

Human Rights Based Approach to Environment and Climate Change – Summary

Natural capital like natural resources, ecosystems, ecosystem services and climate is the basis for human existence and activity. Changes in the environment and the climate have the greatest impact on the people living in poverty, people whose resilience to such changes is very weak.

One of Sida's main tasks is to contribute to a fair and environmental sustainable development. This means taking into account different factors such as environmental impact, climate change, disaster risk and the loss of biodiversity as well as equal distribution of resources. Applying a HRBA, will make these efforts more effective in ensuring that the interests of poor and marginalised women, men and children are prioritised and that people of power are identified and held accountable.

A human rights based approach takes a starting point in **international human rights commitments and standards**. Key questions to discuss when assessing proposed initiatives are:

- Are international human rights agreements and standards used as a reference to justify and design the initiative? Have these commitments been made a precondition for Swedish support?
- How will these international and national commitments be monitored and what will be done if there are gaps in compliance?
- Is there an analysis of the risks and opportunities related to human rights and environmental consequences – both positive and negative?

An important element in a human rights based approach is the focus on **empowerment and capacity development**. Key issues to consider are:

- To what extent does the initiative contribute to capacity development of affected populations to develop necessary skills for dialogue and negotiation? To articulate demands for protection and services that enable them to maintain and develop their livelihoods and health?
 - To what extent does the initiative develop capacities of local community based organisations that can enhance knowledge and provide voice to the affected groups?
 - Is there support to capacity development of associations representing farmers, fishers and groups engaged in natural resource management, and has analysis been made of who is included and excluded from these groups (in relation to gender, ethnicity, etc.)?
 - To what extent does the initiative develop capacities of authorities, investors and businesses to monitor and adhere to legal and voluntary human rights instruments?
 - Have capacities been developed among duty bearers (often together with private sector actors) to assess and mitigate the environmental risks?
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The questions below, related to the four HRBA principles, may also help to prepare, assess and monitor initiatives to ensure that human rights are enhanced and respected both in results and processes.

<p>Non-discrimination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are vulnerable groups specifically identified and targeted? • Is there a proper analysis of the consequences of the initiative for these women, men, girls and boys? • Is there a plan for their inclusion and benefit including disaggregated data and indicators? • Are tariffs and fees adjusted to accommodate also poor and marginalised groups? • Are land and property rights addressed to ensure that women, minorities and poor people are protected or fairly compensated? • Are the livelihoods supported resilient to risks related to climate and market volatility and uncertainty, and thereby relevant for vulnerable populations that cannot afford to shoulder uncertain risks? 	<p>Transparency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the plans and goals of the supported initiative made public and explicit in an accessible manner to all stakeholders concerned, including the most marginalised groups? • Will affected women, men, girls and boys receive sufficient, timely and accessible information, including separate views on the plans, and will they be able to take part in and influence the process? • Will the access to information regarding the local risk situation be improved and will early warning systems be developed so that vulnerable people's ability to protect themselves and quickly recover after disasters is strengthened? • Does the initiative contribute to capacities and commitments for greater transparency in policies and practice affecting land and natural resource tenure, particularly in new forms of land acquisitions and concessions?
<p>Participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are fair and effective platforms for public-private dialogue in place, and do they give space to representatives of women and men with less power and status? • Are measures taken to include and enhance capacity of those with less knowledge and power so that they can participate meaningfully in the consultative processes? E.g. do all stakeholders have sufficient and accessible information on the issues being addressed; are they invited to truly participatory processes? • Are stakeholders actively engaged at all stages of the programming process? • Do initiatives make space for vulnerable people to take actions of their own choosing to manage perceived risks? 	<p>Accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the initiative contribute to ensuring that public and private sector actors have systems in place to monitor and disclose social and environmental impacts according to national and international standards? • Do monitoring and evaluation arrangements involve civil society organisations representing the concerned population? • Are there consequences (legal, financial or moral) for non-compliance to human rights objectives and principles? • Are accessible and effective mechanisms for redress and complaints established or planned for? • Does the initiative facilitate access to networks, organisations and other sources of information that may assist duty bearers to enhance their accountability and rights holders to claim their rights?

To learn more on a human rights based approach in environment and climate change programming, read the full thematic area brief.