

# Supporting Learning Center (LC) Activities to Strengthen Environmental & Social Framework (ESF) Capacity in Bangladesh

## BACKGROUND:

The World Bank, in its steadfast commitment to sustainable development, has formulated the Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) — a strategic amalgamation of policies and Environmental and Social Standards (ESSs). These standards serve as the bedrock for projects seeking to alleviate extreme poverty and engender shared prosperity through Investment Project Financing (IPF). Commencing on October 1, 2018, the ESF Framework delineates a comprehensive sustainability blueprint for managing Environmental and Social (ES) risks associated with World Bank interventions.

In the process of operationalizing the ESF in Bangladesh, discernible challenges have surfaced, chiefly revolving around significant capacity constraints within Implementing Agencies (IAs). These entities find themselves grappling with the intricate web of ES issues mandated by diverse ESSs. Notable impediments include a shortage of seasoned personnel and consultants, incongruities between ESF stipulations and local statutory frameworks, a dearth of structured ES mechanisms at the borrower level, a scarcity of training service providers, and the absence of robust Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) protocols for ES performance.

Responding proactively to these challenges, the World Bank has initiated the ESF Capacity Development initiative. This initiative aims to forge collaborative partnerships with esteemed institutions or organizations to fortify ongoing capacity-building endeavors, specifically targeted at augmenting Borrower's ES performance. To this end, the World

Bank has committed resources in fiscal year (FY) 22 and FY23 to establish a Learning Center (LC). This collaborative venture is poised to address identified gaps comprehensively, encompassing the development of curricula, course materials, the execution of training programs, the cultivation of networks, the facilitation of collaboration and partnerships, and the implementation of promotional activities.

Within the ambit of FY22, a 14-week long (equivalent to a graduate-level) draft course curricula has been meticulously developed, aligning with the ESF and international best practices. Subsequently, in the preceding year, the LC initiated its operational phase, rendering essential services. As part of a pilot program in FY23, a three-month-long course was effectively delivered. Based on lessons learned and feedback from FY23, a second term was offered. The last two years marked a significant milestone toward achieving sustained capacity enhancement in navigating the complexities of the ESF. A total of 80 professionals were awarded certificates of completion through awarding ceremonies. Now, the course is scheduled to be conducted in FY25 as well, continuing its mission to enhance capacity and provide participants with the knowledge and skills required to effectively navigate the complexities of the ESF while upholding international best practices.

The trajectory forward entails continued investment in knowledge dissemination and skill development, fostering collaborative efforts to fortify the capacity of key stakeholders in Bangladesh. This concerted endeavor contributes substantially to the overarching mission of sustainable development, aligning with

the World Bank's strategic vision and commitment to global prosperity.

## COURSE OBJECTIVE:

The objective of this collaboration is to promote and strengthen technical and institutional capacity of relevant IAs/Clients of the Government and the consultants on ES issues covering ESF, related ES policies of the Government, and development partners at the project's implementation level for sustainable development in Bangladesh and Bhutan. The specific objectives are as follows:

- Develop a comprehensive understanding of the Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) and its role in project risk management.
- Develop expertise in preparing key ESF documents, including ESMF, LMP, and SEP.
- Strengthen skills in assessing, managing, and mitigating environmental and social risks through practical exercises.

## LEARNING OUTCOME:

- Understand the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) and the Bank's regulatory framework for assessing and managing ES risks and impacts in development projects.
- Understand the Bank's ESF and its 10 standards.
- Understand the different tools and measures of Environmental and Social Assessment

processes to be implemented in the current or future Bank's projects.

- Systematically develop writing skills for an ESIA report by integrating relevant case studies for each Environmental and Social Standard, providing context, compliance measures, and lessons learned.

### COURSE OUTLINES:

- An overview of the Bank's Environmental and Social Framework (ESF)
- Introduction to 10 ESSs in the World Bank ESF
  - Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts (ESS1)
  - Labour and Working Conditions (ESS2)
  - Resource efficiency and pollution prevention and management (ESS3)
  - Community health and safety (ESS4)
  - Land acquisition, restrictions on land use and involuntary Resettlement (ESS5)
  - Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources (ESS6)
  - Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities (ESS7)
  - Cultural Heritage (ESS8)
  - Financial Intermediaries (ESS9)

- Stakeholder consultation and information disclosure (ESS10)
- Special Classes on:
  - (i) Gender and Gender Based Violence (GBV)
  - (ii) Environmental Regulations related to Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA)
- ESSs applications and implications in development projects
- Field Visit
- Group Presentation on the ESMF

### WHEN:

The course duration would be **3 months**. The course will commence with an orientation session on **8<sup>th</sup> February 2025**. The classes will be held from **2:00 PM to 5:00 PM**, with a total of **14 sessions**. The duration of the class will be **3 hours**.

### PARTICIPANTS:

This is a basic course to provide an overview to the ESF, ESSs, and various ES Documents. The targeted participants would be senior officials (PD, DPD, officials of the different ministries, public representative etc.)

### RESOURCE PERSONS:

CERM's Resource Pool, and professionals having long experience in the field of environment and social background will provide expertise services during the course.

### VENUE:

Centre for Environmental and Resource Management (CERM), 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Controller of Exam Building, BUET, Dhaka-1000.

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