

## CLARIFICATIONS TO VM0042 METHODOLOGY FOR IMPROVED AGRICULTURAL LAND MANAGEMENT, V1.0

Publication date: 12 August 2022

This document provides clarifications applicable to *VM0042 Methodology for Improved Agricultural Land Management, v1.0* and its associated module *VMD0053 Model Calibration, Validation, and Uncertainty Guidance for the Methodology for Improved Agricultural Land Management, v1.0*. Such clarifications are effective on their issuance date. Project proponents and validation/verification bodies (VVBs) shall apply and interpret VM0042, v1.0 and VMD0053, v1.0 consistent with the clarifications set out in this document. These clarifications will be incorporated into the next issued versions of VM0042 and VMD0053.

Clarification	Description	Document and Section Reference	Effective Date
Clarification 1	Soil organic carbon pool required	VM0042, v1.0, Section 5 Project Boundary	12 Aug 2022
Clarification 2	Clarifying contracting arrangements for Independent Modeling Experts	VMD0053, v1.0, Section 5.2.6 Review and Approval of Model Validation Reports	12 Aug 2022

## 1.1 Background

Table 2 on page 10 of VM0042 states that soil organic carbon is the “major carbon pool affected by project activity that is expected to increase in the project scenario.” The paragraph between Tables 2 and 3 explains that any decrease in carbon stocks in carbon pools which is less than five percent of the total net anthropogenic GHG emission reductions and removals due to the project may be deemed *de minimis* and ignored (i.e., their value may be accounted as zero). This directly contradicts the purpose of VM0042, which is to “provide[s] procedures to estimate the greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions and removals resulting from the adoption of improved agricultural land management practices focused on increasing soil organic carbon (SOC) storage”. To eliminate this contradiction, the SOC pool must be included in the project boundary in the baseline and project scenarios and is not allowed to be deemed *de minimis*.

## 1.2 CLARIFICATION 1: VM0042, Section 5, Soil organic carbon pool required

The paragraph between Tables 2 and 3 in Section 2 shall be clarified by the addition of a new last sentence (new text shown in red):

GHG sources included in the project boundary in the baseline and project scenarios are listed in Table 3 below. Where the increase in greenhouse gas emissions from any project emissions or leakage source, and/or decreases in carbon stocks in carbon pools, is less than five percent of the total net anthropogenic GHG emission reductions and removals due to the project, such sources and pools may be deemed *de minimis* and may be ignored (i.e., their value may be accounted as zero). This and all subsequent references to *de minimis* demonstration are conducted via application of CDM A/R methodological Tool for testing the significance of GHG emissions in A/R CDM project activities. **The soil organic carbon pool must be included in the project boundary, i.e., it must be monitored as part of a VM0042 project and is not allowed to be deemed *de minimis*.**

## 2.1 Background

Independent modeling experts (IMEs) provide independent third-party oversight and review of modeling procedures conducted by project proponents, including the generation of model validation reports, as a result of applying VMD0053.

## 2.2 CLARIFICATION 2: VMD0053, Section 5.2.6, Clarifying contracting arrangements for independent modeling experts

Paragraph 2 of Section 5.2.6 shall be read as follows (revised text shown in red and deleted text shown with strikethrough):

Model validation reports must be:

1. Independently assessed by ~~a third-party expert service provider~~ **an IME** hired by the **VVB project developer** and **fulfilling the minimum qualifications defined** ~~approved by Verra~~<sup>1</sup>; or
2. Accepted for publication in one of the peer-reviewed journals listed below and reviewed by an ~~independent third-party expert service provider~~ **IME** hired by the **VVB-project developer** and **fulfilling the minimum qualifications defined** ~~approved by Verra~~. Where the peer-reviewed publication option is pursued the following also applies...

Further, throughout VMD0053 wherever a third-party expert, independent expert or third-party service provider is referenced it shall be interpreted as the IME.

---

<sup>1</sup> Verra defines minimum qualifications that IMEs must fulfill to perform evaluation of the use of process-based biogeochemical models following VMD0053 guidance under the VCS Program. IMEs may be individuals or organizations and must meet the following criteria:

1. Demonstration of competency in quantifying GHG fluxes, in particular SOC stock changes, associated with agricultural land management through the use of biogeochemical models, specifying specialization in certain practices or land-uses and regional/country expertise, if relevant. The applicant shall have at least five years of relevant work experience.
2. Statement specifying which models the expert can assess based on demonstrated use of the model to be evaluated or conceptually similar models. Applicants can demonstrate expertise through citation of their peer-reviewed scientific publication(s), as first or co-authors, or through reference to relevant project reports, presenting or using specific model(s).
3. Demonstration of freedom from conflict of interest. This shall be established by disclosing all relevant organizational affiliations and anything else that might give rise to a conflict of interest.
4. Recommendation by two references, preferably researchers and academia staff or former staff.

The Verra “Independent modeling expert application form” shall be used to provide evidence of meeting the above criteria to demonstrate that the expert meets these criteria.