



VCS Program Definitions

Version 5.0

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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 must ensure that they are using the most current version of the document.

2 DEFINITIONS

Aboveground biomass

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

Accession representation

The deed issued by a project proponent and an acceding entity, made in respect of an acceding entity joining a project as project proponent, and which is prepared using an applicable template (e.g., *Deed of Accession in Respect of VCS Listing Deed of Representation Template*, *Deed of Accession in Respect of VCS Registration Deed of Representation Template*)

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 buffer deed

Deed issued by a project proponent in respect of their obligations to replace credits in the AFOLU pooled buffer account in the event of a reversal, which is prepared using the *AFOLU Buffer Account Remedy for Reversals Deed Template*

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 CO₂, N₂O, and/or CH₄ emissions from soils on croplands and/or grasslands

Agriculture, forestry, and other land use (AFOLU)

The sectoral scopes that cover GHG emissions and GHG emission reductions and/or carbon dioxide removals from project or program activities in sectoral scope 14 (Forestry and other land use: forests, wetlands, and grasslands) and sectoral scope 15 (agriculture) 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

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

Area of review (AOR)

The maximum areal extent that CO₂ 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

Avoidable reversal

A reversal over which the project proponent has influence or control, that occurs in an AFOLU project (e.g., occurring due to poor project management, insufficient measures to prevent foreseeable encroachment, removal of a portion of the project area from participation, harvesting or over-harvesting, tillage events)

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

Binding emission limit

A system that creates binding limits on the total GHG emissions or emissions per unit of output or activity from a site, company, sector, or region but does not include emissions trading.

Biodiversity¹

The variability among living organisms from all sources, such as terrestrial, marine, and other aquatic ecosystems, and the ecological complexes of which they are part. This includes diversity within species, between species, and of ecosystems.

Biomass

Non-fossilized and biodegradable organic material originating from plants, animals, fungi, or micro-organisms (e.g., agricultural, aquacultural, forest, or algaecultural materials; or organic fractions of

¹ Adapted from Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). 1992. "CBD Article 2." <https://www.cbd.int/convention/articles?a=cbd-02>

industrial and municipal wastes), and the gases and liquids recovered from the decomposition of organic material

Biomass feedstock

Biomass, including biomass from waste, used to supply or fuel project activities

Biomass from waste

Biomass that, in the absence of a project, would be left in situ to decompose or would be collected for disposal (including incineration), treatment, or as part of a corrective management strategy. It does not include recycled or salvaged materials.

Biomass origin

The location of production or harvest, or the area of collection, of a biomass feedstock

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)

Cancellation

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 with 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 CO₂ storage for a GCS project and has a fracture stress higher than the reservoir fracture stress

Captured flare or vent gas

CH₄ that was previously flared or vented in a project activity's baseline and that is captured and used during the project activity

Carbon capture and storage (CCS)

GHG emission reduction or carbon dioxide removal activities that capture CO₂ 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.

Carbon dioxide removal (Removal)

A long-term atmospheric benefit attributable to a project activity that increases durably stored carbon stocks in geological, terrestrial, ocean, or product carbon pools, net of associated project and leakage emission. Removals include anthropogenic enhancement of biological or geochemical sinks, and transfers of biogenic carbon from short-term to long-term carbon pools. Removals exclude natural CO₂ uptake such as growth of natural forests. Removals exclude maintenance of declining carbon stocks. One carbon dioxide removal represents one metric tonne of CO₂ removed from the atmosphere.

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 CO₂

Child labor

The employment of child workers younger than the applicable required minimum age or workers under the age of 18 to perform work that is physically, socially, or morally dangerous or harmful; that deprives children of an education; or that requires a child to combine education with long hours and heavy work.

Climatic impact driver (CID)

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

Commercially 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 inappropriately enrich the person or entity to which the information relates

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

Competing claims to land or resource rights (Competing claims)²

Simultaneous, incompatible assertions by two or more parties regarding the same land or resource rights in a single area (e.g., where two parties independently claim exclusive use of a parcel of agricultural land). Competing claims may or may not be active disagreements and may affect the project proponent's right to operate and right to reductions and removals.

Confining layer

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

² Adapted from Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). 2002. Land Tenure and Rural Development. <https://www.fao.org/4/y4307e/y4307e00.pdf>

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

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 CO₂

Crediting period

- The time period for which GHG emission reductions or carbon dioxide 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 carbon dioxide 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”

Cropland

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

Customary rights³

Rights based on long-standing patterns of community lands, territories, and resource use or physical access, grounded in Indigenous People’s and local communities’ customary laws, values, customs, traditions, territorial affiliation, shared common property arrangements, and self-governance systems, including their diverse institutions and livelihood practices. National laws may or may not recognize customary rights.

Customary rights may extend to lands not permanently inhabited by Indigenous Peoples and local communities (e.g., due to displacement caused by conflict or land investments, through migratory patterns, transhumance, shifting cultivation, or seasonal access to land or resources).

Date of project inactivity

The end date of the monitoring period after which GHG emission reductions or carbon dioxide removals are no longer sought for crediting and the project is considered inactive by the respective GHG program

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

³ Adapted from United Nations Collaborative Initiative on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) (UN-REDD Programme). n.d. “Glossary.” <https://www.un-redd.org/glossary/customary-rights> and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). 2022. Guidelines on Recognition of Customary Tenure in Forested Landscapes. https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/ASEAN-Guidelines_On_CT_Recognition_V06.pdf

Deemed savings factor

A type of default factor used to estimate the GHG emission reductions or carbon dioxide 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 carbon dioxide removals and provide greater consistency of calculations across projects

Deforestation

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

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 claiming

Any situation in which the same GHG emission reduction or carbon dioxide removal is credited or claimed by more than one entity towards separate mitigation targets or emissions inventories. Double claiming does not include nested claims such as the same reduction or removal being claimed by a business and the jurisdiction(s) in which it operates. Double claiming includes when a GHG emission reduction or carbon dioxide removal is credited through the VCS Program and the same reductions and removals or GHG-related benefits are also credited or claimed through an emission trading program, binding emissions limit, or GHG-related environmental credit system. See definitions of “emissions trading program,” “binding emissions limit,” and “GHG-related environmental credit system.”

Double counting

Any situation in which the same GHG emission reduction or carbon dioxide removal is counted, claimed, or credited more than once. Double counting includes double issuance, double use, and double claiming.

Double issuance

Any situation in which the same GHG emission reduction or carbon dioxide removal is credited by two or more projects, or through two or more GHG programs. Double issuance includes when the same GHG emission reduction or carbon dioxide removal issued as a VCU by the VCS Program is also credited through another GHG program, and such credits have not been cancelled by the other GHG program. See definition of “GHG program” for further clarification of what constitutes double issuance.

Double selling

Any situation when one or more entities sell a unit representing the same GHG emission reduction or carbon dioxide removal, such that two or more entities would have the same interest (legal, beneficial or otherwise) in or to that unit at the same time. “Double sold” and “double sell” are construed accordingly

Double use

Any situation where a GHG emission reduction or carbon dioxide removal or GHG-related benefit is further sold, transferred, retired, used, or canceled after having already been retired or used

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

Durability

Characteristic of a project in which carbon stored in a given carbon pool (e.g., aboveground biomass, soil, geologic reservoirs) is likely to remain sequestered and not be emitted through a loss event for at least 40 years

Ecosystem⁴

A complex of plants, animals, and microorganisms interacting with one another and with their non-living environment, and functioning as a unit

Ecosystem conversion

Permanent or long-term transformation of an ecosystem into a different ecosystem type, characterized by substantial changes in ecological composition, structure, and function that result in loss or alteration of the original ecosystem services (e.g., land clearing, replacement of natural vegetation such as by crops or tree plantations or through vegetation clearing, permanent flooding such as by a reservoir, and drainage)

Ecosystem degradation

Reduction in an ecosystem's integrity over time, caused by an event, series of events, or persistent activity, either natural or anthropogenic

Ecosystem integrity

Ability of an ecosystem to support and sustain its natural ecological composition, function, and structure

Ecosystem restoration

Process of reversing ecosystem degradation to enhance ecosystem integrity toward a pre-disturbance or adapted state appropriate for the project context and consistent with scientific evidence

Emissions trading program

A voluntary or regulatory program or scheme that allows for trading in GHG credits or allowances (e.g., cap-and-trade emission trading schemes, such as the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) and European Union Emissions Trading System, baseline-and-credit systems such as Canada's Output Based Pricing System)

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

Forced labor

Any work for which someone has not offered himself or herself voluntarily; any work performed under threat of penalty; any work that is demanded as repayment for a loan or debt; any work for which the worker was recruited, transported, harbored, obtained, or received through the use of deception,

⁴ Adapted from Secretariat of the CBD. 1992. "CBD Article 2" <https://www.cbd.int/convention/articles?a=cbd-02>

intimidation, threat, force, or other forms of coercion for the purpose of exploitation; and any work performed by a prisoner that is not performed voluntarily or for which he or she does not receive pay.

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, and wetland forests

Forest degradation

Persistent reduction in canopy cover and/or carbon stocks in a forest due to human activities (e.g., animal grazing, fuelwood extraction, timber removal), 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”

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 carbon dioxide removals that it generates

Free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC)⁵

A safeguard to protect the rights of Indigenous peoples (IPs), as well as local communities (LCs) holding customary rights, that particularly relates to decision-making processes affecting IPs’ and LCs’ lands, territories, and resources. FPIC is an ongoing process where:

- consent is given voluntarily, without coercion, intimidation, manipulation, threats, bribery, or undue influence (“free”).
- consent is obtained at the earliest stages of project development, before key decisions are made or irreversible actions are taken (“prior”).
- IPs and LCs are fully and transparently informed, in a culturally appropriate manner, of all relevant information about the nature, scope, lifespan, likely participants, and potential impacts and assessments of a project (“informed”).
- IPs and LCs can grant, condition, or withhold collective consent to any aspect of a project that affects their lands, territories, and resources using their own customary decision-making processes, representatives, and institutions, prior to implementation of any activities that may affect them, their territories, or resources (“consent”).

For IPs, FPIC is a specific right recognized in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) related to sovereignty and the legal principle of self-determination.

Geological carbon mineralization (GCM)

GHG emission reduction or removal activities that store CO₂ in underground sinks through mineralization processes. It relies on chemical reactions of injected CO₂ with reservoir rock and fluids to immobilize and trap CO₂ permanently as carbonates or other solids. GCM is a type of geological carbon storage.

⁵ Adapted from United Nations Development Programme. 2022. SES Supplemental Guidance: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on Applying Free, Prior, Informed Consent (FPIC). UNDP. <https://ses-toolkit.info.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke446/files/SES%20Document%20Library/Uploaded%20October%202016/FINAL%20FPIC%20FAQ%20Guidance%20-%20June%2015%202022.pdf>

Geological carbon storage (GCS)

GHG emission reduction or removal activities that store CO₂ in underground sinks with the intention of permanent sequestration on geologic timescales. It includes CCS, GCM, and utilization of CO₂ in underground reservoirs

GCS pooled buffer account

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

GHG emission reduction (Reduction)

A long-term atmospheric benefit attributable to a project activity that reduces or avoids anthropogenic or natural GHG emissions into the atmosphere, net of associated project and leakage emissions. One GHG emissions reduction represents one metric tonne of CO₂ equivalent emissions reduced.

GHG program

A formal or organized program, system, or arrangement for the recognition of activities leading to GHG emission reductions or carbon dioxide removals, and/or the crediting or issuance of instruments representing or acknowledging GHG emission reductions or carbon dioxide removals. Some examples of a GHG program are any form of GHG crediting mechanism that issues carbon credits or offsets, such as international and independent programs (e.g., CDM, JI, ACR, CAR, Gold Standard), and any other carbon crediting mechanisms or offset systems administered by government agencies, such as the [Switzerland CO2 Attestations Crediting Mechanism](#) and [Canada's GHG Offset System](#).

GHG-related environmental credit system

A system for the crediting, issuance of instruments, or acknowledging activities that could be interpreted as having GHG emission reduction or carbon dioxide removal value. Examples of a GHG-related environmental credit system include, but are not limited to, energy attribute certificates (EAC); renewable energy certificates (REC); Guarantee of Origin (GO); or renewable thermal certificates (RTC).

GHG statement

A clearly identifiable, factual, and objective declaration made by the project proponent of the project's GHG emission reductions or carbon dioxide 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

An ecosystem dominated by herbaceous plants (e.g., bushlands, grassy woodlands, prairies, rangelands, steppes, savannahs), irrespective of human and/or animal activities such as grazing occurring on the land

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.

Grievance redress mechanism

A formal mechanism established by the project proponent for receiving, assessing, and resolving project grievances raised by project stakeholders, ensuring that stakeholder concerns are addressed in a fair, timely, and transparent manner, including provisions against retaliation and to prevent harm to stakeholders

Grouped project

A project with multiple project activity instances that allows the inclusion of new instances after registration

Grouped project eligibility area (Eligibility area)

Area within which new project activity instances of a grouped project may be added after registration

Human trafficking

The process through which individuals are placed or maintained in an exploitative situation for economic gain. This can include recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of an individual by means of threat or use of force or other form of coercion.

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

Indigenous Peoples (IPs)⁶

Groups that comprise:

- tribal peoples whose social, cultural, and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community, and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws and regulations
- peoples who are regarded as Indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited a country, or a geographic region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonization or the establishment of present state boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural, and political institutions

Self-identification is a fundamental criterion to identify Indigenous Peoples as there is no internationally recognized definition of IPs. Countries may use alternative terms, such as tribes, first peoples or nations, aborigines, ethnic groups, Adivasi, and Janajati. Occupational and geographic terms such as hunter-gatherers, nomads, peasants, and hill people also exist and, for all practical purposes, can be used interchangeably with “Indigenous Peoples.”

⁶ Adapted from General Council of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). 1989. “ILO Convention No. 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples.”

https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C169

Initial crediting period start date

Start date of the first project crediting period and the date on which GHG emission reductions or carbon dioxide removals resulting from the project activity begin to occur. Methodologies may set out criteria to determine initial crediting period start date.

Initial project activity instance (Initial instance)

Project activity instance that has either been implemented or planned in sufficient detail to enable assessment of baseline scenario and additionality at project validation

Injection zone

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

Instance

See definition of “project activity 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

Invasive species

A non-native species whose introduction and spread by human activity either accidentally or intentionally may cause socio-cultural, economic, or environmental harm or harm to human health as set out in the [Global Invasive Species Database](#) and/or a jurisdictional registry which takes precedence over any global dataset

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 carbon dioxide 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 carbon dioxide 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 carbon dioxide 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

Administrative unit such as a nation, state, province, region, department, or district, or an eco-region or other demarcated area. For Jurisdictional and Nested REDD+ projects, the jurisdiction is defined by the jurisdictional proponent, and for non-nested projects is defined by Verra.

Jurisdictional and Nested REDD+ (JNR)

The approach in the VCS Program by which reduced emissions from deforestation, reduced emissions from degradation, and carbon dioxide 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 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 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 right to operate in respect of the jurisdictional REDD+ program

Jurisdictional REDD+ program

A 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 measures, implemented as GHG mitigation activities, and described in a jurisdictional program description. Also referred to as “program” or “jurisdictional program.” A jurisdictional REDD+ program may establish and operationalize rules and requirements for nesting projects and lower-level jurisdictional programs. The VCS Program rules applicable to projects are also applicable to programs.

Label (VCU label, Verra unit label)

A 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

Land or resource rights

Rights to land, territories, or natural resources within or adjacent to a project area. These rights include:

- property rights, as well as rights to access, use, exclude others from, control, market, and manage resources.
- rights held by different rights holders with overlapping claims or competing claims, regardless of whether the claims are recognized or fully formalized under the national legal framework (e.g., identified, mapped, documented, or registered).

Large project

A project that generates 300 000 tonnes of CO₂e or more of GHG emissions reductions or carbon dioxide 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 geological or weather-related events)

Leakage

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

Leakage area

Sum of individual leakage belts, which need not be contiguous

Leakage belt

Geographic area around a project area, in which activity-shifting leakage is expected to occur

Leakage management zone

Discrete geographic area outside of a project area, in which project activities are implemented to reduce the risk of activity-shifting leakage (e.g., 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

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, fumic, 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

Local communities (LCs)⁷

Groups that meet all of the following conditions:

- Traditionally hold and use lands and resources collectively under customary and/or statutory tenure
- Are socially bound by a common identity and a shared interest in local resources for cultural, livelihood, and economic advancement, whether they live in a specified physical area or not (e.g., transhumant or nomadic)
- Do not self-identify as Indigenous Peoples

Long-term carbon pool

A carbon pool where carbon stocks are maintained for more than 100 years but may be regularly exchanged with atmospheric carbon (e.g., stable forests or biochar)

Long-Term Monitoring System (LTMS)

System for remotely monitoring agriculture, forestry, and other land use (AFOLU) projects, detecting loss events, and quantifying reversals

Loss event

In an AFOLU project or jurisdictional REDD+ program, an event or group of events that results in a loss of carbon stock from pools included in a project or program boundary, where the loss is expected to be maintained under the project scenario and is equivalent to:

- more than 5% of previously verified net GHG emission reductions in an AFOLU project or jurisdictional REDD+ program that generates GHG emission reductions (e.g., resulting from illegal logging in the project area of a logged to protected forest (LtPF) project, natural disturbances like fire and hurricanes in a REDD project area, construction of roads or other infrastructure not included in the baseline of a jurisdictional program)
- more than 5% of previously verified net carbon dioxide removals in an AFOLU project that generates carbon dioxide removals (e.g., resulting from illegal logging or fire in a planted forest, increased tillage in an ALM project where tillage had previously been reduced)

In a GCS project, an event that constitutes a non-negligible CO₂ containment loss

Loss event report

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

⁷ Adapted from Larson A., A. Frechette, H. Ojha, et al. 2022. "Land Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities." In *The Land Gap Report*, edited by K. Dooley, H. Keith, A. Larson, et al. https://landgap.org/downloads/2022/Land-Gap-Report_Chapter-4.pdf

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

Marginalized people⁸

People within a given culture, context, and history who face systemic and longer-term discrimination or exclusion from societal benefits due to their identity (e.g., due to age, sex, gender, ethnicity, race, religion, or belief)

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 carbon dioxide removals, and specifying the monitoring procedures

Methodology development and review process

The process by which new or revised methodologies, modules, and tools are developed and reviewed in 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 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

⁸ Adapted from United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN ESCWA). "Glossary." <https://www.unescwa.org/sd-glossary/marginalized-groups>

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 set of criteria and procedures that apply to specific project activities and are used to perform a specific task in conjunction with a methodology. Various methodologies may refer to the same module.

Monitoring report

- The document that records data to allow the assessment of the GHG emission reductions or carbon dioxide 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 carbon dioxide 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

Monoculture

A crop or a population of a single species

Native species

A species that has been observed in the region, is naturally occurring and self-sustaining as demonstrated by peer-reviewed literature, expert judgement, or government registry

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.

Nested project

A registered REDD+ project, that is not currently subject to a grandfathering 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 with the VCS Program

Net GHG emission reductions and carbon dioxide removals (Net reductions and removals)

Total GHG emission reductions and carbon dioxide removals net of project and leakage emissions, and including deductions for uncertainty where relevant

Non-native species

A species that is not endemic to the region, or is not projected to exist in the ecosystem, as demonstrated by peer-reviewed literature, expert judgement, or government registry

Non-negligible CO₂ containment loss

Movement of CO₂ 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 tCO₂, 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 CO₂ or CH₄. 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 area

Forest area (or area converted to forest or otherwise revegetated) within a jurisdiction, but outside project boundaries or nested subnational jurisdiction boundaries, that is included in the accounting of GHG emissions and reductions and/or removals (e.g., areas where reductions or removals are generated through 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 with the VCS Program

Official translation

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

Overlapping claims to land or resource rights (Overlapping claims)⁹

Where two or more parties claim different and co-existing land or resource rights in the same area (e.g., one party may have a property right, another may have a license or a concession title granted by a government, and a further party may have a customary right with respect to the land)

Partial release representation

The deed issued by project proponents and the Verra Registry, made in respect of a project proponent leaving a project, and which is prepared using an applicable template (e.g., *Deed of Partial Release in*

⁹ Adapted from FAO. 2002. Land Tenure and Rural Development. <https://www.fao.org/4/y4307e/y4307e00.pdf>

Respect of VCS Listing Deed of Representation Template, Deed of Partial Release in Respect of VCS Registration Deed of Representation Template)

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 CO₂e per unit of output, tonnes of CO₂e 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 rules

Pore space tenure

The legal instrument that provides the exclusive subsurface right to inject CO₂ into the target geologic reservoir for permanent CO₂ 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-closure period

The period extending indefinitely after GCS storage site closure

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 (PISC)

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

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 carbon dioxide removals

Program crediting period

See definition of “crediting period”

Program initial crediting period start date

See definition of “initial crediting period start date”

Program sensitive information

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 project or program, or damage national security

Program start date

See definition of “project start date”

Project

An initiative established by one or more project proponents to implement project activities that reduce GHG emissions or remove carbon dioxide and encompassing all associated actions necessary for participation in a GHG program

Project activity

A specific set of technologies, measures, and/or outcomes, set out in a methodology applied to a project, that alter the conditions identified in the baseline scenario, represent a change at the project site, and result in GHG emission reductions or carbon dioxide removals. Equivalent to “program activity”

Project activity instance (Instance)

Smallest standalone unit of a project activity that enables the generation of GHG emission reductions or carbon dioxide removals in conformance to the applied methodology (e.g., cookstove, home solar system, landfill gas facility, discrete management unit of forest, farm, grassland, or wetland)

Project area

Geographic area in which project activities leading to the generation of GHG emission reductions or carbon dioxide removals are implemented. A project area does not include roads, water bodies, waterways, settlements, or other areas where project activities are not implemented.

Project boundary

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

Project crediting period

See definition of “crediting period”

Project initial crediting period start date

See definition of “initial crediting period start date”

Project description

Document that describes the project's GHG emission reduction or carbon dioxide removal activities and that uses the *VCS Project Description Template*, an approved combined project description template, or a digital template via the Verra Project Hub

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 *Registration and Issuance Process*

Project grievance¹⁰

A project-related issue, concern, problem, or claim (perceived or actual) that an individual or group wants to have addressed and resolved (e.g., issues regarding overlapping claims or competing claims to land or resource rights, or conflicts)

Project lifetime

The time period over which project activities are implemented

Project longevity

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 pipeline

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

Project proponent

Individual or organization that has overall control of, and responsibility and accountability for, a project, or an individual or organization that together with others, each of which is also a project proponent, has overall control of, and responsibility and accountability for a project. Such entities can demonstrate the right to operate and the right to reductions and removals.

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 sensitive information

See definition of "program sensitive information."

¹⁰ Adapted from ICAT. 2020. Stakeholder Participation Guide, edited by J. C. Durbin and S. Vincent. CCBA, Verra, and ICAT. <https://climateactiontransparency.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Stakeholder-Participation-Assessment-Guide.pdf>

Project start date

The date on which the first significant action to implement the project activity is undertaken. Where the applied methodology does not set out criteria to determine project start date, the first significant action to implement the project activity is:

- execution of the first written agreement or legally binding document committing to implement or construct the project activity (e.g., contract for major project expenditures) or
- where the project activity does not involve such commitments, the first physical action undertaken to implement the project activity.

Equivalent to “program start date”

Project worker

A person directly working on project implementation in return for compensation (financial or otherwise), including employees (in managerial and operational positions), contracted workers, sub-contracted workers, and community members

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

Reference region

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

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

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

For high-income countries,¹¹ project activities are not mandated by any law or regulatory framework. For all other countries, project activities are not mandated by any systematically enforced law or 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)

Renewable biomass

Biomass produced or harvested in a manner that maintains stable or increasing carbon stocks over time; does not negatively impact existing ecosystems or food and water security; maintains land use; and meets all relevant regulations

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 to denote it has been used by the owner in a claim.

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, does not meet the definitions of afforestation and reforestation, and falls under the *IPCC 2003 Good Practice Guidance* land category of *non-forest remaining non-forest*

Reversal

A situation where the net reductions and removals in any monitoring period are negative. The size of a reversal is calculated as the difference between the current total to-date net reductions and removals of a project or program and the total to-date net reductions and removals of the project or program at the previous verification.

Rewetting

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

¹¹ As classified by the World Bank, available at:

<https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519-world-bank-country-and-lending-groups>

Right to operate

The legal right, and where customary rights exist, consent from customary rights holders, to control and operate project activities and access the project area

Right to reductions and removals

The full and exclusive legal and equitable title and rights to all and any GHG emission reductions or carbon dioxide removals generated by a project during the crediting period for which a project proponent is eligible to request VCU issuance. Where customary rights exist, such legal and equitable title includes consent from any customary rights holders that fully and validly transfers to the issuance representor those rights to the reductions and removals generated.

Safeguard

A measure designed to prevent negative environmental, social, and governance impacts of projects, ensuring that climate mitigation efforts do no harm and uphold human rights (including Indigenous Peoples' rights, where relevant)

Scope 3 emissions double claiming

A situation where an organization reports the same GHG emission reductions or carbon dioxide removals in its Scope 3 emissions statement as are also associated with a project registered with the VCS Program

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*¹²

Sequestration zone

The subsurface intended for permanent storage of CO₂ for GCS projects

Short-term carbon pool

A carbon pool that is not a long-term carbon pool (e.g., biomass residues from agricultural or industrial activities)

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

¹²Greenhouse 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

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

Stakeholder

Any individual, organization, or entity that can potentially affect or be affected by a project

Stakeholder engagement¹³

A continual process that encompasses activities and interactions with stakeholders with the objective of building trust, mitigating risks, and enhancing a project's legitimacy and sustainability. Stakeholder engagement begins prior to the project start date and occurs throughout the project lifetime.

Stakeholder group

A group of individual stakeholders who derive similar income, livelihood, well-being and/or cultural values from a project, or who might be similarly impacted by the project, and whose values are different from those of other groups (e.g., Indigenous Peoples, small communities that have homogeneous patterns of social organization, political structure, and livelihoods, women, youth, other social, cultural, and economic groups). Stakeholder groups are often segments of a population rather than officially designated assemblages.

Stakeholder groups may include, for example, people living in the vicinity of the project, local municipalities, project employees, communities using resources in the project area, the operator of a plant or factory, and local environmental organizations.

Stakeholder private and confidential information

Information or data received during FPIC and stakeholder engagement that relates to security, livelihoods, or rights violations and that, if compromised, misused, or disclosed without authorization, could cause harm (directly or indirectly), discrimination, or other negative consequences for an individual or organization

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 CO₂ storage in a GCS project

Storage site closure

A milestone at the end of a GCS project's life cycle, denoted by the end of CO₂ 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

¹³ Adapted from UNDP. Social and Environmental Safeguards – Stakeholder Engagement Guidance Note.

https://ses-toolkit.info.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke446/files/SES%20Document%20Library/Social%20and%20Environmental%20Standards/UNDP%20SES%20Stakeholder%20Engagement%20GN_Oct2017.pdf

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 products whose GHG emission footprints are impacted by project activities.

Sustainable development contribution (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 set of criteria and procedures that apply to specific project activities and are used to perform a specific analysis in conjunction with a methodology. Various methodologies may refer to the same tool.

Unavoidable reversal

A reversal over which the project proponent has no control, that occurs in an AFOLU project (e.g., due to natural disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes, flooding, drought, fires, tornados and winter storms, human-induced events such as acts of terrorism, crime, or war). Encroachment by outside actors (e.g., logging, mining, or fuelwood collection) may be considered unavoidable where it is demonstrably and unambiguously unforeseeable and out of the project proponent's control.

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

Upstream displacement activity

A project activity that reduces GHG emissions upstream of where the project activity is implemented, such as through product substitution, fuel switching, decreased demand for a given activity, product, or service, or other forms of displacement (e.g., displacing high-carbon products with lower-carbon alternatives). This does not include project activities that displace electricity from an electrical grid

Validation

The independent assessment of the project by a validation/verification body that determines whether the project conforms to 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 to 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 to 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 carbon dioxide removals

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 periodically

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 carbon dioxide 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 to 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 carbon dioxide 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 CO₂ 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 Project Hub

Online platform (<https://projecthub.verra.org/>) that hosts a comprehensive set of applications and tools for listing, registering, and managing projects in Verra's programs

Verra Registry

The platform that records all projects and programs (listed and registered) and VCUs issued by 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

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 carbon dioxide removals generated by a project or program during a single vintage period

Vintage period

The time period in which a particular set of GHG emission reductions or carbon dioxide removals are generated. A vintage period is a calendar year, or where the start or end date of a verification period occurs mid-year, the vintage period is a portion of the calendar year, starting on 1 January or ending on 31 December.

Violent conflict¹⁴

A disagreement between parties over fundamental needs, values, or interests, expressed through violence or the use or threat of armed force. Violent conflict varies in its form (direct violence or structural violence), location (confined to specific geographic areas or widespread), actors (some groups may be involved in combat, while others are displaced by it), and over time (particularly for protracted violent conflicts).

Vulnerable people¹⁵

People who are susceptible to harm or risks due to circumstances, temporary states, or inherent attributes (e.g., elderly people, mentally and physically disabled people, children and youth, internally displaced people and returning refugees, HIV/AIDS-affected individuals and households)

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

¹⁴ Adapted from UNDP. 2012. Toolkit and Guidance for Preventing and Managing Land and Natural Resources Conflict. https://www.un.org/en/land-natural-resources-conflict/pdfs/GN_Land%20and%20Conflict.pdf

¹⁵ Adapted from UN ESCWA. "Glossary." <https://archive.unescwa.org/vulnerable-groups>

3 ACRONYMS

AcoGS	Avoiding conversion of grasslands and shrublands
AFOLU	Agriculture, forestry, and other land use
ALM	Agricultural land management
AOR	Area of review
ARR	Afforestation, reforestation, and revegetation
CCS	Carbon capture and storage
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
CID	Climatic impact driver
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FPIC	Free, prior, and informed consent
GCM	Geological carbon mineralization
GCS	Geological carbon storage
GHG	Greenhouse gas
IFM	Improved forest management
IPs	Indigenous Peoples
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
JI	Joint Implementation program
JNR	Jurisdictional and Nested REDD+
LCs	Local communities
LtPF	Logged to protected forests
PIAP	Post-injection assessment period
PISC	Post-injection site care
REDD	Reduced emissions from deforestation and degradation
RS	Remote sensing
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USDW	Underground sources of drinking water
VCS	Verified Carbon Standard
VCU	Verified Carbon Unit
WB	Validation/verification body
WRC	Wetland restoration and conservation

DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version	Date	Comment
v5.0	16 Dec 2025	Updated version released under VCS Version 5



ABOUT VERRA

Verra sets the world's leading standards for climate action and sustainable development. We build standards for activities as diverse as reducing deforestation, improving agricultural practices, addressing plastic waste, and achieving gender equality. We manage programs to certify that these activities achieve measurable high-integrity outcomes. 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](#).



Standards for a
Sustainable Future



**Verified Carbon
Standard**



**Jurisdictional and Nested
REDD+ Framework**



**Climate, Community
& Biodiversity Standards**



**Scope 3
Standard**



**Sustainable Development
Verified Impact Standard**



**Plastic Waste
Reduction Standard**