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Summary of v1.3 Revisions

Summary

This document outlines the changes implemented to the Equitable Earth Programme Manual, the Equitable Earth Standard, and their affiliated documents. Further details are available in the [Public Consultation Digest](#), which provides a comprehensive overview of the feedback received by Equitable Earth and corresponding responses.



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1 Revision Summary

Versions 1.3 of the Equitable Earth Programme and Equitable Earth Standard introduce substantial updates, reflecting feedback from developers, internal teams, validation and verification bodies (VVBs), and other external stakeholders following a public consultation held in August and September 2025. The updates clarify, refine, and expand technical and procedural requirements while strengthening governance, credibility, and operational flexibility across the Equitable Earth Programme. They also support the integration of multiple methodologies under the Programme, including the newly launched M002 methodology.

Revisions to the Programme Manual include updates to the adaptive management timeline, clarified procedures for suspended and failed projects, the introduction of a two-tier grievance mechanism, and the creation of a Monitoring Report to consolidate annual reporting for verification.

Revisions to the Standard include a newly introduced theory of change framework and more robust and streamlined stakeholder engagement requirements. The Ecological Condition Pillar was updated to integrate theory of change assessments, strengthen baseline evaluations, and ensure requirements are applicable across all project activity types. Additional revisions include strengthened project governance and management requirements, enhanced permanence safeguards, and clarified rules related to project budget transparency.

These updates reflect Equitable Earth's commitment to a robust, transparent, and flexible Programme capable of supporting multiple methodologies, ensuring consistent application of standards, and enabling projects to deliver credible climate, ecological, and social outcomes.

2 Overarching Revisions

2.1 Renamed Verified Restoration Units (VRUs)

Document(s) impacted: Equitable Earth Standard, Programme Manual

Type of change: Editorial, Substantial

Summary of revision:

- The scope of the Equitable Earth Programme was expanded to include conservation activities.



- The Verified Restoration Unit (VRU) was renamed the Equitable Carbon Unit (ECU) to reflect the broader scope.

2.2 Procedures and Requirements for Transferred Projects

Document(s) impacted: Equitable Earth Standard, Programme Manual

Type of change: Substantial

Summary of revision:

- New sections have been created to comprehensively outline the procedures and requirements for projects seeking to transfer into the Equitable Earth Programme. These sections establish eligibility criteria, documentation obligations, programme withdrawal requirements, and review steps for incoming projects, including conditions for projects previously rejected or partially implemented under another carbon crediting programme.
- The revision clarifies how developers must demonstrate conformance with the latest Equitable Earth Standard and methodology requirements, request deviations where necessary, and provide evidence of corrective actions to address non-conformances originating under the previous programme. It further sets out rules governing project start dates, monitoring period continuity, project area consistency, crediting period limits, buffer account obligations, and restrictions on converting previously issued credits.

2.3 Introduced a Two-Tier Grievance Mechanism

Document(s) impacted: Grievance Mechanism Requirements & Procedures, Programme Manual, Equitable Earth Standard

Type of change: Substantial

Summary of revision:

- The Equitable Earth Programme now includes a two-tier grievance mechanism to better manage and address stakeholder complaints.



- The first tier is the project-level grievance mechanism, managed by developers to receive, assess, and resolve comments or complaints locally.
- The second tier is the Equitable Earth grievance mechanism, under which Equitable Earth manages unresolved, complex, or sensitive complaints, or cases where complainants prefer not to approach the developer directly.
- Both developers and Equitable Earth must establish and operate their respective mechanisms in accordance with the [Grievance Mechanism Requirements & Procedures](#).

3 Programme Manual Revisions

3.1 Updated Adaptive Management Timeline

Document(s) impacted: Programme Manual

Type of change: Substantial

Summary of revision:

- The frequency of the adaptive management process was updated to occur every five years, instead of every four years. This change aligns adaptive management frequency with baseline re-evaluation timelines under M002.
- Equitable Earth will consider requests to deviate from these timelines on a case-by-case basis to facilitate alignment with verification cycles and other temporal project requirements.
- The revision ensures a more integrated approach between adaptive management and baseline re-evaluation, ensuring consistency across projects and minimising burden for developers.



3.2 Clarified Units Management for Suspended and Failed Projects

Document(s) impacted: Programme Manual

Type of change: Substantial

Summary of revision:

- The requirements and procedures for the issuance, retirement, and cancellation of units for suspended and failed projects have been clarified.
- For suspended projects, ECUs cannot be issued during the suspension period, but units issued before the effective date of the suspension remain valid and tradable unless otherwise directed by Equitable Earth.
- For failed projects, if failure materially compromises the environmental or social integrity of issued ECUs, Equitable Earth may cancel all affected ECUs on the Equitable Earth Registry. Retired ECUs remain unaffected. This revision ensures clear guidance on the management of ECUs in exceptional project circumstances, preserving the integrity and credibility of the units.

3.3 Updated Fee Schedule Requirements

Document(s) impacted: Fee Schedule (available on the Equitable Earth website), Programme Manual

Type of change: Substantial

Summary of revision:

- The fee schedule has been updated to apply a combination of fixed fees and area-based fees across all steps in the certification process. Previously, most steps had a fixed fee, while MRV fees were calculated on a per hectare basis.¹

¹ Please note that Equitable Earth's revenue remains independent from ECU issuance.



- This revision standardises the fee structure, ensuring fees are proportionate to project scale and reflects the resources necessary for certification activity.

3.4 Timeline Restrictions for Design Review Requests

Document(s) impacted: Programme Manual

Type of change: Minor

Summary of revision:

- A timeline restriction has been introduced for design review requests in relation to the project start date.
- Developers must now request a design review at least 12 months before the five-year anniversary of the project start date for projects certified under M002, and at least 12 months before the eight-year anniversary for projects certified under M001.

3.5 Clarified Procedures for Project Design Document (PDD) Updates at Adaptive Management

Document(s) impacted: Programme Manual

Type of change: Clarification

Summary of revision:

- Procedures have been clarified for cases where an updated Project Design Document (PDD), submitted through the adaptive management process, is rejected by Equitable Earth.
- Upon submission, Equitable Earth reviews the updated PDD and either approves it for progression to validation and verification, or issues a rejection accompanied by Corrective Action Requests (CARs) and Clarification Requests (CLs).



- Developers must fully address all CARs and CLs and resubmit the revised PDD for further review. Approval is granted only once all required corrections have been satisfactorily resolved.

3.6 Introduced Monitoring Report

Document(s) impacted: Programme Manual

Type of change: Editorial, Substantial

Summary of revision:

- A new document, the Monitoring Report, has been introduced as the core document developers must prepare prior to each verification.
- The Monitoring Report consolidates information from the Annual Reports covering the period since the previous verification, and replaces the Annual Report in verification years, meaning no Annual Report submission is required in those years.

4 Standard Revisions

4.1 Pre-Submission Activities Reported and Assessed in the First Monitoring Report

Document(s) impacted: Standard

Type of change: Substantial

Summary of revision:

- Pre-submission activities were previously assessed for conformance with Equitable Earth requirements during the project design review and validation.
- Pre-submission activities are now reported on in the first Monitoring Report and assessed during the first verification.



4.2 Added Theory of Change Framework

Document(s) impacted: Equitable Earth Standard

Type of change: Substantial

Summary of revision:

- The concept of theory of change has been introduced, requiring developers to prepare a causal chain linking project interventions, outcomes, and objectives.
- The delivery and impact of interventions is evaluated against baseline conditions and targets. This enables a clear understanding of project performance and facilitates updates to project design during adaptive management.

4.3 Updated Livelihoods Baseline

Document(s) impacted: Equitable Earth Standard

Type of change: Substantial

Summary of revision:

- As part of the newly introduced theory of change concept, developers are now allowed to determine additional baseline attributes for the Livelihoods Pillar, beyond those set by Equitable Earth.
- This update allows for greater flexibility and improved accuracy in baseline assessments, better reflecting the diverse on-the-ground realities of projects.

4.4 Updated Stakeholder Identification and applicability of Livelihoods requirements

Document(s) impacted: Equitable Earth Standard, Terms & Definitions

Type of change: Editorial, Minor

Summary of revision:



- Stakeholder types (i.e., core, direct, indirect) were formally defined to better qualify stakeholder groups and guide the applicability of requirements such as co-design, social additionality, safeguards, benefit-sharing, and Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).

4.5 Streamlined Stakeholder Engagement Requirements

Document(s) impacted: Equitable Earth Standard

Type of change: Substantial

Summary of revision:

- An earlier requirement for developers to establish a formal stakeholder committee has been replaced by identifying representatives for each stakeholder group.
- The elements of the stakeholder engagement plan have been more clearly described in the Standard. Developers must detail how each stakeholder group will be engaged, specifying engagement types, feedback mechanisms, communication channels, and engagement frequency.

4.6 Updated Ecological Condition Pillar

Document(s) impacted: Equitable Earth Standard

Type of change: Substantial

Summary of revision:

- The ecological condition pillar has been updated to reflect the implementation of a theory of change approach, with greater detail on baseline assessments.
- Clarifications have been made to improve the operability of requirements, including the addition of more details on the expert assessment required for ecological condition interventions.
- The pillar has also been restructured to put a greater emphasis on ecological function and to include requirements applicable to all



methodologies under the Equitable Earth Programme, that were previously included in individual methodologies, in the Standard.

4.7 Cancellation of Buffer Pool Credits

Document(s) impacted: Equitable Earth Standard

Type of change: Clarification, Editorial

Summary of revision:

- Buffer requirements were clarified to require that any units contributed to the buffer pool that have not been retired are cancelled at the end of the project's total crediting period.

4.8 Project Governance and Management

Document(s) impacted: Equitable Earth Standard

Type of Change: Substantial

Summary of Revision:

- A new section has been introduced establishing detailed requirements for project governance and management to ensure that developers maintain the administrative capacity and functional expertise needed to implement projects in line with Equitable Earth requirements.
- The revision clarifies expectations regarding organisational capacity, including evidence of administrative systems, minimum functional competencies across project coordination, monitoring, finance, community engagement, and workplace conduct, and flexibility for fulfilling these functions through partnerships or shared services where proportionate to project scale. It sets out requirements for respecting and working through local and customary governance systems, and for equipping project teams with appropriate training and resources when engaging with Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and Local Communities (LCs).
- New obligations were also included requiring developers to maintain documented policies to prevent discrimination, human rights violations, and labour-related abuses, supported by robust reporting and whistleblower mechanisms.



4.9 Reinforced Permanence Safeguards

Document(s) impacted: Equitable Earth Standard

Type of change: Substantial

Summary of revision:

- A new requirement has been added to strengthen permanence safeguards by addressing external risks related to dangerous activities near the project area. Developers must assess whether such activities occur in the project surroundings and implement appropriate safeguards to prevent negative impacts on the project crediting area.

4.10 Clarified Project Budget Transparency

Document(s) impacted: Equitable Earth Standard

Type of change: Substantial

Summary of revision:

- The project budget reporting requirements were revised to ensure appropriate levels of transparency. The Standard now explicitly defines sensitive information and allows sensitive budget details to be excluded from publicly available project documents and only available to Equitable Earth and the VVB.

