

Factsheet: Proposed¹ Environmental and Social Standard 6:

Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources

What is the proposed ESS 6 about?

Protecting the environment is about protecting the rich variety of living organisms, on ground and in water. Sustainable development depends on the sustainable management of living natural resources. The proposed ESS 6 aims to protect biodiversity in all habitats, be they natural or man-made. Under this proposed Standard, Borrowers would be required to preserve habitats for the species that live in them. If approved, the Borrower would determine during the environmental and social assessment (described in the proposed ESS 1), whether their projects affect biodiversity. Special consideration would be given to Indigenous Peoples and affected communities whose use of and dependence on biodiversity resources are affected by the project. If the assessment identifies potential impacts on living natural resources, such as forests and fisheries, the Borrower would develop an approach to sustainably manage such living natural resources.

It is proposed that Bank funds cannot be used for projects that would involve the significant conversion or degradation of critical habitats.

Under the proposed World Bank Environmental and Social Policy, the World Bank's responsibilities would include reviewing the assessments conducted by the Borrower; assisting the Borrower in developing measures and actions required for the project to comply with ESS6; and agreeing with the Borrower on the measures and actions they would take in the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP). Throughout implementation, the World Bank would monitor the environmental and social performance and provides support and capacity building, as needed, in accordance with the legal agreement, including the ESCP.

What's new?

- **No significant conversion or degradation of critical habitats:** The new framework proposes to strengthen the conservation of biodiversity and the management of living natural resources through introducing clearer requirements for mitigating impacts of Bank-financed projects on biodiversity. This would also serve make it clearer for Borrowers, how the proposed requirements would be implemented. If approved, Bank funds could not be used to finance or support projects that would involve a significant conversion or degradation of critical habitats under the new framework.
- **Requirements relating to Primary Suppliers:** The draft Standard proposes clear requirements relating to screening primary suppliers where Borrowers are purchasing primary production such as food and fiber commodities that is known to originate from locations or areas with a risk of significant conversion or degradation of critical habitats.

¹ The content of the proposed Standard is for consultation purposes. It has not been endorsed by the Executive Directors of IBRD/IDA. The Board of Executive Directors will make the final decision on the content.

To review the proposed framework, including the full text of all ten standards, and provide feedback, please visit <http://consultations.worldbank.org/consultation/review-and-update-world-bank-safeguard-policies>

- **Protection of modified habitats:** The current safeguard policies cover only natural resources. In the proposed ESS6, we recognize that biodiversity in modified habitats also needs to be protected. This proposed Standard covers all habitats.
- **Clarification on biodiversity offsets as a last resort:** The proposed ESS6 clarifies that biodiversity offsets should be considered only as a last resort and that in certain specified situations offsetting could not be considered as an option.

What stays the same?

- The proposed ESS 6 addresses the range of biodiversity issues currently covered by the World Bank's policy on Natural Habitats and the policy on Forests.