

WAC 173-446-590 Offset project registry requirements. (1) The offset project registry shall use compliance offset protocols approved pursuant to the requirements of this section to determine whether an offset project may be listed with the offset project registry for issuance of registry offset credits. The offset project registry may list projects under noncompliance offset protocols, but must make it clear that any GHG emission reductions and GHG removal enhancements achieved under those protocols are not eligible to be issued registry offset credits or ecology offset credits.

(2) The offset project registry must make the following information publicly available for each offset project developed under a compliance offset protocol:

(a) Within 10 business days of the offset project listing requirements being deemed complete:

(i) Offset project name;

(ii) Offset project location;

(iii) Offset project operator and, if applicable, the authorized project designee;

(iv) Type of offset project;

(v) Name and date of the compliance offset protocol used by the offset project;

(vi) Date of offset project listing submittal and offset project;

(vii) Commencement date; and

(viii) Identification of whether the offset project is in an initial or renewed crediting period;

(b) Within 10 business days of the offset project registry making a determination of registry offset credit issuance:

(i) reporting period verified project baseline emissions;

(ii) reporting period verified GHG emission reductions and GHG removal enhancements achieved by the offset project;

(iii) The unique serial numbers of registry offset credits issued to the offset project for the applicable offset project data report;

(iv) Total verified GHG emission reductions and GHG removal enhancements for the offset project by reporting period for when an offset project data report was submitted;

(v) The final offset project data report for each reporting period; and

(vi) Offset verification statement for each year the offset project data report was verified; and

(c) Clear identification of which offset projects are listed and submitting offset project data reports using compliance offset protocols. Once an offset project registry has approved a project listing, the offset project registry must continue to list the offset project but may update the project listing status to "inactive" if the project has not been issued any registry offset credits or ecology offset credits or may update the listing status to "terminated" if the project has been issued any registry offset credits or ecology offset credits. The offset project registry may update the listing status to "inactive" or "terminated" if any of the following circumstances exist:

(i) The offset project has missed the 28-month reporting deadline;

(ii) The offset project has missed the deadline for continuous reporting;

(iii) The offset project terminates; or

(iv) The offset project operator submits a letter to the offset project registry stating that it no longer intends to pursue registry

offset credit issuance for this project. The letter must be signed by the offset project operator's primary or alternate account representative and must include the following:

- (A) Offset project operator name;
- (B) Offset project name and both ecology and offset project registry identification numbers;
- (C) Name and date of the compliance offset protocol used by the offset project;
- (D) Date on which the offset project registry approved the listing;
- (E) Indication that the offset project operator will no longer pursue any registry offset credits for the project;
- (F) Request to change the project status to "inactive" or "terminated"; and
- (G) Signature, printed name, title, and date signed.

(d) When an offset project registry updates the listing status to "inactive" or "terminated," the offset project registry must make publicly available a copy of the letter or must make publicly available a memo authored by the offset project registry explaining the change of status. The memo must include the following:

- (i) Offset project operator name and (offset credit registry) identification number;
- (ii) Offset project name and both ecology and offset project registry identification numbers;
- (iii) Name and date of the compliance offset protocol used by the offset project;
- (iv) Date on which the offset project registry approved the listing;
- (v) Indication of the deadline(s) missed; and
- (vi) Date on which the offset project registry has updated the status to "inactive" or "terminated."

(e) An offset project registry may update an offset project's listing status to "completed" if:

- (i) Ecology offset credits have been issued for the offset project;
- (ii) No further ecology offset credits will be issued to the project;
- (iii) The project may no longer undergo offset verification services that could reduce the invalidation period for any ecology offset credits from eight years to three years;
- (iv) The project is no longer required to monitor, report, and verify the permanence of its GHG emission reductions or GHG removal enhancements; and
- (v) The end of the project life has been reached as defined in the compliance offset protocols, if applicable.

(f) An offset project registry may update an offset project's listing status to "monitored" if:

- (i) Ecology offset credits have been issued for the offset project;
- (ii) No further ecology offset credits will be issued to the project; and
- (iii) The project is still required to monitor, report, and verify the permanence of its GHG emission reductions or GHG removal enhancements.

(3) Conflict of interest review by offset project registries. The offset project registry must apply the conflict of interest requirements in WAC 173-466-545 when making a conflict of interest determina-

tion for a verification body proposing to conduct offset verification services. The offset project registry must review and make sure the conflict of interest submittal is complete. When an offset project operator or authorized project designee submits its information to ecology, the offset project registry must provide ecology with the information and attestation within 15 calendar days.

(4) The offset project registry may provide guidance to offset project operators, authorized project designees, or offset verifiers for offset projects using a compliance offset protocol, if there is no clear requirement for the topic in the applicable compliance offset protocol, this chapter, or an ecology guidance document, after consulting and coordinating with ecology.

(a) An offset project registry must maintain all correspondence and records of communication with an offset project operator, authorized project designee, or offset verifier when providing clarifications or guidance for an offset project using a compliance offset protocol.

(b) Before providing such guidance, the offset project registry may request ecology to provide clarification on the topic.

(c) Any offset project operator or authorized project designee requests for clarifications or guidance must be documented and the offset project registry response must be submitted on an ongoing monthly basis to ecology beginning with the date of approval as an offset project registry.

(5) The offset project registry must audit at least 10 percent of the annual full offset verifications developed for offset projects using a compliance offset protocol.

(a) The audit must include the following checks:

(i) Attendance with the offset verification team on the offset project site visit;

(ii) In-person or conference call attendance for the first offset verification team and offset project operator or authorized project designee meeting;

(iii) In-person or conference call attendance to the last meeting or discussion between the offset verification team and offset project operator or authorized project designee;

(iv) Documentation of any findings during the audit that cause the offset project registry to provide guidance to, or require corrective action with, the offset verification team, including a list of issues noted during the audit and how those were resolved;

(v) A review of the detailed verification report and sampling plan to ensure that it meets the minimum requirements and documentation of any discrepancies found during the review; and

(vi) An investigative review of the conflict of interest assessment provided by the verification body, which includes the following:

(A) Discussions with the lead verifier, the verification body officer or staff person most knowledgeable about the conflict of interest self-evaluation, and the offset project operator or authorized project designee to confirm the information on the conflict of interest self-assessment form is true, accurate, and complete;

(B) An internet-based search to ascertain the existence of any previous relationship between the verification body and the offset project operator or authorized project designee, and if so the nature and extent; and

(C) Any other follow up by the offset project registry to have reasonable assurance that the information provided on the conflict of interest assessment form is true, accurate, and complete.

(b) All information related to audits of offset projects developed using a compliance offset protocol must be provided to ecology within 10 calendar days of an ecology request.

(c) The audits must be selected to provide a representative sampling of geographic locations of all offset projects, representative sampling of verification bodies, representative sampling of lead verifiers, representative sampling of offset project types, and representative sampling of offset projects by size.

(d) The offset project registry must provide an annual report to ecology by January 31st for its previous year's audit program of offset projects developed using compliance offset protocols that includes:

- (i) A list of all offset projects audited;
- (ii) Locations of all offset projects audited;
- (iii) Verification bodies associated with each offset project and names of offset verification team members;
- (iv) Dates of site visits;
- (v) Offset project registry staff that conducted the audit; and
- (vi) Audit findings as required in this section.

(6) The offset project registry must review each detailed verification report for completeness and accuracy and to ensure it meets the requirements before accepting the associated offset verification statement for the offset project data report and issuing registry offset credits. The offset project registry must maintain a log of all issues raised during its review of a detailed verification report and the corresponding offset project data report and offset verification statement and how the issues were resolved. Within three business days of issuing registry offset credits, the offset project registry must provide the following to ecology:

(a) The attestations required in this section and any in the applicable compliance offset protocol;

(b) The final offset project data reports submitted to an offset project registry;

(c) The final offset verification statements; and

(d) The offset project registry's log of all issues raised during its review.

(7) The offset project registry must provide all information in its possession, custody, or control related to a listed offset project under a compliance offset protocol within 10 calendar days of request by ecology.

(8) The offset project registry must make its staff and all information related to listed offset projects under compliance offset protocols by the offset project registry available to ecology during any audits or oversight activities initiated by ecology to ensure the requirements of this section are being carried out as required by this chapter.

(9) The offset project registry must remove or cancel any registry offset credits issued for an offset project using a compliance offset protocol, such that the registry offset credits are no longer available for transaction on the offset project registry system, once notified by ecology that the offset project is eligible to be issued ecology offset credits.

(10) The offset project registry must provide an annual report by January 31st of the previous year's offset projects that are listed using a compliance offset protocol. The report must contain the name of the offset project, type of offset project and applicable compliance offset protocol, name of offset project operator or authorized

project designee, location of offset project, status of offset project, associated verification body, crediting period, amount of any registry offset credits issued to date, amount of any registry offset credits retired or canceled for the offset project by the offset project registry to date.

(11) The offset project registry may choose to offer insurance or other products to cover the risk of invalidation of ecology offset credits, but purchase or use of the insurance or other invalidation risk mechanisms will be optional for all parties involved with registry offset credits and ecology offset credit transactions.

(12) Within 10 business days of first receiving an offset project data report to meet the reporting deadline pursuant to WAC 173-446-525 (5)(b), an offset project registry must provide ecology a copy of the offset project data report and confirm the date on which the offset project data report was submitted to the offset project registry.

(13) All information submitted, and correspondence related to, listed offset projects under compliance offset protocols by the offset project registry must be maintained by the offset project registry for a minimum of 15 years.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 70A.65.220. WSR 22-20-056 (Order 21-06), § 173-446-590, filed 9/29/22, effective 10/30/22.]