

WFP Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework

FAQs

Resources:

- [ESSF Overview \(Module 1\)](#)
- [ESS Standards \(Module 2\)](#)
- [ES Safeguards \(Module 3\)](#)
- [EMS \(Module 4\)](#)
- [FAQs on ESS and risk screening and cross-cutting indicators](#)

Acronyms:

- ESSF Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework
- ESS Environmental and Social Safeguards
- ESMP Environmental and Social Management Plan
- ESIA Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
- EMS Environmental Management System (EMS)

Support:

For more information on the ESSF or associated issue please contact global.safegaurds@wfp.org.

What's inside the Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework?

The Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework (ESSF) includes:

- **Overview:** An introduction and overview of the ESSF (Module 1).
- **Standards:** WFP's Eight (8) Environmental and Social Standards (Module 2).

Based on these 8 Standards:

- **Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS)** which identify and manage unintended harm to the environment and/or people associated with WFP's programme operations (Module 3).
- **The Environmental Management System (EMS)** for operational functions such as ensuring proper waste management practices for packaging during food distribution activities. (Module 4)

What are the actual changes to the FLA Template?

Clause 2.3 has been added to the Obligations of the Cooperating Partner in the General Conditions of the FLA:

2.3 The Cooperating Partner shall carry out the Programmes in accordance with the WFP Environmental and Social Standards and shall apply appropriate measures to identify and manage environmental and social risks as set forth in the WFP Environmental and Social Safeguards for Programme Activities.

In the FLA file, the ESSF is also listed as No 4 in the FLA Documents and order of priority.

Where can I find the ESSF screening tool?

The Environmental and Social Risk Screening tool is Annex 1 of the ES Safeguards (Module 3).

Is it necessary to do the screening for all FLAs?

Yes. The screening applies to all WFP's Country Strategic Plan (CSP) programme interventions that come under a Field Level Agreement (FLA), a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or a Construction Contract (CC).

Is this screening only for new FLAs or for ongoing ones?

All FLAs that are signed using the latest FLA Template should be screened. Ongoing proposals or activities can also be screened to identify any possible risks.

What's the screening for? Is it an Assessment?

The screening is not an assessment as such but a list of questions that respond to WFP's 8 ESS Standards. The purpose is to identify risks and the degrees of concern:

Category A – high risk

Category B – medium risk

Category C - low risk

The results of the screening will indicate which intervention is triggering concern and why.

Who does the screening?

The screening can be done by WFP, a Cooperating Partner (CP) or a Contractor.

At what stage is the screening done?

The screening is done when the proposal is being designed and formulated before any implementation starts. If the information is not sufficient, a "preliminary" screening can be conducted and then refined during the identification of on-site project interventions.

Q Does the CP have to factor in the screening when making a proposal?

Yes. Compliance with the ESSF is a requirement of the FLA and should be factored in the proposal.

Q Does the screening only apply to resilience, environmental, livelihood, and climate projects?

No, it does not. The screening is required for all types of CSP intervention

Q Do we need to do the screening with emergencies?

For emergency response interventions, a no-regret approach should be adopted to avoid unintended harm to the environment and/or people. A more in-depth risk identification can be conducted at a second stage so to implement site specific mitigations measures where needed. Specific guidance is going to be elaborated and shared with relevant WFP's staff.

Q Should the screening activities be finalized before signing the FLA?

Yes, generally the results of the Environmental and Social Risk Screening should be signed off as part of the FLA. However, depending on the specific modalities of COs, the FLA could be signed before or after. In any case, the screening must be done when sufficient information is available to conduct a meaningful analysis.

Q What happens if indicators are high risk or medium risk?

A If an intervention is categorized as Category A - high risk, an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) associated with an Environmental and Social Management (ESMP) will be required. The ESIA must be elaborated by an independent entity or a Team of Certified Environmental Practitioners (usually accredited to the Government). Terms of Reference for this work will be developed by WFP in collaboration with the relevant CP.

For Category B - medium risk only an ESMP is required. This is available in Module 3 of the ESSF. The elaboration of the ESMP is a responsibility of the entity designing the project interventions (CP designing a proposal subject to an FLA; construction companies participating to a tender for construction contracts etc.).

Q Is there a template ESMP?

The ESMP template is Annex 5 of Environmental and Social Safeguards (Module 3) An ESMP example – with further guidance - can be shared by contacting global.safeguards@wfp.org.

Q Is the screening per project? If we have multiple projects in a year, can we do one screening only?

The screening applies to the entire set of interventions to be implemented through an FLA/MoU/CC and each site where there will be an intervention should be screened separately. This is because different activities might impact the environment and population differently, both positively and negatively, depending on the location as well as social, environmental and climate specifics.

Q If the project is implemented in several locations in a country, should a screening be done for each location?

Yes, a screening should be carried out for each location. Each intervention may have a different impact depending on where it is and other social, and environmental factors.

Q What if the project timeline is so strict or there is a funding deadline? The screening may cause a delay.

As with emergency operations, a no-regret approach should be used in order to avoid unintended harm to the environment and/or people. However, if there is time a risk screening should be conducted. A ESIA will only be required for Category A - high risk interventions. Activities that fall under this typology would be, for instance, dams higher than 5 meters or irrigation schemes above 20 ha. These types of activity cannot be implemented in a limited timeframe.

Q What about an environmental impact assessment done by a government authority? Do we still have to do the screening?

Not if the impact assessment's requirements are as stringent as WFPs. This can be assessed by an in-country focal point or expert, or by an RB or HQ ESS advisor. It is important to ask the Government to share the EIA report to ensure that the mitigation measures and ESMP elaborated as part of the ESIA are implemented as part of the proposal.

Q How do you handle the screening when implementing with another UN Partner?

The WFP screening tool is the default option to identify ESS risks associated with WFP's programme operations. However, alternative tools can be used after analysis by an in-country focal point or expert, or by an RB or HQ ESS advisor. Any other tool proposed must address all the 8 WFP Environmental and Social Standards.

Environmental and social standards vary from country to country. Which standards (national/global) will be applied?

WFP's standards are the default for our operations. Other government or donor requirements and or standards may be used after a comparative analysis has been conducted by HQ or RB ESS advisors

Will the screening tool be disseminated when WFP sends out the Request for Proposal?

Yes, it will be, but CPS are welcome to become familiar with it in advance. A copy of the screening tool is Annex 1 of the ES Safeguards (Module 3).

In the case of a sudden emergency when the IDPs or refugees have already settled in an area, is a screening always necessary before our intervention?

The screening is required for all CSP programme interventions. In such a situation a no-regret approach should be adopted to avoid emergency interventions causing unintended harm to the environment and/or people. When time allows, a more in-depth/site specific risk identification can be conducted, and more appropriate mitigation measures put in place as required.

If we have already used another tool to do a screening, can we submit those results and mitigation measures, or do we need to fill in the information in the WFP screening tool?

The WFP screening tool is the default option to identify ES risks associated with WFP's programme operations. However, alternative tools can be considered as long as they are as stringent as WFP's. In-country ESS experts or an RB or HQ ESS advisor will analyse the alternative tool and provide advice. Any tool to be considered must address all of the 8 WFP ES Standards.

How many times will the screening be done for CPs signing multi-year FLAs?

The Environmental and Social Risk Screening should be conducted every time new interventions are designed or any change in the initial design is made, or is going to be made. Mitigation measures will have to be changed and implemented accordingly.

Q If an environment and social impact study is required by the government, will start up to be stalled until the local government has the time and means to complete the study?

If the government requires an impact assessment to comply with its laws, WFP must ensure its interventions are compliant. If high risk interventions cannot be avoided, funds will have to be put in place to ensure the elaboration of the required studies. The time needed to complete it will depend on the complexity of the operation and on the capacity of the different stakeholders.

Q In the case of projects with activities implemented by both WFP directly and implementing partners, is there a need for separate screenings - one for those activities implemented by WFP directly and one for each FLA?

This is quite a specific scenario. The principle should be that whoever is designing the intervention is responsible for the screening. However, any mitigation measures put in place as a result of the screening will apply to all those who are part of implementation.