

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

# PV Nature: Plan Vivo Biodiversity Standard

## Technical Review Panel (TRP)

Version 1.1  
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## 1 About Plan Vivo

### 1.1 The Plan Vivo Foundation

The Plan Vivo Foundation (PVF) is a registered UK charity, based in Edinburgh, that supports vulnerable rural communities across the world to develop innovative nature-based solutions to reduce poverty, conserve important ecosystems and tackle climate change - through our stewardship of the Plan Vivo Standards.

### 1.2 The Plan Vivo Biodiversity Standard (PV Nature)

The Plan Vivo Biodiversity Standard (PV Nature) is a stand-alone certification which is a core set of social, environmental and governance requirements that projects must meet to become certified under PV Nature. PV Nature is aimed at generating high-integrity Plan Vivo Biodiversity Certificates (PVBCs) that deliver robust and credible benefits for nature but also deliver both social and climate benefits. PV Nature is fully aligned with the high-integrity principles developed by Plan Vivo, Fauna & Flora and Carbon Tanzania- ensuring holistic impact (for nature, climate and communities). Through a transparent and participatory approach ensuring equitable benefit-sharing for communities involved. Projects certified under PV Nature will generate PVBCs using the PV Nature Methodology. These are in line with the Nature Positive movement and buyers cannot use them as offsets.

PVF and in-country partners support communities and smallholders to pass the rigorous certification process. We thereby enable access to finance from ecosystems services and nature-based solutions, supporting community-led conservation and restoration to deliver impact for climate, communities and nature.

### 1.3 Certification route

To become certified against PV Nature, a project must submit a Project Design Document (PDD) that describes all elements of the project's design, including the biodiversity benefits that the project will achieve from its selected project interventions. To evaluate the outcomes they achieve for biodiversity, projects must apply the PV Nature Methodology using approved methodological tools for specific plant and animal groups and habitats.

To ensure that best practice is followed, projects must either select tools for monitoring biodiversity from a pre-approved list or submit new tools for approval. All new, proposed methodological tools for application under the PV Nature Methodology, and their application by projects, must be reviewed by the Plan Vivo Technical Review Panel (TRP), Plan Vivo Secretariat and Pivotal for approval.

### 1.4 The PV Nature Methodology, in partnership with Pivotal

The PV Nature Methodology is the biodiversity quantification methodology for PV Nature, by which Plan Vivo Biodiversity Certificates (PVBCs) are quantified, quality checked and assured. It sets minimum standards on (for example) biodiversity data quality and sampling protocols, and it defines the metrics via which biodiversity data is converted into numbers of PVBCs.

The PV Nature Methodology is founded on the principle that PVBCs will only be issued where there is high quality, auditable data that provides evidence of biodiversity outcomes. In other words, PVBCs are issued only where there is evidence that species and habitats have benefited.

Under the PV Nature Methodology, projects must collect and report data on a number of broad species groups, across a range of trophic levels (for example on birds, plants, amphibians, bats, and so on). It is not, for example, possible to issue certificates based on numbers of one iconic species or on simple measures like area of habitat, because these types of very simple indicators do not reliably represent ecosystem health.

The objective of the PV Nature Methodology is to assess change over time in a subset of site-level biodiversity that represents the overall trend in the health of the ecosystem. The purpose is to obtain a robust measure of change in biodiversity over time, rather than (for example) to take a complete census of every living thing on a site, or to categorically prove the presence or absence of a particular species or group. Biodiversity trends give us an indication of the health of ecosystems within a site: as biodiversity improves, so do the functionality, productivity and overall health of the ecosystem.

## 2 Functions of the Technical Review Panel

The TRP is a body of ecological and biological specialists who help to ensure that PV Nature projects uphold the project requirements and assess the appropriateness of the applied project interventions and biodiversity monitoring plan, relative to the project region, country, ecoregion and biodiversity. Aligning with regional biodiversity objectives is strongly preferred.

**The functions of the TRP are to review and validate project activities, including:**

- Technical reviews of projects as part of the project validation process.
- Review of project design documents including the selected project interventions and their likely impact on biodiversity.
- Review project interventions with respect to regional and ecoregion-specific conservation objectives.
- Reviews of the strategy for monitoring biodiversity outcomes, including selection of target species groups that will be monitored and application of the proposed sampling plan, with respect to the ecoregion, biodiversity, seasonality and other environmental factors relevant to the project area.
- Review of the strategy for monitoring overall project progress.
- Assessment of any specific biodiversity risks associated with the project or its proposed interventions, for example risks of unintended consequences or the presence of highly threatened biodiversity that might need particularly rapid intervention.
- Review of the project's threat assessment.
- If the project is a conservation project, review of the evidence presented by the project that it meets the conservation project eligibility criteria.

Reviews by the TRP are conducted prior to review by an approved Validation and Verification Body (VVB) or Independent Expert (IE).

## 3 TRP membership requirements

The Plan Vivo Technical Review Panel will include experts with experience and knowledge across a wide range of specialisms. For example, expertise on specific ecosystems, restoration interventions, and/or taxonomic groups.

Experts will be selected to be members of the TRP if they have:

- **Significant technical expertise in biodiversity conservation, restoration and/or ecology, and**
- **Specialist knowledge of a particular biome, ecosystem, taxonomic group or set of conservation/restoration interventions.**

TRP members will be invited to carry out a technical reviews of a specific project, if they have all of the following:

- **Expert knowledge of the geographic region, ecoregion or landscape of the project area.**
- **Expert knowledge of the biodiversity of the project area.**
- **Ability to review project intervention(s) applied by the given project.**
- **At least basic knowledge of the given project context.**

TRP members will be invited to carry out a review of a tool concept note and the full tool specifications if they have all of the following:

- **Expert knowledge of the data requirements applied in the PV Nature Methodology and existing tools.**
- **Expert knowledge in the taxonomic group(s) that the tool will be used to monitor.**
- **Experience using digital and/or remote tools to collect biodiversity data.**

All of the above requirements should be demonstrated by:

- (i) *academic research over the course of at least 3 years; or*
- (ii) *significant time engaged in biodiversity conservation, land/ocean management and/or ecological restoration in the region/ecoregion/landscape; or*
- (iii) *at least 3 peer-reviewed publications.*

## 4 Joining and leaving

Prospective Members can request to join the TRP at any time by submitting their CV that demonstrates their relevant experience to [biodiversity@planvivofoundation.org](mailto:biodiversity@planvivofoundation.org).

New members will be invited to join the TRP for a 2-year term based on the needs of the Plan Vivo Foundation. Renewal of TRP membership after the 2-year term is at the discretion of the Plan Vivo Secretariat.

Members can terminate their participation in the TRP at any time by giving 4 weeks' notice in writing to the Plan Vivo Secretariat. The Plan Vivo Board of Trustees and Secretariat reserve the right to terminate TRP Membership for any reason, by giving 4 weeks' notice in writing to the TRP member. The Plan Vivo Board of Trustees and Secretariat reserve the right to terminate TRP Membership without notice if there is a risk of reputational damage to the Plan Vivo Foundation or Plan Vivo projects, or if they become aware of an undeclared conflict of interest.

## 5 Conflicts of interest

TRP Members must disclose any potential conflicts of interest that could affect their activities in the TRP. TRP Members will be excluded from participation in the review or screening of any project documentation if they, or an organisation that employs them, have played any role in its

development.

## 6 Confidentiality

All information or project details shared by the Plan Vivo Foundation to TRP Members shall be treated as confidential and must not be disclosed to any other party at any time during or after their term on the TRP without express written permission from the Plan Vivo Secretariat or Board of Trustees.

## 7 Time input and remuneration

The expected time input and remuneration offered for TRP tasks is summarised in Table 1.

*Table 1 Indicative time inputs and remuneration rates for TRP tasks*

Task	Indicative time input	Schedule	Remuneration
Review of sections and the Technical Specifications of the Project Design Document (PDD) for PV Nature.	~6h for initial screening and up to 3h for reviewing project responses after auditing process	Initial screening and feedback within 3-weeks of receiving documents from Plan Vivo	£500
Review of a proposal for new tool to be applied under the PV Nature Methodology in line with the minimum data requirements.	~2h for initial review and up to 2h for reviewing responses	Initial review and feedback within 2-weeks of receiving documents from Plan Vivo	£250
Conservation project eligibility check for meeting either 1 Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) Criterion, or 2 Important Plant Area (IPA) criteria within the Project Idea Note (PIN)	~1h for initial review and up to 1h for responses	Review response on eligibility within 10 days of receiving the document from Plan Vivo	£100

## 8 Signature

Full Name:

Signature:

Date: