



Government of Sierra Leone
Ministry of Water Resources and
Sanitation

Sierra Leone Water Security and WASH
Access Improvement Project (P507588)

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT
PLAN (SEP)

April 14, 2025

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Acronyms

CSO	Civil Society Organization
EPASL	Environmental Protection Agency Sierra Leone
ESF	Environmental and Social Framework
ESCP	Environmental and Social Commitment Plan
EWRC	Electricity and Water Regulatory Commission
E&S	Environmental and Social
FCC	Freetown City Council
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FSTP	Fecal Sludge Treatment Plant
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
GRC	Grievance Redress Committee
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
GVWC	Guma Valley Water Company
LMP	Labor Management Procedures
MECC	Ministry of Environment and Climate Change
MPA	Multi-Phase Approach
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MWRS	Ministry of Water Resources and Sanitation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PAPs	Project Affected Persons
PPP	Public-Private Partnerships
NWRMA	National Water Resources Management Agency
RF	Resettlement Framework
RP	Resettlement Plan
SALWACO	Sierra Leone Water Company
SEA/SH	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/ Sexual Harassment
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
WASH	Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene
WASHIT	Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene Project Implementation Team
WRM	Water Resources Management
WARDC	Western Area Rural District Council

1. Introduction/Project Description

The Sierra Leone Water Security and WASH Access Improvement Project (P507588) (WASH Project or the Project) will support Sierra Leone's sustainable Water Resources Management (WRM) and long-term inclusive Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) program prioritizing interventions to improve water and sanitation services and water sector performance, while at the same time undertaking protection of the water resources in the country. The proposed Project aims at prioritizing urban water supply services improvement and sanitation development. It will focus on the Western Area, which is composed of the Freetown City Council (FCC) and the Western Area Rural District Council (WARDC). The Project has a strong focus on the institutional strengthening and capacity building of the Ministry of Water Resources and Sanitation (MWRS), including its WASH Project Implementation Team (WASHIT), all sector institutions as well as the FCC and WARDC. It is expected to strengthen the knowledge, management, and monitoring capacity of efficient and resilient water supply service delivery; improve fecal sludge management; and develop strategic studies to support the Country's long-term engagement for inclusive, affordable, sustainable, and resilient WASH services.

The Project is the first phase of a Multi-Phase Approach (MPA) aiming at enhancing water resources mobilization and management; improving the operational performance of water supply services providers, and increasing access to WASH services in Sierra Leone.

The Project is designed to increase access to water supply and sanitation services, improve the operational performance of water service providers, and enhance water resources management in Sierra Leone. Its components are mutually reinforcing, creating a platform for both immediate service improvements and long-term capacity building that will drive water security. The proposed Project is structured in six components:

Component 1: Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building (US\$ 10 million). This component will be implemented by the MWRS. Activities supported by this component will include technical assistance, equipment and consulting services.

Subcomponent 1.1: Policy, Institutions, Regulation Strengthening (US\$2.2 million) will: (i) review, complete and consolidate existing sector policies and regulations including the draft 2021 WASH Policy; (ii) develop sanitation and Fecal Sludge Management (FSM) guidelines and design standards for energy-efficient and climate-smart WASH systems; (iii) support the MWRS in operationalizing its absorption of sanitation mandate by developing its organizational structure, responsibility-sharing arrangements and essential management systems and tools to be able to deliver on its mandates; (iv) logistical support to strengthen routine monitoring and sector data collection and consolidate sector data into a national monitoring and evaluation platform; (v) strengthen the role of the MWRS in coordinating WASH sector interventions across national and local governments; and (vi) establish a Donor coordination group involving all development partners and NGOs involved in the sector to ensure information sharing, promote coordinated approaches and ensure alignment with the government's priorities. (vii) develop sanitation and FSM guidelines and design standards for energy-efficient and climate-smart WASH systems.

Subcomponent 1.2: Capacity Building and Knowledge Development (US\$2.0 million) will assess the institutional and staff capacity building needs of MWRS, NWRMA, GVWC, SALWACO, EWRC, FCC and WARDC. It will develop a comprehensive institutional and staff capacity building plan and design adapted delivery mechanisms for each institution and agency involved. This sub-component will include equipping one or more existing training centers and develop training material and curriculum for entry level staff, vocational and on-the-job trainings for

existing personnel and leadership and evidence-based decision-making course for executives and senior officials. It will also seek to develop or strengthen partnerships with academic institutions to design curriculum for a master's degree programs on water management with the university of Sierra Leone, to train future water professionals, including on climate change adaptation in the water sector. This component will also develop a web-based system consolidating knowledge documents and sector data. Parts of the capacity building activities may be inserted in PPPs for WASH service improvement and extension.

Subcomponent 1.3: Water Quality Monitoring and Surveillance (US\$1.6 million). This sub-component will strengthen the national water quality monitoring and surveillance system. The MWRS will provide laboratory equipment to allow regular water quality measurements to detect pollutants from industrial or domestic activities.

Subcomponent 1.4: Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) for WASH Service Delivery (US\$1.2 million) will review policies and regulations and advise on PPP options to leverage private sector value addition to improve the quality-of-service delivery and to extend access to WASH services in Sierra Leone.

Subcomponent 1.5: Construct a WASH Administrative Center (US\$3.0 million) will procure and construct a WASH Administrative Center to host the MWRS, NWRMA and EWRC, as the previous MWRS building burnt down in 2023. This Administrative Center will seek to showcase good water and wastewater management and energy efficiency (e.g. rainwater harvesting for toilets and watering green areas), so it can act as a demonstration and learning site. Component 1 will enhance the country's resilience to climate change—exacerbated risks such as floods, droughts, extreme heat, and landslides by improving water governance, capacity building and strengthening relevant government institutions. Improved governance will contribute to watersheds and ecosystems preservation, and higher water quality.

Component 2: Water Resources Management Improvement (US\$7 million). This component will be managed by the NWRMA, with support and oversight by the MWRS. It will support activities to improve water resources planning and mobilization and to protect the Western Area Peninsula National Park—the only water resource for the Western Area. This will be done through technical assistance and consultants services, based on a collaborative and consultative approach. This component will also promote data-driven decision-making, stronger regulation, and community engagement—key pillars in improving WRM in Sierra Leone.

Subcomponent 2.1: National Water Resources Master Plan and Sector Knowledge Enhancement (US\$5 million). Activities under this subcomponent will develop a national Water Resources Master Plan. The process will include updating the existing national inventory of ground- and surface water abstraction points in Sierra Leone, informing the hydrological and hydrogeological characteristics, determining the water balance in the country's various River Basins, estimating the water resources and groundwater potential of each River basin, and mapping and documenting land and water use patterns of major River Basins. The masterplan will also examine concrete measures to enforce the implementation of existing WRM Regulations, in particular the annual 'licensing to operate' for all drilling companies operating in Sierra Leone, and the need to obtain a permit and to register any new borehole into the national inventory. This activity is a prerequisite to securing the water resources necessary for the subsequent phases of the Program.

Subcomponent 2.2: Raising awareness, catchment protection and rejuvenation need (US\$2 million). This subcomponent will include three main activities. First erecting billboards on the greenbelt boundary to inform that any activity beyond that point is encroaching and may be liable

to prosecution. Second erecting physical fences to protect the catchment of selected water supply weirs either in the buffer zone outside the greenbelt or within it and which are under increasing encroachment pressure, for instance the Hasting Police Training Center weir located in the buffer zone. Third, to prepare a map suggesting catchment restorative nature-based solutions (e.g., afforestation, soil conservation) to be implemented to restore the forest cover of the greenbelt in places where it has been degraded. These activities will be implemented through a collaboration between MWRS, NWRMA and GVWC as well as with the MoECC, the National Protected Area Authority and NGOs active in this field such as Catholic Relief Services. By enhancing water resources planning, monitoring, and protection, Component 2 will ensure long-term water security. In addition, it will improve resilience to floods—by reducing the potential impact of floods (because water will be less contaminated) and droughts, as enough clean water will become available when and where needed, and water supply service disruptions will be significantly reduced.

Component 3: Priority Investments in Urban Water Supply (US\$30 million). This component will be implemented by GVWC, with oversight by the MWRS. It will finance works, goods and consultants' services aiming at improving GVWC's operational efficiency, water supply service delivery in Greater Freetown and cost recovery and creditworthiness. It will complement an ongoing project of AfDB and other development partners to extend access to safely managed water supply in GVWC's service area.

Subcomponent 3.1: Strengthening GVWC management tools and improving service efficiency (US\$11.8 million). This subcomponent focuses on updating GVWC's commercial processes, improving customer engagement, and expanding metering programs to reduce commercial losses and boost revenue. This will be achieved by: (i) upgrading the existing Engineering Design And Management Systems (EDAMS) software to address key business challenges including asset management, commercial losses and energy efficiency and providing training for GVWC staff; (ii) procuring about 42,000 smart domestic meters; (iii) implementing parallel PPPs to install smart domestic meters to generalize metering in GVWC's service area, thereby reducing commercial losses and to establish NRW baseline levels to be able to monitor and reduce physical losses (see subcomponent 3.2); (iv) update customer database and GIS mapping in the process to maximize revenue generation, which is essential for better demand management as well as increasing cost recovery and profitability; (v) purchase of water bowser trucks to improve the supply of water to water kiosks located in low-income communities in the Western Area currently using unsafe water sources, thereby increasing coverage and lowering vulnerability to water borne diseases; and (vi) financing feasibility studies, technical designs and tender documents for selected dams and priority investments, all or part of which could be implemented in phase 2 and/or 3 of the MPA, or through parallel financing.

Subcomponent 3.2 Reducing NRW and Upgrading Key Infrastructure (US\$18.2 million). This subcomponent will improve service delivery through the construction or rehabilitation of selected critical infrastructure to increase the reliability of water service delivery, and through leak detection and the preparation of performance-based PPPs for NRW reduction. Activities could include: (i) replacement of pipes subject to frequent breakages; (ii) increasing raw water storage reservoir capacity to increase the reliability of supply in selected areas; (iii) increasing the treatment capacity and rehabilitating selected treated water service reservoirs and associated multistage-pumping systems; (iv) expand micro-hydropower generation at the Guma Water Treatment Plant (WTP) and inject 270kW into the national grid to offset electricity consumption in other places; (v) study the potential of micro-hydropower generation at charge breaking facilities, of energy efficiency across GVWC's distribution network and of solar power generation on water reservoirs at the existing

Guma and Kongo dams and at the open-air Babadorie circular water storage reservoir; (vi) preparing four parallel performance-based PPPs for NRW reduction, to create an emulation between the private sector firms for greater and faster impact; (vii) implementing a pilot of network zoning and District Metering for NRW reduction in a small area of Freetown; (viii) strengthening active leakage management capacity and on-the-job training to reduce NRW, which conserve water and reduce emissions; and (ix) financing construction supervision of investments to ensure technical soundness and value for money. By undertaking these strategic investments—ranging from commercial process improvements and metering to infrastructure upgrades and feasibility studies—Component 3 will significantly reduce water losses, increase revenue, and improve overall service reliability, notably in low-income areas, thus making these communities more resilient to climate change–aggravated droughts. The improved water supply infrastructure is also less likely to become damaged during extreme precipitation or flooding.

Component 4: Urban Sanitation Service Delivery Improvement (US\$10 million). This component will finance works, goods and consultants’ services.

Subcomponent 4.1: Improving Sanitation in the Freetown City Council Area (US\$4.8 million). This subcomponent will be implemented by the FCC, in partnership with the Sanitation Directorate of the MWRS. It will: (i) upgrade the existing Kingdom FSTP; (ii) build at least a second FSTP in Freetown, using a climate-efficient technology such as biogas digestion combined with biochar generation, which can be used for cooking instead of wood or charcoal, as a way to reduce the pressure on the Western Area forest cover and National Park; (iii) increase access to improved sanitation in critical points of Freetown, through the construction of about 100 improved public toilet facilities with handwashing in selected schools, hospitals/health centers without toilets and possibly in a few market places, bus stations and parks or recreational areas where people gather in their free time.

Subcomponent 4.2: Improving Sanitation in the WARDC Area (US\$3.7 million). This subcomponent will be implemented by WARDC, in partnership with the Sanitation Directorate of the MWRS. It will : (i) build at least one FSTP in the WARDC area, using a climate-efficient technology such as biogas digestion combined with biochar generation, which can be used for cooking instead of wood or charcoal, which increases the pressure on the Western Area National Park forest; (ii) increase access to improved sanitation in critical points of the WARDC area, through the construction of about 100 improved public toilet facilities with handwashing in selected schools, hospitals/health centers, market places, bus stations and public institutions.

Subcomponent 4.3: Preparing Nationwide Sanitation Development Campaign (US\$1.5 million). This subcomponent will be implemented by the Sanitation Directorate of the MWRS. It will be managed by the Sanitation Directorate of the MWRS. It will: (i) develop a City Wide Inclusive Sanitation (CWIS) plan to structure the sludge management value chain for the safe collection, transport and treatment of fecal sludge collected from households’ domestic and public toilet facilities in the Western Area ; and (ii) prepare a national behavior change campaign called “Clean Salone” to make Sierra Leone Open-Defecation Free. These activities will enhance resilience to climate change by improving public health outcomes through reduced open defecation, reduced risk of fecal contamination and pollution of water sources, reduced fugitive GHG emissions from open latrines and/or septic tanks, as well as gains from resource efficiency and re-use of bio-digested by-products. Moreover, less contamination of surface and groundwater will reduce the potential impact of floods, which will carry less pollutants.

Component 5: Project Management (US\$3 million). This component will finance fiduciary, safeguards, and technical expenditures related to Project implementation, including operations

costs of the WASHIT, which will be set up within MWRS and will work in close partnership with other implementing agencies. This component will fiduciary, safeguards, and technical expenditures. It will also finance a consultants and/or technical assistance support to the WASHIT, matching Ministry and agencies' staff with consultants to ensure on-the-job training for knowledge transfer and capacity building. It may also finance limited equipment.

Component 6: Contingency Emergency Response Component (US\$0 million). Following an eligible crisis or emergency, the recipient may request the World Bank to reallocate Project funds to support emergency response and reconstruction consistent with the PDO. This component would draw from uncommitted grant resources under Project components and will reallocate them to cover emergency response.

The Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) for this Project is designed to enable an effective platform for productive interaction between the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) and the potentially affected parties and persons as well as institutions with interest in the implementation and outcomes of the Project. It identifies the major stakeholders affected by the Project either directly or indirectly (including vulnerable and marginalized groups) as well as those with other interests that could influence decisions about the Project. The SEP is also prepared to demonstrate the GoSL's commitment to best practices in project management and compliance with the World Bank's corporate requirements on citizen and stakeholder engagement and information disclosure. The Project is being prepared under the World Bank's Environment and Social Framework (ESF).

2. Objective/Description of SEP

The overall objective of this SEP is to define a program for stakeholder engagement, including public information disclosure and consultation throughout the entire project cycle. The SEP outlines the ways in which the Project will communicate with stakeholders and includes a mechanism by which people can raise concerns, provide feedback, or make complaints about activities related to the Project. The SEP specifically emphasizes methods to engage groups considered most vulnerable and that are at risk of being left out of Project benefits.

3. Stakeholder Identification and Analysis per Project component

The Project's SEP is informed by a set of principles which define its core values underpinning engagement with identified stakeholders. Common principles based on "International Best Practice" include: a) Demonstrated commitment on the need to identify, understand, and engage stakeholders meaningfully; b) Integrity, mutual respect, and trust in the stakeholder engagement process; c) Respecting the rights, cultural beliefs, values and interests of stakeholders and affected communities; d) Transparency in responding to community concerns in a timely, open and effective manner; e) Inclusivity is encouraged and supported by appropriate participation opportunities; and, f) Trust is achieved through open and meaningful dialogue that respects and upholds community's beliefs, values, and opinions.

An inclusive SEP is prepared, consulted upon and implemented, proportional to the Project's nature, scale, risks, and impacts. The SEP must be disclosed before Project appraisal, ensuring consultations are timely, relevant, understandable, and accessible. A documented record of stakeholder engagement will be maintained and publicly disclosed. A Project-wide Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) will address concerns, including a confidential channel for Gender Based Violence (GBV) issues.

The Project's stakeholder engagement design must focus on inclusive participation and information disclosure using appropriate language and media. Key stakeholders include MWRS, NWRMA,

SLEWRC, GVWC, Sierra Leone Water Company (SALWACO), FCC and the sixteen districts of WARDC. Beneficiaries include communities with access to clean WASH facilities, school students, hospitals/health centers, water service providers, maintenance workers, and FSTP users.

Other interested parties, other than the directly affected parties, will also take the Project's stakeholders domain including Civil Society and Non-Governmental Organizations (CSOs & NGOs), academia, line ministries, etc.

Within the Project, **the vulnerable or disadvantaged groups** may include but are not limited to low-income households; women; youth; the elderly; persons with limited mobility; or persons with disabilities. Vulnerable groups within the communities affected by the Project will be further confirmed and consulted through dedicated means, as appropriate, such as braille, radio, sign language, etc. Descriptions of the methods of engagement that will be undertaken by the project are provided in Section 4.3. below.

The Project's geographic reach is the Western Area, which will include Freetown City Council (FCC) and Western Area Rural District Council (WARDC). The Project incorporates financing for a range of activities including investments, capacity building, and technical assistance to support system establishment for WRM and WASH services improvement through two main aspects: improving Water Security (Components 1 and 2) and improving access and efficiency of WASH services (Components 3 and 4). During TA activities (mainly Component 1 and 2), the Study Team/ Consultants, with support from MWRS and its WASHIT Social Specialist, will make intentional efforts and considerations to ensure inclusion and participation of the disadvantaged/vulnerable individuals and groups to meaningfully participate during the process of making policies, strategies, and plans. The same applies to feedback from all stakeholders regardless of any ground, including race, sex, pregnancy, marital status, health status, ethnic or social origin, color, age, disability, religion, belief, or culture.

4. Stakeholder Engagement Program

4.1. Consultations undertaken during project preparation and e&s instruments development

To date, three sets of stakeholder consultations were undertaken for SL Water Security and WASH Access Improvement Project. In the below Subsections a summarized findings from these stakeholder engagement activities are presented.

4.1.1.. Stakeholder Consultation: Project Preparation phase, October 2024

Following the World Bank's engagement to support the preparation of Sierra Leone's National WASH Development Plan 2025 – 2035, a stakeholder engagement and workshop was held from October 8 - 13, 2024. The development of the National WASH Sector Development Programme (NWASHSDP) aims at providing a comprehensive roadmap for increased access to safely managed WASH services for households (domestic) and institutions. A stakeholder engagement workshop was held on December 16 – 17, 2024, co-led by the MWRS and the World Bank, gathered 63 participants representing all water sector institutions. It had the following objectives: (i) Consult key people, the MWRS, as well as other key partners and stakeholders to inform about the preparation of the proposed program; (ii) Discuss the preliminary content of the NWASHSDP, solicit stakeholder inputs and fill requisite gaps; (iii) Present the program preparation timeline.

4.1.2. Key feedback from the workshop

- There are fragmented information and documents regarding the WASH sector development in Sierra Leone. The NWASHSDP presents a good opportunity to harmonize these pieces into one coherent document.
- There are misunderstandings in the sector's decision-making structure as presented in the workshop's institutional working group. This was described as unreflective on how the recent institutional change envisions the sector.
- There was an agreement on the Goal and Vision of the NWASHDP. However, further discussions need to be held to firm up realistic targets for the development of the plan.
- There is a strong sense of ownership and commitment. The thematic working groups provided respective inputs on the key challenge, strategies and priority actions critical to the development of the Sierra Leone WASH sector.

4.2. Bank Task Team Consultations (Successive Project Preparation Missions)

As part of the Project preparation, the Task Team has conducted three missions with several meetings with government counterparts within and beyond the MWRS, Bank colleagues working in related sectors, development partners and NGOs active in the sector. As part of the SL Water Security and WASH Access Improvement Project Preparation Missions, team members drawn from the World Bank and implementing agencies, visited Kingtom FSTP, potential sites for FSTP in WRRD C and FCC as well as different relevant governmental institutions were visited and assessed the implementation capacity and commitment towards the E&S requirements were examined.

Below are the Consultations Outcomes:

- The team integrated the feedback received from stakeholders in the program and kept close contact and structured engagement with core program and Project teams.
- The team followed up and organized virtual interviews with key persons in the sector beyond the MWRS.

4.3. Stakeholder Consultation during E&S Instruments Preparation, April 2025

During this RF and ESMF preparation, two stakeholder consultations were undertaken Western Area Rural District Council - WARD C (at Water Loo) and Freetown at Brookfields Hotel, 9th – 10th of April 2025 respectively. The stakeholder consultation meetings were attended by a diverse group of stakeholders, including, Community leaders (Headmen) and members, Ward Councilors and devolve functions representatives (WARD C), Water Catchment Committee Members, Representatives from civil society organizations (CSOs), Women and youth representatives, Ministry of Water Resources and Sanitation and its agencies (SALWACO, GUMA, NWRM and EWRC).

A total of 110 participants took part in the two consultation sessions. These sessions were aimed to ensure stakeholder participation, raise awareness, and gain feedback and support from local stakeholders and affected communities. The main objectives include:

- To introduce the proposed project overview, its subcomponents, institutional arrangements and the required E&S instruments that are relevant to the project.
- To identify potential environmental and social risks and mitigation strategies.
- To gather feedback from stakeholders and incorporate local perspectives into project planning.
- Strengthen collaboration with local communities and build stakeholder ownership.

These sessions have demonstrated strong interest and willingness among community members to support the Sierra Leone Water Security and WASH Access Improvement Project. The detail insights and recommendations received are under compilation and will be further integrated into the subsequent project's E&S instruments and stakeholder engagement strategies.

The below bullet points are presented to show case the main extracts from these sessions.

- Stakeholders share their routine experiences on the challenges of access to WASH infrastructures as a result of non-functionality. In addition, based on their past lessons, workable and coordinated strategy is required from the SL Water Security and WASH Access Improvement Project for enduring operation and maintenance. It was suggested to examine, refine and adopt the experiences of some of the non-governmental organizations working on the field in SL. Community-Based O&M strategy recently developed by MWRS in support by UNICEF, as well as best practices by GOAL SL, World Vision SL and CRS were cited as best practice reference points. Participants were also emphasized that adequate and regular monitoring at all levels (including users) is an essential aspect for the sustainable utilization of projects' investment. In this connection, several participants recommended of forming a local level monitoring committee (e.g. district level Community Liaison Committee) to support the project implementation in general and E&S safeguards performance compliance in particular.
- Participants of the consultations stressed the priority for employment opportunities for local youths and women in the project activities, as relevant and appropriate (30% female employment ratio, as supported by SL law, shall be maintained, and explicitly indicated in project documentations).
- Involvement/ participation of the private sector in the operation and maintenance of the WASH facilities (Nigerian best practice was cited by participants in managing public toilets by the private sectors). To this end, a guideline should be developed on how to manage such WASH schemes in a sustainable manner.
- Capacity enhancement programs should be designed and implemented for district councils in the areas of WASH O&M. On the other hand, future technicians from the beneficiary communities should be organized and trained, from the outset.
- The project's WASH infrastructure design shall take into account of disability conditions.
- Consider representation of WASH Users Associations as member of the Steering Committee to be established for the SL Water Security and WASH Access Improvement Project.
- Grievance redress mechanism should be in place prior to the start of project works in the target areas, with multiple channels including toll-free telephone hotline through Afri-Cell and Orange telecom service providers.
- Child friendly GRM to be employed in the schools to be selected for improved public toilets with handwashing facilities (World Vision SL was cited as a best practice).
- Prior and sufficient consultations of the community before sending contractors to our villages. Contractors shall also be properly instructed prior to engaging them to project works, thus shall adhere to local contexts, beliefs, customs, values, etc.
- Generally, all participants reflected on the beneficial impacts of the proposed project and expressed their enthusiasm for its realization in their respective localities.
- Proper planning of the resettlement operation and livelihood restoration programs as the project is seemingly requiring land for its operation. The GRM will be an important milestone in managing resettlement related complaints.
- Waste management in general and future decommissioning of FSTPs in particular were raised as concerns to some of the participants for envisaging appropriate planning beforehand.
- Ensure timely disclosure of project information and E&S requirements and commitments by responsible actors, including users.

- Conduct further targeted engagement sessions for vulnerable and marginalized groups.

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

Table 1 below outlines the engagement process, methods, including sequencing, topics of consultations and target stakeholders.

Table 1: SEP Summary Table

Project stage	Target stakeholders	Topic of consultation / message	Method	Responsibilities	Frequency/Timeline
<i>Project preparation stage</i>	All stakeholders including Project Affected Persons (PAPs) including water & sanitation facilities users, households to be affected due to land take for FSTPs development, MWRS, MOF, MLGCD, MECC, MLCP, MBSSE, MOH, MGCA, MWRS, NWRMA, GVWC, SALWACO, SLEWRC, FCC, WARDC, NWRMA, EPASL/ MECC, selected schools, hospitals, public parks, fish landing sites, touristic and recreational areas (200 biogas toilets - targeted for the construction of improved public toilet facilities), vulnerable/ disadvantaged individuals/ groups and other Civil Society and Non-Governmental Organizations (CSOs & NGOs), working on the water sector as well as E&S policy issues e.g. gender, disability, etc.), Community and religious leaders, Chiefdoms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present the Project & its activities, potential E&S risks & impacts and receive feedback on aspects of the proposed Project. Information on Project GRM Solicit feedback to inform Project design, implementation, M&E. 	Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), community consultations, formal meetings, virtual discussions, surveys, one-on-one interviews, site visits, email.	MWRS in collaboration with FCC and WARDC.	<i>Prior to Project Appraisal</i>
<i>Project Implementation Stage</i>	<i>Stakeholders stated above plus MWRS WASHIT and Project Management Consultant (PMC), members of Donor Coordination Group to be established by MWRS under Component 1, Grievance Redress Committees in the respective Project sites (GRCs), Water User Associations, Academic institutions, private sectors (via PPP arrangement), Development Partners</i> Religious and community-based institutions (churches, mosques, local level youth/ women associations)	<i>Topics stated above plus GRM procedures, GRM contact addresses, Accessibility of services (esp. for vulnerable & disadvantaged groups/ individuals</i>	Methods stated above plus MWRS, MoF, other Sector Institutions' websites, (links will be included where available), training material, Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials, E&S performance Reports, posters/ pamphlets/ notice boards, workshops/ seminars/ social media (in particularly to Subcomponent 4.3.)	<i>MWRS-WASHIT in collaboration with FCC & WARDC in the respective Project sites.</i>	<i>Continuous during Project implementation phase.</i>

4.3. Proposed strategy to incorporate the views of vulnerable groups

The following measures will be taken to remove obstacles to full participation / access to information for all including identified vulnerable or disadvantaged groups.

The Project will seek the views of all water and sanitation users residing in FCC and WARDC, Local Authorities, other Government officials/entities, and the local communities. Stakeholder engagement will include elderly people, persons with disabilities, women, etc. through public consultations, media, public announcements, in-person meetings, use of local radio stations, etc.

The Project will take special measures to ensure that members of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups have equal opportunity to provide feedback on the mechanism during Project preparation and implementation to incorporate stakeholders' views, voices, and needs. Meeting venues will be considered taking into view the access needs of persons with disabilities while information dissemination will also consider communicating with persons with hearing disabilities (e.g. ensuring there is sign language translation during meetings). In addition to English, the consultations will be held in Krio, a widely spoken language in Western Area Rural and greater Freetown.

The principle of inclusiveness will guide stakeholder engagements, particularly with respect to vulnerable individuals and groups. In cases where vulnerable status may lead to people's reluctance or physical incapacity to participate in large-scale community meetings, the Project will hold separate small group discussions with them at an easily accessible venue. This way, the Project will reach out to groups who, under normal circumstances, may be insufficiently represented at general community gatherings.

Regarding GBV/SEA, the SEP will be recognizing the gender relations and cultural contexts of the given community and how they may participate comfortably and conveniently. It is key to ensure that suitable spaces are made available for disabled, elders, women, and other vulnerable/disadvantaged groups and individuals that will be affected by the Project to be participated in consultations. Some strategies to be adopted to reach out to these groups and to ensure inclusiveness include:

- Identifying vulnerable and marginalized groups, their location, and associations (if available) to reach out to these groups,
- ensure that community engagement teams are gender-balanced and promote women's leadership within these
- Ensuring easy and safe access to Project sites (water and sanitary facilities) and training venues,
- Providing disability friendly training materials, braille, radio, sign language,
- Ensuring GBV codes of conduct and monitoring mechanisms are in place,
- Engaging community leaders, CSOs and NGOs working with vulnerable groups,
- Organizing face-to-face focus group discussions, accompanied by sign language interpreters, with these populations.

To ensure that the Project maintains information disclosure, and continuous and effective interaction with all stakeholders, several methods will be used, including:

- Early notification for consultation sessions and preferably sending out invitations to the stakeholders with a clear agenda for discussion,
- Providing adequate time for preparation before consultative sessions,

- Sharing information for public consumption well in advance and providing opportunities for feedback and comments,
- Choosing appropriate methods of communication, especially for remotely located stakeholders, such as the use of local radio, social media, distribution of printed materials, visual presentations, notice boards or telephone, etc.,
- Ensuring concise documentation of all stakeholder engagement sessions with a record of minutes, lists of attendance (signed), and photographs for the consultative process,
- Establishing a well-designed GRM that will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Project; and
- Employing traditional and innovative channels of communications (TV, newspaper, radio, dedicated phone-lines, and mail) when stakeholders do not have access to online channels or do not use them frequently. Traditional channels can also be highly effective in conveying relevant information to stakeholders.
- Using technology for meetings and consultations such as Zoom, Skype and Microsoft Teams, if and as required.

6. Resources and responsibilities for implementing stakeholder engagement

5.1. Implementation Arrangements and Resources

The MWRS will have the overall responsibility for Project implementation, and for carrying out stakeholder engagement activities and coordination among other sector institutions involved as technical partners, such as NWRMA, SLEWRC, GVWC, SALWACO, FCC, and the WARDC i. MWRS will be responsible for E&S safeguards, monitoring and evaluation and reporting to the Bank, along with other responsibilities.

The overall responsibility for SEP implementation lies with the MWRS and its WASHIT.

5.2. Budget for SEP Implementation

The total budget estimate for the preparation and implementation of this SEP is US\$115,500. The SEP budget will be revised to reflect actual costs once activities to be implemented are finalized, WASHIT will revise and submit the revised budget.

Table 2: SEP Budget Summary

Budget categories	Quantity	Unit costs (USD)	Frequency	Total costs (USD)	Remarks
Consultations/ Participatory Planning, Decision-Making Meetings	10	2,500.00	Twice/year	10,000.00	
Information Communication (<i>Posters, flyers, social media</i>)	5	2,000.00	Once/year	10,000.00	
Trainings	10	2,500.00	Twice/year	10,000.00	
Beneficiary surveys	5	2,000.00	Once/year	10,000.00	
Implementation of Grievance Mechanism (GRC formation, stationery, allowances, etc.)	Lumpsum			25,000.00	
Monitoring and evaluation	20	2,000.00		40,000.00	
Contingency (10%)				10,500.00	
Total Stakeholder Engagement Budget:				115,500.00	

7. Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM)

GRM is a system that allows not only grievances, but also queries, suggestions, positive feedback, and concerns of Project-affected parties related to the E&S performance of the Project to be submitted and responded to in a timely manner.

6.1. Description of the Project GRM

Table 3 below presents the GRM steps that the proposed Water Security and Sanitation Improvement Project will follow.

Table 3: Illustrative Table on the GRM Steps

Step	Description of process	Timeframe	Responsibility
GRM implementation structure	Grievances will be handled at Project sites and addressed by MWRS WASHIT, FCC and WARDC through designated channels and Grievance Redress Committees to be established as Project starts.	5 days after Project effectiveness and before commencement of Project activities, including construction of water, sanitation facilities and FSTP.	MWRS WASHIT – Social Safeguard/ Development Specialist
Grievance uptake	<p>Grievances can be submitted via the following channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In-person at a physical facility at the Project sites (selected schools, hospitals/health centres, public parks, fish landing sites, touristic and recreational areas where the construction of improved public toilet facilities with handwashing) as well as construction sites for FSTPs in FCC and WARDC. ▪ Grievance or suggestion boxes located in Project Construction sites. ▪ Toll-free telephone hotline: [XXXX##] operated by XXXX. ▪ E-mail to WASHIT, GRCs, FCC, WARDC. ▪ Letter to WASHIT, GRCs, FCC, WARDC. ▪ Social media (e.g. GRC <i>WhatsApp group accounts</i>). ▪ Online form on the MWRS/ MoF/ GVWC/ SALWACO/FCC. ▪ Complaint form to be lodged via any of the above channels. Walk-ins may register a complaint in a grievance logbook at a facility or suggestion box ▪ WBG corporate GRS (http://www.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/products-and-services/grievance-redress-service). 	3-5 Days	MWRS WASHIT – Social Safeguard/ Development Specialist; GRCs at FCC and districts of WARDC.
Sorting, processing	Any complaint received is forwarded to MWRS WASHIT Social safeguard/ Development Specialist, logged into the complaint's logbook and categorized according to the nature of the complaint as well as the characteristic of the complaints (Project affected person, other interested party/ vulnerable or disadvantage, group or individual).	Upon receipt of complaint	MWRS WASHIT – Social Safeguard/ Development Specialist; GRCs at FCC and respective districts of WARDC.
Acknowledgement and follow-up	<p>Receipt of the grievance is acknowledged to the complainant by <i>[insert]</i></p> <p>Receipt of the grievance is acknowledged to the complainant by MWRS/CUs Social Development Specialist.</p>	Within 2 days of receipt	MWRS WASHIT – Social Safeguard/ Development Specialist; GRCs at FCC and respective districts of WARDC/ construction sites.

Step	Description of process	Timeframe	Responsibility
Verification, investigation, action	Investigation of the complaint is led by the Grievance Redress Committees (GRCs). A proposed resolution is formulated by the GRCs and communicated to the complainant by the GRCs Chairperson or WASHIT Social Risk Management Specialist.	Within 8 - 10 working days.	GRCs, MWRS WASHIT – Social Risk Management Specialist.
Monitoring and evaluation	Data on complaints is collected in WASHIT and reported to WB and MWRS every quarter.	On monthly basis to MWRS Management and quarterly to WB (as stipulated in the ESCP & per E&S performance reporting format).	MWRS MWRS–Social Risk Management Specialist.
Provision of feedback	Feedback from complainants regarding their satisfaction with complaint resolution is collected through various feedback mechanisms written, verbal or other means and recorded in the grievance logbook.	Within 2 days of a solution delivered to the complainant.	MWRS WASHIT – Social Risk Management Specialist; GRCs at the respective sites.
Training	Training will be provided to staff/consultants in the MWRS WASHIT, Project Institutions and Technical Partners, FCC, WARDC, Contractors and Supervision Consultants and GRCs members in the respective Project sites.	Bi-annual	MWRS WASHIT–Social Risk Management Specialist; collaboration with CSOs/ NGOs working on the area of SEA/SH grievance management, labour and working conditions.
Appeals process	The GM will provide an appeals process if the complainant is not satisfied with the proposed resolution of the complaint. Once all possible means to resolve the complaint have been proposed and if the complainant is still not satisfied, then s/he could be advised of her/his right to legal recourse.	End of Project GRM process	MWRS WASHIT – Social Risk Management Specialist; GRCs at the respective sites.

The Project will have other measures in place to handle sensitive and confidential complaints, including those related to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/ Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH) in line with the Sierra Leone legal framework on GBV and the World Bank ESF Good Practice Note on SEA/SH.

Measures to handle sensitive and confidential complaints, including those related to SEA/SH, will be identified in the GBV Prevention and Response Action Plan. Concerning GBV-related complaints, the Project will follow a survivor-centered approach that prioritizes survivors' dignity, confidentiality, and safety, and the Project accountability and response framework. The Project will ensure to have in place referral procedures for public service providers and NGOs that are experienced in handling GBV cases.

A separate Labor GRM for Project workers will be developed as part of the Labor Management Procedures (LMP).

8. Monitoring and Reporting

7.1. Summary of how SEP will be monitored and reported upon (including indicators)

The SEP will be monitored based on both qualitative reporting (based on progress reports) and quantitative reporting linked to results indicators on stakeholder engagement and grievance performance.

SEP reporting will include the following:

- (i) Progress reporting on the ESS10 - Stakeholder Engagement commitments under the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP);
- (ii) Cumulative qualitative reporting on the feedback received during SEP activities, in particular: (a) issues that have been raised and can be addressed through changes in Project scope and design, and reflected in the basic documentation such as the Project Appraisal Document, the Environmental and Social Assessment, the Resettlement Framework (RF), the Resettlement Plan (RP), the Social Development Plan; (b) issues that have been raised and can be addressed during Project implementation; (c) issues that have been raised that are beyond the scope of the Project and are better addressed through alternative projects, programs or initiatives; and (d) issues that cannot be addressed by the Project due to technical, jurisdictional or excessive cost-associated reasons. Minutes of meetings summarizing the views of the attendees can also be annexed to the monitoring reports;
- (iii) Quantitative reporting based on the indicators included in the SEP. An illustrative set of indicators for monitoring and reporting is included in Annex 3.

The MWRS, through its WASHIT, will have the overall responsibility for Project implementation, carrying out stakeholder engagement activities and coordination among other implementing agencies will monitor the implementation of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) by the requirements of the Legal Agreement and the ESCP. The extension and mode of Stakeholder monitoring for environmental and social performance will be proportionate to the potential environmental and social performance risk and impacts of the project and their effects on the various stakeholder interests.

7.2. Reporting back to stakeholder groups

Specific mechanisms to report back to the stakeholders include, through physical meetings, training reports and action plan where necessary and one to one consultation. This reporting back to the stakeholders will be every quarter and on annual basis.

The SEP will be periodically revised and updated, as necessary, in the course of Project implementation. Quarterly/ annual summaries and internal reports on public grievances, inquiries, and related incidents, together with the status of implementation of associated corrective/preventive actions, will be collated by responsible staff and referred to head of the WASHIT within MWRS.

The quarterly summaries will provide a mechanism for assessing both the number and nature of complaints and requests for information, along with the Project's ability to address those in a timely and effective manner. Information on public engagement activities undertaken by the Project during the year may be conveyed to the stakeholders in various ways: general meetings, website, reports, using public notice boards or minutes of meetings.

Annexes

- Annex 1. Template to capture minutes/records of consultation meetings.
- Annex 2. Example of a SEP Budget Table.
- Annex 3. Sample Table: Monitoring and Reporting on the SEP.

Annex 1: Template to Capture Consultation Minutes

No	Stakeholder (Group or Individual)	Summary of Feedback	Response of Project Implementation Team	Follow-up Action/Next Steps
1				
2				

Annex 2: Example of a SEP Budget Table

Budget categories	Quantity	Unit costs	Times/ Years	Total costs	Remarks
1. Estimated Staff salaries* and related expenses					
1a. <i>E.g., Communications consultant</i>					
1b. <i>E.g., Travel costs for staff</i>					
1c. <i>E.g., Estimated salaries for Community Liaison Officers</i>					
2. Consultations/ Participatory Planning, Decision-Making Meetings					
2a. <i>E.g., Project launch meetings</i>					
2b. <i>E.g., Organization of focus groups</i>					
3. Communication campaigns					
3a. <i>E.g., Posters, flyers</i>					
3b. <i>E.g., Social media campaign</i>					
4. Trainings					
4a. <i>E.g., Training on social/environmental issues for PIU and contractor staff</i>					
4b. <i>E.g., Training on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) for PIU and contractor staff</i>					
5. Beneficiary surveys					
5a. <i>E.g., Mid-project perception survey</i>					
5b. <i>E.g., End-of-project perception survey</i>					
6. Grievance Mechanism					
6a. <i>E.g., Training of GM committees</i>					
6b. <i>E.g., Suggestion boxes in villages</i>					
6c. <i>E.g., GM communication materials</i>					
6d. <i>E.g., Grievance investigations/site visits</i>					
6e. <i>E.g., GM Information System (setting up or maintenance)</i>					
6f. <i>Other GM Logistical Costs</i>					
7. Other expenses					
7a. ...					
Total Stakeholder Engagement Budget:					

*Note: Salary costs can be indicative

Annex 3. Sample Table: Monitoring and Reporting on the SEP

Key evaluation questions	Specific Evaluation questions	Potential Indicators	Data Collection Methods
GM. To what extent have project-affected parties been provided with accessible and inclusive means to raise issues and grievances? Has the implementing agency responded to and managed such grievances?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are project-affected parties raising issues and grievances? • How quickly/effectively are the grievances resolved? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usage of GM and/or feedback mechanisms • Requests for information from relevant agencies. • Use of suggestion boxes placed in the villages/project communities. • Number of grievances raised by workers, disaggregated by gender of workers and worksite, resolved within a specified time frame. • Number of Sexual Exploitation, and Abuse/Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH) cases reported in the Project areas, which were referred for health, social, legal and security support according to the referral process in place. (if applicable). • Number of grievances that have been: (i) opened, (ii) opened for more than 30 days, (iii) resolved, (iv) closed, and (v) number of responses that satisfied the complainants, during the reporting period disaggregated by category of grievance, gender, age, and location of complainant. 	Records from the implementing agency and other relevant agencies
Stakeholder engagement impact on Project design and implementation. How have engagement activities made a difference in Project design and implementation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was there interest and support for the Project? • Were there any adjustments made during Project design and implementation based on the feedback received? • Was priority information disclosed to relevant parties throughout the Project cycle? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active participation of stakeholders in activities • Number of actions taken in a timely manner in response to feedback received during consultation sessions with Project-affected parties. • Number of consultation meetings and public discussions where the feedback and recommendation received is reflected in Project design and implementation. • Number of disaggregated engagement sessions held, focused on at-risk groups in the Project. 	Stakeholder Consultation Attendance Sheets/Minutes Evaluation forms Structured surveys Social media/traditional media entries on the Project results
Implementation effectiveness. Were stakeholder engagement activities effective in implementation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were the activities implemented as planned? Why or why not? • Was the stakeholder engagement approach inclusive of disaggregated groups? Why or why not? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of SEP activities implemented. • Key barriers to participation identified with stakeholder representatives. • Number of adjustments made in the stakeholder engagement approach to improve Projects' outreach, inclusion and effectiveness. 	Communication Strategy (Consultation Schedule) Periodic Focus Group Discussions Face-to-face meetings and/or Focus Group discussions with Vulnerable Groups or their representatives