



Sustainable Development Verified Impact Standard

A VERRA STANDARD

Update on the development of Verra's new framework for supporting and scaling up projects that generate compelling sustainable development impacts

The Sustainable Development Verified Impact Standard (SD VISta), currently under development by Verra and partners, is an innovative, flexible framework that will enable projects to robustly measure, report and assess their social, environmental and economic impacts. SD VISta helps projects consistently and credibly communicate the impacts of their projects to potential investors, funders and other stakeholders.

To achieve certification through SD VISta, projects must generate verifiable sustainable development benefits, including through explicit contributions toward one or more Sustainable Development Goal targets. In using SD VISta, project developers will assess sustainable development impacts across two key dimensions: stakeholder well-being and natural capital/ecosystem services. These concepts relate to the People, Prosperity and Planet categories identified in the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

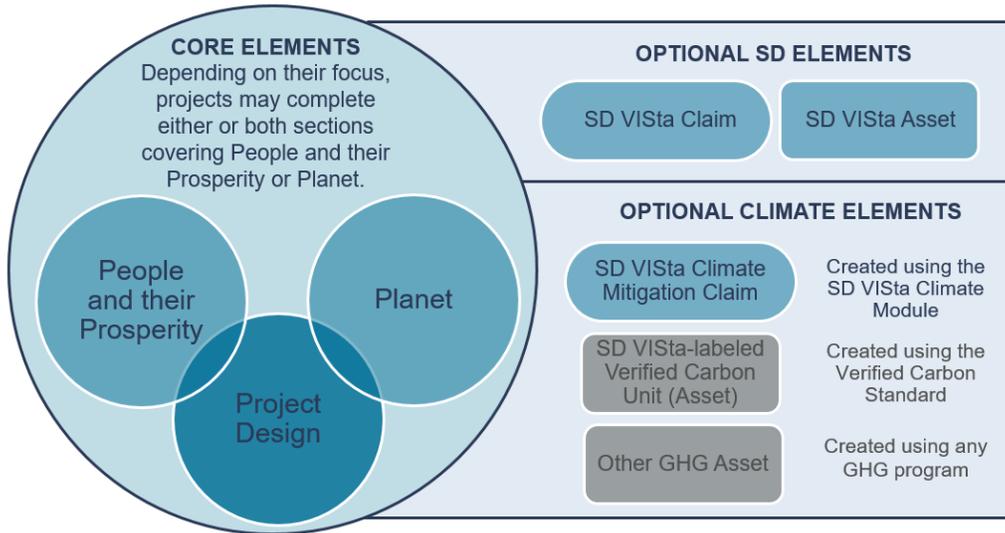
SD VISta allows projects to highlight, through individualized claims, the most important benefits for their stakeholders. In addition, Verra's industry-leading registry platform will enable the generation and trading of related environmental and social assets (e.g., water units, health benefits, adaptation credits and biodiversity offsets) for use in existing and emerging markets. SD VISta asset methodologies will be developed by users of the standard and approved by Verra to meet specific demand. For example, the Nature Conservancy and TerraCarbon are developing an SD VISta asset that puts a value on the resilience benefits of coastal wetland ecosystem restoration and protection. The demand (and potential finance) for such an asset comes from global insurance firms and other businesses that want to better understand the contribution they are making to reducing hazards in the world's most vulnerable wetland areas.

Sustainable Development and Climate Change Mitigation

To generate measurable climate benefits, three pathways are available to projects. To make a general claim about contributions to mitigating climate change, the project proponent would complete the SD VISta climate module. SD VISta projects interested in going further could generate carbon credits using a GHG accounting framework (e.g., the [Verified Carbon Standard](#) (VCS), Gold Standard or American Carbon Registry). The coastal wetland resilience asset mentioned above could be produced by a project that also generates Verified Carbon Units verified to the VCS;¹ the project could then maximize investment potential by issuing both types of credits. The structure of SD VISta is set out in Figure 1 on the next page.

¹ The SD VISta label could be applied to such Verified Carbon Units to make it clear that the carbon asset came from a project that also generated measurable sustainable development benefits.

Figure 1. Basic Structure of SD VISta



The SD VISta Value Proposition

To project developers, SD VISta provides:

- A flexible framework to appropriately define, credibly assess and transparently report a project’s key sustainable development impacts and share them with investors, buyers and other key stakeholders;
- A key to unlock new sources of finance and drive results-based payments to high-performing projects, supporting their proof of concept, scaling-up and replication.

Demand for applying the SD VISta framework could come from companies, investors, development finance institutions (DFIs), donors and others seeking to assess the sustainable development impacts of projects they support or are considering supporting.

- For companies, SD VISta serves as an independent, credible, transparent means to demonstrate achievement of relevant business and corporate social responsibility objectives, such as contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals, achieving “insetting” and/or zero-net deforestation commitments, and improving livelihoods, health and access to water.
- For investors, DFIs and funders, SD VISta could be critical in addressing potential environmental and social risks and maximizing (and consistently assessing) target outcomes from their sustainable development project portfolios, as well as linking to national and regional sustainable development priorities.

SD VISta offers two options for assessment: validation and verification by an accredited validation/verification body, or independent expert evaluation. Independent expert evaluation is an easier, lower-cost option that could help projects get off the ground and serve as a stepping stone for projects to subsequently move on to full validation and verification.

SD VISta was developed using the [ISEAL Standard-setting and Assurance Codes of Good Practice](#) through a transparent and rigorous multi-stakeholder process. This process was supported by a [Standard Development Advisory Committee](#), which included leading project developers, third-party assessors, corporates, investors, civil society representatives, governments and multilateral agencies. SD VISta underwent two [public consultations](#) and was piloted by sustainable development projects located on five continents across a broad ecological range.