

Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative
CO₂ Budget Trading Program



**Massachusetts
Department of Environmental Protection**

Massachusetts CO₂ Budget Trading Program

Offset Project Consistency Application

Afforestation

Version 1.0

Issued by

Issued on

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1. Overview

To demonstrate that an afforestation offset project qualifies for the award of carbon dioxide (CO₂) offset allowances, a Project Sponsor must submit to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) in accordance with the instructions (see accompanying instructions packet), a fully completed *Massachusetts Offset Project Consistency Application – Afforestation Version 1.0 (Consistency Application)*, including the coversheet and all forms and related attachments. An incomplete *Consistency Application* will not be reviewed to determine consistency. Following these instructions will ensure that the *Consistency Application* contains all necessary information and is submitted properly.

Each Project Sponsor should review the Massachusetts CO₂ Budget Trading Program regulations, 310 CMR 7.70(10) for information regarding offset projects and the award of CO₂ offset allowances. All Massachusetts offset application materials and other documents are available at <http://www.rggi.org/offsets>.

Before the *Consistency Application* can be completed, the Project Sponsor must establish a general account and obtain an offset project ID code through the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) CO₂ Allowance Tracking System (COATS). The Project Sponsor identified in the *Consistency Application* must be the same as the Authorized Account Representative for the RGGI COATS general account identified in the Massachusetts *Consistency Application*. For information about establishing a RGGI COATS general account and offset project ID code, consult the RGGI COATS User's Guide, available at <http://www.rggi-coats.org>.

Key eligibility dates and application submittal requirements for offset projects are as follows:

- For offset projects commenced between December 20, 2005 and December 31, 2008, the *Consistency Application* must be submitted by June 30, 2009.
- For offset projects commenced on or after January 1, 2009, the *Consistency Application* must be submitted within six (6) months after the project is commenced.
- For an offset project located solely in one (1) participating state, the *Consistency Application* must be filed with the appropriate regulatory agency in that state.
- For an offset project located in more than one (1) participating state, the *Consistency Application* must be filed in the participating state where the majority of the carbon sequestration due to the offset project is expected to occur.

2. Submission Instructions

The Project Sponsor should submit the completed *Consistency Application*, and all attachments, via RGGI COATS at <http://www.rggi-coats.org> as described above. For information about submitting a *Consistency Application* via RGGI COATS, consult the RGGI COATS User's Guide, available at <http://www.rggi-coats.org>.

The *Consistency Application* has three (3) parts, as described below. Each part comprises specified forms and required documentation. The *Consistency Application* has been created as a Microsoft Word document with editable fields. Enter information directly into the fields provided or submit information or documentation as an attachment, as directed. Include headers on all attachments indicating the form to which each is attached, the offset project name, and offset project ID code. If attachments are being submitted as separate electronic documents, please include the form numbers in the file names of the documents.

When submitting documents electronically via RGGI COATS, it is not necessary to submit a scanned or paper hardcopy of the application forms. The Project Sponsor must retain the completed original copy of the *Consistency Application* and attachments with the original signed documents. MassDEP reserves the right to request the original signed application documents at any time.

A completed hardcopy and/or CD of the *Consistency Application* may also be mailed to: Climate Strategies Group, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Waste Prevention, 6th Floor, One Winter Street, Boston, MA 02108-4747.

Questions about this form and how to submit it should be directed to climate.strategies@state.ma.us or 617-574-6815.

3. Consistency Application Forms

The *Consistency Application* includes eleven (11) forms divided into three (3) parts, as follows.

Part 1. General Information Forms

- Form 1.1 – Coversheet
- Form 1.2 – General Information
- Form 1.3 – Attestations
- Form 1.4 – Project Sponsor Agreement
- Form 1.5 – Disclosure of Greenhouse Gas Emissions Data Reporting

Part 2. Category-Specific Information and Documentation Forms

- Form 2.1 – Project Description
- Form 2.2 – Demonstration of Eligibility
- Form 2.3 – Sequestration Baseline
- Form 2.4 – Monitoring and Verification Plan
- Form 2.5 – Carbon Sequestration Permanence

Part 3. Independent Verification Form

- Form 3.1 – Independent Verifier Certification Statement and Report

Note that although the forms include many embedded instructions, Project Sponsors are advised to consult the accompanying instructions packet for full instructions and documentation requirements.

Offset Project Name

Offset Project ID Code

Form 1.1 – Coversheet

Project Sponsor(RGGI COATS Authorized Account Representative)

Project Sponsor Organization

RGGI COATS General Account Name

RGGI COATS General Account Number

Each of the following forms (except Form 2.5, which is optional) must be submitted. Check the boxes below to indicate that the submitted *Consistency Application* includes each of the required forms:

- Form 1.2 – General Information
- Form 1.3 – Attestations
- Form 1.4 – Project Sponsor Agreement
- Form 1.5 – Disclosure of Greenhouse Gas Emissions Data Reporting
- Form 2.1 – Project Description
- Form 2.2 – Demonstration of Eligibility
- Form 2.3 – Sequestration Baseline
- Form 2.4 – Monitoring and Verification Plan
- Form 2.5 – Carbon Sequestration Permanence (optional)
- Form 3.1 – Independent Verifier Certification Statement and Report

Offset Project Name **Offset Project ID Code**

Form 1.2 – General Information

Project Sponsor (RGGI COATS Authorized Account Representative)

Telephone Number **Fax Number** **Email Address**

Street Address

City **State/Province** **Postal Code** **Country**

RGGI COATS General Account Name

RGGI COATS General Account Number

Name of Offset Project **Application Date**

Summary Description of Offset Project

Project City **Project County** **Project State** **Project Commencement Date**

Project Sponsor Organization

Primary Street Address

City **State/Province** **Postal Code** **Country**

Brief Description of Project Sponsor Organization

Telephone Number **Website URL**

Independent Verifier (Company/Organization) **States Where Verifier Accredited**

Primary Street Address **Website URL**

City **State/Province** **Postal Code** **Country**

Point of Contact for Project

Contact Telephone Number **Contact Fax Number** **Contact Email Address**

Contact Street Address

City **State/Province** **Postal Code** **Country**

Offset Project Name

Offset Project ID Code

Form 1.3 – Attestations

The undersigned Project Sponsor certifies the truth of the following statements:

1. The offset project referenced in this *Consistency Application* is not required pursuant to any local, state, or federal law, regulation, or administrative or judicial order.
2. The offset project referenced in this *Consistency Application* has not and will not be awarded credits or allowances under any other greenhouse gas program, except as provided in 310 CMR 7.70(10)(c)4.e., where CO₂ offset allowances may be awarded to an offset project for which GHG Credits were created pursuant to 310 CMR 7.00: Appendix B(7) provided the offset project meets all of the requirements of 310 CMR 7.70(10).
3. The offset project referenced in this *Consistency Application* has not and will not receive any funding or other incentives from any system benefit fund, or funds or other incentives provided through the auction of CO₂ allowances from the Massachusetts Auction Account.
4. A *Consistency Application* for the offset project or any portion of the offset project referenced in this *Consistency Application* has not been filed in any other participating state.
5. All offset projects for which the Project Sponsor or project sponsor organization has received CO₂ offset allowances, if any, under the Project Sponsor's or project sponsor organization's ownership or control (or under the ownership or control of any entity which controls, is controlled by, or has common control with the Project Sponsor or project sponsor organization) are in compliance with all applicable requirements of the CO₂ Budget Trading Program in all participating states.
6. I am authorized to make this submission on behalf of the project sponsor organization. I certify under penalty of law that I have personally examined, and am familiar with, the statements and information submitted in this *Consistency Application* and all its attachments. Based on my inquiry of those individuals with primary responsibility for obtaining the information, I certify that the statements and information are to the best of my knowledge and belief true, accurate, and complete. I am aware that there are significant penalties for submitting false statements and information or omitting required statements and information, including the possibility of fine or imprisonment.

Project Sponsor Signature

Date

Printed Name

Title

Organization

Offset Project Name

Offset Project ID Code

Form 1.4 – Project Sponsor Agreement

The undersigned Project Sponsor recognizes and accepts that the application for, and the receipt of, CO₂ offset allowances under the Massachusetts CO₂ Budget Trading Program is predicated on the Project Sponsor following all the requirements of 310 CMR 7.70. The undersigned Project Sponsor holds the legal rights to the offset project, or has been granted the right to act on behalf of a party that holds the legal rights to the offset project. The Project Sponsor understands that eligibility for the award of CO₂ offset allowances under 310 CMR 7.70(10) is contingent on meeting the requirements of 310 CMR 7.70(10). The Project Sponsor authorizes MassDEP or its agent to audit this offset project for purposes of verifying that the offset project, including the Monitoring and Verification Plan, has been implemented as described in this application. The Project Sponsor understands that this right to audit shall include the right to enter the physical location of the offset project. The Project Sponsor submits to the legal jurisdiction of Massachusetts.

Project Sponsor Signature

Date

Printed Name

Title

Organization

Offset Project Name

Offset Project ID Code

Form 1.5 – Disclosure of Greenhouse Gas Emissions Data Reporting

Check the box below that applies:

- No greenhouse gas emissions data related to the offset project referenced in this *Consistency Application* have been or will be reported to a voluntary or mandatory program other than the Massachusetts CO₂ Budget Trading Program.
- Greenhouse gas emissions data related to the offset project referenced in this *Consistency Application* have been or will be reported to a voluntary or mandatory program other than the Massachusetts CO₂ Budget Trading Program. Information for all such programs to which greenhouse gas emissions data have been or will be reported is provided below.

Name of Program to which GHG Emissions Data Reported

Check all that apply:

- Reporting is currently ongoing
- Reporting was conducted in the past
- Reporting will be conducted in the future
- Reporting is mandatory
- Reporting is voluntary

Enter Frequency of Reporting

Enter Reporting Start Date

Program Contact Information – Address

Program Website

Categories of Emissions Data Reported

Name of Program to which GHG Emissions Data Reported

Check all that apply:

- Reporting is currently ongoing
- Reporting was conducted in the past
- Reporting will be conducted in the future
- Reporting is mandatory
- Reporting is voluntary

Enter Frequency of Reporting

Enter Reporting Start Date

Program Contact Information – Address

Program Website

Categories of Emissions Data Reported

Add extra pages as needed. Each attachment must include a header that indicates it is an attachment to Form 1.5, identifies the number of the appropriate table and the reference number in the left-hand column of the table, and includes the offset project name and offset project ID code. If attachments are being submitted as separate electronic documents, please include the form numbers in the file names of the documents.

Offset Project Name

Offset Project ID Code

Form 2.1 – Project Description

Attach a detailed narrative of the actions to be taken as part of the offset project. The attached narrative must include a header that indicates it is an attachment to Form 2.1 and includes the offset project name and offset project ID code. If attachments are being submitted as separate electronic documents, please include the form numbers in the file names of the documents.

Check the boxes below to indicate that the following required information is included in the attached detailed project narrative or provided through accompanying attachments:

- 1. Land Owners. Table identifying the owner(s) of the land within the offset project boundary and copy of deed or title filed with state or local registrar of deeds; statement identifying whether subsurface or surface rights leased to other parties
- 2. Detailed Map(s). Detailed map(s) to scale of the land within the offset project boundary and areas immediately adjacent to the offset project boundary
- 3. Permanent Conservation Easement. Copy of permanent conservation easement (executed or to-be-executed copy)
- 4. Plant Species. Table listing plant species to be planted or established via natural regeneration
- 5. Forest Management Plan. Forest management plan; project narrative also describes forest management plan goals; if timber harvesting to occur, project narrative describes form of planned forest management and organization expected to certify environmentally sustainable forestry practices

Offset Project Name

Offset Project ID Code

Form 2.2 – Demonstration of Eligibility

Attach documentation to demonstrate offset project eligibility. Each attachment must include a header that indicates it is an attachment to Form 2.2 and includes the offset project name and offset project ID code. If attachments are being submitted as separate electronic documents, please include the form numbers in the file names of the documents.

Check the boxes below to indicate that the following required documentation is attached:

- 1. Documentation of Non-forested Condition. Documentation that the land within the offset project boundary has been in a non-forested condition for at least 10 years preceding offset project commencement, from at least one (1) of the following information sources:
 - Deeds and/or official government documents describing property status
 - Aerial photographs or satellite imagery
 - Cadastral maps that incorporate details on land cover
 - Notarized affidavit from independent source(s) concerning the state of the property for at least 10 years prior to project commencement
- 2. Forest Management Plan. Documentation describing how the forest management plan is consistent with widely accepted environmentally sustainable forestry practices, including documentation of the following:
 - Side-by-side comparison of criteria used to determine environmentally sustainable forestry practices by nationally recognized organizations and corresponding provisions of the forest management plan
 - Demonstration that at least 75% of the proposed plantings consist of native species
 - Signed statement from an independent source, such as a professional forester, that invasive species will not be introduced by the project through planting or use of contaminated soils

Offset Project Name

Offset Project ID Code

Form 2.3 – Sequestration Baseline

Provide documentation of the sequestration baseline where indicated in the form or as an attachment, as directed below. Each attachment must include a header that indicates it is an attachment to Form 2.3 and includes the offset project name and offset project ID code. Multiple attachments may be integrated into a single document, as appropriate, as long as each element is clearly identified, as specified below. Each spreadsheet must be provided as a distinct electronic file or files (distinct spreadsheets may be incorporated into a single spreadsheet file, as appropriate, as long as each element is clearly identified, as specified below). Please include the form numbers in the file names on each submitted electronic document.

A. Baseline Data

1. Baseline Period. Enter dates of baseline measurements (may include a range):

Measurement dates

2. Baseline Carbon Pools. Enter baseline carbon content in short tons of CO₂-equivalent (CO₂e) emissions for the included carbon pools:

Live above-ground tree biomass (required)

Live below-ground tree biomass (required)

Soil carbon (required)

Dead organic matter and coarse woody debris (required, unless the baseline measurement for this carbon pool is at or near zero, in which case measurement of this carbon pool is optional)

Live above-ground non-tree biomass (optional)

Dead organic matter, forest floor (optional)

Total of above carbon pools

B. Baseline Documentation

Check the boxes to indicate that the following required documentation is attached:

3. Baseline Description. Map to scale providing a description of practices/management and land cover in place within the offset project boundary.
4. Designation of Baseline Sub-populations. Map to scale showing number and types of sub-populations; description of vegetation, tree species, and site factors considered in designating sub-populations (included in map or as accompanying attachment).

Form 2.3 – Sequestration Baseline (continued)

5. Baseline Sampling Plots. Description of methodology used for determining numbers, sizes, and locations of sampling plots for each sub-population; identification of sampling plot locations, including photos, with distinct identifiers.
6. Direct Measurement Procedures for Each Carbon Pool in Each Sampling Plot. List for each carbon pool of all measurement procedures used to calculate baseline sequestered carbon; demonstration of consistency for all measurement procedures with current forestry good practice and guidance contained in Section 3.4 of U.S. Department of Energy, Technical Guidelines -- Voluntary Reporting of Greenhouse Gases (1605(b)) Program; Chapter 1, Emissions Inventories; Part 1 Appendix: Forestry; Section 3: Measurement Protocols for Forest Carbon Sequestration (March 2006). (Also available as Pearson et al., *Measurement Guidelines for the Sequestration of Forest Carbon*, U.S. Forest Service General Technical Report NRS-18 (2007).)
7. Field Measurement Data. Spreadsheet containing all field measurement data collected for each sampling plot for determining biomass and carbon for each carbon pool, with columns and rows clearly labeled, including the following:
- Sampling plot names
 - Sampling plot dimensions
 - Sampling plot slopes
 - Tree diameters
 - Tree heights
 - Standing dead wood diameters, heights, and decomposition classes
 - Dead wood transect lengths
 - Dead wood diameters and decomposition classes
 - Non-tree vegetation and forest floor quadrat sizes
 - Non-tree vegetation and forest floor field sample weights
 - Non-tree vegetation and forest floor laboratory sample dry weights
 - File names for plot photographs
8. Documentation of Biomass and Carbon Equations and Default Parameters. Equations and/or default parameters used to convert field measurement data into biomass and/or carbon, including sources and justifications.
9. Documentation of Carbon Calculations. Spreadsheet documenting all carbon calculations for each carbon pool, and across all carbon pools, including:
- Use of sampling plot data to estimate area-based carbon
 - Conversion of area-based carbon into CO₂-equivalent (CO₂e) short tons
 - Total sum of carbon across all sub-populations for each carbon pool
 - Total sum of carbon across all carbon pools
10. Demonstration of Quantified Accuracy. Spreadsheet documenting quantified accuracy for the combined carbon pool measurement.

Offset Project Name

Offset Project ID Code

Form 2.4 – Monitoring and Verification Plan

Provide the Monitoring and Verification Plan (M&V Plan) as multiple attachments. Each attachment must include a header that indicates it is an attachment to Form 2.4 and includes the offset project name and offset project ID code. Multiple attachments may be integrated into a single document as long as each element is clearly identified, as specified below. Please include the form numbers in the file names on each submitted electronic document.

Check the boxes below to indicate that the following required components of the M&V Plan are attached:

- 1. Designation of Sub-populations. Map to scale showing how the area within the offset project boundary will be divided into sub-populations that form relatively homogenous units; description of how vegetation, tree species, and site factors considered in designating sub-populations (included in map or as accompanying attachment).
- 2. Sampling Plots. Description of methodology for determining the number, sizes, and locations of sampling plots to be used for calculating project carbon sequestration for each sub-population.
- 3. Direct Measurement Procedures for Each Carbon Pool in Each Sampling Plot. List for each carbon pool of all measurement procedures that will be used to calculate sequestered carbon due to the project.
- 4. Documentation of Biomass and Carbon Equations and Default Parameters. Documentation of all equations and default parameters that will be used to convert field measurement data into biomass and/or carbon, including sources and justifications.
- 5. Forest Management Practices if Timber Harvesting is Planned. Description of type of planned forest management and the organization expected to provide certification that project is managed in accordance with environmentally sustainable forestry practices. (Only required if commercial timber harvesting activities will have occurred during the reporting period or will occur during the offset project allocation period.)
- 6. Documentation of Data Quality Assurance Practices. Documentation of all procedures to be used to ensure accuracy in data collection, data analysis, and data storage.

Offset Project Name

Offset Project ID Code

Form 2.5 – Carbon Sequestration Permanence (Optional)

Submit optional Form 2.5 only if long-term insurance has been or will be retained by the Project Sponsor that guarantees replacement of any lost sequestered carbon for which CO₂ offset allowances are awarded by MassDEP. Note that the form and terms and conditions of such long-term insurance are subject to approval by MassDEP.

Attach a copy of the executed or to-be-executed policy, including all terms and conditions of the policy. The attachment must include a header that indicates it is an attachment to Form 2.5 and includes the offset project name and offset project ID code. If attachments are being submitted as separate electronic documents, please include the form numbers in the file names of the documents.

Check the boxes below to indicate that insurance has been or will be retained by the Project Sponsor

1. Retention of Insurance. Insurance has been or will be retained.
- a. Insurance has been retained. Insurance forms are attached, including full terms and conditions of the policy.
 - b. Insurance will be retained. The proposed full terms and conditions of the insurance policy are attached.

Offset Project Name

Offset Project ID Code

Form 3.1 – Independent Verifier Certification Statement and Report

An accredited independent verifier must sign and date Form 3.1. Attach the accredited independent verifier report. The attached verifier report must include a header that indicates it is an attachment to Form 3.1 and includes the offset project name and offset project ID code. If attachments are being submitted as separate electronic documents, please include the form numbers in the file names of the documents. Note that the Project Sponsor must retain the completed original copy of the *Consistency Application* and attachments, including the verifier's original signed documents. MassDEP reserves the right to request the original signed documents at any time.

Name of Accredited Independent Verifier

I certify that the accredited independent verifier identified above reviewed the *Consistency Application*, including all forms and attachments, in its entirety, including a review of the following:

- (a) The adequacy and validity of information supplied by the Project Sponsor to demonstrate that the offset project meets the applicable eligibility requirements of 310 CMR 7.70(10)(c) and (e)3, including the required documentation that must be provided in the *Consistency Application*.
- (b) The adequacy and validity of information supplied by the Project Sponsor to demonstrate baseline-equivalent (CO₂e) sequestration, pursuant to the applicable requirements of 310 CMR 7.70(10)(e)3, including the required documentation that must be provided in the *Consistency Application*.
- (c) The adequacy of the Monitoring and Verification Plan in accordance with the applicable requirements of 310 CMR 7.70(10)(e)3 including the required documentation that must be provided in the *Consistency Application*.

A verification report is attached that documents the verifier's review of the items listed above and includes evaluation conclusions and findings.

<hr/> Verifier Representative Signature	<hr/> Date
<hr/> Printed Name	
<hr/> Title	
Organization	