



Conservation and Development

The Global Conservation Standard is designed to monetize conservation worldwide based on the volume of measurable ecosystem benefits.

Carbon, water and biodiversity are the pillars to Conservation Credit Units that demonstrate measurable ecosystem benefits from active nature protection in Conservation Areas. Sales go directly to local stakeholders for sustainable economic development in the Commercial Buffer Zones.



Photo by Kristina Krause

GCS Basics

The GCS is organized as a charitable non-governmental organization designed to monetize nature conservation worldwide based on the volume of measurable ecosystem services benefits derived from concrete projects.

- Building a bridge between sustainable development and conservation security
- Attracting international finance to holistic land-use management
- Complementing existing climate change mitigation measures
- Providing pragmatic finance for sustainable land use activities, like agroforestry, reforestation and forest management
- Increasing the rural and poor communities' livelihoods

Structure of the GCS

The GCS is governed by the GCS General Assembly as the highest decision-taking body. The Technical Panel decides on accreditation for 3rd-party auditors, project acceptance, methodological and implementation issues, all based upon the GCS principles and criteria. The Executive Board is responsible for the Standard's day-to-day administration, documentation and communication. The GCS Registry is an outsourced function under the oversight of the Technical Panel. The GCS Foundation is an independent international pro-bono institution that collects the revenues from the sale of Conservation Credit Units and other donations into conservation. Being an independent body, it acts along the GCS principles and criteria in approved GCS project areas.

Project Cycle Breakdown

Project proponents maintain full sovereignty within GCS project areas. GCS projects are consistent with national policy goals and the needs of the local population, including indigenous populations and local inhabitants.

Projects are proposed via Project Idea Notes and assessed through comprehensive desktop and field assessments. Currently, the GCS assesses projects based on carbon stocks embodied in their vegetation.

Payments are made for standing stocks and not for a variation in hypothetical carbon flows. Conservation Credit Units (CCUs) represent one-ton of carbon dioxide equivalent existing for one year. No complicated additionality test is needed, and no baseline required. In the future, the GCS will quantify further environmental services, like biodiversity, water, and nutrient cycles.

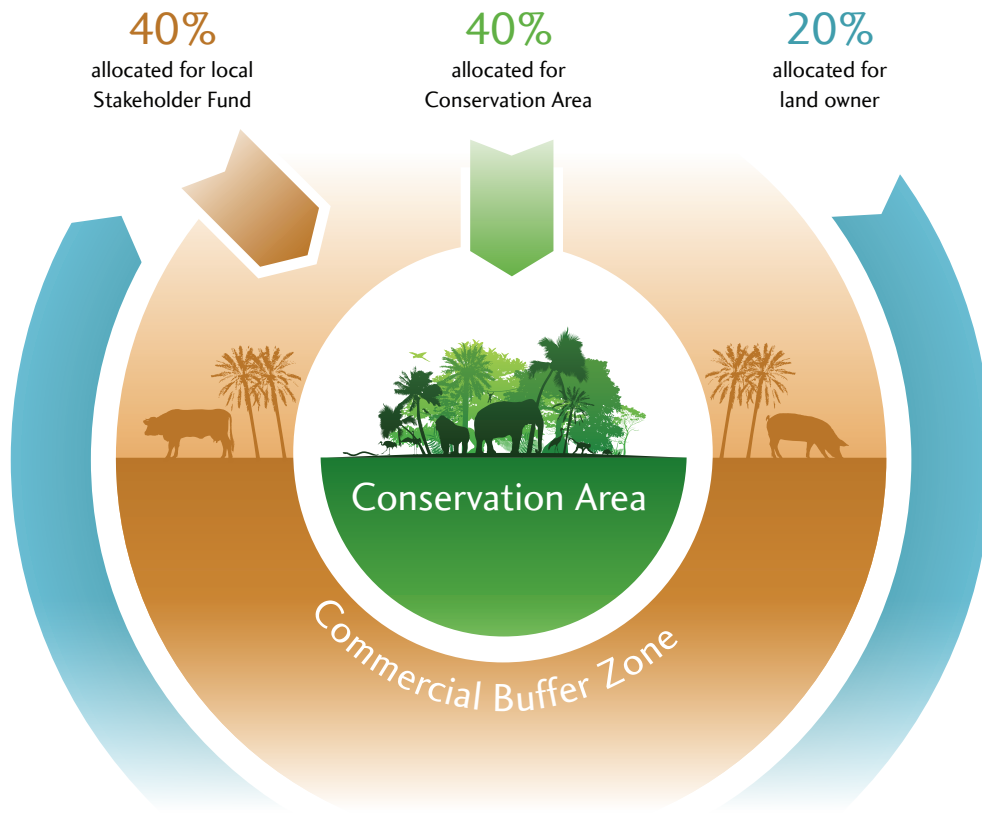
An initial allocation of CCUs provides inception finance for project activities. This first-year allocation is a conservative estimate of the ecosystem services provided by the area.

Landowners, communities, NGOs and government representative form the Stakeholder Foundation. This foundation manages a substantial share of the sales receipts from CCUs for the economic development of the Commercial

Buffer Zone adjacent to the Conservation Area. The Stakeholder Foundation, together with the GCS Foundation, will identify the long-term livelihood potentials of sustainable land use and offer land users funding for rural activities that reduce the resource pressure on the Conservation Area. The GCS helps mitigate poverty and improve sustainable livelihoods of rural communities by:

- Establishing sustainable agroforestry practices
- Establishing ethical and sustainable cash crops
- Establishing sustainable timber plantations / forest management
- Identifying, developing and implementing complementary climate change mitigation projects for carbon offset creation (the CCU itself does not entitle for complying with voluntary or mandatory emission reduction obligations)
- Providing training and capacity building opportunities to local and rural communities
- Increasing awareness of the realities of global climate change and its mitigation

GCS FINANCIAL DISTRIBUTION



Project duration is a minimum of 30 years and the sale of CCUs results in the creation of a capital pool to ensure the program meets its aims and goals. Private entities purchase CCUs to increase Corporate-Social Responsibility, diversify portfolio risk, facilitate philanthropic missions and increase investor confidence. GCS also creates a framework of trust for activities under overseas development assistance.

- The legal landowner receives 20% of the CCU revenues to cover the cost of administration and partial compensation for land opportunity costs
- The Stakeholder Foundation receives 40% of the CCU revenues which are reinvested directly into the Commercial Buffer Zone activities
- The residual 40% directly finances the Conservation Area project implementation framework, including PIN verification, conservation management plan development, project registration and monitoring activities, registry and sale of the CCUs, third-party annual project validation and verification. Monies not used are transferred to the Stakeholder Foundation.
- **There are no costs to stakeholders at any time.**
- **Ownership structures remain untouched.**

Auditing and Monitoring

GCS projects are independently monitored by independent accredited agencies. They validate projects against the GCS principles and criteria and verify monitoring results for ecosystem services.

GCS Registry

The GCS is cooperating with Maxgroup Rights Registry Limited to host the GCS Registry. The registry provides open access to detailed project and financial information, in order to ensure transparency and accuracy.

DNA Timber Library

The GCS partners with Double Helix Tracking Technologies to assist in the creation of a timber DNA map of the Conservation Areas. Easy DNA traceability of stolen timber is deterring illegal logging and encroachment from GCS project areas. Double Helix provides reliable, scientifically proven methodologies to collect and catalogue commercial timber species from registered GCS projects.



Photo by cornstaruk



Photo by arjandijksma



Photo by Angela Sevin

Benefits of the GCS

- Money to areas that are not under commercial extractive use
- No additionality test or baseline scenario in the traditional sense
- CCUs from the Above-Ground Carbon Methodology strictly use the stock approach and not the traditional carbon flow approach.
- CCUs do not create a compliance instrument against greenhouse gas emission targets, nor do they compete with the regulated or voluntary climate offset markets
- The GCS is widely applicable (private areas, Government concessions/national parks)
- There is no restriction on landscape type or geographical area
- Areas currently under conservation are eligible to ensure their continued protection and increased financing (i.e. conservation areas, national parks, world heritage sites, forest reserves, virgin jungle reserves, marine parks)
- The GCS uses independent accredited bodies to carry out annual assessments of carbon stocks, maintaining objectivity and precision in accounting
- Annual third-party verification assures accurate, reliable and consistent revenue streams
- The GCS offers real-time GIS imagery for up-to-date information
- Project-related documentation is provided online and held in the registry for clear, accurate, transparent and accountable project information

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