



Bank Directive

Addressing Risks and Impacts on Disadvantaged or Vulnerable Individuals or Groups

Bank Access to Information Policy Designation

Public

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Content

Establishes directions for Bank staff in respect of disadvantaged or vulnerable individuals or groups as required under the Environmental and Social Framework.

Applicable to

IBRD, IDA

Issuer

President, EXC

Sponsor

Vice President, OPSVP

SECTION I – PURPOSE AND APPLICATION

1. This Directive establishes directions for Bank staff regarding due diligence obligations relating to the identification of, and mitigation of risks and impacts on, individuals or groups who, because of their particular circumstances, may be disadvantaged or vulnerable, as described in paragraph 4 (b) of the *World Bank Environmental and Social Policy For Investment Project Financing* (E&S Policy) and paragraph 28 (b) of the Environmental and Social Standard 1: *Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts* (ESS1).
2. This Directive applies to the Bank.

SECTION II – DEFINITIONS

Capitalized terms and acronyms used in this Directive have the meanings set out: (a) in the Bank Policy entitled “*World Bank Environmental and Social Policy for Investment Project Financing*”; or (b) below.

1. “**disadvantaged or vulnerable**” refers to those individuals or groups who, by virtue of, for example, their age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, physical, mental or other disability, social, civic or health status, sexual orientation, gender identity, economic disadvantages or indigenous status, and/or dependence on unique natural resources, may be more likely to be adversely affected by the project impacts and/or more limited than others in their ability to take advantage of a project’s benefits. Such an individual/group is also more likely to be excluded from/unable to participate fully in the mainstream consultation process and as such may require specific measures and/or assistance to do so. This will take into account considerations relating to age, including the elderly and minors, and including in circumstances where they may be separated from their family, the community or other individuals upon whom they depend.
2. “**due diligence**” means the process conducted by the Bank pursuant to Section C of the E&S Policy.
3. “**Environmental and Social Framework**” means the World Bank Environmental and Social Framework that comprises a “*Vision for Sustainable Development*”, the “*World Bank Environmental and Social Policy for Investment Project Financing*” and the “*Environmental and Social Standards*”.
4. “**environmental and social assessment**” means the process conducted by the Borrower pursuant to Section B of ESS1.
5. “**E&S Directive**” means the Directive entitled “*Environmental and Social Directive for Investment Project Financing*.”
6. “**OESRC**” means the Operations Environmental and Social Review Committee of the Bank referred to in the E&S Directive.

7. “**Stakeholder Engagement Plan**” or “**SEP**” means the plan developed in accordance with Environmental and Social Standard 10: *Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure* (ESS 10).

SECTION III – SCOPE

1. The task team supports the Borrower’s preparation and implementation of the project in accordance with, among other things, Investment Project Financing Policy, the relevant IPF instructions/procedures, the E&S Policy and the E&S Directive. Where a project poses specific risks and impacts to individuals or groups who, because of their particular circumstances, may be disadvantaged or vulnerable, the task team approaches such risks and impacts as set out below.
2. The task team assists the Borrower in establishing arrangements for the undertaking and preparation of the environmental and social assessment of the project as required by ESS1¹, including by reviewing and providing its no-objection to relevant terms of reference (if any) prepared by the Borrower with respect to the assessment and, as and when appropriate, supports the Borrower in carrying out consultations with stakeholders.
3. The task team reviews the terms of reference for the environmental and social assessment to verify that, in accordance with paragraphs 28 (b) (ii) and (iii) and 29 of ESS1, the terms of reference:
 - (a) identifies (or requires the identification of) groups or individuals affected by the project that may be disadvantaged or vulnerable; and
 - (b) requires an assessment of project risks and impacts, and identification of differentiated mitigation measures, as they pertain to the disadvantaged or vulnerable individuals or groups that are identified.
4. As the Borrower is also required to engage with the different stakeholders as an integral part of the environmental and social assessment in accordance with ESS10², the task team reviews the Borrower’s Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) to verify that:
 - (a) the SEP identifies the disadvantaged or vulnerable individuals or groups as referred to in paragraph 1 of Section II;
 - (b) where applicable, the SEP includes differentiated measures to allow the effective participation of such individuals or groups; and
 - (c) the Borrower has engaged and consulted with such individuals and groups in accordance with the SEP.
5. The task team undertakes its due diligence of the project, with respect to disadvantaged or

¹ See in particular paragraphs 28 (b) (ii) and (iii) and 29 of ESS1.

² See in particular paragraphs 11 and 16 of ESS10.

vulnerable individuals or groups, by (as applicable):

- (a) reviewing the environmental and social assessment conducted by the Borrower to verify that it addresses the relevant project risks and impacts, including the (i) risk that project-related impacts fall disproportionately on individuals or groups who, because of their particular circumstances, may be disadvantaged or vulnerable; and (ii) risk of prejudice or discrimination toward individuals or groups in providing access to development resources and project benefits, particularly in the case of those who may be disadvantaged or vulnerable;
 - (b) if appropriate in the context of a particular project, participating in the consultation activities of the Borrower, including with disadvantaged or vulnerable individuals or groups³;
 - (c) considering the potential significance of risks and impacts on disadvantaged or vulnerable individuals or groups in order for the Bank to determine whether to require the Borrower to retain, or whether the Bank should retain, independent third party specialists to assist in the identification of such individuals or groups and assessment of the risks and impacts on them; and
 - (d) reviewing information provided by the Borrower or through the Bank's own efforts about the project's risks and impacts on disadvantaged or vulnerable individuals or groups.
6. Through its due diligence, the task team ascertains whether: (i) the environmental and social assessment has properly identified the disadvantaged or vulnerable individuals or groups; and (ii) appropriate differentiated mitigation measures have been incorporated into project design and documented in relevant project documents so that adverse impacts do not fall disproportionately on the disadvantaged or vulnerable, and they are not disadvantaged in sharing any development benefits resulting from the project. This due diligence contributes to the Bank's decision making as to whether or not to proceed with the proposed project.
7. There may be circumstances in which the application of this Directive (including the identification of disadvantaged or vulnerable individuals or groups or differentiated mitigation measures) could expose such individuals or groups to risk of harm. In such circumstances the task team seeks the advice of the Operations Environmental and Social Review Committee (OESRC), which also considers any implications that such circumstance may have for the task team itself. The OESRC considers the project-specific circumstances and the risk of harm, and advises the task team as to whether or not to proceed with the project and, if so, on what basis. In cases where the project proceeds, the task team will comply with this Directive in the manner advised by the OESRC. The task team documents its good faith efforts to apply this Directive and the response of the Borrower to such efforts.
8. The task team ensures that the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) reflects in adequate detail the measures and actions agreed between the Bank and the Borrower to address risks or impacts on disadvantaged or vulnerable individuals or groups. The task team attaches the ESCP to the legal agreement and includes in the legal agreement any

³ See the E&S Policy, paragraph 53.

appropriate obligations to be met by the Borrower in relation to disadvantaged or vulnerable individuals or groups.

9. During the implementation support and monitoring phase, the task team monitors the Borrower's obligations with respect to disadvantaged or vulnerable individuals or groups.
10. The task team may engage independent third party specialists or consult with stakeholders to verify project monitoring information related to disadvantaged or vulnerable individuals or groups.

SECTION IV – EXCEPTION

None.

SECTION V – WAIVER

A provision of this Directive may be waived in accordance with Bank Policy "Operational Policy Waivers" and the Bank Procedure "Operational Policy Waivers and Waivers of Operational Requirements".

SECTION VI – OTHER PROVISIONS

None.

Section VII – TEMPORARY PROVISIONS

None.

SECTION VIII – EFFECTIVE DATE

This Directive is effective as of the date on the cover page.

SECTION IX – ISSUER

The Issuer of this Directive is President, World Bank.

SECTION X – SPONSOR

The Sponsor of this Directive is Vice President, Operations Policy and Country Services.

SECTION XI – RELATED DOCUMENTS

Bank Policy, “Investment Project Financing”

World Bank Environmental and Social Policy for Investment Project Financing

Borrower Requirements – Environmental and Social Standards 1-10

Bank Directive, “Environmental and Social Directive for Investment Project Financing”

SECTION XII – REVISION HISTORY

This Directive was updated March 2021 to add to the representative list of those who may be disadvantaged or vulnerable (paragraph 1 of Section II).

Questions regarding this Directive should be addressed to the Sponsor.