

# Sustainability Framework

v2.0

For Stakeholder  
Consultation

Preferred  
by Nature  
Certification



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# Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Key features .....	4
How is the Sustainability Framework structured? .....	5
Who does the Framework apply to? .....	6
The Sustainability Framework for Preferred by Nature Certification .....	6
Sustainability Framework – two sets of requirements.....	6
Modular certification with PBN+ .....	7
Using PBNC to supplement other schemes .....	7
The Preferred by Nature Seal (“the Seal”) .....	7
Version history .....	8
<b>Sustainability Framework requirements .....</b>	<b>9</b>
Principle 1: Management and business practices are responsible. ....	9
Principle 2: People’s well-being and human rights are respected. ....	11
Principle 3: Nature and the environment are protected. ....	18
Principle 4: Climate impacts are reduced and mitigated. ....	23
<b>Annex A: Requirements for remediation.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Annex B: Requirements for Exceptional Use Pesticides .....</b>	<b>33</b>

# Introduction

The Sustainability Framework contains the key requirements for [Preferred by Nature Certification](#) (PBNC). It sets the performance requirements used to assess, demonstrate, and improve an organisation's sustainability performance. It serves as:



The foundation for certification under the **Preferred by Nature Certification** system



A reference for **advisory services**, helping to define and address legal and sustainability issues in a structured way



A tool for **risk assessments and mitigation**, to identify and manage sustainability and regulatory risks in supply chains

The Preferred by Nature Sustainability Framework can be used to assess sustainable land use across **commodities and** covers land-use activities like farming and forest management. The Framework also contains indicators aimed at addressing social aspects relevant for supply chain entities.

## Key features

### Broad application

The Framework applies across all types of forest and agricultural commodities, and is also used as basis for our certification services in the travel sector. To support certification for specific commodities, PBN will develop guidance to address commodity specific issues, where relevant. This guidance prioritise the issues most relevant to each commodity while remaining aligned with the Framework's overall principles and criteria.

### Outcome-focused

The Sustainability Framework focuses on measurable outcomes rather than systems and procedures. Its indicators state what must be achieved, and verification emphasises evidence of results rather than documentation alone. This performance-based approach reduces unnecessary administration, encourages practical solutions, remains relevant as practices change, and supports consistent, auditable decisions and continuous improvement.

### Globally applicable and proportionate to size and complexity

The Sustainability Framework is globally applicable, and requirements are worded to be performance-based to allow different approaches to meet the same outcome. This enables smallholders, community enterprises, as well as large multi-site companies to use locally appropriate practices and technologies, as long as they can demonstrate credible outcomes. Proportionality does not change the requirements; it guides the level of effort, evidence, and controls needed to conform.

### Risk-based

When evaluating performance against the Framework we use a risk-based approach to prioritise the most severe and likely risks, by commodity, geography, operation type, and performance history.

Higher-risk issues receive more focus, while lower-risk issues undergo streamlined checks that are still evaluated and periodically revisited.

## Alignment with EU Deforestation Regulation

The Sustainability Framework contains the requirements needed to demonstrate that products are legal and deforestation-free, using the [EU Deforestation Regulation](#) (EUDR) definitions. When used together with our Due Diligence (DDS) and Chain of Custody (CoC) Standards, the Preferred by Nature programme can also support Operator alignment with EUDR obligations on traceability and due diligence system design and implementation.

## Supporting broader sustainability goals and ESG reporting

The Framework is built on internationally recognised sustainability practices and relevant international conventions, including the ILO fundamental conventions. It draws from established schemes and aligns with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, as well as widely used guidance such as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the OECD Due Diligence Guidance. It covers a broad range of environmental, social, and governance topics, supporting clear and meaningful ESG disclosures.





## Synergies with other certification systems

The Framework is designed to complement other leading sustainability certification schemes, reducing audit fatigue and improving efficiency. It has been benchmarked against **major international standards** such as the FSC™ Forest Management Standard and the Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard. As an **add-on** to existing certifications, it requires minimal extra effort and can be easily integrated into regular audits, helping organisations close gaps, streamline compliance, and reduce costs.

## How is the Sustainability Framework structured?

The Sustainability Framework defines **sustainability** and **regulatory** performance through a set of Principles, Criteria, and Indicators. It is built around four globally relevant core principles — **Business**, **People**, **Nature**, and **Climate**. Together, these principles include **31 criteria**, each with performance-based **indicators**, enabling users to assess performance in a clear, consistent, and practical way.

### Principles

-  **P1 | Responsible management:**  
Lawful, transparent operations with secure rights, responsible trade, and robust systems.
-  **P2 | People & human rights:**  
Respect for workers, Indigenous Peoples, and communities; decent work, non-discrimination, health & safety, and Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).
-  **P3 | Nature & environment:**  
No deforestation or conversion; prevention of degradation; protection of biodiversity, water, and soils; responsible chemical use; animal welfare.
-  **P4 | Climate:**  
Greenhouse gas reduction; climate risk management; adaptation and restoration for long-term resilience.



<b>Criteria</b>	Each principle is supported by a set of criteria that outline measurable requirements and specific obligations organisations must meet to fulfil the principle's intent.
<b>Indicators</b>	Parameters — either quantitative or qualitative — used to assess compliance with a given criterion.
<b>Guidance</b>	Guidance clarifies the intent behind each indicator and the expected level of conformance, explaining how organisations and auditors should interpret the requirements and demonstrate compliance in practice.

## Who does the Framework apply to?

The Sustainability Framework was developed with a primary focus on **sustainable forest management and agricultural land-use practices**. An adapted version — with the same principles and criteria but partly adjusted indicators — is applied in **Sustainable Travel** certification.

While the Framework mainly addresses land management practices, a limited set of social indicators under Principle 2 also apply to **supply chain operations**. Their purpose is to prevent human rights violations in the handling of certified products; however, they do not cover all sustainability issues relevant to supply chains.

## The Sustainability Framework for Preferred by Nature Certification

The Sustainability Framework underpins **Preferred by Nature Certification (PBNC)**. Its requirements are used across the **three certification categories** of PBNC in the following ways:

- **Land Use** – For land-based operations such as farms and forests, the full Sustainability Framework provides the basis for evaluating management practices. Requirements cover legal compliance, secure land rights, respect for human rights, ecosystem and biodiversity protection, responsible chemical and water use, and reduction of climate impacts. Land Use certification can demonstrate overall sustainability performance (**Sustainability Scope**) or compliance with specific regulations such as the EU Deforestation Regulation (**Regulatory Scope**).
- **Chain of Custody** – A limited set of indicators from the Framework apply to supply chain entities, focusing on excluding the most severe social risks (such as forced labour, child labour, and unsafe working conditions) from companies handling certified products.
- **Due Diligence** – For companies sourcing forest and agricultural products, the Framework serves as a basis for risk assessment and mitigation. Due Diligence Systems (DDS) can address full sustainability commitments (Sustainability Scope) or specific legal requirements such as the EU Deforestation Regulation (Regulatory Scope).

An adapted version of the Framework is also used for Preferred by Nature's **Sustainable Travel** certification, with certain indicators adjusted, added, or excluded to ensure suitability for this sector.

## Sustainability Framework – two sets of requirements

The Sustainability Framework can be applied in two ways, depending on the type of claim:

- (a) **Sustainability Scope** – A broad scope demonstrating overall sustainability performance against the full set of principles, criteria, and indicators, covering environmental, social, and governance topics.
- (b) **Regulatory Scope** – A narrower scope focused on deforestation/conversion and legal compliance, aligned with the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). This applies only to land-use entities and enables claims related to legal and deforestation-free supply chains.

## Modular certification with PBN+

Through our **PBN+ approach**, organisations can combine certification against the Sustainability Framework with other Preferred by Nature standards, such as Regenerative Agriculture, Closer to Nature Forestry, or Carbon Footprint Certification, to create a tailored, modular scope. Each module adds clearly defined performance requirements and a corresponding claim, enabling stepwise adoption by sector, product, or site. This allows for precise and credible communication (e.g. “*PBN+ Regenerative Agriculture Certified*”).

## Using PBNC to supplement other schemes

Preferred by Nature’s Sustainability Framework (PBNC) recognises the efforts of other schemes, and can be added to existing certifications to address potential gaps. We map PBNC indicators against the other scheme and audit only the uncovered areas, providing a practical way for organisations to strengthen overall assurance without duplicating effort.

## The Preferred by Nature Seal (“the Seal”)

The Seal is a trusted symbol that organisations can use to communicate their verified commitment to sustainable practices in line with the Sustainability Framework. It is reserved exclusively for companies certified against the full Sustainability Framework (Sustainability Scope only). Its use is governed by the **Seal Use Standard**, ensuring that only certified organisations with valid certifications may display it, thereby protecting its credibility and value.



Certified organisations can use the Seal in **three main ways**, each with specific requirements:

- **Communicating certified status.** The Seal may be displayed on websites, reports, and marketing materials to affirm certified status and commitment to sustainable practices.
- **Segregation marking in the supply chain.** For **non-final products**, the Seal can be used to mark certified goods for segregation, ensuring traceability as they move through the supply chain. This is for business-to-business use only and not for final products or their packaging.
- **Use related to final products.** The Seal can be used in relation to final products to signal that they come from sustainably managed farms or forests. To use the Seal this way, organisations must:
  - Manage, measure and communicate the product’s carbon footprint in line with the **Preferred by Nature [Carbon Footprint Certification Standard](#)**.
  - Make a **financial contribution** to projects supporting positive impacts on climate, biodiversity, and communities, as specified in the Seal Use Standard.

## Version history

Version 1.23 | 23 April 2022

Version 1.3 | 25 April 2023

Version 1.4 | 11 September 2023

Version 1.5 | 11 March 2025

Version 2.0

### Box 1.

#### Normative Documents for Preferred by Nature Certification

##### **PBN-01. Sustainability Framework**

Establishes the principles, criteria, and indicators that land-use managers must follow to demonstrate responsible, sustainable practices, as well as social requirements for supply chain entities.

##### **PBN-02. System Standard**

Sets out generic quality system requirements applicable to all Preferred by Nature certified operations.

##### **PBN-03. Due Diligence Standard**

Defines requirements for supplier collaboration, supply chain information, risk assessment, and mitigation for due diligence and includes a EUDR specific annex.

##### **PBN-04. Seal Use Standard**

Sets requirements and conditions for using the PBN Seal.

##### **PBN-05. Chain of Custody Standard**

Specifies requirements for chain of custody models and traceability systems used to manage claims and track products throughout the supply chain.

##### **PBN-06. Terms and Definitions**

Provides definitions and concepts used in the Preferred by Nature Certification programme.

##### **PBN-07. Pesticides Policy**

Defines PBN's policy on the use of pesticides.

##### **PBN-08. GMO Policy**

Defines PBN's policy on the use of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs).



# Sustainability Framework requirements

In the table below, the three columns on the right-hand side indicate the applicability of the requirements to the Regulatory Scope and the Sustainability Scope for land-use and supply chain entities.

**Reg = Regulatory Scope      LU = Land Use      SCE = Supply Chain Entities**

#	Requirements	Reg	LU	SCE
<b>1</b>	<b>Principle 1: Management and business practices are responsible.</b>	✓	✓	
<b>1.1</b>	<b>Land tenure and management rights are secure.</b> Land tenure and management rights for all rights holders are formally defined and legally secure; disputes are addressed through culturally appropriate, transparent, mutually agreed processes; and the certified area is effectively protected from illegal third-party encroachment.	✓	✓	
<b>1.1.1</b>	Land tenure rights are clearly defined and legally secure, according to applicable legal requirements.	✓	✓	
<b>1.1.2</b>	Land management rights are clearly defined and legally secure, according to applicable legal requirements.	✓	✓	
<b>1.1.3</b>	Ongoing land tenure or management rights disputes are managed through a culturally appropriate and transparent process, agreed upon by the affected parties.		✓	
<b>1.1.4</b>	The certified area is protected from illegal encroachment by third parties.		✓	
<b>1.2</b>	<b>Land use and land-use planning are conducted in compliance with legal requirements.</b> Land use is based on legal requirements and documented rights. Plans align with official zoning and permit conditions, identify no-go areas, and all required authorisations, reporting, and fees are kept current. Day-to-day operations, including outsourced work, follow these conditions, with maps, permits, and records demonstrating compliance.	✓	✓	
<b>1.2.1</b>	Legal requirements related to the planning of management and operational activities are complied with.	✓	✓	
<b>1.2.2</b>	Legal requirements related to the implementation of management and operational activities are complied with.	✓	✓	
<b>1.2.3</b>	Legal requirements related to harvesting or production are complied with.	✓	✓	

#	Requirements	Reg	LU	SCE
1.2.4	Legal requirements for the disclosure of information related to land tenure, management planning, and the implementation of operational activities are complied with.	✓	✓	
1.3	<b>Taxes and fees are paid.</b> Applicable taxes and fees have been paid in a timely manner and in accordance with legal requirements.	✓	✓	
1.3.1	Legal requirements for payment of royalties, land/area taxes, and fees are complied with.	✓	✓	
1.3.2	Legal requirements for payment of value-added taxes and/or other sales taxes are complied with.	✓	✓	
1.3.3	Legal requirements for payment of trade and/or export taxes and fees are complied with.	✓	✓	
1.4	<b>Corruption, fraud, and conflicts of interest are avoided.</b> Corruption, fraud, and conflicts of interest are avoided, while business integrity is ensured according to best practices.	✓	✓	
1.4.1	Legal requirements relating to bribery, corruption, fraud, and conflicts of interest are complied with.	✓	✓	
1.4.2	All forms of bribery and corruption are avoided.		✓	
1.4.3	Conflicts of interest, situations where personal, financial, family, or organisational interests could improperly influence duties, are defined, disclosed, and controlled.		✓	
1.5	<b>Trade and procurement are responsible.</b> Trade and transport of materials, products, and animals are conducted in accordance with legal requirements and respect the principles of fairness and transparency in contractual obligations.	✓	✓	
1.5.1	Legal requirements related to trade and transport of products are complied with.	✓	✓	
1.5.2	Legal requirements related to applicable trade restrictions and sanctions are complied with.	✓	✓	
1.5.3	Legal requirements relating to the classification of products are complied with.	✓	✓	
1.5.4	Legal requirements relating to exports are complied with.	✓	✓	
1.5.5	Legal requirements relating to offshore trading and transfer pricing are complied with.	✓	✓	
1.5.6	Legal requirements relating to due diligence or due care are complied with.	✓	✓	

#	Requirements	Reg	LU	SCE
1.5.7	Agreed payments are made in a timely manner, and receipts specifying price, quantity/volume/weight, qualities, deductions, and amount paid are provided.		✓	
1.5.8	Contracts with suppliers and/or buyers have clear terms, are fair and transparent, have an agreed timeframe, and are not changed or cancelled unilaterally.		✓	
1.6	<b>Buildings, infrastructure, and activities are developed and maintained in a responsible manner.</b> Assets are planned, constructed, and maintained in line with permits and codes, minimising health and environmental impacts. They are kept safe and functional, with appropriate access and accessibility, where relevant.		✓	
1.6.1	Legal requirements related to the development of buildings, infrastructure, and activities are adhered to.		✓	
1.6.2	Development of new buildings, infrastructure, and activities is done in a way that minimises adverse impacts on human health and the environment.		✓	
1.6.3	Maintenance of buildings and infrastructure ensures their integrity and functionality while minimising impacts on the surrounding environment and people.		✓	
1.6.4	Where applicable, buildings, infrastructure, and activities provide appropriate access and accessibility features.		✓	
1.7	<b>Visitor experience is safe, appropriate, and responsibly managed.</b> Facilities are functional, clean, hazard-controlled, and suited to the activities offered and the expected number of visitors. Communications are truthful, up to date, and guide customers and visitors to act safely and responsibly.		✓	
1.7.1	Facilities for visitors are clean, safe, and in working order.		✓	
1.7.2	Facilities are appropriate for visitor activities.		✓	
1.7.3	Communication with visitors is accurate and reliable, and promotes responsible visits and interactions.		✓	
2	<b>Principle 2: People's well-being and human rights are respected.</b>	✓	✓	✓
2.1	<b>Human rights are respected and protected.</b> All operations uphold and protect internationally recognised human rights. This includes the rights to life, liberty, security, equality, freedom of expression and association, and protection from discrimination, forced labour, and exploitation. The organisation takes proactive steps to identify, prevent, and remedy any actual or potential human rights violations throughout its operations and supply chains. Special attention is given to the	✓	✓	✓

#	Requirements	Reg	LU	SCE
	rights of vulnerable and marginalised groups, including Indigenous Peoples, women, migrant workers, and children.			
2.1.1	Legal requirements related to human rights protected under international law are complied with.	✓	✓	✓
2.1.2	Human rights, as defined in international human rights instruments, are respected.		✓	✓
2.1.3	All forms of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment are prohibited, prevented, and not tolerated in line with international human rights instruments.		✓	✓
2.1.4	The organisation does not cause, contribute to, or benefit from human rights abuses in situations of armed conflict.		✓	✓
1.2.5	Where the organisation has caused or contributed to human rights violations or harm, it provides for or cooperates in remediation, consistent with Annex 1.  Note: Expectations for remediation should be proportionate to the size and impact of the organisation, and the harm inflicted.		✓	
2.2	<b>Workers' rights are respected.</b> Workers are employed under conditions that respect dignity and safety.	✓	✓	✓
2.2.1	Legal requirements related to freedom of association, the right to organise, and collective bargaining are complied with.	✓	✓	✓
2.2.2	Workers are free to form and join organisations of their choice, to organise collectively, and to negotiate with the organisation without interference, intimidation, or retaliation.		✓	✓
2.2.3	Legal requirements related to working hours, overtime, rest time, and time off are complied with.	✓	✓	✓
2.2.4	Normal working time does not exceed 48 hours per week. Extra hours are voluntary, fairly paid at a premium rate, and refusal is never penalised. Workers have at least one full day of rest each week and receive all legally required paid leave.		✓	✓
2.2.5	Workers are treated with respect and are never subjected to abuse, harassment (including sexual), or verbal, physical, or psychological mistreatment.		✓	✓
2.2.6	Workers' privacy rights are respected, including — though not limited to — situations where an employer gathers private information or implements employee-monitoring practices.		✓	
2.2.7	Legal requirements related to the recruitment and employment of workers are complied with.	✓	✓	

#	Requirements	Reg	LU	SCE
2.2.8	Employment conditions of workers — including wages, bonuses, work hours, overtime, vacation, and other benefits — are documented and made available to workers before employment.		✓	
2.2.9	Responsibilities towards workers are not avoided by hiring de facto permanent, long-term, full-time workers under seasonal or temporary contracts.		✓	
2.2.10	Where migrant workers are employed, the following conditions are ensured: (a) Employment complies with all legal requirements (b) Migrant workers hold valid work and residence permits (c) Workers and their families are free to travel and leave the area or country, except where restricted by law.		✓	
2.2.11	Migrant workers receive equal opportunities and treatment as local workers, and are protected at all stages of recruitment and employment from discrimination, coercion, deception, retention of personal documents, and recruitment fees that could result in debt bondage.		✓	✓
2.3	<b>Child labour is prevented, and young workers are protected.</b> Child labour is prevented, and the worst forms are eliminated. Children and young workers are protected from work that harms their health, safety, education, or development. Where young workers are legally employed, only safe, age-appropriate work is permitted, in compliance with applicable laws.	✓	✓	✓
2.3.1	Legal requirements related to child labour and the employment of young workers are complied with.	✓	✓	
2.3.2	Children and young workers are not employed in dangerous work, their schooling is not disrupted, and they are always properly supervised.		✓	
2.3.3	Children under 15, or under the age of completing compulsory education (whichever is higher), are not employed. Light work for children aged 12–14 is permitted only where allowed by law, and must be non-hazardous, voluntary, supervised, carried out outside school hours, and must not interfere with health or education.		✓	✓
2.3.4	Young workers (above the minimum age and under 18) are employed only in non-hazardous, age-appropriate tasks. Their work is supervised, not performed at night, limited to a maximum of eight hours per day, and scheduled outside compulsory school hours.		✓	✓
2.4	<b>Modern slavery, forced or compulsory labour, and human trafficking are not used, supported, or tolerated.</b> Workers' freedom to choose and leave their employment is fully respected and protected.	✓	✓	✓
2.4.1	Legal requirements related to forced labour, modern slavery, and human trafficking are complied with.	✓	✓	✓



#	Requirements	Reg	LU	SCE
2.4.2	Forced labour, modern slavery, and human trafficking are prohibited and prevented. All work is freely chosen. Workers may leave their jobs with notice and are not held in debt bondage. Any cases are stopped and remedied immediately.		✓	✓
2.4.3	Workers retain full control of their wages, benefits, identity documents, and personal belongings. Any form of withholding, unreasonable restriction, or exploitative debt (including debt bondage or recruitment fee deductions) is strictly prohibited.		✓	
2.4.4	Workers have the right to: (a) Leave the workplace immediately after their paid workday. (b) Move freely within and outside company-controlled premises during rest periods; and (c) Use personal communication (e.g., phones, internet) without surveillance, confiscation, or unreasonable restriction.		✓	
2.4.5	Workers have the right to terminate their employment voluntarily, in accordance with legal requirements, without penalty or intimidation.		✓	
2.4.6	Workers do not pay recruitment fees or costs.		✓	
2.5	<b>Discrimination does not occur.</b> All workers are treated equally and without discrimination, regardless of gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion, social status, or other protected characteristics.	✓	✓	✓
2.5.1	Legal requirements related to non-discrimination are complied with.	✓	✓	
2.5.2	All workers receive fair and equal treatment in all aspects of employment, including recruitment, remuneration, training, promotion, termination, and retirement.		✓	✓
2.5.3	Workers are protected from harassment or exclusion and can raise concerns without fear of retaliation.		✓	
2.6	<b>Workers are remunerated responsibly.</b> All workers — including permanent, contract, seasonal, and migrant — are paid in accordance with national laws. Where minimum wages fall short of providing a decent standard of living, progressive steps are taken to ensure alignment with international standards on living wages.	✓	✓	
2.6.1	Legal requirements related to workers' wages and entitlements, including social insurance, are fully complied with.	✓	✓	
2.6.2	Workers' wages meet or exceed recognised industry benchmarks, where available.		✓	

#	Requirements	Reg	LU	SCE
2.6.3	Workers are paid for a standard work week at a level that enables a decent standard of living for themselves and their families, as part of a continuous improvement approach towards achieving living-wage goals.		✓	
2.6.4	Payment is made directly to all workers to ensure they receive and retain their wages safely.		✓	
2.6.5	Where employers charge workers for goods or services (e.g., food, transportation, medical care), the costs are fair, reasonable, and do not exceed local market rates.		✓	
2.6.6	Workers are informed, in a language they understand, of their wages, benefits, deductions, and payment schedule before employment and at each pay period and receive the agreed wages and benefits on time and in full.		✓	
2.7	<b>Facilities, operations and activities are safe and healthy.</b> Workers have access to and use appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and proactive measures are taken to identify and reduce health and safety risks through training, participation and continuous improvement.	✓	✓	✓
2.7.1	Legal requirements related to workplace health and safety are complied with.	✓	✓	
2.7.2	Equipment, vehicles, machinery and utilities are safe and in good working order, and relevant safety features are complete and functioning.		✓	✓
2.7.3	Indoor workplaces are hygienic, with adequate lighting, temperature, ventilation, sanitation, drinking water, sanitary facilities, as well as break facilities and food storage.		✓	
2.7.4	Workers are competent in relevant health and safety issues, including handling chemicals and machinery, and receive appropriate training.		✓	
2.7.5	Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and tools are available to and used by workers, are in good condition, and are appropriate for the specific activity.		✓	✓
2.7.6	Workers handling hazardous substances have access to appropriate cleaning and washing facilities.		✓	
2.7.7	Expectant and nursing mothers are not engaged in activities that expose them to health and safety risks, and have access to pre- and post-natal medical care.		✓	
2.7.8	Emergency exits, fire detection, emergency alarms, and fire suppression equipment are in place, visible, and in working order, and workers are competent to handle equipment and react to emergencies.		✓	✓
2.7.9	Workers have access to appropriate first-aid equipment and medical services in case of emergencies.		✓	✓

#	Requirements	Reg	LU	SCE
<b>2.8</b>	<b>Employer-provided accommodation is safe, hygienic, and does not undermine workers' rights.</b> Accommodation is safe and hygienic, does not restrict freedom of movement, and any fees are fair, non-exploitative, and proportionate to wages and local conditions.	✓	✓	✓
<b>2.8.1</b>	Legal requirements for employer-provided worker accommodation are complied with.	✓	✓	
<b>2.8.2</b>	When no safe or affordable housing alternatives are available, particularly in remote locations, the employer provides accommodation to workers.		✓	
<b>2.8.3</b>	If workers pay for employer-provided accommodation, the cost is proportional to their pay and comparable to similar accommodation in the area or industry.		✓	
<b>2.8.4</b>	Employer-provided accommodation is safe, hygienic and provides adequate space, privacy and basic facilities.		✓	✓
<b>2.8.5</b>	Where workers and their families live in employer-provided accommodation, the employer ensures access to medical, educational and social services.		✓	
<b>2.9</b>	<b>Gender equality is maintained and protected.</b> Gender equality is respected and promoted. Women and men have equal rights, pay, and opportunities, and are protected from discrimination and harassment. Where barriers exist, the organisation takes fair action to reduce them.	✓	✓	
<b>2.9.1</b>	Legal requirements related to gender equality, non-discrimination, and protection from harassment in the workplace are complied with.	✓	✓	
<b>2.9.2</b>	Job opportunities are available to everyone, irrespective of gender, on the same conditions.		✓	
<b>2.9.3</b>	Irrespective of gender, equal remuneration is provided for work of equal value.		✓	
<b>2.9.4</b>	Legal requirements related to maternity, paternity and parental leave are complied with.	✓	✓	
<b>2.9.5</b>	Legal requirements regarding maternity leave are complied with, and where eligibility thresholds apply (e.g., minimum employment duration or contract type), they are clearly communicated and consistently enforced.		✓	
<b>2.9.6</b>	Where legal requirements provide less, the organisation shall progressively ensure at least 14 weeks of paid maternity leave.		✓	
<b>2.10</b>	<b>The rights of Indigenous Peoples and tribal peoples are respected.</b> The lands, territories, rights, and cultural heritage of these groups are acknowledged and respected through culturally appropriate engagement.	✓	✓	✓

#	Requirements	Reg	LU	SCE
2.10.1	The organisation identifies Indigenous Peoples and tribal peoples who might be affected by its activities, even if they are not recognised under national law.		✓	
2.10.2	Legal requirements that recognise and protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples and tribal peoples are complied with.	✓	✓	
2.10.3	Prior, informed and culturally appropriate consultation, or FPIC where applicable, is carried out in good faith with Indigenous Peoples and tribal peoples, in accordance with legal requirements.	✓	✓	
2.10.4	Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is obtained before any activity that may affect Indigenous Peoples' or tribal peoples' rights, lands, territories, resources, or cultural heritage. The process is documented, inclusive, and led through Indigenous decision-making structures.		✓	✓
2.10.5	Agreements reached through FPIC processes, including benefit-sharing arrangements, are documented, implemented in good faith, and monitored with the participation of Indigenous Peoples and tribal people.		✓	
2.10.6	The actual or potential impacts on the rights, lands, territories, or resources of Indigenous Peoples and tribal people are identified in collaboration with them, and effective measures are implemented to avoid or mitigate adverse effects.		✓	
2.10.7	Engagement with Indigenous Peoples and tribal people is respectful, inclusive, and culturally appropriate, and reflects their preferred forms of communication, decision-making, and representation.		✓	
2.11	<b>Community rights are respected and protected.</b> Local communities are engaged respectfully, their legitimate rights are upheld, and their well-being is supported through agreed benefits resulting from meaningful dialogue.	✓	✓	✓
2.11.1	Communities affected by the operations are known.		✓	
2.11.2	Legally recognised customary rights of local communities are identified and respected.	✓	✓	✓
2.11.3	Equitable opportunities are provided for local communities to benefit from the organisation, including access to employment, training and development support.		✓	
2.11.4	Resources and areas essential for the basic needs or livelihoods of local communities are identified through meaningful consultation and protected from degradation, loss of access or displacement. Where adverse impacts occur, appropriate mitigation or remedy is provided.		✓	
2.12	<b>Cultural heritage is respected and protected from harm or loss.</b>		✓	

#	Requirements	Reg	LU	SCE
	For Indigenous Peoples and local communities, cultural knowledge, traditions and intellectual property are safeguarded through culturally appropriate engagement, with their rights respected in accordance with international standards.			
2.12.1	Cultures are respected and valued, and negative impacts on local culture are minimised, while ensuring that cultural practices do not infringe on human rights and are considerate of environmental values.		✓	
2.12.2	Cultural and spiritual heritage including, local practices, properties, sites, and traditions of historical, archaeological, cultural, and spiritual significance are identified and protected.		✓	
2.12.3	Historical and archaeological artefacts are not sold, traded, or displayed, except in accordance with applicable laws.		✓	
2.12.4	Traditional knowledge, cultural expressions, and intellectual property of Indigenous Peoples and local communities are not used without their consent and equitable benefit-sharing.		✓	
<b>3</b>	<b>Principle 3: Nature and the environment are protected.</b>	✓	✓	
<b>3.1</b>	<b>There is no deforestation or conversion of Other Natural Ecosystems.</b> Activities do not contribute to deforestation or the conversion of Forests or Other Natural Ecosystems.	✓	✓	✓
<b>3.1.1</b>	After 31 December 2020, Primary Forest, Naturally Regenerating Forest, Planted Forest or Plantation Forest, has not been converted to Agricultural Land.	✓	✓	
<b>3.1.2</b>	Natural Forests and Other Natural Ecosystems have not been cleared or converted to agriculture, infrastructure, or other intensive land uses in the past 10 years, except in the following limited cases: <b>(a)</b> Clearing is required by law or is strictly essential for safe, lawful operations (e.g, small buildings, access tracks, firebreaks). <b>(b)</b> The footprint is minimal relative to the certified area, and no viable alternatives exist.		✓	
<b>3.1.3</b>	If Natural Forest or Other Natural Ecosystems were converted, or otherwise destroyed, in the last 10 years, the Organisation shall restore an equivalent or better ecological value, preferably on-site, in alignment with the Preferred by Nature Ecosystem restoration Standard. If on-site restoration is not possible, the restoration can be off-site in the same landscape or ecoregion.		✓	
<b>3.1.4</b>	If there is a risk that sourcing activities may cause significant indirect land use change through conversion or destruction of forests or natural ecosystems elsewhere, steps are taken to mitigate this risk.		N/A	✓



#	Requirements	Reg	LU	SCE
3.1.5	Animal feed shall come from sources that do not contribute to deforestation.	✓	✓	✓
3.2	<b>Natural Forests and Other Natural Ecosystems are not degraded.</b> Management, harvesting and any other resource use in or adjacent to Forests and Other Natural Ecosystems must be carried out in a way that maintains the land's health and productivity into the future.	✓	✓	
3.2.1	After 31 December 2020: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Primary Forest has not been converted to Planted Forest.</li> <li>Primary Forest and Naturally Regenerating Forest have not been converted to Plantation Forest or Other Wooded Land.</li> </ul>	✓	✓	
3.2.2	The rates of extraction from Natural Forests and Other Natural Ecosystems do not exceed the natural regeneration capacity and ensure the long-term yield and health of the resource.		✓	
3.2.3	Other Natural Ecosystems under management are not degraded and retain their native vegetation structure, soil organic integrity, natural hydrology and key functional species.		✓	
3.2.4	Where clear-cutting is legal, the block size, shape, and rotation follow ecological limits for the forest type and landscape connectivity.		✓	
3.2.5	Fire risk is controlled, and fire is only used for land preparation where environmental and social benefits are demonstrated.		✓	
3.3	<b>Ecosystem functions, biodiversity values and habitats are identified, protected and restored where feasible.</b> Ecosystem and biodiversity values are identified, maintained and enhanced, subject to the precautionary approach, in alignment with legal requirements. Note: The HCV Network's approach can be used to meet this criterion.	✓	✓	
3.3.1	Legal requirements regarding protected areas and sites, protected and endangered species, and restoration are complied with.	✓	✓	
3.3.2	Key natural features, habitats, and species within the certified area are known, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Water bodies and riparian zones</li> <li>(b) Erosion-prone soils and slopes</li> <li>(c) Areas of natural vegetation</li> <li>(d) Important habitats (including breeding, roosting, and denning sites), and</li> <li>(e) Occurrences of rare, threatened, or legally protected species.</li> </ul>		✓	
3.3.3	Management and operations protect, maintain, and — where possible — enhance natural features, habitats and species, wildlife, and ecosystem functions.		✓	

#	Requirements	Reg	LU	SCE
3.3.4	Rare, endangered, or legally protected animal and plant species are protected, maintained, or enhanced.		✓	
3.3.5	Management and operations adjacent to Natural Forests and Other Natural Ecosystems are conducted in a way that avoids negative impacts on them.		✓	
3.3.6	The introduction of invasive species is avoided, and invasive species already present are controlled as far as possible.		✓	
3.4	<b>Chemicals are used responsibly, with minimal negative impacts on the environment and people.</b> Prohibited pesticides are not used. Pesticide use is minimised, and any application ensures the protection of human health and minimises environmental impacts.	✓	✓	
3.4.1	Legal requirements for the purchase, storage, handling, application, record-keeping and disposal of chemicals and fertilisers are complied with.	✓	✓	
3.4.2	Active ingredients listed on PBN's Prohibited Pesticides List, as outlined in the PBN Pesticides Policy, are neither purchased, stored, nor used.		✓	
3.4.3	Where active ingredients listed on PBN's Exceptional Use Pesticides List are used, the requirements set out in the PBN Pesticides Policy and Annex B of this standard shall be met, in addition to the indicators of Criterion 3.4.		✓	
3.4.4	An Integrated Pest Management (IPM) system is implemented that: (a) Prioritises preventive practices (e.g., crop rotation, habitat management, resistant varieties). (b) Uses biological and mechanical control methods before chemical ones; and (c) Ensures that any chemical pesticide use is justified, targeted and minimised.		✓	
3.4.5	Chemicals are stored and applied safely, in line with the manufacturer's instructions, so that people are not exposed to harm, water and soil are not polluted, and ecosystems are not damaged.		✓	
3.4.6	Where pesticides are used, mixing, storage and application prevent drift, run-off, spills and contamination of other products.		✓	
3.4.7	Chemicals with known risks for pollinators or other non-target species are only used if: (a) Non-chemical methods or less toxic pesticides are not available. (b) Exposure to natural ecosystems is minimised; and (c) Contact of pollinators and other non-target species with these substances can be minimised.		✓	
3.4.8	Where fertilisers are used: (a) The type of fertiliser is selected based on soil assessment and crop nutrient needs over the growing season; and		✓	

#	Requirements	Reg	LU	SCE
	(b) The amount, timing and application of fertiliser are adjusted to plant nutrient needs and to minimise nutrient loss to the surrounding environment.			
3.4.9	Where refrigeration, cooling, or fire suppression systems are used, any ozone-depleting substances are identified and phased out in accordance with legal requirements.		✓	
3.5	<b>Waste is reduced and managed responsibly.</b> The volume and negative impacts of waste from activities, including production and processing, are managed and minimised to meet legal requirements.	✓	✓	
3.5.1	Applicable legal requirements for the generation, storage, transport, treatment, and disposal of waste are met.	✓	✓	
3.5.2	Waste is stored, treated, disposed of, or burned — based on toxicity — only in facilities that are adequate and operated so that risks to people or natural ecosystems are managed.		✓	
3.5.3	Biomass waste (such as straw, stalks, or other biomass) is managed in an environmentally sustainable manner, such as incorporating residues back into the soil, composting for use as organic fertiliser, or utilising residues for on-farm mulching or bioenergy purposes, where feasible.		✓	
3.5.4	Waste is managed to ensure reduction, recycling, reuse, and safe disposal based on the toxicity of the materials.		✓	
3.6	<b>Pollution is minimised or prevented.</b> The organisation prevents air, water, soil, noise, and light pollution. Emissions and discharges are first avoided, then reduced through clean production, and any remaining releases comply with applicable permits and responsible practices.		✓	
3.6.1	Legal requirements for emissions and discharges to air, water, soil, and nuisance emissions (noise, odour, light) — including permits, limits, monitoring, and reporting — are complied with.		✓	
3.6.2	Land-use practices minimise run-off, erosion, and agro-chemical leaching into surface and groundwater.		✓	
3.6.3	Air, noise, and light pollution are prevented or reduced to meet legal emission levels and are minimised or avoided where possible.		✓	
3.7	<b>Water resources are protected and used efficiently.</b> Where water is used, legal requirements are met, and water resources are protected and used responsibly to ensure long-term viability.	✓	✓	
3.7.1	Legal requirements for the use and protection of surface and groundwater are complied with.	✓	✓	

#	Requirements	Reg	LU	SCE
3.7.2	Water resources are managed to maintain their quality, availability, and ecological function. Water use is planned to avoid significant negative impacts on other users, surrounding ecosystems, and natural vegetation.		✓	
3.7.3	Buffer zones are established and maintained around streams, rivers, wetlands, and ponds.		✓	
3.8	<b>Soil health is protected, maintained, and enhanced.</b> Soil biodiversity, organic matter, and key physical, chemical, and biological functions are conserved. Practices prevent erosion, compaction, contamination, and other adverse impacts, ensuring soils remain productive and ecologically resilient over time.	✓	✓	
3.8.1	Legal requirements related to soil management are complied with.	✓	✓	
3.8.2	Water and wind erosion are reduced through practices such as ground covers, mulches, protection and re-vegetation of steep areas, terracing, or filter strips to protect soils.		✓	
3.8.3	Harvesting, cultivation, and grazing practices and limitations are implemented to maintain or improve the soil's physical, chemical, and biological condition.		✓	
3.8.4	Plant and animal materials are managed to maintain or improve soil biodiversity and organic matter content, and do not contribute to the contamination of crops, soil, or water by nutrients, pathogenic organisms, heavy metals, or residues of prohibited substances.		✓	
3.9	<b>Animal welfare and health are secured.</b> Animal health and welfare are ensured, reducing animal stress and allowing them to exercise their natural behaviours.		✓	
3.9.1	Legal requirements relating to animal health, welfare, medication, transport, and traceability are complied with.		✓	
3.9.2	Animals are fed to satisfy their nutritional needs and maintain good health.		✓	
3.9.3	Animals can access environments that allow them to move freely and exhibit natural behaviour.		✓	
3.9.4	Animals have continuous access to fresh, clean water sufficient to eliminate competition between them.		✓	
3.9.5	Measures (such as vaccination and hygiene) are taken to prevent diseases while minimising risks of antimicrobial resistance, as well as pain and injury to the animals.		✓	
3.9.6	Housing, pens, and handling facilities have adequate space, ventilation, lighting, and drainage; are safe, minimising the risk of disease, injury, and stress to the animals; and are adjusted to climatic zone conditions.		✓	

#	Requirements	Reg	LU	SCE
3.9.7	Transportation of animals considers their size, climatic conditions, and need for water and food (in case of long-distance transportation), minimising animal stress.		✓	
3.9.8	Animal handling is done by workers with experience and competence in animal welfare.		✓	
3.10	<b>Use of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) is disclosed and responsibly managed.</b> Contingent on prior approval by PBN, the use or presence of GMOs is transparently disclosed. GMOs are only used where legally permitted and where they demonstrably contribute to sustainability outcomes.		✓	
3.10.1	GMOs under the scope have been approved to conform to key sustainability requirements by PBN prior to use. Note: Refer to the PBN GMO Policy for details on the approval requirements and process.		✓	
3.10.2	GMO use within the scope of certification is legal in the country or region in question.		✓	
3.10.3	GMOs used within the scope of certification are covered by legal approvals and permits, and associated conditions are met.		✓	
3.10.4	GMOs are used in a manner that prevents significant environmental harm, including gene flow to wild relatives, contamination of non-GMO areas, and adverse effects on non-target species.		✓	
3.10.5	Full disclosure of GMO use is provided to all buyers, ensuring no misleading non-GMO claims.		✓	
4	<b>Principle 4: Climate impacts are reduced and mitigated.</b>		✓	
4.1	<b>Significant greenhouse gas emission sources are identified, considering management practices, land-use change, livestock, energy, sourcing, and use of materials.</b>		✓	
4.1.1	Significant sources of greenhouse gas emissions are known, taking into account management practices, land-use change, livestock, energy, and the sourcing and use of materials.		✓	
4.1.2	Legal requirements related to greenhouse gas emissions and climate change are complied with.		✓	
4.1.3	Efforts are made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from activities, meeting at minimum the best practices of the industry sector and taking into account the size, type, and region of the operation.		✓	
4.1.4	Soil carbon levels are maintained or increased, demonstrated through practices such as cover cropping, reduced tillage, or organic matter enhancement.		✓	



#	Requirements	Reg	LU	SCE
4.1.5	Fertilisers, particularly nitrogen, are managed to ensure that applications do not exceed plant uptake capacity, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions.		✓	
4.1.6	Methane emissions from production (e.g., livestock and paddy fields) are reduced through measurable best practices (e.g., improved feed composition, herd management, alternate wetting and drying).		✓	
4.1.7	Fossil fuel use in operations is minimised through energy efficiency measures or transition to renewable energy where feasible.		✓	
4.1.8	Open burning of crop residues is prohibited, except when demonstrably necessary for pest or disease control and legally permitted.		✓	
4.2	<b>Climate change adaptation efforts are implemented proportionate to the risks.</b> Risks resulting from climate change that may endanger the sustainability of operations are identified, and appropriate climate adaptation measures are implemented.		✓	
4.2.1	The critical risks for the operation resulting from, or potentially resulting from, climate change are identified.		✓	
4.2.2	Measures for climate change adaptation are implemented for high-risk areas and are proportionate to the scale of the operations and anticipated social, economic, and environmental impacts.		✓	
4.3	<b>Efforts are taken for GHG removal and ecosystem restoration as appropriate.</b> Opportunities for GHG removal, ecosystem restoration, and implementing related activities are considered when feasible and relevant.		✓	
4.3.1	The key natural elements storing carbon within the certified area — such as trees, soil, and vegetation — are known. Note: Where relevant, and depending on the size and impact of operations, the carbon stock shall be quantified.		✓	
4.3.2	Management activities ensure long-term carbon storage and enhance biodiversity and ecosystem integrity. NOTE: The extent and intensity of these practices are commensurate with the operation's scale and the magnitude of potential GHG removal.		✓	
4.3.3	Ecosystem restoration activities are implemented, where feasible, in degraded, non-productive areas.		✓	

# Annex A: Requirements for remediation

Preferred by Nature requires remediation whenever credible evidence indicates that an organisation has **caused** or **contributed to** adverse human rights impacts affecting workers, Indigenous Peoples, or local communities. This expectation sits within **Criterion 2.1** of the Sustainability Framework and the present **Annex** on remediation.

In practice, remediation should be initiated — proportionate to severity and scale — when: **(a)** verified non-conformities or substantiated complaints show harm has occurred; **(b)** significant past violations are linked to the organisation’s operations or business relationships (e.g., unlawful displacement, FPIC breaches, forced or child labour, wage theft, serious health and safety harm); or **(c)** systemic or repeated issues indicate ongoing risk if no remedy is provided. Remediation refers to both the process and the outcomes that repair harm (e.g., apologies, restitution, rehabilitation, compensation, sanctions, and guarantees of non-repetition).

This set of requirements defines remediation and grievance mechanisms in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), with particular reference to Principle 22 and Pillar 3 (Principles 29–31). It is designed to support a performance-based, rights-holder-centred approach consistent with Preferred by Nature’s certification system.

#	Remediation and Grievance Mechanism Framework	Guidance
A1	Responsibility and commitment	<p>The organisation is expected to accept and act on its duty to provide or enable remedy when it has caused or contributed to harm. Grievance handling should be an ongoing responsibility to respect human rights, rather than an ad hoc activity. In practice, an adequate and legitimate mechanism is established with clear authority, sufficient resources, and predictable steps. It is accessible in relevant languages and formats and trusted by those who might use it, including Indigenous Peoples and other groups whose cultures or customary practices require particular respect.</p> <p>Expectations include publicising simple ways to raise concerns, acknowledging and assessing cases within reasonable timeframes, and managing conflicts of interest. Where impacts are linked to the organisation through business relationships, it should use its leverage responsibly to support or enable remedy. In general, this involves setting clear expectations for suppliers and partners, cooperating on corrective actions, seeking collaborative solutions where harms</p>

#	Remediation and Grievance Mechanism Framework	Guidance
		<b>are systemic, and disengaging only when efforts to achieve remedy have failed.</b>
<b>A1.1</b>	The organisation addresses adverse human rights impacts that it has caused or contributed to, affecting individuals, Indigenous Peoples, communities, or workers. Remediation is provided through a mechanism that is adequate, legitimate, and culturally appropriate.	<p>The organisation takes responsibility for providing or enabling remedy when it has caused or contributed to harm. A credible grievance-and-remedy mechanism is maintained with a clear scope, authority to act, and sufficient resources to implement outcomes. The mechanism is designed to be legitimate, culturally appropriate, and compatible with human rights, offering straightforward ways for individuals, Indigenous Peoples, communities, and workers to raise concerns in relevant languages and formats.</p> <p>Timeframes for acknowledgement, assessment, decision, and closure are clearly communicated, conflicts of interest are managed, and the organisation demonstrates that remedies restore rights as fully as possible while addressing root causes.</p>
<b>A1.2</b>	Grievance mechanisms are established and maintained as a core part of the organisation's ongoing responsibility to respect human rights.	Grievance handling is integrated into the organisation's ongoing responsibility to respect human rights. Policies, defined roles, budgets, training, and management oversight ensure that the mechanism is a permanent feature of operations rather than an ad hoc response. It is transparent to stakeholders, applied consistently across sites and subsidiaries, regularly reviewed for effectiveness, and adapted whenever evidence indicates barriers or declining performance.
	The organisation identifies and addresses adverse impacts connected to its operations, products, or services through business relationships, and uses its leverage to facilitate access to remedy when it has not directly caused or contributed to the harm.	When adverse impacts are connected to the organisation's operations, products, or services through business relationships, the organisation uses its leverage to facilitate access to remedy. Expectations include setting cooperation requirements in supplier and partner agreements, maintaining a channel for supply chain complaints, agreeing on time-bound corrective actions, and collaborating with peers, industry platforms, civil society, and public authorities when harms are systemic or shared. Disengagement is considered only if genuine efforts to achieve remedy have been unsuccessful.
<b>A2</b>	<b>Access and participation</b>	<b>For access and participation (A2), the aim is to remove barriers so that individuals can use the mechanism early and without fear, and to ensure its legitimacy reflects the perspectives of those affected. Meeting</b>

#	Remediation and Grievance Mechanism Framework	Guidance
		<p>this expectation generally involves providing multiple safe channels (including low-tech or off-site options), publishing clear service standards and indicative timelines, and offering regular updates that protect confidentiality.</p> <p>Affected stakeholders — including workers, unions, community representatives, Indigenous Peoples, and vulnerable or marginalised groups — are engaged in the design and periodic review to ensure the mechanism reflects local realities while remaining compatible with human rights. Non-retaliation is explicit, enforced, and supported by practical safeguards such as confidentiality, the option for anonymity, protection from adverse employment or community consequences, and prompt remedies if retaliation occurs.</p> <p>Company processes complement, and never obstruct, State-based judicial or non-judicial avenues; complainants are informed of their right to seek formal remedy, evidence is preserved, and the organisation cooperates appropriately with public authorities. Finally, individuals receive the information and support needed to participate meaningfully, including plain-language materials, translation or interpretation where required, reasonable accommodations for disability or literacy, and access to trusted representatives or facilitators.</p>
A2.1	The organisation demonstrates that grievance mechanisms are effective, accessible, and employed to address human rights concerns in a timely, transparent, and culturally appropriate way.	Effective grievance mechanisms are easy to use and provide timely, transparent, and culturally appropriate responses. The organisation removes practical barriers such as cost, distance, language, literacy, and disability; offers low-tech or off-site options where needed; and provides regular case updates without compromising confidentiality. Service standards — for acknowledgement, assessment, resolution, and appeal — are clearly defined and consistently met in practice.
A2.2	Affected stakeholders — including workers, vulnerable and marginalised groups, and their representatives (e.g., unions) — are meaningfully engaged in shaping and	Legitimacy is strengthened by engaging affected stakeholders in shaping and reviewing the mechanism. Workers — including migrants and contractors — , unions, community representatives, Indigenous Peoples, and vulnerable or marginalised groups are consulted on the design, piloted materials, and accessibility. Feedback

#	Remediation and Grievance Mechanism Framework	Guidance
	reviewing grievance mechanisms to ensure their legitimacy and local relevance.	is incorporated while ensuring that the process remains consistent with human rights standards and, where relevant, respects customary institutions and FPIC.
<b>A2.3</b>	Grievance mechanisms are used without fear of retaliation and include safeguards to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.	People can raise concerns without fear. The organisation adopts and enforces non-retaliation policies, provides confidential and, where necessary, anonymous channels, and puts in place practical safeguards such as safe meeting options, job or shift protection, and remedies for any retaliation that occurs. Supervisors and managers are trained on appropriate conduct and on the consequences of breaches.
<b>A2.4</b>	The organisation ensures that its grievance mechanisms do not obstruct access to State-based judicial or non-judicial channels and supports affected stakeholders in using them where appropriate. Mechanisms are designed to complement — not replace — these formal systems.	Company mechanisms complement and do not obstruct State-based judicial or non-judicial avenues. The organisation informs complainants of formal options, avoids waivers or confidentiality terms that would restrict access to authorities, preserves evidence, and cooperates appropriately with public bodies. Internal timelines and actions are aligned so that they do not impede external proceedings.
<b>A2.5</b>	The organisation ensures that affected stakeholders have the information, guidance, and support they need to engage meaningfully in grievance processes, including through accessible communication and, where appropriate, facilitation.	Affected stakeholders receive the information, guidance, and support needed to participate meaningfully. Processes, rights, and options are explained in plain language, translation or interpretation and reasonable accommodations are provided, and complainants may be accompanied by trusted representatives or facilitators. Materials and communication channels are adapted to the audiences that rely on them.
<b>A3</b>	<b>Delivery of remedy</b>	<b>For delivery of remedy , the intent is that outcomes repair harm to the extent possible, are proportionate, and uphold human rights. Expectations include assessing severity and remediability, discussing options with affected individuals or communities, and documenting agreements in ways that reflect genuine consent rather than pressure. Remedies may combine measures such as reinstatement, back pay, medical care and rehabilitation, restitution or restoration, guarantees of non-recurrence, community measures, and — where appropriate — compensation, calculated and delivered transparently and without undermining</b>



#	Remediation and Grievance Mechanism Framework	Guidance
		<b>other rights. Where responsibility is shared or the harm is systemic, the organisation is expected to collaborate with relevant actors (suppliers, peers, community organisations, public bodies) so that effective remedy is feasible. Predictability is ensured by communicating procedural steps, typical timelines, possible outcomes, and an appeal option, and by verifying results with those affected before cases are closed.</b>
<b>A3.1</b>	Remedies are determined in consultation with affected individuals or communities and are fair, proportionate, and rights-compatible.	Remedies are defined with the participation of affected people and are fair, proportionate, and compatible with human rights. The organisation assesses severity, scale, and remediability; examines root causes; and designs outcomes that may include reinstatement, back pay, and benefits, medical care and rehabilitation, restitution or restoration, guarantees of non-recurrence, and community measures. Agreements reflect genuine, uncoerced consent and are clearly documented.
<b>A3.2</b>		Where compensation is relevant and agreed upon, it is provided promptly and transparently as part of a broader remedy package. The basis for calculation is explained, payment is made safely and accessibly, and the compensation does not limit other forms of remedy or the right to pursue formal redress.
<b>A3.3</b>	The organisation demonstrates collaboration with relevant actors to enable effective remedy in cases of shared or systemic responsibility.	When responsibility is shared or harms are systemic, the organisation collaborates to ensure effective remedy. Roles, timelines, and verification responsibilities are agreed upon among relevant actors — such as suppliers, peers, community organisations, and authorities — and success is measured by the outcomes for affected people rather than by the attribution of credit.
<b>A3.4</b>	Grievance procedures include clear timelines, defined procedural steps, and information on expected outcomes.	Predictable procedures build trust. The organisation communicates steps, indicative timelines, decision points, and likely outcome types; offers an appeal or review option; defines closure criteria; and verifies with affected parties that the remedies have been implemented and are effective before closing cases.
<b>A4</b>	<b>Monitoring, effectiveness and learning</b>	<b>For monitoring, effectiveness, and learning (A4), the intent is to confirm that remedies are implemented as agreed and actually work, while turning case-level insights into preventive action and system</b>

#	Remediation and Grievance Mechanism Framework	Guidance
		<p>improvement. In general terms, this means tracking progress against plans, verifying outcomes with rights-holders where it is safe to do so, and using a small set of indicators (e.g., time to close, implementation rate, recurrence) to judge performance and trigger adjustments when results fall short.</p> <p>Lessons from grievances inform risk assessment, policy and control changes, procurement and supplier management, training content, and other management decisions; guarantees of non-recurrence are recorded and followed through. Human rights considerations and the grievance mechanism are integrated into due diligence and operational systems, with senior oversight and the authority to allocate resources.</p> <p>Capability is built through regular training for staff and key suppliers on respectful conduct, safe handling of cases, survivor-centered practice, data protection, and context-specific topics such as engagement with Indigenous Peoples; access to independent expertise is maintained for complex situations.</p> <p>Periodic review — drawing on user feedback, monitoring data and outcomes, and, where appropriate, external input — keeps the mechanism relevant and effective as contexts change.</p>
A4.1	The organisation monitors and evaluates remediation actions to ensure they are implemented as planned and achieve outcomes that are fair, effective, and aligned with human rights standards.	Remediation actions are monitored to ensure they are implemented as planned and achieve the intended results. The organisation tracks progress, verifies effectiveness with rights-holders where safe, adjusts measures when results fall short, and maintains records sufficient for audit and learning.
A4.2	Lessons from grievances and remediation outcomes are integrated into risk management, decision-making, and policy development to drive continuous improvement in human rights performance.	Lessons from grievances and remedies inform risk management and continuous improvement. Trends and root causes are analysed and incorporated into policy updates, training, procurement and supplier controls, supervision practices, and guarantees of non-recurrence. Near-misses are treated as opportunities for preventive action.

#	Remediation and Grievance Mechanism Framework	Guidance
A4.3	Human rights considerations are embedded into decision-making and operational systems, and grievance mechanisms are fully integrated into the organisation's due diligence processes.	Human rights considerations and the grievance mechanism are integrated into due diligence and operational decision-making. Case data is linked to risk registers; corrective actions align with human rights and procurement processes; and leadership receives periodic performance reports, with the authority to allocate resources and mandate changes.
A4.4	The organisation builds internal capacity through regular training of staff, suppliers, and partners on grievance mechanisms and responsible business practices, focusing on preventing human rights abuses and enabling access to remedy.	Internal capacity is built and maintained to prevent abuse and enable access to remedy. Staff and key suppliers receive periodic training on respectful conduct, risk identification, safe and survivor-centred case handling, data protection, and, where relevant, engagement with Indigenous Peoples. Access to independent expertise is arranged for complex cases.
A4.5	The organisation regularly reviews and adapts grievance and remediation processes based on feedback, monitoring data, and outcomes to ensure continued relevance and effectiveness.	Grievance and remediation processes are periodically reviewed and adapted to remain relevant and effective. User feedback, monitoring data, and case outcomes inform updates to channels, materials, timelines, and governance; external input is sought where appropriate; and revisions are communicated to stakeholders.
A5	<b>Transparency and reporting</b>	<p><b>For transparency and reporting (A5), the intent is to provide stakeholders with clear, accessible information on salient human rights risks, how the organisation addresses them, and what outcomes the mechanism is achieving — without compromising privacy or safety. Meeting this expectation generally involves publishing an annual summary that explains the mechanism, presents aggregated indicators (e.g., number and types of cases, average time to closure, proportion resulting in remedy, examples of systemic changes), and describes how learning is integrated into decision-making.</b></p> <p><b>Information should be presented in ways that affected stakeholders can access and understand, with appropriate data-protection safeguards. Across all requirements, proportionality applies: smaller or lower-risk operations may adopt streamlined processes so long as they remain legitimate, accessible, predictable, equitable, transparent, and</b></p>

#	Remediation and Grievance Mechanism Framework	Guidance
		<b>rights-compatible; higher-risk contexts should demonstrate commensurately stronger formality, resources, and collaboration.</b>
<b>A5.1</b>	The organisation publicly reports on human rights risks, impacts, and responses — including grievance outcomes — in a format accessible to stakeholders.	Public reporting is clear, accessible, and safe. The organisation discloses salient human rights risks, explains how the mechanism operates, and provides aggregated indicators, such as the number and types of cases, average time to closure, and the proportion resulting in remedy; anonymised examples of outcomes; and systemic changes undertaken. Information is presented in formats accessible to affected stakeholders and managed with appropriate data-protection safeguards.

# Annex B: Requirements for Exceptional Use Pesticides

Exceptional-Use Pesticides are **high-risk active ingredients** permitted only under narrowly defined conditions, as regulated by Preferred by Nature's Exceptional-Use Pesticides Policy (PBN-07). Before any application, the Certificate Holder shall develop and follow an **Exceptional Pesticide Use Plan (EPUP)** demonstrating an IPM-first justification, site-specific risk controls, and monitoring. The Certificate Holder shall also implement the **Sustainability Framework's requirements for Exceptional-Use Pesticides**. Any use outside these conditions constitutes a non-conformance and may result in sanctions, including suspension.

#	Indicator text	Requirements	Guidance
B.1	<b>EUP.1 Exceptional Pesticides Use Plan</b>	<p>Before any Exceptional Use Pesticide is applied, the Certificate Holder shall develop and maintain an Exceptional Pesticide Use Plan (EPUP).</p> <p>The EPUP must document the justification for use, alternatives assessment, site-specific risk appraisal, risk mitigation measures, plans for application and monitoring, and a time-bound phase-out strategy. The plan shall also include emergency response protocols in case of accidental exposure, spills, or community complaints. The EPUP must be available for auditor review and updated annually, or whenever conditions change.</p>	<p><b>Certificate Holder:</b> The Certificate Holder shall complete the EPUP template prior to the first application, covering justification, alternatives assessment, site-specific risk appraisal, mitigation measures, monitoring, emergency response, and a time-bound phase-out. The EPUP shall be updated at least annually, or sooner if conditions change, and the signed original shall be kept on file.</p> <p><b>Auditor:</b> The Auditor shall confirm that an EPUP exists, is current, corresponds with field practice, and includes all required sections. The Auditor shall also spot-check implementation, interview applicators, and verify progress on phase-out.</p>
B.2	<b>EUP.2 Alternatives assessment</b>	<p>Before any product on the list of "Exceptional Use Pesticides" is purchased, the organisation shall ensure the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) That every legally registered non-pesticide or lower-hazard option has been evaluated for technical, agronomic, and economic feasibility; and</li> <li>(b) That the chosen product represents the lowest overall</li> </ul>	<p><b>Certificate Holder:</b> The Certificate Holder shall document the evaluation of all legally registered non-chemical or lower-hazard options, record technical and economic feasibility, ensure the assessment is signed by a qualified agronomist or IPM adviser, and revise the assessment when safer options become available.</p> <p><b>Auditor:</b> The Auditor shall review</p>

#	Indicator text	Requirements	Guidance
		<p>risk capable of achieving the required level of control or nutrition.</p> <p>The assessment shall be signed by a qualified agronomist or IPM adviser, and it shall be updated if new, safer alternatives become available during the certification period.</p>	<p>the alternatives matrix, cross-check supporting evidence such as field trials or supplier quotations, and verify that the chosen product represents the lowest-risk effective option.</p>
<b>B.3</b>	<b>EUP.3 Site-specific risk appraisal</b>	<p>Risks are evaluated for each intended application site and season. The evaluation considers potential exposure of workers, neighbouring communities, surface water and groundwater, pollinators, non-target fauna, protected areas, and the harvested crop, and ranks the level of risk as low, medium, or high. Appropriate mitigation measures, as specified in indicators B4 to B7, are then selected to address these risks.</p>	<p><b>Certificate Holder:</b> The Certificate Holder shall prepare a written appraisal for each site and season, ranking risks to workers, neighbouring communities, water, pollinators, non-target species, crop residues, and protected areas as low, medium, or high. Each medium or high risk shall be linked to the corresponding mitigation measures specified in EUP.4 – EUP.7.</p> <p><b>Auditor:</b> The Auditor shall review a sample of risk appraisals, confirm that the rankings are reasonable, and verify that the specified mitigation measures are implemented in the field.</p>
<b>B.4</b>	<b>EUP.4 Application technology and buffers</b>	<p>Exceptional Use Pesticides must be applied only using calibrated equipment and techniques designed to minimise off-target drift. Equipment must be designed to significantly reduce drift compared to conventional application methods. Unshielded broadcast or air-blast applications are prohibited.</p>	<p><b>Certificate Holder:</b> The Certificate Holder shall apply Exceptional Use Pesticides only with calibrated low-drift equipment. Documented buffer widths and nozzle specifications shall be maintained. Unshielded broadcast and air-blast applications are prohibited. Calibration and maintenance logs shall be kept on file.</p> <p><b>Auditor:</b> The Auditor shall inspect application equipment, observe an application (or review recent video evidence), verify buffer distances using GPS, and check calibration and maintenance records.</p>

#	Indicator text	Requirements	Guidance
B.5	<b>EUP.5 Operator and by-stander protection</b>	All operators shall possess specific competencies related to the hazards of the active ingredient. The prescribed personal protective equipment shall be worn, inspected, and replaced in accordance with manufacturer guidelines. Re-entry intervals shall be posted at field entrances and strictly enforced. Operators handling hazardous pesticides or Exceptional Use Pesticides shall undergo periodic medical examinations to assess exposure-related health risks and fitness for duty.	<p><b>Certificate Holder:</b> The Certificate Holder shall ensure that applicators are trained, medically fit, and wear personal protective equipment (PPE) in accordance with the product label and the EPUP. Re-entry intervals shall be enforced with field signage. Records of PPE inspections and medical examinations shall be maintained.</p> <p><b>Auditor:</b> The Auditor shall interview staff, inspect the condition of PPE, verify training certificates, and check re-entry signage and compliance with prescribed intervals.</p>
B.6	<b>EUP.6 Pollinator and non-target safeguards</b>	If the active ingredient is classified as toxic to bees or other non-target arthropods, the product shall not be applied to flowering crops or flowering ground cover while pollinators are active. Pollinator activity shall be monitored and documented during the application window. Managed hives within a two-kilometre radius shall either be removed, screened, or treated only with the written consent of the beekeeper. Any off-crop flowering vegetation within the buffer zone shall be shielded, or applications shall be timed outside daylight pollinator flight periods.	<p><b>Certificate Holder:</b> Where the active ingredient is classified as toxic to bees, the Certificate Holder shall avoid spraying flowering plants during pollinator flight periods. Pollinator observations shall be documented. Beekeeper consent shall be obtained in writing, or hives within a two-kilometre radius shall be moved or screened. Flowering weeds within the buffer zone shall be managed to prevent exposure.</p> <p><b>Auditor:</b> The Auditor shall review spray timing logs, pollinator monitoring records, and beekeeper correspondence, and shall verify that no flowering cover was present during spraying.</p>
B.7	<b>EUP.7 Residue monitoring</b>	Where a legal Maximum Residue Limit (MRL) exists for the intended destination market, the organisation shall collect at least one composite sample of each treated crop lot and have it analysed in an accredited	<b>Certificate Holder:</b> For crops with legal Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs), the Certificate Holder shall collect a composite sample from each treated lot and have it analysed in an accredited laboratory. Any exceedance shall



#	Indicator text	Requirements	Guidance
		laboratory. Any exceedance of the MRL shall trigger immediate product recall and notification to the Certification Body within 48 hours of detection. Corrective actions following an exceedance shall include a root cause analysis and revision of application protocols.	trigger immediate product recall, notification of the Certification Body within 48 hours, a root-cause analysis, and revision of application protocols. Certificates of analysis shall be kept on file.  <b>Auditor:</b> The Auditor shall inspect the sampling plan and laboratory reports, and shall trace any exceedance to documented corrective actions and timely notification of the Certification Body.
<b>B.8</b>	<b>EUP. 8 Environmental monitoring</b>	For water-soluble active ingredients (AI) applied at rates exceeding 1 kg AI ha <sup>-1</sup> yr <sup>-1</sup> , the first significant rainfall (>20 mm) after application shall trigger downstream surface-water sampling and analysis for the active ingredient. Sampling points shall be selected based on hydrological flow patterns, proximity to sensitive ecosystems, and potential water use (e.g., irrigation, livestock, domestic use). Where recurrent contamination is observed, the organisation shall re-evaluate pesticide selection, application methods, buffer zones, and drainage management.	<b>Certificate Holder:</b> The Certificate Holder shall determine whether any water-soluble active ingredient is applied at a cumulative rate exceeding 1 kg AI ha <sup>-1</sup> yr <sup>-1</sup> . When this threshold is met, EUP 8 monitoring shall be activated. Following the first significant rainfall event of at least 20 mm (or 25% of the local mean 24-hour rainfall in dry regions) after the final application, the Certificate Holder shall, within 24 hours, collect a 500 mL grab sample at the field outlet and a second sample at the nearest downstream water-use point or sensitive habitat, adding an upstream control where feasible. Samples shall be collected in amber-glass or HDPE containers, kept chilled, and delivered to an ISO 17025-accredited laboratory within 24 hours. The analytical method shall have a detection limit of 0.05 µg L <sup>-1</sup> or lower. Results shall be compared with the stricter of national aquatic-life criteria or the 0.1 µg L <sup>-1</sup> drinking-water guideline. Any exceedance, or repeated detection in successive seasons, shall trigger a documented root-

#	Indicator text	Requirements	Guidance
			<p>cause review of pesticide selection, application technique, buffer zones, and drainage management, with resulting changes incorporated into the Exceptional-Use Pesticide Plan. Rainfall records, sampling logs, chain-of-custody forms, laboratory certificates, and evidence of corrective actions shall be retained for at least five years. Monitoring shall be conducted annually while the high-load active is used; after two consecutive clean years, the frequency may be reduced to once every three years unless conditions change.</p> <p><b>Auditor:</b> The Auditor shall verify through application records that a water-soluble active ingredient has been used at more than 1 kg AI ha<sup>-1</sup> yr<sup>-1</sup>, thereby requiring EUP 8 monitoring. The Auditor shall confirm that rainfall data identify a qualifying storm and that water samples were collected within 24 hours at the specified field-outlet and downstream locations, with an upstream control where claimed. Sampling documentation shall be examined to ensure correct sample volume, container type, temperature control, timely delivery to an accredited laboratory, and an analytical detection limit of 0.05 µg L<sup>-1</sup> or lower. Laboratory certificates shall be reviewed, and results verified against the strictest applicable standard. Where exceedances or recurring detections occur, the Auditor shall confirm that a root-cause analysis was completed, corrective measures adopted, and the EPUP</p>

#	Indicator text	Requirements	Guidance
			updated. The Auditor shall also ensure that all monitoring records are retained for the required five-year period and that monitoring frequency follows the rule of annual testing until two consecutive clean seasons, followed by triennial testing unless new risks arise.
<b>B.9</b>	<b>EUP.9 Volume and frequency limits</b>	The total quantity of the Exceptional Use Pesticide applied shall not exceed the maximum dose and frequency stated on the national label. Accurate application logs shall record the date, field block, area, dose, and operator.	<p><b>Certificate Holder:</b> The Certificate Holder shall maintain an application log recording the date, field block, area, dose, and operator, and shall ensure that the total quantity applied does not exceed the limits stated on the national label. Any need to exceed these limits shall be authorised in writing by the Certification Body prior to application.</p> <p><b>Auditor:</b> The Auditor shall tally application log totals against national label limits, verify any written authorisation for exceedance, and cross-check the chemical inventory.</p>
<b>B.10</b>	<b>EUP.10 Annual review and phase-out plan</b>	After each season, the organisation shall evaluate the effectiveness of the Exceptional Use Pesticide, monitoring results, any incidents or complaints, and the availability of alternatives. The findings shall be documented, and a time-bound target set to reduce or replace the product. Progress towards that target shall be reviewed at each subsequent audit.	<p><b>Certificate Holder:</b> After each season, the Certificate Holder shall evaluate the effectiveness of the EPUP, including monitoring data, incidents, complaints, and the availability of alternative products. Time-bound targets to reduce or replace the product shall be set or updated, and the review shall be documented with assigned responsibilities.</p> <p><b>Auditor:</b> The Auditor shall review the annual EPUP evaluation report, confirm that the targets are meaningful, assess progress year-on-year, and verify alignment with the current alternatives landscape.</p>

Preferred by Nature is an international non-profit organisation working to support better land management and business practices that benefit people, nature and the climate. We do this through a unique combination of sustainability certification services, projects supporting awareness raising, and capacity building.

For 30 years, we have worked to develop practical solutions to drive positive impacts in production landscapes and supply chains in 100+ countries. We focus on land use, primarily through forest, agriculture and climate impact commodities, and related sectors such as tourism and conservation.

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