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# Natural Forest Standard

## Guidance Addendum II

### NFS Alignment with the Cancun Safeguards for REDD+ Projects



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## About the Natural Forest Standard

Natural Forest Standard (NFS) is an independent, voluntary carbon market crediting program for REDD+ carbon projects. Ecosystem Certification Organisation is the governing body of the Natural Forest Standard (NFS) providing the overall responsibility, oversight and management of the program, in operation since 2011.

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## 1. Introduction

The NFS aims to conserve and restore natural forests through actions of projects that benefit both local communities while maintaining the biodiversity present in the project area. This all-encompassing approach to environmental, social and biodiversity benefits of projects under the NFS is designed to ensure that social and environmental safeguards are integral throughout the project design and implementation.

The Natural Forest Standard Requirements document sets out the normative requirements for projects using the NFS. The accompanying NFS Guidance document should be consulted in addition to the Standard. The Guidance is designed to assist project developers in meeting the normative requirements of the Standard. The guidance should be interpreted in a pragmatic, professional and balanced manner to address aspects of project design and management that are important for achieving effective forest conservation and restoration in ways that benefit local communities and biodiversity.

The NFS is designed to deliver real, measurable, additional and permanent emissions reductions from the implementation of REDD+ activities in medium to large project areas, within the context of appropriate social and environmental safeguards, and economic development. The NFS promotes and supports the Cancun Safeguards within the Standard Requirements and Guidance for NFS Projects

The working language of ECO and the NFS is English.

## 2. Purpose

This addendum serves as an integral extension of our main guidance document, providing additional information and updates necessary for the comprehensive understanding and implementation of the Natural Forest Standard (NFS). It includes recent amendments, and/or clarifications that enhance the original guidance. The purpose of this addendum is to ensure that all stakeholders have access to the most current and relevant information, maintaining the effectiveness and applicability of our program. Please refer to this addendum in conjunction with the main guidance document to ensure that your activities are aligned with the latest standards and practices established by the NFS.

## 3. Scope

The Cancun Safeguards were adopted at the 16th Conference of the Parties (COP 16) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), held in Cancun, Mexico, in 2010. These safeguards are designed to protect the interests of indigenous peoples and local communities, conserve biodiversity, and ensure effective participation of all stakeholders in the implementation of REDD+ projects. They serve as foundational principles that guide countries and project developers in the responsible execution of forest conservation activities aimed at reducing carbon emissions.

The Natural Forest Standard adopts a holistic approach for projects to deliver Environmental and Social benefits from implementing a project. This places equal emphasis on the combined carbon, socio-economic and biodiversity benefits and values of a project.

This approach can facilitate meaningful contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) enabling projects to support and align their mitigation activities with global sustainability targets.

## 4. Aim

The aim of this is to provide a clear summary of how the Natural Forest Standard (NFS) aligns with and supports the Cancun Safeguards as set out in [Paragraph 71 of decision 1/CP.16 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change](#) in the implementation of REDD+ projects.

The goal is to underscore the commitment of the NFS to promoting sustainable forestry practices that are not only effective in reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation but also include environmental and social safeguards and support positive sustainable development impacts.

## 5. Analysis

The [Cancun Safeguards](#) as set out in Paragraph 71 of decision 1/CP.16 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, are provided in the table below.

This analysis demonstrates the NFS alignment with the safeguards that should be promoted and supported when implementing REDD+ activities, and indicates the NFS Requirements and Guidance that promote, support and align with each Safeguard.

Cancun Safeguard		Relevant NFS Requirements	Associated NFS Guidance
<b>A</b>	That actions complement or are consistent with the objectives of national forest programmes and relevant international conventions and agreements	<b>1.2.1</b> The project operator shall comply with all applicable laws, regulations and nationally ratified international treaties conventions and agreements.	1.3.1
<b>B</b>	Transparent and effective national forest governance structures, taking into account national legislation and sovereignty	<b>1.2.1</b> (as above) <b>3.1.1</b> The project shall develop and maintain a management plan describing the measures to be taken to reduce deforestation and/or degradation and to restore forests within the project area. The plan shall include appropriate leakage mitigation measures, and measures planned to benefit biodiversity and local communities.	1.3.1 3.1 3.3

Cancun Safeguard		Relevant NFS Requirements	Associated NFS Guidance
<b>C</b>	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 Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples	<p><b>1.2.1</b> (as above)</p> <p><b>2.1.1</b> The project shall obtain Free, Prior and Informed Consent of the carbon rights holders and any communities living or having land use rights within the project area whose activities will be affected or constrained by the project.</p> <p><b>2.3.1</b> The project shall establish and maintain regular channels of communication with stakeholders to allow exchange of information on the progress of the project.</p> <p><b>3.1.1</b> (as above)</p>	<p>2.2.1</p> <p>2.3</p> <p>3.1</p>
<b>D</b>	The full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, in particular indigenous peoples and local communities, in the actions referred to in paragraphs 70 and 72 of decision 1/CP.16	<p><b>2.1.1</b> (as above)</p> <p><b>2.3.1</b> (as above)</p> <p><b>2.4.1</b> The project shall establish and maintain mechanisms for dealing with complaints and concerns of stakeholders, including allowance for an independent arbitration process.</p>	<p>2.2.1</p> <p>2.3</p> <p>2.5.1</p>
<b>E</b>	That actions are consistent with the conservation of natural forests and biological diversity, ensuring that the actions referred to in paragraph 70 of decision 1/CP.16 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	<p><b>1.1.1</b> The project shall plan to avoid deforestation and/or degradation of natural forests, and/or restore degraded natural forest within a defined project area or project areas.</p> <p><b>2.2.1</b> The project shall establish a mechanism to benefit local people and support the sustainable management of ecosystems.</p> <p><b>2.6.1</b> The project shall take appropriate measures to maintain and enhance existing biodiversity.</p> <p><b>3.1.1</b> (as above)</p>	<p>1.2.1</p> <p>2.6</p>

Cancun Safeguard		Relevant NFS Requirements	Associated NFS Guidance
<b>F</b>	Actions to address the risks of reversals	<p><b>3.1.1</b> (as above)</p> <p><b>4.4.1</b> Potential sources of leakage from local activity shifting resulting from project activities, including the mechanism for distribution of benefits, shall be assessed, and appropriate actions taken to minimise leakage shall be implemented.</p> <p><b>4.5.1</b> The project shall hold a reserve of Natural Capital Credits in a buffer account sufficient to cover risks of non-permanence, as determined by the NFS Risk Panel.</p>	<p>2.8.2</p> <p>3.1</p> <p>4.2</p>
<b>G</b>	Actions to reduce displacement of emissions	<p><b>3.1.1</b> (as above)</p> <p><b>4.4.1</b> (as above)</p> <p><b>4.6.1</b> The project shall use approved methods to quantify emission reductions from avoided deforestation and degradation and carbon sequestration in areas under restoration on an annual basis taking account of estimates for leakage, the risk of reversals and uncertainty.</p>	<p>2.7</p> <p>2.8.2</p> <p>3.1</p>

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