

Social and Environmental Standards

1. UNDP Programmes and Projects adhere to the objectives and requirements of the [Social and Environmental Standards](#) (SES). The SES objectives are to: (i) strengthen the social and environmental outcomes of Programmes and Projects; (ii) avoid adverse impacts to people and the environment; (iii) minimize, mitigate, and manage adverse impacts where avoidance is not possible; (iv) strengthen UNDP and partner capacities for managing social and environmental risks; and (v) ensure full and effective stakeholder engagement, including through a mechanism to respond to complaints from project-affected people.
2. UNDP will not support activities that do not comply with national law and obligations under international law, whichever is the higher standard (hereinafter "Applicable Law"). UNDP seeks to support governments to adhere to their human rights obligations and empower individuals and groups, particularly the most marginalized, to realize their rights and to ensure that they fully participate throughout UNDP's programming cycle.
3. UNDP applies the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) Country Programming Principles to the development and implementation of Country, Regional, and Global Programmes. These include the following principles: (i) human rights-based approach to development programming; (ii) gender equality; and (iii) environmental sustainability. The SES reinforce application of these principles at the Programme and Project levels. UNDP screens and reviews its activities to identify opportunities to advance these principles and to identify potential risks that may require measures to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate potential impacts.
4. UNDP will ensure that compliance review and stakeholder response (or grievance) mechanisms are in place so that individuals and communities potentially affected by UNDP Programmes and Projects have access to effective mechanisms and procedures for raising concerns about the social and environmental performance of the UNDP Programme and/or Project. UNDP will ensure that its Implementing Partners and its own Programme and Project managers provide clear and constructive responses to potential grievances, correct non-compliance where it has occurred, and share the results of grievance processes.
5. UNDP will ensure that the objectives and requirements of the SES are considered throughout UNDP's Programme and Project Management Cycle. UNDP will ensure that potential social and environmental risks and impacts as well as opportunities are systematically identified and addressed in all UNDP Programmes and Projects.
6. UNDP will ensure adherence to the SES for Project activities implemented using funds channeled through UNDP's accounts, regardless of Implementation Modality. In cases where implementation of the SES is found not to be adequate, UNDP will undertake appropriate measures to address shortcomings.
7. Most UNDP Programmes and Projects involve partners that contribute in-kind resources or parallel funding and apply their own policies and procedures to achieve common objectives. Therefore, while UNDP does not ensure compliance with the SES beyond those activities funded through UNDP's accounts, UNDP reviews the entire Programme or Project for consistency with

the requirements of the SES. All partners are bound to their respective commitments made within the partnership agreement (e.g. Country Programme Action Plan, Annual Work Plan, Project Document, Joint Programme Document, Letter of Agreement).

8. When the Implementing Partner is a government institution (National Implementation Modality or “NIM”), UN entity, inter-governmental organization, or nongovernmental organization (NGO), it is responsible and accountable to UNDP for overall management of the Project. UNDP remains ultimately accountable to its Executive Board and respective cost-sharing donor(s) for the sound use of financial resources channeled through UNDP accounts and must ensure the quality of its support. Implementation of the SES is therefore integral to UNDP’s quality assurance responsibilities.
9. Consistency with the SES is reviewed for all Projects as part of the Quality Assurance Procedure. The Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) is applied to identify potential risks and determine level of social and environmental assessment and management required. Projects that consist solely of the following components will be exempt from the SESP requirement:
 - a. Preparation and dissemination of reports, documents and communication materials
 - b. Organization of an event, workshop, training
 - c. Strengthening capacities of partners to participate in international negotiations and conferences
 - d. Partnership coordination (including UN coordination) and management of networks
 - e. Global/regional projects with no country level activities (e.g. knowledge management, inter-governmental processes)
 - f. UNDP serving as Administrative Agent
10. The Social and Environmental Policy and Standards will be implemented through four key mechanisms:
 - a. Programme-Level Quality Assurance
 - b. Project-Level Quality Assurance
 - c. Project-Level Social and Environmental Screening Procedure
 - d. Stakeholder Response Mechanism