

CLARIFICATION TO VCS PROGRAM RULES AND REQUIREMENTS

Publication date: 18 February 2025

This document provides clarifications applicable to the program document(s) referenced in the table below. Such clarifications are effective on the effective date listed in the table. Project proponents and validation/verification bodies (VVBs) must apply and interpret the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) Program documents consistent with the clarifications set out in this document.

The clarifications will be incorporated into the next issued versions of the program documents.

Correction / Clarification	Description	Document and Section Reference	Effective Date
Clarification 1	Clarification to the effective date for projects to use the <i>AFOLU Non-Permanence Risk Tool</i> , versions 4.1 and 4.2 ¹ .	<i>AFOLU Non-Permanence Risk Tool</i> , v4.2, Appendix 1 Document History	Effective immediately

1.1 Clarification 1: Updated effective date for AFOLU Non-Permanence Risk Tool

Clarification: *AFOLU Non-Permanence Risk Tool*, v4.2, Appendix 1 Document History

v4.1	29 August 2023 Corrected 25 September 2023 <u>Corrected 18 February 2025</u>	<p>Updates effective for all project requests submitted on or after 1 January 2024[*]:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Added a requirement for all projects to use the <i>AFOLU Non-Permanence Risk Assessment Calculation Tool</i> to complete the risk analysis. 2) Updated the natural risk assessment to include an analysis of projected future impacts from climate change and sea level rise. <p>Note that projects may use version 4.0 of this tool to compare their calculated risk score with a previous risk score for the purposes of determining whether the project is eligible for a time release of buffer credits and, where eligible, to calculate the release volume (see the</p>
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¹ The *AFOLU NPRT*, v4.1 was released in August 2023, and v4.2 was released shortly thereafter in October 2023

		<p><i>Registration and Issuance Process</i> for more details on buffer releases). This may <u>only</u> be done for the first eligible time release after 1 January 2024. The most recent version of this tool shall be used to calculate the buffer credits to be deposited. In all other cases, the project must adhere to the process set out in the <i>Registration and Issuance Process</i> to determine whether the project is eligible for a buffer release.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3) Added ALM-specific risk and mitigation options (throughout). 4) Introduced new withholdings for projects that have previously failed to submit a loss event report on time and projects located in countries with a history of intervention in land or resource use. 5) Modified project longevity formulas to ensure projects with longevity of less than 100 years do not receive a zero score and removed the stakeholder engagement mitigation measure (now required in the <i>VCS Standard</i>, v4.5) 6) Updated the political risk mitigation discount requirements to reflect current climate change policy. 7) Removed the ability for projects to obtain negative scores in any sub-category and eliminated the possibility of obtaining a natural risk score of zero unless natural risks are not applicable. 8) Made adaptive management plans a requirement. 9) Minor edits to text to aid readability and improve accuracy (throughout). <p><u>* Projects may continue to use the AFOLU NPRT, v4.0, where all of the following apply:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>The project requested registration on or before 29 August 2023</u> • <u>The project is requesting verification approval for a verification period that includes vintages of 2022 and earlier only</u> <p>Updates effective for all projects which request registration on or after 1 January 2024:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Extended project longevity to 40 years.
V4.2	<p>12 October 2023</p> <p><u>Corrected</u> <u>18 February</u> <u>2025</u></p>	<p>Updates effective for all project requests submitted on or after 1 January 2024[*]:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Updates to align with the new Digital Non-Permanence Risk Calculator. 2) Updates to clarify which projects are subject to the 40-year project longevity requirement, in line with the <i>Corrections and Clarifications to the VCS Rules and Requirements</i> published 25 September 2023 and incorporated above. <p><u>* Projects may continue to use the AFOLU NPRT, v4.0, where all of the following apply:</u></p>

- [The project requested registration on or before 29 August 2023](#)
- [The project is requesting verification approval for a verification period that includes vintages of 2022 and earlier only](#)

Background:

Verra has changed the grace period for projects to update to the *AFOLU Non-Permanence Risk Tool*, versions 4.1 and 4.2. Projects may use the *AFOLU NPRT*, v4.0, where 1) the project requested registration on or before 29 August 2023, and 2) the project is requesting verification approval for a verification period that includes vintages of 2022 and earlier only. Verification approval requests for verification periods that include vintages of 2023 or later are not eligible.

Projects meeting these eligibility criteria may still choose to utilize version 4.2 of the *AFOLU NPRT* to align with the Core Carbon Principles published by the Integrity Council for Voluntary Carbon Markets and to be eligible for CCP-labeled Verified Carbon Units (VCUs).

Eligible projects that wish to apply the *AFOLU NPRT*, v4.0, must follow this guidance:

- (1) For projects that have not yet submitted a verification approval request: Projects should ensure that the verification period using the *AFOLU NPRT*, v4.0 does not encompass vintages of 2023 or later. Where the audit has already been conducted for a verification period encompassing vintage years of 2022 and beyond, the project proponent and the VVB may prepare separate Monitoring Reports and Verification Reports that separate out the vintage years of 2022 and earlier, and 2023 and later with the revised verification period start and end dates. The revised reports may be based on the opinions from the original audit and based on the same template versions effective at the time of the initial verification approval request.
- (2) For projects that have already submitted a verification approval request that is under review and not yet approved: The project may withdraw the request, separate the vintage periods, and re-submit the request. The same guidance in (1) above applies.
- (3) For projects where the eligible verification approval request using version 4.2 or version 4.1 of the *AFOLU NPRT* has already been approved by Verra: The project may resubmit their Monitoring Report using version 4.0 of the *AFOLU NPRT* where the original verification period does not include vintages of 2022 or later. A VVB must verify the changes to the non-permanence risk score and buffer withholdings in a revised Verification Report. Where Verra approves the updated verification approval request, projects may submit a buffer release request to the Verra Registry following the *Registration and Issuance Process*. The Verification Review Fee would not apply.