

Methodology Approval and Development Process

November 2023, version 1.0

1. Introduction

Methodologies, in the context of a GHG Project, refer to the systematic set of procedures and criteria used to quantify, monitor, and verify greenhouse gas emissions reductions or removals.

Proba has set up this process to provide guidelines on which methodology to choose and, where necessary, develop a new methodology. In section 3 of this document a set of quality criteria to assess methodologies is described.

Within the Proba Standard it is possible to use open and publicly available methodologies which are approved by other GHG programs. Proba has a procedure in place to approve these methodologies, as explained in section 4.

Additionally, Proba aligns with the “development and review requirements” of methodologies as described in ICVCM’s Core Carbon Principles.

In case a GHG project wants to use a new methodology, Proba will first evaluate if there is an existing methodology that can be used. In case there is no (suitable) existing methodology, then the project developer and Proba will work together to find an appropriate way to develop a new one. This is explained in section 5.

Proba will conduct a periodic review of each previously accepted or developed methodology. Details of this review process are described in section 6. Methodologies that are not reviewed timely or without positive outcome, will be deprecated.

2. Public availability

All approved methodologies are published on the Proba website: <https://proba.earth/methodologies>. Each methodology listed contains the official name of the methodology, the name of the GHG program (in case it is a methodology by a third-party, otherwise this will be Proba), version of the methodology, and a link to the document or the download section of the methodology. Methodologies that are not approved yet, can be found in the pending section on the webpage.

The inactive section on the webpage contains methodologies that need revision, are revoked or are deprecated.

3. Methodology criteria

Proba has developed the following set of quality criteria to assess methodologies. Proba will use these criteria to approve external methodologies and develop its own methodologies.

3.1 Permission to use

The project developer should be permitted to use the proposed methodology. This implies that the methodology is copyright free or the project developer is licensed to use a copyrighted methodology. In case permittance to use the methodology is unclear, Proba will contact the approved GHG program to make sure the proposed methodology can be used.

3.2 Business and mitigation potential

The potential GHG emission reductions and/or removals of Proba projects under the proposed methodology is expected to be significant. Proba expects to have multiple GHG projects that will use the methodology.

3.3 Alignment with regulations and other voluntary frameworks

The methodology should align with national and international standards and guidelines (such as those developed by ICVCM, ICROA, ISO standards, or specific protocols from GHG programs like the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)) and ensure it is recognized and accepted by regulatory bodies.

3.4 Solid scientific foundation

The proposed methodology should be developed on sound scientific principles and peer-reviewed research.

3.5 Key methodological components

The proposed methodology should contain key methodological components that enable the GHG project developer to comply with the Proba Standard.

- **Baseline determination:** The methodology should provide clear guidelines for the determination of the baseline scenario of the GHG project.

- **Additionality:** The methodology must ensure that the GHG mitigations would not have occurred without the project and are additional to any that would occur in the absence of the project.
- **Robust evidence and quantification:** The methodology should make use of reliable data sources and if possible make use of actual field measurements and empirical evidence.
- **Conservativeness:** The methodology should use estimates of GHG mitigations that are made conservatively to avoid over-crediting
- **GHG Calculation formula:** The methodology should include a clear definition of all data points and metrics needed.
- **Permanence:** The methodology should propose measures to determine the level of certainty that the GHG emissions will not be re-released into the atmosphere. The Proba Standard requires a minimum of 40 years for Storage Duration.
- **Monitoring, validation and verifiability:** The methodology should produce estimates that can be validated and results that can be verified by independent validation and verification bodies.

3.6 Easily understandable

The proposed methodology should be written in a clear simple way that is easily understandable for every stakeholder. The methodology should at least cover the following items:

- Overview of the GHG mitigation methods used
- Eligibility criteria
- Cover the key methodological components mentioned above
- Clear explanation of the calculation methodology

3.7 Clear and thorough development process

The proposed methodologies must have been through a thorough development process. This implies that the methodology has been developed by an expert working group, follows an iterative process and the methodology has sought external feedback through a public consultation process and has processed comments received. Incorporating feedback from public consultation can enhance the robustness and acceptance of the methodology, ensuring it is well-rounded and considers a wide array of concerns and suggestions. It also promotes stakeholder buy-in and the legitimacy of the GHG project in the public eye.

3.8 Review and update mechanism

Proposed methodologies should have a process to be periodically reviewed and need to be updated where needed. The methodology should stay in line with the latest scientific consensus and regulatory requirements.

3.9 Risks and uncertainties

The proposed methodology should indicate which potential risks are involved and how they can be mitigated. Methodologies will not be approved if they are associated with unmitigable social, environmental, legal, or regulatory risks.

The methodology should transparently disclose how the factor of uncertainty is addressed. Methodologies can use qualitative measures by discussing the sources of uncertainty and the confidence in the data and methods used. Or the methodology can provide quantitative estimates, such as confidence levels (e.g., a 95% confidence interval) or uncertainty ranges, to express the precision of the GHG benefit calculations.

4. Approval of third-party methodologies by Proba

Methodologies can be proposed by Proba or GHG project developers. Both follow the same process.

1. Methodology is proposed for approval
2. Methodology will be moved to the pending methodologies section on the Proba website
3. The Proba Technical Committee (see <https://proba.earth/proba-standard> for details) evaluates the methodology using the criteria described in section 3 and makes a proposal for the Proba Management Board. The Proba Technical Committee can also take into account external reviews and ratings on externally developed methodologies.
4. The Proba Management Team reviews the proposal and determines if the methodology can be approved. Proba Management Board can decide that a proposed methodology is approved without all criteria being met.
5. When the methodology is approved, it will be added to the Approved Methodologies section on the Proba website.

5. Proba methodology development

5.1 Methodology development process

Proba will determine if and how the proposed methodology can be developed.

- 1) **Methodology idea:** Methodologies can be proposed by Proba or GHG project developers. Both follow the same process. The methodology idea will result in a short description of the proposed methodology, which includes the context and boundaries in which it will be used.
- 2) **Decision on methodology development:** Proba will take the following points into consideration when deciding on the development of a new methodology.
 - a) Proba determines the CO₂ mitigation and business potential (high or low) of the proposed methodology. Based on the potential of the proposed methodology, Proba will decide if the methodology will be developed.
 - b) For methodologies with high potential, Proba will determine which funding is needed, and who will pay for the development of the methodology.
 - c) Proba will decide if the methodology will be developed internally or will be developed externally by a third-party methodology developer.
- 3) **Create draft methodology:** Methodology developer (either internal or external) starts developing draft methodology. As soon as the creation of the draft methodology has started, Proba will publish the methodology under the “pending” section on the webpage: <https://proba.earth/methodologies>
- 4) **Publish methodology for public consultation:** Proba will publish the methodology on the public consultation page for public comment (see <https://proba.earth/public-consultation>) for a period of 30 days. Proba can decide to extend this period for methodologies of higher complexity.
- 5) **Process feedback from public consultation:** In line with the [Proba standard](#), the Proba Technical Committee will process feedback received and send a final version for validation by a Validation and Verification Body (VVB).
- 6) **Validation:** VVB assesses new methodology and provides feedback, based on feedback it may go back to step 5. Approval from VVB is needed to proceed.
- 7) **Publish active methodology:** After the feedback has been processed, the new methodology will be published on the website in the methodologies section under “Approved methodologies” (see: <https://proba.earth/methodologies>).

5.2 Methodology development guidelines

Each methodology developed by Proba is different, which reflects the complexity and maturity levels of various GHG reduction and removal methods. However for each developed methodology the following should apply:

- The new methodology must be in line with the general principles described in the [Proba Standard](#).
- The new methodology must be in line with the criteria described in section 3 of this document.

6. Review of methodologies

Methodologies developed by Proba will be reviewed every five years. A review will also be made when significant changes have occurred, such as regulation, technologies, scientific progress or other relevant market developments.

For methodologies from third parties that are approved by Proba, Proba will screen the methodology and the methodology developer on any negative news once a year. During this annual check, Proba will also check if there is a new version of the methodology available.

Reviews will be executed by Proba, who can decide to use input from external stakeholders like project developers, validation and verification bodies, or qualified experts.

- For approved methodologies, Proba will address any issues found with the external owner or GHG program.
- For developed methodologies, Proba may decide to temporarily inactivate the methodology at any time during the review process. Inactivated methodologies will be moved on the website to the under review section. The issuance of credits using this methodology will be suspended until a new version of the methodology is active.

For minor revisions, Proba will update the methodology and publish it directly.

For major revisions, Proba will submit the changes for public comment.

For minor and major revisions that can be perceived as improvements and are not related to any flaws in the methodology, there are no consequences for running projects. However, should a project request a renewal of the crediting period, the latest

version of the used methodology(ies) must be applied during monitoring, validation and verification.

However in case a revision identifies a flaw in the methodology, or should a methodology be deprecated or revoked, Proba may decide to suspend or even cancel the issuance of new Proba certificates.

For issues that can't be resolved in the methodology, Proba will inactivate the methodology and move it to the "inactive" section on the methodologies website.