

## Terms of Reference (ToR)

### Independent External Technical Review

Methodology: BCR0014 – High Forest Low Deforestation (HFLD) Asia Pacific Version 1.0, Public Consultation Draft

#### 1. Background

BioCarbon has developed the methodology BCR0014 – High Forest Low Deforestation (HFLD) Asia Pacific (Version 1.0), currently under public consultation. The consultation documents are publicly available at: <https://biocarbonstandard.com/en/public-consultation/>

This methodology establishes a project-level REDD+ framework for HFLD contexts, based on a forward-looking, driver-based baseline approach, specifically designed for regions where historical deforestation rates are low but future risks are material and evolving.

In accordance with the BioCarbon methodological governance framework and international best practices, the methodology is subject to an independent external technical review.

This review aims to ensure methodological robustness, transparency, and alignment with high-integrity carbon market principles, including conservativeness, avoidance of over-crediting, additionality, permanence, and avoidance of double counting.

#### 2. Objective of the Review

The objective of the independent external review is to assess whether the methodology:

- (a) Ensures environmental integrity and conservative estimation of emission reductions;
- (b) Avoids systematic overestimation of mitigation outcomes;
- (c) Applies a robust, evidence-based forward-looking baseline approach, appropriate for HFLD contexts;
- (d) Adequately constrains baseline assumptions through drivers, enabling conditions, and observable land-use dynamics;
- (e) Is consistent with IPCC AFOLU guidance and REDD+ good practice;

- (f) Aligns with high-integrity frameworks, including ICVCM Core Carbon Principles and Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.

The review shall explicitly assess whether the methodology provides a credible and auditable alternative to purely historical baseline approaches, particularly in contexts where historical data alone is insufficient to represent future deforestation risk.

### 3. Scope of Work

The external reviewer shall assess at a minimum:

#### (a) Applicability and Eligibility

- (i) Clarity and enforceability of HFLD eligibility conditions;
- (ii) Adequacy of requirements for demonstrating credible and material future deforestation risk;
- (iii) Consistency with AFOLU and REDD+ accounting principles.

#### (b) Baseline and Additionality (Critical Area of Review)

The reviewer shall specifically assess:

- (i) Robustness of the forward-looking, driver-based baseline approach;
- (ii) Adequacy of the identification and treatment of:
  - (iii) drivers,
  - (iv) agents, and
  - (v) enabling conditions;
- (vi) Treatment of conditional and trigger-based baseline dynamics;
- (vii) Handling of scenario selection uncertainty, including plausibility and conservativeness;

Whether baseline scenarios are:

- (i) evidence-based,
- (ii) constrained (non-speculative), and
- (iii) auditable;
- (iv) Consistency between baseline assumptions and additionality demonstration;
- (v) Treatment of regulatory surplus and non-additional situations.

#### (c) Quantification Approach

- (i) Scientific validity of emission reduction quantification methods;
- (ii) Use and justification of the reference region;
- (iii) Representativeness and statistical robustness of data;
- (iv) Consistency between baseline and project emissions;
- (v) Application of conservative assumptions and parameters.

#### (d) Uncertainty and Conservativeness

Treatment of uncertainty, including:

- (i) measurement uncertainty; and
- (ii) structural uncertainty (scenario selection);
- (iii) Application of the BioCarbon Uncertainty Tool;
- (iv) Adequacy of conservative adjustments;
- (v) Safeguards to prevent over-crediting.

#### (e) Leakage

- (i) Identification of leakage sources consistent with drivers and agents;
- (ii) Adequacy of leakage quantification and conservative treatment;
- (iii) Integration of leakage into emission reduction accounting.

#### (f) Permanence and Reversal Risk

- (i) Identification and classification of reversal risks;
- (ii) Application of the BioCarbon Permanence and Risk Management Tool;
- (iii) Adequacy of buffer and compensation mechanisms;
- (iv) Monitoring and reporting of reversals.

#### (g) Avoidance of Double Counting

- (i) Consistency with national accounting frameworks;
- (ii) Alignment with Article 6 requirements;
- (iii) Application of exclusive claim and traceability principles.

#### (h) MRV and Data Integrity

- (i) Robustness of the MRV framework;
- (ii) Adequacy of monitoring of:
  - (iii) forest cover and condition;
  - (iv) drivers and enabling conditions (HFLD-specific);

Requirements for digital MRV (dMRV), including:

- (i) classification accuracy thresholds;
- (ii) validation procedures;
- (iii) Data traceability, transparency, and reproducibility.

(i) Transparency and Replicability

- (i) Clarity and completeness of methodological steps;
- (ii) Transparency of assumptions and parameters;
- (iii) Internal consistency across sections;
- (iv) Replicability across comparable HFLD contexts.

#### 4. Deliverables

The external reviewer shall provide:

- (i) A written independent technical review report;
- (ii) Identification of material methodological risks, if any;
- (iii) Clear, structured recommendations for improvement;

An overall conclusion regarding:

- (i) methodological robustness;
- (ii) environmental integrity; and
- (iii) suitability for application in high-integrity carbon markets.

The report shall clearly distinguish between:

- (i) critical issues (affecting integrity or credibility); and
- (ii) advisory recommendations (methodological improvements).

#### 5. Eligibility Requirements for Applicants

Applicants shall demonstrate:

Advanced academic qualifications in forestry, land-use science, carbon accounting, or related disciplines;

Demonstrated experience in REDD+, AFOLU methodologies, or GHG accounting;

Expertise in:

- (i) deforestation drivers analysis,
- (ii) remote sensing, and/or
- (iii) land-use modeling;
- (iv) Familiarity with IPCC AFOLU guidance;
- (v) Understanding of high-integrity carbon market principles (e.g., ICVCM CCPs, CORSIA, Article 6);
- (vi) Absence of conflicts of interest.

Applicants shall disclose any past or present involvement in the development of this methodology.

## 6. Selection Process

BioCarbon shall evaluate proposals through a documented, merit-based process, applying criteria related to:

- (a) Technical competence;
- (b) Relevant sectoral expertise;
- (c) Independence and conflict-of-interest screening;
- (d) Capacity to complete the review within the specified timeline.

## 7. Independence and Financial Arrangements

To safeguard independence:

- (a) The external reviewer shall not have participated in the development of the methodology;
- (b) The reviewer shall sign a conflict-of-interest declaration;
- (c) All costs associated with the review shall be borne exclusively by BioCarbon.

## 8. Timeline

The external review is expected to be completed within two (2) weeks from contract signature.