

VCS Methodology Element Assessment Report Template

This template is for the assessment of new methodologies, modules and tools, and revisions of such methodology elements.

Instructions for Completing the Methodology Element Assessment Report

TITLE PAGE: Complete all items in the box on the title page using Arial or Century Gothic 10.5 point, black, regular (non-italic) font. This box must appear on the title page of the final document. Project descriptions may also feature the project title and preparers’ name, logo and contact information more prominently on the title page, using the format below (Arial or Century Gothic 24 point and Arial or Century Gothic 12 point, black, regular font).

METHODOLOGY ELEMENT ASSESSMENT REPORT: Instructions for completing the methodology element assessment report are given under the section headings in this template. All instructions must be followed, as set out in the VCSProgram *Methodology Approval Process*. Many of the instructions relate back to the rules and requirements set out in the *VCS Methodology Requirements* and accompanying VCS Program documents. As such, this template must be completed paying attention to the rules and requirements set out in such documents, and the validation/verification body will need to refer to the VCS Program documents in order to complete the template. It is also expected that relevant guidance, such as that set out in the *Validation and Verification Manual* and *Guidance on Standardized Methods*, is followed. Note that the instructions in this template are intended to serve as a guide and do not necessarily represent an exhaustive list of the information the validation/verification body should provide under each section of the template.

Note that in the instructions in this template the term methodology has been used in lieu of methodology element for ease of readability.

All sections must be completed Arial or Century Gothic 10.5 point, black, regular (non-italic) font. Where a section is not applicable, same must be stated under the section (the section must not be deleted from the final document).

Delete all instructions, including this introductory text, from the final document.



Methodology Assessment Report Title

Logo (optional)

Document Prepared by (individual or entity)

Contact Information (optional)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Methodology Title | *Name of this methodology* |
| Version | *Version number of this methodology e.g.,* |
| Methodology Category | *Methodology* |
| *Methodology Revision* |
| *Module* |
| *Tool* |
| Sectoral Scope(s) | *Sectoral scope(s) applicable to this methodology* |
| Report Title | *Title of this assessment report* |
| Report Version | *Version number of this assessment report* |
| Client | *Client for whom this report is prepared* |
| Pages | *Number of pages of this report* |
| Date of Issue | *DD-Month-YYYY this report issued* |
| Prepared By | *Validation/verification body that prepared this report* |
| Contact | *Physical address, telephone, email, website* |
| Approved By | *Individual at the validation/verification body who approved this assessment report* |
| Work Carried Out By | *Individuals who conducted this assessment, including their titles* |
| **Summary** | |
| *Provide a brief summary of the following:*   * *A brief description of the assessment and the methodology* * *The purpose and scope of the assessment* * *The method and criteria used for the assessment* * *The number of findings raised during the assessment* * *Any uncertainties associated with the assessment* * *Summary of the assessment conclusion (include the version number of the final version of the methodology)* | |

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# Introduction

## Objective

*Explain the purpose of the assessment.*

## Summary Description of the Methodology

*Provide a brief summary description of the methodology describing the project activities that are covered by the methodology (no more than one page).*

# Assessment Approach

## Method and Criteria

*Describe the methods and criteria used for undertaking the assessment, including the VCS Program documentation that was used as the criteria for the assessment.*

## Document Review

*List all documents that were reviewed during the assessment. Do not include VCS Program documents (which must be listed in Section 2.1 above).*

## Interviews

*Describe the interview process and list the individuals interviewed for the assessment, Include the roles and organizational affiliations of such individuals interviewed.*

## Assessment Team

*List the names and roles of all members of the assessment team and provide a summary of the qualifications of each team member, including a description of their expertise and experience in the sectoral scope(s) relevant to the methodology.*

*Where applicable, state the name of the VCS Program-approved expert and their role in the assessment.*

## Resolution of Findings

*Describe the process for the resolution of findings (corrective actions, clarifications or other findings) raised by the assessment team during the assessment process.*

*State the total number of corrective action requests, clarification requests or other findings raised during the assessment.*

*Provide a brief summary of the main findings and/or points of discussion with the methodology developer, and how the methodology was revised in response to them. Include only the main issues (and do not put this summary in an appendix).*

*Provide, in an appendix, a summary of each finding, including the issue raised, the response(s) provided by the developer, and the final conclusion and any resulting changes to methodology.*

# Assessment Findings

*Use this section to describe the assessment process and conclusions for key sections of the methodology. Validation/verification bodies must ensure that the principles set out in the VCS Standard are adhered to in methodologies. Likewise, validation/verification bodies should consider how methodological approaches are consistent with best practice and scientific consensus.*

*Where the methodology references modules or tools approved under the VCS Program or an approved GHG program (e.g., for additionality, or estimation of stocks in the soil carbon pool), assess whether and how the modules or tools are used appropriately within the methodology. Reassessment of the actual modules or tools is not required.*

## Relationship to Approved or Pending Methodologies

*Identify each similar methodology (approved or pending) under the VCS Program or an approved GHG program. Assess whether the methodology provides a complete list of all such similar methodologies.*

*Assess whether the similar methodologies could have reasonably been revised to meet the objective of the new methodology, and provide an overall conclusion regarding the justification for the new methodology. Include an explanation of how none of the identified methodologies could have reasonably been revised to meet the objective of the new methodology*

## Stakeholder Comments

*Identify any comments submitted under the public stakeholder consultation. Assess whether the developer has taken due account of comments, and provide an overall conclusion regarding stakeholder comments.*

*Include the developer’s response to each comment and describe any resultant changes to the methodology and an explanation of how this is appropriate.*

## Structure and Clarity of Methodology

*Assess whether the methodology is written in a clear, logical, concise and precise manner. Include an explanation regarding each of the following:*

* *Whether the developer has followed the instructions in the methodology template and ensured that the methodology’s various criteria and procedures are documented in the appropriate sections of the template.*
* *Whether the terminology used in the methodology is consistent with that used in the VCS Program, and GHG accounting generally.*
* *Whether the key words must, should and may have been used appropriately and consistently to denote firm requirements, (non-mandatory) recommendations and permissible or allowable options, respectively.*
* *Whether the criteria and procedures are written in a manner that can be understood and applied readily and consistently by project proponents.*
* *Whether the criteria and procedures are written in a manner that allows projects to be unambiguously audited against them.*

*Provide an overall conclusion regarding the structure and clarity of the methodology.*

## Definitions

*Assess whether all key terms are defined clearly and appropriately, and are consistently used in the methodology. Provide an overall conclusion regarding the definition of key terms in the methodology. Terms must be listed in alphabetical order, and terms already defined under the VCS Program must not be repeated in the methodology. The Definitions section may also include a list of the key acronyms used in the methodology.*

## Applicability Conditions

*Identify the applicability conditions. Assess whether they are appropriate for the project activities targeted by the methodology and the quantification procedures set out within the methodology, and provide an overall conclusion regarding the specification of the applicability conditions.*

*Include an explanation of how the applicability conditions as a whole are sufficiently clear for determining which project activities are eligible under the methodology, and which are not.*

*Include an explanation of how the applicability conditions address environmental integrity and practical considerations (e.g., where the methodology uses a biochemical model to estimate GHG emission reductions and/or removals, the applicability conditions would need to ensure application of the methodology is restricted to regions for which the model has been calibrated)*

*Separately for each applicability condition, also explain whether:*

* *The applicability condition is written in a sufficiently clear and precise manner, such that it can be determined whether a project activity meets with the condition.*
* *Conformance with the applicability condition can be demonstrated at the time of project validation, noting that projects should not be able to fall out of line with applicability conditions.*

## Project Boundary

*Identify the project boundary. Assess whether the approach for identifying the project boundary is appropriate for the project activities covered by the methodology, and provide an overall conclusion regarding the specification of the project boundary.*

*Include an explanation of how the included and optional GHG sources, sinks and reservoirs (and carbon pools, for AFOLU methodologies) are appropriate to the project activities covered by the methodology. Likewise, for excluded GHG sources, sinks and reservoirs (and carbon pools,) explain how their exclusion is appropriate. Address each source, sink and reservoir (and carbon pool) separately.*

*Include an explanation of how any procedures and/or diagrams provided for the project boundary are clearly specified and appropriate to the project activities covered by the methodology.*

## Baseline Scenario

*Identify the criteria and procedures for determining the baseline scenario (or for standardized methods, the baseline scenario established by the methodology). Assess whether this is appropriate for the project activities covered by the methodology, and p*rovide an overall conclusion regarding the criteria and procedures for determining the baseline scenario (or for standardized methods, the baseline scenario established by the methodology)*.*

For methodologies using a project method, include an explanation of how the criteria and procedures for identifying alternative baseline scenarios and determining the most plausible scenario can be expected to result in a baseline scenario that reasonably represents the GHG emissions or removals that would occur in the absence of the project activity.

For methodologies using a standardized method, include an explanation of how the most plausible baseline scenario or the aggregate baseline scenario described in the methodology reasonably represents the GHG emissions or removals that would occur in the absence of the project activity.

For methodologies using a performance method for the crediting baseline, include an explanation of how the performance benchmark (including the level of the performance benchmark metric) is appropriate. Include an assessment of the appropriateness of the data (including sources of data), analysis and process used to establish the benchmark.

For AFOLU methodologies, include an explanation of how the criteria and procedures for determining the baseline scenario (e.g., procedures for establishing rates of land-use and land-cover change, identifying historical management practices, establishing common practice, and identifying current and/or historical ecological conditions) are appropriate for the AFOLU project category(s) covered by the methodology.

## Additionality

*Identify the criteria and procedures for determining additionality. Assess whether they are appropriate for the project activities covered by the methodology, and provide an overall conclusion regarding the criteria and procedures for determining additionality.*

For methodologies referencing an additionality tool (e.g., VCS Tool for the Demonstration and Assessment of Additionality in VCS AFOLU Project Activities, or CDM Tool for the Demonstration and Assessment of Additionality) include an explanation of how the tool is appropriate for the project activities covered by the methodology. Also include an explanation of how any additional requirements, procedures and/or guidance provided to augment use of the tool is appropriate.

For methodologies using a standardized method (i.e., a performance or activity method), include an explanation of how VCS Program requirements on regulatory surplus are addressed.

For methodologies using a performance method for additionality, include an explanation of how the performance benchmark (including the level of the performance benchmark metric) is appropriate. Include an assessment of the appropriateness of the data (including sources of data), analysis and process used to establish the benchmark.

For methodologies using an activity method, include an explanation of how the option selected (A, B or C) and the data, analysis and process used to establish the positive list is appropriate.

## Quantification of GHG Emission Reductions and Removals

### Baseline Emissions

*Identify the procedures for calculating baseline emissions and removals. Assess whether they are appropriate for the project activities covered by the methodology, and provide an overall conclusion regarding the procedures for calculating baseline emissions and removals.*

*Include an explanation of whether and how:*

* *The procedures for calculating baseline emissions and removals* cover all GHG sources, sinks and reservoirs *(and carbon pools)* included in the project boundary (including any optional sources, sinks and reservoirs).
* *All algorithms, equations and formulas used are appropriate and without error.*
* *All models or default factors used are appropriate and in conformance with VCS Program requirements on same.*
* *The procedures for estimating parameters related to the quantification of baseline emissions (e.g., the procedures for model selection) are appropriate.*

### Project Emissions

*Identify the procedures for calculating project emissions and removals. Assess whether they are appropriate for the project activities covered by the methodology, and provide an overall conclusion regarding the procedures for calculating project emissions and removals.*

*Include an explanation of whether and how:*

* *The procedures for calculating project emissions and removals* cover all GHG sources, sinks and reservoirs *(and carbon pools)* included in the project boundary (including any optional sources, sinks and reservoirs).
* *All algorithms, equations and formulas used are appropriate and without error.*
* *All models or default factors used are appropriate and comply with the VCS Program rules on same.*
* *The procedures for estimating parameters related to the quantification of project emissions and removals (e.g., procedures for stratification, procedures for analyzing land use and land cover change, and procedures for model selection) are appropriate.*

### Leakage

*Identify the procedures for calculating leakage. Assess whether they are appropriate for the project activities covered by the methodology, and provide an overall conclusion regarding the procedures for calculating leakage.*

For AFOLU methodologies, include an explanation of how the procedures for calculating leakage comply with the VCS rules for the relevant AFOLU project category(s).

### Net GHG Emission Reductions and Removals

*Identify the procedures for calculating net GHG emission reductions and removals. Assess whether they are appropriate for the project activities covered by the methodology, and provide an overall conclusion regarding procedures for calculating net GHG emission reductions and removals.*

*Include an explanation of whether and how:*

* *All algorithms, equations and formulas used are appropriate and without error.*
* Any uncertainties associated with the quantification of net GHG emission reductions and removals are addressed appropriately.

## Monitoring

*Identify the data, parameters and procedures for monitoring. Assess whether they are appropriate for the project activities covered by the methodology, and provide an overall conclusion regarding the data, parameters and procedures for monitoring.*

*Separately for each data/parameter available at validation, include an explanation of how the following are appropriate: data unit, source of data, value applied, justification of choice of data or description of measurement methods and procedures applied, and purpose of data.*

*Separately for each data/parameter monitored, include an explanation of how the following are appropriate: data unit, source of data, description of measurement methods and procedures to be applied, frequency of monitoring/recording, QA/QC procedures to be applied, purpose of data, and calculation method.*

*Include an explanation of how the monitoring plan ensures that GHG emission reductions and removals are monitored and reported appropriately.*

# Assessment Conclusion

*Clearly state whether the methodology complies with the assessment criteria, including any qualifications or limitations. Include the version number and issue date of the methodology.*

*Where the methodology has been revised as a result of subsequent assessment or review, update this assessment conclusion with the version number and issue date of the methodology version finally being approved by the validation/verification body.*

# evidence of fulfilment of VVB eligibility requirements

*Describe how the validation/verification body fulfils the eligibility requirements for validation/ verification bodies set out in the VCS Program document Methodology Approval Process, providing appropriate evidence where required.*

# Signature

Signed for and on behalf of:

Name of entity: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name of signatory: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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