Guidelines on Minimum Requirements for Plastic Waste Recovery & Crediting Standards

PREVENT
Waste Alliance

The PREVENT Waste Alliance Core Group on Plastic Credits
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1 Introduction

This publication is a joint effort by plastic waste recovery organisations, all of them operating in developing countries and all of them members of the PREVENT Waste Alliance. These practitioners have gathered with the aim of improving the level of plastic waste recovery services in developing countries, so that ultimately more funds can flow to these services and higher environmental and social impacts can be achieved. The funding instrument used by these practitioners are Plastic Credits, or variants of these crediting schemes. Plastic Credits can be used as a payment for the service of plastic waste collection and processing. Credits are a performance-based financing instrument. There is a growing number of plastic crediting schemes, each offering different levels of service, quality, guarantees or degrees of social and environmental impacts. It is therefore time, to harmonise the Plastic Credit landscape, to create a level playing field and to "raise the bar" for these crediting standards[1], pursuing the ultimate aim to enable international benchmarking. This publication presents a starting point in our efforts to harmonise and showcases our common Minimum Requirements for plastic recovery crediting standards. The 12 requirements are the result of collaboration, debate, consensus, and external consultation over the last 12 months.

Plastic waste pollution is one of the most serious global social and environmental problems of the 21st century. Plastic production today is at 400 million tonnes per year. This is equivalent to the weight of all human beings on earth. Yet it does not stop there, plastic production is set to double by 2040[2] and only 9% of all waste is recycled.[3] In fact, global plastic production capacity is growing more than 10 times that of global recycling capacity.[4] The growing concern is compounded by the fact that the municipal waste collection budgets are insufficient to tackle the scale of the problem. The plastic pollution challenge is therefore a dual challenge of reducing plastic production and increasing waste recovery. This publication focuses on the latter challenge of plastic waste recovery. It also focuses on Plastic Credits, which in addition to EPR policies and packaging taxation, can be a measure to increase funding for waste recovery.

Plastic Credits are a market-based service by which the private sector (e.g. fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies) can contribute to the service of waste collection and processing, offered by a Plastic Credits seller. Crediting, unlike EPR or packaging taxation, is a predominantly voluntary mechanism that is not regulated by a government or at an international level. A Plastic Credit, like an invoice, can be used as a proof and a payment for a service. In this case, it is proof that plastics (usually one tonne) have been removed from the environment and have been delivered to a better destination.[5] Without Plastic Credits, the service would not have happened under existing market circumstances. The Plastic Credit funding is therefore additional to existing market-based waste recovery activities. The added value of the Plastic Credits to the buyer is that plastics, which ended up in the environment, have been recovered and that the buyer can state their contribution to those recovery activities publicly known.

Plastic Credits have faced criticism since their inception. The members of this group are familiar with the concerns regarding credits as expressed by stakeholders like consumer goods companies, NGOs, and governments. For the buyers of credits, it is not always clear what they are buying. Some credits haven't been audited by an independent third party; other standards have no methodology published online; or there are growing concerns from the carbon credit markets spilling over into the evolving Plastic Credit landscape.

This publication wants to restore trust in the evolving funding mechanism based on Plastic Credits, by requesting all practitioners to adhere to a set of Minimum Requirements presented here or exceed this minimum benchmark.

These concerns are what the more rigorous crediting standards have been addressing. This publication also lists the more reliable crediting standards to choose from.

The main reason to adopt the Minimum Requirements for plastic waste recovery is to ensure that plastic recovery activities result in positive environmental and social outcomes, whilst ensuring that methodologies and approaches are transparent, evidence-based, accessible, and inclusive.

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[1] Value Cred report here: Plastic-Credits---Friend-or-Foe.pdf (prevent-waste.net), 2021.
[2] Pew & Systemiq - 'Breaking the wave', 2021.
[3] UNEP Global Waste Management Outlook, 2024.
[4] Minderoo - Plastic Makers Index, 2023.
[5] 'Better destination', see Figure 1: Waste Hierarchy below.

This can be achieved by:

- Agreeing on the adoption of a framework of Minimum Requirements for all plastic crediting standards, including the waste service providers on the ground.
- Bringing more consistency and robustness to the plethora of voluntary standards that are driven by a growing demand for solutions to address plastic pollution.
- Agreeing on guidelines for self-declared environmental and/or socio-economic claims that are made in relation to Plastic Credits.

The combination of these measures can potentially result in:

- increased trust among buyers of Plastic Credits i.e., local services that remove plastic from the environment,
- more funds being made available for local waste management to deal with currently mismanaged waste,
- avoidance of the reputational damage spilling over from the carbon credits market.

It is in this context that the PREVENT Waste Alliance Core Group on Plastic Credits presents its guideline for "Minimum Requirements" for plastic recovery services and plastic crediting standards. These guidelines were elaborated during 2023 by 16 PREVENT member organisations and submitted to public consultation between October and December 2023. This document can serve in guiding new crediting standards and any plastic recovery activities in addition to or absence of EPR schemes. It can also serve Plastic Credit buyers in their enquiry about quality requirements for Plastic Credits.

2 The Minimum Requirements for Plastic Recovery Activities and Plastic Crediting Standards

Below are the 12 Minimum Requirements, grouped under three general principles:
(1) **transparency**, (2) **legal compliance**, and (3) **impact**.
The focus of these requirements is on waste 'recovery activities', by which we understand any socio-economic and environmental services of waste collection, sorting and/or delivery to an adequate destination. Many of the terms below are clarified in the chapter 4 Terminology.

Principle 1 - Transparency

1.1 The offered services and related activities have been audited by an independent third party, using a risk-based approach, verifying both the transactions of recovered waste as well as the systems and processes used to record these transactions.
1.2 The offered services and related activities make material and monetary flows traceable from source to destination.
1.3 There has been no double-counting of collections nor of the sales of credits or certificates.
1.4 The credits or certificates issued and their associated standards should be publicly accessible.[6]

Principle 2 - Legal compliance

2.1 The offered services and related activities as well as the waste destinations[7] comply with the respective applicable national law(s).

Principle 3 - Impact

3.1 The offered services and related activities focus on post-consumer plastic waste.
3.2 The offered services and related activities focus on non-commercially recyclable plastic waste, considering the locally available infrastructure and/or logistics costs.
3.3 The offered services and related activities ensure that waste is delivered to a better destination than where the waste was sourced from.[8]
3.4 The waste has been sorted to recover any recyclable materials, whenever feasible and socially or environmentally acceptable, and not harmful to workers.
3.5 The offered services and related activities aim to minimise and mitigate unintended social and environmental harm.[9]
3.6 The offered services and related activities are additional either in tonnes or qualitative improvements. The service therefore either recovers a higher tonnage of plastic waste; or achieves a similar tonnage while also ensuring better pay, working conditions, collecting lower value plastics, or delivering to better destinations than would have been achieved in absence of or prior to this service.
3.7 The offered services and related activities encourage improved working conditions for all workers engaged.[10]

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[6] Publicly accessible data of credits issued will need to meet privacy policy standards of crediting standards. See also the Terminology chapter 4 on baseline methodology.
[7] The end destination is a legal entity that is licensed to process and store waste materials.
[8] The 'better destinations', in order of priority, are: Reuse, Repair, Recycle, Co-Processing and Managed landfills - according to the Waste Management Hierarchy [Figure 1] (see chapter 3.1).
[9] See chapter 4 on Terminology.
[10] Working conditions refer to all workers engaged in the supply chain, and can include income, protective equipment, health insurance, among others. In some countries the incomes earned by informal workers could be higher than minimum wage, but other working conditions are still below standard. See the chapter 4 on Terminology.

Premiums: doing better than the bare minimum

The requirements listed above are Minimum Requirements, yet many service providers in the waste recovery industry do better. Indeed, all service providers of plastic recovery activities are encouraged to offer a better service at higher standards, than the listed Minimum Requirements, depending on their differing national circumstances. This may result in credits or certificates selling for a higher price per tonne (a premium).

Examples of additional requirements are:

- Improved circularity of plastic waste (reuse, repair, recycle).
- Improved social working conditions (living wages, health insurance, PPE, etc).
- Improved audit frequency and/or stricter criteria.
- Increasing collection of more degraded forms or of lower-value plastic waste.
- Encouraging the investment into local/regional/national recycling capacity or waste prevention measures.

3 Background Concepts

3.1 The Waste Management Hierarchy

The Waste (Management) Hierarchy is a concept from the environmental literature that creates an order of preference for waste destinations and has become part of European Union policies and legislation. We adapted a version of the hierarchy based on the UNEP & Basel Convention[11] to build a broader scheme that explains the movement of waste from a worse source to a better destination.

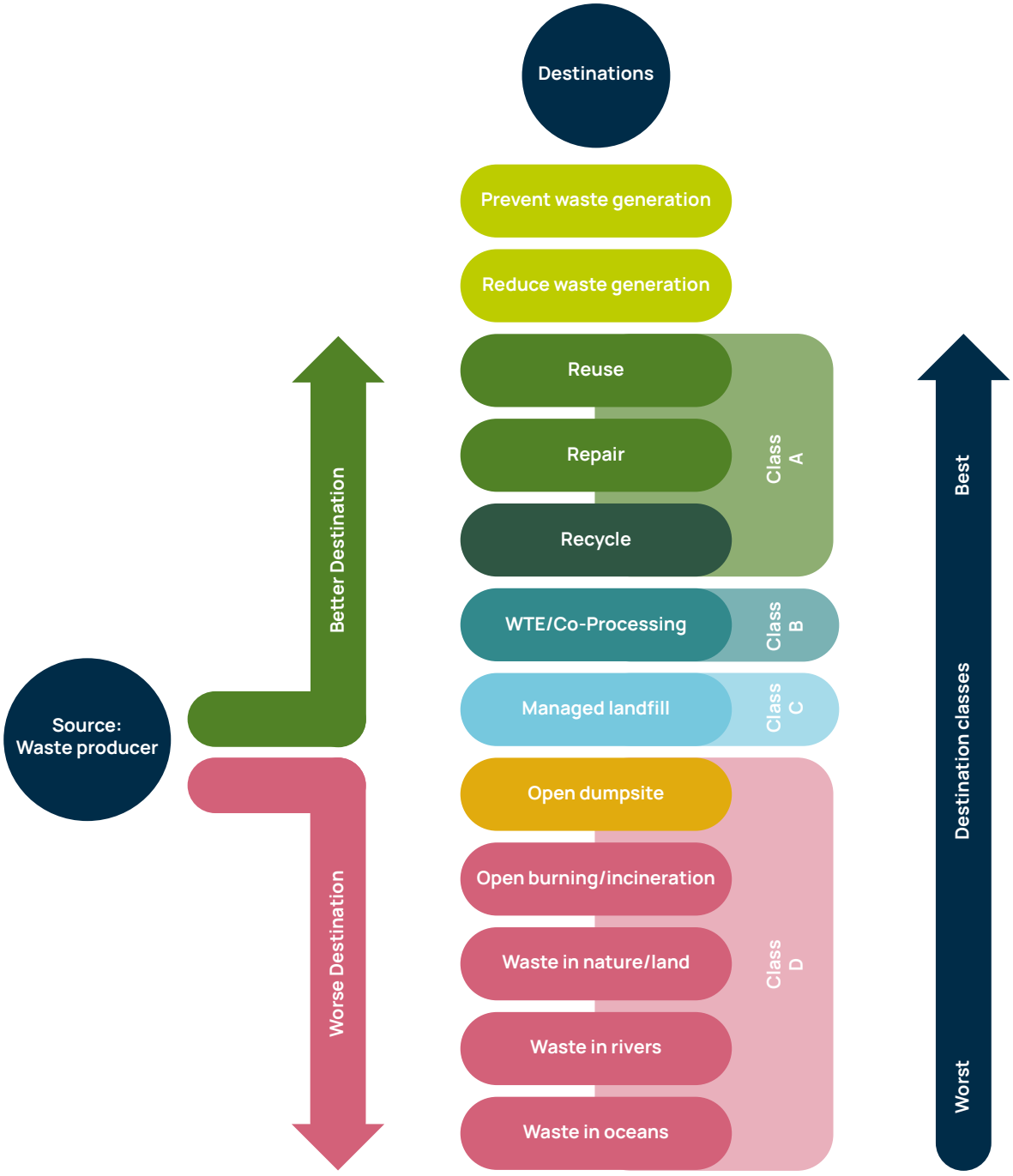


Figure 1: Waste Management Hierarchy

[11] UNEP & SWA Global Waste Management Outlook, p. 31, 2015.

Waste can be collected from e.g., 'waste producers' like households, or rivers and/or the ocean (i.e., a source). For Plastic Credit financing purposes, it should be taken to a higher (see Fig. 1) class of destination.

- **Class A** destinations aim for the circularity of materials, thereby prolonging the use and life of a material. This is done by reuse, repair, or recycling.
- **Class B** destinations use plastic waste as a fuel, such as 'waste to energy' and industrial co-processing (e.g., cement, steel, and glass factories). This publication encourages this class of destination with certified emission filters.
- **Class C** destinations are managed landfills.
- **Class D** destinations are considered leakage into the environment, including pollution entering the air (via open burning), and/or waste polluting land, rivers, and oceans. Open dumpsites are in Class D since these are known for open burning, leakage into groundwater, and the wind blowing waste into the surroundings nearby.
- **The top layers in green**, above Class A destinations in Fig. 1, are plastic waste mitigation strategies, not destinations. Efforts to prevent or reduce the generation of waste can include for example alternatives to plastic packaging or products such as compostable packaging.

Some countries don't have managed landfills, adequate recycling facilities or waste-to-energy facilities. In such situations, removing waste from e.g., rivers, mangroves or the ocean and moving it to an open dumpsite constitutes a better destination. However, Class D destinations are not considered an appropriate destination according to this Minimum Requirements guideline.

3.2 Upstream Activities and Recycling Credits

There are multiple ways to reduce plastic waste. The above focuses on so-called "downstream" activities such as collection, sorting and delivering waste to a destination (recycling, waste-to-energy, co-processing etc.). "Upstream" in the value chain, there are plenty of effective waste reduction and prevention measures. Examples are the re-design of packaging, the use of less packaging, the reuse of materials/products for an extended lifespan or packaging alternatives (e.g., compostables, bio-based renewable materials, paper). Some crediting standards are currently developed to award funding to upstream waste mitigation strategies. These standards are beyond the scope of this guideline.

Most current plastic crediting standards focus on plastic waste recovery (collection and sorting), however, more recently, Plastic Credit standards for recycling have been published. These standards are already offered by Verra, RMS (recycled materials standard) and PCX Solutions.[12] The PREVENT Core Group on Plastic Credits has not focused its efforts on these recycling credit standards but recommends extending the Minimum Requirements to Plastic Credits for recycling.

3.3 EPR Schemes

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is a policy approach that makes producers responsible for their products along the lifecycle, including at the post-consumer stage. Governments are using a suite of policy instruments to shift financial, and sometimes operational, responsibility of waste management and material recovery from governments to producers. The PREVENT Waste Alliance has developed an EPR Toolbox covering EPR in-depth and is hosting the Global Action Partnership for EPR.

Relevant for plastic crediting standards though is that Plastic Credits should never hinder nor compete with EPR schemes but complement and enable them. With ample evidence that EPR systems effectively contribute to reducing packaging waste in the environment and allow setting up and financing reliable and systematic waste

[12] The standard requires the collection, transport and processing which can include recycling or upcycling; there is no credit issuance for recycling or upcycling only, in comparison to other standards.

management structures to ensure that waste is collected, sorted, and treated, EPR systems are preferable to Plastic Credits. First experience regarding potential complementarity is gained in the Philippines, where EPR regulations and Producer Responsibility Organizations (PROs) work together with the Plastic Pollution Reduction Standard (PPRS).

The PREVENT Core Group on Plastic Credits encourages the 'grandfathering' (see chapter 4 on Terminology) of credits into incipient and existing EPR regulations whenever feasible and desirable. The role of Plastic Credits is, potentially:

- In the absence of EPR regulations in a country, Plastic Credits could be issued as a way to facilitate waste management financing and to introduce management and monitoring structures that may be used by a future EPR system.
- In countries where EPR regulations are being formed, Plastic Credits could be a temporary transition finance instrument to pave the way for a mandatory national EPR system.
- Under existing EPR regulations, Plastic Credits could be used to complement waste management finance in areas potentially not covered by common EPR systems, e.g., clean-up of plastic waste pollution in the terrestrial and marine environment.

EPR & Plastic Credits in the Philippines

Properly incorporated Plastic Credits in EPR policy can enable and accelerate the 'polluter pays concept'. In the Philippines, which has one of the more ambitious EPR policies for plastics, companies are required to take responsibility for 80% of their plastic packaging footprint by 2028 (from 20% in 2023). Offsets (defined similarly to Plastic Credits) encourage the avoidance and reduction of plastic footprints while offering the Obliged Enterprises a way to align their impact towards their broader environmental and social goals. The law has already incentivized investments in additional capacity for recycling infrastructure to meet growing and clear demand. PCX Solutions is sharing its direct experience as a trusted Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO) in the Philippines, managing the compliance of nearly 100 Obliged Enterprises. To ensure transparency, integrity and credibility Plastic Credits need to adhere to clear and rigorous standards, as outlined in PCX Solutions' recommendations to the Global UN Plastic Treaty Process.

3.4 Environmental Claims for Plastic Credits

"Ocean-bound plastic neutral", "earth friendly", "plastic waste neutral", "waste-free packaging", and "non-polluting" are some of the claims printed by consumer goods companies on their packaging. Even though the packaging states that it is 'waste free' or 'plastic waste neutral', the companies have often bought only a fraction of the Plastic Credits to offset e.g., the total plastic packaging they have put into the national and international market.

These self-declared and often unverified claims could lead to 'greenwashing' accusations, with the potential to mislead consumers and the wider public.

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) recognized the need to combat greenwashing over 30 years ago when it established a Technical Committee dedicated to Environmental claims in 1993. The ISO 14020 series standardised communication on environmental aspects, including related social and economic aspects, and requires due consideration to life cycle aspects of products and services when such environmental claims are developed. It provides principles and requirements for communicating environmental aspects and impacts of products via environmental statements (e.g., self-declared claims, ecolabels, environmental product declarations and environmental footprint communications).

The EU is currently legislating a directive on 'Green claims', prohibiting unsubstantiated and vague claims. [13]

The PREVENT Sub-WG on Plastic Credit Claims recommends, in alignment with the above, that organisations and consumer goods companies:

- Align with relevant standards, such as the ISO 14020 series, and work towards adherence with the EU Green Claims legislation, if applicable.
- Adhere to the following guiding principles when communicating their environmental claim(s), i.e., they should be clear, transparent, scientifically sound, and documented.
- Consider a "contribution based" approach in their self-declared claims rather than an offset and footprint approach, that is a balanced representation of the positive and negative environmental, social, and economic aspects that the organisation has through their products and services.

[13] https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20230918IPR05412/eu-to-ban-greenwashing-and-improve-consumer-information-on-product-durability.

4 Terminology

Additionality

A plastic recovery service offering is additional, if it is only financially feasible due to the revenues from the sale of Plastic Credits.

Applicable National Law

National law that is relevant and applicable to the waste sector, including international law that has been approved by and embedded into national law.

Baseline Determination

When determining the baseline, the plastic waste recovery volumes that would occur in the absence of the service provided should be estimated, considering aspects such as (e.g., worker pay, distances, infrastructure capacity). [14]

Destination Classes

A Destination Class is a set of one or more destinations for waste where it undergoes a broadly similar treatment. For example, waste-to-energy or co-processing, where waste is used to fuel electricity generation or the heating of cement or glass. These classes are based on the waste management hierarchy - see a graphic scheme in the chapter 3.1.

Double Counting

A situation in which the same tonnes of plastic or waste as registered by a Plastic Credit has been counted more than once. There are three primary forms of double counting:

1. When the same number of materials is counted twice or more during recovery. For example, if a waste picker sells a tonne of plastics to a materials resource facility (MRF), that then sells the same tonne to a recycler, and that tonne was either counted as two tonnes for the issuance of two credits or one credit was issued at each step of the value chain.
2. When multiple credits are issued for the same tonne, as can happen if multiple crediting standards are used in the same value chain.
3. A credit issued for a specific tonne is sold more than once to different buyers.

Additionally, there's the risk that credits are issued and sold with no material tonnes to back them.[15]

Grandfathering

A policy or provision (usually contained in statute) under which an old rule continues to apply to some existing situations while a new rule will apply to future cases. For example, a credit scheme approved as a mechanism can complement the soon-to-be-enforced EPR regulations as a unit of measure or as an acceptable waste collection unit.[16]

[14] OECD Glossary for Evaluation-based Systems, 2022.
[15] Umweltbundesamt, 2022.
[16] Damon, Cole, Ostrom, & Sterner, 2019.

Independent Third-Party

An organisation or an individual that has no conflict of interest and is impartial to the service provided, the service provider (the project) and the standard setter. This independent third party provides a level of assurance that a standard, requirement, or claim is being met. [17]

Managed Landfill

Depending on the available infrastructure in a country, a managed landfill can be technically advanced or simple. An advanced one can be a sanitary landfill with e.g., dedicated waste cells, regular waste coverage, compaction, and impermeable layers/barriers that prevent leachate from infiltrating into the underground and groundwater; a simple managed landfill could only be fenced and secured, thus limiting trash being blown away and preventing waste pickers' access. There is also no open burning on a (simple) managed landfill. [18]

Non-Commercially Recyclable Plastic Waste

These are either plastic waste materials that are too difficult or too contaminated to be recycled. Or the sale price of the materials is not attractive enough to transport it to the nearest recycler. Some examples are MLPs (multilayer plastics), BOPP (Biaxially-Oriented Polypropylene), flexible plastics in general, as well as plastic waste materials collected from the seas, rivers, and mangroves. [19]

Open Dumpsite

Unmanaged disposal sites for waste where the top layer is free to blow or wash away into the natural environment, and the lack of a ground protective layer allows leaching of contaminated liquids into the underground and groundwater systems. These open dumpsites are often used to burn waste or self-combust with sun and heat. [20]

Plastic Credits

A term that describes an outcomes-based financial instrument used to fund otherwise not commercially feasible waste recovery activities. A single Plastic Credit represents 1 tonne of plastic waste that has either been recovered or recycled. There are crediting standards that distinguish recycling credits and collection credits (e.g. Verra, RMS, PWRS). Once the activity has been completed, a verification body can assess the service offered against the requirements of the respective crediting standard. Once audited, the credits are issued by a credit 'issuer', which will then register the credit in a 'registry'. In principle, once the final buyer purchases the credit, the credit is then 'retired', cancelled, or redeemed. [21]

Post-Consumer Waste

Waste generated by end-user waste generators such as households, businesses, hotels, restaurants, etc. This excludes 'post-industrial' or 'pre-consumer' waste produced by factories, e.g., products or packaging that are defective, rejected, or do not meet the quality standards. Factory waste is excluded since these factories can pay for their waste recovery. [22]

[17] OECD Glossary for Evaluation-based Systems, 2022; Umweltbundesamt, 2022.
[18] UNEP, 2023.
[19] UNEP, 2023; OBP, 2021.
[20] UNEP, 2023.
[21] PREVENT Core Group on Plastic Credits, 2023.
[22] EEA Glossary, n.d.

Risk-Based Approach to Third-Party Audits

Third party audits consider the size and complexity of the operations and the level of risk of the activities being assessed. E.g., a limited service i.e., both in terms of waste volumes and complexity of operations can be audited less frequently, with fewer audit days than a more extensive service i.e., either high waste volumes and/or more complex operations. Further information on the risk-based approach that can be taken by validation and verification bodies can be found e.g., in clause 4.3.7 of ISO/IEC 17029:2019. [23]

Traceability

The ability to follow a (waste) material and/or money flow from its source to its destination. This can be done by registering all relevant information using a mobile app, an administrative system, or a ledger, which can be accessed for verification purposes. [24]

Unintended Harm (social or environmental)

Direct or indirect negative impacts that affect the surrounding environment and or people resulting from waste recovery or waste diversion activities. For example, air pollution or wastewater effluents that leak into the surroundings or groundwater, or health and safety impacts on local workers and communities. [25]

Third-Party Verification

Approval by an independent third party (which is an accredited certification body, also known as a Validation and Verification Bodies or VVB, often accredited with ISO 17.065, 14.065, or 17.029 standards) through the provision of objective evidence that specified requirements have been fulfilled. These specified requirements are usually those set out in the respective credit standard. The verification process could also include the Minimum Requirements in these guidelines. Verification can take place at several levels (ISO 9000:2015).

- **Project verification** - Verification of the waste recovery activities and the processes, systems, and transactions. By checking documents and data at regular or randomised intervals. Field visits and checks can complement the document verification.
- **Process or system verification** - Verification of the procedures, processes, and systems used to record waste collection and recovery activities. This assesses whether these processes and systems meet the specified requirements. This, however, does not guarantee that the transactions registered in this process or system are correct.
- **Transaction verification** - Verification of the primary and secondary data, such as images, records, documents, etc., that provide evidence of the tonnes of waste recovered by the waste recovery activity.

[23] ISO, n.d.

[24] ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Sustainability Systems, 2023.

[25] Adapted from 'Unintended consequences,' defined by IEC-8001-2-1:2012.

Waste Recovery

The collection and sorting of post-consumer waste from waste producers or the environment, and its delivery to a better destination such as repair, reuse, recycling or, failing that, to industrial co-processing or waste-to-energy facilities or to a managed landfill. [26]

Working Conditions

An expression used to broadly describe the working environment, the rights of workers, the direct and/or indirect income earned by workers in the waste sector, and the protective clothing, equipment, and insurance cover offered. Ideally, the working conditions are as described by ILO's working standards, with the workers earning more than the minimum wage (which is country-specific and defined by the government) or, preferably, the living wage (locally calculated, diverse methodologies available). Due to a lack of financial and human resources in most developing countries, implementing ILO standards is usually challenging to monitor and to enforce. Therefore, companies that offer services in the waste sector are strongly encouraged to improve the existing working conditions. This does not necessarily imply an encouragement of formalising informal waste sector workers, also known as "waste pickers", since individual workers and/or their associations may prefer to remain autonomous. [27]

[26] EEA Glossary, n.d.; UNEP Glossary, n.d.
[27] WIEGO, 2013.

Annexes

Annex I - Mapping the Minimum Requirements to External Standards

This Table 1 compares various key resources pertinent to the topic, against the predefined set of Minimum Requirements outlined in these guidelines. It demonstrates how closely each resource aligns with the Minimum Requirements, with references to the section and page number included.

Table 1: Comparison of various key resources and the Minimum Requirements of these guidelines (S: section, P: page, -: not mentioned in the source documents).

Source › ›	ISEAL	BASEL ESM	GRI 306	ISWA + UNEP	IFC
Min. Req. Headings					
1.1 Audited	S2.8, P8 S7.4, P24	Indirectly aligns with S14(a), S15(g), S15(h), and S15(i), P10	Indirectly addresses transparency, traceability, and data by informing on how to report and disclose waste topics. S306-4, P13 S306-5, P15	-	S1, P11-12
1.2 Traceable	S2.10, P8 S8.4, P31			-	-
1.3 No Double counting	Indirectly prevents double-counting by promoting clear and transparent tracking and reporting of the system. S4, P11	-		-	-
1.4 Publicly accessible	S1.4; S1.6, P5	-	-	-	-
2.1 National law	-	S10, P9 S19(e), P12	-	-	-
3.1 Post-consumer	-		-	-	-
3.2 Low value plastics	-		-	-	-
3.3 Better destination	-	S11, P9	-	P31	-
3.4 Sort materials	-	S15(c), P10 S34(d,iii), P17	-	S3.3 P67	S3, P25
3.5 Do no harm	S1.5, P5; S2.5, P7	S31(2), P17	-	P20	S1, P6; S3, P22
3.6 More tonnes	Indirectly S1.1; S1.2, P4	-	-	-	
3.7 Working conditions	S3.4, P9	-	-	S7, P215	S2, P16-21

ISEAL Code of Good Practice: https://www.isealalliance.org/defining-credible-practice/iseal-code-good-practice

Basel Convention's Environmentally Sound Management Framework (BASEL ESM): https://www.basel.int/Implementation/CountryLedInitiative/EnvironmentallySoundManagement/ESMToolkit/Overview/tabid/5839/Default.aspx

GRI 306 Standard on waste reporting: https://www.globalreporting.org/standards/standards-development/topic-standard-for-waste/

ISWA + UNEP Global Waste Management Outlook: https://www.unep.org/resources/report/global-waste-management-outlook

IFC Performance Standards on Environmental and Social Sustainability: https://www.ifc.org/content/dam/ifc/doc/mgrt/ifc-performance-standards.pdf

Plastic Crediting Standards & the Minimum Requirements

This Table 2 maps selected Plastic Credit standards or schemes in the field of plastic waste recovery that have requirements similar to those in these guidelines. The table shows the level of correlation between them. The data in this table has been self-declared by each responsible organisation.

(+): Standard is stricter than the Minimum Requirements
(=): Standard is at a par with the Minimum Requirements
(-): Standard has no requirements or is weaker than the Minimum Requirements
(n/a): Methodology documentation not available online

Table 2: Correlation of selected Plastic Credit standards/schemes with the developed Minimum Requirements.

Credit standards › ›	OBP	PWRS	PPRS	CCM	EMP	CHub	RPG
Min. Req. "Headings"							
1.1 Audited	=	+	+	=	-	-	=
1.2 Traceable	=	=	+	-	+	+	=
1.3 Double counting	=	=	=	=	+	=	=
1.4 Public access	=	=	=	=	=	=	-
2.1 National law	=	=	=	=	=	=	=
3.1 Post-consumer plastics	=	=	=	=	=	=	=
3.2 Low value Plastics	+	=	=	=	-	=	=
3.3 Destination	=	=	=	-	=	=	=
3.4 Sort materials	=	=	=	=	=	=	=
3.5 No harm	-	=	=	=	-	=	=
3.6 More tonnes	=	=	=	-	=	=	+
3.7 Work conditions	+	+	=	+	=	+	=
Independent* The organisation is not involved in the service offering.	+	+	+	-	+	-	-

OBP: Ocean Bound Plastic Certification, by Zero Plastic Oceans (ZPO) > OBPcer.org
PWRS: Plastic Waste Reduction Standard, by Verra > verra.org
PPRS: Plastic Pollution Reduction Standard, by PCX Solutions > pcxsolution.org
CCM: Circular Credit Mechanism, by BVRio > Circularactionhub.org
EMP: Empower Plastic Credits, by Empower > empower.eco
Chub: CleanHub, Plastic Credits with ISO-verified track and trace waste management platform > Cleanhub.com
RPG: rePurpose Global - Verified Plastic Recovery Protocol > Plastic Protocol

***** Independent: the credits issued by the owner of the crediting standard or scheme are issued by an organisation that is not itself involved in plastic waste recovery services.

Annex II - The Public Consultation on Minimum Requirements

The Minimum Requirements were published for public consultation between 30 October 2023 and 10 December 2023 with PREVENT members and non-member experts invited by the PREVENT Core Group on Plastic Credits. The Core Group (CG) also held two online meetings with PREVENT members in October and November 2023, and a side event workshop during the INC3 UN Plastic Treaty in Nairobi in mid-November 2023.

This round of consultation round received 70 suggestions from 12 commentators, all practitioners in the sector. All the 70 comments were tabulated, organised by type (general or technical) and the main changes requested were identified. The resulting sheet received inputs (comments and suggestions) from PREVENT members of the Plastic Working Group, and these were carefully analysed by a smaller team that identified the main themes and proposed a set of amendments to be evaluated by the PREVENT Core Group on Plastic Credits.

The most common feedback was a lack of clarity about what the Minimum Requirements represent. This Core Group initially proposed using the name “VPU” meaning Verified Plastic Recovery Units, which implicitly referred to a type of Plastic Credit. Was VPU an alternative name for Plastic Credits, a new standard, or a code of conduct? Commentators more than once concluded that this could cause more confusion in the market. After the internal consultation the name “VPU” was dropped and instead the “Minimum Requirements” were referred to simply as a guideline to help improve the level of already existing credit/certificate standards and schemes.

Another frequent point of feedback was to better reference external sources - documents, guidelines, and standards in order to foster “harmonisation” with existing standards. The referencing task was addressed with vigour by a smaller working group, adding many new references to footnotes, in the chapter 4 Terminology of this publication and the Mapping of External Standards (see tables in the Annex I).

A third relevant type of feedback was the need to bring more transparency to the Minimum Requirements by requiring crediting standards to publish the credits issued as well as the methodologies in a publicly accessible manner. This request has been added as a new requirement (chapter 2, 1.4).

Some more specific feedback related to the limited scope of the Minimum Requirements to waste collection activities, instead recommending the extension of the scope to include upstream activities and recycling as well. The Core Group on Plastic Credits decided to retain the limited (recovery) scope recommending similar requirements to be developed for “Upstream and Recycling Activities”. This is explained in chapter 3.2.

As members of PREVENT we are grateful for the many comments and feedback that we received during this consultation round. All comments were given serious consideration.

Annex III - References

SO 14020 series: Environmental statements and programmes for products - Principles and general requirements. https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/#iso:std:iso:14020:en

Prevent Waste Alliance. Discussion Paper: Plastic credit schemes and EPR - risks and opportunities. https://prevent-waste.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/PREVENT_Discussion-Paper_Plastic-credit-schemes-and-EPR.pdf

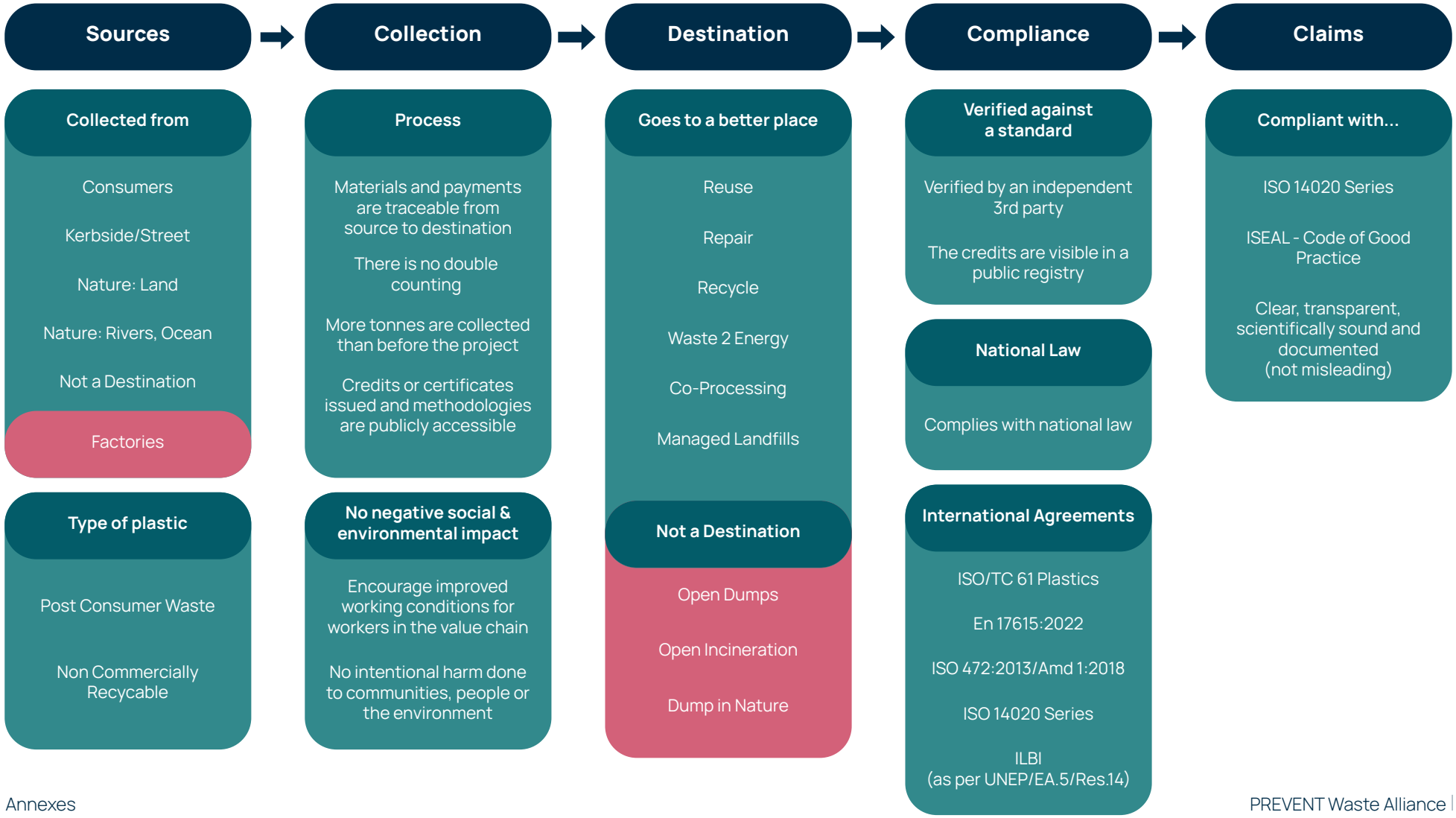
Prevent Waste Alliance. Discussion Paper: Plastic Credits Friend or Foe? https://prevent-waste.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Plastic-Credits-%E2%80%93-Friend-or-Foe.pdf

Wells, Geoff & Pascual, Unai & Stephenson, Chris & Ryan, Casey. (2023). Confronting deep uncertainty in the forest carbon industry. Science. 382. 41-43. 10.1126/science.adh8117.

Global Waste Management Outlook 2024: https://www.unep.org/resources/global-waste-management-outlook-2024

PREVENT Waste Alliance, recordings: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQqTSvAb9aru7indCJORDkA

Annex IV - Quick Reference Card
Minimum Requirements for Plastic Recovery / Collection Crediting Standards & Claims



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