

Reef Credit

Methodology Application and Review Procedure



ecomarkets
AUSTRALIA

Version Control

Reef Credit Methodology Application and Review Procedure

Version 2.1

Version Number	Author	Change	Date Approved
1.2	Secretariat	Minor revisions to incorporate learnings from first method approval process	11 October 2019
2.0	Review panel	Beta phase review	14 October 2021
2.1	Secretariat	Minor review	28 June 2024

Table of Contents

Purpose	3
Scope	3
Application	3
Procedure	3
Procedure for revisions to approved Methodologies	3
Procedure for new Methodology applications	4
1. Methodology Developer submits application to the Secretariat	4
2. Preliminary review of Methodology against Reef Credit Guide and Reef Credit Standard	4
3. Technical Advisory Committee selects two (2) peer reviewers	5
4. Public consultation period (30 days)	5
5. Peer review period (30 days)	6
6. Secretariat receives peer review documentation	6
7. Peer review result	6
8. Methodology Developers revise	7
9. Technical Advisory Committee to confirm process integrity	8
10. Methodology is approved	8
11. Endorsement by Board	8
12. Publish Methodology	8
Definitions	9
Related Documents	9
Attachment 1 – Peer Review Process Flowchart	10
Attachment 2 – Methodology Application Form	11
Attachment 3 – Methodology Template	13
Attachment 4 – Methodology Eligibility Checklist	15
Attachment 5 – Public Consultation Feedback Form	16
Attachment 6 – Peer Review Feedback Form	19
Attachment 7 – Conflict of Interest Policy for peer review	21
Attachment 8 – Peer Review Summary Report Template	22
Attachment 9 – Peer Reviewer Declaration	23
Attachment 10 – Guidance Note for selection of peer reviewers	24
Attachment 11 – Methodology Explanatory Statement Template	25

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to detail the procedure to follow when applying for approval of a draft Methodology, or a revision to an approved Methodology.

Scope

This procedure applies to all draft and approved Methodologies under the Reef Credit Scheme.

Application

This procedure is for use by Methodology Developers, the Reef Credit Secretariat (Secretariat), Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Eco-Markets Australia Board (Board), Peer Reviewers, and any third-party applying to revise an approved Methodology.

This document will be updated periodically by Eco-Markets Australia, the Reef Credit Scheme administrator, and the Secretariat via delegated administrative functions.

Procedure

This procedure describes the steps to apply for approval of a draft Methodology as set out in the Peer Review Process Flowchart (Attachment 1) and the steps to apply to revise an approved Methodology.

This procedure provides further requirements and guidance for specific elements within the process, and attaches associated forms, templates and checklists (Related Documents). The Related Documents referred to throughout this document are listed at the end of this document.

Terms used in this Procedure are defined in the Reef Credit Definitions.

Procedure for revisions to approved Methodologies

Applications to revise approved Reef Credit methodologies may be initiated by a Methodology Developer, the Secretariat or a third-party ('the applicant').

EMA will periodically review methodologies to ensure they continue to be fit for purpose at the discretion of the Secretariat and Board. The procedure to apply to revise a methodology is as follows:

- a. Email to the Secretariat (secretariat@eco-markets.org.au) outlining the scope of the proposed revision.
- b. The Secretariat will determine whether the revision constitutes a minor error or correction, a minor revision, or a major revision.
 - a. For minor revisions or correction of a minor error:
 - i. the Secretariat will liaise with the applicant to review the proposed revision
 - ii. the Secretariat will review the proposed revision with the TAC
 - iii. the Secretariat will consult with the Methodology Developer on the proposed revisions
 - iv. The Secretariat may decide to open the proposed revision for a 30-day public consultation period, taking into account:
 1. guidance (if sought) provided by the TAC.
 2. views of the Methodology Developer (if different to the applicant).
 - b. For major revisions:
 - i. the process is the same as for new Methodology applications.

For clarity, responsibility for bearing the costs of revisions are as follows:

- a. when initiated by a Methodology Developer, costs will be met by the Methodology Developer;
- b. when initiated by the Secretariat, costs will be met by the Secretariat;
- c. when initiated by a third-party, costs will be met by the third-party, except where the Secretariat at its discretion determines otherwise on a case-by-case basis.

The Secretariat will issue an invoice for the Methodology Review Fee set out in the Reef Credit Fee Schedule (Fee Schedule).

Procedure for new Methodology applications

1. Methodology Developer submits application to the Secretariat

The Methodology Developer must prepare and submit to the Secretariat by email to secretariat@eco-markets.org.au a completed:

- a. Methodology Application Form (Attachment 2);
- b. Draft Methodology using the Methodology Template (Attachment 3)
- c. Draft Methodology Explanatory Statement 'using the Methodology Explanatory Statement' Template (Attachment 11).

The Methodology Developer must nominate three (3) or four (4) peer reviewers in the Methodology Application Form. Upon receipt of the Methodology documentation the Secretariat will issue an invoice for the Methodology Lodgement Fee set out in the Fee Schedule.

The Methodology Lodgement Fee must be paid by the Methodology Developer before the Secretariat can proceed to the next step.

2. Preliminary review of Methodology against Reef Credit Guide and Reef Credit Standard

Using the Methodology Eligibility Checklist (Attachment 4) the Secretariat will conduct a preliminary review of the Methodology documentation to evaluate whether:

- a. it is complete;
- b. the requisite format has been followed and completed; and
- c. the draft Methodology is new [or includes revisions to an existing Methodology that require re-submission through these procedures].

For clarity, where major revisions to an existing methodology are proposed by a third-party, consultation with the original Methodology Developer will be required. This will be facilitated via the Secretariat.

The Secretariat's preliminary review is based on information provided by the Methodology Developer in the Methodology documentation and attached documents. The Secretariat is not responsible for errors or if a draft Methodology fails to meet eligibility requirements. At the conclusion of the preliminary review, the Secretariat will notify the Methodology Developer of the outcome and next steps.

If the draft Methodology is accepted it will progress to public consultation and peer review, and the Secretariat will issue an invoice for the Methodology Review Fee set out in the Fee Schedule. Upon receipt of the Methodology Review Fee, the draft Methodology documentation will proceed to the next step.

If the Secretariat considers the Methodology documentation to be incomplete, not in the requisite format, covered or partly covered by another Methodology or a draft Methodology being assessed for approval, or otherwise ineligible under the Reef Credit Scheme, the Secretariat will:

- a. identify aspects requiring additional completion or adherence to the requisite format,
- b. propose modifications, or
- c. reject the application and invite a revised application.

The Methodology documentation may be revised and resubmitted, however if such revisions are substantial the application may be considered a new application and subject to a new Methodology Lodgement Fee.

3. Technical Advisory Committee selects two (2) peer reviewers

The purpose of the peer review is to aid evaluation by subject matter experts to ensure methodologies are theoretically rigorous, scientifically robust and practically workable.

The Secretariat will provide the application documentation to the TAC to select two (2) peer reviewers from those nominated by the Methodology Developer.

To assess the suitability of proposed peer reviewers, the TAC will consider:

- a. the reviewer's subject matter expertise and experience in an area relevant to the draft Methodology, having regard to the reviewers' CV and general public profile and the Guidance Note for selection of peer reviewers (Attachment 10); and
- b. the reviewer's ability to provide objective and impartial advice having regard to:
 - a. the Conflict of Interest Policy for peer review (Attachment 7);
 - b. any disclosures provided by the peer reviewers or Methodology Developer to the TAC; and
 - c. the attestation provided by the Methodology Developer in the Methodology Application and Review Procedure Form regarding conflicts of interest as well as the description provided by the Methodology Developer in the Methodology Application Form regarding the level of involvement, if any, of the peer reviewer(s) in the Methodology development process.

If two (2) or more peer reviewers proposed by the Methodology Developer do not meet both suitability criteria, the TAC (via the Secretariat) may request that the Methodology Developer propose an alternative peer reviewer/s, while retaining the right to recommend selection of another peer reviewer/s, if it is not satisfied with the options provided by the Methodology Developer.

The TAC's recommendation regarding selection of peer reviewers will be formalised through a written resolution.

The Secretariat will contact the selected peer reviewers and:

- a. request their review of the Methodology documentation;
- b. confirm their availability to complete the review of the Methodology documentation within a 30-day timeframe; and
- c. request that they complete and return the Peer Reviewer Declaration (Attachment 9).

The cost of the peer review is included in the Methodology Review Fee and will be paid to the peer reviewers on the Methodology Developer's behalf. Standard rates for peer review may be set by the Secretariat based on the scope and complexity of the Methodology.

The peer reviewers will be provided by the Secretariat with the:

- a. Draft Methodology;
- b. Draft Methodology Explanatory Statement; and
- c. Peer Review Feedback Form (Attachment 6),

for completion and return within the peer review period.

4. Public consultation period (30 days)

The Secretariat will post the draft Methodology and draft Methodology Explanatory Statement on the [Eco-Markets Australia](#) website for public consultation for a period of 30 days, which will include publication on the Eco-Markets Australia website, communication with key stakeholders, and may include promotion via other channels such as social media and online discussion forums at the discretion of the

Secretariat. Comments shall be submitted to the Secretariat via email to secretariat@eco-markets.org.au using the Public Consultation Feedback Form (Attachment 5). Apart from contact details, the content of submissions will be considered public documents free of any claims to intellectual property and will be published on the website at the conclusion of the public consultation and peer review process.

The Secretariat shall collate all comments received during the public consultation period and provide these to the Methodology Developer and peer reviewers.

5. Peer review period (30 days)

The peer reviewers will conduct their assessment of the Methodology documentation over of a period of 30 days.

The commencement of the peer review process may occur during or after the public consultation period (Attachment 1).

If the peer review coincides with the public consultation period, the Secretariat may opt to extend the peer review period to allow the peer reviewers time to consider any comments received during the public consultation.

6. Secretariat receives peer review documentation

The Secretariat will receive the completed Peer Review Feedback Form(s) and any marked-up versions of the draft Methodology and draft Methodology Explanatory Statement from the peer reviewers (Peer review documentation) at the conclusion of the peer review period.

7. Peer review result

The Secretariat will consider the peer review feedback and determine if the peer review resulted in one of the following recommendations:

- a. Endorse with no revisions
- b. Endorse with minor revisions as specified
- c. Major revisions are needed to respond to specified matters before the Methodology can be endorsed
- d. The Methodology is rejected for specified reasons
- e. There are conflicting views between the reviewers on substantive elements of the Methodology.

The process to follow in relation to each of these steps, as summarised in the Peer Review Process Flowchart in Attachment 1, is as follows:

- a. If both peer reviewers agree that no changes are recommended, the Secretariat will refer the Methodology documentation and peer review feedback to the TAC to confirm the integrity of the process followed (step 9).
- b. If specified minor changes are recommended, the Secretariat will return the Methodology documentation to the Methodology Developer with the peer reviewers' feedback regarding the revisions required (step 8). Once the revisions are made and the revised Methodology documentation is submitted to the Secretariat, the Secretariat will refer the documentation and peer review feedback to the TAC to confirm the integrity of the process followed (step 9).
- c. If major revision is recommended to respond to specified matters, the Secretariat will return the Methodology documentation to the Methodology Developer with the peer reviewers' feedback regarding the revisions required (step 8). The Secretariat will prepare a Peer Review Summary Report (Attachment 8) summarising key topics arising from the peer reviewer's comments and the public consultation comments and the Methodology Developer's responses, including advice from the peer reviewers about the extent to which the revisions adequately respond to the matters raised.

After the Methodology documentation is revised, the Secretariat may send the revised

documentation back to the peer reviewers for further review and provide an opportunity for the Methodology Developer to explain their response. The peer reviewers will be given the opportunity to recommend any of options 1 (a– d) again (step 7) after reviewing the revised Methodology documentation.

After the Methodology Developers have responded to any further peer review (step 8), the Secretariat will then refer the Methodology documentation and peer review feedback to the TAC to confirm the integrity of the process followed (step 9).

- d. If it is recommended that the Methodology be rejected for specified reasons, the Secretariat will refer the Methodology documentation and peer review feedback to the TAC which will make a recommendation to the Board for decision to either:
 - i. reject the draft Methodology; or
 - ii. follow another course of action suggested by the TAC or at the discretion of the Board.

The recommendation of the TAC under step 7 will be formalised by the Secretariat through a written resolution. The written resolution will be presented to the Board as a formal recommendation of the TAC and the Board may, at its discretion, endorse the recommendation.

- e. If the peer reviewers have conflicting views about a substantive matter affecting the acceptability of the draft Methodology, or as to whether to reject the draft Methodology, the TAC will make a recommendation to the Secretariat to either:
 - i. pursue a proposed process to see if conflicting responses can be resolved;
 - ii. send the Methodology documentation back to the Methodology Developer seeking a solution to the contested matters;
 - iii. appoint a third peer reviewer to review the Methodology documentation within a period of fourteen (14) days. If the third peer reviewer proposed by the Methodology Developer is not acceptable to the TAC, the TAC will make a recommendation to the Secretariat that a request be made that the Methodology Developer propose an alternative peer reviewer/s. The TAC retains the right to recommend to the Secretariat another peer reviewer/s if it is not satisfied with the options provided by the Methodology Developer; or
 - iv. follow another course of action recommended by the TAC or at the discretion of the Board.

The Secretariat may in its discretion, choose to escalate the matter to the Board for decision.

8. Methodology Developers revise

If the result of the process in step 7 is that revisions are recommended, the Secretariat will refer the Methodology documentation to the Methodology Developer with the peer reviewers' advice regarding the revisions required.

The Methodology Developer must respond to all of the peer reviewer findings by incorporating revisions and/or justifications for the proposed approach.

The Methodology Developer must also provide its responses to the public consultation comments by annotating the received Public Consultation Feedback Form(s).

The Methodology Developer shall take due account of all comments received and either propose to adjust the Methodology or leave the Methodology unchanged, in either case providing the rationale for the proposed adjustment, or reasons why the substance of the comment should not be reflected in the Methodology documentation.

9. Technical Advisory Committee to confirm process integrity

The Secretariat will convene the TAC to review the revised draft Methodology documentation and associated documents and resolve whether or not the Methodology approval process has been properly followed.

The TAC will review the most recent Methodology documentation, and associated documents, to satisfy itself that the Methodology has been assessed in accordance with Reef Credit Guide and Reef Credit Standard.

Where the TAC resolves that the Methodology approval process has not been properly followed or the Methodology has not been assessed in accordance with Reef Credit Guide and Reef Credit Standard, the TAC may require that the Methodology documentation go through any or all of the Methodology approval process steps again. The resolution of matters by the TAC will not be unreasonable or arbitrary or dictated by imperfection of process.

The resolution of the TAC will be formalised through a written resolution. The written resolution will be presented to the Board as a formal recommendation of the TAC and the Board may, at its discretion, endorse the recommendation.

10. Methodology is approved

If the process is found to have been properly followed, the Methodology documentation will be recommended by the TAC to the Board for approval at the next Board Meeting.

The Board reserves the right not to accept the Methodology documentation where it is not consistent with the Reef Credit Scheme principles or may have an adverse impact on the integrity or reputation of the Reef Credit Scheme.

11. Endorsement by Board

With the successful approval vote of the Board, the Methodology is accepted as a Reef Credit Methodology.

The Secretariat will then publish the Methodology and Methodology Explanatory Statement on the Eco-Markets website.

An approved Methodology may be used by any Project Proponent, including the Methodology Developer.

12. Publish Methodology

The Secretariat will post on the Eco-Markets Australia website all public comments and documented responses, and all peer review comments and documented responses, together with the public comment version of the Methodology documentation and the final approved Methodology documentation to provide transparency in the development process.

Definitions

Terms used in this document are defined in the Reef Credit Definitions.

Related Documents

Requirement Documents

Reef Credit Standard Version 2.1

Reef Credit Guide Version 2.1

Reef Credit Definitions Version 2.1

Supporting Documents

Reef Credit Fee Schedule Version 2.0

Templates, Forms and Policies

Attachment 2 - Methodology Application Form

Attachment 3 - Methodology Template

Attachment 4 - Methodology Eligibility Checklist

Attachment 5 - Public Consultation Feedback Form

Attachment 6 - Peer Review Feedback Form

Attachment 7 - Conflict of Interest Policy for Peer Review

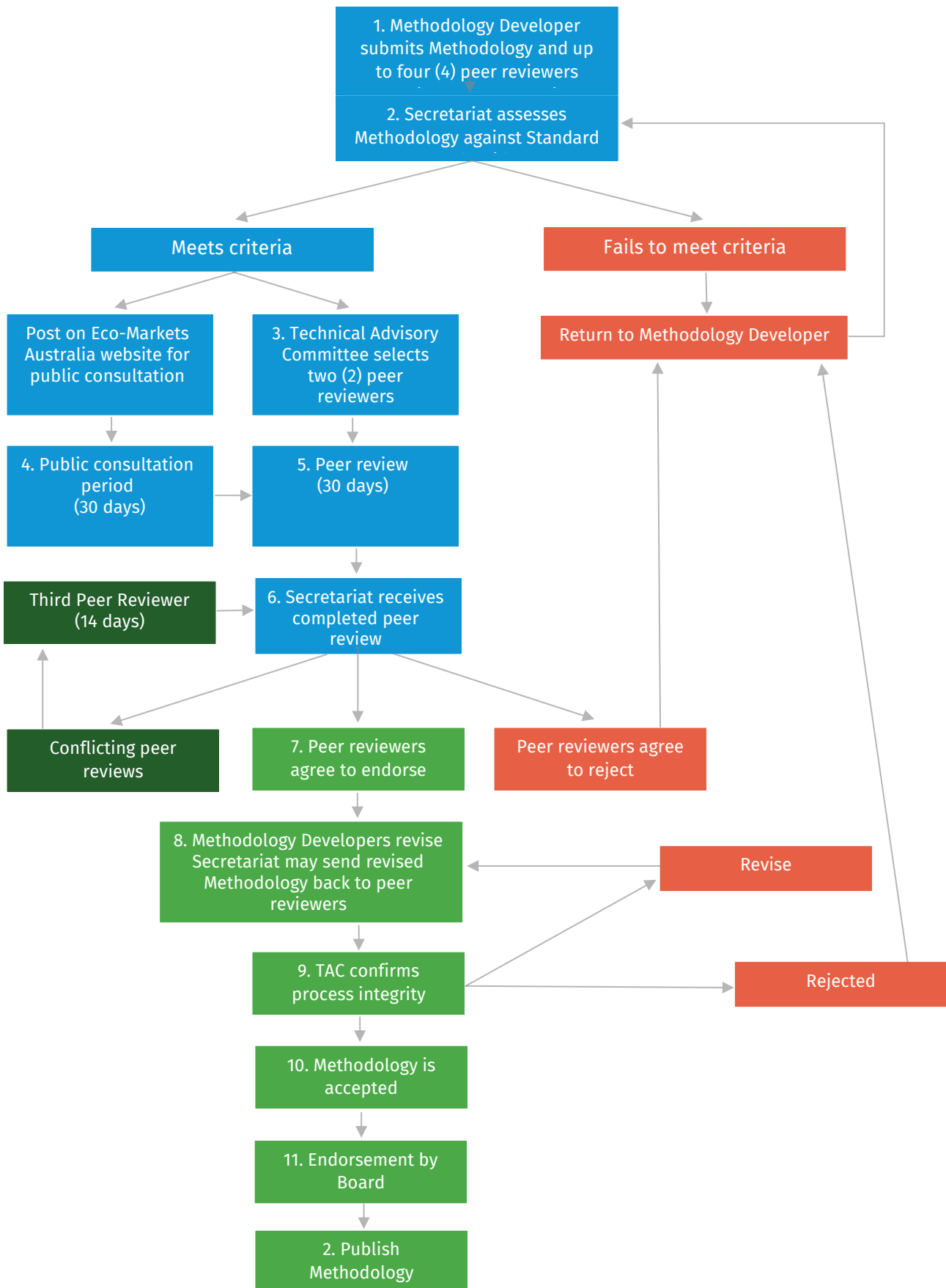
Attachment 8 - Peer Review Summary Report Template

Attachment 9 - Peer Reviewer Declaration Form

Attachment 10 - Guidance Note for selection of peer reviewers

Attachment 11 – Methodology Explanatory Statement Template

Attachment 1 – Peer Review Process Flowchart



Attachment 2 – Methodology Application Form

Instructions: this form is to be completed by the Methodology Developer and submitted together with attachments (including the proposed peer reviewers' curriculum vitae), the draft Methodology (using the Methodology Template) and draft Methodology Explanatory Statement' (using the Methodology Explanatory Statement Template) ('Methodology documentation') to the Secretariat at secretariat@eco-markets.org.au. On receipt of the Methodology documentation, the Secretariat will issue an invoice for the Methodology Lodgement Fee specified in the Fee Schedule.

Reef Credit Methodology Application Form	
Date	DATE/MONTH/YEAR
Methodology Developer	Individual/organisation
Contact	Name; organisation; address; email; phone
Methodology element sectoral scope	e.g. land management practice change
Name of Methodology element	Title of Methodology
Short description	Less than 50 words
Methodology element documentation	Document id
Consultation with Method Developer (where major revisions are proposed by third-parties)	Yes/no; overview of the consultation process and outcome/s.
Peer reviewer 1 (3 or 4 nominees must be provided)	Name; organisation; email address
Peer reviewer 2	Name; organisation; email address
Peer reviewer 3	Name; organisation; email address
Peer reviewer 4	Name; organisation; email address
Peer reviewers have agreed to be considered and have been advised the TAC may contact them, via the Secretariat, for further information	Y
Peer reviewer CVs attached (required)	Y
Please provide a brief synopsis of why the Methodology Developer is proposing each of the peer reviewers with reference to their technical strengths in testing scientific rigour and identifying methodological vulnerabilities and risks, and where they are likely to be able to add value to development of the draft Methodology	Insert relevant details
List of technical experts engaged in the	Insert relevant details

development of the draft Methodology									
Please provide a statement of the scope and extent of involvement, if any, that peer review nominees have had in the development of the draft Methodology.	<i>Insert relevant details</i>								
<p>Attestation</p> <p>By signing and submitting this draft Methodology documentation, the Methodology Developer agrees to pay the Secretariat the non-refundable Methodology Lodgment Fee, the rate of which is set out in the Reef Credit Fee Schedule. The Methodology Developer also acknowledges and agrees that it has read, understood and will comply with the Reef Credit Guide and Reef Credit Standard, that no perceived or actual conflict of interest exists in relation to the proposed peer reviewers, and that the acceptance or non-acceptance of this draft Methodology documentation shall be at the sole discretion of the Secretariat.</p> <p>Signed for and on behalf of:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Name of organisation:</td> <td>Click or tap here to enter text.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Signature:</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Name of signatory:</td> <td>Click or tap here to enter text.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Date:</td> <td>Click or tap here to enter text.</td> </tr> </table>		Name of organisation:	Click or tap here to enter text.	Signature:		Name of signatory:	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date:	Click or tap here to enter text.
Name of organisation:	Click or tap here to enter text.								
Signature:									
Name of signatory:	Click or tap here to enter text.								
Date:	Click or tap here to enter text.								

Attachment 3 – Methodology Template

Instructions: the Methodology Developer is to use this template when drafting the Methodology. The purpose of this template is to help ensure clarity and consistency in methodologies developed for use under the Reef Credit Scheme. If the draft Methodology deviates from the template in any way, the Methodology Developer must provide reasons.

Methodology Template	
Methodology title	
Version	
Author/s	
Acknowledgments [provide a complete list of all experts and organisations involved in the development of the Methodology]	
Consultation Process [include a description of the consultation process the Methodology Developer went through in developing the Methodology]	
Table of Contents	
1. Project Description	
1.1 Governing documents	[e.g. Reef Credit Standard and Reef Credit Guide version]
1.2 References	[indicate key documents and/or tools upon which the draft Methodology is based]
1.3 Summary description of Methodology	[concise summary of the draft Methodology (less than 100 words)]
1.4 Project activities	[include a description of the Project activities to which the Methodology applies]
1.5 Definitions	[include definitions of terms used in the Methodology unless already defined in the Reef Credit Definitions]
1.6 Documentation requirements	[outline the documentation required for Project Application and for issuance of Reef Credits]
2. Eligibility	
[describe the conditions under which the Methodology can (and cannot) be applied. Note: the draft Methodology must not be related to an activity included on the Reef Credit Standard, Schedule 2, Negative List]	
2.1 Location	[provides requirement that proposed Project Area is within the geographical boundaries of the GBR catchment]
2.2 Project land characteristics	[provides guidelines for defining land characteristics of the Project Area]
2.3 Project activities	[provide guidelines for defining the scope of activities and Pollutant pools to be accounted for in the Project]
2.4 Land use change	[any necessary permits to demonstrate that the Project will not have a significant negative impact]
2.5 Additionality	[establish procedures for the demonstration and assessment of Additionality. The draft Methodology may adopt any of the following approaches to the assessment of Additionality a. implementation barriers b. Common Practice c. Performance Benchmark]
2.6 Leakage	[include procedures for identifying the risk of Project Leakage and provide a method for accounting in the calculation of Reef Credits the deduction as a result of Project Leakage]
2.7 Determine if the project may be at risk of Leakage	
3. Project Mapping	
[Provide guidelines for delineating project area boundaries]	
3.1 Geospatial capture	[describe how the spatial boundary is defined and specify the maps or GIS shape files required]
3.2 Fitness for purpose	[specify appropriateness of dataset for purpose]
3.3. Accuracy	[specify minimum requirements for spatial data]
3.4 Reef Credit Accounting Zones	

4. Reef Credit Project Plan	<i>[provide requirements for plan outlining management strategies]</i>
5. Project Accounting	
5.1 Relevant pools	<i>[provide guidelines for defining the Pollutant pools to be accounted for in the Project. Identify all sources and sinks of relevant Pollutant source within the Project Area]</i>
5.2 Baseline Scenario	<i>[provide an explanation of why the baseline was chosen and guidelines for determining average Pollutant loss for the Baseline Scenario e.g. methodologies must be founded on a comparative assessment of the Business As Usual scenario and the alternatives to determine the Baseline Scenario. This must include an assessment of the barriers to implementation of the draft Methodology activities.]</i>
5.3 Project monitoring period calculations	<i>[provide guidelines for quantifying Project Pollutant loss for the monitoring period. Describe how the draft Methodology uses either direct measurement and/or modelling approaches to estimate Pollutant reduction.]</i>
5.4 Calculation of change in Pollutant loss	<i>[assumptions, parameters and procedures involved in calculation of Pollutant reduction must be clearly stated]</i>
5.5 Calculation of change in Pollutant entering the Great Barrier Reef	<i>[detail how to determine pollutant reductions resulting from Project activities at end of catchment for the monitoring period.]</i>
5.6 Calculation of monitoring period Reef Credits	<i>[outline the steps to determine the number of Reef Credits based on calculated Pollutant reductions]</i>
5.7 Uncertainty	<i>[provide details of how the Methodology takes into account any uncertainty and makes an appropriate confidence deduction (correction factor).]</i>
6. Monitoring and Record Keeping Requirements	<i>[provides guidelines for the implementation of a monitoring plan and identify monitored parameters to assess management strategy]</i>
Appendices	

Attachment 4 – Methodology Eligibility Checklist

Instructions: the purpose of the checklist is to guide the Secretariat’s preliminary review of the draft Methodology documentation for completeness and consistency with the Methodology approval requirements under the Reef Credit Guide and Reef Credit Standard before the documentation is progressed through the peer review and public consultation process. The checklist is to be completed by the Secretariat.

The Secretariat’s review of the Methodology documentation at this stage is only a preliminary determination of the Methodology’s compliance with the Methodology approval process under the Reef Credit Guide and Reef Credit Standard. The final approval of the draft Methodology is confirmed in later phases.

The Secretariat’s preliminary review is based on information provided by the Methodology Developer in the Methodology documentation and attached documents. The Secretariat is not responsible for errors therein and is not liable if a draft Methodology fails to meet eligibility requirements.

Methodology Eligibility Checklist	
Methodology title	
Methodology Developer	
Decision	Accept / Revise minor / Decline
Date	DAY/MONTH/YEAR
Assessment Question	Response (Yes/No)
Is the Methodology Approval Process Submission Form complete (including signature and attachments)?	Y/N
Is the draft Methodology written in accordance with the Methodology Template and have all sections of the template been completed?	Y/N
Is the draft Methodology Explanatory Statement written in accordance with the Methodology Explanatory Statement Template and have all sections of the template been completed?	Y/N
Is the draft Methodology new? [If the draft Methodology is partly covered by another approved Methodology or a Methodology under development, modifications should be proposed]	Y/N

Attachment 5 – Public Consultation Feedback Form

Current as at 1 July 2024

The Secretariat is seeking comment on the following Methodology/ies for use under the Reef Credit Standard.

[insert details]

The Methodology/ies will be subject to peer review prior to adoption under the Reef Credit Standard in accordance with the rules set out in the Standard.

Specific feedback on the draft Methodology is sought on:

1. *[insert details e.g. whether the assumptions, parameters and procedures involved in the calculation of Pollutant reduction are clearly stated?]*

Publication

All submissions are public documents and will be published on the website. Please do not include personally identifying information or comments about other persons in the body of your submission. Contact details will not be published or disclosed to others.

Submission Deadline - 5pm (AEST) [day], [date].

Any submissions received after this date will be considered at the Secretariat's discretion. All submissions must include this cover sheet.

Submissions should be emailed to: secretariat@eco-markets.org.au

Your contribution is greatly appreciated. For further information, please contact the Secretariat.

Contact Details	
Name (required)	
Position within organisation (if applicable)	
Organisation (if applicable)	
Postal address (required)	
Email address (required)	
Phone number (required)	

Public Consultation Feedback Form

Which draft Methodology are you commenting on?

Please use a separate Public Consultation Feedback Form for each Methodology you wish to comment on.

[Methodology title]

Section	Comment	Response by Methodology Developer
1. Project Description		
1.1 Governing documents		
1.2 References		
1.3 Summary description of Methodology		
1.4 Project activities		
1.5 Definitions		
1.6 Documentation requirements		
1.7 Project application		
1.8 Project crediting		
2. Eligibility		
2.1 Location		
2.2 Project land characteristics		
2.3 Project activities		
2.4 Land use change		
2.5 Additionality		
2.6 Leakage		
2.7 Determine if the Project may be at risk of Leakage		
3. Project Mapping		
3.1 Geospatial capture		
3.2 Fitness for purpose		
3.3 Accuracy		
3.4 Reef Credit Accounting Zones		
4. Reef Credit Project Plan		
5. Project Accounting		
5.1 Relevant pools		
5.2 Baseline period calculations		
5.3 Project monitoring period calculations		
5.4 Calculation of change in Pollutant loss		
5.5 Calculation of change in Pollutant entering the Great Barrier Reef		
5.6 Calculation of monitoring period Reef Credits		
5.7 Uncertainty		
6. Monitoring and Record Keeping Requirements		
Appendices		
Specific questions for the Secretariat		

Any other comments on the draft Methodology documentation?

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Attachment 6 – Peer Review Feedback Form

Current as at 1 July 2024

Instructions for reviewers: please contact the Secretariat immediately if the topic is outside your area of expertise or if you cannot meet the deadline for review comments. Please complete and return this template (and the draft Methodology documentation if it contains review comments) to the Secretariat, who will provide it to the Technical Advisory Committee.

The Secretariat will send a copy or a summary of information submitted by all reviewers to the Methodology Developer. Please consider the criteria below in order to determine the scientific validity of the Methodology. The following information will be used to reach decisions on approval of the draft Methodology for use under the Reef Credit Standard. Please provide detailed comments on this form. Attach additional pages to provide specific comments that support your recommendations.

Peer Review Feedback Form		
Methodology title		
Peer reviewer name		
Peer reviewer position		
Recommendation	Approve / Revise minor / Revise major / Decline	
Review criteria	Yes/No	Comments
Relationship to approved or pending methodologies: could existing Methodology be revised?		
Presentation: is Methodology written in clear and concise way?		
Definitions: are key terms defined clearly and consistently?		
Applicability conditions: does the Methodology set appropriate criteria for eligibility of Projects?		
Project Area, timeline and scope: are appropriate guidelines provided for defining the geographical and temporal boundaries of the Project, scope of activities and Pollutant pools to be accounted for in the Project?		
Baseline Scenario: is the approach for determining the baseline appropriate and in compliance with the Reef Credit Standard?		
Additionality: is the approach/tools provided for assessing Additionality appropriate and in compliance with the Reef Credit Standard?		
Baseline emissions: are guidelines for determining average Pollutant loss for the baseline period appropriate and in compliance with the Reef Credit Standard?		
Project emissions: are guidelines for determining Project Pollutant loss for the monitoring period appropriate and in compliance with the Reef Credit Standard?		
Leakage: is the approach to assessment and deductions for Leakage appropriate and in compliance with the Reef Credit Standard?		
Net Pollutant Reductions: is the approach for calculating Project Pollutant reductions at end of catchment appropriate and in compliance with the Reef Credit Standard? The draft Methodology must use either direct measurement and/or modelling approaches to estimate Pollutant reduction. Methodologies must take into account any uncertainty and make an appropriate confidence deduction (correction factor).		

Project Crediting Period: is the proposed duration of the Crediting Period appropriate for the Methodology and Project type? For Crediting Periods that are 10 years or longer, particular attention should be paid to any risks or uncertainties associated with the Baseline Scenario, underlying data or models used to estimate Reef Credits, and how any risks or uncertainties are mitigated.		
Project Reporting and Reef Credit issuance: are requirements for reporting Project abatement and the application process for the issuance of Reef Credits appropriate and in compliance with the Reef Credit Standard?		
Monitoring: are guidelines for the implementation of a monitoring plan and monitored parameters to assess management strategy appropriate and in compliance with the Reef Credit Standard?		
Data and parameters: are specifications for data and parameters appropriate and in compliance with the Reef Credit Standard?		
Does the Methodology meet the requirements of the Reef Credit Guide and Reef Credit Standard, including (without limitation) the requirements set out in Section 4, Methodology requirements, of the Reef Credit Standard?		
Other considerations		

Attachment 7 – Conflict of Interest Policy for peer review

Current as at 1 July 2024

An actual or perceived conflict of interest may arise when a peer reviewer's professional judgement about the consideration of the Methodology for approval is influenced by a secondary interest such as financial gain, career advancement, business or personal relationship, academic competition, or intellectual or ideological beliefs.

All participants in the peer-review and approval process, must identify actual or perceived conflicts of interest when fulfilling their roles and disclose all relationships that might be viewed as inappropriate.

Methodology Developers

When Methodology Developers submit a draft Methodology, they are responsible for disclosing all financial and personal relationships with peer review nominees that might bias or be seen to bias the review. If there are no conflicts of interest, Methodology Developers should state that none exist.

Methodology Developers may identify reviewers or editors they wish to exclude from handling their Methodology due to an existing conflict of interest.

Reviewers

When asked to review a draft Methodology, reviewers should disclose any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that could bias their opinions of the Methodology. If reviewers believe that they cannot judge a Methodology impartially because of a conflict of interest, they should decline the invitation to review and provide an explanation. Possible conflicts of interest may occur when reviewers:

- a. have a financial or business relationship; or
- b. were part of an internal review panel for the Methodology before submission.

If a reviewer is unsure whether an actual or perceived conflict of interest exists, advice should be sought from the Technical Advisory Committee.

Reviewers must not use knowledge of the draft Methodology under review before its publication to further their own interests.

Technical Advisory Committee and Eco-Markets Australia Board

If a member of the Technical Advisory Committee or Eco-Markets Australia Board has a conflict of interest or a relationship that may bias their treatment of the Methodology under consideration, they should excuse themselves from involvement in the Methodology approval process.

Attachment 8 – Peer Review Summary Report Template

Instructions: this template is for the peer review of new methodologies. The template is to be completed by the Secretariat.

Report Title – ‘Summary Report of Peer Review in relation to [insert name of methodology]’

Prepared by [Secretariat]

Peer Reviewers [names of peer reviewer/s]

Date [insert date review completed]

Summary [describe Methodology and peer review purpose, scope and process including criteria and conclusions]

1. Introduction [purpose and scope]

2. Description of Methodology [short description]

3. Approach to review and criteria [refer to the review process and criteria listed in the Methodology Application and Review Procedure, Peer Review Feedback Form, note any qualifications/limitations]

4. Documentation reviewed [Methodology documentation]

5. Review team [names, roles, qualifications]

6. Findings [summarise key topics arising from the peer reviewer’s comments and the public consultation comments and the Methodology Developer’s responses, including advice from the peer reviewers about the extent to which the revisions adequately respond to the matters raised]

7. Conclusion [confirm whether or not the Methodology complies with the review criteria]

ANNEXURES [Final version of draft Methodology and draft Methodology Explanatory Statement]

Attachment 9 – Peer Reviewer Declaration

Instructions: all persons involved in the peer review process are required to disclose any conflict of interest, perceived or actual, that is relevant to their individual role and responsibilities.

An actual conflict of interest exists if the personal interests of an individual improperly influence the performance of his or her official duties. A perceived conflict of interest exists if the personal interests of an individual appear to, or could appear to, improperly influence the performance of his or her official duties.

*Refer to the **Conflict of Interest Policy for peer review** for additional guidance on identifying actual or perceived conflicts of interest.*

Participants in the peer review process are also required to maintain strictest confidence in relation to the methodologies under review and the peer review process.

Methodology title	
Methodology Developer	
Reviewer name	
Reviewer position	

I. Conflict of interest declaration

I do not have any conflicts of interest that prevent my full and unbiased participation in the peer review process except as disclosed below.

I will inform the Secretariat immediately, should my circumstances change in any way that affects this declaration.

II. Confidentiality declaration

I declare and agree that all the information that comes into my possession and that is deliberated upon during the peer review process, shall not be disclosed to any other person, and to treat all matters discussed in connection with the peer review process in absolute confidence.

I further agree that I will not submit public comments on the methodologies during the public consultation phase of the Methodology approval process.

I confirm that the declarations I have made above are, to the best of my knowledge, correct.

III. Publication of peer review feedback

I understand and agree that the Secretariat may post on the Eco-Markets Australia website peer review comments (together with the name and position of the peer reviewer who provided the comments) and documented responses to provide transparency in the Methodology approval process.

Peer Reviewer Name

Signature

Date:

.....

.....

.....

Attachment 10 – Guidance Note for selection of peer reviewers

Instructions: The purpose of this Guidance Note is to set out some more explicit considerations to assist in the nomination and selection of appropriately qualified peer reviewers for draft methodologies under the Reef Credit Scheme.

The Technical Advisory Committee (**TAC**) Terms of Reference set out details of the TAC's role in selecting peer reviewers and the Methodology Application and Review Procedure provides additional guidance.

When selecting a combination of two (2) peer reviewers from the three (3) or four (4) prospective nominees, the TAC will generally seek a combination of technical understanding and expertise in relation to:

1. the subject matter of the draft Methodology; and
2. the rigorous design and operation of the Reef Credit Scheme methodologies that have sufficient scope to cover the field within the Methodology's purpose and have a high likelihood of reliable water quality improvement outcomes.

However, as knowledge and expertise in relation to the subject matter of a Methodology is of specific importance, in some circumstances the selection of two (2) subject matter experts may be preferred.

In such cases assurance of the rigour of the design and operation of the Methodology may rely on the accumulated experience of the Secretariat, Eco-Markets Australia Board (Board) and TAC from previously approved Reef Credit methodologies, and/or the expertise and experience of Reef Credit partners or other parties recognised by the Board.

Beyond the above two considerations, the TAC will look for:

3. indications of the peer reviewers' likelihood of providing a pragmatic assessment of the draft Methodology's fitness for purpose. This may include their contextual knowledge about the aspirations, norms, capability and capacity of the relevant industry(ies) and catchment community(ies), that may help finesse the draft Methodology to increase confidence in or reduce barriers to its acceptance, uptake and efficacy.

In relation to prospective peer reviewers, the TAC will take into consideration, their:

4. overall reputation and standing; and
5. experience in peer review processes.

Attachment 11 – Methodology Explanatory Statement Template

Instructions: the purpose of this template is to provide an overview and easy to understand explanation of a Methodology for project developers and other stakeholders that may be new or lack understanding of the Reef Credit Scheme.

When completing the Methodology Explanatory Statement Template, it is important to consider the audience, and the type of information they may need to be able to use the Methodology and apply it to a Project. Please provide examples where possible to help explain various processes in the Methodology, and how modelling tools are accessed and applied (where applicable).

<INSERT METHODOLOGY NAME>

SIMPLE METHODOLOGY GUIDE

Version control

(insert details)

Methodology overview

Provide a description of the Project activities for this Methodology and how the Methodology was developed.

Methodology concept and logic

Provide an explanation of the Methodology concept and logic.

Section 1: Project Description

Provide an explanation of the Project Description requirements of the Methodology.

Section 2: Project Eligibility

Provide an explanation of the Project Eligibility requirements of the Methodology.

Section 3: Project Mapping and Data Requirements

Provide an explanation of the Project Mapping and Data Requirements of the Methodology.

Section 4: Reef Credit Project Plan

Provide an explanation of the Reef Credit Project Plan using examples as required.

Section 5: Project Accounting

Step through the Project Accounting requirements of the Methodology using examples as required.

Section 6: Monitoring and Record Keeping Requirements

Provide an explanation of any Monitoring and Record Keeping Requirements that are required by the Methodology.