

Protected Areas in IFC Performance Standard 6

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Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Performance Standard 6 and Guidance Note 6 Text	1
2.1	Guidance Note Paragraphs	2
3	Protected Area Approach in PS6	3
3.1	Legally Protected Areas.....	3
3.1.1	Definition	3
3.1.2	Legal Recognition of a Protected Area.....	3
3.1.3	Proposed Sites	4
3.2	Internationally Recognized Areas.....	4
3.2.1	Overlap with Legally Protected Areas.....	5
3.2.2	UNESCO Natural World Heritage Sites.....	5
3.2.3	UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserves.....	5
3.2.4	Ramsar Sites	6
3.2.5	Key Biodiversity Areas	7
3.2.6	Other International Sites.....	8
4	IFC PS6 Requirements for Operations Within Protected Areas	9
4.1	Paragraph 20 and the Management Responses	9
4.1.1	Demonstrate the Development is Legally Permitted	9
4.1.2	Act in a Manner Consistent with Government Recognised Management Plans .	9
4.1.3	Stakeholder Consultation	10
4.1.4	Implement Additional Programs to Support Conservation Aims and Effective Management.....	10
5	Natural and Critical Habitat Relevance for Protected Areas and Internationally Recognized Areas.....	12
5.1.1	IUCN Protected Area Management Categories.....	12
5.1.2	Protected Areas without IUCN Management Categories	12

5.1.3	UNESCO Natural World Heritage Sites.....	13
5.1.4	UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserves.....	13
5.1.5	Ramsar Wetlands	13
5.1.6	Key Biodiversity Areas	13
5.2	Summary Table: Which PAs and IRAs are likely to be Critical Habitat?.....	14
Annex 1: Natural and Critical Habitat Definitions		15
	Natural Habitat	15
	Critical Habitat.....	15
Annex 2: Sources of Information		16
	World Database of Protected Areas	16
	A to Z of Areas of Biodiversity Importance	16
	Other information sources: NBSAPs.....	16
References.....		17

Tables

Table 1: Summary of the content of GN6 Paragraphs GN113 – GN118.....	2
Table 2: Legally Protected and Internationally Recognized Area Designations identified by IFC as Critical Habitat within PS6.....	14

1 Introduction

This document aims to provide interpretation of the protected areas text within the International Finance Corporation's Performance Standard 6 on *Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources*. Paragraph 20 on *Legally Protected and Internationally Recognised Areas* refers to a number of protected area designations and categorisations and stipulates a management response for developers operating within these sites. This briefing note provides clarity on the types of protected area referenced and additional information to support business responsibilities when operations are located within these areas.

The International Finance Corporation (IFC) is a member of the World Bank Group and provides investment services to promote development in emerging economies. Within IFC's Sustainability Framework are a number of Performance Standards on Environmental and Social Sustainability which are an integral part of IFC's approach to risk management (IFC 2013). IFC Performance Standard 6 (PS6) defines the responsibilities of IFC's clients towards biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of living natural resources (IFC 2012b). Protected areas are often viewed as the cornerstone of biodiversity conservation and are addressed in paragraph 20 of IFC PS6.

2 Performance Standard 6 and Guidance Note 6 Text

Among a range of requirements related to biodiversity conservation and natural resource management, Performance Standard 6 (IFC 2012b) provides a set of procedures to comply with if the project is located in a *Legally Protected* or *Internationally Recognized Area*. This is detailed in paragraph 20 of the Performance Standard text, and corresponding Guidance Note 6 paragraphs (Box 1 contains the relevant unmodified extract from IFC PS6 for reference purposes while reading this briefing note).

Box 1: Paragraph 20 from IFC PS6 (IFC 2012b)

“Paragraph 20. *In circumstances where a proposed project is located within a Legally Protected Area¹⁶ or an Internationally Recognized Area,¹⁷ the client will meet the requirements of paragraphs 13 through 19 of this Performance Standard, as applicable. In addition, the client will:*

- *Demonstrate that the proposed development in such areas is legally permitted;*
- *Act in a manner consistent with any government recognized management plans for such areas;*
- *Consult protected area sponsors and managers, Affected Communities, Indigenous Peoples and other stakeholders on the proposed project, as appropriate; and*
- *Implement additional programs, as appropriate, to promote and enhance the conservation aims and effective management of the area.¹⁸*

Footnote 16: *This Performance Standard recognizes Legally Protected Areas that meet the IUCN definition: “A clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values.” For the purposes of this Performance Standard, this includes areas proposed by governments for such designation.*

Footnote 17: *Exclusively defined as UNESCO Natural World Heritage Sites, UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Reserves, Key Biodiversity Areas, and wetlands designated under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (the Ramsar Convention).*

Footnote 18: *Implementing additional programs may not be necessary for projects that do not create a new footprint.”*

NB. The requirements of PS6 paragraphs 13 through 19, referenced in paragraph 20, relate to the identification of Natural or Critical Habitat at the project site.

- PS6 Paragraphs 13-15: Define Natural Habitat and outline the response
- PS6 Paragraphs 16-19: Define Critical Habitat and outline the response

Definitions for Natural and Critical Habitat are provided in Annex 1.

2.1 Guidance Note Paragraphs

Guidance Note 6 on Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources (GN6) (IFC 2012a) provides additional information of relevance to PS6 Paragraph 20, which is found in Guidance Note paragraphs GN113 to GN118. A summary of the key elements covered in each of the GN6 paragraphs is provided below. The detail of these paragraphs will be highlighted in the remainder of this document where relevant.

Table 1: Summary of the content of GN6 Paragraphs GN113 – GN118 (IFC 2012a)

GN6 Paragraph Number	Summary of Paragraph (For exact wording consult Guidance Note 6)
GN113	Provides more detail on footnotes 16 and 17 to Paragraph 20 in PS6, regarding the definition of protected areas and Internationally Recognized Areas to which the standard applies.
GN114	Identifies two sources of information which would support the identification and understanding of Legally Protected or Internationally Recognized Areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“World Database on Protected Areas [...] (See http://www.protectedplanet.net)</i> • <i>A to Z Areas of Biodiversity Importance [...] (See http://www.biodiversitya-z.org)”</i>
GN115	Highlights that, as part of impact mitigation, projects are expected to comply with the requirements for Natural or Critical Habitat depending on the biodiversity value present in the protected area. It also identifies which Legally Protected or Internationally Recognized Areas should be treated as Critical Habitat.
GN116	Provides detail on further project activities that are required in Legally Protected and Internationally Recognized Areas. This includes necessary approvals, consistency of activities with national land use, resource use, and management criteria. It also highlights the requirements for stakeholder engagement.
GN117	Stipulates that projects within Legally Protected or Internationally Recognized Areas should result in tangible benefits for the conservation objectives of that area and achieve clear conservation advantages.
GN118	Suggests support for the creation of management plans for protected or designated sites where these do not exist (as a potential response to the requirement of ‘implementing additional programs’ in bullet point four of paragraph 20).

3 Protected Area Approach in PS6

Paragraph 20 of PS6 highlights two different types of designated areas: *Legally Protected Areas* and *Internationally Recognized Areas*. It defines these two types of areas within the footnotes to the paragraph. Footnote 16 explains that the Performance Standard recognises Legally Protected Areas that meet the IUCN protected area definition. Footnote 17 lists the designations recognised as Internationally Recognized Areas. In this way, PS6 picks up protected areas with associated legal protection, important international protected area designations which may or may not have legal status, and Key Biodiversity Areas (the most high profile designation for areas of importance for biodiversity outside the protected area network).

3.1 Legally Protected Areas

3.1.1 Definition

PS6 uses the IUCN definition to identify Legally Protected Areas. The IUCN definition of a protected area is the most widely accepted and internationally endorsed definition. It is considered to be equivalent to the Convention on Biological Diversity's definition of a protected area (Lopoukhine & Dias 2012) and underpins the collation of protected area records in the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA)^a. More detail on the components of the IUCN definition of a protected area can be found in chapter 2 of IUCN's Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories (Dudley 2008).

3.1.2 Legal Recognition of a Protected Area

Legally protected areas in PS6 refer to sites designated under a national legal instrument and based on national legislation. These are the sites to which IUCN Management Categories are most usually applied (and the only sites for which this information is requested in the World Database on Protected Areas [WDPA]; they are tagged in the WDPA as "national" sites). The WDPA includes records for 167,161 national-level protected area globally ().

Despite this distinction, it is important to note that (i) legal recognition of a site is only one component of the IUCN definition of a protected area, and (ii) there are other protected areas, such as some of the designations made under international or regional conventions, commissions or agreements, which also have a legal status.

The IUCN definition recognises forms of governance other than legal protection. These are identified through the wording '*or other effective means*' within the IUCN definition of a protected area. This distinction is explained by the IUCN as follows: "...protected areas must either be gazetted (that is, recognised under statutory civil law), recognised through an international convention or agreement, or else managed through other effective but non-gazetted means, such as through recognised traditional

^a IUCN and UNEP-WCMC (2014), The World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) [On-line]. Cambridge, UK: UNEP- WCMC. Available at: www.protectedplanet.net. Commercial access to the WDPA is available via a dedicated online portal, the Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool at: <https://www.ibatforbusiness.org/login>

rules under which community conserved areas operate or the policies of established non-governmental organizations” (Dudley 2008). Whilst these sites are not explicitly included under the heading *legally protected areas* in PS6, it is important to recognise their status as protected areas and that they possess significant biodiversity and ecosystem services values, are managed for that purpose and may well attract significant stakeholder interest. Protected areas such as private nature reserves and Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs) are recognised through these other governance types in the IUCN definition but often are not established under national law. These may get picked up elsewhere in PS6 (for example, if they qualify as Natural or Critical Habitat) or under the requirements of other IFC Performance Standards, such as those relating to ecosystem services or indigenous communities. As PS6 is currently worded these may not be captured in the legally protected area terminology.

As discussed in section 3.2 below, protected area designations described as *Internationally Recognized Areas* in PS6 may also constitute legally-recognised protected areas (such as the majority of Natural World Heritage sites) as well as certain designations which are not specifically named in the Performance Standard (such as Natura 2000 sites, which require legal recognition in all EU countries).

3.1.3 Proposed Sites

Footnote 16 on Legally Protected Areas also includes areas *proposed* by governments for designation. However, sites proposed by any organisation other than governments would not be included. There is little consistency between countries on what constitutes a proposed protected area and many government-designated proposed sites retain a “proposed” status long after they are operational as protected areas and the international community recognises them as official protected areas.

3.2 Internationally Recognized Areas

Sites highlighted by international conventions and scientific biodiversity assessment approaches are included within the PS6 definition of an *Internationally Recognized Area*. Within footnote 17 of PS6, *Internationally Recognized Areas* are exclusively defined as:

- UNESCO Natural World Heritage sites;
- UNESCO Man and the Biosphere reserves;
- Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs); and
- Wetlands designated under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention).

The list above includes the most prominent international protected area designations which are implemented through international conventions and hence applied globally. It also includes KBAs which are not protected areas, but are important sites for biodiversity, designated on the basis of globally standardised criteria for vulnerability and irreplaceability. KBAs are the basis of an ongoing IUCN process to identify sites ‘*that contribute significantly to the global persistence of biodiversity*’. They are identified using a standard set of quantitative criteria which can be applied consistently and originated from Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas and Important Plant Areas in the 1990s and were expanded to cover other taxa in 2004.

3.2.1 Overlap with Legally Protected Areas

It should be recognised that the designations from international conventions and agreements listed within footnote 17 (World Heritage sites, Man and Biosphere reserves, and Ramsar wetland sites) would also comply with the IUCN definition of a protected area. They are all sites with associated governance and management and are recognised under ‘*other effective means*’ in the IUCN definition. In addition, World Heritage sites and the core zones of Man and Biosphere reserves require legal protection within national legislation for designation and therefore would also constitute legally protected areas^a. These sites, along with Ramsar sites and KBAs, often also overlap national designations. Therefore there is likely to be geographic duplication (overlap) of sites recognised under PS6’s *Legally Protected Areas* and *Internationally Recognized Areas*.

Below is a summary of each PS6 listed *Internationally Recognized Area*.

3.2.2 UNESCO Natural World Heritage Sites

World Heritage sites are a global prioritisation system under the auspices of the *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, commonly known as the ‘World Heritage Convention’. The criteria for a site to be included on the World Heritage List is determined by the area’s Outstanding Universal Value^b (OUV) (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2013a).

Natural World Heritage sites are generally legally protected. The Convention requires that legal protection governs the sites designated. The Convention states that the ‘*State Party to the Convention shall endeavour [...] to take the appropriate legal, scientific, technical, administrative and financial measures necessary for the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and rehabilitation of this heritage*’ (World Heritage Convention 1972). Those countries which have signed up to the Convention will designate areas through a process determined by the World Heritage Committee (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2013b). Natural World Heritage sites comply with the IUCN definition of a protected area and should be legally protected through national legislation. The management response of paragraph 20 should be applied to Natural World Heritage sites as they are recognised as *Internationally Recognized Areas*. In addition, operators should recognise that there will be national policy and regulations under the World Heritage Convention relevant to these sites.

The WDPA includes records for 222 Natural World Heritage sites globally (IUCN and UNEP-WCMC, 2014).

3.2.3 UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserves

The World Network of Biosphere reserves are sites established by national governments and recognized under UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme to promote sustainable development based on local community efforts and sound science.

^a There may be anomalies where this is not the case dependent on the national government mechanisms for designation.

^b Outstanding Universal Value is cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity. As such, the permanent protection of this heritage is of the highest importance to the international community as a whole. (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2013a)

UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) reserves should contain three zones (UNESCO 1996). See Figure 1 for illustration of the three UNESCO MAB zones:

- (a) a legally constituted core area devoted to long-term protection according to the conservation objectives of the biosphere reserve;
- (b) a buffer zone; and
- (c) an outer transition area.

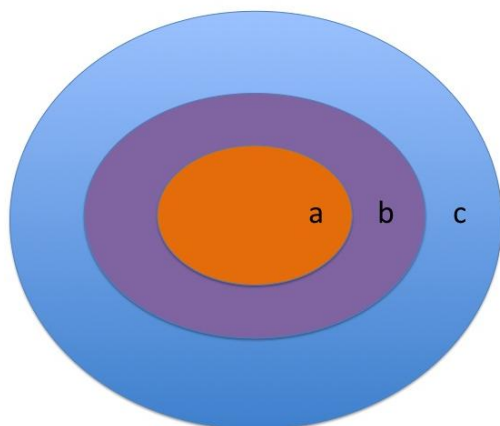


Figure 1: Illustrative diagram of UNESCO MAB sites structure

For the designation of a MAB site, the core area should be legally constituted. States are encouraged also to designate buffer zones as legally protected. The transition zones are not intended to be designated as parts of protected areas (Lausche 2011). PS6 and GN6 do not provide explicit guidance on the zonation of MAB sites or to which zones the standard applies. The core area of a MAB reserve complies with the IUCN definition of a protected area and the buffer zone would often also fit the definition, especially if designated for protection in national legislation. The transition zone would normally fall outside the definition of a protected area (Lausche 2011).

The WDPA includes records for 566 Man and Biosphere reserves globally (IUCN and UNEP-WCMC, 2014).

3.2.4 Ramsar Sites

The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (commonly known as the ‘Ramsar Convention’) is an intergovernmental treaty. It embodies the commitments of its member countries to maintain the ecological character of their Wetlands of International Importance and to plan for the “wise use”, or sustainable use, of all of the wetlands in their territories (Ramsar Convention Secretariat 2013). On joining the Ramsar Convention, each Contracting Party has an obligation to designate at least one wetland site (Ramsar Convention Secretariat 2010). Protection under national law is not a precondition for designating a site as a Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar Convention Secretariat 2010) but legal recognition and protection are likely to be present for many Ramsar sites. There are several guidelines which necessitate protection of Ramsar sites through some means by the Contracting Parties. The Convention requires Contracting Parties to ‘*formulate and implement their planning so as to promote the conservation of the wetlands included in the List and, as far as possible, the wise use of wetlands in their territory*’ (article 3.1) (Ramsar Convention Secretariat 1971). Ramsar sites meet the IUCN

definition of a protected area because their designation under an international convention, with associated requirement for management, constitutes protection through ‘*other effective means*’, even if there is no legal protection in place. Ramsar sites should be treated as official protected areas.

The WDPA includes records for 2,175 Ramsar sites globally (IUCN and UNEP-WCMC, 2014).

3.2.5 Key Biodiversity Areas

The Key Biodiversity Area label is not a protected area designation. The approach was developed by large international NGOs and sites are identified by national stakeholders (as opposed to by governments or through intergovernmental processes as with the majority of protected areas). There is no government requirement to identify KBAs and they are not necessarily recognised by local or national authorities. They are however the most high-profile designation for areas of importance for biodiversity and can be used by governments to support protected area designations. By official definition, KBAs are ‘*sites of global significance for biodiversity conservation...identified using globally standardised criteria and thresholds...based on the framework of vulnerability and irreplaceability widely used in systematic conservation planning*’. (Langhammer et al. 2007). They are also the basis of IUCN’s ongoing work to develop a methodology to identify *areas contributing significantly to the global persistence of biodiversity*. The new methodology is expected to be published in November 2014 and form the basis of IUCN’s KBA Knowledge Product.

KBAs are distinctly different from the other designations listed as *Internationally Recognized Areas* because they do not have management or governance requirements associated with the designation process. As a result they do not fit the IUCN protected area definition, unlike the other listed *Internationally Recognized Areas*, which are designated under Multilateral Environmental Agreements or conventions. KBAs are a site-scale conservation process (Langhammer et al. 2007) and subsets include Alliance for Zero Extinction sites (AZEs), Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) and Important Plant Areas (IPAs). It should be noted that the KBA identification process is not complete and there are many sites which would comply with the criteria but which have not been formally identified or delineated.

The KBA dataset includes records for 13,786 sites (Birdlife International, Conservation International, 2014).

KBAs and Protected Areas

While KBAs are not designated by a process which requires legal protection, they often overlap with protected areas. A global analysis conducted in 2013 identified that 56% of KBA sites overlapped to some extent with a national-level protected area (UNEP-WCMC 2013, unpublished analysis). The degree of overlap varied significantly between countries, with anywhere from 0% to 100% of KBA sites, within any one national boundary, overlapping protected areas.

Ramsar and KBAs

Ramsar sites have been included by IFC within the KBA bracket for the purposes of PS6 (see GN57). Ramsar sites are not normally considered to be a subset of KBAs. KBAs identify sites of biodiversity importance and they can be used by governments to support implementation of international commitments, such as to the Ramsar Convention, through the identification of potential sites. KBAs

within wetland habitats provide potential candidate sites for Ramsar designation. Therefore there is likely to be considerable overlap between Ramsar sites and KBAs identified within the habitats covered by the Ramsar Convention.

3.2.6 Other International Sites

The list of designations identified as Internationally Recognized Areas in footnote 17 omits a number of other regional designations, which are internationally recognised and also used to identify protected areas. These sites are likely to attract significant stakeholder interest, may have associated legal or regulatory protection, and are likely to be considered as relevant to recognition under PS6 Paragraph 20 by informed stakeholders. Examples of these regional designations include:

- **Natura 2000 sites:** A network of terrestrial, coastal and marine protected areas, based on the legislation adopted by the European Union (EU) governments to protect the most valuable and seriously threatened habitats and species across Europe. Natura 2000 includes Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), designated under the Habitats Directive (1992), and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) which are designated under the Birds Directive (1979). There is a requirement that these two directives are transposed into national law which means that Natura 2000 sites are legally protected at the national level.
- Regional seas programmes such as:
 - **Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMI):** Sites identified within the Mediterranean under the Barcelona Convention, signed by twenty-two countries.
 - **Baltic Sea Protected Areas (BSPAs):** Sites identified in the Baltic Sea under the Helsinki Convention, which is governed by the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission / Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) and signed by nine countries and the European Union.

4 IFC PS6 Requirements for Operations Within Protected Areas

The requirements within Paragraph 20 of PS6 apply to both Legally Protected Areas and Internationally Recognized Areas and highlight actions the client is expected to comply with if the project is located in an area falling under one of these definitions. Paragraphs GN116, GN117 and GN118 provide additional detail with regard to management response.

4.1 Paragraph 20 and the Management Responses

4.1.1 Demonstrate the Development is Legally Permitted

The first bullet point under Paragraph 20 highlights that the client will *'demonstrate that the proposed development [...] is legally permitted'*. GN116 extends this and states that *'necessary approvals'* should be secured from the *'responsible government agencies'*.

4.1.2 Act in a Manner Consistent with Government Recognised Management Plans

The second bullet point under Paragraph 20 is elaborated in the Guidance Note as: *'Clients should ensure that project activities are consistent with any national land-use, resource use and management criteria (including Protected Area Management Plans, National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs) or similar documents)'* (GN116). NBSAPs are submitted to the Convention on Biological Diversity and can be found through their website^a.

Protected Area Management Plans

Many protected areas have a management plan which outlines the conservation objectives and lists the management actions to be undertaken at a site over a specified period of time. In some cases these are published as formal documents, in others they are managed more informally through in-house systems. Management plans often include activities for other sectors, including industry which may be present in the vicinity of the protected area. Where available, they are a useful resource for understanding the motivation for protecting the area and the vision for its ongoing management. Where not publically available, the local protected area agency should be contacted to identify if a management plan exists. Management plans are resource-intensive to create and may not be developed due to budget or capacity constraints. The WDPA includes links to management plans where they have been provided by the data provider. However, management plan links exist for only 2% of WDPA protected area records.

National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs)

In response to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Parties to the Convention (normally governments who have ratified the convention) are required to develop an NBSAP to integrate biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into sectoral and cross-sectoral activities (Articles 6 and 10 of the CBD). The approach taken by governments to respond to that requirement varies. A single

^a CBD NBSAP search page: <http://www.cbd.int/nbsap/search/default.shtml>

biodiversity planning document can be produced or a collection of responses collated, including laws, administrative procedures, scientific research plans, projects, public awareness and education materials and the development of forums for stakeholder dialogue (Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity 2011). These may provide guidance on the national approach to biodiversity conservation and protected area management to which companies should consider alignment of their project activities and biodiversity management strategies.

4.1.3 Stakeholder Consultation

The third bullet point under Paragraph 20 and associated Guidance Note paragraph GN116 requires stakeholder consultation “as appropriate” for all projects located in Legally Protected and Internationally Recognized Areas, suggesting engagement with the following stakeholders:

- *Responsible government agencies;*
- *Protected area sponsors;*
- *Protected area managers;*
- *Affected communities;*
- *Indigenous Peoples; and*
- *Other relevant stakeholders.*

For projects located in Internationally Recognized Areas which do not have legal protection, ‘clients would need to consult with the appropriate conservation agencies responsible for the designation’ (GN116). An example of a KBA conservation organisation would be the national Birdlife International partner for the country. National conservation organisations partner with Birdlife International to identify IBAs in particular countries. An example of the conservation agency for IBAs in the UK would be the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, in Brazil it would be SAVE Brazil and in Uganda it is Nature Uganda ^a.

The ‘as appropriate’ included in this bullet point relates to ‘the appropriateness/relevance of stakeholder groups to engage’ as part of the stakeholder engagement process (GN116).

Further information on stakeholder engagement is provided within Performance Standard 1^b paragraphs 26-33 and Guidance Note 1^c paragraphs GN91-GN105. Client requirements with respect to Indigenous Peoples are covered separately in Performance Standard 7 and cultural heritage is included in Performance Standard 8.

4.1.4 Implement Additional Programs to Support Conservation Aims and Effective Management

The fourth bullet point under Paragraph 20 requires implementation of additional programmes within Legally Protected Areas and Internationally Recognized Areas to support management objectives which ‘result in tangible benefits to the conservation objectives of that area’, with the

^a Birdlife International partners can be found on their data zone country pages: <http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/country>.

^b IFC PS1 Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

^c IFC GN1 Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

intention that “*clear conservation advantages should be gained by the presence of the project*’ (GN117). A number of suggested activities for achieving this are provided in GN117 and GN118:

- *Support for park management;*
- *Address alternative livelihoods for Affected Communities;*
- *Support and/or carry out research needed for the conservation aims of the protected area;*
- *Support the development of a protected or designated area management plan with the suitable government agency and conservation organisation. This must have the ‘endorsement [of] relevant stakeholders’ to be considered an ‘additional program’ (paraphrased from GN118).*

GN117 and Footnote 18 to PS6 Paragraph 20 state that if the project is not creating a new footprint there may not be a requirement for *‘implementing additional programs’*.

5 Natural and Critical Habitat Relevance for Protected Areas and Internationally Recognized Areas

In addition to the requirements detailed in Paragraph 20 relating specifically to presence in Legally Protected Areas and Internationally Recognized Areas, PS6 highlights that the client must also consider, and meet as appropriate, the requirements relating to Natural Habitat (PS6 paragraphs 13-15) and Critical Habitat (PS6 paragraphs 16-19) for these areas. PS6 and GN6 provide additional guidance regarding certain designations of Legally Protected or Internationally Recognized Area which should be treated as Critical Habitat. These are detailed in the sections below and summarised in Table 2 at the end of section 4.

5.1.1 IUCN Protected Area Management Categories

Guidance Note 6 states that IUCN Protected Area Management Categories Ia, Ib and II ‘*will be treated as Critical Habitat*’ (GN115). Regardless of whether these sites meet the Critical Habitat thresholds, they will be treated as Critical Habitat by IFC in recognition of their management status. IUCN Categories III – IV ‘*might also qualify*’ (GN115) as Critical Habitat depending on the biodiversity values inherent to those sites. IFC highlights that a Critical Habitat assessment would be required for protected areas with categories III – IV to identify if the biodiversity values correspond to the definition of Critical Habitat provided in PS6 Paragraph 16 (GN115).

The IUCN Protected Area Management Categories were designed to provide an important global standard for the planning, establishment and management of protected areas (Dudley 2008). The six category system allows protected area management authorities to highlight the intended management objective of sites under the guidance of a standardised international process. They are not a hierarchical system and no scale of importance should be inferred from the numbering.

The six management categories are:

- Ia: Strict nature reserve
- Ib: Wilderness area
- II: National Park
- III: Natural monument or feature
- IV: Habitat/species management area
- V: Protected landscape or seascape
- VI: Protected areas with sustainable use of natural resources

5.1.2 Protected Areas without IUCN Management Categories

The IUCN Management Categories are applicable to all protected areas meeting the IUCN definition. However, use of the categories by national governments is highly variable. Some governments do not allocate the categories, some only apply them to a subset of protected areas and some currently lack the capacity to implement the process. As of June 2014, 26% of national-level protected area records within the WDPA did not have a management category reported. Protected areas without assigned

categories do not differ in status from those protected areas where the management authorities have allocated a category. A protected area may qualify as Critical Habitat if it supports high biodiversity values as outlined in the Critical Habitat definition (GN113 & GN115) and the absence of an IUCN category does not imply lower biodiversity values or importance. Further assessment would be required to understand better the management objectives of the protected area and IFC identifies the need for a Critical Habitat assessment to ascertain whether corresponding biodiversity values exist at the site.

5.1.3 UNESCO Natural World Heritage Sites

GN6 states that Natural World Heritage Sites are to be treated as Critical Habitat (GN115).

5.1.4 UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserves

UNESCO MAB sites are only mentioned in PS6 within footnote 17 of paragraph 20. Here UNESCO MAB sites are defined as Internationally Recognized Areas under PS6. There is no further guidance as to how these sites should be treated with reference to the Critical Habitat definition. Management responses under paragraph 20 therefore apply and a Critical Habitat assessment should be considered (noting that the highest biodiversity values are likely to be encountered in the core zone of a MAB site).

5.1.5 Ramsar Wetlands

If the Ramsar site is designated under Criteria 5 or 6 of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, the area qualifies as Tier 2^a Critical Habitat (GN89). Sites designated under other Ramsar criteria may also qualify as Critical Habitat based on other biodiversity values present and will require a Critical Habitat assessment to ascertain.

5.1.6 Key Biodiversity Areas

GN57 states that the majority of KBAs will likely qualify as Critical Habitat. GN115 highlights that this will be the case where the triggers for KBA designation correspond to the criteria within the definition of Critical Habitat. In reality, this will be the case for the majority of KBA sites. However, there is a small subset of KBAs designated on the basis of triggers that do not align with Critical Habitat criteria (e.g. presence of a species identified as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species^b).











^a Within Critical Habitat assessments, “numerical thresholds are used to assign Criteria 1 through 3 [of the Critical Habitat definition] to a Tier 1 or Tier 2 Critical Habitat designation” (GN60). The tiers are detailed in Guidance Note 6 in paragraphs GN73-75, GN81-83 and GN88-89, and summarised in a table that follows paragraph GN89.

^b The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species is the world’s most comprehensive information source on the global conservation status of plant and animal species. It is based on an objective system for assessing the risk of extinction for a species. <http://www.iucnredlist.org/>

5.2 Summary Table: Which PAs and IRAs are likely to be Critical Habitat?

A summary of which Legally Protected Areas and Internationally Recognized Areas conform to Critical Habitat and where further assessment would be required (as identified within PS6) is shown in Table 2. The relevant paragraphs from PS6 and GN6 are listed.

Table 2: Legally Protected and Internationally Recognized Area Designations identified by IFC to be treated as Critical Habitat within PS6

Designation	Critical Habitat (CH)	Relevant paragraphs in IFC PS6	Relevant paragraphs in Guidance Note
Legally Protected Areas			
IUCN Management Categories Ia, Ib, and II		Paragraph 20 footnote 16	GN57, GN115
IUCN Management Categories III – VI		Paragraph 16 (Critical Habitat definition)	GN57, GN115
Legally Protected Areas (which meet IUCN definition) without IUCN Management Category		Paragraph 16 (Critical Habitat definition)	GN113, GN115
Internationally Recognized Areas			
UNESCO Natural World Heritage Sites			GN115
UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserve		Paragraph 20 Footnote 17	
Key Biodiversity Areas			GN115
Ramsar sites:			
Ramsar sites designated under Ramsar Criteria 5 or 6 for identifying Wetlands of International Importance	Tier 2 		GN57, GN89
Other Ramsar Sites			
Key:			
Treated as Critical Habitat		Further Assessment Required: May be Critical Habitat if contain biodiversity values meeting the criteria in PS6 Paragraph 16	

Annex 1: Natural and Critical Habitat Definitions

(IFC PS6)

Natural Habitat

PS6 Paragraph 13: *'Natural Habitats are areas composed of viable assemblages of plant and/or animal species of largely native origin, and/or where human activity has not essentially modified an area's primary ecological functions and species composition.'*

Critical Habitat

PS6 Paragraph 16: *'Critical Habitats are areas with high biodiversity value, including (i) habitat of significant importance to Critically Endangered and/or Endangered¹¹ species; (ii) habitat of significant importance to endemic and/or restricted-range species; (iii) habitat supporting globally significant concentrations of migratory species and/or congregatory species; (iv) highly threatened and/or unique ecosystems; and/or (v) areas associated with key evolutionary processes.'*

Footnote 11: *'As listed on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species.'*

Annex 2: Sources of Information

World Database of Protected Areas

GN114 references the use of the World Database of Protected Areas (WDPA).

The World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) is the most comprehensive global spatial dataset on terrestrial and marine protected areas. These areas are subdivided into national sites (protected areas designated under a national legal instrument and based on national legislation), regional sites (protected areas designated by a country under a regional convention, commission or agreement), and international sites (protected areas designated by a country under an international convention, commission or agreement). The WDPA can be accessed through www.protectedplanet.net. It is also incorporated into the IBAT portal (www.ibatforbusiness.org) and available to Proteus Partners as a monthly download of the most up-to-date version of the dataset.

In some cases, the management authority responsible for a protected area and the management plan url is listed within the WDPA record and can be found on Protected Planet.

The WDPA also contains proposed sites which can be identified through the metadata. Submission of information on proposed sites is not consistent and varies between countries. As of June 2014, there was a total of 2,842 (~1.5% of the total) proposed protected area records in the WDPA, submitted across 107 countries (IUCN and UNEP-WCMC, 2014).

A to Z of Areas of Biodiversity Importance

The A-Z is an online resource which provides detailed information on various biodiversity identification processes supported by national or sub-national institutions, international conventions and programmes and international prioritisation schemes developed by conservation organisations and/or scientific analysis carried out by academic institutions.

The A to Z of Areas of Biodiversity Importance can be accessed through: www.biodiversitya-z.org. This site also provides a glossary of biodiversity terms.

Other information sources: NBSAPs

National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans are available from the Convention on Biological Diversity's website in the NBSAP portal (<http://www.cbd.int/nbsap/default.shtml>). National governments will also hold these documents and are likely to have the most complete and up-to-date versions. Other documents detailing national or site-level biodiversity strategies or management plans may be accessible through the stakeholder consultation process, including from NGOs operating within the region.

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