

Jurisdictional and Nested
REDD+ (JNR) Registration and
Issuance Process

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1 | Introduction

This document outlines the listing, registration and issuance procedures for jurisdictional baselines and jurisdictional REDD+ programs, as well as nested projects and standalone projects¹ (hereinafter referred to individually or collectively as *jurisdictional element(s)*).

This document is intended for use by project proponents, jurisdictional proponents, VCU buyers, VCU sellers and any other entities participating in the verified carbon unit (VCU) market. Note that the *Jurisdictional and Nested REDD+ (JNR) Requirements* and its related documents provide the rules and requirements for developing jurisdictional elements, and this document (the *JNR Registration and Issuance Process*) should not be used for such purpose. Note that jurisdictions may create their own registry systems which set out procedures additional to this document, and jurisdictional proponents and project proponents are responsible for ensuring adherence to any such additional procedures.

The VCS registry system is a multi-registry system, comprised of a number of registries and a central project database. The VCSA provides oversight of the VCS registry system. As set out in the *VCS Program Guide* and the *JNR Validation and Verification Process*, the VCSA is responsible for reviewing jurisdictional element documentation to ensure the integrity of jurisdictional elements and VCUs in the VCS registry system.

Jurisdictional and project proponents interact with their chosen VCS registry to list and register jurisdictional elements, and to issue VCUs. The VCS registry administrators are responsible for undertaking a completeness check on documentation and for ensuring adherence to the VCS rules. The registry administrators also upload information to the VCS project database.

The VCS project database provides the central repository for all information and documentation relating jurisdictional elements. The VCS project database is also responsible for ensuring uniqueness of jurisdictional elements and for issuing VCU serial numbers and tracking VCU retirement. The VCS project database makes such information and documentation publicly available and can be accessed via the VCS website.

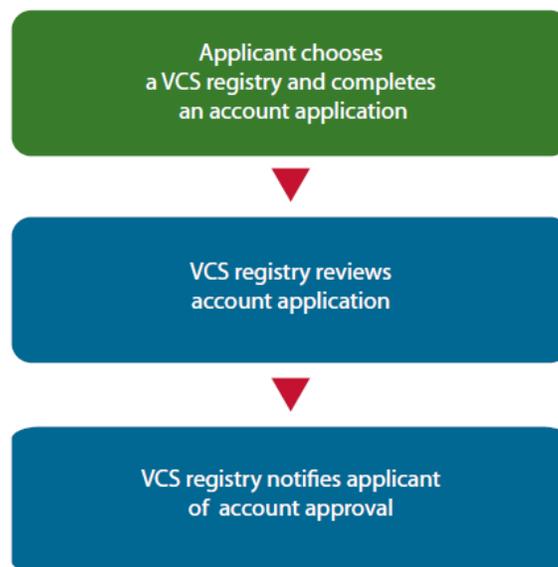
This document will be updated from time-to-time and readers shall ensure that they are using the most current version of the document.

¹ As set out in the *JNR Requirements*, standalone projects are projects operating under a Scenario 1 jurisdiction.

2 | Opening a VCS Registry Account

A VCS registry account shall be opened by any entity seeking to list or register a jurisdictional element and/or to issue, trade or retire VCUs as set out in Diagram 1, with the notes that follow providing further details.

Diagram 1: Opening a VCS Registry Account



- 2.1.1** Entities applying for a registry account may select the registry of their choosing, the contact details of which are available on the VCS website. Further details about the VCS registry system are available in the *VCS Program Guide*.
- 2.1.2** An application to open a VCS registry account may be submitted at any time. For example, a would-be jurisdictional proponent does not need to have a validated jurisdictional REDD+ program, and a would-be VCU buyer does not need to have entered into a legal agreement to purchase VCUs, in order to open a VCS registry account.

3 | Listing Process

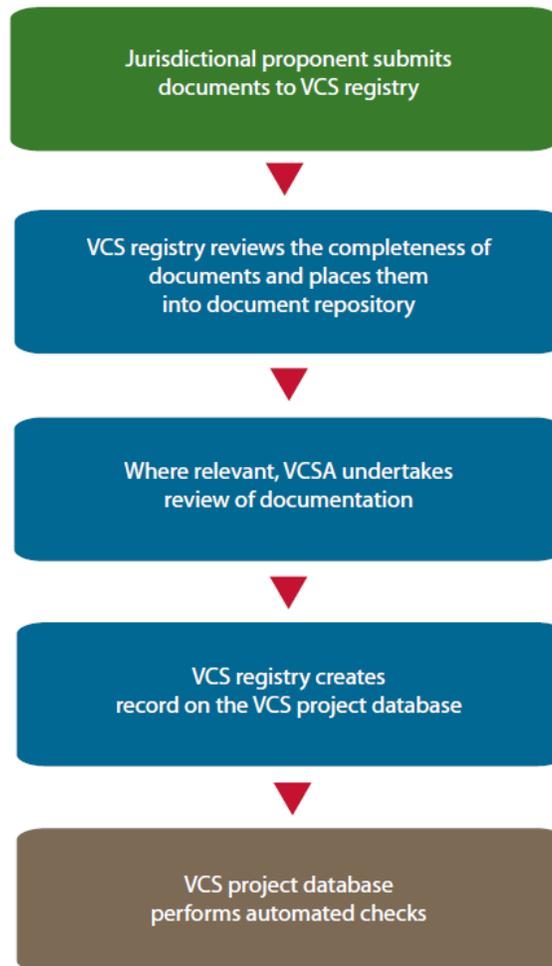
Jurisdictional baselines and jurisdictional REDD+ programs shall be listed on the VCS project database for the purpose of public stakeholder consultation. The consultation period shall be completed before the validation/verification body issues its draft validation or verification report.

Jurisdictional proponents may also request listing of a jurisdictional baseline or jurisdictional program on the VCS project database prior to the beginning of stakeholder consultation. Some jurisdictional proponents may be interested in doing this by way of giving market visibility and credibility to their forthcoming jurisdictional baselines or jurisdictional programs.

Listed jurisdictional baselines and jurisdictional programs are not considered as registered under the VCS Program, and are not eligible for VCU issuance until they are registered in accordance with Section 4 below.

Nested and standalone projects shall follow the project pipeline listing process in accordance with the procedures set out in VCS document *Registration and Issuance Process*.

The process for listing a jurisdictional baseline or jurisdictional program on the VCS project database is set out in Diagram 2 below, with the notes that follow providing further details.

Diagram 2: Listing Process

3.1 PROCESS

- 3.1.1** The only entities that may initiate the listing of a jurisdictional baseline or jurisdictional REDD+ program are jurisdictional government entities (or agencies) that qualify as jurisdictional proponents, or the authorized representative of such entities (see VCS document *Program Definitions* for definitions of jurisdictional proponent and authorized representative).
- 3.1.2** Jurisdictional baselines and jurisdictional REDD+ programs may list on the VCS project database before they begin public stakeholder consultation. Such jurisdictional elements shall be listed as *under development* and the following shall be submitted to the VCS registry administrator:
- 1) A draft jurisdictional baseline or jurisdictional program description, which shall be prepared using the *VCS JNR Baseline Description Template* or the *VCS JNR Program Description Template*, respectively. Jurisdictional proponents are encouraged to provide as much information as possible, though the templates do not have to be completely filled out and indicative information is sufficient (eg, the complete set of data supporting a jurisdictional baseline that will be submitted for validation need not be specified).

- 2) A jurisdictional listing representation.
- 3.1.3** Jurisdictional baselines and jurisdictional REDD+ programs shall list on the VCS project database to facilitate the public stakeholder consultation, as set out in VCS document *JNR Validation and Verification Process*. Such jurisdictional elements shall be listed under status *stakeholder consultation*, and the following shall be submitted to the VCS registry administrator:
- 1) In the case of validation, a complete description of the jurisdictional baseline or jurisdictional program, which shall be prepared using the *VCS JNR Baseline Description Template* or the *VCS JNR Program Description Template*, respectively.
 - 2) In the case of verification, a completed monitoring report, which shall be completed using the *VCS JNR Monitoring Report Template*.
 - 3) A non-permanence risk report, which shall be prepared using the *VCS JNR Non-Permanence Risk Report Template*.
 - 4) A jurisdictional listing representation.
- 3.1.4** Jurisdictional baselines and jurisdictional REDD+ programs may be updated from *under development* to *stakeholder consultation* where the required documentation is submitted to the VCS registry administrator. The registry administrator shall undertake the relevant checks set out in Section 3.1.8.
- 3.1.5** Validation/verification bodies may not issue a draft validation or verification report until the completion of the public stakeholder consultation period. When the consultation period has finished, the VCS registry administrator shall update the status of the jurisdictional element to *under validation* (where stakeholder consultation precedes validation), or *registered* (where stakeholder consultation precedes verification).
- 3.1.6** The following applies with respect to the jurisdictional listing representation:
- 1) The VCS website provides the template for the jurisdictional listing representation. The template shall not be altered other than to fill in the jurisdiction-specific details.
 - 2) The jurisdictional listing representation shall be properly executed as a deed in accordance with applicable local laws and the entity's own constitutional documents (eg, signature by relevant officials or requirement of the entity's seals).
 - 3) Where more than one entity can claim rights in respect of the execution of the jurisdictional listing representation, all such entities shall execute the representation, using the appropriate template available on the VCS website. Note that such representations may be executed in any necessary number of counterparts.
 - 4) The signed originals of the jurisdictional listing representation shall be provided to the VCS registry administrator.
- 3.1.7** All documents other than the jurisdictional listing representation may be submitted to the VCS registry administrator in electronic format.

- 3.1.8** The VCS registry administrator shall check the documents submitted to ensure that:
- 1) All templates have been completed in accordance with Sections 3.1.2 and 3.1.3, as appropriate.
 - 2) The jurisdictional listing representation has been signed by the relevant responsible parties.
- 3.1.9** A jurisdictional baseline or jurisdictional REDD+ program will only be posted for public stakeholder consultation after the relevant documentation has been approved by the VCSA, as set out in VCS document *JNR Validation and Verification Process*.
- 3.1.10** The VCS registry administrator shall upload all relevant documentation to the VCS project database, using the information from the documents to create the record in the VCS project database.
- 3.1.11** The VCS registry shall store the electronic and signed original documents in its record-keeping system for a minimum period of 12 years from the date the jurisdictional baseline or jurisdictional REDD+ program is listed on the VCS project database. Where a jurisdictional baseline or jurisdictional REDD+ program successfully completes validation, it may progress to registration following the procedures set out in Section 4 below.
- 3.1.12** Where the VCSA discovers that misrepresentative information has been provided after a jurisdictional baseline or jurisdictional REDD+ program has already been listed, the VCSA shall seek clarification from the jurisdictional proponent. Where satisfactory justification cannot be provided, the VCSA reserves the right to remove the listing.

4 | Registration Process

The following steps are required under the VCS Program for nested project and jurisdictional proponents to register a relevant jurisdictional element and to issue VCUs to same:

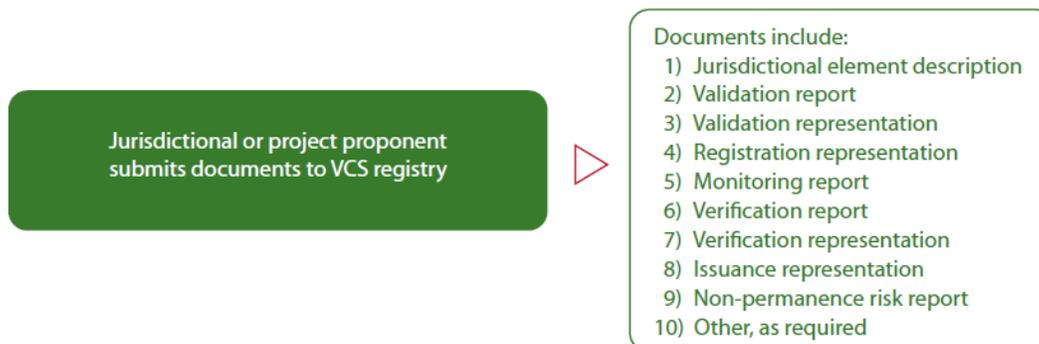
- 1) Registration and issuance request
- 2) Jurisdictional element review
- 3) Jurisdictional element registration and initial VCU issuance
- 4) Periodic VCU issuance
- 5) Jurisdictional element updates

For the purposes of this document, the registration process refers to all or any of these five steps, as the case may be. The entity that initiates the registration process may terminate the process at any one of these steps.

4.1 STEP 1: REGISTRATION AND ISSUANCE REQUEST

Jurisdictional elements shall be presented to a VCS registry for registration and issuance as set out in Diagram 3 below, with the notes that follow providing further details.

Diagram 3: Jurisdictional Element Registration and Issuance Request



4.1.1 The registration and/or issuance process for jurisdictional baselines and jurisdictional REDD+ programs may be initiated only after the validation and/or verification report has been approved by the VCSA, as set out in VCS document *JNR Validation and Verification Process*.

4.1.2 The only entities that may initiate the registration and/or issuance process for a nested or standalone project are the project proponent, an entity to which the project proponent has assigned sole right to the GHG emission reductions or removals for the entire project crediting period (ie, an entity that provides proof of right in accordance with Section 4.1.3 below), or the authorized representative of either of these entities.

Notwithstanding the above, the request for registration and/or issuance for a nested or standalone project shall be subject to the government approval or no-objection requirements set out in Section 6.1.

4.1.3 Proof of right shall be submitted to the VCS registry where an entity other than the project proponent (or its authorized representative) is initiating the registration process. Evidencing proof of right is as set out below. There is no need to submit proof of right to the VCS registry administrator where the project proponent (or its authorized representative) is initiating the registration process.

The entity initiating the registration process shall submit to the registry administrator the legal agreement(s) transferring the right to the GHG emission reductions or removals for the entire project crediting period to it from the project proponent. Where there are one or more intermediaries standing between the entity initiating the registration process and the project proponent, the registry administrator shall check all the legal agreements documenting the complete chain of transfer of right to the GHG emission reductions or removals to the entity from the project proponent. Legal agreement(s) shall be in English or shall be an official translation of the legal agreement(s).

In consideration of confidentiality, the entirety of the aforementioned legal agreement(s) need not be shown, but the registry administrator shall undertake the checks set out in Table 1 (if submitting an official translation of the legal agreement(s), only such information needs to be translated and shown to the registry administrator).

Table 1: Evidence for Proof of Right

Information required	VCS registry administrator check
Names of the parties to the agreement	The parties are the entity initiating the registration process (buyer or transferee) and the project proponent (seller or transferor), or where there is one or more intermediaries, the parties shall be the relevant parties in the chain of ownership between the project proponent and the entity initiating the registration process
Date of the agreement	Appropriate to the project and transaction subject to the legal agreement
Project name	Same as the project that the entity is presenting for registration
Project crediting period	The project crediting period is defined, with a start date and duration (or end date) specified
Clause that transfers the right to the GHG emission reductions or removals between the parties to the agreement	The clause that transfers the right to the GHG emission reductions or removals generated by the project for the project crediting period
Signatures of parties to the legal agreement	The legal agreement is signed by both parties to the agreement

- 4.1.4** The only entities that may initiate the registration and/or issuance process of a jurisdictional baseline or jurisdictional REDD+ program are jurisdictional government entities (or agencies) that qualify as jurisdictional proponents or the authorized representative of such entities.

Notwithstanding the above, the request for registration of a jurisdictional baseline or jurisdictional program shall be subject to the government approval or no-objection requirements set out in Section 6.1.

Note – An entity that provides proof of right in accordance with Section 4.1.3 above may not initiate the registration and/or issuance process of a jurisdictional baseline or jurisdictional program.

- 4.1.5** For a jurisdiction operating under Scenario 3, all issuance requests for non-grandparented activities taking place within the jurisdiction may be submitted by the relevant jurisdictional proponent only, and no project proponents or lower-level jurisdictional proponents may request issuance from the VCS registry administrator. Grandparented activities taking place within a Scenario 3 jurisdiction may request issuance until the expiration of their grandparenting period, after which issuance requests from the activity may be submitted by the relevant jurisdictional

proponent only. For example, if the national jurisdiction registers a jurisdictional REDD+ program that operates under Scenario 3, only the national jurisdictional proponent may request issuance, and no lower-level jurisdictional proponents or project proponents may request issuance at the expiration of any relevant grandparenting period.

- 4.1.6** Where jurisdictional proponents are transitioning from one scenario to another (eg, from Scenario 1 to Scenario 2), the procedures set out in Section 4.5.1 apply.
- 4.1.7** Registration of a jurisdictional element may be initiated once validation is completed and before the first verification of GHG emission reductions or removals.
- 4.1.8** Where a nested or standalone project is presented for registration without VCU issuance, the relevant documents that shall be provided to the VCS registry administrator are the project description, registration representation, the validation report, the validation representation, the non-permanence risk report, and any relevant government approvals/no-objection letters, communications agreement or proof of right.
- 4.1.9** Where a nested or standalone project is presented for registration and VCU issuance, the relevant documents that shall be provided to the VCS registry administrator are the project description, the registration representation, the validation report, the validation representation the monitoring report, the issuance representation, the verification report, the verification representation, the non-permanence risk report, and any relevant government approvals/no-objection letters, communications agreement or proof of right. Where a project description deviation has been applied, and a revised project description is issued, such project description shall be provided to the registry administrator. Likewise, where a project crediting period has been renewed, the revised project description and new validation report and validation representation shall be provided to the registry administrator.
- 4.1.10** Where a jurisdictional baseline or jurisdictional REDD+ program is presented for registration without VCU issuance, the relevant documents that shall be provided to the VCS registry administrator are the jurisdictional baseline description or the jurisdictional program description, the jurisdictional registration representation, the jurisdictional validation report, the jurisdictional validation representation, the JNR expert panel peer review report, the non-permanence risk report, and any relevant government approvals/no-objection letters or communications agreement.
- 4.1.11** Where a jurisdictional REDD+ program is presented for registration and VCU issuance, the relevant documents that shall be provided to the VCS registry administrator are the jurisdictional program description, the jurisdictional registration representation, the jurisdictional validation report, the jurisdictional validation representation, the JNR expert panel peer review report, the jurisdictional monitoring report, the jurisdictional issuance representation, the jurisdictional verification report, the jurisdictional verification representation, the non-permanence risk report, and any relevant government approvals/no-objection letter or communications agreement.

4.1.12 The following shall apply with respect to the jurisdictional and project proponent representations:

- 1) The VCS website provides the templates for the jurisdictional registration representation, registration representation, jurisdictional issuance representation and the issuance representation. The templates shall not be altered other than to fill in the specific jurisdictional element details.
- 2) The jurisdictional and project proponent representations shall be properly executed as deeds in accordance with applicable local laws and/or the organization's own constitutional documents (eg, signature by directors or requirement of the entity's seals).
- 3) Where more than one individual or organization can claim rights in respect of the execution of the jurisdictional and project proponent representations, all such individuals and organizations shall execute such representations, using the appropriate templates available on the VCS website for jurisdictional elements with multiple jurisdictional or project proponents, as applicable. Note that such representations may be executed in any necessary number of counterparts.
- 4) The signed originals of the jurisdictional and project proponent representations shall be provided to the VCS registry administrator.

4.1.13 All jurisdictional element documents other than the jurisdictional and project proponent representations may be submitted to the VCS registry administrator in electronic format.

4.1.14 The VCS Program allows nested and standalone projects to claim GHG credits under both the VCS Program and an approved GHG program (eg, CDM). Likewise, nested and standalone projects may generate other forms of GHG-related environmental credit, such as renewable energy certificates. In such cases, additional documentation is required for the project registration process, as set out in VCS document *Registration and Issuance Process*.

4.1.15 Jurisdictional proponents may claim GHG credits under both the VCS Program and another (ie, non-VCS) jurisdictional registry system. However, evidence shall be submitted to the VCS registry administrator demonstrating that any GHG emission reductions or removals presented for VCU issuance have not been issued as GHG credits on another jurisdictional registry system, or where such GHG credits have been issued evidence shall be provided demonstrating that they have been cancelled.

Note - GHG emission reductions or removals from one verification period may be split between the VCS Program and another jurisdictional registry system.

4.1.16 The jurisdictional or project proponent may protect program or commercially sensitive information by uploading a public jurisdictional element description (ie, a public jurisdictional baseline description, jurisdictional program description or project description, as appropriate) and a private jurisdictional element description. The private jurisdictional element description will not be publicly available. The public jurisdictional element description differs from the private jurisdictional element description only in that it does not contain program or commercially sensitive information.

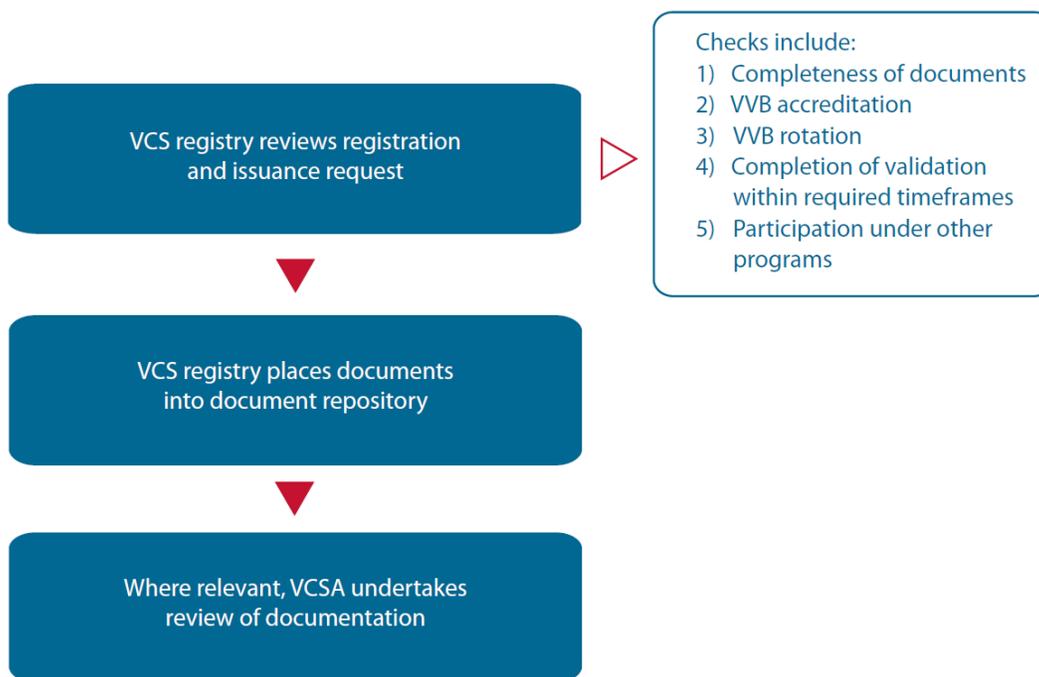
4.1.17 Geodetic coordinates of the jurisdictional element boundary shall be provided in the format specified in the *JNR Requirements*.

4.1.18 The VCS Program allows VCUs to be tagged with additional certifications that have been granted to the jurisdictional element. The VCS website provides the list of standards that are accepted as VCU tags, together with the procedure for attaining such VCU tags.

4.2 STEP 2: JURISDICTIONAL ELEMENT REVIEW

The VCS registry administrator reviews the jurisdictional element registration and VCU issuance request as set out in Diagram 4 below, with the notes that follow providing further details.

Diagram 4: Review of Jurisdictional Element Registration and Issuance Request



4.2.1 The validation/verification body shall be accredited under sectoral scope 14 and shall have signed the required agreement with the VCSA. The VCS website maintains information on validation/verification bodies and the VCS registry administrator shall check the following on the VCS website:

- 1) The validation/verification body that conducted validation of the jurisdictional element was accredited for sectoral scope 14 for validation, and (where relevant) had completed the requisite number of validations, at the date(s) on which the validation report and validation representation were issued.
- 2) The validation/verification body that conducted verification of the jurisdictional element was accredited for sectoral scope 14 for verification, and (where relevant) had completed the

requisite number of validations, at the date(s) on which the verification report and verification representation were issued.

4.2.2 The VCS registry administrator shall check that the requirement for rotation of validation/verification bodies has been met, as follows:

- 1) Validation (including validation of program or project crediting period renewal) and the first verification of a jurisdictional element (in a given program or project crediting period) may be undertaken by the same validation/verification body. However, the subsequent verification shall be undertaken by a different validation/verification body. For example, if validation and verification were undertaken at the same time, the subsequent verification would have to be undertaken by a different validation/verification body. If validation were undertaken first (ie, separately), the first verification could be undertaken by the same validation/verification body, but the subsequent verification would have to be undertaken by a different validation/verification body.
- 2) A validation/verification body may not verify more than six consecutive years of a jurisdictional element's GHG emission reductions or removals. The validation/verification body may undertake further verification for the jurisdictional element only when at least three years of the jurisdictional element's GHG emission reductions or removals have been verified by a different validation/verification body. Additionally, where a validation/verification body verifies the final six consecutive years of a program or project crediting period, the program or project crediting period renewal validation shall be undertaken by a different validation/verification body. Notwithstanding these rules, where jurisdictional elements have verification periods longer than six years, a validation/verification body is permitted to verify more than six consecutive years of a jurisdictional element's GHG emission reductions or removals, and the subsequent verification shall be undertaken by a different validation/verification body.

4.2.3 The VCS registry administrator shall check the jurisdictional element documents submitted to ensure that:

- 1) Each of the documents is complete. This requires the registry administrator to check that all relevant sections of each of the relevant documents have been completed, but does not require them to perform checks on the content and accuracy of such documents. The registry administrator will use information from the documents to create the jurisdictional element record in the VCS registry and VCS project database, and to this extent the VCS registry shall check the content and accuracy of such documents.
- 2) Each document, with the exception of the jurisdictional element description, the non-permanence risk report, the validation report, the monitoring report and the verification report, is signed by the relevant responsible parties.
- 3) In the case of a nested or standalone project, validation has been completed within the relevant timeframes, in accordance with the VCS rules.

- 4) Where a lower-level jurisdiction is registering a new jurisdictional baseline because a higher-level jurisdictional baseline has expired, the registration of the new lower-level jurisdictional baseline is completed prior to the expiration of the relevant grace period.
- 5) Where a subnational jurisdiction becomes nested within a national jurisdiction, the updated lower-level baseline has been validated within the required timeframe.

4.2.4 The VCS registry administrator shall check that the GHG emission reductions or removals presented for VCU issuance have not been issued under any other GHG program or on any other jurisdictional registry system. Likewise, the registry administrator shall check that the GHG emission reductions or removals presented for VCU issuance have not been recognized as another form of GHG-related environmental credit (such as renewable energy certificates). The checks performed by the registry administrator shall be as provided by the VCSA, and if the GHG emission reductions or removals presented for VCU issuance are found to have been issued under another GHG program or on any jurisdictional registry system, or recognized as another form of GHG-related environmental credit, the VCU issuance request shall be rejected,. Such checks shall be performed upon each and every VCU issuance. Where the jurisdictional element is being presented for registration only (ie, without VCU issuance requested), such checks need not be undertaken. The registry administrators shall be notified of any change to the list of other programs and jurisdictional registry systems that need to be checked.

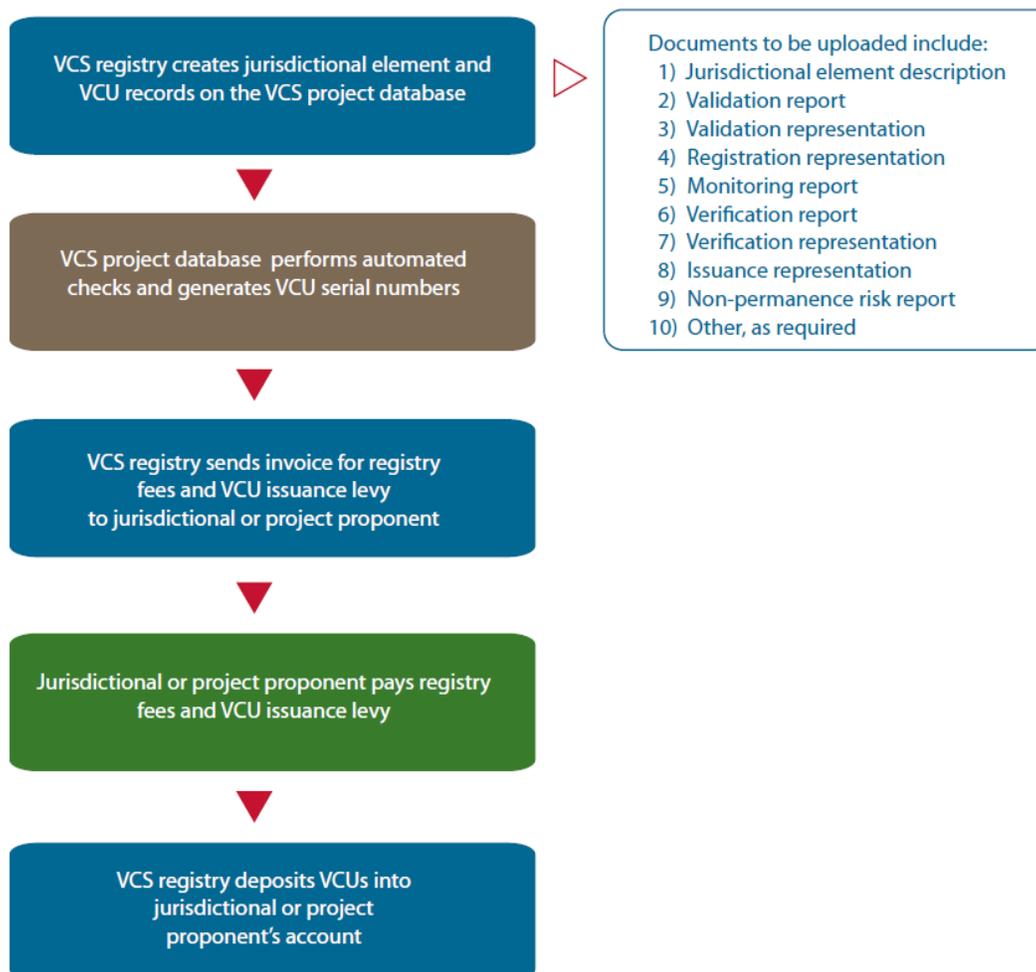
4.2.5 The VCS registry shall store the electronic and signed original jurisdictional element documents in its record-keeping system for a minimum period of 12 years from the retirement date of the last VCU to which the jurisdictional element documents relate.

4.2.6 Where the VCS registry administrator determines that the jurisdictional element has failed to comply with the VCS rules, the registry administrator shall inform the jurisdictional or project proponent (or its authorized representative) and the validation/verification body of same, citing the reasons why the jurisdictional element is ineligible for registration. Upon request by the jurisdictional or project proponent, or its authorized representative, the registry administrator shall return the documentation.

4.2.7 Note that nested and standalone projects may be subject to an accuracy review (undertaken by the VCSA, at its discretion) in accordance with the procedures set out in VCS document *Registration and Issuance Process*.

4.3 STEP 3: JURISDICTIONAL ELEMENT REGISTRATION AND INITIAL VCU ISSUANCE

The jurisdictional element is registered and the VCUs are issued on the VCS project database as set out in Diagram 5, with the notes that follow providing further details.

Diagram 5: Jurisdictional Element Registration and Initial VCU Issuance

- 4.3.1** Where a nested or standalone project is presented for registration without VCU issuance, the project description, registration representation, the validation report, the validation representation, the non-permanence risk report, and any relevant government approval/no-objection letter or communications agreement shall be uploaded to the VCS project database as public documents. Any proof of right shall be uploaded to the VCS project database as a private document (for VCSA internal auditing purposes).
- 4.3.2** Where a nested or standalone project is presented for registration and VCU issuance, the project description, the registration representation, the validation report, the validation representation, the monitoring report, the issuance representation, the verification report, the verification representation, the non-permanence risk report, and any relevant government approval/no-objection letter or communications agreement shall be uploaded to the VCS project database as public documents. Any proof of right shall be uploaded as a private document. Where a project description deviation has been applied, and a revised project description is issued, such project description shall be uploaded to the VCS project database as a public document. Likewise, where a project crediting period has been renewed, the revised project description and new validation

report and validation representation shall be uploaded to the VCS project database as public documents.

- 4.3.3** Where a jurisdictional baseline or jurisdictional REDD+ program is presented for registration without VCU issuance, the jurisdictional baseline description or jurisdictional program description, the jurisdictional registration representation, the jurisdictional validation report, the jurisdictional validation representation, the JNR expert panel peer review report, the non-permanence risk report, and any relevant government approval/no-objection letter or communications agreement shall be uploaded to the VCS project database as public documents.
- 4.3.4** Where a jurisdictional REDD+ program is presented for registration and VCU issuance, the jurisdictional baseline description or jurisdictional program description, the jurisdictional registration representation, the jurisdictional validation report, the jurisdictional validation representation, the JNR expert panel peer review report, the jurisdictional monitoring report, the jurisdictional issuance representation, the jurisdictional verification report, the jurisdictional verification representation, the non-permanence risk report, and any relevant government approval/no-objection letter or communications agreement shall be uploaded to the VCS project database as public documents.
- 4.3.5** The jurisdictional element's geodetic co-ordinates shall be entered onto the VCS project database. The VCS project database checks that there are no other jurisdictional elements within a 5 kilometer radius. Where there are jurisdictional elements within a 5 kilometer radius, the VCS project database notifies the VCS registry administrator and provides a list of the overlapping jurisdictional elements. The registry administrator shall confirm that the jurisdictional element being presented for registration is unique and not one of the overlapping jurisdictional elements, noting that it is possible to have overlapping jurisdictional elements where different jurisdictional elements are developed at higher and lower jurisdictional levels. The registry administrator may do this on its own if sufficient information is available or by contacting the validation/verification body of the jurisdictional element being presented for registration who shall confirm that it is unique and not one of the overlapping jurisdictional elements. Where the registry administrator is unable to confirm uniqueness of the jurisdictional element, it cannot be registered.

Where the geodetic co-ordinates of a higher-level jurisdictional baseline or jurisdictional REDD+ program are entered, the VCS project database will also provide a list of existing registered projects and lower-level jurisdictional baselines or jurisdictional programs that fall within the boundary of the higher-level jurisdictional element. Where there are existing registered projects or lower-level jurisdictional baselines or jurisdictional programs that fall within the boundary of such higher-level jurisdictional element, the registry administrator shall update the records of such projects and lower-level jurisdictional baselines or jurisdictional programs to indicate that they are within the boundary of the higher-level jurisdictional element, and that they may be subject to the grandparenting requirements set out in the *JNR Requirements*.

- 4.3.6** VCUs can be issued incrementally from a verification report (ie, when the jurisdictional or project proponent requests VCU issuance, it can request issuance of part of the verification report

volume and request issuance of the remaining volume at a later date). The following applies:

- 1) The entity requesting VCU issuance shall instruct the VCS registry administrator that it is requesting VCU issuance for only part of the verification report volume and shall specify the volume for which it is requesting VCU issuance.
- 2) The VCU issuance levy and any fees charged by the VCS registry are payable on the volume of VCUs which are issued, not the total verification report volume.
- 3) The VCSA does not specify thresholds or timeframes on incremental VCU issuance (eg, the total number of incremental VCU issuances that can be made from a verification report and the elapsed time between first and last VCU issuance from the verification report). The VCS registries are entitled to apply such thresholds and timeframes as they deem necessary.
- 4) The VCS project database displays the total verification report volume, the volume of VCUs issued to date and the history of VCU issuances with respect to the verification report.
- 5) The entity requesting VCU issuance does not have to request VCU issuance of the total verification report volume (ie, it can choose to only request VCU issuance for a part of the verification report volume and never request issuance of the remaining verification report volume).

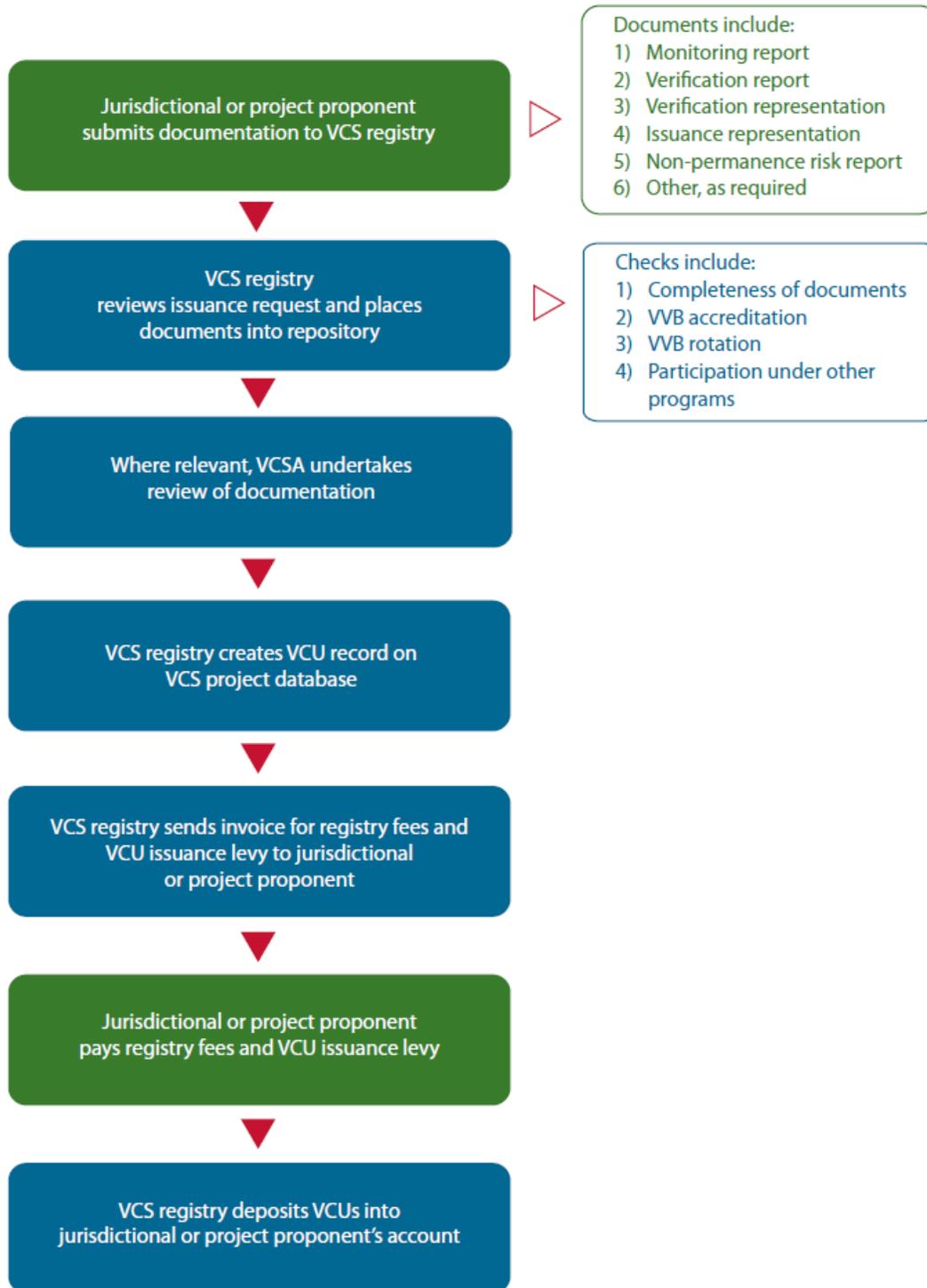
4.3.7 The VCS project database can display separate vintages within one verification period. For example, where the verification period is 1 January 2012 to 30 June 2013, the project proponent may wish to have one VCU issuance record for the 2012 VCUs and a separate VCU issuance record for the 2013 VCUs. The creation of such separate VCU issuance records in respect of one verification period is only possible where the monitoring report and associated verification report specify the vintage breakdown. Where the vintage breakdown is not provided, there can only be one VCU issuance record in respect of the verification report (ie, the VCS registry administrator shall not arbitrarily assign a vintage breakdown where none is specified in the verification report).

4.3.8 The VCU issuance levy shall be collected by the VCS registry administrator, though not necessarily received by the VCSA, before VCUs are deposited into an account. The registry administrator shall either invoice for the VCU issuance levy as part of the invoice for its own fees, or issue a separate invoice using the VCS letterhead.

4.4 STEP 4: PERIODIC VCU ISSUANCE

There may be issuance of VCUs subsequent to the initial issuance of VCUs as set out in Diagram 6 below, with the notes that follow providing further details.

Diagram 6: Periodic VCU Issuance



4.4.1 Any and all periodic VCU issuances shall be initiated only by the eligible entities described in Section 4.1.

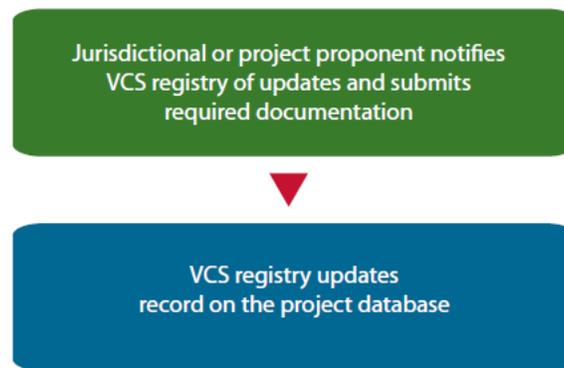
4.4.2 Where another entity wants to become the project or jurisdictional proponent (and therefore

assume the roles and responsibilities of a project or jurisdictional proponent with respect to the VCS registry system), the process set out in Section 6.4 shall be followed. The new project or jurisdictional proponent or its authorized representative may then initiate VCU issuance, subject to the requirements in Section 4.4.1 above.

4.5 STEP 5: JURISDICTIONAL ELEMENT UPDATES

Jurisdictional element details may be updated as set out in Diagram 7 below, with the notes that follow providing further details. For example, jurisdictions may move from one scenario (ie, Scenario 1, 2 or 3) to another over time or a jurisdictional baseline may be updated and revalidated.

Diagram 7: Jurisdictional Element Updates



4.5.1 Where a jurisdiction intends to transition from one scenario to another, the jurisdictional proponent shall complete the validation process described in VCS document *JNR Validation and Verification Process* for the new scenario, and shall provide the VCS registry administrator with the updated documentation described in Section 4.1.10 or 4.1.11, as appropriate. The registry administrator shall perform the completeness checks set out in Section 4.2 and shall update the program record following the procedures set out in Section 4.3.

For example, if a jurisdiction intends to transition from Scenario 1 to Scenario 2, the jurisdictional proponent shall complete validation of its jurisdictional REDD+ program for Scenario 2, and shall submit the updated jurisdictional program description, and other required documents described in Section 4.1.10 or 4.1.11, as appropriate, to the registry administrator. The registry administrator shall then upload the new jurisdictional element documentation to the VCS project database and update the jurisdictional program record to indicate a transition from Scenario 1 to Scenario 2.

4.5.2 Where jurisdictional baselines are updated, the updated jurisdictional element documentation shall be submitted to the VCS registry administrator. The registry administrator shall confirm that the jurisdictional baseline has been validated within the required timeframe, and shall upload the updated jurisdictional documentation to the VCS project database.

4.5.3 Where a higher-level jurisdictional baseline has not been updated (eg, where such baseline has expired), any registered projects or lower-level jurisdictions shall develop and register a new

baseline for the relevant level and shall have registered such baseline prior to the expiration of the relevant grace period, as set out in the *JNR Requirements*.

- 4.5.4** Where a higher-level program is developed after lower levels have been registered, the highest level shall determine how to address any ineligible subnational jurisdictions. The VCS registry administrator shall update any ineligible subnational jurisdiction records as appropriate.

Note that the lowest eligible jurisdictional level is the second administrative level below the national level. For example, in Brazil this would be a municipality (ie, one administrative unit below the state) or, in Indonesia, a regency (ie, one administrative level below the province). A country shall have no more than two registered jurisdictional levels (eg, national and state, or state and municipality), and the higher-level jurisdictional proponent shall be responsible for determining how jurisdictional and project nesting occurs within the jurisdiction.

- 4.5.5** The geographic boundary of a jurisdiction may be changed under certain conditions. Where the geographic boundary of a jurisdiction is changed, the updated geodetic coordinates of the jurisdictional boundaries shall be submitted to the VCS registry administrator at the subsequent request for VCU issuance, and the registry administrator shall update the jurisdictional record in the VCS project database to make use of the adjusted geographic boundary.

5 | Jurisdictional Pooled Buffer Account

The VCS Program addresses non-permanence risk by requiring jurisdictional REDD+ programs and nested projects to contribute buffer credits to the jurisdictional pooled buffer account to cover unforeseen losses in carbon stocks. Standalone projects contribute buffer credits to the AFOLU pooled buffer account.

Jurisdictional buffer credits are held in a single jurisdictional pooled buffer account which can be drawn upon in the event of a reversal in carbon stocks under any jurisdictional program or nested project.

For projects registered prior to the registration of a jurisdictional program, the VCS registry administrator shall transfer any existing buffer credits associated with the project to the jurisdictional buffer pool once such a jurisdictional program has been registered and the project becomes grandparented. Subsequent buffer contributions by such projects shall be deposited into the jurisdictional buffer pool.

5.1 ASSIGNMENT OF BUFFER CREDITS AT FIRST REQUEST FOR ISSUANCE

At first VCU issuance, buffer credits shall be deposited into the jurisdictional pooled buffer account, in accordance with the procedures below.

- 5.1.1** Jurisdictional REDD+ programs and nested projects shall deposit buffer credits in the jurisdictional pooled buffer account based upon the non-permanence risk report assessed by the validation/verification body. Buffer credits are not issued a VCU serial number nor are they considered to be VCUs. They are not subject to the VCU issuance levy.
- 5.1.2** Jurisdictional proponents may choose to contribute a higher proportion of credits than that determined by the *JNR Non-Permanence Risk Tool*.
- 5.1.3** Where the jurisdictional proponent has not and does not intend to seek VCU issuance (ie, in Scenario 2, where projects are nested in a jurisdiction in which the jurisdictional proponents have chosen not to seek VCU issuance), the jurisdictional proponent shall still deposit buffer credits into the jurisdictional pooled buffer to cover potential reversals in non-project areas following verification. The portion of credits that shall be deposited will be determined in accordance with the *JNR Non-Permanence Risk Tool*.

5.2 ASSIGNMENT AND RELEASE OF BUFFER CREDITS AT SUBSEQUENT REQUESTS FOR ISSUANCE

Buffer credits associated with a jurisdictional REDD+ program or nested project may be released over time, as an incentive for continued verification and in recognition that certain risks decrease as the longevity of the jurisdictional program or nested project is demonstrated, in accordance with the procedures below:

- 5.2.1** The jurisdictional REDD+ program or nested project is eligible for release of buffer credits where the non-permanence risk rating in the current verification report remains the same or decreases from the previous verification report. The release of buffer credits from the jurisdictional pooled buffer account occurs when a verification report is presented to a VCS registry administrator and VCU issuance is requested. When buffer credits are released from the jurisdictional pooled buffer account, they shall be issued as VCUs into the designated VCS registry account upon payment of the VCU issuance levy.
- 5.2.2** Release of buffer credits may only occur where a verification report (submitted to request VCU issuance) was issued at least five years after the issuance date of the verification report previously submitted to request VCU issuance. The first release of buffer credits shall be no sooner than five years after the first verification report was issued and presented to the VCS registry administrator for issuance. Subsequent releases of buffer credits shall not occur more frequently than once every five years. Where verification reports are issued at intervals shorter than once every five years, buffer credits shall be released no sooner than the issuance date of a verification report that is at least five years after the issuance date of the verification report used

to request the previous release of buffer credits (and shall be released at the request for VCU issuance). Where verification events occur at intervals longer than five years, the 15 percent time release (see Section 5.2.4 below) shall be compounded based on the number of five-year intervals that have passed since the last verification report was issued.

- 5.2.3** Where the jurisdictional REDD+ program or nested project's non-permanence risk rating at the current verification period remains the same as the non-permanence risk rating at the last verification period, buffer credits shall be deposited into the jurisdictional pooled buffer account in accordance with the procedure set out in Section 5.1 above.

A 15 percent "time release" of buffer credits is then applied where the five-year interval set out in Section 5.2.2 has passed. This 15 percent time release shall be applied to the total number of buffer credits associated with the jurisdictional program or nested project to date (ie, the number of buffer credits previously deposited into the jurisdictional pooled buffer account plus the number of buffer credits newly deposited). The deposit and release of buffer credits may be calculated and handled so that the VCS registry administrator carries out a single transaction for the deposit/release of net buffer credits. An example of how the buffer withholding may be reduced over time is available on the VCS website.

- 5.2.4** Where the jurisdictional REDD+ program or nested project's non-permanence risk rating at the current verification period is lower than the non-permanence risk rating at the previous verification period, the new non-permanence risk rating shall be applied and buffer credits shall be deposited into the jurisdictional pooled buffer account in accordance with the procedure set out in Section 5.1 above.

The new non-permanence risk rating is also applied to all buffer credits associated with the jurisdictional program or nested project that are already deposited in the jurisdictional pooled buffer account from previous verification periods. This means previously deposited buffer credits that are in excess of the reduced withholding percentage shall be released and issued as VCUs where the five-year interval set out in Section 5.2.2 has passed.

A 15 percent time release of buffer credits is then applied to the total number of buffer credits associated with the jurisdictional program or nested project to-date (ie, the number of buffer credits previously deposited into the jurisdictional pooled buffer account plus the number of buffer credits newly deposited). The deposit and release of buffer credits may be calculated and handled so that the VCS registry administrator carries out a single transaction for the deposit/release of net buffer credits.

- 5.2.5** Where the jurisdictional REDD+ program or nested project's non-permanence risk rating at the current verification period is higher than the non-permanence risk rating at the previous verification period, no release of buffer credits shall occur. Buffer credits shall be deposited into the jurisdictional pooled buffer account in accordance with the procedure set out in Section 5.1 above.

5.3 CANCELLATION AND HOLDING OF BUFFER CREDITS

Buffer credits are cancelled from the jurisdictional pooled buffer account where there are negative net GHG emission reductions or removals associated with a jurisdictional REDD+ program or nested project, and are put on hold in certain situations, as outlined in this section.

- 5.3.1** Where an event occurs that is likely to qualify as a loss event (see VCS document *Program Definitions* for definition of loss event) and VCUs have been previously issued, the entity(s) that has experienced a potential loss (ie, the project proponent(s) or jurisdictional proponent(s)) shall prepare and submit a loss event report to the VCS registry administrator, as follows:
- 1) The loss event report shall be prepared using the *VCS JNR Loss Event Report Template*.
 - 2) The loss event report shall be accompanied by a loss event representation signed by the jurisdictional or project proponent, as appropriate. The template for the loss event representation is available on the VCS website.
 - 3) The loss event report shall be submitted to the VCS registry administrator within two years of the loss event. Where a loss event report is not submitted within two years of the date the loss event occurred, the project or jurisdiction shall no longer be eligible to issue VCUs, except where it can be demonstrated the loss was not detected (eg, it was detected at the subsequent monitoring event, that may have been more than two years after the event).
 - 4) The VCS registry administrator shall put buffer credits from the jurisdictional pooled buffer account on hold, in an amount equivalent to the estimated loss stated in the loss event report.
- 5.3.2** The following applies with respect to the verification report submitted subsequent to a loss event:
- 1) Where the net benefit of a nested project for the verification period is negative, a reversal has occurred, and the VCS registry administrator shall follow the procedures for handling a project reversal in accordance with VCS document *Registration and Issuance Process*.
 - 2) Where the net GHG benefit of the jurisdiction, compared to the baseline, for the monitoring period is negative, a reversal has occurred and the following applies:
 - a) Where the reversal is due to natural disturbance (see VCS document *Program Definitions* for definition of natural disturbance), except for those associated with certain geologic and weather-related events, as set out in *JNR Requirements*, the following applies:
 - i) Where GHG emissions resulting from natural disturbances are significant and infrequent, the VCS registry administrator shall cancel buffer credits from the jurisdictional pooled buffer account in an amount equivalent to the gross emissions from these disturbances. As such, natural disturbance emissions are accounted for and addressed through the buffer, rather than being subtracted from the net emissions reductions and/or removals generated within the jurisdiction. These losses will therefore not affect the number of credits available to jurisdictional and project proponents.
 - ii) The VCS registry administrator shall contribute the volume of any emissions

reductions or removals achieved from areas affected by such natural disturbances as buffer credits to the jurisdictional buffer pool, to replenish the pool, rather than issued as tradable credits.

- iii) To maintain solvency of the buffer, no more than 20 percent of the credits contributed to the pool by the jurisdictional proponent shall be cancelled in a single year due to reversals from natural disturbances. Instead, natural disturbance losses individually or collectively exceeding this 20 percent threshold shall be compensated for over time; cancelling up to 20 percent of the buffer pool each year until the loss has been completely accounted for.
- b) In all other cases, the following applies:
 - i) Where the total reversal is less than the number of credits put on hold after the submission of the loss event report, the VCS registry administrator shall cancel buffer credits equivalent to the reversal. Any remaining buffer credits shall be released from their on-hold status (though remain in the jurisdictional pooled buffer account).
 - ii) Where the reversal is greater than stated by the loss event report, the buffer credits put on hold in response to the submission of the loss event report shall be cancelled, and additional buffer credits from the jurisdictional pooled buffer account shall be cancelled to account for the reversal.
- 3) Where the net GHG benefit for the monitoring period is positive (ie, all losses have been made up for over the monitoring period), a reversal has not occurred and buffer credits put on hold after the submission of the loss event report shall be released from their on-hold status (but shall remain in the jurisdictional pooled buffer account).

5.3.3 At a verification event where a reversal has occurred, the following applies:

- 1) In order to track performance across the entire jurisdiction, the VCS registry administrator shall log and subtract any buffer credits cancelled from the jurisdictional pooled buffer account from the total number of buffer credits the entity that experienced the reversal has contributed to date (to the jurisdictional pooled buffer account). Where the entity that experienced the reversal has contributed insufficient credits to cover the loss, the registry administrator shall log and subtract any shortfall (ie, net deficit) against the buffer contribution made to date by the next jurisdictional level up participating in the VCS Program (whether subnational or national) until the loss has been accounted for or no higher credited level exists.
- 2) Jurisdictions or projects where reversals have occurred shall make up any buffer shortfall that has occurred due to the loss by replenishing the jurisdictional pooled buffer account with future GHG credits before being issued further VCUs. As such replenishments are made, the registry administrator shall appropriately credit the buffer tracking logs of all the affected jurisdictional levels.

For example, a project has contributed 100 credits into the jurisdictional pooled buffer account and the jurisdiction above it has contributed 500 credits. Where the project

experiences a reversal of 150 credits, this amount would be cancelled from the jurisdictional pooled buffer account. For tracking purposes, the project would now show a net buffer contribution of -50 credits, which would have to be paid back (with subsequent GHG credits) before the project receives any further VCUs. Until the project's 50 credit deficit is remedied, the jurisdiction above the project would show a net buffer contribution of 450 (ie, 500-50). Were such jurisdiction subsequently to experience a net loss of more than 450 credits then it would not receive any further VCUs until the shortfall had been remedied.

- 3) Where jurisdictional and project proponents may be credited directly (ie, under Scenario 2), in the event of a reversal² in non-project areas of a jurisdiction, the reversal shall be handled as follows to avoid penalizing performing entities:
 - a) Buffer credits equivalent to the reversal shall be cancelled from the jurisdictional pooled buffer account.
 - b) The registry administrator shall issue VCUs to the (lower-level) performing entities in an amount equal to the number of GHG emissions reductions achieved.

Note - Such rules apply *mutatis mutandis* where reversals occur in project areas and would otherwise result in a crediting shortfall to jurisdictions. Such rules also apply to reversals within registered national jurisdictions that include nested subnational jurisdictional REDD+ programs.
 - c) Where the jurisdictional proponent has previously been issued VCUs, the jurisdictional proponent shall replenish the jurisdictional pooled buffer account in accordance with Section 5.3.3(2) above.
- 4) Where 25 percent of the deficit from a reversal recorded in a single monitoring report is paid back, and where there are no prior reversals for which the buffer account has not been replenished, jurisdictional proponents may request VCU issuance for 50 percent of subsequent GHG emissions reductions or removals achieved and shall contribute 50 percent to the jurisdictional pooled buffer account until the buffer has been replenished (for all credits cancelled due to the reversal).³

5.3.4 Where a jurisdiction or nested project fails to submit a verification report to a VCS registry within five years of its last verification, 50 percent of the buffer credits associated with the relevant

² The term reversal is used here even though a jurisdictional proponent may not have elected to seek VCU issuance (eg, when a jurisdictional REDD+ program only credits projects and not jurisdictions). In such cases, the jurisdictional buffer pool will still cover the loss in non-project areas regardless of whether the jurisdictional proponent itself has been issued VCUs.

³ After experiencing reversals, it is important to promote continued jurisdictional participation in the REDD+ program (and reduce default risks) where continued progress is demonstrated towards reducing emissions. Therefore, jurisdictional proponents are permitted to repay the buffer account over time, rather than replenishing the account immediately.

jurisdictional element shall be put on hold. After a further five years, all of the remaining buffer credits associated with such jurisdictional element shall be put on hold. Where no subsequent verification report has been presented within a period of 15 years, and the program or project crediting period has not yet expired, buffer credits shall be cancelled from the jurisdictional pooled buffer account in an amount equivalent to the total number of VCUs issued to the jurisdictional element (including buffer credits put on hold).

- 5.3.5** Where buffer credits are put on hold because a jurisdictional element does not submit a verification report within five years of the previous verification, the jurisdictional element may reclaim buffer credits. A new verification report shall be submitted prior to the expiration of the program or project crediting period. The VCS registry administrator shall re-assign buffer credits that have been put on hold in accordance with the procedure set out in Section 5.1.1 above.
- 5.3.6** Where a jurisdictional proponent following Scenario 2 reports net reversals in 75 percent or more of monitoring reports over a ten year period or fails to submit a verification report within seven years of the previous verification, it shall be assumed that the jurisdictional REDD+ program is not functioning effectively, and lower levels (ie, nested projects or jurisdictions) may continue to be credited for their GHG emissions reductions or removals, compensated by cancellation of the equivalent number of credits from the jurisdictional pooled buffer account, and only until such time as the net buffer contributions (including credits contributed by the jurisdictional proponent and all participants within it) are exhausted or until 10 years after the defaulting jurisdictional proponent last submitted a verification report, whichever occurs sooner. At such point, no further VCUs shall be issued to projects or sub-jurisdictions nested within the non-performing jurisdiction until the jurisdictional underperformance has been remedied.
- 5.3.7** Gaps in a jurisdictional boundary can be removed or created when a jurisdictional baseline is renewed, and the jurisdictional proponent shall justify any new areas or areas that continue to be excluded at each baseline renewal. Where GHG credits have been issued from an area that is subsequently designated a gap, the VCS registry administrator shall cancel buffer credits for the total amount of GHG credits issued from such area, at the subsequent request for VCU issuance request, on the assumption that carbon has been lost.
- 5.3.8** Any remaining balance of buffer credits is cancelled at the end of the program or project crediting period.

6 | Further Information

6.1 GOVERNMENT APPROVALS AND NO-OBJECTION

- 6.1.1** As set out in the *JNR Requirements*, national and subnational jurisdictions may include, as part of a jurisdictional REDD+ program, requirements governing government approval or no-objection of

any element covered by such program. Likewise, national and subnational jurisdictions may implement domestic regulations governing approval of any element covered by a jurisdictional REDD+ program. Further, jurisdictional proponents and project proponents should be aware that some jurisdictions may not permit registration of lower-level activities.

Where the validation or verification report indicates that a jurisdictional element is subject to any relevant approval procedures, the required government approvals or no-objection letters shall be submitted to the VCS registry administrator at the time of registration or issuance.

6.2 COMMUNICATIONS AGREEMENT

6.2.1 The purpose of the communications agreement is to allow an authorized representative to interact with the VCS registry on behalf of the jurisdictional or project proponent and designate the account into which VCUs may be deposited. The following is provided by way of further clarification:

- 1) Where there are multiple jurisdictional or project proponents stated in the jurisdictional element description, a communications agreement shall be provided to the VCS registry administrator signed by all jurisdictional or project proponents, as appropriate. The communications agreement shall designate an authorized representative and the account into which any VCUs shall be issued. Where a subsequent registration representation is provided to the registry administrator for the purpose of switching the jurisdictional or project proponent, a communications agreement shall also be provided in respect of designation of an authorized representative or the account into which any VCUs shall be issued. Such communications agreement shall supersede any prior communications agreement.
- 2) Where there is a single jurisdictional or project proponent and a registration or listing representation is provided to the VCS registry administrator, a communications agreement may also be provided in respect of designation of an authorized representative or the account into which any VCUs shall be issued. Where a subsequent registration representation is provided to the registry administrator for the purpose of switching the jurisdictional or project proponent, a communications agreement may also be provided. Any such communications agreement shall supersede any prior communications agreement. Where a communications agreement is not provided, authorized representation reverts to the (new) jurisdictional or project proponent, as appropriate.

6.3 SWITCHING THE NOMINATED VCS REGISTRY

6.3.1 Once a jurisdictional element is registered with a VCS registry, the jurisdictional or project proponent, or its authorized representative, can choose to move the jurisdictional element to a different VCS registry. The second VCS registry then becomes the new nominated VCS registry. The process for changing the nominated VCS registry is as set out in VCS document *Registration and Issuance Process*, mutatis mutandis.

6.4 RELEASE AND ACCESSION OF JURISDICTIONAL AND PROJECT PROPONENTS

- 6.4.1** Project proponents may join or leave a nested or standalone project subsequent to validation and registration. The process for release and accession of project proponents is set out in VCS document *Registration and Issuance Process*. Jurisdictional proponents joining or leaving a jurisdictional element shall also follow the procedure set out in VCS document *Registration and Issuance Process*, mutatis mutandis, noting that such jurisdictional proponents shall sign the *VCS JNR Deed of Partial Release Template* or the *VCS JNR Deed of Accession Template*, as appropriate.

APPENDIX 1: DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version	Date	Comment
v3.0	8 Oct 2013	Initial version released under <i>VCS Version 3</i> .

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