

## WWF Environmental and Social Safeguards - Risk Categorization Memorandum

Version 2.1 November 2020

<b>Project Name:</b> Securing a Living Amazon through Landscape Connectivity in Southern Guyana	<b>Date:</b> February 8, 2022																					
<b>Executing Agency/ies:</b> Environmental Protection Agency of Guyana																						
<b>Landscape Categorization on E&amp;S Risks:</b>																						
<b>High Risk - (A) ___ and/or (Special Consideration) ___ /Medium Risk (B) <u>X</u> / Low Risk (C) ___</b>																						
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">Substantive Safeguard Standards Triggered:</th> <th style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">Yes/ TBC</th> <th style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Natural Habitats</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">X</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pest Management</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Indigenous Peoples</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">X</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Restriction of Access &amp; Resettlement</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">X</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Community Health, Safety and Security</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">X</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Physical and Cultural Resources</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">TBC</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Substantive Safeguard Standards Triggered:	Yes/ TBC	No	Natural Habitats	X		Pest Management			Indigenous Peoples	X		Restriction of Access & Resettlement	X		Community Health, Safety and Security	X		Physical and Cultural Resources	TBC	
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<p><b>In addition to the Substantive Safeguards above, the four Process Standards apply to all projects:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Environmental and Social Risk Management</li> <li>● Consultation and Disclosure</li> <li>● Community Stakeholder Engagement</li> <li>● Grievance Mechanism</li> </ul>																						
<b>Landscapes categorized as low risk have been screened in accordance to the Standard on E&amp;S Risk Management.</b>																						
<p><b>Project Area Context</b></p> <p>To support the ecological integrity of the Amazon, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) approved the Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Program (ASL) II, led by the World Bank as the GEF Agency, in 2019. The program objective is to improve integrated landscape management and conservation of ecosystems in targeted areas in the Amazon region, and includes Child Projects in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru and Suriname. The proposed Child Project, <b>Securing a Living Amazon by Strengthening the Management of Protected Areas and Priority Landscapes in Southern Guyana</b>, contributes directly to this program. The aim of the Project is to strengthen landscape connectivity through improved management of the Kanuku Mountain Protected Area and in the North Rupununi Wetlands in southern Guyana. This will be achieved through the following four components:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Integrated Protected Landscapes:</i> It will support strengthening of the KMPA's management, in coordination with the Indigenous communities who live around and utilize resources of the protected area. More specifically, the project will support new infrastructure for PAC's site level operations and provide training and capacity building for PAC site level staff and local communities, and strengthen natural resource use planning in the KMPA through a participatory process and following the FPIC process.</li> <li>2. <i>Integrated Productive Landscapes:</i> The project will support a process for integrated management planning in the North Rupununi Wetland landscape, which will include a governance framework for decision making, as</li> </ol>																						

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well as overall goals and objectives for the landscape. The project will also support implementation of sustainable land and water management activities.

3. *Policies/Incentives for Protected and Productive Landscapes:* The project will support the revision of the PA Act through a legal review, preparation of regulatory text in consultation with all key stakeholders, and submission of Revised Act to Cabinet for Review and tabling in Parliament.
4. *Capacity Building and Regional Cooperation:* The component includes monitoring and evaluation, communications, as well as cooperation with the wider Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program.

The Child Project area lies in southern Guyana and comprises two sites: the North Rupununi Wetlands (NRW) and the adjacent Kanuku Mountains Protected Area (KMPA). The North Rupununi Wetlands has enormous vertebrate diversity, and consists of a mixture of seasonal/intermittent flooded savannahs and freshwater bodies and permanent freshwater areas, including rivers, streams, creeks, marshes and lakes. Flooding during the rainy season creates a complex hydrological connection between the Amazon and Essequibo River systems and allows for the exchange of fauna and ensures the water and food security for twenty-one indigenous Makushi communities, which have approximately 7,000 inhabitants. This flooding and hydrological connection replenish fish stocks, recharges water sources, allows for the exchange of fauna, particularly freshwater fishes thereby increasing diversity, and promote gene flow. The Kanuku Mountains, which are adjacent to the NRW, were declared a protected area in 2012. It is documented as having the second-highest bat diversity (89 species) of any protected area in the world and holds 70% of the 25 bird species considered to be endemic to the Guiana Shield. 99% of its 611,000 hectares are covered in forest, making it important for carbon sequestration (10.4% of Guyana's irrecoverable carbon by mass is in PAs)<sup>1</sup> and climate regulation; 1% is savannah.

### Summary of Key Safeguard Issues

- Policy on Protection of Natural Habitats: This policy is triggered as the proposed Project directly targets protecting and restoring natural habitats; including through improved PA management plans, improved logging practices, and strengthening local communities' ability to conserve the natural resources they depend on. Additionally, the construction activity proposed in Component 1 related to the KMPA management could have an impact on biodiversity if adequate mitigation measures are not in place. Prior to construction of any new building, an Environmental Impact Assessment must be conducted in accordance with WWF safeguards and Guyanese law, and has been included in the project budget.
- Policy on Involuntary Resettlement: While the proposed Project is unlikely to cause displacement of people, the project might lead to certain access restrictions. Given that the activities proposed under the project include, but are not limited to, protected area management, improved wetlands management and changes in timber use on community lands, WWF's policy on Involuntary Resettlement is triggered because the Project will help define and thereby potentially restrict access to natural resources and livelihoods activities.

WWF policies prohibit forced evictions, which include acts involving the coerced or involuntary displacement of individuals, groups, or communities from homes and/or lands and common property resources that were occupied or depended upon, thus eliminating or limiting the ability of an individual, group or community to reside or work in a particular dwelling, residence, or location without the provision of and access to, appropriate forms of legal and other protection. In addition, the project will exclude financing any activities that would lead to physical displacement and voluntary or involuntary relocation. However, economic displacement or restriction to livelihoods or access to natural resources may occur (e.g. as a result of negotiating through FPIC-based consultations the establishment of collaborative management arrangements for wetlands and the updated management plan for the Kanuku Mountains Protected Area). This, however, will only occur with the consent of the affected people and following a decision made with all required information at hand. As the specific project activities will only be confirmed with communities within the first year of project implementation, a Process Framework will be prepared as part of the ESMF to conform to WWF's Environment and Social Safeguards Framework.

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- Policy on Indigenous Peoples: The project will take place on lands customarily and legally owned and used by a number of indigenous communities, and therefore this Policy has been triggered. The Indigenous Peoples within the project area include the Makushi Indigenous peoples, who live in 21 communities, consisting of approximately 7000 persons in the North Rupununi (also North Rupununi Wetlands) and the Wapishana indigenous peoples in in the South Rupununi. There is also a small population of Indigenous Wai-Wai peoples, which live in Kanashen Village, which is to the south of the project sites. Associated with the Kanuku Mountains PA project site are 11 Amerindian villages and 7 satellite communities located around the Kanuku Mountains Protected Area (KMPA). The population of these 11 communities and 7 satellites is not known.

This policy is triggered to ensure the Project respects Indigenous Peoples' rights in the project areas, including their rights to FPIC processes and to tenure over traditional territories; that culturally appropriate and equitable benefits (including from traditional ecological knowledge) are negotiated and agreed upon with the indigenous peoples' communities in question; and that potential adverse impacts are avoided or adequately addressed through participatory and consultative approach. Indigenous peoples live in and/or have cultural, spiritual and economic ties all areas where Project activities will happen, and in most cases are the majority populations in those areas.

As the project activities will only be confirmed during the first six months of implementation, and true FPIC processes were not established with communities during the ProDoc stage due to the ongoing COVID pandemic restrictions, an Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework will be prepared as part of the ESMF to conform to WWF's Environment and Social Safeguards Framework. The Indigenous Peoples Plan will be co-created with communities during the first six months of project implementation with the guidance of the Gender and Safeguards Specialist, who will be hired as part of the PMU.

- Policy on Accountability and Grievance Mechanism: In addition to stakeholders having access to national level grievance and redress mechanisms, the WWF GEF Agency mechanism and the GEF Agency Mechanisms for Conflict Resolution and Accountability, a project level Grievance Mechanism will be created and implemented for this Project.
- Standard on Cultural Resources: Depending on the final Project activities decided upon in collaboration with communities and other stakeholders in Year 1, this Standard may be triggered and a plan created to mitigate identified risks in partnership with potentially affected stakeholders. If no risks are identified with communities, then this Standard will not be triggered and no Plan created.
- Standard on Community Health and Security: This Standard is triggered due to construction activities in Component 1. Additionally, it is triggered because of necessary safety protocols related to the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic. To compliment this Standard, a Guidance Note on Labor and Working conditions will also be issued, due to the construction activities proposed in Component 1 of the project.

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**Summary of Cross Cutting Issues;** (Human Rights, Gender Equality and Women's Rights, Children's Rights, Conflict Sensitivity and Climate Change).

### **Human Rights:**

Gender-based violence is prevalent in the country and the project areas. There have also been cases of Trafficking In Persons reported in the region and project areas. And addressed below, there are several human rights issues related to children in the country and in Region 9 specifically.

More specific to the project, it is possible that the updating of the KMPA management plan could negatively affect the most marginalized and vulnerable people if they are not included in the decision-making process and their access to certain natural resources are restricted. This will be addressed through careful design of the stakeholder engagement plan, and explicit outreach to those vulnerable and/or marginalized communities or individuals. However, in general Indigenous Peoples in Guyana have strong rights and land titles, and in both project areas are well-organized and have strong representative organizations- the Kanuku Mountains Community Representative Group (KMCRG) and the North Rupununi District Development Board (NRDDB).

### **Gender Equality & Women's Rights:**

A detailed Gender Action Plan can be found in Appendix VIII of the ProDoc that links outputs with tangible activities to promote gender inclusion, equality, and equity. A brief summary of the Gender Action Plan includes the following high-level recommendations:

- In the communities, men's and women's differential roles, responsibilities and daily practices directly influence their uses of and needs for natural resources. This needs to be factored into both Component 1 and Component 2 through the collection of gender data and sex-disaggregated data in the Rapid assessments on socio-economic, environmental, and ecological features in the productive landscape to inform regional planning.
- The project will ensure that access to resources and opportunities for training, information and decision-making are equitable and transparent for all community members, including women, at the household, community, and landscape levels.
- The Gender Analysis recommended that, at the community level, there be a quota of 50 percent women in all project related decision-making bodies to increase women's participation in environmental decision making.
- For Component 3, mainstreaming of gender in the new PA Act is a necessity, as the current one is gender blind. The new PA Act should be gender responsive in keeping with mainstreaming of gender in national legislations and policies.
- Within Component 4, the project will include a robust gender responsive Monitoring and Evaluation plan that collects both gender and sex-disaggregated data, including both quantitative and qualitative data.

### **Children's Rights:**

There are existing child rights issues within the project area, including violent discipline of children and child marriages, which includes 6.1% of children being married before age 15 and 41.3% being married before age 18. This is linked to low educational achievement and an adolescent birth rate at 21.3%. Region 9, where the project sites are located, also has the highest levels of child labor in the country at 70.1% prevalent rates. Child marriage and adolescent birth rates are beyond the scope of this project, but there is the potential risk that children may participate in labor related to the project, due simply to the fact that child labor is so prevalent in the Region. The project plans to address this with strict hiring practices that follow national law and international good practice.

### **Conflict Sensitivity:**

Tensions present in Indigenous communities, primarily those related to mining and sub-surface rights, will not be exacerbated by project activities. These tensions are primarily expressed as concerns by communities affected by mining, and have not resulted in violent conflicts to WWF's knowledge, nor are they related to WWF's work. WWF is aware of the tensions and will monitor them throughout project implementation. In addition to regular community consultations, the project-level grievance mechanism will be a necessary tool in monitoring and addressing conflict with project stakeholders and rightsholders.

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### Climate Change:

The impact of climate change has already been noted in the area as it experiences shorter, more intense rainy seasons and hotter temperatures during the dry seasons. This results in greater occurrences of both extremes of floods and droughts. Also, with rising temperatures and increased rainfall variability, the impacts on human well-being and the environment from threats are likely to be exacerbated. In this context, preserving the integrity of the Rupununi Wetlands is a priority, since wetlands have been widely demonstrated to be efficient nature-based solutions to mitigate impacts of rainfall variability, floods and droughts.

A Climate Risk Screening was conducted for the project, and the main climate impacts are:

- Temperature Fluctuation: The climate change projection for southern Guyana indicates a 2 to 3°C temperature rise by 2050
- Frequency and Intensity of Heavy Rainfall: One of the greatest threats of climate change in the KMPA and NRW is the increased precipitation variability. This will result in greater occurrences of both extremes of floods and droughts.

The project will mitigate potential climate change impacts by mainstreaming mitigations and responses into project-developed plans, including resource use maps and land use maps in KMPA and management planning for the NRW.

### Required Actions for Impact Assessment (ESIA) and Mitigation Framework (ESMF):

An Environmental and Social Management Framework will be required for this project, created by consultants prior to project implementation. The ESMF will include an Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework, a Process Framework, and guidance on labor and working conditions, which will include information on preventing child labor.

Additionally, an Environmental Impact Assessment will be required prior to beginning Component 1, Output 1.1.1. This will be completed by qualified environmental engineers either on the PMU or within the firm hired to complete construction of the facilities.

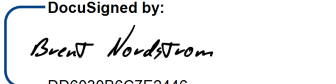
Furthermore, a Gender Assessment and Gender Action Plan will be drafted and submitted with the ProDoc and a Grievance Redress Mechanism will be drafted prior to final agency approval.

**Signature:**   
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