

ASES ON-CHAIN PROTOCOL

GUIDE FOR CONDUCTING A LOCAL SOCIAL CONSULTATION (LSC)

Version 1.0



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What is the Local Social Consultation (LSC)?

Local Stakeholder Consultation (LSC) is an essential element for complying with the social and environmental safeguards of the aOCP framework.

In general, the objective of LSC is to ensure that the project is implemented in a socially responsible and sustainable manner and that it generates long-term benefits for the local community, the ecosystem, and the global climate.

The planning and execution of an LSC can be approached in the following 9 steps, as presented by Carbon Market Watch¹.

1. DEFINE THE DESIRED OBJECTIVE OF THE CONSULTATION

The objective of LSC is to engage with stakeholders in the local community where the Nature-based Solutions project is being implemented. The consultation aims to solicit feedback and input from stakeholders, including their concerns, interests, and suggestions regarding the project's potential impacts on the local environment, economy, and social structure.

The consultation process is essential to ensure that the project is designed and implemented in a way that aligns with the needs and aspirations of the local community and that it does not negatively affect the community's livelihoods, cultural heritage, or human rights.

The consultation also helps to identify potential risks and opportunities associated with the project and to design appropriate mitigation measures to address them. It can also help to build trust and cooperation between the project developers, local stakeholders, and other interested parties, which is critical for the success of the carbon credit program.

1. Define objectives in advance to clarify what stakeholders can expect from the consultation;
2. Identify all potential sources of harm to local stakeholders and the environment;
3. Develop preventative solutions to avoiding potential harm; or allow the affected people to identify compensatory actions, so that they are, on their recognizance, at least as well off after the implementation of the project as they were before;
4. To ensure that the project does not significantly increase inequalities within a community, identify all potential benefits from the project and put in place appropriate methods of distribution among stakeholders.

2. IDENTIFY RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS

When planning the consultation, all relevant stakeholders that have an interest in the project must be identified. The selection must be done transparently, ensuring that all interested parties will be contacted and provided with the opportunity to engage.

The following stakeholders must be consulted during the aOCP project development process:

¹ [Practitioner's guide for local stakeholder consultation - how to ensure adequate public participation in climate mitigation actions - Carbon Market Watch](#)

1. The landowner;
2. Local people and communities affected by the project, including marginalized groups, or duly designated and authorized representatives of them;
3. Local policymakers and representatives of local authorities;
4. Local schools or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working on issues related to the project or dedicated to the protection of communities and people.

3. IDENTIFY THE APPROPRIATE TIME AND PLACE FOR THE MEETING

To ensure that all stakeholders can attend, it's important to schedule the meeting at a convenient time, date, and location, taking into account factors such as work arrangements, accessibility, and cultural/religious sensitivities.

The choice of location is crucial for creating an environment that allows all stakeholders to feel comfortable expressing their opinions and contributing to discussions without fear of intimidation. This extends to the physical setup of the location, which should not emphasize hierarchy but rather encourage all participants to participate equally. In some cases, it may be necessary to hold separate meetings if certain groups feel uncomfortable sharing their views in the presence of others due to social, cultural, or other pressures.

4. IDENTIFY APPROPRIATE MEANS OF OUTREACH

To ensure that all relevant stakeholders are reached, being proactive in outreach efforts is crucial. This includes using appropriate measures and media to communicate information about the project and consultations, taking into account best practices and national and cultural circumstances. Gender-sensitive communication processes should also be implemented.

Invitations should be provided through various means, such as oral and written communication, notices, door-to-door announcements, local radio announcements, emails, public meetings, phone messages, and announcements at community centers, cultural centers, schools, and places of worship. It's important to consider the most effective means of outreach based on the population being targeted. For example, illiterate populations may not respond to written invitations, so oral communication via local radio or public announcements may be more effective. Additionally, all communication should be made in the local languages.

5. DEFINE THE TYPE AND FORMAT OF THE INFORMATION NEEDED

Stakeholders need to be provided with adequate and timely information in a language and style that is appropriate for their local context. Before the consultation, stakeholders should have access to:

- A non-technical summary of the project that can be easily understood,
- Other relevant information such as project location and scope.

This information should be included in the stakeholder consultation invitation and made available to the public through websites. A more detailed explanation of the project, including technical specifications, should be provided to stakeholders upon request, and this right to information should be advertised in the non-technical summary.

In addition to project information, consultation organizers should provide stakeholders with a list of qualified organizations that can conduct independent research on the project. This will allow stakeholders to seek information from third parties.

6. DEFINE ISSUES TO CONSULT ON

The purpose of the consultation is to provide information to stakeholders in a way that is easily understood and accessible, while also taking local culture(s) into account. The consultation aims to gather feedback, comments, and questions from stakeholders, which will be addressed during the meeting. It's crucial to provide a translation into the local language(s).

The agenda for the meeting should include the following components:

- Opening the meeting with an introduction allows everyone present to understand with whom they are meeting;
- Presentation of the project in simple non-technical terms that enables stakeholders to understand the project and its impacts;
- Information on project scope, lifetime, and impacts;
- Information on means to raise concerns and/or seek recourse for impacts that occur during the project implementation;
- Question and answer session allows stakeholders to raise any questions they may have regarding the project.

In cases where stakeholders have concerns or grievances that were not addressed during the consultation process, they must have a way to seek recourse. It's the responsibility of the Project developer to establish a reliable grievance mechanism that enables stakeholders negatively impacted by climate mitigation actions to raise their concerns and have them addressed promptly.

7. DEFINE ALL MEANS BY WHICH STAKEHOLDERS CAN PROVIDE INPUT

The primary mode of consultation will be an in-person meeting, which will allow for meaningful exchange. However, if local circumstances require it or if certain stakeholders are unable to attend, comments should be received using alternate means. These may include written input or interviews with stakeholders, among others. All comments received should be taken into account.

8. ANALYZE AND DISSEMINATE CONSULTATION RESULTS

In addition to taking minutes of the meeting, the results of the consultation should be carefully studied. Once all the information has been compiled, the comments received should be evaluated to determine how they should be incorporated into the project design.

The results of the consultation should be summarized in a report that includes the information, comments received, and photographic evidence. This report should be made publicly available both online and in hard copy, **and attached to the PSF AOCPP as an annex at the time of submission of the project registration documentation.**

9. MONITOR THE NEED FOR FOLLOW-UP CONSULTATIONS

After any changes to the project design based on stakeholder feedback or for any other reason during the implementation phase, the project proponent(s) should assess whether further consultation is necessary. This consultation should be carried out if project modifications or unforeseen results lead to at least one of the following conditions:

- The scope of impacts is modified and affects new stakeholders who did not participate in the initial consultation, be it because they had not been invited or because the issue had not had a significant impact on them at the time;
- The intensity of impacts on one or more stakeholder(s) has changed significantly;
- The type of impacts on one or more stakeholder(s) has changed significantly.

Follow-up consultations should include at a minimum all stakeholders who have been affected by changes to the project, as well as any stakeholder who attended the first consultation and requests to participate in the follow-up consultation. Appropriate means should be established to ensure that the follow-up consultation follows the nine steps set out in this document.

DOCUMENT HISTORY		
Version	Date	Comments
V1.0	10/04/2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Initial version released for review by the aOCP Steering Committee under the aOCP Version 1.