Rangeland Stewardship Council

RSC

Global Rangelands Standard V0.2

Foundation Standard, August 2026

Foreword

Rangelands cover more than half of the world's terrestrial surface and support the livelihoods, cultures, and food security of hundreds of millions of people. They are among the planet's most diverse and dynamic landscapes, shaped by variability, mobility and long-standing relationships between people, livestock and ecosystems. Rangelands also play a critical role in biodiversity conservation, climate regulation and the stewardship of shared natural resources.

Despite their global importance, rangelands are often poorly reflected in sustainability standards and certification systems, which have tended to prioritise sedentary, privately managed agricultural models. As a result, many pastoral and rangeland systems - particularly communal, customary, mobile and state-governed systems - remain underserved or excluded from existing approaches.

The Rangeland Stewardship Council (RSC) has developed the Global Rangelands Standard to address this gap. The Standard provides a comprehensive framework for good rangeland stewardship that is applicable across diverse ecological, social and governance contexts, while remaining grounded in the realities of pastoral life. It is intended not only as a basis for certification, but as a broader framework to guide, align and strengthen efforts to support rangeland stewardship globally.

Version 0.2 marks an important milestone in the development of the Standard and is being released as the Foundation Standard at UNCCD COP17 in August 2026. It reflects feedback received through the first phase of consultation and technical review and establishes the core global framework on which the Standard will continue to develop.

The Foundation Standard will support the next phase of implementation, testing and refinement, including the development of country-level guidance and supporting tools. RSC welcomes continued input as the Standard progresses towards field testing and formal approval.

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How to Use This Standard

The Global Rangelands Standard is designed as a globally applicable framework for defining, supporting and recognising responsible rangeland stewardship across diverse ecological, social and governance contexts.

The Standard may be applied in multiple ways, depending on context and stakeholder needs. These include:

- as a **reference framework** to define good rangeland stewardship;
- as a **guidance tool** to support improved management practices and learning;
- as a **benchmarking framework** to align, compare or strengthen existing standards, programmes or initiatives;
- as a **basis for monitoring, reporting or investment frameworks**, including landscape initiatives or sustainability-linked finance; and
- as a **foundation for independent verification or certification systems**, where appropriate.

Certification is therefore one potential application of the Global Rangelands Standard, but not its sole purpose.

This document sets out the normative requirements of the Standard, which define the expectations for responsible stewardship regardless of how the Standard is applied. Version 0.2 constitutes the Foundation Standard: the global normative framework of Principles, Themes and Requirements on which further guidance, implementation tools and application pathways will be built. Additional guidance and tools may support interpretation and implementation across different use cases.

Structure of the Standard

The Global Rangelands Standard is organised into three interconnected levels:

- **Principles**, which define the overarching objectives and outcomes for responsible rangeland stewardship;
- **Themes**, which group related areas of management, governance or practice under each Principle; and
- **Requirements,** which set out the specific expectations used to assess alignment with the Standard (referred to as “conformity” in certification contexts).

Each Theme includes an outcome statement describing what successful implementation of its requirements is intended to achieve. Theme Outcomes are not additional requirements or independently assessed for conformity; they provide a reference point for understanding and implementing the requirements, and for monitoring the effectiveness of the Standard over time.

Requirements are divided into **minimum requirements,** which define the baseline expectations for good stewardship (and must be met where the Standard is applied within certification systems), and **improvement requirements**, which describe pathways for strengthening practices and outcomes over time. Requirements define *what must be demonstrated*, while allowing flexibility in *how* they are met across different ecological, social and governance contexts.

Guidance is provided for each theme in the Standard to support consistent interpretation and proportionate implementation across the wide diversity of rangeland systems globally. This guidance – which is non-normative - is intended to support consistent and credible assessment across different application contexts, including by Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) in certification systems, while also offering clarity to Certificate Holders. It explains the intent of requirements, clarifies how they may be applied in different governance, tenure, scale and mobility contexts, and provides illustrative examples of appropriate approaches or forms of evidence. Guidance is primarily designed to support consistent interpretation in assessment contexts, including but not limited to certification.

Additional **country-level guidance and annexes** will be developed to support context-appropriate implementation and piloting of the Standard.

Development Process

The Global Rangelands Standard has been developed through a multi-stage, iterative process informed by scientific and technical expertise, practitioner experience and stakeholder consultation.

Version 0.2 incorporates feedback and learning from consultation and review of earlier drafts, including input from producers, industry representatives, rangeland experts, the RSC Science and Technical Committee and other stakeholders. This process has informed both the overall architecture of the Standard and the continued refinement of its principles and requirements.

Version 0.2 is being released at COP17 as the Foundation Standard. It establishes the core global framework and normative requirements of the Global Rangelands Standard while remaining open to testing and refinement. The next phase will assess its clarity, feasibility and applicability across diverse rangeland systems and governance contexts, identify any remaining gaps or unintended consequences, and inform subsequent revisions.

The Standard will ultimately be submitted through RSC's formal approval process, including review by the Standard System Improvement Committee (SSIC).

What has changed in Version 0.2?

Following consultation and review of Version 0.1, key changes made in Version 0.2 include:

- clearer scope and applicability across different rangeland production systems;
- stronger recognition of pastoral, communal and customary governance, tenure and rights;
- strengthened participation, inclusion and safeguards for pastoralists' knowledge and community-generated data;
- clearer requirements for grazing management, rangeland condition and ecological outcomes;
- strengthened wildlife conservation and human–wildlife coexistence requirements;
- greater integration of climate resilience, monitoring and adaptive management; and
- development of the Animal Welfare Principle

Alignment with Global Frameworks

The Global Rangelands Standard is aligned with, and informed by, internationally recognised frameworks and commitments related to sustainable development, biodiversity conservation, land governance, animal welfare and human rights.

In particular, the Standard contributes to the objectives of:

- the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), including Land Degradation Neutrality;
- FAO frameworks and guidance on pastoralism and sustainable rangeland management;
- the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD);
- relevant International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions;
- the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP);
- the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs);
- internationally recognised animal welfare frameworks, including the Five Domains model.

This alignment is intended to support coherence with international policy goals, facilitate benchmarking with other sustainability standards, and reinforce the credibility of the Standard as a globally applicable framework for rangeland stewardship.

Design Rationale: A Pastoral Systems Framing

The Standard is intentionally grounded in a pastoral systems framing, reflecting the ecological characteristics of rangelands while accommodating both mobile and sedentary production systems. This framing is based on how rangelands function as landscapes, rather than on the identity, governance arrangements, or legal status of those who manage them.

Rangelands are shaped by high spatial and temporal variability in forage availability, strong climatic influence on productivity, large spatial extents, and periodic disturbance. Under these conditions, extensive and adaptive approaches to livestock management are well suited, responding to environmental signals and landscape dynamics over time rather than relying on fixed or highly controlled production models.

Pastoralism, understood as an adaptive land-use system based on extensive grazing, has evolved in response to these conditions and provides a coherent functional logic for sustainable rangeland stewardship. Pastoralism is one form of farming adapted to rangeland environments, and rangeland users may identify in diverse and overlapping ways - as pastoralists, nomads, herders, farmers, producers, or through locally specific terms - often combining multiple roles within a single livelihood system.

Many sedentary or privately managed rangeland systems operate according to pastoral principles in practice, even where mobility is limited or systems are not described as pastoralist. By contrast, sustainability standards developed primarily around sedentary, farm-based assumptions often struggle to accommodate the variability, scale, shared resources, and adaptive decision-making that are central to rangeland systems.

Across this diversity of identities and production systems, all rangeland users share a common role as stewards of the land – an understanding at the core of the RSC's mission and the purpose of the Standard.

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1. Purpose of the Global Rangelands Standard

1.1 Intended Sustainability Outcomes

The Global Rangelands Standard provides a credible, globally applicable reference framework for good rangeland stewardship. Through its application, the Standard seeks to contribute to positive and sustained environmental, social, governance and animal welfare outcomes for rangelands and the people, livelihoods and production systems that depend on them.

This purpose is operationalised through a structured set of **Principles, Themes and Requirements** that define expected outcomes and pathways for implementation across diverse rangeland systems. The **Rangeland Management Plan (RMP)** provides a central tool for applying the Standard across these different pathways.

The Standard seeks to support outcomes including:

- **Ecologically functional rangelands**, characterised by healthy soils, vegetation, and biodiversity, resilience to climatic variability and disturbance
- The maintenance and improvement of ecosystem services that support people, livestock and nature.
- **Sustainable and adaptive land use practices** that reflect the inherent variability, mobility, and scale of rangeland systems;
- **Secure and equitable livelihoods**, including respect for human rights, the rights of Indigenous Peoples, cultural values, pastoralists' knowledge systems, and decent working conditions.
- **Responsible animal husbandry and welfare**, recognising the central role of livestock and working animals in rangeland systems; and
- **Effective governance and management**, including transparency, participation, and continuous improvement in decision-making and stewardship.

The Standard combines process- and outcome-based requirements, recognising that responsible rangeland stewardship depends both on effective management processes and the outcomes they deliver. It allows for different pathways to achieving these outcomes across ecological, social, governance and application contexts.

1.2 Continuous Improvement Logic

The Global Rangelands Standard is designed to support continual improvement while recognising the realities of rangeland systems, including climatic variability, long ecological timeframes, governance constraints and external pressures. Continuous improvement refers to the ongoing strengthening of management and stewardship over time, rather than an expectation that ecological, social or production outcomes will improve continuously or linearly.

Adaptive management and learning are central to this approach. Rangeland users are expected to monitor and learn from changing conditions and management outcomes and adjust management where appropriate. Adaptation may involve changing practices, responding to emerging risks or constraints, or maintaining approaches that continue to perform effectively.

Responsible stewardship may therefore be demonstrated through maintaining healthy and well-managed rangelands, restoring degraded rangelands, or preventing future degradation through proactive management. Accordingly, Certificate Holders should not be disadvantaged because they have already invested in sustainable stewardship before seeking certification.

Where the Standard is applied within certification systems, continuous or linear improvement in outcomes is therefore not required at every assessment cycle. Depending on the starting condition of the Management Unit, certification may recognise the maintenance of positive outcomes, learning, adaptation and collaboration. The absence of short- or medium-term biophysical change does not preclude certification where responsible stewardship and informed decision-making are evident.

1.3 Role of the Standard in Rangeland Landscapes

The Standard is intended to serve as a global benchmark for rangeland stewardship that can be applied across diverse rangeland systems and through multiple implementation pathways. These pathways may include certification, but also extend to benchmarking, policy alignment, investment frameworks, landscape initiatives, and other verification or recognition approaches.

The Standard is designed to:

- address sustainability issues that are distinctive to rangelands and pastoral systems, including scale, mobility, shared resources, and governance complexity;
- provide a coherent framework that integrates environmental, social, economic, governance, and animal welfare considerations within a single standard; and
- enable certification, benchmarking, and alignment across rangeland-based production systems that are not adequately served by existing agricultural or land-use standards.
- recognise, support and strengthen responsible stewardship by pastoralists and other rangeland users, building on existing knowledge, institutions and management systems wherever possible rather than replacing them. Implementation

By articulating a clear set of principles and requirements grounded in rangeland realities, the Standard aims to improve consistency, credibility and comparability in how sustainability is defined and assessed in rangeland contexts.

1.4 Relationship to Other Standards and Benchmarking Intent

Operating as a standalone standard, the Global Rangelands Standard is capable of being applied independently of other certification schemes. At the same time, the Standard is explicitly intended to support benchmarking and equivalence assessments with other relevant standards and initiatives operating in rangeland landscapes.

Through benchmarking:

- existing standards may demonstrate alignment with the principles and requirements defined by the Standard;
- gaps or strengths in coverage of rangeland-specific sustainability issues can be identified; and
- users may reduce duplication while maintaining credibility and rigour.

Following the finalisation of the Global Rangelands Standard, RSC will develop a benchmarking framework against which other standards and initiatives may be assessed for relevance and equivalence in rangeland contexts.

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2. Scope of the Global Rangelands Standard

2.1 Introductory Context

For the purposes of this Standard, rangelands are extensive landscapes dominated by natural or semi-natural vegetation, including grasslands, savannas, shrublands, deserts, tundra, alpine areas and open woodlands where ecological processes are shaped primarily by climate variability, grazing, fire and other natural disturbances. Rangelands are typically managed through low-input systems and support livestock grazing, pastoral and agropastoral livelihoods, wildlife habitat and a range of ecosystem services. They are characterised by spatial and temporal variability, large scales and diverse governance and tenure arrangements, including private, communal, customary and state-managed systems.

2.2 Geographic Scope

The Standard is global in scope. It is intended to be applicable in all geographic regions where rangelands occur, including arid, semi-arid, dry sub-humid, alpine, sub-polar, tropical, and temperate rangeland ecosystems. It is designed to be applicable across diverse climatic, ecological, socio-economic, and institutional contexts, recognising that rangelands occur across multiple continents and jurisdictions and are subject to varying environmental conditions and governance arrangements.

2.3 Production Scope

The Global Rangelands Standard applies to livestock production systems in which the use and stewardship of natural or semi-natural rangelands are integral to the production system, and in which direct grazing or browsing of these rangelands is the principal means by which livestock are managed and fed. Temporary departures from this are permitted where justified by seasonal, climatic, ecological, animal welfare or legitimate management needs, provided these do not replace direct grazing or browsing as the defining basis of the production system.

Eligible production systems include, but are not limited to:

- pastoral, agropastoral and ranching systems;
- sedentary, transhumant and nomadic livestock systems;
- mixed farming systems in which livestock production remains predominantly rangeland-based; and
- rangeland-based systems producing fibre, meat, milk, hides and other livestock-derived products.

Scale, ownership structure or degree of market integration do not, in themselves, determine eligibility. Eligibility is determined by whether the production system remains fundamentally rangeland-based, with direct grazing or browsing of natural or semi-natural rangelands integral to livestock production.

Livestock production systems may include cultivated or improved pastures, forage production areas or other non-rangeland land uses that support the overall production system. These do not affect eligibility under the Standard, provided the production system remains fundamentally rangeland-based. The Standard is intended to assess the stewardship of rangelands and associated livestock production, rather than the management of cultivated agricultural land, except where activities on non-rangeland areas directly affect rangeland stewardship outcomes.

2.4 Sustainability Scope

The Standard addresses sustainability in a comprehensive and integrated manner, encompassing the following dimensions:

- **Environmental sustainability**, including ecosystem health, soil function, vegetation dynamics, biodiversity, and landscape resilience;
- **Social sustainability**, including human rights, labour conditions, wellbeing, cultural values, and pastoralists' knowledge;
- **Economic sustainability**, including livelihoods, risk management, productivity, and long-term viability of rangeland-based systems;
- **Governance**, including land tenure realities, decision-making processes, participation, transparency, and accountability; and
- **Animal welfare**, recognising the central role of livestock and working animals in rangeland systems and the importance of humane and responsible care.

These dimensions are addressed collectively through the principles, themes and requirements of the Standard.

2.5 Activities Included and Excluded

2.5.1 Included Activities

The Global Rangelands Standard applies to activities directly related to the management and stewardship of rangelands and rangeland-based livestock systems, including:

- grazing and livestock husbandry practices;
- rangeland management, maintenance, and restoration activities;
- water access and management relevant to livestock and ecosystems;
- animal handling, health, and welfare practices within the production system;
- governance, planning, monitoring, and management activities associated with rangeland use; and
- activities undertaken to support adaptive management and continuous improvement.

2.5.2 Excluded Activities

The Standard does not apply to:

- livestock production systems that are fundamentally based on permanent confinement, zero grazing, feedlot production, or other systems in which direct grazing or browsing of rangelands is incidental rather than integral to livestock production, including systems that rely primarily on harvested, purchased or externally sourced feed under normal conditions;
- crop production systems not integrally linked to rangeland-based livestock management;
- other land and ecosystem uses, such as recreation, tourism, energy production or conservation activities, except where they directly affect rangeland stewardship or livestock production;
- downstream processing, manufacturing, or retail activities beyond the rangeland production stage, unless explicitly referenced for alignment or engagement purposes.

2.6 Applicability and Contextual Implementation

The Global Rangelands Standard is applicable across a wide range of eligible rangeland systems, including:

- privately managed rangelands;
- communal, customary or collectively governed rangelands;
- state-owned, leased or concession-based rangelands; and
- mixed or mosaic landscapes comprising multiple tenure and governance arrangements.

The Standard does not prescribe or favour any particular land tenure, governance or production model. It recognises that eligible rangeland systems differ widely in their ecological, social and institutional contexts, as well as in management practices such as mobility, housing, supplementary feeding and infrastructure. Requirements are therefore implemented using a contextual approach that maintains consistent sustainability and animal welfare outcomes while allowing flexibility in how those outcomes are achieved. Contextual implementation does not alter the eligibility of production systems or the normative requirements of the Standard.

The Standard establishes globally applicable principles, safeguards and outcomes, while country-level guidance will provide context-specific interpretation and application in countries where the Standard is implemented. This guidance will address relevant national legal, tenure, governance, institutional, ecological and cultural contexts, without altering the normative requirements of the Standard.

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3. Glossary

Certificate Holder (CH)
The individual or organisation that holds certification and is accountable for conformity with the Standard across the defined Management Unit. The term “Certificate Holder” is used throughout the Standard for consistency, but may also refer to the responsible entity applying the Standard in non-certification contexts.

Conformity Assessment Body (CAB)
An independent organisation authorised to assess whether a Certificate Holder meets the requirements of the Standard.

Management Unit (MU)
The defined rangeland area or areas, and associated activities, that fall within the scope of certification and for which the Certificate Holder is responsible.

Operational Units (OU)
A distinct component of a Management Unit where standard requirements are implemented and assessed, which may be spatially fixed or seasonally mobile and does not need to correspond to legal land parcels.

Group Certification
A certification approach whereby multiple independent producers or Operational Units are covered under a single Certificate Holder with internal management arrangements.

Pastoralism
A livelihood and land-use system based primarily on extensive livestock grazing of rangelands, often involving mobility, seasonal use of resources, and adaptive management in response to environmental variability. The term is used throughout this Standard as an umbrella term and may encompass systems locally described as farming, ranching, herding, livestock production or other context-specific terms.

Pastoralist
An individual or group whose livelihood or production system is based primarily on pastoralism and the management of livestock and rangeland resources. The term is used throughout this

Standard as an umbrella term and may include people who identify as herders, ranchers, farmers, livestock keepers, growers, producers or other locally relevant terms.

Pastoralists' Knowledge
The diverse and evolving knowledge held, developed and applied by pastoralists. It may encompass knowledge described as Indigenous, traditional or local, as well as experiential, ecological, cultural, technical and scientific knowledge, and may be inherited, acquired or developed through experience and engagement with other knowledge sources. Pastoralists' knowledge is recognised as a valuable source of knowledge and evidence in its own right and does not require scientific validation to be considered credible or relevant.

Problem Animal
An individual wild animal that repeatedly causes, or presents a significant risk of causing, harm to people, livestock or livelihoods.

Rangelands
Extensive landscapes dominated by natural or semi-natural vegetation, where land use is primarily extensive grazing and ecological processes are shaped by climate variability and natural disturbances.

Rangeland Management Plan (RMP)
A documented plan describing objectives, management practices, monitoring, and adaptive management approaches for the Management Unit.

Landscape Initiative
A multi-stakeholder initiative operating at a landscape level to align goals, coordinate actions, and monitor outcomes across multiple land users and interests.

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4. Application Pathways: Certification Model

The Global Rangelands Standard is designed to support multiple application pathways. This section describes how the Standard may be applied within a certification system. Additional guidance on other application pathways (e.g. benchmarking, policy alignment, investment frameworks and landscape initiatives) will be developed in future iterations.

4.1 Overview of Certification Model

The Standard applies across a wide diversity of rangeland governance, tenure, and management contexts, including private, communal, customary, state-owned, leased, and co-managed systems. The certification model is designed to accommodate both mobile and sedentary rangeland production systems, as well as shared, seasonal, and overlapping land use arrangements.

When applied within certification systems, the Standard follows a management-system approach, whereby a clearly defined responsible body holds accountability for conformity with the Standard across a defined rangeland management scope.

The unit of certification under the Standard is the Management Unit, for which the Certificate Holder holds responsibility.

The certification model distinguishes between:

- the **Certificate Holder**, which holds overall responsibility and accountability for conformity with the Standard;
- the **Management Unit**, which defines the rangeland area or areas and associated activities within scope of certification; and
- **Operational Units**, where requirements are implemented and assessed in practice.

This structure enables the Standard to be applied consistently across individual, group, and collective arrangements, while maintaining a clear and auditable unit of certification.

4.2 Certificate Holder

The Certificate Holder (CH) is the individual, organisation or legally recognised body that:

- enters into a certification agreement,
- assumes responsibility for conformity with the Standard across the Management Unit, including oversight of participating Operational Units, and
- is accountable for the implementation, monitoring and continual improvement of practices within the certification scope.

The Certificate Holder may take different forms depending on context, including but not limited to:

- an individual landowner or pastoral producer;
- a family enterprise or household;
- a cooperative, producer group, or association;
- a customary or traditional governance institution;
- a company or concession holder;
- a public or semi-public entity with management responsibility; or
- another legally or socially recognised body with decision-making authority.

The Certificate Holder shall have sufficient authority, legitimacy or mandate to implement the requirements of the Standard within the defined scope, either directly or through agreed internal arrangements.

For consistency, the Standard uses the term “Certificate Holder” throughout the requirements, but this should be understood as the responsible entity applying the Standard in any context, not only certification.

4.3 Management Unit

The Management Unit (MU) is the defined rangeland area or areas, and associated activities, that fall within the scope of certification. The Management Unit shall have a clearly defined certification boundary for assessment and monitoring purposes. This boundary may reflect seasonal use, customary access, shared stewardship or other locally recognised management arrangements and does not need to correspond to fixed physical, legally surveyed or ownership boundaries.

Identification of the Management Unit should be undertaken through a participatory process involving the Certificate Holder and relevant rangeland users, rightsholders and local land stewards, as appropriate to the governance context. The process should reflect how rangelands are actually used, managed and governed in practice, rather than relying solely on administrative, cadastral or externally defined boundaries. Participatory mapping, seasonal calendars, pastoralist knowledge and other locally appropriate approaches may be used to identify management areas, grazing patterns, mobility routes, shared resources and other features relevant to the Management Unit.

The Management Unit:

- may consist of a single contiguous area or multiple spatially distinct areas;
- may include seasonal, rotational, or mobile grazing areas;
- may encompass shared or overlapping use areas, where the Certificate Holder holds recognised access or use rights; and
- defines the geographic and operational boundary for assessment, monitoring, and reporting.

Where use rights are seasonal, customary, or shared, the boundaries and conditions of access shall be described and documented in a manner appropriate to the local context.

A Management Unit may include rangeland areas used or accessed by multiple users, not all of whom participate in certification. Certification applies only to the practices, responsibilities, and commitments of the Certificate Holder and participating Operational Units. The presence of non-participating users within a Management Unit does not, in itself, preclude certification.

4.4 Operational Unit

Operational Units are the distinct operational components within a Management Unit where rangeland management and livestock production practices are implemented and assessed.

Operational Units may include, for example:

- pastoral households or herding camps;
- seasonal grazing units or pastures;
- ranches, paddocks, or sub-properties;
- satellite operations or remote use areas;
- infrastructure or service locations relevant to rangeland management.

Operational Units do not need to correspond to legal land parcels or fixed locations and may be seasonal, mobile, or overlapping, provided their scope and management responsibilities are clearly described. Their purpose is to enable proportionate implementation, monitoring, and assessment of the Standard at an operational level.

The Certificate Holder shall define the roles and responsibilities of the Operational Units within the management system.

4.5 Group Certification

Where certification is sought by multiple independent producers or Operational Units under a single Certificate Holder, group certification may be applied. In such cases, the Certificate Holder shall establish appropriate internal management arrangements to ensure conformity with the Standard across all participating Operational Units. The complexity and formality of internal arrangements shall be proportionate to the scale, risk and context of the Management Unit.

4.6 Relationship to Governance & Tenure Contexts

The Global Rangelands Standard does not prescribe or require any particular governance or land tenure arrangement.

The Certificate Holder shall:

- clearly describe the governance and tenure context in which the Management Unit operates;
- document the rights, responsibilities, and limitations associated with land use and management; and
- demonstrate how requirements of the Standard are implemented within those constraints.

Where multiple users operate within a Management Unit, the Certificate Holder is not required to exercise control over non-participating users, but shall demonstrate how stewardship outcomes are pursued within the limits of their responsibility and influence, including through engagement, coordination, and transparency where appropriate.

4.7 Applicability Across Rangeland Contexts

This certification model is designed to apply consistently across:

- single-operator or privately managed rangelands;
- communal, customary, or collectively governed systems;
- state-owned, leased, or concession-based rangelands; and
- mixed or mosaic landscapes with multiple tenure and governance arrangements.

Relevant applicability notes are provided in the guidance sections for each theme, outlining how requirements may be met in different contexts, without altering the core requirements of the Standard.

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5. Principles, Themes & Requirements

PRINCIPLE 1: Effective Management

Intent: Ensure entities engaged in rangeland stewardship have clear roles, accessible processes, collaborative planning structures, and adaptive learning cycles that fit pastoral realities, anticipate and respond to climatic and other risks, support collective governance, and enable continual improvement without undue administrative burden.

Theme 1.1 - Administration and Coordination

Desired outcome: Roles, responsibilities and coordination arrangements are clear, understood and effective in supporting implementation of the Standard across the Management Unit.

Minimum requirements

1.1.1. A management representative responsible for Standard implementation is identified.

1.1.2. The rangeland areas included within the Management Unit, including seasonal, mobile or shared use areas, are identified in a manner appropriate to the local context.

1.1.3. The Certificate Holder is recognised through formal legal structures or acknowledged through customary, Indigenous or other locally recognised governance arrangements relevant to the Management Unit

1.1.4. Roles and responsibilities for meeting the requirements of the Standard are clearly understood and agreed among participating Operational Units, through written or verbal arrangements.

1.1.5. Any change in designated management representative is communicated to the RSC and relevant CAB as soon as practicable and within 30 days.

Improvement requirements

1.1.6. Additional roles supporting effective management and inclusive decision-making are in place, where relevant.

1.1.7 Simple administrative or communication tools are used to support coordination, such as shared calendars, seasonal meeting schedules, basic note-keeping or locally appropriate technologies.

1.1.8 Contingency arrangements are in place to maintain coordination and communication during foreseeable disruptions, including illness, seasonal absences, migrations or emergency events, and are reflected in the Participatory Risk Management Template (Resilient Livelihoods Principle).

Guidance – Theme 1.1

Effective administration and coordination are necessary for implementing the Standard across all rangeland contexts, but the formality and structure of these functions will vary widely depending on governance arrangements, scale, mobility and capacity.

Administrative coordination refers to the ability to organise, communicate and maintain responsibility for certification-related activities. This does not require a permanent office or formal organisational structure. Coordination functions may be fulfilled by individuals or groups and may be formal or informal, fixed or rotating, seasonal or combined with other roles.

Examples of coordination and management roles may include, where relevant:

- administrative coordination or record keeping
- liaison with the CAB, RSC, or buyers
- coordination of the Rangeland Management Plan (RMP)
- communication across Operational Units
- representation of women, youth, elders or customary leaders
- conflict resolution or access coordination
- risk, emergency, or contingency coordination

Roles and responsibilities may be documented or verbally agreed, consistent with local governance practices. "Acknowledgement" under 1.1.3 does not require formal legal registration; it may be demonstrated through customary recognition, community acceptance, local authority awareness or other locally legitimate arrangements.

Identification of rangeland areas under 1.1.2 should reflect how land is actually used and accessed within the Management Unit. This may include seasonal areas, shared or overlapping lands, corridors, or customary use zones and may be demonstrated through maps, sketches, seasonal calendars, verbal explanation or reference to the RMP.

Where multiple Operational Units are involved, agreements under 1.1.4 may be written or verbal and should ensure shared understanding of responsibilities for meeting Standard requirements. The emphasis is on clarity and accountability rather than formal contracts.

Evidence of conformity may include explanation by the Certificate Holder or representatives, observation of coordination practices, simple records, meeting notes, customary agreements, or other locally appropriate means.

Theme 1.2 - Record Keeping and Documentation

Desired outcome: Relevant management information is accessible, credible and used to support accountability, monitoring, learning and informed decision-making.

Minimum requirements

1.2.1. The Certificate Holder maintains basic records sufficient to support implementation of the Standard and demonstrate responsible management within the Management Unit, in formats appropriate to the capacity, scale and context of the system.

Records may include, where relevant:

a) use or storage of hazardous substances;
b) identification of Operational Units employing hired labour;
c) training, awareness or information-sharing activities undertaken;
d) meetings, decisions, agreements and customary arrangements relating to the Management Unit;
e) periodic summary of actions taken toward meeting Standard requirements;
f) purchases, sales, and payments relevant to RSC certification; and
g) negative or unintended impacts related to implementation of the Standard.
h) monitoring results and observations relevant to management outcomes and changes in rangeland condition over time.

1.2.2. Records are retained in an appropriate format for a period sufficient to demonstrate ongoing compliance and improvement, typically at least 3 years.

Improvement requirements

1.2.3. Record keeping is progressively strengthened where needed to support monitoring, learning, adaptive management and demonstration of outcomes under the Standard.

Guidance – Theme 1.2

Record-keeping practices in rangeland systems vary widely depending on governance, scale, literacy, mobility and access to infrastructure. This theme focuses on ensuring that information needed to support effective management, accountability and learning is retained and accessible, without requiring formalised or written record-keeping systems.

Records may be maintained in written, verbal, visual, digital or practice-based forms, and may be held centrally by the Certificate Holder or distributed across Operational Units. What is considered “basic” or “reasonable” record keeping should be proportionate to the context of the Management Unit.

Examples of proportionate approaches include:

- simple notebooks, logbooks or calendars;
- verbal explanations supported by observation of practices;
- sketches or maps showing use areas or activities;
- photographs, symbols or tally marks; and
- digital records where access allows.

For **1.2.1**, records should focus on information relevant to implementation of the Standard and management decision-making. Not all listed record types will be applicable in every context. For example, records related to hired labour, hazardous substances or financial transactions are only relevant where such activities occur. Monitoring information may also be maintained in forms appropriate to the context, including observations and locally held knowledge, provided it can be used to understand changes and inform management decisions.

For **1.2.2**, retention of records should reflect local realities and the type of information concerned. The expectation of retaining records for typically at least three years does not require all information to be maintained as formal written documentation. Where written or digital records are not feasible, continuity may be demonstrated through other credible and locally appropriate forms of evidence, including consistent explanation, repeated observation of practices, or reference to past events, decisions and responses.

For **1.2.3**, strengthening record keeping should be driven by management need rather than by an expectation of increasing formality for its own sake. This may involve improving the consistency, accessibility or usefulness of information; strengthening monitoring records; or developing more systematic ways of tracking decisions, actions and outcomes where capacity and circumstances allow.

Evidence of conformity may include explanation by responsible persons, observation of practices, examples of records in any appropriate format, or demonstration that relevant information is known, retained, shared and used to inform management decisions. The emphasis is on the usefulness, accessibility and credibility of information rather than the volume or formality of documentation.

Theme 1.3 - Understanding and Learning

Desired outcome: People involved in rangeland management have the knowledge and understanding needed to fulfil their responsibilities and contribute effectively to responsible rangeland stewardship.

Minimum requirements

1.3.1 Participants involved in rangeland management, including contract workers where applicable, have at least annual opportunities to learn and share knowledge about:

a) RSC and the certification process;
b) the requirements of the Standard;
c) applicable Country Guidelines *(to be developed)*;
d) chain of custody requirements *(to be developed)*;
e) pastoralists' knowledge and practices recognised by the local community as essential to sustainable rangeland management.

1.3.2 Participants involved in rangeland management, including contracted workers where applicable, receive health and safety training appropriate to their roles, based on identification of relevant risks.

This includes, where relevant:

f) role-specific hazards and appropriate control measures;
g) actions to be taken in the event of an accident or emergency;
h) fire safety and emergency procedures;
i) first-aid responsibilities training for designated representatives; and
j) workers' rights and responsibilities to stop or refuse unsafe work and to report hazards.

1.3.3 Learning and information sharing under this theme are delivered in accessible formats, including verbal, visual and participatory approaches, to ensure understanding regardless of literacy level.

1.3.4 Where multiple Operational Units are involved, at least one representative from each Operational Unit participates in learning or training activities relevant to their roles.

Improvement requirements

1.3.5 Knowledge gained through learning or training activities is shared within Operational Units through peer learning, mentoring or on-the-job practice.

1.3.6 Learning effectiveness is strengthened through participatory approaches that provide participants with opportunities to ask questions, practice skills and provide feedback, which is used to improve future learning activities.

Guidance – Theme 1.3

Learning in rangeland systems is often experiential, seasonal and embedded in everyday practice. This theme is concerned with whether people involved in rangeland management understand their roles and relevant responsibilities, rather than how learning is delivered or documented.

Learning activities may be formal or informal and may occur through:

- peer learning, mentoring or on-the-job practice;
- seasonal meetings, demonstrations or shared problem-solving;
- verbal explanation or storytelling grounded in pastoralists' knowledge.

Where multiple Operational Units are involved, participation by at least one representative supports internal sharing of knowledge. This does not require all individuals to attend the same learning activities or sessions.

For assessment purposes, CABs should focus on practical understanding and application, not recall of specific wording or attendance records. Understanding may be demonstrated through explanation of practices, correct application of agreed procedures, or observation of safe and informed behaviour in daily activities.

Health and safety learning should be proportionate to the roles and risks involved. In many contexts, practical risk awareness and shared norms are more relevant than formal certification or written procedures.

Evidence of conformity may include:

- explanation by participants of how they carry out their roles;
- observation of practices consistent with stated understanding;
- examples of peer learning or mentoring;
- simple notes or records where used.

The emphasis is on accessibility, relevance and shared understanding, rather than formal training programmes or standardised materials.

Theme 1.4 – Adaptive Management and Learning

Desired outcome: Management remains responsive to experience, monitoring and changing conditions, with learning used to maintain effective practices and improve management and outcomes over time.

Minimum requirements

1.4.1 At each reassessment, continual improvement is demonstrated through implementation of improvement actions, adaptive management or maintenance of performance in response to external factors outside of the Certificate Holder's control.

1.4.2 Priorities and intended actions for maintaining or strengthening stewardship outcomes are identified and periodically reviewed.

1.4.3 When issues or non-conformities are identified, corrective actions are taken within a reasonable timeframe.

Improvement requirements

1.4.4 The Certificate Holder contributes to shared learning, knowledge exchange or innovation related to rangeland stewardship, animal welfare, cultural knowledge, or community wellbeing, as appropriate to its context.

Guidance – Theme 1.4

This theme focuses on adaptive management, learning and improvement over time, recognising that maintaining effective practices or responding to external constraints may represent appropriate progress in rangeland systems.

Improvement planning and review may be formal or informal and should reflect local governance, tenure, mobility and capacity. What matters is that priorities are identified, experience is reflected on and responses are adjusted where feasible.

Progress may be demonstrated through:

- changes made in response to monitoring, observation or seasonal outcomes;
- adaptation following shocks such as drought, conflict or market disruption;
- learning from unsuccessful actions and adjusting accordingly;
- maintaining practices that continue to perform well under changing conditions.

CABs should recognise that maintenance of performance can represent improvement where external constraints limit change, and should not expect visible modification at every reassessment.

Contribution to shared learning may take many forms, including:

- herder-to-herder exchange or peer support;
- sharing pastoralists' knowledge through community mechanisms;
- mentoring youth or new rangeland users;
- participation in collective reflection or innovation where feasible.

Evidence of conformity may include explanation by responsible persons, observation of adaptive practices, examples of reflection or peer engagement, or simple improvement notes where used. The emphasis is on responsiveness, learning and proportionality rather than formal improvement plans.

Theme 1.5 - Collaborative Rangeland Management

Desired outcome: Rangeland management is coherent and coordinated across relevant users and scales, with planning, monitoring and learning supporting adaptive management and long-term rangeland resilience.

Minimum requirements

1.5.1 The Certificate Holder ensures that rangeland management within the Management Unit is guided by a Rangeland Management Plan (RMP) appropriate to the governance, tenure and landscape context.

1.5.2 Where a shared, jurisdictional, or landscape-level RMP exists, the Certificate Holder seeks alignment with relevant elements of that plan and participates where feasible, or otherwise demonstrates awareness of the plan and intent to engage when feasible. Where no such plan exists, an RMP is developed for the Management Unit that reflects its rangeland context and external interactions.

Note: Supporting guidance and a Rangeland Management Plan template will be developed to support implementation and piloting of the Standard.

1.5.3 The RMP applicable to the Management Unit:

a) reflects relevant governance arrangements, including customary or statutory systems where applicable;
b) addresses seasonal use, livestock management practices, water access, key climatic and other risks affecting the Management Unit, and appropriate measures for preparedness, adaptation and response;
c) identifies all rangeland users and land uses that interact with the Management Unit, including non-participants, and considers coexistence or coordination where relevant;
d) identifies simple monitoring indicators for ecological, human and animal health;
e) includes a plan for monitoring these indicators;
f) outlines indicative timelines for key actions, aligned with seasonal cycles where relevant; and
g) is reviewed at least annually.

Note: Seasonal use and mobility patterns are documented under the RMP in line with customary land governance systems (Principle 2) and applied through adaptive grazing practices (Principle 3).

1.5.4 Where multiple Operational Units or land users are involved within the scope of the Management Unit, opportunities are provided for meaningful participation in the development, implementation, monitoring and review of the RMP, appropriate to the local context.

1.5.5 Monitoring results relevant to the Management Unit are reviewed and used to inform adaptive management and maintain or improve rangeland condition and resilience.

Improvement requirements

1.5.6 The Certificate Holder, together with participating Operational Units where relevant, actively contributes to the co-creation or review of shared or landscape-level rangeland management initiatives.

1.5.7 Monitoring and learning related to rangeland condition, animal welfare and social outcomes are strengthened through shared learning processes, peer exchange or community-based processes.

1.5.8 Climate-adaptation and risk management measures identified in the RMP are aligned with risk-planning under *Principle 4: Resilient Livelihoods* and adaptive management under *Principle 3: Land Management & Ecosystem Health*.

1.5.9 Restoration activities identified under *Principle 3: Land Management & Ecosystem Health* are integrated into the RMP where relevant.

1.5.10 Where feasible and appropriate, the Certificate Holder engages in broader landscape or jurisdictional planning processes, including customary, community or government-led forums relevant to rangeland stewardship. *Note: Climate- risk collaboration is assessed under Principle 4: Resilient Livelihoods*.

Guidance – Theme 1.5

Effective rangeland management often extends beyond individual decision-making, but collaboration can take different forms depending on governance, tenure, scale and landscape context. This theme is concerned with whether appropriate coordination and collaboration are in place to support coherent rangeland management across relevant scales, rather than with the formality of planning processes or the existence of documented agreements.

Under the Standard, the Rangeland Management Plan (RMP) is intended as a practical coordination tool for collaborative management. It may be formal or informal and should reflect how management decisions are actually made and adjusted over time.

In individually managed or privately held systems, collaboration may focus on:

- alignment with neighbouring land users,
- awareness of wider plans or constraints, and
- internal planning for seasonal or long-term management.

In communal, customary or shared-use systems, collaboration may be reflected through:

- customary decision-making processes,
- seasonal agreements or norms, or
- representative or delegated coordination arrangements.

Participation with wider landscape or jurisdictional plans is encouraged, but absence or lack of access to such processes does not preclude conformity.

Monitoring and review under this theme may be collective and qualitative. Discussion of observations, seasonal outcomes or emerging issues is sufficient where formal monitoring systems are not appropriate.

Evidence of conformity may include explanation by responsible persons, observation of coordinated practices, simple planning materials, or demonstration that management decisions are informed by shared understanding and external interactions. The emphasis is on coordination and coherence, rather than on formal planning structures or documented agreements.

PRINCIPLE 2: Responsible Land Governance and Tenure

Intent: Ensure that rangeland use is grounded in legitimate and transparent governance and tenure arrangements that recognise statutory, customary, communal and Indigenous rights and governance systems, support inclusive decision-making, enable shared stewardship where relevant, prevent conflict and strengthen long-term security of access for pastoral livelihoods.

Theme 2.1 - Clear and Legitimate Land and Resource Use Rights

Desired outcome: Rangeland access and use are based on legitimate, recognised and understood rights and responsibilities that reflect applicable statutory, customary, communal and other locally recognised governance arrangements.

Minimum requirements

2.1.1 The Certificate Holder demonstrates that access to and use of rangeland resources within the Management Unit is legitimate and recognised through applicable statutory, customary, communal or other locally recognised governance arrangements.

2.1.2 Simple records describing the nature, basis and extent of land and resource use rights within the Management Unit are maintained, in formats appropriate to the local governance context.

Guidance – Theme 2.1

Rangeland governance and tenure arrangements are highly diverse and may include private ownership, customary tenure, state-managed land, shared or overlapping use or combinations of these. The intent of this theme is to ensure that rangeland use occurs with a clear understanding of rights, responsibilities and access arrangements relevant to the Management Unit.

Understanding of tenure and access may be demonstrated in different ways depending on context. In some systems this may involve formal titles, permits or leases; in others it may rely on customary rules, seasonal norms, verbal agreements or long-standing practice recognised by relevant authorities or communities.

Recognition of customary, communal or other locally legitimate tenure arrangements does not override applicable law. Where statutory requirements apply to land or resource use, the Certificate Holder should be able to demonstrate that its use is not knowingly unlawful. Formal title or statutory documentation is not required where this is not required by law.

In contexts where land rights or access are shared, overlapping or contested, conformity may be demonstrated by showing awareness of these dynamics and by managing use in ways that avoid avoidable conflict or harm. The Standard does not require the Certificate Holder to resolve tenure disputes or to substitute for state or customary governance processes.

Guidance – Theme 2.1

Evidence of conformity may include:

- explanation by customary leaders, landholders or representatives;
- maps, sketches, or seasonal calendars showing access and use;
- reference to customary rules, permits, or agreements (written or verbal);
- observation of practices consistent with described access arrangements.

For CABs, assessment should focus on whether land access and use are understood, legitimate within the local context and transparently reflected in management decisions, rather than on the formality or legal status of tenure arrangements.

Theme 2.2 - Inclusive and Participatory Land Use Planning

Desired outcome: Land-use, access and mobility arrangements reflect the rights and interests of affected land users and rightsholders and support coordinated, context-appropriate use of rangeland resources.

Minimum requirements

2.2.1 Affected land users and rightsholders relevant to the Management Unit are informed of, and have opportunities to engage in, decisions related to rangeland use where such decisions may affect their access, livelihoods or customary rights.

2.2.2 Patterns of rangeland use – including seasonal use, rest areas and mobility routes where relevant – are identified and documented in ways appropriate to the local context.

2.2.3 Land-use planning and management do not knowingly result in the exclusion, privatisation or appropriation of common land in ways that undermine legitimate access, mobility or customary governance arrangements.

Improvement requirements

2.2.4 Where overlapping or shared access exists, cooperative or community-based approaches are used to support fair access, coordination and conflict prevention.

Guidance – Theme 2.2

The intent of this theme is to ensure that decisions about rangeland use, access and mobility are made through inclusive and context-appropriate processes that recognise shared resources, overlapping interests and seasonal dynamics, helping to reduce avoidable conflict or exclusion. Recognising that planning in rangeland systems often occurs through informal dialogue, negotiation and customary processes rather than formal plans, this theme focuses on whether relevant land users and rightsholders are meaningfully considered in land-use decision-making.

Guidance – Theme 2.2

Planning may take different forms depending on context, including:

- seasonal discussions on grazing, rest areas or movement routes;
- customary decision-making through elders or community forums; and
- informal coordination among neighbouring users.

Where overlapping or shared access exists, planning may be iterative and responsive, adjusting to environmental or social change rather than setting fixed allocations.

Documentation under 2.2.2 does not require formal written land-use plans, cadastral records, technically produced maps or fixed boundaries. It may take locally appropriate forms such as:

- participatory or hand-drawn maps and sketches;
- seasonal calendars;
- photographs or other visual records;
- community records, agreements or meeting notes; and
- other locally recognised ways of recording patterns of land and resource use.

In customary or predominantly oral systems, documentation may be supported by consistent oral accounts from relevant land users and rightsholders, together with observation or other forms of evidence where appropriate.

CABs should assess whether affected parties have meaningful opportunities to engage in relevant decisions and whether patterns of use are sufficiently understood to support coordination and reduce avoidable harm or exclusion. The emphasis is on meaningful participation and a credible understanding of land and resource use, rather than the formality of planning or documentation.

Theme 2.3 – Conflict Resolution and Grievance Mechanisms

Desired outcome: People affected by land- and resource-use decisions have access to legitimate, culturally appropriate and effective means of raising concerns and addressing disputes.

Minimum requirements

2.3.1 Accessible and culturally appropriate mechanisms exist for addressing disputes relating to land or resource use affecting the Management Unit, including customary, administrative or judicial processes.

Improvement requirements

2.3.2 Where conflicts occur, outcomes and lessons learned are documented or shared in appropriate ways to support transparency, learning and prevention of future disputes.

Guidance – Theme 2.3

Rangeland systems often experience disputes related to access, mobility, resources or external pressures. This theme is concerned with whether appropriate and accessible mechanisms exist to address such issues, rather than on outcomes or formal procedures.

Conflict resolution and grievance mechanisms may be:

- customary or community-based;
- administrative or judicial where accessible;
- informal but socially recognised and trusted.

What matters is that affected parties know how concerns can be raised and that mechanisms are culturally appropriate and usable in practice.

CABs should assess whether:

- mechanisms are known to those affected;
- there is clarity on how issues can be raised;
- management practices do not knowingly escalate disputes.

The Standard does not require the Certificate Holder to resolve structural or historical conflicts, nor to intervene beyond their legitimate role or capacity.

Sharing of outcomes or lessons learned may occur through discussion, reflection or local communication, rather than formal reporting.

Evidence of conformity may include:

- explanation of grievance or dispute processes;
- reference to customary or local practices;
- observation of how issues are handled when they arise;
- simple records or shared accounts where used.

Theme 2.4 – Equitable Access and Participation

Desired outcome: Access to shared land and resources is managed fairly, and relevant interests and perspectives are reflected in decisions affecting their use.

Minimum requirements

2.4.1 Decision-making related to land and resource use within the Management Unit takes account of the interests and perspectives of women, youth, contract workers and minority or marginalised groups, where relevant to the context.

Improvement requirements

2.4.2 Where grazing areas, water points or other resources within the Management Unit are shared or subject to overlapping use, clear and understood approaches for managing access are maintained and periodically reviewed.

Guidance – Theme 2.4

Access to land and resources, and participation in related decisions, take different forms across rangeland systems. The intent in this theme is to ensure that relevant interests are considered in management decisions, without prescribing specific governance or participation models.

How this may be applied in practice depends on context:

- In individually managed or privately held systems, consideration may involve household members, family workers or contracted labour.
- In communal, customary, or shared-use systems, this may occur through customary norms, community dialogue or representative arrangements.

Where grazing areas, water points, or other resources are shared or subject to overlapping use, approaches for managing access may be:

- formal or informal,
- written or verbal,
- seasonal or situation-specific.

The emphasis is on clarity, fairness and avoidance of harm or exclusion, rather than on uniform access or fixed allocation rules.

Evidence of conformity may include:

- explanation of how interests are considered in decisions,
- observation of access arrangements in practice,
- reference to agreements, norms, or customary practices.

CABs should assess whether access and participation are managed responsibly in relation to the local context, rather than against predetermined governance structures.

Theme 2.5 – Transparency and External Pressures

Desired outcome: External pressures affecting rangeland access, mobility or condition are understood and transparently documented, enabling their impacts to be considered in management and raised through appropriate channels where feasible.

Minimum requirements

2.5.1 External developments or activities that could affect access or rangeland condition within the Management Unit are identified.

2.5.2 Basic information is maintained describing how such external pressures interact with rangeland use, grazing patterns or mobility routes

Improvement requirements

2.5.3 Where external pressures negatively affect rangeland access or condition, impacts are recorded and, where feasible, raised through appropriate community, customary of administrative channels.

2.5.4 Participation occurs, where feasible, in community or multi-stakeholder discussions that address external pressures and support fair land-use decisions.

Guidance – Theme 2.5

Rangeland management is often affected by external developments and decisions beyond the control of the Certificate Holder, which may influence access, mobility, land condition or livelihoods within the Management Unit. The purpose of this theme is to support awareness, documentation, and responsible response, rather than to require resolution of impacts created by third parties or the state.

External developments may include, for example:

- mining or energy projects,
- infrastructure development,
- agricultural expansion,
- tourism facilities,
- conservation zoning,
- urban growth, or
- policy-driven land-use change.

Documentation of external pressures may be proportionate and context-appropriate and may include notes, maps, sketches, community statements, participatory assessments, or verbal accounts. Evidence may also be demonstrated through explanation of how such pressures are considered in management decisions, planning or engagement with relevant actors.

The emphasis of this theme is on transparency and learning, including recognition of constraints and risks, rather than on control over external processes or outcomes.

Theme 2.6 – Integration with National and Regional Frameworks

Desired outcome: Rangeland management is coherent with applicable statutory and customary arrangements and, where feasible, contributes to relevant national and regional rangeland, climate and land-use objectives.

Minimum requirements

2.6.1 Rangeland use practices do not knowingly conflict with applicable statutory requirements or recognised customary arrangements.

Improvement requirements

2.6.2 The Certificate Holder maintains awareness of relevant land-use designations, regulations or planning instruments applicable to rangeland use within the Management Unit.

2.6.3 Where feasible, rangeland management practices are aligned with national or regional rangeland strategies, climate or drought frameworks or land-degradation neutrality targets.

Guidance – Theme 2.6

Rangeland governance often involves multiple and overlapping statutory, customary and institutional frameworks. The intent of this theme is to ensure that management under the Standard is consistent with applicable requirements and, where feasible, contributes to wider national and regional priorities.

Applicable statutory requirements should be distinguished from broader national or regional policies, strategies, plans and objectives. Under 2.6.1, rangeland use and management practices must not knowingly conflict with applicable statutory requirements or recognised customary arrangements. This does not require Certificate Holders to demonstrate comprehensive legal compliance beyond matters relevant to the application of the Standard.

Alignment with broader national or regional frameworks is encouraged where relevant and feasible but is not required for conformity. This may include contributing to:

- rangeland management and restoration priorities;
- climate adaptation or mitigation objectives;
- biodiversity and conservation strategies;
- land-use or sustainable development objectives; and
- other relevant national or regional initiatives.

Engagement with government agencies, customary authorities or other institutions should be proportionate to the context and the Certificate Holder's capacity and sphere of influence.

For assessment purposes, CABs should focus on whether:

- there are known conflicts between management practices and applicable statutory requirements or recognised customary arrangements relevant to the Management Unit;
- relevant wider frameworks and opportunities for alignment are understood where appropriate; and
- engagement or contribution to wider initiatives is reasonable and proportionate to the Certificate Holder's context and sphere of influence.

CABs are not expected to undertake a comprehensive legal compliance audit. Evidence may include explanation by responsible persons, relevant permits or agreements where applicable, engagement with customary or statutory authorities, or other locally appropriate evidence.

PRINCIPLE 3: Land Management and Ecosystem Health

Intent: Strengthen rangeland health through adaptive and context-appropriate land management practices that protect soil, biodiversity, water, and vegetation diversity, thereby contributing to Land Degradation Neutrality and to sustaining the ecosystem services on which people, livestock and wildlife depend. This Principle recognises rangelands as dynamic and variable ecosystems shaped by climate variability and pastoral management, and promotes regenerative practices informed by both pastoralists' knowledge and scientific understanding and guided by inclusive learning processes.

Note: Practices under this principle are planned, implemented, and monitored through the Rangeland Management Plan described in Principle 1: Effective Management.

Theme 3.1 - Adaptive Grazing Practices

Desired outcome: Grazing supports pasture recovery and maintains or improves rangeland condition and resilience over time, including under changing climatic, ecological and social conditions.

Minimum requirements

3.1.1 **WHO grazes WHERE and WHEN:** The Certificate Holder ensures that grazing use within the Management Unit - including seasonal areas, access arrangements and patterns of use - is documented in the Rangeland Management Plan (RMP) and agreed upon where multiple users are involved. Decisions draw on locally relevant knowledge and remain flexible in response to climatic, ecological, or social conditions.

3.1.2 **WHAT practices are ecologically appropriate:** Livestock numbers and overall grazing pressure are managed in relation to available forage, ecological condition, seasonal variability and the capacity of the rangeland to sustain grazing.

3.1.3 **HOW the grazing system is designed for recovery:** The timing and distribution of grazing, including through mobility, rotation, resting of areas or other context-appropriate strategies, enables pasture recovery and long-term rangeland resilience.

3.1.4 **HOW the agreed plan is implemented:** Grazing practices are implemented in accordance with the Rangeland Management Plan (RMP), with the Certificate Holder maintaining appropriate oversight through locally appropriate management processes.

3.1.5 Grazing decisions *respond* to observed rangeland condition to maintain or improve ecological function over time. as identified through ecological monitoring and local observation.

Improvement requirements

3.1.6 The RMP is periodically updated to reflect outcomes, lessons learned and improvements to grazing management based on experience, monitoring results and inclusive reflection.

3.1.7 Opportunities for collaborative grazing planning and shared learning with neighbouring land users or community institutions are pursued where relevant. These may include joint trials, demonstration areas or other collective learning on regenerative practices.

3.1.8 Contingency measures for climatic or environmental shocks are identified in the RMP and implemented when needed, in alignment with risk-planning under *Principle 4: Resilient Livelihoods*.

Guidance – Theme 3.1

Sustainable grazing in rangelands depends on adaptive decision-making that responds to environmental variability, seasonal change and local conditions. The intent of this theme is to ensure that grazing management decisions maintain or improve rangeland condition through adaptive planning, flexibility and feedback, appropriate to variable rangeland environments. Rather than prescribing specific grazing systems, the focus is on whether grazing practices are deliberate, informed and responsive over time.

How grazing decisions are made and documented will vary by context. In some systems, this may involve formal plans and mapped areas; in others, it may rely on shared understanding, seasonal norms or customary practices reflected in the Rangeland Management Plan (RMP).

Where multiple users or Operational Units are involved, agreement on key aspects of grazing use helps reduce conflict and support coordinated management. In individually managed systems, agreement may be internal or implicit within household or enterprise decision-making.

Adaptive grazing approaches under this theme may include, where relevant:

- seasonal movement or rotation of livestock,
- variation in timing or intensity of use,
- resting of areas to allow recovery,
- adjustment of practices in response to rainfall, forage condition or social factors.

Flexibility is central to this theme. Management decisions should allow for adjustment when conditions change, rather than requiring fixed schedules or stocking patterns.

Evidence of conformity may include explanation of grazing decisions and adjustments, observation of grazing practices, reference to seasonal plans or norms or demonstration that grazing management responds to observed conditions. CABs should assess whether grazing is actively managed and adaptive, rather than evaluating compliance with predetermined grazing plans.

Theme 3.2 - Conservation of Natural Habitats and Biodiversity

Desired outcome: Native biodiversity, important habitats and ecological connectivity are maintained or enhanced, supporting the long-term persistence of native wildlife alongside pastoral land use.

Minimum requirements

3.2.1 The Certificate Holder identifies key natural habitats, biodiversity values, and wildlife considerations relevant to the Management Unit, and reflects appropriate management actions in the Rangeland Management Plan (RMP).

3.2.2 Conversion or fragmentation of natural rangelands within the Management Unit is not undertaken. Fencing and other infrastructure are planned and managed to avoid unnecessary barriers to wildlife movement, and important wildlife corridors or movement pathways are maintained.

Note: Limited exceptions may apply only where conversion is unavoidable, legally authorised, and does not undermine habitat integrity or wildlife movement, including corridors, such as for essential infrastructure, human or livestock safety, or restoration and conservation purposes.

3.2.3 Native wildlife is not intentionally harmed, persecuted or displaced due to rangeland management. Where intervention is necessary to protect human safety, livestock or ecosystem health, non-lethal and coexistence measures should be priorities wherever feasible. Any lethal control should be lawful, proportionate, targeted (e.g. against known problem animals) and consistent with maintaining viable native wildlife populations, including carnivores.

Note. This requirement does not preclude lawful subsistence, cultural or regulated hunting that is consistent with maintaining viable native wildlife populations.

3.2.4 Livestock management should support the long-term viability of native wildlife and avoid contributing to biodiversity loss. Where credible information - including pastoralists' knowledge, community observations, government monitoring or scientific assessments - indicates that management activities may be contributing to declines in native wildlife, management practices should be reviewed and adapted as appropriate.

3.2.5 Where livestock-wildlife interactions result in conflict, preventive and non-lethal management approaches are favoured and indiscriminate control methods are avoided.

3.2.6 Where relevant disease transmission risks between wildlife, livestock and humans are identified, appropriate measures are implemented to prevent or minimise those risks, consistent with a One Health approach.

Improvement requirements

3.2.7 Locally appropriate measures are taken to prevent the introduction and spread of alien or invasive species within the Management Unit to maintain native biodiversity and ecological integrity.

3.2.8 Information on priority habitats, species and other locally relevant biodiversity values is gathered through locally led observation and monitoring and used to inform management and updates to the RMP.

3.2.9 Management practices are adapted over time to maintain or enhance priority habitats, biodiversity values and ecological connectivity, based on monitoring and locally relevant knowledge.

3.2.10 Areas of high ecological or cultural significance are identified and managed to limit disturbance where appropriate, through seasonal restrictions, agreed access arrangements, or other locally appropriate approaches.

Guidance – Theme 3.2

The intent of this theme is to conserve native biodiversity, important habitats and ecological connectivity within rangeland landscapes, while recognising that these landscapes support both pastoral livelihoods and diverse wild species. The focus is on identifying relevant biodiversity values, avoiding or minimising harm, and adapting management to support their long-term persistence.

Biodiversity and ecosystem condition are closely interconnected, and some indicators may apply to both this theme and Theme 3.3. This theme focuses on species, habitats and other biodiversity values, while Theme 3.3 addresses rangeland condition and ecological functioning, including soil, water and vegetation.

Biodiversity values may include native or culturally important species, sensitive habitats, wildlife movement routes, ecological connectivity and areas of high ecological significance. Their identification may draw on local knowledge, observation and experience and does not require formal surveys or technical studies. Knowledge of species presence, habitat use and ecological change may be seasonal and applied through everyday management.

Rangelands commonly support livestock and wildlife in the same areas and across different seasons. Management should enable coexistence where possible by maintaining habitat and movement routes, avoiding unnecessary disturbance, managing livestock–wildlife conflict responsibly, and addressing relevant disease transmission risks. This does not preclude lawful or customarily governed hunting consistent with maintaining viable native wildlife populations and relevant conservation objectives.

Measures under 3.2.6 should be proportionate to locally relevant disease risks and may include animal health management and vaccination, management of shared water or feeding areas, carcass management, hygiene and biosecurity, and coordination with relevant veterinary, public health or wildlife authorities.

Application of this theme may include:

- recognising important habitats or species and avoiding unnecessary disturbance;
- maintaining wildlife movement routes and ecological connectivity;
- adjusting grazing, infrastructure or access around sensitive habitats;
- using preventive or non-lethal approaches to livestock–wildlife conflict;
- reducing disease transmission risks between livestock and wildlife;
- preventing the introduction or spread of alien or invasive species; and
- using locally appropriate biodiversity observations or indicators to inform management.

Management should respond where biodiversity values or habitats are threatened or declining. Broader deterioration in soil, water or vegetation condition, including associated restoration and monitoring, is addressed under Theme 3.3.

CABs should assess whether relevant biodiversity values are understood and reflected in management decisions, rather than expecting comprehensive inventories or specialist ecological surveys in all contexts.

Theme 3.3 - Rangeland Condition and Ecological Function

Desired outcome: Soil, water and vegetation condition and ecological function are maintained or improved, with degraded areas recovering where restoration is feasible.

Minimum Requirements

3.3.1 The Certificate Holder identifies areas within the Management Unit showing signs of soil, vegetation or water degradation and tracks condition over time using local observation or monitoring, alongside technical information where available.

3.3.2 Grazing management practices support soil, water and vegetation condition and prevent or minimise avoidable land degradation. This includes avoiding loss of soil cover and vegetation diversity, reduced water infiltration, erosion, gully formation and sedimentation of watercourses.

3.3.3 Natural watercourses, wetlands and riparian areas are protected from excessive disturbance, including from grazing and livestock access, to maintain their ecological function and water quality.

3.3.4 Where degradation is identified, feasible restoration or rehabilitation actions are undertaken to address underlying causes, documented in the RMP and implemented consistent with local capacity, ecological context and, where appropriate, in collaboration with relevant partners.

3.3.5 Where fire is a relevant ecological or management factor, locally appropriate fire management practices - including prevention, controlled or cultural burning, and post-fire recovery actions - are planned and implemented to support soil stability, vegetation regeneration and habitat resilience.

3.3.6 Indicators of soil, water and vegetation condition are monitored and used to inform grazing and other land management decisions, including adaptive practices addressed under Theme 3.1.

Improvement Requirements

3.3.7 Practical measures are applied to regenerate perennial vegetation, maintain or enhance forage diversity, improve soil cover and water infiltration, and avoid chronic grazing pressure that could undermine long-term rangeland condition.

3.3.8 Monitoring and restoration practices are strengthened over time through learning, knowledge exchange or collaboration with other land users, customary institutions or technical partners, integrating pastoralists' knowledge and, where available, scientific information.

3.3.9 Where relevant and feasible, restoration and management efforts contribute to broader landscape or catchment-scale objectives, such as land restoration, watershed protection or other locally appropriate initiatives.

3.3.10 Monitoring information collected under this Theme is reviewed over a multi-year period appropriate to the rangeland context to assess trends in agreed indicators of land condition. Where declining trends are identified, potential causes are assessed and feasible corrective or adaptive management actions are implemented and reflected in updates to the Rangeland Management Plan (RMP).

Guidance – Theme 3.3

The intent of this theme is to prevent or minimise avoidable land degradation and maintain or restore the ecological integrity of rangelands. This requires sustaining soil, water and vegetation systems that underpin ecological function, productivity and resilience. Biodiversity and ecosystem condition are closely interconnected, and some indicators may therefore be relevant to both this theme and Theme 3.2. Theme 3.2 focuses on the conservation of species, habitats and other biodiversity values, while this theme focuses on the condition and ecological functioning of the rangeland, including its soil, water and vegetation components.

Rangeland soils, vegetation and water systems are often shaped by high climatic variability, episodic disturbance and long recovery timeframes. In many dryland systems, changes in rainfall, temperature or extreme events may exert a stronger influence on observed rangeland condition than management interventions, particularly over short or even medium time horizons.

This theme therefore focuses on responsive and informed management, rather than on demonstrating short-term improvements in biophysical indicators. Certification is not dependent on showing measurable improvement in rangeland condition within a defined period. Where short-term improvements are observed, these are positive outcomes, but should be interpreted cautiously, recognising that they may reflect climatic drivers rather than management change alone.

Identification and tracking of land condition may rely on locally led observation, seasonal review or simple indicators, supported by technical information where available. What matters is that:

- changes in condition are noticed and discussed;
- potential causes (including climate, grazing pressure or external factors) are considered; and
- management responses are adjusted where feasible and appropriate.

In practice, application of this theme may include:

- adapting grazing or water access in response to observed stress or recovery;
- maintaining soil cover, vegetation structure and diversity, and water infiltration;
- preventing or responding to erosion and degradation of watercourses, wetlands and riparian areas;
- prioritising areas for rest or restoration following degradation or adverse seasons;
- applying locally appropriate fire management where relevant; and
- maintaining effective practices where condition is stable under variable climate.

CABs should assess whether land condition information is used to inform decisions, not whether trends show consistent improvement. Stable condition, reduced rates of decline or appropriate response to deterioration may all indicate good stewardship.

Evidence of conformity may include explanation by rangeland users, observation of land condition and management practices, seasonal reflections, RMP references or monitoring summaries. The emphasis is on learning, responsiveness and long-term stewardship, rather than short-term performance metrics.

Theme 3.4 - Pollution Prevention and Waste Management

Desired outcome: Soil, water, vegetation, livestock, wildlife and people are protected from avoidable harm arising from waste, pollution and the use or disposal of potentially hazardous inputs.

Minimum requirements

3.4.1 Activities and waste from rangeland and livestock operations - including fuels, chemicals and animal treatments - are managed to avoid contamination of soil, water or vegetation within the Management Unit.

3.4.2 Chemical, medical, biological, and veterinary waste - including carcasses and feed-related contaminants - are not disposed of on rangeland in ways that could harm livestock, wildlife, water, or vegetation. Disposal follows locally approved procedures and, where applicable, is coordinated with relevant veterinary or environmental authorities.

3.4.3 Human waste is managed safely to prevent contamination of soil and water and reduce risks to human and animal health.

3.4.4 Use of fertilisers and pesticides is minimised, while veterinary products are used as necessary to maintain animal health. All such inputs are used in ways that minimise risks to human health and the environment.

Improvement requirements

3.4.5 Where contamination or waste accumulation is identified, reasonable restoration or remediation actions are taken to address affected areas, consistent with local capacity and context.

3.4.6 Where relevant and feasible, collaboration with other land users, communities or local actors supports improved waste management practices, including shared systems, training or infrastructure.

Guidance – Theme 3.4

Waste, chemicals and other potential contaminants in rangeland systems must be managed responsibly to prevent harm to soil, water, vegetation, livestock, wildlife, and people, and contamination addressed where it occurs. This theme is applied with recognition of the highly variable conditions under which rangeland management occurs, including differences in mobility, remoteness, infrastructure, climate and governance. Assessment should focus on whether practices are effective in preventing exposure to contaminants, rather than on the presence of formalised systems or infrastructure.

Appropriate practices will vary by context and may range from simple, customary approaches to more formal systems. When evaluating suitability, consideration should be given to:

- the likelihood of waste, chemicals, or biological materials entering water sources, grazing areas, or living spaces;
- proximity to people, livestock, wildlife, and sensitive ecological areas; and
- the scale and intensity of inputs used within the Management Unit.

Guidance – Theme 3.4

In remote or mobile systems, acceptable approaches may rely on locally established norms, practical containment methods, or seasonal practices, provided these demonstrably reduce risk. In more settled or accessible contexts, alignment with formal procedures and engagement with relevant authorities is expected where practicable.

The theme also supports a precautionary approach to chemical and veterinary inputs. Auditors should look for evidence that use is deliberate and controlled, and that handling, storage, and disposal practices are consistent with minimising cumulative or downstream impacts, rather than focusing solely on individual applications.

Where issues are identified, improvement is assessed based on the reasonableness and proportionality of the response, taking into account local capacity and constraints. This may include incremental changes, trialling alternative practices, or participation in shared solutions with neighbouring land users or community actors.

Evidence may be qualitative or observational and does not need to be record-heavy. Conformity and improvement can be demonstrated through:

- visible practices on the ground;
- explanations from those responsible for day-to-day management; and
- examples of learning, adaptation, or collaboration over time.

Overall, the emphasis is on responsible stewardship, risk awareness and continuous strengthening of practices in line with local realities, rather than compliance with prescriptive waste management models.

PRINCIPLE 4: Resilient Livelihoods

Intent: Strengthen the resilience and wellbeing of rangeland livelihoods by supporting risk awareness, adaptive planning, and responsible diversification that enhance the capacity of rangeland users to respond to environmental, climatic, economic, and social change, while sustaining pastoral systems, cultural practices, and ecological integrity.

Theme 4.1 – Risk Awareness and Planning

Desired outcome: Rangeland livelihoods are better able to anticipate, withstand and adapt to climatic, ecological, economic and social risks while sustaining pastoral systems and rangeland resources.

Note: **A Participatory Risk Planning Template** will be developed as a supporting implementation tool. Other culturally appropriate approaches to risk identification, mitigation and adaptive learning are equally acceptable..

Minimum requirements

4.1.1 The Certificate Holder identifies the main livelihood and income sources associated with the Management Unit and key risks that could affect their continuity, including environmental, climatic, market, social or policy-related risks.

4.1.2 Approaches to reducing, managing or responding to identified risks are discussed and, where feasible, documented in a form appropriate to the governance, scale and context of the Management Unit.

Improvement Requirements

4.1.3 Risk awareness and response approaches are periodically reviewed and adjusted based on experience, seasonal learning or changing conditions.

4.1.4 Where relevant, pastoralists' knowledge and external information (e.g. forecasts, advisory services, scientific or technical inputs) are combined to strengthen anticipation of risks and decision-making.

4.1.5 Where feasible, collaboration with neighbouring land users, communities or institutions supports shared understanding of risks and coordination of responses.

4.1.6 Groups or individuals who may be disproportionately affected by shocks are identified and reasonable measures are taken to support equitable access to assistance or coping strategies.

Guidance – Theme 4.1

Rangeland livelihoods are exposed to multiple, interacting risks that are often outside the direct control of the Certificate Holder. Rather than requiring formal risk management systems or comprehensive plans, this theme promotes awareness and preparedness in ways that are appropriate to rangeland realities.

Risk identification may be informal or formal and may draw on:

- local experience and seasonal knowledge;
- community discussion;
- external information such as forecasts or advisory services where available.

Not all risks must be mitigated. Recognising constraints, trade-offs or limits to response is acceptable and should not be treated as non-conformity.

Risk responses may include mobility adjustments, reserve pasture use, stocking flexibility, savings or asset strategies, social support mechanisms, diversification where appropriate or collective responses with neighbours.

Risk planning should also consider whether particular groups or individuals may be more exposed to shocks, have different capacities to respond, or face barriers to accessing available assistance or coping strategies. Appropriate responses will depend on the context and should focus on reasonable measures within the Certificate Holder's sphere of influence.

Guidance – Theme 4.1

CABs should focus on whether risks are understood and considered in decision-making, rather than on completeness of risk coverage or documentation.

Evidence of conformity may include:

- explanation of key risks and responses;
- seasonal plans or reflections;
- observation of adaptive practices;
- community discussions or shared understanding.

The emphasis is on learning, anticipation and responsiveness over time.

Theme 4.2 – Livelihood Diversity

Desired outcome: Livelihood diversity contributes to resilience and stability without undermining rangeland condition, mobility, cultural practices or community wellbeing.

Minimum requirements

4.2.1 Where new livelihood diversification activities are undertaken, they are consistent with ecological sustainability, local governance arrangements, and cultural practices, and do not undermine rangeland condition, mobility, or community wellbeing.

4.2.2 New livelihood diversification activities are considered through appropriate decision-making processes, taking account of feasibility, cultural appropriateness and potential impacts.

Improvement Requirements

4.2.3 The contribution of diversification activities to livelihood resilience, income stability and risk reduction is periodically reviewed and used to inform future decisions.

Guidance – Theme 4.2

Diversity is an inherent feature of many pastoral livelihood systems and an important source of resilience to climatic, ecological, economic and other forms of variability. This may include diversity in livestock species and breeds, livestock products, seasonal production strategies, markets, income sources and complementary livelihood activities. The Standard recognises the value of this existing diversity and does not assume that pastoral livelihoods need to diversify in order to be resilient.

PRINCIPLE 5: Rights, Equity and Inclusion

Intent: Ensure that rangeland management respects human rights, cultural identity, and dignity, including the rights, cultures and self-determined institutions of Indigenous Peoples, where relevant. Also ensure it supports equitable participation, meaningful influence in decision-making and benefit-sharing, protects workers and vulnerable groups, and enables pastoral livelihoods to be sustained across diverse governance, tenure, and labour contexts. This principle recognises pastoralism as both a livelihood and a cultural system, while also accommodating larger enterprises that rely on hired labour.

Applicability Note: The Standard distinguishes between two categories of Certificate Holders for Principle 5:

- **Tier A:** Pastoral households or community labour systems relying primarily on family or customary labour; and
- **Tier B:** Enterprises that structurally rely on hired labour (permanent or recurring seasonal workers).

Tier A and Tier B are applicability categories, not performance tiers, and shall be determined and documented by CABs at the outset of certification. Further guidance on Tier determination, assessment implications and examples is provided in Annex Further guidance on determining the applicable Tier is provided in Annex 1.”.

Requirements for Themes 5.1, 5.2 and 5.5 apply to all Certificate Holders (Tier A and Tier B). Themes 5.3 and 5.4 include requirements that are only applicable to Tier B Certificate Holders. For these themes, requirements are structured in two parts: requirements that apply to all Certificate Holders (Tier A and Tier B), followed by the additional requirements for Tier B Certificate Holders.

Theme 5.1 - Empowered Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities

Desired outcome: Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities retain agency over their land-use systems, institutions, knowledge and cultural practices, and are able to sustain and strengthen these across generations.

Minimum requirements (all Certificate Holders – Tier A and B)

5.1.1 Indigenous and local communities’ customary institutions, land-use systems, culturally significant sites, values and knowledge are recognised and reflected in management and monitoring processes.

5.1.2 Where pastoralists’ knowledge or community-generated data are collected, documented, used or shared through implementation of the Standard, relevant knowledge holders retain appropriate authority over how that information is accessed, used and shared, and sensitive information is protected from inappropriate disclosure.

5.1.3 Cultural identity, mobility traditions, language, and all forms of pastoralists’ knowledge are respected and supported.

Improvement requirements (all Certificate Holders – Tier A and B)

5.1.4 Intergenerational transfer of pastoralists' knowledge, skills and cultural practices is actively supported where feasible.

5.1.5 Where relevant, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities have opportunities to participate in and influence landscape- or jurisdictional-level discussions affecting land use, mobility or cultural heritage.

Guidance – Theme 5.1

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities have diverse governance arrangements, land-use systems, knowledge systems and cultural practices. Assessment should recognise this diversity and should not require particular formal institutions, documentation or decision-making structures where customary or locally legitimate arrangements are in place.

Recognition of pastoralists' knowledge means treating it as a valid source of knowledge and evidence in its own right, rather than requiring external or scientific validation. Respect for cultural identity and practices should similarly reflect how these are understood and maintained by the relevant communities and knowledge holders.

For 5.1.2, consent for the collection, documentation, use or sharing of pastoralists' knowledge and community-generated data should be informed and appropriate to the context and governance arrangements of the relevant knowledge holders. Knowledge holders should retain appropriate authority over subsequent access, use and sharing, and consent may need to be revisited where the intended use changes significantly. Customary or community protocols should be respected, including where knowledge is confidential, culturally sensitive or otherwise restricted from wider disclosure.

Intergenerational knowledge transfer may occur through everyday pastoral practice, oral traditions, mentoring, participation in customary activities or other locally appropriate means; formal education or documentation is not required.

For 5.1.5, opportunities to influence wider landscape or jurisdictional processes should be assessed in relation to opportunities that actually exist and the Certificate Holder's reasonable sphere of influence.

Theme 5.2 - Inclusive Participation, Gender Equity and Non-Discrimination

Desired outcome: Women, youth and marginalised groups participate meaningfully and have influence in relevant rangeland decisions, within an environment free from discrimination, harassment and violence.

Minimum requirements (all Certificate Holders – Tier A and B)

5.2.1 Decision-making processes related to rangeland management are inclusive and provide meaningful opportunities for women, youth and marginalised groups to contribute to and influence decisions that affect their rights, livelihoods or interests, where relevant to the context.

5.2.2 Discrimination, harassment, or violence - including gender-based violence - is not tolerated (ILO C111 and C190).

5.2.3 Where benefits are collectively generated or distributed through rangeland management, they are shared fairly, taking account of relevant rights, contributions and local arrangements.

Improvement requirements (all Certificate Holders – Tier A and B)

5.2.4 Proactive measures are taken to identify and reduce barriers to meaningful participation, influence and leadership for women, youth and marginalised groups, appropriate to the governance and cultural context.

5.2.5 Meaningful participation, leadership and influence of under-represented groups in decisions relevant to rangeland stewardship are strengthened over time through locally appropriate approaches.

Guidance – Theme 5.2

Inclusive participation is a vital component of fair and resilient rangeland management. The intent of this theme is to ensure fair participation, safety and benefit-sharing in rangeland management, with particular attention to women and marginalised groups, while recognising that decision-making structures and social norms vary widely across contexts.

Participation does not require formal representation or standardised governance structures. Taking account of perspectives may occur through:

- customary, household or community decision-making processes;
- informal consultation, dialogue or consensus-building; or
- other locally appropriate arrangements that allow relevant voices to be considered in practice.

This theme also emphasises the importance of safe and respectful participation. Discrimination, harassment or violence - including gender-based violence - is not tolerated. Reasonable and context-appropriate measures are expected to:

- prevent such behaviour within the Certificate Holder’s sphere of influence; and
- respond appropriately if incidents occur, taking account of local capacity and constraints.

Guidance – Theme 5.2

Efforts to strengthen participation, leadership or benefit-sharing for women, youth and marginalised groups may be informal, incremental and adaptive. These efforts may include:

- reducing barriers to participation;
- supporting leadership or representation over time; or
- ensuring fair access to benefits linked to rangeland management.

Evidence of conformity may include explanation by responsible persons, observation of participation practices, examples of decision-making or benefit-sharing arrangements, or documentation where available. CABs should focus on whether participation is meaningful, safe and progressively more equitable, rather than on the existence of prescribed structures or formal representation.

Theme 5.3 - Fair Work and Labour Rights

Desired outcome: People contributing labour experience fair and dignified working relationships, are protected from exploitation and coercion, and can exercise their fundamental labour rights.

Note: Child safeguarding is covered by Theme 5.5.

Minimum requirements (all Certificate Holders – Tier A and B)

5.3.1 Forced labour, including coercion, debt bondage, deceptive recruitment, restriction of movement or retention of personal identity documents is prohibited (ILO C29 & C105).

5.3.2 Where paid or exchange-based labour is used, terms are clear, mutually understood and considered fair by the parties involved; terms may be written or verbal.

5.3.3 Wages or value exchange meet legal minimums or customary fair rates agreed by both parties, and payments are made in a timely and transparent manner.

5.3.4 Equal pay for equal work and fair treatment for all, regardless of gender, social identify, age (where legally allowed to work) or migration status (ILO C100 & C111).

5.3.5 People contributing labour (family or hired) are treated with dignity and respect and can raise concerns without retaliation; culturally appropriate dialogue and grievance channels are available.

5.3.6 Labour responsibilities are organised in ways that support the wellbeing of pregnant or vulnerable herders, consistent with pastoral cultural practices of support and care.

Improvement requirements (all Certificate Holders – Tier A and B)

5.3.7 Awareness of labour rights and responsibilities improves through informal learning, peer exchange or community dialogue.

5.3.8 Efforts are made to prevent overwork and support rest during peak periods (mobility camps, shearing, drought response).

Additional minimum requirements (Tier B only)

5.3.9 Workers receive written contracts in a language they understand, covering duties, compensation, rest periods, and housing/food if provided.

5.3.10 Working hours and rest days follow national law or customary fair pastoral norms, and overtime is voluntary and compensated.

5.3.11 Reasonable adjustments are made to support pregnant or vulnerable workers in line with health, safety, and wellbeing needs.

5.3.12 Payroll records or documented payment evidence are maintained and accessible to workers.

5.3.13 No recruitment fees are charged to workers; recruitment is transparent and fair.

5.3.14 Workers' rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining are respected, including the right to organise, join worker organisations, or engage through representatives of their choosing *(ILO C87 and C98)*.

Additional improvement requirements (Tier B only)

5.3.15 Worker representatives or trusted intermediaries participate in dialogue on workplace issues, where culturally appropriate.

5.3.16 Regular orientation is provided for new, seasonal and migrant workers.

5.3.17 Worker accommodation and facilities progressively improve beyond legal minimums.

5.3.18 Systems to monitor working conditions (hours, pay, safety) evolve in line with enterprise scale and capacity.

Guidance – Theme 5.3

Labour arrangements in rangeland systems range from family, reciprocal and customary labour to enterprises employing permanent, seasonal or migrant workers. Further guidance on determining the applicable Tier is provided in Annex 1.

For Tier A Certificate Holders, paid or exchange-based labour arrangements do not need to be written, but those involved should have a shared understanding of the work expected and the payment, exchange or other compensation provided. Evidence may include consistent accounts from those involved, observation of customary arrangements or payment evidence where available. Tier B workers require written contracts and payment records.

Assessment of forced labour should consider practices that may prevent a person from freely entering or leaving a work arrangement, including debt, withheld wages, retention of identity documents, threats, deceptive recruitment or restrictions on movement. Particular attention may be needed where seasonal or migrant workers depend on employers or intermediaries for transport, accommodation or access to work.

Pastoral work may involve seasonal peaks or exceptional periods requiring longer working hours. For Tier B workers, CABs should assess whether adequate rest is provided, additional hours are voluntary and compensated, and persistent overwork is avoided. For family and customary labour systems, practical approaches may include sharing or adjusting workloads during peak periods.

Guidance – Theme 5.3

Concerns may be raised directly or through customary processes, trusted intermediaries, worker representatives or formal workplace mechanisms. A formal grievance system is not required, but people should be able to raise concerns without retaliation.

For Tier B Certificate Holders:

- recruitment may be direct or through intermediaries; evidence such as worker interviews, contracts and payment records can help establish whether recruitment is transparent and free from worker-paid fees;
- freedom of association does not require a trade union or formal worker committee; workers may organise through unions, worker groups, chosen representatives or other forms of collective engagement and should be free to do so without interference or retaliation;
- worker orientation may be verbal, practical or written, provided workers understand their duties, terms, rights and how to raise concerns; and
- monitoring of working conditions may range from worker discussions and review of payment or working arrangements to more systematic tracking of hours, pay and conditions in larger enterprises.

Evidence of conformity may include worker interviews, verbal explanations, observation, contracts, payment or working-time records and other locally appropriate evidence. Confidential worker interviews are particularly important where assessing forced labour, recruitment, payment, working hours or freedom of association.

Theme 5.4 - Safe Working and Living Conditions

Desired outcome: People involved in rangeland and livestock activities are protected from avoidable harm and have working and living conditions that support their health, safety and wellbeing.

Minimum requirements (all Certificate Holders – Tier A and B)

5.4.1 Common herding risks (animals, terrain, weather) are understood and basic precautions are taken to prevent harm.

5.4.2 Safe animal handling practices appropriate to local herding systems are used to avoid injury to people and livestock.

5.4.3 Workers and helpers have reasonable access to drinking water and opportunities for rest during herding activities, appropriate to mobility, remoteness, and local conditions.

5.4.4 Pregnant or vulnerable herders are supported and not asked to perform hazardous or overly strenuous work.

5.4.5 Basic first-aid knowledge or access to local emergency support is available, appropriate to remoteness and mobility.

5.4.6 Basic hygiene practices appropriate to pastoral life are used to reduce risks from communicable and zoonotic diseases.

Improvement requirements (all Certificate Holders – Tier A and B)

5.4.7 Steps are taken over time to improve tools, equipment, tools, and herding practices to reduce risk of injury and support wellbeing.

5.4.8 Opportunities are provided for skill development and safe participation in herding tasks, especially for women, youth, and new herders.

5.4.9 Where housing is provided for seasonal help or apprentices, conditions are improved over time to support safe and clean living.

Additional minimum requirements (Tier B only)

5.4.10 Basic first-aid supplies are available at worksites and housing locations, and workers know the emergency contact and response plan appropriate to remoteness and mobility.

5.4.11 Workers receive practical instruction and demonstration on safe livestock handling, machinery use (where applicable), and emergency procedures before performing high-risk tasks.

5.4.12 Personal protective equipment (PPE) required for specific tasks (e.g., shearing, fencing, machinery) is provided at no cost and maintained in usable condition.

5.4.13 Where accommodation is provided, workers have safe, clean sleeping areas with adequate ventilation, weather protection, basic privacy and safe cooking and food storage areas.

5.4.14 Workers have access to sanitary toilet arrangements and basic hand-washing facilities appropriate to pastoral conditions.

5.4.15 Workers have reliable access to clean drinking water and basic washing facilities at herding sites and accommodation locations.

Additional improvement requirements (Tier B only)

5.4.16 Emergency preparedness systems expand over time (e.g., radios/satellite phones, first-aid kits in vehicles, emergency contacts visible, evacuation plans).

5.4.17 Worker accommodation, sanitation, and hygiene facilities are progressively improved beyond minimum requirements to enhance safety, privacy, cleanliness and wellbeing, using locally appropriate solutions.

5.4.18 Zoonotic disease prevention and awareness is strengthened through training and access to information, veterinary support, vaccination campaigns and safe handling practices.

5.4.19 Safety awareness, learning and continuous improvement are strengthened over time, with incidents, near-misses, worker feedback and practical training informing adjustments to working practices, equipment and emergency preparedness.

Guidance – Theme 5.4

This theme recognises that rangeland work involves inherent risks linked to livestock handling, terrain, weather, remoteness and mobility, and seeks to ensure safe, healthy and dignified working and living conditions. The focus is on reducing avoidable harm and supporting wellbeing through practical, context-appropriate precautions, rather than requiring formal occupational health and safety systems.

Basic precautions in pastoral systems may include practices such as awareness of animal behaviour, choosing appropriate routes and timing, adjusting tasks to weather and terrain conditions, using suitable tools or tack, sharing labour during higher-risk activities, ensuring rest and hydration, and knowing how to seek help in an emergency. What constitutes a reasonable precaution depends on mobility, remoteness, cultural practice, and available resources.

Evidence of conformity may be demonstrated through observation of practices, verbal explanation by herders or workers, or practical measures in use, rather than written procedures. Evidence should be appropriate to pastoral mobility and cultural context and need not be formally documented unless required under Tier B.

Tier B requirements apply only where hired labour is a regular feature. In these contexts, additional safeguards are expected, including access to first-aid supplies, PPE for higher-risk tasks, safe accommodation, sanitation, and practical safety instruction. These measures should be proportionate to enterprise scale, remoteness, and capacity.

Under 5.4.7, improvement in tools, equipment, and practices may include gradual upgrades that reduce physical strain or injury risk and support wellbeing. Examples may include improved saddles or harnesses, safer fencing or handling equipment, better lighting or shelter, or protective gear for tasks involving machinery or vehicles. The emphasis is on practical risk reduction over time, not on adopting uniform equipment standards.

Improvement requirements also encourage progressive strengthening of housing, sanitation, hygiene, emergency preparedness, and learning from incidents or near-misses. Evidence may include observation, explanation, worker feedback, or documentation where appropriate. The emphasis is on proportional risk reduction, dignity, and continuous improvement rather than prescriptive standards.

Theme 5.5 - Child Rights and Pastoral Learning

Desired outcome: Children are protected from hazardous and exploitative work while having safe, age-appropriate opportunities to learn, participate in and inherit pastoral knowledge, skills and cultural practices.

Minimum requirements (all Certificate Holders – Tier A and B)

5.5.1 Children are protected from harm and hazardous work or the worst forms of child labour (ILO C138 & C182).

5.5.2 Where children participate in pastoral activities or cultural traditions, such participation is age-appropriate, voluntary, supervised and conducted in ways that protect their safety and wellbeing.

5.5.3 Children's participation in pastoral life does not compromise their education, rest, play or healthy development.

Improvement requirements (all Certificate Holders – Tier A and B)

5.5.4 Intergenerational transfer of pastoralists' knowledge and cultural heritage is encouraged through safe and supervised activities such as storytelling, mentoring, observation or traditional practices.

5.5.5 Where feasible, families take steps to support children's access to education suited to pastoral life, such as seasonal schooling, flexible attendance, distance learning, tutoring support or mobile schooling where available.

5.5.6 Children are gradually introduced to pastoral skills, where relevant, in ways that build confidence and understanding while ensuring safety, rest, and age-appropriate limits.

5.5.7 Efforts are made, where appropriate, to support safe play, recreation and social interaction for children within pastoral households or communities.

Guidance – Theme 5.5

Children's presence and learning within family and community life are integral to pastoral systems. At the same time, children must be protected from harm, exploitation and hazardous work. This theme seeks to safeguard children's wellbeing while supporting their rights to pastoral learning, cultural identity and education suited to pastoral life, and to clearly distinguish between child labour and age-appropriate participation in pastoral and cultural activities.

Children's involvement in pastoral life should be:

- voluntary, supervised, and appropriate to age and development;
- compatible with education, rest, play and wellbeing; and
- free from hazardous, exploitative or harmful work, which is not permitted under any circumstances.

Support for pastoral learning and cultural transmission may include:

- storytelling, observation or mentoring;
- participation in safe, everyday activities; or
- other informal practices consistent with local culture and norms.
  Formal training programmes or structured learning systems are not required.

Access to education may take different forms depending on mobility, remoteness and local provision. Flexible, seasonal or alternative education arrangements are recognised where they support children's learning and healthy development.

Evidence of conformity may include explanation by caregivers, observation of practices, or demonstration that children's safety, education and wellbeing are prioritised in practice. The emphasis is on protection, care and healthy development rather than formal compliance mechanisms.

PRINCIPLE 6: Animal Welfare

Intent: The health, welfare and humane treatment of livestock and working animals are maintained throughout their lives. Animals experience conditions that support good nutrition, health, comfort, natural behaviour and positive human-animal interactions, while minimising pain, fear and distress.

Requirements are based on the internationally recognised Five Domains of Animal Welfare and seek to achieve consistent animal welfare outcomes across diverse rangeland production systems through context-appropriate implementation.

Scope and application: This Principle applies to all livestock and working animals managed within eligible rangeland production systems, including animals used for herding, transport or other work. It covers aspects of animal welfare under the control or responsibility of the Certificate Holder, including animal health, nutrition, handling, husbandry, veterinary treatment and living conditions.

Animal welfare during transport and slaughter is also addressed where these activities are undertaken by, or under the responsibility of, the Certificate Holder. Food safety, hygiene, processing and other technical requirements associated with slaughter and post-slaughter activities are outside the scope of this Principle and are governed by applicable legal and regulatory frameworks. Certificate Holders shall comply with applicable legislation in these areas.

Species-specific guidance will be developed through supporting annexes to support the interpretation and implementation of the animal welfare requirements set out in this Principle. Annexes relevant to initial pilot contexts will be developed to support piloting, with additional species-specific guidance developed progressively over time.

Theme 6.1 - Animal Health and Disease Prevention

Desired outcome: Animals are protected from preventable disease, injury and unnecessary suffering through appropriate management and timely care.

Minimum requirements

6.1.1. Animal welfare risks are identified and managed through measures appropriate to the species, scale and context of the operation.

6.1.2. Animal welfare is assessed using relevant animal-based indicators appropriate to the species and production system, supported where necessary with information about their management and living conditions.

6.1.3. People responsible for animal care have appropriate knowledge and skills to protect animal welfare.

6.1.4. Animals are observed at a frequency appropriate to the species, production system, season and level of welfare risk, and sufficiently often to identify sickness, injury or abnormal behaviour and provide timely care.

6.1.5. Animals known to be sick, injured, lame or otherwise at increased welfare risk are monitored more frequently and receive appropriate care.

6.1.6. Animals suspected or known to have a contagious condition are managed to reduce transmission while maintaining their health and welfare.

6.1.7. Animals experiencing severe pain, illness or injury without a reasonable prospect of recovery are humanely euthanised without unnecessary delay using a method that results in rapid unconsciousness and death.

6.1.8. Newly acquired or returning animals are subject to appropriate health checks and disease-control measures before mixing with the herd or flock, based on identified disease risks.

6.1.9. Mortality events and significant disease outbreaks are investigated, and management practices are reviewed where appropriate.

6.1.10. Dead animals are removed or managed without unnecessary delay and disposed of in a manner that minimises risks to animal health, human health and the environment.

6.1.11. Measures are in place to protect animal welfare during foreseeable emergencies and exceptional conditions, including severe weather, disease outbreaks and disruption to feed or water supplies.

Improvement requirements

6.1.12. Animal health and welfare risks and outcomes are periodically reviewed, and at least one practicable action is identified and implemented to improve animal health or reduce a recurring welfare risk.

Guidance – Theme 6.1

Animal health and welfare management should focus on preventing avoidable disease, injury and suffering, identifying problems early and providing timely and appropriate care. Approaches should reflect the species, production system, season, mobility, remoteness and access to veterinary services.

Animal welfare assessment should use relevant **animal-based indicators**, such as body condition, lameness, injury, signs of disease, mortality or abnormal behaviour, supported where useful by information about management and living conditions.

Animals should be observed often enough to identify welfare problems and respond promptly, with closer monitoring of animals at increased risk. Expected minimum observation frequencies may be further defined through species-specific annexes or implementation guidance. Where contagious disease is suspected or identified, appropriate measures may include separation, cohorting, movement restrictions, quarantine or other locally appropriate disease-control measures, while maintaining animal welfare.

Newly acquired or returning animals should be managed according to the disease risks involved. This may include a period of separation or quarantine, with species-specific annexes or implementation guidance providing further guidance on appropriate minimum durations where needed.

Guidance – Theme 6.1

Mortality events, significant disease outbreaks and recurring welfare problems should be reviewed to identify causes and opportunities to reduce future risk. Emergency arrangements should address foreseeable risks such as severe weather, disease outbreaks and disruption to feed or water supplies.

Evidence of conformity may include observation of animals and management practices, explanation by responsible persons, relevant animal-health records where maintained, and evidence of appropriate responses to health or welfare problems. The emphasis is on animal welfare outcomes, timely care and effective risk management rather than formal veterinary systems or documentation.

Theme 6.2 - Nutrition and Access to Water

Desired outcome: Animals receive sufficient nutrition and water to maintain health, welfare and appropriate body condition throughout the year.

Core Requirements

6.2.1. Animals have reliable access to sufficient, safe water.

6.2.2. Animals receive adequate nutrition appropriate to their species, age, physiological state and seasonal conditions.

6.2.3. Known risks from harmful or poisonous plants, contaminated feed and other hazardous substances are identified and managed to minimise harm to animals.

6.2.4. Body condition and nutritional status are regularly monitored.

6.2.5. Animals are not allowed to become emaciated or suffer from preventable nutritional disease, and timely corrective action is taken where poor body condition or nutritional problems are identified.

6.2.6. Feeding and watering practices minimise competition, injury and unnecessary stress.

6.2.7. Feed is safe, suitable for the species and does not contain substances known to present an unacceptable risk to animal or human health.

6.2.8. Feed and water are not withheld for longer than necessary for animal management, transport or slaughter, and animals at increased welfare risk are given additional protection.

Improvement requirements

6.2.9. Trends in body condition and nutritional status are used to improve feeding, grazing, herd-management or seasonal-preparedness practices where opportunities are identified.

Guidance – Theme 6.2

Nutritional needs and access to water can vary considerably across rangeland systems and seasons. Assessment should take account of species, age and physiological state, as well as factors such as mobility, climate, forage availability and seasonal fluctuations.

Adequate nutrition does not require supplementary feeding where animals can meet their needs through grazing or browsing. Equally, seasonal changes in body condition are not necessarily a welfare concern where these are normal for the species and production system and do not result in poor welfare. The emphasis should be on identifying significant or prolonged poor condition, preventable nutritional problems, and whether management responds appropriately when risks arise.

Monitoring may be based on practical observation and locally appropriate methods and does not require formal measurement or recording of every animal. Species-specific annexes may provide further guidance on appropriate indicators and thresholds, as well as any species-specific restrictions on feed ingredients, such as the use of animal by-products or fishmeal.

Evidence of conformity should focus on the condition and welfare of animals and the effectiveness of management responses, taking account of normal seasonal and production-system variability.

Theme 6.3 - Humane Handling, Living Conditions and Husbandry

Desired outcome: Animals are managed in ways that minimise fear, pain and distress while supporting their natural behaviour and welfare.

Core Requirements

6.3.1 Animals are handled calmly and competently to minimise stress, fear and injury.

6.3.2 Young, pregnant, sick, injured, lame or otherwise vulnerable animals are handled with additional care appropriate to their condition.

6.3.3 Facilities, infrastructure, equipment and handling practices are designed, maintained and used in ways that support animal welfare and minimise the risk of injury, fear and distress.

6.3.4 Where housing, shelters or other enclosed facilities are used, they provide environmental conditions that support animals' health, comfort and welfare, including appropriate thermal comfort, ventilation, lighting, cleanliness, drainage, resting surfaces, freedom of movement and protection from harmful weather and other foreseeable environmental risks.

6.3.5 Routine husbandry procedures that may cause pain or distress are only undertaken where there is a legitimate animal management or animal welfare reason.

6.3.6 Where routine husbandry procedures are expected to cause significant pain, appropriate measures are taken to minimise pain and distress, including the use of pain prevention or relief, except where immediate action is necessary to prevent greater suffering.

6.3.7 Electric prods and other devices that cause avoidable pain or distress are not used, except where necessary to prevent immediate danger to animals or people and no safer alternative is available.

6.3.8 Electro-immobilisation devices are not used.

6.3.9 Animals are managed in ways that support appropriate movement, social interaction and the expression of natural behaviours, taking into account the species and production system.

6.3.10 Animals are tethered only where justified for health, welfare, management or safety reasons, and only for as long as necessary. Tethering methods do not cause injury, distress or prevent access to essential resources.

6.3.11 Animals are not kept in social isolation except where justified for health, welfare, disease control, management or safety reasons, and only for as long as necessary.

6.3.12 Breeding and reproductive management practices support animal health and welfare and do not knowingly select for traits that are likely to compromise animal welfare.

6.3.13 Animals are monitored during birth and other periods of increased reproductive risk, and timely assistance is provided where necessary.

6.3.14 Working animals are fit for the work undertaken and are provided with appropriate equipment, working conditions, rest and care to protect their health and welfare.

Improvement requirements

6.3.15 Less painful alternatives to hot-iron branding and other painful identification methods are adopted.

6.3.16 Handling methods, facilities, infrastructure and equipment are periodically reviewed, and practicable improvements are made to further reduce animal fear, stress and injury.

6.3.17 Management practices are progressively adapted to increase animals' opportunities for positive behavioural experiences, including comfortable rest, appropriate movement, social interaction and exploration or foraging.

Guidance – Theme 6.3

Assessment should focus on their effect on animal welfare, rather than expecting particular facilities, infrastructure or management systems.

Housing or shelter is not required where animals are adapted to local conditions and their welfare needs can be met without it. Where facilities are used, they should be appropriate to the species, environmental conditions and duration of use.

Husbandry procedures that cause pain or distress should have a legitimate animal management or welfare purpose and use the least harmful practicable approach. Further requirements or guidance on particular procedures, including appropriate pain management, may be specified in species-specific annexes.

Guidance – Theme 6.3

Assessment should focus on their effect on animal welfare, rather than expecting particular facilities, infrastructure or management systems.

Housing or shelter is not required where animals are adapted to local conditions and their welfare needs can be met without it. Where facilities are used, they should be appropriate to the species, environmental conditions and duration of use.

Husbandry procedures that cause pain or distress should have a legitimate animal management or welfare purpose and use the least harmful practicable approach. Further requirements or guidance on particular procedures, including appropriate pain management, may be specified in species-specific annexes.

Theme 6.4 - Responsible Veterinary Treatment and Medicines

Desired outcome: Veterinary medicines are used responsibly to protect animal welfare while minimising unnecessary use and associated risks.

Core Requirements

6.4.1 Veterinary advice or support is sought where necessary and is accessible through arrangements appropriate to the scale, location and disease risks of the operation.

6.4.2 Veterinary medicines are used only where justified for the prevention, control or treatment of disease or injury.

6.4.3 Veterinary medicines are administered in accordance with the instructions of the prescribing veterinary professional or product label.

6.4.4 The routine use of veterinary medicines as a substitute for good animal husbandry is not permitted.

6.4.5 Hormones, antibiotics and other veterinary medicines are not used for non-therapeutic growth promotion.

6.4.6 Measures are implemented to prevent, monitor and control parasitic infections where they pose a risk to animal health or welfare.

6.4.7 Information on veterinary treatments is maintained at a level appropriate to the scale and complexity of the operation, including the animal or group treated, reason for treatment, substance used and treatment date.

6.4.8 Patterns of illness, injury, mortality and veterinary treatment are periodically reviewed, and management practices are adapted where recurring welfare problems are identified.

Improvement requirements

6.4.9 Preventive animal-health and husbandry practices are progressively strengthened to reduce recurring disease and avoidable reliance on veterinary medicines, without delaying or withholding necessary treatment.

Guidance – Theme 6.4

Appropriate veterinary oversight may include private or state veterinarians, community animal-health workers, vaccination programmes, remote veterinary support or group-level animal health planning. More intensive or industrial operations may require more formal veterinary oversight, such as periodic veterinary review.

Expectations for medicine management and record keeping should be proportionate to the scale and context of the production system. Records may range from individual animal records in more intensive systems to herd- or flock-level registers, cooperative or veterinary campaign records, or simple locally appropriate records in pastoral systems.

Responsible medicine use should not discourage necessary treatment or compromise animal welfare. Efforts to reduce unnecessary medicine use should focus on appropriate prevention, diagnosis and treatment rather than withholding treatment from animals that need it.

Theme 6.5 - Humane Transport and Slaughter

Desired outcome: Where animals are transported or slaughtered, they are managed in ways that minimise pain, fear and distress.

Core Requirements

6.5.1 Animals are assessed as fit for the intended journey before transport and are not transported where doing so would cause avoidable pain or suffering, except where transport is necessary to obtain veterinary care.

6.5.2 Transport is planned and undertaken by people with appropriate knowledge and skills, using suitable vehicles, equipment and loading practices to minimise injury, fear, stress, unnecessary suffering and avoidable delays, with contingency arrangements for delays, adverse weather, and animals becoming sick or injured during the journey.

6.5.3 Animals' needs for space, ventilation, protection from weather, food, water and rest are met according to the duration and conditions of the journey.

6.5.4 Animals awaiting slaughter are handled and managed humanely and are protected from avoidable distress associated with seeing, hearing or otherwise being exposed to the slaughter of other animals.

6.5.5 Where slaughter is undertaken by, or under the responsibility of, the certificate holder, humane methods are used that result in rapid loss of consciousness followed by death, while minimising pain, fear and distress.

6.5.6 Death is confirmed before skinning, dressing or any other processing of the animal begins.

Improvement requirements

6.5.7 Where animals are transported, transport practices and outcomes are periodically reviewed and practicable measures are taken to reduce journey-related stress, injury, delays or other welfare risks.

Guidance – Theme 6.5

Transport and slaughter practices vary considerably between production systems and locations, including access to transport infrastructure, slaughter facilities and veterinary services. Assessment should take account of these circumstances while maintaining the welfare outcomes required by the Standard.

Fitness for transport should be considered in relation to the individual animal, journey duration and conditions. Particular care may be needed for young, pregnant, sick, injured or otherwise vulnerable animals.

Where transport or slaughter is undertaken by third parties, assessment should reflect the extent to which these activities are under the responsibility or reasonable control of the Certificate Holder. The Certificate Holder is not expected to demonstrate control over activities beyond its defined responsibility.

Species-specific annexes may provide further guidance on fitness for transport, journey conditions and appropriate slaughter methods.

Annex 1: Guidance on Tiers under Principle 5

Note: This annex is explanatory and does not introduce additional requirements beyond those set out in Principle 5.

Purpose and Rationale

Pastoral entities operating in rangeland systems vary in both how labour is organised and the scale at which operations are conducted. Some rely primarily on family or customary labour within pastoral households or communities, while others structurally rely on hired labour, including permanent employees or recurring seasonal workers. Larger-scale operations typically involve more people, more formal labour arrangements and greater potential for social risk and therefore carry a greater degree of responsibility and accountability in relation to rights, safety, participation and equity.

Within the Standard, the Certificate Holder is the pastoral entity responsible for conformity across a defined Management Unit. For Principle 5 (Rights, Equity & Inclusion), the Standard distinguishes between **Tier A and Tier B categories** based primarily on the Certificate Holder's **structural reliance on hired labour**, with scale considered where it affects accountability.

Tier A and Tier B are applicability categories, not performance tiers. They are used by Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) to interpret and assess requirements in line with the Certificate Holder's labour model and resulting sphere of influence, and do not represent higher or lower standards of compliance.

Tier A: Pastoral Households and Community Labour Systems

Definition and characteristics

Tier A applies where the Certificate Holder:

- relies primarily on family, household or customary community labour; and
- operates at a scale where labour relationships are embedded within household or community structures, rather than formal employment arrangements.

Occasional, short-term or reciprocal labour support does not, on its own, place a Certificate Holder in Tier B.

Typical Tier A contexts may include:

- pastoral households or family-run operations;
- customary or communal pastoral systems where labour is shared among members; or
- small-scale community arrangements without recurring hired labour.

Assessment implications

For Tier A Certificate Holders, CABs should focus on whether:

- rights, dignity and safety of those involved in pastoral work are respected;

- participation and decision-making reflect local norms and customary practices;
- discrimination, harassment or violence are not tolerated within the Certificate Holder's sphere of influence; and
- reasonable efforts are made to support inclusion and equity over time.

Assessment should recognise that Tier A Certificate Holders generally have limited ability or need to formalise labour systems, and should prioritise observed practice, behaviour and local accountability over documentation.

Tier B: Enterprises Structurally Relying on Hired Labour

Definition and characteristics

Tier B applies where the Certificate Holder:

- structurally relies on hired labour, including permanent employees or recurring seasonal workers; and/or
- operates at a scale where labour arrangements are organised, planned or managed beyond household or customary structures.

Structural reliance refers to labour arrangements that are integral to normal operations, rather than occasional or exceptional.

Typical Tier B contexts may include:

- larger commercial ranches or pastoral enterprises;
- companies, producer groups or cooperatives employing workers; or
- operations that engage recurring seasonal or migrant labour.

Assessment implications

For Tier B Certificate Holders, CABs should expect:

- a higher level of accountability for working conditions, safety and fair treatment of workers;
- active measures to prevent discrimination, harassment, exploitation or unsafe practices;
- appropriate mechanisms to support participation, grievance handling and benefit-sharing; and
- particular attention to risks faced by women, migrant workers or other vulnerable groups.

Assessment should reflect the greater sphere of influence and responsibility associated with both structural reliance on hired labour and larger operational scale, while remaining proportionate to context.

Determining the Applicable Tier

The applicable Tier should be determined at the outset of certification, based on:

- whether hired labour is a structural and recurring feature of operations; and

- the scale of the enterprise, insofar as it affects the Certificate Holder’s ability to influence labour conditions and social outcomes.

CABs should:

- assess actual labour practices rather than legal form alone;
- document the rationale for Tier determination; and
- review the Tier if labour arrangements or scale change over time.

Where uncertainty exists, professional judgement should be applied, guided by the principle that greater reliance on hired labour and larger scale imply greater accountability.

Key Points for Conformity Assessment Bodies

- Tier A and Tier B are applicability categories, not performance levels.
- Tier A is not a “lighter” version of Principle 5, and Tier B is not optional.
- Evidence may be written, verbal, observational or practice-based, depending on context.
- Assessment should focus on reasonable action within the Certificate Holder’s sphere of influence, recognising differences arising from labour model and scale.