

# **Sustainable Development Safeguards**

## **SDSs Tool**

BIOCARBON CERT<sup>®</sup>

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## Acronyms and abbreviations

AFOLU	Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use
BBS	BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard
BCR	BioCarbon
GHG	Greenhouse gas
BDCs	Biodiversity Credits
IPBES	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
CAB	Conformity Assessment Body
CB	Certification Body
REDD-	Conservation, sustainable management, or improvement of carbon stocks in forests
PD	Project Document
CID	Conservation Initiative Document
NNH	No net Harm
SDSs	Sustainable Development Safeguards
VCCs	Verified Carbon Credits
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILK	Indigenous People and Local Knowledge
UNCA	United Nations Convention against Corruption
FCPA	Foreign Corrupt Practices Act of 1977
N/A	Not applicable

## 1. Introduction

The GHG Crediting Program and the Biodiversity Crediting Program at BioCarbon Cert (hereinafter referred to as BioCarbon) set out the rules and requirements for project holders and biodiversity conservation initiatives who, alongside reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions and quantifying biodiversity net gains, undertake a process of socio-economic and environmental due diligence. This approach essentially entails a Sustainable Development Safeguards assessment that examines and addresses risks and potential negative impacts related to land use, water, biodiversity and ecosystems, human rights (including labor and work conditions, gender equality, and Indigenous Peoples and Cultural Heritage), among others.

In accordance with the IPBES, *'The concept of nature's contribution to people was developed to embrace a fuller and more symmetric consideration of diverse stakeholders and world views, and a richer evidence base for action, i.e., the knowledge base offered by the natural and social sciences, the humanities, and the knowledge of practitioners and indigenous peoples and local communities'*.<sup>1</sup>

As part of the certifying and registering processes under BioCarbon Programs, GHG project (hereinafter referred to as project) and biodiversity initiative (hereinafter referred to as initiative) holders shall comply with this tool.

## 2. Objectives

The purpose of this document is to:

- (a) Effectively highlight environmental and socio-economic risks and potential negative impacts arising from project and initiative activities. Identifying these safeguard requirements will aid in preventing and/or mitigating risks resulting from any intervention during the emission reduction/removal or biodiversity conservation activities;
- (b) Outline the framework for project and initiative developers to analyze the potential negative effects on biodiversity and ecosystems, as well as the significant socioeconomic adverse impacts of their activities;
- (c) Specify the requirements that the project or initiative holder shall identify, assess and address to demonstrate the compliance with the SDSs safeguards described in this tool;
- (d) Provide the criteria that the Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) or Certification Body (CB) shall utilize to evaluate whether the analyses described in point (b) and

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<sup>1</sup> IPBES. The Global Assessment report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. 2019.

(c) are adequate to meet the requirements of this tool, and consequently of the BCR Standard and the Biodiversity Standard (BBS).

### 3. Version

This document constitutes Version 1.1, July 2024. This version of the document may be adjusted periodically to make sure it is still relevant.

This document is available at the Official [Website](#) of BioCarbon.

### 4. General terms

For this tool, the following terms and definitions apply:

- (a) "Shall" is used to indicate that the requirement shall be met;
- (b) "Should" is used to suggest that, among several possibilities, a course of action recommended as particularly appropriate;
- (c) "May" is used to indicate that it is permitted.

### 5. Scope and Applicability

This document is designed for adoption by all users<sup>2</sup>, particularly project/initiative holders, who shall adhere to the rules and conditions outlined in the BIOCARBON GHG CREDITING PROGRAM and in the BIODIVERSITY CREDITING PROGRAM for certifying and registering their GHG projects and conservation initiatives.

The Sustainability Framework of BioCarbon consists of several components, including the present document on Sustainable Development Safeguards (SDSs) (formerly known as the No Net Harm Environmental and Social Safeguards NNH<sup>3</sup>), the REDD+ Safeguards tool, and the SDGs tool.

These three tools incorporate socio-economic and environmental guiding principles aligned with international conventions and agreements. This includes the Cancun Safeguards for activities in the REDD+ activities and the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development

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<sup>2</sup> Intended user: "individual or organization identified by those reporting GHG and Biodiversity related information as being the one who relies on that information to make decisions"

<sup>3</sup> This means that the present tool includes components necessary for compliance with the No Net Harm tool, which represents the previous version of the current approach for the set of safeguards.

Goals. Additionally, they uphold universal principles by respecting and adhering to human rights and freedoms, as well as promoting justice and peace worldwide.<sup>4</sup>

This tool, structured around ESG principles, focuses on potential risks related to Environmental and Socio-economic safeguards throughout the activities of a GHG project and a biodiversity conservation initiative. These risks shall be assessed and consistent with the sustainable development safeguards of the host country, context and goals of the project/initiative.

Projects/initiatives market eligibility for Verified Carbon Credits (VCCs) and Biodiversity Credits (BDCs) shall comply with the following:

- (a) The project/initiative holder shall demonstrate sustainable development safeguards by identifying environmental and socio-economic risks and potential negative impacts of project/initiative activities and, when applicable, demonstrate a risk management to avoid, or when avoidance is not possible, to minimize each identified risk;
- (b) According to the Standards of BioCarbon and the applied methodologies, the project/initiative holder shall design and articulate a monitoring plan included on the PD/CID. This plan shall provide detailed information necessary for monitoring project activities, assessing mitigation and preventive results and quality control of measurements and quantification related to the Sustainable Development Safeguards assessment<sup>5</sup>;
- (c) Project/initiative holders shall, when completing the Monitoring Report during the Verification/Certification process, describe the activities of how they have prevented and/or mitigated negative environmental and socio-economic risks as described in the registered project, how this plan has been implemented, and how the monitoring of the project/initiative activity has been conducted; and

For the Validation/certification of the project/initiative the CAB and CB shall provide an auditing report and determine whether the project/initiative holder complies with the present tool and has completed Annex A.

In compliance with this tool, the project/initiative holder shall:

- (a) Not violate local, state/provincial, national or international regulations or obligations;

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<sup>4</sup> Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)

<sup>5</sup> BCR Standard. Section 20. Monitoring Plan. BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard. Section 12. Monitoring Plan.

- (b) Identify potential environmental and socio-economic effects resulting from the implementation of the project/initiative activities; use of *Annex A: Sustainable Development Safeguards (SDSs)* assessment questionnaire
- (c) Develop preventive and/or mitigations activities to manage the risks;
- (d) Periodically review and revise the assessment questions throughout the lifecycle of the project/initiative to ensure comprehensive consideration and management of all pertinent risks;
- (e) Provide the necessary criteria and indicators for monitoring the implementation of activities and achievement of action-plan targets; and
- (f) Carry out the validation/verification or certification by the CAB/CB, aimed at certifying that the Sustainable Development Safeguards of project/initiative activities are in compliance.

The project/initiative holder shall use appropriate methods to carry out the assessment of the identified risks (direct and indirect) and consider preventive and mitigation measures, within the framework of adaptive management. The SDSs assessment and risk management shall be adequate, accurate and objective.

As mentioned previously, the implementation of the Sustainable Development Safeguards (SDSs) tool shall be reviewed by all interested parties, including Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) and Certification Bodies (CBs) approved as BioCarbon validator/verifier/certifier, during the Validation/Verification or Certification Process, as well as in the BCR Registration Processes.<sup>6</sup>

The applicability of this Sustainable Development Safeguards Tool will be determined by the CAB and the CBs according to the criteria set out in the BCR and BBS Standards, as well as in the Validation and Verification Manual and the Certification Manual for biodiversity conservation initiatives.<sup>7</sup>

The CAB or the CB shall verify the precautionary measures for the identified risks as well as the mitigation actions for potential impacts triggered by the project/initiative activities. In case of non-compliance, the project/initiative shall be assessed and described in the validation/verification and certification reports.

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<sup>6</sup> BCR Standard. Section 14. Sustainable Development Safeguards. And BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard. Section 9.12. Sustainable Development Safeguards.

<sup>7</sup> Available in: [https://biocarbonstandard.com/wp-content/uploads/BCR\\_validation-and-verification-manual.pdf](https://biocarbonstandard.com/wp-content/uploads/BCR_validation-and-verification-manual.pdf) and section 9.1 of the Certification Manual for biodiversity conservation initiatives



## 6. Environment

Project/initiative developers and participants play a pivotal role in ensuring the environmental sustainability of their initiatives by:

- (a) Adhering to environmentally and socio-economic sound practices throughout the project lifecycle;
- (b) Implementing measures to minimize carbon emissions, conserve biodiversity, and reduce environmental and socio-economic impact;
- (c) Complying with all relevant socio-environmental regulations and standards; and
- (d) Continuously seeking innovative solutions to enhance environmental performance.

Without prejudice to the obligation of the project/initiative holder to develop an environmental management plan, as required by the legislation of the country in which the project/initiative is conducted, the project/initiative holder shall conduct an environmental assessment. This assessment should analyze the potential effects on biodiversity and ecosystems within the project's boundaries and be supported by reliable and recent references.

The risks assessment under the Environment aspect is divided on:

- (a) Land use: Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management;
- (b) Water;
- (c) Biodiversity and Ecosystems;
- (d) Climate Change.

If the assessment concludes that adverse effects or impacts would occur, the project holder shall define measures to prevent, correct or, when applicable, mitigate the environmental impacts resulting from the development of the GHG project/biodiversity initiative activities.

### 6.1 Land use: Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management

The land use assessment acknowledges that heightened economic activity, and other project or initiative activities may lead to elevated levels of pollution in the air, water, and soil, and the depletion of finite resources, posing potential threats to people, the environment, and biodiversity at local, regional, and global scales.

Land-use changes are predominantly driven by agriculture, livestock, and urbanization, all of which are linked to pollution of the air, water, and soil.

Project or initiative holders are advised to adopt more efficient and sustainable resource management practices whenever possible. This includes implementing pollution prevention measures and utilizing technologies and practices aimed at avoiding and mitigating potential negative environmental effects.

Additionally, it is advisable to align with the *International Code of Conduct for the Sustainable Use and Management of Fertilizers* by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). This alignment serves to enhance food safety, promote the safe use of fertilizers, maintain soil fertility, safeguard ecosystem services, and protect the environment.<sup>8</sup>

The project or initiative holder shall:

- (a) Avoid or minimize adverse impacts on human health and the environment by preventing or reducing pollution from project activities; and,
- (b) Promote more sustainable use of resources, including energy and water.

Throughout the project or initiative life cycle, the project/initiative holder shall assess environmental conditions and implement technically and financially viable resource efficiency and pollution prevention measures. These measures should be chosen to either prevent or, if prevention is not feasible, minimize adverse impacts on human health and the environment. The selection of these techniques should consider local factors such as climate, geography, infrastructure, security, governance, capacity, and operational reliability.

## 6.2 Water

Risks and negative potential impacts on water resources and related ecosystems shall be assessed during the activities of a project or initiative, with measures in place to mitigate risks and promote environmental sustainability in water-related ecosystems including mountains, forests, rivers, aquifers and lakes, freshwater, arctic, marine/ocean, seabed, and wetlands.

The project/initiative holder shall guarantee that activities do not negatively impact access to or the quality of water supplies. Furthermore, they should consider the impact on downstream water, including coastal and marine ecosystems, with a focus on avoiding any negative effect.

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<sup>8</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The international Code of Conduct for the sustainable use and management of fertilizers. 2019.

The project or initiative holder should also consider water consumption, adopting measures to avoid or reduce water usage to prevent significant adverse impacts on people and the environment. Please refer to Section 6.1 on Land Use: Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management for further guidance for any additional information regarding water resources.

### **6.3 Biodiversity and ecosystems**

Preserving and safeguarding biodiversity, upholding ecosystem services, and responsibly managing natural resources are essential for sustainable development. The project holder shall evaluate the risks and the related negative potential impacts of their activities on terrestrial, freshwater, and marine biodiversity, as well as on ecosystem services.

The process of identifying risks and negative impacts should encompass both direct and indirect risks of the project/initiative on biodiversity and ecosystems. Additionally, it should pinpoint any notable residual risks and address areas needed for habitat connectivity. This process will assess pertinent threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services, with particular attention given to habitat loss, and fragmentation, invasive alien species, overexploitation, nutrient loading, pollution, and others.

According to recent studies, although indigenous peoples constitute approximately 15 percent of the world's extreme poor and only five percent of the global population, they are safeguarding an estimated 80 percent of the world's remaining biodiversity.<sup>9 10</sup>

Project/initiatives holders shall acknowledge, respect, preserve and uphold the traditional knowledge of Indigenous peoples and local communities, which can be a crucial component for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems.

### **6.4 Climate Change**

Negative effects can result from gradual shifts in climate, encompassing increased temperatures, reduced water availability, land and freshwater salinization, erosion, desertification, rising sea levels, ocean acidification, and the depletion of natural buffer zones, as well as the thawing of permafrost lands, among other possible alterations. Climate change can also influence the occurrence, intensity, spatial distribution, duration, and timing of weather-related or hydro-meteorological hazards, resulting in sudden extreme events such as floods, landslides, tropical storms, wildfires, and droughts.

Project/initiative holders shall assess the potential vulnerabilities of relevant communities, ecosystems, critical infrastructure and other exposed elements to climate change threats,

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<sup>9</sup> Nature Sustainability. A spatial overview of the global importance on Indigenous lands for conservation. 2018.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/kb/record/newsHeadlines/135368?FreeText=protected%20areas>

whether natural or human-induced, including extreme weather events. Subsequently, they shall incorporate into their management plans measures aimed at preventing, increasing resilience or adaptation capacity or mitigating climate change-related impacts that might appear or be exacerbated under the context of the activity's implementation.<sup>111213</sup>

The project/initiative shall consider existing inputs on temperature change projections and changes in rainfall patterns as a basis for identifying pre-existing risk scenarios and, likewise, analyze how project activities could exacerbate climate related risk scenarios.

In other words, projects in regions where it is expected that temperatures will increase by 1 to 2 degrees, shall take that into account and project how over time their activities could potentially amplify impacts within the project boundaries.

## 7. Social

The principles guiding project/initiative holders related to the social aspect include:

- (a) Engaging and collaborating with Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples to understand and address their needs and concerns;
- (b) Promoting fair labor practices, diversity, and inclusion within project teams and contracted workers employed by third parties;
- (c) Contributing to the socio-economic development of communities affected by the project activities;
- (d) Upholding human rights principles and working to mitigate any adverse socio-economic impacts.

These core principles are to be adhered to, and in the event of any identified risks, project/initiative holders shall conduct assessments using the SDSs tool.

GHG project and Biodiversity initiatives holders shall analyze the significant socio-economic risks of project/initiative activities within the project boundaries, clearly explaining the assumptions used and justifying the review results. The assessment should also reference related documentation and evidence.

Project/initiative holders and participants shall ensure respect for the rights of ethnic groups or traditional local communities where project/initiative activities are conducted within

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<sup>11</sup> BCR Standard. Section 11.3. *Leakage and non-permanence*.

<sup>12</sup> Biodiversity Standard. Section 10. *Climate Change Adaptation*.

<sup>13</sup> BCR Standard. Section 13. *Risk management*.

their territories. They shall also adhere to and develop procedures as provided for by the law under their national context.

Regarding these rights, BioCarbon Standard stipulates that carbon rights entail ownership of verified carbon credits (VCC) and, when applicable, the rights to benefit from the sale of credits or other payments or interests derived from GHG emissions reductions. In essence, carbon rights represent the right to benefit from GHG emission reductions. Consequently, project/initiative holders shall demonstrate full legal ownership of the VCCs.

Carbon rights shall exhibit transparency and, if necessary, be supported by evidence of a process grounded in full, prior, and informed consent (FPIC).<sup>14</sup>

In certain instances, carbon rights may be intertwined with other rights, such as land tenure rights, particularly in projects within the AFOLU sector. For detailed requirements pertaining to this aspect, the project holder shall refer to the [BCR Standard](#).

The risks assessment under the social aspect are divided on:

(a) Human Rights

- Labor and Working Conditions
- Gender equality and Women empowerment
- Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use, Displacement, and Involuntary Resettlement
- Indigenous Peoples and Cultural Heritage
- Community Health and safety

(b) Corruption

(c) Economic impact

If this assessment concludes that adverse effects would occur, the project/initiative holder shall define actions and corrective measures to prevent or, when applicable, mitigate the social and economic effects resulting from the development of the project activities.

## 7.1 Human Rights

Within the framework of the UN Guiding Principles, human rights due diligence involves a continuous management process that a responsible and prudent business should engage in,

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<sup>14</sup> BCR Standard, Section 12. *Carbon ownership and rights*.

considering its specific circumstances (such as sector, operating context, size, and similar factors). This process is essential for fulfilling its obligation to uphold and respect human rights.<sup>15</sup>

As part of due diligence, project holders shall conduct a risk management to proactively take preventive actions addressing human rights risks, demonstrating their commitment to respecting human rights in practice. In the event of human rights impacts, they shall follow up with remediation and/or remedies as necessary, considering the specific contexts.

Due diligence also includes recognizing that risks to people may change over time as the project/initiative activities and project context evolve. It is therefore expected that project/initiative holders complete this SDSs assessment in every certification process.

All human rights shall be addressed with the same urgency and concern. The order of the human rights described below does not indicate a prioritization; rather, each right holds equal importance in the commitment to safeguarding and upholding human dignity.

BioCarbon does not endorse or condone activities that could lead to the violation of a State's human rights obligations and core international human rights treaties. Instead, it aims to uphold and promote the protection and fulfillment of human rights.<sup>16</sup>

### **7.1.1 Labor and Working Conditions**

Project/initiative holders shall ensure the right to work for all its participants and collaborators and acknowledge everyone's entitlement to the opportunity to make their living by work, which they freely choose or accept.<sup>17</sup> This entails that individuals should not be forced to exercise or engage in employment, and that potential workers have access to a protective system ensuring employment opportunities.

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), work should be 'decent work,' meaning it upholds the fundamental rights of individuals as well as workers' rights concerning working conditions, safety, and remuneration. The right to work is closely intertwined with equitable and favorable working conditions and the rights of trade unions.<sup>18</sup>

The principles and rights articulated in The declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998) by the International Labour Organization (ILO) are translated in the present document into a SDSs assessment approach for project holders to evaluate potential

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<sup>15</sup>Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework

<sup>16</sup> Code of Ethics. Section 7. Protection of Human Rights

<sup>17</sup> ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work 1998, ILO Convention 122 concerning Employment Policy (1964), and ILO Recommendation 169 on Employment Policy (Supplementary Provisions) (1984).

<sup>18</sup> Articles 7 and 8 of the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, United Nations Human Rights.

risks related to labor and working conditions. This approach enables the implementation of prevention and mitigation actions in alignment with the ILO declaration:

- (a) freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
- (b) the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labor;
- (c) the effective abolition of child labor;
- (d) the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation; and
- (e) a safe and healthy working environment.

### **7.1.2 Gender equality and women empowerment**

The impacts of environmental and socio-economic risks disproportionately affect women and men.

Women are particularly vulnerable to extreme weather events such as droughts, floods, hurricanes, heavy rainfall, and sea level rise due to systemic gender discrimination and societal expectations regarding gender roles<sup>19</sup>. These discriminations stem from socio-economic factors such as urban or rural residence, sexual orientation, education level, income, gender, ethnicity, age, class, and (dis)ability. Women often experience higher mortality rates than men in climate-related disasters.

Additionally, women's domestic responsibilities, such as gathering firewood and water, significantly increase with various climate change effects. Women rely more on natural resources for their livelihoods, making them more susceptible to declines in land and biomass productivity, especially in rural areas of the Global South.<sup>20</sup> In urban settings, poor women face greater challenges than men in recovering their economic status and well-being following climate-related disasters.

Despite these challenges, women, along with men, play a crucial role in combating climate change and biodiversity conservation as knowledgeable small-scale farmers and leaders in climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts.<sup>21</sup>

The *Gender Equality and Women Empowerment* SDS's assessment questionnaire aims to effectively promote the gender approach to achieve more equitable and sustainable impacts.

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<sup>19</sup> UNFCCC. Dimensions and examples of the gender-differentiated impacts of climate change, the role of women as agents of change and opportunities for women. 2022.

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.fao.org/3/cc5343en/cc5343en.pdf> The Status of women in agrifood systems. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). 2023

<sup>21</sup> [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/sbi2022\\_07.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/sbi2022_07.pdf)

Projects and initiatives holders shall:

- (a) Encourage diversity, equality and inclusion;
- (b) Ensure their activities do not discriminate against women and girls, reinforce gender-based inequalities and exclusion, or have disproportionate adverse gender-related impacts;
- (c) Promote equal access to and control over productive resources and program and project benefits;
- (d) Conduct gender-sensitive stakeholder analysis and provide equal opportunities in terms of participation and decision-making;
- (e) Empower and prioritize the needs of marginalized and vulnerable women and men of diverse socioeconomic contexts; and
- (f) Identify and mitigate the risk of potential exposure of affected individuals to gender-based violence and/or other forms of abuse and sexual exploitation that may arise during the project activities under Biocarbon's programs.

### **7.1.3 Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use, Displacement, and Involuntary Resettlement**

This SDSs assessment aligns with the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, which are designed to address the specific needs of internally displaced persons globally by identifying relevant rights and guarantees for their protection.<sup>22</sup>

The indicators apply to all GHG project activities and Biodiversity initiatives, and the assessment of Involuntary Resettlement, whether full or partial, permanent or temporary, shall be evaluated. This includes situations arising from project/initiative-related land or resource acquisition, as well as restrictions on land use or access to resources (including externalities like pollution and impacts on biodiversity or ecosystem services) that people rely on for their physical, economic, social, cultural, or spiritual well-being.

The SDSs Tool excludes voluntary, legally recorded market transactions where the seller is fully informed and has the genuine right to retain or refuse to sell the land. However, if such a sale has the potential to displace individuals, other than the seller, who currently occupy, use, or claim rights to the land, then the relevant SDSs assessments shall be implemented.

Additionally, the BioCarbon Programs do not cover restrictions on access to natural resources within community-based natural resource management arrangements, such as the establishment of a community conserved area. In these cases, the exclusion applies when

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<sup>22</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights: Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.



the relevant community voluntarily decides to restrict its own access to these resources through an appropriate decision-making process that reflects informed consensus.

In the event of involuntary resettlement occurring before CAB or CB involvement, project/initiative is encouraged to use negotiated settlement and avoid the need to use governmental authority to enforce relocation.

If potential impacts on displacement and resettlement concerning indigenous peoples are identified, please refer to section 7.1.4 on [Indigenous Peoples and Cultural Heritage](#).

#### **7.1.4 Indigenous Peoples and Cultural Heritage**

Project/initiative holders are tasked with safeguarding and recognizing indigenous and local knowledge (ILK) for nature management. ILK is increasingly recognized for its relevance in sustainable production and its contributions to the enhancement and maintenance of biodiversity and landscapes.<sup>23</sup>

Project/initiative holders are responsible for protecting indigenous peoples and cultural heritage from the adverse impacts of project/initiative activities, as well as promoting their preservation.

Furthermore, project/initiative holders shall acknowledge the significance of cultural heritage for present and future generations, ensuring its preservation throughout activities in alignment with the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. BCR Standard emphasizes the integration of indigenous peoples and cultural heritage into the project, partly drawing from standards established by the [ILO 169 Convention](#) and the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#).<sup>24</sup>

Moreover, project holders shall recognize the vulnerability of Indigenous Peoples, who often face marginalization and limited capacity to defend their rights to lands, resources, and cultural heritage. Their economic, social, and legal status may restrict their participation in and benefit from development, making them particularly susceptible to adverse impacts associated with project development. These impacts may include loss of identity, culture, livelihoods, and exposure to impoverishment and diseases.

In addition to complying with relevant laws governing the protection of cultural heritage, including national legislation implementing the host country's obligations under the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, project/initiative holders shall identify and safeguard cultural heritage. This involves ensuring the implementation of internationally recognized practices for the protection, field-based study, and documentation of cultural heritage.

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<sup>23</sup> IPBES. 2019. The Global Assessment report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem services.

<sup>24</sup> BCR Standard. Section 10.7. Compliance with Laws, Statutes and Other Regulatory Frameworks.

### 7.1.5 Community Health and safety

BioCarbon recognizes that project/initiative activities, equipment and infrastructure often bring benefits to communities, including employment opportunities, services, and economic development prospects. However, they can also increase community exposure to health and safety hazards and impacts. Communities may also be affected by impacts on their natural resources, exposure to diseases, and the presence of security personnel.

While project/initiative holders shall acknowledge the role of public authorities in promoting the health, safety and security, they shall also take steps to avoid or minimize the risks and impacts to community health, safety and security that may arise from project activities.

The project/initiative holder shall take into account the local economic and political context. In instances where the project area is situated in conflict or post-conflict zones, it shall contribute to the development of effective models for managing post-conflict scenarios. This should always be done with consideration for the perspectives of the affected communities and their understanding of conflict resolution or their interpretation of 'effective models'.<sup>2526</sup>

The project/initiative holder shall prioritize the well-being and safety of communities while ensuring responsible project management by:

- (a) Anticipating and preventing adverse impacts on the health and safety of affected communities throughout the project life-cycle, including both routine and non-routine circumstances.
- (b) Ensuring quality and safety in the design and construction of project/initiative-related infrastructure to prevent and minimize potential safety risks and accidents.
- (c) Minimizing community exposure to disaster risks, diseases, and hazardous materials associated with project/initiative activities.
- (d) Safeguarding personnel and property to minimize risks to communities in accordance with international human rights standards and principles.
- (e) Implementing effective measures to address emergency events, whether human-made or natural hazards.

The indicators in the SDSs assessment aim to underscore potential community health and safety issues during the activities of a GHG project and biodiversity initiative, emphasizing the importance of implementing measures to safeguard the well-being of local communities.

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<sup>25</sup> BCR Standard. Section 18.1.2. *Community Benefits*.

<sup>26</sup> BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard. Section 9.6. *Conservation objectives/targets*

## 7.2 Corruption

BioCarbon is fully committed to fostering a strong ethical culture and ensuring compliance with all Anti-Corruption legislation, including but not limited to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) (2005), the European Union's Anti-Corruption Policy (Article 29 of the Treaty on European Union), the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act of 1977 (FCPA), and the United Kingdom Bribery Act of 2010 ('UK Bribery Act').

In this regard, Anti-Corruption Policy and Procedures govern, of BioCarbon, the required behaviors and business conduct concerning fraud, corruption, transactional bribery and/or associated misconduct. All third parties associated with BioCarbon, including GHG projects and biodiversity conservation initiatives, must adhere to this Policy and the internal controls established.<sup>27</sup>

The SDSs assessment shall consider misuse of funds, fraudulent reporting, conflict of Interest, lack of transparency, weak regulatory oversight, lack of accountability mechanisms, environmental permitting corruption and subcontractor corruption, among others.

These questions aim to highlight potential corruption issues that may arise during GHG projects and biodiversity initiatives, emphasizing the importance of proactive measures to prevent and address corruption within project activities.

## 7.3 Economic Impact

BioCarbon advocates for fair and sustainable economic growth and stability, encouraging projects/initiatives to strive towards reducing social and economic inequalities.

The indicators in the Economic Impact aspect aim to assist project/initiative holders in identifying and addressing concerns related to economic impacts during the activities of a GHG project and/or biodiversity initiative. This underscores the importance of considering socio-economic factors in project planning, implementation, and monitoring.

According to BCR Standard: in all cases, the GHG project holder shall implement transparent agreements that include provisions for fair and equitable compensation.

The project holder shall describe the procedures followed to agree on benefit-sharing arrangements with all project participants.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> BioCarbon Handbook and Good Practices Registry Platform. Section 2. *User Registration*.

<sup>28</sup> BCR Standard. Section 12. Carbon ownership and rights.

Along the same lines, the BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard requires the demonstration of the initiative's generation of short and long-term socioeconomic benefits to members of the communities in the initiative area.<sup>29</sup>

## 8. Governance and Compliance

Project/initiative developers play a critical role in upholding high standards of governance within their projects/initiatives and shall operate in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Key project/initiative responsibilities include:

- (a) Ensure transparency and accountability in project/initiative decision-making processes.
- (b) Uphold ethical business practices and adhere to all applicable laws and regulations.
- (c) Collaborate with relevant stakeholders to incorporate diverse perspectives.
- (d) Report on sustainability performance, providing stakeholders with transparent and accurate information.

The project/initiative holder shall adhere to the Code of Ethics and ethical principles of BioCarbon, which include the protection of human rights, respect for the environment, and prevention of money laundering and terrorist financing. These principles are particularly relevant in the context of Sustainable Development Safeguards, which are defined as follows:<sup>30</sup>

### (a) Ethics

Ethics are rooted in core values and norms, constituting a set of standards for conduct within government, companies, and society. They serve as guiding principles for decision-making, choices, and actions.

### (b) Integrity

Integrity refers to behaviors and actions that align with a set of moral or ethical principles and standards embraced by both individuals and institutions. Integrity serves as a barrier to corruption and ensures consistency with ethical standards. See the definition of "Ethics" above.

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<sup>29</sup> BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard. Section 9.6. *Conservation objectives/targets*.

<sup>30</sup> Code of Ethics. Section 6. BioCarbon's Values and Principles.

## 9. Continuous improvement

This document, referred to as Sustainable Development Safeguards (SDSs) will be periodically reviewed to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. We are committed to continuous improvement, and feedback from project developers and biodiversity initiative holders will be actively sought and incorporated into our sustainability practices.

## Annex A: Sustainable Development Safeguards (SDSs) assessment questionnaire

The project/initiative holder shall carry out the SDSs assessment considering its project/initiative context and identify related risks and potential negative impacts. As a result of the assessment, the project/initiative holder shall provide answers to the following non-exhaustive assessment questions, accompanied by justifications for those responses, in accordance with the following guidance. provide answers to assessment questions, accompanied by justifications for those responses, in accordance with the following guidance.

Response	Meaning	Mitigation and/or preventive actions
'Yes'	The risk or expected impact identified during the assessment is imminent in the Project/Initiative and context.	The requirements are applicable, and compliance shall be demonstrated. Describe the measures taken to either reduce the severity and likelihood of a risk occurring in the first place or minimize the potential impact. All complementary information and evidence shall be incorporated into the Monitoring & Reporting Plan and subsequent monitoring periods.
'Potentially'	The risk or expected impact may exist at some point in the Project/Initiative's cycle but is not necessarily present now and/or may never arise.	The Project/Initiative may justify with evidence why these requirements do not need to be demonstrated as being met. The project shall update information on any assessment questions answered 'Potentially' for each monitoring report.
'No'	The risk or expected impact is not present in the Project/Initiative.	Justification shall be provided to support this conclusion, with evidence provided where required.
'N/A'	The question is not relevant to the project/initiative and its potential impact.	No action is required

### Land use: Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management

In accordance with the aspects and requirements highlighted in section 6.1, project/initiative holders shall, in their question assessment, consider risks and potential impacts related to resource efficiency and pollution prevention and management.

The following table shows the minimum aspects that must be addressed as a result of the assessment.

Could the project/initiative activities potentially entail or result in:	Response	Mitigation and/or preventive actions
Land degradation or soil erosion, leading to the loss of productive land?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Contaminating soils and aquifers with pollutants, chemicals, or hazardous materials?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Air and water pollution resulting from project-related emissions, discharges, or improper waste disposal practices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Detrimental excess of nutrients caused by the use of fertilizers and/or pesticides?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Inadequate waste management practices, leading to the improper disposal of project-related waste and potential environmental harm?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Inefficient resource use, including energy, water, and raw materials, leading to increased environmental footprint?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Losing productive agricultural land to urban expansion, impacting local food production, rural livelihoods, and overall food security?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	

<b>Could the project/initiative activities potentially entail or result in:</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Mitigation and/or preventive actions</b>
Urbanization, leading to the urban heat island effect, impacting local climates and potentially contributing to higher energy consumption for cooling?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Disrupting natural drainage systems, leading to increased vulnerability to floods, soil erosion, or other hydrological issues?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Inadequate recycling and reuse of project-related resources, leading to unnecessary waste and environmental impact?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Deforestation or degradation of forested areas impacting carbon sequestration, biodiversity, and ecosystem services?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Changes in agricultural practices, such as intensive monoculture, leading to soil degradation, loss of biodiversity, and increased vulnerability to pests?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Urbanization or infrastructure development leading to changes in land use patterns and potential habitat fragmentation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	



## Water

The table below outlines the essential criteria that shall be addressed (not exclusively) as an outcome of the assessment in line with the aspects described in section 6.2.

Could the project/initiative activities potentially entail or result in:	Response	Mitigation and/or preventive actions
Exacerbating water scarcity or depleting water resources?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Water pollution, including contamination of rivers, lakes, oceans, or aquifers as a result of project-related activities such as emissions, spills, or waste disposal?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Disrupting aquatic ecosystems, including marine life, river ecosystems, or wetlands, due to changes in water quality, temperature, or flow patterns?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Altering coastal dynamics, including erosion, sedimentation, or changes in sea levels?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Displacing or negatively impacting wetland habitats, affecting the unique biodiversity and ecosystem services provided by wetlands?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Altering river flow patterns, potentially leading to downstream impacts on water availability, sediment transport, and ecosystems?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Could the project/initiative activities potentially entail or result in:	Response	Mitigation and/or preventive actions
Depleting aquifers and groundwater resources as a result of the project's activities, impacting local water supplies and ecosystem sustainability?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Mountainous terrains, including changes in snowmelt patterns, glacier dynamics, or alterations in water runoff?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Disrupting lake ecosystems, including changes in water quality, nutrient levels, or habitat disturbance?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Contributing to ocean acidification, with potential consequences for marine life and coral reef ecosystems?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	

### Biodiversity and ecosystems

The table below outlines the minimum risks and related impacts described in section 6.3. Projects and initiatives shall consider their own local context and activities when conducting the Sustainable Development Safeguards assessment.

Could the project/initiative activities potentially entail or result in:	Response	Mitigation and/or preventive actions
Habitat destruction or fragmentation, impacting biodiversity by reducing available habitats for various species?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	

<b>Could the project/initiative activities potentially entail or result in:</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Mitigation and/or preventive actions</b>
Introducing invasive species, which could negatively affect native flora and fauna and disrupt local ecosystems? *	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Altering ecosystem dynamics, including changes in species composition, trophic interactions, or nutrient cycles on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Disrupting migration patterns for wildlife species, such as birds, mammals, or aquatic organisms?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Chemical contamination or pollution negatively impacting biodiversity in soil, water, or air?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Overexploiting natural resources, such as timber, water, or other materials, leading to declines in biodiversity and ecological balance?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Overharvesting species at rates faster than they can actually sustain themselves in the wild?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Climate change-induced impacts on biodiversity, including shifts in species distributions, changes in phenology, or increased vulnerability to extreme weather events?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Negatively impacting endangered or threatened species within the project area, either directly or indirectly through habitat changes or other disturbances?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Could the project/initiative activities potentially entail or result in:	Response	Mitigation and/or preventive actions
Reducing genetic diversity within populations, potentially leading to decreased resilience and adaptability of species in the face of environmental changes?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Inadequate monitoring and assessment of biodiversity within the project area, making it Challenging to identify and address changes over time?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Pressure on vulnerable ecosystems?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	

\*The BCR Standard requires GHG projects to demonstrate the no presence of invasive species as a result of the project activities.<sup>31</sup>

### Climate Change

The table below outlines the minimum risks and climate-related impacts. Projects and initiatives are called to reflect in their SDSs assessment the technical inputs described in section 6.4 and assess at least the following questions.

Could the project/initiative activities potentially entail or result in:	Response	Mitigation and/or preventive actions
increasing greenhouse gas emissions?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	
changes in habitat suitability for species due to climate change impacts, leading to shifts in species distributions or loss of critical habitat?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	

<sup>31</sup> BCR Standard. Section 18.1. *Special categories components.*

Could the project/initiative activities potentially entail or result in:	Response	Mitigation and/or preventive actions
disrupt ecosystem services provided by biodiversity, such as pollination, water purification, and carbon sequestration, affecting overall ecosystem functioning?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
the spread of invasive species, leading to competition with native species and alteration of ecosystem dynamics?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
increased frequency or intensity of extreme weather events, such as storms, droughts, or floods, which can damage habitats and threaten species survival?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
alteration of the phenology and behavior of species, affecting reproductive cycles, migration patterns, and interactions with other species, disrupting ecosystem dynamics?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
reducing genetic diversity within species populations due to climate change-induced habitat loss or fragmentation, compromising the adaptive capacity of populations to environmental stressors?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
exacerbation the prevalence of diseases and pathogens among wildlife populations, leading to population declines and ecosystem destabilization?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
weakening the resilience of ecosystems to disturbances, making them more susceptible to collapse or regime shifts, with cascading effects on biodiversity and ecosystem function?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Could the project/initiative activities potentially entail or result in:	Response	Mitigation and/or preventive actions
new challenges in effectively incorporating climate change considerations into biodiversity conservation planning, such as identifying climate-resilient habitats and prioritizing species and ecosystems for conservation action?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
habitat loss, pollution, and overexploitation, amplifying the impacts on biodiversity and complicating conservation efforts?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	

### Labor and Working Conditions

The table below outlines the minimum aspects linked to human rights defined in section 7.1.1. Projects and initiatives are called to reflect on their SDSs assessment at least the following questions.

Could the project/initiative activities potentially entail or result in:	Response	Mitigation and/or preventive actions
forced labor, or human trafficked labor	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
child labor or forced labor practices during the project, either directly or within the project's supply chain?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
unsafe working conditions, exposing project stakeholders to potential hazards or accidents before, during and after the implementation of the activities?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
exploitative labor practices, such as inadequate wages, excessive working hours, or poor working conditions for the personnel engaged during the project activities?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Could the project/initiative activities potentially entail or result in:	Response	Mitigation and/or preventive actions
discrimination in employment, including unequal opportunities, biased hiring practices, or unfair treatment based on factors such as gender, ethnicity, or other characteristics?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
violating workers' rights, including issues related to freedom of association, collective bargaining, or other fundamental labor rights during the project's activities?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
unfair treatment, exploitation, or inadequate protections for contractual workers or migrant laborers?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
inadequate grievance mechanisms, making it challenging for workers to address concerns, report issues, or seek resolution for labor-related problems?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
insufficient social welfare support, such as healthcare, insurance, or other benefits for workers engaged in project activities?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
displacement or negative impacts on local communities due to labor-related issues, including challenges related to employment opportunities and livelihoods?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
lack of training	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	

### Gender equality and Women empowerment

Projects and initiatives are called to include in their SDSs assessment the analysis of aspects a, b, c, d, and f mentioned in section 7.1.2, aimed at avoiding any gender

discrimination and ensuring activities do not discriminate against women and girls, reinforcing gender-based inequalities and exclusion.

Could the project/initiative activities potentially entail or result in:	Response	Mitigation and/or preventive actions
gender-based discrimination in employment opportunities, recruitment processes, or access to leadership positions, hindering women's participation and advancement?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
unequal access to project benefits, resources, or decision-making processes, resulting in disparities between men and women in the distribution of project-related opportunities and rewards?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
limited participation and representation of women in project activities, consultations, or community engagements, potentially marginalizing their voices and perspectives?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
increasing unpaid care work burden on women, such as caregiving responsibilities or household chores, due to changes in community dynamics or time constraints resulting from project activities?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
limited access to education, training, or capacity-building opportunities for women and girls, inhibiting their ability to develop skills and pursue leadership roles within the project or related industries?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	



Could the project/initiative activities potentially entail or result in:	Response	Mitigation and/or preventive actions
gender-based violence or harassment occurring within project settings or project-affected communities, affecting women's safety, well-being, and ability to participate fully?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
inequitable access to land, natural resources, or economic opportunities, particularly disadvantaging women in rural or indigenous communities affected by land use changes?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
underrepresentation of women in decision-making processes, including planning, governance structures, or stakeholder consultations, leading to less inclusive and effective outcomes?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
gender-blind policies, interventions, or project designs that fail to consider the specific needs, priorities, and capacities of women and men, resulting in unintended negative consequences for gender equality and women empowerment?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
limited economic empowerment and livelihood opportunities for women, such as access to credit, entrepreneurship support, or income-generating activities, within project-affected communities?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
health and safety risks that disproportionately affect specific genders within the community, potentially leading to disparate impacts on men and women?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Could the project/initiative activities potentially entail or result in:	Response	Mitigation and/or preventive actions
cultural and social barriers that may hinder the advancement of gender equality and women empowerment within project settings or affected communities, such as stereotypes, norms, or traditional roles and expectations?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
inadequate gender analysis and monitoring mechanisms, resulting in a lack of understanding of gender dynamics and missed opportunities for promoting gender equality and women empowerment?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	

### Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use, Displacement, and Involuntary Resettlement

The following table describes the minimum aspects to be considered during the SDSs assessment related to principles and concepts defined in section 7.1.3.

Could the project/initiative activities potentially entail or result in:	Response	Mitigation and/or preventive actions
conflict over land resources and/or rights, such as competition for space between different land uses, communities, or stakeholders affected by the project?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
land acquisition, leading to changes in land ownership patterns and potential conflicts with local communities and landholders?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Could the project/initiative activities potentially entail or result in:	Response	Mitigation and/or preventive actions
imposing restrictions on traditional land use practices, affecting the livelihoods and cultural practices of communities in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
displacing communities or residents from their homes and lands, leading to social, economic, and cultural disruptions?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
involuntary resettlement or relocation of communities, impacting their access to resources, services, and community networks?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
communities losing their livelihoods and agricultural productivity as a result of land acquisition or restriction on land use?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
insufficient compensation and benefits for affected communities and individuals, leading to economic hardships and social discontent?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
lack of free, prior, and informed consent from affected communities, potentially resulting in conflict and challenges to project implementation? *	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
social and cultural disintegration within displaced communities, leading to the erosion of social cohesion and cultural practices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Could the project/initiative activities potentially entail or result in:	Response	Mitigation and/or preventive actions
communities losing access to common resources, such as forests, water bodies, or grazing lands, due to land acquisition or use restrictions?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
inadequate resettlement plans, potentially leading to insufficient support, services, and infrastructure for resettled communities?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	

\*Due diligence for pre-established agreements with local communities is expected, as stated in the BCR Standard Section 12.

### Indigenous Peoples and Cultural Heritage

The following table describes the minimum aspects to be considered during the SDSs assessment related to principles and concepts defined in section 7.1.4.

Could the project/initiative activities potentially entail or result in:	Response	Mitigation and/or preventive actions
violating the right of indigenous peoples, including their right to land, resources, and self-determination?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
impacts on indigenous lands and territories, potentially leading to the displacement of indigenous communities and disruption and loss of livelihoods?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
negatively impacting the traditional livelihoods, such as hunting, fishing, or gathering, due to changes in land use or environmental conditions?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Could the project/initiative activities potentially entail or result in:	Response	Mitigation and/or preventive actions
losing sacred sites and cultural heritage, impacting the spiritual and cultural identity of indigenous communities?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
the lack of free, prior and informed consent from indigenous communities (FPIC), potentially resulting in conflicts and challenges to project implementation? *	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
inadequate cultural impact assessments, potentially leading to insufficient understanding of the project's impact on indigenous cultures and traditions?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
losing indigenous knowledge and practices related to land management, resource utilization, and traditional ecological knowledge?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
cultural disintegration and the erosion of social cohesion within indigenous communities?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
inadequate recognition and respect for indigenous governance systems, potentially leading to conflicts over land and resource management?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
insufficient benefit-sharing mechanisms, resulting in the unequal distribution of benefits derived from the project among indigenous communities? **	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Could the project/initiative activities potentially entail or result in:	Response	Mitigation and/or preventive actions
conflicts arising over land rights, particularly when the project involves changes in land use that may be contested by different stakeholders, including indigenous communities?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	

\*Due diligence for pre-established agreements with local communities is expected, as stated in the BCR Standard Section 12. *Carbon ownership and rights.*

\*\*Refer to Section [7.3 Economic Impact](#) to know more about benefit sharing.

### Community health and safety

The SDSs assessment shall consider at least, but not exclusively, the following questions related to the principles, concepts, and safeguards to be implemented aligned with section 7.1.3.

Could the project/initiative activities potentially entail or result in:	Response	Mitigation and/or preventive actions
exposure to hazardous materials, chemicals, or pollutants, potentially leading to adverse health effects or life-threatening risks?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
degrading air quality in the project area due to emissions, dust, or other airborne pollutants?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
water contamination, including pollution of water sources or reduced access to clean water, affecting community health and well-being?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	

<b>Could the project/initiative activities potentially entail or result in:</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Mitigation and/or preventive actions</b>
increased noise levels or vibrations resulting from project operations, potentially causing disturbances and health impacts for nearby communities?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
traffic accidents or road safety hazards associated with increased traffic flow or transportation activities related to the project?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
workers exposure to hazardous conditions, physical attacks or inadequate safety measures?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
increased prevalence of vector-borne diseases or pest infestations as a result of changes in environmental conditions or habitat disruption?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
community displacement or involuntary resettlement, leading to social disruption, stress, and negative health outcomes?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
community mental health and well-being, including stress, anxiety, and social isolation resulting from changes in living conditions or community dynamics?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
inadequate emergency preparedness and response mechanisms, leading to challenges in managing and mitigating potential health and safety emergencies?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Could the project/initiative activities potentially entail or result in:	Response	Mitigation and/or preventive actions
changes in land use patterns, such as increased exposure to disease vectors or decreased access to natural resources essential for health?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
inadequate health infrastructure and services in the project area, leading to challenges in addressing community health needs and emergencies?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	

### Corruption

Could the project/initiative activities potentially entail or result in:	Response	Mitigation and/or preventive actions
funds allocated for the project/initiative being misappropriated or embezzled through fraudulent practices or kickbacks?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
bribery or kickbacks being solicited or offered to secure contracts, permits, or other project-related approvals?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
nepotism or favoritism in the selection of contractors, suppliers, or project personnel, compromising the integrity and fairness of procurement processes?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
fraudulent reporting or manipulation of project data, such as inflating project costs or overstating achievements, to obtain additional funding or meet performance targets?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	



<b>Could the project/initiative activities potentially entail or result in:</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Mitigation and/or preventive actions</b>
conflicts of interest among project stakeholders or personnel, such as individuals with financial interests in project outcomes or decision-makers with personal connections to project contractors?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
lack of transparency in project decision-making processes, budget allocations, or contract awards, leading to suspicions of corruption or malpractice?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
weak regulatory oversight or enforcement mechanisms, allowing for corrupt practices to go undetected or unaddressed within project/initiative activities?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
undue influence or pressure exerted by external parties, such as political figures or industry lobbyists, to sway project decisions or gain unfair advantages?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
inadequate accountability mechanisms or whistleblower protection, discouraging individuals from reporting instances of corruption or unethical behavior?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
corruption in the environmental permitting process, such as officials accepting bribes to overlook environmental violations or grant permits unlawfully?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Could the project/initiative activities potentially entail or result in:	Response	Mitigation and/or preventive actions
corruption within subcontracting relationships, such as subcontractors paying bribes to secure favorable terms or win subcontracting opportunities?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	

### Economic Impact

Aspects related to economic impacts described in section 7.3 shall be assessed. The following questions are linked to economic impact safeguards, which should be coherent with the project/initiative context.

Could the project/initiative activities potentially entail or result in:	Response	Mitigation and/or preventive actions
compromising healthy competition, resulting in unhealthy rivalry and undermining collaboration and cooperation essential for achieving project goals?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
loss of employment opportunities, particularly for vulnerable populations, as a result of changes in economic activities or restructuring?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
creating economic dependence, such as tourism or conservation initiatives, leading to vulnerability to fluctuations in project funding or market conditions?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
market distortions or increased competition, such as changes in land use patterns or shifts in supply and demand dynamics within local economies?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Could the project/initiative activities potentially entail or result in:	Response	Mitigation and/or preventive actions
increasing the cost of living for local communities as a consequence of project-related developments, such as infrastructure projects or influxes of external workers?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
inequitable distribution of benefits, leading to disparities in wealth, income, or access to resources among different segments of the population?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
losing traditional economic practices and knowledge systems, potentially undermining cultural heritage and resilience to economic shocks in communities?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
negatively impacting small-scale enterprises or informal economies that rely on natural resources or ecosystem services?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
financial uncertainties, such as project delays, budget overruns, or changes in funding sources, affecting investment confidence and economic stability?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
limited access to financial resources, such as credit or microfinance services, for entrepreneurs or smallholders affected by project-related changes in land use or economic activities?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
lack of economic resilience and adaptive capacity within project-affected communities, particularly in response to external shocks or long-term changes in market conditions?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Could the project/initiative activities potentially entail or result in:	Response	Mitigation and/or preventive actions
inadequate compensation or mitigation measures for economic impacts, such as loss of assets or disruptions to income streams, experienced by individuals or communities?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	

### Governance and Compliance

Section 8 encompasses the set of safeguards linked to governance and best practices for decision-making. The following table summarizes some of the aspects to be assessed by projects/initiatives.

Could the project/initiative activities potentially entail or result in:	Response	Mitigation and/or preventive actions
insufficient institutional capacity within project/initiative implementing agencies or partner organizations, leading to challenges in effective governance and project management?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
weak governance structures and mechanisms within the project/initiative, such as unclear roles and responsibilities, inadequate decision-making processes, and limited transparency and accountability?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
inadequate stakeholder engagement and participation in project/initiative decision-making processes, leading to governance gaps and reduced project legitimacy?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	

<b>Could the project/initiative activities potentially entail or result in:</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Mitigation and/or preventive actions</b>
ineffective or inadequate regulatory frameworks governing project activities, resulting in loopholes, inconsistencies, or gaps in environmental protection and governance standards?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
delays or challenges in obtaining necessary permits, licenses, and approvals for project activities due to regulatory complexities, bureaucratic inefficiencies, or legal requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
political interference in project/initiative decision-making processes, such as pressure to prioritize certain projects or interventions based on political agendas rather than scientific or environmental considerations?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
non-compliance with relevant laws, regulations, permits, and international agreements governing GHG emissions, biodiversity conservation, environmental protection and land use management, leading to legal challenges and reputational risks?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
conflicts of interest among project stakeholders or decision-makers, such as individuals with personal or financial interests that may influence project outcomes or decision-making processes?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Could the project/initiative activities potentially entail or result in:	Response	Mitigation and/or preventive actions
limited access to justice for communities affected by project activities, such as barriers to legal recourse or remedies for grievances related to land rights, environmental harm, or social impacts?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
insufficient monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess project performance, impacts, and compliance with governance standards, leading to gaps in accountability and learning?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
inadequate capacity building and training for project stakeholders, such as government officials, local communities, and civil society organizations, to effectively participate in project governance and decision-making processes?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially <input type="checkbox"/> No	

## Annex B: Glossary of terms

### **Adaptive management**

Process of iterative planning, implementing and modifying strategies for managing resources in the face of uncertainty and change.

[SOURCE: IPCC, 2014, ISO 14090:2019(en), 3.3]

### **Agricultural Lands**

Agricultural territories are those lands dedicated mainly to the production of food, fiber, and other industrial raw materials, whether they are useful or not for cultivation, grazing, rotation, rest, or as fallow. It includes areas devoted to permanent and temporary crops, pasture areas, and different agricultural zones, where livestock can also share it and agriculture.

### **Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU)**

The sector comprises greenhouse gas emission reductions or removals attributable to project activities in the agriculture, forestry, and other land uses sectors.

### **Approved methodology**

A methodology that has been approved by the BCR Technical Committee for application to GHG projects, under the BCR Program. Approved methodologies are publicly available on the BioCarbon website ([www.biocarbonstandard.com](http://www.biocarbonstandard.com)).

### **BioCarbon (BCR) Program**

The GHG Crediting Program managed by BioCarbon which sets out requirements and procedures that operationalize the BioCarbon Standard. This enables the validation of GHG projects, and the verification of GHG emission reductions and removals.

### **BioCarbon (BCR) Registry**

The electronic database system that records issuance and distribution of VCCs to project participants. The BCR registry is managed and maintained by Global CarbonTrace.

### **Biodiversity conservation initiative**

Plans, programs, projects, actions, measures, or activities expressly dedicated to meeting a particular objective related to the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

### **Biodiversity conservation initiative holder**

The natural or legal person, public or private, responsible for the formulation, implementation, monitoring, and registration of a biodiversity conservation initiative.

### **Biodiversity credit (BDCs)**

The results of management actions that enhance biodiversity values and ecosystem services can be traded through biodiversity credits based on their ecological importance. "A credit is a defined unit of environmental goods or services, which can be applied towards the fulfillment of a permit, or held, traded, sold or retired."<sup>32</sup>. Accordingly, BDCs are a measurable unit of net gains in biodiversity gains. Each credit is equivalent to one hectare in which biodiversity conservation actions are developed.

### **Biological diversity**

"Biological diversity" means the variability among living organisms from all sources, including, among other things, terrestrial, marine, and different aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; it includes diversity within species, between species, and of ecosystems.

### **Carbon credit**

Measurable and tradable unit, accounted for a GHG Project. When verified and listed in the registry system of BIOCARBON, it is called a Verified Carbon Credit (VCC). It is equivalent to one metric ton of carbon dioxide equivalent.

### **Certification**

Third-party attestation related to an object of conformity assessment, with the exception of accreditation.

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC 17000:2020(en), 7.6.]

### **Certification Body**

Third-party conformity assessment body operating certification schemes.

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC 17065:2012(en), 3.12]

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<sup>32</sup> Ecosystem Marketplace. <https://www.ecosystemmarketplace.com/>



## **Child**

Every human being below the age of eighteen year unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier. The term includes adolescents and is preferable to the term *minor*.

[SOURCE: Article 1 of the [Conventions on the Rights of the Child](#)]

## **Child labour**

Any work performed by a child which deprives them of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to their physical and mental development.

Child labour refers to work that:

- (a) Is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and/or
- (b) Interferes with their schooling by: depriving them of the opportunity to attend school; obliging them to leave school prematurely; or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.

[SOURCE: International Labour Organization (ILO), [What is child labour](#)]

## **Climate Change**

The Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) defines climate change as: “a change in the state of the climate that can be identified (e.g., by using statistical tests) by changes in the mean and/or the variability of its properties, and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer. Climate change may be due to natural internal processes or external forcings, or to persistent anthropogenic changes in the composition of the atmosphere or in land use”.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) defines climate change as “a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods”.

[SOURCE: Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), *Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation*, Glossary of terms, 2012; and [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change](#), 1992, p. 3.]

## **Consent**

Any freely given and informed indication of agreement by a person. Consent is not given if agreement is obtained through abuse of power, force or threat of force, and other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception or misrepresentation.

[SOURCE: [UNHCR glossary](#)]

### **Cultural heritage**

Cultural heritage includes artefacts, monuments, a group of buildings and sites, museums that have a diversity of values including symbolic, historic, artistic, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological, scientific and social significance. It includes tangible heritage (movable, immobile and underwater), intangible cultural heritage (ICH) embedded into cultural, and natural heritage artefacts, sites or monuments. The definition excludes ICH related to other cultural domains such as festivals, celebration etc. It covers industrial heritage and cave paintings.

[SOURCE: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2009 UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics]

### **Co-benefits**

A policy or measure aimed at one objective could have positive effects on other purposes, regardless of the net impact on overall social welfare. Co-benefits are often subject to uncertainty and depend, among other factors, on local circumstances and implementation practices. Co-benefits are the same named as secondary benefits.

### **Conformity Assessment**

Demonstration that specified requirements are fulfilled.

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC 17000:2020(en), 4.1]

### **Conformity Assessment Body (CAB)**

Body that performs conformity assessment activities and that can be the object of accreditation.

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC 17000:2004, 2.5, modified — The words “and that can be the object of accreditation” have been added to the definition and the Note to entry has been added; [ISO/IEC 17011:2017(en), 3.4]

### **Data protection**

The systematic application of a set of institutional, technical and physical safeguards that preserve the right to privacy with respect to the processing personal data. See UNHCR's [Policy on the Protection of Personal Data of Persons of Concern to UNHCR](#), 2015.

[IASC, [Operational Guidance on Data Responsibility in Humanitarian Action](#), 2021, citing definition developed by the UN Privacy Policy Group, 2017].

## **Displacement**

The movement of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence (whether within their own country or across an international border), in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters.

[SOURCE: adapted from [United Nations, Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement](#), 22 July 1998, ADM 1.1, PRL 12.1, PROO/98/109, para. 2.]

## **Ecosystem**

dynamic complex of plant, animal and micro-organism communities and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit.

[SOURCE: UN Convention on Biological Diversity]; ISO 34101-2:2019(en), 3.7

## **Ecosystem services**

Benefit people obtain from ecosystems.

Note 1 to entry: These are generally distinguished into provisioning, regulating, supporting and cultural services. Ecosystem services include the provisioning of goods (e.g. food, fuel, raw materials, fiber), regulating services (e.g. climate regulation, disease control), and non-material benefits (cultural services) (e.g. spiritual or aesthetic benefits). The supporting services are necessary for the production of all other ecosystem services (e.g. soil formation, nutrient cycling, water cycling) and are also referred to as “ecosystem functions”.

Note 2 to entry: Ecosystem services are sometimes called “environmental services” or “ecological services”.

[SOURCE: ISO 14008:2019(en), 3.2.11]

## **Empowerment**

A participatory process that increases the capacity of people or groups to take greater control over the decisions, assets, policies, processes and institutions that affect their lives.

See World Bank, [Empowerment in practice: From Analysis to Implementation](#), 2006; and United Nations Development Fund for Women, [Women's Empowerment Principles](#), 2010.

## **Fertilizer**

Chemical or natural substance or material that is used to provide nutrients to plants, usually via application to the soil, but also to foliage or through water in rice systems, fertigation or hydroponics or aquaculture operations. Thus, multiple nutrient types and sources are considered within this Fertilizer Code and include: chemical and mineral fertilizers; organic fertilizers such as livestock manures and composts; and sources of recycled nutrients such as wastewater, sewage sludge, digestates and other processed wastes.

[SOURCE: Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), [The international Code of Conduct for the sustainable use and management of fertilizers](#), 2019]

## **Forest (Natural Forest)**

“Forest” is a minimum area of land of 0.05-1.0 hectares with tree crown cover (or equivalent stocking level) of more than 10-30 per cent with trees with the potential to reach a minimum height of 2-5 meters at maturity in situ. A forest may consist either of closed forest formations where trees of various stores and undergrowth cover a high proportion of the ground or open forest. Young natural stands and all plantations which have yet to reach a crown density of 10-30 per cent or tree height of 2-5 meters are included under forest, as are areas normally forming part of the forest area which are temporarily unstocked as a result of human intervention such as harvesting or natural causes, but which are expected to revert to forest.<sup>33</sup>

## **Forced labour**

All work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered themselves voluntarily.

[SOURCE: International Labour Organization (ILO), [Convention Concerning Forced or Compulsory Labour](#), 28 June 1930, Co29, Art. 2(1)]

## **Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC)**

Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) is a specific right granted to Indigenous Peoples recognized in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which aligns with their universal right to self-determination.

FPIC allows Indigenous Peoples to provide or withhold/ withdraw consent, at any point, regarding projects impacting their territories. FPIC allows Indigenous Peoples to engage

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<sup>33</sup> The Marrakesh Accord. CP7/D11. <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/docs/cop7/13a01.pdf>. The project holder shall use the definition that applies.

in negotiations to shape the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of projects.

Definition available in: <https://www.fao.org/indigenous-peoples/our-pillars/fpic/en/>

## **Gender**

Refers to the socially constructed roles for women and men, which are often central to the way in which people define themselves and are defined by others. Gender roles are learned, changeable over time, and variable within and between cultures. Gender often defines the duties, responsibilities, constraints, opportunities and privileges of people of different genders in any context.

[See [UNHCR Policy on Age, Gender and Diversity](#), 8 March 2018.]

## **Gender equality**

Gender equality refers to the equal enjoyment of rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of people of any gender.

[See [UNHCR Policy on Age, Gender and Diversity](#), 8 March 2018.]

## **Gender-Based Violence and Harassment**

In its [Policy on the Prevention of, Risk Mitigation, and Response to Gender-Based Violence \(2020\)](#)

UNHCR adopted the IASC definition of Gender-based violence (GBV) as ‘an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person’s will and that is based on socially ascribed (i.e. gender) differences between males and females. It includes acts that inflict physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion, and other deprivations of liberty. These acts can occur in public or in private.’

[UNHCR’s GBV Policy](#) further outlines that ‘GBV is based on patriarchal power relations and gender discrimination. The term ‘Gender-Based Violence’ ‘is most commonly used to underscore how systemic inequality between males and females, which exists in every society in the world, acts as a unifying and foundational characteristic of most forms of violence perpetrated against women and girls.’ GBV also describes ‘the violence perpetrated against women, girls, men and boys with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities as well as non-binary individuals because it is driven by a desire to punish those seen as defying gender norms.’

UNHCR has historically used the term sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), often used interchangeably with gender-based violence, but with the issuance of the 2020 Policy, it consciously decided to use the term gender-based violence (GBV).

[Source: [IASC GBV Guidelines for Integrating GBV Interventions in Humanitarian Action](#), 2015, Part 1.]

[See [UNHCR Policy on the Prevention of Risk Mitigation and Response to GBV](#).]

### **GHG project (Greenhouse gas project)**

Activity or activities that alter the conditions of a GHG baseline and which cause GHG emission reductions or GHG removal enhancements.

[SOURCE: ISO 14064-3:2019(en), 3.4.1.]

### **Greenhouse gas (GHG)**

Gaseous constituent of the atmosphere, both natural and anthropogenic, that absorbs and emits radiation at specific wavelengths within the spectrum of infrared radiation emitted by the Earth's surface, the atmosphere and clouds.

[SOURCE: ISO 14064-3:2019(en), 3.1.1.]

### **Greenhouse gas emission (GHG emission)**

release of a GHG into the atmosphere.

[SOURCE: ISO 14064-3:2019(en), 3.3.2.]

### **Greenhouse gas emission reduction (GHG Emissions Reduction)**

Quantified decrease in GHG emissions between a baseline scenario and the GHG Project.

[SOURCE: ISO 14064-3:2019(en), 3.4.8.]

### **Greenhouse Gas Mitigation**

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change ("IPCC"), mitigation is a human-made intervention to reduce the sources or enhance the sinks of greenhouse gases defined as natural or human-made carbon reservoirs, reducing the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere.

### **Greenhouse gas project proponent (Project holder)**

Individual or organization that has overall control and responsibility for a GHG Project.

[SOURCE: ISO 14064-2:2019(en), 3.3.2.]

### **Greenhouse gas programme (GHG Program)**

Voluntary or mandatory international, national or subnational system or scheme that registers, accounts or manages GHG emissions, GHG removals, GHG emission reductions or GHG removal enhancements outside the organization or GHG Project.

[SOURCE: ISO 14064-2:2019(en), 3.3.4.]

### **Greenhouse gas removal**

Withdrawal of a GHG from the atmosphere by GHG sinks.

[SOURCE: ISO 14064-1:2018(en), 3.1.6]

### **Greenhouse gas removal activities**

These are GHG mitigation actions, in the AFOLU sector, based on agricultural and forestry activities such as silvopastoral systems (grasses and planted trees), agroforestry systems (agroforestry crops), commercial plantations (forest plantations), and other landscape management tools. Oil palm crops are a GHG mitigation action if palms grow and occupied areas other than natural forest or natural vegetation cover other than forest.<sup>34</sup>

GHG removal forestry activities can also include actions leading to the restoration of degraded ecosystems, such as (a) ecological restoration, (b) ecological rehabilitation, and (c) ecological recovery.

### **Habitat**

Place or type of site where an organism or population naturally occurs.

[SOURCE: CBD, Art.2]; ISO 14055-1:2017(en), 3.1.6.

### **Human rights**

The inalienable rights to which a person is entitled merely for being human. Human rights are built on underlying principles of universality, equality and non-discrimination, and are enshrined in international human rights law, rules of customary international law, national laws and other standards that define them and help to guarantee their full enjoyment. Human rights apply to all individuals over whom States have jurisdiction, including all persons falling within UNHCR's mandate.

[SOURCE: [UNHCR glossary](#)]

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<sup>34</sup> The names in parentheses correspond to the definitions contained in CORINE Land Cover.

## **Human trafficking**

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purpose of exploitation. Such exploitation includes, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

### **Notes:**

The consent of a victim of trafficking is considered irrelevant where any of the coercive means outlined above have been used.

Note, however, that children cannot give consent to exploitation. For children, there is no need to demonstrate 'threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person'.

The term trafficking in persons is commonly used to refer to human trafficking.

When distinguishing between smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons it is important to note the following points: Smuggling of migrants necessarily involves an irregular border crossing and entry into another State, whereas trafficking in persons may occur within a single country. A smuggler commits a crime against the State, and the commodity involved is a service: the facilitation of an irregular border crossing for financial or other material benefit. A human trafficker commits a crime against the individual, who is the commodity. The relationship between smuggler and migrant is based on a commercial transaction, which usually ends after the border crossing, whereas the trafficking relationship often involves ongoing exploitation that generates a benefit (financial or otherwise) for the trafficker alone.

[SOURCE: [UNHCR glossary](#)]

## **Intended User**

Individual or organization identified by those reporting GHG and Biodiversity Net Gains- related information as being the one who relies on that information to make decisions.

The intended user can be the client, the responsible party, GHG program administrators, Biodiversity program administrators, regulators, the financial



community or other affected interested parties, such as local communities, government departments or non-governmental organizations.

### **Invasive species**

An exotic or unnatural species can be any kind of organism that has been introduced to a foreign habitat. This introduction can cause major threats to the native species.

### **Involuntary resettlement**

Refers both to physical displacement (relocation or loss of shelter) and to economic displacement (loss of assets or access to assets that leads to loss of income sources or means of livelihood). Resettlement is considered involuntary when affected individuals or communities do not have the right to refuse land acquisition that results in displacement.

### **Leakages**

Those are the potential emissions that would occur outside the project boundaries due to the GHG Project activities. Leakage means the net change in anthropogenic emissions by sources of greenhouse gases (GHG) that occurs outside the project boundary and are measurable and attributable to the project activity.

### **Monitoring plan**

The plan which sets out the methodology to be used by project holders for the monitoring of, and by CABs for verification of, the amount of GHG emission reductions or GHG removals achieved by a GHG project, as applicable.

### **Monitoring report**

A report prepared by a project holder which sets out the GHG emission reductions or GHG removals of an implemented registered GHG project, for a particular monitoring period.

### **Nature-based solutions**

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) defines nature-based solutions as "actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, while simultaneously providing benefits for human well-being and biodiversity."

### **Net gains in biodiversity**

The net gain corresponds to the increase of biodiversity values since the beginning of the initiative and throughout the implementation of the initiative due to biodiversity conservation activities.

## **Pollution**

Refers to both hazardous and non-hazardous chemical pollutants in the solid, liquid, or gaseous phases, and includes other components such as pests, pathogens, thermal discharge to water, GHG emissions, nuisance odors, noise, vibration, radiation, electromagnetic energy, and the creation of potential visual impacts including light.

## **Project Activity**

Specific set of technologies, measures, and/or outcomes, applied to a project to change the conditions in the baseline scenario and reduce or remove GHG emissions.

## **Project Document**

The document prepared by the project holder of a GHG project which sets out in detail, in accordance with the BCR Program, the GHG project. The template of PD is publicly available on the BioCarbon website.

## **Project holder**

The person or organization responsible for the design, validation, monitoring, verification and registration of a GHG project.

The project holder has the agreements to represent all project participants to the BioCarbon registration.

NOTE: The project holder is acting as the Responsible Party.

## **Project participant**

The organizations or individuals that own, develop, and/or manage the project activities. This may include the project holder, project sponsor, investor, and property manager.

## **Registration**

The formal acceptance by the Technical Committee of a proposed GHG project validated by a CAB as an approved project, as applicable. Registration is the prerequisite for the verification and issuance of VCCs.

## **REDD+**

An international mitigation mechanism framed in the decisions of the CMNUCC, whose objective is to reduce and remove GHG emissions through the implementation of activities to reduce emissions from deforestation, forest degradation, and other forestry activities.

### **REDD+ Activities**

These are GHG mitigation actions that lead to the removal or reduction of GHG emissions from deforestation and degradation of natural forests, namely:

- (a) Reducing emissions from deforestation;
- (b) Reducing emissions from forest degradation;
- (c) Conservation of forest carbon stocks;
- (d) Sustainable management of forest; and
- (e) Enhancement of forest carbon stocks

### **Register (Registry)**

List issued by a certification body, an authority or another registration organization, for certificate holders or persons meeting predetermined criteria. Note 1 to entry: A register can be publicly available or for in-house purposes. [SOURCE: ISO/IEC TS 17027:2014(en), 2.65]

### **Restoration**

According to the Society for Ecological Restoration (SER), ecological restoration is the process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged or destroyed.<sup>35</sup>

### **Risk**

Effect of uncertainty.

Note 1 to entry: An effect is a deviation from the expected – positive or negative.

Note 2 to entry: Uncertainty is the state, even partial, of deficiency of information related to, understanding or knowledge of, an event, its consequence and likelihood.

Note 3 to entry: Risk is often characterized by reference to potential events (as defined in ISO Guide 73:2009, 3.5.1.3) and consequences (as defined in ISO Guide 73:2009, 3.6.1.3), or a combination of these.

Note 4 to entry: Risk is often expressed in terms of a combination of the consequences of an event (including changes in circumstances) and the associated likelihood (as defined in ISO Guide 73:2009, 3.6.1.1) of occurrence.

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<sup>35</sup> <https://www.ser.org/>

[SOURCE: ISO 9000:2015, 3.7.9, modified — Notes to entry 5 and 6 have been deleted];  
[ISO 19011:2018(en), 3.19]

### **Stakeholder (Interested Party)**

person or organization that can affect, be affected by, or perceive itself to be affected by a decision or activity.

Note 1 to entry: To “perceive itself to be affected” means the perception has been made known to the organization.

Note 2 to entry: The terms “interested party” and “stakeholder” are used interchangeably.

[SOURCE: ISO 14001:2015, 3.1.6, modified — The admitted term “stakeholder” and Note 2 to entry have been added; ISO 14006:2020(en), 3.1.7.].

### **Sustainability**

State of a system, including economic, social and environmental aspects, in which the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Note 1 to entry: In the ISO 34101 series “sustainability” is referred to as an objective rather than a requirement.

[SOURCE: ISO 34101-1:2019(en), 3.51]

### **Sustainable development**

Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Note 1 to entry: Sustainable development is about integrating the broader expectations of society as a whole of a high quality of life, health and prosperity with environmental justice and maintaining Earth's capacity to support life in all its diversity. These social, economic and environmental goals are interdependent and should be mutually reinforcing.

[SOURCE: ISO 26000:2010, 2.23]

### **Transparency**

openness about decisions and activities that affect society, the economy and the environment, and willingness to communicate these in a clear, accurate, timely, honest and complete manner

Note 1 to entry: Transparency can be the result of processes, procedures, methods, data sources and assumptions used by the local government that ensure appropriate information is made available to customers/citizens and other interested parties.

[SOURCE: ISO 26000:2010, 2.24, modified — The note to entry has been added.]; ISO 18091:2019(en), 3.7.

### **Tool**

A type of document or manual that provides a procedure on how to perform a particular type of analysis.

### **Validation**

Process for evaluating the reasonableness of the assumptions, limitations and methods that support a statement about the outcome of future activities.

[SOURCE: ISO 14064-2:2019(en), 3.4.3]

### **Validation body**

Body that performs validation.

Note 1 to entry: A validation body can be an organization, or part of an organization.

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC 17029:2019, 3.4, modified — Note 2 to entry has been added.]; [ISO 14065:2020(en), 3.3.26]

### **Verification**

Systematic, independent and documented process for the evaluation of a greenhouse gas assertion against agreed verification criteria.

Note 1 to entry: In some cases, such as in first-party verifications, independence can be demonstrated by the freedom from responsibility for the development of GHG data and information.

[SOURCE: ISO 14064-3:2006, definition 2.36].

### **Verification body**

body that performs verification.

Note 1 to entry: A verification body can be an organization, or part of an organization.

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC 17029:2019, 3.5, modified — Note 2 to entry has been added.]; [ISO 14065:2020(en), 3.3.27]

## **Vulnerability**

Propensity or predisposition to be adversely affected.

Note 1 to entry: Vulnerability encompasses a variety of concepts and elements including sensitivity or susceptibility to harm and lack of capacity to cope and adapt.

Note 2 to entry: Vulnerability is the degree to which an ecological, social and economic system is susceptible to, or unable to cope with, adverse climate change impacts, including climate variability and extremes.

[SOURCE: ISO 14090:2019, 3.15, modified — Note 2 to entry has been added.]; [ISO/TS 14092:2020(en)]

*Document history*

**Type of document.** Tool

Approved by: Executive Board

<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Nature of the document</i>
1.0	April 5, 2024	First version
1.1	July 4, 2024	Updated version Some clarifications and adjustments

This document is also available in Spanish.