



Standards for a  
Sustainable Future

# Revisions to VCS Avoiding Unplanned Deforestation and/or Degradation Methodologies

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Overview of updates open for consultation

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**13 October 2022**

# Agenda

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- Webinar overview – 5 min
- Updates and clarifying questions – 40 min
- Timeline and submission of comments – 5 min

# Webinar overview

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- **Objective:** present proposed revisions to VCS Avoiding Unplanned Deforestation and/or Degradation methodologies and answer clarifying questions
- Priority: explanatory questions on the proposed updates
- Please use the Q&A function to type your clarifying questions

# Phase in of new Verra REDD methodology

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# Background

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- Moving toward one REDD meth for all VCS projects
  - Developed over the next two years (Jan 2025)
  - First iteration based on AUD modules (May 2023)
- Between Q2 2023 and 2026, projects have options:
  - Updated existing meths
  - Consolidated REDD+ meth (AUD only to start)

See <https://verra.org/revision-of-verras-avoiding-unplanned-deforestation-and-degradation-project-methodologies-update/> for more detail

# Proposed Revisions Suggested Existing REDD+ Methodologies Transition Phase

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# Participants in Methodology Revision

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- Tim Pearson – GreenCollar
- Till Neeff – Independent Consultant
- Kevin Brown – Wildlife Conservation Society
- Simon Koenig – Climate Focus
- Julie Barood, Salvador Sanchez Colon, Marie Calmel, Basanta Gautam – Verra

*Advice, suggestions and inputs from the Verra JNR Advisory Group*

# Key Elements of Criticism in Current Methodologies\*

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- Size and location of reference region
- Means of projection of rates of deforestation
- Means of allocation of location of deforestation
- Calculation of uncertainty and uncertainty deductions
- Lack of consistency / comparability between methodologies and transparency in project metrics

\*Current VCS AUDD methodologies are VM0006, VM0007, VM0009, VM0015 & VM0032



# Reference Area

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## Problem

- Non-contiguous reference areas currently allowed that are perceived to be cherry-picked to give high rates of reference forest loss

## Solution

- *We considered a requirement for contiguity alongside standardized similarity criteria*
- BUT elected to go with jurisdictional boundaries to form a steppingstone to the upcoming AUDD methodology

# Reference Area Proposal

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- National or 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> level jurisdiction below national
- BUT requirement for minimum of 50 km to exist from project boundary to jurisdiction boundary or neighboring jurisdiction must be included
  - Serves to ensure reference area captures relevant historical deforestation pressures
  - Allowance included that projects on the National boundary can capture deforestation pressures across the boundary where relevant
- Additional requirement included for mangroves and peat forests that jurisdictions must contain at least as much of the relevant forest type as project area

# Rate of Deforestation

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## Problem

- Perception that some projects are using aggressive modeling to justify sharply rising baseline rates of forest loss

## Solution

- Require ten-year historical average
- EXCEPT if can show significant linear regression
  - You can use a significant linear regression if upward and must use if downward

# Location of Deforestation

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## Problem

- Inconsistency in how baseline deforestation is allocated including some of the methodologies having no spatial allocation

## Solution

- All methodologies must include allocation of deforestation following the same modeling standards with pixel-specific risk of loss

# Uncertainty

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## Problem

- Inconsistency in how uncertainty is calculated and how deductions are applied
- Including current significant errors in how uncertainty is summed

## Solution

- Standardized approach requiring uncertainty calculations on both activity data and emissions factors
- Deductions following the VCS Methodology Requirements

# Consistency and Transparency

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## Problem

- Currently there are five avoided deforestation methodologies each with differing key calculation approaches
- Little means for observers to even understand annual baseline and actual loss rates, emission factors etc.

## Solution

- Standardization in approaches
- New required reported parameters on activity data and emissions factors

# Safety Mechanism

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## Problem

- Independent analyses by the media, ratings agencies and independent watchdogs have shown projects have been credited without having a defensible atmospheric impact

## Solution

- Simplified safety mechanism introduced that requires the project to demonstrate that, at a minimum, the relative reduction in deforestation in the project area exceeds reductions occurring in the reference region

# Public Comment Period Logistics

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# Timeline

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Date	Existing Meths Revision
6 Oct – 6 Nov.	Consultation on revisions to existing meths requirements (5 Oct – 6 Nov)
Nov	Update individual methodologies
Dec	Coordinate with meth developers on changes to their individual meths
Jan 2023	VVB assessment
Feb	
Mar	Publish meths (one at a time if necessary)
April	

# Clarifying questions and answers

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Please use the Q&A function

# Comment submission

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- Please email [methodologies@verra.org](mailto:methodologies@verra.org) to:
  - Provide comments using the public consultation comment template
  - To submit further clarifying questions about these updates
- Proposed updates and comment template:  
[verra.org](https://verra.org) > For Stakeholders > Updates > Public Consultation:  
Revisions to VCS Avoiding Unplanned Deforestation and/or  
Degradation Methodologies (6 October 2022)

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