



Operational Policies

These policies were prepared for use by World Bank staff and are not necessarily a complete treatment of the subject.

Indigenous Peoples

Note: OP and BP 4.10 together replace OD 4.20, *Indigenous Peoples*, dated September 1991. These OP and BP apply to all projects for which a Project Concept Review takes place on or after July 1, 2005. Questions may be addressed to the Director, Social Development Department (SDV).

1. This policy[1] contributes to the Bank's[2] mission of poverty reduction and sustainable development by ensuring that the development process fully respects the dignity, human rights, economies, and cultures of Indigenous Peoples. For all projects that are proposed for Bank financing and affect Indigenous Peoples,[3] the Bank requires the borrower to engage in a process of free, prior, and informed consultation.[4] The Bank provides project financing only where free, prior, and informed consultation results in broad community support to the project by the affected Indigenous Peoples.[5] Such Bank-financed projects include measures to (a) avoid potentially adverse effects on the Indigenous Peoples' communities; or (b) when avoidance is not feasible, minimize, mitigate, or compensate for such effects. Bank-financed projects are also designed to ensure that the Indigenous Peoples receive social and economic benefits that are culturally appropriate and gender and intergenerationally inclusive.

2. The Bank recognizes that the identities and cultures of Indigenous Peoples are inextricably linked to the lands on which they live and the natural resources on which they depend. These distinct circumstances expose Indigenous Peoples to different types of risks and levels of impacts from development projects, including loss of identity, culture, and customary livelihoods, as well as exposure to disease. Gender and intergenerational issues among Indigenous Peoples also are complex. As social groups with identities that are often distinct from dominant groups in their national societies, Indigenous Peoples are frequently among the most marginalized and vulnerable segments of the population. As a result, their economic, social, and legal status often limits their capacity to defend their interests in and rights to lands, territories, and other productive resources, and/or restricts their ability to participate in and benefit from development. At the same time, the Bank recognizes that Indigenous Peoples play a vital role in sustainable development and that their rights are increasingly being addressed under both domestic and international law.

3. *Identification.* Because of the varied and changing contexts in which Indigenous Peoples live and because there is no universally accepted definition of "Indigenous Peoples," this policy does not define the term. Indigenous Peoples may be referred to in different countries by such terms as "indigenous ethnic minorities," "aboriginals," "hill tribes," "minority nationalities," "scheduled tribes," or "tribal groups."

4. For purposes of this policy, the term "Indigenous Peoples" is used in a generic sense to refer to a distinct, vulnerable, social and cultural group[6] possessing the following characteristics in varying degrees:

- (a) self-identification as members of a distinct indigenous cultural group and recognition of this identity by others;

(b) collective attachment to geographically distinct habitats or ancestral territories in the project area and to the natural resources in these habitats and territories;[7]

(c) customary cultural, economic, social, or political institutions that are separate from those of the dominant society and culture; and

(d) an indigenous language, often different from the official language of the country or region.

A group that has lost "collective attachment to geographically distinct habitats or ancestral territories in the project area" (paragraph 4 (b)) because of forced severance remains eligible for coverage under this policy.[8] Ascertaining whether a particular group is considered as "Indigenous Peoples" for the purpose of this policy may require a technical judgment (see paragraph 8).

5. *Use of Country Systems.* The Bank may decide to use a country's systems to address environmental and social safeguard issues in a Bank-financed project that affects Indigenous Peoples. This decision is made in accordance with the requirements of the applicable Bank policy on country systems.[9]

Project Preparation

6. A project proposed for Bank financing that affects Indigenous Peoples requires:

(a) screening by the Bank to identify whether Indigenous Peoples are present in, or have collective attachment to, the project area (see paragraph 8);

(b) a social assessment by the borrower (see paragraph 9 and [Annex A](#));

(c) a process of free, prior, and informed consultation with the affected Indigenous Peoples' communities at each stage of the project, and particularly during project preparation, to fully identify their views and ascertain their broad community support for the project (see paragraphs 10 and 11);

(d) the preparation of an Indigenous Peoples Plan (see paragraph 12 and [Annex B](#)) or an Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (see paragraph 13 and [Annex C](#)); and

(e) disclosure of the Indigenous Peoples Plan or Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (see paragraph 15).

7. The level of detail necessary to meet the requirements specified in paragraph 6 (b), (c), and (d) is proportional to the complexity of the proposed project and commensurate with the nature and scale of the proposed project's potential effects on the Indigenous Peoples, whether adverse or positive.

Screening

8. Early in project preparation, the Bank undertakes a screening to determine whether Indigenous Peoples (see paragraph 4) are present in, or have collective attachment to, the project area.[10] In conducting this screening, the Bank seeks the technical judgment of qualified social scientists

with expertise on the social and cultural groups in the project area. The Bank also consults the Indigenous Peoples concerned and the borrower. The Bank may follow the borrower's framework for identification of Indigenous Peoples during project screening, when that framework is consistent with this policy.

Social Assessment

9. *Analysis.* If, based on the screening, the Bank concludes that Indigenous Peoples are present in, or have collective attachment to, the project area, the borrower undertakes a social assessment to evaluate the project's potential positive and adverse effects on the Indigenous Peoples, and to examine project alternatives where adverse effects may be significant. The breadth, depth, and type of analysis in the social assessment are proportional to the nature and scale of the proposed project's potential effects on the Indigenous Peoples, whether such effects are positive or adverse (see [Annex A](#) for details). To carry out the social assessment, the borrower engages social scientists whose qualifications, experience, and terms of reference are acceptable to the Bank.

10. *Consultation and Participation.* Where the project affects Indigenous Peoples, the borrower engages in free, prior, and informed consultation with them. To ensure such consultation, the borrower:

- (a) establishes an appropriate gender and intergenerationally inclusive framework that provides opportunities for consultation at each stage of project preparation and implementation among the borrower, the affected Indigenous Peoples' communities, the Indigenous Peoples Organizations (IPOs) if any, and other local civil society organizations (CSOs) identified by the affected Indigenous Peoples' communities;
- (b) uses consultation methods^[11] appropriate to the social and cultural values of the affected Indigenous Peoples' communities and their local conditions and, in designing these methods, gives special attention to the concerns of Indigenous women, youth, and children and their access to development opportunities and benefits; and
- (c) provides the affected Indigenous Peoples' communities with all relevant information about the project (including an assessment of potential adverse effects of the project on the affected Indigenous Peoples' communities) in a culturally appropriate manner at each stage of project preparation and implementation.

11. In deciding whether to proceed with the project, the borrower ascertains, on the basis of the social assessment (see paragraph 9) and the free, prior, and informed consultation (see paragraph 10), whether the affected Indigenous Peoples' communities provide their broad support to the project. Where there is such support, the borrower prepares a detailed report that documents:

- (a) the findings of the social assessment;
- (b) the process of free, prior, and informed consultation with the affected Indigenous Peoples' communities;
- (c) additional measures, including project design modification, that may be required to address adverse effects on the Indigenous Peoples and to provide them with culturally appropriate project benefits;
- (d) recommendations for free, prior, and informed consultation with and participation by Indigenous Peoples' communities during project implementation, monitoring, and evaluation; and

(e) any formal agreements reached with Indigenous Peoples' communities and/or the IPOs.

The Bank reviews the process and the outcome of the consultation carried out by the borrower to satisfy itself that the affected Indigenous Peoples' communities have provided their broad support to the project. The Bank pays particular attention to the social assessment and to the record and outcome of the free, prior, and informed consultation with the affected Indigenous Peoples' communities as a basis for ascertaining whether there is such support. The Bank does not proceed further with project processing if it is unable to ascertain that such support exists.

Indigenous Peoples Plan/Planning Framework

12. *Indigenous Peoples Plan.* On the basis of the social assessment and in consultation with the affected Indigenous Peoples' communities, the borrower prepares an Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP) that sets out the measures through which the borrower will ensure that (a) Indigenous Peoples affected by the project receive culturally appropriate social and economic benefits; and (b) when potential adverse effects on Indigenous Peoples are identified, those adverse effects are avoided, minimized, mitigated, or compensated for (see [Annex B](#) for details). The IPP is prepared in a flexible and pragmatic manner,[12] and its level of detail varies depending on the specific project and the nature of effects to be addressed. The borrower integrates the IPP into the project design. When Indigenous Peoples are the sole or the overwhelming majority of direct project beneficiaries, the elements of an IPP should be included in the overall project design, and a separate IPP is not required. In such cases, the Project Appraisal Document (PAD) includes a brief summary of how the project complies with the policy, in particular the IPP requirements.

13. *Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework.* Some projects involve the preparation and implementation of annual investment programs or multiple subprojects.[13] In such cases, and when the Bank's screening indicates that Indigenous Peoples are likely to be present in, or have collective attachment to, the project area, but their presence or collective attachment cannot be determined until the programs or subprojects are identified, the borrower prepares an Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF). The IPPF provides for the screening and review of these programs or subprojects in a manner consistent with this policy (see [Annex C](#) for details). The borrower integrates the IPPF into the project design.

14. *Preparation of Program and Subproject IPPs.* If the screening of an individual program or subproject identified in the IPPF indicates that Indigenous Peoples are present in, or have collective attachment to, the area of the program or subproject, the borrower ensures that, before the individual program or subproject is implemented, a social assessment is carried out and an IPP is prepared in accordance with the requirements of this policy. The borrower provides each IPP to the Bank for review before the respective program or subproject is considered eligible for Bank financing. [14]

Disclosure

15. The borrower makes the social assessment report and draft IPP/IPPF available to the affected Indigenous Peoples' communities in an appropriate form, manner, and language. [15] Before project appraisal, the borrower sends the social assessment and final IPP/IPPF to the Bank for review.[16] Once the Bank accepts the documents as providing an adequate basis for project appraisal, the Bank makes them available to the public in accordance with [The World Bank Policy on Disclosure of Information](#), and the borrower makes them

available to the affected Indigenous Peoples' communities in the same manner as the earlier draft documents.

Special Considerations

Lands and Related Natural Resources

16. Indigenous Peoples are closely tied to land, forests, water, wildlife, and other natural resources, and therefore special considerations apply if the project affects such ties. In this situation, when carrying out the social assessment and preparing the IPP/IPPF, the borrower pays particular attention to:

- (a) the customary rights^[17] of the Indigenous Peoples, both individual and collective, pertaining to lands or territories that they traditionally owned, or customarily used or occupied, and where access to natural resources is vital to the sustainability of their cultures and livelihoods;
- (b) the need to protect such lands and resources against illegal intrusion or encroachment;
- (c) the cultural and spiritual values that the Indigenous Peoples attribute to such lands and resources; and
- (d) Indigenous Peoples' natural resources management practices and the long-term sustainability of such practices.

17. If the project involves (a) activities that are contingent on establishing legally recognized rights to lands and territories that Indigenous Peoples have traditionally owned or customarily used or occupied (such as land titling projects), or (b) the acquisition of such lands, the IPP sets forth an action plan for the legal recognition of such ownership, occupation, or usage. Normally, the action plan is carried out before project implementation; in some cases, however, the action plan may need to be carried out concurrently with the project itself. Such legal recognition may take the following forms:

- (a) full legal recognition of existing customary land tenure systems of Indigenous Peoples; or
- (b) conversion of customary usage rights to communal and/or individual ownership rights.

If neither option is possible under domestic law, the IPP includes measures for legal recognition of perpetual or long-term renewable custodial or use rights.

Commercial Development of Natural and Cultural Resources

18. If the project involves the commercial development of natural resources (such as minerals, hydrocarbon resources, forests, water, or hunting/fishing grounds) on lands or territories that Indigenous Peoples traditionally owned, or customarily used or occupied, the borrower ensures that as part of the free, prior, and informed consultation process the affected communities are informed of (a) their rights to such resources under statutory and customary law; (b) the scope and nature of the proposed commercial development and the parties interested or involved in such development; and (c) the potential effects of such

development on the Indigenous Peoples' livelihoods, environments, and use of such resources. The borrower includes in the IPP arrangements to enable the Indigenous Peoples to share equitably in the benefits^[18] to be derived from such commercial development; at a minimum, the IPP arrangements must ensure that the Indigenous Peoples receive, in a culturally appropriate manner, benefits, compensation, and rights to due process at least equivalent to that to which any landowner with full legal title to the land would be entitled in the case of commercial development on their land.

19. If the project involves the commercial development of Indigenous Peoples' cultural resources and knowledge (for example, pharmacological or artistic), the borrower ensures that as part of the free, prior, and informed consultation process, the affected communities are informed of (a) their rights to such resources under statutory and customary law; (b) the scope and nature of the proposed commercial development and the parties interested or involved in such development; and (c) the potential effects of such development on Indigenous Peoples' livelihoods, environments, and use of such resources. Commercial development of the cultural resources and knowledge of these Indigenous Peoples is conditional upon their prior agreement to such development. The IPP reflects the nature and content of such agreements and includes arrangements to enable Indigenous Peoples to receive benefits in a culturally appropriate way and share equitably in the benefits to be derived from such commercial development.

Physical Relocation of Indigenous Peoples

20. Because physical relocation of Indigenous Peoples is particularly complex and may have significant adverse impacts on their identity, culture, and customary livelihoods, the Bank requires the borrower to explore alternative project designs to avoid physical relocation of Indigenous Peoples. In exceptional circumstances, when it is not feasible to avoid relocation, the borrower will not carry out such relocation without obtaining broad support for it from the affected Indigenous Peoples' communities as part of the free, prior, and informed consultation process. In such cases, the borrower prepares a resettlement plan in accordance with the requirements of [OP 4.12, *Involuntary Resettlement*](#), that is compatible with the Indigenous Peoples' cultural preferences, and includes a land-based resettlement strategy. As part of the resettlement plan, the borrower documents the results of the consultation process. Where possible, the resettlement plan should allow the affected Indigenous Peoples to return to the lands and territories they traditionally owned, or customarily used or occupied, if the reasons for their relocation cease to exist.

21. In many countries, the lands set aside as legally designated parks and protected areas may overlap with lands and territories that Indigenous Peoples traditionally owned, or customarily used or occupied. The Bank recognizes the significance of these rights of ownership, occupation, or usage, as well as the need for long-term sustainable management of critical ecosystems. Therefore, involuntary restrictions on Indigenous Peoples' access to legally designated parks and protected areas, in particular access to their sacred sites, should be avoided. In exceptional circumstances, where it is not feasible to avoid restricting access, the borrower prepares, with the free, prior, and informed consultation of the affected Indigenous Peoples' communities, a process framework in accordance with the provisions of [OP 4.12](#). The process framework provides guidelines for preparation, during project implementation, of an individual parks and protected areas' management plan, and ensures that the Indigenous Peoples participate in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the management plan, and share equitably in the benefits of the parks and protected areas. The management plan should give priority to collaborative arrangements

that enable the Indigenous Peoples, as the custodians of the resources, to continue to use them in an ecologically sustainable manner.

Indigenous Peoples and Development

22. In furtherance of the objectives of this policy, the Bank may, at a member country's request, support the country in its development planning and poverty reduction strategies by providing financial assistance for a variety of initiatives designed to:

- (a) strengthen local legislation, as needed, to establish legal recognition of the customary or traditional land tenure systems of Indigenous Peoples;
- (b) make the development process more inclusive of Indigenous Peoples by incorporating their perspectives in the design of development programs and poverty reduction strategies, and providing them with opportunities to benefit more fully from development programs through policy and legal reforms, capacity building, and free, prior, and informed consultation and participation;
- (c) support the development priorities of Indigenous Peoples through programs (such as community-driven development programs and locally managed social funds) developed by governments in cooperation with Indigenous Peoples;
- (d) address the gender^[19] and intergenerational issues that exist among many Indigenous Peoples, including the special needs of indigenous women, youth, and children;
- (e) prepare participatory profiles of Indigenous Peoples to document their culture, demographic structure, gender and intergenerational relations and social organization, institutions, production systems, religious beliefs, and resource use patterns;
- (f) strengthen the capacity of Indigenous Peoples' communities and IPOs to prepare, implement, monitor, and evaluate development programs;

- (g) strengthen the capacity of government agencies responsible for providing development services to Indigenous Peoples;

- (h) protect indigenous knowledge, including by strengthening intellectual property rights; and

- (i) facilitate partnerships among the government, IPOs, CSOs, and the private sector to promote Indigenous Peoples' development programs.

1. This policy should be read together with other relevant Bank policies, including *Environmental Assessment* (OP 4.01), *Natural Habitats* (OP 4.04), *Pest Management* (OP 4.09), *Physical Cultural Resources* (OP 4.11, forthcoming), *Involuntary Resettlement* (OP 4.12), *Forests* (OP 4.36), and *Safety of Dams* (OP 4.37).

2. "Bank" includes IBRD and IDA; "loans" includes IBRD loans, IDA credits, IDA grants, IBRD and IDA guarantees, and Project Preparation Facility (PPF) advances, but does not include development policy loans, credits, or grants. For social aspects of development policy operations, see OP 8.60, *Development Policy Lending*, paragraph 10. The term "borrower" includes, wherever the context requires, the recipient of an IDA grant, the guarantor of an IBRD loan, and the project implementing agency, if it is different from the borrower.

3. This policy applies to all components of the project that affect Indigenous Peoples, regardless of the source of financing.

4. "Free, prior, and informed consultation with the affected Indigenous Peoples' communities" refers to a culturally appropriate and collective decisionmaking process

subsequent to meaningful and good faith consultation and informed participation regarding the preparation and implementation of the project. It does not constitute a veto right for individuals or groups (see paragraph 10).

5. For details on "broad community support to the project by the affected Indigenous Peoples," see paragraph 11.

6. The policy does not set an *a priori* minimum numerical threshold since groups of Indigenous Peoples may be very small in number and their size may make them more vulnerable.

7. "Collective attachment" means that for generations there has been a physical presence in and economic ties to lands and territories traditionally owned, or customarily used or occupied, by the group concerned, including areas that hold special significance for it, such as sacred sites. "Collective attachment" also refers to the attachment of transhumant/nomadic groups to the territory they use on a seasonal or cyclical basis.

8. "Forced severance" refers to loss of collective attachment to geographically distinct habitats or ancestral territories occurring within the concerned group members' lifetime because of conflict, government resettlement programs, dispossession from their lands, natural calamities, or incorporation of such territories into an urban area. For purposes of this policy, "urban area" normally means a city or a large town, and takes into account all of the following characteristics, no single one of which is definitive: (a) the legal designation of the area as urban under domestic law; (b) high population density; and (c) high proportion of nonagricultural economic activities relative to agricultural activities.

9. The currently applicable Bank policy is [OP/BP 4.00, *Piloting the Use of Borrower Systems to Address Environmental and Social Safeguard Issues in Bank-Supported Projects*](#). Applicable only to pilot projects using borrower systems, the policy includes requirements that such systems be designed to meet the policy objectives and adhere to the operational principles related to Indigenous Peoples identified in OP 4.00 (see [Table A1.E](#)).

10. The screening may be carried out independently or as part of a project environmental assessment (see [OP 4.01, *Environmental Assessment*](#), paragraphs 3, 8).

11. Such consultation methods (including using indigenous languages, allowing time for consensus building, and selecting appropriate venues) facilitate the articulation by Indigenous Peoples of their views and preferences. The "Indigenous Peoples Guidebook" (forthcoming) will provide good practice guidance on this and other matters.

12. When non-Indigenous Peoples live in the same area with Indigenous Peoples, the IPP should attempt to avoid creating unnecessary inequities for other poor and marginal social groups.

13. Such projects include community-driven development projects, social funds, sector investment operations, and financial intermediary loans.

14. If the Bank considers the IPPF to be adequate for the purpose, however, the Bank may agree with the borrower that prior Bank review of the IPP is not needed. In such case, the Bank reviews the IPP and its implementation as part of supervision (see [OP 13.05, *Project Supervision*](#)).

15. The social assessment and IPP require wide dissemination among the affected Indigenous Peoples' communities using culturally appropriate methods and locations. In the case of an IPPF, the document is disseminated using IPOs at the appropriate national, regional, or local levels to reach Indigenous Peoples who are likely to be affected by the project. Where IPOs do not exist, the document may be disseminated using other CSOs as appropriate.

16. An exception to the requirement that the IPP (or IPPF) be prepared as a condition of appraisal may be made with the approval of Bank management for projects meeting the requirements of [OP 8.50, *Emergency Recovery Assistance*](#). In such cases, management's approval stipulates a timetable and budget for preparation of the social assessment and IPP or of the IPPF.

17. "Customary rights" to lands and resources refers to patterns of long-standing community land and resource usage in accordance with Indigenous Peoples' customary laws, values, customs, and traditions, including seasonal or cyclical use, rather than formal legal title to land and resources issued by the State.

18. The "Indigenous Peoples Guidebook" (forthcoming) will provide good practice guidance on this matter.

19. See [OP/BP 4.20](#), *Gender and Development*.

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