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# Third Edition Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards

Version 3.1



# Table of Contents

1	INTRODUCTION .....	3
1.1	Justification for the CCB Program .....	3
1.2	The Role of the CCB Program .....	5
1.3	Reflection of UNFCCC safeguards for REDD+ in CCB Standards.....	6
1.4	REDD+ Social & Environmental Standards (REDD+ SES) and CCB Standards .....	7
1.5	Validation and Verification using the CCB Standards .....	8
2	GENERAL.....	10
G1.	Project Goals, Design and Long-term Viability .....	10
G2.	Without-project Land Use Scenario and Additionality.....	14
G3.	Stakeholder Engagement.....	16
G4.	Management Capacity .....	20
G5.	Legal Status and Property Rights .....	21
3	CLIMATE.....	25
CL1.	Without-Project Climate Scenario .....	25
CL2.	Net Positive Climate Impacts .....	27
CL3.	Offsite Climate Impacts (Leakage) .....	29
CL4.	Climate Impact Monitoring.....	30
GL1.	Climate Change Adaptation Benefits .....	31
4	COMMUNITY.....	33
CM1.	Without-Project Community Scenario .....	33
CM2.	Net Positive Community Impacts .....	35
CM3.	Other Stakeholder Impacts.....	37

CM 4. Community Impact Monitoring.....	38
GL2. Exceptional Community Benefits .....	39
<b>5 BIODIVERSITY .....</b>	<b>41</b>
B1. Biodiversity Without–project Scenario .....	41
B2. Net Positive Biodiversity Impacts .....	43
B3. Offsite Biodiversity Impacts .....	45
B4. Biodiversity Impact Monitoring.....	46
GL3. Exceptional Biodiversity Benefits .....	47
<b>6 GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CCB STANDARDS .....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1: DOCUMENT HISTORY .....</b>	<b>52</b>

# 1 | Introduction

## 1.1 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE CCB PROGRAM

The *Climate, Community & Biodiversity (CCB) Standards* and the rules and requirements that operationalize them (collectively referred to as the CCB Program) were created to foster the development and marketing of projects that deliver credible and significant climate, community and biodiversity benefits in an integrated, sustainable manner. Projects<sup>1</sup> that meet the Standards adopt best practices to deliver net positive benefits for climate change mitigation<sup>2</sup>, for local communities and for biodiversity.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Fourth Assessment Report<sup>3</sup> documents the dramatic effects of human-induced climate change on ecosystems<sup>4</sup>, productivity and the global economy. These impacts, which are expected to worsen in the coming decades, will fall disproportionately on the world's most vulnerable people and ecosystems. Vulnerable communities often rely on natural resources but lack the reserves and capacity to cope with changes in their environment. Meanwhile, the ongoing losses of biological diversity threaten the ecosystems upon which all life depends.

Land use change is a major part of humans' impact on the world's climate. Greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation, agriculture and other land use conversion activities are responsible for just under a quarter of total human emissions.<sup>5</sup> Population growth and economic development – and the inability of institutions to ensure adequate governance and safeguards – are the primary drivers of these significant and widespread impacts.

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<sup>1</sup> A 'project' is defined as a set of actions or activities applied to a defined geographical area for specific purposes

<sup>2</sup> Climate change mitigation is the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to achieve stabilization of GHG concentrations in the atmosphere and subsequently a cessation of further climate change.

<sup>3</sup> IPCC, 2007. *Climate Change 2007: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* [Core Writing Team, Pachauri, R.K and Reisinger, A. (eds.)]. IPCC, Geneva, Switzerland, 104 pp.

<sup>4</sup> An 'ecosystem' is a dynamic complex of plant, animal and micro-organism communities and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit (1992, United Nations. Convention on Biological Diversity, Article 2. Rio de Janeiro (available at: [https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/1992/06/19920605%2008-44%20PM/Ch\\_XXVII\\_08p.pdf](https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/1992/06/19920605%2008-44%20PM/Ch_XXVII_08p.pdf))).

<sup>5</sup> Smith P., M. Bustamante, H. Ahammad, H. Clark, H. Dong, E.A. Elsiddig, H. Haberl, R. Harper, J. House, M. Jafari, O. Masera, C. Mbow, N.H. Ravindranath, C.W. Rice, C. Robledo Abad, A. Romanovskaya, F. Sperling and F. Tubiello, 2014: Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU). In: IPCC, 2014: *Climate Change 2014: Mitigation of Climate Change. Contribution of Working Group III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* [Edenhofer, O., R. Pichs-Madruga, Y. Sokona, E. Farahani, S. Kadner, K. Seyboth, A. Adler, I. Baum, S. Brunner, P. Eickemeier, B. Kriemann, J. Savolainen, S. Schlömer, C. von Stechow, T. Zwickel and J.C. Minx (eds.)], IPCC, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, NY, USA, p. 816.

Well-designed land-based climate change mitigation activities are therefore an essential component of climate change mitigation. Reducing deforestation and forest degradation can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while reforestation and agroforestry activities can remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. When sensitively designed, these projects also protect biodiversity and promote the sustainable economic and social development of communities. Such projects can bring sustainable livelihoods to local people through the diversification of agriculture, soil and water protection, direct employment, the use and sale of forest products and ecotourism. In the process, communities can also build their capacity to adapt to the effects of climate change. Well-designed projects also contribute to biodiversity conservation by restoring and protecting the world's natural ecosystems, saving threatened animal and plant species from extinction and maintaining resilient and productive natural life-support for humankind. Through effective planning and implementation, all of these positive outcomes can be achieved cost-effectively.

The CCB Program is beneficial to a variety of users, including:

- 1) **Project Developers and Local Communities:** Communities, NGOs, agencies and others use the CCB Program to guide the development of projects that deliver a suite of environmental and community benefits. Ensuring effective stakeholder engagement, good governance and holistic design to address social and environmental risks and opportunities helps to build a more sustainable project that can achieve multiple objectives. From an early stage, the Standards can be used to demonstrate a project's high quality and multiple benefits of their project to potential investors and other stakeholders. Projects that meet the CCB Program rules and requirements are likely to garner preferential investment and even a price premium from investors or offset buyers who support multiple-value projects and best-practice projects. Multiple-benefit projects also are more likely to attract a diverse portfolio of investors.
- 2) **Project Investors and Offset Buyers:** Private companies, multilateral agencies and other funders investing in carbon projects or sourcing carbon credits can use the CCB Program for project screening. The CCB Program identifies projects that actively address environmental and social performance factors, thereby lowering the risks to effective project implementation and permanence<sup>6</sup> of the climate benefits that are posed by environmental degradation and resistance from local communities and governments. In this way, the Standards help investors and offset buyers to minimize risks by identifying high-quality projects that are unlikely to become implicated in controversy. Multiple-benefit projects also create valuable goodwill and other ancillary returns for investors. Social and environmental benefits and

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<sup>6</sup> 'Permanence' is defined as the longevity of a carbon pool and the stability of its stocks, given the management and disturbance environment in which it occurs. A feature of land-based carbon projects is the possibility of a reversal of carbon benefits from either natural disturbances (e.g., fires, disease, pests and unusual weather events), or from the lack of reliable guarantees that the original land use activities will not return after the project concludes. Strategies have been identified that mitigate potential reversals such as the non-permanence risk analysis and buffer approach adopted by the Verified Carbon Standard or the establishment of contingency carbon credits, insurance, conservation easements and mixed portfolios of projects.

sustainability are also an important means to reduce risks to the permanence of the climate benefits.

- 3) Governments: Governments can use the CCB Program to ensure that projects within their boundaries contribute to their sustainable development goals. Also, donor governments can use the Standards to identify Official Development Assistance (ODA) projects that efficiently satisfy multiple international obligations, such as the Millennium Development Goals and the UN Conventions on Climate Change and Biological Diversity.

## 1.2 THE ROLE OF THE CCB PROGRAM

The CCB Program identifies land management projects that deliver net positive benefits for climate change mitigation, for local communities and for biodiversity. The *Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards* can be applied to any land management project, including projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation or from avoided degradation of other ecosystems, and projects that remove carbon dioxide by sequestering carbon (e.g., reforestation, afforestation, revegetation, forest restoration, agroforestry and sustainable agriculture) or other land management projects. The *Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards* are important for all phases of project planning and management, from design through implementation and monitoring.

The CCB Program performs two important roles:

- 1) Project design standard: The CCB Program provides rules and guidance to encourage effective and integrated project design. The *Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards* can be applied early on during a project's design phase to validate projects that have been well designed, are suitable to local conditions and are likely to achieve significant climate, community and biodiversity benefits. This validation helps to build support for the project at a crucial stage and attract funding or other assistance from key stakeholders, including investors, governments and other important local, national and international partners. This early project support and funding can be particularly important for multiple-benefit land-based carbon projects, which often require considerable investment and effort for project development before greenhouse gas emissions reductions can be generated.
- 2) Multiple-benefit standard: The CCB Program can be applied throughout the project's life to verify the adoption of best practices and the delivery of social and environmental benefits of a land-based carbon project. The CCB Program can be combined very effectively with a carbon accounting standard such as, for example, the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) or the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS). In this case, the *Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards* provide a basis for evaluating a project's social and environmental impacts while the carbon accounting standard enables verification and registration of quantified greenhouse gas emissions reductions or removals. In this way, the CCB Program is used to verify the social and environmental benefits generated by a project, enabling investors to select carbon credits with additional benefits, while screening out projects with unacceptable social and environmental impacts.

The CCB Program can be used regardless of a project's geographical location, start date, or size. The CCB Program can be used for projects funded with either private or public investment, and they apply to projects that generate carbon credits for either compliance or voluntary markets. It is important to note that quantified emissions reductions certificates cannot be issued from projects verified to the *Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards* alone. Projects are encouraged to use a carbon accounting standard (such as CDM or VCS) in combination with the *Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards* in order to issue units for emission reductions or removals.

### 1.3 REFLECTION OF UNFCCC SAFEGUARDS FOR REDD+ IN CCB STANDARDS

In 2010 in Cancun, Mexico, parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) agreed on seven safeguards for the implementation of activities that reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and contribute to conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (REDD+).<sup>7</sup> These safeguards address transparency, participation of stakeholders, protection of biodiversity and ecosystem services, and respect for rights of indigenous and local communities.

The *Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards* are aligned with and help projects to demonstrate that they meet the UNFCCC REDD+ safeguards in all respects except the safeguard (b) relating to national forest governance structures, which is not applicable to the CCB Program given that it applies to the project level. The table below illustrates the relationship with Cancun safeguards.

#### UNFCCC REDD+ SAFEGUARDS

When undertaking [REDD+] activities, the following safeguards should be promoted and supported:

- a) Actions complement or are consistent with the objectives of national forest programmes and relevant international conventions and agreements;
- b) Transparent and effective national forest governance structures, taking into account national legislation and sovereignty;
- c) Respect for the knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples and members of local communities, by taking into account relevant international obligations, national circumstances and laws and noting that the United Nations General Assembly has adopted the United National Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;

<sup>7</sup> Decisions adopted by the Conference of Parties 1/CP.16, *The Cancun Agreements: Outcome of the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention*, FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1 (15 March 2011)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>d) The full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, in particular indigenous peoples and local communities;</li> <li>e) Actions are consistent with the conservation of natural forests and biological diversity, ensuring that REDD+ activities are not used for the conversion of natural forests, but are instead used to incentivize the protection and conservation of natural forests and their ecosystem services, and to enhance other social and environmental benefits;</li> <li>f) Actions to address the risks of reversals;</li> <li>g) Actions to reduce displacement of emissions.</li> </ul>							
UNFCCC safeguards	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
<i>Climate, Community &amp; Biodiversity Standards</i> Third Edition	G5.6 partly (requires compliance only with national and local laws)	Not applicable	G5.1-3	G3.1-6, G5.2-3	B1-4, CM1-4	G1.10-11	CL3, CM3, B3

#### 1.4 REDD+ SOCIAL & ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS (REDD+ SES) AND CCB STANDARDS

REDD+ SES provide principles, criteria and indicators and also a country-led, multi-stakeholder process to support the development and implementation of a safeguards information system for a government-led REDD+ program (see [www-redd-standards.org](http://www-redd-standards.org)). The issues covered by the REDD+ SES and the *Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards* are very similar but both standards were developed through separate multi-stakeholder processes and are differently structured and organized.

REDD+ SES differs from the CCB Program in that it is designed to be used by national or sub-national jurisdictional (e.g., State, Provincial, County) programs of policies and measures for REDD+ rather than site-based projects. For example, REDD+ SES includes indicators about the contribution of the REDD+ program to good governance, broader sustainable development and social justice at the national or jurisdictional level and also to biodiversity and ecosystem priorities defined at the national jurisdictional level. In contrast, the *Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards* focus more on respect for rights and generation of benefits for specific communities affected by the project, and for the impacts on biodiversity affected by the project.

The REDD+ SES indicators are adapted to the country context following a transparent and inclusive multi-stakeholder process defined in the Guidelines for the Use of the REDD+ SES at Country Level. The main way of ensuring the quality and credibility of the self-assessment against the country-specific REDD+ SES indicators is through stakeholder review and a transparent process. This approach enables country leadership in the definition of country-specific safeguards and performance assessment based on



the REDD+ SES international norms for high performance. In contrast, the same *Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards* indicators are used for all projects around the world, and projects achieve validation and verification to the CCB rules through an independent audit of their project descriptions<sup>8</sup> and monitoring reports<sup>9</sup> against the global standards following the process defined in the *CCB Program Rules*.

The CCB Program is used to provide project-level quality assurance, including for projects implemented through a program of activities or for grouped projects. The CCB Program may be used for internal quality control within a jurisdiction using REDD+ SES, and the information provided through CCB validation and verification can feed into the assessment done for the whole jurisdiction using REDD+ SES.

## 1.5 VALIDATION AND VERIFICATION USING THE CCB STANDARDS

Use of the CCB Program requires that independent, validation/verification bodies (VVBs) determine conformance with the CCB rules<sup>10</sup> at two stages: validation and verification.

- **CCB validation** is the systematic, independent and documented process for the evaluation of the design of a land management project against the criteria<sup>11</sup> of the *Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards*.
- **CCB verification** is the systematic, independent and documented process for the evaluation of a project's delivery of net climate, community and biodiversity benefits in accordance with the project's validated design and monitoring plan and the criteria of the *Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards* in accordance with the CCB rules. Verification must be performed at least every five years.

Successful CCB verification enables the addition of a permanent marker, the CCB label, to a GHG credit listed on a registry to indicate that the verified emission reductions or removals represented by that credit were issued from a project which satisfies and is verified to the CCB rules. More information about the addition of a CCB label to verified emission reductions can be found in the *CCB Program Rules*.

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<sup>8</sup> The 'project description' (PD) is the document that describes the design of a project and the ways in which it meets each of the requirements of the *Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards*, and that uses the *CCB Project Description Template* or *CCB & VCS Project Description Template*.

<sup>9</sup> The 'monitoring report' is the document that describes how a project has been implemented in accordance with its validated design and records data to allow the assessment of the net positive climate, community and biodiversity benefits generated by the project to meet the requirements of the *Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards* during a given time period in accordance with the monitoring plan set out in the validated project design, and which is prepared using the *CCB Monitoring Report Template* or *CCB & VCS Monitoring Report Template*.

<sup>10</sup> 'CCB rules' are the rules and requirements set out in this document, the *CCB Program Rules*, and other CCB Program documents; these rules and requirements may be updated from time to time.

<sup>11</sup> 'Criteria' are conditions that must be met to achieve the requirements of the *Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards*. Each criterion includes 'indicators', which are quantitative or qualitative parameters that allow the assessment of whether the associated criterion is met. Third party validation/verification bodies (VVBs) use indicators to determine whether the project in question satisfies a particular criterion.

The required process for the validation and verification of projects through an independent audit in accordance with the CCB rules is described in the *CCB Program Rules*.

### Using this Document for Validation and Verification

- 'Shall' indicates requirements that must be followed for conformance to the standard.
- 'Can be used' applies to manuals, methods and other tools that are recommended as guidance but the project proponent may choose to use other manuals, methods or tools.
- The following terms generally apply to requirements for validation: 'describe the measures needed', 'explain or specify the criteria and process', 'project design', etc.
- The following terms generally apply to requirements verification: 'describe the measures taken', 'have been included', 'demonstrate' that conditions have been met', described how conditions have been met during 'implementation', etc.
- In instances where the project needs to have implemented some activities at the time of validation (e.g., some aspects of stakeholder engagement) some terms may be applicable for validation as well as verification such as 'describe how', 'explain how', 'describe measures taken', 'demonstrate', etc.
- Throughout the *Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards*, requirements that are more relevant for verification and that should be addressed in the monitoring report are in *italics*.

Project descriptions and other project documents submitted for audit, those approved by the audit process, any public comments received, the name of the validation/verification body, the validation or verification audit report and statement, whether the project met the requirements for approved or Gold Level stating which Gold Level criteria achieved, the date of validation or verification along with any validations or certifications achieved by the project against other relevant standards are published on the VCS project database.

## 2 | GENERAL

### G1. PROJECT GOALS, DESIGN AND LONG-TERM VIABILITY

#### Concept

The project has clear objectives to generate climate, community and biodiversity benefits<sup>12</sup> and is designed to meet these objectives. Risks are identified and managed to generate and maintain project benefits within and beyond the life of the project.

#### Indicators

##### *Project Overview*

- 1) Identify the primary project proponent<sup>13</sup> which is responsible for the project's design and implementation and provide contact details.
- 2) Define the project's climate, community and biodiversity<sup>14</sup> objectives.<sup>15</sup>
- 3) Provide the location (country, sub-national jurisdictions(s)) and a brief overview of the basic physical<sup>16</sup> and social<sup>17</sup> parameters of the project.

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<sup>12</sup> The project's 'climate benefits' are defined as the GHG emissions reductions or removals resulting from project activities. The project's 'community benefits' are defined as improvements in the well-being of communities resulting from project activities. The project's 'biodiversity benefits' are defined as enhancement of elements of biodiversity resulting from project activities. All project benefits take into account positive and negative impacts and are relative to conditions under the without-project land use scenario described in G2.

<sup>13</sup> 'Project proponent' is defined as the individual or organization that has overall control and responsibility for the project, or an individual or organization that together with others, each of which is also a project proponent, has overall control or responsibility for the project. The entity(s) that can demonstrate project ownership in respect of the project.

<sup>14</sup> 'Biodiversity' (biological diversity) is defined as 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 (1992, United Nations. Convention on Biological Diversity, Article 2. Rio de Janeiro (available at: [https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/1992/06/19920605%2008-44%20PM/Ch\\_XXVII\\_08p.pdf](https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/1992/06/19920605%2008-44%20PM/Ch_XXVII_08p.pdf))).

<sup>15</sup> The project shall have specific, measurable and distinct climate, community and biodiversity objectives such that climate, community or biodiversity benefits are not just a result of positive externalities.

<sup>16</sup> Such as soil, topography, climate temperature ranges and precipitation, types of vegetation, forest type, etc.

<sup>17</sup> Such as main settlements and land use, economic activities, ethnic groups, migration, etc.

### Project Design and Boundaries

- 4) Define the boundaries of the project area<sup>18</sup> where project activities aim to generate net climate benefits and the project zone<sup>19</sup> where project activities are implemented.
- 5) Explain the process of stakeholder identification<sup>20</sup> and analysis used to identify communities,<sup>21</sup> community groups<sup>22</sup> and other stakeholders.<sup>23</sup>
- 6) List all communities, community groups and other stakeholders identified using the process explained in G1.5.
- 7) Provide a map identifying the location of communities and the boundaries of the project area(s),<sup>24</sup> of the project zone, including any high conservation value areas (identified in CM1 and B1), and of additional areas that are predicted to be impacted by project activities identified in CL3, CM3 and B3.

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<sup>18</sup> The 'project area' is defined as the land area in which project activities aim to generate net climate benefits.

<sup>19</sup> 'Project zone' is defined as the area encompassing the project area in which project activities that directly affect land and associated resources, including activities such as those related to provision of alternative livelihoods and community development, are implemented. For grouped projects, the project zone also includes all potential project areas (i.e., all potential new land areas in which project activities that aim to generate net climate benefits may be implemented in the future after the initial validation).

<sup>20</sup> Stakeholder identification and analysis should include an assessment of rights, interests and relevance to the project for each stakeholder group. The following manual can be used for guidance on stakeholder identification and analysis: Richards, M. and Panfil, S.N. 2011, *Social and Biodiversity Impact Assessment (SBIA) Manual for REDD+ Projects: Part 1 – Core Guidance for Project Proponents*. Climate, Community & Biodiversity Alliance, Forest Trends, Fauna & Flora International and Rainforest Alliance. Washington, DC (available at: <http://www.v-c-s.org/project/ccb-program/guidance/>).

<sup>21</sup> 'Communities' are defined as all groups of people—including Indigenous Peoples, mobile peoples and other local communities—who derive income, livelihood or cultural values and other contributions to well-being from the **project area** at the start of the project and/or under the with-project scenario. In cases where numerous small communities can be shown to have homogeneous patterns of social organization, political structure and livelihoods, these communities may be identified and listed as a community. In identification of communities, it is permitted to consider significance of user populations and of their level of use such that distant or intermittent user groups who have very limited dependence on the site need not be defined as communities.

<sup>22</sup> 'Community groups' are sub-groups of communities whose members derive similar income, livelihood and/or cultural values and other contributions to well-being **from the project area** and whose values are different from those of other groups; such as Indigenous Peoples, women, youth or other social, cultural and economic groups. The number of appropriate groups will depend on the size and complexity of the community. 'Indigenous Peoples' are defined as distinct social and cultural groups whose members identify themselves as belonging to an indigenous cultural group.

<sup>23</sup> 'Other stakeholders' are defined as all groups other than communities who can potentially affect or be affected by the project activities and who may live within or outside the project zone.

<sup>24</sup> Location information must allow the identification of the boundaries of the project area unambiguously and with a reasonable level of certainty through the provision of digital data such as GPS coordinates, KML files, or shape files.

- 8) Briefly describe each project activity and the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts of the activities identifying the causal relationships<sup>25</sup> that explain how the activities will achieve the project's predicted climate, community and biodiversity benefits.
- 9) Define the project start date<sup>26</sup> and lifetime,<sup>27</sup> and GHG accounting period<sup>28</sup> and biodiversity and community benefits assessment period if relevant, and explain and justify any differences between them. Define an implementation schedule, indicating key dates and milestones in the project's development.

### **Risk Management and Long-term Viability**

- 10) Identify likely natural and human-induced risks<sup>29</sup> to the expected climate, community and biodiversity benefits during the project lifetime and outline measures needed and *taken* to mitigate these risks.
- 11) Describe the measures needed and *taken* to maintain and enhance the climate, community and biodiversity benefits beyond the project lifetime.
- 12) Demonstrate that financial mechanisms adopted, including actual and projected revenues from GHG emissions reductions or removals and other sources, provide an adequate actual and projected flow of funds for project implementation and to achieve the project's climate, community and biodiversity benefits.

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<sup>25</sup> Causal relationships should be built upon a theory of change analysis and based on the same analysis of drivers and actors of land use or land-use change used for the without-project scenario described in G2, CL1, CM1 and B1. The following manual is recommended for guidance on participatory theory of change analysis: Richards, M. and Panfil, S.N. 2011, *Social and Biodiversity Impact Assessment (SBIA) Manual for REDD+ Projects: Part 1 – Core Guidance for Project Proponents*. Climate, Community & Biodiversity Alliance, Forest Trends, Fauna & Flora International and Rainforest Alliance. Washington, DC (available at: <http://www.v-c-s.org/project/ccb-program/guidance/>). Appropriate imprecision is permissible, as mentioned in the aforementioned manual.

<sup>26</sup> The 'project start date' is defined as the start of implementation of activities that will lead to the generation of GHG emission reductions or removals.

<sup>27</sup> The 'project lifetime' is defined as the time period over which project activities are implemented. The project lifetime starts on the date on which activities which aim to generate climate, community or biodiversity impacts begin.

<sup>28</sup> The 'project GHG accounting period' is defined as the time period over which changes in GHG emissions reductions and/or removals resulting from project activities are monitored for use as offsets.

<sup>29</sup> Including risks in the shorter and longer term, risks related to continued community willingness to participate in the project, risks related to ability to adapt to climate change and climate variability, etc.

### Grouped Projects

The following information shall be provided for grouped projects.<sup>30</sup>

- 13) Specify the project area(s) and communities that may be included under the grouped project *and identify any new project area(s) and communities that have been included in the project since the last CCB validation or verification.*
- 14) Specify the eligibility criteria<sup>31</sup> and process for project expansion under the grouped project *and demonstrate that these have been met for any new project areas and communities that have been included in the project since the last CCB validation or verification.*
- 15) Establish scalability limits,<sup>32</sup> if applicable, and describe measures needed and *taken* to address any risks to climate, community and biodiversity benefits if the project expands beyond those limits.

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<sup>30</sup> A 'grouped project' allows for additional project areas that meet pre-established eligibility criteria to be added subsequent to prior validation. Conformance with the *Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards* is assessed for new activities during the next validation or verification of the project against the CCB rules (see *CCB Program Rules* available on the VCS website).

<sup>31</sup> Eligibility criteria must include: adoption of project activities specified in the project description and applied in the same manner as specified in the project description; subject to the climate, community and biodiversity without-project scenarios as determined for the project; have similar characteristics with respect to additionality; subject to the same processes for stakeholder engagement described in G3 and respect for rights to lands, territories and resources including free, prior and informed consent described in G5; and have similar monitoring elements.

<sup>32</sup> This is the scale beyond which, if new project activities are added, the project may not generate net positive climate, community or biodiversity benefits, such as capacity limits, economic and managerial constraints, and thresholds for project expansion beyond which there may be negative impacts on communities and/or biodiversity.

## G2. WITHOUT-PROJECT LAND USE SCENARIO AND ADDITIONALITY

### Concept

The without-project land use scenario<sup>33</sup> describes expected land use or land-use changes in the project zone<sup>34</sup> in the absence of project activities. The project impacts for climate, communities and biodiversity are measured against the expected conditions for total GHG emissions, for communities and for biodiversity associated with this without-project land use scenario (described in CL1, CM1 and B1). Project benefits must be additional, such that they would not have occurred without the project.

### Indicators

- 1) Describe the most likely land-use scenario within the project zone in the absence of the project,<sup>35</sup> describing the range of potential land-use scenarios and the associated drivers of land use changes and justifying why the land-use scenario selected is most likely.<sup>36</sup> It is allowable for different locations within the project zone to have different without-project land use scenarios.
- 2) Document that project benefits including climate, community and biodiversity benefits would not have occurred in the absence of the project, explaining how existing laws, regulations and governance arrangements, or lack of laws and regulations and their enforcement, would likely affect land use and justifying that the benefits being claimed by the project are truly 'additional' and would not have occurred without the project.<sup>37</sup> Identify any distinct climate, community and

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<sup>33</sup> The 'without-project land use scenario' is equivalent to 'baseline scenario' for the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) Program.

<sup>34</sup> The land use analysis is done for the project zone because this represents the largest geographic area of the project's direct impacts and encompasses the project area.

<sup>35</sup> In cases where a published methodology or model is used to assess land use change and the drivers of land use change, the full reference shall be given and any variations from the published methodology shall be explained.

<sup>36</sup> The drivers, actors and causal model for land use change used for the without-project scenario should underpin the project's causal model described in G1.8.

<sup>37</sup> Project proponents must demonstrate that project activities would not have been implemented under the without-project scenario due to significant financial, technological, institutional or capacity barriers. Actions implemented by the project must not be required by law, or project proponents must demonstrate that the pertinent laws are not being enforced. Project proponents must provide credible and well-documented analyses (e.g., poverty assessments, farming knowledge assessments, or remote sensing analysis) to demonstrate that the without-project land use scenario reflects land use practices that are likely to continue or that otherwise differ from the land use practices expected as a result of project activities. The most recent version of the following Verified Carbon Standard tool may be used: *VT0001: Tool for the Demonstration and Assessment of Additionality in VCS Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) Project Activities* (available on the VCS website) considering the following options: Sub-step 2b. – Option I. Apply simple cost analysis; or Step 3. Barrier analysis.

biodiversity benefits intended for use as offsets and specify how additionality is established for each of these benefits.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> The following paper can be used as guidance: 2009, *Stacking Payments for Ecosystem Services*, World Resources Institute (available at: [http://pdf.wri.org/factsheets/factsheet\\_stacking\\_payments\\_for\\_ecosystem\\_services.pdf](http://pdf.wri.org/factsheets/factsheet_stacking_payments_for_ecosystem_services.pdf)).



## G3. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

### Concept

Communities and other stakeholders are involved in the project through full and effective participation,<sup>39</sup> including access to information, consultation, participation in decision-making and implementation, and free, prior and informed consent (requirements for free, prior and informed consent are included in G5.2). Timely and adequate information is accessible in a language and manner understood by the communities and other stakeholders. Effective and timely consultations are conducted with all relevant stakeholders and participation is ensured, as appropriate, of those that want to be involved.

Feedback and grievance redress procedures are established and functional.

Best practices are adopted for worker relations and safety.

### Indicators

#### Access to Information

- 1) Describe how full project documentation<sup>40</sup> has been made accessible to communities and other stakeholders, how summary project documentation<sup>41</sup> (including how to access full documentation) has been actively disseminated to communities in relevant local or regional languages and how widely publicized information meetings have been held with communities and other stakeholders.
- 2) Explain how relevant and adequate information about potential costs, risks and benefits<sup>42</sup> to communities has been provided to them in a form they understand and in a timely manner prior to any decision they may be asked to make with respect to participation in the project.

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<sup>39</sup> Full and effective participation means meaningful influence of all relevant rights holder and stakeholder groups who want to be involved throughout the process, and includes access to information, consultation, participation in decision-making and implementation and free, prior and informed consent.

<sup>40</sup> Includes project description and monitoring reports, as they become available, through the project lifetime.

<sup>41</sup> Summary documentation disseminated to communities prior to CCB validation shall at least include information required for G1.1-9, and prior to CCB verification shall at least include information on monitoring results showing that the project has delivered net positive climate, community and biodiversity benefits.

<sup>42</sup> Costs, risks and benefits to communities should be identified using a participatory and transparent process. The following manual can be used: Richards, M. and Panfil, S.N. 2011, *Social and Biodiversity Impact Assessment (SBIA) Manual for REDD+ Projects: Part 1 – Core Guidance for Project Proponents*. Climate, Community & Biodiversity Alliance, Forest Trends, Fauna & Flora International and Rainforest Alliance. Washington, DC (available at: <http://www.v-c-s.org/project/ccb-program/guidance/>). All assessment of costs, risks and benefits include those that are direct and indirect and include those related to social, cultural, environmental and economic aspects and to human rights and rights to lands territories and resources. Costs include those related to responsibilities and also

- 3) Describe the measures taken, and communications methods used, to explain to communities and other stakeholders the process for CCB validation and/or verification by an independent validation/verification body,<sup>43</sup> providing them with timely information about the validation/verification body's site visit before the site visit occurs and facilitating direct and independent communication between them or their representatives and the validation/verification body.

### Consultation

- 4) Describe how communities including all the community groups and other stakeholders have influenced project design and *implementation* through effective consultation,<sup>44</sup> particularly with a view to optimizing community and other stakeholder benefits, respecting local customs, values and institutions and maintaining high conservation values. Project proponents must document consultations and indicate if and how the project design and implementation has been revised based on such input.<sup>45</sup> A plan must be developed and *implemented* to continue communication and consultation between the project proponents and communities, including all the community

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opportunity costs. Note that the term 'benefits' refers to positive impacts and the phrase 'costs and risks' equates with negative impacts.

<sup>43</sup> A validation/verification body (VVB) is defined as a recognized, qualified and independent auditing organization that evaluates whether a project has met each of the CCB criteria and any other requirements following the process for CCB validation or verification defined in the *CCB Program Rules* (available on the VCS website). The validation/verification body must be approved by the VCS as defined in the *CCB Program Rules*; a list of approved validation/verification bodies can be found on the VCS website.

<sup>44</sup> Effective consultation requires project proponents to inform and engage broadly with the communities and other stakeholders using socially and culturally appropriate methods to enable meaningful influence on the subject of consultation. Consultations must be gender and inter-generationally sensitive with special attention to vulnerable and/or marginalized people and must be conducted at mutually agreed locations and through representatives who are designated by the groups themselves in accordance with their own procedures. Different approaches may be appropriate for different community groups or other stakeholders. Communities and community groups potentially affected by the project must have an opportunity to evaluate impacts and raise concerns about potential negative impacts, express desired outcomes and provide input on the project design including the theory of change, both before the project design is finalized and during implementation. Consultations must include participatory identification of ecosystem services important for communities and high conservation values, for example through participatory mapping. Consultations must also include an evaluation of the type and magnitude of impacts resulting from project activities (CM2.1). Consultations must also include a participatory design of feedback and grievance redress procedures (G3.8).

<sup>45</sup> In cases where it is unclear whether a project will be implemented or not, it is acceptable to start with preliminary consultations, provided there are plans for appropriate full consultations before the start of the project. Where conformance with the *Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards* is being applied to a project already under implementation, project proponents must either provide documentation of appropriate consultations during the project design phase or demonstrate how more recent consultations have been effective in evaluating community benefits and adapting project design and implementation to optimize community and other stakeholder benefits and respect local customs.

groups, and other stakeholders about the project and its impacts to facilitate adaptive management<sup>46</sup> throughout the life of the project.

- 5) Demonstrate that all consultations and participatory processes have been undertaken directly with communities and other stakeholders or through their legitimate representatives, ensuring adequate levels of information sharing with the members of the groups.

### ***Participation in Decision-making and Implementation***

- 6) Describe the measures needed and *taken* to enable effective participation, as appropriate, of all communities, including all the community groups that want and need to be involved in project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation throughout the project lifetime, and describe how they have been implemented in a culturally appropriate and gender sensitive manner.

### ***Anti-Discrimination***

- 7) Describe the measures needed and *taken* to ensure that the project proponent and all other entities involved in project design and implementation are not involved in or complicit in any form of discrimination<sup>47</sup> or sexual harassment with respect to the project.

### ***Feedback and Grievance Redress Procedure***

- 8) Demonstrate that a clear grievance redress procedure has been formalized to address disputes with communities and other stakeholders that may arise during project planning, implementation and evaluation with respect but not limited to, free, prior and informed consent, rights to lands, territories and resources, benefit sharing and participation.<sup>48</sup>

The project shall include a process for receiving, hearing, responding to and attempting to resolve grievances within a reasonable time period.<sup>49</sup> The feedback and grievance redress procedure shall take into account traditional methods that communities and other stakeholders use to resolve conflicts.

The feedback and grievance redress procedure shall have three stages with reasonable time limits for each of the following stages.

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<sup>46</sup> Adaptive management is an approach that accepts that management must proceed without complete information. It views management not only as a way to achieve objectives, but also as a process for probing to learn more about the resource or system being managed. Learning is an inherent objective of adaptive management. Adaptive management is a process where policies and activities can adapt to future conditions to improve management success.

<sup>47</sup> Including discrimination based on gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or other habits.

<sup>48</sup> Referred to as grievances.

<sup>49</sup> Referred to as feedback and grievance redress procedure

First, the project proponent shall attempt to amicably resolve all grievances and provide a written response to the grievances in a manner that is culturally appropriate.

Second, any grievances that are not resolved by amicable negotiations shall be referred to mediation by a neutral third party.

Third, any grievances that are not resolved through mediation shall be referred either to a) arbitration, to the extent allowed by the laws of the relevant jurisdiction or b) competent courts in the relevant jurisdiction, without prejudice to a party's ability to submit the grievance to a competent supranational adjudicatory body, if any.

The feedback and grievance redress procedure must be publicized and accessible to communities and other stakeholders. Grievances and project responses, including any redress, must be documented and made publicly available.

### **Worker<sup>50</sup> Relations**

- 9) Describe measures needed and *taken* to provide orientation and training for the project's workers and relevant people from the communities with an objective of building locally useful skills and knowledge to increase local participation in project implementation. These capacity building efforts should target a wide range of people in the communities, with special attention to women and vulnerable and/or marginalized people. Identify how training is passed on to new workers when there is staff turnover, so that local capacity will not be lost.
- 10) *Demonstrate* that people from the communities are given an equal opportunity to fill all work positions (including management) if the job requirements are met. Explain how workers are selected for positions and where relevant, describe the measures needed and *taken* to ensure community members, including women and vulnerable and/or marginalized people, are given a fair chance to fill positions for which they can be trained.
- 11) Submit a list of all relevant laws and regulations covering worker's rights in the host country. Describe measures needed and taken to inform workers about their rights. Provide assurance that the project meets or exceeds all applicable laws and/or regulations covering worker rights and, where relevant, demonstrate how compliance is achieved.
- 12) Comprehensively assess situations and occupations that might arise through the implementation of the project and pose a substantial risk to worker safety. Describe measures needed and *taken* to inform workers of risks and to explain how to minimize such risks. Where worker safety cannot be guaranteed, project proponents must show how the risks are minimized using best work practices in line with the culture and customary practices of the communities.

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<sup>50</sup> 'Workers' are defined as people directly working on project activities in return for compensation (financial or otherwise), including employees, contracted workers, sub-contracted workers and community members that are paid to carry out project-related work.

## G4. MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

### Concept

The project has adequate human and financial resources for effective implementation.

### Indicators

- 1) Describe the project's governance structures and roles and responsibilities of all the entities involved in project design and implementation. For grouped projects, identify any new entities included in the project since the last CCB validation or verification.
- 2) Document key technical skills required to implement the project successfully, including community engagement, biodiversity assessment and carbon measurement and monitoring skills. Document the management team's expertise and prior experience implementing land management and carbon projects at the scale of this project. If relevant experience is lacking, the proponents must either demonstrate how other organizations are partnered with to support the project or have a recruitment strategy to fill the gaps.
- 3) Document the financial health of the implementing organization(s). Provide assurance that the project proponent and any of the other entities involved in project design and implementation are not involved in or are not complicit in any form of corruption<sup>51</sup> such as bribery,<sup>52</sup> embezzlement,<sup>53</sup> fraud,<sup>54</sup> favoritism, cronyism, nepotism,<sup>55</sup> extortion,<sup>56</sup> and collusion,<sup>57</sup> and describe any measures needed *and taken* to be able to provide this assurance.

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<sup>51</sup> The abuse of entrusted power for private gain. The following guide can be used: Transparency Initiative, 2012, *Keeping REDD+ Clean: A Step-by-Step Guide to Preventing Corruption* (available at: [http://issuu.com/transparencyinternational/docs/2012\\_keepingreddclean\\_en?e=2496456/1427494](http://issuu.com/transparencyinternational/docs/2012_keepingreddclean_en?e=2496456/1427494)).

<sup>52</sup> Giving someone a benefit (such as money or services) to persuade them to do something in return. Bribes can also be referred to as kickbacks, hush money or protection money.

<sup>53</sup> The taking or conversion of money, property or valuable items by an individual who is not entitled to them but has access to them by virtue of their position.

<sup>54</sup> Behavior designed to trick another person or entity for one's own benefit or that of a third party.

<sup>55</sup> The favorable treatment of friends, business associates (cronyism) and family (nepotism) in the distribution of resources and positions, regardless of their objective merits.

<sup>56</sup> The process of coercion, where a person or institution forces another party to pay in exchange for doing or saying something, or not doing or saying something.

<sup>57</sup> An arrangement between two or more parties designed to achieve an improper purpose, including influencing improperly the actions of another party. The most common form of collusion is when bidders agree among themselves on prices and on 'who should win'. The practice of collusion likely involves a hefty bribe or promise thereof in order to induce the other party to sidestep the expected and legitimate behavior. If that brings a gain to the companies and/or individuals taking part in that activity it is corruption.

## G5. LEGAL STATUS AND PROPERTY RIGHTS<sup>58</sup>

### Concept

The project is based on an internationally accepted legal framework, complies with relevant statutory and customary requirements and has necessary approvals from the appropriate state, local and indigenous authorities.

The project recognizes respects and supports rights to lands, territories and resources, including the statutory and customary rights of Indigenous Peoples and others within communities and other stakeholders.<sup>59</sup> The free, prior and informed consent (as described in G5.2) of relevant property rights holders has been obtained at every stage of the project.

Project activities do not lead to involuntary removal or relocation of property rights holders from their lands or territories and do not force them to relocate activities important to their culture or livelihood.<sup>60</sup> Any proposed removal or relocation occurs only after obtaining free, prior and informed consent from the relevant property rights holders.

### Indicators

#### ***Respect for Rights to Lands, Territories and Resources and Free, Prior and Informed Consent***

- 1) Describe and map statutory and customary<sup>61</sup> tenure/use/access/management rights to lands, territories and resources in the project zone including individual and collective rights and including overlapping or conflicting rights. If applicable, describe measures needed and taken by the project to help to secure statutory rights. Demonstrate that all property rights are recognized, respected and supported.

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<sup>58</sup> 'Property rights' are defined as statutory and customary tenure/use/access/management rights to lands, territories and resources and 'property rights holders' are the entities that have individual or collective property rights.

<sup>59</sup> United Nations Human Rights Council, *UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights* (2011) (available at: <https://business-humanrights.org/en/un-guiding-principles>).

<sup>60</sup> United Nations Human Rights Council, *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, Article 10. ILO Convention 169, Article 16, 2008.

<sup>61</sup> 'Customary rights' to lands, territories and resources refer to patterns of long-standing community lands, territories and resource usage in accordance with Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' customary laws, values, customs and traditions, including seasonal or cyclical use, rather than formal legal title to lands, territories and resources issued by the State. (See: World Bank Operational Manual, *OP 4.10 – Indigenous Peoples*, 200, available at: <https://policies.worldbank.org/sites/ppf3/PPFDocuments/090224b0822f89d5.pdf>)

- 2) *Demonstrate* with documented consultations and agreements that:
- a) The project will not encroach uninvited on private property, community property,<sup>62</sup> or government property,
  - b) The free, prior and informed consent<sup>63</sup> *has been obtained* of those whose property rights are affected by the project through a transparent, agreed process.

Free, Prior and Informed Consent<sup>64</sup> is defined as:

**Free** means no coercion, intimidation, manipulation, threat and bribery;

**Prior** means sufficiently in advance of any authorization or commencement of activities and respecting the time requirements of their decision-making processes;

**Informed** means that information is provided that covers (at least) the following aspects

- i) The nature, size, pace, reversibility and scope of any proposed project or activity;
- ii) The reason/s or purpose of the project and/or activity;
- iii) The duration of the above;
- iv) The locality of areas that will be affected;

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<sup>62</sup> Including collective rights, both customary and statutory, to lands, territories and resources that communities have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired whether or not such ownership has been formally recorded. (Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security*, Principle 3.1, 2012 (available at: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/016/i2801e/i2801e.pdf>)).

<sup>63</sup> In conformance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 169. The following manual can be used for guidance on Free, Prior and Informed Consent: Anderson, 2011, *Free, Prior and Informed Consent in REDD+: Principles and Approaches for Policy and Project Development* (available at <http://www.recoftc.org>). If non-contacted peoples are located or believed to be located in the project area, their right to remain in isolation should be respected in accordance with local, national and international laws and recommendations. Unless invited to make contact, implementing entities should not engage in any activities that may impact these populations, including project activities. There should be a buffer zone between the project area and the area in which indigenous populations living in voluntary isolation reside, or are believed to reside. Guidelines for the Protection of Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation and Initial Contact in the Amazon Region, the Gran Chaco and the Eastern Region of Paraguay, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner (OHCHR) and the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development, May 2012.

<sup>64</sup> Definition of free prior and informed consent from United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2005, *International Workshop on Free, Prior and Informed Consent and Indigenous Peoples*, UN Document PFII/2005/WS.2/4 (available at: [http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/workshop\\_FPIC\\_tamang.doc](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/workshop_FPIC_tamang.doc)). It is important to note that consultation is not the same as consent. Free, prior and informed consent is the decision made by a community following a consultation. A project team must receive affirmative consent from relevant property rights holders prior to commencing with project activities. UN General Assembly, 2007, *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly, A/RES/61/295*, Articles 32 (2), (available at: [www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS\\_en.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf)).

- v) A preliminary assessment of the likely economic, social, cultural and environmental impact, including potential risks and fair and equitable benefit sharing in a context that respects the precautionary principle;
- vi) Personnel likely to be involved in the execution of the proposed project (including Indigenous Peoples, private sector staff, research institutions, government employees and others); and
- vii) Procedures that the project may entail; and

**Consent** means that there is the option of withholding consent and that the parties have reasonably understood it.

Collective rights holders must be able to participate through their own freely chosen representatives and customary or other institutions following a transparent process for obtaining their Free, Prior and Informed Consent that they have defined.

- c) Appropriate restitution or compensation has been allocated to any parties whose lands have been or will be affected by the project.<sup>65</sup>
- 3) *Demonstrate* that project activities do not lead to involuntary removal or relocation of property rights holders from their lands or territories and does not force them to relocate activities important to their culture or livelihood. If any relocation of habitation or activities is undertaken within the terms of an agreement, the project proponents must *demonstrate* that the agreement was made with the free, prior and informed consent of those concerned and includes provisions for just and fair compensation.<sup>66</sup>
  - 4) Identify any illegal activities that could affect the project's climate, community or biodiversity impacts (e.g., illegal logging) taking place in the project zone and describe measures needed and *taken* to reduce these activities so that project benefits are not derived from illegal activities.<sup>67</sup>
  - 5) Identify any ongoing or unresolved conflicts or disputes over rights to lands, territories and resources and also any disputes that were resolved during the last twenty years where such records exist, or at least during the last ten years. If applicable, describe measures needed and *taken* to resolve conflicts or disputes.<sup>68</sup> *Demonstrate* that no activity is undertaken by the project

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<sup>65</sup> Compensation should include both the financial and non-financial costs of the loss of lands, for example loss of culture or loss of business opportunity. See *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, Article 10. Article 28

<sup>66</sup> In conformance with *the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and ILO 169, Article 28 of the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* indicates that unless otherwise agreed upon, compensation should be in the form of lands, territories or resources equivalent in quality, size and legal status to those taken. When such compensation is not available, monetary compensation is appropriate.

<sup>67</sup> If the project enables previously illegal activities to become "legal" by means of appropriate laws and other means, benefits from these activities may be considered for the net benefit analysis in CL2, CM2 and B2.

<sup>68</sup> *FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure*, Principle 25.1.



that could prejudice the outcome of an unresolved dispute relevant to the project over lands, territories and resources in the project zone.

### **Legal Status**

- 6) Submit a list of all national and local laws<sup>69</sup> and regulations in the host country that are relevant to the project activities. Provide assurance that the project is complying with these and, where relevant, demonstrate how compliance is achieved.
- 7) Document that the project has approval from the appropriate authorities, including the established formal and/or traditional authorities customarily required by the communities.
- 8) Demonstrate that the project proponent(s) has the unconditional, undisputed and unencumbered ability to claim that the project will or did generate or cause the project's climate, community and biodiversity benefits.<sup>70</sup>
- 9) Identify the tradable climate, community and biodiversity benefits of the project and specify how double counting is avoided, particularly for offsets sold on the voluntary market and generated in a country participating in a compliance mechanism.

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<sup>69</sup> Local laws include all norms given by organisms of government whose jurisdiction is less than the national level, such as departmental, municipal and customary norms.

<sup>70</sup> Corresponds to project ownership, which is the legal right to control and operate project activities. Project ownership may be accorded to the project proponent(s) in the following circumstances: 1) Project ownership arising or granted under statute, regulation or decree by a competent authority. 2) Project ownership arising under law. 3) Project ownership arising by virtue of a statutory, property or contractual right in the plant, equipment or process that generates GHG emission reductions and/or removals, community and biodiversity benefits (where such right includes the ownership of such reductions or removals, community and biodiversity benefits and the project proponent has not been divested of such ownership). 4) Project ownership arising by virtue of a statutory, property or contractual right in the land, vegetation or conservational or management process that generates GHG emission reductions and/or removals, community and biodiversity benefits (where such right includes the ownership of such reductions or removals, community and biodiversity benefits and the project proponent has not been divested of such ownership). 5) An enforceable and irrevocable agreement with the holder of the statutory, property or contractual right in the plant, equipment or process that generates GHG emission reductions and/or removals, community and biodiversity benefits which vests the ownership in the project proponent. 6) An enforceable and irrevocable agreement with the holder of the statutory, property or contractual right in the land, vegetation or conservational or management process that generates GHG emission reductions or removals, community and biodiversity benefits which vests the ownership in the project proponent.

## 3 | CLIMATE

This section is used to demonstrate a project's net positive climate benefits and not for claiming greenhouse gas (GHG)<sup>71</sup> emissions reductions and removals units that may be used as offsets. This section is not required<sup>72</sup> for projects that have met the requirements of a recognized GHG Program.<sup>73</sup>

### CL1. WITHOUT-PROJECT CLIMATE SCENARIO

#### Concept

Estimates of total GHG emissions in the project area under the without-project land use scenario are described.

#### Indicators

- 1) Estimate the total GHG emissions inside the project area under the without-project land use scenario (described in G2) using an approved<sup>74</sup> or defensible<sup>75</sup> methodological approach. The

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<sup>71</sup> Greenhouse gases are defined as gaseous components of the atmosphere that trap infrared heat and contribute to the Earth's greenhouse effect. In addition to carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), prominent GHGs related to forests include methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) and nitrous oxides (N<sub>2</sub>O).

<sup>72</sup> The optional Gold Level for climate change adaptation GL1 may be used if the project is eligible for a waiver of the Climate Section CL1-4.

<sup>73</sup> A list of GHG Programs recognized by the CCB Program is published on the VCS website. See also the *CCB Program Rules*.

<sup>74</sup> Approved methodologies are those approved by GHG programs recognized by the CCB Program.

<sup>75</sup> A 'defensible' methodological approach follows good practice guidance that includes procedures for delineating the conditions under which the methodological approach can be applied: defining the project area; estimating any projected rates of land cover change in the without-project and with-project scenarios; conservatively estimating without project GHG emissions and removals; monitoring GHG emissions over the project lifetime; defining types of leakage potential caused by project activities; and conservatively estimating expected leakage emissions under the with-project scenario. It shall also observe principles of relevance, completeness, consistency, transparency and conservativeness for land-based carbon accounting; such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 2006 *Guidelines for National GHG Inventories for Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use* (IPCC 2006. 2006 IPCC *Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories*. Prepared by the National Greenhouse Gas Inventories Programme, Eggleston H.S., Buendia L., Miwa K., Ngara T. and Tanabe K. (eds). Published: IGES, Japan.) and the *AFOLU Requirements* of the Verified Carbon Standard. The principle of conservativeness means that where accounting relies on assumptions, values and procedures with high uncertainty, the most conservative option in the biological range should be chosen so as not overestimate GHG removals or GHG emissions.

timeframe for this analysis is the project GHG accounting period or the project lifetime.<sup>76</sup> In the without-project scenario, it is allowable for the analysis to exclude GHG emissions from sources such as biomass burning, fossil fuel combustion, synthetic fertilizers, and to exclude non-CO<sub>2</sub> GHG emissions such as CH<sub>4</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O gases, in cases where this can be justified as conservative. The analysis of GHG emissions or removals must include carbon pools<sup>77</sup> expected to increase significantly<sup>78</sup> under the without-project scenario.

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<sup>76</sup> In some cases, the project lifetime may be longer than the project GHG accounting period.

<sup>77</sup> Carbon pools are defined as a reservoir of carbon; a system that has the capacity to accumulate or release carbon. Carbon pools are measured in terms of mass (e.g., metric tons of carbon). The major carbon pools associated with forestry projects are: live biomass (including above and below ground components, i.e., roots), dead biomass, soil and wood products.

<sup>78</sup> That may negate the net positive benefit.

## CL2. NET POSITIVE CLIMATE IMPACTS

### Concept

The project reduces GHG emissions over the project lifetime from project activities within the project area.

### Indicators

- 1) Estimate the total GHG emissions expected from land use activities inside the project area under the with-project land use scenario using an approved or defensible methodological approach<sup>79</sup>. This estimate must be based on clearly defined and defensible assumptions about changes in GHG emissions under the with-project scenario over the project lifetime or the project GHG accounting period. The GHG emissions estimate must include non CO<sub>2</sub> emissions such as CH<sub>4</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O (in terms of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent<sup>80</sup>) and GHG emissions from sources<sup>81</sup> such as biomass burning, fossil fuel combustion, use of synthetic fertilizers and the decomposition of N-fixing species, etc., if those GHG emissions sources are cumulatively likely to account for more than 20% of the project's expected total GHG emissions in the with-project scenario.<sup>82</sup>
- 2) *Demonstrate* that the net climate impact of the project is positive. The net climate impact of the project is the difference between the total GHG emissions or removals in the without-project scenario (including CO<sub>2</sub> and non-CO<sub>2</sub> GHG emissions) and total GHG emissions or removals

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<sup>79</sup> A defensible methodological approach follows good practice guidance that includes procedures for delineating the conditions under which the methodological approach can be applied: defining the project area; estimating any projected rates of land cover change in the without-project and with-project scenarios; conservatively estimating without project GHG emissions and removals; monitoring GHG emissions over the project lifetime; defining types of leakage potential caused by project activities and conservatively estimating expected leakage emissions under the with-project scenario. It shall also observe principles of relevance, completeness, consistency, transparency and conservativeness for land-based carbon accounting; such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 2006 Guidelines for National GHG Inventories for Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (IPCC 2006 GL for AFOLU) and the AFOLU Requirements of the Verified Carbon Standard.

<sup>80</sup> Carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e) is the universal unit of measurement used to indicate the global warming potential (GWP) of each of the seven greenhouse gases. It is used to evaluate the impacts of releasing (or avoiding the release of) different greenhouse gases. For GWP's of relevant GHGs refer to relevant decisions of the CDM Executive Board or the Verified Carbon Standard.

<sup>81</sup> A carbon source is a carbon pool that is a net source of carbon to the atmosphere with less carbon flowing into it than is flowing out of it.

<sup>82</sup> GHG sources may be excluded from this estimate where cumulatively emissions from those sources are less than 20% of the project's expected total GHG emission in the with-project scenario. To determine which sources may be excluded, sources are ranked in order of their relative contribution to the total GHG emissions in the with-project scenario, starting with the lowest source and added until the total cumulative level of 20% is reached (i.e., GHG sources with the lowest cumulative contribution up to 20% may be excluded from the estimate). The threshold of 20% has been adopted as a reasonable limit for demonstration of net climate benefits so that it is not necessary to measure emissions sources if cumulatively they are clearly lower than this level. The following CDM Executive Board tool can be used as guidance for ranking GHG emissions sources: *Tool for testing significance of GHG emissions in A/R CDM project activities* (available at: [http://cdm.unfccc.int/EB/031/eb31\\_repan16.pdf](http://cdm.unfccc.int/EB/031/eb31_repan16.pdf)).

resulting from project activities, minus any project-related negative offsite climate impacts (leakage see CL3).

### CL3. OFFSITE CLIMATE IMPACTS (LEAKAGE)

#### Concept

Increased GHG emissions that occur beyond the project area caused by project activities (leakage) are assessed and mitigated and accounted for in the demonstration of net climate impacts.

#### Indicators

- 1) Determine the types of leakage<sup>83</sup> that are expected and estimate offsite increases in GHG emissions due to project activities using an approved or defensible methodological approach. Where relevant, define and justify where leakage is most likely to take place.
- 2) Describe the measures taken to mitigate leakage.
- 3) Non-CO<sub>2</sub> emissions must be included if they are likely to account for more than 20% of the total leakage emissions (in terms of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent) following the procedures for including or excluding non-CO<sub>2</sub> emissions described in CL2.1.

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<sup>83</sup> The following tools can be used for further explanation and clarification on leakage: Section 4.6.1 in the VCS AFOLU Requirements, available on the VCS website, and/or IPCC LULUCF report, available at [http://www.ipcc.ch/ipccreports/sres/land\\_use/index.php?idp=71](http://www.ipcc.ch/ipccreports/sres/land_use/index.php?idp=71).

## CL4. CLIMATE IMPACT MONITORING

### Concept

Climate impact monitoring assesses changes (within and outside the project area) in project-related carbon pools, project emissions and non-CO<sub>2</sub> GHG emissions if relevant, resulting from project activities.

### Indicators

- 1) Develop and implement a plan for monitoring changes in relevant carbon pools, non-CO<sub>2</sub> GHGs and emissions sources and leakage (as identified in CL1, CL2 and CL3)<sup>84</sup> using an approved or defensible methodological approach and following the defined frequency of monitoring of defined parameters. Emissions sources to monitor must include any sources expected to cumulatively contribute more than 20% of total GHG emissions in the with-project scenario (See footnote to CL2.1). Where the methodological approach used to estimate leakage under CL3 requires monitoring, this leakage must be monitored.
- 2) Disseminate the monitoring plan and any results of monitoring undertaken in accordance with the monitoring plan, ensuring that they are made publicly available on the internet and summaries are communicated to the communities and other stakeholders through appropriate means.

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<sup>84</sup> Synergies should be sought with biodiversity monitoring, such as monitoring of changes in habitats.

**Optional Criterion****GL1. CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION BENEFITS****Concept**

The project provides significant support to assist communities and/or biodiversity in adapting to the impacts of climate change. Strategies to help communities and biodiversity adapt to climate change are identified and implemented.<sup>85</sup>

**Indicators**

- 1) Identify likely regional or sub-national climate change and climate variability scenarios and impacts, using available studies,<sup>86</sup> and identify potential changes in the local land use scenario due to these climate change scenarios in the absence of the project.
- 2) Demonstrate that current or anticipated climate changes are having or are likely to have an impact on the well-being of communities<sup>87</sup> and/or the conservation status of biodiversity<sup>88</sup> in the project zone and surrounding regions.

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<sup>85</sup> Consideration should be made of communities and biodiversity that may be more vulnerable to the negative impacts of these changes due to, for example: vulnerability of key crops or production systems to climatic changes; lack of diversity of livelihood resources and inadequate resources, institutions and capacity to develop new livelihood strategies; and high levels of threat to species survival from habitat fragmentation. Strategies to help local communities and biodiversity adapt to climate change may include diversifying revenues and livelihood strategies; strengthening community organizations and social security systems; maintaining valuable ecosystem services such as hydrological regulation, pollination, pest control and soil fertility; and increasing habitat connectivity across a range of habitat and climate types.

<sup>86</sup> The following tools can be used: *Climate Change Knowledge Portal* (available at: [http://sdwebx.worldbank.org/climateportal/index.cfm?page=global\\_map](http://sdwebx.worldbank.org/climateportal/index.cfm?page=global_map)) *Climate Change Wizard* (available at: <http://www.climatewizard.org/>); *Water World* (available at: <http://www.policysupport.org/waterworld>), etc.

<sup>87</sup> Project proponent(s) can demonstrate, for example, evidence of decreased access to ecosystem services of importance for communities' livelihoods and overall well-being. Climate change models such as Costing Nature (<http://www.policysupport.org/costingnature>), that detail the predicted effects on these-ecosystem services, such as freshwater, and participatory evaluations can be used to demonstrate anticipated impacts on communities.

<sup>88</sup> Project proponent(s) can demonstrate evidence of a change in actual range, phenology or behavior of a species found within the project zone. For a range change, the project proponents should demonstrate that the change affects the entire range of the species and not just a subset of the range (which might be part of natural variation and offset by gains in other parts of the species range). Alternatively, the project proponents can demonstrate anticipated negative changes in the range of one or more species found in the project area using modeling techniques. The recommended modeling tool is Maxent because of its ease of implementation and performance (available at: <http://www.cs.princeton.edu/~schapire/maxent/>). Recommended climatologies are IPCC4 A1 or A2 scenarios, Hadley or Japan high resolution GCM, downscaled to 1km (available at: <http://www.worldclim.org>). Best practice is to have this analysis conducted by a researcher who has published on climate and species distribution modeling using Maxent in the peer-review literature.



- 3) Describe measures needed and *taken* to assist communities and/or biodiversity to adapt to the probable impacts of climate change based on the causal model that explains how the project activities will achieve the project's predicted adaptation benefits.
- 4) Include indicators for adaptation benefits for communities and/or biodiversity in the monitoring plan. *Demonstrate* that the project activities assist communities<sup>89</sup> and/or biodiversity<sup>90</sup> to adapt to the probable impacts of climate change. Assessment of impacts of project activities on Communities must include an evaluation of the impacts by the affected communities.

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<sup>89</sup> Where communities are predicted to experience or are experiencing decreased access to natural resources because of climate change, project proponent(s) must demonstrate that activities are likely to decrease Communities' dependence on these natural resources. For example, where freshwater access is affected by climate change, a project can improve water management for maximum efficiency or provide alternative agricultural methods or products that require less water. Project activities may also help communities adapt to new planting and harvesting schedules to ensure maximum yields. Other climate change adaptation assistance can involve helping communities prepare for 'extreme events' such as floods, droughts and mudslides.

<sup>90</sup> Where an actual range or phenology change in a species is identified, project proponent(s) must demonstrate that the project activities will make a significant contribution to mitigating this impact of climate change. Examples include: creating suitable habitat in an area that is becoming climatically suitable for a species that is losing climatically suitable habitats in other parts of its range; and providing a native food source for a species that is suffering population declines because of timing mismatches between its food needs and food availability linked to climate change (such as spring emergence of vegetation or insects). Where a modeled range impact is demonstrated, project proponents should demonstrate that the project significantly contributes to improving species' ability to occupy a new range or creates habitat in areas to which the species is migrating.

# 4 | COMMUNITY

## CM1. WITHOUT-PROJECT COMMUNITY SCENARIO

### Concept

Original well-being<sup>91</sup> conditions for communities and expected changes under the without-project land use scenario are described.

### Indicators

- 1) Describe the communities at the start of the project and significant community changes in the past, including well-being information, and any community characteristics.<sup>92</sup> Describe the social, economic and cultural diversity<sup>93</sup> within the communities and the differences and interactions between the community groups.
- 2) Evaluate whether the project zone includes any of the following high conservation values (HCVs)<sup>94</sup> related to community well-being<sup>95</sup> and describe the qualifying attributes for any identified HCVs:
  - a) Areas that provide critical ecosystem services;<sup>96</sup>
  - b) Areas that are fundamental for the livelihoods of communities;<sup>97</sup> and

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<sup>91</sup> 'Well-being' is defined as people's experience of the quality of their lives and may include environmental, social, economic, psychological, spiritual and medical dimensions. The improvement of well-being may include providing opportunity, ensuring and enhancing security and empowerment (see the World Bank's attacking poverty framework adapted to REDD+, Lawlor, K., Madeira, E.M., Blockhus, J. and Ganz, D.J., 2013, *Community Participation and Benefits in REDD+: A Review of Initial Outcomes and Lessons*, *Forests*, 4(2), 296-318. available at: <http://www.mdpi.com/1999-4907/4/2/296>).

<sup>92</sup> Community characteristics may include shared language, mythology, history, culture, livelihood systems, traditional authority structures, institutions, practices, values, relationships with specific sites of historical, cultural or spiritual significance, relationships with natural resources, or the customary institutions and rules governing the use of resources and sites.

<sup>93</sup> Including by wealth, gender, age, ethnicity etc.

<sup>94</sup> These high conservation value criteria are based on those defined by the High Conservation Value (HCV) Resource Network (see: <http://hcvnetwork.org/>). Practical help is available for using HCVs in each region, including generic guidance documents (Toolkits) and Country Pages.

<sup>95</sup>Note that high conservation values that are more related to biodiversity are covered in B1.

<sup>96</sup> Such as hydrological services, erosion control, fire control.

<sup>97</sup> Such as for essential food, fuel, fodder, medicines, or building materials without readily available alternatives.

c) Areas that are critical for the traditional cultural identity of communities.<sup>98</sup>

Identify the areas that need to be managed to maintain or enhance the identified HCVs.

- 3) Describe the expected changes in the well-being conditions and other characteristics of Communities under the without-project land use scenario, including the impact of likely changes on all ecosystem services in the project zone identified as important to communities.

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<sup>98</sup> Such as areas of cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance identified in collaboration with the communities.

## CM2. NET POSITIVE COMMUNITY IMPACTS

### Concept

The project generates net positive impacts on the well-being of communities and the community groups within them over the project lifetime. The project maintains or enhances the high conservation values in the project zone that are of importance to the well-being of communities.

### Indicators

- 1) Use appropriate methodologies<sup>99</sup> to assess the impacts<sup>100</sup>, including predicted and actual, direct and indirect benefits, costs and risks, on each of the identified community groups (identified in G1.5) resulting from project activities under the with-project scenario. The assessment of impacts must include changes in well-being due to project activities and an evaluation of the impacts by the affected community groups.<sup>101</sup> This assessment must be based on clearly defined and defensible assumptions about changes in well-being<sup>102</sup> of the community groups under the with-project scenario, including potential impacts of changes in all ecosystem services identified as important for the communities (including water and soil resources), over the project lifetime.
- 2) Describe measures needed and *taken* to mitigate any negative well-being impacts on community groups and for maintenance or enhancement of the high conservation value attributes (identified in CM1.2) consistent with the precautionary principle.<sup>103</sup>
- 3) *Demonstrate* that the net well-being impacts of the project are positive for all identified community groups<sup>104</sup> compared with their anticipated well-being conditions under the without-project land use scenario (described in CM1).

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<sup>99</sup> The following manual is recommended for guidance on appropriate methodologies: Richards, M. and Panfil, S.N. 2011, *Social and Biodiversity Impact Assessment (SBIA) Manual for REDD+ Projects: Part 1 – Core Guidance for Project Proponents*. Climate, Community & Biodiversity Alliance, Forest Trends, Fauna & Flora International and Rainforest Alliance. Washington, DC (available at: <http://www.v-c-s.org/project/ccb-program/guidance/>).

<sup>100</sup> 'Impacts' includes benefits, costs and risks, including those that are direct and indirect and including those related to social, cultural, environmental and economic aspects and to human rights and rights to lands territories and resources. Costs include those related to responsibilities and also opportunity costs. Note that the term 'benefits' refers to positive impacts and the phrase 'costs and risks' equates with negative impacts.

<sup>101</sup> Includes types and magnitude of impacts.

<sup>102</sup> Restricting the evaluation to well-being based on activities that comply with statutory laws or conform with customary rights.

<sup>103</sup> The 'precautionary principle' is defined in the Preamble to the *Convention on Biological Diversity* "[W]here there is a threat of significant reduction or loss of biological diversity, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to avoid or minimize such a threat" (United Nations, 1992. *Convention on Biological Diversity*, Article 2. Rio de Janeiro (available at: [https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/1992/06/19920605%2008-44%20PM/Ch\\_XXVII\\_08p.pdf](https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/1992/06/19920605%2008-44%20PM/Ch_XXVII_08p.pdf))).

<sup>104</sup> An exception may be made if a community group is not significantly affected by or participating in the project, in which case, net well-being impacts must not be negative for that group.

- 4) *Demonstrate* that no high conservation values (identified in CM1.2) are negatively affected by the project.

### CM3. OTHER STAKEHOLDER IMPACTS

#### Concept

Project activities at least 'do no harm' to the well-being of other stakeholders. <sup>105</sup>

#### Indicators

- 1) Identify any potential positive and negative impacts that the project activities are likely to cause on the well-being of other stakeholders.
- 2) Describe the measures needed and *taken* to mitigate the negative well-being impacts on other stakeholders.
- 3) Demonstrate that the project activities do not result in net negative impacts on the well-being of other stakeholders.

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<sup>105</sup> Restricting the evaluation to well-being based on activities that comply with statutory or conform with customary rights.

## CM 4. COMMUNITY IMPACT MONITORING

### Concept

Community impact monitoring assesses changes in well-being resulting from the project activities for community groups and other stakeholders.

### Indicators

- 1) Develop and implement a monitoring plan that identifies community variables<sup>106</sup> to be monitored, communities, community groups and other stakeholders to be monitored, the types of measurements, the sampling methods and the frequency of monitoring and reporting.<sup>107</sup> Monitoring variables must be directly linked to the project's objectives for communities and community groups and to predicted outputs, outcomes and impacts identified in the project's causal model related to the well-being of communities (described in G1.8). Monitoring must assess differentiated impacts, including and benefits, costs and risks, for each of the community groups and must include an evaluation by the affected community groups.<sup>108</sup>
- 2) Develop and implement a monitoring plan to assess the effectiveness of measures taken to maintain or enhance all identified high conservation values related to community well-being.
- 3) Disseminate the monitoring plan, and any results of monitoring undertaken in accordance with the monitoring plan, ensuring that they are made publicly available on the internet and summaries are communicated to the communities and other stakeholders through appropriate means.

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<sup>106</sup> Potential variables may include but are not limited to: income, employment generation, health, market access, schools, food security and education.

<sup>107</sup> The following manual is recommended for guidance on appropriate monitoring methodologies: Richards, M. and Panfil, S.N. 2011, *Social and Biodiversity Impact Assessment (SBIA) Manual for REDD+ Projects: Part 1 – Core Guidance for Project Proponents*. Climate, Community & Biodiversity Alliance, Forest Trends, Fauna & Flora International and Rainforest Alliance. Washington, DC (available at: <http://www.v-c-s.org/project/ccb-program/guidance/>).

<sup>108</sup> Evaluation by the affected community groups can be undertaken through a documented opportunity for feedback from communities and their community groups as part of a participatory rural appraisal, community meetings or some other process.

**Optional Criterion****GL2. EXCEPTIONAL COMMUNITY BENEFITS****Concept**

The project is a smallholder/community-led and implemented on land that they own or manage and/or is explicitly pro-poor in terms of targeting benefits to globally poorer communities.

The project delivers equitable well-being benefits to smallholders/community members,<sup>109</sup> including short-term and long-term benefits and enhancement of security and empowerment of smallholders/community members. Appropriate institutional and governance arrangements have been used to enable full and effective participation of smallholders/community members in decision making, implementation and management of the project and in doing so has managed risks related to aggregating smallholders/community members at scale.

Well-being benefits are shared equitably not only with the smallholders/community members but also among the smallholders/community members, ensuring that equitable benefits also flow to more marginalized and/or vulnerable households and individuals within them.

**Indicators**

- 1) a) Demonstrate that smallholders/community members or communities either own or have management rights, statutory or customary, individually or collectively, to land in the project area. The smallholders/community members or communities have rights to claim that their activities will or did generate or cause the project's climate, community and biodiversity benefits.

OR

- b) Demonstrate that the project zone is in a low human development country OR in an administrative area of a medium or high human development country in which at least 50% of the households within the communities are below the national poverty line.
- 2) *Demonstrate* that the project generates short-term<sup>110</sup> and long-term net positive well-being benefits for smallholders/community members. Include indicators of well-being impacts on smallholder/community members in the monitoring plan. The assessment of impacts must include changes in well-being due to project activities and an evaluation of the impacts by the affected smallholders/community members.

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<sup>109</sup> Smallholders/community members are defined as households within the communities that are actively participating in the project.

<sup>110</sup> Including significant benefits that start flowing to smallholders/community members in a short enough time frame to provide incentives that outweigh their costs and risks of participation.



- 3) Identify, through a participatory process, risks for the smallholders/community members to participate in the project, including those related to trade-offs with food security, land loss, loss of yields and short-term and long-term climate change adaptation. Explain how the project is designed to avoid such trade-offs and the measures taken to manage the identified risks. Include indicators of risks for smallholders/community members in the monitoring plan.
- 4) Identify community groups that are marginalized and/or vulnerable.<sup>111</sup> *Demonstrate* that the project generates net positive impacts on the well-being of all identified marginalized and/or vulnerable community groups. *Demonstrate* that any barriers or risks that might prevent benefits going to marginalized and/or vulnerable smallholder/community members have been identified and addressed. *Demonstrate* that measures are taken to identify any marginalized and/or vulnerable smallholders/community members, whose well-being may be negatively affected by the project, and that measures are taken to avoid, or when unavoidable to mitigate, any such impacts.
- 5) *Demonstrate* that the project generates net positive impacts on the well-being of women and that women participate in or influence decision making and include indicators of impacts on women in the monitoring plan.
- 6) Describe the design and implementation of a benefit sharing mechanism, demonstrating that smallholders/community members have fully and effectively participated in defining the decision-making process and the distribution mechanism for benefit sharing; and demonstrating transparency, including on project funding and costs as well as on benefit distribution.
- 7) Explain how relevant and adequate information about predicted and actual benefits, costs and risks has been communicated to smallholders/community members and provide evidence that the information is understood.
- 8) Describe the project's governance and implementation structures, and any relevant self-governance or other structures used for aggregation of smallholders/community members, and demonstrate that they enable full and effective participation of smallholders/community members in project decision-making and implementation.
- 9) *Demonstrate* how the project is developing the capacity of smallholders/community members, and relevant local organizations or institutions, to participate effectively and actively in project design, implementation and management.

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<sup>111</sup> 'Marginalized' people or groups are those that have little or no influence over decision-making processes. Marginalization may be related to a range of factors including age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status and religion. 'Vulnerable' people or groups are those who lack secure access to the assets on which secure livelihoods are built (socio-political, cultural, human, financial, natural and physical) and with high exposure to external stresses and shocks (including climate change). Therefore they have high sensitivity and low adaptive capacity to adjust in response to actual or expected changes. Forest dependency may be an important factor affecting vulnerability particularly where the project itself may change access to forest resources. In many situations marginalization exacerbates vulnerability (e.g., marginalization by gender).

# 5 | BIODIVERSITY

## B1. BIODIVERSITY WITHOUT-PROJECT SCENARIO

### Concept

Original biodiversity conditions in the project zone and expected changes under the without-project land use scenario are described.

### Indicators

- 1) Describe biodiversity<sup>112</sup> within the project zone at the start of the project and threats to that biodiversity, using appropriate methodologies.
- 2) Evaluate whether the project zone includes any of the following high conservation values (HCVs) related to biodiversity and describe the qualifying attributes for any identified HCVs:<sup>113</sup>
  - a) Globally, regionally or nationally significant concentrations of biodiversity values:
    - i) Protected areas<sup>114</sup>
    - ii) Threatened species<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> 'Biodiversity' is defined as 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 (Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992)

<sup>113</sup> These high conservation value criteria are based on those defined by the High Conservation Value (HCV) Resource Network (see: <http://hcvnetwork.org/>) where practical help is available for using HCVs in each region, including generic guidance documents (Toolkits) and Country Pages. Note that high conservation values that are more related to community well-being are covered in CM1.2.

<sup>114</sup> 'Protected areas' are defined as an area of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means equivalent to IUCN Protected Area Management Categories I-VI (see: <https://www.iucn.org/theme/protected-areas/about/protected-areas-categories> for definitions) as well as areas that have been proposed for protected area status by the relevant statutory body but have not yet been officially declared, and including areas protected under international conventions (e.g., Ramsar sites, World Heritage Sites, UNESCO Man-and-Biosphere Reserves, etc.).

<sup>115</sup> Species at risk of extinction, specifically those that qualify for the IUCN Red List threat categories of Critically Endangered (CR), Endangered (EN) and Vulnerable (VU) (see: [www.iucnredlist.org](http://www.iucnredlist.org) and the CCB Program document *CCB Program Definitions* for more information), species classified by IUCN as Vulnerable (VU), Endangered (EN) and Critically Endangered (CR) at a global or regional level, or whose trade is regulated under international agreements (e.g., CITES), as well as nationally protected species. IUCN Red Listing remains incomplete and many threatened species have not yet been assessed by the IUCN Species Survival Commission. In some countries,

- iii) Endemic species<sup>116</sup>
  - iv) Areas that support significant concentrations of a species during any time in their lifecycle.<sup>117</sup>
  - b) Globally, regionally or nationally significant large landscape-level areas where viable populations of most if not all naturally occurring species exist in natural patterns of distribution and abundance;
  - c) Threatened or rare ecosystems.<sup>118</sup>
- 3) Identify the areas that need to be managed to maintain or enhance the identified HCVs.
  - 4) Describe how the without-project land use scenario would affect biodiversity conditions in the project zone.<sup>119</sup>

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especially those lacking national IUCN red lists or nationally protected species lists, expert consultation is needed to learn if any such species might be present.

<sup>116</sup> Species for which the entire global range is restricted to the site, the region or the country (the level of endemism must be defined).

<sup>117</sup> Such as for migrations, feeding grounds, or breeding areas.

<sup>118</sup> Includes ecosystems (intact or not) or associations of species that have always been rare, those which are now rare or greatly reduced and those for which intact examples are very rare even if heavily disturbed or degraded. For threatened ecosystems, IUCN is coordinating the development of an Ecosystem Red List. This list will reflect extinction risks at local, regional and global levels, using the categories for threatened ecosystems which are already used for threatened species: Vulnerable, Endangered and Critically Endangered. Once operational, this will be an important resource for countries where little or no information exists on national ecosystem prioritization (see: <http://www.iucnredlistofecosystems.org/>).

<sup>119</sup> Such as in terms of habitat availability, landscape connectivity, or threatened species.

## B2. NET POSITIVE BIODIVERSITY IMPACTS

### Concept

The project generates net positive impacts on biodiversity within the project zone over the project lifetime. The project maintains or enhances any high conservation values present in the project zone that are of importance in conserving biodiversity. Native species<sup>120</sup> are used unless otherwise justified and invasive species<sup>121</sup> and genetically modified organisms (GMOs)<sup>122</sup> are not used.

### Indicators

- 1) Use appropriate methodologies<sup>123</sup> to estimate changes in biodiversity, including assessment of predicted and actual, positive and negative, direct and indirect impacts, resulting from project activities under the with-project scenario in the project zone and over the project lifetime. This estimate must be based on clearly defined and defensible assumptions.
- 2) *Demonstrate* that the project's net impacts on biodiversity in the project zone are positive, compared with the biodiversity conditions under the without-project land use scenario (described in B1).
- 3) Describe measures needed and *taken* to mitigate negative impacts on biodiversity and any measures needed and *taken* for maintenance or enhancement of the high conservation value attributes (identified in B1.2) consistent with the precautionary principle.
- 4) *Demonstrate* that no high conservation values (identified in B1.2) are negatively affected by the project.
- 5) Identify all species used by the project and *show* that no known invasive species are introduced into any area affected by the project and that the population of any invasive species does not increase as a result of the project.

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<sup>120</sup> 'Native species' are defined as those that are part of the composition of a natural representative ecosystem of the area where the project site is located.

<sup>121</sup> 'Invasive species' are defined as non-native species that threaten ecosystems, habitats or species in the Project Zone as identified in the Global Invasive Species Database (see: <http://www.iucngisd.org/gisd/>), from scientific literature and from local knowledge.

<sup>122</sup> 'Genetically modified organisms' are defined as any living organism that possesses a novel combination of genetic material obtained through the use of modern biotechnology and which is capable of transferring or replicating genetic material.

<sup>123</sup> The following manual is recommended for guidance on appropriate methodologies: Richards, M. and Panfil, S.N. 2011, *Social and Biodiversity Impact Assessment (SBIA) Manual for REDD+ Projects: Part 1 – Core Guidance for Project Proponents*. Climate, Community & Biodiversity Alliance, Forest Trends, Fauna & Flora International and Rainforest Alliance. Washington, DC (available at: <http://www.v-c-s.org/project/ccb-program/guidance/>).

- 6) Describe possible adverse effects of non-native species<sup>124</sup> used by the project on the region's environment, including impacts on native species and disease introduction or facilitation. Justify any use of non-native species over native species.
- 7) *Guarantee* that no GMOs are used to generate GHG emissions reductions or removals.
- 8) Describe the possible adverse effects of, and justify the use of, fertilizers, chemical pesticides, biological control agents and other inputs used for the project.
- 9) Describe the process for identifying, classifying and managing all waste products resulting from project activities.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> 'Non native species' are defined as species occurring outside their natural range, whether accidentally or intentionally introduced.

<sup>125</sup> May include but not limited to: methods of collecting, storing, moving, treating and disposing of animal, plant, food processing, municipal and industrial wastes, development of products from waste materials, including biofuels, engineering and analysis of projected and existing waste disposal systems and pesticide, containers, recycling pre- and post-consumer wastes, improved methods for mitigating environmental impacts and biosecurity risks from, agricultural, forestry, municipal and industrial wastes, etc.

## B3. OFFSITE BIODIVERSITY IMPACTS

### Concept

Negative impacts on biodiversity outside the project zone resulting from project activities are evaluated and mitigated.

### Indicators

- 1) Identify potential negative impacts on biodiversity that the project activities are likely to cause outside the project zone.
- 2) Describe the measures needed and *taken* to mitigate these negative impacts on biodiversity outside the project zone.
- 3) Evaluate unmitigated negative impacts on biodiversity outside the project zone and compare them with the project's biodiversity benefits within the project zone. Justify and demonstrate that the net effect of the project on biodiversity is positive.

## B4. BIODIVERSITY IMPACT MONITORING

### Concept

Biodiversity impact monitoring assesses the changes in biodiversity resulting from project activities within and outside the project zone.

### Indicators

- 1) Develop and implement a monitoring plan that identifies biodiversity variables<sup>126</sup> to be monitored, the areas to be monitored, the sampling methods and the frequency of monitoring and reporting.<sup>127</sup> Monitoring variables must be directly linked to the project's biodiversity objectives and to predicted activities, outcomes and impacts identified in the project's causal model related to biodiversity (described in G1.8).
- 2) Develop and implement a monitoring plan to assess the effectiveness of measures taken to maintain or enhance all identified high conservation values related to globally, regionally or nationally significant biodiversity (identified in B1.2) present in the project zone.
- 3) Disseminate the monitoring plan and the results of monitoring, ensuring that they are made publicly available on the internet and summaries are communicated to the communities and other stakeholders through appropriate means.

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<sup>126</sup> Potential variables may include but are not limited to: species abundance; population size, range, trends and diversity; habitat area, quality and diversity; landscape connectivity; and forest fragmentation.

<sup>127</sup> The following manual is recommended for guidance on appropriate monitoring methodologies: Richards, M. and Panfil, S.N. 2011, *Social and Biodiversity Impact Assessment (SBIA) Manual for REDD+ Projects: Part 1 – Core Guidance for Project Proponents*. Climate, Community & Biodiversity Alliance, Forest Trends, Fauna & Flora International and Rainforest Alliance. Washington, DC (available at: <http://www.v-c-s.org/project/ccb-program/guidance/>).

**Optional Criterion****GL3. EXCEPTIONAL BIODIVERSITY BENEFITS****Concept**

Projects conserve biodiversity at sites of global significance for biodiversity conservation selected on the basis of the Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) framework of vulnerability and irreplaceability.<sup>128</sup>

Conserving biodiversity at these sites may contribute to meeting country commitments to the Aichi Targets under the Convention on Biological Diversity and with the priorities identified in a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

**Indicators**

- 1) Demonstrate that the project zone includes a site of high biodiversity conservation priority by meeting either the vulnerability or irreplaceability criteria defined below<sup>129</sup>, identifying the 'trigger' species<sup>130</sup> that cause(s) the site to meet any of the following qualifying conditions and providing evidence that the qualifying conditions are met:

- a) Vulnerability

Regular occurrence of a globally threatened species (according to the IUCN Red List) at the site:

- i) Critically Endangered (CR) and Endangered (EN) species - presence of at least a single individual; or

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<sup>128</sup> A 'Key Biodiversity Area' is a site of global significance for biodiversity conservation that satisfies criteria based on a framework of vulnerability and irreplaceability defined in terms of species and population threat levels as defined in Langhammer et al (2007) (see: Langhammer, P.F., Bakarr, M.I., Bennun, L.A., Brooks, T.M., Clay, R.P., Darwall, W., De Silva, N., Edgar, G.J., Eken, G., Fishpool, L.D.C., Fonseca, G.A.B. da, Foster, M.N., Knox, D.H., Matiku, P., Radford, E.A., Rodrigues, A.S.L., Salaman, P., Sechrest, W. and Tordoff, A.W. 2007, *Identification and gap analysis of Key Biodiversity Areas: Targets for comprehensive protected area systems*, Best Practice Protected Areas Guidelines Series, No. 15. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland).

<sup>129</sup> Qualifying sites can be identified based on available information about the site or by referring to existing lists of Key Biodiversity Areas that have so far been identified at national, sub-national or regional level in over 200 countries. The Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT) for Business (available at: <https://www.ibatforbusiness.org/>) provides a visualization and GIS download tool for protected areas and prioritization approaches, including Key Biodiversity Areas.

<sup>130</sup> A Key Biodiversity Area 'trigger species' is any species that causes a site to meet the Key Biodiversity Area qualifying conditions (see: Langhammer, P.F., Bakarr, M.I., Bennun, L.A., Brooks, T.M., Clay, R.P., Darwall, W., De Silva, N., Edgar, G.J., Eken, G., Fishpool, L.D.C., Fonseca, G.A.B. da, Foster, M.N., Knox, D.H., Matiku, P., Radford, E.A., Rodrigues, A.S.L., Salaman, P., Sechrest, W. and Tordoff, A.W. 2007, *Identification and gap analysis of Key Biodiversity Areas: Targets for comprehensive protected area systems*, Best Practice Protected Areas Guidelines Series, No.15. IUCN)



ii) Vulnerable species (VU) - presence of at least 30 individuals or 10 pairs.

OR

b) Irreplaceability

A minimum proportion of a species' global population present at the site at any stage of the species' lifecycle according to the following thresholds:<sup>131</sup>

- i) Restricted-range species - species with a global range less than 50,000 km<sup>2</sup> and 5% of global population at the site; or
  - ii) Species with large but clumped distributions - 5% of the global population at the site; or
  - iii) Globally significant congregations - 1% of the global population seasonally at the site; or
  - iv) Globally significant source populations - 1% of the global population at the site.
- 2) Describe recent population trends<sup>132</sup> of each of the trigger species<sup>133</sup> in the project zone at the start of the project and describe the most likely changes under the without-project land use scenario.
  - 3) Describe measures<sup>134</sup> needed and *taken* to maintain or enhance the population status of each trigger species in the project zone and to reduce the threats to them based on the causal model that identifies threats to trigger species and activities to address them.
  - 4) Include indicators of the population trend of each trigger species and/or the threats to them in the monitoring plan and demonstrate the effectiveness of measures needed and taken to maintain or enhance the population status of trigger species.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> While there is wide consensus on the need for a sub-criterion for bioregionally restricted assemblages, this sub-criterion has been excluded from the Standards until guidelines and thresholds have been agreed.

<sup>132</sup> This may be achieved through collection of a small number of direct measures (such as trend in absolute population size) or through triangulation of a broader set of less direct but more easily measured indicators (linked to the causal model) such as relative abundance, site occupancy, intensity of key threats (off-take, mortality, habitat change, disturbance) and/or key demographic parameters like nest productivity. Where direct evidence is lacking, past trends can be determined from threat assessments, credible local reports etc. Projections of population trend should relate to the theory of change described in G1.7 and the threat assessments in B1.1.

<sup>133</sup> In cases where several trigger species occur, it is allowable to focus population trend (GL3.2), conservation measures (GL3.3) and monitoring (GL3.4) on at least three species that include (i) species for which populations at the site have the highest global significance, (ii) those facing the most acute threats at the site and (iii) those for which management will be beneficial to a broad range of other trigger species facing similar threats.

<sup>134</sup> Following good practice guidance for in-situ species management including active management measures and re-introduction, as appropriate, and consistent with any relevant existing species management plan.

<sup>135</sup> Population status or even presence at the site may be hard to establish for some species that are threatened, rare or cryptic, for example. Evidence that threats to the species are being addressed may be used to demonstrate that species population status is likely to be maintained or enhanced as a result of project activities.

## 6 | Governance and Development of the CCB Standards

The *Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards* were developed by the Climate, Community & Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA). The CCBA is a partnership of CARE International, Conservation International, The Nature Conservancy, Rainforest Alliance and the Wildlife Conservation Society. VCS assumed management of the CCB Program in November of 2014. VCS works to maximize the potential of the *Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards* through collaboration with members of the CCBA and other stakeholders. The CCB Steering Committee, which includes representatives of CCBA member organizations Conservation International, the Rainforest Alliance, The Nature Conservancy and Wildlife Conservation Society and the CCBA Secretariat, supports VCS in governance, strategic direction and ongoing development of the *Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards*.

*CCB Version 1*, which comprised solely the first edition of the *Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards*, was released in May 2005 after a two-year development process based on input from community and environmental groups, companies, academics, project developers and others with expert knowledge or affected by the standards. Prior to their release, *CCB Version 1* was tested on projects in Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas and peer reviewed by the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) in Indonesia, the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE) in Costa Rica and the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) in Kenya.

*CCB Version 2* was released in December 2008. *CCB Version 2*, which initially comprised only the second edition of the *Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards*, was revised to respond to the evolving context for land-based carbon based on feedback from a wide range of users of the standards such as project developers, representatives of local communities and indigenous peoples, investors, offset buyers, non-governmental organizations and government agencies. The revision process included two public comment periods of 60-days and 30-days respectively and was overseen by a multi-stakeholder Standards Committee. The *CCB Program Rules* were added to *CCB Version 2* in June 2010 to provide guidance on the evaluation of projects using the CCB Program.

*CCB Version 3* was released in December 2013. *CCB Version 3* is built around the third edition of the *Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards* and a significantly updated edition of the *CCB Program Rules* initially released in December 2013. The two main objectives of the revision from *CCB Version 2* to *Version 3* were to incorporate substantial feedback received from users and other stakeholders to ensure that the CCB Program remained robust, practical and continued to meet the demands of the users, and to facilitate the access of smallholder and community-led projects to carbon finance. This revision process, overseen by a multi-stakeholder Standards Committee, was accompanied by two 60-day public comment periods in 2013. Version 3.1 of this document, the *Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards*, was released in June 2017. The main objective of this update was to better align the terminology and

formatting of the CCB Program with the VCS Program. The update process was accompanied by a 60-day public comment period in 2016.

## 7 | Acknowledgements

*CCB Version 3* was developed through a transparent and inclusive participatory process involving diverse stakeholders facilitated by Priti Narasimhan and Joanna Durbin with support from Gareth Wishart of the CCBA secretariat. Significant inputs and oversight were provided by a Standards Committee composed of: Jenny Henman (Plant your Future), Jeremy Freund (Wildlife Works Carbon LLC), Christian Dannecker (South Pole Carbon Asset Management Ltd), Sarah M. Walker (Winrock International), Rebecca Dickson (TerraCarbon LLC), Kanyinke Sena (Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordination Committee), Juan Carlos Jintiach (Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon basin-COICA), Nigel Hughes (Green Light trust), Ambrosius Ruwidrijanto (Telapak), Johannes Ebeling (BioCarbon Macquarie Global Investments), Brian McFarland (Carbonfund.org Foundation), David Lloyd (Carbon Neutral Company), Helen Crowley (Kering), Edit Kiss (Eneco), Henry Neufeldt (World Agroforestry Center), Bastiaan Louman (CATIE), Pam Jagger (CIFOR), Seth Shames (Ecoagriculture Partners), Yaw Kwakye (Forestry Commission, Ghana), Felix Ya Mbumba (Ministry of Environment, Conservation of Nature and Tourism, Democratic Republic of Congo), Jane Dunlop (Fauna and Flora International), Charlie Parker (WWF), Sebastian Hetsch (TUV SUD Industrie Service GmbH), Christie Pollet-Young (SCS Global Services), Carolyn Ching (VCS Association), Nicole Virgilio (The Nature Conservancy), Jeffrey Hayward (Rainforest Alliance) and Tom Evans (Wildlife Conservation Society).

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Note that affiliations listed in this section are only for reference and may have changed since the person's contribution to the CCB Program.

## APPENDIX 1: DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version	Date	Comment
First Edition, v1.0	12 May 2005	First edition released.
Second Edition, v2.0	02 Dec 2008	Second edition released.
Third Edition, v3.0	12 Dec 2013	Third edition released.
Third Edition, v3.1	21 June 2017	<p>Main updates (all effective on issue date):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Overall re-formatting to include numbered sections (throughout).</li> <li>2) Reorganization of content to move information about governance and development of the CCB Program and acknowledgements to the end of the document (Section 6 and 7).</li> <li>3) Updated the roles of the VCS and CCBA in the management and governance of the CCB Program (Section 6 and throughout).</li> <li>4) Removed the 'Glossary' section, as all definitions are now included in the CCB Program document <i>CCB Program Definitions</i>.</li> <li>5) Changed the following terms and document titles (throughout): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <i>Approved Auditor</i> to <i>validation/verification body</i></li> <li>b) <i>Right of use</i> to <i>project ownership</i></li> <li>c) <i>Projects using the programmatic approach</i> to <i>grouped projects</i></li> <li>d) <i>Project design documentation</i> to <i>project description</i></li> <li>e) <i>Project implementation report</i> to <i>monitoring report</i></li> <li>f) <i>Rules for the Use of the Climate, Community &amp; Biodiversity Standards</i> to <i>CCB Program Rules</i></li> <li>g) <i>Fee Schedule for the Climate, Community &amp; Biodiversity Standards</i> to <i>CCB Program Fee Schedule</i></li> </ol> </li> <li>6) Updated the definition of <i>start date</i> and clarified the start of the <i>project lifetime</i> (G1.9).</li> </ol>

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