# Al-Powered Environmental and Social Impact Assessment Platforms of the World Bank



#### **Hak Joo Song**

Environmental Specialist & Program Lead of WB Tech-for-ESF Initiative / The World Bank

USA / South Korea

www.linkedin.com/in/hsong4

www.worldbank.org



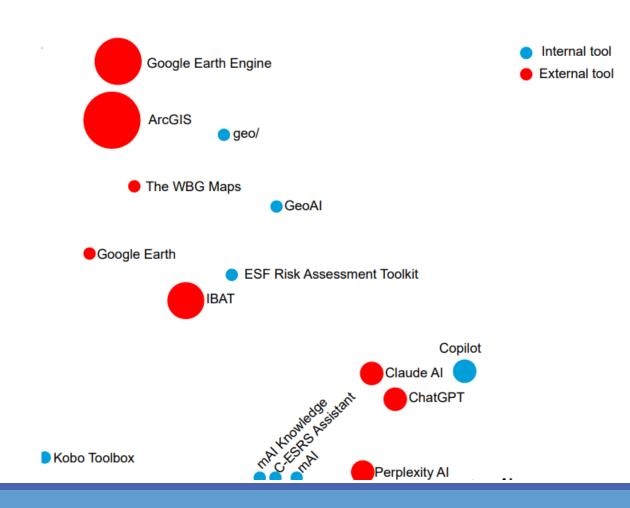


"How can we use existing technology to increase the efficiency of design and implementation of the ESF?"

- Tech-for-ESF (Technology for ESF) program was launched at the WB Environment Global Department to provide support to E&S Specialists in the field by:
- (1) streamlining the adoptable existing technologies
- (2) sharing good practices cross-regionally
- (3) Developing & piloting the emerging tech that can be useful for ESF in a practical way
- Tech-for-ESF rolled out the WB project "Integrating AI-GPT Technology to ESF", and started to upgrade and streamline AI applications for ESIA

# Existing Technologies that can be used for ESIA & Safeguards

- a. Drones (UAVs)
- **b.** On-the-Ground Survey Tool (e.g., Kobo Toolbox)
- c. Remote sensing (Satellite Images)
- d. Al Applications
- e. GIS & Geospatial Toolkit
- f. Biodiversity Data and Analytics (IBAT, etc.)
- g. Digital GRM (Grievance Redress Mechanism)
- h. Impact assessment database/applications
- ... and more



#### What sort of technology do you use in your field for your project? (e.g., drones, satellite imagery, IBAT, AI, etc.) Open text poll 28 responses 25 participants Anonymous Anonymous ChatGPT Chat got Survey Results from the WBG AI Tech for ESF Forum – June 2024 Anonymous Anonymous Satellite imagery Not much. Maps 28 responses: Anonymous **Anonymous ARCGis Geoesf** AI, RS images 30% - AI Anonymous **IBAT** Anonymous IBAT, ESF Tool kit 21% - Satellite Imagery Anonymous lbat Anonymous 21% - IBAT (Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool) Satellite Anonymous Al, satellite imagery, dat 18% - GIS, Google Earth, ArcGIS, Maps Anonymous GeoIFC Anonymous Satellite imagery 4) 7% - Drones Anonymous Drones, IBAT Anonymous Google Earth 1% - KoboToolbox

Anonymous

Anonymous

Anonymous Al

IBAT, GEMS

All of these - also in-situ

6)

...

Anonymous Imagery

Anonymous

Telephone.

### World Bank is developing enterprise-approved versions of ChatGPT and other AI tools

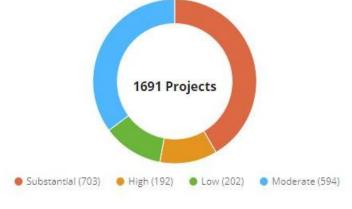
 WB is partnering with Microsoft, OpenAI and Google to develop secure, enterprise-grade generative AI tools with built-in safeguards for staff and institutional interests.





## → Quickly bringing Al to be a practical tool to support our ESF/Safeguards work

- What is ESF (Environmental and Social Framework) of the World Bank?
  - The ESF is a set of guidelines with 10 E&S Standards developed by the World Bank to ensure the sustainability of development outcomes to support Borrowers' projects
  - **2. ESF applies to all Investment Policy Financing (IPF) projects** initiated after October 1, 2018.

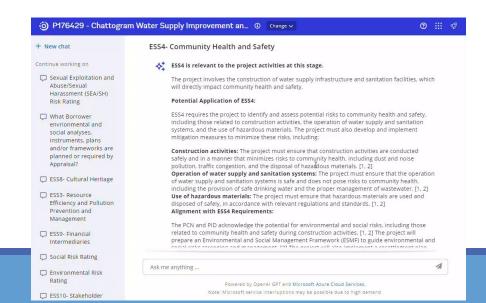


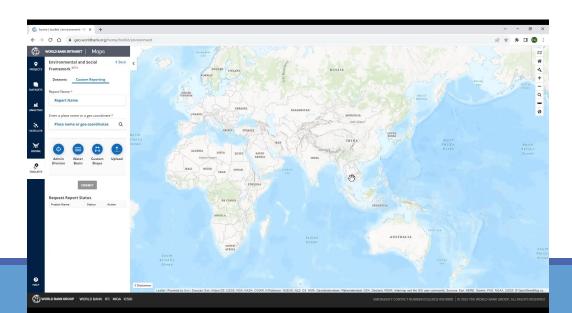
Source: WB ESMS

- Some of the issues in the ESF context:
  - ✓ Difficult to get the right information at the right time, and also from the hundreds of pages of E&S documents.

## **World Bank AI applications for ESF**

- 1. C-ESRS AI Assistant: Leverage AI to generate a draft Concept ESRS template
  - Output: Automatically populated draft content for each section of the Concept ESRS (Environmental and Social Review Summary), drawing from internal World Bank data repositories and any uploaded documents.
  - Pilot: Rolled out pilots to more than 35+ WB E&S Specialists in 2025
- 2. Geospatial ESF Risk Assessment Toolkit: Leverage AI to assess potential E&S risks and perform quick screening using 190+ public geospatial data layers and internal World Bank datasets
  - Output: Interactive web-based report with ESS-specific summaries, geospatial data, graphs, and maps for the project area.
  - ☐ **Pilot:** Rolled out pilots to more than 25+ WB Project teams in 2023-2024

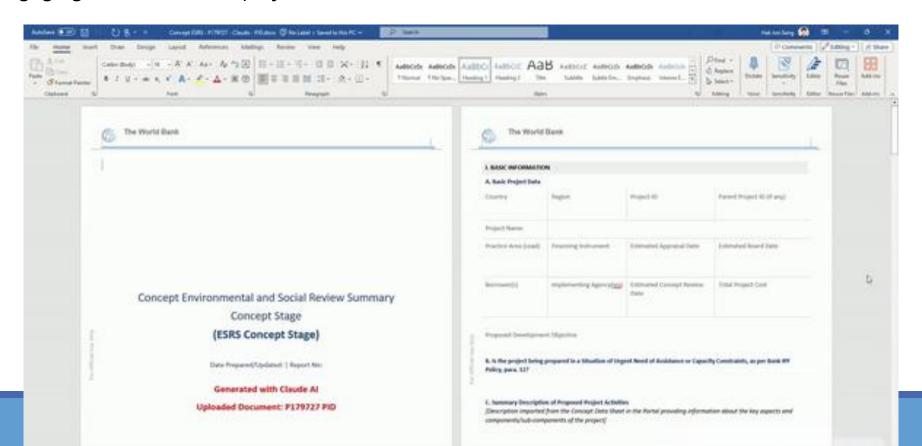




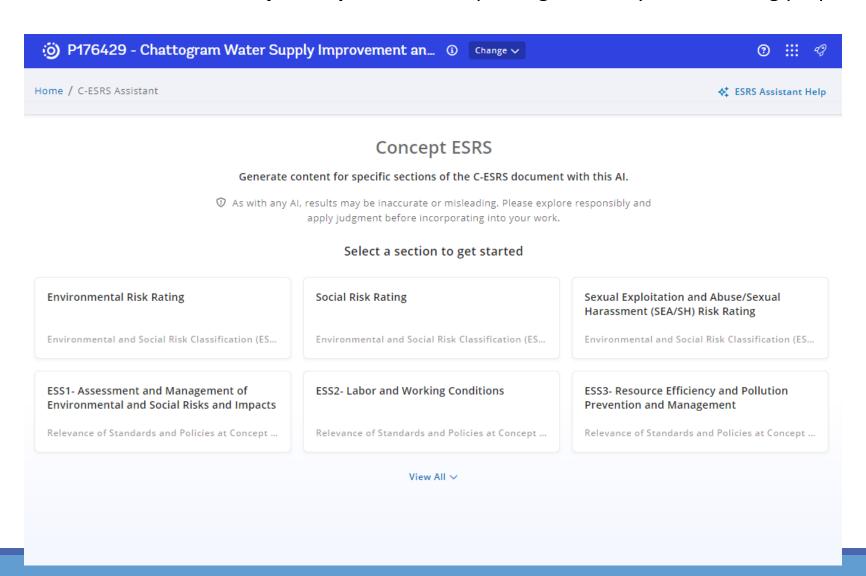
**Concept ESRS preparation** is a detailed process that can take several weeks, depending on project complexity, data availability, and stakeholder engagement needs, etc.

#### **Current method includes:**

- 1. Reviewing core project documents (e.g., PCN: Project Concept Note)
- 2. Referring to country- or sector-specific sources
- 3. Manually searching for relevant studies and data
- 4. Relying on personal and peer knowledge of local context
- 5. Using technical tools for ESS-specific analysis
- 6. Engaging with clients and project teams (incl. TTL)

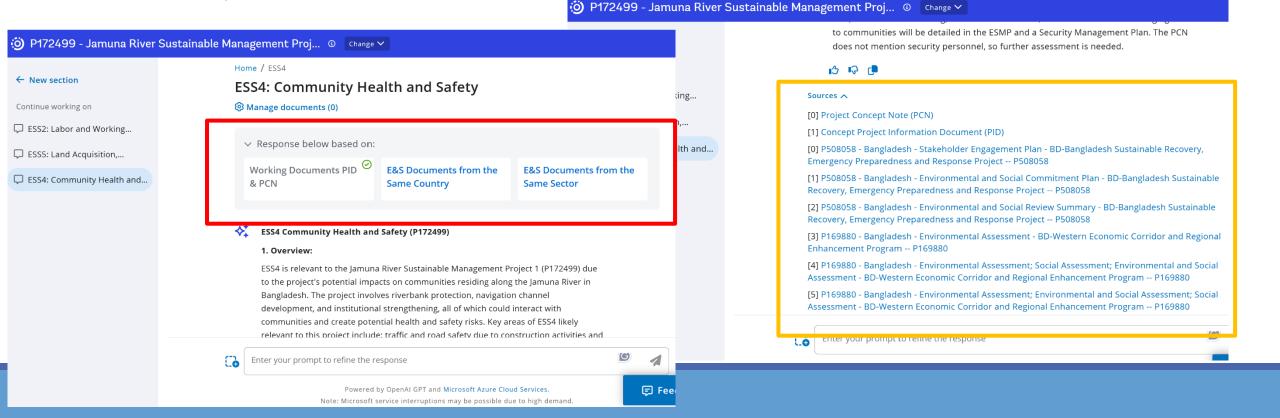


C-ESRS Al Assistant World Bank developed this Al LLM-powered tool that leverages the World Bank's knowledge repository to automate and generate draft content for each section of the C-ESRS for review and refinement by E&S Specialists—improving efficiency and reducing preparation time.



#### ✓ What data and source documents are linked?

- Fully integrated with all historical World Bank data
- Key source documents include:
- 1. PCN (Project Concept Note) & PID (Project Information Document)
- **2. E&S Documents from the Same Country & Same Sector** (e.g., completed ESRS of other relevant projects, context specific relevant studies, ESIA, ESMP, ESCP, ESMF, SESA, CIA, LMP, BMP, CHMP, etc.)

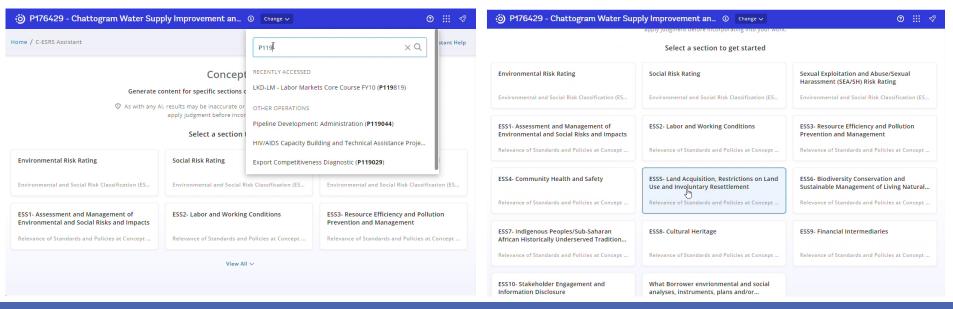


#### Methodology:

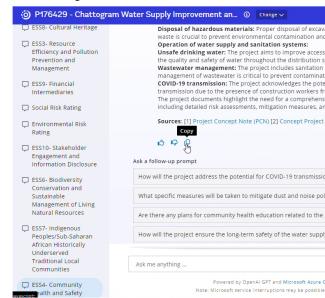
- 1. Establish linkage with all relevant existing data (baseline setup).
- 2. Apply effective prompt engineering using well-structured and context-specific prompts.
- 3. E&S Specialist-friendly interface and customized functionalities:
  - ☐ Allow ESF Specialists to upload additional files and inputs via prompts
  - ☐ Show a list of all source documents found
  - ☐ Provide advanced filtering options for more flexible document selection.

Step 1: Select the project from the WB portal

Step 2: Select a Section (e.g., ESS4, ESS8, etc.)



Step 3: Upload additional files, enter further prompt, check the list of sources



#### **Development Timeline:**

- 1. Prompt engineering and testing using various external and internal AI LLMs (2023)
- 2. Prototype development and internal testing through multiple iterations (2024–2025)
  - ✓ Includes **prompt refinement**, **identification of additional source documents**, and **interface enhancement** based on feedback
- 3. Pilot testing with 35+ E&S Specialists across regions ongoing enhancements for improved performance (2025)

4. Official launch scheduled for early June 2025 🚀

#### April 2025 version of the prompt for one section

В	C	D	F		к		L
		, and the second		Concept ESRS			
Document Sections	Context Source	Prompts provided by Business	Prompt (Version 1)	Updated Prompt (Version 2)	Updated Prompt (Version 3) 1/30/2025		Updated Prompt (Version 4) 4/01/2025
ESS3 - Financial Intermediaries	PIDIPON	provide a brief overview of its application, ensuring to stay within a maximum character limit of 1,000.	concerning Financial Intermediaries for this project. If ESS9 is relevant, give a brief overview of its application and discuss how existing	Based on the PCN and PID Source Documents, Evaluate the relevance of Environmental and Social Standard g (ESSS) concerning financial Intermedianies for this project. If ESSS is relevant, give a brief overview of its application and discuss how existing practices align with or need modification to meet ESS9 requirements. Ensure the maximum character limit is 500. If ESSS is not relevant, just print "ESSS" is not relevant to the project activities at this stage. The project is not expected to involve any financial intermedianes.	concerning Financial Intermediaries (Fls) for this project, using t source documents. ESS9 outlines the role of Fls in assessing, m	e available naging, finance, rtfolio ncluding anagemen conmental ironmenta sk portfolio in the ces ely ect does t require	1. Target Project Information:  O Required: Project Metadata (Including Target Project ID, Country, Region, Sector, PDO, Summary Description).  OI f Available: Project Concept Note (PCN) or Project Information Document (PID). (Primary assumed to project specifics, identified by Target Project Concept Note (PCN) or Project Information Document (PID). (Primary assumed to project Specific
B.2 Legal Operational Policies B.3 Other Salient Features			-				Analyze Target Info: Extract project characteristics, activities, context, scale from Metadata & PCN/PID.
B.4 Summary of Assessment of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts	PIDIPON		Write a comprehensive yet succinct summary, adhering to a maximum character limit of 1,000, that encapsulates the assessment of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts associated with the project. Ensure your summary precisely addresses the following aspects:  - Qualine the overall scope of the environmental and social assessment, including the geographical, temporal, and thematic boundaries considered.  - Identify and describe the key environmental and social risks associated with the project, ensuring to delineate between direct, indirect, and countalative impacts Identify and discuss any vulnerable and marginalized groups that may be particularly impacted by the project, detailing the nature and extent o potential impacts Detail the proposed mitigation and management measures that will be implemented to address identified risks and impacts, ensuring alignment with relevant environmental and social standards.	with the project, ensuring to delineate between direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts. Identify and discuss any vulnerable and marginalized groups that may be particularly impacted by the project, detailing the nature and extent of potential impacts. Identify the propect of the project of the project of implemented to address identified risks and impacts, ensuring alignment with relevant environmental and social standards.			Critically scan CNLY the Target Project info for explicit mention or clear description of an Fl financing mechanism.  3. Determine ESS9 Relevance (CRITICAL STEP - Default is SUNP-RELEVANT):  O Based strictly on the analysis of Target Project Info, determine if the Critical Trigger is met.  Oil fithere is ND explicit evidence of an Fl financing mechanism in the Target Project description, conclude ESS9 is NDT relevant. Proceed directly to Step 6 (Justify Non-Relevance). This is the expected outcome unless proven otherwise.  Oil f, and CNLY IF, there is CLEAR and EXPLICIT evidence of Fl involvement in the Target Project info, conclude ESS9 is relevant. Proceed to Step 4 (Analyze Analogs) and Step 5 (Draft ESS9 Section).  4. Analyze Analogs (Only if ESS9 relevance is confirmed): Review Analog Fl Project Documents to identify typical patterns: standard ESMS components (policy, procedures, capacity, monitoring), common risk categorization approaches, typical ESS requirements applied to subprojects, Fl internal HPESS2 application.  5. Draft ESS9 Section (Only if ESS9 relevance is confirmed): Synthesize findings into a draft following the Cutting Requirements below. Emphasize the need for ESMS development/assessment.  6. Justify Non-Relevance (Default Case): Provide a concise justification explicitly stating why ESS9 is not relevant, referencing the absence of an Fl mechanism in the Target Project Information (e.g., "ESS9 is not relevant as the project, based on the PCNMetadata, involves direct financing for (activities) and does not utilize Financial Intermediaries.").  Dutput Requirements:

### **C-ESRS AI Assistant Pilot Overview – April 2025**

Department	Number of Pilot Teams
Environment	25
Social	11
RSA	1
Total	37



Region	# of pilots
AFE	5
AFW	5
ECA	13
EAP	3
LAC	7
MENA	2
Global	2
Total	37



**51.4%** (19 out of 37) of participants responded to the survey



84% (16 out of 19) said the C-ESRS AI Assistant helped enhance their ESF work

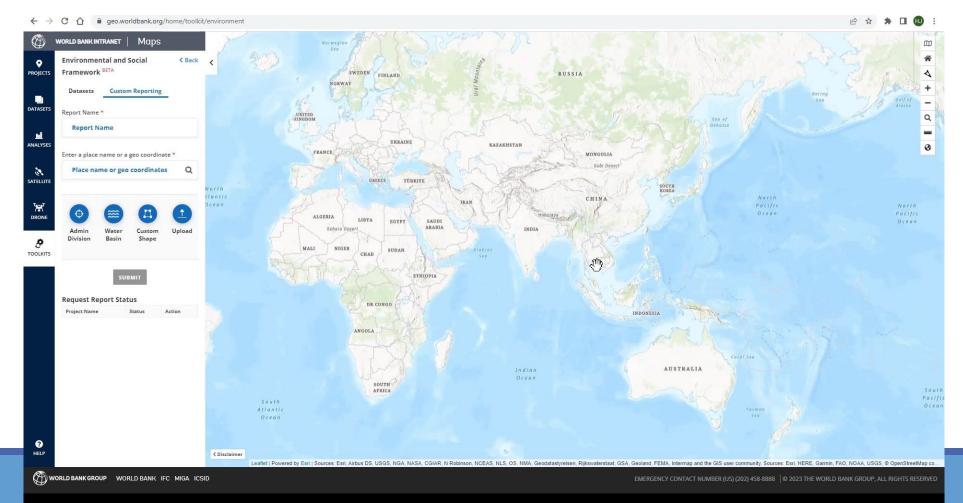
**84%** (16 out of 19) of participants indicated that the C-ESRS AI Assistant's **strongest point** is that it **increased saved time**.

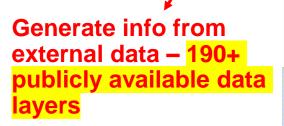
**58%** (11 out of 19) of participants indicated that the toolkit's **second strongest** point is that it **identified relevant available E&S documents**.

**81%** of participants reported **finding mismatches** between the content generated by the AI Assistant and the project information they already knew.

# WB's Geospatial ESF Risk Assessment Toolkit: Leverage AI to conduct quick screening using 190+ publicly available geospatial data layers and internal World Bank datasets, assessing potential E&S risks.

- ☐ Output Interactive web-based report (Printable as PDF) with:
  - ✓ Detailed baseline information on project sites (+ buffer zones) including geospatial data, graphs, tables, and maps
  - ✓ ESS-specific summaries, list of relevant past World Bank projects, key technical issues, including previous specialists' comments and cited data sources





## Toolkit - ESF Report

Project Name: Mindanao Transport Connectivity Improvement Project - (P177017)

**Quick Screening** 

Full Report

Knowledge Base

Recommender System

PRINT REPORT

### **Quick Screening**

The quick screening uses publicly available Geospatial data to flag prominent environmental and social risks. A lack of warning indicator does not indicate a lack of risk as these are based on available data where there may be gaps.

Generate info from all WB internal historical data including E&S (ESRS, etc.)

Quick Screening

The quick screening uses publicly available Geospatial data to flag prominent environm and social risks. A lack of warning indicator does not indicate a lack of risk as these are based on available data where there may be gaps.

#### Basic Data on the Area of Interest

Name/tb of the user Report Mindatus Transport Connectivity Improvement Project (P177817)1 requested by stopalovic/thworldbarngroup.org request Date of the report Type of Area Position of the area of interest Area (hat Provigos Ptolippines - Regino 10 - Bulotnen -1,254,170 Philippines - Region 15 - Daviso del Sur Philippines - Region 12 - South Cotabate Phopuses - Region 12 - Satisfyon #hillippintes - Region 12 - Cotabito Philippines - Region 10 - Missettly Chental Philippines - Region 12 - Bultan Kudarat Philippines - Region 11 - Daven Occidental

Philippines - Region I t - Davas del trurte

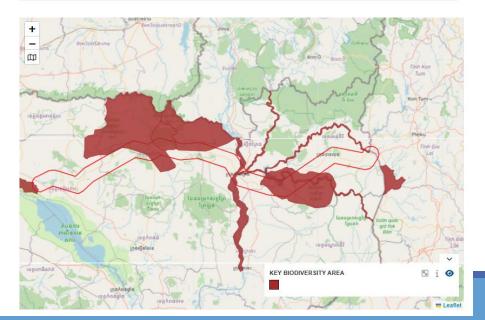
#### ^ ESS6 - Biodiversity Conservation and sustainable Management of Living natural resources

ESS6 - Biodiversity Conservation and sustainable Management of Living natural resources

#### Forest Cover / Deforestation

	Area of Interest		National wide	
	(ha)	(%)	(ha)	(%)
Forest cover 2000	225,711	154.701	8,819,646	48.562
Forest Gain (2000-2021)	3,436	2.355	109,412	0.602
Forest Loss (2000-2021)	110,176	75.513	2,455,835	13.522

KBA overlapping area of interest and 10 km buffer zone		
International name	Protection	
Chu Prong	Líttle/none	
Sekong River	Little/none	
Preah Net Preah / Kra Lanh / Pourk	Little/none	
Upper Stung Sen Catchment	Most	
O Skach	Little/none	



#### **✓ ESF reports generated by this AI toolkit can:**

- .. Help project teams engage in strategic dialogue with key government agencies
- 2. Guide consultants conducting technical studies as part of project preparation (e.g., E&S screening)
- 3. Support detailed project preparation by the client (implementing agency)
- 4. Be printed as a PDF or hard copy and shared with colleagues, clients, consultants, and stakeholders involved in the same project.

#### Sources of data A

BirdLife International (2019). World Database of Key Biodiversity Areas. Developed by the KBA Partnership: BirdLife International, International Union for the Conservation of Nature, Amphibian Survival Alliance, Conservation International, Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, Global Environment Facility, Global Wildlife Conservation, NatureServe, Rainforest Trust, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Wildlife Conservation Society and World Wildlife Fund. Available at www.keybiodiversityareas.org KBA status is triggered by the presence of key biodiversity criteria, informed by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species<sup>TM</sup>. KBA mapping builds upon the work of a number of existing partnership-supported initiatives - such as BirdLife International's Important Plant Areas, IUCN's Important Sites for Freshwater Biodiversity and sites identified by the Alliance for Zero Extinction - to map important sites for a wide range of critical biodiversity in marine, freshwater and terrestrial biomes. Data on KBA sites is compiled from an international network of local, national and international partners in NGOs, academic institutions and government agencies, and is compiled into the World Biodiversity Database (WBDB) managed by BirdLife International and Conservation International. The global inventory of terrestrial Important Bird Areas is nearly complete. Completeness of coverage varies for other taxa and biomes.

Endangered and Threatened S	pecies in AOI			
Total Species	Mammals	Birds	Amphibians	Reptiles
12	3	6	2	1
Endangered and Threatened S	pecies national wide.			
26	13	11	1	1

#### Sources of data A

IUCN, BirdLife International, World Bank Group

Detailed discussions of the methodology are in the following reports:

Dasgupta, Susmita; Wheeler, David. 2016. Minimizing Ecological Damage from Road Improvement in Tropical Forests. Policy Research Working Paper: No. 7826. World Bank, Washington, DC. © World Bank. Danyo Stephen, Susmita Dasgupta and David Wheeler. 2018. Potential Forest Loss and Biodiversity Risks from Road Improvement in Lao PDR. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 8569. World Bank, Washington, DC. © World Bank. Damania Richard, Jason Russ, David Wheeler and Alvaro Federico Barra. 2018. The Road to Growth: Measuring the Tradeoffs between Economic Growth and Ecological Destruction, World Development, Elsevier, vol. 101(C), pages 351-376. https://datacatalog.worldbank.org/dataset/terrestrial-biodiversity-indicators

Biodiversity indicator values (scores) for grid cells at 1-kilometer resolution, derived from over 25,000 range maps of species provided by IUCN and Birdlife International.

Cambodia is home to a variety of endangered and threatened species. The Asian Elephant is listed as endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The population of Asian Elephants in Cambodia has declined by more than 50% in the last three generations due to poaching, habitat loss, and human-elephant conflict. The Javan Rhino is also listed as critically endangered by the IUCN. There are only an estimated 60-70 individuals left in the wild, and none are known to exist in Cambodia. The Siamese Crocodile is also listed as critically endangered by the IUCN. It is estimated that there are only 250-400 individuals left in the wild, and none are known to exist in Cambodia. The Bengal Florican is listed as endangered by the IUCN. It is estimated that there are only 1,000-2,000 individuals left in the wild, and none are known to exist in Cambodia. The Giant Ibis is listed as critically endangered by the IUCN. It is estimated that there are only 250-400 individuals left in the wild, and none are known to exist in Cambodia. The White-shouldered lbis is also listed as critically endangered by the IUCN. It is estimated that there are only 250-400 individuals left in the wild, and none are known to exist in Cambodia. The Giant Softshell Turtle is listed as critically endangered by the IUCN. It is estimated that there are only 250-400 individuals left in the wild, and none are known to exist in Cambodia. The Siamese Fireback is listed as endangered by the IUCN. It is estimated that there are only 1,000-2,000 individuals left in the wild, and none are known to exist in Cambodia. The White-rumped Vulture is listed as critically endangered by the IUCN. It is estimated that there are only 1,000-2,000 individuals left in the wild, and none are known to exist in Cambodia. The Greater Adjutant is listed as critically endangered by the IUCN. It is estimated that there are only 1,000-2,000 individuals left in the wild, and none are known to exist in Cambodia. The conservation of these species is of utmost importance to ensure their survival and to protect the biodiversity of Cambodia. Conservation efforts must focus on protecting their habitats, reducing human-wildlife conflict, and increasing public awareness of the importance of these species.

https://geo.worldbank.org/home/esf-report/2w0wkbk2njlv5kxnmt

4/18/24, 4:45 PM World Bank Group Geospatial Platform

Table of Endangered and Threatened Unique Species in 10km Buffer Zone of Cambodia			
	Species Name	Estimated Population	conservation Status
	Asian Elephant	<1000	Endangered
	B engal Tiger	<200	Critically Endangered
	Siamese Crocodile	250	Critically Endangered
	Eld's Deer	<200	Critically Endangered
	Gaur	<200	Endangered
	Malayan Sun Bear	<200	Vulnerable
	Clouded Leopard	<200	Vulnerable
	Asian Small- Clawed Otter	<200	Vulnerable
	Smooth-Coated Otter	<200	Vulnerable
	Asian Giant Tortoise	<200	Vulnerable

Generate a quick summary write-up for each ESS using OpenAI-GPT. All outputs should be reviewed and verified by E&S specialists.

#### **Public geospatial datasets used in this ESF Toolkit:**

ex. ESS6 - Biodiversity Conservation and sustainable Management of Living natural resources

- Forest Cover / Deforestation (Source: Hansen/ UMD/ Google/ USGS/ NASA, accessed through Global Forest Watch)
- Protected areas (Source: World Database on Protected Areas -International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- Biodiversity hotspots (Source: Conservation International. "Biodiversity hotspots." Accessed through Global Forest Watch)
- Key Biodiversity Area (Source: Conservation International. "Biodiversity hotspots." Accessed through Global Forest Watch.)
- Key Biodiversity Area (Source: BirdLife International (2019). World Database of Key Biodiversity Areas. Developed by the KBA Partnership)
- Endangered and Threatened Species in AOI (Source: IUCN, BirdLife International, World Bank Group, Detailed discussions of the methodology are in the following reports: ~~)
- And more...

Source: Open AI GPT 🗸

## **AI-GPT Applied ESF Report Toolkit Pilot Overview**

GP	Number of Pilot Teams
ENB	13
SSI	2
Total	15



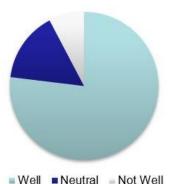
Region	# of pilots
AFE	3
AFW	1
EAP	4
ECA	3
LAC	3
MENA	1
Total	15

**92%** (12 out of 13) of participants indicated that the Toolkit's **strongest point** is that it **increased understanding of the project sites**.

**54%** (6 out of 13) of participants indicated that the Toolkit's **second strongest** point is that it **saved time**.



85% (11 out of 13) said the AI-GPT applied ESF Report Toolkit helped enhance their ESF work

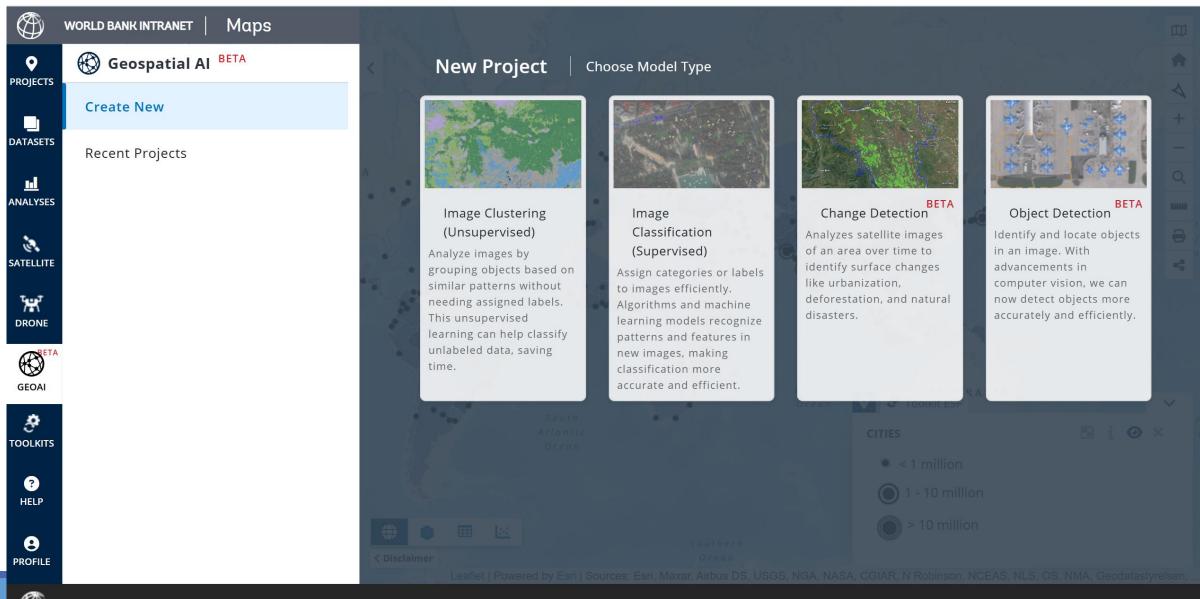


77% (10 out of 13) of participants stated that the AI-GPT ESF Report provided information very well, while 2 out 13 said neutral and 1 out 13 said it didn't.

## What's next?

- 1. **ESF Chatbot:** An internal AI LLM-based query instrument that draws specifically from the internal WBG ESF library.
- 2. **ESIA Document Review Tool by IFC MALENA:** An AI tool which can review draft ESIAs/ESMPs for structural completeness against a review checklist. Its primary audience is the regional safeguards quality assurance teams, and will also be useful for ESF specialists and ESF external clients/PIU specialists. **The tool is a product of an IFC MALENA** The World Bank is in close contact with the IFC team working on AI and Performance Standards, piloting the tool to the WB E&S teams in Europe and Central Asia Region.

# World Bank ITS Geospatial Platform







# Satellite Imagery Services by WB ITS Geospatial

The World Bank's ITS Geospatial offers both:

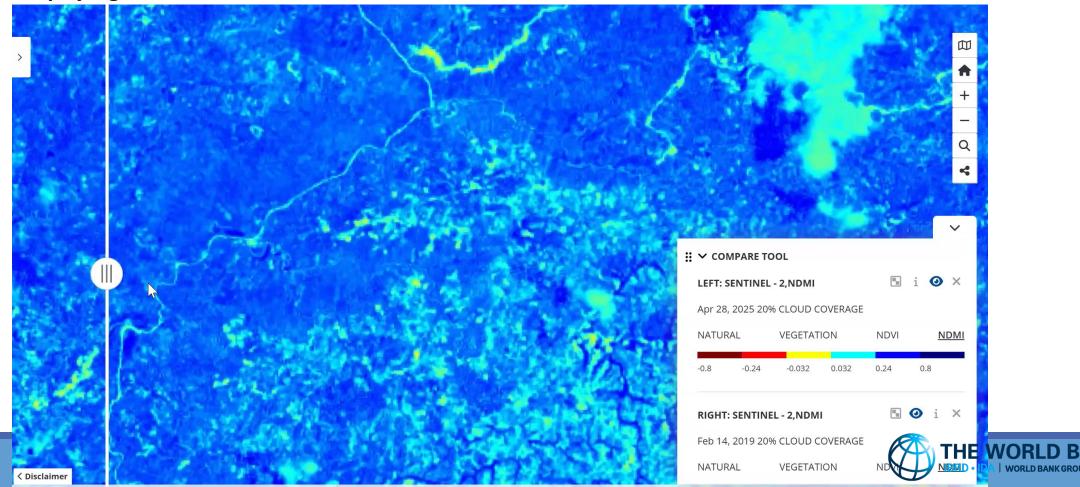
- 1. Free-publicly available satellite imageries and basic analytic services (powered by Google Earth Engine) including change detection (satellite image over time) and simple GIS mapping, and
- 2. Access to High-resolution satellite imagery via WB Geospatial Platform API, connecting to the good external service providers (e.g., Planet, Maxar, Airbus) upon the requests from the Bank staff





# Free-publicly available satellite imageries

- 1. WB teams **and also external users** (clients) can access to this WB's free-publicly available satellite imageries (i.e., **Sentinel-2 that has 10m-60m resolution**) and basic analytic services (powered by Google Earth Engine) by just using this external link: <a href="https://maps.worldbank.org/imagery/Satellite">https://maps.worldbank.org/imagery/Satellite</a>
- 2. Anyone can do simple change detection analysis (satellite image over time) using this Bank's free platform without paying additional cost.



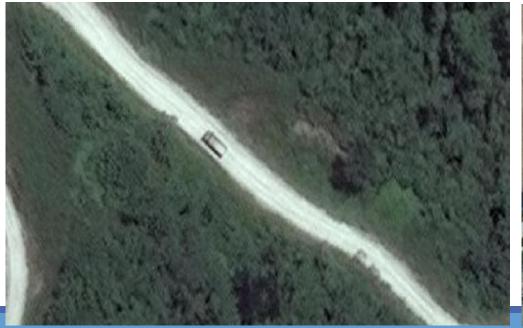
# High-resolution satellite imagery services via WB Geospatial Platform

#### Maxar

- Resolution: 30-40 cm
- Near Real-Time (+/-2 Days Latency 90 Days)
- Approx Cost: 11000 USD for 12 shots/imageries for one year (Minimum order quantity is 100 km<sup>2</sup>) or 2750 USD for 4 shots/imageries of 25 km<sup>2</sup> for one year
- Specific cost shall be determined upon the request and discussion with the team
- Below are some example images taken from Maxar near project area (it's good enough for forest clearance monitoring purpose)

#### 2. PlanetScope

- Resolution: 2-3 m
- Near Real-Time (Daily)





## **Drone Operation Services**

## via WB Geospatial Platform

- WB ITS provides access to global/region-specific drone services to get drone images that can be commissioned for key areas.
- Master Agreement with Drone Service Providers
  - Top 3 ~ 5 in the region, who can operate globally
  - E.g. Globhe, WeRobotics, Flying Labs Malawi
- Integration of Cloud-based Drone Data Management Platforms
  - SiteScan, Pix4DCloud
  - Delivery Through WB Geospatial Platform



# **Sharing Best Practices**



Organized MFIs Tech-for-ESF Working Group with ADB, IDB, FAO, EBRD, AfDB, AIIB, IFC, MIGA, and WB since 2023 (Co-led by WB & ADB).

Rolling out as a Global Engagement Program, and aim to work with three levels of stakeholders

- E&S Specialists
- Country Clients
- Task Team Leaders of the WB Projects
- Collaborating with internal & external partners



# Let's continue the conversation!

Message me your questions or comments in the IAIA25 app.

#### **Hak Joo Song**

Environmental Specialist & Program Lead of WB Tech-for-ESF Initiative / The World Bank

USA / South Korea

www.linkedin.com/in/hsong4

www.worldbank.org