



Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Natural Resource Management

Environmental and Social Standard 6 (ESS6)*

WHAT IS THE PROPOSED STANDARD ABOUT?

The proposed environmental and social standard 6 (ESS6) recognizes the importance of maintaining core ecological functions of habitats and the biodiversity they support. Biodiversity often underpins ecosystem services valued by humans and therefore, impacts on biodiversity often adversely affect the delivery of ecosystem services.

The proposed ESS6 sets out requirements for conservation of biodiversity and sustainable management of living natural resources. The standard builds on the Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Natural Resources Management requirements under the Safeguard Policy Statement (2009).

* The full text of ESS6 is at [Safeguard Policy Review: Draft Policy | Asian Development Bank \(adb.org\)](https://www.adb.org/who-we-are/safeguards/safeguard-policy-review/draft-policy). <https://www.adb.org/who-we-are/safeguards/safeguard-policy-review/draft-policy>. This information brochure was prepared based on the consultation draft of the proposed Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) for information purpose only. Guidance from the ADB Board of Directors will be sought on the full text of the proposed ESF as part of the Working Paper, scheduled in Q4 2023. The final ESF will be considered for approval by the ADB Board of Directors in 2024.



**SAFEGUARD
POLICY REVIEW
AND UPDATE**

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The objectives of this standard are to:

- protect and conserve biodiversity and ecological function and connectivity in a changing climate;
- apply the mitigation hierarchy and the precautionary approach to achieve a minimum of no net loss and, preferably, a net gain of biodiversity; and
- maintain the benefits from ecosystem services and promote the sustainable management and use of living natural resources.



WHAT ARE THE NEW AND IMPROVED POLICY PROVISIONS?

1



Classification of habitat types

The proposed standard updates the way a habitat is classified and sets out an assessment process to identify potential priority biodiversity features that will determine the presence of critical habitat. Under the proposed ESS6, habitat will be classified as modified or natural, and assessment will identify potential priority biodiversity features which will determine the presence of critical habitat.

2



Conservation of habitats

The proposed standard strengthens the conservation of biodiversity and the management of living natural resources, and clarifies the requirements for addressing impacts on biodiversity: no net loss for modified and natural habitats, preference for net gain of priority features, and net gain for critical habitats.

3



Primary suppliers

The proposed standard introduces risk-based sustainable resource procurement, management, and verification procedures to evaluate primary suppliers or suppliers engaged by them. The procedures require (i) only supplies of a legal and sustainable origin are procured; (ii) the source of supplies are monitored and documented, and (iii) where possible, procurement of natural resources is limited to those suppliers that can demonstrate that they are not causing significant adverse impacts to natural habitats, priority biodiversity features, critical habitats, protected areas, or internationally recognized areas.

4



No go zones

The proposed standard prohibits developing a project in Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) sites, UNESCO Natural and Mixed world heritage sites, and “free flowing” rivers of 500 km or longer in length. Exception may be allowed if projects are specifically designed to contribute to the conservation of such areas

5



Biodiversity offsets as a last resort

Clarifies that biodiversity offsets should be considered only as a last resort and all viable project alternatives will need to have been previously explored and the offsetability of the project will need to be established.

