FAST-Infra Label

ST02: Methodology

Version 1

November 2024

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Preface

Legal notice

It is the responsibility of participating projects to ensure compliance with any and all applicable local and/or national laws, including all national or state legislation, statutes, ordinances and other laws, and regulations and by-laws of any legally constituted public authority. Should any of the FAST-Infra Sustainable Infrastructure Label (FAST-Infra Label or, in this text, 'the Label') Principles or Objectives in this document contradict any applicable local and/or national law as defined herein, projects will only be required to align with such Principles or Objectives to the extent that they require higher levels of environmental or social protections than the legally required minima.

Interpretation, disputes and complaints

Questions of interpretation of the FAST-Infra Label are addressed through procedures devised by the Label's Secretariat, the Global Infrastructure Basel Foundation (GIB). When disputes and complaints arise between stakeholders concerning compliance or the interpretation of the FAST-Infra Label, then the relevant complaints procedure shall apply, according to document PR03, the Label's Complaints Procedure, available on the FAST-Infra Label website at www.fastinfralabel.org/resources.

Versions of this document

This is version 1.0 of the FAST-Infra Label Methodology, issued in November 2024. This version replaces version 0.3, dated April 2024, and introduces the following changes:

- Update of the application process to the FAST-Infra Label Application Portal.
- Introduction of time-series and methodology-related indicators.

The methodology is subject to periodic review. Please ensure that you are reading the most recent version of this document by visiting www.fastinfralabel.org/resources.

Objective of this document

This document, the FAST-Infra Label Methodology, establishes guidance for market participants seeking to apply the Label for infrastructure projects. It provides an overview of the labelling process and its steps, being the practical support for applying the FAST-Infra Label 'ST01 Dimensions and Criteria Indicators'.

FAST-Infra Label enables comparable reporting for sustainable infrastructure projects, thus promoting transparency in the market and supporting investment decision-making. It establishes cohesion

between existing initiatives, building on and complementing other standards, regulations, and industrial good practices in the market.

Throughout this document, 'project' will be used to define the entity for the application of the Label.

FAST-Infra Label Supporting Documents

Implementing the FAST-Infra Label for projects is supported by additional documents detailed in Table 1 below and publicly available in the 'Resources' section on the Label's website: www.fastinfralabel.org/resources.

Code	Title	Description
SM02	Terms of Reference - Non-normative Document	FAST-Infra Label's detailed scope, justification, implementation risks, objectives and expected outcomes, principles and added value to target groups.
SM03	Theory of Change - Non-normative Document	Actions related to the Label scheme, expected results, outcomes and finally impacts of the FAST-Infra Label.
GO01	Governance Bodies Terms of Reference - Normative Document for FAST-Infra Label Governance Bodies	Decision-making process of the Label, application process to decision-making bodies, stakeholder-balanced composition of decision-making bodies.
GD01	Guide to Claims and Label Usage - Normative Document	General rules for Label usage and brand application principles to be followed by the adopters, including both projects and funds.
RQ01	Verification and Labelling Requirements - Normative Document	Procedure for the verification process and the requirements for the assurance bodies.
PR03	Complaints procedure - Normative Document	Description of how complaints, suggestions, and comments from stakeholders of the Label are taken into consideration by the Label's Secretariat.
ST01	Dimensions and Criteria Indicators - Normative Document	Description of all the criteria and indicators across the four dimensions, as well as the minimum safeguards and project identification questions.
FT01	Assessment Workbook for Projects - Normative Document	Excel tool for project self-assessment against the criteria and their indicators.
SM02	Terms of Reference - Non-normative Document	FAST-Infra Label's detailed scope, justification, implementation risks, objectives and expected outcomes, principles and added value to target groups.

WHAT TYPE OF PROJECT CAN APPLY FOR THE FAST-INFRA LABEL?

INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Projects from any infrastructure sector will be eligible to apply for the Label. Throughout this document, the term 'sector' refers to the project's category (e.g., transportation, energy, building, etc.) and/or specific technology employed (e.g., solar energy, nature-based solutions, etc.).

ELIGIBLE PROJECT STAGES

The Label may be applied at any stage of the lifecycle of projects, including development (pre-feasibility, planning, design, sponsoring, tendering), construction, operations, financing, and decommissioning. For ease of use, the Label divided these stages into three: development, construction, and operations. The Label requirements are different according to the project stage.

- Projects in development stage must:
    o Meet or commit to meeting the minimum safeguards.
    o Meet or commit to meeting the baseline requirements for all criteria, to ensure minimal negative impact and reflect 'do no significant harm' requirements.
    o Demonstrate a realised or anticipated significant positive contribution to at least one criterion.

- Projects during the construction and the operations stages must:
    o Meet the minimum safeguards.
    o Meet or commit to meeting the baseline requirements for all the criteria within one year.
    o Demonstrate a realised or anticipated significant positive contribution to at least one criterion. Positive contributions have been designed using the UN Sustainability Development Goals and adapted to make them applicable to projects.

Note on the ongoing development of the Label:
As the FAST-Infra Label is further developed and enhanced, several new versions of the Label are planned to be sequentially released with the following sector applicability:
- Version 0.1: beta version applicable to photovoltaic power generation and onshore wind power generation.
- Version 0.2: beta version applicable to all sectors: February to May 2024.
- Version 0.3: beta version applicable to all sectors: May 2024 to November 2024.
The beta self-assessments are Excel versions, replaced from November onwards with an online application portal:
- Version 1.0: applicable to all sectors: November 2024.
- Version 2.0: applicable to all sectors: Q1 2025.
Projects can apply for the Label at any time, using the FAST-Infra Label Application Portal.

LABELLING PROCESS

FAST-INFRA LABEL'S PROCESS FLOW

The labelling process provides an easy-to-execute journey for infrastructure projects to apply for the two levels of FAST-Infra Label: the Self-Assessed Label and the Verified Label, as described below.

FAST-INFRA SELF-ASSESSED LABEL (STEPS 1 TO 3):

Entry level for FAST-Infra Label requires compliance with all the Label requirements described in the following sections. After filling all the Label's requirements satisfactorily, the Self-Assessed Label is automatically awarded, and it has time-limited validity (Details in Table 2 - Summary of Self-Assessed Label Validity).

FAST-INFRA VERIFIED LABEL (STEPS 4 TO 5):

The FAST-Infra Verified Label is available for projects that have received the Self-Assessed Label. All the projects securing the Self-Assessed Label are strongly encouraged to organise verification from an independent reviewer, to strengthen the credibility of their own assessment on sustainability and resilience and increase market confidence.

STEP 1: APPLY FOR THE FAST-INFRA LABEL

To be able to participate in the labelling process, the project must register on the FAST-Infra Label Application Portal at the following link: https://up.bloomberg.com/signup and select 'FAST-Infra Label Application' from the 'Product' drop down menu at the top of the page. On the 'Project Identification' page, the following information is requested:

- Information about the **participants and collaborators** (name, role, etc,). Anyone tied to the project (public entity, contractor, sponsor, financier) can apply for or update the Label at any point of the project lifecycle.
- Basic information related to the project **must be provided**, such as:
    - Sector,
    - Project capacity (MW, km etc.),
    - Project stage,
    - CAPEX,
    - Location.

STEP 2: SUBMIT THE NECESSARY INFORMATION

RISK ASSESSMENTS

After inserting the project's identification and general information, applicants must declare whether the project meets the **minimum safeguards** of the FAST-Infra Label. These are minimum requirements for a project to be able to continue with the next steps of the assessment, demonstrating that it meets appropriate environmental, social and governance safeguards.

To be able to claim the FAST-Infra Label at any stage of the lifecycle, the infrastructure project must demonstrate adherence to each of the following requirements, or an accepted equivalent alternative (for example, in the case that any applicable local and/or national laws impose more stringent standards, projects will be required to comply with those stricter requirements):

- Produce an **Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) report,** to be published in the public domain and produced by a qualified independent firm or consultant.
- Develop a full **Climate Risk (and Resilience) Assessment for both physical and transition risk** (using best practice methodologies), produced by a qualified independent firm or consultant (if not separately conducted within the ESIA).
- Develop and/or maintain an **Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS)** reviewed by an external party.
- Conduct a **Stakeholder Engagement Plan** to incorporate the views of affected communities and other relevant stakeholders produced by a qualified independent firm or consultant.
- Prepare a **Sustainability Mitigation and Action Plan**, which includes, but is not limited to, actions and mitigation recommended by the ESIA (i.e., **Environmental and Social Mitigation Plan, ESMP**), the Climate Risk (and Resilience) Assessment, and any agreements in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan.

- Have an **Environmental and Social Action Plan** produced by a qualified independent firm or consultant (this document is optional).

Furthermore, projects must demonstrate that an assessment has been conducted confirming compliance against either:

- **IFC Performance Standards** (IFC PS, 2012) on Environmental and Social Sustainability; or
- **Equator Principles** (EP4, July 2020 or their latest version), to the extent applicable to the project.

Additionally, projects should:

- Declare whether they have **Associated Facilities** according to the definition in IFC PS1; and
- Confirm that a risk assessment has been conducted on these Associated Facilities.

Applicants must upload the relevant justification documents related to the Risk Assessments under the minimum safeguards. If an applicant is unable to produce a particular document, the applicant would have to provide alternative documents demonstrating the same result to be eligible to achieve the Label. More specifically:

Projects in development, for which all the minimum safeguards might not be available at the time of answering the self-assessment, can answer that they commit to the minimum safeguards to get the Self-Assessed FAST-Infra Label. Projects in development without the intention to obtain the required documents or any equivalent alternatives will not be awarded the Label.

Projects in construction or operations that do not have the required documents in place in the minimum safeguards and that can't provide an alternative will not be awarded the Label.

PROJECT DISCLOSURE

The applicant will be required to provide basic information on the project. This includes:

- General **financial metrics**;
- Project **financing ratio and structure**;
- Main **financial partners and respective contributions**.

STEP 3: CHECK THE PROJECT'S COMPLIANCE TO FAST-INFRA LABEL CRITERIA

Once the minimum safeguards questions are answered, applicants will be asked to evaluate their performance against **the baseline requirements** and demonstrate **a significant positive contribution** to at least one criterion.

The **indicators** constituting the baseline requirements and the positive contribution are split across **14 criteria, structured into 4 dimensions**: Environmental, Adaptation & Resilience, Social, and Governance. Regardless of the sector, project stage or type, projects must answer all the mandatory questions corresponding to the indicators.

The Label will be continuously developed and updated to answer specific sectors needs and match on-going development in the infrastructure space.

LIST OF DIMENSIONS AND CRITERIA

This section lists the criteria against the four dimensions of the FAST-Infra Label.

Environmental dimension:

- Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (E1)
- Climate Change Mitigation (E2)
- Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency (E3)
- Pollution Prevention and Control (E4)

Adaptation & Resilience dimension:

- Resilience and Climate Adaptation (R5)

Social dimension:

- Inclusivity and Gender (S6)
- Health and Safety (S7)
- Human Rights and Labour Rights (S8)
- Land Acquisition and Resettlement (S9)
- Stakeholder Engagement (S10)
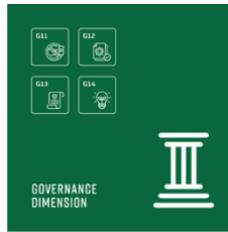
Governance dimension:

- Anti-corruption (G11)
- Transparency and Accountability (G12)
- Financial Integrity and Fiscal Transparency (G13)
- Sustainable Reporting and Compliance (G14)

STRUCTURE OF THE CRITERIA

The criteria are structured in two parts: baseline requirements and positive contribution. The only exceptions are the stakeholder engagement criterion (S10) and the criteria in the governance dimension (G11-G14), which only contain baseline requirements.

a) Baseline requirements

Baseline requirements refer to the practices that infrastructure projects must adhere to, complementing the requirements included in Step 2.

For a project to obtain the Label, it must demonstrate that it either meets or commits to meeting the baseline requirements under all 14 criteria. To fulfil it, projects must answer all indicators required.

b) Positive contribution

Positive contribution refers to the measurable contribution to a sustainability objective, over and above the baseline requirements that infrastructure projects shall demonstrate. Eligible positive contributions are actions made by the project with an impact beyond the project's scope. The impact must be demonstrated on the surrounding communities, the project's area of influence, local stakeholders, etc.

Whilst it is required to claim and demonstrate meeting at least one positive contribution (either realised or forecasted depending on projects stages) for one of the criteria to be eligible for the Label, applicants are strongly encouraged to report as many positive contributions as per the project's scope. This will highlight their positive impacts and will be effectively communicated on the FAST-Infra Label website, if the project is successful in obtaining the Label.

> **Indicator ID generation method:**
> Each indicator has a unique ID made up of two parts. The first part is a code representing the criteria, found in section B.3.1, such as "Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (E1)". The second part represents a three-character code for the specific indicator under that criterion, consisting of two letters and one number, generated randomly. Additionally, some indicators have sub-indicators, indicated by a suffix. For example, if the indicator E1.O6L is answered "Yes", its sub-indicator E1.O6L.1 also requires a response. Moreover, time-series indicators are denoted with the letter A or B based on whether they require, respectively, a historical or forecast answer.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF INDICATORS

The Label's indicators are questions of different types:

- **Single-choice questions** (e.g. Yes/No/Committed to).
- **Quantitative disclosure** (may be tied to a threshold).
- **Time-series disclosure** (a subset of quantitative disclosures associated with a specific year).

- **Multi-choice questions** (multiple answers can be selected to justify one indicator). Often those require projects to select out of a list how they meet the indicator.
- **Methodology-related questions** (a subset of multi-choice questions). Those require projects to select the methodology/ies used to answer an indicator.
- **Free text questions** (available and mandatory for reporting on claimed positive contribution indicators.)

For some indicators, the self-assessment form will include additional guidance notes to complement the indicators and provide support on how to answer the indicators.

FEEDBACK FORM

The feedback form enables projects to provide feedback regarding the self-assessment process and the Label's criteria and indicators. The feedback form can be accessed through the relevant hyperlink specified in the Application Help of the FAST-Infra Label Application Portal and is independent from the self-assessment.

GLOSSARY AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

To help the understanding of the indicators, the Glossary and Bibliography are provided in the FAST-Infra Label website, under the Framework section (https://www.fastinfralabel.org/label-documents).

The Glossary provides definitions of key terms used throughout the framework, ensuring clarity and consistency in understanding.

The Bibliography compiles a list of sources and references utilised in the development of the indicators. The specific criteria against which these sources have been referenced are also documented within the Bibliography.

STEP 4: OBTAINING THE SELF-ASSESSED LABEL

To get the Self-Assessed Label, a project must:

- **Fill out the mandatory project information** requested in the project identification section;
- Show **compliance with the sustainability and legal requirements and fill in all the mandatory minimum safeguards**;
- Show **compliance with all the baseline indicators**. Depending on the project stage and indicator, some flexibility is provided if the project can demonstrate the non-applicability of a specific indicator or show a future commitment; and
- Demonstrate **a positive contribution to at least one criterion**.

By complying with all the requirements above, the project will receive the right to use the **FAST-Infra Self-Assessed Label** and will be publicised on FAST-Infra Label's website and official communication channels.

The validity of the Self-Assessed Label depends on the project development stage, as per Table 1 below.

Table 1. Summary of Self-Assessed Label Validity

Question	Details
How long is the validity of the Self-Assessed Label?	Projects in Development and Construction can maintain the Self-Assessed Label provided they update their data on a yearly basis.
	Projects in Operations can retain the Self-Assessed Label for a maximum of 24 months, provided the yearly data update is conducted. The Self-Assessed Label will expire after 24 months if the project does not enter the verification process.
Is verification required?	Verification is strongly encouraged for projects in all stages.
	Projects in Operations must begin Verification latest 24 months after self-assessment; otherwise, the Self-Assessed Label will expire.
When is an update of the self-assessment required?	Every 12 months*

* For ease of reporting, the existing self-assessment can be updated by changing the answers to the specific indicators that need to be updated.

STEP 5: THIRD-PARTY VERIFICATION

An **independent third-party verification conducted by an approved verification body** is necessary for projects to obtain the Verified FAST-Infra Label. This external verification is considered good market practice and is strongly encouraged to facilitate trust and assurance among participants and enable the high level of transparency sought under the Label.

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Verification bodies must be independent from the project owner and/or financier and from the contracting public authorities. Verification bodies must be accredited to the standard ISO/IEC-17021 and approved by the FAST-Infra Label Secretariat. They shall demonstrate technical expertise in evaluating sustainability credentials, risks, and compliance in the absence of a conflict of interest. The list of approved verification bodies is available to the projects seeking verification through the FAST-Infra Label Application Portal. The project owner will be responsible for organising, selecting and contracting a FAST-Infra Label approved verification body to proceed with third-party verification.

Once the project and the verification body have signed a contractual agreement as required in ISO 17021, and following FAST-Infra Label guidelines, the verification body will conduct the verification of the data submitted by the project and submit the result of the verification using the FAST-Infra Label Application Portal.

The verification body will verify the answers and documents provided in the self-assessment and review additional relevant supporting documents as necessary. If alternative documents for minimum safeguards are provided   the verification body will be responsible for validating their applicability.

The verification body will then document findings and any identified areas of concern that could be classified as non-conformities (or requirements for the verification). Furthermore, the audit will involve setting timelines and workplans between the project and the verification body to address and resolve the non-conformities and complete the verification process.

The verification body will decide if the project requires an on-site visit depending on certain criteria, such as the project's CAPEX, the number of people displaced by the project, the location of the project, and the project stage. The verification process will conclude with an audit report and the decision on the awarding of the Verified Label to the project, followed by yearly surveillance audits in the three years of the Verified Label's validity. The third and last surveillance audit can be used to re-verify the project and renew the Verified Label for another cycle of three years.

More details on the verification process can be found in Annex A.

STEP 6: CHECK THE PROJECT'S COMPLIANCE TO FAST-INFRA LABEL CRITERIA

Once the verification process is completed, if the project conforms to all requirements, the verification body will grant the project the Verified FAST-Infra Label and will be publicised on the FAST-Infra Label's website and official communication channels.

The Verified Label is valid for three years unless material changes happen. Projects will be required to provide yearly updates to maintain the Label and complete surveillance reviews through which verification bodies will monitor Label compliance. See more details in the Table 2 below:

Table 2. Summary of Verified Label Validity

Question	Details
How long is the validity of the Verified Label?	The Verified Label is valid up to a maximum of 36 months, provided that projects update their data every 12 months for surveillance audits*.
Can projects apply to re-verification?	Projects can re-apply for verification in the third year of their Verified Label, prior to its expiration. After successful re-verification, projects will get a Verified Label for another 3 years.
When does the surveillance audit** take place?	One surveillance audit per calendar year. First audit to be conducted within 12 months of the granting of the Verified Label. The third surveillance audit can be arranged to serve as re-verification.

* For ease of reporting, the existing self-assessment can be updated by changing the answers to the specific indicators that need to be updated
** A less intensive annual review conducted by the Verification Body to ensure that the project is still meeting the key elements of the FAST-Infra Label.

If the verification body concludes that the project is not eligible for the Verified FAST-Infra Label, the project will not be granted the FAST-Infra Label, and the Self-Assessed Label will also be automatically terminated.

If the FAST-Infra Label Secretariat becomes aware of and confirms the existence of significant sustainability or reputational risks linked to the project and/or of the project's non-compliance with the Label's minimum safeguards and criteria after having received the Label, the Secretariat will take this information to the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will assess and make a decision if the Self-assessed or the Verified Label needs to be withdrawn.

FAST-INFRA LABEL APPLICATION PORTAL AND DEMONSTRATING SUSTAINABILITY

COMMUNICATION ON THE LABELLED PROJECTS

The FAST-Infra Label is designed to promote market integrity for sustainable infrastructure projects and enable comparability of metrics. It encourages transparency, disclosure, and reporting, while supporting investment decision-making. Projects that have been assessed and have received the Self-Assessed or the Verified FAST-Infra Label will be showcased on the FAST-Infra Label website.

Additional communication may be carried out, providing extra visibility in different communication channels and events, aiming to highlight the labelled projects to investors, financiers, contractors, regulators, and the sustainability community.

Once the project gets the Self-Assessed FAST-Infra Label or the Verified FAST-Infra Label, it is encouraged to communicate on the Label according to the Guide to Claims and Label Usage document provided on www.fastinfralabel.org/resources.

UPDATING THE FAST-INFRA LABEL WEBSITE

The FAST-Infra Label website enables projects, verification bodies, and all interested parties to get the latest information on the FAST-Infra Label. Among others, the website provides the following information:

- Information on the FAST-Infra Label governance bodies and stakeholders.
- The latest FAST-Infra Label standard documents.
- Costs, process, and duration to obtain the Label.
- Project spotlights, knowledge products, news, and events.
- Frequently Asked Questions on the Label.

ANNEX A TYPICAL PROCESS FLOW FOR AUDIT AND CERTIFICATION PROCESS,

Conformity assessment: requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems.