

Applying best practices to oil & gas projects

PLANNING

Oil & gas projects should focus on avoiding impacts on great apes and their habitats through the assessment of alternatives.

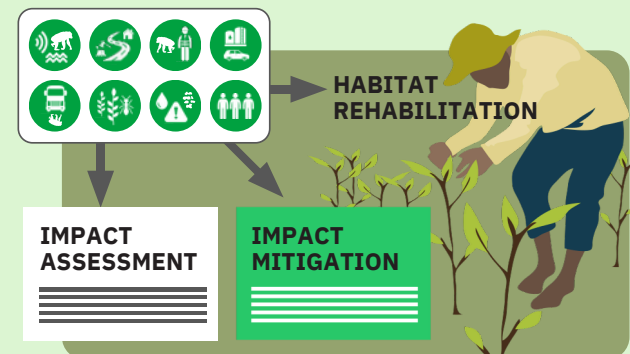


BASELINE SURVEYS

Baseline data for great apes should be collected by appropriate experts within the project's Area of Influence. Great ape surveys require a minimum of 8-12 months to ensure cross-seasonal coverage, using complementary survey methods

INFORM

These data should inform the application of the mitigation hierarchy, which will help the project minimize its residual impacts. The project's mitigation approach should then be captured in their management and action plans.



OFFSET

Offsetting is a measure of last resort. Different offset options should be considered with the inputs of relevant stakeholders. The project should then ensure that the offset will be supported by a sustainable financial mechanism to guarantee the long-term protection of great apes and their habitats.

Resources

- | **IUCN SSC APES PLATFORM:** <https://www.iucngreatapes.org/apes-platform>
- | **Disease risk mitigation guidelines** are available from ARRC Task Force infographics (<https://arrctaskforce.org/resources/infographics/>)
- | **Invasive species information** is available from <https://www.ipieca.org/resources/invasive-alien-species-and-the-energy-industry>
- | **Water and soil pollution management and mitigation** is available from <https://www.ipieca.org/resources/water-management-framework>
<https://www.ipieca.org/resources/water-stewardship>
<https://www.ipieca.org/resources/oil-spill-preparedness-and-response-an-introduction>



REACH OUT to the ARRC Task Force if projects risk impacting great apes (info@arrctaskforce.org)



Mitigating the Impacts of Oil & Gas Projects on Great Apes



based on a decision of the German Bundestag

This infographic was developed by the ARRC Task Force and designed by Re:wild.



Mitigating the Impacts of Oil & Gas Projects on Great Apes


Despite a global call to phase out fossil fuels, oil & gas permits continue to be auctioned in areas harboring great apes and of high importance for biodiversity and climate change, such as peatlands. Impacts occur across the different project phases, but are typically most significant during the exploration and construction phases. These projects also include associated infrastructure, such as pipelines and access roads, which need to be considered within the project Area of Influence (AoI). Best practice guidance can help projects improve the mitigation of their impacts, and this document highlights specific guidance for great apes and their habitats.





Oil & gas projects generate different types of impacts: direct, indirect and cumulative. The potential extent of these impacts are then used to define the project AoI.


Direct Impacts

 **Habitat fragmentation and loss** due to the project footprint

 **Habitat disturbance, including noise and vibrations**, caused by seismic activity

 **Worker presence** in great ape habitat

 **Invasive species**

 **Water and soil pollution**

Consequences on great apes

Can cause great apes to avoid areas and/or shift their range, affecting movement and access to key resources and increasing the risk of resource competition and intergroup lethal aggression, especially in chimpanzees. Such disturbances can also increase stress levels, reducing resistance to disease and impacting reproduction.

Increases risks of zoonotic disease transmission (e.g. respiratory diseases like COVID-19).

Can impact local ecology, threatening species of importance to great apes and other wildlife.

Can negatively impact great ape habitat and health.

Indirect Impacts

 **Induced access**

 **Human influx**

Can exacerbate anthropogenic pressures on natural resources, such as habitat conversion and degradation and natural resource extraction (including logging and the hunting of great apes), and increase the risk of disease transmission from humans to great apes.

Cumulative impacts

These are the combined effects from past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future activities within a landscape. The project needs to assess potential cumulative impacts on great apes and their habitat as part of project planning.

The mitigation hierarchy is the benchmark for best practice. It consists of sequential steps to first avoid, then reduce, rehabilitate, and, as a final resort, offset impacts. See below for examples:

AVOID

- | Avoid infrastructure development and activities in areas of confirmed great ape presence and natural habitat.
- | Abstain from cutting trees of importance to great apes for nesting or food.

REDUCE

- | Use baseline surveys to inform phased exploration relying on low-seismic activities.
- | Consider directional drilling to reduce impacts on habitats used by great apes.
- | Limit work hours, especially during construction, from dawn (+1 hour) to dusk (- 1 hour).
- | Develop staff codes of conduct (e.g., no hunting, hygiene protocols), provide regular training, and apply sanctions in cases of non-compliance.
- | Improve sanitary conditions and services to minimise the risks of disease transmission.
- | Control access along all access roads and restrict usage to staff only.
- | Install speed limit signage, speed bumps and/or monitors in areas known to be used by great apes.

REHABILITATE

- | Immediately rehabilitate temporary infrastructure and ensure all impacted areas are rehabilitated upon closure.
- | Ensure that roads that are no longer used are closed and rehabilitated.

OFFSET

- | Implement an offset to compensate for the project's residual impacts. This needs to be started before construction begins.

The effectiveness of mitigation measures should be closely monitored through a biodiversity monitoring and evaluation plan that triggers adaptive management if necessary.

