

OP 4.11 - Physical Cultural Resources

These policies were prepared for use by World Bank staff and are not necessarily a complete treatment of the subject.

OP 4.11
July, 2006

Note: OP/BP 4.11, *Physical Cultural Resources*, were revised on April 2013 to take into account the recommendations in “*Investment Lending Reform: Modernizing and Consolidating Operational Policies and Procedures*” (R2012-0204 [IDA/R2012-0248]), which were approved by the Executive Directors on October 25, 2012. As a result of these recommendations, OP/BP 10.00, *Investment Project Financing*, have been revised, among other things, to incorporate OP/BP 13.05, *Supervision* and OP/BP 13.55, *Implementation Completion Report*, (which have accordingly been retired). OP/BP 4.11 have consequently been updated to reflect these changes, as well as to reflect the updated title of the Bank’s policy on access to information.

OP/BP 4.11 should be read in conjunction with OP/BP 4.01, *Environmental Assessment*.

Questions on this OP/BP may be addressed to the Safeguard Policies Helpdesk in OPCS (safeguards@worldbank.org).

Revised April 2013

Introduction

1. This policy addresses physical cultural resources,¹ which are defined as movable or immovable objects, sites, structures, groups of structures, and natural features and landscapes that have archaeological, paleontological, historical, architectural, religious, aesthetic, or other cultural significance. Physical cultural resources may be located in urban or rural settings, and may be above or below ground, or under water. Their cultural interest may be at the local, provincial or national level, or within the international community.
2. Physical cultural resources are important as sources of valuable scientific and historical information, as assets for economic and social development, and as integral parts of a people’s cultural identity and practices.

Objective

3. The Bank² assists countries to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts on physical cultural resources from development projects³ that it finances. The impacts on physical cultural resources resulting from project activities, including mitigating measures, may not contravene either the borrower’s national legislation, or its obligations under relevant international environmental treaties and agreements.⁴

Physical Cultural Resources within Environmental Assessment

4. The borrower addresses impacts on physical cultural resources in projects proposed for Bank financing, as an integral part of the environmental assessment (EA) process. The steps elaborated below follow the EA sequence of: screening; developing terms of reference (TORs); collecting baseline data; impact assessment; and formulating mitigating measures and a management plan.⁵
5. The following projects are classified during the environmental screening process as Category A or B, and are subject to the provisions of this policy: (a) any project involving significant excavations, demolition, movement of earth, flooding, or other environmental changes; and (b) any project located in, or in the vicinity of, a physical cultural resources site recognized by the borrower. Projects specifically designed to support the management or conservation of physical cultural resources are individually reviewed, and are normally classified as Category A or B.⁶
6. To develop the TORs for the EA, the borrower, in consultation with the Bank, relevant experts, and relevant project-affected groups, identifies the likely physical cultural resources issues, if any, to be taken into account by the EA. The TORs normally specify that physical cultural resources be included in the baseline data collection phase of the EA.

7. The borrower identifies physical cultural resources likely to be affected by the project and assesses the project's potential impacts on these resources as an integral part of the EA process, in accordance with the Bank's EA requirements.⁷
8. When the project is likely to have adverse impacts on physical cultural resources, the borrower identifies appropriate measures for avoiding or mitigating these impacts as part of the EA process. These measures may range from full site protection to selective mitigation, including salvage and documentation, in cases where a portion or all of the physical cultural resources may be lost.
9. As an integral part of the EA process, the borrower develops a physical cultural resources management plan⁸ that includes measures for avoiding or mitigating any adverse impacts on physical cultural resources, provisions for managing chance finds,⁹ any necessary measures for strengthening institutional capacity, and a monitoring system to track the progress of these activities. The physical cultural resources management plan is consistent with the country's overall policy framework and national legislation and takes into account institutional capabilities with regard to physical cultural resources.
10. The Bank reviews, and discusses with the borrower, the findings and recommendations related to the physical cultural resources aspects of the EA, and determines whether they provide an adequate basis for processing the project for Bank financing.¹⁰

Consultation

11. As part of the public consultations required in the EA process, the consultative process for the physical cultural resources component normally includes relevant project-affected groups, concerned government authorities, and relevant nongovernmental organizations in documenting the presence and significance of physical cultural resources, assessing potential impacts, and exploring avoidance and mitigation options.

Disclosure

12. The findings of the physical cultural resources component of the EA are disclosed as part of, and in the same manner as, the EA report.¹¹ Exceptions to such disclosure would be considered when the borrower, in consultation with the Bank and persons with relevant expertise, determines that disclosure would compromise or jeopardize the safety or integrity of the physical cultural resources involved or would endanger the source of information about the physical cultural resources. In such cases, sensitive information relating to these particular aspects may be omitted from the EA report.

Projects in Situations of Urgent Need of Assistance or Capacity Constraints under OP 10.00

13. This policy normally applies to projects processed under paragraph 11 of [OP 10.00](#), *Investment Project Financing*. [OP/BP 4.01](#), *Environmental Assessment*, sets out the application of EA to such projects.¹² When compliance with any requirement of OP 4.11, *Physical Cultural Resources* would prevent the effective and timely achievement of the objectives of such a project, the Bank (subject to the limitations set forth in paragraph 11 of [OP 10.00](#)) may exempt the project from such a requirement, recording the justification for the exemption in the loan documents. However, the Bank requires that any necessary corrective measures be built into either the emergency operation or a future lending operation.

Projects Involving Subprojects or Financial Intermediaries

14. The physical cultural resources aspects of subprojects financed under Bank projects are addressed in accordance with the Bank's EA requirements.¹³

Country Systems

15. The Bank may decide to use a country's systems to address environmental and social safeguards issues in a Bank-financed project that affects physical cultural resources. This decision is made in accordance with the requirements of the applicable Bank policy on country systems.¹⁴

Capacity Building

16. When the borrower's capacity is inadequate to manage physical cultural resources that may be affected by a Bank-financed project, the project may include components to strengthen that capacity.¹⁵

17. Given that the borrower's responsibility for physical cultural resources management extends beyond individual projects, the Bank may consider broader capacity building activities as part of its overall country assistance program.

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1. Also known as 'cultural heritage', 'cultural patrimony', 'cultural assets' or 'cultural property'.
 2. "Bank" is as defined in [OP/BP 4.01, Environmental Assessment](#).
 3. The project is described in Schedule 2 to the Financing Agreement. This policy applies to all components of the project, regardless of the source of financing.
 4. This includes the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, 1972 (UNESCO World Heritage Convention).
 5. See [OP 4.01, Environmental Assessment](#).
 6. For definitions of project categories A and B, see [OP 4.01, Environmental Assessment, paragraph 8](#).
 7. See [OP 4.01, Environmental Assessment](#).
 8. If there is an Environmental Management Plan, it incorporates the physical cultural resources management plan. See OP 4.01, *Environmental Assessment, Annex C*.
 9. For the purposes of this policy, 'chance finds' are defined as physical cultural resources encountered unexpectedly during project implementation.
 10. See [OP 4.01, Environmental Assessment](#), paragraph 5.
 11. See [The World Bank Policy on Access to Information](#).
 12. See [OP 4.01, Environmental Assessment](#), paragraph 12.
 13. As set out in paragraphs 9, 10, and 11 of [OP 4.01, Environmental Assessment](#). The relevant requirements in these paragraphs apply also to physical cultural resources aspects of other projects which are similarly designed to finance multiple sub-projects that are identified and appraised during the course of project implementation (e.g., social investment funds (SIFs) and community-driven development projects (CDDs)).
 14. [OP/BP 4.00, Piloting the Use of Borrower Systems to Address Environmental and Social Safeguards Issues in Bank-Supported Projects](#), which is applicable only to pilot projects using borrower systems, includes requirements that such systems be designed to meet the policy objectives and adhere to the operational principles related to physical cultural resources identified in [OP 4.11, Physical Cultural Resources](#).
 15. See [OP 4.01, Environmental Assessment](#), paragraph 13.