

A Framework For Socio-Cultural Impacts and Safeguards Assessment



BirdLife 2018

Introduction

Conservation, by its very nature, affects the distribution and abundance, rights of access to, governance (decision-making) and use of, natural resources. Very often this may have benefits for people and communities – by securing the sustainable use of goods, services and cultural values on which their livelihoods and wellbeing depend. However, poorly planned conservation interventions also have potential to change people’s habitual use and access to natural resources or affect relations of power and control over these. This may be of particular concern for those directly dependent on the environment such as indigenous peoples and the most vulnerable – but is relevant wherever people are or may be affected by conservation action.

Socio-cultural impact assessment is therefore important to help project/programme managers and practitioners avoid negative socio-cultural impacts (and enhance positive benefits) from conservation actions and decisions, and to plan, budget for and monitor these actions and the changes and impacts they are supposed to deliver.

This document is a tool designed to help strengthen your project/programme, improve its performance, avoid conflict and harm to both people and environment, and enhance the prospect of long-term success and sustainability.

Each section provides a brief introduction to important issues and presents some of the questions that should be considered during the design, development and implementation of any project/programme. Where, in your response to each topic, you identify a potential negative or socio-cultural impact please explain how that will be mitigated or minimized, and monitored or in case of positive impacts, how these can be enhanced.

Before answering the questions below it is important to find out whether:

- a. A stakeholder analysis has been carried identifying the most important stakeholders and beneficiaries and if not, do you plan to carry out such an analysis and if yes, when?
- b. Are there socio-cultural data available and if not, do you plan to carry out a baseline (or other) survey and if yes, when?
- c. Do you have sex-disaggregate data and if not, do you plan to carry out a gender study and if yes, when?

BirdLife has developed tools and policies to guide you in your work, including a [Position on Conservation and Gender](#) and [guidelines for implementing the position](#), a [training tool for Integrating Rights and Social Issues into Conservation \(INTRINSIC\)](#) and a [toolkit for evaluating the outcomes and impacts of small–medium sized conservation projects \(PRISM\)](#) that can be found on <https://conservationevaluation.org>.

Background information

Before starting the assessment exercise it is useful to provide some background information.

Title of programme/project:

Name of lead organisation:

Name of Partners:

Countries:

Sites:

When was the assessment done:

The assessment done by (title/organisation):

Where did you get the information for the assessment:

Has a stakeholder assessment been carried out:

Do you have socio-cultural data:

Do you have sex-disaggregate data:

Planned follow up (e.g. site based assessment during the Inception Phase):

1. Participation

The complex and dynamic nature of environmental problems requires flexible and transparent decision-making. It is important to ensure that all relevant stakeholders are engaged in an intervention from the very beginning. It is also important to recognize that in addition to being stakeholders, they are diverse, and have rights, for example, communities with either legal or traditional land tenure rights.

Questions	Answers	Main activity planned
<i>What activities, methods, or processes did you use/will you use to identify all affected households and groups and ensure their full and effective participation?</i>		
<i>Which stakeholders and rights holders have you identified as a part of a participatory process and have you ensured equal access to participation regardless of gender, age, status etc.?</i>		
<i>Have you ensured that all stakeholders (women and men) have information about the conservation initiative and know the expected impacts (negative and positive)?</i>		
<i>Do you have a process that ensures ongoing participation?</i>		
<i>Is there or do you plan a process and procedure for resolving disputes or conflicts?</i>		

2. Vulnerable and marginalized people and groups

Certain groups in your area of conservation action, or certain people affected by it, may be particularly vulnerable based on factors such as age, socio-economic status, education level, etc. It is important to identify these and plan specifically for how the intervention will engage them throughout.

Questions	Answers	Main activity planned and timeline
<i>What vulnerable groups/households exist within the project/programme area?</i>		
<i>What specific barriers to participation and/or benefit from the intervention might they face? Could they face additional burdens or costs because of it?</i>		
<i>How can you ensure those barriers are reduced or eliminated and that all stakeholders are equitably included? What measures will you put in place?</i>		

3. Women and men

All projects/programmes or policies that directly or indirectly impact people need to consider gender since gender is a fundamental element to how society functions and affects access to power, control, decision-making, priorities and resources.

Questions	Answers	Main activity planned and timeline
<i>How do men and women use the resources that the project/programme or policy seeks to conserve differently? How will their lives and livelihoods be impacted by the project/policy?</i>		
<i>To which extent and how does the project/programme seek to address gender related roles and priorities?</i>		

<i>What barriers might men or women face in fully participating in (and benefiting from) the project/programme?</i>		
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4. Livelihoods and wellbeing

The degradation or unsustainable use of resources can negatively affect people’s livelihoods and quality of life. Conservation can help prevent such negative outcomes, with positive social, cultural and economic impacts for communities. However, conservation projects, by regulating or restricting use of resources, can also have adverse consequences for some people.

Questions	Answers	Main activity planned
<i>Will the project/programme impact on the use of or access to natural resources and products (whether for sale or own use) by people living in and around the project/programme area?</i>		
<i>Will the project/programme affect the ability of local people and other stakeholders to carry out their recreational activities and their cultural or spiritual customs?</i>		
<i>Is the project/programme likely to increase or decrease human-wildlife and other conflicts?</i>		
<i>How does the project/programme seek to balance human wellbeing with biodiversity conservation needs?</i>		

5. Tenure and rights to land and resources

Land tenure, resource ownership and user rights can influence the use to which land is put for economic and social development. Secure tenure tends to promote sustainable use and development. Conservation initiatives often involve changes in rights to land and resources, for example by shifting them to communities (e.g. community forest management) or government (e.g. creation of protected areas with restricted rights of access).

Questions	Answers	Main activity planned and timeline
<i>Does the project/programme affect the access of people to places and resources (including those of recreational, cultural as well as economic value) which they currently have legal or traditional user rights to, have traditionally used or upon which they rely?</i>		
<i>Is there likely to be conflicts among different communities or user groups who claim traditional ownership or use of resources, for example between indigenous communities and people who have later settled in the area?</i>		

6. Resettlement or displacement

People often have rights to remain on the lands and territories that they have traditionally occupied, which includes the continued access to resources they have traditionally used.

Questions	Answers	Main activity planned and timeline
<i>Does your project/programme recommend displacement or restricted access to resources on which people's livelihoods depend?</i>		

<i>Is there another way to achieve project/programme outcomes which doesn't include physical or economic displacement?</i>		
<i>What steps will you take/have you taken to ensure that any displacement is taken place with Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) of all rights-holders affected, regardless of their gender, age, social status etc.?</i>		

7. Indigenous peoples

Under international law, indigenous peoples are afforded the right to Free, Prior, and Informed consent (FPIC) when an intervention impacts their lands, territories, resources, traditional practices and customs. Indigenous peoples often have a long relationship with the land on which they live and may differ from the majority population in various ways.

Questions	Answers	Main activity planned and timeline
<i>Does your project/programme affect indigenous peoples?</i>		
<i>If yes, did you consult with the indigenous community about the proposed initiative before its planning began and if not do you intend to do so?</i>		
<i>How are decisions made in the wider community, and is this process equitable for all people in the community, including indigenous peoples?</i>		
<i>What are the indigenous community' cultural and spiritual beliefs about sacred sites, forests, and natural resources that are or may be impacted by the project/programme?</i>		
<i>Do you have evidence that the indigenous community wishes to</i>		

<i>be part of the project/programme and has it been given the opportunity to contribute to the formulation of activities and benefits?</i>		
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8. Monitoring and impact assessment

In order to avoid negative impacts and produce equitable and sustainable positive impacts it is important that you formulate indicators for these expected impacts and that you monitor and report on changes and impacts, both positive and negative

Questions	Answers	Main activity planned and timeline
<i>Have you formulated a monitoring and evaluation/impact assessment framework for the project/programme with indicators for outcomes and outputs and have you shared and discussed it with your Partner(s)?</i>		
<i>Have you established a procedure for monitoring and ensured that there is sufficient capacity and resources to carry out participatory monitoring and document impacts?</i>		

8. Research and studies

Research and studies (e.g. surveys, participatory mapping etc.) may be required to provide the necessary data and knowledge to implement the project/programme effectively and reach desired results. For example when working with gender and livelihoods, you may need to have detailed knowledge on the roles of women and men in natural resource management, their access to economic and other assets and the benefits they hope to achieve through the project/programme.

Questions	Answers	Main activity planned and timeline
<i>Do you plan to carry out activities to gather more and</i>		

<i>detailed information and if yes, what is the objective?</i>		
<i>Will you employ participatory approaches to get that information or will the study be purely quantitative?</i>		
<i>Will you be collecting personal information which can identify a respondent (age, sex, location, etc.) and if so, do you have protocols in place that safeguard the information?</i>		
<i>Have you carried out or do you plan to carry out an in depth study into what works and what does not work in this or similar conservation interventions?</i>		

9. Partnerships

Your project is likely to involve a variety of partnerships including with other NGOs, businesses and Government.

Questions	Answers	Main activity planned and timeline
<i>Do your key Partner organisations have any socio-cultural safeguards or human rights policies?</i>		
<i>Is your Partner aware of and use BirdLife positions and approaches to socio-cultural safeguards and rights and do they have the capacity to implement them?</i>		
<i>If not, are they willing to follow the procedures that you have planned to respect rights and avoid or minimize social risk?</i>		



Summary of actions undertaken or that are planned

Based on your responses to the questions above, complete the table below to provide a list that summarises the actions and approaches you will take to avoid negative social impacts (and enhance positive social benefits) from the conservation initiative. This list can help you in developing your overall work plan with milestones.

Issue	Activity undertaken or planned