REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

VCS Tool Development: Remotely Sensed Forest Biomass Validation Tool

13 November 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.

Verra and its Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) Program are working to transform the way forest conservation, management, and restoration are addressed in the Voluntary Carbon Market (VCM). In recent years, new VCS carbon accounting methodologies have introduced innovative approaches that increase and ensure integrity and accuracy in estimating carbon credits generated from afforestation, reforestation, and restoration (ARR), improved for forest management (IFM), and reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD).

A remote sensing-based biomass estimation validation tool (RSBEV Tool) is needed for use across Verra's forest carbon methodologies to enable a common framework for using remote sensing approaches to estimate biomass and biomass change. Developing the RSBEV tool is a priority as it has the potential to reduce credit issuance timelines, while increasing scalability, consistency, transparency, and credit integrity across the portfolio.

The tool will enable project proponents and data service providers to use remote sensing-based estimates of biomass and biomass change where those estimates are demonstrated to meet the performance requirements specified in the tool. It will define the evidence an estimate must provide, the reference data needed to test it, how uncertainty is quantified, and deducted, and how VVBs and Verra reviewers verify the result.

Per section 2.1 of the *VCS Methodology Development and Review Process, v5.1* (*MDRP*), **Verra invites proposals from individual consultants or organizations with expert remote sensing and biomass capabilities to support development of the tool as the lead technical contributor completing the scope of work below.**

The selected service provider will collaborate with Verra's Forest Carbon team and external experts to ensure that the final product can be used to validate the use of existing biomass estimation products across forest carbon activities.

The tool will define the minimum requirements needed to validate remote sensing-based estimates of biomass and biomass change and translate estimation performance into conservative crediting outcomes.

Table 1. Components that must be addressed by RSBEV tool

Component	Purpose
Accuracy and bias thresholds	Define the minimum statistical performance an estimate must meet.
Reference data specifications	Identify field data requirements, including plot-level data needs, placement, resolution, and independence criteria.
Validation tests	Specify how estimates are compared with *in situ* field data and how tests are passed or failed.
Uncertainty quantification	Translate model performance, data limitations, and spatial variation into spatially explicit uncertainty.
Uncertainty deductions	Apply conservative deductions that scale with uncertainty and protect against over-crediting.
Technology-agnostic provider review	Allow data service providers to retain proprietary methods while requiring standardized outputs and evidence.
VVB verification procedures	Give VVBs a clear checklist for evaluating inputs, validation results, uncertainty treatment, and claims made in monitoring reports.

2 SCOPE OF WORK

Development of the tool will occur in three phases. The phases below describe the overall development roadmap.

Phase 1: Define minimum viable product

Focus: Build draft architecture, define accuracy and uncertainty thresholds

- Develop minimum viable requirements for validation datasets, including plot count, plot placement, and whether project-only plots are sufficient in specific methodology contexts.
- Develop minimum viable requirements for remotely sensed biomass products, including spatial/temporal resolution, quantization/scale requirements, etc.
- Use input from Verra's Program Management Department to assess approaches used by projects to date, and how they might contribute to the tool.
- Use input from public comments and expert input from IFM for fire-adapted forests methodology (M0159) to test core tool concepts.

- Draft the statistical validation tests and conservative uncertainty deduction approach.
- Map how the tool integrates into Verra's forest carbon methodologies, e.g. VM0047, VM0045, VM0048, M0159, and future methodology updates.
- Identify data providers and other organizations to partner on tool conceptualization, development, and/or piloting and solicit expert feedback on tool design.
- Meet with Verra's Forest Carbon team on a bi-weekly basis to share updates and align on technical specifications.
- Prepare and present draft RSBEV Tool with Verra's external Forest Carbon Working Group members to request feedback.

Deliverable: Draft RSBEV Tool architecture and initial data requirements

Phase 2: Develop draft tool for public comment & expert review

Focus: Develop the validation approach and prepare public consultation materials

- Draft tool based on requirements established in Phase 1 and address validation approach, data requirements, and verification procedures.
- Identify approach needed for specific activities (ARR, IFM, REDD) and determine how approach can be generalized and applied across activities and corresponding methodologies.
- Conduct validation tests.
    - Engage data service providers or estimation approaches.
- Prepare and present results from validation testing to demonstrate RSBEV Tool feasibility to Verra and external Forest Carbon Working Group.
- Prepare a public comment package, with methodology integration pathways, including assessment of any necessary revisions to existing methodologies.
- Publish draft tool for comment.
- Submit tool for expert review.

Deliverable: Draft tool for public comment

Phase 3: Finalize tool

Focus: Tool published for use by project proponents

- Address comments received during public comment period.
- Address comments received from expert review.
- Publish final tool.

Deliverable: Final published tool

3 CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

Verra will use the following criteria for evaluating proposals:

1) Relevant background, demonstrated by experience and record of scientific publications and reports. Critical areas include:
    - Expertise in remote sensing and its use in biomass estimation
    - Depth of knowledge of forest carbon standards, ideally including knowledge of VCS, and Verra's REDD+, IFM, and ARR methodologies
    - Experience developing similar tools or related products.
2) Appropriateness and viability of proposed approach, demonstrating ability to address components described in Table 1 and phases presented in the Scope of Work.
3) Cost, ensuring that the proposed level of effort is consistent with the outcomes.
4) Ability to comply with or exceed the proposed timeline.

4 MILESTONES, DELIVERABLES, AND TIMELINE

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

Milestone	Estimated Timeline
Deliverable 1: Draft RSBEV Tool architecture and initial data requirements	January – February 2027
Review with Verra and adjust as needed	March 2027
Deliverable 2: Draft tool for public comment & expert review	April – July 2027
Review with Verra and adjust as needed	August 2027
Verra publishes draft for public consultation (Step 4 of MDRP)	September 2027
Draft undergoes independent expert review (Step 5 of MDRP)	September 2027
Address public comments and expert review	October 2027
Deliverable 3: Final published tool	November 2027

5 RESPONSES TO THE RFP

Respondents are requested to submit their proposals as follows:

- A proposal describing the technical approach to the Scope of Services and Deliverables, relevant experience developing comparable products or tools, the proposed personnel and their roles, a delivery schedule mapped to the three phases, and proposed cost. Please use the sections as provided in Annex 1.

- Completed Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form, provided in Annex 2 and also available as a Word document, which 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# M0498 in the subject line, by close of business on 4 December 2026. Verra may ask the top candidates clarifying questions about their proposal. Verra plans to finalize selection of the consultant by 18 December 2026 with the work to begin in January.

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 Sections

Note that proposals must not exceed 8 pages, excluding CVs.

- **Section 1: Relevant background and personnel** (2 pages)
    - Experience with remote sensing and biomass estimation
    - Knowledge of forest carbon standards
    - Experience developing similar tool or products.
    - Include reference to relevant past work, scientific publications, and reports.
- **Section 2: Proposed approach** (2-4 pages)
    - Describe how tool will be developed to address the components in Table 1
- **Section 3: Cost** (<1 page)
- **Section 4**: **Work plan** (1 pages)
    - Overview of how work will be accomplished in 10-month time frame.
- **Annex**: CVs for key personnel (2 pages for each CV)

Confidential

Conflict of Interest Disclosure
Tool Developer

Name: (of collaborator)	**Position/Role**: (of collaborator)
Organization: (of collaborator)	**Tool: M0498** Remote Sensing Forest Biomass Validation Tool

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