



ADAPTATION FUND

AFB/B.21/Inf.6  
3 July 2013

---

Adaptation Fund Board  
Twenty-first Meeting  
Bonn, Germany, 3-4 July 2013

## **OVERVIEW OF EXISTING PROVISIONS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS**

## Background

1. The Adaptation Fund Board (the Board) at its twentieth meeting considered the application of environmental and social safeguards in the context of the project/programme review process of the Adaptation Fund (the Fund), at the request of the Chair. The Chair remarked that although safeguards were covered at the technical review stage through the project/programme review criteria, the Fund still lacked a policy document on environmental and social safeguards, the development of which may further clarify and streamline the safeguard requirements as well as help the secretariat in the technical review process and the application of the safeguards.

2. Following a discussion on the matter, the Board

*[D]ecided to request the secretariat to prepare a document for the consideration of the Board at its twenty-first meeting that:*

*(a) Compiles and provides an overview of the safeguards applicable to Adaptation Fund projects/programmes with a view to streamlining the application of such safeguards; and*

*(b) Takes into account the existing safeguards in the Adaptation Fund portfolio and other projects/programmes of a comparable nature, the current project/programme review criteria, the instructions for preparing a request for project/programme funding from the Adaptation Fund, as well as national and international safeguards systems in developed and developing countries.*

**(Decision B.20/21)**

3. In response to item (a) of the decision above, the present document provides an overview of the existing provisions for social and environmental safeguards contained within the Fund's procedures.

### Existing provisions for social and environmental safeguards

4. The operational policies and guidelines (OPG) of the Fund, as first adopted by the Board in Decision B.7/2 and most recently amended in its twenty-first meeting, contains review criteria that are used by the secretariat and the Project and Programme Review Committee (PPRC) in the technical review of project/programme proposals. The review criteria were established in order that, as well as ensuring adaptation projects/programmes deliver concrete benefits for the most vulnerable communities, they do so in a way that avoids or mitigates any potential negative impacts.

5. The provisions for safeguarding the social and environmental wellbeing of vulnerable communities are applied during the technical review process by the secretariat and PPRC through the application of review criteria. The specific review criteria that include provisions for environmental and social safeguards, detailed in the guidance document "Instructions for Preparing a Request for Project or Programme Funding from The Adaptation Fund",<sup>1</sup> approved in the seventeenth meeting of the Board (Decision B.17/7), and available on the website of the Adaptation Fund, are presented in Annex I.

---

<sup>1</sup> Available for download at: <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/page/proposal-submission-materials>

6. In addition to the review criteria and instructions to proponents referred to above, the Board, in its eighteenth meeting, decided to:

- (a) Issue a call for inputs from the public for comments on project/programme proposals for consideration in the technical reviews to be submitted no later than six weeks before each Board meeting using the comment function on the Adaptation Fund webpage;*
- (b) Make all substantive comments publicly available on the Adaptation Fund website and annexed to each relevant project/programme document; and*
- (c) Prepare a paper for consideration at the PPRC's 10th meeting on a strategy to engage the scientific community in providing inputs on proposals.*

*(Decision B.18/24)*

7. The above decision strengthens and extends the consultative process contained as a review criterion in the technical review process, as detailed in the OPG of the Fund.

## **ANNEX I – SELECTED REVIEW CRITERIA OF THE ADAPTATION FUND THAT INCLUDE PROVISIONS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS**

### **B. Describe how the project / programme provides economic, social and environmental benefits, with particular reference to the most vulnerable communities, and vulnerable groups within communities, including gender considerations.**

The proposal should include information on the expected beneficiaries of the project/programme, with particular reference to the equitable distribution of benefits to vulnerable communities, households, and individuals.

*For a fully developed proposal, the estimated benefits will have to be quantified, whenever possible. In addition, if there is any concern of negative development or maladaptation in any of these areas, relevant evidence would need to be referenced, with specific studies if necessary. In that case, based on an Impact Assessment, the proposal should describe how it addresses possible threats, risks of maladaptation or imbalances caused in a wider region, or upstream/downstream to other communities and ecosystems.*

### **D. Describe how the project / programme is consistent with national or sub-national sustainable development strategies, including, where appropriate, national or sub-national development plans, poverty reduction strategies, sector strategies, national communications, or national adaptation programs of action, or other relevant instruments, where they exist.**

The relevant plans and strategies have to be identified. This includes as a minimum the most important adaptation-related plans and strategies and the most important relevant sectoral plans and strategies in the country.

*For a fully developed proposal, the compliance of the project/programme with the relevant plans and strategies has to be explained in detail.*

### **E. Describe how the project / programme meets relevant national technical standards, where applicable, such as standards for environmental assessment, building codes, etc.**

The relevant national technical standards need to be identified, and compliance stated in a logical manner. These standards include Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), building codes, water quality regulations, and sector-specific regulations. Regarding EIAs, depending on the sector and the size of the project, the category of impact assessment or management strategy that the project is expected to trigger will have to be outlined.

*For a fully developed proposal, compliance with relevant technical standards needs to be explained in detail, addressing environmental assessments, building codes, and land use or tenure regulations, as required by national legislation. If one specific activity of the project/programme requires compliance with technical standards, the legal source of the requirement, the steps taken to comply with it and the nature of the authorization/clearance granted for the project to be implemented will have to be explained. A proposal cannot be recommended for approval, if the project has yet to receive technical clearances, in accordance with national legislation, for core parts of the project design. If technical clearance is pending for a minor part of the project design (either for a part that is included from the start or for any part that is to be included during implementation through a participatory planning arrangement), it should be mentioned in the document and the project design must include clear procedures for*

*a fallback option. Finally, in considering compliance with national technical standards, the time required to get clearance using national procedures may be as important a factor as compliance itself, as lengthy procedures may significantly hinder implementation of overly ambitious plans.*

**H. Describe the consultative process, including the list of stakeholders consulted, undertaken during project preparation, with particular reference to vulnerable groups, including gender considerations.**

At the concept stage, an initial consultative process has to take place, with key stakeholders of the project/programme. Depending on the level of involvement of local communities or governments, private sector, CSOs or universities/research centres in the execution of the project/programme, those stakeholders may or may not be consulted at the concept stage. Where Project Formulation Grants (PFG) are accessed, these should also be used to facilitate a comprehensive stakeholder consultation process in the project preparation phase.

*For a fully developed proposal, a comprehensive consultative process has to take place, and should involve all direct and indirect stakeholders of the project/programme, including vulnerable groups and taking into account gender considerations. The results of the consultative process must be reflected in the project design. Under extraordinary circumstances, the consultation of a specific stakeholder can be deferred to the implementation stage, if it enables a more effective consultation (e.g. if beneficiaries for specific activities have not been identified yet). However, if the project specifically targets the most vulnerable groups, they will have to be identified and consulted by the time of submission.*

*The implementation arrangement should include a framework allowing for stakeholders' views to be heard during project implementation. Whenever possible, a strategy and timetable for sharing information and consulting with each of the stakeholder groups during project implementation should be provided. Adequate facilitation measures (e.g. travel costs) should be budgeted to minimise barriers for involvement of key stakeholders where these impede their participation.*

*The documentation of the consultative process should at least contain a) the list of stakeholders already consulted (principles of choice, role ascription, date of consultation), b) a description of the consultation techniques (tailored specifically per target group), c) the key consultation findings (in particular suggestions and concerns raised).*

**J. Describe how the sustainability of the project/programme outcomes has been taken into account when designing the project / programme.**

The adaptation benefits achieved with the help of the project/programme should be sustained after its end, and should enable replication and scaling up with other funds after its end. The proposal should explain the arrangements through which this would be achieved, taking into account sustainability and maintenance of any infrastructure or installations to be developed, policies and governance arrangements to be developed and implemented, knowledge to be generated, management and other capacity to be improved, etc. All key areas of sustainability should be addressed, including but not limited to economic, social, environmental, institutional, and financial.