

OD 4.30: Involuntary Resettlement

This directive was prepared for the guidance of staff of the World Bank and is not necessarily a complete treatment of the subjects covered.

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Involuntary Resettlement

Introduction

1. This directive describes Bank¹ policy and procedures on involuntary resettlement, as well as the conditions that borrowers are expected to meet in operations involving involuntary resettlement.² Planning and financing resettlement components or free-standing projects are an integral part of preparation for projects that cause involuntary displacement. Any operation that involves land acquisition or is screened as a Category A or B project for environmental assessment purposes³ should be reviewed for potential resettlement requirements early in the project cycle ([para. 20](#)).

2. Development projects that displace people involuntarily⁴ generally give rise to severe economic, social, and environmental problems: production systems are dismantled; productive assets and income sources are lost; people are relocated to environments where their productive skills may be less applicable and the competition for resources greater; community structures and social networks are weakened; kin groups are dispersed; and cultural identity, traditional authority, and the potential for mutual help are diminished. Involuntary resettlement may cause severe long-term hardship, impoverishment, and environmental damage unless appropriate measures are carefully planned and carried out.⁵

Policy Objectives

3. The objective of the Bank's resettlement policy is to ensure that the population displaced by a project receives benefits from it. Involuntary resettlement is an integral part of project design and should be dealt with from the earliest stages of project preparation ([para. 28](#)), taking into account the following policy considerations:

(a) Involuntary resettlement should be avoided or minimized where feasible, exploring all viable alternative project designs. For example, realignment of roads or reductions in dam height may significantly reduce resettlement needs.

(b) Where displacement is unavoidable, resettlement plans should be developed. All involuntary resettlement should be conceived and executed as development programs, with resettlers provided sufficient investment resources and opportunities to share in project benefits. Displaced persons should be (i) compensated for their losses at full replacement cost prior to the actual move; (ii) assisted with the move and supported during the transition period in the resettlement site; and (iii) assisted in their efforts to improve their former living standards, income earning capacity, and production levels, or at least to restore them. Particular attention should be paid to the needs of the poorest groups to be resettled.

(c) Community participation in planning and implementing resettlement should be encouraged.

Appropriate patterns of social organization should be established, and existing social and cultural institutions of resettlers and their hosts⁶ should be supported and used to the greatest extent possible.

(d) Resettlers should be integrated socially and economically into host communities so that adverse impacts on host communities are minimized. The best way of achieving this integration is for resettlement to be planned in areas benefiting from the project and through consultation with the future hosts.

(e) Land, housing, infrastructure, and other compensation should be provided to the adversely affected population, indigenous groups,⁷ ethnic minorities, and pastoralists who may have usufruct or customary rights to the land or other resources taken for the project. The absence of legal title to land by such groups should not be a bar to compensation.

Resettlement Planning

4. Where large-scale⁸ population displacement is unavoidable, a detailed resettlement plan, timetable, and budget are required. Resettlement plans should be built around a development strategy and package aimed at improving or at least restoring the economic base for those relocated. Experience indicates that cash compensation alone is normally inadequate. Voluntary settlement may form part of a resettlement plan, provided measures to address the special circumstances of involuntary resettlers are included. Preference should be given to land-based resettlement strategies for people dislocated from agricultural settings. If suitable land is unavailable, nonland-based strategies built around opportunities for employment or self-employment may be used.

Plan Content

5. The content and level of detail of resettlement plans, which will vary with circumstances, especially the magnitude of resettlement, should normally include a statement of objectives and policies, an executive summary, and provision for the following:

- (a) organizational responsibilities (para. 6);
- (b) community participation and integration with host populations (paras. 7-10);
- (c) socioeconomic survey (para. 11);
- (d) legal framework (para. 12);
- (e) alternative sites and selection (para. 13);
- (f) valuation of and compensation for lost assets (paras. 14-16);
- (g) land tenure, acquisition, and transfer (para. 17);
- (h) access to training, employment, and credit (para. 18);
- (i) shelter, infrastructure, and social services (para. 19);
- (j) environmental protection and management (para. 20); and
- (k) implementation schedule, monitoring, and evaluation (paras. 21-22).

Cost estimates should be prepared for these activities, and they should be budgeted and scheduled in

coordination with the physical works of the main investment project.

Organizational Responsibilities

6. The responsibility for resettlement rests with the borrower. The organizational framework for managing resettlement must be developed during preparation and adequate resources provided to the responsible institutions. The organization responsible for resettlement should be strengthened when entities executing infrastructure or other sector-specific projects lack the experience and outlook needed to design and implement resettlement. One alternative is to create a special resettlement unit within the project entity: this can facilitate the involvement of other line agencies. Another alternative is to entrust resettlement to the regional or town administration that knows the population and area, can mobilize local expertise, speaks the resettlers' language, and will ultimately be responsible for the integration of resettlers into the host population and area. There also may be considerable scope for involving nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in planning, implementing, and monitoring resettlement.⁹

Community Participation and Integration with Host Population

7. Most displaced people prefer to move as part of a preexisting community, neighborhood, or kinship group. The acceptability of a resettlement plan can be increased and the disruption caused by resettlement can be cushioned by moving people in groups, reducing dispersion, sustaining existing patterns of group organization, and retaining access to cultural property¹⁰ (temples, pilgrimage centers, etc.), if necessary, through the relocation of the property.

8. The involvement of involuntary resettlers and hosts in planning prior to the move is critical. Initial resistance to the idea of involuntary resettlement is to be expected. To obtain cooperation, participation, and feedback, the affected hosts and resettlers need to be systematically informed and consulted during preparation of the resettlement plan about their options and rights. They should also be able to choose from a number of acceptable resettlement alternatives. These steps can be taken directly or through formal and informal leaders and representatives. Experience has shown that local NGOs can often provide valuable assistance and ensure viable community participation. Moreover, institutionalized arrangements, such as regular meetings between project officials and communities, should be provided for resettlers and hosts to communicate their concerns about the resettlement program to project staff throughout planning and implementation.¹¹ Particular attention must be given to ensure that vulnerable groups such as indigenous people, ethnic minorities, the landless, and women are represented adequately in such arrangements.

9. The plan should address and mitigate resettlement's impact on host populations. Host communities and local governments should be informed and consulted. Any payment due the hosts for land or other assets provided to resettlers should be promptly rendered. Conflicts between hosts and resettlers may develop as increased demands are placed on land, water, forests, services, etc., or if the resettlers are provided services and housing superior to that of the hosts. Conditions and services in host communities should improve, or at least not deteriorate. Providing improved education, water, health, and production services to both groups fosters a better social climate for their integration. In the long run, the extra investment will help prevent conflicts and secure the project's aims.

10. Successful resettlement requires a timely transfer of responsibility from settlement agencies to the settlers themselves. Otherwise, a dependency relationship may arise, and agency resources may become tied up in a limited number of continually supervised schemes. Local leadership must be encouraged to assume responsibility for environmental management and infrastructure maintenance.

Socioeconomic Survey

11. Resettlement plans should be based on recent information about the scale and impact of resettlement on the displaced population. In addition to describing standard household characteristics, socioeconomic surveys should describe (a) the magnitude of displacement; (b) information on the full resource base of the affected population, including income derived from informal sector and nonfarm activities, and from common property; (c) the extent to which groups will experience total or partial loss of assets; (d) public infrastructure and social services that will be affected; (e) formal and informal institutions (such as community organizations, ritual groups, etc.) that can assist with designing and implementing the resettlement programs; and (f) attitudes on resettlement options. Socioeconomic surveys, recording the names of affected families, should be conducted as early as possible to prevent inflows of population ineligible for compensation.

Legal Framework

12. A clear understanding of the legal issues involved in resettlement is needed to design a feasible resettlement plan. An analysis should be made to determine the nature of the legal framework for the resettlement envisaged, including (a) the scope of the power of eminent domain, the nature of compensation associated with it, both in terms of the valuation methodology and the timing of payment; (b) the legal and administrative procedures applicable, including the appeals process and the normal time-frame for such procedures; (c) land titling and registration procedures; and (d) laws and regulations relating to the agencies responsible for implementing resettlement and those related to land compensation, consolidation, land use, environment, water use, and social welfare.

Alternative Sites and Selection

13. The identification of several possible relocation sites and the demarcation of selected sites is a critical step for both rural and urban resettlement. For land-based resettlement, the new site's productive potential and locational advantages should be at least equivalent to those of the old site. The Bank encourages "land for land" approaches, providing replacement land at least equivalent to the lost land. For rural settlers, irrigation, land reclamation, tree crop development, intensification of production, and other innovations often can provide adequate production potential on limited amounts of land to resettle agriculturalists, even in countries with high population densities. In selecting sites, attention must be paid to the availability of sources of off-farm income (fishing, gathering forest products, seasonal wage employment) to complement farm income. For urban resettlers, the new site should ensure comparable access to employment, infrastructure, services, and production opportunities. For both rural and urban resettlement, the borrower needs to (a) develop institutional and technical arrangements for identifying and preparing relocation sites, e.g., pooling together small plots, wasteland reclamation, land leveling, and terracing; (b) draw up timetables and budgets for site preparation and transfer; (c) make legal arrangements for transferring titles to resettlers; and (d) consider, when necessary, a temporary freeze on land transactions within the relocation area to prevent land speculation. Though the Bank does not normally disburse against land acquisition, it can finance land improvement to accommodate resettlers.

Valuation of and Compensation for Lost Assets

14. Valuation of lost assets should be made at their replacement cost. Compensation is facilitated by (a) paying special attention to the adequacy of the legal arrangements concerning land title, registration, and site occupation; (b) publicizing among people to be displaced the laws and regulations on valuation and compensation; (c) establishing criteria for determining the resettlement eligibility of affected households, e.g., households that have only partially lost their assets but are no longer economically viable should be entitled to full resettlement; and (d) developing mechanisms to prevent illegal encroachers and squatters, including an influx of nonresidents entering to take advantage of such benefits, from participating in the compensation arrangements, by an early recording of the numbers and names of affected populations

entitled to compensation/rehabilitation.

15. Some types of loss, such as access to (a) public services; (b) customers and suppliers; and (c) fishing, grazing, or forest areas, cannot easily be evaluated or compensated for in monetary terms. Attempts must therefore be made to establish access to equivalent and culturally acceptable resources and earning opportunities.

16. Vulnerable groups at particular risk are indigenous people, the landless and semilandless, and households headed by females who, though displaced, may not be protected through national land compensation legislation. The resettlement plan must include land allocation or culturally acceptable alternative income-earning strategies to protect the livelihood of these people.

Land Tenure, Acquisition, and Transfer

17. Resettlement plans should review the main land tenure and transfer systems, including common property and nontitle-based usufruct systems governed by locally recognized land allocation mechanisms. The objective is to treat customary and formal rights as equally as possible in devising compensation rules and procedures. The plan should address the issues raised by the different tenure systems found in a project area, including (a) the compensation eligibility of land-dependent populations; (b) the valuation procedures applicable to different tenure types; and (c) the grievance procedures available for disputes over land acquisition. Plans should contain provisions for conducting land surveys and regularizing land tenure in the earliest stages of project development. Planning should also anticipate the approximate time needed to acquire and transfer land.

Access to Training, Employment, and Credit

18. Normally, general economic growth cannot be relied upon to protect the welfare of the project-affected population. Thus, alternative employment strategies are needed for nonagricultural displaced people, or where the land that can be made available is not sufficient to accommodate all the displaced farmers. The resettlement plan should, where feasible, exploit new economic activities made possible by the main investment requiring the displacement. Vocational training, employment counseling, transportation to jobs, employment in the main investment project or in resettlement activities, establishment of industries, incentives for firms to locate in the area, credit and extension for small businesses or reservoir aquaculture, and preference in public sector employment should all be considered where appropriate.

Shelter, Infrastructure, and Social Services

19. To ensure the economic and social viability of the relocated communities, adequate resources should be allocated to provide shelter, infrastructure (e.g., water supply, feeder roads), and social services (e.g., schools, health care centers).¹² Site development, engineering, and architectural designs should be prepared for shelter, infrastructure, and social services. Since community or self-built houses are often better accepted and more tailored to the resettlers' needs than contractor-built housing, provision of a building site with suitable infrastructure, model plans, building materials, technical assistance, and "construction allowances" (for income foregone while resettlers build their houses) is an option communities should be offered. Planning for shelter, infrastructure, and services should take into account population growth.

Environmental Protection and Management

20. The screening process for an environmental assessment (EA) normally classifies projects involving involuntary resettlement as Category A.¹³ The EA of the main investment requiring the resettlement should thus cover the potential environmental impacts of the resettlement. The resettlement plan must be developed in coordination with the EA and define the boundaries of the relocation area, and calculate incremental

population density per land unit. In agricultural projects (involving, for example, relocation to the catchment surrounding a reservoir, or to a downstream command area), if the incoming resettled population is large in relation to the host population, such environmental issues as deforestation, overgrazing, soil erosion, sanitation, and pollution are likely to become serious and plans should either include appropriate mitigating measures, including training of oustees, or else should allow for alternative sites to be selected. Urban resettlement raises other density-related issues (e.g., transportation capacity, access to potable water, sanitation systems, health facilities, etc.). Constructive environmental management, provided through the EA's mitigation plan,¹⁴ may provide good opportunities and benefits to resettlers and host populations alike (e.g., project-financed compensatory afforestation not only replaces the forests submerged by reservoirs but also offers gainful employment). If the likely consequences on the environment are unacceptable, alternative and/or additional relocation sites must be found.

Implementation Schedule, Monitoring, and Evaluation

21. The timing of resettlement should be coordinated with the implementation of the main investment component of the project requiring the resettlement. All resettlement plans should include an implementation schedule for each activity covering initial baseline and preparation, actual relocation, and post-relocation economic and social activities. The plan should include a target date when the expected benefits to resettlers and hosts would be achieved.

22. Arrangements for monitoring implementation of resettlement and evaluating its impact should be developed by the borrower during project preparation and used during supervision.¹⁵ Monitoring provides both a warning system for project managers and a channel for the resettlers to make known their needs and their reactions to resettlement execution. Monitoring and evaluation units should be adequately funded and staffed by specialists in resettlement. In-house monitoring by the implementing agency may need to be supplemented by independent monitors to ensure complete and objective information. Annual and midterm reviews are desirable for large-scale resettlement. The borrower should be required to continue impact evaluation for a reasonable period after all resettlement and related development activities have been completed. The borrower should also be required to inform the Bank about the findings.

Bank Role and Project Options

23. The Bank supports borrowers' efforts through (a) assistance in designing and assessing resettlement policy, strategies, laws, regulations, and specific plans; (b) financing technical assistance to strengthen the capacity of agencies responsible for resettlement; and (c) direct financing of the investment costs of resettlement. The Bank may sometimes finance resettlement even though it has not financed the main investment that made displacement and resettlement necessary (*para. 26*).

24. The task manager (TM) should inform the borrower of the Bank's resettlement policy. Starting early in the project cycle, the TM with the support of Bank operational, research, and legal staff should assess government policies, experiences, institutions, and the legal framework covering resettlement. In particular, the TM needs to ensure that involuntary resettlement is avoided or minimized, that laws and regulations concerning displaced people provide compensation sufficient to replace all lost assets, and that displaced persons are assisted to improve, or at least restore, their former living standards, income earning capacity, and production levels.

25. The adequacy of the resettlement plan should be reviewed by appropriate social, technical, and legal experts. Resettlement specialists should visit the possible resettlement sites and review their suitability. In the case of large-scale relocation, such experts should be included in independent technical or environmental review boards.¹⁶

26. Bank financing of resettlement can be provided as follows: (a) As a component of the main investment project causing displacement and requiring resettlement. (b) If large enough, as a free-standing resettlement project with appropriate cross-conditionalities, processed and implemented in parallel with the investment project that causes the displacement. The latter approach may better focus country and Bank attention on the effective resolution of resettlement issues. (c) As a sector investment loan.¹⁷ Where the specific resettlement needs of each subproject are not known in advance, the borrower would need to agree to resettlement policies, planning principles, institutional arrangements, and design criteria that meet Bank policy and requirements as a condition of the loan. An estimate should be provided of total population to be displaced and overall resettlement costs, as well as an evaluation of proposed resettlement sites. Subprojects in sector investment loans should be screened by the implementing agency to ensure consistency with this directive, and approved individually by the Bank. For countries with a series of operations requiring resettlement, efforts to improve the policy, institutional, and legal framework for resettlement should form part of the Bank's ongoing country and sector dialogue with the government. These efforts should be appropriately reflected in economic and sector work and in country strategy papers and briefs.

Processing and Documentation

27. The Regional Vice President (RVP) should be kept informed of major resettlement issues, and his guidance sought where necessary. The Regional Environment Division (RED), the Legal Department (LEG), and settlement specialists in Sector Policy and Research (PRS) should be consulted or included as necessary in peer reviews on involuntary resettlement issues throughout the project cycle.

Identification

28. The possibility of involuntary resettlement should be determined as early as possible and described in all project documents. The TM should (a) briefly summarize in the Initial Executive Project Summary (Initial EPS)¹⁸ the magnitude, strategy, and timing of the resettlement; (b) inform borrowers of the Bank's resettlement policy; (c) review past borrower experience with similar operations; (d) invite agencies responsible for resettlement to discuss their policies, plans, and institutional, consultative, and legal arrangements for resettlement; and (e) where appropriate, ensure that technical assistance is provided early to borrowers. Such assistance should include the use of project preparation facility (PPF) resources¹⁹ for planning resettlement and building institutional capacity.

Preparation

29. During project preparation, the feasibility of resettlement must be established, a strategy agreed upon, the resettlement plan drafted, and budget estimates prepared.²⁰ The full costs of resettlement should be identified and included in the total cost of the main investment project, regardless of financing source. The costs of resettlement should also be treated as a charge against the economic benefits of the investment project that causes the relocation. Any net benefits to resettlers (as compared to the "without project" circumstances) should be added to the benefit stream of the main investment. While the resettlement component or free-standing project need not be economically viable on its own, it should be the least-cost approach consistent with the policies laid out above.

Appraisal and Negotiation

30. Submission to the Bank of a time-bound resettlement plan and budget that conforms to Bank policy is a condition of appraisal for projects involving resettlement, except for sector investment loans as discussed in [para. 26](#). All final EPSs should confirm that this requirement has been met. The appraisal mission should ascertain (a) the extent that involuntary resettlement and human hardship will be minimized and whether borrowers can manage the process; (b) the adequacy of the plan, including the timetable and budget for

resettlement and compensation; (c) the soundness of the economic and financial analysis; (d) the availability and adequacy of sites and funding for all resettlement activities; (e) the feasibility of the implementation arrangements; and (f) the extent of involvement of beneficiaries. At negotiations, the borrower and the Bank should agree on the resettlement plan. The resettlement plan and the borrower's obligation to carry it out should be reflected in the legal documents. Other necessary resettlement-related actions must be covenanted. The Staff Appraisal Report and the Memorandum and Recommendation of the President should summarize the plan and state that it meets Bank policy requirements.

Implementation and Supervision

31. Resettlement components should be supervised throughout implementation.²¹ Supervision that is sporadic or left until late in implementation invariably jeopardizes the success of resettlement. Bank supervision missions should be staffed with the requisite social, economic, and technical expertise. Annual reviews of large-scale resettlement and in-depth Bank reviews of midterm progress are highly desirable. These reviews should be planned from the outset to allow the Bank and the borrower to make necessary adjustments in project implementation. Complete recovery from resettlement can be protracted and can often make it necessary to continue Bank supervision until well after populations have been relocated, sometimes even after a project has been closed.

Ex Post Evaluation

32. The project completion report²² submitted to the Operations Evaluation Department should evaluate resettlement and its impact on the standards of living of the resettlers and the host population.