

# ***“Core Benefits” Standards and the impact of Natural Climate Solutions (NCS) on sustainable development***

**We must act now to stay within 1.5°C of global warming and avoid catastrophic climate change by drastically reducing our emissions this decade and reaching net zero by 2050.<sup>1</sup>**

A key part of this effort lies in decarbonizing the Agriculture, Food and Other Land Use (AFOLU) sector, which accounts for approximately 22% of all global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions at present.<sup>2</sup> For this purpose, nature-based solutions addressing climate change – or Natural

Climate Solutions (NCS) – are the best-understood and most cost-effective approaches available.<sup>3</sup>

NCS activities include a number of crucial climate mitigation interventions highlighted in the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\) Sixth Assessment Report](#), such as the conservation, improved management, and restoration of forests and other ecosystems as well as improved and sustainable crop and livestock management.<sup>4</sup> Corporate support for these actions, from direct finance to capacity building, can

play a pivotal role in addressing nature loss and inequality while accelerating the transition to Net Zero.

The objective of this brief is to position the benefits from NCS activities (including climate mitigation) as “core” to the value of NCS, indicate the role of carbon crediting standards in verifying core benefits, present a preliminary checklist for use alongside existing due diligence and assurance mechanisms and share reference material in the form of high-level factsheets on key standards.



# Natural Climate Solutions and “core benefits”

As Net Zero and Nature Positive gain momentum, demand is growing rapidly for carbon projects that achieve both climate mitigation and clear benefits to communities and the wider environment. The IPCC confirms the value of NCS in this sense; the special reports on Land Use and Oceans and the Cryosphere state that: “[...] transformations to societal and economic processes on land and water systems can play an integral

*role in both climate mitigation and achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)”<sup>5,6</sup>.*

The positive impacts on sustainable development achieved by implementing NCS should be viewed as ‘core’ benefits rather than “additional” or “co-” benefits, and as expected outcomes rather than potential upsides. They are crucial in achieving long-term sustainability for climate, nature, and people.

Many of the positive outcomes from NCS are highly interrelated, from protection of biodiversity and ensuring resilience to transitioning to a more sustainable economy. Woven through the implementation of all NCS is a lasting need to work with and deliver positive impact for local communities, including Indigenous Peoples, whose participation and knowledge are key to the success of NCS activities.

## The role of standards in verifying core benefits

NCS activities have a lot to gain – and much to lose – if suitable mechanisms are not in place to track the full range of their impacts. As a result, several carbon standards are looking beyond climate mitigation impact and considering the full range of benefits from solutions like NCS. At present, the existing measurement and verification infrastructure offered by major carbon standards is in the initial stages of attributing and measuring core benefits achieved by NCS projects. Those who are interested in NCS projects from both a climate and sustainable development perspective are incorporating processes to verify the specific core benefits that NCS projects can achieve.

To support companies in due diligence and certifying core benefits from their NCS investments, this report presents factsheets for several standards that are currently available. The reference material shared in the factsheets is intended to support companies in the early stages of selecting credits. They are designed to complement existing assessments of carbon standards and to feed into existing due diligence processes for credit selection. Each factsheet includes the following information:

- *general information:* logo, name, organization behind the standard and a brief description.
- *carbon market acceptance:* reputation analysis based on whether the standard’s carbon certifications are recognized by independent assessing organizations.
- *certification coverage:* geographical coverage of host countries and eligible NCS project types
- *core benefits measurement:* information on the standard’s link to the SDGs, measurement approaches and methodology information.
- *NCS-specific methodologies:* list of approved NCS methodologies that assess core benefits.

# Selecting NCS activities that deliver core benefits

Based on the information in this brief and the associated factsheets, the following checklist of key questions should feature in corporate procurement and due diligence practices for NCS investments. This is particularly true for NCS activities claiming to achieve any core benefits beyond climate mitigation. The checklist is as follows:

1. Does the NCS activity and/or standard have specific safeguards on upholding sustainable development during the planning and implementation stage of the projects?
  - a. Does this include stakeholder engagement processes that reflect the best interests and knowledge of local communities and Indigenous Peoples?
2. Does the NCS activity and/or standard require projects to identify the core benefits the project is expected to achieve?
3. Does the NCS activity and/or standard have tools in place to measure and verify the achievement of core benefits?
4. How is the NCS activity expected to prove they have achieved their core benefits?
5. Will standards have independent assessors verify that NCS activities have achieved core benefits?

## The way forward

“Core” benefits from NCS include increased biodiversity, climate adaptation, improved quality of life for rural communities and many others. These benefits are crucial in delivering Nature Positive and addressing inequality during the transition to Net Zero.


Standards have a key role to play in ensuring that the full range of positive impacts from activities

such as NCS is recognized; while the available core benefits assessment tools are not yet as advanced as those for greenhouse gas emissions, they are developing rapidly. The factsheets alongside this brief are intended to present an overview of several existing assessments and standards and to streamline their inclusion into existing due diligence processes.

It is crucial that businesses and other potential investors review their strategies to ensure they are prepared to identify and reflect the entire range of benefits from NCS. Once this is in place, they can use the developing core benefits standards to verify the impact of their investments on climate, nature and people.

# Core benefits factsheets

## Gold Standard

General information	
 <a href="https://goldstandard.org">goldstandard.org</a>	<b>Standard organization</b> The Gold Standard Foundation
	<b>Unit name</b> Verified Emission Reduction (VER) and Planned Emission Reduction (PER)
	<b>Description</b> Certification entity that aims to ensure the good quality and sustainable development contribution of carbon projects.
	<b>Historical background</b> Gold Standard was established in 2003 by World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and other international NGOs to ensure emission reduction projects feature high environmental integrity. The certification process was created through close collaboration between technical and policy experts from governments, the private sector and civil society organizations. A non-profit Swiss Foundation was established to take over management and further advancement of Gold Standard tools. The Voluntary Gold Standard (GS VER) for the use in the voluntary market was established in 2006. In 2017, Gold Standard for the Global Goals was introduced, requiring a contribution to three impacts, with one of them being SDG 13 Climate Action.
Market acceptance	
<b>International Carbon Reduction and Offset Alliance (ICROA) recognized</b>	Yes
<b>Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) eligible</b>	Yes
NCS certification	
<b>Geography</b>	Global
<b>Project types</b>	Tree planting; ecosystem restoration; forest restoration, and afforestation/reforestation (A/R)
Core benefits measurement	
<b>Link to the SDGs</b>	Yes. It is mandatory to have a quantified and verified contribution to a minimum of three SDGs, one of them being SDG 13: Climate Action. The SDG impacts must be demonstrated as creating a positive effect beyond what would reasonably be expected to take place in the baseline scenario.
<b>Standard's approach to core benefits measurement</b>	Gold Standard uses a baseline-based approach for SDG core benefits measurement. SDG impacts are identified compared to baseline scenarios. For project developers, Gold Standard provides three options to demonstrate SDG impacts: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The National or UN SDG indicators list. Project developers must select the most relevant SDG targets and indicators to the chosen SDGs or propose indicators with justifications that demonstrate how the project makes a positive impact on the chosen SDGs</li> <li>2. A Gold Standard Approved SDG Tool for demonstration of SDG impacts</li> <li>3. A <a href="#">Gold Standard Approved Methodology</a> usually used to issue Gold Standard Certified Impact Statements or Products</li> </ol>
<b>Standard's methodology for core benefits</b>	Gold Standard launched a new <a href="#">SDG Impact Tool</a> based on principles set forth in the <a href="#">SDG Tool Guidance</a> . The tool established standardised impact indicators and quantification methods. The SDG Impact Tool is mandatory for all new projects submitted for certification under Gold Standard for the Global Goals after 14 March 2022. The existing projects are able to use the SDG Impact tool on a voluntary basis.
<b>Can project developers submit their own methodology for core benefits?</b>	Yes. Project developers may submit a methodology for review and approval by Gold Standard, according to the procedure laid out in the <a href="#">Impact Quantification Methodology Approval Procedure</a> .  When submitting a new methodology, project developers must provide evidence that the proposed methodology includes the quantification approach(es) to measure contribution to at least one SDG.  The SDG Impact Tool includes a list of default indicators for eligible activity types. However, project developers may also submit new monitoring indicators for inclusion in future versions of the SDG Impact Tool by filling out the <a href="#">template for proposing new monitoring indicators</a> .
NCS-specific methodologies for core benefits measurement	
SDG Impact Tool: forestry, agriculture (see other case studies in <a href="#">the SDG Impact Tool Manual</a> )	

(Source: South Pole, 2022 based on Gold Standard, 2021)

## Verified Carbon Standard (VCS)

General information									
 <a href="https://verra.org">verra.org</a>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>Standard organization</b></td> <td>Verra</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Unit name</b></td> <td>Verified Carbon Units (VCUs)</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Description</b></td> <td>Founded by several key carbon market actors, including WBCSD, with the purpose of certifying and crediting voluntary and compliance carbon projects. Largest independent crediting mechanism and the largest issuer of REDD+ and forestry credits overall.</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Historical background</b></td> <td>In 2005, Climate Wedge and Cheyne Capital drafted the first version of the VCS to transact “non-Kyoto” Protocol carbon credits. The VCS was launched in 2006 by the International Emissions Trading Association (IETA), The Climate Group and the World Economic Forum (WEF), subsequently joined by the WBCSD. The Verified Carbon Standard Association was founded in 2007 in Switzerland. In 2018, the organization that manages the VCS changed its name from Verified Carbon Standard to Verra.</td> </tr> </table>	<b>Standard organization</b>	Verra	<b>Unit name</b>	Verified Carbon Units (VCUs)	<b>Description</b>	Founded by several key carbon market actors, including WBCSD, with the purpose of certifying and crediting voluntary and compliance carbon projects. Largest independent crediting mechanism and the largest issuer of REDD+ and forestry credits overall.	<b>Historical background</b>	In 2005, Climate Wedge and Cheyne Capital drafted the first version of the VCS to transact “non-Kyoto” Protocol carbon credits. The VCS was launched in 2006 by the International Emissions Trading Association (IETA), The Climate Group and the World Economic Forum (WEF), subsequently joined by the WBCSD. The Verified Carbon Standard Association was founded in 2007 in Switzerland. In 2018, the organization that manages the VCS changed its name from Verified Carbon Standard to Verra.
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Market acceptance									
<b>ICROA recognized</b>	Yes								
<b>CORSIA eligible</b>	Yes								
NCS certification									
<b>Geography</b>	Global								
<b>Project types</b>	Afforestation, reforestation and revegetation; agricultural land management; improved forest management; reduced emissions from deforestation and degradation; avoided conversion of grasslands and shrublands; and wetlands restoration and conservation								
Core benefits measurement									
<b>Link to the SDGs</b>	Yes. From 20 January 2023, the VCS will require reported impacts to contribute to at least three SDGs by the end of the first monitoring period, as well as in each subsequent monitoring period. For projects registered before 20 January 2023, Verra will provide a three-year grace period to fulfil the necessary requirements on reporting the achievement of 3 SDGs.								
<b>Standard’s approach to core benefits measurement</b>	Currently, VCS projects can voluntarily report their SDG claims through the Sustainable Development (SD) Contributions Report. From 20 January 2023, the SD Contributions Report will be included into the VCS monitoring report making it mandatory for all VCS projects to report SDGs. Although mandatory, SDG claims will be based on self-reporting. VCU projects can also be linked to Verra’s core benefits programs such as the SD VISTa, the CCBS, Crown Standard and others. Projects seeking a verification to the SD VISTa and CCBS at the same time as a VCS program verification do not need a separate demonstration of compliance with the VCS SDG requirements.								
<b>Standard’s methodology for core benefits</b>	There is no specific methodology for SDG measurement. All VCS projects are subject to desk and field audits by independent third parties. However, VVBs only have to certify that the project has been implemented, and therefore the estimated SDG impacts are achieved. However, it is anticipated that when VCS methodologies are developed for SDGs, this will have more stringent verification requirements that VVBs need to assess.								
<b>Can project developers submit their own methodology for core benefits?</b>	SDGs measurement for VCS projects is currently based on the project developer’s approach, as there are no specific SDG quantification methodologies. It is up to project developers to set a baseline and define monitoring indicators, which will be used by VVBs to verify the impact.								
NCS-specific methodologies for core benefits measurement									
N/A									

(Source: South Pole, 2022 based on Verra 2022)



## Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) Sustainable Development Verified Impact Standard (SD VISta)

General information									
 <a href="https://verra.org">verra.org</a>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>Standard organization</b></td> <td>Verra</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Unit name</b></td> <td>SD VISta-labelled Verified Carbon Units (VCU) and SD VISta assets. SD VISta claims can also be generated, which only have informational value.</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Description</b></td> <td>The program was established by Verra in 2019 to help drive finance to projects that aim to explicitly advance SDGs. It applies to any project type that aims to deliver sustainable development benefits.</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Historical background</b></td> <td>Verra's Standard Development Advisory Committee developed the SD VISta Program in 2019, which piloted with fourteen projects. The reason for creating the SD VISta Program was a growing number of non-AFOLU projects seeking to demonstrate additional benefits such as those part of the CCBS which are limited to land-based projects only. Without expanding the scope of the CCBS, Verra created the SD VISta Program to drive real impact and transformation by allowing all types of projects to demonstrate to their contributions to the SDGs.</td> </tr> </table>	<b>Standard organization</b>	Verra	<b>Unit name</b>	SD VISta-labelled Verified Carbon Units (VCU) and SD VISta assets. SD VISta claims can also be generated, which only have informational value.	<b>Description</b>	The program was established by Verra in 2019 to help drive finance to projects that aim to explicitly advance SDGs. It applies to any project type that aims to deliver sustainable development benefits.	<b>Historical background</b>	Verra's Standard Development Advisory Committee developed the SD VISta Program in 2019, which piloted with fourteen projects. The reason for creating the SD VISta Program was a growing number of non-AFOLU projects seeking to demonstrate additional benefits such as those part of the CCBS which are limited to land-based projects only. Without expanding the scope of the CCBS, Verra created the SD VISta Program to drive real impact and transformation by allowing all types of projects to demonstrate to their contributions to the SDGs.
	<b>Standard organization</b>	Verra							
	<b>Unit name</b>	SD VISta-labelled Verified Carbon Units (VCU) and SD VISta assets. SD VISta claims can also be generated, which only have informational value.							
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Market acceptance									
<b>ICROA recognized</b>	Yes								
<b>CORSIA eligible</b>	Yes								
NCS certification									
<b>Geography</b>	Global								
<b>Project types</b>	All project types that aim to deliver sustainable development benefits, e.g. agriculture, forestry, energy and transport								
Core benefits measurement									
<b>Link to the SDGs</b>	Yes. The standard requires reported impacts to contribute to at least one SDG target.								
<b>Standard's approach to core benefits measurement</b>	SD VISta uses a baseline-based approach for SDG core benefits measurement. In addition to identifying a baseline scenario, the standard requires project developers to identify a baseline situation, or the social, economic, and natural capital conditions at the beginning of the project.								
<b>Standard's methodology for core benefits</b>	SDG core benefits are incorporated in the project's MRV system. The SDG indicator set is individually translated to the project-level, thus there is no universal set of indicators. Projects that successfully complete verification, including on meeting SDG core benefits, can add an SD VISta label to verified emission reduction units (e.g. VCUs), or issue separate SD VISta assets during the SD VISta-verified period.								
<b>Can project developers submit their own methodology for core benefits?</b>	Yes. As there are no standardised approaches to setting baselines and monitoring indicators for reporting SDG contributions, it is the project developer's responsibility to propose those, subject to a rigorous verification process by the VVB. Project developers can select their own SD VISta asset methodology through the <a href="#">SD VISta methodology approval process</a> . Verra will approve methodologies in cases where projects generate SD VISta assets.								
NCS-specific methodologies for core benefits measurement									
Methodology for Coastal Resilience Benefits from Restoration and Protection of Tidal Wetlands									


(Source: South Pole, 2022 based on Verra 2019)

## Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) Climate, Community and Biodiversity Standards (CCBS)

General information									
 <a href="https://verra.org">verra.org</a>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>Standard organization</b></td> <td>Verra</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Unit name</b></td> <td>CCB-labelled VCUs</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Description</b></td> <td>The CCB Program is managed by Verra and operated with the support of the five members of the Climate, Community &amp; Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA). The program was established to provide a framework for assessing land management projects which create net-positive benefits for climate, communities and biodiversity.</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Historical background</b></td> <td>The First Edition of the CCBS was released by the Climate, Community &amp; Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA) in 2005 after a rigorous two-year development process, which was based on input from various actors with expert knowledge. In 2008, the Second Edition of the CCBS was released. Finally, the Third Edition released in 2013 was designed to help smallholder and community-led projects access carbon finance. The CCBS can be applied to land management VCS projects only, which generate CCB-labelled VCUs.</td> </tr> </table>	<b>Standard organization</b>	Verra	<b>Unit name</b>	CCB-labelled VCUs	<b>Description</b>	The CCB Program is managed by Verra and operated with the support of the five members of the Climate, Community & Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA). The program was established to provide a framework for assessing land management projects which create net-positive benefits for climate, communities and biodiversity.	<b>Historical background</b>	The First Edition of the CCBS was released by the Climate, Community & Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA) in 2005 after a rigorous two-year development process, which was based on input from various actors with expert knowledge. In 2008, the Second Edition of the CCBS was released. Finally, the Third Edition released in 2013 was designed to help smallholder and community-led projects access carbon finance. The CCBS can be applied to land management VCS projects only, which generate CCB-labelled VCUs.
	<b>Standard organization</b>	Verra							
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<b>Market acceptance</b>									
<b>ICROA recognized</b>	Yes								
<b>CORSIA eligible</b>	Yes								
<b>NCS certification</b>									
<b>Geography</b>	Global								
<b>Project types</b>	All types of land management projects, e.g. forest conservation and restoration, agroforestry, and sustainable agriculture								
<b>Core benefits measurement</b>									
<b>Link to the SDGs</b>	Yes								
<b>Standard's approach to core benefits measurement</b>	Assessment of SDG impacts is done against a baseline. Projects must create net positive impacts on biodiversity compared to the "without-project" baseline scenario.								
<b>Standard's methodology for core benefits</b>	For measuring social, environmental and biodiversity impacts, a set of indicators is outlined in the monitoring plan. The indicators are identified and proposed by project developers under the CCBS. The 22 standardised indicators grouped into 11 impact categories are available for project developers. Data collection for monitoring occurs continuously and is reported upon verification. The project, including its climate, community and biodiversity benefits, are demonstrated through the verification process under Verra (VCS and CCBS procedures). Validation/verification to the CCBS is based on a review of the project documentation provided by the project proponent and appropriate fact finding by the VVB during a project site visit.								
<b>Can project developers submit their own methodology for core benefits?</b>	Yes. Project developers can choose methodology, including SDGs, a baseline, as well as monitoring indicators, to quantify core benefits to meet the CCBS requirements.								
<b>NCS-specific methodologies for core benefits measurement</b>									
N/A									


(Source: South Pole, 2022 based on Verra, 2017)

## Plan Vivo

General information	
 <a href="http://planvivo.org">planvivo.org</a>	<b>Standard organization</b> The Plan Vivo Foundation
	<b>Unit name</b> Plan Vivo Certificates (PVCs)
	<b>Description</b> A certification body for community-land projects that certifies projects against the Plan Vivo Standard and provides environmental and social benefits to communities.
	<b>Historical background</b> In 1994, Plan Vivo was designed to help smallholders in Chiapas, Mexico, plant trees and generate carbon credits, a pilot project supported by the UK Department for International Development (DFID). The three versions of the Plan Vivo Standard were developed between 2001-2008 providing guidance on project development and requirements for projects and auditors. In 2009, the Plan Vivo Foundation was established to take over management of the Standard. Putting a greater emphasis on sustainable livelihoods and biodiversity, the fourth Plan Vivo Standard was created in 2013; the fifth iteration was launched in 2022.
Market acceptance	
<b>ICROA recognized</b>	Yes (version 5.0)
<b>CORSIA eligible</b>	No
NCS certification	
<b>Geography</b>	Global
<b>Project types</b>	Focus on NCS, mostly community land-use projects (e.g. ecosystem restoration, ecosystem rehabilitation, prevention of ecosystem conversion or ecosystem degradation, and improved land use management)
Core benefits measurement	
<b>Link to the SDGs</b>	Yes. SDGs are recommended for identification of indicators to demonstrate co-benefits resulting from the project.
<b>Standard's approach to core benefits measurement</b>	<p>Plan Vivo does not have an SDG co-benefit tool but provides project developers with a <a href="#">Socio-Economic Manual</a> for integrating livelihood and participatory approaches into the design, development and monitoring of Plan Vivo projects.</p> <p>Plan Vivo draws on the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) (Schreckenberg et al., 2010) as a guide. The project must demonstrate clear plans to benefit the livelihoods of participants. Local participants must define what constitutes a benefit.</p>
<b>Standard's methodology for core benefits</b>	<p>The baseline socio-economic assessment and identification of socio-economic or livelihood indicators should be carried out using some common tools such as stakeholder analysis, participatory well-being assessment, participatory land use planning, timeline/historical transect, or participatory climate vulnerability assessment.</p> <p>A project socio-economic baseline scenario must be defined based on information on the socio-economic context in participating communities at the start of the project, and how these conditions are likely to continue or change in the absence of the project. In the project socio-economic baseline scenario, information must be included on demographics and population groups, access to and main uses of land and natural resources, access to and use of energy sources for light and heat, typical assets and income levels, main livelihood activities, local governance structures and decision-making mechanisms, cultural, religious and ethnic groups present, and gender and age equity.</p> <p>A socio-economic impact assessment/monitoring plan must be developed in a participatory manner to assess improvements against the baseline scenario, within one year of the project validation.</p> <p>The chosen indicators must be monitored, preferably on an annual basis. Short exercises during village meetings are recommended for monitoring. All chosen socio-economic and livelihoods indicators should be assessed and compared with their baseline values in time for the independent project verification after five years, or more frequently.</p>
<b>Can project developers submit their own methodology for core benefits?</b>	Yes. Project developers are also encouraged to use other frameworks that can help them assess people's livelihoods.
NCS-specific methodologies for core benefits measurement	
N/A	


(Source: South Pole, 2022 based on Plan Vivo, 2022)



General information	
 <a href="https://sustain-cert.com">sustain-cert.com</a>	<b>Standard organization</b> SustainCERT
	<b>Unit name</b> VERs, CERs, Gold Standard Renewable Energy labels for iRECs
	<b>Description</b> A verification body aimed to provide robust climate and SDG impact accounting and certification. SustainCERT is now open to any carbon standard that does value chain impact verification.
	<b>Historical background</b> SustainCERT was established as a spin off from the Gold Standard in 2018, raising seed capital from the Gold Standard Foundation, World Wildlife Foundation (WWF) Impact Ventures, Blue Orchard and 1to4 Foundation that maintain an ownership stake in the company. SustainCERT's digital carbon project application, SustainCERT App, was launched in 2018 and has since then successfully supported over 1200 projects spanning across energy, land-use, waste and community services sectors. SustainCERT has since expanded into assessing value chain emissions.
Market acceptance	
<b>ICROA recognized</b>	No
<b>CORSIA eligible</b>	No
NCS certification	
<b>Geography</b>	Global
<b>Project types</b>	All types of projects aimed at creating GHG emission reductions and removals
Core benefits measurement	
<b>Link to the SDGs</b>	Yes
<b>Standard's approach to core benefits measurement</b>	SDGs measurement is integrated in the MRV process developed for the purpose of the project.
<b>Standard's methodology for core benefits</b>	A fully completed monitoring plan and all relevant supporting documentation must be submitted to the VVB. Third-party auditors conduct a desk review and a field trip and confirm that the project is aligned with all requirements.
<b>Can project developers submit their own methodology for core benefits?</b>	Yes. Project developers must confirm that project design meets Gold Standard Safeguards, estimate climate and sustainable development impact, and consult with Gold Standard stakeholders.
NCS-specific methodologies for core benefits measurement	
N/A	

(Source: South Pole, 2022 based on SustainCERT, 2021)

## LandScale

General information	
 <a href="https://landscale.org">landscale.org</a>	<b>Standard organization</b> LandScale
	<b>Unit name</b> LandScale does not certify emission reductions but recognizes other types of claims, including assessment milestone claims (pillar, holistic, holistic+), landscape performance claims, and contribution to landscape performance claims.
	<b>Description</b> An initiative designed to generate landscape-level sustainability outcomes and provide reliable information about landscape sustainability performance. LandScale is piloting in nineteen landscapes with different geographies and governance models.
	<b>Historical background</b> LandScale is a cooperative initiative led by Rainforest Alliance, Verra and Conservation International. Since 2019, LandScale has been developing a system for consistent assessment and communication of landscape sustainability performance. It has involved two rounds of field-testing and public consultation to incorporate input from development partners and experts. LandScale aims to make the system available for public use in 2022.
Market acceptance	
<b>ICROA recognized</b>	No
<b>CORSIA eligible</b>	No
NCS certification	
<b>Geography</b>	Global
<b>Project types</b>	Any type of landscape, typically at least 100 square kilometres (km <sup>2</sup> )
Core benefits measurement	
<b>Link to the SDGs</b>	No
<b>Standard's approach to core benefits measurement</b>	Measurement is incorporated in the MRV system. LandScale provides a set of performance indicators grouped into four pillars: ecosystems, governance, human well-being, and production.
<b>Standard's methodology for core benefits</b>	Project developers must establish their landscape and assessment objectives, as well as define the landscape boundary. They must gather key background information such as land-use cover, population demographics, and economic activities. Project developers must choose the indicators and methodologies relevant to their landscape. Each measured metric is reviewed by stakeholders that have relevant expertise as part of the local review. The LandScale team validates the project by reviewing the selection and quality of data and methodology chosen for the assessment. Assessment results are validated if they both were reviewed by local stakeholder and LandScale. Assessment results must be published on the LandScale platform to make public claims.
<b>Can project developers submit their own methodology for core benefits?</b>	Yes. Any LandScale user can develop custom indicators and metrics and include them as part of their assessment. Where appropriate, custom indicators and metrics should be linked to the LandScale goals and performance indicators in the assessment report. However, custom indicators and metrics are not included within the scope of LandScale validation and claims.
NCS-specific methodologies for core benefits measurement	
N/A	

(Source: South Pole, 2022 based on LandScale, 2021)

# Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> World Resources Institute, 2021. 5 Big Findings from the IPCC's 2021 Climate Report. Available: <https://www.wri.org/insights/ipcc-climate-report>
- <sup>2</sup> IPCC, 2022. Working Group III contribution, Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change. Available: <https://www.ipcc.ch/assessment-report/ar6/>
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## ABOUT THE WORLD BUSINESS COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (WBCSD)

WBCSD is the premier global, CEO-led community of over 200 of the world's leading sustainable businesses working collectively to accelerate the system transformations needed for a net zero, nature positive, and more equitable future.

We do this by engaging executives and sustainability leaders from business and elsewhere to share practical insights on the obstacles and opportunities we currently face in tackling the integrated climate,

nature and inequality sustainability challenge; by co-developing "how-to" CEO-guides from these insights; by providing science-based target guidance including standards and protocols; and by developing tools and platforms to help leading businesses in sustainability drive integrated actions to tackle climate, nature and inequality challenges across sectors and geographical regions.

Our member companies come from all business sectors and all major economies, representing a combined revenue of more than USD \$8.5 trillion and 19 million employees. Our global network of almost 70 national

business councils gives our members unparalleled reach across the globe. Since 1995, WBCSD has been uniquely positioned to work with member companies along and across value chains to deliver impactful business solutions to the most challenging sustainability issues.

Together, we are the leading voice of business for sustainability, united by our vision of a world in which 9+ billion people are living well, within planetary boundaries, by mid-century.

[www.wbcSD.org](http://www.wbcSD.org)

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