

Policy

OP 4.12 - Involuntary Resettlement

Bank Access to Information Policy Designation

Public

Catalogue Number

Issued

Effective

April 1, 2013

Retired

July 14, 2024

Content

Applicable to

Issuer

OPCS

Sponsor

OP 4.12 - Involuntary Resettlement

These policies were prepared for use by World Bank staff and are not necessarily a complete treatment of the subject.

OP 4.12
December, 2001

Note: OP/BP 4.12, *Involuntary Resettlement*, were revised on April 2013 to take into account the recommendations in "Investment Lending Reform: Modernizing and Consolidating Operational Policies and Procedures" (R2012-0204 [IDA/R2012-0248]), which were approved by the Executive Directors on October 25, 2012. As a result of these recommendations: (a) OP/BP 10.00, *Investment Project Financing*, have been revised, among other things, to incorporate OP/BP 13.05, *Supervision* and OP/BP 13.55, *Implementation Completion Reporting*, (which have consequently been retired); and (b) OP/BP 8.60, *Development Policy Lending*, and OP 9.00, *Program-for-Results Financing*, have also been revised. OP/BP 4.12 have consequently been updated to reflect these changes, to clarify the extent of applicability of OP/BP 4.12 to Development Policy Lending and Program-for Results-Financing, and to reflect the updated title of the Bank's policy on access to information.

Questions on this OP/BP may be addressed to the Safeguard Policies Helpdesk in OPCS (safeguards@worldbank.org).

Revised April 2013

1. Bank¹ experience indicates that involuntary resettlement under development projects, if unmitigated, often gives rise to severe economic, social, and environmental risks: production systems are dismantled; people face impoverishment when their productive assets or income sources are lost; people are relocated to environments where their productive skills may be less applicable and the competition for resources greater; community institutions and social networks are weakened; kin groups are dispersed; and cultural identity, traditional authority, and the potential for mutual help are diminished or lost. This policy includes safeguards to address and mitigate these impoverishment risks.

Policy Objectives

2. Involuntary resettlement may cause severe long-term hardship, impoverishment, and environmental damage unless appropriate measures are carefully planned and carried out. For these reasons, the overall objectives of the Bank's policy on involuntary resettlement are the following:

- (a) Involuntary resettlement should be avoided where feasible, or minimized, exploring all viable alternative project designs.²
- (b) Where it is not feasible to avoid resettlement, resettlement activities should be conceived and executed as sustainable development programs, providing sufficient investment resources to enable the persons displaced by the project to share in project benefits. Displaced persons³ should be meaningfully consulted and should have opportunities to participate in planning and implementing resettlement programs.
- (c) Displaced persons should be assisted in their efforts to improve their livelihoods and standards of living or at least to restore them, in real terms, to pre-displacement levels or to levels prevailing prior to the beginning of project implementation, whichever is higher.⁴

Impacts Covered

3. This policy covers direct economic and social impacts⁵ that both result from Bank-assisted investment projects,⁶ and are caused by

- (a) the involuntary⁷ taking of land⁸ resulting in
 - (i) relocation or loss of shelter;
 - (ii) lost of assets or access to assets; or
 - (iii) loss of income sources or means of livelihood, whether or not the affected persons must move to another location; or

(b) the involuntary restriction of access⁹ to legally designated parks and protected areas resulting in adverse impacts on the livelihoods of the displaced persons.

4. This policy applies to all components of the project that result in involuntary resettlement, regardless of the source of financing. It also applies to other activities resulting in involuntary resettlement, that in the judgment of the Bank, are

- (a) directly and significantly related to the Bank-assisted project,
- (b) necessary to achieve its objectives as set forth in the project documents; and
- (c) carried out, or planned to be carried out, contemporaneously with the project.

5. Requests for guidance on the application and scope of this policy should be addressed to the Resettlement Committee (see [BP 4.12, para. 7](#)).¹⁰

Required Measures

6. To address the impacts covered under para. 3 (a) of this policy, the borrower prepares a resettlement plan or a resettlement policy framework (see paras. 25-30) that covers the following:

- (a) The resettlement plan or resettlement policy framework includes measures to ensure that the displaced persons are
 - (i) informed about their options and rights pertaining to resettlement;
 - (ii) consulted on, offered choices among, and provided with technically and economically feasible resettlement alternatives; and
 - (iii) provided prompt and effective compensation at full replacement cost¹¹ for losses of assets¹² attributable directly to the project.
- (b) If the impacts include physical relocation, the resettlement plan or resettlement policy framework includes measures to ensure that the displaced persons are
 - (i) provided assistance (such as moving allowances) during relocation; and
 - (ii) provided with residential housing, or housing sites, or, as required, agricultural sites for which a combination of productive potential, locational advantages, and other factors is at least equivalent to the advantages of the old site.¹³
- (c) Where necessary to achieve the objectives of the policy, the resettlement plan or resettlement policy framework also include measures to ensure that displaced persons are
 - (i) offered support after displacement, for a transition period, based on a reasonable estimate of the time likely to be needed to restore their livelihood and standards of living;¹⁴ and
 - (ii) provided with development assistance in addition to compensation measures described in paragraph 6(a);
 - (iii) such as land preparation, credit facilities, training, or job opportunities.

7. In projects involving involuntary restriction of access to legally designated parks and protected areas (see para. 3(b)), the nature of restrictions, as well as the type of measures necessary to mitigate adverse impacts, is determined with the participation of the displaced persons during the design and implementation of the project. In such cases, the borrower prepares a process framework acceptable to the Bank, describing the participatory process by which

- (a) specific components of the project will be prepared and implemented;
- (b) the criteria for eligibility of displaced persons will be determined;
- (c) measures to assist the displaced persons in their efforts to improve their livelihoods, or at least to restore them, in real terms, while maintaining the sustainability of the park or protected area, will be identified; and

(d) potential conflicts involving displaced persons will be resolved.

The process framework also includes a description of the arrangements for implementing and monitoring the process.

8. To achieve the objectives of this policy, particular attention is paid to the needs of vulnerable groups among those displaced, especially those below the poverty line, the landless, the elderly, women and children, indigenous peoples,¹⁵ ethnic minorities, or other displaced persons who may not be protected through national land compensation legislation.

9. Bank experience has shown that resettlement of indigenous peoples with traditional land-based modes of production is particularly complex and may have significant adverse impacts on their identity and cultural survival. For this reason, the Bank satisfies itself that the borrower has explored all viable alternative project designs to avoid physical displacement of these groups. When it is not feasible to avoid such displacement, preference is given to land-based resettlement strategies for these groups (see para. 11) that are compatible with their cultural preferences and are prepared in consultation with them (see [Annex A](#), para. 11).

10. The implementation of resettlement activities is linked to the implementation of the investment component of the project to ensure that displacement or restriction of access does not occur before necessary measures for resettlement are in place. For impacts covered in para. 3(a) of this policy, these measures include provision of compensation and of other assistance required for relocation, prior to displacement, and preparation and provision of resettlement sites with adequate facilities, where required. In particular, taking of land and related assets may take place only after compensation has been paid and, where applicable, resettlement sites and moving allowances have been provided to the displaced persons. For impacts covered in para. 3(b) of this policy, the measures to assist the displaced persons are implemented in accordance with the plan of action as part of the project (see para. 30).¹⁶

11. Preference should be given to land-based resettlement strategies for displaced persons whose livelihoods are land-based. These strategies may include resettlement on public land (see footnote 1 above), or on private land acquired or purchased for resettlement. Whenever replacement land is offered, resettlers are provided with land for which a combination of productive potential, locational advantages, and other factors is at least equivalent to the advantages of the land taken. If land is not the preferred option of the displaced persons, the provision of land would adversely affect the sustainability of a park or protected area,¹⁷ or sufficient land is not available at a reasonable price, non-land-based options built around opportunities for employment or self-employment should be provided in addition to cash compensation for land and other assets lost. The lack of adequate land must be demonstrated and documented to the satisfaction of the Bank.

12. Payment of cash compensation for lost assets may be appropriate where (a) livelihoods are land-based but the land taken for the project is a small fraction¹⁸ of the affected asset and the residual is economically viable; (b) active markets for land, housing, and labor exist, displaced persons use such markets, and there is sufficient supply of land and housing; or (c) livelihoods are not land-based. Cash compensation levels should be sufficient to replace the lost land and other assets at full replacement cost in local markets.

13. For impacts covered under para. 3(a) of this policy, the Bank also requires the following:

(a) Displaced persons and their communities, and any host communities receiving them, are provided timely and relevant information, consulted on resettlement options, and offered opportunities to participate in planning, implementing, and monitoring resettlement. Appropriate and accessible grievance mechanisms are established for these groups.

(b) In new resettlement sites or host communities, infrastructure and public services are provided as necessary to improve, restore, or maintain accessibility and levels of service for the displaced persons and host communities. Alternative or similar resources are provided to compensate for the loss of access to community resources (such as fishing areas, grazing areas, fuel, or fodder).

(c) Patterns of community organization appropriate to the new circumstances are based on choices made by the displaced persons. To the extent possible, the existing social and cultural institutions of resettlers and any host communities are preserved and resettlers' preferences with respect to relocating in preexisting communities and groups are honored.

Eligibility for Benefits¹⁹

14. Upon identification of the need for involuntary resettlement in a project, the borrower carries out a census to

identify the persons who will be affected by the project (see the [Annex A](#), para. 6(a)), to determine who will be eligible for assistance, and to discourage inflow of people ineligible for assistance. The borrower also develops a procedure, satisfactory to the Bank, for establishing the criteria by which displaced persons will be deemed eligible for compensation and other resettlement assistance. The procedure includes provisions for meaningful consultations with affected persons and communities, local authorities, and, as appropriate, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and it specifies grievance mechanisms.

15. *Criteria for Eligibility.* Displaced persons may be classified in one of the following three groups:

- (a) those who have formal legal rights to land (including customary and traditional rights recognized under the laws of the country);
- (b) those who do not have formal legal rights to land at the time the census begins but have a claim to such land or assets--provided that such claims are recognized under the laws of the country or become recognized through a process identified in the resettlement plan (see [Annex A](#), para. 7(f)); and²⁰
- (c) those who have no recognizable legal right or claim to the land they are occupying.

16. Persons covered under para. 15(a) and (b) are provided compensation for the land they lose, and other assistance in accordance with para. 6. Persons covered under para. 15(c) are provided resettlement assistance²¹ in lieu of compensation for the land they occupy, and other assistance, as necessary, to achieve the objectives set out in this policy, if they occupy the project area prior to a cut-off date established by the borrower and acceptable to the Bank.²² Persons who encroach on the area after the cut-off date are not entitled to compensation or any other form of resettlement assistance. All persons included in para. 15(a), (b), or (c) are provided compensation for loss of assets other than land.

Resettlement Planning, Implementation, and Monitoring

17. To achieve the objectives of this policy, different planning instruments are used, depending on the type of project:

- (a) a resettlement plan or abbreviated resettlement plan is required for all operations that entail involuntary resettlement unless otherwise specified (see para. 25 and [Annex A](#));
- (b) a resettlement policy framework is required for operations referred to in paras. 26-30 that may entail involuntary resettlement, unless otherwise specified (see [Annex A](#); and
- (c) a process framework is prepared for projects involving restriction of access in accordance with para. 3(b) (see para. 31).

18. The borrower is responsible for preparing, implementing, and monitoring a resettlement plan, a resettlement policy framework, or a process framework (the "resettlement instruments"), as appropriate, that conform to this policy. The resettlement instrument presents a strategy for achieving the objectives of the policy and covers all aspects of the proposed resettlement. Borrower commitment to, and capacity for, undertaking successful resettlement is a key determinant of Bank involvement in a project.

19. Resettlement planning includes early screening, scoping of key issues, the choice of resettlement instrument, and the information required to prepare the resettlement component or subcomponent. The scope and level of detail of the resettlement instruments vary with the magnitude and complexity of resettlement. In preparing the resettlement component, the borrower draws on appropriate social, technical, and legal expertise and on relevant community-based organizations and NGOs.²³ The borrower informs potentially displaced persons at an early stage about the resettlement aspects of the project and takes their views into account in project design.

20. The full costs of resettlement activities necessary to achieve the objectives of the project are included in the total costs of the project. The costs of resettlement, like the costs of other project activities, are treated as a charge against the economic benefits of the project; and any net benefits to resettlers (as compared to the "without-project" circumstances) are added to the benefits stream of the project. Resettlement components or free-standing resettlement projects need not be economically viable on their own, but they should be cost-effective.

21. The borrower ensures that the Project Implementation Plan is fully consistent with the resettlement instrument.

22. As a condition of appraisal of projects involving resettlement, the borrower provides the Bank with the relevant

draft resettlement instrument which conforms to this policy, and makes it available at a place accessible to displaced persons and local NGOs, in a form, manner, and language that are understandable to them. Once the Bank accepts this instrument as providing an adequate basis for project appraisal, the Bank makes it available to the public through its InfoShop. After the Bank has approved the final resettlement instrument, the Bank and the borrower disclose it again in the same manner.²⁴

23. The borrower's obligations to carry out the resettlement instrument and to keep the Bank informed of implementation progress are provided for in the legal agreements for the project.

24. The borrower is responsible for adequate monitoring and evaluation of the activities set forth in the resettlement instrument. The Bank regularly supervises resettlement implementation to determine compliance with the resettlement instrument. Upon completion of the project, the borrower undertakes an assessment to determine whether the objectives of the resettlement instrument have been achieved. The assessment takes into account the baseline conditions and the results of resettlement monitoring. If the assessment reveals that these objectives may not be realized, the borrower should propose follow-up measures that may serve as the basis for continued Bank supervision, as the Bank deems appropriate (see also [BP 4.12](#), para. 16).

Resettlement Instruments

Resettlement Plan

25. A draft resettlement plan that conforms to this policy is a condition of appraisal (see [Annex A](#), para. 2-21) for projects referred to in para. 17(a) above.²⁵ However, where impacts on the entire displaced population are minor,²⁶ or fewer than 200 people are displaced, an abbreviated resettlement plan may be agreed with the borrower (see [Annex A](#), para. 22). The information disclosure procedures set forth in para. 22 apply.

Resettlement Policy Framework

26. For sector investment operations that may involve involuntary resettlement, the Bank requires that the project implementing agency screen subprojects to be financed by the Bank to ensure their consistency with this OP. For these operations, the borrower submits, prior to appraisal, a resettlement policy framework that conforms to this policy (see [Annex A](#), paras. 23-25). The framework also estimates, to the extent feasible, the total population to be displaced and the overall resettlement costs.

27. For financial intermediary operations that may involve involuntary resettlement, the Bank requires that the financial intermediary (FI) screen subprojects to be financed by the Bank to ensure their consistency with this OP. For these operations, the Bank requires that before appraisal the borrower or the FI submit to the Bank a resettlement policy framework conforming to this policy (see [Annex A](#), paras. 23-25). In addition, the framework includes an assessment of the institutional capacity and procedures of each of the FIs that will be responsible for subproject financing. When, in the assessment of the Bank, no resettlement is envisaged in the subprojects to be financed by the FI, a resettlement policy framework is not required. Instead, the legal agreements specify the obligation of the FIs to obtain from the potential subborrowers a resettlement plan consistent with this policy if a subproject gives rise to resettlement. For all subprojects involving resettlement, the resettlement plan is provided to the Bank for approval before the subproject is accepted for Bank financing.

28. For other Bank-assisted project with multiple subprojects²⁷ that may involve involuntary resettlement, the Bank requires that a draft resettlement plan conforming to this policy be submitted to the Bank before appraisal of the project unless, because of the nature and design of the project or of a specific subproject or subprojects (a) the zone of impact of subprojects cannot be determined, or (b) the zone of impact is known but precise sitting alignments cannot be determined. In such cases, the borrower submits a resettlement policy framework consistent with this policy prior to appraisal (see [Annex A](#), paras. 23-25). For other subprojects that do not fall within the above criteria, a resettlement plan conforming to this policy is required prior to appraisal.

29. For each subproject included in a project described in para. 26, 27, or 28 that may involve resettlement, the Bank requires that a satisfactory resettlement plan or an abbreviated resettlement plan that is consistent with the provisions of the policy framework be submitted to the Bank for approval before the subproject is accepted for Bank financing.

30. For projects described in paras. 26-28 above, the Bank may agree, in writing, that subproject resettlement plans may be approved by the project implementing agency or a responsible government agency or financial intermediary without prior Bank review, if that agency has demonstrated adequate institutional capacity to review resettlement plans and ensure their consistency with this policy. Any such delegation, and appropriate remedies for the entity's approval of resettlement plans found not to be in compliance with Bank policy, are provided for in the

legal agreements for the project. In all such cases, implementation of the resettlement plans is subject to ex post review by the Bank.

Process Framework

31. For projects involving restriction of access in accordance with para. 3(b) above, the borrower provides the Bank with a draft process framework that conforms to the relevant provisions of this policy as a condition of appraisal. In addition, during project implementation and before enforcing of the restriction, the borrower prepares a plan of action, acceptable to the Bank, describing the specific measures to be undertaken to assist the displaced persons and the arrangements for their implementation. The plan of action could take the form of a natural resources management plan prepared for the project.

Assistance to the Borrower

32. In furtherance of the objectives of this policy, the Bank may at a borrower's request support the borrower and other concerned entities by providing

- (a) assistance to assess and strengthen resettlement policies, strategies, legal frameworks, and specific plans at a country, regional, or sectoral level;
- (b) financing of technical assistance to strengthen the capacities of agencies responsible for resettlement, or of affected people to participate more effectively in resettlement operations;
- (c) financing of technical assistance for developing resettlement policies, strategies, and specific plans, and for implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of resettlement activities; and
- (d) financing of the investment costs of resettlement.

33. The Bank may finance either a component of the main investment causing displacement and requiring resettlement, or a free-standing resettlement project with appropriate cross-conditionalities, processed and implemented in parallel with the investment that causes the displacement. The Bank may finance resettlement even though it is not financing the main investment that makes resettlement necessary.

1. "Bank" includes IBRD and IDA; "loans" includes IDA credits and IDA grants, guarantees, Project Preparation Facility (PPF) advances and grants; and "projects" includes projects under (a) PPFs advances and Institutional Development Fund (IDF) grants, if they include investment activities; (b) grants under the Global Environment Facility and Montreal Protocol, for which the Bank is the implementing/executing agency; and (c) grants or loans provided by other donors that are administered by the Bank. The term "project" does not include programs supported by Development Policy Lending (for which the environmental provisions are set out in [OP/BP 8.60, Development Policy Lending](#)), or by Program-for-Results Financing (for which environmental provisions are set out in [OP/BP 9.00, Program-for-Results Financing](#)). "Borrower" also includes, wherever the context requires, the guarantor or the project implementing agency.

2. In devising approaches to resettlement in Bank-assisted projects, other Bank policies should be taken into account, as relevant. These policies include [OP 4.01, Environmental Assessment](#), [OP 4.04, Natural Habitats](#), [OP 4.10, Indigenous Peoples](#), and [OP 4.11, Physical Cultural Resources](#).

3. The term "displaced persons" refers to persons who are affected in any of the ways described in para. 3 of this OP.

4. Displaced persons under para. 3(b) should be assisted in their efforts to improve or restore their livelihoods in a manner that maintains the sustainability of the parks and protected areas.

5. Where there are adverse indirect social or economic impacts, it is good practice for the borrower to undertake a social assessment and implement measures to minimize and mitigate adverse economic and social impacts, particularly upon poor and vulnerable groups. Other environmental, social, and economic impacts that do not result from land taking may be identified and addressed through environmental assessments and other project reports and instruments.

6. This policy does not apply to restrictions of access to natural resources under community-based projects, i.e. where the community using the resources decides to restrict access to these resources, provided that an assessment satisfactory to the Bank establishes that the community decision-making process is adequate, and that it provides for identification of appropriate measures to mitigate adverse impacts, if any, on the vulnerable members of the community. This policy also does not cover refugees from natural disasters, war, or civil strife (see [OP 8.00, Rapid Response to Crises and Emergencies](#)).

7. For the purposes of this policy, "involuntary" means actions that may be taken without the displaced person's informed consent or power of choice.

8. "Land" includes anything growing on or permanently affixed to land, such as buildings and crops. This policy does not apply to regulations of natural resources on a national or regional level to promote their sustainability, such as watershed management, groundwater management, fisheries management, etc. The policy also does not apply to disputes between private parties in land titling projects, although it is good practice for the borrower to undertake a social assessment and implement measures to minimize and mitigate adverse social impacts, especially those affecting poor and vulnerable groups.

9. For the purposes of this policy, involuntary restriction of access covers restrictions on the use of resources imposed on people living outside the park or protected area, or on those who continue living inside the park or protected area during and after project implementation. In cases where new parks and protected areas are created as part of the project, persons who lose shelter, land, or other assets are covered under para. 3(a). Persons who lose shelter in existing parks and protected areas are also covered

under para. 3(a).

10. The *Involuntary Resettlement Sourcebook* provides good practice guidance to staff on the policy.

11. "Replacement cost" is the method of valuation of assets that helps determine the amount sufficient to replace lost assets and cover transaction costs. In applying this method of valuation, depreciation of structures and assets should not be taken into account (for a detailed definition of replacement cost, see [Annex A](#), footnote 1). For losses that cannot easily be valued or compensated for in monetary terms (e.g., access to public services, customers, and suppliers; or to fishing, grazing, or forest areas), attempts are made to establish access to equivalent and culturally acceptable resources and earning opportunities. Where domestic law does not meet the standard of compensation at full replacement cost, compensation under domestic law is supplemented by additional measures necessary to meet the replacement cost standard. Such additional assistance is distinct from resettlement assistance to be provided under other clauses of para. 6.

12. If the residual of the asset being taken is not economically viable, compensation and other resettlement assistance are provided as if the entire asset had been taken.

13. The alternative assets are provided with adequate tenure arrangements. The cost of alternative residential housing, housing sites, business premises, and agricultural sites to be provided can be set off against all or part of the compensation payable for the corresponding asset lost.

14. Such support could take the form of short-term jobs, subsistence support, salary maintenance or similar arrangements.

15. See [OP 4.10](#), *Indigenous Peoples*.

16. Where the borrower has offered to pay compensation to an affected person in accordance with an approved resettlement plan, but the offer has been rejected, the taking of land and related assets may only proceed if the borrower has deposited funds equal to the offered amount plus 10 percent in a secure form of escrow or other interest-bearing deposit acceptable to the Bank, and has provided a means satisfactory to the Bank for resolving the dispute concerning said offer of compensation in a timely and equitable manner.

17. See [OP 4.04](#), *Natural Habitats*.

18. As a general principle, this applies if the land taken constitutes less than 20% of the total productive area.

19. Paras. 13-15 do not apply to impacts covered under para. 3(b) of this policy. The eligibility criteria for displaced persons under 3 (b) are covered under the process framework (see paras. 7 and 30).

20. Such claims could be derived from adverse possession, from continued possession of public lands without government action for eviction (that is, with the implicit leave of the government), or from customary and traditional law and usage, and so on.

21. Resettlement assistance may consist of land, other assets, cash, employment, and so on, as appropriate.

22. Normally, this cut-off date is the date the census begins. The cut-off date could also be the date the project area was delineated, prior to the census, provided that there has been an effective public dissemination of information on the area delineated, and systematic and continuous dissemination subsequent to the delineation to prevent further population influx.

23. For projects that are highly risky or contentious, or that involve significant and complex resettlement activities, the borrower should normally engage an advisory panel of independent, internationally recognized resettlement specialists to advise on all aspects of the project relevant to the resettlement activities. The size, role, and frequency of meeting depend on the complexity of the resettlement. If independent technical advisory panels are established under [OP 4.01](#), *Environmental Assessment*, the resettlement panel may form part of the environmental panel of experts.

24. See [The World Bank Policy on Access to Information, para. 34](#) (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2002).

25. An exception to this requirement may be made in highly unusual circumstances (such as emergency operations) with the approval of Bank Management (see [BP 4.12](#), para. 8). In such cases, the Management's approval stipulates a timetable and budget for developing the resettlement plan.

26. Impacts are considered "minor" if the affected people are not physically displaced and less than 10 percent of their productive assets are lost.

27. For the purpose of this paragraph, the term "subprojects" includes components and subcomponents.

[Annex A - Involuntary Resettlement Instruments](#)