

Annex B: Stakeholder Consultation & Risk Assessment for Land Conversion and Biodiversity

A. Introduction to Stakeholder Consultation

The aim of this stakeholder consultation is to ensure that rice growing areas established after 2009 do not negatively impact the environment by causing conversion within proposed native ecosystem sites, protected areas, Ramsar Sites (wetlands), primary forests, or secondary forests (native). This consultation process is crucial for maintaining and enhancing site-specific biodiversity elements at the field level, including in-field habitats/refuges, field margins, non-cropped areas, plant species that host beneficial natural enemies, and trees (which must be replanted if harvested or felled within the same catchment).

By engaging in this consultation, we aim to gather valuable input from all relevant stakeholders to support the identification and risk assessment processes. This will help ensure that there has been no conversion of the described areas after 2009 and that farming practices continue to maintain and enhance site-specific biodiversity and ecosystem services.

For individual large producers, it is mandatory to conduct an independent formal identification and risk assessment before the first soil systematization for rice production, followed by a formal stakeholder consultation process. Group administrators of large producers must adhere to the same rules as individual large farms.

Follow these minimum guidelines to ensure a thorough and effective stakeholder consultation process that supports the SRP verification audit and promotes sustainable rice production practices. You can adjust these guidelines based on your specific needs and the size of your project.

B. Stakeholders Consultation Process

Stakeholder consultation is required only during the verification audit, which occurs every three years. The results of the stakeholder consultation, along with all relevant documentation and the risk assessment, should be sent to the auditor at least one month in advance or preferably together with the verification audit application. This advance submission allows the auditor sufficient time to review and prepare, ensuring a comprehensive and efficient audit process. The stakeholder consultation and risk assessment will be reviewed in the next verification audit cycle, and a new round of stakeholder consultation should be conducted every three years. For further details or guidance, please email assurance@sustainable-rice.org with subject *Land Conversion and Biodiversity*.

By following these guidelines, we can collectively ensure that our rice production practices are sustainable and environmentally responsible, safeguarding biodiversity and ecosystem services for future generations.

Key considerations of stakeholder engagement are:

- **Transparency:** Maintain open communication throughout the process to build trust and ensure stakeholder buy-in.
- **Inclusivity:** Ensure all relevant stakeholders, especially marginalized groups, have a voice in the consultation.
- **Compliance:** Adhere to the SRP Standard requirement land conversion and biodiversity to avoid any negative environmental impacts and enhance biodiversity.

Activity	Producer/ Producer Group Administrator Stakeholder consultation	Auditor Verify the stakeholder consultation process
Stakeholder identification	Identifying all relevant stakeholders, including farmers, local communities, environmental NGOs, government agencies, and other parties with a direct or indirect interest in the land use and biodiversity of the area. Ensure that the selection criteria include all those who might be affected by or have an interest in the project.	Verify that the producer/producer group has identified all relevant stakeholders, ensuring that marginalized groups and those with a direct interest in the land use and biodiversity are included.
Consultation preparation	Gather all necessary documents such as maps, land use plans, and biodiversity assessments. Develop a clear agenda that outlines the purpose, process, and expected outcomes of the consultation. This preparation will help ensure that the consultation is focused and productive	Confirm that all necessary documents, such as maps and biodiversity assessments, are prepared and available. Ensure that the consultation agenda is clear and comprehensive.
Gathering input/feedback	Organize meetings at times and locations that are convenient and accessible for all stakeholders. Use a neutral facilitator to ensure balanced participation and manage any conflicts that arise. Clearly explain the SRP Standard requirement #6 and its implications for land conversion and biodiversity to all participants. Could also use various methods e.g. surveys, interviews, focus groups, and public meetings to gather diverse perspectives from stakeholders.	Verify that meetings are held at convenient times and accessible locations. Ensure that a neutral facilitator is used, and that the consultation process is balanced and inclusive. Check that the SRP Standard requirement #6 is clearly explained to stakeholders.
Documentation	Document all feedback accurately to ensure transparency and accountability throughout the process.	Verify the documentation made, check if it is ensuring transparency and accountability throughout the process.
Assessment	Evaluate the feedback to identify common concerns, suggestions, and areas of agreement. Incorporate relevant feedback into the risk assessment and land use planning to ensure that stakeholder input is meaningfully considered.	Verify that the feedback has been properly analyzed and that common concerns and suggestions are identified. Check that relevant feedback is incorporated into the risk assessment and land use planning.
Reporting and follow-up	Prepare a comprehensive report summarizing the consultation process, the feedback received, and how it was addressed. Share this report with stakeholders and provide opportunities for further input or clarification. Develop and implement an action plan based on the consultation outcomes, ensuring continuous monitoring and improvement.	Review the comprehensive report summarizing the consultation process and feedback. Ensure that the report is shared with stakeholders and that opportunities for further input are provided. Confirm that an action plan is developed and implemented based on the consultation outcomes, with continuous monitoring and improvement.

C. Risk Assessment

The stakeholder consultation process is integral to the risk assessment for SRP Standard requirement on Land Conversion and Biodiversity. By engaging stakeholders, producers and producer groups can gather valuable insights and feedback on potential environmental and biodiversity impacts. This input is crucial for identifying and evaluating risks associated with land conversion and biodiversity loss. The feedback collected during the consultation should be systematically analyzed to identify common concerns and suggestions, which will inform the risk assessment process.

Following the stakeholder consultation, producers and producer groups should conduct a thorough risk assessment to address the identified issues. This involves following processes:

1. **Evaluate Potential Risks:** Begin by assessing the likelihood and severity of potential risks associated with land conversion and biodiversity. This includes identifying risks such as deforestation, habitat loss, and disruption of ecosystem services. Understanding these risks is crucial for developing effective mitigation strategies.
2. **Develop Mitigation Measures:** Once the risks have been identified, create strategies to prevent or minimize these risks. Mitigation measures can include establishing buffer zones to protect sensitive areas, implementing reforestation programs to restore degraded lands, and enhancing in-field habitats to support biodiversity. These measures should be tailored to address the specific risks identified in the assessment.
3. **Document Results:** Thoroughly document the results of the risk assessment. This documentation should include a detailed description of the identified risks and the proposed mitigation measures. Clear and comprehensive documentation is essential for transparency and accountability.
4. **Submit Documentation:** Send the documented risk assessment and the results of the stakeholder consultation to the auditor at least one month in advance of the verification audit. Alternatively, this documentation can be submitted together with the verification audit application. Early submission ensures that the auditor has sufficient time to review the materials and prepare for the audit.
5. **Facilitate Audit Preparation:** By providing the necessary documentation well in advance, you facilitate a comprehensive and efficient audit process. This allows the auditor to thoroughly review the risk assessment and stakeholder consultation results, ensuring that all potential risks and mitigation measures are adequately addressed during the verification audit.

Simple Risk Assessment Example

1. **Evaluate Potential Risks:** During the stakeholder consultation, concerns were raised about the potential deforestation of nearby secondary forests. This risk is assessed as having a high likelihood due to increasing agricultural pressure and

significant severity due to the potential loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

2. **Develop Mitigation Measures:** To address the identified risk of deforestation, several mitigation measures are proposed. These include establishing buffer zones around the forested areas to prevent encroachment, implementing reforestation programs to restore degraded lands, and enhancing in-field habitats to support biodiversity. These measures aim to prevent deforestation and enhance the local ecosystem.
3. **Document Results:** The results of the risk assessment are thoroughly documented. This includes a detailed description of the identified risk of deforestation, the proposed mitigation measures (buffer zones, reforestation programs, and habitat enhancement), and the rationale behind these measures. Clear documentation ensures transparency and accountability.
4. **Submit Documentation:** The documented risk assessment and the results of the stakeholder consultation are sent to the auditor at least one month in advance of the verification audit. This early submission allows the auditor sufficient time to review the materials and prepare for the audit. Alternatively, this documentation can be submitted together with the verification audit application.
5. **Facilitate Audit Preparation:** By providing the necessary documentation well in advance, the auditor is able to thoroughly review the risk assessment and stakeholder consultation results. This ensures that all potential risks and mitigation measures are adequately addressed during the verification audit, facilitating a comprehensive and efficient audit process.