



Environmental & Socio-Economic Standards (ESS)

Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V.

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Contact:

programme@welthungerhilfe.de

Binding for:

The Executive Board and all employees of Welthungerhilfe involved in program work (Association and Foundation)

To be agreed with:

- All partner organizations involved in program work
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1. INTRODUCTION TO ESS AT WHH

Our program work puts us in direct contact with people and nature. We recognize that this interaction bears potential environmental and social risks. To better mitigate these risks in the future and avoid any unintended harm to the environment or people, a set of **eight Environmental and Socio-Economic Standards (ESS)** has been defined. These standards serve as guiding principles regarding environmental and social aspects of Welthungerhilfe's (WHH) program work and build the basis for a broader approach towards Environmental and Social Safeguarding. The objectives behind each standard

are described to allow for appropriate consideration in daily operations and in program planning as early as possible.

The standards listed in this document build on WFP's Environmental & Social Standards as part of its Safeguards Framework but include WHH-specific adaptations. Other organizations' Environmental & Social Standards/ Safeguards that are in line with international best practice have also been considered based on their close fit to Welthungerhilfe's activities and principles.

2. APPLICATION OF ESS AT WHH

These standards provide basic guidelines for all program work conducted by Welthungerhilfe and as such are generally applicable. Not every standard is equally applicable to every activity and program in terms of content. People involved in project planning should therefore carefully evaluate which standards are meaningful with regard to the planned activities and then assess those in more detail.

Acknowledging that it is impossible not to leave any environmental or social footprint, implementation of the standards will often require trade-offs in decision-making. Some activities or violations of standards, however, are explicitly prohibited without exception and make any WHH involvement impossible. Such activities

include but are not limited to any form of violation of the Code of Conduct and the rule of (inter-)national laws. The standards serve as a binding basis for our cooperation with partners during the planning and implementation of activities. Therefore, we will ensure that our implementing and cooperation partners are aware of these standards and will strengthen their capacity to apply them. Where partners have their own standards, WHH should assure itself of the consistent application of these throughout the course of the activities. Where legal obligations or donor requirements exist to conduct formal Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIA), the application of Welthungerhilfe's standards does not replace the need for a formal ESIA.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS

The following environmental standards aim to avoid, or when avoidance is not possible, to minimize and/or mitigate any adverse effects project activities might have on the environment. Such effects include unintended

harm to ecosystems and biodiversity, the overuse of natural resources, excess generation of waste and pollution as well as avoidable contribution to climate change or lack of effective countermeasures.

ESS 1 SUSTAINABLE NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Objective: To promote the sustainable use and management of natural resources by not exploiting them beyond their regenerative capacity; to raise awareness for conservation, restoration and rehabilitation efforts and illustrate the (hidden) value of natural resources

Elements to be considered:

- Implement sustainable agricultural practices
- Minimize land-use-change: alteration of land cover of forests, wetlands, farming land, grazing land, or other landscapes of ecological or economic importance
- Respect water rights and ensure that water quality and availability (incl. groundwater, surface water and sea water) are maintained or improved; avoid depletion and pollution
- Avoid degradation and/or contamination of soils, soil erosion, sediment load in surface water flows

(see also ESS 3)

- Ensure sustainable animal husbandry by considering animal welfare and avoiding overstocking
- Natural resources depletion (indirectly)
- Conserve or improve agrobiodiversity
 - Anticipate adverse effects resulting from the interaction between plant genetic resources, the abiotic and biotic environment, and agricultural management practices

Existing WHH standards/assessments to be considered:

- [GRAS - Global Risk Assessment Services](#)
- Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) Commitment 9
- Food Security Standard (FSS) Principle 10 and 11

ESS 2 BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEMS

Objective: To protect and conserve biodiversity incl. agrobiodiversity and ecosystems; to maintain benefits from ecosystems services.

Elements to be considered:

- Ensure that biodiversity is maintained or improved, incl.
- Conserve or increase the diversity of living organisms and prevent negative effects particularly on endangered or protected animals,

insects or plant species and their natural habitats

- Avoid the use of genetically modified organisms (GMO)
- Maintain or improve existing ecosystems
- Respect protected areas (by national/international law or conventions)

Existing WHH standards/assessments to be considered:

- [GRAS - Global Risk Assessment Services](#)

ESS 3 RESOURCE EFFICIENCY AND WASTE AND POLLUTION MANAGEMENT

Objective: To use energy, water, raw materials efficiently; to eliminate or better manage waste, paying special attention to reuse, recycling and recovery; to minimize air, soil or water pollution.

Elements to be considered:

- Minimize consumption of fuel (wood, charcoal, fossil fuel) and water
- Avoid the use of substances or activities that could pollute the air, soil, and water
- Act responsibly regarding the use of agrochemicals
 - Pay attention to good practices regarding storage, handling, use and disposal of chemicals

- Appropriately use inorganic fertilizers
- Use agrochemicals only according to European or national standards (whatever is stricter)¹
- Prioritize human safety
- Avoid pollution from agrochemicals
- Avoid waste materials and reduce and recycle those not avoidable

Existing WHH standards/assessments to be considered:

- CHS Commitment 9

ESS 4 CLIMATE CHANGE

Objective: To ensure that WHH interventions consider climate-related risks; to increase resilience and reduce vulnerability of beneficiaries; to reduce emissions deriving from WHH activities.

Elements to be considered:

- Minimize greenhouse gas emissions from fuel, combustion, changes in land cover, and other sources
- Reduce exposure and vulnerability of people to natural hazards
- Proactively respond to climate change effects

- Consider medium to long-term changes (in climatic, environmental, and agricultural conditions)
- Create capacities, raise awareness

Existing WHH standards/assessments to be considered:

- WHH Climate Proofing Tool
- CHS Commitment 3
- FSS Principle 3

4. SOCIO-ECONOMIC STANDARDS

The following socio-economic standards link back to commitments already made, such as UN Global Compact or Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS) and reference the

related policies. They consider socio-economic aspects such as human rights, gender equity, safety and security, and accountability.

ESS 5 PROTECTION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Objective: To ensure that fundamental human rights are respected, protected, and observed in all WHH activities.

Elements to be considered:

- Respect and protect human rights, with a special regard to the right to food
- Comply with applicable national, regional and local laws and regulations and ratified international treaties
- Endorse all national strategies that ensure food security and respect human rights

- Refuse any form of discrimination of the people involved based on race, color, gender (see ESS 6 for more detail), religion, political opinion, national extraction, social origin, sexual orientation, family responsibilities, marital status, union membership, age or any other condition that could give rise to discrimination
- Ensure socio-economic equalities and inclusion

¹ Food Security Standard 11.2.1: None of the chemicals recorded in the WHO's 1a, 1b and 2 lists, the Rotterdam Convention or in the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants shall be used. Pesticides included in the PAN list of highly hazardous pesticides under the categories H330 (fatal if inhaled) and/or with long term effects according to the EU GHS classification are also prohibited.

- Respect existing land rights and land-use rights, including formal, informal and customary rights, in accordance with the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT)
- Prevent involuntary resettlement (either physical or economic) of people
- Refuse any form of child labor or child exploitation
- Conserve cultural heritage (tangible or intangible)

- Protect indigenous people and their territories

Existing WHH standards/assessments to be considered:

- WHH's Code of Conduct
- WHH's Child Protection Policy
- CHS Commitment 3
- FSS

ESS 6 WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUITY

Objective: To avoid gender-based discrimination and to integrate gender equity and women's empowerment into all Welthungerhilfe activities.

Elements to be considered:

- Prevent gender-based inequity (e.g., due to unequal distribution of work and benefits)
- Refuse gender-related discrimination and exclusion

- Counteract gender-based violence

Existing WHH standards/assessments to be considered:

- WHH PSEA policy
- WHH Gender Mainstreaming and Equality Checklists
- CHS Commitment 3 and 8
- FSS Principle 15

ESS 7 COMMUNITY HEALTH, SAFETY AND SECURITY

Objective: To anticipate and avoid adverse impacts on health and safety of affected populations during all phases of programming.

Elements to be considered:

- Avoid tension or conflicts within and across communities
- Respect labor rights of the people employed by a project or benefiting from "work for ..." activities (incl. their health and safety)
- Ensure that health and safety of people involved are maintained or improved

- Raise awareness regarding food security and nutrition
- Consider impacts on food security in the area of influence of the operation
- Avoid the spread or introduction of diseases

Existing WHH standards/assessments to be considered:

- WHH's Orientation Framework "Do No Harm"
- CHS Commitment 3

ESS 8 ACCOUNTABILITY TO AFFECTED POPULATIONS

Objective: To promote meaningful and effective participation of affected groups and individuals; to ensure that affected individuals have access to effective complaint and feedback mechanisms.

Elements to be considered:

- Pay attention to and involve key stakeholders during the project design, implementation and/or monitoring
- Share information regarding project goals,

activities and risks

- Anticipate the economic impacts of a project
- Implement and maintain complaints and grievances mechanisms

Existing WHH standards/assessments to be considered:

- WHH's Whistleblower System ("Complaints Response Mechanism")
- CHS Commitments 3, 4 and 5

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