

Validation and Verification Body (VVB) Program Manual

Issued by the SEPLS Carbon Credit Regional Revitalization Center

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Overview

The Satoyama Mace Initiative, proudly endorsed by UNU-IAS/IPSI (United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability / International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative), is developing a new voluntary carbon credit methodology that integrates the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) with Nature-based Solutions (NbS) to enhance carbon sinks and biodiversity conservation.

This initiative supports Socio-Ecological Production Landscapes and Seascapes (SEPLS) in establishing Greenhouse Gas (GHG) programs, leading to the issuance of Biodiversity-SDG Carbon Credits. These credits are based on robust Measurement, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) systems, aligned with international standards such as ISO 14065.

🔗 Learn more: Satoyama Mace Initiative

<https://satoyamainitiative.org/activities/ipsi-collaborative-activities/satoyama-mace-initiative-regional-revitalization-of-sepls-in-carbon-credit/>

1. Role of VVBs in the SEPLS Carbon Credit Program

Validation and verification are critical processes that ensure the environmental integrity, quality, and transparency of projects and methodologies registered under biodiversity-SDG-related GHG programs. These processes are conducted by Validation and Verification Bodies (VVBs)—qualified, independent third-party auditors approved by the SEPLS Carbon Credit Regional Revitalization Center. VVBs must demonstrate technical competence within specific programmatic, sectoral, or methodological scopes. Their responsibilities include:

Validation: Assessing whether a project meets all relevant rules and requirements before registration.

Verification: Confirming that the project's GHG reductions or removals have been achieved and are quantifiable per the methodology and standard.

2. Accreditation Requirements

To become an approved VVB under the SEPLS Carbon Credit Program, an organization must:

- Be accredited under a recognized ISO standard (e.g., ISO 14065) by a designated accreditation body.
- Submit documentary evidence of accreditation status or indicate “Accreditation Pending” with supporting documentation.
- Undergo review and approval by the SEPLS Carbon Credit Regional Revitalization Center.

A VVB will become inactive if:

- Accreditation is suspended or terminated,
- Accreditation is withdrawn by the respective body, or
- SEPLS Carbon Credit Regional Revitalization Center suspends or terminates the agreement.

- Inactive or suspended VVBs are prohibited from conducting validations/verifications or issuing reports until reinstated.

3. VVB Application Process

Eligibility and Instructions- This application is for organizations seeking VVB approval under biodiversity-SDG-related GHG programs. If already approved under another scope or program, a new application must be submitted for any additional scope.

To apply:

1. Complete and sign the official VVB Application Form.
2. Submit supplementary documentation (e.g., accreditation certificates, sectoral competence).
3. Submit the full application package to the SEPLS Carbon Credit Regional Revitalization Center.
4. Review and Preliminary Assessment
5. SEPLS Carbon Credit Regional Revitalization Center will evaluate the completeness and qualifications of each application.
6. Applicants may be provisionally listed as “Accreditation Pending” if documentation confirms that accreditation is in process.
7. To achieve “Approved” status, the full accreditation process must be completed and the certificate submitted.
8. Approval and Agreement
9. Upon approval:
 - The applicant will sign the VVB Agreement.
 - The applicant will be invoiced for the annual program fee (if applicable).
10. Final Status and Listing
11. Once the agreement is executed and fees are paid:
 - The VVB will be authorized to conduct audits under biodiversity-SDG GHG programs.
 - The VVB will be publicly listed as Approved on the SEPLS Carbon Credit Regional Revitalization Center website.

4. Performance Monitoring Program (PMP)

The VVB Performance Monitoring Program (PMP) ensures consistent, high-quality performance of approved VVBs through systematic evaluation across standards. The PMP includes SDGs and KMGBF performance indicators grouped into four oversight categories:

Project Reviews

- Performance Observation Audits (PO Audits)
- Sanctions and Cooperation
- Accreditation Body Feedback
- Each VVB receives an annual (or more frequent) performance scorecard, which may include:
 - ✓ Quantitative metrics on audit quality

- ✓ Feedback from accreditation bodies
- ✓ Observational assessments from SEPLS Carbon Credit Regional Revitalization Center staff
- ✓ Documentation of cooperation and compliance

5. Oversight Activities and Quality Assurance

a. Project Reviews

SEPLS Carbon Credit Regional Revitalization Center conducts reviews during registration and issuance to ensure proper assessment and documentation by the VVB.

b. Performance Observation Audits (PO Audits)

These audits are conducted remotely or onsite to evaluate auditor competency by witnessing real-time validation and verification work.

c. Sanctions and Cooperation Mechanisms

- Section 6 / Quality Control Reviews: Triggered by errors, stakeholder concerns, or SEPLS Carbon Credit Regional Revitalization Center-identified issues.
- Non-Conformance Reports: Issued when recurring, material, or severe issues are detected. VVBs must respond with root cause analysis and corrective action plans.
- Cooperation: VVBs must collaborate in all quality assurance and compliance matters, including investigations of conflicts of interest.

d. Information Exchange with Accreditation Bodies

SEPLS Carbon Credit Regional Revitalization Center maintains active communication with accreditation bodies regarding VVB performance.

6. VVB Sanctions

SEPLS Carbon Credit Regional Revitalization Center reserves the right to impose sanctions on VVBs for non-compliance or poor performance. Sanctions may include:

- Formal warning
- Referral to accreditation body
- Temporary suspension
- Termination of VVB status

These measures are taken to ensure the credibility of SEPLS Carbon Credit Regional Revitalization Center - issued carbon credits and to uphold the highest standards of integrity and audit quality.