

Draft methodological tool**“Procedure to determine when accounting of the soil organic carbon pool may be conservatively neglected in CDM A/R project activities”****I. SCOPE, APPLICABILITY AND PARAMETERS****Scope**

This tool provides guidelines to determine when accounting of the soil organic carbon pool may be conservatively neglected in CDM A/R projects. The guidelines have been developed from a review of recent scientific peer-reviewed literature, and with reference to IPCC¹ literature as appropriate. Where available evidence on change in the soil organic carbon pool under land use or land-use change remains limited, a conservative approach has been adopted.

Applicability

The tool is applicable to those land areas within the project boundary that meet conditions 1 to 3 below:

1. The areas shall not include organic soils (e.g., peat-lands), or wetlands².
2. The rate of loss of carbon stocks in mineral soils due to erosion within the project boundary shall not be permanently increased above baseline rates by the CDM A/R project activity. This requirement shall be considered satisfied when conditions (i) to (iii) are met:
 - (i) Removal of existing vegetation during site preparation for the CDM A/R project activity shall not occur on more than 10% of the project area, unless it can be demonstrated that:
 - a. Land clearance by slash-and-burn activities is a common practice in the baseline scenario in the region in which the project is located; or
 - b. The rate of loss of carbon stocks in mineral soils in the project area is not increased above baseline rates for more than five years after the project commences.
 - (ii) Soil disturbance associated with site preparation for the CDM A/R activity shall not exceed 10% of the project area, unless it can be demonstrated that the rate of loss of carbon stocks in mineral soils in the project area is not increased above baseline rates for more than five years after the project commences.
 - (iii) If ploughing/ripping/scarification is used for site preparation, it shall follow the land contour.
3. Fine litter (woody twigs less than 2mm diameter, bark and leaves) shall remain on site.

Parameters

This procedure does not use its own parameters.

¹ The *Good Practice Guidance for Land Use, Land-use Change and Forestry* (IPCC 2003), and the *Revised 2006 Guidelines for Agriculture, Forest and Other Land Use* (IPCC 2006).

² “Wetlands”, “settlements”, “croplands” and “grasslands” are land uses as defined in the *Good Practice Guidance for Land Use, Land-use Change and Forestry* (IPCC, 2003). Any woody perennial vegetation on settlements, croplands or grasslands must be below the thresholds for forest land.

II. PROCEDURE

Changes in the carbon stocks of the mineral soil component of the soil organic carbon pool may be conservatively neglected in CDM A/R projects, during the calculation of net GHG removals by sinks, when the baseline carbon stock in mineral soils within the project boundary is either:

- In decline; or
- Is at steady-state or quasi-steady-state³; or
- Is increasing at a rate less than or equal to the rate expected under the project activity.

These conditions shall be considered satisfied when a CDM A/R project is established under the applicability conditions in Section I above, on any of the following land uses:

- Settlements².
- Croplands².
- Degrading or degraded grasslands².
- Any other grasslands where a similar land use has been present for at least 10 years, and provided also that conifer species are not used as part of the A/R project.
- Any other grasslands where a similar land use has been present for at least 10 years and conifer species are used within the A/R project, provided also that for those areas where conifers occur:
 - a. Carbon gains in neither the dead wood nor litter pools shall not be accounted; and
 - b. Evidence shall be provided that the majority of the material in the dead wood pool has remained on site during the crediting period.

³ The IPCC default assumption is that the mineral soil carbon pool can be considered at steady-state 20 years after any land use change known to cause a substantial change in soil carbon, and/or in litter inputs to the soil carbon pool (IPCC 2003). Current evidence suggests most change in the mineral soil carbon pool occurs within about the first 10 years after a land-use change to forestry, under climo-edaphic conditions commonly encountered for A/R projects. After this time, rates of change in the mineral soil carbon pool become very slow, and for all practical purposes the pool may be considered close to steady state—that is, at quasi-steady-state.

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