



**Jurisdictional
& Nested REDD+**

JNR Validation and Verification Process



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CONTENTS

- 1 INTRODUCTION 1**
- 2 JNR VALIDATION AND VERIFICATION PROCESS 2**
 - 2.1 Overview 2
 - 2.2 Step 1: Development Of Jurisdictional Element Documentation 3
 - 2.3 Step 2: Public Comment Period 3
 - 2.4 Step 3: Validation/Verification Body Assessment 4
 - 2.5 Step 4: Verra Review 5
- 3 VALIDATION AND VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS 10**
 - 3.1 Introduction 10
 - 3.2 General Requirements 10
 - 3.3 Technical Expertise Requirements 11
- APPENDIX I VALIDATION AND VERIFICATION WITH REDD+SES 13**
- APPENDIX II DOCUMENT HISTORY 15**

1 INTRODUCTION

The JNR validation and verification process is the process by which jurisdictional forest reference emission levels (FRELs) and jurisdictional programs (hereinafter referred to individually or collectively as *jurisdictional element(s)*) are validated, and by which jurisdictional programs are verified, under the VCS Program. Such validations and verifications consist of a public comment period hosted on the Verra registry, an independent assessment by a validation/verification body and an in-depth review by Verra.

The purpose of this document is to lay out the steps involved in the JNR validation and verification process and to provide practical guidance on the process. This document is intended for use by jurisdictional proponents, validation/verification bodies and any other parties involved in the process. Note that the *Jurisdictional and Nested REDD+ Requirements (JNR)* provide the rules and requirements for developing jurisdictional elements and the *JNR Registration and Issuance Process* sets out the process to list on the Verra registry, register jurisdictional elements and issue VCUs from jurisdictional programs.

Projects nested in jurisdictional programs following Scenario 2 or Scenario 3 or jurisdictional FRELs under Scenario 1 are subject to the process for project validation and verification set out in the *VCS Standard*, and this document (the *JNR Validation and Verification Process*) should not be used for such project validations and verifications.

This document also includes information about the joint validation and verification process for jurisdictional programs using both JNR and REDD+ Social and Environmental Standards (REDD+SES) in Appendix I.

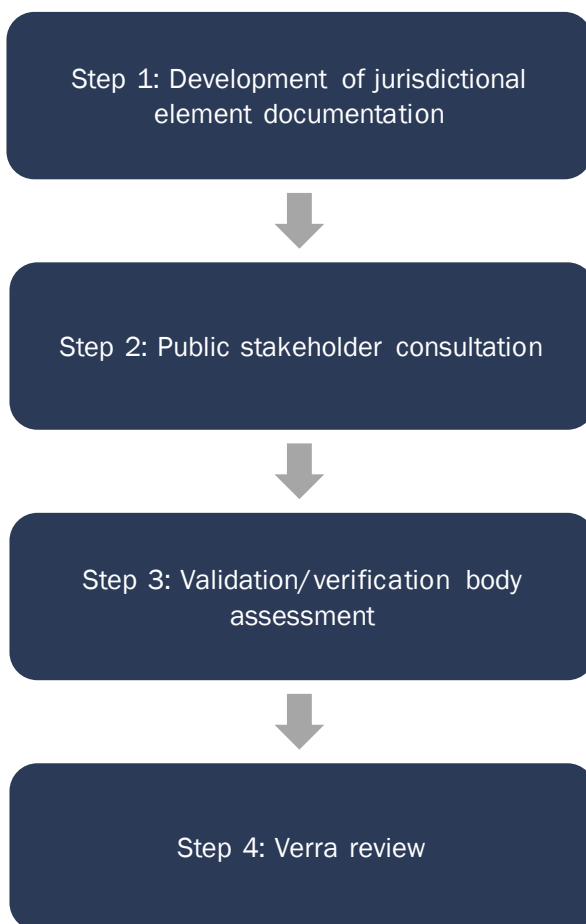
This document will be updated from time-to-time and readers shall ensure that they are using the most current version of the document.

2 JNR VALIDATION AND VERIFICATION PROCESS

2.1 Overview

Diagram 1 summarizes the JNR validation and verification process, which is further described in the sections that follow. Jurisdictional elements may undergo validation and verification separately or at the same time.

Diagram 1: Steps in the JNR Validation and Verification Process



2.2 Step 1: Development of Jurisdictional Element Documentation

- 2.2.1 The jurisdictional proponent shall prepare the jurisdictional element documentation that will be subject to the jurisdictional validation and/or verification process.
- 2.2.2 Where jurisdictions are developing a FREL only under a Scenario 1, the jurisdictional proponent shall document the FREL using the *VCS JNR FREL Description Template*.
- 2.2.3 Where jurisdictions are developing a jurisdictional program under Scenarios 2 or 3, the jurisdictional proponent shall document the program using the *VCS JNR Program Description Template*. It shall also prepare a non-permanence risk report using the *VCS JNR Non-Permanence Risk Report Template*, which may be included as an annex to the jurisdictional program description or provided as a standalone document.
- 2.2.4 Where jurisdictional programs are verifying GHG emission reductions, the jurisdictional proponent shall prepare a monitoring report using the *VCS JNR Monitoring Report Template*. It shall also prepare a non-permanence risk report using the *VCS JNR Non-Permanence Risk Report Template*, which may be included as an annex to the jurisdictional monitoring report or provided as a standalone document.
- 2.2.5 Where jurisdictions are transitioning from one Scenario to another (e.g., from a Scenario 1 to a full jurisdictional program using Scenario 2 or 3), the jurisdictional proponent shall prepare the relevant documentation described in the sections above.

2.3 Step 2: Public Comment Period

- 2.3.1 A 60-day public comment period is required for jurisdictional FRELS and jurisdictional programs undergoing validation, as well as jurisdictional programs undergoing verification.

Completeness Review

- 2.3.2 Verra reviews the documentation to ensure that it is of sufficient quality to enable its assessment under the JNR validation and verification process and may require the jurisdictional project proponent to update jurisdictional element documentation before posting it for public comment on the Verra registry as described in the *JNR Registration and Issuance Process*.
- 2.3.3 Verra checks the jurisdictional element documents submitted to ensure that each section of the program documents has been completed with appropriate information.
- 2.3.4 Verra completes the completeness review within fifteen business days.

Public Comment Period

- 2.3.5 The jurisdictional element is listed on the Verra registry for the purpose of inviting public comment. The 60-day public comment period is also announced on the Verra website. Any comments shall be submitted to Verra at secretariat@verra.org and respondents shall provide their name, organization, country and email address.

Note – respondents may request to remain anonymous, in which case Verra will not include identifying information in the public or shared versions of the comments.

- 2.3.6 At the end of the public comment period, Verra provides all and any comments (including anonymous comments) received to the jurisdictional proponent and validation/verification body and posts them on the Verra registry. The jurisdictional proponent shall take due account of such comments, which means it will need to either update the jurisdictional element documentation or demonstrate the insignificance or irrelevance of the comment. The jurisdictional proponent shall demonstrate to the validation/verification body what action it has taken.

2.4 Step 3: Validation/Verification Body Assessment

- 2.4.1 The jurisdictional proponent shall seek approval from Verra for its choice of validation/verification body by submitting a formal letter or request to secretariat@verra.org.
- 2.4.2 Such approval may be requested before, after or during Step 2 above. The validation/verification body should ensure that Verra has approved its selection before it contracts with the jurisdictional proponent.
- 2.4.3 The validation/verification body shall meet the requirements set out in Section 3.2.1, below, and shall have signed the required agreement with Verra. The Verra website maintains information on validation/verification bodies.
- 2.4.4 Verra shall contact the validation/verification body to request evidence of expertise. The validation/verification body shall submit the *JNR Technical Expertise Template* and any additional evidence of its fulfillment of the technical expertise requirements as set out in Section 3.3, below, by email to secretariat@verra.org. The validation/verification body may work with one or more outside experts in order to meet these requirements, where needed. Where outside experts are acting as technical experts to the validation and/or verification team, they shall meet all the requirements of technical experts set out in ISO 14065:2013¹ and shall not carry out the assessment alone.
- 2.4.5 Verra checks that the requirement for rotation of validation/verification bodies will be met, as set out in the VCS Program document *Registration and Issuance Process*.
- 2.4.6 Once Verra approves the validation/verification body, Verra shall send a notification to the validation/verification body and jurisdictional proponent.
- 2.4.7 The public comment period shall be completed before the validation/verification body issues its draft validation or verification report. The validation/verification body is responsible for

¹ Note that Verra will post information about the transition timeline to ISO 14065:2019 on the Verra website when it is available.

ensuring that the jurisdictional proponent has taken due account of all and any comments received during the public comment period.

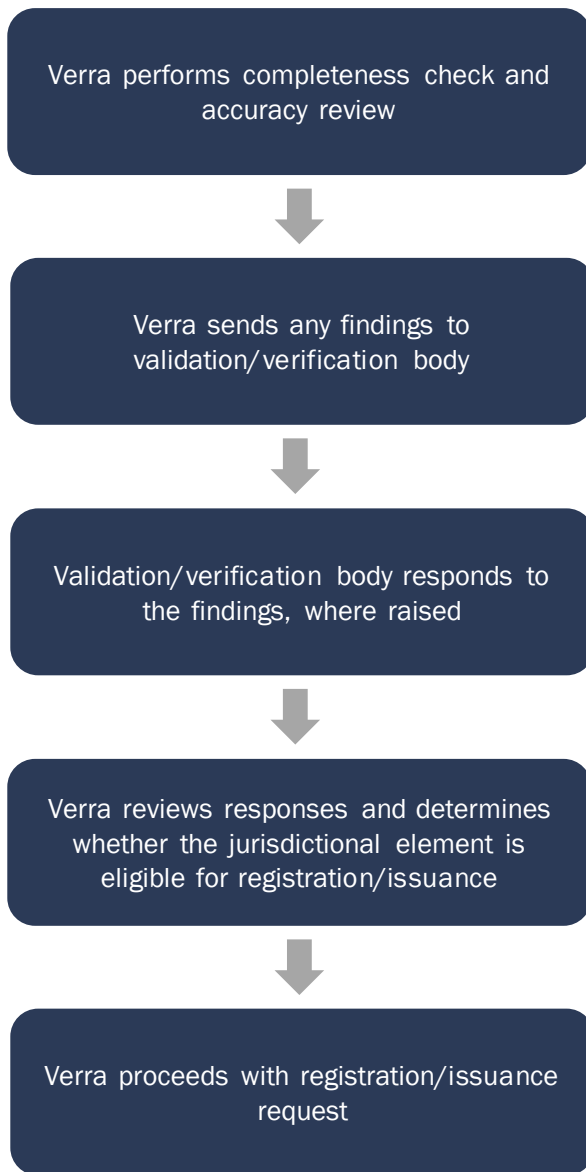
- 2.4.8 The validation/verification body shall produce a validation or verification report in accordance with the VCS Program rules and best practice and using the *VCS JNR Validation Report Template* or the *VCS JNR Verification Report Template*, as appropriate. The scope and requirements of the validation/verification body assessment are set out under Section 3.

In addition, the validation or verification report shall include:

- 1) A list of the members on the validation or verification team, including their role and a summary description of the qualifications of each member of the team indicating their expertise and experience in the sectoral scope(s) relevant to the program. Where applicable, the name of any technical experts and their role in the validation or verification shall also be stated.
- 2) Evidence of fulfilment of eligibility requirements for validation/verification bodies, as set out in Section 3.2.1.

2.5 Step 4: Verra Review

The jurisdictional element review is a two-part process consisting of a completeness check and an accuracy review of the jurisdictional element registration, VCU issuance or program crediting period renewal request, as set out in Diagram 2 below.

Diagram 2: Review of Jurisdictional Element Registration and Issuance Request


Completeness Check

2.5.1 Verra undertakes a completeness check of the jurisdictional element documentation to ensure that validation or verification has been completed within the required timeframes and the GHG emission reductions have not been issued under another GHG program. Verra checks the following:

- 1) Validations have been contracted or completed within the appropriate timeframes, in accordance with the VCS Program rules.
- 2) Validation of any nested projects have been completed within the relevant timeframes, in accordance with the VCS Program rules.

- 3) Where a lower-level jurisdiction becomes nested within a national jurisdiction, the updated lower-level FREL has been validated within the required timeframe.
- 4) Where a jurisdictional FREL has not been reassessed within the required timeframe and has expired, nested projects or lower-level jurisdictional programs that have received an extension to continue to use the allocated project baseline or lower-level jurisdictional FREL are doing so within the allowable timeframe and, where applicable, has submitted a letter from the higher-level jurisdictional proponent stating allowed the extension period.
- 5) Where VCU issuance is requested for a jurisdictional program, the GHG emission reductions presented for VCU issuance have not been issued under any other GHG program or recognized under a program which creates GHG-related environmental credits. Where the GHG emission reductions presented for VCU issuance are found to have been issued under another program, the VCU issuance request shall be rejected, and the jurisdictional program shall no longer be eligible for crediting under the VCS Program. Such checks shall be performed upon each and every VCU issuance. Where the jurisdictional element (e.g., FREL) is being presented for registration only (i.e., without VCU issuance requested), such checks need not be undertaken.

Note – GHG emission reductions from one verification period can be split between the VCS Program and another GHG program.

Accuracy Review

- 2.5.2 Verra shall undertake an accuracy review of the registration, issuance or crediting period renewal request, the scope of which is to ensure full adherence of the validation or verification to the VCS Program rules. Any findings issued as a result of the Verra review shall be addressed before the registration or issuance request can proceed. Verra determines whether it will undertake a review, completes the review and issues any findings within 25 business days.
- 2.5.3 Where no findings are raised during the accuracy review, Verra notifies the jurisdictional proponent (or its authorized representative) that the jurisdictional element registration or VCU issuance may proceed in accordance with the *JNR Registration and Issuance Process*.
- 2.5.4 Where material non-conformances are identified during the accuracy review (see the *VCS Standard* for further details on the threshold for materiality), the validation/verification body shall respond to the findings issued (e.g., corrective action requests and clarification requests) by Verra, in accordance with the following procedure:
 - 1) The validation/verification body shall provide a written response to each finding, undertake (or ensure that the jurisdictional proponent undertakes, as appropriate) revisions to the jurisdictional element documents where necessary, and submit all revised documents to Verra. Verra reviews such documents within 10 business days.
 - 2) Where the findings are addressed to the satisfaction of Verra, Verra notifies the jurisdictional proponent and validation/verification body that the jurisdictional element

registration or VCU issuance may proceed in accordance with Section 4 in the VCS Program document *JNR Registration and Issuance Process*.

- 3) Where the findings are not addressed to the satisfaction of Verra, Verra may issue a further round of findings (not to exceed a total of three rounds of findings).
 - 4) Where the findings are not addressed to the satisfaction of Verra after the third round and/or where Verra otherwise determines that the jurisdictional element has failed to demonstrate compliance with VCS Program rules, the registration and/or issuance request shall not be accepted. Verra notifies the jurisdictional proponent (or its authorized representative) and the validation/verification body of same. The findings may be addressed and the request resubmitted three months after such notification, except where the jurisdictional element is ultimately deemed by Verra to not qualify under the VCS Program.
 - 5) Where the accuracy review identifies errors or quality issues in a previous validation or verification, the procedures set out in Section 6 of the VCS Program document *JNR Registration and Issuance Process* shall apply.
 - 6) Where no response is received from the validation/verification body within 60 business days from the date the findings were issued, Verra reserves the right to assume that the jurisdictional proponent does not intend to pursue the jurisdictional element registration or VCU issuance request. Where Verra determines this to be the case, the jurisdictional element registration and VCU issuance request shall not be accepted, and Verra notifies the jurisdictional proponent (or its authorized representative) and the validation/verification body of same. The registration and/or issuance request may be resubmitted three months after such notification, except where the jurisdictional element is ultimately deemed by Verra to not qualify under the VCS Program.
- 2.5.5 Where Verra approves the validation and/or verification report, it shall notify the jurisdictional proponent and validation/verification body of same.
- 2.5.6 Where the Verra determines that the jurisdictional element has failed to comply with the VCS Program rules, Verra shall inform the jurisdictional proponent (or its authorized representative) and the validation/verification body that the jurisdictional element fails to demonstrate compliance with the VCS Program rules and is ineligible for registration or issuance, stating the reasons. Upon request by the jurisdictional proponent or its authorized representative, Verra shall return the jurisdictional element documents to the jurisdictional proponent or its authorized representative.
- 2.5.7 Nested projects may be subject to an accuracy review (undertaken by Verra, at its discretion) in accordance with the procedures set out in VCS document *Registration and Issuance Process*.

Procedure for Clarification and Facilitation by Verra

- 2.5.8 The jurisdictional proponent and/or validation/verification body may request that Verra provides clarification with respect to the VCS Program rules. Verra will consult all necessary parties before providing any clarification and will notify the jurisdictional proponent and the validation/verification body when such clarification is provided.
- 2.5.9 Where the jurisdictional proponent is unable to concur with the validation/verification body with respect to the resolution of all findings and finalization of the jurisdictional element documentation, it may request that Verra facilitates discussions between the parties to attempt to resolve the situation.

3 VALIDATION AND VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 For the purposes of this document, validation is the independent assessment of a jurisdictional element (including review of the jurisdictional FREL description or jurisdictional program description and non-permanence risk report) by a validation/verification body to determine whether the jurisdictional element complies with the VCS Program rules. Verification is the periodic ex-post independent assessment of the GHG emission reductions that have occurred as a result of the jurisdictional program during the monitoring period (including review of the jurisdictional monitoring report and non-permanence risk report) by a validation/verification body.
- 3.1.2 The validation and verification requirements set out in the *VCS Standard* apply, *mutatis mutandis*. Additional requirements with respect to validation and verification are set out in this Section 3 and shall be adhered to.

3.2 General Requirements

- 3.2.1 The jurisdictional element shall be validated and GHG emission reductions verified by a validation/verification body that meets with the following requirements:
- 1) Is accredited under sectoral scope 14; and
 - 2) Has completed at least five project validations under sectoral scope 14. Project validations can be under the VCS Program or an approved GHG program and projects shall be registered under the applicable program.
 - 3) Has completed JNR training from Verra, and the experts participating in such training remain part of the validation/verification team during the validation/verification process.
- 3.2.2 The validation report shall be accompanied by a validation representation, which shall be prepared using the *VCS JNR FREL Validation Deed of Representation Template* or *VCS JNR Program Validation Deed of Representation Template*. The verification report shall be accompanied by a verification representation, which shall be prepared using the *VCS JNR Program Verification Deed of Representation Template*. The validation/verification body shall ensure that such deeds are properly executed as a deed in accordance with applicable local laws and the organization's own constitutional documents (e.g., signature by directors or requirement of the entity's seals).

3.2.3 The verification statement shall state the quantity of GHG emission reductions generated during each calendar year of the monitoring period that have been verified, as well as any action that need be taken in respect of the jurisdictional buffer pool (in accordance with the procedures set out in the VCS Program document *JNR Registration and Issuance Process*).

3.2.4 The Verra registry displays separate vintages within one verification period.

For example, where the verification period is 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2021, the jurisdictional or project proponent would have one VCU issuance record for the 2020 VCUs and a separate VCU issuance record for the 2021 VCUs.

The monitoring report and associated verification report shall specify the number of GHG emission reductions generated in the corresponding years, including the buffer contribution and VCUs eligible for issuance. Therefore, in this case the two vintages would be 1 January 2020 – 31 December 2020 and 1 January 2021 – 30 June 2021.

3.3 Technical Expertise Requirements

3.3.1 The validation/verification team (including any technical experts) must include the following expertise for the validation and/or verification of a jurisdictional element:²

- 1) The combined education and experience of the validation/verification team (including any technical experts) shall cover all of the following topic areas:
 - a) Drivers of deforestation and degradation, and related socio-economic issues.
 - b) Development and/or assessment of REDD+ baselines and/or FRELs at the jurisdictional scale for relevant activities (i.e., deforestation, degradation and/or enhancements).
 - c) Modeling, measuring and monitoring forest carbon stocks and emissions, including remote sensing, GIS and statistical techniques.
 - d) Accounting of GHG emission reductions, including estimation of leakage emissions from relevant activities, at the jurisdictional scale.
 - e) AFOLU non-permanence risk assessments.
 - f) Institutional and legal frameworks relevant to REDD+ programs, baselines and/or FRELs, and nesting.
 - g) Policy, programmatic and/or project GHG mitigation approaches relevant to REDD+ programs.
 - h) Safeguards and benefit-sharing approaches for REDD+ programs.

² Additional expertise requirements are set out in Appendix I for jurisdictional programs that are also applying REDD+SES.

- i) Any additional relevant topic areas listed in the *VCS Standard* for AFOLU experts on REDD, IFM, WRC and/or ARR.
- 2) Be well versed in current scientific thinking and best practices associated with REDD+ program design and implementation, as well as forest carbon accounting and reporting.
- 3) Have regional expertise or experience that may be relevant to the assessment of the particular jurisdictional program or jurisdictional FREL undergoing validation or verification.
- 4) Local expertise and experience specific to the context of the jurisdictional element undergoing validation or verification, at a minimum, for the following topic areas:
 - a) Drivers of deforestation and degradation, and related socio-economic issues.
 - b) Institutional and legal frameworks.
 - c) Policy, programmatic and/or project GHG mitigation approaches.
- 5) Validation/verification bodies are required to include members or technical experts that have prior experience in Technical Assessments of FREL/FRLs and/or assessing REDD+ Technical Annexes to BURs under the UNFCCC, reviewing UNFCCC national GHG inventories, or in the development or review of FCPF Emission Reductions Program Document (ERPD), Forest Investment Programme (FIP) pilots or another jurisdictional program or jurisdictional FREL under the VCS Program or another GHG program.

APPENDIX I VALIDATION AND VERIFICATION WITH REDD+SES

This section sets out the process for validation and verification of jurisdictional programs that are using both the VCS JNR framework and the REDD+ Social and Environmental Standards (REDD+SES)³.

Jurisdictional elements using REDD+SES must also follow the full rules and requirements set out in the REDD+ Social and Environmental Standards.

Where JNR programs are validating and verifying to REDD+SES at the same time as they are validating or verifying to the JNR program, the following shall apply:

- A1.1 A 60-day public comment period is required for jurisdictional programs undergoing validation or verification to REDD+SES. The requirements set out in Section 2.3, above, shall apply and:
- 1) Where jurisdictions are developing a jurisdictional program, the jurisdictional proponent shall document the program using the *VCS JNR + REDD+SES Program Description Template*.
 - 2) Jurisdictional proponents shall make all jurisdictional program documents available and accessible to jurisdictional stakeholders. They shall also inform stakeholders how to submit comments and facilitate the submission of comments where appropriate.
- A1.2 In addition to the technical expertise required in Section 3.3, above, the validation/verification body (including any technical experts) shall include the following expertise for the validation or verification of a jurisdictional program under REDD+SES:
- 1) The combined education and experience of the validation/verification body must cover the following topic areas:
 - a) Stakeholder engagement, including of Indigenous Peoples and local communities;
 - b) Processes to ensure respect for rights to lands, resources and territories, and for obtaining Free Prior and Informed Consent;
 - c) Social and environmental impact assessment;
 - d) Equitable benefit sharing approaches for REDD+ programs;
 - 2) Be well-versed in current best practices associated with addressing and respecting REDD+ safeguards and providing information on how they have been addressed and respected;

³ See <https://www.redd-standards.org/>

- 3) Have regional expertise or experience that may be relevant to the assessment of the particular jurisdictional REDD+ program undergoing validation or verification;
- 4) Local expertise and experience specific to the context of the jurisdictional REDD+ program undergoing REDD+SES validation or verification, at a minimum, for the following topic areas:
 - a) Drivers of deforestation and degradation, and related socio-economic issues;
 - b) Institutional and legal frameworks;
 - c) Policy, programmatic and/or project GHG mitigation approaches employed in the jurisdiction;
 - d) Representing the perspective and interests of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in the jurisdiction.

APPENDIX II DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version	Date	Comment
v4.0	15 April 2021	Initial version released under VCS Version 4.
V4.1	21 December 2021	Minor update made to Section 3.2.4 to clarify how the Verra registry displays vintages by calendar year.



Standards for a Sustainable Future



**Verified Carbon
Standard**



**Jurisdictional
& Nested REDD+**



**Climate, Community
& Biodiversity Standards**



**Sustainable Development
Verified Impact Standard**



**Plastic Waste
Reduction Standard**