcomes. For the Climate Proof Water4Food Project, the most relevant risks include:

- Technical and operational risks such as breakdown of solar-powered water systems and limited local capacity for repair and maintenance.
- Macroeconomic risks linked to inflation, currency depreciation, and limited government financing, which may reduce affordability and disrupt input supply chains.
- Institutional and policy risks stemming from weak enforcement of WASH and agricultural policies and limited local ownership of O&M systems.
- Security and accessibility risks including armed clashes, cattle raiding, and seasonal flooding that restrict safe access to project sites.
- Social and safeguarding risks such as restrictive gender norms, exclusion of women from decision-making spaces, risks of sexual exploitation and abuse, child labour, and GBV linked to changes in household income dynamics.
- Agricultural and environmental risks including pests, livestock diseases, climate shocks (floods and droughts), poor infrastructure limiting market access, and limited availability of quality seeds and inputs.

Mitigation measures include capacity building, safeguarding protocols, gender-responsive engagement, DRR and climate-smart practices, security protocols, and policy alignment with line ministries.

A detailed *Risk, Impact, and Mitigation Matrix* is provided in Annex 1, outlining each risk, its impact level, proposed mitigation measures, and responsible actors.

Engagement Strategy & Plan

The project adopts a participatory and inclusive approach to stakeholder engagement, ensuring that all groups are reached through culturally appropriate and accessible methods. Engagement will be guided by the following principles:



- **Accessibility:** Engagement activities will be conducted in local languages (Nuer, Dinka, Agnuak, Amharic) using methods adapted to literacy levels (pictorial tools, visual materials, radio, loudspeakers). Locations will be chosen to ensure physical access for women, youth, refugees, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Traditional leaders, elders, and opinion shapers will be actively involved to respect cultural norms and strengthen legitimacy of consultations. Timing of activities will consider community calendars, religious practices, and seasonal constraints.
- **Inclusivity:** Separate consultations (men, women, youth, PWDs) will be held where necessary to ensure safe spaces for all voices. Engagement will promote gender balance and youth participation in decision-making processes.
- **Safe Participation:** All activities will adhere to Plan International's safeguarding, PSHEA, and child protection policies. Clear referral pathways and grievance channels will be communicated to participants.
- **Partnership with Local Actors:** Plan International will implement the project in partnership with the Coalition for Humanity (CfH), a local organization with strong rapport and acceptance among communities and local leaders. This partnership will enhance trust, ensure cultural appropriateness, and support sustainability of engagement mechanisms.

By embedding these principles, the project ensures that engagement is not only transparent and accountable but also equitable, culturally appropriate, and responsive to the realities of the communities it serves.

Key engagement strategies include:

Participation in Coordination Platforms

- Actively attend and contribute to local and national coordination forums, including the WASH Cluster, FSL Cluster, and the Humanitarian Coordination Forum.
- Share lessons learned and align project interventions with ongoing initiatives.

Strengthening State-Level Coordination



- Establish or join a dedicated coordination mechanism in Unity State for organizations implementing similar activities.
- Facilitate regular information-sharing to minimize duplication and enhance complementarities.

Inclusive Stakeholder Involvement

- Engage stakeholders in project design and implementation through kick-off workshops, periodic review meetings, trainings, and consultations.
- Ensure participation of both decision-making and affected stakeholders, with a focus on gender and youth inclusion.
- From outset, establish expectation that systems established must be operated and maintained and financially sustained by the communities themselves.

Transparent Information Sharing

- Disseminate key extracts from project reports and updates to stakeholders on a regular basis.
- Use multiple communication channels (meetings, email, and local networks) to reach all levels of stakeholders effectively.

Collaborative Monitoring and Learning

- Organize joint monitoring visits with relevant line ministries and development partners.
- Use findings from joint missions to adapt project interventions and strengthen accountability.

Collaborative Engagement of Pastoralists

- Timing meetings around transhumance cycles,
- Engaging with pastoralist representatives and youth, and
- Ensuring water points and agricultural schemes do not create or exacerbate farmer-herder conflicts

Stakeholders engagement stages and timelines

Stakeholders will be involved through out the project cycle with different activities being conducted ranging from project design to project closer. The table below shows the key stakeholders engagement activities and timelines.



Table 4: Stakeholders Engagement Activities and Timing

Level / Responsible Party	Roles and Responsibilities in Stakeholder Engagement	Level of Influence / Interest	Engagement Techniques & Description	Target Audience	Timeframe
National Level-Line ministries of environment, natural resources including humanitarian affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Provide oversight, support, and quality control for risk management and stakeholder engagement. -Review, assure quality, and approve screening reports and ESMPs. -Facilitate disclosure of ESIA/ESMP/SEP to the public. -Ensure contracts and bidding documents contain E&S and stakeholder engagement provisions. 	High influence/ High interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Steering committee meetings -Technical committee meetings -Joint review meetings -Digital media/websites for disclosure 	National ministries, development partners, regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steering committee (quarterly) Technical committee (monthly) Joint review (quarterly) Digital media (continuous)
State level-Line ministries of environment, natural resources including	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Review and approve ESMPs and engagement plans. -Provide training on E&S 	Medium influence/ High interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Capacity building workshops/meetings and consultation 	State level staff from line ministries	Quarterly



humanitarian affairs	safeguards and stakeholder engagement.				
State level-Line ministries of environment, natural resources including humanitarian affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Coordinate stakeholder engagement activities and support consultation processes. -Integrate E&S and engagement clauses in regional contracts. -Provide regular reports on engagement and mitigation measures. 	High influence / High interest	-Workshops and trainings for contractors and staff	Regional offices, contractors, CSOs	Monthly/Quarterly
Local Contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Maintain direct communication with workers and surrounding communities. -Enforce Codes of Conduct (GBV, child labor, OHS). -Ensure timely disclosure of site-specific risks. 	Medium influence / Medium interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Daily safety briefings -On-site consultations -Disclosure boards at worksites 	Workers, local communities	Daily /Continuous
Local Community level including	Actively participate in consultations, provide	Low influence / High interest	Community meetings facilitated by project team and	Community members, vulnerable	Continuous / Quarterly meetings; closure



leaders and project groups	feedback on project activities, report grievances through GRM, and collaborate in implementing mitigation measures (e.g., erosion control, water management).		project management committees Participation in workshops, FGDs, and handover events	groups, water users	activities at project end
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Detailed responsibility of SEP is which explains the specific roles of the stakeholders and levels as well as management of grievance and redress system with specific timeframe is documented in the table below.

Table 5: Responsibilities of key stakeholders and timeframes

Project Stage	Engagement Activity	Objective	Target Stakeholders	Priority E&S Issues	Timeframe	Expected Outputs / KPIs	GRM Integration	Estimated Cost (USD)
Project Design	National stakeholder consultations	Collect views on project design, target beneficiaries, E&S risks, mitigation measures, GRM, SEP	Line ministries of environment and natural resources Plan International, AfDBs	Identification of key E&S risks and safeguard gaps and key needs in affected communities	During preparation	# of institutions consulted; Minutes with agreed actions; Draft list of risks & mitigation measures	GRM process introduced, roles of national institutions in handling grievances clarified	8,000
	State/County-level stakeholder consultations	Gather inputs on beneficiaries, local E&S risks, mitigation, GRM, SEP	County line ministries of environment, agriculture	County level water use conflicts, livelihood impacts	During preparation	# of documented county level environmental risks identified	County grievance channels discussed,	5,000



			ure, Plan Internat ional Office	and impact of flooding		and documented	GRM focal points nomina ted	
Project Design	Communit y-level consultatio ns	Collect views on identificatio n, targeting beneficiarie s, risks, mitigation, GRM	Comm unity membe rs, vulnera ble groups (wome n, youth, elderly, PWDs)	Social risks (exclusio n, site selection disputes, land-use conflicts)	During preparatio n	# of groups represented that agreed with mitigation measures documented	GRM explain ed in local languag es, commu nity- level compla int uptake channel s establis hed	12, 000
Project Launch	National project launch workshop	Raise awareness of project features, safeguards, roles/respon sibilities	MoWE , MoA, Plan Internat ional, AfDBs	Institutio nal safeguar d responsib ilities	Launching stage	Workshop report; # of institutions committed; Agreed roadmap on safeguards	GRM officiall y launche d and shared	5,000
Project Launch	County project launch workshops	Explain project features, safeguards, roles, communica tion to beneficiarie s	County line ministrie s, Plan Office	Commun ication of safeguar d measures & inclusion of vulnerabl e groups	Launching stage	# of participants; Summary of roles/respon sibilities; Beneficiary communicat ion plan agreed	GRM focal persons at woreda level introdu ced	6,000
Impleme ntation	Communit y/public mobilizati on & consultatio n	Mobilize and prepare communitie s, clarify expectation s, agree on outreach methods	Nationa l and county offices, commu nity associat ions and project manage ment groups	Site selection for infrastruc ture, land-use conflicts, exclusion risks	Quarterly	# of community mobilization events; ≥40% female participants; Documente d site selection decisions	GRM reintrod uced, flyers/p osters distribu ted in local languag es, hotline shared	14,00 0
Impleme ntation	Monitorin g &	Provide and obtain ongoing	Nationa l and county	Monitori ng complian	Quarterly/ monthly	# of missions conducted;	Grievan ce cases	10,00 0



	supervision missions	info on performance	offices, community associations and project management groups	ce with safeguard measures		Compliance reports submitted; % corrective actions implemented	tracked, resolution reports shared	
Implementation	Project review meetings	Collect feedback on progress, address new/emerging issues	County level line ministries	Adaptive management of E&S risks	Quarterly	# of review meetings with issues identified and addressed	Standing GRM agenda reviewed; grievances tracked	12,000
Closing	Project closeout meetings	Discuss project achievements and exit strategy	National and regional line ministries	Project achievements and sustainability of safeguard measures, exit strategy	End of project	Final report shared; # of stakeholders attending; Exit strategy agreed	Final GRM report presented, including total grievances received & resolved	10,000

Information Disclosure

Transparent, timely, and inclusive information-sharing is central to ensuring accountability to affected communities and fostering stakeholder support. Monthly Project Summaries will be disseminated within the first week of each month through community information centers From the design phase—when PI consulted stakeholders on project scope, implementation, beneficiaries, and duplication risks—information has been consistently shared to build trust, incorporate local knowledge, and design interventions that are community-driven and climate-smart.

This practice will continue throughout the entire project cycle, from inception to closure and evaluation, ensuring that all stakeholders remain informed of progress, challenges, and next steps, while helping to minimize duplication and strengthen collaboration. The final evaluation



report will be presented to stakeholders through end of project validation workshop to inform sustainability.

Planned Activities:

- **Monthly Project Summaries:** Concise updates on project implementation, translated into local languages (Dinka and Nuer).
- **Community Dissemination:** Printed summaries distributed to community members and local leaders, supported by town hall and community meetings.
- **Institutional Communication:** English-language reports and updates shared with NGOs, INGOs, UN agencies, and government line ministries.
- **Information Boards:** Noticeboards installed in selected sites and offices across the two counties for regular posting of updates.
- **Digital Platforms:** Sharing project highlights via email, WhatsApp groups, and LinkedIn to reach wider audiences.

Engagement Approach: *Transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in information flow to foster trust, secure stakeholder support, and strengthen community ownership.*

8 . Grievance Redress Mechanism

As part of the Climate Proof Water4Food project, a Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) will be designed consultatively to provide stakeholders with a structured and accessible way to raise concerns related to project activities. It will serve as a complementary tool to formal legal and institutional channels, such as courts, audit bodies, and administrative procedures, without replacing them. Stakeholders will retain the full right to pursue grievances through these formal avenues if they choose.

The GRM will aim to resolve issues through dialogue, transparency, and collaborative problem-solving. It will be particularly useful for addressing concerns that arise despite proactive stakeholder engagement, and for ensuring that all voices, especially those of vulnerable or marginalized groups, are heard and respected.

The GRM will be designed and finalized during the autumn of 2025, before the project implementation will begin in early 2026.



Core GRM principles

The grievance mechanisms will ensure that all grievances are addressed in good faith, through a transparent, impartial, and culturally appropriate process. The following key principles will guide the design of the GRM:

Accessibility: Accessible to all stakeholders, including marginalized groups such as women, youth, persons with disabilities, etc.

Confidentiality: Anonymous reporting will be allowed; all personal information is protected.

Non-retaliation: Complainants will be protected from any form of retaliation.

Timeliness: Grievances will be acknowledged, investigated, and resolved promptly.

Transparency: All complaints will be tracked and reported transparently.

Consultation Meetings

Structured public consultations will be conducted at key milestones of the project cycle (e.g., design review, project launch, implementation updates, and project close-out). These consultations ensure transparency, accountability, and inclusivity while fostering ownership among all stakeholder groups.

The first consultation was held during the design phase in September 2025, at both state level (Bentiu) and national level (Juba). At the state level, participants included government line ministries, women's and youth representatives, Plan International (PI), CfH, and the AfDB team. At the national level, consultations were conducted with AfDB, PI, INGOs, UN agencies, and government representatives.

The next consultation will take place at the start of the project (kick-off workshops at Juba and Bentiu levels). Stakeholders will be invited in advance, and the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) will be presented for discussion, revision, and finalization. Subsequent engagements will follow the agreed plan, while remaining flexible to respond to emerging issues through local coordination forums, sector clusters, and ad-hoc meetings.

Planned Activities

- Convening a Project Inception Meeting to present objectives, scope, and implementation plan.
- Holding periodic Project Review Meetings to assess progress and capture lessons.
- Facilitating regular Project Steering Committee Meetings to strengthen oversight and decision-making.



- Conducting a Project Close-Out Workshop to review achievements, share lessons, and ensure sustainability.

Monitoring, Reporting & Recordkeeping

The project will systematically track SEP activities, document stakeholder feedback, integrate findings into project adjustments, and produce periodic reports to ensure accountability and learning.

Key MEAL activities include:

- Post-distribution monitoring of improved seeds provided to farmers' groups
- Post-harvest assessments
- Hygiene Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP) surveys
- Documentation of success stories and impact cases
- Evaluations at baseline, mid-term, and endline

Implementation Responsibilities

Table 6: Implementation Responsibilities

Stakeholder	Responsibility
Plan International	Project implementation, local partner's capacity building
Coalition for Humanity	Project implementation support, leading local stakeholders' engagement activities
PI national offices (DNO and SPNO)	Match fund contribution, technical support,
AFDB	Funding the project, technical supervision,
Government line ministers (Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Ministry of Water and Irrigation, Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management, and Ministry of Finance and Planning, etc.)	Facilitation, monitoring, strategic leadership, ensuring security, Support in community mobilization, coordination, and provision of technical training and feedback
Communities and community leaders	Uptalking project's services Feedback about the project Creating an enabling environment



Service Providers, e.g., contractors for water point construction	Timely delivery of contracted services/procurements Compliance with environmental and social safeguards, such as proper waste management (especially from construction), safe handling of materials, and adherence to the project's GRM and safeguarding policies.
NGOs and UN agencies	Information sharing,

Project Exit Strategy

To ensure sustainability beyond the project duration (2026–2028), a phased exit strategy will be implemented. From the outset, communities, water user committees, farmer groups, and county authorities will be actively engaged in the management of agriculture, water, and flood-control systems. Capacity-building activities will focus on governance, technical operation and maintenance (O&M), financial management, and gender- and youth-inclusive leadership.

A central component of the exit strategy is financial sustainability. Communities will be expected to pay water tariffs to support the ongoing operation and maintenance of solar-powered water systems. These tariffs will be set transparently in consultation with water user committees and county leadership, ensuring affordability and equitable access. The revenues collected will be managed locally by committees and savings groups, with oversight from county water authorities, to guarantee that systems remain functional and services continue after project closure.

By embedding ownership at community and institutional levels, aligning with national WASH and agricultural frameworks, and strengthening the financial and technical capacity of local structures, the project will create conditions for long-term resilience and self-reliance in Unity State beyond external support

Exit Strategy – Objectives and Key Actions

Table 7 Objectives and Key Actions in Exit Strategy

Objective	Key Actions	Responsible Stakeholders	Timeline (2026–2028)
1. Local Ownership & Governance Strengthen community structures for sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and formalize community-based water user committees and farmer groups. Ensure women, youth, and vulnerable groups are represented in leadership roles. Develop by-laws for O&M and accountability. 	Water User Committees, Farmer Groups, Community Leaders, Coalition for Humanity (CfH), Plan Int'l	Yr 1–2: Committees formed & trained. Yr 2–3: Committees assume decision-



			making & O&M.
2. Financial Sustainability Secure reliable O&M financing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce and enforce water tariffs to fund O&M. • Link tariff collection with Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs). • Establish contingency funds for emergency repairs. 	Water User Committees, VSLAs, County Authorities, Ministry of Finance, Plan Int'l	Yr 1: Tariff structures designed. Yr 2–3: Tariffs operational & funds managed locally.
3. Institutional Anchoring Integrate systems into government planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign MoUs with Ministry of Water & Irrigation, Ministry of Agriculture, and county authorities. • Align O&M structures with national WASH & agriculture policies. • Include WASH/agriculture committee monitoring in county annual plans. 	Ministry of Water & Irrigation, Ministry of Agriculture & Food Security, County Authorities, AfDB	Yr 1: MoUs signed. Yr 2–3: O&M integrated into gov't frameworks.
4. Technical Sustainability Build local capacity & private sector linkages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train local pump mechanics, youth cooperatives, and farmer groups in solar/irrigation system maintenance. • Provide toolkits and local-language manuals. • Strengthen partnerships with solar/irrigation suppliers and agro-input dealers. 	Plan Int'l, CfH, TVETs, Youth Cooperatives, Private Sector, County Water Dept	Yr 1: Training & manuals developed. Yr 2–3: Local service provision established.
5. Transition & Handover Ensure smooth exit & local ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gradually reduce external technical support in final year. • Conduct joint close-out workshop with government, AfDB, and communities. • Document and share lessons learned nationally. 	Plan Int'l, AfDB, Ministries (Water, Agriculture, Finance), County Gov't, Community Committees	Yr 2: Begin phased handover. Yr 3: Final handover & lessons dissemination.

Budget

No budget needed to clarify Implementation Responsibilities. This will be done in kick-off workshops and other engagements. The budgets are already included in other categories.



Overall Budget Summary

Table 8: Overall Stakeholders Engagement Budget

#	Description	Total Cost (SSP)	Total Cost (USD)
1	Stakeholder Mapping & Analysis	4,251,000	29,764
2	Engagement Strategy & Plan	1,355,000	9,487
3	Information Disclosure	1,352,500	9,470
4	Consultation Meetings	962,500	6,739
5	Grievance Redress Mechanism	605,000	4,236
6	Monitoring, Reporting & Recordkeeping	766,000	5,363
7	Implementation Responsibilities	2,417,500	16,926
	Grand Total	11,709,500	81,985

Annex

Table 9: Lists of Annex

Annex 1 – Risk, Impact and mitigation matrix

Risk Category	Specific Risk	Impact Level	Mitigation Measures	Responsible Actors
Technical Design & Ops	Breakdowns/delays in solar-powered water & flood control systems	Moderate	Conduct TEM hydrogeological surveys; train local technicians; establish spare parts supply chain; phased roll-out with pilots	Project engineers, Private vendors, M&E team
Macroeconomic	Inflation, currency depreciation, limited govt budget	Substantial	Budget contingencies; fixed-price contracts; strengthen VSLAs & income-generating groups	Finance team, Project mgmt, VSLA groups
Sector Policies	Weak enforcement of WASH/agriculture	Moderate	Strengthen County Water Dept capacity; establish WUAs with	Regional Bureaus, County



Risk Category	Specific Risk	Impact Level	Mitigation Measures	Responsible Actors
	policies; poor O&M frameworks		bylaws/fees; align with MWRI & MoA policies	Water Dept, Project mgmt
Security	Armed clashes, cattle raiding, looting (Unity State)	Very High	Apply SSAFE protocols; real-time monitoring via UNDSS; engage local guards; stagger material deliveries	Security team, Local leaders, UNDSS
Accessibility	Seasonal flooding cuts off sites, delays works	Moderate	Align works with seasonal calendars; pre-position materials	Project engineers, Field teams
Social & Cultural	Gender norms limit women's participation	Moderate	Train WASH/agriculture committees on gender-responsive approaches; mentorship for women leaders To ensure women's participation in WASH and agriculture committees. To address GBV/SEA risks through inclusive planning and safeguards.	Gender officer, Community leaders
Safeguarding/PSHEA	Risk of sexual exploitation, abuse, harassment	Moderate	Safeguarding risk assessments; PSHEA training	Safeguarding officer, HR,



Risk Category	Specific Risk	Impact Level	Mitigation Measures	Responsible Actors
			for staff; awareness campaigns; gender-sensitive feedback channels	Community reps
Child Labour & GBV	Use of child labour; GBV against women gaining income	Moderate	Awareness sessions on child labour & GBV; integrate into VSLA, agri, WASH; partner with Ministry of Gender; quarterly safety audits	Project staff, Ministry of Gender, Community facilitators
Pests & Diseases	Reduced crop/livestock productivity	Moderate	Promote organic pesticides & crop protection practices; strengthen agri extension services	Agric extension workers, Farmers groups
Climate Change	Floods/drought damage crops & livestock	Moderate	Provide climate-resilient seeds; support DRR; establish Early Warning Systems To co-design flood mitigation structures with community input. To integrate local knowledge into climate adaptation strategies. To ensure community ownership of	DRR committees, Agric bureau, Project mgmt



Risk Category	Specific Risk	Impact Level	Mitigation Measures	Responsible Actors
			resilience-building measures.	
Infrastructure/Markets	Poor roads & transport limit market access	Moderate	Prioritize feeder roads; strengthen market linkage interventions	Local govt, Market actors, Project mgmt
Agricultural Inputs	Limited access to quality seeds & inputs	Moderate	Promote seed multiplication schemes; link to seed banks/trade associations; organize seed fairs; local procurement where feasible	Agric bureau, Seed banks, Farmer groups
Social Cohesion	Labour Influx and Community Cohesion	Moderate	Prioritize local hiring, enforce fair labor practices, conduct regular community sensitization, implement health screening, and establish grievance redress mechanisms.	RRC Project manager Community Leaders
Land Onwership	Land Use and Ownership Conflicts	Moderate	Conduct participatory land mapping, engage traditional leaders and local authorities, ensure transparent land allocation, and resolve disputes through inclusive dialogue.	Community Leaders Farmers Groups
Waste management		Moderate	Establish community-led waste management systems, provide	Ministry of Environment and the Forestry



Risk Category	Specific Risk	Impact Level	Mitigation Measures	Responsible Actors
	Waste Management and Pollution		training on hazardous waste handling, and set up monitoring and reporting mechanisms.	Town Councils
Use of Chemicals	Agrochemical and Pesticide Use	Moderate	Train farmers on Integrated Pest Management, distribute protective gear, regulate chemical use, and promote organic alternatives.	Farmers groups Agirc Trainers
Community Health	Community Health and Safety	Moderate	Design water structures with drainage systems, involve communities in site selection, and conduct regular health risk assessments.	WASH Engineer Water Management Committees
Social Inclusion	Vulnerable Groups and Social Inclusion	Low	Apply inclusive targeting criteria, collaborate with CBOs, and monitor participation and access to services.	Project Team, Community Leaders Farmers Groups
Climate Change	Flooding and Climate Resilience	Moderate	Co-design flood mitigation structures, integrate indigenous knowledge, and build local capacity for climate adaptation.	Project Team Farmers Groups Community leaders



Risk Category	Specific Risk	Impact Level	Mitigation Measures	Responsible Actors
Coordination and Governance	Stakeholder Coordination and Governance	Moderate	Establish coordination platforms, align with local development plans, and implement feedback and adaptive management systems.	Line ministries RRC Project Team

Stakeholders Engagement

Stakeholders engagement interviews were conducted during the ESIA period using methods such as key informant interviews and focus group discussions FGD participants included men, women, youths including persons with disabilities. This was intended to find out input from project participants on how best they can be involved in project design, implementation, monitoring and closer as well as ensuring that there is sustainability. Below are the details of input provided by stakeholders involved.

Relief & Rehabilitation Commission (RRC)

- There are only two temporary water points which are not sufficient to meet the clean water needs of the local communities. The NGO in charge of the water points had communicated to RRC that the water point will be closed in October due to funding cuts.
- Waterborne diseases are prevalent due to lack of clean water for drinking. Water from the river and flooded areas is contaminated from open defecation and poor sanitation practices.
- Insufficient sanitation facilities.

Flooding has caused displacement of local communities and loss of agricultural land. This has increased communities' vulnerability in addition to armed conflicts experienced in the region.

County WASH Director

- Water facilities destroyed by flooding. Rivers are the main source of water for cooking and drinking.
- Noted poor sanitation across the county due to lack of sufficient facilities.
- Open and illegal dumping of waste promotes poor sanitation especially in Robkona town.
- Crowding in town from families displaced by floods has put stress on existing sanitary facilities and increase cases of open defecation.



- 210 hygiene promoters participated in WASH awareness in collaboration with Coalition for Humanity (CH).

Unity State Ministry of Agriculture, Environment & Forestry

- Seed bank present in the county provide seeds to farmers for cultivation.
- Conflict experience in the region coupled by flooding are the main causes of vulnerability in the county.
- Agricultural farming in the county is mostly subsistent.
- Flooding offers opportunities for new crops such as rice.
- UN FAO provides farmers with tools such as hoes and seeds.
- There are no trees because of flooding. The ministry is promoting tree planting.

Group meetings with the local community members

- Welcomed the Project and emphasized for the Project to become a success the need to engage and include the local community.
- Most vulnerable people may lack food this season due to flood which spoiled their crops in farms and there are no organization.
- Lack of youth centres and vocational training centres.
- Subsistence farming had been affected by floods and droughts impacting harvest and food security.
- Pastoralists are impacted by floods and droughts and have to migrate from time to time in search of pasture for their animals.
- Open defecation happens because of few sanitary facilities that are not sufficient or lack of sanitary facilities.
- Rivers, streams and ponds that community members rely on as sources of water for household use are contaminated by poor sanitation practices.

Focus group discussions with women

- Requested for empowerment initiatives and opportunities for women participation in the Project.
- Women are involved in farming and has been affected by floods.
- Lack of improved seeds and tools limits the capacity to farm a large part of their land.
- Women do not own land but ownership I transferred to them when the husband passes away.
- Women are responsible for fetching water from the rivers, streams, ponds and few boreholes. Drinking water is boiled whereas it is used as it for other uses.

Women are responsible for sanitation and hygiene in their homes but the access to clean water and soap is a challenge.

