CCB Standards

The Climate, Community & Biodiversity Alliance

December 2013

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

About the CCBA

The Climate, Community & Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA) is a partnership of five international non-governmental organizations: Conservation International, CARE, Rainforest Alliance, The Nature Conservancy and Wildlife Conservation Society (see http://www.climate-standards.org/). The CCBA's mission is to stimulate and promote land management activities that credibly mitigate global climate change, improve the wellbeing and reduce the poverty of local communities, and conserve biodiversity.

The CCBA has two initiatives:

- The Climate, Community & Biodiversity (CCB) Standards were launched in 2005 to foster development of, and investment in, site-based projects that deliver credible and significant climate, community and biodiversity benefits in an integrated, sustainable manner.
- The REDD+ Social & Environmental Standards (REDD+ SES) were launched in 2010 to build support for government-led REDD+ programs that make a significant contribution to human rights, poverty alleviation and biodiversity conservation. The development of REDD+ SES was jointly facilitated by CARE and CCBA.

Both the CCB Standards and the REDD+ SES focus not just on ensuring 'no harm' but also aim to enhance multiple benefits.

Acknowledgements[1]

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[1] Affiliations are only for reference and may have changed since their contribution to the CCB Standards.

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Development of the CCB Standards and Rules

The First Edition of the CCB Standards was released in May 2005 after a rigorous two-year development process based on input from community and environmental groups, companies, academics, project developers and others with expert knowledge or affected by the standards. Prior to their release, the Standards were tested on projects in Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas and peer reviewed by the world's leading tropical forestry institutes: the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) in Indonesia, the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE) in Costa Rica and the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) in Kenya.

The Second Edition of the CCB Standards was released in December 2008. The Standards were revised to respond to the evolving context for land-based carbon based on feedback from a wide range of users of the standards such as project developers, representatives of local communities and indigenous peoples, investors, offset buyers, non-governmental organizations and government agencies. The revision process included two public comment periods of 60-days and 30-days respectively and was overseen by a multi-stakeholder Standards Committee.

The Rules for the Use of the CCB Standards (21st June 2010) were developed to define the CCBA's requirements for the evaluation of projects against the CCB Standards.

The Third Edition of the CCB Standards was released in December 2013 concurrently with this version of the Rules for the Use of the CCB Standards (12th December 2013). The CCBA launched a revision of the CCB Standards and Rules in 2012 with the following objectives:

- to incorporate substantial feedback received from current users and others to ensure that the CCB Standards remain robust, practical and continue to meet the demands of the users, and also
- to facilitate the access of smallholder and community-led projects to carbon finance.

The second objective seeks to support smallholder- and community-led projects which have significant potential to provide multiple climate and development benefits but face a series of challenges. CCB Standards are in a unique position to reduce the barriers for these kinds of projects through modifications to help showcase the special qualities and multiple benefits of smallholder- and community led-projects.

The terms of reference for the revision of the CCB Standards to develop the Third Edition were published in November 2012, followed by the creation of a multi-stakeholder Standards Committee to oversee the revision.[2] The CCBA undertook a range of research and consultations to seek input for the revision, including case studies and a workshop with smallholder- and community-led projects in Addis Ababa in October 2012, and a survey of current CCB Standards users in January 2012.[3]

Two draft versions of the CCB Standards Third Edition were posted on www.climate-standards.org for public comments for 60 days from 22nd March to 21st May, 2013 and from 31st July 2013 to 29th September 2013.

A draft revised Rules for the Use of the CCB Standards (Rules) was also prepared by the CCBA with substantial input from the CCB Standards Committee and comments were invited from members of the public over a 60-day period from 31st July 2013 to 29th September 2013.

[2] See http://www.climate-standards.org/ccb-standards/ccb-standards-revision/
[3] See http://www.climate-standards.org/ccb-standards/ccb-standards-for-smallholders-initiative/

All comments received were evaluated and a written synopsis has been published of how each material issue has been addressed in the Standards and the Rules.[4]

[4] See http://www.climate-standards.org/ccb-standards/history-of-the-standards/

Contents

Introduction

The CCB Standards identify land management projects that deliver net positive benefits for climate change mitigation, for local communities and for biodiversity. The Standards can be applied to any land management project, including projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation or from avoided degradation of other ecosystems, and projects that remove carbon dioxide by sequestering carbon (e.g., reforestation, afforestation, revegetation, forest restoration, agroforestry and sustainable agriculture) or other land management projects. The CCB Standards are important for all phases of project planning and management, from design through implementation and monitoring.

The CCB Standards perform two important roles:

- **Project design standard**: The CCB Standards provide rules and guidance to encourage effective and integrated project design. The Standards can be applied early on during a project's design phase to validate projects that have been well designed, are suitable to local conditions and are likely to achieve significant climate, community and biodiversity benefits. This validation helps to build support for the project at a crucial stage and attract funding or other assistance from key stakeholders, including investors, governments and other important local, national and international partners. This early project support and funding can be particularly important for multiple-benefit land-based carbon projects, which often require considerable investment and effort for project development before greenhouse gas emissions reductions can be generated.
- **Multiple-benefit standard**: The CCB Standards can be applied throughout the project's life to verify the adoption of best practices and the delivery of social and environmental benefits of a land-based carbon project. The Standards can be combined very effectively with a carbon accounting standard such as, for example, the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) or the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS). In this case, the CCB Standards provide a basis for evaluating a project's social and environmental impacts while the carbon accounting standard enables verification and registration of quantified greenhouse gas emissions reductions or removals. In this way, the CCB Standards verify the social and environmental benefits generated by a project, enabling investors to select carbon credits with additional benefits, while screening out projects with unacceptable social and environmental impacts.

The CCB Standards can be used regardless of a project's geographical location, start date, or size. The Standards can be used for projects funded with either private or public investment, and they apply to projects that generate credits for either compliance or voluntary markets.

The CCB Standards are used to demonstrate net positive climate, community & biodiversity benefits. It is important to note that the CCBA does not issue quantified emissions reductions certificates and therefore encourages the use of a carbon accounting standard (such as CDM or VCS) in combination with CCB Standards.

Use of the CCB Standards requires that independent, approved auditors determine conformance with the CCB Standards at two stages, *validation* and *verification*. A CCB validation is an assessment of the design of a land-based carbon project against each of the CCB Standards criteria. A CCB verification is an evaluation of a project's delivery of net climate, community, and biodiversity benefits against the project's validated design and monitoring plan. Verification must be performed at least every five years.

Successful CCB verification enables the addition of a 'CCB label' to verified emissions reductions units listed on a registry.

Information and supporting documents for projects that are undergoing or have completed audit against the CCB Standards and their current CCB Standards status are published on www.climate-standards.org/projects. The current versions of the CCB Standards, the Rules for the Use of the CCB Standards, approved auditors and guidance for the use of the standards are also published at www.climate-standards.org.

Scope of these Rules

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 Approved 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. A full set of all terms and definitions that apply to the CCB Standards is provided in the CCB Standards Third Edition.

Approved methodological approach – A methodology approved by GHG Programs recognized by the CCBA. A list of GHG Programs recognized by the CCBA is published on the CCBA website (www.climate-standards.org).

Auditor – A recognized, qualified and independent auditing organization that evaluates whether a project has met each of the CCB Standards criteria and any other requirements following the process for validation or verification against the CCB Standards defined in this Rules document. See the 'Approved Auditors' section in this document.

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

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

CCB Standards Public Comment Period – The process in which CCBA posts project documents that are under evaluation by an Auditor for conformance with the CCB Standards on www.climate-standards.org for at least 30 days with an invitation and link for submission of comments by members of the public to which the Auditor must respond in the Validation/Verification Report.

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 Gold Level, indicating which of the Gold Level criteria are achieved. The First Edition of the CCB Standards also included Silver Level.

Communities – Are all groups of people—including Indigenous Peoples, mobile peoples and other local communities—who derive income, livelihood or cultural values and other contributions to well-being from the Project Area at the start of the project and/or under the with-project scenario. In cases where numerous small Communities can be shown to have homogeneous patterns of social organization, political structure and livelihoods, these Communities may be identified and listed as a Community. In identification of Communities, it is permitted to consider significance of user populations and of their level of use such that distant or intermittent user groups who have very limited dependence on the site need not be defined as Communities.

Criteria (singular **Criterion**) – Conditions that must be met to achieve the requirements of the CCB Standards. The CCB Standards Third Edition are comprised of 20 discrete criteria, including 17 required criteria and three optional Gold Level criteria.

Defensible methodological approach – A Defensible methodological approach follows good practice guidance that includes procedures for delineating the conditions under which the methodological approach can be applied: defining the project area; estimating any projected rates of land cover change in the without-project and with-project scenarios; conservatively estimating without project GHG emissions and removals; monitoring GHG emissions over the project lifetime; defining types of leakage potential caused by project activities and conservatively estimating expected leakage emissions under the with-project scenario. It shall also observe principles of relevance, completeness, consistency, transparency and conservativeness for land-based carbon accounting; such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 2006 Guidelines for National GHG Inventories for Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (IPCC 2006 GL for AFOLU), and the AFOLU Requirements of the Verified Carbon Standard.

Gap validation – The systematic, independent and documented process for the evaluation of the design of a project against each of the CCB Standards' criteria that assesses only those areas of project design or the CCB Standards that have changed since a project was previously assessed and achieved Validated CCB Status.

Indicators –Quantitative or qualitative parameters that allow the assessment of whether associated criteria are being met. The CCB Standards include indicators under each criterion that independent Auditors use to determine whether the project in question satisfies that particular criterion.

Other Stakeholders – All groups other than Communities who can potentially affect or be affected by the project activities and who may live within or outside the Project Zone.

Programmatic approach – Allows the expansion of project activities that aim to generate net climate benefits to new land areas subsequent to project validation subject to meeting established eligibility criteria. Conformance with the standards is assessed for new activities during the next validation or verification of the project against the CCB Standards.

Project – A set of actions or activities applied to a defined geographical area for specific purposes.

Project Area – The land area in which project activities aim to demonstrate net climate benefits

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

Project GHG accounting period – The time period over which changes in GHG emissions reductions and/or removals resulting from project activities are monitored for use as offsets.

Project Implementation Report (PIR) – The document that describes how the project has been implemented in accordance with its validated design and delivered net positive benefits to meet the requirements of the CCB Standards.

Project lifetime – The time period over which project activities are implemented.

Project start date – The start of implementation of activities that will directly cause the project's expected climate, community or biodiversity benefits.

Project Zone – The area encompassing the Project Area in which project activities that directly affect land and associated resources, including activities such as those related to provision of alternate livelihoods and community development, are implemented. If using a programmatic approach, the Project Zone also includes all potential Project Areas (i.e. all potential new land areas in which project activities that aim to generate net climate benefits may be implemented in the future after the initial validation).

Project Proponent – The individual or organization that has overall control and responsibility for the project, or an individual or organization that together with others, each of which is also a project proponent, has overall control or responsibility for the project.

Recognized Greenhouse Gas Program – A GHG Program or standard recognized by the CCBA. Criteria for eligibility and the process for recognizing GHG programs by the CCBA and a list of Recognized GHG Programs are found in the 'Climate Section Waiver' section of this document.

Scalability limit – This is the scale beyond which, if new project activities are added, the project may not generate net positive climate, community or biodiversity benefits, such as capacity limits, economic and managerial constraints, and thresholds for project expansion beyond which there may be negative impacts on communities and/or biodiversity.

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

Verification (or CCB 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.

CCB Standards documents

The CCB Standards system is based on two key documents:

- The *Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards* (the Standards) provide objective criteria and indicators that can be used to identify projects that deliver credible and significant climate, community and biodiversity benefits in an integrated and sustainable manner.
- The *Rules for the Use of the Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards* (this document – the Rules) describe the required process for the evaluation of the conformance of projects to the CCB Standards through an independent audit.

Guidance and tools supplement the Standards and the Rules. As of December 2013, guidance documents published by the CCBA include:

- Social and Biodiversity Impact Assessment Manual for REDD+ Projects (available in English, French and Spanish)
- Templates and guidance for combining validation and verification to both the CCB Standards and the Verified Carbon Standard.

Policy announcements are issued to inform Standards users of updates to the Standards or the Rules.

Validity of Versions of the Standards and Rules

These *Rules for the use of the Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards* (12th December 2013) (Rules) are effective immediately from 12th December 2013. These Rules apply to all use of the CCB Standards from this effective date and replace the first version of the Rules published on 21st June 2010.

The CCB Standards Third Edition may be used immediately from 12th December 2013 and shall be used for all projects for which the CCB Standards Public Comment Period for validation to the CCB Standards is initiated on or after 1st July 2014.

The CCB Standards Second Edition may be used for projects for which CCB Standards Public Comment Period for validation to the CCB Standards is initiated on or before 30th June 2014.

Each verification of a project shall be conducted against the most recent validated project design using the same edition of the Standards that was used for that CCB Standards validation. The CCB Standards Third Edition will therefore be used for subsequent verifications of projects that were validated against the Third Edition and the CCB Standards First or Second Editions will be used for the verification of projects validated to those editions.

As described in the "New Validations and Gap Validations" section of this document, certain changes in project design require a new validation or gap validation, for which the project must meet the requirements of the most recent edition of the CCB Standards. Projects that have successfully completed a new validation or gap validation demonstrating conformance to a more recent edition of the Standard will be verified using the revised validated project design and the more recent edition of the CCB Standards that was used for the new or gap validation.

The CCBA will occasionally publish updates to the CCB Standards and the Rules. These updates and announcements will be published on www.climate-standards.org.

The current and valid versions of all documents can be found at www.climate-standards.org**.**

Roles and responsibilities

The Climate, Community and Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA) develops and publishes the CCB Standards and the Rules for the Use of the CCB Standards. Guidance and suggested tools to assist Project Proponents to design and implement projects to meet the requirements of the CCB Standards, and to assist Auditors and stakeholders with their evaluation, are also provided by the CCBA. The CCBA posts the Project Design Documentation (PDD)/Project Implementation Report (PIR) on its website for a public comment period, collates and publishes any comments that it receives and then sends them to the Auditor and the Project Proponent. The final versions of the PDD/PIR are posted by the CCBA on its website along with the CCB Status indicating whether the project is CCB Validated/Verified and whether

it has achieved the Gold Level, identifying which Gold Level criterion/criteria are met and which edition of the CCB Standards was used.

Project Proponent has overall control and responsibility for the project, for example identifying the project opportunity, designing and implementing the project, and organizing validation, monitoring activities and ultimately verification.[5] The Project Proponent may partner with other entities for project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and financing.[6] The Project Proponent is responsible for producing project documentation including Project Design Documentation, Project Implementation Reports, monitoring reports, etc. to demonstrate that the project meets all the requirements of the CCB Standards. The Project Proponent engages an Approved Auditor and, prior to the first meeting with the Auditor, provides the CCBA with pipeline information about the project. Project Proponents are expected to communicate widely to Communities and Other Stakeholders their intent to proceed with CCB Validation or Verification and must publicize the opportunity for public comment. On receipt of comments from the CCBA, they may respond to these comments through revisions to the PDD/PIR or other documented efforts. The project proponent notifies stakeholders of the Auditor's site visit and assists with the CCB Validation/Verification audit by providing the Auditor with the necessary documentation and other evidence, information and action as needed or requested. On receipt of the Draft Validation/Verification Report, the Project Proponent addresses all identified corrective action or non-conformity requests to the satisfaction of the Auditor and produces the final version of the documentation. In each case, the Project Proponent submits relevant documentation to the Auditor, who is responsible for submitting it to the CCBA.

Approved Auditors: An Auditor is a recognized, qualified and independent auditing organization that evaluates whether a project has met each of the CCB Standards criteria and any other requirements following the process for validation or verification against the CCB Standards defined in this Rules document. Based on this determination, the project may earn Validated or Verified CCB Status and, in exceptional cases, also achieve Gold Level status**.** The Auditor is responsible for checking that the project is listed on the CCBA website before conducting their opening meeting with the Project Proponent or starting the validation or verification process. The Auditor is also responsible for providing its contact details and expected dates of the CCB Validation or Verification site visit as soon as the information is available and before submitting any of the project's documents to the CCBA for publication. On receipt of the PDD/PIR from the Project Proponent, the Auditor reviews the document(s) for completeness then sends them to the CCBA (to info@climate-standards.org). The Auditor makes appropriate inquiries onsite or otherwise about any comments received during the public comment period. The Auditor acknowledges receipt of comments from the CCBA and assesses how the Project Proponent has responded to the issues raised by the comments. The Auditor undertakes the site visit and prepares a Draft Validation Report, specifying which criteria and indicators the project does and does not satisfy, or a Draft Verification Report, specifying whether the project has or has not been implemented in accordance with its validated design for each of the criteria and indicators for which documentation in the PIR is required and that the project has successfully generated net positive climate, community and biodiversity benefits. Auditors raise corrective action or non-conformity requests for any non-conformities and deficiencies. The Auditor furnishes the final versions of the PDD/PIR, the CCB

5 Peters-Stanley M and Yin D. 2013. Maneuvering the Mosaic Sate of the Voluntary Carbon Markets 2013: Forest Trends Ecosystem Marketplace & Bloomberg New Energy Finance. Available online at www.ecosystemmarketplace.com

6 Shames S., Wollenberg E., Buck L.E., Kristjanson P., Masiga M. and Biryahaho B. 2012. Institutional innovations in African smallholder carbon projects. CCAFS Report no. 8. Copenhagen, Denmark: CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS). Available online at: www.ccafs.cgiar.org

Validation/Verification Report and the CCB Validation/Verification Statement to the CCBA for publication on the CCBA website. Approved Auditors meet the eligibility requirements detailed in the "Approved Auditor" section of this document and are listed on www.climate-standards.org.

Project Eligibility

Project type

The CCB Standards identify land management projects that deliver net positive benefits for climate change mitigation, for local communities and for biodiversity. The CCB Standards can be applied to any land management project, including projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation or from avoided degradation of other ecosystems, and projects that remove carbon dioxide by sequestering carbon (e.g., reforestation, afforestation, revegetation, forest restoration, agroforestry and sustainable agriculture) or other land management projects.

Location and avoidance of double counting

Projects may be located in any country of the world.

G5.9 in CCB Standards Third Edition requires Project Proponents to:

> "Identify the tradable climate, community and biodiversity benefits of the project such as emissions reductions, water credits, etc., and specify how double counting is avoided, particularly for emissions reductions offsets sold on the voluntary market and generated in a country participating in a compliance mechanism."

The equivalent indicator in CCB Standards Second Edition is CL1.5.

Whether for compliance or voluntary purposes, offsets must represent real reductions, and the simultaneous inclusion of the project activities in voluntary *and* compliance accounting will lead to double counting.

If the climate benefits generated from a project are included in an emissions trading program, or take place in a jurisdiction and sector in which binding limits are established on GHG emissions, then any use of the climate benefits as offsets would result in double counting.

Even if the project is clearly additional to the 'without project' land-use scenario, the inclusion of the project's benefits in sector or jurisdiction compliance reporting will "free up" offsets that can potentially be sold to other covered entities and/or permit additional emissions from covered sectors in that jurisdiction. The CCB Standards require that a project achieves net positive climate, community and biodiversity benefits, and the net positive climate benefits would not be achieved if the project's climate benefits enable additional emissions from covered sectors.

In such cases, in order to conform to G5.9 for GHG offsets, the project proponents should provide evidence that the reductions or removals generated by the project have not or will not be used in the emissions trading program or for the purpose of demonstrating compliance with the binding limits that are in place in that jurisdiction or sector. Such evidence could include:

i. a letter from the program operator or designated national authority that offsets generated by the project have been cancelled from the program, or national cap as applicable;

ii. purchase and cancellation of GHG allowances equivalent to the GHG emissions reductions or

removals generated by the project related to the program or national cap;

iii. evidence from the program operator, designated national authority or other relevant regulatory authority stating that the specific GHG emission reductions or removals generated by the project or type of project are not within the scope of the program or national cap.

There may be specific situations where projects reduce GHG emissions from activities that are included in an emissions trading program or take place in a jurisdiction or sector in which binding limits are established on GHG emissions, but there exists a reduced risk for double counting. Such examples include:

i. the absence of enforceable regulation to meet a binding limit on GHG emissions, such as the implementation of a national or relevant sectoral cap and emissions trading program;

ii. the extent to which the host country is adrift of any binding limit on GHG emissions;

iii. the absence of sufficient political will in the host country to comply with any binding limit on GHG emissions, including policies and regulation such as national or relevant sectoral cap and emissions trading program.

For example, if a UNFCCC Annex 1 country were to fail to comply with its Kyoto Protocol reduction commitment, it is possible that double counting of the environmental benefit associated with any GHG emission reduction or removal projects hosted in that country might not occur. Likewise, there may be post-2012 scenarios where similar uncertainties may exist, such as if non-Annex 1 countries were to adopt non-binding or no-lose reduction commitments. However, given the uncertainties associated with these scenarios and the possibility that a country could miss its target, but still have in place functioning elements of domestic policy that would make projects non-additional, such situations must be evaluated by the Auditor on a case-by-case basis.

Dates

The CCB Standards does not limit the start date of a project or specify a minimum or maximum project lifetime. The Project Proponent shall describe the project dates as specified in criterion G1.8 of CCB Standards Third Edition:

> "Define the project start date and lifetime, and GHG accounting period if applicable, and explain and justify any differences between them. Define an implementation schedule, indicating key dates and milestones in the project's development."

The equivalent indicator in CCB Standards Second Edition is G3.4.

Climate Section Waiver

The Climate section of the CCB Standards Third Edition is used to demonstrate a project's net positive climate benefits and not for claiming greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions and removals units for use as offsets. CL1-4 is not required for projects that have met the requirements of a Recognized GHG Program. Waiver of the Climate section is not possible for using CCB Standards First and Second Editions.

In order to demonstrate that a project has met the requirements of a Recognized GHG Program, documentation shall be provided demonstrating that the same project meets the requirements for

validation of the Recognized GHG Program. The project must *inter alia* have the same name, the same project area, the same project proponent, the same project start date, the same activities and the same without-project scenario. In the case of CCB Verification, documentation shall be provided demonstrating that the same project meets the requirements for verification of the Recognized GHG Program for the same time period as for the CCB Verification.

Equivalent documentation to the Project Design Documentation (PDD) for validation and the Project Implementation Report (PIR) for verification, demonstrating how the project meets the requirements of the Recognized GHG Program shall be submitted by the Auditor to the CCBA for the CCB Standards public comment period at the same time as the relevant PDD/PIR documents are submitted for the CCB Validation or Verification.

The Validation or Verification Report shall include evidence in the form of a positive validation or verification statement following the procedure of the Recognized GHG Program that the project meets the requirements of the Recognized GHG Program (for the appropriate time period, in the case of verification).

If a project is not successfully validated or verified to the standards of a recognized GHG program at the time of its validation or verification to the CCB Standards, it shall demonstrate conformance with the CCB Standards Climate Section CL1-4.

If a Project meets the requirements of a Recognized GHG Program resulting in a waiver of the Climate section of the CCB Standards, the project must be verified to the CCB Standards at the same time and every time that it is verified to the Recognized GHG Program.

Recognized Greenhouse Gas Programs

In order to be recognized by the CCBA, a GHG Program shall have requirements that ensure the use of a Defensible methodological approach and that projects meet all other requirements of the CCB Standards Climate Section CL1-4. Criteria for eligibility as a Recognized GHG Program are:

i. The GHG program administrator is an entity or institution that does not have involvement in GHG project development which would represent a conflict of interest in administering the GHG program.

ii. The GHG program standard was developed through a process of public stakeholder consultation or is the implementation of regulations that themselves have been developed through a process of public stakeholder consultation.

iii. The GHG program standard is publicly available.

iv. The GHG program administrator maintains a public record of all projects for which certification statements are issued.

v. The GHG program has the complementary objectives and scope to the CCB Standards Climate section and includes rules and requirements on establishing that GHG emissions reductions or removals are real, measureable, permanent, additional, and independently audited.

vi. The GHG program is applicable to GHG projects and the emission reductions or removals generated by such projects (for example, it is not a certification that applies at the organizational level).

vii. The GHG program provides a methodological approach that meets the requirements in CL 1.1,

2.1, 3.1 and 4.1 of a Defensible methodological approach to estimating total GHG emissions from land use activities under a without-project scenario, the with-project scenario, and resulting from leakage.

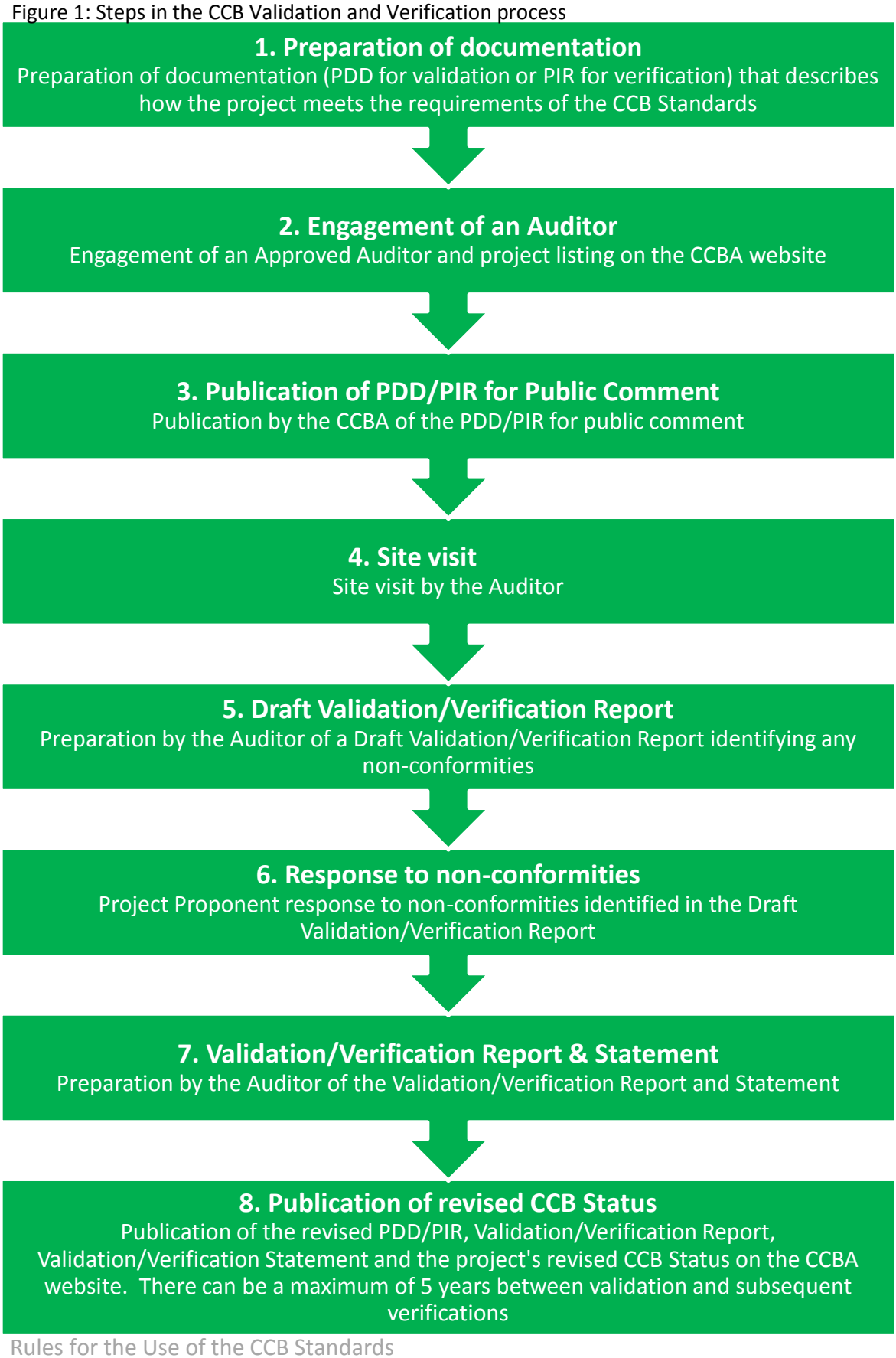
viii. The GHG program standard requires monitoring, reporting, and verification of changes in relevant GHGs pools and sources.

All Recognized GHG Programs are listed at www.climate-standards.org. The listing for each Recognized GHG Program identifies which documents are equivalent to the PDD and the PIR. Applications for acceptance by the CCBA as a Recognized GHG Program should to be sent to info@climate-standard.org.

The Validation and Verification Process

All projects seeking approval under the CCB Standards shall be *validated* to determine that the project design conforms to the Standards, and shall subsequently be *verified* to determine that the project has been successfully implemented, and whether it has generated, or is on track for generating, net positive climate, social, and biodiversity benefits in accordance with its validated design. (See Figure 1)

Figure 1: Steps in the CCB Validation and Verification process



1. Preparation of documentation

Validation

The Project Proponent shall prepare Project Design Documentation (PDD) that provides a detailed description of the project explaining how it has been designed, how it will be implemented and how success in terms of climate, community and biodiversity benefits will be measured. The PDD shall describe how the project meets each of the criteria and indicators of the CCB Standards and, if seeking the Gold Level, each of the relevant optional Gold Level criteria and indicators of the CCB Standards.

There is no mandatory format or template for the PDD, but it shall 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 VCS Project Description (PD) template or the CDM Afforestation & Reforestation Project Design Document (PDD) 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. For projects using CCB Standards in combination with VCS, the VCS+CCB Project Description template may be used.[7] Alternatively, a PDD may follow the structure of the CCB Standards and describe how the project conforms to each criterion and indicator in the CCB Standards, cross-referencing to additional documents where appropriate. In all cases, the PDD shall clearly identify which information pertains to which of the CCB Standards criteria and indicators by the use of sub-headings or other cross-referencing.

If a project includes multiple activities to reduce emissions (e.g. a project that is implementing activities to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) and also for afforestation, reforestation and revegetation (ARR)), the Project Proponents may prepare a single PDD that describes each activity or may prepare a separate PDD for each activity.

A cover page of the PDD shall include:

i. project name

ii. project location (country, sub-national jurisdiction(s))

iii. Project Proponent (organization and contact name with email address and phone number)

iv. Auditor (organization and contact name with email address and phone number)

v. project start date, GHG accounting period and lifetime

vi. whether the document relates to a full validation or a gap validation

vii. history of CCB Status, where appropriate, including issuance date(s) of earlier Validation/ Verification Statements etc.

viii. the edition of the CCB Standards being used for this validation

ix. a brief summary of the project's expected climate, community and biodiversity benefits

x. which optional Gold Level criteria are being used and a brief description of the attributes that enable the project to qualify for each relevant Gold Level

xi. date of completion of this version of the PDD, and version number, as appropriate, and

[7] At the time of publication of this document, VCS+CCB templates only exist for the CCB Standards Second Edition. Please check www.climate-standards.org for updates related to templates for CCB Standards Third Edition.

xii. expected schedule for verification, if known.

Verification

The Project Proponent shall prepare a Project Implementation Report (PIR) that describes, in detail, for each relevant CCB Standards criterion and indicator, how the project was implemented during the period covered by the verification and what outcomes and impacts have been generated since the start of the project and over the current implementation period. The PIR is the main document that will be evaluated by the Auditor to determine whether the project has been implemented in accordance with its validated design and has successfully generated net climate, community and biodiversity benefits.

A cover page of the PIR shall include:

i. project name

ii. project location (country, sub-national jurisdiction(s))

iii. Project Proponent (organization and contact name with email address and phone number)

iv. Auditor (organization and contact name with email address and phone number)

v. project start date, GHG accounting period and lifetime

vi. the project implementation period covered by the PIR

vii. history of CCB Status including issuance date(s) of earlier Validation/Verification Statements etc.

viii. the edition of the CCB Standards being used for this verification

ix. a brief summary of the climate, community and biodiversity benefits generated by the project since the project start date and during the current implementation period covered by the PIR

x. which optional Gold Level criteria are being used and a brief summary of the exceptional benefits generated by the project to meet the requirements of each relevant Gold Level, and

xi. date of completion of this version of the PIR, and version number as appropriate.

The Project Implementation Report does not need to include information for indicators that has not changes from the validated PDD but shall include relevant information about project implementation and impacts, and any changes to project design, as follows:[8]

a) **Project implementation information** explaining how the project has been implemented in accordance with the validated PDD for all CCB Standards indicators that require implementation of an activity or process. These may include, but are not limited to:

    i. G1. Project Goals, Design and Long Term Viability: Implementation of activities described in the PDD for G1. 9,10,11, and for projects using a programmatic approach, inclusion of new Project Areas and Communities and measures taken to address risks in conformance with eligibility criteria and scalability limits described in the PDD for G1.13-15

    ii. G3. Stakeholder Engagement: implementation of activities and processes described in the PDD in for G3.1-12

[8] Information for inclusion in the PIR is cross referenced in this list with indicators in the CCB Standards Third Edition. Equivalent information shall be included in a PIR for verification to the CCB Standards Second Edition.

iii. G4. Management Capacity: how the project continues to meet the conditions in G4.2 and G4.4, and for projects using a programmatic approach, any new entities included in the project governance

iv. G5. Legal Status and Property Rights: implementation of activities and processes described in the PDD for G5.1-6, 9

v. CL3. Offsite Climate Impacts: implementation of activities and processes described in the PDD for CL3.2

vi. CL4. Climate Impact Monitoring: implementation of activities and processes described in the PDD for CL4.1-2.

vii. CM2. Net Positive Community Benefits: implementation of activities and processes described in the PDD for CM2.1-2

viii. CM3. Other Stakeholder Impacts: implementation of activities and processes described in the PDD for CM3.2

ix. CM4. Community Impact Monitoring: implementation of activities and processes described in the PDD for CM4.1-3

x. B2. Net Positive Biodiversity Benefits: implementation of activities and processes described in the PDD for B2.1,3, 5-9

xi. B3. Other Stakeholder Impacts: implementation of activities and processes described in the PDD for B3.2

xii. B4. Biodiversity Impact Monitoring: implementation of activities and processes described in the PDD for B4.1-3

Where Gold Level criteria are included in the PDD, the PIR shall also include information on:

xiii. GL1. Climate Change Adaptation Benefits: implementation of activities and processes described in the PDD for GL1.2-3

xiv. GL2. Exceptional Community Benefits: implementation of activities and processes described in the PDD for GL2.2-9

xv. GL3. Exceptional Biodiversity Benefits: implementation of activities and processes described in the PDD for GL3.3

b) **Project impact information** that provides the results of monitoring and shows how the project meets all indicators that require demonstration of impacts, including:

xvi. CL2. Net Positive Climate Impacts: CL2.1-2

xvii. CL3. Offsite Climate Impacts: assessment of effectiveness of measures to reduce offsite impacts for CL3.2

xviii. CM2. Net Positive Community Impacts: CM2.2,3-4

xix. CM3. Other Stakeholder Impacts: CM3.3

xx. B2. Net Positive Biodiversity Impacts: B2.2,4,5,8

xxi. B3. Offsite Biodiversity Impacts: B3.3

Where Gold Level criteria are included in the PDD, the PIR shall also include information on:

xxii. GL1. Climate Change Adaptation Benefits: GL1.4

xxiii. GL2. Community- and Smallholder-led Equitable Benefits: for assessment of well-being benefits for smallholder/community members, for marginalized and/or vulnerable groups and for women GL2.2,4,5

xxiv. GL3. Exceptional Biodiversity Benefits: GL3.4

c) **Changes to project design** that occurred during implementation compared with the validated PDD, including justification for the changes and demonstration that the changes are in conformance with the requirements of the CCB Standards criteria and indicators. Minor changes are allowable, at the discretion of the Auditor, but significant changes including those listed in the "New Validations and Gap Validations" section below require a new validation or gap validation.

There is no mandatory format or template for the PIR, but it shall be prepared in a way that facilitates assessment by the public and the Auditor. For projects using CCB Standards in combination with VCS, the VCS+CCB Monitoring and Implementation Report template may be used.[9] Alternatively, a PIR may follow the structure of the CCB Standards and describe how the project conforms to each relevant CCB Standards criterion and indicator identified above. In all cases, the PIR shall clearly identify which information pertains to which of the CCB Standards criteria and indicators by the use of sub-headings or other cross-referencing.

2. Engagement of an Auditor

The Project Proponent shall engage an Approved Auditor to undertake the CCB Validation or Verification. The CCBA maintains a list of Approved Auditors at www.climate-standards.org. The same Auditor may be used for three consecutive validation and/or verification audits, but the fourth consecutive validation and/or verification audit shall be conducted by a different Auditor.

The CCBA shall be notified of the engagement of an Auditor for a CCB Validation or Verification and also of any termination of the agreement with the Auditor that occurs prior to issuance of a CCB Validation or Verification Statement. Prior to the opening meeting between the Project Proponent and the Auditor (such meeting representing the start of the validation or verification process), the Project Proponent shall provide the following information to the CCBA for publication on the CCBA website www.climate-standards.org:

i. project name

ii. project location (country, sub-national jurisdiction(s)),

iii. Project Proponent (organization, contact name with email address and phone number),

iv. Auditor (organization).

The Auditor is responsible for checking that this information is listed on the CCBA website and shall not conduct the opening meeting or otherwise start the validation or verification process until such time as the project is listed. The Auditor is responsible for providing the following information to the CCBA for

[9] At the time of publication of this document, VCS+CCB templates only exist for the CCB Standards Second Edition. Please check www.climate-standards.org for updates related to templates for CCB Standards Third Edition.

publication on the CCBA website as soon as the information is available and before submitting any of the project's documents to the CCBA for publication.

i. point of contact for the Auditor (name, email address and phone number)

ii. expected dates of the Auditor's site visit.

3. Publication of PDD/PIR for Public Comment

The Auditor shall send the PDD/PIR to the CCBA after a review to determine that information has been provided in response to each of the requirements of the CCB Standards for a PDD and the information listed in the "Preparation of documentation that describes how the project meets the requirements of the CCB Standards" section above for a PIR, and has included all the information required on a cover page (see the "Preparation of documentation that describes how the project meets the requirements of the CCB Standards/Verification" section above). This review is not an evaluation of the quality of the information supplied in the PDD/PIR. The CCBA reserves the right not to publish documents at its discretion.

For projects located in countries for which English is not a widely used language among Communities and Other Stakeholders, the Project Proponent shall submit at least a summary of the PDD and PIR in a relevant local or regional language to CCBA for posting on the CCBA website prior to the start of the public comment period (for further information see the 'Language Requirements' section of this document). The PDD summary submitted to CCBA shall, at least, include information required for the cover page and also for G1.1-9 of CCB Standards Third Edition (or G1.1,3, G3.1-4 and G4.1 for projects being validated to CCB Standards Second Edition). The PIR summary shall include, at least, the information required for the cover page and also information on monitoring results showing that the project has delivered net positive climate, community and biodiversity benefits. These summaries shall be the same as those disseminated to Communities in conformance with G3.1 of CCB Standards Third Edition that requires Project Proponents to:

> "Describe how full project documentation has been made accessible to Communities and Other Stakeholders, how summary project documentation (including how to access full documentation) has been actively disseminated to Communities in relevant local or regional languages, and how widely publicized information meetings have been held with Communities and Other Stakeholders."

The CCBA will post the PDD/PIR and relevant summaries on its website for the CCB Standards Public Comment Period. Members of the public are invited to submit comments to the CCBA about whether the project meets the CCB Standards. The CCB Standards Public Comment Period shall last a minimum of 30 days, but the Auditor or Project Proponent, at their discretion and on agreement of both parties, can request a longer period of the CCBA.

The CCB Standards Public Comment Period should be completed before the start of the Auditor's 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 shall give full consideration to any comments received and may need to return to the project site to do so.

The CCBA collates and publishes any comments that it receives and sends them to the Auditor and the Project Proponent. The Auditor shall acknowledge receipt of the comments and 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/PIR or other documented efforts. The Auditor shall

take these comments into account when determining whether the project meets the CCB Standards. The Validation or Verification Report shall describe how each comment was addressed by the Project Proponent.

4. Site Visit

CCB Validation/Verification audits shall include a visit to the project site except in cases described below. The purpose is to confirm the validity of the written PDD or PIR and to ensure that the project meets the requirements of the CCB Standards.

The Auditor may conduct a verification audit or a new or gap validation audit without a site visit only in a case where the Auditor decides that current information provided by the Project Proponent combined with information from a site visit conducted by the same Auditor within three years from posting of the current PDD/PIR for public comment provides sufficient evidence for issuance of an opinion about whether the project achieves the requirements of the CCB Standards. A site visit is always required for an initial validation, for the first verification, when there has been a change in auditor since the last validation or verification, and when the last site visit was conducted more than three years ago.

The CCB Validation/Verification is based on a review of the project documents provided by the Project Proponent and appropriate fact finding by the Auditor during a project site 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 process normally includes interviews with Project Proponents and stakeholders, and a review of supporting records, documents and reports.

The Project Proponent shall provide notification of a planned and upcoming Auditor's site visit to Communities and Other Stakeholders, preferably with 30 days' notice. Such notification shall indicate the auditing firm name, audit team leader, dates and locations of the audit, contact details, and means of communicating with the audit team. Note that G3.3 of the CCB Standards Third Edition requires the Project Proponent to:

> "Describe the measures taken, and communications methods used, to explain to Communities and Other Stakeholders the process for validation and/or verification against the CCB Standards by an independent auditor, providing them with timely information about the auditor's site visit before the site visit occurs and facilitating direct and independent communication between them or their representatives and the auditor."

Projects undergoing validation/verification to CCB Standards Second Edition shall meet the requirements of G3.9 of CCB Standards Second Edition.

The Project Proponent shall assist with the CCB Validation/Verification audit by providing the Auditor with the necessary documentation and other evidence to show how the project satisfies each CCB Standards criterion and indicator. In a timely manner, the Project Proponent shall submit additional evidence as needed and requested, respond to questions from the Auditor and its staff, and assist in arranging meetings with Communities and Other Stakeholders as requested and required. The burden of proof in the CCB Validation/Verification process ultimately rests with the Project Proponent.

If a Project Proponent changes Auditors after the site visit but before a CCB Validation/Verification Statement is issued, the most recent Auditor engaged to assess the project shall contact the latest previous Auditor to request that it share its Draft Validation/Verification Report, if any, and any outstanding corrective action or non-conformity requests, and the latest previous Auditor shall share

that information. The most recent Auditor shall inform the CCBA when such a request has been made and when the relevant information has been received.

5. *Draft Validation/Verification Report*

A CCB Validation/Verification audit and the decision to approve a project shall be documented by the Auditor. The first stage of audit reporting is the preparation of a Draft Validation/Verification Report. Based on its assessment, the Auditor prepares a Draft Validation Report specifying which criteria and indicators the project does and does not satisfy or a Draft Verification Report specifying whether the project has or has not been implemented in accordance with its validated design and successfully delivered net climate, community and biodiversity benefits for each of the criteria and indicators for which documentation in the PIR is required (see the "Preparation of documentation that describes how the project meets the requirements of the CCB Standards" section). For projects that included a programmatic approach in the validated PDD, the Auditor will also assess whether new activities, Project Areas and Communities and measures taken to address risks conform to eligibility criteria and scalability limits described in the PDD for G1.12-14. In addition, the Draft Validation/Verification Report will assess whether the summary of climate, community and biodiversity benefits that will be or have been generated by the project included on the cover page of the PDD/PIR is accurate. The Draft Validation/Verification Report is not submitted to the CCBA and is not made public.

The Draft Validation/Verification Report shall 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 a validation and whether the project was implemented according to validated design and generated climate, community and biodiversity benefits for a verification.

For projects seeking approval at the Gold level of the CCB Standards Third Edition, the report shall 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 or implementation with respect to the CCB Standards, these shall be identified and justified by the Auditor at the indicator level. Auditors will usually raise corrective action or non-conformity requests for any such deficiency. These shall be outlined clearly and specifically so that the Project Proponent may respond to any open issue(s) and undertake appropriate corrective action.

The Draft Validation/Verification Report shall also inform the Project Proponent of the timeframe and process to follow for completion of the validation or verification audit.

6. Response to non-conformities

After receiving the Draft Validation/Verification Report, the Project Proponent shall address all identified corrective action or non-conformity requests to the satisfaction of the Auditor. The Project Proponent may take remedial actions, including, but not limited to, modifying the project design in the case of validation, or providing new or revised documentation or supporting evidence, so that it can satisfy the design or implementation requirements of the CCB Standards.

An Auditor may determine that the Project Proponent is required to share with Communities and Other Stakeholders information about major changes in Project Design Documentation or the Project Implementation Report that occur between the CCB Standards Public Comment Period, or the version of these documents shared with Communities and Other Stakeholders, and the issuance of a Validation/Verification Statement.

7. Validation/Verification Report and Statement

When the Project Proponent has produced a PDD that conforms to each criterion and indicator or a PIR that demonstrates implementation according to validated project design and generated climate, community and biodiversity benefits, the Auditor will produce a Validation/Verification Report and a Validation/Verification Statement.

The Validation/Verification Report shall document the evidence used to determine that the project satisfies each of the CCB Standards criteria for validation or has been implemented according to validated project design and generated climate, community and biodiversity benefits for verification and how any non-conformities identified in the Draft Validation/Verification Report have been addressed through corrective actions. For projects that included a programmatic approach in the validated PDD, the Validation/Verification Report will assess whether new activities, Project Areas and Communities and measures taken to address risks conform to eligibility criteria and scalability limits described in the PDD for G1.13-15. In addition, the Validation/Verification Report will assess whether the summary of climate, community and biodiversity benefits that will be or have been generated by the project included on the cover page of the PDD/PIR is accurate.

There is no mandatory format or template for the Validation/Verification Report. For projects using CCB Standards in combination with VCS, the VCS+CCB Validation or Verification Report template may be used. Alternatively, a Validation/Verification Report may follow the structure of the CCB Standards and describe how the project conforms to each CCB Standards criterion and indicator for validation and for all relevant criteria and indicators for which documentation is required in the PIR. In all cases, the Validation/Verification Report shall clearly identify which information pertains to which of the CCB Standards criteria and indicators by the use of sub-headings or other cross-referencing

The Validation/Verification Statement is a separate summary document that lists:

i. project name

ii. project location (country and sub-national jurisdictions(s))

iii. Project Proponent

iv. date of validation/verification and expiration[10]

v. the version of the CCB Standards used and the level (e.g. Validated/Verified or Validated/Verified at Gold Level) achieved

vi. which of the optional Gold Level criteria were met, if applicable, and

vii. the brief summary of the climate, community and biodiversity benefits the project is expected to deliver included in the cover page of the PDD or has delivered included in the cover page of the PIR.

8. Publication of revised CCB Status

The Auditor shall furnish the final versions of the PDD/PIR, the Validation/Verification Report and the Validation/Verification Statement to the CCBA for publication. The CCBA posts these documents on its website and updates the project's CCB Status indicating whether the project is CCB Validated/Verified and whether it has achieved the Gold Level, for which Gold Level criterion/criteria, and against which

[10] The CCB Validation expires after five years from the date of issuance of the Validation Statement unless the project achieves CCB Verification within this period.

edition of the CCB Standards.

The Draft and final Validation/Verification Reports and the Validation/Verification Statement shall remain the property of the Project Proponents, the Auditor, and the CCBA, and shall 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 verified to the CCB Standards, the Validation/Verification Report and the Validation/Verification Statement shall 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" or "Verified" on the active list maintained by the CCBA. Similarly, it is not considered to have achieved the Gold Level unless this designation is shown on the CCBA list.

The CCBA shall receive the Validation/Verification Report and Validation/Verification Statement within one year of the initiation of the relevant CCB Standards Public Comment Period. If the Validation/Verification Report and Validation/Verification Statement are not issued by this date, then the project shall reinitiate the CCB Validation or Verification process, including a new CCB Standards Public Comment Period. The Auditor shall determine whether a new site visit is needed.

Repetition of Verification Audits for the Life of the Project

A project shall achieve CCB Verification within five years of issuance of the Validation Statement for a CCB Validation. Verification audits shall be repeated for the life of the project and no more than five years may pass between the date of issuance of each consecutive Verification Statement. Projects may choose to do verifications more frequently as this serves as confirmation that the project has been implemented in conformance with its validated design and achieved its intended impacts.

If the Climate Section was waived for CCB Validation because the project met the requirements of a Recognized GHG Program, the project must be verified to the CCB Standards each time that it is verified to the Recognized GHG Program.

New Validations and Gap Validations

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. Either a new validation or a gap validation is required at the time of verification if any of the following situations occur:

i. There has been a change in the Project Area as defined in the CCB Standards, except in projects using a programmatic approach which meet validation and verification requirements defined in G1.13-15.

ii. 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.

iii. 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 positive or negative impacts, or the affected Communities or Community Group(s).

iv. There has been a change of the Project Proponent(s) responsible for implementation.

v. For projects that met the requirements of the Climate Section waiver and did not use CL1-4 for the previous validation, there has been a revision of Project Design Documentation and a new validation undertaken to demonstrate conformance with a Recognized GHG Program, for example resulting in changes to the project's without-project scenario.

vi. Information is provided to demonstrate that the project meets the requirements of a Gold Level that was not included in the PDD for an earlier validation.

The auditor will decide if the project's situation requires a full new validation or a gap validation based on the criteria listed above. The process for new validations is the same as for the initial validation. Gap validations follow the CCB Validation process but only address areas of the project design or CCB Standards where changes have occurred. When a new validation or gap validation is required, the audits shall be successfully completed and Validation Statement issued before, or concurrent with, the completion of the next verification and the issuance of the Verification Statement. The CCB Standards Public Comment Period and Auditor's site visit for the new validation or gap 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 or gap validation may also do this simultaneously with the verification of the previous project implementation period.

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

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

Combined Validation and Verification with Other Standards

The CCB Standards may be combined with other carbon accounting standards because the CCB Standards do not result in the issuance of emissions reductions certificates.

Dual Validation/Verification leads to the waiver of the Climate section of the CCB Standards Third

Edition. (See the 'Climate Section Waiver' section.)

Emissions reductions or removals units listed on a registry under a GHG Program may include a CCB Label to indicate that the emissions reduction or removal was produced by a project that has met the CCB Standards. More information is provided in the 'CCB Label' section of this document.

Comments Received Outside the Public Comment Period

Comments are information relevant to past, present or future validations or verifications about whether the project meets the requirements of the CCB Standards. Some comments may be categorized as Complaints. Complaints are objections or dissatisfactions relating to the activities of projects validated or verified to the CCB Standards and/or Approved Auditors, that are relevant to the suspension of a project's CCB Status (see the "Withdrawal and Suspension" section below) and/or to an Approved Auditor status.

Comments received by the CCBA about a project outside the CCB Standards Public Comment Period are processed as follows:

i. Comments received after a Project Proponent has engaged an Auditor and information about the project has been posted on the CCBA's website, but before the public comment period has opened are sent to the Auditor and Project Proponent but are not published by the CCBA. The commenter is informed by the CCBA that comments resubmitted during the next public comment period will be published and addressed in the Validation or Verification Report.

ii. Comments received after a public comment period and before an audit is finalized (the Validation/Verification Statement is issued and posted on the CCBA website) are sent to the Auditor and Project Proponent but are not published by the CCBA.

iii. Comments received outside an audit period are sent to the Auditor that conducted the previous CCB Standards validation or verification and to the Project Proponent. These comments are not published by the CCBA but the commenter is informed by the CCBA that comments resubmitted during the next public comment period will be published and addressed in the Validation or Verification Report.

iv. Comments received outside an audit period are compiled by the CCBA and sent to the next Auditor that is engaged for a CCB Validation or Verification for this project, who may request information from the Project Proponent about how comments received outside the audit period have been addressed.

v. Complaints received outside an audit period are handled in accordance with the CCBA Dispute Resolution Policy[11] available on the CCBA website. The commenter may also decide to refer issues to the relevant Auditor's dispute resolution process.

[11] Under development at the time of publication of this document.

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 CCBA website for the CCB Standards public comment period may also be in the local language. In cases where the PDD/PIR are submitted to the CCBA in a language other than English, at least a summary in English of the PDD for validation and the PIR for verification shall be submitted to the CCBA for posting on the CCBA website prior to the start of the public comment period.

For projects located in countries for which English is not a widely used language among Communities, the Project Proponent shall submit at least a summary of the PDD and PIR in a relevant local or regional language to CCBA for posting on the CCBA website prior to the start of the public comment period.

The PDD summary submitted to CCBA shall, at least, include information required for the cover page and also for G1.1-9 of CCB Standards Third Edition (or G1.1,3, G3.1-4 and G4.1 for projects being validated to CCB Standards Second Edition). The PIR summary shall include, at least, the information required for the cover page and also information on monitoring results showing that the project has delivered net positive climate, community and biodiversity benefits. These summaries shall be the same as those disseminated to Communities in conformance with G3.1 of CCB Standards Third Edition that requires Project Proponents to:

> "Describe how full project documentation has been made accessible to Communities and Other Stakeholders, how summary project documentation (including how to access full documentation) has been actively disseminated to Communities in relevant local or regional languages, and how widely publicized information meetings have been held with Communities and Other Stakeholders."

Comments may be submitted to the CCBA in English, French, Spanish or Portuguese.

The CCB Validation and Verification Statements shall be translated into English. Any significant revisions to the final approved versions PDD and PIR compared with the versions originally posted for public comment shall be reflected in revised summaries and submitted to CCBA for posting on the CCBA website.

Approved Auditors

CCB Validations and Verifications shall be performed by an experienced and respected auditing organization with one of the following qualifications:

i. Accreditation as a "Designated Operational Entity" for the sectoral scope "Afforestation and Reforestation" or "Agriculture" with the CDM Executive Board (the sectoral scope that the auditor is accredited shall match the type of project undergoing validation or verification);

ii. 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*

iii. Accreditation under ISO 14065:2007 with an accreditation scope specifically for the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) Program covering Agriculture, Forestry or Other Land Use.

Auditor organizations shall make a written request to the CCBA to be recognized as an Approved

Auditor, by submitting evidence of their qualification for eligibility, the name, address, email and phone number of a contact person.

CCBA maintains a current list of all Approved Auditors on the CCBA website www.climate-standards.org.

All Approved Auditors shall faithfully adhere to the requirements of the CCB Standards and the *Rules for the Use of the Standards*. The CCBA reserves the right to exclude auditor organizations from the Approved Auditor list at its discretion.

The organization and its staff that work on the CCB Validation/Verification shall 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. Auditors may simultaneously undertake audits of the project against other standards (e.g., VCS, FSC, CDM) to enable time and cost efficiencies.

The Validation or Verification Report for a given project shall demonstrate that the team conducting the audit includes expertise in the following areas:

i. proficiency in a relevant local or regional language for the project location;

ii. relevant agriculture, forestry and/or other land use experience in the project country or region;

iii. relevant social and cultural expertise; and

iv. relevant ecological and biodiversity expertise.

Withdrawal, Expiration or Suspension

Withdrawal: Project Proponents shall inform the CCBA if they wish to withdraw a project from the use of the CCB Standards. The project will continue to be listed on the CCBA website with any documentation that was submitted to CCBA with a notification in the CCB Status that the project has been "Withdrawn" and the stage of withdrawal, for example "prior to finalization of CCB Validation or Verification".

Expiration: A project shall have its 'Validated' or 'Verified' CCB Status revoked when the time limits detailed in these Rules are not met, for example when verification is not completed within five years of issuance of the Validation or Verification Statement. The project will continue to be listed on the CCBA website with any documentation that was submitted to CCBA with a notification that the project's CCB Status has "Expired".

Suspension: Project Proponents shall abide by the rules stated in this document, and the CCBA reserves the right to suspend a project's 'Validated' or 'Verified' CCB Status at any time, at its own discretion. The suspended project will continue to be listed on the CCBA website with any documentation that was submitted to CCBA with a clear notification in the CCB Status that the project has been 'Suspended' along with the reason for the suspension. In the event that the CCBA receives information that suggests that a project is failing to meet the Standards, suspension of the project will follow the CCBA Dispute Resolution Policy available on www.climate-standards.org.

A project that was withdrawn, expired or suspended shall undergo the full assessment process, beginning with validation, in order to achieve 'Validated' or 'Verified' CCB Status.

CCB Standards listings

CCBA Website

The CCBA maintains a list of projects that are using the Standards on its website, www.climate-standards.org. Projects are first posted to the site after they have engaged an Approved Auditor. Documentation is added to the project listing when the Auditor submits the PDD, PIR, and any supporting documents to the CCBA for publication. Final versions of the PDD, PIR, the Validation/Verification Report and the Validation/Verification Statement are published by the CCBA upon successful completion of a validation or verification, along with revision of the project's CCB Status. The status indicates whether the project is CCB Validated or Verified, whether it has achieved the Gold Level (or Silver in the case of projects validated against the CCB Standards First Edition), for which Gold Level criteria/criterion and the Edition of the Standards that was used.

When new validations or verifications are performed, the relevant new documents are added to the project listing and previous documents are listed as 'Archive'. The history of CCB Status for the project is clearly indicated, showing any changes and respective dates.

Links with other project listings and registries and the CCB label

A successful verification under the CCB Standards and a carbon accounting standard enables the addition of a CCB label to verified emissions reductions units listed on a registry. A registry is a system used by GHG programs to issue and track carbon credits, linking standards and markets. A 'CCB label' may be added to credits issued from projects that have completed verification against the CCB Standards. The label may not be used for carbon units issued from projects that are validated but not verified to the CCB Standards: validation demonstrates that a project has been designed so that it *is likely to deliver* multiple benefits, while verification demonstrates that multiple benefits *have been delivered*.

The carbon units to which the CCB label is applied must have been generated during the project implementation period that is covered by the CCB Verification. This means that the CCB label may only be applied to carbon units for which the issuance period is entirely included in the period covered by the CCB Verification.

The CCB label is a permanent marker added to each credit's unique carbon registry identification code that makes it easier for investors and offset buyers to identify credits from a project that has met the CCB Standards. The Project Proponent must request the addition of the CCB Label when requesting issuance of eligible emissions reductions and removals units, providing all required documentation to the registry and paying the required fees. The CCB Label may only be added at the time of issuance of the unit.

At the time of publication, the participating registries include Markit VCS Registry http://www.markit.com/sites/en/products/environmental/ and APX VCS Registry http://www.vcsregistry.com/.

Project proponents should contact the registries directly if they wish to utilize the label.

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 shall 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 shall 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 shall 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 shall accurately portray the Approved, Silver, or Gold Level validation or verification achieved and shall always identify which Gold Level criteria are achieved (for projects using CCB Standards Second and Third Editions). Project Proponents shall 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.