



**ENVIRONMENTAL & SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS**

# **STANDARD ON STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

### Introduction

This Standard aims to strengthen WWF's engagement in a landscape/seascape (hereafter 'landscape') with local communities including Indigenous Peoples who may be impacted by our work, as required in WWF's Social Policies, Project and Program Standards (PPMS), and in WWF's commitment to international instruments such as the UN Declaration on Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

Stakeholder engagement is an inclusive process to support the development of strong, constructive and responsive relationships that help to identify and manage risks and which encourage positive outcomes for stakeholders and conservation and regeneration activities. Stakeholder engagement is most effective when initiated at the earliest stage in defining an activity. Engagement strategies include disclosure of information, consultation, effective and equitable participation of the most vulnerable. The intensity and scale of engagement will vary with the type of activities, socio-political complexities, and potential risks and impacts.

### Requirements

#### Stakeholder Engagement

The WWF team will engage with stakeholders based on the following principles:

- Stakeholder identification and engagement begins as early as possible in the design of activities. It aims to identify and analyse the socio-political-economic situation of affected people, and local organizations which represent them. This includes analysis of rights, claims and relations of differing stakeholders, and initial stakeholder views on conservation aims, which help to inform the early design of activities;
- Engagement is carried out on a continuous basis, and as new environmental or social risks and impacts may arise;
- Engagement is carried out in a culturally sensitive, non-discriminatory and inclusive manner;
- Engagement actions are targeted to the audience, taking into account the different access and communications needs of various groups and individuals, especially those who are vulnerable or disadvantaged;
- For activities that may affect the rights, interests, lands, resources and territories of Indigenous Peoples, their free prior informed consent (FPIC) is ensured. (See the [Standard on Indigenous Peoples](#));
- Where potentially affected peoples are not officially recognised as Indigenous, but are peoples who are historically, socially and culturally distinct and have customary practices that are inextricably linked to nature, the principles of FPIC will be extended to them. Said peoples may include tribal, ethnic minority, nomadic, hunter-gatherer and pastoralist (nomadic, semi-nomadic, transhumance) communities;

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- Consultations are based on the prior disclosure and dissemination of relevant, objective, meaningful and easily accessible information in a timeframe that enables consultations with stakeholders in a culturally appropriate format; carried out in a non-discriminatory and gender-responsive manner, free of external manipulation, interference, coercion, discrimination and intimidation; and
- Stakeholder feedback is encouraged and responded to.

### Public Consultation

Public consultation is based on the prior disclosure and dissemination of relevant, transparent, objective, meaningful and easily accessible information in a timeframe that enables consultation with stakeholders in a culturally appropriate format, in relevant local language(s) and is understandable and accessible to diverse stakeholders. Where Indigenous Peoples are present and/or may be affected by WWF related activities, please refer to the [Standard on Indigenous Peoples](#).

The landscape team will undertake a process of consultation in a manner that provides stakeholders with opportunities to express their views on risks, impacts, and mitigation measures and allows the landscape team to consider and respond to them. Consultation will be carried out on an ongoing basis as the nature of issues, impacts and opportunities evolves.

Consultation is a two-way process, that:

- Begins early in the activities planning process to gather initial views and to inform project design;
- Encourages stakeholder feedback, to inform activities design and foster engagement by stakeholders in the identification and mitigation of environmental and social risks and impacts;
- Continues on an ongoing basis, as risks and impacts arise;
- Considers and responds to feedback;
- Supports active and inclusive engagement with affected parties;
- Is free of external manipulation, interference, coercion, discrimination, and intimidation; and
- Is documented.

For all high and medium risk landscapes, landscape teams formally consult (and document) relevant stakeholders at least four times:

1. during stakeholder analysis to identify most relevant stakeholders who will be affected by the activities;

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2. during scoping and before the terms of reference for the impact - or any other assessment - are finalized;
3. once a draft assessment or mitigation framework is prepared; and
4. during monitoring and reviews.

For the initial consultation, the team provides a summary of the proposed activities, their objectives, and potential impacts. For consultation after the draft impact assessment is prepared, the team provides a non-technical summary of the findings. The summaries should be provided in advance of consultation and proactively disseminated to local stakeholders in a form and language meaningful to those being consulted.

Following the public consultation on the draft impact assessment, the team supplements the document by adding details of the public consultation process, including the team's responses to concerns raised by the various stakeholders and details of measures taken to incorporate these concerns into project design and implementation. The existence of, and access to, the final document must be communicated to stakeholders as part of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP).

### Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Where there are multiple stakeholders and/or complex inter-relationships between different stakeholder groups, a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) must be developed, in consultation with stakeholders as part of programme design and including the following steps:

- Identify affected people - those likely to be affected by the proposed activities because of the actual impacts or potential risks to their physical environment, health, security, well-being or livelihoods and who, because of their circumstances, may be disadvantaged or vulnerable. Based on this, the landscape team will further identify individuals or groups (for example minorities inside communities) who may have different concerns or priorities about impacts, mitigation mechanisms and benefits, and who may require different or separate forms of engagement;
- In consultation with those stakeholders, develop a SEP which is proportionate to the nature and scale of the activities and potential risks and impacts, and addresses the concerns expressed by stakeholders;
- Disclose a draft Stakeholder Engagement Plan to seek the views of interested parties; and
- Finalize the SEP based on the views and feedback, and then redisclose.

The SEP is part of the broader environmental and social mitigation framework for the landscape. Where there are a limited number of stakeholders and without complex inter-relationships, a stand-alone SEP is not mandatory (and instead can be integrated into the ESMF). See [Standard on Environmental and Social Risk Management](#) and the [Framework document](#) for further detail).

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During implementation, the WWF landscape team will execute the SEP by:

- Continuing to engage with and provide information to all stakeholders, including affected peoples on the potential environmental and social risks and impacts of the activities;
- Communicating significant changes to the activities that will result in additional risks and impacts to affected people. WWF will provide information on such risks and impacts and consult with affected people as to how these risks and impacts can be mitigated;
- Respond to concerns and grievances from affected people in a timely manner and in line with the [Standard on Grievance Mechanisms](#).
- All stakeholder engagement e.g., meetings and workshops - must be documented, with aims, key outcomes, concerns raised, agreements, as well as time, date, place and attendance.

The landscape lead is responsible for the implementation of the SEP and will designate specific personnel to be responsible for the implementation and monitoring of stakeholder engagement activities.

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