

EQUITABLE EARTH

(Previously: Ecosystem Restoration Standard)

20 January 2026

Version number 1.0

SUMMARY

The following document outlines an assessment of whether Equitable Earth (previously Ecosystem Restoration Standard) meets ICROA's Carbon Crediting Programme Endorsement Review Criteria (version 3.5). The assessment was carried out between 1 December 2025 and 20 January 2026, and is based on the documents submitted to ICROA by Equitable Earth on November 16th, 2023 as well responses to clarification questions provided on 12 January 2026

We deem that Equitable Earth meets the requirements for ICROA's conditional endorsement, for the reasons summarised in the table below.

Requirement	Outcome	Explanation
1) Independence	●	Not reassessed (criteria fulfilled in Review #1)
2) Governance	●	Not reassessed (criteria fulfilled in Review #1)
3) Registry	●	The Registry is publicly available, and includes access to underlying project information. Unique serial numbers are given to credits, and the Registry identifies credits as at least 'issued', 'retired' and 'cancelled'. However, other labels are provided to registry credits and it not always clear whether these other credit types are fully distinct. This would benefit from clarification by defining the terms used on the Registry.
4) Validation and verification		Not reassessed (criteria fulfilled in Review #1)
5) Carbon Crediting Principles		Not reassessed (criteria fulfilled in Review #1)
6) Environmental and social impacts	●	The current version of the Programme requires projects to complete a safeguard declaration and risk matrix. A project certified under the current version of the Programme evidences that these procedures are being followed.
7) Stakeholder considerations	●	Evidence is provided that the requirements for Programme-level and project-level stakeholder consultations are being followed.

Requirement	Outcome	Explanation
8) Scale	●	The Programme lists four projects as 'Active' (i.e. passed validation); and has issued 49 ex-post carbon credits. Both mean the Programme is only eligible for conditional endorsement.
9) Additional considerations	●	The Programme is not involved in any open litigation.

Box 1: Definition of review outcomes

The review outcome for each criterion can be 'Yes', 'No', 'Unclear' or 'Yes, with improvements possible'. These outcomes are defined as follows:

Yes = the requirements of the criterion assessed are met.

No = the requirements of the criterion assessed are not met.

Unclear = based on the information provided in the application, it is not possible to evaluate whether the requirements of the criterion assessed are met.

Yes, with improvements possible = the requirements of the criterion assessed are met, but there is scope for further voluntary improvements.

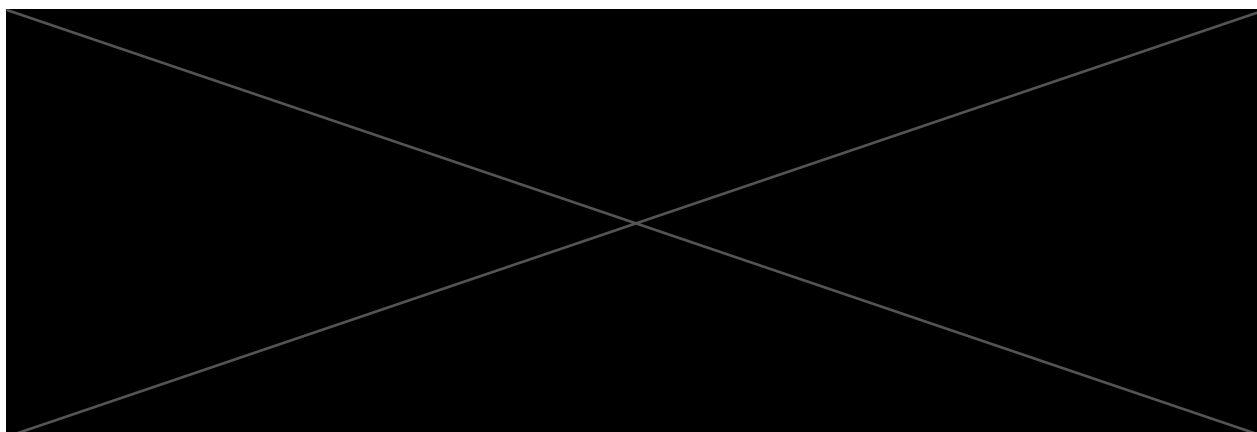
Review

#01

SUMMARY

The following document outlines an assessment of whether Ecosystem Restoration Standard meets ICROA's Carbon Crediting Programme Endorsement Review Criteria (version 2.7). The assessment was carried out between December 1st and December 21st, and is based on the documents submitted to ICROA by Ecosystem Restoration Standard on November 16th 2023.

We deem that Ecosystem Restoration Standard does not currently meet the requirements for ICROA's endorsement. The primary reasons for this include:



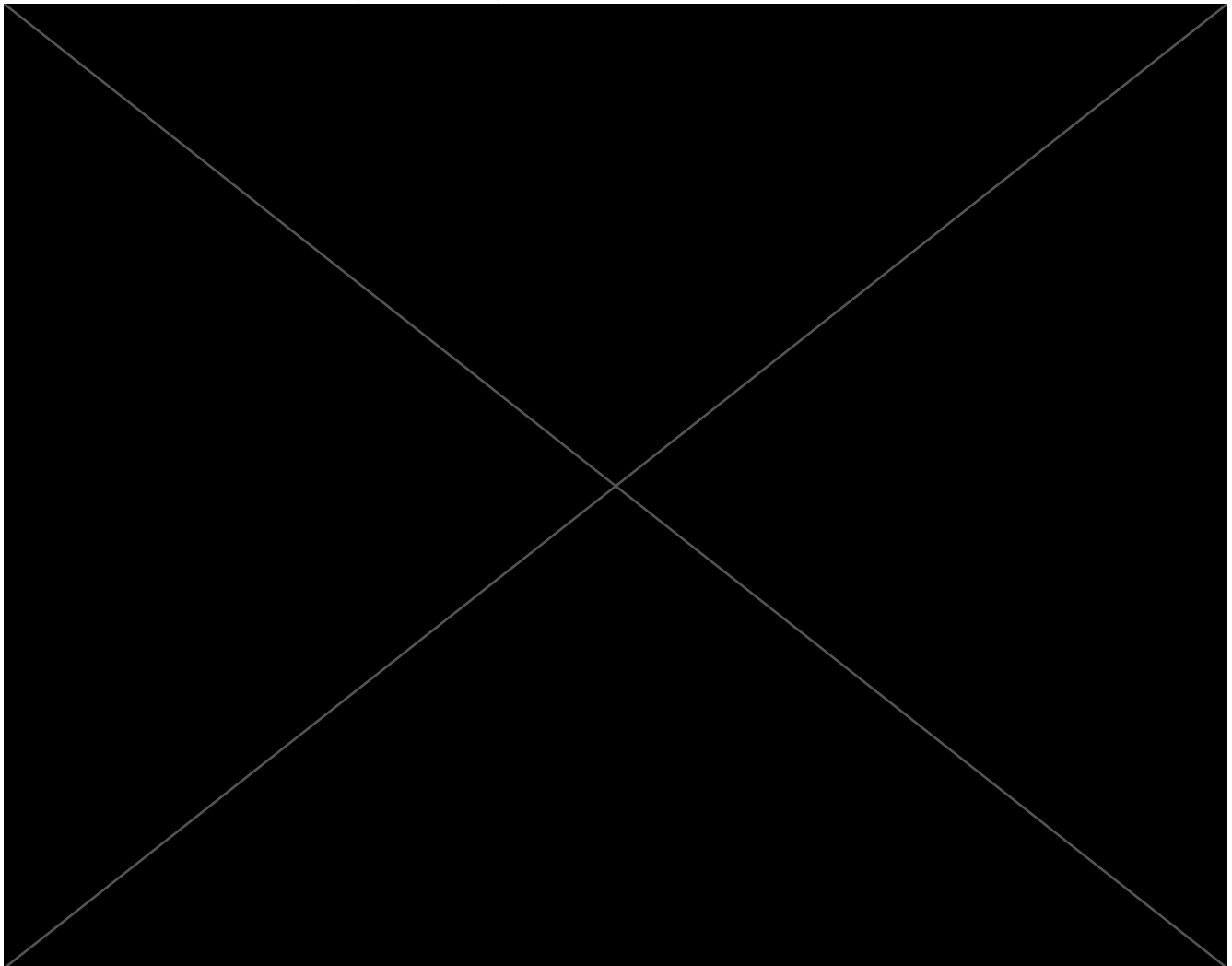
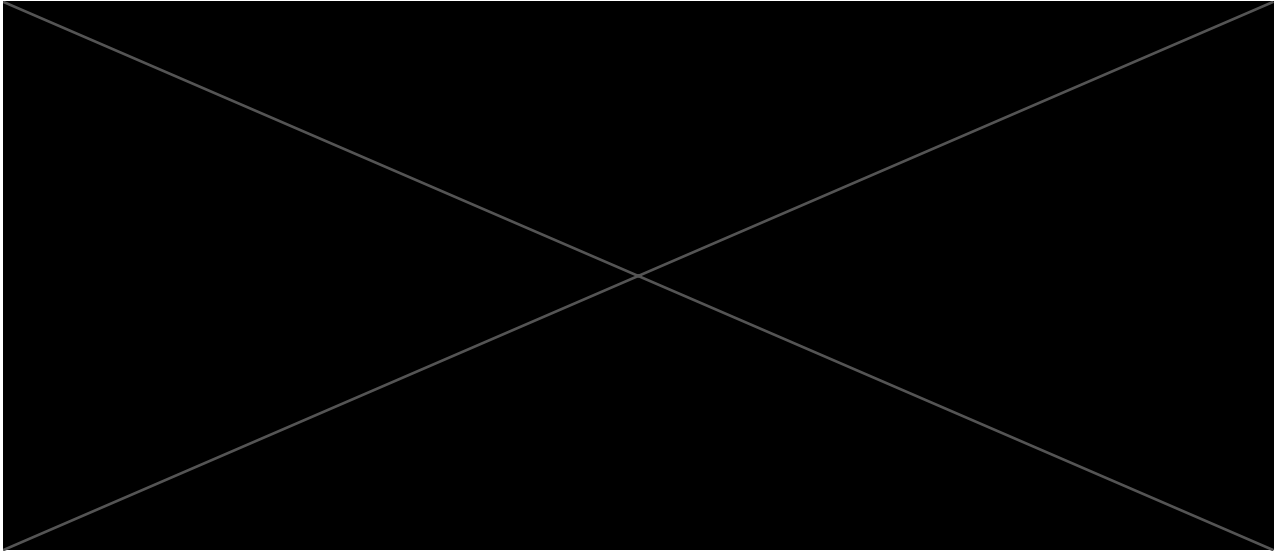
In addition, due to the scale limitations of the programme ERS would only be eligible for conditional endorsement, as per Section 8 of ICROA's Standards Endorsement Procedure.

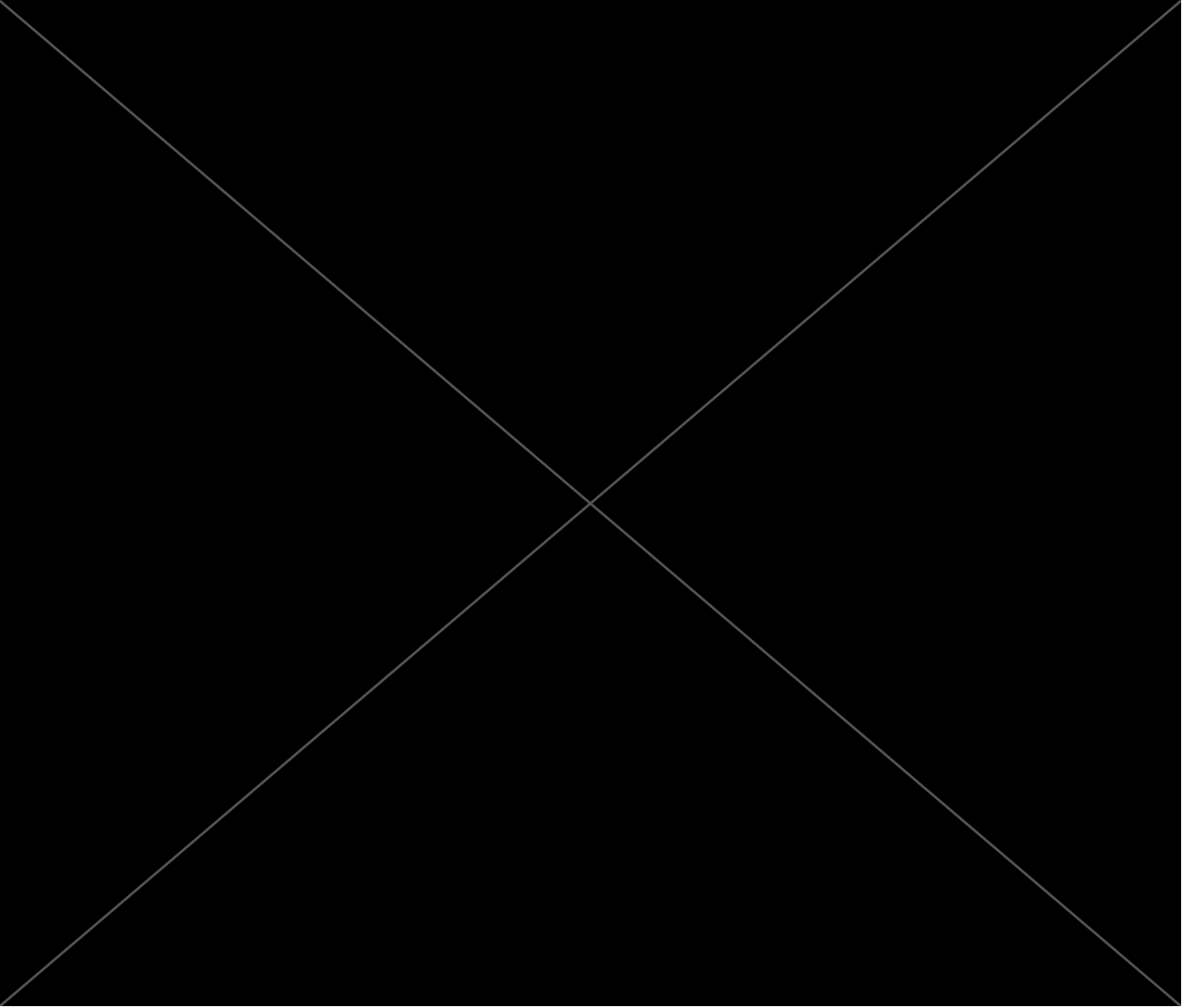


Requirement	Outcome	Explanation
1) Independence	●	<p>The programme has detailed procedures for identifying and mitigating COIs between all parties which is set out in the Code of Ethics and Business Conduct document, with specific enforcement guidance in the Anti-Fraud Policy. The programme does not act as a project developer.</p> <p>The programme promotes carbon credits it certifies to buyers through its External Relations Team. However, there are no fees charged to developers or buyers for this, and the programme has stated that it does not promote specific projects but rather promotes all projects generally. There does not appear to be any scope for financial gain from such promotion.</p>
2) Governance	●	<p>The governance structures in place at ERS are clearly described in public documentation. Roles and responsibilities of governing bodies and their members are clearly explained, and the members are listed on the website. Procedures for appointments are sufficiently clear.</p>

Requirement	Outcome	Explanation
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Processes for creating and updating standard and methodology documents are described in detail in publicly available documentation on the programme website. The programme does not reference other standards.



Requirement	Outcome	Explanation
		
9) Additional considerations	●	The small amount of media coverage regarding the standard is positive in its portrayal.



CARBON CREDITING PROGRAMME ENDORSEMENT APPLICATION FORM

Contact Information

Name of Programme	Equitable Earth (formerly Ecosystem Restoration Standard [ERS])
Contact Person	Hannah Robinson
Contact Email	h.robinson@eq-earth.com
Date of Submission	16/11/2023
Date of First Update	07/08/2024
Date of Second Update	<p>29/08/2025</p> <p><i>Note – Direct revisions (not including minor editorial revisions, e.g., typo corrections) to the text in this second update to the Application Form are made in purple. Boxes with red borders summarise the revisions made to this Application Form and provide additional detail on the latest updates to the Equitable Earth Programme (v1.2).</i></p> <p><i>Note that ‘ERS’ is replaced with ‘Equitable Earth’ throughout, though this is not noted in purple text for readability purposes.</i></p> <p><i>In v1.2, the Programme architecture was redesigned. The former ‘ERS Programme’ document was divided into two core documents: the Programme Manual, which details all the overarching rules, governance, and procedures governing the Equitable Earth Programme, and the Equitable Earth Standard, which sets out the rules and requirements for all projects certified under the Equitable Earth Programme. As part of this restructuring, the Livelihood Pillar – previously set out in the M001 methodology – has been fully integrated into the Standard, because its requirements apply to all projects, regardless of the methodology applied. Other key changes include consolidating guidelines previously in separate documents into the Standard or methodology, as appropriate.</i></p>
Version of Submission	v1.0
Version of First Update	v1.1

Version of Second Update	v1.2
Brief Overview of Programme (max 150 words)	Equitable Earth (formerly ERS) certifies ecosystem restoration and conservation projects on the carbon markets. Our standard is designed to empower efforts that combat climate change, uplift biodiversity, and improve livelihoods. Through rigorous assessments and the use of innovative technologies, Equitable Earth ensures projects meet the highest standards of the market. We prioritise community involvement and traditional knowledge, fostering sustainable practices that deliver measurable impacts. Our approach not only targets carbon sequestration but also promotes resilience in ecosystems and supports socioeconomic development.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Independence

1.1 Conflicts of Interest

1.1.1 ***Provide evidence of the procedure in place to identify and mitigate conflicts of interest (COI) between staff, board members, contractors, and the projects developed under the Programme.**

(1) In line with Equitable Earth's foundational [Code of Ethics and Business Conduct](#), a comprehensive set of procedures is in place to identify and mitigate conflicts of interest (COI) between staff, board members, contractors, and projects. The [Code of Ethics and Business Conduct](#) requires individuals to disclose any COI and to recuse themselves from decision-making processes where their interests might affect the outcome. To enforce this Code, Equitable Earth has set forth the [Anti-Fraud Policy](#), encompassing COI management, anticorruption, and Anti-money Laundering and Counter-terrorism Financing (AML/CTF). It is structured around a 'three lines of defence' model:

- **Prevention.** It includes continuous training on COI, [Declarations of Interest](#), and the assessment of third parties.
- **Detection:** This line includes a [Grievance Mechanism](#) and accounting controls to identify any signs of fraudulent activities promptly.
- **Remediation:** In case of detected fraud, the [Anti-Fraud Policy](#) outlines the steps for implementing corrective measures and disciplinary sanctions.

(2) More specifically, the Anti-Fraud Policy encompasses the following key process:

- The [Declaration of Interest](#) mandates that all Equitable Earth agents and third parties disclose all potential COI. This comprehensive disclosure covers material transactions, family relationships, or any type of affiliation that could lead to a COI, ensuring transparency and accountability from the outset of any engagement with Equitable Earth. This document must be updated by Equitable Earth agents and third parties every four years. Additionally, third parties must update Equitable Earth on any changes to their situation that may influence an individual's relationship with Equitable Earth and its activities.
 - Technical Advisory Board (TAB) members are also bound to avoid significant COI and must sign the Declaration of Interest. In case of a conflict, they must disclose it and, if necessary, recuse themselves from related decision-making processes.
 - [Due Diligence Reports](#) are employed to manage potential or existing COI proactively. They include verifying the accuracy of information from third parties, ensuring their competence, legal compliance, and alignment with Equitable Earth values. The Equitable Earth investigator must cross-check data provided by third parties through WorldCheck and other registries, perform discrepancy checks, risk alert level assessments, and a summary of findings. Reports with a global alert level of 3 or higher are reviewed by the Secretariat and may lead to reevaluating business relationships with entities known for malpractice.
- (3) Additionally, Equitable Earth maintains the integrity and independence of its certification activities by **separating operational and commercial functions**. As such, it is prohibited for the External Relations team to:
- influence the certification process at any stage;
 - participate in meetings regarding ongoing certification processes;
 - directly sell issued carbon credits (Restoration Units under the Equitable Earth Programme).
- Likewise, Certification team members are not allowed to:
- provide the External Relations team with strategic information on a specific project. The External Relations team can only access a project's documentation once it is publicly disclosed on the Equitable Earth Registry;
 - participate in any online or in-person event involving a potential developer or buyer outside the scope of their work. Certification team members cannot engage with current or potential developers or buyers outside of their work on Equitable Earth's certification activities.
- (4) Regular training and assessments on AML/CTF, Equitable Earth's [Anti-Fraud Policy](#) and [Code of Ethics and Business Conduct](#) are conducted to ensure that all agents understand and can rigorously apply these policies. Such training is a preventative measure to manage and mitigate risks associated with COI.

Overall, such policies collectively provide a robust framework to safeguard against COI, thereby fostering an environment of integrity and accountability within the Equitable Earth Programme.

1.1.2 *Provide evidence of the COI declaration for all staff, board members and contractors to sign, and provide evidence that the COI declaration has been signed by the relevant parties.

Equitable Earth has instituted a [Declaration of Interest](#) process as part of its commitment to uphold transparency and manage COI across the organisation. This process requires all staff, board members, and contractors to complete and sign a [Declaration of Interest](#) form to identify any actual or potential conflicts that may arise due to personal or financial interests.

~~ERS is currently implementing this policy. At the date of application, all ERS Agents have completed and signed their Declaration of Interest. Furthermore, ERS requires its Third Parties and board members to complete it by December 31, 2023.~~

~~As of the latest update of this application, all board members and Equitable Earth agents have completed and signed their Declaration of Interest. A folder containing all these signed Declarations of Interest can be found **here** [link removed for privacy purposes].~~

The completed forms are securely stored as part of our comprehensive record-keeping policy. These records serve as evidence that each individual associated with Equitable Earth has acknowledged and committed to the procedures outlined in the [Code of Ethics and Business Conduct](#). To ensure the accuracy and currency of this documentation, the signed Declarations are reviewed and updated every four years or in response to any significant change in an individual's circumstances that could affect their relationship with Equitable Earth and its operations.

August 2025 Update

In 2024, the [Code of Ethics and Business Conduct](#) was updated to explicitly reference "Equitable Earth Agents, board members, management, contractors, and Third Parties" as entities responsible for disclosing potential and real conflicts of interest. The revised document aligns with Equitable Earth's separate [Anti-Fraud Policy](#).

Additionally, the answer above has been updated with confirmation that all Equitable Earth board members and agents have signed the Declaration of Interest (DOI) and to clarify the rationale for not requiring DOI signatures from third-party (e.g., business partner, service provider, vendor) entities. After careful consideration, Equitable Earth determined that requiring third parties to sign the Declaration was not pertinent due to the nature of our business relationships with them. Instead, we ensure transparency and integrity through our contractual agreements.

1.1.3 *Provide evidence that the Programme does not have conflict of interest with validation and verification bodies (VVBs) and project developers.

Describe how, and at what frequency, the Programme checks to ensure no COIs are present.

Equitable Earth has implemented stringent measures to prevent and address conflicts of interest (COI) with Validation and Verification Bodies (VVBs) and developers.

(1) Before contracting, VVBs and developers have to go through a screening process that aims to prevent and detect COI:

- **Declaration of Interest**: In line with Equitable Earth's Code of Ethics and Business Conduct and Anti-Fraud Policy, VVBs and developers must disclose all actual and potential conflicts of interest by filling out the Declaration of Interest template, which allows Equitable Earth to detect potential COI at an early stage.
- **Due Diligence Report**: An Equitable Earth Agent investigates and crosschecks the Declaration of Interest along with the rest of the provided data to ensure the accuracy of this information, confirming VVBs' and developers' competency, legal compliance, and alignment with Equitable Earth' requirements regarding COI.

These two documents are updated every four years or earlier if suspicions of wrongdoing arise. All stakeholders are free to use the **Grievance Mechanism** to report issues related to non-compliance with any requirement of the Standard and its affiliated documents, including COI provisions.

(2) Once a contract is signed, Equitable Earth also has various quality checks to ensure the performance of VVBs and avoid any COI. As such, VVBs:

- Must have a publicly available impartiality policy.
- Cannot audit the same project more than two consecutive times.
- Are immediately investigated if suspicions of COI arise, and the findings are addressed according to the VVBs' sanctions detailed in the Validation and Verification Procedure.
- Are paid by Equitable Earth on behalf of the developers. Equitable Earth then rebills these fees to the developers on an at-cost basis.
- Are evaluated by the Secretariat after their first audit, and regularly after that through performance evaluations.

(3) Any claims and suspicions of COI are immediately investigated and addressed through corrective measures, including, but not limited to:

- **Suspension or termination of the business relationship**: If violations of Equitable Earth's Anti-Fraud rules are discovered, Equitable Earth reserves the right to take immediate action such as suspending or terminating the business relationship with the VVB or developer.

- **Disciplinary sanctions.** Individuals violating Equitable Earth's policies or legal obligations may face disciplinary action, as outlined in the [Code of Ethics and Business Conduct](#).
- **Corrective action plan.** If Equitable Earth decides to pursue the business relationship with the VVB or developer, a detailed corrective action plan outlining the actions to address the issue must be developed and implemented. The timeline for implementation will depend on the severity of the non-compliance.
- **Third Party notification.** If a violation is discovered, Equitable Earth should undertake to inform other potentially affected third parties of the issue and the steps taken to resolve it, preserving the integrity and trustworthiness of Equitable Earth business relationships.
- **Policy reviews.** All incidents, non-compliances and grievances will be analysed to determine if systemic issues require adjustments to Equitable Earth's policies or procedures.

1.1.4 ***Describe how carbon credits from the Programme go to market and the stakeholders involved.**

Describe the Programme's revenue structure and confirm the Programme is not exposed to the sale price of a carbon credit.

Equitable Earth certifies ecosystem restoration projects and issues ~~two different types of units, referred to by Equitable Earth as Restoration Units (RUs): Projected Restoration Units (PRUs) and Verified Restoration Units (VRUs) to verified projects. Only VRUs are comparable to~~ carbon credits, representing the independently verified removal of one tCO₂e (one metric tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent) from the atmosphere. A summary of the process defining how carbon credits go to market is detailed below. Refer to ~~Sections 2 and 4 the Certification Procedures and Units & Issuance sections~~ of the [Equitable Earth Programme Manual](#) for more details.

(1) Project Feasibility Review.

- **Developer Feasibility.** Equitable Earth performs the developer's due diligence to determine its capacity to execute the proposed project, its compliance with jurisdictional legal requirements, and its financial, legal and moral good standing. Developers must submit the requested documentation to the Certification team.
- **Project Feasibility.** A Feasibility Study report must be submitted per Project. The information disclosed allows Equitable Earth to evaluate if the Project qualifies for certification under the Equitable Earth Standard. The report includes the following content:
 - The shapefile of the project area and a preliminary zonation
 - The shapefile of the reference site
 - Land tenure and compliance with jurisdictional legislation

- Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) process conformance
- The Project's stakeholders mapped in the Livelihood Matrix
- Equitable Earth's carbon assessment of the project area, including:
 - Biome information retrieval and matching test between the reference site and the project area.
 - Assessment of land cover change in the project area in the last ten years, and the evolution of the degradation.
 - First GHG emission removal estimation, using satellite-based remote sensing to determine a baseline scenario before intervention.
 - Screen registries from leading carbon crediting programs to verify no double registration and double issuance of the same activity.
- If all information is cleared, the project is qualified to advance to the assessment phase of the certification.

(2) **Project Design Review.** The developer must complete all necessary assessments, data collection and documentation at this stage. Refer to the [Section 2 Certification Procedure](#) of the [Equitable Earth Programme Manual](#) for more details. Equitable Earth then undertakes a screening process to assess the completeness, clarity and veracity of the information provided by the Developer. If discrepancies are found, Corrective Action Requests (CARs) or Clarification Requests (CRs) are communicated to the Developer, which must be addressed directly in the PDD. The preliminary PDD is completed once all issues are cleared of CARs or CRs. The Risk Assessment is then performed by Equitable Earth; details about the Risk Assessment are given in questions 5.3.1 and 6.2.

(3) **Public Comment.** The Project must undergo a thirty-calendar-day project public comment. Equitable Earth must publish a dedicated survey for public comments on its website, collect all comments within fifteen working days following the end date and share the project public comment digest with the developer. The project public comment period is considered closed once all feedback, CARs and CRs are addressed by the developer. A final project public comment digest report is added as an appendix to the PDD [and made publicly available on the Equitable Earth Registry](#).

(4) **Validation.** The project must undergo an independent Validation audit involving an Equitable Earth-approved VVB. ~~Successful Validation leads to the issuance of Projected Restoration Units (PRUs).~~ More details about validation and verification audits can be found in section 4 of this document.

(5) **Issuance and Transactions.**

~~● Projected Restoration Units (PRUs):~~

- ~~○ PRUs represent future sequestration and should not be considered carbon credits. While they may resemble ex-ante credits in some~~

~~aspects, they cannot be classified as ex-ante carbon credits due to the inability to retire them.~~

- ~~○ ERS issues PRUs at Project start, after a successful Validation. The amount of PRUs is based on the calculations performed by Equitable Earth following the Quantification Methodology for Terrestrial Forest Restoration. Each PRU represents a tCO₂e expected to be sequestered during the Project's crediting period.~~
- ~~○ All PRUs are allocated by the Secretariat to the Developer account, within the ERS Registry. Developers can then proceed to sell them to Buyers on the market. From a Developer's perspective, PRUs are a tangible asset to secure upfront funding for their Project. From a Buyer's perspective, PRUs are utilised as a tangible asset to ensure the ownership of carbon credits (VRUs) in the future.~~
- Verified Restoration Units (VRUs):
 - VRUs represent a verified sequestration of one tCO₂e from the atmosphere. They are categorised into vintages according to the year when the sequestration occurred. VRUs are ~~considered~~ carbon credits and can be retired.
 - Equitable Earth ~~converts PRUs into~~ issues VRUs after a successful verification, based on the net GHG benefit achieved during a verification period ~~cycle~~. Specific calculations are determined in the applied methodology (e.g., M001, the Methodology for Terrestrial Forest Restoration) ~~Quantification Methodology for Terrestrial Forest Restoration~~. ~~PRUs convert sequentially, with each PRU having a unique serial number determining its conversion order.~~
 - VRUs will be allocated to the developer ~~the corresponding PRUs owner~~. ~~It can be the Developer, if no transaction has been made, or a Buyer if the Developer has sold the corresponding PRUs.~~
 - Whenever a transaction is made between the developer and a buyer, the Developer has to change the "Owner" property on the Equitable Earth Registry. More details regarding registry procedures can be found in the [Registry Procedures](#) document.

Describe the Programme's revenue structure and confirm the Programme is not exposed to the sale price of a carbon credit (2/2).

The Equitable Earth Programme's revenue structure is designed to maintain its independence as a standard body. Equitable Earth does not charge fees based on the volume or price of Restoration Units to avoid creating perverse incentives. Instead, Equitable Earth charges a fixed price for its Project Design Review services and a price per hectare for its Measurement, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) services. This ensures that Equitable Earth's revenues do not depend on the generation of Restoration Units, eliminating any incentive to overestimate the number of generated units. Equitable Earth fees are detailed ~~on the Equitable Earth website~~ [here](#) in Appendix 1.

Equitable Earth's product and service prices are determined based on various factors, including costs related to data providers, internal certification, VVBs, and the competitive landscape. The fee structure can be changed at Equitable Earth's discretion, considering the overall cost structure and business needs. Prices may be adjusted periodically to reflect inflation, based on globally recognised inflation indices, with an annual review of inflation rates and adjustments applied accordingly.

August 2025 Update

With the release of v1.2 of the Equitable Earth Standard and Programme Manual, Equitable Earth removed the option for projects to issue Projected Restoration Units (PRUs) (i.e., ex ante credits) as a response to industry feedback following a public consultation in early 2025. All associated PRU conversion requirements and procedures have been removed.

Projects registered under v1.0 and v1.1 of the Equitable Earth Programme may continue to convert PRUs to VRUs.

1.2 Project Development

1.2.1 ***Describe the Programme's role in the development of carbon credit projects, if any. Confirm the Programme owner / operating entity does not act in the capacity of a project developer.**

- (1) Equitable Earth is never involved in the development and implementation of project activities. Equitable Earth reviews and certifies project proposals, and measures impacts on Carbon, Ecological Recovery and Livelihoods over the entire crediting period.
- (2) Developers are responsible for designing projects that conform with Equitable Earth requirements and methodologies. Equitable Earth supports developers by providing templates, tools, and a streamlined certification process but does not directly involve itself in the production of **project design** documentation. Nevertheless, to guarantee conservative calculations and minimise the risk of negative incentives, Equitable Earth is responsible for performing calculations related to quantifying GHG emission removals from terrestrial forest restoration activities, in line with the [Methodology for Terrestrial Forest Restoration](#).
- (3) Developers are responsible for securing project funding, which may come from self-financing, credit purchase agreements with buyers, or other sources such as grants. The funding information must be disclosed and demonstrated in the project's budget and communicated to Equitable Earth.
- (4) Equitable Earth is responsible for **assessing** ~~verifying~~ information reported by the developer in **project design documents**, annual reports and four-year updates, for mandating VVBs, for issuing and converting Restoration Units and for communicating project information via the Equitable Earth Registry.
- (5) **VVBs are responsible for the validation and verification of Equitable Earth projects, which includes assessing all documentation prepared and provided by the developer**

as well as the carbon reports and GHG removal estimates and calculations provided by Equitable Earth.

Through its rigorous processes, the Programme confirms that it does not act in the capacity of a developer, maintaining a clear distinction between regulatory oversight and project development.

August 2025 Update

A paragraph has been added in Section 1.2.1 above to clarify the role of VVBs in the development and certification of projects.

1.3 Marketplaces

1.3.1 ***Describe the Programme's role in the sale of carbon credits, if any. Confirm the Programme does not pursue buyers, act in a brokering capacity, or actively market carbon credits.**

Equitable Earth certifies ecosystem restoration and conservation projects on carbon markets. Equitable Earth does not engage in activities that involve pursuing buyers, acting in a brokering capacity, or actively marketing carbon credits.

- (1) Equitable Earth does not provide investment advice regarding specific Projects and is not directly involved in selling carbon credits.
- (2) The External Relations team promotes the Standard and creates market awareness about Equitable Earth. More specifically, the External Relations team is involved in:
 - **Sourcing activities**, which consist of developing partnerships and liaising with stakeholders to identify and source suitable projects. The team may proactively contact developers to invite them to submit a project. All developers who intend to or have submitted a project can regularly communicate with the Equitable Earth External Relations team to ask questions and receive updated information about their project's position on the waitlist. These projects are then transferred to the Certification team for selection and assessment.
 - **Corporate partnerships** to streamline direct cooperation and information sharing between developers and buyers. A secondary objective is to signal demand to developers by pooling the investment intentions of buyer members. Overall, the External Relations team aims to cultivate a community of stakeholders that uphold best practices, transparency, and accountability in the voluntary carbon markets.

1.3.2 ***If the Programme has a marketplace, describe how the marketplace functions. Provide evidence that the Programme does not set the price of carbon credits that are sold on its marketplace.**

Equitable Earth does not have a marketplace. However, all ~~Restoration Units, both Projected Restoration Units (PRUs) and~~ Verified Restoration Units (VRUs) can be traded via selling

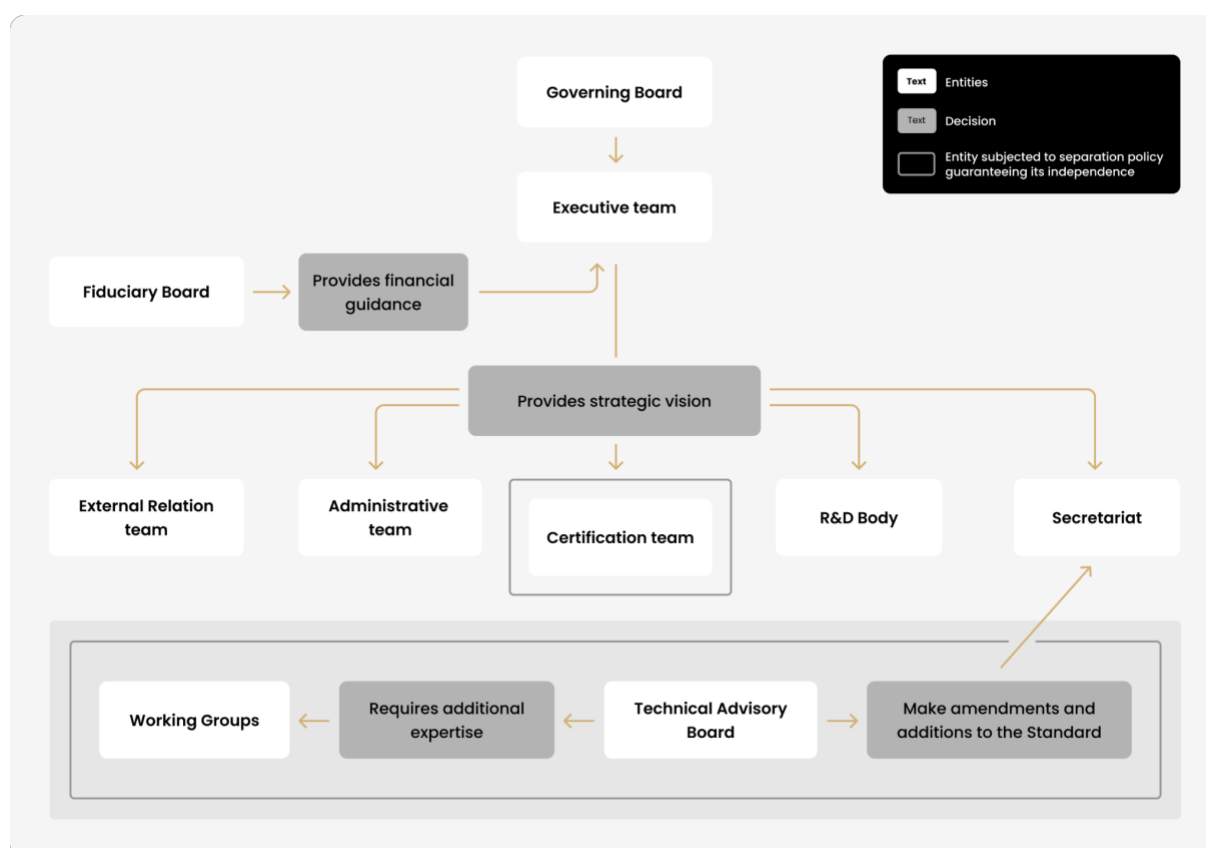
operations, which are recorded on the [Equitable Earth Registry](#). The Equitable Earth Registry records the change in ownership but does not support the selling operation.

- The [Equitable Earth Registry](#) only operates as a neutral platform to record transactions between buyers and sellers, maintaining the independence and objectivity of the trading process.
- The price of restoration units is negotiated via bilateral agreements between developers and buyers. Equitable Earth takes no part in such agreements and therefore does not set the price of carbon credits.

2. Governance

2.1 Effective Governance

- 2.1.1 *Share the Programme's publicly available organisation chart that shows the governance structure, including the makeup of the governing body or equivalent authority. Describe the responsibilities of the governing body or equivalent authority.**



The Equitable Earth Programme's governance structure is outlined in the [Equitable Earth Governance](#) document. It specifies the composition and responsibilities of the Executive team and other entities.

- (1) This Executive team (also referred to as the “Leadership team”) is charged with setting the overall direction and strategy of the organisation, managing day-to-day operations, and making critical decisions that affect Equitable Earth's goals and success. The name

and credentials of all Executive team members are publicly disclosed on Equitable Earth's website at this [weblink](#). It comprises the following positions:

- **Chief Executive Officer (CEO):** As the head of Equitable Earth, the CEO is tasked with overall strategic planning, decision-making, and management, setting the vision and communicating it to Equitable Earth Agents, stakeholders, and investors.
 - **Chief Operations Officer (COO):** The COO is responsible for overseeing all operations across the organisation, driving strategic initiatives, and ensuring sustainable financial management. Members of the Executive Team report to the COO.
 - **Director of Secretariat:** Leads the Secretariat's core functions, which encompass gathering feedback from Equitable Earth entities and stakeholders, drafting standard documents, managing logistics and agenda of TAB meetings, upholding transparency and integrity policies, managing anti-fraud policies, and maintaining records. This role also oversees the issuance of Restoration Units and the supervision of Equitable Earth's network of VVBs. Equitable Earth is actively searching for a professional with a substantial background to take over this position. The Managing Director is acting as interim Director of the Secretariat until the position is filled.
 - **Director of Certification:** Manages the Certification team and is responsible for the selection, feasibility, assessment, and ongoing monitoring of Projects.
 - **Chief of Staff:** Leads the Administrative team, managing Equitable Earth's finances, including budgeting, financial planning, and accounting, and is responsible for human resources and communications.
 - **Director of Product:** Defines the product strategy and is responsible for designing tools and workflows to digitise and enhance all certification steps and MRV.
 - **Director of Engineering:** Manages the Research & Development team (R&D), overseeing the development and implementation of scientific models into technological solutions and ensuring that Equitable Earth's models, tools, and workflows include the latest scientific developments.
 - **Director of External Relations:** Manages outreach, communications, sourcing, and relationship management with all external stakeholders, including developers, buyers, the press, and other market participants.
- (2) The Equitable Earth ecosystem includes ~~three~~ **two** other entities statutorily separated from Equitable Earth to guarantee their independence and prevent COI: **the Governing Board**, the Technical Advisory Board, and the Fiduciary Board.
- The Governing Board (also known as the “Comité Stratégique” or “Strategic Committee”) is Equitable Earth’s highest governing body and is made up of **three** members and two observers. The Governing Board assumes fiduciary responsibility for Equitable Earth and exercises binding decision-making authority over the organization’s governance, financial, operational, and

strategic matters. The Board members' names, organisations and roles are available on Equitable Earth's website at this [weblink](#).

- The Technical Advisory Board (TAB) comprises up to ten independent experts appointed for a maximum of three consecutive two-year mandates. The TAB is responsible for providing scientific and technical expertise to Equitable Earth. Their names and qualifications are available on Equitable Earth's website at this [weblink](#).
- The Fiduciary Board is an independent advisory body safeguarding company assets and Stakeholders' interests. Its role is to provide financial oversight, ensuring financial alignment with the company's mission and long-term viability. It consists of up to four independent members with financial expertise. Their names and qualifications are available on Equitable Earth's website at this [weblink](#).

August 2025 Update

Section 2.1.1 above was revised to include information, including a revised organisational chart, about the Equitable Earth Governing Board. The Governing Board (also known as the "Comité Stratégique" or "Strategic Committee") is Equitable Earth's highest governing body. The section now includes information about two additional positions now filled on the Executive Team: the Chief Operations Officer (COO) and Director of External Relations.

2.1.2 *Provide evidence of the publicly available description of how appointments are made to leadership positions, committees, and groups, including (if applicable) how decisions are taken following any relevant government procedures or regulations.

The Equitable Earth Programme's appointment process to leadership, committees, and groups is governed by its [Hiring Policy](#) and the [Equitable Earth Governance](#) document.

(1) Equitable Earth Agents

- Appointments are made through a public vacancy advertisement detailing the required qualifications and skills. Candidates are evaluated on merit and experience with an emphasis on diversity and inclusion.
- Human Resources coordinates with hiring managers and stakeholders to align on a recruitment strategy before posting job openings. Job postings are made on various channels to ensure a wide reach, and internal candidates are equally encouraged to apply.
- A structured interview process assesses candidates' skills, professional background, and alignment with Equitable Earth's values and mission. This includes comprehensive interviews and potential practical assignments. Reference checks are systematically conducted for shortlisted candidates, with respect to data privacy.

- Once candidates are selected, they are personally informed via telephone and issued a formal job offer. This offer includes details on compensation, benefits, and terms of employment, followed by a streamlined onboarding process upon acceptance.
- (2) Equitable Earth also has clear appointment processes for TAB members and Working Groups members within the TAB, which are outlined in the Technical Advisory Board document, [as well as for Fiduciary Board and Governing Board members](#):

- **TAB members.**
 - **First appointment:** When setting up the TAB for the first time, the Executive team initiates the appointment process, mandating the Secretariat to assemble the board. The Secretariat sources and interviews potential candidates, keeping in mind that the number of candidates should be twice the number of seats and that TAB members must represent a variety of technical expertise, including remote sensing, livelihoods, ecological restoration and carbon markets. A shortlist of potential candidates is established and submitted to the Executive team, which makes the final appointment decision.
 - **Regular Appointment Process:** When the mandate of a TAB member ends, or if a TAB member is excluded from the TAB, the regular appointment process applies. It is similar to the first appointment process but includes a public call for applications for at least thirty days.
 - **TAB Working Group members:** The appointment criteria for Working Groups are the same as for TAB members. TAB members cannot be part of a Working Group.
- **Fiduciary Board:** Members of the Fiduciary Board are appointed upon the recommendation of the company's CEO, by an ordinary collective resolution of the Associates (i.e., [shareholders](#)).
- **Governing Board:** Members of the Governing Board are appointed through a collective decision of the Associates (i.e., [shareholders](#)), with an indefinite term [unless otherwise specified](#).

These procedures demonstrate Equitable Earth's commitment to a fair, transparent and systematic process for appointments within the organisation. [See Section 2.1.4 for more information about decision-making.](#)

August 2025 Update

Minor revisions were made to Section 2.1.2 to clarify the role of the Governing Board and the appointment process for Governing Board members.

The Governing Board is governed by robust bylaws set out in Section 15.3 of the company's statutes (i.e., "bylaws" or "articles of association"). Equitable Earth has provided copies of the company's statutes and meeting minutes from Board meetings as supporting evidence alongside this application form.

2.1.3 *Confirm the Programme complies with all laws and regulations related to the business in the jurisdiction in which it is registered as a business. Provide evidence, as available.

Equitable Earth is registered and operates under French law. The company does not hold any subsidiaries in countries where it certifies Projects.

- (1) The Programme ensures compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements in its jurisdiction through several measures and practices outlined in the [Code of Ethics and Business Conduct](#) and the [Anti-Fraud Policy](#). As such, Equitable Earth endeavours to comply with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations, including local environmental, employment, safety, and anti-corruption norms.
- (2) Equitable Earth respects all applicable labour laws and regulations. Equitable Earth Agents are protected under French law and, by application of the following requirements:
 - Work Hours and Overtime: The legal limit is 35 hours per week for full-time Agents, with provisions for overtime pay.
 - Minimum Wage: Employees are paid at least the national minimum wage.
 - Health and Safety: Equitable Earth ensures a safe working environment, adhering to health and safety regulations.
 - Equal Treatment: Equitable Earth Agents are provided with equal treatment, prohibiting discrimination based on race, gender, religion, etc.
 - Employment Contracts: Equitable Earth issues proper employment contracts, whether fixed-term or permanent, detailing terms and conditions of employment.
 - Holidays and Leave: Equitable Earth grants paid holidays, maternity leave, paternity leave, and other types of leave as per legal requirements.
 - Social Security Contributions: Make mandatory social security contributions, covering healthcare, unemployment, retirement, etc.
 - Sectoral Collective Agreements: Equitable Earth adheres to the applicable sectoral collective agreements, which may set rules on wages, working hours, and other working conditions.
 - Dismissal Rules: Equitable Earth follows strict procedures for employee termination, including justified grounds for dismissal and adherence to notice periods.
 - Data Protection: Comply with data protection laws regarding employee personal information.
- (3) ERS' Anti-Fraud Policy mandates compliance with various local, national, and international regulations, the most relevant being related to anti-corruption, conflicts of interest, anti-money laundering (AML), and counter-terrorism financing (CTF). This also

includes all customs regulations, trade embargoes, and economic sanctions. Non-compliance by an Equitable Earth Agent or a third party may lead to the immediate termination of contracts and potential legal actions.

These rules are enforced through the Anti-Fraud Policy, which stipulates:

- **Equitable Earth Agents Training:** The Administrative team oversees the financial operations and ensures compliance with legal and regulatory requirements by implementing regular training for Equitable Earth agents on anti-corruption, COI, and AML/CTF.
- **Third Party Assessment:** Before entering a contractual relationship with Equitable Earth, auditors, buyers, and developers have to go through a Due Diligence process, and other third parties have to go through a streamlined Third Party Screening. This ensures the full compliance of Equitable Earth's third parties with local and international laws and regulations. Using reliable databases like WorldCheck, Due Diligence Reports allow Equitable Earth to confirm the accuracy of information provided by third parties. This includes cross-checking for discrepancies and assessing risk levels. If the global alert level is medium or higher, the report is submitted to the Secretariat for further review.
- **Internal Controls:** The Administrative team conducts yearly randomised internal audits focusing on high-risk areas, complemented by the Secretariat's initiative to act on suspicions or concerns raised via the Grievance Mechanism. These controls include regular operational reviews, compliance checks, and real-time transaction monitoring, ensuring alignment with Equitable Earth objectives and compliance with laws and regulations.
- **Policy Review and Reporting:** In cases of non-compliance, Equitable Earth informs other potentially affected third parties of any violations and the steps to resolve them. Incidents, non-compliances, and grievances are analysed to determine if adjustments to Equitable Earth policies or procedures are necessary. All corrective measures and outcomes are documented and included in Equitable Earth's Annual Reports and Strategy Plans for transparency.

(4) From a financial standpoint, Equitable Earth has the following dispositions in place to comply with French law:

- Equitable Earth monitors all its financial transactions in real time, with any irregularities capable of triggering an immediate investigation.
- Monthly budget analysis meetings are held with Equitable Earth's subcontracting accountant to ensure financial records are reconciled with bank statements and that there's a proper comparison between budgeted and actual expenses.
- Before finalisation, all contracts must be scrutinised by the Administrative team with the support of Equitable Earth's legal advisors.

(5) For data privacy obligations, Equitable Earth ensures the privacy of its stakeholders through its [Privacy Policy](#), which outlines how personal data is collected, processed, and protected in compliance with the GDPR. The main dispositions to safeguard against breaches are:

- Access to personal data is restricted to Equitable Earth agents, data processors, and when required, public and private organisations.
- Secure data transfer within and outside the EU, adhering to GDPR safeguards.
- Individuals have rights regarding their data, including access, rectification, erasure, and objection to processing ensured by communication channels that are made available to all Equitable Earth Stakeholders.
- Equitable Earth makes itself available to address queries about data privacy which must be addressed to Equitable Earth at the Paris office or via email at the following address: info@eq-earth.com.

2.1.4 *Describe how the Programme transparently makes decisions. Provide evidence of decision-making provisions in the bylaws or Terms of Reference of specific decision-making forums.

(1) The [Equitable Earth Governance](#) document commits to high governance standards. It details the roles and responsibilities of each entity within Equitable Earth, including the Executive Team, Secretariat, Certification Team, R&D Team, External Relations Team and Administrative Team, ensuring that each entity within Equitable Earth operates with a clear mandate and accountability. Refer to the answer in 2.1.1 for more details.

(2) Additionally, some decision-making forums are statutorily independent of Equitable Earth and are the subject of specific policies to guarantee their independence: [the Governing Board](#), the Fiduciary Board and the Technical Advisory Board.

- The [Governing Board](#) is governed by robust bylaws set out in Section 15.3 of the company's Statutes (i.e., "bylaws" or "articles of association"), which can be provided as supporting evidence upon request. Equitable Earth manages the Governing Board's independence through enforcement of its conflict of interest policies and procedures. All Governing Board members are required to disclose any real and potential conflicts by signing the Declaration of Interest form.
- The [Fiduciary Board](#) document outlines the structure and function of the Fiduciary Board, which serves as an independent advisory body for Equitable Earth. The document also details the Board's meeting protocols and decision-making procedures, ensuring open governance. The criteria for member selection, terms of service, and conflict-of-interest policies underscore the Board's role in upholding transparency within Equitable Earth's decision-making processes.
- The [Technical Advisory Board](#) (TAB) document clearly describes the role and functioning of the Technical Advisory Board, which is responsible for all modifications of the Standard. It outlines the TAB's authority over the Standard

Revision Procedure and its independence from Equitable Earth, ensuring that decisions are made with scientific and technical integrity. As such, TAB members gather during monthly regular decision-making meetings and may request ad-hoc meetings to discuss additional topics. Furthermore, the Terms of Reference for TAB members detail the precise scope and working modalities for the participation of each member in the TAB.

(3) Finally, the [Standard Setting and Methodology Development Procedure](#) sets forth the precise process by which the Programme and its methodologies are amended. To keep a record of these decisions, the Secretariat ensures that all versions of the Standard documents are securely stored and publicly disclosed, as well as every version of each Standard Setting and Methodology Development Procedure document, including:

- Methodology Development/Revision Mandate or Standard Development/Revision Mandate;
- Methodology Development/Revision Mandate or Standard Development/Revision Proposition;
- Call for Public Comment Period;
- Public Comment Digest;
- Final Revision Proposition.

Each document contributes to a comprehensive understanding of how Equitable Earth ensures transparency in its decision-making processes, from governance structure to specific decision-making forums.

August 2025 Update

Section 2.1.4 above was revised to include the Governing Board and its decision-making provisions.

As mentioned, the Governing Board and its decision-making processes are governed by robust bylaws set out in Section 15.3 of the company's statutes (i.e., "bylaws" or "articles of association"). Equitable Earth has provided copies of the company's statutes and meeting minutes from Board meetings as supporting evidence alongside this application form.

Equitable Earth manages the Governing Board's independence through enforcement of its conflict of interest policies and procedures set out in the following documents:

- [Programme Manual, v1.2](#), Section 7
- [Code of Ethics and Business Conduct](#), Section 'Ethics & Best Practices', pp. 16-17
- [Anti-Fraud Policy](#)

2.1.5 *Provide evidence of publicly available procedures and quality control mechanisms to enforce procedures. Describe how these procedures were developed and which standards they are based upon (i.e., ISO 9001, 31000).

- (1) The Equitable Earth [Quality Management System](#) (QMS) document outlines the procedures and quality control mechanisms Equitable Earth has developed following ISO 9001 guidelines. It reflects Equitable Earth's commitment to continuous improvement, performance tracking, stakeholder feedback integration, and adaptation to market regulations. The QMS is central to enhancing the Equitable Earth methodologies and tools.
- (2) The Executive Team is committed to refining this system and achieving the ISO-9001 certification within the next four years. The Chief of Staff is responsible for maintaining the QMS, and each quality objective is assigned to a member of the Executive team who reports on their performance annually. Equitable Earth's quality management system is audited annually by a Third Party.
- (3) Quality management performance is published in the Equitable Earth's Annual report, which is publicly disclosed on the Equitable Earth website and informs the Equitable Earth Administration Plan. This process ensures that Equitable Earth's commitment to quality is transparent and publicly documented.
- (4) All Equitable Earth Agents and stakeholders must receive training on the QMS, emphasising its benefits and their role in its effectiveness. This training is regularly updated to stay current with changes in the QMS, ensuring all stakeholders are informed and proficient in Equitable Earth's quality management practices.

August 2025 Update

Since our last update, Equitable Earth has published the Annual Reports for 2023 and 2024, which are available for review. The reports can be accessed via the following [weblink](#).

2.2 Transparency and Publicly Available Information

2.2.1 *Provide evidence that the following information is publicly available on the Programme's website and/or in standalone, version-controlled documents:

- ***Operating procedures that include, at minimum, how Programme rules are drafted and revised and how committees are formed, as well as how these are approved by the board (1/3).**

The Standard Setting and Methodology Development Procedure applies to the drafting and revising of both Programme and Methodology documents.

- (1) Operating procedures are detailed in the [Programme Manual](#). It affirms that pivotal documents relevant to Equitable Earth's operational and governance frameworks are openly accessible on its official website and through its version-controlled registry. These publicly disclosed documents include:
 - [Technical Advisory Board](#): It specifies the working modalities and appointment criteria for TAB Members, including the creation of Working

Groups. The names and credentials of TAB and Working Group members are publicly disclosed on [Equitable Earth's website](#).

- **Standard Setting and Methodology Development Procedure**: It specifies the protocol for all Standard Revisions.

(2) Operating procedures can only be modified using the **Standard Setting and Methodology Development Procedure**, during which the TAB oversees and approves all modifications, amendments and updates to the Standard. The procedure can be decomposed into four phases:

- **Development Phase**: The TAB mandates the Secretariat to draft a Standard Development/Revision Proposition or suggest modifications via a Standard Development/Revision Mandate;
- **Review Phase**: The drafted proposition is reviewed by the TAB. They either accept it, reject it or request for further revisions;
- **(Optional) Public Consultation**: a Standard public consultation may be required;
 - If a Standard public consultation is required to account for stakeholders' and market needs, the Equitable Earth Secretariat must organise and launch a Standard Public Comment Period for at least 30 calendar days. It must then publish a public response as a Public Comment Digest, explaining how the feedback is integrated into the Final Revision Proposition.
- **Approval Phase**: The TAB either accepts and implements the Final Standard Revision or returns it for revision if not accepted.

All the Standard documentation is reviewed at least every two years or periodically, as requested by the TAB. All the aforementioned documents are publicly disclosed and available on [Equitable Earth's website](#).

- ***Methodology development procedures that include, at minimum, requirements for expert involvement and public consultation, and a description of the frequency at which methodologies are updated (2/3).**

(1) It must be noted that the **Standard Setting and Methodology Development Procedure** applies to the drafting and revising of both Programme and Methodology documents. Similarly to modifications on Equitable Earth Programme procedures, methodology development procedures can only be modified through a Methodology Development/Revision Proposition as described in the **Standard Setting and Methodology Development Procedure**.

(2) The Methodology developed/revised must exhaustively detail the rules, requirements and procedures in all the elements of the Methodology, including but not limited to:

- Eligibility criteria;
- Ecological Recovery Pillar with its Principles and Methods;

- Livelihoods Pillar with its Principles and Methods;
 - Carbon Pillar with its Principles, Methods and its associated Quantification Methods, specifically:
 - Determination of the Project boundary, including selection of relevant GHG sources, sinks and reservoirs.
 - Establishment of a baseline scenario.
 - Demonstration of additionality.
 - Quantification of net GHG removals:
 - Determination of the baseline scenario;
 - Determination of the Project's removals;
 - Determination of Project emissions;
 - Determination of leakage;
 - Uncertainty and associated parameters.
 - Determination of GHG reversal risk and a reversal mitigation plan.
 - Monitoring and Reporting of achieved net GHG removals and Project interventions.
- (3) The overall procedure is completely similar to the Standard Setting Procedure. Please refer to the answer above for more details.
- (4) Existing methodologies are reviewed every two years by the TAB. Should these methodologies lead to overestimating GHG emission reductions or removals, they shall be suspended and withdrawn when a new methodology is drafted.
- ***A grievance and redress mechanism that is accessible to project developers, project stakeholders, and the public, and includes, at minimum, a description of how grievances will be addressed by the Programme (3/3).**
- (1) **Concept.** Equitable Earth has implemented a comprehensive [grievance and redress mechanism](#), managed by the Secretariat and accessible to all stakeholders, including Developers, Project stakeholders, and the general public. This mechanism follows the definitions provided by The World Bank and follows the High Carbon Stock Approach Grievance Mechanism. It allows grievances to be raised against Equitable Earth's activities or one of its certified Projects. Grievances are divided into three categories depending on the nature of the claim:
- **Standard Grievances.** When a grievance is issued against Equitable Earth for not respecting Programme procedures.
 - **Project Grievances.** When a grievance is issued against a developer for not respecting its obligations.

- **Suspicious-Activity Grievances.** When a grievance reports suspected violations of the law or any regulation, regardless of its actor.

(2) Scope.

- Every stakeholder, whether Equitable Earth Agents, VVBs, buyers, developers, or local communities, should utilise this mechanism to report any suspicions or possible wrongdoings. These include mistreatment, community agreement breaches, FPIC process disregard, environmental and social safeguard violations, fraud, corruption, deviation from Project Design Documents, and violations of Equitable Earth's Anti-Fraud Policy, Code of Ethics and Business Conduct, and Rules of Procedure.
- Specifically, developers are requested to implement the Equitable Earth Grievance Mechanism at the project level. The mechanism must be known and accessible to all project stakeholders without language, technology, literacy, or location barriers.

(3) Grievance Issuance.

- Grievances must be backed by evidence that includes a detailed description, the date and time of the incident, and potential consequences.
- The privacy of grievance Issuers is protected under GDPR, ensuring that personal data collected is anonymised and used solely for the stated purpose, with the issuer's identity kept confidential.
- To maintain impartiality, all claims are reviewed by individuals without direct or indirect involvement in the matter. As such, if a grievance is lodged against any of the Secretariat's agents, that agent is excluded from the grievance resolution process. In extreme cases where the entire Secretariat is suspected of wrongdoing, the Administrative team takes over the investigation, potentially with the assistance of an external auditor.
- To file complaints, alerts, or any grievances related to non-conformities, stakeholders may use the following channels, solely dedicated to the Grievance Mechanism:
 - grievance@eq-earth.com
 - Phone line: [+33768862989](tel:+33768862989) (French, English, Spanish, Italian, and German-speaking)
 - WhatsApp: [+33768862989](tel:+33768862989)

The Secretariat is required to acknowledge the receipt of a grievance and to respond within five working days.

(4) Grievance Resolution.

- Secretariat agents are in charge of the entire grievance process, from reception to resolution, and they must investigate thoroughly, with the ability to consult the Administrative team or accredited Third Parties when necessary.

- The official decision on a grievance must be provided within 60 days and include a detailed Grievance Report.
 - If Equitable Earth cannot meet this deadline, they are to inform the Issuer of the reasons for the delay.
 - In urgent situations where immediate threats or disruptions occur, Secretariat agents may act promptly, even before the investigation concludes.
 - If it suspects a violation of the law or regulations, the Secretariat creates a Suspicious Activity Report. This report is reviewed and approved by the Director of the Secretariat and then transmitted to the relevant authorities via secure channels.
- Once a decision is made, concerned parties are notified within one working day, and Issuers have a 30-day period to appeal the decision.

This structured mechanism ensures that grievances are handled with the utmost seriousness, transparency, and adherence to legal requirements, offering a safe channel for stakeholders to raise concerns and seek redress.

(5) Audit.

Equitable Earth Grievance Mechanism is audited annually by a third-party auditor. Equitable Earth must submit to the auditor all grievances of the previous year; if the auditor disagrees with the decision made, the file must be re-evaluated by another Secretariat Associate, and the auditor must validate its new decision.

More details regarding the structure and operation of the grievance mechanism can be found in the Section 4 of the [Programme Manual](#).

August 2025 Update

At the time of submitting this application, Equitable Earth was in the process of acquiring a new phone number as part of the grievance mechanism. The new number will replace the one above, and include identical capabilities (i.e., option to leave voice messages and/or text messages in several languages).

2.2.2 If the Programme references other Standards (i.e., CDM additionality tool, methodologies), describe the process in place to ensure that changes to the referenced Standards are reflected in the Programme's processes.

Not applicable. Equitable Earth develops its own tools and methodologies and does not use CDM tools and methodologies, ~~for example~~.

3. Registry

3.1 Describe the registry provider and relationship to the Programme. Provide evidence the registry is publicly available and available internationally.

- (1) The Equitable Earth Registry, hosted by [APX](#), can be accessed via this [weblink](#). Technical specifications for the registry are accessible in the [Registry Procedures](#). If needed, more details can be directly asked to the APX point of contact, Danielle King (dking@apx.com). Proofs of contract between Equitable Earth and APX can be found at the following links: **Contract documentation** and **Proof of contract** [links removed for privacy purposes].
- (2) The Secretariat administers the Equitable Earth Registry and is authorised to perform the issuance, cancellation, conversion, and transfer of Restoration Units. The Equitable Earth Registry is committed to transparency and accessibility. It maintains a publicly accessible online platform where participants can access documentation and operations regarding carbon credits. It also ensures data privacy and security measures to protect confidential information.
- (3) The registry is available internationally, as it adheres to international data exchange standards.

More details can be found in the [Registry Procedures](#).

3.2 Provide evidence that the registry provides public access to underlying project information including, at minimum, project descriptions, monitoring reports, and validation and verification reports.

The Equitable Earth Registry provides public access to underlying project information. On each Project page, the Equitable Earth Registry publicly discloses key information including:

- **Project Identification:** Includes the unique Project ID, Project Name, Country, and Region where the Project is located.
- **Geographical Information:** Details such as geographic coordinates are provided, with locations displayed on a map for visual reference.
- **Project Description:** A narrative description of the Project, outlining its objectives, scope, and nature.
- **Developer Details:** The name and website of the Developer are directly available on the Equitable Earth Registry, and additional information is available in each PDD.
- **Project Status:** Current status of the Project, which can indicate the following states:
 - Project Feasibility study;
 - Project Design review;
 - Initial funding;

- Validation;
 - Issuance and Transfer
 - Active;
 - Verification;
 - Suspended;
 - Completed;
 - Cancelled;
 - Rejected.
- **Labels:** Any labels or accreditation the Programme has obtained, which allows for the corresponding labelling of credits. For example, if Equitable Earth is ICROA-endorsed, credits could be labelled as “ICROA-compliant”.
 - **Registration and Crediting Period:** Key dates, including when the project was registered and the start and end dates of the crediting period.
 - **Project Size:** The size of the project in hectares.
 - All documentation provided by the Certification team at different phases of the project. For a full list of documentation uploaded on the registry, please refer to the Section 4.10 of the [Registry Procedures](#).
 - Validation and verification reports, uploaded by the Secretariat.
 - The content of the Buffer Pool, including details about the origin of Restoration Units, such as the project type and vintage.

This level of disclosure ensures transparency and provides stakeholders with comprehensive information about the projects registered within the Equitable Earth Registry.

3.3 Provide evidence that the registry individually identifies units through unique serial numbers.

The Equitable Earth Registry ensures that each carbon credit unit is individually identified by employing a unique serialisation methodology. Every unit within the Equitable Earth Registry is assigned a unique serial number that adheres to this specific format:

ERS-[project type]-[project id]-[country code]-[unit type]-[issuance date or vintage]-[batch]-[block start]-[block end].

For example, a serial number may look like this:

ERS-1-123-FR-VRU-2025-1-200-2500.

This format includes the system identifier or originating registry (ERS), the Project type (such as 0 for Reforestation, 1 for Terrestrial Forest Restoration), the country code, and the unit type. This serialisation ensures transparency, accountability, and protection against double counting

by uniquely identifying each unit and tracking its ownership and transfer within the Equitable Earth Registry.

3.4 Provide evidence that the registry can identify credit status including, at minimum, “issued”, “retired”, and “cancelled”.

The Equitable Earth Registry has procedures in place to identify the status of credits, including "Issued" "Retired" and "Cancelled", under the control of the Secretariat. The registry's documentation and record-keeping practices ensure that all actions related to the cancellation and retirement of credits are transparently recorded and maintained. For more details, refer to the [Registry Procedures](#), Section 'Unit Status'.

- The Secretariat issues restoration units ~~at the project start~~, following successful ~~verification~~ ~~validation~~ of a project. Units are transferred into the developer's account and the Buffer Pool. As registry administrator, the Secretariat addresses erroneous issuances by performing manual checks for redundancies to cancel incorrectly issued units.
- When retiring a unit, account holders must select a reason for retirement from specified options, including a Compensation Claim for balancing or neutralising GHG emissions, and a Contribution Claim for adding to GHG reduction efforts. Additionally, when Restoration Units are retired on behalf of a specific legal entity or individual, this action is documented within the Equitable Earth Registry, detailing the account holder, the legal entity or individual favoured by the retirement, and the chosen retirement reason along with any supporting details. This information is kept within the Equitable Earth Registry for transparency and verification.
- All cancellations in case of reversals or double counting are properly documented and the reasons for cancellation are clear and traceable.

These mechanisms provide evidence that the Equitable Earth Registry can effectively identify and record the status of credits, whether issued, retired, or cancelled, and maintain this information for public transparency and accountability.

3.5 *Provide evidence that the registry has publicly available rules and procedures that include, at minimum, all account holders undertake and pass “know your customer” checks, and a description of how the registry operators guard against conflicts of interest.

(1) The Equitable Earth Registry has publicly available rules and procedures to ensure compliance and guard against COI, as evidenced by the following:

- **KYC/AML:** All account holders must accept the Equitable Earth Registry [Terms and Conditions](#) and undergo Know Your Customer (KYC) and Anti-Money Laundering (AML) Verification. Details about the KYC protocol can be found in Equitable Earth's [Anti-Fraud Policy](#). All information will be declared in the [Third-Party Screening](#) template.

- **Conflict of Interest Policies:** Equitable Earth Secretariat Agents, who are in charge of managing the Equitable Earth Registry, are required to declare all actual and potential conflicts in the [Declaration of Interest](#), with the failure to do so possibly resulting in termination or adjustment of their role within Equitable Earth.

These procedures demonstrate the Equitable Earth Registry's commitment to transparency, accountability, and the prevention of COI in its operations.

- (2) Additionally, Equitable Earth's Registry service provider APX has high-security measures in place to ensure the safety of its operations and the data it manages. APX has completed a Service Organization Controls Type II (SOC 2) examination to review its security, availability and processing integrity principles. More information regarding Equitable Earth Registry security can be found in Section 7 of the [Registry Procedures](#).

August 2025 Update

Section 3.5 above was revised to include a [link](#) to the publicly available Registry Terms & Conditions, and a [link](#) to the Third-Party Screening procedure and template used by Equitable Earth to conduct Know-Your-Customer checks of Registry account holders (as well as other stakeholders).

Note that Equitable Earth plans to rename "Verified Restoration Units (VRUs)" as "Equitable Carbon Units (ECUs)" in a future update to the Programme.

3.6 *Provide evidence that registry functions, programme documents, and methodologies are available in English.

As stated in the [Equitable Earth Governance](#) document, Equitable Earth's working language for written and oral communication is English. As such, the Equitable Earth Registry's procedures and related program documents, including methodologies, are all available in English.

3.6.1 Confirm understanding that where the Assessor seeks evidence that is not available in English (i.e., when doing spot checks of project documents) ICROA may have to charge the Programme a fee to have the relevant document translated.

Equitable Earth understands that if the Assessor requires evidence not available in English, such as during spot checks of Project documents, ICROA may charge Equitable Earth a fee for translation services.

Recommendation: If applicable, provide information on whether your programme is connected to the Climate Action Data Trust or any comparable market infrastructure that ensures public access to harmonized registry information and enhances market transparency and integrity globally.

Equitable Earth is a participant in the [Carbon Data Open Protocol \(CDOP\)](#) and fully supports efforts to increase standardisation, transparency, and interoperability of market infrastructure.

4. Validation and Verification

4.1 Third-party validation and verification

4.1.1 Provide evidence that all projects are verified to a reasonable level of assurance as defined in ISO 14064-3

- (1) Equitable Earth adheres to the rigorous standards established by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) for its [Validation and Verification Procedure](#). As part of this commitment, Equitable Earth mandates that projects undergo validation and verification by a Validation and Verification Body (VVB) accredited under ISO 14064-3, ISO 14065, and ISO 17029. This ensures that the auditing process is conducted by qualified and reputable entities, with a track record in evaluating carbon projects.
- (2) In the context of ISO 14064-3, a VVB who reaches a reasonable level of assurance must have considered a sufficient amount of evidence to reduce the risk of material misstatement to an acceptably low level. To ensure that VVBs have access to comprehensive documentation and evidence, Equitable Earth provides an extensive set of materials for their review.
 - Documents submitted to VVBs for evidence include the PDD and its appendices, the [Risk Assessment Matrix](#), the Developer Due Diligence and the Annual Reports (for verification only).
 - The VVB can ask at any point for additional information, and if deemed necessary, go to the field to collect appropriate evidence.

Refer to the [Validation and Verification Procedure](#) document for details regarding the audit rules and procedures.

4.2 VVB Qualifications

4.2.1 *Provide the list of approved VVBs and a link to where this is published on the Programme's website.

The list of VVBs approved is publicly available on the Equitable Earth website at the [following address](#). We have established a robust network of accredited VVBs and are actively working to expand this network further to enhance our capacity and meet the demands of our growing project pipeline.

4.2.2 *Confirm the organisation has at least two organisations approved as VVBs, or an explanation of why not, if fewer than two are approved.

Equitable Earth has a robust and growing network of accredited and approved VVBs with proven experience conducting project-level audits in climate, GHG, and ecological restoration

and conservation areas, as well as diverse regional expertise. Equitable Earth has four active VVBs: Enviance, Carbon Check, Verifit, and Control Union, all fully authorised to perform independent validation and verification services of Equitable Earth projects. Other VVBs, including TÜV Nord, AENOR, EPIC Sustainability, and EcoLance, are in the Equitable Earth application review pipeline, and will become active once final steps in the process (e.g., application submission and review, contract signing, fee payment) are complete. Equitable Earth is continuously working to expand its network to ensure broad geographic coverage while maintaining high performance expectations.

~~ERS just published the first version of the Standard and will start certifying Projects under the Programme and Methodology during the first quarters of 2024. Equitable Earth commits to building a robust network of accredited VVBs by year-end, and available starting in 2024.~~

August 2025 Update

Section 4.2.2 above has been revised to reflect the expansion of Equitable Earth's network of approved VVBs since the submission of our original application. We have provided more detailed information on the organisations now approved to conduct independent third-party assessments of Equitable Earth projects, and clarified the current status of the VVBs in later stages of the approval pipeline.

In addition to the information above (which is [publicly available](#)), several additional VVBs have started or will soon begin the application process.

The Equitable Earth Secretariat team hired additional staff in 2025 to include dedicated capacity for the maintenance and improvement of a robust VVB performance management and training programme, and further expand the Equitable Earth VVB network.

4.2.3 *Provide evidence of the publicly available list of qualifications for VVBs that includes, at a minimum,

- **requirements that VVBs must be accredited under a relevant accreditation programme, such as ISO 14065, CDM/A6.4 Accreditation programme, etc.**
- ***that VVBs may only perform validation and/or verification activities for the sectoral scope for which they have been accredited.**

Following the [Validation and Verification Procedure](#), the Equitable Earth Secretariat ensures that accredited VVBs possess the following qualifications:

- VVBs must hold valid ISO 17029, 14065, and 14064-3 accreditation.
- At this time, only ecological restoration and conservation activities (under the Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use [AFOLU] sectoral scope) are eligible under the Equitable Earth Programme. VVBs must therefore demonstrate technical and practical auditing experience in auditing carbon removal, ecological recovery, and ecosystem restoration and conservation activities. Audit teams must also demonstrate expertise in remote sensing, community-based projects, livelihoods and social benefits, and sustainable development.

VVBs must provide concrete evidence demonstrating such experience to Equitable Earth for review ~~livelihoods, supported by tangible evidence of their previous involvements in these domains. In addition to this track record, audit teams must demonstrate expertise in remote sensing, community-based projects and sustainable development approaches.~~

- All team members participating in validation/verification activities within the Equitable Earth Programme must be proficient in English to effectively read, comprehend, interpret, implement, and write reports based on the Equitable Earth Programme and related methodologies.
- In addition:
 - VVBs must show commitment to ongoing professional development.
 - VVBs must not have any ongoing judicial processes related to malpractice, fraud, or other activities incompatible with their role as independent Auditing Bodies.
 - VVBs must maintain a publicly available impartiality policy.
 - VVBs must fill out and sign Equitable Earth's Declaration of Interest and Anti-Fraud Inquiry.

These requirements ensure that VVBs engaged in auditing activities possess the necessary expertise, experience, and integrity to conduct credible validation and verification.

August 2025 Update

Section 4.2.3 above has been revised to clarify Equitable Earth's minimum eligibility requirements for VVBs.

4.2.4 *Describe how, and at what frequency, the Programme checks the qualifications of the Programme's approved VVBs against the list of requirements.

Equitable Earth ensures the qualifications of the Programme's approved VVBs through a rigorous and systematic evaluation process.

(1) The evaluation process encompasses the following steps:

- Equitable Earth requests all final audit reports, CVs of VVB members, data sets used in the audit, assessment records, and any additional evidence provided by the VVB to corroborate their work.
- Equitable Earth solicits feedback from local stakeholders after each audit, providing a mechanism to assess the VVBs' conduct on the field, if applicable. This helps ensure that VVBs demonstrate cultural sensitivity, professionalism, and effective communication when interacting with the project's stakeholders.
- Equitable Earth reviews VVB compliance based on the following criteria:

- **Auditing team:** ensuring technical competence and pertinence to the project while maintaining independence from the Programme, market, and project.
- **Audit process:** adhering to Equitable Earth's guidelines and the guidelines of ISO 14064-3, ISO 17029, ISO 14065, with a commitment to impartiality, transparency, and respecting deadlines.
- **Audit Report:** emphasising the accuracy of assessments and calculations, clarity, comprehensiveness, completeness, consistency, and the actionability of recommendations.

(2) The frequency of these evaluations is as follows:

- **First Audit Evaluation:** An in-depth evaluation is performed after the VVB's first validation or verification audit.
- **Periodic Evaluation:** An in-depth evaluation is performed biennially to ensure consistent and ongoing performance assessment.
- **Occasional Evaluation:** The Secretariat reserves the right to evaluate VVBs randomly, especially when concerns or complaints arise.

(3) The Secretariat may issue a decision based on the findings. This could range from clearance (if no issues are found), to clarification (if there are doubts due to unclear documentation), to sanctions (if breaches of Equitable Earth Validation and Verification procedures are confirmed). In case of serious malpractices or breaches, the Secretariat can suspend or terminate the VVBs' accreditation. The duration of these sanctions is determined on a case-by-case basis. All evaluation reports and sanctions are publicly disclosed on the [Equitable Earth website](#).

4.2.5 *If applicable, describe the rules that outline the scenarios when it is acceptable to have validation or verification completed by a qualified individual (sole proprietor). Describe what qualifications are required of the individual.

Equitable Earth does not permit the completion of a validation or verification by a sole individual. The requirements emphasise that these activities must be conducted by accredited institutions or organisations, following both ISO guidelines and programme-specific requirements. More details can be found in the [Validation and Verification Procedure](#).

4.3 Programme Oversight of VVBs

4.3.1 *Provide evidence of the publicly available procedure for providing oversight to VVBs that includes, at minimum:

Detailed requirements for validation and verification activities, and VVB eligibility and accreditation can be found in the [Validation and Verification Procedure](#).

- **Requirements for the VVB to prove independence from the Programme, market, and project.**

VVBs are independent third-party entities accredited by Equitable Earth. They must declare any conflicts of interest prior to contractualisation by filling out Equitable Earth's Declaration of Interests and must have a publicly available impartiality policy. They cannot in any way be affiliated with Equitable Earth or the project they must validate/verify. Track records and competencies are thoroughly reviewed both prior to their Accreditation and during the performance evaluation.

To uphold independence from Projects, VVBs are paid by Equitable Earth on behalf of the Developers; Equitable Earth then rebills these fees to the developers on an at-cost basis. This is a robust safeguard against the risk of conflict of interest between developers and VVBs.

- ***At least two individuals involved in validation and/or verification of each project (peer review)**

ERS' validation and verification process follows ISO 17029 audit process. This includes the review of evidence and conclusions before the final report is issued by members who have not been involved in the assessment. For more details, refer to the [Validation and Verification Procedure](#).

- ***Minimum requirements for site visits are specified (at a minimum: one physical site visit during verification).**

With major technological advances, Equitable Earth considers remote assessments and audit techniques reliable alternatives to physical site visits. Nevertheless, on-site visits **must be performed in the following circumstances**~~are allowed if:~~

- It is the first verification of a project.
- An initial verification.
- Project documentation is not completed sufficiently well. This could include information that is suspected to be false, missing or unreliable data, geolocation, and/or supporting images that prevent the VVB from assessing the project remotely with a reasonable level of assurance.
- There is a suspected breach of one or more Equitable Earth requirements.
- A material grievance complaint has been filed since the last verification.
- Stakeholders are inaccessible via remote channels.
- Material changes in the scope or boundary of reporting, i.e. project expansion.

In cases the VVB decides to perform a site visit it must:

- Communicate its decision to the Secretariat.

- Schedule a site visit with the developer.
- Collect relevant data during the site visit, including GPS coordinates, photographs, interviews and supporting documents. These on-site observations, measurements, and records must be reported in the final validation and verification report.
 - If interviews of local populations or stakeholders are performed, they must be done in the local language or dialect.
 - If the VVB team does not speak the local language or dialect, it must use the services of a translator.

August 2025 Update

Section 4.3.1 above was revised to clarify when on-site audits are required. The Equitable Earth [Validation and Verification Procedure](#) was revised in 2025 to require mandatory site visits at the first verification (among other circumstances). Additional minor revisions were made with the release of v1.2 of the Procedure.

- ***A rule on what number of sequential verifications are allowed before the project must be verified by a new VVB.**

A VVB cannot audit the same project for validation or verification more than two consecutive times.

- **Procedure for spot checks on quality of validation/verification reports, and mitigation plan**

Audit reports (i.e., [validation and/or verification reports](#)) are reviewed by Equitable Earth with a focus on accuracy in Project Design Review and calculations, clarity, comprehensiveness, completeness, consistency, and the practicality of recommendations. The whole procedure for spot checks on the quality of validation/verification reports is detailed in the performance evaluation process described in question 4.2.4.

4.3.2 *Provide evidence that the procedure described in Section 4.3.1 is being followed.

The validation and verification of the first project applying v1.1 of the Equitable Earth Standard was completed in Q1 2025. The final approved project documents, including the validated PDD, verified GHG monitoring report, validation and verification report, and additional supporting documentation, are publicly available on the Equitable Earth Registry, demonstrating that the procedures described in Section 4.3.1 above were followed by Equitable Earth and the approved VVB.

Several additional projects are undergoing the validation and verification process under v1.1 and more information is publicly available on the Equitable Earth Registry as those audits progress.

~~ERS has not yet conducted any validation or verification audits, as we published our new Programme in November 2023 after three years of research and development, the certification of three pilot projects, and a comprehensive public consultation. We anticipate that the first validation and verification audits will take place between Q3 and Q4 2024. Once completed, these audits will be made publicly available in our registry.~~

August 2025 Update

Section 4.3.2 was updated to describe the progress of the first validations and verifications under the Equitable Earth Programme.

The validation and verification of the [Restauração Sinal Do Vale Da Mata Atlântica](#) (1006) project was approved in June 2025, and the VRUs were issued to the project.

The audits of [Regenerating the Brazilian Caatinga for a Sustainable Territorial Development](#) (1010) and [Los Tities de San Juan](#) (1012) are ongoing and are expected to be finalised in Q4 2025, in addition to the audits of [Sustainable Restoration in the Andes: Promoting Biodiversity and Environmental Balance](#) (1017) and [Ribadeo Mondigo Carbon2Nature](#) (1013).

4.3.3 *Describe the capacity building support the Programme provides to the VVBs, including onboarding, training, and explanations of what the VVB must look at when completing validations and verifications.

Equitable Earth provides VVBs with comprehensive capacity-building support to ensure they can carry out their roles effectively. This support includes:

- **Onboarding.** VVBs are onboarded following their accreditation. The Secretariat provides them access to Programme-specific documents, templates, tools, and training materials and resources, including webinars, online courses, and reference materials.
- **Training.** The Secretariat provides structured training that covers all topics relevant to the validation and verification process. These modules include:
 - Equitable Earth Programme: Provides in-depth training on Equitable Earth's specific templates, procedures, and guidelines. This comprises a comprehensive review of Programme documentation to ensure VVBs have a thorough understanding of Equitable Earth's requirements.
 - Detailed instructions on Equitable Earth's methodology and its three pillar approach, including details on baseline assessments and annual reporting requirements.
 - MRV requirements and techniques, along with guidance on utilising the associated tools developed by Equitable Earth.
 - Proper documentation practices, including data collection, record keeping, and reporting requirements. VVBs will have access to sample

validation and verification reports as templates to understand reporting expectations.

- **Continuous Learning.** Equitable Earth promotes continuous learning by encouraging VVBs to stay updated with the latest industry advancements, methodologies, and standards. VVBs are encouraged to participate in relevant workshops, seminars, and conferences to enhance their expertise. Training sessions for refresher courses are provided biennially, while updates are offered quarterly to ensure that VVBs remain current and informed about Programme developments and requirements.
- **Communication.** Equitable Earth emphasises regular communication with its accredited VVBs, to ensure they can submit inquiries and get additional support or training when necessary.

August 2025 Update

Equitable Earth successfully conducted training for several VVBs as part of the approval process. The list below includes the 2024 and 2025 VVB training sessions so far, along with the participating organisations:

- **12/03/2024:** Enviance
- **20/03/2024:** Carbon Check
- **28/05/2024:** Earthood
- **29/10/2024:** Verifit
- **21/01/2025:** TÜV Nord and Control Union

This update reflects our continued commitment to ensuring a robust and well-qualified network of VVBs. Additional trainings will be scheduled for the coming months.

4.3.4 ***Provide evidence of the procedure that ensures VVBs operate to the spirit of the Standard and projects are working towards the goals of the Programme.**

Equitable Earth outlines a comprehensive procedure to ensure that VVBs operate in accordance with the spirit of the standard and that Projects are working towards the goals of the Programme.

(1) The spirit of Equitable Earth is reflected through the following components.

3 Pillars

- **Concept.** The Equitable Earth Programme is structured around three pillars – ecological recovery, livelihoods, and carbon – connecting environmental and social aspects with carbon-crediting activities. For each pillar, Developers perform baseline assessments to determine the objectives and action plans for

the project in consultation with local communities. This reflects the commitment to a holistic approach to restoration, beyond GHG emission removals.

- **VVB procedure.** Equitable Earth sets out Programme-specific procedures to verify baseline assessment and reported impact on all pillars. To ensure the quality of validation and verification assessments under the ecological recovery and livelihoods pillar, VVBs must hold expertise in the fields of ecology and anthropology.

Digital MRV and adaptive management.

- **Concept.** To provide greater traceability of the activities performed in the field, Equitable Earth integrated next-generation digital Measurement Reporting and Verification (dMRV) at the Standard level. Projects are continuously monitored ~~throughout the~~ ~~during the whole~~ crediting period ~~(40 years)~~, and for 100 years after the end of the crediting period, and annual results are publicly available in the Equitable Earth Registry. The combination of a Mobile App to gather geolocated and timestamped field data, and leading-edge remote sensing guarantee robust GHG emission removal projections and precise progress monitoring against each pillar's baselines.

The MRV process ensures a continuous flow of data to developers, allowing them to implement adaptive management in their pProjects. Every four years, they must update the Restoration Plan and the Social Additionality Plan to ensure that project objectives and interventions remain aligned with the on-ground reality and upcoming challenges.

- **VVB Procedure.** VVBs are trained on Equitable Earth's tools and methodologies during their onboarding and regularly thereafter to keep them updated on any change in methodology and process. Equitable Earth uses leading-edge remote sensing to calculate the project's carbon stock. As such, VVBs must be proficient or seek external expertise in remote sensing and Earth observation technologies. This ensures that they are able to comprehend Equitable Earth's calculation and approach, and, therefore, able to validate/verify it.

Every four years, VVBs must assess the updated documentation and ensure Developers reflect on the activities implemented during the four-year period. This will allow VVBs to verify that projects adapt their project plan following Equitable Earth requirements regarding adaptive management practices.

Transparency and Benefit-Sharing.

- **Concept.** Equitable Earth is committed to providing transparency regarding budget allocations. At the start of a four-year period, developers must inform the period's estimated budget in the [Project Budget Template](#). During a four-year period, if significant variances in budget allocation emerge, developers must address them in the [Annual Report](#). After a four-year period, developers must report the realised expenses using the Project Budget template.

- **VVB Procedure.** VVBs must verify the alignment between the estimated budget, the deviations in the Annual Reports and the realised budget. This ensures that VVBs can verify the transparency of budget allocations, aligning with the spirit of the Standard.

(2) As described in the previous questions, the Programme has also implemented the following process to ensure VVBs operate in alignment with the Standard:

- The ~~accreditation~~ **approval** process for VVBs involves an application and review phase. VVBs apply via an application form on the Equitable Earth website, and the Equitable Earth Secretariat reviews these applications. If a VVB complies with the eligibility criteria, a first call is scheduled where Equitable Earth's expectations and details about the contractual relationship are discussed. This ensures that VVBs are well-informed and aligned with Equitable Earth standards and objectives.
- The Equitable Earth Secretariat provides VVBs with access to Programme-specific documents, templates, tools, and training materials, including webinars, online courses, and reference materials. This comprehensive training ensures VVBs are fully equipped to understand and implement Equitable Earth's methodologies and requirements.
- The performance of VVBs is reviewed after their first audit, and at least every two years, following the [VVB Performance Evaluation](#).

5. Carbon Crediting Principles

5.1 Unique

5.1.1 Provide evidence of the procedure in place that ensures carbon credits are not double counted.

Equitable Earth has implemented several measures to prevent double counting of carbon credits, encompassing double issuance, double use, and double claiming. These measures ensure that a single tonne of greenhouse gas (GHG) emission removal is not attributed to more than one mitigation target, pledge, obligation, or mitigation commitment effort.

The key procedures safeguarding against double counting are:

- **Double use.** The Equitable Earth Registry specifically incorporates the following features:
 - Only one Verified Restoration Unit (VRU) is issued for each tCO₂e of net GHG removal achieved.
 - Transparent management of the issuance, transfer, retirement and cancellation of Restoration Units (RUs).
 - Serialisation and labelling of issuances so that each RU is associated with a specific Project, country, issuance block and vintage.
 - A unit is owned by only one account at a time within the Equitable Earth Registry.
 - Public disclosure of all of the Project documentation and geographical coordinates.
 - In addition, Projects that seek eligibility for Article 6 must disclose:
 - Details about the beneficiary and the calendar year for which the offsetting requirement is fulfilled through the cancellation.
 - A Letter of Authorisation from the Host Country.
 - Evidence showing the Host Country has applied a corresponding adjustment.
 - The exhaustive list of the Registry's features can be found in the [Registry Procedures](#).
- **Double issuance.** The following measures are implemented:
 - Activities registered, previously registered, or seeking registration under another carbon crediting program are ~~not~~ eligible for Equitable Earth certification as long as the project activities are eligible, and the project is withdrawn from the other GHG programme prior to transfer to and registration with Equitable Earth. ~~Restoration units must be credited to Projects that have not received carbon credits for past activities.~~

Projects cannot be registered with multiple GHG programmes at one time. The main GHG registries around the world are thoroughly checked by an Equitable Earth Certification agent before the project's certification to ensure they are not part of another carbon program.

- Projects that have been previously declined by another carbon crediting scheme due to eligibility or procedural standards can only be eligible for Equitable Earth certification upon providing conclusive evidence of the official grounds for rejection.
 - ~~○ Projects that have applied to other carbon crediting programs and have undergone validation by a VVB can only apply for Equitable Earth certification if they submit proof that their former application was cancelled and no credits were issued.~~
 - Projects that are or have been registered with other carbon crediting programs can only apply for Equitable Earth certification if their activities occur in areas not included in current or former projects.
 - In addition, Equitable Earth also screens independent registries of carbon crediting programs to verify no double registration or double issuance of an activity by a developer has occurred. If an activity is found to be registered with another carbon crediting program, the project is rejected.
 - More details can be found in ~~the No Double Counting section~~ Section 2.4 of the Equitable Earth Standard.
- **Double claims under Article 6.** The following measures are implemented:
 - Project Host Countries must pre-authorise any unit that seeks qualification for authorised uses under Article 6. In the Guidelines for avoiding double counting, Equitable Earth specifies the authorised uses under Article 6 for international mitigation purposes other than Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), such as the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) or Other Purposes. A Letter of Authorisation must be obtained from the Host country's UNFCCC National Focal Point for Equitable Earth credits to qualify under the authorised uses. To this end, Equitable Earth provides specific Letter of Authorisation templates containing all Equitable Earth requirements for the Letter to be approved.
 - Where a GHG emission removal is achieved within one Host Country's national boundaries and is transferred to another Party for use towards its reduction target, a Corresponding Adjustment is required. These adjustments are needed when authorised use has been granted and "first transfer" conditions are met. Host Countries must report to the UNFCCC and enact the Corresponding Adjustments as mandated. Equitable Earth actively seeks evidence to confirm the effective implementation of these adjustments.

- Developers must provide and execute a compensation plan for double claims of GHG emission removal units. This mechanism is activated if Corresponding Adjustments are revoked or if the Host Country cannot apply Corresponding Adjustments to the same calendar year in which the net GHG removal occurred.
- Equitable Earth will publicly disclose necessary evidence of all measures taken to prevent double claiming on its registry, including Equitable Earth Annual Reports containing aggregated information on carbon credits issuance, designation for eligible offsetting scheme and cancellation.

August 2025 Update

Version 1.2 of the [Equitable Earth Standard](#), released in August 2025, revised the requirements for projects registered with other GHG programmes. Such projects are now eligible to transfer to the Equitable Earth Programme, provided that the project activities are eligible and the project is withdrawn from the other GHG programme prior to registering with Equitable Earth. These requirements and associated procedures will be further built out in the subsequent versions of the Equitable Earth Standard and Programme Manual.

Equitable Earth published Annual Reports for 2023 and 2024 since the original application was submitted. The Annual Reports are available for review and are publicly accessible on the website [here](#).

5.2 Real

5.2.1 Provide evidence that carbon credits are measured, monitored, and verified ex-post. Identify any methodologies under the Programme that issue carbon credits ex-ante.

Equitable Earth issues ~~two categories of Units: Projected Restoration Units (PRUs) and Verified Restoration Units (VRUs)~~. ~~Only VRUs are comparable to carbon credits, representing the independently verified removal of one tCO₂e (one metric tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent) from the atmosphere.~~

~~(1) Projected Restoration Units (PRUs)~~

- ~~● Concept: PRUs represent future sequestration and should not be considered carbon credits. While they may resemble ex-ante credits in some aspects, they cannot be classified as ex-ante carbon credits due to the inability to retire them. From a Developer's perspective, PRUs are a tangible asset to secure upfront funding for their Project. From a Buyer's perspective, PRUs are utilised as a tangible asset to ensure the ownership of carbon credits (VRUs) in the future.~~
- ~~● Measurement: To calculate PRUs, ERS estimates the total Project sequestration potential according to the Quantification Methodology for Terrestrial Forest Restoration. Each PRU represents a tCO₂e that is expected to be sequestered during the Project's crediting period; PRUs are thus intended to be converted into VRUs during the crediting period.~~

- ~~Monitoring: PRUs are not monitored.~~
- ~~Verification: PRUs estimation is verified by VVBs during Validation. ERS issues the entire quantity of PRUs only after a successful Validation Audit.~~

~~(2)~~ Verified Restoration Units (VRUs)

- Concept: VRUs represent a verified sequestration of one tCO₂e from the atmosphere. They are categorised into vintages according to the year when the sequestration occurred. VRUs are considered ex-post carbon credits and can be retired.
- Measurement: VRU ~~issuance conversion~~ is based on the net GHG benefit achieved during a verification ~~period cycle~~ (time between two verification audits). It is determined by comparing the biomass status at verification cycle t, with the biomass status at verification cycle t-1. The detailed calculation of VRUs can be found in the [Methodology for Terrestrial Forest Restoration](#).
- Monitoring: VRUs undergo yearly monitoring by Equitable Earth through remote sensing imagery for as long as Equitable Earth exists. This monitoring approach enables the detection of any loss events¹ that could affect the Project's GHG benefits and, consequently, the issuance of VRUs. Seedlings monitoring, performed on the ground by the developer with the Equitable Earth App, is also a requirement during the initial four years of Project implementation.
- Verification: Equitable Earth issues VRUs only after a successful verification. This implies that an external VVB has verified all project documentation, including carbon calculations.

Therefore, the Programme documents provide clear evidence that carbon credits (VRUs) are measured, monitored, and verified ex-post.

August 2025 Update

Minor updates were made in this section to reflect that Equitable Earth removed the option for projects to issue Projected Restoration Units (PRUs) (i.e., ex ante credits) with the release of v1.2 of the Equitable Earth Standard and Programme Manual. The change was made in response to industry feedback following a public consultation in early 2025. All associated PRU conversion requirements and procedures have been removed.

Projects registered under v1.0 and v1.1 of the Equitable Earth Programme may continue to convert PRUs to VRUs.

5.3 Permanent

¹ A loss event refers to a specific occurrence or series of occurrences that lead to the unintentional release of carbon, which had been previously sequestered by the Project, back into the atmosphere.

5.3.1 Identify the project types under the Programme that have a risk of reversal. Describe the Programme's requirements for a multi-decadal term/commitment by the project developer.

Equitable Earth identifies ecosystem restoration projects as having an inherent risk of reversal. This can be due to various factors such as natural disasters, extreme weather events, or human interventions like deforestation or poor management practices.

The Programme requires developers to ensure durable GHG emission removal over the crediting period. During this period:

- Developers must secure both land use and carbon rights for their projects. Equitable Earth has developed a range of templates to assist developers in obtaining all necessary authorisations from local stakeholders for their projects. These templates are available on the [Documentation](#) page of the website.
- Developers commit to enforcing the necessary actions, activities and safeguards to protect the project area and its surroundings from loss events.
- Developers must revise and update the project design document (PDD) every four years to facilitate adaptive management and maintain high ambition throughout the project's duration.

Equitable Earth ~~sets a fixed Project crediting period of 40 years~~ requires that initial project crediting periods are 40 years. This period is chosen to align with practical project management needs while allowing adequate time for the restoration site to develop ecologically, similar to the reference site. It balances these considerations, ensuring effective project planning and ecological objectives are met. ~~While the initial crediting period cannot be extended, the crediting period may be renewed in 20-year periods, not to exceed 100 years in total from the project start date.~~

In addition to this multi-decadal commitment, developers are encouraged to implement the necessary safeguards to ensure the integrity beyond the crediting period; when necessary, applying for further funding through other mechanisms such as nature and biodiversity conservation schemes is encouraged.

August 2025 Update

Minor updates were made in this section to reflect that Equitable Earth has established requirements and procedures allowing projects to renew their crediting period if they can demonstrate continued progress and additionality. Projects with evidence of ongoing and additional conservation and/or restoration activities, such as biomass growth or ecosystem improvements, have a pathway to renew their crediting period and continue generating carbon benefits. Specifically, projects may now renew their crediting period in 20-year increments, provided that the total project lifetime does not exceed 100 years. See Sections 3.2.8 - 3.2.10 of the [Equitable Earth Standard](#) for details.

5.3.2 For projects with a risk of reversal, describe the requirements for the project to complete a risk mitigation plan that includes, at minimum, a description of how risks of reversal will be minimised.

The Equitable Earth Risk Management Process encompasses all risks threatening the Project's objectives. Risks derive from the following categories:

- Risk of failure to deliver - Delivery Risk. This includes all risks threatening the developer's capacity to deliver the Project.
- Risk of avoidable and unavoidable reversal - Reversal Risk. This includes all risks that pose a reversal threat once restoration is already done.
- Risk of non-compliance with an Equitable Earth Requirement - Equitable Earth Requirements Risk. This includes all risks threatening the project's compliance with an Equitable Earth requirement.

Section 3.5 of the [Equitable Earth Standard](#) and Section 2.2.3 of the [Programme Manual](#) set out the Risk Assessment requirements and procedures. ~~The risk evaluation methodology is provided in detail in Appendix 1.~~ It is important to highlight that if the likelihood of a risk materialising is higher than "non-existent", Equitable Earth requires a monitoring plan at minimum.

When a risk mitigation plan is required (according to the evaluation methodology), it must be implemented during the first phase of the project to reduce the risk and likelihood of reversal. The developer is responsible for indicating the required mitigation plan and the indicators for monitoring. The plan must outline the following components:

- A rationale for selecting treatment options, including the expected benefits to be gained.
- The person accountable and responsible for approving and implementing the plan.
- The proposed actions, resources required (including contingencies), performance measures, constraints, and required reporting and monitoring.

Equitable Earth reviews the plan and approves it or requests corrective actions or clarifications. In cases where mitigation is necessary, a new risk evaluation is issued before the certification.

5.3.3 For projects with a risk of reversal, describe the risk mitigation mechanism(s) in place to ensure any carbon credits lost to intentional or unintentional reversals are replaced.

Equitable Earth has set up a Buffer Pool as a mitigation mechanism to ensure the integrity of Restoration Units and to compensate for potential reversals, both intentional and unintentional.

The Buffer Pool is an insurance pool common to all Equitable Earth-certified Projects. Twenty per cent (20%) of every Project Unit issuance is allocated to Equitable Earth's Buffer Pool. These Units can never be sold; they are held in a dedicated account on the Equitable Earth Registry and administered by the Equitable Earth Secretariat. Information on the Buffer Pool

supply, including the origin of Restoration Units (e.g., activity type and vintage), is publicly available in the Equitable Earth Registry.

The Buffer Pool ensures full compensation for all reversals throughout the Project's crediting period. Reversals must be classified as avoidable or unavoidable.

Unavoidable/Unintentional reversals are events beyond the control of the developer. They are categorised as follows:

- Natural disaster events: events caused by disasters such as fire, severe drought, storms, floods, landslides, hurricanes, earthquakes, and pest/disease outbreaks.
- Any act of war (whether declared or not), invasion, revolution, insurrection, terrorism, or any other acts of a similar nature or force.
- Any change in governmental requirements or policy that affects the project implementation and operations is also included.

Avoidable/Intentional reversals are events that could have been avoided by the developer. They result from:

- Activities not being implemented as described in the Project Design Document (PDD), such as cessation of monitoring and verification, cessation of field operations or participants leaving the project.
- Negligence of the developer which includes, but is not limited to, poor project management practices, shortages of personnel, contract breaches by subcontractors and liquidity or solvency problems.

The compensation procedure in case of reversal is summarised below.

- Monitoring: Equitable Earth monitors loss events annually **and on an ongoing basis throughout the project lifetime, and for 100 years after the end of the crediting period**. Developers must also monitor loss events on an ongoing basis.
- Notification: If the Developer or Equitable Earth identify a loss event, they must notify each other within thirty calendar days. At the occasion, developers will be asked to provide:
 - The description and date of the loss event;
 - A shapefile delimiting the loss event's total area and location;
 - The loss event's nature - avoidable or unavoidable;
 - Documentation to prove the loss event's nature;
 - The verified and expected impacts on project activities.
 - Equitable Earth confirms the loss events area and location annually using satellite imagery.
- Reporting: Loss events must be reported in the Annual Report.

- Quantification of Impacts: Equitable Earth quantifies loss events' impact before the ~~biennial~~ verification audit, using the approach described in the “Quantification of Loss Events” section in the Methodology for Terrestrial Forest Restoration.
- Loss events characterisation: Equitable Earth will deduct the total GHG emissions of loss events from the project's total GHG removals in that cycle. Balance will result in either:
 - Reversal: When the impact of the loss event(s) led to a net GHG emission. The nature of the reversal stems from the nature of the underlying loss event(s) on a pro-rata basis.
 - Underperformance: When the impact of the loss event(s) led to a net GHG removal, but lower than projected.
- Verification: Loss events are verified ~~every two years~~ during the verification audit, upon which the following is verified:
 - Quantification of loss events
 - Nature of loss events (avoidable or unavoidable)
 - The accounting of GHG emissions and removals

Verification can also occur before the verification audit if, at notification, Equitable Earth considers the documentation provided by the developer to be insufficient to prove the loss event's nature.
- Buffer Pool Compensation:
 - For Avoidable Reversals: The Secretariat cancels VRUs in the Buffer Pool equal to the net loss. The developer must deposit an equivalent amount of VRUs into the Buffer Pool. ~~The Secretariat will not convert any PRUs for the given verification period.~~
 - For Unavoidable Reversals: Equitable Earth cancels VRUs in the Buffer Pool equal to the net loss. ~~The Secretariat will not convert any PRUs for the given verification period.~~
 - If the cancelled VRUs exceed the Project's net contribution to the Buffer Pool, additional VRUs from the Buffer Pool are cancelled. In this scenario, the additional VRUs should be issued under the same Equitable Earth Programme and Methodology versions.

This detailed procedure ensures that any carbon credit losses due to reversals are accurately quantified, monitored, reported, and compensated for, maintaining the integrity of the carbon credit system.

August 2025 Update

Equitable Earth made the following revisions related to permanence, loss events, and

reversals in v1.2 of the [Equitable Earth Standard](#) and the [Methodology for Terrestrial Forest Restoration](#):

- Instead of using a fixed 1-hectare threshold, loss events are defined based on a percentage (5%) of verified net GHG removals already achieved by the project. This ensures that only statistically significant losses trigger mandatory reporting, reducing unnecessary notifications while maintaining the integrity of permanence monitoring.
- The requirement for continuous monitoring of loss events throughout the crediting period was made explicit.
- Equitable Earth monitors loss events for 100 years from the end of the crediting period.

5.3.4 Provide evidence that the requirements and mechanisms described in Sections 5.3.1-5.3.3 are in place and followed.

The validation and verification of the first project applying v1.1 of the Equitable Earth Programme was completed in Q1 2025. The final approved project documents, including the validated PDD, verified GHG monitoring report, validation and verification report, and additional supporting documentation, are publicly available on the Equitable Earth Registry, demonstrating that the requirements and mechanisms described in Sections 5.3.1-5.3.3 above were followed by Projects and Equitable Earth, and assessed by a VVB. Units deposited in the Equitable Earth Buffer Pool are publicly available on the [Equitable Earth Registry](#), including credits deposited by the first project registered and verified under v1.1.

While no reversals have occurred to date, Equitable Earth has successfully implemented the initial phase of the risk mitigation and reversals management process. For each project that progresses to the Project Design stage, a [Risk Assessment Matrix](#) is made publicly available, identifying potential reversal risks and detailing the associated mitigation plans, where applicable.

~~ERS did not yet operationalise these requirements and mechanisms, as it just published its new standard, following three years of R&D, the certification of three pilot Projects and a comprehensive public consultation. Equitable Earth is currently certifying the first Projects under the first version of the Standard, and will publish relevant documentation once the process is complete.~~

August 2025 Update

Section 5.3.4 was updated to describe the progress of the first validations and verifications under the Equitable Earth Programme, and the evidence demonstrating the implementation of mechanisms to ensure permanence.

The validation and verification of the [Restauração Sinal Do Vale Da Mata Atlântica](#) (1006) project was approved in June 2025, and the VRUs were issued to the project. Credits from the first verification were deposited into the buffer, as shown on the Equitable Earth Registry [here](#).

The audits of [Regenerating the Brazilian Caatinga for a Sustainable Territorial](#)

[Development](#) (1010) and [Los Titíes de San Juan](#) (1012) are ongoing and are expected to be finalised in Q4 2025, in addition to the audits of [Sustainable Restoration in the Andes: Promoting Biodiversity and Environmental Balance](#) (1017) and [Ribadeo Mondigo Carbon2Nature](#) (1013).

5.4 Additional

5.4.1 Describe how the Programme ensures projects are additional based on:

- Legal or regulatory additionality analysis, and
- At least one of the following:
 - Investment, cost, or other financial analysis (most preferred), with a common practice/market penetration analysis
 - Barrier analysis (least preferred), with a common practice/market penetration analysis
 - Performance standards/benchmarks

5.4.1.1 Provide evidence that the Programme defines and provides guidance for each additionality assessment method it permits. This should include the instructions the Programme gives to project developers on how to apply each method, along with examples of acceptable evidence (as provided by the Programme).

The Equitable Earth Programme includes ~~the following guiding~~ principles, requirements, and methods for demonstrating the additionality of a project. ~~This includes specific instructions that the developer must follow and evidence they should provide in order to meet the requirements and demonstrate additionality.~~ The requirements are set out in Sections 4.1, 4.2.1 - 4.2.8 of the [Methodology for Terrestrial Forest Restoration](#) and are summarised below:

- Regulatory Surplus: The developer must demonstrate that there is no enforced legal obligation to implement project activities. If such an obligation does exist, the developer must clarify and prove how this obligation is not enforced. The developer is required to provide a list of applicable laws and regulations that the Project complies with. Furthermore, Equitable Earth encourages developers to include written descriptions and expert judgments on enforcement. For high-income countries, all legal requirements shall be deemed to be enforced.
- ~~Environmental Surplus: The Project must demonstrate that ecological recovery and consequent GHG emission removal would not have occurred at the same level without the Project's interventions. Additionally, the Developer must prove that the Project Area was not cleared of existing natural, non-degraded ecosystems to obtain carbon credits revenue. Equitable Earth confirms environmental additionality using satellite imagery and assessing land cover degradation in the past ten years preceding the Project origination.~~
- Barrier Analysis: The developer must provide an extensive barrier analysis. This entails identifying barriers that could impede the desired project activities and illustrating how these obstacles can be effectively addressed. The analysis must include, at a minimum, the following types of barriers:

- Financial barriers. These include a lack of funding, high upfront costs, or difficulties accessing finance that can stall or prevent a project from starting.
- Technical barriers. These include challenges related to technology, methodology, expertise, site-specific conditions, and other technical aspects of the project. It can involve anything from lack of necessary equipment to difficulties in measuring GHG emission removal.
- Capacity barriers: challenges related to education, technical training, and human resources. Barriers may include a lack of skilled personnel or insufficient training in restoration techniques, monitoring protocols, and carbon accounting.
- Logistical barriers: challenges related to the infrastructure, operational aspects of a project, and labour shortages. Barriers can include poor accessibility to key sites, limited transportation options, inadequate facilities, and the unavailability of necessary materials.
- Cultural and social barriers. These refer to challenges in the collective movement of local communities towards implementing, maintaining and monitoring restoration projects due to, for example, lack of information, threats to the safety of community members, and existing social structures and norms.
- Regulatory and institutional barriers. These refer to limitations within the regulatory framework and its relevant institution, such as limited staff capacity, lack of necessary skills, local regulations, complex permitting processes, ineffective bureaucratic processes or challenges in meeting specific compliance standards.

For each identified barrier, the developer must provide verifiable evidence both for the existence of the barrier and the necessity of carbon credits to overcome it. Examples of evidence are provided in Section 4.2.4 of the [Methodology for Terrestrial Forest Restoration](#).

- Common Practice Analysis: Developers must demonstrate that activities similar to the project activity are not common practice in the project's jurisdiction. Sections 4.2.5 - 4.2.8 of the [Methodology for Terrestrial Forest Restoration](#) includes a stepwise approach for assessing common practice.

August 2025 Update

The [Methodology for Terrestrial Forest Restoration](#) was revised in v1.2 to require that all projects conduct a common practice analysis as part of the demonstration of additionality. The full stepwise approach includes regulatory surplus, a barrier analysis, and common practice analysis, and the methodology includes examples of evidence that should be provided by the developer in order to demonstrate additionality.

In v1.2, the environmental surplus requirements were removed from the additionality section and into the general eligibility criteria in Section 2.

- 5.4.2 If the Programme pre-defines certain projects as automatically additional (e.g., through a “positive list” of eligible project types), describe how the activity was determined to be additional. Provide evidence that the criteria for such positive lists are publicly disclosed, and conservative.**

Equitable Earth does not pre-define projects as automatically additional.

5.5 Measurable

- 5.5.1 Provide evidence that carbon credits are issued from project-based standards and methodologies. Describe any methodologies where carbon credits are issued from a product-based methodology or via lifecycle assessment.**

Equitable Earth has developed a dedicated methodology for terrestrial forest restoration projects, the [Methodology for Terrestrial Forest Restoration](#), encompassing the principles and techniques for evaluating all three of Equitable Earth’s Pillars and assessing project risks within this specific ecosystem (terrestrial forests). Restoration Units, which are carbon credits according to the Standard, are quantified and accounted for using this methodology ~~in conjunction with the associated~~ [Quantification Methodology for Terrestrial Forest Restoration](#), which measures net GHG benefits from land cover evolution throughout the years.

Equitable Earth is also developing a new [Methodology for Terrestrial Forest Conservation \(M002\)](#), which is currently under public consultation and is planned to be published in November 2025.

- 5.5.2 Provide evidence of procedures in place to ensure projects are measurable and backed by data. These procedures must include, at minimum, requirements for:**

- **All projects to clearly define the business-as-usual baseline scenario.**

All Equitable Earth projects must establish a baseline scenario that represents what would occur at the Restoration Site(s) without the intervention of the project, as set out in Section 6.1 of the [Equitable Earth Standard](#).

Baseline ~~scenario~~ carbon stock is determined through a process that involves a combination of remote sensing and latest scientific advancements to accurately estimate the carbon stored in the project area before the implementation of any project interventions. The process is set out in Section 7.1 of the [Methodology for Terrestrial Forest Restoration](#) and comprises the following steps:

~~(1) **Woody/Non-woody Classification:** Using remote sensing models, the methodology distinguishes between woody and non-woody areas within the Project boundary. A raster format map, derived from the Project’s shapefile, is used to identify these areas, taking into account the spatial resolution suitable for the scale of the Project.~~

(1) Above Ground Biomass (AGB) calculation:

- ~~For Woody Areas: The methodology requires an estimation of the AGB at the pixel level. This is provided by an AGB provider who uses remote sensing data to generate a Woody AGB map, reflecting the estimated AGB in tonnes per pixel.~~
- ~~For Non-Woody Areas: Are assessed using IPCC or AR-TOOL14 default data. The AGB for these areas is estimated by assigning values based on the land cover classification and the specific ecological zone, following IPCC guidelines for the relevant climate zone.~~
- The AGB provider generates an AGB map that estimates both the mean AGB value, and its associated standard error, at the pixel level in raster format for the restoration site(s). Equitable Earth then applies a Monte Carlo approach to this map to generate a distribution of possible AGB values. These values are used as inputs in the Monte Carlo Simulation. If requested by the developer, the AGB value provided may be calibrated using field data. This calibration must conform to the requirements set out in the [Protocol for Field Data Calibration](#).
- Exclusion of Non-reforestable Areas: The methodology requires the exclusion of areas that are not suitable for reforestation from the AGB quantification. Such areas might include infrastructure, water bodies, or any other land covers that are not capable of supporting forest growth.
- Equitable Earth consciously excluded SOC, SIC, dead wood, litter and harvested wood products from its calculations. ~~Rationale for exclusion, can be found in the “List of emissions sink” section in the~~ [Quantification Methodology for Terrestrial Forest Restoration](#).

(2) **Below Ground Biomass (BGB) Estimation:** The estimation of BGB, both for woody and non-woody areas, is based on the AGB using root-to-shoot ratios. The methodology follows IPCC guidelines for determining these ratios, which reflect the proportion of biomass below ground relative to above ground.

(3) **Calculation of Total Biomass:** The total initial carbon stock of the Project Area is the sum of the AGB and BGB estimates ~~for both woody and non-woody areas, excluding the non-reforestable zones.~~

(5) **Conversion to Carbon Dioxide Equivalents:** The methodology employs equations from the "AR-TOOL14 A/R Methodological tool" to convert the total biomass into carbon dioxide equivalents. This conversion accounts for the carbon content in the biomass, providing a measurement of the CO2 sequestration potential of the Project Area at the baseline.

This process ensures a robust estimation of the ~~business-as-usual~~ baseline carbon stock ~~scenario~~. For detailed methodology, including calculations, refer to Section 7.1 of the [Methodology for Terrestrial Forest Restoration](#).

August 2025 Update

Section 5.5.2 above was revised to add a sentence clarifying the baseline scenario requirements in the [Equitable Earth Standard](#), v1.2.

Further, v1.2 of the [Methodology for Terrestrial Forest Restoration](#) includes minor revisions to the baseline carbon stock calculations—specifically, the distinction between woody and non-woody vegetation masks was removed, as the classification relied on land cover datasets that have not been regularly updated. Instead, v1.2 uses data from the AGB provider to assess AGB across all land cover types.

- **All projects to identify and mitigate leakage of emissions.**

Equitable Earth has comprehensive procedures in place to ensure that projects identify and mitigate leakage of emissions.

The [Methodology for Terrestrial Forest Restoration](#) accounts for the following types of leakage: activity shifting leakage and, market leakage, ~~and upstream and downstream emissions~~. Equitable Earth performs initial leakage calculations during the design ~~assessment~~ phase of the project, which is then ~~reassessed at every verification~~ ~~refined in the fourth year of implementation~~.

The procedure to identify, mitigate and quantify leakage is as follows:

(1) **Identification:** Prior to project initiation, developers must identify activities within the project area that could lead to displacement and impact the surrounding tree biomass. To understand the reasons behind these shifts, developers engage with local stakeholders. ~~A dedicated template, the Leakage Mitigation Declaration, guides developers in to assess and declare~~ ~~ing~~ any activities that may result in leakage emissions.

(2) **Leakage Mitigation Plan:** Developers must formulate a leakage mitigation plan to minimise the repercussions of displaced activities, ~~including the planned mitigation interventions, the stakeholders involved and the corresponding timeline~~. These interventions must be reported on annually and the mitigation plan must be updated at every adaptive management. ~~The mitigation plan is an integral component of the leakage mitigation template, and it is delineated within the Social Additionality Plan. This plan is executed during the initial four years of the project to address and mitigate potential leakage emissions while ensuring that the project does not negatively impact the livelihoods of local stakeholders.~~

(3) **Initial Estimation:** Equitable Earth then proceeds to quantify the impact of the estimated activity displacement(s) through two different methods. If the developer knows where leakage will occur and is therefore able to provide the hosting area(s), Equitable Earth calculates the average stock of tree biomass in the corresponding area(s) and will conservatively assume that leakage is set equal to the carbon stock present in the area at baseline. ~~where the activity will likely be displaced to~~. If the developer cannot provide the hosting area(s), they must identify the displaced activity area(s) within the project area, Equitable Earth will estimate leakage by considering the conservative per-hectare carbon stock of the leakage belt multiplied by the size of the displaced activity area(s). Finally, Equitable Earth aggregates the impact of each activity to obtain the total leakage emissions, which must be discounted from the project's projected GHG benefits. Detailed calculations can be found in the 'Initial Leakage Quantification' section in the [Methodology for Terrestrial Forest Restoration](#).

(4) **Quantification**~~Correction~~: At every verification, Equitable Earth quantifies the leakage monitored during the last verification period by following the same two methods. If the developer knows where leakage has occurred and is therefore able to provide the hosting area(s), Equitable Earth compares the carbon stock in the hosting area(s) between the start and end of the verification period and sum all pixels that show a carbon loss to obtain the corresponding leakage. If the developer cannot provide the hosting area(s), Equitable Earth uses the leakage belt to conservatively quantify leakage by considering a conservative estimate of per-hectare carbon loss using the 95th percentile of the distribution of carbon stock loss across the pixels in the Leakage Belt. ~~Upon the completion of the first four year period and the implementation of the mitigation plan, Equitable Earth uses satellite imagery to confirm if the Leakage Area(s) location(s) and extent match the Developer's declaration at certification. Equitable Earth will update the quantification and obtain the revised leakage emissions, which will be discounted from the Project's GHG benefits.~~

(5) **Continuous Monitoring**: It is conducted by Equitable Earth and aims at identifying and addressing leakage emissions throughout the entire duration of the project. Equitable Earth is responsible for monitoring potential leakage throughout the lifetime of the project. This includes annual monitoring of the leakage belt, as well as monitoring of hosting areas and displaced activity areas prior to each verification. Where land cover changes in the leakage belt exceed the average observed over the preceding five years, Equitable Earth must notify the developer. Developers are then required to justify whether the observed change is attributable to project activities. If the justification is unsatisfactory, Equitable Earth reserves the right to take additional measures, as appropriate, to assess the cause of the land cover change. ~~Leakage monitoring involves the integration of field data and satellite imagery within a 5-kilometre radius of the project area, specifically zones within the leakage belt where the displaced activities are relocated called hosting areas. If the hosting area's surface changes by more than one hectare, developers must provide justification for Equitable Earth to determine whether the change is linked to project activities. If the justification is deemed unsatisfactory, Equitable Earth will estimate the GHG emissions resulting from the Hosting Area's expansion and factor them into the net GHG removals of the verification period. Additionally, developers must implement a mitigation plan. Monitored leakage emissions will be reported at each verification.~~

~~In cases where detected leakage is demonstrated to have a direct connection to the Project activities, Developers must implement a mitigation plan.~~

These procedures ensure that projects identify and mitigate leakage of emissions. Note that future methodologies developed under the Equitable Earth Programme may include alternative approaches to identifying, monitoring, and mitigating leakage.

August 2025 Update

Section 5.5.2 above was revised to provide additional information about Equitable Earth's continuous leakage monitoring requirements.

- **Projects to use conservative estimates if real project data is not available.**

~~To employ conservative estimates, Equitable Earth has implemented the following protocol:~~

(1) An evaluation of uncertainty in estimates is performed:

- The uncertainty is considered throughout the quantification process, from field measurements to model outputs. This includes all stages from measurements to modelling errors, such as those associated with allometric equations.
- The propagation of uncertainty through these stages must be managed effectively.
- A 95% confidence interval for Above Ground Biomass (AGB) values must be generated to account for this uncertainty.

(2) Equitable Earth guarantees maximised conservatism by systematically selecting a conservative uncertainty boundary, which prevents overestimation of GHG emission removals.

- During the baseline quantification, the upper band of the 95% confidence interval is selected for woody AGB values. This overestimates the current state of the restoration site and provides a conservative estimate of the GHG emission removal potential of the Project.
- For the Reference Site quantification, the lower band of the 95% confidence interval is chosen. This underestimates the current state of the Reference Site, providing a conservative estimate of the Project's GHG emission removal potential.
- The GHG emission removal potential is conservatively estimated due to the application of conservative quantifications in the baseline scenario at the Project site and the CO₂ sequestration at the Reference Site.
- During GHG emission removal monitoring, the lower band of the 95% confidence interval is selected, leading to a conservative estimation of the current sequestration on the restoration site.
- In assessing the impact of reversals, the complete loss of Below Ground Biomass (BGB) is conservatively considered, and the CO₂e stock bound to BGB is deducted from the Project issuances.

By applying these conservative measures, the methodology ensures that the quantification of carbon stocks and the estimation of GHG emission removals are responsibly understated to avoid the risk of overcreditation and to maintain the integrity of the carbon credit issuance.

Equitable Earth uses remote sensing technology for all quantification processes and employs a highly conservative approach to ensure that carbon removals are accurately and conservatively estimated. The procedures for ensuring conservativeness are as follows:

(1) **Evaluation of Uncertainty.** Uncertainty is integrated throughout the quantification process, from initial AGB estimations to final GHG removal calculations.

(2) **Monte Carlo Simulation:** The Monte Carlo method is used to generate a probability density function (PDF) for AGB removals, accounting for pixel-level uncertainties and spatial correlations. Through this simulation, uncertainty is propagated across all stages of the

calculation, ensuring that the uncertainty inherent in the data at the pixel-level is captured and reflected in the final GHG removal estimates.

(3) Equitable Earth consistently selects the lower boundary of the 70% confidence interval in the Monte Carlo distribution to estimate net GHG removals of the project, ensuring a conservative approach and preventing overestimation.

(4) As presented above, Equitable Earth applies a conservative approach to account for leakage estimation and quantification. For carbon potential estimations, the biomass within the hosting area is conservatively assumed to be reduced to zero, reflecting a complete displacement of activities. At each verification, the leakage quantification is based on a conservative quantification, using the upper bound of the 90% confidence interval in the distribution of carbon loss in the leakage belt.

(5) When there is a loss event, Equitable Earth conservatively considers a complete loss of BGB and consequently deducts both AGB and BGB from the carbon stock quantification.

By applying these conservative measures, the methodology ensures that the quantification of carbon stocks and the estimation of GHG emission removals are responsibly understated to avoid the risk of overcrediting and to maintain the integrity of the carbon credit issuance.

August 2025 Update

Section 5.5.2 above was revised to describe modifications to the uncertainty calculations set out in the v1.2 of the [Methodology for Terrestrial Forest Restoration](#).

In revisions to v1.1 and v1.2 of the methodology, Equitable Earth now applies a Monte Carlo approach to carbon calculations, which leverages pixel-level uncertainty data provided by Chloris (the AGB data provider).

In v1.2 of the M001, the lower bound for net GHG removal quantification has been adjusted from 95% to 70%, without reducing conservativeness. A supporting study was conducted by the Equitable Earth technical team and is available at the following [link](#).

- **All projects to re-calculate baselines, at minimum, upon each crediting period renewal.**

The dynamic baseline evaluation is a critical component of the Equitable Earth quantification methods, allowing for a periodic re-evaluation of the initial baseline scenario to adjust credit issuance. This re-evaluation occurs every two years prior to verification. This reassessment may lead to adjustments in credit issuance based on the new findings.

The process encompasses several steps to ensure the accuracy and relevance of the baseline in reflecting the business-as-usual scenario.

(1) Project Clustering: At the start of the project, the K-means clustering algorithm is utilised to accurately represent the diverse conditions within the project area. This statistical technique stratifies the project area into sub-zones. These sub-zones are then used to identify control plots with the same characteristics.

(2) Selection of Control Plots: Control plots are identified outside of the project area within ecosystems that share similar characteristics, ensuring they provide a true representation of

the business-as-usual scenario. These plots are chosen based on ecological and biophysical attributes, including levels of degradation, and their details, including shapefiles, are made public on the Equitable Earth Registry.

(3) Dynamic Evaluation: Before each verification cycle, Equitable Earth reassesses the control plots to ensure their ongoing relevancy. If the plots are no longer representative, new ones are generated.

(4) The mean AGB evolution of all control plots is calculated, leading to two possible scenarios:

- AGB Growth Scenario: If an upward trend in forest growth is observed, adjustments are made to account for this increase, ensuring the project does not claim full credit for natural increases in GHG emission removal.
- AGB Decrease Scenario: If a decline is observed, corrective mechanisms are applied to add the loss in AGB to the project's carbon credit issuance.

By systematically evaluating and adjusting the baseline, Equitable Earth ensures the integrity of the credit issuance process, reflecting any changes in the project area's carbon stock due to natural fluctuations or other factors not attributable to the project activities.

5.5.3 Provide evidence that all methodologies under the Programme have monitoring requirements that are validated and verified for each project.

The Equitable Earth Programme offers comprehensive monitoring requirements and a procedure to validate and verify these requirements for each project.

(1) Field activities must be monitored by the developers using templates and surveys on the Equitable Earth App. Embedded geolocation and timestamping ensure the veracity of data collected.

During the first four years after each plantation, the developer must track the seedlings' survival rates and signs of disturbance every year [using the Equitable Earth App](#). Monitoring plots are determined using a random stratified sampling approach.

Additionally, developers must monitor every year:

- Ecological indicators, according to the methodologies stipulated in the Restoration Plan.
- Socioeconomic indicators according to the methodologies stipulated in the Social Additionality Plan.
- Progress of the SDGs according to the project objectives in the Monitoring Plan, using the official indicators and targets.
- The annual realised expenses in the Annual Report.
- All risks and mitigation actions identified in the Risk Matrix.

In addition to the monitoring performed by developers, Equitable Earth:

- Monitors annually the forest cover of the project area and the leakage belt using satellite imagery to detect loss events and leakage.
- Quantifies GHG emission removals every two years using remote sensing technologies.

(2) Reporting is conducted on an annual basis by the developer, based on the monitoring of Project activities, which is then consolidated in the project Annual Report. Equitable Earth Certification plays a crucial role in reviewing every Annual Report, ensuring the completeness and accuracy of all the information contained within it.

(3) Every two years within the crediting period, starting at the conclusion of the initial four-year period, an external VVB conducts verification of the Annual Reports. The verification process is designed to confirm the Developer's conformance with the monitoring requirements and to address any discrepancies or concerns that may arise.

5.5.4 Demonstrate that the Programme's methodologies are based on scientifically robust or peer-reviewed methods and go through a public consultation process.

(1) Existing methodologies are reviewed annually by the Technical Advisory Board. If evidence shows that specific methodologies lead to overestimation of GHG emission reduction or removals, the use of these methodologies must be suspended or withdrawn, and new ones must be drafted.

(2) Equitable Earth maintains a dedicated Research and Development (R&D) team with the mandate of drafting new methodologies. This team ensures that methodologies stay aligned with the most up-to-date research, scientific advancements, and technological innovations available.

New methodologies are collaboratively developed with the involvement of a group of independent experts, the Technical Advisory Board. They must be approved via the Standard Revision process.

Public consultations are mandatory components of Equitable Earth's methodology development process, including prior to the release of a new methodology. As part of the process, ~~The process starts with the release of a Call for Public Comment, inviting~~ stakeholders are invited to review and provide feedback on proposed methodological changes. Comments are gathered for a minimum period of thirty days; after this period, the Standard Public Comment Digest Template is used to summarise and respond to the feedback, ensuring transparency and consideration of stakeholder input. The Secretariat then integrates this feedback into a Final Standard Revision, which is reviewed by the Technical Advisory Board. The details of the entire process can be found in the [Standard Setting and Methodology Development Procedure](#).

The Equitable Earth Programme's methodologies are not only based on scientifically proven or peer-reviewed methods but also undergo a rigorous review and Standard Public Comment Period to ensure their validity and effectiveness.

August 2025 Update

In February 2025, Equitable Earth launched two public consultations on proposed revisions to the Programme and M001 methodology.

In August 2025, Equitable Earth launched a public consultation on the [Methodology for Terrestrial Forest Conservation \(M002\)](#).

More information, including the public comment digests, can be found on the Equitable Earth website [here](#).

6. Environmental and Social Impacts

6.1 Provide evidence of the publicly available rules and requirements that ensure all projects identify and mitigate any potential environmental or social impacts. These rules and requirements must include, at minimum, the “No Net Harm” principle is fulfilled by all projects.

The Equitable Earth Standard includes robust requirements for social and environmental benefits and multiple safeguards. Developers must implement safeguard measures ~~to be implemented~~ at project start and throughout the project’s crediting period to prevent and monitor unintended negative environmental and social impacts, and mitigate them when they arise.

- (1) At the Project Design Review phase of the certification, developers are requested to fill out the [Safeguards Declaration](#) detailing and proving all measures in place to avoid and, if necessary, mitigate and monitor all 35 environmental and social impacts. The safeguards declaration is part of the Project Design Document and is verified by a VVB. Any identified risk is monitored yearly and declared in the Annual Report, and the developer is requested to update the declaration every four years.
- (2) Equitable Earth operates based on three Pillars – ecological recovery, livelihoods, and carbon – connecting environmental and social aspects with carbon-crediting activities.
 - Requirements listed in each pillar go beyond the principle of no net harm and ensure positive impacts, called ecological and social additionality in Equitable Earth methodology, on the environment and the community. Requirements must be included in the project design, and measured and monitored annually, according to the [Equitable Earth Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification \(MRV\) procedures](#) ~~MRV Procedures, detailed in the ERS Programme.~~
 - If a project lags in one pillar while excelling in carbon performance, Equitable Earth may choose not to certify the Project or halt issuance, depending on the project’s stage, until a mitigation plan is implemented. This reflects the commitment to a holistic approach beyond GHG emission removal, including all environmental and social impacts.

These rules and requirements ensure that all projects identify and mitigate all potential environmental or social impacts, including the fulfilment of the No Net Harm principle.

Detailed benefits and safeguards under the Livelihoods Pillar are set out in Section 4.3 of the [Equitable Earth Standard](#), and benefits and safeguards under the Ecological Condition (formerly Recovery) Pillar are set out in Section 5.1 of the [Equitable Earth Standard](#) and the applied methodology.

August 2025 Update

Equitable Earth enhanced its benefits and safeguards requirements throughout v1.2 of the [Equitable Earth Standard](#).

Notable updates include addressing additional environmental risks, such as pollutant

discharges into water, untreated waste generation, and the impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems, particularly concerning rare, endangered and threatened (RET) species. The updated provisions also emphasise the protection of Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and Local Communities (LCs), safeguarding their ancestral knowledge and livelihoods.

6.2 Provide evidence of how projects undertake a risk assessment for potential environmental and social impacts. Confirm this is included in the project documents that undergo validation or verification.

Equitable Earth requires projects to undertake risk assessments for potential environmental and social impacts.

(1) The risk assessment process is guided by the ISO 31000 assessment structure. The risk assessment process involves risk identification, risk analysis, and risk evaluation.

- **Risk identification:** the project considers tangible and intangible sources of risk, vulnerabilities and capabilities, changes in external and internal context, limitations of knowledge and reliability of information, time-related factors, as well as biases, assumptions, and beliefs of those involved.
- **Risk analysis:** risks are analysed based on the likelihood of them happening and the severity of their consequences. This analysis is based on the integrality of certification documentation provided by the developer, desktop data, and ground findings from validation and verification assignments.
- **Risk evaluation:** all details about the risk evaluation methodology are provided in [Section 3.5 of the Equitable Earth Standard](#) and [Section 2.2.3 of the Programme Manual](#) [Appendix 2](#).
- **Risk treatment:** If there is any possibility of a risk materialising, the developer must implement a surveillance plan to enable ongoing assessment and management of the risk.

(2) The [Risk Assessment Matrix](#) includes 124 pre-identified social and environmental risks. Additional risks can also be included by the Developer on a per-project basis. The risk assessment results are published in the Equitable Earth Registry, alongside the Project Design Document (PDD) and are thoroughly reviewed as part of validation and verification audits. The PDD, along with the Risk Assessment Matrix, is updated every four years, at the end of a four-year period.

For more details on how Equitable Earth assesses potential social and environmental risks on each Project, refer to the [Risk Assessment Matrix](#) document.

6.3 Provide evidence that the rules and requirements in Sections 6.1-6.2 are being followed.

~~ERS did not yet operationalise these requirements, as it just published its new standard, following three years of R&D, the certification of three pilot Projects and a comprehensive public consultation. ERS is currently certifying the first Projects under the first version of the Standard, and will publish relevant documentation once the process is complete.~~

Equitable Earth is currently certifying several projects under Versions 1.0 and 1.1 of the Equitable Earth (formerly ERS) Programme. Each project record on the Equitable Earth Registry includes publicly available project documentation. The versions and types of documents are dependent on each project's stage in the certification process (e.g., projects in the feasibility stage will have a Feasibility Report available on the Equitable Earth Registry, but not a Project Design Document [PDD]). Examples of relevant publicly available documents include the PDD, Risk Matrix, and Safeguards Declaration referenced in Sections 6.1 and 6.2 above.

August 2025 Update

Several projects have progressed significantly in the certification process since the original submission of Equitable Earth's application. Section 6.3 was updated to reflect that the Equitable Earth Registry now includes publicly available project documentation.

The validation and verification of the [Restauração Sinal Do Vale Da Mata Atlântica](#) (1006) project was approved in June 2025, and the documents referenced above are available publicly on the Registry.

The audits of [Regenerating the Brazilian Caatinga for a Sustainable Territorial Development](#) (1010) and [Los Tities de San Juan](#) (1012) are ongoing and are expected to be finalised in Q4 2025, in addition to the audits of [Sustainable Restoration in the Andes: Promoting Biodiversity and Environmental Balance](#) (1017) and [Ribadeo Mondigo Carbon2Nature](#) (1013). Documents are also publicly available on the Registry for these projects.

7. Stakeholder Considerations

7.1 ***Provide evidence of the publicly available stakeholder engagement procedure that includes, at minimum:**

7.1.1 ***At the programme level:**

- ***a definition of “stakeholder”**

Equitable Earth adopts UN Guiding Principles Reporting Framework’s definition of stakeholders: "Any individual or organisation that may affect, or be affected by an activity’s actions and decisions". See the [Terms & Definitions](#) document for additional related definitions.

During the Stakeholder Mapping process conducted in the Project Feasibility review phase of the Equitable Earth certification, stakeholders are classified into core, direct, indirect, and other categories. Equitable Earth defines:

- **core** stakeholders as essential for the project's sustainability,
- **direct** stakeholders as actively involved in daily project operations,
- **indirect** stakeholders as having indirect links to project activities,
- **other** stakeholders, as having the potential to influence or be influenced by project activities.

More information regarding the Stakeholder Mapping can be found in the [Livelihood Matrix](#).

Section 4.2 of the [Equitable Earth Standard](#) sets out the stakeholder engagement requirements applicable to all projects.

- ***a requirement for 30-day public consultation for new programme documents (or during revisions to programme documents)**

The [Standard Setting and Methodology Development Procedure](#) applies to drafting and revising both Programme and Methodology documents and requires a 30 consecutive day public consultation. More specifically, the Technical Advisory Board (TAB) is required to mandate the Secretariat to organise the 30-day standard public consultation if the Standard Revision Proposition involves modifications to the Standard’s three Pillars (ecological recovery, carbon, and livelihoods), governance, or methodologies related to the qualification and quantification of GHG emission removals.

The Secretariat must proactively reach out to identified key stakeholders, including local stakeholders where projects are certified, and must strive to include diverse views from ecologists, carbon market experts, and community experts. As part of Equitable Earth’s Quality Management System, the Secretariat must aim to gather at least 50 completed surveys at the end of a public consultation.

August 2025 Update

In February 2025, Equitable Earth launched two public consultations on proposed revisions

to the Programme and M001 methodology.

In August 2025, Equitable Earth launched a public consultation on the [Methodology for Terrestrial Forest Conservation \(M002\)](#).

More information, including the public comment digests, can be found on the Equitable Earth website [here](#).

- ***a requirement for 30-day public consultation during methodology development**

The [Standard Setting and Methodology Development Procedure](#) applies to drafting and revising both Programme and Methodology documents. Please refer to the process described above.

7.1.2 ***At the project level:**

- ***project consultation documents available in relevant local language(s), as necessary for effective consultation with local stakeholders**

Equitable Earth requires that every consultation document be shared with local stakeholders in a transparent and accessible manner, in the local language using comprehensible vocabulary and widely accessible channels. It is a mandatory requirement, as part of the 'Free, Prior and Informed Consent' (FPIC) principles that developers must respect when designing their projects. Equitable Earth defines robust and thorough FPIC [and stakeholder consultation requirements guidelines](#) in Section 4.2 of the [Equitable Earth Standard](#) ~~its section 'Stakeholders Participation' of the Programme~~ to stress the importance of aligning with traditional and customary protocols, including verbal and non-verbal communication norms. Projects are explicitly required to implement a participatory communication plan and to provide timely materials in formats and languages accessible to IPs and LCs, preferably in their own language, while respecting traditional and customary protocols.

In addition, Equitable Earth ensures that all project documentation is accessible in English in the Registry, making it available to individuals worldwide.

- ***a process by which results of stakeholder engagement is included in documents that undergo validation and verification**

Equitable Earth documentation outlines several procedures that ensure stakeholder engagement is reviewed in validation and verification audits.

(1) The completion of the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) guidelines must be reported in the Feasibility Study report [and the Project Design Document \(PDD\)](#). The report is then validated by VVBs during the Validation audit.

(2) Consultations conducted during the Project Design review phase must be documented and reported following the [requirements in the Equitable Earth Standard-Community Consultations Guidelines](#). A summary of these consultations must be integrated into the templates provided

to the developer for this purpose. Extensive reports must also be included in the [Appendix 9 of the Project Design Document \(PDD\)](#). The PDD is then validated by VVBs during the validation audit.

(3) Consultations conducted during the project implementation must be documented and reported ~~following the Community Consultations Guidelines~~. A summary of these consultations should be integrated into the Annual Report. Annual reports are verified by VVBs ~~every two years~~ during every verification audit.

(4) Every four years, as part of the adaptive management approach ~~taken by ERS~~, Developers must re-issue the Project's PDD, updating the Social Additionality and Ecological Recovery Plans incorporating learnings and feedback from stakeholders over the last four years. The same methodology for designing the plans before the Project starts, ~~following the Community Consultations Guidelines~~, is required when updating them. The updated PDD is ~~validated~~ ~~verified~~ by VVBs at the verification audit.

August 2025 Update

A minor update is included above to clarify Equitable Earth requirements for the availability of public consultation documentation (e.g., project design documents) in local languages.

Note that, as part of the release of v1.2 of the Equitable Earth Programme, requirements previously included in separate guidelines documents (e.g., Community Consultation Guidelines) were moved into the Equitable Earth Standard and/or methodology documents. The language above has been revised accordingly.

Note that examples of relevant documents are publicly available on the Equitable Earth Registry. See, for example, the 'Livelihood' section and Appendix 9 of the PDD of the Restauração Sinal Do Vale Da Mata Atlântica project on the Equitable Earth Registry [here](#).

• ***a defined process on how local consultations must be conducted**

Equitable Earth acknowledges that stakeholder engagement is key to successful and durable ecosystem restoration. As such, [Section 2.4 of the Equitable Earth Standard](#) provides a comprehensive procedure for stakeholder consultation ~~including The two main documents guiding Developers on how to engage stakeholders and conduct consultations are the FPIC guidelines detailed in ERS Programme and the Community Consultation Guidelines. Both documents encompass~~ instructions to be followed by all Projects throughout their lifecycle and applied to all three Equitable Earth pillars.

(1) The Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) guidelines must be followed prior to the commencement of any Project that may impact directly or indirectly lands, territories and resources of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPs and LCs), and consistently during the project's implementation. Equitable Earth provides developers with a step-by-step template, divided into several phases, to help them implement the FPIC process.

(2) The Standard requirements ~~Community Consultation Guidelines~~ guide developers through the consultation process starting at the Project Feasibility review phase, with the mapping of

stakeholders. Interviews with all stakeholders are conducted to introduce the project and gather feedback on initial implementation steps, namely the relevance of the project area, the choice of Reference Ecosystem, the collection of local ecological knowledge, and the draft of the project's zonation. The developer is required to identify past social conflicts and unresolved grievances during the mapping phase. All local stakeholders must be identified and reported in the Livelihood Matrix.

(3) During the Project Design review phase, developers must engage in consultations with local stakeholders to establish baselines, objectives, and interventions for the Ecological Recovery and Livelihoods Pillars. Equitable Earth provides detailed instructions on conducting these consultations, including the consultation's format, objectives, required preparation work, expected outcomes, and how they should be integrated into the project's design. ~~More details can be found in the Community Consultation Guidelines document.~~ The suggestions arising from these consultations must be integrated into the Restoration Plan and the Social Additionality Plan, which define the objectives and interventions for the upcoming four-year period.

(4) These consultations continue regularly throughout the project's crediting period to ensure ongoing community engagement. Developers must report on how the communities' suggestions are incorporated into the project and how their effects are monitored and reported in the Annual Report.

(5) Projects must use Project Design Document (PDD) and annual reports to publicly disclose how stakeholders' inputs have been treated and included.

These procedures are designed to ensure that local communities are integrated into the planning, execution, monitoring, and reporting of the project, and that the project is designed according to stakeholders' needs and aspirations.

7.2 Describe how stakeholder comments are transparently addressed at both the programme and project levels.

Stakeholder comments are transparently addressed through structured processes as part of the Equitable Earth Programme.

(1) Community consultation (project level)

- Stakeholders' comments and how they are addressed are reported in the Feasibility Report, the PDD and Annual Reports, which are validated and verified by VVBs and made publicly available on the Equitable Earth Registry. More specifically:
 - Community inputs given during the Project Feasibility review phase and how they are integrated into the project's design must be reported in the [Feasibility Study Report](#) in the section 'Stakeholder Engagement Results'.
 - Community inputs given during the Project Design review phase and how they are integrated into the project's design must be included in the ~~PDD in the following appendices: Community Consultations Report, Livelihood Matrix, Ecological Recovery Assessment.~~ Note that the PDD is updated every four years as part of the Equitable Earth's adaptive management approach.

- Community inputs given throughout the crediting period must be included in the [Annual Reports](#) in the sections “*Monitoring Plan*” for both the Ecological Recovery and Livelihood pillars.

(2) Project Public Comment Period (project level)

- After the issuance of the Preliminary Project Design Document (PDD) and before the Validation Audit, a thirty-working-day project public comment period is initiated. The Preliminary PDD is published on the Equitable Earth’s [website](#) alongside a dedicated public comment survey.
- All comments received during this period are reviewed by the Equitable Earth Secretariat and compiled within fifteen working days after the comment period concludes. The resulting project public comment period digest, which includes all stakeholder feedback, is shared with the developer, maintaining the anonymity of the commenters to protect their identity.
- If the feedback includes grievances, infractions, or other concerns, the Certification Agent may issue Corrective Actions Requests (CARs) and/or Clarification Requests (CRs) to the developer. The developer is then required to address all feedback directly in the public comment period digest ~~within ten working days~~, making necessary modifications in the Project Design Document and any other affected certification documents. These changes are reviewed and validated by the VVB and the Equitable Earth Certification team ~~within five working days following their submission by the Developer~~.
- ~~Developers are given up to three rounds to address all CARs. Failure to do so within this timeframe necessitates restarting the Assessment phase. The Project Public Comment Period is officially closed once the Developer has addressed all feedback, CARs, and CRs. Finally, a~~ A final report of the project public comment digest is added as an Appendix to the PDD and is published online, ensuring that the stakeholders’ comments and responses are transparent and publicly accessible.

(3) Grievance Mechanism (project and programme level)

- The Equitable Earth [Grievance Mechanism](#) ensures that grievances are handled with the utmost seriousness, transparency, and adherence to legal requirements, offering a safe channel for stakeholders to raise concerns and seek redress. For the exact scope and functioning of the Grievance Mechanism, please refer to the answer in the third subsection of question 2.2.1.

(4) Internal feedback mechanism (programme level)

- All Equitable Earth entities are allowed to send feedback on their respective areas of expertise to the Secretariat, to allow for the continuous improvement of the Standard’s Programme and Methodology.
- The Secretariat gathers this feedback, along with updates, proposals and requests. Such feedback can lead to Standard Revision Procedures or the evolution of the Equitable Earth Programme in line with the Equitable Earth Administration Plan.

- The Secretariat has no obligation to implement this feedback and is the sole judge of the opportunity for such implementation.

(5) Ongoing Stakeholder feedback (programme level)

- A feedback page is available on the Equitable Earth website at the following [link](#) to facilitate the continual improvement of Equitable Earth's processes, requirements, and applications. The Equitable Earth website features a feedback survey on operational activities, which is made available annually for one month at the end of every calendar year. All submitted feedback will be publicly shared on the webpage and thoroughly reviewed by the Equitable Earth Secretariat to inform improvements to the documentation and tools.

August 2025 Update

The sections above were revised to reflect changes in document structure made with the release of v1.2 of the Equitable Earth Programme, and minor adjustments to the procedures for developers to address comments received during the 30-day public comment period.

Equitable Earth added additional information above to highlight the implementation of an annual survey designed to gather stakeholder feedback on the Programme, methodology, procedures, and other associated tools. The 2024 consultation digest is publicly available on the Equitable Earth website [here](#).

7.3 Provide evidence that the procedure in Section 7.1 is being followed.²

Equitable Earth is actively following the procedures outlined in Section 7.1. ~~We are currently in the process of certifying multiple projects. Although the full certification process is ongoing,~~ The first feasibility reports and project design documents are now available in our Equitable Earth [Registry](#), and four projects have undergone a public comment period, demonstrating adherence to the established requirements. Additionally, we have operationalised our Grievance Mechanism, which is now active and accessible for stakeholders to report any issues. Since the launch of the Programme, we have also implemented the internal feedback mechanism to collect expert inputs from all Equitable Earth teams.

Information about current and past public consultations on standard and methodology documents, and project-level public comment periods, can be found on the Equitable Earth website [here](#) and [here](#), respectively. Project-level public comment period information is also posted publicly on the project record on the Equitable Earth Registry.

We remain committed to ensuring that all projects meet the rigorous standards set forth in the Equitable Earth Programme and ~~M001~~—methodologies, and we will publish relevant documentation as each project progresses through the certification stages.

August 2025 Update

From December 10, 2024 to January 10, 2025, the [Restauração Sinal Do Vale Da Mata Atlântica](#) (1006) project was open for public comment on the Equitable Earth Registry.

² This requirement applies to both programme-level and project-level stakeholder consultations.

Several comments were received, and the complete comment digest is publicly available on the Registry.

More information about past and current project-level public comment periods can be found on the Equitable Earth website [here](#). Three additional projects have undergone public comment periods as of August 2025.

In February 2025, Equitable Earth launched two public consultations on proposed revisions to the Programme and M001 methodology.

In August 2025, Equitable Earth launched a public consultation on the [**Methodology for Terrestrial Forest Conservation \(M002\)**](#).

More information, including the public comment digests, can be found on the Equitable Earth website [here](#).

8. Scale

8.1 ***Provide evidence that the Programme has issued³ carbon credits from at least two projects.**

To date, Equitable Earth has certified three projects to test **early versions** of its tools and methodology. The largest of these projects is located in Madagascar, covering 300 hectares of tropical inland forest, and it has issued 115,951 PRUs. These credits were issued under version 0.9 of our standards, and more details can be found on the Equitable Earth [Registry](#).

~~Although we have not yet issued credits with the new version of our standards, we are actively in the process of certifying new projects. Additionally, we have several Projects in our pipeline that are currently undergoing pre-submission activities.~~

Equitable Earth issued carbon credits to one project under v1.1 of the Programme. The validation and verification of the [Restauração Sinal Do Vale Da Mata Atlântica](#) (1006) project was approved in June 2025, and the VRUs were issued to the project. Evidence of issued VRUs can be found [here](#).

Equitable Earth expects to issue credits to three additional projects by the end of 2025.

8.2 ***Confirm whether the Programme has registered 10+ projects and issued 100,000+ t CO2e in carbon credits.**

As explained in the previous response, Equitable Earth has certified three pilot projects, and a comprehensive public consultation. Details about the credit issuances for these pilot projects are available on the Equitable Earth [Registry](#).

Equitable Earth has certified and issued credits to one project under v1.1 of the Programme.

While we have not yet registered 10+ projects under the new standard or issued more than 100,000 t CO2e in carbon credits, we are actively scaling up the certification of projects under v1.1 and v1.2 ~~the first version of our Programme~~. Major developers and NGOs active in the carbon markets have already submitted a project or are in discussions ahead of a submission. As of 2025, 40+ Projects have begun certification, covering 1,300,000+ hectares. An additional six Projects, covering over 4,000,000+ hectares, have recently been submitted and are being transferred to the certification team for review.

Equitable Earth has 10+ projects currently slated to pilot the new Methodology for Terrestrial Forest Restoration (M002), which will be released in November 2025.

August 2025 Update

Section 8.1 provides status updates on Equitable Earth projects, and Section 8.2 above was revised to provide the latest numbers and statistics about Equitable Earth projects at various stages in the certification process.

The validation and verification of the [Restauração Sinal Do Vale Da Mata Atlântica](#) (1006)

³ "Issued" refers to ex-post credits.

project was approved in June 2025, and the VRUs were issued to the project.

The audits of [Regenerating the Brazilian Caatinga for a Sustainable Territorial Development](#) (1010) and [Los Tities de San Juan](#) (1012) are ongoing and are expected to be finalised in Q4 2025, in addition to the audits of [Sustainable Restoration in the Andes: Promoting Biodiversity and Environmental Balance](#) (1017) and [Ribadeo Mondigo Carbon2Nature](#) (1013).

Equitable Earth does not yet have 10+ projects registered with the Programme, or 100,000 tCO₂e issued in Verified Restoration Units. This application will be updated as the Programme scales and meets these criteria.

9. Additional Considerations

Please disclose any open litigation involving your organization. For each case, provide a detailed explanation, including the nature of the litigation, the parties involved, and the current status.

Equitable Earth is not involved in any open litigation at the time of submitting this application.

August 2025 Update

Section 9 is a new section added to the ICROA Application Form since the time of original submission.