

## Natural Climate Solutions (NCS) Alliance Lighthouses

This document aims at answering to the most common questions related to the NCS Lighthouses. If you have additional questions, you can contact us at [ncsalliance@weforum.org](mailto:ncsalliance@weforum.org)

### What are Natural Climate Solutions?

'Natural climate solutions (NCS) are "conservation, restoration and improved land management actions that increase carbon storage and/or avoid greenhouse gas emissions". NCS therefore play a role in reducing emissions by, for instance, avoiding deforestation, and removing emissions such as through restoring peatlands as part of climate-mitigation pathways. As well as mitigating climate change, NCS can provide other valuable benefits that address critical societal challenges, such as the protection of ecosystems and biodiversity, restoration of degraded lands and the support of sustainable and equitable livelihoods, particularly in remote rural landscapes.

### The need to unlock finance for Natural Climate Solutions

Unlocking large-scale carbon finance for NCS, whether through voluntary or compliance action, will require close collaboration between governments, businesses, investors, civil society, local stakeholders, including indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs). Therefore, to scale high-quality NCS, it has become mission-critical to build trust among different stakeholders by highlighting NCS examples based on methodological and technological advances focused on mitigating environmental and social risks and generating positive environmental impacts and socio-economic benefits.

In recent years, concerns about the integrity of NCS credits have been raised repeatedly, focusing on measurement, additionality, leakage, permanence, baseline setting, verification and equitable benefit sharing. However, with more than 20 years of international efforts to generate and trade NCS credits, great strides have been made in addressing these issues. By increasing collaboration, amplifying advancements, and sharing ideas, the community of on-the-ground actors, project developers, Validation/Verification Bodies (VVBs), and registries can diffuse best practices, accelerating progress and impact and resolve the perceived credibility concerns of NCS.

### Opportunity Statement: NCS Alliance Lighthouse Workstream

The narrative of NCS for businesses and governments must be strengthened to build momentum towards COP26 and beyond. The NCS Alliance strives to productively engage with sceptics by highlighting NCS as an essential and credible tool for climate mitigation action.

To achieve this goal, the NCSA Lighthouse Workstream will highlight projects and programmes based on methodological and technological advances focused on mitigating environmental and social risks and generating positive benefits.

To achieve this, the **Lighthouse Workstream Taskforce (TF)** has developed criteria for selecting these projects and programmes and to elevate the **successful human, environmental, and climate stories** behind these initiatives. In addition, digital and other assets will be developed to complement this effort and a public-facing event to showcase to a broader audience.

## What are the criteria?

The selection of Lighthouses will be based on the NCS Alliance Supply-side Working Groups (WG) outputs in addition to additional criteria and questions identified by the TF. The Supply-Side WG's members drafted the NCSA's **Principles to Ensure Integrity of Natural Climate Solutions Carbon Credits**. These principles build on the ICAO'S "CORSI A Emissions Unit Eligibility Criteria" and ICROA "Code of Best Practice" and mirror the Core Carbon Principles of the TSVM. The Principles can be found in the [Natural Climate Solutions for Corporates](#) guidance, published in July, 2021.

According to the Principles are **Seven Threshold Criteria** that are required to ensure credit quality and integrity:

1. Program Governance
2. Program Transparency and Public Participation Provisions
3. Clear and Transparent Accounting Standards
4. Environmental and Social Safeguards
5. Robust Verification
6. Legal Underpinning
7. Credit Registry

The NCSA states that it is **not endorsing one single standard over another**. Initial priority will be given to projects that can both demonstrate conformance with the NCSA's guidelines for high-quality NCS projects and programmes, and that can prove significant environmental and social co-benefits.

**The criteria were developed specifically for this unique goal and does not imply that projects or programs that receive low scores are low-quality.**

### ***Additional considerations***

The TF will draft **qualitative questions** to unearth the environmental and social stories behind these activities and asks submitters to provide engaging material to strengthen the positive message for targeted audiences.

Based on the desired outcome of this workstream to respond negative criticisms and concerns about the environmental and social integrity of NCS credits, a further **screening process** will be put in place to avoid showcasing projects and programmes with **certain features** that could stimulate negative attention and reinforce negative criticisms that the NCSA is trying to counter and result in reputational risk for the NCSA. This screening will be driven by the Secretariat and the TF.

## How does the selection process work?

The following process has been developed to enable the Secretariat and the Lighthouse Taskforce to develop the initial pipeline of projects and programmes.

1. All projects and programmes are welcome to complete an [application form](#) and submit it to the NCSA Secretariat that will be hosted on the [NCSA Lighthouse website](#).
2. The Secretariat and the Lighthouse TF will review the applications against and apply a scoring rubric to identify projects and programmes that most closely align with the initial prioritization criteria and perform a screening process to avoid reputational risks.
3. The Secretariat will contact the initially selected projects and programmes to confirm their willingness and ability to work with the Secretariat within the required timeframes.
4. All other projects and programmes will remain in the pipeline.

## Who can apply?

Any project or programme that meets the criteria and aligns with the agreed defined NCS pathways outlined by [Bronson et al., 2017](#) and [Nature4Climate](#), falling into Forestry, Agriculture and Grasslands and Wetlands. These activities must have had produced emissions reductions and removals and issued carbon credits.

## What is the final output?

To support this, the NCSA will accompany each Lighthouse with the outputs identified in the table below. The production of this will be led by the NCSA Secretariat with the support of the Lighthouse TF. The projects will gain visibility through the various events that are carried out by the NCSA through the World Economic Forum and WBCSD, and ideally through a workshop series.

<b>Format</b>	Written 2-page case study, unearthing the human and environmental dimension of this stories
	Longer 5-10-page deep-dive case study

	Infographics
	WEF video
	Blog post
<b>Channels</b>	WEF/WBCSD social media
	Membership social media
	NCSA networks
<b>Repository</b>	NCSA website
<b>External communication</b>	WBCSD/WEF Workshop
	Events / Issue briefing
	External communication partners (e.g. N4C)