



# STATEMENTS OF PRINCIPLES AND ENVIRONMENTAL & SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS

WWF NETWORK CORE STANDARDS



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# STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES: HUMAN RIGHTS 2023

WWF is a conservation organisation and seeks to advance its mission - a world in which both people and nature thrive - on the fundamental principle that positive outcomes for both people and nature depend on firmly anchoring and integrating human rights into conservation practices. While the protection of human rights lies with states as the 'duty-bearer', WWF recognises that businesses and organisations, including ours, can play an important role in respect to human rights.

Whilst respecting national laws and the role of the State, this Statement of Principles applies in the context of all WWF's work. It is part of WWF's core standards, which have been adopted across the WWF Network and are supported by WWF's core values of courage, integrity, respect and collaboration.

## Principles

1. **Respect human rights.** WWF respects and promotes internationally proclaimed human rights, including the right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment.
2. **Implement a human rights based approach.** WWF promotes a human rights based approach to conservation and is committed to integrating such an approach in its work.
3. **Advocate for States to meet their obligations as duty-bearers.** In its work, WWF encourages States to respect, protect, and fulfil their obligations to rights holders; in meeting their duty to protect, States must prevent, investigate, punish and address any violation of human rights.
4. **Avoid causing or contributing to human rights infringements.** WWF seeks to identify instances of potential and actual negative human rights impacts connected to its activities and take appropriate and proportionate steps to either prevent or address those impacts.
5. **Support protection of people in vulnerable situations.** WWF recognises the need to



make special efforts to prevent harm to those who are vulnerable to infringements of their human rights, and to support the protection and fulfilment of their human rights within the scope of its work.

6. **Encourage good governance.** WWF supports the improvement of governance systems that can secure the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in the context of its work on conservation and sustainable natural resource use, including elements such as legal, policy and institutional frameworks, and procedures for equitable participation and accountability.
7. **Support rights holders.** WWF seeks to support rights holders to exercise their rights and to hold duty-bearers accountable.
8. **Support human rights in partnerships.** WWF expects its partners to respect human rights and reserves the right to withdraw from partnership if this expectation is not met.
9. **Support the human rights of environmental defenders.** Without putting at risk its staff, partners or environmental defenders themselves, WWF seeks to promote the responsibility of duty-bearers at local and national level to secure civic space and protect the human rights of environmental defenders.
10. **Align communications and advocacy.** WWF works to incorporate its commitments to human rights in its communications and advocacy.



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# STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES: GENDER EQUALITY 2023

WWF is a conservation organisation and seeks to advance its mission - a world in which both people and nature thrive - on the fundamental principle that positive outcomes for both people and nature depend on firmly anchoring and integrating human rights into conservation practices. Promotion of gender equality is core to this approach and a cross-cutting theme for all of its work<sup>1</sup>.

Whilst respecting national laws and the role of the State, this Statement of Principles applies in the context of all WWF's work. It is part of WWF's core standards, which have been adopted across the WWF Network and are supported by WWF's core values of courage, integrity, respect and collaboration.

## Principles

1. **Respect and promote gender equality.** Gender equality is an internationally recognised human right. WWF is committed to advancing and integrating gender equality across its work, embedding gender responsiveness.
2. **Understand the local gender context.** WWF seeks to understand gender norms, roles and dynamics in the local context, as well as how gender intersects with other identities and characteristics, to inform its actions, including advancing gender equality.
3. **Promote inclusion, understanding and representation of all genders.** WWF promotes an enabling environment for all individuals and groups to be included, represented, respected, engaged and heard regardless of their gender and intersecting identities.
4. **Advocate for States to meet their obligations as duty-bearers.** In its work, WWF encourages States to respect, protect, and fulfill their obligations in the area of gender equality.

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<sup>1</sup> WWF recognises the definition of gender is evolving. WWF use of the term "gender" is informed by [https://www.who.int/health-topics/gender#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/gender#tab=tab_1)



5. **Combat gender-based violence.** WWF supports the elimination of all forms of gender-based violence and seeks to prevent and mitigate the risks of harmful acts motivated by gender inequality or discrimination related to its work.
6. **Support gender equality in partnerships.** WWF expects its partners to respect gender equality and reserves the right to withdraw from partnerships if this expectation is not met.
7. **Align communications and advocacy.** WWF works to incorporate its commitment to gender equality in its communications and advocacy.



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# STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES 2023

WWF is a conservation organisation and seeks to advance its mission - a world in which both people and nature thrive - on the fundamental principle that positive outcomes for both people and nature depend on firmly anchoring and integrating human rights into conservation practices. Promotion of the rights of Indigenous Peoples is core to this approach and a cross-cutting theme for all its work.

Whilst respecting national laws and the role of the State, this Statement of Principles applies in the context of all WWF's work. It is part of WWF's core standards, which have been adopted across the WWF Network and are supported by WWF's core values of courage, integrity, respect and collaboration.

## Principles

1. **Respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples.** WWF respects and promotes the internationally proclaimed rights of Indigenous Peoples.
2. **Respect the right to self-determination.** WWF respects the right of Indigenous Peoples to self-determination and to define and pursue their own social, economic, and cultural development priorities for their well-being and for protection of their territories and resources.
3. **Respect territorial rights.** WWF respects the rights of Indigenous Peoples over the lands, waters, and resources that they customarily own, occupy or use – and seeks to support them to conserve biodiversity and promote sustainable use of natural resources within the scope of its work.
4. **Respect traditional knowledge and intellectual property.** WWF respects the rights of Indigenous Peoples to practice, teach, and share their traditional knowledge and practices,



cultural heritage and languages.

5. **Respect the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).** WWF respects the right of Indigenous Peoples to Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) and to make their own decisions over their lands, territories, resources, traditional livelihoods and cultures.
6. **Respect Indigenous Peoples living in isolation or initial contact.** WWF seeks to avoid contact or encroachment on the territories of Indigenous Peoples living in isolation or those in initial contact, in line with their cultural values and practices.
7. **Advocate for States to meet their obligations as duty-bearers.** In its work, WWF encourages States to respect, protect, and fulfil their obligations regarding the rights of Indigenous Peoples.
8. **Support Indigenous Peoples as rights holders.** WWF seeks to support Indigenous Peoples to exercise their rights and to hold duty-bearers accountable.
9. **Support Indigenous Peoples in partnerships.** WWF expects its partners to respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples and reserves the right to withdraw from partnership if this expectation is not met.
10. **Align communications and advocacy.** WWF works to incorporate its commitments to the rights of Indigenous Peoples in its communications and advocacy.



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# SAFEGUARD PROCESS 2023

## Scope of application

This safeguard defines the overall process that WWF undertakes when applying the Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework (ESSF) to place-based activities (hereafter, 'activities').

## Objectives

The objectives of this safeguard are to define a consistent process that:

- Improves planning and design of conservation actions through the identification and selection of alternatives that avoid adverse environmental and social impacts and enhance benefits where possible;
- Where avoidance is not achieved, minimises adverse environmental and social impacts and responds to residual impacts through the identification and design of appropriate and proportionate mitigation measures;
- Effectively monitors, reviews and adaptively manages environmental and social opportunities and risks at all stages of a conservation action from conceptualization to closure.

## Requirements

For all place-based activities the following process is required and its steps must be integrated into relevant project cycles: 1) Screening, 2) Risk Review and Prioritisation, 3) Supplementary Assessments, 4) Consideration of Alternatives and Mitigation Planning, and 5) Implementation, Monitoring and Adaptive Management.



## 1) Screening

Prior to their implementation, activities must be screened for their environmental and social risks and issues and any opportunities that could maximise positive outcomes and benefits. A screening is undertaken of how intended activities:

- a) Can lead to environmental and social risks in relation to the ESSF's Substantive Safeguards: [Protection of Natural Habitats, Restriction of Access, Indigenous Peoples, Cultural Heritage, Community Health, Safety and Security, and Pest Management].
- b) Intersect with key cross-cutting issues – namely human rights, gender equality, protection of children's rights, conflict sensitivity (including human-wildlife conflict), and vulnerability to climate change impacts.

Activities are screened for their inherent risks, i.e. risks regardless of planned or existing mitigation and management measures. The screening is informed by stakeholder engagement (see Safeguard on Stakeholder Engagement)

At the outset, confirmation is required that the proposed activities do not feature on the list of excluded activities. If so, the activity must be either removed or redesigned to eliminate the prohibited activities.

## 2) Risk Review and Prioritisation

A review of the screening results must be conducted with the support of appropriate safeguards expertise.

The *significance* of the environmental and social risks is identified, based on each risk's *likelihood* (the probability that a risk will occur) and *impact* (the consequences if the risk were to occur).



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A thorough understanding of WWF's role with respect to the risks and potential adverse impacts is established to ensure proportionate and appropriate management of these risks and impacts. This includes understanding WWF's role with respect to risks and impacts through partnerships.

The risk review determines:

- A prioritisation of environmental and social risks according to their significance and any consequences for the implementation of activities, including whether requirements of specific Substantive Safeguards apply;
- If any supplementary assessments are required to better understand risks and potential impacts or to address information gaps;
- What type(s) of and in which areas proportionate mitigation actions are likely to be required (and captured in mitigation plans, as appropriate);
- If any independent external expertise is required to support the subsequent steps in the safeguards process.

The risk review may also identify situations that will be categorized as special consideration. These are:

- Where activities lead to a multitude of environmental and social risks associated with multiple substantive safeguards, such that these risks intersect and significantly compound each other.
- Where activities are ongoing or proposed in [Fragile or Conflict-Affected](#) situations. For conflict-affected situations, the geographic relationship of the conflict zone(s) to the activities will be assessed. For fragile situations, the drivers of the fragility will be assessed. In both cases, an assessment is to determine their potential influence and impact on the activities and vice versa.
- Where activities are taking place in regions of states that have a history where incidents of human rights<sup>1</sup> abuses have intersected with conservation efforts. The degree and nature in

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<sup>1</sup> See [WWF Statement of Principles: Human Rights].



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which the history of human rights abuses continue to influence and intersect with the conservation activities under review will be assessed.

All situations identified as special consideration require escalation within the WWF Network and the use of independent external expertise to support the safeguards process.

Results of the risk review are summarised, documented and retained together with other implementation records of the activities.

### 3) Supplementary Assessments

In case the risk review has determined that supplementary assessments are required (e.g. environmental and social impact assessment, socio-economic impact assessment, thematic analysis in relation to a substantive safeguard or cross-cutting issues, stakeholder analysis) they must be completed prior to the implementation of the relevant activity/ies. Results of the assessment will guide the following steps of the safeguards process.

Any assessment must be conducted with the meaningful and informed participation of those potentially affected (see Safeguard on Stakeholder Engagement) and respecting the right to FPIC as appropriate.

### 4) Consideration of Alternatives and Mitigation Planning

Based on the results of the previous steps, mitigation planning is conducted prior to the implementation of activities. The following is required:

- Alternative activities and preventive measures are identified that avoid or eliminate the potential risks and adverse impacts, while seeking to achieve the intended conservation outcomes and to maximise the generation of benefits to affected groups. Adjustments to activity design (or the design of the activities as a whole) are undertaken accordingly.



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- Where all feasible project alternatives have been exhausted and adverse impacts cannot
- be avoided, measures to minimise risks and adverse impacts are identified.
- Residual impacts are responded to through the identification and design of appropriate mitigation measures. Mitigation measures must be proportional to the adverse impact and WWF's role with respect to this impact. Mitigation measures must be fair and meaningful to potentially affected people and communities, responding to the impacts experienced by them.
- Potentially affected peoples must be consulted in a culturally appropriate way during the mitigation planning process and be enabled to participate actively and effectively in decision-making processes relevant to them.
- A decision is taken whether or not to move forward with the activities, based on technical and financial feasibility of the implementation of mitigation measures.

Results of this exercise are captured, as appropriate, in a separate mitigation plan. Plans for situations identified as special consideration require escalation within the WWF Network.

#### 5) Implementation, Monitoring and Adaptive Management

Results of the mitigation planning must be operationalised for implementation by adapting the theory of change and integrating them into work plans, monitoring plans and budgets, as appropriate.

Implementation of the mitigation measures must be monitored closely to ensure that they are proportionate, timely, effective, locally appropriate and specifically benefit those who are potentially affected. Monitoring should be conducted with the informed and active participation of those potentially affected.

If information becomes available through monitoring, stakeholder feedback or other circumstances that require adaptation to the mitigation, changes to the mitigation design must take into consideration the requirements stipulated for mitigation planning.



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Results of the implementation, monitoring and adaptive management, especially any changes made to the activity design and/or mitigation planning must be thoroughly documented and retained together with other implementation records of the activities.

Situations categorised as special consideration are subject to more frequent monitoring and review, with outcomes escalated within the WWF Network.

## **Relationship to other safeguards**

There are two other process-related safeguards that apply to all place-based activities:

- Safeguard on Stakeholder Engagement
- Safeguard on Grievance Redress Mechanisms

There are six substantive safeguards that implementation of this safeguard may find to be applicable:

- Safeguard on Restriction of Access
- Safeguard on Indigenous Peoples
- Safeguard on Community Health, Safety and Security
- Safeguard on Biodiversity and Natural Resources
- Safeguard on Pest Management
- Safeguard on Cultural Heritage



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# SAFEGUARD ON GRIEVANCE MECHANISMS

## 2023

### **Scope of application**

Grievance Mechanisms are a fundamental pillar of stakeholder engagement and an essential part of implementing WWF's place-based activities (hereafter 'activities'). They provide a transparent and trusted way for individuals and communities who may be adversely impacted by the activities to voice their grievances and seek resolution.

This safeguard applies to all individuals and communities who may be affected by WWF's place-based activities.

Each WWF office is responsible for developing and maintaining effective procedures to enable individuals or communities to have their grievances addressed in a timely manner.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of this safeguard are to:

- Strengthen WWF's accountability by ensuring that effective mechanisms are established at relevant levels to enable individuals and communities who may be adversely impacted to raise their grievances and have them addressed
- Address received grievances in a timely and effective way that resolves conflicts through collaborative problem-solving, improves mutual understanding and strengthens accountability
- Through these mechanisms, improve the environmental and social outcomes of WWF's work.



## Requirements

The following is required in all contexts, where WWF's place-based activities are planned or ongoing:

1. Assess whether an effective grievance mechanism is in place. For WWF Offices, this may be embedded in the country-level complaints processes established under the [WWF's Speak Up! Core Standard on Whistleblowing and Complaints Management](#). The grievance mechanism must be:
  - a. Legitimate: Customised to respect the particular social context and trusted by individuals and communities intended to use the mechanism
  - b. Accessible: Known by its intended users, with accessible entry points and accommodating for potential cultural, linguistic, logistical or other barriers to access
  - c. Predictable: Clear and known time-bound procedures
  - d. Equitable: Enabling informed, respectful and fair engagement of all parties
  - e. Transparent: Keeping parties informed throughout their case and providing information on the overall performance of the mechanism to the wider public
  - f. Rights-compatible: Ensuring that procedures and outcomes are compliant with applicable law and internationally recognized human rights
  - g. A source of continuous learning: subject to periodic review and update to reflect lessons learned from implementation and informing organisational learning
  - h. Based on dialogue and meaningful consultations with potentially affected individuals and communities.
  
2. Where needed, ensure the existing grievance mechanism meets the effectiveness criteria stated under requirement 1.a-h.



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3. Assess the availability of other grievance mechanisms that are accessible to potentially affected individuals and communities, including ownership, scope, usage and effectiveness. Assess whether WWF or its partners should establish collaboration with such grievance mechanisms as complementary, and if so, engage with the respective operators to agree on the arrangements for the collaboration.
4. Where available mechanisms are not fit for purpose for the nature of WWF's place-based activities, design a localised grievance mechanism. The mechanism must fulfil the requirements of the Speak Up! Core Standard, meet the effectiveness criteria of requirement 1.a-h) and additionally, must:
  - a. Have a clearly defined scope of application, be designed to best address the identified risks, and be integrated with the country-level grievance mechanism;
  - b. Be designed based on meaningful consultations with potentially affected people and communities, ensuring that they are respected as rights-holders. Where possible and with community consent, WWF's mechanism be designed to support or supplement existing community dispute resolution processes;
5. Actively communicate the options available, including any country level, localised or relevant third party mechanisms and WWF's Office of the Ombudsperson, for raising concerns and grievances about WWF's activities so that potentially affected individuals and communities are able to make informed choices on where and how to report their grievance.
6. WWF expressly prohibits any form of retaliation for raising or reporting grievances or for assisting in a review or investigation.
7. Where WWF collaborates with, or contracts a third-party to operate a grievance mechanism, there must be an agreement between WWF and the third-party that clarifies



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the roles and responsibilities of each party, including communication protocols and arrangements for the financial sustainability of the mechanism.

## **Relationship to other safeguards**

Grievance Mechanisms are a fundamental pillar of stakeholder engagement and an essential part of implementing WWF's activities. This safeguard is therefore applied alongside that for Stakeholder Engagement.



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# SAFEGUARD ON STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

## 2023

### Scope of application

This safeguard applies to WWF's place-based activities (hereafter, 'activities') and throughout the implementation of the safeguards process. For the purposes of this safeguard, WWF understands:

- *Stakeholders* as individuals of all genders and ages, groups, or organisations who might have an interest or stake in activities, could influence activities, or who may be impacted by activities. Stakeholders may further be classified into rights-holders, duty-bearers and other stakeholders:
  - Every person is entitled to human rights and is therefore a *rights-holder*. In the context of the activities, WWF focuses on engaging those rights-holders (individuals and groups) whose human and/or legal rights could be affected by WWF's work. *Duty-bearers* are those actors who have human rights duties and responsibilities towards rights-holders. States are the primary duty-bearers with the duty to respect, protect and fulfil human rights. However, WWF recognises that businesses and organisations, including our own, also have a responsibility to respect human rights and can play an important role in contributing to their promotion.

### Objectives

The objectives of this safeguard are to:

- Respect the participation and consultation rights of rights-holders in the context of the activities.
- Provide for meaningful engagement with all stakeholders relevant to the activities, through an inclusive and ongoing process of interaction, conducted in good faith to support the development of strong, constructive, and responsive relationships that are based on trust and respect.



- Support the effective implementation of the safeguards process and therefore the identification and management of environmental and social risks in an appropriate and timely manner.

## Requirements

Stakeholder engagement should fulfil its purpose without unnecessarily burdening stakeholders. Efforts to fulfil these requirements must therefore be proportionate to the proposed activities, their potential impacts, and WWF's role with respect to the impacts.

1. A stakeholder analysis is undertaken as early as possible in the design of activities, or where applicable, an existing analysis is reviewed and updated as necessary. This should:
  - a. Identify all relevant stakeholders, and within stakeholder groups, those who may be disadvantaged, structurally discriminated against or in vulnerable situations;
  - b. Distinguish rights-holders from duty-bearers and other stakeholders and analyse the capacities of rights-holders to claim their rights and of duty-bearers to uphold their duties;
  - c. Analyse rights to consultation and participation (including the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent), and the respective duties of duty-bearers;
  - d. Analyse the levels of power and vulnerability for different stakeholders;
  - e. Analyse representative structures of stakeholders, especially of rights-holders;
  - f. Analyse the relationships between different stakeholders, including existing conflicts or tensions;
  - g. Analyse stakeholder needs and interests in the landscape and how these relate to WWF's conservation interests.
2. Based on the stakeholder analysis, the most appropriate strategy is determined to engage the different identified stakeholders. This can be described in a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP). The engagement process and actions - including the level of engagement - must be commensurate and tailored to the type (e.g. rights-holders, duty-bearers, others) and



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capacities of stakeholders, any relevant participation and consultation rights, the type of activities, socio-political complexities, as well as potential impacts of activities on the stakeholders.

3. Stakeholders are provided with relevant, objective, meaningful, understandable, and easily accessible information about the proposed activities, including on the purpose, nature and duration of the activities, and any opportunities, benefits, risks and impacts that may arise from their implementation. This must also include providing information about proposed engagement processes and mitigation actions, and available grievance mechanisms. Such information must be provided prior to implementation and any required consultations in a timeframe that allows for informed participation.
4. Appropriate channels for stakeholder feedback (including grievance mechanisms) are made accessible to stakeholders to enable them to raise their views and concerns on a continuous basis. Stakeholder feedback must be responded to accordingly.
5. Planning and implementation of stakeholder engagement in the context of the activities must adhere to the following, supported by qualified expertise in the relevant fields:
  - a. Stakeholder engagement begins as early as possible in the design of activities. Engagement is carried out on a continuous basis through implementation, monitoring, evaluation of activities, and throughout the safeguards process. Stakeholder engagement is adjusted based on stakeholder feedback and as new risks and impacts arise.
  - b. Stakeholder engagement is carried out in culturally appropriate formats and in a non-discriminatory and gender-responsive manner, seeking to ensure the inclusion and effective participation of persons with disabilities and those groups and individuals who may be in vulnerable situations. This may include, for example, ethnic or other minorities, women, children and youth, and older persons.
  - c. Engagement is carried out free of external manipulation, interference, coercion, and intimidation.





- d. Stakeholder engagement is carried out in a conflict-sensitive manner, seeking to ensure that engagement with WWF does not create or exacerbate tensions between or within stakeholder groups or put stakeholders at risk of harm.
  - e. When activities may affect Indigenous Peoples and/or their rights, lands, territories, resources, traditional livelihoods and cultures, or any other potentially affected peoples to whom the Safeguard on Indigenous Peoples applies, engagement and consultations with these groups are carried out adhering to the principles of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).
  - f. Other rights-holders are consulted in appropriate ways, including through their own representative institutions, to achieve their active, effective, informed and meaningful participation in decision-making processes relevant to them in the context of the activities. This may require informing them about their rights to participation and consultation and strengthening capacities to support active and effective participation.
  - g. Where appropriate and feasible, stakeholder engagement with duty-bearers should include encouraging them to uphold and protect the rights of rights-holders.
6. The implementation and the quality of stakeholder engagement must be continuously monitored.
  7. Stakeholder engagement is documented. At the minimum, this must include any consultations<sup>1</sup> carried out, issues or concerns raised by stakeholders, and decisions taken or agreements made as a result of stakeholder feedback or engagement actions. Such

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this document, consultations are understood as one form of engagement, referring to a more formal, two-way process of communication and information exchange between WWF and stakeholders with the objective of seeking stakeholder inputs and understanding their views, preferences, concerns and expectations regarding a particular issue or proposed activities, interventions or decisions. Consultations are complemented by other types of engagement, including more informal interactions and dialogue on a regular basis, disclosure and sharing of information, negotiation, joint decision-making, and effective feedback and grievance mechanisms.





documentation must be retained together with other implementation records of the activities.

8. Where WWF funds or supports a government agency or other third party to carry out activities, WWF expects this party to fully observe safeguards requirements in such activities, including with respect to the participation and consultation rights of rights-holders. WWF reserves the right to withdraw support if its safeguards requirements are not met.

## **Relationship to other safeguards**

Grievance Mechanisms are a fundamental pillar of stakeholder engagement and an essential part of implementing WWF's activities. This safeguard is therefore applied alongside that for Grievance Mechanisms.

Whenever Indigenous Peoples are present in the landscape, this safeguard must be applied alongside the Safeguard on Indigenous Peoples.



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# SAFEGUARD ON BIODIVERSITY & NATURAL RESOURCES

2023

## Scope of application

This safeguard applies to WWF's place-based activities (hereafter 'activities') that may involve adverse impacts on biodiversity, natural resources and/or areas providing ecosystem services upon which potentially affected people and communities are dependent for sustenance, cultural maintenance, or livelihoods.

## Objectives

WWF's place-based activities may, in certain cases, have unintended consequences and cause risks to the natural environment. The objectives of this safeguard are to:

- Identify and avoid adverse impacts on biodiversity, ecosystem services and natural resources or, where avoidance is not achieved, minimise adverse impacts;
- Sustain ecosystems as well as their services to maintain their ecological functions and their socio-economic and cultural benefits to people and communities who depend on them.

## Requirements

When the Safeguards Screening determines that this safeguard applies, the following is required. Efforts to fulfil these requirements must be proportionate to the potential adverse impacts and WWF's role with respect to the impacts.

1. Prior to the implementation of activities that potentially lead to adverse impacts on biodiversity, ecosystem services and natural resources, an assessment has been carried out
  - a. analysing the identified risks and impacts;
  - b. identifying strategies, alternative approaches and/or sitings to avoid the risk.
2. The assessment should involve, as applicable, relevant people and communities, concerned government authorities, relevant civil society organisations, local experts and



traditional knowledge holders in assessing potential impacts on biodiversity and ecosystem services and exploring avoidance and mitigation options.

3. Where adverse impacts cannot be avoided, measures must be taken to minimise them based on scientific knowledge and traditional knowledge of the communities who depend on the resources and/or may be potentially impacted.
4. Where WWF supports private or public sector agencies to develop infrastructure or other investment projects that may lead to adverse impacts on biodiversity, ecosystem services and natural resources, WWF expects those agencies to fully observe safeguards requirements in such activities. WWF reserves the right to withdraw support if its safeguards requirements are not met.

## **Relationship to other safeguards**

WWF maintains a list of excluded activities as part of the ESSF. It includes:

*Conversion or degradation of areas of high biodiversity, especially those that are legally protected, proposed for protection, or identified as high-conservation value.*

Where the activities may occur on or affect Indigenous lands, WWF will apply this safeguard alongside the WWF Safeguard on Indigenous Peoples.



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# **SAFEGUARD ON COMMUNITY HEALTH, SAFETY & SECURITY**

## **2023**

### **Scope of application**

This safeguard applies to WWF's place-based activities (hereafter 'activities') that may involve a risk of harm to the health, safety and security of people and communities. This includes situations where community members take on specific roles and/or participate in the implementation of WWF's place-based activities.

For the purposes of this safeguard, health pertains to the physical, mental and social well-being of people and communities; safety pertains to people and communities being protected from accidents, injuries, and exposure to hazardous conditions; and security pertains to people and communities being protected from crime, violence and other intended or deliberate threats carried out by human actors.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of this safeguard are to:

- Identify and avoid potentially adverse impacts to the health, safety and security of people and communities, or where avoidance is not achieved, minimise adverse impacts and respond to residual impacts through the identification and design of appropriate and proportionate mitigation measures, paying particular attention to people who may be in vulnerable situations;
- Respect in relation to their health, safety and security the rights of potentially affected people and communities to information and participation.

### **Requirements**

When the Safeguards Screening determines that this safeguard applies, the following is required. Efforts to fulfil these requirements must be proportionate to the potential adverse impacts and WWF's role with respect to the impacts.



1. Prior to the implementation of activities that may affect the health, safety and security of people and communities an assessment has been carried out. The assessment should include an analysis of:
  - a. Potentially affected persons, paying particular attention to people who may be in vulnerable situations;
  - b. Conflict and/or post-conflict contexts, the interaction of activities with such context, potential risks that may arise from such interaction and the potential risk of creating new or exacerbating existing conflict;
  - c. Potential risk of harm and adverse impacts for people and communities on their:
    - i. *Health*, e.g. through exposure to communicable diseases, an elevation of risk factors linked to other physical health conditions, an elevation of risk factors linked to mental health conditions, a limitation of access to health care;
    - ii. *Safety*, e.g. through exposure to accidents, physical injuries and hazardous conditions, increased vulnerability to natural hazards;
    - iii. *Security*, e.g. through exposure to the risk of violence or abuse (including physical, sexual and emotional). This includes assessing the possibility of activities contributing to gender-based violence;
  - d. The potential for WWF's place-based activities to increase the vulnerability of communities to health, safety and security risks;
  - e. All feasible project alternatives and preventive measures that avoid adverse impacts on the health, safety and security of people and communities.
2. Affected people and communities must be consulted in a culturally appropriate way during the safeguards process and be enabled to participate actively and effectively in decision-making processes relevant to them in the context of the activities. Particular attention must be paid to people who may be in vulnerable situations. This process should also be supported by qualified experts in the relevant fields.



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3. Where all feasible project alternatives have been exhausted and adverse impacts cannot be avoided, measures to minimise and respond to these impacts must be identified. Mitigation measures must be fair and meaningful to affected people and communities, responding to the potential impacts.
4. Mitigation measures addressing potential adverse impacts related to the health, safety and security of people and communities should, as appropriate:
  - a. Take into account differences in risk exposure and sensitivity of people who may be in vulnerable situations;
  - b. Be developed in a conflict sensitive manner;
  - c. Establish relevant preventive measures such as safety and security protocols and procedures;
  - d. Include appropriate management plans and systems based on good international practice and designed and carried out with appropriate expertise;
  - e. Include relevant emergency preparedness plans, that will be implemented and monitored in collaboration with stakeholders and relevant authorities.
5. Any security arrangements that are intended to protect personnel, property or affected people must be proportional and consistent with applicable national laws and good international industry practice.
6. Where WWF funds or supports a government agency or other third party to carry out activities that may lead to adverse impacts on the health, safety and security of people and communities, WWF expects this party to fully observe safeguards requirements in such activities, including with respect to the rights of the affected people and communities. WWF reserves the right to withdraw support if its safeguards requirements are not met.





## **Relationship to other safeguards**

Where security arrangements may involve access restrictions, WWF will apply this safeguard alongside the WWF Safeguard on Restriction of Access and Resettlement.

Where activities may affect the health, safety and security of Indigenous peoples, WWF will apply this safeguard alongside the WWF Safeguard on Indigenous Peoples.



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# SAFEGUARD ON CULTURAL HERITAGE

## 2023

### Scope of application

This safeguard applies to WWF's place-based activities (hereafter 'activities') that may:

1. Lead to a risk of harm to cultural heritage
2. Involve the utilisation of cultural heritage of Indigenous Peoples and/or local communities (e.g. commercial, research or other purposes)
3. Involve restricting access to cultural heritage by peoples and communities with legitimate rights to access or who use the cultural heritage for their livelihoods and/or cultural and spiritual reasons.

For purposes of this safeguard, cultural heritage is defined as follows:

- *Tangible cultural heritage*: physical moveable or immovable objects, monuments, property (e.g. buildings, artefacts), sites (e.g. burial sites, sacred sites, marine heritage sites), structures, or groups of structures, having archaeological (prehistoric), paleontological, historical, architectural, artistic (e.g. works of art), and religious values.
- *Natural cultural heritage*: unique natural features or physical objects that embody spiritual values, such as sacred groves, rocks, lakes, and waterfalls, including those in marine, shoreline and near-shore settings, and/or that are otherwise important for the wellbeing and cultural resilience of local populations. The difference between tangible and natural cultural heritage is that the former have been shaped and created by human activities.
- *Intangible cultural heritage*: the non-physical intellectual wealth of a community, which includes the practices, languages, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills, and spaces (e.g. ceremonial routes) associated therewith - that those communities and groups recognise as part of their heritage, as transmitted from generation to generation and constantly recreated by them in response to their environment, their interaction with nature, and their history.



This safeguard applies to cultural heritage that is recognised as such by the potentially affected peoples and communities, relevant expert organisations, or mandated government agencies, regardless of its legal and protection status.

## Objectives

The objective of this safeguard is to:

- Identify and avoid negative impacts on cultural heritage and/or restrictions of people's ability to legitimately use and/or access cultural heritage. Where avoidance is not achieved, minimise adverse impacts and respond to residual impacts through the identification and design of appropriate and proportionate mitigation measures;
- Respect in relation to their cultural heritage the rights of potentially affected peoples and communities to information and participation;
- Where possible, maximise opportunities for the protection of cultural heritage.

## Requirements

When the Safeguards Screening determines that this safeguard applies, the following is required. Efforts to fulfil these requirements must be proportionate to the potential adverse impacts and WWF's role with respect to the impacts.

1. Prior to the implementation of activities, an assessment of potential adverse impacts on cultural heritage has been carried out. The assessment should include an analysis of:
  - a. Tangible, natural and/or intangible cultural heritage that may be affected by WWF's place-based activities. This includes assessing the characteristics (including physical location and extent), current status and values attached to said cultural heritage;
  - b. All potential impacts on this cultural heritage and access to it;



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- c. All feasible project alternatives and measures to avoid adverse impacts on, or the restriction of access to the cultural heritage.
2. Affected peoples and communities must be consulted in a culturally appropriate way during the safeguards process and be enabled to participate actively and effectively in decision-making processes relevant to them in the context of the activities. This process must also be supported by meaningful stakeholder consultations with qualified and experienced cultural heritage experts and organisations, as well as relevant regulatory authorities entrusted with the protection of cultural heritage, when appropriate. When the affected communities include Indigenous Peoples<sup>1</sup>, WWF must respect their right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) where applicable.
3. Where all feasible project alternatives have been exhausted and adverse impacts cannot be avoided, measures to minimise and respond to these impacts must be identified. Mitigation measures must be fair and meaningful to affected peoples and communities, responding to the potential impacts.
4. Determine, where appropriate, through consultation with affected peoples and communities, or engaging outside experts whether disclosure of information regarding cultural heritage (e.g. specific location, traditional use) could compromise or jeopardise its safety or integrity (e.g. physical looting, uncontrolled visitation, disrespect of cultural norms) or would endanger local informants (e.g. reprisal against the community, groups or individuals that shared the information). It may also be the wish of said people or experts' advice that information about the cultural heritage in question (e.g. sacred sites, sacred knowledge) remains undisclosed to other parties or the public. In such cases, WWF must discuss and agree upon measures to maintain confidentiality in order to protect the cultural heritage that is of value to the community.

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<sup>1</sup> See also the Safeguard on Indigenous Peoples to identify to whom this may apply.





5. Where activities are likely to encounter previously undiscovered cultural heritage, WWF must develop 'chance find' procedures. Chance find procedures lay out the management and conservation approach, including any safeguards requirements, that must be applied in the event that cultural heritage is subsequently discovered during implementation.
6. Where activities involve access to and/or (especially commercial) use of traditional ecological knowledge, other forms of cultural knowledge, practices, and innovations of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, WWF must engage in meaningful consultations with the potentially affected people and communities and mutually agree on the fair and equitable sharing of benefits, respecting the right to FPIC, as applicable.
7. For cultural heritage that is legally protected, WWF must ensure compliance with applicable law on the protection of cultural heritage and, where relevant, consult with the legally appointed custodian in order to meet the requirements of this safeguard.
8. Where WWF funds or supports a government agency or other third party to carry out activities to which this safeguard applies, WWF expects this party to fully observe safeguards requirements in such activities, including with respect to rights of the affected people and communities. WWF reserves the right to withdraw support if its safeguards requirements are not met.

## **Relationship to other safeguards**

Where the activities may involve restricting access to or use of cultural heritage, WWF will apply this safeguard alongside the WWF Safeguard on Restriction of Access.

Where the activities may affect the cultural heritage of Indigenous Peoples, WWF will apply this safeguard alongside the WWF Safeguard on Indigenous Peoples.



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# SAFEGUARD ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

## 2023

### Scope of application

This safeguard applies to WWF's place-based activities (hereafter 'activities') that may affect Indigenous Peoples, and/or their rights, lands, territories, resources, traditional livelihoods and cultures. It applies in any of the following situations:

- Indigenous Peoples are present in the area;
- Indigenous Peoples have a collective attachment to the area;
- Indigenous Peoples and/or their lands, territories, resources could be affected by the activities.

While there is no single globally-recognised definition of Indigenous Peoples, for the purposes of this safeguard WWF is guided by the statement of coverage contained in International Labour Organization Convention 169 (ILO 169), which includes both Indigenous and tribal peoples. In certain countries, these peoples may or may not be formally identified as "Indigenous or tribal" and should be referred to using contextually appropriate terminology.

This safeguard also covers peoples who have been extended the rights of Indigenous Peoples under national law and/or rulings by applicable regional human rights courts.

Specific expertise may be needed to ascertain whether a particular group should be considered as Indigenous Peoples for the purpose of this safeguard.

### Objectives

Within the scope of application, the objectives of this safeguard are to:

- Respect and promote the rights of Indigenous Peoples, including but not limited to, their rights to self-determination, Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), and to make their own decisions over their lands, territories, resources, traditional livelihoods and cultures
- Enable Indigenous Peoples to meaningfully engage in identifying any potential impacts of the activities on their communities, lands, territories, resources, livelihoods and cultures,



and to take their own decisions on whether to proceed, and if so, to co-design mitigation measures within the context of the activities

- Optimise opportunities for providing just, equitable and gender inclusive benefits for Indigenous Peoples in a culturally appropriate manner as agreed with them.

## Requirements

When the Safeguards Screening determines that this safeguard applies, the following is required.

Efforts to fulfil these requirements must be proportionate to the potential adverse impacts and WWF's role with respect to the impacts.

1. At the outset of designing activities, Indigenous Peoples (as per the understanding of this safeguard) are identified, including their representative organisations as well as indigenous lands, territories, and resources. This includes identifying and analysing as appropriate:
  - a. Their legal tenure and/or customary rights (including any claims to land and/or resources that they have used, owned or occupied for generations);
  - b. Their livelihoods, governance systems or institutions, and important cultural values and practices;
  - c. Any specific groups or subgroups within the Indigenous communities that may be in vulnerable situations, paying particular attention to their rights and special needs.
2. Prior to the implementation of activities that may impact the rights, lands, territories, resources, livelihoods and cultures of Indigenous Peoples an assessment of the potential impacts and benefits is carried out. This includes the exploration of alternative strategies, designs and locations or consideration of not proceeding with the activities.
3. The right of Indigenous Peoples to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is respected. During the safeguards process, Indigenous Peoples must be consulted in a culturally appropriate way and be enabled to participate actively and effectively in decision-making



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processes relevant to them. Activities that this safeguard applies to can only proceed once the principles of FPIC have been followed and consent has been granted.

4. Where all feasible alternatives have been exhausted and adverse impacts cannot be avoided, Indigenous Peoples must be enabled to self-determine whether the activities in question should proceed, and if so, measures to minimise and respond to these impacts must be co-designed. Mitigation measures must be fair and meaningful to affected peoples, responding to the potential impacts.
5. The sharing of benefits derived from the use of Indigenous Peoples' lands, territories or resources including from their cultural heritage and/or traditional ecological knowledge is mutually agreed through the FPIC process, culturally appropriate and equitable.
6. In situations where there are known to be, or where there may be Indigenous Peoples living in isolation and/or initial contact, their wishes to remain isolated must be respected and activities that may result in such undesired contact must not be pursued.
7. Where WWF funds or supports a government to carry out activities that may affect Indigenous Peoples, and/or their rights, lands, territories, resources, traditional livelihoods and cultures, WWF expects this party to fully observe safeguards requirements in such activities, including with respect to upholding the principles of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent. WWF reserves the right to withdraw support if its safeguards requirements are not met.

## **Relationship to other safeguards**

Where activities may involve the cultural heritage of Indigenous Peoples, WWF will apply this standard alongside the WWF Safeguard on Cultural Heritage.

Where activities may involve access restrictions or resettlement of Indigenous Peoples, WWF will apply this standard alongside the WWF Safeguard on Restriction of Access.



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# SAFEGUARD ON PEST MANAGEMENT 2023

## Scope of application

This safeguard applies to WWF's place-based activities (hereafter 'activities') that involve agricultural or other activities where pest management is undertaken.

## Objectives

The objectives of this safeguard are to:

- Ensure that pest management associated with WWF's place-based activities is carried out in a safe, effective, and environmentally sound manner;
- Avoid the use of hazardous chemicals in pest management and where avoidance is not possible, minimise adverse impacts and respond to residual environmental and health risks and impacts through the identification and design of appropriate and proportionate mitigation measures.

## Requirements

When the Safeguards Screening determines that this safeguard applies, the following is required. Efforts to fulfil these requirements must be proportionate to the potential adverse impacts and WWF's role with respect to the impacts.

1. Prior to the implementation of activities an assessment has been carried out including an analysis of:
  - a. The nature and degree of pest management risks and impacts taking into account the proposed use and intended users
  - b. The availability of non-toxic products and techniques for pest management
  - c. All feasible alternatives that avoid reliance on synthetic chemical pesticides



- d. All feasible alternatives that promote the use of demand-driven, ecologically-based biological or environmental pest management practices (referred to as integrated pest management - IPM).
2. Where the use of hazardous chemicals is required in pest management:
    - a. Users of any hazardous chemicals must be trained to handle, store and dispose such chemicals in a proper and responsible manner and must utilise appropriate application equipment and adequate personal protective equipment;
    - b. Activities avoid, where feasible, or minimise the use of hazardous chemicals that damage non-target species or the natural environment or contribute towards the development of resistance in pests and vectors.
  3. Where WWF supports private or public sector agencies to carry out activities that may involve pest management, WWF expects those agencies to fully observe safeguards requirements in such activities. WWF reserves the right to withdraw support if its safeguards requirements are not met.

## Relationship to other safeguards

WWF maintains a list of excluded activities as part of the ESSF. It includes:

- *Formulated World Health Organisation (WHO) classes IA and IB Products, or formulations of Class II products, unless exclusively used by those with training and proper equipment to avoid impacts on human health and the environment and in the absence of safer alternatives;*
- *Procurement or use of pesticides and chemicals specified as persistent organic pollutants under the Stockholm Convention*



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Where activities relate to the application of pesticides by labourers, community members, or in proximity to communities, WWF will apply this safeguard alongside the WWF Safeguard on Community Health, Safety, and Security.

Where activities relate to the application of pesticides in areas of high biodiversity, WWF will apply this safeguard alongside the WWF Safeguard on Biodiversity and Natural Resources.

Where activities relate to the application of pesticides on Indigenous lands, WWF will apply this safeguard alongside the WWF Safeguard on Indigenous Peoples.



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# SAFEGUARD ON RESTRICTION OF ACCESS

## 2023

### Scope of application

This safeguard applies when WWF's place-based activities (hereafter 'activities') may involve access restrictions or the resettlement of people and/or communities. WWF regularly engages in on-the-ground conservation where access restrictions or resettlement are imposed by a governing authority or another party. In these situations, fulfilling the requirements of this safeguard will become the responsibility of this party as a condition for WWF's engagement.

For purposes of this safeguard, access restrictions and resettlement are defined as follows:

- *Access restriction* means the loss and/or limitation (i) of physical access to or (ii) of use of land/sea, natural resources, and cultural heritage either on a permanent or temporary/seasonal basis. Such restrictions may impact negatively on the economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits that people accrue from these resources or areas.
- Should the access restrictions include the physical relocation of people and/or communities to a new place whereby their housing, assets, and infrastructure (both individual and communal) are re-established, it is referred to as *resettlement*.

### Objectives

The objectives of this safeguard are to:

- Identify and avoid adverse impacts from access restrictions (and if applicable, resettlement) and where avoidance is not achieved, minimise adverse impacts and respond to residual impacts through the identification and design of appropriate and proportionate mitigation measures;
- Respect, in relation to access restriction (and if applicable, resettlement), the right of potentially affected people and communities to information and participation;



- Avoid resettlement where there is no documentation of mutually accepted good-faith negotiation and informed consent of the affected people and communities based on their free will and choice, or the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) of Indigenous Peoples.

## Requirements

When the Safeguards Screening determines that this safeguard applies, the following is required. Efforts to fulfil these requirements must be proportionate to the potential adverse impacts and WWF's role with respect to the impacts.

1. Prior to the implementation of activities that lead to access restriction (and if applicable, resettlement), an assessment has been carried out that includes analysis of:
  - a. WWF's role and contribution with respect to the planned access restrictions (and if applicable, resettlement);
  - b. Tenure regimes, i.e. formal and informal rules that regulate access to, use of, and control over areas (land, forest, waters) and resources, including customary and collective or communal forms of land tenure;
  - c. Potentially affected people and communities, their legal and customary rights, their relationships to the affected areas and resources;
  - d. All potential adverse impacts on the affected people and communities. This should include impacts on tenure regimes, livelihoods, culture, social organisation and social cohesion (differentiating, where applicable, between rights-holders and others, women and men, Indigenous Peoples and people who may be in vulnerable situations. These may include for example persons with disabilities, children, ethnic minorities or landless, elderly or displaced persons).
  - e. All feasible alternatives and measures to avoid access restrictions (and if applicable, resettlement).



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2. Affected people and communities must be consulted in a culturally appropriate way during the safeguards process and be enabled to participate actively and effectively in decision-making processes relevant to them in the context of the activities. When the affected communities include Indigenous Peoples<sup>1</sup> their right to FPIC must be respected.
3. Resettlement activities are supported only when they are justifiable and lawful and where there is documentation of mutually accepted good-faith negotiation and informed consent of the affected people and communities based on their free will and choice. Resettlement must not take place without the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) of Indigenous Peoples.
4. In cases where the community owns and/or uses the resources collectively and decides to restrict access to these resources, WWF will only support such activities when the decision-making process is inclusive, i.e. vulnerable community members participate in this process and their interests and concerns are being addressed appropriately.
5. Where all feasible alternatives have been exhausted and adverse impacts cannot be avoided, measures to minimise and respond to these impacts must be identified. Mitigation measures must be fair and meaningful to affected people and communities, responding to the potential impacts.
6. Mitigation measures responding to potential adverse impacts related to access restriction or resettlement should:
  - a. Specify actions to assist affected people and communities to improve or at least restore their livelihoods, in real terms, including assistance to re-establish commercial or subsistence activities, activities aimed at capacity-building and strengthening local institutions, and at enhancing social services (e.g., health and education);

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<sup>1</sup> See also the Safeguard on Indigenous Peoples to identify to whom this may apply.





- b. Detail the approach for responding to loss of assets and for loss of access to assets;
  - c. Take into account the cultural and spiritual relationship between people and nature, and identify activities to sustain that relationship;
  - d. Specify a process to address potential conflicts;
  - e. Describe arrangements for implementing and monitoring mitigation measures.
7. Where WWF funds or supports a government agency or other third party to carry out activities that may lead to access restriction or resettlement, WWF expects this party to fully observe safeguards requirements in such activities, including with respect to the rights of the affected people and communities. WWF reserves the right to withdraw support if its safeguards requirements are not met.

## Relationship to other safeguards

WWF maintains a list of excluded activities as part of the ESSF. It includes:

- *Involuntary resettlement*

Where activities may involve restricting access to or use of cultural heritage, WWF will apply this safeguard alongside the WWF Safeguard on Cultural Heritage.

Where activities may involve access restriction or resettlement of Indigenous Peoples, WWF will apply this safeguard alongside the WWF Safeguard on Indigenous Peoples.



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## LIST OF EXCLUDED ACTIVITIES

2023

WWF maintains a list of excluded activities as part of the ESSF. These are activities that we cannot and will not implement, fund or support under any circumstances. If proposed work is found to include any of the excluded activities, it must be re-designed to remove the respective activities. The list of excluded activities is provided below.

- i. Weapons and Munitions<sup>1</sup>
- ii. Military activities<sup>2</sup>
- iii. Forms of forced labour, or harmful or exploitative forms of child labour
- iv. Formulated World Health Organisation (WHO) classes IA and IB Products, or formulations of Class II products, unless exclusively used by those with training and proper equipment to avoid impacts on human health and the environment and in the absence of safer alternatives<sup>3</sup>
- v. Procurement or use of pesticides and chemicals specified as persistent organic pollutants under the Stockholm Convention
- vi. Conversion or degradation of areas of high biodiversity, especially those that are legally protected, proposed for protection, or identified as high-conservation value
- vii. Introduction of, or increased competitiveness of, invasive species; and
- viii. Involuntary resettlement.

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<sup>1</sup> The restriction does not apply to field knives, bush knives, machetes and other essential field or safety gear provided to rangers. Equipment needed for research or translocation of wildlife is also permitted. Weapons and Munitions required for WWF staff safety and security are permitted, subject to the policies and approval of the National Office and in line with local law and any relevant donor restrictions.

<sup>2</sup> Military activities are activities that (i) are conducted by members of a military; and (ii) have the primary purpose of national defence or public safety. Military activities do not include activities conducted by members of the military whose primary purpose is conservation, even if those activities incidentally serve a national defence or public safety purpose. Support for conservation activities conducted by members of the military must always satisfy applicable ESSF policies and standards, including WWF's Standard on Community Health, Safety and Security.

<sup>3</sup> WHO Class IA denotes Extremely Hazardous Products, Class IB denotes Highly Hazardous Products, and Class II denotes Moderately Hazardous Products.