

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Independent Expert Review of revised VCS methodology VM0045 v1.3 *Improved Forest Management Using Dynamic Matched Baselines from National Forest Inventories*

May 12, 2026

1 INTRODUCTION

Verra is a global leader helping to tackle the world’s most intractable environmental and social challenges. As a mission-driven nonprofit organization, Verra is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving livelihoods, and protecting natural resources by working with the private and public sectors. We support climate action and sustainable development with standards programs and tools that credibly, transparently, and robustly assess environmental and social impacts and enable funding for sustaining and scaling up projects that verifiably deliver these benefits.

The [Verified Carbon Standard \(VCS\) Program](#) is our flagship program. It allows vetted projects to turn their greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions and carbon dioxide removals into tradable carbon credits called Verified Carbon Units (VCUs).

An integral component of the VCS Program is the [VCS Methodology Development and Review Process, v5.1 \(MDRP\)](#), which outlines procedures and rules for the development of new or revised VCS methodologies, modules, and tools. A key element of the rigorous process includes review by a group of independent experts to ensure the methodology or revision aligns with current scientific knowledge, research, and best practices. Independent experts review the technical rigor, accuracy, and consistency of the draft methodology as per Section 3.5 of the *MDRP, v5.1*.

2 SCOPE OF WORK

Verra is accepting proposals for independent expert reviews of the minor revision to *VM0045 Improved Forest Management Using Dynamic Matched Baselines from National Forest Inventories, v1.2*. This methodology uses a matching approach to construct a quasi-experimental design with matched pairs of treatments (project) and controls (baseline), with baseline plots sourced from existing continuously measured national or sub-national forest inventory data. Currently, *VM0045* is only applicable to projects located in the United States. This revision expands its geographical applicability by adding a new appendix to evaluate the quality and feasibility of national forest inventories (NFIs) and other datasets that could allow projects located in jurisdictions other than the United States to use this

methodology. Below are five key technical areas that should receive particular attention during the independent expert reviews of the draft VCS methodology *VM0045, v1.3*, especially the new Appendix 2 supporting expansion outside the United States:

- 1) **Scientific and statistical rigor of National Forest Inventories (NFI) eligibility requirements:** Assess whether the proposed eligibility framework for NFIs is sufficiently rigorous to ensure statistically representative, unbiased, and design-consistent donor pools across diverse international forest contexts. Particular attention should be given to:
 - Probability-based sampling requirements
 - Temporal continuity and remeasurement systems
 - Design-consistent estimators and variance procedures
 - Treatment of changes in inventory protocols over time

- 2) **Technical robustness of optional matching dataset (OMD) integration:** Evaluate whether the proposed rules for OMD appropriately balance flexibility and methodological integrity when augmenting donor pools outside the U.S. Review should focus on:
 - Harmonization and bridging procedures
 - Statistical compatibility with the underlying NFI
 - Risks of bias, pseudo-replication, or altered inference structure
 - Requirements for provenance, transparency, and independent validation
 - Whether OMDs augment rather than replace the core NFI framework

- 3) **Validity and performance of the matching framework for international application:** Assess whether the proposed matching procedures remain statistically robust and operationally feasible across jurisdictions with highly variable inventory systems and forest conditions. Particular review areas include:
 - Covariate selection and dimensionality constraints
 - Use of Mahalanobis-distance nearest-neighbor matching
 - Standardized Mean Difference (SMD) thresholds
 - Match Quality Decision Ladder procedures
 - Sensitivity of donor-pool construction to sparse or heterogeneous datasets

- 4) **Consistency of international expansion with the existing *VM0045* accounting framework:** Evaluate whether Appendix 2 preserves functional equivalence with the existing U.S.-based methodology and maintains consistency with the original *VM0045* accounting structure. The review should assess whether:
 - Dynamic baseline construction remains aligned with the existing quasi-experimental framework
 - Additionality and baseline equations are applied consistently across jurisdiction

- New international provisions alter, intentionally or unintentionally, the conservativeness or interpretation of the methodology
- 5) **Transparency, governance, and reproducibility of NFI eligibility assessments:** Review whether the proposed governance structure for approving and maintaining eligible NFIs is sufficiently transparent, reproducible, and operationally credible. Particular attention should be given to:
- First-time NFI eligibility assessments
 - Institutional attestation requirements
 - Verra’s role in maintaining approved NFI records
 - Conditions triggering reassessment
 - Documentation requirements supporting validation and verification

Verra is therefore requesting proposals for independent expert reviews (including academic experts, consultants, and validation/verification bodies [VVBs]) of the above-listed documents. The requirements for the independent expert review are set out in Sections 3.3.2 and 3.5.1–3.5.4 of the *MDRP, v5.1*.

Principal tasks and responsibilities will include at least the following:

- 1) **Review documents and issue draft Independent Expert Report.** Independent experts review the draft revision document and submit a draft Independent Expert Report issuing findings to Verra, using the [VCS Independent Expert Report Template](#), as per Section 3.5.1 in the *MDRP, v5.1*.
- 2) **Iteration with Verra to resolve independent expert findings** as per Section 3.5.3 in the *MDRP, v5.1*. Verra may arrange a meeting or series of meetings to discuss findings and how they may be clarified or resolved within the draft revision documents. Where findings identify major risks that cannot be addressed within a reasonable timeframe, the methodology is put on hold or rejected by Verra (see Section 3.5.4 in the *MDRP, v5.1*).
- 3) **Issue Independent Expert Report.** Independent experts issue to Verra a final, signed version of the Independent Expert Report, using the [VCS Independent Expert Report Template](#), as per Section 3.5.3 in the *MDRP, v5.1*.

The expected time commitment in number of working days:

Draft revision document	Review documents and issue draft of Independent Expert Report	Iterate with Verra to resolve findings	Issue Independent Expert Report	Total
Draft VM0045, v1.3	10	15	5	30

3 CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

Verra will use the following criteria for evaluating proposals:

- 1) Relevant expertise in forest inventories and statistical methods, including:
 - a) Knowledge of National Forest Inventories (NFIs), probability-based sampling, and permanent plot systems
 - b) Experience with matching methods, donor-pool construction, and statistical inference
 - c) Demonstrated through scientific publications, technical reports, or project experience
- 2) Relevant expertise in forest carbon accounting and IFM methodologies, including:
 - a) Knowledge of forest carbon accounting, dynamic baselines, and uncertainty assessment
 - b) Familiarity with AFOLU methodologies and IPCC guidance
 - c) Demonstrated through methodology development, review, or implementation experience
- 3) Experience evaluating heterogeneous datasets and harmonization approaches, including:
 - a) Experience assessing compatibility and quality of inventory and supplementary datasets
 - b) Familiarity with dataset harmonization, sensitivity analysis, and validation approaches
 - c) Demonstrated through applied technical or scientific work
- 4) Capacity for independent and critical technical review, including:
 - a) Ability to identify methodological strengths, limitations, and implementation risks
 - b) Ability to provide practical recommendations while maintaining scientific rigor
 - c) Demonstrated through prior expert review, advisory, or scientific leadership roles
- 5) Experience with VCS project development, GHG accounting, or VCS methodology development, demonstrated by relevant experience
- 6) Cost, including making sure that the proposed level of effort is consistent with the outcomes
- 7) Availability to comply with the proposed timeline
- 8) Ability to perform an independent review, without risk of bias that could impact the integrity of the methodology

4 MILESTONES, DELIVERABLES, AND TIMELINE

The independent expert review is expected to start in parallel with the public consultation.

The main deliverables and expected timeline resulting from this assignment are as follows:

Deliverable	Timeline
1) Review documents and issue draft Independent Expert Report	June 15, 2026 – June 26, 2026 (10 days)

2) Iterate with Verra to resolve findings	June 29, 2026 – July 17, 2026 (15 days)
3) Issue Independent Expert Report	July 20 – July 24, 2026 (5 days)

5 RESPONSES TO THE RFP

Respondents are requested to submit their proposals as follows:

- Completed Proposal Response Template, provided in Annex 1 and also available as a Word document, that indicates the respondent’s qualifications, experience, rate, and ability to conduct the review
- Completed Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form, provided in Annex 2 and also available as a Word document, that indicates the respondent’s ability to perform an independent review without risk of bias
- Separately appended resumes/CVs (not to exceed two pages each)

All application materials submitted to Verra will be kept confidential.

Proposals must be submitted by email to methodologies@verra.org, with the methodology development ID# M0289 in the subject line, by close of business on 29 May 2026. Verra will likely ask the top candidates clarifying questions about their proposal. Verra plans to finalize selection of the consultant by 10 June 2026 with the work to begin as soon as possible after then.

Legal Nature of RFP

This RFP is an invitation for proposals, and Verra is under no legal obligation to accept any proposal nor proceed with the RFP. Verra reserves the right to amend the requirements at any time.

Annex 1 – Proposal Response Template

Evaluation Criteria	Response
<p>#1) Relevant expertise in forest inventories and statistical methods</p> <p>Please list relevant scientific publications, reports, and project experience.</p>	
<p>#2) Relevant expertise in forest carbon accounting and IFM methodologies.</p>	
<p>#3: Experience evaluating heterogeneous datasets and harmonization approaches.</p>	
<p>#4: Capacity for independent and critical technical review.</p>	
<p>#5: Experience with VCS project development, GHG accounting, or VCS methodology development, demonstrated by relevant experience</p>	
<p>#6: Cost, including making sure that the proposed level of effort is consistent with the outcomes</p>	
<p>#7: Availability to comply with the proposed timeline</p>	
<p>#8: Ability to perform an independent review, without risk of bias that could impact the integrity of the methodology.</p>	<p>Please complete (sign and PDF) the Conflict of Disclosure Form provided in Annex 2.</p>

Annex 2 – Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form

Conflict of Interest Disclosure
Methodology Reviewers

Name: (of collaborator)	Position/Role: (of collaborator)
Organization: (of collaborator)	Methodology: M0289 - Minor Revision to VM0045 Methodology for Improved Forest Management Using Dynamic Matched Baselines from National Forest Inventories, v1.2

Instructions

Conflict of Interest (“COI”):

A COI is a situation in which a personal interest interferes with or is perceived to interfere with your ability to carry out your responsibilities in an impartial, unbiased, and objective manner. There are three categories of COIs - potential, perceived, or actual. Each category could potentially pose risks for Verra, your relationship with our organization, the integrity of the consultancy and the resulting methodology, and your personal and professional reputation.

In undertaking your review responsibilities, you have an ongoing duty to be transparent and are required to disclose any potential, perceived, or actual conflicts of interest within five (5) business days of being aware of the situation. When in doubt, please make a disclosure.

Disclosure

1. Do you have any affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity that develops projects under the proposed methodology? Yes (Verra will contact you regarding next steps) No
2. Do you have interests, financial,* personal,† or otherwise, related to project development (interests that concern the broader support of climate mitigation are not required to be disclosed). Yes (Verra will contact you regarding next steps) No

If you answered “Yes” to #1 or #2, or if you have a situation that is different from them, please provide details in the space below. Please include names of organizations, activities, and relevant relationships.

*Financial interests arise when the reviewer or their immediate relative has been or is currently engaged in discussions to have, directly or indirectly, through business or investment, an ownership or investment interest in any project development.

† Personal interests arise when the reviewer or their immediate relative obtains an advantage, profit, right, or share or may benefit in any manner from the project development.

I have declared all relevant interests on this form and will continue to raise relevant interests as and when they arise.

Signature

Date