

# Planning virtual consultations in the context of COVID-19

Guidelines for Government Agencies and  
Project Executing Units

Juan Martinez  
Julio Rojas

Environmental and Social  
Solutions Unit

TECHNICAL  
NOTE N°  
IDB-TN-1965

# Planning virtual consultations in the context of COVID-19

## Guidelines for Government Agencies and Project Executing Units

Juan Martinez  
Julio Rojas

Environmental and Social Solutions Unit

July 2020



Cataloging-in-Publication data provided by the  
Inter-American Development Bank  
Felipe Herrera Library

Martínez, Juan Antonio.

Planning virtual consultations in the context of COVID-19: Guidelines for  
Government Agencies and Project Executing Units / Juan Antonio

Martínez, Julio Rojas.

p. cm. - (IDB Technical Note ; 1965)

1. Economic development projects-Latin America-Citizen participation. 2. Economic  
development projects-Latin America-Environmental aspects. 3. Economic development  
projects-Latin America social aspects. 4. Internet videoconferencing-Latin America.  
5. Coronavirus infections-Latin America-Prevention. I. Rojas, Julio. II. Inter-American  
Development Bank. Environmental and Social Solutions Unit. III.

Title. IV. Series.

IDB-TN-1965

JEL codes: O15; O19; P48; Q56

Keywords: public consultation, stakeholder participation, COVID-19

<http://www.iadb.org>

Copyright © 2020 Inter-American Development Bank. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons IGO 3.0 Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives (CC-IGO BY-NC-ND 3.0 IGO) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/igo/legalcode>) and may be reproduced with attribution to the IDB and for any non-commercial purpose. No derivative work is allowed.

Any dispute related to the use of the works of the IDB that cannot be settled amicably shall be submitted to arbitration pursuant to the UNCITRAL rules. The use of the IDB's name for any purpose other than for attribution, and the use of IDB's logo shall be subject to a separate written license agreement between the IDB and the user and is not authorized as part of this CC-IGO license.

Note that link provided above includes additional terms and conditions of the license.

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Inter-American Development Bank, its Board of Directors, or the countries they represent.



## Acknowledgments

This note was prepared under the direction of Joseph Christofer Milewski, head of the Environmental and Social Solutions Unit, reporting to the Vice Presidency for Sectors and Knowledge of the Inter-American Development Bank.

The main authors of this note are Juan Martinez, Social Practice Leader, and Julio Rojas, Social Specialist. Soraya Senosier, Patricia Henriquez, Pilar Larreamendy, Alessandro Sidore, and Julia Miguez contributed relevant sections of this note.

The review of this note was conducted by a team of VPS/ESG environmental and social specialists, and it has undergone a Quality and Risk Review (QRR) process. Special thanks to Javier Game, Ernesto Monter, María Cristina Landázuri-Levey, and María Cecilia Ramirez who commented and provided contributions for the preparation of this guidance note.

This note is the property of the IDB and must not be reproduced for commercial purposes. The opinions expressed in the note are from their authors and do not necessarily represent the views or opinions of the IDB Executive Board or the countries they represent. This note was originally written in Spanish.

Note on future updates. This note was prepared in the context of a global pandemic and during the first months of the COVID-19 outbreak. The note will be reviewed and updated to address the changing nature of the global emergency.

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgments.....	4
Acronyms: .....	6
Definitions.....	7
1. Introduction.....	8
2. Implementation of virtual consultations in IDB operations .....	9
3. Considerations for conducting virtual consultations .....	10
4. Indigenous peoples and culturally appropriate consultations.....	11
5. Virtual consultation process.....	12
6. Preparation, implementation, and documentation of the virtual consultation .....	14
(i) Identification of priority topics to consult.....	14
(ii) Mapping and analysis of stakeholders and preparation of the virtual consultation plan .....	14
(iii) Identification of virtual tools to be used for the consultation process.....	15
(iv) Information shared in advance .....	15
(v) Suitable virtual forums and methods for the consultation process based on the socio-economic, technological, and cultural characteristics of interested parties .....	16
(vi) Alternative methods of virtual consultations.....	16
(vii) Grievance Mechanism (GM).....	17
(viii) Documentation and disclosure.....	17
(ix) Ongoing consultation with stakeholders during implementation .....	18
Annex 1. Description of virtual consultation scenarios .....	19
Annex 2. Tools and use of virtual technology.....	24

## Acronyms:

COVID-19	Corona Virus 2019
ESA	Environmental and Social Analysis
ESG	IDB Environmental and Social Solutions Unit
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
ESMP	Environmental and Social Management Plan
ESMR	Environmental and Social Management Report
ESS	Environmental and Social Strategy
FPIC	Free Prior and Informed Consent
GA	Government Agencies
GM	Grievance Mechanism
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PEU	Project Executing Units
SCA	Sociocultural Analysis
SESA	Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment
WHO	World Health Organization

## Definitions

The consultation is significant when it is conducted with a methodology and planning that achieves the objective to inform and involve all parties interested in and affected by the project. For more details, see the guide published by the IDB<sup>1</sup>.

**COVID-19<sup>2</sup>:** Respiratory infectious disease caused by a new coronavirus detected in China. The WHO declared the disease a pandemic in March 2020. The disease is currently under investigation, and at the time of writing this guide, according to the WHO, the virus can be transmitted in two ways, (i) person to person through respiratory droplets that are produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes and these droplets contact another person through the eyes, mouth, and nose, and (ii) through contact with contaminated surfaces or objects, if a person touches a surface or object that has the virus and then touches their mouth, nose, or eyes.

**Government agencies:** Refers to borrowers responsible for the execution of projects financed by the IDB (Investment Projects, Investment Donations, and Investment Guarantees), regardless of the source of resource.

**Infectious diseases (also called infectious or communicable):** according to the WHO<sup>3</sup> the infectious diseases are caused by pathogenic microorganisms like bacteria, viruses, parasites or fungi. These diseases can be transmitted, directly or indirectly, from one person to another. For the WHO list of infectious diseases, see footnote<sup>4</sup>.

**Public Consultations:** Process of socialization of a project in which the affected and interested parties are informed about the project, as well as its negative socio-environmental impacts, the mitigation measures, and the mechanism for dealing with complaints and claims of the project. Likewise, this process includes a space so that the aforementioned parties can express their opinions, concerns, and opportunities to improve the socio-environmental issues of the project.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://publications.iadb.org/es/publicacion/17469/consulta-significativa-con-las-partes-interesadas>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index-sp.html>  
<https://www.who.int/es/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/q-a-coronaviruses>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.who.int/topics/infectious\\_diseases/es/](https://www.who.int/topics/infectious_diseases/es/)

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.who.int/topics/infectious\\_diseases/factsheets/es](https://www.who.int/topics/infectious_diseases/factsheets/es)

## 1. Introduction

In order to provide a timely response to the global crisis resulting from the expansion of COVID-19 and to support LAC countries in their response, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) has prepared a strategy that considers: i) the preparation of a set of prototype projects in different sectors that will serve as the basis for the expedited preparation of loan operations; and ii) the restructuring of the portfolio of projects in execution in order to allocate part of the remaining resources to combat the health crisis and the economic crisis that could occur in the region. The operations within the strategy mentioned above will be approved by the Bank following an expedited procedure with short deadlines.

As a consequence of the crisis unleashed by the expansion of COVID-19, the governments of the region have issued regulations aimed at limiting meetings and the movement of people, as well as maintaining a social distancing in order to prevent the spread of the virus, a situation that could extend for a period of time not yet determined. These restrictions have implications for operations that the IDB supports, in particular with regard to the requirement to carry out public consultations and maintaining a continuous relationship with stakeholders in projects, both in the preparation stage as well as in execution (OP703, B6).

In this scenario, the present guidance note contains guidelines and recommendations that should be taken into account in order to plan and carry out the virtual consultation, as well as maintaining continued stakeholder participation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This guidance note will be updated regularly as necessary in the event of changes in the situation or as a result of experiences in the region during the execution and implementation of this note.

**Objective.** Provide guidance and solutions to the different Government Agencies (GA) and Project Executing Units (PEU) financed by the IDB, to plan and conduct a significant virtual consultation<sup>5</sup> with stakeholders in the preparation and implementation of the different modalities of operations that are under its responsibility, with special attention to those that are in preparation, as well as those that have scheduled public consultation within the current situation and thus be able to respond to the challenges created by the presence of COVID-19.

It is important to highlight that, any alternative technique to conduct consultations and stakeholder participation, should be developed in accordance with national laws and regulations, especially those related to the use of modes of communication. The recommendations and suggested alternatives in this note, especially for the use of virtual technology, must be confirmed that they are in concordance with existing laws and regulations, as well as the socio-cultural context applicable to each project.

---

<sup>5</sup> Virtual means any type of consultation that is not carried out in-person, for example, through the use of digital media (see Annex 2 of this note) and that the process described in section 6 of this note also applies.

## 2. Implementation of virtual consultations in IDB operations

The following operations will be able to plan and develop virtual consultations:

**Operations prioritized by the countries** of the region, in response to public health issues, security networks for vulnerable populations, economic productivity, employment, and fiscal policies in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, financed through: (i) the approval of new operations; and (ii) approval of modifications to IDB loan operations in progress.

To date, the IDB has prepared the following **project prototypes for new operations in the context of COVID-19**: (i) Immediate Public Health Response to contain and control Coronavirus and mitigate its effect on service delivery; (ii) Support for Vulnerable Populations affected by Coronavirus; (iii) Global credit program for the defense of the Productive Network and Employment; and (iv) Program for Strengthening Public Policy and Fiscal Management to attend to the health crisis and economic crisis caused by COVID-19.

When the IDB, together with the governments, has defined specific projects based on the prototypes previously mentioned, environmental and social assessments will be prepared, virtual public consultations will be held, and environmental and social management plans will be prepared for each of these projects, including technical cooperation, when they are part of the projects, based on the studies and previously developed generic plans. Depending on the information available in each case, including the information gathered in the virtual consultation process, these studies could take the form of an Environmental and Social Analysis (ESA) or a Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA); in both cases, with their respective Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMP) or Strategic ESMP in the case of the SESAs. These documents must be prepared in a scenario in which the deadlines will be a key constraint.

**Approval of modifications to IDB loan operations in progress.** Many countries, as part of their strategy to face the COVID-19 crisis, proposed to the IDB the modification of loan operations in execution to attend this emergency. In these cases, for the purpose of new proposed activities, the virtual consultation will help to incorporate the opinions of affected people, including their preferences for participation in the planned activities.

**Operations with moderate and significant adverse impacts.** Includes all those operations that are not part of the prioritized operations by the countries in the context of the COVID-19 Pandemic mentioned above, and considers the operations that are in preparation and that have moderate (Category B) and significant (Category A) adverse socio-environmental impacts. These operations need to socialize and consult the social and environmental assessments as well as the management plans, and will follow the regular preparation processes. For these operations, the virtual consultation processes can be used on a case-by-case basis, analyzing their origin with the support of the environmental and social specialists from the ESG unit of the IDB assigned to these operations.

### 3. Considerations for conducting virtual consultations

**Stages of the Project.** Virtual consultations may be carried out considering the respective stage of each project in relation to its progress, either in the preparation phase or in implementation.

Virtual consultations follow the same process for preparing in person consultations. The individual responsible for determining if it is feasible to carry out the virtual consultation will be the ESG specialist assigned to the respective operation in coordination with the project team leader, after having developed a detailed analysis of the possibilities, evaluated access to technology, and determined whether interested and affected groups can participate. This analysis also includes the participation of the PEU, responsible for the consultation process.

The consultation plan and the actions to follow will be described in: (i) the environmental and social strategy (ESS); and (ii) the environmental and social management report (ESMR).

When it is determined that it is possible to conduct a virtual consultation, the provisions of section 6 and Annex 1 will be followed. Virtual consultations can be implemented for:

- Operations in early stages of preparation in which social and environmental documents and instruments (ESA, SESA, ESMP, etc.) have not yet been prepared and the stakeholders and affected parties have not been identified.
- Operations in advanced stages of preparation in which the development of social and environmental documents and instruments is ongoing and close to being finalized. At this stage, the stakeholders have already been identified as have affected communities and/or individuals and the environmental and social documents are ready to proceed with publication (*“fit for disclosure”*) on the IDB website and, if applicable, on the respective GA website.
- Operations in implementation, in which public consultation and the activities of stakeholder engagement, through a consultation plan, have been planned and the results of public consultations have been incorporated into the different documents and instruments of the project (ESIA, ESMP, etc.).

**Project Impacts.** The associated adverse environmental and social impacts, generated by the project construction and operation activities, will determine the magnitude and level of effort for virtual consultation and methods to maintain continued stakeholder engagement. Accordingly, two possible modes are presented which, due to the type of operations that the IDB supports, it is feasible to carry out virtual consultations.

- **Operations with moderate adverse socio-environmental impacts.** This type of operation could include the following cases: (i) The intervention area has been identified; (ii) The involuntary resettlement and/or economic displacement is minor or non-existent; (iii)

Vulnerable populations are not affected; (iv) Indigenous peoples are not significantly affected; (v) The expectation that direct and indirect environmental and social impacts will be generated, as well as social risk is moderate, local in nature and limited in magnitude and scale, short term, and well defined; (vi) Environmental and social mitigation measures have been identified, have been tested, and are ready to be implemented; and (vii) It is expected that the project does not generate significant negative social or environmental impacts.

- **Operations with significant potential adverse impacts.** These operations could include the following cases: (i) The intervention areas have not been identified or defined; (ii) Includes multiple project implementation areas (provinces, municipalities and / or regions); (iii) Large-scale involuntary resettlement and/or large-scale economic displacement will or could occur; (iv) Sociocultural Analysis (SCA) and Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is required, given the presence of indigenous peoples in the project's area of influence; (v) The expected direct and indirect impacts, as well as the associated risks, are of high magnitude and long term; and (vi) There is a high degree of uncertainty regarding the potential environmental and social impacts, as well as the required mitigation and compensation measures.

#### 4. Indigenous peoples and culturally appropriate consultations

IDB Operational Policy 765 establishes that “For cases of particularly significant potential adverse impacts that carry a high degree of risk to the physical, territorial or cultural integrity of the affected indigenous peoples or groups, the Bank will further require and verify that the project proponent demonstrate that it has, through a good faith negotiation process, obtained agreements regarding the operation and measures to address the adverse impacts to support, in the Bank's judgment, the sociocultural viability of the operation.” The IDB requires a minimum of two rounds of consultations with the indigenous communities regardless of whether the operation is a Category A or B project.

##### Considerations:

- Once the presence of indigenous peoples in the project's area of influence has been determined, identified indigenous peoples should be consulted using formats and languages understandable to them. This may require the translation of key documents (summary of the project, analysis of negative socio-environmental impacts, and mitigation measures) to a local indigenous language or visual information could be produced.
- For the initial consultation, various forms of information exchange and dissemination can be used including the tools and platforms indicated in Annex 2. This decision should be based on results of the analysis of the interested parties, in the case of indigenous peoples it will take into account the SCA, that will identify the national, regional, and local representative

organizations that are representative of indigenous peoples in the area of influence of the project. Through these instances, there should be agreement on the scope and modality of the virtual consultation with the possible affected parties. The impacts of a project may include environmental, social, and cultural impacts.

- It is recommended that the first virtual consultation be based on the identification of possible impacts that could significantly affect indigenous peoples, as well as an approach to the ways to mitigate them.
- Language is another element to be considered in virtual consultations with indigenous peoples. The translations into indigenous languages, if necessary, should be prioritized with the representative organizations. If interpreters are required, they should be people with knowledge of the local context and with the trust of the consulted community.

#### **Agreements through good faith negotiations: free, prior, and informed consent**

- IDB Operational Policy 765 requires that an agreement or a free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) be reached with indigenous peoples in the “cases of particularly significant potential adverse impacts that carry a high degree of risk to the physical, territorial or cultural integrity of the affected indigenous peoples or groups”.
- It should be noted that in these operations, due to the impacts and mitigation options and compensation that requires agreements with individuals, families and/or indigenous communities directly affected, the consultation will not proceed virtually.

## **5. Virtual consultation process**

The virtual consultation process should be prepared in collaboration with the IDB social and environmental safeguards specialists (ESG), who will follow internal guidelines to apply the principles and objectives of this public consultation guide in the context of COVID-19.

With the growing concern about the spread of COVID-19, there is an urgent need to adjust the consultation methodologies, as well as the constant participation of stakeholders in the stages of the project, taking into account the national laws and regulations established to face the emergency originated by COVID-19, for which virtual consultation represents an important tool.

The adoption of virtual consultation modalities may not achieve the participation of vulnerable groups and those who do not have access to alternative means of communication, due to multiple reasons given the conditions of each country. For this reason, it is recommended to work with representative organizations, following the steps described in section 6 of this note.

As part of the environmental assessment process, the virtual consultation will be prepared as a complement. It will be coordinated with the preparation of an Environmental and Social Analysis

(ESA) or an Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA), and in both cases with their respective Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMP) or Strategic ESMP in the case of SESAs, including technical cooperation that have safeguards implications and that are part of the modalities mentioned in number 2.

The results of the virtual consultation work will be incorporated in the report of the respective environmental and social documents of the project. In the event that a consultant or consulting firm is hired to support the process, these, together with the PEU, must develop methodologies and materials for the consultation process - for example, interviews and work sessions with key stakeholders - all of this considering the status of the recommendations for social distance and limitations on bringing together the interested parties.

It will be necessary to identify the stakeholders of the public, private, civil society sectors (NGOs), negatively affected individuals and groups, beneficiaries, community organizations and members of indigenous communities and representatives of their organizations, if applicable. Likewise, the pertinent meetings should be coordinated, using appropriate methodologies for each group and in the case of indigenous peoples, include the relevant elements of free, prior, and informed consent and if necessary, in good faith negotiations, as well as measures consisting of mitigation and compensation for the impacts identified.

The participation of people with disabilities in virtual consultations will be ensured. For this reason, during the mapping of interest groups, it will be identified, among others, if the project has the potential to negatively affect people with disabilities. If within the interest groups people with disabilities are identified, direct invitations will be made to them and/or to the organizations that represent them, trying to ensure their participation in the consultations. In this sense, the PEU may improve the decision-making process by ensuring the integration and participation of disabled people. It should be noted that the experiences, concerns, and recommendations of people with disabilities will be extremely useful to mitigate the significant adverse impacts that they have experienced and recognized so that the projects do not generate significant adverse impacts to these populations.

The GA and/or the PEU team will be responsible for the following tasks:

- Conduct a virtual consultation plan that includes an analysis of the interested parties.
- Select the appropriate virtual forums and methods for the consultation process based on the socio-economic, technological, and cultural characteristics of the interested parties (See Annex 2).
- Carry out the identification of priority topics for consultations and relations with the interested parties.
- Provide prior information to interested parties.
- Design a virtual mechanism for complaints and claims that includes access via email, networks social, messaging services (WhatsApp), among others.
- Carry out the virtual consultation process with interested parties.

- Document the virtual consultation through proceedings, executive summaries, minutes or other forms of documentation.
- Disseminate virtually the results of the interested parties consultation process.
- Ensure that interested party perspectives are reflected in design decisions and project implementation.
- Ensure that consultation with interested parties is ongoing during implementation or other phases of the operation.

## 6. Preparation, implementation, and documentation of the virtual consultation

Virtual consultations may be carried out sequentially with the aforementioned points, insofar as possible. Consultations with interested parties should be systematically documented as indicated in the steps below. This will allow the preservation of the evidence and contributions to the decisions made during the process of preparing the respective documentation and during the project cycle. Adequate documentation will allow different GAs and/or the PEU and the IDB to verify whether a virtual consultation process under the parameters described, was significant or not, based on the guidelines issued by the Bank (Meaningful Stakeholder Consultation, IDB, 2017 [www.iadb.org/consultations](http://www.iadb.org/consultations)). This is particularly important in situations such as the emergency caused by COVID 19 and the focus on virtual consultations.

### (i) Identification of priority topics to consult

The priority issues will be identified from the analysis of the possible impacts that the activities of the operation could generate. The GA and the PEU should analyze the existing information to determine the priority issues that will need to be consulted, this through reviewing data sources and existing studies, including the identification of possible adverse socio-environmental impacts that the activities of the operation could generate (see annex 1).

### (ii) Mapping and analysis of stakeholders and preparation of the virtual consultation plan

With the information from the relevant studies that are being carried out, such as the Environmental and Social Analysis (ESA) or the Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA), the possible adverse impacts will be identified as well as the relevant risks and opportunities and how they may affect different groups. For this reason, a specific analysis must be carried out to identify the interested parties (see below) who could participate in this type of virtual consultation. This includes the mapping based on secondary sources, internet or social networks of the people negatively affected by the project and that could be excluded from its benefits, with emphasis on poor and vulnerable groups. To ensure participation of interested parties, the preparation of the Consultation Plan must take into account, as a minimum, the following elements:

- Identification of categories and subcategories of different interested parties based on secondary data.
- Nature of interest in the project, including probable impacts or benefits, or interests, positive or negative.
- Key characteristics (social situation, cultural factors, location, size, capacity organizational and degree of influence, vulnerability or social exclusion).
- Relationship of the project with each of the different groups (how to provide significant background information, virtual meetings will be used for key informants, focus groups, structured interviews, other options or formats to connect, etc.).

The virtual consultation plan will be updated whenever necessary, adding the following information:

- Main concerns and recommendations expressed during the virtual consultations by the different categories and subcategories of interested parties.
- The way that the project will respond to interested parties, on how their opinions have been reflected in the project decisions, or if applicable, the reason why they have been dismissed.
- How the project will engage with different groups of interested parties during the rest of the preparation and implementation.

### **(iii) Identification of virtual tools to be used for the consultation process**

The proposed methodology includes the identification of virtual tools to be used for the consultation process: The Government Agencies (GA), the Project Executing Units (PEU), and their respective consultants will carry out a quick identification of the existing tools of virtual communication that exists at the level of the government agency (see Annex 2).

### **(iv) Information shared in advance**

The GA, the PEU, and/or the consultant will document the detailed information transmitted electronically and tailored to specific stakeholder groups, prior to virtual consultation events. It is important to record the time allotted to interested parties to study and discuss the information internally, prior to the consultation event. Information should be organized according to following topics:

- The nature of the project and how it might affect different groups of interested parties locally.
- Simplified or summarized technical reports, in a format and language that facilitate reading.
- The format and medium with which interested parties find the information to be more useful (illustration, videos, role-play, and others).
- Disclosure of the preliminary agenda on social networks with details of the events that summarize the topics to be discussed and how to connect and participate.
- The rights and responsibilities of people within the framework of the project or program.
- Digital formats and ways to access so that interested parties can contribute to design and implementation of the project.

#### **(v) Suitable virtual forums and methods for the consultation process based on the socio-economic, technological, and cultural characteristics of interested parties**

The GA and/or the PEU will ensure that each of the identified stakeholder groups and subgroups are represented in the analysis and have an opportunity to express their opinions. Additional efforts will be made to ensure that marginal or vulnerable groups are not prevented from participating. The preferred approach combines stratified and selective sampling to identify relevant interested parties in the various groups and categories.

Before organizing the consultation events, the GA, the PEU will analyze if it is necessary to implement orientation sessions or awareness sessions for the authorities involved in the project, in order to disseminate information about the project and ensure that all opinions and concerns of interested parties are heard, respected, and understood. In the same way, the consultant will assess the ability of interested parties to take part in an event and consider whether additional support is required.

#### **(vi) Alternative methods of virtual consultations**

As described in the previous section, it is advisable to carry out the virtual consultation process since, during the course of it, the various participating stakeholders can share, discuss, and exchange with others their views on the project, enriching the discussion and allowing the identification of common visions and the differences between the different actors. However, there is the possibility that it may not be possible to conduct the consultation under this modality, due to the limitations inherent in the emergence of COVID-19 and the difficulties of coordinating the agendas of the different actors identified. Or, that the consultation be carried out in the form of a forum with simultaneous participation of interested groups, and one or more key sectors (vulnerable groups living far from access to virtual media) may not be able to participate.

In this case, an alternative method to virtual consultation is through interviews focused on key representatives and informants, who will regularly be qualified individuals from the interested parties, who can contribute relevant information. Such interviews can be conducted carried out using different virtual communication applications (WhatsApp, Skype, Zoom, Teams, etc.), or through phone calls. For this outcome, the same procedures outlined in previous chapters should be applied, such as the provision of prior information (section 6.iv), as well as the development of the interview, and its documentation must adhere to what is established in section 6.v above.

Documentation containing the results of the consultation carried out in the form of individual interviews should, once completed, be published and distributed to all groups of stakeholders who participated in the process so that everyone knows the points of view and opinions expressed by the other sectors.

The IDB reserves the right to evaluate, at the end of the consultation process that was carried out under this modality and based on the documentation received by the Executors, whether this process can be considered significant, and if not, it may require that complementary consultation processes be carried out during the preparation and/or execution of the project in question.

### **(vii) Grievance Mechanism (GM)**

The Operation must implement a mechanism to manage complaints and claims according to the nature of the operation and that facilitates remote access to the complaints and claims that the Operation may cause.

The GM should be established based on the analysis of priority issues, through the process of evaluation described above. Its structure and function should be discussed with the groups of affected parties.

The GA and/or PEU will verify that the design of the GM is proportional to the risk and complexity of the project with the following objectives, in accordance with the IDB's socio-environmental policies:

- Support the decision-making of this GM in relation to the design and development of the project.
- Serve as a mechanism for timely resolution of difficulties and prevent escalation of problems towards social conflict.
- Provide a resource and accountability mechanism for the agencies in charge of implementing the project, so that they can be held accountable for project actions, and people can seek and find resolution when necessary.

The consultant, in coordination with the GA and/or PEU, will guarantee that the established GM:

- Is integrated into the project's environmental and social management system.
- Is designed, in part, based on recommendations of the interested parties.
- Is known by affected people and is easily accessible by establishing multiple means of effective access (face-to-face, email, website, WhatsApp, phone, etc.).
- Has the mandate and authority to address and resolve concerns raised by the interested parties and to influence the decisions of design and implementation of the project.

### **(viii) Documentation and disclosure**

To verify whether a consultation process is significant or not, the GA and / or PEU must retain the evidence and the contributions made to the decisions made during project preparation. This is especially important in situations where there may be difficulties or opposition to the project.

The documentation of the consultation process with interested parties includes:

- A written record and minutes of consultation events with a list of participants including: contact information and representatives of the authorities of the project.

- Virtual photographs, image or sound recordings, when appropriate, after having made a clear explanation of the purpose of the recording and having obtained the agreement of the participants.
- The “Chatham House Rules”<sup>6</sup> can be applied where appropriate, and respect for full confidentiality if requested.
- Clear and accessible evidence for all that an agreement has been reached, in those cases where that a consent or agreement is required.

#### **(ix) Ongoing consultation with stakeholders during implementation**

Regularly, the GA and/or the PEU will inform the affected people about the progress of the implementation plans that concerns them. Likewise, the GA and/or the PEU must verify that the interested parties have the opportunity to communicate with project authorities without fear of intimidation or retaliation, and that they will have access to the GM.

In the event that significant changes occur in a project, the GA and/or the PEU must inform and consult the relevant interested parties. In this case, the GA and/or the PEU will be responsible for identifying new interested parties that may arise.

---

<sup>6</sup> When a meeting, or part of a meeting, is called under the Chatham House Rule, the participants have the right to use the information they receive, but the identity and affiliation of the speaker, or any other participant at least, cannot be disclosed that they authorize it.

## Annex 1. Description of virtual consultation scenarios

SCENARIO/PROJECT	DESCRIPTION OF SCENARIO  Projects in phases of preparation or execution	KEY ACTIONS		CONTRACTUAL CONDITIONS  Refers to the consultations (without detriment to the other identified conditions)
		Documents	Consultations	
<p><b>ESIA/ESMP completed</b></p> <p><b>Adverse social impacts not significant</b></p>	<p>Environmental and social documents meet requirements for publication.</p> <p>Pending consultations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Existing ESIA/ESMP</li> </ul>	<p>Virtual consultation with interested parties should include:</p> <p>(i) platforms with free and easy access for the affected population to participate</p> <p>(ii) assistance and representation of directly affected and vulnerable population</p> <p>(ii) other interested parties (e.g., civil society organizations, NGOs, neighborhood associations, trade associations, unions, community boards, civic committees)</p>	<p>Before the start of each of the works, must ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ New round of virtual consultations focused on affected vulnerable population and other interested parties.</li> <li>▪ Have digital platforms, messaging groups and other available means to document queries and include as part of the updated ESMP.</li> <li>▪ Publication of the updated ESMP.</li> </ul>
<p><b>ESIA/ESMP incomplete or to be prepared</b></p> <p><b>Adverse social impacts not significant</b></p>	<p>Social documents not suitable for publication or still pending</p> <p>Pending consultations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consider preparing a Strategic Plan (ESMP-E) from an existing ESIA/ESMP or prepare it in its entirety. In both cases, use secondary information available and complement it with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Satellite images (Google Earth)</li> <li>- Geographic Information Systems (GIS), ArcGIS, indigenous territories maps</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Focused virtual consultations, with key stakeholders that should include:</p> <p>(i) platforms with open access so that the affected population can participate;</p> <p>(ii) representation of the population directly affected and (ii) other interested parties (e.g., civil society organizations, NGOs, neighborhood associations, trade associations, unions, community boards, civic committees)</p>	<p>Before the start of the first work program, must ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Update Strategic Consultation Plan</li> </ul> <p>Before the start of each of the works must ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conduct virtual consultation with affected population and interested parties</li> <li>▪ Have digital platforms, messaging groups and other available means to document queries and include as part of the updated ESMP.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information from previous operations with similar impacts</li> <li>▪ Identify key stakeholders (mayors, community boards, neighborhoods, NGOs)</li> <li>▪ Prepare Strategic Consultation Plan</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Publication of the updated ESMP.</li> </ul>
<p><b>ESIA/ESMP completed</b></p> <p><b>Significant social impacts that have a high degree of social risk such as: physical displacement, economic displacement</b></p>	<p>Social documents with suitable information for publication including Resettlement Plan and/or Economic Restoration Plan</p> <p>Pending consultations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Existing ESIA/ESMP: Resettlement Plan and/or Economic Restoration Plan</li> <li>▪ Strategic Consultation Plan with identified affected parties Resettlement Plan</li> <li>▪ Strategic Consultation Plan with affected parties identified in the Economic Restoration Plan</li> </ul>	<p>Virtual consultations with parties directly affected by resettlement and/or economic restoration</p>	<p>Prior to the award of the contract for the works in question, must ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Update Strategic Plan for Consulting on the Resettlement Plan</li> <li>▪ Update Strategic Plan for Consulting on the Economic Restoration Plan</li> <li>▪ Consultations with population affected, including those affected by resettlement and/or economic restoration</li> <li>▪ Update Resettlement Plan</li> <li>▪ Update Restoration Plan</li> <li>▪ Have digital platforms, virtual message groups, and other means available to document queries and include as part of the updated ESMP.</li> <li>▪ Publication of all updated plans</li> </ul>
<p><b>ESIA/ESMP incomplete or to be prepared.</b></p> <p><b>Significant social impacts that have a high degree of risk such as: physical displacement, economic displacement</b></p>	<p>Social documents with incomplete information for publication or without elaboration, without Resettlement Plan and/or Economic Restoration Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consider developing a Strategic ESMP that includes Resettlement Plan and/or Restoration Plan elaborated with available secondary information which includes at least:</li> </ul>	<p>Virtual consultations with affected parties and/or representative (sample) of directly and indirectly affected parties by resettlement and/or economic restoration</p>	<p>Prior to the call for bids for the work in question, must ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Update Resettlement Plan</li> <li>▪ Update Economic Restoration Plan</li> </ul>

	<p>Pending consultations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Socio-economic information of the area</li> <li>- Estimated number of affected parties</li> <li>- Cadastral information available in public records</li> <li>- Types of damage</li> <li>- Compensation alternatives</li> <li>- Eligibility matrix</li> <li>- Methodology for calculating appraisals for compensation and assistance</li> <li>- Estimated budget</li> <li>- Strategic Consultation Plan with affected parties</li> </ul> <p>Use secondary information available and complement it with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Satellite images (Google Earth)</li> <li>- Geographic Information Systems (GIS), ArcGIS or QGIS, maps of indigenous territories, maps of natural and critical habitats</li> <li>- Information from previous operations with similar impacts</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Update Strategic Plan for Consulting on the Resettlement Plan</li> <li>▪ Update Strategic Plan for Consulting on the Economic Restoration Plan</li> <li>▪ Consultations with affected population, including those affected by resettlement and/or economic restoration</li> <li>▪ Have digital platforms, virtual message groups and other means available to document queries and include as part of the updated ESMP.</li> <li>▪ Publication of all updated plans</li> </ul>
<p><b>ESIA/ESMP completed</b></p> <p><b>Adverse impacts not significant for indigenous population</b></p>	<p>Social documents with suitable information for publication including Sociocultural Analysis</p> <p>Pending consultations</p>	<p>Existing ESIA/ESMP</p>	<p>Virtual consultations, culturally appropriate, with key stakeholders which should include:</p> <p>(i) platforms with free and easy access for the affected population to participate</p>	<p>Before the start of the work in question, must ensure:</p> <p>New round of consultations that are culturally appropriate focused on affected population indigenous and other interested parties.</p>

			<p>(ii) representativeness of the directly affected indigenous population and</p> <p>(iii) other stakeholders of the population in the area of influence of the project (indigenous organizations, leaders)</p>	<p>Have available means to document queries and include as part of the updated ESMP.</p> <p>Publication of the updated ESMP.</p>
<p><b>ESIA/ESMP incomplete or to be prepared</b></p> <p><b>Adverse impacts not significant for Indigenous population</b></p>	<p>Projects with non-significant social impacts</p> <p>Pending consultations</p>	<p>Perform Sociocultural Analysis as part of a Strategic Plan (ESMP-S). Use secondary information available and complement it with:</p> <p>Maps of indigenous territories</p> <p>Satellite images (Google Earth)</p> <p>Geographic Information Systems (GIS), ArcGIS</p> <p>Information from previous operations with similar impacts</p> <p>Prepare or complement Strategic Indigenous Plan, including estimated budget</p> <p>Prepare Consultation Plan in follow-up to local governance, for obtaining agreements in good faith/consent</p>	<p>Virtual consultations with directly and indirectly affected indigenous people (sample) in the sphere of influence, ensuring:</p> <p>Platforms with free and easy access for participation by the affected population</p> <p>Representativeness/Representation of those consulted (authorities, leaders, and local formal and informal women leaders)</p> <p>Confirmation of impacts and benefits</p> <p>Identification of the perspective of those affected</p> <p>Agree on the content and process to update the Strategic Indigenous Plan (estimated dates, methodology, central themes)</p>	<p>Before the start of the work in question, must ensure:</p> <p>Update Strategic Consultation Plan</p> <p>Update Strategic Indigenous Plan</p> <p>Conduct culturally adequate consultation with affected indigenous population and interested parties</p> <p>Obtain agreements in good faith/consent</p> <p>Have digital platforms, virtual message groups, and others means available to document queries and include as part of the updated ESMP.</p> <p>Publication of the updated ESMP.</p>
<p><b>ESIA/ESMP incomplete or to be prepared</b></p> <p><b>Adverse impacts significant for indigenous population</b></p>	<p>Projects with significant negatives impacts (loss of land, livelihoods, access to resources, impacts on cultural identity physical or intangible)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perform Sociocultural Analysis as part of a Strategic Plan (ESMP-E). Use available secondary information and complement it with:</li> </ul>	<p>Virtual consultations with directly and indirectly affected indigenous people (sample) in the sphere of influence, ensuring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Representativeness/Representation of those</li> </ul>	<p>Before the call for bids for the work in question, must ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update Strategic Consultation Plan</li> <li>Update Strategic Indigenous Plan</li> <li>Conduct culturally appropriate consultation with affected</li> </ul>

	Pending consultations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Platform with free and easy access so that the affected population can participate in the SCA</li> <li>- Indigenous territories maps</li> <li>- Satellite images (Google Earth)</li> <li>- Geographic information systems e.g., ArcGIS, QGIS.</li> <li>- Information from previous operations with similar impacts</li> <li>▪ Prepare or complement a Strategic Indigenous Plan, including estimated budget</li> <li>▪ Prepare a Consultation Plan in monitoring local governance, to obtaining agreements in good faith and consent</li> </ul>	<p>consulted (authorities, formal and informal leaders, and local women leaders)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Confirmation of impacts and benefits</li> <li>▪ Identification of the perspective of those affected</li> <li>▪ Agree on the content and process to update the Strategic Indigenous Plan (estimated dates, methodology, central themes)</li> </ul>	<p>indigenous population and interested parties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain consent</li> <li>▪ Have digital platforms, virtual message groups, and other available means available to document queries and include as part of the updated ESMP.</li> <li>▪ Publication of the updated ESMP.</li> </ul>
--	-----------------------	--	---	--

## Annex 2. Tools and use of virtual technology

### Tools and virtual technology in determining the scope of environmental and social documents

During the phase of determining the scope of environmental and social documents, the restriction of movement and social distancing for COVID 19 causes difficulty in identifying the interested groups, as well as the environmental, social, and health and safety (ESHS) risks associated with the operation. In this context, the use of virtual technology will be of great importance for identifying interested parties, including indigenous peoples who are located in the area of influence of the operation and ESHS risks in rural and urban settings.

The following is a series of tools that can be used for the scope of environmental and social documents:

- **Free mapping system** (for example, Google Earth, Google Maps, Bing Maps, OpenStreetMap, LandMark). It allows the review of the project area: surrounding infrastructure, isolated communities and dwellings, indigenous communities and territories, economic activities, environmental characteristics such as protected areas, bodies of water, exposure to natural hazards, topography, changes in the landscape.
- **Drone filming and photography.** Drones provide a powerful means to capture data and information at a project site (for example, the presence of formal and informal housing, artificial features, cultural sites) that are not captured on official maps, while providing social distancing. Drone images can be used to take virtual tours of the project site. Drone images can also be used for consultation with interested parties.
- **Interviews in virtual meetings and videoconference**  
The interested parties such as a community leader, local government officials, Indigenous leaders located in the program areas must be identified by the Government Agency (GA) with the support of the IDB and designated project consultants. The identified representatives can be interviewed by phone or audio conference. Interviewing these stakeholders will allow the EA (or the designated consultants) to obtain key information about relevant stakeholders and the environmental and social context in the program area. These interviews will also provide relevant information on existing information dissemination practices, such as accessibility to virtual technologies, the means of communication used by communities and by authorities for public announcements.

These may include:

Virtual Platforms: Common virtual platforms include the websites of the GA and their official websites on traditional social networks (for example, Facebook, Instagram). Information can be disseminated through messaging (for example, WhatsApp).

Traditional community press, radio, and television platforms and virtual platforms readily available and used by the local government and the GA.

Broadcast by email and/or instant messaging service (WhatsApp).

### **Virtual methods - Consultation phase**

Due to the restrictions of movement and social distancing adopted by the impacts of COVID 19, an alternative possibility is to conduct consultations through virtual participation<sup>7</sup>.

In this sense, the following equipment and technologies necessary to organize a virtual consultation have been identified:

- Telephone, mail, and email: traditional media are particularly useful for consultation in areas with poor internet connection coverage or for ad-hoc/personalized engagement (for example, to contact the key interested parties individually).
- Virtual platforms to share information: this can include website associated with the PEU or with the operation. Virtual platforms can include social network accounts, such as a Facebook page, Twitter and / or Instagram of a PEU. The idea is to allow a route to obtain visibility for the PEU in social networks (checking the number of followers and the level of interactions on the website), in addition the support of the virtual community for the project and the PEU (reviewing the type and concern that the project generates through comments and inquiries received). Virtual platforms are particularly useful for reaching communities and interested parties in general.

Telephone messaging platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook are widely used by the public. These means are mainly used by the community to share personal and private information. In closed and remote communities, these platforms can be used by the PEU to facilitate dissemination of project information.

- Virtual platforms for audio/video conferencing and live streaming: various options are available in the market and are generally free to use. The accessible platforms include Microsoft Teams, Microsoft Skype, WebEx, Zoom, YouTube, Facebook-live, among others. These platforms allow the audience to participate through conferences audio/video and live chat.

### **Key aspects to consider:**

- Identify roles and responsibilities within the PEU dedicated to the management of the virtual communication (within and outside a digital platform).  
A person or a team should be selected, depending on the size of the project within of the PEU, to ensure that all communication related tasks (including, among others, the organization of the consultation event and associated logistical requirements) are attended to effectively and in a timely manner.
- Establish a platform and effective two-way communication systems with all key and relevant interested parties (before and after the consultation event).

---

<sup>7</sup> In the case of Indigenous Peoples, virtual arrangements should be designed in a way culturally appropriate

This is usually ensured by providing interested parties various means to contact the PEU regarding the development of the project. A virtual platform should be provided to share information related to the project, including invitation to consultation events and gathering feedback from the community, comments, and eventual complaints (before, during, and after the public consultation). For this purpose, existing websites or pages social media website may be referred to (for example, Facebook) of the PEU or of affiliated parties (for example, partner organizations).

A suitable website should be chosen to share and publish information from the project according to level and type of affiliation with the GA and the Operation (if appropriate, the project information can be shared on the web pages of other authorities or organizations).

- Establish the type of virtual consultation to be conducted.

A virtual consultation can be conducted through videoconference or live transmission. The speakers can use a presentation (for example, in Power-Point) to support the delivery of the information and prompting reactions or queries.

In videoconferences, all participants could be consulted, and feedback provided through the video/audio calling service in real time. In the live broadcast, participants will be able to attend the event (via audio or video), however, the level of participation will be limited to live chat.

Although video conferencing proves to be more effective, it requires more logistical effort and appropriate equipment for all participants; as such, it is not considered appropriate for events involving the participation of a large audience.

A hybrid model can be suggested between the two options. In this option, the PEU, the speakers, selected key stakeholders, and principal representatives (head of communities, local authorities) can attend a restricted video conference or an in-person meeting (where and when possible). Other members from the community (such as the broad community) can follow the event through live stream (can still provide inputs via monitored live chat).

An appropriate platform for sharing the event should be identified. Many options are available and are free to use (for example, YouTube, Facebook, Zoom, WebEx).

- Ensure that appropriate equipment and service technology are available for all parties participating in the virtual consultation.

Professional subcontracted companies can be hired to facilitate the logistical organization of the event.

Technical arrangements should focus on the following key aspects:

- Organize a registry of virtual assistants. Audience members who participate through videoconference must provide their name and organization. However, participants may be offered the option to participate anonymously (for example, via live chat).

- Reliable and fast internet connection for people who participate through video conferencing and the audience that attends via live broadcast.
- The people who participate through videoconferencing must have high-resolution cameras and microphones for live streaming (commercial smart phones are generally adequate).
- A communication manager should be appointed for the event (to support the speakers) to moderate the conversation (prohibit potential disruptive/unpleasant/offensive contributions and participants) and to control live virtual chats.
- Questions, observations, and comments from stakeholders interested in the project must be collected before, during, and after the consultation event and should be responded to in a timely manner.
  - In the videoconferences, all participants can be consulted, and feedback provided through the video/audio service in real time.
  - Questions that are sent through live chat must be answered by the speaker in real time.
  - If time is a limiting factor in addressing all the questions raised in a live chat, it is recommended to provide a pre-established platform (for example, an email address) to collect more comments and questions that were not addressed during the event. This can be offered to the audience within a determined period (for example, 1 day after the event) to provide more input.
  - These questions must be registered and responded to in a timely manner.
  - Questions and answers provided after the event must be disclosed.