

# Safeguarding Principles and Procedures of Cercarbono's Certification Programme





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**Version  
1.0**

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## 1 Introduction

Reaching climate change mitigation goals must be done in harmony with the environment and social development of the communities where climate change mitigation projects and Programmes (CCMPs) are implemented. All this creates an interconnection between climate change mitigation objectives, compliance with environmental, labour, and related laws, and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development goals, all of which must be developed in an aligned manner.

To ensure this alignment, all CCMPs must pre-assess the Safeguard Principles established by Cercarbono's Voluntary Carbon Certification Programme and implement them per the specified requirements. The assessment is applied to the project scenario, in the context representing the baseline scenario, and to the implementation stages, analysed in the context of the CCMP verifications.

The following programme ruling documents and procedures define the principles set out here:

- ***Cercarbono's Protocol for Voluntary Carbon Certification.***
- ***Procedures of Cercarbono's Certification Programme.***
- ***Cercarbono's Tool to Estimate the Carbon Buffer in Climate Change Mitigation Initiatives in the Land Use Sector.***
- ***Cercarbono's Tool to Report Contributions from Climate Change Mitigation Initiatives to the Sustainable Development Goals.***
- Methodologies.
- Templates for monitoring reports and validation and verification statements.

## 2 Safeguarding principles and requirements

The main objective of the principles and requirements of these safeguards is to ensure at least **no net harm in environmental, social, and economic terms**. In parallel, *Cercarbono's Tool to Report Contributions from Climate Change Mitigation Initiatives to the Sustainable Development Goals*, which is mandatory for CCMPs, allows the alignment of CCMPs' co-benefits in these areas and the reporting and auditing of positive contributions in these areas.

CCMPs are required to promote and demonstrate activities aimed at improving the environment and the quality of life of local populations in the framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. In contrast, these safeguards support the no net harm principle.

From these two perspectives, compliance with all environmental and social laws in the context in which the CCMP is developed is mandatory. It is not accepted that CCMPs deteriorate the quality of life of local or surrounding populations.

The CCMP should conduct a safeguards status analysis as part of the PDD, focused on the planned implementation of the CCMP. The monitoring report should include a safeguards compliance section, including all applicable principles listed below.

For its part, the VVBs oversee the assessment of legal compliance and environmental and social requirements of CCMPs, as stated in Cercarbono's Protocol and Procedures.

### 2.1 General considerations applicable to all principles

For all the principles applicable to a specific activity, the CCMP shall:

- As part of the PDD, report initial conditions related to the principle and how these would be affected by the implementation of the activity.
- Identify the risks associated with implementing the activities concerning the principle and the responses to avoid negative impacts related to the principle.
- Report how the project activities would not cause net harm to this principle.
- If evaluating the principle requires expert stakeholders' opinions and recommendations, demonstrate that they have conducted a thorough review and that their requests have been incorporated into the project design.
- The assessment of safeguarding principles shall include a description with justifications on how a project met these requirements.
- State how the principle will be monitored.

### 2.2 Environmental safeguarding principles

The following are the safeguards principles to be considered by CCMPs:

**1. Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of living environmental components**

- 1a. Genetic resources.
- 1b. Endangered species.
- 1c. Dignified treatment of animals.

- 1a and 1c are mandatory for CCMPs in the land use sector and non-urban CCMPs, regardless of the sector.

The CCMP shall report, as part of its PDD, the initial conservation and management status of environmental components indicating, among other things, existing valuable genetic resources and threatened species in the project area. The CCMP shall also report and address if it potentially impacts other areas where endangered species may be present through transboundary effects.

If the CCMP includes any management or coexistence with non-human animals, it shall report how its implementation will lead to the humane treatment of animals and how this component will be monitored.

The CCMP shall also follow the general considerations presented in [Section 2.1](#) for this principle.

**2. Natural heritage<sup>1</sup>**

- Mandatory for CCMPs in the land use sector and non-urban CCMPs regardless of the sector where their implementation may affect natural heritage.

If there are sites that are considered natural heritage inside project area or if the implementation of activities can affect natural heritage outside the project area, the CCMP shall follow the general considerations presented in [Section 2.1](#).

**3. Sustainable management of Non-living environmental components**

- 3a. Water.
- 3b. Soil.
- 3c. Landscape.

- Mandatory for CCMPs in the land use sector and for non-urban CCMPs regardless the sector.

The CCMP shall follow the general considerations presented in [Section 2.1](#) for this principle.

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<sup>1</sup> According to UNESCO: natural features, geological and physiographical formations and delineated areas that constitute the habitat of threatened species of animals and plants and natural sites of value from the point of view of science, conservation, or natural beauty. It includes private and publicly protected natural areas, zoos, aquaria and botanical gardens, natural habitat, marine ecosystems, sanctuaries, reservoirs etc.

#### **4. Pollution, pesticides, and fertilisers**

4a. Pollution.

4b. Pesticides and fertilisers.

- 4a is mandatory for all CCMP.

- 4b is mandatory for CCMPs in the land use sector and non-urban CCMPs regardless the sector.

The CCMP shall follow the general considerations presented in **Section 2.1** for this principle.

### **2.3 Social safeguarding principles**

#### **5. Gender equality and human rights**

- Mandatory for all CCMPs.

The CCMP shall follow the general considerations presented in **Section 2.1** for this principle.

#### **6. Cultural heritage<sup>2</sup>**

- Mandatory for all CCMPs whose implementation may affect cultural heritage.

If there are sites that are considered cultural heritage inside project area or if the implementation of activities can affect natural heritage outside the project area, the CCMP shall follow the general considerations presented in **Section 2.1**.

#### **7. Communities and Indigenous Peoples**

- Mandatory for all CCMPs implemented on communities' or indigenous people's lands.

When the CCMP is developed in an area where a local population is established or when the CCMP activity may have an environmental, social, or economic impact on local people or society in general, a public consultation by the CCMP with interested parties is required.

The objective of this consultation is to meaningfully engage stakeholders to discuss the potential environmental, social, and economic impacts (both positive and potential risks) that these may have during the design, planning, implementation, and operation stages of the CCMP and to establish a feedback mechanism in consultation with stakeholders.

The CCMP must report on all mechanisms disseminating complete and relevant consultation information.

For REDD+ projects, the CCMP shall also consider the social and environmental safeguards, as stated in Cercarbono's REDD+ methodologies. The safeguards compliance detailed by the

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<sup>2</sup> According to UNESCO: historical, cultural, artistic, traditional, or religious values or intangible forms of culture (e.g., knowledge, innovations, or practices).

CCMPs must be integrated into the PDD and the monitoring report before each verification event. If the National Safeguards System (NSS) is operational in the country where the CCMP is implemented, such compliance will be reported to this system. See Cercarbono's REDD+ methodologies for more details.

The CCMP shall also follow the general considerations presented in [Section 2.1](#) for this principle.

## **8. Land acquisition and involuntary resettlement**

- Mandatory for all CCMPs, where this event occurs.

If the CCMP requires any land tenure arrangements or resettlement of people, it shall follow the general considerations presented in [Section 2.1](#) for this principle.

## **9. Health, safety, and security**

- Mandatory for all CCMPs.

The CCMP shall follow the general considerations presented in [Section 2.1](#) for this principle.

## **10. Corruption**

- Mandatory for all CCMPs.

The CCMP shall follow the general considerations presented in [Section 2.1](#) for this principle.

## **11. Legal compliance**

- Mandatory for all CCMPs.

As stated in Cercarbono's Protocol, CCMPs shall list, describe, and justify compliance with the laws, statutes, and regulatory frameworks under which it is governed (local, regional, and national), which apply to the CCMP activity, including applicable environmental requirements and the registration of the CCMP's concrete actions in the national registry system, where applicable.

CCMPs in the land use sector shall demonstrate the compatibility of the actions developed with the land use categories, if any, in the country where it is implemented.

If CCMPs are to be implemented in areas of environmental protection, a permit or authorisation must also be obtained, as appropriate, from the environmental authority with jurisdiction in the intervention area, which will verify the compatibility of the CCMP with the management instrument and the zoning established therein.

The CCMP should specify all applicable laws, statutes, and regulatory frameworks (local, regional, national, etc.) in force regarding land categorisation or management and should identify, implement, and periodically evaluate compliance with them.



The CCMP shall also follow the general considerations presented in *Section 2.1* for this principle.

## **2.4 Economic principles**

### **12. Negative economic consequences**

- Mandatory for all CCMPs.

The CCMP shall follow the general considerations presented in *Section 2.1* for this principle.

### **13. Labour rights**

- Mandatory for all CCMPs.

The CCMP shall follow the general considerations presented in *Section 2.1* for this principle.

### 3 Identification and mitigation of negative impacts

To identify negative impacts and define mitigation activities, CCMPs should follow the guidelines set by the competent environmental authority in the country where they are implemented. In any case, the CCMP must comply with the environmental legislation applicable in its context. If these guidelines do not exist, one of the following methods can be used:

- Expert judgement.
- Quantitative physical and mathematical models.
- Cumulative impact assessment.
- Interaction matrices and diagrams.
- Rapid Impact Assessment Matrix.
- Battelle environmental assessment system.

#### **4 Monitoring the impact on the safeguarding principles**

As part of monitoring mitigation activities' implementation, the CCMP will also monitor the impact of its implementation on the safeguard principles, providing evidence, where necessary, to demonstrate that there is no net harm to these principles.

The monitoring report templates have specific sections for monitoring impacts on the safeguard principles.

## 5 Third party validation and verification

As part of the auditing process, VVBs shall integrate the auditing of the compliance of the safeguard principles in their validation and verification statements. All auditing templates have specific sections for safeguards review.

Any failure to complete the safeguard principles, including conformity with protocol, procedures and monitoring and reporting requirements, shall lead to non-conformity statements to be addressed by the CCMPs.

## 6 Grievance mechanism

### 6.1 Programme mechanism

Cercarbono has a specific grievance mechanism on its website, described in ***Procedures of Cercarbono's Certification Programme***.

### 6.2 CCMPs mechanism

CCMPs should incorporate strategies for promoting dialogue and effective communications with stakeholders or communities.

Intervention processes should be developed to address queries, claims, concerns and complaints from stakeholders or community members in the areas where CCMPs are implemented that respond to:

- Identification of enquiries, claims, concerns, and complaints.
- Registration and analysis of queries, claims, concerns, and complaints.
- Creation of dialogue scenarios.
- Proposing solutions (from the CCMP as well as from the stakeholders or communities).
- Development of agreements or commitments.
- Drafting of reports and follow-up to agreements or commitments.

These processes can be developed independently or in a complementary manner. In any case, a documentary registry of them must be evidenced when they occur. The CCMP must establish no more than three months to resolve any query, claim, concern, or complaint. If this deadline is not feasible, it may extend it by justifying its decision.

## 7 Deviation requests

An exception to a specific safeguard principle or requirement may arise in particular circumstances. For example, the CCMP shall submit a deviation request to Cercarbono to review unavoidable negative impacts that may not be remediated. Cercarbono shall review these requests to determine whether the exception should be accepted.

## 8 Document history

Version	Date	Comments or changes
1.0	24.03.2023	Initial version.