

4 Achieving and maintaining IUCN ‘Green List’ status

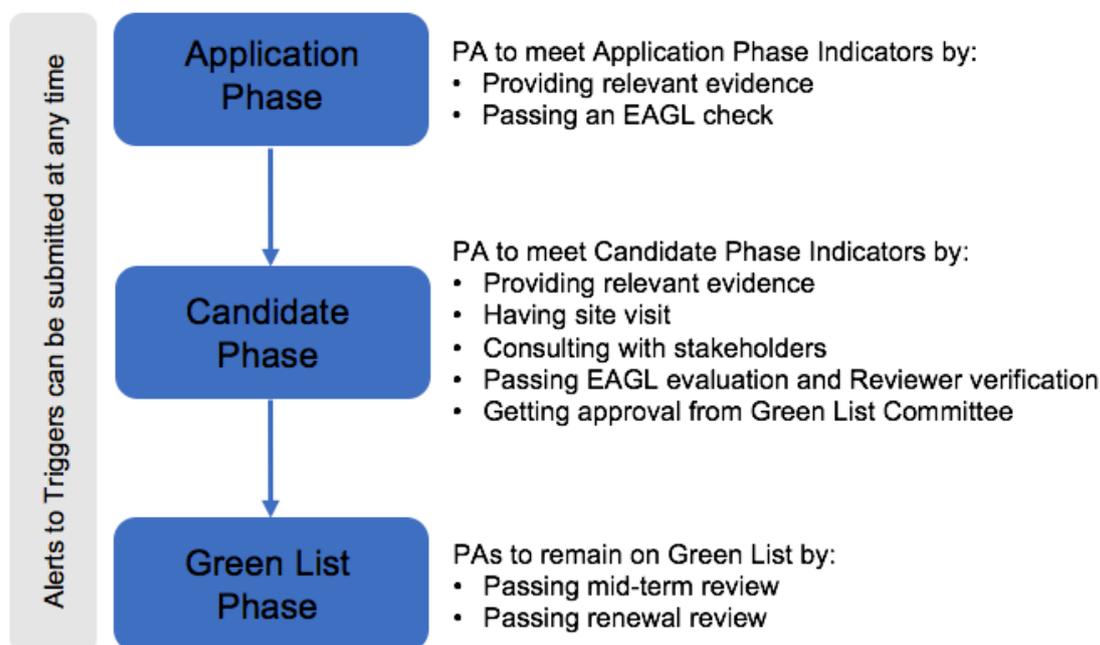


Figure 6: The Green List process (simplified)

To achieve and maintain IUCN Green List status, PAs have to complete an evaluation process that is made up of three phases:

- **Application Phase**, where PAs submit an application form and provide evidence against five basic Indicators of the IUCN Green List Standard
- **Candidate Phase**, where PAs work to gather sufficient evidence to support an evaluation that the PA meets all of the indicators and criteria of the IUCN Green List Standard
- **Green List Phase**, where a Green List PA undertakes a mid-term review to justify continued compliance with the Green List Standard and thereby maintain Green List status.

In the Application Phase, the PA representative shall complete an application form and seek admission to the IUCN Green List Programme. Once admitted, evidence must be provided to show how the site meets the five Adapted Indicators required for this first phase. The Application Phase also includes confirmation by an EAGL representative that the Adapted Indicators of the Application Phase are met. Once this phase is completed, PAs enter the Candidate Phase.

In the Candidate Phase, the PA representative shall demonstrate compliance with the full set of approved Adapted Indicators of the IUCN Green List Standard. This phase will include a site visit by the EAGL, stakeholder consultation, EAGL scrutiny of the PA, and the relevant Reviewer verification of the process that was applied. If

the EAGL and the Reviewer find that the PA meets all Adapted Indicators, the PA will be put forward to the Green List Committee. The Committee will review a summary of the full application of the PA, and take the decision on Green Listing. If successful, the PA will be recognised as a 'Green List site'.

The process for achieving Green List status should generally be concluded within five years.

PAs that are found to meet all of the approved Adapted Indicators are added to the Green List for a period of up to five years. During this Green List Phase, the PA representative needs to demonstrate that they continue to meet the indicator requirements. This will happen via a review after half-term or when an issue or event arises that warrants investigation (see Chapter 4.3 below). Before their Green List status expires, the PA representative needs to consider whether they want to apply for renewal and undergo a light re-evaluation.

The different Phases of the Green List process are described below in detail.

4.1 Application Phase

Participation in the Green List Programme is voluntary and requires commitment to the IUCN Green List Standard by the PA Manager and relevant authority, agency or institution.

As a first step, it should be decided which individual will be responsible for the Green List application of the PA. This can be the PA Manager or an appropriate member of staff of the site or of the respective PA agency. Whoever will take the lead on the site's Green List application must **complete and submit the application form** on <http://iucn.force.com/greenlist>. The form will ask the PA representative for some general information about the site, such as its designation(s), governance and ownership type. It will also require the PA representative to **provide a brief narrative summary on the PA** in its local language and in English. The **summary shall outline the main features of the PA with respect to the four Components of the IUCN Green List Standard and describe the site's major nature values as well as major ecosystem services and cultural values.**

By submitting the form, the PA management commits to:

- Achieve a level of performance that meets the IUCN Green List Standard's criteria
- Use the Green List programme's online platform COMPASS for providing and sharing information and evidence on the PA
- Have relevant information about the PA published on the IUCN Green List website for the purpose of stakeholder engagement

- Have the PA listed on 'Protected Planet', the front-end of the World Database of Protected Areas (WPDA)

PAs should note that some of the information provided via the application form will be fed into Protected Planet.

After submission of the form, the Green List Operations Team shall make sure that the respective EAGL is aware of the site's proposal to join the Green List. Where there is no EAGL in place yet, chapter 5.7 of this document describes the process for setting up an EAGL. Where there are two or more EAGLs available for a PA, the Green List Operations Team will assign the PA application to one specific EAGL.

Once the EAGL confirms that they are ready and able to engage, the Green List Operations Team shall **provide a COMPASS login to the PA representative** named on the application form.

The Operations Team shall **announce that the PA is applying for Green Listing** by:

1. Ensuring the information from the application form is added to COMPASS
2. Informing IUCN member organisations in the jurisdiction of the PA's application for Green Listing via the IUCN and WCPA newsletters and direct communication. IUCN Members can be identified and communicated with through these resources:
<https://www.iucn.org/about/members/iucn-members>
<https://www.iucn.org/about/members/national-and-regional-committees>
<https://www.iucn.org/newsletters>
<https://www.iucn.org/regions>
3. Including the site on the published list of applicant sites.

The PA is now accepted as an applicant for the Green List. It can appoint a Mentor to support its Green List application.

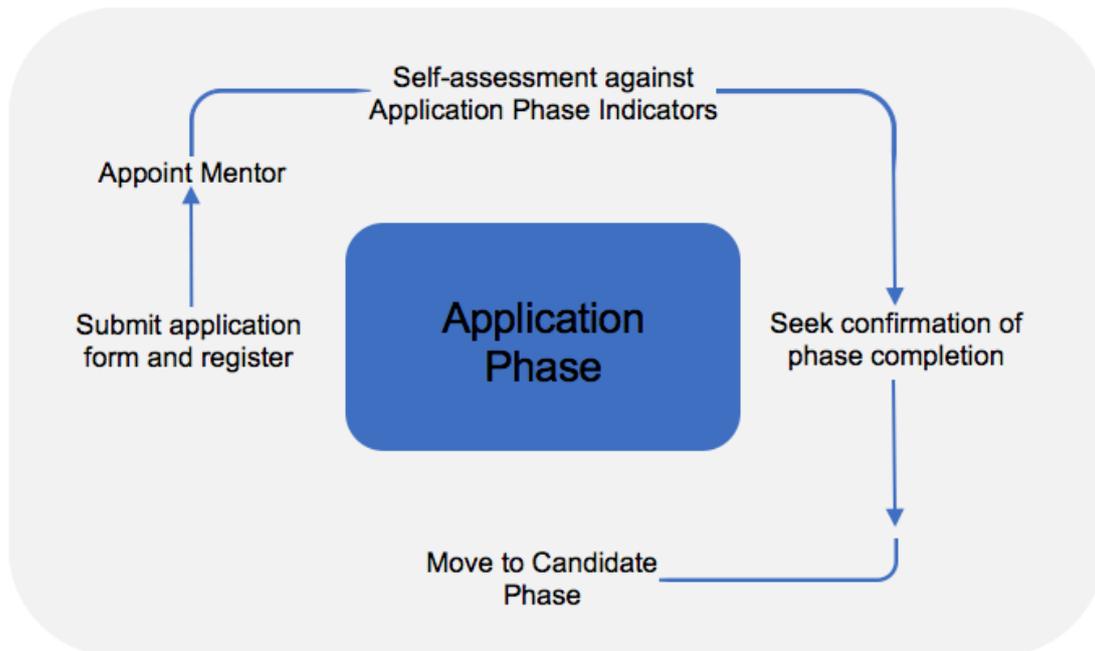


Figure 7: Application Phase

The **PA has to complete a self-assessment** on COMPASS on each of the approved Adapted Indicators of the Application Phase (1.1.1, 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 3.5.3). In the self-assessment, the **PA shall provide arguments and evidence to show that it meets these Indicators.**

Additionally, the **PA representative shall submit at least one ‘solution’ from its various activities to ‘PANORAMA – Solutions for a Healthy Planet’** to describe conservation efforts at the site (see the available guidance on The IUCN Green List and the Panorama platform in the Annex).

The PA representative shall submit the Application Phase to the EAGL via COMPASS to notify them that the phase has been completed.

One of the EAGL members shall check that the self-assessments have been conducted and that evidence has been provided for all approved Adapted Indicators of the Application Phase. The EAGL member shall enter a short statement on COMPASS to **confirm that the Application Phase has been completed.**

NOTE: The PA Solution can also be submitted to the PANORAMA platform in the Candidate Phase. However, since the review process might take some time, it is advised to submit it as early as possible. The review process is external to the Green List programme. As such, it is sufficient for PAs to have submitted their solution to the PANORAMA platform by the time of their evaluation by the EAGL. It is not necessary for the solution to be approved and published by then.

4.2 Candidate Phase

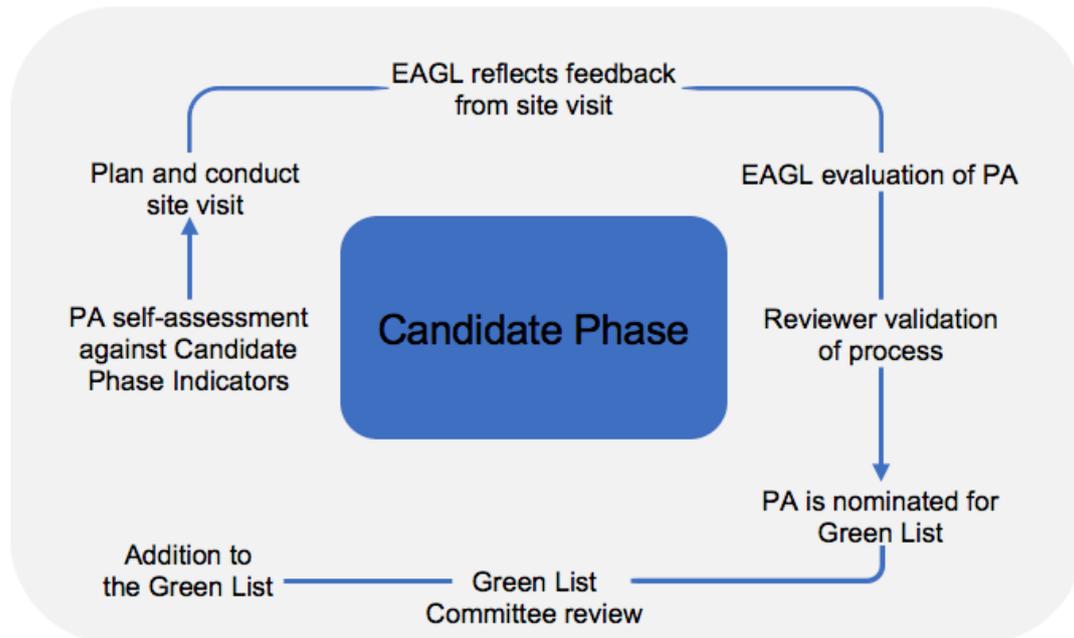


Figure 8: The different steps of the Candidate Phase

During the Candidate Phase, the PA representative works to show that the site meets the Adapted Indicators of the Candidate Phase as outlined in the IUCN Green List Standard. To this end, the PA representative shall conduct self-assessments against all remaining Indicators on COMPASS. For each approved Adapted Indicator that the PA does not yet meet, it shall develop an action plan that is aimed at bringing the PA in line with the necessary requirements. All action plans shall be described on COMPASS (see also the guidance on Action Plans in the Annex). Once all action plans have been successfully implemented and the PA representative considers the site fully compliant with the approved Adapted Indicators of the Green List Standard, the PA representative shall update the self-assessment and submit the Candidate Phase to the EAGL via COMPASS to notify them that the site is ready to be visited and evaluated.

NOTE: For World Heritage sites, there is guidance in the Annex on how the IUCN Green List and World Heritage Programmes cooperate, which is particularly relevant during the Candidate Phase of the Green List.

Site visits

The site visit needs to be planned in close coordination of the site and the EAGL. It can happen as part of the PA's normal stakeholder consultation process, but the PA representative and the EAGL shall ensure that there is sufficient time in the agenda to discuss the Green List application of the PA.

The aim of the site visit is:

- For the EAGL representative(s) to get a first-hand impression of the PA and its performance
- To consult with interested stakeholders on the performance of the PA
- For the EAGL to review any information that is not available in electronic form or that is confidential
- To answer any open questions on the PA and its Green List efforts

The site visit has to be planned and prepared by the EAGL and the PA representative well in advance to ensure it is worthwhile. The Mentor can be asked to help organising and conducting the site visit. Prior to the site visit taking place, a schedule shall be developed by the EAGL and the PA representative, assigning tasks and activities to be carried out and identifying stakeholders that should be consulted on the PA's performance in relation to the Green List Standard. **The site visit schedule has to be submitted to the Reviewer and approved by them to ensure it suits the jurisdictional context.**

Each applicant should receive an appropriate level of visitation and time spent on site. The visiting EAGL members should not have any Conflicts of Interest concerning the PA they plan to visit. Please see the guidance on Site visits and on Conflicts of Interest (COI) in the Annex.

The costs for the site visit will be covered by the PA, unless other arrangements are possible or arranged. The PA Manager / PA agency and key staff should be on site to show around the EAGL and to assist with reviewing information and consulting with stakeholders. The Mentor may join the site visit if the PA representative agrees to cover their costs, or at their own expense.

The site visit must at least include the following key elements to achieve its stated aim:

1. Stakeholder engagement, including:
 - a. Direct engagement with relevant rights-holders and other stakeholders at site and landscape / seascape levels
 - b. Interviews with rights-holders and other stakeholders related to governance arrangements and administrative context of the PA

2. Interviews with site management and staff
3. Field visit(s) to inspect stated condition of relevant PA values
4. Observation of relevant facilities and infrastructure
5. Observation of one or more relevant PA operations.

Not all stakeholders might be able to participate in the site visit. To ensure that all relevant views and information about the PA are taken into account for the purpose of Green Listing, **the PA representative shall point out other appropriate channels for stakeholders to be engaged and communicate their comments on the PA's performance to the EAGL.** To this end, the **PA representative shall assist the Operations Team in publishing the following information at the time the site visit is announced and at least for 30 days on appropriate outlets:**

- The PA's full self-assessment from COMPASS
- The PA's narrative report in the local language
- A solution on the PANORAMA web platform (if already approved and published)
- A map outlining the boundaries and/or important zones of the site
- A means for stakeholders to provide feedback to the EAGL (e.g. through a published form)

The EAGL shall summarise the outcomes of the site visit, including important stakeholder input, on COMPASS.

NOTE: The Annex of this document provides guidance on Stakeholder engagement, on Site visits and also on How to summarise site visits on COMPASS. **EAGLs should also consider the more detailed site visit guidance in the COMPASS library called 'Core Green List Documents'**. It contains details on site visit planning, agenda, budget and reporting.

EAGL evaluation and Reviewer verification

Following the site visit, **the EAGL members shall individually scrutinise the Site's documentation prior to their next meeting.** The EAGL members may discuss PA performance via COMPASS and may reach out to the PA representative and Mentor to raise questions of clarification via the EAGL Chair.

It is advised that EAGL meetings are held face-to-face. However, if an EAGL member cannot be there in person they may participate remotely. **The relevant Reviewer shall be present at the EAGL meeting**, either in person or remotely, to

follow the discussions (see Reviewer Terms of Reference for further details). At the meeting, the EAGL Chair shall establish whether any EAGL members have any personal direct or indirect interests in the PA to be discussed. Any member with a Conflict of Interest shall abstain from voting on the PA for the purpose of Green Listing.

The EAGL shall determine if the PA meets the requirements of the approved Adapted Indicators by engaging in a detailed and open discussion on each of the indicators, based on available evidence, received stakeholder input and the results of the site visit.

When the discussion has concluded, the **EAGL shall conduct a formal voting on the PA. The PA shall be recommended for Green Listing if the EAGL reaches consensus that it meets all approved Adapted Indicators** (see the EAGL Terms of Reference for further details). The EAGL may list time-bound conditions that need to be met by the Site, and will be verified by the EAGL that they are met.

The EAGL shall write an English summary on its discussions regarding the PA. The summary shall include a reflection of the PA's performance against all 4 Components of the Green List Standard, including any initial disagreement the EAGL had about its performance, how these disagreements were resolved, and how the site visit results contributed to the discussion. The summary has to be posted on COMPASS. The full PA application will now be submitted to the relevant Reviewer.

The Reviewer shall validate that the process used by the PA, its Mentor (if applicable) and the EAGL complies with the rules and procedures. They may point to insufficient evidence or stakeholder consultation or a lack of scrutiny by the EAGL. The Reviewer shall share their feedback and any recommendations with the EAGL, who shall take the Reviewer's points into account. Where they do not follow the recommendations of the Reviewer, they shall justify this in writing. Once this step has been completed to the satisfaction of the Reviewer, **the Reviewer shall draft and post an English summary of their findings** on COMPASS. The summary shall reflect on the quality of the applied process and shall describe any initial issues the Reviewer found and how these were resolved.

The PA is now nominated for the Green List and the Reviewer shall submit the PA to the Green List Committee for the final decision on Green Listing.

NOTE: See the available guidance on Conflicts of Interest (COI) in the Annex.

Green List Committee review of Green List nominations

The Green List Committee shall meet with sufficient frequency to decide on Green List nominations, either in person or remotely. Nominated PAs shall be reviewed by the Committee based on:

- The English summary reports by the EAGL and the Reviewer
- The English narrative summaries of the PAs (prepared during the Application phase)

Where the Committee needs clarification on certain points, they may submit a clarification request via COMPASS to the EAGL and the Reviewer.

The Committee's **Green Listing decision shall be made by consensus**. See the Committee's Terms of Reference in chapter 5.3 for operating procedures and voting. Where the Committee cannot reach consensus, the PA shall not be Green Listed.

The decision of the Committee is final.

The Committee shall document their decision on COMPASS to inform the Site, the EAGL, Operations Team and Reviewer and shall liaise with the Operations Team to have the decision published. The Committee may list time-bound conditions that need to be met by the Site, and will be verified by the Committee that they are met.

NOTE: The English summaries of the EAGL and the Reviewer and the decision by the Green List Committee will be published.

4.3 Green List Phase

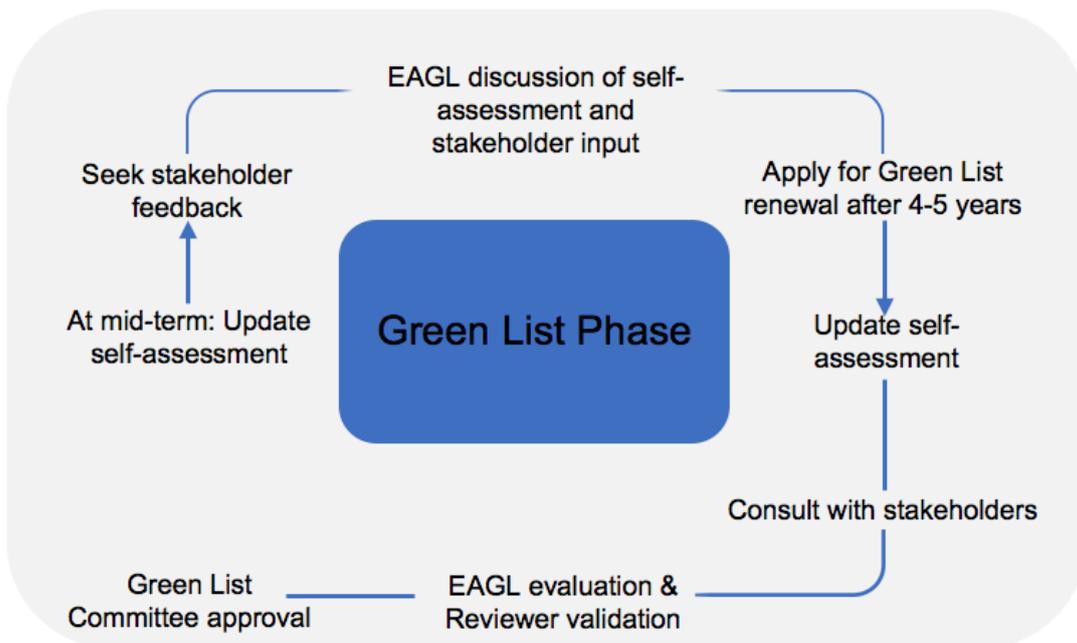


Figure 9: Green List Phase

Green List status is valid for up to 5 years after being awarded, and can be renewed. **After mid-term, the PA representative shall conduct a self-assessment on any Adapted Indicators where its performance has changed.** It shall develop an action plan for each Adapted Indicator where it considers its performance to be in need of improvement. The PA representative shall record the self-assessment and potential action plans on COMPASS.

The EAGL shall discuss the PA update and the likelihood of success of potential action plans. It may request necessary changes to the action plans before granting continued Green List status and confirming this via COMPASS.

The EAGL findings on the mid-term review shall be published via the Operations Team.

Triggers for unscheduled reviews of Green List PAs

In keeping with the Green List principles of credibility and transparency, **‘Triggers’ can set in motion a review of a PA’s Green List status, over and above the normal review and renewal cycle outlined.** The Trigger mechanism ensures that the Green List process can help secure better conservation outcomes and identify and address potential threats to PAs and the values they are meant to protect.

Triggers can stem from developments that have the potential to negatively impact the ability of the PA to meet its conservation goals and which could result in the PA falling out of compliance with the Criteria of the IUCN Green List Standard. These developments could be:

- Changes in Governance of the PA
- Changes in Management of the PA
- Industrial activities or cumulative activities
- Natural disasters or major stochastic events

Any stakeholder can submit an alert to a potential Trigger. This can be done in two ways:

- Email to the Operations Team at greenlist@iucn.org, describing the potential Trigger and with the subject ‘Trigger’ and the name of the PA.
- Written postal communication to IUCN, addressed to the Green List Operations Team, Global Protected Areas Programme, IUCN Headquarters, Rue Mauverney 28, 1196 Gland, Switzerland

In all cases, the alert will be forwarded to the relevant EAGL and to the assigned Reviewer. **Within 30 days of receiving the alert, the EAGL and the Reviewer shall liaise with one another and the EAGL shall provide an initial harmonised response to the party that submitted the alert.**

Following the initial response, **the EAGL shall determine the severity of the alert within a further 30-day period.** This step shall involve an initial investigation and request for further information from the PA representative to determine if the alert qualifies as a Trigger. The investigation may be desk-based or involve interviews or e-communications with relevant experts or stakeholders. The investigation result has to be documented by the EAGL on COMPASS and shared with the Reviewer.

If the Reviewer and EAGL determine that the alert does not qualify as a Trigger because it is of low accuracy, credibility or consequence, the EAGL shall write a brief summary of the alert and of the EAGL investigation, and communicate it to the party that submitted the alert. The response also has to be retained on COMPASS and be published by IUCN. No further action shall be necessary if the alert is not considered a Trigger for an unscheduled review of the PA's Green List status.

If the alert is deemed a Trigger by the EAGL and the Reviewer, **the EAGL shall assign the Trigger to one of the following three categories:**

1. **Precautionary:** The Trigger has a real or potential negative impact on the performance of the PA, but not yet in a way that significantly impairs major site values. However, it could develop into a more Significant or Severe Trigger (as below) if there is no active response to the Trigger.
2. **Significant:** The Trigger has significant negative impact on the performance of the PA and/or on the major site values.
3. **Severe:** The Trigger has severe negative impact on the performance of the PA and/or on the major site values.

The EAGL shall inform the PA of the severity of the Trigger within the 30-day period.

The Trigger categories shall initiate the following actions:

Precautionary Triggers:

- Within 30 days of being notified by the EAGL, the PA representative has to provide a detailed response to the Trigger. If the EAGL is satisfied that the Trigger is explained or addressed in an adequate and timely manner, no further action shall be necessary.

- If the EAGL is not convinced that the Trigger is yet addressed in an adequate and timely manner, the PA representative shall provide an action plan within 60 days, outlining the measures for remediation of the Trigger. The progress and effectiveness of the action plan's implementation shall be reviewed by the EAGL at the next scheduled PA evaluation (being either the mid-term review or the renewal review).
- If at the next evaluation the Trigger has been resolved, no further action shall be necessary. If the Trigger remains, the steps above shall be repeated. If the action plan fails to address the Precautionary Trigger within 2 review cycles, then the PA's Green List status shall be suspended by the EAGL with validation from the Green List Committee, and the Trigger shall be treated as Significant (below).

Significant Triggers:

- Within 30 days of being notified by the EAGL, the PA representative has to provide a detailed response to the Trigger. If the EAGL is satisfied that the Trigger is explained or addressed in an adequate and timely manner, no further action shall be necessary.
- If the EAGL is not convinced that the Trigger is yet addressed in an adequate and timely manner, the PA's Green List status shall be suspended and the PA representative shall provide an action plan within 60 days, outlining the measures for remediation of the Trigger. The Green List Committee shall validate the EAGL's decision to suspend the PA. The EAGL shall review progress and effectiveness of the action plan's implementation at the next scheduled PA evaluation. The EAGL may decide, however, to conduct the review earlier.
- If at the next evaluation the Trigger has been resolved, the PA's Green List status shall be reinstated and no further action shall be necessary. If the Trigger remains, the steps above shall be repeated. If the action plan fails to address the Significant Trigger within 2 review cycles, the PA's Green List status shall be withdrawn by the EAGL with validation from the Green List Committee. In this case, the PA representative can decide to submit a new Green List application once it believes that the Trigger has been removed.

Severe Triggers:

- Within 30 days of being notified by the EAGL, the PA representative has to provide a detailed response to the Trigger. If the EAGL is satisfied that the Trigger is explained, or addressed in an adequate and timely manner, no further action shall be necessary.

- If the EAGL is not convinced that the Trigger is addressed in an adequate and timely manner, yet some progress has been made, the Trigger shall either be reduced to 'Precautionary' or 'Significant' and the steps above shall be followed. However, if the EAGL considers the Trigger to remain 'Severe' the PA's Green List status shall be withdrawn by the EAGL with validation from the Green List Committee. In this case, the PA representative can decide to submit a new Green List application once it believes that the Trigger has been removed.

In all cases, the Reviewer shall validate that the EAGL's investigation of the Trigger has been sound and thorough and that any decisions are based on meaningful evidence.

The EAGL shall inform the PA representative and the party that submitted the Trigger alert of the investigation results. Resolution of the Trigger shall be published.

Green List renewal

The PA representative should apply for renewal about 4 years after having being added to the Green List to ensure that the relisting process can be completed before its Green List status runs out after 5 years. The PA representative shall announce renewal efforts on COMPASS.

Renewal of the Green List status shall follow the same process as for initial Green Listing. However, no site visit is needed. The PA representative has to demonstrate conformance with the Adapted Indicators that are effective at the time it starts its Green List status renewal process.

Since the PA has demonstrated during the initial Green List process that it conforms with the approved Adapted Indicators, it is expected that the effort for renewing its Green List status will be considerably lower.

4.4 Incomplete PA applications

If the PA representative cannot complete the two evaluation phases (Application and Candidate) within five years, but is still committed to achieving Green List status, it shall apply for an extension following the provisions of chapter 6. If a variation is granted, the PA shall continue the process where it left off.

However, if information, data and stakeholder input already provided is older than two years by the time the PA representative considers the site compliant with all the Adapted Indicators of the Application and / or the Candidate phase, it shall update the information and data and shall seek stakeholder feedback once again.

If the site visit had already happened and was conducted more than two years before applying for the variation, the PA representative shall conduct another one and follow the provisions of chapter 4.2.

If a PA representative does not wish to continue seeking Green List status, the PA representative shall state so on COMPASS and the Operations Team shall publish the decision.

4.5 PAs not added to the Green List

If the EAGL or the Green List Committee finds that the applicant PA does not meet the requirements of the approved Adapted Indicators, it shall provide feedback in this regard to the PA representative, Mentor and – if applicable – the EAGL via COMPASS.

The PA representative can resubmit a self-assessment and any additional evidence once they have addressed all of the EAGL's or Green List Committee's concerns, making an addition to the Green List more likely. The re-submission should happen within five years of the EAGL's or Committee's decision to decline.

If provided information, data and stakeholder input is older than two years by the time the PA representative wants to re-submit an application, it shall update the information and data and shall seek stakeholder feedback once again.

If the site visit had already happened more than two years ago, the PA representative shall conduct another one and follow the provisions of chapter 4.2. If a PA representative do not wish to continue seeking Green List status after its application has been rejected, the PA representative shall state so on COMPASS and the Operations Team shall publish the PA's decision.

If it takes the PA representative longer than five years to re-submit an application, the Application phase has to be repeated and all steps of the ensuing process have to be followed if the PA representative wishes to pursue the Green List efforts.