

STANDARD FOR THE CERTIFICATION
AND REGISTRATION OF
BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION
INITIATIVES
NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS FOR QUANTIFYING NET GAINS

PROCLIMA[®]
SOUTH POLE

Version 1.0 | July 02, 2021



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PROCLIMA, SOUTH POLE. 2021. STANDARD FOR THE CERTIFICATION AND REGISTRATION OF BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION INITIATIVES. Nature-Based Solutions for Quantifying Net Gains. Version 1.0. July 02, 2021. Bogotá, Colombia. 43 p. <http://www.proclima.net.co>

NOTE: This document is a faithful translation of the *Estándar para la Certificación y Registro de Iniciativas de Conservación de Biodiversidad. Soluciones basadas en la naturaleza para cuantificar ganancias netas*. If there is an unintended difference in interpretation between the English and Spanish versions, the Spanish version shall prevail.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

BbL	Biodiversity Baseline
BCs	Biodiversity Credits
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LMT	Landscape Management Tools
MSU	Minimum Spatial Unit
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TOC	Theory of change
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework on Climate Change
VBC	Verified Biodiversity Credits

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

According to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD 1992), "*Biological diversity' means the variability among living organisms from all sources including, among other things, 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.*"²

In keeping with this definition, biodiversity-related issues have been addressed through action plans that consider the conservation of species and ecosystems linked to recognizing associated ecosystem services.

However, despite efforts to meet the priorities defined almost three decades ago, terrestrial habitats continue to be subject to fragmentation and degradation, increasing species' vulnerability. In this regard, the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species states that currently, "*of the 63,837 species assessed, 19,817 are threatened with extinction, including 41% of amphibians, 33% of reef-building corals, 25% of mammals, 13% of birds and 30% of conifers.*"³

As a result, new goals will be set this year in international negotiations, focusing on new forms of biodiversity management, including strategies that combine the sustainable use of natural resources with activities associated with the preservation and restoration of ecosystems. All this, based on an integral approach that favors the sustainable management of ecological and social systems. Thus, if biodiversity conservation actions framed in nature-based solutions are appropriately designed and implemented in line with this purpose, net biodiversity gains can make a difference.

Following this determination, South Pole and ProClima join forces to provide tools for biodiversity management, motivating the participation of public and private actors who intend to undertake nature-based solutions with a landscape approach. Likewise, considering that monitoring, reporting, and verifying the impacts generated offers the possibility of articulating conservation actions, quantifying net gains, and participating in environmental credit markets.

¹ Term known as biodiversity

² <https://www.cbd.int/doc/legal/cbd-es.pdf>

³ <https://www.iucn.org/es/regiones/am%C3%A9rica-del-sur/nuestro-trabajo/pol%C3%ADticas-de-biodiversidad/lista-roja-de-uicn>

In this context, the Standard for the Certification and Registration of Biodiversity Conservation Initiatives⁴ is designed to certify and register initiatives that contribute to preserving and restoration of ecosystems, ensuring compliance with national and international policies related to biodiversity and sustainability use, without neglecting ecosystem services.

1.2 Objectives

The objectives of the "Standard for the Certification and Registration of Biodiversity Conservation Initiatives" (hereinafter referred to as this Standard) are:

- (a) establish the principles and practices that shall be complied with by holders of biodiversity conservation initiatives in order to obtain certification and registration with PROCLIMA;
- (b) define the requirements to be taken into account by the holders of biodiversity conservation initiatives to implement plans, programs, projects, actions or activities that allow quantifying net gains in biodiversity;
- (c) provide criteria and requirements for quantifying net biodiversity gains;
- (d) provide the necessary conditions to ensure the data quality in the quantification and management of biodiversity credits;
- (e) promote the compliance of biodiversity conservation initiatives with the rules and procedures that apply to their certification and registration;
- (f) ensure the overall effectiveness and integrity of the PROCLIMA Program.

2 Version

This document constitutes the Version 1.0. July 02, 2021.

This version of the standard may be adjusted periodically. Therefore, the interested parties should ensure that they are using the current version of the document.

⁴ Biodiversity conservation initiatives are plans, programs, projects, actions, measures or activities expressly dedicated to achieving a particular objective related to the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

3 Scope

This document constitutes the Standard for the certification and registration of biodiversity conservation initiatives. It provides the set of principles and requirements necessary for the accreditation and registration of biodiversity conservation initiatives and the quantification of Biodiversity Credits (from now on BCs), ensuring that they comply with the conditions established in this Standard.

The extent of this Standard is limited to:

- (a) biodiversity conservation initiatives that include actions for the preservation, restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity;
- (b) biodiversity conservation initiatives whose development includes contributions to regional or local conservation strategies;
- (c) biodiversity conservation initiatives generated from compliance with biodiversity loss compensation plans, provided that the actions framed in the initiative are additional to those of mandatory compliance;
- (d) biodiversity conservation initiatives that propose voluntary actions for the preservation, restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity;
- (e) quantifiable net biodiversity gains generated by the implementation of biodiversity conservation initiatives;

This document presents the requirements for the certification and registration of plans, programs, projects, actions, activities, or measures, whose purpose is the conservation of biological diversity, seeking to demonstrate net gains in biodiversity and that may be applicable in the framework of compliance with environmental obligations or voluntary biodiversity conservation projects.

The net gain corresponds to the differential between the biodiversity values at the beginning of the project and those observed due to biodiversity conservation activities throughout project implementation.

This standard can be applied regardless of the geographic location or scale of a project.

This standard can be used alone to quantify net biodiversity gains and obtain BCs, or combined with PROCLIMA standards related to the certification and registration of climate

change mitigation projects⁵. In such cases, the biodiversity conservation standard makes it possible to evaluate net gains in biodiversity. In contrast, the criteria for the quantification of GHG emission reductions or removals allow the recording of greenhouse gas emission reductions or removals.

4 Area of application

This standard is intended to serve:

- (a) all holders of biodiversity conservation initiatives that intend to register with PROCLIMA their plans, programs, projects, actions, measures or activities expressly dedicated to meeting a particular objective related to biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services;
- (b) independent entities that conduct certification audits of biodiversity conservation initiatives;
- (c) the entities involved in the management of biodiversity information;
- (d) private companies, government agencies, multilateral institutions and other financial institutions that invest in biodiversity conservation projects and/or participate in markets related to nature-based solutions;
- (e) in general, to all interested parties related to biodiversity conservation initiatives.

5 Principles

Biodiversity conservation initiative holders and all stakeholders should apply the following principles⁶:

Responsibility

Guarantee the responsible use of the resources that make up the biological diversity, demonstrating the responsibility of the people who use and manage the resource.

⁵ Certification and Registration Program for GHG Mitigation Initiatives and Other Greenhouse Gas Projects; and Voluntary Carbon Market Standard. Available in www.proclima.net.co

⁶ Some elements for the definition of these principles have been taken from the following document: Secretaría del Convenio sobre la Diversidad Biológica (2004) Principios y directrices de Addis Abeba para la utilización sostenible de la diversidad biológica (Directrices del CDB) Montreal: Secretaría del Convenio sobre la Diversidad Biológica, 21 p.

Integrity

Cover the three areas on which sustainable development is based (social, economic, and environmental).

Compatibility

Determine consistency between the sustainable use of biological diversity and local customs and traditions (and the law that recognizes them) when developing biodiversity conservation initiatives.

Equality

Promote the participation of resource users in making decisions about use, and share the authority to undertake any actions arising from those decisions, based on rights to biodiversity resources and responsibility for their conservation.

Equity

Guarantee the reasonable distribution of the benefits generated by the sustainable use of biodiversity resources, ensuring that an equitable share of the advantages is provided to local participants as compensation for their efforts.

Precautionary principle

Apply the "precautionary principle"⁷ to decisions related to biodiversity management, following Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development.⁸

Transparency

Ensure disclosure of decisions and activities that affect society, the economy, the environment, the willingness to communicate them in a clean environment, and the willingness to express them accurately, timely, honest, and complete.⁹

6 General Terms

The following general terms apply to this standard:

⁷ Principle 15. Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. Available in: <https://www.un.org/spanish/esa/sustdev/agenda21/riodeclaration.htm>

⁸ In order to protect the environment, the precautionary approach shall be widely applied by States according to their capabilities. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.

⁹ Taken from ISO 26000:2010 Standard, 2.24

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

7 Normative References

The following references are indispensable for the application of this Standard:

- (a) Convention on Biological Diversity¹⁰. United Nations (1992);
- (b) National policies and action plans related to the use and management of biological diversity;
- (c) Environmental legislation that dictates norms on the management of biological diversity;
- (d) The PROCLIMA Certification and Registration Program and/or the PROCLIMA Program Methodological Guidelines that apply to biodiversity conservation initiatives;

8 Eligible activities and conservation tools

8.1 Eligible activities for quantifying net gains in biodiversity

This standard applies to biodiversity conservation initiatives that demonstrate net gains in biodiversity. Biodiversity conservation initiatives are plans, programs, projects, actions, measures, or activities expressly dedicated to meeting a particular objective related to the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Under this Standard, initiatives consisting of the following conservation actions can be certified and registered¹¹: (a) preservation; (b) restoration; (c) sustainable use.

¹⁰ <https://www.cbd.int/doc/legal/cbd-es.pdf>

¹¹ These actions, developed separately or combined, make up a biodiversity conservation initiative.

8.1.1 Preservation

Actions that lead to maintaining the natural state of biodiversity and ecosystems by limiting or eliminating human intervention.¹²

Preservation actions generally include isolation of areas, the establishment of living barriers, isolation of forest fragments, monitoring and control programs, and reducing hunting and fishing activities.

8.1.2 Restoration

Restoration¹³ is an interdisciplinary strategy in which scientific knowledge is articulated to provide answers to ecosystem management and administration processes in response to the need to restore degraded ecosystems and prevent future damage.

Restoration includes interventions such as: (a) ecological restoration, (b) ecological rehabilitation and, (c) ecological recovery.

Ecological restoration consists of restoring the degraded ecosystem to a condition similar to the pre-disturbance ecosystem concerning its composition, structure, and functioning. In addition, the resulting ecosystem shall be a self-sustaining system. It shall ensure the conservation of species, the ecosystem in general, and most of its goods and services.

Ecological rehabilitation aims to bring the degraded system to a system similar or not to the pre-disturbance system, which should be self-sustaining, preserve some species, and provide some ecosystem services.

Ecological recovery aims to recover some ecosystem services of social interest. Generally, the resulting ecosystems are not self-sustaining and do not resemble the pre-disturbance system.

8.1.3 Management and sustainable use

Management and sustainable use activities¹⁴ are **complementary** actions to the preservation and restoration of ecosystems. These include the sustainable use and

¹² Defined in the colombian document: *Política Nacional para la Gestión Integral de la Biodiversidad y sus Servicios Ecosistémicos (PNGIBSE)*. Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible. s.f. Bogotá, 134 p.

¹³ According the definitions in: Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible. 2015. *Plan Nacional de Restauración: restauración ecológica, rehabilitación y recuperación de áreas disturbadas*. Bogotá, D.C.: Colombia. 92 p. Available in: <https://www.minambiente.gov.co/index.php/bosques-biodiversidad-y-servicios-ecosistematicos/gestion-en-biodiversidad/restauracion-ecologica>

¹⁴ Adapted to the *Manual de compensación del componente biótico / Dirección de Bosques, Biodiversidad y Servicios Ecosistémicos*; textos: Ramírez Martínez, Natalia María; Hincapié Posada, Juan Esteban; Fernández, María Angélica; Ruíz Hernández, Johanna Alexandra; Lozano Rodríguez, Laura Andrea. --- Bogotá, D.C.: Colombia. Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible, 2018. Disponible en: <https://www.minambiente.gov.co/index.php/bosques-biodiversidad-y->

exploitation of resources, generating alternatives for local communities based on the identification of ecosystem services.

These activities, as complementary, should be designed as part of the preservation and restoration processes, seeking to fulfill the objective of the biodiversity conservation initiative and ensuring that they serve as a permanent conservation strategy.

8.2 Conservation tools

Some of the tools that should be included in the development of conservation initiatives are the so-called "**landscape management tools**" (LMT)¹⁵. LMT are a model for the implementation of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use strategies. LMT are landscape elements that compose or enhance habitat, increase functional connectivity, or simultaneously fulfill these functions while contributing to biodiversity conservation.

LMT can include corridors (biological and conservation), mini-corridors or connecting strips enclosures, enclosures, live fences, enrichment, supplementation, multipurpose forests, conversion from pasture to forest cover, silvopastoral systems, agroforestry systems, forest plantations, among others.

Corridors (*biological and conservation*) are landscape management tools that favor movement and genetic exchange between local populations spatially isolated due to habitat fragmentation and loss. They can follow natural dispersal and migration routes, such as watercourses, or be created through restoration strategies in open areas. Biological corridors can be remanent when the connection between forest patches is preserved or restored when they are reestablished.

Mini corridors or connection strips. These are small strips or galleries that connect natural areas through productive areas. They are also generated on the margins of streams and rivers. They differ from the previous one in size, and their function is limited to small areas.

The *closures* are areas that are enclosed by a fence and are dedicated to conservation. In some cases, intensive restoration and cover establishment activities are carried out. In others, depending on the degree of deterioration and pressure on the resource, it is possible to do so with minimal actions. For this purpose, species can be used as long as their extraction and management do not negatively impact the ecosystem. The use of timber species, for example, is possible if they are established on the periphery. In this

servicios-ecosistematicos/estrategia-nacional-de-compensaciones-ambientales/manual-de-compensaciones-del-componente-biotico

¹⁵ <http://www.humboldt.org.co/es/component/k2/item/344-herramientas-de-manejo-para-la-conservacion-de-biodiversidad-en-paisajes-rurales>

case, the management tool is similar to an enrichment system (in the case of existing cover) and a mini-corridor in pasture areas.

Enclosures are established live fences that isolate conservation areas, restoration or recovery areas, water sources, or other systems, preventing the impact generated by the passage of livestock and people. The enclosure of forests is the most efficient alternative to stop animals from entering the forest fragments. Trampling, consumption of seedlings and seeds, and soil compaction are among the most frequent effects in areas where water sources originate.

Live fences are single, in-line tree lines or wide strips of up to several meters. Live fences are crucial in increasing structural connectivity, resource provisioning, and decreasing fence maintenance costs. Live fences can generate the most prominent and most efficient possible connections between forest fragments, in tightly confined areas, without altering existing productive activities on a large scale. In addition, live fences reduce pressure on forests by reducing the demand for timber.

Through *enrichment*, flora elements are incorporated into the remnants, ravines, and forested areas. The details shall come from the local biota that can significantly decrease due to use pressures and other factors, although still found in natural ecosystems.

Supplementation is used to recover endangered species or key species for the functioning of the ecosystem. It is also possible that the individuals have disappeared from the local biota. However, they were there, probably because of records that show their presence in the ecosystem. Through supplementation, individuals produced in nurseries or recovered in the field and require very particular habitat conditions for their establishment and development are taken to natural areas. In some cases, the conservation of species in safe sites has been proposed, that is, to establish these species in spots that, in addition to their unique natural conditions, are in a management category such as protected areas.

Multipurpose forests are areas of natural or cultivated forests established under use criteria. Such is the case of firewood banks or sites for fodder production. They fulfill a protective and use function. Therefore, it is necessary to reduce pressures so that use does not dominate over protection or conservation, such as staggered harvests, thinning, etc.

Conversion from pasture to forest cover can be used in conjunction with establishing conservation corridors or the expansion of riparian strips. This includes techniques that allow the change from field to a more diverse cover in composition and structure. In addition, various strategies can be employed to accelerate succession processes that lead to a rapid, economical, and practical transformation, both biologically and ecologically. For example, through the establishment of native species, intermediate pioneers are the

basis of establishment with enrichments of native species of threatened character and/or advanced succession.

Passive restoration in paramos¹⁶ is the elimination or reduction of disturbances due to agriculture and grazing alone. In addition, it allows the recovery of the vegetation of the natural communities of the paramo, with the type species of the different strata and habits.

*The restoration of the hydrological regime in wetlands*¹⁷ consists of restoring or rehabilitating a wetland. This requires, first and foremost, the repair of the hydrological regime. Activities that can lead to this may consist mainly of removing infrastructure works that impede water flow into the wetland or pipes and canals that drain the swamp. However, water regulation of the wetland is also related to activities to control the entry of sediment, solid waste, and pollutant flows and the geomorphological reconfiguration of the site.

The hydrological regime can be recovered indirectly by controlling water quality based on nutrient concentrations, exploiting aquifers and supply springs, and maintaining vegetation cover in the upper parts of the watersheds. Since sediment input is related to the hydrological regime, it is sometimes necessary to build gabions or soil retention structures.

*The reconstruction of the physical structure of the wetland habitat*¹⁸ through the restitution of the substrate's microtopography determines the variety of factors such as oxidation-reduction potential and temperature and/or the distribution and establishment of species. The physical reconfirmation of the wetland involves techniques to stabilize the form and, at the same time, promote heterogeneity in the relief.

Although this document contains the definition of some LMT, the ones described here are not the only tools that conservation initiative holders can implement to develop plans, programs, projects, actions, measures, or activities whose purpose is the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Conservation strategies may include activities based on agricultural and forestry activities, such as silvopastoral systems, agroforestry systems, or commercial forest plantations,

¹⁶ Definition adapted of the colombian document: *Plan Nacional de Restauración: restauración ecológica, rehabilitación y recuperación de áreas disturbadas* (2015). Available in: <https://www.minambiente.gov.co/index.php/bosques-biodiversidad-y-servicios-ecosistematicos/gestion-en-biodiversidad/restauracion-ecologica>

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 29

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 29

among others, as long as they are developed in areas other than natural forest or natural vegetation cover other than forest.

9 Requirements for certification of biodiversity initiatives

To certify and register biodiversity conservation initiatives, holders shall comply with the requirements described below by demonstrating compliance of the conservation initiatives with any requirements.

9.1 Starting date

The conservation initiative holder shall define the start date and the period of evaluation of net biodiversity gains. The start date of biodiversity conservation initiatives is when implementing activities that will directly generate net biodiversity gains begins.

It shall also design, an implementation schedule that contains key dates for developing the initiative and milestones in developing biodiversity conservation activities.

Holders of biodiversity conservation initiatives can only certify and register initiatives whose start date is defined within the five (5) years before the certification audit.¹⁹

9.2 Geographic boundaries and minimum spatial unit

The project boundaries consist of the sites on which the biodiversity conservation strategies are developed. The minimum spatial unit (MSU) is represented in terms of surface area. In the case of biodiversity conservation initiatives, the MSU corresponds to 1 hectare (10,000m²). To identify conservation strategies, the initiative holder shall determine the land cover within the project boundaries.

It should also carry out an identification of the ecosystems in the project area. For example, an MSU may contain a mixture of coverages. This represents different ecological functions within the ecosystem; therefore, the extent of the ecosystem may be reflected in the same proportion in which the various cover types occur.

Developers should identify land cover within the project boundaries through land cover analysis (at scales of 1:10,000 or greater), considering the diversity of the landscape in each MSU. Changes in land cover, in turn, can be indicators of changes in the availability of ecosystem services.

¹⁹ The certification audit begins once a commercial agreement has been signed with the certifying body.

These identified area units and determine the sites within the project boundaries. Therefore, they should be represented in a Geographic Information System for the duration of the conservation initiative. This should be carried out following appropriate methodologies for information systems and land cover analyses.

For example, geographic information should be handled following the quality standards of ISO 19111:2019(en)²⁰, which defines the conceptual scheme for the description of coordinate referencing, the minimum data needed to determine coordinate reference systems, and additional descriptive information (coordinate reference system metadata).

9.3 Biodiversity baseline

The project boundaries are made up of area units (as described in Section 9.2). These area units are determined by biotic and abiotic factors, coupled with economic and social characteristics. These components, working together, are what determine the ecosystem services and their condition.

Therefore, it is necessary for the identification of conservation strategies to carry out a complete analysis to establish the biodiversity baseline (BbL)²¹, including the status of the ecosystems within the project boundaries. The biodiversity baseline should include, as a minimum:

- (a) information on cover types and their condition, including an assessment of the physiognomic-structural characteristics of the vegetation;
- (b) structure and composition of plant communities, with indicators such as importance value index, relative abundance and diversity index, horizontal and vertical structure;
- (c) structure and composition of wildlife communities, represented in different groups such as birds, amphibians, reptiles and mammals, in relation to the different types of associated vegetation cover;
- (d) identification of threatened, rare and endemic species, based on IUCN categories;²²

²⁰ Geographic information — Spatial referencing by Referencing by coordinates

²¹ Biodiversity baseline is the collection and interpretation of information on the conditions present at a site, as well as trends related to use and management.

²² Red List of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Available in: <http://www.iucnredlist.org>

- (e) social and economic aspects, identifying the factors related to resource management and the variables that determine the degradation or conservation of ecosystems;
- (f) assessment of vulnerability to climate change.

It should also include *"an assessment of the limitations imposed by the resource and the opportunities offered by the social environment. An understanding of the preferences, tastes, and expectations of the communities concerning the restoration process, their interpretation of the environment and the losses or gains at the ecosystem level"*²³.

However, the state of the ecosystem reflects its characteristics and quality. Therefore, the evaluation of the state of the ecosystem should consider two different periods of analysis (to determine trends) and contemplate the qualitative and quantitative aspects that define the conditions of the ecosystem.

In the first period, it is necessary to select the characteristics and indicators associated with changes in those characteristics. The selection of features and associated indicators should be carried out on a rigorous technical basis to assess ecosystem functioning, resilience, and integrity. In the second period of analysis, the indicators are related to the initial reference condition. Finally, changes are determined concerning the variables considered.

In general terms, the biodiversity baseline should facilitate the identification of:

- (a) areas for the conservation of biodiversity;
- (b) areas for the maintenance and enhancement of landscape connectivity;
- (c) species or groups of species that due to their characteristics can be key in preservation and restoration processes in the project sites;
- (d) species or groups of species to establish strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity;
- (e) interest groups or stakeholders, the characteristics that identify them and their relationship with biodiversity, within the project boundaries;
- (f) activities for the preservation, restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity.

²³ As proposed in the National Restoration Plan. (Minambiente, 2015)

9.4 Drivers of transformation and biodiversity loss

The effectiveness of conservation actions depends on how the drivers of transformation, underlying causes, or indirect drivers of change and loss are addressed. Therefore, biodiversity conservation initiatives should be designed based on clear and precise identification of the direct drivers, underlying causes, and agents that generate biodiversity transformation and loss.

The drivers of transformation and loss are natural and anthropogenic alterations that affect the structure and function of ecosystems, generating transformed or degraded areas.

Therefore, conservation initiative holders should conduct an assessment related to the drivers of ecosystem loss and transformation, defined as "*forces that directly influence and affect the provision of ecosystem services.*" Some direct drivers include land-use changes, overexploitation of resources, pollution, climate change, and the presence of invasive alien species.

Underlying causes are factors that reinforce the direct drivers or causes of biodiversity loss. These factors are linked to social, political, economic, technological, and cultural variables that constitute the existing relationships between natural systems and the populations that inhabit them. Some of these underlying causes are production and consumption habits, population dynamics and trends, trade, and local governance systems.

9.5 Risk assessment and management

The holders of biodiversity conservation initiatives should assess the risks of implementing conservation activities environmentally, financially, and socially.

Based on the identification of risks in these three dimensions, the initiative holder shall design measures to manage the risks so that the net gains in biodiversity are maintained during and after the duration of project activities.

In this regard, the holder of the biodiversity conservation initiative should:

- (a) identify potential natural and anthropogenic risks to which conservation actions may be exposed and determine the measures necessary to mitigate such risks;
- (b) identify potential financial risks related to expected costs and investments, as well as the cash flows of the conservation initiative and define the necessary measures to mitigate financial risks;

- (c) determine, in the medium and short term, the risks associated with the participation of local communities and stakeholders in the activities proposed in the biodiversity conservation initiative.

The holder of the conservation initiative should employ appropriate methodologies to assess expected risks (direct and indirect) and consider mitigation measures within adaptive management.

Adaptive management is a process by which conservation actions can be adapted to future conditions to ensure the achievement of the proposed objectives. It is a structured decision-making process that considers the variables of incidence to reduce uncertainty about the results.

Finally, and taking into consideration the above, risk assessment and management shall be adequate, accurate, and objective.

9.6 Leakage

Biodiversity conservation initiatives can cause negative impacts on biodiversity by displacing threats outside the project area as a result of implementing conservation activities. Consequently, leakage is the potential loss of biodiversity outside the project boundary that is measurable and attributable to the conservation initiative.

Holders of conservation initiatives shall assess and mitigate potential negative impacts on biodiversity (resulting from project activities) outside the project boundaries.

9.7 Conservation targets

Based on the assessment of the baseline, drivers and underlying causes of biodiversity loss and transformation, as well as the risk assessment, the conservation initiative holder shall identify conservation targets and demonstrate that it proposes practical actions and measures to halt biodiversity loss and transformation, favoring the continuity of ecosystem services.

The design of biodiversity conservation activities should respond to economic, social, and ecological variables. Likewise, conservation objectives should have a logical structure that makes it possible to define conservation actions and measures and in a way that facilitates the elaboration of consistent, meaningful, measurable, and accurate results.

Biodiversity conservation targets should, in principle:

- (a) ensure environmental, social and financial sustainability for biodiversity conservation projects in a territory, working in partnership with local communities;

- (b) support the development of rural communities in an effective and measurable way, contributing to the conservation of endangered species of flora and fauna;
- (c) contribute to connectivity processes and to the fulfillment of country goals;
- (d) promote local initiatives to generate productive alternatives for communities or populations in vulnerable situations;
- (e) support the management of public or private protected areas through management plans, expansion or direct investments in restoration or preservation;
- (f) contribute to restoration processes in prioritized areas within regional portfolios, local initiatives or private enterprises that contribute to the recovery of strategic ecosystems and their associated services;
- (g) centralize of efforts with dual-track gains and biodiversity indicators;
- (h) generate economic incentives for landowners (per hectare preserved, restored or destined for sustainable use);
- (i) increase the food and financial security through the diversification of rural economic activities;
- (j) maintaining of ecosystems to ensure the provision of ecosystem goods and services.

In line with the above, biodiversity conservation initiatives should include priorities for vulnerable and culturally valuable species and ecosystems, with a particular ecosystem approach.

Regarding the socioeconomic component, the holder of the biodiversity conservation initiative shall demonstrate that:

- (a) identifies and strengthens mechanisms for social and community participation at the local and regional levels;
- (b) implements sustainable production systems, combining production and conservation actions to generate local development;
- (c) considers pre-existing social conflicts and supports the development of efficient models with post-conflict scenario management;

- (d) the initiative generates short- and long-term benefits to small-scale productive projects with members of the communities in the project area;
- (e) generates actions that improve the capabilities and access to opportunities of vulnerable community groups; and,
- (f) activities under the biodiversity conservation initiative produce an average net increase in the income of local producers.

A helpful tool for identifying, measuring, and monitoring conservation objectives is the Theory of Change (TOC). Through a logical sequence, this represents the conditions and factors necessary to achieve the expected impact. With variables that adequately describe the connections between conservation measures and net gains in biodiversity, effects and results can be quantified in the short term.

The conservation initiative holder can use the FSC Guidance for Demonstration of Ecosystem Service Impacts²⁴. This guide includes the essential elements of a theory of change and a quality checklist for a theory of change.

9.8 Additionality

Conservation initiatives shall achieve demonstrable gains in the conservation status of biodiversity that would not be achieved without their implementation, with new, additional outcomes resulting from the actions of the conservation initiatives²⁵.

Additionality shall be demonstrated through a qualitative and quantitative assessment that can explain, based on measurable variables, the contribution of the conservation initiative beyond the results that would have occurred if the conservation initiative had not taken place.

Furthermore, the design and implementation of biodiversity conservation initiatives should avoid the displacement of activities that generate biodiversity.

²⁴ FSC-GUI-30-006 V1-0 ES. Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC,2018). FSC®Fo00100.

²⁵ Adapted from *Manual de compensación del componente biótico / Dirección de Bosques, Biodiversidad y Servicios Ecosistémicos*; texts: Ramírez Martínez, Natalia María; Hincapié Posada, Juan Esteban; Fernández, María Angélica; Ruíz Hernández, Johanna Alexandra; Lozano Rodríguez, Laura Andrea. ---- Bogotá, D.C.: Colombia. Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible, 2018. Availableint: <https://www.minambiente.gov.co/index.php/bosques-biodiversidad-y-servicios-ecosistemicos/estrategia-nacional-de-compensaciones-ambientales/manual-de-compensaciones-del-componente-biotico>

9.9 Biodiversity conservation results

The holder of the biodiversity conservation initiative should describe the biodiversity conservation outcomes, considering appropriate variables and relevant valuation techniques, in the context of net biodiversity gains.

It should present in an orderly and appropriate manner biodiversity conservation results, obtained in line with eligible activities and conservation tools, drivers of biodiversity transformation and loss, risk management, and conservation targets.

Thus, it shall demonstrate that nature-based solutions result in net gains in biodiversity and ecosystem services.

9.10 Interested Party Engagement

Biodiversity conservation initiatives shall be socially sustainable. Therefore, stakeholder engagement is a fundamental aspect for the design and implementation of nature-based solutions proposed to quantify net biodiversity gains.

The holder of the conservation initiative should maintain open interaction with stakeholders and consider alternatives to consider their views and perceptions on biodiversity and ecosystem services during the design and implementation of the initiatives.

In this sense, the initiative owner shall identify the stakeholders and develop plans to facilitate their participation. Likewise, it shall implement mechanisms for information disclosure and stakeholder consultation.

9.11 Consistency with applicable legislation

The consistency of biodiversity conservation initiatives with the applicable legal framework strengthens the biodiversity management approach, applied through processes framed by legal requirements.

The holder of the biodiversity conservation initiative shall demonstrate that it complies with the legislation related to the activities developed in the scope of the conservation activities.

In this sense, the initiative holder shall have a documented procedure (Document Management System). It identifies and has access, on an ongoing basis, to the relevant legislation and regulations, demonstrating that it has a procedure to review compliance with them periodically.

Accordingly, the biodiversity conservation initiative holder shall maintain an updated list of all legislative requirements that apply to its biodiversity conservation initiative activities.

In addition, by complying with these documented procedures, the owner of the initiative shall²⁶:

- (a) determine and have access to legal and other requirements related to its activities;
- (b) determine how these legal and other requirements apply to the biodiversity conservation initiative;

9.12 Sustainable Development Goals

Biodiversity conservation initiatives should align preservation and restoration actions with the Sustainable Development Goals. Accordingly, holders of biodiversity conservation initiatives should conduct an assessment on the contribution of the conservation initiative to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

To demonstrate compliance with this requirement, initiative holders shall demonstrate that by defining relevant criteria and indicators, the initiative's contribution to sustainable development objectives applicable to biodiversity conservation activities contributes to sustainable development objectives applicable to biodiversity conservation activities defining relevant criteria and indicators.

The 17 sustainable development goals include recognition and efforts in terms of fundamental rights and actions to improve well-being and quality of life, such as food security, healthy living, education, gender equality, access to water and energy, economic growth, and sustainable use of ecosystems and peaceful societies.

Holders of biodiversity conservation initiatives should, for example, determine whether the project contributes to actions such as²⁷:

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

²⁶ Adapted from NORMA TÉCNICA COLOMBIANA NTC-ISO 14001. SISTEMAS DE GESTIÓN AMBIENTAL. REQUISITOS CON ORIENTACIÓN PARA SU USO. 2015-09-23.

²⁷ Variables based on the 2030 Agenda in Colombia (adapted from some of the Agenda's indicators). It will be necessary for the holder of the initiative to review the Agenda in his country.

- (b) ensure that all men and women, particularly the poor and vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources and access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other assets;
- (c) improve agricultural productivity and the incomes of small-scale food producers, particularly women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, livestock keepers and fishermen;
- (d) ensure the sustainability of food production systems and apply resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, contribute to the maintenance of ecosystems, and strengthen adaptive capacity;
- (e) achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health services, and access to safe, effective, affordable, and quality medicines and vaccines for all;
- (f) reduce the number of deaths and illnesses caused by hazardous chemicals and by air, water, and soil pollution and contamination;
- (g) ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all decision-making levels in political, economic, and public life;
- (h) grant women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control of land and other property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources;
- (i) support the efficient use of water resources and ensure the sustainability of freshwater extraction and supply to address water scarcity;
- (j) ensure full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including youth and persons with disabilities, as well as equal pay for work of equal value;
- (k) protect labor rights and promote a safe and secure working environment for all workers, including migrant workers, particularly migrant women and those in precarious employment;
- (l) promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and significantly increase industry contribution to employment and gross domestic product under national circumstances.

As mentioned above, it is mandatory to determine particular criteria and indicators for each conservation initiative and to carry out monitoring to demonstrate compliance with the indicators, as defined by the initiative holder, concerning the SDGs.

10 Climate change adaptation

Considering that there is a relationship between ecosystems and climate, it is clear that ecosystems and biodiversity are closely linked to their capacity to provide goods and services. Consequently, the transformation and loss of biodiversity are associated with vulnerability to climate change.

According to the IPCC, vulnerability is defined as "*the degree of susceptibility or inability of a system to cope with the adverse effects of climate change and, in particular, climate variability and extreme events.*"

The vulnerability has two components: (a) sensitivity, which measures system's weakness, and (b) adaptation, which corresponds to the system's ability to cope with and recover from an event.

Following the above, holders of biodiversity conservation initiatives shall develop a climate change adaptation plan (directly related to biodiversity conservation actions), following a process of planning, impact and climate risk assessment, quantification of impacts, and identification of climate change adaptation strategies.

In this regard, holders of conservation initiatives should:

- (a) identify possible scenarios and regional impacts of climate change and climate variability, based on relevant information;
- (b) identify the likely changes in land cover and land use due to these climate change scenarios;
- (c) determine whether current or projected climate changes will have an impact on the well-being of local communities and/or the conservation status of biodiversity;
- (d) evaluate the contribution of conservation strategies to climate change adaptation;

11 Other certification criteria

In order to provide greater integrality to biodiversity conservation initiatives, conservation initiative holders should design additional actions, such as:

- (a) (a) activities that support the Aichi Targets²⁸, or other existing biodiversity-related targets;
- (b) restoration activities of degraded ecosystems, in areas included in the National Registry of Protected Areas (RUNAP) or in the Registry of Ecosystems and Environmental Areas (REAA), when applicable;
- (c) High Conservation Values²⁹ (HCV) assessment in the project area;
- (d) actions aimed at the conservation of globally threatened species (according to the IUCN Red List³⁰);

12 Monitoring plan

As part of the project document, initiative holders shall submit a monitoring plan that, at a minimum, contains the following:

- (a) the data and information necessary to estimate net gains in biodiversity;
- (b) data and complementary information to determine the biodiversity baseline;
- (c) information related to risk assessment and risk management;
- (d) the procedures established for the management of biodiversity net gain results and related quality control for monitoring activities;
- (e) description of the procedures defined for the periodic calculation of net gains in biodiversity;
- (f) the assignment of roles and responsibilities for monitoring and reporting of variables relevant to the estimation of net biodiversity gains;
- (g) procedures related to the evaluation of the contribution of the biodiversity conservation initiative to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- (h) the procedures necessary to follow up on climate change adaptation strategies;

²⁸ <https://www.cbd.int/aichi-targets/>

²⁹ Based on criteria defined by the network High Conservation Value (HCV). <https://hcvnetwork.org/>

³⁰ <https://www.iucnredlist.org/>

- (i) the criteria and indicators related to the initiative's contribution to sustainable development objectives, applicable to the activities proposed by the initiative's owner;

The monitoring plan should be structured appropriately and in accordance with:

- (a) the national circumstances and context of the biodiversity conservation initiative;
- (b) good monitoring practices, appropriate for the follow-up and control of the activities of the biodiversity conservation initiative;
- (c) data quality assurance procedures.

Monitoring shall be carried out at least annually and shall be submitted to the certification body.

The holders of biodiversity conservation initiatives shall implement the monitoring plan validated by the certification body. The execution of the validated monitoring plan and, if applicable, its modifications shall be a requirement for verification.

During the verification process, the initiative holders shall submit the report under the monitoring plan. Any revisions to the monitoring plan to increase its accuracy and/or the completeness of the information shall be justified and submitted to the certification body.

Based on the implementation of the monitoring plan and the evaluation of net biodiversity gains, the certification body will determine that these have been obtained in an accurate, relevant, and transparent manner.

13 Certification of biodiversity conservation initiatives

Holders of biodiversity conservation initiatives should ensure that their certification processes are carried out by an independent certification body, which complies with all requirements related to the relevant accreditation for this purpose.

In cases where the holder of the biodiversity conservation initiative intends to use the Verified Biodiversity Credits (VBC) on its behalf, i.e., develops conservation actions to carry out own offsetting activities, the initiative holder may submit a Statement resulting from an internal (first-party) audit process, provided it complies with all the provisions of ISO 19011:2018³¹ and the other aspects contemplated in this standard for certification, which apply.

³¹ ISO 19011:2018 (es). Directrices para auditar Sistemas de Gestión. <https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/#iso:std:iso:19011:ed-3:v1:es>

Certification bodies are responsible for conducting an objective assessment and issuing a statement on the compliance of the conservation initiative with the requirements of this standard, based on the information submitted by the biodiversity conservation initiative holder and complying with the necessary procedures within the framework of the auditing processes.

The scope of certification should include the following:

- (a) the geographic boundaries of the biodiversity conservation initiative and the baseline analysis;
- (b) the date of commencement of biodiversity conservation actions;
- (c) biodiversity conservation activities and tools;
- (d) assessment of the drivers and underlying causes of biodiversity transformation and loss;
- (e) additionality analysis;
- (f) consistency of the initiative with applicable law;
- (g) risk assessment and risk management;
- (h) review of stakeholder engagement;
- (i) indicators related to the SDGs;
- (j) the monitoring plan.

Through an independent and documented process, the certification body shall evaluate the biodiversity conservation initiative by determining compliance with the criteria and requirements specified in both the current standards and the provisions of this standard.

The certification body shall evaluate the documentation and information related to the design of the initiative and shall determine whether the initiative holder complies with all the provisions of this standard and other applicable standards, by examining, among other aspects, the following:

- (a) biodiversity conservation targets and outcomes;
- (b) the appropriate use of the concepts and procedures required to demonstrate net gains in biodiversity;
- (c) the biodiversity baseline;

- (d) compliance with the initiative's additionality criteria;
- (e) the participation of all interested parties;
- (f) the initiative's contribution to sustainable development objectives;
- (g) compliance with applicable law;
- (h) the design of a monitoring plan that contemplates everything related to the quantification and follow-up of net gains in biodiversity.

If the certification body determines that the biodiversity conservation initiative meets all the requirements to be certified, the certification body shall submit a report with the assessment and conclusion on the net biodiversity gains and compliance with the indicators defined by the initiative holder concerning the SDGs.

14 Certification bodies

Bodies conducting certification audits of biodiversity conservation initiatives shall demonstrate the following:

- (a) its scope of accreditation includes biodiversity conservation and/or ecosystem services valuation activities;
- (b) has a sufficient number of professionals who demonstrate the necessary ethical conduct to perform all the functions required to conduct certification audits;
- (c) the auditors in charge of the certification audits have experience in the evaluation of biodiversity conservation strategies;
- (d) at least one member of the audit team shall be trained in the ecosystem services subject of the assessment or have demonstrated competence based on previous experience;
- (e) the auditors in charge of certification audits have the necessary skills to evaluate the choice and use of applicable methodologies and interpret the results for the ecosystem service(s) evaluated;
- (f) has documented internal procedures for the performance of its functions, in particular, procedures for the assignment of responsibilities within the organization;

- (g) is competent to perform the functions specified in the applicable laws and regulations and in the provisions described in this Standard;
- (h) ensures the necessary practice and knowledge of environmental issues relevant to the certification of conservation initiatives and ensures quality in conformity assessment;
- (i) is knowledgeable about the technical aspects of biodiversity conservation initiatives and methodologies for tracking and monitoring biodiversity conservation strategies;
- (j) has procedures for handling complaints, appeals and disputes.

In addition, certification bodies shall operate in an independent, reliable, non-discriminatory and transparent manner, in compliance with the applicable legislation and in particular with the following requirements:

- (a) have a documented structure that protects its integrity, with provisions that guarantee the impartiality of its operations;
- (b) have appropriate arrangements in place to protect the confidentiality of information obtained from the holders of biodiversity conservation initiatives;
- (c) demonstrate that they do not have an actual or potential conflict of interest with the holders of the biodiversity conservation initiatives for whose certification audit they have been contracted;
- (d) make available to PROCLIMA, upon request, the information obtained from the holders of biodiversity conservation initiatives. Information classified as confidential shall not be disclosed without the written consent of the provider, unless required by applicable law;
- (e) the information used to determine additionality, as defined in the PROCLIMA Program, shall not be considered confidential.

Bodies conducting certification audits shall issue a certification statement indicating that the net gains in biodiversity were generated following the guidelines defined in this Standard.

14.1 Registration and issuance of Verified Biodiversity Credits (VBC)

Once the certification body has completed the certification process, it shall submit a statement to PROCLIMA. The Registration process by PROCLIMA is a formal written statement issued by the administrator of the standard and the registration system.

Upon completion of the certification process, the certifying body shall submit the certification statement, assuring that the biodiversity conservation initiative has achieved net gains in biodiversity over a specified period.

The registration includes the issuance of Verified Biodiversity Credits for a certified initiative.

Biodiversity credits will only be issued if they have been previously certified, following the certification process under the guidelines established for this purpose in the norms and procedures of the PROCLIMA Standard.

15 Platform of Registry

PROCLIMA has a public registry that allows the registration and assignment of a unique serial number for verified biodiversity credits. Likewise, the records in the system are connected to a BlockChain system that guarantees the security, traceability, and transparency of the credits issued by PROCLIMA.

In order to register in the PROCLIMA system, the owner of the biodiversity conservation initiative shall provide the following documentation:

- (a) Information on the project and the holder of the initiative;
- (b) Authorization for registration of VBCs;
- (c) Project Description Document;
- (d) Report and certification statement;
- (e) Monitoring report;
- (f) Other documents, if required.

The only ones who may request the registration of conservation initiatives are the initiative holders or whoever is authorized by the initiative holder to carry out the procedures required in this regard.

Registration may be requested when the certification process has been carried out or before, if applicable.

16 Public Information

The information in the registry system of PROCLIMA shall be public, except for the report classified or reserved by law, following applicable national legislation.

ANNEX A. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Accreditation

third-party attestation related to a conformity assessment body conveying formal demonstration of its competence to carry out specific conformity assessment tasks. [SOURCE: ISO/IEC 17000:2004, 5.6]

Adaptation to climate change (Climate change adaptation)

process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects

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

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

Adaptive capacity

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

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

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

Adaptive management

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

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

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

Attestation

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

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

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

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

Audit

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

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

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

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

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

Biodiversity conservation initiative

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

Biodiversity conservation initiative holder

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

Biodiversity credit (BCs)

the results of management actions that enhance biodiversity values and ecosystem services can be traded through biodiversity credits based on their ecological importance. *"A credit is a defined unit of environmental goods or services, which can be applied towards*

the fulfillment of a permit, or held, traded, sold or retired."³². Accordingly, BCs are a measurable unit of biodiversity gains. Each credit is equivalent to one hectare in which biodiversity conservation actions are developed.

Biological diversity

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

Certification

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

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

Certification body

third-party conformity assessment body operating certification schemes

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

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

Certification criteria

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

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

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

Conformity Assessment

demonstration that specified requirements are fulfilled.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conformity Assessment Body

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

Note 1 to entry: Whenever the term “*conformity assessment body*” is used in the text, it applies to both the applicant and accredited conformity assessment bodies, unless otherwise specified.

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

Data quality

degree to which the characteristics of data satisfy stated and implied needs when used under specified conditions. [SOURCE: ISO/IEC 25012:2008, definition 4.3]

Declaration

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

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

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

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

Ecosystem

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

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

Ecosystem services

benefit people obtain from ecosystems

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

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

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

Forest (Natural Forest)

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

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

Habitat

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

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

Nature-based solutions

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

Net gains in biodiversity

the net gain corresponds to the differential between the biodiversity values at the beginning of the project and those observed due to biodiversity conservation activities throughout project implementation.

Stakeholder (Interested party)

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

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

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

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

Stakeholder engagement

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

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

Register

list issued by a certification body, an authority or another registration organization, for certificate holders or persons meeting predetermined criteria.

Note 1 to entry: A register can be publicly available or for in-house purposes.

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC TS 17027:2014(en), 2.65]

Risk

effect of uncertainty.

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

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

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

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

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

Site

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

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

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

Sustainability

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

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

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

Sustainable development

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

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

[SOURCE: ISO 26000:2010, 2.23]

Sustainable utilization (use)

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

Transparency

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

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

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

Uncertainty

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

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

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

Vulnerability

propensity or predisposition to be adversely affected

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

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

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

Document history

Document type

Standard. The standard for the Certification and Registration of Biodiversity Conservation Initiatives. Nature-Based Solutions for Quantifying Net Gains.

Version	Date	Nature of the document
Version for public consultation	May 11, 2021	Initial version – a document submitted for public consultation
Version 1.0	July 2, 2021	Definitive version. No changes with respect to the former document.