Verified Carbon Standard | Jurisdictional and Nested REDD+ (VCS JNR)

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Category Voluntary Carbon Standards
Type:
Carbon accounting and reporting
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National
Sub-national / jurisdictional
Nested
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Deforestation
Forest Degradation
Enhancement
Forest management
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Global

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The Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) developed the “Jurisdictional and Nested REDD+ (JNR)” framework to account and credit REDD+ programmes implemented at the national or subnational scale, and to establish a clear pathway for existing and new subnational jurisdictional activities and projects to be integrated (or “nested”) within higher-level jurisdictional REDD+ programmes.

**Introduction**

The Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) originally only covered project-level REDD+ activities. In December 2010 the VCS Association launched an initiative to develop a new jurisdictional and nested REDD+ standard that could account for emission reductions and removals at the national, subnational, and project levels. The initiative was launched to address the need for a framework to allow governments to account for emission reductions and removals generated through large-scale policies and programmes and to support REDD+ projects that may be integrated into national or subnational accounting frameworks.

The new standard took almost 2 years to develop and in October 2012 the *Jurisdictional and Nested REDD+ (JNR) Requirements* were released for use. It is the first standard of its kind for accounting and crediting jurisdictional and nested REDD+ programmes. Jurisdictions are able to choose between three different jurisdictional scenarios. Scenario one involves registering a jurisdictional baseline only which can subsequently be used by projects, scenario two expands on this by including jurisdictional MRV and crediting along with direct crediting to nested projects and/or nested jurisdictions, and scenario three involves registering a jurisdictional baseline along with jurisdictional MRV and crediting, but does not allow direct registration or crediting to nested projects or jurisdictions. In addition to the requirements set out in the JNR Requirements document, all programmes must also adhere to applicable VCS requirements and rules set out in the VCS Programme documents.

**Design Features**

**Scope** [11]

REDD+ activities fall into 3 categories: Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD), Improved Forest Management (IFM), and Afforestation, Reforestation and Revegetation (ARR).

**Scale** [12]

National, subnational/jurisdictional, and nested projects and jurisdictions. Subnational jurisdictions may either be based on administrative boundaries or other boundaries (e.g. eco-region) established by the national government.

**Reference Levels** [13]

Jurisdictional baselines are fixed for a period of between 5 and 10 years (defined by a jurisdictional proponent) and subsequently updated with the same periodicity. Where no UNFCCC baseline has been established for the purposes of crediting in a market-based mechanism, the proponent must develop at least two alternative baseline scenarios: (1) historical annual average emissions or removals over an 8 to 12 year period; and (2) historical trend of emissions or removals based on
changes over at least 10 years, both ending within 2 years of the start of the current jurisdictional baseline period. Modeled adjustments reflecting national or subnational circumstances may be presented as alternative baseline scenario(s). After presenting the options the jurisdiction must determine the most plausible baseline and justify its selection.

**Additionality** [14]

Additionality is assumed to be factored into the jurisdictional baseline. Nested projects do not need to demonstrate additionality if they have adopted a spatially explicit jurisdictional baseline under JNR scenario two. In scenario one the project must demonstrate additionality following the procedures to do so in the project level methodology being applied.

**Leakage / displacements** [15]

National jurisdictions do not need to account for leakage (i.e., international leakage) but should identify and mitigate it to the extent possible. Subnational jurisdictions also must identify the potential of baseline drivers to cause leakage and develop and implement measures to avoid or reduce the risk of leakage. Subnational jurisdictions are further required to estimate and deduct any residual leakage that may occur outside the jurisdiction but within the country (i.e., where there is no national REDD+ programme with national monitoring in place). Three types of leakage are considered: activity-shifting, market and ecological leakage. GHG emissions from leakage may be determined either directly from monitoring, or indirectly when leakage is difficult to monitor directly but where scientific knowledge or research provides credible estimates of likely impacts. Subnational jurisdictions may optionally use the *JNR Leakage Tool* to estimate leakage, or may justify use of their own method(s).

**Permanence / reversals** [16]

Jurisdictional REDD+ programmes seeking to issue credits must assess risk categories such as political/governance, programme design and natural risk, using the *JNR Non-Permanence Risk Tool*. The tool also allows jurisdictions to demonstrate where they have reduced risk by implementing risk mitigation strategies. The overall risk rating will then determine the volume of buffer credits to be deposited in a jurisdictional pooled buffer account. This account will hold non-tradable buffer credits to cover any reversals associated with jurisdictional programmes and nested projects. Jurisdictional programmes that demonstrate their longevity, sustainability and ability to mitigate risks are eligible for release of buffer credits from the jurisdictional pooled buffer account. Nested projects use the *AFOLU Non-Permanence Risk Tool* to determine their non-permanence risk and the volume of buffer credits which are also deposited into the jurisdictional pooled buffer account.

**Social measures or requirements** [17]

Jurisdictional proponents must provide information in the monitoring reports with respect to how they have avoided (and where necessary mitigated) negative, and enhanced positive, social impacts in accordance with the safeguards contained in Appendix 1 of Decision 1/CP.16 of the UNFCCC Cancun Agreements and relevant jurisdictional (national and subnational) REDD+ safeguards requirements.

**Environmental measures or requirements** [18]

Jurisdictional proponents must provide information in the monitoring reports with respect to how they have avoided (and where necessary mitigated) negative, and enhanced positive, environmental impacts in accordance with the safeguards contained in Appendix 1 of Decision 1/CP.16 of the...
UNFCCC Cancun Agreements and relevant jurisdictional (national and subnational) REDD+ safeguards requirements.

Procedural measures or requirements [19]

There are a number of procedural safeguards that address integration in policies, laws, regulations; transparency; stakeholder participation; provision of information; and avenues for stakeholders to air grievances. Implementation of the jurisdictional program and any nested project shall not lead to the violation of any applicable law, regardless of whether or not the law is enforced. Jurisdictional programs, baselines and crediting options including benefit sharing mechanisms must be developed in a transparent manner, and in consultation with relevant stakeholders (including private land owners, local communities, indigenous peoples, and/or relevant government agencies). The standard refers to Principle 6 of the REDD+ SES, the FCPF Guidelines on Stakeholder Engagement in REDD+ Readiness, and UN-REDD procedures as a basis to guide consultation processes. Monitoring reports must be provided which contain information on how the Cancun Safeguards are being addressed and jurisdictional proponents must ensure such information is made readily available to all relevant stakeholders throughout implementation of the jurisdictional REDD+ program.

A mechanism for handling and resolving grievances and disputes related to the design, implementation and evaluation of the jurisdictional REDD+ program is required. The standard references Principle 6.6 of the REDD+ SES as potential guidance.

Monitoring and Reporting [20]

A jurisdictional proponent must submit a VCS JNR Monitoring Report for verification at least every 5 years. Nested subnational jurisdictions and projects may monitor and report at different intervals than the higher-level jurisdiction, but must also monitor and synchronize their reporting with the higher-level jurisdiction at least every 5 years. At validation, the jurisdictional proponent must select which level (lower or higher) will consistently be used for reconciling any discrepancies between lower and higher level monitoring results.

Registry [21]

Jurisdictional programs and nested projects applying the VCS JNR Requirements use the VCS Registry System. The VCS Registry System is currently supported by two registry operators: APX and Markit. New registry service providers are able to join the VCS Registry System at any time.

Process [22]

The detailed steps for validation and registration of jurisdictional REDD+ programs and baselines, and verification and issuance of jurisdictional VCU are contained in VCS documents JNR Validation and Verification Process and JNR Registration and Issuance Process. The validation and verification process involves the following steps: (1) Jurisdictional proponent develops jurisdictional element documentation (e.g., jurisdictional program/baseline description for validation and monitoring report for verification); (2) Jurisdictional element documentation posted for 60-day public stakeholder consultation; (3) Validation/verification body (VVB) assesses jurisdictional element documentation; (4) Jurisdictional REDD+ expert panel peer reviews jurisdictional element documentation (where relevant); (5) Final review and approval by the VCS Association. Validation and verification may happen simultaneously or sequentially. The process also lays out requirements for the jurisdictional REDD+ expert approval and selection process.

The registration and issuance process involves the following steps: (1) Jurisdictional proponent
requests registration (after validation) and/or issuance (after verification); (2) VCS registry administrator reviews jurisdictional element documentation; (3) VCS registry administrator registers jurisdictional program/baseline and/or issues VCUs. The process also lays out requirements for the operation of the jurisdictional pooled buffer account.

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Initiatives on the REDD Desk linked to this standard

Brazil (4)

- Suruí REDD+ Project [29]
- Jari-Amapá REDD project [30]
- Purus Project [31]
- Florestal Santa Maria Project [32]

Related news

- What will voluntary carbon markets look like in 2015? Q+A with Verified Carbon Standard [33]

Further reading

Technical Guidance for Jurisdictional and Nested REDD+ Programs [34]
Guidance for Jurisdictional and Nested REDD+ Program Design [35]

External Links

Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) JNR [36]
VCS Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) Requirements [37]
The VCS Project Database [38]

Related encyclopaedia articles

- Activity [39]
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