COLCX No Net Harm and Socio-environmental Safeguards Guide

Version 1.0

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1. INTRODUCTION

The implementation of activities within a specific area for various purposes, including climate change mitigation, may result in the manifestation of harm and impacts capable of affecting the integrity of the environment and people (UN Environment, 2020). Ensuring the integrity of individuals and their surroundings depends on the shared responsibility of all actors involved, regardless of their location, to uphold and respect human rights and to protect economic, social, and cultural assets.

In addition, the inclusion and effective participation of all stakeholders involved in climate change action from the global to the local level, including rural communities, indigenous peoples, minorities and people with disabilities, are relevant aspects for the effectiveness of the objectives committed by nations to reduce GHG emissions in the atmosphere. Similarly, the Cancun safeguards are mechanisms adopted by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to protect the integrity of the environment and the people involved in climate change mitigation and adaptation activities.

The COLCX program, through this guide, adopts the evaluation and monitoring of risks and impacts derived from project activities and urges proponents and owners to implement safeguards and mitigation and impact reduction actions within their area of influence, reducing risks, minimizing damages and respecting the rights of stakeholders, taking into account aspects of gender equity, empowerment of minorities, environmental resilience and sustainability, cultural heritage and labor conditions. This guide takes into consideration the identification of risks, assessment of impacts derived from their manifestation, mitigation measures related to socio-environmental safeguards and declaration of no net damage.

2. OBJECTIVE

- Provide a methodological flow for the identification of risks involved in project activities
- Guide project owners and proponents in the formulation of actions to mitigate risks and impacts within their area of influence
- Promote the application of socio-environmental safeguards as a measure to mitigate the net damage caused by activities

3. SCOPE

This guide promotes respect for natural resources, the environment and human rights through accurate analysis of the risks and effects derived from the implementation of GHG mitigation initiative activities. It is a tool that will allow project owners and proponents to demonstrate that they do not generate net damage to the elements that make up their

area of influence, while at the same time allowing them to comply with the essential principles for working with communities in their environment.

The link between risks, impacts and mitigation measures with the project activities allows demonstrating the contribution that the project makes not only to the atmosphere through the reduction and removal of GHG, but also to components associated with the system where it is implemented. This in turn, makes the proponent design actions carefully, where multiple purposes are integrated to mitigate climate change, reduce risks and nullify the probable net damage, contributing to a sustainable development model based on social and environmental safeguards, and the validity of human rights.

Finally, the project owner and/or proponent are expected to be able to declare to their stakeholders that they have undertaken comprehensive actions that consider the multiple dimensions of sustainable development, including models of equity and transparency, the transfer of accurate information, the protection of natural resources, and respect for the traditions and cultures of the communities with whom they engage. The process concludes with a verified and approved declaration that the project does not cause net harm and complies with social and environmental safeguards, supported by risk and impact management plans when impacts exceed acceptable thresholds.

4. REFERENCES

This document is based on the following references:

- American Convention on Human Rights (Pact of San José)[1]
- UNDP Social and Environmental Standards. Year 2021[2]
- UNEP Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework[3]
- Report of the Conference of the Parties on its 16th session, held in Cancun in 2010[4]
- Article 6.4 Sustainable Development Tool[5]

5. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Project proponents and/or owners must apply the guidelines defined in this guide to declare that they generate no net harm to people and the environment associated with the limits of their initiative, and that they employ social and environmental safeguards, as well as other mitigation measures as mechanisms for the reduction and prevention of severe impacts on the environment. For all owners and/or proponents and their initiatives it must prevail that:

[1] https://www.oas.org/dil/esp/1969_Convención_Americana_sobre_Derechos_Humanos.pdf
[2]https://www.undp.org/publications/undp-social-and-environmental-standards
[3]https://www.unep.org/resources/report/un-environments-environmental-social-and-economic-sustainability-framework
[4] https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/spa/07a01s.pdf
[5] https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/A6.4-SBM014-A04.pdf

About people

- Human rights are respected, starting with the right to life, integrity in all its dimensions, personal freedom, freedom of thought, traditions and religions, the right to private property and its progressive development.
- They are based on equal participation, inclusion of minorities, protection of children, non-discrimination and respect for differences.
- Comply with norms and laws related to human rights, respect for tradition, culture and sustainable development.
- Empower vulnerable women, men and children in the multiple contexts where the initiative generates benefits.
- They protect the safety and health of the communities and workers involved.

About the environment

- They assess risks to natural resources, ecosystems, biodiversity and land use, and design measures to reduce their impacts and avoid net damage to the environment.
- Apply management, prevention and warning measures when the magnitude of the risks and impacts exceeds the capacities of the stakeholders involved.

About the benefits

- They foster financial sustainability, promote equity in the distribution of benefits and will be accountable for the results obtained
- Promote the participation of all stakeholders in decision making and the allocation of benefits received from the initiative
- Provides timely and accurate information on the management of perceived benefits

This guide is based on the analysis scheme shown in Illustration 1.

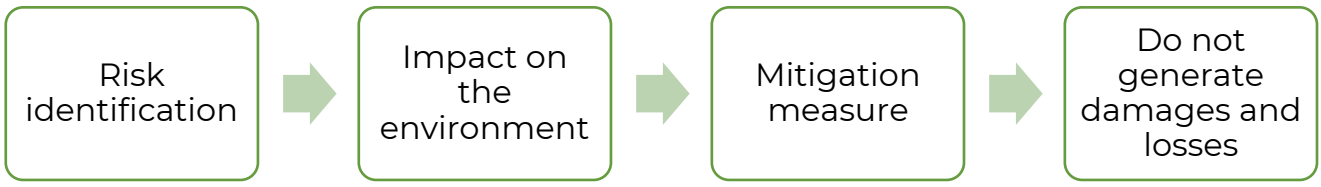

Illustration 1 Logical Framework for Risk, Impact, and Mitigation Measure Assessment.

For every identified risk there is a probability of occurrence that leads to an impact within the environment. Each impact must have a mitigation measure for which the proponent must create relevant measures, the objective of these will be the non-generation of damage and losses in the environment and the people involved.

The owner and/or proponent of the mitigation initiative must:

1. Assess the risks associated with the mitigation initiative itself and all activities comprising it for the mitigation of GHG
2. Recognize the impacts derived from the manifestation of these risks according to their probability of occurrence, as well as the direct impacts generated by their activities on the elements of safeguards
3. Design mitigation measures for each impact to mitigate, prevent or lessen them
4. Demonstrate that the implementation of these measures avoids the generation of net damage to the environment and the people involved in the initiative
5. Monitor and report periodic progress in the mitigation of identified risks and impacts, which will be subject to evaluation at each verification event by validating and verifying bodies (VVB).

6. RISK CONSIDERATIONS

The identification of project risks makes it possible to recognize, analyze and categorize the factors that may affect the performance and viability of the initiative throughout its development and implementation, ensuring its environmental, social and economic integrity. This process is fundamental to establish mitigation strategies that reduce uncertainty and strengthen the project's resilience to possible adverse events.

This guideline directs the developer in the declaration of its risks according to the elements of socio-environmental safeguards, based on its knowledge of the project activities and the possible effects derived from its implementation, the proponent declares whether the risk is real, potential, non-existent or not applicable. In addition, the proponent may report other risks not covered by the guidelines.

For the identification of risks, proponents should consider the following key issues:

- The risk assessment should consider environmental, social, financial, cultural, regulatory and technological factors, establishing scenarios that allow evaluating their probability of occurrence and severity.
- Risk assessment should consider:
  - To prevent and eliminate risks whenever possible
  - Reduce the probability of occurrence and/or the impact of the identified risks
  - Implement mitigation measures that minimize adverse effects
  - Compensate unavoidable impacts through politically, ecologically, socially and financially viable mechanisms
- The information used in the risk justification of the project activities must come from verifiable and updated sources, with a maximum of five (5) years old
- The analysis must be objective and context-specific, considering the possibility of redesigning the project based on the ability to mitigate the identified risks

- Risks at the local level must be identified, as well as, when applicable, those with transboundary effects that may manifest in the long term, including cumulative and synergistic impacts.

If the project design undergoes substantial modifications, such as the inclusion and/or exclusion of an area, the proponent is obliged to perform a complementary analysis to evaluate the occurrence and/or appearance of new risks.

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

The risk assessment on safeguards elements is classified as real, potential, non-existent or not applicable, providing respective justification for all of them. When the risk is real or potential, evidence of its manifestation must be provided, as well as the design of rigorous mitigation measures in accordance with its impact and the context; when it is non-existent or not applicable, it must be demonstrated how the risk is not appropriate to the project activity and/or its environment, or because it is not related.

For risk assessment, reporting of mitigation measures and performance of social and environmental indicators, use the "*Risk Assessment Tool for Social and Environmental Safeguards and No Net Harm*", its application is mandatory, being complementary to this guide. The Validation and Verification Body (VVB) must evaluate the correct application of this guide and its tool; partial results are not accepted.

8. CONSIDERATIONS FOR MITIGATING SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

This guide recommends analyzing the impacts resulting from identified risks using the UNEP Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework (UN Environment, 2020) and its evaluation and management criteria, which should be considered as follows:

- The scope of the analysis is based on the nature and effect of the risk and impact identified (See 6 RISK CONSIDERATIONS), the greater the impact, the greater the level of certainty of the information for its characterization and the mitigation measures determined.
- Use the mitigation hierarchy in Illustration 2.

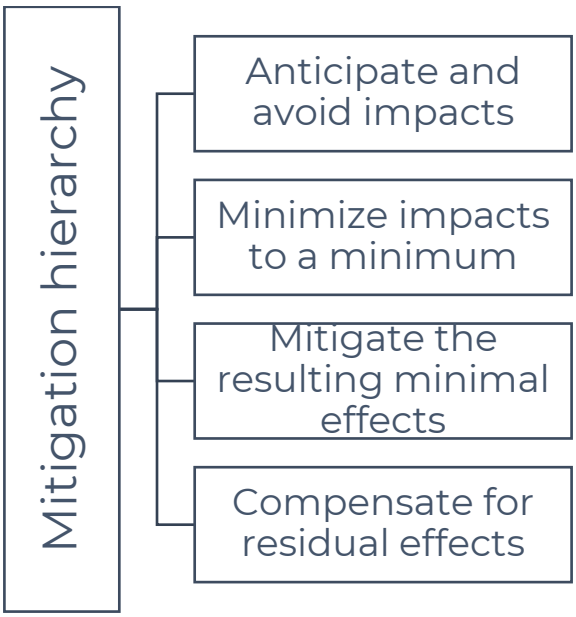

Illustration 2 Impact Mitigation Hierarchy. Adapted from UNEP (2020).

- The assessment must use official, approved and publicly available environmental, social and legal information, no more than five (5) years old
- Apply a principle of objectivity and consistency with the project context, considering, when necessary, the abandonment of the project activity due to its impacts
- Mitigation measures should be applied to all identified risks, assuming that every risk generates an impact if it manifests itself. In the case of impacts that are not associated with a risk, describe it, including the cause of its manifestation and its corresponding mitigation measure.
- Include impacts that may have a local origin, but manifest themselves in another location over time, even if they are transboundary, their environmental and socio-cultural impact should be considered.
- Participatory evaluation mechanisms with stakeholders provide ample certainty on the results presented, considering their application within the initiative.
- If there are changes to the project design, the proponent must conduct a supplemental analysis identifying potential new impacts and effects due to these changes.

Throughout the respective certification periods of the project, the monitoring associated with each risk and impact reported must be presented, to identify possible changes in these and/or the appearance of new ones that were not initially contemplated in the initial stages of the mitigation initiative.

The results of this assessment should be compiled in the risk matrix in Table 1, following the logical scheme shown in Illustration 1.

9. CANCUN SAFEGUARDS

Project proponents must comply with the Cancun social and environmental safeguards adopted since decision 1/COP 16. Projects in the afforestation, reforestation, REDD+ and pasture and soil management sectors must evaluate the Cancun safeguards.
For projects in the afforestation, reforestation and natural forests sector, the Cancun safeguards must be evaluated, other sectors must consider the principles of safeguards applicable to them, without this limiting the evaluation of the Cancun safeguards, otherwise it must justify the lack of application.
Processes to be implemented to demonstrate compliance with Cancun safeguards are described below.

A. The complementarity or compatibility of actions with the objectives of national forestry programs and with international conventions and agreements on the matter

To comply with this safeguard, the proponent must perform an analysis of the national regulatory framework related to the subject matter that evidence that all project activities and mitigation measures allow for the correct application of current regulations within the host country. For agricultural sector methodologies, consider the applicable sectoral regulations. To perform this analysis, the following steps must be followed:

1. Identify the official documents and regulations of the forestry sector applicable to the project, considering its objective, goals and activities developed, including laws, decrees, land management plans, forest management plans, life plans, among others
2. Identify the objectives and goals of the identified documents
3. Demonstrate how the project activities and proposed mitigation actions are compatible and contribute to meeting the goals and objectives of the previous step.

B. Transparency and effectiveness of national forest governance structures, considering national legislation and sovereignty

The project proponent must demonstrate that the governance arrangements created by the project or those prior to the implementation of activities comply with the regulatory framework of the host country where the project is developed.

To ensure the transparency and effectiveness of forest governance structures, an analysis of the project context should be carried out based on the following steps:

1. Analyze internal community factors such as governance structure, number of communities associated with the project, governance and hierarchy for decision making.

2. Identify in the context of the project, the political, social, economic, ecological, legal, and technological aspects that arise prior to the implementation of project activities and that relate to the use and management of forests.
3. Evaluate how decision-making structures take into consideration aspects related to the management, use and conservation of forests within the project environment.
4. Reveal the effectiveness in the application of decision making based on the guidelines of point 2. State the results obtained in these guidelines and justify how they endure overtime within the initiative.

C. *Respect for the knowledge and rights of Indigenous Peoples and members of local communities, considering relevant international obligations and national circumstances and legislation, and bearing in mind that the United Nations General Assembly has adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*

For this safeguard, apply the guidelines of Element 4 Human Rights, Element 6 Health and Safety, Element 9 Ethnic Communities and Element 11 Cultural Heritage, and report the corresponding results.

The proponent must demonstrate that the project activities arise from its interaction and consensus with ethnic communities. Therefore, they all consider compliance with human rights, indigenous peoples' rights and the integration of minorities.

D. *The full and effective participation of stakeholders, in particular Indigenous Peoples and local communities, in the measures referred to in paragraphs 70 and 72 of this decision*

To ensure full and effective participation, the proponent must:

1. Characterize the stakeholders that have influence over the project, assessing as a minimum:
   a. Type of stakeholder: Natural or legal person
   b. Presence of the stakeholder: local, regional, national or international
   c. Degree of influence and relationship with the project
2. Create a protocol for stakeholder relations based on the analysis of the project context, including at least the use of appropriate means of communication and language, respect for the uses, customs and traditions of the stakeholders, and the establishment of appropriate media outreach pieces for each stakeholder context
3. Develop on-site tasks that allow direct relations with stakeholders and orient them on the implications and benefits of implementing initiatives in their territory. In some of them, the acceptance of the initiative must be disclosed.
4. Establish a communication channel for handling Petitions, Complaints, Claims, Compliments, Reports, or Requests (PCCCRR), which includes a response time protocol, response formats, access mechanisms, information management

procedures, and adaptability for addressing PCCCRR. This channel must be properly communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

5. Support each of the approaches with project stakeholders and the results of these interactions (e.g., audios and/or videos of the development of workshops with stakeholders, testimonies of representative actors, attendance lists, minutes, recordings of radio spots or pieces, survey results).
6. The contract with the project owner should include a clause that prevents any type of information from being concealed from the evaluation process, in accordance with ISO 14604-3. Likewise, it is recommended that a confidentiality contract be drawn up with the corresponding entity to reduce the risk of information leakage.

E. The compatibility of the measures with the conservation of natural forests and biological diversity, ensuring that the measures referred to in paragraph 70 of this decision are not used for the conversion of natural forests, but rather to incentivize the protection and conservation of these forests and the ecosystem services they provide, as well as to enhance other social and environmental benefits

The proponent must state how its GHG mitigation activities directly and indirectly conserve, enhance and increase forest or vegetation areas. A causal analysis of the different activities (See Illustration 3) must be made and reported in a specific way with areas of intervention, population involved, and performance obtained.

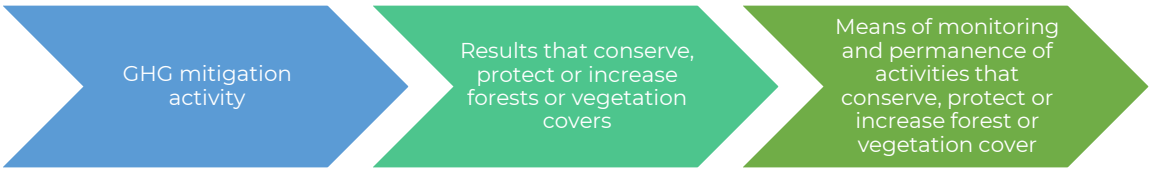

Illustration 3 Causal analysis of activities that conserve, protect or increase forests or vegetation cover.

F. Adoption of measures to address the risks of reversion

The proponent must demonstrate how the mitigation measures established for each of the characterized risks and impacts guarantee the permanence of the carbon reservoirs in the short, medium and long term. Additionally, it must identify how the mitigation measures present adaptive management plans in the event of an increase in the occurrence, severity or impact of the identified risks. Their performance should be reported in each verification period. Finally, the proponent must take into consideration the current version of the "Guidance for the Analysis of Reversal and Non-Permanence Risks".

G. Adoption of measures to reduce the displacement of emissions

1. The proponent must have a mechanism for leakage monitoring in place so that leakage can be effectively identified

2. Must identify and list which mitigation measures prevent the displacement of emissions.
3. Communications should be made to stakeholders about leaks, the actions that cause them and measures for their control and mitigation

10 NO NET HARM

As a result of the application of this guide, the project proponent identifies the risks and impacts associated with the implementation of the project and defines the mitigation measures for the impacts produced, in accordance with the regulations of the host country where the project is developed, and the guidelines of this guide. Additionally, it evaluates how the principles of social and environmental safeguards support the mitigation measures during the project certification period.

Finally, the project should provide a summary of all measures defined for the mitigation of impacts and damages in the environmental and social context, ensuring that these actions are verifiable and permanent over time. If the project identifies that all mitigation measures effectively address each of the impacts identified for the project implementation period, the project can guarantee that the project generates no net social and environmental harm. Compliance with the different procedures established in this guide must be reported by the project continuously during the different certifications, evidencing the efficiency and effectiveness in the identification, implementation and monitoring of risks, impacts and mitigation measures.

11 ANNEXES

11.1 Risk assessment and mitigation matrix

The following matrix must be completed by the project proponent in the "Risk Assessment Tool for Social and Environmental Safeguards and No Net Harm," in accordance with the identified risks, the mitigation measures adopted, and the application of this guidance.

Table 1 Example of the risk assessment and mitigation matrix — no net harm and social and environmental safeguards matrix from the "Risk Assessment Tool for Social and Environmental Safeguards and No Net Harm.

Risk	Time of Manifestation	Origin	Impact generated	Mitigation measure adopted	Monitoring Frequency	MRV systems to be used	Responsible for Monitoring
Waste generation	Short term	Environmental	Contamination of water sources	Water quality monitoring	Semiannual	Water quality measurements	Proponent

11.2 Guidelines for designing impact mitigation measures

In compliance with the principle of causing no net social and environmental harm, this annex provides guidelines that the project proponent must consider when formulating risk mitigation plans and actions.

The project proponent must demonstrate how impacts on safeguard elements are addressed through prevention, mitigation, or elimination measures, based on the guidance provided in this document. All measures must include monitoring mechanisms and comply with the data requirements established by COLCX for the parameters to be monitored, in accordance with the document templates.

Below are guidelines for designing impact mitigation measures for the applicable safeguard elements.

Element 1 Energy

The proponent must demonstrate that the energy sources applied in the project area are a good alternative in terms of GHG emissions emitted, being lower than other generation alternatives, protecting the atmosphere from polluting loads. If no option is available, it employs efficient energy use mechanisms for project activities.
The proponent may additionally use methods related to Cancun safeguard (f) to demonstrate mitigation on this element (See 9 CANCUN SAFEGUARDS).

Element 2 Air, soil and water

Activities must avoid, to the greatest extent possible, pollution of air, soil, and water in any form (solid, liquid, or gaseous). When such pollution occurs, measures must be implemented to reduce its effects. If these effects cannot be controlled, the activity must be changed to achieve emission reductions or removals.

When impacts affect air, soil and water, the proponent must propose integrated management mechanisms for the affected resources, complemented with performance indicators that must be reported periodically in the project monitoring report.

The areas of intervention shall be indicated on a cartographic level, illustrating the area of direct influence and the sites for measuring the performance of the activities carried out.

The proponent must propose measures to manage water consumption and ensure availability for communities and livelihoods that depend on it. Demonstrate the application of demand management practices, consumption efficiency, benchmark parameters, alternative supplies, pollution prevention, protection of downstream users, and compensation for use.

Indicators of chemical, physical or biota properties within air, soil and water are valid to demonstrate performance in the care, conservation and enhancement of resources after mitigation activities are carried out.

Apply the mitigation hierarchy, when the impact on these resources is determined to be very high and affects availability, quality and access to dependent populations, the reformulation of the GHG mitigation activity should be considered.

Element 3 Natural and ecological resources

Define a management of the biotic and abiotic elements involved within each of the ecosystems and habitats identified as vulnerable due to the implementation of the activities.

For each element, determine specific actions that will lead to its permanence and conservation. Consider relocation of the activity when it overlaps with potential areas to be restored or improved, avoiding alterations to existing ecosystems. A preventive approach should be implemented in all actions.

For residual effects derived from these activities, it must state the compensation measures to be carried out.

The objective of these actions must be to achieve a net gain of biodiversity or at least a zero loss, which must be reported in each evaluation period by the proponent.

Protected areas, ecosystems declared as strategic, or areas of special environmental importance are not suitable for intervention according to their management plans.

When the measures are related to the sustainable use of biodiversity, the proponent must demonstrate that the practices do not alter the abundance and frequency of the species involved, as well as respect the traditional knowledge of the communities.

Invasive species may not be used. The proponent must identify suitable species within an analysis of site conditions, ensuring ecological continuity.

The proponent may use complementary methods related to Cancun safeguards (c) and (e) to demonstrate mitigation on this element (See 9 CANCUN SAFEGUARDS).

Element 4 Human rights

Activities must consider the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[6], ensuring justice, equity, and dignity for all individuals involved. To this end, the proponent must report how each activity is associated with human rights and contributes to their fulfillment.

[6] The Universal Declaration of Human Rights | United Nations

In the presence of Indigenous communities, the rights outlined in the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples must be upheld[7].

The rights of indigenous, peasant and Afro-descendant communities, among others, as well as the host country's national guidelines on human rights and sustainable development, must be respected in a complementary manner.

Element 5 Work

When the project activities involve employment, the proponent must guarantee the design and application of labor policies adequate to the welfare conditions for the worker, delimiting the type of hiring, applicable regulations, benefits granted (remuneration, rest periods, vacations, sickness, etc.) and rights and duties of the employees.
The proponent must demonstrate how staff selection and employment are not related to discrimination, illegitimate favoritism or corruption in remuneration, access to training, selection, job assignment, among others; through equitable, fair and transparent work guidelines, consistent with the labor regulations of the host country. In the absence of regulations, known good practices should be applied.
Forced labor, i.e. labor outside the employee's will, regardless of the existence of a contract, easements, etc., is not accepted. The proponent designs measures against forced labor into the employees' contracts and labor procedures. No child is allowed to work within the project activities.
A labor grievance mechanism must be designed to allow employees to submit PCCS (Petitions, Complaints, Claims, and Suggestions) related to their work environment. This mechanism should be complemented by the measures taken by employers to reduce its impact.

Element 6 Health and safety

The project proponent must adopt measures based on the best international practices to avoid effects on the health of the population, applying the mitigation hierarchy. Likewise, when incidents and accidents are generated, the proponent must create recovery and compensation measures.

When activities involve migration of outsiders, the proponent must create measures to protect the health, integrity, safety and resources of the area. It may implement awareness programs, codes of ethics and conduct, training, among others, and demonstrate that they have been adopted by those involved.

When the activities implemented generate volumes of waste greater than the monthly average, strategies must be created to reduce waste generation through reuse, recycling,

[7] https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@americas/@ro-lima/documents/publication/wcms_345065.pdf

and recovery. The proponent must create a waste management plan, with environmentally responsible practices, controlling emissions and harmful effects.

Activities using pesticides must be carried out under a safety scheme for people and the environment, the proponent must report the measures used for the protection of integrity. The least toxic pesticides must be used, providing evidence of their efficiency, minimal effects on other species and no development of resistance in pests and vectors.

When the damage is irreparable, compensation measures must be developed and approved by the community where the action is implemented. The use of pesticides containing active ingredients restricted under national or international regulations is prohibited.

All infrastructure implemented within the area must be designed, constructed and dismantled in accordance with the country's regulations. The proponent must demonstrate that staff are qualified to build, materials are certified by staff independent of the project, construction supervision plans are in place and will have quality, staff protection, operation and maintenance checks.

If local staff are involved in the activities, the proponent must ensure training, education and preparation processes for those involved prior to exposure. The proponent must demonstrate the mechanisms employed to protect and strengthen the capacities of those involved on an ongoing basis and during the execution of the activity.

The principle of universal access should be promoted, where everyone can benefit from the infrastructure created.

Element 7 Gender equity

The proponent must create a plan to prevent, eliminate or mitigate risks and impacts of inequality towards women and girls.
Evidencing in the documents designed for community development how women, marginalized groups and minorities are involved and benefit; this based on the principle of non-discrimination, equal treatment and equal pay - equal work.

Element 8 Land acquisition and resettlement

No activity can generate forced displacement[8].

[8] The act of removing individuals, families, or communities from their homes or the lands they occupy, either permanently or temporarily, without offering them appropriate legal or other forms of protection or granting them access to such protections (Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment No. 7, 1997).

When project activities involve land acquisition, the proponent must assess the presence of communities, settlements, or beneficiaries. In such cases, proper consultation must be conducted to obtain their Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) and reconcile land use where applicable.

All land use and exploitation permits must be documented and approved by the parties involved, delimited in terms of time of use, activities and limitations within them. An indemnification clause must be included for non-compliance with conditions.

Project activities must not undermine land tenure structures. The property rights of the stakeholders involved must be identified and secured for the entire lifespan of the initiative. When activities may affect isolated or uncontacted peoples, site-specific measures approved for the protection of their traditions must be documented, avoiding any unwanted contact.

Element 9 Ethnic Communities

The proponent must verify the existence of ethnic communities in the area of influence of its activity. Communities have the right to their own consultation and decision making, the project proponent must apply the guidelines of the recent version of the *Guide for Stakeholder Consultation COLCX*.

Consultations must be carried out prior to project design, ensuring the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) of the stakeholders involved, and must be maintained throughout the different stages of the project. Activities that do not have FPIC cannot be assessed for project validation or verification.

The proponent must report at least one annual meeting with the communities involved, report the objective of the meeting, participation and conclusions, supported by visual aids with testimonies of the participants.

The proponent must propose a scheme for the management of petitions, complaints and claims by the communities, indicating mechanisms for filing them, methods for their treatment and answers given.

Mechanisms for the integration of women, youth, children, the elderly and the disabled must be created within the consultation spaces; the proponent must disclose their presence through visual and written evidence.

The cultural, intellectual, religious and/or spiritual property of the communities involved must be respected, its use is subject to FPIC which must be demonstrated by written and graphic evidence.

If a community expresses potential impacts on the implementation of activities, the project proponent must perform a specific analysis of the action, evaluate its impacts and define actions based on the mitigation hierarchy, where applicable, the implementation of the activity must be cancelled.

The proponent must communicate and document the benefit sharing mechanisms mentioning the stakeholders involved, perceived benefits, means of distribution and follow-up of benefits.

The proponent may use complementary methods related to Cancun safeguards (c) and (d) to demonstrate mitigation actions in this element (See 9 CANCUN SAFEGUARDS).).

Element 10 Corruption

Mechanisms for access to information related to project activities should be designed in a balanced and inclusive manner for all stakeholders.

The actors involved in the management and formulation of the initiative must report in their contractual clauses that their actions are free of corruption, improper assignment of activities, hidden direction of resources or bias in decision making, based on the principle of good faith.

Accountability events should be reported periodically, demonstrating that they were open, participatory and inclusive with the parties involved, through video support, minutes, reports, interviews, among others.

The proponent may additionally use methods related to Cancun safeguard (d) to demonstrate mitigation on this element (See 9 CANCUN SAFEGUARDS).).

Element 11 Cultural heritage

The proponent must identify the existence of cultural heritage through official primary (field diagnosis) or secondary (geographic information, bibliographic reports) information.

The proponent must evaluate the harmful effects generated on the community's cultural heritage and generate measures to avoid them according to the mitigation hierarchy. For cases of high damage, a cultural heritage management plan must be created.

The proponent may employ cultural heritage experts to generate strategies for the protection and management of these tangible and intangible assets. Where applicable, consultation and measures should be extended to local and regional authorities in charge of the matter.

Communities cannot be prohibited from entering their cultural heritage sites as a measure to ensure their protection, unless there is community approval. The proponent must provide evidence of the decision on this matter.

Information related to cultural heritage may be restricted and confidential when its owners decide so, the proponent must create measures to guarantee this designation.

A plan for handling and treatment of incidental findings derived from the development of project activities should be created. Deterioration, mishandling or loss must be avoided. In addition, the relevant authority should be notified to guide the necessary actions to ensure their protection and proper management. Actions should include documentation, excavation - documentation and in-situ conservation, as appropriate.

When the heritage element is related to landscape, the proponent must conduct a consultation with the individuals affected by the damage regarding the altered elements and, if applicable, notify the relevant representative authorities to negotiate appropriate actions concerning this heritage.

Traditional knowledge and intangible heritage cannot be decontextualized, commodified or misinterpreted. The proponent must evaluate measures for their protection in conjunction with the community and document mechanisms of respect for local rights and traditions.

If it is decided to commercialize the cultural heritage, an explanatory document should be created explaining the benefits and difficulties generated by the dissemination of its heritage, the approval of the local stakeholders and the equitable distribution of the benefits obtained, as well as reflecting the protection measures for commercial use.

All areas normatively designated as cultural heritage, from local to international levels, must be protected. The proponent must detail the mechanisms for identifying such heritage and the corresponding protection measures. In addition, the proponent must comply with the applicable regulations, notify the presence of heritage within the area, and consult with the entities responsible for its management.

The theft, trafficking and sale of movable cultural heritage (books, paintings, sculptures, textiles, etc.) must be prevented, the proponent shall create a plan with measures for their protection even if they are exhibited or hidden.

The proponent may additionally use methods related to Cancun safeguard (c) to demonstrate compliance with this element (See 9 CANCUN SAFEGUARDS).

History of the Document

Version	*Date*	*Description*
1.0	26/05/2025	Initial version.