



Publication Date:
14/11/2023

Methodology:
M001

Version:
V1.0

Contact:
Ecosystem Restoration Standard
25 Rue de Frémicourt
75015 Paris, FRANCE
info@ers.org

GUIDELINES

Zonation Guidelines

SUMMARY

This document presents a comprehensive set of guidelines to support Project Developers in carrying out zonation and identifying intervention zones within a Project Area. It outlines the best practices, the step-by-step process ERS requires Developers to follow, and the expected outcomes.



Table of *Contents*

Table of Contents	1
General Guidelines	2
Feasibility Phase	3
STEP 1: DRAFT ZONATION	3
STEP 2: PRELIMINARY ZONATION	3
Delineation of areas impacted by Pre-submission Activities	4
STEP 3: PARTICIPATORY MAPPING	4
Assessment Phase	6
STEP 4: FINAL ZONATION	6
Appendix 1	7
EXAMPLE	7
Example: Montane Forest Project Area	7
REFERENCES	8



General *Guidelines*

- When applicable, the Developer must ensure the Project Area selection and its zonation follow [Free, Prior and Informed Consent Guidelines](#).
- Given their distinct characteristics, such as vegetation biomass, current and historical land use, levels of conservation and degradation, each zone will require different interventions to drive ecological restoration.
- As there exist several ecosystems and landscapes, these guidelines serve as general instructions. Developers are encouraged to read and understand the outlined steps and best adapt them to the local circumstances. Developers should review and implement these processes under the guidance of an ecologist, rangeland expert, forest engineer or related technical expert and communicate their decisions within the [Restoration Plan](#).



Feasibility *Phase*

STEP 1: DRAFT ZONATION

1. The Developer must share with ERS a shapefile of the Project Area, and desktop data on its land use.
 - 1.1. Desktop-data sources can be:
 - 1.1.1. Ground-truthed maps from satellite imagery;
 - 1.1.2. Aerial photos;
 - 1.1.3. Maps of vegetation, soils, and topography that can provide an understanding of the landscape;
 - 1.1.4. Past Project reports;
 - 1.1.5. IPLCs and Stakeholders recorded interviews.
 - 1.2. If the Developer has enough elements, ERS encourages the shapefile to contain a **Draft Zonation**.
2. If the Project is of landscape scale, encompassing multiple ecosystems and/or biomes, the Developer must indicate each in the submitted shapefile.
3. ERS will produce and share with the Developer, a high-resolution landcover map outlining the main distinct landcover types present in the Project Area.

STEP 2: PRELIMINARY ZONATION

1. Based on the data and the land cover analysis, the Developer must determine the Project's **Preliminary Zonation**.
2. Every zone must be characterised by distinct characteristics such as vegetation biomass, land use, levels of conservation and degradation, and



accessibility that require different interventions. Refer to the *Examples* section for more details.

3. If certain zones are populated by invasive species that will be removed as part of the Restoration Plan, the Developer must clearly identify them in the Project Shapefile.
4. If the zones assigned for restoration are isolated from each other, the Developer should increase their connectivity through biological corridors. This applies also to enabling connectivity to the Project's Reference Site.

💡 It is possible to have a Restoration Site that is one homogenous block, not needing to be zoned; Developers must treat such area as a single zone. If non-contiguous land patches with very similar characteristics are found across the site, they can be considered as a single zone.

Delineation of Areas Impacted by Pre-Submission Activities

For Projects that have undertaken pre-submission activities, Developers should clearly delineate and indicate in which areas the tests have been performed and classify them as an individual zone or multiple individual zones. Developers are welcome to include pictures of the areas before, during and after the pre-submission activities.

STEP 3: PARTICIPATORY MAPPING

1. The Developer must engage the local communities during the [Feasibility Interviews](#) and present to them the Preliminary Zonation.
2. The interviews must inform the "Participatory Mapping" tab in the [Ecological Recovery Assessment](#). The Developer must be able to complete it at the end of the feasibility interviews.



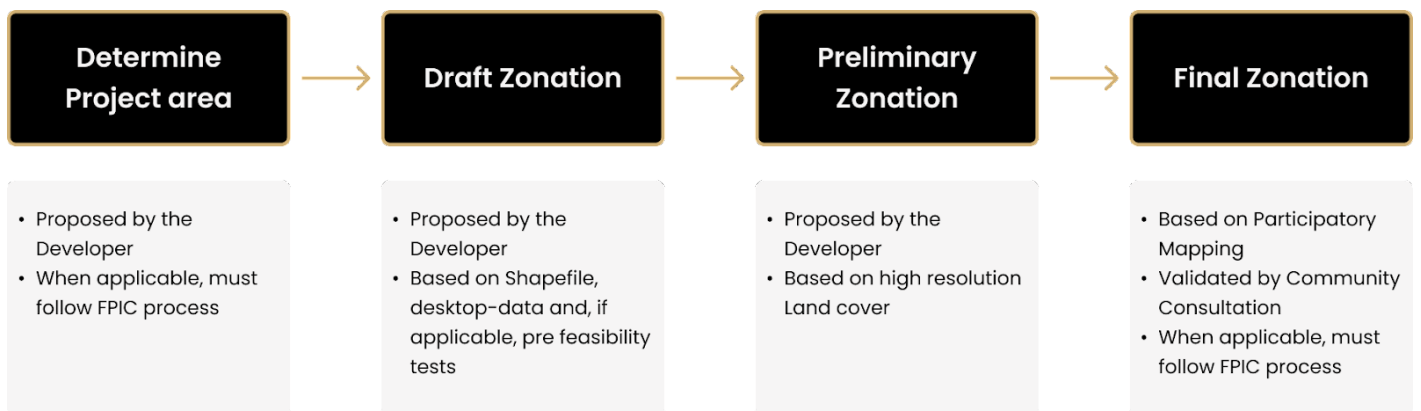
3. When applicable, the Developer must ensure the Participatory Mapping follows FPIC processes, as described in item **1.2** of the [Free, Prior and Informed Consent Guidelines](#).
4. Input from the interviews must be used to refine the Zonation and achieve its final design.



Assessment *Phase*

STEP 4: FINAL ZONATION

- The Final Zonation, resulting from the participatory mapping, must be validated by the Stakeholders during the Community Consultation on Ecological Recovery, as outlined in the [Community Consultation Guidelines](#).
- After Stakeholder validation, the zonation map is eligible for certification.





Appendix 1

EXAMPLE

Here are some examples of how zonation works to define the Project Area. In each intervention zone, the strategies and actions will be tailored to the specific challenges and needs identified through baseline assessments and the reference ecosystem conditions.

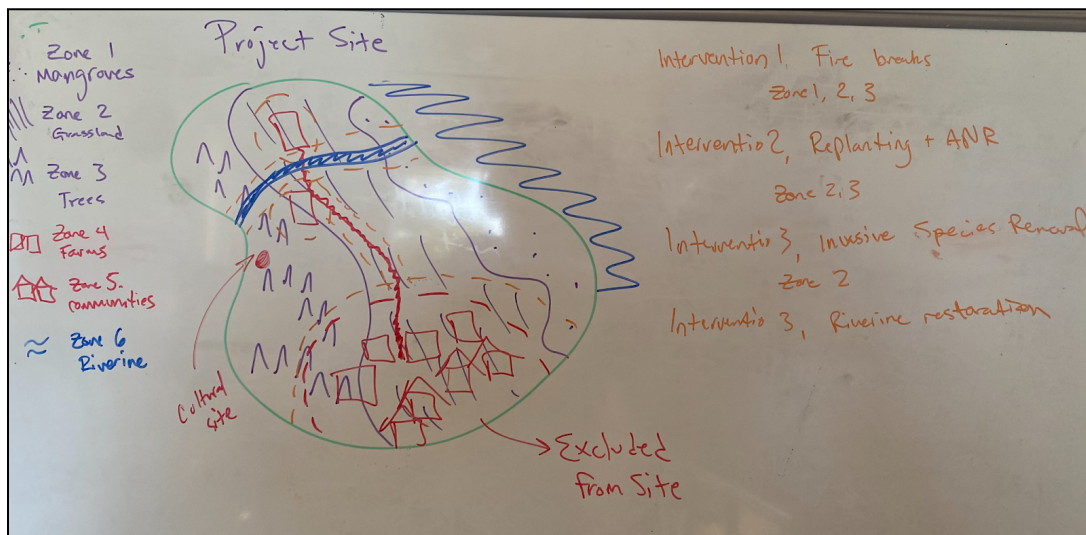


Figure 1. Hand drawn community map

Example: Montane Forest Project Area

Zones:

1. **Lower Forest Zone (Zone 1):** This zone is at the lower elevations of the mountains and typically has a mix of montane and sub-montane vegetation. Trees in this zone are typically shorter, and more spread out than those in higher elevations. This zone has been depleted due to logging. Restoration



here could involve replanting native tree species, controlling invasive species, and possibly improving soil conditions.

2. **Upper Forest Zone (Zone 2):** The forest becomes denser with a more closed canopy. There is often a more diverse understory with a higher abundance of epiphytes and mosses. Soil erosion is a common problem in this zone. Restoration could involve contour planting, terracing, and planting of grasses and shrubs that are effective in holding the soil together.
3. **Riverine Zone (Zone 3):** This zone comprises the areas surrounding rivers and streams flowing through the forest. It is characterised by high levels of biodiversity and is crucial for water retention. Restoration in this zone could aim at protecting the riverbanks and favouring natural regeneration into riparian forests.

REFERENCES

Gann, G. D., McDonald, T., Walder, B., Aronson, J., Nelson, C. R., Jonson, J., ... & Dixon, K. (2019). International principles and standards for the practice of ecological restoration. *Restoration Ecology*, 27(S1), S1-S46.



Ecosystem Restoration Standard

info@ers.org | www.ers.org