**Catholic Relief Services**

**Sudan THABAT Project**

**(P181490) – Additional Financing 2**

***DRAFT***

**Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP)**

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# List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| CSO | Civil Society Organization |
| E&S | Environmental & Social |
| ECRP | Enhancing Community Resilience and Local Governance Project |
| ESCP | Environmental and Social Commitment Plan |
| ESF | Environmental and Social Framework |
| ESMF | Environmental and Social Management Plan |
| ESS | Environmental and Social Standards |
| EU | European Union |
| FAO | United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization |
| FGD | Focus Group Discussions |
| GBV | Gender Based Violence |
| GRM | Grievance Redress Mechanism |
| ICRC | International Committee of the Red Cross |
| IDP | Internally Displaced Person |
| IP | Implementing Partner |
| LMP | Labor Management Procedures |
| M&E | Monitoring & Evaluation |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| NRC | Norwegian Refugee Council |
| OHS | Occupational Health and Safety |
| OIP | Other Interested Person |
| O&M | Operations & Maintenance |
| OP | Operational Policy |
| PAP | Project-Affected Person |
| PIU | Project Implementation Unit |
| PDO | Project Development Objective |
| PIM | Project Implementation Manual |
| PSEA | Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse |
| PWD | Person with Disabilities |
| SAF | Sudanese Armed Forces |
| SEA | Sexual Exploitation and Abuse |
| SEP | Stakeholder Engagement Plan |
| SH | Sexual Harassment |
| SME | Small and Medium Enterprise |
| SUDIA | Sudan Development Initiative |
| TA | Technical Assistance |
| TPI | Third Party Implementation |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children’s Fund |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| WASH | Water, Sanitation and Hygiene |
| WB | World Bank |
| WHO | World Health Organization |
| WFP | World Food Programme |

# Introduction and Project Description

## 1.1 Introduction

Sudan’s economic crisis has been worsening over time. In April 2019 former President Omar al-Bashir was ousted by revolutionaries. Over the next two years the declining economic situation was exacerbated by the effects of COVID-19. InOctober 2021*,* the military took over Sudan’s government. Street protests continued, but were met with excessive force, violence in Darfur, and other areas saw intensified conflict. In April 2023 the situation escalated into open violent conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), and the internal war, also reactivated prior social and political fault lines in different parts of the country. The rapidly deteriorating security, social and economic context has resulted in widespread lawlessness, migration, shortages of basic services and livelihood inputs, and freezing of foreign assistance. The ongoing military conflict risks pushing Sudan into a failed state. The situation is desperate, with 30% of Sudan’s counties engaged in conflict. Food security levels from June to September, indicated that half of the localities were at IPC level 4, with humanitarian needs surpassing 20 million people, representing over 45 percent of the population. The poor socio-economic outlook, loss of governance, infrastructure, services and access to technology and finance are steadily undermining the already low resilience of communities across the country. Food production has declined drastically and farming systems are threatened by the effects of severe weather, such as droughts and floods, caused by increasingly climate change. These factors are leading to mass displacement which has contributed to an exponential growth of informal settlements in unsafe areas.

The Sudan Community Resilience Project (CRP) consists of a grant of US$ 160 million to the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP) to kick-start community interventions addressing impacts of the conflict, especially the opportunities and challenges deriving from the displacement of large numbers of IDPs, and allowing communities to restart their path towards development. Additional Financing (AF) was proposed for US$ 30 Million for Mercy Corps to implement the same project components in additional States. The US$30 million AF will scale up the development effectiveness of the parent project by increasing its geographic scope to an additional state, namely Gedaref, where components 1 and 2 will be implemented. Another amount for AF II, USD $80 million, is currently proposed to extend and deepen the implementation of Component 2 activities to the following States: River Nile, Northern, Gederaf and Red Sea States and implment nutiriton activities under Component 1 in Darfur States, Khartoum and Gezira (as feasible). The AF II will be implemented by Catholic Relief Services (CRS).

This Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) covers the activities under the AF II. As in the parent project, the AF II will be implemented in the selected States because of their IDP influx, relative security, and overall project feasibility criteria, such as access and proximity to productive agricultural areas with irrigation that can supply food to domestic markets serving IDPs and host communities, even through periods of severe weather, such as drought. The localities, communities, and agricultural cooperatives will be selected using a formula agreed by the World Bank and CRS, that will be based on a defined set of criteria, such as IDP influx, service and food security levels, climate vulnerability, and complementarity with other development partner interventions.

The World Bank’s ESS10 recognizes the importance of open and transparent engagement with all project stakeholders, based on the recognition that effective stakeholder engagement can improve E&S sustainability of project activities, enhance project acceptance and implementation, and allow stakeholders to contribute to project design. The key objectives of stakeholder engagement include an assessment of the level of interest and support of the project by stakeholders, to promote effective and inclusive engagement with all project-affected parties, and to ensure that project information on E&S risks and impacts is disclosed and addressed in a timely and understandable way.

This SEP outlines all stakeholder engagements for the activities under the AF II in a systematic way. It defines legal and policy requirements in regard to stakeholder engagements, lists stakeholder engagements that have already been undertaken, provides a stakeholder analysis of all relevant project-affected parties, including members of vulnerable groups, and lays out the means of dissemination of information to different parties as well as means and ways to continue to consult different stakeholder groups throughout the Project cycle. It also includes a Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM), through which people affected through project-related activities can bring their grievances and concerns to project management attention, and which describes how those grievances and concerns will be considered and addressed. Furthermore, it contains a monitoring plan for the implementation of the SEP.

## 

## 1.2 Project Components

The Project Development Objective (PDO) is to improve access to climate resilient basic services and enhance the food security system of conflict affected communities in Sudan.

AF II activities will have multisectoral and spatial approaches to development with a strong focus on community-led processes via existing and new Community Development Committees (CDCs) or similar community structures to promote ownership, social cohesion, and sustainability. The activities focus on food systems resilience.

The AF II will focus on Component 1 and 2 of the Parent Project and finance goods, matching grants, consulting and non-consulting services, and operating costs. CRS will implement the activities:

1. **Component 1:** Community Led Basic Service Delivery. This component is supporting improved nutritional status of pregnant and lactating women and children under five in the neediest states through expanded provision of community management of acute malnutrition services.
2. Component 2: Improving Food Security. This component is supporting:(i) increased resilience and production of select crops and protection of livestock assets in rural areas that supply food to the target communities; (ii) agricultural value chains; (iii) the scaling-up and strengthening of community consumer cooperatives and organizations and community food centers that distribute agricultural outputs and provide affordable food to vulnerable groups; and (iv) project management and implementation costs.

## 

## 1.3 Project Locations and Beneficiaries

Through the AF II, the number of beneficiaries will increase from 300,000 IDP and host community individuals in year 1 to 500,000 in year 2 and from 10,000 farmers in year 1 to 20,000 in year 2. Final numbers will be determined during project appraisal together with CRS as well as during the project implementation stage based on the assessments

Darfur States, Gezira (as feasible) and Khartoum have been selected for Component 1 due to the high proportion of localities predicted to reach atleast IPC 4 between January and May 2025 and of localities included within the Sudan National Nutrition Cluster’s list of priority one areas for nutrition response. Initial focus will be on priority 1 localities in West, Central, North and South Darfur and Khartoum States taking into account security and access considerations as well as considerations of comparative advantage and operational efficiencies. Initial localities within these states have been identified using IPC mapping, famine report predictions, nutrition cluster partner mapping, discussions with State Ministries of Health and PHC service mapping where accessible, as well as considerations on of the proximity of the localities to each other and to existing CRS offices and warehouses, reducing operational costs and increasing efficiency. However these are suggested localities only and, recognizing the rapidly evolving situation the final list will be selected at project start up, using a structured combination of the above criteria (to be approved by the World Bank) and in detailed planning with UNICEF as the key implementer of the community based basic service delivery components of the Parent Project within the target States.

River Nile, Northern, Gederaf and the Red Sea States have been selected for the Component 2 of AFII because of their IDP influx, relative security, and overall project feasibility criteria, such as access and proximity to productive agricultural areas that supply food to domestic markets serving IDPs and host communities. The localities, communities, and agricultural cooperatives will be selected using a formula agreed between the World Bank and CRS, that will be based on a defined set of criteria, such as influx of IDPs, level of services, level of food security, climate vulnerability, and complementarity with other development partner interventions.

## 

## 1.4 Institutional Arrangements

As per World Bank Operational Policy (OP) 7.30 on Dealing with De Facto Governments, the project will be implemented via Third Party Implementation (TPI), whereby UNICEF is the implementing agency of Component 1 and WFP is the implementing agency of Component 2 of the parent project under two-year grant agreements with the World Bank. The AF I will be implemented by Mercy Corps, and AF II by CRS in partnership with Farmers organizations/ Cooperatives, Private Sector actors, Small and Medium Size Enterprise (SMEs), Consumer organizations, and in collaboration with the local government, parastatal entities, local organizations, and community-based organizations - such as the community development committees/community action groups, natural resource management committees.

For the implementation of AF II component 1, CRS will establish a Project Implementation Unit (PIU) based in West Darfur and will select implementing partners to expand reach of component 1 activities. Activities will be coordinated closely with local level nutrition clusters led by UNICEF and State Ministries of Health and involving local and international NGOs supporting CMAM services within the State. CRS will implement activities in line with standardized packages agreed on by the National Nutrition Cluster and Ministry of Health enabling clear service mapping and gap identification as well as referral and continuum of care for project participants. CRS or its local implementing partner will develop MoUs with Ministry of Health-run health facilities to provide incentive support to key nutrition staff, as well as commodities, supplies, training and basic infrastructure repair to enable safe and dignified programming. Within the component CRS will engage with National and State level ministry of health, National and State level Nutrition Clusters, UNICEF, WHO, WFP and other implementing partners, MoH seconded staff, community health management committees, community and faith based leaders, community extension workers, mother to mother support groups, pregnant women, primary and secondary caregivers or children under five and other influential community members.

For the implementation of the AF II Component 2, CRS will establish another Project Implementation Unit (PIU) with decentralized oversight functions in River Nile, Northern, Gederaf and Red Sea States and will select competent implementing partners and service providers to carry out Component 2 activities. Government institutions may play a role in planning, coordination, and O&M of services; however, project funds will not be provided to these institutions. For Component 2, CRS will engage local expert consultants, community-based organizations, local NGO partners, Farmers’ Organizations, private sector Small and Medium Enterprises to implement activities.

CRS will develop the coordination, implementation, and governance mechanisms for the Component activities, to be included in the Project Implementation Manual (PIM) to be cleared by the World Bank. The PIUs will also include provisions to address security risks in the country.

An international support and monitoring firm will be contracted by the World Bank to provide field-level technical support and monitor implementation.

## 

# Objectives and Scope of the SEP

The SEP seeks to define a structured, purposeful, and culturally appropriate approach to consultation and disclosure of information, in accordance with ESS10. It recognizes the diverse and varied interests and expectations of project stakeholders and seeks to develop an approach for reaching each of the stakeholders in the different capacities at which they interface with the project. The aim is to create an atmosphere of understanding that actively involves project-affected people and other stakeholders leading to improved decision making.

The objectives of this SEP are:

* To identify Project stakeholders, including members of vulnerable groups, their priorities, and concerns.
* Identify strategies for information sharing and communication to stakeholders as well as consultation of stakeholders in ways that are meaningful and accessible throughout the Project cycle.
* To specify procedures and methodologies for stakeholder consultations, documentation of the proceedings and strategies for feedback.
* To maintain and expand the effective, transparent, and responsive grievance mechanism for the Project.
* To develop a strategy for inclusive and meaningful stakeholder participation in the monitoring of project impacts, documenting, reporting and dissemination of results among the different stakeholders.
* To develop plans to maximize visibility and external communications for the program that considers high risk environment. Certain activities may have lower visibility profiles considering the high risk environment.
* To devise strategies to establish the relevant organizations as trustworthy partners in the public sphere
* To establish a systematic approach to stakeholder engagement to build trust and increase adoption, especially with the targeted beneficiaries.

# Stakeholder Identification and Analysis

The stakeholders of the Project are individuals or groups (parties) that can be affected by the Project outcomes, either directly or indirectly and both positively or negatively (Project-Affected Parties - PAPs) or have an interest in the Project (other interested parties - OIP).

PAPs are individuals, groups, local communities, and other stakeholders that are directly or indirectly affected by the Project, with particular focus being accorded to those directly, positively and/or adversely affected. It also refers to those who are more susceptible to changes associated with project activities, and thus need to be closely engaged in identifying impacts and their significance, as well as in decision-making on mitigation and management measures. For the purposes of this Project, it includes immediate beneficiaries, customary leadership in targeted communities, donor partners, among others.

OIPs refer to those who are not directly affected by project activities but have interests in this project owing to its proximity, as in broader local communities where beneficiaries are located, or by virtue of their role in project preparation and implementation. This includes local government authorities, civil society organizations, interest groups, media sources, and so on.

Analysis of stakeholders therefore encompasses identification of the stakeholder groups that are likely to influence or be affected by the proposed Project components either positively or negatively and organizing them according to the potential impacts of the activities on them.

Disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and individuals, although somewhat covered under the first category, experience unique limitations and barriers to participating in consultation process and being represented in overarching stakeholder engagement. By extension, they may be disproportionately impacted or further disadvantaged due to their vulnerable status, notably women and youth, elderly, unaccompanied and accompanied children, female-headed households, people with disabilities and/or chronic illnesses, or traditionally underserved communities and tribes. Given engagement efforts required to enable their equitable representation in consultation and decision-making process for the project, inclusion of this additional category places an emphasis on addressing their constraints, enhancing their means of receiving information and providing any additional assistance required.

The table below presents these different groups.

Table 1 Stakeholder Analysis[[1]](#footnote-2)

| **Stakeholder** | **Category** | **Key characteristics** | **Stakeholder group**  **PAP/ OIP** | **Language needs** | **Preferred notification means (Emails, Phone, Letters)** | **Specific needs (accessibility, large print, daytime meetings)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **National Level** | | | | | | |
| UNICEF, WFP, Mercy Corps, CRS | UN Agency and INGO | Implementation of Project, including implementation of SEP | PAP | English | Consultation meetings, formal reports on stakeholder engagement | * None |
| World Bank | Multilateral Bank | Provision of funding and TA to the Project | PAP | English | Meetings, Formal letter, email, phone | * None |
| Other bi-lateral and multi-lateral donors (African Development Bank (AfDB), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), European Union (EU), Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), and UN Agencies (e.g. FAO, IFAD, etc) | Multilateral and bilateral donors | Working on issues related to conflict, food security and preserving resilience and essential social services | OIP | English | Meetings, Formal letter, email, phone | * None |
| Academic Institutions, Universities, CGIAR centers, National Research Institutes. | Parastatal or international organization of Research or academic nature | Working on best practices and technologies development | OIP | Arabic -and English | Consultation Meetings, Formal letter, email, phone, project briefs or report summaries | * None * Day time meeting and translation |
| Humanitarian aid and development clusters (e.g. National and State level Nutrition Clusters; Food Security and Livelihoods), working groups (Agriculture, Nutrition, Cash) | Multilateral organizations, donors etc. | Working on issues related to nutrition service provision, conflict, food security and preserving resilience and essential social services  coordination | OIP | English | Meetings, Formal letter, email, phone | * Day time meeting and translation |
| 1. International NGOs (e.g. Goal, MedAir, Medicins Sans Frontiers (MSF), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), International Medical Corps (IMC), Danish Refugee Council (DRC), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), CARE International, Concern Worldwide, Saferworld, Save the Children etc.) | NGOs | Working on issues related to nutrition, health conflict, food security and preserving resilience and providing essential social services | PAP / OIP | English | Meetings, Formal letter, email, phone | * Day time meeting (either virtual or in-person) and translation |
| 1. National NGOs (HQ, Abroad, Port Sudan or Darfur-based. E.g. Sahari, Nido, HPDO, DCD, SEKER, SUDIA, Mamoun Biheiry, , Sharik Foundation, etc | NGOs | Working on issues related to conflict, food security and preserving resilience and essential social services | PAP / OIP | English, Arabic and local languages | Meetings, Formal letter, email, phone | * Day time meeting and translation |
| **Local Level** | | | | | | |
| 1. Civil society: Resistance Committees (RCs), Emergency Response Rooms, women’s groups, CBOs representing IDPs | Civil society organizations, community-based organizations | Advocacy and holding governments to account. Providing essential services | OIP | Arabic and local languages | Community meetings, radio broadcasts, phone, field visits, project briefs/findings | Physically accessible meeting places, RCs have been targeted by warring parties |
| 1. Local NGOs, including CRS’s local partners | NGOs | Working on issues related to conflict, food security and preserving resilience and essential social services  / Sustainability and coordination | PAP | English, Arabic and local languages as required | Meetings, Formal letter, email, phone, project briefs | , visual materials, scheduling transportation, meeting space, refreshments  Day time meeting and translation |
| 1. Community Development Committees (CDCs), Community Health Management committees (CHMC) and/or other existing community structures | Existing or newly formed CDCs | Community decision-making body / sustainability and implementation | PAP | Arabic and local languages as required | Meetings, Formal letter, email, phone, IEC materials, field visits, | visual materials, scheduling, transport help  Day time meeting and translation  Day time meeting and translation |
| 1. Mother support groups, Farmers / farmers’ cooperatives, Farmers Unions and groups, Pastoral Unions and groups, other cooperatives and initiatives of farmers and pastoralists, and entrepreneurs | Community members | Beneficiaries / sustainability and implementation | PAP | Arabic and local languages as required | Community meetings, radio broadcasts, phone, IEC materials, project brief/findings, field visits | * Meeting times outside of farm work * Day time meeting and translation |
| Value chain actors (private sector) in targeted states – millers, transporters, other processors and packing businesses | Private sector actors | Profit motive, advocacy for sector needs | OIP/PAP | Arabic and local languages as required | Community meetings, radio broadcasts, emails, phone | * Physically accessible meeting places * Day time meeting and translation |
| Financial service providers (private sector) in targeted states – insurance, credit etc | Private sector actors | Profit motive | OIP / PAP | Arabic and local languages as required | Meetings, Formal letter, email, phone |  |
| 1. Traditional leaders, elders, Omdas and sheikhs, influential community members, community extension workers and religious leaders | Communities and community leadership | Supporting the project within their authority, can mobilize communities / sustainability and implementation | OIP | Arabic and local languages as required | Community meetings, radio broadcasts, phone, , IEC materials, field visits, assessments, community outreach volunteers, Informational groups meeting / discussions and KIIs | Physically accessible meeting places, visual materials, scheduling, transport help |
| 1. young people young people, young men and women, or young   adults | Vulnerable group | Low awareness, limited access | PAP / Vulnerable groups | Arabic and local languages as required | Community meetings, radio broadcasts, phone, IEC materials, field visits, Informational groups meeting / discussions and KIIs | Gender and culturally appropriate meetings |
| 1. older adults | Vulnerable group | Low awareness, limited access | PAP / Vulnerable groups | Arabic and local languages as required | Community meetings, radio broadcasts, phone, IEC materials, field visits, assessments, Informational groups meeting/ discussions and KIIs etc | Daytime meetings, accessibility and affordability. transportation and sitting fees where needed, among others |
| 1. Unaccompanied and accompanied children | Vulnerable group | Low awareness, limited access | PAP / Vulnerable groups | Arabic and local languages as required | Community meetings, field visits, assessments, outreach volunteers engagement, testimonials, sensitization | Daytime meetings, accessibility and affordability. |
| 1. Female-headed households | Vulnerable group | Low awareness, limited access | PAP / Vulnerable groups | Arabic and local languages as required | Community meetings, radio broadcasts, phone, IEC materials, field visits, assessments, Informational groups meeting/ discussions and KIIs, community outreach volunteers | Daytime meetings, accessibility and affordability. Gender and culturally appropriate meetings, transportation and sitting fees where needed |
| 1. People with disabilities and / or chronic illness | Vulnerable group | Low awareness, limited access | PAP / Vulnerable groups | Arabic and local languages as required | Community meetings, radio broadcasts, phone, IEC materials, field visits, assessments, Informational groups meeting / discussions and KIIs, community outreach volunteers’ engagement, | Daytime meetings, accessibility and affordability. visual aids for the less literate |
| 1. Traditionally underserved communities | Vulnerable group | Low awareness, limited access | PAP / Vulnerable groups | Arabic and local languages as required | Community meetings, radio broadcasts, phone, IEC materials, field visits, assessments, Informational groups meeting / discussions and KIIs, community outreach volunteers’ engagement, testimonials | Daytime meetings, accessibility and affordability. Gender and culturally appropriate meetings |

# 

# Stakeholder Engagement Program

## Summary of Stakeholder Engagement Activities During Project Preparation

As part of the SEP update and Social Assessment, UNICEF and WFP have already conducted consultations with various stakeholders under the parent project. This included consultations in Northern State and Kassala State (June-July 2024) through focus group discussions and key informant interviews with a range of potential beneficiaries to get a deeper understanding of project stakeholders, their informational needs and accessibility. These consultations included farmers in farmer organizations, share croppers, agricultural labours, consumer co-operatives, private sector actors in food processing, women’s groups, farmers from different tribal groups, young farmers, and people living with disabilities. Key findings from these consultations include:

* There are significant numbers of farmers who are not part of farmer co-operatives, and thus using farmer’s co-operatives as an entry point could inadvertently exclude these farmers from both project benefits and stakeholder engagement actions. Stakeholder engagement with farmers will need to reach beyond farmer cooperative members.
* There exist separate ‘seasonal labour camps’ (non ‘native’ tribes that have settled permanently and often many decades previously but do not have land and work as agricultural labour). These communities may need to be reached as well with project activities.
* Some non-native tribes have been allocated agricultural land in schemes &/or obtained rainfed agricultural land. Where there are mixed settler communities the land may be organized by tribe, with farmer’s co-operatives mirroring the tribal division of land. Engaging with different farmer co-operatives may be interpreted tribally.
* There are people with partial disabilities working as farmers and active within both farmer organizations and consumer co-operatives, including among the governance structures of consumer co-operatives. Thus they can be reached through these fora. However people with more significant disabilities remain housebound, and are not active within these or other fora, requiring individualized efforts to reach / engage. There do not seem to be people living with disabilities working in food processing SMEs.
* Controls on women’s rights and freedoms is already well established, including the significant variation among tribes. The consultations identified shifts in women’s involvement in farming although these changes were also varied: in one community in Kassala women had increasing involvement in farming over the recent past, while in another community in Kassala women’s involvement in farming had significantly reduced over a longer time period. Engaging women farmers will be significantly shaped by women’s involvement in farming, which is evolving.
* Chambers of Commerce exist but do not offer a useful mechanism to reach SMEs, as they are not active. There are no small business offices or other state level organizations supporting small businesses, the only outreach avenue to food processing SMEs of merit appears to be public health officials who undertake spot checks on food processing businesses, and so are assumed to hold data on food processing businesses. However this may be of limited utility for engaging other value chain businesses of interest. Significant focus will be needed to find and reach SMEs.
* Many co-operatives are multi-purpose, including both farmers and consumers, and supporting each. Some also engage in income generating activities, and the engagement process may need to determine an approach to distinguish between these variants.

In September 2024, UNICEF conducted participatory consultations in Kassala State, engaging government officials at the state and locality levels. Key issues identified included limited access to health and nutrition services, rising child malnutrition, inadequate Primary Health Care, and overcrowded antenatal services, particularly in displacement-affected areas. The education system remains severely underfunded, with many children out of school due to conflict and displacement, while child protection services require urgent strengthening, especially in addressing Child Protection and Gender-Based Violence (GBV). Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) services are critically lacking, particularly in vulnerable and displacement-affected communities. Vulnerable groups, including internally displaced persons (IDPs) and people with special needs, face significant barriers in accessing essential services and are often excluded from meaningful participation in program planning and implementation, exacerbating their economic and social hardships.

The insights from these consultations underscore the urgent need for comprehensive, inclusive, and well-resourced interventions across health, education, child protection, and WASH services, as well as the protection of vulnerable groups in the target states of the Community Resilience Project. Once the target communities are selected, consultations will continue as part of the Social Assessment process to fully understand the social dynamics of each stakeholder group. This will ensure that disadvantaged or vulnerable groups, such as IDPs, the elderly, people with disabilities, unaccompanied children, and other minority groups, are identified and engaged in a tailored manner. Specific engagement strategies will be developed to guarantee accessibility, effective communication, and confidentiality, empowering these groups to fully participate and express their concerns.

CRS will conduct further consultations in Darfur, Gedaref and River Nile, Northern and Red Sea States, which are selected for the AF I and AF II. Local level consultations can only be conducted once locations have been selected so as not to raise undue expectations. Results will be included in site-specific instruments.

Consultations will be conducted using participatory approaches that are inclusive of various vulnerable groups (i.e. (women, youth, female-headed households, children, minority ethnic groups, PWD, IDPs, extremely poor, people who are not able to read and write). CRS will also further prepare a Social Assessments (SA) and Social Risk Management Plan (SRMP).

## 

## 4.2 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.

Table 2 SEP Summary Table

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Project Stage** | **Target stakeholders** | **Topic of Consultation** | **Suggested Method** | **Responsibility and Frequency** | **Frequency / Timeline** |
| **Project Preparation Stage** | World Bank  Other bi-lateral and multi-lateral donors  Humanitarian aid and development clusters  International NGOs  National NGOs | - Present the AF II part of the Project and receive feedback on project activities  - Consult on possible risks and mitigation measures  - Consult on who are PAPs and OIPs and best means to engage | Formal meetings  Virtual discussions and surveys  Website  Email | PIU  Prior to commencement of ground activities and thereafter on a quarterly basis | Once during Project preparations |
| Local NGOs  Farmers / farmers’ cooperatives  Private sector  Civil society, Community Health Management committees (CHMC) and/or other existing community structures | - Present the AF II component 2 part of the project and receive feedback on project activities  - Consult on possible risks and mitigation measures  - Consult on who are PAPs and OIPs and best means to engage  - Gather information on local context / | Informational groups meeting / Discussions  Community consultations  Formal meetings  One-on-one interviews  Site visits  Assessments | PIU  Prior to commencement of ground activities and thereafter on a quarterly basis | Once during Project preparations |
| Vulnerable groups  Traditional leaders, elders, Omdas and sheikhs, influential community members and Religious leaders  Community Workers  community members, community extension workers | - Present the relevant component of the AF II part of the Project and receive feedback on project activities  - Consult on possible risks and mitigation measures  - Consult on who are PAPs and OIPs and best means to engage  - Gather information on local context  - consult on proposed GRM process | Informational groups meeting / Discussions  Community consultations  One-on-one interviews  Site visits  Assessments | PIU  Prior to commencement of ground activities and thereafter on a bi- annual basis or when required | Once during Project preparations |
|  | Vulnerable groups | - Present the relevant component of the AF II part of the Project and receive feedback on project activities- Consult on possible risks and mitigation measures  - Consult on who are PAPs and OIPs and best means to engage  - Gather information on local context / baseline  - consult on proposed GRM process | Informational groups meeting / Discussions  Community consultations  One-on-one interviews  Site visits  Assessments | PIU  Prior to commencement of ground activities and thereafter on a bi-annual basis or when required | Once during Project preparations |
| **Project Implementation** | World Bank  Other bi-lateral and multi-lateral donors  Humanitarian aid and development clusters  International NGOs  National NGOs | - Inform on AF II part of the Project or sub-project progress  - Public events to disseminate the results | Website  Reports/briefs or one pager summaries | UNICEF PIU  WFP PIU    Prior to commencement of ground activities and thereafter on a quarterly basis or when required | - Quarterly during sub-project implementation |
| Local NGOs  Farmers / farmers’ cooperatives  Private sector  Civil society, Community Health Management committees (CHMC) and/or other existing community structures | - Inform on Project or sub-project progress  - consult on sub-projects, e.g. ESMPs  - Public events to disseminate the results | Meetings  Notice boards  Radio broadcasts  IEC materials (leaflets, posters, job aid card etc.) | PIU  Implementing partners  Prior to commencement of ground activities and thereafter on a quarterly basis or when required | - Quarterly during sub-project implementation |
| Vulnerable groups  Traditional leaders, elders, Omdas and sheikhs, influential community members and Religious leaders  Community Workers, community extension workers | - Inform on relevant component of the AF II part of the Project or sub-project progress  - consult on sub-projects, e.g. ESMPs  - gather feedback on E&S performance and implementation of mitigation measures  - further consultations on new risks/ mitigations if project evolved | Community Meetings  Notice boards  Radio broadcasts | PIU  Implementing Partners  Prior to commencement of ground activities and thereafter on a quarterly basis or when required | Semi-annually during sub-project implementation |

## 4.3 Proposed Strategy to Include the Views of Vulnerable Groups and Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities

The project will seek the views of the identified vulnerable groups (SSAHUTLC, women, informational groups meetings, female-headed households, children, minority ethnic groups, PWD, IDPs, people living in extreme poverty, illiterate). The CRS PIU will ensure that women, SSAHUTLC and other vulnerable groups are participating in consultative processes and that their voices are taken into consideration. This requires specific meetings with some of the above identified vulnerable groups at the community level, in addition to general community consultations. CRS will undertake a Social Assessment with a focus on SSAHUTLC and will prepare a Social Risk Management Plan (SRMP) accordingly. This SEP will be updated based on the findings of the Social Assessment.

The following measures will be taken in order to remove obstacles to full and enabling participation / access to information:

During project design stage

* The PIU team will identify those who may be disadvantaged / vulnerable, and if they face difficulties in participating in mainstream consultations, and activities; and if difficulties must be established to exist, then innovative measures shall be sought to render these actors inclusive of all activities and consultations.

At all stages of design/implementation

* Women-only consultation meetings will be conducted to ensure that women have the space to be outspoken and express their voices.
* Separate meetings will be held with young people to allow them to express their voices through the existing youth mechanisms.
* Determine the presence of minority groups, whether they face exclusion or marginalisation. Convene separate meeting will be held with ethnic minority groups where appropriate.
* IDPs and host communities will be consulted to understand their potentially different issues and discuss sub-projects specific to them.
* The Project will engage with representatives or CBOs and CSOs that represent these vulnerable groups on a regular basis.
* Engagement of community development committees, Community health management committees, Mothers Groups, Indigenous People/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities (IP/SSAHUTLC) and any other existing community structures.

# Responsibilities for the Implementation of Stakeholder Engagement

## 5.1 Implementation Arrangements

The overall responsibility for the implementation of the SEP lies with the two CRS PIUs. The Plan will be overseen on a day-to-day basis by the respective PIU Social Specialist. The specialist will maintain a stakeholder database for the overall project and will lead a commitment register that will be developed prior to commencement of activities. The Specialist will be assisted by a GRM Officer in the implementation of the GRM.

CRS Implementing partners will also be responsible for the implementation of this SEP and for conducting stakeholder consultations together with CRS and/or on behalf of CRS. They will report all planned and executed stakeholder activities to the PIU, and their stakeholder engagement activities will be monitored by the CRS PIU. SEP requirements and respective staffing requirements will be included into respective contractual agreements of implementing partners.

# Grievance Redress Mechanism

A Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) is a system that allows not only grievances, but also queries, suggestions, positive feedback, and concerns of project-affected parties related to the performance of a project, including environmental and social performance, to be submitted and responded to in a timely manner. The GRM will allow any type of claim or inquiry, including workers’ grievances. The AF II will implement an existing grievance redress mechanism (GRM) which aligns with ESS 10. The GRM will be consistent with ESS10 and ESS2.

In the design and implementation of project activities, it is crucial to acknowledge that stakeholders may experience direct or indirect adverse impacts. These grievances often pertain to social and environmental issues that can arise during project execution. To address these concerns effectively CRS will build upon and enhance its established experience with safe and inclusive feedback, complaints, and response mechanisms (FCRM) and Grievance Redress Mechanisms (GRM). As outlined in CRS's auditable Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) policy, specifically Policy 6 (accountability to the people we serve) and Policy 7 (accountability to stakeholders), CRS will engage in community consultations to create accessible FCRM/GRM systems that cater to diverse community members and stakeholders, in alignment with the CRS Safeguarding Policy and the Safe and Dignified Programming framework. Informed by existing practices, and results of community consultation, CRS will develop a FCRM/GRM standard operating procedures (SOPs) within 90 days of the project start as per the auditable CRS MEAL Policy, procedure 6.2. The SOP will provide practical guidelines and procedure to ensure functionality of the accountability system though the project cycle.

Current FCRM channels that are operational in various localities of Sudan include a dedicated telephone line functioning as an accountability hotline, suggestion boxes, help desks at distribution locations, and community-based FCRMs/GRM. Additional two-way communication avenues, such as community meetings, designated feedback focal points or committees, written correspondence, and FCRM-oriented focus group discussions, will also accommodate based on community consultations with various stakeholders. In addition to community consultation, CRS will conduct desk review an analysis the strength and weakness of the different channels utilized for various project in part of Sudan.

CRS is committed to ensuring that all feedback is addressed either immediately upon receipt or through appropriate follow-up actions by CRS or partner staff. Informed consent is duly documented if the complainant opts to provide personal information for direct follow-up, although anonymity in reporting is always preserved as an option. Regardless of the manner in which feedback is provided, all submissions are meticulously documented, assessed, tracked, and resolved in accordance with the CRS Sudan accountability framework and project specific FCRM/GRM standard operating procedures (SOPs). The procedures will also specify procedures for the management and escalation of sensitive and out of scope complaint, and referral procedure. To enhance FCRM data relevance for program quality, CRS will ensure development of FCRM data management system, (as per MPP procedure 6.4), and reflect on community feedback on quarterly basis (as per MPP procedure 2.4 and 6.6).

**Alignment with World Bank Requirements**

The GRM meets the World Bank's Environmental and Social Framework, particularly Environmental and Social Standard 10 (ESS10), which mandates that projects establish mechanisms for identifying and resolving grievances related to environmental and social performance. It provides a structured approach that allows affected parties to voice concerns regarding potential negative impacts on their livelihoods, environment, and social well-being. This mechanism facilitates transparency and accountability, ensuring that stakeholders receive timely feedback on their complaints.

The GRM includes multiple channels for submitting grievances, listed above, ensuring accessibility for all community members. The grievance handling process is designed to be efficient, unbiased, and culturally appropriate, enabling stakeholders to engage without fear of retribution. Moreover, it ensures that grievances are documented and addressed promptly, thereby reinforcing the project's commitment to social responsibility.

**Considerations for SEA/SH Cases**

Recognizing the sensitive nature of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and Sexual Harassment (SH) cases, the GRM incorporates specific considerations to protect and support survivors. The mechanism offers confidential reporting options, allowing individuals to raise concerns without disclosing their identity if they choose. This is crucial in encouraging survivors to come forward, as they may fear stigmatization or retaliation. CRS has an agency wide Safeguarding Policy[[2]](#footnote-3) that lays out CRS' expectation that all staff, affiliates, partners, suppliers and service providers treat all people with whom they have contact with respect, actively prevent all forms of harassment, abuse and exploitation, including all forms of sexual misconduct and trafficking, and ensure our programs do no harm to the communities in which we work. CRS ensures that all project participants and stakeholders are informed about standard safe and dignified programming messages. These messages aim to provide thorough information, including measures related to SEA. The project will complete the Communicating with Communities Key Safeguarding Messages template within 6 months of project commencement, in accordance with the internal requirement.

In addition, the GRM provides dedicated training for staff on handling SEA/SH cases, focusing on the importance of a survivor-centred approach. The CRS Safeguarding policy is binding upon all staff around the world.​​​ and is applicable to staff activities and behaviors at work, outside work, and while on leave. As part of this Policy, CRS has established Safeguarding Allegation Management (SAM) procedures, that ensures case investigations are based on the principles of confidentiality, safety and well-being, professional competence, independence and planning. Staff are trained to ensure that grievances are managed with the utmost sensitivity, confidentiality, and respect for the survivor’s wishes. The mechanism also facilitates access to necessary services, including medical, legal, and psychological support, ensuring survivors receive comprehensive care. In coordination with the PSEA cluster, CRS will work to update referral service point information packages relevant to project operational localities. SEA/SH cases will be reported to the World Bank within 48 hours through the attached reporting templates in Annex 4.

***Workers’ Grievance Mechanism***

Additionally, in line with the provisions of ESS2, a grievance mechanism will be provided to all direct workers and contracted workers to raise workplace concerns. Workers will be informed of this grievance mechanism at the time of recruitment and the measures put in place to protect them against any reprisal for its use. This worker grievance mechanism is included in the project’s Labor Management Procedures (LMP) (see ESMF). Note that for SH at the workplace, provisions under the SEA/SH Action Plan apply. The GRM will include opportunities for project workers to file grievances. Where feasible, CRS will ensure that partner organizations implement their own organizational workers grievance redress mechanism. All project workers will be informed about the available GRM opportunities during the time of contracting.

# Monitoring and Reporting

## 7.1 Monitoring of SEP Implementation

The SEP will be monitored based on both qualitative reporting and quantitative reporting linked to results indicators on stakeholder engagement and GRM performance, to be summarized and included in the Project progress reports. CRS will implement regular monitoring activities to meticulously gather and assess data related to project activities and their corresponding outputs. The monitoring report will be organized on a quarterly basis.

SEP reporting will include the following:

1. Qualitative reporting on the feedback received during stakeholder engagement 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 (PAD), ESMF, or GBV/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 or jurisdictional issues.
2. Quantitative reporting based on the indicators developed to measure the implementation of the SEP. A set of indicators for monitoring and reporting is included in Annex 3.

Adequate institutional arrangements, systems and resources will be put in place to monitor the implementation of the SEP. The main monitoring responsibilities will be with the PIU as the main administrator of the GRM. This will be led by the PIU Project Director. CRS will have overall responsibility for the implementation of the environmental and social mitigation measures, including the SEP, as well as for monitoring partner compliance with the SEP. The GRM will be an additional mechanism that will allow stakeholders, at the community level in particular, to provide feedback on project impacts and mitigation programs.

## 

## 7.2 Reporting Back to Stakeholder Groups

The SEP will be revised and updated as necessary during project implementation. Summaries of 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 respective assigned “receiving focal points” and, when needed, to the PIU.

Results of stakeholder engagements will be reported back to stakeholders on a biannual basis. It will be the responsibility of the PIU to ensure that all relevant reporting is shared through the above defined methods. Specifically, the PIU will report back on the participatory stakeholder engagements in subproject design and follow up on any agreements made with stakeholders during the consultations. This reporting back to the stakeholders will be undertaken throughout the project, as appropriate.The PIU will gather all comments and inputs originating from community meetings, and GRM outcomes. It will prepare minutes or reports, of all stakeholder engagements – with any agreements made attached. The information gathered will help to ensure that the project has general information on the perception of communities, and that it remains on target. It will be the responsibility of the PIU to respond to comments and inputs, and to keep open a feedback line to the communities, as well as to the state and county authorities and follow up on any agreements.

# Annex 1: Template for Consultation Meetings

The below Table presents a template, in which the results of consultation meetings can be captured throughout project implementation.

Table 3 Template to Capture Consultation Minutes

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Stakeholder (Group or Individual)** | **Summary of Feedback** | **Response of Project Implementation Team** | **Follow-up Action/Next Steps** | **Status of completion of follow-up measures and disclosure** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

# Annex 2: SEP Budget

CRS will be responsible for the implementation of the activities in this SEP. Budgetary resource will be dedicated to the implementation of the SEP, as laid out in the budget summary below.

The below Tables present estimated costs for the implementation of this AF SEP for Component 1 and Component 2, in addition to the original budgets of the parent project SEP.

Table 4 Estimated SEP budget for Component 1

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Budget categories** | **Total costs (in USD)** |
| 1. PIU Social Specialist (50% of staff time ), and Social Specialists among partner NGOs (50% of Social Specialist staff time) | 42,726 |
| 2. Consultations/ Participatory Planning, Decision-Making Meetings | 71,864 |
| 3. Communication campaigns | 5,000 |
| 4. Partner cost | 45,000 |
| 5. Grievance Mechanism | 72,000 |
| **TOTAL STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT BUDGET:** | **191,590** |

# Annex 3: Monitoring and Reporting on the SEP

The below Table presents key indicators and evaluation questions for monitoring activities in relation to the SEP implementation. Targets and baselines will be developed as per Component once implementation locations are selected.

Table 5 SEP Performance questions and indicators

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **SEP Performance questions** | **SEP Performance questions** | **Indicators** | **Data Collection Method** |
| **GRM.**  To what extent have PAPs been provided with accessible and inclusive means to raise issues and grievances?  Has the implementing agency responded to and managed such grievances? | * Are PAPs raising issues and grievances? * How quickly/effectively are the grievances resolved? Are grievances resolved according to the processing and resolution time? | * # of requests for information on Project activities received. * # of suggestion boxes placed in the communities. * # of feedback received from the community, disaggregated by sex of feedback provider, and type of feedback channel * % of complaints resolved in 30 days or less through GRM. * # of grievances raised by workers, disaggregated by gender of workers and worksite * % of workers’ grievances resolved within a specified time frame. * # of SEA/SH cases reported in the project areas, which were referred to health, social, legal and security support according to the referral process in place. * # of grievances that have been (i) opened, (ii) opened for more than 30 days, (iii) resolved, (iv) closed during the reporting period disaggregated by category of grievance, gender, age, and location of complainant. | GRM records through the CRM |
| **Stakeholder engagement impact on project design and implementation.**  How have the results of stakeholder engagement 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? | * # of stakeholder groups involved in project design activities and implementation * # of actions taken in a timely manner in response to feedback received during consultation sessions with PAPs. * # of consultation meetings and public discussions where the feedback and recommendation received is reflected in sub-project design and implementation. * # of engagement sessions held, focused on at-risk groups in the project. | Stakeholder Consultation Attendance Sheets/Minutes  Consultation session forms  Evaluation forms  Structured surveys  Social media/traditional media entries on the project results |
| **Implementation effectiveness.**  Was stakeholder engagement effective in implementation? | * Were the activities implemented as planned? Why or why not? * Was the stakeholder engagement approach inclusive of vulnerable groups? Why or why not? | * # of SEP activities implemented. * . * # of engagements with members of vulnerable groups | Consultation Schedule  Periodic Focus Group Discussions  Face-to-face meetings and/or Focus Group discussions with Vulnerable Groups or their representatives |

# Annex 4: Grievance Submission Form

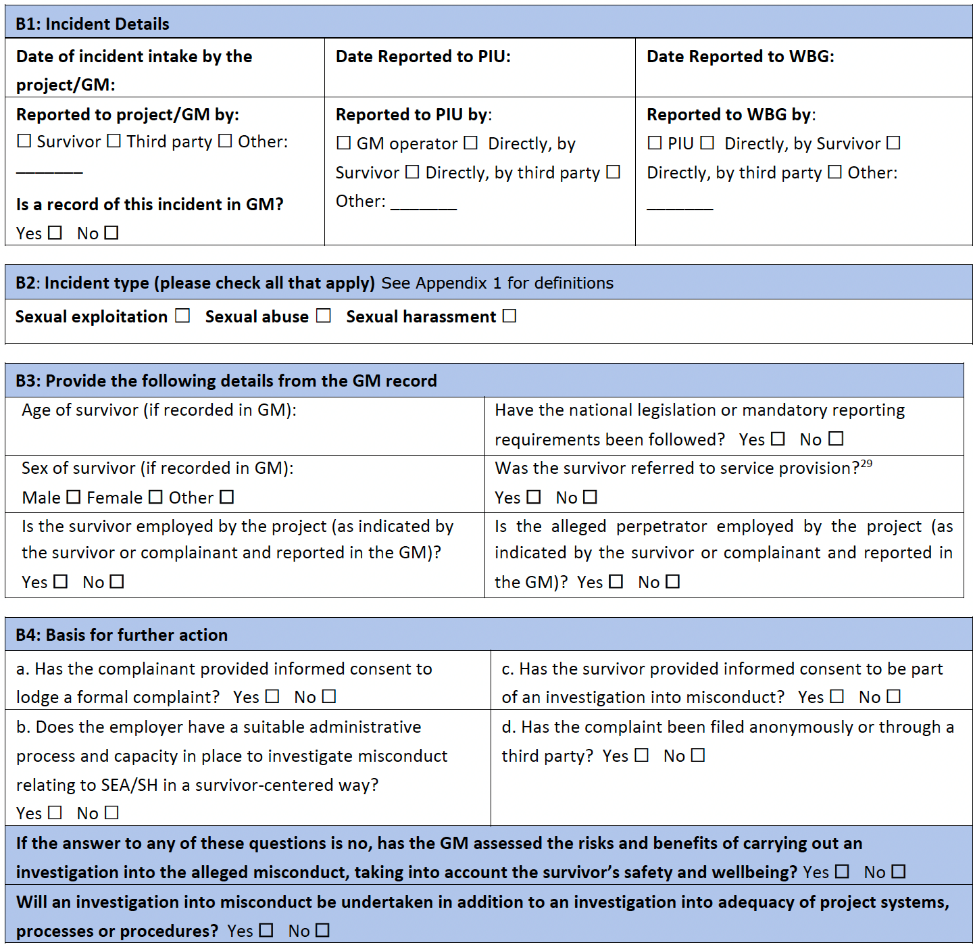
The grievance register will contain the following information (ideally in an excel file, or if at local level in a book):

Table 10 Grievance Register

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Type of Information** | **Response** |
| Complaint/ Log number |  |
| Reference document (s) |  |
| Date complaint made |  |
| Date complaint received |  |
| Category of Grievance |  |
| Method of Logging: Direct Communication; Suggestion Box; Toll-free Line; Online to CRS Whistleblower site |  |
| Complaint name (state if anonymous) |  |
| Location in which complained action took place (district, village) |  |
| Caller contacts for follow up |  |
| Gender |  |
| Age |  |
| Parties against whom complaint is made (unit/contractor/agency etc) |  |
| Nature of Complaint ["SEA/GBV"; "Timing of Payment"; "Amount of Payment"; "Inclusion or Issue regarding Project benefits"; “Environmental Impact”; “Discrimination”; “Absence of Consultations”; “Land Conflict”; “Labor Influx”; etc… or create standard categories based on complaint type] |  |
| Description of Complaint/Concerns/Suspicions |  |
| Nature of feedback (describe)[In case issue type is GBV/SEA immediate referral to the GBV referral system] |  |
| Verification and investigation (for non-sensitive cases) (describe) |  |
| Recommended action (describe) |  |
| Timeline of Initial feedback (within 5 working days) [investigate the claim within 5 working days, and share findings/feedback with relevant stakeholder] |  |
| Status update (and justification if it is not expected to be resolved within the timeframe set out) |  |
| Date resolved and sign-off by complainant on resolution |  |
| Indicate if a spot check has been conducted (you can include then in the narrative reports spot checks for resolutions of x number of complaints have been conducted) |  |

The following incident form will be completed by the PIU in the case of SEA/SH cases, within 24 hours:

Table 11 Incident Report Form for SEA/SH cases



The following form will be completed by the PIU in case of SEA/SH cases – following investigations:

Table 12 SEA/SH incident report form after investigations



1. This table will be updated once the results of the SA are obtained. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. [Safeguarding | CRS](https://www.crs.org/about/safeguarding) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)