Peer verification is an alternative approach to the ISO-accredited 3rd party verification that is accepted by nearly all major GHG programs. The peer verification process is low in cost and high in student and faculty educational value. However, as reviewers are not accredited verifiers, there is a need to shore up the legitimacy of this approach by adding another layer of review to assess the verifications themselves.

Robust process review and transparency are fundamental to the credibility and success of the Offset Network Peer Verification process. It is also critical to the Offset Network's goal to act as an incubator for novel project ideas, with successful projects connecting to existing offset markets for ease of replication.

Following the submission of verification reports, teams of expert peer verification assessors or the Offset Network Executive Committee will review these reports and assess whether the verification process was carried out thoroughly and effectively. To assist this team of verification assessors, the Offset Network has developed a general guideline for the review of offset project verification reports.

This guidance document is meant to help expert peer verification assessors or the Offset Network Executive Committee determine:

- o Did the verifier effectively assess PAVER standards? Are there any lingering questions?
- o Are parties relevant to future project success identified within the verification report? To what extent are they engaged?
- o Was verification conducted thoroughly and professionally?
- o Does the verification determination reflect the findings and recommendations?

These guidance documents provide a means to help structure and standardize process assessment for peer verification and provide meaningful feedback for project managers as well as peer verifiers.

Assessment and feedback on the verification process will be included with the verification reports for each offset project posted on the Offset Network. This information should provide further support for groups and individuals preparing verification reports, and further establish the case study review approach to supporting the overall peer verification process.

The Offset Network's goal is to develop a widely representative group of expert peer verification assessors to carry out these process reviews. This team will be made up of higher education faculty and staff, qualified graduate students, and members of the professional offset community, and is open to any professional with established credentials. Interested parties and nominations for participation in this team of expert verification assessors may be directed to mleigh@secondnature.org

Reviewer's Name: _____

Document Reviewed: _____

Section Review Summaries	Verification/Validation Approved	Verification/Validation Not Approved
Required		
Eligibility Conditions		
Permanent		
Additional		
Verifiable		
Enforceable		
Real		
Strongly Recommended		
Verification or Validation Summary		
Co-Benefits		
Interview Questions		
Site Visit		
Verification or Validation Statement		
Appendices		
Final Recommendation: *A selection MUST be made*	*SELECT based on the answers to the questions below*	*SELECT based on the answers to the questions below*

Recommendations and Improvements:
If verification/ validation report is approved, please use the space below to provide suggestions to make the project more successful or to address minor potential issues.
If verification/ validation report is not approved, these recommendations are more critically important and will be used to refine the peer verification process.

GUIDELINES FOR VERIFICATION OR VALIDATION REVIEW OF CARBON OFFSET PEER VERIFICATION

You do not need to respond to everything. These questions are meant to help guide your thinking during the review. For questions that require more explanation than just a "yes" or a "no," please provide an explanation in the box below each set of questions.

Eligibility Conditions

Questions to consider	Yes	No	N/A
Did the plan conform with the relevant protocol/methodology requirements ,or were any deviations appropriately identified?			
Did the verifier thoroughly review project-related eligibility requirements, including, but not limited to, project location, project commencement, legal requirements, and minimum time commitment?			
If issues were identified, were they addressed through verifier review and feedback?			
Comments and Explanation			

Permanent

Questions to consider	Yes	No	N/A
If issues were identified with a maintenance schedule or management regime, were they resolved through verifier review and feedback?			
Did the verifier comprehensively identify issues that could impact the permanence of the GHG emissions reductions, removals or preventions resulting from the project?			
Did the verifier identify any current or possible future sources of leakage in the project?			
If potential sources of leakage were identified, were these addressed through verifier review and feedback?			
If applicable, were monitoring equipment calibration schedules identified?			
Did the verifier effectively assess planned or already made buffer pool contributions by the project?			
Were risk factors present in the project appropriately evaluated by the verifier?			

Comments and Explanation

Additional

Questions to consider	Yes	No	N/A
Did the verifier thoroughly review and comment on project additionality, including a review of the project's history, project budget and funding sources, and projected offset sales arrangements?			
If the verifier proposed recommendations to address issues related to additionality, were these resolved by project partners?			
Comments and Explanation			

Verifiable

Questions to consider	Yes	No	N/A
Did the verifier receive the appropriate monitoring reports from the project?			
Did the verifier appropriately address any issues with monitoring frequency being out of line with the project protocol requirements?			
Was the information from monitoring reports appropriately included in the verification reports?			
Did the verifier fully address any issues with sharing data or communication between project partners?			
If not, can the project still be considered legitimate despite these communication issues?			
If missing project data was identified, did the verifier suggest an appropriate recourse?			
If sampling was employed in the project, did the verifier assess the level of sampling and sampling method appropriately?			
Did the verifier propose recommendations to: address issues identified, and/or improve certainty around the project impact?			
Comments and Explanation			

<u>Enforceable</u>

Questions to consider	Yes	No	N/A
Was carbon offset credit ownership appropriately scrutinized by the verifier?			
Were contract documents reviewed?			
If additional clarity was sought, were project partners interviewed about credit ownership or was OffsetNetwork.org consulted?			
Have credits generated to date been registered on Offset Network or another registry?			
Was information on generated offset credits identified by the verifier – including their current status (banked/retired), vintage (year), unique ID#, and ownership?			
Did the verifier feel confident that there was no evidence of double counting?			
Did the verifier propose recommendations to: address issues identified, and/or improve certainty around the project impact?			
Comments and Explanation			

<u>Real</u>

Questions to consider	Yes	No	N/A
Was the verification conducted thoroughly and professionally?			
Did the verifier thoroughly review and assess project impact(s)?			
Did the verifier propose recommendations to address issues identified, and/or improve certainty around project impact(s)?			
Did the verifier thoroughly review and provide commentary on carbon calculations (equations and emissions factor(s) used, software used for calculations, etc.)?			
Did the verifier thoroughly review and provide commentary on transparency and public availability of carbon accounting data?			
In the event accounting or estimation errors were identified in the verification process, did the verifier propose recommendations to address the errors?			

Comments and Explanation

Verification or Validation Summary

Questions to consider	Yes	No	N/A
Are parties relevant to future project success identified within verification report and/or committed to the plans?			
Was the project management/maintenance plan assessed?			
Comments and Explanation			

Co-Benefits

Questions to consider	Yes	No	N/A
Was the verification conducted thoroughly and professionally?			
Did the verifier propose recommendations to: address issues identified, and/or improve certainty around the project impact?			
Comments and Explanation			

Interview Questions

Questions to consider	Yes	No	N/A
Did the verifier conduct interviews, phone calls or otherwise correspond with project stakeholders?			
Are communications with relevant stakeholders included within the report or in appendices?			
Did the verifier request additional information from project stakeholders?			
Did they define how this information could be applied to improve the project or its documents?			
Were all project stakeholders that seem relevant to communicate with included in the report by the verifier?			
Comments and Explanation			

Site Visit

Questions to consider	Yes	No	N/A
Did a site visit occur?			
Did the site visit(s) accomplish all project specific validation/verification site visit objectives?			
Was a site visit description included?			
Were all issues uncovered during the site visit addressed with recommendations to have them resolved?			
Comments and Explanation			

Verification or Validation Statement

Questions to consider	Yes	No	N/A
Was a definitive statement made qualifying the project as having passed, requiring certain changes to the project in order to pass, or failing the validation based upon identified issues?			
Does verification determination reflect findings/recommendations?			
Comments and Explanation			

Appendices

Questions to consider	Yes	No	N/A
Were monitoring reports (i.e. tree inventories, system calibrations, quarterly checks, etc.) included in materials for verifier review?			
If they occurred, were project reversals (i.e. missing/dead trees within an urban forestry project) explained within monitoring reports evaluated as part of the verification?			
Comments and Explanation			