

VCS VERIFICATION REPORT

MAÍSA REDD+ PROJECT



Document Prepared by IMAFLORA/Rainforest Alliance

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Summary:

This is the Final Verification Report of the REDD+ Maísa project in Moju, PA, Brazil. The purpose of the verification report is to provide a systematic way of identifying conformance to the VCS Standards as well as areas of nonconformances and observations.

The VCS Standard Version 3, along with the VCS VM0015 v1.1 methodology were the relevant criteria used for this evaluation. The audit method was both desk and field based. The field audit was conducted from June 10th to 13th 2015. Five Imaflorea/Rainforest Alliance auditors were assigned to the audit. Before the field audit, the audit team have stayed an additional day in Belém, PA Brazil for public consultation with key informants, government agencies and projects implementation partners. The audit was combined with a VCS & CCB validation audit for which a separate validation joint report has already been issued. In this regard, the main issues identified by the audit team during the audit process was already addressed by the project proponent through the validation process and can be found in the combined VCS & CCB validation report. Still, two of the NCRs identified during the field audit and the subsequent desk review were considered relevant for the verification and were transcribed to this verification report. Refer to Appendix 1 for detailed descriptions of these nonconformances, and their closure.

Once the NCRs were closed, this audit report was updated with detailed descriptions of the project's full conformance to the VCS standards. The positive verification decision was made based on the PD version 2.1 dated on December 12th, 2014, the AFOLU Non-Permanence Risk Report Version 2.0 dated on September 12th, 2014 and the Monitoring Report version 2.1 dated on December 12th, 2014.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Rainforest Alliance certification and auditing services are managed and implemented within its RA-Cert Division. All related personnel responsible for audit design, evaluation, and certification / verification/validation decisions are under the purview of the RA-Cert Division, hereafter referred to as Rainforest Alliance or RA. Rainforest Alliance is an ANSI ISO 14065:2007 accredited validation and verification body; additionally, Rainforest Alliance is a member of the Climate, Community, and Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA) standards and an approved verification body with a number of other forest carbon project standards.

Imaflora acts in partnership with Rainforest Alliance as a VCS/CCB validation/verification body since 2008. Imaflora has more than eighteen years of experience with environmental-social standards certification, such as SAN (Sustainable Agriculture Network) and FSC® (Forest Stewardship Council®), which has given it familiarity with land management practices in Brazil and has provided a solid professional platform for auditing forestry carbon projects.

For a complete list of the services provided by the Imaflora/Rainforest Alliance, see <http://www.imaflora.org/certificacao-socioambiental.php> and http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/climate.cfm?id=international_standards.

Dispute resolution: If Imaflora/Rainforest Alliance clients encounter organizations or individuals having concerns or comments about Rainforest Alliance and our services, these parties are strongly encouraged to contact Imaflora or the RA-Cert Division headquarters directly. Formal complaints or concerns should be sent in writing.

1.1 Objective

The purpose of this report is to document the conformance of the Maísa REDD+ Project with the requirements of the Verified Carbon Standard, through an ex-post assessment of the monitored GHG data and information. During the verification, the audit team evaluated the extent to which methods and procedures, including monitoring procedures, have been implemented in accordance with the validated project description. This includes ensuring conformance with the monitoring plan. The audit team also evaluated the extent to which GHG emission reductions and removals reported in the monitoring report were materially accurate. The project was developed by Biofilica Investimentos Ambientais SA, Maísa-Mojú Agroindustrial Ltda., and Sipasa-Seringa Industrial do Pará S/A, hereafter referred to as “Project Proponent”. The report presents the findings of qualified Imaflora/Rainforest Alliance auditors who have evaluated the Project Proponent’s documentation, systems and performance against the applicable standards in the field.

1.2 Scope and Criteria

Scope: The scope of the audit is to assess the conformance of the Maísa REDD+ Project in the city of Moju, PA, Brazil, against the Verified Carbon Standard Version 3 and the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Standards Second edition – December 2008. The objectives of this audit included an assessment of the monitoring report for verification. The project covers an area

of 28,752 hectares. The land is privately owned. The project has a lifetime of 30 years and estimates 2,023,743.8 tCO₂e emissions reductions over the course of the project lifetime. The first verification period is from 21 May 2012 to 21 May 2013. During this period, the Ex-post estimated net anthropogenic GHG emission reduction was 64,331.7 tCO₂e. 12,223.0 tCO₂e were held as buffer credits and 52,108.7 tCO₂e were considered as Ex-post tradable VCUs.

Standard criteria: Criteria from the following documents were used to assess this project:

- Verified Carbon Standard Program Guide Version 3.5;
- Verified Carbon Standard Version 3.4;
- Verified Carbon Standard Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) Requirements Version 3.4;
- Verified Carbon Standard AFOLU Non-Permanence Risk Tool Version 3.2;
- Verified Carbon Standard Program Updates
- VCS VM0015 - Methodology for Avoided Unplanned Deforestation, v1.1;

Materiality: The Maísa REDD+ Project ex ante estimates that it will produce over 64,331.7 tCO₂e in reductions per year, hence it is not consider as a VCS Large Project and thus subject to a 5% materiality threshold.

1.3 Level of Assurance

The assessment was conducted to a reasonable level of assurance.

1.4 Summary Description of the Project

The Maísa REDD+ Project is a partnership between Biofíllica Investimentos Ambientais S.A., Maisa-Moju Agroindustrial Ltda. and Sipasa-Seringa Industrial do Pará S/A., to promote forest conservation and reduction of emissions from unplanned deforestation and forest degradation, through the valuation of the "standing forest" by integrating Sustainable Forest Management activities and marketing environmental services.

Project's actions to climate aim to reduce emissions due to unplanned deforestation, controlling leakage and mitigating the risk of non-permanence. The following strategies were designed accordingly: prospection of economic alternatives to add value on the standing forest and to different forest products from the project area, greater efficiency and effectiveness in property surveillance within the project area along with the use of satellite images for forest cover monitoring and promotion of profitable, employment increase, low emission activities at leakage management areas.

On this first monitoring period, from the project start date (May 21th 2012) to May 21th 2013, great part of the implemented activities under those mentioned strategies focused on basic assessments (socioeconomic, flora, fauna, forest's carbon stock and baseline projections), activities' design, sustainable forest management execution and monitoring, strengthening of property surveillance and analysis of satellite images to monitor unplanned deforestation and leakage. In these regards, technologies applied were, the same required by the sustainable forest management activities, such as GIS software, satellite images, digital SIG data, spreadsheets

and general data analysis. As a result Maísa REDD+ Project avoided an amount of 64,331.7 tCO₂eq, from which 52,108.7.5 tCO₂eq will be tradable.

Besides actions to promote climate benefits, Maísa REDD+ Project also have developed actions to promote benefits to surrounding communities and regional biodiversity. The social and biodiversity components of the project, though, are not subject of this report.

2 VERIFICATION PROCESS

The verification process was conducted at the Maisa farm (project area), along with the validation process under both the VCS and *Climate, Community, and Biodiversity Standard* (CCBS). Hence, it was the initial verification of the project. In this regard, field activities were conducted to evaluate the accuracy of the carbon inventory, the compliance of remote sensing analysis and the overall carbon calculations. The verification process was also focused on the implementation of the monitoring activities described in the PD (ref. 1) and the monitoring report (ref. 6).

2.1 Method and Criteria

This document is a Final Verification Audit Report conducted against the VCS Standards using a desk and field based audit. During the field audit, the audit team split in two or three groups to cover a larger proportion of the project area and throughout the surrounding communities, as well as inside the reference region/project zone. The members of the audit team that were responsible for a re-sample of the previously installed inventory plots by the project proponent determined its sampling approach systematically through transects, aiming to cover the largest possible extent of land over the project area and in this way, possibly noting differences over forest patterns; and randomly through plots of a transect, this approach offered good statically directives for its analysis.

The members of the team that was in charge of conducting interviews inside the communities and for the overall social context analysis systematically chose three communities around the project area, taking in consideration the proximity between them and the Maísa's farm, the expected influence that the project activities would possibly have over them over the project lifetime and the proximity of these communities and the leakage management areas previously established by the project proponent. These auditors were also responsible for checking the overall status and the implementation of the project activities over the leakage management areas.

The audit team reviewed the project documentation based on GIS shapefiles during two online interviews with the staff responsible for the GIS analyses, from Biofilica (project proponent) and Eco-logica (consulting company). In this regard, the audit team compared the total amount of forest from classified satellite imagery in both project area and leakage belt areas, at the end of the monitoring period, which were compared to the baseline deforestation in order to assess the project's climate impacts. Comparisons were also made between the scenario at the beginning of the project and the scenario at the end of the monitoring period. Potential differences in the forested areas were evaluated in order to verify project emissions and leakage in accordance with the selected methodology. Additionally, the audit team had matched the values obtained through GIS analyses to the values used for the GHG emission reductions presented in the calculation spreadsheet. A review of the parameters, formulas, and default factors adopted was also conducted.

AUDIT TEAM

Auditor team names and positions	Auditor qualifications
Bruno Brazil Lead Auditor	Forest Engineer graduated by Escola Superior de Agricultura "Luiz de Queiroz" (ESALQ). Biologist graduated by Universidade de São Paulo (USP). Bruno was empowered by the Instituto Floresta Tropical (IFT) and Imaflora through intensive evaluations in FSC Forest Certification and Reduced Impact Exploration. He was trained as lead auditor of management systems by ATSG (Lead Assessor ISO 14001:2004). He has 4 years of work experience in FSC, when he worked with forest management and chain of custody certification. He was trained to be a carbon projects auditor by Rainforest Alliance and currently integrates Imaflora's climate team. He has technical expertise on VCS and CCB standards and is also experienced on the development of REDD+policies social and environmental safeguards.
Cedric de Ville de Goyet Audit Team Member	Forest engineer with 5 years of experience in forest management. Cedric was trained as lead auditor of management systems by ATSG (Lead Assessor ISO 14001:2004) and was empowered by the Instituto Floresta Tropical (IFT) and Imaflora through intensive evaluations in FSC Forest Certification and Reduced Impact Exploration. He currently integrates the Imaflora audit teams covering environmental, legal and chain of custody aspects, besides have been trained by Imaflora to be a carbon auditor.
Guilherme Berwerth Stucchi Audit Team Member	Native forest certification coordinator at Imaflora. Guilherme has master degrees in silviculture and forest management. He has five years of work experience in forest management over Brazilian Amazon, where he had worked with forest management enterprises. Guilherme is an auditor since 2010, when he have started to work with FSC forest certification processes of native forests. He was empowered by the Instituto Floresta Tropical (IFT; 2008 to 2013) and Imaflora (2010 onwards) through intensive evaluations in FSC Forest Certification and Reduced Impact Exploration. He was trained as lead auditor of management systems by ATSG (Lead Assessor ISO 14001:2004).

<p>Isabel Garcia Drigo</p> <p>Audit Team Member</p>	<p>PhD in Environmental science by PROCAM/USP/AgroParisTech/França, with thesis about barriers on implantation of forest concessions in Latin America. Author of a dissertation about impacts of FSC forestcertification over two communities in the state of Acre. She was trained to be an internal auditor of FM-06, April 19th, 2012 ISO 9001:2000. She has seven years of experience in audit teams administration at organic certification processes. Since 2008 she executes audits over the social principle and criteria in community forest management and in forest management enterprises. She was also trained as lead auditor of management systems by ATSG (Lead Assessor ISO 14001:2004) and to be a carbon auditor by Imaflora.</p>
<p>Thales West</p> <p>Audit Team Member</p>	<p>Thales has a BA in forest engineering and a MSc in forest resources, both from the University of Sao Paulo. Thales started working with forest carbon projects in 2008, and since 2011 he works as a climate specialist auditor for the Rainforest Alliance. He is currently a PhD student at the University of Florida, focused on land-use change decisions, remote sensing, and deforestation modelling under REDD+ initiatives.</p>
<p>Lawson Henderson</p> <p>Senior Internal Reviewer</p>	<p>Carbon Coordinator with Rainforest Alliance (2012 – current). Education: B.S.F. in forest management from University of New Hampshire, 2005. Experience, Forest Management Associate with Rainforest Alliance, US Region (2008 to 2012). Chain of Custody Associate with Rainforest Alliance, US Region (2007-2008). Forest Land Surveyor for a private forest/civil engineering firm in Western Oregon for two years. Auditor on more than 20 FSC forest management and chain of custody audits and assessments. Lead auditor or auditor on 16 forest carbon projects, including 14 IFM projects. Performed VCS audits of ARR, IFM, & REDD forest carbon projects. Project manager on over 250 forest management and chain-of-custody projects. Completed Rainforest Alliance CoC Auditor Training in April 2008, Rainforest Alliance Carbon Verification and Validation Audit Training in March 2009, and Rainforest Alliance Lead Forest Management Auditor Training in June 2009. Successfully completed the Climate Action Reserve Lead Verifier Training for the Forest Project, and Urban Forest Project Protocol in September 2010, CAR Lead Verifier credentials renewed in June 2014. Successfully completed the ISO Quality Management Systems Lead Auditor Training Course (ISO 9001) in December 2010. ARB Lead Verifier credentials obtained in October 2012. Member of the Society of American Foresters and the Forest Guild.</p>

2.2 Document Review

The following documents were viewed as a part of the field audit:

Ref.	Title, Author(s), Version, Date	Electronic Filename
1	Maísa REDD+ Project, Biofílica Investimentos	PDD_Maísa_v.2.1.pdf

	Ambientais, v.2.1, 12 December 2014	
2	"IMAGENS" folder, Biofíllica Investimentos Ambientais, version and date unknown.	IMAGENS.zip
3	"Mapas" folder	Mapas.zip
4	Project_GIS folder	Project_GIS.zip
5	"Shapefile" folder	Shapefile.zip
6	MAÍSA REDD+ PROJECT MONITORING REPORT OF GHG EMISSIONS REDUCTIONS FROM AVOIDING UNPLANNED DEFORESTATION TITLE IN 2012/2013, Biofíllica Investimentos Ambientais, v.2.1, 12 December 2014	VCS Monitoring Report Maísa_v.2.1_final.pdf
7	Calculation spreadsheet, Biofíllica Investimentos Ambientais, v.2.0, 11 December 2014	VCS Monitoring Report Maise_v.2_excel.xlsx
8	RELATÓRIO PÓS EXPLORATÓRIO UPA n.º 10 do PMFS n.º 2010/0000008127 - SEMA/PA, Maurício Batista da Silva, version unknown, 2012.	Relatório.Pós.Exploratório.UPA.10.SIPASA.doc
9	Planilha de inventario de carbono - Maísa, Biofíllica Investimentos Ambientais, v.2.1, 11 December 2014	VM0015_planilha de cálculo_v.2.1.xlsx
10	Silva Equacao Alometrica (2007)	Tese_Silva (2007).pdf
11	Nogueira, E.; Fearnside, P.; Nelson, B., et al., 2008. Estimates of forest biomass in the Brazilian Amazon: New allometric equation and adjustments to biomass from wood volume inventories. Forest Ecology and Management, 256 (11), pp.1853-1867.	
12	Accuracy map assessment, Biofíllica Investimentos Ambientais and Eco-logica, version and date unknown.	kappa10cond_pontosRF.xlsx
13	Fearnside, 1996	
14	"Arquivos de SIG" folder, Biofíllica Investimentos Ambientais and Eco-logica, version and date unknown.	Arquivos de SIG
15	Plano de Trabalho Maísa_2015, 11/12/14	Plano de Trabalho_Maísa_2015.xlsx
16	Technical note on forest similarity, 10/11/2014	Metodologia_Nota Tecnica.docx Tabela Analise.xlsx
17	Maps_forest similarity, 10/11/2014	Similaridade da flora.zip
18	AFOLU Non-Permanence Risk report, v.2	Relatório de Risco v.2.pdf
19	Financial and additionality analyses, Microsoft Excel file, SIPASA, version and date unknown.	Maise_Modelo adicionalidade economico-financeiro_2014.xls
20	Documentação CRA – Cotas de Reserva Ambiental, 16/09/2014	Documentação CRA.zip

21	Forest fires risk assessment	Focos de queimadas.zip;
22	Forest Fire Control Protocols, 12/09/2014	PROCEDIMENTOS NO CASO DE INCÊNDIOS.pdf
23	Baccini, 2012	Baccini et al. (2012) DOI.pdf
24	Determination of baseline for Maísa REDD+ Project, Biofílica Investimentos Ambientais, v.2, 15/09/2014	VM0015_planilha de cálculo_v.2.xlsx
25	Planilha de inventario de carbono - Maísa, Biofílica Investimentos Ambientais, v.1	Planilha_Inventário_Carbono_Maísa.xlsx

2.3 Interviews

The audit team conducted interviews in three villages (Ituquara, Alto Apeí and Branquelândia) inside the leakage management area. This resulted in a sampling of 75% of villages inside the leakage management area. In the three villages a sample of community members, including leadership and other members were interviewed. The community members interviewed represent small producers living in settlement project areas and some newcomers. Their dominant model of production is the subsistence agriculture (i.e. manioc production system). In addition, the audit team interviewed the project workers and members of the subcontracted organization to perform social assessments.

The following interviews were conducted as part of the field audit.

Interviewee or Village Chief	Village or other Location	Date	Number of participants
João Meirelles, director of Peabiru Institute, Paula Vanessa, member of the team of Peabiru in charge of social assessment	Belém	09/06/2014	02
Lucas Mazzei, researcher of EMBRAPA in Belém, forestry engineer, specialized in carbon research	Belém	09/06/2014	01
Maria Batista Antão, women leadership, associated do the Community Association; João Batista Antão, member of the board of Community Association; Gino Batista Antão, son of Maria Batista Antão; Dil Silva e Deodora Silva, a couple, members of the Community, but not associated to the Association. Dinaldo Batista, a newcomer in the	Alto Apeí	10/06/2014	06

Community			
Moacir Santos Pereira, husband of Raquel de Souza Pereira, president of the women Association of Itaquara, Denildo Alves, member of the Community and holds a plot near Maísa Farm boundaries, Maria Ferreira, nurse, member of the Itaquara Community	Itaquara	11/06/2014	03
Diana Teixeira, president of one Association in Branquelândia village, Ana Furtoza (called Nina), member of one Association in Braquelândia, president of a second Association in Branquelândia (a rival of Diana Teixeira),	Branquelândia	12/06/2014	03
Arigleison dos Santos Lima, Massau Mendes de Abreu, Mauro Ferreira de Araújo Filho (workers at proponent bases, they are also members of Itaquara and Branquelândia Community); Luis Gonzaga, mechanic, Benedito Lucena de Souza, supervisor of proponent activities, João, worker being trained to perform as social agent, Valdemir, proponent for human resources department, Josvel, administrative functions in central office, Tercina Barros da Silva, female cook.	Maísa central bureau	13/06/2014	08

2.4 Site Inspections

Location	Date
Maisa Farm, Mojú city, Pará/BR, Opening meeting, strategic interviews with project proponent	June 10 th , 2014
Plots 09, 11, Maisa Farm, Mojú city, Pará/BR, plots selected in the farm to compare inventory data field data field from proponent for carbon stocks.	June 10 th , 2014
Plots 34, 37, 02, 08, Maisa Farm, Mojú city, Pará/BR, plots selected in the farm to compare inventory data field from	June 11 th , 2014

proponent for carbon stocks.	
Unit Work 02, Annual Unit Production 12, Maisa Farm, Mojú city, Pará/BR, plot selected in the farm to compare inventory data field and carbon stocks	June 13 th , 2014
Maisa Farm, Mojú city, Pará/BR, strategic interviews with project proponent	June 11 th , 2014
Maisa Farm, Mojú city, Pará/BR, strategic interviews with project proponent	June 12 th , 2014
Maisa Farm, Mojú city, Pará/BR, closing meeting with project proponent	June 13 th , 2014
Surveillance bases 1, 2 and 3, three roponente a bases on the borders of the project area and in the central workers housing. The proponent approach in these inspections included: i) interviews with the workers; ii) visual verification of the legal work conditions (housing, source of water, quality of the food, etc.), safety issues and proponent to perform the surveillance activities.	June 13 th , 2014

2.5 Resolution of Findings

All findings relevant for this verification process were expressed as nonconformity reports (NCRs) in this document (Appendix 1), thus representing areas of nonconformance in regards to verification of the project. Given that the verification audit was combined with a validation audit (VCS & CCB), the main issues identified by the audit team was addressed by the project proponent during the validation process and can be found in the validation report. Still, two of the NCRs identified during the field audit and the subsequent desk review were considered relevant for the verification and were transcribed into this report. Please see Appendix 1 for detailed descriptions of these nonconformances.

The project proponents have implemented corrective actions and presented evidence of conformance with the applicable VCS standards in order to address the NCRs raised by the audit team. The non-conformity reports were related to inappropriate accounting for the dead wood carbon pool and mistakes related to allometric equations and inventory spreadsheets.

Action Taken by Project Proponent following the issuance of the Draft Report		Date
Additional documents submitted to audit team (additional documents listed below)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	11 September 2014

Additional stakeholder consultation conducted (evidence described below)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	12 December 2014
Additional clarification provided	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	12 December 2014
Documents revised (document revision description noted below)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	21 January 2015
GHG calculation revised (evidence described below)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	20 January 2015

2.5.1 Forward Action Requests

No Forward Action Requests were raised by the audit team in this report.

2.6 Eligibility for Validation Activities

Rainforest Alliance certification and auditing services are managed and implemented within its RA-Cert Division. All related personnel responsible for audit design, evaluation, and certification / verification/validation decisions are under the purview of the RA-Cert Division, hereafter referred to as Rainforest Alliance or RA. Rainforest Alliance is an ANSI ISO 14065:2007 accredited validation and verification body; additionally, Rainforest Alliance is a member of the Climate, Community, and Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA) standards and an approved verification body with a number of other forest carbon project standards.

Imaflora acts in partnership with Rainforest Alliance as a VCS/CCB validation/verification body since 2008. Besides, Imaflora has more than eighteen years of experience with environmental-social standards certification, such as SAN (Sustainable Agriculture Network) and FSC® (Forest Stewardship Council®), which has given it familiarity with land management practices in Brazil and has provided a solid professional platform for auditing forestry carbon projects.

3 VALIDATION FINDINGS

A validation audit of the project against the VCS & CCB standards was conducted in combination with the VCS verification audit. Upon completion of the validation audit, the project's design was found to be in full conformance with the VCS & CCB standards and the combined VCS & CCB validation report was finalized on 29 December 2014.

No observations can be made in regards to project description deviations, no gap validation was performed in this audit and the project was not designed as group. In regards to methodology deviations, see section 3.2.

3.1 Participation under Other GHG Programs

The proponent asserts in section 3.4 of the PD (ref. 1) that it has not and will not be seeking registration under other GHG programs other than the VCS. The audit team has verified that the project is not listed under any other GHG program. Currently in Brazil, there are only REDD projects seeking to participate on VCS and CCB programs under the voluntary market.

3.2 Methodology Deviations

The project proponent and Eco-logica have used the equation (4) from Puyravaud's study (2003; ref. 16) instead of the equation (3) of VM0015 to calculate the annual deforestation rate. The project proponent have properly justified its approach, discussing the modelling types used and presenting a results based comparison between both equations, in which for the same set of data, Puyravaud's equation outcome is more conservative than equation 3 of VM0015 (ref. 9, worksheet "Step 4.1.2.1"). It's the audit team understanding that the Puyravaud's Equation is more complex than the equation 3 of VM0015 and promotes a more conservative approach. As seen that this proposed methodology deviation is related to deforestation rates measurement and monitoring and is more conservative, the audit team has concluded that this deviation meets the VCS requirements for methodology deviations.

3.3 Project Description Deviations

No project descriptions deviations were made by the project proponent. The validation and the first verification were performed together.

3.4 Grouped Project

The project was not designed as a VCS grouped project.

4 VERIFICATION FINDINGS

4.1 Project Implementation Status

This is the project's first VCS verification, and it was conducted along with the project validation under both, the VCS and CCB standards. No material discrepancies between project implementation and the project description were identified. The implementation status of the monitoring plan regarding the climate component of the project and the suitability of the implemented monitoring system were found to be in conformance by the audit team.

The project monitoring plan is described in the PD (ref. 1 - section 8) and in the monitoring report (ref. 6 - section 3.3). Section 2 of the former document provides the implementation status of the project activity (see ref. 6 - Table 2).

Maísa REDD+ project defines the forest management activities on the farm as a strategy to add value to the standing forest and the forest certification schemes such as FSC®, as a possible goal. The proponent believes that FSC certification will promote better management which will lead to more effective protection of the forest. In this sense, through the REDD+ project, the project proponents had implemented complementary activities for the farm's sustainable forest management plan, focused on the forest management quality and efficiency, such as the whole carbon inventory data collection and all the remote sensing analysis performed. Besides this, the project proponent developed a formal training program that covers all themes related to the relevant project activities, including the forest management operation (ref. 15). In order to prove its efforts in starting the capacity and training implementation, the project proponent has also presented an IFT application form (In portuguese: *Instituto Floresta Tropical*) in which it requested a company training exercise at the Maísa farm. Currently, the project area is still not certified but is involved in a step wise approach program created to help forest management enterprises move towards certification.

Besides supporting forest management activities, the project proponent has made efforts to enhance the farm property security measures and has monitored the vegetation cover through satellite images and remote sensing analysis over the course of the first project monitoring period. Through Maísa REDD+ project's implementation, the farm's property security protocols were consolidated. During the first year of the project's implementation eight monitoring stations became activated and eight patrols are now responsible for performing the watches with a surveillance frequency of two times a day, which was confirmed by the audit team through direct observations made in the field, and through interviews made with the responsible employees and also the project proponent staff. In regards of this matter, the project proponent is currently working on improve registry procedures for the surveillance activities.

Through satellite images and remote sensing analysis the project proponent has monitored leakage at the project leakage belt. No leakages were found. No leakage management activities were performed at the leakage management areas by the project proponent during the first monitoring period.

The suitability of the implemented monitoring system was also found to be in conformance with VM0015 (ref. 1 to 7). The project proponent has fulfilled all tasks requested by the adopted methodology. The outcomes from monitoring of actual carbon stock changes and GHG emissions within the project area, the monitoring of leakage and the ex-post calculation of net anthropogenic GHG emission reduction can be checked over the carbon monitoring spreadsheet (ref. 7).

No other GHG trading mechanism was considered by the project proponent, nor any other form of environmental credit was issued from the project area. The project has not participated or been rejected under any other GHG program to date (see ref. 6 - section 1.9). The audit team concluded that the project has been implemented as described in the validated project description in conformance with the applicable VCS requirements and the VM0015 methodology (ref. 1).

4.2 Accuracy of GHG Emission Reduction and Removal Calculations

The project proponent identified the data and parameters used to calculate the GHG emission reductions in the monitoring report (ref. 6, section 3.2). The accuracy of the GHG emission reductions was assessed by reviews of the calculation spreadsheets and the remote sensing/GIS analyses performed. Considering that both the validation and verification processes were conducted simultaneously, the methods and formulae set out in the project description for calculating baseline emissions, project emissions and leakage have been correctly followed for ex-post calculations.

An allometric equation developed by Silva (2007; ref. 10) was used to estimate individual tree dry biomass. This equation was actually developed for western Amazon forest and not for the project area site. However the project proponent performed additional analysis (ref. 16) and provided additional documentation (ref. 17) in order to prove the similarity between both sites and demonstrate that the equation could be used. This was accepted by the audit team, because it was understood as a conservative approach.

Wood density values were not used since the allometric equation adopted only required input from tree DBH. The auditors found that the root-to-shot factor of 0.27 (ref. 10 – Nogueira, 2007)

and the carbon fraction of 0.485 (ref. 11 – Nogueira, 2008) used in the calculations to be in accordance with the VCS AFOLU and VM0015 requirements. Finally, the molecular proportion of 44/12 was correctly used to convert carbon values to CO₂e. The statistical analysis of the carbon inventory were reviewed by the auditors and no inconsistencies were found (ref. 9).

In accordance with VM0015 step 7.1.1, ex-post emissions from planned activities were accounted by the project proponent (see ref. 7 – worksheet “Table_25”). According to the validated PD (ref. 1 – section 5.4), emissions from planned activities were based on the planned deforestation caused by logging operations available from logging reports of the farm (see ref. 1 – Table 40). The ex-post emissions from planned activities for the monitoring period was based on the logging activities conducted from May 21, 2012 to May 21, 2013. The 2012-2013 logging report was presented to the audit team and the values reported were found to be properly used (ref. 8). The emissions associated with the planned deforestation in the project area from 21 May 2012 to 21 May 2013, were 7,840.6 tCO₂e, which represents the total ex post estimated carbon stock change in project area under the project scenario in this monitoring period (ref. 6, tab. 8)

Thus, the audit team had concluded that the GHG emission reductions were correctly quantified in accordance with the VCS requirements and VM0015.

4.3 Quality of Evidence to Determine GHG Emission Reductions and Removals

The monitoring report (ref. 6, section 3) describes the quality control and quality assurance procedures adopted for the remote sensing/GIS analyses, as well as the data archiving, and the frequency of monitoring/recording of the parameters used. Non-conformances were not found with these aspects of the project.

The audit team conducted interviews with two of the staff responsible for the remote sensing/GIS analyses performed for the project, in order to confirm that they have the knowledge and skills necessary to perform the required analyses and interpret the results. All steps related to the GIS analyses and their outcomes evaluations were appropriate when presented for the audit team, which corroborates their proficiency on this matter (ref. 5).

In regards to the accuracy of the imagery classification, a map accuracy assessment based on the most recent land-use (2011) was provided to auditors. The assessment was based on 82 randomly distributed points within the reference region. High resolution imagery obtained from Google Earth was used for the visual interpretation and the accuracy assessment. All land-use classes resulted in accuracy higher than 80% and the global map accuracy was 94% (ref. 12). The procedure and the results from the spatial analyses were found to be in conformance with VM0015 (see section 7.3 of the validation report for a full assessment on the GIS/remote sensing analyses performed).

The audit team reviewed the classified GIS shapefiles (ref. 4 and 5) to check the forest areas, at the beginning and end of the monitoring period (2012 and 2013), within the project area. The goal of this review was to assess the project emissions due to deforestation and compare the observed deforestation levels to the annual baseline deforestation maps (ref. 14 - "Step_4_2_2_BaselineMaps" subfolder).

According to the monitoring report (ref. 7 - section 4.3) the project proponent estimated ex-ante leakage due to displaced deforestation during the monitored period as 7,312.9 Mg CO_{2e}. VM0015 (Part 3 - section 1.2.2) states that "Leakage will be calculated as the difference between the *ex ante* and the *ex post* assessment". Hence, if no increase is observed in the trend of deforestation for the leakage belt areas during the monitoring period (i.e. above the ex-ante leakage estimation), the project is found not to have generated leakage. The project proponent reported a value of zero for the ex-post leakage, what represents no emissions from leakage during the first monitoring period.

Thus, the audit team had concluded that the quality of evidences provided to determine GHG emission reductions was acceptable.

4.4 Non-Permanence Risk Analysis

The project proponent uses the VCS non-permanence risk report (ref. 18) to identify risks and mitigation measures to the project climate aspects. The risk report shows the risk factor score for each category, subcategory and the global score of 19. Many justifications and mitigation measures were provided in order to calculate the total score, fulfilling the objectives of the VCS tool. Given that the project was validated and verified simultaneously, the risk assessment presented in both reports is the same.

Risk Factor	Self Assessment Risk Rating	Findings (including description of any mitigation activities as required per VCS AFOLU Non-Permanence Risk Tool Section 2.1.2.2)	NCR/OBS
Internal Risks (VCS AFOLU Non-Permanence Risk Tool Section 2.2):			
Project Management: Shall be assessed using Table 1 of VCS AFOLU Risk Tool.	-2	The auditors found this risk score to be justified. The REDD+ project is implemented on Brazilian Amazon native forests. No exotic species will be planted as part of the project activities in association with GHG accounting and generation of VCUs (a: 0). The project has not generated VCUs yet (b: 0). The project proponent staff is highly qualified and has demonstrated work experience on REDD+ projects development and forest management activities (ref. 18; c: 0, e: -2). Sipasa and Maisa-Moju are project proponents and forest management enterprises based in the project area. Biofilica maintains staff in Belém, PA, less than a day in distance from the project area (d: 0)	None

Financial viability: Shall be assessed using Table 2 of VCS AFOLU Risk Tool.	5	The auditors found this risk score to be justified. The project cash flow breakeven point is 8 years from the current risk assessment (ref. 19, b: 2). The project has secured less than 15% of funding needed to cover the total cash out before the project reaches breakeven (e: 3). No mitigation measures were considered.	None
Opportunity cost: Shall be assessed using Table 3 of the VCS AFOLU Risk Tool.	0	The auditors found this risk score to be justified. Most of the activities in the baseline scenario are driven by subsistence; 66% of the deforestation in the reference region is attributed to small holder agricultural practices (a: 8). The project is protected by a legally binding commitment to continue management practices that protect the credited carbon stocks over at least 100 years; 52% of the project area is protected by the Brazilian forest code (Law nº 12.651, from 25/05/2012 and CAR – in Portuguese, <i>Cadastro Ambiental Rural</i>) and the remainder is protected as an environmental forest reserve, in accordance with Brazilian law and agreements already instituted by the land owner (ref. 20) (i: - 8);	None
Project longevity: Shall be assessed using Table 4 of the VCS AFOLU Risk Tool.	15	The auditors found this risk score to be justified. The project is protected by a legally binding commitment to continue management practices that protect the credited carbon stocks over at least 100 years; 52% of the project area is protected by the Brazilian forest code (Law nº 12.651, from 25/05/2012 and CAR – in Portuguese, <i>Cadastro Ambiental Rural</i>) and the rest will be protected as environmental forest reserves, in conformance with Brazilian law and agreements already implemented by the land owner (ref. 20) (b: 15).	None
Total Internal Risk: Shall be calculated using Table 5 of the VCS Risk Tool.	18	The auditors found the Total Internal Risk score to be justified per above findings, and calculated correctly by the project proponent.	
External risks (VCS AFOLU Non-Permanence Risk Tool Section 2.3):			
Land and resource tenure: Shall be	0	The auditors found this risk score to be justified. The land ownership and resource access/use	None

<p>assessed using Table 6 of the VCS Risk Tool.</p>		<p>rights are held by the same entity (Maísa-Moju Agroindustrial, a: 0).</p> <p>The project area is also protected by a legally binding commitment to continue management practices that protect carbon stocks over the length of the project crediting period. Project is protected by a legally binding commitment to continue management practices that protect the forest carbon stocks over at least 100 years; 52% of the project area is protected by the Brazilian forest code (Law nº 12.651, from 25/05/2012 and CAR – in Portuguese, <i>Cadastro Ambiental Rural</i>) and the rest will be protected as environmental forest reserves, in conformance with Brazilian law and agreements already implemented with the land owner (ref. 20) (f: -2)</p>	
<p>Community engagement: Shall be assessed using Table 7 of the VCS Risk Tool.</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>Not applicable. The auditors found this risk score to be justified. There are no communities living inside the project area. The communities around are not reliant on the project area based on documented consultations with the communities and interviews conducted by the audit team. The communities in the project zone (but outside the project area) have been previously consulted about the project activities and implementation. The community engagement process was further bolstered after the validation field audit as a result of findings of the field audit and will be continuously implemented in a step-wise approach until the next verification audit. Communities exist in the project zone only outside the project area and do not have legal right or traditional right to the resources in the project area.</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>Political risk: Shall be assessed using Table 8 of the VCS Risk Tool.</p>	<p>0.054</p>	<p>The auditors found this risk score to be justified. The Brazilian governance score was calculated as 0.054 according to the World Bank Institute's Worldwide Governance Indicators (c: 2). Brazil federation and state governments are working with different REDD+ initiatives, such as <i>Fundo Amazônia</i> (- www.fundoamazonia.gov.br), REDD+ PSA (http://www.redd-standards.org),</p>	<p>None</p>

		GCF (www.gcftaskforce.org) and also has a an established national FSC standards body (www.fsc.org.br) and a Designated National Authority under the CDM with at registered CDM Afforestation/Reforestation project (http://cdm.unfccc.int) (f: -2).	
Total external risks: Shall be calculated using Table 9 of the VCS Risk Tool.	0	The auditors found the Total External Risk score to be justified per above findings, and calculated correctly by the project proponent.	None
Natural Risks (VCS AFOLU Non-Permanence Risk Tool Section 2.4):			
Natural risks: Shall be assessed using Table 10 of the VCS Risk Tool.	1	<p>The auditors found the Total Natural Risk score to be justified. The project proponent has accounted for risks related to forest fires in the project area, considering them as frequent, but not significant events; this decision was supported by a GIS analysis that covered a period of ten years over the project area and over a buffer zone of 3.5Km beyond the project boundaries (ref. 21) (LS_F: 2).</p> <p>In addition there are mitigation measures in place to deal with forest fires (ref. 22) including fire breaks as confirmed by the audit team. As a result the project proponent has justified a mitigation score 0.5 (M_F), in regards to risk of forest fires, reaching a final sub-score of 1 for this natural risks subcategory (F=1).</p> <p>The project proponent considered the likelihood of impacts due to pests and diseases outbreaks as null. The Amazon biome is the most diverse ecosystem in the world. It is well established that this high species and functional diversity as well as minor dominance by specific species or genera, leads to low risks of pests for tropical forests. This high biodiversity condition regulates the pests and microbiological populations preventing possible outbreaks (LS_{PD} = 0) as justified by the proponent.</p> <p>Supported by secondary data, the project proponent considered the likelihood of impacts due to extreme weather as insignificant (less</p>	

		than 5% loss of carbon stocks) in case of severe droughts and floods and rare (once every 100 years or more) in case of hurricanes and blowdowns ($LS_w = 0$, $LS_{ON} = 0$). Also supported by secondary data, the project proponent considered the likelihood of impacts due to geological risk as null ($LS_G = 0$).	
Overall Risk (VCS AFOLU Non-Permanence Risk Tool Section 2.5):			
Overall Risk Rating: Shall be assessed using Table 11 of the VCS Risk Tool	19	The overall risk rating, calculated by the project proponent, considering internal, external and natural risks of non-permanence was found to be in conformance by the audit team.	

5 VERIFICATION CONCLUSION

The audit team has reviewed all the exhibits submitted by the Project Proponent and concluded that the proposed project is in conformance with VCS Version 3. Following the review of the monitoring report and supporting documents, the audit team has concluded with a reasonable level of assurance that the project is in full conformance with the VCS standard requirements, validated project design document, and approved VCS methodology. Below is a description of the verified emission reductions as reviewed and approved by the audit team.

Verification period: From 21 May 2012 to 21 May 2013

Verified GHG emission reductions in the above verification period:

Year	Baseline emissions or removals (tCO ₂ e)	Project emissions or removals (tCO ₂ e)	Leakage emissions (tCO ₂ e)	Net GHG emission reductions or removals (tCO ₂ e)
2012	71,762.5	7.840,6	0.0	64,331.7
Total	71,762.5	7.840,6	0.0	64,331.7

Year	Net GHG emission reductions or removals (tCO ₂ e)	Buffer account contribution (tCO ₂ e)	VCUs (tCO ₂ e)
21 May 2012 – 21 May	64,331.7	12,223.0	52,108.7

2013			
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Based on Project's conformance with audit criteria, the auditor makes the following recommendation:		
Final Report Conclusions		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Verification approved: <i>NCR(s) closed</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Verification not approved: <i>Conformance with NCR(s) required (See appendix I)</i>	
Draft Final Report Conclusions		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Verification approved: <i>NCR(s) closed</i>	The Project Proponent has 7 days from the date of this report to submit any comments related to the factual accuracy of the report or the correctness of decisions reached. The auditors will not review any new material submitted at this time.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Verification not approved: <i>Conformance with NCR(s) required</i>	
Draft Report Conclusions		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Verification approved: <i>No NCRs issued</i>	The Project Proponent has 30 days from the date of this report to revise documentation and provide any additional evidence necessary to close the open non-conformances (NCRs). If new material is submitted the auditor will review the material and add updated findings to this report and close NCRs appropriately. If no new material is received before the 30 day deadline, or the new material was insufficient to close all open NCRs the report will be finalised with the NCRs open, and validation and/or verification will not be achieved. If all NCRs are successfully addressed, the report will be finalised and proceed towards issuance of a assessment statement.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Verification not approved: <i>Conformance with NCR(s) required</i>	

VCS Standard Requirement	Draft Report Project Conformance	Final Report Project Conformance
<i>1 Project Design</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<i>2 Application of Methodology</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<i>3 Additionality and baseline selection</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<i>4 Quantification of GHG</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

<i>emissions</i>		
<i>5 Leakage</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<i>6 Net emission reductions and removals</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<i>7 Monitoring plan</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<i>8 Environmental Impact</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<i>9 Comments by stakeholders</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<i>10 Non-permanence Risk Assessment</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

APPENDIX 1: NON-CONFORMITY REPORTS

1.1 Nonconformance evaluation

Note: A non-conformance is defined in this report as a deficiency, discrepancy or misrepresentation that in all probability materially affects carbon credit claims. Non-conformance Request (NCR) language uses “shall” to suggest its necessity but is not prescriptive in terms of mechanisms to mitigate the NCR. Each NCR is brief and refers to a more detailed finding in the appendices.

NCRs identified in the Draft Report must be closed through submission of additional evidence by the Project Proponents before Rainforest Alliance can submit an unqualified statement of conformance to the GHG program.

NCR#:	01/15
Standard & Requirement:	VM0015 v1.1, anexo 3 VCS Principle of accuracy
Report Section:	7.1, 7.3
Description of Non-conformance and Related Evidence:	
<p>As identified in the validation report, an allometric equation developed by Silva (2007; ref. 17) was used to estimate individual tree dry biomass. The equation, however, was developed for western Amazon forest and no validation of the equation was performed within the project area by destructively harvesting, as required by VM0015 appendix 3. Additionally, the equation was developed for trees ranging from 5 to 120 cm DBH, but it was applied to trees with >120 cm DBH. This approach was not found to be accurate by the audit team. This forest inventory issue directly affects the total carbon stocks per hectare and thus, the ex-post calculations, and is therefore a relevant matter to the verification process.</p>	
Corrective Action Request:	<p>Organization shall implement corrective actions to demonstrate conformance with the requirement(s) referenced above.</p> <p>Note: Effective corrective actions focus on addressing the specific occurrence described in evidence above, as well as the root cause to eliminate and prevent recurrence of the non-conformance.</p>
Timeline for Conformance:	Prior to Verification
Evidence Provided by Organization:	<p>Ref. 16: Metodologia_Nota Tecnica.docx Ref. 17: Similaridade da flora.zip Ref. 10: Tese_Silva (2007).pdf Ref. 23: Baccini et al. (2012) DOI.pdf Ref. 9: Planilha_Inventário_Carbono_Maísa_v.2.xlsx Ref. 24: VM0015_planilha de cálculo_v.2.xlsx</p>
Findings for Evaluation of	The project proponent made additional analysis (ref. 16) and

Evidence:	provided additional documentation (ref. 17) in order to prove the similarity between the forest in the project area and the western Amazon forest, for which Silva’s allometric equation was developed, in terms of carbon biomass. The project proponent compared height and biomass between both forest sites through a GIS based analysis (ref. 17) and secondary data (refs. 10 & 23) to infer that the using of Silva’s equation is actually a conservative approach. The audit team analyzed the documents, maps and the spreadsheet provided by the proponent in order to conclude that Silva’s equation can be used without overestimation of biomass calculation and the overall GHG assertion. Furthermore, the project proponent revised its inventory and carbon calculations spreadsheet (refs. 9 & 24), excluding trees out of the range of the equation from data. This NCR is therefore considered closed.
NCR Status:	CLOSED
Comments (optional):	None

NCR#:	02/15
Standard & Requirement:	VCS Standard v.3.4, item 3.15.1
Report Section:	7.3, 7.6
Description of Non-conformance and Related Evidence:	
The Silva (2007) equation indicated on the PD (ref. 1), section 5.3 page 116 is incorrect in the excel spreadsheet, “Planilha_Inventário_Carbono_Maísa” (ref. 25). This forest inventory issues directly affects the total carbon stocks per hectare and thus, the ex-post calculations, and is therefore a relevant matter in regards to the verification process.	
Corrective Action Request:	<p>Organization shall implement corrective actions to demonstrate conformance with the requirement(s) referenced above.</p> <p>Note: Effective corrective actions focus on addressing the specific occurrence described in evidence above, as well as the root cause to eliminate and prevent recurrence of the non-conformance.</p>
Timeline for Conformance:	Prior to Vefification
Evidence Provided by Organization:	Ref. 9: Planilha_Inventário_Carbono_Maísa_v.2.xlsx Ref. 25: Planilha_Inventário_Carbono_Maísa.xlsx Ref. 10: Tese_Silva (2007).pdf
Findings for Evaluation of Evidence:	The project proponent has revised its carbon calculations spreadsheet (ref. 9), erasing the typo in the allometric equation used, which is now correctly pointed as $PF = 2.7179 * (DAP)^{1.8774}$,

	according to Silva's equation (ref. 10). This NCR is therefore considered closed.
NCR Status:	CLOSED
Comments (optional):	None

1.2 Observations

Note: Observations are issued for areas that the auditor sees the potential for improvement in implementing standard requirements or in the quality system; observations may lead to direct non-conformances if not addressed. Unlike NCRs, observations are not formally closed.

No Observations (OBS) were raised during the VCS verification audit of the Maisa REDD+ Project.