

Standard

E16 – Biodiversity protection and natural resource management

November 2017

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Owner: Group Executive Health, Safety & Environment		Approver: Executive Committee	Target audience: All Rio Tinto staff and each Rio Tinto Group business and function	
Direct linkages to other relevant policies, standards, procedures or guidance notes: Rio Tinto management system standard and E14 – Land management and rehabilitation control standard. E16 - Biodiversity protection and natural resource management guidance note				
Document purpose: To support the implementation of the Group HSEC policy. This standard defines the minimum acceptable requirements for behaviours and/or conditions in respect of managing biodiversity and natural resources used by affected communities, which if not met, could materially impact the Group.				

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Intent and scope

Business units and operations are accountable to manage impacts associated with our operations to ensure risk is managed in accordance with regulatory commitments, Rio Tinto values as outlined in *The way we work*, and the HSEC policy. Rio Tinto is committed to protecting the environmental value of the regions where we operate and maintaining good stewardship for the long term. The intent of the standard and the requirements herein, is to prevent, or otherwise minimise, mitigate and remediate the effects that our business' operations have on communities and environments.

This standard is applicable to all Rio Tinto business units and managed operations across all phases of their life cycle from exploration through post-closure. This includes impacts on biological diversity and ecosystem services that are relied upon by surrounding communities for natural resource use, as well as ecosystems held within avoidance, buffer, and offset zones, or other non-operational zones. It applies to all lands and waters utilised by the business or for which the business may have responsibility.

Performance requirements

- 1.1 Mitigate impacts on important biodiversity features, priority ecosystems services and related natural resource availability to reduce residual impacts to the extent practicable by applying the mitigation hierarchy principles of avoid, minimize, and rehabilitate.
- 1.2 Actions that are planned to mitigate biodiversity impacts but have unavoidable impacts on the natural resource needs of communities must ensure that appropriate compensation is agreed and provided in a manner consistent with the Communities and Social Performance Standard.
- 1.3 Actively seek and implement collaborative opportunities for enhancing biodiversity and long-term stewardship of natural resources within avoidance and restored zones and non-operational lands through an inclusive stakeholder approach.
- 1.4 When residual impacts are, or are predicted to be, significant following application of the earlier stages of the mitigation hierarchy, implement offsets as necessary to meet regulatory or lender requirements, or to otherwise manage associated risk. Commitments to voluntary offsets due to significant biodiversity impacts require the approval of the Managing Director.

Control requirements

Requirements in this standard apply in addition to any requirements defined in the *Rio Tinto Management System* standard, those of the *Community and social performance* standard, and the other environmental standards. Materiality thresholds, described in guidance to this standard, determine the level of effort required to meet subsequent clauses herein.

Hazard identification and risk management

- 2.1 Develop internal performance criteria when government regulations are absent or insufficient to ensure protection of important biodiversity features, priority ecosystems services and related natural resource availability. Any performance criteria that are more stringent than government regulations must have formal approval from the business' Managing Director.

- 2.2 Assess biodiversity, natural resource values, and ecosystem services at existing and new sites. Update this values assessment in response to changes in local conditions or the conservation status of species or ecosystems.
- 2.3 Design and implement baseline studies with adequate time to identify important biodiversity features, priority ecosystems services and related natural resource availability that may be impacted by new projects or expansions.
- 2.4 Identify, characterise, document and evaluate all known potential risks and impacts, including cumulative and indirect impacts, to biodiversity, natural resources and related ecosystem services.
- 2.5 Develop and document appropriate mitigation strategies that could address identified significant risks and impacts to important biodiversity features, priority ecosystems services and related natural resource availability.
- 2.6 Develop, maintain and implement a mitigation plan for all significant risks and impacts to important biodiversity features, priority ecosystems services and related natural resource availability, based on mitigation strategies and in consultation with relevant stakeholders and affected communities.
- 2.7 Ensure internal alignment between biodiversity management and other appropriate business departments throughout implementation.
- 2.8 Evaluate and document all known potential impacts to important biodiversity features, priority ecosystems services and related natural resource availability. Develop appropriate mitigation strategies for all significant risks and impacts as part of the technical and financial preparation and evaluation of capital projects.

Management of change

- 2.9 Evaluate and document any change to mine design, infrastructure and operations that could impact important biodiversity features, priority ecosystems services and related natural resource availability, as part of a change management process that prioritises opportunities to avoid and/or reduce impacts.
- 2.10 Apply a disturbance approval procedure to address activities that may lead to disturbance of sensitive areas and result in impacts to important biodiversity features, priority ecosystems services and related natural resource availability.

Monitoring, measuring and reporting

- 2.11 Design and implement a monitoring programme using metrics that adequately track changes in identified important biodiversity features, priority ecosystem services and related natural resource availability to confirm impact predictions, and validate the success of mitigation plans.
- 2.12 Investigate and take appropriate actions when material deviations from impact predictions are identified or when internal performance criteria are not met.
- 2.13 Develop participatory monitoring programmes with affected communities, as appropriate.
- 2.14 Arrange for an independent review of the mitigation plan by qualified external expertise at least every five years or with every significant change to the risk profile if significant biodiversity risks or impacts are identified.
- 2.15 Report on site-level mitigation performance to relevant external stakeholders regularly if significant risks or impacts to important biodiversity features, priority ecosystem services or natural resource availability are identified.