

Environmental and Social Considerations

JICA's Guidelines for Environmental and Social Considerations

A project aiming for social and economic development nevertheless may involve a risk of causing negative impacts on the environment, including air, water, soil, and/or the ecosystem, as well as negative impacts on society, such as involuntary resettlement or infringement of rights of indigenous peoples. In order to achieve sustainable development, the project's impacts on the environment and society must be assessed, and costs to avoid or minimize those impacts must be integrated into the project itself.

This internalization of the cost that reduces environmental and social impacts into the development cost is the gist of environmental and social considerations (ESC). JICA Guidelines for Environmental and Social Considerations (ESC Guidelines) are guides that set forth JICA's responsibilities and required procedures, together with obligations of partner countries and project proponents, in order to put ESC into practice. JICA runs projects with appropriate ESC put into practice in accordance with the ESC Guidelines.

The ESC Guidelines, in languages including English, Chinese, French, and Spanish, as well as related documents such as Frequently Asked Questions, are available on JICA's website.*

[→ https://www.jica.go.jp/english/our_work/social_environmental/guideline/index.html]

Application of the ESC Guidelines

JICA's partners, including host countries, borrowers, and project proponents (hereinafter referred to as "project proponents etc."), bear the primary responsibility for ESC. JICA's role is to examine the ESC undertaken by the project proponents etc. in their development projects and to provide necessary support to ensure that the appropriate ESC are put into practice and that adverse impacts are avoided or minimized to an acceptable level. Procedures taken by JICA include the following:

1. Reinforcement of ESC

JICA provides various assistance to project proponents etc. to ensure that appropriate ESC are put into practice. For example, in the planning stage of a project, JICA may provide assistance for the survey and other procedures related to ESC within its Preparatory Survey or Detail Design. JICA also enhances the capacity of project proponents etc. in ESC through Knowledge Co-Creation Programs and Technical Cooperation Projects.

Aiming at reinforcing Japan's support system, JICA provides capacity-building programs for consultants etc., as well as collects information on ESC in developing countries, and also shares information with other development partners.

2. Confirmation of ESC

JICA examines and confirms that the ESC are put into practice by the project proponents etc. at various stages of

the project, including formulation, review, implementation, and post evaluation. JICA's procedure consists of three processes: Screening, in which projects are classified into four categories based on the magnitude of their potential impacts; Environmental Review, in which JICA examines and evaluates the ESC during the review of the project proposal; and Monitoring, in which JICA follows up on the ESC activities for a certain period of time, including the post-completion stage.

Screening is a process in which JICA classifies the project into one of four Environmental Categories based on the magnitude of its impacts inferred from information provided by the project proponents etc. The categories are: A (likely to have significant adverse impacts), B (potential impacts are less adverse than A), C (minimal or little impact), and FI (JICA provides fund to a financial intermediary where subprojects could not be identified prior to JICA's approval). JICA then follows the ESC procedures set by the ESC Guidelines in accordance with the category of the project.

In Environmental Review, JICA confirms the possible environmental or social impacts together with measures to be taken by the project proponents etc., through examination of documents, including an environmental impact assessment (EIA) report and Environmental Checklist that indicates the state of ESC, which are provided by the project proponents etc. For category A projects, JICA holds a discussion with the project proponents etc. to confirm the positive and negative impacts of the project based on the EIA report and other documents related to ESC. Then JICA evaluates the proposed measures for avoidance, minimization, mitigation, or compensation for the adverse impacts, as well as measures to enhance the positive impacts on the environment and society.

JICA secures the transparency of the Environmental Review by disclosing Environmental and Social Consideration Documents prior to the process.

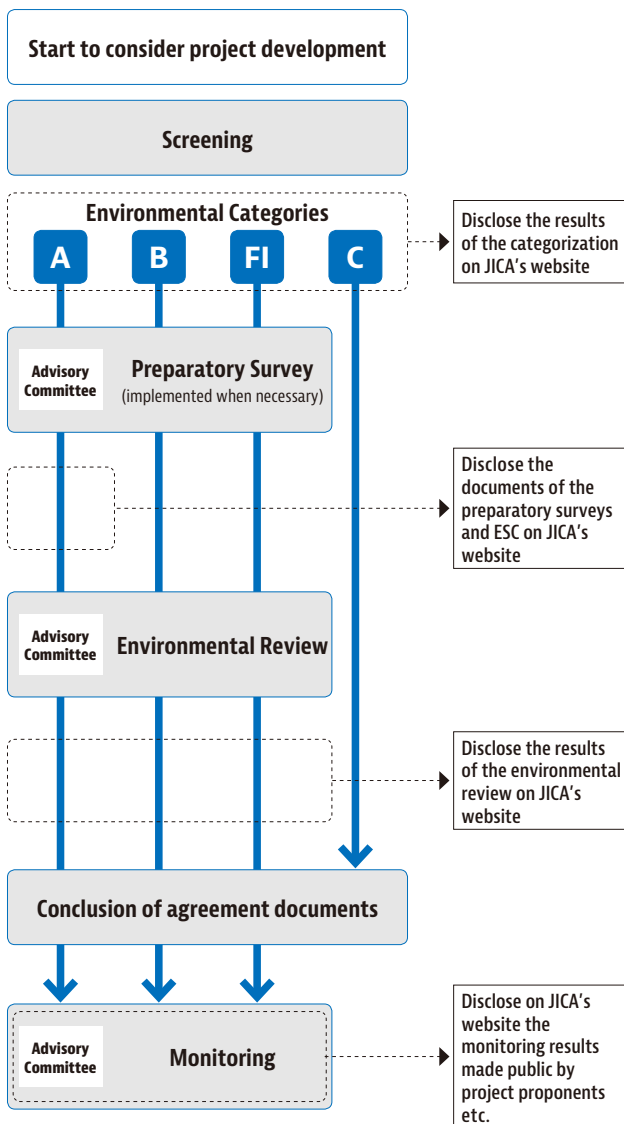
Monitoring of ESC is carried out by the project proponents etc. Regarding projects in categories A, B, and FI, JICA confirms the results of monitoring of significant environmental impact items for a certain period of time. If any necessity of improvement is identified during monitoring, JICA urges the project proponents etc. to devise appropriate countermeasures and provides necessary support.

3. Advisory Committee for Environmental and Social Considerations

The Advisory Committee for Environmental and Social Considerations has been established by JICA as an independent council that advises JICA on its examination and support of ESC. The committee consists of external experts in the relevant field

*The current ESC Guidelines apply to projects requested in July 2010 onward. For projects requested by June 2010, either JICA's former ESC Guidelines (April 2004) or JBIC's Guidelines for Confirmation of Environmental and Social Considerations (April 2002) apply, depending on the scheme.

Flowchart for Environmental and Social Consideration Procedures



who were impartially selected following a public advertisement. During fiscal 2019, the committee held 11 plenary meetings and 23 working group meetings. Working groups—made up of committee members assigned by a plenary meeting and tasked with investigating individual projects subject to scrutiny by the Advisory Committee—provided advice for 17 projects during the year. The working group meeting for a comprehensive review of the guidelines was held six times. The list of the committee members and the minutes of plenary meetings (in Japanese) are available on the Environmental and Social Considerations page on JICA's website.

4. Objection Procedures

In addition to the measures mentioned above, JICA has established the Objection Procedure as a fail-safe mechanism

to ensure its compliance with the ESC Guidelines. By following this procedure, residents of the partner country or their agents who are affected or likely to be affected by the project due to non-compliance with JICA's ESC Guidelines can file an objection with JICA.

Contents of the objection will be reviewed by the Examiners, who are independent of the operational departments of JICA. The Examiners inspect the facts relating to compliance or non-compliance with the ESC Guidelines and report the findings to JICA's president. If a problem or a dispute is identified as a result of non-compliance with JICA's ESC Guidelines, Examiners will encourage a dialogue between the Requester (person who raised the objection) and the project proponents etc.

Documents providing an outline of Objection Procedures and the annual reports of the Examiners are available on the Environmental and Social Considerations page of JICA's website. During the course of fiscal 2019, no objection was received.

5. Information Disclosure

In order to maintain its accountability and transparency, JICA actively discloses information on ESC. Project proponents etc. are primarily responsible for the disclosure of information regarding the project's ESC, but JICA itself also discloses key information about a project's ESC based on the ESC Guidelines. Details and information are available on the Environmental and Social Considerations page on JICA's website.

6. Harmonization with Other Development Partners

The ESC Guidelines state that JICA's projects must not deviate significantly from the World Bank's Safeguard Policies, and that JICA should refer to the internationally recognized standards and good practices, including those of the international financial organizations, when appropriate.

To this end, JICA closely coordinates with development partners including the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank to keep up to date with global trends and share its experiences. In addition, JICA actively seeks harmonization of its ESC procedures with those of such development partners by engaging in a joint mission on ESC in projects it co-finances with them.

7. Review of the ESC Guidelines for Possible Revisions

The current ESC Guidelines stipulate that: "JICA will create a comprehensive review of the guidelines within ten years of their enforcement on the basis of its findings. Revisions are made as needed, based upon the results mentioned above." Given this stipulation, JICA commenced its work on possible revisions to the current guidelines. It is now making a comprehensive review of the guidelines by going over the projects subject to them.