



Modernizing Ethiopia's Statistical System Project (MESSP)

Draft STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN (SEP)

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1. Introduction/ Project Description

The Ethiopian statistical system faces challenges related to fragmented data systems, limited interoperability, inadequate infrastructure, insufficient institutional coordination, limited data quality assurance mechanisms, weak administrative data systems, low statistical literacy among users, and insufficient use of modern digital technologies. The Modernizing Ethiopia's Statistical System Project seeks to address these challenges by supporting the transformation and modernization of the National Statistical System.

The Government of Ethiopia, through the Ethiopian Statistics Service (ESS), is preparing the Modernizing Ethiopia's Statistical System Project (MESSP) with support from the World Bank. The project is designed to strengthen Ethiopia's National Statistical System (NSS) through institutional modernization, improved data production systems, enhanced administrative data integration, digital transformation, statistical capacity building, and improved dissemination and use of official statistics.

The project supports the Government of Ethiopia's commitment to evidence-based policymaking, national development planning, monitoring of development outcomes, and improved public service delivery through reliable and timely statistical information.

Modernizing Ethiopia's Statistical System Project (MESSP) aims to improve the availability, quality, timeliness, and use of official statistics for evidence-based policymaking in Ethiopia.

Modernizing Ethiopia's Statistical System Project (MESSP) is structured around four components designed to strengthen the National Statistical System.

Component 1 -Data Availability. This component focuses on strengthening the production, integration, and modernization of official statistics to improve the availability, timeliness, and comprehensiveness of data within the National Statistical System.

Component 2 - Quality, Dissemination, Accessibility, and Use. This component aims to improve the quality, accessibility, dissemination, and utilization of official statistics for evidence-based policymaking.

Component 3-Human, Infrastructural, and Institutional Capacity Development and Coordination. This component focuses on strengthening human resources, institutional systems, ICT infrastructure, and coordination mechanisms of the National Statistical System.

Component 4- Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation .This component will support effective project coordination, implementation, fiduciary management, environmental and social risk management, and monitoring and evaluation.

Modernizing Ethiopia's Statistical System Project (MESSP) is being prepared under the World Bank's Environment and Social Framework (ESF). The project has been assessed as Moderate Risk under the ESF, reflecting the primarily institutional, technical, and capacity-building nature of its activities. No significant physical footprint or land acquisition is expected.

2. Objective/Description of SEP

This Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) has been prepared in accordance with the World Bank Environmental and Social Framework (ESF), particularly Environmental and Social Standard 10 (ESS10): Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure., addressing grievances, and ensuring inclusive participation of all interested and affected parties. 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 Ethiopian Statistics Service (ESS) will communicate with stakeholders and includes a mechanism by which people can raise concerns, provide feedback, or make complaints about the project and any 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.

The SEP will be disclosed on the World Bank external website and the ESS official website prior to project appraisal, in accordance with ESS10 requirements. It will be reviewed and updated periodically during implementation, as described in Section 7.3.

3. Stakeholder Identification and Analysis

3.1 Methodology

For the MESS, the following stakeholders have been identified and analyzed per project component. These stakeholders include affected parties (as defined in section 3.2), other interested parties (as defined in section 3.3) and disadvantaged/vulnerable individuals or groups (as defined in section 3.4).

Stakeholders are individuals, groups, institutions, or organizations that may affect, be affected by, or have an interest in the project. Stakeholders are categorized into three major domains:

- Project-Affected Parties;
- Other Interested Parties;
- Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Groups.

Stakeholder Identification and Prioritization

The identification process was informed by a desk review of Ethiopia's statistical landscape, consultations conducted during project preparation in March 2026, and ESS's institutional knowledge of the National Statistical System. Stakeholders were assessed using two criteria: their level of interest in MESSP outcomes and their degree of influence over project success. This analysis informed the prioritization of engagement methods described in Section 4.

3.2 Project-Affected Parties

The matrix below outlines the core project-affected entities along with their level of interest and project influence:

Stakeholder Group	Interest in the Project	Influence Level
Ethiopian Statistics Service (ESS)	Project implementation and coordination	High

Ministry of Planning and Development (MoPD)	Steering Committee Coordinator	High
Federal Ministries and Agencies	Administrative data production and use	High
Regional Statistical Offices	Statistical production and coordination	High
Sector Institutions	Data generation and reporting	High
Project staff and consultants	Project implementation	Medium
Enumerators and field staff	Data collection operations	Medium
Local governments	Local-level data generation and use	Medium

3.3 Other Interested Parties

Stakeholder Group	Interest in the Project	Influence Level
Ministry of Finance	Financing and oversight	High
Ministry Of Planning and Development (MoPD)	Evidence-based planning	High
Development partners	Technical and financial support	High
Universities and research institutions	Research and data use	Medium
Civil society organizations	Advocacy and policy analysis	Medium
Private sector organizations	Business and market data use	Medium
Media organizations	Dissemination of statistical information	Medium
International organizations	Development monitoring and reporting	Medium
General public	Access to official statistics	Low

3.4 Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Groups

The project will ensure inclusion of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups that may face barriers to participation. These groups include:

- Women and female professionals;
- Persons with disabilities;
- Remote and underserved communities;
- Pastoralist communities;
- Youth groups;
- Low-capacity regional institutions;

- Linguistically marginalized groups.

Potential barriers to engagement include limited internet access, language barriers, geographic remoteness, limited technical capacity, and accessibility constraints.

Tailored Engagement Strategies for Vulnerable Groups

To support meaningful participation, the project will apply differentiated engagement approaches for each vulnerable group:

- **Women and female professionals:** Consultations will be held at times and locations accessible to women, including separate sessions where culturally appropriate. Female facilitators will be engaged, gender-disaggregated feedback will be tracked, and ESS will promote women's representation in technical workshops and capacity-building activities.
- **Persons with disabilities:** Consultation venues will be assessed for physical accessibility. Sign language interpretation will be provided upon request, and materials will be made available in accessible formats, including large print, audio, and screen-reader-compatible digital versions. The grievance mechanism will include communication options for persons with visual or hearing impairments.
- **Pastoralist communities:** Engagement will be conducted through local community leaders, pastoralist associations, and regional pastoral offices. Sessions will be scheduled around seasonal mobility patterns, and mobile or radio-based information dissemination will be used where internet access is limited.
- **Linguistically marginalized groups:** Key project information and consultation materials will be translated into Amharic and, as applicable, Afaan Oromo, Somali, Tigrinya, and other major regional languages. Local facilitators with appropriate language skills will lead community-level sessions in non-Amharic-speaking areas.
- **Remote and underserved communities:** Field visits and mobile outreach will be organized by the PIU Social Specialist. Regional focal points will serve as primary contact persons, and radio announcements or telephone-based engagement will be used where in-person access is not feasible.
- **Youth groups:** Digital channels, including social media, online surveys, and webinars, will be used to engage youth. Youth representation will be sought in user forums and statistical literacy programs under Component 2.
- **Low-capacity regional institutions:** Dedicated capacity-building sessions on stakeholder engagement roles and the grievance mechanism will be organized for regional statistical offices, supported by regular technical backstopping from ESS.

4. Stakeholder Engagement Program

4.1 Summary of Previous of Previous Stakeholder Engagement Activities

Stakeholder consultations were conducted from 13 March to 25 March 2026. Participants included all ESS Lead Executive Officers, Deputy Director Generals, and representatives from the Ministry of Planning and Development (MoPD). A total of 52 participants attended the consultations

Key issues raised included institutional coordination, administrative data integration, and statistical capacity development, dissemination of official statistics, stakeholder engagement, and grievance management. Feedback from these consultations informed the design of MESSP and the preparation of this SEP. ESS has conducted several consultations and stakeholder engagement activities during the preparation of the project and the development of the Ethiopian Statistical Development Program (ESDP II). These activities included:

- Technical working group meetings;
- Consultations with government ministries and agencies;
- Development partner coordination meetings;
- User-producer dialogues;
- Workshops with regional statistical offices;
- Internal institutional assessments and staff consultations.

Key issues raised during these engagement activities included the need for integrated data systems, improved administrative data quality, stronger capacity building, timely dissemination of official statistics, better data accessibility and interoperability, strengthened regional statistical capacity, and improved coordination among NSS institutions.

These consultations informed the design and priorities of the project.

4.2 Stakeholder Engagement Program

Principles of Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement under the project will follow the following strict principles: transparency; inclusiveness and non-discrimination; timely information disclosure; meaningful consultation; accessibility; cultural appropriateness; and responsiveness and accountability.

Methods of Stakeholder Engagement

The project will apply a mix of engagement methods to ensure that stakeholders can participate through channels that are accessible, appropriate, and responsive to their needs. These methods will include:

- Public consultations;
- Technical workshops;
- Focus group discussions;
- Bilateral meetings;
- Community meetings;
- Surveys and questionnaires;
- Online consultations and webinars;
- Social media and digital communication;
- User-producer forums;
- Training and awareness sessions.

4.3 Stakeholder Engagement Matrix

Stakeholder	Engagement Method	Frequency	Responsibility
ESS Management	Coordination meetings	Monthly	Project Implementation Unit
Federal Ministries	Technical consultations	Quarterly	ESS/PIU
Regional Statistical Offices	Workshops and training	Quarterly	ESS
Development Partners	Review meetings	Semi-annually	ESS and MoF
Academia and Researchers	User forums	Semi-annually	ESS
CSOs and NGOs	Consultative meetings	Semi-annually	ESS
Media	Press briefings	As needed	ESS Communication Team
General Public	Website updates and publications	Continuous	ESS
Vulnerable Groups	Targeted consultations	As needed	ESS Social Specialist

Engagement during Project Phases

Project Preparation Phase

- Stakeholder mapping, completed in March 2026;
- Consultations on project design, completed in March 2026, as summarized in Table A above;
- Environmental and social risk consultations, completed during project preparation; and
- Disclosure of draft safeguard instruments on the ESS website and the World Bank external website, in progress prior to appraisal.

Status: All preparation-phase engagement activities have been completed. Feedback received during preparation has been incorporated into the project design, as documented in Table A above.

Project Implementation Phase

- Regular progress consultations;
- Capacity-building workshops;
- Community and institutional engagement;
- Feedback collection and grievance handling.
- A mid-term stakeholder review in Years 2–3, aligned with the project mid-term review; and
- Annual reporting to stakeholders on SEP implementation progress, as described in Section 7.2.

Project Completion Phase

- Dissemination of results;
- Lessons learned workshops;

- Final stakeholder review meetings.
- Completion-phase disclosure of final monitoring reports and the SEP implementation summary.

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

The Stakeholder Engagement Plan below outlines the engagement process, methods, including sequencing, topics of consultations and target stakeholders. The World Bank and the Borrower do not tolerate reprisals and retaliation against project stakeholders who share their views about Bank-financed projects.

Table 1: SEP Summary Table

Project stage	Target stakeholders	Topic of consultation / message	Method used	Responsibilities	Frequency/Timeline
<i>Indicate whether it is:</i> - Preparation stage -Implementation stage	: General Public, Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Communities, persons with disabilities.	- Present the project and receive feedback on project activities. - Inform on progress, - Consult on key risks - Note public events to disseminate the results - Give information on GM	<i>Examples may include:</i> - Focus Group Meetings/ Discussions - Community consultations - Formal meetings - Virtual discussions or surveys - One-on-one interviews - Site visits	ESS	"quarterly"

5. Resources and Responsibilities implementing stakeholder engagement

5.1 Implementation Arrangements

The Ethiopian Statistical Service-ESS will have overall responsibility for SEP implementation. A Project Implementation Unit (PIU) will oversee day-to-day stakeholder engagement activities. The PIU coordinator under the supervision of ESS will coordinate the supervision of the SEP while the Social Safeguard specialist of the PIU will be responsible for its full implementation and report to the Program coordinator for the World Bank. The Specialist will on a timely basis engage with stakeholders throughout the life cycle of the Program.

5.2 Resources/ Budget

The total approved budget for implementation of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan is ETB 10,000,000.

Indicative activities to be financed under the SEP include:

Activity	Budget Category	Estimated Budget (ETB)
Public consultations	Workshops and meetings	4,500,000.00
Travel and outreach	Travel and logistics	1,500,000.00
Communication materials	Printing and media	245,000.00
Stakeholder workshops	Training and facilitation	2,500,000.00
Grievance management	Administrative costs	125,000.00
Monitoring and reporting	Operational costs	350,000.00
Contingency and additional engagement activities	Operational costs	780,000.00
Overall Cost	-	10,000,000.00

NB: A detailed annual stakeholder engagement budget will be prepared during project implementation.

6. Grievance Mechanism (GM)

Objective

The Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) will provide accessible and transparent processes for receiving, reviewing, and resolving project-related complaints and concerns.

The GRM will ensure accessible, transparent, confidential, timely and fair handling of grievances.

GRM Principles

- Accessible;
- Transparent;
- Confidential;
- Timely;
- Fair and impartial;
- Culturally appropriate.

Grievance Uptake Channels

- **Telephone hotline:** ESS dedicated project line, to be established and publicized by Month 3 of project effectiveness.
- **Email:** Dedicated email address to be activated at project effectiveness.
- **ESS website:** Dedicated online grievance form to be published on the ESS website.
- **Suggestion boxes:** To be placed at ESS headquarters, Regional Statistical Offices, and field survey sites.
- **Written submissions:** Addressed to the PIU Coordinator, ESS, Addis Ababa.
- **In-person reporting:** At ESS headquarters or designated Regional Statistical Office focal points.

- **Regional focal points:** Designated GM officers in each Regional Statistical Office, trained within six months of effectiveness.

Grievance Handling Process

1. **Receipt and registration:** All grievances will be logged in the grievance register within two working days of receipt, assigned a unique reference number, and acknowledged to the complainant.
2. **Screening and assessment:** The grievance will be assessed and categorized as a general project complaint, labor complaint, SEA/SH complaint, or other issue within three working days.
3. **Investigation and resolution:** Relevant staff will investigate and propose corrective measures within 10 working days for standard grievances.
4. **Response to complainant:** The complainant will be informed of the outcome in writing, or verbally where literacy is a barrier, within 15 working days.
5. **Closure and documentation:** Resolved grievances will be documented and archived. If the complainant is not satisfied, they may appeal within 10 working days of receiving the response. Appeals will be reviewed by a senior ESS official not involved in the original determination. If the matter remains unresolved at the project level, complainants may access the World Bank's Grievance Redress Service (GRS) or the Inspection Panel.

Disclosure of Information

This SEP, together with the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) and other relevant environmental and social instruments will be disclosed on the ESS official website and the World Bank's external website (www.worldbank.org) prior to the project appraisal, in accordance with the World Bank's access to information policy and ESS10.

Confidentiality and SEA/SH Considerations

Sensitive grievances, including Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH)-related complaints, will be handled confidentially using survivor-centered approaches. Referral pathways to appropriate service providers will be established.

A Grievance Mechanism is a system that allows not only grievances, but also queries, suggestions, positive feedback, and concerns of project-affected parties related to the environmental and social performance of a project to be submitted and responded to in a timely manner.

6.1. Description of Grievance Mechanism (GM)

- **Table 2: Illustrative Table on the GM Steps - to be adjusted to each project**

[Step]	Description of process (e.g.)	Timeframe	Responsibility
GM implementation structure	<i>[Describe, for example, GM structure at national, regional, and local levels]</i>		
Grievance uptake	Grievances can be submitted via the following channels <i>[select and specify as appropriate]</i>		

[Step]	Description of process (e.g.)	Timeframe	Responsibility
	• Toll-free telephone hotline: <i>[include number]</i> operated by <i>[insert]</i> • Short Message Service (SMS) to <i>[include number]</i> • E-mail to <i>[insert]</i> • Letter to <i>[insert]</i> • In-person at a physical facility <i>[specify where]</i> • Grievance or suggestion boxes located <i>[insert locations]</i> • Social media <i>[insert relevant social media accounts]</i> • Tablet/smartphone application <i>[specify]</i> • Online form on the following website: <i>[insert]</i>		
Sorting, processing	Any complaint received is forwarded to <i>[insert]</i> ; logged in <i>[insert]</i> ; categorized according to the following complaint types: <i>[insert]</i>	Upon receipt of complaint	Local grievance focal points
Acknowledgement and follow-up	Receipt of the grievance is acknowledged to the complainant by <i>[insert]</i>	Within 2 days of receipt	Local grievance focal points
Verification, investigation, action	Investigation of the complaint is led by <i>[insert]</i> A proposed resolution is formulated by <i>[insert]</i> and communicated to the complainant by <i>[insert]</i>	Within 10 working days	Complaint Committee composed of <i>[insert]</i>
Monitoring and evaluation	Data on complaints are collected in <i>[insert]</i> and reported to <i>[insert]</i> every <i>[insert]</i>		
Provision of feedback	Feedback from complainants regarding their satisfaction with complaint resolution is collected <i>[insert]</i>		
Training	Training needs for staff/consultants in the PIU, Contractors and Supervision Consultants are <i>[insert]</i>		
If relevant, payment of reparations following complaint resolution	<i>[If relevant, describe how payment of reparations will be handled including amounts, recipients, etc.]</i>		

[Step]	Description of process (e.g.)	Timeframe	Responsibility
Appeals process	<i>[Describe how appeals will be handled when/if the complainants are not satisfied with the proposed resolution of the complaint]</i>		

6.2 Labor Grievance Mechanism

A separate Labor Grievance Mechanism (Labor GM) will be established for all project workers, including direct workers, contracted workers, consultants, and temporary staff engaged under the Modernizing Ethiopia's Statistical System Project (MESSP). The Labor GM will provide an accessible, transparent, confidential, and timely process for addressing workplace-related concerns, complaints, and grievances. Workers will be able to submit grievances through designated focal persons, supervisors, written submissions, email, telephone, or other established channels without fear of retaliation. All grievances will be recorded, reviewed, and resolved within established timeframes in accordance with the project's Labor Management Procedures (LMP) and applicable national labor laws. Detailed procedures, responsibilities, grievance handling steps, and appeals processes are described in the Labor Management Procedures and other relevant project documents.

7. 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 that can be addressed through changes in project scope and design, and reflected in the basic documentation such as the Project Appraisal Document, Environmental and Social Assessment, Resettlement Plan, Indigenous Peoples Plan, or SEA/SH Action Plan, if needed; (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.

7.2. Reporting back to stakeholder groups

The SEP will be revised and updated as necessary during project implementation.

The biannual report summaries and internal reports on public grievances, enquiries, and related incidents, together with the status of implementation of associated corrective/preventative actions will be collated by responsible staff and referred to the project managers.

Specific mechanisms to report back to the stakeholders include semiannual progress updates, annual stakeholder's forum and grievance status reporting.

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

Other Annexes can include:

- Visual summaries such as stakeholder mapping or stakeholder diagrams
- Grievance submission form
- Project maps (if applicable)

Annex 1. Template to Capture Consultation Minutes

Stakeholder (Group or Individual)	Summary of Feedback	Response of Project Implementation Team	Follow-up Action/Next Steps

Annex 2. 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?	• Are project affected parties raising issues and grievances? • How quickly/effectively are the grievances resolved?	• 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?	- 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?	- 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?	- Were the activities implemented as planned? Why or why not? - Was the stakeholder engagement approach inclusive of disaggregated groups? Why or why not?	- 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

Annex 3.SEP Budget Table

Budget categories	Quantity	Unit costs	Times/ Years	Total costs	Remarks
1. Estimated Staff salaries* and related expenses					
1a. E.g., Communications consultant					
1b. E.g., Travel costs for staff					
1c. E.g., Estimated salaries for Community Liaison Officers					
2. Consultations/ Participatory Planning, Decision-Making Meetings					
2a. E.g., Project launch meetings					
2b. E.g., Organization of focus groups					
3. Communication campaigns					
3a. E.g., Posters, flyers					

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., Grevance investigations/site visites</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:					