



Sustainable Development Verified Impact Standard

CLEAN COOKING- COOK STOVE FOR RURAL INDIA

VALIDATION REPORT



Document Prepared by RINA Services S.p.A (RINA)

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Report title	Clean cooking- cook stove for rural india
Date of Issue	30-May-2024
Version	03.0
Report ID	2023_IQ_MD_23
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Client	EKI Energy Services Limited
Project Title	Clean Cooking- Cook Stove for Rural India
Project Location	India
Summary	

- A brief description of the project: The main purpose of the project is the distribution of fuel-efficient improved cook stoves (ICS) in India, presently distributed in Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Bihar state of India. The Improved cookstove stoves distributed through this project have replaced the low-efficient traditional cookstoves. Through this project, the distribution, and installation of high thermal efficient improved cook stoves (ICS) has been undertaken for households. The ICS burns wood more efficiently thereby improving thermal energy transfer to pots, hence saving fuel wood and greenhouse gases. This will not only lead to reduce deforestation but will also reduce health hazards from indoor air (smoke) pollution, decrease in time spent by women and children for collecting the firewood. The project contributes to the achievement of 11 of the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) of United Nations through the positive impacts generated by the project activities. Additionally, the project is expected to achieve 9,452,380 tCO₂e will be reduced during the course of the seven years of the crediting period as SD VISTA labeled VCUs, as a consequence of the activities implemented to reduce demand for wood fuel, slowing local deforestation and empowering the end-users of India.
- The purpose and scope of validation: The objective of the validation was to conduct an independent assessment of the project design in order to determine its compliance with the requirements of the SD VISTA program, including the appropriateness of the SD VISTA claims and the plans design for their monitoring. The scope of the validation was the review of the sustainable development impacts generated by the project, their contribution to the UN SDG and the benefits for people and prosperity and the benefits for the planet that they imply.
- The method and criteria used for validation: The validation was performed through a combination of document review, interviews and communications with relevant personnel and on-site inspections. The project was assessed in conformance to the criteria set by the SD VISTA program.
- The number of findings raised during validation: During the validation process six clarification requests (CLs) and two Corrective action (CARs) requests (cars) were raised as findings. All findings issued by the RINA audit team during the validation process have been closed.
- Any uncertainties associated with the validation: There are no uncertainties associated with the validation of the project activity. The validation has been done with a reasonable level of assurance.
- Summary of the validation conclusion: The conclusion of this validation report is that the ICS project, as it was described in the project description, conforms with all criteria applicable for validation set by the sustainable development verified impact standard and the SD VISTA program guide, without any qualification nor limitation.

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1 VALIDATION PROCESS

1.1 Objective

RINA Services S.p.A has been contracted by M/s EKI Energy Services Limited (project proponent), to undertake the validation of the project titled “Clean Cooking - Cook Stove for Rural India. The objective of the validation is to have an independent third- party assessment of the SD VISTA Project design in order to determine its compliance with the requirements of the Sustainable Development Verified Impact Standard, as set out by the guidance documents listed in Section 2.1 of this report, including the appropriateness of the SD VISTA claims and the plan design for their monitoring.

1.2 Scope and Criteria

The validation's focus was on the project's contributions to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), as well as the advantages to people, prosperity, and the environment that they entail for sustainable development. In order to do this, the audit evaluated the project's management, stakeholder conditions, natural and ecosystem services, and plans for impact monitoring. It also evaluated the project's design and stakeholder circumstances.

The validation followed the criteria set by the SD VISTA Program. Specifically, by the documents:

- SD VISTA Program Guide, v1.0¹
- Sustainable Development Verified Impact Standard, v1.0²
- SD VISTA Program Definitions, v1.1³

1.3 Level of Assurance

A fair degree of assurance of conformity to the established audit criteria and materiality levels within the audit scope has been obtained through the evaluation. According to Criterion 5.2.3 of the SD VISTA Standard v1.0/16/, the threshold for quantitative materiality with regard to the total of mistakes, omissions, and misrepresentations, individually or collectively, for any reported SD VISTA claim was established at 5%.

¹ <https://verra.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/SD-VISTA-Program-Guide-v1.0.pdf>

² <https://verra.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Sustainable-Development-Verified-Impact-Standard-v1.0.pdf>

³ <https://verra.org/documents/sd-vista-program-fee-schedule-v1-1/>

Before being presented to the customer, every version of the validation report underwent an independent internal technical review to ensure that all validation operations had been done in accordance with the relevant RINA guidelines. A technical reviewer qualified under the RINA qualification framework conducted the technical review.

1.4 Summary Description of the Project

The project activity's goal is to provide enhanced efficient cookstoves (ICS) to rural and semi-urban households throughout Six states of India – Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Gujrat, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar. The project activity seeks to accomplish two goals: distribution of effective ICS among those state's rural and semi-urban families, and creation of livelihood opportunities for the rural families in relation to this distribution.

In order to improve efficiency, decrease fuelwood use, minimize smoke emissions, improve the health and wellness of women, and free up time that may be put to better use, the ICS will deploy a straightforward technical intervention in traditional cookstoves. For families, communities, and non-households, high thermal efficiency improved cook stoves (ICS) are being distributed and installed through this project. The ICS will improve thermal energy transfer to pots and increase the efficiency of wood burning, saving fuel, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Not only will this slow down the quickly advancing deforestation, but it will also lessen the health risks posed by indoor air pollution (smoke) and require women and children to spend less time gathering firewood.

Therefore, the proposed project activity aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by providing above mentioned six states' rural and semi-urban households with fuel-efficient cookstoves. Old, inefficient cookstoves that release more smoke and other GHGs will be replaced by new, upgraded cookstoves that consume less fuel and emit less smoke as part of the project activity (ICS). The overall goals are to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce the amount of firewood consumed, protect forests and woods, and improve the health of ICS users by reducing drudgery in daily cooking and improving indoor air quality.

The project is anticipated to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by an average of 5.4 tCO₂e annually for each project activity instance (ICS) and 2,700,000 tCO₂e annually for the group project activity throughout the course of the crediting period.

1.5 Audit Team Composition

Name	Role in the Team
Ranjit Joshi	Project Manager
Ranjit Joshi	Lead auditor

Cyril

Independent Technical Reviewer

1.6 Method and Criteria

The validation process involved a comprehensive approach that included document review, interviews, communications with relevant personnel, and on-site inspections. The assessment of the project was conducted based on the criteria outlined in Section 2.1 of the report. The findings of the assessment were issued to ensure that the project fully complied with all requirements.

RINA has confirmed that there is sufficient evidence to support the SD VISta claims made by the project. The audit trail clearly demonstrates the evidence and records validating the project's contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The project proponent has provided the necessary evidence to support the claims stated in the Project Description.

The evidence presented to the audit team was collected from reliable and traceable sources, as detailed in the project documents. The data were thoroughly checked during the on-site visit and interviews with relevant stakeholders, ensuring the credibility of the information.

Therefore, RINA affirms that the stated SD VISta claims in the Project Description are accurate and valid.

1.7 Document Review

A comprehensive examination of all project documentation was undertaken to ensure adherence to the SD VISta Program requirements and to identify any deviations. The initial review focused on the Project Description (PD) and encompassed an assessment of project details, implementation schedule, pre-project conditions, stakeholder involvement, expected impacts, and monitoring plans. The reviewed documents included monitoring data, reports on community activities, project proponent (PP) policies, standard operating procedures (SOP), as well as responses to Corrective Action Requests (CARs) and Clarifications (CLs).

The audit encompassed an evaluation of on-site conditions and interviews with the project management team. Direct interviews conducted on-site with relevant stakeholders constituted the primary means to verify the statements and claims presented in the PD, along with the supporting evidence provided by the PP.

For a comprehensive understanding, Appendix I of this report provides a detailed list of the documents submitted by the PP and reviewed by RINA throughout the entire process.

1.8 Interviews

Interviews were performed during the validation site inspection and as part of the overall validation process. The RINA validation team met with individuals with various roles in the project. This included a

series of interviews with on-site and in-country staff that support the mission of the project and other conservation objectives. Onsite interviews and informal discussions were conducted with project staff.

Stakeholders were interviewed both individually and in groups, including local villagers, and representative beneficiaries of all the project activities.

A detailed list of interviewees can be found in appendix- IV

1.9 Site Inspections

The purpose of the site visit was to enable the VVB (Validation and Verification Body) to attain a reasonable assurance level in validating the project claims. It provided an opportunity for the VVB to gain a deeper understanding of the project, verify the implementation of project activities, evaluate the appropriateness of causal chains and identified impacts, assess the relevance of stakeholder groups, and identify potential sources of error to focus on during the desk review process.

The on-site inspections took place between 18-May-2023 to 24-May-2023, in the project area. Its primary objective was to examine the monitoring efforts, including gathering feedback from community members. Ground-truthing and a thorough review of project activities were also conducted.

States	Type of Audit	Date of Audit
Chhattisgarh	Physical	19-May-23
Rajasthan	Remote	18-May-23
Maharashtra	Physical	20-May-23
Gujrat	Remote	22-May-23
Madhya Pradesh	Remote	23-May-23
Bihar	Remote	24-May-23

The following table provides a summary of the activities carried out during the site visit:

Activity & Information	Date
Initial meeting - Introduction and scope of the validation process. - Confirmation of the on-site visit planning. - Clarifications related to monitoring procedures. - Introduction to calculations.	As above

Visit to project area - Randomly selected installations of the activity included in the project. (Considering feasible access), in accordance with the data base provided by the project developer. - Review of operation and records. - Test of monitoring equipment and observation of monitoring practices. - Calibration and/or verification of equipment used (if applicable).	As above
Meetings with stakeholders - Project proponents and staff - Local stakeholders - Community members (including women) benefited by project program	As above
Final meeting - Audit visit closure	As above

1.10 Public Comments

The public commenting period for the project was from 03/02/2023 to 05/03/2023.

No public comment has been received during the public comment period.

1.11 Resolution of Findings

This section provides a summary of the findings obtained during the validation of the project activity. It encompasses the results derived from the document review, assessments, and remote and onsite interviews.

During the validation process, any significant inconsistencies or discrepancies identified were addressed through corrective measures. These corrective measures take the form of Corrective Action Requests (CARs), Clarification Requests (CLs), or Forward Action Requests (FARs).

Corrective Action Requests (CARs) are issued when:

- The project participants have made errors that could impact the project activity's ability to achieve genuine, measurable, verifiable, and additional emission reductions and SDG claims.
- The relevant requirements of VCS/SD VISta have not been met.
- There is a potential risk that the monitoring or quantification of emission reductions and SDG claims cannot be adequately performed.

If the available information is insufficient or lacks clarity to determine compliance with the applicable VCS/SD VISta requirements, a Clarification request (CL) may be issued.

Throughout the validation process, a total of three (03) CARs and no CLs were raised. Further details regarding these CARs/CLs and their resolutions can be found in Appendix 4.

1.12 Forward Action Requests

No Forward Action Request was raised during the validation process.

2 VALIDATION FINDINGS

2.1 Summary of SDG Contributions

The PP has identified a number of project impacts that, via the positive effects produced by the project activities, all of which are of the claim type, help to accomplish 11 of the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

Only the effect of 148,372 tCO₂e emissions reductions, which are anticipated to be achieved over the course of the project, as a result of the initiatives put in place to lower demand for wood fuel, reducing local deforestation, is categorized as a label for SD VISTA labelling. as SD VISTA Labelled VCUs, specifically.

The direct impact of the project on the SDGs as a result of project activities is summarised in the table below.

SDG	Goal	U.N. Sustainable Development Goals	SDG Target ⁴	SDG Indicator	Net impact on SDG indicator	Claim/Label	Asset/Label	Contribution of the project
1	No Poverty	End poverty in all its forms everywhere	1.4	Project specific indicator: No. of households receiving the improved cook stoves as an access to clean fuel and technology.	Implemented activities to increase	SD VISTA VCUs	labeled	The assessment team confirms that the information provided in this table is complete in accordance with SD VISTA requirements. Additionally, in line with the SD VISTA PD template requirement, the project's measure for tracking benefits aligns with the project specific indicator, i.e. of households receiving the improved cook stoves as an access to clean fuel and

⁴ <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/>

							technology. The project proponent (PP) has been found to have appropriately defined the SDG indicator which has been reviewed and deemed appropriate by the Verification and Validation Body (VVB). Furthermore, as the quantification of benefits for this indicator will be directly monitored through the number of improved cookstoves installed which is basically providing the beneficiaries with greater access to basic services in the form of clean cooking technology, the PP has indicated "increase" in the corresponding
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							column for 'net impact on SDG indicator,' which aligns with the SD VISTA requirement. The social well-being and improvement in the life condition of the beneficiary has been confirmed by the project participant during the monitoring survey. The monitoring survey report questionnaire /17/ has been verified. RINA has interviewed with the selected beneficiaries and found satisfied with their feedback. The conclusion mentioned above is drawn based on the review of the SD VISTA PD /01/,
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							supporting documents/17/ well as interviews conducted with representatives of the PP and end-users (recipients of the improved cookstoves).
3	Good Health & Well Being	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages	3.9	Project-specific indicator: Household reporting a reduction in smoke while cooking which indicates improved health of end users.	Implemented activities to decrease	SD VISTA labeled VCUs	The assessment team affirms that the information presented in this table meets the requirements of SD VISTA. Furthermore, in accordance with the SD VISTA PD template requirement, the project has chosen a self-defined measure for tracking benefits that does not align with an official SDG indicator. Therefore, the project proponent (PP) has

							appropriately not provided an indicator number. Instead, a project-specific indicator related to the most relevant SDG target has been provided, which has been reviewed and deemed appropriate by the Verification and Validation Body (VVB). Additionally, since it was either not feasible or the project lacks the necessary resources or intention to directly monitor the parameters required to attribute impacts to a quantifiable change in the indicator, the PP has indicated "implemented activities to decrease." This
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							aligns with the SD VISTA requirement. The conclusion stated above is based on a review of the SD VISTA PD /01/, supporting documents /17/, as well as interviews conducted with representatives of the PP and end-users (recipients of the improved cookstoves). As a result, the assessment team confirms that the information provided in the SD VISTA PD supports the generation of SD VISTA-labeled Verified Carbon Units (VCUs).
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4	Quality education	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all	4.3	Project-specific indicator: Number of individuals who received any informal training to enable their employment in project activity or elsewhere.	Implemented activities to Increase	SD VISta labeled VCUs	The assessment team confirms that the information presented in this table fulfils the requirements of SD VISta. Moreover, as the quantification of benefits for the indicator will be directly monitored by tracking the number of individuals who received any informal training to enhance their employment opportunities within the project activity, the PP has indicated "increase" in the corresponding column for 'net impact on SDG indicator.' This aligns with the SD VISta requirement.
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							The conclusion mentioned above is based on a review of the SD VISTA PD /01/, a review of records of training conducted /18/. Therefore, the assessment team confirms that the information provided in the SD VISTA PD supports the validation of SD VISTA-labeled Verified Carbon Units (VCUs).
5	Gender Equality	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	5.4	Percentage of people reporting reduction in their time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by	Implemented activities to decrease	SD VISTA labeled VCUs	The assessment team affirms that the information presented in this table meets the requirements of SD VISTA. The project contributes to reducing drudgery

				sex, age, and location.			and reducing gender inequality, especially for women and children by saving time spent in collecting fuel wood and cooking as compared to the baseline scenario where nearly 6-8 hours on average, per trip, around thrice a week collecting firewood, The project will lead to time savings and reduced drudgery in 0.57 million households translating to equal number of women as they are primary cooks and fuel wood collectors in most of the households. (PP) has appropriately provided the project
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							specific indicator, Percentage of people reporting reduction in their time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age, and location. The validity and appropriateness of this indicator has been checked and deemed appropriate by the Verification and Validation Body (VVB). The social well-being and improvement in the life condition of the beneficiary has been confirmed by the project participant during the monitoring survey. The monitoring survey report questionnaire /17/ has been verified. RINA has
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							interviewed with the selected beneficiaries and found satisfied with their feedback. The conclusion above is based on a review of the SD Vista PD /01/, supporting documents /17/, and interviews conducted with representatives of the PP and end-users (recipients of the improved cookstoves). Therefore, the assessment team confirms that the information provided in the SD Vista PD supports the validation of SD Vista-labeled
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							Verified Carbon Units (VCUs).
7	Affordable & Clean Energy	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all	7.1	7.1.2 Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology	Implemented activities to Increase	SD VISTA labeled VCUs	The assessment team affirms that the information provided in this table meets the requirements of SD VISTA. Furthermore, in compliance with the SD Vista PD template requirement, the project proponent (PP) has appropriately provided an indicator number for the relevant Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), which has been checked and deemed suitable by the Verification and Validation Body (VVB). The number of efficient cookstoves distributed is the

							indicator to be monitored by the project participant to justify the contribution of the project to the SGDs. Therefore, the assessment team confirms that the information provided in the SD Vista PD supports the validation of SD Vista-labeled Verified Carbon Units (VCUs).
8	Decent Work & Economic Growth	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all	8.5	Project specific indicator: Number of jobs created.	Implemented activities to Increase	SD VISTA labeled VCUs	The project has created direct or indirect employment due associated in manufacturing and distribution of the improved cookstoves to the rural households. The assessment team has verified that the information

							presented in this table fully complies with the SD VISta requirements. Furthermore, in accordance with the SD Vista PD template requirement, the project proponent (PP) has appropriately provided the SDG indicator number which aligns with the project's measure for tracking benefits. This indicator has been reviewed and considered suitable by the Verification and Validation Body (VVB). Additionally, since the quantification of indicator benefits will be directly monitored by tracking the number of individuals employed in the
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							project activity, the PP has indicated an "increase" in the corresponding column for the net impact on the SDG indicator. This aligns with the SD Vista requirement. RINA has checked the employment record/19/ of the project participant and found to be appropriate. The conclusion presented above is based on a comprehensive review of the SD Vista PD /01/, supporting documents /08/ and /19/, as well as interviews conducted with representatives of the PP and
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							distribution team (who are responsible for distribution and monitoring survey of the Improved Cookstoves). As a result, the assessment team confirms that the information provided in the SD Vista PD substantiates the SD Vista-labeled Verified Carbon Units (VCUs).
11	Sustainable cities and communities	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable	11.1	Project-specific indicator: percentage of households reporting a decrease in fire incident compared to the baseline cookstoves.	Implemented activities to decrease	SD VISTA labeled VCUs	The assessment team confirms that the information presented in this table fulfils the requirements of SD VISTA. The project targets lowering the fire/burn incidents caused due to open-fire cooking and

							unsafe cooking practices by distributing the improved cook stoves, characterized by features like easy portability, closed combustion chamber to reduce fire hazards, fuel efficiency to comparatively reduce smoke and soot, coupled with the appropriate training to operate them. Furthermore, the quantification of benefits for the indicator will be directly monitored by tracking the number of households reporting a decrease in fire incident compared to the baseline cookstoves
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							during the monitoring survey. The project proponent (PP) has appropriately indicated an "decrease" in the corresponding column for 'net impact on SDG indicator,' which aligns with the SD VISTA requirement. The conclusion mentioned above is drawn from a comprehensive review of the SD VISTA PD /01/, Improved cookstove database/20/, training records/18/ physical inspection of improved cookstoves during onsite verification, and interviews conducted with
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							representatives of the PP and end-users (recipients of the Improved Cookstoves). In summary, the assessment team confirms that the provided information in the SD VISTA PD substantiates the SD VISTA-labeled Verified Carbon Units (VCUs). Therefore, the assessment team confirms that the information provided in the SD VISTA PD supports the validation of SD VISTA-labeled Verified Carbon Units (VCUs).
12	Responsible production & consumption	Ensure sustainable consumption and	12.0	Project-specific indicators: Tons of renewable woody biomass	Implemented activities to Increase	SD VISTA labeled VCUs	The assessment team confirms that the information presented in this table fulfils the

		production patterns		(firewood) saved.			requirements of SD VISTA. Furthermore, in compliance with the SD VISTA PD template requirement, since the project has chosen a self-defined measure for tracking benefits that does not align with an officially defined UN SDG indicator, the project proponent (PP) has appropriately not provided an indicator number. Instead, a project-specific indicator related to the most relevant SDG target has been provided, which has been reviewed and deemed appropriate by the Verification and Validation Body (VVB).
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							Furthermore, the quantification of benefits for the indicator will be directly monitored by tracking the quantity (Tons) of renewable woody biomass (firewood) saved compared to the baseline cookstoves through monitoring survey. The calculation approach of the quantity of woody biomass (firewood) saved/02/ has been verified by the RINA and found appropriate. The project proponent (PP) has appropriately indicated an "increase" in the corresponding column for 'net
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							impact on SDG indicator,' which aligns with the SD VISTA requirement. The conclusion mentioned above is drawn from the review of the SD Vista PD /01/, supporting documents /11/20/, and interviews conducted with representatives of the PP and end-users (recipients of the Improved Cookstoves). In summary, the assessment team confirms that the provided information in the SD VISTA PD substantiates the SD VISTA-labeled Verified Carbon Units (VCUs). Therefore,
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							the assessment team confirms that the information provided in the SD VISTA PD supports the validation of SD VISTA-labeled Verified Carbon Units (VCUs).
13	Climate Action	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts	13.0	13.0 Tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions avoided	Implemented activities to decrease	SD VISTA labeled VCUs	The assessment team affirms that the information presented in this table fully complies with the requirements of SD VISTA. Additionally, in accordance with the SD Vista PD template, since the project has established its own measure for tracking benefits that is not aligned with an official SDG indicator, the project proponent (PP) has appropriately chosen

							not to provide an indicator number. Instead, a project-specific indicator has been proposed, which pertains to the most relevant SDG target. This indicator has been carefully evaluated and deemed suitable by the Verification Body (VVB). The calculation approach of the quantity CO2 saved due to the implementation of the project/02/ has been verified by RINA and found appropriate. Furthermore, as the quantification of benefits for this indicator will be monitored through the reduction in
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							greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions compared to the baseline scenario of open-fire cooking, the PP has specified "decrease" in the column corresponding to the 'net impact on SDG indicator.' This alignment with the SD Vista requirement is considered appropriate. The conclusion outlined above is derived from a comprehensive review of the SD Vista PD (document reference /01/), pertinent supporting documents (document reference /02/), and insightful interviews conducted with
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							representatives of the PP as well as end-users who have received the Improved Cookstoves (ICS). In summary, the assessment team verifies that the information provided in the SD VISTA PD substantiates the SD VISTA-labeled Verified Carbon Units (VCUs).
15	Life on Land	Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and	15.2	Project-specific indicators: Tons of non-renewable woody biomass (firewood) saved.	Implemented activities to Increase	SD VISTA labeled VCUs	The assessment team confirms that the information presented in this table fulfils the requirements of SD VISTA. Furthermore, in compliance with the SD VISTA PD template requirement, since the project has chosen a self-

		halt biodiversity loss					defined measure for tracking benefits that does not align with an officially defined UN SDG indicator, the project proponent (PP) has appropriately not provided an indicator number. Instead, a project-specific indicator related to the most relevant SDG target has been provided, which has been reviewed and deemed appropriate by the Verification and Validation Body (VVB). The calculation approach of the quantity of woody biomass (firewood) saved/02/ has been verified by RINA and found appropriate.
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							Furthermore, the quantification of benefits for the indicator will be directly monitored by tracking the quantity (Tons) Tons of non-renewable woody biomass (firewood) saved compared to the baseline cookstoves through monitoring survey. Moreover, since the quantification of the indicator's benefits relies on monitoring the parameter "non-renewable woody biomass (firewood) saved," which measures the amount of non-renewable fuel wood consumed by the project stoves during the project activity, the PP has indicated an "increase" in the
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							corresponding column for the 'net impact on SDG indicator.' This aligns with the requirements of SD Vista. The project proponent (PP) has appropriately indicated an "increase" in the corresponding column for 'net impact on SDG indicator,' which aligns with the SD VISTA requirement. The conclusion mentioned above is drawn from the review of the SD Vista PD /01/, supporting documents /02/, and interviews conducted with representatives of the PP and end-users (recipients of
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							the Improved Cookstoves).
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The audit team conducted a thorough examination of the project's impacts on people, their prosperity, and the planet. They followed the causal chains outlined by the PP and evaluated their validity based on predefined conditions, the nature of the project activities and their objectives, the evidence provided, and the information gathered during the site visit (including observations of project activities and stakeholder testimonies). Additionally, the audit team drew upon their own expertise to assess the impacts. RINA is confident in confirming that the impacts have been clearly identified and appropriately attributed to the project's contribution to the SDGs.

The information presented in the PD/01/, along with the additional evidence provided, supports all the claims made by the PP. The audit team believes that the information pertaining to the projected contribution to the SDGs, associated SDG indicators, and net impact is comprehensive, credible, well-substantiated, and compliant with the requirements of SD VISta.

2.2 Project Design

2.2.1 Project Objectives

The main goal of the project is to decrease greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere. This will be achieved by replacing open cooking fires with ICS. These actions will reduce the amount of fuelwood needed, thereby decreasing energy demand. Additionally, the project aims to protect local biodiversity by reducing the demand for fuelwood, which in turn slows down deforestation. This approach promotes more sustainable land use, reduces erosion rates, and increases biodiversity. Furthermore, the project contributes to the local sustainable development by providing training and employment opportunities for the local population.

Sustainable Development Objectives of the project activity are:

Summary of objectives listing goal to claim for SDG labels and further corresponding evidence of the project activity are as follows:

Economic Wellbeing

The project will provide access to a basic service, i.e., modern energy in the form of clean cooking alternative to the rural and peri-urban communities of India. The project will lead to a distribution of 0.5 million energy-efficient ICS throughout its lifetime. Thus, the project will achieve:

SDG GOAL 1: ICS will provide clean energy which is a basic service necessary to lead a healthy and productive life, including saving time and money at the household level (1.4)

Further, the project will result in generating employment opportunities, both long-term as well as short-term, for the local individuals in the six states of India. Long-term employment under the project refers to engaging individuals for at least six months while short-term refers to an engagement of a minimum of 1 week. The reduction of smoke and carbon emission and fuel consumption lead to the conclusion that the

life condition of the participating households by the way of saving in fuel expenses and smoke less cooking experience.

SDG GOAL 8: Contracting of individuals on full-time and part-time basis with a focus on hiring local people and women (8.5) .

SDG GOAL 9: The project will generate employment opportunities in SME (manufacturing) sector (9.3).

Employment records/19/ provided by the project participant were verified by the audit team and found to be satisfactory.

Social Wellbeing

The project is envisaged to improve the overall social well-being within the project implementation area by yielding human health benefits, increasing awareness levels, reducing gender inequality, and providing access to clean cooking technology to economically weaker sections of the society that does not have affordability and access to this technology. Each of the benefit aligned with respective SDG has been explained in the following points:

The projects will address SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 7 and SDG 11 in the following ways:

SDG GOAL 4: Contribute to increasing vocational and relevant skills of local individuals by introducing them to issues related to climate change, and bring awareness about importance of sustainable development, health, nutrition, and well-being, through formal and informal training which will enhance their avenues for getting decent jobs and employment opportunities (4.4). The training procedure has been found to be adequately defined by the project participant; the training records/18/ were verified by the audit team and found to be appropriate.

The employed individuals will be provided with regular trainings to enhance their vocational skills related to various aspects of project implementation and monitoring which would increase their employability and chances of getting long-term employment even after the completion of the project. Field executive officer, will be specifically trained in stove operation and GHG awareness.

SDG Goal 5: Usage of ICS will reduce women and children's drudgery through times savings by reducing time spent cutting, collecting, and carrying firewood from trees far removed from households and reduce time spent cooking over toxic smoky open fires. These tasks are a major cause of gender inequality in rural communities of India which will be addressed by the project activities by providing the women and children opportunities to involve in more productive activities (5.4).

By switching to fuel in small, twig-sized pieces of woody biomass, women, and girls save time collecting, cutting, and carrying heavy wood over long distances. Also, as the ICS burns at a higher temperature, with less fuel used, due to combustion chamber and stove design, cooking the day's meal takes approximately an hour less than it would take to cook the same meal with the baseline stove. The beneficiaries were interviewed by the audit team during onsite and remote audit to share their feedback.

Their cooking experience in regard to reduction in cooking duration, fuel quantity and smoke was found to be unequivocal and unanimous during the audit process.

Children, particularly girls, are frequently kept at home to support household chores, like cooking and collecting firewood, estimated on average to be 10 hours per week, with an ICS more time can be dedicated to education – attending school and studying.

SDG Goal 7: The primary activity under the project is distribution of ICSs free of cost to six states of the Indian population that are predominantly reliant on wood fuel based basic stoves for meeting their cooking need and are unable to afford improved cookstoves. It will reduce emission of PM 2.5 and CO resulting in lowering of household air pollution due to the use of the ICS and mitigate the environmental impact of traditional stoves, improving well-being for women and children (7.1). Being a clean cooking technology, ICS provides an essential tool to address sustainable energy security in approximately 0.50 million households in India during the project lifecycle, the project will generate an overall positive impact on the community. The ICSs distributed were physically verified by the audit team during onsite verification on sample basis. The database for the distributed beneficiaries/20/ maintained by the project participant were verified by the audit team and found to be appropriate. The technical specifications/04/ of the ICS distributed to verify the designed functional parameters and found to be appropriate.

SDG Goal 11: Beneficiaries will stop using open fire after the successful installation of 0.5 million ICSs. Because of its portability, ICSs can be easily installed anywhere in the home, providing security against environmental risks like CO₂, CO & pm_{2.5} emissions as well as will reduce accidental burns in infants and children due to its design comprising of a closed combustion chamber and stable base. A safer and healthier cooking environment will be promoted by regular monitoring which will show a reduction in fire incidents and emissions compared to baseline cookstoves (11.1).

Environmental Wellbeing

The distribution of ICSs is expected to reduce the fuelwood consumption for cooking purpose which will not only reduce the amount of GHG emissions being released in the atmosphere but also reduce the burden on forest ecosystems in and around the project area. Thus, the project will contribute to SDG 3, SDG 12, SDG 13 and SDG 15 in the following ways:

SDG Goal 3: Reduce emission of smoke, fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) and CO resulting in lowering of household air pollution due to use of the ICS, improving well-being for women and children (3.9).

Goal 12: Reduce firewood consumption and dependence on renewable biomass. This will promote the efficient utilization of renewable biomass resources while achieving sustainable energy practices (12.0).

Goal 13: Reduce carbon emissions by approximately 9,453,233 tCO₂e due to the replacement of baseline stoves with ICS over 7 years of the first crediting period (13.0)

Goal 15: Reduce deforestation and degradation by up to 1.34 million tons during the first crediting period (15.2). Forest, observed as a public place is often used for the collection of non-renewable fuelwoods, which significantly contributes to deforestation and degradation. The distribution of the ICSs will reduce non-renewable fuelwood consumption and hence reduce the pressure on the forests. Due to ICS's efficiency and widespread community use, there will be a reduction in non-renewable firewood collection resulting in better management of protected areas.

The calculation approach of quantity of fuel wood and carbon emission saved reported is verified by the audit team from the ER estimation spread sheet/02/ and found to be appropriate.

According to RINA's assessment, the PP has effectively outlined the sustainable development goals of the project. These objectives are well-suited to the project's nature, planned activities, and the context of sustainable development within which it is being carried out. The stated objectives align with the principles underlying the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by focusing on enhancing the well-being of individuals, safeguarding ecosystems and biodiversity, strengthening institutions, and fostering global partnerships in a sustainable, equitable, and non-discriminatory manner.

2.2.2 Project Activities

The main focus of the project is to distribute and install the ICSs in Indian states. RINA has evaluated the primary objective through a review of the SD VISta PD /01/, supporting evidence provided, and interviews conducted with the project proponent's representative and stakeholders.

2.2.3 Implementation Schedule

The PP has included a comprehensive list of key dates and milestones in the development and implementation of the project in section 2.1.3 of the PD. The initial milestones reported in the PD pertain to the early phases of project establishment. According to the official records provided by the PP, the project start date is declared as 16-June-2022, coinciding with the implementation of a new series of ICS installations under the project activity "Clean Cooking- Cook Stove for Rural India". The audit team had access to the beneficiary agreement, and upon verification, it was confirmed that the content and issuance date were accurate. Consequently, the project start date aligns with the definition stated in Criterion 2.14 of SD VISta v1.0 and SD VISta Program Definitions v1.0, referring to the date when activities leading to sustainable development benefits are initiated.

The implementation schedule provided in the PD/01/ indicates the start date of the project activity. At the time of the validation, the project activity had already commenced. The audit team confirmed the accuracy of this information by conducting on-site inspections and observing the progress of project activity.

2.2.4 Project Proponent and Other Entities Involved in the Project

EKI Energy Services Limited and Vitol Asia Pte Ltd are the project proponents, and there are no other entities involved in the project.

Throughout the validation process, the audit team conducted a thorough verification and confirmed that EKI Energy Services Limited and Vitol Asia Pte Ltd are the exclusive entities participating in the project, and their role and responsibilities were duly established. The entities involved in manufacturing and distribution of the improved cookstoves are incorporated appropriately in the PD/1/. The audit team concludes that the contact and entity information provided in the PD aligns with the requirements outlined in SD VISta.

2.2.5 Project Type

The ICS project falls under the category of a grouped project and does not belong to the AFOLU sector. The audit team has verified and confirmed that the project's general sector is energy efficiency. This determination was made based on a comprehensive assessment of the project's objectives and the planned and executed project activities.

2.2.6 Project Location

The project is implemented within the geographical limits of India, specifically between the coordinates of Latitude 8° 4' to 37° 6' N and Longitude 68° 7' to 97° 25' E. This information is documented in validated VCS PD of the project /02/. Through remote interviews and a thorough review of SD VISta /01/ the assessment team from RINA confirmed the project's location, including the accuracy of the project activity's location and project boundaries.

2.2.7 Baseline Scenario

In section 2.1.8 of the PD/01/, the PP has presented a concise overview of the social, economic, and natural capital conditions that existed at the beginning of the project in connection with the project activities. The summary of the reported baseline scenario is as follows:

Fire still held to be an important aspect of daily life, this reverence for fire and the three-stone hearth, along with key economic factors, have preserved the use of three stone fire cook stoves within the home for cooking. Smoke inside the home exposes women and children to harmful HAP levels.

The audit team primarily relied on direct testimonies from local stakeholders, gathered through interviews conducted during the site visit, to assess the appropriateness of the baseline scenario defined by the PP. Key questions such as "What was the situation before the project start?" or "How has your life changed since the start of the project activities?" were asked to obtain relevant evidence for the assessment. Additionally, observing the surroundings of the project area helped provide context for understanding the hypothetical situation in the absence of the project.

The project proponent has selected the households living below poverty line, and using only their traditional cook stoves (mud or three-stone cook stoves) as the target end-users to distribute the improved cookstoves. The end user agreements by the project proponent are executed with the rural households who have been using the conventional three stone cookstoves. The sample end user agreements/03/ submitted to the RINA team are verified and found to be appropriate.

Based on the evidence collected, RINA can confidently affirm the accuracy and credibility of the description of the social, economic, and natural capital conditions at the start of the project as provided by the PP in the project documentation.

2.2.8 Causal Chain(s)

The project proponent (PP) presented a causal chain in the project documentation (PD) that outlined the outputs, outcomes, and impacts of the project. The causal chain distinguished between negative and positive impacts on the planet, as well as impacts on people and prosperity.

The assessment team from RINA evaluated the causal chain provided by the PP in Appendix A of the SD VISta PD. This assessment was conducted through on-site observations during the audit and a review of relevant documents. The project's causal chain effectively justified the segregation of impacts on the planet, people, and prosperity. The PP identified several benefits within the causal chain, including employment generation, technology transfer and skill building, increased incomes and livelihoods, economic prosperity and development in the region, reduction in carbon emissions, and sustainable development.

After a thorough review of the evidence provided by the PP and gathering information through direct interviews and inspections during the site visit, the audit team validated all the causal chains outlined in Appendix A of the PD. According to RINA, the PP has appropriately and comprehensively described the cause-and-effect relationships resulting from the project activities. They have correctly traced all the direct positive and negative, intended and unintended impacts on the planet, people, and prosperity, as required by Criterion 2.1.5 of the SD VISta v1.0. The audit team believes that the PP has included all reasonable effects of the project activities in the causal chains.

Furthermore, the PP has clearly documented in the causal chains which impacts of the project activities are related to people and their prosperity, and which are related to the planet. It is important to note that no SD VISta assets are expected to be generated by the project.

2.2.9 Threats to the Project

The PP has provided a description of both natural and human-induced threats to the anticipated sustainable development benefits throughout the project's lifespan. These threats include challenges such as cultural resistance to adopting the Agneekaa Eco Mini Stove, stove modifications by owners, lack of maintenance, and potential price increases. Additionally, factors like climate change and deforestation have made firewood an unsustainable fuel source, leading to negative impacts on agricultural yields and reducing community income, which in turn affects the availability of funds for purchasing ICSs.

To address these threats, the PP has implemented several strategies. These include employing a distribution team fluent in participants' native language and well-versed in their cultural perspectives, implementing an improved screening process to identify recipients committed to using the ICS to achieve the SDGs, educating stove recipients on best practices and the

environmental and economic benefits, and maintaining an extensive information dissemination schedule through social media platforms to emphasize the importance of using the ICS appropriately to maximize benefits for both people and the planet.

Based on a thorough evaluation, RINA affirms that the PP has accurately and comprehensively identified the threats to the project's benefits. Furthermore, RINA acknowledges that the PP has developed and is actively implementing measures to mitigate and minimize these threats.

2.2.10 Benefit Permanence

The PP affirms that the project is centred around an educational program and supports a maintenance system aimed at extending the lifespan of the deployed environmental technologies.

To guarantee the long-term sustainability and durability of the ICS, PP has established the following long-term objectives:

- Implementation of a continuous grievance redressal mechanism: This mechanism addresses challenges related to distributed cookstoves and other concerns associated with the project activity, fostering trust and a sense of belonging among the beneficiaries.
- The PP offers technical training to Distribution Partners and local staff members to ensure effective project implementation and minimize non-adoption. These trainings also focus on disseminating knowledge about the benefits and co-benefits associated with the adoption of ICS.

The assessment team of RINA conducted a verification of the benefit-permanence activities through site audit and remote interviews. They conclude that these measures are likely to achieve the sustainable development goals of the project and are expected to endure beyond its lifespan.

2.3 Stakeholder Engagement

2.3.1 Stakeholder Identification

The PP conducted stakeholder identification by considering individuals, groups, or communities who fall into two categories: (1) those directly affected or likely to be affected by project activities and (2) those with an interest in the project. The first category specifically includes marginalized and/or vulnerable individuals and groups, while the second category encompasses broader stakeholders who may not experience direct project impacts but can provide insights on risks and opportunities associated with project activities.

The following stakeholders have been considered within each category: government authorities, environmental public-sector agencies, local NGOs and businesses, academics, religious groups, the media, and individuals and families in nearby communities. Special attention is given to individuals and groups who may be directly or potentially adversely affected by project activities.

Based on the nature and location of the project, as well as the conditions prior to its implementation, the audit team assessed the potential effects of the project on institutions (both governmental and non-governmental), civil society, and private companies. After reviewing the evidence provided by the PP and gathering information during the site visit, the audit team concludes that the PP's approach to stakeholder identification was accurate and the rationale behind it was appropriate for the local context of the project. Therefore, RINA affirms that the process has successfully identified all stakeholders who might be impacted by the project activities.

2.3.2 Stakeholder Description

The PP described the following stakeholders in the PD:

A. Directly affected parties:

Directly affected parties can be further subdivided into four categories:

- a) **Current Beneficiary (ICS registered users):** *These beneficiaries are identified as any family/individuals/women who are involved in cooking in the household of the project area and interested to adopt the improved and clean technology. Beneficiary families are those living in or sharing the same family compound as project beneficiaries. During distribution of ICS, PP gives priority to the households whose extended family has already demonstrated successful adaptation to the new technology. PP also has a strict policy against providing Improved cookstoves to family members of those who have intentionally altered or destroyed a previously installed stove. The distributed technology i.e., ICS is being distributed free of cost by the PP to increase economic productivity and reduce the health impact due to indoor air pollution of the family.*
- b) **Potential beneficiaries (New Users and potential adopters):** *PP seeks out new beneficiaries through marketing, sensitization activities, active engagement and interaction with community leaders, organizations such as Self-Help Groups and community forums, local collaborations with university and government institutions, and stakeholder consultation. Considering project's target, demographics are individuals and households in rural settings, present and future beneficiaries often have similar characteristics within India. This strategy is intended to minimize the demand for the traditional cookstoves.*
- c) **Distribution Partner-Organizations collaborating with PP:** *Distribution Partners have a local presence, community networks, and experience with on-ground scenarios, giving them an advantage in setting the project on the ground. The initiative directly benefits or influences the Distribution Partners through learning, improved employability, and monetary benefits resulting from project implementation.*
- d) **PP's on-ground staff:** *PP carries out its development activities in host nations by engaging the local workforce at various project development and implementation stages. These individuals receive employment and additional training opportunities throughout the project from the organization, improving their chances of landing a job after the project's completion.*

B. Indirectly affected parties:

- a) **Governmental Authorities:** Through "Courtesy Calls," PP and implementing partners approach local governments to provide information and input on proposed projects and target populations. Through these "Courtesy Calls," PP teams obtain authorization from local authorities to operate in certain regions.
- b) **Environment, Health, and Nutrition public-sector agencies:** In-country organizations that work in parallel with PP's programs via implementation may operate in the same geographical regions or oversee initiatives that may touch on comparable sectors as PP's projects.
- c) **Academic Institutions:** PP welcomes interested academic institutions to study their work at any level and is dedicated to collaboration and financing. To better understand the advantages and disadvantages as well as how to highlight the positive aspects and mitigate the negative ones, PP are especially interested in doing direct household-level research of beneficiaries for PP.
- d) **Local and International NGOs:** In-country partners who collaborate with PP on project execution may operate in the same geographical areas or on initiatives that touch on similar sectors as the programs implemented by PP.

Others, as applicable and interested: PP encourages input and interest in the initiatives from sources not indicated in this description. However, PP reserves the right to act on feedback and communicate with the party providing feedback to ensure it is constructive.

During the site visit, the audit team conducted interviews with representatives from various stakeholder groups as described in the PD. This allowed the team to verify the accuracy and correctness of the descriptions regarding their relevance to the project and their respective interests.

2.3.3 Stakeholder Consultation

The project participant has conducted the stake holder consultation with prior notice at the below locations.

State	Rajasthan					
Location	Choru	Nagor	Pratpgarh	Sikar	Tonk	Bilwada
Public Notice	21-07-22	20-08-22	18-08-22	20-08-22	19-07-22	21-07-22
Meeting Date	17-08-22	17-09-22	16-09-22	17-09-22	16-08-22	16-08-22

State	Bihar			Madhya Pradesh
Location	Begusarai	Banka	Jamui	Dhar
Public Notice	25-07-22	02-09-22	02-09-22	15-06-22

Meeting Date	22-08-22	12-09-22	13-09-22	05-06-22
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State	Bihar		
Location	Begusarai	Banka	Jamui
Public Notice	25-07-2022	09-02-22	09-02-22
Meeting Date	22-08-2022	09-12-22	13/09/2022

In all the stakeholder meetings, the representative of PP, welcomed the gathering and given a brief about the climate mitigation project activity. Subsequent to the introductory speech, stakeholders were explained about the purpose of distribution of highly efficient cook stoves which will burn wood more efficiently thereby improving thermal transfer to pots, hence saving fuel. Project also reduces the rapidly progressing deforestation but will also reduce health hazards from indoor smoke pollution and women and children will have to spend less time collecting contributing to reduction in GHG emissions. The Project will also assist to the local population by providing employment opportunities to both skilled & unskilled labours.

The records of stakeholder consultation process/07/ are verified by RINA and found to be appropriate. PP has maintained a register as a part of on-going communication with local stakeholders, end users are informed about grievance register/16/. The distributors have the responsibility to take grievances regarding the project activity and same will be conveyed to PP during operation of project activity. Thus, ongoing communication of stakeholders is followed through grievance mechanism. The audit team has checked the grievance register/16/ and no grievances have been reported during the first monitoring period for the all the project instances. The VVB confirms that the local stakeholder consultations have been done in accordance with requirements.

2.3.4 Continued Consultation and Adaptive Management

The assessment process involved several steps to evaluate the project's strategy for ongoing communication and consultation with all stakeholder groups. These steps included

- reviewing the SD Vista PD /01/ and
- conducting interviews with sample stakeholders and the Project Proponent (PP).

As part of the ongoing communication with local stakeholders, end users are provided with an ID Card/09/ that includes a helpline number for registering grievances. The field survey team is also

responsible for addressing grievances related to the project activity during their operations. This ensures that stakeholder communication continues through the grievance mechanism, and any concerns received during the project's operation will be addressed if relevant.

The input of every direct stakeholder, including local leaders, is considered promptly and as required. Women and other direct users of cookstoves were consistently consulted during the design phase of the Improved Cookstove (ICS), and this practice of seeking user input will continue. If necessary, meetings will be arranged as soon as possible to discuss potential remedies in the event of any complaints. Users will receive advance invitations to these meetings on their registered phone numbers, and public announcements will be made at the local village panchayat office.

Additionally, meetings will be conducted in each zone by local women employed as field executive officers and resource persons to gather feedback on the improved cookstoves. The project aims to bring about a comprehensive transformation in the socioeconomic conditions of the surrounding districts. While the change in cookstoves may seem like a minor concern, PP's social surveys have demonstrated the interconnectedness of cookstoves with other socio-economic issues. The project's proponents are committed to following the sustainable development goals for India, ensuring community involvement and welfare throughout the project's duration. Community development initiatives will be incorporated into the project activities.

The PP collects feedback from beneficiaries through various methods, including informal meetings, formal local stakeholder consultations, and surveys specifically designed to gather input on ICS use and uptake. These feedback channels ensure ongoing progress and stakeholder engagement, particularly from the beneficiaries and future beneficiaries.

These protocols fulfil the requirements for continued consultation and adaptive management outlined in SD VISta. The chosen consultation channels and the project's plan for adapting management processes based on stakeholder input, as outlined in the SD Vista PD /01/, are deemed appropriate by VVB. The information gathered through these consultations will be incorporated adaptively into management plans, as applicable. RINA agrees that the overall project plan for continued consultation and adaptive management is sufficient to ensure the inclusion of these components, in accordance with the SD VISta program.

2.3.5 Anti-Discrimination

RINA has conducted an assessment and verified that the PP has established a rigorous policy that strictly prohibits all forms of discrimination or harassment. Furthermore, the PP has implemented measures to ensure equal opportunities for community members, including women and individuals who are vulnerable or marginalized, in alignment with Criterion 2.2.9 of the SD VISta v1.0/16/.

2.3.6 Worker Training

The PP has devised and executed strategies for the recruitment, training, and capacity building of project employees. The interviews conducted during the site visit verified that employees had received training

and possessed the necessary expertise to fulfil their job responsibilities. The audit team affirms that the project has appropriately identified the training requirements and provided sufficient capacity building to enable workers to carry out their tasks safely and efficiently.

2.3.7 Equal Work Opportunities

PP is committed to being an equal opportunity employer, in accordance with the definition provided by the International Labour Organization (ILO). According to the ILO's fundamental convention, discrimination is identified as any form of differentiation, exclusion, or preference based on race, color, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction, or social origin, which results in nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation.

During the site visit, the audit team observed that a significant number of positions within the project were occupied by women. This observation provides evidence that the project actively promotes and provides equal employment opportunities, including for women and individuals who may be vulnerable or marginalized. Based on this finding, RINA concludes that the project effectively upholds and encourages equal employment opportunities.

2.3.8 Workers' Rights

Every worker is provided with a contract that clearly outlines their rights and responsibilities. In India, labour laws are designed to protect employees, and reputable organizations make diligent efforts to adhere to these laws, which are enforced by the Ministry of Labor.

The audit team has verified that the project not only meets all local labour regulations but also exceeds them. The project ensures that all workers are well-informed about their rights and obligations, in line with the Core Labour Conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO). During interviews with staff members, no labour conflicts or issues were identified, indicating a high level of compliance and positive labour relations.

2.3.9 Occupational Safety Assessment

To minimize risks, workers will be educated about occupational hazards and trained in best practices to mitigate these risks. They will also be provided with appropriate equipment and tools. Verbal communication regarding these risks and their mitigation will be incorporated into worker training, orientation discussions, and periodic refresher courses.

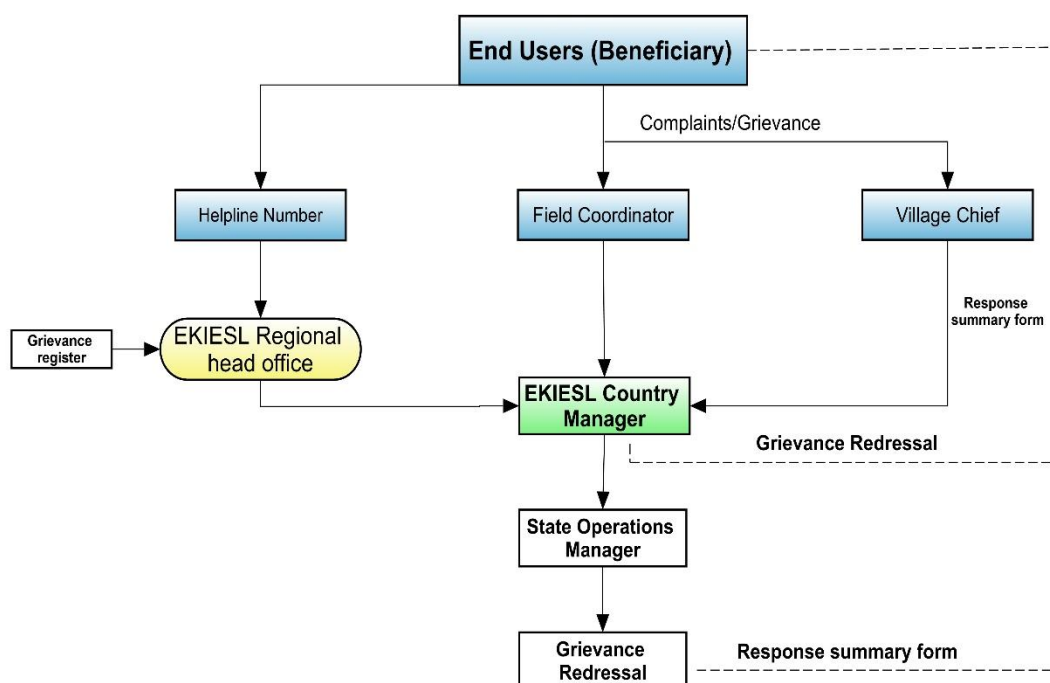
During the site visit, the audit team confirmed that workers had been informed about the risks associated with their tasks and had received instructions on how to minimize them. The assessment team believes that the occupational safety assessment was thorough and comprehensive, and appropriate measures have been implemented to minimize risks to workers.

2.3.10 Feedback and Grievance Redress Procedure

The feedback and grievance redressal procedure of the Project Proponent is outlined in Section 2.2.10 of the PD /01/, and the specific policy is detailed in the document titled "Project Grievance Redress

Mechanism" /10/. Based on interviews and observations, the assessment team believes that the grievance redressal procedure is designed to handle any issues that may arise during project planning and implementation.

The grievance redressal process ensures that beneficiaries and stakeholders have access to the contact information of the Project Proponent and understand that they can reach out to the organization with any problems, questions, or grievances. According to the SD Vista PD/01/ and further confirmed during remote interviews, end-users have the option to approach PP through their village chief. The village chief then communicates the concerns to the relevant PP field staff, who take appropriate actions to resolve the issue. This approach, as assessed by VVB, respects the traditional sentiments and values of the villages, allowing them to express their concerns without hesitation. VVB considers this mechanism suitable and in line with the project's objectives. A typical diagram illustrating this grievance redressal mechanism is provided below:



2.3.11 Feedback and Grievance Redress Procedure Accessibility

According to section 2.2.11 of the PD /01/, the PP Grievance Policy and Procedure /102/ can be accessed through the phone number provided on the ID card distributed to each household, which serves as the most accessible means for providing feedback.

During the site visit, the assessment team verified the availability of information about the project. Based on interviews conducted with local stakeholders, there is no evidence of any pending grievances. The

assessment team believes that the project maintains transparency with all stakeholders concerning grievances or any other feedback, and that the procedure is accessible to all of them.

2.3.12 Stakeholder Access to Project Documentation

The assessment outlined below describes the steps taken to evaluate the project's plan for ensuring accessibility of full project documentation to all stakeholders throughout its duration.

Based on a review of the SD Vista PD (01) and individual interviews with stakeholders, VVB confirms that the PP has distributed hard copies of all project-related documents to the Distribution Partners (DP). These documents are made accessible to all stakeholders involved in the project, particularly the end-users. This includes a non-technical summary that provides an overview of the project activities and outcomes. Additionally, as stated in the PD /01/, the PP has ensured verbal communication about the availability of project documents during the distribution of stoves. The information regarding document accessibility has been effectively conveyed to the distribution partners, staff, and end-users. Furthermore, a dedicated helpline number has been provided to the end-users, enabling them to contact the DPs or the PP's ground staff for access to project documents. VVB confirms that the PP has successfully ensured accessibility of all project documents, including the non-technical summary, to all stakeholders.

Therefore, during the one to one interviews with stakeholders, the assessment team verified that information about the project was readily available. The assessment team believes that the project demonstrates transparency with all stakeholders regarding project documentation, and the procedures in place are accessible to all of them.

2.3.13 Information to Stakeholders on Validation and Verification Process

The PP effectively communicates to the beneficiaries and their families about their involvement in a project that offers the project stove at a reduced price, emphasizing the benefits of improved respiratory health, enhanced family economy, and a positive impact on the environment. The importance of monitoring key data, such as wood fuel expenses and other economic indicators, is also conveyed. Given the community's initial scepticism towards external motives, PP's staff accompanied the auditors during site visits, and families were provided advance notification via phone or in-person interactions.

During the interviews, all participants demonstrated a clear understanding of the audit process and expressed prior awareness of the auditors' visit. RINA acknowledges that all stakeholders are likely to remain informed about future assessments.

2.4 Project Management

2.4.1 Avoidance of Corruption

PP's staff uphold the highest standards of transparency, ensuring accountability in their operations. The organization engages an external accountant who diligently manages the accounts and organizes all financial documents. Furthermore, PP has enlisted the services of an auditor to provide guidance on their

transactions. To foster transparency, PP publishes annual reports on its website. The organization fully adheres to all Indian laws pertaining to favouritism, cronyism, and nepotism.

The project proponents, along with all individuals associated with PP, are actively committed to environmental protection and sharing the project's benefits with the beneficiaries. Having carefully examined these policies, the audit team affirms that the project management has established a robust and comprehensive framework to prevent any form of illicit activity by project staff. Throughout the review of the provided evidence and the site visit, no evidence of corruption or illegality was found.

2.4.2 Statutory and Customary Rights

PP conducts its operations from a private office space, and the installation activities are carried out in the homes of the beneficiaries. PP's staff enter private properties only after obtaining explicit permission from the owners.

This information was verified by the audit team during their site visit, where they consulted with local leaders. No conflicts related to statutory or customary rights were reported to the audit team, and they did not observe any such conflicts themselves.

2.4.3 Recognition of Property Rights

To assess whether all property rights are recognized, respected, and supported, the following steps were taken:

- Review of the SD VISta PD /01-/.
- Interview with the PP and the end users.

According to the information provided in the SD VISta PD /01/, the PP installs the stove /04/ only at the invitation of the property owner. In most cases, the homes where the stove is installed are built on properties acquired through inheritance. Based on the assessment conducted by VVB, it is determined that no additional measures need to be designed and implemented by the project to secure statutory rights, as the project does not infringe upon or interact with property rights.

After considering the above assessment, VVB concludes that all property rights are recognized, respected, and supported. The project, as designed and implemented, contributes to the securing of statutory rights.

2.4.4 Free, Prior and Informed Consent

FPIC does not apply to the project activities since they do not infringe on or otherwise concern land rights.

2.4.5 Restitution and/or Compensation for Affected Resources

The project does not affect any party's access to resources or their lands.

2.4.6 Property Rights Removal/Relocation of Property Rights Holders

The assessment process included two major steps to evaluate whether the project activity resulted in the involuntary removal or relocation of property rights holders from their lands or territories, or forced rights holders to relocate activities crucial to their culture or livelihood. These steps involved

- reviewing the SD VISta PD /01/,
- conducting interviews with the PP and the end users.

According to the information provided in the SD VISta PD /01/, the installation of the PP's ICS /04/ does not impede, involuntarily remove, or disrupt the land or property rights of the beneficiaries or their families. The installation of ICS /04/ aims to incentivize the beneficiaries to transition from using traditional three-stone fire cook stoves to the ICS.

The project activities do not involve the removal or relocation of property rights holders from their lands or territories, and they do not force rights holders to relocate activities. The participation in ICS activities is entirely voluntary. This approach takes into consideration the stakeholders' awareness of property boundaries and associated rights.

Based on the assessment conducted by RINA, it is determined that the project's approach is acceptable, as it aligns with the requirements outlined in the SD VISta framework.

2.4.7 Identification of Illegal Activities

There have been no instances of theft. Still measures have been taken by PP to ensure Secure storage and direct hand-off of stove parts have been implemented to avoid chances of theft.

Based on the evidence and information gathered, the assessment team determines that the project has appropriately identified illegal activities and has implemented measures outlined in the SD VISta PD /01/ to prevent them.

2.4.8 Ongoing Conflicts or Disputes

To assess any ongoing or unresolved conflicts or disputes related to rights to lands, territories, and resources, the following steps were taken:

- A review of the SD VISta PD /01/ was conducted.
- Interviews were conducted with the PP and the end users.

No ongoing conflicts or disputes were identified, as the project's scope does not involve rights to lands, territories, and resources. The project activities primarily take place within private households, which would not interfere with the outcome of any unresolved disputes. Since there are no ongoing or unresolved conflicts or disputes, no specific measures are needed or designed to resolve such issues. The assessment team of RINA considers this to be acceptable.

2.4.9 National and Local Laws and Regulations

To assess the project's compliance with local, regional, and national laws, the following steps have been taken:

- A review of the SD VISTA PD /01/ was conducted.
- Interviews were conducted with the PP, and web research was performed, including gathering opinions from local experts.

The PP adheres to the Indian Companies Act and complies with subsequent local and national laws. The project implementors are registered with the appropriate national authorities, allowing them to carry out their operations, including the project. Based on these findings, the assessment team is reasonably confident and concludes that the project is compliant with all relevant laws.

2.4.10 Project Ownership

The PP possesses the necessary legal rights /05/06/ over the project, which were verified by the assessment team through site audit and document review /05/. Furthermore, the assessment team has acknowledged the existence of a contractual agreement /05/ between the PP and the beneficiaries of the ICS project. Based on this information, the assessment team confirms that the PP's project ownership aligns with the requirements of SD VISTA /01/.

2.4.11 Grouped Projects

The eligibility criteria outlined in Section 2.3.11 of the PD ensure that any new instances of project activities adhere to the requirements specified in the SD VISTA Standard, v1.0/16/.

3 BENEFITS FOR PEOPLE AND PROSPERITY

3.1.1 Condition of Stakeholders at Project Start

In section 3.1 of the PD, the PP provided a detailed account of the conditions pertaining to the stakeholders as outlined in section 2.2.2. The audit team evaluated the appropriateness of these descriptions by gathering testimonies from the stakeholders themselves during on-site interviews. For a comprehensive record, Appendix IV of this report presents a comprehensive list of all the individuals who were interviewed throughout the process.

The descriptions of the conditions prior to the project's commencement were corroborated by all the stakeholders interviewed. Therefore, RINA affirms that the PP accurately depicted the conditions existing at the start date of the project, with regards to the social, economic, and cultural diversity within and between the stakeholder groups, as well as the interactions among them.

3.1.2 Expected Stakeholder Impacts

The project proponent (PP) determined the anticipated impacts on stakeholders by establishing the causal chains for each project activity outlined in section 2.1.9 of the PD. The assessment of the expected impacts on each stakeholder group resulting from the project activities is summarized in the following table:

Impact #1	<i>Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology</i>
Type of Impact	<i>Positive actual direct impact on ICS user household. Impact will be monitored as "reduction in fuel required for cooking in households".</i>
Affected Stakeholder Group(s)	<i>ICS users.</i>
Resulting Change in Well-being	<i>Distribute 0.5 million high-efficiency, clean burning ICSs to benefit over 2 million individuals (considering 4heads on average/household)</i>
Impact #2	<i>Reduced exposure to smoke, HAP and other dangers.</i>

Type of Impact	<i>Positive actual direct impact on ICS user household. Impact will be monitored as "Reduction in PM2.5 emissions".</i>
Affected Stakeholder Group(s)	<i>ICS users.</i>
Resulting Change in Well-being	<i>Lowered risk of developing COPD or worsening COPD.</i> <i>Less instance of acute lower respiratory illness and anticipated reduction of burns due to contained flames.</i> <i>Improved overall respiratory health</i> <i>Increased ability to consume safe drinking water by reducing boiling water time.</i>

Impact #3	<i>Trainings imparted on climate change, project implementation and monitoring procedures.</i>
Type of Impact	<i>Positive actual direct impact on ICS . Impact will be monitored as "Average training manhour".</i>
Affected Stakeholder Group(s)	<i>Village community, Beneficiaries, Distribution Partner Staff</i>
Resulting Change in Well-being	<i>Training and skill development related to community engagement, survey conduction, technical trainings like conducting Water Boiling Tests (WBT) will be provided to many stakeholder groups which is envisaged to empower their lives by not only providing long-term employability but also through increased awareness levels regarding issues related to climate change, social equity.</i>

Impact #4	<i>Reduce Average time saving associated with cooking and fuel collection</i>
Type of Impact	<i>Positive actual direct impact on ICS user women. Impact will be monitored through survey of "Average time spend for cooking and fuel collection"</i>
Affected Stakeholder Group(s)	<i>Beneficiaries (most notably, female, elderly, and children, primarily girls).</i>

Resulting Change in Well-being	<i>Females will have a predicted time saving which can be redirected to income-generating activities or relaxation time.</i> <i>Contributing to enhanced conditions for gender equity.</i>
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Impact #5	<i>Reducing PM 2.5 and CO emissions by using ICSs</i>
Type of Impact	<i>Positive actual direct impact on ICS user household. Impact will be proved with lab reports to show a “Reduction in PM 2.5 and CO emission”.</i>
Affected Stakeholder Group(s)	<i>ICS users.</i>
Resulting Change in Well-being	<i>Lowered risk after reduced developing of PM 2.5 and CO emission.</i> <i>Improved overall respiratory health</i> <i>Increased ability to consume safe drinking water by reducing boiling water time.</i>

Impact #6	<i>Enhancing Job opportunity in informal sector</i>
Type of Impact	<i>Positive actual direct impact on Distribution Partner staffs. Impact will be monitored as “Informational employment generation”.</i>
Affected Stakeholder Group(s)	<i>Local Citizens (Men’s & Women’s) – Staffs of Distribution Partners.</i>
Resulting Change in Well-being	<i>Help in economic growth through creating more job opportunities by implementing project activity. It will help families to come above BPL.</i>

Impact #7	<i>Enhancing Job opportunity in manufacturing sector</i>
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Type of Impact	<i>Positive actual direct impact on the staffs of the manufacturing unit. Impact will be monitored as “Number of man-hours of permanent & temporary employees of the manufacturing unit involved in ICS manufacturing of this project activity”.</i>
Affected Stakeholder Group(s)	<i>Local Citizens (Men’s & Women’s) – Staffs of Manufacturing unit.</i>
Resulting Change in Well-being	<i>Help in economic growth in SME (manufacturing) sector through creating more generation of employment opportunities.</i>

Impact #8	<i>Reduced fire incidents in households</i>
Type of Impact	<i>Positive actual direct impact on ICS user household. Impact will be monitored as “households reporting no fire incident”.</i>
Affected Stakeholder Group(s)	<i>ICS users.</i>
Resulting Change in Well-being	<i>Considerable decrease in fire incident compared to the baseline cookstoves will make the human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.</i>

Upon thorough examination of the evidence presented by the PP and gathering information through direct interviews and on-site inspections during the site visit, the audit team is able to validate that the anticipated impacts on each stakeholder group, as identified in the PD, are likely to materialize. RINA acknowledges that the PP has accurately assessed the nature and extent of the project's impacts on the various stakeholder groups, meeting the requirements specified in Criterion 3.1.4 of the SD VISta v1.0.

3.1.3 Mitigation of Negative Impacts on Stakeholders

Describe the steps taken to assess the measures needed and designed to mitigate any negative impacts on stakeholder groups. Include information with respect to how such measures are consistent with the precautionary principle. Provide and justify an overall conclusion as to whether the project will mitigate negative impacts on stakeholders.

After reviewing documents such as /02/04/07/08/10/11/14/15/ and conducting interviews, the assessment team from RINA confirms that the majority of activities implemented during the project period have positive impacts on a significant portion of the communities in the project area, surpassing the baseline scenario. The project proponent (PP) has outlined a comprehensive plan in SD VISTA PD /01/ to ensure continuous monitoring and assessment of the effects, as considered by the PP, and

appropriate mitigation measures will be incorporated into the project design if any unintended negative impacts arise.

Furthermore, based on document review and interviews conducted with the beneficiaries, the assessment team concludes that the project has implemented measures to mitigate and minimize any negative impacts on stakeholders.

3.1.4 Stakeholder Monitoring Plan

This project uses the installation of improved cookstoves as an opportunity to create a net positive impact in overall wellbeing of the people in the project site. Monitoring mechanisms are employed to ascertain the project's impact on all major stakeholders. The project plans to collect data through interviews, surveys, direct observations, group discussions, and other employment, financial, and health records. Village resource personnel and women monitors will collect primary information through regular visits and interviews with the households. They will be tasked with monitoring the changes after installation of improved cookstoves. field executive officers will conduct group discussions, and other interviews regarding the same. The data from these interactions will be compiled into reports and forwarded to the senior analysts.

The stakeholder monitoring plan for the variables linked to the identified project impacts and the claims are described as follows:

SDG Targeted	1.4
Type of Impact	No. of households receiving the improved cook stoves as an access to clean fuels and technology
Affected Stakeholder Group(s)	End User Households
Measurement methods and procedures	Monitoring Survey is conducted for measuring this impact. Measured directly or based on a representative sample. As per methodology, minimum sample size determines in which case compliance with 90/10 confidence precision is not obligatory. 100 Sample size is selected being target population is above 1000.
Monitoring frequency	Once in every 2 years

SDG Targeted	3.9
Type of Impact	Percentage of households reporting a reduction in smoke while cooking which indicates improved health of end users.
Affected Stakeholder Group(s)	End User Households (primary cooks)

Measurement methods and procedures	Monitoring Survey is conducted for measuring this impact. Measured directly or based on a representative sample. As per methodology, minimum sample size determines in which case compliance with 90/10 confidence precision is not obligatory. 100 Sample size is selected being target population is above 1000.
Monitoring frequency	Once in every 2 years

SDG Targeted	4.3
Type of Impact	Number of individuals who received any informal training to enable their employment in project activity or elsewhere.
Affected Stakeholder Group(s)	End users employed under distribution unit.
Measurement methods and procedures	The impact is monitored through the training records furnished by the distribution unit.
Monitoring frequency	To be monitored for the duration of monitoring period at the time of each verification

SDG Targeted	5.4
Type of Impact	Percentage of people reporting reduction in their time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age, and location
Affected Stakeholder Group(s)	Women and children (especially girls)
Measurement methods and procedures	Monitoring Survey is conducted for measuring this impact. Measured directly or based on a representative sample. As per methodology, minimum sample size determines in which case compliance with 90/10 confidence precision is not obligatory. 100 Sample size is selected being target population is above 1000.
Monitoring frequency	Once in every 2 years

SDG Targeted	7.1
Type of Impact	Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology

Affected Stakeholder Group(s)	End user households
Measurement methods and procedures	Monitoring Survey is conducted for measuring this impact. Measured directly or based on a representative sample. As per methodology, minimum sample size determines in which case compliance with 90/10 confidence precision is not obligatory. 100 Sample size is selected being target population is above 1000.
Monitoring frequency	Once in every 2 years

SDG Targeted	8.5
Type of Impact	Number of jobs created
Affected Stakeholder Group(s)	Employees under manufacturing unit and the distribution unit.
Measurement methods and procedures	The impact is monitored through the employment records furnished by the ICS manufacturing unit and distribution unit, consisting of male to female count.
Monitoring frequency	To be monitored for the duration of monitoring period at the time of each verification

SDG Targeted	9.3
Type of Impact	Number of man-hours of permanent & temporary employees of the manufacturing unit involved in ICS manufacturing of this project activity
Affected Stakeholder Group(s)	Employees under manufacturing unit
Measurement methods and procedures	The impact is monitored through the employment records furnished by the manufacturing unit.
Monitoring frequency	To be monitored for the duration of monitoring period at the time of each verification

SDG Targeted	11.1
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Type of Impact	Percentage of households reporting a decrease in fire incident compared to the baseline cook stoves.
Affected Stakeholder Group(s)	End User Households (primary cooks)
Measurement methods and procedures	Monitoring Survey is conducted for measuring this impact. Measured directly or based on a representative sample. As per methodology, minimum sample size determines in which case compliance with 90/10 confidence precision is not obligatory. 100 Sample size is selected being target population is above 1000.
Monitoring frequency	Once in every 2 years

The above parameters are to be monitored based on monitoring survey, training records and employment records. is conducted for measuring this impact. Measured directly or based on a representative sample. As per methodology/B02/, minimum sample size determines in which case compliance with 90/10 confidence precision is not obligatory. 100 Sample size is selected being target population is above 1000. This has been assessed to be appropriate by the RINA team. The training records/18/ and employment records/19/ are checked by the RINA team which are found to be appropriate.

Also, as a part of on-going communication with local stakeholders, end users are being provided with an ID Card which is having a helpline number for registering grievance. The field survey team will have the responsibility to take grievances regarding the project activity during the field survey and same will be conveyed to PP during operation of the project activity. If any concerns received during operation of project activity, same will be addressed if relevant to project activity.

In opinion of the RINA, all necessary parameters required to support all impacts and claims described in the project's expected and net impacts are contained in the monitoring plan and are clearly described. Details on the methods for collection of data for each output that is being monitored, particularly regarding the monitoring frequency and methods and SDG Target or Indicator, are provided. After the review of evidence provided by the PP, the interview and communications with PP, RINA confirms that monitoring arrangements described in the monitoring plan are feasible within the project design and that the PP will be able to implement the monitoring plan.

3.1.5 Net Positive Stakeholder Wellbeing Impacts

As stated in the PD, all identified impacts contribute to a combined, long-term positive effect that brings sustainable development benefits to the stakeholders of the project. These benefits include:

- A higher proportion of the population will live in a household with access to basic services and will primarily rely on clean fuels and technology to prepare meals. Open cooking fires will be eliminated in the homes serviced.
- Beneficiaries below the international and national poverty lines will have a greater capacity to save money that would otherwise be spent on energy bills/wood fuel, and/or time that would otherwise be spent collecting wood. This is especially relevant for the rural areas PP serves.
- Fewer individuals will be at risk of death attributed to household and ambient air pollution as they will no longer be at risk of cardiovascular diseases, cancers, or chronic respiratory diseases that are caused by exposure to HAP.
- Fewer pregnancies will be at risk of ending prematurely due to complications arising from exposure to HAP.
- Fewer children under-five will be at risk of falling into open cooking fires.
- Female beneficiaries will spend a lower proportion of time on unpaid domestic and care work.
- SME sector got more boost from the manufacturing of ICSs and ensured engagement of manufacturing stuff in terms of man-hours.
- Local individuals will be trained and have better vocational skills enhancing their long-term employability and influencing their overall social and economic wellbeing.

During site visits, interviews with community members and leaders demonstrated that the project was delivering benefits that would not have been received otherwise. Job opportunities were created, income-generating possibilities were made available, and these opportunities extended to the poorest individuals, including women. RINA believes that the assessment of the anticipated net impacts accurately and faithfully reflects the project's benefits in the communities.

RINA conducted thorough on-site assessments, visiting all project activities during the field trip. Additionally, working groups and beneficiaries, as well as members of the distribution and monitoring team, were interviewed. The results mentioned in the assessment were confirmed by these stakeholders, and extensive documentary evidence provided during the validation process supports these findings (refer to Appendix 1: list of evidence provided in this report).

Based on RINA's observations, the net impacts of the project activities are anticipated to be positive for each stakeholder group involved.

4 BENEFITS FOR THE PLANET

4.1.1 Condition of Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services at Project Start

In section 4.1 of the PD/01/, the PP described the conditions of natural capital and ecosystem services prior to the project start and their potential threats. The audit team based the assessment of the appropriateness of these description on the ecological evidence provided by the PP, the historical evolution of the region, the inspection of the project area and the situation of its neighbouring zone, as well as the testimonies of local community members and users of the services provided by the project area ecosystems.

The description of the conditions prior to the project start and the threats faced by the ecosystems were confirmed by the observations of the audit team on site and by all the interviewed locals. Thus, RINA considers that the PP has described accurately the conditions at the project start date with respect to of natural capital and ecosystem services and includes real and possible threats.

4.1.2 Expected Impacts on Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services

RINA has acknowledged that the PP has successfully identified the anticipated effects on natural capital and ecosystem services by establishing the causal links of the project activity, as described in section 2.1.9 and appendix 1 of the SD VISta PD /01/. Furthermore, section 4.3 of the SD VISta PD /01/ outlines the expected impacts on natural capital and ecosystem services, along with their associated benefits and monitoring methods. According to the SD VISta PD /01/, the implementation of efficient cook stoves under the project would result in a decrease in fuel wood consumption, subsequently contributing to a higher proportion of renewable energy in the project area's total final energy consumption. This, in turn, would help reduce the negative annual net change rate of forest area in India, leading to an increase in forest coverage as a percentage of the total land area. The project also promotes awareness and interest in the conservation of forests by utilizing woody biomasses, twigs, and crop by-products.

The natural capital and ecosystem services monitoring plan for the variables linked to the identified project impacts and the claims are defined by the project proponent as follows:

SDG Targeted	12.0
Type of Impact	Tons of renewable woody biomass (firewood) saved.
Measurement methods and procedures	Total renewable biomass(tons) saved by the project activity= Total Woody Biomass saved (tons)- Total Non-renewable Woody Biomass saved (tons) The calculation of the same can be traced from the Emission Reduction Sheet of the project activity, and shall be verified by the VVB.
Monitoring frequency	At every verification cycle

SDG Targeted	13.0
Type of Impact	Tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions avoided
Measurement methods and procedures	The GHG emission reductions achieved will be calculated based on the applied methodology: VMR0006: Methodology for Installation of High Efficiency Firewood Cook stoves, Version 1.1, and shall be verified by VVB.
Monitoring frequency	At every verification cycle

SDG Targeted	15.2
Type of Impact	Tons of non-renewable woody biomass (firewood) saved.
Measurement methods and procedures	Total non-renewable biomass(tons) saved by the project activity= Total Woody Biomass saved (tons)* Fraction of woody biomass that can be established as non-renewable biomass (%) The calculation of the same can be traced from the Emission Reduction Sheet of the project activity, and shall be verified by the VVB.
Monitoring frequency	At every verification cycle

These parameters are to be sourced from the approved verified emission reduction calculation sheet. After assessing the evidence provided by the PP and gathering information through site audits, interviews, and inspections, the evaluation team confirms that the projected impacts on natural capital and ecosystem services, as identified in the PD, are likely to materialize. RINA believes that the PP has appropriately estimated the nature and magnitude of the project's effects on natural capital and ecosystem services, as required by section 3.2.4 of the SD VISta v1.0/01/.

4.1.3 Mitigation of Negative Impacts on Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services

The SD Vista PD /01/ does not indicate any negative impacts on natural capital and ecosystem services resulting from the implementation of project activities. To assess the presence of any adverse effects, RINA undertook the following steps:

- Reviewing the SD Vista PD /01/ document
- Conducting interviews with the project proponent (PP) and the end users

Based on these actions, VVB (presumably the assessment team) has determined that the project does not anticipate any measures to mitigate negative impacts on natural capital and ecosystem services. RINA's assessment team considers this determination to be appropriate.

4.1.4 Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services Monitoring Plan

The PP has devised a monitoring plan to systematically track the effects of the project activities on the natural capital and ecosystem services, as outlined in section 4.3 of the PD. This monitoring plan is designed in a manner that aligns with the project activities and facilitates the tracking of contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) specified in section 1 of the PD. It also supports the assessment of all impacts and claims made by the project. Each variable in the monitoring plan directly corresponds to the anticipated environmental impacts projected by the project.

Furthermore, the project has undergone validation and regular verification under the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS), and a robust monitoring system has been developed and implemented for the next seven years.

According to the RINA's assessment, the monitoring plan contains all the necessary parameters required to substantiate the described impacts and claims concerning the expected and net effects of the project. The plan provides detailed information on the data collection methods for each monitored output, including the frequency of monitoring, specific methods employed, and the relevant SDG target or indicator. After reviewing the evidence provided by the PP, conducting interviews and communications with the PP, RINA confirms that the monitoring arrangements outlined in the monitoring plan are practical within the project's design, and the PP will be able to successfully implement the monitoring plan.

4.1.5 Net Positive Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services Impacts

The project's implementation is expected to result in a net positive ecological impact on the natural capital within the project area. This means that the area will continue to provide essential ecosystem services such as biodiversity habitat, soil and water conservation, and carbon sequestration. Without the project activities, the natural capital would be subject to logging for wood fuel, rendering it incapable of delivering the ecosystem services outlined in section 4.1 of the PD.

By replacing three-stone fire cook stoves with ICS technology, which serves as the primary project activity, approximately 9.45 million tCO₂e will be generated over the course of the initial seven-year crediting period. Consequently, RINA has determined that the projected net impacts of the project activities are likely to have a positive effect on natural capital and ecosystem services.

5 OPTIONAL: CLIMATE MODULE

5.1 Baseline Scenario for GHG Sinks and Sources

“Not applicable. Project is applying the deemed estimates approach”.

5.1.1 Defensible Methodological Approach

“Not applicable. Project is applying the deemed estimates approach”.

5.1.2 Baseline Emissions

“Not applicable. Project is applying the deemed estimates approach”.

5.2 Monitoring

5.2.1 Emissions Reductions and Removals Monitoring Plan

“Not applicable. Project is applying the deemed estimates approach”.

5.2.2 Dissemination of Monitoring Plan and Results

“Not applicable. Project is applying the deemed estimates approach”.

5.2.3 Project Emissions

“Not applicable. Project is applying the deemed estimates approach”.

5.2.4 Leakage

“Not applicable. Project is applying the deemed estimates approach”.

5.2.5 Net GHG Emission Reductions and Removals

“Not applicable. Project is applying the deemed estimates approach”.

6 OPTIONAL: SD VISTA ASSETS

“Not applicable”.

6.1 SD VISTA Asset

“Not applicable”.

6.1.1 Methodology

“Not applicable”.

6.1.2 Project Crediting Period

“Not applicable”.

6.1.3 Project Boundary

“Not applicable”.

6.1.4 Baseline Scenario

“Not applicable”.

6.1.5 Additionality

“Not applicable”.

6.1.6 Methodology Deviations

“Not applicable”.

6.1.7 Data and Parameters Available at Validation

“Not applicable”.

6.1.8 Monitored Data and Parameters

“Not applicable”.

6.1.9 Monitoring Plan

“Not applicable”.

6.1.10 Benefit Quantification

“Not applicable”.

6.2 Assets from Other Programs

“Not applicable”.

6.2.1 Participation under Other Programs

“Not applicable”.

6.2.2 Rejection from Other Programs

“Not applicable”.

7 VALIDATION CONCLUSION

RINA has conducted a validation assessment of the "Clean Cooking- Cook Stove for Rural India" project in India. With a reasonable level of assurance, it affirms that the project is compliant with the requirements of the Sustainable Development Verified Impact Standard v1.0, along with its associated guides and definitions, without any qualifications or limitations.

The objective of the validation was to independently assess the design of the "Clean Cooking- Cook Stove for Rural India" project to ensure its compliance with the SD VISta Program requirements. This assessment included evaluating the appropriateness of the SD VISta claims and the design of the monitoring plans to track these claims. The scope of the validation encompassed reviewing the sustainable development impacts generated by the project, its contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the associated benefits for people, prosperity, and the planet.

RINA conducted a comprehensive review of the Project Description and related project management and monitoring documents. Additionally, background investigations, stakeholder interviews, testimonies, and site inspections were conducted to gather sufficient evidence for validating the project's adherence to the specified criteria.

The key conclusions can be summarized as follows:

- The project fully aligns with the criteria of the SD VISta v1.0, the SD VISta Program Guide v1.0, and the SD VISta Program Definitions v1.0/16/.
- All claims made by the project, including its contribution to the SDGs, associated SDG indicators, and net impacts on people, prosperity, and the planet, are credible and supported by historical and projected data and information.
- The monitoring plans designed to track the impacts on stakeholders, natural capital, and ecosystem services are transparent and adequate, supporting all anticipated impacts and claims of the project.

In conclusion, this report confirms that the "Clean Cooking- Cook Stove for Rural India" project, as described in the Project Description, fully complies with all applicable criteria for validation set by the Sustainable Development Verified Impact Standard and the SD VISta Program Guide, without any qualifications or limitations.

APPENDIX 1: REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Ref	Document
/01/	a. SD Vista PD, version 01, dated 24-July-2022 b. SD VISta PD, version 02, dated; 16-June-2023 c. SD VISta PD, version 03, dated; 22-March-2024 d. SD VISta PD, version 04, dated; 30-May-2024
/02/	VCS PD, ER estimation spread sheet and corresponding joint Val-Ver report dated 29-Nov-2023.
/03/	Evidence for the start date of the grouped project • End user agreements • Validated joint validation-verification VCS PD dated 14-April-2023 • Joint Validation Verification report of the project dated 18-May-2023
/04/	Technical specifications of the AGNEEKAA ECO MINI STOVE MODEL4 Stove including the life span - Manufacturer's brochure
/05/	Proof of right of VERs. - Declaration/Undertaking from GHG reduction technology Private Limited (manufacturer) for no ownership of carbon credit/double counting dated 20- March-2023. - Declaration/Undertaking from Envro Queen PVT LTD (distributor) for no ownership of carbon credit/double counting dated 20-March-2023. - Declaration/Undertaking from Bibsikha LLP (distributor) for no ownership of carbon credit/double counting dated 20-March-2023. - Declaration/Undertaking from EKI Energy Services for the ownership, no double counting of ICS dated 20-March-2022
/06/	Company registration certificate for the PP Company Act of India, 2013.
/07/	Records of Local stakeholders' consultation meeting as per the SD Vista requirements. a) Stakeholder Feedback.pdf b) Local Stakeholder consultation c) LSC_Minutes
/08/	Grievance register maintained at site.
/09/	Sample ender user agreement and ID card.
/10/	Project Proponent policy & procedure for following: 1. Grievances Redress policy 2. Stove registration and distribution guide
/11/	Procedure/provision of ICS maintenance & replacement.
/12/	Monitoring survey questionnaire template developed for the SD Vista Project
/13/	Official information related to SGDs: https://www.globalgoals.org/take-action/?gclid=CjwKCAjwkLCKBhA9EiwAka9QRrN7wkZxPExOe-ilcC6J-6xcbm2rYglp3MeZMDwd7v0FYgyVOYIBJxoCMp8QAvD_BwE

/14/	Report and Calculation spread sheet of f_{NRB} prepared by PP.
/15/	Contract between the RINA (VVB) and EKIESL (PP) for the SD Vista validation of the grouped project.
/16/	SD VISta Program docs SD VISta Program Guide; https://verra.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/SD-VISta-Program-Guide-v1.0.pdf Sustainable Development Verified Impact Standard; https://verra.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Sustainable-Development-Verified-Impact-Standard-v1.0.pdf SD VISta Program Definitions https://verra.org/documents/sd-vista-program-fee-schedule-v1-1/
/17/	Project monitoring survey questionnaire
/18/	Training records for the training provided to the rural households and youths.
/19/	Employment records
/20/	Improved cookstoves beneficiary database

APPENDIX 2: BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Ref	Document
/B01/	SD VISTA Requirements
	SD VISTA Standard (v1.0, dated 22/01/2019)
	SD VISTA Program Guide (v1.0, dated 22/01/2019)
	SD VISTA Program Definitions version (v1.0, dated 22/01/2019)
	SD VISTA PD template version (v1.0, dated 22/01/2019)
/B02/	Applied baseline and monitoring methodology
	1) VMR0006. version 1.1, "Methodology for Installation of High Efficiency Firewood Cookstoves"
/B03/	Website and links:
	IPCC (http://www.ipcc-nggip.iges.or.jp) https://verra.org/project/sd-vista/

APPENDIX III: RESOLUTION OF CORRECTIVE ACTION REQUESTS AND CLARIFICATION REQUESTS

Table 1.Remaining FAR from validation and/or previous verification

FAR ID	xx	Section no.	xx	Date : DD/MM/YYYY
Description of FAR				
No remaining FAR to be addressed.				
Project participant response				Date: DD/MM/YYYY
NA				
Documentation provided by project participant				
DOE assessment				Date: DD/MM/YYYY

Table 2.CL from this verification

CL ID	xx	Section no.	xx	Date : DD/MM/YYYY
Description of CL				
-				
Project participant response				Date: DD/MM/YYYY
-				
Documentation provided by project participant				
-				
DOE assessment				Date: DD/MM/YYYY

Table 3.CAR from this verification

CARL ID	01	Section no.	1.1	Date: 16-June- 2023
Description of CAR				
The project participant is required to submit supportive evidences for all the SDGs claimed.				
Project participant response				Date: 16-June- 2023
Please refer the supportive evidence as mentioned below: SDG 1: Number of households which has received the ICS as mentioned in the distribution record and end user agreements SDG 3: Number of households reporting reduction in smoke during the Monitoring survey as shown in the monitoring survey forms (samples are being provided) SDG 4: Number of individuals received training for project implementation SDG 5: Number of household reporting time saving during the monitoring survey can be found in the monitoring forms SDG 7: Third party certificate for the ICS showing CO & PM 2.5 emission SDG8: Employment declaration given by the distributor and Manufacturer SDG 9: Manufacturing manhour invested during the project ICS manufacturing & Job satisfaction survey forms SDG 11: Number of household reporting reduction in fire incident during the Monitoring survey as shown in the monitoring survey forms (samples are being provided) SDG 12: fNRB calculation, Monitoring survey data, Monitoring survey forms SDG 13: Please refer VCS PD & ER calculation SDG 15: fNRB calculation, Monitoring survey forms				
Documentation provided by project participant				

Please refer the supportive evidences as mentioned below:

SDG 1: “Database” and “End-user agreement” folders

SDG 3: “Monitoring Survey SDVISTA” folder

SDG 4: “Distribution training” folder

SDG 5: “Monitoring Survey SDVISTA” folder

SDG 7: “Delhi IIT Efficiency 36.42.PDF”

SDG 8: “Distributor employment” and “Employment Manufacturer” folders

SDG 9: “Manufacturing manhour.pdf” & “Job satisfaction survey” folders

SDG 11: “Monitoring Survey SDVISTA” folder

SDG 12: “fNRB” folder, “Monitoring Survey SDVISTA” folder

SDG 13: “Joint PDMR & ER” folder

SDG 15: “fNRB” folder, “Monitoring Survey SDVISTA” folder

DOE assessment

Date: 16-June- 2023

The documents submitted by the project participant are verified by the RINA and found to be appropriate.

CAR is closed.

CARL ID	02	Section no.	1.11	Date: 16-June-2023
Description of CAR				
Project start date of the project is not correctly mentioned in section 2.1.3 of the SD VISTA PD.				
Project participant response				Date: 16-June-2023
Start date of the project has been corrected in the section 2.1.3 of the SD VISTA PD.				
Documentation provided by project participant				
Revised PD “SD-VISTA-PD_VVISTA 002_Vitol & EKIESL_V2.docx”.				
DOE assessment				Date: 16-June-2023
The project start date has been corrected appropriately in the revised PD submitted by the project participant.				
CAR is closed.				

CARL ID	03	Section no.	1.7	Date: 16-June-2023
Description of CAR				
SDGs included in section 1 and section 2 are not aligned.				

Project participant response	Date: 16-June-2023
SDGs has been revised in Section 1 & 2 to align them with each other.	
Documentation provided by project participant	
Revised PD "SD-VISTA-PD_VVISTA 002_Vitol & EKIESL_V2.docx".	
DOE assessment	Date: 16-June-2023
The GSDs in the section 1 and section 2 of the PD are found to be filled appropriately and consistently in the revised PD.	
CAR is closed.	

APPENDIX IV: LIST OF INTERVIEWED PERSONS

Sr No	Bihar	Gujarat	Madhya Pradesh	Rajasthan	Chhattisgarh	Maharashtra
1	PANO DEVI	GUTIYA PARIBEN TUKARAMBHAI	RADHESHYAM JI	RAM LAL	Raj Kumari Nishad	Govinda Pawar
2	RAJ KUMARI DEVI	PATEL SUNIL	SEETA RAM RUGNATH	RODAKI BAI	Rama Sahu	Hira Namdev
3	CHANNAR DEVI	PATEL PINALBEN SUNILBHAI	SHOBHARAM	MUKHARAM	Ravi Shrivastava	Jyoti Gavit
4	MINA DEVI	PATEL MAYANKBHAI ISHVARBHAI	SANTOSI BAI	DINESH	Shradha Patel	Deepak Chaudhari
5	MALA DEVI	PATEL RASILABEN BHARATBHAI	KUSHA BAI MORYA	CHANDRWATI	Dulari Sahu	Hira Bai Bagh
6	CHUMKI DEVI	PATEL BIPINBHAI NAGARBHAI	MUKESH NOSARNEM	RAJU RAM REGAR	Saroj Sahu	Vithal Jadhav
7	MUNNI HANSADA	VARALI MADHUBEN SAILESHBHAI	LEELU BAI	AKSHAT JAIN	Sobha Yadav	Mina Prabhakar
8	MANJU DEVI	DIVTE SENTIBEN MOTIRAMBHAI	SEEMA ALAWA	MADHAN DAS	Damini Dhritlahare	Laxmi Pandit
9	PHOOLKUMARI DEVI	PATEL PRAKASHBHAI CHHAGANBHAI	GOPAL CHAUHAN	RAHISA	Janta Sahu	Malti Gaikwad