

Towards a VCS AFOLU standard for Peatland Rewetting and Conservation

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Contents

- The need for an international ‘peat standard’
- Issues addressed concerning peat

Why develop a standard?

- No international standard specific for peat exists
- VCS AFOLU includes ARR, ALM, IFM, REDD
 - Specific guidance for peat IS needed
- EB (47th meeting) has rejected NM0297 "Carbon dioxide and methane emissions avoidance from Block-C, Central Kalimantan"
 - (a) It cannot be ensured that the baseline GHG emissions related to the above mentioned project activities are of anthropogenic nature;
 - (b) The permanence of the GHG emission reduction cannot be ensured

The Voluntary Carbon Standard (VCS)

- Global benchmark standard for voluntary carbon projects
 - Founded by IETA, the WBCSD and the Climate Group
- Designed to be as robust as Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), while attempting to reduce costs and bottlenecks
 - Real, additional, measurable, permanent, independently verified and unique offsets (VCUs)

Why a dedicated AFOLU peat standard?

- Peat can represent a carbon pool in ARR, ALM, IFM and REDD, however
 - The soil carbon pool (peat) is large and potentially dominant vis à vis the other carbon pools
 - GHG emissions and carbon stock increases largely depend on hydrological conditions
 - Emission reductions may be achieved that are in a different order of magnitude
- Expert group acts as a third party proposing a standard to the VCS

GHG emissions from peatland degradation

Peat oxidation due to:

- Drainage
 - Fire
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- Land uses:
 - Logging
 - Agriculture
 - Peat extraction

VCS-PRC: possible project activities

- Peatland rewetting and conservation
 - ‘Rewetting’ implies the elevation of the average annual water table in drained peatland as a consequence of project activities resulting in reduced net GHG emissions
- Additional activities in combination with rewetting and conservation
 - ARR, ALM, IFM, REDD on peatland
 - Peatland fire management

Issues regarding PRC project activities

- Rewetting:
 - Resulting CH₄, and N₂O emissions
 - Crediting period vs peat depletion time
 - Hydrological connectivity → leakage and permanence
- Fire management:
 - Baseline setting

Accounting for emissions reductions from rewetting

- Current knowledge and experience allow for the development of cost effective and environmentally sound approaches to estimate emissions reductions in peatland projects, e.g.:
 - Water level/CO₂ emissions relationships, remote sensing (soil moisture), peat subsidence/CO₂ emissions
 - Applying conservatively high emissions factors in the project case (e.g. CH₄)
 - Discounting uncertainties from the carbon benefits
 - Conservatively neglect insignificant emissions in the baseline/reductions in the project case to reduce costs

Issues addressed

- Drainage before 1 January 2008: no need to prove that drainage was with the intention to generate carbon credits by rewetting
- ARR vs ARR_p (etc)
 - Significance peat >5% → use both ARR and PRC guidance
 - Peat is dominant source → PRC risk assessment

Issues addressed

- Biofuel crop production activities on drained peat are not eligible. Biofuel plus rewetting: use PRC guidance
- Drainage of peatland to increase forest productivity is not eligible

Issues addressed

- Because reliable onsite monitoring of both N₂O emission changes and N input (from artificial fertiliser and manure from grazing animals) is complicated and susceptible to fraud, reducing emissions from N fertilisation on peatland is not eligible for crediting
- N-fertiliser application in ALM on peat is not eligible
- Upon rewetting, N₂O emission will not increase, therefore, ignoring N₂O emission implies a conservative approach

Fire management

- Only eligible in combination with rewetting
- Complicated baseline setting
 - Pre-defined conservative estimate of emissions from fire in the baseline (25% of total baseline emissions) - conditional
 - Applying IPCC GL 2006 Tier-3 methods

Thank you

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