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GEF Agency Minimum Standards on Environmental & Social Safeguards

2016 GEF Introduction Seminar

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Objectives

- Principle: **Avoid** adverse environmental & social risks and impacts to people and the environment; if avoidance is not feasible, **minimize, mitigate and compensate** such risks in the design, implementation and evaluation of GEF-financed operations.
- Serves as the **minimum policy requirements for GEF Agencies** in implementing GEF projects and programs.
- Consists of 8 standards (*mandatory & optional* provisions).
- An Agency may demonstrate its area of work would not trigger an *optional* standard(s), it is not eligible to receive GEF funding to implement a project which may trigger such standard(s).
- All 18 GEF Agencies are in full compliance with the GEF Safeguard Standards (Council approved in June 2015).
- On-going monitoring plan to assess each Agency's compliance status; once per replenishment cycle (monitoring policy approved in September 2016).



8 Environmental & Social Safeguard Standards

Mandatory

- 1) Environmental & Social Impact Assessment
- 2) Protection of Natural Habitats
- 8) Accountability & Grievance Systems

Optional

- 3) Involuntary Resettlement
- 4) Indigenous Peoples
- 5) Pest Management
- 6) Physical Cultural Resources
- 7) Safety of Dams



Standard 1: Environmental & Social Impact Assessment

GEF Agencies shall conduct environmental & social impact assessments of proposed GEF projects to help ensure their environmental & social soundness and sustainability.

- Risks: physical, biological, socioeconomic, cultural (incl. physical cultural resources), transboundary concerns, human health & safety, legal & institutional framework; direct, indirect, cumulative & associated impacts.
- **Avoid** adverse risks; if not feasible, **minimize, mitigate** or **compensate**.
- **Stakeholder** engagement at an early stage & throughout project implementation.
- Publicly disclose **draft** E&S risk assessment report prior to appraisal.
- Language & accessibility to project affected stakeholders.
- Early screening – public disclosure of draft risk assessment report -appraisal
– public disclosure of final risk assessment report - monitoring/supervision



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Standard 2: Protection of Natural Habitats

GEF Agencies shall establish policies & procedures to ensure environmentally sustainable development and support sustainable management, protection, conservation, maintenance & rehabilitation of natural habitats and associated biodiversity and ecosystem functions.

- Assess if project benefits substantially outweigh potential environmental costs.
- Avoid *significant* conversion or degradation of **critical natural habitats (incl. forests)**: existing protected areas, officially proposed by authoritative sources, protected by Indigenous Peoples & traditional local communities, sites that are critical for rare, vulnerable or endangered species, etc.
- When a project would adversely affect non-critical natural habitats, determine any viable alternatives are available; if not, ensure appropriate conservation & mitigation measures are in place.



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Standard 8: Accountability Systems

GEF Agencies shall have accountability systems or measures that are designed to ensure enforcement of its environmental & social safeguard policies and related systems.

- Address non-compliance of Agency's policies and procedures.
- Independent, transparent and effective.
- Accessible to project-affected people.
- On-going communication with and update complainants on progress made to address the cases.
- Maintain records on all cases & issues brought forward for review.



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Standard 8: Grievance Systems

GEF Agencies shall have systems or measures for the receipt of and timely response to complaints from parties affected by the implementation of the Agencies' projects and which seek resolution of such complaints.

- Designate **staff or a division** that is available to receive and respond to complaints; **publicly disclose** the contact info; local languages.
- **Inform project stakeholders** of the grievance systems during consultations and how to file complaints.
- Maintain records on all cases & issues brought forward, with due regard for confidentiality of info.
- Not intended to substitute for the country-level dispute resolution and redress mechanisms.



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