Project Description Document

Template

*Last Updated February 2023*

General Instructions and Document Overview

To complete this Project Description Document (PDD), please refer to the instructions listed under the section headings and subheadings. For the title page, please complete the information listed in the box. Delete this section, along with the instructions listed under section headings and subheadings, when finalizing the creation of the PDD.

As a tool to accomplish the Greenhouse Gas accounting requirements and lower the non-project costs for small-scale and local carbon offset projects, this template document aids in the preparation of project accounting to develop projects through the Offset Network. It is advised that this template document be filled in while building the documentation to fulfill project accounting and used as a guidance tool. Most project developers will have first completed a Project Plan and received feedback from The Offset Network Executive Committee. This PDD aligns closely with and should build upon the Project Plan.

Substantial components of project documentation will differ depending on the project type, whether an urban tree planting program, a farm soil management project, a methane capture & destruction project or any number of other projects. If relevant, supplemental Project Type specific templates must be used in coordination with the Protocol being used to complete this PDD.

Please note that documentation requirements may necessitate additional space for data input and this template must be scaled appropriately on a project-by-project basis. Also, note that section lengths may differ by project. Content and other elements may require different approaches than those presented through this template, and it is therefore recommended to consult the Offset Network Executive Committee with specific questions while completing project documents.

*The Offset Network Project Plan Template, the Project Plan Template Instructions v1.0, the Project Description Document Template v1.5, and Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) - Project Description Template v4.0 informed the content and creation of this Project Description Document Template.*

[Project Title]

|  |
| --- |
| General Project Information |
| Project Title | *Name of project* |
| Date Submitted | *When did you submit this plan to the Offset Network Executive Committee?* |
| College or University  | *Academic institution developing the project* |
| Prepared by | *Individual responsible for preparing this report* |
| Contact | *Telephone, email address, website for office, physical address etc.* |
| Method of Project Review | *Identify the method of project review you plan to pursue. If pursuing peer verification, you may include any additional related information, such as a potential verifier (via OffsetNetwork.org).*  |

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# 1. Introduction

Project Title

Provide a project title.

Summary - Purpose & Objective(s)

Summarize the project, including the project purpose and objectives, and how it seeks to achieve atmospheric reductions of greenhouse gases (GHGs). The summary should not exceed 1 page.

Type of GHG Project

Identify the specific type of GHG activity the project represents.

## 1.1 Site Details

Project Location

Include geographic and physical location information fully defining the extent of the project and framing it within its surrounding landscape. Provide an image of the site and the surrounding landscape; this image can be a map, KLM file or aerial photograph. Indicate the project size in units appropriate to the project type (e.g. acres/hectares, MWs, number of individuals, etc). Describe common uses for the area and how people access the project site.

Section “3.1.2 Project Boundary Map” of this document asks for a diagram or map of the project boundary showing the locations of the various activities taking place as part of this project. If you would prefer to include the project boundaries in this section, which describes the project location, you may do so; project boundaries may be shown on the same map. Otherwise, please include a separate project boundary map in Section 3.1.2 or in the appendix.

Condition Prior to Project Commencement

Include information about the condition of the site prior to project initiation. Include all relevant project dates.

## 1.2 GHG Impact

Description of Project Impact on GHG Emissions

Describe the ways the project will impact GHG emissions: include those Sources, Sinks and Reservoirs (SSRs) of GHG emissions that are anticipated to represent larger than a 3% (de minimis) contribution to the project impact and will be included in the GHG Assertion calculation.

Note that section “3.1.1. Project Sources Sinks and Reservoirs List” asks you to list in detail the relevant project sources, sinks, and reservoirs (SSR). You may refer here to Section 3.1.1.

Project Technologies, Products, and Services

Please give a detailed description of the technologies, measures, or behavior changes to be employed by the project, and conditions prior to implementing the project.

## 1.3 GHG Assertion

Please include a projection of total emissions reductions/sequestration expected in tCO2e per year and the time frame over which these reductions are expected.

(Stated in mtCO2e):

Identification of Risks to GHG Impact of Project

Please describe the risks, and the identification of risks, to the project’s GHG Impact. If applicable, please indicate how the project risks were assessed and the total risk factor.

## 1.4 Program Inclusion

Program Name:

Identify the GHG program that the project will be submitted and registered with (The Offset Network).

Protocol or Methodology Applied:

Indicate the protocol which this project will follow. Provide a rationale for the choice of the GHG program and the protocol. Provide the following details about the methodology used: name, version, registry or developer, and applicable URL (or, if the URL is unavailable, include the methodology as an appendix).

Justification of Selected Program, and Protocol or Methodology:

Describe why you chose this methodology, and why it is applicable to the proposed project.

Additional Information

Please provide any additional information, such as legal, regulatory, technical, economic, sectoral, social, geographic, site-specific, and/or temporal, that may impact program inclusion, the project, or the GHG impact.

## 1.5 Roles & Responsibilities

Internal Structure

Identify the management structure of the project and how different groups will coordinate and manage respective responsibilities involved with the project. List the key project participants and describe their roles; include the offset project funder, project owners, project developers, project implementers, technology providers, etc.

Additionally, identify the chain of custody of carbon offset credits; which project stakeholder(s) will possess the credits after verification?

Participant(s) Contact Information

Include contact information for relevant participants.

Project Stakeholders

Include contact information for project stakeholders.

Relevant Regulators & Administrators of GHG Program

Include contact information for regulators & administrations of the GHG Program.

## 1.6 Relevant Stakeholder Outcomes & On-going Communication

Explain the anticipated outcomes of the project for each of the stakeholders identified in 1.5; are these outcomes related to learning objectives, sustainability goals, or something else? For example, the project funder’s anticipated outcome might be to reduce their carbon footprint while the project developer may hope to create a unique learning experience for students through project development. Provide an explanation as to how these parties will remain in contact throughout the course of the project, regarding project updates and other project-related tasks.

Use this space to describe the outcomes and methods of communication in narrative format; < 500 words.

## 1.7 Co-benefits

One of the goals of the Offset Network is to catalyze and support offset projects that provide educational and research opportunities for students, faculty, and staff. The Offset Network also aims to foster the development of local and small-scale projects with meaningful co-benefits. Please describe the anticipated co-benefits of this offset project, including any student involvement and academic research that may result.

Use this space to describe the outcomes and methods of communication in narrative format; < 500 words.

## 1.8 Environmental Impact Assessment

Identify and explain if an environmental impact assessment will be required, by law or by one of the project stakeholders, to implement the project activities.

Use this space to provide a brief explanation about environmental impact assessment.

## 1.9 Chronological Project Plan

Please include the actual or expected project commencement date, monitoring/verification dates, project termination date, and other key timeline components as much as is possible to estimate at this time.

**Project Dates**

**(Actual or Expected)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Timing** | **Description** | **Status** |
|  | Project Commences |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  | Verification |  |
|  | Project Ends |  |

Add additional project dates to the timeline above.

# 2. Application of Protocol

## 2.1 Eligibility Requirements from Protocol

List any eligibility requirements listed in the protocol and describe how the project meets those requirements. Additionally, provide all information needed to validate the eligibility of the project.

Use this space to list the eligibility requirements and explain why the project is eligible; length will vary depending on eligibility requirements set forth in the protocol.

## 2.2 Additionality

Please describe how you performed the additionality assessment and how you demonstrated additionality relative to the baseline. Describe how you are ensuring the additionality of the project.

Please refer to the protocol requirements for demonstrating additionality.

### 2.2.1 Requirements

*Answer each question within this section, covering Legal Requirements, Project Finances, Project Context, Project History, Protocol-specific Additionality Questions, Relevant Literature, and how you performed your additionality assessment.*

Legal Requirements

Is any part of the proposed project required by law, regulation, court order, or other binding requirement?

Project Finances

Please discuss project financing. If relevant, describe any non-financial benefits of the project to the project participants.

Project Context

Describe any technical (management plan, new technology adoption, etc.), economic/sectoral, social, or site-specific considerations that led to the project’s development or might impact the project’s outcome.

Project History

Please describe the history of the development of the project from the project’s first conception through the present, emphasizing the involvement of your campus and others involved from the offset industry in project planning, development, and implementation. E.g., When was the project first conceived? When did the campus and others from the offset industry get involved? What has been the extent of your involvement?

Protocol-specific Additionality Questions

Please list and respond to any additionality questions specified in the protocol, either by answering them in this space, or referring to answers in 2.1.

Relevant Literature

If relevant, please list any peer-reviewed articles documenting the additionality and effectiveness of the offset project type on emissions.

How did you perform your additionality assessment?

Please discuss who was interviewed, what documents were consulted, and what analyses were performed.

# 3. Emissions Reduction Data, Methods, and Calculations

## 3.1 Establishing Project Boundaries

### 3.1.1 Project Sources Sinks and Reservoirs List

List the relevant project sources, sinks, and reservoirs (SSR) in the table below.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Identified SSR** | **Is this included in the project, baseline, both or neither?** | **Rationale for Inclusion or Exclusion** | **Project Impact** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
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|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

[extend table as needed]

### 3.1.2 Project Boundary Map

Include a diagram or map of the project boundary (this may be included here or in the appendix), showing the locations of the various activities taking place as part of this project. If a map was included in section 1.1, the project boundaries may be shown on the same map.

## 3.2 Data Sources

Use this space to write a summary of how project data will be collected, calculated, and managed.

Provide the following:

* Key data sources that will inform the calculation of the project impact.
* How the data will be collected.
* How the data will be monitored.

## 3.3 Determination of Baseline Scenario

Describe the baseline scenario and how that scenario was determined. Explain what alternative baseline scenarios were considered and why they were eventually excluded.

Please refer to the protocol instructions when determining baseline.

### 3.3.1 Baseline Scenario Selection:

Please indicate the selected baseline scenario and why the selected baseline is the most likely scenario.

## 3.4 Quantification of Emissions Reductions/Sequestration

Please follow the methodology used in the protocol to estimate the impact of the project on emissions and carbon storage.

### 3.4.1 Project Impact Calculation

Global Warming Potentials Used:

Insert source of GWPs used and values.

Baseline Scenario Total Atmospheric GHG Impact:

Combine baseline SSRs

Project Scenario Total Atmospheric GHG Impact:

Combine project SSRs

GHG Assertion:

(Project Scenario – Baseline Scenario) \* (1 – Total Project Risk Factor) = GHG Assertion

## 3.5 Explanation of Methodological Choices and Protocol Deviations

Were there any protocol deviations? These can include any proposed changes from the protocol reporting, monitoring, and verification requirements to accommodate the peer review process. Include the rationale for changes.

# 4. Risk Assessment & Future Consideration

## 4.1 Double Counting

Double counting is considered to have occurred if the reductions achieved by the project are claimed twice, either by more than one entity, or twice by one entity. Double counting may result, if an entity that has implemented a project within its emissions inventory boundaries, for example: an energy efficiency project for an entity owned building, that both counts this improvement in its emissions inventory as well as selling carbon credits from that same project.

Submitting a project to the Offset Network requires a signed attestation against double counting whereby the project implementer agrees that any credits generated by the project will not be sold, and that the credits will be counted once and only once against the funding institution’s carbon footprint.

Consider answering the following questions in your narrative to describe how your project actively avoids double counting:

* Who will own the credits?
* Have attestations against double counting been signed?
* Was the project implemented within your organization’s emissions inventory boundaries?

## 4.2 Leakage

Leakage occurs when a project that reduces emissions in one place causes an increase in emissions elsewhere. The most common cause of leakage is when a project reduces GHGs by reducing production of a product without also causing an equivalent decrease in demand for that product. For example, if an offset project or program increases carbon storage on forest lands by reducing timber harvesting without also causing a corresponding reduction in the use of timber, it should be assumed that more timber will be harvested elsewhere as a result to meet demand for timber. This increased production of timber from elsewhere has emissions impacts that must be accounted for.

Protocols should account for the possible leakage that may result from a given project, but it is ultimately the responsibility of the project owner to ensure potential sources of leakage are identified and that monitoring procedures are established to track these sources.

Please describe possible opportunities for leakage to occur and how these possible sources will be monitored and managed over the project lifespan. Consider the following questions in your narrative to describe how your project reduces and accounts for leakage:

* Does the project result in a reduction in the production of any product?
* Does the project provide sufficient profits to a project participant so that production may increase?
* If leakage does occur, what monitoring procedures are in place to track these sources?
* Will future maintenance needs exceed the project operator’s capacity?

## 4.3 Project Permanence

Permanence is a concern for carbon storage projects, like forestry and soil carbon projects, because of the risk that the carbon will be released back into the atmosphere. The project has climate benefit only for as long as the carbon remains stored; to the extent that carbon sequestered by a project is released back into the atmosphere, the project has no benefit to the climate. Please detail the possible risks of project reversal; consider answering the following questions in your narrative to describe the possible risks of project reversal, and how these risk factors will be mitigated and accounted for:

* How will unintentional risks to permanence, such as fire, flood, and geologic events, be accounted for and minimized?
* How will intentional risks, such as the discontinuation of the project, be minimized?
* If carbon storage is reversed, what will be done to mitigate the effects?

## 4.4 Additional Risks

Provide information regarding any additional risks that may impact the project.

## 4.5 Buffer Pool Designation & Total Project Risk Factor

Describe the buffer pool designation and total project risk factor. If applicable, indicate projected contribution by project year and describe how and when the buffer pool designation will be updated.

# 5. Project Monitoring Plan

Please use the project protocol as a guide in building the project monitoring plan.

Using the project protocol as a guide, how do you anticipate monitoring will occur? Who will be responsible? Identify the data that is important to the project impact to monitor, and the timeframe, methods and conditions required for successful monitoring activity.

The creation of a project monitoring plan should also include monitoring of the baseline scenario as the baseline scenario is prone to change especially in industry sectors like agriculture, building management, and others.

## 5.1 Manage Data Quality (Internal Review)

Please indicate the internal review process for this template and how data quality was managed.

### 5.1.1 Information Management System

Please describe your information management system as it relates to project calculations and project data.

## 5.2 Data for Collection

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Specific SSR** | **Monitored or Estimated?** | **Data Source** | **Collection Method** | **Responsible Party (for data collection)** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

Schedule of Calibration for Direct Monitoring:

Insert equipment calibration schedule, if applicable.

Conditions for Data Monitoring:

Data Collection & Monitoring Methods:

Include technical information needed to collect and monitor.

## 5.3 Project & Baseline Monitoring Schedule

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Project Timeline** | **Monitoring Event Type** | **Data Collected** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

[Extend table as needed]

# 6. Project Verification

If you are planning to pursue Peer Verification, please specify an institution that has been identified to possibly perform validation and verification, or which institutions may act as verifiers.

If you are unable to identify verifiers, please contact the Offset Network Executive Committee for guidance and for a list of peer verifiers.

# 7. Document Author(s) & Contact

The author(s) of this document, [insert your name(s)], attest that they have performed duties regarding the accounting documentation required within this document with complete honesty and truthfulness. The signature below certifies that the authors did not intentionally misrepresent or present information in misleading ways through this document.

**Author Signature**:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The author(s) welcomes your comments and invites you to be in communication. Please contact them at [insert contact info].

# 8. Appendix

Please use appendices for supporting information. If no appendix is required, please delete this appendix, including title and instructions.