Plan Vivo Project Idea Note (PIN) template & Guidance

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| **PIN Contents** | **Indicative size** |
| What is a Project Idea Note  Conformity with Basic Eligibility Criteria  Summary Information | –  –  150 words |
| Part A: Project Aims & Objectives | 200 words |
| Part B: Proposed Project Area | 500 words (+maps/images) |
| Part C: Identification of Target Groups & Communities  Part D: Land Tenure & Carbon/ES Rights | 350 words  350 words |
| Part E: Project Interventions & Activities | 300 words |
| Part F: Identification of Any Non-Eligible Activities  Part G: Long-Term Sustainability Drivers  Part H: Application Organisation & Proposed Governance Structure | 200 words  350 words  750 words |
| Part I: Community-Led Design Plan | 250 words |
| Part J: Additionality Analysis | 350 words |
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**What is a Project Idea Note?**

The first step in registering a Plan Vivo project is to submit a Project Idea Note (PIN), which allows the Plan Vivo Foundation to assess the applicability of the Plan Vivo Standard and System to the project, to facilitate project design by providing guidance, and to give projects a platform to attract support through inclusion of approved PINs in the pipeline of the Plan Vivo project register.

Before writing and submitting a PIN, applicants should ensure they have consulted the Plan Vivo basic eligibility checklist (see next page) and the latest version of the Plan Vivo Standard to check that the Plan Vivo System is applicable to their project.

**Approval and Registration**

Evaluation of a PIN involves a desk-based review by the Plan Vivo Foundation. For a PIN to be approved it is necessary that the proposed project demonstrates its potential to enhance ecosystem services, promote sustainable livelihoods and protect biodiversity over the long-term. The key elements of demonstrating eligibility are:

**a) Organisational Capacity**

The Project coordinator and any partner organisations have the organisational capacity to undertake a long-term community-led project.

**b) Eligible land-tenure and carbon/ES rights**

The project applies to land over which the target communities have ownership or long-term user rights, and which represents no less than two thirds of the total project area.

**c) Suitable land-use activities**

Project activities are eligible under the 2013 version of the Plan Vivo Standard and are/will be designed to promote sustainable land-use and livelihoods, maintain or enhance biodiversity and produce quantifiable ecosystem benefits such as, but not limited to, carbon sequestration.

**How to Apply**

The report should use the summary table and subsequent headings to present the requested information. An indication of the desired word count is provided in the contents table. Applicants can reference supporting documentation where necessary. Applications (and any question relating to applications) should be submitted to the Plan Vivo Foundation at:

[info@planvivofoundation.org](mailto:info@planvivofoundation.org)

The applicant should include in an email a statement that they have read and intend to apply the Plan Vivo principles in their project (see 2013 Plan Vivo Standard, p.5, available at [www.planvivo.org/governance-of-the-standard](http://www.planvivo.org/governance-of-the-standard)). The application fee must be paid in full prior to PIN registration (for up-to-date information on fees see [www.planvivo.org/tools-and-resources/costs-and-resource-needs](http://www.planvivo.org/tools-and-resources/costs-and-resource-needs)).

**Confidentiality**

The Plan Vivo Foundation evaluates PINs and publishes approved PINs on the Plan Vivo website. If the applicant considers any part of the PIN to contain confidential or sensitive information, the Foundation should be notified of this and instructed to remove such information before its publication.

## Key eligibility checklist for a prospective Plan Vivo project

1. **Start date**

Projects will typically use the 2013 Plan Vivo Standard from the outset. However, it is also possible for a project that is already operational to become an approved Plan Vivo Project, provided it can meet the requirements of 2013 Plan Vivo Standard. No retroactive crediting is possible for activities already implemented.

1. **Project participants**

**2.1. Producers**

* Must be small-scale farmers, land-users or forest dwellers with recognised land tenure or user rights (see below)
* Must be organised, or in the process of being organised, into cooperatives, associations, community-based organisations or other organisational forms able to contribute to the social and economic development of their members and communities and democratically controlled by the members
* Must be able to use existing farmland, forest, woodland or other land type for project activities without undermining livelihood needs
* Producers should not be structurally dependent on permanent hired labour, and should manage their land mainly with their own and their family’s labour force

**2.2. Project coordinators**

* Must be an established legal entity that takes responsibility for the project and meeting the requirements of the Plan Vivo Standard for its duration
* Must have a strong in-country presence and the respect and experience required to work effectively with local communities and partners
* Must be focused and have the organisational capability and an ability to mobilise the necessary resources to develop the project
* Must have the capability to negotiate and deal with government, local organisations & institutions, and buyers of ecosystem services
* Must have the ability to mobilise and train participants, implement and monitor project activities, carry out technical functions
* Must recognise that the decision of producers to participate in project activities is entirely voluntary
* Must recognise that producers own the carbon/ES benefits of the project activities they choose to undertake
* Must ensure that the benefit-sharing arrangement is fair and equitable and that payments are made in a transparent and traceable manner
* Should not draw on more than 40 percent of sales income for ongoing coordination, administration and monitoring costs, save in exceptional circumstances where justification is provided to the Plan Vivo Foundation and a waiver formally agreed

1. **Land status**

Land that is not owned by or subject to user rights of smallholders or communities may be included in the project area if:

* It represents less than a third of the project area at all times
* It was not acquired from smallholders/communities in order to develop the project
* It bestows clear benefits to the project on a landscape level
* It is managed under an executed agreement between the owners/managers and the project participants

1. **Land tenure/ user rights**

* Land tenure or user rights must be secure and stable so that there can be clear ownership, traceability and accountability for ecosystem service benefits such as carbon reduction or sequestration, and the ability to commit to project interventions for the duration of PES Agreements

1. **Project activities**

* Must enable communities to plan and take control of their resources in a sustainable way that promotes rural livelihoods and other environmental and social co-benefits
* Must be able to generate ecosystem service benefits through one or more of the following project intervention types under the Plan Vivo System:
  + **Ecosystem restoration** (e.g. assisted natural generation)
  + **Ecosystem rehabilitation** (e.g. inter-planting naturalised tree species)
  + **Prevention of ecosystem conversion or degradation** (e.g. REDD+)
  + **Improved land use management** (e.g. minimum till agriculture)
* Must be additional, not liable to cause leakage, and provide foundations for permanence, as described in the Plan Vivo Standard
* Must involve the planting and/or promote the restoration or protection of native or naturalised plant and tree species. The use of naturalised (i.e. non-invasive) species is acceptable only where such species are:
  + Preferable to any alternative native species owing to compelling livelihood benefits;
* Specifically selected by communities for this purpose;
* Not going to result in any negative effects on biodiversity or the provision of key ecosystem services in the project and surrounding areas
* Must encourage the development of local capacity and minimise dependency on external support

1. **Expansion ambitions**

* Must be based on an commitment to initiating activities on a pilot basis, gaining experience, and identifying improvements (‘learning by doing’)
* Must be based on practical capabilities ‘on the ground’, not on high-level targets imposed from above

# **Summary Information**

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| --- | --- |
| Project Title |  |
| Project Location – Country/Region/District |  |
| Project Coordinator & Contact Details |  |
| Summary of Proposed Activities  (Max 30 words) |  |
| Summary of Proposed Target Groups  (Max 30 words) |  |

## Project Aims & Objectives

A1 Describe the project’s aims and objectives

* The problem(s) the project will address

## Proposed Project Area

B1 Description of Project Location

* Map(s) showing overall project area(s) and boundaries
* Identification of any legally designated/protected conservation areas within, overlapping or adjacent to the project area
* Physical description of the land, habitat types and land use
* Any known local land degradation processes or trends, including the main drivers of these processes (e.g. population pressure, charcoal production, fire, conversion for agriculture)

B2 Description of Socio-Economic Context (PV requirements 7.2.2-7.2.5)

* Average income and main types of income in the area
* Summary of relevant local and national governance structures

## Identification of Target Groups & Communities

C1 Summarise information for the participating communities/groups/individuals expected to benefit from the project (PV requirements 1.1, 7.2.1, 7.2.7 & 7.2.8)

* Populations
* Cultural, ethnic and social groups
* Marginalised groups
* Gender and age equity
* Local organisational capacity.

## Land Tenure & Carbon Rights

D1 Describe the land tenure context and current understanding of carbon/ES rights for the project area(s) (PV requirements 1.1 & 1.2)

* For smallholders and for community land
* For other land included in the project
* State typical size of land-holdings in the project
* List any conflicts or potential issues related to land tenure, including any national/regional land reforms underway
* Assessment of the difficulty in proving land tenure and/or carbon and ES rights, detailing any measures to clarify or strengthen these rights

*Plan Vivo Certificates are generated through activities where communities or smallholders have rights to implement activities and benefit from payments for ecosystem services. This can be demonstrated through land-tenure or long-term recognised user rights. Deeds of title are not strictly required if tenure can be shown to be lawful and widely recognised. Any activities undertaken on private/government-owned land that individuals or communities have user-rights for require explicit, demonstrable ownership of associated carbon/ES rights*.

## Project Interventions & Activities

E1 Describe the types of interventions included in the project and envisaged to generate PV Certificates (PV requirements 2.1.1-2.1.4), e.g.:

* Ecosystem restoration
* Ecosystem rehabilitation
* Prevention of ecosystem conversion or degradation (includes REDD+)
* Improved land use management

*Applicants must demonstrate a willingness to promote the use of indigenous species and recognise that Plan Vivo activities generating Plan Vivo Certificates must be limited to native and naturalised species*

*While there is no requirement for carbon/ecosystem service (ES) baselines to be defined at PIN stage, any information held on potential carbon/ES benefits can be included here for additional information (PV requirements 5.1-5.8)*

## Identification of Any Non-Eligible Activities

F1 Describe any additional activities to be supported or implemented by the project

* How these additional activities relate to the project objectives

## Long-Term Sustainability Drivers

G1 Description of project design that will ensure the project is self-sustaining after carbon/PES revenues cease

* Project activities such as: high-value sustainable timber, NTFP initiatives, sustainable enterprises, tree nurseries, ecotourism, etc.

## Applicant Organisation & Proposed Governance Structure

H1 Project Organisational Structure (PV requirements 3.1-3.6)

* Identify organisations, communities, groups and individuals that may/will be involved in the governance of the project and their corresponding roles (use diagrams and tables if necessary)
* Project coordinator and legal status – technical functions, administrative functions, and social functions
* Capacity and experience of each organisation involved

H2 Applicant organisation (not necessarily the project coordinator) must provide the following information about itself:

* Legal status (e.g. registered NGO);
* Long-term objectives of the organisation;
* Brief history and achievements;
* Summary of current activities including details of scale and range;
* Personnel to be involved in the project with details of relevant skills and experience.

*If the applicant organisation identifies another organisation to act as the project coordinator, the PIN should be accompanied by a signed statement on behalf of the nominated organisation that the PIN was submitted with their full consent.*

*The Plan Vivo System does not prescribe a specific organisational structure; this will vary depending on the project context. More than one organisation may be involved in implementing a project. There must, however, be one organisation that takes on the role of ‘project coordinator’ and as such is responsible to the Foundation for conformance with the Plan Vivo Standard.*

*Key responsibilities in a Plan Vivo project:*

*Administrative*

* *Registration and recording of plan vivos and sale agreements;*
* *Managing the use of project finance in the Plan Vivo and making payments to producers*
* *Coordinating and recording monitoring*
* *Negotiating sales of Plan vivo Certificates*
* *Reporting to the Plan Vivo Foundation*
* *Contracting project validation and verification*
* *Managing project data.*

*Technical*

* *Providing technical support and training to producers in planning and implementing project activities*
* *Developing, reviewing and updating forestry and agroforestry systems (technical specifications)*
* *Evaluating plan vivos*
* *Monitoring plan vivos*

*Social*

* *Conducting preliminary discussions and continued workshops with communities*
* *Gathering socio-economic information for project registration and reporting purposes*
* *Helping groups/individuals to demonstrate land-tenure*
* *Advising on issues such as mobilisation, setting up bank accounts, dispute resolution, etc.*

*External Technical Support/Project Development Services*

*Project co-ordinators may require technical assistance to develop certain aspects of the project. Potential areas of assistance:*

* *Assisting in technical aspects of project design and development*
* *Providing training to project technicians*
* *Developing carbon/ES modelling and technical specifications*

## Community-Led Design Plan

I1 Submit a plan for achieving community participation in the project, including a mechanism for ongoing consultation with target groups and producers   
(PV requirement 4.1)

*Participation in Plan Vivo projects must be through free, prior, informed consent (FPIC), and demonstrable through consultation and participatory design processes. Projects should, at an early stage, initiate discussions with target groups to identify project activities*

## Additionality Analysis

J1 Description of how project activities additional (PV requirement 5.4)

* Statement that the project is not the product of a legislative decree, or a commercial land-use initiative likely to have been economically viable in its own right
* Description of the current barriers to implementing the proposed project, e.g. lack of finances, lack of technical expertise
* Description of how the project will overcome these barriers.

*Additionality is a key requirement for the sale of carbon services. A project can be described as additional where it and the activities supported by it could not take place without the availability of carbon/PES finance.*

## Notification of Relevant Bodies & Regulations

K1 Provide both of the following (scanned copy of letter, or email):

* Evidence of notification of the relevant national regulatory body of the project proposal (e.g. national climate change focal point, Ministry of Forestry, Dept. of Environment, REDD+ Agency, etc.)
* Statement of intention to comply with all relevant national and international regulations

## Identification of Start-Up Funding

L1 Provide details of how the project will be financed in the development phase, before full project registration

*Start-up funding is an internal issue for project developers. However, start-up funding can be a significant hurdle for new projects as carbon finance only becomes available after technical specifications have been developed, community training undertaken, and multiple other costs such as hiring staff, travel and external consulting costs have been incurred. Therefore projects are encouraged to consider potential funding sources at an early stage.*