

ADB Safeguard Policy Statement and Gender Standards (seed)

Purpose

Safeguard and gender reference for ADB proposal design. Not an official document.

ADB Safeguard Policy Statement (SPS) — overview

ADB's Safeguard Policy Statement (2009) governs environmental and social risk management.

Three safeguard areas:

1. Environment

2. Involuntary resettlement

3. Indigenous peoples

Environmental safeguards

Projects are categorised A, B, C, or FI based on environmental risk:

- Category A: significant adverse environmental impacts; full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) required.
- Category B: limited adverse impacts; initial environmental examination (IEE) required.
- Category C: minimal impacts; no EIA required.
- Category FI: financial intermediaries; risk assessment at portfolio level.

Environmental Management Plans (EMPs) are required for Category A and B projects.

Involuntary resettlement safeguards

ADB requires resettlement plans when projects displace people (physically or economically).

Key principles:

- Avoid involuntary resettlement where feasible.
- Restore livelihoods and living standards to pre-project levels or better.
- Affected persons must be consulted and participate in planning.
- Full replacement cost must be paid before displacement begins.

Resettlement Framework and Resettlement Plans must be ADB-approved before construction.

Indigenous peoples safeguards

Where projects affect indigenous or tribal communities:

- Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) must be obtained for projects with significant impacts.
- Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP) required.
- Cultural heritage must be protected.

Gender standards — EGM requirements

For projects classified as EGM (Effective Gender Mainstreaming):

- At least one gender output is required.
- Gender Action Plan (GAP) must be prepared and costed.
- Sex-disaggregated baselines and targets are mandatory.
- Progress against GAP reviewed in project progress reports and completion reports.

Gender Action Plan (GAP) components

A GAP for ADB projects includes:

- Gender analysis of the sector and project context.
- Gender-specific activities (training, quotas, design features, policy).
- Targets with sex-disaggregated indicators.
- Budget allocation for gender activities.
- Responsibilities (project management unit, executing agency, consultants).
- Monitoring and reporting arrangements.

ADB climate and safeguard nexus

ADB expects climate risk screening as part of project preparation:

- Climate risk and vulnerability assessment (CRVA) for high-risk projects.
- Infrastructure design standards adapted for climate projections.
- Natural hazard risk integrated into environmental assessment.
- Community-based disaster risk reduction as a project component where relevant.

Social development requirements

ADB also expects analysis of:

- Poverty and social analysis (PSA): who benefits, who may be harmed.
- Benefit monitoring and evaluation (BME) for poverty-targeted projects.

- Grievance redress mechanisms accessible to affected communities.
- Labor standards compliance (ILO core conventions).