

Guidance for Developing a Baseline

The baseline provides a clear understanding of the greenhouse gas emissions that would occur without an offset project being put into place. Often referred to as the “business as usual” case, a baseline is the existing or projected greenhouse gas emissions in the absence of the project. The quantity of offsets generated by a project is the difference between the “with-project” emissions baseline, and the “without-project” emissions baseline.

The baseline methodology must explain the most likely “without-project” scenario. In an effort to reduce the project preparation costs for applicants filling out the initial proposal form, the Colorado Carbon Fund does not require an extensive baseline study be performed at this early stage. Instead, we require project applicants to develop their own project baseline using best available data with the understanding there may be a degree of uncertainty involved. Final baseline development takes place in the later stages of the project selection process.

Information that can help support the presentation of a project baseline:

- Experiences from similar projects. For example, if a particular inefficient technology is the industry standard it can be used as the baseline case.
- Studies or surveys that demonstrate that the project differs from prevailing practice.
- Communications or minutes from meetings from the developer indicating that the baseline case is the most likely scenario for the project.
- Independent expert assessments.
- Clearly stated references for all data and assumptions used in the baseline

Other Resources on Additionality and Baselines

- The [Voluntary Carbon Standard \(VCS\)](#), a leading international certification system for the voluntary offset market, has a variety of tools for project developers. VCS adopted our test for determining additionality, the most crucial criterion for offsets.
- [The Greenhouse Gas Protocol](#), which is a collaboration between the World Resources Institute (WRI) and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) has created a variety of resources for project developers.
- [Clean Development Mechanism \(CDM\)](#), part of the Kyoto Protocol, this body reviews and approves project based offsets located in developing countries.
- [The Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development](#) describes the main approaches and issues involved in developing a baseline.
- [Glossary of Common Offset Terms](#)