

DIGITAL PROJECT SUBMISSION TOOL



USER GUIDE



Standards for a Sustainable Future

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1. Introduction

Welcome to the user guide for Verra's Digital Project Submission Tool, an application within the Verra Project Hub. The tool hosts project data, calculates methodology quantifications, generates project reports, and organizes project data for easy access and modification. This guide explains the primary functions of the tool, including the generation of project descriptions, monitoring reports, validation reports, and verification reports.

The purpose of this guide is to assist stakeholders with the process of creating projects digitally using the Digital Project Submission Tool. This tool aims to streamline the process of creating carbon projects by making the project submission process simpler for stakeholders.

Access the tool via the Verra Project Hub at: <https://projecthub-uat.verra.org/>. You have been provided with the sign-in credentials separately in an email.

2. Creating a Project

To create a new project, click on the project submission icon in the navigation bar and navigate to “Project Descriptions” (figure 1). Then, click “Create New Project Description” (figure 2).

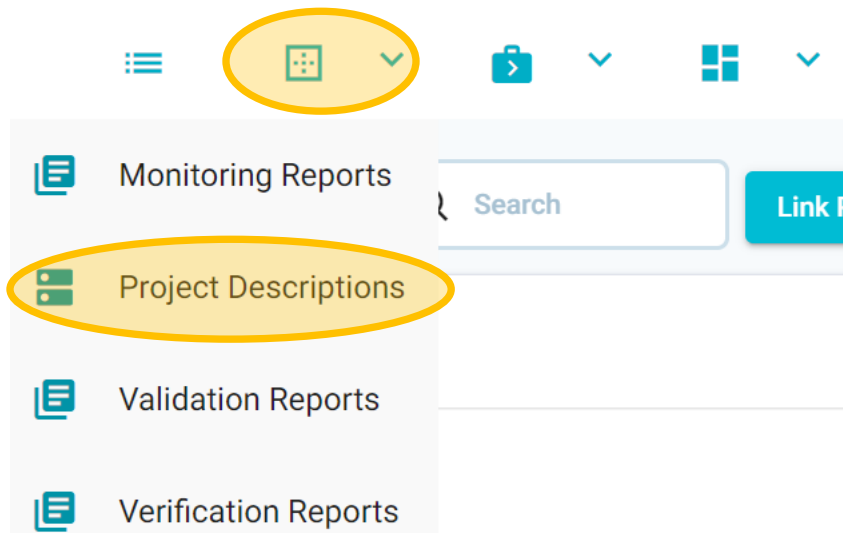


Figure 1. Project submission icon.

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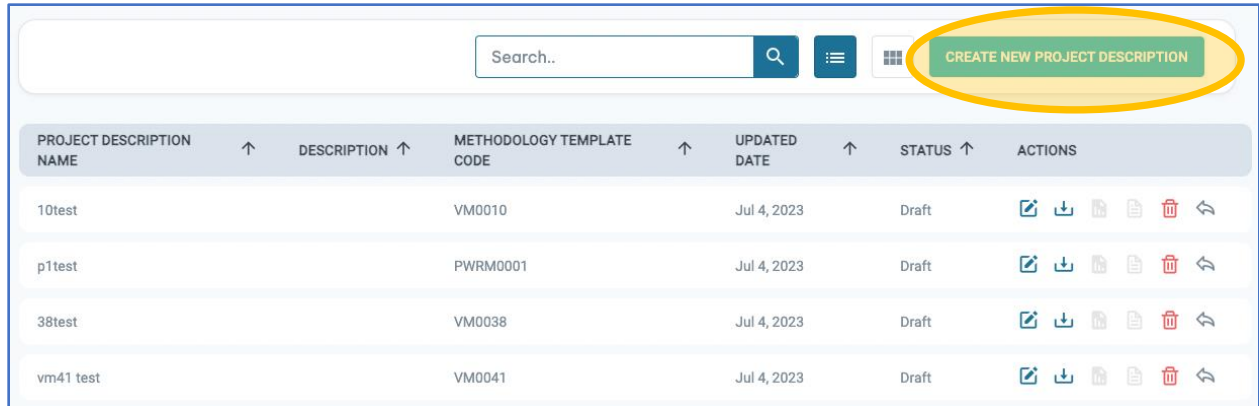


Figure 1. Create a project description.

The user will then be taken to the Methodology Selection Tool.

2.1 Methodology Selection Tool

The purpose of the Methodology Selection Tool is to help stakeholders navigate the methodologies that apply to their projects. The user will be asked a series of questions, and with each answer, the number of applicable methodologies (shown on the right side of the screen) is whittled down. The questionnaire begins with the high-level question of which program the project should be registered under and proceeds to lower-level details. Once the user has reached the end of the questionnaire, or at any intermittent point, they can click “Take me to the methodologies” (Figure 23).

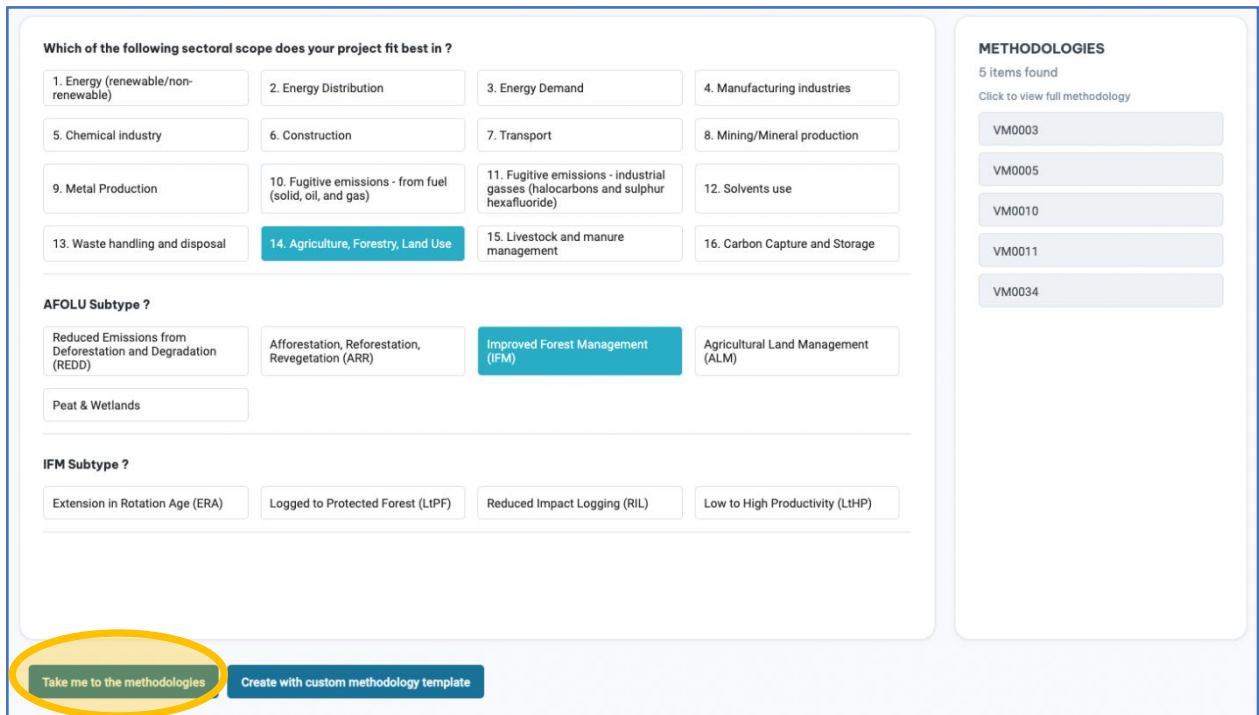


Figure 2. Methodology Selection Tool.

The user will then be shown the applicable methodologies, and they can click the checkbox of the one they find most relevant to their project. Once they have checked a methodology, the applicability criteria for that methodology will appear on the right side of the screen. If the user agrees that their project satisfies all the required applicability criteria, they may click “Confirm” and proceed. This layout is shown in Figure 3.

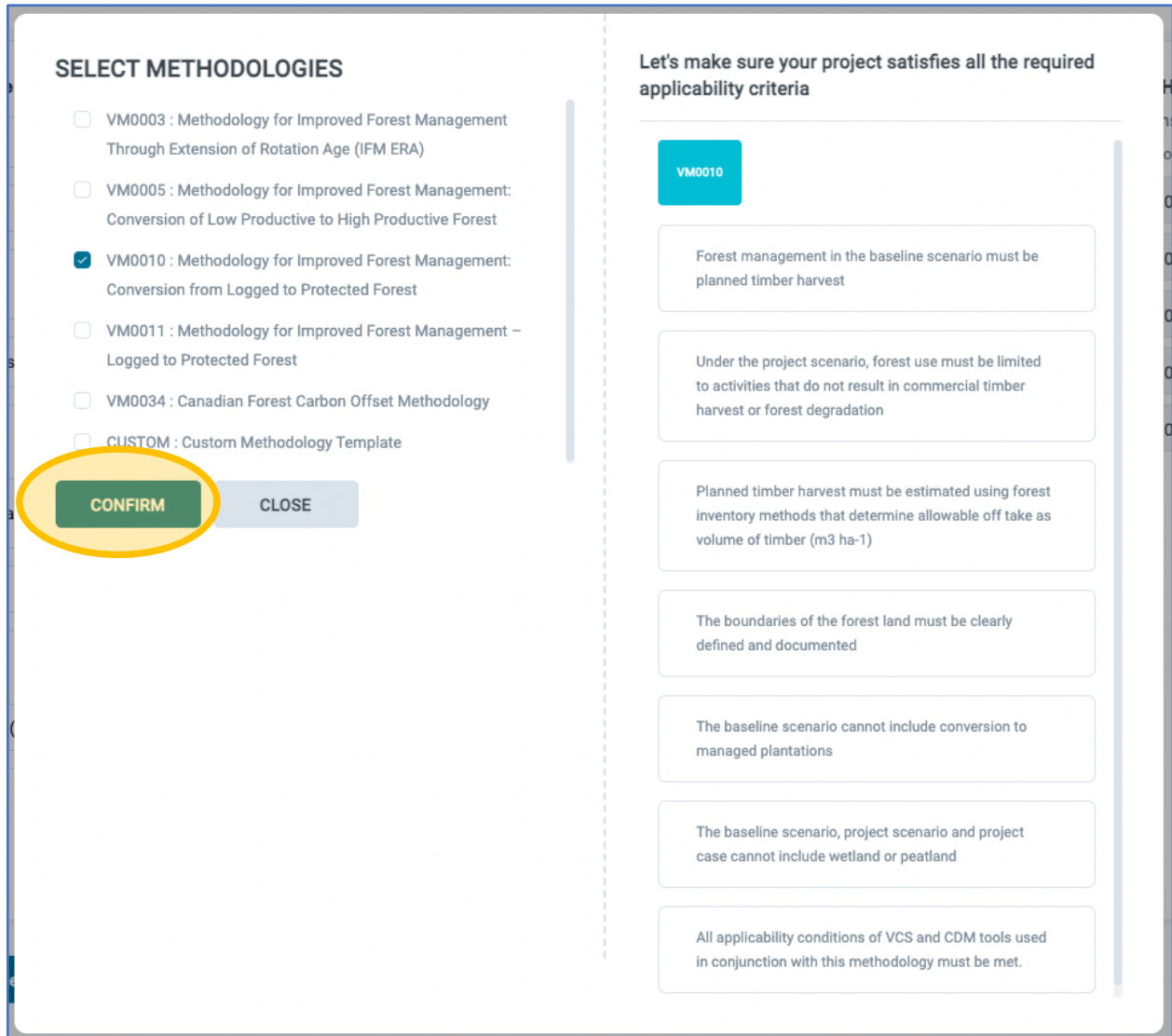


Figure 3. Applicability criteria confirmation.

For a list of methodologies that the Digital Project Submission Tool currently supports, please visit the following link: <https://verra.org/methodologies-main/#digitalized-program-methodologies->.

This list will gradually expand to include all Verra-developed methodologies. Non-Verra-native methodologies can also be supported by selecting the custom methodology option (this will not include the integrated calculation engine that performs the methodology's quantification equations).

2.2 Project Templates

After selecting a methodology and confirming applicability criteria, the user will be prompted to input a project title, project description, and choose a project description template. There are currently three available templates: the VCS Project Description v4.2 template is for projects in the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) Program, while the VCS+CCB Project Description (VCSv3.3, CCB V3.0) template is for projects jointly using the VCS Program and the Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards (CCBS) Program. CCB Project Description v3.0 is also available. Once the user inputs their project title, project description, and selects a project description template they will need to press the "Create Project" button. After the "Create Project" button is selected a project dashboard will appear with tabs representing each major section of the chosen template.

2.2.1 Project Information: VCS

If the user chooses the VCS project template, the project dashboard that appears (figure 5) displays nine tabs: General, Project Details, Safeguards, Application of Methodology, Quantification, Monitoring, ERR Table, Appendix, and Registry. Each tab represents a section in the VCS template, with the addition of ERR Table and Registry, and contains text fields that the user may fill out. There is an information button next to each field that provides guidance on what the user needs to provide. Below each field, there is also an option to upload files, which the user may utilize if they need to share supplementary information or images that cannot be entered in the text field. Note, too, that a navigation bar is available to help direct the user to different sections of the template. User can access the navigation bar by clicking on the "Table of contents"

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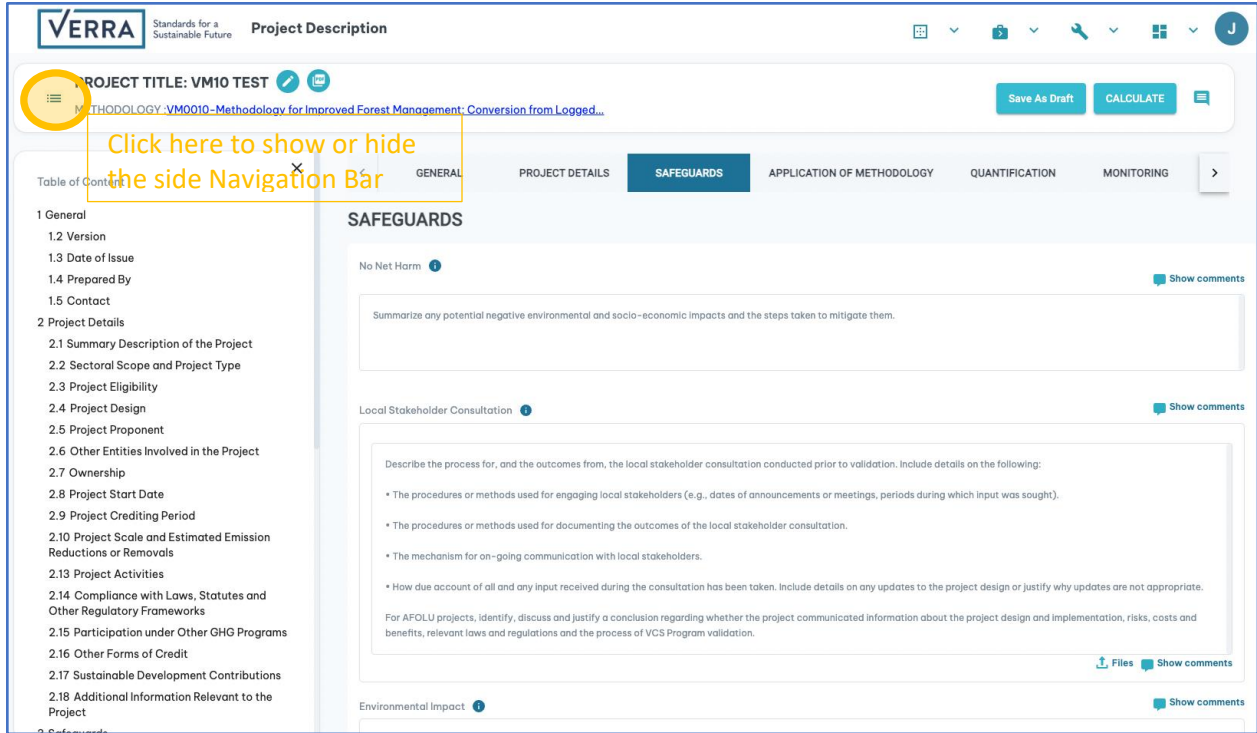


Figure 4. VCS template layout.

2.2.2 Project Information: VCS+CCB

If the user chooses the VCS+CCB project template, the project dashboard that appears (figure 6) displays a different set of nine tabs: Cover, Summary of Project Benefits, General, Climate, Community, Biodiversity, ERR Table, Appendix, and Registry. Each tab represents a section of the VCS+CCB template, with the addition of ERR Table and Registry, and contains text fields that the user may fill out. There is an information button next to each field that provides guidance on what the user needs to provide. To the right side of certain applicable fields, there is also an option to upload files, which the user may utilize if they need to share supplementary information or images that cannot be entered in the text field. The file upload option is only available on the following tabs: cover, general, climate, community, biodiversity, and appendix.

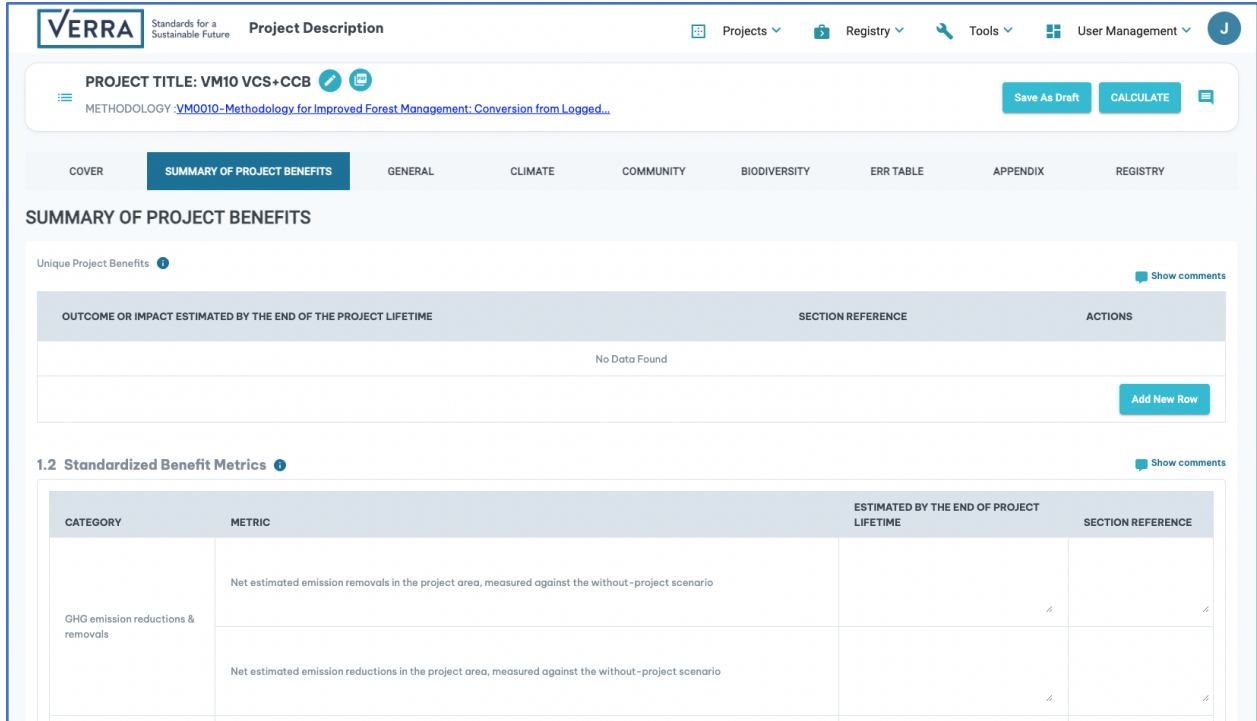


Figure 5: VCS+CCB template layout.

3. Methodology Quantification

The quantification of estimated emission reductions/removals is carried out by an internal calculation engine and requires input data from the user. In the VCS template, this data upload is contained in the Quantification and Monitoring tabs; in the VCS+CCB template, these sections are contained within the Climate tab.

3.1 Quantification

The Quantification tab guides the user through the methodology by providing a text field for each major section of the methodology. Here, users are asked to describe their procedure for quantification. In some methodologies, the user is prompted with questions where answers appear as radio buttons, checkboxes, or dropdown menus (figure 7). The user’s responses to these prompts can change the logic of the calculation engine and which parameters are displayed in the Monitoring tab—or they might change which text fields appear, depending on context. Please refer to the full methodology document for a more detailed context of each section.

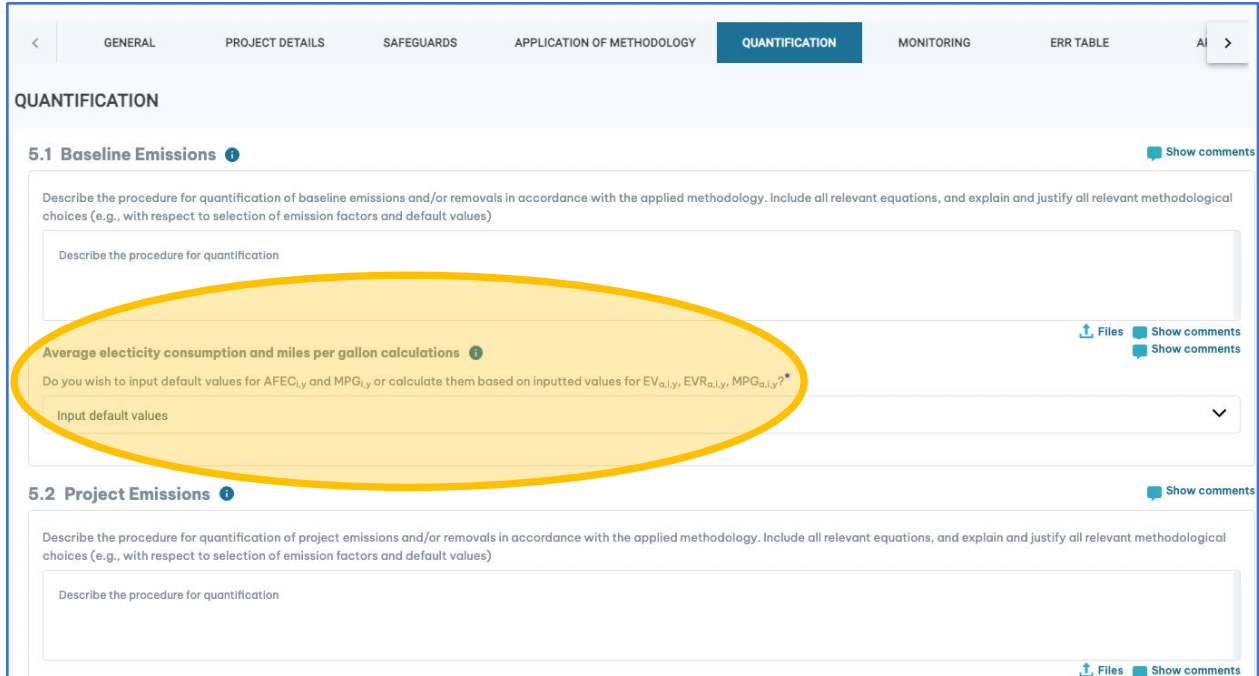


Figure 6. Methodology quantification questions.

For AFOLU projects, the parameter for the total number of credits withheld in the VCS AFOLU pooled buffer account is in the Quantification Tab, and a value needs to be entered here. The user can use the digital version of the AFOLU Non-Permanence Risk Tool for assistance with calculating this value by navigating to it through the top ribbon (Tools → Risk Assessment).

3.2 Monitoring

Within the Monitoring tab, users will see two parameters: (1) Parameters Available at Validation and (2) Data and Parameters Monitored. For each parameter, the user will need to expand the section by clicking the down arrow (Figure 7) and enter a value, source of data, purpose of data, justification of choice of data, and any other associated comments (Figure 89).

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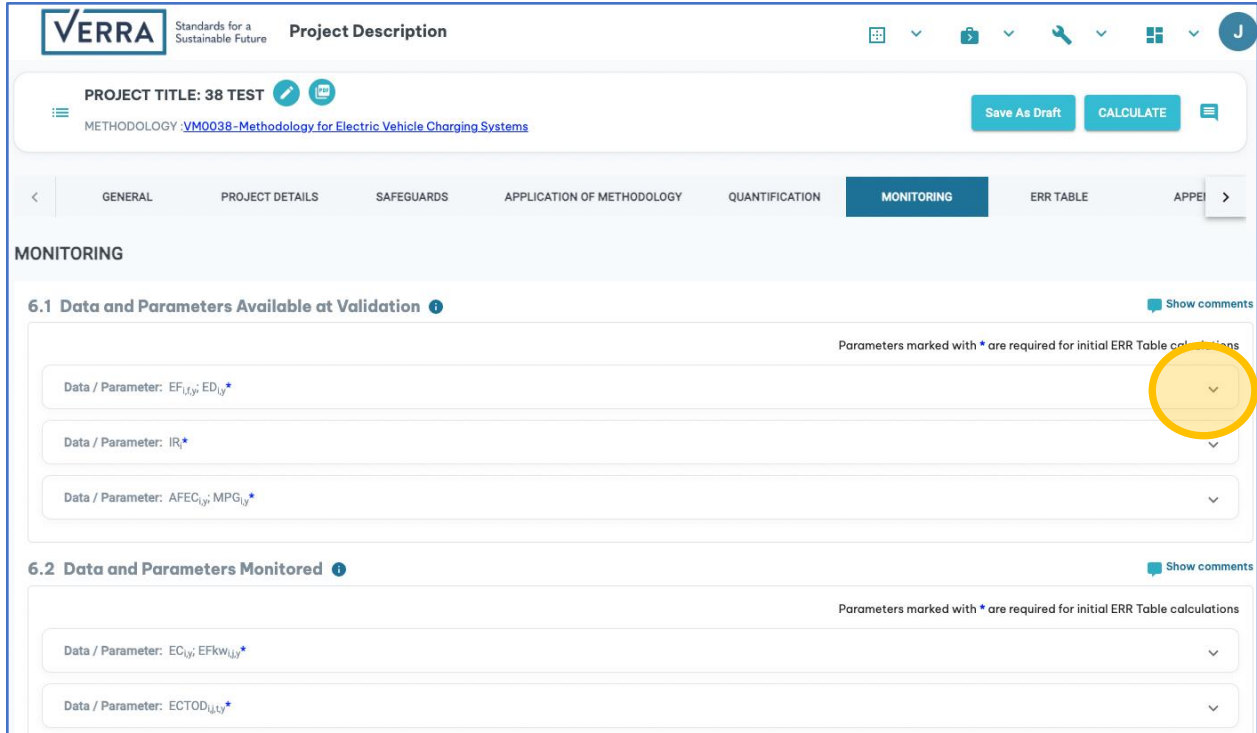


Figure 7. Parameter expansion.

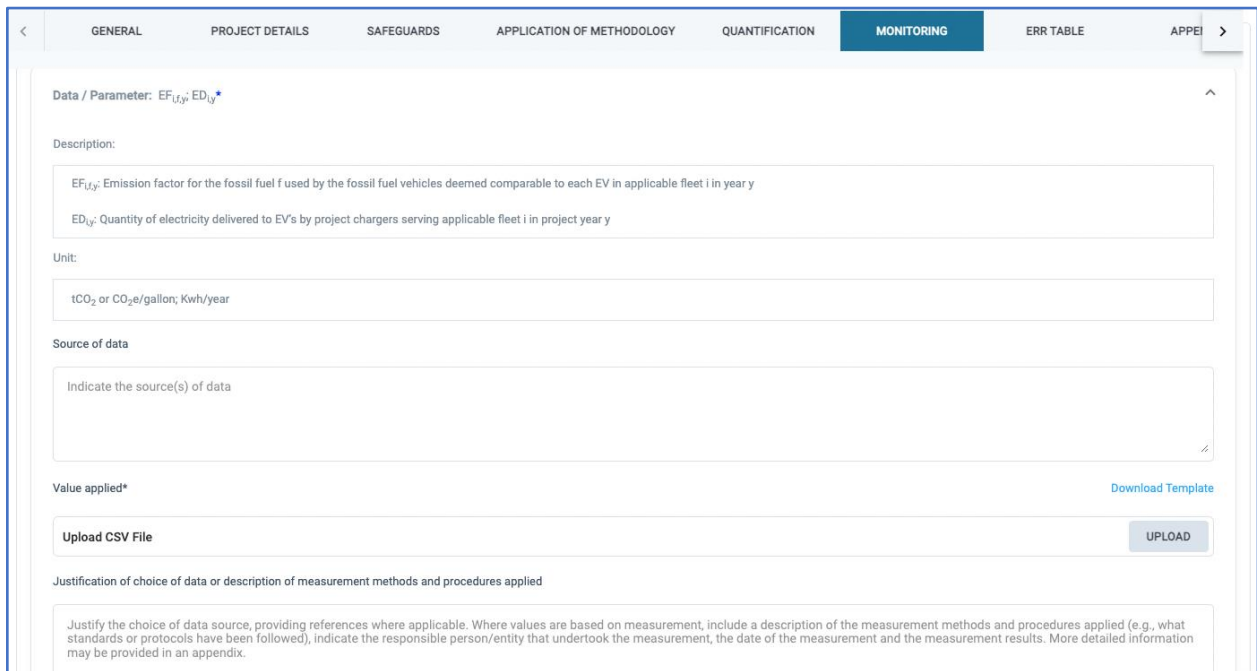


Figure 8. Parameter fields.

Parameters required for the ERR table's initial calculation are designated with an asterisk.

3.2.1 Inputting Parameter Values

When inputting parameters that contain multiple values, such as parameters that have multiple dependencies and commonly contain large datasets (e.g., forest inventory data), the user will be prompted to upload a CSV file rather than input a value in the text field. Users can click the “Download Template” button for these parameters to learn the required data layout in the CSV and use it as a template. Figure 9 Figure 10 shows an example of a parameter that requires uploading a CSV file, and Figure 10 shows an example of a populated CSV file.

Data / Parameter: $EF_{f,y}, ED_{i,y}$ *

Description:

$EF_{f,y}$: Emission factor for the fossil fuel f used by the fossil fuel vehicles deemed comparable to each EV in applicable fleet i in year y

$ED_{i,y}$: Quantity of electricity delivered to EVs by project chargers serving applicable fleet i in project year y

Unit:

tCO_2 or $CO_2e/gallon$; $Kwh/year$

Source of data

Indicate the source(s) of data

Value applied*

Upload CSV File

Download Template

UPLOAD

Figure 9. Download CSV template and upload CSV file.

| | A | B | C | D | E |
|----|-------------|--------|--------------|------|--------|
| 1 | Stratum (i) | PlotId | Species | Tree | Volume |
| 2 | 1 | 1 | white pine | t1 | 10.83 |
| 3 | 1 | 1 | red oak | t2 | 10.31 |
| 4 | 1 | 1 | white pine | t3 | 3.64 |
| 5 | 1 | 1 | red maple | t4 | 4.68 |
| 6 | 2 | 2 | white pine | t5 | 2.55 |
| 7 | 3 | 3 | hemlock | t6 | 8.06 |
| 8 | 2 | 2 | red oak | t7 | 7.12 |
| 9 | 1 | 1 | red oak | t8 | 4.19 |
| 10 | 3 | 3 | white pine | t9 | 10.87 |
| 11 | 2 | 2 | hemlock | t10 | 3.68 |
| 12 | 1 | 1 | yellow birch | t11 | 7.76 |
| 13 | 1 | 1 | red maple | t12 | 10.94 |
| 14 | 1 | 1 | white pine | t13 | 7.69 |
| 15 | 2 | 2 | red oak | t14 | 3.06 |
| 16 | 2 | 2 | white pine | t15 | 8.31 |
| 17 | 3 | 3 | hemlock | t16 | 4.65 |
| 18 | | | | | |
| 19 | | | | | |
| 20 | | | | | |

Figure 10. A CSV file populated with data.

3.2.2 Running the Calculation Engine

Once parameters have been input, the calculation engine can be run. Click “Calculate” in the upper right of the screen and wait for the calculations to be performed—this can take up to one minute. Once complete, “Calculation Complete” should appear in the upper right of the screen, and an ERR table will appear in the ERR Table tab (see section 3.2.4 The ERR Table). If any required parameters are not input, or if there is a data mismatch, an error message will appear in the top right of the screen (Figure 11).

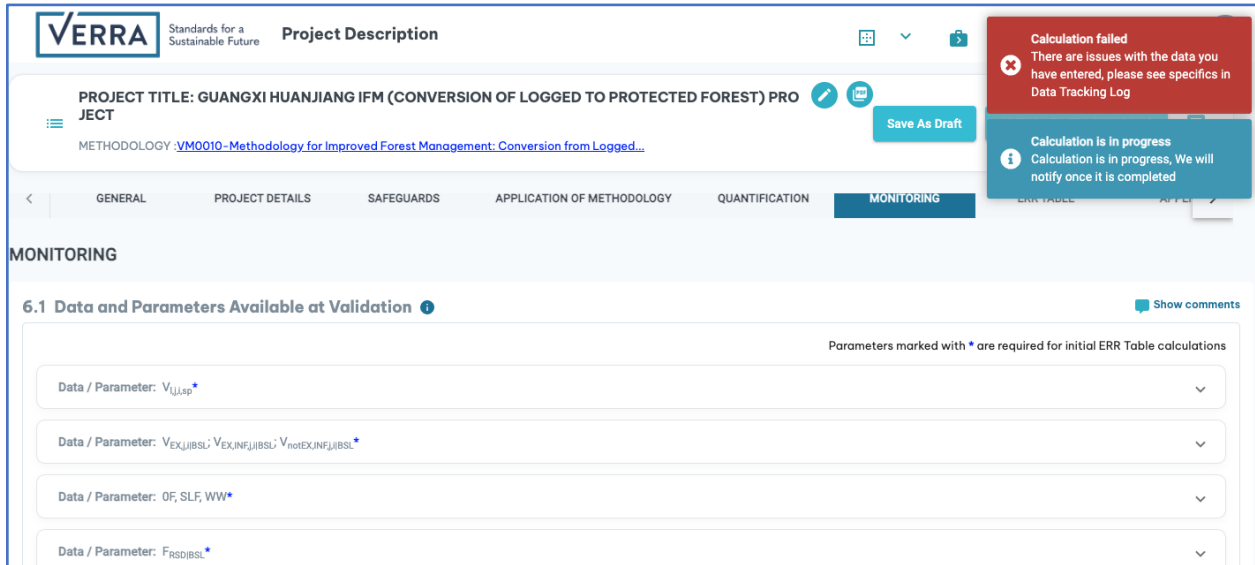


Figure 11. Calculation error message.

The error message directs the user to view the Data Tracking Log, which is a button that will appear in the top right of the screen. If the user clicks “Open Data Tracking Log,” a window listing the errors with the input data will appear. Figure 13 shows an example of a failed calculation due to a parameter with a missing value—in this case, the parameter $F_{RSD|IBSL}$ was left blank. The Data Tracking Log specifies the problem parameter, notes the error, and describes the location of the parameter.

Once the issues are resolved, a “Re-Calculate” button will appear at the top right of the Data Tracking Log. Click this to attempt the calculation again.

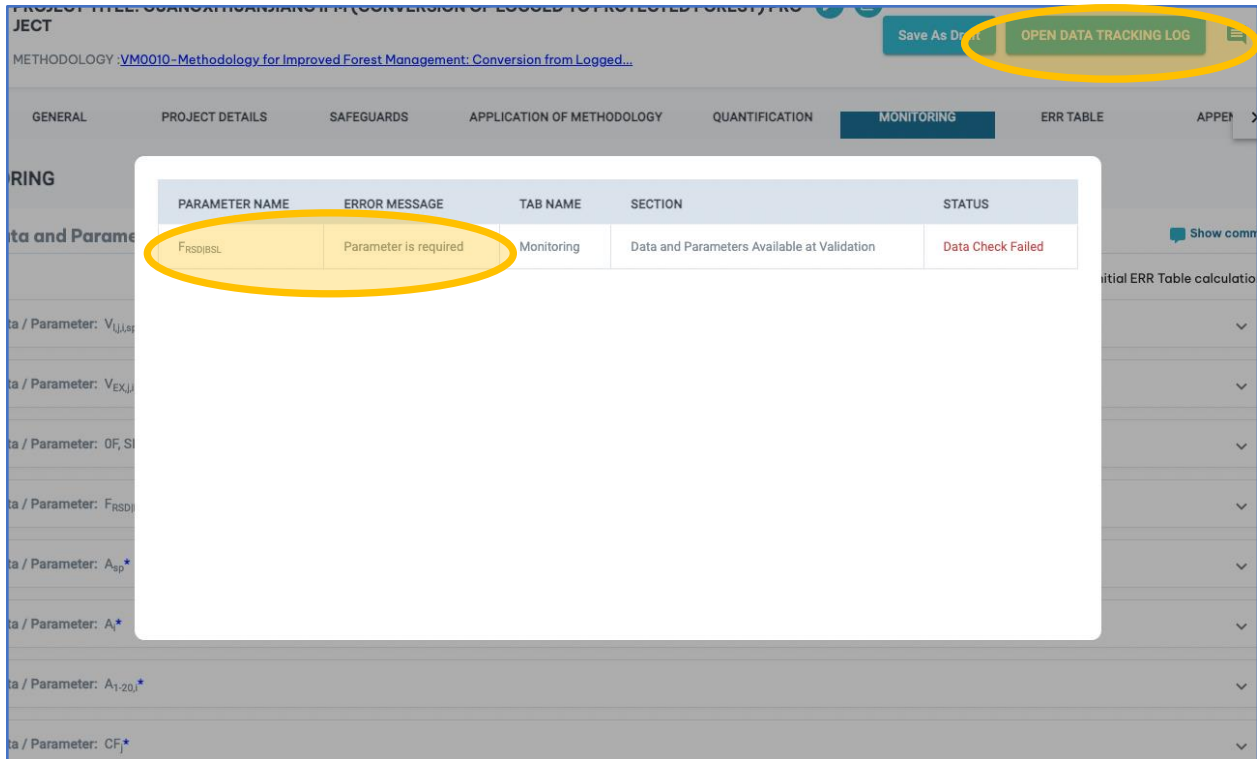


Figure 12. Data Tracking Log.

3.2.3 Common Errors with the Calculation Engine

The most common error users encounter when validating parameter values is that parameter dependencies do not match. For example, two parameters A_y and B_y both depend on year y , and if A_y includes entries for years 2022 – 2041 and B_y includes entries for years 1 – 20, a data mismatch error will occur. The years that parameters depend upon must also match those given as the crediting period, entered under the Project Details tab. All other parameter dependencies must also match for the calculation engine to run successfully.

3.2.4 The ERR Table

Before calculations are run, the ERR Table tab will resemble Figure 13. The text reads, “Once calculations are complete, the estimated annual GHG emission reductions or removals will be displayed here. To complete calculations, please input values for the required parameters under the Quantification and Monitoring tabs, and then click the Calculate button.”

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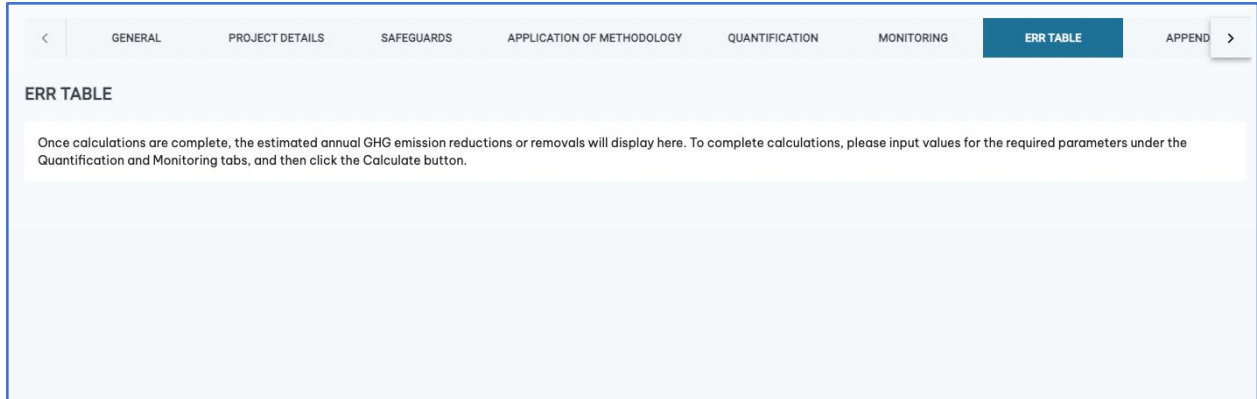


Figure 13. The ERR table before calculations are run.

Once calculations are run, the complete ERR table will appear, as shown in Figure 14. When the PDF of the report is generated, the ERR table will appear in the correct locations of the document as governed by the *VCS Project Description Template*—Section 1.10 (summary table) and Section 4.4 (full table). For clarity, in the Digital Project Submission Tool user interface, the ERR table only appears in the ERR Table tab.

| Year | Estimated baseline emissions or removals (tCO ₂ e) | Estimated project emissions or removals (tCO ₂ e) | Estimated leakage emissions (tCO ₂ e) | Estimated net GHG emission reductions or removals (tCO ₂ e) | AFOLU Pooled Buffer Account |
|-------------------------|---|--|--|--|-----------------------------|
| 01/07/2016 - 01/07/2017 | 107890 | 0 | 21578 | 107890 | 384049 |
| 01/07/2017 - 01/07/2018 | 154492 | 0 | 30898 | 154492 | 384049 |
| 01/07/2018 - 01/07/2019 | 307359 | 0 | 61471 | 307359 | 384049 |
| 01/07/2019 - 01/07/2020 | 519534 | 0 | 103906 | 519534 | 384049 |
| 01/07/2020 - 01/07/2021 | 793029 | 0 | 158605 | 793029 | 384049 |
| 01/07/2021 - 01/07/2022 | 1101503 | 0 | 220300 | 1101503 | 384049 |
| 01/07/2022 - 01/07/2023 | 1340308 | 0 | 268061 | 1340308 | 384049 |
| 01/07/2023 - 01/07/2024 | 1579113 | 0 | 315822 | 1579113 | 384049 |

Figure 14. The ERR table after calculations are complete.

4. Project Description Generation

After all text has been entered, supplementary files uploaded, parameters entered, and calculations run, a project description (PD) PDF can be generated by clicking the “PDF” button

in the top ribbon (Figure 15 16). This document displays all project information and data entered into the Digital Project Submission Tool in the style and format of a traditional VCS PD template (Figure 1617).

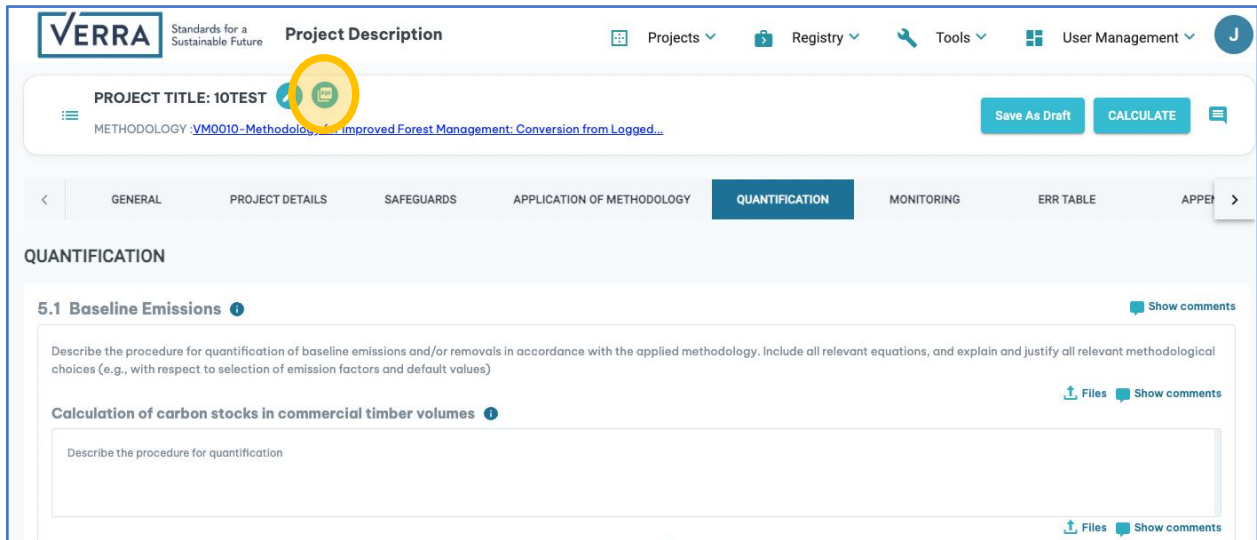


Figure 15. PD PDF generation.

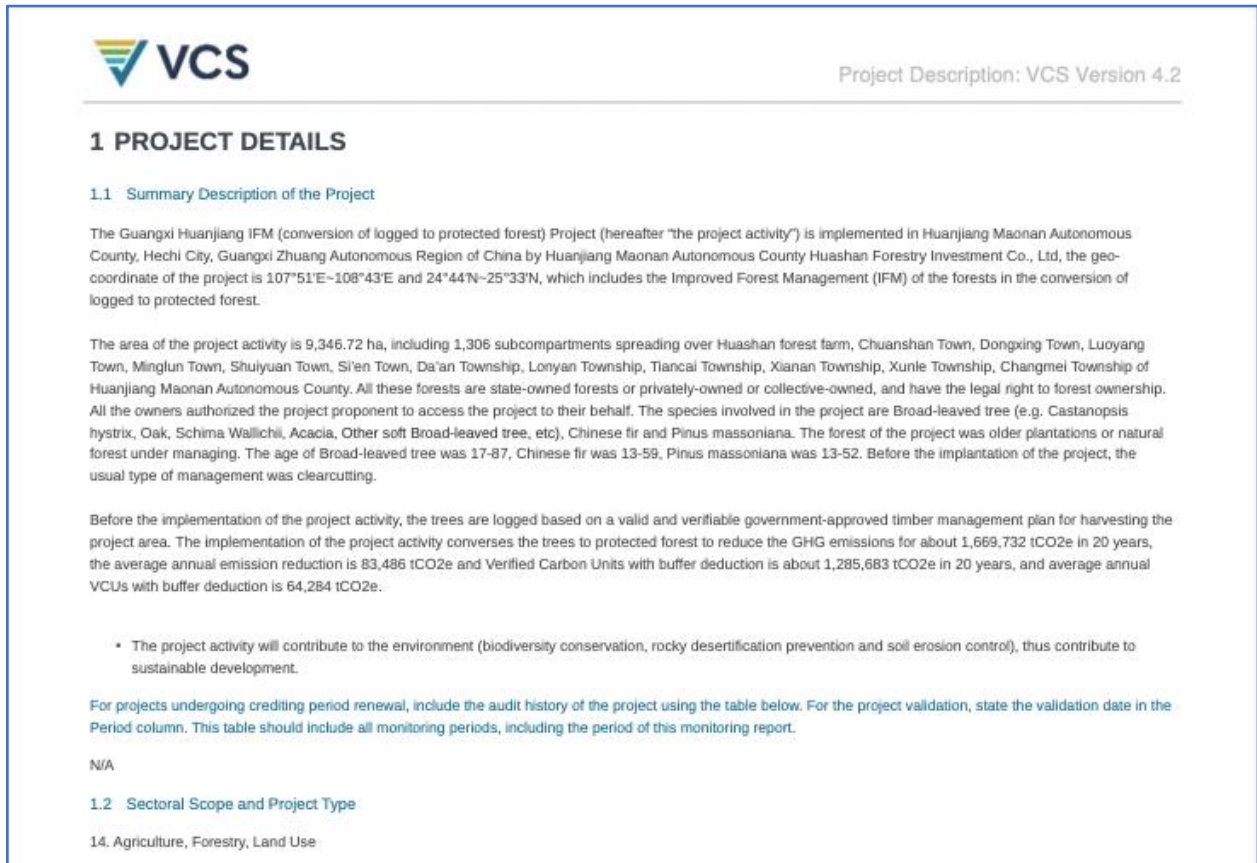


Figure 16. VCS PD example.

5. Creating a Monitoring Report

To create a monitoring report, click “Monitoring Reports” from the top ribbon and then “Create New Monitoring Report,” as seen in Figure 17 18.

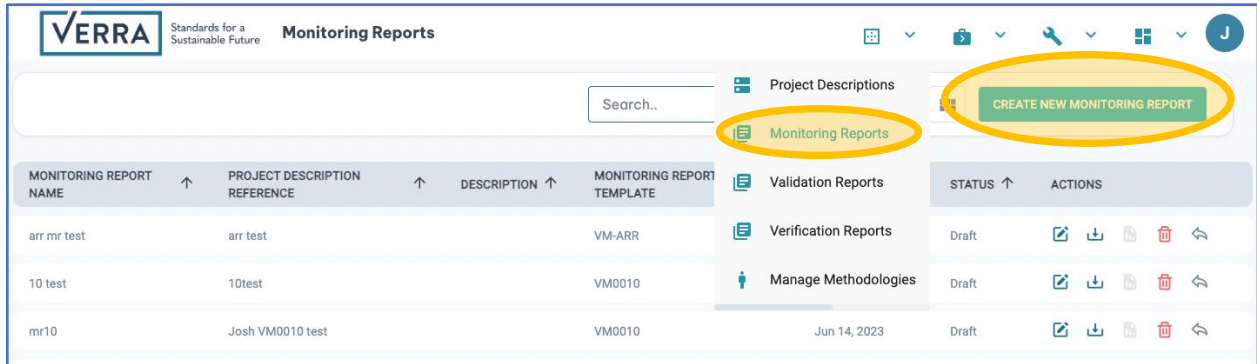


Figure 17. Create a monitoring report from the Monitoring Reports page.

Alternatively, a monitoring report can be created from the Project Description page. As Figure 18 19 shows, if a PD has been submitted, the button under the “Actions” column that creates a monitoring report will become active (the button to create a validation report will, too). Creating a monitoring report this way or directly from the Monitoring Reports page will sync all relevant information from the project description it depends on—the choice based on user preference.

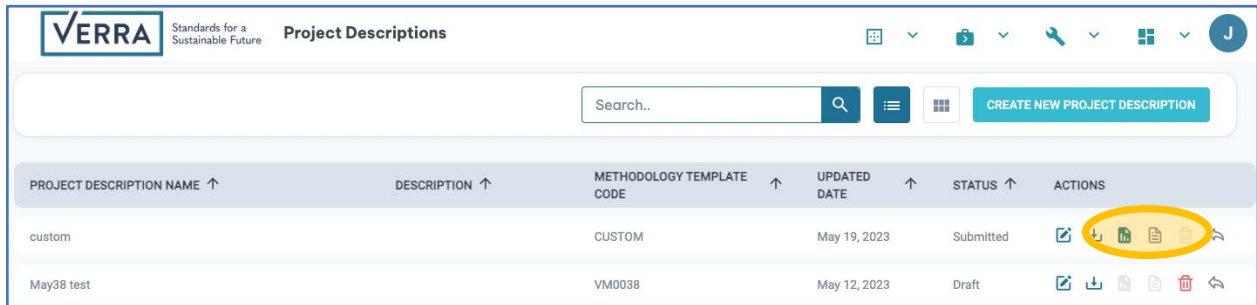


Figure 18. Creating a monitoring report from the Project Descriptions page.

Regardless of the path to initialize creating a new monitoring report, a window will appear prompting the user to input a monitoring report project reference, monitoring report name, description, and monitoring report template. There are three templates available for monitoring report. VCS Monitoring Report v4.2, VCS+CCB Monitoring Report (VCS v3.4, CCB v3.0, and CCB Monitoring Report v3.0). User need to choose the appropriate monitoring report template for their project. The first input, Monitoring Report Project Reference, links the digital project description that this new monitoring report refers to. Once the cursor is placed within this text field, a dropdown selection of the available projects will load (Figure 1920). Click the

project for which you intend to create a monitoring report, enter information in the remaining fields, and click “Create Monitoring Report.” This step is unnecessary if the monitoring report creation was initialized from the Project Description page, as a specific project description would have already been chosen.

The screenshot shows a web form titled "CREATE MONITORING REPORT". The form contains a label "Monitoring Report Project Reference*" above a search input field. A dropdown menu is open, displaying a list of project references: "VM0044 - test44", "VM0010 - test", "VM0010 - Test VCS+CCB", "VM0010 - test", and "VM0025 - VM0025 test". Below the dropdown is a "Create Monitoring Report" button and a "CLOSE" button.

Figure 19. Link monitoring report to a project description.

The components of a monitoring report are then displayed in eight tabs: General, Project Details, Safeguards, Implementation Status, Data and Parameters, Quantification, ERR Table, and Appendix. The layout is similar to creating a project description, and for instructions on inputting information and data, refer to Sections 2 and 3 of this document. Many fields will be automatically filled out as relevant data is pulled from the linked PD.

6. Creating a Validation or Verification Report

To create a validation or verification report, click on “Validation Reports” or “Verification Reports” in the lefthand sidebar and then “Create New Validation Report” or “Create New Verification Report,” as seen in Figure 2021.

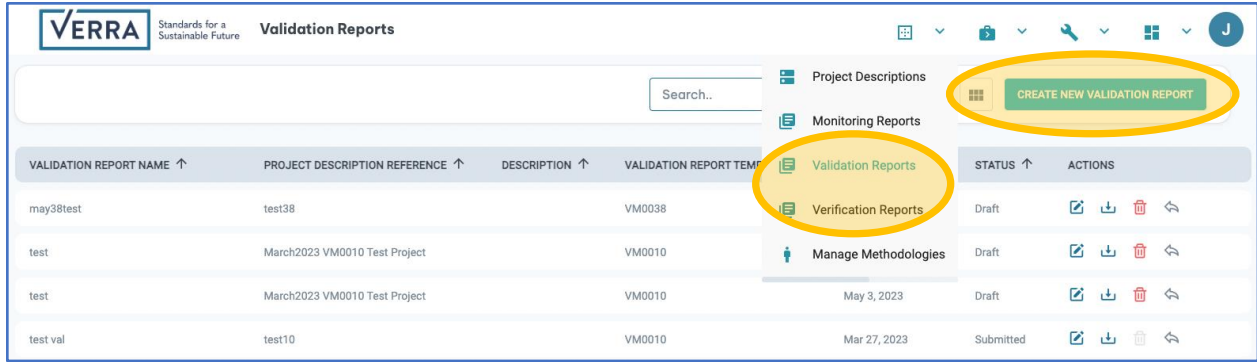


Figure 20. Create a validation or verification report.

Alternatively, a validation report can be created from the Project Description page—if a PD has been submitted, a button to create a new validation report will become active under the “Actions” column. Similarly, a verification report can be created from the Monitoring Reports page—if a monitoring report has been submitted, a button to create a new verification report will become active under the “Actions” column. Creating a validation report or verification report this way or directly from the Validation Reports or Verification Reports page will sync all relevant information from the project description or monitoring report it depends upon, respectively—the choice based on user preference.

Regardless of the path to initialize creating a new validation report or verification report, a window will appear prompting the user to input a validation/verification report project reference, validation/verification report name, and description. The function of the first input, Validation/Verification Report Project Reference, is to link the digital project to which this new validation/verification report refers. Once the cursor is placed within this text field, a dropdown selection of the available projects will load (Figure 2122). Click the project for which you intend to create a validation/verification report, enter information in the remaining fields, and click “Create Validation Report” or “Create Verification Report.”

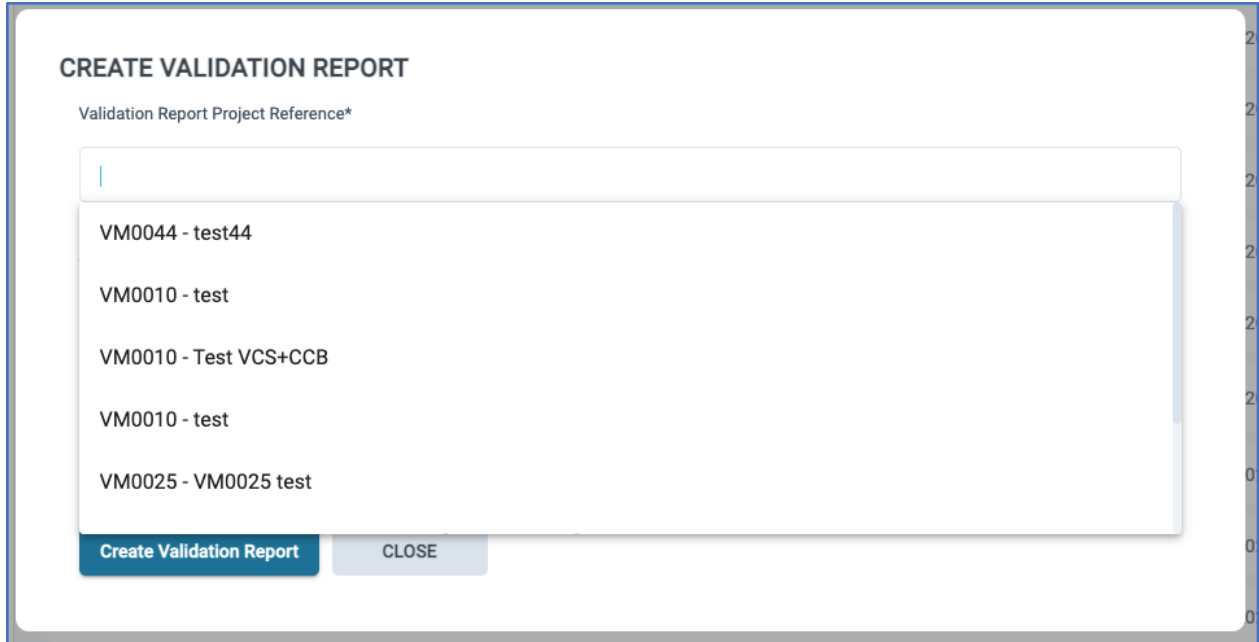


Figure 21. Link validation/verification report to a project.

The components of a validation/verification report are then displayed in six tabs: General, Introduction, Validation/Verification Process, Validation/Verification Findings, Validation/Verification Opinion, and Appendix. The layout is similar to creating a project description, and for instructions on inputting information, refer to Section 2 of this document. Many fields will be automatically filled out as relevant data is pulled from the linked digital project.