A Community Guide to the International Finance Corporation’s Performance Standard 7 on Indigenous Peoples (PS7)
This guide tells you what to do if a company is planning to develop projects on or near your customary lands, using a loan from the International Finance Corporation (IFC) – the private sector part of the World Bank Group.

You can find out if the company is seeking a loan from the IFC by asking the company directly, or by asking other indigenous peoples or organisations that support indigenous and local communities about what they know about the project.

If a company wants a loan from the IFC for a project in your area, it must follow the IFC’s social and environmental rules, which are called its ‘Performance Standards’. There are 8 IFC Performance Standards in total. The company must also obey national laws and regulations.

The IFC must also follow certain rules which are laid down in the IFC Policy on Environmental and Social Sustainability, IFC Information Disclosure Policy and the IFC’s Environmental and Social Review Procedures (ESRP).

The rules say that the IFC will not fund projects that harm the lives or customary lands and ‘resources’ (lands, plants, animals and water) of indigenous peoples if the affected indigenous communities do not support and agree to the project.

This guide explains how IFC borrower companies must try to prevent, or at least reduce, any harm that the project might cause to indigenous peoples.

The guide also explains your people’s rights to be consulted fairly and honestly about IFC funded projects, to receive information about projects, to participate in them, and to refuse the project if your community chooses to do so. The guide suggests how to tell the company and the IFC about your people’s needs and concerns, and how to object to a proposed project.

As well as following the suggestions in this guide, you may be able to use your national courts or other administrative appeal processes to stop or alter the project if you consider it violates laws or regulations in your country. To find out your options it is a good idea to consult a local lawyer or legal advisor.

Dealing with ‘Equator Bank’ projects

This guide may also help you and your communities discuss projects funded by private banks that have signed the ‘Equator Principles’ http://www.equator-principles.com/principles.shtml. The Equator Principles are a set of non-binding voluntary principles that are mostly based on the IFC’s rules, and which some private banks have agreed to obey when they fund projects. The banks that have signed up to the Equator Principles say they will comply with PS7 and other IFC Performance Standards.
1 THE START OF A PROJECT - PLANNING

Before a company asks for IFC funding, it must first carry out a social and environmental assessment of the project’s risks – the possibility that the project could harm the environment and communities that are on or near the project site or its ‘associated facilities’ (see Boxes 4 and 10). If the company or the IFC find out that indigenous peoples might be affected, then the IFC must apply its rules for projects affecting indigenous peoples which are set out in Performance Standard 7 (PS7).

If the company is planning a project on or near the customary lands of indigenous peoples, then it must involve those affected communities in identifying potential risks and impacts (see Box 4).

When deciding whether to fund a project the IFC must look at every part of that project and its associated facilities that might affect indigenous peoples or their traditional lands, including the sections of the project that are funded by other agencies or banks. During the planning stage the IFC decides whether the project will be ‘category’ A, B, C or FI.

Category A means that the project could have serious negative impacts.
Category B means that the project could have bad, but limited, impacts.
Category C means that the project has very few or no environmental or social impacts.
Category FI means that it is a project being funded through another organization – a ‘financial intermediary’ (see Box 10).

All the protections of the Performance Standards apply to all projects. But if a project is Category C it means the IFC has decided that it will do very little or no harm and does not expect that the standards will be triggered.

So, it is VERY important to challenge a category if you think it is wrong. Find out the category given to the project that you are worried about as soon as possible and tell the IFC if you think the category is wrong.

2 YOUR RIGHTS TO PARTICIPATION

The company borrowing money from the IFC must send ‘consultants’ to discuss with your people at each stage of the project, from design and planning through to carrying out the project (‘implementation’) and monitoring of the project. The consultants find out your community’s opinions on the project – what you think it should do, whether you support the project and whether you agree or not to project activities that may affect your customary lands or affect your lives and livelihoods (ways of making a living) (see Box 4). You may be visited several times by consultants, company staff or IFC staff during the project.

If the project goes ahead and it could harm (even in a limited way) your community or your customary lands and resources, the company must regularly talk to your community about its proposals. It must discuss with you what the project will do, what the good and bad outcomes might be and ask how you feel about the project.

If the project is on your customary lands (not only affecting them from nearby lands) or if it will use your traditional knowledge in any way, the company must enter into ‘good faith negotiation’ with your community representatives and leaders to see if you accept the project (see Boxes 5 and 7).

Where a project might have harmful impacts on you (even minor ones), every consultation must be free, prior and informed.

‘Free’ means your community gives its opinions willingly and is not persuaded, tricked or forced to say or agree to certain things.

‘Prior’ means the company tells you in advance when it will consult with you, and carries out the consultation before decisions are made, not afterwards.

‘Informed’ means the company tells the whole truth about the project, including the good things and the bad things that may happen and all the different alternative activities that can be done to achieve the project objectives and avoid or reduce harm. The company must give you information in the right languages and in a way that your communities can understand.

The company must carry out the consultations honestly and sincerely, in ‘good faith’, and in a way that respects your culture and your community’s governing institutions, including your traditional ways of making community decisions.

Free, prior and informed consultation means more than just giving you information and listening to you. It means that your people are actively involved in making decisions about the project. This is called ‘informed participation’. For the IFC to agree to fund a project that may adversely affect indigenous peoples, free, prior and informed consultation must result in ‘broad community support’ – this means that the major sections of your communities support the project (see Box 3).

The IFC advises companies that it is good practice to share draft documents with affected communities. So at each stage of the project you should ask the company to give you copies of the documents.
The IFC’s rules

3 BROAD COMMUNITY SUPPORT

‘Broad community support’ is a term that the IFC uses to decide whether or not to fund a project that may harm indigenous peoples, their land and territories or livelihoods. Broad community support means that most people in the main community groups want the project, including traditional leaders, women’s groups and other sections of the community traditionally involved in decision making. The IFC must decide for itself whether a community supports the project or not, it can not just rely on what the company says.

You should tell the IFC and the company what ‘broad community support’ means in your community, and which community institutions must be consulted to find out if the community wants the project. To make sure the IFC knows what your community thinks about the project, you should give your views in writing to the IFC as well as to the company and its consultants.

4 SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT - SEA

The borrower company must carry out a detailed Social and Environmental Assessment (SEA) to identify indigenous communities who may be affected by the project and to collect information about its possible impacts – both good and bad – on them. If the planning stage shows that the project might harm you or your traditional lands, the company must bring in people from outside the IFC who know about the project area. These ‘external experts’ must carry out the SEA with the active participation of your communities. This stage is important because what your community says during the SEA may have a better chance of influencing the project than if you give comments and objections later on.

The SEA consultants must work with your communities and organizations and give you the chance to give your opinions and suggestions about the project. The SEA must look at how bad impacts can be avoided or reduced. It must find out how the land directly used by the project will be affected – this may include your community lands or areas next to your lands. The SEA must also find out how the project will affect indigenous peoples and the environment in the ‘project area of influence’ and the impacts of ‘associated facilities’ connected to the project (see Box 10 for explanations of these terms).

Your lands include all ‘customary lands under use’, meaning all areas traditionally occupied and used by your communities and your ancestors, including occasional and seasonal use for livelihood, ceremonial and spiritual purposes or for other cultural activities. This includes lands that may not be legally recognised by the government (that is, the community may not have recognised, official title to the lands).

The SEA must include a study of the customary land and resource tenure system (how you own, manage and use your lands and resources according to your custom) of your communities within the project area of influence if

- the project may affect your traditional or ‘customary lands under use’ or traditional knowledge, or
- the project might involve land that is taken from you or intends to resettle your community, or
- your livelihoods and economic well-being will be threatened in some way.

The findings of the SEA affect what rules the IFC and the borrower company must follow in the assessment process, in project appraisal (Box 8) and project implementation (Box 9). It is therefore very important that you give the consultants information so that their report makes the right decisions about how the project will affect your communities, both directly and indirectly. To make sure your concerns have been included, ask the consultants to give you a copy of the draft SEA.
The IFC’s rules

5 GOOD FAITH NEGOTIATION
PS7 has some important additional protections for your customary lands, your livelihoods and your traditional knowledge. If a proposed IFC project
- is on your customary lands and may have harmful effects (even limited ones), or
- might harm your livelihoods and economic well being, or
- means you have to move or change where you live, or
- uses your traditional knowledge commercially (uses it for the company’s profit)
then PS7 states that the company cannot carry out the project unless your communities have given their agreement through a process of mutual dialogue which the IFC calls ‘good faith negotiation’.

‘Good faith negotiation’ means the company must talk with you in a way that you fully agree from the start of discussions. The company must show you and your leaders that it will respond to anything you ask quickly, regularly, and in a language your people understand. It must give you all the information you need to make an informed decision. It must discuss with you the most serious concerns you have with the project, and be willing to change its plans to avoid problems for your communities – even stop certain project activities. It must give you and your leaders enough time to discuss things according to your own ways of deciding things.

If there is no ‘successful outcome’ to the negotiation, or if your communities choose to reject negotiations, then the IFC cannot continue with the project. A successful outcome means that your communities have negotiated with the company and agree to the project continuing with any conditions you may have placed on it.

You should always ask for, and be given, the record of any negotiation that takes place between your people and the company doing the project.

6 INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DEVELOPMENT PLAN (IPDP) or COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN (CDP)
The company must write an Action Plan to show the IFC how it will obey all the rules to prevent or minimise harmful impacts on indigenous peoples and provide benefits to them, and how it will obey any other rules under the full set of Performance Standards that might apply to the project.

If your community or lands might be harmed by the project, then the company’s Action Plan should include an ‘Indigenous Peoples’ Development Plan’ (IPDP). The company may write a ‘Community Development Plan’ (CDP) instead if indigenous peoples are only a small part of the population in the project area.

The company must create the IPDP together with your community and its representative organisations, making sure that men and women both have an opportunity to be heard, that your traditional leaders, councils or elders are involved, and that you have enough time to make your decisions and give your views. The Plan must also include a ‘grievance mechanism’ – ways for your community to complain directly to the company if anything goes wrong during the project. The company must tell you how to use this system.

The Plan must include the various actions that you have agreed to, to make the project better for your people. This includes the actions needed to prevent or minimise damage from the project, and to make sure that you get benefits from the project. The Plan must be written in your own language or a language you can understand. It must include a timetable for the company to fulfil all of the promises and agreements that have been made with your community.

Remember to ask for a copy of the draft Plan. If you do not accept the Plan you should inform the company and the IFC in writing. 

So, that’s what’s in the Indigenous Peoples Development Plan. Do you agree with it?

We need time to discuss with our elders before we can decide whether or not we accept the Plan.
8 APPRAISING AND APPROVING THE PROJECT

At this stage, the company must give your community a copy of the final Action Plan and the Indigenous Peoples Development Plan. It must also give you a copy of the Environmental and Social Review Summary (ESRS – see Box 10). It must give you these documents in a language and a form that you can understand. The company and the IFC will also give these documents to the public, together with the Summary of Proposed Investment (SPI – a project overview document – see Box 10).

The company must also provide your community with final copies of the social or environmental assessments, which may include studies of your customary land use.

The final version of all these documents must be given to you

- at least 60 days before the IFC approves the project in the case of projects with likely serious problems (category A),
- at least 30 days before IFC approval in the case of projects with some problems (category B).

Unfortunately, this gives you very little time to respond, so try to obtain copies of these documents in advance so that your community has enough time to study them.

The IFC ‘appraises’ (reviews) all the information about the project, including the results of its consultations with your communities, when making its decision about whether to fund. In projects that may do harm to your communities, the IFC must be sure that you give your ‘broad community support’ – that you agree – to the proposed investment.

If the project may harm your customary lands, the IFC must find out if there has been a process of ‘good faith negotiation’ and whether, as a result of that negotiation, an agreement exists between your communities and the company (see Box 5).

Contact the IFC office and ask when they will visit your community to see whether you support the project. Arrange to meet them to discuss the project. If the IFC office does not respond, complain to the Compliance Advisor Ombudsman (CAO).

9 DOING THE PROJECT

The company must give your community the final project documents in a language and form that respects your culture, and at a place that you can get to easily. The company must set up the project’s complaints system. It must monitor how the project is carried out and involve your community in that monitoring, using free, prior and informed consultation.

The IFC must make sure that the company is carrying out the project according to the legal agreement of the loan, and according to the agreements in the Action Plan. The Action Plan may include an Indigenous Peoples Development Plan (see Box 6), which is a special separate plan for your communities. If there is any change to this Plan during the life of the project then the company must talk to you about these changes, and you need to agree to them before they become officially part of the Action Plan.
10 UNDERSTANDING THE IFC’S LANGUAGE

The IFC Performance Standards use particular words to explain what its rules mean (‘definitions’).

- **Associated facilities**: structures which the project depends on, but does not fund e.g. in a petroleum processing plant funded by the IFC, the gas pipelines and the gas drill are ‘associated facilities’ because they are needed to bring the gas to the processing plant.

- **Broad community support** - Box 3

- **Customary lands under use** - Box 4

- **Environmental and Social Review Document (ESRD)**: a set of documents that is updated from time to time covering the project through its lifetime from planning up to when the project is closed. The ESRD gives information on the IFC’s social and environmental rules and the tracking of the project activities and performance. This is not public but it may be worth asking the IFC for a copy.

- **Environmental and Social Review Procedures (ESRP)**: a rule book for IFC staff on how to apply the performance standards and other relevant policies.

- **Environmental and Social Review Summary (ESRS)**: the document through which IFC publicly explains how a project was reviewed and the reasons for IFC’s decision to invest. It explains the project’s classification (see Box 1) and describes the main social and environmental risks and impacts of the project, and the key measures to avoid or reduce those risks and impacts. It says what the project must do to meet the Performance Standards – these activities will be included in the company’s Action Plan. The ESRS is a public document that the company must give you in a language and form that you understand. You can also obtain it from.

- **Exclusion List**: a list of activities for which the IFC will never provide investment funding, loans or financial services, e.g. IFC will not fund equipment for logging primary moist tropical forest areas.

- **Financial Intermediary**: an organization or company through which the IFC invests money in projects. The FI arranges its own projects, loans and finances, and the IFC does not know all the investments that the FI will make with the funds that IFC provides. When an FI is involved, the process for implementing the performance standards is different, but the principles are the same.

- **Financing Agreement**: the legal agreement between IFC and the borrowing company which defines the terms of the financing, including the activities in the Action Plan. This may include equity agreements, which means the IFC agrees to become a part-owner of a company or project to provide money. Sometimes this agreement is secret, but not always. You can ask for a copy of this agreement from the company.

- **Free, prior and informed consultation** - Box 2

- **Good faith negotiation** - Box 5

- **Indigenous Peoples Development Plan (IPDP)** - Box 6

- **Informed participation** - Box 2

- **Project Appraisal** - Box 8

- **Project area of influence**: the main site of the project plus any areas affected by related construction or developments. It also covers ‘associated facilities’ (see above). It includes areas that may be affected over a long period of time by changes brought about by the project.

- **Project Data Sheet (PDS)**: a document prepared by the IFC project team. It describes the project, the potential investment and key policy issues, reviews IFC’s role in the project and the impact of the project, and outlines issues and policy concerns (including project classification). The PDS is continually updated during project appraisal and is a key decision document for the Investment Review Meeting, which is when the IFC decides whether or not to continue with the project and invest money. This is not public but it may be worth asking the IFC for a copy.

- **Social and Environmental Assessment (SEA)**: a study done by the company or its consultants to find out all the possible ways that a project may affect your communities, lands, resources and way of life within the ‘project area of influence’ (see above). The SEA must be given to you by the company at the same time as the ESRS (see above). If you do not receive it, contact the IFC.

- **Summary of Proposed Investment (SPI)**: a public document that must be released before the executive directors of the IFC meet to decide whether they will fund a project – 30 days before for Category B projects and 60 days before category A projects. The document gives an overview of the project, including the loan amount, the project category, name of the company, location, development impact, and references to any environmental and social review (if done). The SPI must also include contact details for people responsible for the project (in the company and in the IFC) and where to get locally available information about the project. This is a public document that the company must give you in a language and form that you understand.
COMMUNITY ACTION

A
GETTING INFORMATION ABOUT A PROJECT

Ask other indigenous peoples, your NGO partners and international support NGOs for information about the project and advice on how to deal with it.

Get as much information about the project as you can from the IFC representative for your country or region or from the IFC headquarters in the USA.

Ask the IFC in writing or through the IFC web site for copies of any information publicly available about the project, as well as the Project Data Sheet and the preliminary environment and social assessment (see Box 4). These documents give the aims of the project, its timetable, the name of the company and sometimes the name of the IFC person responsible for the project. You should request the name of a person in the IFC who will be responsible for giving you information; this may be the project manager or a communications officer.

The IFC says that it will normally release any document requested. Reasons not to release documents are few e.g. if they reveal private company information, or affect security.

Ask the company for information about the project and the name of the person responsible for the project. Try to contact this person as early as possible to tell them how you expect to be involved.

Do these documents correctly recognize the existence of your people, all your communities and their lands and natural resources that could be affected by the project?

Have your views and concerns been properly recorded?

Start discussing the project with community members.

If you don’t get enough information from the IFC or company, send a written complaint to the Environmental and Social Development Department in the IFC headquarters.

B
CONSULTATIONS WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

Did the company tell your community about the consultation in good time, and make arrangements for you to participate?

Were your traditional leaders, elders, women and other important community groups included?

Did you get enough information, in your language or a language you can understand, so that you could understand the project?

Were you told about the bad things as well as good things that could happen in the project?

Were you told about all of the different options for carrying out the project activities?

Did the consultation respect your indigenous culture, institutions, and traditional ways of making decisions?

Did the consultation find out the whole community’s opinion, not just the views of some individuals?

Did the community members talk about what is most important to them and their worries about the project, and did the consultation record these things?

Were your concerns and questions properly answered? Are you happy with the information you received?

Does your community think that company consulted with you honestly and sincerely and in the manner in which you agreed with the company in the beginning?

Did the consultation allow your communities, its leaders and organisations that speak for your people, to make decisions about the project and change how the project will be planned and carried out?

If you think you were not consulted properly according to Box 2, or that your right to informed participation or prior Good Faith Negotiation (Box 5) was not respected, write to the IFC office in your country or region and send a copy of the letter to the IFC’s Environmental and Social Development Department. Keep copies of these letters.

REMEMBER!
Don’t rely on verbal agreements with the consultants. Always write down what the consultants told you and what your community said. If you can’t write, ask someone to help you. Keep copies of every letter you send to the company or IFC in case you have to prove this later.

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PARTICIPATING IN THE SOCIAL ASSESSMENT

Mobilise your community to discuss the project. Educate them about the IFC rules that apply.

- Is the company following the rules of the Performance Standards?

Discuss how the project could affect your customary rights (including your people’s laws and traditions) to your lands and resources, your livelihoods and your spiritual practices.

If your communities want to participate in the social and environmental assessment, make sure the company and its consultants involve you fully and record your concerns about impacts and risks. Remember: this is your right under IFC rules and the company cannot refuse you. If the company has hired an outside expert to study your customary land use and you agree with this, find out how she or he will actively involve you and your communities in this important study.

If you think the project could damage your community, lands or resources, tell the consultants carrying out the Social Assessment and land use studies how and why the project might be harmful for your people. Write down what you told the consultants and send it to the IFC office in your country or region  with a copy to the IFC headquarters in the USA. Keep copies of what you write.

DECIDING ABOUT THE PROJECT

If your community decides that it does not want the project, tell the consultants and send a written copy of your statement to the IFC representative in your country or region. If possible, get an outside person or organisation that you trust to witness your decision. Keep a copy of your declaration of opposition to the project.

If the project is located on your customary lands under use and may harm you, the IFC will not fund the project if it receives clear proof that your community objects.

If you object, the company may offer to negotiate with your communities. If you do not reject the offer and you decide to enter into discussions, do not start any negotiations until you have first agreed with the company on the rules for the talks and the way in which your communities will decide on any final agreement. This right is guaranteed by Performance Standard 7.

If your community thinks the project might be a good thing, ask the consultants to tell you what they will write in their report, including any agreements they have made with you about what the project will do. Tell them whether you approve or disagree with what they have written and ask them to change any sections you are not happy with.

If you are still worried about some parts of the project, tell the consultants how the project must change before you can give your support or before you can agree to it. Write these concerns down and keep a copy. Be confident and explain clearly to the consultants that your community has its own way of making decisions that the company and the IFC must respect.

If your community might accept the project, tell the consultants that you will confirm your support only after you have seen all the final project documents and draft agreements and you have checked that the company has, in writing, agreed to fully respect your rights and interests and will protect your community and provide it with project benefits.

Do not sign any document supporting the project until you have studied and understood the final project documents and any draft agreements between the company and your communities. You can ask the company to see these documents now as the company must give them to you anyway later on at the Appraisal stage. They cannot refuse you if the project affects you directly (see Box 2).
COMMUNITY ACTION

E COMMUNITY INPUT TO THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES’ DEVELOPMENT PLAN or COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Find out from the IFC staff, company, consultants or your NGO partners when the company will consult with you about the Action Plan, whether this will include an Indigenous Peoples Development Plan, and how the company will arrange for your informed participation (see Box 2) in preparing and carrying out the Plan.

If your community agrees to the project, decide what you want the project to do for your people, both to avoid harm and to provide benefits. If possible, work out how much money it will cost to carry out these activities so you can check later whether the company has given enough money for the activities in the IPDP.

- Did the company use the right procedures (Box 2) for consulting with your community about the Indigenous Peoples’ Development Plan or Community Development Plan?
- Will your community be involved in planning and carrying out the Plan?

Ask the consultants to tell you what they will write in the Indigenous Peoples Development Plan (or Community Development Plan) and the Action Plan. Are you satisfied that the Plans deal properly with the things that are most important for your community? If not, you should tell the company and the IFC in writing and consider withdrawing your support or prior agreement.

So that’s what I have written in the IPDP. The project will train your women’s group in health care and provide bicycles so you can take your products to market.

F PROTECTION FROM FORCED DISPLACEMENT

- Did the company use the right procedures in Box 2 for free, prior and informed consultations, Box 5 for good faith negotiation and Box 7 on protection from forced relocation?
- Did the consultants record any objections from your community to relocation or changing the way you use your lands and resources?
- If you do not agree to the relocation it can not happen. If the company is planning to relocate you and you have not agreed, you must let the company, the IFC and your own government know that you do not agree. Do this in writing and keep copies of your letters.
- If your community will probably agree to relocate or change its use of land and resources, make sure the consultant has properly recorded your demands for alternatives or compensation for loss of lands, resources, livelihoods and spiritual practices.

Remember that the company, under an IFC project, cannot force you to move off your lands or change your use of your customary resources. You must consent to these moves and changes.
ABC of what you can do

IFC PROJECT APPRAISAL (REVIEW) & APPROVAL

Before the project is approved by the IFC’s Board of Directors in the USA, write to the IFC to find out if and when the IFC’s appraisal team will visit your country. Ask the team to meet with the leaders and groups that speak for your community. Try to have your own observers at the meeting as witnesses to the discussions.

- Have you received project documents in the right languages and in a form you can understand?

Make sure you ask for copies of all the social and environmental assessments done in relation to the project. There may be more than one, and the IFC should give you all of them.

Make sure you get a copy of the updated Environmental and Social Review Summary and the Summary of Proposed Investment.

- Does the Summary of Proposed Investment state that you have given your broad community support to the project?
- Does it state if there has been good faith negotiation (if the project is within your customary lands)?
- Do you agree with the IFC record of what happened?
- Does the Social and Environmental Assessment report properly describe your people and your circumstances?
- Does it state how your community thinks the project will affect you?
- If the project is on your land or affects your land, does the assessment include accurate information about your customary laws and tenure regimes?

If you do not agree with what the documents say, speak to the IFC appraisal team and write to the IFC. Keep a copy of what you said. If you are not satisfied with the IFC’s reply, write again stating your objections so that your letter can be presented to the IFC’s Board before the project is approved. Send a copy of the letter to the member on the Board of Directors responsible for your region.

If you do not get a positive response, write another letter to the IFC, this time copying that letter to international organizations and forums, such as the Secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples of the United Nations, the Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (if you live in north, central or south America) and the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights if you live in Africa. The international support agencies listed on page 13 can provide these addresses.

If you still have objections to the project, ask to meet your country’s representative on the IFC’s Board of Directors before the Board meets to approve the IFC loan.

DOING THE PROJECT AND MONITORING ITS IMPACTS

- Did your community receive the project documents in the right way (in the right language, with enough time to review before deciding, in a format understandable to your community)?
- Is your community fully involved in the project through free, prior and informed consultation?
- Do you get regular information on how the project is doing, how the budget is being spent, and the Action Plans that were agreed with you?
- Is the company respecting its agreements with you in good faith?
- Do you understand the project’s complaints system? Is it easy for you to use and do they respond quickly?

Ask for copies of the project’s monitoring reports, and make sure they record any problems you have raised.

If there are still problems with the project or the company is not respecting the rules and agreements in the project documents, use the project’s grievance mechanism to register your concerns and write to the IFC in your country or region as well. You can also ask for help from your National Human Rights Commission, public defence organisations, and national and international NGOs.

You may also wish to make a formal complaint to the IFC Compliance Advisor Ombudsman (CAO). This is a separate IFC group that can assess complaints about the IFC, and mediate between your community and the company to try to find solutions. However, the CAO will not make any judgement about whether the company or the IFC has done something wrong.
1 CONTACTING IFC IN YOUR COUNTRY OR REGION

Some countries have an IFC representative in the capital city, usually attached to the World Bank office. Other countries are served by a regional office. To find out your regional or country representatives, search on the websites:
http://www.ifc.org/ifcext/about.nsf/Content/Regions
http://www.ifc.org/contacts

Here you can find the contact details for the people in the IFC responsible for investments in your region or country, and information about some of the IFC investments in that region or country.

2 CONTACTING IFC HEADQUARTERS

If you want information about projects in your country, you will usually be more successful if you contact your country representative. But you can also write or email direct to the IFC headquarters, to their Environmental and Social Development Department.

email: CorporateCitizenship@ifc.org

International Finance Corporation
Environment and Social Development Department
Social Responsibility Program
Attn: Houria Sammari
2121 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
MSN F3K-300
Washington, DC 20433, USA

3 CONTACTING IFC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Directors are listed at

Select your country from the drop down list, then click on ‘About the office’ for contact details.

4 ABOUT IFC PROJECTS

For information about proposed or existing IFC projects, search the IFC information disclosure web pages at:
http://www.ifc.org/disclosure or http://www.ifc.org/projects

Type in key words or use the menus to locate the project and the documents that you want. If you don't find the information you need, you can fill in a request form at http://www.ifc.org/ifcext/corresmanage.nsf/frmInformationRequest?OpenForm

5 ABOUT IFC RULES

To get copies of the 11 documents which together make up the social and environmental rules that the IFC and companies must follow, visit the following web sites or write to the IFC.

1. Policy on Environmental and Social Sustainability:
http://www.ifc.org/ifcext/enviro.nsf/Content/SustainabilityPolicy

2. Disclosure Policy:
http://www.ifc.org/ifcext/enviro.nsf/Content/Disclosure

3. Environmental and Social Review Procedure:
http://www.ifc.org/ifcext/enviro.nsf/Content/ESRP

4. 8 Performance Standards & associated Guidance Notes:
Performance Standards: http://www.ifc.org/ifcext/enviro.nsf/Content/PerformanceStandards
Guidance Notes: http://www.ifc.org/ifcext/enviro.nsf/Content/GuidanceNotes

• Performance Standard and Guidance Note 1: Social and Environmental Assessment and Management System
• Performance Standard and Guidance Note 2: Labour and Working Conditions
• Performance Standard and Guidance Note 3: Pollution Prevention and Abatement
• Performance Standard and Guidance Note 4: Community Health, Safety and Security
• Performance Standard and Guidance Note 5: Land Acquisition and Involuntary Resettlement
• Performance Standard and Guidance Note 6: Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Natural Resource Management
• Performance Standard and Guidance Note 7: Indigenous Peoples
• Performance Standard and Guidance Note 8: Cultural Heritage

5. In addition to these 11 documents, the IFC continually updates and releases environmental, health and safety guidelines which can be found at http://www.ifc.org/ifcext/enviro.nsf/Content/EnvironmentalGuidelines

6 MAKING A COMPLAINT

If you are not happy with an IFC project that affects your communities, you may file a complaint with the IFC’s Compliance Advisor Ombudsman (CAO). The CAO will review your complaint and may travel to your area to investigate and meet with you to discuss your concerns. This complaint can be made at any time before a project is approved or after it has already started.

Compliance Advisor Ombudsman (CAO)
International Finance Corporation
2121 Pennsylvania Av., NW
Washington, DC 20433 USA
Tel: 1 202 458 1973
Fax: 1 202 522 7400
e-mail: cao-compliance@ifc.org
http://www.cao-ombudsman.org
The Forest Peoples Programme (FPP) is an NGO that supports the rights of indigenous peoples to self-determination and to challenge top-down and destructive projects of international agencies like the World Bank. FPP can give advice on the Bank’s rules and the options open to you for responding to World Bank projects, including legal options.

Web site: [http://www.forestpeoples.org](http://www.forestpeoples.org)
Forest Peoples Programme
1c Fosseway Business Centre
Stratford Road,
Moreton-in-Marsh, GLOS. GL56 9NQ, UK
Tel: +44 1608 652893
Fax: +44 1608 652878
Email: info@forestpeoples.org

The Bank Information Center (BIC) is an NGO that works with civil society in developing countries to influence the World Bank and other international financial institutions to promote social and economic justice and ecological sustainability. BIC's website has a lot of information about World Bank projects that are planned or being carried out around the world.

Web site: [http://www.bicusa.org](http://www.bicusa.org)
Bank Information Center
1100 H Street, NW, Suite 650
Washington, D.C. 20005, USA
Tel: +1 202 737 7752
Fax: +1 202 737 1155
Email: info@bicusa.org

The International Accountability Project (IAP) is an international NGO that gives advice to indigenous and local communities about how to make complaints about international financial institutions and aid agencies, including the IFC.

Web site: [http://www.accountabilityproject.org](http://www.accountabilityproject.org)
International Accountability Project
657 Mission Street, Suite 500
San Francisco, CA 94105, USA
Tel: +1 510 759 4440

In many countries there are non-governmental organisations (NGOs) already working on issues to do with World Bank Group projects or who may have had difficulties with a World Bank or IFC project in the past. It is a good idea to contact NGOs with World Bank experience in your country for advice and help about IFC projects.