

Eco-Markets.

ENVOMARK Methodology Application and Review Procedure

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Nature. Valued.

Version Control

ENVOMARK Methodology Application and Review Procedure Version 1.0

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Table of Contents

Version Control	1
Purpose	3
Scope	3
Application	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 Methodologies against the ENVOMARK Standard	4
3. Technical Advisory Committee selects two (2) peer reviewers	5
4. Public consultation period (30 days)	6
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	7
10. Methodology is approved	7
11. Endorsement by Board	8
12. Publish Methodology	8
Definitions	9
Related Documents	9
Attachment 1 – Methodology Application and Review Procedure Flowchart	10

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 under an ENVOMARK Standard, administered by Eco-Markets (EMA).

Scope

This procedure applies to all draft and approved Methodologies under an approved ENVOMARK Standard such as, but not limited to:

- Australasian Catchment Water Improvement Standard (ACWIS)
- Australasian Biodiversity Improvement Standard (ABIS)
- Reef Credits Standard
- Cassowary Credits Standard

This procedure describes the steps to apply for approval of a draft Methodology as set out in the ENVOMARK Methodology Application and Review Procedure 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 and available online on the Eco-Markets website.

Terms used in this procedure are defined in the Definitions.

Application

This procedure is for use by Methodology Developers, the 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, and the Secretariat via delegated administrative functions.

Procedure for revisions to approved Methodologies

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

Eco-Markets 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:
 - v. the process is the same as for new Methodology applications.

For clarity, responsibility for bearing the costs of revisions:

- a) initiated by a Methodology Developer, costs will be met by the Methodology Developer;
- b) 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 New Methodology Assessment Fee set out in the Fee Schedule, prior to assessment.

Procedure for new Methodology applications

1. Methodology Developer submits application to the Secretariat

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

- a) New Methodology Application Form (Attachment 2);
- b) Draft Methodology using the Methodology Template (Attachment 5, Attachment 6)
- c) Draft Methodology Explanatory Statement Template (Attachment 3)

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 New Methodology Application Fee set out in the Fee Schedule.

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

2. Preliminary review of Methodologies against the ENVOMARK 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 within 14 days via reply email 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 New Methodology Assessment Fee set out in the Fee Schedule. Upon receipt of the New Methodology Assessment 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 relevant ENVOMARK Standard, 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 Developer may revise and resubmit the documentation, however at discretion of the Secretariat if such revisions are substantial the application may be considered a new application and subject to a New Methodology Application Fee. In this case, the Methodology Developer will be advised upon resubmission, before a new review process begins.

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 7); 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 8);
 - 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 Forms (Attachments) regarding conflicts of interest as well as 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 10).

The cost of the peer review is included in the New Methodology Assessment 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 7), 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 website for public consultation for a period of 30 days, which will include publication on the Eco-Markets 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 at secretariat@eco-markets.org.au using the Public Consultation Feedback Form (Attachment 12). 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 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 (30 days).

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 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 revised 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 9) 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.
- d) 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.

- e) 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).
- f) 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.

- a) 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, as per the EMA Fee Schedule, 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 within a reasonable timeframe.

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

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 the ENVOMARK 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 the ENVOMARK 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, or via Circular Resolution if necessary.

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

11. Endorsement by Board

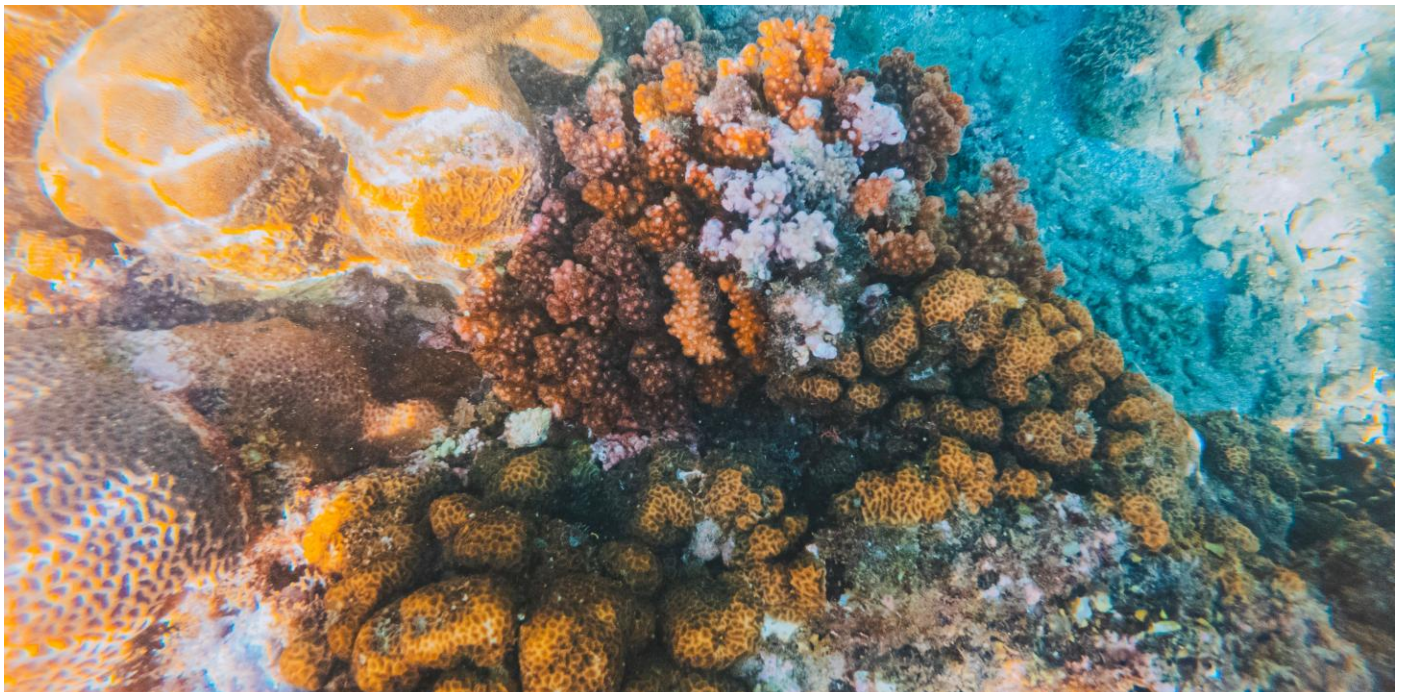
With the successful approval vote of the Board, the Methodology is accepted and approved.

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 website comments and responses from peer review and public consultation to provide transparency in the development process.

The Secretariat will publish the Methodology, Methodology Explanatory Statement, and a simplified Guide (prepared by the Secretariat) on the Eco-Markets website.



Definitions

Terms used in this document are defined in the Definitions.

Related Documents

Requirement Documents

Australasian Catchment Water Improvement Standard (ACWIS) Version 1.0
Australasian Water improvement Credit Guide Version 1.0
Australasian Water improvement Credit Definitions Version 1.0
Australasian Biodiversity Improvement Standard Version 1.1
Australasian Biodiversity Improvement Definitions Version 1.1
Australasian Biodiversity Improvement Guide Version 1.1
Cassowary Credits Scheme Standard Version 1.1
Cassowary Credits Scheme Guide Version 1.1
Cassowary Credits Scheme Definitions Version 1.1
Reef Credits Scheme Standard Version 2.1
Reef Credits Scheme Guide Version 2.1
Reef Credits Scheme Definitions Version 2.1

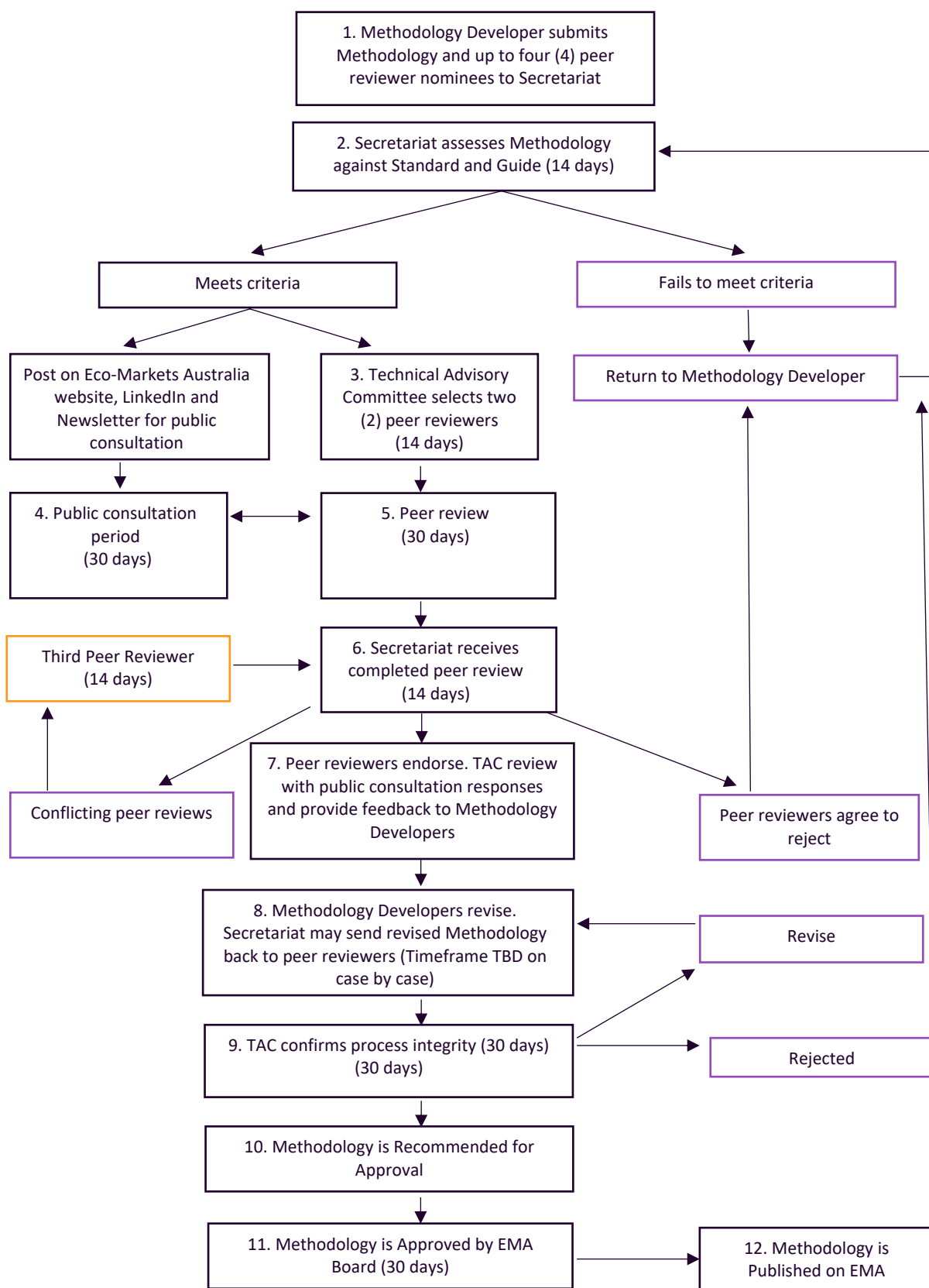
Supporting Documents

Eco-Markets Australia Fee Schedule
ENVOMARK Additionality Tool

Templates, Forms and Policies

Methodology Application and Review Procedure
New Methodology Application Template
Methodology Explanatory Statement Template
Methodology Eligibility Checklist
Methodology Template
Peer Review Feedback Form
Conflict of Interest Policy for peer review
Peer Review Summary Report Template
Peer Reviewer Declaration
Guidance Note for selection of peer reviewers
Example Public Consultation Form

Attachment 1 – Methodology Application and Review Procedure Flowchart



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