BioCarbon Standard

# BIOCARBON BIODIVERSITY STANDARD (BBS)

## ECOSYSTEM AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES



## BIOCARBON CERT®

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The BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard (BBS) establishes robust criteria for measurable, verifiable, and transparent biodiversity conservation, ensuring scientific integrity and equitable participation.



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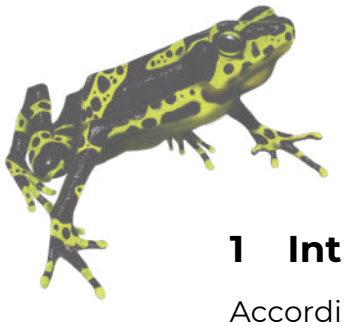
## Acronyms and abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| BBS | BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard |
| BioCredit | Voluntary Biodiversity Credit |
| CAB | Conformity Assessment Body |
| CID | Conservation Initiative Document |
| FPIC | Free, Prior and Informed Consent |
| FSC | Forest Stewardship Council |
| GBF | Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework |
| GCT | Global CarbonTrace |
| GIS | Geographic Information System |
| ISO | International Organization for Standardization |
| IUCN | International Union for Conservation of Nature |
| IP | Indigenous Peoples |
| LC | Local Communities |
| LMT | Landscape Management Tools |
| MSU | Minimum Spatial Unit |
| SDG | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SDSs | Sustainable Development Safeguards |
| SER | Society for Ecological Restoration |
| TOC | Theory of change |





# 1 Introduction

According to the Convention on Biological Diversity, "biological diversity" means the variability among living organisms from all sources, including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine, and other aquatic ecosystems, and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species, and of ecosystems (United Nations, 1992a).

Despite decades of global efforts to implement national biodiversity strategies and action plans, ecosystems continue to face accelerating fragmentation, degradation, and species loss. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (2025) indicates that, among more than 63,000 species assessed, over 19,000 are currently threatened with extinction, including 41% of amphibians, 33% of reef-building corals, 25% of mammals, 13% of birds, and 30% of conifers. These figures underscore the urgent need for coherent, measurable, and accountable frameworks capable of delivering long-term positive outcomes for nature and people[1].

In response to this global challenge, international agreements have evolved toward a more comprehensive vision of biodiversity management. The Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) (United Nations, 2022) calls upon all stakeholders to mobilize financial resources, promote sustainable investment, and recognize measurable biodiversity outcomes through innovative instruments such as biodiversity credits. This transition reflects a shift from fragmented, project-based conservation approaches toward transparent, performance-based mechanisms that ensure equity, scientific rigor, and durability.

Aligned with this determination, BioCarbon Cert (hereinafter "BioCarbon") establishes the BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard (hereinafter "BBS") as a reference framework for public and private actors seeking to design, implement, and certify ecosystem and biodiversity conservation initiatives. The Standard provides a structured model for financing, monitoring, auditing, and certifying conservation initiatives, ensuring that actions are additional, measurable, permanent, and aligned with national and international biodiversity targets.



[1] https://www.iucn.org/es/regiones/am%C3%A9rica-del-sur/nuestro-trabajo/pol%C3%ADticas-de-biodiversidad/lista-roja-de-uicn

The BBS enables the registration and issuance of Voluntary Biodiversity Credits (BioCredits) for initiatives that meet its technical, social, and governance requirements. These credits represent verified and traceable biodiversity outcomes that may be used in voluntary markets, conservation investment mechanisms, or compensation schemes consistent with applicable legislation. By linking ecological integrity with transparent certification and registry processes, the BBS contributes to the development of high-quality biodiversity assets and strengthens confidence among stakeholders, investors, and affected communities.

The BBS is grounded in rights-based and community-centered principles. All initiatives registered under the BBS shall respect the rights, knowledge systems, governance structures, and stewardship roles of Indigenous Peoples (IP) and Local Communities (LC). Initiative holders shall obtain Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) whenever activities affect IP or LC lands, resources, cultural values, or decision-making systems. All uses of biodiversity-related information originating from IP or LC territories shall respect Indigenous and Local Communities Data Sovereignty, ensuring that data are collected, shared, stored, and used only with explicit authorization and under agreed governance arrangements.

Transparency is a core principle of the BBS. All processes related to certification, registration, monitoring, auditing, and issuance of BioCredits shall be conducted under open and traceable procedures. BioCarbon shall ensure public access to relevant information, including methodologies, tools, governance decisions, initiative documentation, monitoring results, and Audit Reports, through its official website and the Registry platform. This commitment strengthens accountability, comparability, and public confidence in the integrity of biodiversity conservation outcomes certified under the BBS.



## 2 Objectives

(a) The BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard (BBS) establishes the rules, criteria, and procedures governing the certification, registration, and issuance of Voluntary Biodiversity Credits (BioCredits).

(b) This Standard provides the framework through which biodiversity conservation initiatives (hereinafter “Initiatives”) shall demonstrate measurable, additional, and verifiable biodiversity outcomes, ensuring

integrity, transparency, and scientific rigor across all stages of design, implementation, monitoring, auditing, and certification.

Specifically, the BBS aims to:

(a) define clear eligibility and technical requirements for the design and implementation of biodiversity conservation, restoration, and sustainable use initiatives;

(b) establish the conditions for measurement, reporting, and auditing of biodiversity outcomes, ensuring consistency, comparability, and traceability of data;

(c) provide criteria to demonstrate additionality, permanence, and ecological integrity, supported by robust scientific evidence;

(d) ensure the meaningful, effective, and equitable participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities throughout the design, implementation, monitoring, and benefit-sharing processes of biodiversity initiatives, in alignment with international human rights norms;

(e) ensure the application of Sustainable Development Safeguards (SDSs), guaranteeing social and environmental responsibility, gender equity, and the protection of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities and their cultural heritage;

(f) establish governance and competence requirements applicable to accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) conducting auditing processes;

(g) promote transparency and public disclosure throughout the certification and registry processes, reinforcing accountability and stakeholder confidence;

(h) safeguard Indigenous and Local Communities Data Sovereignty by establishing obligations for ethical data governance, including community ownership, control, access, and consent regarding biodiversity-related information;

(i) support the quantification and issuance of BioCredits representing verified biodiversity conservation outcomes; and

(j) support the development of high-integrity, equitable, and transparent biodiversity markets, ensuring that all certified initiatives contribute to long-term ecosystem resilience and equitable participation.

# 3 Version

This document constitutes the Public Consultation for Version 4.0 of the BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard (BBS), issued on January 7th, 2026.

It supersedes all previous versions of the Standard.

The BBS may be revised periodically to incorporate technical updates, editorial revisions, or new procedural requirements approved by BioCarbon.

Users shall ensure that they are consulting and applying the latest official version of the document, available on the BIOCARBON website at www.biocarbonstandard.com.

BioCarbon shall publish transition procedures for the application of updated versions of this Standard.

## 3.1 Transition Provisions for Version 4.0 (Consultation Draft)

This document constitutes the public consultation draft of Version 4.0 of the BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard (BBS). As such, it does not have an Effective Date.

The Effective Date of Version 4.0 shall be established upon its formal approval by BioCarbon Cert.

All Initiatives, including those currently under development or in early stages of validation or verification, shall apply Version 4.0 as of the Effective Date. No Initiative may apply a superseded version of the BBS after this date.

All methodologies, tools, and templates shall apply the same rule and shall be used exclusively in their latest approved version.

# 4 Scope

This document constitutes the Standard governing the certification and registration of biodiversity conservation initiatives and the issuance of Voluntary Biodiversity Credits (BioCredits).

The Standard provides the regulatory framework under which biodiversity conservation initiatives shall demonstrate compliance with applicable national legal frameworks, as well as with the rules, procedures, and requirements established by BioCarbon.

The BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard (BBS) applies exclusively to initiatives that:

(a) include activities for the preservation, restoration, and/or sustainable use of biodiversity, together with their corresponding specific actions;

(b) contribute to regional, local, or landscape-level biodiversity conservation strategies;

(c) implement ecosystem and biodiversity conservation activities using a methodology developed or approved by BioCarbon and in force at the time of application;

(d) support the implementation of the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (United Nations, 2022) or other recognized biodiversity-related targets;

(e) develop conservation activities intended for participation in voluntary biodiversity markets; and

(f) seek to participate in environmental compensation or conservation investment mechanisms, such as biodiversity offsetting or compensation for biodiversity loss, provided that all applicable legal requirements are strictly complied with.

All initiatives registered under the BBS shall demonstrate respect for the rights, governance systems, and cultural values of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities and shall comply with Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) requirements where applicable.

All initiatives registered under the BBS shall comply with the Principles established in Section 6 of this Standard.



## 5 Area of application

The BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard (BBS) is intended to serve the following actors and stakeholders:

(a) public and private actors, including natural persons, communities, companies, public entities, and national or subnational governments, that intend to register with BioCarbon a biodiversity conservation initiative expressly designed to achieve specific biodiversity conservation objectives (hereinafter referred to as "Initiative holders");

(b) independent third-party entities (hereinafter referred to as "Certification Bodies" or "CABs") that conduct certification and auditing activities for biodiversity conservation initiatives under the BBS;

(c) entities responsible for the management, analysis, or administration of biodiversity-related information relevant to the implementation, monitoring, or certification of initiatives;

(d) private companies, governmental agencies, multilateral institutions, and other financial institutions that invest in biodiversity conservation initiatives and/or participate in voluntary biodiversity markets or related mechanisms; and

(e) other interested parties involved in biodiversity conservation initiatives, including technical experts, civil society organizations, and market participants.

The BBS is also applicable to Indigenous Peoples (IP) and Local Communities (LC) whose lands, territories, resources, cultural assets, or biodiversity stewardship roles are directly or indirectly affected by, or engaged in, the development and implementation of initiatives. Their participation shall ensure meaningful representation in governance and decision-making processes and shall comply with Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) requirements, where applicable.

# 6 Principles

Initiative holders and all relevant stakeholders shall apply the following principles in the design, implementation, monitoring, and certification of biodiversity conservation initiatives under the BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard (BBS):

**Responsibility**

Initiative holders shall ensure the responsible use of environmental and human resources that comprise biological diversity, avoiding practices that may compromise ecosystem integrity or social well-being.

**Compatibility**

Initiative holders shall ensure consistency between the sustainable use of biological diversity, local customs and traditions, and the applicable legal frameworks that recognize and protect such practices.

**Equity and justice**

Initiative holders shall ensure the fair and equitable distribution of benefits derived from biodiversity conservation activities, promote continuous participation and inclusive decision-making, and guarantee an equitable share of benefits for all participants.

This principle also requires respect for the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, ensuring their leadership, meaningful participation, and equitable access to the benefits generated by conservation initiatives.

**Respect for rights and Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)**

Initiative holders shall respect the rights, territories, traditional knowledge, and governance systems of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.

Activities shall be implemented only with Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), where required, ensuring culturally appropriate engagement, transparent communication, and full participation in decisions affecting lands, resources, livelihoods, or cultural values.

**Precautionary principle**

Initiative holders shall apply the precautionary principle in accordance with Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (United Nations, 1992b), ensuring that the absence of full scientific certainty is not used as a reason to postpone measures to prevent environmental degradation where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage.

**Transparency**

Initiative holders shall communicate information in a clear, accurate, timely, honest, and comprehensive manner, in accordance with recognized transparency principles (ISO 26000:2010).

**Governance arrangements shall ensure clear, accountable, and participatory decision-making processes.**

Initiative holders shall not make, nor allow others to make, claims implying biodiversity outcomes beyond those certified under the BBS. All claims shall be consistent with verified outcomes and with the disclosure requirements of this Standard.

**Indigenous and Local Communities Data Sovereignty**

All biodiversity-related data, traditional knowledge, and territorial information originating from Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities shall be governed by principles of data ownership, control, access, and consent.

The use of such data shall require explicit authorization and shall follow agreed protocols that protect cultural integrity, confidentiality, and self-determination.

**Sustainability**

Initiative holders shall integrate the environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainable development and ensure the conservation of biodiversity and the well-being of present and future generations.

**Verified and certified outcomes**

Biodiversity conservation outcomes shall be based on scientifically robust and rigorous quantification approaches, ensuring that BioCredits are generated exclusively from reliable measurements, verified data, and certification processes.

Outcomes shall be robust, transparent, and supportive of the integrity and credibility of the information disclosed under the BBS.

**Do no harm and safeguard integrity**

All initiatives shall apply a risk-based due diligence process to identify, prevent, and mitigate negative social, environmental, and cultural impacts.



Initiatives shall not undermine community rights, exacerbate inequities, or create new risks for Indigenous Peoples or Local Communities.

## 7 General terms

For the purposes of the BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard (BBS), the following terms shall be interpreted as follows:

(a) “Shall” indicates a mandatory requirement that must be complied with.

(b) “Should” indicates a recommendation among several possible options, where one course of action is considered particularly appropriate without being mandatory.

(c) “May” indicates that an action is permitted within the framework of this Standard.

These terms follow standard usage in ISO normative documents and apply exclusively within the context of this Standard.

## 8 Normative references

The following references are indispensable for the application of the BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard (BBS); however, they are not exhaustive. While the documents cited below are essential, additional references may be relevant depending on the specific context of application.

(a) Convention on Biological Diversity. United Nations (1992).

(b) National policies, strategies, and action plans related to the conservation, use, and management of biological diversity.

(c) Applicable environmental legislation establishing requirements for the management, conservation, and sustainable use of biological diversity.

(d) The BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard (BBS), in its most recent official version.

(e) The Methodological Document for Ecosystem and Biodiversity Conservation Activities, the BioCarbon Tools and Sustainable Development Safeguards, and any other applicable documents issued by BioCarbon.

(f) The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) (United Nations, 2007) and other relevant international human rights frameworks recognizing and protecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.

Unless otherwise specified, references to external documents shall be understood as referring to their latest official version in force.

# 9 Ecosystem and biodiversity conservation activities

## 9.1 Community Rights, Consent, and Participation

All conservation, restoration, and sustainable-use activities implemented under the BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard (BBS) shall:

(a) respect the rights, knowledge systems, cultural values, and governance structures of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities;

(b) be designed, implemented, and monitored with the meaningful participation of affected Indigenous Peoples (IP) and Local Communities (LC);

(c) obtain Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) whenever activities affect IP or LC lands, territories, resources, cultural values, or customary practices;

(d) ensure fair, transparent, and equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms;

(e) comply with Indigenous and Local Communities Data Sovereignty principles when generating, using, storing, or sharing biodiversity-related data, including the application of consent protocols and agreed governance arrangements; and

(f) incorporate risk-based due diligence processes to identify, prevent, and mitigate potential negative social, environmental, and cultural impacts.

## 9.2 Conservation activities

Conservation activities shall respond to ecological, social, and economic considerations and shall be structured in a manner that enables consistent, meaningful, and scientifically robust ecosystem and biodiversity conservation outcomes.

Initiatives implementing one or more of the following categories of conservation activities may be registered under the BBS: (a) preservation; (b) ecological restoration; and (c) sustainable use.

### 9.2.1 Preservation

Preservation is defined by the Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible (2012) "*as actions aimed at maintaining the natural state of biodiversity, landscapes, or ecosystems by limiting or eliminating human intervention*".[2]

Specific preservation actions may include, inter alia: a) isolation of areas and establishment of ecological barriers; b) isolation and protection of forest fragments; c) surveillance, enforcement, and control programs; d) reduction or elimination of hunting and fishing pressures; and e) other.

### 9.2.2 Ecological restoration

According to the Society for Ecological Restoration (SER, 2025), ecological restoration is the process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged, or destroyed.[3]

Specific ecological restoration actions may include, inter alia:

(a) reestablishment of degraded areas with respect to ecosystem function, structure, or composition;

(b) rehabilitation of ecosystem productivity and/or ecosystem services;

(c) recovery or reintroduction of ecosystem uses and services different from those present at the time of degradation, where ecologically appropriate;

(d) removal or mitigation of agents causing ecosystem degradation; and

(e) other scientifically justified restoration actions.

### 9.2.3 Sustainable use

Sustainable use refers to the utilization of components of biological diversity in a manner and at a rate that does not lead to their long-term decline,

[2] Defined in the "Política Nacional para la Gestión Integral de la Biodiversidad y sus Servicios Ecosistémicos "(PNGIBSE). Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible. s.f. Bogotá, 134 p.
[3] https://www.ser.org/

thereby maintaining their potential to meet the needs and aspirations of present and future generations (United Nations, 2011)[4].

Specific sustainable-use actions may include, inter alia:

(a) regulated resource extraction and control measures consistent with sustainability thresholds;

(b) restrictions on public access or tourism activities to sensitive ecosystems;

(c) limitations on the use of heavy or destructive machinery or technologies that may cause collateral ecosystem damage;

(d) soil nutrient recycling and rotation practices;

(e) composting and organic soil management;

(f) sustainable agricultural and agroecological practices;

(g) restrictions on agrochemical or fertilizer use; and

(h) other sustainable-use practices aligned with conservation objectives.

### 9.3 Landscape Management Tools (LMT)

Landscape Management Tools (LMTs) are spatial and functional elements incorporated into the design and implementation of biodiversity conservation initiatives to enhance habitat quality, improve ecological connectivity, and support ecosystem functions while contributing to measurable biodiversity conservation outcomes.

The use of LMTs is optional; however, their application is strongly encouraged where they contribute to the effectiveness, resilience, and long-term sustainability of conservation outcomes.

LMTs may be applied as complementary measures to the conservation activities and specific actions described in Sections 9.1 and 9.2, and shall be designed in a manner consistent with the conservation objectives, landscape context, and ecological conditions of the initiative area.



[4] https://www.cbd.int/doc/legal/cbd-es.pdf

Examples of Landscape Management Tools may include, inter alia:

(a) biological or conservation corridors that facilitate species movement, gene flow, and functional connectivity between habitat patches fragmented by land-use change or degradation;

(b) riparian buffers, ecological strips, mini-corridors, or connection strips that link natural or semi-natural areas across productive landscapes;

(c) live fences, hedgerows, and tree lines that enhance structural connectivity, reduce pressure on natural forests, and provide ecosystem services within agricultural or pastoral systems;

(d) enclosures or protected areas established to prevent degradation from livestock, human intrusion, or other pressures, including areas subject to passive or assisted natural regeneration;

(e) enrichment and supplementation measures aimed at increasing species diversity, restoring functional ecological components, or supporting the recovery of threatened or locally depleted species;

(f) agroforestry systems, silvopastoral systems, multipurpose forests, and forest plantations designed to combine production functions with biodiversity conservation objectives;

(g) conversion of degraded pasture or agricultural land to forest or mixed vegetation cover, including assisted succession and restoration of native species; and

(h) hydrological and geomorphological restoration measures in wetlands, mangroves, riparian systems, or other aquatic ecosystems, including actions to restore natural water flows, sediment dynamics, and habitat structure.

Where LMTs are applied, initiative holders shall:

(i) justify their selection in relation to the conservation objectives and expected biodiversity outcomes;

(ii) demonstrate that LMTs do not introduce adverse social, environmental, or cultural impacts;

(iii) integrate LMTs into the monitoring and reporting framework of the initiative, using appropriate indicators and spatial data; and

(iv) ensure that the design and implementation of LMTs respect Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities rights, governance systems, and Data Sovereignty principles, including the application of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) where applicable.

The application of LMTs shall be documented in the Conservation Initiative Document (CID) and, where relevant, reflected in spatial datasets submitted for registration and auditing purposes.

The conservation activities, specific actions, and Landscape Management Tools (LMTs) described in Section 9 may be applied globally, regardless of geographic location, provided that the initiative is designed and implemented exclusively in terrestrial ecosystems, mangroves, or wetlands, and is intended to generate verifiable biodiversity conservation outcomes under the BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard (BBS).

To ensure full consistency with best practices, all eligibility criteria under this Standard shall be applied in a manner that safeguards the rights, participation, and data governance of Indigenous Peoples (IP) and Local Communities (LC), incorporates risk-based due diligence, and ensures transparent documentation and auditable decision-making.

All eligibility decisions shall be justified with objective evidence and recorded in a traceable manner.

## 10 Start date and quantification period

The initiative holder shall define the start date of the initiative, the quantification period, the duration of the initiative, and all relevant monitoring periods, milestones, and timelines.

The start date refers to the exact date on which biodiversity conservation activities commence within the geographic boundaries of the initiative.

The start date shall not automatically imply the start of the quantification period.

## 10.1 Duration period

The initiative shall have a minimum duration of ten (10) years, during which it may quantify and demonstrate biodiversity conservation outcomes eligible for the issuance of BioCredits.

The duration of the initiative may be extended for an additional ten (10)-year period, provided that the initiative holder justifies the reasons, objectives, and expected biodiversity outcomes of such extension.

For any renewal or extension, the initiative holder shall reassess the biodiversity baseline, additionality, and all other applicability requirements established under the BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard (BBS).

## 10.2 Quantification period

The quantification period shall begin on the date on which the biodiversity baseline is established.

BioCredits may only be generated for biodiversity conservation outcomes that occur within the quantification period and that are supported by verifiable monitoring data.

## 10.3 Retroactivity

Retroactivity refers to the period prior to the certification of the initiative during which biodiversity conservation activities may be recognized and considered for the generation of BioCredits, provided that all requirements set forth in this Standard are fully met.

Retroactivity shall not allow, under any circumstances, the ex-ante issuance of BioCredits. BioCredits may only be issued ex-post, following verified monitoring results, third-party auditing, and certification.

Retroactivity may be applied in the following cases:

(a) Retroactive initiative start date

The initiative holder may establish a retroactive start date up to five (5) years prior to the registration of the initiative.

In such cases, the initiative shall establish a biodiversity baseline that accurately represents the condition of the ecosystem or landscape at the retroactive start date.

All applicable social and environmental safeguards, including Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), shall have been fulfilled prior to the retroactive start date and shall be appropriately documented.

(b) Retroactive crediting period beginning after the initiative start date

Where the initiative start date precedes the establishment of the biodiversity baseline, the crediting period may begin in a later year, provided that the initiative holder establishes a biodiversity baseline demonstrating that the biodiversity conservation outcomes achieved during the retroactive period would not have occurred in the absence of the initiative.

Additionality shall be demonstrated for any retroactively credited period.

10.3.1 Conditions for retroactive issuance

Retroactive issuance of BioCredits shall be permitted only if all of the following conditions are met:

(a) a valid biodiversity baseline has been established for the retroactive period;

(b) Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) and all applicable safeguards were fulfilled prior to the retroactive start date;

(c) monitoring data for the retroactive period are complete, verifiable, and auditable;

(d) third-party verification has been conducted for the entire retroactive period; and

(e) certification by BioCarbon Cert confirms that all requirements have been met.

10.3.2 Prohibition of ex-ante issuance

No BioCredits shall be issued for periods in which monitoring was not conducted, a biodiversity baseline does not exist, safeguards were not fulfilled, or verification has not occurred.

Forward-looking claims, financial instruments, or advance purchase agreements shall not be represented, sold, or traded as issued BioCredits.

10.3.3 Start of the crediting period

The crediting period shall begin on the date on which the biodiversity baseline is established.

Retroactive issuance shall apply only to periods for which ex-post monitoring, verification, and certification are possible.

10.3.4 Baseline establishment

The biodiversity baseline shall be established using field measurements, official data, and/or satellite imagery, supported by methodologies consistent with this Standard.

The baseline shall represent the conditions prior to or at the beginning of the quantification period, allowing subsequent biodiversity changes to be measured accurately.

Under no circumstances shall the baseline post-date the start of the quantification period.

Where retroactivity is applied, the baseline shall correspond precisely to the retroactive start date or to the earliest year of the approved retroactive crediting period.

10.3.5 Consistency with retroactivity rules

Where retroactivity is applied in accordance with Section 10.2, the start date, biodiversity baseline, and quantification period shall be defined in a manner consistent with the retroactive eligibility requirements, including the application of safeguards, Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), monitoring, verification, and certification conditions.

# 11 Geographic boundaries of the conservation initiative

The Area of the Initiative is the location where ecosystem and biodiversity conservation activities are implemented. It shall be defined by clear geographic boundaries and shall constitute a minimum spatial unit (MSU) of one (1) hectare (10,000 $m^2$).

Prior to the implementation of conservation activities, the initiative holder shall determine land cover within the geographic boundaries through a land cover analysis conducted at a scale of 1:10,000 or finer.

The initiative area shall be represented in a Geographic Information System (GIS) for the entire duration of the initiative. This representation shall follow appropriate information system methodologies and land cover analysis standards. Geographic information shall be managed in accordance with ISO 19111:2019, which defines the conceptual scheme for coordinate referencing, the minimum data required to determine coordinate reference systems, and the associated metadata.

All geographic boundaries shall be supported by documented land tenure information, including maps, legal instruments, or recognition of customary land rights, where applicable. Where lands of Indigenous Peoples (IP) or Local Communities (LC) are included or potentially affected, initiative holders shall demonstrate that Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) has been obtained prior to boundary confirmation.

The initiative holder shall consider landscape heterogeneity within the geographic boundaries and shall identify the ecosystems present, recognizing that an MSU may comprise multiple land-cover types representing different ecological functions. The spatial extent of ecosystems may therefore be reflected in proportion to the occurrence of different cover types.

The geographic boundaries of the initiative shall not overlap with any area already registered under the BioCarbon Standard for carbon activities, as such overlap may result in double counting and may undermine additionality. Carbon initiatives and biodiversity initiatives shall be designed and implemented independently, while geographic adjacency may be permitted where appropriate.

All spatial files, including shapefiles, boundary maps, and GIS layers, shall follow standardized metadata, version-control, and traceability procedures to ensure auditability and data integrity.

### 11.1 Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities, and land and resource rights

Where the geographic boundaries of the conservation initiative overlap with lands, territories, resources, or culturally significant areas used, governed, or claimed by Indigenous Peoples (IP) or Local Communities (LC), the initiative holder shall identify and document all statutory and customary land and resource rights, including tenure systems, access arrangements, and culturally significant areas.

The initiative holder shall obtain Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) from the affected IP and LC prior to initiative design, implementation, data collection, or monitoring activities, in accordance with the BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard and internationally recognized FPIC principles.

The initiative holder shall demonstrate that FPIC processes are culturally appropriate, inclusive, gender-responsive, and transparently documented.

Governance arrangements for the initiative shall enable meaningful participation and representation of IP and LC throughout the initiative lifecycle.

The initiative holder shall respect Indigenous and Local Communities Data Sovereignty, ensuring that data generated within IP or LC territories are collected, stored, used, and disclosed only under agreed terms and with explicit consent.

No initiative shall be registered where FPIC has not been obtained when required, or where unresolved material conflicts related to land or resource rights persist.

## 12 Conservation objectives

The initiative holder shall define specific conservation objectives that may be represented at the level of species, taxa, or functional groups, including, inter alia, vascular and non-vascular plants, birds, amphibians, reptiles, mammals, large herbivores, or soil invertebrates, as appropriate to the ecological context of the initiative.

When defining conservation objectives, the initiative holder shall take into account priorities and specific characteristics such as vulnerability status, ecological relevance, and cultural value.

Conservation objectives shall explicitly describe how they were developed through stakeholder participation, including meaningful engagement of Indigenous Peoples (IP) and Local Communities (LC), where applicable.

In selecting conservation objectives, the initiative holder shall consider, at a minimum, the following aspects:

(a) ensuring environmental, social, and financial sustainability for Local Communities;
(b) ensuring social and financial sustainability for Indigenous Peoples;

(c) contributing to the conservation of endangered ecosystems and species of flora and fauna;
(d) contributing to landscape connectivity and the achievement of national or subnational conservation goals;
(e) generating productive and sustainable livelihood alternatives for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities;
(f) supporting the management of public or private protected areas through management plans, expansion, or direct investments in restoration or preservation;
(g) contributing to restoration processes in prioritized areas within regional portfolios, local initiatives, or private enterprises that support the recovery of strategic ecosystems and associated services;
(h) generating economic incentives for initiative participants, including incentives linked to areas preserved, restored, or managed for sustainable use;
(i) increasing food security and financial resilience through the diversification of economic activities; and
(j) maintaining ecosystem stability to ensure the continued provision of ecosystem goods and services.

## 13 Baseline and additionality

The initiative's geographic boundaries shall be composed of area units determined by biotic and physical factors, together with economic and social characteristics, which collectively define the state of the landscape or ecosystem.

The initiative holder shall conduct a comprehensive analysis of these components in order to establish the biodiversity baseline (hereinafter the "baseline").

The baseline shall include a description of data sources, data quality, uncertainty, and the replicability of sampling methods. Where data originate from Indigenous Peoples (IP) or Local Communities (LC) territories or knowledge systems, Indigenous and Local Communities Data Sovereignty principles shall be applied, and consent protocols shall be followed.

The baseline analysis shall focus primarily on the conservation objectives of the initiative and its ecological context and shall include, at a minimum:

(a) information on land-cover types and their condition, including an assessment of the physiognomic and structural characteristics of vegetation;

(b) the structure and composition of plant communities, using indicators such as importance value index, relative abundance, diversity indices, and horizontal and vertical structure;

(c) the structure and composition of wildlife communities in relation to associated vegetation cover types;

(d) identification of threatened, rare, and endemic species, based on IUCN categories and/or other applicable national, regional, or local databases;

(e) relevant social and economic aspects, including factors related to resource management and variables influencing ecosystem degradation or conservation; and

(f) an assessment of vulnerability to climate change.

The evaluation of the state of the landscape or ecosystem shall consider at least two distinct periods of analysis in order to identify trends, enabling the assessment of quantitative and qualitative attributes such as composition, mobility or migration patterns, reproductive stages, and seasonal or ecological dynamics.

The initiative holder shall select appropriate characteristics and indicators associated with change in accordance with the conservation objectives of the initiative. The selection of indicators shall be based on rigorous technical criteria to assess ecosystem functioning, resilience, and integrity.

During subsequent analysis periods, indicators shall be compared against the baseline reference condition to determine changes in relation to the assessed components.

In general terms, the baseline shall support the identification of:

(a) biodiversity conservation activities, their specific actions, and applicable Landscape Management Tools (LMTs);

(b) the area designated for ecosystem and biodiversity conservation and the defined conservation objectives;





(c) additional areas that support landscape functionality and ecological connectivity with the Area of the Conservation Initiative (ACI);

(d) conservation objectives that are critical to preservation, restoration, or sustainable use processes; and

(e) Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, including their characteristics, relationship with biodiversity, well-being, rights, and needs, ensuring their continuous involvement, communication, and participation.

## 13.1 Drivers of transformation and biodiversity loss

The effectiveness of the conservation activities shall depend on how the drivers of transformation as well as their underlying causes are addressed. Initiatives shall therefore be designed and based on the clear and precise identification of these, per the following:

### 13.1.1 Drivers of transformation and biodiversity loss

Defined as "forces that directly influence and affect the provision of ecosystem services", are natural or anthropogenic alterations that affect the structure and function of landscapes or ecosystems, resulting in transformed or degraded areas. Some of these include wildfires, land-use changes, deforestation, overexploitation of resources, pollution, and the presence of invasive species.

#### *13.1.1.1 Underlying causes*

Are factors that originate the drivers or causes of biodiversity loss. These factors are linked to social, political, economic, technological, and cultural variables that constitute the existing relationships between natural systems and the populations that inhabit them. Examples of underlying causes include unsustainable production and consumption patterns, demographic dynamics, social inequality, lack of education and poverty, market trade, local legislations and governance systems.

The identification of drivers shall be linked to the initiative's Theory of Change or equivalent causal model, demonstrating how proposed activities are expected to address direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss.

# 14 Additionality

Initiative holders shall demonstrate that the biodiversity conservation outcomes achieved are additional, meaning that such outcomes have occurred as a direct result of the implementation of the initiative and would not have occurred in its absence.

Additionality shall be established through a qualitative and quantitative assessment that identifies and measures the causal relationship between the initiative's activities and the observed biodiversity gains. This assessment shall be based on measurable ecological and social variables, supported by verifiable data and transparent documentation.

The additionality assessment shall include, at a minimum:

(a) identification of a baseline representing the most plausible condition of the ecosystem and biodiversity in the absence of the initiative;
(b) comparison of the baseline with monitored outcomes, demonstrating measurable net gains directly attributable to the initiative;
(c) evidence that external drivers, public policies, or legally required actions do not, individually or collectively, fully explain the observed conservation outcomes; and
(d) justification of the causal mechanisms linking the initiative's activities to the verified outcomes.

Activities that are legally required or mandated by public policy shall not be considered additional.

The design and implementation of the initiative shall include at least one conservation activity described in Section 9 of this Standard and one or more specific actions that contribute directly to measurable biodiversity improvements.

The use of Landscape Management Tools (LMTs) is optional; however, it is strongly encouraged where it strengthens spatial planning, ecological connectivity, and the long-term sustainability of conservation outcomes.

Initiative holders shall document, in a transparent manner, all data, assumptions, and methodological approaches used to establish additionality.

The additionality assessment and its supporting evidence shall be reviewed during the auditing process and shall be made publicly available through the

Registry operated by Global CarbonTrace, in accordance with the transparency provisions of the BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard.

## 15 Displacement of pressures and leakage

The initiative holder shall assess the potential for displacement of activities that generate biodiversity loss from within the conservation initiative area to areas outside its geographic boundaries ("Leakage").

The assessment shall:

(a) Identify pathways through which conservation restrictions or land-use changes within the initiative area may shift human pressures (e.g., land conversion, hunting, extraction, grazing, tourism) to neighboring areas;
(b) Distinguish, where feasible, between primary leakage (local, adjacent areas) and secondary leakage (broader landscape displacement);
(c) Describe and implement mitigation measures to minimize leakage risks, including coordination with landholders, Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities, and relevant authorities;
(d) Provide indicators for monitoring leakage in subsequent monitoring periods; and
(e) Report material evidence of leakage in Monitoring Reports and apply corrective actions where necessary.

Significant unmitigated leakage shall require corrective measures and may affect the quantification or issuance of BioCredits.

## 16 Biodiversity conservation outcomes

Initiative holders shall describe and quantify the biodiversity conservation outcomes achieved through the implementation of the initiative.

Biodiversity conservation outcomes shall be expressed using scientifically robust indicators, measurable variables, and appropriate valuation approaches that capture both ecological and socio-cultural dimensions of biodiversity conservation.

The description of biodiversity conservation outcomes shall:

(a) identify the ecosystems, habitats, and species groups targeted by the initiative;

(b) present measurable outcomes consistent with the conservation activities, specific actions, and, where applicable, the Landscape Management Tools (LMTs) applied;

(c) demonstrate how the outcomes address the identified drivers of ecosystem transformation and biodiversity loss;

(d) describe how risk management measures have contributed to maintaining or improving biodiversity conditions; and

(e) demonstrate progress toward the conservation objectives defined in the initiative design and in the applicable methodology.

Biodiversity conservation outcomes shall be presented in a transparent and comparable manner, enabling verification during audits and subsequent monitoring periods.

All variables, indicators, data sources, and calculation approaches used to quantify biodiversity conservation outcomes shall be documented, justified, and made available for auditing and public disclosure in accordance with the transparency provisions of this Standard.

## 17 Risk assessment and management

Initiative holders shall employ appropriate methods to assess potential risks, both direct and indirect, including financial, human-induced, environmental, and climate-related risks, and shall define and implement risk mitigation measures within an adaptive management approach.

Adaptive management is a structured decision-making process through which conservation activities are planned, implemented, monitored, and adjusted in response to changing conditions and new information, with the objective of reducing uncertainty and improving biodiversity conservation outcomes.

The risk assessment shall incorporate social, environmental, governance, operational, and cultural risks, including potential impacts on Indigenous Peoples (IP) and Local Communities (LC). Risk identification and mitigation measures shall follow a documented due-diligence process.

This requirement is intended to complement, and not replace, the Sustainable Development Safeguards (SDSs) Tool of BioCarbon (BioCarbon

Cert, 2025). It shall apply when initiative holders identify risks associated with initiative activities that are not fully addressed by the SDSs Tool.

Risk assessment and risk management measures shall be appropriate, accurate, objective, and proportionate to the scale, scope, and context of the initiative.

# 18 Stakeholder engagement and consultation

Initiatives shall prioritize social sustainability. Accordingly, effective stakeholder engagement shall be an integral component of the design, implementation, monitoring, and permanence of biodiversity conservation initiatives.

BioCarbon policies and procedures require initiative holders to:

(a) engage with community members from the earliest stages of the initiative to understand priorities, concerns, and expectations;

(b) ensure participatory and inclusive decision-making processes;

(c) provide training, information, and resources that enable meaningful participation of stakeholders in initiative activities; and

(d) respect and incorporate local customs, traditions, and knowledge into the design and implementation of the initiative.

BioCarbon recognizes Indigenous Peoples (IP) and Local Communities (LC) as key stakeholders and stewards of nature and natural resources. Initiative holders shall recognize and value the capacities of IP and LC in biodiversity conservation and in the management of ecosystem assets and services.

## 18.1 Stakeholder identification and engagement

During the design phase, initiative holders shall conduct a comprehensive stakeholder assessment to identify all individuals, groups, and organizations that may be affected by, or have legitimate interests in, the initiative.

This assessment shall document stakeholder interests, concerns, potential influence, and expected roles, using culturally appropriate methods such as interviews, surveys, focus groups, or community meetings.

Initiative holders shall invite, at a minimum, representatives of directly affected stakeholders and relevant local authorities. All stakeholder groups, including women, men, youth, elders, and other relevant social groups, shall be provided with opportunities to submit feedback prior to finalization of the initiative design.

Initiative holders shall provide evidence that invitations were issued and that stakeholder comments were reviewed and considered. Where relevant stakeholders were not invited, initiative holders shall provide documented justification.

The results of stakeholder engagement shall inform decision-making, support the identification of potential risks and conflicts, and contribute to strategies for participation, inclusion, and information disclosure throughout the initiative lifecycle.

The scope of stakeholder engagement shall include a description of the potential positive and negative impacts of the initiative and an explanation of how stakeholder inputs were incorporated.

All stakeholder engagement activities, including methods used, inputs received, initiative holder responses, and any resulting modifications to the initiative, shall be documented in a Stakeholder Engagement Report.

This report shall be made publicly available through the Registry together with the initiative documentation, subject to applicable confidentiality requirements. Sensitive information may be redacted; however, key concerns raised and the corresponding responses shall be disclosed transparently.

Decision-making processes informed by stakeholder engagement shall also be disclosed publicly and reported periodically.

### 18.2 Consultation with Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities

Where Indigenous Peoples or Local Communities are affected or have legitimate interests, Initiative holders shall obtain Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) in accordance with applicable national legislation and internationally recognized standards, including ILO Convention No. 169 and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Initiative holders shall maintain ongoing, transparent, and culturally appropriate communication with IP, LC, and other stakeholders throughout the design, implementation, and monitoring phases of the Initiative.

Records of engagement shall include evidence of meetings, materials shared, participants, concerns raised, and responses provided.

All consultation documentation and agreements, including FPIC documentation, shall be translated into the predominant local language using qualified translators to ensure accessibility and understanding. In contexts of low literacy, initiative holders shall apply simplified language and visual tools, where culturally appropriate.

Stakeholder engagement processes shall be gender-responsive. Initiative holders shall ensure that women are meaningfully consulted and have equal opportunities to participate in decision-making. Engagement methods shall be adapted to remove barriers to participation, and gender-differentiated impacts shall be assessed and documented.

### 18.3 Grievance mechanism

During implementation, initiative holders shall establish and maintain a robust, transparent, independent, and culturally appropriate grievance mechanism.

The grievance mechanism shall:

(a) be publicly accessible and available in relevant local languages;

(b) allow confidential submission of grievances;

(c) address social, environmental, and cultural grievances, whether direct or indirect;

(d) provide accessible formats for individuals with limited literacy or digital access;

(e) include differentiated measures for vulnerable or marginalized groups;

(f) protect complainants against retaliation; and

(g) establish clear and reasonable timelines for grievance processing and resolution.

The grievance mechanism shall be reviewed at least once every three (3) years to assess effectiveness and accessibility.

Where feasible, grievances shall be resolved directly by the affected parties; where this is not possible, the mechanism shall identify an independent arbitrator or neutral third-party mediator.

The grievance mechanism shall be clearly described in each Biodiversity Initiative Agreement and shall be communicated prominently to all stakeholders, including Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.

Initiative holders shall inform stakeholders, IP, and LC of BioCarbon's Ethics and Compliance Channel, which may be used to report concerns related to consent, rights violations, contractual breaches, or other grievances.

The quality and representativeness of stakeholder engagement shall be assessed in accordance with the Sustainable Development Safeguards (SDSs) Tool, ensuring inclusive, documented, and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.

### 18.4 Consultation with stakeholders

In addition to local consultation and public comment processes, initiative holders shall identify and engage with relevant stakeholders where initiatives may have transboundary implications, involve biodiversity of global significance, or raise international interest or concern.

Relevant global stakeholders may include, inter alia, civil society organizations, international non-governmental organizations, multilateral institutions, scientific bodies, and other actors with mandates or interests related to biodiversity, climate change, human rights, or sustainable development.

In this context, initiative holders shall:

(a) conduct outreach to relevant global stakeholders during the design and implementation phases, where applicable;

(b) provide access to the initiative description and supporting documentation in English and, where appropriate, in other relevant languages;

(c) establish a clear and accessible channel, such as an online feedback form or dedicated email address, to receive comments or concerns from global stakeholders; and

(d) summarize global stakeholder engagement activities within the initiative documentation, including outreach actions undertaken, feedback received, and how such feedback was considered or addressed.

BioCarbon shall include comments received from global stakeholders during public consultation as part of the public comment section of the Registry and shall ensure that Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) evaluate the adequacy of global stakeholder engagement as part of the auditing process.

## 19 Consistency with applicable legislation

Initiative holders shall ensure that the initiative complies with all applicable national and international legislation, regulations, and legal frameworks relevant to the biodiversity conservation activities implemented within the scope of the initiative.

Legal compliance shall include, inter alia, legislation related to the protection of human rights and the rights of Indigenous Peoples (IP) and Local Communities (LC), in accordance with internationally recognized instruments such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (ILO Convention No. 169).

Initiative holders shall establish and maintain a documented procedure, as part of a Document Management System, to identify, monitor, and periodically review all applicable legal and regulatory requirements relevant to the initiative.

Accordingly, initiative holders shall maintain an up-to-date register of all legal and regulatory requirements applicable to the initiative's conservation activities.

Initiative holders shall also maintain a legal compliance register documenting all permits, licenses, land-use authorizations, and Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) records, where applicable, and shall ensure that such documentation is kept current and available for auditing.

## 20 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Initiative holders shall align the conservation activities of the initiative with at least three (3) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and shall specify how and to what extent such alignment is achieved.

Initiative holders shall assess the contribution of the initiative to the selected SDGs and, accordingly, to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by all United Nations Member States.

Such contributions shall be consistent with relevant national or subnational SDG strategies or priorities, where applicable, and shall be documented using transparent methodologies, clearly identified data sources, and verifiable indicators. Initiative holders shall ensure that such contributions are consistent with relevant national SDG strategies or priorities, where applicable, and shall document the methodologies applied, data sources used, and the manner in which results contribute to national or subnational SDG implementation efforts.

To demonstrate compliance with this requirement, initiative holders shall apply the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Tool issued by BioCarbon Cert (2023), using the relevant criteria and indicators to evidence the initiative's contribution to the selected SDGs.

The SDGs encompass fundamental rights and actions aimed at improving well-being and quality of life, including, inter alia, food security, health, education, gender equality, access to water and energy, economic growth, sustainable use of ecosystems, and peaceful and inclusive societies.

As part of the SDG assessment, initiative holders shall determine whether, and to what extent, the initiative contributes to actions such as:

(a) reducing the proportion of women, men, and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions;

(b) ensuring equal rights to economic resources and access to basic services, particularly for poor and vulnerable groups;

(c) improving agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, particularly women, Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities, family farmers, livestock keepers, and fishers;

(d) ensuring the sustainability of food production systems and applying resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity, contribute to ecosystem maintenance, and strengthen adaptive capacity;

(e) achieving universal health coverage, including financial risk protection and access to quality essential health services and medicines;

(f) reducing deaths and illnesses caused by hazardous chemicals and by air, water, and soil pollution;

(g) ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life;

(h) granting women equal rights to economic resources, financial services, and natural resources;

(i) supporting efficient water use and ensuring the sustainability of freshwater extraction and supply to address water scarcity;

(j) ensuring full and productive employment and decent work for all, including youth and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value;

(k) protecting labor rights and promoting safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers; and

(l) promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization and increasing industry's contribution to employment and economic development, in accordance with national circumstances.

Initiative holders shall define specific criteria and indicators for each initiative to continuously demonstrate compliance with the selected SDGs.

Initiative holders shall demonstrate that the initiative contributes positively to the socioeconomic context by evidencing that it:

(a) identifies and strengthens mechanisms for social and community participation at local and regional levels;

(b) implements sustainable production systems combining conservation and production actions to generate local economic development;

(c) considers pre-existing social conflicts and supports effective models for post-conflict management, where applicable;

(d) generates short- and long-term benefits for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities within the initiative area; and

(e) results in an average increase in income for local producers attributable to conservation activities.

A useful tool to identify, measure, and monitor these contributions as drivers of positive change is the Theory of Change (TOC), which describes the logical sequence of conditions and factors required to achieve the expected impact and enables the quantification of short-term effects and outcomes. Initiative holders may also apply the FSC Guidance for Demonstrating Ecosystem Services Impacts (FSC, 2018), which includes the essential elements of a TOC and a quality checklist.

## 21 Sustainable Development Safeguards (SDSs)

Initiatives shall comply with the Sustainable Development Safeguards (SDSs) Tool issued by BioCarbon Cert (2025) and shall demonstrate that initiative activities do not cause harm to communities or the environment by identifying, assessing, and addressing potential environmental and socio-economic risks and impacts.

Initiative holders shall apply the SDSs Tool and shall design and implement monitoring, preventive, mitigation, and management measures for each identified risk. Such measures shall be integrated into the initiative design and maintained throughout the full duration of the initiative.

Safeguards shall be reassessed during each monitoring cycle to ensure that risks remain adequately identified, monitored, and mitigated over time.

The SDSs Tool establishes the requirements and rules for initiatives to examine and address risks related to, inter alia:

(a) land use, including resource efficiency and pollution prevention and management;

(b) water resources;

(c) biodiversity and ecosystem protection;

(d) climate change;

(e) labor rights and working conditions;

(f) gender equality and women's empowerment;

(g) land acquisition, restrictions on land use, displacement, and involuntary resettlement;

(h) respect for human rights and inclusive stakeholder engagement;

(i) protection of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities cultural heritage;

(j) community health and safety;

(k) corruption; and

(l) economic impacts, including transparent benefit-sharing arrangements.

Gender equality and women's empowerment shall be addressed in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Sustainable Development Safeguards (SDSs) Tool. Initiative holders shall identify, assess, monitor, and report gender-related risks, mitigation measures, and indicators as part of the SDSs assessment..

Where stakeholders experience negative impacts arising from Initiative activities that cannot be fully mitigated, including impacts affecting livelihoods or access to resources, Initiative holders shall implement appropriate compensation measures. Such measures shall be developed in collaboration with affected stakeholders to ensure fair replacement of lost assets, income, or access to resources.

All losses, including those arising from customary or non-formal tenure or resource-use systems, shall be considered legitimate for the purposes of compensation. Initiative holders shall also establish and implement a remediation plan to address unresolved grievances and to support the restoration of affected stakeholders' livelihoods.

All safeguards shall be subject to independent validation and verification in accordance with the procedures and criteria established in the BioCarbon Audit Manual. Independent third-party auditors shall assess compliance through evidence-based evaluations, including stakeholder consultations, field assessments, and review of supporting documentation.

The results of such assessments shall be made publicly available in accordance with the transparency provisions of the BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard.



## 22 Climate change adaptation

Biodiversity and climate change are intrinsically interconnected. Biodiversity loss can exacerbate the impacts of climate change, while climate change can generate additional stress on ecosystems, increasing risks and threats to species and ecosystem functions. Consequently, biodiversity loss and

ecosystem transformation are closely linked to vulnerability to climate change.

In accordance with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), vulnerability is defined as the degree to which a system is susceptible to, or unable to cope with, the adverse effects of climate change, including climate variability and extreme events.

Vulnerability comprises two main components: (a) sensitivity, which reflects the degree to which a system is affected by climate stimuli, and (b) adaptive capacity, which represents the ability of the system to cope with, respond to, and recover from such impacts.

On this basis, initiative holders shall develop and implement a climate change adaptation plan directly related to the biodiversity conservation activities of the initiative. The adaptation plan shall be developed through a structured process that includes planning, assessment of potential climate-related impacts, and identification of appropriate adaptation strategies.

In this regard, initiative holders shall:

(a) identify plausible climate change risk and climate variability scenarios based on relevant and credible information sources;

(b) assess potential changes in land cover and land use resulting from identified climate change scenarios;

(c) determine whether current or projected climate changes may affect the well-being of Indigenous Peoples (IP) and Local Communities (LC) and/or the conservation status of biodiversity within the initiative area; and

(d) evaluate the contribution of the initiative's conservation activities to climate change adaptation and ecosystem resilience.

## 23 BioCredits ownership and rights

Rights associated with BioCredits include ownership and the right to benefit from their sale, as well as from any other payments, revenues, or interests derived from biodiversity conservation activities. Ownership therefore confers the right to benefit from ecosystem and biodiversity conservation outcomes.

The accreditation of ownership rights over BioCredits shall be supported by clear, transparent, and auditable documentation, including valid agreements

and evidence of processes grounded in Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) with the relevant initiative participants, which may include individuals, communities, organizations, or other entitled parties.

Initiative holders shall respect and uphold the rights of all participants to provide consent and to be consulted as part of the design and implementation of the initiative. Where initiatives are located on, or make use of, lands, territories, or resources of Indigenous Peoples (IP) or Local Communities (LC), FPIC shall be obtained and documented prior to the implementation of activities affecting such rights.

Initiative holders shall ensure that actions affecting IP or LC lands, territories, or resources respect statutory and customary land and resource rights, in accordance with applicable legislation, and shall not result in forced eviction or involuntary displacement.

Where Indigenous Peoples or Local Communities are not active participants in the initiative, initiative holders shall verify, through the competent authority the presence of IP or LC within the Initiative area and shall apply consultation or FPIC requirements, as applicable, irrespective of participation status.

FPIC shall meet or exceed the requirements of applicable national legislation and international standards protecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities. FPIC shall be treated as an ongoing process and shall be reaffirmed when material changes occur in the initiative, including changes to activities, scope, land use, governance arrangements, benefit-sharing terms, or other factors that may affect IP or LC.

The FPIC process shall follow a decision-making framework and timeline defined by the rights holders, allow participation through freely chosen representatives, and ensure the inclusion of women and marginalized, vulnerable, or disadvantaged groups.

Initiative holders shall accredit BioCredits ownership through transparent and auditable agreements that, at a minimum, include:

(a) identification of all signatory participants;

(b) objectives of the agreement;

(c) date of execution;

(d) name of the initiative;

(e) quantification period; and

(f) responsibilities, obligations, and rights of each signatory party.

Such arrangements shall also specify an accessible grievance mechanism, including procedures for raising and resolving disputes, timelines for response, and contact information for responsible entities.

Where Peoples or Local Communities are participants, initiative holders shall provide evidence that the individuals signing on their behalf possess legitimate authority to do so. Where the initiative holder is itself an IP or LC, documentation shall be issued by the appropriate representative authority.

Initiative holders shall accredit legal tenure or use rights over the area where conservation activities are implemented for at least the duration of the quantification period. Where such rights are not held directly, a valid agreement with the rights holder shall be provided.

All initiatives shall establish transparent, fair, and equitable benefit-sharing arrangements with IP, LC, and other participants. Such arrangements shall clearly define the obligations and responsibilities of all parties and shall be communicated in culturally appropriate formats, processes, and languages.

Benefit-sharing arrangements shall be developed in accordance with the principles set out in Section 6, particularly equity and justice, and shall promote continuous participation and decision-making. The resulting equitable share shall be presented to BioCarbon as a percentage (%) reflecting the outcomes of negotiations among participants.

Benefit-sharing arrangements shall be developed in accordance with the Principles set out in Section 6 of this Standard, particularly equity and justice, and shall promote continuous participation and decision-making. The resulting equitable share shall be presented to BioCarbon as a percentage (%) reflecting the outcome of negotiations among participants.

Benefit-sharing shall apply irrespective of legal, customary, communal, or collective tenure systems. All participants with legitimate interests or customary relationships to land, resources, or biodiversity assets shall be included in the benefit-sharing process.

Draft and final versions of benefit-sharing plans shall be shared with affected IP and LC as part of the stakeholder consultation process, in accessible and understandable formats. Initiative holders shall provide evidence of

dissemination, consultation records, and translations, and shall submit draft agreements to the Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) for validation and final agreements for each verification.

BioCarbon shall respect self-governance and negotiated outcomes; however, registration shall not proceed where any participant does not agree with the final benefit-sharing arrangement.

The accreditation of BioCredits ownership shall ultimately be evidenced through the Conservation Initiative Document (CID) and supporting documentation, including benefit-sharing agreements and proof that FPIC was obtained where required. Supporting documents and evidence shall be made publicly available in the CID, subject to applicable confidentiality and legal restrictions.

# 24 Transparency and public disclosure

## 24.1 General principles

The BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard (BBS) shall operate with full transparency, ensuring that all relevant documentation, procedures, decisions, and outcomes associated with biodiversity initiatives are publicly accessible.

All public claims associated with BioCredits or biodiversity conservation initiatives shall be consistent with certified outcomes and shall not imply impacts beyond those verified under this Standard.

Transparency and accountability are fundamental principles of the BBS and shall apply to all phases of the initiative lifecycle, including registration, monitoring, auditing, certification, issuance, transfer, and retirement.

All biodiversity initiatives registered under the BBS shall disclose their documentation, monitoring outcomes, and audit statements in accordance with the provisions of this Section.

All publicly disclosed documents shall include, at a minimum, a version number, date of issuance, author, approver, and a change log summarizing modifications from previous versions, in alignment with BioCarbon transparency requirements.

### 24.2 Public access to information

The BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard (BBS) shall ensure transparency and public access to all relevant information related to the certification and registration of biodiversity initiatives.

All records shall be made publicly available through the official Registry platform and the BioCarbon Standard website.

The following documents shall be published and accessible to all stakeholders:

(a) the Conservation Initiative Document (CID) or equivalent Project Document;

(b) Monitoring Reports, including all verified indicators and biodiversity conservation outcomes;

(c) Audit Reports issued by accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs);

(d) methodologies, procedures, tools, and templates applicable under the BBS; and

(e) governance decisions, procedural manuals, and policy updates relevant to the Standard.

All documents shall be made available in English and, where applicable, in the official language of the host country.

Previous versions of methodologies, tools, and standards shall remain archived and publicly accessible to ensure traceability.

Only information that is legally protected or demonstrably commercially sensitive may be withheld, in accordance with applicable confidentiality provisions and national legislation.

### 24.3 Public monitoring summaries

For each monitoring period, the initiative holder shall prepare a non-technical monitoring summary providing a clear, concise, and accessible description of the biodiversity conservation outcomes achieved.

The non-technical monitoring summary shall include, at a minimum:

(a) a concise overview of the monitoring activities conducted during the reporting period;

(b) the quantified results of verified biodiversity indicators and the number of BioCredits issued, where applicable;

(c) a summary of participation and benefit-sharing outcomes involving Indigenous Peoples (IP) and Local Communities (LC), where applicable;

(d) a description of any grievances received during the monitoring period and the actions taken to resolve them; and

(e) key lessons learned and adaptive management measures implemented.

The non-technical monitoring summary shall be publicly disclosed through the Registry together with the corresponding Monitoring Report.

The purpose of the non-technical monitoring summary is to promote transparency, stakeholder engagement, and accessibility of biodiversity information for non-specialized audiences.

### 24.4 Public consultation

All biodiversity initiatives submitted for certification and registration under the BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard (BBS) shall undergo a public consultation period of at least thirty (30) calendar days, during which any interested party may submit comments or observations.

Comments shall be submitted using the format provided through the Registry or through any additional channels established under this Standard. Initiative documentation shall be publicly accessible through the Registry for the duration of the public consultation period.

Each submission shall be duly completed and accompanied by the submitter's identifying information, including name, country, organization, and contact email address.

BioCarbon shall ensure that:

(a) all comments received are forwarded to the initiative holder and the corresponding Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) for review;

(b) the initiative holder provides responses to, or demonstrates consideration of, all relevant comments received; and

(c) the CAB assesses the adequacy of the responses and documents its assessment within the Audit Report.

At the conclusion of the public consultation period, BioCarbon shall transmit all comments received to the initiative holder. The initiative holder shall review and consider each comment individually and, where applicable, shall update the Conservation Initiative Document (CID) or Monitoring Report, or provide a justified explanation where comments are deemed not applicable.

The Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) shall verify that all information related to stakeholder and public consultation has been examined and shall include its conclusions within the validation and/or verification report.

Initiative holders shall ensure that stakeholders, including Indigenous Peoples (IP) and Local Communities (LC), where applicable, have ongoing opportunities to provide feedback and access consultation processes throughout the design, implementation, and monitoring phases of the initiative.

Public consultation aims to strengthen inclusiveness, legitimacy, transparency, and continuous improvement of biodiversity conservation and BioCredits issuance activities.

### 24.5 Transparency in methodologies and governance

All methodological documents, tools, and procedures approved under the BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard (BBS) shall be subject to public consultation prior to approval and shall be published in full upon adoption.

Published methodological documents shall include version history, date of approval, author, and applicability conditions.

BioCarbon shall ensure that:

(a) each approved methodology includes clear applicability conditions and references to peer review or expert technical review, where applicable;

(b) revised methodologies and superseded versions remain publicly accessible to ensure traceability; and

(c) governance decisions, including resolutions arising from updates to the Standard, are publicly available through the official BioCarbon website.

These transparency provisions enable comparability across biodiversity methodologies and strengthen confidence in the credibility and integrity of the governance framework of the BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard.

### 24.6 Confidentiality and commercially sensitive information

Initiative holders may classify certain information as commercially sensitive, provided that such classification is explicitly justified and demonstrably meets at least one of the following conditions:

(a) the information concerns proprietary methods, confidential business data, or intellectual property protected by law;

(b) disclosure would breach contractual, privacy, or data protection obligations; or

(c) confidentiality is required under applicable legislation.

All other information shall be presumed public by default.

BioCarbon reserves the right to reject confidentiality claims that are not adequately justified or that conflict with the transparency requirements of this Standard.

Where confidential information is withheld, initiative holders shall provide a non-confidential summary of the same content for public disclosure.

### 24.7 Further transparency measures

To enhance traceability and trust in the biodiversity crediting system under the BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard (BBS), the following additional transparency measures shall apply:

(a) publication of non-technical summaries for all registered initiatives and for all issued BioCredits;

(b) clear identification of each issuance and retirement event in the Registry, including the initiative reference, serial numbers, and dates;

(c) mechanisms for addressing erroneous issuance, reporting errors, or data inconsistencies, including public disclosure of corrective actions taken;

(d) public disclosure of any corrections, suspensions, or revocations of BioCredits, including the reasons for such actions and the corrective measures implemented;

(e) publicly accessible grievance and feedback channels enabling stakeholders to submit concerns related to the integrity, performance, or compliance of initiatives; and

(f) open access to aggregated, non-confidential data and analytical reports generated by BioCarbon to support scientific research, market integrity, and policy development.

These measures shall ensure that all registered initiatives operate under a transparent, accountable, and high-integrity framework consistent with international best practices and the objectives of this Standard.

### 24.8 Continuous improvement

BioCarbon shall periodically review and update the transparency provisions of the BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard (BBS) to reflect evolving best practices, stakeholder feedback, and relevant regulatory or market developments.

Any updates to the Standard shall be published for public consultation and shall be applied in accordance with the transition procedures defined by this Standard.

Public disclosure processes shall include mechanisms to receive, document, assess, and respond to stakeholder comments in a transparent and timely manner.

All responses to stakeholder comments shall be recorded and made publicly accessible through the Registry, in accordance with the transparency provisions of this Standard.

Updates to the Standard shall follow the transition procedures established by BioCarbon and shall be communicated publicly.

## 25 Monitoring and reporting

### 25.1 General principles

Initiative holders shall establish and implement a monitoring and reporting framework to ensure that biodiversity conservation outcomes achieved under the BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard (BBS) are measured, documented, and communicated in a consistent, accurate, and transparent manner.

Monitoring under this Standard shall be designed to ensure scientific rigor, repeatability, verifiability, transparency, and alignment with indicator quality standards, sampling design requirements, and data governance principles. All monitoring activities shall apply Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Data Sovereignty principles, where applicable.

Monitoring and reporting activities shall be designed to:

(a) quantify biodiversity conservation outcomes using the indicators and metrics defined in the applicable methodology;

(b) demonstrate progress toward the conservation objectives of the initiative;

(c) provide verifiable and auditable information to support certification and the issuance of BioCredits; and

(d) support continuous improvement and adaptive management of biodiversity conservation actions.

Monitoring outcomes shall be recorded and made available for review by accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) and BioCarbon and shall be disclosed publicly through the Registry in accordance with the transparency provisions of this Standard.

Monitoring results shall be assessed against the established biodiversity baseline.

### 25.2 Monitoring frequency and scope

Monitoring shall be conducted at regular intervals defined by the applicable methodology and by the characteristics of each biodiversity indicator.

At a minimum, initiative holders shall ensure that:

(a) monitoring is performed periodically to assess measurable changes in selected biodiversity indicators;

(b) data collection methods and sampling protocols are consistent with the approved methodology;

(c) participation of Indigenous Peoples (IP) and Local Communities (LC), where applicable, is effective, transparent, and supported by regular communication updates at least once per year during the initiative duration;

(d) the scope of monitoring covers all relevant ecological, social, and spatial components of the initiative area; and

(e) the monitoring design allows comparability across consecutive reporting periods.

Monitoring frequency shall balance scientific rigor with practicality, ensuring reliable long-term datasets while remaining cost-effective and feasible for local implementation, and shall be consistent with the risk levels identified under Section 10.8.

Monitoring frequency shall be justified based on indicator characteristics, ecosystem dynamics, and risk levels identified through the due-diligence process. Any adjustments to monitoring frequency shall require documented justification and updated monitoring approval.

### 25.3 Reporting obligations and public disclosure

Initiative holders shall prepare and submit a Monitoring Report for each monitoring period.

Each Monitoring Report shall include:

(a) a description of monitoring activities conducted, including methodologies, sampling design, and analytical approaches;

(b) quantified results for each biodiversity indicator defined under the applicable methodology;

(c) a comparison of results with previous monitoring periods, highlighting observed trends or changes;

(d) a summary of stakeholder engagement activities and benefit-sharing outcomes; and

(e) supporting evidence, datasets, maps, and spatial files required for auditing.

Metadata for all datasets, GIS files, and sampling records shall follow standardized formats and version-control procedures.

All non-confidential components of Monitoring Reports shall be made publicly available through the Registry.

Monitoring Reports shall be submitted to the accredited Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) for auditing and approval prior to the issuance of BioCredits.

A non-technical summary of each Monitoring Report shall be disclosed publicly through the Registry to ensure transparency and accessibility for non-specialized audiences.

Monitoring Reports shall follow the prescribed format and shall undergo internal quality control prior to submission to the CAB, in accordance with the criteria defined in the BioCarbon Audit Manual.

### 25.4 Participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in monitoring

Where Indigenous Peoples or Local Communities are present within the initiative area, the monitoring plan shall describe opportunities for their meaningful participation in data collection, validation, and interpretation, including the integration of traditional knowledge where appropriate and only with consent.

### 25.5 Adaptive monitoring and corrective measures

Initiative holders shall implement an adaptive monitoring system that enables the identification, documentation, and correction of any significant deviation affecting previously certified biodiversity outcomes.

Where monitoring results indicate a decline in biodiversity indicators, or where conservation outcomes differ from those reported in previous audit periods, initiative holders shall:

(a) identify the causes of the deviation, in accordance with the risk identification process established in Section 10.8;

(b) design and implement corrective or adaptive measures to restore or maintain the intended biodiversity outcomes;

(c) document such measures in the subsequent Monitoring Report or, where necessary, request an extraordinary audit; and

(d) maintain evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of corrective actions in subsequent monitoring periods.

The implementation of adaptive monitoring and corrective measures shall be carried out through meaningful consultation with affected stakeholders, including Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, and shall be reported transparently through the Registry.

This approach supports continuous improvement, accountability, and the long-term integrity of biodiversity conservation, in accordance with the principles of transparency and adaptive management defined under the BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard.

### 25.6 Records and data management

Initiative holders shall maintain complete and accurate records of all monitoring activities, datasets, and outcomes throughout the duration of the initiative.

Such records shall:

(a) be stored securely and made available for auditing at any time;

(b) include version history, timestamps, and metadata to ensure traceability and prevent unauthorized modification;

(c) be retained for a minimum period of ten (10) years after the end of the monitoring period; and

(d) be updated in each new reporting period to reflect the most recent monitoring results and corrective measures implemented.

Data and records shall be managed in accordance with the BioCarbon Data Protection Policy, applicable national regulations on information security and confidentiality, and the applicable national data protection legislation.

## 26 Auditing and certification process

Initiative holders that meet the eligibility criteria and requirements defined in Section 10 of this Standard shall undergo an independent auditing process conducted by an accredited Conformity Assessment Body (CAB).

Audits shall be evidence-based, risk-informed, impartial, and consistent across monitoring periods.

The outcomes of the audit shall constitute the basis for BioCarbon's certification decision under the BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard (BBS).

CABs shall be responsible for conducting audit activities to evaluate the initiative's conformity with the environmental, social, and technical requirements established under the BBS, the Methodological Document for Biodiversity Conservation Initiatives, and all applicable BioCarbon Tools and guidance documents, including the BioCarbon Audit Manual.

All audits shall be conducted in accordance with principles of transparency, independence, integrity, and traceability.

### 26.1 Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs)

The Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) operating under the BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard (BBS) shall demonstrate the following:

(a) a valid accreditation scope that includes biodiversity conservation evaluation activities and is maintained in good standing with the relevant accreditation body;

(b) a sufficient number of qualified professionals who demonstrate ethical conduct and independence to perform all functions required for certification and auditing activities;

(c) documented experience of appointed auditors in the evaluation of biodiversity conservation strategies and initiatives;

(d) demonstrated competence of at least one member of the audit team based on prior experience and, where applicable, formal training;

(e) technical capacity to assess the application of approved methodologies and to interpret biodiversity conservation outcomes;

(f) documented internal procedures governing the performance of CAB functions, including clear assignment of responsibilities within the organization;

(g) competence to perform functions in accordance with applicable legislation and the provisions of this Standard;

(h) demonstrated knowledge of environmental and biodiversity-related issues and effective quality management for conformity assessment;

(i) technical knowledge relevant to the monitoring of biodiversity conservation activities; and

(j) established procedures for handling complaints, appeals, and disputes.

Certification Bodies shall operate in an independent, reliable, non-discriminatory, and transparent manner and shall comply with applicable legislation and, at a minimum, the following requirements:

(a) a documented governance structure that safeguards integrity and ensures impartiality of certification and auditing activities;

(b) appropriate arrangements to protect the confidentiality of information obtained from initiative holders;

(c) absence of actual or potential conflicts of interest with initiative holders, buyers, intermediaries, or any other entities that could unduly influence audit outcomes; and

(d) provision of information to BioCarbon upon request, except where disclosure is legally restricted. Information classified as confidential shall not be disclosed without written consent of the information provider, unless disclosure is required by law. Information used to assess additionality shall not be considered confidential.

CABs shall maintain procedures to ensure that all audit activities involving data originating from Indigenous Peoples or Local Communities comply with Indigenous and Local Communities Data Sovereignty principles, including lawful authority to access, use, store, and disclose such data.

#### 26.1.1 Governance and competence of Certification Bodies

Certification Bodies operating under the BBS shall maintain robust governance structures, impartiality safeguards, and technical competence consistent with internationally recognized accreditation standards.

Accordingly, CABs shall operate in conformity with the following normative references:

(a) ISO/IEC 17065 — Conformity assessment: Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes, and services; and

(b) ISO/IEC 17029 — Conformity assessment: General principles and requirements for validation and verification bodies, applied as guidance for governance and impartiality principles.

CABs shall apply the relevant requirements of these standards, as applicable, to the auditing and certification of biodiversity conservation initiatives.

Compliance with these requirements shall be evidenced through documented procedures addressing competence, impartiality, confidentiality, independence, and ethical conduct.

CABs shall comply with the provisions of the BioCarbon Audit Manual, which establishes minimum requirements for auditor qualification, audit planning, sampling, evidence evaluation, reporting, and quality assurance.

Each CAB shall:

(a) maintain governance mechanisms to identify, analyze, and mitigate threats to impartiality and independence in decision-making;

(b) establish transparent procedures for auditor appointment, qualification, and periodic performance review;

(c) demonstrate technical competence in biodiversity and ecosystem conservation, including ecological, social, and legal aspects;

(d) implement internal quality management systems to ensure consistency, traceability, and reliability of audit outcomes;

(e) maintain valid professional liability insurance covering auditing activities under this Standard and adhere to BioCarbon's Code of Conduct; and

(f) ensure continuous training of personnel involved in auditing activities on updates to the BBS and associated methodologies, tools, and safeguards.

Audit Reports issued by CABs shall explicitly reference compliance with the BioCarbon Audit Manual and indicate the applicable accreditation scope.

BioCarbon reserves the right to review CAB documentation, performance, and audit procedures at any time to ensure continued compliance with governance and competence requirements.

CABs shall maintain a secure audit-evidence management system with documented controls for data integrity, confidentiality, retention, and versioning, including access logs and retention procedures, to ensure audit traceability and post-certification review.

### 26.2 Scope of the auditing process

Each audit shall include a comprehensive review of the initiative's design, implementation, and monitoring outcomes.

At a minimum, the audit shall assess and document the following elements:

(a) the geographic boundaries of the initiative and the delineation of the conservation area;

(b) the start date of conservation activities and evidence of effective implementation;

(c) where retroactivity is applied, verification that all retroactive periods comply with the requirements set forth in Section 10.2;

(d) the conservation activities, specific actions, and applied Landscape Management Tools (LMTs);

(e) identification of drivers of ecosystem transformation and biodiversity loss, including underlying causes;

(f) accreditation of additionality, confirming that outcomes exceed baseline conditions and are not legally required;

(g) compliance with applicable legislation and regulatory frameworks;

(h) the stakeholder consultation process and, where applicable, application of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC);

(i) direct consultations with Indigenous Peoples (IP) and Local Communities (LC), where applicable;

(j) compliance with Indigenous and Local Communities Data Sovereignty, including lawful authority to access, process, store, and disclose data originating from IP or LC territories;

(k) application of Sustainable Development Safeguards (SDSs), including social and gender-related safeguards;

(l) conservation objectives and targeted biodiversity outcomes;

(m) use of approved methodologies and procedures for the quantification of BioCredits;

(n) establishment of the biodiversity baseline and its consistency with the applied methodology;

(o) alignment of the biodiversity baseline with the quantification period and retroactivity rules set out in Section 10;

(p) contribution of the initiative to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), supported by verifiable indicators and documentation;

(q) implementation of the monitoring and reporting system, including adaptive monitoring and corrective measures, where applicable; and

(r) verification that all data, records, geospatial files, and monitoring datasets used as audit evidence comply with data-quality, metadata, and version-control requirements established under the BBS and applicable BioCarbon Tools, and that datasets used in quantification are reproducible by the CAB.

CABs shall ensure that all audit evidence, including interviews, field observations, datasets, and documentation, is securely stored, traceable, and handled in accordance with integrity principles, including protection of sensitive information and respect for Indigenous and Local Communities Data Sovereignty.

### 26.3 Certification decision

Upon completion of the audit, the CAB shall submit an Audit Report to BioCarbon documenting findings, conclusions, and recommendations regarding the initiative's conformity with the BBS.

BioCarbon shall review the Audit Report and, where all applicable requirements are met, shall issue a Certification Statement confirming that the initiative complies with the BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard and is eligible for the issuance of BioCredits.

The certification decision shall be based solely on objective evidence obtained through the audit process.

Both the Audit Report and the Certification Statement shall be made publicly available through the Registry in accordance with the transparency provisions of this Standard.

BioCarbon may request additional information or corrective actions prior to finalizing the Certification Statement where audits identify data gaps, inconsistencies, or insufficient evidence of conformity.

No Certification Statement shall be issued until all corrective actions have been satisfactorily closed.

Certification decisions relating to retroactive periods shall explicitly specify the approved retroactive start date, baseline year, and verified retroactive periods in accordance with Section 10.2.

## 27 BioCredits issuance and registry

Upon completion of the certification process and submission of the Certification Statement, BioCarbon shall review the Audit Report, Monitoring Report, and associated documentation to verify procedural and technical consistency prior to issuance.

Where the review confirms conformity with this Standard, BioCarbon shall issue a BioCredits Issuance Statement authorizing the registration and issuance of verified BioCredits corresponding to certified biodiversity conservation outcomes.

BioCredits shall be issued exclusively on an ex-post basis following verified monitoring results and certification.

BioCredits shall be issued only where:

(a) the initiative has been formally certified under the BBS and all monitoring datasets supporting issuance have passed quality control and audit procedures;

(b) the Certification Statement and Audit Report are complete and approved; and

(c) all applicable transparency and disclosure requirements have been fulfilled through the Registry.

Each BioCredits Issuance Statement shall specify the number of BioCredits authorized, the monitoring period to which they correspond, and the serial identification assigned in the Registry.

Where retroactive issuance is approved, the Issuance Statement shall also specify the retroactive start date, baseline year, and the verified retroactive periods approved under Section 10.2.

The issuance process shall conclude with the public listing of BioCredits in the Registry, including serial numbers, issuance batches, corresponding monitoring periods, and associated documentation, ensuring full traceability, transparency, and integrity.

No forward-looking claims, financial instruments, or advance purchase agreements shall be represented, marketed, or traded as issued BioCredits.

BioCarbon shall ensure that no serial number is altered, duplicated, or reassigned.

The Issuance Statement shall include a public link to the certified Monitoring Report and Audit Report available in the Registry.

Prior to issuance, BioCarbon shall verify consistency among the Monitoring Report, Audit Report, and Certification Statement, including alignment of spatial data, indicators, baselines, and quantities, ensuring that all issued BioCredits are fully traceable to verified biodiversity conservation outcomes.

### 27.1 Registry platform

BioCarbon shall maintain a public Registry for the registration of initiatives and the issuance, tracking, transfer, and retirement of BioCredits.

Each BioCredit issued shall be assigned a unique serial number recorded in the Registry.

Registry records shall be supported by secure digital infrastructure, including distributed ledger or equivalent technologies, to ensure security, transparency, and traceability.

Only initiative holders, or entities duly authorized by them, may request the registration of initiatives and initiate Registry-related procedures.

To register an initiative, initiative holders shall submit, at a minimum, the following documentation:

(a) information identifying the initiative holder and the initiative;

(b) authorization for registration and use of the Registry;

(c) the Conservation Initiative Document (CID); and

(d) the applicable Monitoring Report.

All publicly accessible Registry information shall include metadata describing data sources, monitoring periods, version history, and certification dates.

Sensitive or culturally restricted information shall be managed in accordance with applicable legislation and Indigenous and Local Communities Data Sovereignty principles.

Registry information shall be public by default, except where information is lawfully classified or restricted under applicable legislation.

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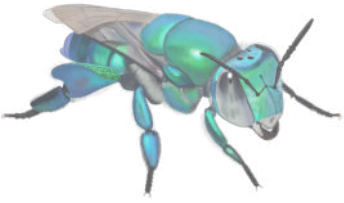

# ANNEX A. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Adaptive management**

process of iteratively planning, implementing and modifying strategies for managing resources in the face of uncertainty and change

Note 1 to entry: Adaptive management involves adjusting approaches in response to observations of their effects and changes in the system brought on by resulting feedback effects and other variables.

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

**Area of the conservation initiative (ACI)**

location with defined geographical boundaries where conservation activities may be carried out

**BioCarbon Registry (operated by Global CarbonTrace – www.globalcarbontrace.io)**

Digital platform to manage the registration, tracking, transfer, and retirement of BioCredits, ensuring traceability, transparency, and integrity.

**Benefit-sharing**

The commitment to channel some kind of returns, whether monetary or non-monetary, back to the range of designated participants; for example, sharing of benefits arising from sustainable wildlife management.

[SOURCE: SOFO, FAO, 2014 (MJ677)]

**Biodiversity conservation initiative (Initiative)**

A set of coordinated conservation activities expressly dedicated to achieving measurable outcomes related to the conservation, restoration, or sustainable use of biodiversity.

**Biodiversity conservation initiative holder (Initiative holder)**

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

**BioCredit**

Corresponds to a certified unit that represents a positive, sustainable and additional biodiversity conservation outcome that would not have occurred in the absence of the initiative. It is measured in terms of the effective reduction of threats to biodiversity, the prevention of expected losses, or the enhancement of biodiversity through specific actions designed to improve the resilience of ecosystems (Biodiversity Credit Alliance, 2024).

In the context of the BBS, biodiversity credits are referred to as BioCredits. The term BioCredit is accepted as a synonym for Voluntary Biodiversity Credit (VBC). It is a measurable, traceable and tradable unit that represents the unit of measurement related to biodiversity conservation and is quantified through the application of the set of metrics outlined in section 12 of this document (IAPB, 2024) .

Each BioCredit represents a verified biodiversity conservation outcome that has been audited and certified under the BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard.

**BioCredits Issuance Statement**

Formal declaration issued by BioCarbon authorizing the registration and issuance of BioCredits following certification.

**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.

**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.

**Community-led project**

A community-led project is an initiative in which local community members play a central role in identifying priorities, planning, decision-making, implementing, and maintaining activities or interventions. These initiatives

leverage the community's own resources and capacities, build on local strengths, and ensure accountability to the community's own vision and needs. External actors (e.g., NGOs, governments, donors) act as partners or facilitators rather than primary decision-makers.

**Conservation objects**

Conservation objects are the components of biodiversity that are considered in conservation activities and therefore included in the calculation of BioCredits. They include species or taxa such as vascular and non-vascular plants, birds, amphibians, reptiles and mammals. Functional taxa such as large herbivores or soil invertebrates may also be included. These may vary according to conservation objectives, which shall be justified by their ecological and functional relevance. The selection of conservation objects shall consider priorities and special features, such as their vulnerability status and cultural value, to ensure that their conservation contributes to the maintenance and resilience of ecosystems.

The identification of conservation objects shall be based on a diagnosis of the functional, physical and biotic components of the ecosystem, together with a baseline analysis, considering the local and regional context. It shall also include information to ensure the stability of ecosystems and the continued provision of environmental goods and services.

**Continuous community participation**

regular and ongoing involvement of community members in all phases of a project or initiative, including its design, planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and adaptive management.

Note 1 to entry: Continuous community participation requires inclusive and equitable processes that ensure all groups, particularly women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and marginalized populations, have meaningful opportunities to influence decisions.

Note 2 to entry: It relies on mechanisms for continuous dialogue, feedback, transparency, and accountability between project proponents and the community.

[SOURCES: Based on UNDP Community Participation Framework; World Bank Participation Sourcebook; FAO Guidelines on Community-Based Forestry; OECD DAC Principles; ILO Community Participation Methods.]





**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

**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 (UNFCCC, 2002).

**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.

**Indigenous and Local Communities Data Sovereignty**

rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities to govern the collection, ownership, control, access, use, and stewardship of data relating to their peoples, lands, natural resources, cultures, and knowledge systems (including Community Generated Data), ensuring that such data is managed in ways that support communities' self-determination, collective benefit, ethical use, and responsibility

Note 1 to entry: Indigenous Data Sovereignty frameworks commonly include principles such as Collective Benefit, Authority to Control, Responsibility, and Ethics (CARE Principles), as well as Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP®).

Note 2 to entry: These principles apply to biodiversity, cultural knowledge, geospatial information, and all data derived from Indigenous and Local Communities territories or knowledge systems.

[SOURCE: Global Indigenous Data Alliance (GIDA), 'CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance', 2020; First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC), 'The OCAP® Principles', 2014.]

**Indigenous Peoples (IPs)**

Are inheritors and practitioners of unique cultures and ways of relating to peoples and the environment. They have retained social, cultural, economic and political characteristics that are distinct from those of the dominant societies in which they live.

[SOURCE: Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations ]

**Local Communities (LCs)**

All land-dependent communities. While communities vary in size, identity, internal equity and land-use systems, they all share strong connections to their lands and distribute rights according to norms which they themselves devise.

[SOURCE: COMMON GROUND, Securing land rights and safeguarding the earth, Land Rights Now, ILC, OXFAM, Rights Resources and A Global Call to Action on Indigenous and Community Land Rights, 2016.]

**Metadata**

Data that provides information and context about other data. In dMRV, this includes details such as the time, date, GPS location, sensor used, and the processing method of the collected information.

**Monitoring period**

Defined interval of time during which biodiversity indicators are measured and monitored to assess conservation outcomes. Monitoring periods provide the basis for reporting, auditing, and issuance of BioCredits

**Nature-based solutions**

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (UICN) 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."

**Species**

Species are groups of individuals or natural populations that actually or potentially interbreed and are reproductively isolated from other similar groups by their physiological characteristics (producing incompatibility between parents or sterility of hybrids, or both).

**Sustainable utilization (use)**

" Sustainable use" means the use of components of biological diversity in a manner and at a rate that does not lead to the long-term decline of biological diversity, thereby maintaining the potential of biological diversity to meet the needs and aspirations of present and future generations.

# ANNEX B. NORMATIVE REFERENCES – ISO Terminology

The following terms are included for informational purposes (for reference only) to provide context on the international conformity assessment framework used as reference in the BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard (BBS).

These definitions are extracted from ISO/IEC 17000, ISO 14000, ISO 26000, and related standards and are not intended as operative terms within the BBS.

**Accreditation**

Third-party attestation related to a conformity assessment body conveying formal demonstration of its competence to carry out specific conformity assessment tasks.

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC 17000:2004, 5.6].

**Adaptation to climate change (Climate change adaptation)**

process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects

Note 1 to entry: In human systems, adaptation seeks to moderate or avoid harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.

Note 2 to entry: In some natural systems, human intervention can facilitate adjustment to expected climate and its effects. [SOURCE: ISO 14090:2019, 3.1]

**Adaptive capacity**

ability of systems, institutions, humans, and other organisms to adjust to potential damage, to take advantage of opportunities, or to respond to consequences.

Note 1 to entry: Coping capacity is defined as the ability of people, organizations, and systems, using available skills, resources, and opportunities, to address, manage, and overcome adverse conditions.

[SOURCE: ISO 14090:2019, 3.2, modified — Note 1 to entry has been added.]

**Attestation**

issue of a statement, based on a decision, that fulfilment of specified requirements has been demonstrated.

Note 1 to entry: The resulting statement, referred to in this document as a "statement of conformity", is intended to convey the assurance that the specified requirements have been fulfilled. Such an assurance does not, of itself, provide contractual or other legal guarantees.

Note 2 to entry: First-party attestation and third-party attestation are distinguished by the term's declaration, certification and accreditation, but there is no corresponding term applicable to second-party attestation.

[SOURCE:ISO/IEC 17000:2020(en), 7.3]

**Audit**

process for obtaining relevant information about an object of conformity assessment and evaluating it objectively to determine the extent to which specified requirements are fulfilled.

Note 1 to entry: The specified requirements are defined prior to performing an audit so that the relevant information can be obtained.

Note 2 to entry: Examples of objects for an audit are management systems, processes, products and services.

Note 3 to entry: For accreditation purposes, the audit process is called "assessment".

[SOURCE:ISO/IEC 17000:2020(en), 6.4]

NOTE: In the context of the BBS, audits are conducted by accredited Certification Bodies to assess the conformity of biodiversity conservation initiatives.

**Audit Report**

A report issued by an accredited Certification Body (CAB) containing the findings, conclusions, and recommendations from the audit of a biodiversity conservation initiative.

**Certification**

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

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

NOTE: In the context of BioCarbon, certification refers to the formal decision issued by BioCarbon based on the Audit Report performed by an accredited Certification Body (CAB)

**Certification body**

third-party conformity assessment body operating certification schemes

Note 1 to entry: A certification body can be non-governmental or governmental (with or without regulatory authority).

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

**Certification criteria**

set of standards, rules, or properties to which an asset shall conform in order to be certified to a certain level

Note 1 to entry: Certification criteria are defined by a certification policy. Certification criteria can be specified as a set of certification properties that shall be met.

[SOURCE ISO/IEC/IEEE 24765 :2017(en), 3.526]

**Certification statement**

Formal document issued by BioCarbon confirming that a biodiversity conservation initiative complies with the BioCarbon Biodiversity Standard and is eligible for the issuance of BioCredits.

**Conformity Assessment**

demonstration that specified requirements are fulfilled.

Note 1 to entry: The process of conformity assessment as described in the functional approach in Annex A can have a negative outcome, i.e. demonstrating that the specified requirements are not fulfilled.

Note 2 to entry: Conformity assessment includes activities defined elsewhere in this document, such as but not limited to testing, inspection, validation, verification, certification, and accreditation.

Note 3 to entry: Conformity assessment is explained in Annex A as a series of functions. Activities contributing to any of these functions can be described as conformity assessment activities.

Note 4 to entry: This document does not include a definition of “conformity”. “Conformity” does not feature in the definition of “conformity assessment”. Nor does this document address the concept of compliance.

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

**Data quality**

degree to which the characteristics of data satisfy stated and implied needs when used under specified conditions.

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC 25012:2008, definition 4.3]

**Declaration**

attestation document issued by anybody other than an independent third-party certification body.

Note 1 to entry: This definition differs from the definition of declaration in ISO/IEC 17000.

Note 2 to entry: “Body” includes any individual.

[SOURCE: ISO 22222:2005(en), 3.8]

**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]

**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.

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

**Site**

location with defined geographical boundaries and on which activities under the control of an organization may be carried out

Note 1 to entry: The geographical boundaries may be on land and in water, and include above- and below-surface structures, both natural and man-made.

[SOURCE: ISO 14015:2001(en), 2.14.]

**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]

**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]

**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.]

**Stakeholder engagement**

activity undertaken to create opportunities for dialogue between an organization and one or more of its stakeholders, with the aim of providing an informed basis for the organization's decisions

[SOURCE: ISO 26000:2010(en), 2.21]

**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.

**Uncertainty**

parameter associated with the result of quantification that characterizes the dispersion of the values that could be reasonably attributed to the quantified amount

Note 1 to entry: Uncertainty information typically specifies quantitative estimates of the likely dispersion of values and a qualitative description of the likely causes of the dispersion.

[SOURCE: ISO 14064-1:2018(en), 3.2.13]

**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*

Document type. Normative document

| Version | Date | Nature of the document |
|---|---|---|
| Version for public consultation | May 11th, 2021 | Initial version – a document submitted for public consultation |
| Version 1.0 | July 2nd, 2021 | Definitive version. No changes with respect to the former document. |
| Version 2.0 | November 15th, 2022 | Adjusted version<br>Concepts and definitions<br>Change of author to BioCarbon Registry (formerly ProClima)<br>Minor editorial changes |
| Version 3.0 | February 27th, 2024 | Adjusted version<br>Change of author to BioCarbon Cert<br>Clarifications and minor editorial changes |
| Version 3.1 | May 31st, 2024 | Adjusted version<br>Concepts and definitions<br>Minor editorial changes. |
| Version 3.2 | January 25th, 2025 | Adjusted version<br>Concepts and definitions<br>Minor editorial changes |
| Version 4.0 Public Consultation Version | January 7th, 2026 | Comprehensive revision consolidating technical and structural updates to strengthen methodological coherence, transparency, governance, biodiversity outcome integrity, and alignment with international standards, including enhancements to additionality, safeguards, stakeholder engagement, Data Sovereignty, and auditing and certification processes |