



AGA KHAN FOUNDATION
An agency of the Aga Khan Development Network



Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF)

Road to Resilience

“Making the Rural Agricultural Communities in Syria More Viable”

Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) Syria

September 2024

Contents

1. Introduction of the Project and ESMF:	6
1.1 Project Overview:.....	6
1.2. The Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF)	6
1.2.1 Need for the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF):.....	7
1.2.2 Objectives of the ESMF:	7
1.2.3 The ESMF’s Complementary Instruments:	7
3. National and International Legal and Regulatory Frameworks, Standards and Conventions	8
3.1 Environment and Social Management Legal and Regulatory Framework in Syria:.....	8
3.1.1 Legal Environmental Definitions as Syrian Environmental Law:	8
3.1.2 Legal Framework for Environmental Protection:	8
3.1.3 Syrian Social Management Policies, Laws, and Regulatory Bodies:	9
3.1.4 Syrian Labor Laws to Protect Labor Rights:	9
3.1.5 National Regulatory Bodies on Environmental and Social Management (ESM):.....	9
3.1.6 Syria International and Regional Cooperation for Environmental Protection:	10
3.2. The World Bank's Environmental and Social Standards (ESS):	10
3.2.1 Table 1: The World Bank Environmental and Social Standards (ESSs):	11
3.3. Core International Labor Organization (ILO) Conventions:	14
3.3.1 Table 2: The Core ILO Conventions:	14
3.4. KfW Sustainability Guidelines:.....	16
3.4.1 Environmental and Social Screening (E&S):	19
3.4.1.2 Table-3 E&S Screening Process for the Project Activities:.....	19
3.5. AKF Syria Existing Environment and Social Management Policies, and Instruments:	21
3.5.2 AKF Safeguarding Policy:	21
3.5.3 AKF Gender Equality and Sexual Exploitation and Abuses (SEA) Prevention Plan:	21
3.5.4 Signing Code of Conduct Staff, Vendors/Contractors/Sub-Contractors:.....	22
3.6 Concurrent Policies and Instruments:.....	22
4. Gaps Analysis Syrian Environmental and Social Management (ESM) laws:	22
4.1 Table 4 Key Areas and Gaps Analysis:	22
4.2 Recommendations for the Road to Resilience Project:.....	23
5. Institutional Arrangements for the Implementation of the ESMF:	25
5.1 Role of the Executing Agency Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) Syria:.....	25
5.2 The Ministry of Local Administration and Environment in Syria plays a crucial role in:.....	26
5.3 Role of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor in Syria plays a crucial role in:	26

5.4 Role of Farmer CIGs/Cooperatives is crucial in the Implementation of the Project:	27
6. ESHS Management Structure for Implementation of the ESH Framework:.....	27
6.1 AKF Syria will Develop Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP):.....	27
6.2 Establish ESHS Management Structure with AKF Syria:.....	27
6.2.1 Table 5: Roles and Responsibilities of the ESHS Management Structure:.....	28
7. Environmental and Social Baseline:.....	29
7.1 Environmental Aspects to Cover in Baseline Survey:.....	29
7.2 Socio-Economic and Cultural Aspects to Cover in the Baseline Survey:	29
8. Environmental and Social Impacts, Risks and Mitigation Measures:	30
8.1 Risk of Conflict Escalation and Access to Program Area:	30
8.2 Risk of Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) in the field:.....	31
8.3 Risks Related to Agriculture Climate Change and Environment:	31
8.4 Risks Related to Sexual Exploitation and Abuses, Labor Rights Violation and Exclusion:.....	32
8.5 Potential Health Risks due to exposure to Chemical/Fertilizers/Pesticides:.....	33
8.6 Risks Related to Gender, and inequalities related to PWDs:.....	33
8.7 Potential Risks/Impact on Farmers' Resilience:	33
9. Grievance Redressal Mechanism (GRM):.....	34
9.1 Concept and Definition:	34
9.2 Grievance Redress System (GRS):.....	34
9.3 Grievance Procedure:	34
9.3.1 Steps of grievance procedure:.....	35
9.3.6 Community-Based Complaint Response Mechanism (CBCRM).....	37
10. AKF Safeguarding	38
10.1 Mechanism to safeguard Staff/workers, beneficiaries, and Stakeholders:.....	38
10.2 The flowchart below provides an overview of AKF’s reporting process for the AKF Staff/Workers and Beneficiaries	40
11. Key Stakeholder, and Engagement in ESMF:	41
11.2 Stakeholder Involvement in Program Management:	52
11.2.1 Stakeholder involvement during implementation:.....	52
11.2.2 AKF Syria/AKF UK and KfW:.....	52
11.2.3 Beneficiary Engagement and Roles:.....	52
11.2.4 Role of Other Stakeholders in Project Success:.....	52
12. Capacity Building of Staff, Contractor, Farmers Cooperatives/CIGs:	53
12.2 Training of Staff on Environment and Social Screening (E&S):.....	53
12.3 Awareness Campaigns for Community/Farmers/CIGs, and Cooperatives:.....	53

13. Monitoring and Evaluation and Reporting of the (ESMP) Activities:	54
13.1 Monitoring & Evaluation of the Activities:.....	54
13.2 Roles and Responsibilities to monitor compliance with E&S Safeguards during the project implementation:.....	54
13.3 Reporting of the (ESMF) Activities:	55
13.4 Environmental and Social Reporting:.....	56
13.4.1 Table 07: Overview of Environmental and Social Screening Process/Responsibilities:	56
14. Incident Reporting:	56
14.1 Incident Reporting Procedures:	57
14.1.2 Response and Resolution:.....	57
14.1.3 Incident Documentation and Reporting:.....	57
14.1.4 Staff Training and Awareness on Incident Reporting:	58
15. Knowledge Management, Learning and Best Practices:	58
16. Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP):.....	59
16.1 Environmental and Social Management Activities Work Plan (ESMP):	59
17. Annexures:	77

Acronyms	
UNMAS	United Nations Mine Action Support
ACSAD	The Arab Centre for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
KfW	(Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau)
AKF	Aga Khan Foundation
CBOs	Community-Based Organizations
CIGs	Common Interest Groups
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CIGs	Common Interest Groups
EORE	Explosive Ordnance Risk Education
IEE	Initial Environmental Examination
FSPs	Financial Service Providers
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
UXO	Un-Explosive Ordnance
HRM	Human Resource Management
ICARDA	International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
PEA	Project Executing Agency
ESHS	Environment Social Health Safety Structure
ESS	Environmental and Social Standards
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
INGO	International Non-Government Organisation
BDS	Business Development Services
MoRRA	Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform
NGO	Non- Government Organisation
OCHA	Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Agencies
PWDs	People with Disabilities
SEP	Stakeholders Engagement Plan
UN	United Nations
GRM	Grievances Response Mechanism
WB	World Bank
ILO	International Labour Organization
E&SS	Environmental and Social Screening
ESS	Environmental and Social Standards
ESMP	Environmental and Social Management Plan
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
PDM	Post Distribution Monitoring
AKF	Aga Khan Foundation
AKDN	Aga Khan Development Network
IEC	Information Education and Communication Material

1. Introduction of the Project and ESMF:

1.1 Project Overview:

The Project "Road to Resilience", aims at making rural agricultural communities in Syria more viable. It is a four-year initiative funded by the German Development Bank (KfW) through a grant from BMZ under Transitional Development Assistance. This project focuses on the agricultural sector, with the main goal of improving the resilience of rural communities—particularly women and youth in targeted governorates—by enabling them to cope with the ongoing economic instability and environmental challenges in the country.

To achieve this objective, the project will promote modern, environmentally sustainable, and non-chemical farming agricultural practices. Through this project, AKF Syria will work to enhance community-based, socially inclusive business models for smallholder farmers in six governorates: Homs, Aleppo, Rural Damascus, Tartus, and Sweida. With a total budget of EUR 10 million over four years, the project is structured around three specific objectives:

1. **Enhanced Participation of Smallholder Farmers:** Strengthen the involvement of smallholder farmers in Common Interest Groups (CIGs) and cooperative models.
2. **Strengthened Agricultural Value Chains:** Fortify strategic agricultural, horticultural, and livestock value chains.
3. **Improved Access to Agricultural Services and Financing:** Increase access to agricultural business services and financing opportunities.

The project defines resilient communities as those people who possess sustainable, high-quality products/services, a diversified economy, and strong local and community-based social and economic systems. As an implementing agency of the proposed project, the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) will adopt a participatory approach by collaborating with existing local structures—such as farmers, Common Interest Groups (CIGs), Cooperatives, and Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SMEs) mainly in and around the agriculture sector. The project will focus on capacity building across the value chain, from farm to market, and will invest in viable agricultural value chains, including livestock (sheep, cattle, poultry) and agriculture/horticulture crops.

The project through investing resources in potential value chains for livestock (cattle, sheep, and cows) and agriculture/horticulture production will — enhance local food production, improve market availability, and increase household access to affordable and nutritious food. The approach will benefit food-insecure households, as improved market conditions and increased production will help stabilize prices and ensure a more reliable food supply. Moreover, the project will contribute to stimulating economic growth by creating employment opportunities along the entire value chain, from farm to market. This, in turn, contributes to poverty reduction and strengthens the resilience of local communities.

1.2. The Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF)

The Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) offers a comprehensive overview of Syria's environmental protection laws, as well as its legal and institutional frameworks, including the relevant national regulatory bodies. It also encompasses international standards such as KfW Guidance, World Bank Standards, and ILO Conventions, ensuring alignment with global best practices. In addition, the ESMF outlines AKF's environmental and social management policies, identifying potential risks during project implementation and detailing corresponding mitigation measures.

The framework emphasizes the roles, analysis, and engagement of key stakeholders (SEP), and includes a robust Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) to effectively address concerns. A Code of Conduct (CoC) is also incorporated, ensuring the highest standards of ethical behavior and professionalism across all interactions.

Furthermore, the ESMF outlines the Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP), which identifies key risks, mitigation measures, and a well-defined timeline. It also establishes clear monitoring, and reporting mechanisms, serving as a comprehensive roadmap for AKF senior management, project staff, and stakeholders to ensure the effective integration of environmental and social safeguards throughout all phases of the KfW-funded, Road to Resilience Project lifecycle.

The implementing agency must ensure full compliance with both national and international environmental and social management laws, policies, standards, and best practices in its country of operations. This is important for responsible and effective project execution. The Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) offers a thorough overview of the relevant national legal and regulatory frameworks, as well as applicable international standards and best practices. It is designed to guide the mitigation of potential environmental and social risks throughout the project's implementation. By strictly adhering to these laws, policies, and standards, the project team can facilitate continuous program execution, ensuring the protection of the environment, the well-being of the targeted beneficiaries, relevant staff, and the interests of other key stakeholders.

1.2.1 Need for the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF):

The broader geographic areas for the project Road to Resilience have been pre-identified, and the exact physical locations and nature, and the associated impacts and potential risks are identified and listed. Therefore, the project has adopted a framework approach. The preparation of an ESMF ensures that the proposed project has procedures and processes in place to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate potentially adverse environmental and social impacts. It examines the potential, actual, and anticipated environmental and social risks and impacts of the project on targeted farmers/CIGs/cooperatives and the overall community.

1.2.2 Objectives of the ESMF:

ESMF will achieve the following objectives:

- Broadly identify and assess the environmental and social risks and impacts that may arise during the implementation of the project, ensuring they are effectively managed and mitigated through proactive and adaptive measures.
- Foster the integration of comprehensive environmental and social considerations across all stages of the project lifecycle, promoting long-term sustainability and resilience in agricultural value chains.
- To ensure alignment with the KfW Environmental and Social Management and Sustainability framework, while also adhering to relevant national, regional, and international standards and best practices in environmental and social governance.

1.2.3 The ESMF's Complementary Instruments:

The following documents are integral parts of the ESMF, already prepared by AKF Syria and will be strictly followed during the implementation of the project:

- The Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) to engage relevant stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle.
- Grievance Response Mechanism (GRM) to address complaints/feedback.
- Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESMP) to implement all mitigation measures, monitoring to track progress on implementation and evaluate the impact.

3. National and International Legal and Regulatory Frameworks, Standards and Conventions

3.1 Environment and Social Management Legal and Regulatory Framework in Syria:

AKF Syria is registered in the country (Syria) and is fully committed to adhering to all applicable environmental protection and social management laws and regulations within the country. To ensure that the implementation of the Road to Resilience Project aligns with these regulations, AKF will actively engage in close coordination and communication with the relevant national regulatory bodies and authorities. This collaboration is critical for the effective execution of the Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) within the broader Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), ultimately contributing to the achievement of the desired environmental sustainability outcomes. A brief overview of the key laws, policies, regulatory bodies, and their respective roles are detailed below.

3.1.1 Legal Environmental Definitions as Syrian Environmental Law:

The Environmental and Social Management policies, laws, and regulations in Syria are part of the broader framework governing environmental protection, resource management, and social welfare. These policies are aimed at ensuring sustainable development while minimizing negative environmental and social impacts from various activities, particularly in sectors like construction, energy, and agriculture.

3.1.2 Legal Framework for Environmental Protection:

a). Environmental Protection Law (2002):

The primary law for environmental protection in Syria. It aims to protect the environment, reduce pollution, and ensure sustainable use of natural resources. Key Provisions: This law mandates Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) for projects that could potentially harm the environment. It also establishes standards for air, water, and soil quality, and prescribes penalties for non-compliance.

b). Law on Protection of Environment No. 50 (2002)

Key Provisions: This law outlines the responsibilities of various ministries in enforcing environmental regulations and sets up the framework for pollution monitoring and control.

c). Law No. 12 on Agriculture and Land Reclamation (1994)

Governs land use, agricultural practices, and land reclamation. Key Provisions: This law includes provisions for sustainable land management, soil conservation, and restrictions on land use to prevent environmental degradation.

d). Land Acquisition Law in Syria, officially known as Law No. 20 of 1983:

The land Acquisition law governs the process of expropriating land for public interest. This law allows the government to acquire private land or property for public use, such as infrastructure projects, housing, and other development purposes while ensuring compensation for the landowners. The law outlines the procedures for expropriation, including the assessment of compensation based on market value and the rights of the landowners to appeal against the acquisition.

The law has been effective since **July 30, 1983**. It sets legal guidelines for balancing public interest with the protection of private property rights in Syria.

AKF Syria will carefully select project locations/farming lands/areas not taken or seized by the Government. AKF will avoid implementing projects on confiscated land (i.e., taken or grabbed with authority). While it is challenging to acquire accurate information about land ownership in the current context, AKF Syria will additionally carry out steps to gather this information through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) in the targeted locations to verify land ownership history. Additionally, during the

beneficiary targeting assessment, AKF will verify the land ownership status of the farmers. This approach will ensure that the land is not subject to disputes or issues related to forced ownership transfers.

3.1.3 Syrian Social Management Policies, Laws, and Regulatory Bodies:

The Syrian social management policies aim to improve social welfare across the country. The Social development initiatives include promoting and protecting labor rights, addressing wage issues, working conditions, safety, health care, education, housing, and employment generation.

3.1.4 Syrian Labor Laws to Protect Labor Rights:

Syrian labor laws aim to protect workers' rights, including fair wages, safe working conditions, and the prohibition of child labor. These laws are crucial in ensuring that development projects adhere to social standards.

3.1.5 National Regulatory Bodies on Environmental and Social Management (ESM):

During the implementation of the project, AKF Syria will maintain close coordination and communication with environmental and social protection regulatory bodies/authorities to acquire all necessary approvals (if required) for project activities.

a. Ministry of Local Administration and Environment:

This is the main regulatory body responsible for environmental protection in Syria. It oversees the implementation of environmental laws, conducts EIAs, and monitors compliance with environmental standards.

As the Road to Resilience project falls under the moderate to low-risk category, there is no requirement to conduct the EIA (Environmental Impact Assessments). However, the project team should maintain good coordination in case any environmental issues arise during the project.

b. Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform:

Oversees land use and implementation of land reform policies, land use, providing support services to farmers, ensuring regulatory compliance, and supporting agricultural research and innovation.

AKF Syria will maintain close coordination with the ministry, particularly in designing agricultural input packages, technical training/capacity building, and selection/promotion of different varieties of seeds or livestock breeds. The project team needs to consider the technical recommendations from the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform.

c. Ministry of Water Resources:

The Ministry of Water Resources, Is the central body responsible for the management of the country's water resources as well as the allocation of these resources to domestic, industrial, and agricultural sectors. The ministry's role includes monitoring, developing, and protecting water resources, developing related laws, legislation, and policies, investment planning and implementation of potable water supply and wastewater collection and treatment services.

In the Road to Resilience Project, AKF will support the CIGs. This requires close coordination with the Ministry of Water Resources and their local representatives to incorporate recommendations related to irrigation water management, recycling and reuse of wastewater for irrigation, and capacity-building initiatives.

d. Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor:

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor is typically responsible for overseeing and implementing policies related to social welfare, employment, and labor issues. This can include managing social services, promoting fair labor practices, and addressing unemployment and social inequalities. It works to ensure the well-being of citizens through various policies and regulations.

Since 2003, AKF has been operating in Syria in full compliance with the country's labor laws and regulations related to social affairs. The Road to Resilience Project team will strictly adhere to Syrian labor laws, covering areas such as staff contracts, working hours, wage rates, annual and sick leave, working conditions, health and life insurance, and social security. In addition to these legal requirements, AKF will implement international best practices in staff training and development, performance appraisals, retention strategies, and promotion opportunities.

3.1.6 Syria International and Regional Cooperation for Environmental Protection:

a. International Conventions:

Syria is a signatory to several international environmental agreements, such as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity. These commitments influence national policies and regulations. Since the adherence to the international conventions by the country does not financial conventions, it does not impact the agreement status.

b. Regional Cooperation:

Syria participates in regional environmental initiatives, particularly through the League of Arab States, which promotes environmental protection and sustainable development across the Arab region.

The Environmental and Social Management policies, laws, and regulations in Syria are designed to ensure sustainable development while protecting the environment and society. However, the ongoing conflict has significantly affected their implementation and enforcement, creating challenges in achieving the intended outcomes.

Being registered locally, AKF Syria is legally bound to strictly adhere to the relevant local laws and regulations related to environmental protection labor engagement (wages, safety, and social welfare), and designing agricultural and business packages for the local farmers/common interest groups (CIGs)/Cooperatives aligning to the local laws/regulations/standards/policies. This will allow AKF to minimize the associated risks ensure smooth implementation in the field and contribute to achieving the intended results/outcomes of the KfW Road to Resilience Project.

3.2. The World Bank's Environmental and Social Standards (ESS):¹

Under its new Environmental and Social Standards (ESS), the World Bank introduced ten (10) Environmental and Social (E&S) standards to ensure that projects are designed and implemented in a socially and environmentally sustainable way to avoid, reduce, or mitigate unanticipated or unforeseen risk in its projects. The Environmental and Social Standards set out the requirements for borrowers relating to the identification and assessment of environmental and social risks and impacts associated with projects supported by the Bank through Investment Project Financing. The standards will: (a) support borrowers in achieving good international practice relating to environmental and social sustainability; (b) assist Borrowers in fulfilling their national and international environmental and social obligations; (c) enhance non-discrimination, transparency, participation, accountability, and governance; and (d) enhance the sustainable development outcomes of projects through ongoing stakeholder engagement.

The Road to Resilience Project is expected to result in significant social benefits and positive environmental impacts and is assigned within a Moderate risk category. The project will adopt a participatory and inclusive community development approach, implementing interventions in close consultation and coordination with project beneficiaries and stakeholders, based on principles of good governance, transparency, and accountability. The potential negative environmental impacts anticipated for this project are minor and of a temporary nature during the installation/rehabilitation of greenhouses, storage facilities/aggregation hubs,

¹ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/environmental-and-social-framework>

or any other community-productive assets. Also, there are some potential risks associated with the selection of crop seeds/varieties, livestock breeds, and chemical fertilizers/pests/insecticides. The installation/construction/rehabilitation of small-scale work interventions including dust, noise, waste generation, pollution, chemical exposure, health, and safety; would be reduced and mitigated by utilizing the screening and checklist included in this ESMP of the project.

3.2.1 Table 1: The World Bank Environmental and Social Standards (ESSs):

World Bank ESS	Relevance	Explanation
<p>ESS:1. Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>According to the standard definitions the "Road to Resilience" project is classified as a Moderate to Lower Risk initiative. The project does not involve major construction activities; however, the CIGs/Cooperatives may install greenhouses, rehabilitate storage facilities, and enhance aggregation centers/hubs.</p> <p>Before these activities begin, AKF Syria will conduct project baselines incorporating the key environmental and social aspects/indicators to measure. Risks to soil, water, and air should all be considered, especially any adverse impacts (even minor) that may be caused by the activities. This baseline information will enable AKF to compare the results to see the impact at the end of the project through the end-line or impact study.</p> <p>Additionally, the AKF team will conduct a comprehensive site assessment and prepare a checklist related to the program's interventions. The site visits will evaluate safety, environmental, health, labor, and community-related aspects. This will involve both direct observations during site walkthroughs and the review of any available documentation, monitoring, and records. The goal is to ensure that appropriate decisions are made concerning worker safety, work condition monitoring, and mitigating risks associated with sexual exploitation and abuse.</p> <p>Additionally, AKF will promote regenerative agriculture that restores soil, water, air, and biodiversity while providing sufficient quality outputs to support food security and livelihoods. AKF also promotes farmer autonomy through the local self-production of natural inputs, and alternatives to synthetic pesticides and fertilizers, which are not widely available, are expensive (particularly in Syria), and have undesirable effects on the environment, quality of food, and health.</p>
<p>ESS 2. Labor and Working Conditions</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The project will engage dedicated staff for its implementation and work closely with farmers, CIGs, and cooperatives within the selected value chains. Since 2003, AKF has operated in Syria in full compliance with the country's labor laws and social regulations.</p> <p>The Road to Resilience Project team will strictly follow Syrian labor laws, ensuring compliance in areas such as staff contracts, working hours, wage rates, annual and sick leave, working conditions, health and life insurance, staff medical checkups, and social security. Beyond legal obligations, AKF will also apply international best practices in staff training and development,</p>

		<p>performance appraisals, retention plans, and promotions in line with its HR, safeguarding, and operational policies and procedures.</p> <p>AKF will closely monitor CIGs, contractors/ consultants/other affiliates to prevent any form of child or forced labor in project-related activities. In addition, measures will be put in place to address risks of gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA).</p> <p>While national laws and regulations already exist regarding labor, upon project commencement, a complaint response mechanism (CRM) will be established for staff, farmers, CIGs, cooperatives, contractors, and consultants. This will ensure that grievances are heard and resolved, maintaining a work environment that is inclusive and free from discrimination and inequality.</p>
<p>ESS 3. Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>In the project minor, localized pollution from fertilizers, chemicals, pesticides/insecticides, agricultural waste, and the use of water and other natural resources is anticipated. The AKF team will carry out a thorough site assessment and develop a checklist related to the program’s interventions, which will include recommendations for energy and water efficiency practices.</p> <p>Additionally, the proposed activities may lead to an increase in the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides as part of efforts to enhance agricultural production. The project’s focus on improving water efficiency could also encourage farmers to expand their cultivable land, which may further contribute to the increased use of these inputs.</p> <p>To enhance resource efficiency and pollution prevention, the project will train farmers on sustainable agricultural practices, promote water conservation, and implement waste management systems.</p> <p>Additionally, AKF will encourage the adoption of renewable energy sources like solar-powered irrigation and biogas. These activities aim to improve the resilience of rural communities by promoting sustainable practices and reducing environmental impact.</p>
<p>ESS:4. Community Health and Safety</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>ESS4 is applicable as the proposed activities may pose risks to community health and safety, particularly during labor-intensive agricultural operations such as land cultivation, harvesting, processing, and transportation.</p> <p>Also, there is a possibility of exposure to fertilizers/pesticides/insecticides during the crop production stage. The Environmental and Social Management Standards (ESMS) identifies the necessary measures to mitigate these risks, and the project's Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) will include comprehensive health and safety measures, including provisions to address Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) risks.</p>

		<p>The project is expected to positively impact the livelihoods of farming communities by contributing to food production and supply, thereby addressing food insecurity in the country. It will also promote Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), climate-smart agriculture, and efficient irrigation techniques to enhance water use efficiency and support environmental sustainability.</p>
<p>ESS 5. Land Acquisition, Restriction on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Not relevant, no land acquisition for project/on involuntary resettlement anticipated. Also, the project will not work on the confiscated land (land taken by authority).</p> <p>There are no anticipated requirements for land acquisition or instances of involuntary resettlement in the project. The project does not foresee any displacement of communities, nor any loss of access to farming land or livelihoods for local residents.</p> <p>The KfW-funded project will primarily focus on supporting farmers and Common Interest Groups (CIGs) who already possess existing farming land and= are settled within the designated program area.</p>
<p>ESS:6. Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>This standard is applicable as the project aims to promote agriculture and livestock production, enhance efficient water use and management, and strengthen the resilience of smallholder farmers in addressing food security challenges.</p> <p>The project is expected to have positive impacts on sustainable agricultural production, as well as on water resources, land vegetative cover, and living natural resources, contributing positively to the local environment.</p> <p>During the baseline and the initial site assessments, the project will gather detailed information on biodiversity and sustainable conservation. It will take steps to avoid, minimize, and mitigate potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems by employing relevant formats and checklists, which will be applied during the preparation of site-specific assessments and mitigation plans. A "negative list" will be used to exclude any sensitive sites from the project's scope.</p> <p>Given that the overall environmental risk of the project is moderate, no activities will be implemented in areas with potential adverse impacts on critical habitats, as identified during site selection and assessments.</p>
<p>ESS:7. Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>This is not relevant as there are no Indigenous people in the project area.</p>

ESS 8. Cultural Heritage	No	This is not relevant as there are no implications on the cultural heritage as the project focus is agriculture and farmers/CIGs so mainly work in agriculture and livestock production.
ESS 9. Financial Intermediaries	No	This ESS is not relevant as there will be no FI working on this project. The project will be implemented directly by AKF Syria through engaging the farmers/CIGs/cooperatives.
ESS:10. Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure	Yes	<p>ESS10 applies to all projects implemented by AKF Syria, emphasizing the importance of stakeholder consultation in the environmental and social assessment, as well as the design and implementation of the project. To facilitate effective consultation and coordination among various stakeholders, the project is required to develop a comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP).</p> <p>A detailed SEP, alongside an information-sharing mechanism and a Project Grievances Redress Mechanism (GRM), has been developed, consulted upon, and disclosed to key stakeholders. The project also incorporates measures to enhance social accountability, engagement, and responsiveness, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Conducting meaningful and effective consultations. (ii) Establishing a functional GRM. (iii) Fostering substantive interaction between beneficiaries and key stakeholders on matters related to project design and decision-making. <p>The SEP will outline strategies for engaging vulnerable and disadvantaged groups within the project area. These stakeholders, which include, but are not limited to, the landless, internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees, ethnic and religious minorities, female-headed households, persons with disabilities, the elderly, children, and pastoral nomads, will be identified during the project preparation phase. Specific provisions to ensure their active participation in the consultation process will also be incorporated into the SEP.</p>

3.3. Core International Labor Organization (ILO) Conventions:²

The International Labor Organization (ILO) has developed a set of core conventions that cover fundamental labor standards. These are part of the broader ILO framework, but eight conventions are recognized as "core" because they address fundamental human rights at work. These are:

3.3.1 Table 2: The Core ILO Conventions:

World Bank ESS	Relevance	Explanation
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² <https://www.ilo.org/international-labour-standards/conventions-protocols-and-recommendations>

<p>Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention, 1948 (No. 87): Guarantees workers' and employers' rights to form and join organizations of their choosing.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>AKF employees have the right to form and join staff groups or other associations without fear of retaliation and penalties. AKF respects the freedom of association and does not hinder the creation or activities of such groups/associations. AKF always encourages participation and dialogue and allows employee representatives to engage in collective bargaining or discussions on work conditions/salary structure/benefits, etc.</p>
<p>Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98): Protects workers against anti-union discrimination and promotes collective bargaining.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>AKF respects the rights of employees and ensures that they are not discriminated against or penalized for joining or forming associations or groups to safeguard their interests. This applies to all AKF workers, including those with short-term or service contracts.</p>
<p>Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29): Prohibits all forms of forced or compulsory labor.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>AKF Syria adheres fully to ILO Forced Labour Conventions and strictly prohibits the use/engagement of forced labor in any of its activities or those associated with its projects/stakeholders/affiliates. The organization is firm in its commitment to protecting and promoting labor rights across all its operations and affiliates.</p>
<p>Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105): Bans the use of forced labor for political purposes and economic development</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>AKF Syria adheres fully to ILO Forced Labour Conventions and strictly prohibits the use/engagement of forced labor in any of its activities or those associated with its projects/stakeholders/affiliates. The organization is firm in its commitment to protecting and promoting labor rights across all its operations and affiliates.</p>
<p>Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138): Establishes minimum age requirements for employment to prevent child labor.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>AKF Syria fully complies with the International Labour Organization (ILO) Minimum Age Convention and strictly prohibits the employment or engagement of children in any capacity within the organization or its affiliates. According to AKF's HR manual, the minimum age for employment is clearly defined as 18 years and above, and this policy applies universally to all forms of employment, whether full-time, part-time, seasonal, daily wage, or incentive-based workers. This reflects AKF's commitment to upholding child protection standards and ensuring fair labor practices across all operations.</p>

<p>Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182): Prohibits the worst forms of child labor, including slavery, trafficking, and hazardous work.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>AKF Syria, as an international organization, ensures compliance with Convention No. 182 through several practices. AKF has established internal policies (HR, Safeguarding, code of conduct), to explicitly prohibit child labor, including slavery, trafficking, and hazardous work. Our employment practices are structured to prevent child labor by enforcing age requirements and vetting employees, contractors, and partners/affiliates.</p> <p>AKF closely monitors supply chains to ensure child labor is not involved in activities like agriculture, livestock production, construction, procurement, or logistics in any of the project-associated activities.</p>
<p>Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100): Promotes equal pay for men and women for work of equal value.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>AKF Syria fully complies with the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), and always ensures equal pay/salary for men and women employees for work of equal value. AKF practices this by implementing policies that promote gender pay equity across all levels of its operations. This involves conducting regular wage assessments to identify disparities, ensuring transparent salary scales, and providing training to managers on equitable remuneration practices. AKF always encourages gender balance in decision-making roles and promotes a workplace culture of fairness and inclusion, ensuring compliance with local labor laws while setting a global standard for gender equality in salaries/wages.</p>
<p>Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111): Ban discrimination in employment and occupation on various grounds, including race, gender, and religion.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>AKF Syria fully complies with this convention, and practices this by establishing clear anti-discrimination policies, ensuring recruitment and promotion processes are free from bias, and providing training on diversity and inclusion to all staff. The organization regularly reviews its internal practices to identify and address potential discrimination. Additionally, fostering a supportive workplace environment that values diversity and ensures equal opportunities for all employees irrespective of gender across the programs and operations. AKF always encourages gender balance in decision-making roles and promotes a workplace culture of fairness and inclusion, ensuring compliance with local labor laws aligning with global standards. In AKF women are entitled to 90 days of maternity leave, the same applies to men as short (10) days of paternity leave, etc.</p>

3.4. KfW Sustainability Guidelines:

In addition to adhering to national environmental and social management laws and policies, AKF Syria must also comply with the guidelines and policies provided by the donor (KfW). The purpose of the KfW Environmental and Social Management Guidance documents (ESM) and Environmental and Social Code of Practice (ES COP) Package is to support the Project Executing Agency (PEA) - referred to hereafter as the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF)—in identifying and documenting project-specific environmental and social (E&S) risks and impacts. Furthermore, it provides guidance on defining and implementing appropriate risk mitigation measures to achieve the project’s sustainability outcomes/results.

a) Screening and Categorization of FC-measures:

a.1) as part of the screening process, the planned FC measure is appraised at an early stage to determine its relevance in terms of environmental and social impacts and risks. The screening process is designed to identify and appraise the type and scale of any adverse environmental and social impacts or risks that may arise from the planned FC measure. The Appraisal of the environmental and social impacts considers the whole project, even if KfW Development Bank is financing only a component of the project. The next step, once the relevance of such consequences or risks has been established, is to define the type and scope of additional studies that need to be conducted as part of FC-measure preparations.

a.2) All FC-measures are classified into one of the following four categories “A” (high risk), “B+” (substantial risk), “B” (moderate risk), or “C” (low risk), according to the relevance of their July 2024, KfW Development Bank – Sustainability Guideline Page 8 of 20 potentially adverse environmental and social impacts and risks. For FC measures with financial intermediaries „FI“ is added as a prefix (see section 4.8).

a.3) FC measures are classified as Category A if they risk having diverse significant adverse impacts and risks on the environment or the social conditions of the affected population. Such impacts and risks may derive from the complex nature of the FC-measure, its scale (large to very large), the sensitivity of the location(s) of the FC-measure, or from the potential impacts and risks being irreversible or unprecedented. Such impacts and risks may affect a larger area that is beyond the site of the facility under construction, the facility itself as well as any associated facilities, or just the FC-measure area in a narrower sense. Therefore, an FC-measure will be classified as Category A if it for example:

- Adversely impacts important sites such as tropical forests, coral reefs, nature reserves, wetlands, natural/near-natural forests, and important cultural heritage sites;
- Has significant transboundary impacts or is of relevance concerning international treaties (such as conventions on international waste management regulations or marine conservation, or agreements on the protection of biodiversity);
- Leads to high consumption of resources, in particular soil, land, or water;
- is associated with high risks to human health or safety (e.g., industry or traffic facilities located adjacent to residential areas with considerable noise pollution and harmful emissions during construction and/or operation or handling hazardous substances);
- Requires large-scale resettlement or leads to a significant loss of livelihood; and/or
- Is anticipated to harm Indigenous peoples

a.4) For Category A FC measures, it is mandatory to analyze and appraise any adverse environmental and social effects as part of an independent Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) study including an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP). The ESMP should describe all measures that need to be taken to avoid, mitigate, offset, and monitor any adverse impacts and risks that have been identified by the ESIA. It should also assign responsibilities for implementing such measures and list the costs involved. For Category A FC measures, KfW Development Bank requires the executing agency to operate an appropriate monitoring system. If the FC measures are run by private operators, they are required to have their own Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) in place. Any such management system must comprise the following elements:

- i. Adequate organizational capacity and competency
- ii. Environmental and social assessment procedures
- iii. Management programmes
- iv. Specific environmental and social training measures
- v. Well-structured relations with the target group
- vi. Monitoring,
- vii. Reporting procedures

a.5) A FC-measure is classified as Category B if it potentially risks having adverse impacts and risks on the environment or the social conditions of those concerned, However, the impacts and risks tend to be less significant than those of Category A FC-measures and can usually be mitigated through standard, best available mitigation approaches (cf. Annex). Typically, the potential impacts and risks of Category B FC measures are limited to a local area, are in most cases reversible, and are easier to mitigate through appropriate measures. For Category B Measures, the need for and the scope, priorities, and depth of an ESIA are determined through a case-by-case evaluation.

a.6) If it is expected that a Category B FC-measure has single significantly adverse environmental and social impacts or risks (Category B+), an ESIA and an ESMP as well as an ESMS adapted to these impacts and risks are required, as described under Category A. July 2024, KfW Development Bank – Sustainability Guideline Page 9 of 20

a.7) FC measures will be classified as Category C if they are expected to have no or only minor adverse environmental and social impacts or risks, and if the implementation and operation of the FC measures do not require any particular protection, compensation, or monitoring measures. Category C FC measures usually do not require any additional analysis within the scope of this Guideline or any further ESDD procedures. Category C FC measures should, however, be monitored for any relevant changes over their life cycle.

a.8) if an FC-measure is to be implemented in an area in which a critical human rights situation is known or expected, or if the project has effects that may result in conflicts that could significantly harm human rights (e.g., resource use conflicts), KfW Development Bank may require a detailed Human Rights Impact Assessment (HRIA) and additional measures aimed at ensuring that human rights are upheld.

b) Environmental and Social Due Diligence: Depending on the results of the screening, a decision is made regarding the extent of the in-depth assessments of possible adverse environmental and social impacts. An in-depth ESDD of adverse environmental and social impacts and risks is obligatory for FC measures categorized as Category A, B+, and B. The executing agency or the funding recipient is responsible for providing the relevant information for the assessment of environmental and social impacts. If required, KfW Development Bank will request the information that is needed for the ESDD from the executing agency and manage the execution of any further investigations. The recommendations of the ESIA are to be written in an action-oriented manner in an ESMP that also includes the required environmental and social monitoring by the executing agency.

c) Mitigation Measures: The ESMP includes specific actions to prevent, minimize, or offset adverse environmental and social impacts. These measures are tailored to the project's unique context and are designed to comply with international standards. The implementation of the mitigation measures identified as a result of the ESDD to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts and risks, as well as – where required – offset measures, will be stipulated as binding for the executing agency in the financing agreements. KfW Development Bank requires regular reports on the implementation, and on corrective actions taken if measures have not been adequately implemented or if the objectives of these measures have not been achieved.

d) Stakeholder Engagement Planning: The guidelines emphasize the importance of involving stakeholders, particularly affected communities, in the planning and implementation phases. This process ensures transparency, addresses concerns, and fosters community support.

e) Monitoring and Reporting: Continuous monitoring of environmental and social impacts is required throughout the project's implementation. Regular reporting to KfW ensures that the ESMP is being effectively implemented and allows for corrective actions if needed.

e) Compliance with International Standards: The guidelines align with international best practices, such as those set by the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation (IFC). This alignment ensures that projects meet globally recognized sustainability standards.

In summary, the KfW ESMP Guidelines provide a comprehensive approach to managing environmental and social risks, ensuring that development projects are sustainable and socially responsible. The KfW ESMP/ESCAP Package provides necessary templates and formats that can be used for the preparation of structured and clear ESMPs/ESCAPs. (AKF Syria will adopt and customize it where applicable).

AKF Syria to comply with the KfW (1.0 Guidance Document for ESMP), will strictly apply the criteria outlined for the Moderate and Lower Risk Projects during implementation in the field. AKF will organize specific orientation sessions for staff on the donor (KfW) guidelines and conduct regular monitoring in the field to enforce the guidelines in all areas from supporting farmers/common interest groups/cooperatives with agricultural inputs, solarization of irrigation water boreholes, greenhouse construction or supporting processing units, working with stakeholders, engaging workers/employees regular or on a contractual basis by AKF or by partners engaged in the project.

3.4.1 Environmental and Social Screening (E&S):

AKF globally and in Syria practice the environmental assessment during the inception phase of the projects. As per the KfW guidance document the project Road to Resilience falls under the category of the Moderate and Lower Risk Projects. In the project, there are no major construction-related activities, but CIGs/Cooperatives will likely entail work such as the installation of greenhouses, minor rehabilitation of storage facilities, and improving aggregation centers/hubs. Also, the installation of household-level gray water treatment units, roof rainwater harvesting, hydroponic units, and precision irrigation.

During the inception of the stated activities, the AKF team will conduct a thorough site assessment and prepare a checklist related to program intervention. The site visit will be looking for safety, environmental, health, labor, and community issues. This will involve both what can be observed directly while walking around the site, but also what is being documented, monitored, and recorded, as available. This will enable the team to make necessary decisions relevant to worker safety, monitoring work conditions, and the risks related to sexual exploitation and abuses.

3.4.1.2 Table-3 E&S Screening Process for the Project Activities:

Category	Activities Description	E&S Instrument
CIGs/Water User Associations Formation and Value Chain Studies		
Category - C	Identify target areas and conduct a rapid assessment to pinpoint the community needs and determine the type of potential CIGs/cooperatives in each target area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simple E&S Screening Checklist
	Mobilize and build community awareness and acceptance of cooperative and CIG models within the targeted governorates.	
	Establish and support the CIGs/cooperatives with the legal and financial Registration procedures in coordination with local authorities, local Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), and community stakeholders.	
	Identify existing and establish new community-based water management Groups and promote best practices for water management.	
	Analyze, implement, and disseminate the agricultural research study on value chains, mapping of current actors' networks, and local market systems.	

Capacity Building/Training and Exposure Visits		
Category - C	Conduct tailor-made organizational capacity building for male and female members of new and existing cooperatives including managerial, technical, and conflict resolution skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple E&S Screening Checklist
	Implement community practice activities including knowledge and exposure visits for selected members from existing and new CIGs/cooperatives.	
	Provide technical training on selected value chains to selected members of CIGs/cooperatives.	
	Train and equip women, youth, and their groups in basic principles of post-harvest handling, cleaning, sorting, and storage.	
	Train and equip women, youth, and their groups in food processing and value addition.	
	Provide business and technical training to targeted men, women, and youth beneficiaries.	
	Enhance operational capacity and value of products for the units operated by CIGs /cooperatives.	
Awareness Sessions for CIGS/Cooperatives/Community		
Category - C	Conduct EORE Awareness Sessions in the targeted program area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple E&S Screening Checklist
	Conduct awareness sessions on the most common livestock diseases, best practices, and breeding (Sheep, cattle, poultry, etc.) and support livestock keepers with basic inputs.	
Provision of Agriculture and Livestock Inputs/Tools/Equipment		
Category - C	Consult with stakeholders to identify and select the appropriate tools and assets For CIGs/cooperatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple E&S Screening Checklist
	Promote the best practices and technologies for CIGs/cooperatives to adopt.	
	Provide quality tools and equipment to existing cooperatives/CIGs to increase access to productive assets and inputs for small-scale cooperative members.	
	Promote the sheep, cattle, and poultry value chains.	
	Support the established CIGs/cooperatives members with basic agriculture and livestock inputs and equipment to boost the value chains.	
	Support livestock keepers by planting pastoral plants in targeted areas. (Salsola And Atriplex).	
Minor Construction/Set up of Agro-processing Units and Storage Facilities		
Category – B	Establish agro-processing units for women and youth interest groups Increase linkages between women and youth, and local agriculture producers, and increase the technical knowledge for women and youth through agricultural apprenticeship and facilitate their access to the local market and financial institutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple E&S Screening Checklist • A simplified ESIA • An ESMP is specific to the project and outlines the
	Set up in conjunction with a microfinance institution a receipt storage scheme for a selection of key commodities.	
	Set up local hubs for aggregation, storage, processing, and access to testing, logistics, and marketing	

		<p>actions required to manage and mitigate identified risks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder Engagement Plan specific for the project on how the stakeholders will be consulted, informed, and involved/engaged in the project Simple ESIA Report
Access to Financial Services		
Category – C	Enhance linkages between financial bodies and agricultural communities and raise awareness about the local financial structure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> E&S Screening Checklist

Note: The Project team will adopt KfW tools/instruments/tools as per the risk category.

3.5. AKF Syria Existing Environment and Social Management Policies, and Instruments:

The Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) ensures that all humanitarian and development projects and activities are implemented in an environmentally sustainable and socially responsible manner. The guidelines serve as a comprehensive tool for identifying, assessing, and managing potential environmental and social impact associated with AKF’s interventions globally and in the country of operations (Syria). The existing practices and instruments employed by AKF Syria are given below:

3.5.2 AKF Safeguarding Policy:

To protect all stakeholders, AKF has a global and in-country Safeguarding Policy, ensuring that all staff, beneficiaries, and community members are protected from exploitation, abuse, and harassment. As per AKF policy, training on safeguarding is mandatory for all relevant staff, vendors/suppliers/ contractors and sub-contractors engaged in the project, and clear reporting mechanisms for safeguarding concerns will be established. The project team, relevant contractors/suppliers/consultants will strictly follow it in the field during the implementation of the KfW-funded Road to Resilience Project. AKF’s Safeguarding Policy is annexed herewith to the report.

3.5.3 AKF Gender Equality and Sexual Exploitation and Abuses (SEA) Prevention Plan:

AKF already has a global and in-country (localized) gender policy. For the KfW Road to Resilience Project, AKF will formulate a customized Gender and SEA Action Plan that outlines specific measures to promote gender equality in all project activities. This plan will ensure that women and men have equal access to project resources and opportunities and that gender considerations are integrated into decision-making processes. AKF will also provide targeted support for female-headed households, recognizing their unique challenges. To prevent and respond to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA), AKF will implement comprehensive measures, including training for staff and community members, establishing safe spaces for women and girls, and providing access to support services for the survivors.

3.5.4 Signing Code of Conduct Staff, Vendors/Contractors/Sub-Contractors:

AKF already has a Code of Conduct (CoC) for the project staff, vendors/contractors/sub-contractors AKF will customize the Code of Conduct for the KfW Road to Resilience incorporating the environmental and social management compliances that sets clear expectations for the behavior of all project staff and vendors/contractors/sub-contractors. The Code of Conduct (CoC) will emphasize respect for local cultures, prohibit harassment and discrimination, and mandate adherence to ESHS standards. Enforcement will be strict, with disciplinary actions for violations, up to and including termination of employment.

The above-outlined policies/guidelines/codes of conduct are part of AKF's broader commitment to sustainable development, ensuring that its interventions contribute positively to both people and the planet.

Note: The Road to Resilience Project team will adopt the **KfW ESMP/ESCOP Guidance – Code of Conduct**

3.6 Concurrent Policies and Instruments:

The ESMF/ESMP has been prepared considering national, regional, and international laws and conventions. Similarly, the project will be harmonizing the existing procedures and instruments with those of KfW. Though AKF Syria has its policies, procedures, and instruments in place, it will tailor instruments to harmonize with those of KfW. However, the adoption and tailoring of instruments will not affect the organizational policies of AKF Syria such as organizational policies like Human Resources, Gender and Safeguarding, and procurement of AKF Syria have application at the global level and to international standards.

4. Gaps Analysis Syrian Environmental and Social Management (ESM) laws:

Analyzing the gaps in Syrian Environmental and Social Management (ESM) laws involves examining various aspects such as Environmental and Social (E&S) assessments, permits, stakeholder engagement, labor and working conditions, and gender considerations. The gaps can be evaluated based on international standards and best practices, such as those set by institutions like the World Bank, the International Labor Organization (ILO), and other globally recognized environmental and social guidelines.

4.1 Table 4 Key Areas and Gaps Analysis:

Key Areas	Gaps Identified
Environmental and Social Assessment and Permits	Syria's ESM laws are often outdated and do not fully align with international standards, such as the World Bank Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) or the IFC Performance Standards. The legal framework lacks a comprehensive system for E&S risk assessment, especially in high-impact sectors.
	The requirements for conducting Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) and Social Impact Assessments (SIAs) are not clearly defined or strictly enforced. There is often limited guidance on the methodologies and criteria for these assessments, which can lead to inconsistent or inadequate evaluations.
	The process of obtaining environmental permits/approvals is often bureaucratic and lacks transparency. There are limited checks and balances to ensure compliance with permit conditions, and enforcement mechanisms are generally weak. The lack of monitoring and enforcement results in poor implementation of E&S requirements.
	Syrian ESM laws lack provisions for meaningful stakeholder engagement during project planning and implementation. Public consultations are either not required or are poorly organized, with minimal participation from affected communities or vulnerable groups.

Stakeholder Engagement and Involvement	The concept of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC): (FPIC), which ensures that affected communities, particularly Indigenous and vulnerable populations, are adequately informed and have the right to approve or reject projects, is not well-integrated into the legal framework.
	There are significant gaps in the requirements for disclosing information to stakeholders. Often, relevant project information is not made available to the public in a timely or accessible manner, which limits the ability of communities to engage in meaningful dialogue.
Labor and Working Conditions	The enforcement of labor laws in Syria, particularly concerning working conditions, health and safety, and workers' rights, is often weak. The ESM laws do not provide sufficient protection against forced labor, child labor, or other forms of exploitation.
	A significant portion of the workforce in Syria operates in the informal sector, which is largely unregulated. ESM laws do not adequately address the rights and conditions of these informal workers, leaving them vulnerable to unsafe working conditions and unfair treatment.
	The absence of formal mechanisms for workers to raise grievances or report issues related to labor conditions. Without these mechanisms, workers have limited recourse for addressing violations or disputes.
Gender Aspects	Syrian ESM laws lack specific provisions for integrating gender considerations into project planning and implementation. There are no requirements for gender analysis or the development of gender-sensitive action plans.
	Women's participation in decision-making processes related to E&S assessments and project development is minimal. The laws do not mandate inclusive consultation processes that actively engage women and address their specific needs and concerns.
	There is insufficient focus on preventing gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual harassment in the workplace and within project areas. Syrian laws do not have strong protections or response mechanisms for addressing these issues, which are critical in ensuring safe working environments for all.

4.2 Recommendations for the Road to Resilience Project:

To enhance the implementation of the KfW Project and achieve better Environmental and Social Management (ESM) and sustainability outcomes, it is recommended to go beyond compliance with local Syrian laws and policies by adopting international standards, conventions, guidelines, and best practices.

1. Adoption of the World Bank Environmental and Social Standards (ESS):

The World Bank's Environmental and Social Standards (ESS) include ten standards designed to ensure that projects are implemented in a socially and environmentally responsible manner. These standards aim to avoid, reduce, or mitigate unforeseen risks. It is highly recommended that the project adopts and applies all relevant Environmental and Social Standards, as outlined in Table 1.

2. Adoption of the Core ILO Conventions:

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has established a set of core conventions addressing fundamental labor standards and human rights at work. It is advised that the project complies with all eight core ILO conventions, as detailed in Table 2, to protect and promote labor rights effectively.

3. Compliance with KfW ESM Guidance Documents and Instruments:

In addition to adhering to national environmental and social management laws, the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) Syria must also align with the environmental and social guidelines provided by KfW. The KfW Environmental and Social Management (ESM) guidance documents, along with the Environmental and Social Code of Practice (ES COP) package, are designed to assist the Project Executing Agency (PEA)—AKF in this case—in identifying and documenting project-specific environmental and social risks and impacts. They also provide clear instructions on implementing suitable risk mitigation measures to ensure the sustainability of project outcomes.

4. Implementation of AKF Safeguarding and Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) Policies:

The Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) is committed to carrying out all humanitarian and development activities in an environmentally sustainable and socially responsible manner. It is crucial to adopt and implement AKF's safeguarding policy and Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) to prevent sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment of both staff and community members involved in the project.

5. Institutional Arrangements for the Implementation of the ESMF:

5.1 Role of the Executing Agency Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) Syria:

The role of Aga Khan Foundation Syria (AKF) as an Executing Agency (EA) has a key role in the implementation of an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP). In addition to its environmental protection and social management policy/Guidelines/SOPs, AKF Syria will enforce the local Syrian Environmental Protection and Social Management Laws and Regulations (where applicable), and the donor (KfW) will provide comprehensive guidance on the Environmental Protection and Social Management during the project lifecycle. AKF Syria will take all necessary actions to mitigate, manage, and monitor the environmental and social impacts of the project. As an executing agency, AKF Syria holds significant responsibilities to ensure that the ESMP is effectively executed. The details on the role of the AKF as Executing Agency are:

- AKF will recruit and deploy a multi-disciplinary ESHS team composed of a dedicated ESHS Officer, experts in environmental protection (environmentalist), social safeguards/gender, and health and safety. This team will conduct day-to-day monitoring, regular site inspections, and periodic audits/reviews and provide technical guidance to ensure that all activities align with the EMMP. The ESHS team will coordinate closely with the relevant program staff and departments within AKF to track the ESMP progress in terms of implementation of activities to achieve the intended outcomes/results. A training and capacity plan will be developed to implement the EMF provisions and included as an annex to the ESMF.
- **Oversee the implementation of the Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP)**, and regularly review and monitor the activities in the field to see the progress towards the intended results.
- **Agricultural Inputs Packages, Water Irrigation Projects, or Installation of Greenhouses:** AKF Syria will align all agricultural inputs packages, water irrigation projects, and greenhouses with the AKF and KfW ESP guidelines. AKF throughout the project lifecycle will discourage the application of chemical fertilizers/pesticides and promote organic compost and alternatives to pesticides. The project will also refer to existing local Syrian laws related to agricultural activities particularly the construction or installation of greenhouses, aggregation hubs, and processing centers.
- **Initial Environment Examination (IEEs), and Environmental Risk Screening (ERS).** As part of its commitment to sustainable development, AKF will categorize the risk and then conduct a thorough Environmental Risk Screening (ERS) (where required) in the light of the guidance document/ESMP. Guidelines provided by KfW will be modified to include environmental screenings through different phases of the project, and regular monitoring to ensure that any new risks identified are adequately managed. These assessments will identify potential environmental risks, such as soil erosion, water contamination, and biodiversity loss, and will inform the development of mitigation measures.
- **AKF will continuously monitor activities to ensure compliance with the ESM.** This includes ensuring that environmental regulations, social safeguards, and health and safety standards are strictly followed. AKF will prepare periodic reports on ESMP implementation status and share them with stakeholders, donors (KfW), regulatory authorities (where applicable), and the community. In addition, an environmental management and monitoring plan will be developed as part of this step, and a responsible focal point will be identified for managing risks and monitoring that the mitigations are taking place.
- **AKF will engage with regulatory Authorities** to acquire approvals where required to ensure that all necessary environmental and social permits and approvals are obtained before the commencement of

project activities. Additionally, AKF will liaise with regulatory authorities to ensure the project complies with all national, local environmental, and social regulations.

- **AKF will facilitate audits and inspections** conducted by the donor (KfW) or the regulatory authorities to ensure that the project remains in compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.
- **AKF will maintain strong communication with stakeholders** throughout the project lifecycle. This involves regular updates on ESMP implementation, responding to stakeholder concerns, and involving them in decision-making processes.
- **AKF will establish a Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM)** to address concerns and grievances raised by affected communities or other stakeholders regarding the environmental and social impacts of the project in a timely fashion. All grievances will be properly documented.
- **AKF oversees the closure of the project** by managing the environmental and social management activities once the project is completed. This includes ensuring that all temporary impacts are restored, and any residual impacts documented and shared with the donor (KfW).

In summary, the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) Syria is central to the successful implementation of the ESMP, serving as the link between project design and on-the-ground activities.

5.2 The Ministry of Local Administration and Environment in Syria plays a crucial role in:

- Reviewing and approving the ERS/IEE Reports.
- Developing and implementing policies and regulations that support sustainable agricultural practices and environmental protection.
- Coordinating between various government agencies, local authorities, and international organizations to ensure that agriculture projects are aligned with national goals and standards.
- Providing technical expertise and resources to enhance agricultural productivity and address environmental concerns.
- Overseeing the progress and impact of agriculture projects to ensure they meet their objectives and comply with environmental regulations.

5.3 Role of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor in Syria plays a crucial role in:

- Formulating the labor laws/policies implementing and overseeing labor laws and regulations to ensure fair labor practices, working conditions, and employee rights.
- Developing and administering social welfare programs aimed at improving the quality of life for vulnerable populations, including children, the elderly, and disabled individuals.
- Facilitating job placement services, vocational training, and employment support to enhance workforce skills and reduce unemployment.
- Formulating and executing labor and social affairs policies, including initiatives to promote economic development and social justice.
- Working with other governmental bodies, NGOs, and international organizations to address social issues and enhance labor market conditions.

These functions will help to create a balanced and supportive environment for both workers and employers while addressing various social challenges within the country.

5.4 Role of Farmer CIGs/Cooperatives is crucial in the Implementation of the Project:

Farmers' Common Interest Groups (CIGs) have a crucial role in environmental and social management within agricultural projects. The following are the key roles and responsibilities of CIG/Cooperatives:

- Actively engaged in project field activities, including program activities related to the production, processing, and marketing of agricultural and livestock products.
- Promote the development of priority Value Chains by addressing key issues like access to quality inputs, extension services, economy of scale, and market linkages.
- Promote and facilitate the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices, such as regenerative agriculture to minimize environmental impact.
- Provide stewardship of local natural resources by implementing practices like water conservation, soil erosion control, preservation of biodiversity, and sustainable land use and management.
- Participate in monitoring the environmental indicators and evaluating the impact of agricultural practices on local ecosystems.
- Promote learning and innovation by sharing knowledge, experiences, and best practices to educate other peer farmers on environmentally sustainable agriculture and livestock practices.
- Serve as a platform for community members to voice their concerns and suggestions, fostering a collaborative and inclusive environment for project implementation.
- Mediate and resolve conflicts related to resource use or project impacts, promoting social cohesion.
- Ensure that all members of the community, including marginalized groups, benefit from the project and have a voice in decision-making processes.
- Provide valuable feedback to the project team about the social and environmental impacts of the project, helping to make necessary adjustments and mitigate risks.

In summary, farmer Common Interest Groups can act as intermediaries to bridge the gap between individual farmers and larger project goals, ensuring that environmental and social considerations are effectively integrated into agricultural projects.

6. ESHS Management Structure for Implementation of the ESH Framework:

The Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), as a Project Executing Agency (PEA), is fully committed to ensuring the highest standards of Environmental, Social, Health, and Safety (ESHS) management throughout the implementation of the "Road to Resilience" project.

6.1 AKF Syria will Develop Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP):

AKF Syria will develop a detailed ESMP aligning with the ESMF and allocate significant resources/budget to execute the plan, training of the relevant staff/contractors on ESMP, and Stakeholders coordination and engagement. AKF has recently acquired an in-house environmental expert trained in EMS who will be engaged in this process.

6.2 Establish ESHS Management Structure with AKF Syria:

AKF Syria will establish an ESHS Management Structure/unit to oversee the Execution of the Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP). This includes ensuring that the AKF staff, CIGs/cooperatives, consultants/contractors/sub-contractors adhere to environmental and social standards during project execution. To achieve the intended results/ standards of Environmental, Social, Health, and Safety (ESHS), AKF Syria will deploy a dedicated ESHS Officer, safeguarding, and gender capacities in the project management team. A dedicated team will be responsible for overseeing the execution of the ESMP aligning with the ESMF. The team will work in close collaboration with the Senior Management

Team (SMT) of AKF Syria, local authorities, and community representatives to ensure that all ESHS requirements are met.

6.2.1 Table 5: Roles and Responsibilities of the ESHS Management Structure:

Senior Management	Program Manager/Project Coordinator	ESHS Officer and Team
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide leadership, allocate resources, and ensure that ESHS commitments are integrated into the organization’s strategic goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that ESHS standards are applied to project activities and that project-specific ESHS plans are developed and followed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversee the implementation of the ESMP aligning with the ESHS Framework, coordinating with focal points, and reporting to senior management.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They are responsible for developing and endorsing ESHS policies and ensuring they are aligned with legal requirements, standards, and best practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set performance metrics, review ESHS performance, and drive continuous improvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversee the identification, assessment/baselines, and mitigation of ESHS risks.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster a culture of safety and environmental responsibility across the organization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overseeing the financial aspects of programs, including budgeting, forecasting, and financial reporting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate with stakeholders, including employees, regulators, and the public, regarding ESHS matters.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior management sets the tone for ESHS practices by establishing a clear vision and commitment to these principles. Their leadership is vital in integrating ESHS considerations into the organization’s strategic goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building and maintaining relationships with stakeholders such as government agencies, community organizations, and funding bodies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide training and support to employees on ESHS practices and regulations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure adherence to ESHS regulations and standards, and lead audits and inspections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leading and managing a team, including hiring, training, and providing ongoing support and supervision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate incidents, accidents, and near-misses to determine causes and recommend corrective actions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for communicating ESHS goals, achievements, and challenges to internal and external stakeholders, ensuring transparency and accountability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparing reports for internal and external stakeholders and communicating program progress and outcomes effectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversee and enhance workplace health and safety programs to ensure a safe working environment.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the effectiveness of ESHS programs and initiatives, making necessary adjustments to improve performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributing to the strategic direction of the organization by aligning ESHS programs with broader organizational goals and priorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain accurate records and reports of ESHS activities, incidents, and compliance status.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior management will be communicating with KfW about issues about policy and strategic guidance of the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate and flag to SMT related to the implementation of project activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MERL and the program team will maintain a database of indicators specific to interface between activities and environmental dimensions.

7. Environmental and Social Baseline:

To establish a foundation for understanding the current environmental, social, and cultural conditions in the project area, AKF will conduct the baseline survey of the ORoad to Resilience Project. The baseline will cover key environmental and social aspects/indicators. This baseline will guide future interventions, ensure compliance with environmental and social standards, and mitigate potential adverse impacts. The baseline survey will cover the following key aspects:

7.1 Environmental Aspects to Cover in Baseline Survey:

- Natural Environment:** Assess the existing state of the natural surroundings, including land use, soil quality, and ecosystems. This will identify areas of high environmental value that may be sensitive to change due to project activities.
- Climate Change:** Evaluate local climate patterns, including rainfall, temperature ranges, and any vulnerabilities to climate change. This helps in planning for climate resilience and adapting project activities to local weather and long-term climate trends.
- Agriculture (Fertilizers/Pesticides Impact):** Examine agricultural practices in the area, with a focus on the use of fertilizers and pesticides. The impact of these chemicals on soil health, water bodies, and local biodiversity will be assessed to inform sustainable agricultural practices in the project area.
- Land Topography:** Understand the area's topographical features, including elevation, slopes, and natural formations. This can influence project planning, especially in areas related to infrastructure development, erosion control, and water management.
- Impact on Biodiversity (Flora and Fauna):** Study the biodiversity of the project area, identifying key plant and animal species, especially those that may be endangered or sensitive to habitat disturbance. This helps protect ecosystems while ensuring that project interventions do not harm local biodiversity.
- Water Resources:** Assess the availability, quality, and management of water resources such as rivers, lakes, and groundwater. Ensuring the sustainability of water usage is critical for agricultural productivity and for the needs of local communities.

7.2 Socio-Economic and Cultural Aspects to Cover in the Baseline Survey:

- Demographics:** Document the population structure, including age, gender, and household sizes, to understand the community's composition and plan for inclusive project benefits.

- **Gender Issues:** Identify gender roles and dynamics within the community, including women’s access to resources, participation in decision-making, and economic opportunities. This ensures the project addresses gender inequalities and promotes gender equity.
- **Persons with Disabilities (PWDs):** Assess the inclusion and access of PWDs in community life, services, and employment. The project should consider their needs to ensure interventions are inclusive and accessible for all.
- **Work Conditions:** Review the local labor practices, working conditions, and rights of workers. Understanding these conditions helps ensure that the project upholds fair labor standards and prevents exploitation.
- **Livelihoods:** Study the local economy, key sources of income, and employment trends. This helps the project identify opportunities to enhance livelihoods and reduce poverty in the area.
- **Health, and Safety:** Examine the health conditions of the population, including access to healthcare services, prevalent diseases, and safety issues. This informs how the project can support improved health outcomes and address potential health and safety risks linked to project activities.

The environmental and social aspects are intertwined with the program activities. Therefore, it is recommended to incorporate these dimensions within the overall baseline of the project so that a synthesized perspective of the project can be attained.

In summary, the baseline survey will provide a comprehensive overview of the environmental and socio-economic landscape in the project area. This will enable the project to plan and implement interventions that are sensitive to local conditions, environmentally sustainable, and socially inclusive. The baseline finding will provide indicators for data collection, process monitoring, and reporting.

8. Environmental and Social Impacts, Risks and Mitigation Measures:

At the stage of proposal development, AKF Syria carried out the preliminary assessment of potential environmental and social risks associated with project activities. The ESMF emphasis is on considering all factors throughout the project lifecycle that may adversely impact the environment, communities, and overall sustainability of the Project “Road to Resilience”.

Key Potential Risks to the Road to Resilience Project are outlined below:

8.1 Risk of Conflict Escalation and Access to Program Area:

The fragile socio-economic and security situation in Syria poses several challenges in accessing program areas, particularly in the regions of Hama, Homs, Aleppo, Rural Damascus, and As-Suwayda, where the Road to Resilience project will be implemented. Political instability, ongoing conflict shifting dynamics among various actors, and several regional factors have led to instability, making the security environment unpredictable.

The risk of conflict escalation remains a significant concern due to ongoing military activities, periodic clashes, and the presence of various armed groups. Tensions between government forces, opposition groups, and other non-state actors continue to create a volatile environment that could impact both the safety of personnel and the project's implementation. In addition, the increasing tensions in the region tend to spill over into Syria, thus affecting wider activities.

Access to these areas may also be hindered by roadblocks, checkpoints, and restrictions imposed by different controlling authorities, each with its regulations and demands. In the current context, coordination with local authorities, humanitarian agencies, and community leaders will be essential to facilitate access and ensure the safety of staff and beneficiaries. The complex and fragmented control of territories by

different groups makes movement in and out of program areas difficult, requiring a thorough understanding of the local security situation.

Ongoing economic challenges, worsened by the conflict, have strained local communities. This has led to increased reliance on humanitarian assistance, including agricultural interventions, which are important for food security and livelihood restoration. In Syria, despite these challenges, there is significant potential for positive impact if the program can be implemented with careful consideration of security risks, access constraints, and local dynamics.

AKF Syria will conduct a thorough risk assessment and prepare a contingency plan essential to mitigate the potential disruptions caused by conflict and to ensure the continuity of the program, and outreach to targeted farmers. AKF Syria will continuously monitor the political and military developments in these areas, as sudden escalations could risk access and the overall success of the project. The project should adopt a flexible project implementation approach, strong local partnerships with CIGs/Cooperatives and other existing community structures and contingency strategies will be key to navigating these risks and ensuring the program reaches the communities in need.

8.2 Risk of Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) in the field:

Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) in Conflict-Affected Governorates of Syria - particularly in Hama, Homs, Aleppo, Rural Damascus, and Sweida - poses severe risks to farmers and rural communities. UXOs, including bombs, shells, grenades, landmines, and other debris left behind from military activities continue to endanger lives and livelihoods. Farmers face immediate physical threats, such as injury or death, while children and livestock are also at risk. Fear of UXOs limits access to farmland, leading to income loss, food insecurity, and abandoned land.

In addition to these risks, there are psychological, social, and environmental consequences. Explosions disrupt soil, prevent mechanized farming, and exacerbate displacement and stress among affected populations. UXO clearance efforts require very technical capacities and are expensive and time-consuming, and the lack of awareness among farmers increases the likelihood of accidental exposure. The long-term economic impact is profound, with reduced agricultural output, reliance on external aid, and delays in post-conflict recovery.

To address these challenges, comprehensive solutions are needed. UXO clearance, risk education, and close coordination between local communities, humanitarian organizations, and international demining operations are crucial.

In line with KfW guidelines, the Road to Resilience Project will develop a thorough Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) program to mitigate the risks posed by UXOs to targeted farmers, staff, and communities. The strategy will include training project staff in EORE and Explosive Ordnance Risk Assessment, identifying and assessing program locations, and conducting detailed awareness campaigns. Enhanced coordination with UNMAS and other organizations involved in UXO clearance and community education will further strengthen efforts to minimize associated risks throughout the project lifecycle.

Note: The Project team is to adopt the KfW: *(ESMP/ESCOP Guidance Annex D – UXO Clearance Form for all locations during the EORE Sessions and prepare the final list)*

8.3 Risks Related to Agriculture Climate Change and Environment:

The project in Hama, Homs, Aleppo, Rural Damascus, and As-Suwayda, is confronted with numerous agricultural and environmental risks. Drought, heatwave, and water scarcity are the major issues, particularly in Homs, Hama, and Aleppo, where long-standing droughts have already strained irrigation systems and diminished crop yields. Additionally, soil degradation due to over-exploitation and conflict

has resulted in reduced fertility, necessitating rehabilitation measures like crop rotation and the use of organic inputs. The rapid desertification, particularly the Road to Resilience Project targeted Governorates Hama, Homs, Aleppo, Tartous, Rural Damascus, and As-Suwayda, remains a concern due to unsustainable agricultural practices, deforestation, and climate change. Local biodiversity is under threat from deforestation, overgrazing, and urban expansion, putting additional pressure on the region's ecosystem.

Agricultural risks are further compounded by disruptions in the supply chain, with conflict significantly affecting the availability of essential inputs like seeds, fertilizers, and equipment. Infrastructure damage, including irrigation systems, storage facilities, and transport networks, presents a barrier to restoring agricultural productivity and accessing markets. Moreover, the weakened state of ecosystems has led to increased vulnerability to pest and disease outbreaks, while a lack of veterinary services threatens livestock health. The region also faces market volatility, driven by political instability and fluctuating prices for both agricultural inputs and outputs, which undermines the economic sustainability of farming activities.

Socio-economic and policy risks include legal uncertainty surrounding land tenure, particularly in conflict-affected areas, which could complicate farmers' access to land and create disputes with displaced populations. The weak enforcement of environmental regulations and policies in post-conflict Syria presents challenges to combating environmental degradation and promoting sustainable agriculture. The region also struggles with energy access, as damage to infrastructure and fuel shortages hinder agricultural processing and transportation.

Climate change poses additional risks, with rising temperatures threatening to reduce crop productivity and increase water demand, especially in Aleppo and As-Suwayda. The region is also vulnerable to extreme weather events such as extreme hot/cold and unprecedented rains, which could cause severe damage to both crops and infrastructure.

Mitigation measures include the development of drought-resilient irrigation systems and the promotion of water-efficient technologies to address water scarcity. Soil rehabilitation efforts, such as implementing crop rotation, increasing organic matter inputs, and using erosion control measures, help restore soil fertility. To combat desertification requires sustainable land management practices, including reforestation and controlled grazing. The project will invest in conservation initiatives and promote sustainable agricultural practices to address biodiversity loss.

Strengthening agricultural supply chains through local production of inputs, rehabilitating critical infrastructure, and enhancing veterinary and pest control services will be essential. Market risks can be mitigated by diversifying income sources and enhancing access to regional and international markets. Addressing land tenure issues will require coordination with local authorities to ensure clarity and equity in land access. Improving energy access could be supported by investing in renewable energy sources such as solar power, which would help sustain agricultural production in the face of fuel shortages. Finally, climate adaptation strategies, such as developing climate-resilient crop varieties and improving early warning systems for extreme weather events will be crucial in building resilience against climate change.

8.4 Risks Related to Sexual Exploitation and Abuses, Labor Rights Violation and Exclusion:

The document outlines risk and mitigation measures related to sexual exploitation and abuse, labor rights violations, forced labor, and gender inequalities. To address sexual exploitation and harassment, it suggests implementing strict anti-harassment policies, providing regular training, establishing a confidential reporting mechanism, and conducting background checks. To protect labor rights and against child labor, it recommends enforcing child labor laws, partnering with local organizations for monitoring, offering education and alternatives to affected children, and educating employers. To combat forced labor, it advises implementing anti-forced labor policies, ensuring transparency in contracts and conditions, monitoring workplaces, and collaborating with local authorities.

For the mitigation of the risk of gender equality, it suggests creating transparent resource distribution systems, involving community representatives in decision-making, regularly assessing resource allocation, and promoting inclusivity. These measures aim to foster a safer and more equitable environment for all involved (men, women, and PWDs).

8.5 Potential Health Risks due to exposure to Chemical/Fertilizers/Pesticides:

Agriculture projects can present various health risks. The possible exposure to fertilizers, chemicals, and pesticides is a primary concern, as these substances may lead to health problems for farmers, seasonal workers, and local communities. Additionally, such exposure can negatively affect local biodiversity. Another significant risk is waterborne diseases, which can arise from contaminated or stagnant water, potentially harming individuals who encounter or consume the affected water.

To mitigate these risks, implementing protective measures is crucial. The project will discourage chemical fertilizers/pesticides and will not include any of these in the agricultural support package. Additionally, AKF will train farmers on climate-smart agricultural practices and orient farmers/CIGs to adopt safer handling practices, provide personal protective equipment (where applicable), and offer training on safe use. Regular monitoring and testing of water sources can prevent contamination and reduce the risk of waterborne diseases. Integrating environmentally friendly practices and promoting biodiversity conservation can also mitigate adverse effects on the ecosystem.

8.6 Risks Related to Gender, and inequalities related to PWDs:

Women and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in particular face obstacles when accessing critical agricultural resources like land, credit, or training, limiting their ability to fully engage in and benefit from agricultural projects. Women may experience an increased workload due to agricultural duties, which can negatively impact their productivity and well-being.

To mitigate these challenges, efforts should focus on ensuring equal access to resources. Tailored training programs should be developed to meet the specific needs of women and PWDs, equipping them with the skills and knowledge necessary to access and use resources effectively. Inclusive policies must be advocated for, promoting equal access to land and credit, while also working with local authorities and financial institutions to create programs that serve all individuals. Additionally, assistive technologies should be provided to PWDs to help them overcome barriers in agricultural activities.

Addressing workload disparities is equally important. Support services such as childcare, household assistance, or labor-saving technologies can help alleviate the burden on women. Encouraging equitable distribution of agricultural tasks within households and communities can also reduce disparities, possibly through cooperative or community-based initiatives. Raising awareness of the specific challenges women face in agriculture and advocating for supportive policies are key to fostering a more inclusive agricultural environment. By implementing these measures agricultural projects can improve the participation and productivity of women and PWDs creating a more inclusive and equitable agricultural sector.

8.7 Potential Risks/Impact on Farmers' Resilience:

The risk of relying on imported seeds, fertilizers, or pesticides includes potential supply chain disruptions, price volatility, and quality issues. To address this, measures include diversifying by developing and promoting local alternatives, building capacity through training local farmers in sustainable and self-reliant practices and investing in local production facilities for seeds and fertilizers. Also, under the project establishing the community-based seeds bank is one of the activities that will be implemented to improve farmers' access to quality inputs, like seeds.

Additionally, a potential impact/risk is that the aid could increase farmers'/CIGs' dependency on donors/INGOs/NGOs. AKF Syria will integrate a sustainability plan throughout the project lifecycle to

ensure continuity of benefits after formal exit. The plan should include concrete measures/steps on improving the Organizational Capacity of Farmers/CIGs, linkages with key stakeholders and market players, exploring new markets, and improving agriculture infrastructure in and around targeted value chains to increase the resilience of farmers/CIGs and continuity of benefits. It will contribute to a gradual reduction in dependence on aid.

Another significant risk is the erosion of traditional agricultural knowledge, which can undermine community resilience and sustainability. To mitigate this, efforts should focus on documenting and preserving traditional practices, integrating these methods with modern agricultural practices where advantageous, and engaging local communities in project planning and implementation to ensure their knowledge is valued and utilized effectively.

9. Grievance Redressal Mechanism (GRM):

9.1 Concept and Definition:

Grievances are concerns, problems, or complaints that beneficiaries and stakeholders raise with AKF. A grievance can be defined as a situation where the stakeholders feel that they are being treated unfairly and can substantiate it with objective and transparent facts, documents, witnesses, evidence, etc. It is the right of every stakeholder to express a grievance and to seek redress. According to the World Bank “grievance mechanisms provide a way to reduce risk for projects, offer communities an effective avenue for expressing concerns and achieving remedies, and promote a mutually constructive relationship.”³ It outlines the following characteristics of a well-functioning grievance mechanism:

- Provides a predictable, transparent, and credible process to all parties, resulting in outcomes that are seen as fair, effective, and lasting.
- Builds trust as an integral component of broader community relations activities.
- Enables more systematic identification of emerging issues and trends, facilitating corrective action and pre-emptive engagement.

9.2 Grievance Redress System (GRS):

AKF in Syria is implementing a complaint and feedback mechanism in its different projects. It is managed by the Complaint team which is responsible for receiving complaints through different modalities such as hotline calls, and complaint boxes distributed in offices which are monitored until the case is closed by taking the appropriate actions and using a referrals system. The team is composed of males and females taking into consideration social norms as there are women who would prefer only talking with another woman. Field monitors who conduct regular visits to the places where the activities are implemented, ensure compliance in different aspects of timing and quality.

9.3 Grievance Procedure:

Grievance mechanisms are put in place so as not to obstruct engagement with communities and project implementation. On the contrary, the grievance procedure is introduced to the organization for good community engagement strategies or management–employee communication programs that result in improved relationships with employees or communities. They are an essential component of projects that are respectful of the rights of those affected by project design and implementation, reducing risk and contributing to long-term support for activities.

³ [*World Bank. A Guide to Designing and Implementing Grievance Mechanisms for Development Projects. The Office of the Compliance Advisor/Ombudsman. 2008.*](#)

9.3.1 Steps of grievance procedure:

The project team will set other supportive feedback mechanisms to receive feedback and complaints from beneficiaries, staff/workers, and other stakeholders. These mechanisms will include complaint boxes in project locations, a dedicated communication/calling team (Help Desks), and regular meetings/group discussions with the beneficiaries, staff/workers, and stakeholders – when needed.

The complaint boxes and the communication team will receive complaints from AKF staff/workers, beneficiaries/farmers/CIGs/Cooperatives, and other stakeholders. The GRM team updates the information regularly and then delivers it to the relevant program team (if related to the program) or to the safeguarding focal point (if sensitive complaints related to harassment/abuses/exploitation) to be processed and addressed.

The distribution of inputs/equipment/tools and processes will also be monitored using feedback assessments conducted during and after distribution to measure the level of satisfaction of beneficiaries about the aid type, modality, and distribution process. This will be used to address issues and enhance service delivery. All teams will have a working mobile number for communication, following up on cases, and inquiring about services, and numbers will be made available and announced during the provision of services.

Several types of complaints may be dealt with:

a) Programmatic Complaints/Grievances, these complaints related to:

- Potential damage resulting from the implementation of project activities.
- Complaints related to the mechanism for selecting project beneficiaries.

In the case of programmatic complainants, the complainant could submit his complaint via several Complaints and Feedback Mechanisms (CFM) such as complaint boxes distributed in the offices, via the hotline, or through personal interviews with the team's employees, or they may submit complaints orally in person if they prefer. The team must collect complaints, document them, and begin remediation procedures within a maximum of one week.

b) Safeguarding/ PSEA complaints:

- Beneficiaries/farmers/CIGs/Cooperative complaints related to harassment/abuses and exploitation
- AKF Staff/workers' complaints of harassment/abuse and exploitation

If the subject of the complaint is related to Safeguarding/PSEA issues, a separate 'Speak Up' standard of procedures (SOPs) will be applied to ensure high-level confidentiality, priority, and robust protection for complainants. Accordingly, collected/received complaints will be delivered directly to the safeguarding focal point to be dealt with according to AKF Speak Up SOPs which are implemented in compliance with AKF Safeguarding standards and principles including AKF Zero Tolerance principle and Survivor-Centred Approach. Note that the Speak-Up policy is part of the AKDN-wide Safeguarding Manual, to which all AKDN agencies (of which AKF is part) must adhere.

Both types of Complaints /Grievances must be fully followed up / Investigated, and appropriate action must be taken at the earliest opportunity.

About **programmatic complaints**, if a complainant or affected party has a grievance and remains dissatisfied following informal discussions with the project manager, or with the other party involved in the grievance or with the mediation, the complainant may raise their grievance formally:

- The relevant officer must assign an employee from the team to deal with the complaint submitted by the communities or beneficiaries and ensure the procedures are followed in the process of dealing with the problem.

- The person conducting the grievance hearing will respond to the complainant either at the end of the meeting (if appropriate), or within seven working days of the hearing stating the outcome in writing.
- The complainant will have the right to appeal against the outcome if they are not satisfied and should do so in writing within the following seven working days of reception enclosing a copy of their original grievance and stating why they are dissatisfied with the outcome of the first hearing.
- The appointed person responsible for the hearing will make any further required investigations and communicate the final decision to the relevant parties within seven working days of a second hearing.
- All previous stages must be documented and reported to the project manager
- If the complainant is still not satisfied following the second appeal hearing, they should write to the Human Resource Management (HRM) within seven days of the appeal hearing enclosing a copy of their original grievance and stating why they are dissatisfied with the outcomes of the original and second appeal hearings.
- The HRM shall settle the case with the Senior Management Team (SMT). This is the final stage of the internal grievance procedure and the decision of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) alongside the SMT shall be considered final.
- If a complainant is found to have raised a grievance with malicious intent, they should not be eligible to benefit from the project.
- The donor will be informed of issues that are complex or affect project implementation along with actions taken.

9.3.2 If a Grievance is Upheld:

If after investigation the grievance is substantiated, the Human Resource (HR) Department will take appropriate disciplinary action as per AKF Disciplinary Policy.

AKF will protect its employees and beneficiaries who raise a grievance or take part in an investigation from intimidation, victimization, or discrimination. Retaliation against someone who has raised a grievance will be treated as a serious disciplinary offense.

9.3.3 If a Grievance is Not Upheld:

If an employee or beneficiary raises a grievance that is not upheld, AKF recognizes that this can affect working relationships and will work with both parties to maintain the relationship. The complainant will be expected to cooperate and continue to work normally. Mediation may be used to help in restoring normal working relationships.

If a complainant objects that, upon investigation, proves to have been with malicious intent, they will become the subject of disciplinary proceedings, and this could result in their involvement with the project being terminated.

9.3.4 Mediation:

The HR-designated member responsible for Grievance Procedures and Mediation will act as the mediator to support the resolution of the grievance issues before it is necessary to invoke a formal procedure. If the HR-designated member is a part of the grievance, the CEO will appoint a member of the SMT for this particular purpose. Mediation is a voluntary internal process where the mediator helps two or more people in dispute to attempt to reach an agreement. The mediator is not there to judge, to say one person is right and the other wrong, or to tell those involved in the mediation what they should do. The mediator oversees the process of seeking to resolve the problem by supporting the parties to reach an agreement.

AKF will always attempt to solve all issues through mediation before commencing official Disciplinary Processes.

9.3.5 Role and Responsibilities:

AKF-Syria's Supervisors (Program Manager, and Project Coordinator) should ensure that:

- Employees, beneficiaries, and stakeholders are aware of and understand the project's Grievance Policy and Procedure and that no reprisals will be taken against them for raising a legitimate grievance.
- All grievances received are investigated and addressed in a fair and timely manner in line with the Grievance Procedure.

HR Department should:

- Play an active role in the process where the formal procedures require this, and record the outcomes.
- Provide advice to anyone involved in a grievance case in whatever role they may play to ensure that the policy and procedures are fully understood and complied with.
- Provide advice and guidance as to how best to implement the policies.

Chief Executive Officer/ Program Director should:

- Provide support and assistance to any employee who feels that they have a grievance and reassure them that there will be no reprisal if they formally raise a grievance
- Chair any appeals as per relevant guidelines and nominations.

9.3.6 Community-Based Complaint Response Mechanism (CBCRM):

A CBCRM is a mechanism for enabling and responding to feedback, reports, and complaints from communities. It is developed by consulting with communities on what channels they would like to use to provide feedback or make complaints or reports safely and has a process in place for assessing, referring, and following up on those reports once they come into the organization.

Not all complaints are appropriate for safeguarding reports. Some complaints are for general reports but can also handle reports relating to safeguarding and are set up to specifically elicit and respond to safeguarding reports.

While AKF Syria is rolling out CBRM to communities/staff/workers, as an interim solution it adopted an internal hotline and appointed staff, both at local and global levels to serve as reporting channels for beneficiaries.

Note: The Project team to adopt the KfW: *(5.2 ESMP/ESCOP Guidance Annex B – Grievance Mechanism Form)*

10. AKF Safeguarding

10.1 Mechanism to safeguard Staff/workers, beneficiaries, and Stakeholders:

Safeguards are an important part of all development and humanitarian programs and are key to managing risks, ensuring that interventions do no harm and that outcomes are sustainable. They are also important in ensuring quality, accountability, and transparency, and in enhancing organizational reputation, legitimacy, and effectiveness.

AKF seeks to implement policies that are ethical, values-driven, and align with our beliefs and objectives. To strengthen internal policies to protect AKF's staff and the communities in which it works. AKF has developed a Global Safeguarding Manual that provides a framework for all AKF units. Moving forward, AKF aims to build on, contextualize, and standardize existing best practices and develop a robust approach to ensure the safety of AKF's staff and beneficiaries.

Many organizations have designed and implemented community feedback and reporting mechanisms (CBRM) to enable communities to raise concerns on a range of issues, including safeguarding concerns.

However, reports of safeguarding concerns from communities remain low, especially from within vulnerable or at-risk groups. The UK Foreign, Development, and Commonwealth Office (FCDO) led the "Listening Exercise on Victims and Survivor Voices" in October 2018 and described a poor understanding of the scale of under-reporting because of difficulty in gathering evidence. However, the evidence that does exist indicates that between 30 - 80% of child victims and survivors do not disclose their experiences until adulthood, with countless others never disclosing.

The development sector has identified several barriers to community reporting and recognized that certain groups within communities feel less empowered to report abuse. The September 2018 Violence Against Women & Girls Helpdesk Research Report and the above FCDO-led "Listening Exercise on Victims and Survivor Voices" described the barriers as including deep-rooted power imbalances between communities and aid and development organizations, traditional views of sex and gender, limited understanding of community reporting mechanisms, insufficient processes for safe reporting, lack of trust in the system, perceived impunity of alleged perpetrators, and inaccessible reporting mechanisms for particular groups.

The 2018 sector crisis led to the development of a reporting toolkit through Bond UK (the UK's lead INGO coordination body), designed to help address reporting issues by encouraging organizations to respond more effectively to safeguarding reports. Many organizations are reviewing existing complaints and reporting mechanisms to understand their effectiveness and whether they remain 'fit for purpose' as circumstances, communities, or contexts change. There remains a gap in knowledge of how power differentials between organizations and communities, and within communities, affect reporting. The evidence on what has been done to reduce barriers is limited with very few evaluations of effectiveness. Innovative beneficiary engagement methods that allow for more open communication can be key to creating more trust between beneficiaries and agencies.

AKF's approach is to design and implement a community reporting model that draws on innovative engagement methods that can be adapted to fit the needs of different communities (and the groups within them) in varying contexts, and that specifically addresses the power dynamics that create barriers to reporting.

AKF is committed to safeguarding beneficiaries through:

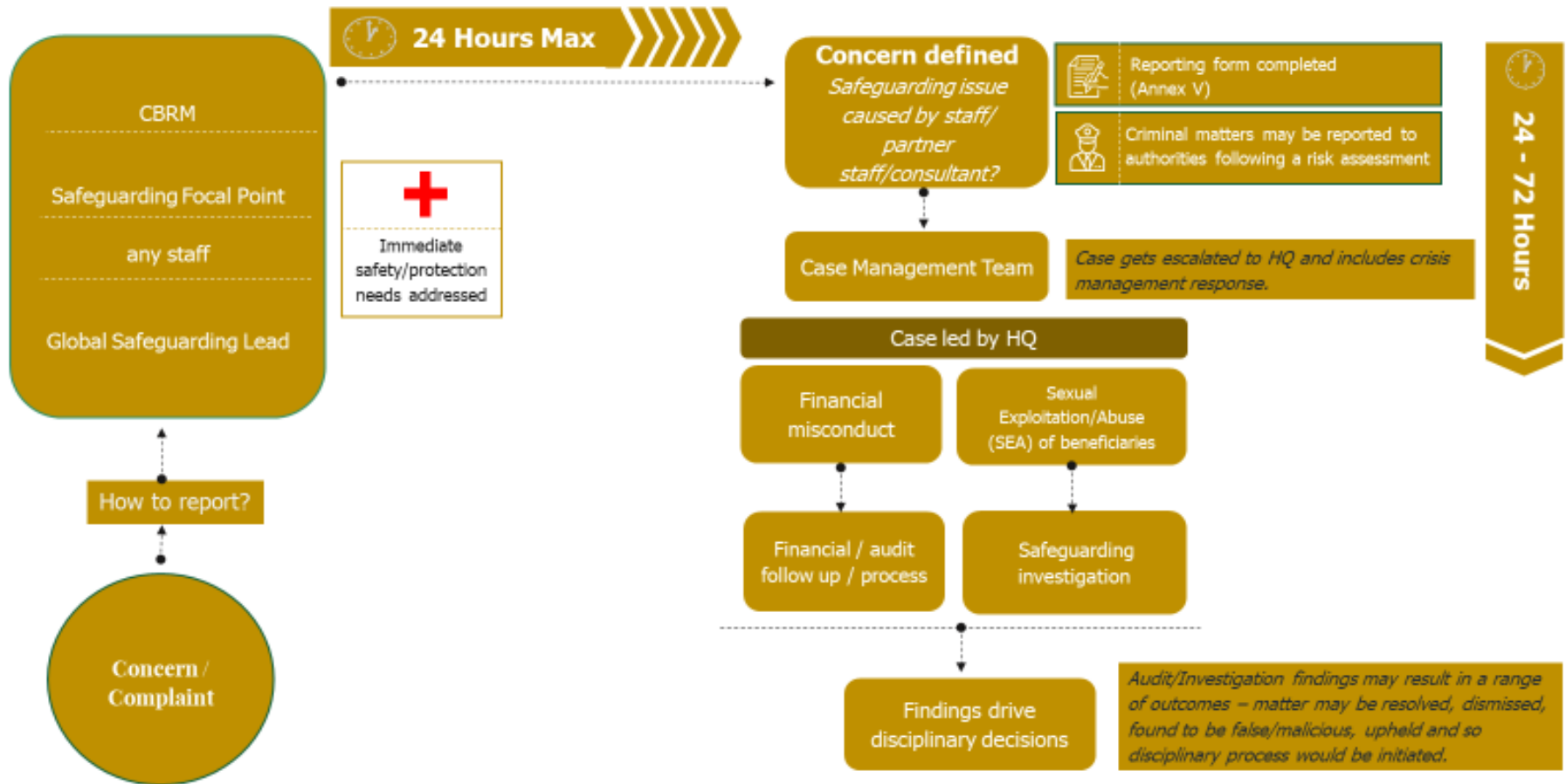
- **Preventative Measures:** (policies, procedures, training, integration of safeguarding into AKF systems and functions).

- **Responding Processes:** case management, investigations, supporting services for the survivors, and disciplinary procedures.
- **Reporting Mechanisms:** to raise safeguarding concerns and allegations including (SEA) in line with AKF's Global Safeguarding Manual. To accomplish this, AKF has launched the Community-Based Complaint Response Mechanism (CBRM) a pilot project which entailed conducting consultations with diverse community groups in different contexts to reduce barriers to reporting safeguarding cases and enhance the transparency, trust, and efficiency of the mechanism.

The focus group discussions showed that beneficiaries prefer having a helpline to provide different programmatic and safeguarding allegations, in addition to appointed skilled project staff with whom they are in regular contact as well as having complaint boxes as noted above. Depending on the results of consultations with the community, AKF will adopt different mechanisms to ensure that all beneficiaries have access to different reporting channels that they feel safe and comfortable using.

10.2 The flowchart below provides an overview of AKF’s reporting process for the AKF Staff/Workers and Beneficiaries.

Speak up process – beneficiaries



11. Key Stakeholder, and Engagement in ESMF:

The Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) is a holistic approach where stakeholder engagement is critical to successful implementation. The Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) Syria has developed a comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) for this project. This plan outlines the key roles and influence of stakeholders, as well as the potential positive and negative impacts they may have. The AKF Environmental, Social, Health, and Safety (ESHS) team will rigorously adhere to the engagement plan to leverage stakeholder expertise, mitigate potential negative impacts, and maximize positive outcomes throughout the project.

The ESMF identifies stakeholders, ensuring that project stakeholders are informed and involved throughout the project lifecycle. However, regular consultations with affected communities, particularly the targeted farmers/CIGs/Cooperatives. Farmers, including smallholders, and commercial, and subsistence farming households, are the primary beneficiaries of the project. They participate either as individuals or as members of Common Interest Groups (CIGs) or cooperatives within the program area. These groups are instrumental in driving the project's success and ensuring that the interventions deliver tangible benefits and sustainability of the project.

The project's interventions primarily focus on empowering farmers to sustainably increase their agricultural productivity and income levels. All activities are designed to create meaningful, long-term change for local communities, including farmers, cooperatives, and other stakeholders.

The engagement of farmers, CIGs, and cooperatives is vital to the project's success, as their active participation and commitment are essential for the adoption of sustainable farming practices and the implementation of innovative solutions. As primary beneficiaries, farmers are not only the recipients of the project's benefits but also play a critical role as the main implementers of the interventions.

CIGs and cooperatives, representing collective groups of farmers, play a significant role in setting priorities, developing action plans, and promoting social and environmental responsibility. Their organized structure and collaborative approach facilitate effective communication, decision-making, and resource allocation, which leads to smoother project implementation and a broader community impact.

By actively involving these groups in the planning and execution of project activities, the program leverages their collective knowledge, experience, and influence, ultimately fostering a sense of ownership and accountability that is crucial for the sustainability and long-term success of the initiatives.

The brief roles of key stakeholders are highlighted below:

i. KfW (Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau):

As the primary funding agency, KfW provides financial support to the project and ensures its alignment with its strategic goals and funding guidelines. KfW also holds responsibility for monitoring both financial and operational progress, ensuring that resources are used efficiently and that project deliverables are met in line with the donor's expectations.

KfW collaborates closely with AKF providing strategic guidance to ensure that Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMP) and Frameworks (ESMF) are implemented properly. It oversees compliance with donor requirements, ensuring proper governance, accountability, and sustainable outcomes that align with both local and international best practices. Additionally, KfW will support the capacity building of AKF on Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) and provide training and technical support by covering the cost of the EORE Trainer/Expert.

ii. Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform:

The Ministry oversees and approves agricultural activities within the project, ensuring they conform to national policies and practices. It plays a crucial role in integrating project activities with broader agricultural development goals in Syria. The Ministry provides technical guidance on agricultural inputs, practices, and sustainable methods. AKF for all agricultural and livestock input packages to consult and acquire guidelines from the ministry.

It will work with AKF to ensure that all agricultural interventions follow regulations and contribute to national food security strategies. Their engagement ensures that the project supports the sustainable development of the agricultural sector around priority agriculture Value Chains.

iii. Ministry of Local Administration and Environment:

This ministry is the primary regulatory body for environmental standards in Syria, tasked with enforcing environmental laws and overseeing projects to ensure environmental sustainability. As the Road to Resilience Project falls under the moderate to low-risk category the project does not require a formal Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). However, the project team should maintain good coordination in case any environmental issues arise during the project. The Ministry still plays a role in ensuring compliance with relevant environmental guidelines.

AKF will closely coordinate project activities with the Ministry as well as governorate and sub-district authorities to ensure that water and irrigation-related interventions are designed and implemented in full compliance with national standards, norms, regulations, and strategies. This includes the use and management of surface water, groundwater, and recycled water from water treatment plants.

iv. UNMAS (United Nations Mine Action Service):

UNMAS is a UN Agency, responsible for assessing and managing risks related to landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) in the country of operation. Their role is critical for ensuring the safety of project sites and beneficiaries.

UNMAS will guide Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) and safety protocols, helping AKF ensure that all project activities are carried out in secure environments. Their expertise is essential for mitigating potential hazards and ensuring the safety of workers and beneficiaries in areas with a history of conflict.

v. Ministry of Water Resources:

This ministry oversees the management and approval of all water-related activities, including irrigation and water resource management. They are responsible for issuing licenses to Water User Associations and ensuring the sustainable use of water resources.

AKF will work closely with the Ministry to ensure that irrigation schemes are aligned with national water management strategies. The Ministry will also provide guidance on the efficient use of water resources, ensuring sustainability and compliance with legal frameworks.

vi. Municipalities and Ministry of Local Administration:

These local government entities provide the necessary approvals for administrative logistics, such as vehicle movements, project site access, and other on-the-ground operations. They play a key role in ensuring that project activities are carried out smoothly and are in line with local governance frameworks.

AKF will collaborate with these entities to obtain the necessary approvals and ensure alignment with local governance policies. They will also work through the Higher Relief Authority to coordinate relief efforts, especially in areas affected by conflict or natural disasters.

vii. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs):

These organizations are key to mobilizing local communities and fostering active community engagement in the project. They act as a bridge between the project and the local population, ensuring community needs are considered and addressed.

AKF will partner with CSOs, NGOs, and CBOs to engage local communities, encourage their participation, and promote ownership of project outcomes. This collaboration is essential for ensuring the long-term sustainability and success of the project, as well as for building trust and transparency.

viii. Agriculture and Food Security Sector Syria:

A group constituted by International non-governmental organizations, National non-government Organizations, and UN Agencies focusing on food security, this sector plays a crucial role in coordinating activities across various stakeholders to ensure alignment with national strategies and avoid duplication of efforts. Their role is to align project activities with the food sector guidelines/SOPs. The sector consultations are important to avoid duplication of activities and optimum use of resources/expertise available within the sector. The sector ensures that the project is in line with international standards and that best practices are adopted.

AKF will collaborate with this sector to share resources and expertise, receiving guidelines related to agricultural input packages ensuring the project contributes to national food security goals. This cooperation helps in optimizing resource use and ensuring that project activities complement other ongoing initiatives.

ix. Ministry of Industry:

The Ministry supports cooperative and industrial development, which is essential for improving the marketability of agricultural and industrial products from the project. The relationship with this ministry is primarily for obtaining necessary approvals and facilitation of registration and accreditation certificates for Cooperatives/CIGs. Also, there is support for quality control of the local produce which contributed to the sustainability of CIGs/Cooperatives.

AKF will work with the Ministry to ensure that cooperatives and Community Interest Groups (CIGs) involved in the project are properly registered, accredited, and meet quality standards. This ensures that products from these groups can enter larger markets, improving economic outcomes for beneficiaries.

x. UN Agencies and Other International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs):

AKF will coordinate with UN agencies and INGOs to ensure efficient collaboration and avoid redundancy. This will enhance the overall impact of the project through shared knowledge, resources, and expertise.

These organizations provide additional technical, operational, and strategic support to the project. They help ensure that the project is in line with international standards and that best practices are adopted.

xi. Value Chain Actors in and around the selected Value Chains:

The value chain actors include production cooperatives, private entities, agribusinesses, and logistics, aggregation hubs that facilitate market access for project beneficiaries. They are crucial for ensuring that products reach markets efficiently and generate economic returns.

AKF will work closely with value chain actors to ensure that beneficiaries, including farmers and cooperatives, are connected to markets. This engagement helps in building sustainable income streams and fostering long-term economic growth for project participants.

xii. Financial Services Providers/Banks (FSPs):

The FSPs provide financial services, including credit and loans, to project beneficiaries, enabling them to invest in agricultural and business activities. Their involvement is crucial for enabling CIGs access to capital and financial resources, which support the project's economic activities and contribute to business sustainability for the farmers/CIGs/Cooperatives.

AKF will seek partnerships with financial institutions to ensure that the project beneficiaries and value chain actors access affordable financial services. This support can enhance the economic activities of the targeted beneficiaries, fostering their economic empowerment and enabling sustained project impact.

xiii. Local Research and Academic Institutions:

These institutions provide valuable technical expertise and research support, helping to improve the agricultural practices and resilience strategies employed in the project. Research institutions contribute by sharing knowledge on best agricultural practices, livestock breeding, and climate-resilient crop varieties. Their research and expertise enhance the technical quality and sustainability of project interventions.

By integrating insights from local research and academic institutions, AKF ensures the project remains innovative and adopts the latest sustainable agricultural practices. This collaboration also helps improve the climate resilience of project interventions and enhances overall project outcomes.

11.2 Table-6 Stakeholder Analysis Matrix to see their Role, Importance, and Engagement:

Stakeholder (Ministries, networks, authorities, NGOs, donors)	Importance	Influence and Power	Interests/Positive Impact	Concerns/Negative Impacts
Communities/Farmers/CIGs/Cooperatives:				
Farmers, Common Interest Groups (CIGs)/Cooperatives	<p>They are primary beneficiaries mainly smallholders, commercial and subsistence farming households working as individuals or as members of the common interest groups/Cooperatives in the program area.</p> <p>The interventions will primarily target farmers to sustainably increase their agriculture productivity and income.</p> <p>All activities are geared toward bringing about change on the ground for local communities, i.e. farmers, cooperatives, etc.</p>	<p>The engagement of farmers, CIGs, and cooperatives is crucial for the success of the project. Their active participation ensures the adoption and sustainability of project activities and developed solutions.</p> <p>Farmer involvement is vital as they are the primary beneficiaries and implementers of the project.</p> <p>CIGs and cooperatives representing groups of farmers play a significant role in setting priorities, developing action plans, and fostering social responsibility.</p> <p>Their collective influence contributes to smoother project implementation and greater community impact.</p>	<p>Potential beneficiaries and members of the local community, including key informants and local experts, are usually engaged in designing activities, including choosing the priorities that should be worked on to ensure their implementation and subsequent adoption by beneficiaries.</p> <p>The same for CIGs, where their engagement in setting priorities and developing their action plans increases social responsibility and ensures smooth implementation and adoption of activities.</p> <p>As grassroots-level stakeholders, they are primary agents for bringing about change in practices that contribute</p>	<p>If there is no coordination and engagement of local communities, the activities may not be relevant and therefore we will face difficulties in implementation. If farmers avoid joining the program, we may not be able to implement activities.</p> <p>The absence of the local community in the initiative will make it impossible to translate the concept before the framework on the ground.</p>

			to a sustainable environment and coping with the impacts of climate change in everyday life.	
Government Ministries and Regulatory Authorities:				
2.1 Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform (MoAAR)	It is the highest agriculture authority and broadly supervises all agriculture activities in the country	It provides the required approvals and the necessary facilities to the AKF, including, but not limited to access to secondary data for the targeted areas.	Smooth implementation of activities in the field and better coordination. Since the ministry determines the parameters and policy contours of the agriculture sector, engagement with it will help streamline environment-related activities.	In case AKF does not coordinate with MoAAR, all activities will be affected and AKF needs the approval and the coordination to implement the project. MoAAR will not be part of the project. AKF needs the approval and the facilitations by MoAAR only.
2.2 Ministry of Water Resources	As the highest agricultural authority and supervisor of all water-related activities in the country.	Provides AKF with the required approvals, facilitating the implementation of irrigation-related activities, and licensing water user associations.	Access to secondary data for the targeted areas and licenses water user associations.	It has all the required secondary data and the location of water resources needed for approval and facilitation of the project. In case AKF does not coordinate with the Ministry of Water Resources, all activities will be affected and AKF needs the approval and coordination to implement the project.
2.3 Ministry of Local Administration and Environment:	This ministry is the primary regulatory body for environmental standards in Syria, tasked with enforcing	The ministry is also responsible for Governors and other administrative units such as municipalities,	The Road to Resilience Project falls under the moderate to low-risk category, and the project	If not consulted or engaged in a timely way it could create

	<p>environmental laws and overseeing projects to ensure environmental sustainability.</p> <p>The Ministry of Local Administration currently holds the position of Chairman of the Higher Relief Committee.</p>	<p>and it is the body responsible for granting administrative approvals.</p> <p>All the environmental regulations and procedures are set by the ministry. Therefore, for permission, clearance, and coordination, the Ministry of Environment has a pivotal role to play.</p>	<p>does not require the conducting of a formal Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).</p> <p>However, the project team should maintain good coordination in case any environmental issues arise during the project. The Ministry still plays a role in ensuring compliance with relevant environmental guidelines.</p> <p>The proper engagement will lead to the timely acquisition of the administrative approval. (Where applicable)</p>	<p>constraints or delays in acquiring approvals (if required).</p>
2.4 The Ministry of Industry	<p>This body is important in particular as the project focus is value chains and supporting actors engaged in the selected crops/vegetable/livestock value chains such as processing industries, packaging factories, agriculture, and veterinary inputs factories/companies. So the Ministry of Industry is important to align actors engaged in the value chains, particularly for registration, approvals, certifications, trade facilitation, policy, quality</p>	<p>They play a key role in regulating the CIGs/Cooperatives/SMEs/Companies/Commercial Entities engaged in agriculture and livestock inputs, production, processing, and marketing.</p> <p>They are also important for the sustainability of the targeted groups in terms of getting trade facilitation support.</p>	<p>The Ministry can facilitate the growth and formalization of cooperatives, providing them with legal recognition, which can enhance project implementation and sustainability.</p> <p>The ministry supports quality control and trade facilitation.</p>	<p>If not engaged properly the CIGs/Cooperatives/SMEs engaged in and around agriculture and livestock value chains will not be able to get the required support in business registration, certifications, trade facilitation, access to loans, and quality control which could adversely impact their business.</p>

	control, and regulation related to SMEs/CIGs/Cooperatives.	They also play a key role in promoting local products through support in quality control, timely approvals, certifications, etc.		
Agriculture/Food Security /Livelihoods Sector (Syria)				
3.1 The Agriculture and Food Security Sector	<p>Considering the Humanitarian Context in Syria the Food Security Sector plays a crucial role in improving coordination and reducing the risk of potential overlap/duplication between the various partners on the ground.</p> <p>Additionally, technical backstopping to the food security sector partners' guidelines, SOPs, and standardized packages to bring more uniformity.</p>	<p>It includes all national and international organizations working in the agriculture and food security sectors.</p> <p>The sector is led by the UN Agency for Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP), and the Ministry of Agriculture.</p> <p>The food security sector shares the list of potential areas/Governorates/Sub-districts for interventions based on need and severity scores for partners to consider.</p> <p>The beneficiaries targeting criteria, package guidelines, and SOPs to promote uniformity among partners.</p>	<p>The formation of synergies in different fields of the sector will help replicate best practices on the ground.</p> <p>It will help in the selection of target areas, reviewing and sharing needs and priorities, review the progress of the projects.</p> <p>The sector recommendation also plays a key role in securing donor funding/additional resources (if required) for scale-up/expanding the interventions across the country.</p>	<p>If the sector is not engaged properly then the chances of potential duplication/overlapping of resources and efforts would lead to wasting resources.</p>
Value chains actors in and around the selected Agriculture and Livestock Value Chains:				
This includes existing production/processing cooperatives, private entities, agribusinesses,	Their engagement is required to link the project's target beneficiaries to markets and	These actors have significant influence over market dynamics, pricing, and supply chains, which can	Complete the value chains and remove constraints.	Without engagement, the value chain is not complete and could adversely impact the quality of the produce, job market, and

<p>and logistic and consolidation hubs.</p>	<p>improve the value chain's functioning.</p> <p>The value chain actors have key roles in strengthening value chains from the field/point of production to the market.</p> <p>Their engagement is crucial to getting optimum benefits from value chains in terms of creating jobs, improving product quality, and overall productivity of the agriculture sector.</p>	<p>directly impact project outcomes.</p> <p>They play a key role in project success and contributions towards the intended results/outcomes strengthening the value chains in and around agriculture.</p>	<p>Improve the quality of the agricultural produce.</p> <p>Diversification of the products.</p> <p>Create more formal and informal jobs within value chains.</p> <p>Will contribute to the increase in profitability and income for the farmers/ CIGs/Cooperatives/SMEs</p>	<p>sustainability of the targeted individual farmers as well as the CIGs/Cooperatives/SMEs.</p> <p>Large market players may also dominate the market and can potentially marginalize smaller actors and cooperatives.</p>
<p>Local CSOs/ Associations/NGOs:</p>				
<p>5.1 Local Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs):</p> <p>Local non-governmental organizations LNGOs, which are local associations licensed under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, operate within specific themes and are active in Syria.</p> <p>5.2 Community-based organizations include village committees, development committees,</p>	<p>The main role of the NGOs/CSOs/CBOs is participation in mobilizing local communities and facilitating entry to the targeted area.</p> <p>AKF will form 2 types of CBOs: farmers groups or what we call Common Interest Groups (CIGs), and Water Use Association</p>	<p>NGOs and CSOs play a crucial role in connecting grassroots-level communities with project activities. They have the power and influence to mobilize people for an activity.</p>	<p>The active participation of NGOs/CSOs/CBOs helps in making the planning and implementation of the project participatory in nature and accountable to the local communities. They can contribute to scaling up the sustainable models and sustainability of the project interventions.</p>	<p>Some local NGOs and CBOs may lack the necessary capacity to effectively contribute to the project, potentially leading to suboptimal outcomes. Partner NGOs/CBOs might focus on short-term gains rather than long-term sustainability, which can undermine the project's lasting impact.</p> <p>This will be addressed through the rigorous selection of partner NGOs, organization capacity assessment, and capacity building. AKF will also apply Due Diligence Assessments</p>

agricultural committees, agricultural associations, etc.				before entering partnerships with local NGOs.
KFW (Donor) of the Project				
6.1 KfW	KfW, as the project funding agency plays a crucial role in the project as they provide the necessary funding that enables project implementation and success.	KfW has significant influence and power over the project. As a donor agency, KfW can affect decision-making processes, project design, modifications, and implementation strategies.	KfW is interested in the successful implementation of the project, achieving the project goals, objectives, and targets, and ensuring funds are used effectively and efficiently. A successful project enhances AKF's and KfW's reputation and demonstrates the commitment to improving the quality of life of the disadvantaged and conflict-affected communities in Syria.	KfW may have specific guidelines and requirements for project implementation. Ensuring compliance with these, considering the context of Syria, can be challenging and lead to delays in the project interventions. Effective communication and coordination with KfW can help to address this concern.
Financial Service Providers/Banks:				
7.1 Banks and Microfinance Institutions i.e First Micro-Finance Bank	Financial institutions Banks and microfinance institutions provide financial services, enabling project activities and supporting the economic growth of target communities.	Contribute to enabling access to finance during the crucial agriculture period through loans to the farmers in need. Also, contribute to business expansion, and sustainability of CIGs/Cooperatives.	They stimulate local economies by providing loans and financial services to farmers and other value-chain actors fostering economic growth.	High interest rates and short loan durations can burden beneficiaries, potentially leading to financial strain and reduced financial inclusion, particularly among poor and marginalized communities.

			Also, they can promote financial inclusion by offering tailored financial products to underserved communities, enhancing economic resilience.	If not engaged properly will adversely impact the business continuity for farmers and common interest groups (CIGs)/Cooperatives. The farmers and CIGs could suffer in crucial times if they cannot access loans.
Service Providers/Consultants/Contractors/Vendors:				
8.1 Local suppliers/providers/ of goods and services, including agricultural inputs suppliers.	They are a crucial line for the supply and provision of items required in the field of agriculture and for the implementation of the project.	They influence the cost and quality of inputs directly affecting the project's budget and the quality of outputs. The quality of their services, including delivery time can affect the implementation timeline.	The availability of efficient local suppliers/providers of goods and services will ensure the timely execution of activities in the field.	The service provider might infringe on the safeguarding or other policies of AKF as it operates outside the remit of AKF. The agriculture-related activities are time-bound. Therefore, timely provision of required goods/supplies is crucial. Delays in the provision of services or goods/supplies will result in an inability to carry out activity on time.
Local research and academic institutions				
13. ACSAD, ICARDA (international)	They are the repository of knowledge in the agriculture field. Therefore, the knowledge and data are required for the contextual understanding of the project and work in the field.	They can provide expert guidance and insights based on their extensive knowledge and data, shaping project strategies and ensuring they are relevant and effective in the context of Syria and project-targeted areas.	Share information about the best agriculture practices/livestock breeding/climate resistant and tested varieties of crops, and trees.	Delays in the provision of or access to data and information may hamper the implementation of the project.

11.2 Stakeholder Involvement in Program Management:

The Road to Resilience project, implemented by AKF and funded by KfW, relies on extensive collaboration among various stakeholders to ensure the successful implementation of its Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF). The Programme Director at AKF Syria holds responsibility for guiding the strategic direction of the project, overseeing the operational and financial aspects, and approving key documents such as the operational manual, annual work plan, procurement plans, as well as technical and financial reports.

To ensure the project’s effectiveness, the above-stated stakeholders will be actively consulted and engaged throughout the project lifecycle:

11.2.1 Stakeholder involvement during implementation:

During implementation, a broad range of stakeholders—including civil society organizations, farmer associations, local communities, and research institutions—will play important roles. The active participation from beneficiary farmers/CIGs/cooperatives across targeted villages is essential, as the majority of project activities are based in rural and semi-rural settings. Regular coordination with government departments is crucial, especially for acquiring necessary permits and ensuring smooth field operations.

11.2.2 AKF Syria/AKF UK and KfW:

At the AKF Syria level, project staff will oversee field-level implementation in close collaboration with community facilitators and stakeholders. Simultaneously, AKF(UK), serving as the fund manager, will maintain oversight, and quality assurance and coordinate with KfW to ensure compliance requirements and project goals. The community leaders and other key influencers will be oriented on project objectives, ensuring community-level support for planned activities. The existing community structures at the village or district level will act as a bridge between implementing partners and beneficiaries. These committees will help in beneficiary selection, distribution of inputs, and project monitoring, with efforts to ensure the participation of women and PWDs where safe and appropriate.

11.2.3 Beneficiary Engagement and Roles:

Beneficiaries, who form the core of the project, will need to actively participate by providing accurate data, committing to the registration process, and contributing through cost-sharing to ensure the sustainability of their livelihoods. Their role will extend beyond participation, fostering greater commitment and enhancing the project’s long-term impact.

11.2.4 Role of Other Stakeholders in Project Success:

In addition to beneficiaries, other stakeholders critical to the project’s success include:

- **Existing Community Structures:** These groups will aid in identifying beneficiaries, conducting assessments, and facilitating access to vulnerable populations. Their role is important in effective input delivery and service provision.
- **District Agriculture Authorities (Ministry of Agriculture):** While not formal partners, these authorities are essential for obtaining approvals and permits. Close coordination with them is required for information sharing and compliance. Also, technical guidance on agriculture inputs, extension services, and training of the farmers/CIGs/cooperatives.
- **Private Suppliers and Service Providers:** These include both international and local suppliers authorized by the government, who will provide production inputs and services critical to the project. They will also assist with monitoring agricultural and livestock health, ensuring resilience against disease outbreaks.
- **Research Organizations (e.g., ACSAD, ICARDA):** These organizations will offer technical expertise, develop high-yield crop varieties, and train technicians on best practices for agricultural

production and animal husbandry. Their involvement will help improve productivity and resilience among farming communities.

Examples of Research Contributions:

- **Improved Crop Varieties or Livestock breeds:** Research organizations will introduce new, high-productivity crop varieties adapted to the local environment, disseminating them through seed breeding centers and sharing innovative breeding techniques for livestock.
- **Technical Expertise:** Leveraging years of research, these organizations will train local technicians in advanced agricultural practices and animal husbandry, ensuring that project interventions are sustainable and scientifically sound.

12. Capacity Building of Staff, Contractor, Farmers Cooperatives/CIGs:

12.1 Training of Staff/Contractors/Sub-Contractors/Suppliers on ESM Activities:

AKF will develop and implement a comprehensive ESHS training program for all project staff and contractors to build the capacity of our team and stakeholders in ESHS management. This training will cover topics such as environmental protection, safeguarding, occupational health and safety, conflict sensitivity, grievance mechanism, gender equality, and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuses (SEA). AKF will focus and train the staff/workers/Contractors/Subcontractors/Suppliers engaged in moderate to high-risk activities, including those related to agriculture, livestock management, and enterprise development in the project.

12.2 Training of Staff on Environment and Social Screening (E&S):

The training for staff on Environmental and Social Screening (ESS) for the agriculture project funded by KfW is designed to ensure adherence to environmental and social safeguards. Its primary goals are to provide staff with a comprehensive understanding of ESS, ensure compliance with KfW standards, and develop practical skills for effective environmental and social assessments. The training includes modules on the introduction to ESS, regulatory frameworks, screening processes, Environmental and Social Assessment (E&S), risk assessment and mitigation, integration and implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

Interactive workshops, practical exercises, and expert sessions are employed to enhance learning. The expected outcomes include improved knowledge, better project practices, compliance with KfW guidelines, and sustainable project impact. Follow-up support includes ongoing resources, refresher courses, and a feedback mechanism for continuous improvement. This training is crucial for aligning the project with KfW standards and integrating ESS considerations into all aspects of project management.

12.3 Awareness Campaigns for Community/Farmers/CIGs, and Cooperatives:

In parallel to the formal training program, AKF will also organize Community Awareness Programs regarding project activities. The awareness will be carried out in close collaboration with local community/farmer groups/CIGs/Cooperatives engaged in the project. These campaigns will educate community members about the project's ESHS measures, their roles and responsibilities, safety matters, safeguarding, and the grievance mechanisms available to speak out. The awareness campaigns will be designed according to cultural sensitivities and accessible to all, including women, youth, the elderly, PWDs, and marginalized groups.

13. Monitoring and Evaluation and Reporting of the (ESMP) Activities:

13.1 Monitoring & Evaluation of the Activities:

AKF will develop a comprehensive set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to monitor and measure the effectiveness of the Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP). This process will involve incorporating environmental, social, and gender components into monitoring tools and reporting mechanisms to ensure that all critical dimensions are adequately addressed. The M&E team will develop a specific M&E Plan for the ESMP activities to track progress and for quality assurance.

The KPIs will cover various aspects, including but not limited to:

- Environmental and Social Protection
- Safeguarding practices
- Health and safety performance
- Gender equality and inclusion
- Community relations and engagement

For example, some specific KPIs might include:

- Climate-smart agriculture initiatives: Tracking the number of initiatives implemented and their adoption by the local community.
- Water usage efficiency: Measuring the reduction in water consumption for agricultural practices.
- Incident reporting: Monitoring the number of health, safety, and environmental incidents and corrective actions taken.
- Complaints Response Mechanism: Regular feedback and monitoring/follow-up on the complaints received/resolved/addressed.
- Beneficiaries' satisfaction: Gauging the level of community satisfaction with project activities and engagement.

To ensure continuous monitoring, AKF will establish a strong schedule that includes regular site visits, periodic environmental and social audits, and health and safety inspections. Monitoring will be conducted bi-weekly and monthly, with more frequent checks during periods of high project activity or heightened risk.

Response to Deviations from ESMP:

In the event of deviations from the Environmental and Social (E&S) commitments, the project will have a clear mechanism to address these issues:

- **Frequent Field Monitoring of the ESMP:** The ESHS and AKF M&E teams will conduct regular field visits to monitor the implementation of the ESMP and share field information with the senior management for immediate corrective actions/decisions where required.
- **Immediate Action Plan:** The project team will develop a corrective action plan to address any identified deviations from the E&S safeguards.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Lessons learned from deviations will be integrated into future project activities to enhance the effectiveness of mitigation measures and promote adaptive management.

13.2 Roles and Responsibilities to monitor compliance with E&S Safeguards during the project implementation:

a) Program Manager, and Team:

- Provide strategic leadership and ensure the effective implementation of the ESMP. They coordinate among various stakeholders to ensure that ESMP activities are aligned with the project's goals

- Provide oversight to the M&E and ESHS teams, making high-level decisions and ensuring that monitoring data is used to make informed decisions about project progress.
- The Program Manager ensures that the necessary resources, including finances and personnel, are available to support the effective implementation of the ESMP.
- The Program Manager will act as the primary point of contact with donors, regulatory bodies, and other stakeholders, providing updates on the progress of ESMP activities and addressing concerns that arise.
- Ensure timely and accurate reporting of the ESMP activities to both internal and external stakeholders, including project funders and government bodies.

b) Environmental, Social, Health, and Safety (ESHS) Team:

- The ESHS team ensures that all ESMP activities are compliant with relevant environmental, social, health, and safety regulations, as well as project standards.
- The ESHS team will conduct E&S Screening and ESIA and share reports.
- They identify potential risks and impacts associated with project activities on the environment and communities, implementing measures to mitigate these risks.
- The ESHS team ensures that health and safety protocols are strictly followed during the implementation of ESMP activities to prevent accidents or harm to workers and the community.
- They work closely with local communities to address their concerns, ensure their involvement in the project, and maintain transparency in communication regarding environmental and social issues.
- The ESHS team provides training to project staff and contractors on best practices in environmental management, social safeguards, and health and safety standards.

c) Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Team:

- The M&E Team will formulate an M&E Plan for the ESMP activities to track progress and for quality assurance.
- The M&E team is responsible for collecting data on key performance indicators (KPIs) related to ESMP activities.
- The M&E team will analyze the data to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of the interventions.
- The M&E regular site visits and inspections to monitor the implementation of ESMP activities, identifying any gaps or deviations from the planned activities.
- The M&E team evaluates the outcomes of ESMP interventions to assess their impact on environmental and social aspects, comparing the results with the project's baseline data.
- Provide regular feedback to the Program Manager and ESHS team on areas that need improvement, helping to guide adaptive management strategies for the project.
- The team compiles reports based on their findings, documenting successes, challenges, lessons learned, and recommendations for future action.

By incorporating these elements into the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting framework of the ESMP, AKF aims to strengthen the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Accountability to ensure that environmental and social safeguards are adhered to throughout the project's lifecycle.

13.3 Reporting of the (ESMF) Activities:

AKF will develop a comprehensive mechanism for the preparation and sharing of the Quarterly, and need-based ESMP reports, site assessment reports, and the IEE and ERS Assessment Reports (where applicable) The reports will be submitted to all relevant stakeholders, including the donor (KfW), the Ministry of Agriculture, local authorities, and community representatives. These reports will provide a comprehensive

overview of ESMP implementation and, the latest progress, including monitoring results against indicators, incidents reported, complaints/grievances received and settled, and corrective actions/measures taken.

AKF will conduct an annual review of the Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) to assess its effectiveness and identify any necessary adjustments. This review will involve input from all stakeholders, including the AKF Senior Management Team, ESHS structure, local communities, and external experts.

13.4 Environmental and Social Reporting:

Environmental and Social Management Reporting (ESMR) is the process of tracking, assessing, and reporting the environmental and social impacts of a project. It helps ensure the project meets environmental protection and social responsibility goals, as well as regulatory requirements. This reporting is often needed by stakeholders, financial institutions, or government agencies to confirm that the project is following best practices for sustainability.

For the KfW-funded project, Environmental and Social (E&S) reports will be submitted to KfW for review and any necessary actions. The ESHS team will be responsible for collecting information from each sub-project and submitting it for review. Additionally, any E&S findings from the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) process will be included in the project's quarterly, bi-annual, and annual reports.

13.4.1 Table 07: Overview of Environmental and Social Screening Process/Responsibilities:

No.	E&S Activities	Corresponding E&S Requirements	Responsibility
1.	Project Baseline Including the E&S indicators/aspects	The overall project baseline includes key environmental and social aspects to measure the environmental and social impact of the project. (Baseline tool to be developed by the team ESHS and M&E)	ESHS and M&E
2.	Preparation of pre-feasibility studies and review	Environmental and Social Screening (Annex G: ESMP – Site Assessment Tool)	ESHS Officer
3.	Based on the findings of the feasibility studies relevant mitigation plans prepared	Social and Environmental Assessment E&S Assessment Report with Key Recommendations ESMP implementation to mitigate potential risks	ESHS Officer
4.	Follow-up and Monitoring	Close follow-up and monitoring to ensure that the risk has been mitigated and addressed accordingly	ESHS Officer

Note: The Project team to adopt the KfW: (3.2 *Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) ESMP Report Template*)

14. Incident Reporting:

Incident reporting is the formal process of documenting any unexpected or unplanned event, issue, or occurrence that may have caused or has the potential to cause harm, injury, disruption, or damage. It is a practice applied in various sectors such as healthcare, workplace safety, and education, to manage and mitigate risks.

AKF will establish a strong incident reporting mechanism for the Road to Resilience Project, aimed at ensuring the timely identification, documentation, and resolution of incidents that may impact the project's success. The potential incidents include operational disruptions, equipment failures, theft or vandalism, health and safety accidents, injuries, security breaches, and violations of regulations or contractual agreements. The financial risks such as the misuse of funds or discrepancies in the budget are also critical considerations in this framework. By addressing these potential incidents through a structured reporting system, the project can maintain its integrity, accountability, and safety, ensuring that any issues are managed efficiently and appropriately.

14.1 Incident Reporting Procedures:

Project staff are required to report any incidents promptly to KfW. The reports should provide a complete account of the incident, including a clear description of the event, the date and time it occurred, the location, the parties involved, and an assessment of the incident's impact. These reports must be submitted to both the project management team and KfW representatives for proper documentation. Upon submission, the incidents will undergo a thorough review by a designated committee responsible for assessing the situation and devising an appropriate action plan based on the findings.

14.1.2 Response and Resolution:

A full investigation is carried out by a designated team to thoroughly understand the cause and impact of the incident, ensuring that all contributing factors are identified. The designated team on the findings, an action plan is developed to address the root cause, incorporating both corrective measures to resolve the immediate issue and preventive strategies to mitigate the risk of recurrence.

The implementation phase involves executing the action plan while continuously monitoring its effectiveness to ensure the desired outcomes are achieved. Throughout the process, all relevant stakeholders are kept informed of the incident, the steps being taken to resolve it, and any ongoing measures to prevent future occurrences.

14.1.3 Incident Documentation and Reporting:

It is important to maintain thorough and detailed records of all incidents, investigations, and corresponding resolutions. This process involves documenting every step of the incident from its occurrence to the final resolution. The records should include the nature of the incident, the investigation process, findings, corrective actions taken, and any follow-up measures to prevent recurrence. These records serve as a reference for internal reviews and external audits, ensuring transparency and accountability.

The project team will maintain regular communication with KfW on significant incidents. This includes timely updates on the progress of ongoing investigations, as well as the status of any resolution measures that have been implemented. The shared detailed reports allow KfW to stay informed and confident that incidents are being managed properly and that the necessary steps are taken to resolve them effectively.

Additionally, it is important to ensure that all reporting adheres to KfW-specific requirements and guidelines. This includes meeting deadlines, using the appropriate reporting format, and providing the necessary information as per KfW standards. The project team will strictly follow the guidelines to ensure that reporting is consistent, complete, and in line with KfW expectations.

Note: The Project team is to adopt the KfW: **(ESMP/ESCOP Guidance Annex C – Immediate Incident Notification Form)**

14.1.4 Staff Training and Awareness on Incident Reporting:

The ESHS team will conduct regular training sessions for staff on incident reporting procedures and best practices to ensure all team members are well-prepared to handle and report incidents effectively. These sessions should also emphasize the importance of accuracy, timeliness, and adherence to established protocols. In parallel, raise awareness among all stakeholders, including staff, partners, and beneficiaries, about the importance of incident reporting and their respective roles in the process.

Effective incident reporting is essential for the successful implementation and long-term sustainability of the KfW-funded agriculture project in Syria. By strictly following the outlined procedures and promoting a culture of transparency and accountability, the project will be better positioned to manage risks and achieve its objectives.

15. Knowledge Management, Learning and Best Practices:

For Knowledge Management, documenting best practices and learnings in the Road to Resilience Project, AKF will adopt systematic data collection, organization, sharing, and application of project-related information, ensuring that lessons learned, best practices, and critical insights are captured and utilized throughout the project lifecycle.

To optimize the ESMP's success, AKF will capture best practices in knowledge management and create a centralized repository for all project documents, link it with AKF Global 'Learning Hub', and facilitate regular knowledge-sharing sessions among team members, implementing continuous learning mechanisms such as periodic workshops and training programs. Additionally, AKF will foster a culture of knowledge sharing, where staff members are encouraged to document and communicate their experiences, challenges, and solutions, and enhance the project's adaptive capacity and resilience. This approach will not only strengthen project outcomes but also build long-term capacity within the organization.

16. Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP):

As a Project Executing Agency (PEA) the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), is fully committed to ensuring the highest standards of Environmental, Social, Health, and Safety (ESHS) management throughout the implementation of the "Road to Resilience" project.

The project will establish a multi-disciplinary ESHS team composed of a dedicated ESHS Officer, experts in environmental protection (environmentalist), social safeguards/gender, and health and safety. This team will conduct day-to-day monitoring, regular site inspections, periodic audits/reviews, and provide technical guidance to ensure that all activities align with the EMMP. The ESHS team will coordinate closely with relevant program staff and departments within AKF to track the ESMP progress in terms of implementation of activities to achieve intended outcomes/results.

16.1 Environmental and Social Management Activities Work Plan (ESMP):

Project Activities	Potential Environmental & Social Risk	Mitigation Activities	Means of Verification	Responsibility	Monitoring Procedures
A. Staff Structure, Implementation, and General Requirements for ESHS					
1. ESHS Management Structure (dedicated staff/capacities/expertise in ESM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If not established a proper structure could hinder the implementation of the Project Challenges in the implementation of the ESMP Challenges to ensure KfW compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish staff structure recruit all key positions and deploy. Set a work plan aligning with the ESMP to achieve the targets Staff/experts regularly monitor the implementation to ensure donor compliance related to E&S. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant ESHS staff recruited, trained and deployed The staff has to work with specific ESM activities and deadlines 	CEO/HR/Program me Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resumes, and contracts of staff TORs/Workplans with timelines Clear Deliverables for each staff
2. Signing Code of Conduct by staff/contractors/suppliers/consultants engaged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If not signed the Code of Contract risk of exploitation and abuses. Risk of exploitation of the rights of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All relevant staff/contractors/supplier s/consultants will sign the contract once recruited/engaged. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All relevant staff/contractors/suppliers/consultants sign the CoC 	HR, PM, and ESHS Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check the CoC is signed Check that all staff/contractors/suppliers/consultants are well

	staff/farmers/commu nity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction orientation on the Code of Conduct (CoC) • Refreshers sessions on (CoC) and continued monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All relevant staff/contractors/suppliers/consultants attended the CoC induction/orientation and report. 		<p>informed about the CoC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field monitoring to ensure that staff/contractors/consultants work in compliance with the signed CoC
3. Provide ESHS induction and training and awareness to the workforce regarding ESHS risks and mitigation measures to all relevant staff/workers/contractors/consultants (including indirect workers) tailored to the Project scope.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If not trained will not understand the ESHS standards and protocols. • Will increase the risk of incidents/safety issues. • Will cause negative impacts on the health/fitness/safety of the workers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory ESHS training before deployment in the field. • Easy understandable ESHS instructions with visuals written as a part of training to all relevant workers. • Continuous follow-up and monitoring in the field to see that the training is being practiced. • Organize training refreshers where required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trained staff/workers, and training reports • Training content and material • Training attendance sheet • Training Photos • Follow-up report 	PM and ESHS Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check the training content • Conduct a quick pre and post-training test to see changes in knowledge ESHS before and after training • See the gaps in training and prepare recommendations for improvement
B. Access to Program Area, Safety and Security Risks					
1. Risk of Conflict Escalation hinders access to program areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The staff access to the program area to assist the farmers/CIGs/cooperatives. • The farmers/CIGs might not get 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated Field Security, and Staff access plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated security plan for staff field movement 	Director Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check the field security plan and evolving context
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share regular security alerts, and enhance coordination with UN Agencies advocating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alerts shared with staff/farmers/CIGs/Cooperatives 	Director Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See the security updates/briefs/alerts shared by the security team and

	<p>assistance due to outreach challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The staff or farmers/CIGs movement restricted could delay the implementation of the program 	<p>peace and humanitarian access.</p>	<p>and other relevant stakeholders</p>		<p>ensure they reach the relevant people. Also, see the AKF security manual/policies</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preferably deploy staff based in the targeted Governorates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Offices established at each Governorate to cover the staff and local recruitment done 	<p>HR and Programme Director/PM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff list/resumes/contracts
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remote Management (where applicable) to achieve the targets and adjust the work plans/priorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remote management plan, and see the adjusted workplan 	<p>HR/ Programme Director /PM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check the remote management strategy, adjusted work plan, and deliverables
<p>2. Risk of Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) in the field/farming land/area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It could cause serious safety issues for the farmers/CIGs/Cooperatives/Staff Restrict farmers/CIG's access to their agriculture farms/land It could adversely impact agriculture and livestock production as farmers abandon land due to risks of UXO. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project team conducts EORE and prepares the list of villages with high risk of UXO and shares it with the donor. Try to avoid it unless get clarity from relevant agencies/experts in UXO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UXO Assessment Report and list of villages/locations highlighting the level of risk of UXO 	<p>Director Operations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check the locations/villages list
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff training on Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE), and training rollout in the field. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff training report with all details and trained staff list 	<p>Director operations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See the training content and report, pre and post-test to see changes in knowledge level related to EORE for the staff

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) Sessions conducted in the targeted villages to mitigate risk. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EORE sessions conducted. Report the number of people reached and see the awareness campaign's effectiveness 	Director Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See the content session and also check the level of awareness of EORE in the community through the KAP survey
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise with UNMAS for the clearance of mines/unexploded ordnance (in case not yet cleared or something) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNMAS clearance report (if any is required for any location) 	Director Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See if UNMAS did any mine clearance operations and report
3. Risk of Incidents, Road Accidents, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk of Security incidents particularly in high-risk areas such as Aleppo and Aswedia etc. This could hinder the implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff travel plan before approval by the security department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travel Plan, Security approvals 	Director Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travel forms and security approvals record
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See the situation and context and monitor the whole trip 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vehicle trackers and radio communication for emergency 	Director Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See the context update and alerts
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Armored Vehicles for the staff traveling to moderate or high-risk governorates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See that the armored vehicle is equipped with all required communication tools/first aid etc. Incident reporting 	Director Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that all staff traveling to high-risk areas have armored vehicles Armored vehicles are fully equipped check regularly

			system is in place		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Road Accidents staff during travel could risk the lives of the staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The staff health and life insurance policy to be strictly practiced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and Life Insurance policy in practice and all staff signed 	HR/Director Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check and confirm the health and life insurance policy is being practiced
C. Agricultural, and Environmental Risk					
C.1 Specific Objective 1 (SO1): Participation of small-scale farmers in cooperative and community models enhanced:					
Result 1.1: New Common Interest Groups (CIGs)/cooperatives formed, and existing ones strengthened.	Possible exclusion of members from the CIG based on gender/economic status/ethnic/political/secularian/religious affiliations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project team will develop an inclusive criterion and hold regular meetings with the farming community to explain the criteria so that none of the eligible households are excluded. The project team keeping the gender sensitivities and local dynamics where required will form women farmers-focused CIGs. The CIGs will be inclusive and PWDs engaged in farming/related activities will be included as members. The team will assist the CIG leadership in preparing inclusive policies and by-laws. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criteria and TORs for CIG formation List of CIG members Public Meetings/published the criteria to reach more people By-laws developed Orientation session report on criteria and TORs. Gender and disability disaggregated data 	ESHS Officer, M&E, Gender and Program Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Random visit and conduct FGDs with CIGs. Check the CIGs database and analyze it and extract information about gender, disability, etc. Check the constitution of the CIGs it's inclusive Check the meeting record and key decisions and women and PWDs participation in decisions.

<p>Result 1.2: Governance and technical skills of all CIGs/cooperatives improved</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training content is not appropriate or relevant. • Not gender or culturally sensitive and women and PWDs not participating. • As a result of training good indigenous agricultural practices are no more in practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The training content should be carefully developed with modern agriculture and livestock practices and highlighting the indigenous practices of the context. • The Women and PWD attendance should be ensured through special measures like separate training for women or transportation allowance to PWDs etc. • The training material should be gender-sensitive, more visual, and in an easily understandable Arabic language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training content/material • Training Report • Women and PWDs disaggregated data • Modern and Indigenous practices content developed and shared • Pre and post-training test forms • Training photos etc. 	<p>Program Team and M&E. Gender and ESHS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants feedback form • Periodic KAP Surveys • Training observation like training methodology, content, and participation. • Training evaluation
<p>Result 1.3: Sustainable agricultural intensification techniques are adopted</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of Indigenous context relevant agriculture practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program team should encourage modern agriculture and livestock practices but also highlight/stress the indigenous practices good for the context for better production and risk mitigation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KAP Survey Report • Beneficiaries feedback • Field Observation Reports 	<p>Program Team and M&E. Gender and ESHS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct periodic crop/livestock monitoring • Conduct KAP surveys
<p>D. Specific Objective 2: Strategic agriculture, horticulture, and livestock value chains strengthened.</p>					
<p>Result 2.1 Strategic agriculture, horticulture, and livestock value chains strengthened.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of Manipulating Prices by specific actors around value chains. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select the priority value chains and conduct value chain studies, including strategies for upgrading value chains. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value Chain Study Reports • Regular Market Price 	<p>Program Team and M&E and ESHS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Price tracking/monitoring surveys

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk of crop diversity due to focus on selected value chains. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the concept of fair price and sensitize the CIGs/other actors to follow the fair price formula. Parallel strategies to invest in other crops not included in value chains. 	<p>Monitoring Tool</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AKF synergies and investment in other projects 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consumer feedback from the local market
<p>Result 2.2: Selected (strategic importance and market-backed) value chains in agriculture, horticulture, and livestock are assessed and promoted.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Risk of Loss of food diversity and nutrition due to focus on targeted value chains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AKF to work on parallel strategies to also promote crops contributing to food such as wheat, and other food crops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crops monitoring survey reports 	Program Team and M&E and ESHS	Crop Monitoring/Extension services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk of Soil Degradation and land infertility due to focus on specific crops and cultivation each year without crop rotations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AKF deploys experts to advise farmers on issues related to soil degradation and improving fertility through modern and indigenous agricultural practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Reports GAP Practices material Field Observations 	Program Team and M&E and ESHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training observation Pre and Post Training test forms Periodic KAP Survey Farmers/CIGs feedback
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training of Farmers/CIGs in good agricultural practices (GAP). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Reports GAP Practices material Field Observations 	Program Team and M&E and ESHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training observation Pre and Post Training test forms Periodic KAP Survey Farmers/CIGs feedback
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce climate-smart agriculture practices such as crop rotation, mulching, intercropping, and production of local 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Content Training Reports 	Program Team and M&E and ESHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training observation

		organic compost to enhance soil fertility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training Attendance Sheets and Photos • KAP Survey Report • Organic Compost Preparation and Use monitoring report 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre and Post Training test forms • Periodic KAP Survey • Farmers/CIGs feedback
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance Indigenous drainage methods to remove excess water reduce soil salinity and increase fertility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field reports by experts • Field Observation • Farmers feedback documented 	Program Team and M&E and ESHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field Observation • Farmers/CIGs feedback
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the value chain approach is all about the economies of scale there is a Risk of Water Resource Depletion due to over-extraction or Excessive use of surface or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce modern irrigation practices such as drip and sprinkler irrigation to reduce water wastage and efficient utilization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water Irrigation Report • Feedback from CIGS/Water user associations 	Program Team and M&E and ESHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field Observation • Farmers/CIGs feedback • Surveys on water use irrigation and practices

	groundwater leading to depletion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the concept of rainwater harvesting practices through training and awareness sessions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Report Training Content Training Attendance Sheet and Photos 	Program Team and M&E and ESHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Observation Pre and Post-test forms Field Observation Farmers/CIGs feedback
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contamination of water from pesticides, fertilizers, or animal waste. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote usage of organic alternatives for pesticides and fertilizers such as organic compost etc. 	Expert reports	PM and Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field Observation Farmers/CIGs feedback
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on Wildlife: Disruption of local wildlife due to habitat loss or chemical use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discourage the use of chemicals/fertilizers/pesticides to promote organic and natural solutions 	Site Assessment report	ESHS Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field Observation Farmers/CIGs feedback
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chemical Pollution Pesticides and Herbicides: Contamination of air, soil, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training farmers in the production of natural fertilizers (Organic Compost). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Material Training Report Attendance sheets and Photos 	Program Team and M&E and ESHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Observation Pre and Post-test forms Field Observation Farmers/CIGs feedback
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training farmers on the production of natural/organic alternatives for pesticides/insecticides. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Material Training Report 	Program Team and M&E and ESHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Observation Pre and Post-test forms Field Observation

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance sheets and Photos 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmers/CIGs feedback
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waste Management Agro-waste: Improper disposal of crop residues, packaging, or animal waste. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training of the farmers/CIGs on proper disposal of the agro-waste. 	Site Assessment report	Program Team and M&E and ESHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Observation Pre and Post-test forms Field Observation Farmers/CIGs feedback
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training farmers on the utilization of agro-waste for bi-products such as organic compost (use of animal manure for fertilizing land) and fodder for livestock from crop residues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Material Training Report Attendance sheets and photos 	Program Team, M&E, and ESHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Observation Pre and Post-test forms Field Observation Farmers/CIGs feedback
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plastic Waste: Pollution from the use of plastic mulches, bags, or containers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training farmers on waste collection, and sorting. Recycling, reuse, and disposal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Material Training Report Attendance sheets and photos 	Program Team, M&E, and ESHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Observation Pre and Post-test forms Field Observation Farmers/CIGs feedback
Result 2.3: Increased access to collectively owned and managed production, processing, value addition, and storage assets	Installation of greenhouses/minor construction of storage facilities/aggregation hubs by farmers/CIGs might cause adverse environmental impacts.	E&S site Assessment using the KfW tool to acquire more information about the environmental and social impacts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site Assessment Report ESMP Report 	ESHS Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct Site E&S Assessment on the specified tool Monitor the implementation of the mitigation plan

		Based on the findings of the report will prepare a mitigation plan			
E. Specific Objective 3: Availability of agriculture business services and financing increased					
Result 3.1: Access to production services (farming and veterinary) increased for women and youth	Risk of women/PWD participation.	Orientation sessions about the activity in the field to reach more women and PWDs. Allocate specific quotas for women and PWDs to enable access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Session Reports • Gender and disability disaggregated database • Feedback Survey Report 	Program, Gender, and ESHS team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the targeting of the beneficiaries • Follow-up to ensure that women and PWDs have a quota • Conduct Periodic Feedback Surveys
Result 3.2: Access to post-harvest services (aggregation, storage, processing, logistics, and marketing) improved.	Installation of greenhouses/minor construction of storage facilities/aggregation hubs by farmers/CIGs might cause adverse environmental impacts.	E&S site Assessment using the KfW tool to acquire more information about the environmental and social impacts. Based on the findings of the report will prepare a mitigation plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site Assessment Report • ESMP Report 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct Site E&S Assessment on the specified tool • Monitor the implementation of the mitigation plan
Result 3.3: Improved use of savings and other financial services	Risk of women/PWDs exclusion from access to finance.	Orientation sessions about the activity in the field to reach more women and PWDs. Allocate specific quotas for the women and PWDs to enable their access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Session Reports • Gender and disability disaggregated database • Feedback Survey Report 	Program, Gender, ESHS and M&E team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the targeting of beneficiaries • Follow-up to ensure that women and PWDs have a quota • Conduct Periodic Feedback Surveys
F. Social Risks During Implementation					

1. Risk of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/Harassment at the workplace to staff or in the field with the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Victims may experience long-term emotional distress, anxiety, and loss of self-esteem, affecting their mental health and well-being. Incidents of harassment can lead to decreased morale, productivity, and trust among staff, negatively impacting team dynamics and project outcomes. The SEA issues may suffer reputational harm, resulting in a loss of credibility, donor support, or future funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff/Contractors/Sub-contractors orientation/training on AKF safeguarding and PSEA Policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Report on Safeguarding and PSEA policy 	The program, Safeguarding, ESHS, and M&E team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Observation Training Content review Feedback from participants
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AKF will enforce the code of conduct all staff/contractors/sub-contractors will sign the code of conduct (CoC). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signed Code of Conduct 	The program, Safeguarding, ESHS, and M&E team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that all staff/workers signed the code of conduct before deployment and induction sessions have been done
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disseminate awareness to staff and community on the AKF Complaint Mechanism process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaint Response Mechanism established 	The program, Safeguarding, ESHS, and M&E team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See the IEC material content Observation feedback
2. Labor Rights Violations and Child Exploitation of children in agricultural activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children involved in agricultural labor may suffer from physical strain, injuries, and hindered education, affecting their long- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Labor management plan, sign of code of conduct, and enforce AKF HR policies workforce conditions, working hours, annual leaves, sick leaves, and fair wages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Reports CIGs Signed Code of Conduct AKF Policy enforced 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Observation Ensure signing of CoC Ensure AKF policy is signed and enforced

	<p>term growth and development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child labor limits educational opportunities, trapping families into cycles of poverty as children are unable to gain skills for better-paying jobs in the future. • Exploiting children and violating labor rights undermine ethical standards and may result in legal and reputational consequences for involved organizations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worker health, safety, and insurance policy to be employed. • As per the Aga Khan Foundation's (AKF) Human Resource Policy, child labor in any form is strictly prohibited and not tolerated in any AKF projects or its affiliated initiatives. AKF is firmly committed to upholding child rights and adheres to its HR policy to ensure the protection and promotion of these rights. We actively implement measures to mitigate any potential risks of child exploitation and abuse, demonstrating our unwavering dedication to creating a safe and supportive environment for all children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AKF life and health insurance policy • Enforce the code of conduct and AKF policy to prohibit child labor in any project activity. • Awareness sessions report on child labor • Photos • Content of the sessions 	<p>The program, Safeguarding, ESHS, and M&E team</p> <p>The program, Safeguarding, ESHS, and M&E team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Insurance Policy is enforced • Monitor all activities in the field and ensure that the Code of Conduct is being practiced by AKF and affiliates. • Child labor rights sessions and see content • Feedback from participants • KAP Surveys • Regular field monitoring
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forced Labor: Coercion of individuals to work under threat or without proper compensation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular monitoring, observation, and conducting random interviews with the labor/workers engaged by partners/contractors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field Observation report 	<p>The program, Safeguarding, ESHS, and M&E team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labor rights sessions and see the content • Feedback from participants • KAP Surveys • Regular field monitoring

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen and promote the complaint/grievances response mechanism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GRM established 	The program, Safeguarding, ESHS, and M&E team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enforce GRM See the complaints See the complaint responded Complaints record
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor Working Conditions: Exposure to harmful chemicals, lack of protective gear, or inadequate wages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular monitoring, observation, and conducting random interviews with the labor/workers engaged by partners/contractors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring and Observation Reports 	The program, Safeguarding, ESHS, and M&E team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular monitoring to enforce AKF HR Policy
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure worker health and safety through insurance policies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insurance Policy 	The program, Safeguarding, ESHS, and M&E team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enforcing Insurance Policy
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote safety through proper use of personal protective equipment while working on the field in project-related activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPEs given to relevant staff and workers 	The program, Safeguarding, ESHS, and M&E team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field Observation all staff/workers PPEs
G. Health and Safety Risks					
1. Pesticide Exposure: Health issues among workers and local communities due to chemical exposure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers and communities may suffer from respiratory issues etc. Pesticides can leach into water sources, affecting drinking water quality. Harmful effects on non-target species, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discourage the use of fertilizers/pesticides/insecticides through awareness and training and promote alternatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sessions Reports and Photos 	The program, Safeguarding, ESHS, and M&E team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Observation Training Content review Feedback from participants KAP Surveys
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure health and safety through health and life insurance policies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insurance Policy 	The program, Safeguarding, ESHS, and M&E team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and Life Insurance Policy practiced

	including beneficial insects, birds, and aquatic life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers safety through provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) working in project activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPE provided 	The program, Safeguarding, ESHS, and M&E team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPEs procured and staff/workers use it
2. Waterborne Diseases: Spread of diseases due to water contamination or stagnant water.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spread of diseases like cholera, typhoid, diarrhea, etc. Increased pressure on local healthcare systems due to the rise in waterborne illnesses. Contaminated water sources limit access to safe drinking water, exacerbating health risks. Contaminated water used in irrigation or food preparation can lead to foodborne illnesses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness of the community/CIGs on adverse effects of keeping their premises clean and organic waste management campaigns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sessions Report/Attendance Sheet and Photos 	The program, Safeguarding, ESHS, and M&E team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Session observation Feedback
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocacy and coordination in the sector to engage partners working in Water Health, Hygiene, and Sanitation issues to remove stagnant water. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report 	The program, Safeguarding, ESHS, and M&E team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Session observation Feedback
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support local municipalities in removing the water and managing the waste. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report from the program 	Program, Safeguarding, ESHS, and M&E team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring in the field See meeting minutes and key decisions with the municipality
H. Risks Related to Community Resilience					
1. Dependency on External Inputs: Vulnerability due to reliance on imported seeds, fertilizers, or pesticides.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High reliance on imported inputs often means higher costs, which can make farming less sustainable or reduce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training of farmers/CIGs on income diversification and business planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Report/Attendance/Photos 	The program, Safeguarding, ESHS, and M&E team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Observation Feedback KAP Surveys

	<p>farmer income margins.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local farmers and agricultural systems have become overly reliant on foreign suppliers, reducing local autonomy and resilience in agricultural practices. Overuse of imported chemical fertilizers and pesticides may degrade soil health and local ecosystems over time. Countries or farmers dependent on imported inputs may face financial challenges if exchange rates fluctuate unfavorably, further increasing costs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support in-kind or grants to diversify or increase income sources. Promoting locally available improved varieties get recommendations from the local research institutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CIGs/Farmers signed sheets Agriculture package 	<p>The program, Safeguarding, ESHS, and M&E team</p> <p>The program, Safeguarding, ESHS, and M&E team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beneficiary verification exercise Conduct PDM Field Monitoring Field Monitoring Feedback from farmers
<p>2. Loss of Traditional/ Indigenous Knowledge Decreased resilience of communities due</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communities lose valuable knowledge of sustainable farming practices, leading to decreased ability to adapt to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training in Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Reports/ Attendance Sheets and Photos 	<p>The program, Safeguarding, ESHS, and M&E team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Observation Training Content review Feedback from participants KAP Surveys

to the erosion of indigenous practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> environmental changes. The decline of indigenous practices can weaken cultural identity and traditions, diminishing community cohesion and heritage. Traditional knowledge often includes the use and preservation of diverse local plant and animal species, the loss of which can harm ecosystems and reduce biodiversity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training in climate smart agricultural methods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Reports/ Attendance Sheets and Photos 	The program, Safeguarding, ESHS, and M&E team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Observation Training Content review Feedback from participants KAP Surveys
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refine and promote indigenous agricultural methods to increase crop production. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Reports/Attendance Sheets and Photos 	The program, Safeguarding, ESHS, and M&E team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Observation Training Content review Feedback from participants KAP Surveys
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document the indigenous practices and share them with the farmers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program report and practices documented 	The program, Safeguarding, ESHS, and M&E team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program report Field Observations Feedback from farmers/ CIGs KAP Surveys

I. Risks Related to Gender Inequality

1. Unequal Access to Resources: Women and PWDs may face barriers in accessing land, credit, or training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women and persons with disabilities (PWDs) may have limited income-generating opportunities due to restricted access to land, credit, or training, exacerbating poverty and inequality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AKF gender policy and mainstreaming approaches to be adopted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AKF Gender Policy practiced 	Gender Coordinator and ESHS Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enforce Gender and safeguarding policy Regular field monitoring
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closely monitor the list of beneficiaries to ensure that women, PWDs, and other segments are equally participating. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Database 	Gender Coordinator and ESHS Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and evaluate the field data Ensure women's and PWDs participation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excluding these groups from resources reduces overall agricultural or business productivity, hindering community development and growth. Unequal access to resources perpetuates social inequality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special quota for women and PWDs in business grants and training (where applicable) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quota assigned check and ensured 	Gender Coordinator and ESHS Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure Quota is practiced Monitoring the data
2. Workload Disparities: Increased burden on women due to agricultural responsibilities without proper support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women may face exhaustion and stress due to the heavy burden of agricultural work combined with household responsibilities. Overburdened women may struggle to work efficiently, leading to lower agricultural productivity and economic output. Excessive workload may prevent women from accessing education training etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the gender roles and responsibilities before designing the package. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender Roles assessed Report 	Gender Coordinator and ESHS Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender sensitization in the field
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize gender sensitization sessions to ensure fair division of work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Session report/Attendance Sheet/Photos 	Gender Coordinator and ESHS Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Session content Observations KAP
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sensitize men to ensure women's inclusion in the project activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Session report/Attendance Sheet/Photos 	Gender Coordinator and ESHS Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Session content Observation KAP

17. Annexures:

- Annex A – AKF Safeguarding Policy
- Annex B – KfW 5.1 ESMP/ESCOP Guidance – Code of Conduct
- Annex C – Detailed Stakeholders Engagement Plan (SEP)
- Annex D – KfW Incident Reporting Form
- Annex E – KfW UXO Clearance Form
- Annex F – KfW (ESMP) Reporting Template
- Annex G – 2.0 ESMP – Site Assessment Tool (“Moderate Risk Category B Projects”, as defined in the Guidance Document)