

BHRRC
Invitation to respond - Gendered impacts of solar project in Uzbekistan

“We are writing to invite TotalEnergies to respond to allegations of negative impacts on women living near the Tutly solar farm in Uzbekistan. More information can be found in the article linked below: “Solar Energy Project Leaves Uzbek Women in the Dark”, August 03, 2022, Nina Lesikhina: <https://thediplomat.com/2022/08/solar-energy-project-leaves-uzbek-women-in-the-dark/> .

Further to your request, please find below (i) a summary of the project and (ii) our answers to your questions.

In August 2019, agreements between the Government of Uzbekistan and Total Eren SA was established and signed for the construction of 100 MW solar PV solar plant in Samarqand province, Nurabad district and the purchase of the associated generated electricity (hereinafter “**Tutly Project**”). Tutly Project entered into operation in June 2022 and produces 270 GWh per year, enough to supply the needs of about 140,000 people in Uzbekistan while reducing CO2 emissions. On July 24th, 2023 TotalEnergies acquired Total Eren, increasing its stake from close to 30% to 100%, through two concomitant acquisitions (i) acquisition of New Eren’s participation in Total Eren Holding and (ii) drag of minority shareholders participation in Total Eren.

More specifically, we would like to raise the following questions with TotalEnergies:

- 1. Your Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) mentions ‘The Local population is very interested by the opportunity of employment, and as such the CLO shall ensure that a list disclosing the positions to be covered during the lifespan of the project and skills required is appropriately publicized, so that the local population may have the time and opportunity to train in the right areas so as to gain employment as a result of the Project.’ – Can you share details when this was published, and how was this information distributed among the local stakeholders – and, whether it was translated in Uzbek?***

General information about the Tutly Project and the list of positions was communicated to the local head of village who shared with local communities during the whole development of the project. For instance, six public meetings about Tutly Project were conducted in 2019-2020 during which the list of positions were shared orally with the community. Project was commissioned in 2022, involving local people in the construction and operation. A Community Liaison Officer (CLO) was appointed within the project company employees.

An “Awareness Raising Program” for local community was also conducted by FE Tutly Solar LLC and its consultant Nazar Business & Technology (NBT) in April 2023 (see pictures below). The program was directed towards informing the children in school, shepherds, and the local population of the village of Tutly about the Tutly Solar PV station and its environmental and social activities. One of the topics of the program was future professions in energy sector and gender component – opportunities to work in energy sector and possibilities for local girls and women with education to receive profession in energy sector.



Pictures of public consultation and awareness raising program session.

2. Can you share the exact list of (anonymised) local employees (in the Tutly settlement) disaggregated by gender?

Local men and women were employed during lifecycle of the Tutly Project, please find below the figures:

	Man	Women
Development period	8	4
Construction period	460	20
Operation period	36	7

3. Your SEP does not give any details on how women were specifically consulted and engaged during the consultation phase, as mentioned in the article. Could you share any details on specific measures taken to mitigate risks to local women and protect women's rights in the nearby settlement? How did you assess and mitigate retaliation risks?

TotalEnergies and its affiliates respect the rights of local communities by identifying, preventing and mitigating the impact on their environment and way of life and remedying the situation as needed. We establish dialogue as early as possible to foster lasting relationships

with those communities, and we are mindful of opportunities for community development. We design and implement grievance procedures and corrective measures, particularly on behalf of vulnerable groups, including indigenous peoples.

Regarding the Tutly Project, multi-dimension consultation activities were adopted to make marginalized, voiceless youth and women to gain information about the project. The teams managed to collect information about community concerns regarding the project during various implementation phases.

Women were informed about grievance mechanism procedure and grievance mailboxes were installed (two in Tutly village and one on site) which are checked continually (see picture below). During these meetings, representatives of women's committee of Tutly village were also encouraged to explain grievance mechanism to all women.

In addition, during construction phase by the Engineering, Procurement and Construction contractor (EPC contractor), trainings were given to all employees on the rules of working at the site. One of the main points of which was compliance with human rights requirements, including gender and racial equality.



Picture 1: Grievance box



Picture 2: Woman signing the list of participants of public meeting.

4. Access to electricity is a major issue in the community – what actions did Total Eren take, or is taking, to improve local energy access (for the residents of the nearby settlement)? –

The purpose of the Tutly Project is to generate electricity from the solar farm and sell it to the public power utility (National Electric Networks of Uzbekistan). Electricity supply to end-users is the sole responsibility and monopoly of the public distribution utilities. The FE Tutly Solar LLC does not have the mandate to supply electricity directly to end-users.

Nevertheless, solar kiosks configured to support lighting, phone charging, TV, refrigeration, Wi-Fi etc. are under study by FE Tutly Solar LLC in the frame of the Community Development plan.

5. Could you share details on status of actions decided under the Community Development Plan and their overall costs?

FE Tutly Solar LLC engaged with the local communities to identify the most relevant Corporate Social Responsibility actions that could be undertaken. After evaluating various options, it was collectively decided during meeting on August 18th, 2022 notably with Tutly village authorities, that the re-construction of the school roof was the most relevant action. In August 2022, FE Tutly Solar LLC, together with Metka LLC invested 50K€ to repair the roof of the local school in Tutly village (see pictures below).



Pictures of the re-construction of the school roof

Subject to prior approval from the local authorities, FE Tutly Solar LLC will invest in the project of install photovoltaic system with 9.6 kWh storage and 10 kW inverters on Tutly medical center. This project will generate more stable electricity for the medical center and enable better medical treatment for local communities.
