Guidelines for SEPLS-CCRR Certification Process

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The certification process under the SEPLS Carbon Credit Regional Revitalization Center (SEPLS-CCRR) for the Satoyama Mace Initiative, which is set-up to help project developers design initiatives for maximum positive impact. The application of conservative and considered methodologies ensures accurate quantification of impact, a unique approach to stakeholder inclusivity supports long term project success, and the assurance process, overseen by SEPLS-CCRR, uses approved third-party validation and verification bodies (VVBs) to audit the projects and ensure verified impacts - resulting in high quality projects with credible claims that can attract premium prices.

The following sections will explain step by step the main implementing parties, the scope of work, relevant regulations, estimated timelines, and associated costs for each stage, to facilitate operation by project developers. The entire process is illustrated in Figure 1 and summarized in Table 1.
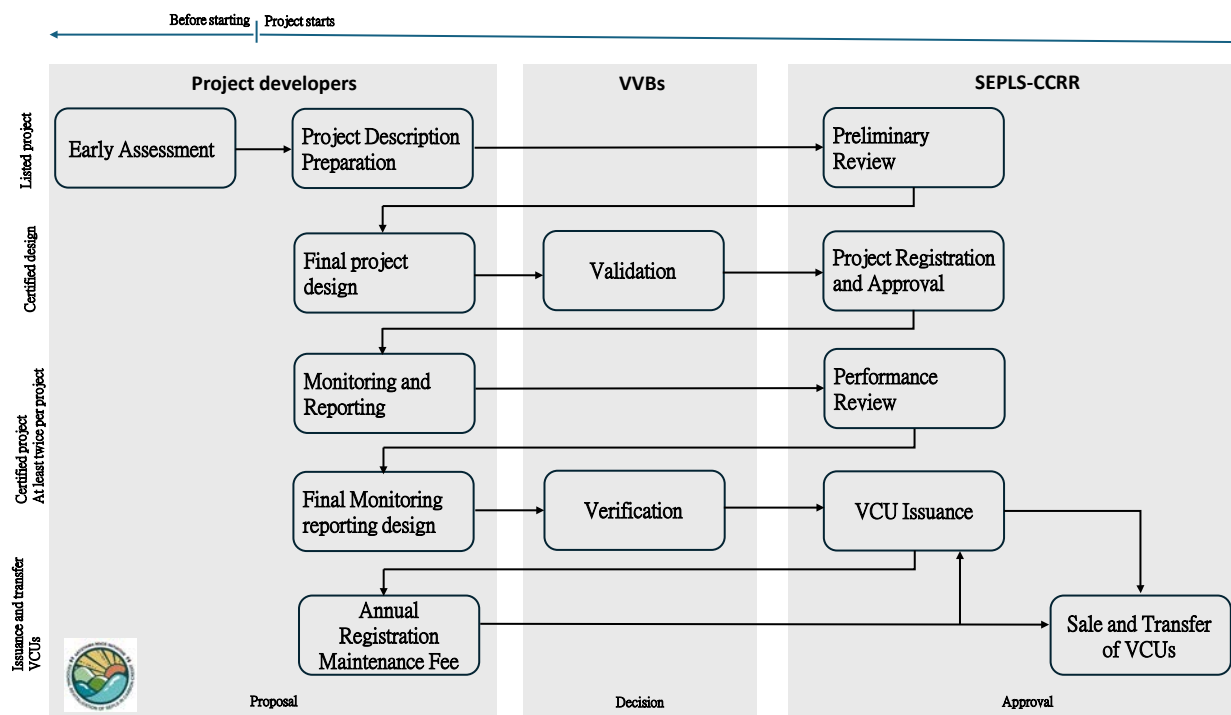

Figure 1: Overall Certification Process

Table 1: Summary of SEPLS-CCRR Certification Stages

Stage	Estimated Time	Estimated Cost (USD)	Execution Notes
Before starting Step 0 : Early Assessment	Case-specific	$0–$2,000	1. Before the project starts, the applicable methodology must be determined, and project developers or consultants conduct self-assessment; or request SEPLS-CCRR support. 2. SEPLSCCRR will assign the expert to conduct an on-site assessment (subject to expert consultation and transportation costs). 3. For services by other organizations, follow their respective standards.
Project starts Step 1: Project Description (PD) Preparation	1–3 months	$0–$50,000	1. Project developers or consultant prepares the PD, defining project boundary, methodology, baseline, and estimated emission reductions. 2. Relevant templates and guidance available on SEPLS-CCRR website.
Step 2: Preliminary Review	1 month	$1,000	After PD completion, submit to SEPLS-CCRR for preliminary review.
Step 3: Validation	1–2 months	$5,000–$15,000	1. Validation and Verification Body (VVB) reviews PD to confirm compliance. 2. Accredited VVB list available on SEPLS-CCRR official site: https://ipsi.mse.ncku.edu.tw/validation-and-verification-body
Step 4: Project Registration and Approval	2–4 weeks	$1,500	1. Submit PD and validation report for project registration. 2. SEPLS-CCRR conducts conformity review and lists project in the registry. 3. Official SEPLS-CCRR fee.
Step 5: Monitoring and Reporting (MR)	As per methodology	$5,000–$25,000	1. Project developers or consultant monitors emission reductions according to methodology and prepares Monitoring Report. 2. Estimated cost includes data collection or consultancy fees.

Stage	Estimated Time	Estimated Cost (USD)	Execution Notes
Step 6: MR Review	1 month	$1,000	After MR completion, submit to SEPLS-CCRR for MR review.
Step 7: Verification	1–2 months	$5,000–$20,000	1. VVB verifies emission reductions in MR to confirm accuracy and compliance. 2. Accredited VVB list available on SEPLS-CCRR official site.
Step 8: VCU Issuance	2–4 weeks	$0.10 per VCU	1. Upon receipt and acceptance of the verification report, Verified Carbon Units (VCUs) shall be duly issued. 2. Official SEPLS-CCRR fee.
Step 9: Sale and Transfer of VCUs	1 week – 3 months (depending on transaction method)	Platform fees: 0–5%; Brokerage commission: up to 15%	1. VCUs can be sold via marketplaces or directly transferred. Actual costs depend on platform rules; subject to buyer negotiation. 2. Platforms potentially listed on the SEPLS-CCRR official website.
Step 10: Annual Registration Maintenance Fee	Annual	$500 per year (waived in first year)	SEPLS-CCRR charges an annual fee to maintain project status in the registry.

Mitigation and removals options

In alignment with the spirit of the Satoyama Mace Initiative: Regional Revitalization of SEPLS in Carbon Credit, and with the intention of reducing the financial burden on farmers, SEPLS-CCRR introduces the following support program:

The costs for Step 1, Step 3, Step 6, Step 7, and Step 8 will be covered by SEPLS-CCRR, and in return SEPLS-CCRR shall obtain 50% of the carbon credits generated by the project as a contribution back to the program.

Farmers receiving this support are required to undertake the following responsibilities:

- Maintain records and assist with measurement activities.
- Cooperate with VVB representatives during interviews.
- Collaborate in the preparation of required reports.

Those who are interested in participating in this program and wish to apply for the subsidy may contact us via email at Z10909116@ncku.edu.tw.

Step 0: Early Assessment (Before starting)

Early assessment is a key stage of the SEPLS-CCRR certification process. Project developers are encouraged to review the relevant methodologies, standard documentation, and terms of use to ensure that the project meets the SEPLS-CCRR principles and requirements and is therefore eligible for SEPLS-CCRR certification.

Before the project starts, project developers should identify if there is an applicable methodology for the proposed project. View the mitigation and removals options for the feasible scopes (both current and upcoming) under SEPLS-CCRR. For a more detailed review, project developers can use the methodology tool to identify eligible and available methodologies in accordance with the Guidelines for the Development of Methodologies for Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Biodiversity Conservation. Alternatively, they may request support from SEPLS-CCRR or consult external experts. SEPLS-CCRR may assign experts for an on-site assessment (actual travel expenses will be reimbursed). Any additional visit will incur a fee of USD 100 per visit plus travel expenses. (Each on-site assessment is estimated to last about two hours.) As for consultancy services, project developers may engage a suitable consultant from the market.

For new technologies, measures and/or interventions where no methodology is yet available, the Guidelines for the Development of Methodologies for Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Biodiversity Conservation document is available. Initial ideas, both for brand-new methodologies or methodology revisions, can be submitted to check eligibility using the concept note template.

Once the methodology has been identified, the next step is to check project eligibility within the Principles & Requirements and the relevant Project Activity Requirements. Find more information on how the SEPLS-CCRR standard documents are structured.

For projects that plan to issue SEPLS-CCRR carbon credits, additional requirements are located in the GHG emission reductions and sequestration product requirements. Projects need to apply the latest version of the methodology and any applicable tools at the time of first submission (preliminary review). The required documents for the program can be downloaded on the platform.

Once all preliminary steps are completed, the project developer can proceed to implement the plan.

Step 1: Project Description Preparation

Project developers or consultants shall prepare the Project Description, clearly defining the project boundary, the selected methodology, the baseline scenario, and the estimated emission reductions.

Project boundary: Define the project's geographic scope and boundaries, covering all relevant GHG sources, sinks, and reservoirs for both project and baseline. Follow methodology requirements, note included sources (with maps/diagrams), and justify any exclusions.

Methodology: Use an approved methodology, citing its title, version, and identifiers. Apply the latest version, reference any tools or guides, and show the project meets applicability conditions. List and meet requirements for all methodologies used.

Baseline & emission estimation: Describe the baseline scenario and its GHG emissions, considering regulations. Detail methods and calculations for baseline and project emissions, including leakage. Document parameters, data, and assumptions, applying conservative estimates with clear factors and references.

Ecosystem & social impacts: Add ecosystem and social information as required by SEPLS-CCRR. Show

contributions to biodiversity, services, and community well-being. Highlight positive impacts, note risks with mitigation, and summarize safeguards, stakeholder input, and links to SDGs and the Kunming–Montreal Framework.

Template & guidance: Follow the official Project Description template, using the latest version and required structure. Cite all data sources and guidance documents to ensure clarity and compliance. Templates and guides are available on the SEPLS-CCRR website.

Step 2: Preliminary Review

Once the Project Description has been completed, a project will have the necessary documentation to move on to a Preliminary Review. The Preliminary Review aims to make sure every project has the potential to conform to the SEPLS-CCRR requirements and ensure readiness for third-party validation.

Reviews are to be scheduled and managed by SEPLS-CCRR. The timeline is 4 weeks. Review Response Timelines: Completeness check responses from project developers are due within 2 weeks. Missing these deadlines will result in request rejection, requiring a new review request to be submitted.

Step 3: Validation

To apply for SEPLS-CCRR certification, projects need to demonstrate compliance with SEPLS-CCRR for the Global Goals principles and requirements.

Validation that a project meets these principles and requirements is done through an independent assessment conducted by a SEPLS-CCRR approved Validation and Verification Body (VVB), appointed by the project developer. This step may consist of a field visit or a desk-based review and provides impartial confirmation that the project's design and monitoring system is in line with the SEPLS-CCRR Requirements and that the project can indeed achieve the expected impact. Validation must be successfully completed within 2 years of the date of "listing" the project.

To undertake a third-party validation, projects must:

- Have SEPLS-CCRR Preliminary Review Proof.
- Identify, contract, and pay an eligible SEPLS-CCRR approved Validation and Verification Body to carry out validation.
- Once the VVB has completed the validation, the VVB will upload the final validation report and any other relevant documentation directly into the Assurance Platform. On submission of the documents, the SEPLS-CCRR Assurance and Review Management (ARM) Team will conduct a completeness check and notify the VVB that the documents are ready for design review.

Timeline: Validation timelines are to be scheduled with the contracted VVB directly.

Step 4: Project Registration and Approval

Documents are submitted by creating and submitting a request for project registration and approval within the SEPLS-CCRR Assurance Platform.

A login for the Assurance Platform is automatically set up and provided when an account is opened on the SEPLS-CCRR Impact Registry. For existing projects, project developers can request access to the Assurance Platform.

Make sure to open a Registry Account in plenty of time to avoid any delays in submitting the required documentation. Ensure all documents are fully completed and submitted in time to pass the completeness

check to avoid any unnecessary delays.

Project developers are required to pull together all the documentation, assessments, impact estimates, and any other additional evidence or information required to submit the project for validation with an SEPLS-CCRR approved Validation and Verification Body (VVB).

Step 5: Monitoring and Reporting

The Project Developer implements the project and its monitoring system according to the certified project design.

Projects must:

- Monitor according to the approved methodology – collect data, operate and maintain monitoring systems, and follow quality control procedures.
- Compile data and calculate results – process monitored parameters and calculate verified emission reductions or removals.
- Prepare the Monitoring Report – complete all required sections in the official template with clear data and explanations.

Step 6: MR Review

Once the Monitoring Report has been completed, a project will have the necessary documentation to move on to an MR Review. The MR Review aims to make sure every project has the potential to conform to the SEPLS-CCRR requirements and ensure readiness for third-party verification.

Reviews are to be scheduled and managed by SEPLS-CCRR. The timeline is 4 weeks. Review Response Timelines: Completeness check responses from project developers are due within 2 weeks. Missing these deadlines will result in request rejection, requiring a new review request to be submitted.

Step 7: Verification

Verification of the project activity involves an independent assessment conducted by an accredited and SEPLS-CCRR approved Validation and Verification Body (VVB), appointed by the project developer. This consists of a site visit and/or desk-based review and provides confirmation that the project and its impacts are in line with the SEPLS-CCRR Requirements and relevant methodology(ies).

To initiate the verification, projects must:

- Have SEPLS-CCRR Preliminary Review Proof.
- Identify, contract, and pay an eligible SEPLS-CCRR approved VVB to carry out verification.
- Provide to the VVB a fully completed Monitoring Report (MR) and all relevant supporting documentation for VVB verification via the SEPLS-CCRR Assurance Platform.

Once the VVB has completed the verification, the VVB will upload the final verification report and any other relevant documentation directly into the Assurance Platform. On submission of the documents, the SEPLS-CCRR Assurance and Review Management (ARM) Team will conduct a completeness check and notify the VVB that the documents are ready for performance review.

Verification timelines are to be scheduled with the contracted VVB directly. Verification ends when the VVB submits a positive verification report to the Assurance Platform.

Verification must occur at least once during the five-year certification cycle with the first verification completed within 2 years of the project implementation date or design certification date, whichever is

later.

Step 8: VCU Issuance

Upon receipt and acceptance of the verification report by SEPLS-CCRR, the project may proceed to request the issuance of Verified Carbon Units (VCUs).

Submission of verification report and application documents: The project developer shall submit the final verification report issued by the VVB, together with the required application forms and declarations, to SEPLS-CCRR. All documents must be complete and compliant to avoid delays in issuance.

Document review and compliance check: SEPLS-CCRR reviews the verification report and supporting documents to confirm that the certified emission reductions meet all applicable methodologies and standards.

Issuance of VCUs: Upon successful review, SEPLS-CCRR records the approved quantity of emission reductions in the Assurance Platform and issues the corresponding VCUs. Each VCU is assigned a unique serial number and issuance date, ensuring traceability and integrity within the registry.

After verification, the project developer submits the verification report and required application documents to SEPLS-CCRR. SEPLS-CCRR then conducts a review, usually within 1–2 weeks, to confirm compliance with the methodology and standards, addressing any clarifications if needed. Once the review is approved, SEPLS-CCRR issues the VCUs in the registry, assigning unique serial numbers and recording the issuance date.

Step 9: Sale and Transfer of VCUs

After issuance, project developers can view various details of their VCUs on the Assurance Platform, including transfer status, sale transactions, and cash flow.

VCUs may be sold or transferred through various channels, including:

- Platform transactions: Listing VCUs on carbon trading platforms where buyers bid and purchase.
- Bilateral agreements: Directly contracting with a specific buyer and completing the transfer in the registry.
- Brokered transactions: Engaging brokers or intermediaries to locate buyers and facilitate the sale.

The transaction period generally ranges from 1 week to 3 months, depending on the method and buyer negotiations. Platform transactions may incur 0–5% platform fees, while brokered sales may involve commissions of up to 15%. Actual costs and timelines depend on platform rules and agreements with buyers.

Step 10: Annual Registration Maintenance Fee

Project developers must pay the Annual Registration Maintenance Fee on time. This fee is required to maintain the project's active status in the SEPLS-CCRR registry. Timely payment of the annual fee is a prerequisite for keeping the project registration valid and continuing with VCU issuance.

The actual fee will be determined according to SEPLS-CCRR's official announcements.