CI SAFEGUARD SYSTEM

Improving Outcomes for People and Nature

What is the CI Safeguard System?

Our CI Safeguard System (CISS) is a conservation tool to enhance outcomes for people and nature. It uses safeguard policies, standards, and procedures to identify project risks and avoid or mitigate their adverse impacts on people and the environment. It also supports projects to 'do good' through, for example, improved benefit sharing, closing equity gaps, and building local leadership.

To best support projects, the CISS also includes guidance and tools; defined roles and responsibilities; capacity-building processes; and feedback loops for learning, reporting, and adaptation. The different components of the CISS are designed to ensure equitable conservation outcomes in the places where CI works.

Overview of CI's Safeguard Policies and Standards

The CISS includes a set of four safeguard policies linked to ten environmental and social standards (Table 1). These policies and standards outline safeguard requirements and procedures. Policies are applicable to all projects, while standards are triggered depending on the project context. Together the policies and standards form CI's Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF)—the backbone of the CISS.

CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL

Operationalizing the CISS

As of January 1, 2023, the CISS applies to all new projects funded and/or implemented by CI.[1] Project teams are responsible for designing and implementing safeguards to fulfil this institutional commitment. To do so, projects are first screened and assigned a risk category (low, medium, or high). Next, project teams develop safeguard plans and activities, with corresponding budgets, to mitigate the environmental and social risks identified in the project (Figure 1). The Project Design and Monitoring (PDM) unit provides project teams with screening support and safeguard guidance, templates, tools, and compliance monitoring. PDM prioritizes support for CI's highest risk projects while also building resources that all project teams, regardless of risk categorization, can utilize for quality safeguard design and implementation.

Table 1. Overview of CISS Policies (P) and Environmental and Social Standards (ESS).

P1: Environmental and Social Management identifies and describes all Environmental and Social Standards relevant to the project. It describes the implementation arrangements for each relevant ESS and includes a more detailed description of measures to address thematic issues pertaining to the respective Standards.
ESS 1: Environmental and Social Assessment outlines steps to categorize and assess risk, define appropriate mitigation measures, ensure adequate implementation, and monitor and report on results.
ESS 2: Protection of Natural Habitats and Biodiversity Conservation outlines steps to avoid or mitigate any significant loss or degradation and to maintain and promote the sustainable management, protection, conservation, maintenance, and rehabilitation of natural habitats and their associated biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services.
ESS 3: Resettlement and Physical and Economic Displacement outlines steps to assess risks of economic displacement associated with access restrictions, use of compensatory measures, and reaching agreements in a transparent, accountable manner, while also seeking to avoid involuntary resettlement.
ESS 4: Indigenous Peoples outlines CI's respect for Indigenous Peoples' collective rights, customary law, and customary land tenure rights, in accordance with their own worldview and governance structures. This includes respecting the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) established through well documented, good faith negotiation between the Project Team and the project-affected communities.

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[1] Projects funded by the CI GEF/GCF Project Agency, CEPF, and Blue Nature Alliance are subject to the safeguard systems and requirements of those donors.

ESS 5: Resource Efficiency & Pollution Prevention outlines steps to avoid or minimize adverse impacts on human health and the environment by avoiding or minimizing pollution from project activities, and to promote more sustainable use of resources within the project. This safeguard also outlines steps to identify and manage risks associated with climate change, and to promote appropriate mitigation and adaptation measures (including sustainable use of pesticides and scarce resources such as water).

ESS 6: Cultural Heritage outlines steps to identify and manage project-related risks for tangible (physical) and intangible (e.g., traditional knowledge) forms of cultural heritage, ensure meaningful consultation with stakeholders regarding cultural heritage, and ensure equitable sharing of benefits from the commercialized use of cultural heritage.

ESS 7: Labor & Working Conditions outlines steps to adhere to the International Labour Organization's core labor standards, including prohibition of child labor and forced labor. Project activities that employ subcontractors or community labor may require labor management procedures.

ESS 8: Community Health, Safety & Security outlines different types of risks associated with the collective health and safety of communities, including public health (e.g., pandemic), use of security forces or community patrols, incidence of social conflict, or emergency preparedness for natural disasters.

ESS 9: Private Sector Direct Investment and Financial Intermediaries outlines steps to identify and manage risks associated with use of intermediary bodies (e.g., trust funds) to provide subgrants or pool investment for funding project activities.

ESS 10: Climate and Natural Disaster Risk ensures alignment of CI projects with the goals of international frameworks and outlines requirements for strengthening the resilience of communities to address the risks of climate change impacts and climate-related disasters and adapt to adverse impacts.

P2: Gender Mainstreaming outlines steps to design a Gender Mainstreaming Plan that identifies and manages risks of gender inequality/inequity or potential gender-based violence, as well as actively close gender gaps using a gender-responsive approach in all relevant project activities, project design and implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluation.

P3: Stakeholder Engagement outlines steps to identify and analyze project stakeholders and design and implement a stakeholder engagement plan.

P4: Accountability and Grievance Mechanism outlines principles and steps to design and operate a suitable mechanism for receiving and responding to project complaints.

Figure 1. Safeguards Implementation Flow Chart

Safeguards must be integrated into projects from the earliest stages of project design. To facilitate their integration, each project proposal is screened and assigned a risk categorization (low, medium, or high). The risk categorization triggers steps required to respond to the degree of potential risk present in the project. This helps the project team prepare for different scenarios that could take place, long before they ever do take place, and enhances our conservation outcomes for people and nature.
(ESIA – Environmental and Social Impact Assessment, ESMP – Environmental and Social Management Plan)

Safeguard Screening Form
- Filled in by project team
- Reviewed by PDM team
- Identifies primary safeguard areas
- Categorizes project by risk level

Category A/ high-risk → Full ESIA / Full ESMP +
1. Gender Plan
2. Stakeholder Engagement Plan
3. Accountability & Grievance Plan
4. Others TBD by ESIA*

Category B/ medium-risk → Limited ESIA / Limited ESMP +
1. Gender Plan
2. Stakeholder Engagement Plan
3. Accountability & Grievance Plan
4. Others TBD by ESIA*

Category C/ low-risk →
1. Limited Gender Plan
2. Limited SE/ Accountability & Grievance Plan

* Other plans may include Indigenous Peoples Plan, Resettlement Plan, Community Health Safety & Security Plan, Pest Control Plan, etc.