



CLIMATE
ACTION
RESERVE

Mexico Forest Protocol

***Draft for Workgroup Review
Sections 1 through 3***

October 17, 2019

Acknowledgements

Authors (in alphabetical order)

Amy Kessler
John Nickerson
Jon Remucal
Cecilia Simon

Supporting Staff (in alphabetical order)

Derik Broekhoff
Gary Gero
Mark Havel
Heather Raven
Emily Russell-Roy
Katy Young
Robert Youngs

Workgroup/Participants

The list of workgroup members below comprises all individuals and organizations who have assisted in developing and updating various versions of the protocol. Not all members were involved in every protocol revision process. For more information, see section 4.3 of the Reserve Program Manual.

(Note: affiliations may have changed)

Armando Alanis	Comisión Nacional Forestal
Mariana Azaola	Comisión Nacional Forestal
Danae Azuara	Environmental Defense Fund
Arturo Balderas	CIGA/UNAM
Barbara Bamberger	California Air Resources Board
Karla Barclay	Comisión Nacional Forestal
Juan Carlos Carrillo	Centro Mexicano de Derecho Ambiental
Francisco Chapela	Rainforest Alliance
Carolyn Ching	Verified Carbon Standard
Alfredo Cisneros Pineda	Instituto Nacional de Ecología
Alejandra Cors	Reforestamos Mexico
Lina Dabbagh	World Wildlife Fund
Liliana Davila	World Wildlife Fund
Pablo Delgadillo	Comision de Cooperacion Ecológica Fronteriza
Janik Granados	CIGA/UNAM
Steven de Gryze	Terra Global Capital
Rubén de la Sierra	ASERCA
Francisco Echevarría	Alianza de Ejidos y Comunidades Forestales Certificados de Mexico A.C.
Leticia Espinosa	Pronatura Mexico A.C.
Raúl Espinoza Bretado	Comisión Nacional Forestal
Elsa Esquivel	Ambio
Jose Carlos Fernandez	Comisión Nacional Forestal
Eugenio Fernandez	Rainforest Alliance
Rafael Flores	Comisión Nacional Forestal
Bryan Foster	Ecologic
Sandie Fournier	Ambio
Sofia Garcia	Comisión Nacional Forestal
Maria Elena Giner	Comision de Cooperacion Ecológica Fronteriza
Ricardo Gomez	SOLAL
Sergio Graf	Comisión Nacional Forestal

Luis Guadarrama	MREDD
Gabriela Guerrero	Comisión Nacional Forestal
Leticia Gutierrez Lorandi	Comisión Nacional Forestal
Brett Jackson	Clean Trade Group
Noura Hammadou	Baker & McKenzie
Mary Kate Hanlon	New Forest
Jeffrey Hayward	Rainforest Alliance
Carly Hernandez	University of Colorado
Ivan Hernandez	Gold Standard
Robert Hrubec	Scientific Certification Systems
Omar Jiménez	Subdelegado Jurídico PROFEPA – Delegación Chihuahua
Kjell Kühne	Instituto Nacional de Ecología
Federico Lage	Natura Proyectos Ambientales
Alex Lotsch	World Bank
Rubén Martínez	Ambiente y Desarrollo
Christina McCain	Environmental Defense Fund
Claudia Mendez	Rainforest Alliance
Maria Elena Mesta	Rainforest Alliance
Jose Maria Michel	Comisión Nacional Forestal
Pedro Morales	Baker and McKenzie
César Moreno	Comisión Nacional Forestal
Kurt Christoph Neitzel	Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México
Carolina Orta	Comisión Nacional Forestal
Yves Paiz	The Nature Conservancy
Michelle Passero	The Nature Conservancy
Carlos Perez	Servicios Ambientales de Oaxaca A.C.
Laura Perez	Grupo Ecológico Sierra Gorda
Rosario Peyrot-Gonzalez	Procuraduría Federal de Protección al Ambiente
Benjamin Pozoz	OVALO
Pablo Quiroga	Natura Proyectos Ambientales
Isabel Ramirez	Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Mexico
Fernanda Rivas	SOLAL
Ricardo Rivera	Comisión Nacional Forestal
David Ross	Independent Consultant for carbon forestry projects
Federico Ruanova	Baker and McKenzie
Patti Ruiz	Grupo Ecológico Sierra Gorda
Alejandra Salazar	Pronatura Mexico A.C.
Jose Mario Sánchez	Comision de Cooperacion Ecológica Fronteriza
Steve Schwartzman	Environmental Defense Fund
Margaret Skutsch	CIGA/UNAM
Brian Shillinglaw	New Forest
Cheri Sugal	Terra Global Capital
Naomi Swickard	Verified Carbon Standard
Julie Teel	Governor's Climate and Forest Task Force
Jorge Rubén Tarango	Subdelegado Jurídico SEMARNAT - Delegación Chihuahua
Denisse Varela	Baker and McKenzie
Rubén Trejo Ortega	Independent
Rosa María Vidal	Pronatura Sur
Yougha von Laer	South Pole Carbon
Gmelina Ramirez	

Technical Support

Nancy Budge	QB Consulting
-------------	---------------

Table of Contents

Abbreviations and Acronyms.....	1
2 Introduction	2
2.1 About Forests, Carbon Dioxide, and Climate Change	2
2.2 Nested Projects in a Jurisdictional Framework.....	3
3 Stages of Project Development and Maintenance	6
3.1 Forest Projects.....	6
3.2 Project Areas and Activity Areas	6
3.2.1 Project Areas	6
3.2.2 Activity Areas	7
3.2.3 Monitoring Requirements for Project and Activity Areas.....	8
3.3 Activity Areas and Management Actions	8
4 Eligibility Criteria and Participation Requirements.....	10
4.1 Project Location	10
4.2 Jurisdictions.....	10
4.3 Forest Owner	10
4.3.1 Communal Land (Ejidos and Communities)	10
4.3.2 Private Property	11
4.3.3 Public Land.....	11
4.4 Forest Project Coordinator	11
4.5 Project Developer	11
4.6 Aggregation	12
4.7 Required Documentation for Land Tenure Status	12
4.7.1 Attestation of Title	13
4.8 Conflicts.....	13
4.9 Regulatory Compliance.....	14
4.10 Social Safeguards.....	14
4.11 Environmental Safeguards.....	17
4.12 Project Start Date.....	20
4.13 Additionality	20
4.13.1 Legal Requirement Test.....	21
4.13.2 Performance Standard Test.....	21
4.14 Project Crediting Period	22
4.15 Minimum Time Commitment	22
4.16 Project Implementation Agreement	23
4.17 Other Eligibility Criteria	23
5 Glossary of Terms	24

Abbreviations and Acronyms

CH ₄	Methane
CO ₂	Carbon dioxide
CONAFOR	Comisión Nacional Forestal
CRT	Climate Reserve Tonne
FMP	Forest Management Program
FPC	Forest Project Coordinator
GHG	Greenhouse gas
IFM	Improved Forest Management
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
MFP	Mexico Forest Protocol
N ₂ O	Nitrous oxide
PIA	Project Implementation Agreement
PR	Project Report
RAN	National Agrarian Registry
REDD+	Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks
Reserve	Climate Action Reserve
SEMARNAT	Secretaria de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales
SSR	Source, sink, and reservoir
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
VR	Verified removal

1 Introduction

The initial release of the draft Version 1.0 of the Climate Action Reserve's (Reserve) Mexico Forest Protocol (MFP) followed 14 months of meetings, consultations, and conference calls among an expansive list of Mexican and American stakeholders. The participants in the stakeholder process included non-governmental organizations (NGOs), government agencies, project developers, and landowner representatives. Following a public comment period in January 2012, in which many important ideas were raised, the Reserve postponed further elaboration of the protocol while important activities were taking place in Mexico with regard to REDD+ initiatives and Mexico's Climate Change Law. The final draft of Version 1.0 was developed with improved clarity as to which activities will be eligible in Mexico and with a vision toward seeking synergies with a standard developed in Mexico (*Norma Mexicana - NMX-AA-173-SCFI-2015 - para el registro de proyectos forestales de carbon y la certificación del incremento en el acervo de carbono*) that will create an important infrastructure for all forest project activities.

The Reserve has developed Version 2.0 of the MFP in response to observations of project development and further discussions with stakeholders, government agencies, project developers and landowners to improve and clarify guidance and to improve the cost-effectiveness of project development and verification while maintaining the rigor of the Reserve program.

This protocol is focused on the crediting of activities that sequester CO₂ from the atmosphere through increasing carbon stocks in trees over time. The protocol provides project eligibility rules, methods to calculate a project's net removals of CO₂ from the atmosphere due to sequestration activities, procedures to address and compensate for the release of CO₂ back to the atmosphere (i.e., "reversals"), and approaches for long-term project monitoring and reporting. The goal of this protocol is to ensure that the net greenhouse gas (GHG) removals caused by a project are accounted for in a complete, consistent, transparent, accurate, and conservative manner and may therefore be reported to the Reserve as the basis for issuing carbon offset credits (called Climate Reserve Tonnes or CRTs). The protocol is designed to interface and reconcile with future accounting strategies developed at jurisdictional levels, where the focus is expected to be on avoiding emissions from deforestation and degradation (REDD). The intention is for this protocol to be complementary to jurisdictional efforts by focusing on forest carbon enhancements.

The Reserve is an international offsets program working to ensure integrity, transparency, and financial value in the North American carbon market. It does this by establishing regulatory-quality standards for the development, quantification and verification of GHG emissions reduction projects in North America; issuing carbon offset credits generated from such projects; and tracking the transaction of credits over time in a transparent, publicly accessible system. Adherence to the Reserve's high standards ensures that emission removals associated with projects are real, additional, and meet rigorous permanence standards, thereby instilling confidence in the environmental benefit, credibility, and efficiency of carbon markets.

1.1 About Forests, Carbon Dioxide, and Climate Change

Forests have the capacity to both emit and sequester carbon dioxide (CO₂), a leading GHG that contributes to climate change. Trees, through the process of photosynthesis, naturally absorb CO₂ from the atmosphere and store the gas as carbon in their biomass, i.e., trunk (bole), leaves, branches, and roots. Carbon is also stored in the soils that support the forest, as well as the

understory plants and litter on the forest floor. Wood products that are harvested from forests can also provide long-term storage of carbon.

When trees are disturbed, through events like fire, disease, pests or harvest, some of their stored carbon may oxidize or decay over time releasing CO₂ into the atmosphere. The quantity and rate of CO₂ that is emitted may vary, depending on the particular circumstances of the disturbance. Forests function as reservoirs in storing CO₂. Depending on how forests are managed or impacted by natural events, they can be a net source of emissions, resulting in a decrease of carbon in the reservoir, or a net sink, resulting in an increase of carbon to the reservoir. In other words, forests may have a net negative or net positive impact on the climate.

Through sustainable management and protection, forests can play a positive and significant role to help address global climate change. The Reserve's MFP is designed to address the forest sector's unique capacity to sequester, store, and emit CO₂ and to facilitate the positive role that forests can play to address climate change.

1.2 Nested Projects in a Jurisdictional Framework

The development of the Reserve's protocol is occurring simultaneously with the development and ongoing evolution of Mexico's REDD+ Strategy (ENAREDD+). Jurisdictions are also moving forward with strategies to address climate change, as well as addressing biodiversity, social, and watershed issues. Additionally, Mexico has developed a project standard (Norma Mexicana, NMX-AA-173-SCFI-2015) that will ensure integrity and consistency in the accounting of all forest carbon project activities in Mexico.

These dynamics have shaped the discussions and the development of the protocol, since it is a key objective to produce a protocol that is respected in international frameworks and relevant to Mexico's REDD+ Strategy. Early on, the workgroup discussed the concept of developing a protocol that could function in the near term as standalone project guidance and be adaptable to REDD+ accounting systems as they develop. Ultimately, it is expected that the Reserve's MFP will provide guidance for landscape projects that are reconciled to, or nested within, jurisdictional accounting systems either at the regional, state or federal level (or all).

The protocol is intended to help catalyze the development of carbon sequestration activities in Mexican forests. The guidance in this protocol provides:

1. Assurances that environmental and social safeguards are achieved where credited activities occur.
2. A resolute assessment of additionality where activities occur.
3. Accurate quantification methods based on measurable benefits resulting from explicit management activities.
4. Practical methods for ensuring permanent carbon storage.

While the current guidance is designed to quantify GHG removals from enhanced sequestration at the landscape scale, the Reserve expects this guidance to evolve as broader accounting frameworks are developed at the national and sub-national level in Mexico. Addressing REDD+ activities at jurisdictional scales will provide opportunities to comprehensively address forest sector emissions and enhancements and improve the overall accuracy of forest carbon accounting. The ability to control and account for leakage, for instance, is proportional to the geographic scale of a program and monitoring efforts. Hence, the intent is to embed this protocol in jurisdictional mechanisms as they are developed and provide sound metrics for

directing incentive programs for carbon enhancement activities. The ultimate objective is a system in which projects are reconciled to jurisdictional REDD+ frameworks in a way that is mutually reinforcing with respect to accounting, permanence, and safeguarding environmental and social values.

This protocol has been designed with conservative assumptions in order to minimize the risk of over-crediting and to facilitate the protocol's incorporation into jurisdictional programs. Incorporating the protocol in a jurisdictional REDD+ framework, however, may require reconsidering or revising a number of protocol elements at the time such jurisdictional systems are developed, including:

1. Crediting Pathway

The protocol has been designed with the assumption that credits will be issued directly to projects as described in CONAFOR's (2012) statement on carbon rights.¹ This allows owners and possessors managing the forest to be directly rewarded for activities that increase carbon sequestration. The protocol will be fully compatible with programs that issue credits at both the jurisdiction and project levels (or at the project level only), provided mechanisms are devised to reconcile project- and jurisdiction-level accounting. This protocol does not currently reference or incorporate such mechanisms, however, we assume that any credits due to reduced deforestation will be assigned to the jurisdictional level only, and the forest enhancement credits (which can be concretely measured in situ at the level of individual parcels under management) to the owners/managers of such parcels only. This creates two clearly separate fields of crediting, avoiding the problem of how to settle accounts.

It is possible to design jurisdictional REDD+ frameworks for which credits are issued at the jurisdiction level, and not directly to projects. Such programs may still incorporate project-level activities and could rely on the accounting structures within this protocol to determine the relative contribution of projects to jurisdiction-wide performance.

2. Baselines and Reconciliation

In this protocol, baselines are a benchmark or reference for measuring increased sequestration. A baseline should be a representation of the future expected level of sequestration from the Project Area in the absence of carbon credit incentives (also known as business as usual). This protocol provides crediting for enhancement activities and conservatively requires that net forest-related emissions from the Project Area be discontinued prior to receiving credits. Project baselines are estimated as a standardized function of risk to the existing forest carbon stocks within the Project Area.

In a jurisdictional system, a jurisdictional reference level will be set to measure performance in the jurisdiction as a whole. As long as jurisdictional reference levels are designed only to account for emissions from deforestation, project-level crediting of enhancement activities facilitates reconciliation of project- and jurisdiction-level crediting since the carbon

¹ CONAFOR considers property rights as established on article 27 of the Mexican Constitution. Furthermore, it acknowledges what is established in article 5 of the General Law for Forest Sustainable Development that states that forest resources belong to the ejidos, communities, indigenous groups, individuals and others. As such, recognizing that CO₂ is a gas that can be absorbed by the vegetation and that carbon is incorporated to the biomass, CONAFOR states that it belongs to the forest owners. In this sense, any additional carbon sequestered that complies with the specific market mechanism requirements will belong to the forest owner.

inventories associated with enhancement activities and the location of Project Areas are known. Project Area can be backed out of areas considered for avoided deforestation.

3. Scope

Jurisdictional programs may choose to monitor and account for reduced emissions from deforestation and/or degradation (RED and/or REDD), but may also include accounting for enhanced sequestration (typically called REDD+). This protocol accounts only for enhanced sequestration at the project level (described in Section **Error! Reference source not found.**). A jurisdictional program that relies on this protocol may therefore need to include accounting for sequestration at the jurisdiction level (REDD+) or adopt methods for reconciling jurisdiction- and project-level accounting frameworks based on these different activities.

4. Liability and Risk-Sharing

Under this protocol, projects are credited for their individual performance against a project baseline, and issuance of credits to Forest Owners is adjusted to account for risk of reversals. At the project scale, unavoidable reversals of carbon sequestration are compensated by the Reserve out of a common Buffer Pool. Contributions to the Buffer Pool are required by projects at a rate determined by project risk. Avoidable reversals must be compensated for by the Forest Owner in cases where the credits have been contractually secured and have been issued based on a defined time commitment. Similarly, jurisdictional systems must define mechanisms to compensate for reversals at a jurisdictional level. However, since jurisdictional REDD+ performance will depend on the performance of both Project and non-Project Areas, a mechanism for sharing risk among projects and between projects and the jurisdiction must be defined. Conversely, the existence of a jurisdictional program that performs well may decrease the risk of reversals to individual projects, and wall-to-wall jurisdictional monitoring may decrease the need for leakage discounting. The protocol is designed to recognize the benefits of jurisdictional monitoring as it relates to leakage. Thus, leakage discounting and project risk assessments in the current protocol may be adjusted over time.

5. Safeguards

Where possible, this protocol strives to incorporate safeguards at the project level by providing explicit social and environmental safeguards. Certain base criteria for social and environmental safeguards are embedded within this protocol. As jurisdictional systems for REDD+ develop, policy decisions regarding appropriate environmental and social safeguards will be determined.

The Reserve uses a rigorous, transparent, and comprehensive process for developing all of its protocols, focusing on accurate and conservative accounting to ensure that credits are issued only for GHG removals that are real, permanent, additional, verifiable, and enforceable by contract. The Reserve may update the MFP from time to time to reflect new scientific findings or policy decisions. For additional information about the update process and further news on future updates, please visit the Reserve website at www.climateactionreserve.org.

2 Stages of Project Development and Maintenance

The many key steps involved in developing a project credit are shown in Figure 2.1.²

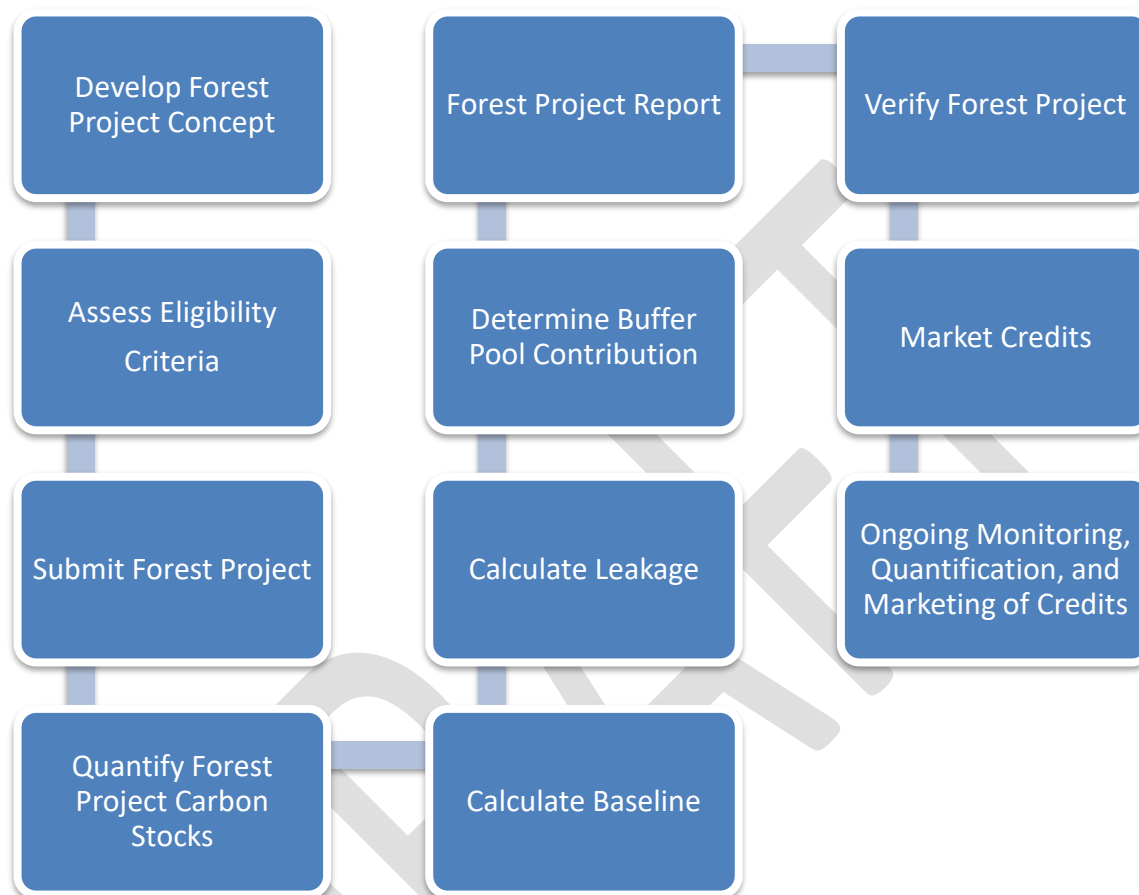


Figure 2.1. Key Steps Involved in Developing and Maintaining a Forest Carbon Project

2.1 Forest Projects

For the purposes of the MFP, a Forest Project is a planned set of defined activities designed to increase removals of CO₂ from the atmosphere through increasing forest carbon stocks on the communal lands of ejidos or communities, private lands, or non-federal public lands.

A glossary of terms related to Forest Projects is provided in Section 4 of this protocol. Throughout the protocol, important defined terms are capitalized (e.g., “Forest Owner”).

2.2 Project Areas and Activity Areas

Forest Projects have two distinct levels of monitoring: the Project Area and Activity Areas.

2.2.1 Project Areas

² The Reserve’s Guide for Project Development provides further detailed steps, which can be located on the Reserve’s website (<http://www.climateactionreserve.org/how/protocols/mexico-forest/>).

Project Areas include all areas within an ownership, held either communally, privately, or publicly (limited to non-federal public lands), in which project activities within Activity Areas (defined below) may occur as part of the project, currently or in the future.

For privately owned lands, the Project Area must consist of the entire area included under all land title(s) that encompass planned Activity Areas. All included land titles must share a common ownership.

For communally owned lands (known in Mexico as *comunidades* and *ejidos*), the Project Area must include the entire communal ownership, as defined by the Basic File (*Carpeta Basica*)³, as the Project Area at project initiation, including ejidal parcels that do not have *dominio pleno*⁴. If ejidal parcels later obtain *dominio pleno*, the Forest Owner (*ejido*) may remove the parcels with *dominio pleno* from the Project Area. The new Project Area would need to be verified through a site visit verification during the next Reporting Period (see Section 8). Individual *ejidal* parcels with *dominio pleno* may alternatively participate as private owners.

For individual ejidal parcels with *dominio pleno* that are entering as private landowners, the Project Area is defined the same as for all privately owned lands (see above).

For non-federal public lands, the Project Area is considered to be the entire area included under all land title(s) that encompass planned Activity Areas. All included land titles must be owned by the same government agency.

For all ownership types, multiple properties, contiguous or disparate, may be included in a common Project Area if the land titles demonstrate ownership by the same Forest Owner.

Project Areas cannot be redefined without approval by the Reserve following the initial verification. The geographic boundaries defining the Project Area must be described in detail at the time a Forest Project is listed on the Reserve.

The Project Area boundaries must be defined using a map. Major settlements (towns), roads and watercourses must be displayed on the map. The map should include a legend and a scale. A GIS shapefile or Google Earth KML file that includes the project boundary is required to be included with the project submission that matches project boundaries in the project document. The maps should be of adequate resolution to clearly identify the requested features.

2.2.2 Activity Areas

Activity Areas are explicit areas within the Project Area where defined activities (reforestation, improved forest management, etc.) occur that lead to quantified increased sequestration compared to baseline levels. Activity Areas need not be contiguous and new Activity Areas can be added throughout the life of a project. In order to comply with project monitoring and

³ *La Carpeta Básica* is constituted of information that proves the creation and constitution of ejidos and communities. Documents include: *Resolución Presidencial*, *Acta de Posesión y Deslinde*, and *Plano Definitivo* and its publication in the Federation Official Journal (DOF). The information can be provided at the Agrarian Registry. The *Resolución Presidencial* (Presidential Resolution) is a decree given by the president where it is stated that the land is given to the corresponding community or ejido. This fact is stated on the *acta de posesión y deslinde* and a map of the community was drawn, called *Plano Definitivo*. Presidential resolutions are registered in the Agrarian Registry.

⁴ *Dominio pleno* is a legal mechanism that allows members of the ejido to acquire ownership over their land parcels, which will no longer be subject to the *ejido* regime but to the private property regime, governed by common law.

documentation requirements, a shapefile or KML file and map of Activity Area boundaries is required (see Section 7).

2.2.3 Monitoring Requirements for Project and Activity Areas

Distinct monitoring guidance is provided for Project Areas and Activity Areas. The purpose of developing a two-tiered approach to monitoring is to ensure efficiency in addressing project safeguards and leakage at the larger, Project Area level, while allowing for adequate rigor in quantifying carbon stocks at the smaller, Activity Area level. In addition, by allowing for multiple Activity Areas within one Project Area, the protocol provides flexibility for adding new project activities without the need to create a new project.

Figure 2.2 displays the relationship between Activity Areas and the Project Area and outlines some of the general monitoring and reporting requirements associated with each area.

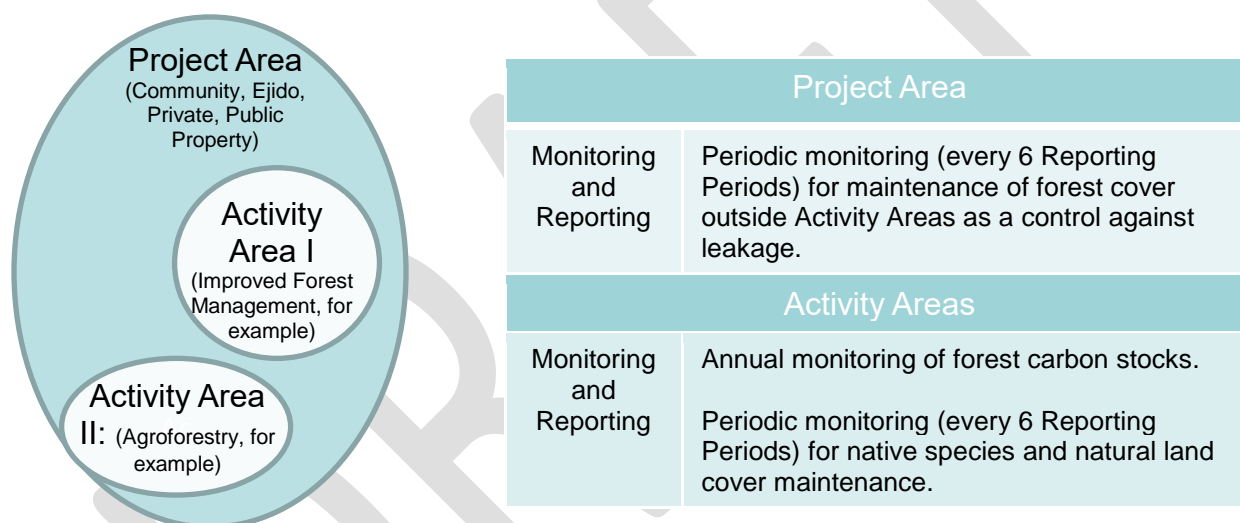


Figure 2.2. Relationship between the Project Area and Activity Areas (within a Project Area) and the General Monitoring Requirements Associated with Each Level

2.3 Activity Areas and Management Actions

The Reserve will register Forest Project activities for enhancement of forest carbon stocks that fall under the definition of the “+” of REDD+,⁵ specifically sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks, adopted by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Within the Project Area boundaries, Activity Areas are identified as explicit areas to implement management actions. Activity Areas must be identified as one of the activities in Table 2.1 and meet the associated definition at the Activity Area’s initiation. Activity Areas may transition

⁵ Decision 2/CP.13. Bali Action Plan - reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries. Decision 1/CP.16. Cancun Agreements, paragraph 70. Encourages developing country Parties to contribute to mitigation actions in the forest sector by undertaking the following activities, as deemed appropriate by each Party and in accordance with their respective capabilities and national circumstances (a) Reducing emissions from deforestation; (b) Reducing emissions from forest degradation; (c) Conservation of forest carbon stocks; (d) Sustainable management of forests; (e) Enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

between defined activities throughout the activity life, for example, a Restoration Activity Area may transition to an Improved Forest Management Activity Area upon obtaining an approved forest management plan. Specific management actions under each activity may be diverse. Some examples are shown in Table 2.1

Table 2.1. Activity Area Designation

Activities	Definition/Description	Examples of Management Actions
Agroforestry and Silvopastoral	The primary human activity within the Activity Area is agriculture and/or grazing, and the land cover type is defined as agriculture or grassland. Trees are either planted or otherwise encouraged from natural regeneration. Trees may be harvested, according to law, within and among the cultivated crops and grazing areas.	-Increasing trees within through intercropping and border planting. -Planting of sparse shade trees or mast trees for livestock.
Improved Forest Management (IFM)	The primary land cover is forest, which may be present in varying densities and sizes and the forest has an approved forest management program for the purposes of commercial timber harvest. Agriculture may be included as a secondary activity and most likely in varying intensity across the landscape over time and space. Reforestation within this Activity Area, if it occurs, generally follows a harvest or other disturbance event that has occurred within the past 5 years.	- Increasing rotation ages - Management to maintain health and vigor -Stocking improvement -Removing impediments to natural forest regeneration
Reforestation	Trees are planted manually or encouraged through site preparation activities on lands that are not in forest cover on the project Start Date or have recently experienced a natural disturbance that reduced live tree stocking below 50% live canopy cover. The primary objective of the Forest Project activities being to convert the land cover to forest. It may have been in forest cover historically, but not within the past 5-years.	- Planting tree seedlings directly - Removing impediments to natural forest regeneration
Restoration	The sequestration associated with the protection and restoration of forests that meet the additionality requirements of this protocol for risk. Ongoing commercial harvest operations is not a permitted use. The forests may include protected areas and non-commercially viable forests that are degraded or at high risk of degradation and deforestation for a variety of reasons.	- Planting tree seedlings directly - Removing impediments to natural forest regeneration - Enforcement against illegal harvest operations - Enforcement against illegal land use conversion
Large Urban Forestry	The planting and management of trees within lands of more than 10 contiguous hectares of 10% canopy cover zoned for urban use or otherwise within 100 meters from homes, warehouses, factories, schools, and other human establishments.	-Planting trees in the urban zone - Management to maintain health and vigor -Stocking improvement
Small Urban Forestry	The planting and management of trees within lands of less than 10 contiguous hectares of 10% canopy cover zoned for urban use or otherwise within 100 meters from homes, warehouses, factories, schools, and other human establishments.	-Planting trees in the urban zone

Avoided emissions from deforestation and degradation are not eligible as project activities.

3 Eligibility Criteria and Participation Requirements

Forest Projects must meet several criteria and conditions described below, to be eligible for registration with the Reserve, and must adhere to certain requirements related to their duration and crediting periods.

3.1 Project Location

This protocol is applicable to Forest Projects located anywhere in Mexico, provided they meet all other eligibility requirements described in this protocol.

3.2 Jurisdictions

Mexico's development of jurisdictional REDD+ is well underway. Jurisdictional REDD+ is addressing many issues beyond carbon accounting. Jurisdictional boundaries are being considered to address watershed, biodiversity, and social benefits, along with forest carbon. As progress is made in the definition of jurisdictions and development of jurisdictional accounting frameworks, the Reserve will seek ways to improve efficiencies of accounting for carbon benefits associated with Forest Project activities. The Reserve will also work closely with jurisdictional frameworks to ensure alignment with accounting frameworks.

3.3 Forest Owner

A Forest Owner can be any non-federal entity that has undisputed legal ownership of the forest carbon through outright ownership or through rights granted to them from a state or federal agency. Ownership can be private, communal (including ejidos and communities), or public, excepting federal ownership. The Climate Action Reserve maintains the authority to determine which public agencies may be eligible to be Forest Owners.

The Forest Owner is responsible for undertaking a Forest Project and registering the Forest Project with the Reserve and is ultimately responsible for all Forest Project reporting. The Forest Owner may, however, engage a Project Developer to assist or consult with the Forest Owner and to implement the Forest Project. All information submitted to the Reserve on behalf of the Forest Owner shall reference the Forest Owner, who is ultimately responsible for the accuracy and completeness of the information submitted.

The following types of ownership are eligible for participation (following the Agrarian Law⁶ and Civil Code):

3.3.1 Communal Land (Ejidos and Communities)

Eligibility includes communally owned land (both communities and ejidos). Ejidal parcels without *dominio pleno* may be included in Activity Areas along with the communally owned land through an agreement with the ejido.

Individual ejidal parcels with *dominio pleno* may alternatively participate as private owners (see below).

Ejidal and communal property includes those properties inscribed in the National Agrarian Registry (*Registro Agrario Nacional*, RAN).⁷

⁶ Ejidos, Chapter I, article 9. Communities, Chapter V, article 98. Private Property, Fifth Title, article 115.

⁷ Decentralized body of the Ministry of the Agrarian Reform responsible for communal land (ejido) tenure regulation through the provision of legal certainty.

3.3.2 Private Property

Private property includes those properties inscribed on the Public Registry of Property (*Registro Público de la Propiedad*).

Individual ejidal parcel owners with *dominio pleno* or with ownership certification may participate as private landowners where their land certificates are either registered in the National Agrarian Registry or inscribed in the Public Registry of Property.

3.3.3 Public Land

Non-federal government agencies that voluntarily support the defined activities in Table 2.1 to increase carbon stocks on non-federal, such as municipal or state, public lands may be a Forest Owner.

Land owned by the federal government is not eligible for participation.

For Non-federal public land, government agencies must submit the legal document inscribed in the Public Registry of Property (*Registro Público de la Propiedad*) and/or the Decree or Ordinance that states that the land is destined for a specific use and/or management by a municipality or state.

3.4 Forest Project Coordinator

A Forest Project Coordinator (FPC) must be identified through a process identified in the Social Safeguard section on governance for communally owned Forest Owners. The role of FPCs is to be the main communication link between the Reserve and the Forest Owner and to ensure proper implementation of the protocol requirements. In communities and ejidos, the FPC must be a community/ejido member and must prove through a signed Assembly Act⁸ recognized by law that he/she has been chosen by the ejido or community as the FPC. In a private land, the Forest Owner can designate the FPC, including designating themselves. The FPC should serve as the Account Manager for the Project Owner (i.e. Forest Owner) account with the Reserve.

3.5 Project Developer

A Project Developer may be the Forest Owner or an independent third-party contracted by the Forest Owner to assist or consult with the Forest Owner and to implement the Forest Project. The Forest Owner must give the Project Developer the authorization to implement the project and submit all documentation for the project on behalf of the Forest Owner, by means of a Designation of Authority form (found on the Reserve website)⁹. The Project Developer must have an account on the Reserve in order to submit the documentation but is not the immediate owner or recipient of CRTs issued to the project by the Reserve (unless the Forest Owner acts as its own Project Developer, in which case the Project Developer account would be issued CRTs directly). In cases in which the Forest Owner contracts a third-party Project Developer, the Forest Owner would still be required to open a "Project Owner (Limited)" account on the Reserve software in order to receive any CRTs issued to the project.

All information submitted to the Reserve on behalf of the Forest Owner shall reference the Forest Owner, who is responsible for the accuracy and completeness of the information submitted, and for ensuring compliance with this Protocol.

⁸ An Assembly Act is a document that describes all the resolutions that took place during an Assembly. The Assembly is the highest ejido/community body where decisions are made.

⁹ The Project Implementation Agreement, however, must be signed directly by the Forest Owner.

3.6 Aggregation

The goal of aggregation is to alleviate transaction costs for individual landowners, while upholding the Reserve's standards for quantification certainty and integrity. Participation in an Aggregate can help reduce costs by enabling economies of scale and improve marketing opportunities by increasing the volume of transactable credits.

An Aggregate is two or more individual Forest Projects and may be composed of any combination of eligible Forest Owners from any geographic location within Mexico.

Forest Projects that are not enrolled in an Aggregate, but that have multiple Activity Areas, also benefit from the statistical principals applied to inventory standards for Aggregates. Standalone Forest Projects with multiple Activity Areas should refer to the modified target sampling errors included in Appendix B. Standalone Forest Projects with multiple Activity Areas do not, however, benefit from the modified verification schedule used by Aggregates. Standalone Forest Projects must always follow the verification schedule in Section 8.2.

Forest Projects enrolled in an Aggregate should follow the guidance in the Reserve Guidelines for Aggregating Forest Projects for modified target sampling errors and verification schedule.

The Aggregator may be a corporation or other legally constituted entity, city, county, state agency, individual or a combination thereof, which may then submit documentation on behalf of aggregate participants (two or more Forest Owners). An Aggregator must have an account on the Reserve and may also be a Project Developer for one or more of the Aggregate participants, and/or Forest Owner of one or more of the projects.

Forest Owners are ultimately responsible for submitting all required forms and complying with the terms of the MFP, even while participating in an Aggregate. Aggregators must, however, manage the flow of ongoing monitoring and verification reports to the Reserve as a service to Forest Owners. Aggregators may also engage in project development, provide inventory services, and provide other services for the Forest Owner. The scope of aggregator services may be negotiated between Forest Owners and the Aggregator and reflected in contracts between the Forest Owners and the Aggregator.

3.7 Required Documentation for Land Tenure Status

All landowners must demonstrate proof of ownership of the Project Area.

Communities and Ejidos

1. Official identification of the members of the Agrarian Authority¹⁰ that could include: voter ID (*credencial de elector*), military ID (*cartilla militar*), passport, or certificate of naturalization.
2. Basic File (*Carpeta Básica*):¹¹

¹⁰ The Agrarian Authority is the *Comisariado Ejidal* or *Bienes Comunes*, which in general is composed of three individuals elected by the General Assembly: president, secretary, and treasurer as well as a supervisory board comprised of a president and two secretaries, all with their alternates.

¹¹ *La Carpeta Básica* is constituted of information that proves the creation and constitution of ejidos and communities. Documents include: *Resolución Presidencial*, *Acta de Posesión y Deslinde*, and *Plano Definitivo* and its publication in the Federation Official Journal (DOF). The information can be provided at the Agrarian Registry. The *Resolución Presidencial* (Presidential Resolution) is a decree given by the president where it is stated that the land is given to the

- a. Presidential Resolution (*Resolución Presidencial*) – For ejidos and communities constituted or recognized before 1992
- b. Possession Act (*Acta de Posesión y Deslinde*)
- c. Property Boundaries (*Plano Definitivo*)
- d. Date when it was published under the Federation Official Journal (DOF)
- e. For ejidos: Registration Proof (*Constancia Registral del ejido*)¹²
3. For certified ejidos: Delimitation, Destination, and Land Allocation Act (*Acta de Delimitación, Destino, y Asignación de Tierras Ejidales, ADDATE*).
4. Current communal bylaws (*Estatutos comunales*)¹³ or Internal Rules of Procedure (*Reglamento Interno*).
5. Census of Agrarian Nuclei (*Padrón e Historial de Núcleos Agrarios, PHINA*), as available.
6. Official identification – Identification of the FPC responsible for the project that has the approval of the agrarian nucleus.¹⁴
7. Optional: Communal land use plan (*Ordenamiento Territorial Comunitario*).¹⁵

Small Private Property (Including individual ejidal parcels participating as private owners)

1. Official identification of the owner that could include: voter ID (*credencial de elector*), military ID (*cartilla militar*), passport, or certificate of naturalization.
2. Property titles inscribed under the Public Registry.

Public Lands

1. Legal document inscribed in the Public Registry of Property (*Registro Público de la Propiedad*) and/or the Decree or Ordinance that states that the land is destined for a specific use and/or management by a municipality or state.
2. Official identification of the individual authorized to represent the public agency.

3.7.1 Attestation of Title

Each time a Forest Project is verified, the Forest Owner or Project Developer¹⁶ must sign the Reserve's standard Attestation of Title form indicating that the Forest Owner has an exclusive ownership claim to the GHG removals achieved by their Forest Project over the verification period. Copies of the Attestation of Title form are available on the Reserve's website. Please note that in requesting this form, the Reserve is not providing financial services or acting as a broker to trade any Forest Project CRTs.

3.8 Conflicts

Boundary disagreements may exist for Project Areas. The Reserve cannot issue credits for any lands where substantial disputes exist regarding property ownership. Therefore, all Activity Areas must be free of substantial conflict or dispute (at the Reserve's discretion) with regards to

corresponding community or ejido. This fact is stated on the *acta de posesión y deslinde* and a map of the community was drawn, called *Plano Definitivo*. Presidential resolutions are registered in the Agrarian Registry.

¹² Document that refers to the land dimensions and number of current beneficiaries.

¹³ Internal rules and regulations.

¹⁴ An agrarian nucleus refers to social property, communities and ejidos. Many times, the authority of the agrarian nucleus is the *Comisariado Ejidal* or *Bienes Comunales* who is the responsible body to execute and enforce the decisions taken in the General Assembly.

¹⁵ Defines land uses within a community or ejido.

¹⁶ The Project Developer may sign the Attestation of Title on behalf of the Forest Owner, only if the Forest Owner has signed a Designation of Authority granting the Project Developer such rights.

ownership. For all ejidos and communities, the Forest Owner must submit a document produced by the Agrarian Attorney (*Procuraduría Agraria*) that states that there are no agrarian conflicts within the Activity Areas as part of the Project Report. Private and public landowners must also attest that there are no boundary conflicts within the Activity Areas by submitting the signed Reserve Attestation of No Conflicts declaring that there are no lawsuits or claims on the property. Documentation must be signed by the Forest Owner or Project Developer¹⁷ and submitted prior to each verification. Ejidos and communities may opt to use the Attestation of No Conflicts for annual monitoring after the initial verification. Copies of the Attestation of No Conflicts form are available on the Reserve's website.

3.9 Regulatory Compliance

Each time the Forest Project is verified, the Forest Owner or Project Developer¹⁸ must sign the Reserve's Attestation of Regulatory Compliance form indicating that the project is in material compliance with all applicable laws, bylaws, regulations or norms¹⁹ relevant to the project activity. Materiality is further discussed in the Reserve's Program Manual.²⁰ Forest Owners are required to disclose in writing to the verifier any and all instances of material non-compliance²¹ of the project with any law. CRTs will not be issued for GHG removals that occurred for the monitoring period in which the material non-compliance occurred.

3.10 Social Safeguards

Forest Projects can create long-term climate benefits as well as other social and environmental benefits. Investment into forest carbon projects has the potential to improve quality of life for rural communities, both in terms of increased revenues and in terms of sustaining and improving forest ecosystems.

For ejidos and communities, this protocol includes certain general social and environmental safeguards that must be considered in the project design and implemented throughout the Project Life to help guarantee that the project will have positive environmental and social outcomes. Private, public, non-communal and private ejidal landowners are not required to address the social safeguards outlined in this protocol, though they are required to address the environmental safeguards. The safeguards in the protocol are intended to respect internal governmental processes, customs, and rights of Forest Owners while ensuring projects are beneficial, both socially and environmentally. The sections on Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (Sections 7 and 8) specify the criteria for verification of each of these safeguards and consequences for failure to achieve the minimum thresholds.

The social safeguard requirements for ejidos and communities include:

1. Free, Prior, and Informed Consent

¹⁷ The Project Developer may sign the Attestation of Regulatory Compliance on behalf of the Forest Owner, only if the Forest Owner has signed a Designation of Authority granting the Project Developer such rights.

¹⁸ The Project Developer may sign the Attestation of Regulatory Compliance on behalf of the Forest Owner, only if the Forest Owner has signed a Designation of Authority granting the Project Developer such rights.

¹⁹ Including the General Law of Environmental Equilibrium and Protection, Law for Sustainable Rural Development, General Law for Sustainable Forest Development, Agrarian Law, and The Political Constitution of the Mexican United States, among others.

²⁰ http://www.climateactionreserve.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Climate_Action_Reserve_Program_Manual_090115.pdf

²¹ Material non-compliance with the law, for purposes of this protocol, is any illegal act, for which the Forest Owner has been prosecuted, that impacts forest stocking, and/or conservation values.

2. Meeting Notification, Participation, and Documentation
3. Project Governance

The requirements for each of the categories are identified below.

Free, Prior, and Informed Consent	
<p>Prior to project submission, Forest Owners must hold an assembly or a series of assemblies²² to discuss the themes addressed in this section. Provisions must be made to ensure non-Spanish speaking participants can understand the material and communicate during meetings or assemblies. Meetings must be announced in a manner to ensure that the information reaches all community members, including vulnerable groups like women, <i>avecindados</i>²³ and young people. The meeting records or assembly acts and proof of it (through photographs or signatures) must be included in the PR.</p> <p>These assemblies must adhere to proper notification, participation, and documentation requirements in the section on Assembly Notification, Participation, and Documentation below.</p>	
Themes	Description
SS1 Forest Carbon Project Concepts	<p>The rationale behind the participation in a forest carbon project must be discussed. Presentations must address the following topics in order to understand the basics behind climate change and actions to mitigate it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Concept of climate change associated with GHGs ▪ Role of forests in mitigating climate change ▪ Opportunities (economic and environmental) for participation in forest carbon project ▪ Methods to enhance forest carbon stocks ▪ Additionality and permanence associated with forest carbon projects ▪ Importance of maintenance of native biodiversity
SS2 Anticipated Costs ²⁴	<p>Anticipated costs of the forest carbon project must be discussed and documented in the assembly notes. The following must be addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Site preparation ▪ Provision of and planting of forest seedlings ▪ Inventory and monitoring ▪ Project governance ▪ Project verification ▪ Changes in land use and access to resources
SS3 Anticipated Benefits	<p>Presentations must be provided that define economic benefits to Forest Owners due to involvement in a forest carbon project. Anticipated benefits discussed must address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local environmental benefits that are usually associated with biodiversity, water quality, soil conservation, and recreation ▪ Economic benefits associated with carbon and other forest resources (through market mechanisms) ▪ Distribution of benefits to the community and/or community members
SS4 Project Approval	<p>The project must be approved through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Established formal and/or traditional authorities ▪ An Assembly Act with consensus (>50%) of all community members in favor
SS5 Aggregate Approval	<p>When joining an aggregate, the decision must be approved through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Established formal and/or traditional authorities ▪ An Assembly Act with consensus (>50%) of all community members in favor ▪ A contract²⁵ that determines the scope of aggregator services and the terms of credit payments must be made available to all participating community members. The contract must include all mandatory components as defined in the Reserve Guidelines for aggregating Forest Projects.

²² The Assembly is the highest ejido/community body where decisions are made.

²³ *Avecindados* are inhabitants of the ejido or community that are not ejidatarios or comuneros, and therefore, on several occasions they do not participate in decision making.

²⁴ An Excel based tool is available on the Reserve website to facilitate the assessment of anticipated costs and benefits.

²⁵ The contract should be negotiated between the Forest Owner and the Aggregator.

Assembly Notification, Participation, and Documentation	
<p>Assemblies (at least once a year) are held to discuss critical elements associated with project activities. Assemblies must prove that vulnerable groups are included, including <i>avecindados</i>²⁶. Each assembly must include the following items on the agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Forestry activities (management actions, environmental issues, grievances, other concerns and opportunities) ▪ Programmatic events (monitoring, reporting, and verification) ▪ Credits issued ▪ Benefit sharing arrangements ▪ Finances 	
Themes	Description
SS6 Proper Notification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Each Forest Owner should describe how notices of assemblies take place in order to include as many people as possible
SS7 Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assemblies must provide a sign-in sheet so that meeting attendance can be monitored ▪ Opportunities for all community/ejido members to share opinions, both in writing and orally ▪ The FPC can request comment from community/ejido members during meetings if deemed pertinent
SS8 Assembly Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assembly notes must document the discussions associated with each required item on the agenda ▪ Forest Owners should describe how assembly acts will be publicly available as part of the project record

Project Governance	
<p>Forest carbon projects require an organizational structure that will endure for long periods of time. A FPC must be selected for the community to represent the project with community members, with verifiers, and with Reserve staff. The FPC is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensuring all project-related documentation is in order and up to date ▪ Ensuring assemblies include the required elements above and providing the corresponding act ▪ Organizing logistics with verifiers and Reserve staff <p>The process for identifying the FPC is at the discretion of the community but must include the elements described below.</p>	
Themes	Description
SS9 Identification of a FPC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A description of the nomination process must be documented in the Project Report ▪ A description of the selection/election process must be documented in the Project Report ▪ FPC must be approved with a >50% vote of the community/ejido members present in the assembly ▪ For ejidos and communities, must be a member
SS10 Term of a FPC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The length of the term of FPC must be defined in the Project Report ▪ The PR must identify whether the position of FPC can be renewed and, if so, for how many terms
SS11 Replacing the FPC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To address potential disputes associated with the FPC, a process in replacing the FPC from the position (which should take place during a general assembly) must be documented in the Project Report

²⁶ *Avecindados* are inhabitants of the ejido or community that are not ejidatarios or comuneros, and therefore, on several occasions they do not participate in decision making.

3.11 Environmental Safeguards

The Environmental Safeguards ensure that Forest Projects sustain and/or enhance forest ecosystem functions. The Environmental Safeguards are established by activity to take into consideration the different forest ecosystems and land cover types present within different Activity Areas.

Table 3.1 provides a summary of the Environmental Safeguards by activity.

Table 3.1 Environmental Safeguards

Environmental Safeguard	Applicable Activities	Activity Area Guidance
1. Maintenance of forest carbon stocks	All	Activity Areas must maintain or increase standing live and dead carbon stocks over the Project Life, as determined by a running 10-year average of carbon stocks within the Activity Areas. Exceptions may be granted by the Reserve for cases of natural disturbances or silviculture activities aimed at reducing an imminent risk of disease or pest infestation.
2. Native Species	IFM, Restoration, Reforestation	IFM and Restoration Activity Areas must demonstrate verified continuous progress towards achieving a goal of 95% native species within the Activity Areas, as measured by average trees per hectare. For the purposes of this protocol, native species are those found naturally in and around the Project Area. An affidavit from the appropriate regional SEMARNAT office is required wherever a dispute arises as to whether a tree is native to the Project Area or not. The use of native species outside of their historic range is permitted if the use is intended as an adaptation strategy against climate change. In such cases, a letter stating the use of the particular species is required from the appropriate regional SEMARNAT office. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. For IFM and Restoration: must be met within 50 years. b. For Reforestation: must be met immediately following the establishment of a new forest stand.
	Large Urban Forestry	Large Urban Forestry Activity Areas may not reduce the percent of native species throughout the Project Life.
3. Composition of Native Species	IFM, Restoration, Reforestation	IFM and Restoration Activity Areas must demonstrate verified continuous progress towards meeting the composition of native species according to the Table 3.2. The native species composition requirements must be met by each Activity Area independently. Exceptions to the composition of native species are accepted through a letter signed by the appropriate regional SEMARNAT office that ecological rationale justifies an alternative composition of native species.

		<p>a. For IFM and Restoration: must be met within 50 years.</p> <p>b. For Reforestation: must be met immediately following the establishment of a new forest stand.</p>
	Large Urban Forest	For Large Urban Forestry Activity Areas, if a single species comprises more than the proportion indicated under Table 3.2, the proportion of the dominant species may not be intentionally increased throughout the Project Life.
4. Maintenance of forest land cover throughout the Project Area	IFM, Restoration, Reforestation, Agroforestry, Silvopastoral	Forest land cover outside the Activity Areas but within the Project Area must not decrease as a result of human activities over the Project Life in relative proportion to the area in forest land cover at the Start Date. Forest land cover is a means of assessing the shifting of forest disturbance activities from the Activity Areas to the Project Area as a result of project activities. If a decline in forest land cover in excess of 5% is detected during a full verification, the project must rectify the forest cover loss through reforestation in the subsequent 6 Reporting Periods and commit to a full verification at the end of the 6 th Reporting Period following the detection, regardless of whether the project is in an aggregate or not. Declines in forest land cover resulting from wildfire or other natural disturbances that are not the result of gross negligence are exempt. An efficient method for estimating forest land cover is described in Appendix A. Forest Owners that are able to provide evidence that forest land cover declines in excess of 5% (by area) are planned and approved activities sanctioned by municipal, state, or federal agencies are exempt from this requirement.
5. Sustainable harvesting practices	IFM	<p>Where harvest occurs within the Activity Areas in a contiguous area larger than 5 hectares, a tree, or group of trees, representative of the age cohort that was harvested, can be no further than 100 meters from other trees, either within the harvest area or outside of the harvest area in order to provide refugia for plants and animals.</p> <p>Should these retained trees fall due to wind events, the fallen trees may be harvested. Retained trees may not be felled intentionally until the regenerated stand reaches 10-years of age. Exceptions, related to safety, ecological, or other rationale, to this requirement may be granted if the request is made to the Reserve in writing prior to the exception occurring.</p>
6. Maintenance of natural land cover	Reforestation	Forest Projects should take into consideration the effects of project activities on ecological processes; where project activities result in the conversion of natural land cover, the Project Developer must

		provide justification to be approved by the Reserve. See below for further information on determining natural land cover.
--	--	---

Table 3.2 provides further guidance for the environmental safeguard related to the composition of native species for IFM, reforestation, and restoration activities.

Table 3.2. Requirements for the Proportion of Native Species within the Activity Areas (IFM, reforestation, and restoration).

Project Activity Areas ¹	Native Species Composition Requirements (Trees per Hectare)
Up to 10 hectares	Up to 100% can be in one species.
>10 to ≤50 hectares	Up to 90% can be in one species.
>50 to ≤100 hectares	No more than 80% can be in one species. The balance must be made up of at least two other species.
>100 to ≤1,000 hectares	No more than 70% can be in one species. The balance must be made up of at least two other species.
Greater than 1,000 hectares	No more than 60% can be in one species. The balance must be made up of at least three other species.

¹ The area is determined by the sum of hectares in each Activity Area.

Conceptually, natural land cover includes areas dominated by native species that may exhibit complex age and structural variation and contain critical habitat niches to fully support natural ecosystem functions.

For the purposes of the Protocol:

- Natural forest and shrub land cover (bosque, selva, zonas aridas) areas are identified where the dominant overstory vegetation is comprised of an overwhelming majority of native species, i.e., greater than 70% by CO₂e stocking and the overall canopy density of the dominant vegetation across the assessment area is no less than 50% of canopy density levels found in similar natural plant communities without human intervention.
- Natural grassland areas are identified where grassland plant communities (native or non-native species) exist due to natural environmental features (soil conditions, precipitation etc.) and/or natural frequency of disturbance events. If the grasslands must be constantly grazed or burned more frequently than would be the case in a natural ecosystem, the grasslands would not meet the definition of natural.
- Wetlands are considered natural wherever they are found not being used for agriculture or intensive aquaculture and not part of a non-natural waterbody.

Crediting will be discontinued in the event a project fails to meet these requirements until the project develops a plan acceptable by the Reserve to return to compliance.

3.12 Project Start Date

The Start Date of a Forest Project is a date in which project activities commenced (see Section 2.3). The project Start Date can be no more than twelve months prior to the submittal date²⁷. The Forest Owner must be able to demonstrate project activities initiated on this date through a verifiable action or event. The following actions may be used to identify the project Start Date:

1. Official approval of the project by the Forest Owner, such as a general assembly in which the Forest Project was approved. Proof must be provided to the verifier in the form of an official act (or similar documentation for private and public landowners), the meeting notes and agenda.
2. Submitting the project to the Reserve.

The initiation of subsequent Activity Areas is based on a completed inventory and a description of the new activity presented in the Project Report.

3.13 Additionality

The Reserve only registers projects that yield GHG emission removals that are determined to be additional to what would have occurred in the absence of a carbon offset market (i.e., under “Business As Usual”). For a general discussion of the Reserve’s approach to determining additionality see the Reserve’s Program Manual.²⁸

To be considered additional, enhancement activities must be the result of defined investment rather than the result of natural activities. Projects that implement the defined activities in Table 2.1 meet this criterion. Defined investment for reforestation/agroforestry activities means an investment of labor or capital to establish tree seedlings, either directly (tree planting, site preparation, etc.) or indirectly (protecting regenerated stands against herbivory, conversion to agriculture or grazing, or other abrasive environmental elements). Direct investment for other enhancement activities includes investments in stocking improvements and opportunity costs associated with extended rotations. Indirect investment activities include investments into the protection of forested stands against environmental threats or manmade elements, including illegal harvesting.

Forest Projects must satisfy the following tests to be considered additional:

1. **Legal requirement test.** Forest Projects must achieve GHG removals above any GHG removals that would result from compliance with any law, statute, rule, regulation or ordinance. Legally-binding mandates entered into as part of the project and in support of project activities are not considered for the purpose of determining additionality under the legal requirement test.
2. **Performance test.** Forest Projects must achieve GHG removals above and beyond any GHG removals that would result from engaging in Business As Usual activities, as defined by the requirements described below (Section 3.15).

²⁷ The submittal date is the date in which the Forest Owner officially submits the Submittal Form to the Reserve. The Forest Owner will need to state the project Start Date on the Submittal Form.

²⁸ <http://www.climateactionreserve.org/how/program/program-manual/>

3.13.1 Legal Requirement Test

Project activities must not be required by law. Each time a Forest Project undergoes verification, including the initial verification, the Forest Owner or Project Developer²⁹ must sign the Reserve's Attestation of Voluntary Implementation form indicating that project activities are not legally required at the time of the Start Date or during the Reporting Period(s) being verified.

Documented stewardship activities within municipal development plans (if existing) are not considered legally binding for purposes of additionality determination. Instead, they are viewed as desired objectives which would have a better probability of implementation with funding that might occur with carbon sales.

3.13.2 Performance Standard Test

A standardized analysis determines whether a risk of forest cover loss to a specific Activity Area is sufficient to warrant recognition that forest carbon enhancements, protected over a long time (100-year permanence), are considered additional. Forest conversions to other uses, such as agriculture, grazing and urban use, are key drivers of forest carbon loss. Forest carbon loss can also occur as the result of non-sustainable timber or fuelwood harvest often due to illegal logging. Forest carbon loss due to natural disturbance is excluded from this analysis.

3.13.2.1 Improved Forest Management Activity Areas

Forest Management Plans (FMPs) are legal forest management documents approved by SEMARNAT that permit harvesting at sustainable levels by ensuring that forest harvest does not exceed forest growth. Where landowners can demonstrate that the actual forest growth exceeds the allowable harvest identified in the FMP, SEMARNAT may accept an increase in the allowable harvest. Therefore, this protocol considers that all periodic growth is at risk under a FMP and, regardless of the current allowable harvest rate, any non-harvested periodic growth is additional. Since this protocol only credits for growth above the Activity Area baseline, or its initial carbon stocks (Section 5.2), and all growth is considered at risk under a FMP, Activity Areas under a FMP or currently in the process of obtaining an FMP automatically pass the Performance Standard Test.

Improved Forest Management activities thus automatically satisfy the Performance Standard Test. Activities are considered additional to the extent they produce GHG removals in excess of those that would have under a Business As Usual scenario, as defined by the baseline (Section 5.2).

3.13.2.2 Restoration and Reforestation Activity Areas

The performance standard test for Restoration and Reforestation activities is based on evidence that risks to forest inventories are present at considerable levels within the Activity Area. The assessment of risk to carbon stocks across the Activity Area is based on an analysis of drivers of deforestation and degradation that may impact the land use within the Activity Area.

The Reserve has developed an analytical tool that provides a standardized assessment of risk to Activity Areas. The tool, referred to as the Forest Land Cover Risk tool, is available on the MFP Website. The tool evaluates a variety of drivers that impact forest land cover and provides a score for a given Activity Area based on local land management activities, biophysical characteristics of the Activity Area, the presence of urban development, and economic pressures affecting land

²⁹ The Project Developer may sign the Attestation of Voluntary Implementation on behalf of the Forest Owner, only if the Forest Owner has signed a Designation of Authority granting the Project Developer such rights.

management decisions. Activity Areas with scores that exceed the risk threshold are deemed additional.

As part of the Performance Standard Test, projects must identify legal restrictions that would affect forest cover or canopy area within the Activity Area, particularly inclusion in a Natural Protected Area or other classification that restricts forest harvesting. Activity Areas that are included in such categories have an inherent lower risk of deforestation, however, under certain circumstances may experience persistent risks of degradation and deforestation. Projects may use the Reserve's Forest Land Cover Risk tool to determine whether Activity Areas with legal restrictions may be considered additional.

For Activity Areas that comply with the performance standard, activities are considered additional to the extent they produce GHG removals above the baseline.

3.13.2.3 Urban Forestry, Agroforestry, and Silvopastoral

Large and Small Urban Forestry, Agroforestry, and Silvopastoral activities automatically satisfy the performance standard test. Activities are considered additional to the extent they produce GHG removals in excess of the Activity Area baseline (Section 5.2).

3.14 Project Crediting Period

The baseline for any Forest Project registered with the Reserve under this version of the MFP is valid for 30 years. This means that a registered Forest Project will be eligible to receive CRTs for GHG removals quantified using this protocol, and verified by Reserve-approved verification bodies, for a period of 30 years following the project's Start Date. Credits that were generated during the crediting period must continue to be monitored to meet contractual obligations, if any, and for credits to be issued according to the tonne-year accounting guidance (see Section 5.5.1). Projects that have met all Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) requirements and maintained legal compliance throughout their first crediting period, can extend the crediting period for another 30-year period using the baseline developed for the initial crediting period.

3.15 Minimum Time Commitment

Projects may commit to maintaining carbon sequestered due to project activities for any length of time. However, credits will be issued in an amount proportional to the length of the commitment relative to 100 years. Commitments must be secured through a contractual agreement referred to as a Project Implementation Agreement (see below). Projects that are secured contractually for less than 100 years will be issued credits (CRTs) proportional to the atmospheric impact of maintaining the carbon out of the atmosphere for the period of time the CO₂ is secured, commensurate with the length of the contractual commitment relative to 100 years. This is discussed further in the section entitled Tonne-Year Accounting (Section 5.5.1). Carbon secured through a contractual agreement must be monitored and verified for the duration of the agreement.

Forest Projects must submit annual monitoring reports and undergo periodic full verifications, at minimum every 6 Reporting Periods, for the duration of their contractually agreed time commitment.

There are three possible exceptions to this minimum time commitment:

1. A Forest Project automatically terminates if a significant natural disturbance occurs,³⁰ leading to an Unavoidable Reversal (see Section 6.2.1) that reduces the project's standing live or dead carbon stocks below the project's baseline standing live or dead carbon stocks. Once a Forest Project terminates in this manner, the Forest Owner has no further obligations to the Reserve. The project's credits are made whole through the Reserve's Buffer Pool.
2. A Forest Project may be voluntarily terminated prior to the end of its minimum time commitment if the Forest Owner retires³¹ a quantity of CRTs equal to the total number of CRTs secured through contractual relationship.
3. A Forest Project may be automatically terminated if there is a breach of certain terms described within the Project Implementation Agreement. Such a termination will require the Forest Owner to retire³¹ a quantity of CRTs, equal to the total number of CRTs secured.

3.16 Project Implementation Agreement

A Project Implementation Agreement (PIA) is a contract between the Reserve and the Forest Owner that effectively secures Verified Removals for periods of time (up to 100 years).

The PIA ensures that the net quantity of carbon sequestered by a project will continue to be monitored and verified for the duration of the agreed-upon commitment period, specifies remedies in the event of a contract breach, and stipulates the number of credits to be issued for each net tonne of CO₂e sequestered due to project activities.

The PIA sets forth the Forest Owner's obligation (and the obligation of its successors and assignees) to comply with the monitoring and verification requirements of the Mexico Forest Protocol. The Forest Owner's responsibilities in the event of a reversal are also addressed in the PIA. For projects that secure carbon through a contract (see Section 5.5.1), the PIA must be signed by the governance body of the ejido/community, the land owner of private properties, or the appropriate authority for non-federal government agencies, notarized, and registered with the National Agrarian Registry (*Registro Agrario Nacional* or RAN) or Public Registry in accordance with the laws and requirements of the state and/or municipality. If registration is not allowed by the applicable laws of the state and/or municipality, the execution of the agreement before a notary public is adequate. The contract does not need to be recorded on the deed to the Forest Owner's property.

Contracts that bind actions of communal landscapes are currently limited by law to 30 years. The PIA can be renewed annually to allow Verified Removals associated with prior Reporting Periods to be issued, such that projects can receive additional credits for previously stored carbon until the 100-year permanence commitment is reached.

3.17 Other Eligibility Criteria

An affidavit stating that there are no ongoing encumbrances or expectations for specific forest management activities is required in cases where a Reserve project is to be initiated in an area where a previous project existed. Projects may not be located on any part of a project that was terminated as the result of an avoidable reversal.

³⁰ The natural disturbance shall not be the result of avoidable or grossly negligent acts of the Forest Owner.

³¹ To retire a CRT means to transfer it to a retirement account in the Reserve's software system. Retirement accounts are permanent and locked, so that a retired CRT cannot be transferred or retired again. See the Reserve Program Manual for further information.

4 Glossary of Terms

Above-Ground Live Biomass	Live trees including the stem, branches, and leaves or needles, brush and other woody live plants above ground.
Activity Area	An Activity Area is a spatially discrete area within the Project Area where management activities are undertaken for the purpose of increasing forest carbon inventories for which the Forest Owner intends to generate offsets. Inventories within Activity Areas are held to a higher standard than inventories in Non-Activity Areas.
Additionality	A criterion for Forest Project eligibility. A Forest Project is “additional” if it would not have been implemented without incentives provided by the carbon offset market, including the incentives created through the Reserve program. Under this protocol, Forest Projects meet the additionality criterion by demonstrating that they pass a legal requirement test and a performance test, as described in Section 3.13, and by achieving GHG reductions and removals quantified against an approved baseline, determined according to the requirements in Section 5.2.
Aggregate	An Aggregate must consist of two or more individual Forest Projects and may be comprised of any combination of the eligible project types and Forest Owners from any geographic location within Mexico.
Aggregator	A corporation or other legally constituted entity, city, county, state agency, individual or a combination thereof, which may then submit documentation on behalf of aggregate participants (two or more Forest Owners).
Allometric Equation	An equation that utilizes the genotypical relationship among tree components to estimate characteristics of one tree component from another. Allometric equations allow the below-ground root volume to be estimated using the above-ground bole volume.
Annual Monitoring Report	Form that serves as the basis for annual monitoring and requires the submittal of the CMW and Monitoring Report for Native Species to be submitted as attachments. The form can be downloaded from the Reserve’s website and must be submitted to the Reserve on an annual basis.
Avoidable Reversal	An avoidable reversal is any reversal that is due to the forest owner’s negligence, gross negligence or willful intent, including harvesting, development, and harm to the Project Area.
Attestation of Regulatory Compliance	Each time the Forest Project is verified, the Forest Owner must sign the Reserve’s Attestation of Regulatory Compliance form indicating that the project is in material compliance with all applicable laws ³² relevant to the project activity. Copies of the Attestation of Regulatory Compliance form are available on the Reserve’s website .

³² Including the General Law of Environmental Equilibrium and Protection, Law for Sustainable Rural Development, General Law for Sustainable Forest Development, Agrarian Law, and The Political Constitution of the Mexican United States, among others.

Attestation of Title	Each time a Forest Project is verified, the Forest Owner or Project Developer must sign the Attestation of Title form indicating that the Forest Owner has an exclusive ownership claim to the GHG removals achieved by their Forest Project over the verification period. Copies of the Attestation of Title form are available on the Reserve's website .
Attestation of Voluntary Implementation	Each time a Forest Project undergoes verification, including the initial verification, the Forest Owner or Project Developer must sign the Reserve's Attestation of Voluntary Implementation form indicating that project activities are not legally required at the time of the Start Date nor during the Reporting Period(s) being verified. Copies of the Attestation of Voluntary Implementation form are available on the Reserve's website .
Baseline	The level of GHG emissions, removals, and/or carbon stocks at sources, sinks, and reservoirs affected by a Forest Project that would have occurred under a "business as usual" scenario. For the purposes of this protocol, a project baseline must be estimated following standard procedures in Section 5.2.
Biological Emissions	For the purposes of this protocol, biological emissions are GHG emissions that are released directly from forest biomass, both live and dead, including forest soils. For Forest Projects, biological emissions are deemed to occur when the reported tonnage of onsite carbon stocks, relative to baseline levels, declines from one year to the next.
Biomass	The total mass of living organisms in a given area or volume; recently dead plant material is often included as dead biomass. ³³
Bole	A trunk or main stem of a tree.
Buffer Pool	The buffer pool is a holding account for Forest Project CRTs administered by the Reserve. It is used as a general insurance mechanism against unavoidable reversals for all Forest Projects registered with the Reserve. If a Forest Project experiences an unavoidable reversal of GHG reductions and removals (as defined in Section 6.2), the Reserve will retire a number of CRTs from the buffer pool equal to the total amount of carbon that was reversed (measured in metric tons of CO ₂ -equivalent).
Business As Usual	The activities, and associated GHG reductions and removals that would have occurred in the Project Area in the absence of incentives provided by a carbon offset market
CALCBOSK	CALCBOSK is a data management tool for users of the Reserve's Mexican Forest Protocol. The tool is built to complement the quantification methodology requirements for the protocol and its use is required. Project inventory data are entered in forms within CALCBOSK and automated reports can be generated.

³³ Metz, Davidson, Swart, & Pan, 2001.

Carbon Pool	A reservoir that has the ability to accumulate and store carbon or release carbon. In the case of forests, a carbon pool is the forest biomass, which can be subdivided into smaller pools. These pools may include above-ground or below-ground biomass or harvested wood products, among others.
Climate Reserve Tonne (CRT)	The unit of offset credits used by the Climate Action Reserve. Each Climate Reserve Tonne represents one metric ton of CO ₂ reduced or removed from the atmosphere, completing the Reserve requirements for permanence through a secured contract or time.
Community (Comunidad)	A system of communal land tenure in Mexico, particularly among indigenous groups.
Deforestation	The conversion from forestland use to another land use.
Degradation	From the point of view of climate change policy and the IPCC, it refers to loss of carbon stock within forests that remain forests. ³⁴
Ejido	A system of communal land tenure in Mexico.
Forest Management	the planning and implementation of actions on forestlands to meet specific environmental, economic, social and cultural objectives.
Forest Management Program	Legal documents approved by SEMARNAT that enable Forest Management and ensure sustainable management by ensuring forest harvest does not exceed forest growth.
Forest Owner	A forest owner is an ejido, a community or an individual that lives in a community and has a portion of the land, but that does not have a property title. It can also include individual private landowners.
Forest Project	A planned set of defined activities designed to increase removals of CO ₂ from the atmosphere through Forest Management that increases forest carbon stocks.
Forest Project Coordinator (FPC)	Serves as the main communication link between the Reserve and the Forest Owner to ensure proper implementation of the protocol requirements. In communities and ejidos, the FPC must be a community/ejido member and must prove through a signed Assembly Act ³⁵ recognized by law that he/she has been chosen by the ejido or community as project coordinator.
Project Report (PR)	A standard document for reporting required information about a Forest Project. The Project Report must be submitted for review by a verification body and approved by the Reserve before the Forest Project can be registered with the Reserve (see Section Error! Reference source not found.).
Forestland	Land spanning more than 0.5 hectares with trees that have the potential to grow higher than 5 meters and a canopy cover of more than 10 percent, or trees able to reach these thresholds in situ and

³⁴ UNFCCC, 2008.

³⁵ An Assembly Act is a document that describes all the resolutions that took place during an Assembly. The Assembly is the highest ejido/community body where decisions are made.

	that allows for management of one or more forest resources, including timber, fish and wildlife, biodiversity, water quality, recreation, aesthetics, and other public benefits.
GHG Assessment Boundary	The GHG Assessment Boundary defines all the GHG sources, sinks, and reservoirs that must be accounted for in quantifying project GHG reductions and removals (Section 4). The GHG Assessment Boundary encompasses all the GHG sources, sinks, and reservoirs that may be significantly affected by Forest Project activities, including forest carbon stocks, sources of biological CO ₂ emissions, and mobile combustion GHG emissions.
Greenhouse Gas (GHG)	Gas that contributes to global warming and climate change. For the purposes of this protocol, GHGs are the six gases identified in the Kyoto Protocol: carbon dioxide (CO ₂), nitrous oxide (N ₂ O), methane (CH ₄), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), and sulfur hexafluoride (SF ₆).
Lead Verifier	Must be designated as an active Lead Verifier on the COI Form, and must have successfully completed sector-specific project verifier training.
Listed	A Forest Project is considered “listed” when the forest owner has created an account with the Reserve, submitted the required Project Submittal Form and other required documents, paid the project submission fee, and the Reserve has approved and accepted the project for listing.
Litter	Any piece(s) of dead woody material from a tree, e.g., dead boles, limbs, and large root masses, on the ground in forest stands that is smaller than material identified as lying dead wood.
Lying Dead Wood	Any piece(s) of dead woody material from a tree, e.g., dead boles, limbs, and large root masses, on the ground in forest stands. Lying dead wood is all dead tree material with a minimum average diameter of 13 cm and a minimum length of 2.5 m. Anything not meeting the measurement criteria for lying dead wood will be considered litter. Stumps are not considered lying dead wood.
Metric Ton or “Tonne” (t)	A common international measurement for the quantity of GHG emissions, equivalent to about 2204.6 pounds or 1.1 short tons.
Non-Activity Area	Areas within the Project Area that are not managed with the specific intent to increase forest carbon inventories for purposes of creating forest carbon offsets. Non-Activity Areas are subject to monitoring activities to ensure conformance with environmental safeguards and that leakage is accounting for locally.
Non-Forest Cover	Land with a tree canopy cover of less than 10 percent.
Non-Forest Land Use	An area managed for residential, commercial or agricultural uses other than for the production of timber and other forest products, or for the maintenance of woody vegetation for such indirect benefits as protection of catchment areas, wildlife habitat, or recreation.

Onsite Carbon Stocks	Carbon stocks in living biomass, dead biomass, and soils within the Project Area.
Permanence	The requirement that GHGs must be permanently reduced or removed from the atmosphere to be credited as carbon offsets. For Forest Projects, this requirement is met by ensuring that the carbon associated with credited GHG reductions and removals remains stored for at least 100 years.
Primary Effects	The Forest Project's intended changes in carbon stocks, GHG emissions or removals.
Project Area	The area inscribed by the geographic boundaries of a Forest Project, as defined following the requirements in Section 2.1 of this protocol.
Project Developer	May be the Forest Owner or an independent third-party contracted by the Forest Owner to assist or consult with the Forest Owner and to implement the Forest Project. See Section 3.5 for further information.
Project Implementation Agreement	A contract between the Reserve and the Forest Owner that effectively secures Verified Removals for periods of time (up to 100 years).
Project Life	The Project Life is time period that the Forest Project is obligated to monitoring and verification activities which is defined in the Project Implementation Agreement.
Project Report	Required document for reporting project information. Project Reports are intended to serve as the main project document that thoroughly describes how the project meets eligibility requirements, the project's vegetative and social framework, and the current forest conditions, threats, and activities associated with the Project Area.
Project Submittal Form	Required form to submit a forest project; located on the Reserve's website . See Section Error! Reference source not found. for further information.
REDD+	In policy texts currently in discussion under the UNFCCC, REDD+ is understood to include reduced deforestation and degradation, forest enhancement, sustainable management of forest, and forest conservation.
Reduction	The avoidance or prevention of an emission of CO ₂ (or other GHG). GHG reductions are calculated as gains in carbon stocks over time relative to a Forest Project's baseline (also see Removal).
Registered	A Forest Project becomes registered with the Reserve when it has been verified by a Reserve-approved and ISO-accredited verification body, all required documentation has been submitted by the Forest Owner to the Reserve for final approval, and the Reserve approves the project.
Removal	Sequestration ("removal") of CO ₂ from the atmosphere caused by a Forest Project. GHG removals are calculated as gains in carbon

	stocks over time relative to a Forest Project's baseline (also see Reduction).
Reporting Period	A discrete period of time over which a Forest Owner quantifies and reports GHG removals to the Reserve. The length of the Reporting Period can be any amount of time up to 12 months for the first Reporting Period. Subsequent Reporting Periods must be exactly 12 months.
Reservoir	Physical unit or component of the biosphere, geosphere or hydrosphere with the capacity to store or accumulate carbon removed from the atmosphere by a sink, or captured from a source.
Retire	To retire a CRT means to transfer it to a retirement account in the Reserve's software system. Retirement accounts are permanent and locked, so that a retired CRT cannot be transferred or retired again.
Reversal	A reversal is a decrease in the stored carbon stocks associated with quantified GHG reductions and removals that occurs before the end of the Project Life. Under this protocol, a reversal is deemed to have occurred if there is a decrease in the difference between project and baseline onsite carbon stocks from one year to the next, regardless of the cause of this decrease (i.e., if the result of $(\Delta AC_{\text{onsite}} - \Delta BC_{\text{onsite}})$ in Error! Reference source not found. is negative).
Safeguard	Policy or procedure that identifies, evaluates, minimizes, and mitigates direct and indirect impacts to communities and ecosystems.
Secondary Effects	Unintended changes in carbon stocks, GHG emissions, or GHG removals caused by the Forest Project.
Senior Internal Reviewer	The Senior Internal Reviewer must be an active Lead Verifier as designated on the COI Form, the form and has successfully completed sector-specific project verifier training. The Senior Internal Reviewer must remain independent of all verification activities and must perform a final quality assurance review on the data, the Verification Report, the List of Findings and must sign the Verification Statement attesting to the accuracy of reported data. The Senior Internal Reviewer must not participate in site visits as this would compromise their objectivity and independence in the final review.
Sequestration	The process of increasing the carbon (or other GHGs) stored in a reservoir. Biological approaches to sequestration include direct removal of CO ₂ from the atmosphere through land-use changes ³⁶ and changes in forest management.
Significant Disturbance	Any natural impact that results in a loss of least 20 percent of the above-ground live biomass that is not the result of avoidable or grossly negligent acts of the Forest Owner.
Sink	Physical unit or process that removes a GHG from the atmosphere.

³⁶ Metz, Davidson, Swart, & Pan, 2001.

Source	Physical unit or process that releases a GHG into the atmosphere.
Standing Dead Carbon Stocks	The carbon in standing dead trees. Standing dead trees include the stem, branches, roots, or section thereof, regardless of species, with minimum diameter (breast height) of 13 cm and a minimum height of 15 m. Stumps are not considered standing dead stocks.
Standing Live Carbon Stocks	The carbon in the live tree pool. Live trees include the stem, branches, roots, and leaves or needles of all above-ground live biomass, regardless of species, with a minimum diameter (breast height) of 13 cm and a minimum height of 5 m (inventory methodology must include all trees 13 cm and greater).
Start Date	See Section 3.12.
Stocks (or Carbon Stocks)	The quantity of carbon contained in identified carbon pools.
Submitted	The Reserve considers a Forest Project to be “submitted” when all of the appropriate forms have been submitted and uploaded to the Reserve software system, and the forest owner has paid a project submission fee.
Tree	A woody perennial plant, typically large and with a well-defined stem or stems carrying a more or less definite crown with the capacity to attain a minimum diameter at breast height of 13 cm and a minimum height of 5 m. ³⁷
Unavoidable Reversal	An unavoidable reversal is any reversal not due to the forest owner’s negligence, gross negligence or willful intent, including wildfires or disease that are not the result of the forest owner’s negligence, gross negligence or willful intent.
Verification	The process of reviewing and assessing all of a Forest Project’s reported data and information by an ISO-accredited and Reserve-approved verification body, to confirm that the forest owner has adhered to the requirements of this protocol.
Verified Removals	Quantified GHG removals that have been verified through either site visit or desktop verifications. See Section 5.5.1 for further information.
Verification Report	This document is a detailed summary and scope of verification activities undertaken and serves as the basis for the public and the Reserve to evaluate GHG projects registered on the Reserve. The Verification report must be provided to the Forest Owner as well as made available to the Reserve and public.
Verification Statement	The official confirmation and final statement of findings during the verification process, detailing the number of CRTs issued, the vintages (if more than one) and the standard used to verify those CRTs. The Verification Statement confirms the verification activities and outcomes for all stakeholders (Forest Owners, verifiers, the Reserve, and the public).

³⁷ Helms 1998.

DRAFT