



Standard on Public Consultation and Disclosure

Public Consultation

When developing environment and social safeguards assessments or developing management plans for a Category A or B project, the Project Team is required to conduct meaningful consultations with relevant stakeholders, including affected groups, indigenous peoples, CSOs, and local authorities, concerning the project's environmental and social impacts (positive and negative) and to take their views into account. The Project Team initiates such consultations as early as possible. For meaningful consultations, the Project Team provides relevant information in a timely manner and in a form and language that are understandable and accessible to diverse stakeholders. In addition, the Project Team should consult WWF's Project and Program Management Standards (PPMS), particularly the relevant sections on stakeholder engagement and the supporting documentation and tools provided. Where indigenous peoples are present and/or may be affected by the project, Project Teams should also consult implementation guidance for WWF's Indigenous Peoples and associated guidance on FPIC procedures.

If a project involves involuntary resettlement, before project concept finalization, the Project Team shall disclose final Resettlement Plans (including documentation of the consultation process) for 30 days or if IPs exist for 45 days prior to project concept finalization in a culturally appropriate and inclusive manner. The Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) or Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF) must be accessible to key stakeholders, including project-affected groups, and should be disclosed not only in English but also in relevant local languages.

PROCEDURES DURING PREPARATION

For Category A projects, the Project Team consults relevant stakeholders at least three times: (a) during scoping and before the terms of reference for the ESIA are finalized, (b) once a draft ESIA report is prepared, and (c) during monitoring and reviews. For the initial consultation, the Project Team provides a summary of the proposed project's objectives, description, and potential impacts. For consultation after the draft ESIA report is prepared, the Project Team provides a non-technical summary of the report's findings. In both cases, the summaries should be provided in advance of consultation and proactively disseminated to local stakeholders in a form and language meaningful to those being consulted.

Following the public consultation on the draft ESIA, the Project Team supplements the ESIA by adding details of the public consultation process, as necessary, including the Project Team's responses to concerns raised by the various stakeholders and details of measures taken to incorporate these concerns into project design and implementation. These will be publicly provided on the Safeguards Resource page (see section on Public Disclosure for links).

For Category B projects, the above procedures are also applied, especially in those cases where close relations with communities are important for project execution but may be less intensive and frequent.

For Category C projects, an environment and social assessments and management plans is generally not required, since these projects generally focus on capacity building and institutional issues. However public consultations are always

strongly recommended for field projects, in order to build up ownership and commitment and to mobilize local knowledge and expertise.

PROCEDURES DURING IMPLEMENTATION

The Project Team must continue to engage relevant stakeholders throughout project implementation and operation, as necessary, to address any environmental and social safeguard risks and other issues that affect them. The priority placed on consultation with potentially affected people (men and women) should, however, not be at the expense of consultations with other relevant groups (trade unions, chambers of commerce or agriculture, relevant municipal/regional/national administrations, locally elected leaders, etc.).

Disclosure

Disclosure of information concerning environmental and social issues relevant to the project is associated with decision points related to the project life cycle. The main decision points where disclosure of safeguards information is required are the following:

- Disclosure of Safeguards Project Categorization Memo;
- Disclosure of final safeguards reports, including management plans; and
- Disclosure of Safeguards Compliance Memo.

For Category A and B projects, on completion of the Environment Social Safeguards Coordinator's review of the SST, a **Project Categorization Memo**¹³ will be drafted and approved by the Senior Director of Public Sector Support, Policy and Government Affairs of WWF-US.

All key safeguards documents, such as the final Project Categorization Memos, Compliance Memos, ESAs for Category A projects, and ESMPs or other mitigation plans for Category B projects are publicly disclosed on the WWF Safeguards Resource web page (<http://www.worldwildlife.org/pages/safeguards-resources>). These documents will be disclosed for at least 30 days prior to project concept finalization—and if IPs exist in the project area, then for 45 days. In addition to this, these final safeguards documents should be published on national websites of the Executing Agency and made available locally in specific locations accessible to affected communities. Only after all steps of the safeguards process, including all public consultations and all required disclosures, are completed and verified can the project be considered for agency approval by WWF GEF or GCF

Since project-affected people may not have reasonable access to a WWF office or to the Internet, the Project Team is also required to locally release all final key safeguards documents via hardcopy, translated into the local language and in a culturally appropriate manner, to facilitate awareness by relevant stakeholders that the information is in the public domain for review.