



# Verified Carbon Standard

A VERRA STANDARD

## Program Definitions

This is not the current version of this VCS Program document. The current version is at:  
<https://verra.org/programs/verified-carbon-standard/vcs-program-details/#rules-and-requirements>



# ABOUT VERRA

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Verra sets the world's leading standards for climate action and sustainable development. We build standards for activities as diverse as reducing deforestation, to improving agricultural practices, to addressing plastic waste, and to achieving gender equality. We manage programs to certify that these activities achieve measurable high-integrity outcomes. And we work with governments, businesses, and civil society to advance the use of these standards, including through the development of markets. Everything we do is in service of increasingly ambitious climate and sustainable development goals – and an accelerated transition to a sustainable future.

Verra's certification programs include the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) Program and its Jurisdictional and Nested REDD+ (JNR) framework, the Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards (CCBS) Program, the Sustainable Development Verified Impact Standard (SD VISTA) Program, and the Plastic Waste Reduction Program.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

This document provides the definitions for terms used in the VCS Program documents. In addition, the definitions set out in *ISO 14064-2*, *ISO 14064-3*, and *ISO 14065* shall apply to the VCS Program. Note that defined terms in the VCS Program documents, in common with ISO convention, are used without capital first letters. Section 3 lists acronyms used in the VCS Program documents.

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

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## 2 DEFINITIONS

### Aboveground Biomass

Biomass above the soil, including the stem, stump, branches, bark, seeds, and foliage

### Accession Representation

- The deed issued by the project proponent, and an acceding entity, made in respect of an acceding entity joining a project as project proponent, and which is prepared using the *VCS Deed of Accession in Respect of Registration Deed of Representation Template*; or
- The deed issued by the jurisdictional proponent, and an acceding entity, made in respect of an acceding entity joining a jurisdictional baseline or program as jurisdictional proponent, and which is prepared using the *VCS Deed of Accession in Respect of JNR Baseline Registration Deed of Representation Template* or the *VCS Deed of Accession in Respect of JNR Program Registration Deed of Representation Template*, respectively

### Activity Method

A methodological approach that determines additionality for a given class of project activity in accordance with the VCS Program rules

### Afforestation

The direct human-induced conversion of land that has not been forested for a period of at least 50 years to forested land through planting, seeding, and/or the human-induced promotion of natural seed sources

### Afforestation, Reforestation, and Revegetation (ARR)

Activities that increase carbon stocks in woody biomass (and in some cases soils) by establishing, increasing, and/or restoring vegetative cover through planting, sowing, and/or the human-assisted natural regeneration of woody vegetation

### AFOLU Pooled Buffer Account

The account in the Verra Registry containing non-tradable AFOLU buffer credits for covering the risk of unforeseen losses in carbon stocks across the AFOLU project portfolio

### Agricultural Land Management (ALM)

Activities that increase carbon stocks in soils and woody biomass and/or decrease CO<sub>2</sub>, N<sub>2</sub>O, and/or CH<sub>4</sub> emissions from soils on croplands and/or grasslands

### Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use (AFOLU)

The sectoral scope that covers GHG emissions and emission reductions and/or removals from project or program activities in the agriculture, forestry, and other land use/land use change sectors and for which the VCS Program has established rules and requirements with respect to specific project categories

### Agro-Ecological Zones

Geographic areas based on similar characteristics such as combinations of soil, landform, and climatic conditions

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### Agroforestry

An ecologically-based natural resource management system in which trees are integrated into farmland and rangeland

### Agro and Forest Residue

Agro residues are organic material produced as a by-product after harvesting and processing agricultural crops; examples include bagasse, stover, chaff, and straw. Forest residues are organic materials as a by-product of forest harvesting; examples include chips, sawdust, branches, and bark

### Approved GHG Program

A GHG program that has been approved by the Verra Board, through a gap analysis, as demonstrating alignment with VCS Program principles and requirements. The *VCS Program Guide* and *VCS Standard* further set out the implications of being an approved GHG program

### Area of Review (AOR)

The maximum areal extent that CO<sub>2</sub> could impact underground sources of drinking water for a GCS project. This includes the area where potential natural and/or induced migration pathways could exist

### Authorized Representative

An entity authorized by the project or jurisdictional proponent to communicate with and provide instructions to the Verra Registry on its behalf, with such authorization granted through a communications agreement signed by both/all parties and submitted to the Verra Registry

### Belowground Biomass

Living biomass of live roots, sometimes excluding fine roots of less than 2 mm diameter because these often cannot be distinguished empirically from soil organic matter or litter

### Blue Carbon

Organic carbon stored in above- and below-ground biomass and soil pools in tidal and marine ecosystems (e.g., mangrove forests, seagrass meadows, and tidal marshes)

### Cancelation

The permanent removal of a VCU from circulation in the Verra Registry system for purposes other than retirement (e.g., converting VCUs into another form of GHG credit, compensating for excess VCU issuance)

### Capacity Limit

A limitation on any quantity in relation to the project imposed by a methodology applied to the project, the GHG program under which the methodology applied to the project was developed, or the GHG program under which the project was developed

### Capital Expenditure

The costs to the project activity of acquiring new assets or improving existing assets that are utilized for the duration of the project crediting period

### Caprock

A layer of impermeable rock that acts as a trapping mechanism, overlying a geologic reservoir that is the target for permanent CO<sub>2</sub> storage for a GCS project and has a fracture stress higher than the reservoir fracture stress

### Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS)

GHG emission reduction or removal activities that capture CO<sub>2</sub> and sequester it into saline aquifers or into depleted oil or gas reservoirs with the intention of permanent sequestration on geological timescales. CCS is a type of geological carbon storage.

### Captured Flare or Vent Gas

CH<sub>4</sub> that was previously flared or vented in a project activity's baseline and that is captured and used during the project activity

### Carbon Pools

A reservoir of carbon that has the potential to accumulate (or lose) carbon over time, which for AFOLU projects or programs encompasses aboveground biomass, belowground biomass, litter, dead wood, soil, and wood products

### Carbon Stock

The quantity of carbon held within a carbon pool, measured in tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>

### Catastrophic Reversal

A type of reversal caused by disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes, flooding, drought, fires, tornados or winter storms, or man-made events over which the project proponent has no control such as acts of terrorism or war

### Climatic Impact Driver (CID)

Physical climate system conditions (e.g., means, events, extremes) that affect an element of society or ecosystems

### Commercially Sensitive Information

See "Sensitive Information"

### Communications Agreement

The agreement by which the project or jurisdictional proponent authorizes a third party to communicate with and provide instructions to the Verra Registry on its behalf, the form and scope of which shall be determined solely by the Verra Registry and the signatories to the agreement

### Confining Layer

Single or multiple geological formations that are a barrier to substance movement

### Containment

A characterization of overall storage site integrity in a GCS project, whereby the geologic seals, caprock, or other trapping mechanisms contain the injected fluids

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### Cooperative Hub Project

A GCS project in which pore space tenure holders, storage site operators, and other entities with interests in capture sites and the transportation network have agreements to connect plants, equipment, and processes, and share common infrastructure that collectively serves to store CO<sub>2</sub>

### Crediting Period

- The time period for which GHG emission reductions or removals generated by the project are eligible for issuance as VCUs, not including any potential crediting period renewals. Also referred to as the “Project Crediting Period”; or
- The time period for which GHG emission reductions or removals generated by the jurisdictional REDD+ program are eligible for issuance as VCUs, not including any potential crediting period renewals. Also referred to as the “Program Crediting Period”

### Crediting Period Start Date

The start date of a non-AFOLU project is the date on which the project began generating GHG emission reductions or removals. The start date of an AFOLU project or jurisdictional REDD+ program is the date on which activities that led to the generation of GHG emission reductions or removals are implemented (e.g., planting, changing agricultural or forestry practices, rewetting, restoring hydrological functions, or implementing management or protection plans); Equivalent to “Project Start Date” and “Program Crediting Period Start Date”

### Cropland

Arable and tillage land and agro-forestry systems where vegetation falls below the threshold used for the forest land category

### Dead Wood

Non-living woody biomass not contained in the litter, either standing, lying on the ground, or in the soil. Dead wood includes wood lying on the surface, dead roots, and stumps larger than or equal to 10 cm in diameter or any other diameter used by the host country for its UNFCCC national inventory accounting

### Deemed Savings Factor

A type of default factor used to estimate the GHG emission reductions or removals associated with a unit of activity implemented by the project, such as a project activity instance

### Default Factor

A parameter value that is specified in a methodology to standardize the calculation of net GHG emission reductions and/or removals and provide greater consistency of calculations across projects

### Deforestation

The direct human-induced conversion of forest land to non-forest land

### Degradation

The persistent reduction of canopy cover and/or carbon stocks in a forest due to human activities such as animal grazing, fuelwood extraction, timber removal, or other such activities, but that does not result in the conversion of forest to non-forest land and falls under the *IPCC 2003 Good Practice Guidance* land category of *forest remaining forest*

### Distributed Mini-Grid

Localized grid-connected electricity generation units that facilitate the delivery of electricity to the user but do not displace fossil fuels from the grid or sell electricity to the grid

### Double Counting

The scenario under which a singular GHG emission reduction or removal is monetized separately by two different entities or where a GHG emission reduction or removal is sold to multiple buyers

### Drained Peatland

A peatland having a lower than natural average annual water level due to accelerated water loss or decreased water supply resulting from human activities and constructions, both on- and off-site

### Emission Trading Program

A voluntary or regulatory program that allows for trading in GHG credits or allowances

### Facility

A single installation, set of installations, or production processes (stationary or mobile), which can be defined within a geographical boundary, organizational unit, or production process

### Free-rider

An activity that is undertaken without requiring any intervention from the carbon market but that nonetheless receives credit for the GHG emission reductions or removals that it generates

### Forest

Land with woody vegetation that meets an internationally accepted definition (e.g., UNFCCC, FAO, or IPCC) of what constitutes a forest, which includes threshold parameters, such as minimum forest area, tree height, and level of crown cover, and may include mature, secondary, degraded, and wetland forests

### Geological Carbon Mineralization (GCM)

GHG emission reduction or removal activities that store CO<sub>2</sub> in underground sinks through mineralization processes. It relies on chemical reactions of injected CO<sub>2</sub> with reservoir rock and fluids to immobilize and trap CO<sub>2</sub> permanently as carbonates or other solids. GCM is a type of Geological Carbon Storage.

### Geological Carbon Storage (GCS)

GHG emission reduction or removal activities that store CO<sub>2</sub> in underground sinks with the intention of permanent sequestration on geological timescales. It includes CCS, GCM, and utilization of CO<sub>2</sub> in underground reservoirs

### GHG Program

A formal or organized program, system, or arrangement for the recognition of activities leading to GHG emission reductions or removals, and/or the crediting or issuance of instruments representing, or acknowledging, GHG emission reductions or removals

### GHG Statement

A clearly identifiable, factual, and objective declaration made by the project proponent of the project's GHG emission reductions or removal enhancements, and which provides the subject matter for the verification or validation body's opinion. Such a statement could be presented at a point in time or could



cover a period of time and must be capable of consistent evaluation or measurement against suitable criteria by the validator or verifier

### Grassland

Areas dominated by grasses with a density of trees too low to meet an internationally accepted definition of forest, including savannas (i.e., grasslands with scattered trees). Grasslands also include managed rangeland and pastureland that is not considered cropland where the primary land use is grazing, and which may also include grass-dominated systems managed for conservation or recreational purposes

### Grid-Connected Electricity Generation

The generation of electricity primarily for delivery to a national or regional grid where at least 50% of annual electricity generation (by quantity of energy, not capacity) is planned to be delivered to such a grid. Generation of electricity for on-site self-consumption, delivery to a micro-grid, distributed mini-grid, or off-grid consumption is not included in this definition.

### Grouped Project

A project to which additional instances of the project activity, which meet pre-established eligibility criteria, may be added subsequent to project validation

### Harvesting activity

The harvest of trees, vegetation, or other biomass, which results in a reduction by more than 20% of carbon stocks over a five-year period that starts when a reduction of carbon stocks occurs. In the case of grouped projects, the 20% threshold applies to each project activity instance

### Impacted Goods and Services

All goods and services whose GHGs are directly impacted by the technologies and measures specified as project activities in the project description for which VCU's have been or will be sought. For example, for an improved forest management project where the forest manager implements the project activities and sells felled logs to a sawmill, the felled logs would be considered impacted goods, whereas processed lumber and other downstream products such as furniture would not

### Implementing Partner

The individual or organization operating the project or program activity (or activities) in partnership with the project or jurisdictional proponent, respectively

### Improved Forest Management (IFM)

Activities that change forest management practices and increase carbon stock on forest lands managed for wood products such as saw timber, pulpwood, and fuelwood

### Injection Zone

The geological interval in the subsurface into which a substance is injected for GCS projects

### Instance

See "Project Activity Instance (Instance)"

### Internal Allocation Mechanism

The mechanism for the distribution of GHG credits and/or other benefits, established by the jurisdictional proponent as part of the jurisdictional REDD+ program

### Issuance Representation

The unilateral representation issued by the project proponent at each VCU issuance request, made in respect of the GHG emission reductions and/or removals generated by the project, and which is prepared using the *VCS Issuance Deed of Representation Template*; or

The unilateral representation issued by the jurisdictional proponent at each VCU issuance request, made in respect of the GHG emission reductions and/or removals generated by the jurisdictional program, and which is prepared using the *VCS JNR Program Issuance Deed of Representation Template*

### JNR Expert

A person with expertise and experience in jurisdictional baselines and/or REDD+ programs who is approved by Verra for participation on expert panels for the validation/verification of jurisdictional REDD+ programs

### JNR Program Description (Program Description)

The document that describes the jurisdictional baseline and/or program GHG emission reductions or removals and that uses the *VCS JNR Baseline Description Template* (for jurisdictions registering only a jurisdictional baseline) or the *VCS JNR Program Description Template* (for jurisdictional REDD+ programs), respectively

### Jurisdiction

The administrative unit such as a nation, state, province, region, department or district, or an eco-region or other defined area, specified in the jurisdictional program description

### Jurisdictional and Nested REDD+ (JNR)

The approach under the VCS Program by which reduced emissions from deforestation, reduced emissions from degradation, and removals from carbon stock enhancements can be credited at the jurisdictional and/or nested project levels

### Jurisdictional Approval Authority

The government agency, department, or organization that has control of and responsibility for reviewing and giving approval, or the no-objection letter, to lower-level jurisdictional REDD+ programs and/or projects, and that may or may not be the same entity as the jurisdictional proponent

### Jurisdictional Baseline Period

The time period for which the baseline for a jurisdictional REDD+ program is valid

### Jurisdictional Proponent

The government agency, department, or organization that has overall control and responsibility for the jurisdictional REDD+ program, or a government agency, department, or organization that together with others, each of which is also a jurisdictional proponent, has overall control of or responsibility for the jurisdictional REDD+ program. The entity(s) that can demonstrate program ownership in respect of the jurisdictional REDD+ program

### Jurisdictional Pooled Buffer Account

The account in the Verra Registry containing non-tradable jurisdictional and nested REDD+ buffer credits for covering the risk of unforeseen losses in carbon stocks across the jurisdictional REDD+ program and REDD+ project portfolio

### Jurisdictional REDD+ Program and Jurisdictional Program

See “Program”

### Label (VCU Label, Verra Unit Label)

A permanent marker on a Verra unit, representing that the unit has met the requirements of another certification or is eligible or approved for use under a national, sectoral, or investor-specific market

### Land-Based Accounting

A method of GHG accounting in which all land in an entire geographic area or jurisdiction is included in the accounting through categorization of land-use types and a sampling or modeling approach sufficient to capture carbon stocks and changes in carbon stocks, irrespective of activity

### Large Project

A project that generates 300,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e or more of GHG emissions reductions or removals per year

### Large-Scale Commercial Deforestation

An area of deforestation that exceeds 1,000 ha, cleared in a single monitoring period (or, between two points of remotely sensed historical data), that has a single post-deforestation land use (e.g., commercial agriculture or timber plantation), not including areas covered by the footprint of large infrastructure (such as a dam) or those affected by natural disturbances (i.e., due to geologic or weather-related events)

### Leakage

Net changes of anthropogenic emissions by GHG sources that occur outside the project or program boundary, but are attributable to the project or program

### Leakage Area

The sum of individual leakage belts. Such leakage belts need not be contiguous

### Leakage Belt

The geographical area around the project area where leakage is expected

### Leakage Management Area

The discrete geographical area outside of the project area where project activities are implemented to mitigate deforestation drivers in the project area (i.e. sustainable agriculture)

### Listing Representation

The unilateral representation issued by the project proponent at the time of the project pipeline listing request, made in respect of the project, and which is prepared using the VCS *Listing Representation Template*; or

The unilateral representation issued by the jurisdictional proponent at the time of the jurisdictional baseline or program listing request, made in respect of the jurisdictional baseline or program, and which is prepared using the VCS *JNR Baseline Listing Deed of Representation Template* or the VCS *JNR Program Listing Deed of Representation Template*, respectively

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### Litter

Non-living biomass, with a size less than a minimum threshold diameter (e.g., 10 cm) chosen by the host country for its UNFCCC national inventory accounting, lying dead, in various states of decomposition above the mineral or organic soil, including litter, fomic and humic layers. Live fine roots (of less than the threshold diameter for belowground biomass) are included in litter where they cannot be distinguished from it empirically

### Loss Event

- In an AFOLU project, any event that results in a loss of more than five percent of previously verified emission reductions and removals due to losses in carbon stocks in pools included in the project boundary that is not planned for in the project description (e.g., harvesting as set out in management plans and described in the project description is not a loss event). Examples include catastrophic events (see definition of catastrophic reversal) as well as human-induced losses such as those caused by poor management, tillage, over-harvesting, or encroachment by outside actors (e.g., illegal logging or fuelwood collection); or
- In a jurisdictional program, any event that results in a loss of more than five percent of previously verified emission reductions and removals due to losses in carbon stocks in pools included in the program boundary that is not planned for in the program description (e.g., harvesting as set out in management plans and described in the program description is not a loss event). Examples include harvesting beyond levels predicted in the baseline, construction of roads or other infrastructure not included in the baseline, or significant natural disturbances

### Loss Event Report

The document that describes and records a loss event using the *Loss Event Report Template*

### Loss Event Representation

- The unilateral representation issued by the project proponent prepared using the *VCS Loss Event Deed of Representation Template* and made in respect of the carbon stock loss estimate in a loss event report; or
- The unilateral representation issued by the jurisdictional proponent prepared using the *VCS JNR Program Loss Event Deed of Representation Template* and made in respect of the carbon stock loss estimate in a loss event report

### Market Leakage Evaluation

The evaluation by the project or jurisdictional proponent of the project's or program's market leakage impacts and discount factor, documented in the project description, program description, or monitoring report, as applicable

### Materiality

The concept applied to determine if errors, omissions, and misstatements in information could affect the GHG statement and influence decisions resulting from it

### Methodology

A specific set of criteria and procedures, which apply to specific project activities, for identifying the project boundary, determining the baseline scenario, demonstrating additionality, quantifying net GHG emission reductions and/or removals, and specifying the monitoring procedures

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### Methodology Development and Review Process

The process by which new or revised methodologies, modules, and tools are developed and reviewed under the VCS Program

### Methodology Deviation

A deviation from the criteria and procedures for monitoring or measurement set out in a methodology applied to the project

### Methodology Developer

An entity that develops a methodology, tool, or module

### Methodology Revision

A revision to the criteria and procedures of an existing methodology

### Micro-Grid

A localized grid that facilitates the delivery of electricity to discrete and often remote sets of infrastructure that do not otherwise have reliable access to electricity

### Model

A formula or set of formulae that uses parameters and input values to establish the value of one or more output variables

### Module

A component of a methodology that can be applied to perform a specific methodological task

### Monitoring Report

- The document that records data to allow the assessment of the GHG emission reductions or removals generated by the project during a given time period in accordance with the monitoring plan set out in the project description, and which is prepared using the *VCS Monitoring Report Template* or an approved combined monitoring report template available on the Verra website; or
- The document that records data to allow the assessment of the GHG emission reductions or removals generated by the program during a given time period in accordance with the monitoring plan set out in the jurisdictional program description, and which is prepared using the *VCS JNR Monitoring Report Template* available on the Verra website

### Native Ecosystem

A landscape composed of indigenous vegetation not established by planting and/or seeding

### Natural Disturbance

Non-anthropogenic events or non-anthropogenic circumstances that cause significant emissions from forests and are beyond the control of, and not materially influenced by, a project or jurisdictional proponent, such as wildfires, insect and disease infestations, extreme weather events, and/or geological disturbances. Harvesting and prescribed burning are not considered natural disturbances

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### Nested Project

A registered REDD+ project, that is not currently subject to a grandparenting period, and that is located within a jurisdiction covered by a registered jurisdictional REDD+ program

### Nested Subnational Jurisdiction

A subnational jurisdiction that is located within a national jurisdiction covered by a jurisdictional REDD+ program that is also registered under the VCS Program

### Non-Negligible CO<sub>2</sub> Containment Loss

Movement of CO<sub>2</sub> from a GCS site(s) to the atmosphere or above the injected zone, greater than 0.001% (one part in 100,000) of accumulated injected volumes, or 1 tCO<sub>2</sub>, whichever is higher

### Non-Permanence Risk

The risk that carbon stored in a carbon pool (e.g., above-ground biomass, soil, geologic reservoirs) is released back into the atmosphere as CO<sub>2</sub> or CH<sub>4</sub>. This risk may be associated with natural events such as fires, pests, extreme weather events, leaks from geologic reservoirs, or human-caused events such as tree harvests or changes in soil management practices

### Non-Permanence Risk Analysis

- The assessment of the risk of a potential loss in carbon stock in the project over a period of 100 years, prepared by the project proponent using the *VCS Non-Permanence Risk Report Template*; or
- The assessment of the risk of a potential loss in carbon stock in the jurisdictional program over a period of 100 years, prepared by the jurisdictional proponent using the *VCS JNR Non-Permanence Risk Report Template*

### Non-Project Areas

Forest areas (or areas converted to forest or otherwise revegetated) within a jurisdiction, but outside project boundaries or nested subnational jurisdiction boundaries, that are included in the accounting of GHG emissions and emission reductions and/or removals (e.g., areas where GHG emission reductions and/or removals are generated through the implementation of government policies and programs, rather than by projects or activities implemented within nested subnational jurisdictions)

### No-Objection Letter

A written letter or other written communication from the jurisdictional approval authority of the higher-level jurisdiction stating that it does not object to a specific (lower-level) jurisdictional REDD+ program element or project being submitted for registration under the VCS Program

### Official Translation

A translation by a member of a member body of the International Federation of Translators

### Partial Release Representation

- The deed issued by the project proponents and the Verra Registry, made in respect of a project proponent leaving a project, and which is prepared using the *VCS Deed of Partial Release in Respect of Registration Deed of Representation Template*; or
- The deed issued by the jurisdictional proponent and the Verra Registry, made in respect of a jurisdictional proponent leaving a jurisdictional baseline or jurisdictional program, and which is

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prepared using the *VCS Deed of Partial Release in Respect of JNR Baseline Registration Deed of Representation Template* or the *VCS Deed of Partial Release in Respect of JNR Program Registration Deed of Representation Template*, respectively

### Peatland

An area with a layer of naturally accumulated organic material (peat) that meets an internationally accepted threshold (e.g., host-country, FAO, or IPCC) for the depth of the peat layer and the percentage of organic material composition. Peat originates because of water saturation. Peat soil is either saturated with water for long periods or artificially drained. Common names for peatland include mire, bog, fen, moor, muskeg, pocosin, and peat swamp (forest)

### Performance Benchmark

A benchmark against which the performance of individual projects is assessed to determine additionality and/or the crediting baseline

### Performance Benchmark Metric

The indicator, specified in terms of tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e per unit of output, tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e per unit of input, or as a sequestration metric, used to define the performance benchmark

### Performance Method

A methodological approach that establishes a performance benchmark to determine additionality and/or the crediting baseline in accordance with the VCS Program rule

### Pore Space Tenure

The legal instrument that provides the exclusive subsurface right to inject CO<sub>2</sub> into the target geologic reservoir for permanent CO<sub>2</sub> storage in a GCS project

### Pore Space Tenure Holder

The person(s) or organization(s) legally entitled to pore space tenure for a GCS project

### Post-Injection Assessment Period (PIAP)

The period extending 1000 years from the end of injection, used as the timeframe over which GCS permanence is assessed

### Post-Injection Site Care

The activities required at a GCS storage site during the closure and post-closure monitoring periods, typically including monitoring, any site remediation, and closure activities.

### Post-Injection Site Care Period (PISC Period)

The period extending from the end of injection at a GCS storage site to the end of post-closure monitoring

### Post-Closure Period

The period extending indefinitely after GCS storage site closure.

### Program

The program established by a national or subnational jurisdictional proponent that establishes and operationalizes rules and requirements to enable accounting and crediting of REDD+ policies and

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measures and/or nested projects, implemented as GHG mitigation activities, and described in the jurisdictional program description. Also referred to as “Jurisdictional REDD+ Program” or “Jurisdictional Program”

#### Program Activity

The specific set of REDD+ policies and measures, specified by the jurisdictional REDD+ program, that alter the conditions identified in the baseline scenario and which result in GHG emission reductions or removals

#### Program Crediting Period

See “Crediting Period”

#### Program Crediting Period Start Date

See “Crediting Period Start Date”

#### Program Ownership

The legal right to control and operate the program activities. Distinct from proof of right

#### Program Start Date

See “Crediting Period Start Date”

#### Program Sensitive Information

See “Sensitive Information Project”. The project activity or activities implemented as a GHG project and described in the project description

#### Project Activity

The specific set of technologies, measures, and/or outcomes, specified in a methodology applied to the project, that alter the conditions identified in the baseline scenario and which result in GHG emission reductions or removals

#### Project Activity Instance (Instance)

A particular set of implemented technologies and/or measures that constitute the minimum unit of activity necessary to comply with the criteria and procedures applicable to the project activity under the methodology applied to the project

#### Project Area

The geographic area in which the project activities are implemented.

#### Project Boundary

The specification of GHG sources, sinks, and reservoirs associated with the project and baseline scenarios

#### Project Crediting Period

See “Crediting Period”

#### Project Crediting Period Start Date

See “Crediting Period Start Date”

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### Project Description

The document that describes the project's GHG emission reduction or removal activities and that uses either the *VCS Project Description Template*, an approved combined project description template available on the Verra website, or the project description template specified by the relevant approved GHG program

### Project Description Deviation

A deviation from the project design, procedures, and other specifications set out in the project description

### Project Documents

The documents required to register the project and/or issue VCUs, as set out in the VCS Program document *Registration and Issuance Process*

### Project Longevity Period

The number of years beginning from the project start date, that project activities will be maintained. In some cases, project longevity period can be longer than a project's crediting period

### Project Method

A methodological approach that uses a project-specific approach for the determination of additionality and/or the crediting baseline in accordance with the VCS Program rules

### Project Ownership

The legal right to control and operate the project activities. Distinct from proof of right

### Project Pipeline

The list of projects on the Verra Registry, which are either *under development* or *under validation*

### Project Proponent

The individual or organization that has overall control and responsibility for the project, or an individual or organization that together with others, each of which is also a project proponent, has overall control or responsibility for the project. The entity(s) that can demonstrate project ownership in respect of the project.

### Project Proponent Representation

A unilateral deed of representation issued by the project proponent(s) and/or individuals or organizations accorded certain rights in respect of a project

### Project Start Date

See "Crediting Period Start Date"

### Project Zone

The area where AFOLU project activities aim to generate or maintain net climate benefits, which includes the project area, WRC buffer zone, leakage belt(s), and leakage management area(s)

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### Proof of Right

The document(s) demonstrating the entity's right to all and any GHG emission reductions or removals generated by the project or program during the crediting period or verification period, as the case may be. Distinct from project ownership and program ownership

### Proxy

A parameter that is monitored or measured to determine the value of a strongly correlated parameter that is not monitored or measured

### Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD)

Activities that reduce GHG emissions by slowing or stopping conversion of forests to non-forest land and/or reduce the degradation of forest land where forest biomass is lost

### REDD+

Activities that reduce GHG emissions from deforestation and/or degradation by slowing or stopping conversion of forests to non-forest land and/or reducing the degradation of forest land where forest biomass is lost; and/or activities that enhance carbon stocks through improved forest management and/or afforestation, reforestation or revegetation

### Reforestation

The direct human-induced conversion of non-forested land to forested land through planting, seeding and/or the human-induced promotion of natural seed sources on land that was once forested but has been converted to non-forested land

### Reference Region

The region from which historical and current deforestation and degradation quantities and trends are ascertained to predict future deforestation and degradation quantities in the baseline scenario

### Registration Representation

The unilateral representation issued by the project proponent at the time of the project registration request, made in respect of the project, and which is prepared using the *VCS Registration Deed of Representation Template*; or

The unilateral representation issued by the jurisdictional proponent at the time of the program registration request, made in respect of the jurisdictional baseline or program, and which is prepared using the *VCS JNR Baseline Registration Deed of Representation Template* or the *JNR Program Registration Deed of Representation Template*, respectively

### Regulatory Surplus

Project activities are not mandated by any law, statute, or other regulatory framework, or for UNFCCC non-Annex I countries, any systematically enforced law, statute, or other regulatory framework.

### Remedial Liability

The responsibilities and resourcing associated with any site remediation activities and/or costs

### Remote Sensing (RS)

The use of an instrument, such as a radar device or camera, to scan the earth from a distance in order to collect data (e.g., for forest inventory or monitoring)

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### Reservoir Model

A model of the subsurface for GCS projects which incorporates geological characteristics of the storage reservoir

### Retirement

The permanent removal of a VCU from circulation in the Verra Registry system which represents an offset of one metric tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent

### Revegetation

A direct human-induced activity to increase carbon stocks of woody biomass on sites through the establishment of vegetation that covers a minimum area of 0.05 hectares and does not meet the definitions of afforestation and reforestation

### Reversal

A situation where the net GHG benefit, taking into account project or program emissions, removals and leakage, in any monitoring period is negative. The amount of a reversal is calculated as the difference between the current total to-date net GHG benefit of the project or program, compared to the total to-date net GHG benefit of the project or program at the previous verification event

### Rewetting

The elevation of the average annual water table in drained peatland by partially or entirely reversing the existing drained state

### Scope 3 Emissions Double Claiming

The situation where an organization reports in its Scope 3 emissions statement a GHG emission reduction or removal that is also associated with an issued VCU

### Scope 3 Inventory Emissions

All indirect GHG emissions (including both upstream and downstream emissions not included in Scope 2) that occur in an organization's Scope 3 emissions inventory boundary, as defined in the *Corporate Value Chain (Scope 3) Accounting and Reporting Standard*<sup>1</sup>

### Sensitive Information

- Trade secrets, financial, commercial, scientific, technical or other information whose disclosure could reasonably be expected to result in a material financial loss or gain, prejudice the outcome of contractual or other negotiations or otherwise damage or enrich the person or entity to which the information relates. Also referred to as “Commercially Sensitive Information”; or
- Internal policy decisions, classified, financial, commercial, scientific, technical or other information whose public disclosure could reasonably be expected to undermine or negatively affect the development and/or implementation of a program, or damage national security. Also referred to as “Program Sensitive Information”

<sup>1</sup>Greenhouse Gas Protocol. (2011). *Corporate Value Chain (Scope 3) Accounting and Reporting Standard*. [https://ghgprotocol.org/sites/default/files/standards/Corporate-Value-Chain-Accounting-Reporting-Standard\\_041613\\_2.pdf](https://ghgprotocol.org/sites/default/files/standards/Corporate-Value-Chain-Accounting-Reporting-Standard_041613_2.pdf)

### Sequestration Zone

The subsurface intended for permanent storage of CO<sub>2</sub> for GCS projects

### Shrubland

Areas dominated by shrubs, with a density of trees too low to meet an internationally accepted definition of forest, including chaparral, scrubland, heathland and thickets

### Site

The location where a Project Proponent (or a representative on their behalf or at their direction) carries out work or a service. A site may include one or several facilities

### Soil organic carbon

Organic carbon in mineral and organic soils (including peat) to a specified depth chosen by the host country for its UNFCCC national inventory accounting and applied consistently through the crediting period. Live fine roots (of less than the threshold diameter limit for belowground biomass) are included with soil organic matter where they cannot be distinguished from it empirically. In organic soils, soil organic carbon encompasses the entire depth of the organic layer (i.e., up to the depth of the mineral substrate). In the case of peatland, this depth can be several meters

### Standardized Method

A methodological approach that standardizes elements of additionality and/or the crediting baseline, for a given class of project activity, via a performance method or activity method

### Storage Site

The surface facilities, wells, subsurface, and geologic formations that allow pore spaces in a geologic reservoir to be assessed and used for permanent CO<sub>2</sub> storage in a GCS project

### Storage Site Closure

A milestone at the end of a GCS project's lifecycle, denoted by the end of CO<sub>2</sub> injection and demarcating the time when closure activities initiate. Storage site closure is determined by the regulating authority in the jurisdiction where the storage site(s) is/are located

### Storage Site Operator

The person(s) or organization(s) that have approval for drilling, constructing, and operating a storage site issued from the regulating authority in the jurisdiction where the GCS site(s) is located

### Subnational Jurisdiction

An administrative- or other sub-unit within a country, such as a state, province, region, department, district, or an eco-region or other defined area, specified in the jurisdictional program description

### Supply Chain

A network of organizations (e.g., manufacturers, wholesalers, distributors, and retailers) involved in the production, delivery, and sale of a product or service to the consumer. Supply chain entities include organizations upstream and downstream of the goods and services whose GHGs are impacted by project activities.

### Sustainable Development (SD) Contribution

A demonstration of how project activities, or additional activities implemented by the project proponent, contribute to sustainable development, as defined by and tracked against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

### Tool

A type of module that provides a procedure for performing a specific analysis

### Uncertainty

Uncertainty is a parameter associated with the result of measurement that characterizes the dispersion of the values that could be reasonably attributed to the measured amount

### Underground Source of Drinking Water (USDW)

An aquifer or source of water with a quantity sufficient to supply a water system for local use cases, and for human consumption with less than 10,000 mg/L total dissolved solids

### Validation

The independent assessment of the project by a validation/verification body that determines whether the project conforms with the VCS Program rules and evaluates the reasonableness of assumptions, limitations, and methods that support a claim about the outcome of future activities

### Validation Report

The written report of validation prepared by the validation/verification body in accordance with the VCS Program rules which contains the validation opinion

### Validation Representation

- The deed issued by the validation/verification body, referencing the validation report to which it relates, containing a unilateral representation that it has validated the project's conformance with the applicable VCS Program rules, and which is prepared using the *VCS Validation Deed of Representation Template*; or
- The deed issued by the validation/verification body, referencing the validation report to which it relates, containing a unilateral representation that it has validated the jurisdictional baseline's or program's conformance with the applicable VCS Program rules, and which is prepared using the *VCS JNR Baseline Validation Deed of Representation Template* or the *VCS JNR Program Validation Deed of Representation Template*, respectively

### Validation/Verification Body (VVB)

An organization approved by Verra to act as a validation/verification body in respect of providing validation and/or verification services in accordance with the VCS Program rules

### VCS Program

The GHG program operated by Verra which establishes rules and requirements that operationalize the *VCS Standard* to enable the validation of GHG projects and programs, and the verification of GHG emission reductions and removals

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### VCS Program Rules

The rules and requirements set out in the *VCS Program Guide*, the *VCS Standard* and the other VCS Program documents; such rules and requirements may be updated from time-to-time

### VCU Conversion Representation

The unilateral representation issued by the project proponent, prepared using the applicable VCS Program template and made in respect of cancellation of GHG credits under another GHG program and/or conversion of GHG credits issued under an approved GHG program into VCUs

### VCU Issuance Levy

The fee charged by Verra at the time of VCU issuance to cover the administration costs of the VCS Program

### Verification

The periodic ex-post independent assessment by a validation/verification body of the GHG emission reductions and removals that have occurred as a result of the project during the monitoring period. The assessment is based on historical data and information to determine whether the claim is materially correct and conforms with specified requirements and is conducted in accordance with the VCS Program rules

### Verification Period

The time period specified in a verification report during which the GHG emission reductions or removals were generated and have been verified by a validation/verification body

### Verification Report

The written report of the verification prepared by the validation/verification body in accordance with the VCS Program rules

### Verification Representation

- The deed issued by the validation/verification body, referencing the verification report to which it relates, containing a unilateral representation that it has verified the relevant GHG emission reductions or removal claims in accordance with the applicable VCS Program rules, and which is prepared using the *VCS Verification Deed of Representation Template*; or
- The deed issued by the validation/verification body, referencing the verification report to which it relates, containing a unilateral representation that it has verified the relevant GHG emission reductions or removal claims in accordance with the applicable VCS Program rules, and which is prepared using the *VCS JNR Program Verification Deed of Representation Template*

### Verified Carbon Unit (VCU)

A unit issued by and held in the Verra Registry representing the right of an account holder in whose account the unit is recorded to claim the achievement of a GHG emission reduction or removal in an amount of one (1) metric tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent that has been verified by a validation/verification body in accordance with the VCS Program rules. Recordation of a VCU in the account of the holder at the Verra Registry is prima facie evidence of that holder's entitlement to that VCU

### Verra Registry

The platform that records all projects and programs (listed and registered) and VCUs issued under the VCS Program. Provides public access to all project, program and VCU information, including retirement and tracking of the AFOLU and jurisdictional pooled buffer accounts, and provides project and jurisdictional proponents with the ability to list and register projects and programs, and issue, hold and retire VCUs

### Verra Unit

A unit issued or assigned by and held in the Verra Registry representing the right of an account holder in whose account the unit is recorded to claim the achievement of a specific type of environmental or social benefit (i.e., SD VISta Asset, Verified Carbon Unit, Waste Collection Credit, or Waste Recycling Credit)

### Verra Website

The Verra website: [www.verra.org](http://www.verra.org)

### Vertically Integrated Project

A GCS project in which the operator of the storage site(s) and the pore space tenure holder is the project proponent and is the controlling entity for all the capture site(s) and transport infrastructure associated with the project

### Vintage

The set of GHG emission reductions or removals generated by a project or program during a single vintage period

### Vintage Period

The time period for which a particular set of GHG emission reductions or removals generated by the project or program are verified, which may be any subset of a verification period

### Wetland

Land that is inundated or saturated by water for all or part of the year (e.g., peatland), at such frequency and duration that under natural conditions they support organisms adapted to poorly aerated and/or saturated soil. Wetlands (including peatlands) cut across the different AFOLU categories. Project activities may be specific to wetlands or may be combined with other AFOLU activities

### Wood Products

Products derived from wood harvested from a forest, including fuelwood and logs and the products derived from them such as sawn timber, plywood, wood pulp and paper

### WRC Buffer Zone

A discrete geographic area within or outside the project area of a WRC project that is established to mitigate potential negative impacts to the hydrology in the project area

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## 3 ACRONYMS

<b>ACoGS</b>	Avoiding Conversion of Grasslands and Shrublands
<b>AFOLU</b>	Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use
<b>ALM</b>	Agricultural Land Management
<b>ANSI</b>	American National Standards Institute
<b>AOR</b>	Area of Review
<b>APC</b>	Avoiding Planned Conversion
<b>APDD</b>	Avoiding Planned Deforestation and Degradation
<b>APWD</b>	Avoiding Planned Wetland Degradation
<b>ARR</b>	Afforestation, Reforestation and Revegetation
<b>AUC</b>	Avoiding Unplanned Conversion
<b>AUDD</b>	Avoiding Unplanned Deforestation and Degradation
<b>AUWD</b>	Avoiding Unplanned Wetland Degradation
<b>CCS</b>	Carbon Capture and Storage
<b>CDM</b>	Clean Development Mechanism
<b>CGLC</b>	Cropland and Grassland Land-use Conversions
<b>CID</b>	Climatic Impact Driver
<b>CIW</b>	Conservation of Intact Wetlands
<b>CAR</b>	Climate Action Reserve
<b>CORSIA</b>	Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation
<b>CRT</b>	Climate Reserve Tonne
<b>DBH</b>	Diameter at Breast Height
<b>DSH</b>	Diameter at Stump Height
<b>ERA</b>	Extended Rotation Age
<b>ERU</b>	Emission Reduction Unit
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization
<b>GCS</b>	Geologic Carbon Storage
<b>GCM</b>	Geologic Carbon Mineralization
<b>GHG</b>	Greenhouse Gas
<b>GWP</b>	Global Warming Potential
<b>ICM</b>	Improved Cropland Management

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IFM	Improved Forest Management
IGM	Improved Grassland Management
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
JI	Joint Implementation program
JNR	Jurisdictional and Nested REDD+
ICER	Long-term Certified Emission Reduction
LtHP	Low-productive to High-productive Forests
LtPF	Logged to Protected Forests
ODS	Ozone-Depleting Substances
PDT	Peat Depletion Time
PIAP	Post-Injection Assessment Period
PISC	Post-Injection Site Care
REDD	Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation
RIL	Reduced Impact Logging
RS	Remote Sensing
RWE	Restoring Wetland Ecosystems
SDT	Soil Organic Carbon Depletion Time
tCER	Temporary Certified Emission Reduction
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USDW	Underground Sources of Drinking Water
VVB	Validation/Verification Body
VCS	Verified Carbon Standard
VCU	Verified Carbon Unit
WRC	Wetlands Restoration and Conservation

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# APPENDIX 1 DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version	Date	Comment
v4.0	19 Sep 2019	Initial version released under VCS <i>Version 4</i> .
v4.1	20 Jan 2022	<p>Revised definition of ‘approved GHG program’ as follows:</p> <p>A GHG program that has been approved by the Verra Board, through a gap analysis, as a VCS Program approved GHG program demonstrating alignment with VCS Program principles and requirements. The VCS Program Guide and VCS Standard further set out the implications of being an approved GHG program.</p> <p>Added definition of ‘Sustainable Development (SD) Contribution’.</p>
v4.2	22 Jun 2022	<p>Main updates (all effective on issue date, unless otherwise stated):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p>Incorporated revised definition of ‘start date’ from <i>Clarification to VCS Program Rules and Requirements</i>, v4.0, published 19 April and updated 21 April 2022, as follows (effective <u>19 April 2022</u>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The date on which the project began generating GHG emission reductions or removals; equal to “Project Crediting Period Start Date”. Also referred to as “Project Start Date”; or</li> <li>The date on which the jurisdictional REDD+ program began generating GHG emission reductions or removals; equal to “Project Crediting Period Start Date”. Also referred to as “Program Start Date”</li> </ul> </li> <li> <p>Revised definition of ‘project crediting period start date’ as follows:</p> <p>The date on which the first monitoring period commences the project began generating GHG emission reductions or removals; equal to “Project Start Date”</p> <p>Added definitions for ‘Climate Impact Driver,’ ‘Label (VCU Label, Verra Unit Label),’ ‘Project Longevity Period,’ and ‘Verra Unit’</p> </li> </ol>
v4.3	21 Dec 2022	<p>Main updates (all effective on issue date, unless otherwise stated):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Definitions for terms related to Table 1 in the VCS Standard Section 2.1. have been added and/or edited, including ‘Grid-Connected Electricity Generation,’ ‘Micro-grid,’ ‘Distributed mini-grid,’ ‘Power Plant,’ ‘Aboveground Biomass,’ ‘Agro and Forest Residue,’ and ‘Capture flare or vent gas.’</li> <li>Definitions related to GCS projects have been added to support new program requirements related to GCS projects seeking to register under the VCS program.</li> <li>Definition for ‘Blue Carbon’ has been added.</li> <li>Definitions for terms related to leakage area, leakage belt, leakage management area, project area, project boundary, project zone, and reference region have been added and/or updated for greater clarity.</li> <li>Definition for ‘GHG statement’ has been added.</li> <li>Definition of ‘Harvesting activities’ has been added.</li> <li>Definitions related to double-counting of scope-3 emissions have been added, including: impacted goods and services, Scope 3 emissions double claiming, Scope 3 inventory emissions, and supply chain.</li> <li>Definitions pertaining to the new Methodology Development and Review Process, v4.2 have been added and/or updated.</li> </ol>

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- 9) Definition for 'Non-Permanence Risk-' has been added.
- 10) Definition for 'Regulatory Surplus' has been added.
- 11) Definitions related to 'Validation' and 'Verification' have been added and/or updated in line with updated definitions and content in Section 4.1 of the VCS Standard to align with ISO 14064-3:2019.
- 12) Definition for 'WRC Buffer Zone' has been added.

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## Standards for a Sustainable Future

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**Verified Carbon Standard**



**Jurisdictional & Nested REDD+**



**Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards**



**Sustainable Development Verified Impact Standard**



**Plastic Waste Reduction Standard**

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