



**Verified Carbon
Standard**
A VERRA STANDARD

Methodology Development and Review Process



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Verra sets the world's leading standards for climate action and sustainable development. We build standards for activities as diverse as reducing deforestation, improving agricultural practices, addressing plastic waste, and achieving gender equality. We manage programs to certify that these activities achieve measurable high-integrity outcomes. We work with governments, businesses, and civil society to advance the use of these standards, including through the development of markets. Everything we do is in service of increasingly ambitious climate and sustainable development goals, and an accelerated transition to a sustainable future.

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1 INTRODUCTION

This document describes the process for developing new or revised Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) methodologies, modules, and tools (referred to in this document as “methodologies”). It also outlines the review process for approved methodologies, which enables methodologies to continue to reflect best practices, scientific consensus, evolving market conditions, and ongoing technical developments.

This document is intended for use by project proponents, experts, consultants, and stakeholders interested in contributing during the VCS methodology development and review process.

- 1.1.1 This document is updated periodically. Readers shall ensure that they are using the most recent version.

2 GENERAL GUIDANCE

2.1 Overarching Rules and Guidance for Methodology Development

2.1.1 Verra leads the methodology development and review process. External stakeholders are encouraged to contribute, collaborate, and support in a variety of ways.

1) Stakeholders participating formally include the following:

- a) Funders: stakeholders who provide funding for development costs (e.g., fees for consultants, independent experts, Verra staff time)
- b) Technical contributors: stakeholders providing professional expertise (in-kind or as a paid consultant) to draft or prepare content
- c) Independent expert reviewers: stakeholders with professional expertise that serve as independent reviewers of content (see Section 3.4)

Note – Stakeholders may participate as both funders and technical contributors for the same methodology.

2) General stakeholders participate informally and include those:

- a) sharing ideas for new and revised methodologies by submitting a methodology idea note (see Section 3.1);
- b) participating in workshops or webinars;
- c) providing feedback during public consultation;
- d) testing or piloting draft methodologies, quantification spreadsheets, or digital versions of methodologies; and
- e) sharing estimates and plans for future project development to demonstrate demand for a methodology.

2.1.2 All materials, products, and outcomes developed or prepared as part of a Verra-led methodology development process are the exclusive property of Verra. Verra acknowledges contributors in a transparent and consistent manner. Verra continues to honor ownership arrangements that have already been established for existing versions of approved methodologies and those under development.

2.1.3 Verra may apply alternative processes for developing and reviewing methodologies to those outlined in this document, where such approaches are deemed more efficient and equally robust.

- 2.1.4 At any point during the methodology development process, Verra may put the process on hold or reject a proposed methodology under the following circumstances:
- 1) Unmitigable risks or issues are identified that might:
 - a) sanction or foster politically or ethically contentious project activities.
 - b) create negative outcomes (e.g., negative social and environmental impacts).
 - c) lack scientific understanding or hinder consensus regarding an innovative activity.
 - d) impact the integrity of the VCS Program or the functioning of the broader carbon market.
 - 2) Available resources, including funding, Verra staff time, and external expertise, are limited.

2.2 Conflict of Interest

- 2.2.1 Verra manages all potential conflicts of interest that may arise during methodology development. A conflict of interest:
- 1) is a situation in which a stakeholder's personal, professional, or economic interests interfere with, or appear to interfere with, their ability to carry out their duties and responsibilities while contributing to methodology development.
 - 2) exists where a stakeholder may gain a personal or economic advantage at the expense of Verra or other stakeholders.
- 2.2.2 Technical contributors, independent expert reviewers, and funders providing grants (Section 2.3.2) shall disclose any conflicts of interest.
- 2.2.3 Verra reviews conflict of interest disclosure forms to assess potential, perceived, and actual conflicts of interest that could impact the ability of a stakeholder to be impartial, objective, and make merit-based decisions in the best interest of methodology development.

2.3 Funding

- 2.3.1 Methodology development may be funded by Verra, external stakeholders, or both. Stakeholders may choose to provide funds in the form of grants (Section 2.3.2) or unrestricted donations (Section 2.3.3).
- 2.3.2 Grants: Funds are received as grants where funding is provided in exchange for Verra to develop a methodology that covers a specific scope of eligible project activities. Multiple stakeholders (funders) may share overall costs for a given methodology. Verra establishes an agreement with each funder that includes at least the following provisions and safeguards:
- 1) **Independence:** Funder acknowledgment that the grant is made voluntarily with no expectation of reciprocity or quid pro quo, including no right to influence Verra's

governance, policies, programs, operations, or decision-making process. The funder recognizes and agrees that Verra maintains full control and authority over the methodology development and review process and the project review process, including timelines, to ensure quality, consistency, and alignment with VCS Program rules and requirements. Verra commits to developing the methodology to cover a specific scope of eligible project activities, but does not confirm the funder's future project eligibility or compliance with VCS Program rules.

- 2) **Ownership:** Funder acknowledgment that all materials, products, and outcomes developed or prepared under the agreement are the exclusive property of Verra
- 3) **Non-exclusivity:** Funder acknowledgment that Verra reserves the right to consult with other third parties in relation to the scoping and drafting of methodologies

2.3.3 Unrestricted donations: Funds are received as unrestricted donations where funding is provided with no exchange of goods or services. At its discretion, Verra allocates funds received as an unrestricted donation towards priority or strategic work, which may include methodology development. Funders should specify the unrestricted nature of their donation in their communication or donation letter to Verra. Funders receive an acknowledgment letter and/or tax receipt.

2.3.4 The total cost of methodology development includes at least:

- 1) Verra's costs to author, review, coordinate stakeholder input, and manage the process. Verra may hire or accept in-kind support from external parties (contractors or consultants) to provide technical expertise; and
- 2) review by a group of independent experts.

2.4 Methodology Status

2.4.1 Verra assigns a status to each methodology in the development process. The status may change throughout the development process.

- 1) Under development: The proposed methodology is proceeding in the development process.
- 2) On hold: The development of the proposed methodology is paused and may be resumed later.
- 3) Rejected: Verra has determined not to proceed with development of the proposed methodology.
- 4) Archived: The proposed methodology has been merged with another similar proposal or is not proceeding as originally proposed.

2.4.2 Approved methodology versions may have one of the following statuses:

- 1) Active: The methodology version is eligible for use under the VCS Program.

- 2) Inactive: The methodology version is no longer eligible for use under the VCS Program once the grace period expires. Stakeholders may request reactivation of an inactive methodology by submitting a methodology idea note as per Section 3.1, unless specified otherwise on the Verra website.
- 2.4.3 The grace period for using a methodology version that becomes inactive is set per the VCS Standard and specified on the methodology's webpage on the Verra website.

2.5 Methodology Revisions

- 2.5.1 A revision to an approved methodology is an update to the prevailing version of the methodology and is appropriate for:
- 1) modifying the methodology's scope.
 - 2) aligning with updated VCS Program rules and requirements.
 - 3) reflecting best practices, scientific consensus, evolving market conditions, and ongoing technical developments.
 - 4) introducing new or improved monitoring methods, data sources, or calculation procedures.
 - 5) updating or adopting approaches for baseline setting and additionality, including standardized methods.
 - 6) adopting tools or modules.
 - 7) improving the methodology's usability.
 - 8) incorporating corrections, clarifications, and guidance.
 - 9) introducing other updates to enhance, improve, or streamline the methodological approach.
- 2.5.2 The VCS Program distinguishes between two types of methodology revision based on extent:
- 1) **Major revision:** Revisions with significant impact on the methodology's content.¹ A major revision follows the same process as developing a new methodology.
 - 2) **Minor revision:** Revisions with limited impact on the methodology's content.² A minor revision does not require a concept note or independent expert review. Verra determines whether a public consultation would add value to the process based on the scope, impact, and associated risks of the minor revision.

¹ Examples include expansion of the scope to different project activities, adoption of a standardized method, and modifications to the greenhouse gas quantification approach.

² Examples include improvements to language, clarity, formatting, updates to emission factors, improvements to procedures, and minor expansions of the scope to include similar project activities consistent with the existing methodological approach.

3 PROCEDURE FOR METHODOLOGY DEVELOPMENT

Proposed new methodologies, modules, and tools are developed through the process set out in this section, as summarized by the steps shown in Figure 1.

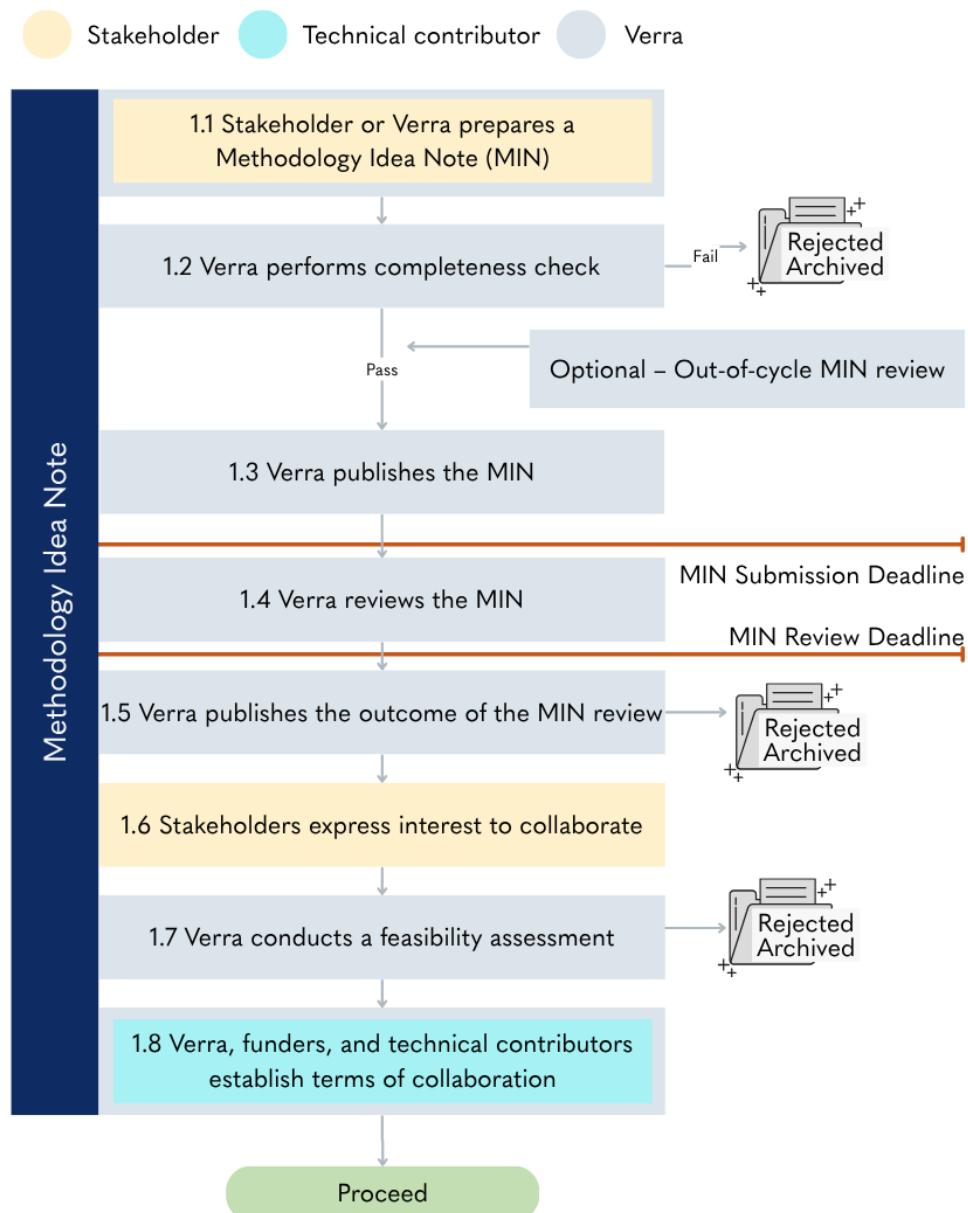
Figure 1. Steps in the methodology development process



3.1 Step 1: Methodology Idea Note

Methodology development is initiated either by stakeholders submitting a methodology idea note (MIN) or directly by Verra. The MIN includes a high-level summary of the proposed methodology or revision, analysis of the climate change mitigation potential, contribution to sustainable development, mitigation of potential risks, and availability of external funding. The purpose of this stage is to identify opportunities and assess whether to proceed with the development process based on priorities, potential impact, and available resources. Figure 2 outlines the stages included in Step 1.

Figure 2. Methodology idea note



- 3.1.1 **Step 1.1: Stakeholder or Verra prepares a methodology idea note (MIN).** Stakeholders that have an idea for a new or revised methodology, module, or tool, or would like to request reactivation of an inactive methodology shall submit a MIN to Verra at methodologies@verra.org. Verra may also prepare MINs to initiate new ideas or opportunities.
- 3.1.2 The MIN shall be prepared using the VCS *Methodology Idea Note Template* available on the Verra website.
- 3.1.3 Stakeholders are encouraged to review proposals that are currently under development prior to submitting a new MIN. These are available in the “Under Development” section on the methodologies webpage on the Verra website.
- 1) Where a similar proposal has already been rejected or archived, the stakeholder shall demonstrate that the conditions or reasons that led to Verra’s previous decision have significantly changed. Otherwise, the MIN will not proceed to the MIN review step.
 - 2) Where a similar proposal has already been submitted and is currently on hold, stakeholders should not submit another MIN. Instead, they are encouraged to express their interest by contacting methodologies@verra.org, including the methodology development ID number in the subject line and a brief description of their interest.
- 3.1.4 New methodologies or major revisions that expand the scope of an existing methodology shall have the potential to generate at least 500 000 t CO₂e of greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions and/or carbon dioxide removals (reductions and removals) per year within five years of MIN submission. Where Verra determines that the proposed methodology is unlikely to meet this minimum potential, the MIN does not proceed to the MIN review step.
- 3.1.5 Stakeholders are encouraged to submit MINs at any time. Verra reviews MINs on a periodic basis and the next submission deadline and review timeline is published on the Verra website.
- 3.1.6 **Step 1.2: Verra performs completeness check.** Verra performs completeness checks upon receipt of MIN submissions.
- 3.1.7 The completeness check ensures that the MIN has been correctly completed. Verra may ask the stakeholder to resubmit the MIN where:
- 1) relevant information is missing.
 - 2) the instructions in the template are not followed.
 - 3) the MIN is not written clearly and concisely.
- 3.1.8 **Step 1.3: Verra publishes the MIN.** For MINs that pass the completeness check, Verra publishes a high-level summary of the MIN on the Verra website, including:
- 1) scope, and
 - 2) stakeholder who submitted the MIN.

3.1.9 **Step 1.4: Verra reviews the MIN.** For MINs that pass the completeness check, Verra reviews the complete MIN. During the review, Verra may request additional information.

3.1.10 Verra determines whether the MIN review occurs:

- 1) after the next MIN submission deadline; or
- 2) as an out-of-cycle MIN review. Verra may consider out-of-cycle MIN reviews for proposals that strengthen integrity, build onto existing methodology development processes, or align with Verra's top priorities.

3.1.11 Priority to proceed with the next steps of the development process will be given to proposed methodologies that:

- 1) have high climate change mitigation potential compared to other proposals;
- 2) are broadly applicable (i.e., cover the range of potential technologies, processes, and geographic regions that may apply to related projects);
- 3) support sustainable development; and
- 4) are not associated with unmitigable social, environmental, legal, regulatory, or financial risks.

3.1.12 Potential outcomes from the MIN review are that Verra determines that the proposed methodology development:

- 1) may proceed or;
- 2) may not proceed and the proposal is rejected or archived (see Section 2.4.1).

3.1.13 Verra determines whether proposed methodology revisions are major or minor, based on the extent and type of changes proposed (see Section 2.5.2).

3.1.14 **Step 1.5: Verra publishes the outcome of the MIN review.** Verra updates the Verra website with the outcome of the review.

3.1.15 For proposals that are proceeding to the next step in the methodology development process, Verra publishes a preliminary scope of work and call for expressions of interest, including whether funding, expertise, or support is required to complete development.

3.1.16 **Step 1.6: Stakeholders express interest to collaborate.** Stakeholders are encouraged to collaborate and contribute towards methodology development in a variety of ways:

- 1) Funders, technical contributors, and independent experts may be invited to submit an expression of interest.
- 2) General stakeholders may be invited to provide input or demonstrate demand for the proposal via a survey, facilitated workshops, informal working groups, or preliminary consultation.

Verra includes details on how to participate in the call for expressions of interest published per Section 3.1.15.

3.1.17 **Step 1.7: Verra conducts a feasibility assessment.** Verra assesses whether there are resources available to continue to full methodology development.

3.1.18 Potential outcomes from the feasibility assessment are that Verra determines the proposed methodology development:

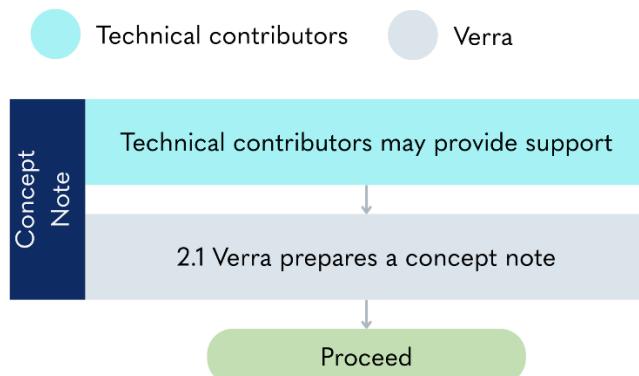
- 1) may proceed; or
- 2) may not proceed and the proposal is put on hold, rejected, or archived (see Section 2.4.1).

3.1.19 **Step 1.8: Verra, funders, and technical contributors establish terms of collaboration.** Verra formalizes the terms and nature of each party formally collaborating during methodology development. Verra publishes the names and organizations of funders and technical contributors on the Verra website, unless they request to remain anonymous.

3.2 Step 2: Concept Note

The concept note defines the detailed scope and outlines key methodological components of a proposed new methodology or revision. It sets out the high-level approach, identifies critical issues and proposed solutions to align with VCS Program rules and requirements, and serves as a preliminary step to guide full methodology development. Concept note development is summarized in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Concept note



3.2.1 **Step 2.1: Verra prepares a concept note.** Technical contributors may provide professional expertise to draft or prepare content. The concept note:

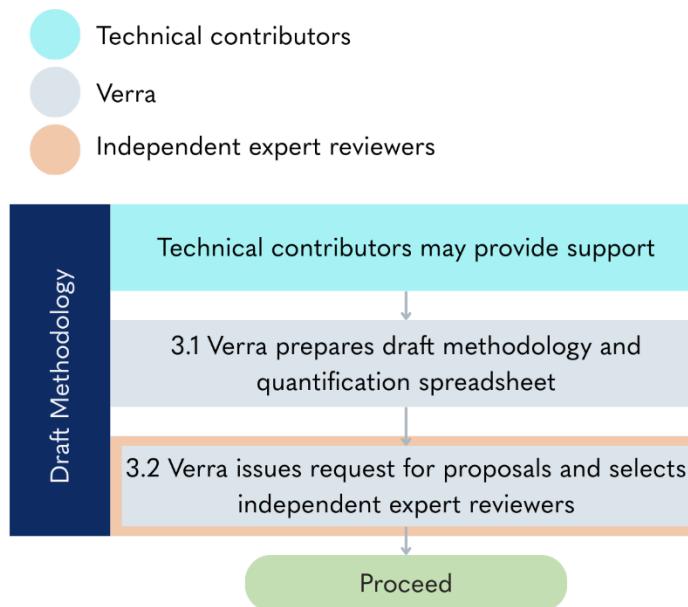
- 1) clarifies or refines the proposed scope of eligible activities to be included in the proposed methodology, based on expressions of interest received from stakeholders during Step 1.6, priorities, and feasibility.

- 2) outlines key methodological components of the proposed methodology or revision, including the conceptual approach for demonstrating the baseline and additionality, quantifying reductions and removals, monitoring, and permanence.

3.3 Step 3: Draft Methodology

In Step 3, the draft methodology or revision and a quantification spreadsheet are prepared based on the content of the concept note developed in Step 2. Verra and any technical contributors draft the new methodology or revision in full and prepare for the public consultation, and review of the methodology by independent experts, as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Draft methodology



- 3.3.1 **Step 3.1: Verra prepares the draft methodology and quantification spreadsheet.** Technical contributors may provide support to draft or prepare content. The quantification spreadsheet is comprehensive, covering all project types, scenarios, and methodological options.
- 3.3.2 **Step 3.2: Verra issues request for proposals and selects independent expert reviewers.** The group of independent experts shall perform a review as described in Step 5.
- 3.3.3 Upon receipt of any proposals, Verra narrows the pool of eligible experts to those with the most relevant academic and technical expertise and experience to review the technical rigor and consistency of the methodology. Verra manages potential conflicts of interest with all independent expert reviewers following Section 2.2.

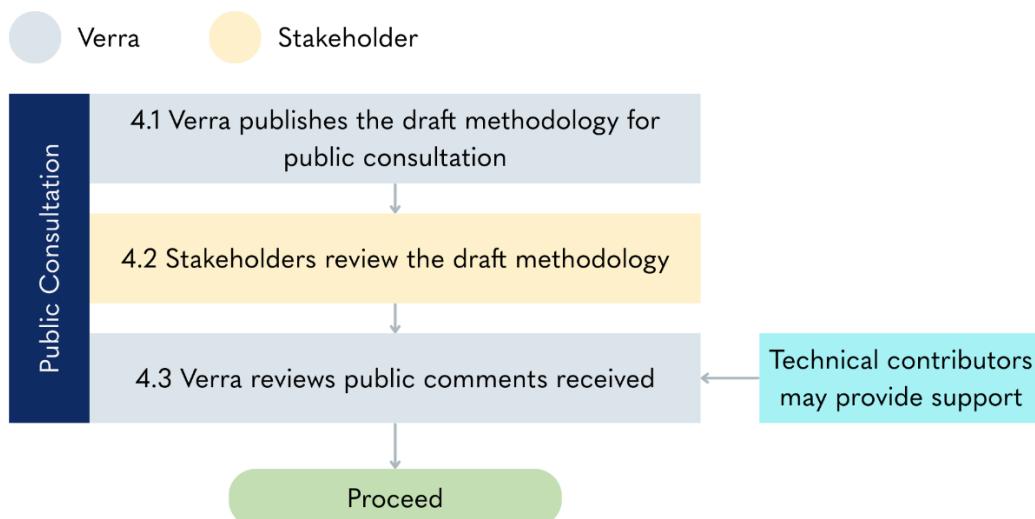
- 3.3.4 Verra selects and hires a group of at least two independent experts. Verra strives to assemble a diverse and balanced group of independent expert reviewers to cover different aspects and technical or scientific expertise needed to ensure a robust and comprehensive review.

3.4 Step 4: Public Stakeholder Consultation

Verra conducts a public stakeholder consultation to gather feedback on the draft methodology or revision. The purpose of this step is to provide transparency and to improve the overall quality of the methodology by asking for public feedback and incorporating responses into subsequent drafts.

Figure 5 summarizes the stages of public stakeholder consultation.

Figure 5. Public consultation



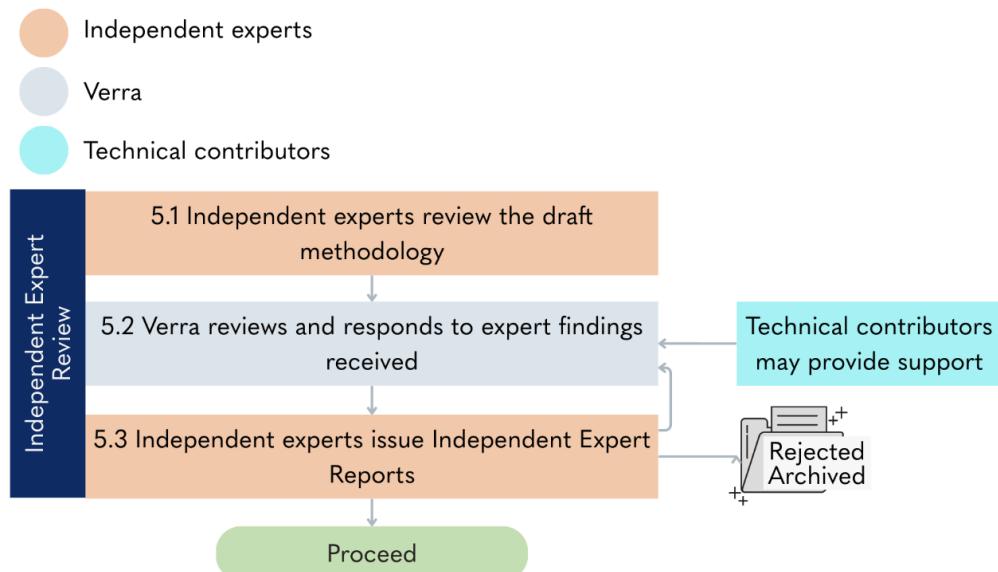
- 3.4.1 **Step 4.1: Verra publishes the draft methodology for public consultation.** Verra posts the methodology and quantification spreadsheet on the Verra website for 30 days and invites public comment. Where appropriate, Verra may establish a longer consultation period (e.g., for methodologies of higher complexity). Verra may host a webinar to provide an overview of the methodology.
- 3.4.2 **Step 4.2: Stakeholders review the draft methodology.** Stakeholders shall submit any comments and feedback to Verra using the template published with the draft methodology. Respondents shall provide their name, organization, country, and email address. Respondents shall indicate in their submission whether they wish to remain anonymous to the public.
- 3.4.3 **Step 4.3: Verra reviews public comments received.** Verra consolidates the comments and, for each comment or common theme, updates the methodology to address the comment, provides clarification, or explains why no changes are made.

- 3.4.4 Verra prepares a draft summary of stakeholder comments that is published with the approved methodology in Step 6 (see Section 3.6). Technical contributors may support preparation of responses or content.
- 3.4.5 Where significant changes to the methodology are made after the first public stakeholder consultation, Verra may choose to conduct a second public stakeholder consultation.

3.5 Step 5: Independent Expert Review

Independent experts review the technical rigor, accuracy, and consistency of the draft methodology. This step ensures that the methodology undergoes an independent review process and aligns with best practices and current scientific knowledge and research. Figure 6 summarizes the stages of independent expert review.

Figure 6. Independent expert review



- 3.5.1 **Step 5.1: Independent experts review the draft methodology.** The independent experts submit a draft Independent Expert Report to Verra using the template provided by Verra. The independent expert review may occur either in parallel with or after the public consultation.
- 3.5.2 **Step 5.2: Verra reviews and responds to expert findings received.** Verra prepares a response to each expert finding outlined in the draft Independent Expert Reports. For each finding, Verra either updates the methodology to address the finding or provides clarification. Technical contributors may support drafting of responses or content preparation.
- 3.5.3 **Step 5.3: Independent experts issue Independent Expert Reports.** Independent experts review Verra's response to their findings and provide an Independent Expert Report according to the template provided by Verra.

- 3.5.4 Where the Independent Expert Reports identify major risks that cannot be addressed within a reasonable timeframe, the methodology is put on hold or rejected by Verra.

3.6 Step 6: Final Verra Review and Decision

In Step 6, Verra performs a final review of the methodology, as shown in Figure 7. The purpose of this step is to ensure the final methodology aligns with VCS Program rules and requirements, and that relevant feedback from the public consultation and independent expert review has been incorporated.

Figure 7. Final Verra review and decision



- 3.6.1 **Step 6.1: Verra performs final review.** Verra reviews the methodology, the summary of the stakeholder consultation, and the Independent Expert Reports produced by the independent experts to determine whether the methodology can be approved.

- 3.6.2 Potential outcomes of Verra's final review are:

- 1) Verra approves the new methodology or revision.
 - a) For new methodologies: Verra assigns the methodology a unique reference number (i.e., VM00XX, VMD00XX, VT00XX, or VMR00XX for methodologies, modules, tools, and revisions of methodologies from other GHG programs, respectively). The first issued version of a new methodology is assigned v1.0.
 - b) For revisions: Verra assigns a new version number as follows:
 - i) Minor revisions: The version number is incremented at the decimal level from the prevailing version number (e.g., from v2.1 to v2.2).
 - ii) Major revisions: The version number is incremented at the whole number level from the prevailing version number (e.g., from v2.1 to v3.0).
 - 2) Verra rejects the methodology or puts the process on hold where any of the circumstances specified in Section 2.1.4 have been identified.
- 3.6.3 After approval, Verra publishes the new methodology or revision, with the Independent Expert Reports and summary of stakeholder consultation, where applicable, on the Verra website.

Verra may publish an updated quantification spreadsheet. The new or revised methodology is then active and eligible for use under the VCS Program. The previous version of a revised methodology becomes inactive.

Note – Verra digitalizes approved methodologies, which are hosted on the Verra Project Hub. These digitalized methodologies undergo extensive testing and piloting to ensure their robustness and usability. The full list of available digital methodologies can be found on the Verra website.

4 REVIEW OF ACTIVE METHODOLOGIES

Verra reviews active methodologies to ensure that they continue to reflect best practices, scientific consensus, evolving market conditions, and ongoing technical developments. This includes ensuring that methodologies are consistent with new VCS Program rules and requirements and use appropriate and current methodological procedures.

The following procedures apply to all methodologies, modules, and tools.

4.1 Trigger for Review

- 4.1.1 Verra conducts a periodic review of each active methodology, module, and tool within five years of the last update or review.
- 4.1.2 A review may be triggered at any time where a VVB, project proponent, another stakeholder, or Verra identifies an issue with a methodology, module, or tool, such as:
 - 1) material inconsistency with a VCS Program rule or requirement (e.g., that may lead to a material difference in the quantification of reductions or removals by projects applying the methodology);
 - 2) general scientific or technical developments in a specific sector; or
 - 3) any other quality concerns about a methodology.
- 4.1.3 Verra may make a methodology inactive where no projects using the methodology have been registered within five years of the last update or review.

4.2 Procedure for Review

- 4.2.1 Verra reviews the methodology and the issue that triggered the review. Verra may request input from stakeholders, including developers of previous methodology versions and external experts.
- 4.2.2 At any point during the review, the methodology may be inactivated where a quality concern exists.

4.3 Outcome of Review

- 4.3.1 Where the review determines that the methodology meets all VCS Program rules and requirements and reflects best practice and scientific consensus, no further action is taken.
- 4.3.2 Where the review determines that the methodology requires updating, Verra prepares a correction and clarification, minor revision, or major revision.

4.3.3 Where Verra determines that use of the methodology could impact the integrity of the VCS Program or the functioning of the broader carbon market, or create negative outcomes, the methodology is made inactive, either:

- 1) until a revision addressing the issues is published; or
- 2) indefinitely where a revision is unlikely to adequately resolve the issue.

APPENDIX 1: DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version	Date	Comment
v5.0	18 June 2025	<p>Main updates, effective immediately unless specified otherwise:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Removed the option for third party-led methodology development and redefined how stakeholders can collaborate with Verra during Verra-led methodology development. This update is effective for all methodology idea notes submitted on or after the release date. Proposed methodology developments submitted prior to the release date may continue as third party-led (as defined in the <i>Methodology Development and Review Process, v4.4</i> Section 2.1.1(1)) on a case-by-case basis.2) Introduced the option for stakeholders to support methodology development by providing funding in the form of grants or unrestricted donations to cover and share development costs.3) Replaced the validation/verification body assessment of the methodology with review by a group of independent experts.4) Replaced the requirement to prepare a draft project description during draft methodology development with a requirement to prepare and publish a quantification spreadsheet.



Standards for a Sustainable Future



**Verified Carbon
Standard**



**Jurisdictional
& Nested REDD+**



**Climate, Community
& Biodiversity Standards**



**Sustainable Development
Verified Impact Standard**



**Plastic Waste
Reduction Standard**