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# Programme Guide: Carbon Registry India

(DRAFT) VERSION 0.3

NETWORK FOR CERTIFICATION AND CONSERVATION OF FORESTS  
(NCCF)



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## Abbreviations

*To be provided in the final version of the document*

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Carbon Registry India

Carbon Registry India (CR-I), established by the Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests (NCCF), is a standards-based mechanism comprising GHG reduction and removal projects and associated methodologies. The CR-I mechanism is intended to provide a platform for listing, registration and verification of GHG reduction and removal projects, issuance of emission reductions units and approval and adoption of new quantification and monitoring methodologies, for the time being, applicable preferably to the Indian Territory. Consonant with all existing standards-based programmes, this mechanism too shall develop and follow a dedicated set of rules and requirements. The *rules* are defined as a collection of regulations, principles, as well as constraints, introduced to establish an overall structure of the mechanism, and further leverage decision-making. On the other hand, the *requirements* are defined as a collection of actions and procedures undertaken to achieve the intended outcomes of the mechanism, in conformance with the established rules. The all-round functioning of the mechanism will be ensured by the rules and requirements laid out in a dedicated document framework comprising standards, procedures, templates and forms, and other supporting documents, collectively labelled as regulatory documents.

## 1.2. Governing Body

The overall structure of the mechanism rests firmly on the underlying guiding principles of Climate Security, Confidentiality, Flexibility, Responsiveness and Cyber Security. It is being developed, managed and overseen by NCCF with Chairman and Chief Coordinator, Carbon Registry-India as the Principal Authority on all matters related to the development, functioning and maintenance of the Registry and all associated matters (Refer to section-5 for detailed description of the mechanism's Governing Structure).

## 1.3. Entry into force

The Programme Guide shall enter into force from *the date to be provided in the final document* and shall be put forward for revision every two years, or as deemed appropriate by the NCCF.

## 1.4. Language of documents

English shall be the language of operation of the mechanism. All regulatory documents under the mechanism, as applicable, shall be in English. If required, the documents may be translated to other languages also. However, interpretation of the English version shall hold precedence.

## 1.5. Definitions

The definitions of terms applicable under the mechanism have been made available in the Glossary of Terms document, being developed separately (refer to Section 4.4(iii)).

## 1.6. Unit of Measure and Unit of Exchange

Under the mechanism, the estimation, calculation and reporting of all GHG reduction and removals shall be made by converting each metric tonne of GHG into its Carbon Dioxide Equivalent (CO<sub>2e</sub>). The calculations of conversion into CO<sub>2e</sub> shall be based on Global Warming Potential (GWP) factor corresponding to a time horizon of 100 years.

The unit of exchange under the mechanism is a verified emissions reduction quantified in terms of metric tonnes of CO<sub>2e</sub>. The emission reduction shall be designated as '**Marketable Carbon Unit**' (MCU).

## 1.7. Avoidance of double counting

In order to maintain robustness, integrity, avert possible instances of double counting of emission reductions, and double assertion on environmental benefits due to GHG reductions and removals, NCCF shall undertake all measures outlined below:

- i. Assign a unique Reference Number to every project listed under the mechanism
- ii. Ensure that only one carbon unit is assigned for each tonne of emission reduction or removal
- iii. Provide a unique Serial ID to each carbon unit issued under the mechanism
- iv. Exclude existing projects and transfer of MCUs issued under other GHG programme(s).
- v. Exercise due diligence to check and preclude if a project has been registered under other GHG programme(s).

## 2. Objectives

The objectives of the CR-I mechanism are given below:

- **To promote domestic emission reduction and removal enhancement:** as internalization within the country of issuance of carbon units will promote preparation of GHG emission reduction and removal projects and activities in the country.
- **To create a scalable domestic carbon market:** to provide the owners, buyers and other intermediaries with a standardised, flexible platform for presenting, issuance and trading of carbon units.
- **To create a platform for introduction and usage of new methodologies:** as focus towards development of country-specific projects will lead to the development of specific methodologies suited for the Indian market.
- **To monetize emission reduction and removal benefits:** as project proponents are expected to trade the MCUs issued under the mechanism thereby generating revenue.
- **To reduce the overall cost of abatement:** as the mechanism will provide a healthy carbon market promoting competition among entities, it will reduce the overall cost of abatement.
- **Create general awareness:** presence of a national mechanism will create awareness about issues and urgency related to climate change and persuade entities to find solutions to address them. The awareness is intended to sensitise the corporates and the general public as well.

## 3. Scope

### 3.1. General Scope

The general scope of the CR-I mechanism constitutes independent and impartial validation of GHG emission reduction and removal projects for registration and verification of GHG emission reduction and removal enhancement leading to certification, and subsequent issuance of MCUs. In addition, the mechanism also entails approval and listing of project-based methodologies.

The principles, rules and requirements established under the mechanism are applicable to all Independent Project Proponents (IPPs), Validation/Verification Bodies (VVBs), Independent Methodology Developers (IMDs) and Transactional Organizations (TOs); which are collectively, along with the NCCF, termed as entities. The mechanism shall not be discriminatory towards any entity seeking admission under the mechanism. Moreover, it shall not prevent any entity to participate in any other GHG mechanism(s) or Emission Trading Scheme(s) provided the same does not lead to double counting of emission reductions (as mentioned in Section 1.7).

### **3.2. Geographical Scope**

The CR-I mechanism allows registration, verification and issuance of MCUs for projects from any location within the Indian Territory, provided these are using an approved methodology and further comply with all established rules, requirements and procedures of the mechanism.

### **3.3. Sectoral Scopes**

The mechanism shall adhere to the sectoral scopes defined by UNFCCC's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) as listed below:

1. Energy industries (renewable - / non-renewable sources)
2. Energy distribution
3. Energy demand
4. Manufacturing industries
5. Chemical industry
6. Construction
7. Transport
8. Mining/Mineral production
9. Metal production
10. Fugitive emissions from fuels (solid, oil and gas)
11. Fugitive emissions from production and consumption of halocarbons and sulphur hexafluoride
12. Solvents use
13. Waste handling and disposal



14. Afforestation and reforestation
15. Agriculture

All proposed project activities, new methodologies and tools shall fall within one or more sectoral scope(s) identified above.

### **3.4. Greenhouse Gases**

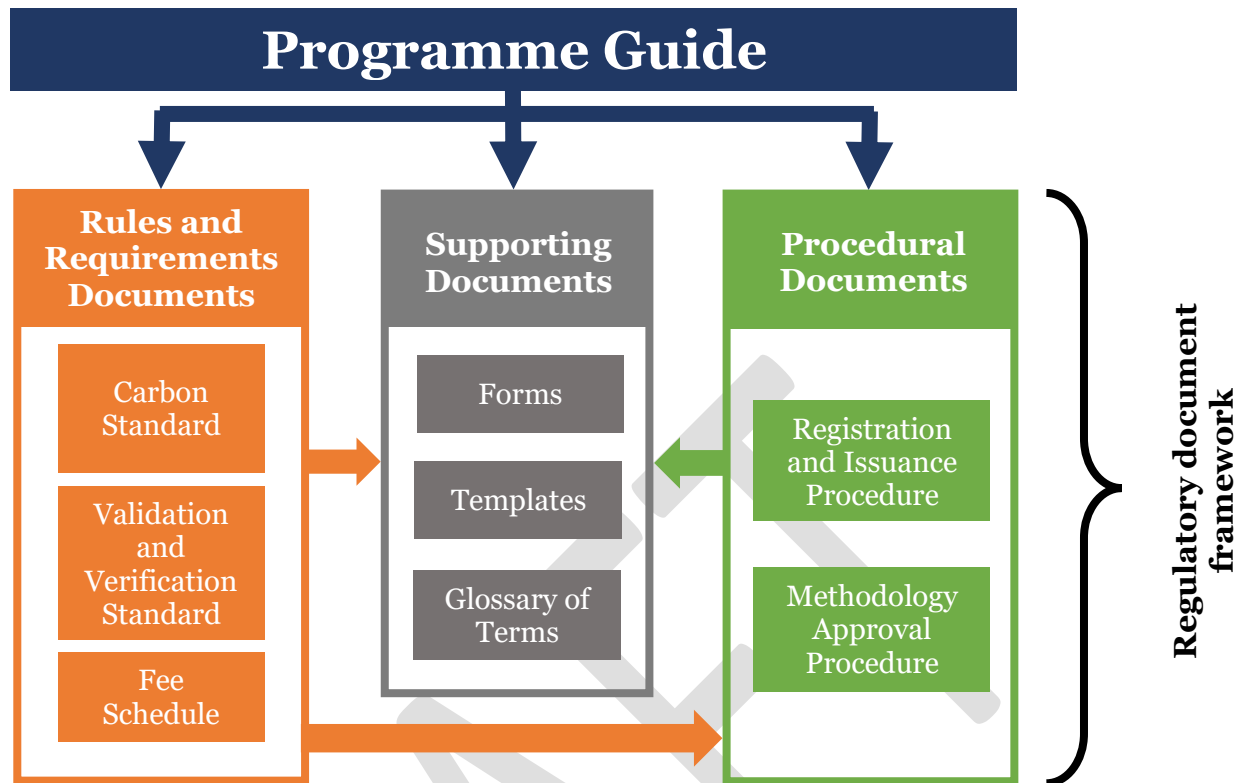
The mechanism encompasses six types of Greenhouse Gases (GHG), namely, Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), Methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), Nitrous Oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O), Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), Perfluorocarbons (PFCs) and Sulphur Hexafluoride (SF<sub>6</sub>).

## **4. Programme Guide: Overall Document Framework**

The overall document framework constitutes the Programme Guide and the regulatory documents framework, which has further been classified into the Rules and Requirements Documents, Procedural Documents and Supporting Documents.

A broad layout of the overall document framework has been provided below:

**Figure 1**



As indicated above, the Programme Guide shall function as an umbrella document of the mechanism. Within the regulatory document framework, the established rules and requirements and the procedures shall determine the design and development of the Supporting Documents. Moreover, the rules and requirements shall also influence the design and development of the Procedural Documents.

A brief description of each type of document is provided below:

#### **4.1. Programme Guide**

This document provides the overarching underlying framework of the mechanism by describing the key philosophy, overall design and scope, and by further outlining the rules, requirements and procedures for various processes and activities contained in it. All regulatory documents shall operate under the purview of the Programme Guide.

## 4.2. Rules and Requirements Documents

- i. **Carbon Standard:** This is the governing document for all IPPs, further serving as a guidance document for VVBs, and provides rules and requirements for design, development, implementation and monitoring of GHG reduction and removal enhancement projects and also contains rules and requirements for design and development of project-based methodologies.
- ii. **Validation and Verification Standard:** This is the governing document for all VVBs and provides rules and requirements for validation, verification and certification of MCUs of GHG reduction and removal enhancement projects.
- iii. **Fee Structure:** This document provides information regarding the fees and levies, as applicable and chargeable under the CR-I mechanism. This serves as a governing document for all entities, except VVBs, who are not subjected to fees and levies under the mechanism.

## 4.3. Procedural Documents

- i. **Registration and Issuance Procedure:** This document provides a detailed project cycle procedure for registration of a project, issuance of MCUs based on verified emission reduction and/or removal enhancement, and related actions. This shall serve as a governing document for IPPs, VVBs and NCCF.
- ii. **Methodology Approval Procedure:** This document provides a detailed procedure for submission, assessment and approval of a methodology for its listing under the CR-I mechanism. This shall serve as a governing document for IMDs, VVBs and NCCF.

## 4.4. Supporting Documents

The supporting documents, which are being formulated based on rules, requirements and procedures, comprise of various forms, templates and the glossary of terms. The documents shall encompass all entities under the mechanism, and shall be used based on function, scope and applicability.

- i. **Forms:** These documents include formats for application/submission requests required under pre-defined processes and activities of the mechanism.

- ii. **Templates:** These documents include formats for design and preparation of different reports required under pre-defined processes and activities of the mechanism.
- iii. **Glossary of terms:** This document contains definitions of terms and phrases, both specific and general, used within the mechanism.

## 5. Principles

### 5.1. Working Principles

The principles outlined below govern the functioning of the CR-I mechanism.

- i. **Climate Security:** The GHG reduction and removal enhancement projects included within the mechanism shall promote climate change mitigation and contribute towards limiting of global warming to 2°C, and preferably to 1.5°C.
- ii. **Confidentiality:** NCCF shall not divulge proprietary or confidential information, provided by an entity, without the written approval of the provider/owner of the information, except as required by national law.
- iii. **Flexibility:** The mechanism is open to inclusion of new processes, techniques, technologies and methodologies if these are in conformance with its objectives, principles, rules, requirements and procedures.
- iv. **Responsiveness:** NCCF intends to be prompt towards addressing queries, complaints, comments and for providing general feedback, and further aims to be unambiguous, transparent, fair and impartial in its approach.
- v. **Cyber Security:** The mechanism provides a safe and secure environment for all entities by adopting appropriate and potent measures and safeguards against hacking, phishing of data and fraud (concerning potentially sensitive information or theft of MCUs).
- vi. **Legality:** The mechanism works within the legal framework of India with its functioning, including registration of projects, issuance, listing and trading of MCUs, and approval and listing of project methodologies being compliant with the Government of India's rules, acts or notifications.

## 5.2. GHG Accounting Principles

GHG accounting principles have been adopted from the standard ISO 14064-2:2006 Greenhouse gases - Part 2: Specification with guidance at the project level for quantification, monitoring and reporting of greenhouse gas emission reduction or removal enhancement.

- i. **Relevance:** Select the GHG sources, GHG sinks, GHG reservoirs, data and methodologies appropriate to the needs of the intended user.
- ii. **Completeness:** Include all relevant GHG emissions and removals. Include all relevant information to support criteria and procedures.
- iii. **Consistency:** Enable meaningful comparisons in GHG-related information.
- iv. **Accuracy:** Reduce bias and uncertainties as far as is practical.
- v. **Transparency:** Disclose sufficient and appropriate GHG-related information to allow intended users to make decisions with reasonable confidence.
- vi. **Conservativeness:** Use conservative assumptions, values and procedures to ensure that GHG emission reduction or removal enhancement are not over-estimated.

## 6. Responsibilities of Entities Involved

Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests (NCCF) is a non-profit standard setting organisation which intends to develop the CR-I mechanism through an open and transparent stakeholder engagement process and will maintain unbiased stance towards all entities involved (refer to Section 3.1) within the mechanism. All processes and activities, allowed under the mechanism, shall be executed by a relevant entity with designated responsibilities.

The responsibilities of each entity are briefly described below:

## **6.1. NCCF (The Regulator)**

NCCF shall be responsible for:

- i. Formulating the overall design and development of the CR-I mechanism and subsequent management and control to ensure its efficient functioning.
- ii. Developing and making subsequent revisions (as and when required) in all the documents existing within the overall document framework.
- iii. Ensuring that relevant requirements are met, and guidelines followed by all applicable entities during the entire project cycle, methodology approval cycle and trading of MCUs.
- iv. Exercising regular oversight over the performance of the VVBs and their deliverables.
- v. Registering projects, granting approval and listing of methodologies within the mechanism that have followed due procedure and further complied with the relevant rules and requirements.
- vi. Issuing and transferring MCUs to IPPs in accordance with the verified net emission reductions.
- vii. Addressing queries, concerns, complaints and appeals in compliance with the regulatory and legal framework of the mechanism and the country of India.
- viii. Developing new project methodologies and relevant supporting documents for which it has or gained competency by engaging external experts from the relevant sector, if required.

## **6.2. Independent Project Proponent (IPP)**

IPPs are organisations which shall be responsible for development and implementation of projects, and ensuring their conformance to the rules, requirements and procedures of the mechanism. They are also responsible for preparing and furnishing relevant documents, appointing accredited VVBs, monitoring of project activities and performing other activities related to registration of projects, verification/certification of emission reductions or removals, and issuance of MCUs.

### **6.3. Validation and Verification Body (VVB)**

VVBs are independent third-party entities, having a valid accreditation and further listed under the mechanism; responsible for performing the tasks of validation and verification, as well as assessment of new methodologies submitted, in compliance with the rules, requirements and procedures of the mechanism.

### **6.4. Independent Methodology Developers (IMD)**

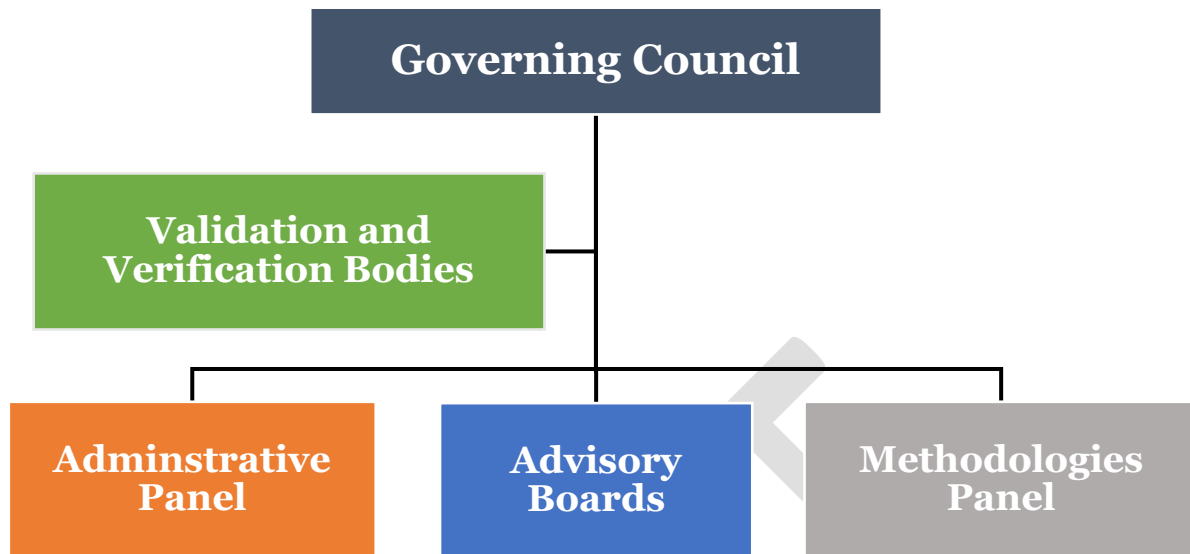
IMDs are responsible for design and development of methodologies for GHG quantification, as per the rules and requirements of the mechanism. IMDs are responsible for preparation of methodology document, appointment of 'first' VVB for assessment of the methodology, and preparation of other documents required during methodology submission, assessment and approval.

### **6.5. Transactional Organisation (TO)**

TOs are buyers, sellers or brokers who are neither IPP nor IMD, but have stake in transaction and management of MCUs.

## **7. Governing Structure**

A broad layout of the overall governing structure has been provided below:



A brief description of responsibilities of each constituting element is provided below:

### 7.1 Governing Council

The Governing Council (GC) is headed by Chairman and Chief Coordinator, Carbon Registry-India. The GC oversees the governing and functioning of CR-I. The responsibilities of GC include final approval for Request for Registration, Request for Issuance, methodology submission/approval, and other activities relevant to the Mechanism. It shall also provide strategic guidance for improvement of the Mechanism, and for resolution of complaints and appeals.

### 7.2 Administrative Panel

The Administrative Panel (AP) of CR-I oversees and ensures effective day to day operation of the Mechanism. AP will comprise full-time and part-time Members who are expert in IT, processes of the Mechanism, and relevant sectoral scopes, etc. Functions of AP will include:

- i. IT registry administration: AP is involved in day to day functioning of IT system, account management and response to queries
- ii. Completeness check: AP is involved in completeness check of submissions received from IPP, IMD, and VVB
- iii. Communication and coordination: AP forms a channel of communication among the different entities involved in the system and



coordinates with members of Governing Council, Advisory Boards and Methodology Panel

### **7.3 Advisory Boards**

A number of Advisory Boards consisting of internal and external experts is required for providing technical guidance for designing the framework and functioning of CR-I, development of CR-I documents, project evaluation, Risk Permanence and Buffer Bank evaluation, and to undertake other technical reviews.

### **7.4 Methodology Panel**

Methodology Panel has members having technical expertise and experience in different sectoral scopes of CR-I. Members are both internal and external, and the proportion of the two can change as per the requirements of a specific methodology submission. The main function of the Methodology Panel is to review the methodology submissions and undertake assessment and listing process of the methodology developed and submitted by IMDs.

### **7.5 Validation and Verification Bodies**

(Refer to Section 6.3)

## 8. Validation and Verification

### 8.1. Validation

In order to be registered, all projects shall undergo a process of validation by an independent and impartial VVB listed under the mechanism. The appointed VVB shall be accredited in a select, or all sectoral scopes applicable to the methodology(ies) used by the IPP. The validation process comprises an independent assessment and evaluation of the project design against the requirements of *Carbon Standard* (document under preparation separately), *Validation and Verification Standard* (document under preparation separately) and other relevant rules and requirements. The VVB shall prepare and submit a Validation Report in the Validation Report Template, containing thorough assessment and conclusion of the validation exercise, along with the validation statement. The rules and requirements to be followed by VVBs for performing validation exercise of a project are being included separately in the *Validation and Verification Standard*.

### 8.2. Verification

Projects seeking issuance of MCUs, for a specific monitoring period, shall be subjected to a process of verification by an independent and impartial VVB listed under the mechanism. The appointed VVB shall be accredited in select, or all sectoral scopes applicable to the methodology(ies) used by the IPP. The verification process comprises an independent assessment and evaluation of the project implementation and monitoring against the requirements of *Carbon Standard*, *Validation and Verification Standard* and other relevant rules and requirements. The VVB shall prepare and submit a Verification Report in the Verification Report Template, containing a thorough assessment and conclusion of the verification exercise, along with the Verification Statement. The rules and requirements to be followed by VVBs for performing verification of a project are being included separately in the *Validation and Verification Standard*.

## 9. Inclusion of new Methodologies/Tools

The methodology approval procedure allows for submission, assessment and approval of new methodologies and tools seeking to be listed under the CR-I mechanism.

Methodologies/Tools seeking approval may be developed by any institute, organisation or any legal entity having demonstrable expertise in the relevant sector(s) applicable to the methodology.

All methodology/tool submissions shall compulsorily undergo stakeholder consultation on the CR-I mechanism website, shall further be subjected to independent assessments by two separate VVBs, and thereafter finally an appraisal and review by NCCF.

The complete process of methodology/tool submission, assessment and approval is mentioned in the Methodology Approval Process (document under preparation separately).

## **10. Eligibility of Validation and Verification Bodies**

All applicant entities intending to become a listed Validation and Verification Body under the mechanism shall fulfil any one of the following two eligibility criteria:

- i. The applicant entity is accredited as a Designated Operational Entity (DOE) under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) or listed as an active Validation and Verification Body (VVB) with the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS).
- ii. The applicant entity is accredited under valid version of ISO 14065 standard by an accreditation body that is a member of International Accreditation Forum (IAF).

In addition to satisfying the above eligibility criteria, the applicant entity shall further sign an agreement with the NCCF in order to be formally listed as a VVB under the mechanism.

VVBs shall be accredited in the sectoral scope(s) of their expertise, as applicable to the methodology(ies) used by the project, for which the VVB is contracted to perform validation or verification.

## **11. The Registry System**

The CR-I mechanism comprises two separate online domains; the Project and Methodology Database and the Accountholder Platform. The registry shall act as an interface to facilitate interaction and exchange of information among various entities involved in processes under the mechanism.

### 11.1. Project and Methodology Database

The Project and Methodology Database is overseen by the Registry Administrator and serves as a public interface on information and documentation related to all projects, approved methodologies, processes and rules and requirements that are part of the mechanism.

Each project, and methodology initially submitted to the mechanism shall be assigned a unique serial number that is automatically generated by the database.

The database includes a comprehensive list of all projects and approved methodologies, and also provides a tabulated summary of details concerning each individual project and approved methodology on a dedicated homepage. In order to further promote transparency and accessibility, project and methodology related documentation, generated using forms and templates, is made publicly available.

### 11.2. Accountholder Platform

The Accountholder Platform provides services for registration, opening and maintenance of account for all relevant entities associated or seeking association with the mechanism. The Registry Administrator manages the platform and shall be responsible for security and maintenance of all accounts. The platform allows for different types of accounts to be created based on the needs of all relevant entities.

The different types of accounts available under this registry domain are briefly described below:

- i. **Independent Project Proponent (IPP) Account:** This type of account is held by IPPs seeking project registration, approval of post-registration changes, verification and certification of emissions reductions and removals, issuance of MCUs and renewal of crediting period.
- ii. **Validation and Verification Body (VVB) Account:** This type of account is held by VVBs listed under the mechanism for performing functions of validation and verification of projects and assessment of new methodology submissions.
- iii. **Independent Methodology Developer (IMD) Account:** This type of account allows IMDs to submit and seek approval of new project methodologies designed and developed by them.
- iv. **Transactional Organisation (TO) Account:** This type of account is held by TOs for the sole purpose of trade, transfer and management of MCUs.

### **11.3. Risk Permanence and Buffer Bank**

Particularly relevant to AFOLU project activities, Permanence refers to the longevity of the net GHG removals owing to carbon reservoirs and the long-term stability of the aggregate carbon stock. The net GHG removals corresponding to AFOLU project activities might not be permanent and may result in release of GHGs back into the atmosphere (GHG reversal) upon materialization of potential risk(s) (like extreme weather events, fires, insect infestation, political instability etc.). Thus, it becomes essential for IPP(s) to determine the risk of non-permanence and adopt an appropriate approach to mitigation of GHG reversals. This shall be performed by employing the CR-I Tool for Risk Analysis and Buffer Determination, and adhering to rules, requirements and procedures prescribed therein.

Based on the tool, the IPP(s) shall quantify the overall risk-rating percentage for the proposed project activity, termed as the Minimum Buffer Percentage, which shall be the amount of carbon units that must be deposited in the CR-I Buffer Pool Account to mitigate the risk of GHG reversals. NCCF shall be responsible for the managing and executing operational control over the CR-I Buffer Pool.

The buffer bank MCUs shall be non-transferrable and non-tradable.

## **12. Fee Schedule**

To encourage project registration and methodology listing, no fees or levies shall be charged for a period of at least 2 years from the time the CR-I mechanism becomes operational. Post that, applicable fees and levies, as outlined in the *Fee Schedule* (document under preparation separately), shall enter into force.

## **13. Records**

All entities functioning within the CR-I mechanism should control and maintain records of all generated documents, in either hard and/or electronic format, for a minimum period of 10 years from date of generation.

## **14. Complaints and Appeals**

Complaints and appeals shall be filed before the NCCF in an appropriate format at the designated email ID to be provided later.

### **14.1. Complaints**

A complaint is defined as the first documented disagreement against the scope of services, a decision of the CR-I mechanism, or overall operational approach or rules, requirements and procedures of the mechanism that any entity may deem to be unfair and/or having an unintended adverse effect.

The procedure for filing and resolution of a complaint is given below:

- i. The complainant shall file a formal complaint by completing and submitting a Complaint Form along with the relevant supporting documentation at the designated e-mail address indicated above.
- ii. An e-mail acknowledging the receipt of the complaint shall be sent to the complainant.
- iii. The NCCF shall assign a representative to investigate, and take appropriate action based on the report of the investigating representative to address the complaint. It shall ensure that the assigned representative does not have any conflict of interest with the complaint, or subject of the complaint.
- iv. NCCF shall arrive at a final decision based on the outcome of the investigation and shall provide their response to the complainant through the designated e-mail.

### **14.2. Appeals**

An appeal is defined as the documented disagreement against the final decision on a filed complaint.

The procedure for filing and resolution of an appeal is given below:

- i. The appellant shall file a formal appeal by completing and submitting the Appeal Form along with the relevant supporting documentation and the copy of the original complaint at the designated email address mentioned above.
- ii. An e-mail acknowledging the receipt of the appeal shall be sent to the appellant.

- iii. NCCF shall assign a representative to investigate, and take appropriate action based on the report of the investigating representative to address the appeal. It shall ensure that the assigned representative does not have any conflict of interest with the original complaint, or its subject, or its redressal.
- iv. NCCF shall arrive at a final decision based on the outcome of the investigation and shall provide their response to the appellant through the designated e-mail.
- v. Decision of the NCCF on the appeal shall be final.

The procedure for filing of complaints and appeals shall be made available in a public domain on the Registry website.

The following information shall be provided when filing a complaint or appeal:

- i. Name of Complainant/Appellant
- ii. Name of Organisation
- iii. Details of Complaint (if applicable mention specific entity or personnel)
- iv. Details of Appeal (in case of appeals only) along with reference number of complaint(s).
- v. Contact details of Complainant/Appellant

NCCF shall maintain confidentiality of information, and shall not disclose any detail of the complaint, complainant, appeal and appellant until permission is granted by the complainant or appellant in writing, or as required by law.

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## Document History

Version	Date	Description
0.0	26.12.2018	It is a principal document which describes the overarching framework and includes all rules and requirements governing the mechanism.
0.1	29.12.2018	Changes were made based on preliminary internal review and discussion.
0.2	03.01.2019	Changes were made based on comprehensive internal review and feedback received from Dr. Jagdish Kishwan, Chief Advisor-NCCF.
0.3	25.02.2019	Changes made based on the comments and suggestions received from 1 <sup>st</sup> stakeholder feedback and subsequent internal reviews.