



# Verified Carbon Standard

## AVOIDING UNPLANNED DEFORESTATION (AUD) METHODOLOGY APPLICATION GUIDE

Document Prepared by Climate Focus

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# Relationship to Approved or Pending Methodologies

In 2021, Verra decided to update and consolidate baseline, leakage, monitoring, and uncertainty procedures of existing methodologies for Avoiding Unplanned Deforestation (AUD) to (a) achieve consistency of procedures within AUD methodologies and (b) work toward alignment of VCS project methodologies with the Jurisdictional and Nested REDD+ Requirements (JNR).

Verra subsequently developed standardized AUD baseline, leakage, monitoring, and uncertainty procedures in alignment with JNR Version 4.0. These procedures are contained in methodological modules that replace respective procedures in methodologies VM0006, VM0007, VM0009, VM0015, and VM0037. These modules will be published as:

- J-ADB-UD: Determination of jurisdictional activity data baseline for unplanned deforestation.
- BL-UD: Estimation of baseline greenhouse gas emission within the project area and leakage belt from unplanned deforestation.
- LK-UD-AS: Estimation of emissions from activity shifting for avoiding unplanned deforestation.
- MON-AUD: Methods for monitoring greenhouse gas emissions within the project boundary and leakage belt from unplanned deforestation.

Methodologies VM0006, VM0007, VM0009, VM0015, and VM0037 will be revised to incorporate the methods contained in the above-mentioned modules. Other tools previously published by Verra that are applied in connection with AUD methodologies include:

- The JNR Allocation Tool (JNR-AT).
- The JNR Risk Mapping Tool (JNR-RMT).

**Table 1: Related Methodologies**

Methodology	Title	GHG Program	Comments
VM0006	Methodology for Carbon Accounting for Mosaic and Landscape-scale REDD Projects, v2.2	VCS	n/a
VM0007	REDD+ Methodology Framework (REDD+MF), v1.6	VCS	n/a
VM0009	Methodology for Avoided Ecosystem Conversion, v3.0	VCS	n/a
VM0015	Methodology for Avoided Unplanned Deforestation, v1.1	VCS	n/a
VM0037	Methodology for Implementation of REDD+ Activities in Landscapes	VCS	n/a

	Affected by Mosaic Deforestation and Degradation, v1.0		
JNR-AT	JNR Allocation Tool, v4.0	VCS JNR	n/a
JNR-RMT	JNR Risk Mapping Tool	VCS JNR	n/a

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# 1 SOURCES

This tool is based on the following modules/tools/methodologies:

- VCS Jurisdictional and Nested REDD+ (JNR) Requirements 4.0
- VCS JNR Allocation Tool
- VCS JNR Risk Mapping Tool
- J-ADB-UD: Determination of jurisdictional activity data baseline for unplanned deforestation.
- BL-UD: Estimation of baseline greenhouse gas emission within the project area and leakage belt from unplanned deforestation.
- LK-UD-AS: Estimation of emissions from activity shifting for avoiding unplanned deforestation.
- MON-AUD: Methods for monitoring greenhouse gas emissions within the project boundary and leakage belt from unplanned deforestation.

# 2 SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

This guide defines the application process for VCS methodologies VM0006, VM0007, VM0009, VM0015, and VM0037 to projects Avoiding Unplanned Deforestation (AUD) effective as of the “Effective Date” to be defined by Verra.

# 3 DEFINITIONS

See specific modules and the *VCS Program Definitions* for relevant definitions.

# 4 APPLICABILITY CONDITIONS

This guide is applicable as of the Effective Date to all VCS AUD projects (“Projects”) not located in a jurisdiction with a registered VCS JNR Forest Reference Emission Level (FREL) or program.

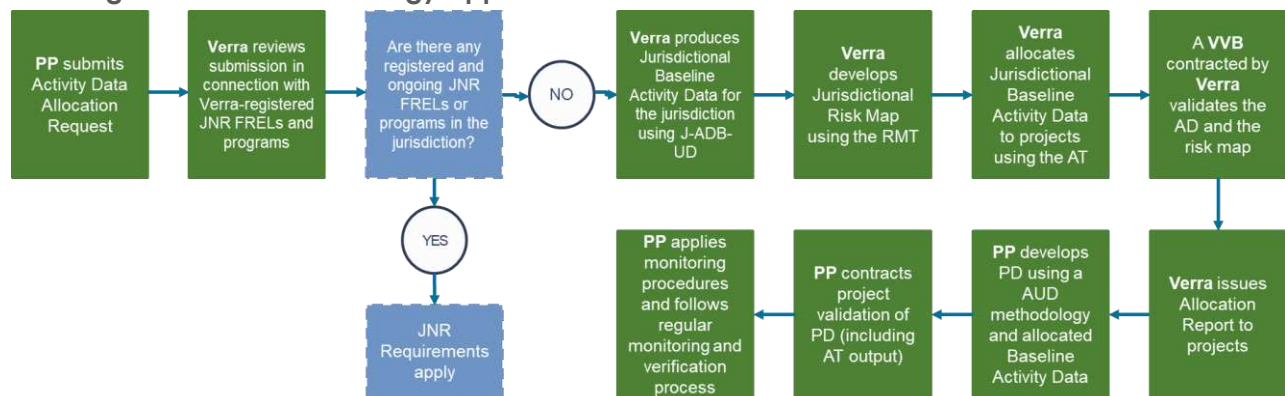
Project proponents (PP) may quantify emission reductions and removals associated with non-AUD project activities by using the respective procedures in approved VCS methodologies.

## 5 PROCEDURES

The application process for revised AUD methodologies requires the development of an Activity Data Baseline at jurisdictional level using module J-ADB-UD and its allocation to projects using the JNR-RMT and the JNR-AT. Verra will produce **Jurisdictional Activity Data Baseline for Unplanned Deforestation (J-ADB-UD)** and allocate it to project areas per the processes outlined in this Tool. Figure 1 provides an overview of the high-level application process.

Annex 1 provides additional detail on the technical processes and procedures related to the application of modules J-ADB-UD and MON-AUD.

**Figure 1: AUD Methodology Application Process**



### Responsibilities of Verra:

1. Development of Jurisdictional Activity Data Baseline using module J-ADB-UD.
2. Development of the Jurisdictional Deforestation Risk Map using the JNR-RMT.
3. Allocation of Unplanned Deforestation Activity Data Baseline to Project and Leakage Belt areas using the JNR-AT and the Deforestation Risk Map.
4. Contract and finalize validation J-ADB-UD and Risk Map.
5. Produce the J-ADB-UD Allocation Report.
6. Deliver J-ADB-UD Allocation Report and Deforestation Risk Map to the PP.

In jurisdictions for which J-ADB-UD and Risk Maps have already been produced for a determined J-ADB-UD Validity Period, Verra will only carry out activities 3 to 6 above to allocate Jurisdictional Activity Data Baseline to projects.

Note: Verra may choose to contract third-party service providers to develop activity data, map products, and manage application of the JNR-AT and JNR-RMT on its behalf. The selection of such providers is at the sole discretion of Verra.

**Responsibilities of the Project Proponent related to J-ADB-UD development:**

1. Submission of J-ADB-UD Allocation Request including associated data to Verra.
2. Optional submission of forest cover benchmark maps (FCBM) per procedures defined in module BL-UD to inform development of jurisdictional FCBMs as input to the JNR-RMT.
3. Payment of AD generation and allocation fees to Verra.
4. Contracting Project validation including allocated AD from JNR-AT.

**Other responsibilities of the Project Proponent:**

1. Development of the Project Description and other documents per the VCS Standard and Project Registration and Issuance Process.
2. Development of project-area-specific Emission Factors (EFs) using an applicable AUD Methodology.
3. Calculation of Project Baseline Emissions allocated activity data, deforestation risk map, and project level EFs per procedures define in module BL-UD.
4. Project Monitoring in line with module MON-AUD.
5. Elaborate monitoring report according to applicable VCS rules and templates.

## 5.1 Submission of Jurisdictional Activity Data Baseline Allocation Request

PPs must submit the Jurisdictional Activity Data Baseline Allocation Request Template to Verra to receive their Activity Data Baseline allocation, which is required for the application of AUD methodologies and the development of the PD. Information to be provided in submissions includes but is not limited to:

1. Project Name.
2. Project Start Date.
3. Location (Country/Jurisdiction) – if the Project covers geographical areas of more than one jurisdiction, all jurisdictions must be named.
4. Project area size (hectares).
5. Spatial boundaries of the Project area (shapefile).
6. Spatial boundaries of the Project's Leakage Belt (per procedures defined in module LK-US-AS, shapefile).
7. Maps and detailed explanations of any previously developed land cover and land cover transition maps, and activity data or Forest Cover Benchmark Maps (FCBM) that the project would like to be considered in the development and allocation of AD.

Verra will receive and review submissions on a rolling basis and determine the need for generating new or allocating existing Jurisdictional Activity Data Baseline to Projects.

## 5.2 Production of Jurisdictional Activity Data Baseline

J-ADB-UD Data represents the projected baseline data on deforestation areas generated at the jurisdictional level that can be allocated to project areas and leakage belts located within a jurisdiction to allow for the construction of project baselines. As defined in module J-ADB-UD,

jurisdictional activity data is constructed based on historical data during the Historical Reference Period (HRP) and is valid for the respective Jurisdictional Baseline Validity Period.

Verra will produce J-ADB-UD using the latest version of module J-ADB-UD. Verra will determine the jurisdictional boundaries for the development of J-ADB-UD, in accordance with the module, including but not limited to:

1. Jurisdictional boundary;
2. Start and end date of the Jurisdictional Validity Period; and
3. Start and end date of the Historical Reference Period.

Verra may consider information such as FCBMs submitted by PPs as part of their Jurisdictional Activity Data Allocation Baseline Request to inform the development of J-ADB-UD. Verra may integrate information developed by PPs at the project or jurisdictional level in the development of J-ADB-UD if by doing so the accuracy of the Activity Data Baseline may be increased.

The process of developing J-ADB-UD for each jurisdiction shall be documented in the J-ADB-UD Description Report for the purpose of validation by a Verra-contracted VVB.

### 5.3 Development of the Jurisdictional Risk Map

Until further notice, the JNR-RMT is the only risk mapping approach that can be applied for the allocation of baseline jurisdictional activity data to AUD projects. Alternative risk mapping approaches may be considered by Verra to revise and improve the JNR-RMT. Verra will therefore set up a process to periodically consider alternative risk mapping approaches submitted by Project Proponents or other stakeholders. Updated versions of the JNR-RMT may be applied for the allocation of J-ADB-UD effective as of the start of each subsequent Jurisdictional Activity Data Baseline Validity Period.

Verra will produce the Deforestation Risk Map for the J-ADB-UD Validity Period using the latest version of the JNR-RMT. For this purpose, and as defined in J-ADB-UD and the JNR-RMT, a series of three jurisdictional FCBMs must be produced for the HRP.

PPs have the option of creating FCBMs for the Project Area and the Leakage Belt for submission to and consideration by Verra. If, per the procedures defined in J-ADB-UD, FCBMs submitted by a PP produce a higher accuracy of estimating forest cover than jurisdictional FCBMs, project level maps shall be integrated into the jurisdictional FCBMs. The following rules for submission of FCBM by project proponents apply:

1. FCBMs can only be submitted for development of Deforestation Risk Maps for a particular J-ADB-UD Validity Period prior to the start of the validation process of the Deforestation Risk Map. FCBMs cannot be submitted to Verra to adjust Deforestation Risk Maps during a J-ADB-UD Validity Period.
2. Projects registered after the J-ADB-UD and the Risk Map validation process for a jurisdiction has started may optionally submit FCBMs to be considered for the generation of the AD and maps for the next Validity Period.



3. Verra will notify PPs operating within the relevant jurisdiction about the expected timelines for FCBM development and communicate the deadlines for FCBM submission. Projects will be given at least three months to produce FCBMs starting from the date of such notification.

The process of developing FCBMs for a jurisdiction shall be documented in the J-ADB-UD Description Report for the purpose of validation by a Verra-contracted VVB.

## 5.4 Jurisdictional Activity Data Baseline Allocation

Verra will use J-ADB-UD and the Deforestation Risk Map as inputs to the JNR-AT and allocate J-ADB-UD by risk class to the following areas submitted by the PP:

1. Project Area; and
2. Leakage Belt.

PPs are required to submit the validated spatial boundaries of the Project Area and the Leakage Belt to Verra for the allocation of J-ADB-UD (see 5.4.3 below). For the purpose of submitting an Allocation Request (see 3.1), unvalidated boundaries are acceptable.

It is therefore advisable that PPs contract validation in stages, requesting the VVB to validate the boundaries of the Project Area and Leakage Belt at an early stage to allow for submission to Verra and enable the generation of the Allocation Report that PPs require to calculate project baselines. At a second stage, the J-ADB-UD Allocation Report will be validated to ensure the proper application of the JNR-AT. As defined in module BL-UD, the J-ADB-UD Allocation Report produced by Verra will contain the J-ADB-UD for both the Project Area and Leakage Belt.

Allocated J-ADB-UD will only be valid until the end of the respective J-ADB-UD Validity Period, at which point the PP will be allocated, upon submission of their Allocation Request, J-ADB-UD for the subsequent Validity Period.

## 5.5 Development of the Project Description

PPs shall continue to apply approved VCS Methodologies alongside the procedures described here to quantify emission reductions and removals associated with project activities. The development of Project Descriptions shall follow the processes and procedures defined in the VCS Standard and Registration and Issuance Process with the exception that for AUD, PPs will use Verra-allocated J-ADB-UD.

# 6 TRANSPARENCY

To keep PPs duly informed, Verra will make the following public announcements:

1. Allocation Requests received.
2. Timelines for J-ADB-UD development for each jurisdiction.

3. Validation timeline for the J-ADB-UD and the Deforestation Risk Map.

Verra will make publicly available the following information:

1. Validated J-ADB-UD Description Report.
2. Validated FCBMs and Deforestation Risk Map.
3. Allocation Reports issued to projects (as part of projects' PDs).

## 7 DATA AND PARAMETERES

Per referenced methodologies, modules, and tools.

# APPENDIX 1: TECHNICAL PROCESSES FOR APPLICATION OF J-ADB-UD BL-UD

