



Publication Date:
21/08/2025

Version:
v0.1

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M002 & Equitable Earth Standard

Future Improvements

Summary

This document details future improvements related to [M002 - Methodology for Terrestrial Forest Conservation](#) and the [Equitable Earth Standard](#). Equitable Earth is committed to continually improving and developing its methodologies.



Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
1 Introduction	2
1.1 Normative References	2
1.2 Reading Notes	2
2 Future Improvements	2
2.1 Eligibility Criteria	2
2.1.1 Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) Activities	2
2.1.2 Jurisdictional Reference Level (JRL) Validation	3
2.1.3 Peatlands	3
2.2 Carbon	3
2.2.1 Permanence and Buffer Allocation	3
2.2.2 Additional Carbon Pools	4
2.3 Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV)	4
2.3.1 Field Calibration	4
2.4 Livelihoods	5
2.4.1 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL)	5
2.4.2 Collaboration with IPs and LCs	5



1 Introduction

1.1 Normative References

1.1.1 The following document should be read in conjunction with:

- [M002 - Methodology for Terrestrial Forest Conservation](#)
- [Terms & Definitions](#)

1.2 Reading Notes

1.2.1 This document outlines Future Improvements, which are Limitations that Equitable Earth believes can be addressed with the current ‘state-of-the-art’ science, technology, and market practices. Equitable Earth has not yet found a way to accurately and efficiently implement these improvements into the current methodology, but is actively working towards including them in a future version.

2 Future Improvements

2.1 Eligibility Criteria

2.1.1 Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) Activities

- 2.1.1.1 ANR activities are not currently eligible under this version of the methodology and procedures for baseline development, quantification, and buffer treatment for ANR are still under development.
- 2.1.1.2 This methodology quantifies avoided unplanned degradation (AUDD). Future versions will enable crediting of both reductions and removals by incorporating ANR activities, with supporting processes for baselines, quantification, and buffer treatment. Release is planned for the first half of 2026, including potential pathways for retroactive crediting for early monitoring periods.



- 2.1.1.3 Equitable Earth will continue aligning M001 (Methodology for Terrestrial Restoration) with M002 to ensure the methodologies are complementary and Developers have clear pathways to GHG reductions and removals.

2.1.2 Jurisdictional Reference Level (JRL) Validation

- 2.1.2.1 The JRL must be validated by an independent expert panel in accordance with the Jurisdictional Baseline Validation Methodology. Future versions will provide the operational process, supporting documentation, and procedures to implement this requirement.
- 2.1.2.2 Equitable Earth is currently developing supporting tools and procedures for establishing and convening an independent expert panel to validate the JRL.

2.1.3 Peatlands

- 2.1.3.1 Avoided emissions from the rewetting of peat soils and from the conservation of peat from unplanned conversion are not eligible under this version of the methodology. A planned update in 2026 will include criteria and methods for quantifying avoided emissions from peatlands, supported by further R&D and potential beta testing with developers. Options for retroactive crediting of early monitoring periods will also be explored by Equitable Earth.
- 2.1.3.2 Equitable Earth acknowledges that impactful conservation projects are often located on peatlands, and it is important that such activities are eligible for crediting. Peatland emissions are complex to model and monitor, and further development by Equitable Earth is required to ensure accurate accounting. Standardised tools and QA/QC procedures for robust peatland accounting will be developed.

2.2 Carbon

2.2.1 Permanence and Buffer Allocation

- 2.2.1.1 This version of the methodology requires a fixed 20% buffer contribution of verified GHG reductions at issuance. Future updates may introduce a risk-based buffer allocation framework with standardised procedures, tools to manage risks and quantitative methods to proportion contributions to project-specific non-permanence risks.



- 2.2.1.2 While conservative and standardised, a fixed buffer contribution may not account for the diversity of project contexts and risk profiles. Equitable Earth is expanding its risk assessment procedures and supporting tools to enable project-specific buffer allocation, including quantification and mitigation factors.

2.2.2 Additional Carbon Pools

- 2.2.2.1 This methodology currently quantifies only woody above-ground (AGB) and below-ground biomass (BGB). A planned update in late 2026 will consider the inclusion of additional carbon pools (e.g., soil organic carbon, dead wood, litter, non-woody biomass) with standardised procedures to ensure consistency and comparability across projects.
- 2.2.2.2 Equitable Earth acknowledges that additional carbon pools (e.g., soil organic carbon) may be significant for some projects, impacting certification viability. However, additional carbon pools have been excluded from the first version of the methodology due to measurement complexity, associated high uncertainty, and relevance. Standardised procedures and tools for additional carbon pools are yet to be established by Equitable Earth.

2.3 Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV)

2.3.1 Field Calibration

- 2.3.1.1 This methodology minimises field data requirements. Future updates may allow developer in-situ data collection for field calibration in specific cases, supported by standardised procedures and technical guidance to ensure robust and auditable integration with central datasets.
- 2.3.1.2 Standardised protocols for integrating field data with remote sensing and model outputs are already established by Equitable Earth for restoration activities (see the Protocol for Field Calibration under M001), but not yet for conservation activities.



2.4 Livelihoods

2.4.1 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL)

- 2.4.1.1 The Livelihoods Pillar is a core component of the Equitable Earth Standard and methodologies, and includes robust requirements for socio-economic benefits and safeguards, stakeholder engagement, Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC), and benefit sharing, with an emphasis on cultural heritage and collaborative decision-making with Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and Local Communities (LCs). It also includes methods for setting objectives, defining interventions and indicators, monitoring and reporting results, and adapting project design over time.
- 2.4.1.2 The next version of the Equitable Earth Standard may be revised to include a specific framework for measuring project impacts and outcomes. The Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) framework will better enable projects to report on actual, realised benefits using clear criteria and indicators. The framework, linked to a project's theory of change, will ensure social and biodiversity claims made by a project are backed up by defensible evidence and directly attributable to the project.

2.4.2 Collaboration with IPs and LCs

- 2.4.3 Equitable Earth will establish a dedicated working group of Indigenous and community leaders to ensure their knowledge and perspectives are at the core of our work. Collaboration with and insights from this group will inform the evolution of the Equitable Earth Programme. The working group will be part of Equitable Earth's Technical Advisory Board (TAB).



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