



Rules for the use of the Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards

Version June 21, 2010

*The current version of this document is
published at www.climate-standards.org*

The Climate, Community & Biodiversity Alliance

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Acknowledgements	3
Scope.....	4
Terms and Definitions	4
History of the Standards and Validity of Versions	5
The Validation and Verification Process	6
Validation	6
Verification	10
Repetition of Verification Audits for the Life of the Project	14
New Validations	14
Concurrent Validations and Verifications	14
Project Eligibility	15
Issuance of Emissions Reductions Certificates	15
Combined Validation and Verification with other Standards.....	15
Language Requirements	16
Approved Auditors.....	16
Updates to the CCB Standards and Rules for Use	16
Logo Use and Communications Regarding CCB Status.....	17
Suspension or Withdrawal.....	17

Introduction

The Climate, Community & Biodiversity (CCB) Standards are used to evaluate the design and implementation of land-based projects that simultaneously reduce or remove greenhouse gas emissions and generate positive impacts for local communities and the local environment.

The CCB Standards can be used to:

- **Demonstrate good project design to generate significant climate, community and biodiversity benefits.** Successful CCB Validation can help build support for the project among stakeholders and investors.
- **Verify the delivery of social and environmental benefits.** CCB Verification is a rigorous independent endorsement of community and biodiversity benefits.

The CCB Standards are comprised of *Criteria*, each of which include a *Concept*, which describes the principles upon which the Standards are based and a series of *Indicators* which are measurable states that allow the assessment of whether or not associated criteria are being met.

The CCB Standards differ from carbon accounting standards such as the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) or the Voluntary Carbon Standard (VCS) by, inter alia, ensuring that there are net community and biodiversity benefits to a planned project. The CCB Standards require projects to generate net reductions in greenhouse gas concentrations, but do not result in the issuance of emissions reduction certificates and combination with a carbon accounting standard is recommended. The Standards can be applied to any kind of agriculture, forestry or other land use project anywhere in the world, whether undertaken for compliance or for voluntary purposes.

This document was created by the Climate, Community & Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA)¹ to clarify the process and provide guidance for the use of the CCB standards to assist with impartial and consistent application of the standards. The CCBA members and advisors that contributed to this document have aimed to resolve questions and ambiguities about the use of the standards to improve the quality of the CCB standards system. The CCBA welcomes any comments or questions about this document at any time. Comments will be incorporated into the next review process. Please submit comments to the CCBA via info@climate-standards.org.

Acknowledgements

This document was developed by Steven Panfil and Joanna Durbin of the CCBA who gratefully acknowledge comments and suggestions made by a number of people, including Jeff Hayward (Rainforest Alliance), Martin Schroeder and Sebastian Hetsch (TÜV SÜD), Jenny Henman (Greenresources), Christie Pollet-Young (SCS), Silvia Gomez-Caviglia (Greenox), Toby Janson-Smith (Conservation International), Ray Victorine (Wildlife Conservation Society), Phil Franks (CARE International), and Nicole Virgilio (The Nature Conservancy).

¹ The Climate, Community & Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA) is a partnership of international non-governmental organizations seeking to foster the development of forest protection and restoration activities around the world that deliver significant climate, community and biodiversity benefits. The current members of the alliance are CARE International, Conservation International, The Nature Conservancy, the Rainforest Alliance, and the Wildlife Conservation Society.

Scope

This is the first version of the *Rules for the use of the Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards*. This document was produced by the Climate, Community & Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA) and was published on June 21, 2010. It replaces the *Terms of Reference and Guidance Document for the Validation of a Project Using the Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards*. The current and valid version of this document can be found at www.climate-standards.org.

This document describes the CCBA's requirements for the evaluation of projects against the CCB Standards and is intended to be used by project proponents and the independent auditors that evaluate the conformance of projects to the CCB Standards.

Terms and Definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

Auditor - an experienced and respected environmental auditing organization that conducts the validation or verification of a project. See the section on Approved Auditors below in this document.

CCBA - The Climate, Community & Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA) is the joint initiative of CARE International, Conservation International, The Nature Conservancy, the Rainforest Alliance, and the Wildlife Conservation Society that publishes the CCB Standards.

CCB Standards - The Climate, Community & Biodiversity (CCB) Standards are a set of concepts and indicators which are used in the design and evaluation of land-based projects that seek to simultaneously reduce or remove greenhouse gas emissions and generate positive impacts for local communities and the local environment.

CCB Status - The qualification of a project with respect to the CCB Standards. Approved projects are designated as Validated and/or Verified. Projects that also meet optional criteria are designated as Validated and/or Verified at the Silver or Gold Level.

Project Design Documentation (PDD) - The document(s) that describe the design of a project and the ways in which it meets each of the requirements of the CCB Standards.

Project proponent - The individual or organization responsible for the design and implementation of the project.

Validation - The systematic, independent and documented process for the evaluation of the design of a project against each of the CCB Standards' criteria.

Verification - The systematic, independent and documented process for the evaluation of a project's delivery of net climate, community and biodiversity benefits in accordance with the project's validated design and monitoring plan and each of the CCB Standards criteria.

History of the Standards and Validity of Versions

The Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards were developed by the Climate, Community & Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA). The following organizations made a substantial contribution to the development of the standards: CARE International, Conservation International, the Rainforest Alliance, The Nature Conservancy, the Wildlife Conservation Society, BP, GFA Envest, Intel, SC Johnson, Sustainable Forestry Management, Weyerhaeuser, the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE), The Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and the World Agroforestry Center (ICRAF).

The CCB Standards First Edition was released in May 2005 following an intensive two-year international stakeholder development process, expert review, public comments and field testing. The Standards were reviewed and strengthened during a nine-month participatory process leading to the release of the Second Edition in December 2008.

The CCB Standards Second Edition was launched on December 6, 2008 and was immediately available for use by project proponents. During a transition phase, projects wishing to use the First Edition of the Standards were permitted to do so if they were able to complete the public comment period and conduct the validation audit site visit by June 30, 2009. Projects which did not complete the public comment period and validation audit site visit by this date must be validated against the CCB Standards Second Edition.

Each verification audit of a project shall be conducted using the same edition of the Standards that was used when the project was validated. The CCB Standards First Edition will therefore be used for the first verification of projects that were validated against the First Edition and the CCB Standards Second Edition will be used for the first verification of projects validated to this edition.

All projects are expected to conform to the current edition of the CCB Standards at the time of, or shortly after, completion of a verification. To maintain CCB Standards Validated status, a project validated to the First Edition must demonstrate to the auditor that it meets the requirements of current edition of the CCB Standards. This may require a new validation as described below.

The Validation and Verification Process

All projects seeking approval under the CCB Standards must be *validated* to determine that the project design conforms with the Standards, and must subsequently be *verified* to determine that the project has been successfully implemented, generating net positive climate, social, and biodiversity benefits in accordance with its design.

The steps in the CCB Validation and Verification process are as follows:

Validation

1. *Preparation of documentation that describes how the project meets the requirements of the CCB Standards*
2. *Engagement of a qualified auditor*
3. *Publication and dissemination of the PDD for public comment*
4. *Validation audit site visit*
5. *Preparation by the auditor of a Draft CCB Validation Report*
6. *Revision of the project design to address any identified deficiencies*
7. *Preparation by the auditor of the Final CCB Validation Report and CCB Validation Statement*
8. *Publication of the revised PDD, Final CCB Validation Report, CCB Validation Statement and the project's CCB Status on the CCBA website*

Verification

1. *Publication and dissemination of climate, community and biodiversity monitoring plans and reports*
2. *Preparation of documentation that describes how the project met the requirements of the CCB Standards*
3. *Engagement of a qualified auditor*
4. *Publication and dissemination of the project implementation report for public comment*
5. *Verification audit site visit*
6. *Preparation by the auditor of a Draft CCB Verification Report*
7. *Response to deficiencies identified in the Draft CCB Verification Report*
8. *Preparation by the auditor of the Final CCB Verification Report and CCB Verification Statement*
9. *Posting of the Final CCB Verification Report, CCB Verification Statement and the project's CCB status to the CCBA website.*

Validation

1. *Preparation of documentation that describes how the project design meets the requirements of the CCB Standards*

The project design documentation (PDD) is a detailed description of the project and the ways in which it meets the required and optional criteria of the CCB Standards. There is no mandatory format or template for the PDD, but it must be prepared in a way that facilitates assessment by the public and the auditor.

Project proponents may use formats required by other relevant standards such as the [CDM Afforestation & Reforestation Project Design Document \(PDD\) template](#) or the [VCS project description template](#). Where additional information is required for the purposes of a CCB validation, this can be inserted within the document or provided as appendices or as an additional

document. Alternatively, a CCB project document could describe how the project conforms to each criterion in the CCB Standards, cross-referencing to additional documents where appropriate.

If a project includes multiple activities to reduce emissions (i.e., an integrated REDD and ARR project), the project proponents may prepare a single PDD that describes each activity or may prepare a separate PDD for each activity.

Project proponents may wish to review the documents of validated projects on the CCB Standards website (www.climate-standards.org) for examples of formats.

2. Engagement of a qualified auditor

The project proponent must engage a qualified auditor to undertake the validation. The CCBA maintains a list of approved auditors at www.climate-standards.org.

3. Publication and dissemination of the PDD for public comment

The auditor shall send the PDD to the CCBA after a review to determine that information has been provided in response to each of the requirements of the CCB Standards. This review is not an evaluation of the quality of the information supplied in the PDD.

The CCBA will post the PDD on its website for a 30-day public comment period. The public is invited to submit comments to the CCBA about whether the project meets the CCB Standards.

The 30-day public comment period should be completed before the start of the validation audit site visit, so that the auditor may make appropriate inquiries onsite about any comments received. In the event that the public comment period ends after the site visit is complete, the auditor must give full consideration to any comments received and may need to return to the project site to do so.

It is recommended that the project proponent should also provide notification of a planned and upcoming on-site validation audit to local stakeholders, preferably with 30-days notice. Such notification should indicate the auditing firm name, audit team leader, dates and locations of the audit, contact details, and means of communicating with the audit team.

Project proponents are also expected to communicate widely their intent to proceed with CCB validation and to publicize the opportunity for public comment. Note that criterion G3.9 of the Second Edition of the CCB Standards requires project proponents to:

‘Describe what specific steps have been taken, and communications methods used, to publicize the CCBA public comment period to communities and other stakeholders and to facilitate their submission of comments to CCBA. Project proponents must play an active role in distributing key project documents to affected communities and stakeholders and hold widely publicized information meetings in relevant local or regional languages.’

The CCBA collates and publishes any comments that it receives and sends them to the auditor and the project proponent. The auditor must assess how the project proponent has responded to the issues raised by public comments. The project proponents may respond to public comments through revisions to the PDD or other documented efforts.

The auditor must take these comments into account when determining whether the project meets the CCB Standards. The auditor's final report must describe how each comment was addressed by the project proponent.

4. *Validation audit site visit*

All CCB validation audits must include a visit to the project site. The purpose is to confirm the validity of the written project design documentation.

The CCB validation is based on a review of the project documents provided by the project proponent and appropriate fact finding by the auditor during an on-site project visit. The auditor is expected to use his/her expert knowledge and professional judgment to assess available evidence to determine which of the CCB Standards criteria are satisfied by the project as designed and documented. The on-site audit normally includes interviews with project proponents and stakeholders, and a review of supporting records, documents and reports. The project proponent should notify stakeholders of the on-site audit and invite further comment and participation, as applicable, during the audit.

The project proponent must assist with the CCB audit by providing the auditor with the necessary documentation and other evidence to show how the project satisfies each CCB criterion and indicator. In a timely manner, the project proponent must submit additional evidence as needed and requested, respond to questions from the auditor and its staff, and assist in arranging meetings with project participants as requested and required. The burden of proof in the CCB validation process ultimately rests with the project proponent.

5. *Preparation by the auditor of a Draft CCB Validation Report*

A validation audit and the decision to approve a project must be documented by the auditor. The first stage of audit reporting is the preparation of a draft report. Based on its assessment, the auditor prepares a *Draft CCB Validation Report* specifying which criteria and indicators the project does and does not satisfy. The *Draft CCB Validation Report* will not be made public.

This report must list, at minimum, all required CCB Standards criteria and their associated indicators and identify what evidence or documentation the auditor used to determine whether the project conforms to a given criterion and indicator.

Optional: For projects seeking approval at the Gold level of the CCB Standards Second Edition, the report must also include the relevant optional criteria and indicators (at least one of GL.1 GL.2 or GL.3).

In the case that there are non-conformities (deficiencies or weaknesses) of the project design with respect to the CCB Standards, these must be identified and justified by the auditor at the indicator level. Auditors will usually raise Corrective Action Requests for any non-conformity. These must be outlined clearly and specifically so that the project proponent may respond to any open issue(s) and undertake appropriate corrective action.

The *Draft CCB Validation Report* must also inform the project proponent of the timeframe and process to follow for completion of the validation audit.

6. *Revision of the PDD to address any identified deficiencies*

After receiving the *Draft CCB Validation Report*, the project proponent must address any failing criteria to the satisfaction of the auditor. The project proponent may take remedial actions, including, but not limited to, modifying the project design, or providing new or revised documentation or supporting evidence, so that it can satisfy the CCB Standards.

7. *Preparation by the auditor of the Final CCB Validation Report and CCB Validation Statement*

When the project proponent has produced project design documentation that conforms to each criterion and indicator, the auditor will produce a *Final CCB Validation Report* and a *CCB Validation Statement*. The *Final CCB Validation Report* must document the evidence used to determine that the project satisfies each of the CCB Standards criteria and how any non-conformities identified in the Draft Report have been addressed through corrective actions. The *CCB Validation Statement* is a separate summary document that lists the project name, location, project proponent, date of validation and expiration, the version of the CCB Standards used and the level (e.g. Approved or Gold) achieved. This statement will indicate whether the project earned Gold level and which of the optional criteria were met, if applicable.

The CCBA must receive the final CCB Validation Report and the CCB Validation Statement within one year of the initiation of the project's CCBA public comment period. If the Final CCB Validation Report is not issued by this date, then the project must reinstate the validation process, including a new public comment period. The auditor must determine whether a new site visit is needed. An exception is made for projects that initiated the public comment period before this document took effect. For these projects, the final CCB Validation statement must be received within one year of the effective date of these rules.

8. *Publication of the revised PDD, Final CCB Validation Report, CCB Validation Statement and the project's CCB Status on the CCBA website*

The auditor will furnish the final versions of the PDD, the CCB Validation Report and the Final CCB Validation Statement to the CCBA for publication. The CCBA posts these documents on its website and publishes the project's CCB status indicating whether the project is CCB Validated and whether it has achieved the Gold Level (or Silver in the case of projects validated against the CCB Standards First Edition).

The Draft and Final CCB Validation Reports and the CCB Validation Statement will remain the property of the project proponents, the auditor, and the CCBA, and will remain confidential until the project proponent consents to their public release. This is intended to encourage projects to be audited with the CCB Standards without having to fear that a non-passing report could be used against them.

For projects to be considered validated or approved to the CCB Standards, the *Final CCB Validation Report* and the *CCB Validation Statement* must be made publicly available, which includes posting on the CCBA website (www.climate-standards.org/projects). This transparency is essential to maintain the credibility of the CCB validation/verification process and its value in the marketplace. A project is not considered validated or verified against the CCB Standards unless its CCB Status is indicated as 'Validated' and/or 'Verified' on the active list maintained by the CCBA. Similarly, it is not considered to have achieved the Silver or Gold Level unless these designations also are shown on the CCBA list.

Verification

To maintain its CCB Standards Validation status, a project must be verified within five years of the last validation or verification.

1. *Publication and dissemination of climate, community and biodiversity monitoring plans and reports*

To successfully complete verification a project must have designed and then implemented a monitoring plan as described in sections CL3, CM3, and B3 of the Standards:

‘Commit to developing a full monitoring plan within six months of the project start date or within twelve months of validation against the Standards and to disseminate this plan and the results of monitoring, ensuring that they are made publicly available on the internet and are communicated to the communities and other stakeholders.’

To satisfy the requirement for posting on the internet, the project proponent must submit the full monitoring plan(s) to the CCBA within the specified time limits and must also send the results of the monitoring to the CCBA in accordance with a dissemination schedule defined in the monitoring plan. The CCBA will publish both the monitoring plan and the results on its website. Failure to do the above may result in suspension or withdrawal of the CCB Standards Validation status.

A well designed monitoring plan is essential to successful verification against the CCB Standards as auditors will use the data collected under this plan to evaluate whether the project has delivered net climate, community and biodiversity benefits. The CCBA does not require this plan to be reviewed by the auditor prior to undergoing the verification process, but it may be advantageous to the project proponent to have an approved auditor review and issue an opinion on the full monitoring plans rather than wait for the auditor’s opinion during a future verification.

In the monitoring plans, the project proponent must state which climate, community and biodiversity variables they will monitor over time and how frequently and where they intend to undertake the monitoring in order to assess on-site and off-site impacts. Anticipated positive and negative impacts must be monitored. However, recognizing that unforeseen circumstances can preclude gathering certain data, the project proponent may revise their choice of indicators in the future if they can justify to the auditor that undertakes the future verification that the new indicators are appropriate. When considered together, each reported set of climate, community and biodiversity variables needs to be sufficiently broad and inclusive to show that overall benefits have accrued across all three dimensions. The auditor has sole discretion to determine whether the selected variables are adequate in this regard.

2. *Preparation of documentation that describes how the project met the requirements of the CCB Standards*

Prior to verification, the project proponent must prepare a report that describes how the project has been implemented in accordance with the validated PDD, and how it meets each of the CCB Standards criteria. The project implementation report is the main document that will be evaluated by the auditor to determine whether the project has successfully delivered net climate, community and biodiversity benefits.

3. Engagement of a qualified auditor

The project proponent must engage a qualified auditor to undertake the verification. The CCBA maintains a list of approved auditors at www.climate-standards.org. The auditor that performs the verification could be the same auditor that performed the initial or any subsequent validations or verifications or a different auditor.

4. Publication and dissemination of the project implementation report

The auditor shall send the project implementation report to the CCBA after a review to determine that information has been provided in response to each of the criteria in the CCB Standards. This review is not an evaluation of the quality of this information.

The CCBA will post the project implementation report on its website for a 30-day public comment period. The public is invited to submit comments to the CCBA about whether the project implementation meets the CCB Standards.

The 30-day public comment period should be completed before the start of the verification audit site visit, so that the auditor may make appropriate inquiries onsite about any comments received. In the event that the public comment period ends after the site visit is complete, the auditor is required to give full consideration to any comments received and may need to return to the project site to do so.

It is recommended that the auditor should also provide notification of a planned and upcoming on-site validation audit to local stakeholders, preferably with 30-days notice. Such notification should indicate the auditing firm name, audit team leader, dates and locations of the audit, contact details, and means of communicating with the audit team.

Project proponents are also expected to communicate widely their intent to proceed with verification and to publicize the opportunity for public comment. Note that criterion G3.9 of the Second Edition of the CCB Standards requires project proponents to:

‘Describe what specific steps have been taken, and communications methods used, to publicize the CCBA public comment period to communities and other stakeholders and to facilitate their submission of comments to CCBA. Project proponents must play an active role in distributing key project documents to affected communities and stakeholders and hold widely publicized information meetings in relevant local or regional languages.’

The CCBA collates and publishes any comments that it receives and sends them to the auditor and the project proponent. The auditor must evaluate how the project proponent has responded to the issues raised by public comments. The project proponents may demonstrate their responses to public comments through revisions to the project implementation report or other documented efforts.

The auditor must take these comments into account when determining whether the project meets the CCB Standards. The auditor’s final report must describe how each significant comment was addressed by the project proponent.

5. *Verification audit site visit*

All CCB verification audits must include a visit to the project site. This site visit is analogous to the validation site visit, and its purpose is to confirm the validity of the project implementation report with the project proponents and local stakeholders.

The CCB verification is based on a review of the project documents provided by the project proponent and appropriate fact finding by the auditor during an on-site project visit. The auditor is expected to use his/her expert knowledge and professional judgment to evaluate available evidence to determine which of the CCB Standards criteria were satisfied by the project as designed and documented. Credible and independently verifiable indicators must have been used to demonstrate the stated benefits. If these benefits vary in magnitude and scope from the expected benefits described in the validated project design, the project may still be successfully verified if the net climate, community and biodiversity impacts are positive compared to the baseline scenario.

As with the validation site visit, the verification site visit normally includes interviews with project proponents and stakeholders, and a review of supporting records, documents and reports. The project proponent should notify stakeholders of the on-site audit and invite further comment and participation, as applicable, during the audit. The project proponent must assist with the CCB audit by providing the auditor with the necessary documentation and other evidence to show how the project satisfies each CCB criterion and indicator. In a timely manner, the project proponent must submit additional evidence as needed and requested, respond to questions from the auditor and its staff, and assist in arranging meetings with project participants as requested and required. The burden of proof in the CCB Verification process ultimately rests with the project proponent.

6. *Preparation by the auditor of a Draft CCB Verification Report*

A verification audit and the decision to approve a project must be based on reporting that follows minimum requirements. The first stage of audit reporting is the preparation of a draft report. Based on its assessment, the auditor prepares a *Draft CCB Verification Report* specifying which criteria and indicators the project does and does not satisfy. The *Draft CCB Verification Report* will not be made public.

This report must list, at minimum, all required CCB Standards criteria and their associated indicators and identify what evidence or documentation the auditor used to determine whether the project conforms to a given criterion and indicator. For projects seeking approval at the Gold level, the report must also include the relevant optional criteria and indicators. A project that meets all of the required criteria but fails to meet the optional criteria at the time of verification will be approved at the level determined by the verification. A project may not be verified to a higher level than the one achieved at the time of validation.

In the case that there are non-conformities (deficiencies or weaknesses) to the CCB Standards evaluated, these must be identified and justified by the auditor at the indicator level. Auditors will usually raise Corrective Action Requests for any non-conformity. These must be outlined clearly and specifically so that the project proponent may respond to any open issue(s) and undertake appropriate measures of corrective action.

The *Draft CCB Verification Report* must also inform the project proponent of the timeframe and process to follow for completion of the verification audit.

7. *Response to deficiencies identified in the Draft CCB Verification Report*

After receiving the *Draft CCB Verification Report*, the project proponent may address any aspects that fail to achieve the criteria in the standards to the satisfaction of the auditor. The project proponent may provide additional documentation or supporting evidence to demonstrate that it has met these criteria. If the project proponent is unable to demonstrate that it meets all required criteria in the CCB Standards, then Verification will not be approved.

8. *Preparation by the auditor of the Final CCB Verification Report and CCB Verification Statement*

When the project implementation report shows that the project meets all requirements of the CCB Standards, the auditor will produce a *Final CCB Verification Report* and a *CCB Verification Statement*. The *Final CCB Verification Report* must document the evidence used to determine that the project satisfies each of the CCB Standards criteria and how any non-conformities identified in the Draft Report have been addressed through corrective actions. The *CCB Verification Statement* is a summary document that lists the project name, location, project proponent, the dates of the period evaluated for the verification, and the name of the auditing company. This statement will indicate whether the project earned Gold level, as defined by the CCB Standards Second Edition, if applicable.

The auditor will furnish the final versions of the *CCB Verification Statement* and the *Final CCB Standards Verification Report* to the CCBA for publication. The CCBA posts these documents on its website showing the project's CCB status indicating whether it is CCB Verified and whether it has achieved the Gold Level (or Silver Level in the case of projects verified against the CCB Standards First Edition).

The Draft and Final CCB Verification Reports and the *CCB Verification Statement* will remain the property of the project proponents, the auditor, and the CCBA, and will remain confidential until the project proponent consents to their public release. This is intended to encourage projects to be audited with the CCB Standards without having to fear that a non-passing report could be used against them.

9. *Posting of the Final CCB Verification Report and CCB Verification Statement to the CCBA website.*

For projects to be considered verified to the CCB Standards, the *Final CCB Verification Report* and the *CCB Verification Statement* must be made publicly available, which includes posting on the CCBA website (www.climate-standards.org/projects). This transparency is essential to maintain the credibility of the CCB validation/verification process and its value in the marketplace. A project is not considered CCB validated or verified if it is not included on the active list maintained online by the CCBA.

The CCBA must receive the *Final CCB Verification Report* and the *CCB Verification Statement* within one year of the initiation of the project's CCBA public comment period for the project implementation report.

Repetition of Verification Audits for the Life of the Project

Verification audits must be repeated for the life of the project and no more than 5 years may pass between each verification. Projects may choose to do verifications more frequently as this serves as confirmation that the project has achieved its intended impacts.

New Validations

A new validation is required at the time of verification if any of the following situations occur:

- The project was validated and verified to an edition of the CCB Standards that is no longer current;
- There has been a change in the project area as defined in the CCB Standards;
- There has been a significant change in the project activities, such as significant changes in the scope (e.g. inclusion or exclusion of reforestation or reducing emissions from deforestation) or scale of the activities;
- There has been a substantial change in the expected climate, community, or biodiversity impacts of the project, for example, a substantial change in the type of impacts, or the affected group;
- There has been a change of the project proponent responsible for implementation.

The validated PDD is used during a verification to determine if a project has been implemented in accordance with its design. Significant changes in the project activities or substantial changes in the impacts of the project that are not described in a validated PDD would make verification impossible.

The process for new validations is the same as for the initial validation. Subsequent validation audits must be successfully completed within twelve months of the conclusion of the period evaluated in the previous verification audit. The public comment period and site visit for the new validation may be concurrent with the public comment period and site visit for the verification.

Concurrent Validations and Verifications

Validations and verifications may be done concurrently at the time of the initial and subsequent validations. For example, a project that started before its initial validation may choose to do a validation and verification simultaneously. Similarly, a project that is required to do a new validation may also do this simultaneously with the verification of the previous monitoring period.

In a concurrent validation and verification, the auditor must assess whether the project has been implemented in a way that conforms to the requirements of the CCB Standards, and whether it has delivered net positive climate, community and biodiversity benefits. The verification is an assessment of the implementation that has already occurred and there must be adequate monitoring records to demonstrate delivery of these net benefits. As with other verifications, a project implementation report must be published on the CCBA website and disseminated in locally appropriate ways for a 30 day public comment period.

The validation is an evaluation of the project design for future implementation and must satisfy all requirements for validations as described above.

Project Eligibility

Project type

The CCB Standards may be applied to all land-based activities that generate GHG emissions reductions and removals. This includes, but is not limited to forest restoration, avoided deforestation, avoided conversion of other habitats, and improved forest management or agricultural land management.

Location

Projects may be located in any country of the world. Note that criterion CL1.5 requires project proponents to:

“Specify how double counting of GHG emissions reductions or removals will be avoided, particularly for offsets sold on the voluntary market and generated in a country with an emissions cap.”

The CCBA Policy Announcement *Applicability of CL1.5 of the CCB Standards Second Edition concerning double counting* provides more detail on this issue.

Dates

The CCB Standards does not limit the start date of a project or specify a minimum or maximum project lifetime. The project proponent must describe the project dates as specified in criterion G3.4:

“Define the project lifetime and GHG accounting period and explain and justify any differences between them. Define an implementation schedule, indicating key dates and milestones in the project’s development.”

Issuance of Emissions Reductions Certificates

The use of the CCB Standards does not result in the issuance of emissions reductions certificates by the CCBA. The approval of a project’s design (through successful completion of a validation audit) and the approval of a project’s implementation (through successful completion of a verification audit) is an assessment of the quality of the project and its ability to generate net positive climate, community, and biodiversity impacts. It is recommended that project proponents that seek to use or sell emissions reductions and removals as offsets also seek certification under a recognized carbon accounting standard that includes a formal process for the issuance, registry, and tracking of emissions reductions certificates.

Combined Validation and Verification with other Standards

The CCB Standards may be combined with other certification schemes. Because the CCB Standards do not result in the issuance of emissions reductions certificates, many projects choose to apply the CCB Standards together with a separate carbon accounting standard. The CCBA encourages the combination of the CCB Standards with a carbon accounting standards but does not require this combination, nor does it endorse the use of any specific carbon accounting

standard. Project proponents are encouraged to consult with potential investors and buyers to determine the most appropriate carbon accounting standard for their circumstances.

Emissions reductions units issued by other standards may include a label to indicate that the emissions reduction was produced by a project that was approved by the CCBA. This label may only be applied to emissions reductions generated during a period for which the project was successfully *verified* to the CCB Standards.

Language Requirements

Project documents may be developed in a locally appropriate language and may be submitted for validation and verification audits in the local language if the auditor has competency in that language. The project documents which are posted on the CCB Standards website for the official public comment period may also be in the local language, but a summary of the project which includes the PDD sections for CCB Standards Criteria G3.1-3 must be translated to English for posting to the CCB Standards website.

Once a project is approved the CCB Validation and Verification Statements must be translated into English. Both the local language and English versions of the approved documents will be posted on the CCBA website.

Approved Auditors

CCB validations and verifications must be performed by an experienced and respected environmental auditing company with one of the following qualifications:

- Accreditation as a “Designated Operational Entity” for the sectoral scope “Afforestation and Reforestation” with the CDM Executive Board;
- Accreditation as a Certification Body for sustainable forest management audits under the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) in the geographical area of the project to be evaluated;
or
- Accreditation under ISO 14065:2007 with an accreditation scope specifically for the Voluntary Carbon Standard (VCS) Program covering Agriculture, Forestry or Other Land Use.

The company and its staff that work on the CCB validation/verification of the project must be completely independent of all other aspects of the project and not have previously assisted in its design or worked on any of its components. CCB auditors may simultaneously undertake audits of the project against other standards (e.g., FSC, CDM) to enable time and cost efficiencies.

CCBA maintains a current list of all approved CCB Standards auditors on the CCBA website (www.climate-standards.org).

Updates to the CCB Standards and Rules for Use

The CCBA will occasionally publish updates to the CCB Standards and the rules for their use. In addition, the CCBA may publish policy announcements that clarify requirements and rules for the use of the CCB Standards. These updates and announcements will be published on www.climate-standards.org.

Logo Use and Communications Regarding CCB Status

The CCB Standards logo may be used for materials about CCB Validated and CCB Verified projects upon specific written approval by the CCBA. A request for logo use must be sent to info@climate-standards.org, including a copy of the relevant document or material and a description of its intended use.

A CCB Validated and/or Verified project may communicate this status through oral or written means and must do so in a way that accurately represents the level of approval achieved and the validated or verified climate, community and biodiversity benefits. Statements about a project that has been validated but not verified must ensure that any reference to the use of the CCB Standards refers only to the quality of project design and to projected benefits and does not suggest that a verification has been achieved. Statements must accurately portray the approved, silver, or gold level validation or verification achieved. Project proponents must ensure that statements regarding CCB status are used only for the project and activities specifically described in the project documents that have been validated or verified.

Suspension or Withdrawal

Project proponents must abide by the rules stated in this document, and the CCBA reserves the right to revoke a project's CCB Standards Validated or Verified status at any time, at its own discretion.

In the event that the CCBA receives information that suggests that a project is failing to meet the Standards, the CCBA will transmit this information to the auditor. The auditor must determine if the information is valid and whether it affects the project's status with respect to the CCB Standards and must report to the CCBA on the results of its inquiries. The project proponent must assist the auditor to obtain the necessary information for making this determination and the cost of this inquiry must be assumed by the project proponent and/or the auditor. If the project proponent is unable to satisfy the auditor and/or the CCBA that it meets the requirements of the CCB Standards, then the CCBA may remove the project from its list of approved projects and communicate this in the ways that it deems appropriate.