



# **Glossary of Terms, Definitions and Acronyms**

Version 1.3

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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

This document provides the definitions for the terms and acronyms that are used in the Natural Forest Standard program documentation including the Standard, Guidance, Templates and website.

Where applicable, this document has referenced the source of definitions; these sources can be found in the footnotes.

This document will be reviewed and updated from time-to-time and users should ensure they are using to the most current version of the document.

## 2. GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Where the following terms appear in the Natural Forest Standard, or the Guidance, Templates or website relating to the standard, the meanings of the terms are defined as follows:

TERM	DEFINITION
<b>Above Ground Biomass</b>	Living biomass above the soil, including the stem, stump, branches, bark, seeds and foliage <sup>1</sup> .
<b>Accreditation</b>	Accreditation is the formal, third party recognition of competence to perform specific tasks. It provides a means to identify a proven, competent validation team. For NFS projects, ANSI (American National Standards Institute), UKAS (United Kingdom Accreditation Services) and ISO 14064 accredited validators and verifiers are approved to carry out the validation and verification of projects against the standard.
<b>Additionality</b>	<p>Additionality describes the extent to which activities, and resulting outcomes, occur as a consequence of an intervention, such as the resource flows generated from carbon certificates, made possible by the existence of a standard and market for certificates.</p> <p>A proposed activity is additional if the activity occurs as a consequence of the application of the NFS. The activity must be taking place as a result of the NFS, and would not have taken place in the baseline situation – defined as the absence of the Standard. The definition of additionality often seen in other standards – ‘would the activities have taken place in the absence of the project?’ – is not sufficient; the activities of a project are indistinguishable from the existence of the</p>

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<sup>1</sup> Consistent with the VCS Program Definitions v.3.4. Available at: <http://v-c-s.org/sites/v-c-s.org/files/Program%20Definitions%2C%20v3.4.pdf>



	project, so framing the question in this way produces a meaningless answer <sup>2</sup> .
<b>Baseline</b>	A project baseline is an estimate of what would happen without NFS, and thus the absence of activities supported by carbon finance in the project area. The conditions of a baseline are described in a baseline scenario – a quantification of the expected biomass loss in the absence of the project activities.
<b>Below Ground Biomass</b>	Living biomass of live roots, excluding fine roots of less than 2 mm diameter as these cannot be easily distinguished empirically from soil organic matter or litter <sup>3</sup> .
<b>Benefit Distribution Mechanism</b>	A mechanism administered by the project to allocate resources and/or finance to local communities to help establish sustainable land management, improve living conditions and livelihoods.
<b>Biodiversity</b>	The variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine & other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems <sup>4</sup> (Consistent with Convention on Biological Diversity definitions).
<b>Buffer Stock</b>	A buffer stock is a pooled stock of NCC's from projects which will not be traded. The purpose of keeping a buffer stock is to insure against the possibility of carbon losses as a result of unforeseen events.
<b>Carbon at Risk</b>	The estimated stock of carbon at risk of emission to the atmosphere within a given area over a given time span, taking into account relevant risk factors such as accessibility, suitability for cultivation or extraction, and the degree of protection.
<b>Carbon Benefits</b>	A project's carbon benefit is the annual sum-total reduction in CO <sub>2</sub> emissions to the atmosphere and sequestration of CO <sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere that occurs as a result of the project activities, expressed in tonnes of carbon dioxide per year (tCO <sub>2</sub> /yr).
<b>Carbon Rights Holders</b>	Rights holders to carbon are individuals, institutions, groups or communities that have rights to the benefits (and liabilities) associated

<sup>2</sup> Gillenwater, 2012: What is additionality? Part 1: A Long Standing Problem. Greenhouse Gas Management Institute, Silver Spring, MD. Available at:

[http://ghginstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/content/GHGMI/AdditionalityPaper\\_Part-1\(ver3\)FINAL.pdf](http://ghginstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/content/GHGMI/AdditionalityPaper_Part-1(ver3)FINAL.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> See footnote 1.

<sup>4</sup> Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, 2011: Livelihood Alternatives for the Unsustainable use of Bushmeat. Technical Series No. 60, Montreal, SCBD. Available at:

<http://www.cbd.int/doc/publications/cbd-ts-60-en.pdf>



	with carbon sequestration within a defined area. Where the ownership of carbon benefits is not legally defined, contractual mechanisms apportioning benefits shall be acceptable. This can be established without a formal legal framework, although a formal legal framework defining rights is preferable.
<b>Carbon Stock</b>	The quantity of carbon held within a pool, including aboveground biomass, below ground biomass, litter, deadwood and soil, measured in tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> <sup>5</sup> .
<b>Carbon Risk Map</b>	A map showing variations in the carbon at risk within the project area - see for example, Estimating Terrestrial Carbon at Risk of Emission <sup>6</sup> .
<b>Commercial Timber Extraction /Logging</b>	Commercial timber extraction is the extraction of wood by commercial organisations to supply markets for timber, pulp or bio-energy. Commercial operations are distinguished from subsistence extraction or resource use by a combination of legal status, scale and level of mechanisation. Timber extraction is considered commercial when it exhibits any of the following characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducted by a commercial business;</li> <li>• Use of heavy machinery for extraction and transport;</li> <li>• Use of contracted/hired labour;</li> <li>• Construction of skid-tracks, extraction roads and landings;</li> <li>• Logs taken to an industrial sawmill.</li> </ul>
<b>Conservation Activities</b>	Conservation activities are processes carried out by the project proponents with the purpose of maintaining forest cover, ecological functions, ecosystem services, and populations of species. It is a protective process to manage identified threats and risks. It is distinct from restoration activities (see Forest Restoration definition below) which are designed to actively improve the quality of habitats, populations and ecosystems.
<b>Double Counting</b>	The scenario under which a singular GHG emission reduction or removal is monetized separately by two different entities or where a GHG emission reduction or removal is sold to multiple buyers <sup>7</sup> .

<sup>5</sup> See footnote 1

<sup>6</sup> Terrestrial Carbon Group, 2009. Estimating terrestrial carbon at risk of emission: applying the Terrestrial Carbon Group 3 Filters Approach. Available at: [http://www.terrestrialcarbon.org/Terrestrial Carbon Group soil %26 vegetation in climate solution/Policy Briefs files/TCG%20Policy%20Brief%203%20TCG%20REL%20Tool%20090608.pdf](http://www.terrestrialcarbon.org/Terrestrial%20Carbon%20Group%20soil%20vegetation%20in%20climate%20solution/Policy%20Briefs%20files/TCG%20Policy%20Brief%203%20TCG%20REL%20Tool%20090608.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> See footnote 1



<b>Deforestation</b>	The conversion of forest to non-forest through human-induced activities <sup>8</sup> .
<b>Degradation</b>	Changes within the forest which negatively affect the structure or function of the stand or site, and thereby lower the capacity to provide ecosystem functions and services <sup>9</sup> .
<b>Endangered Species</b>	Species classified in the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) Red List of species as being 'Endangered' or 'Critically Endangered'.
<b>Forest Restoration</b>	The repair of natural forest structure, function and biomass following degradation or deforestation. The success of restoration can be measured using the Normative Biodiversity Metric, which will quantify improvements in the degree of 'pristineness'.
<b>Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)</b>	The right for indigenous peoples and communities to give, or withhold, their consent to developments that affect part of their territory. It describes the establishment of conditions under which indigenous people and communities can exercise their fundamental rights to "negotiate the terms of externally imposed policies, programs, and activities that directly affect their livelihoods or wellbeing, and to give or withhold their consent to them" <sup>10</sup> .
<b>Greenhouse Gas Inventory Protocols</b>	Internationally accepted guidelines for emissions reporting, such as IPCC, WBCSD, or WRI <sup>11</sup> .
<b>Jurisdiction</b>	An administrative entity such as a second level of government (state or province) or a third level (municipalities). <sup>12</sup>
<b>Leakage</b>	Greenhouse gas emissions occurring outside the project boundary as a result of project activities within the project boundary.
<b>Local Community</b>	Communities verified as living within the project area boundaries, established prior to the start of the project. Where there are transient communities within and around the project area, those communities

<sup>8</sup> See footnote 1

<sup>9</sup> Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, 2000: Global Ecological Zones. Available at: <http://www.fao.org/geonetwork/srv/en/metadata.show?id=1255>

<sup>10</sup> RECOFTC & GIZ, 2011. Free, Prior, and Informed Consent in REDD+: Principles and Approaches for Policy and Project Development. RECOFTC, Bangkok.

<sup>11</sup> World Business Council for Sustainable Development; World Resources Institute, 2004: The Greenhouse Gas Protocol: A Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard. Washington, D.C. Geneva, Switzerland.

<sup>12</sup> <https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/governance/what-are-we-talking-about-when-we-talk-about-subnational-governments>



	<p>which are known to, or thought to often frequent the project area will be treated as local communities.</p>
<p><b>Major/Minor Deficiencies</b></p>	<p>Deficiencies are shortcomings with a project’s design, management systems or operations that require attention as part of the process of validation or verification.</p> <p><u>Major deficiencies</u> are those that pose a serious barrier to meeting the standards and require resolution prior to the project progressing towards registration or credit issuance.</p> <p><u>Minor deficiencies</u> are those that raise risks or could, if uncorrected, have a negative effect on the project or its outcomes in terms of quantified carbon, social and biodiversity benefits.</p>
<p><b>Management Plan</b></p>	<p>A document, setting out activities and resources to be applied to the project area to protect and restore forest carbon and activities designed to benefit local people.</p>
<p><b>Natural Forest</b></p>	<p>Natural Forests are forest ecosystems with most of the principal characteristics and elements of native ecosystems such as complexity, structure and diversity. They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Primary Forest - Naturally regenerated forest of native tree species, where there are no clearly visible indications of human activities and the ecological processes are not significantly disturbed (FAO 2020)</li> <li>● Naturally Regenerating Forest - Forest predominantly composed of trees established through natural regeneration (FAO 2020)</li> <li>● Managed Natural Forest - Forest in which sustainable timber and non-wood harvesting (e.g. through integrated harvesting and silvicultural treatments), wildlife management and other uses have resulted in changes of forest structure and species composition (UNFCCC 2001)</li> <li>● Semi-Natural Forest - Managed forests modified by man through silviculture and assisted regeneration (ITTO 2002)</li> <li>● Forest established through planting or seeding which at stand maturity resembles or will resemble naturally regenerating forest (FAO 2020).</li> </ul> <p>They exclude:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Plantation Forest - Forest predominantly composed of trees established through planting and/or deliberate seeding that is intensively managed and meets all the following criteria at planting and stand maturity: one or two species, even age class, and regular spacing (FAO 2020).</li> </ul>



<b>Natural Capital</b>	Natural Capital is the collective term for the Earth’s natural assets comprising land, air, water, living organisms and all formations of the Earth’s biosphere that provide us with ecosystem goods and services imperative for human existence survival and well-being <sup>13</sup> .
<b>Natural Capital Credit (NCC)</b>	The resulting certificate representing the verified, permanently avoided emission of one tonne of CO2 from a Natural Forest Standard project. NCCs are denoted as one metric tonne of CO2 equivalent of GHG emission reductions. NCCs are only issued ex-post.
<b>NFS Risk Panel</b>	A sub-group of the Technical Panel who will provide guidance on the level of risk buffers or other insurance and risk management methods to be applied to ensure the permanence of emission reductions by NFS projects.
<b>NFS Technical Panel</b>	A group of independent experts, administered by an independent organisation who will review, approve and rate carbon maps and risk maps used to quantify the carbon benefits of projects, and who will develop and propose good practice guidance, providing advice on an independent professional basis.
<b>NFS Registry</b>	A secure platform for issuing, tracking and retiring Natural Capital Credits, that promotes transparency and credibility to the market by ensuring provenance and singularity of credits.
<b>Non-Permanence Risk</b>	The risk that a project will be subject to an unforeseen external event, which will cause a significant loss of carbon and/or biomass.
<b>Normative Biodiversity Metric (NBM)</b>	The Normative Biodiversity Metric is a tool used to provide a quantified assessment of the biodiversity significance of a defined area of habitat <sup>14</sup> .
<b>Performance Benchmark Approach</b>	A performance benchmark approach draws upon statistically derived risk estimates for land categories to estimate the impacts of measures to improve forest conservation. According to VCS <sup>15</sup> performance benchmarks "are a promising alternative to determining baselines and assessing additionality on a project-by-project basis". A performance benchmark provides advantages for a programmatic approach to reducing emissions where projects within a given region can use a

<sup>13</sup> International Institute for Sustainable Development <http://www.iisd.org/natres/agriculture/capital.asp>

<sup>14</sup> Jarrett, D, 2011. Assessing Organisational Biodiversity Performance. Available at: [http://ecometrica-cms-media.s3.amazonaws.com/assets/media/pdf/assessing\\_organisational\\_performance.pdf](http://ecometrica-cms-media.s3.amazonaws.com/assets/media/pdf/assessing_organisational_performance.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Seager & Lehman, 2011.: Standardized Approaches to Baselines and Additionality; Public Consultation. Available at: <http://v-c-s.org/sites/v-c-s.org/files/VCS%20Presentation,%20Standardized%20Approaches,%20Webinar,%202013%20SEP%202011.pdf>





	consistent set of baseline data, accounting methods and rules. This will aid the evaluation of the program, reduce costs for individual projects and allow the performance benchmark to be adjusted over time according to evidence.
<b>Permanence</b>	Emissions reductions expected to be avoided for over a period of 100 years.
<b>Project Benefits</b>	The project benefits are the combined carbon, biodiversity and socio-economic benefits that are generated from the implementation of the project activities.
<b>Project Crediting Period</b>	The time period for which GHG emission reductions or removals generated by the project are eligible for issuance of Natural Capital Credits, the rules with respect to the length of such time period and the renewal of the project crediting period. The term “project period” and “project crediting period” are interchangeable and mean the project duration. <sup>16</sup>
<b>Project Design Document</b>	A PDD is a detailed description of a proposed project, including a management plan and methods for quantifying the proposed project and shall include all appropriate, relevant and required documentation and materials necessary for the validation of the proposed project against the NFS requirements.
<b>Project Implementation Report (PIR)</b>	A PIR is a document that describes how the project has been implemented in accordance with its validated design and delivered net positive benefits to meet the requirements of the NFS.
<b>Project NBM Score</b>	The Project Normative Biodiversity Metric <sup>17</sup> score is average NBM score from all the distinct patches of habitat, including artificial habitats within the project area. The score is ranked on a scale from 0 – 10. The project NBM score will be attached to the carbon credit, so buyers are aware of the biodiversity value of the project area. The process for calculating the Normative Biodiversity Metric score is in the Biodiversity Assessment section.
<b>Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD)</b>	Reduction in greenhouse gases emissions through the avoidance of deforestation and forest degradation.

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.un-redd.org/glossary/project-crediting-period>

<sup>17</sup> See footnote 13.



<b>Risk of Biomass Loss</b>	The risk of biomass loss within the project area in the baseline scenario is the likelihood that in the absence of any interventions, carbon and/or biomass will be lost as a result of deforestation.
<b>Risk Rating</b>	A rating exercise carried out by the NFS Risk Panel with relevant expert input, to determine the level of Natural Capital Credits to be held and maintained in the project buffer account to mitigate risks and uncertainties associated with the delivery of permanent avoided GHG emissions.
<b>Type 1 Error</b>	Incorrect classification of risk (over-estimate) leading to the unnecessary protection and issuance of excess credits for areas of forest at low or no risk.
<b>Type 2 Error</b>	Incorrect classification of risk (under-estimate) leading to insufficient protection and subsequent loss of forest and associated emissions.
<b>Validation</b>	Independent, third-party assessment of a project by a validation/verification body that determines whether a project design complies with the requirements of the Natural Forest Standard.
<b>Verification</b>	The periodic ex-post independent, third party assessment by a validation/verification body of the carbon benefits, biodiversity rating, social impacts and management according to the guidance and methods specified in the standard and project documentation.

### 3. ACRONYMS

Where the following acronyms are used in the Natural Forest Standard, Guidance, Templates or website relating to the standard, their meanings are defined as follows:

<b>ACRONYM</b>	<b>DEFINITION</b>
ACEU	Accessible, Cultivable, Extractable, Unprotected
ACR	American Carbon Registry
AFOLU	Agriculture, Forestry and other Land Use
AGC	Above-ground Carbon
ANSI	American National Standards Institute



BDM	Benefit Distribution Mechanism
BGC	Below-ground Carbon
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCBA	Climate Community and Biodiversity Alliance
ECO	Ecosystem Certification Organisation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
GISP	Global Invasive Species Program
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ISSG	Invasive Species Specialist Group
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
NBM	Normative Biodiversity Metric
NCC	Natural Capital Credit
NFS	Natural Forest Standard
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PDD	Project Design Document
PIN	Project Idea Note
PMS	Project Management System
REDD	Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation



SOC	Soil Organic Carbon
UKAS	United Kingdom Accreditation Service
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VCS	Verified Carbon Standard
VVB	Validation/Verification Body
WBCSD	World Business Council for Sustainable Development
WRI	World Resources Institute
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

#### 4. WORD USAGE

Where the following words are used in the Natural Forest Standard, Guidance, Templates or website relating to the standard, their meanings are defined as follows:

TERM	DEFINITION
<b>Shall</b>	The word <u>shall</u> indicates a mandatory requirement of the Standard.
<b>Shall Not</b>	The words <u>shall not</u> mean that the action is absolutely not permissible under the standard.
<b>Should</b>	The word <u>should</u> indicates a certain action is recommended under the standard i.e. a certain course of action is preferred but not necessarily required.
<b>Should Not</b>	The words <u>should not</u> highlight that an action is not recommended under the standard.
<b>May</b>	The word <u>may</u> means that an action is optional. It is used to indicate a course of action permissible within the requirements of the standard. The relevance of such actions is to be determined according to local circumstances and the appropriateness in line with the principles of the standard.
<b>Can</b>	The word <u>can</u> is used to demonstrate that an action is possible under the standard.



## **ENDNOTE**

Please refer to the document “Summary of Revisions 10 2024” for full details of documentation updates. Effective date 13<sup>th</sup> August 2024