



Concept Environmental and Social Review Summary

Concept Stage

(ESRS Concept Stage)

Date Prepared/Updated: 06/26/2025 | Report No: ESRSC05019



I. BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Operation Data

Operation ID	Product	Operation Acronym	Approval Fiscal Year
P509669	Investment Project Financing (IPF)	TREES Bolivia	2026
Operation Name	Targeted Restoration and Economic Enhancement of Chiquitania Forests for Sustainability		
Country/Region Code	Beneficiary country/countries (borrower, recipient)	Region	Practice Area (Lead)
Bolivia	Bolivia	LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN	Environment, Natural Resources & the Blue Economy
Borrower(s)	Implementing Agency(ies)	Estimated Board Date	
Fundación para la Conservación del Bosque Chiquitano (FCBC)	Fundación para la Conservación del Bosque Chiquitano (FCBC)	26-Dec-2025	
Estimated Concept Review Date	Total Project Cost		
08-Jul-2025	5,000,000.00		

Public Disclosure

Proposed Development Objective

21. To restore degraded forest landscapes and enhance the resilience of local populations in the Chiquitania.

B. Is the operation being prepared in a Situation of Urgent Need of Assistance or Capacity Constraints, as per Bank IPF Policy, para. 12?

No

C. Summary Description of Proposed Project Activities

The Targeted Restoration and Economic Enhancement of Chiquitania Forests for Sustainability (TREES Bolivia) project, funded by a \$5 million Japan Social Development Fund (JSDF) grant, seeks to address the challenges of deforestation, forest degradation, and socio-economic vulnerability in the Chiquitania region of Bolivia. The project focuses on restoring at least 10,000 hectares of forest landscapes while supporting sustainable livelihoods for approximately 8,000 individuals, including indigenous communities such as the Guarayos, Chiquitanos, and Ayoreos. These communities



depend on natural resources for their livelihoods but face significant challenges due to recurring forest fires, environmental degradation, and economic insecurity. A key component of the project is the promotion of fire-resistant and sustainable agricultural practices through small grants to 2,000 people. By reducing slash-and-burn methods and introducing practices like agroforestry and crop diversification, the project aims to enhance local resilience and reduce the risk of future wildfires. Community participation is central to the project’s design, with the establishment of fire prevention brigades and early warning systems empowering local stakeholders to manage fire risks and contribute to sustainable natural resource management. The Fundación para la Conservación del Bosque Chiquitano (FCBC) has been selected as the implementing agency, given its extensive experience with environmental projects in Bolivia and its capacity to manage partnerships with international donors. In collaboration with the Government of Santa Cruz, the project will align with Bolivia’s Country Partnership Framework (CPF) goals and Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), addressing climate change, deforestation, and biodiversity conservation while filling critical gaps in existing donor-led initiatives. The project adopts a gender-sensitive approach by addressing inequalities in access to resources, training, and decision-making opportunities, particularly for women, who play a vital role in sustainable land management. It also integrates community-driven approaches to ensure the sustainability and scalability of its interventions. By leveraging local knowledge and building on existing strategies, TREES Bolivia aims to restore forest ecosystems, improve community resilience, and contribute to Bolivia’s broader environmental and climate goals.

D. Environmental and Social Overview

D.1 Overview of Environmental and Social Project Settings

The project will support approx. 8,000 individuals in the most affected areas of the Chiquitania region located in eastern Bolivia. Chiquitania is a vast and biodiverse region covering approximately 230,000 Km². It is renowned for its dry forests, which play a crucial role in carbon sequestration and support a variety of ecosystems. Additionally, it serves as an essential link between the Amazon rainforest and the Gran Chaco, fostering rich biodiversity. The prioritized area in the Northern Chiquitania includes 24 communities in 5 municipalities (San Ramón, Concepción, San Ignacio, San Miguel, San Rafael), home to indigenous communities (mainly Chiquitanos, and neighboring Ayoreos and Pauserna Guarasugwe), who rely heavily on the region’s natural resources, particularly forests, for their livelihoods. These communities are engaged in subsistence agriculture, livestock farming, and collection of forest products, activities that partially meet their basic needs. Gender dynamics are crucial to the project since women manage household resources and sustainable land-use practices. In Chiquitania, women face challenges such as land tenure insecurity, income inequality, limited access to education and healthcare, and gender-based violence. Gender-sensitive approach to community-driven forest restoration and livelihood support activities will be applied to ensure equitable access to training, and decision-making opportunities related to the project. The 3 main project components are: i) targeted reforestation and assisted regeneration, reaching a restoration of 10,000 ha of priority forest areas affected by recurrent forest fires, ii) Sustainable Livelihood Grants to approximately 2,000 people to promote the adoption of sustainable agricultural and agroforestry practices, and iii) Fire prevention and Management for the establishment of community-led fire prevention brigades and the development of early warning systems in collaboration with local authorities.

D.2 Overview of Borrower’s Institutional Capacity for Managing Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

The Fundación para la Conservación del Bosque Chiquitano (FCBC) is the proposed grant recipient, chosen for its extensive experience in managing complex environmental projects in Bolivia. FCBC has a proven track record of successful project management with multiple international donors, including the World Bank, European Union, and



USAID, which highlights its capacity to oversee this small RETF project and coordinate resources for maximum impact in the Chiquitania region.

The FCBC will serve as implementing agency for this project. The Government of Santa Cruz (GADSC) and some Municipal Autonomous Governments (MAG) (not yet defined) will act as key partners in implementation and will benefit from FCBC’s technical expertise in community-led forest management.

The FCBC will serve as implementing agency for this project, and will coordinate closely with the Government of Santa Cruz (GADSC) and Municipal Autonomous Governments (MAG) to be defined, GADSC and MAGs, will act as a key partners in implementation and will benefit from FCBC’s technical expertise in community-led forest management. It is expected that this partnership will improve local governance capacities, ensure effective project execution and align regional priorities.

Two FCBC technicians have been appointed as focal points to prepare and monitor environmental and social instruments for the overall Project, its components and subgrants. Even though the FCBC has no specific experience applying the ESF in WB-financed projects, they have over 10 years of experience working with equivalent E&S safeguards. FCBC implements institutional policies that align with or equivalents and rely on institutional policies in response to risk management related to many of the required standards. During project preparation, the Bank will work closely with the client to ensure adequate risk assessment and will also strengthen its capacity to promote adequate application of environmental and social ESF instruments.

II. SCREENING OF POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL RISKS AND IMPACTS

A. Environmental and Social Risk Classification (ESRC)

Moderate

A.1 Environmental Risk Rating

Moderate

The Project's environmental risk rating is assessed as Moderate, based on the current information respect the nature of its activities, scale, and organizational capacity. the initiative aims to restore ecosystems by sustainable agricultural practices, including reducing slash-and-burn methods, promoting agroforestry, crop diversification, and reduce the wildfire risk to enhance biodiversity conservation. Although the current project design does not include Protected Areas (PA) within the planned intervention zones, the exact boundaries of the project area have not yet been fully defined. As a result, there remains a possibility of overlap with subnational PA, which will be formally confirmed during the appraisal stage. This uncertainty, combined with the potential use of pesticides and fertilizers under Component 2, introduces possible environmental and community health risks. In particular, it highlights the importance of ensuring compatibility between the management objectives of any nearby or overlapping PAs. The project does not involve infrastructure construction, and aim to adopt sustainable agricultural and agroforestry practices through small donations to the local communities supported by the component 2. The environmental risks and impacts, such as waste generation and pesticide exposure, will depend on the specific characteristics of the subprojects that will be proposed at a later stage. These risks are expected to be site-specific and manageable through established mitigation measures. The executing agency, FCBC, has extensive experience in addressing environmental and social issues through the implementation of projects within the region, although additional capacity building will be needed in relation to the ESF and its application.

A.2 Social Risk Rating

Moderate



The social risk rating of the project under the ESF is Moderate. The potential social risks of the project include (i) potential exclusion of vulnerable populations, such as women, people with disabilities, people with low levels of education, the poorest, minority indigenous groups, from receiving project benefits, if targeted strategies to ensure their engagement are not incorporated in the preparation and implementation of the project; (ii) SH/SEA risk associated with the subproject activities in the local communities, if codes of conduct are not adopted and followed by all actors involved in the activities; (iii) potential increase in underlying local tensions (between local indigenous and migrant communities, and other land and/or resource users) if stakeholder engagement processes are not properly carried out, especially in areas at risk of forest fires; (iv) inability to manage rising expectations and increasing demands for employment and more income by local populations; (v) reproduction of gender inequities in the decision-making processes that will be promoted as part of the project; (vi) inadequate management of temporary or permanent restrictions of community-level access to natural resources if specific management plans are not designed and handled in a participatory and consensus-based manner; and (vii) lack of experience with the Bank’s ESF on the part of FCBC and related institutional stakeholders (including GAD Santa Cruz and yet- to- be- defined MAGs, as well as natural resources management stakeholders in the timber and non-timber forest sector). This last risk will be managed by providing close technical support during the project preparation and implementation including capacity-building actions in the ESCP.

B. Relevance of Standards and Policies at Concept Stage

B.1 Relevance of Environmental and Social Standards

ESS1 - Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

Relevant

An Environmental and Social Assessment (ESA) will be prepared to review the E&S baseline information in the project area, the legal and institutional framework, and the identification of key stakeholders for consultation. It will assess the potential risks and impacts of the project on the environment, the beneficiaries, communities including indigenous peoples to avoid or mitigate them while ensuring culturally appropriate benefits. Key E&S management measures for risks and impacts will be prepared to strengthen FCBC’s capacities, including ESHS training and institutional arrangement needs for project implementation. The ESA will identify potential risks and impacts that could need specific ESMPs to manage them. Additionally, the ESA will include a gender gap analysis to promote key activities in the project to narrow the identified gaps.

ESS10 - Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure

Relevant

Potential beneficiaries include Indigenous peoples (mainly Chiquitanos and Pauserna Guarasugwe), immigrants (intercultural and Mennonites), along with productive associations in five prioritized municipalities. A Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) will ensure inclusive participation, focusing on vulnerable groups at risk of exclusion. Consultations will promote culturally appropriate services and address risks related to social and economic constraints, gender, reforestation, sustainable agriculture, fire prevention, and advanced technologies. A centralized, culturally adapted GRM with subproject-level access will support timely resolution of concerns, including SH/SEA cases in coordination with SLIMs and DNNA. A draft SEP will be disclosed by appraisal.

ESS2 - Labor and Working Conditions

Relevant

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Project implementation will involve FCBC staff, with potential inclusion of community or contracted workers as activities are defined. Local hiring will be encouraged to reduce SH/SEA risks. Labor Management Procedures (LMP) will assess risks, contracting types, and safety practices, and outline workforce protections. Child and forced labor are prohibited, with a minimum working age of 18. Due to high child labor rates in forestry, measures like school attendance proof and child-free labor promotion will be enforced. The LMP will include a worker GRM and a Code of Conduct aligned with Laws 348 and 548 to manage SH/SEA risks. The LMP will be finalized and disclosed within 60 days after project effectiveness.

ESS3 - Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management

Relevant

Some of the small-scale projects under Component 2 (C2) may have site-specific environmental impacts to be assessed once the outcomes of the value chain studies are available. However, based on current information of the potential activities, it is unlikely that a significant and irreversible adverse environmental risk will be generated. Activities under C2 that may involve pesticide and fertilizer use, and waste generation, will have corresponding mitigation measures. Particular attention will be given to pesticide use, applying both IFC’s exclusion list and local regulations to guide their management and reduce potential environmental and health risks. Project preparation documents will promote the use of natural or low-impact fertilizers and pesticides as part of good environmental practices. The project will also consider water-efficient irrigation in nurseries, water harvesting strategies, and assess potential impacts of water use—especially in dry season—on local availability.

ESS4 - Community Health and Safety

Relevant

At the project level, a Gender SH/ SEA Prevention Action Plan will be prepared, to address potential risks related to Gender-based Violence (GbBV) or SEA/-SH occurrences, including the identification of competent partner institutions to provide attention [Municipal Integrated Legal Services (SLIM for its name in Spanish) and Obudsoffice for children and adolescents (DNNA) or others]]. Also, GRMs at the project and subproject levels will include GBV prevention measures and links to specialized local services to refer cases when needed. The potential use of pesticides and fertilizers from the implementation of community initiatives will consider avoiding community exposure by applying both IFC’s exclusion list and local regulations to guide their management and reduce potential environmental and health risks. Project preparation documents will promote the use of natural or low-impact fertilizers and pesticides as part of good environmental practices.

ESS5 - Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement

Relevant

Currently no risk of involuntary resettlement, including physical and/or economic displacement or involuntary restriction of access to natural resources, has been identified at the subproject level. However, given the lack of full definition of the subprojects to be included, involuntary physical and/or economic displacement will be excluded from the project, to avoid further risks related to land use and land tenure conflicts (among and between IP and other local communities), which have been prevalent in the project area. To ensure proper management of any land management issues, the ESA will conduct analysis and develop guidelines for Conflict Management Plans at the subproject level. If interventions in Protected Areas (PAs) are confirmed, a Process Framework will be prepared to address access restrictions, conflict resolution, grievance management, and ensure participatory implementation and monitoring of these subprojects.

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ESS6 - Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources

Relevant

Although, current project design does not include Protected Areas (PA) within the planned intervention zones, the exact boundaries are not fully defined, and possible overlap with subnational PA will be formally confirmed during the appraisal. The ESA will assess compatibility with PA objective, considering the adherence to the PA guidelines, sectorization or respective existing management plan. The ESA will also assess if there are any other sensitive areas in the project's prioritized clusters. Specific activities proposed in the prioritized areas will be assessed in accordance with the requirements of ESS6, particular care will mainly be taken in matters of biodiversity, land degradations, and water management. Agricultural grants and technical assistance may risk unintended expansion into natural or critical habitats, to prevent this, the ESA must map, ensuring that project interventions avoid locations where these habitats are present.

ESS7 - Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities

Relevant

The majority of direct beneficiaries are Chiquitano and Pauserna Guarasugwe indigenous communities, followed by non-indigenous people. The client will carry out a targeted Social Assessment as part of the ESA to cover project-related issues such as measures, benefits, and processes to ensure cultural adequacies for project activities. The ESA will also include guidelines to ensure indigenous peoples' participation in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of subprojects. Although FPIC will not be required—since no adverse impacts on lands, natural resources, relocation, or significant effects on indigenous cultural heritage are expected—the project will still adhere to the principles of meaningful consultation, good-faith negotiations, and proper documentation to ensure informed and voluntary participation. Given that indigenous peoples represent the majority of project beneficiaries, all elements of an IPP are being integrated into the overall project design.

ESS8 - Cultural Heritage

Relevant

Project activities are expected to positively impact indigenous peoples' intangible cultural heritage. The ESA will analyze opportunities to use traditional indigenous knowledge as part of the project. Information on potential use of cultural heritage (local and traditional knowledge) will be gathered during consultations with indigenous peoples, particularly for future site-specific ESMPs, which will include a detailed analysis of local conditions and agroforestry alternatives related to the proposed activities. The ESA will assess the potential existence of material cultural heritage located in the prioritized clusters. ESMP will state that ESMPs at the subproject level feature, when relevant, include Chance Finds Procedures, which will require notifying relevant authorities, fencing the area to avoid disturbance, evaluating the finds by cultural heritage experts, implementing actions consistent with ESS8 and national legislation, and training project staff on the procedure.

ESS9 - Financial Intermediaries

Not Currently Relevant

This standard is not relevant for the project.

B.2 Legal Operational Policies that Apply

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OP 7.50 Operations on International Waterways

No

OP 7.60 Operations in Disputed Areas

No

B.3 Other Salient Features

Use of Borrower Framework

No

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Use of Common Approach

No

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C. Overview of Required Environmental and Social Risk Management Activities

C.1 What Borrower environmental and social analyses, instruments, plans and/or frameworks are planned or required by Appraisal?

- Environmental and Social Assessment (ESA) will be prepared, consulted on, adopted and disclosed by appraisal.
- A draft Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) will be prepared, consulted on, and disclosed by appraisal. Final version will be adopted and disclosed sixty days after effectiveness.
- Labor Management Procedures (LMP) to be prepared, adopted and disclosed within sixty days after effectiveness.

Public Disclosure

III. CONTACT POINT

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