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# ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL FRAMEWORK

## OVERVIEW

In August 2016, the World Bank's Board of Executive Directors approved the Environmental and Social Framework (ESF); the ESF became effective on October 1, 2018. The ESF protects people and the environment from potential adverse impacts that could arise from Bank-financed projects, and promotes sustainable development. This new framework provides broad coverage, including important advances on transparency, non-discrimination, social inclusion, public participation and accountability. The ESF also places more emphasis on building borrower governments' own capacity to deal with environmental and social issues.

### Why change the World Bank's environmental and social policies?

The world has changed since the World Bank's current environmental and social policies, called the 'Safeguard Policies', were developed, some more than 20 years ago. The ESF consolidates and modernizes many of the requirements under the Safeguard Policies. This effort is one of several key initiatives, including procurement reform, and the climate and gender strategies, recently undertaken by the World Bank to improve development outcomes.

The ESF offers a broader and more systematic coverage of environmental and social risks. The ESF also requires attention to environmental and social issues throughout the preparation and implementation of a project, with increased focus on stakeholder engagement and monitoring. It clarifies roles and responsibilities between the World Bank and its Borrowers. The ESF sets out a risk management approach tailored to risks and impacts of projects. The ESF is the result of the most extensive consultations ever conducted by the World Bank, with nearly four years of analysis and engagement around the world with governments, development experts, and civil society groups, reaching nearly 8,000 stakeholders in 63 countries.

### What are the key changes?

The scope of **social issues** explicitly addressed has been broadened and now includes specific reference to occupational health and safety, labor and working conditions, and community health and safety.

The ESF enhances requirements for transparency and stakeholder engagement. These requirements can now be found throughout the ESF.

The ESF also includes non-discrimination provisions against disadvantaged or vulnerable individuals or groups. In addition, a separate new mandatory World Bank Directive, which sets out examples of these groups, requires staff to assist Borrowers to consider, mitigate, and manage potential discrimination issues.

The ESF also highlights additional **environmental issues**, for example the estimation of project greenhouse gas emissions, the sustainable management of living natural resources, and water management.

### How is the new Environmental and Social Framework an improvement?

The ESF is a strong and comprehensive package that sets a high standard in terms of scope and depth. It brings the World Bank's environmental and social protections in line with those of other development institutions, and makes advances in important areas.

It includes comprehensive protection for workers, communities and disadvantaged or vulnerable groups.

By considering a greater range of environmental and social risks and potential impacts, the ESF will promote better — and lasting — development outcomes.

### How will the ESF help Borrowers with their own environmental and social frameworks?

Strengthening national systems in borrowing countries is recognized as a central development goal in international agreements endorsed by

the World Bank and most of its shareholders, such as the Paris Declaration, the Accra Agenda for Action, and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation.

In line with this, the ESF places greater emphasis on the use of Borrower frameworks, with the goal of building sustainable Borrower institutions and increasing efficiency. Under the ESF, all or part of a Borrower environmental and social framework may be used for a project when it is determined that using the Borrower framework will address the risks and impacts of the project and will lead to outcomes consistent with the objectives of the ESF.

### What is the ESF's scope of application?

As of October 1, 2018, the ESF applies to all new World Bank investment project financing. With existing projects continuing to apply the Safeguard Policies, the two systems will run in parallel for an estimated seven years.



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