

FACT SHEET ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Background

- The World Bank is in the process of reviewing its policy on indigenous peoples, and IFC will take any new direction into account.
- The objective is to ensure that the development process fosters full respect for the dignity, human rights, and cultural uniqueness of indigenous peoples to ensure that they do not suffer adverse effects during the development process, particularly from World Bank-financed projects, and that they receive culturally compatible social and economic benefits.

Current IFC Policy

Indigenous peoples are broadly defined as groups with a social and cultural identity distinct from the dominant society, which makes them vulnerable to being disadvantaged in the development process. They are primarily subsistence-oriented, have close attachment to ancestral territories and to the natural resources in the area, are self-identified as well as by others as members of a distinct cultural group, often speak a language different from the national language, and have customary social and political institutions.

In practice, IFC's policies may cover social groups described under such terms as "indigenous peoples," "indigenous ethnic minorities," "national minorities," "tribal groups," "scheduled tribes," and other similar terms. IFC uses the following process to identify those social groups to which its policies apply:

- Review constitutions, laws (including customary law), and other legislation, as well as relevant international conventions to which the country is a party (the major international convention on indigenous peoples is ILO Convention 169, 1989).
- Consult with national, regional, and local indigenous peoples' organizations and communities on their criteria for identifying such groups.
- Consult with government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and experts who know the ethnic composition of the particular country.
- Determine the presence, in varying degrees, of the following characteristics:
 1. self-identification as members of a distinct social group
 2. vulnerability to being disadvantaged as social groups in the development process
 3. close attachment to ancestral territories and natural resources
 4. presence of customary social and political institutions
 5. use of a language different from the national language

Additional Resources

- [The World Bank Operational Manual: Operational Directive: Indigenous Peoples](#)
- [IFC Glossary – Indigenous Peoples](#)

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