



SCIENCE
BASED
TARGETS

DRIVING AMBITIOUS CORPORATE CLIMATE ACTION

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SBTi Forest, Land and Agriculture (FLAG) project

FAQs

Version 1.1
26/06/2020



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PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS



1. GENERAL QUESTIONS

- **When is the project expected to be completed?**

The project is targeted for completion by the end of Q3 2021 (note: COVID is causing some delays in the project’s kick off). The detailed timeline is below:

Q1 2020			Q2 2020			Q3 2020			Q4 2020			Q1 2021			Q2 2021			Q3 2021	
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Scientific Feasibility Assessment/Integrated Assessment Model review						Develop V0.1 model & guidance		Develop V1.0 model and guidance						Develop V2.0 final model guidance & support tools					

- **I have a question that is not addressed here. Who should I reach out?**

Please email us at FLAG-SBTi@wwfus.org for any additional questions and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

2. PROJECT SCOPE/DELIVERABLES

- **How is this project related to the GHG Protocol development of new standards for land sector emissions & removals and bioenergy?**

These projects are complementary and are being developed in parallel but support companies’ climate ambition in different ways. The FLAG project, led by WWF, will provide methods for corporate target setting under the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) for land intensive sectors. The GHG Protocol work, led by WRI and WBCSD, will develop three new standards to guide corporate accounting and reporting. These standards include: 1. Carbon Removals & Sequestration, 2. Land Sector Emissions & Removals, 3. Bioenergy. Together, both projects will facilitate the alignment of corporate efforts to address deforestation and other land stewardship commitments with climate science-based targets.

For more information on the GHG protocol effort and how to participate, see [here](#).

- **How is this project related to the Science Based Targets Network work on Land/Forests and Biodiversity?**

The FLAG project only concerns greenhouse gas emissions from the AFOLU sectors (land-intensive sectors like forestry, agriculture, food & beverage) and their inclusion in methodologies used by companies to set science-based targets under the SBTi. The SBTN work addresses a broader set of nature-based indicators, beyond climate emissions – including biodiversity, freshwater, land productivity/degradation, fragmentation, etc. The goal is to have any targets developed under the SBTi or SBTN support the necessary response options needed from the corporate sector to deliver on the global goals (SDGs).

- **Will the FLAG project methodologies also be applicable to cities or countries?**

No, because the Science Based Targets initiative is solely focused on GHG target setting for corporates. However, [the Science Based Targets Network](#) (SBTN) is an initiative that addresses both companies and cities target setting, not only for climate but also for freshwater, biodiversity, land, and ocean. There is close coordination between the SBTN and the Science Based Targets initiative.

- **Will the FLAG project allow a whole industry to set SBTs (Ex. UK meat industry)?**

The FLAG project deliverables will allow SBT setting at the company level only. The project will not be downscaling from a global model to a national level to a sector basis level. All the sector specific methods are based on a carbon budget for the sector and then align the companies within the sector to that sector pathway.

- **Will this project address the construction sector?**

Yes, particularly the sectors related to timber and fiber production as the project will include guidance for forestry sectors and will integrate models on timber and fiber production. The project deliverables will be a tool for those sectors to set science-based targets.

- **Will the FLAG project address supply chain/scope 3 emissions?**

Yes, the project will address all scopes of emissions, including scope 3. For the majority of companies, scope 3 is where most land-use emissions occur, thus, it is key to include it.

- **Will this project address other land-related impacts/sequestration potential such as forest restoration, soil carbon sequestration, etc.?**

The priority of the project is to incorporate deforestation-related emissions (which represent 12% global emissions and 50% of AFOLU emissions) into SBTs setting methodologies for land-intensive sectors. However, the technical team is scoping the feasibility of including other emission reduction categories from the land sector including methane CH₄ reductions from manure/enteric fermentation, CO₂ reductions associated with forest and soils degradation, and societal opportunities for reductions through food waste and diet shift.

- **Why is the project not focusing more on the positive opportunities of land-based interventions rather than the impacts of deforestation?**

The Science Based Targets initiative focuses on what needs to happen to limit global warming within 1.5C to well-below 2C, based on what scientific reports (principally IPCC) reflect as priorities. There is scientific consensus that emissions reductions need to occur first and are the highest priority. Prioritizing avoidance of deforestation is also what makes most economic sense, rather than cutting down forests and then implementing measures to capture that carbon. Thus, for all these reasons, the FLAG project is focused on emissions related to

deforestation. We do recognize that removals are important too, especially for achieving a net-zero world in the long term (15+ years). This reasoning is supported by models as removals are mainly considered in models to achieve reductions in the long-term, not in the short and medium term (5-15 years) which is what the Science Based Targets initiative focuses on.

- **Which scenarios is the FLAG project planning to use?**

The FLAG project will be using heavily the IPCC Special Report on 1.5C Scenario Database, keeping in mind that the IAM behind that database have different treatments of the land sector. For further information on those different scenarios, we recommend reviewing the following paper: Roe, et al. 2019, “Contribution of the land sector to a 1.5 °C world” Nature Climate Change. Note that the IEA scenarios, which have been used by the SBTi to develop the Sectoral Decarbonization Approach, are solely focused on the energy and industry portions of the economy. The IEA uses the work on AFOLU emissions done by the IPCC and subtracts AFOLU emissions from their scenarios, so IEA scenarios won’t be relevant for this project.

3. CONSULTATIVE PROCESS

- **I am a representative of a company in the food and beverage, agriculture or forest sectors. How can I be involved in the consultative process?**

Companies interested in being involved in the project have 3 options:

- *Joining the Corporate Consultative Group 1 (CG T1):* Composed of technical experts from companies in land-intensive sectors as well as from representatives from SBTi partner organizations. This group will be able to provide feedback during/after scoping phase, after V0.1 and after V1.0.
- *Joining Corporate Consultative Group 2 (CG T2):* Composed of interested representatives from companies in land-intensive sectors. This group will be able to provide feedback during/after scoping phase, and after V1.0.
- *Submitting comments through the public consultation:* Industry and non-industry representatives interested in the project who will be able to provide feedback at the final stage of the process.

Please note each individual company can participate in only one of consultative groups. Companies interested in participating in any of the two groups should email us at FLAG-SBTi@wwfus.org. Note participation in both groups is limited and we cannot guarantee that

all individuals interested will be able to join. We expect to confirm participation in the different groups by the end of summer 2020.

- **Can companies that are not in the food and beverage, agriculture or forest sectors join the consultative groups (ex. Retail sector)?**

This work is to support target setting in companies with land-intensive operations and supply chains. Non-AFOLU sector participants can reach out to FLAG-SBTi@wwfus.org to discuss meaningful exceptions, while understanding our project focus.

- **What are the requirements for joining the consultative groups?**

- For participation in *the Corporate Consultative Group 1*, companies will need to have technical expertise in AFOLU emissions and GHG accounting data availability (as it pertains to deforestation and other land use change impacts). Companies will need to commit to a minimum of 6-10 FTE days to participate in workshops, review materials and provide feedback. Companies will also need to make a one-time financial contribution (20K recommended) to the project and have a deforestation-free commitment, if relevant to company's activities.
- For participation in *the Corporate Consultative Group 2*, companies will need to commit to a minimum of 3-5 FTE days to participate in workshops, review materials and provide feedback. Companies will also need to make a one-time financial contribution to the project (20K recommended).

4. GHG ACCOUNTING QUESTIONS

- **What is the most recognized methodology for land use GHG accounting?**

There is limited guidance for land-use emissions in the current GHG Protocol. In the interim, we recommend using:

- Quantis. [Accounting for Natural Climate Solutions Guidance](#) provides the best guidance for companies at the moment.
- GHG Protocol. Corporate Standard, Scope 3 Standard, Product Standard, [Agriculture Guidance](#), [LULUCF project guidelines](#), [Brazil forestry tool](#)
- IPCC. Guidelines for National GHG Inventories. 2006 Guidelines, Good Practice Guidance for LULUCF, [2019 Refinement](#)
- ISO. ISO [14064-1:2018](#)

- Gold Standard, [Value Change Initiative](#) Value Chain (Scope 3) Interventions & Soil Organic Carbon Guidance
- **How will the Quantis Natural Climate Solutions (NCS) guidance inform the FLAG project?**
The Quantis NCS guidance will be an input for the corporate carbon accounting standards development process led by WRI, as it will help companies set a baseline in terms of AFOLU emissions. The FLAG project will make sure that the way interventions are treated are aligned with the GHG project accounting process, thus both projects will be coordinated closely.
- **Will insetting practices be allowed for achieving SBTs at the end of this project?**
There is no standardized definition of “insetting” so this is difficult to answer. To the degree that those emissions are fully within the company’s Scope 3 boundary, they would count toward reductions if the baseline of the company was set properly. More guidance on this will be included in the GHG Protocol. The FLAG project will refer to what is decided through the GHG Protocol process.
- **If land use change occurred in the past and this is in our Scope 3 inventory, how should we account past land use change in our SBT?**
According to the [Quantis NCS guidance](#) (see section 9.2) and [IPCC Good Practice Guidance](#) you should consider the land-use change that has occurred in the past by using the 20-year IPCC legacy emission factor. From the land use change event, you consider 20 years forward and distribute those emissions among the production that has happened in the land over the next 20 years. This is the best standard practice to date and the one we recommend companies use until the GHG Protocol New Standards are launched.

5. TARGET-RELATED QUESTIONS

- **Does this project affect current SBTi target approval for land-intensive sectors? Will there be a pause on target approvals for companies in the forestry, agriculture, food & beverage sectors until the project is completed?**
No, there won’t be a pause on target approvals for companies in land-intensive sectors. We encourage companies in these sectors who are in the process of setting targets to continue doing so and to estimate land-use change emissions and include those in their targets. This will increase the credibility of the company’s climate commitments and help the company anticipate future changes to the GHG Protocol as well as SBTi criteria.

- **I am a company in the forestry, agriculture, food & beverage sectors and I already have an approved SBT. Will the SBTi require us to update our targets/GHG inventory once the FLAG project is completed?**

When it comes to including AFOLU-related emissions into their GHG inventory, companies have been in part limited by the lack of available standardized guidance. This gap is now being addressed by the [GHG protocol update project](#). Once the project is completed companies will be able to integrate AFOLU related emissions into their inventories in a standardized and robust manner. In general, the SBTi expects that companies keep their inventories updated as per the latest recommendations and guidance available, and that if the base year inventory data significantly changes, that targets are recalculated (see [Criteria and Recommendations](#) R12). The specific implications of the changes in the GHG Protocol Standard for already approved targets will be further defined as the FLAG project and the GHG Protocol process progresses.

In addition, an important thing to note is that updating the GHG inventories to include AFOLU emissions will not only make targets more credible, particularly for companies in land-intensive sectors, but it will also allow companies to integrate land-related measures (e.g. forest management, deforestation free supply chain) into their target implementation activities.

- **My company has land-use change emissions and we are in the process of setting our SBT. Should we wait until the GHG protocol and the FLAG project are completed to set our target? If not, how can we be best prepared for the upcoming changes in the methodologies and accounting?**

We do not recommend companies to delay the target setting process. If your company is in the process of setting your SBT, we recommend that you evaluate and incorporate the deforestation-related emissions and other land-use related emissions into your inventory and target boundary using the best currently available guidance. This is in line with the [SBTi Criteria](#) Recommendation R2.

Given the early stage of the FLAG project and GHGP standards development, it is difficult to assess how much the final deliverables will differ from available guidance, but having initial estimates of the extent to which your company's supply chain is linked to deforestation and other land impacts and their related emissions, as well as developing response options to decrease these impacts, are all good first steps. When planning for mitigation activities intended to reduce these emissions, we recommend companies use the available guidance when relevant to calculate the expected GHG emission reduction outcomes of the activities in order to limit overestimates.

We also encourage all companies interested to follow the FLAG project through the available consultation opportunities in order to be up to date with potential target setting requirements.

- Currently available guidance to consult:
 - *GHG accounting*
 - Quantis's [Accounting for Natural Climate Solutions Guidance](#) provides the best guidance for GHG accounting at the moment
- *Target setting/Response options:*
 - [Accountability Framework Initiative guidance](#) - guidance to set deforestation policy and implementation for companies in land intensive sectors
 - [Special Report on Climate Change and Land](#) - to align response options with guidance provided
- **The SBTi currently doesn't allow companies to use carbon removals (except for documented assumptions related to bioenergy feedstock) to achieve their targets. Will this change with the completion of this project?**

This is a topic of ongoing conversation and this question will be partly determined by the results of the GHG Protocol update. It is important to remember that the SBTi provides pathways and guidance for companies to set near to mid-term climate targets (5 to 15 years timeframe). There is a scientific consensus from IPCC and subsequent literature that within that timeframe we need to prioritize emission reductions and thus, the SBTi is focused on incentivizing and aligning on emission reductions. However, the SBTi is currently working to develop guidance and criteria for science-based net-zero targets and will explore the role carbon removals should play in credible corporate climate strategies as part of this process.

- **What kind of reduction activities can be considered in the context of reduction land-use emissions to achieve a Scope 3 target?**

[The Accountability Framework](#) and the IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Land Chapter 6 are useful resources to define activities to control land-use emissions. It is important to note that for companies seeking to implement mitigation actions aimed at reducing land use change as part of their SBTs (for example through removing deforestation from their supply chains), the inclusion of land use change emissions in their baseline is crucial.