

Environmental and Social Safeguards System

Version 3
(ESSS 3.1)

United Nations Human Settlements Programme

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1. Abbreviations and Acronyms

AF	Adaptation Fund
CCTA	Cross-cutting Thematic Areas
EHSG	(World Bank Group's) Environment, Health and Safety Guidelines
EMG	UN Environment Management Group
EPRP	Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan
ERMIG	Enterprise Risk Management Implementation Guidelines
ESAP	Environmental and Social Action Plan
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
ESMP	Environmental and Social Management Plan
ESSS	Environmental and Social Safeguard System
E&S	Environmental and Social
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GIIP	Good International Industry Practice
HRBA	Human Right-based Approach
ICP	Informed Consultation and Participation
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NUA	New Urban Agenda
SDG	UN Sustainable Development Goals
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
SII	Social Inclusion Issues
SSR	Safeguard Screening Report
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

2. Foreword

This third version of UN-Habitat's Environmental and Social Safeguards system supports the agency's constant strive to improve on the delivery of our mandate and to achieve our vision of "a better quality of life for all in an urbanizing world". The ESSS 3 does not stop at setting minimum standards for projects and programmes, it aims to directly improve outcomes at project, programme and organizational level by promoting social justice, human rights, gender equality, resilience and safety. We are now fully compliant with the UN-wide Common Approach to Environmental and Social Management, and we meet or exceed the requirements of our donors and partners.

To ensure a successful roll-out, UN-Habitat has established an ESSS lead and set up an Implementation Team. In addition to the templates which form part of this document, a comprehensive training programme for all UN-Habitat personnel supports the socialization of this Safeguards System, also enabling us to cascade the new requirements to our partners. A community of practice and a knowledge management platform provide further support, for example through the collection and dissemination of good practices.

I would like to thank the ARCADIS Shelter Programme for its invaluable support in the development and initial roll-out of this latest version of the Environmental and Social Safeguards System as well as the many colleagues who have volunteered their time to draft and test this document and who will continue to support the roll-out.



Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif

United Nations Under-Secretary-General
and Executive Director

3. Introduction to ESSS Version 3.0

Nairobi, September 2021

The UN-Habitat Environmental and Social Safeguards System (ESSS) is reviewed regularly to accommodate any change in business processes, lessons learnt and emerging risks. The new Version also responds to recommendations made by an external reviewer in the second half of 2019, who reviewed the current system as part of a Green Climate Fund accreditation process.

This ESSS Version 3.0, replaces the ESSS version 2.0 (18 June 2018). It has been updated to:

- Include a stronger focus on the organizational management of Environmental and Social (E&S) risks of projects and programmes - including agency-wide monitoring and reporting. It also takes a more comprehensive project and programme lifecycle management approach. Thus, with this version of the ESSS we aim to identify, analyse, avoid, minimize, and mitigate any potential adverse environmental and social impacts of project and programme activities, or, where a complete mitigation is not possible, to compensate for or offset such impacts to maximize environmental and social benefits, and to improve the environmental and social performance of UN-Habitat and its activities consistently over time (“Do No Harm”, and “Do Good”);
- Include a comprehensive set of tools for its implementation, including procedures, templates and checklists for projects and programmes;
- Incorporate UN-Habitat’s Social Inclusion Issues (SII) and Cross-Cutting Thematic Areas (CCTA) into UN-Habitat’s Environmental and Social (E&S) management, to foster project and programmes benefits (“Do Even Better”); and
- Be fully aligned and tailored to UN-Habitat’s mandate, organizational model and internal processes, and at the same time be aligned with the requirements for E&S Management of the United Nations (UN Common Approach) and partners (donors and financial institutions).
- Support UN-Habitat personnel as well as interested and affected parties in the implementation of the ESSS through a training programme, an ESSS Lead and an ESSS Implementation Team, with associated resources.

All staff and personnel please note the changes to UN-Habitat’s Environmental and Social

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