

EHS Guidelines Update and Consultation

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are the World Bank Group Environmental, Health, and Safety Guidelines?

The World Bank Group (WBG) Environmental, Health, and Safety (EHS) Guidelines are technical reference documents with general and industry-specific examples of Good International Industry Practice (GIIP). They contain the performance levels and measures that are normally acceptable to the World Bank Group and are generally considered to be achievable in new facilities at reasonable costs by using existing technology. Application of the EHS Guidelines to existing facilities may involve the establishment of site-specific targets, with an appropriate timeline for achieving them.

2. Why are the EHS Guidelines relevant?

The EHS Guidelines are EHS risk management tools used by the WBG to support the appraisal and supervision of projects across various industry sectors. As a public good, the EHS Guidelines are widely utilized by over 150 financial institutions, private sector companies, governments, consultants, and the public for project appraisals and planning, impact assessments and as tools for informing management systems.

3. What sectors are covered by the EHS Guidelines?

The General EHS Guidelines present information on common environmental, health, and safety issues that potentially apply to and are relevant across industry sectors. The Industry-Sector Guidelines are available for more than 60 industrial sectors and contain measures and performance levels expected to be met in each industry, as applicable, following GIIP. These industries include the following major sectors: Agribusiness/ Food Production; Chemicals; Forestry; General Manufacturing; Infrastructure; Oil, Gas, and Mining; and Power. A detailed list is available at www.ifc.org/ehsguidelines.

4. What topics are covered in the EHS Guidelines?

The EHS Guidelines include the General EHS Guidelines, which present typical risks and impacts that are applicable across sectors and the Industry-Specific EHS Guidelines, which are specific to various industry sectors and cover environmental, occupational health and safety (OHS) and community health and safety (CHS) aspects. For example, the risks and mitigants presented in the EHS Guidelines for environmental aspects may include air emissions, effluents, waste management, energy and water conservation, hazardous materials, biodiversity, among others. The OHS aspects may include physical risks (e.g., work at heights, repetitive motion); chemical risks (e.g., exposure to

hazardous materials, radiation exposure); biological risks (e.g., exposure to disease), among others. Aspects related to community health and safety may include traffic safety, disease prevention and control, water availability and quality, among others.

5. Are social aspects included in the EHS Guidelines?

The scope of the EHS Guidelines includes environmental, occupational health and safety and community health and safety aspects. Social aspects, such as land acquisition and involuntary resettlement; labor; socio-economic impacts; indigenous peoples; consultation and stakeholder engagement; and reprisals management, are excluded from the EHS Guidelines. Guidance on social aspects is available in relevant Guidance Notes to IFC/MIGA Performance Standards, relevant Guidance Notes to World Bank Group E&S Standards, and various other World Bank Group good practice publications.

6. Who are the users of the EHS Guidelines?

The EHS Guidelines are a knowledge product and are available online. They are among the most downloaded documents on the WBG website. Since their publication in 2007, their uptake and use have remained steady. Some of the key users of the EHS Guidelines include:

- World Bank, IFC, and MIGA
- Other Multilateral Development Banks
- International Financial Institutions
- Export Credit Agencies
- Equator Principles Financial Institutions
- Industry Associations
- Private sector companies
- Public sector and regulatory agencies
- International Agencies
- Consultants
- Donors
- Think Tanks
- Civil Society Organizations

7. Why is the WBG updating the EHS Guidelines?

Since their first issuance in 2007, the EHS Guidelines are periodically updated to remain relevant and useful to practitioners. The update aims to:

- Reflect latest GIIP and advancements in industry standards and technology.
- Update key references to relevant mitigation measures, standards, and performance indicators.
- Incorporate emerging EHS topics and trends.
- Enhance digital features for better access and user friendliness.

8. Who can take part in these consultations?

The consultations are open to a broad range of participants, including technical experts, industry leaders, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders interested in contributing to the update of the EHS Guidelines. Public consultation will be available online for 45 days for each EHS Guidelines. The start and end dates will be published on the website. Consultation is a key part of the update process to seek input from a diverse group of stakeholders that are users of the EHS Guidelines.

9. When and how can I participate in these consultations?

The process will take place in phases, with each phase covering a number of sector-specific Guidelines in batches. Draft Guidelines will be available online for a 45-day consultation, during which stakeholders can review and provide written feedback. The consultation timeline begins when a draft Guideline is posted online and the consultation period is indicated.

Timelines are displayed on the consultation website, which also include:

- the proposed draft updated EHS Guidelines
- summary of key updates or changes in the draft, with translations into five languages
- the start and end dates for the consultation
- access to the feedback form
- registration link

[Register here](#) to receive notifications on draft releases.

10. How can I provide feedback?

Feedback can be submitted through the online submission form, where all responses will be compiled into a central database for review. Alternatively, feedback can be sent via email to ehsguidelines@ifc.org.

All input will be carefully considered as we finalize the update of the guidelines.

11. Will comments and feedback be made public?

After each consultation phase concludes, a consultation feedback summary will be disclosed for each Industry-sector. This summary will highlight key themes and comments raised by stakeholders but will not include individual comments or responses and will not be associated or identified to the stakeholder. The feedback summary will be translated into WBG languages to ensure broad accessibility and will be made available on the consultation website.

12. Will my personal information be made public?

Personal information or organization identifiers submitted through the feedback form will be used for internal World Bank Group purposes only, including contacting you for future consultations if you indicate interest. A summary containing aggregated and de-identified data, including summaries of comments received without attribution, will be produced and made public following the consultation period.

13. Where will the final versions of the EHS Guidelines be posted?

The final updated version of the EHS Guidelines will be available on the [EHS Guidelines website](#).

14. Will the previous versions remain available to the public?

As the EHS Guidelines are updated, the previous versions are moved to an archive, which remains accessible to the public. A link to these versions is available [here](#).

15. Will the EHS Guidelines be translated?

As part of the consultation period, a short summary of key changes will be prepared for each EHS Guidelines, including main areas of change, additions and new topics. The summary will be translated into WBG official languages and made available on the website to complement the consultation process. The full updated draft of each EHS Guideline will be disclosed in English.

Once the final updated EHS Guidelines are published, they will be translated into WBG official languages and disclosed sometime after the English version. The English version will remain the official version.

16. Is the ongoing update of the EHS Guidelines part of the Sustainability Framework update?

No, the Sustainability Framework Update and the update of the EHS Guidelines are two separate initiatives happening in parallel and with different timelines. For more information on the IFC Sustainability Framework update, click [here](#).

17. How are the EHS Guidelines related to IFC's and MIGA's Sustainability Framework (including the Sustainability Policy and Performance Standards)?

The EHS Guidelines are referenced in IFC's [Sustainability Policy](#) and [Performance Standards](#). They serve as technical reference documents and examples of Good International Industry Practice (GIIP) to support IFC's appraisal and supervision activities. In addition, IFC clients and their consultants use the EHS Guidelines to manage environmental, health, and safety risks in alignment with IFC's Performance Standards.

The EHS Guidelines are also referenced in MIGA's [Performance Standards](#) and the World Bank's [Environmental and Social Framework](#), and serve as a critical tool to support project appraisal and supervision by WBG Environmental and Social Specialists.

18. Are IFC and MIGA clients or World Bank borrowers required to follow the EHS Guidelines?

For IFC and MIGA clients, the EHS Guidelines serve as a technical reference for meeting the environmental and social requirements outlined in the Performance Standards. Clients are expected to align their projects with GIIP, as applicable for each project. The application of the EHS Guidelines is based on the project's impact assessment, specific project circumstances, and the professional opinion of qualified experts to manage risks and promote sustainability.

For World Bank borrowers, the World Bank's Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) is required for Investment Project Financing (IPF) projects financed by the Bank. The EHS Guidelines serve as a technical reference to assist borrowers in addressing the environmental, health, and safety aspects in the ESF. Similarly, the application of the EHS Guidelines is based on the project's impact assessment, specific project circumstances, and the professional opinion of qualified experts.

Adherence to the EHS Guidelines helps projects align with internationally recognized best practices in design, implementation and operation.

19. How does the World Bank Group (WBG) monitor how clients are measuring up to the recommendations in the EHS Guidelines?

The EHS Guidelines are technical references based on Good International Industry Practice (GIIP). The applicability of the EHS Guidelines should be tailored to the hazards and risks identified for each project based on results of an environmental assessment that considers site-specific variables. The applicability of specific technical recommendations should follow GIIP and be based on the professional opinion of qualified and experienced professionals. For existing facilities, site-specific targets and appropriate timetables may be established. Once the specific recommendations are established for a project, they are included in the project's action plan and ongoing monitoring and reporting requirements. During project supervision, the E&S Specialists review the client's adherence to the specific commitments, which may include applicable aspects of the EHS Guidelines. Note that not all measures and performance levels in the EHS Guidelines will apply to all projects, a risk-based approach is applied.

20. How are climate risks, including GHG emissions accounting and reporting, and climate risk mitigation and adaptation, going to be incorporated into the update of the EHS Guidelines?

The EHS Guidelines update will revise the technical references of GIIP for energy efficiency and energy conservation and other opportunities for the reduction (mitigation) of GHG emissions. The update will also include references to GIIP for climate risk prevention and adaptation. In addition, guidance on quantification of GHG emissions and references to internationally accepted methodologies may be included in relevant industry sectors.