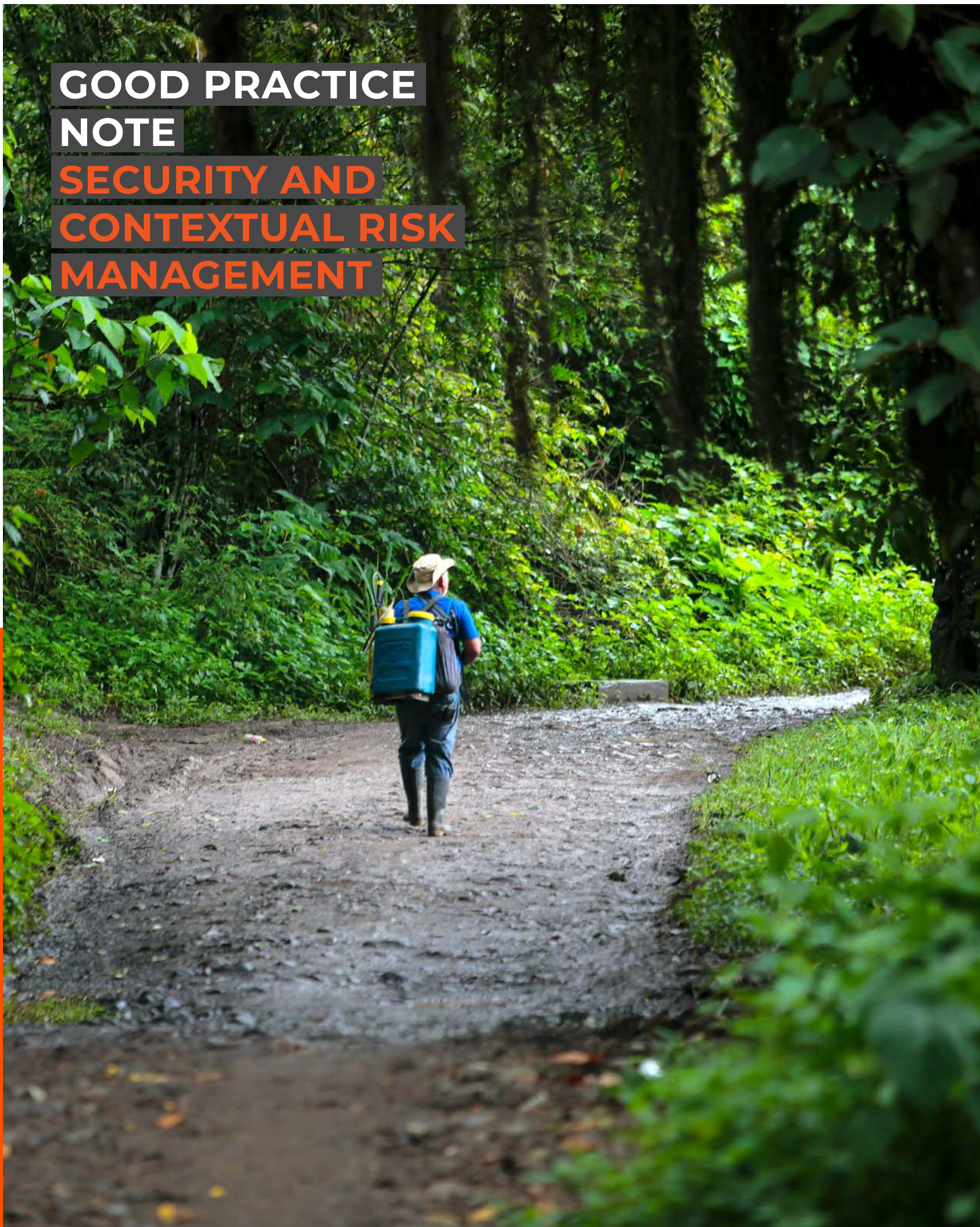


GOOD PRACTICE NOTE

SECURITY AND CONTEXTUAL RISK MANAGEMENT



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7 *Introduction and Overview*



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This note provides practical guidance for IDB invest clients on how to identify and manage contextual risks in areas of heightened conflict, violence, and insecurity. Contextual risks are defined as risks in the external environment (at a country, sector, or subnational level) that are pre-existing risk factors not caused by the project. Examples of such contextual and structural risks are land disputes, tensions and conflicts among groups, high levels of gender inequality and violence, and governance failures.

The client generally has limited or no direct control over contextual risks. However, these risk factors can negatively impact a project's or private sector client's ability to meet IDB Invest's environmental and social requirements. Such risks may exacerbate risks and adverse environmental and social impacts project activities may cause or contribute to. Disadvantaged and vulnerable populations such as women, children, ethnic minority groups, and others may be at higher risk in projects operating in settings of conflict, violence, and insecurity, and poor subsistence farmers are at higher risk of becoming destitute in cases of land acquisition and loss of livelihoods caused by the project. The project itself may also contribute to a worsened situation in the operating environment, for example:

- Economic growth may worsen conflicts over land
- Project activities may be perceived as a threat to local power holders
- The project may put strains on local resources and service
- Poor justice systems may lead to vigilante justice

Early identification and integration of these risks into project design are essential to avoid further destabilizing local communities. Projects must therefore assess how their activities could amplify existing conflicts, weaken governance structures, or disproportionately impact vulnerable groups, ensuring risk management is built into the foundation of the project. IFC Performance Standard 1 (PS1) highlights the importance of identifying risks and impacts resulting from a third party's actions.¹

“Contextual risks are external risks originating from the broader socio-political, economic, and environmental context in which a project operates, which the project itself does not create but can exacerbate.”²

This note discusses and provides practical guidance on how to effectively manage contextual risks in conflict-affected and high-risk regions. It begins by identifying specific risks related to the project's interaction with pre-existing conflicts, followed by outlining comprehensive risk management measures that include security arrangements and human rights considerations. The note emphasizes the importance of inclusive stakeholder engagement, with a focus on fostering community participation and maintaining active grievance mechanisms. Additionally, it highlights the need for continuous monitoring and reporting to ensure timely adjustments to risk management strategies. Finally, it covers the establishment of transparent grievance systems to safeguard vulnerable groups and promote non-retaliation principles.

¹ Performance Standard 1, para 9. | ² IFC Contextual Risk Framework Good Practice Note, p. 10.

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2 Contextual Screening and Risk Identification



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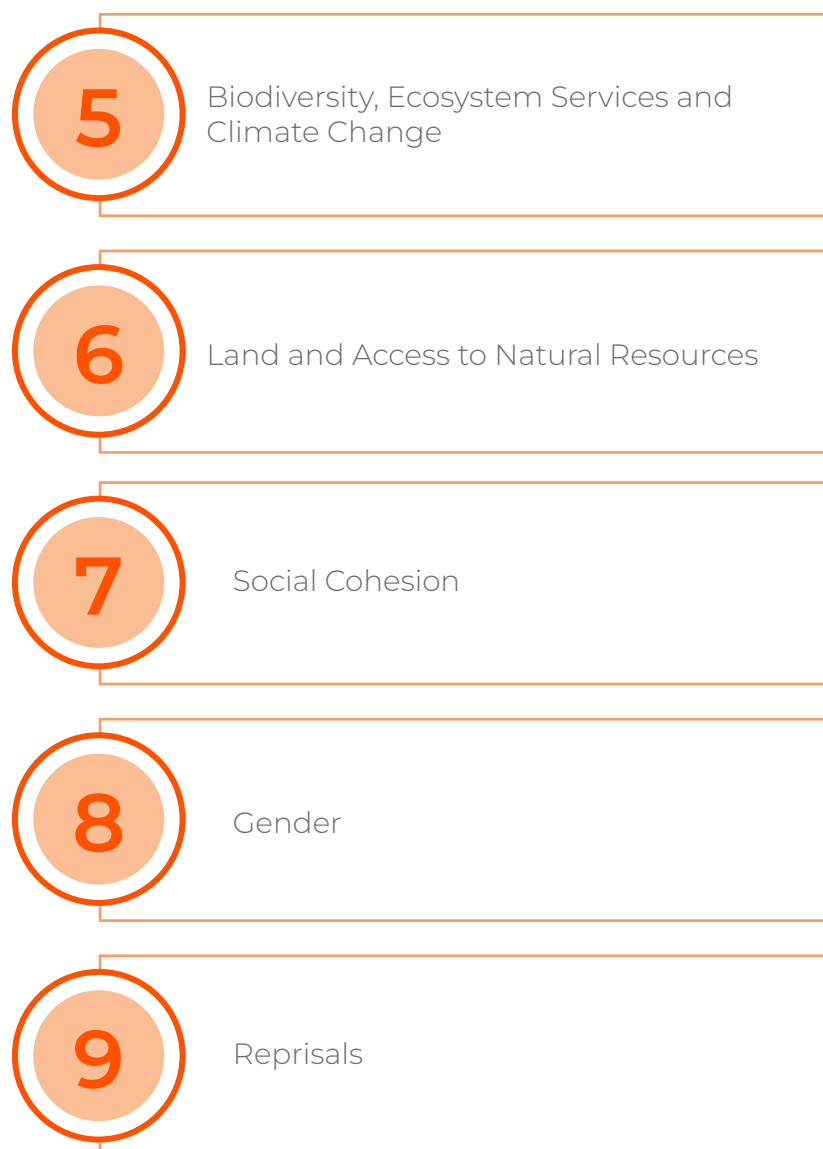
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In high-risk circumstances, businesses face the challenge of operating in environments where the rule of law may be weak, governance structures fragile, and risks of violence and human rights abuses elevated.³ The presence of armed conflict or organized violence introduces additional complications. Contextual risk screening is therefore essential for projects operating in areas affected by conflict, violence, and insecurity. These environments present unique challenges due to pre-existing tensions, governance failures, and security threats. Proper screening helps identify risks like violence, land disputes, or weak governance early, allowing project teams to implement tailored mitigation strategies to minimize potential harm.

IDB Invest and IFC have both developed structured approaches to evaluating these types of risks in the operating environment. IFC's Contextual Risk Framework (CRF) supports a systematic assessment of nine thematic dimensions:



This data-driven approach enables teams to apply a conflict- and violence and security-sensitivity lens to projects.⁴ This helps recognize and address complex, context-specific risks early in the project cycle, with the aim of fostering more resilient and socially responsible project implementation.⁵ IDB Invest's contextual risk template, with its emphasis on conflict-sensitive indicators, complements the CRF by helping teams align with regional and local risk parameters specific to Latin America.

These screening tools are helpful in showing how issues such as political instability and institutional corruption can heighten security risks, particularly in areas prone to violence or weak governance. For example, unresolved land competition between Indigenous communities and development projects

³ Shift Project. Human Rights Due Diligence in High-Risk Circumstances. New York. (2015) | ⁴ For an international good practice approach, see the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights. These principles have been developed jointly by businesses, governments, and civil society organizations. | ⁵ The IFC Contextual Risk Framework Good Practice Note also includes a site visit interview guide and a rapid desktop questionnaire for subnational application, to help practitioners gather information and assess contextual risks

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can lead to local unrest and delays. The lack of a clear framework for Indigenous land rights recognition, combined with limited institutional capacity to mediate disputes, exacerbates these tensions and may lead to setbacks and the project's social license to operate.⁶

Comprehensive contextual risk screening, incorporating indicators like governance capacity and land-related conflicts, is important in order to anticipate such challenges, and to avoid or minimize adverse impacts.

Contextual Risk Factors in the Environmental and Social Assessment

To identify and address risks in the operating environment, projects should integrate contextual risk analysis into the Environmental and Social Assessment (ESA) process. Conflict-sensitive indicators—such as those assessing resource competition, governance strength, and social inclusion—help assess potential project interactions with local dynamics. A proactive inclusion of contextual risk assessment enables project teams to identify such risks early, and try to reduce risks to the project as well as risks that the project may exacerbate existing tensions and conflicts.

Strategies for Identifying High-Risk Circumstances

In operational settings with complex supply chains or where interactions with local communities may pose risks, businesses can adopt structured approaches to highlight high-risk circumstances. Three approaches to identifying such high-risk circumstances are recommended:

1

Evaluate the Significance of Risk Factors: Assess the impact of specific risk factors in the operational context.

- **Single Factor Intensity:** For example, high levels of forced labor in a particular supply chain, despite laws prohibiting it, may signal significant risk.
- **Accumulated Risk within a Category:** A supplier with a history of human rights violations, weak oversight, and limited stakeholder engagement can indicate compounded risk.
- **Cross-Category Risks:** For instance, land acquisition initiated by a government with a record of human rights abuses, in an environment with systemic corruption and vulnerable groups, underscores compounded risk across multiple dimensions.

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2

Identify Meta Indicators of High-Risk Contexts: Recognize factors that could point to heightened risks.

- **Conflict Settings:** Active or recent conflicts may reveal weak governance, resource competition, and heightened vulnerability of local populations.
- **Corruption:** Widespread corruption undermines legal protections and raises concerns about business partners’ commitments to human rights.
- **Vulnerable Groups:** Indicators of weak protection for marginalized groups can signal increased exposure to human rights impacts.
- **Repression:** The suppression of freedom of expression or organization suggests specific risks to the affected groups’ ability to voice and defend their rights.

3

Assess Internal Business Management Capacity: Consider whether the company’s own systems are equipped to mitigate or eliminate these risks.

- Reflect on prior experience in similar regions, past performance in managing comparable risks, current policies and practices, and the resources available for risk management.

Identifying Security Risks

A thorough assessment of security risks is foundational in determining suitable security measures. The depth of assessment should align with the project’s threat environment, from basic screenings to comprehensive Security Risk Assessments that consider political, socioeconomic, and military contexts. Companies should evaluate likely threats requiring security intervention and consider the potential impact on local communities. This assessment also includes understanding how the company’s presence may influence the overall security of the local population.

- ☐ Consider contextual risk screening as a precursor to project-level risk assessments
- ☐ Conduct a comprehensive contextual risk screening early in the project cycle, that go beyond the project level to include the surrounding areas and socio-political dynamics utilizing the IFC CRF and IDB Invest’s contextual risk analysis tool.
- ☐ Integrate conflict-sensitive indicators in the ESA, focusing on risks related to governance, land, and security.
- ☐ Regularly update the risk screening throughout the project lifecycle as conditions on the ground evolve.
- ☐ Use available practical tools such as a the CRF site visit interview guide and a rapid desktop questionnaire to help practitioners gather information and assess contextual risks

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3 *Designing Risk Management Measures*



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Effective risk management in areas affected by conflict, violence, and insecurity requires an integrated approach that aligns security considerations with human rights standards and community protection. Security forces—whether public or private—are often needed to protect project assets. However, poorly managed security arrangements can exacerbate local tensions, lead to human rights abuses, and even intensify existing conflicts. For these reasons, security protocols should be regularly reassessed and adapted to meet evolving risks in conflict zones. Scenario-based planning and flexibility are key, allowing security measures to scale up or down as local conditions shift, ensuring both personnel and community safety without unnecessarily increasing tensions.

Incorporating Security Arrangements into Broader Risk Management

To effectively integrate security measures into project risk management, companies should ensure that security contracts incorporate clear clauses on human rights compliance, proportionality in the use of force, and community engagement. According to IFC Performance Standard 4 (PS4), these arrangements should respect the rights of workers and community members, aligning security measures with international good practices and local regulations.⁷ Including specific contractual clauses helps prevent abuse and supports a responsible security framework that mitigates risks for both the project and the surrounding communities.⁸

Emergency Protocols

Crisis management protocols, including emergency contacts, evacuation plans, and coordination with local authorities, should be established early and revisited regularly. Regular staff training on emergency procedures can ensure preparedness and safeguard both project teams and community members.

Managing Private Security

CORE STANDARDS AND OVERSIGHT

When employing private security—whether through direct hires or third-party providers—companies must maintain responsibility for meeting specific security standards. Core oversight areas include:⁹

- **Equipping:** Security personnel should have essential equipment like uniforms, identification, and communication devices. In higher-risk situations, non-lethal deterrents such as pepper spray might be suitable. Decisions regarding arming personnel should follow a thorough security risk assessment and training, per PS4's guidance on the proportional use of force.
- **Monitoring:** Companies should conduct regular performance reviews to ensure that security personnel follow all relevant policies and procedures. This includes contracted security providers. Companies retain oversight responsibilities to ensure compliance in vetting, training, and conduct.
- **Vetting:** Companies must conduct background checks to prevent the hiring of individuals with a history of abuse or misconduct. PS4 emphasizes the need for careful screening to ensure that security personnel are suitable for operations, especially in high-risk areas. Background vetting can involve consulting prior employers and relevant authorities.
- **Use of Force:** Security personnel must apply force appropriately and proportionally in all situations, with guidance detailed in contracts and reinforced through training. Clear protocols ensure that personnel are prepared to respond adequately to various security scenarios.
- **Training:** Training on human rights, community relations, and conflict de-escalation is essential for security personnel. In some contexts, this may involve brief reviews of policies; in higher-risk areas, comprehensive scenario-based training is recommended to meet PS4 standards on the responsible use of security forces.

⁷ IFC Performance Standard 4, paras 12-14. ⁸ For detailed guidance on use of security forces, see IFC Handbook on Security Forces: International Finance Corporation. Use of Security Forces: Assessing and Managing Risks and Impacts. Good Practice Handbook. (2017) ⁹ IFC Handbook on Security Forces, pages 49-54.

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INVOLVING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Security arrangements should prioritize the protection of local communities, not solely the security of project assets. It is therefore recommended that projects engage with community representatives to co-design risk management strategies, to account for local dynamics in security measures. Industry experience in sectors such as mining shows that co-developing security strategies with community members can be effective in preventing conflicts related to land use, resource allocation, and property rights.¹⁰

By involving local communities in security planning, projects can develop customized approaches that address specific community concerns. For example, engaging local leaders in security discussions allows for the development of community-specific safety protocols that foster trust and minimize the likelihood of conflict.

Women and girls are frequently disproportionately impacted by violence and insecurity. In conflict zones, gender-specific risks are often exacerbated, with security forces potentially contributing to issues such as sexual violence. Therefore, it is essential to incorporate gender assessments into risk analyses. Projects should implement tailored security measures to protect women and ensure that gender-differentiated risks are effectively addressed in their risk management plans. To avoid complicity in human rights violations, it is recommended to continuously assess and address these risks, ensuring accountability throughout the project cycle.

MONITORING SECURITY FORCES

Regular monitoring of security personnel is a critical component of risk management in conflict-prone areas. Comprehensive monitoring systems track security personnel's conduct, ensuring alignment with PS4's emphasis on human rights compliance and local regulations. These systems should include transparent mechanisms for reporting incidents, as well as periodic third-party audits to ensure accountability. Community

feedback and participatory monitoring can serve as additional layers of oversight to address potential issues early and foster a culture of accountability.¹¹

COORDINATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Coordination among security forces, project teams, and local stakeholders is essential in conflict-affected areas. PS4 supports establishing clear communication channels with security providers, local authorities, and community representatives. Regular briefings and joint assessments help align security measures with local expectations and improve transparency. Coordination mechanisms, such as community advisory boards or scheduled meetings with local officials, help prevent misunderstandings and build mutual trust.¹²

¹⁰ See for example ICMM Human Rights Due Diligence Guidance (2023) | ¹¹ Shift Project. Human Rights Due Diligence in High-Risk Circumstances. New York: Shift (2015), p. 49. | ¹² IFC Handbook on Security Forces: International Finance Corporation. Use of Security Forces: Assessing and Managing Risks and Impacts. Good Practice Handbook. (2017), p. 47.

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<div><input type="checkbox"/></div> <div>Conduct Gender Assessments: Integrate gender assessments into risk analyses to identify specific vulnerabilities faced by women and girls.</div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div> <div>Conduct Training: Provide regular training on the principles of proportionality, focusing on de-escalation techniques, human rights, and community relations for security personnel.</div>
<div><input type="checkbox"/></div> <div>Continuous Risk Assessment: Regularly assess and address risks related to gender-based violence and insecurity throughout the project cycle.</div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div> <div>Engage Local Communities: Involve local communities in the co-development of security measures that address their specific concerns.</div>
<div><input type="checkbox"/></div> <div><div>Develop Security Arrangements:</div><div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Integrate security arrangements into overall risk management, ensuring alignment with PS4 and local legal standards.• Implement tailored security measures specifically designed to protect women and address gender-differentiated risks.• Consider hiring female security staff where appropriate to meet the unique security needs of women.</div></div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div> <div>Implement Monitoring Systems: Develop systems to oversee the conduct of security forces, including reporting mechanisms for accountability.</div>
<div><input type="checkbox"/></div> <div><div>Establish Communication Protocols:</div><div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set up clear communication protocols with public security and, where possible, create Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) detailing expected conduct and responsibilities.• Establish formal coordination structures among project teams, security forces, and local stakeholders.• Include Human Rights Provisions: Incorporate human rights and proportional use-of-force clauses in contracts with security providers.</div></div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div> <div>Conduct Third-Party Audits: Facilitate third-party audits or community-based monitoring to ensure transparency and accountability in security operations.</div>
	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div> <div>Ensure Accountability: Establish mechanisms to prevent complicity in human rights violations by security forces or project personnel.</div>

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4 Stakeholder Participation and Community Engagement



In high-risk contexts, conducting in-person consultations and maintaining consistent oversight can be particularly challenging due to security concerns and restricted access. Therefore, adaptable engagement strategies are essential, such as leveraging remote communication methods or partnering with trusted local intermediaries.

In high-conflict areas, the risk of retaliation against stakeholders who voice concerns or oppose projects is a significant challenge. This can manifest as threats, intimidation, or violence, affecting both internal personnel and external community members, including activists and representatives from civil society organizations. Reprisals can severely disrupt project operations, undermine community trust, and threaten the overall social license to operate.¹³

To mitigate these risks, companies are encouraged to adopt comprehensive stakeholder engagement strategies that incorporate clear grievance mechanisms. These mechanisms should ensure that stakeholders can express their concerns without fear of retribution. Effective measures include conducting thorough risk assessments during the planning stages, fostering a culture of open communication, and establishing protective protocols for stakeholders, especially vulnerable groups. The goal is to create an environment where dialogue is encouraged and reprisals are less likely, thereby enhancing safety and project sustainability.

Inclusive participation, particularly for marginalized groups, ensures that community voices are integrated into project decisions. By fostering transparency and building trust, projects are better positioned to mitigate risks and achieve lasting, positive outcomes.

Engagement as a Risk Mitigation Strategy

Meaningful engagement with stakeholders reduces the risk of exacerbating social tensions. According to IFC's Contextual Risk Framework, identifying and involving key

¹³ For guidance on addressing risks of retaliation and violence against project stakeholders, see IFC and IDB Invest: Good Practice Note for the Private Sector: Addressing the Risks of Retaliation Against Project Stakeholders (2021).

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stakeholders early in the project lifecycle—especially those vulnerable to displacement or social disruption—can help prevent potential conflicts from escalating.¹⁴

Building Trust Through Ongoing Dialogue

Establishing trust with communities requires a commitment to ongoing, transparent communication. By facilitating a two-way dialogue, projects can address community concerns early, preventing misunderstandings that might lead to conflict. Regular consultations, both formal and informal, create opportunities for communities to express concerns, receive project updates, and provide constructive feedback. Good practice suggests that consistent community dialogue, tailored to local contexts, builds trust and facilitates smoother project operations.¹⁵

Ensuring Inclusive Participation

Inclusive engagement requires identifying and addressing the needs of marginalized groups. Stakeholder mapping, conducted at the start of the project, is instrumental in recognizing groups that may face barriers to participation, including indigenous peoples, women, and LGBTQ+ communities.¹⁶ This process ensures that these groups' specific concerns are integrated into the project, creating a sense of community ownership. Industry good practices in the extractive sector underscore the importance of gender-responsive approaches to engagement, such as separate consultation forums for women and support for culturally sensitive methods.

Culturally Sensitive and Gender-Responsive Processes

Engagement in culturally sensitive ways demonstrates respect for local customs and helps mitigate conflicts. Utilizing local languages, working with community leaders, and respecting traditional governance structures are best practices that increase inclusivity and transparency. Similarly, gender-responsive processes, such as holding separate meetings for women or providing childcare during

consultations, allow greater participation from those who might otherwise be excluded, creating a balanced approach that accounts for all community members' needs.

Given the dynamic risks in conflict zones, flexible engagement strategies are essential. To respond effectively to evolving community needs while maintaining safety and continuity, project teams may consider alternative approaches such as remote or digital consultations, intermediaries familiar with and trusted by local communities, and flexible scheduling to adapt to changing circumstances and maintain open communication.

Establishing formal, transparent communication channels with local communities and authorities is essential to prevent misunderstandings. Regular briefings or community bulletins can provide updates on project activities, security measures, and any changes to risk management strategies, reinforcing community trust and reducing the risk of conflict due to misinformation.

☐ Adopt comprehensive stakeholder engagement strategies that incorporate clear grievance mechanisms to mitigate the risk of retaliation against project opponents.

☐ Conduct regular consultations to maintain ongoing dialogue and build trust with affected communities.

☐ Use stakeholder mapping to identify marginalized groups early in the project cycle.

☐ Provide stakeholders with project information in accessible formats, including local languages.

☐ Implement culturally sensitive and gender-responsive consultation processes, adapted to the community's social and cultural context.

¹⁴ IFC Contextual Risk Framework: International Finance Corporation. IFC Contextual Risk Framework: General Purpose Note (2022) p. 29. ¹⁵ IFC Contextual Risk Framework: International Finance Corporation. IFC Contextual Risk Framework: General Purpose Note (2022) p. 59. ¹⁶ IFC Contextual Risk Framework: International Finance Corporation. IFC Contextual Risk Framework: General Purpose Note (2022), p. 25.

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Grievance Mechanisms

In high-conflict areas, the risk of retaliation against land and environmental defenders poses a significant threat to their safety and well-being. For instance, individuals who resist land exploitation may face violence, intimidation, and even murder.¹⁷ Grievance mechanisms are essential tools in areas affected by conflict, violence, and insecurity, providing a formal channel for communities to express concerns, report incidents, and seek redress. By establishing transparent processes, grievance mechanisms help prevent minor issues from escalating into larger conflicts, building trust between project teams and local communities. An effective grievance mechanism and ongoing reporting to affected communities are requirements of the IFC Performance Standards.¹⁸

In many conflict-affected regions, local partners may lack the capacity for sustained engagement or understanding of grievance protocols. Integrating capacity-building efforts—covering human rights standards, incident reporting, and monitoring techniques—can empower local stakeholders and enhance project oversight, ensuring more effective collaboration.

Simplifying the Grievance Process for Accessibility

Simplified grievance mechanisms are especially critical in high-risk settings to facilitate easy reporting, particularly for security incidents. This approach ensures that the reporting process is straightforward and user-friendly, encouraging community members to raise concerns without fear or confusion. Effective grievance mechanisms are clearly communicated and accessible, and their steps are easy to navigate for all users, even those with limited literacy or digital access.

Ensuring Accessibility for Marginalized Groups

A robust grievance mechanism must be accessible to all community members, particularly marginalized and

¹⁷ Global Witness. Missing Voices: The Violent Erasure of Land and Environmental Defenders. (September 2024). ISBN 978-1-911606-75-8. ¹⁸ See in particular Performance Standard 1, para 25.

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vulnerable groups such as women, indigenous peoples, and LGBTQ+ individuals. Projects should provide multiple, culturally appropriate avenues for submitting grievances—such as in-person submissions, anonymous options, and digital channels where appropriate. Additionally, information about the grievance mechanism should be communicated in local languages and through trusted community channels, ensuring that cultural and linguistic barriers do not prevent marginalized groups from using it.

Confidentiality and Non-Retaliation

In high-risk areas, community members may be reluctant to report issues due to fear of retaliation. Therefore, the grievance mechanism must include strong confidentiality measures and a non-retaliation policy, allowing individuals to submit grievances securely and anonymously if needed. For example, implementing secure, anonymous reporting channels and engaging respected community intermediaries to collect grievances, will help reassure community members that their identities will be protected and that they will not face repercussions for voicing concerns. Confidentiality is particularly important in cases of gender-based violence.¹⁹

Timelines and Follow-Up

Timely response to grievances is critical for maintaining the effectiveness of the grievance mechanism. Clear timelines should be set for acknowledging, investigating, and resolving complaints, and these timelines should be communicated to the complainant. Each grievance should be documented, its progress tracked, and outcomes communicated back to the complainant to demonstrate a commitment to transparency and accountability.

Documentation and Classification

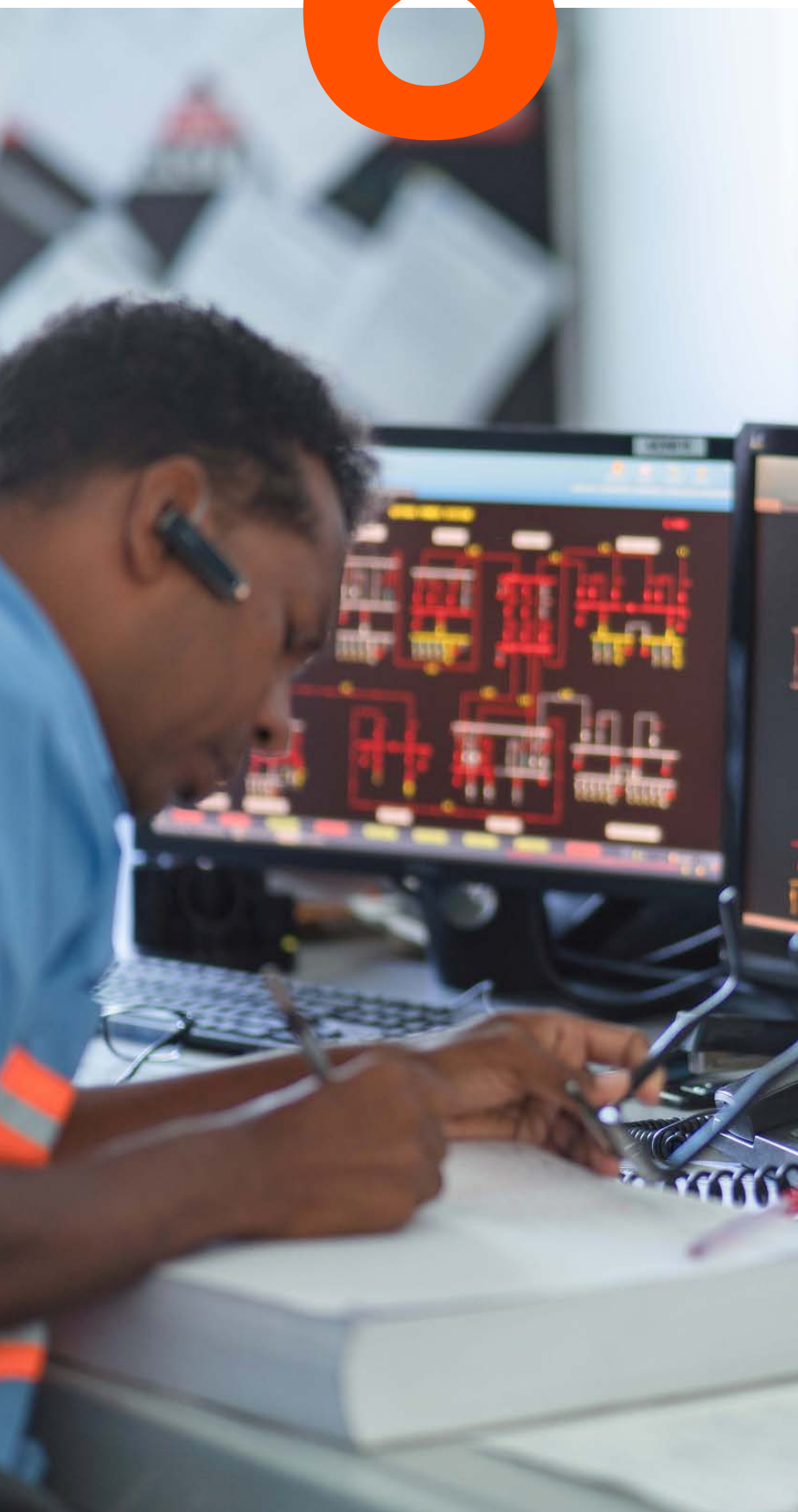
Grievance mechanisms should also include a process for systematically documenting and classifying complaints. Categorizing grievances based on type—such as security incidents, environmental concerns, or land disputes—allows project teams to identify recurring issues and implement targeted responses. This data-driven approach not only helps address systemic problems but also enables project teams to adjust their risk management strategies to prevent similar grievances from arising in the future.

- ☐ **Simplified Access:** Streamline the grievance process to facilitate straightforward and accessible reporting, especially for security incidents.
- ☐ **Accessibility:** Make the mechanism accessible to all, including marginalized groups, by providing culturally appropriate communication channels in local languages.
- ☐ **Confidentiality and Non-Retaliation:** Ensure confidentiality and a strong non-retaliation policy, protecting complainants from backlash and fostering a safe environment for reporting.
- ☐ **Timelines and Follow-Up:** Set clear response timelines and follow-up procedures to maintain transparency and accountability.
- ☐ **Documentation and Classification:** Keep thorough records of grievances by category to address systemic issues and inform project adjustments.

¹⁹ See for example IFC (2021), *How to Support your Company to Develop a Community-Based Grievance Mechanism for Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*

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6 Monitoring and Reporting



Effective monitoring and reporting processes are fundamental in high-risk or conflict-affected environments where conditions on the ground can shift rapidly. These processes allow project teams to track critical factors such as security arrangements, human rights practices, and community interactions in real-time, supporting flexible and adaptive responses to emerging risks. In these contexts, maintaining structured and ongoing oversight is essential, ensuring practices align with international standards and that the project remains responsive to any local dynamics that may arise.

Continuous oversight allows for proactive management of security arrangements, enabling project teams to confirm that actions taken by security personnel, including any use of force, remain proportional, justified, and sensitive to local populations' rights and dignity. Regular monitoring also reinforces accountability to the community, ensuring that project activities respect the project's objectives while upholding local and international standards for human rights.

In high-risk settings, transparency and trust are crucial for sustaining positive community relationships, which can be achieved through independent third-party audits and participatory monitoring. Independent audits provide objective evaluations of the project's performance in high-risk areas, including adherence to security protocols, human rights standards, and compliance with local laws. By adding this layer of external review, projects enhance their accountability framework, verifying that risk management practices align with commitments to transparency and ethical standards.

Participatory monitoring further strengthens community relations by including affected communities in overseeing project activities. This approach empowers local voices, making them active participants rather than passive recipients of information. By involving community members in the monitoring process, projects foster a sense of ownership and mutual responsibility, which is especially important in areas where trust between the project team and the community may be fragile. Participatory monitoring offers local communities a structured platform to share their concerns and contribute insights, mitigating potential tensions by demonstrating the project's responsiveness and accountability.

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☐ A proactive monitoring checklist is integral to tracking the project's progress in managing security, human rights, and community relations. Below are key elements:

☐ Establish a Monitoring System: Implement a comprehensive system to track security incidents, human rights violations, and community interactions. This system should support real-time data access, enabling rapid response and informed decision-making when issues arise. Clear indicators should be defined to assess the system's effectiveness, allowing the team to adapt measures as necessary.

☐ Use Independent Third-Party Audits: Third-party audits bring objectivity to the monitoring process, especially valuable in high-risk areas. These audits provide an external perspective on the project's compliance with human rights standards, security protocols, and community engagement practices, building trust among stakeholders and demonstrating the project's commitment to transparency. Regular, independent reviews verify that security measures align with ethical standards and community expectations.

☐ Engage Communities in Participatory Monitoring: In high-risk or sensitive environments, engaging community members directly in monitoring can bridge potential gaps in trust and understanding. Participatory monitoring invites affected communities to take an active role in the oversight of risk management activities, allowing them to express concerns and influence project decisions. This inclusive approach to monitoring helps build mutual trust and fosters a sense of shared ownership, making it less likely that minor grievances will escalate.

☐ Regularly Share Monitoring Reports: Transparent reporting is essential for maintaining trust with stakeholders, especially affected communities. Monitoring reports should be shared routinely with these groups, detailing security incidents, community grievances, and the project's responses to evolving risks. Regular reporting demonstrates the project's commitment to accountability, reinforcing a transparent relationship with stakeholders and reassuring communities that their concerns are taken seriously.

☐ Incorporate Community Feedback into the Adaptive Management Cycle: An adaptive management approach incorporates ongoing feedback from local stakeholders, allowing the project team to adjust strategies as risks and dynamics change. Community feedback serves as a critical input for improving monitoring effectiveness, identifying potential issues early, and refining risk management strategies. This approach demonstrates that the project values community insights, promoting a responsive, evolving process that meets both project and community needs.

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Ongoing Community and Stakeholder Engagement

In high-conflict and high-risk settings, regular, transparent engagement with stakeholders—particularly affected communities—strengthens the monitoring process and provides critical insights for adaptive project management. By actively engaging stakeholders in the oversight process, project teams can manage and mitigate risks associated with security, human rights, and social dynamics more effectively. Reporting to stakeholders, along with incorporating their feedback, provides a formal channel for communities to express concerns and hold the project accountable, reinforcing the project's credibility and responsiveness.

Transparent engagement practices demonstrate that the project values its relationship with affected communities. This is especially important in high-risk areas where communities may be sensitive to external activities, especially those involving security forces or significant environmental or social impacts. Transparency, through shared reporting and inclusive monitoring, helps prevent misunderstandings and conflicts, fostering a collaborative environment that reduces tensions and builds community trust.

Integrated Monitoring for Responsive Project Management

An integrated monitoring approach—one that combines structured oversight, participatory engagement, and third-party audits—equips projects in high-risk areas with a proactive, responsive framework for managing risks. This comprehensive process, grounded in inclusivity and transparency, allows project teams to remain flexible and adaptive, responding to shifting conditions with informed, community-sensitive measures.

Ultimately, by establishing a robust monitoring system, engaging in participatory monitoring, conducting regular third-party audits, and transparently sharing findings with stakeholders, projects can enhance their risk management practices. An integrated monitoring strategy not only supports compliance with environmental and social standards but also strengthens relationships with affected communities, demonstrating a commitment to ethical practices and sustainable outcomes.

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