VCS VERSION 5: OVERVIEW OF VCS PROGRAM UPDATES AND EFFECTIVE DATES

Release Date: 16 December 2025

Last updated: 27 October 2026

This document provides an overview of the updates to the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) Program rules released in VCS Version 5. Updates include new requirements and revisions to the existing requirements in the *VCS Standard, v4.7* and other program documents.

The table below provides the effective dates of these updates. Updates are effective immediately unless otherwise specified below. More information about effective dates and how they should be interpreted can be found in the *VCS Program Guide, v5.0.*

Updated versions of all templates and representations have been released throughout 2026. New templates will have an effective date of 1 July 2027, to align with the effective dates of most program updates.

Project proponents may choose to be validated or verified to VCS Version 5 before its effective dates, under the following conditions:

- The project must conform to all VCS Version 5 requirements. The following exceptions apply:
  - Updates whose effective date is based on the project start date and listing dates do not yet apply.[1]
  - Updates whose effective dates are based on the next crediting period renewal request or verification approval request that includes baseline reassessment only apply to projects making such requests.

[1] These are updates V5#49 (project start date and initial crediting period start date), V5#14 (right to operate and right to reductions and removals), V5#16 (stakeholder engagement requirements), V5#58 (financial transparency for benefit sharing), V5#17 (safeguard requirements), and V5#23 (ecosystem conversion safeguards). For example, a project with a project start date prior to 1 July 2027 may validate under VCS Version 5 prior to 1 July 2027 while applying the VCS Standard, v4.7 requirements pertaining to safeguards and stakeholder engagement, among others. If the project was listed on the Verra Registry prior to 16 December 2025, it may continue to apply VCS Version 4 start date requirements.

- The project proponent must use an applicable version (v5.0A or v5.0B) of the *VCS Project Description Template, VCS Monitoring Report Template*, or *VCS Project Description and Monitoring Report Template*.
- A validation/verification body must validate and/or verify the project in accordance with VCS Version 5 using an applicable version (v5.0A or v5.0B) of the *VCS Validation Report Template, VCS Verification Report Template,* or *VCS Validation and Verification Report Template*.

1.1 Updates for Project Eligibility, Design, Implementation and Reporting

The following updates are listed together because they are related to project eligibility, design, implementation, and reporting, including monitoring and quantification of reductions and removals. Project proponents and VVBs should review these updates carefully to ensure they conform to all updates by the effective dates listed below.

Effective for new project registration requests only

ID#	Description of Update	Affected Documents & Section Numbers	Effective Date
V5#49	**Project start date and initial crediting period start date** In the *VCS Program Definitions,* revised definitions were added for "project start date" and "initial crediting period start date" (formerly "crediting period start date"). Other definitions were revised or removed for "jurisdictional REDD+ program," "program," "program crediting period start date," "program start date," "project," and "project activity." In the *VCS Standard,* tables with examples of how project start date and initial crediting period start date for all project types can be determined were included. Examples and further guidance or criteria will be incorporated into methodologies over time. All projects are now required to submit a pipeline listing request within 1 year of the initial crediting period start date (*VCS Standard, v5.0,* section 3.8.2). Registration timeline milestones have been revised to "initial crediting period start date" and "initial registration request."	*VCS Standard, v5.0,* section 3.7, section 3.8.1 – 3.8.3 *VCS Program Definitions, v5.0* *VCS Methodology Requirements, v5.0,* section 3.2.6, new section 3.8	Updates to the *VCS Standard* and *VCS Program Definitions:* Effective for all registration requests submitted on or after 1 July 2027, except for registration requests received after 1 July 2027 from projects which were already listed as *under validation* on the Verra Registry on or before 16 December 2025. *VCS Standard, v5.0,* section 3.8.2 (requirement to submit pipeline listing within 1 year of initial crediting period start date, for all project types) is only effective for pipeline listing requests submitted on or after 1 July 2027. Updates to the *VCS Methodology Requirements*: Effective immediately for all new and revised methodologies under development for which public consultation has not yet started

V5#43	**Removal of "approved GHG programs" and CER conversions** The concept of "approved greenhouse gas (GHG) programs" has been removed, which means gap validations are no longer permitted. Projects registered with other GHG programs may still register with the VCS Program in accordance with the VCS Program rules after the date of inactivity in the other GHG Program. Verra will also stop accepting Certified Emission Reduction (CER) conversion requests. Projects registering with the VCS Program that were previously registered with another GHG program must establish the project crediting period in accordance with VCS Program rules (i.e., the crediting period length is no longer restricted to the shorter of the VCS Program crediting period length and the other GHG program crediting period length) In the *VCS Program Definitions,* the definition for "approved GHG programs" and "VCU conversion representation" were removed. The definition for "project description" was revised.	*VCS Program Guide, v5.0,* section 5-6. Section 8 and Appendix 2 from *v4.4* was removed. *VCS Standard, v5.0,* section 3.4.1, 3.13.2, 3.21.3 – 3.21.7, 4.1.9, 4.1.15. Sections 3.1.7- 3.1.8, 3.9.7, 4.1.8 from *v4.7* were removed. *VCS Program Definitions, v5.0* *VCS Methodology Requirements, v5.0,* section 2.3.8, 2.10, 3.5.2(1) *Registration and Issuance Process, v5.0,* section 4.2.12. Sections 4.2.15 – 4.2.18, 4.4.5 and Appendix 1 from *v4.6* were removed. *Procedure for Applying the AFOLU Non-Permanence Risk Tool, v5.0,* section 2.2.1(3), Table 1 Q3(h)	Updates to all documents: Effective for all registration requests submitted on or after 1 July 2027 New CER conversion requests will not be accepted after 28 February 2026

Effective for all new project registration requests and some project requests from registered projects

#ID	Description of Update	Affected Documents & Section Numbers	Effective Date
V5#101	**Crediting period renewal and baseline reassessment intervals** Crediting period lengths have been set to 5 years for many project types to ensure that projects update to an active methodology and reassess their baselines at more frequent intervals, and to create more consistency and alignment with the market.	*VCS Standard, v5.0,* sections 3.2.3 – 3.2.5, 3.8.4 - 3.8.11 *Geological Carbon Storage (GCS) Requirements, v5.0,* section 3.3 from *v4.1* was removed.	**Baseline reassessment intervals** **For the following project types:** Improved Forest Management (IFM), REDD where the baseline is not allocated from jurisdictional level data, Avoided Conversion of Grasslands and Shrublands (ACoGS), and Conservation of Intact Wetlands (CIW) • Effective for all registration requests submitted on or after 1 July 2027[2] • For registered projects, updated requirements are effective from the next crediting period renewal request or verification

[2] Example: A project currently under validation which submits their initial registration request on 1 August 2027 must apply the 5-year baseline reassessment interval.

	For projects with longer crediting periods (i.e., certain agriculture, forestry, and other land use (AFOLU) projects), baseline reassessment intervals have been shortened to 5 years or in accordance with the applied methodology for the same reasons. Procedures for conducting baseline reassessment have been revised for clarity.		approval request that includes a baseline reassessment submitted on or after 1 July 2027.[3] • For registered projects with a 6 or 10-year baseline reassessment interval that is validated and submitted in a registration request, crediting period renewal request, or verification approval request that includes a baseline reassessment before 1 July 2027: o The project may continue to use the 6 or 10-year baseline for verification approval requests submitted before 1 January 2030. o For verification approval requests submitted on or after 1 January 2030, the 6 or 10-year baseline may only be used for monitoring periods that fall within the first 5 years of the baseline validity period. After this point, the baseline must be reassessed in accordance with the update requirements.[4] **For the following project types:** REDD where the baseline is allocated from jurisdictional level data, Agricultural Land Management (ALM) with SOC stock change, Afforestation, Reforestation and Revegetation (ARR), and Restoring Wetland Ecosystems (RWE) • Baseline reassessment intervals are determined in accordance with the applied methodology. **For all other project types** • Baseline reassessment is done at crediting period renewal (see below). **Crediting period length and renewal** **For Geological Carbon Storage (GCS) projects:** • Effective immediately for projects that initiate listing on the Verra Registry on or after 16 December 2025

[3] Example: An IFM project has a baseline valid for 10 years from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2025. The project proponent submits a verification approval request that includes a baseline reassessment on 1 August 2027. The new baseline is valid for 5 years, and the baseline reassessment interval is 5 years moving forward.

[4] Example: A project has a 10-year baseline validity period (BVP) from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2031. Verification approval requests for any monitoring period using this BVP may be submitted until 31 Dec 2029. After this date, verification requests can only cover monitoring periods that fall within the first five years of the 10-year BVP (i.e., until 31 Dec 2026). To verify any monitoring periods occurring after this date, the baseline must be reassessed in accordance with the new requirements.

			• For projects which initiated listing on the Verra Registry before 16 December 2025: the transition to 5-year renewal of crediting period and maximum crediting period of 45 years is effective at their first crediting period renewal request.[5] **For the following project types:** Energy and industry (E&I), ALM without SOC stock change, Livestock Systems (LS) • Effective for all registration requests submitted on or after 1 July 2027 • For registered projects with a fixed 10-year crediting period: No change • For registered projects with a renewable crediting period of 7 years (twice renewable) or other previously allowed crediting periods:[6] The transition to 5-year renewal of crediting periods is effective at the next crediting period renewal request submitted on or after 1 July 2027. Registered projects may retain their original maximum crediting period.[7] **For the following project types**: ALM with SOC stock change, ARR, IFM, REDD, Wetland Restoration and Conservation (WRC), and ACoGS • No change (see changes to baseline reassessment intervals, above)
V5#02	**Regulatory surplus** Changed differentiation between regulatory surplus demonstration requirements from UNFCCC Annex 1 and non-Annex 1 countries to high-income countries and all other countries. Clarified that regulatory surplus must also be demonstrated at baseline reassessment, in	*VCS Standard, v5.0,* section 3.13.1 *VCS Program Definitions, v5.0* *VCS Methodology Requirements, v5.0*, section 3.5.3, 3.5.7, 3.5.9	Updates to the *VCS Standard* and *VCS Program Definitions*: Effective for all registration requests, crediting period renewal requests, and verification approval requests that include a baseline reassessment submitted on or after 1 July 2027 Updates to the *VCS Methodology Requirements:* Effective immediately for all new and revised methodologies under development

[5] Example: A GCS project initiated listing on the Verra Registry on 1 July 2025. It has a first crediting period from 1 January 2029 to 31 December 2035. The project proponent submits a crediting period renewal request on 1 October 2036 and must transition to 5-year crediting periods, starting on 1 January 2036. The maximum crediting period is 45 years (1 x 7 years + 7 x 5 years + 1 x 3 years).

[6] For example, projects that were registered under earlier versions of the VCS Program may have been validated with a maximum 30-year crediting period.

[7] Example: A project has a first crediting period from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2030. At the next renewal of the crediting period, the project must transition to 5-year crediting periods. The second crediting period will be from 1 January 2031 to 31 December 2035, and the third crediting period will be from 1 January 2036 to 31 December 2040. Since the maximum crediting period of 21 years is retained, the project may renew for an additional crediting period from 1 January 2041 to 31 December 2044.

	addition to validation and crediting period renewal. In the *VCS Program Definitions,* the definition for "regulatory surplus" was revised.		
V5#78	**Grouped project requirements** New rules for grouped projects require that: • capacity limits apply at the project level, not the instance level. • Instances are added in batches via a *Grouped Project Batch Report Template,* available on the Verra website. • instances added in a batch have been implemented in the monitoring period during which they are added. • grouped project eligibility areas align with the physical boundary of a jurisdiction and do not span more than one country Other updates were made to streamline the clarity and layout of section 3.5 "Project Design" of the *VCS Standard.* In the *VCS Program Definitions,* definitions were added or revised for "project activity instance (instance)," "grouped project," "grouped project eligibility area," "initial project activity instance," and "jurisdiction."	*VCS Standard, v5.0,* sections 3.2.9 – 3.2.10, 3.5, 3.9.3 *VCS Program Definitions, v5.0*	Updates to the *VCS Standard*: The following requirements are effective for all registration requests submitted on or after 1 July 2027: • Capacity limits apply at the project-level (*VCS Standard, v5.0,* sections 3.5.12 – 3.5.13) • Grouped project eligibility areas align with jurisdictional boundaries and do not span more than one country (*VCS Standard, v5.0,* section 3.5.4) The following requirements are effective for all project requests submitted on or after 1 July 2027: • Instances are added in batches via a Batch Inclusion Form, and instances must have been implemented in the monitoring period during which they are added (*VCS Standard, v5.0,* sections 3.5.8 – 3.5.11) • All other clarification and streamlining updates made to the *VCS Standard, v5.0,* section 3.5 Updates to the *VCS Program Definitions:* Effective 1 July 2027
V5#14	**Right to operate and right to reductions and removals** Clarified and enhanced requirements for project proponents to hold the right to operate and the right to reductions and removals, including requirements for the analysis needed to substantiate these rights. Added new requirements for project proponents to conduct a land or resource rights analysis where such rights are affected by the project. The analysis will:	*VCS Program Guide, v5.0,* section 2.6.1 *VCS Standard, v5.0,* section 3.6 *VCS Program Definitions, v5.0* *VCS Methodology Requirements, v5.0,* Appendix 1 *GCS Requirements, v5.0,* sections 2.1.1 – 2.1.2, 2.1.5 – 2.1.6 *Registration and Issuance Process, v5.0,* section 4.2.3 – 4.2.5, 4.2.11	Updates to all documents: Effective for registration requests from projects with a project start date that occurs on or after 1 July 2027 Effective from the next crediting period renewal request or verification approval request that includes a baseline reassessment submitted on or after 1 January 2030, as follows: • To conform to the *VCS Standard, v5.0,* sections 3.6.1 and 3.6.2, project proponents must demonstrate the right to operate and right to reductions and removals substantiated by an analysis of applicable laws,

	• identify and analyze claims to land or resource rights, and • conclude whether additional measures are necessary to establish the right to operate and right to reductions and removals (e.g., obtaining free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) from customary rights holders and Indigenous Peoples (IPs)). In the *VCS Program Definitions,* definitions have been added or revised for "right to operate" (formerly "project ownership" and "program ownership"), "right to reductions and removals" (formerly "proof of right"), "land or resource rights" (formerly "property rights"), "competing claims to land or resource rights (competing claims)," "overlapping claims to land or resource rights (overlapping claims,)" "project proponent," "violent conflict," and "customary rights." Definition was removed for "customary rights holder." This terminology has been incorporated throughout all other program documents.	*Procedure for Applying the AFOLU Non-Permanence Risk Tool, v5.0,* section 2.2.4(2), 2.3.1, Table 6	regulations, and legal instruments at verification, in accordance with the guidance in the *VCS Project Description Template* and *VCS Monitoring Report Template*. • Where land or resource rights are affected, to conform to the *VCS Standard, v5.0,* section 3.6.7, project proponents must conduct a land or resource rights analysis, using the provided template and guidance in accordance with the *VCS Standard, v5.0,* sections 3.6.3 – 3.6.6.
V5#16	**Stakeholder engagement requirements** Clarified that meaningful stakeholder engagement must occur before the project start date. Introduced requirements to develop and implement a stakeholder engagement plan that is tailored to stakeholders' needs and required levels of engagement (e.g., FPIC from customary rights holders and IPs, enabling influence from directly affected stakeholders, collaborating with key enabling stakeholders). Enhanced FPIC requirements with revised definitions for customary rights, IPs, local communities (LCs), and FPIC, including to reach a written project implementation agreement, that includes terms of the benefit sharing mechanism, where relevant. Strengthened grievance redress mechanism requirements, including explicit requirements to	*VCS Standard, v5.0*, section 3.17.1 – 3.17.11, 3.17.17 – 3.17.23 *VCS Program Definitions, v5.0*	Updates to all documents: Effective for registration requests from projects with a project start date that occurs on or after 1 July 2027 For existing projects, effective from the next crediting period renewal request or verification approval request that includes a baseline reassessment submitted on or after 1 January 2030, as follows: Updates to the *VCS Standard, v5.0:* • To conform to section 3.17.3, project proponents must prepare a stakeholder engagement plan for verification using the *VCS Stakeholder Engagement Plan Template*, in accordance with sections 3.17.1 – 3.17.2, and are exempt from the clause "before the project start date." • To conform to section 3.17.6, project proponents must prepare a stakeholder input tracker for verification.

	make the mechanism available to stakeholders at the earliest stages of project development. In the *VCS Program Definitions,* a definition was added for "grievance redress mechanism."		• Where the conditions in section 3.17.11 apply to the project, project proponents must ensure ongoing consent in accordance with sections 3.17.18-3.17.19 but are exempt from conditions related to the project implementation agreement (section 3.17.17). • To conform to sections 3.17.22 and 3.17.23, project proponents must update their grievance redress mechanism for verification and are exempt from the clause "before the project start date."
V5#58	**Financial transparency for benefit sharing** Expanded requirement for project proponents to design a benefit-sharing mechanism jointly with rights holders where land or resource rights are impacted and customary rights holders or IPs are identified in the project area. New requirement for project proponents to provide benefit-sharing mechanism participants with financial information on the project's revenues and costs. New requirements that enable in-kind benefits to be included in the mechanism and clarify what does not constitute a benefit. New requirement to co-develop a plan with mechanism participants for the continuing function and utility of in-kind benefits related to long-term infrastructure not necessary to implement project activities.	*VCS Standard, v5.0,* sections 3.17.12 – 3.17.16	Updates to all documents: Effective for registration requests from projects with a project start date that occurs on or after 1 July 2027 Effective from the next crediting period renewal request or verification approval request that includes a baseline reassessment submitted on or after 1 January 2030, as follows: • Where the conditions in the *VCS Standard, v5.0,* section 3.17.12 apply to the project, project proponents must design and implement a benefit-sharing mechanism in accordance with the *VCS Standard, v5.0*, sections 3.17.13 - 3.17.16, where one did not previously exist or update an existing mechanism accordingly.
V5#17	**Safeguards requirements** Clarified that project proponents must assess risks and apply adaptive management to enhance protections to stakeholders and the environment, as follows: • conduct an environmental, social, and governance risk assessment to evaluate the potential negative impacts of the project • design commensurate mitigation measures that address the safeguards	*VCS Standard, v5.0*, sections 3.1.6, 3.18 *VCS Program Definitions, v5.0*	Updates to all documents: Effective for registration requests from projects with a project start date that occurs on or after 1 July 2027 Effective from the next crediting period renewal request or verification approval request that includes a baseline reassessment submitted on or after 1 January 2030, with respect to the following: • To conform to the *VCS Standard, v5.0,* section 3.18.3, project proponents must prepare the risk assessment, including the mitigation measures that address the safeguards requirements set out in the *VCS Standard,*

	requirements and any other risks identified in the assessment • implement the mitigation measures • monitor project risks and the effectiveness of mitigation measures, throughout the project lifetime and apply adaptive management to ensure mitigation measures remain effective. Enhanced governance requirements (e.g., anti-corruption, anti-money laundering, illegal activities, emergency preparedness and response). Enhanced social safeguard requirements, including for gender equality, and armed personnel. In the *VCS Program Definitions,* definitions were added or revised for "commercially sensitive information" and "program sensitive information" (formerly "sensitive information,") "free, prior and informed consent (FPIC)," "Indigenous Peoples (LCs)," "local communities," "marginalized people," "project grievance," "project worker," "safeguard," "stakeholder," "stakeholder engagement," "stakeholder group," "stakeholder private and confidential information," and "vulnerable people."		*v5.0,* sections 3.19.4 - 3.19.7, and 3.19.12– 3.19.38, and any other risks identified, using the *VCS Environmental, Social, and Governance Risk Assessment Template* for verification in accordance with *VCS Standard, v5.0,* section 3.18.1, and are exempt from the clause "before the project start date."
V5#23	**Ecosystem conversion safeguards** Clarified that projects must not further degrade or convert an ecosystem to a type T7 ecosystem ("intensive land-use biome," IUCN GET). Ecosystem conversion is prohibited, except for ARR, ALM, or WRC projects where either of the following conditions are met: • The ecosystem exhibits high ecosystem degradation for at least 10 years prior to the project start date • High ecosystem degradation has occurred within 10 years prior to the project start date, and:	*VCS Standard, v5.0,* sections 3.2.1, 3.18.8 - 3.18.11 *VCS Program Definitions, v5.0*	Updates to all documents: Effective for registration requests from projects with a project start date that occurs on or after 1 July 2027

	○ the disturbances are unrelated to the project, and ○ ecosystem degradation was not carried out by the project proponent. • The project proponent provides specific evidence to demonstrate high ecosystem degradation through these criteria: ○ significant historical, present, or imminent drivers of degradation; and ○ that the ecosystem has lost its ability to sustain its biotic or abiotic characteristics compared to a high integrity ecosystem. Proponents of ARR and WRC projects that restore ecosystems must demonstrate that the project activity is improving the ecosystem integrity toward ecologically suitable and appropriate reference conditions justified for the project or an adapted state based on scientific evidence. In the *VCS Program Definitions,* definitions were added for "biodiversity," "ecosystem degradation," "ecosystem integrity," "ecosystem restoration," and "forest degradation" (formerly "degradation"). Definitions were revised or removed for "degraded ecosystem," "ecosystem," "ecosystem conversion," "forest," "grassland," and "native ecosystem."		
V5#09	**De minimis requirements** De minimis thresholds now apply to all project types. Methodologies will specify different de minimis thresholds (capped at 5%), differentiated by project scale, and will establish procedures for determining whether emissions qualify as de minimis.	*VCS Standard, v5.0,* section 3.14.6. Section 3.15.13 from *v4.7* was removed. *VCS Methodology Requirements, v5.0,* section 3.3.5 – 3.3.8, 3.3.11. Section 3.7.2 in *v4.4* was removed.	Updates to the *VCS Standard:* Effective for all registration requests, crediting period renewal requests, and verification approval requests that include a baseline reassessment submitted on or after 1 July 2027 Updates to the *VCS Methodology Requirements:* Effective immediately for all new and revised methodologies under development for which public consultation has not yet started

Effective for all project requests

#ID	Description of Update	Affected Documents & Section	Effective Date

		Numbers	
V5#18	**Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) contributions reporting** Minor update to incorporate existing reporting requirements for a project's SDG contributions from the monitoring report templates into the *VCS Standard*	*VCS Standard, v5.0,* section 3.16	Effective immediately
V5#89	**Digital project submissions** Project documents must now be submitted digitally via the Verra Project Hub where digital versions of methodologies are available. Other forms, such as loss event notifications and buffer credit release requests, must also now be submitted via the Verra Project Hub. In the *VCS Program Definitions,* definitions were added or revised for "Verra Project Hub" and "project description."	*VCS Standard, v5.0,* section 3.4.1 - 3.4.2, 4.1.18 - 4.1.20 *VCS Program Definitions, v5.0* *Registration and Issuance Process, v5.0,* section 1, 2.1.5, 3.1.1 – 3.1.6, 3.1.10, 3.1.18- 3.1.19, 4.2.3 – 4.2.5, 4.2.9, 5.2.1 *Procedure for Applying the GCS Non-Permanence Risk Tool, v5.0*, section 2.1.1 *GCS Requirements, v5.0,* section 2.3.1 Other sections referencing requests submitted to the Verra Registry have also been revised throughout.	Updates to all other documents: Effective for all project requests submitted on or after 1 July 2027. Where a methodology, module, or tool is newly digitized or a new digital version is released, digital project submission will be required three months from the release date of the digital version, unless otherwise specified by Verra.[8] Updates to the *GCS Requirements* and *Procedure for Applying the GCS Non-Permanence Risk Tool*: Effective immediately for projects that initiate pipeline listing on the Verra Registry on or after 16 December 2025
V5#44	**VCS sectoral scopes and VCS project classification system** Sectoral scope 14 has been split into "14. Forestry and other land use (forests, wetlands, and grasslands)" and "15. Agriculture." New scopes added for "Other engineered removals" and "Ocean and marine resources." New VCS project classification system defines project categories and project activity types for each sectoral scope.	*VCS Program Guide, v5.0,* section 2.3 and 2.4 *VCS Standard, v5.0,* section 3.2 (concept), Appendix 1. Section 2.1.1 from *v4.7* was removed. *VCS Program Definitions, v5.0* *VCS Methodology Requirements, v5.0,* section 2.7.1, Appendix 1 *VCS Sectoral Scopes and Project Classification Guidance, v5.0*	Updates to all documents: Effective for all project requests submitted on or after 1 July 2027 Updates to methodologies: Effective immediately, all new and revised methodologies under development will be assigned to sectoral scopes aligned with VCS Version 5

[8] Project proponents should visit the Verra website and Verra Project Hub for the latest information on available digitalized methodologies and their effective dates.

	Minor changes to project categories and project activity types within sectoral scopes 14 and 15 include: • new project activity types defined for ARR • "enhanced sequestration" defined as a project activity type under IFM • two new project activity types added under ALM ("restoration of degraded agricultural land" and "enhanced weathering applications in agriculture") • new project category "livestock systems" added in sectoral scope 15 Note – The term "non-AFOLU" has been replaced with more specific terminology throughout program documents. Guidance was added to the *VCS Program Guide* to denote that: • the term "energy and industry (E&I)" refers to projects from sectoral scopes 1–13 and 17 • The term "AFOLU" refers to projects from sectoral scopes 14–15. In the *VCS Program Definitions,* the definition for "AFOLU" was revised.		
V5#21	**VCS Program principles and VCU attributes** The VCS Program principles have been revised in the *VCS Standard* and new VCU attributes defined in the *VCS Program Guide.* New requirements and guidance have been introduced to clarify how PPs and VVBs should apply the principles to projects.	*VCS Program Guide, v5.0,* section 3 *VCS Standard, v5.0,* section 2.2	Updates to all documents: Effective for all project requests submitted on or after 1 July 2027
V5#57	**Separating reporting by country and methodology** Project proponents are now required to report reductions and removals with a breakdown of those generated in each country and under each methodology.	*VCS Standard, v5.0,* section 3.14.2	Effective for all project requests submitted on or after 1 July 2027

V5#79	**Project location reporting** Updated project location requirements clarify expectations for reporting a project's geographic information and require that an updated geolocation file be submitted at both validation and verification. The *Geolocation File Requirements* document specific the requirements for preparing a geolocation file. In the *VCS Program Definitions,* the definitions for "leakage belt" and "project area" were revised. Definition for "project zone" was removed.	*VCS Standard, v5.0,* section 3.10.1 – 3.10.4 *Registration and Issuance Process, v5.0,* section 3.1.7(2), 4.2.3 – 4.2.5, 4.4.3	Updates to all documents: Effective for all project requests submitted on or after 1 July 2027
V5#115	**Minor Standard organization improvements** Moved two requirements related to implementing partners and ongoing implementation previously under "AFOLU-specific matters" to "general requirements" to clarify that they are applicable to all project types. The organization of section 3.4 "Project Documentation" was also improved.	*VCS Standard, v5.0,* sections 3.1.9 - 3.1.10, 3.4.	Effective for all project requests submitted on or after 1 July 2027
V5#105	**Verification deadlines** All project proponents are now required to submit a verification approval request within five years of their project's last approved verification approval request. Otherwise, projects will be marked as late to verify on the Verra Registry.	*Registration and Issuance Process, v5.0,* section 4.1.2 – 4.1.3	Effective for all registered projects from 1 July 2027
V5#87	**Long-term average** The long-term average sections in the *VCS Standard* and *VCS Methodology Requirements* have been removed, and instead projects will be required to use the forthcoming VCS tool *Calculating the Long-term Average of Forest Carbon Stocks.* The definition for "harvesting activity" has been removed from the *VCS Program*	*VCS Standard, v5.0,* section 3.2.28 *VCS Program Definitions, v5.0* *VCS Methodology Requirements, v5.0,* section 3.6.13. Section 3.6.6 from *v4.4* was removed *Registration and Issuance Process, v5.0,* section 4.7.1 – 4.7.2	Updates to the *Registration and Issuance Process*: The late-to-verify procedure for ARR or IFM projects that have reached their LTA is effective from 1 July 2027. Until that date, such projects are subject to the same late-to-verify procedures as all other projects (see V5#80). Updates to all other documents: Effective for all project requests submitted on or after 1 July 2027

	Definitions and instead will be defined in the tool.		

1.2 Updates to Procedures

The following updates are listed together because they are related to Verra's internal processes or project-related procedures (i.e., for registration and issuance, buffer pool management, methodology development, and project review).

#ID	Description of Update	Affected Documents & Section Numbers	Effective Date
V5#108	**Buffer pool procedures** Verra may use the Long-Term-Monitoring System to detect reversals after the end of a project's longevity period or project crediting period, whichever is longer. Updates have been added to clarify the handling of buffer credits of projects that are late to verify or have withdrawn from the VCS Program. In the *VCS Program Definitions,* definitions were added or revised for "avoidable reversal," "reversal," "Long-Term Monitoring System" and "AFOLU buffer deed." References to the AFOLU buffer deed have been incorporated into program documents.	*VCS Standard, v5.0,* section 3.2.27 *VCS Program Definitions, v5.0* *Registration and Issuance Process, v5.0,* 4.2.3 – 4.2.5, 4.7.5(4), 5.1, 5.2.1, 5.2.5, 5.3.5 – 5.3.8, 5.3.10	Updates to all documents: Effective immediately
V5#107	**Updated procedures for project withdrawal** Revised conditions under which projects are not eligible to withdraw from the VCS Program (e.g., projects under a quality control review). Clarified that Verra cancels approved but not issued Verified Carbon Units (VCUs) where projects withdraw from the VCS Program.	*Registration and Issuance Process, v5.0,* 4.7.5(3), 4.7.5(5), 7.1.4, 7.2.1(2)	Updates to *Registration and Issuance Process*: • Cancellation of approved but not issued VCUs where projects withdraw: Effective 1 July 2027 • All other updates: Effective immediately

V5#06	**Loss event definitions and procedures** In the *VCS Standard* and *Registration and Issuance Process,* requirements were revised pertaining to loss event reporting procedures and expectations. In the *VCS Program Definitions,* the definitions for "loss event" was revised and a new definition was added for "net GHG emission reductions and carbon dioxide removals."	*VCS Standard, v5.0,* section 2.4 *VCS Program Definitions, v5.0* *Registration and Issuance Process, v5.0,* sections 5.3.1 – 5.3.3	Updates to all documents: Effective for all project requests submitted on or after 1 July 2027
V5#99	**Effective dates guidance** An overview of guiding criteria that Verra uses to set effective dates and timelines of program updates is provided in the *VCS Program Guide* to increase transparency and clarity for stakeholders.	*VCS Program Guide, v5.0,* section 1.1	Effective immediately
V5#98	**Methodology transition periods** Reframed requirements to remove references to "methodology grace periods" and instead clarify where projects must apply active methodologies. The inactivation date of a methodology is now 12 months after the release of a new version.	*VCS Standard, v5.0,* sections 3.1.1 – 3.1.5. Section 3.22 from *v4.7* was removed. *Registration and Issuance Process, v5.0,* section 3 *Methodology Development and Review Process, v5.1*, sections 2.4.2 – 2.4.5	Updates to all documents: Effective immediately
V5#111b	**Verra-led methodology development** Changes made throughout documents to reflect the Verra-led methodology development and review process launched in the *Methodology Development and Review Process, v5.0.* In the *VCS Program Definitions,* the definition for "methodology developer" was removed and the definitions for "module" and "tool" were revised.	*VCS Program Guide, v5.0,* sections 2.6.2, 2.6.5, section 5, removal of section 7 of the *VCS Program Guide, v4.4* *VCS Standard, v5.0,* section 4.1.8 *VCS Program Definitions, v5.0* *VCS Methodology Requirements, v5.0,* references to "methodology developers" revised throughout.	Updates to all documents: Effective immediately

V5#109	**Use of C&Cs in methodologies** Added a minor note to the *Methodology Development and Review Process* to explain how correction and clarification documents are used for methodologies.	*Methodology Development and Review Process, v5.1*, section 2.5.2	Effective immediately
V5#75	**Quality control review procedures** Section 6 of the *Registration and Issuance Process* has been revised to include new procedures for quality control reviews of projects. The new section includes triggers for identification of potential non-conformances, the process for opening a review, response deadlines, review outcomes, and methods for replacement of excess VCUs.	*Registration and Issuance Process, v5.0,* section 6	Effective immediately
V5#81	**Procedure for returning project requests (request denials)** "Project request denial" section has been renamed to "Process for returned project requests." It details what happens when Verra does not approve a project request, returns the request, and closes the review. Project proponents may submit new requests in accordance with the VCS Program rules. Where a new request is submitted within 180 days, project proponents may use the same version of the VCS program documents as was used in the original request. Where a new request is not received within one year, Verra inactivates the project.	*Registration and Issuance Process, v5.0,* section 4.3	Effective immediately
V5#104	**Accession, release, and transfer of project proponents** Procedures have been added to account for situations where: • a project only has one project proponent who wishes to be released from the project and a new entity wishes to accede.	*VCS Program Definitions, v5.0* *Registration and Issuance Process, v5.0,* section 7.2	Updates to all documents: Effective immediately

	• the remaining project proponents wish to remove a disputed or nonresponsive project proponent from the project. • a project proponent of an active project no longer exists and a new entity wishes to accede to the project. In the *VCS Program Definitions,* definitions were revised for "accession representation" and "release representation."		
V5#80	**Inactivation and late-to-verify procedures** Updates provide clarity on: • how to request reactivation of inactive projects • reasons why projects are inactivated (e.g., they do not respond to findings within 90 days at the pipeline listing stage – Section 3.1.13) • why Verra rejects projects or puts projects on hold (e.g., inactive projects are rejected after 12 months if reactivation is not requested – Section 3.1.21(1)). • procedures for late-to-verify projects	*Registration and Issuance Process, v5.0,* section 3.1.7 – 3.1.8, 3.1.11 – 3.1.21, 4.7.1 – 4.7.4	Effective immediately The following exceptions apply: • Regarding section 3.1.13 – Verra will start to implement this update (i.e., inactivating pipeline projects that do not respond to findings within 90 days) from 15 April 2026 • Regarding section 3.1.21(1) – Verra will start to implement this update (i.e., rejecting inactive pipeline projects if reactivation is not requested within 12 months) from 1 July 2027 • Regarding sections 4.7.1 and 4.7.2 – The separate late-to-verify procedure for ARR or IFM projects that have reached their LTA is effective from 1 July 2027. Until that date, these projects are subject to the same late-to-verify procedures as all other projects (see V5#87).
V5#110	**GCS buffer pool procedures** Procedures for buffer withholding and buffer releases for GCS projects have been incorporated into the *Registration and Issuance Process* and references to the GCS buffer pool have been incorporated in other program documents. In the *VCS Program Definitions,* definitions were added or revised for "avoidable reversal," "unavoidable reversal," "GCS pooled buffer account" and "loss event."	*VCS Program Guide, v5.0,* section 4 *VCS Program Definitions, v5.0* *Registration and Issuance Process, v5.0,* section 5 *GCS Non-Permanence Risk Tool, v5.0,* section 1.1.1 – 1.1.2	Updates to all documents: Effective immediately
V5#08	**AFOLU Non-Permanence Risk Tool and GCS Non-Permanence Risk Tool**	*VCS Standard, v5.0,* section 3.2.8, 3.2.11 – 3.2.12, 3.2.25	Updates to all documents: Effective immediately

	Minor updates to the *AFOLU Non-Permanence Risk Tool* and *GCS Non-Permanence Risk Tool* documents to reframe them as procedural documents that provide guidance for using the digital versions of the NPRTs on the Verra Project Hub.	*Procedure for Applying the AFOLU Non-Permanence Risk Tool, v5.0,* section 1, 2.1.2 *Procedure for Applying the GCS Non-Permanence Risk Tool, v5.0,* section 1	
V5#102	**Durability terminology** In the *VCS Program Definitions,* a new definition was added for "durability" to introduce the concept in the context of requirements to manage non-permanence risk.	*VCS Program Definitions, v5.0*	Effective immediately
V5#76	**Cross references to new procedural documents** Cross-references have been incorporated for two recently released procedural documents – the *Exemption Request Procedure* and the *Procedure to Change Methodology via a Project Description Deviation.*	*VCS Standard, v5.0,* section 3.20.2(3) *Registration and Issuance Process, v5.0,* section 7.6	Effective immediately
V5#85	**Vintage periods** The definitions for "vintage" and "vintage period" were revised.	*VCS Program Definitions, v5.0*	Effective immediately

1.3 Updates to Methodology Requirements

The following updates are listed together because they are related to updates that affect new methodologies and methodology revisions under development. Such methodologies will incorporate these updates prior to their approval, after the effective date.

#ID	Description of Update	Affected Documents & Section Numbers	Effective Date
V5#46	**Default eligibility for project activities (Table 1 in the *VCS Standard)*** Revised Table 1 in the *VCS Standard* to reframe default exclusions from VCS Program scope as default eligibility for certain project	*VCS Standard, v5.0,* section 2.1.1 and Table 1	Updates to section 2.1.1 and Table 1 in the *VCS Standard:* Effective immediately. The following exceptions apply:

	activities. Certain methodologies may specify applicability conditions for project activities based on geography that take precedence over the default geographic eligibility in Table 1. The default eligibility for project activities that replace incandescent electric bulbs with light emitting diodes (LEDs) or compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) and projects that replace CFLs with LEDs (row 6 of Table 1, *VCS Standard, v5.0*) was restricted to least developed countries (LDCs) only. The final two rows of Table 1 in the *VCS Standard, v4.7* (activities installing transmission lines or transformers, and activities reducing HFC-23 emissions) were removed in version 5.0, because no active methodologies currently allow those project activities.		Updates to the default eligibility for LED/CFL projects in Table 1, row 6: • Projects requesting registration before 1 January 2027 may apply the active version of relevant methodologies (e.g., AMS-II.C) using Table 1 of the *VCS Standard, v4.7*. • Existing projects (i.e., projects that are registered or request registration before 1 January 2027) may continue to use the applied version of the relevant methodologies until their next crediting period renewal, as set out in the *VCS Standard, v5.0*, section 3.1.5. At the next crediting period renewal, projects must apply an active version of the methodology in accordance with section 3.1.4.[9] • For registered projects, new instances for scope-excluded activities may only be added within verification approval requests submitted before 1 July 2027.
V5#24	**Biomass feedstocks** New requirements introduced for methodologies that involve use of biomass feedstocks to generate reductions and removals. In the *VCS Program Definitions,* definitions were added for "biomass," "biomass feedstock," "biomass from waste," "biomass origin," and "renewable biomass."	*VCS Program Definitions, v5.0* *VCS Methodology Requirements,* v5.0, new section 2.9.1	Updates to the *VCS Program Definitions:* Effective immediately Updates to the *VCS Methodology Requirements:* Effective immediately for all new and revised methodologies under development
V5#116	**Additionality activity methods** Minor revisions made to the activity methods for the additionality demonstration section, including removal of barrier analysis for activity penetration (section 3.5.10 (1)(c)).	*VCS Methodology Requirements, v5.0*, section 3.5.10(1) – (3). Section 2.2.4 from *v4.4* was removed.	Effective immediately for all new and revised methodologies under development
V5#86	**Equivalent soil mass (ESM) requirements** Methodologies must now specify requirements for periodic soil sampling and soil organic	*VCS Methodology Requirements, v5.0,* section 3.6.9	Effective immediately for all new and revised methodologies under development

[9] A Corrections and Clarifications (C&C) to AMS-II.C and other LED-related methodologies is available on the Verra website and includes more specific geographic applicability conditions, and their effective dates, for projects applying these methodologies.

	carbon measurements to enable ESM-based accounting.		
V5#31	**Soil organic carbon (SOC) baseline setting** Minor updates to requirements for quantifying baseline soil organic carbon stocks.	*VCS Methodology Requirements, v5.0,* section 3.4.13, 3.6.5, 3.6.7	Effective immediately for all new and revised methodologies under development
V5#50	**Uncertainty requirements** Added clarification of relevant uncertainty in the context of the VCS Program (overestimation risk) and expanded the examples of application. Introduced further clarifications for methodologies applicable to natural carbon removal projects and how to account for uncertainty where there are slow increases in sequestered carbon over longer periods.	*VCS Methodology Requirements, v5.0,* section 2.4	Effective immediately for all new and revised methodologies under development
V5#95	**Leakage emissions from equipment** Added procedures for quantifying leakage emissions from project activities that replace or discontinue the use of equipment used in the baseline scenario.	*VCS Methodology Requirements, v5.0,* section 3.7.2	Effective immediately for all new and revised methodologies under development for which public consultation has not yet started
V5#32	**De minimis GHG sources from N_2O emissions** Minor updates to GHG sources that may be considered de minimis for N_2O emissions in ARR, IFM, and REDD projects.	*VCS Methodology Requirements, v5.0,* section 3.3.11(1)	Effective immediately for all new and revised methodologies under development for which public consultation has not yet started
V5#42	**Ozone-depleting substances (ODS)** ODS requirements in the *VCS Standard* and *VCS Methodology Requirements* have been removed and moved into VCS methodology *VM0016 Destruction of Ozone-Depleting Substances and Hydrofluorocarbons, v2.0.*	*VCS Standard, v5.0.* Sections 3.3, 3.8.5 – 3.8.6, 3.14.3 from *v4.7* were removed. *VCS Methodology Requirements, v5.0,* section 2.8, 3.4.30, 3.7.24, 3.10.8	Updates to the *VCS Standard*: Effective immediately for any projects applying *VM0016, v2.0.* These updates do not apply to projects applying previous versions of ODS methodologies. Updates to the *VCS Methodology Requirements:* Effective immediately

DOCUMENT HISTORY

Date	Comment
16 Dec 2025	Document released with the launch of VCS Version 5
24 Mar 2026	Document updated with track changes reflecting the Corrections and Clarifications document released on 24 March 2026.
10 Sept 2026	Document updated with track changes reflecting the Corrections and Clarifications document released on 9 June 2026.
27 Oct 2026	Track changes from previous updates were incorporated into the document. The overall effective date of most VCS Version 5 updates was changed from 1 January 2027 to 1 July 2027. The effective date for update V5#89 (digital project submissions) was revised to clarify the effective date for using newly digitized methodologies moving forward.