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Note: this Standard will be subject to public consultation in Q1 of 2021 and may be revised beforehand

Standard on Protection of Natural Habitats

Introduction

WWF's environmental mission underpins all our work and is the foundation for WWF's Global Goals. This standard reflects the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to conserve biological diversity and promote the sustainable management and use of natural resources, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna, the World Heritage Convention, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and the International Plant Protection Convention, which covers the movement of invasive alien species, pests, and pest risk analysis for quarantine pests, including analysis of environmental risks and living modified organisms.

Requirements

WWF does not undertake activities that knowingly result in the conversion or degradation of natural habitats, especially those that are legally protected, officially proposed for protection, or identified as having high conservation value. This standard requires WWF to:

- Conserve biological diversity and ecosystem integrity by avoiding or, if avoidance is not possible, reducing and minimizing adverse impacts on biodiversity;
- Repair or restore adverse impacts on biodiversity, including, where impacts are unavoidable, through implementing biodiversity offsets to achieve a net gain for biodiversity conservation;
- Protect natural, modified, and critical habitats (natural and modified); and
- Sustain the availability and productivity of priority ecosystem services to maintain benefits to the affected communities and sustain activity performance.

This standard applies to WWF activities that:

- Are located in areas providing ecosystem services upon which potentially affected stakeholders are dependent for sustenance, livelihood, or primary income, or which are used for sustaining the activity;
- Involve the extraction of renewable natural resources as a main purpose (e.g., plantation forestry, commercial harvesting, agriculture, livestock, fisheries, and aquaculture);
- Potentially increase the vulnerability of local communities or of the local ecosystem to climate variability, temperature increases or climate hazards (e.g., floods, droughts, wildfires, landslides, cyclones, storm surges, etc.); and/or
- Include small-scale infrastructural development.

In order to protect the environment, and in accordance with international agreements, WWF endorses and applies the precautionary approach for its activities, projects and programs. Thus, where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for

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postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.

WWF's work does not involve the development of large-scale physical infrastructure associated with significant negative environmental impacts. Therefore, we do not have specific safeguards criteria for physical infrastructure in natural habitats as such. However, where WWF is active in assessing dams for their impacts, guidance is available.

As reflected in WWF's Standard on Environment and Social Risk Management, if risks of negative impacts on natural habitats are identified, a comprehensive assessment and mitigation of these risks are required to be incorporated into the activities.

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