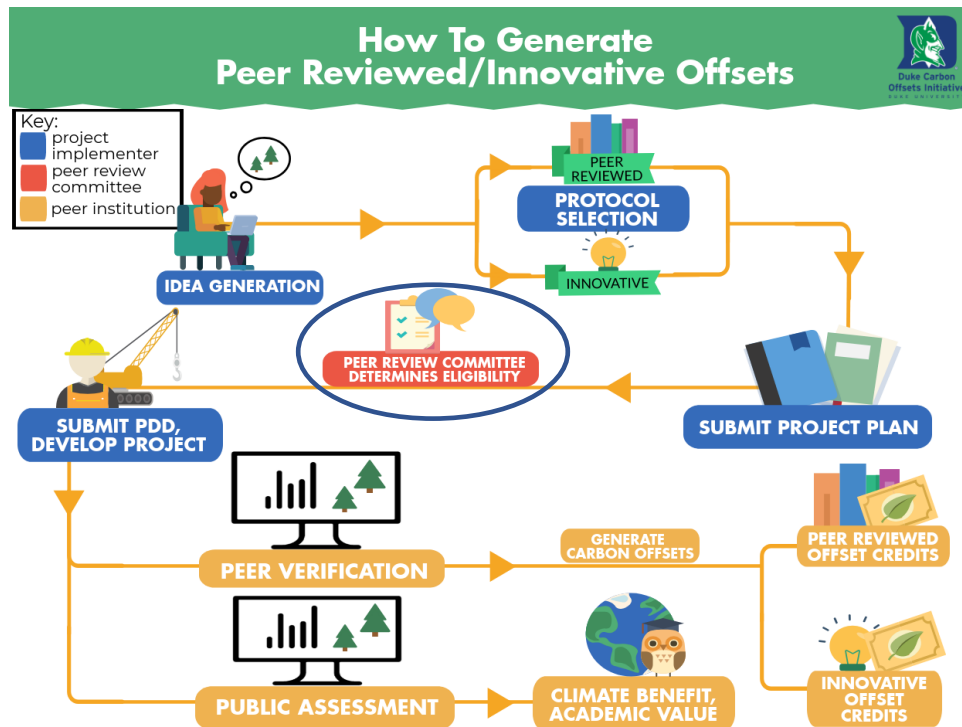# Project Plan Review Rubric

The following rubric is intended for use in the review of submitted Project Plans by the Peer Review Committee. The rubric is intended as a guidance document to aid the Peer Review Committee in determining the eligibility of proposed offset projects to move forward and to aid the Committee in providing feedback to project developers about how to adjust, revise or improve their Project Plans. The Rubric follows the same structure as the Project Plan Template document. This Rubric is not intended as guidance for project developers, but rather for the Peer Review Committee to use in assessing projects.

This Project Plan Rubric will be used in the Peer Review Committee's work to determine eligibility of Project Plans, circled in the above infographic – following Project Plan submission.

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Instructions on the Use of the Project Plan Review Rubric

This rubric asks a series of 31 questions about the Project Plan Review Rubric's Sections 1-4. For each question, there is a tick-box which **indicates that there may be a concern with this component that needs to be addressed**. An ideal project plan document would have no boxes ticked, as every item would already be adequately addressed. However, we anticipate that, even for projects that are determined to be eligible, there will be areas for clarification and improvement. Hence, the Rubric is structured to provide maximal feedback to project proposers on all items of the plan. In addition, narrative or track-change comment feedback should be provided for Sections 5-8 of the Project Plan document.

How to assess eligibility? The overall assessment of eligibility is a qualitative one made by the Peer Review Committee. Even largely well put together Project Plans may be ineligible if there is a glaring omission. However, as a general rule of thumb, we suggest that Project Plan documents which have more than 10 boxes ticked out of 31 should not YET be judged eligible until further refinements of the Project Plan are made. Those with >0 and <10 may be eligible or not eligible depending on the judgment of the Peer Review Committee

OVERVIEW:

Q1 In the Project Plan Title Overview at the start of the Project Plan, is the project information, contact information, and method of project review either unspecified or unclear?
☐ Yes, proposers should clarify the following pieces of information:

1. INTRODUCTION:

1.1. Site Details
Q2 Does the project site that is identified reveal any potential conflicts of use resulting from project activities?
☐ Yes. Proposers should provide information on the following potential conflicts:

Q3 Are there any other ways in which the project site might create issues that can be foreseen?
☐ Yes, proposers should address the following potential issues:

1.2. GHG Impact
Q4 Are there any missing items from the GHG impact statement?
☐ Yes, the following items are missing and should be revised:

Q5 Is there insufficient detail to follow all elements of the GHG Impact narrative?
☐ Yes, more detail is needed about:

1.3. Program Inclusion

Q6 Does the project plan clearly identify which offset program the project will work through?

☐ No, it is not clear which offset program will work:

Q7 Does the project plan clearly identify the protocol selected for implementing the project?

☐ No, it is not clearly identified. It needs to be clarified as follows:

1.4 Roles & Responsibilities

Q8 Does the project structure and management arrangement make sense and is it clear?

☐ No, it is not clear. Please clarify the following:

Q9 Are all partners' roles identified or are there any ambiguities of roles and responsibilities?

☒ Yes, there are ambiguities. Please clarify the following:
Where do the trees come from and how are they delivered to the planting sites?

Q10 Are there any essential project roles that are not filled, as stated in the project plan, that seem essential to the success of the project?

☐ Yes, there are clear missing partners:

1.5 Relevant Stakeholder Outcomes & On-going Communication:

Q11 Are there concerns about whether diverse stakeholder outcomes are included?

☐ Yes, there are concerns about the following stakeholder outcomes:

Q12 Are any communication channels for stakeholders obviously missing?

☐ Yes, there are missing channels, including:

1.6 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

Q12 Does the proposal include a detailed response to the EIA requirement?

☒ No, the response does not include enough detail to explain the necessity or non-applicability of an EIA.
The response notes there is no requirement for an EIA. While the project seems very straightforward and that the EIA is not required, should the PPD include a letter from VA Dept of Forestry or City of Richmond confirming that EIA is not required in order to comply with this rubric's stated requirements? It is not clear to me whether this is obligatory as part of PPD materials.

1.7 Chronological Project Plan

Q13 Does the chronological project plan clearly describe major project events and in what order they will occur?

☐ No, it is not clear about what events will occur or in what order they will occur. It can be improved by:
I would like to see mention of when replanting would occur to address mortality, if that is part of the maintenance plan.

Q13 Does the chronological project plan include all protocol requirements within the specified time intervals?

☐ No, it is missing that. It should include the following:

2. PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

2.1 Eligibility Requirements from the Protocol

Q14 Are all of the correct eligibility requirements included?

☐ No, it is missing the following:

Q15 Are any of the eligibility requirements inadequately addressed by the project?

☐ Yes, the following requirements should be discussed in more detail:

2.2 Additionality

Q16 Does the additionality assessment fail to address any items in the Project Plan Instructions Document? If so, which ones?

☐ Yes, the following additionality criteria need to be addressed in more detail:

Q17 Are there ANY concerns about additionality assumptions? Please list or state here.

☐ Yes, the following items need to be improved or clarified:

2.3 Additionality Checkbox

Q18 Read the Additionality Checkbox. Are there any obvious omissions or areas that are underdeveloped or lack sufficient information? Regardless of whether or not there are, please provide a brief statement summarizing the effectiveness and completeness of this Checkbox tool to assess the project's additionality in the space provided below:

Overall, the PPD does a good job of completing the description of how the project addresses additionality requirements. The Additionality Checkbox was completed sufficiently. I would only ask that they consider including whether trees purchased from the nursery would have been planted otherwise or are these "additional" trees generated specifically for the project. Would they have been otherwise planted in the Carver neighborhood in Richmond?

3. EMISSIONS REDUCTIONS DATA, METHODS, and CALCULATIONS

3.1 Project Sources, Sinks, and Reservoirs

Q19 Are any baselines or project emissions sources, sinks or reservoirs missing or mischaracterized?

☒ Yes, the following sources and sinks are missing or mischaracterized:

Related to 4.2 Leakage – how are trees delivered to the planting sites? I think this is likely minimal and would be considered negligible, but perhaps worth mentioning to show that was considered in the calculations?

Q20 Are the sources, sinks or reservoirs aligned with the additionality statements and project plan narratives as a whole?

☐ No, they are not well aligned. We are concerned about:

3.2 Data Sources

Q21 Are any data sources required to calculate project impact included missing from the project plan?

☐ Yes, the following data sources are missing:

Q22 Are data gathering methodologies aligned with protocol requirements to sufficiently and accurately gather project data?

☐ No, data gathering needs to be improved as follows:

3.3 Determination of the Baseline Scenario

Q23 Is the choice of baseline scenario in any way unreasonable? Was the start year selected earlier than required in order to augment emissions calculations? Do you have any concerns about the baseline scenario?

☐ Yes, the baseline scenario should be improved by:

3.4 Estimation of Emissions Reductions

Q24 Does the estimated project impact seem reasonable?

☐ No, the following information is needed to further assess the estimated project impact:

Q24 Do these calculations include any errors or omissions?

☐ Yes, please correct the following errors:
Estimates of mortality and replacement as part of the maintenance program? Not explicitly described in the PPD. Worth a brief mention that refers to Duke Urban Forestry Protocol and

3.5 Explanation of Methodological Choices

Q25 Is the choice and selection of methodology incorrect, missing, or incomplete?

☐ Yes, it should be improved as follows:

Q26 Are there any modifications to the methodology proposed? If so, please comment on whether they need to be further refined.

☐ Yes, there are modifications. Comments are here:

Q27 If there are significant modifications to the methodology, such that the project developers are in the process of creating a revised or new protocol, are the changes specific and the reasons for the changes clear?

☐ No, changes suggested are not specific and/or the reasoning for making them is not satisfactory. Please clarify the following:

4. RISK ASSESSMENT and FUTURE CALCULATIONS

4.1 Double Counting
Q28 Are explanations of double counting adequate to address who owns the credits and any concerns about double counting?

☐ No, please explain the following issues related to double counting:

4.2 Leakage
Q29 Are explanations of potential leakage adequate to address what emissions might increase elsewhere?

☒ No, they are not adequate. More information is needed on the following:

Measurements are adequate, but I would like to see consideration of how trees are delivered from nursery to planting sites considered. Even if negligible, should be noted as such.

4.3 Permanence
Q30 Are concerns about permanence (specifically for carbon sequestration projects) adequately addressed?

☐ No, they are not adequate. More information is needed on the following:

4.4 Additional Risks
Q31 Are any additional risks provided or listed? If not, should there be any listed?

☐ No, none are listed but the following issues should be considered:

The information provided in the PPD was sufficient. Have they considered any institutional risk that could impact the program? (E.g., is there any risk that VCU administration would pull support?)

ADDITIONAL ASSESSMENT OF ITEMS 5 - 8 (Please provide narrative feedback)

5. PROJECT MONITORING PLAN
Note that this plan is optional and therefore not included in our tick-box questions for rubric assessment The Peer Review Committee should consider evaluating the plan and providing feedback on the clarity and detail of the plan. Basically, upon reading it, are there any obvious questions or comments? Feedback can be provided as track changes, annotations, or in paragraph narrative form.

6. PEER VERIFICATION
If Peer Verification is being pursued, please confirm that the project developers have potential verifying institutions in mind. Additionally, confirm that project developers understand that peer verifiers must have some training in GHG accounting, the project type of the project, or previous experience in peer verification before engaging in these activities.

It was not made clear that American University has training in GHG accounting or has completed previous peer verification of offset projects within Offset Network. That could be included in a simple statement.

7. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
If additional information is provided in this section, please provide any feedback in narrative form or as track changes or annotations.

8. AUTHOR CONTACT INFORMATION
Confirm information is not missing.

Reviewer:
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