Key attributes of forest carbon projects

For all types of forest carbon projects under a carbon registry, the carbon registries outline strict requirements for eligibility. Carbon projects must demonstrate that there is additional carbon capture that would not have occurred without the carbon project – this is called *additionality*. Additionality is the difference between the carbon storage of the forest if it was enrolled in a carbon offset project compared to the carbon storage if it was not enrolled in a carbon project. The latter is usually called the baseline. The baseline is defined according to the project type and protocol; it can relate to common practice, business as usual, standardized emissions estimates, profit maximization, or minimum legal requirements. The project must have a long-term commitment, or *permanence*, to ensure that the stored carbon is not immediately released. And the project must demonstrate that it does not facilitate any new emissions elsewhere, called *leakage*. For example, there are penalties if the carbon project results in an increase in timber harvesting in another location. The number of carbon credits that a project produces is based on the additionality while accounting for permanence and leakage (Figure 15).

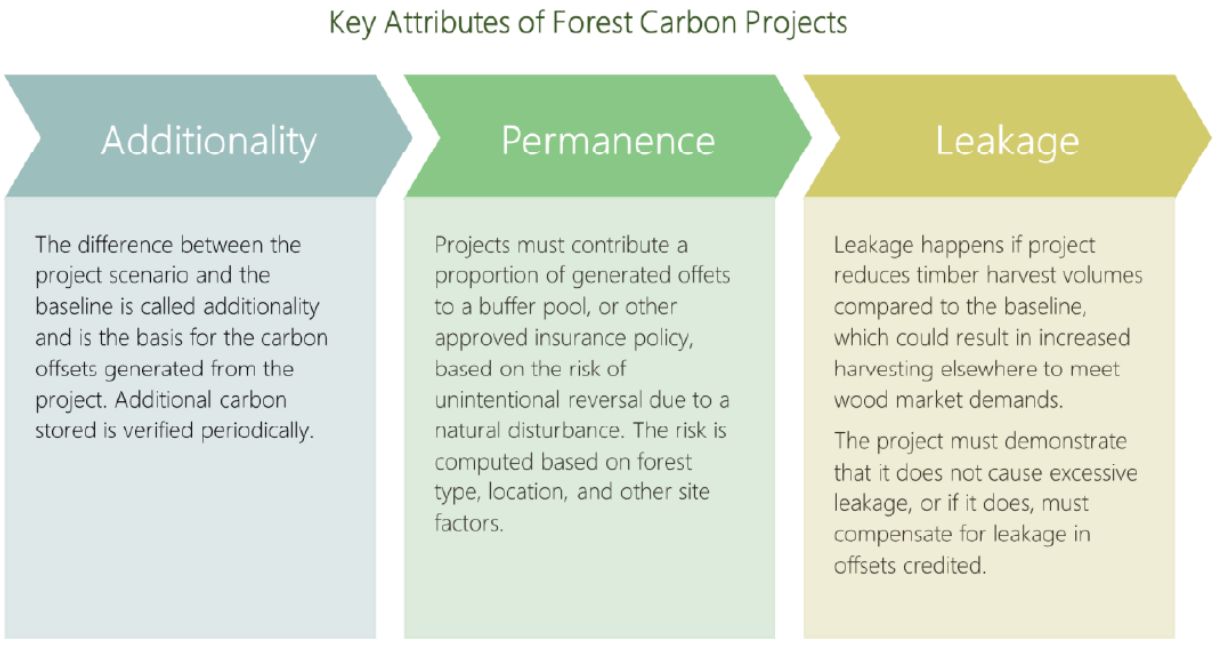

Figure 1

Note: The content of this publication draws heavily on several similar publications produced by the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation.