



## Public Consultation Meeting ESPF Civil Society Organizations Jamaica – 28 February 2020

**Location: AC Marriot Hotel, Kingston-Jamaica**

### Context

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) is updating its environmental and social policies and consolidating them into a single integrated and coherent policy framework. On December 18, 2019, the IDB Board of Directors approved a draft proposal of the new Environmental and Social Policy Framework (ESPF), which is now the subject of a public consultation process in order to obtain feedback, comments and recommendations from all interested stakeholders.

The consultation process involves: (a) an active use of the IDB's website (<https://www.iadb.org/en/mpas>) and public communications resources to disseminate ESPF materials and gather comments and suggestions from stakeholders through a virtual process which will be open until April 20th, 2020, (b) a round of meetings with representatives of government agencies, civil society organizations and indigenous groups held in IDB regional hubs in Europe, Asia, the United States and Latin America and the Caribbean.

On January 19, 2020, the IDB posted for comments the draft standard agenda for these meetings. The agendas for the face-to-face meetings were adjusted according to specific suggestions received in advance.

Once authorized by the Board of Directors, the IDB will release a new version of the draft ESPF that addresses the suggestions and recommendations received. In accordance with the Consultation Plan approved by the IDB's Board of Directors on July 2, 2019, the new version of the ESPF will be available to the public in the dedicated website (<https://www.iadb.org/en/mpas>) for an additional 30 days period for virtual review by stakeholders.

### Development

For the Jamaica regional meeting on February 28th, 2020 a total of 133 Civil Society Organizations were invited to attend, these were from: Jamaica, Barbados, Bahamas, Guyana, Trinidad & Tobago, and Suriname, all those who registered received copies of the materials to be discussed prior to the event.

A total of 21 participants attended, 17 in the face to face meeting and 4 through virtual participation space that was established which could be accessed through a link to the live broadcast of the session and the participation was registered through a chat and was called "Virtual Table". The official language of the session was English, with simultaneous translation into Dutch.



The session began with the opening greeting by the IDB team and the presentation of all the participants. The IDB presentation on the draft of ESPF included:

- ¿What is the IDB? And what is your mission?
- The ESPF development
- The ESPF next steps, from the public consultation process
- The ESPF Guiding Principles
- ESPF Architecture
- Policy Statement
- Environmental and Social Performance Standards
- ESPF Policy Highlights

Participants organized themselves at worktables and had time and space to review and discuss the draft ESPF. Each table appointed a spokesperson who presented their recommendations, comments or suggestions to the plenary.

The key comments and suggestions from the participants are summarized below:

#### - **Policy Statement – General Features:**

Overall, there was a general consensus that the inclusion of current IDB practices and additional policy and standard requirements to the ESPF is a significant step forward, particularly in terms of labor and working conditions, indigenous peoples, gender equality, stakeholder engagement and information disclosure, as well as the assessment of potential risks related to natural hazards, due to their importance in the Caribbean region.

Participants suggested the IDB to consider aligning the draft ESPF with international standards and sustainable development agendas (ILO, Climate change agenda). They also proposed that ESPF requirements should remain applicable, even in the cases where national laws may differ.

The participants also suggested the IDB review the definition of vulnerable populations and ensure it is wide enough to include people with disability, the youth and the elderly. They also highlighted the importance of synergies across different lending institutions (a common approach) to ensure that the new requirements of the ESPF do not add unnecessary complexities to projects.

#### - **Environmental and Social Performance Standards (ESPS)**

- **ESPS 1. Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts:** Participants suggested that mention be made of the need to close the gap between vulnerable and non-vulnerable populations, and to ensure that the focus on the case of vulnerable groups, not be at the expense of the second, non-vulnerable population.





- ESPS 2. Labor and Working Conditions:** It was suggested that the IDB consider International Labor Organization (ILO) standards as the main reference point for ESPF 2 and seek to ensure that the two are aligned with one another. It also was recommended that monitoring include compliance with the scope of the terms of employment for workers, and also take into consideration cultural local norms of related to work, which may bear on such issues as child labor.
- ESPS 3. Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention:** In the discussion of this ESPS, representatives recommended that it be explicitly aligned with the international climate change agenda, and that clear guidance be provided with regard to the management of residual and accumulated impacts. It was also suggested to go beyond pesticides and include an exclusion list of chemicals that may be harmful or contaminate the environment. Regarding chemicals that are permissible, it was suggested to strongly encourage/require the correct and appropriate application and handling of those chemicals.
- ESPS 4. Community Health, Safety and Security:** Participants suggested including a reference to risks associated with Non-Communicative Diseases (NCDs) derived from project implementation and to consult the World Health Organization (WHO) standards on the issue. In addition, they recommended the inclusion of measures about management of electronic (e-waste).
- ESPS 5. Land Acquisition and Involuntary Resettlement:** In the discussion of involuntary resettlement, it was noted that preventative measures to avoid or reduce the need for resettlement should be prioritized first, and then followed by the development of measures to mitigate potential impacts. Cultural displacement should also be included as a potential impact of resettlement, and participants proposed changing the wording of the text from "inform and consult" to "engage", as a way of highlighting the importance of meaningful consultation in cases of resettlement.
- ESPS 6. Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources.** Participants suggested IDB provide technical assistance in the design and implementation of traceability mechanisms, in order to ensure proper evaluation of primary suppliers and prevent sourcing from regions with risks of significant conversion of natural or critical habitat.
- ESPS 7. Indigenous peoples:** Acknowledging the IDB's commitment to indigenous peoples' rights, participants gave their full endorsement to ESPS#7. They suggested, as well, that the requirement of the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) with indigenous peoples should not be limited to cases where there are impacts on their land, natural resources or cultural heritage, but to all cases involving them.
- ESPS 8. Cultural Heritage:** Participants commented that both tangible and intangible cultural heritage should be considered in the standard, as well as other relevant issues like cultural assets, hidden cultures and grassroots organizations.



- **ESPF 9. Gender Equality:** The group noted that the implementation of ESPF 9 might be challenging in the context of the Caribbean due to differences in national laws and legislation on issues like gender identity. Participants suggested adding a mechanism to ensure the enforceability of the standard, particularly around sexual harassment, as well as adding a redress framework for addressing gender-based inequity. An enhancement of the definition of gender-based violence was also recommended.
- **ESPF 10. Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure:** In the discussion of this ESPS, it was stressed that an asymmetry of information exists between the local communities and the project-related personnel. As participants considered that ESPS 10 creates an opportunity for meaningful participation in government decision-making processes, they suggested that the IDB include mechanisms to build the necessary capacity within civil society organizations to participate effectively in these processes. They also recommended including a reference to the young people in the standard. It was also noted that ESPF 10 should be evaluated not only at a project level, but also across a number of projects in order to analyze whether its application broadly promotes participatory engagement.
- **Other topics**
  - Transparency. Participants suggested widening the definition of transparency, so it reflects the two-way process of stakeholder engagement that is anticipated in the projects and is not limited to information disclosure. Participants also recommended the IDB publicly disclose information about loans (i.e. amounts, interest rates).
  - Role of civil society. Participants appreciated that civil society has a role in reviewing the draft ESPF but suggested to better specify how this presence and active engagement will be assured in the future.
  - Timeline gap. Participants commented the ESPF should be able to adapt to the changes in the local context between the time projects are designed and finally approved.
  - Exclusion List. Participants suggested the IDB to refrain from activities related to the use of prohibited agrochemicals.

No comments were recorded from the virtual table.

At the end of the meeting, the IDB provided a brief summary of the main comments and suggestions raised by the participants. The IDB explained that new guidance notes for each standard will be developed by the IDB after the approval of the new ESPF, particularly on innovative areas of the new policy framework. The IDB also confirmed that the Bank will provide training and technical assistance to the borrowers meet the ESPF requirements.



