The African Development Bank Group adopted an Integrated Safeguards System (ISS) in December 2013 with the aim of ensuring the social and environmental sustainability of the projects the Bank supports through the protection of the environment and people from the potentially adverse impacts of projects. Through the ISS, the Bank also helps borrowers/clients to strengthen their safeguards systems and develop their capacity to manage environmental and social risks.

**ISS components**

The ISS consists of four parts: (i) an overall Policy Statement; (ii) five Operational Safeguards (OSs); (iii) technical guidance in the form of Environmental and Social Assessment Procedures (ESAP); and (iv) a set of Integrated E&S Impact Assessment (IESIA) guidance notes.

**Priorities of E&S management**

- Avoid adverse E&S impacts
- Minimise and or mitigate E&S impacts
- Compensate adverse E&S impacts
- Maximise potential development benefits

More information publicly available at [https://esa.afdb.org/pages/documents](https://esa.afdb.org/pages/documents)
With the approval of the Integrated Safeguards System (ISS), the Board of Directors of the AfDB mandated Independent Development Evaluation (IDEV) to conduct an Evaluation of the ISS’s effectiveness in achieving the safeguards objectives four years after its adoption.


The Independent Evaluation of the ISS builds on that analysis with the aim of assessing the relevance and robustness of the ISS design; the efficiency of the systems, process, resourcing and incentives in place; and emerging effectiveness in achieving the safeguards objectives.

**Disclaimer about this brief**

This document builds on the key findings and recommendations of the independent evaluation and highlights some practices related to environmental and social management of development interventions to inspire project teams, both borrowers and clients and Bank’s staff. It is based on information reported in Bank’s and borrowers/clients’ reports. Factual issues have been verified with the Bank Management, but not in all cases IDEV verified on the ground the actual results of the environmental and social mitigation measures.
What is Broad Community Support?

Broad Community Support (BCS) is defined as a ‘collection of expressions by affected communities, through individuals or their recognized representatives, in support of the project’. It should be noted that there may be BCS even if some individuals or groups object to the project.

For instance, the Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) documentation should provide an explicitly written statement that embodies the agreement reached with affected people and demonstrate that BCS was obtained. Meetings minutes and attendance records should be appended to the RAP, along with an explanation about how the outcomes of consultations were fed into the project design and/or resettlement planning progress.

The AfDB’s Integrated Safeguards System (ISS) requires that the borrower or client demonstrates that BCS has been obtained, especially for high E&S risk projects (Category 1); (ISS Guidance on OS1, page 5).

BCS is the result of effective stakeholder engagement, which is usually conducted through:
(i) community participation and meaningful consultation;
(ii) adequate disclosure of information about the project, including the RAP, if any;
(iii) functional project-level grievance redress mechanism.

1. Description of the context of the intervention

AfDB funded a road upgrading and rehabilitation project that traverses four counties of an Eastern Africa country (more than 150 km).

It was estimated that various hundreds of persons were going to be impacted. For instance, some of the affected persons were required to step-back within their compounds or had their access to community assets restraint. There was no complete relocation of affected persons from one geographical location to another.

2. AfDB’s Operational Safeguards triggered

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operational Safeguards (OSs)</th>
<th>Applicability and Reasons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OS1: Environmental and Social Assessment</td>
<td>OS1 and OS2 were triggered because the road exceeds the Bank threshold of 50Km and there were likely to be significant disturbance and impacts on the traders, businesses and settlements along the road corridor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OS2: Involuntary Resettlement, Land Acquisition, Population Displacement and Compensation</td>
<td>Not triggered because the road largely follows the existing alignment, so the environment along the corridor shall not be modified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OS3: Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services</td>
<td>Triggered since construction will involve use of fuels and possibly some hazardous materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OS4: Pollution Prevention and Control, Greenhouse Gases, Hazardous Materials and Resource Efficiency</td>
<td>Triggered since the construction will involve a significant number of construction workers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OS5: Labor Conditions, Health and Safety</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Community participation to prepare the project was done through:

i) socio-economic survey of affected communities;
ii) interviews with 30 key informants;
iii) general public participation forums (10 meetings).

Different groups were associated: government officials, members of the impacted neighboring communities, including vulnerable members (elderly, youth, unemployed widows and orphans), representatives of NGOs and conservation organizations.

During meetings, project information was presented in English and in various local languages.

The main concerns expressed by stakeholders identified during the consultations were reported, including detailed responses and how they were incorporated in the design of the project and of the compensation plan. Specific mitigation measures addressed the key issues raised: high level of unemployment, spread of HIV/AIDS, high accident rates, water shortages, escalation of insecurity.

Statement of BCS

“The majority of the project affected persons (PAPs) show willingness to participate in the resettlement program, so long as there is inclusiveness in problem solving and re-establishment of livelihoods. The spirit of stakeholder engagement established during RAP studies should be promoted and sustained through-out the implementation process hence building sustainable relationships among all stakeholders”

(Source: Borrower’s Resettlement Action Plan Executive Summary)
4. Overall learning from this experience

- Involve all stakeholders well ahead in the project planning process and document how their views in the project choices are considered;
- An environmental and social monitoring task force team composed of officers from different national agencies and the private sector should frequently review safeguards performance;
- Always keep records of the meetings held, with attendance lists and signatures;
- Develop and implement a Stakeholder Engagement Plan is a good practice. It provides a formal commitment, defines responsibilities, and ensures that adequate funds are made available to carry out the program of consultation;
- Maintain a functional free-of-cost grievance mechanism for affected parties to express any issues and problems they may have with the compensation and resettlement process.

5. Related IDEV’s evaluation recommendation (2019)

- Making Stakeholder Engagement Plans mandatory for Category 1 operations (high E&S risk);
- Strengthening the functionality on the Bank’s website for stakeholders to provide feedback on E&S assessment reports;
- Improving the reporting on resettlement measures, including information regarding all RAP provisions and their effects on people’s livelihoods, beyond procedural aspects and monetary compensation of PAPs; and
- Developing additional tailored training on the ISS requirements for specific lending products, deepening the training on managing involuntary resettlement processes.