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GUIDELINES

Community Consultation Guidelines

SUMMARY

This document outlines best practices and guidelines for conducting the Community Consultations required for the ERS certification process. It is intended to assist Developers by highlighting vital elements and their implementation, as is the case of Free, Prior and Informed Consent, and by pointing out each Consultation's objectives, preparation and outcomes.

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NORMATIVE REFERENCES

This document must be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- ERS Programme
- Zonation
- Field Assessment Guidelines

TEMPLATES

This document is linked with the following templates:

- Livelihood Matrix
- Ecological Recovery Assessment
- Restoration Plan
- Feasibility Study Report
- Social Additionality Plan

Community Consultation *Principles*

DEFINITION AND TYPES OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

To comply with ERS Stakeholders' participation requirements, Developers must consult the Communities participating in or impacted by the Project, as identified in the Stakeholder mapping in the Livelihood Matrix. Community consultations are engagement platforms through which Developers meet interested and impacted parties in the Project, share the Project's design proposition, and collect feedback and critical information from the communities in a co-creation process. The Developer should convene these at the earliest stages of the Project. ERS requests three types of Community Consultation:

1. During the Project Feasibility Review
    1.1. *Stakeholder Engagement*
2. During the Project Design Review
    2.1. Ecological Recovery Community Consultation
    2.2. Livelihoods Community Consultation

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

The objectives of a Community Consultation are:

1. **To onboard communities on the proposed Project.** It entails presenting the Project's concept, the Developer(s) and key staff working in the field, proposed intervention areas, and overall expected results.
2. **To gather feedback from the relevant communities.** To collect information from Stakeholders by using the questions in this guide to better understand the Project Area and its communities, and to learn Traditional and Local Ecological Knowledge (LEK) regarding the site.
3. **To co-create.** Design the Project's objectives, activities and outcomes with the community. Community consultations serve as an essential platform and critical step in obtaining consent from the communities. Engaging stakeholders from the Project's inception fosters co-ownership and support, which are vital elements for the Project's success.

This document is a tool to help Developers conduct the different types of Community Consultations required by ERS' Methodology M001. General guidelines and recommendations on how to conduct Community Consultations can be found in Appendix 1.

💡 Guiding Questions in this document are suggestions; Developers are free to change and/or amend them as appropriate.

FREE, PRIOR AND INFORMED CONSENT (FPIC)

All consultations with Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) must follow the FPIC Guidelines as outlined in the ERS Programme.

Project Feasibility Phase *Consultations* Guidelines

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The Stakeholder Engagement must be done at the early stages of the Project to ensure an accurate Stakeholder Mapping, collect feedback, and involve Stakeholders impacted by or impacting the Project.

Interactions can occur individually between the Developer and one Stakeholder or collectively between the Developer and multiple Stakeholders simultaneously, often taking the shape of informal conversations.

At this stage, Stakeholders are not expected to provide formal validation.

💡 Whenever addressing IPLCs, all Interviews must follow the FPIC guidelines, as outlined in the Programme.

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1. Expected Outcomes

1.1. Present an overview of the Project and its planned interventions, and collect Stakeholders' feedback on the Project's feasibility.

1.2. Refine the Stakeholder mapping in the Livelihood Matrix, which is mandatory for all Projects.

1.3. The following outcomes are mandatory for Projects that present IPLCs among its Stakeholders, and recommended for all Projects:

1.1.1. Collect feedback on the selection of the Project Area and Reference Site.

1.1.2. Perform the Participatory Mapping in the Ecological Recovery Assessment to gain insight on the Project Area's history, composition, land use, and any other relevant information resulting on the refinement of the Zonation.

1.1.3. Collect Local Ecological Knowledge (LEK) to inform the Restoration Plan.

1.1.4. Confirm the ownership, tenure, user rights or management rights of the Project Area.

2. Before engaging with Stakeholders

To better leverage the interactions with Stakeholders, the following materials should be prepared beforehand:

2.1. Draft of the Project Area and the Reference Site.

2.2. Draft of the Stakeholder Mapping.

2.3. The Preliminary Zonation.

2.4. If IPLCs are present among the Stakeholders, the Participatory Mapping (section 'Input from the Developer') in the Ecological Recovery Assessment.

3. Post engagement with Stakeholder

After engaging with Stakeholders, Developers must be able to:

3.1. Validate the Project Area and the Reference Site.

3.2. Complete the Participatory Mapping (section 'Input from IPLCs' - mandatory only if IPLCs are present).

3.3. Complete the Stakeholder mapping.

3.4. Complete and submit the Feasibility Study Report.

💡 These first interactions should be followed by several other meetings to further discuss the Project and engage the Communities throughout the Project's crediting period.

Project Design Phase *Consultation* Guidelines

The Community Consultations taking place during the Project Design Phase aim to co-create and validate the four-year objectives, namely the Social Additionality objectives, Ecological Recovery objectives, and all four-year plans (the Social Additionality Plan and Restoration Plan).

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION ON ECOLOGICAL RECOVERY

This consultation aims to present and validate the Ecological Recovery Assessment. The key findings, suggested objectives, interventions, and rationale should be submitted to Stakeholders and validated upon integration of their feedback.

1. Expected Outcomes

1.1. Validate the Ecological Recovery Assessment (baseline and Recovery Wheel, key findings, suggested interventions and their rationale).

1.2. Validate the Final Zonation.

1.3. Validate the Project's four-year objectives and plan, namely the Restoration Plan.

2. Before the Consultation

In preparation for the meeting, Developers must:

2.1. Perform the Field Assessment in the ERS Mobile App following the Field Assessment Guidelines and have it shared with and validated by the ERS Certification Agent.

2.2. Fill the "Baseline" tab of the Ecological Recovery Assessment using the observations and scores of the Field Assessment.

2.3. Produce the Recovery Wheel in the Ecological Recovery Assessment.

2.4. Prepare the Preliminary Zonation resulting from the *Stakeholder Engagement*.

2.5. Complete the "Input from the Developer" section for both "Key Findings" and "Objectives" in the Tab "Interventions" of the Ecological Recovery Assessment.

2.5.1. If the Project has undertaken Pre-submission activities, an overview of the activities and the results must be considered when completing information for the respective zone.

3. Post Consultation

After the meeting, the Developer must be able to:

3.1. Have the final version of the Restoration Plan informed by the Stakeholder's feedback.

💡 If interventions with direct social implications are identified, such as changing land uses and creating alternative jobs, they must be reported in the Social Additionality Plan after discussion during the Livelihoods Community Consultation.

LIVELIHOODS COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

The Community Consultation on Livelihoods aims to provide the Developer with a clear understanding of the Stakeholders' socioeconomic structure and livelihood conditions.

1. Expected Outcomes

1.1. Establish a baseline for livelihoods, including agreeing on a common definition of some criteria such as wealth, well-being and living standard.

1.2. Define the benefit-sharing mechanism.

1.3. Validate the Social Additionality Plan.

2. Before the Consultation

In preparation for the meeting, Developers must:

2.1. Prepare a comprehensive overview of the Restoration Plan to be presented.

2.2. Familiarise with the concepts of the Livelihood Matrix.

2.3. Secure a translator if necessary.

2.4. Assess all applicable laws and regulations concerning benefit-sharing and IPLCs obligations.

3. Post Consultation

After the meeting, Developers must be able to:

3.1. Have the “Baseline” and “Interventions” tabs of the Livelihood Matrix finalised.

3.2. Have the Social Additionality Plan designed and validated by the Stakeholders.

Appendix 1.

Organise and Hold a Consultation

GENERAL GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS

The following indicative guidelines can be applied to all types of Consultations.

1. Obtaining Permission

1.1. If applicable, Developers must obtain the necessary permit from the relevant local office to hold Community meetings. Developers are responsible for understanding the requirements for holding community meetings and following the process that applies to the jurisdiction.

1.2. Once permission is granted, Developers must approach the Community's leadership to introduce the Project, request permission to hold the meeting and invite them to participate as described in the Free, Prior and Informed Consent guidelines in the Programme.

2. Setting the Meeting Date and Time

2.1. Developers must define the duration of the meeting and set the date and time of the Consultation in advance so that Stakeholders can organise accordingly. The schedule and period must consider attendees' ability to participate.

3. Setting the Meeting Venue

3.1. Developers must select a venue that is easily accessible for all participants, can hold the capacity of the expected attendees, does not offer distractions, and is a place where participants feel safe to share their point-of-views and address delicate matters.

3.2. Politically neutral venues are encouraged. Ideal locations can be schools, community meeting centres, and other similar facilities that allow for seating. Developers must consult with Community leaders beforehand, enabling them to help find a suitable venue.

3.3. If accessing the venue is a barrier for participants, Developers must secure commuting solutions or reimburse commuting costs.

4. Inviting Stakeholders

4.1. Developers must send invitations to the participants in advance with the precise meeting details (Date, Time, Venue, Agenda, Relevant materials).

4.2. Developers must invite all Stakeholders or the group's representatives identified during the Stakeholder mapping.

💡 Developers should get the buy-in of Community leaders before the Consultation and ask them to help gather participants. Invitees are more likely to attend if their leadership is participating.

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5. Agenda

5.1. The Agenda for the meeting must be prepared in advance, detailing discussion topics and their allocated time.

5.2. Allocated time should include buffers and account for enough time to allow spontaneous discussions.

5.3. The Agenda must be shared in advance of the meeting.

6. Other Preparations

Community Background and Knowledge

6.1. Before a Consultation, Developers must study and understand the history of the Community, prevailing social and political issues and any other dynamics.

Tools and resources

Developers must prepare and bring all the resources and tools necessary to run the consultation. Overall tools and resources include:

6.2. This guide;

6.3. The templates that need to be completed;

6.4. Stationary materials such as notebooks, pens/pencils, flip charts, markers, stickers, and scotch tape.

Staff skills

Ideally, there should be facilitators with a background in Community development, project management, and pillar-specific knowledge. A dedicated note-taker should be assigned. The roles of the staff should be outlined and communicated in advance. Ensure facilitators speak the local languages or dialects and always respect the local culture.

Content

Content for the meeting must be prepared in advance and be culturally and linguistically adequate to the participants.

Appendix 2.

Community Consultation

Reporting Template

Disclaimer: *This template will eventually be integrated into the ERS App to facilitate its use. In the meantime, the Project Developer must either download the template, print it to fill it out during the consultation and send it back via email to ERS, or turn on the offline mode before every consultation and fill it out electronically.*

💡 This template must be completed during and after each Consultation for record-keeping purposes.

Name of the consultation:

Date and time:

Location:

Facilitator(s):

Objective(s) of the consultation:

General meeting notes:

Conclusions & outcomes:

Attendees list:

Name of participant *Full name and title, if applicable*	Stakeholder group *As identified in the Livelihoods Matrix*	Age	Gender	Status and/or profession *Describe the participant's role in the community*

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