

CLIMATE SAFE

ClimateSafe is a service offering that seeks to provide clarity and informed decision-making to investors and off-takers by ensuring carbon projects adhere to the highest ESG safeguarding standards and do-no-harm principles.

We provide screening, due diligence and monitoring services against international best-practices, filling the gaps that current industry standards miss and bring projects into alignment with the Integrity Council-VCM Core Carbon Principles and Assessment Framework' requirements.

About us

We are an international advisory organisation that specialises on environmental, social and governance (ESG) safeguards and international climate finance, with a niche expertise on land use, stakeholder consultations including with Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) and REDD+ .

Unparalleled experience

Established in 2013, we've supported:

- 25 national governments in addressing safeguard related challenges, including setting-up safeguard systems and enhancing their governance arrangements to access climate finance
- multinational corporations throughout their carbon credit purchase process, from initial due diligence to overall monitoring and reporting
- the world's largest climate funds (GCF and GEF) in addressing safeguard related challenges, including designing and updating their safeguard systems and safeguard policies
- a leading market-based standard, ART TREES, to devise and implement their ESS assessment, validation and verification process, including annual advisory on existing certification processes
- ratings agencies (Calyx Global) in building and implementing their ESS and SDG ratings process and
- private and public sector actors access climate finance through the GCF as a key service provider to their project preparation facility, specialising on ESG safeguard and grievance redress mechanism (GRM) compliance.

Diverse view and network

In addition to our core team of international legal and policy climate specialists, we are supported by an international [roster](#) of 100+ of the world's leading safeguard and GRM experts on all continents.

Our global vetted network of international safeguards experts have specialized expertise across the breadth of ESG safeguard areas (e.g. gender, indigenous peoples, etc.), cover all UN languages, and have track record experience in all UN regional groupings.

For more information, please contact:

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Our services

Depending on the project stage and investor engagement level we offer 3 main services.

1. Screening and risk categorization

We offer a comprehensive social and environmental screening and risk categorization package, which aims to:

- (i) Identify the main social and environmental issues in the project area, as well as any significant impacts (positive and negative) likely to be associated with the project.
- (ii) Provide a risk categorization of the project, in correlation to the key risks identified and their significance, likelihood and impact level.
- (iii) Recommend environmental and social requirements the project must fulfil, including: (a) a preliminary indication of the appropriately scaled environmental and social safeguard assessments and management plans required for addressing and managing the project's potential social and environmental risks and impacts; and (b) any consultation requirements of the proposed project.
- (iv) Provide a rapid assessment of the project developer's environmental and social management system (ESMS) or processes, including an identification of the elements in place, gaps identified and recommendations to address identified gaps.

2. Environmental and Social Due Diligence

We offer a comprehensive environmental and social diligence service, which aims to:

- (i) Evaluate the adequacy of the environmental and social assessments and associated management plans;
- (ii) Evaluate the adequacy of the grievance mechanism and benefit sharing arrangements;
- (iii) Evaluate the adequacy of the stakeholder consultations and disclosure of information;
- (iv) Evaluate the adequacy of the project developer's ESMS and how it has been applied to the activities; and
- (v) Provide recommendations to the project developer for addressing gaps, including any additional measures that are needed to uphold the requirements for managing environmental and social risks and impacts.
- (vi) Provide recommendations to buyer/investor concerning the priority ESG issues that need to be addressed by the project developer as a condition of financing, and in a timebound manner.

3. Environmental and social monitoring and reporting of carbon projects

As part of our service offering, we provide annual, independent monitoring and reporting on the compliance of the project's social and environmental management plans, including the tracking of complaints and grievances from project affected stakeholders.

This service will include an identification of any necessary corrective actions that need to be undertaken to ensure project is compliant with applicable environmental and social safeguards, based on monitoring results and/or if there are any substantive changes to the project during implementation.

Bespoke services

Additionally, we can offer tailored and timely expert advice and technical backstopping in relation to the overall ESG safeguard compliance of carbon projects, including but not limited to:

- a) Understanding the requirements and procedures of private certification standards (e.g. CCBA, Gold Standard) in correlation to international best in class standards (i.e. IFC standards);

- b) Providing clarity on the relative risks of a project and the legal and standards’ basis for the applicable requirements and procedures for environmental and social risk assessments and management plans of a project; and
- c) Technical advice on re-designing and/or re-structuring a project following the results of the environmental and social risk assessments.

In providing these services, we apply best in class environmental and social safeguards (10 areas and 56 sub-areas- Table 1)¹, which can be complemented with any additional safeguard areas and requirements of investors/financiers.

Table 1- E&S safeguard areas and sub-areas

E&S AREA	E&S SUB-AREA
LABOUR RIGHTS	Working conditions
	Workers’ rights (including non-discrimination and equal opportunity)
	Forced labour
	Occupational safety and health
	Child labour
	Workers organization
	Workplace grievance mechanism
	Contractor/third parties workers
	Primary supplier workers
RESOURCE EFFICIENCY	Pesticide use and management
	Hazardous materials management
	Water usage
	Resource efficiency
	Pollution prevention
	Waste management
	Fertiliser use and management
COMMUNITY HEALTH, SAFETY AND SECURITY	Impact on ecosystem services that impact affected communities
	Security related issues
	Community Health and Safety
	Infrastructure Design and Safety
	Emergency Preparedness and Response
	Risk Associated with Influx of Project Workers
LAND RIGHTS AND INVOLUNTARY RESETTLEMENT	Recognition, protection and fulfilment of land tenure rights
	Avoid, minimize and mitigate physical and economic displacement
	Prohibited forced eviction, allowing evictions in exceptional circumstances only

¹ We identified these areas and sub-areas by mapping the environmental and social requirements of international and project level standards, and then triangulated the key areas and sub-areas. Standards examined included: the IFC, the World Bank, the UNDP, CCB, ACR, Gold Standard, Social Carbon, and Fair-Trade Climate.

BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF NATURE	Land and soil conservation
	Conservation of natural forests and their ecosystem services
	Protection and conservation of biodiversity and habitats
	Management of ecosystem services
	Protection and management of water resources
	Exotic and invasive species
	Biosafety and genetic resources
	Sustainable management of living natural resources
	Endangered and protected species
	Legally Protected Areas
HUMAN RIGHTS AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES	Full and effective participation of indigenous peoples- and FPIC
	Lands, territories and natural resources subject to traditional ownership or under customary use
	Recognition of the distinct identity and rights of indigenous peoples
	Recognition and respect of human rights
	Recognition and respect traditional knowledge
CULTURAL HERITAGE	Legally protected cultural heritage areas
	Protection of Cultural Heritage
	Critical Cultural Heritage Areas
	Intangible Cultural Heritage
	Chance Find Procedures
TRANSPARENCY, PARTICIPATION AND BENEFIT SHARING	Disclosure and dissemination of all relevant information
	Identification of relevant stakeholders
	Meaningful stakeholder engagement/full and effective participation
	Distribution of benefits carried out in a fair, transparent, and accountable manner and are based/adopted on mutually agreed terms
ACCESS TO JUSTICE	Dispute resolution mechanism is available to all project affected stakeholders, including indigenous peoples
	Dispute resolution mechanism is aligned with international principles (accessible, rights compatible, legitimate, predictable, transparent, and equitable)
GENDER EQUITY	Gender integration
	Gender responsiveness
	Promotion and enhancement of gender equity and women's empowerment

Why do we need ClimateSafe, can't we rely on existing voluntary carbon standards?

Carbon-crediting programs such as VCS, CCBA and Gold Standard make an extremely important contribution to mitigating the social and environmental risks of projects, although these too are on a journey of continuous improvement. While progress is being made to strengthen methodology, content and requirements, the approach and level of stringency are not consistent across programs. This can lead to inconsistencies between projects and between the standards themselves, with consequences for the quality of the credits and potentially for the credibility of the sector as a whole.

As noted by the IC-VCM's CCPs and Assessment Framework requirements, existing carbon-crediting programs (and their standards) have notable gaps and weaknesses in relation to the robustness of their safeguard requirements, and the procedures for ensuring environmental and social risks and impacts are screened, assessed, managed and monitored. Table 2 illustrates the main limitations of these standards in relation to the services we provide.

Table 2 Limitations of relevant private certification standards in relation to our services

Our services	Limitations of the carbon programs and their certification standards
Screening and risk categorization	<p>Assessments that are just pass/fail, and do not offer a 'project risk categorization', nor a clear understanding of the specific social and environmental risks of each project. Consequently, there is no identification of the appropriately scaled environmental and social safeguard assessments and management plans that the project must adopt, in order to address and manage any potential social and environmental risks and impacts.</p> <p>Do not assess the project developer's environmental and social management system (ESMS) or processes.</p>
Environmental and Social Due Diligence	<p>Do not evaluate the adequacy of the environmental and social assessments and associated management plans of the project, including the adequacy of the project's grievance mechanism, benefit sharing arrangements and of the stakeholder consultations and disclosure of information processes.</p> <p>Do not evaluate the adequacy of the project developer's ESMS and how it has been applied to the activities.</p> <p>Auditors are not allowed to provide recommendations for addressing gaps, including any additional measures that are needed to uphold the requirements for managing environmental and social risks and impacts.</p>
Environmental and social monitoring and reporting of carbon projects	<p>Generally carry out verification of monitoring reports every 5 years² leaving time for significant changes during the implementation of the projects with regards to social and environmental risks and impacts, and important gaps in terms of risk mitigation opportunities.</p>

² CCB section 1.5: "at least every 5 years"