STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Electrification of the East-West Region and Rural Electrification Peperpot to Albina

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Abstract

The Peperpot-Albina Transmission Line Project aims to expand Suriname's electricity grid, improve energy access, and reduce fossil fuel reliance. Key components include a 110 kV transmission line, new substations, and connecting rural communities to the national grid. The Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) ensures transparent communication, minimizes risks, and promotes local participation for long-term social and economic benefits.

Contents

Tables

Figures

1. Introduction

This report is part of a series of documents outlining the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) within the "Energy Transition and Integration Program for Suriname."

The Peperpot-Albina Transmission Line Project is a crucial infrastructure initiative designed to expand Suriname's electricity grid, enhance energy access, and reduce reliance on costly diesel generation in the eastern region. The project covers the road corridor from Peperpot to Albina, including all rural villages along this route, as well as Wanhatti and its surrounding communities.

The primary objective is to transition from isolated energy systems to a centralized energy generation and distribution network.

Currently, energy distribution in the region varies:
- The communities of Perica, Adjoema Kondre, Moengoe Tapoe, and Alfons Dorp are connected to the EBS grid.
- Moengo and Albina rely on isolated fossil fuel generators.
- The villages around Wanhatti also depend on fossil fuel generators for electricity.

The planned interventions include:
- Construction of two new substations in Moengo and Albina, along with the expansion of the Peperpot substation.
- Installation of a 110KV overhead transmission line (OHL) from the Peperpot substation (SS/PP) to Albina.
- Connection of Wanhatti and nearby villages to the EBS distribution grid.

2. Scope and Objectives

2.1 Scope

The Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) covers all areas affected by the construction, operation, and associated works of the substations, distribution network, and renewable energy facilities, including:
- Project site (locations of substations and the solar PV plant)
- Transmission corridor (for the 110 kV transmission line and the 33 kV distribution line)
- Communities and stakeholders directly or indirectly impacted by the project

The project consists of the following major works:
1. Construction and operation of a 110 kV transmission line (approx. 127 km, 50 MW capacity) to interconnect the EPAR system at Peperpot (Commewijne District) with Albina (Marowijne District), along an existing road.
2. Upgrade of one existing substation at Peperpot and construction of two new substations at Moengo and Albina.
3. Construction of a 33 kV distribution line (approx. 34 km) between Moengo and Perica.
4. Last-mile rural electrification in Wanhatti, including the necessary distribution infrastructure to connect new users and improve reliability of supply.
5. Construction of a 1.6 MW grid-tied solar PV plant in Moengo, integrated into the new Moengo substation and connected to the EPAR system via an existing 12 kV distribution line, with SCADA-based real-time monitoring and fault detection.
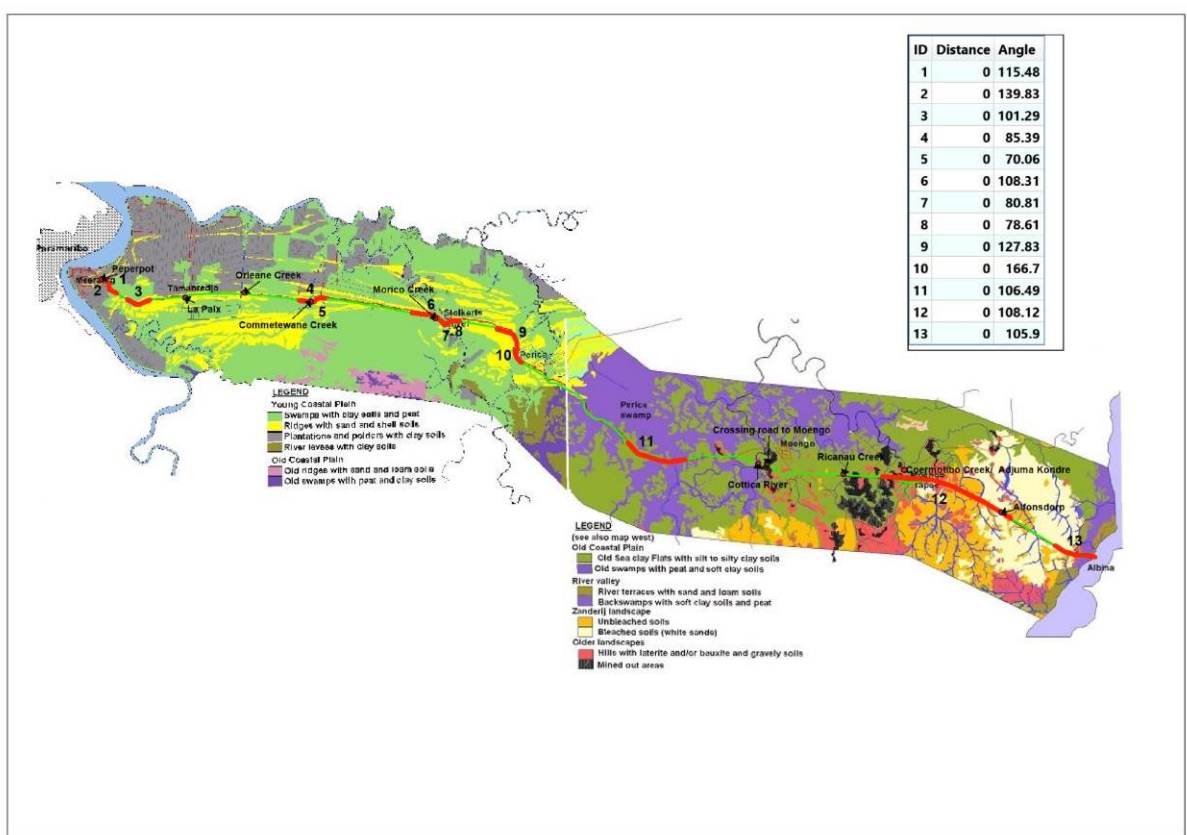

Figure 1: The Study Area and the project location

The SEP is a critical component for ensuring the success of this energy generation, transmission, and distribution project. It will guide the engagement process to keep all relevant parties informed, consulted, and involved throughout the project lifecycle. This is particularly important for rural communities, where historically, optimal inclusion in project planning and implementation has been limited.

This guidance document for stakeholder engagement contributes to:

Enhancing project transparency and trust
- Provides clear and consistent communication about the project's objectives, scope, and impacts.
- Builds trust with communities, government agencies, and other stakeholders through open dialogue.

Reducing risks and conflicts
- Prevents misunderstandings and misinformation that could lead to resistance or opposition.
- Mitigates potential legal and reputational risks by proactively addressing environmental, social, and economic concerns.

Ensuring regulatory compliance
- Aligns the project with national and international requirements, including environmental and social safeguards.
- Meets funding agency criteria, ensuring continued financial and institutional support.

Supporting social and environmental responsibility
- Ensures the inclusive participation of Indigenous and Tribal communities.
- Promotes sustainability by addressing environmental concerns and minimizing negative impacts.

Strengthening community buy-in and long-term benefits
- Encourages local participation, fostering a sense of ownership and cooperation.
- Leads to long-term socio-economic benefits, including improved energy access and employment opportunities.

Facilitating effective grievance resolution
- Provides a structured Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) for efficient handling of complaints.
- Prevents escalation of conflicts through clear resolution pathways.

Improving project monitoring and adaptability
- Establishes feedback mechanisms to capture and respond to stakeholder concerns throughout the project lifecycle.
- Allows for adjustments based on stakeholder input, ensuring continuous improvement.

2.2 Objectives

The primary objective of the project is to strengthen energy security, reduce dependence on fossil fuels, and enhance economic opportunities in Suriname, with a focus on rural areas.

The Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) supports this goal by ensuring inclusive and active participation of:
- Indigenous and Tribal communities
- The Government of Suriname (GoS)
- The private sector
- Local residents within the project area
- Road users along the Peperpot–Albina corridor
- Communities in potentially impacted areas, including Wanhatti, Moengo Tapoe, and neighboring villages

Specific objectives of the SEP include:
- Facilitating transparent communication on all project components, including transmission and distribution upgrades, rural electrification, and renewable energy generation.
- Identifying and addressing social, environmental, and cultural concerns early in the project cycle.
- Ensuring that benefits such as reliable energy access and job opportunities are equitably shared among communities.
- Promoting gender inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in alignment with EBS's Gender and PwD Action Plan.

3. Stakeholder Identification and Analysis

3.1 Key Stakeholders' mapping

The data presented here is derived from CESI Reports, EBS data, secondary sources, and field visits conducted by the consultant. In relation to the Indigenous village of Alfonsdorp and the Maroon villages of Moengo Tapoe, Adjoema Kondre, and Wanhatti, meetings have been held and will continue to follow the principles of FPIC (Free, Prior, and Informed Consent).

The methodology used to map stakeholders included:

- Desk study
- Consultation and communication with key stakeholders
- Development of a semi-structured questionnaire
- Field surveys and meetings in the communities.

Stakeholder and rights holder engagement and consultation aim to facilitate the exchange of information and perspectives while strengthening relationships between stakeholders, rights holders, and the project execution team. This process is designed to address community concerns and foster collaborative solutions. By keeping communities informed, it enhances support for feasible solutions and helps prevent conflicts. In addition, comprehensive discussions took place with key stakeholders and rights holders, including the relevant District Commissioners, local representatives from pertinent ministries, and the chiefs of local Indigenous and Maroon communities.

3.1.1 Communities

The villages of Wanhatti, Moengo Tapoe, and Adjoemakondre are Maroon villages, and their residents belong to the Aucaner or N'djuka Maroon ethnic group. Alfonsdorp, an Indigenous or Amerindian village, is home to residents who belong to the Arawak or Lokono Indigenous ethnic group. Both the Indigenous and Maroon groups in Suriname are classified by the government as disadvantaged groups.

Perica is not classified as an Indigenous or Maroon village due to its lack of the typical social structure associated with these communities. While the village has existed since the 1960s, its residents are descendants of various ethnic groups, including Maroon and Indigenous people. Perica is located on an old colonial plantation, and according to the residents, it lies between km 54 and km 70 along the East-West Corridor in the Marowijne district. The following table presents the demographic information for the villages and communities, as provided by the Centraal Bureau Burgerzaken (CBB) of the Ministry of Interior Affairs (Binnenlandse Zaken).

Table 1 – Demographic information of the villages

Name of village	Resort	Ethnic group	Tribe	Population[1]		
				Men	Women	Total
Alfonsdorp	Albina	Indigenous	Arowak	125	102	227
Adjoemakondre	Moengo Tapoe	Maroon	Aucaner	171	166	337
Moengo Tapoe	Moengo Tapoe	Maroon	Aucaner	286	242	528
Wanhatti	Wanhatti	Maroon	Aucaner	108	113	221
Perica	Moengo	Various ethnic groups		54	38	92

[1] Population per January 2019

The villages also have some basic government services, presented in the following overview.

Table 2– Government services of the villages

Name of village	Outpatient clinic	School	Electricity	Installed capacity in kW	Drinking water supply
Alfonsdorp	yes	yes	yes	68	no
Adjoemakondre	no	no	yes	40	no
Moengotapoe	no	no	yes	150	no
Wanhatti	yes	yes	yes	60	yes
Perica	no	no	yes	18	no

3.1. 2 GoS Agencies

Education: All six resorts in Marowijne have GLO primary schools. Additionally, the Moengo and Albina resorts offer More Extended Primary Education (MULO) secondary schools and Primary Vocational Education (LBO) secondary schools.

Health Services: The Regional Health Service (RGD) is responsible for primary healthcare in Marowijne, operating several outpatient clinics in the resorts. For hospitalization, patients must rely on facilities in Paramaribo or French Guiana.

MinRoS: There are two district commissioners (DCs), responsible for the management of Marowijne: DC Marowijne Noord-Oost (based in Albina) and DC Marowijne Zuid-West (based in Moengo).

3.1. 3 Other stakeholders

External Funding parties

- With funding from the French development agency AFD, the IDB, and the government, a new hospital has been built in the Albina resort.

Private Sector

- Gold mining is the most important mining activity in the district and is carried out at various locations along the Marowijne River and its branches.
- There is an intensive trade in Albina of articles from French Guiana and Paramaribo. The trade, which is mostly with villages and illegal gold mining fields, provides employment for a lot of women.
- Logging has an important role in the economic life of the villages. The communities have Logging Permits (HKV), which are mainly used for maintaining employment in and around the villages.
- Agriculture and livestock production activities in the district are mainly intended for own use

3.2 Stakeholders analysis

The table below discusses the link between GoS agencies and Energy projects: the power and interest levels.

Table 3- Stakeholder identification, Public sector

Stakeholder	Category	Key Responsibility	Link to energy	Link to other basic services	Power of Influence	Level of Interest
Ministry of Natural Resources (MNH)	Public (Central Government)	Sustainable and efficient management and development of natural resources potentially present in Suriname. Within the focus area of energy, the ministry is tasked with Energy Policy and supervision of the energy sector. Also, the MNH supervises the performance of water services institutions and guides water management.	Yes	Yes (Water)	High	High
Ministry of Regional Development and Sports (MROS)	Public (Central Government)	Responsible for regional development, agricultural development in the interior, and sports	Yes	Yes (Economic development)	Medium	High
Ministry of Health	Public (Central Government)	Responsible for better access to healthcare and good quality of care	No	Yes (healthcare)	Low	High
Ministry of Education, Science and Culture	Public (Central Government)	The Education System of Suriname is centralized and coordinated, guided and regulated by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.	Yes	Yes (education)	Low	High
Ministry of Finance	Public (Central Government)	Monitors the income and expenditure of the state, and is responsible for the payment of the State's expenditure.	Yes	Yes	High	Medium
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation	Public (Central Government)	It is committed to making Suriname a better country. It does this by establishing and maintaining relationships with various countries and organizations in the world.	Yes	Yes	High	Low
Ministry of Public Works	Public (Central Government)	The Ministry of Public Works develops, builds, and maintains public assets.	No	Yes (Water)	High	High
Ministry of Transport, Communications and Tourism	Public (Central Government)	Responsible for telecommunications services in Suriname	No	Yes (Telecoms)	Low	Low
Energy Authority of Suriname (EAS)	Public	An independent, supervisory, and management body established by law (SB 2016 no. 41) in the energy sector that regulates, monitors, informs, and advises. Energy security and sustainability are also important principles.	Yes	No	High	High
Suriname Power Utility (EBS)	Public	Responsible for power generation, transmission, and distribution (Portfolio of power generation includes HFO Diesel Gensets, Solar PV grid-tied systems. Via subsidiary, Ogane is also	Yes	Yes (Water and Telecoms)	Medium	High

9

		responsible for the retail of cooking fuel (LPG)				

In general, GoS agencies are engaged in the energy sector as follows:

Financing	Ministry of Finance and Planning
International Cooperation	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation
Policy Maker/Operator "Energy Sector"	Ministry of Natural Resources Department of Rural Energy
Regulatory Agency	Energy Authority of Suriname
Services	Ministry of Education, Science and Culture
Power Utility	Suriname Power Utility
Local/rural Development	Ministry of Regional Development and Sports

Figure 2 - Public Institutions related to rural electrification in Suriname

In addition to the GoS agencies, several ITP organizations, Civil Societies, CBos, and NGOs have a stake in Energy projects in the coastal rural area of Suriname.

Table 4- Stakeholder identification, ITP organizations, Civil Society, and Non-Governmental Organizations

Stakeholder	Category	Key Responsibility	Link to energy	Link to other basic services	Power of Influence	Level of Interest
Association of Indigenous Village Leaders in Suriname (VIDS)	Civil Society	Its main responsibility is defending Indigenous peoples' rights, as well as promoting sustainable development and environmental protection.	No	Yes (sustainable development)	Medium	High
Collaboration of Tribal People in Suriname (KAMPOS)	Civil Society	The purpose of the collaboration includes advocating for the land and other rights and representing the collective interests of Tribal Peoples.	No	No	Medium	Medium
Association of Saamaka Authorities (VSG)	Civil Society	This organization focuses primarily on the recognition of the land rights of the Saamaka people.	No	No	Medium	Low
Organization for Indigenous people in Suriname (OIS)	NonGovernmental Organization	OIS's work focuses on mitigating the consequences of the actual sanitary crisis and fostering socio-economic resilience within Indigenous communities	No	Yes (sustainable development)	Medium	High

Stakeholder	Category	Key Responsibility	Link to energy	Link to other basic services	Power of Influence	Level of Interest
World Wildlife Fund (WWF)	NonGovernmental Organization	Organization that focuses on conserving wildlife and endangered species	No	No	Low	Medium

Table 5 - Stakeholder identification, Private sector

Stakeholder	Category	Key Responsibility	Link to energy	Link to other basic services	Power of Influence	Level of Interest
Power China	Private Sector	It is an international company working with MNH for electricity projects in the Hinterland.	Yes	No	Low	High
SinoSoar	Private Sector	It is an international company specializing in solar hybrid and off-grid systems	Yes	No	Low	High
JGH	Private Sector	It is an international company of solar energy specializing in remote areas.	Yes	No	Low	High
ElGAWA	Private Sector	It is a local service contractor and distributor of technical products such as generators and electrical materials.	Yes	No	Low	High
Multi Electrical System N.V. (MES)	Private Sector	It is a local technical services provider of electricity	Yes	No	Low	High
HSW Energy	Private Sector	It is a local renewable energy solutions company	Yes	No	Low	High
CleanTech Suriname	Private Sector	Is a local service provider company related to sustainable energy projects	Yes	No	Low	High
InterData N.V.	Private Sector	It is a local service provider company in Suriname related to sustainable energy projects.	Yes	No	Low	High

Table 6- Stakeholder identification, Academia

| Stakeholder	Category	Key Responsibility	Link to energy	Link to other basic services	Power of Influence	Level of Interest
Anton de Kom University of Suriname	Academia	Is the central point of expertise and personnel capable of serving the community with data, knowledge, and skills in various facets of renewable energy systems' operation, maintenance, and management	Yes	No	Medium	High
Polytechnic College (PTC)	Applied Sciences	Institute or Applied sciences that provides BSc. Electrical engineering studies with the possibilities of two majors: electrical technology or information technology.	Yes	No	Low	High
The Institute for Natural Resources and Engineering Studies (NATIN)	Vocational	One of the biggest secondary vocational institutions that aims to provide the Surinamese business sector, service industry, and government with well-trained technical middle management personnel.	Yes	Yes	Low	High
Technical Vocational Education & Training (TVET/AMTO)	Vocational	Secondary vocational institution that provides qualitative education and training for adults.	Yes	No	Low	High
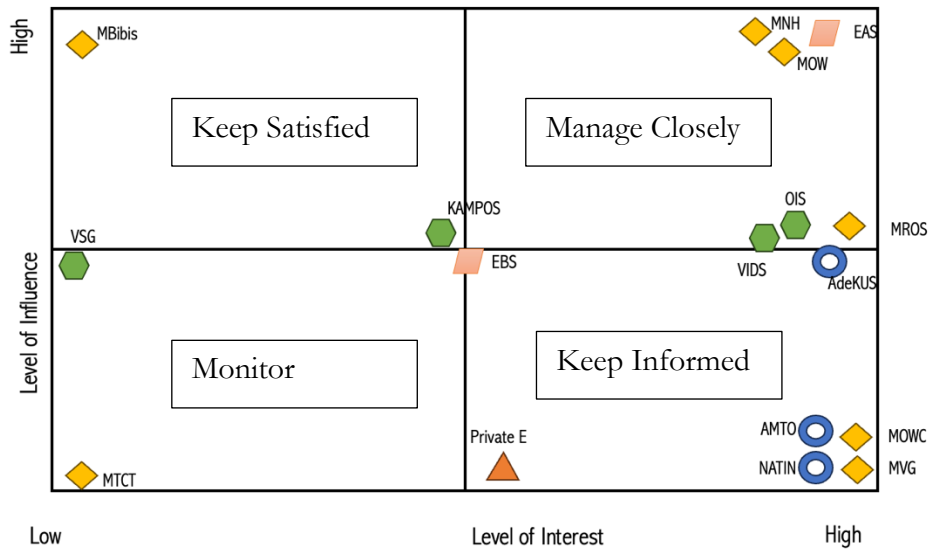
Figure 3 – Power Influence of Stakeholders

4. Engagement Plan

Once stakeholders have been identified and characterized according to their power and influence, the Team proceeded with developing a communication strategy to determine the information to be shared with the stakeholders and the communication tools to be used.

Manage Closely

MNH, MOW, and EAS, as policy makers and regulatory agencies, respectively, are the main stakeholders and the decision makers for the definition of the regulatory and institutional framework for rural electrification projects. These institutions will be included and informed continuously and closely regarding the Project's progress. Also, these institutions must participate in meetings and presentations to evaluate progress and present the main deliverables/products of this consultancy. For these stakeholders, the following communication methods will be used: emails, meetings, presentations, WhatsApp, and reports.

Keep Satisfied

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs should be kept informed on the project, mainly the results and reports. The regulatory and institutional framework will be an important tool for rural electrification development in the country, which will need financing support, so the participation of the ministry will be key to success in this initiative.

Keep Informed

The multilateral and bilateral organizations, ministries of health, education, and Vocational School, and the private sector (energy services and solar mini grids installers) should be adequately informed to potentially provide services.

Monitor

For the rest of the stakeholders who have low interest and low influence, it recommends informing the results of the project. For this, the communication methods to be used will be just reports.

Medium level for both influence and interest

The Academia, specifically Anton de Kom University, would participate as a reviewer or adviser of the main deliverables/products, which could include their participation in meetings and presentations. EBS should also be kept satisfied, considering that they are a key player in the provision of the energy service and will need to be included in this process. For these stakeholders, communication methods will be through high-level meetings, final presentations, and sharing reports.

KAMPOS, VSG, VIDS, and OIS should also be regularly informed about how the project will be executed and how the project is progressing.

Figure 4 – Stakeholders analysis and determine communication/engagement plan

Community Engagement Plan aimed to empower stakeholders, especially with a focus on the communities, and drive forward the shared vision of 24/7 access to energy, and empower the socioeconomic well-being of the communities. Its primary goal is to establish a strategic framework that promotes active participation, open communication, and collaboration among community members, local authorities, and relevant stakeholders.
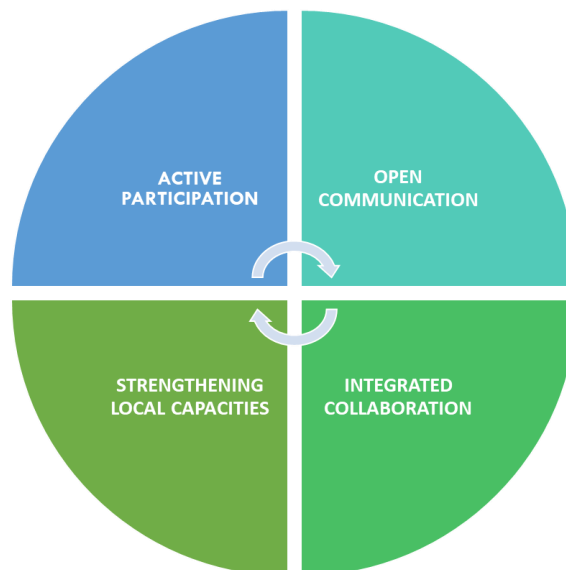

Figure 5 – Phases of communication/engagement plan

To ensure a successful community engagement, ITP organizations suggest consistently incorporating the ten fundamental principles illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 6 – 10 Recommended basic principles for effective community engagement

The following table outlines the basic principles for effective community engagement and demonstrates their application within the context of this project.

Table 7 - Principles' explanation and how they will be implemented in the project

Principle	Explanation	Project Implementation
Respect	Partnering with Indigenous and tribal peoples requires a respectful approach. A respectful approach that clearly demonstrates a basis of equality and partnership, based on equal opportunity and input, constitutes the fundamental principle throughout the entire engagement process.	Respect is a principle that should be considered all the time, whether in an informal or formal setting. During the 1st phase, where communication and project socialization will be discussed in depth, there will be communication channels, methods, and guidelines composed by all parties involved, which provide the baseline of communicating and treating all involved with respect.
Ownership and leadership	The concepts of ownership and leadership are intertwined. Ownership implies that the group for whom the intervention/project was initiated takes responsibility for the process; it becomes or already is their own project. If it is successful, it is their success of which they are proud; if it fails, it feels like their own failure. Ownership should ideally begin at the inception or design stage of a project. When there is ownership, the community naturally also wants and needs to play a leading role in exercising that ownership effectively. Leadership entails the community making its own decisions, whether good or bad, and confidently determining the direction of the design and implementation of the process. External technical support can be provided (and sometimes must be),	During the 1st phase, all key players will have the chance to meet and discuss the project, roles, responsibilities, et, altogether. In addition to the traditional leaders playing a pivotal role, they should also identify whether other community members have the willingness and capacity to take on various potential roles and responsibilities throughout this process and the project's lifetime.

	but decisions should not be made by others for the community or about the community.	
Human capital strengthening, empowerment, and independency	Another fundamental principle that should be consistently observed and applied in an effective community development process is capacity building (sometimes also referred to as capacity development), and related to this, empowerment. Development can only be called genuine and sustainable development if it is rooted and perpetuated by local capacities. "Capacity" can be described as the ability of individuals, institutions, and societies to perform tasks, solve problems, and formulate and achieve objectives in a sustainable manner.	At different stages, communities and their members will engage in decision-making processes, both in collaboration with other important stakeholders and within their own community. However, to guarantee the long-term viability of the services, capacity-building initiatives will be customized to address both the community's specific requirements and the needs of the services. Both technical and administrative training will be provided.
Right-based Approach	A human rights-based approach entails that an organization: • Frames the outcomes of the intervention/project as aiming to achieve one or more human rights, such as the right to education, health, employment, culture, property, access to information, legal protection, etc. • Respects human rights in every phase and activity of its work (including respecting the right to participation, as well as the right to culture and way of life). • Empowers rights-holders (including Indigenous and tribal communities) to assert their rights and empowers duty-bearers (such as healthcare providers) to fulfill their responsibilities.	This project aims to improve the overall well-being of the communities. To provide a better idea of how well this project contributes to the communities, in regard to the rights-based approach, is to link the project with the SDGs. Direct or indirect, the project contributes to 3. Good Health & Well-being 6. Affordable energy 7. Decent work and economic growth 8. Industry, innovation and infrastructure 11. Sustainable cities and communities 12. Responsible consumption and production 13. Climate Action 14. Life below water 15. Life on land 17. Partnerships for the goals.
Information, communication, and transparency	It goes without saying that information, communication, and transparency are crucial for the success of any intervention. Another key aspect of effective communication is the use of understandable, culturally appropriate communication methods. There is little point in communicating in a language that is not well understood or using expressions or concepts that the other party is unfamiliar with or may not interpret in the same way (for example, using a proverb to clarify something, but it is interpreted literally, leading to a misunderstanding).	Within the 1st phase, where communication and project socialization are the topics, communities will be able to express their preferred communication methods and protocols. Based on the mutually agreed channels, methods, and protocols, all parties must adhere throughout the project's lifetime.
Effective participation	This concerns effective participation, which means involvement by the community where they can make a substantial contribution and/or have a genuine impact.	The purpose of having a community engagement plan is to have the communities involved and have their opinions at every step of the process.

Trust	Another fundamental principle to be observed when working with Indigenous and tribal communities is the establishment or reinforcement of mutual trust. When a good trust relationship exists, cooperation and communication will proceed smoothly and quickly, and project partners will indeed be seen as mutual partners rather than just "service providers" or "recipients." Trust is also a crucial aspect of information exchange. Information that comes to or goes from a trusted person will be much more profound and will also resonate more.	By establishing relationships between different key players and having the communication methods, channels, and guidelines, it is a step towards gaining trust, if not, growing trust. By holding true to agreements, it is to ensure trust.
Cultural sensitivity	It is essential for every intervention to be culturally sensitive because otherwise, it can be perceived as unpleasant or even intrusive, or as attempts to ignore or promote cultural assimilation. This can apply to thematic activities within a project (e.g., providing health education in a culturally sensitive manner) but also to the intervention process, especially the interaction among project stakeholders. To be culturally sensitive, it is necessary, or at the very least, beneficial, to understand certain key aspects of the culture of the communities involved. One of these aspects is the collective approach that Indigenous and tribal societies typically have. For instance, community interest, rather than individual interest, is the standard against which a project/intervention will be evaluated. Decision-making can be an iterative community process involving various segments of the village community, and multiple steps may be required that are not always visible to an outsider.	Understanding the Indigenous culture plays an important role in how the project progresses. Especially for local capacity building, awareness and communication need to be adapted to their way of living – best practices will be adapted from the communities' partners, NGOs, and CBOs.
Gender sensitivity	A gender-sensitive approach is sometimes underdeveloped in development interventions, especially when it comes to culturally appropriate gender perspectives. In the context of Indigenous and Tribal communities, cultural appropriateness must be consistently observed. While certain gender-related norms and values may be universal, such as equality, respect, and protection from discrimination, the processes for achieving these outcomes can differ significantly from urban or Western-oriented approaches. In urban settings, gender interventions often focus on individual empowerment and participation. However, in Indigenous and Tribal contexts, the emphasis may be placed on social collectiveness, community consensus, and the maintenance of traditional roles that are integral to cultural identity.	The project will therefore: • Respect cultural norms and practices while promoting equitable opportunities for all genders. • Engage both men and women in consultations and decision-making processes, ensuring that voices from different age groups and social roles are heard. • Adapt engagement methods to align with community-specific communication styles and cultural protocols. • Integrate gender considerations into all phases of project planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, ensuring that benefits are distributed fairly. • Avoid imposing external models that may conflict with traditional governance structures; instead, work collaboratively with community leaders to identify culturally grounded solutions. By embedding a gender-sensitive and culturally respectful approach into project implementation, the initiative will enhance inclusivity, reduce the risk of cultural misunderstandings, and contribute to more sustainable and accepted outcomes.

	Like the gender-sensitive approach, there may be instances where it is necessary to create specific conditions or circumstances to facilitate effective participation and empowerment of various age groups, either as additional or specifically incorporated activities. In addition to ensuring effective participation in a project or intervention, it is also important to examine the potential positive and especially the potential negative impacts of a project or intervention on different age groups. An activity or project may be beneficial for one group but detrimental to another.	Not only will gender equality be addressed, but it is also important to be inclusive of men and women, of all ages, with utmost consideration of what they are capable of.
Age sensitivity		

Stage 1: Free Prior and Informed Consent safeguard.

The consent is sought sufficiently in advance of any authorization or commencement of activities.

A collective decision made by the right holders and reached through a customary decision-making processes of the communities.

FREE   **PRIOR**   **INFORMED**   **CONSENT**

The consent is free, given voluntarily an without coercion, intimidation or manipulation. A process that is self-directed by the community from whom consent is being sought, unencumbered by coercion, expectations or timelines that are externally imposed.

The engagement and type of information that should be provided prior to seeking consent and also as part of the ongoing consent process.
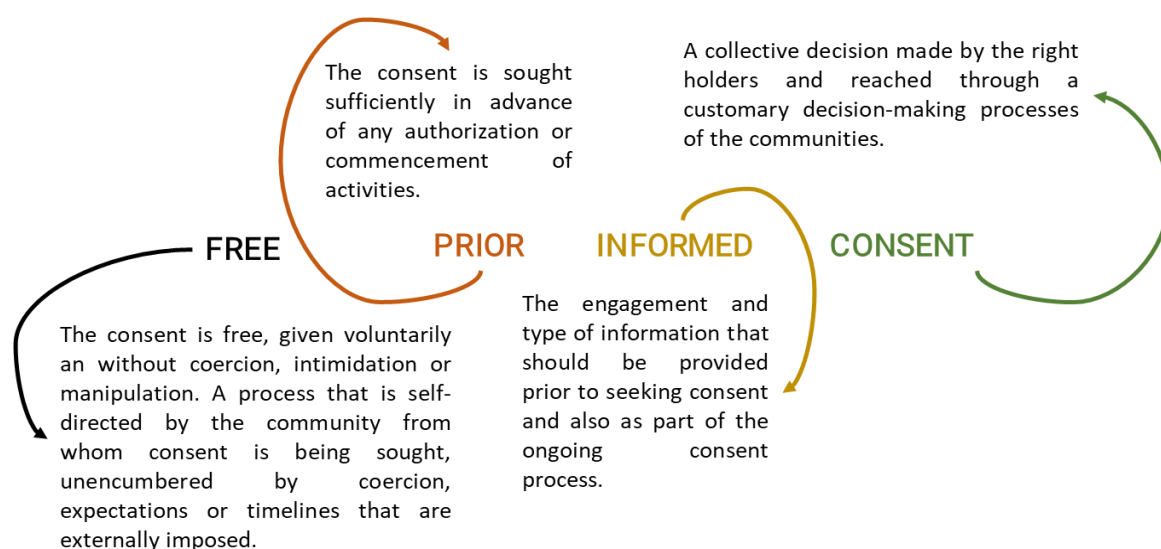
Figure 7 – FPIC process to adhere to

The principle of FPIC refers to the right of Indigenous and tribal peoples to give or withhold consent for any action that would affect their lands, territories, or rights. Legally speaking, there is no official recognition in Suriname's land law that states that native groups own the land they live on. However, a constitutional amendment and a draft Law on Collective Rights of Indigenous people and Tribal groups is composed by a land rights management team consisting of representatives of the government and traditional communities of Indigenous people and Maroons, which addresses their right to self-determination, cultural integrity, FPIC, and the composition of traditional authorities.

FPIC Protocol

The Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) process ensures that Indigenous and Tribal Peoples have the right to give or withhold consent for any action that may affect their lands, territories, resources, or rights. This process must be culturally appropriate, inclusive, and free from coercion, providing sufficient time for communities to deliberate and decide according to their own governance systems.

This protocol builds on Figure 7 and defines the steps, timeline, methods, and procedures for documenting and revisiting FPIC.

1. Steps, Timeline, and Methods

Step 1 – Preparation Phase *(approx. 1–2 months)*
- Identify all potentially affected Indigenous and Tribal communities.
- Map traditional governance structures, leadership roles, and decision-making processes.
- Identify preferred languages, communication styles, and meeting protocols.
- Develop culturally appropriate information materials in oral, written, and visual formats, ensuring accessibility for both men and women, youth, elders, and persons with disabilities.

Step 2 – Information Phase *(approx. 1–2 months)*
- Conduct joint and separate information sessions for men, women, elders, youth, and other key groups.
- Present project objectives, activities, potential benefits, risks, and mitigation measures in clear, non-technical language.
- Share details of rights under FPIC, grievance mechanisms, and alternatives to the proposed project.
- Provide information through multiple channels (community meetings, printed materials, radio, visual aids).

Step 3 – Deliberation Phase *(approx. 1–3 months, aligned with community protocols)*
- Allow communities to discuss internally without project staff present.
- Respect traditional timelines and consensus-building practices.
- Offer follow-up clarification sessions on request.
- Ensure marginalized groups have safe spaces for expressing their views.

Step 4 – Decision and Consent Phase *(as determined by the community)*
- Organize a formal meeting in accordance with traditional governance structures.
- Clearly state the question of consent/non-consent.
- Confirm understanding among participants before recording the decision.

2. Documentation of Consent / Non-Consent
- Signed or thumb-printed resolution from recognized traditional leaders and representatives of both genders.
- Meeting minutes capturing the discussion, questions raised, and concerns addressed.
- Attendance records disaggregated by gender and age group.
- Photographic or video evidence of meetings (only with prior permission).
- Copies of all documents are to be stored securely by the project team and provided to the community in an accessible format.

3. Revisiting FPIC if Project Design Changes

If there is a significant change in project scope, location, technology, timing, or potential impacts:

- Inform the community promptly using the same culturally appropriate channels as in the original process.
- Provide updated project information materials detailing the changes and potential impacts.
- Allow sufficient time for renewed internal deliberation, following the same steps and respecting the same decision-making protocols as the initial FPIC process.
- Document renewed consent/non-consent using the same methods as above.

4. Integration with Engagement and Grievance Mechanisms

- This FPIC protocol is implemented alongside the Stakeholder Engagement Plan to ensure consistency in community participation.
- Any issues or disputes arising during FPIC will be addressed through the project's Grievance Mechanism, with priority given to resolving them in collaboration with community representatives.

Stage 2: Community capacity building safeguard

The report indicates **a significant gap in local technical capacity,** which should be considered during the progress of the project. Not only for the longevity of the infrastructures to be installed, but also for the critical enhancement of the ownership, **community members should be identified and trained to certain levels of operation and maintenance.** These trainings can happen **'on the job'** during project building work or during periodic refreshers to help build capacities further. Another aspect to consider is **promoting gender equality and empowering women**. Given that women comprise the biggest users of these services, their active involvement in all stages of the project is crucial. This will enhance community ownership and contribute to the long-term sustainability of these services.

Stage 3: Socioeconomic capacities and ownership.

Within the socioeconomic capacities and ownership, based on the dialogues with focus groups, the following socioeconomic factors were gathered;

1. the willingness to pay, their current potential to pay, and the potential future economic activities that can be potentiated, and
2. the financial ownership models to sustain operation and maintenance costs.

It is noteworthy that there are plans in place to tackle the economic distress of payments and financial ownership models to sustain operation and maintenance costs.

Communication and project socialization

The initial phase involves disseminating information about the project and reaching a consensus on the way forward. This includes informing the communities about the current project status, introducing and shaping the community engagement plan, outlining the

stakeholders and their relationships, specifying communication methods and guidelines, and detailing feedback and conflict resolution procedures.

Table 8 Activities for communication & project socialization

Phase	Activity
Communication and Socialization	i) Project socialization
	ii) Facilitating the shaping of a community engagement plan
	iii) Identify stakeholders and define relationships, communication channels, and protocols
	iv) Facilitate feedback and conflict mechanisms

i) Project Socialization is the communication of any information-sharing activities between all stakeholders. This activity happens before, during, and after the community engagement plan – this is an ongoing activity. Although there are no communication channels, protocols, and methods established yet, communication with and to the communities prior to initiating any project activities is eminently important, addressing the FPIC protocol.

ii) Facilitate shaping a community engagement plan. Within this activity, the objective is to propose this document to the communities as a preliminary work done to shape the actual engagement plan. The first task is to inform all the communities about the engagement plan: inform them what a community engagement plan is, why it is important for all stakeholders, and why it is important for the energy, water, and telecommunication project. The second task is for the community to assign community members who have the best knowledge of their communities to help shape a community engagement plan. The third task is to organize a gathering with all the assigned community members to discuss and shape the community engagement plan and its timeline. The fourth task is to finalize, translate, and distribute this plan to all communities. The fifth and last task for this activity is that the community members are going to inform the community of the final community engagement plan.

iii) Identify stakeholders and define relationships, communication channels, and protocols is the first activity after having a mutually agreed community engagement plan produced. The outcome of this activity is to come up with communication channels, protocols, and a basis to improve trust. In order to achieve this outcome, it is necessary to identify the stakeholders who are going to be engaging with the communities prior to, during, and post the whole trajectory of this project.

The second task is to define every stakeholder's responsibility and role within these projects.

The third task is to establish communication channels and protocols.

This is important to mitigate miscommunication, important for the sake of coordination flow, and important to keep everyone rightfully and truthfully informed.

iv) Facilitate feedback and conflict mechanisms. It is also important to actively support and enable processes for receiving input, comments, and addressing conflicts within this project. This involves creating structured channels for stakeholders to provide feedback, as well as establishing mechanisms for resolving disputes or disagreements that may arise during the course of the project or engagement. The aim is to ensure that communication is open, issues are addressed promptly, and conflicts are managed effectively to maintain a productive and harmonious working environment. Although this activity is described as a separate activity, due to its importance, it can be achieved altogether or within the communication channel and protocol activity.

Crosscutting knowledge and experience exchange

The third phase is to facilitate or create a platform for the communities to exchange their knowledge, their experiences, and the impact these past activities have brought. But it will also be a time to exchange and discuss their concerns, issues, identified risks, etc. And more importantly, how they will mitigate, if not prevent, these potential risks.

Table 9 - Activities for crosscutting community project knowledge & experience exchange

Phase	Activity
Crosscutting Community Project Knowledge and Experience Exchange	i)Training and awareness on sustainable waste management practices ii) Organize exchanges with communities to share experiences, best practices, and positive impacts
	iii) Facilitate discussion on identified and/or potential risks and a risk mitigation plan

Training, awareness, and sustainable implementation of a waste management plan. Before starting any construction activities for energy projects, technical or administrative training, and awareness, it is important to compose a waste management plan that works for the communities.

Organize exchanges with communities to share experiences, best practices, and positive impacts. There will be 2 moments created where the communities will gather and where they can share their experiences, their best practices, and their positive impacts.

Facilitate discussion on identified and/or potential risks and a risk mitigation plan. After every gathering where experiences, best practices, and positive impacts are presented by the communities, they will have the opportunity to also discuss their identified and/or potential risks, and eventually come to an idea or conclusion on how to mitigate these risks.

Transition phase

The last phase is the transition phase. Each of these activities in this phase will be done separately – meaning that each community will have an appreciation of stakeholders' participation and efforts activity, and an official handover of the services to communities and partners.

Table 10 - Activities for crosscutting community project knowledge & experience exchange

Transition Phase	Monitoring, evaluation, and improvement

Monitoring, evaluation, and improvement. This is a responsibility for every stakeholder. It is important to keep track at all times on how well all stakeholders progress in growing and taking ownership and leadership of their responsibilities, thus the project and its outcomes. This activity goes in parallel with phase I, where communication is discussed.

To support the monitoring, evaluation, and continuous improvement, it is recommended to install a group of community awareness officers (community watch group) that oversee the rational use of the services, the leadership, the clientele satisfaction or issues, and the equal use and advantage of services for every woman, child, and men of all ages. In short, oversee the social, economic, and environmental factors for sustainability.

5. Grievance Mechanism

Grievance Mechanism for the Electrification Project with Indigenous and Tribal Peoples

This Grievance Mechanism (GM) is designed to provide Indigenous communities and other stakeholders with a formal process to raise concerns or complaints related to the Electrification Project. The GM ensures transparency, fairness, and timely resolution while respecting cultural norms and the principles of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) (*see Section 4: Engagement Plan – FPIC Protocol*).

The GM aims to:
- Establish a transparent and accessible system for addressing grievances.
- Ensure that concerns are resolved fairly and efficiently.
- Build trust and maintain good relationships between the project team and Indigenous communities.
- Prevent and mitigate conflicts that may arise from project activities.

Scope – This mechanism applies to grievances related to:
- Environmental and social impacts of the project.
- Land use and access issues.
- Disruptions to Indigenous cultural practices or livelihoods.
- Employment and labor conditions.
- Community health and safety concerns.
- Any other project-related complaints.

Grievance Submission Channels

Stakeholders can submit grievances through multiple channels:
- In-person: At designated community grievance desks or during community meetings.
- Written complaints: Via letters, emails, or designated grievance forms.
- Telephone/SMS hotline: A dedicated number for urgent concerns.
- Suggestion boxes: Placed in community centers for anonymous submissions.
- Community representatives: Traditional leaders, elders, or local NGOs can submit grievances on behalf of individuals.

Grievance Handling Process

Step	Action	Timeline
Acknowledgment	Confirm receipt of the grievance and log details into the Grievance Register.	Within 5 working days
Assessment & Categorization	Determine the nature, severity, and urgency of the grievance. Assign to the relevant team for resolution.	Within 10 working days

Step	Action	Timeline
Investigation	Conduct necessary consultations, site visits, and discussions with affected parties.	Within 20 working days
Resolution Proposal	Provide a proposed solution or mitigation measures for the complainant.	Within 30 working days
Implementation & Follow-up	Monitor the implementation of the agreed resolution and ensure compliance.	Ongoing
Appeal (if needed)	If the complainant is unsatisfied, they can escalate the grievance for further review.	Within 15 working days of the resolution proposal
Closure & Documentation	Log up the resolution and ensure the complainant is informed.	Upon agreement

Confidentiality and Non-Retaliation
- All grievances will be handled confidentially to protect the identity of complainants.
- No stakeholder will face retaliation for submitting a grievance in good faith.

Disclosure and explanation of the GM to Communities
To ensure accessibility and understanding of the GM (*cross-reference: Section 4 – Communication and Socialization*), the project team will:
1. Introduce the GM during early engagement and FPIC meetings, using culturally and linguistically appropriate methods.
2. Provide visual and written guides in local languages, with pictograms for low-literacy audiences.
3. Use diverse communication channels such as community radio, village bulletin boards, and public announcements.
4. Hold dedicated GM information sessions for:
   o Women – in safe spaces and at convenient times, with childcare if needed.
   o Youth – using interactive formats such as role-play and peer discussions.
   o Elders – allowing more time for discussion and using oral presentations.
5. Train community focal points to assist residents in filing grievances.
6. Reinforce awareness by including GM reminders during all project site visits and community meetings.

Concrete Measures for Gender & Age-Sensitive Engagement
- Ensure gender-balanced grievance committees, with women's, youth, and elder representatives.
- Schedule grievance-related meetings at times that do not conflict with key livelihood activities.
- Provide separate consultation spaces when cultural norms or privacy concerns require it.
- Use youth facilitators to increase participation of younger community members.
- Ensure translation into Indigenous languages and adapt methods for varying literacy levels.

Monitoring & Reporting of GM Effectiveness

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):
- % of grievances acknowledged within the 5-day target.
- % of grievances resolved within agreed timelines.
- % of grievances submitted by women, youth, and elders.
- Level of satisfaction with grievance resolution (via post-resolution survey).
- % of grievances leading to project modifications or mitigation actions.

Roles and Responsibilities:
- Community Engagement Officer (CEO): Day-to-day GM oversight, logging, and reporting.
- Project Social Safeguards Specialist: Monitors trends and ensures compliance with IDB safeguards and EBS Gender & PwD Action Plan (*cross-reference: Section 4 – Gender Sensitivity Principle*).
- Community Grievance Committee: Reviews of complex or escalated cases; including local representatives.

Monitoring Timeline:
- Monthly internal review of grievance log.
- Quarterly public summary shared with communities and published on the project notice board.
- Annual evaluation of GM effectiveness, including gender/age disaggregation and lessons learned.

Contact Information (Include project-specific contact details such as phone numbers, email addresses, and office locations for grievance submission.)

Cross-References:
- *Section 4 – Engagement Plan: FPIC protocol and culturally appropriate engagement measures.*
- *EBS Gender & PwD Action Plan: Gender and inclusion commitments.*
- *IDB Environmental and Social Policy Framework (ESPF): Requirements for stakeholder engagement and grievance redress.*