

## UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP)

### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

**1. When screening for potential social and environmental risks, do I assume that the planned mitigation and management measures are already in place?**

No. Project activities are screened for potential social and environmental risks prior to the application of planned mitigation and management measures. It is necessary to form a clear picture of potential inherent risks in the event that mitigation measures are not implemented or fail. This means that risks should be identified and quantified as if no mitigation or management measures were to be put in place.

**2. UNDP is funding one portion of a project with multiple components that are supported by the national partner and other donors. What activities do I screen?**

UNDP ensures compliance with the requirements of the SES for those project activities implemented using funds channeled through UNDP accounts. In order to do this, UNDP must review not only its own portion of the project for potential social and environmental risks, but also project activities funded through other partners to ascertain whether they may be inconsistent with the SES, possibly calling into question whether UNDP can deliver on its policy commitments. It is thus important to screen all activities outlined in the project documentation (i.e. even those not funded through UNDP's accounts) for consistency with the SES. If UNDP identifies such an inconsistency, it engages other project partners to devise an approach to ensure that UNDP complies with the SES for its portion of the project.

**3. What if an ongoing project is significantly revised during implementation?**

Per the SES, “[p]rojects that undergo substantive revision after the initial screening and categorization will be re-screened and potentially re-categorized.” Such revisions could involve changes in project strategy or the addition of major project components and/or funding. Major changes in the social and/or political context of the project (e.g. heightened social conflict, dramatic shifts in partner priorities and commitment) could also necessitate a re-examination of a project's social and environmental risks. If the revised screening results in a higher risk categorization, the revised SESP needs to be reviewed by the Project Board or a subsequent PAC process and the project risk log updated.

**4. When does social and environmental assessment take place for projects rated Moderate or High Risk?**

Social and environmental assessment is a process of identifying, predicting, and evaluating potential adverse effects of development proposals *prior* to the making of major decisions and commitments. When possible, the preferred situation is for assessments to be completed prior to project appraisal and approval. However, given UNDP's project cycle and mode of operations, several scenarios arise regarding the timing of assessments in relation to project decision-making (see below). It must be emphasized that *in all cases required social and environmental assessments and adoption of appropriate mitigation measures must be completed, disclosed, and discussed with stakeholders prior to implementation of any activities that may cause adverse social and environmental impacts:*

Scenario 1: Existing assessment is used	
<i>Project Design</i>	<i>Implementation</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draw on existing assessment to analyze UNDP project components</li> <li>• Ensure assessment and mitigation &amp; management measures consistent with SES, including appropriate stakeholder consultation and engagement. Undertake additional consultation and assessment if not the case</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement and monitor management measures</li> </ul>
Scenario 2: Assessment conducted as part of project preparation	
<i>Project Design</i>	<i>Implementation</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure management measures integrated into Project document</li> <li>• Ensure relevant management plans (e.g. IPP) attached as Annex to Project Document and reviewed by PAC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement and monitor management measures</li> <li>• Further screening/assessment required if substantive changes to the project or context (resubmitted to PAC or Project Board)</li> </ul>
Scenario 3: Assessment is conducted during project implementation	
<i>Project Design</i>	<i>Implementation</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate plans, activities, and budget to conduct appropriate stakeholder consultations and assessment during project implementation</li> <li>• Identify any component(s) of the project that cannot proceed until assessment has been conducted and management plans in place</li> <li>• Attach preliminary relevant management plans (e.g. IPP), noting that these will be updated subsequent to assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure appropriate stakeholder engagement and consultation undertaken early and iteratively</li> <li>• Assessment conducted and management plans developed during implementation</li> <li>• Following assessment, the project would need to be updated to incorporate management measures and update relevant management plans</li> <li>• Update project risk log with findings of assessment</li> <li>• Implement and monitor management measures</li> </ul>

## 5. How do I screen Global and Regional projects?

Screening Global and Regional Projects must accommodate several scenarios. Some Global/Regional Projects focus on the global or regional level with no country-level actions (e.g. policy advice and dialogue on global/regional issues). Global/Regional Projects may also involve activities that occur at the country-level (across multiple countries), with varying degrees of definition (see below) at the time the Global/Regional Project is screened and appraised. Where these activities are not well defined in the Project Document, the Global/Regional Project will need to provide the framework to ensure compliance with the SES and that proper screening and assessment are conducted prior to the implementation of any country-level activities that may adversely affect people and/or the environment. The following table outlines several different scenarios and the approach that should be taken:

Scenario 1: Global/ Regional Project is focused solely at the global/regional level with no Country-level activities	
<i>Project Design</i>	<i>Implementation</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Screening should be a fairly straightforward exercise, promoting an integrated perspective on social and environmental sustainability aspects surrounding the global/regional policy issue. SESP helps to identify potential areas that can be strengthened even for “Low” risk projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement and monitor management measures, if any</li> </ul>

Scenario 2: Global/ Regional Project has some Country support activities, which may eventually lead to a full project at the Country level	
<i>Project Design</i>	<i>Implementation</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If the Global/Regional Project has country support activities (e.g. missions to support countries to develop new projects), it will likely be 'Low' risk. If it references potential future country-level interventions, it should be noted in the Project Document that these would be developed and appraised as separate projects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Future country-level interventions to be screened and appraised as separate projects once developed</li> </ul>
Scenario 3: Country-level activities are well defined in the Global/Regional Project document and appraised as part of the global/regional PAC	
<i>Project Design</i>	<i>Implementation</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relatively straightforward application of the SESP as the details of the country-level interventions are fully designed and described. A single screening process of the Global/Regional Project would identify the potential social and environmental risks and appropriate mitigation and management measures for country-level activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement and monitor management measures, if any</li> </ul>
Scenario 4: Country-level activities are identified and designed during implementation of the Global/Regional Project	
<i>Project Design</i>	<i>Implementation</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This scenario represents the majority of cases and poses a challenge for the SESP process because potential country-level activities and impacts are unknown at the time of appraisal. Because the POPP does not currently require a formal quality assurance or appraisal process of the detailed plans for these future country-level interventions (e.g. to ensure that a SESP is conducted once the country level interventions are designed), the Global/Regional Project will need to build in a mechanism to ensure the SES are considered as the details of country-level initiatives are clarified. Therefore, in cases where there may be potential risks of social and environmental impacts from country-level activities, the Global/Regional Project Document should include the adjacent elements that will need to be addressed during project implementation:</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Allocation Process</i>: a requirement that proposed activities need to be elaborated, screened and appraised using the SESP prior to the allocation of resources to COs. Country-level proposals would need to provide sufficient detail to undertake a screening exercise. No activities that may cause adverse social and environmental impacts are to proceed until assessments and adoption of appropriate mitigation and management measures are completed, and this should be noted in the Project Document;</li> <li><i>Risk Log</i>: as country-level initiatives are defined and screened, any identified social and environmental risks and management measures need to be integrated into the overall risk log for the Global/Regional Project; and</li> <li><i>Annual Work Plan</i>: any social and environmental management measures planned need to be integrated into the Global/Regional AWP</li> </ul>

## 6. How do you identify risks related to upstream policy support activities?

Projects designed to support policies, plans, and/or programmes of a national partner also need to be screened for potential social and environmental impacts of key decisions. Potential adverse risks associated with such activities may be predominantly indirect, long-term or difficult to identify. For example, potential impacts of road building or other infrastructure projects are more readily identifiable than those related to reform of policies regarding land administration, health care systems, or business promotion. During the screening process, it is necessary to think through potential cascade effects of proposed policy reforms. Where potential High risks are identified in the screening template, Strategic Social and Environmental Assessment (SESA) needs to be employed in order to evaluate effects of policy changes on a broad, cross-sectoral basis with the aim of making "upstream" development decision-making more sustainable. Recommendations of the SESA, including needed mitigation and

management measures, should be adopted prior to implementation of policies, plans and programmes that may lead to adverse social and environmental impacts.

**7. Does a “yes” answer to questions in the Social and Environmental Risk Screening Checklist mean that the relevant Principle or Standard is applicable to the project?**

Not necessarily. After potential risks are identified in the checklist (“yes” answers), screeners assess the potential significance of the risk by rating potential Impact and Probability (see tables 2-4 of the SESP guidance). Only when risks are rated either Moderate or High is the relevant Principle or Standard (from a risk perspective) considered applicable. This is recorded in Question 5 of the screening template.

It should be noted that for projects that may affect the human rights, lands, natural resources, territories, and traditional livelihoods of indigenous peoples (see Question 6.3 of the screening template), it is presumed that “yes” answers indicate that potential risks would be Moderate or High and requirements of the Standard 6 would be applicable.