# SOCIAL and ENVIRONMENTAL SAFEGUARDS

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## Objectives and Legal Framework

The World Bank (WB) has categorized the PRF II as a ‘Category B’ project and out of the ten safeguard policies, four policies are triggered: Environmental Assessment (OP 4.01); Pest Management (OP 4.09); Indigenous Peoples (OP 4.10); and Involuntary Resettlement (OP 4.12). Given the Project’s Community Driven Development (CDD) nature, which is designed and implemented through a participatory planning process and the types of small civil works that will be supported under the project, it is not anticipated that the Project activities will create many major adverse impacts that cannot be managed by communities themselves. However small-scale civil works may require minor land acquisition and/or may create other minor negative impacts on local environment and local people although such impacts would be localized, temporally, and can be mitigated through good planning and construction practices.

In line with the above environmental and social Safeguards policy (OP 4.01, OP 4.09, OP 4.10, and OP 4.12), four safeguard instruments have been prepared as a standalone documents:[[1]](#footnote-1)

* the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), and

the simplified Pest Management Plan (PMP)

* the Compensation and Resettlement Policy Framework (CRPF),
* the Ethnic Group Policy Framework (EGPF)

## Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF)

The Social and Environmental Safeguards Guidelines (ESMF) deal with the guidelines, policies and procedures to be used to avoid or minimize adverse environmental and social impacts of sub-projects and to ensure that they meet with the requirements of the World Bank as described in its safeguards policies. Implementation will be carried out in accordance with Lao PDR’s national policy and legislation as well as with the World Bank Safeguards Policies. The objective of these guidelines is to provide the national, provincial and district government, the PRF team, consultants, village officials, private and public sector agencies with adequate guidance for effectively addressing environmental and social issues in designing and implementing PRF sub-projects by adopting a community-driven approach in developing and implementing sub-projects.

## Environmental Management Framework (EMF)

Environmental Management Framework (EMF) will be implemented as part of the PRF project cycle and the activities will be fully integrated into the sub-project selection, approval, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation process. The EMF is developed based on the implementation experience of the Social and Environmental Safeguard Guidelines (SESG) for the PRF I project and the scope of activities to be carried out under PRF II. The EMF describes a safeguard screening and review process and safeguards actions, including monitoring and supervision, to be carried out and it will be applied to all investments to be financed by the PRF II project.

The screening and review will take place prior to submission of sub-project proposals to the district meeting. It also includes an environmental code of practices (ECOP) for all types of civil works expected to be financed under PRF II. It is also connected to the CRPF, EGPF, and PMP.

This document is considered a living document and could be modified and changed in line with the changing situation or scope of the activities. Close consultation with the World Bank and clearance of the revised EMF will be necessary.

**a) Environmental Management Strategies**

In order to minimize the sub-projects’ negative impact on local environment, the PRF has developed an Environmental Management Framework in compliance with the World Bank’s Environmental Safeguards Policy (OP/BP 4.01) aiming at:

* Screening and assessing the potential impacts of a proposed sub-project before it is approved;
* Mitigating the negative impacts of approved sub-projects during their design, construction and implementation and in the long term.

***1) Sub-project identification phase***

Before the approval of sub-project, several meetings are facilitated by the PRF district staff at village, Kum ban and district level. During these meetings, the PRF staff will inform the communities of the potential environmental risk of the sub-project, raise awareness of communities on how to prevent and minimize the negative environmental impact by the community themselves, and gather information on areas where a sub-project will be implemented; for instance, the current land use in the area, existence of protected area, etc. If the sub-project is found to include in the list of prohibited activities in Section 2, the activity will be screened out or reconsidered to exclude such activities.

***2) Sub-project design phase***

Sub-projects which are submitted by a village and which have been pre-selected during the Kum ban and the district prioritization meetings are then designed by the villagers with the technical support of the PRF teams.

The Sub-project Proposal Form (SPPF) used to document the design includes a quick environmental screening which allows the team to check if there are any specific risks. PRF teams fill in the form based on the villagers’ knowledge, on *in-situ* observations and on prior discussions with district government staff (in order, for example, to cross-check that the sub-project will not be located in a protected area). At this stage, if sub-project activities are specified in Section 1.5.2 of activity prohibited list, such activities will be completely excluded from the sub-project. If sensitive environmental issues do not exist and the scale of the sub-project is less than the threshold, further EA work is not required and the sub-project follows the standard operating procedures in the Engineering and Technical Guidelines while environmental due diligence should be provided, as appropriate.

If a potential environmental risk is identified, a simple EA is conducted by the PRF district team. Typical environmental impacts and mitigation measures by sub-project category are available for a reference to conduct the EA and identify appropriate mitigation measures. A draft EA is disclosed to and consulted with the village members and other stakeholders to seek and incorporate their views into the sub-project design and mitigation measures. Upon the completion of draft EA, the PRF team will send the draft EA to the district government technical staff for review and approval before the sub-project is submitted for approval at district level (district decision meeting).

Note: The quick environmental screening included in the SPPF has been revised during the update of the PRF Manual of Operations at the beginning of 2008. Based on PRF experience, the main environmental risks are not linked to the size of the infrastructure but rather to the location chosen to build it. However, it is necessary to be particularly cautious when the size of one infrastructure is over PRF standards. As a result the size of the infrastructure is still an important criterion triggering (or not) the EA but the thresholds were reviewed as indicated in the excerpt of the updated Infrastructure Sub-project Proposal Form below:

Table 5: Proposal for environment safeguard

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| SCALE | **Type of Activities** | **Screening criteria** |
|  | Rural road, tracks and footpaths (3 – 3.5 m ) |  |
|  | * Rural road upgrading | No need EIA |
|  | * Track improvement | No need EIA |
|  |  |  |
|  | Bridge, ramps and piers |  |
|  | * Bridge structure | ≥ 30 m need EIA |
|  | * Suspended/Suspension bridge | No need EIA |
|  |  |  |
|  | Domestic Drinking water systems |  |
|  | * Dug well | No need EIA |
|  | * Drilled well | No need EIA |
|  | * GFS water | >1000 users, need EIA |
|  | * Community water supply | >1000 users, need EIA |
|  | Irrigation systems |  |
|  | * Weir | >30 m need EIA |
|  | * Irrigation channel | No need EIA |
|  | * Repaired weir | No need EIA |
|  | * Reservoir | >10 ha , need EIA |
|  | Building(community hall, health, school, market) |  |
|  | * School | >1000m2, need EIA |
|  | * Health center | >600 m2, need EIA |
|  | * Community hall | >1000m2, need EIA |
|  | * Market | >400m2, need EIA |
|  | Sanitation facility(latrines) | >200 users, need EIA |
|  | Mini-hydro generators | >10 kw, need EIA |
|  |  |  |

***3) Sub-project implementation phase***

The implementation of impact mitigation measures as well as the monitoring and inspection of environmental consequences is the responsibility of sub-project-implementation parties including the communities. Training and awareness raising activities must be implemented to ensure that communities are aware of sub-projects environmental risks and to ensure them to take actions to avoid and mitigate these risks and to increase their capacity to monitor the contractors and ensure they are respecting their obligations in terms of environmental protection.IEC tools will be developed before the beginning of sub-project and training sessions on environmental protection will be conducted by the PRF community development team at the inception and during the implementation of the sub-projects.

Contract templates for sub-contracted work will also be modified to include specific clauses detailing sub-contractors’ obligations in terms of environmental protection. PRF will also expand the clause detailing communities’ commitments in terms of environment protection in the contract signed between the communities and PRF.

During the implementation phase, regular technical monitoring visits are conducted by the PRF team to monitor environmental impacts and inspect the implementation of mitigation measures. When the work is sub-contracted, a final inspection visit is organized before handing over the infrastructure (see section 5.8. Quality Control sub-project inspection visits). The PRF team uses a specific form to assess the quality of the work during the visits which includes an environmental monitoring and inspection checklist.

***4) Pest Management***

While the project will not support to procure and promote use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers, which are included in the *negative* list, it may be unrealistic to completely prevent all farmers from applying chemical inputs. Specifically, rehabilitation of irrigation, building of small irrigation/agriculture production, and/or control of infestation of diseases may involve the use of pesticides and/or procurement of small amount of pesticides, herbicides, and insecticides. To mitigate this potential impact, a simplified Pest Management Plan (PMP) has been prepared outlining clear regulations and procedures for management of pesticides and/or toxic chemical as well as providing knowledge and training on health impacts and safe use of pesticides and/or, when possible, promotion of non-chemical use alternatives such as organic farming. The PRF team will work closely with agriculture sector to ensure that PMP is applied in the communities benefiting from agriculture and livelihood related activities financed by PRF II.

***5) Management of UXO related risks***

When a sub-project proposal is prepared by communities with support from PRF team, villagers are asked whether there are UXO in the sub-project site or in its vicinity. Their response is documented in the Sub-project Proposal Form (SPPF) and cross-checked with UXO Lao (Lao National Unexploded Ordnances Disposal Program) district team. Additionally, UXO Lao district team participates in the district validation meeting and comment on all sub-projects in relation to UXO risks.

PRF district will submit the list of approved sub-projects list to be implemented during the four cycles to UXO –Lao for booking the site to be surveyed and cleared, in the following year if there is any change on the sites that need clearance, PRF will inform UXO - Lao at district, province and National level.

If there is a potential risk and if the area had not been previously surveyed and / or cleared by UXO Lao, the PRF will send a letter with the list of all the sub-project sites needing to be surveyed or cleared prior to the beginning of the implementation phase to UXO Lao both at district and provincial level so that the sites are included in UXO Lao work plan.

If a potential risk has been identified during the design phase, the PRF will not transfer the first budget Installment to the Kum ban Team unless a clearance or survey certificate from UXO Lao is attached to the request.

1. These safeguards documents have been disclosed (both in English and Lao) at the World Bank InfoShop as well as at PRF offices in Vientiane, provinces, districts, and villages and at the World Bank office in Vientiane. The documents are considered living documents and could be updated in line with the changing situation or scope of the activities. Close consultation with the World Bank and clearance of the revised safeguards documents will be necessary. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)