



Terms of Reference

Advisory Committee and Technical Experts for the VCS Jurisdictional and Nested REDD Initiative

17 December 2010

This document presents the terms of reference for the Advisory Committee and Technical Experts for the VCS Jurisdictional and Nested REDD Initiative. The Voluntary Carbon Standard Association (VCSA) is establishing the initiative to support its work on the development of Voluntary Carbon Standard (VCS) criteria and procedures for regional baselines and jurisdictional and nested REDD accounting and crediting. This work is made possible through a grant provided by the Climate and Land Use Alliance (CLUA). This document consists of several sections that outline the following:

- 1) The background of the VCS Jurisdictional and Nested REDD Initiative;
- 2) The purpose, role and composition of the Advisory Committee
- 3) The purpose, role and composition of Technical Expert group
- 4) The application process

1) Background on the VCS Jurisdictional and Nested REDD Initiative

Background

The VCS's reputation as one of the world's leading and most innovative carbon standards has in large part been established by its inclusion of agriculture, forestry and other land use (AFOLU) activities. There are now a number of ground-breaking new AFOLU methodologies for Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD) and Improved Forest Management (IFM), among other project types, approved and in the VCS approval pipeline. There are also several dozen major forestry projects under development using the VCS that could generate millions of tons of emissions reductions over the coming decades.

One of the next key challenges is to ensure that these groundbreaking project activities find a pathway to continue to be a part of the climate solution as the accounting and crediting scale for REDD moves up from the project level to state/province and national levels. To do this, project level activities must be brought under these broader scale baselines and accounting frameworks. This will help ensure that the carbon credits issued are recognized under emerging compliance markets and bi/multilateral agreements and that the reductions across different scales "add-up" properly. Knitting these different activities together is critical to maintaining environmental integrity and to incentivizing early action and catalyzing REDD policies and measures targeting different scales. The establishment and use of such integrated frameworks will also help build confidence among domestic and international policy makers and donors supporting REDD.

To achieve these goals it will be essential to build upon the foundation created by the existing VCS AFOLU rules, being used by most REDD projects around the world. In particular, the VCSA will engage a broad range of experts and stakeholders to collaborate on the development of the following:

- Requirements for the use of Regional Baselines. This includes VCS guidance for the use of regional baselines by REDD projects, covering how to develop, register and use regional baselines to credit project-level emission reductions. The VCSA sees a growing need to facilitate the use of common baselines where projects are clustered in a region. This will help streamline processes while maintaining atmospheric integrity and consistency, as well as reducing transaction costs for individual projects and fostering learning on setting broader-scale deforestation reference levels.
- Criteria and Procedures for Jurisdiction-Wide Accounting. This includes developing criteria to support national and state REDD initiatives seeking to integrate the accounting of emissions reductions, whether generated by policies, programs or individual projects. In addition, the initiative will establish VCS procedures and program elements for enabling the issuance and registration of Voluntary Carbon Units (VCUs) for jurisdiction-wide (e.g., district, state or national) accounting and crediting programs, including allocation of VCUs to projects operating within such jurisdictions.

In addition to these two new sets of VCS criteria and procedures, a guidance document will be prepared as a final step. The document will include key insights gleaned through collaboration with other initiatives, such as the Governors' Climate & Forests Task Force, and through the preparation of criteria and procedures for jurisdiction-wide accounting, outlining key lessons learned and challenges. It will provide guidance to government entities to facilitate the development of their jurisdiction-wide accounting and crediting programs, and to donors and other market participants on key issues that need to be addressed in best-practice integrated project and jurisdictional REDD accounting.

Overview of Governance and Process

The VCSA will collaborate with a broad range of stakeholders and experts to carry out the initiative. The team will include an Advisory Committee, Secretariat and Technical Experts, along with input from stakeholders and the public.

The **Advisory Committee** will guide and provide strategic input into the conceptual development of the initiative and review the resulting work products.

The **Secretariat** will consist of the VCS AFOLU Program Coordinator (Naomi Swickard), Chair of the VCS AFOLU Steering Committee (Toby Janson-Smith), and Climate Focus staff (Charlotte Streck and Robert O'Sullivan). The Secretariat will be responsible for implementing the project including day-to-day coordination, management of technical experts and work products, drafting VCS criteria and procedures based on reports from technical experts and Advisory Committee input, and responding to public comments.

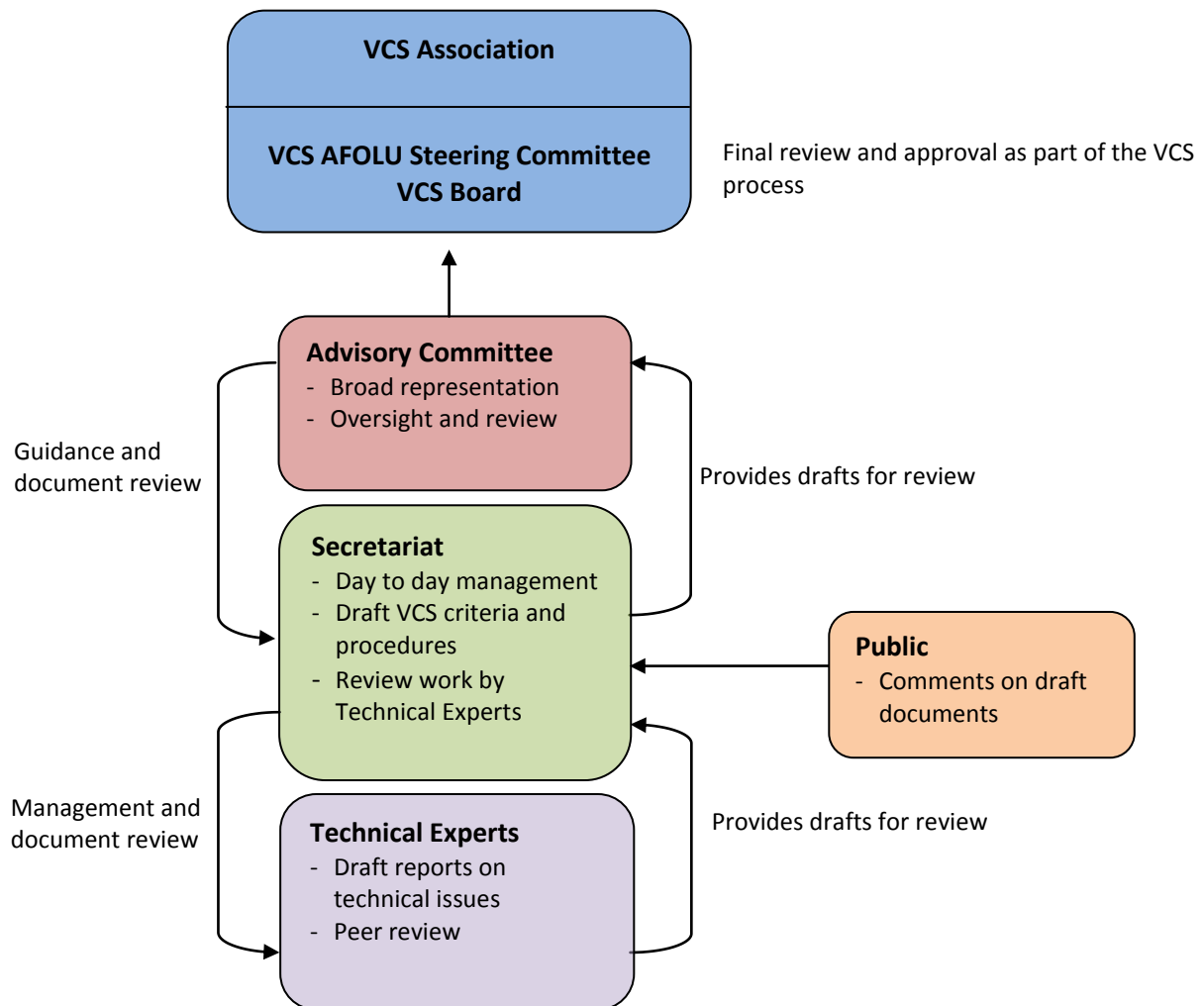
Technical Experts will be retained to provide expert advice on specific issues. The technical experts will prepare background papers that will help inform the Advisory Committee and be used by the Secretariat to draft new VCS criteria and procedures. The technical experts will also be a part of a broad group of experts that will act as peer reviewers of the final draft of the new VCS text.

Public consultation will be a final and critical element of the initiative. The VCSA follows ISEAL best-practice guidance, and in this particular case, the VCSA envisions holding a 60-day public comment period on the final draft of the new VCS text.

The final versions of the VCS criteria, procedures and guidance will be revised based on peer and public input and then submitted to the VCS AFOLU Steering Committee and VCS Board for final approval.

Figure 1 below outlines the structure of the initiative and the roles of the different entities involved.

Figure 1. Overview of Project Organization and Relationships



2) Purpose, Role, and Composition of Advisory Committee

Purpose

The Advisory Committee (“the Committee”) will provide strategic input and guidance into the conceptual development of the initiative and resulting work products. The Committee will consist of representatives from host governments interested in developing regional baselines and/or jurisdictional accounting and crediting programs, donor governments, technical experts, and other stakeholders (see below for more details). The Committee will play a key role in the initiative to ensure the criteria and procedures developed for use under the VCS are informed by the latest thinking and developed in collaboration with the jurisdictions that may ultimately use them. It is critical that the work be driven by these regional perspectives, taking into account the breadth of local

knowledge, current on-the-ground developments and differences, and the goals and needs of the different jurisdictions.

Role and Activities of the Advisory Committee

The Committee will perform several key functions, including:

- Guidance and Direction: The Committee will help to guide the strategic direction and conceptual development of the initiative. This will include:
 - Guidance and Strategy: Committee members will provide input to the initiative to ensure the outcomes take into account key issues that reflect jurisdictional, national and international needs and priorities;
 - Regional Perspectives and Ground-truthing: Representing specific jurisdictions or technical perspectives, Committee members will provide advice and feedback on specific issues facing their jurisdictions. This will include lessons learnt from design and implementation of existing REDD laws or policies, the potential implementation of VCS criteria and procedures, and views from donor governments, indigenous peoples, local communities and the private sector.
- Review of Drafts: The Committee will review and comment on the following content developed under the initiative:
 - Scoping paper: A short scoping paper setting out the scope of work and issues to be addressed by the initiative will be circulated for review. This will guide the subsequent scope of technical issues papers and ultimate VCS criteria and procedures.
 - Technical issues papers: A series of succinct technical papers will be commissioned based on the scoping paper. Committee members will review and provide feedback on the papers prior to their finalization.
 - Resulting draft VCS criteria, procedures and guidance: Based on the issues papers, the secretariat will draft VCS criteria, procedures and guidance for developing and registering regional baselines and for jurisdiction-wide accounting.

Time Commitment

The total time required by each Advisory Committee member will be up to approximately 35 hours over the next 9-12 months, to be divided amongst the following activities:

- Two major meetings, likely conducted remotely by webinar. Total time commitment per member for each meeting is approximately 5 hours, including a 3-hour meeting and 2 hours for preparation and follow-up.
- Three quarterly conference calls. Total time commitment is approximately 9 hours per member for three 2-hour calls with 1 hour for preparation and follow-up.
- Reviewing and commenting on submissions and new rules – total time commitment per member is approximately *up to* 16 hours.

In-person meetings of the Committee are not currently anticipated due to budget and timing constraints.

Compensation

Some compensation is available for members where needed. Priority will be given to developing country and civil society representatives.

Composition of the Advisory Committee

An open public call is being used to identify members for the Committee. The VCSA expects to receive more applicants than can be accommodated in a functionally sized Committee. When deciding on the final Committee membership, the VCSA will seek to ensure the Committee contains broad representation. Representatives are sought from the following groups:

- National and sub-national government representatives in developing countries engaged in REDD implementation
- Representatives from donor countries and states, and bilateral and multilateral institutions supporting REDD in developing countries through public funding or emerging compliance markets
- Technical experts
- Representatives from civil society and the private sector

Applicants will be chosen for the Committee according to their expertise and experience, and ability to shape and implement emerging local and international REDD jurisdictional frameworks, while ensuring that the full range of interests and perspectives is represented.

3) Purpose, Role and Composition of Technical Expert Group

Purpose

Developing VCS criteria and procedures to support regional baselines and jurisdictional accounting and crediting will require input from leading experts around the world. This expert input is important to ensure the final VCS rules and criteria safeguard environmental integrity, are practical, and will promote on-the-ground implementation.

Role and Activities of the Technical Experts

The technical experts will prepare background papers that will be used by the Secretariat to draft new VCS criteria and procedures and also be converted into guidance. Technical experts will also act as peer reviewers of the final deliverables. The precise scope of work for the technical experts will be defined after the first Committee meeting, and may include issues such as regional baseline development, stakeholder consultation, MRV, leakage, assessing and managing performance risk, credit ownership and other legal issues, and credit registration.

Time Commitment

The bulk of the technical work is expected to occur between early March through the end of May 2011, though additional time for peer review is expected periodically through the end of 2011. The total time commitment will vary for each paper commissioned, and is expected to range between 5 and 20 total person days of time per paper.

Compensation

Payments for papers and peer review will be made on a lump sum basis based on an agreed number of hours that reflects the scope of work, at a rate of USD 125.00 an hour.

Composition of the Technical Expert Group

The technical experts will be experts in their field and able to deliver input at high quality in a timely manner. The technical experts are expected to come from academia, civil society, the private sector, or government agencies amongst others.

4) Application Process

Applicants for the Advisory Committee and Technical Expert group are asked to send their CV/resume and a short outline of their credentials for, and interest in, membership to:

secretariat@v-c-s.org by **Monday 17 January 2011** using the subject line "**VCS Jurisdictional and Nested REDD Initiative – Applicant**".

Applicants for the Committee should indicate if financial support is needed for their participation. The VCSA will contact prospective Committee members by 31 January 2011. Committee members will be asked to sign an agreement with the VCSA that includes excerpts from these TORs. The final composition of the Committee will be published on the VCS website when it is finalized.

The VCSA will create and notify a shortlist of technical experts by 31 January 2011. Final decisions on technical experts will be made after the first Committee meeting, expected in mid-February. Technical experts will be asked to sign service agreements with the Secretariat.

The VCSA may consider an applicant either for the Committee or as a Technical Expert, regardless of the role stated in the application.