



Stakeholder Consultation Summary



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1 Introduction

As a way of demonstrating support for the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, Preferred by Nature has developed the Standard for Field Verification of Ecosystem Restoration. This Standard focuses on assessing the performance of ecosystem restoration at the field level, in tropical, temperate and boreal biomes. By blending technical, environmental, social and economic attributes, the Standard provides a structured approach and detailed checklist for verifying ecosystem restoration practices.

This Standard is suitable to be applied across all scales and credible models of ecosystem restoration, including smallholder and community, medium- and large-scale operations.

The first version was released for public consultation in September 2020. In this document the reader can find an overview of feedback received during the stakeholder consultation phase of Version 2.0 of the Forest Ecosystem Restoration standard.

2 Consultation Details

This second consultation process started on 3 August 2021, and has gathered the opinion of many experts, we would like to thank everyone that provided feedback to the standard – we greatly appreciate the time spent on this to provide important feedback to Preferred by Nature.

3 Revisions

3.1 General changes to the document:

1. **Glossary expanded** to include the following definitions: Chemical, Forest, Forest degradation, Integrated pest, weed, and diseases management, Natural ecosystem, Waste, Child, Child Labour, Child labor, worst form of, Discrimination, Greenhouse Gas (GHG), Insetting projects, Land Tenure, Leakage, Non-conformity, Non-conformity report (NCR), Non-permanence, Young worker.
2. **The proposed approach** has a special focus on the adaptation of the needs of the SH&C and medium projects, taking into consideration the risk, scale, and intensity of the restoration project in the performance review step. In that spirit, and understanding that the standard will need to keep evolving most likely to meet that objective, the key considerations taken, on top of the Continuous Improvement approach, are summarized below for clarity:
 - The documentation required is reduced to a minimum (see below).
 - The audit frequency is reduced wherever possible depending on the assessed risk.
 - The use and training of local experts is promoted to empower the local organizations and communities and reduce the cost of audits¹.
 - The use of Information and Communication Technology is given a special emphasis to reduce the cost of the audits.
3. **Audit cycle and Continuous Improvement**, this version shows multiple options for audit cycles, depending on the risk and scale of the restoration project. The typical independent audit cycle is 5 years, starting with the first verification audit, where all the indicators of the

¹ The use of Participatory Guarantee Systems is being explored as well in this same objective.

standard are checked, although only the “core indicators” need to be met for obtaining an ecosystem restoration verification from Preferred by Nature.

4. **Climate Change Module**, has been included in this version with the intention allows the project owners to assess the actions taken against climate change.

3.2 Revisions of the standard indicators:

Indicator 1.2. **Planning Governance** word was added

Indicator 1.4.1 **Landscape context**: Baseline conditions are grouped in two main issues: Environmental and Social conditions.

Indicator 1.4.5 **Landscape context**: Customary use rights or other tenure rights by local people (Indigenous² or otherwise), for example water supply areas, cultural heritage sites, biodiversity, etc. (Continuous Improvement for SH&C projects), added in replace of 1.4.4 For adjacent and/or nearby³ Indigenous and Traditional Peoples : rights or critical resources (for example water supply areas, cultural heritage sites, Traditional Knowledge, etc.).

Indicator 1.5 **Restoration Plan**: Numeration was updated.

Indicator 1.5.5 **Restoration Plan**: Bullet points were deleted.

Section 2: **Tenure, Rights, and Engagements**: replace Tenure, Rights, and Security.

Indicator 2.1. **Tenure, Rights, and Engagements**: Legal land tenure was specified and the reference of CI for SH&C projects was deleted.

Indicator 2.3 **Tenure, Rights, and Engagements**: The indicator was comprised

Indicator 2.4 **Tenure, Rights, and Engagements**: Previous indicator 1.5 Stakeholders engagements on the V 2.0 was moved to this section.

Indicator 2.4.2 **Tenure, Rights, and Engagements**: Previous indicator 2.6 was moved to this section.

Indicator 2.4.3 **Tenure, Rights, and Engagements**: Previous indicator 1.5.2 was moved to this section.

Indicator 2.5.1 **Tenure, Rights, and Engagements**: Dispute resolution mechanism, the numeration was changed.

Indicator 2.5.2 **Tenure, Rights, and Engagements**: Dispute resolution process, the numeration was changed.

Indicator 3.1 **Field implementation**: New **Project Implementation** indicator was added as the head of sub-indicators, in order to organize the essence of the sub-indicators.

Indicators 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3, 3.1.4, 3.1.5 **Field implementation**: correspond to the 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 indicators on the version 2.0. No wording change or sense was performed.

Indicator 3.2 **Field implementation**: New **Environmental aspects** indicator was added as the head of sub-indicators.

Indicators 3.2.1, 3.2.2 **Field implementation**: correspond to the 3.6, 3.7 indicators on version 2.0. No wording change or sense was performed.

² As per the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf and the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention: https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C169

³ Relative to the scale, intensity, and risk of the project

Indicators 3.2.3 **Field implementation:** Indicator **Chemical Use** new indicators have been added for auditability with requirements on control, documentation, assessment and mitigation of risks when highly hazardous pesticides are used, and risks for pollinators.

Indicator 3.2.3.1 **Field implementation:** Indicator **Integrated pest, weed, and diseases** management concept was added.

Indicator 3.2.3.2 **Field implementation:** Specific reference on fertilizers and pesticides as chemicals are added, doing the precision on the correct use at the minimal level.

Indicator 3.2.3.2.1 **Field implementation:** Indicator added referring to Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POP) and/or recommended for inclusion in Annex A or B of the Stockholm Convention by the POPs Review Committee (POPRC).

Indicator 3.2.3.2.2 **Field implementation:** Indicator added referring to Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozon Layer.

Indicator 3.2.3.2.3 **Field implementation:** Indicator added referring to Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade (PIC) and the Annex III by the Chemical Review Committee (CRC).

Indicator 3.2.3.2.4 **Field implementation:** Indicator added referring to World Health Organisation's Recommended Classification of Pesticides by Hazard.

Indicator 3.2.3.2.5 **Field implementation:** Indicator added referring to Globally Harmonized System (GHS) of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals as implemented/applied by the European Union (Regulation 1272/2008 and Regulation 1107/2009) and by Japan.

Indicator 3.2.3.3 **Field implementation:** Indicator added as CI for SH&C projects related to purchase documentation of chemicals.

Indicator 3.2.3.5. **Field implementation:** Indicator expanded by added examples.

Indicator 3.2.4. **Field implementation:** Indicator added with the waste management indications.

Indicator 3.3 **Field implementation:** New **Social aspects** indicator was added as the head of sub-indicators.

Indicator 3.3.1 **Field implementation:** correspond to the 3.9 indicator on version 2.0. No wording change or sense was performed.

Indicator 3.3.2 **Field implementation:** indicator expanded to include the **Discrimination** concept, **Right to organize, freedom of association and collective bargaining, and Equal Remuneration.**

Indicator 3.3.3 **Field implementation:** correspond to the 3.12 indicator on version 2.0. No wording change or sense was performed.

Indicator 3.3.4 **Field implementation:** correspond to the 3.13 indicator on version 2.0. No wording change or sense was performed.

Indicator 3.3.5 **Field implementation:** indicator expanded to include Indicator 3.3.5.1 and 3.3.5.2 as CI for SH&C projects related to legal and living wages.

Indicator 3.3.6. **Field implementation:** indicator **Local communities** was added.

Indicator 3.3.6.1. **Field implementation:** indicator was added as CI for SH&C projects related social benefits and related impacts.

Indicator 3.3.6.2. **Field implementation:** indicator was added related consequences to local communities.

Indicator 4.1. **Monitoring and Reporting:** indicator was added as CI for SH&C projects.

Indicator 4.2 **Monitoring and Reporting:** correspond to the 4.1 indicator on version 2.0. No wording change or sense was performed.

Indicator 4.3 **Monitoring and Reporting**: indicator was compressed, to improve the order of the text.

Indicator 4.4 **Monitoring and Reporting: Resources for monitoring** indicator was expanded, including now the precision of the need for resources to monitor the project for a longer-term.

Indicator 4.5 **Monitoring and Reporting**: correspond to the 4.3 indicator on version 2.0. No wording change or sense was performed.

Annex I: **Climate Change Module**: 9 indicators were added in version 3.1, related to the assessment of the restoration project in terms of carbon footprint and climate change mitigation. Indicator 5.1 **Baseline GHG emissions** were included as CI for SH&C projects, the objective is assessing the use of GHG quantification and indicator 5.2 **Leakage was** also included as CI for SH&C projects has focused on verifying that leakage does not occur in the project.

3.3 Stakeholders feedback

We have inserted all comments received in the survey we conducted during the first round of consultation in an excel sheet to allow an easy overview of the comments received for specific principles, criteria and indicators.

The full list of comment sheet can be accessed here .

As part of the consultation process Preferred by Nature asked for specific feedback from stakeholders on key issues, for which we have a special interest in receiving feedback. The following topics were covered:

1. **The name of the standard has been changed from "Forest Ecosystem Restoration" to "Ecosystem Restoration", in line with the stakeholder feedback received and help to elevate restoration to non-forest ecosystems (e.g. wetlands, grasslands, drylands) as equally important to forests: do you think the Standard can be maintained general or does it need to develop additionally specific indicators for each ecosystem?**

Feedback

The stakeholders consulted agreed on the importance of developing a tool where all the ecosystems, biomes, and contexts were addressed, some of them propose the use of a guide, and others mentioned the need to show examples or even specific indicators for different ecosystems.

2. **While we see Ecosystem Restoration is being mainstreamed, we see it connected with other efforts (Sustainable Forestry, Climate Change mitigation and adaptation, Sustainable Agriculture, Sustainable/Resilient Landscapes, Sustainable Supply Chains, No Deforestation, etc.), and their related certification/verification schemes (FSC, VERRA, Rainforest Alliance, Gold Standard, RSPO, HCVRN, HCSA, etc.). We aim to collaborate further with actors within these areas rather than trying to include more requirements to this standard. What are the priority areas and actors you think we should engage with to help deliver more comprehensive solutions?**

Feedback

The stakeholders consulted show a positive approach regarding the possibility of engaging the standard with other schemes, the sustainable forestry and agriculture sectors seem to be the most related to the restoration approach. Some of them mentioned the importance of engaging with restoration actors at the field level and strengthening the relationship with government actors related to the water management.

3. Do you see other avenues to maximize the positive benefits of the standard?

The stakeholders consulted mention that the collaboration with other certification schemes and actors related to reclamation management can be some of the ways to increase the benefits of the standard

4. Other comments

The need for training to improve the knowledge regarding the best and adequate restoration activities including the crops best management practices to protect important resources like water is a must in the sector.

About us

Preferred by Nature (formerly known as NEPCon) is an international non-profit organisation working to support better land management and business practices that benefit people, nature and the climate. We do this through a unique combination of sustainability certification services, projects supporting awareness raising, and capacity building.

For more than 25 years, we have worked to develop practical solutions to drive positive impacts in production landscapes and supply chains in 100+ countries. We focus on land use, primarily through forest, agriculture and climate impact commodities, and related sectors such as tourism and conservation. Learn more at www.preferredbynature.org

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