

Summary of Changes from ACR Standard v4.0 to v5.0

The following is a summary of major changes from v4.0 to v5.0 of the *ACR Standard*.

Topic	Revision	Section
Governance	Adds language to clarify that ACR is governed by the senior management team, executive team and Board of Directors of its parent organization, Winrock International.	Introduction
Effective date of ACR Standard 5.0 and application of changes	The ACR Standard v5.0 supersedes the ACR Standard v4.0, published in January 2015. Any project listed or registered subsequent to March 1, 2018 must follow all requirements of the ACR Standard v5.0. Projects that are registered prior to March 1, 2018, may be validated and verified according to ACR Standard v4.0 through the end of the Crediting Period.	Introduction
Ex-ante Crediting	Maintains and clarifies ACR's existing policy to not credit GHG emissions reductions or removals when an emission mitigation activity has not occurred or is not yet verified.	1.I
Revisions to the ACR Standard	Specifies the timeframe of 60 days for the public comment period for revisions to the ACR Standard. Clarifies a three-year minimum timeframe for ACR to review and revise its Standards. Further clarifies that ACR may require all projects, including those validated under a previous version of the ACR Standard, to immediately implement a policy or process revision, such as an administrative or reporting requirement, detailed in a subsequent version of the ACR Standard.	1.J
Conflict of Interest	Maintains and clarifies the existing Winrock Conflict of Interest Policy as well as Conflict of Interest provisions in place with registry service provider(s) and verification bodies.	1.L
Uncertainty	Specifies how uncertainty deduction is calculated when Project Proponent cannot meet the targeted sampling error.	2.B.c
Participation in Other Asset Programs	Specifies the eligibility requirements for any project that seeks to simultaneously register non-carbon attributes and carbon offsets.	2.B.g
Start Date	Clarifies the project start date for projects using newly approved methodology, or newly approved modification that expands the eligibility of a previously published methodology. Differentiates between AFOLU and non-AFOLU projects.	3 – Table 2
Minimum Project Term	Consolidates language around minimum project term requirements. Policy remains unchanged.	3 - Table 2

Real	Maintains and clarifies ACR's existing policy that credits will not be issued for GHG emissions reductions or removals when an emission mitigation activity has not occurred or is not yet verified (ie: no ex-ante crediting).	3 – Table 2
Land Title	Removes the overarching eligibility requirement for land title, as this is not applicable to all offset project types. Moves requirement details to AFOLU specific eligibility criteria in Annex A.	3 – Table 2
Regulatory Compliance	Updates and clarifies the requirement for material regulatory compliance and violations related to administrative processes. Provides that projects deemed to be out of compliance with regulatory requirements are not eligible to earn credits during the period of non-compliance.	3 – Table 2
Permanent	Maintains and clarifies ACR's existing requirements for projects with a risk of reversal of GHG removal enhancements to assess and mitigate risk, and monitor, report and compensate for reversals as detailed in the legally-binding Reversal Risk Mitigation Agreement.	3 – Table 2
Validation and Verification	Clarifies that validation can be conducted at the same time and by the same VVB as a full verification, however the deadline for validation is determined by the methodology being implemented and the project Start Date.	3 - Table 2
Environmental and Community Safeguards	Maintains ACR's policy on assessment, monitoring and reporting on project environmental and community impacts and updates the policy to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarify that projects can follow internationally recognized and/or industry-standard environmental and community safeguards approaches including the World Bank Safeguard Policies, the Climate Community and Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA) Standard or the Social Carbon Standard; and - Highlight that projects may disclose positive environmental and social impacts as aligned with applicable sustainable development goals. 	3 – Table 2
Regulatory Surplus	Specifies consideration for timing of conservation easements when defining regulatory constraints of AFOLU projects.	4.A.1
Permanence	Consolidates language between previously published policy documents. Defines "reversal" and maintains and clarifies ACR's existing requirements for all AFOLU projects with a risk of reversal of GHG removal enhancements to assess and mitigate risk (using the ACR Tool for Risk Analysis and Buffer Determination), and monitor, report and compensate for reversals as detailed in the applicable ACR methodology and the legally-binding Reversal Risk Mitigation Agreement. Maintains and clarifies the use of the ACR Buffer Pool as specified in ACR Buffer Pool Terms and Conditions	5

	in Appendix B. Further outlines requirements specific to geologic sequestration projects.	
Project Development Process	Clarifies steps along project development process, including that ACR must approve the VVB prior to the start of validation and verification services based on proper accreditation, Conflict of Interest (COI) review and rotation requirements. Incorporates requirements for “previous rejection by another GHG program” from chapter 10 with no changes.	6
Project Development Process	Removes references to the processes for methodology modifications and approval of new methodologies, which was duplicative of information included in Chapter 7: Methodologies and Tools.	6.B and 6.C
Aggregation and Programmatic Development Approach	Clarifies requirements for Aggregated Projects and adds information on requirements for projects registering under a Programmatic Development Approach (PDA).	6.E
Crediting Period Renewal	Clarifies that upon seeking a renewal of a crediting period, projects are required to meet the requirements of the most recent version of the ACR Standard.	6.H
Modifications to ACR approved methodologies	Provides clarifications to ACR’s existing policy for the process of review and approval of modifications to ACR approved methodologies.	7.A.2
Methodologies from other GHG Programs	Removes the language on the use of methodologies from other GHG Programs since methodologies from other programs, unless CDM as detailed in 7.A.1, would be considered new methodologies, for which the process is detailed in 7.A.3 (previously 7.A.4).	7.A.3
Timing for Updates to ACR approved methodologies	For ACR methodologies that employ a performance standard for additionality assessment, clarifies the timeline for reviewing the validity of assumptions on which the performance standard is based.	7.C
Methodologies and Tools for Social and Environmental Impact Assessment	Moves ACR requirements for environmental and community impact assessments, net positive community and environmental impacts of projects, and regular disclosure of negative impacts and mitigation measures, into a new Chapter 8.	7.E
Environmental and Community Safeguards	Incorporates requirements previously in 7.E into a new Chapter 8: Environmental and Community Safeguards, which maintains ACR’s policy on assessment, monitoring and reporting on project environmental and community impacts and updates the policy to:	8

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specify ACR requirements for project environmental and community impact assessments; - Clarify that ACR does not require that a particular process or tool be used for the impact assessment as long as basic requirements defined by ACR in Section 8 are addressed. Note that per existing policy, projects can follow internationally recognized and/or industry-standard environmental and community safeguards approaches including the World Bank Safeguard Policies, the Climate Community and Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA) Standard or the Social Carbon Standard; and - Highlight that projects may disclose positive environmental and social impacts as aligned with applicable sustainable development goals. 	
Validation/Verification Body Requirements	Specifies that VVBs that are not accredited by ANSI will be subject to additional oversight by ACR as detailed in the <i>ACR Validation and Verification Standard</i> .	9.D
Validation and Verification Oversight	Adds a new section H to clarify ACR's existing verification oversight policies and updates the current policy to include provisions for audits of verifications of ACR projects.	9.H
Policies to Prevent Double Issuance, Double Use and Double Selling of Offsets	Maintains and clarifies ACR's existing policies to prevent double issuance, double use and double selling of offsets from projects registered simultaneously on ACR and other voluntary or compliance GHG Programs or Registries as well as for projects transferred to ACR, which were previously registered on other voluntary or compliance GHG programs or registries.	10.A
Double Counting of Offsets	<p>Maintains ACR requirements, procedures and systems to avoid double claiming in the pre-Paris Agreement, pre-2020 context from offset projects in Annex I countries and non-Annex I countries and/or from activities that are part of a binding GHG emissions trading program, or that take place in a jurisdiction or sector in which there is a binding limit/cap established on GHG emissions.</p> <p>Adds a new section (10.B.1) to address double claiming in the context of the Paris Agreement under which all countries agree to Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to reduce emissions. Includes ACR requirements, procedures and systems to avoid double claiming.</p>	10.B
Complaints and Appeals Procedure	Outlines the ACR policies and procedures for presenting a complaint about and/or appealing a decision made by ACR.	11
Agriculture, Forestry and other Land Use (AFOLU) projects	Incorporates requirements in the previously published ACR Forest Carbon Project Standard v2.1 into the ACR Standard v5.0, detailing ACR's requirements for the quantification, monitoring, and reporting of Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) project-based projects	Appendix A

	<p>emission reductions and removals. Redundancies across ACR policy documents have been removed.</p> <p>Adds new definitions and requirements for AFOLU project types previously not addressed directly by ACR policy documents. These include: Agriculture-soil carbon enhancement; Agriculture-avoided emissions; Wetland Restoration or Revegetation; Avoided Conversion of Non-Forest.</p>	
Start Date: AFOLU	Expands the list of allowable start dates for IFM projects to include the date the project was submitted to ACR for listing review. Specifies requirements for newly addressed project types.	Appendix A Table 1
Crediting Period: AFOLU	Clarifies requirements for Avoided Conversion project types with land conservation agreements in place. Specifies requirements for newly addressed project types.	Appendix A Table 1
Natural Management Requirements	Adds a new criterion that project plantations are designed within a minimum threshold for facilitating regrowth of species that contribute to an ecosystem with broad environmental benefits and avoid potential negative impacts.	Appendix A Table 1
Use of Models	Adds specifications around use of models in AFOLU project development.	Appendix A Section 6
Validation and Verification: AFOLU	Clarifies that AR and wetlands restoration projects may defer their first verification up to 10 years after project validation.	Appendix A Section 7
Buffer Pool Terms and Conditions	Moves the detailed Terms and Conditions governing the use of the ACR Buffer Pool Account as Appendix B of the Standard rather than as a stand-alone document, and references the Appendix in Chapter 5. Provision to refund buffer contributions over time has been discontinued.	Appendix B
Definitions	List of definitions has been expanded to include non-methodology specific terms used across multiple project types.	Definitions