



BIOCARBON STANDARD

REDD+ SAFEGUARDS TOOL

**Project holders shall implement and maintain
safeguards to ensure the social, environmental,
governance, and climate integrity of REDD+ activities
over time**

BIOCARBON CERT[®]

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BIOCARBON CERT

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1 Introduction

This document constitutes the REDD+ Safeguards Tool of the BioCarbon Standard and establishes the applicable requirements to ensure that project-level REDD+ activities are designed, implemented, and monitored in a socially and environmentally responsible manner, as well as with due integrity in the management of risks that may affect the credibility and sustainability of mitigation outcomes.

This Tool is based on the REDD+ safeguards adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as established in paragraph 70 of Decision 1/CP.16 (Cancún), as well as on the need to ensure environmental integrity and the permanence of mitigation outcomes generated by REDD+ activities.

This Tool does not introduce new safeguards nor modify the scope or intent of existing REDD+ safeguards. Its purpose is to operationalize, at the project level, the requirements necessary to verify compliance with such safeguards and with the applicable complementary integrity provisions, through the definition of compliance requirements, verifiable evidence, risk management measures, and monitoring mechanisms consistent with the BioCarbon Standard.

For practical implementation purposes, this Tool distinguishes between:

- (i) substantive safeguards derived from Cancún, applicable to the social, environmental, and governance aspects of REDD+ activities; and
- (ii) climate integrity safeguards derived from Cancún, developed in this Tool as complementary REDD+ integrity provisions, necessary to manage reversal risks and the displacement of emissions, and to ensure the permanence and environmental integrity of mitigation outcomes.

This Tool is mandatory for all REDD+ projects seeking validation, verification, registration, or continued eligibility under the BioCarbon Standard. It shall be applied consistently with the BioCarbon Standard, applicable REDD+ methodologies, and other technical tools of the program, and its application shall be subject to independent assessment by authorized Conformity Assessment Bodies.

2 Purpose

The purpose of this Tool is to:

- (a) establish the mandatory requirements that REDD+ project holders shall comply with to demonstrate compliance with REDD+ safeguards under the BioCarbon Standard;
- (b) define the evidence required to substantiate such compliance;
- (c) enable consistent, transparent, and replicable assessment of safeguards by Conformity Assessment Bodies and BioCarbon Cert; and
- (d) strengthen the social, territorial, environmental, and governance integrity of REDD+ activities certified under the BioCarbon Standard.

3 Objectives

The objectives of this Tool are to:

- (a) operationalize the REDD+ safeguards established in Section 18 of the BCR Standard;
- (b) ensure that safeguards compliance is assessed using a structured and risk-based approach;
- (c) prevent negative impacts on Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities, and other affected stakeholders;
- (d) promote transparency, accountability, and legal certainty in the implementation of REDD+ projects; and
- (e) support the long-term environmental integrity and credibility of REDD+ mitigation outcomes.

4 Scope and applicability

This Tool applies to all project-level REDD+ activities seeking validation, verification, certification, registration, or continued eligibility under the BioCarbon Standard.

This Tool shall be applied:

- (a) during project design and documentation;

- (b) as part of validation and verification processes conducted by Conformity Assessment Bodies;
- (c) during subsequent verifications of registered projects; and
- (d) whenever risks, conflicts, or material changes related to safeguards arise during the project lifecycle.

Compliance with this Tool is mandatory and shall be demonstrated through documented evidence submitted by the project holder, in accordance with the responsibilities and declarations established in the relevant section of this document.

5 Responsibilities and declarations of the project holder and the Conformity Assessment Body

The project holder is responsible for the integrity, accuracy, completeness, and consistency of all information, analyses, documentation, and evidence submitted in the project documentation and in the reports associated with the application of this REDD+ Safeguards Tool.

In such documents, the project holder declares that:

- (a) the information provided is complete, accurate, and truthful, and adequately reflects the project's status with respect to compliance with applicable REDD+ safeguards and climate integrity safeguards;
- (b) social, environmental, governance, and climate integrity risks associated with the project have been identified and transparently disclosed;
- (c) the evidence submitted is authentic, verifiable, and has been obtained in accordance with applicable legislation and the requirements of the BioCarbon Standard; and
- (d) full responsibility is assumed for any omission, inaccuracy, or misrepresentation in the information provided.

The Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) is responsible for independently assessing compliance with REDD+ safeguards and climate integrity safeguards in the validation and verification reports prepared in connection with the application of this Tool, in accordance with the BioCarbon Standard and applicable procedures.

In such reports, the CAB declares that:

- (a) the assessment has been conducted using professional, impartial, and independent judgment;
- (b) the information and evidence submitted by the project holder have been reviewed to a sufficient and reasonable extent to support its conclusions;
- (c) its determinations are based on verifiable evidence and the consistent application of the BioCarbon Standard requirements; and
- (d) any non-conformities, conditions, or recommendations arising from the assessment process have been adequately documented.

The responsibilities of the project holder and the CAB are complementary and non-substitutable, and do not exempt either party from their obligations under the BioCarbon Standard, applicable legislation, or relevant contractual arrangements.

6 Nature of the Tool and normative hierarchy

This REDD+ Safeguards Tool is an operational compliance instrument.

It does not introduce new safeguards, but defines how compliance with existing safeguards shall be demonstrated, substantiated, and assessed.

This Tool is binding for project holders and CABs and shall be applied in conjunction with other applicable normative instruments of the BioCarbon Standard.

7 Principles governing the application of this Tool

The application of this Tool shall be guided by the following principles:

- (a) No net harm: REDD+ activities shall not result in negative impacts on communities, territories, or ecosystems;
- (b) Risk-based approach: safeguards shall be assessed proportionally to the level and nature of identified risks;
- (c) Evidence-based assessment: all claims shall be supported by verifiable and documented evidence;
- (d) Transparency and traceability: decisions and conclusions shall be traceable and auditable;

- (e) Respect for rights: human, territorial, and cultural rights shall be respected at all times; and
- (f) Continuous compliance: safeguards compliance is not static and shall be maintained throughout the project lifecycle.

8 Approach and structure of the REDD+ Safeguards Tool

This Tool applies a structured, safeguard-by-safeguard approach to demonstrate compliance with REDD+ safeguards under the BioCarbon Standard.

For each safeguard, project holders shall, in accordance with the responsibilities assumed under this document:

- (a) identify applicable safeguard requirements based on project context, scale, location, and activities;
- (b) demonstrate compliance through documented, verifiable, and traceable evidence;
- (c) identify actual or potential risks associated with each safeguard;
- (d) define and implement proportionate mitigation measures to address identified risks; and
- (e) establish monitoring, updating, and continuous compliance mechanisms over time.

Safeguards compliance shall be assessed as an integrated and continuous process, not as a one-time declaration.

8.1 Safeguard-level structure

Each REDD+ safeguard addressed in this Tool is structured using a standardized framework consisting of the following elements:

Safeguard requirement

Clear description of the safeguard obligation applicable to project-level REDD+ activities.

Compliance requirements

Definition of the substantive obligations that the project holder shall comply with for each safeguard.

Evidence to demonstrate compliance

Description of the documented and verifiable evidence that shall be submitted to substantiate compliance, in a manner proportional to the project's risk level and context.

Safeguard-related risks

Identification of typical or context-specific risks that may compromise compliance with the safeguard.

Expected mitigation measures

Examples of measures that may be implemented to prevent, reduce, or manage the identified risks.

Monitoring and updating requirements

Requirements to ensure that compliance with the safeguard is maintained and updated throughout the project lifecycle.

This structure shall be applied consistently across all safeguards addressed in this Tool.

8.2 Evidence-based and proportional assessment

Safeguards compliance shall be assessed in accordance with the principle of proportionality, considering:

- (a) the nature and scale of project activities;
- (b) the presence of Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities, or other affected stakeholders;
- (c) land tenure complexity and territorial governance conditions;
- (d) historical, social, environmental, and legal context; and
- (e) identified risks and potential impacts.

The type, depth, and volume of evidence required shall be proportional to the level of safeguard-related risk. Projects presenting higher risks shall be subject to enhanced documentation and justification requirements.

The absence of evidence, inconsistent documentation, or purely descriptive statements shall not be considered sufficient to demonstrate compliance.

8.3 Identification and treatment of safeguard-related risks

Project holders shall identify, document, and assess safeguard-related risks, including but not limited to:

- (a) risks to land tenure security or customary rights;
- (b) risks of inadequate participation or representation of affected stakeholders;
- (c) risks related to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) processes;
- (d) risks of social conflict, exclusion, or inequitable benefit distribution;
- (e) risks of environmental harm, degradation, or indirect impacts; and
- (f) risks related to governance, transparency, or accountability failures.

Identified risks shall be accompanied by clearly defined mitigation measures, responsibilities, timelines, and monitoring arrangements.

Failure to identify or address material safeguard-related risks may constitute non-compliance with this Tool.

8.4 Continuous compliance and updates

Safeguards compliance shall be maintained throughout the entire project lifecycle.

Project holders shall:

- (a) update safeguard-related information when material changes occur;
- (b) reassess risks and mitigation measures during subsequent verification cycles;
- (c) document any changes affecting safeguards compliance; and
- (d) ensure coherence between safeguard documentation and other project documents.

Safeguards compliance shall be subject to independent validation and verification in accordance with applicable BioCarbon procedures.

9 REDD+ safeguards requirements

9.1 General considerations

This section sets out the mandatory REDD+ safeguards requirements applicable to project-level REDD+ activities under the BioCarbon Standard.

Project holders shall demonstrate compliance with each safeguard through documented, verifiable, and context-specific evidence, in accordance with the structure and approach defined in Section 8 of this Tool.

Safeguards shall be interpreted and applied in a manner consistent with the national legal, institutional, and socio-environmental context of the host country, without lowering the level of protection required by the BioCarbon Standard.

9.2 Safeguards framework and structure

The REDD+ safeguards addressed in this section correspond to the substantive social, environmental, and governance safeguards derived from paragraph 70 (a) to (e) of Decision 1/CP.16 (Cancún).

For the purposes of this Tool, these safeguards are organized into the following categories:

Safeguard A – Consistency with national forest policies and legal frameworks

Safeguard B – Transparent and effective forest governance

Safeguard C – Respect for the rights, knowledge, and practices of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities

Safeguard D – Full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders

Safeguard E – Conservation of natural forests, biodiversity, and ecosystem services

Each safeguard is assessed using the standardized structure defined in Section 8.1 of this Tool.

Safeguards related to reversal risks and displacement of emissions (leakage), corresponding to paragraph 70 (f) and (g) of Decision 1/CP.16, are addressed separately as climate integrity safeguards in Section 11 of this Tool, in accordance with their distinct operational nature.

9.3 Evidence of compliance

For each safeguard, project holders shall:

- (a) Clearly describe how the safeguard is applicable to the project context;
- (b) Identify relevant risks and potential impacts;
- (c) Provide documented evidence demonstrating compliance;
- (d) Describe mitigation or management measures where risks are identified; and
- (e) Ensure that safeguards compliance is maintained throughout the project lifecycle.

Declarative statements without supporting evidence shall not be considered sufficient.

9.4 Assessment by Conformity Assessment Bodies

Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) shall independently assess compliance with each REDD+ safeguard during validation and verification.

The assessment shall be:

- (a) Evidence-based;
- (b) Proportionate to the level of risk;
- (c) Consistent across projects and contexts; and
- (d) Fully documented in validation and verification outputs.

Any identified non-compliance or weakness shall be addressed in accordance with BioCarbon procedures.

10 Social, Environmental and Governance Safeguards

This section establishes the applicable framework to ensure that REDD+ activities certified under the BioCarbon Standard are designed and implemented in a socially and environmentally responsible manner, in coherence with the principles of governance, rights, and conservation set out in the Cancun Safeguards.

The REDD+ safeguards adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as established in paragraph 70 of Decision 1/CP.16 (Cancún),

constitute the normative basis of this section. These safeguards address fundamental aspects related to consistency with national forest policies and programs, forest governance, respect for the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, the full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, and the conservation of natural forests, biodiversity, and ecosystem services.

For the purposes of project-level implementation, and in accordance with operational and regulatory practice, the Cancun Safeguards are addressed in this Tool through five substantive safeguards, set out in Sections 10.1 to 10.5, which coherently integrate the elements contained in subparagraphs (a) to (e) of paragraph 70 of Decision 1/CP.16. These safeguards relate respectively to:

- (i) consistency with national forest policies and legal frameworks;
- (ii) transparent and effective forest governance;
- (iii) respect for the rights, knowledge, and practices of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, including their full and effective participation;
- (iv) informed participation of relevant stakeholders; and
- (v) conservation of natural forests, biodiversity, and ecosystem services.

10.1 Safeguard A. Consistency with national forest policies and legal frameworks

10.1.1 Safeguard requirement

REDD+ project activities shall be consistent with, and not contrary to, applicable national forest policies, legal frameworks, and other relevant laws and regulations of the host country.

Project activities shall complement, reinforce, or be compatible with national objectives related to forest conservation, sustainable forest management, climate change mitigation, biodiversity protection, and land-use governance.

10.1.2 Compliance requirements

The project holder shall demonstrate that:

- (a) The project has been designed and implemented in alignment with the applicable national forest policy framework and relevant sectoral regulations;

- (b) Project activities do not conflict with legally established land-use designations, forest management regimes, or conservation objectives;
- (c) Where applicable, the project contributes positively to the achievement of national forest, climate, or conservation objectives; and
- (d) Any applicable legal requirements, permits, authorizations, or approvals required for the implementation of project activities have been identified and complied with.

10.1.3 Evidence to demonstrate compliance

At a minimum, the project holder shall provide documented evidence including, as applicable:

- (a) A documented analysis of applicable national forest policies, strategies, and legal instruments relevant to the project area and activities;
- (b) A legal or regulatory matrix identifying applicable laws, regulations, and institutional authorities;
- (c) Evidence demonstrating compatibility between project activities and applicable land-use and forest management frameworks;
- (d) Copies or references to relevant permits, licenses, approvals, or official authorizations, where required; and
- (e) Spatial or documentary evidence demonstrating that project activities are not implemented in legally restricted or incompatible areas.

10.1.4 Safeguard-related risks

Typical risks related to this safeguard may include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Inconsistencies between project activities and national forest or land-use policies;
- (b) Implementation of activities in areas subject to legal restrictions or incompatible land-use designations;
- (c) Incomplete or outdated identification of applicable legal requirements;
- (d) Lack of clarity regarding institutional competencies or overlapping authorities; and
- (e) Changes in national legal or policy frameworks affecting project compliance.

10.1.5 Expected mitigation measures

Where risks are identified, the project holder shall implement proportionate mitigation measures, which may include:

- (a) Updating the legal and policy analysis throughout the project lifecycle;
- (b) Engaging with competent national or local authorities to clarify applicable requirements;
- (c) Adjusting project activities to ensure ongoing legal and policy compatibility; and
- (d) Documenting decisions and actions taken to address identified inconsistencies or risks.

10.1.6 Monitoring and updates

The project holder shall monitor compliance with this safeguard on an ongoing basis and update the relevant documentation when:

- (a) Project activities are modified;
- (b) Applicable legal or policy frameworks change; or
- (c) New risks related to legal or policy consistency are identified.

Compliance with this safeguard shall be reassessed during each verification.

10.2 Safeguard B. Transparent and effective forest governance

10.2.1 Safeguard requirement

REDD+ project activities shall be implemented under transparent, accountable, and effective forest governance arrangements, consistent with applicable national legal and institutional frameworks.

Project activities shall promote transparency in decision-making, access to relevant information for affected stakeholders, and the existence of effective mechanisms to address complaints, grievances, or disputes related to the project.

10.2.2 Compliance requirements

The project holder shall demonstrate that:

- (a) transparent governance arrangements are in place for the design, implementation, and monitoring of the project;

- (b) relevant information related to the project's objectives, activities, impacts, and safeguards is accessible to affected stakeholders in an appropriate and timely manner;
- (c) project-related decision-making processes are documented, traceable, and consistent with applicable governance frameworks;
- (d) effective and operational grievance, complaints, or feedback mechanisms are in place throughout the project lifecycle; and
- (e) project governance arrangements respect existing local, community, or customary governance structures, where applicable.

10.2.3 Evidence to demonstrate compliance

The project holder shall provide documented and verifiable evidence demonstrating compliance with this safeguard, including, as applicable:

- (a) documentation describing the project's governance structure, roles, and responsibilities;
- (b) records demonstrating how relevant project information is disclosed and communicated to affected stakeholders;
- (c) evidence of stakeholder access to information, including culturally appropriate formats and channels, where relevant;
- (d) documentation of grievance, complaints, or feedback mechanisms, including procedures, records of submissions, and responses provided; and
- (e) evidence demonstrating recognition and respect of applicable local or community governance arrangements.

10.2.4 Safeguard-related risks

Typical risks associated with this safeguard may include, among others:

- (a) limited transparency in project decision-making or information disclosure;
- (b) restricted or ineffective access to project information by affected stakeholders;
- (c) absence or ineffective operation of grievance or complaints mechanisms;
- (d) governance arrangements that weaken or disregard legitimate local or community structures; and

(e) insufficient documentation or traceability of governance-related decisions.

10.2.5 Expected mitigation measures

Where risks are identified, the project holder shall implement proportionate mitigation measures, which may include:

- (a) strengthening transparency and disclosure procedures;
- (b) improving access to project information, including language, format, and communication channels;
- (c) establishing or strengthening grievance and feedback mechanisms and ensuring their effective operation;
- (d) reinforcing alignment with legitimate local or community governance arrangements; and
- (e) documenting and periodically reviewing governance-related decisions and processes.

10.2.6 Monitoring and updates

The project holder shall continuously monitor compliance with this safeguard and update the relevant documentation when:

- (a) governance arrangements or decision-making processes are modified;
- (b) new stakeholders or governance-related risks are identified; or
- (c) grievances, complaints, or material governance issues arise.

Compliance with this safeguard shall be reassessed during each verification.

10.3 Safeguard C. Respect for the rights, knowledge, and practices of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities

10.3.1 Safeguard requirement

REDD+ project activities shall fully respect the human, territorial, cultural, and collective rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities present within the project area and its zone of influence, in accordance with applicable national legislation and existing rights protection frameworks.

Project activities shall recognize, respect, and, where appropriate, integrate the traditional knowledge, customary practices, and governance and land-use systems of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.

10.3.2 Compliance requirements

The project holder shall demonstrate that:

- (a) Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities present within the project area and its zone of influence have been fully and accurately identified;
- (b) the territorial, cultural, social, and economic rights of such communities, including customary rights where applicable, are recognized and respected;
- (c) relevant traditional knowledge and local practices have been appropriately considered in the design and implementation of the project;
- (d) project activities do not result in significant adverse impacts on livelihoods, cultural practices, or the social integrity of the communities; and
- (e) appropriate mechanisms are in place to prevent, identify, and manage risks related to rights violations or community conflicts.

10.3.3 Evidence to demonstrate compliance

The project holder shall provide documented and verifiable evidence demonstrating compliance with this safeguard, including, as applicable:

- (a) documentation identifying Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities present within the project area and its zone of influence;
- (b) evidence of recognition of territorial, customary, or land-use rights, in accordance with applicable national regulations;
- (c) records demonstrating how traditional knowledge and local practices have been considered in project design;
- (d) evidence that project activities are implemented in a manner compatible with local livelihoods and cultural practices; and
- (e) documentation of measures adopted to prevent or manage risks related to rights impacts or community conflicts.

10.3.4 Safeguard-related risks

Typical risks associated with this safeguard may include, among others:

- (a) incomplete or inadequate identification of Indigenous Peoples or Local Communities;

- (b) failure to recognize or respect territorial, customary, or cultural rights;
- (c) inappropriate or unauthorized use of traditional knowledge;
- (d) negative impacts on livelihoods, social cohesion, or cultural practices; and
- (e) community conflicts arising from project implementation.

10.3.5 Expected mitigation measures

Where risks are identified, the project holder shall implement proportionate mitigation measures, which may include:

- (a) strengthening community identification and characterization processes;
- (b) adjusting project design or implementation to avoid adverse impacts;
- (c) establishing or reinforcing measures to protect traditional knowledge;
- (d) implementing specific actions to prevent or manage community conflicts; and
- (e) documenting and periodically reviewing the measures adopted.

10.3.6 Monitoring and updates

The project holder shall continuously monitor compliance with this safeguard and update the relevant documentation when:

- (a) new communities are identified or changes in community composition occur;
- (b) project activities are modified with potential implications for rights or local practices; or
- (c) risks, grievances, or conflicts related to the rights of Indigenous Peoples or Local Communities arise.

Compliance with this safeguard shall be reassessed during each verification.

10.4 Safeguard D. Full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders

10.4.1 Safeguard requirement

REDD+ project activities shall ensure the full, effective, informed, and culturally appropriate participation of relevant stakeholders, including Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities potentially affected by the project.

Where applicable under national legislation and the project context, REDD+ activities shall obtain Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), acquired in a valid, documented, and verifiable manner, prior to the implementation of activities that may affect rights, territories, livelihoods, or cultural practices.

10.4.2 Compliance requirements

The project holder shall demonstrate that:

- (a) relevant stakeholders and potentially affected communities have been adequately identified;
- (b) early, inclusive, and continuous participation processes have been implemented throughout project design, implementation, and monitoring;
- (c) relevant project information has been provided in a timely, understandable, and culturally appropriate manner;
- (d) where applicable, the FPIC process has been conducted in accordance with legal requirements and applicable rights protection standards; and
- (e) decisions resulting from participation and FPIC processes have been respected and incorporated into project design and implementation.

10.4.3 Evidence to demonstrate compliance

The project holder shall provide documented and verifiable evidence demonstrating compliance with this safeguard, including, as applicable:

- (a) records identifying relevant stakeholders and potentially affected communities;
- (b) documentation of participation processes, including invitations, agendas, meeting minutes, attendance lists, and informational materials;
- (c) evidence that information was provided in culturally appropriate languages, formats, and channels;
- (d) complete documentation of the FPIC process, including decisions adopted, conditions established, and updates where applicable; and
- (e) evidence demonstrating consistency between FPIC outcomes, community agreements, and implemented project activities.

10.4.4 Safeguard-related risks

Typical risks associated with this safeguard may include, among others:

- (a) late, incomplete, or purely formal participation processes;
- (b) exclusion of vulnerable groups or relevant stakeholders;
- (c) insufficient, inadequate, or culturally inappropriate information provision;
- (d) invalid, incomplete, or outdated FPIC processes; and
- (e) conflicts arising from the failure to respect community decisions.

10.4.5 Expected mitigation measures

Where risks are identified, the project holder shall implement proportionate mitigation measures, which may include:

- (a) strengthening or repeating participation processes where gaps are identified;
- (b) adjusting communication mechanisms to ensure understanding and accessibility;
- (c) updating or complementing FPIC processes where necessary;
- (d) implementing specific measures to ensure inclusion of vulnerable groups; and
- (e) transparently documenting decisions and adjustments made.

10.4.6 Monitoring and updates

The project holder shall continuously monitor compliance with this safeguard and update the relevant documentation when:

- (a) relevant changes are introduced in project design or implementation;
- (b) new relevant stakeholders or participation-related risks are identified; or
- (c) grievances, disputes, or conflicts related to participation or FPIC processes arise.

Compliance with this safeguard shall be reassessed during each verification.

10.5 Safeguard E. Conservation of natural forests, biodiversity, and ecosystem services

10.5.1 Safeguard requirement

REDD+ project activities shall conserve natural forests and avoid the conversion of natural ecosystems, as well as prevent significant negative impacts on biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Project activities shall be designed and implemented in a manner that maintains or enhances the ecological integrity of the project area and its zone of influence.

10.5.2 Compliance requirements

The project holder shall demonstrate that:

- (a) project activities do not involve the conversion of natural forests or other natural ecosystems;
- (b) relevant biodiversity values and ecosystem services present within the project area have been identified;
- (c) risks of direct or indirect negative impacts on biodiversity have been assessed and managed;
- (d) project activities are consistent with conservation and sustainable land management objectives; and
- (e) measures are in place to prevent, minimize, or manage adverse environmental impacts.

10.5.3 Evidence to demonstrate compliance

The project holder shall provide documented and verifiable evidence demonstrating compliance with this safeguard, including, as applicable:

- (a) cartographic and geospatial information demonstrating the conservation of natural forests;
- (b) environmental studies, assessments, or diagnostics relevant to the project area;
- (c) evidence of identification and management of risks to biodiversity and ecosystem services;

- (d) documentation of measures implemented to avoid or mitigate environmental impacts; and
- (e) relevant environmental monitoring records.

10.5.4 Safeguard-related risks

Risks associated with this safeguard may include, among others:

- (a) unintended conversion of natural ecosystems;
- (b) indirect or cumulative impacts on biodiversity;
- (c) insufficient identification of conservation values;
- (d) inadequate implementation of mitigation measures; and
- (e) external pressures affecting the ecological integrity of the project area.

10.5.5 Expected mitigation measures

Where risks are identified, the project holder shall implement proportionate measures, which may include:

- (a) adjustments to the design or location of activities;
- (b) protection, restoration, or adaptive management measures;
- (c) reinforcement of conservation and control actions; and
- (d) documentation and periodic review of measures implemented.

10.5.6 Monitoring and updates

The project holder shall continuously monitor compliance with this safeguard and update relevant information when:

- (a) project activities are modified;
- (b) new environmental risks are identified; or
- (c) relevant changes in ecological conditions within the project area are detected.

Compliance with this safeguard shall be reassessed during each verification.

11 Climate integrity safeguards

The provisions set out in this section are based on subparagraphs (f) and (g) of paragraph 70 of Decision 1/CP.16 (Cancún), which form part of the Cancún Safeguards.

However, these subparagraphs correspond to safeguards of a different nature from those related to the social, environmental, and governance aspects developed in Section 9. While Safeguards 10.1 to 10.5 focus on the protection of rights, participation, forest governance, and ecosystem conservation, subparagraphs (f) and (g) refer to climate integrity safeguards, aimed at ensuring the permanence of mitigation outcomes and preventing the displacement of emissions.

In light of this substantive difference, safeguards related to reversals and displacement of emissions are developed in this section through a differentiated approach, without undermining their status as Cancún Safeguards or affecting their mandatory nature under the BioCarbon Standard.

The provisions of this section complement, but do not replace or limit, compliance with the REDD+ Safeguards set out in Section 9 and shall be applied in a manner consistent with applicable REDD+ methodologies, the technical tools of the BioCarbon Standard, and the corresponding validation and verification processes.

11.1 Management of reversal risks

REDD+ activities shall identify, assess, and manage reversal risks that may affect the permanence of mitigation outcomes and the associated social and environmental benefits of the project.

The project holder shall:

- (a) identify reversal risks relevant to the project context, including social, institutional, territorial, environmental, and governance-related risks;
- (b) assess potential causes of reversals and their likelihood of occurrence;
- (c) define and implement proportionate measures to prevent, reduce, or manage identified reversal risks;
- (d) integrate reversal risk management into project planning, implementation, and monitoring; and

- (e) establish response and adaptation mechanisms in the event of reversal occurrences.

The project holder shall provide documented and verifiable evidence demonstrating compliance with these provisions, including, as applicable: reversal risk assessments; documentation of preventive and risk management measures implemented; evidence of integration of reversal risk management into project instruments; monitoring records of conditions relevant to permanence; and documented procedures for responding to reversal events.

Reversal risk management shall be continuously monitored and reassessed during each verification.

11.2 Management of displacement of emissions (leakage)

REDD+ activities shall identify and manage the risks of displacement of emissions that may arise as a direct or indirect consequence of project implementation.

The project holder shall:

- (a) identify potential sources and causes of displacement of emissions associated with project activities;
- (b) assess the likelihood and potential magnitude of displacement of emissions;
- (c) define and implement measures to prevent, reduce, or manage identified displacement of emissions;
- (d) integrate leakage management into project planning and monitoring; and
- (e) establish mechanisms for tracking and adjusting the measures adopted.

The project holder shall provide documented and verifiable evidence demonstrating compliance with these provisions, including, as applicable: leakage analyses; documentation of prevention and mitigation measures; evidence of integration of leakage management into project instruments; and relevant monitoring records.

Displacement of emissions management shall be continuously monitored and reassessed during each verification.

12 Evidence, traceability, and documentary coherence

The application of this Tool is based on the principle of verifiable, traceable, and coherent evidence. Compliance with REDD+ safeguards and climate integrity safeguards shall be demonstrated through documentation consistent across all project and program instruments.

12.1 Mandatory documentary coherence

The project holder shall ensure full and verifiable coherence, at a minimum, between the following documents and instruments:

- (a) the current Project Document (PD);
- (b) this REDD+ Safeguards Tool;
- (c) the Sustainable Development Safeguards Tool (SDS Tool);
- (d) documentation related to stakeholder engagement, consultation, and FPIC, where applicable;
- (e) community, contractual, and governance agreements associated with the project; and
- (f) validation and verification reports prepared by the CAB.

A safeguard shall not be considered complied with where material contradictions, unjustified inconsistencies, or substantive misalignments exist between these documents.

12.2 Version control and temporal consistency

The project holder shall implement adequate version control to:

- (a) clearly identify the current version of each document;
- (b) track substantive modifications made throughout the project lifecycle; and
- (c) ensure that updates made to one instrument are coherently reflected in the other applicable documents.

The versions used for validation or verification shall be explicitly identified in the corresponding reports.

12.3 Updates and material changes

Where material changes occur in the project design, its social, territorial, environmental, or governance context, or in safeguard-related risks, the project holder shall:

- (a) update the relevant information and evidence;
- (b) clearly document the nature of the change; and
- (c) reflect such changes in the applicable instruments prior to the next verification.

13 Critical conditions of non-compliance

Certain conditions, by their nature and severity, prevent the demonstration of compliance with REDD+ safeguards or climate integrity safeguards and shall be treated as critical non-compliance conditions.

For the purposes of this Tool, such conditions include, among others, unresolved territorial overlaps, whether with other mitigation projects or with areas subject to special management, protection, or restriction regimes, as well as the existence of significant reputational risks, such as public controversies, documented allegations, or background issues that may affect the integrity, credibility, or eligibility of the project under the BioCarbon Standard.

13.1 Nature of critical conditions

Critical conditions of non-compliance shall include, among others:

- (a) the total absence or invalidity of Free, Prior and Informed Consent where applicable;
- (b) serious and documented violations of the rights of Indigenous Peoples or Local Communities;
- (c) unresolved territorial or tenure conflicts directly affecting the project area;
- (d) evidence of conversion of natural forests or severe unmitigated environmental impacts;
- (e) material inconsistencies between project documents affecting the integrity of the assessment; and
- (f) relevant omissions, misrepresentations, or falsifications in the information submitted.

13.2 Effects of critical conditions

The identification of a critical non-compliance condition may result in:

- (a) suspension of the certification process;
- (b) the requirement to implement corrective actions prior to any decision; or
- (c) project ineligibility, where the condition is not remediable.

The assessment of such conditions shall be explicitly documented by the CAB and considered by BioCarbon Cert in decision-making.

14 Articulation with the CAB and other BioCarbon Standard tools

This Tool shall be applied in an integrated manner with other tools and procedures of the BioCarbon Standard, as well as with the work of the Conformity Assessment Body.

14.1 Articulation with the CAB

The CAB shall use this Tool as a mandatory reference to:

- (a) assess compliance with REDD+ safeguards;
- (b) verify the sufficiency and coherence of the evidence submitted; and
- (c) document findings, non-conformities, and conclusions in validation and verification reports.

14.2 Articulation with other tools

The application of this Tool shall be coherent and consistent with:

- (a) the SDS Tool, for the identification and management of social and environmental risks;
- (b) the MRV Tool, with respect to indicators, monitoring, and verification;
- (c) the Permanence Tool, for the management of reversal risks; and
- (d) the ADC Tool, for the prevention of double counting and territorial and accounting coherence.

No tool shall be applied in isolation; results shall be mutually consistent.

15 Transition regime

15.1 New projects

All REDD+ projects entering the BioCarbon Standard as of the effective date of this Tool shall apply it in full from the design phase.

15.2 Projects in progress

Projects undergoing validation or verification as of the effective date of this Tool shall apply it immediately.

Where field work or information collection for validation or verification was initiated prior to the effective date of this Tool, previously completed activities shall not be required to be repeated, provided they were conducted in good faith and in accordance with the requirements applicable at the time.

However, prior to any validation, verification, registration, or continued eligibility decision, the project holder shall demonstrate full compliance with this Tool, including the identification, documentation, and closure of any gaps identified with respect to its requirements.

Failure to demonstrate such compliance may result in suspension of the process, the requirement to implement corrective actions, or project ineligibility, as applicable.

15.3 Future verifications

All verifications conducted after the effective date of this Tool shall be carried out in accordance with the version in force at the time.

16 Entry into force and versions

This Tool shall enter into force on the date of its official publication by BioCarbon Cert.

This Tool may be updated periodically. The applicable version shall be the one in force at the start of the relevant validation or verification process, unless otherwise expressly stated.

All historical versions shall be retained for reference and traceability purposes.

Document History

Version	Date	Description
Version 1.0	February 22, 2022	Previous versions of the Program's REDD+ Safeguards Tool. These versions establish the initial framework for the identification and assessment of compliance with REDD+ safeguards at the project level.
Version 1.1	January 26, 2023	
Version 1.2	September 2, 2024	
Draft for public consultation of version 2.0	December 29, 2025	<p>Draft for public consultation of version 2.0 of the BioCarbon Standard REDD+ Safeguards Tool.</p> <p>This version proposes a comprehensive review and full restructuring of the Tool and: (i) explicitly aligns the Tool with the Cancun Safeguards established in paragraph 70 of Decision 1/CP.16; (ii) distinguishes between social, environmental, and governance safeguards and climate integrity safeguards, recognizing that all form part of the Cancun Safeguards but respond to different operational natures; (iii) introduces strengthened requirements for evidence, traceability, and documentary coherence; (iv) incorporates specific provisions on the responsibilities and declarations of the project holder and the Conformity Assessment Body in the documents and reports associated with the application of this Tool; (v) establishes a clear transition regime for new and ongoing projects, with immediate application and without improper retroactivity; and (vi) consolidates criteria on critical conditions of non-compliance,</p>

Version	Date	Description
		articulation with other BioCarbon Standard tools, and version control.

Note: This version corresponds to a draft for public consultation. Comments received during the consultation process may result in additional adjustments prior to the publication of the final version v2.0. The final version will be formally adopted and officially published by BioCarbon Cert together with its effective date.