

## Program Definitions

# 1 | Introduction

This document provides the definitions for terms used in the VCS Program documents. In addition, the definitions set out in *ISO 14064-2:2006*, *ISO 14064-3:2006* and *ISO 14065:2007* 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 shall ensure that they are using the most current version of the document.

## 2 | Definitions

### **Aboveground Biomass**

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

### **Agroforestry**

An ecologically based natural resource management system in which trees are integrated in farmland and rangeland

### **Agro-ecological zones**

Geographic areas based on similar characteristics such as combinations of soil, landform and climatic conditions

### **Accession Representation**

- The deed issued by the project proponent, and an acceding entity, made in respect of an acceding entity joining a project as project proponent, and which is prepared using the *VCS Deed of Accession in Respect of Registration Deed of Representation Template*; or
- The deed issued by the jurisdictional proponent, and an acceding entity, made in respect of an acceding entity joining a jurisdictional baseline or program as jurisdictional proponent, and which is prepared using the *VCS Deed of Accession in Respect of JNR Baseline Registration Deed of Representation Template* or the *VCS Deed of Accession in Respect of JNR Program Registration Deed of Representation Template*, respectively.

### **Activity Method**

A methodological approach that determines additionality for a given class of project activity in accordance with the VCS 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 the planting, sowing and/or human-assisted natural regeneration of woody vegetation

**Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU)**

The sectoral scope that covers GHG emissions and emission reductions and/or removals from project or program activities in the agriculture, forestry, and other land use/land use change sectors and for which the VCS Program has established rules and requirements with respect to specific project categories

**Agricultural Land Management (ALM)**

Activities that increase carbon stocks in soils and woody biomass and/or decrease CO<sub>2</sub>, N<sub>2</sub>O and/or CH<sub>4</sub> emissions from soils on croplands and/or grasslands

**AFOLU Expert**

A person with expertise and experience in AFOLU methodologies, tools, modules and/or projects, and who is approved by the VCSA for methodology element assessments within a given AFOLU project category

**AFOLU Pooled Buffer Account**

The account in the VCS project database, managed by the VCSA, containing non-tradable AFOLU buffer credits for covering the risk of unforeseen losses in carbon stocks across the AFOLU project portfolio

**Approved GHG Program**

A GHG program that has been approved by the VCS Board, through a gap analysis, as a VCS approved GHG program

**Authorized Representative**

An entity authorized by the project or jurisdictional proponent to communicate with and provide instructions to the VCS registry administrator on its behalf, such authorization granted through a communications agreement signed by both/all parties and submitted to the VCS registry administrator

**Belowground Biomass**

Living biomass of live roots, sometimes excluding fine roots of less than 2mm diameter because these often cannot be distinguished empirically from soil organic matter or litter

**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 under 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

**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 pool, measured in tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>

**Catastrophic Reversal**

A type of reversal caused by disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes, flooding, drought, fires, tornados or winter storms, or man-made events over which the project proponent has no control such as acts of terrorism or war

**Commercially Sensitive Information – see Sensitive Information****Communications Agreement**

The agreement by which the project or jurisdictional proponent authorizes a third party to communicate with and provide instructions to the VCS registry administrator on its behalf, the form and scope of which shall be determined solely by the VCS registry and the signatories to the agreement

**Crediting Period**

- The time period for which GHG emission reductions or removals generated by the project are eligible for issuance as VCUs, the rules with respect to the length of such time period and the renewal of the project crediting period being set out in the *VCS Standard*. Also referred to as **Project Crediting Period**; or
- The time period for which GHG emission reductions or removals generated by the jurisdictional REDD+ program are eligible for issuance as VCUs, the rules with respect to the length of such time period and the renewal of the program crediting period being set out in VCS document *JNR Requirements*. Also referred to as **Program Crediting Period**

**Cropland**

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

**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 10cm in diameter or any other diameter used by the host country for its UNFCCC national inventory accounting

**Deemed Savings Factor**

A type of default factor used to estimate the GHG emission reductions or 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 with the intention of standardizing the calculation of net GHG emission reductions and/or removals and providing greater consistency of calculations across projects

**Deforestation**

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

**Degradation**

The persistent reduction of canopy cover and/or carbon stocks in a forest due to human activities such as animal grazing, fuelwood extraction, timber removal or other such activities, 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*

**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

**Double Counting**

The scenario under which a singular GHG emission reduction or removal is monetized separately by two different entities or where a GHG emission reduction or removal is sold to multiple buyers

**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 removals that it generates

**Forest**

Land with woody vegetation that meets an internationally accepted definition (eg, 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, degraded and wetland forests

**Emission Trading Program**

A voluntary or regulatory program that allows for trading in GHG credits or allowances

**GHG Program**

A formal or organized program, system or arrangement for the recognition of activities leading to GHG emission reductions or removals, and/or the crediting or issuance of instruments representing, or acknowledging, GHG emission reductions or removals

**Grassland**

Areas dominated by grasses with a density of trees too low to meet an internationally accepted definition of forest, including savannas (ie, grasslands with scattered trees). Grasslands also include managed rangeland and pastureland that is not considered as cropland where the primary land use is grazing, and which may also include grass-dominated systems managed for conservation or recreational purposes

**Grouped Project**

A project to which additional instances of the project activity, which meet pre-established eligibility criteria, may be added subsequent to project validation

**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

**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

**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 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 removals generated by the jurisdictional program, and which is prepared using the *VCS JNR Program Issuance Deed of Representation Template*

**Jurisdiction**

The administrative unit such as a nation, state, province, region, department or district, or an eco-region or other defined area, specified in the jurisdictional program description

**Jurisdictional and Nested REDD+ (JNR)**

The approach under the VCS Program by which reduced emissions from deforestation, reduced emissions from degradation and 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 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

**JNR Program Description (Program Description)**

The document that describes the jurisdictional baseline and/or program GHG emission reductions or 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

**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 or responsibility for the jurisdictional REDD+ program

**JNR Expert**

A person with expertise and experience in jurisdictional baselines and/or REDD+ programs who is approved by the VCSA for participation on expert panels for the validation/verification of jurisdictional REDD+ programs

**Jurisdictional REDD+ Program and Jurisdictional Program** – see **Program**

**Jurisdictional Pooled Buffer Account**

The account in the VCS project database, managed by the VCSA, 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

**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

**Large Project**

A project that generates 300,000 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e or more of GHG emissions reductions or removals per year

**Large-Scale Commercial Deforestation**

An area of deforestation that exceeds 1000 ha, cleared in a single monitoring period (or, between two points of remotely sensed historical data), that has a single post-deforestation land use (eg, 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 (ie, due to geologic or weather-related events)

**Leakage**

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

**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 (eg, 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, fomic 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

**Loss Event**

- In an AFOLU project, any event that results in a loss of more than five percent of carbon stocks in pools included in the project boundary but is not planned for in the project description, (eg, harvesting as set out in management plans and described in the project description is not a loss event). Examples include catastrophic events (see definition of catastrophic reversal) as well as human-induced losses such as those caused by poor management, tillage, over-harvesting or encroachment by outside actors (eg, illegal logging or fuelwood collection); or
- In a jurisdictional program, any event that results in a loss of more than five percent of total forested area in the program boundary that is not planned for in the program description (eg, harvesting as set out in management plans and described in the program description is not a loss event). Examples include harvesting beyond levels predicted in the baseline, construction of roads or other infrastructure not included in the baseline, or significant natural disturbances

**Loss Event Report**

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

**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

**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 assertion 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 removals, and specifying the monitoring procedures

**Methodology Approval Process**

The process by which new methodology elements are approved under 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 Element**

A methodology, methodology revision, module or tool (including additionality tools, performance benchmarks and technology benchmarks)

**Methodology Element Developer**

An entity that develops a methodology element

**Methodology Revision**

A revision to the criteria and procedures of an existing methodology

**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 component of a methodology that can be applied to perform a specific methodological task

**Monitoring Report**

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

**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 disturbance

**Native Ecosystem**

A landscape composed of indigenous vegetation not established by planting and/or seeding

**Nested Project**

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

**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 under the VCS Program

**Non-Project Areas**

Forest areas (or areas converted to forest or otherwise revegetated) within a jurisdiction, but outside project boundaries or nested subnational jurisdiction boundaries, that are included in the accounting of GHG emissions and emission reductions and/or removals (eg, areas where GHG emission reductions and/or removals are generated through the implementation of government policies and programs, rather than by projects or activities implemented within nested subnational jurisdictions)

**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*

**Official Translation**

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

**Partial Release Representation**

- The deed issued by the project proponents and the relevant VCS registry, made in respect of a project proponent leaving a project, and which is prepared using the *VCS Deed of Partial Release in Respect of Registration Deed of Representation Template*; or
- The deed issued by the jurisdictional proponent and the relevant VCS registry, made in respect of a jurisdictional proponent leaving a jurisdictional baseline or jurisdictional program, and which is prepared using the *VCS Deed of Partial Release in Respect of JNR Baseline Registration Deed of Representation Template* or the *VCS Deed of Partial Release in Respect of JNR Program Registration Deed of Representation Template*, respectively

**Peatland**

An area with a layer of naturally accumulated organic material (peat) that meets an internationally

accepted threshold (eg, 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 is 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 for the purpose of determining additionality and/or the crediting baseline

**Performance Benchmark Metric**

The indicator, specified in terms of tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e per unit of output, tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e 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 rules

**Program**

The 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 and/or nested projects, implemented as GHG mitigation activities, and described in the jurisdictional program description. Also referred to as **Jurisdictional REDD+ Program** or **Jurisdictional Program**

**Program Crediting Period** – see **Crediting Period**

**Program Start Date** – see **Start Date**

**Program Sensitive Information** – see **Sensitive Information Project**

The project activity or activities implemented as a GHG project and described in the project description

**Project Activity**

The specific set of technologies, measures and/or outcomes, specified in a methodology applied to the project, that alter the conditions identified in the baseline scenario and which result in GHG emission reductions or removals

**Project Activity Instance (Instance)**

A particular set of implemented technologies and/or measures that constitute the minimum unit of activity necessary to comply with the criteria and procedures applicable to the project activity under the methodology applied to the project

**Project Crediting Period** – see **Crediting Period**

**Project Crediting Period Start Date**

The date on which the first monitoring period commences

**Project Description**

The document that describes the project's GHG emission reduction or removal activities and that uses either the *VCS Project Description Template* or the project description template specified by the relevant approved GHG program

**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 VCS document *Registration and Issuance Process*

**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 rules

**Project Pipeline**

The list of projects on the VCS project database which are either *under development* or *under validation*

**Project Proponent**

The individual or organization that has overall control and responsibility for the project, or an individual or organization that together with others, each of which is also a project proponent, has overall control or responsibility for the project

**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 Start Date** – see **Start Date****Proof of Right**

The document(s) demonstrating the entity's right to all and any GHG emission reductions or removals generated by the project or program during the crediting period or verification period, as the case may be. Distinct from right of use

**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

### **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

### **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

### **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 (eg, for forest inventory or monitoring)

### **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 and does not meet the definitions of afforestation and reforestation

### **Reversal**

A situation where the net GHG benefit, taking into account project or program emissions, removals and leakage, in any monitoring period is negative. The amount of a reversal is calculated as the difference between the current total to date net GHG benefit of the project or program, compared to the total to-date net GHG benefit of the project or program at the previous verification event

### **Rewetting**

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

### **Right of Use**

In respect of a GHG emission reduction or removal, the unconditional, undisputed and unencumbered ability to claim that the relevant project, or jurisdictional REDD+ program, will or did generate or cause such reduction or removal. Distinct from proof of right

### **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 enrich the person or entity to which the information relates. Also referred to as **Commercially Sensitive Information**; or

- 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 program, or damage national security. Also referred to as **Program Sensitive Information**

### **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

### **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 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 (ie, up to the depth of the mineral substrate). In the case of peatland, this depth can be several meters

### **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

### **Standardized Methods Expert**

A person with expertise and experience in standardized approaches to baselines and additionality, and who is approved by the VCSA for assessments of methodology elements that use standardized methods

### **Start Date**

- The date on which the project began generating GHG emission reductions or removals. Also referred to as **Project Start Date**; or
- The date on which the jurisdictional REDD+ program began generating GHG emission reductions or removals. Also referred to as **Program Start Date**

### **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

### **Tool**

A type of module that provides a procedure for performing a specific analysis

### **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

**Validation Report**

The written report of validation prepared by the validation/verification body in accordance with the VCS rules

**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 compliance with the applicable VCS 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 compliance with the applicable VCS 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 the VCSA to act as a validation/verification body in respect of providing validation and/or verification services in accordance with the VCS rules

**VCS Program**

The GHG program operated by the VCS Association which establishes rules and requirements that operationalize the VCS to enable the validation of GHG projects and programs, and the verification of GHG emission reductions and removals

**VCS Project Database**

The central project database that records all projects and programs (listed and registered) and VCUs issued under the VCS Program, and that provides public access to all project, program and VCU information, including retirement and tracking of the AFOLU and jurisdictional pooled buffer accounts

**VCS Registry**

A registry operating within the VCS registry system and holding a current, valid agreement with the VCS Association to provide registry services on behalf of the VCS Association. VCS registries interact with the VCS project database to issue VCUs, and hold, transfer (to and from other VCS registries), retire, suspend, cancel and provide custodial services for VCUs on behalf of its accountholders

**VCS Registry System**

The system established by the VCS Program, comprised of the VCS project database and the VCS registries, to provide project and jurisdictional proponents with the ability to list and register projects and programs, and issue, transfer, hold and retire VCUs

**VCS Rules**

The rules and requirements set out in the *VCS Program Guide*, the *VCS Standard* and the other VCS Program documents, as such rules and requirements may be updated from time to time

**VCS Website**

The VCS website: [www.v-c-s.org](http://www.v-c-s.org)

**VCU Conversion Representation**

The unilateral representation issued by the project proponent, prepared using the applicable VCS template and made in respect of cancellation of GHG credits under another GHG program and/or conversion of GHG credits issued under an approved GHG program into VCUs

**VCU Issuance Levy**

The fee charged by the VCSA at the time of VCU issuance to cover the administration costs of the VCSA

**Verification Period**

The time period specified in a verification report during which the GHG emission reductions or 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 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 removals in accordance with the applicable VCS 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 removals in accordance with the applicable VCS 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 a VCS registry representing the right of an accountholder 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 CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent that has been verified by a validation/verification body in accordance with the VCS rules. Recordation of a VCU in the account of the holder at a VCS registry is prima facie evidence of that holder's entitlement to that VCU.

**Vintage**

The set of GHG emission reductions or removals generated by a project or program during a single vintage period

**Vintage Period**

The time period for which a particular set of GHG emission reductions or removals generated by the project or program are verified, which may be any subset of a verification period



**Wetland**

Land that is inundated or saturated by water for all or part of the year (eg, 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, paper

## 3 | Acronyms

<b>ACOGS</b>	Avoiding Conversion of Grasslands and Shrublands
<b>AFOLU</b>	Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use
<b>ALM</b>	Agricultural Land Management
<b>ANSI</b>	American National Standards Institute
<b>APC</b>	Avoiding Planned Conversion
<b>APDD</b>	Avoiding Planned Deforestation and Degradation
<b>APWD</b>	Avoiding Planned Wetland Degradation
<b>ARR</b>	Afforestation, Reforestation and Revegetation
<b>AUC</b>	Avoiding Unplanned Conversion
<b>AUDD</b>	Avoiding Unplanned Deforestation and Degradation
<b>AUWD</b>	Avoiding Unplanned Wetland Degradation
<b>CDM</b>	Clean Development Mechanism
<b>CGLC</b>	Cropland and Grassland Land-use Conversions
<b>CIW</b>	Conservation of Intact Wetlands
<b>DBH</b>	Diameter at breast height
<b>DSH</b>	Diameter at stump height
<b>ERA</b>	Extended Rotation Age
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization
<b>GHG</b>	Greenhouse Gas
<b>GWP</b>	Global Warming Potential

<b>ICM</b>	Improved Cropland Management
<b>IFM</b>	Improved Forest Management
<b>IGM</b>	Improved Grassland Management
<b>IPCC</b>	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
<b>ISO</b>	International Organization for Standardization
<b>JNR</b>	Jurisdictional and Nested REDD+
<b>LtHP</b>	Low-productive to High-productive Forests
<b>LtPF</b>	Logged to Protected Forests
<b>ODS</b>	Ozone-Depleting Substances
<b>PDT</b>	Peat Depletion Time
<b>REDD</b>	Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation
<b>RIL</b>	Reduced Impact Logging
<b>RS</b>	Remote Sensing
<b>RWE</b>	Restoring Wetland Ecosystems
<b>SDT</b>	Soil Organic Carbon Depletion Time
<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>VVB</b>	Validation/Verification Body
<b>VCS</b>	Verified Carbon Standard
<b>VCSA</b>	Verified Carbon Standard Association
<b>VCU</b>	Verified Carbon Unit
<b>WRC</b>	Wetlands Restoration and Conservation

## APPENDIX 1: DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version	Date	Comment
v3.0	8 Mar 2011	Initial version released under <i>VCS Version 3</i> .
v3.1	19 Oct 2011	Main updates (all effective on issue date): 1) Added new definitions for grassland and shrubland.
v3.2	1 Feb 2012	Main updates (all effective on issue date): 1) Added new definition for loss event report. 2) Revised definition for double counting. 3) Removed definition for <i>proof of title</i> (term no longer used). 4) Added new definitions for the inclusion of standardized methods requirements (activity method, capital expenditure, free-rider, performance benchmark, performance benchmark metric, performance method, project method, standardized method and standardized method expert).
v3.3	1 May 2012	Main updates (all effective on issue date): 1) Added new definitions and revised definitions associated with introduction of the project pipeline (listing representation, project pipeline, VCS project database and VCS registry system).
v3.4	4 Oct 2012	Main updates (all effective on issue date): 1) Added new definitions for deemed savings factor, default factor, large project, materiality, model, natural disturbance, project description deviation and proxy. 2) Revised definition for leakage. 3) Removed definition for mega project. 4) Added new definitions for the inclusion of jurisdictional and nested REDD+ requirements (internal allocation mechanism, jurisdiction, jurisdictional and nested REDD+, jurisdictional approval authority, jurisdictional baseline period, jurisdictional leakage, jurisdictional proponent, jurisdictional REDD+ program, jurisdictional REDD+ program start date, jurisdictional REDD+ program crediting period, jurisdictional pooled buffer account, land-based accounting, large-scale commercial deforestation, nested project, nested subnational jurisdiction, no-objection letter, non-project areas, REDD+, remote sensing).
v3.5	8 Oct 2013	Main updates (all effective on issue date): 1) Added new definitions for JNR expert, jurisdictional program description, loss event representation and program sensitive information. 2) Revised definitions applicable to jurisdictional and nested REDD+ to clarify that these terms apply to both jurisdictional proponents and project proponents (accession representation, AFOLU, authorized representative, carbon pools, commercially sensitive information, communications agreement, default factor, implementing partner, issuance representation, listing representation, loss event, market leakage evaluation, monitoring report, natural disturbance, non-permanence risk analysis, partial release representation, project pipeline, project crediting period, project start date, proof of right, registration representation, reversal, soil organic carbon, validation report, validation representation, VCS

		<p>Program, VCS project database, VCS registry system, verification report, verification representation, vintage and vintage).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>3) Revised the definitions for carbon pools, leakage and nested project.</li><li>4) Removed the definition for jurisdictional leakage and micro project.</li><li>5) Clarified that readers <i>shall</i> use the most current version of this document (Section 1).</li></ol>
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