

Overview of Performance Standards on Environmental and Social Sustainability

1. IFC's Sustainability Framework articulates the Corporation's strategic commitment to sustainable development, and is an integral part of IFC's approach to risk management. The Sustainability Framework comprises IFC's Policy and Performance Standards on Environmental and Social Sustainability, and IFC's Access to Information Policy. The Policy on Environmental and Social Sustainability describes IFC's commitments, roles, and responsibilities related to environmental and social sustainability. IFC's Access to Information Policy reflects IFC's commitment to transparency and good governance on its operations, and outlines the Corporation's institutional disclosure obligations regarding its investment and advisory services. The Performance Standards are directed towards clients, providing guidance on how to identify risks and impacts, and are designed to help avoid, mitigate, and manage risks and impacts as a way of doing business in a sustainable way, including stakeholder engagement and disclosure obligations of the client in relation to project-level activities. In the case of its direct investments (including project and corporate finance provided through financial intermediaries), IFC requires its clients to apply the Performance Standards to manage environmental and social risks and impacts so that development opportunities are enhanced. IFC uses the Sustainability Framework along with other strategies, policies, and initiatives to direct the business activities of the Corporation in order to achieve its overall development objectives. The Performance Standards may also be applied by other financial institutions.

2. Together, the eight Performance Standards establish standards that the client¹ is to meet throughout the life of an investment by IFC:

Performance Standard 1:	Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts
Performance Standard 2:	Labor and Working Conditions
Performance Standard 3:	Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention
Performance Standard 4:	Community Health, Safety, and Security
Performance Standard 5:	Land Acquisition and Involuntary Resettlement
Performance Standard 6:	Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources
Performance Standard 7:	Indigenous Peoples
Performance Standard 8:	Cultural Heritage

3. Performance Standard 1 establishes the importance of (i) integrated assessment to identify the environmental and social impacts, risks, and opportunities of projects; (ii) effective community engagement through disclosure of project-related information and consultation with local communities on matters that directly affect them; and (iii) the client's management of environmental and social performance throughout the life of the project. Performance Standards 2 through 8 establish objectives and requirements to avoid, minimize, and where residual impacts remain, to compensate/offset for risks and impacts to workers, Affected Communities, and the environment. While all relevant environmental and social risks and potential impacts should be considered as part of the assessment, Performance Standards 2 through 8 describe potential environmental and social risks and impacts that require particular attention. Where environmental or social risks and impacts

¹ The term "client" is used throughout the Performance Standards broadly to refer to the party responsible for implementing and operating the project that is being financed, or the recipient of the financing, depending on the project structure and type of financing. The term "project" is defined in Performance Standard 1.

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are identified, the client is required to manage them through its Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) consistent with Performance Standard 1.

4. Performance Standard 1 applies to all projects that have environmental and social risks and impacts. Depending on project circumstances, other Performance Standards may apply as well. The Performance Standards should be read together and cross-referenced as needed. The requirements section of each Performance Standard applies to all activities financed under the project, unless otherwise noted in the specific limitations described in each paragraph. Clients are encouraged to apply the ESMS developed under Performance Standard 1 to all their project activities, regardless of financing source. A number of cross-cutting topics such as climate change, gender, human rights, and water, are addressed across multiple Performance Standards.

5. In addition to meeting the requirements under the Performance Standards, clients must comply with applicable national law, including those laws implementing host country obligations under international law.

6. The World Bank Group Environmental, Health and Safety Guidelines (EHS Guidelines) are technical reference documents with general and industry-specific examples of good international industry practice. IFC uses the EHS Guidelines as a technical source of information during project appraisal. The EHS Guidelines contain the performance levels and measures that are normally acceptable to IFC, and that are generally considered to be achievable in new facilities at reasonable costs by existing technology. For IFC-financed projects, application of the EHS Guidelines to existing facilities may involve the establishment of site-specific targets with an appropriate timetable for achieving them. The environmental assessment process may recommend alternative (higher or lower) levels or measures, which, if acceptable to IFC, become project- or site-specific requirements. The General EHS Guideline contains information on cross-cutting environmental, health, and safety issues potentially applicable to all industry sectors. It should be used together with the relevant industry sector guideline(s). The EHS Guidelines may be occasionally updated.

7. When host country regulations differ from the levels and measures presented in the EHS Guidelines, projects are expected to achieve whichever is more stringent. If less stringent levels or measures are appropriate in view of specific project circumstances, a full and detailed justification for any proposed alternatives is needed as part of the site-specific environmental assessment. This justification should demonstrate that the choice for any alternative performance level is protective of human health and the environment.

8. A set of eight Guidance Notes, corresponding to each Performance Standard, and an additional Interpretation Note on Financial Intermediaries offer guidance on the requirements contained in the Performance Standards, including reference materials, and on good sustainability practices to help clients improve project performance. These Guidance/Interpretation Notes may be occasionally updated.

Introduction

1. Performance Standard 1 underscores the importance of managing environmental and social performance throughout the life of a project. An effective Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) is a dynamic and continuous process initiated and supported by management, and involves engagement between the client, its workers, local communities directly affected by the project (the Affected Communities) and, where appropriate, other stakeholders.¹ Drawing on the elements of the established business management process of “plan, do, check, and act,” the ESMS entails a methodological approach to managing environmental and social risks² and impacts³ in a structured way on an ongoing basis. A good ESMS appropriate to the nature and scale of the project promotes sound and sustainable environmental and social performance, and can lead to improved financial, social, and environmental outcomes.

2. At times, the assessment and management of certain environmental and social risks and impacts may be the responsibility of the government or other third parties over which the client does not have control or influence.⁴ Examples of where this may happen include: (i) when early planning decisions are made by the government or third parties which affect the project site selection and/or design; and/or (ii) when specific actions directly related to the project are carried out by the government or third parties such as providing land for a project which may have previously involved the resettlement of communities or individuals and/or leading to loss of biodiversity. While the client cannot control these government or third party actions, an effective ESMS should identify the different entities involved and the roles they play, the corresponding risks they present to the client, and opportunities to collaborate with these third parties in order to help achieve environmental and social outcomes that are consistent with the Performance Standards. In addition, this Performance Standard supports the use of an effective grievance mechanism that can facilitate early indication of, and prompt remediation for those who believe that they have been harmed by a client's actions.

3. Business should respect human rights, which means to avoid infringing on the human rights of others and address adverse human rights impacts business may cause or contribute to. Each of the Performance Standards has elements related to human rights dimensions that a project may face in the course of its operations. Due diligence against these Performance Standards will enable the client to address many relevant human rights issues in its project.

Objectives

- To identify and evaluate environmental and social risks and impacts of the project.
- To adopt a mitigation hierarchy to anticipate and avoid, or where avoidance is not possible, minimize,⁵ and, where residual impacts remain, compensate/offset for risks and impacts to workers, Affected Communities, and the environment.

¹ Other stakeholders are those not directly affected by the project but that have an interest in it. These could include national and local authorities, neighboring projects, and/or nongovernmental organizations.

² Environmental and social risk is a combination of the probability of certain hazard occurrences and the severity of impacts resulting from such an occurrence.

³ Environmental and social impacts refer to any change, potential or actual, to (i) the physical, natural, or cultural environment, and (ii) impacts on surrounding community and workers, resulting from the business activity to be supported.

⁴ Contractors retained by, or acting on behalf of the client(s), are considered to be under direct control of the client and not considered third parties for the purposes of this Performance Standard.

⁵ Acceptable options to minimize will vary and include: abate, rectify, repair, and/or restore impacts, as appropriate. The risk and impact mitigation hierarchy is further discussed and specified in the context of Performance Standards 2 through 8, where relevant.

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- To promote improved environmental and social performance of clients through the effective use of management systems.
- To ensure that grievances from Affected Communities and external communications from other stakeholders are responded to and managed appropriately.
- To promote and provide means for adequate engagement with Affected Communities throughout the project cycle on issues that could potentially affect them and to ensure that relevant environmental and social information is disclosed and disseminated.

Scope of Application

4. This Performance Standard applies to business activities with environmental and/or social risks and/or impacts. For the purposes of this Performance Standard, the term “project” refers to a defined set of business activities, including those where specific physical elements, aspects, and facilities likely to generate risks and impacts, have yet to be identified.⁶ Where applicable, this could include aspects from the early developmental stages through the entire life cycle (design, construction, commissioning, operation, decommissioning, closure or, where applicable, post-closure) of a physical asset.⁷ The requirements of this Performance Standard apply to all business activities unless otherwise noted in the specific limitations described in each of the paragraphs below.

Requirements

Environmental and Social Assessment and Management System

5. The client, in coordination with other responsible government agencies and third parties as appropriate,⁸ will conduct a process of environmental and social assessment, and establish and maintain an ESMS appropriate to the nature and scale of the project and commensurate with the level of its environmental and social risks and impacts. The ESMS will incorporate the following elements: (i) policy; (ii) identification of risks and impacts; (iii) management programs; (iv) organizational capacity and competency; (v) emergency preparedness and response; (vi) stakeholder engagement; and (vii) monitoring and review.

Policy

6. The client will establish an overarching policy defining the environmental and social objectives and principles that guide the project to achieve sound environmental and social performance.⁹ The policy provides a framework for the environmental and social assessment and management process, and specifies that the project (or business activities, as appropriate) will comply with the applicable laws and regulations of the jurisdictions in which it is being undertaken, including those laws implementing host country obligations under international law. The policy should be consistent with the principles of the Performance Standards. Under some circumstances, clients may also subscribe

⁶ For example, corporate entities which have portfolios of existing physical assets, and/or intend to develop or acquire new facilities, and investment funds or financial intermediaries with existing portfolios of assets and/or which intend to invest in new facilities.

⁷ Recognizing that this Performance Standard is used by a variety of financial institutions, investors, insurers, and owner/operators, each user should separately specify the business activities to which this Performance Standard should apply.

⁸ That is, those parties legally obligated and responsible for assessing and managing specific risks and impacts (e.g., government-led resettlement).

⁹ This requirement is a stand-alone, project-specific policy and is not intended to affect (or require alteration of) existing policies the client may have defined for non-related projects, business activities, or higher-level corporate activities.

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to other internationally recognized standards, certification schemes, or codes of practice and these too should be included in the policy. The policy will indicate who, within the client's organization, will ensure conformance with the policy and be responsible for its execution (with reference to an appropriate responsible government agency or third party, as necessary). The client will communicate the policy to all levels of its organization.

Identification of Risks and Impacts

7. The client will establish and maintain a process for identifying the environmental and social risks and impacts of the project (see paragraph 18 for competency requirements). The type, scale, and location of the project guide the scope and level of effort devoted to the risks and impacts identification process. The scope of the risks and impacts identification process will be consistent with good international industry practice,¹⁰ and will determine the appropriate and relevant methods and assessment tools. The process may comprise a full-scale environmental and social impact assessment, a limited or focused environmental and social assessment, or straightforward application of environmental siting, pollution standards, design criteria, or construction standards.¹¹ When the project involves existing assets, environmental and/or social audits or risk/hazard assessments can be appropriate and sufficient to identify risks and impacts. If assets to be developed, acquired or financed have yet to be defined, the establishment of an environmental and social due diligence process will identify risks and impacts at a point in the future when the physical elements, assets, and facilities are reasonably understood. The risks and impacts identification process will be based on recent environmental and social baseline data at an appropriate level of detail. The process will consider all relevant environmental and social risks and impacts of the project, including the issues identified in Performance Standards 2 through 8, and those who are likely to be affected by such risks and impacts.¹² The risks and impacts identification process will consider the emissions of greenhouse gases, the relevant risks associated with a changing climate and the adaptation opportunities, and potential transboundary effects, such as pollution of air, or use or pollution of international waterways.

8. Where the project involves specifically identified physical elements, aspects, and facilities that are likely to generate impacts, environmental and social risks and impacts will be identified in the context of the project's area of influence. This area of influence encompasses, as appropriate:

- The area likely to be affected by: (i) the project¹³ and the client's activities and facilities that are directly owned, operated or managed (including by contractors) and that are a component of the project;¹⁴ (ii) impacts from unplanned but predictable developments caused by the project that may occur later or at a different location; or (iii) indirect project impacts on biodiversity or on ecosystem services upon which Affected Communities' livelihoods are dependent.

¹⁰ Defined as the exercise of professional skill, diligence, prudence, and foresight that would reasonably be expected from skilled and experienced professionals engaged in the same type of undertaking under the same or similar circumstances globally or regionally.

¹¹ For greenfield developments or large expansions with specifically identified physical elements, aspects, and facilities that are likely to generate potential significant environmental or social impacts, the client will conduct a comprehensive Environmental and Social Impact Assessment, including an examination of alternatives, where appropriate.

¹² In limited high risk circumstances, it may be appropriate for the client to complement its environmental and social risks and impacts identification process with specific human rights due diligence as relevant to the particular business.

¹³ Examples include the project's sites, the immediate airshed and watershed, or transport corridors.

¹⁴ Examples include power transmission corridors, pipelines, canals, tunnels, relocation and access roads, borrow and disposal areas, construction camps, and contaminated land (e.g., soil, groundwater, surface water, and sediments).

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- Associated facilities, which are facilities that are not funded as part of the project and that would not have been constructed or expanded if the project did not exist and without which the project would not be viable.¹⁵
- Cumulative impacts¹⁶ that result from the incremental impact, on areas or resources used or directly impacted by the project, from other existing, planned or reasonably defined developments at the time the risks and impacts identification process is conducted.

9. In the event of risks and impacts in the project's area of influence resulting from a third party's actions, the client will address those risks and impacts in a manner commensurate with the client's control and influence over the third parties, and with due regard to conflict of interest.

10. Where the client can reasonably exercise control, the risks and impacts identification process will also consider those risks and impacts associated with primary supply chains, as defined in Performance Standard 2 (paragraphs 27–29) and Performance Standard 6 (paragraph 30).

11. Where the project involves specifically identified physical elements, aspects and facilities that are likely to generate environmental and social impacts, the identification of risks and impacts will take into account the findings and conclusions of related and applicable plans, studies, or assessments prepared by relevant government authorities or other parties that are directly related to the project and its area of influence.¹⁷ These include master economic development plans, country or regional plans, feasibility studies, alternatives analyses, and cumulative, regional, sectoral, or strategic environmental assessments where relevant. The risks and impacts identification will take account of the outcome of the engagement process with Affected Communities as appropriate.

12. Where the project involves specifically identified physical elements, aspects and facilities that are likely to generate impacts, and as part of the process of identifying risks and impacts, the client will identify individuals and groups that may be directly and differentially or disproportionately affected by the project because of their disadvantaged or vulnerable status.¹⁸ Where individuals or groups are identified as disadvantaged or vulnerable, the client will propose and implement differentiated measures so that adverse impacts do not fall disproportionately on them and they are not disadvantaged in sharing development benefits and opportunities.

Management Programs

13. Consistent with the client's policy and the objectives and principles described therein, the client will establish management programs that, in sum, will describe mitigation and performance improvement measures and actions that address the identified environmental and social risks and impacts of the project.

¹⁵ Associated facilities may include railways, roads, captive power plants or transmission lines, pipelines, utilities, warehouses, and logistics terminals.

¹⁶ Cumulative impacts are limited to those impacts generally recognized as important on the basis of scientific concerns and/or concerns from Affected Communities. Examples of cumulative impacts include: incremental contribution of gaseous emissions to an airshed; reduction of water flows in a watershed due to multiple withdrawals; increases in sediment loads to a watershed; interference with migratory routes or wildlife movement; or more traffic congestion and accidents due to increases in vehicular traffic on community roadways.

¹⁷ The client can take these into account by focusing on the project's incremental contribution to selected impacts generally recognized as important on the basis of scientific concern or concerns from the Affected Communities within the area addressed by these larger scope regional studies or cumulative assessments.

¹⁸ This disadvantaged or vulnerable status may stem from an individual's or group's race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status. The client should also consider factors such as gender, age, ethnicity, culture, literacy, sickness, physical or mental disability, poverty or economic disadvantage, and dependence on unique natural resources.

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14. Depending on the nature and scale of the project, these programs may consist of some documented combination of operational procedures, practices, plans, and related supporting documents (including legal agreements) that are managed in a systematic way.¹⁹ The programs may apply broadly across the client's organization, including contractors and primary suppliers over which the organization has control or influence, or to specific sites, facilities, or activities. The mitigation hierarchy to address identified risks and impacts will favor the avoidance of impacts over minimization, and, where residual impacts remain, compensation/offset, wherever technically²⁰ and financially feasible.²¹

15. Where the identified risks and impacts cannot be avoided, the client will identify mitigation and performance measures and establish corresponding actions to ensure the project will operate in compliance with applicable laws and regulations, and meet the requirements of Performance Standards 1 through 8. The level of detail and complexity of this collective management program and the priority of the identified measures and actions will be commensurate with the project's risks and impacts, and will take account of the outcome of the engagement process with Affected Communities as appropriate.

16. The management programs will establish environmental and social Action Plans,²² which will define desired outcomes and actions to address the issues raised in the risks and impacts identification process, as measurable events to the extent possible, with elements such as performance indicators, targets, or acceptance criteria that can be tracked over defined time periods, and with estimates of the resources and responsibilities for implementation. As appropriate, the management program will recognize and incorporate the role of relevant actions and events controlled by third parties to address identified risks and impacts. Recognizing the dynamic nature of the project, the management program will be responsive to changes in circumstances, unforeseen events, and the results of monitoring and review.

Organizational Capacity and Competency

17. The client, in collaboration with appropriate and relevant third parties, will establish, maintain, and strengthen as necessary an organizational structure that defines roles, responsibilities, and authority to implement the ESMS. Specific personnel, including management representative(s), with clear lines of responsibility and authority should be designated. Key environmental and social responsibilities should be well defined and communicated to the relevant personnel and to the rest of the client's organization. Sufficient management sponsorship and human and financial resources will be provided on an ongoing basis to achieve effective and continuous environmental and social performance.

¹⁹ Existing legal agreements between the client and third parties that address mitigation actions with regard to specific impacts constitute part of a program. Examples are government-managed resettlement responsibilities specified in an agreement.

²⁰ Technical feasibility is based on whether the proposed measures and actions can be implemented with commercially available skills, equipment, and materials, taking into consideration prevailing local factors such as climate, geography, demography, infrastructure, security, governance, capacity, and operational reliability.

²¹ Financial feasibility is based on commercial considerations, including relative magnitude of the incremental cost of adopting such measures and actions compared to the project's investment, operating, and maintenance costs, and on whether this incremental cost could make the project nonviable to the client.

²² Action plans may include an overall Environmental and Social Action Plan necessary for carrying out a suite of mitigation measures or thematic action plans, such as Resettlement Action Plans or Biodiversity Action Plans. Action plans may be plans designed to fill in the gaps of existing management programs to ensure consistency with the Performance Standards, or they may be stand alone plans that specify the project's mitigation strategy. The "Action plan" terminology is understood by some communities of practice to mean Management plans, or Development plans. In this case, examples are numerous and include various types of environmental and social management plans.

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18. Personnel within the client's organization with direct responsibility for the project's environmental and social performance will have the knowledge, skills, and experience necessary to perform their work, including current knowledge of the host country's regulatory requirements and the applicable requirements of Performance Standards 1 through 8. Personnel will also possess the knowledge, skills, and experience to implement the specific measures and actions required under the ESMS and the methods required to perform the actions in a competent and efficient manner.

19. The process of identification of risks and impacts will consist of an adequate, accurate, and objective evaluation and presentation, prepared by competent professionals. For projects posing potentially significant adverse impacts or where technically complex issues are involved, clients may be required to involve external experts to assist in the risks and impacts identification process.

Emergency Preparedness and Response

20. Where the project involves specifically identified physical elements, aspects and facilities that are likely to generate impacts, the ESMS will establish and maintain an emergency preparedness and response system so that the client, in collaboration with appropriate and relevant third parties, will be prepared to respond to accidental and emergency situations associated with the project in a manner appropriate to prevent and mitigate any harm to people and/or the environment. This preparation will include the identification of areas where accidents and emergency situations may occur, communities and individuals that may be impacted, response procedures, provision of equipment and resources, designation of responsibilities, communication, including that with potentially Affected Communities and periodic training to ensure effective response. The emergency preparedness and response activities will be periodically reviewed and revised, as necessary, to reflect changing conditions.

21. Where applicable, the client will also assist and collaborate with the potentially Affected Communities (see Performance Standard 4) and the local government agencies in their preparations to respond effectively to emergency situations, especially when their participation and collaboration are necessary to ensure effective response. If local government agencies have little or no capacity to respond effectively, the client will play an active role in preparing for and responding to emergencies associated with the project. The client will document its emergency preparedness and response activities, resources, and responsibilities, and will provide appropriate information to potentially Affected Community and relevant government agencies.

Monitoring and Review

22. The client will establish procedures to monitor and measure the effectiveness of the management program, as well as compliance with any related legal and/or contractual obligations and regulatory requirements. Where the government or other third party has responsibility for managing specific risks and impacts and associated mitigation measures, the client will collaborate in establishing and monitoring such mitigation measures. Where appropriate, clients will consider involving representatives from Affected Communities to participate in monitoring activities.²³ The client's monitoring program should be overseen by the appropriate level in the organization. For projects with significant impacts, the client will retain external experts to verify its monitoring information. The extent of monitoring should be commensurate with the project's environmental and social risks and impacts and with compliance requirements.

23. In addition to recording information to track performance and establishing relevant operational controls, the client should use dynamic mechanisms, such as internal inspections and audits, where relevant, to verify compliance and progress toward the desired outcomes. Monitoring will normally

²³ For example, participatory water monitoring.

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include recording information to track performance and comparing this against the previously established benchmarks or requirements in the management program. Monitoring should be adjusted according to performance experience and actions requested by relevant regulatory authorities. The client will document monitoring results and identify and reflect the necessary corrective and preventive actions in the amended management program and plans. The client, in collaboration with appropriate and relevant third parties, will implement these corrective and preventive actions, and follow up on these actions in upcoming monitoring cycles to ensure their effectiveness.

24. Senior management in the client organization will receive periodic performance reviews of the effectiveness of the ESMS, based on systematic data collection and analysis. The scope and frequency of such reporting will depend upon the nature and scope of the activities identified and undertaken in accordance with the client's ESMS and other applicable project requirements. Based on results within these performance reviews, senior management will take the necessary and appropriate steps to ensure the intent of the client's policy is met, that procedures, practices, and plans are being implemented, and are seen to be effective.

Stakeholder Engagement

25. Stakeholder engagement is the basis for building strong, constructive, and responsive relationships that are essential for the successful management of a project's environmental and social impacts.²⁴ Stakeholder engagement is an ongoing process that may involve, in varying degrees, the following elements: stakeholder analysis and planning, disclosure and dissemination of information, consultation and participation, grievance mechanism, and ongoing reporting to Affected Communities. The nature, frequency, and level of effort of stakeholder engagement may vary considerably and will be commensurate with the project's risks and adverse impacts, and the project's phase of development.

Stakeholder Analysis and Engagement Planning

26. Clients should identify the range of stakeholders that may be interested in their actions and consider how external communications might facilitate a dialog with all stakeholders (paragraph 34 below). Where projects involve specifically identified physical elements, aspects and/or facilities that are likely to generate adverse environmental and social impacts to Affected Communities the client will identify the Affected Communities and will meet the relevant requirements described below.

27. The client will develop and implement a Stakeholder Engagement Plan that is scaled to the project risks and impacts and development stage, and be tailored to the characteristics and interests of the Affected Communities. Where applicable, the Stakeholder Engagement Plan will include differentiated measures to allow the effective participation of those identified as disadvantaged or vulnerable. When the stakeholder engagement process depends substantially on community representatives,²⁵ the client will make every reasonable effort to verify that such persons do in fact represent the views of Affected Communities and that they can be relied upon to faithfully communicate the results of consultations to their constituents.

28. In cases where the exact location of the project is not known, but it is reasonably expected to have significant impacts on local communities, the client will prepare a Stakeholder Engagement Framework, as part of its management program, outlining general principles and a strategy to identify Affected Communities and other relevant stakeholders and plan for an engagement process

²⁴ Requirements regarding engagement of workers and related grievance redress procedures are found in Performance Standard 2.

²⁵ For example, community and religious leaders, local government representatives, civil society representatives, politicians, school teachers, and/or others representing one or more affected stakeholder groups.

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compatible with this Performance Standard that will be implemented once the physical location of the project is known.

Disclosure of Information

29. Disclosure of relevant project information helps Affected Communities and other stakeholders understand the risks, impacts and opportunities of the project. The client will provide Affected Communities with access to relevant information²⁶ on: (i) the purpose, nature, and scale of the project; (ii) the duration of proposed project activities; (iii) any risks to and potential impacts on such communities and relevant mitigation measures; (iv) the envisaged stakeholder engagement process; and (v) the grievance mechanism.

Consultation

30. When Affected Communities are subject to identified risks and adverse impacts from a project, the client will undertake a process of consultation in a manner that provides the Affected Communities with opportunities to express their views on project risks, impacts and mitigation measures, and allows the client to consider and respond to them. The extent and degree of engagement required by the consultation process should be commensurate with the project's risks and adverse impacts and with the concerns raised by the Affected Communities. Effective consultation is a two-way process that should: (i) begin early in the process of identification of environmental and social risks and impacts and continue on an ongoing basis as risks and impacts arise; (ii) be based on the prior disclosure and dissemination of relevant, transparent, objective, meaningful and easily accessible information which is in a culturally appropriate local language(s) and format and is understandable to Affected Communities; (iii) focus inclusive²⁷ engagement on those directly affected as opposed to those not directly affected; (iv) be free of external manipulation, interference, coercion, or intimidation; (v) enable meaningful participation, where applicable; and (vi) be documented. The client will tailor its consultation process to the language preferences of the Affected Communities, their decision-making process, and the needs of disadvantaged or vulnerable groups. If clients have already engaged in such a process, they will provide adequate documented evidence of such engagement.

Informed Consultation and Participation

31. For projects with potentially significant adverse impacts on Affected Communities, the client will conduct an Informed Consultation and Participation (ICP) process that will build upon the steps outlined above in Consultation and will result in the Affected Communities' informed participation. ICP involves a more in-depth exchange of views and information, and an organized and iterative consultation, leading to the client's incorporating into their decision-making process the views of the Affected Communities on matters that affect them directly, such as the proposed mitigation measures, the sharing of development benefits and opportunities, and implementation issues. The consultation process should (i) capture both men's and women's views, if necessary through separate forums or engagements, and (ii) reflect men's and women's different concerns and priorities about impacts, mitigation mechanisms, and benefits, where appropriate. The client will document the process, in particular the measures taken to avoid or minimize risks to and adverse impacts on the

²⁶ Depending on the scale of the project and significance of the risks and impacts, relevant document(s) could range from full Environmental and Social Assessments and Action Plans (i.e., Stakeholder Engagement Plan, Resettlement Action Plans, Biodiversity Action Plans, Hazardous Materials Management Plans, Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans, Community Health and Safety Plans, Ecosystem Restoration Plans, and Indigenous Peoples Development Plans, etc.) to easy-to-understand summaries of key issues and commitments. These documents could also include the client's environmental and social policy and any supplemental measures and actions defined as a result of independent due diligence conducted by financiers.

²⁷ Such as men, women, the elderly, youth, displaced persons, and vulnerable and disadvantaged persons or groups.

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Affected Communities, and will inform those affected about how their concerns have been considered.

Indigenous Peoples

32. For projects with adverse impacts to Indigenous Peoples, the client is required to engage them in a process of ICP and in certain circumstances the client is required to obtain their Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC). The requirements related to Indigenous Peoples and the definition of the special circumstances requiring FPIC are described in Performance Standard 7.

Private Sector Responsibilities Under Government-Led Stakeholder Engagement

33. Where stakeholder engagement is the responsibility of the host government, the client will collaborate with the responsible government agency, to the extent permitted by the agency, to achieve outcomes that are consistent with the objectives of this Performance Standard. In addition, where government capacity is limited, the client will play an active role during the stakeholder engagement planning, implementation, and monitoring. If the process conducted by the government does not meet the relevant requirements of this Performance Standard, the client will conduct a complementary process and, where appropriate, identify supplemental actions.

External Communications and Grievance Mechanisms

External Communications

34. Clients will implement and maintain a procedure for external communications that includes methods to (i) receive and register external communications from the public; (ii) screen and assess the issues raised and determine how to address them; (iii) provide, track, and document responses, if any; and (iv) adjust the management program, as appropriate. In addition, clients are encouraged to make publicly available periodic reports on their environmental and social sustainability.

Grievance Mechanism for Affected Communities

35. Where there are Affected Communities, the client will establish a grievance mechanism to receive and facilitate resolution of Affected Communities' concerns and grievances about the client's environmental and social performance. The grievance mechanism should be scaled to the risks and adverse impacts of the project and have Affected Communities as its primary user. It should seek to resolve concerns promptly, using an understandable and transparent consultative process that is culturally appropriate and readily accessible, and at no cost and without retribution to the party that originated the issue or concern. The mechanism should not impede access to judicial or administrative remedies. The client will inform the Affected Communities about the mechanism in the course of the stakeholder engagement process.

Ongoing Reporting to Affected Communities

36. The client will provide periodic reports to the Affected Communities that describe progress with implementation of the project Action Plans on issues that involve ongoing risk to or impacts on Affected Communities and on issues that the consultation process or grievance mechanism have identified as a concern to those Communities. If the management program results in material changes in or additions to the mitigation measures or actions described in the Action Plans on issues of concern to the Affected Communities, the updated relevant mitigation measures or actions will be communicated to them. The frequency of these reports will be proportionate to the concerns of Affected Communities but not less than annually.