



CLIMATE  
ACTION  
RESERVE

# Nitrogen Management Project Protocol V1.0

## Protocol Summary

### Project Definition

The adoption and maintenance of an approved project activity that reduces nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) emissions. The approved project activity for Version 1.0 is a reduction in the annual nitrogen fertilizer application rate (N rate) compared to recent historic application rates at the project site, without going below nitrogen demand. The project activity is currently applicable to corn cropping systems only and can be located on one field or multiple fields participating as an aggregate project.

### Project Eligibility Requirements

**Location:** North Central Region of the United States. Region includes Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin. Project site must also meet applicability conditions outlined below.

**Start Date:** The first day of a new cultivation cycle (e.g. the first day after completion of the previous harvest) on a given field during which an N rate reduction project is implemented. Projects with start dates after June 27, 2010 may be submitted at any time until June 27, 2013. After June 27, 2013, projects must be submitted within six months of the project start date.

**Crediting Period:** Five eligible crop years, over a period of up to 10 years. Crop years may be non-consecutive, but reporting must be continuous. The crediting period is renewable one time.

**Performance Standard Test:** A project field's ratio of removed nitrogen (by crop) to applied nitrogen (as fertilizer), also known as the removed to applied (RTA) ratio, must exceed the average state RTA where the project is located. The field-level RTA is calculated for each eligible crop year using total annual N rate for that year and average historic yield.

**Legal Requirement Test:** Project must exceed any reductions that would have occurred as a result of compliance with federal, state or local regulations. The project is subject to a review of the legal requirement test for each reporting period and the project developer or aggregator must sign the Attestation of Voluntary Implementation.

**Ecosystem Services Payment Stacking:** Project fields are not eligible if a contract to receive Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) conservation payments, specifically for N rate reduction projects under Conservation Practice Standard (CPS) 590, was signed prior to the project start date or submittal to the Reserve. Submitting a project to the Reserve concurrent to pursuing CPS 590 payments is permissible. Project fields stacking NRCS payments are only eligible to receive Climate Reserve Tonnes (CRTs) for the portion of the project not funded by public dollars.

**Regulatory Compliance:** Project must be in compliance with all relevant federal, state and local regulations. Project developer or aggregator must sign the Attestation of Regulatory Compliance for each reporting period.

**Reporting and Verification Schedule:** Project must report annually. Project must undergo verification for each eligible crop year, which may be non-consecutive for multi-crop rotations.

#### Applicability Conditions:

- ⌘ Project area shall not contain organic soils (e.g. histosols)
- ⌘ Mean annual precipitation in county where project field is located must be between 600 and 1200 mm
- ⌘ Project area shall not include irrigated corn cropping systems (emergency irrigation may be permissible)
- ⌘ Project area shall not include tile-drained fields
- ⌘ Only N<sub>2</sub>O emission reductions from reductions in synthetic fertilizer application rates shall be credited, even though project may apply both organic and synthetic fertilizer to fields
- ⌘ Total annual nitrogen applied from synthetic and organic fertilizer must decrease below baseline levels even though total organic nitrogen applied may increase or decrease in the project area

#### Project Is Ineligible If:

- ⌘ Located on lands with no previous cropping history
- ⌘ Located on lands designated as highly erodible and/or wetlands
- ⌘ Management records from the past five years (or past three years of eligible crop in a rotation) are not available to set the project baseline
- ⌘ Frequency of corn crop increases due to the project

*Important Note: This is a summary of the protocol. Please read the full protocol for a complete description of project requirements.*

