Andalusian blue carbon standard for certification of blue carbon credits

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AENOR
METODOLOGÍA VALIDADA PARA LA HUELLA DE CARBONO
Validation statement
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ABBREVIATIONS

IVB: Independent verification body

GHG: Greenhouse Gas

SDG: Sustainable Development Goal

AU: Absorption Unit

SACE: Emissions Offsetting Andalusian System

1. Version

1. This document is version 01.2 of the “Andalusian Carbon Standard for Certification of Blue Carbon Credits” (hereinafter the Standard). The editions of the Standard, and all regulating documents, templates, etc. will be catalogued with the version number include the creation date and the date of entry into force.

2. All the documents under the Standard which are subject to review and/or update must incorporate an annex to the document clearly referencing updates, indicating the essential changes between the updated version and the preceding versions. The annex must also contain the information on the date of entry into force. The reviews of the documents may involve the amendment of rules and/or requirements in relation to previous versions.

3. The different stakeholders involved in the Standard are responsible for the use of the up-to-date versions of documents, and may, at the discretion of the regulator, establish periods of grace between overlapping validity of different versions.

4. The operating language of this Standard is Spanish. All documents relating to the cycle of the project must be drafted and presented in Spanish.

1.1 Entry into force

5. This standard enters into force when approved by resolution of the management body responsible for its approval, termination and monitoring of entries on the Register of the Andalusian Emissions Offset System for the carbon offset projects.

2. Purpose

6. The purpose of this Standard is to provide stakeholders involved in the development of blue carbon projects in Andalusia with a clear guide on minimum requirements, administrative approaches and alternative methodologies for the design, implementation and monitoring of conservation/restoration of seagrass meadows and saltmarshes and all types of projects included in the scope of this Standard.

7. The scope of all those activities related to the generation of carbon credits (Absorption Units or AUs) linked to CO_2 absorptions originating in emission offset project considered in Law 8/2018, of 8 October[1]. Each AU is the quantity of certified CO_2 absorbed through an absorption project, equivalent to one ton of CO_2.

8. In general, the execution of the absorption projects of the Standard must not be demanded by any legal requirement or applicable sectoral regulation.

9. Adoption of the Standard is voluntary and implies the acceptance of the technical, administrative and methodological provisions set out herein.

10. The scope of application of this Standard does not include the evaluations of the carbon footprint of declarations of carbon neutrality.

11. The Standard defines the targets across three fundamental areas:

    a) Provide requirements applicable to all type of projects included in the scope of application of the Standard and provide a specific approach that allows for facilitation and promotion of clear and common understanding of all the elements involved in the Standard.

    b) Guarantee the quality and uniformity of data included in the description of the projects and all those elements linked to monitoring.

    c) Ensure the efficiency and general integrity of the Standard, guaranteeing containment of implementation costs and consistency and reliability of the data relating to the life of the projects.

2.1 Terminology

12. In addition to the specific definitions detailed in the different documents linked to the Standard, the existence of three levels of requirements represented by the following generally accepted expressions:

    a) “Must” is used to indicate the requirements must be followed on a compulsory basis.

    b) "Should" is used to indicate that, among the various possibilities, it is recommended to pursue the indicated steps as particularly adequate.

    c) “May” is used to indicate that an option/alternative is permitted within compliance with this Standard.

1 Law 8/2018 of the Regional Government of Andalusia against climate change and for the transition to a new energy model in Andalusia.

Consolidated text: https://www.boe.es/eli/es-an/l/2018/10/08/8/con

3. Guiding principles of the Standard

13. The proponents of the project will ensure that all the proposed activities comply with the standards and requirements of the Standard applicable to all phases of the project cycle, including the design, implementation and monitoring up to the issue of AUs.

14. The following principles constitute the guide for design, implementation and monitoring of the results of a project.

3.1 Relevance

15. These elements are of interest, relating to aspects such as sources of greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), GHG sinks, GHG pools, activity data, methodology and all other information suitable for the needs of the user.

3.2 Transparency

16. It is guaranteed that the elements that make up the documentation are sufficient and clear to make it possible to understand how the actions proposed were described and the impact of results, as well as the related calculations to make it possible to confirm the quality and traceability.

3.3 Consistency

17. The data have attributes that are free of contradiction and are coherent with other data in a similar context (spatial and/or temporal).

3.4 Comparability

18. The calculation of the procedures defined in the Standard are replicable and comparable between different territories and circumstances.

3.5 Exhaustivity

19. The estimates or all relevant variables are reported, defining the system to follow in the case of absence of data, and establishing the criteria where required to make certain assumptions.

3.6 Accuracy

20. Insofar as can be determined, the results of the application of the Standard should not include overestimations or underestimations. The User of the Standard commits to provide descriptive information on the processes to reduce levels of uncertainty, justifying the decision on the basis of the technical viability criteria and availability of information. In parallel, the estimates must define the way in which the criteria are addressed in relation to the materiality of the calculations. To do that, every effort must be made to eliminate bias from estimates.

3.7 Duration

21. Faced with a risk of reversibility, adequate safeguards are established to ensure the risk of reversal is minimised and that, in the event of any reversal, there is a mechanism that ensures the AUs are substituted or offset.

3.8 Independent audit

22. The carbon absorptions covered by this Standard are verified to a reasonable level of guarantee with an accredited independent verification body (IVB) with the necessary experience for the verification of reduction of emissions in areas compatible with this Standard.

3.9 Unique

23. Each AU generated based on this Standard should be unique and should be linked to a project. Appropriate procedures are articulated to prevent any double counting, whether it consists of the issue of the AUs or the potential double claiming of the AUs generated.

3.10 Conservative approach

24. Conservative assumptions, values and procedures are used to ensure that CO_2 absorptions are not overestimated.

4. Functions and responsibilities

4.1 Management Body/Standard Register

25. The management body supervises the operational, procedural and methodological functioning of the Standard. The management body is the final point of contact for proponents of projects for the registration of projects and the issue of AUs.

26. Among other functions, the manager will have the following competencies:

a) Support the projects, and new related methodologies related, among other aspects, with the calculation and estimates of baselines, monitoring plans, etc.

b) Propose, implement and review provisions relating to the procedures linked to the Standard.

c) Define the criteria used by the independent verification bodies can serve as certification bodies of the Standard.

d) Make available to the general public and the proponents of the relevant information projects in relation to the Standard, and the publicity proposals deemed appropriate.

e) Develop, maintain and make available to the public a repository of standards, procedure, methodologies and standards approved.

f) Develop and maintain the register of the project and AUs associated with the Standard.

g) Carry out any other function for the maintenance and correct operation of the Standard, and for regulatory and/or legislative adherence.

4.2 Methodological Support Panel

27. The principal mission of the methodological support panel is to develop recommendations for the Standard management body on technical guidelines and/or related methodologies, among others, with the variables on description of the project, calculation and estimates and monitoring plans. At the request of the Standard management body, the panel may propose guidelines and clarifications on the implementation methodology of projects.

28. The methodological support panel may, at the request of the Standard management body, provide technical, methodological and scientific guidelines in relation to the potential deviations from the projects, or approval of reviews proposed by stakeholders.

29. The members participating in the methodological support panel must certify, credibly and unequivocally, the absence of conflict of interest in relation to the specific area of the recommendation.

30. The selection of members of the methodological support panel is the responsibility of the Standard management body. Said selection will take into consideration the criteria for technical, professional and scientific experience of the candidate in relation to materials covered in this Standard.

4.3 Proponents of the project

31. The proponent of the project is an individual, association, consortium or organisation that presents or proposes a project eligible for registration within the framework of this Standard. The proponent of the project will be responsible for liaising with the stakeholders involved in the Standard.

32. The responsibilities and functions of the stakeholders involved in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project should be clearly identified.

33. The internal structural organisation of the proponent of the project may recognise different responsibilities including:

a) Technical participant: participant of a project responsible for the technical development of the project, assuming responsibility for the design of the project, calculation and estimates, implementation of the actions of the project, including its development and execution and monitoring.

b) Financial participant in the project: participant in the project who assumes no direct responsibility for the technical development of the project, assuming mainly actions linked to the financing or patronage of the project.

4.4 Independent Verification Body

34. The entity recognised by the Standard Management Body and which meets the requirements described in the Standard is considered an IVB.

35. The principal mission of the IVB is to the verification and certification of the AUs in the framework of the projects registered in accordance with this Standard.

36. The independent verification body will ensure the integrity at all times in verification/certification activities, and work on a credible, independent, non-discriminatory and transparent bases.

37. The independent verification body will act impartially and avoid any conflict of interest that might compromise its capacity to make impartial decisions.

38. The independent verification body must establish, document, apply and maintain a procedure to determine the human and technical resources (internal and/or external) with competency for completing the verification/certification functions.

5. Links with other greenhouse gas programmes/standards

39. The Standard may be linked, through the specific decision of the management body, to other national and international programmes/standards aligned with the purpose and scope of this Standard. The link with programmes/standards must consider the compatibility of at least the following aspects:

- Recognition of verification bodies.
- Ensuring the absence of double counting in the issue of credits and the identification of projects.
- The compatibility of methodological references in accordance with the requirements established in this Standard.
- Type of projects.

6. Term

40. The determination of the criteria for the term covered by the Standard is limited to three specific areas:

- Start date of the project: The start date of the project will be considered the implementation date of the activities driving the generation of AUs. To that effect, the registration date of the project will be considered the start date of the project.

- Credit period: The period in which the atmospheric CO_2 absorptions are attributable to a project adhering to the Standard. The period of time applied to the credit period will be:
  - Fixed period: 50 years.

- Term: during the term of the project, the proponent of the project must carry out maintenance actions agreed with the management body.
  - Term: 50 years, coinciding with the credit period.

41. The registration of those projects designed and implemented from the entry into force of Law 8/2018 and complying with the requirements provided for in this Standard and methodological documents.

7. Ownership of the project

42. The description of the project should be accompanied by one or several of the following types of tests to establish the ownership of the project granted to the proponents of the project:

a) Document certifying the stakeholders involved in the project, which must include detailed identification of the natural person or legal entity in whose name the AUs will be issued.

43. The proponent of the project will certify compliance with applicable regulation around the public maritime-terrestrial domain as well the necessary permits from competent authorities for the intervention in this environment.

8. Design of the project

8.1 Conceptual note

44. The conceptual note of the project will be limited in length, no longer than 15 pages, and must adhere to the template. The information contained in the conceptual note must provide clear information that identify, among other aspects:

    a) The proponent of the project and participants (if applicable).

    b) Area of the project (coordinates, geographical and nominal references, etc.).

    c) Prior context of the area of intervention and baseline.

        i. Vulnerabilities and climate impacts to be addressed through intervention.

        ii. Obstacles (social, gender, tax, regulatory, technological, financial, ecological, institutional) to be overcome.

    d) The actions provided:

        i. Competencies and activities planned to address the obstacles identified above that will lead to the expected results.

        ii. Description of the adequacy of the activities of the proposal in relation to the regulatory/legal framework.

        iii. If necessary, proof of the implementation agreements must be provided.

    e) Expected results of the project in terms of the fight against climate change and the existence of co-benefits.

    f) Indicative financial report on action.

    g) Additional supporting documentation that might be provided:

        i. Feasibility study.

        ii. Environmental and social impact assessment or environmental and social management framework.

        iii. Consultations of interested parties (if applicable).

        iv. Operations and maintenance plan, if applicable.

        v. Letters of co-financing commitment.

8.2 Project Description Document

45. The proponent of the project must use the templates publicly available. The proponent of the project will adhere to the published requirements and compliance instructions.

46. In the case of "commercially sensitive" information, the proponent of the project may request from the management body the restriction of public access to such information, providing the grounds for same. The acceptance of such request will be at the discretion of the management body. The management body will provide a reasoned explanation of its decision in this regard.

47. The information contained in the design template of the project must include the following:

a) Title of the project.

b) Reference to the methodology and calculation tool applied (version, year, validity etc.).

c) The purpose and the general description of the activity of the project, including how to contribute to sustainable development.

d) The physical/geographic location of the project.

e) The presence of any species or habitats subject to a special protection regime.

f) Legal protection provisions in the area or geographic scope of the project.

g) The measurements to be used and/or applied in the project.

i. A list of actions and interventions to be carried out within the framework of the project, in chronological order,.

ii. Quantitative aspects of the intervention.

iii. Expected results and term of execution.

iv. Monitoring and control measures.

v. Species and varieties selected for the activity of the project.

h) Description of the pre-operational state or scenario existing before the completion of the project, especially in current environmental conditions in the area scheduled for the project activity.

i) Actions developed prior to the proposal of the project.

48. The design of the project should include information allowing to identify:

- Relevant stakeholders in legal and/or jurisdictional material of the project area.
- The stakeholders involved in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project, detailing the responsibility and functions of each of them.

49. The proponent of the project should confirm that the project is not registered on any other scheme/ programme and/or carbon standard, to avoid double counting of AUs.

50. The proponent of the project must prove that they hold the authorisation (in the form of a concession, collaboration agreement or other) for the design and execution of the implementation, maintenance and monitoring of the CO_2 absorption project. The proponent of the project must submit supporting documentation that conclusively establishes any right to use/liability arising from a legal, proprietary or contractual right in the generation of AUs.

8.3 Type of project: Individual project

51. The projects under the Standard for the certification of blue carbon credits correspond to the type of projects contained in Law 8/2018 of the Regional Government of Andalusia on measures to address climate change and for the transition to a new energy model in Andalusia.

52. To be eligible, projects must meet all the provisions, standards and requirements established in the Standard and the related functional and methodological documents. Any additional requirements or documents determined by the management body must also be met.

53. Four types of project are considered in the Standard:

    a) Restoration projects of coastal wetlands and tidal marshes.

    b) Restoration projects of seagrass meadows.

    c) Conservation project of tidal marshes and seagrass meadows that increase or maintain organic blue carbon stocks.

    d) Restoration projects of tidal marshes and seagrass meadows.

54. These categories may be extended to project actions for the implementation of conservation actions to increase or maintain organic blue carbon stocks or other typologies that may be defined at a later stage.

8.4 Location of the project

55. The location of the project is limited to the Autonomous Community of Andalusia.

56. For the purpose of guaranteeing the location of the project, the necessary information must be provided to define the exact location of the specified area.

The information provided must ensure compliance with regulator and/or jurisdictional requirements of the project.

57. The location will be specified in the description of the project in terms of the area covered. The spatial extension of the project must be clearly defined to facilitate monitoring and verification.

58. In the description the location, the following minimum information must be included:

- Name of the area of the project (local name, geographic references, etc.).
- Map of the project area.
- Geodesic polygons delimiting the geographic area of each activity, plots definition (in the format of compatible files from the regulatory authority of the Standard).
- Real size of the project area.
- Ownership and concession details.
- Detailed description supporting compliance with legal/jurisdictional regulation.

8.5 Application of the methodology.

59. The proponent of the project will provide the references (title, version and reference number) of the methodology and calculation tool applied. The project proponent is responsible for ensuring compliance with methodological requirements at all stages of the of the project.

8.6 Additionality

60. Any voluntary project is considered additional when it can guarantee that the real net GHG absorptions through the sinks considered in the current Standard are in excess of the sum of the changes in carbon sticks in carbon pools within the limits of the project which would have occurred in the absence of the proposed project.

61. When applying the baseline and monitoring methodologies under this Standard, projects are automatically considered additional if they exclusively apply the measures listed in this section and provide evidence that they comply with the relevant conditions set out herein.

8.7 Estimating the volume of absorptions (AUs)

8.7.1 *Ex ante* estimate

62. The proponent of the project will present an estimate of the AUs generated for each monitoring period within the credit period, in accordance with the methodology and the calculation tools.

8.7.2 *Ex post* estimate

63. The proponent of the project will describe how to make an *ex post* calculation of the project scenario and estimate the AUs generated by the project.

64. If the proposed activity contains more than one component, the proponent of the project will apply this requirement for each component separately, ensuring transparency and traceability of results.

65. The proponent of the project will describe all the steps to undertake for the implementation of the values in the calculation tools and provide all the results required for the methodology applied.

66. The proponent of the project must, in accordance with the methodology applied and the calculation tool, provide the necessary information for the estimation of the data and parameters involved in the calculations. This paragraph makes reference to both the parameters being monitoring and those not subject to the methodological monitoring (default values, assumptions).

67. The proponent of the project ensures that the application of predetermined data in the estimate of AU reductions ensures conservative estimates.

68. The proponent of the project, when employing sampling techniques to determine the values of the parameters for the calculation of AUs, will include a sampling plan with a description of the approach to sampling, important underlying assumptions and the reasons for the selection of the chosen approach. The sampling plan must be designed in a way that provides unbiased, reliable estimates of the average value of the parameters used in the calculation of the AUs.

69. Unless specific methodological criteria state otherwise, the project proponent will use a 90/10 confidence/precision interval as reliability criteria of the sampling effort.

8.8 Geographic limits/boundaries of project.

70. The proponent of the project will describe the project proposal, including the physical delimitation of the project and the activities included within the scope of the project in accordance with the methodologies applied and the standardised baselines applied.

71. The selection must be in line with the provisions of the methodology section.

8.9 Baseline or reference scenario

72. The baseline scenario represents the carbon emissions/sequestering scenario that would occur in the absence of the project. This reference scenario will be determined accurately so that the generation of AUs can be calculated based on the status prior to the baseline scenario and the status arising from the implementation of the project in relation to carbon absorption.

73. The project reference scenario will be determined in accordance with the requirements established in the methodology applied in the project. The choice of the baseline scenario shall be justified.

74. The equivalence of the type and level of activity of the project and the reference scenario must be demonstrated and, where applicable, the significant differences between the project and the reference scenario will be explained.

75. When developing the reference scenario, those assumptions, values and procedures that help avoid any overestimation of AUs will be selected.

8.10 Project scenario

76. The project scenario is defined as the scenario that will exist once the project is implemented and operable (involving maintenance and monitoring in line with the applicable methodological criteria).

8.11 Monitoring plan

77. The proponent of the project will draft and describe a monitoring plan for the project, in accordance with the methodologies applied and the other regulatory methodological or administrative documents.

78. The design, inclusion and execution of the project monitoring plan must provide information allowing to guarantee the traceability of this information and its consistency with the methodology used. The information included in the monitoring plan will cover at least the following aspects.

a) The frequency and regularity of monitoring, reporting and verification.

b) Maintenance actions which will be necessary for the project area to guarantee its satisfactory development.

c) The employment of the methods for the collection of data set out in the methodology.

d) The use of a version of the monitoring report template in force.

e) The activity data involved in the calculation of carbon absorptions that have been measured, assessed of registered in the proposed intervals.

f) The default data will be defined in the calculation tools and the methodology, and if not available, will be based on the scientific literature.

g) The equipment used in the monitoring are certified/calibrated according to the national standards and/or the scientific community.

h) The coherence of the estimated parameters and variables is analysed.

i) The operating and management structure, responsibilities and institutional solutions necessary for the application of the monitoring plan are defined precisely.

j) Measures are established for the conservation and archive of monitoring data for at least two years after verification.

79. For each parameter, the frequency of monitoring and its characteristic must be suitable for the type of project and specific needs and must be established in the project design document.

80. The monitoring plan must be completed before the verification process is initiated.

81. The first verification of the project will be completed at least eight years after the implementation and subsequent verifications carried out at least every seven years. The proponent of the project may carry out more frequent verifications and with shorter monitoring periods.

8.12 Existence of co-benefits

82. The proponent of the project may draft a document describing the additional benefits for the sustainable development arising from the implementation of the project.

83. If including information on co-benefits, the proponent of the project may include in the monitoring plan the same information on the results of supervision of the co-benefits and whether they have the intention of verify monitoring results independently.

8.13 Eligibility and regulation

84. Before developing the project, the proponent will first confirm that the project activity is eligible to be registered within the framework of the Standard.

85. To confirm the eligibility within the framework of the Standard, before presenting the documents, the proponent of the project will demonstrate that:

    a) It complies with the eligibility requirements of at least one type of project described in the methodology.

    b) It has started to generate AUs after the entry into force of Law 8/2018 of the Regional Government of Andalusia.

    c) It implies net GHG emission reductions (through absorption; i.e., AUs) (compulsory requirement).

    d) It contributes to compliance with different United Nations SDGs)

86. The proponent of the project will ensure that all the proposed activities comply with the latest rules and requirements of the Standard applicable to the activity of the project in all stages of the project cycle, including the design of the activity, implementation and monitoring up to the issue of AUs.

87. When reference is made to external documents other than the applicable regulatory documents of the Standard, the latest version of the document will be used.

8.14 Analysis of environmental impact

88. The proponent of the project will complete an environmental impact assessment and provide a summary of the analysis and references to all related documentation.

89. The project must comply with all the legal requirements on environmental legislation.

9. Implementation of the project

90. The proponent of the project must implement and operate the project in accordance with the description in the design document submitted, including all the physical characteristics.

91. The proponent of the project will maintain and monitor the project and the generation of AUs according to the registered monitoring plan.

92. Four years after implementation, the proponent of the project must submit to the management body a report on the status of the project that allows for the assessment of its persistence. The document must include, at a minimum, updated photographs of the area where it is possible to observe the initial and current status of the project and a description of the maintenance actions carried out plus a timeline since implementation.

93. The proponent of the project must draft a single report for every monitoring period covering all the project activities using the templates and criteria of the Standard. The monitoring periods will be consecutive. There shall be no gaps between them and will not overlap.

94. All monitoring activities, verifications and requests for the issue of AUs are calculated using the Global Warming Potential values published in the latest version of the "2019 Refinement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories", in the design of the project, or those defined in the calculation structures of the Standard.

95. The proponent of the project will describe the project and the AUs generated in a monitoring report allowing for a full understanding of how the project is executed and monitored. The proponent will adhere to the templates in drafting the monitoring report.

96. In describing the implementation and monitoring, the proponent of the project must provide information on:

a) Title and reference number of the project.

b) Name of the proponent of the project.

c) Name of the participants involved in the project.

d) Location of the project.

e) Titles, version and reference numbers of the methodologies and calculation tools applied.

f) Start date and duration of the credit period.

g) Number of the monitoring period and dates covered.

h) Monitoring report number for the monitoring period, if several monitoring reports during the monitoring period are issued.

97. The proponent will submit a description of the project implemented including the following minimum information:

a) Description of the measures implemented.

b) Information on the execution and the actual functioning of the project, including the relevant dates.

c) For projects implemented in phases, the proponent will indicate the progress achieved in each phase.

98. The proponent will indicate any temporary deviations from the registered monitoring plan or permanent changes.

99. The proponent will describe the monitoring system and provide graphic diagrams and schemes that show the relevant control points. This description may include the procedures for data collection (flow of information, including data generation, the aggregation, registration, calculation and reports), the organisational structure, functions and responsibilities of the staff and emergency procedures for the monitoring system.

100. The proponent of the project will provide all parameters used in the calculations, and the information on how the data and parameters have been supervised.

101. For each parameter, the proponent must provide the AU values of the parameter monitored.

102. The proponent must describe the essential details of the calculation and offer an estimate of each parameter, including:

a) Description of the measurement/calculation procedure.

b) The sources of the data.

c) Characteristics and representativeness of the samples.

103. The techniques and equipment used to control each parameter must be described, including details on the precision and calibration data, frequency of sampling, representativeness, etc.

9.1 Processing of deviations

104. The proponent of the project will identify and document any existing or planned change for the implementation, operation or monitoring of the project.

105. If there is any existing or planned change in the implementation, operation or monitoring of the project, the proponent of the project will draft a corrected project design document reflecting actual or proposed changes. The proponent of the project will provide a summary of the changes, including the justification for the changes and any additional information relating to the changes in the project document.

106. The deviations of the project regardless of the nature thereof will not alter the eligibility criteria of the project.

107. The proponent of the project will determine whether the existing or planned changes are considered temporary deviations or are in fact permanent changes according to the following criteria:

9.2 Temporary deviation

108. Any change arising from an unavoidable situation in which the proponent cannot, for a period of time, monitor the project in accordance with the monitoring plan, the methodologies applied or any other regulatory document applicable to this Standard.

a) The proponent of the project will describe the nature, the scope and duration of this period of deficient monitoring in the monitoring report, proposing alternative monitoring provisions for the period in question.

b) The proponent of the project will apply conservative hypotheses or discount factors to the calculations to the necessary extent to ensure the integrity of the project and that the calculation of AUs is not unduly distorted as a result of the deviation.

9.3 Permanent deviation

109. Any change arising as a result of the modification of the parameters proposed in the project design document, the impact of which will extend beyond the remaining project's life span.

110. When the permanent deviation implies changes in the design of the project, the proponent will draft a revised project design document that describes the nature and scope of the actual or proposed changes.

111. Among the project design changes, the following options can be identified:

a) Increase or reduction of the surface area of the project.

b) Inclusion of the new measure/actions, not originally planned, aimed at maintaining and/or improving the project and its capture capacity.

c) Change of the real operating parameters under the control of the proponent and which differ from the parameters initially provided for in the design of the project.

d) Changes arising from the updating of the methodologies and calculation tools in this Standard.

9.4 Verification and acceptance of the deviations

112. The deviations proposed (temporary or permanent) must be verified by an IVM, which will issue a reasoned opinion on the deviation which must be approved by the management body of the Standard.

10. Verification

113. The proponent of the project will retain all monitoring results for the project in accordance with the retention system for logs identified in the design document.

114. The proponent of the project will select an IVB certified for the verification of the implementation of the project and the generation of AUs in the monitoring period. The proponent (or in the absence thereof, the participant designated by the proponent for the execution of the contract) should have a contract with said IVB

115. The proponent will submit to the selected IVB a complete project monitoring report for the monitoring period, along with supporting documentation for publication and verification.

116. The verification is the reviewed process and subsequent confirmation of at least the following aspects:

    a) The implementation, maintenance and monitoring of the project in accordance with the project document and any other alteration/deviation in any of the phases of the life span of the project.

    b) Compliance with the provisions of the Standard and the methodological variables.

    c) The data that appear in the monitoring report: analysing the registers and archives of data, the accuracy of the data, the consistency of the data provided and the calculation of the generation of AUs.

    d) The accuracy and quality of the monitoring process.

117. The verification process must be completed at least once every seven years, with the exception of the first verification, which must be completed at least eight years after the implementation of the project.

10.1 Verification bodies

118. For the purpose of this Standard, accreditations granted under the following schemes are recognised:

    - Clean Development Mechanism: Designated Operational Entities (DOEs).
    - European emissions trading system: entities understood as those verification bodies accredited in Spain (or in any EU Member State by virtue of mutual recognition of accreditation entities).[2]

10.2 The verification team:

119. The verifier (IVB) will ensure that the designated verification team have the technical and professional competence and the resources necessary for the execution of the verification activities.

120. The verification team will be composed of a head verifier and as many additional team members the head verifier deems necessary, to ensure coverage of the all areas linked to the verification process. The verification team will be comprised of the following technical profiles (may be performed by the same person):

    - Head Verifier: responsible for the management of the verification process with overall authority, communication with other stakeholders.
    - Verifier: responsible for carrying out verifications of monitoring reports, ensuring compliance with all regulatory provisions.
    - Technical expert: qualified person who provides technical, methodological and sector-specific knowledge and/or experience in a verification/certification team or in a technical review team.

121. The IVB must provide grounds for the verification report, selection of the team members and the principal functions of the verification team. The verification report must include the certification or qualifications of the chosen members of the team based on their competency for the execution of the verification work.

122. The IVB must retain all documents related to the verification process of a project under this standard for at least 10 years after the completion of the verification report issued to the management body.

123. The verification body must have the necessary competence for the execution of a technical review process and, to this effect, will define:

2 Commission Regulation (EU) No 600/2012, Article 66 (1) on the mutual recognition of verifiers: Member States will accept the accreditation certificates of verifiers accredited by those national accreditation bodies and respect the right of the verifiers to carry out verification for their scope of accreditation.

- Technical reviewer: designated qualified person to complete technical review.
- Technical review team: one or more persons completing a technical review.

124. The IVB must ensure the general principles of good professional practice are upheld along with the general principles of the Standard. In the event of any conflict of interest, the IVB will abstain from providing the verification services in which:

- A verifier or part of the same legal entity has previously provided any technical assistance to the project subject to verification.

- The relationship between the verifier and the owner or operator of the project is based on shared ownership, shared management or shared staff, shared resources, shared finances and shared contracts or commercial activities.

11. Generation and issue of Absorption Units. Guarantee fund

125. The Blue Carbon Project approved by the management body may begin to count real net absorptions form the project implementation date.

126. To ensure the environmental integrity of all of the blue carbon projects managed under the Standard, a Guarantee Fund is set up to cover the loss of absorptions in any of the registered products due to force majeure.

127. If a proponents fails to meet the maintenance or monitoring obligations of the project agreed with the management body or acts in a manner that is negligent or fraudulent, they may not use the Absorption Unit Guarantee Fund to replace those absorptions lost due to negligence or fraud.

128. The Guarantee Fund will be funded in part by the AUs issued ex ante to all approved projects, and part of the AUs verified after each verification process.

129. When the management body is aware of the implementation of the project and approves the supporting documentation submitted by the proponent, they will issue and consign in the SACE account of the project, the quantity of AUs corresponding to the percentage approved ex ante, minus the part allocated to the Guarantee Fund.

130. The ex ante Absorption Units, which are allocated to the SACE account of the proponent are designated “AUs available ex ante”.

131. After each verification, the management body will register the resulting absorptions and determine the quantity of Absorption Units verified minus those allocated to the Guarantee Fund.

132. The ex ante Absorption Units, which are allocated to the proponent's SACE account are designated as “AUs available ex ante”.

133. After each verification process, the management body will check in the proponent’s SACE account whether the total number of verified AUs minus the part allocated to the Guarantee Fund is greater than the number of “AUs available ex ante”. Once exceeded, the “ex post AUs” will be issued.

134. The different quantities of Absorption Units to be considered are the following:

- Total ex ante AUs: 20% of the total absorptions over the project crediting period.
- Ex ante AUs for the Guarantee Fund: 10% of total ex ante AUs.
- AUs available ex ante: the difference between the two figures above.
- Total verified AUs: sum resulting from the verification of the absorptions registered by the project during the monitoring period.
- AUs verified for the Guarantee Fund: 2% of total verified Aus.
- Ex post AUs: the difference between the two figures above.

135. The Absorption Units of the Guarantee Fund that are not used after the end of the crediting period of the blue carbon projects in Andalusia are cancelled under the principle of substantial contribution to climate change mitigation in the Paris Agreement.

12. Related Documents

136. The documents related to the Standard and applicable over the course of blue carbon projects in Andalusia (calculation tool, methodology manual, templates) will be registered in their latest version on the Regional Government of Andalusia website.

Version	Date	Principal elements of the version (changes with respect to previous versions)
01.0	15/07/2021	Initial adoption
01.1	25/11/2021	Layout of document
01.2	31/07/2023	Review for approval.