

World Bank for LGBTIQ Advocates

A Simple Guide

April 2025



OUTRIGHT
INTERNATIONAL



Outright International works together for better LGBTIQ lives.

Outright is dedicated to working with partners around the globe to strengthen the capacity of the LGBTIQ human rights movement, document and amplify human rights violations against LGBTIQ people, and advocate for inclusion and equality.

Founded in 1990, with staff in over a dozen countries, Outright works with the United Nations, regional human rights monitoring bodies, governments, humanitarian and development institutions, and civil society partners. Outright holds consultative status at the United Nations, where it serves as the secretariat of the UN LGBTI Core Group.

www.outrightinternational.org
hello@outrightinternational.org
facebook.com/outrightintl
bsky.app/profile/outrightintl.bsky.social
youtube.com/@OutrightIntl

Outright International
216 East 45th Street, 17th Floor New York, NY 10017 USA
+1 212 430 6054

This work may be reproduced and redistributed, in whole or in part, without alteration and without prior written permission, solely for nonprofit administrative or educational purposes provided all copies contain the following statement:

© 2025 Outright International. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercialNoDerivatives 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

Contents

Introduction 4

1. What Is the World Bank Group? 6

Origin and Mission 6

Structure 7

2. The World Bank 8

What It Does 8

Governance 8

Where Does the Bank Get Its Money? 10

Other Institutions: The UN and the IMF 10

The World Bank Group and International Human Rights Norms 10

3. The World Bank at the Country Level 11

The Country Management Unit 11

Country Planning Cycle 12

Loan/Project Cycle 14

4. The Environmental and Social Framework 19

Getting to Know the ESF 20

World Bank Environmental and Social Policy for Investment Project Financing 22

Environmental and Social Standard #1. Borrower Must Implement Mitigation Measures 23

Environmental and Social Standard #10. The Borrower Is Required to Meaningfully Consult With LGBTIQ Stakeholders 24

5. Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity at The World Bank 26

Office of the SOGI Advisor 26

Gender Unit 26

SOGI Task Force 27

LGBT+ Employee Resource Group 27

6. Finding World Bank Projects in Your Country 28

Step One: Find Your Country Page 28

Step Two: Find a Country Project List 29

Step Three: Find Individual Project Page 30

Step Four: Find Project Documents 31

Step Five: Find the Program Description 31

7. Complaints and Accountability Mechanisms 33

The Accountability Mechanisms 33

Grievance Redress Service 34

Grievance Redress Mechanisms 34

8. Next Steps 35

Acknowledgments

The primary author of this guide was Andrew Park, Senior Advisor, Inclusive Development at Outright International. Neela Ghoshal, senior director of Law, Policy, and Research at Outright, reviewed the guide, and Venus Aves, program assistant, provided copy-editing.

This guide has benefited from the contributions of Biljana Ginova and Dominik Koehler. Particular thanks go to Rachel Burton, Director of Social Inclusion of the Bank Information Center for her significant efforts and partnership in the development of this guide.

This guide has also been shaped by the collaboration with and feedback from LGBTIQ advocates from around the world who have participated in meetings and seminars about advocacy at the World Bank.

Introduction

This guide is a simple description of the World Bank and its operations. It is intended for use by those who are brand new to World Bank advocacy and by advocates who have a moderate level of exposure to the World Bank.

The World Bank provides USD \$120 billion annually to governments of low- and middle-income countries to support their development programs, including education, health, livelihood, social protection, and gender equality programs. The mechanisms that facilitate this massive flow of funding offer a number of entry points for advocates to ensure that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ) people benefit equally from these programs. Having a basic understanding of the operations of the World Bank is the first step in identifying advocacy goals and strategies.



01 What Is the World Bank Group?

Origin and Mission

The World Bank Group is a public international body owned and directed by its member countries. The World Bank Group was established in 1944 to support post-World War II reconstruction. At that time, 29 countries signed the Articles of Agreement, which created the first institutions that eventually became the World Bank Group. Currently, 189 countries have signed and ratified the Articles. Each of these countries is represented on the Bank's Board of Governors, which governs the Bank.

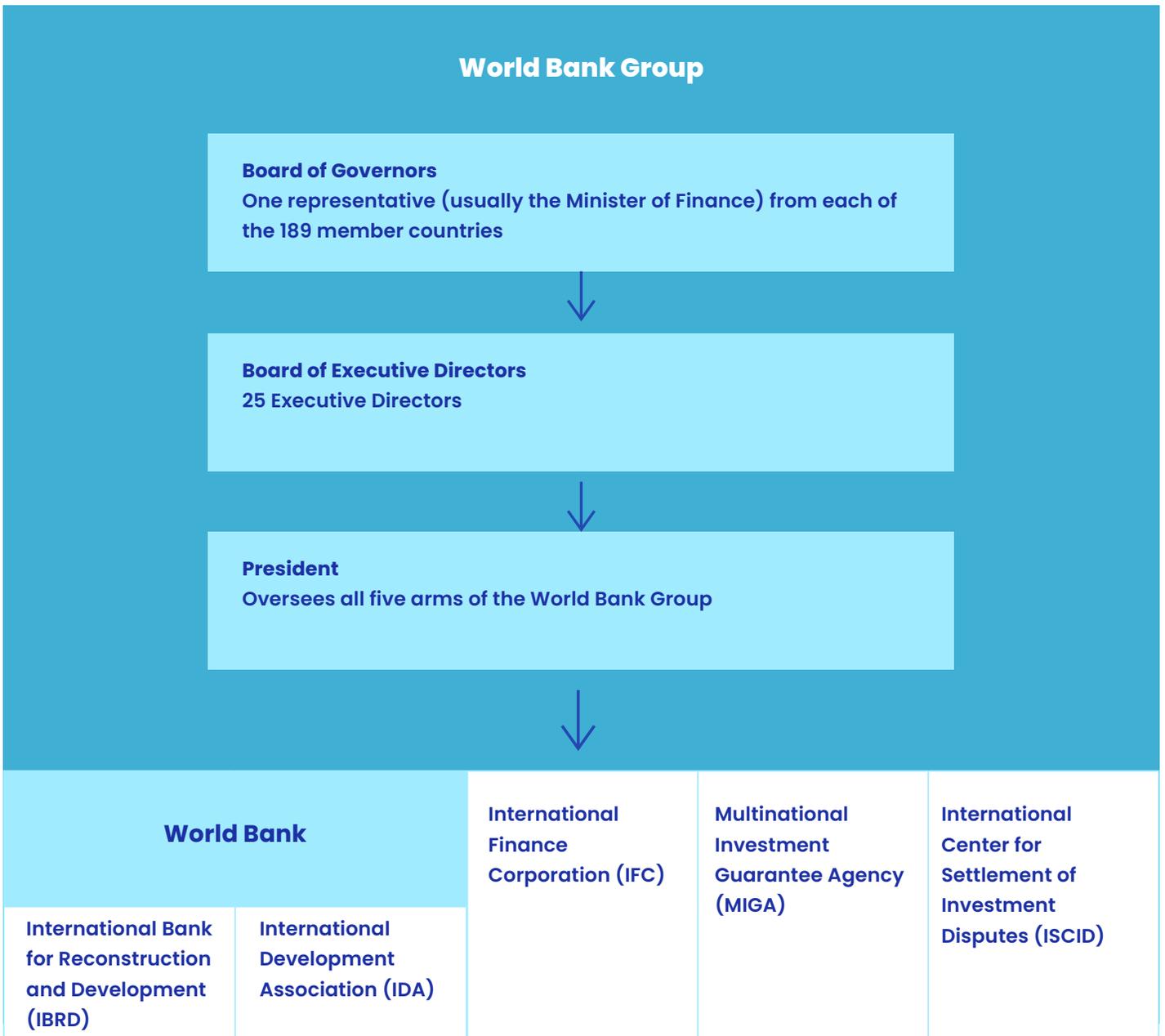
Today, the World Bank Group's mission is to end extreme poverty and boost shared prosperity on a livable planet.

Does the World Bank fund non-governmental organizations?

With some exceptions, the World Bank does not make grants to non-governmental organizations. It operates a robust procurement program, seeking consultants to provide a wide range of services on a fee-for-service basis. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ) groups have been awarded procurement contracts to conduct research and support other Bank activities. However, these contracts are not intended to support LGBTIQ groups' general operations.

Structure

The World Bank Group is made up of five separate arms. Two of those arms—the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association (IDA)—work primarily with governments and together are commonly known as "the World Bank." Two other branches—the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA)—directly support private businesses that invest in developing and transition countries. The fifth arm is the International Center for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID), which arbitrates disagreements between foreign investors and governments.



02 The World Bank

What It Does

The World Bank relies on three strategies to accomplish its mission of ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity on a livable planet:

1. Providing loans and grants to governments in low- and middle-income countries.
2. Brokering technical assistance, expertise, and data directly or through contractors. The Bank often uses its role as the central repository of development data to influence governments by requiring them to accept Bank-generated analyses and conclusions.
3. Serving as a gatekeeper for development policy and finance. The Bank's lending decisions can create channels in international development financing systems when other donors follow the Bank's lead, giving the World Bank an outsized influence on the formulation of development priorities and access to capital.

Governance

Board of Governors

The World Bank is governed by a Board of Governors comprising the Ministers of Finance of its 189 member countries. The Board of Governors meets once a year at the World Bank Annual Meeting to review and set broad policies and priorities. It has ultimate decision-making authority over the World Bank Group.

Board of Executive Directors (“the Board”)

The Bank's day-to-day decisions are made by the Board of Executive Directors at World Bank Group headquarters in Washington, DC. Technically, each organization within the World Bank Group has a different country membership, as explained [here](#). Nonetheless, the Boards often meet concurrently and are commonly regarded as one body. The full Board meets frequently, sometimes twice weekly, and committee meetings occur daily. The Board operates by consensus, although decisions are highly political and always made in the context of a small group of countries having the largest official voting power. Board deliberations are closed to the public.

Composition

The 25 seats on the Board are distributed as follows:

- Each of the eight largest shareholder countries holds one seat.
- Each of the seventeen other seats is held by a representative of one country that speaks for itself and represents a constituency of other countries. The governments of countries that are part of a constituency each appoint a country representative who works in the offices of the Board in Washington, DC, speaking for their country on board matters.

Review and Approval of Loans

One of the Board's most essential functions is to review hundreds of loan proposals each year. Board members can exercise their influence by voting, but just as frequently, Board members shape the Bank's priorities by making comments and asking questions, both in Board meetings and through other oversight channels. Questions from Board members can trigger discussion and modification of loans.

LGBTIQ Issues

With increasing frequency, the Board of Executive Directors has been addressing issues related to LGBTIQ inclusion in its meetings in Washington, DC. Questions that have been considered at Board meetings include:

- Should project documents specifically reference sexual orientation and gender identity?
- Should the Bank's strategies for gender, education, and health include specific attention to LGBTIQ populations?
- Has Bank staff considered the concerns of LGBTIQ people when making its decisions?

Who Represents Your Country?

You can find the name and contact information of the Board member representing your country using the "Find Executive Director" search function on the World Bank [website](#). If the Board member representing your country is not from your country, look at the description of each staff member in the Board member's office. The staff of each Board member usually includes a representative from each of the countries represented by that board member. Most likely, you will find a staff person who is a citizen of your country. That person is probably your country's representative on the Board.

The President

The World Bank Group president oversees all five arms of the Bank. The President serves as the Chair of the Board of Executive Directors. The President's staff includes one or more Managing Directors who manage the International Development Association and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development—the two arms of the Bank commonly referred to as the World Bank. The World Bank's organizational structure also includes Regional Vice Presidents, each overseeing operations in one of six regions. Each Regional Vice President reports to the President.

Headquarters Staff

Headquarters staff most important to LGBTIQ advocates include the following:

- The Director of the Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) provides guidance on issues concerning the ESF, which is a mandatory policy and a key tool for LGBTIQ advocates.
- The Vice President of Operations Policy and Country Services (OPCS) oversees the operational aspects of Country Management Units (CMUs).
- Thematic units set the framework for lending in their respective areas, such as education, health, social protection, climate, and poverty. By issuing guidance documents on LGBTIQ-related issues, these units can set the tone for LGBTIQ inclusion.

Where Does the Bank Get Its Money?

The World Bank raises funds in three ways.

1. Member countries provide cash contributions in proportion to their share in the Bank and guarantees of additional capital.
2. Using guarantees from its members, as well as the Bank's base of capital, the Bank secures more financing from the sale of World Bank bonds on the international financial markets.
3. Members make direct contributions every three years, called replenishments, to support lending and grants to the poorest countries.

Other Institutions: The UN and the IMF

The World Bank describes its relationship with the United Nations (UN) as "treaty-based." It is formally a specialized agency under the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the UN system. However, it does not share the UN decision-making structure, nor is it directly accountable to the UN.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) was created at the same time as the World Bank. It lends money to governments in order to stabilize currencies and increase monetary cooperation between governments, facilitating international trade. It also responds to the economic and financial impacts of crises. While the World Bank focuses on impacting the development outcomes of populations in each country, the IMF focuses on financial stability in global markets and between countries. Improving the development outcomes of specific populations, such as LGBTIQ people, is not part of the core mission of the IMF.

The World Bank Group and International Human Rights Norms

The World Bank famously does not engage with human rights norms or human rights institutions. The Bank explains that its mission is poverty alleviation, human development, and economic development through activities that will produce measurable outcomes. Also, as a bank, the World Bank does not see itself as having the same human rights obligations as States. Consequently, advocacy at the World Bank based on human rights has limited impact.

However, the World Bank recognizes that fulfilling human rights is necessary for development. In this way, governments' adoption of human rights standards is seen as a means to an end rather than a goal to itself—the ultimate goal is to alleviate poverty and improve the development outcomes of people and the planet. Accordingly, an element of the Bank's approach to LGBTIQ issues is to promote the adoption of a number of human rights standards listed in its [Equality of Opportunity for Sexual and Gender Minorities \(EQOSOGI\) Index](#).

03 The World Bank at the Country Level

In each country, the activities of the World Bank are influenced by at least four factors. First, borrowing countries have their own development plans. They propose projects to the Bank for which they seek support. Second, the Bank and its staff have institutional priorities. Third, powerful donor countries on the Bank's Board of Executive Directors strive to ensure that their interests are served. Last, the actions of civil society in borrowing countries and globally can impact Bank operations and decisions. What follows is a description of the process that the Bank follows when making lending decisions in each country.

The Country Management Unit

This is Where Decisions Are Made

The World Bank has a decentralized decision-making process. Although the Board of Executive Directors must approve every loan agreement and Country Partnership Framework, initial decisions about the design, negotiation, and implementation of Bank-financed projects are made at the country level.

Country Director

Each Country Management Unit (CMU) is led by a Country Director, or sometimes a Country Manager, who is the highest-level decision-maker in the field. Country Directors manage the relationship with each borrowing country and usually have a direct line of communication with the government through the Minister of Finance and often to the country's President, Prime Minister, or executive leader. The name of the Country Director can usually be found on the country page of the Bank's website.

Task Team Leader

For each project, the Bank appoints a Task Team Leader (TTL), the primary person coordinating project activities on behalf of the Bank. The TTL works with the borrowing country throughout the project cycle. The name of the TTL is listed on the project page on the World Bank website and on the Project Appraisal Document.

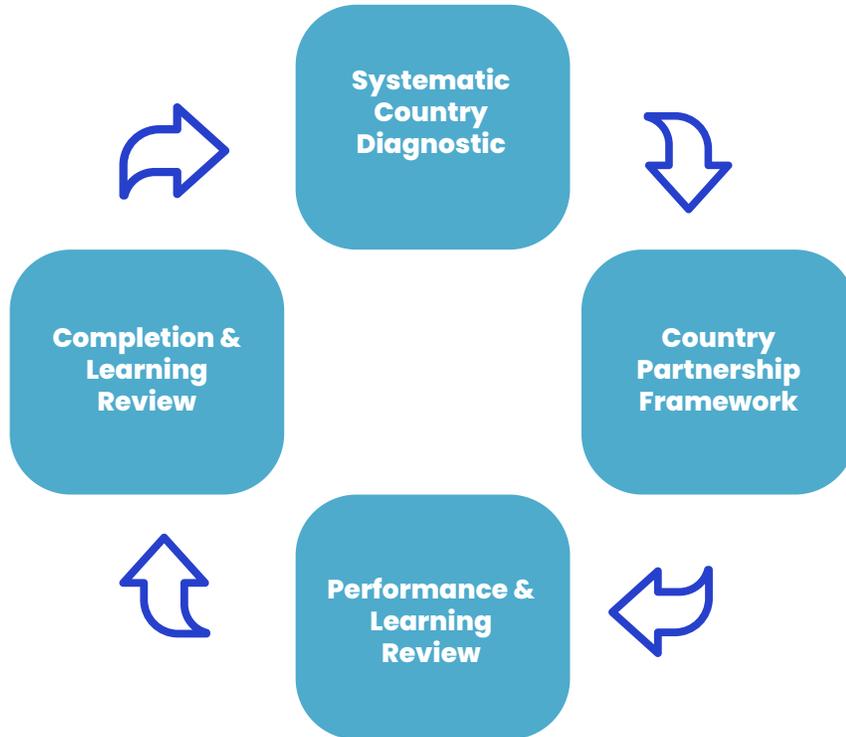
Regional Vice Presidents

Country Directors report to a Regional Vice President. The six regions are as follows:

- Eastern and Southern Africa
- Western and Central Africa
- East Asia and the Pacific
- Europe and Central Asia
- Latin America and the Caribbean
- Middle East and North Africa
- South Asia

Country Planning Cycle

The country planning cycle includes four stages, each drawing on the previous stage.



1. Systematic Country Diagnostic

The Systematic Country Diagnostic (SCD) is a document prepared by World Bank staff in the CMU in close cooperation with officials from the borrowing country. It assesses the economic and human development situation, reviews the circumstances of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, and analyzes opportunities and constraints for achieving the goals of poverty reduction, shared prosperity, and sustainability. The Country Partnership Framework is based on the SCD.

2. Country Partnership Framework

After the World Bank finalizes the Systematic Country Diagnostic, the Country Management Unit develops the Country Partnership Framework (CPF), the central document that guides World Bank lending priorities in that country for four to six years. All projects and programs that the Bank finances must align with the CPF's priorities. Thus, the likelihood of Bank support for a specific issue is much higher if that issue is referenced in the CPF.

The CPF must be approved by the Board of Executive Directors. The CPF for most countries can be found on the country page on the World Bank's website. When country circumstances do not allow a government and the Bank to develop a medium-term program, the Bank will develop a Country Engagement Note (CEN), rather than a CPF, to set out short-term country engagement.

Loan/Project Cycle

Loans Support Projects

The terms “loan” and “project” are often used synonymously. The activities funded by the World Bank are grouped into projects, and each project is typically funded by one or more loans. The loan agreement is the legally binding document that officially sets out the objectives and the terms of the loan, although other documents are often more informative.

Types of Loans

The World Bank makes several types of loans, referred to as lending instruments. Each lending instrument follows a different set of rules regarding how the funds can be used, when the funds are disbursed, and how the loan is repaid. Some World Bank policies, like the Environmental and Social Framework, apply to some lending instruments but not others.

Investment Project Financing (IPF) is a loan for the creation of physical infrastructure, from roads to schools to energy production facilities, as well as social infrastructure, such as the operation of health clinics, vocational training, and agricultural technology. Most Bank loans are IPF.

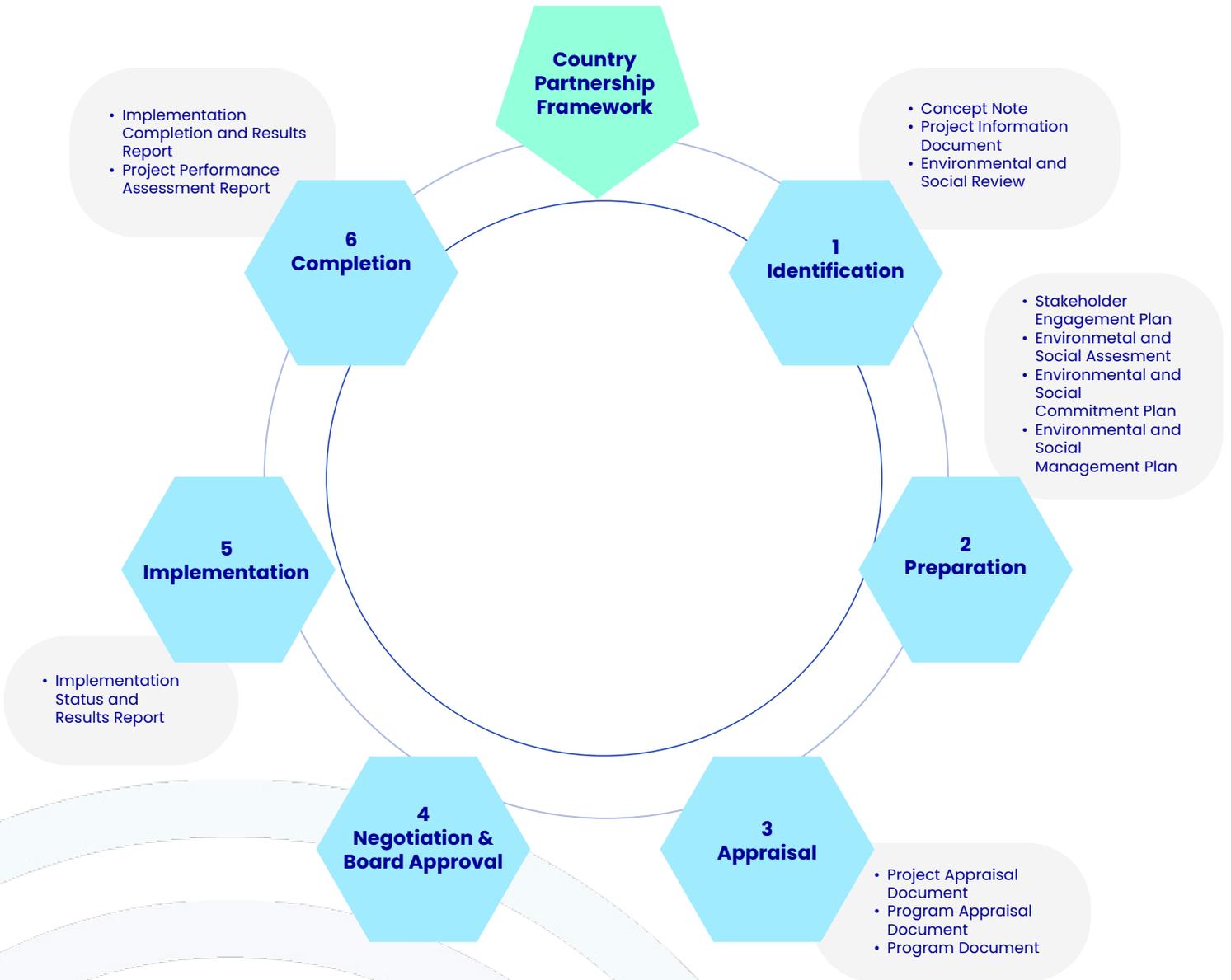
Development Policy Financing (DPF) is a loan applied directly to the government’s treasury accounts as non-earmarked funds to support policies or new institutional actions. This is the least restrictive type of loan and is used only in countries with a good financial management record.

Program for Results Financing (PforR) can support a broad range of programs, similar to IPF loans. However, disbursements are made based on achieved results as set forth in disbursement level indicators (DLIs), agreed upon by the Bank and the borrowing country. Although this is the most restrictive type of loan, the Bank gives the government the primary role of defining the conditions for disbursements. In this way, this type of loan is meant to help countries with poor records of compliance improve the design and structure of their development programs.

Type of Financing Instrument	What Type of Support	What Triggers Disbursements
Investment Project Financing (IPF)	Project support	Disbursements made against specific actions
Development Policy Financing (DPF)	General budget support	Disbursements made against policy/institutional actions
Program for Results Financing (PforR)	Expenditure program support	Disbursements made against measurable program results

The Project Cycle

Customarily, the project cycle is initiated by a government request to the World Bank for a loan. Each phase in the project cycle triggers requirements for the Bank to produce documentation. Below is a description of each stage in the cycle, as well as a listing of documentation associated with it.



Project Documents

At each phase of the project cycle, the World Bank produces documents that should be listed on the project page of the World Bank website. These documents are the first place you will look for information about a project. There is a wide range of documents. Generally, the most informative document is the most recent version of the Project Appraisal Document. Listed below are the most relevant documents.

Phases of Project Cycle	
Description	Documents Published on the Bank's Website
Phase 1. Identification	
<p>In this phase, the World Bank and the borrowing country agree on a project concept. The Country Partnership Framework is the primary tool that outlines the scope of possible projects, so the concept should be grounded in it.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Concept Note outlines the general objectives of the project, possible challenges, and the likely timetable. • A Project Information Document (PID) outlines the scope of the intended project, including which government programs and facilities will be supported by the project. • The Environmental and Social Review Summary (ESRS) for Investment Project Financing (IPF) loans includes an assessment of the environmental and social risks, identifies which environmental and social standards apply, and provides an overview of how those risks will be managed. IPF loans are explained in the next section. For projects financed with IPF loans that were initiated prior to October 1, 2018, the Bank publishes an Integrated Safeguards Data Sheet. On October 1, 2018, the Bank's old safeguard policy expired and was replaced by the new Environmental and Social Framework. Both are explained below.
Phase 2. Preparation	
<p>The borrowing country is responsible for preparation, which includes designing the project, planning how the project would be implemented, conducting feasibility studies, and creating a plan to procure needed goods and services. During this phase, the borrowing country is obligated to consult with stakeholders. For Investment Project Financing (IPF) projects initiated after October 2, 2018, the Bank applies the Environmental and Social Framework.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In some cases, the Project Information Document (PID) and the Environmental and Social Review Summary (ESRS), defined above, are produced during phase 2 of the project cycle. • A Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) sets out how the borrower will consult with stakeholders in accordance with the Environmental and Social Framework's requirements. • An Environmental and Social Assessment (ESA) sets out the environmental and social risks identified by the borrower and describes measures to mitigate risks. • An Environment and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) or an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) lists the measures to be taken to address risks of harm or exclusion of disadvantaged or vulnerable populations. The Bank may also issue an Environmental Action Plan (EAP), an Indigenous People's Plan, and a Procurement Plan with details of how each of those issues will be addressed.

Phase 3. Appraisal	
During this phase, the Bank and the borrowing country review the work done in earlier phases, make any adjustments, and agree on a timetable.	The Bank often updates the Project Information Document (PID) and Environmental and Social (E&S) documents and publishes them in the project database. However, the Bank does not remove earlier versions, so both can still be found.
Phase 4. Negotiation and Approval	
Once both the borrower and the Bank accept all project details, the Country Management Unit prepares a package of documents for submission to the Board of Executive Directors for consideration and approval.	The documents prepared for approval by the Board of Executive Directors include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Appraisal Document for Investment Project Financing (IPF) loans • Program Appraisal Document for Program for Results Financing (PforR) loans • Program Document for Development Policy Financing (DPF) loans
Phase 5. Implementation	
The borrower implements the project. At least twice a year, the Bank and the borrower prepare a review of a project's progress.	Based on the Bank and the borrowing country's review of progress on a project, they jointly prepare an Implementation Status and Results Report evaluating the progress of project implementation against baseline indicators. This report is prepared semi-annually.
Phase 6. Completion	
When a project is completed and closed at the end of the loan disbursement period, the World Bank and the borrower evaluate the outcomes, challenges, and lessons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Implementation Completion and Results Report contains the evaluation findings. • The Bank's Independent Evaluation Group may prepare a Project Performance Assessment Report to assess compliance with Bank policies.

03 The Environmental and Social Framework

The Environmental and Social Framework and Safeguard Policies

The [Environmental and Social Framework \(ESF\)](#) went into effect in 2018 as the Bank's central approach to ensuring the projects it finances do not cause harm or exclude disadvantaged and vulnerable groups from accessing project benefits. It is often called a safeguard policy. Historically, Bank policies focused on safeguarding the environment and indigenous populations from harm caused by infrastructure and construction projects. These safeguard policies have been replaced by the ESF, but many continue to refer to the ESF as the safeguard policy.

Using the ESF in Advocacy

The ESF is your most important tool to advocate for the inclusion of LGBTIQ people in a Bank-financed project. It requires the Bank and the borrower to take a number of steps to avoid the exclusion of LGBTIQ people from projects. However, it is rarely implemented without pressure from advocates. One of your central advocacy strategies will be to seek the implementation of the ESF in relation to LGBTIQ people.

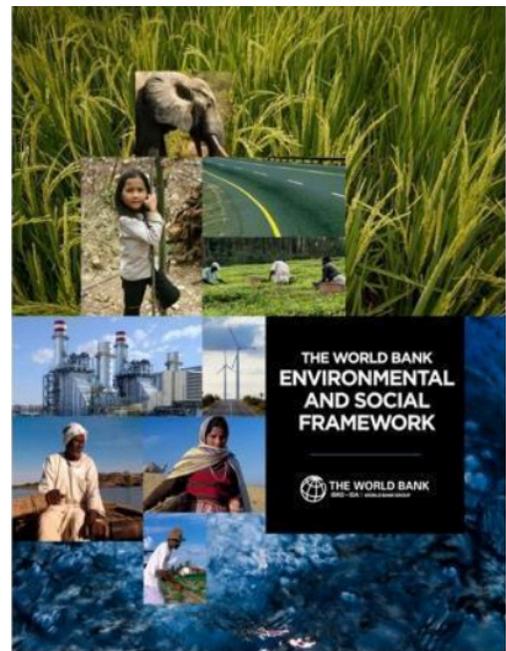


Image: The World Bank Environmental and Social Framework cover

Applies to Investment Project Financing

The ESF applies to all IPF-financed loans, with the exception of loans developed before October 1, 2018. The ESF only applies to programs financed by the Bank. It does not apply to other government programs. As the ESF is referenced in the loan agreement, its provisions are mandatory and supersede any conflicting laws.

Other important documents provide interpretation of, and guidance about, the ESF:

- [Bank Directive Addressing Risks and Impacts on Disadvantaged or Vulnerable Individuals or Groups](#). As its title implies, this directive provides direction for World Bank staff on identifying and mitigating harm to disadvantaged or vulnerable individuals or groups. It provides a detailed definition of disadvantaged or vulnerable that includes “individuals and groups who, by virtue of their sexual orientation and gender identity, may be more likely to be adversely affected or limited in their ability to take advantage of project’s benefits” (Directive, p. 1).
- [Guidance Note for Borrowers: ESS1: Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impact](#). This document provides guidance to borrowers on how to comply with Environmental and Social Standard 1: Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks.
- [Guidance Note for Borrowers: ESS10: Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure](#). This document provides guidance to borrowers on how to comply with Environmental and Social Standard 10: Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure.
- [Good Practice Note, Environmental & Social Framework for IPF Operations, Non-discrimination: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity \(SOGI\)](#). This document provides guidance to Bank staff on issues relating to discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in investment project financing projects.
- [The Inspection Panel Summary: Consultation, Participation, and Disclosure of Information](#). The Inspection Panel is an independent body to which project-affected populations can bring complaints if they think the Bank is not following its own policies. This document is a summary of the Inspection Panel’s decisions on complaints about stakeholder consultation.

Getting to Know the ESF

Where to Start

As indicated in the accompanying outline, the ESF starts with an overview and a vision section. The World Bank Environmental and Social Policy for Investment Project Financing is the main policy that applies to any IPF loan initiated after October 1, 2018. Following that are ten Environmental and Social Standards, each of which applies to particular aspects of the ESF or particular types of projects.

When you start working with the ESF document, you should focus on the following three sections:

1. World Bank Environmental and Social Policy for Investment Project Financing (p. 3).
2. Environmental and Social Standard 1: Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts (p. 15).
3. Environmental and Social Standard 10: Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure (p. 97).

Outline of ESF Document

- Overview
- Vision
- World Bank Environmental and Social Policy for Investment Project Financing (p. 3).
- Borrower Requirements -- Environmental and Social Standards 1 – 10:
 - Environmental and Social Standard 1: Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts (p. 15).
 - Environmental and Social Standard 2: Labor and Working Conditions.
 - Environmental and Social Standard 3: Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management.
 - Environmental and Social Standard 4: Community Health and Safety.
 - Environmental and Social Standard 5: Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement.
 - Environmental and Social Standard 6: Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources.
 - Environmental and Social Standard 7: Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities.
 - Environmental and Social Standard 8: Cultural Heritage.
 - Environmental and Social Standard 9: Financial Intermediaries.
 - Environmental and Social Standard 10: Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure (p.97).

World Bank Environmental and Social Policy for Investment Project Financing (p. 3)

The main ESF policy is the World Bank Environmental and Social Policy for Investment Project Financing, found on page 3 of the ESF document. It sets out the Bank's due diligence responsibility and applies to:

The Bank Must Assess the Risk of Exclusion of Disadvantaged and Vulnerable People

When a loan is first being designed and prepared, the Bank is required to assess environmental and social risks, assign a high–low rating, and work with the borrower to address risks. A number of risks are listed in the ESF. These most relevant for LGBTIQ people are:

- Risks that project impacts fall disproportionately on individuals or groups who, because of their particular circumstances, may be disadvantaged or vulnerable
- Risks of "any prejudice or discrimination toward individuals or groups in providing access to development resources and project benefits, particularly in the case of those who may be disadvantaged or vulnerable" (Environmental and Social Policy, p. 4, para. 4).

LGBTIQ People Are Disadvantaged or Vulnerable

The term disadvantaged or vulnerable is defined in the ESF as:

...those who may be more likely to be adversely affected by the project impacts and/or more limited than others in their ability to take advantage of a project's benefits. Such an individual/group is also more likely to be excluded from/unable to participate fully in the mainstream consultation process and as such may require specific measures and/or assistance to do so. This will take into account considerations relating to age, including the elderly and minors, and including in circumstances where they may be separated from their family, the community or other individuals upon whom they depend" (Environmental and Social Policy, p. 4, footnote 11).

You will notice that the definition of disadvantaged or vulnerable people does not specifically mention many marginalized groups such as people with disabilities, women, girls, refugees, Indigenous people, or LGBTIQ people. However, because LGBTIQ people face stigma and exclusion, they easily fit into the description of "those who may be... more limited than others in their ability to take advantage of a project's benefits" and who are "more likely to be excluded from/unable to participate fully in the mainstream consultation process" (Environmental and Social Policy, p. 4, footnote 11).

Additionally, the ESF's Overview says that "[t]he Bank will issue a Bank Directive Addressing Risks and Impacts on Disadvantaged or Vulnerable Individuals or Groups, which will set out mandatory requirements on Bank staff relating to the identification of disadvantaged or vulnerable individuals or groups" (Overview, p. x, para. 7).

In 2021, the Bank issued the [Bank Directive Addressing Risks and Impacts on Disadvantaged or Vulnerable Individuals or Groups](#). That directive defines "disadvantaged and vulnerable" as follows:

"disadvantaged or vulnerable" refers to those individuals or groups who, by virtue of, for example, their age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, physical, mental or other disability, social, civic, or health status, sexual orientation, gender identity, economic disadvantages or Indigenous status, and/or dependence on unique natural resources, may be more likely to be adversely affected by the project impacts and/or more limited than others in their ability to take advantage of a project's benefits.... (Directive, p 1).

Environmental and Social Standard #1. Borrower Must Implement Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measures

After the Bank assesses the risks for the purposes of assigning a risk rating, the Borrower must then assess the risks and identify measures to mitigate them. ESS1: Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts specifies the borrower's responsibilities:

Where the environmental and social assessment of the project identifies specific individuals or groups as disadvantaged or vulnerable, the Borrower will propose and implement differentiated measures so that adverse impacts do not fall disproportionately on the disadvantaged or vulnerable, and they are not disadvantaged in sharing any development benefits and opportunities resulting from the project (ESS 1, para. 29, p. 20).

Documentation of Mitigation Measures

The borrower must produce an **Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA or E&S Impact Assessment)** and formulate a plan to address these risks, called an **Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP or E&S Commitment Plan)** or an **Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP, or E&S Management Plan)**, which ESMP can be incorporated into an ESCP:

- (a) Mitigation: The ESMP [Environmental and Social Management Plan] identifies measures and actions in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy that reduce potentially adverse environmental and social impacts to acceptable levels. The plan will include compensatory measures, if applicable. Specifically, the ESMP:
 - (i) identifies and summarizes all anticipated adverse environmental and social impacts (including those involving Indigenous people or involuntary resettlement);
 - (ii) describes—with technical details—each mitigation measure, including the type of impact to which it relates and the conditions under which it is required (e.g., continuously or in the event of contingencies), together with designs, equipment descriptions, and operating procedures, as appropriate (ESS 1, para 15, p. 17)

Environmental and Social Standard #10. The Borrower Is Required to Meaningfully Consult With LGBTIQ Stakeholders

What is Required of the Borrower?

Meaningful Consultations

ESS10. Stakeholder Engagement requires that:

[b]orrowers will engage in meaningful consultations with all stakeholders. Borrowers will provide stakeholders with timely, relevant, understandable and accessible information, and consult with them in a culturally appropriate manner, which is free of manipulation, interference, coercion, discrimination, and intimidation (ESS 10, p. 98, para. 7).

Who Are Stakeholders?

Stakeholders can be broken down into three main categories:

- Project-affected parties, including those who receive, or should receive, benefits of a particular project, as well as those who are negatively impacted by project activities
- Other interested parties, including international groups and
- Disadvantaged or vulnerable individuals or groups

Stakeholder Engagement Plan

For each project, the borrower is required to create a **Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP)**. An SEP describes the methods and timing of engagement with project-affected parties, including beneficiaries and other interested parties, throughout the project cycle.

What is Meaningful Consultation?

The ESS 10 sets out a number of characteristics of meaningful consultation:

Timely

Consultation should begin early enough so that stakeholder feedback can be considered in project selection, planning, and design. After-the-fact consultation is not meaningful.

Detailed

ESS 10 states that "[t]he Borrower will disclose project information to allow stakeholders to understand the risks and impacts of the project and potential opportunities...the nature and scale of the project...differentiated measures taken to avoid and minimize these [risks]" (ESS 10, p. 98, para. 19).

Understandable

The information provided to stakeholders must be in a culturally appropriate format, in relevant local language(s), and understandable. As part of the above mandate, the consultation meetings with the borrower must allow for stakeholder preparation. The Inspection Panel, which hears complaints by people claiming to be adversely affected by World Bank projects, has elaborated that "regardless of when during the project cycle they take place, consultation meetings should be announced at least two to three weeks in advance, and that an agenda and relevant background materials should be distributed ahead of the meetings to allow participants sufficient time to prepare. Ideally, participants should be allowed to comment on and agree to the agenda at the beginning of the meeting (The Inspection Panel, The World Bank, Consultation, Participation & Disclosure of Information, Emerging Lessons Series No. 4, 2017, p. 11.)

Two-Way

ESS 10 states that "[t]he Borrower will undertake a process of meaningful consultation in a manner that provides stakeholders with opportunities to express their views on project risks, impacts, and mitigation measures, and allows the Borrower to consider and respond to them" (ESS 10, p. 99, para. 21).

Safety and Security

"Do No Harm" Is No Excuse For Avoiding Engagement

ESS 10 says that the government cannot avoid engaging LGBTIQ communities by claiming that engagement involves placing LGBTIQ people at risk of harm, particularly when the government itself is sometimes a source of harm. Instead, the government must conduct stakeholder engagement "free of manipulation, interference, coercion, discrimination, and intimidation" (ESS 10, p. 98, para. 7).

Bank Must Ensure Safety of LGBTIQ Populations During Consultation

The Inspection Panel has articulated the Bank's role in the case of LGBTIQ populations:

Special care is also necessary to ensure the safety of groups that are traditionally marginalized (such as members of LGBTI communities or minorities) or those that oppose projects in situations where a community is split. The project team needs to be cognizant that, in some cases, people might not feel safe voicing their concerns in front of local government officials. While consultations are normally held by the borrower, it might be justifiable in those exceptional cases with a high risk of retaliation for the Bank to ensure consultations are conducted independently and on a confidential basis (The Inspection Panel, The World Bank, Consultation, Participation & Disclosure of Information, Emerging Lessons Series No. 4, 2017, p. 13.).

04 Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity at the World Bank

Office of the SOGI Advisor

In 2016, the World Bank created the Office of the Global Advisor on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI). While the name of the office does not refer to sex characteristics, it has taken up issues that are relevant to intersex people along with lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer people. According to the [Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity page](#) of the World Bank website, this office coordinates several streams of activities:

Data and Knowledge Generation Director

The SOGI Advisor has coordinated research efforts related to LGBTIQ populations. Here are some of the publications that contain research findings:

- [\[Note\] Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity \(SOGI\) Inclusion and Gender Equality \(2023\)](#)
- [Life on the Margins: Survey Results of the Experiences of LGBTI People in Southeastern Europe \(2018\)](#)
- [Discrimination Against Sexual Minorities in Education and Housing in Serbia \(2018\)](#)
- [A Comparative Analysis of the Socioeconomic Dimensions of LGBTI Exclusion in Serbia \(2019\)](#)
- [Economic Inclusion of LGBTI Groups in Thailand \(2018\)](#)
- [Economic Cost of Stigma and the Exclusion of LGBT people in India \(2014\)](#)
- [Equality of Opportunity for Sexual and Gender Minorities \(EQOSOGI\)](#)

Data and Knowledge Generation Director

The Global Advisor on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI Advisor) works internally to increase Bank staff awareness of the Bank's duties under the ESF as set out in the [Good Practice Note on the ESF and Non-Discrimination: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity \(SOGI\)](#).

Staff and Community Consultations

The SOGI Advisor conducts training and meets with Bank staff at headquarters and in country offices to increase their knowledge about SOGI issues. The Advisor is available to respond to questions from community groups and LGBTIQ advocates about the Bank.

SOGI Task Force

The World Bank Group's Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Task Force includes members from a cross-section of departments at headquarters. It serves as a forum for headquarters staff to share knowledge and coordinate ongoing and future work. Roughly once a calendar quarter, the Task Force meets with civil society organizations interested in World Bank and LGBTIQ issues to share knowledge and coordinate externally.

LGBT+ Employee Resource Group

GLOBE is the LGBT+ employee resource group for the World Bank Group. It was founded in 1994 and provides staff support and advocates on behalf of LGBTIQ staff within the World Bank.



05 Finding World Bank Projects in Your Country

Step One: Find Your Country Page

From the main page of the World Bank website, navigate to your country page. Country pages have lots of information, although it is not always up-to-date. It should include:

- Contact information for the World Bank office and country staff (often at the bottom of the page)
- A link to the Country Partnership Framework or other country-level planning documents (often at the bottom of the page)
- A summary of the country's development strategy
- Recent research or World Bank blogs about the country

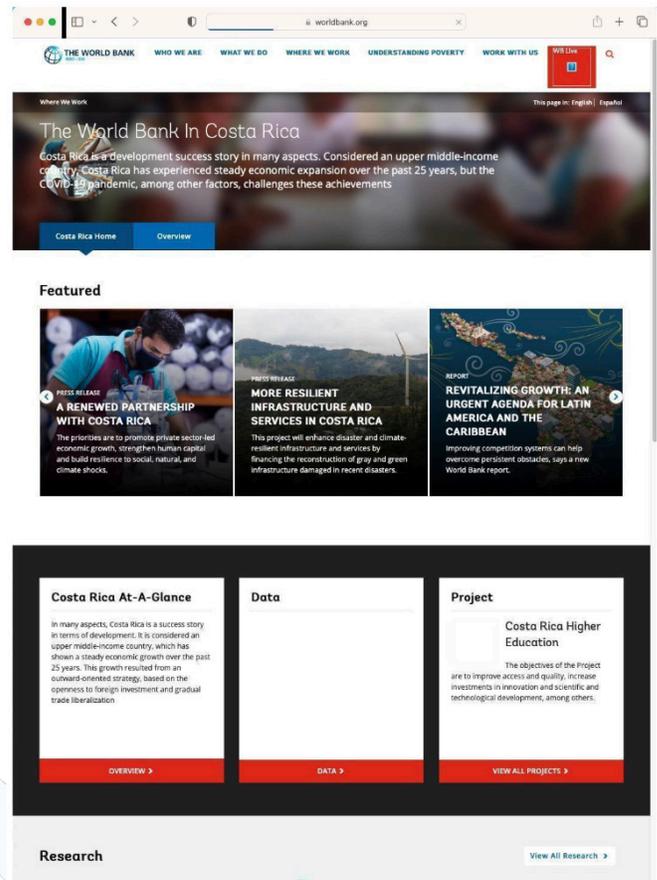


Image: Example of country page.

Step Two: Find a Country Project List

For each borrowing country, you can find a list of all active projects and projects in the planning pipeline. The hyperlinks on the World Bank website do not always work, so you may need to try different methods.

- **METHOD #1.** From the country page, look for the link "VIEW ALL PROJECTS" on a red background. That should lead you to a page where you can get a full project list for that particular country. If that does not work, try method #2.
- **METHOD #2.** On the main page of the World Bank site, select or hover your cursor over "WHAT WE DO" and select the "By Country" option listed under "Projects." This will take you to a different list of countries from which to make a selection.

The country projects list appears as below. You can filter the list for "status" of projects, selecting for only "active" projects or those that are in the "pipeline." The website also lists "closed" and "dropped" projects.

The screenshot shows the World Bank website's 'Projects' page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the World Bank Group logo and a search bar. Below the navigation bar, there are tabs for 'SUMMARY', 'PROJECT LIST', 'DOCUMENT LIST', and 'ARCHIVAL RECORDS'. The 'PROJECT LIST' tab is selected. On the left side, there is a 'FILTER' sidebar with various dropdown menus for filtering projects, including 'Timeframe', 'Specific Date Range', 'Financing Type', 'Status', 'Country', 'Region', 'Sector', 'Theme Level1', 'Theme Level2', 'Theme Level3', 'Consultant Services Required', and 'Environmental and Social Risk Category'. The main content area displays a table of projects with columns for 'Project Title', 'Country', 'Project ID', 'Commitment Amount', 'Status', 'Approval Date', 'Last updated Date', and 'Last Stage Reached'. The table shows several projects for Argentina, including 'Tax Administration Services Modernization Program', 'Argentina Environmental Management Project', 'Promoting Better Jobs through Integrated Labor and Skills Programs', 'Argentina: Fiscal Sustainability and Competitiveness DPF', 'Integrated Early Childhood Development Project', and 'Supporting the Federal Policy for Enhancing Foundational Literacy'. A 'Download' button is visible in the top right corner of the table area.

Project Title	Country	Project ID	Commitment Amount	Status	Approval Date	Last updated Date	Last Stage Reached
Tax Administration Services Modernization Program	Argentina	P508935	300000000.00	Pipeline	July 29, 2025	January 30, 2025	CONCEPT REVIEW
Argentina Environmental Management Project	Argentina	P180028	100000000.00	Pipeline	July 10, 2025	July 21, 2023	BEGIN APPRAISAL
Promoting Better Jobs through Integrated Labor and Skills Programs	Argentina	P505771	230000000.00	Pipeline	April 23, 2025	March 26, 2025	BEGIN NEGOTIATION
Argentina: Fiscal Sustainability and Competitiveness DPF	Argentina	P509552	1500000000.00	Active	April 11, 2025	April 14, 2025	BANK APPROVED
Integrated Early Childhood Development Project	Argentina	P505675	1200000000.00	Active	November 27, 2024	February 7, 2025	BANK APPROVED
Supporting the Federal Policy for Enhancing Foundational Literacy	Argentina	P505179	500000000.00	Active	November 27, 2024	December 14, 2024	BANK APPROVED

Image: Example of project list.

Step Three: Find Individual Project Page

From the project list, select the name of a project. You will be taken to a project page with the following information:

- The general objectives of the project
- The date the project was approved by the Bank’s Board of Executive Directors, or if the project is in the pipeline, the date that it is expected to go to the Board for a vote
- The closing date
- The names of the Team Leaders—World Bank staff in charge of the project, usually located in the country
- The government ministry implementing the project

The project pages look like the screenshot below.



Development Objective

Expand sewerage coverage in the Metropolitan area of Buenos Aires guarantying last mile connections and improving AySA's efficiency on drinking water operational parameters.

Key Details

Project Details			
Project ID P180622	Status Pipeline	Team Leader Maria Ramirez , Lizmara Kirchner	Borrower ² Argentine Republic
Country Argentina	Approval Date (as of board presentation) July 10, 2025	Total Project Cost ¹ US\$ 450.00 million	Implementing Agency AySA
Region Latin America And Caribbean	Fiscal Year ³ 2026	Commitment Amount US\$ 450.00 million	Environmental Category N/A
Last Update Date June 5, 2023	Closing Date N/A	Consultant Services required Yes	Last Stage Reached BEGIN APPRAISAL
Notes ▾			

Image: Example of project page.

Step Four: Find Project Documents

On the project page, select the "DOCUMENTS" tab. You will see a list of documents in reverse chronological order. This list includes procurement documents, audits, Board reports and summaries, disbursement letters, agreements, and others.

Start your review at the very end of the list with the earliest documents. You can ignore most of them. Look for the Project Information Document (PID) or the Project Appraisal Document (PAD). These documents are often revised, so make sure you have the most recent version. The programs description section of these documents describes the government programs being financed.

Below is an example of the project documents list. You will see many documents listed in the project cycle section above.

The screenshot shows the World Bank Group website for the 'Integrated Early Childhood Development Project'. The 'DOCUMENTS' tab is active, displaying a list of project documents. The table below represents the data shown in the screenshot.

DOCUMENT TITLE	DATE	REPORT NO.	DOCUMENT TYPE
Argentina - LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN- P505675- Integrated Early Childhood Development Project - Procurement Plan (English)	March 6, 2025	STEP110054	Procurement Plan
Disclosable Version of the ISR - Integrated Early Childhood Development Project - P505675 - Sequence No : 1 (English)	February 27, 2025	ISRO3279	Implementation Status and Results Report
Argentina - LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN- P505675- Integrated Early Childhood Development Project - Procurement Plan (English)	February 20, 2025	STEP109371	Procurement Plan
Official Documents- Loan Agreement for Loan 9748-AR.pdf (English)	December 4, 2024		Loan Agreement
Official Documents- Disbursement and Financial Information Letter for Loan 9748-AR.pdf (English)	December 4, 2024		Disbursement Letter
Argentina - Integrated Early Childhood Development Project (English)	November 4, 2024	PADHI00706	Project Appraisal Document
Revised Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) Integrated Early Childhood Development Project (P505675) (English)	October 30, 2024		Environmental and Social Commitment Plan
Appraisal Project Information Document (PID) (English)	October 10, 2024	PIDIA00903	Project Information Document
Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) - Integrated Early Childhood Development Project - P505675 (English)	October 2, 2024		Environmental and Social Commitment Plan
Appraisal Environmental and Social Review Summary (ESRS) - Integrated Early Childhood Development Project - P505675 (English)	October 2, 2024	ESRSA03713	Environmental and Social Review Summary
Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) - Integrated Early Childhood Development Project - P505675 (English)	October 2, 2024		Stakeholder Engagement Plan
Concept Project Information Document (PID) (English)	July 4, 2024	PIDDC00832	Project Information Document
Concept Environmental and Social Review Summary (ESRS) - Support for Integrated Early Childhood Development Project - P505675 (English)	July 2, 2024	ESRSC04377	Environmental and Social Review Summary

Image: Example of project document list.

Step Five: Find the Program Description

The **Project Information Document (PID)** and/or the **Project Appraisal Document (PAD)** will have a section called “Program Description.” This section sets out what the World Bank is financing in your country.



06 Complaints and Accountability Mechanisms

The Accountability Mechanisms

Advocates should have a solid understanding of Bank operations before pursuing official accountability mechanisms. As this guide is intended for advocates who are in the beginning stages of their advocacy at the World Bank, the following section only provides a brief overview of the mechanisms. Advocates considering using an accountability mechanism should consult with the Bank Information Center or another group with expertise in these mechanisms.

The Accountability Mechanism Secretary, located in Washington, DC, reports directly to the World Bank Board of Executive Directors. The Secretary manages the two programs below:

Inspection Panel

The Inspection Panel is an independent three-member body with a permanent staff that reports directly to the World Bank Board of Executive Directors. The Panel receives and investigates eligible complaints from people who feel they have been or could be harmed by activities financed by the World Bank, specifically the IBRD and the IDA. The alleged harm must result from a violation of the Bank's own policies or procedures, including a violation of the provisions of a loan agreement or the ESF.

In general, complaints alleging that a project has excluded or adversely impacted a group of people must include evidence of at least two people who can each document how they have been personally excluded or impacted. Failure to consult with disadvantaged and vulnerable groups is not, on its own, considered a valid basis for a complaint, although evidence about failure to consult is considered relevant to complaints of exclusion or adverse impact.

The Inspection Panel has recognized that the term "disadvantaged and vulnerable," as used in the ESF, includes LGBTI people (The Inspection Panel, The World Bank, Consultation, Participation & Disclosure of Information, Emerging Lessons Series No. 4, 2017, p. 13.).

Inspection Panel

In some cases, the Accountability Mechanism Secretary will offer the complaining party and the government the option of dispute resolution facilitated by the Dispute Resolution Service (DRS). DRS is a separate and independent process outside of the Panel's compliance review. If the process is not successful, the panel will take up the complaint for a compliance investigation.

Grievance Redress Service

The World Bank Grievance Redress Service (GRS) is a management-led service where project-affected people can submit complaints if they believe a World Bank-funded (IBRD/IDA) project has or is likely to adversely affect them. Unlike the Inspection Panel, the GRS is not independent from the World Bank staff. It is part of and reports to World Bank management. While this service may enable project-affected people to engage directly with Bank management, some complainants pursue other strategies due to this lack of independence.

Grievance Redress Mechanisms

A Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) is a project-specific mechanism set up to address complaints related to a specific project. It is established as part of the initial project design or through a project modification after the project implementation period has started. It is often managed by the borrowing country. There is no such thing as a Bank-wide GRM. Each project has its own GRM, which, if required, is managed at a local level. The scope, administration, and procedures of GRMs vary widely, depending on the project.



07 Next Steps

The information in this guide will help you advocate for the inclusion of LGBTIQ people in Bank-financed projects and the development planning process in your country. You should reach out to experienced advocates to seek advice on how to identify advocacy goals and strategies. Experienced advocates can assist you in sorting through and interpreting World Bank documents, crafting realistic requests to World Bank staff, knowing which advocacy strategies tend to be most effective, coordinating your efforts with others, and anticipating common roadblocks faced by advocates.

Outright International and the Bank Information Center may be able to assist you in planning and implementing your advocacy strategies. The Bank Information Center describes itself as an independent, non-governmental organization that advocates for transparency, accountability, sustainability, and inclusion in development finance. The Bank Information Center's [Tools for Activists: An Information and Advocacy Guide to the World Bank Group](#) is a popular resource among advocates. In addition, you may find other groups in your country who have already been engaging with the World Bank on other issues.

The World Bank may seem unfamiliar, bureaucratic, or opaque. However, its own policies require the prevention of discrimination, making it a crucial advocacy tool for inclusive development. Outright International encourages LGBTIQ advocates around the world to seize this opportunity to ensure that no one is left behind.





OUTRIGHT
INTERNATIONAL

Contact:

Outright International

216 East 45th Street, 17th Floor, New York, NY, 10017

+1 212 430 6054

comms@outrightinternational.org

outrightinternational.org