



# Plastic Waste Reduction Standard

A VERRA STANDARD

# Plastic Standard

# ABOUT VERRA

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Verra manages a number of global standards frameworks designed to drive finance towards activities that mitigate climate change and promote sustainable development, including the [Verified Carbon Standard \(VCS\) Program](#) and its [Jurisdictional and Nested REDD+ framework \(JNR\)](#), the [Verra California Offset Project Registry \(OPR\)](#), the [Climate, Community & Biodiversity \(CCB\) Standards](#), the [Sustainable Development Verified Impact Standard \(SD VISTa\)](#) and the [Plastic Waste Reduction Program \(Plastic Program\)](#). Verra is also developing new standards frameworks, including [LandScale](#), which will promote and measure sustainability outcomes across landscapes. Finally, Verra was a founding member of the [Initiative for Climate Action Transparency \(ICAT\)](#), which helps countries assess the impacts of their climate actions and supports greater transparency, effectiveness, trust and ambition in climate policies worldwide. Today Verra remains engaged with the ICAT in an advisory role.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

The *Plastic Waste Reduction Standard (Plastic Standard)* provides a global standard for plastic waste<sup>1</sup> collection and recycling projects. The *Plastic Standard* is operationalized by the Plastic Waste Reduction Program (Plastic Program) to enable the validation of plastic collection and recycling projects, and the verification of collected and/or recycled plastic waste. The three principal documents of the program are the *Plastic Waste Reduction Program Guide (Plastic Program Guide)*, the *Plastic Standard* and the *Plastic Program Methodology Requirements*. The *Plastic Program Guide* describes the rules and requirements governing the Plastic Program and further describes the constituent parts of the program, such as the project registration process, the Verra Registry, the methodology approval process and the accreditation requirements for validation/verification bodies. The *Plastic Standard* provides the requirements for developing projects, as well as the requirements for the validation, monitoring and verification of projects that collect and/or recycle plastic waste. The *Plastic Program Methodology Requirements* provide the rules and requirements for developing new plastic collection and recycling methodologies.

The *Plastic Standard* can also be used by plastic waste collection and/or recycling projects that intend only to account for the results of their collection and/or recycling activities and are not interested in issuing Waste Collection Credits or Waste Recycling Credits (Plastic Credits). Requirements pertaining to the issuance of Plastic Credits and eligibility requirements for crediting are not applicable to such projects and are noted as such.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, projects using the *Plastic Standard* solely for accounting purposes are not eligible to issue Plastic Credits.

The *Plastic Standard* was developed with the support and leadership of the 3R Initiative and the technical and strategic input of the Plastic Standard Development Committee (PSDC).<sup>3</sup>

## 1.1 Version and Update Schedule

All information about version control under the Plastic Program is contained in the *Plastic Program Guide*.

This document will be updated from time to time and readers shall ensure that they are using the most current version of the document. The next review and potential update of this document is scheduled for 2022. Where external documents are referenced and such documents are updated, the most recent version of the document shall be used.

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<sup>1</sup> In this document, the term plastic waste refers to all waste that includes materials under the scope of this program, including composite materials (e.g., used beverage cartons).

<sup>2</sup> In this *Plastic Standard*, v1.0, those requirements are Sections 3.5, 3.6 and 3.10.

<sup>3</sup> More information about the PSDC and its members can be found on the Verra website.

## 1.2 Language

The operating language of the Plastic Program is English. Plastic Program documents may be translated into other languages to facilitate local use. However, the English versions of the documents, and the interpretation of the same, shall take precedence over any translations.

The project description, validation report, monitoring report, verification report and all other documentation (including any and all appendices) required under the Plastic Program shall be written in English. For projects located in countries in which English is not a widely used language among project stakeholders, the project proponent shall develop at least a summary of the project description and/or monitoring report in a relevant local or regional language.

# 2 PLASTIC PROGRAM OVERVIEW

## 2.1 Scope of Plastic Program

2.1.1 The materials included in the scope of the Plastic Program are:

- 1) All materials made of the seven types of plastic:<sup>4</sup> polyethylene terephthalate (PETE or PET), high-density polyethylene (HDPE), polyvinyl chloride (PVC), low-density polyethylene (LDPE), polypropylene (PP), polystyrene (PS) or expanded polystyrene (EPS), and other plastics (O).
  - a) Other plastics include, among others, acrylic or polymethyl methacrylate, acrylonitrile butadiene styrene (ABS), polyamide (nylon), polycarbonate and polylactic acid.
- 2) Composite materials containing the plastic types listed above. Such packaging items can be blends of different plastics or products combining layers of different materials. The materials may include different plastic types, thin metal foils or coatings and/or layers of paper or cardboard.<sup>5</sup>
  - a) Containers with closures, labels or other detachable elements made of materials different from the container shall be considered to be composite materials only if the container is considered to be a composite material independent of the detachable elements.

Table 1 provides examples of commonly found items made of each material type included in the scope of the Plastic Program. The examples can be used to identify the material composition of collected and/or recycled plastic waste and are not exhaustive. The table also

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<sup>4</sup> American Chemistry Council (n.d.). *Plastic Packaging Resins*. Available at: <https://plastics.americanchemistry.com/Plastic-Resin-Codes-PDF/>.

<sup>5</sup> World Economic Forum, Ellen MacArthur Foundation and McKinsey & Company (2016). *The New Plastics Economy – Rethinking the Future of Plastics*. Available at: <http://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/publications>.

contains material sub-types that may be used for further identification and categorization of materials. Section 3.11 sets out the requirements for the quantification of collected and recycled plastic waste by material type.

**Table 1: Material types included in the scope of the Plastic Program**

Material Type <sup>6</sup>	Material Sub-Type <sup>7</sup>	Examples
PET (1)	PET bottle	Water, soft drink and juice bottles, salad dressing bottles, cleaning product bottles
	PET thermoforms	Salad domes, trays, cups, clamshells, berry boxes
	PET durables <sup>8</sup>	Carpet, clothing textiles, automotive and furniture fabrics, and non-woven goods
	PET other rigid	Jars (e.g., peanut butter containers)
HDPE (2)	HDPE bottle	Milk bottles, shampoo bottles, cleaning product and detergent bottles
	HDPE injection	Reusable shipping containers, fishing crates, jars, pots, trays, cups, buckets, boats, folding chairs
	HDPE other rigid	Wire and cable sheathing, piping for water, construction sacks, tubs (e.g., dip, ice cream, butter)
	HDPE films	Freezer bags, crinkly shopping bags
PVC (3)	PVC bottles	Cosmetic containers
	PVC extrusion	Piping, framing, fencing materials, windows, doors, siding
	PVC other rigid	Heavy duty non-food packaging, blisters, trays, films
	PVC construction – flexible (softer and more flexible with plasticizers)	Plumbing products, electrical cable insulation
	PVC medical	Medical tubing

<sup>6</sup> World Economic Forum, Ellen MacArthur Foundation and McKinsey & Company (2016). *The New Plastics Economy – Rethinking the Future of Plastics*. Available at: <http://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/publications>.

<sup>7</sup> The majority of these categories come from Ellen MacArthur Foundation and UN Environment Program (2020). *New Plastics Economy Plastic Recycling Data Survey 2020 – Guidelines for Respondents*. Available at: <https://www.newplasticseconomy.org/assets/doc/Plastic-recycling-data-survey-2020-guidelines-for-respondents.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> “Durables” refers to a category of consumer goods that do not wear out quickly.

<b>LDPE (4)</b>	LDPE bottles	Squeeze bottles
	LDPE films and flexibles	Plastic wrap, shrink wrap, rubbish bags, sachets, wrappers, small bags, films (e.g., bottle labels), shopping bags, e-commerce pillows and bubble wrap, bread bags, newspaper bags, dry-cleaner bags, six-pack rings
<b>PP (5)</b>	PP bottle	Ketchup bottles, medicine bottles, syrup bottles
	PP bulky rigid	Automotive parts, buckets, pails, drums, totes, storage containers
	PP other rigid	Tubs (e.g., for yogurt, ice cream, dip), microwave dishes, lightweight cups, containers for medicines, caps, closures, lids, laboratory equipment, medical devices
	PP films and flexibles	Pouches, small bags, straws, sachets, wrappers, potato chip bags
<b>PS (6)</b>	PS injection	Pots, trays, CD cases, plastic cutlery, coat hangers
<b>EPS (6)</b>	EPS foam	Foamed polystyrene hot drink cups, clamshells, foamed trays (e.g., egg cartons, meat and produce trays), foamed PS plates, protective packaging for fragile items, insulation for buildings
<b>Other Plastics (7)</b>	Acrylic or polymethyl methacrylate	Plexiglas, mirrors, lenses, screens, roof windows, signs
	Acrylonitrile butadiene styrene (ABS)	Children's toys (e.g., Lego bricks), keyboard components, wall sockets, plastic alloys and decorative interior car parts, tubing, power-tool housings
	Polyamide (nylon)	Textiles, fishing line, carpets, food packaging, power-tool housings, insulators
	Polycarbonate	Bottles, shatterproof windows, lightweight eyeglass lenses, water jugs
	Polylactic acid	Food packaging (e.g., cups, containers, overwrap, blister packages), biodegradable medical devices

<b>Composite materials</b>	Multi-material packaging	Liquid board packaging/used beverage cartons, toothpaste tubes, stand-up pouches
	Non-packaging composite materials (with visible plastic)	Diapers, building and construction materials (e.g., window frames, pipes, facade panels, exterior and interior covering, insulation), storage tanks, circuit boards, protective headgear (e.g., helmets), circuit boards, non-hazardous electronic materials containing plastic
	Multi-material packaging flexibles	Chip and candy wrappers, sachets, pouches, snack bags

2.1.2 The activities included in the scope of the Plastic Program are:

- 1) Plastic waste collection and recycling activities, including, among others, informal waste collection activities, community waste collection from the environment (including open ocean clean-up), municipal or private waste collection infrastructure development, waste sorting, mechanical recycling and chemical recycling.
- 2) Project activities supported by a methodology approved under the Plastic Program through the methodology approval process.

2.1.3 The scope of the Plastic Program excludes:

- 1) Project activities that undertake the reduction or reuse of plastic waste. The program may be expanded to include the reduction and/or reuse of plastic waste in the future;
- 2) Plastic footprint assessments or plastic waste-related claims; and
- 3) Projects that can reasonably be assumed to have generated plastic waste primarily for the purpose of its subsequent collection and/or recycling.



## 2.2 Principles

2.2.1 The application of principles is fundamental to ensuring that plastic waste-related information is a true and fair account. The following principles, based on clause 4 of *ISO 14064-2:2019*<sup>9</sup> and the ISEAL Credibility Principles, shall provide the basis for and guide application of the Plastic Program rules and requirements.

- **Relevance:** Select the plastic waste sources, end-of-life options, data and methodologies appropriate to the needs of the intended user
- **Completeness:** Include all relevant material types. Include all relevant information to support criteria and procedures
- **Consistency:** Enable meaningful comparisons of plastic waste-related information
- **Accuracy:** Reduce bias and uncertainties as far as practical
- **Transparency:** Disclose sufficient and appropriate plastic waste-related information to allow intended users to make decisions with reasonable confidence
- **Conservativeness:** Use conservative assumptions, values and procedures to ensure that net plastic waste collection and recycling are not overestimated
- **Continuous improvement:** Regularly integrate learning and innovation to increase benefits to people and the environment

*Note – Accuracy should be pursued as far as possible, but the hypothetical nature of baselines, the high cost of monitoring of some types of plastic waste collection and recycling and other limitations make accuracy difficult to attain in many cases. In these cases, conservativeness may serve as a moderator to accuracy in order to maintain the credibility of plastic waste collection and recycling quantification.*

## 2.3 Timing of Crediting

2.3.1 Plastic Credits shall not be issued under the Plastic Program for plastic waste collection or recycling that has not been verified.

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<sup>9</sup> Given that there is currently no ISO standard for projects that collect and/or recycle plastic waste, the general intent of *ISO 14064-2:2019* informs the principles of the Plastic Program.

## 3 PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

This section sets out the rules and requirements for projects participating in the Plastic Program.

In order to complete the Plastic Program certification process, projects must demonstrate how they meet the rules and requirements set out below.<sup>10</sup> Projects must also demonstrate how they have applied an eligible methodology in full. Projects demonstrate their compliance with Plastic Program rules and the applied methodology through the validation and verification processes, which are defined in Section 4. Once projects complete the validation and verification processes, they become eligible to request registration and Plastic Credit issuance, respectively. Note that the full process for requesting project registration and Plastic Credit issuance is set out in the *Plastic Program Guide*.

### 3.1 General Requirements

#### Concept

Establishing a consistent and standardized certification process is critical to ensuring the integrity of plastic waste collection and recycling projects. Accordingly, certain high-level requirements must be met by all projects, as set out below.

#### Requirements

- 3.1.1 Projects shall meet all applicable rules and requirements set out under the Plastic Program, including this document. Projects shall be guided by the principles set out in Section 2.2.
- 3.1.2 Projects shall apply methodologies eligible under the Plastic Program. Methodologies shall be applied in full where the project proponent seeks to issue Plastic Credits, including the full application of any tools or modules referred to by a methodology (e.g., only projects that will generate Plastic Credits need to meet a methodology's additionality requirements). The list of methodologies and their validity periods is available on the Verra website.
- 3.1.3 Projects and the implementation of project activities shall not lead to the violation of any applicable law, statute or regulation, regardless of whether or not they are enforced.

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<sup>10</sup> Certain sections not applicable to projects using the *Plastic Standard* solely for accounting purposes are marked as such.

- 3.1.4 Where Verra issues new requirements relating to projects, registered projects do not need to adhere to the new requirements for the remainder of their project crediting periods (i.e., such projects remain eligible to issue Plastic Credits through to the end of their project crediting period without revalidation against the new requirements), unless explicitly stated otherwise. The new requirements shall be adhered to at project crediting period renewal, as set out in Section 3.6.4.

## 3.2 Project Documentation

### Concept

In order to complete the project validation process, project proponents shall prepare a project description, which describes the project's plastic waste collection and/or recycling activities. In order to complete the project verification process, project proponents shall prepare a monitoring report, which describes the data and information related to the monitoring of plastic waste collection and/or recycling.

### Requirements

#### Project Description

- 3.2.1 The project proponent shall use the *Plastic Project Description Template* available on the Verra website and adhere to all instructional text within the template.
- 3.2.2 All information in the project description shall be presumed to be available for public review, though commercially sensitive information may be protected, as set out in the *Plastic Program Guide*, where it can be demonstrated that such information is commercially sensitive. The validation/verification body shall check that any information designated by the project proponent as commercially sensitive meets the Plastic Program definition of commercially sensitive information.

#### Monitoring Report

- 3.2.3 The project proponent shall use the *Plastic Project Monitoring Report Template* available on the Verra website and adhere to all instructional text within the template.
- 3.2.4 The monitoring period of the monitoring report shall be a distinct time period that does not overlap with previous monitoring periods. Projects shall not be eligible for crediting of plastic waste collected or recycled by the project in previous monitoring periods. In addition, monitoring periods shall be contiguous with no time gaps between them.

### 3.3 Project Configuration

#### Concept

The Plastic Program allows for different approaches to configuring projects. Table 2 describes the configurations that projects may use.

**Table 2: Project configurations**

Project Configuration	Description	Example
Single installation of an activity	One project activity at one location	One chemical recycling facility
Multiple project activities	More than one collection and/or recycling project activity	Collection of plastic waste from households and one mechanical recycling facility (both activities are applicable whether or not the waste collected from the households is a source for the recycling activity)
Multiple instances of a project activity	The same project activity at different locations	Waste picker project that distributes new collection equipment to different communities
Multiple instances of multiple project activities	More than one collection and/or recycling project activity, with instances of some or all activities at different locations	Collection of plastic waste from households in three localities and one mechanical recycling facility (all activities are applicable whether or not the waste collected from the households is a source for the recycling activity)
Grouped project (with any of the project configurations listed above)	Inclusion of new project activity instances subsequent to project validation	Chemical recycling at one initial facility with new facilities added in different locations after project validation

*Note – Project activity and project activity instance have specific meanings that are set out in the Plastic Program Definitions.*

## Requirements

### Multiple Project Activities

- 3.3.1 Projects may include multiple project activities where the methodology applied to the project allows more than one project activity and/or where projects apply more than one methodology.
- 3.3.2 Where more than one methodology has been applied to a project with multiple project activities, the following applies:
- 1) Each project activity shall be specified separately in the project description, referencing the relevant methodology.
  - 2) All criteria and procedures set out in the applied methodologies in relation to applicability conditions, demonstration of additionality, determination of the baseline scenario and plastic waste collection and/or recycling quantification shall be applied separately to each project activity, noting the following:
    - a) A single set of criteria and procedures for the demonstration of additionality may be applied where the applied methodologies reference the same additionality procedures, and where separate demonstration of additionality for each project activity is not feasible.

For example, separate demonstration of additionality may not be feasible in project activities that are implemented at a single facility and therefore represent a single investment. The onus is upon the project proponent to demonstrate to the validation/verification body that separate demonstration of additionality is not feasible, failing which separate demonstration of additionality shall be provided. Where a methodology specifies requirements for demonstrating additionality in addition to those specified in the referenced additionality procedures, such requirements shall be adhered to.
    - b) The criteria and procedures for identifying the baseline scenario may be combined where the relevant methodologies or the referenced additionality procedures specify criteria and procedures for combining baseline scenarios.
  - 3) More than one project activity may be implemented in the same project location as set out in Section 3.7.
  - 4) The collected and/or recycled plastic waste resulting from each project activity shall be quantified separately in accordance with the relevant methodology.
  - 5) The criteria and procedures relating to all other aspects of the methodologies may be combined.

*Note – Where a single methodology is applicable to more than one project activity and where the methodology does not provide clear procedures for its application to more than one project activity, the above requirements shall be adhered to.*

### Multiple Instances of Project Activities

- 3.3.3 The baseline determination and additionality demonstration for all project activity instances of the same project activity shall be combined. For example, the baseline and additionality of multiple mechanical recycling installations shall be determined and demonstrated in combination rather than individually.
- 3.3.4 Each project activity instance shall have the same combined baseline scenario (i.e., without project scenario) as set out in Section 3.3.3 but may set its own crediting baseline, as described in the applied methodology, for quantification of net plastic waste collected and/or recycled.
- 3.3.5 Where a project includes multiple project activities and one or more of the project activities include multiple project activity instances, the project activity instances from each project activity shall be assessed in accordance with Sections 3.3.1-3.3.2. For example, the baseline scenario of a project consisting of multiple instances of plastic waste collection from the environment at different sites and one mechanical recycling facility shall be determined for each project activity in accordance with Sections 3.3.1-3.3.2.

### Grouped Projects

#### Baseline Scenario and Additionality

- 3.3.6 Requirements in Sections 3.3.7-3.3.15 shall supersede requirements in Sections 3.3.1-3.3.5 for grouped projects with a single project activity, multiple project activities and/or multiple instances of project activities.
- 3.3.7 Grouped projects shall have one or more clearly defined geographic areas within which project activity instances may be developed. Such geographic areas shall be defined using geodetic polygons as set out in Section 3.7.
- 3.3.8 Determination of the baseline scenario for and demonstration of additionality of project activity instances added subsequent to validation are based upon the initial project activity instances. The initial project activity instances are those that are included in the project description at validation and shall include all project activity instances currently implemented on the issue date of the project description. The initial project activity instances may also include any planned instances of the project activity that have been planned and developed to a sufficient level of detail to enable their assessment at validation. Geographic areas with no initial project activity instances shall not be included in the project unless it can be demonstrated that such areas are subject to the same (or at least as conservative a) baseline scenario and rationale for the demonstration of additionality as a geographic area that does include initial project activity instances.
- 3.3.9 Where a grouped project includes multiple project activities, the project description shall indicate which project activities may occur in each geographic area.

- 3.3.10 The baseline scenario for a project activity shall be determined for each designated geographic area, in accordance with the methodology applied to the project. Where a single baseline scenario cannot be determined for a project activity over the entirety of a geographic area, the geographic area shall be redefined or divided such that a single baseline scenario can be determined for the revised geographic area or areas. Project activity instances in each designated geographic area shall have the same baseline scenario (i.e., the without-project scenario) but may set their own crediting baselines for quantification of net plastic waste collected and/or recycled.
- 3.3.11 The additionality of the initial project activity instances shall be demonstrated for each designated geographic area, in accordance with the methodology applied to the project. Where the additionality of the initial project activity instances within a particular geographic area cannot be demonstrated for the entirety of that geographic area, the geographic area shall be redefined or divided such that the additionality of the instances occurring in the revised geographic area or areas can be demonstrated.
- 3.3.12 Where factors relevant to the determination of the baseline scenario or demonstration of additionality require assessment across a given area, the area shall be, at a minimum, the grouped project geographic area. Examples of such factors include common practice; laws, statutes, regulatory frameworks or policies relevant to demonstration of regulatory surplus;<sup>11</sup> and historical collection and recycling rates.

### Eligibility Criteria

- 3.3.13 Grouped projects shall include one or more sets of eligibility criteria for the inclusion of new project activity instances. At least one set of eligibility criteria for the inclusion of new project activity instances shall be provided for each combination of project activity and geographic area specified in the project description. Grouped projects shall include eligibility criteria to ensure that new project activity instances:
- 1) Meet the applicability conditions set out in the methodology or methodologies applied to the project;
  - 2) Use the technologies or measures specified in the project description that are relevant to the project activity;
  - 3) Apply the technologies or measures in the same manner as specified in the project description;
  - 4) Are subject to the baseline scenario determined in the project description for the specified project activity and geographic area; and

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<sup>11</sup> Demonstration of regulatory surplus requires demonstration that the project is not mandated by any law, statute or other regulatory framework or that the existing laws, statutes or regulatory frameworks are not enforced.

- 5) Have characteristics with respect to additionality that are consistent with the initial instances for the specified project activity and geographic area. For example, the new project activity instances have financial, technical and/or other parameters (such as the size/scale of the instances) consistent with the initial instances, or face the same investment, technological and/or other barriers as the initial instances.

*Note – Where grouped projects include multiple baseline scenarios or demonstrations of additionality, such projects will require at least one set of eligibility criteria for each combination of baseline scenario and demonstration of additionality specified in the project description.*

### Inclusion of New Project Activity Instances

3.3.14 Grouped projects allow for the inclusion of new project activity instances subsequent to the initial validation of the project. New project activity instances shall:

- 1) Occur within one of the designated geographic areas specified in the project description;
- 2) Comply with at least one complete set of eligibility criteria for the inclusion of new project activity instances. Partial compliance with multiple sets of eligibility criteria is insufficient;
- 3) Be included in the monitoring report with sufficient technical, financial, geographic and other relevant information to demonstrate compliance with the applicable set of eligibility criteria and enable sampling by the validation/verification body;
- 4) Be validated at the time of verification against the applicable set of eligibility criteria;
- 5) Have evidence of project ownership, with respect to each project activity instance, held by the project proponent from the respective start date of each project activity instance (i.e., the date upon which the project activity instance began collecting and/or recycling plastic waste);
- 6) Have a start date that is the same as or later than the grouped project start date; and
- 7) Be eligible for crediting from the start date of the instance through to the end of the project crediting period (only). Note that where a new project activity instance starts in a previous verification period, no credit may be claimed for plastic waste collected or recycled by the project during the previous verification period (as set out in Section 3.2.4) and new instances are eligible for crediting from the start of the next verification period.

Where inclusion of a new project activity instance necessitates the addition of a new project proponent to the project, such instances shall be included in the grouped project within two years of the project activity instance start date. The procedure for adding new project proponents is set out in the *Plastic Program Guide*.



## Project Description for Grouped Projects

3.3.15 A grouped project shall be described in a single project description, which shall contain the following:

- 1) A delineation of the geographic area(s) within which all project activity instances shall occur. Such area(s) shall be defined by geodetic polygons as set out in Section 3.7;
- 2) One or more determinations of the baseline for the project activity in accordance with the requirements of the methodology applied to the project (see Section 3.3.10);
- 3) One or more demonstrations of additionality for the project activity in accordance with the requirements of the methodology applied to the project (see Section 3.3.11);
- 4) One or more sets of eligibility criteria for the inclusion of new project activity instances at subsequent verification events (see Section 3.3.13); and
- 5) A description of the central plastic waste information system and controls associated with the project and its monitoring.

*Note – Where the project includes more than one project activity (multiple project activities), the above requirements shall be addressed separately for each project activity, except for the delineation of geographic areas and the description of the central plastic waste information system and controls, which shall be addressed for the project as a whole.*

## 3.4 Ownership

### Concept

Project proponents shall demonstrate that they have the legal right to control and operate project activities.

### Requirements

3.4.1 The project description shall be accompanied by one or more of the following types of evidence establishing project ownership accorded to the project proponent(s):

- 1) Project ownership arising or granted under statute, regulation or decree by a competent authority
- 2) Project ownership arising under law
- 3) Project ownership arising by virtue of a statutory, property, direct or indirect contractual right or service agreement in the plant, equipment, land or process that facilitates and/or performs plastic waste collection and/or recycling (where the project proponent has not been divested of such project ownership)

- 4) An enforceable and irrevocable agreement with the holder of the statutory, property, direct or indirect contractual right or service agreement in the plant, equipment, land or process that facilitates and/or performs plastic waste collection and/or recycling which grants project ownership to the project proponent
- 5) Project ownership and right to operate arising by virtue of agreement with the relevant government entity to perform the project activity and/or to operate on the land
- 6) Project ownership arising from the implementation or enforcement of laws, statutes or regulatory frameworks that require activities to be undertaken or incentivize activities that facilitate and/or perform plastic waste collection and/or recycling

Where the types of evidence listed above are not appropriate, project ownership and right to operate may arise by virtue of other means of demonstrating proof of ownership and/or right to operate. These include, among others, contractual agreements and alliance of project actors with an organization that can demonstrate proof of ownership (as listed above) on behalf of the project actors. The project proponent shall demonstrate that the nature of the proof of ownership used is commonplace to the location of the project activity or the project activity type.

### 3.5 Project Start Date

#### Concept

The project start date is the date on which the project began collecting and/or recycling plastic waste. Projects shall complete validation within a specific timeframe from the project start date, as set out in Sections 3.5.2 and 3.5.3, and Figure 1.

*Note – The requirements in this section do not apply to projects that intend to use the Plastic Standard solely for accounting purposes and not to issue Plastic Credits.*

#### Requirements

- 3.5.1 The project start date shall be on or after 1 January 2016.
- 3.5.2 Projects with a project start date on or before 31 December 2021 shall complete validation by 31 December 2023.

**Figure 1: Start date and validation timeline**



- 3.5.3 Projects with a project start date on or after 1 January 2022 shall complete validation within two years of the project start date. Additional time is granted for projects to complete validation where they are applying a new plastic waste collection or recycling methodology. Specifically, projects using a new plastic waste collection or recycling methodology and completing validation within two years of the approval of the methodology by Verra may complete validation within four years of the project start date.

## 3.6 Project Crediting Period

### Concept

The project crediting period is the time period in which plastic waste collected and/or recycled by the project is eligible for issuance as Plastic Credits. Project crediting periods shall be renewed periodically in order to ensure that changes to a project's baseline scenario and regulatory surplus are taken into consideration throughout the lifetime of the project.

*Note – The requirements in this section do not apply to projects that intend to use the Plastic Standard solely for accounting purposes and not to issue Plastic Credits.*

### Requirements

#### Project Crediting Period Length

- 3.6.1 The project crediting period shall be either 7 years, twice renewable for a total of 21 years, or 10 years fixed.
- 3.6.2 The project crediting period may begin on or after the project start date.

#### Renewal of Project Crediting Period

- 3.6.3 Where projects fail to renew the project crediting period, the project crediting period shall end and the project shall be ineligible for further crediting.
- 3.6.4 The following shall apply with respect to the renewal of the project crediting period under the Plastic Program:
- 1) A full reassessment of additionality is not required when renewing the project crediting period. However, regulatory surplus shall be demonstrated in accordance with the requirements set out in the Plastic Program rules, and the project description shall be updated accordingly.
  - 2) The validity of the original baseline scenario shall be demonstrated – or where invalid a new baseline scenario shall be determined – when renewing the project crediting period, as follows:
    - a) The validity of the original baseline scenario shall be assessed. Such assessment shall include an evaluation of the impact of any new relevant national and/or sectoral policies and circumstances on the validity of the baseline scenario. This

shall also include the market penetration level, financial feasibility and revenue stream of the project activity type in the region.

- b) Where it is determined that the original baseline scenario is no longer valid, the current baseline scenario shall be established in accordance with Plastic Program rules.
  - c) The project description, containing updated information with respect to the baseline, the estimated amount of collected and/or recycled plastic waste and the monitoring plan shall be submitted for validation.
- 3) The updated project description shall be validated in accordance with Plastic Program rules. In addition, the project shall be validated against the (current) scope of the *Plastic Standard*. Such a validation report shall be issued within two years of the end of the (previous) project crediting period, as set out in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Validation timeline for crediting period renewal**



## 3.7 Project Location

### Concept

The project location shall be provided in order to accurately describe project characteristics and to demonstrate a project's conformance with other requirements, such as project ownership and regulatory compliance.

### Requirements

3.7.1 Project location shall be specified in the project description as follows:

- 1) Project location shall be specified by a single geodetic coordinate.
- 2) Where the project activity includes the movement of technology (e.g., riverine plastic interception devices), project location shall be specified according to the following:
  - a) At least one geodetic coordinate shall be provided, together with sufficient additional geographic information with respect to the boundaries within which the technology will operate; or
  - b) Geodetic polygons shall be provided in a KML file to delineate the geographic area or areas within which the technology will operate.

- 3) Where there are multiple project activity instances (see Sections 3.3.3-3.3.5 for more information on multiple instances of project activities), project location shall be specified according to the following:
  - a) Where it is reasonable to do so, a geodetic coordinate shall be specified for each instance and provided in a KML file; or
  - b) Where there are a large number of project activity instances (e.g., waste collection sites for collected plastic waste), at least one geodetic coordinate shall be provided, together with sufficient additional geographic information (with respect to the location of the instances) to enable sampling by the validation/verification body.
- 4) Project location for grouped projects shall be specified according to the following:
  - a) Where it is reasonable to do so, a geodetic coordinate shall be provided for each instance and provided in a KML file; or
  - b) Where there are a large number of grouped project instances, at least one geodetic coordinate shall be provided, together with sufficient additional geographic information (with respect to the location of the instances) to enable sampling by the validation/verification body.

In addition, geodetic polygons shall be provided in a KML file to delineate the project's geographic area or areas (see Section 3.3.7 for further information on geographic areas for grouped projects).

## 3.8 Project Boundary

### Concept

The project boundary includes the source (e.g., environment, landfill, material recovery facility or household/business) and proximate end-of-life scenario (e.g., landfill, sale of recycled material) of the plastic waste collected and/or recycled that are relevant to the project and baseline scenarios. The relevant sources and proximate end-of-life scenarios that shall be included or excluded, or are optional, are set out in the methodology or methodologies applied by the project.

### Requirements

- 3.8.1 The project boundary shall be described (using diagrams, as required), and sources and proximate end-of-life scenarios of collected and/or recycled plastic waste shall be identified and assessed in accordance with the methodology applied to the project. If applicable, the project shall justify not selecting any relevant source or proximate end-of-life scenario.

- 3.8.2 The project boundary may span multiple countries. The requirements of the *Plastic Standard* and all criteria and procedures set out in the applied methodology or methodologies, in relation to applicability conditions, demonstration of additionality and determination of the baseline scenario, shall be met for each country included in the project boundary. The project location (see Section 3.7) shall include all countries in which the project activity is operating.

## 3.9 Baseline Scenario

### Concept

The baseline scenario represents the plastic waste management activities that would most likely occur in the absence of the project activity. The baseline scenario shall be determined so that an accurate comparison can be made between the plastic waste management that would have occurred under the baseline scenario and the plastic waste collection and/or recycling that was achieved by project activities.

### Requirements

- 3.9.1 The baseline scenario for the project shall be determined in accordance with the requirements set out in the methodology applied to the project, and the choice of baseline scenario shall be justified.
- 3.9.2 Equivalence in type and level of activity of products or services provided by the project and the baseline scenario shall be demonstrated and, where appropriate, any significant differences between the project and the baseline scenario shall be explained.
- 3.9.3 In developing the baseline scenario, assumptions, values and procedures shall be selected that help ensure that net plastic waste collected and/or recycled is not overestimated.

## 3.10 Additionality

### Concept

A project activity is additional if it can be demonstrated that the activity results in collected or recycled plastic waste that is in excess of what would most likely have occurred in the absence of the project activity and the activity would not have occurred in the absence of the incentive provided by the plastic crediting mechanism. Additionality is an important characteristic of Plastic Credits because it indicates that they represent a net environmental benefit and a real reduction in plastic waste in the environment compared to what would have occurred in the absence of the project.

*Note – The requirement in this section does not apply to projects that intend to use the Plastic Standard solely for accounting purposes and not to issue Plastic Credits.*

### Requirement

- 3.10.1 Additionality shall be demonstrated and assessed in accordance with the requirements set out in the methodology applied to the project.

## 3.11 Quantification of Collected and Recycled Plastic Waste

### Concept

Plastic waste collected and/or recycled by projects is the basis for the number of Plastic Credits that can be issued. Collected and recycled plastic waste shall be quantified in accordance with the applied methodology or methodologies.

### Requirements

3.11.1 The net amount of plastic waste collected and/or recycled by the project shall be quantified.

3.11.2 Metric tonnes shall be used as the unit of measure.

### Estimation of Collected Plastic Waste

3.11.3 Where feasible, the amount of collected plastic waste should be estimated for each material type relevant to the project and baseline scenarios following Table 1 in Section 2.1.1.

3.11.4 Where it is unreasonable to identify collected plastic waste by material type following Table 1 in Section 2.1.1, the following categories may be used:

- 1) Rigid material
- 2) Flexible material
- 3) Composite material

### Estimation of Recycled Plastic Waste

3.11.5 The amount of recycled plastic waste shall be estimated for each material type relevant to the project and the baseline scenarios following Table 1 in Section 2.1.1. Table 1 also includes material sub-types that may be used for further identification and categorization of materials.

## 3.12 Monitoring

### Concept

The impacts of project activities on relevant plastic waste sources and proximate end-of-life scenarios shall be monitored in order to determine the net plastic waste collection and/or recycling benefit. Projects shall be monitored in accordance with the applied methodology or methodologies.

### Requirements

#### Data and Parameters

3.12.1 Data and parameters used for the quantification of plastic waste collection and/or recycling shall be provided in accordance with the methodology or methodologies.

3.12.2 Quality management procedures to manage data and information shall be established and applied. Where applicable, procedures to account for uncertainty in data and parameters shall be applied in accordance with the requirements set out in the methodology.

## Monitoring Plan

- 3.12.3 The project proponent shall establish a plastic waste management information system for obtaining, recording, compiling and analyzing data and information important for quantifying and reporting plastic waste collection and/or recycling relevant to the project and baseline scenario.
- 3.12.4 A monitoring plan for the project that includes roles and responsibilities shall be established.
- 3.12.5 Where measurement and monitoring equipment is used, the project proponent shall ensure the equipment is calibrated according to the equipment's specifications and/or relevant national or international standards.

## 3.13 Stakeholder Engagement

### Concept

Stakeholders must be involved with projects on an ongoing basis. All stakeholder groups and interested stakeholders shall have access to timely and adequate information and open communication channels with project proponents.

### Requirements

#### Stakeholder Identification

- 3.13.1 The project proponent shall use locally appropriate methods to identify all stakeholder groups who could potentially be affected by the project, with special attention given to identification of marginalized or vulnerable groups, such as informal waste workers. Any known interested stakeholders should also be identified. Project proponents should work with, as necessary, local community groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or other organizations to identify directly affected or interested stakeholders.
- 3.13.2 Stakeholder groups shall be described in the project description and updated as necessary in monitoring reports (see Box 1 for more information on stakeholders and stakeholder groups).



### Box 1: Stakeholders and stakeholder groups

A **stakeholder** is any person or entity who can potentially be affected by the project. In identification of stakeholders, it is permitted to consider the significance of user populations and how deeply affected they may be by the project such that distant or intermittent user groups who will be affected in very limited ways by the project need not be defined as stakeholders.

A **stakeholder group** is composed of individual stakeholders who derive similar income, livelihood, well-being and/or cultural values from the project and whose values are different from those of other groups. Examples include Indigenous Peoples, women, youth or other social, cultural and economic groups. Every individual stakeholder must belong to at least one stakeholder group, but may belong to more than one (e.g., a female community leader should be considered as a woman and as a community leader). Stakeholder groups will often be segments of the population, not officially designated assemblages.

In the Plastic Program, stakeholder groups may include, but are not limited to, people living in the vicinity of the project, local municipalities, project employees, informal waste workers, the waste management establishment and local environmental organizations.

Where the term “stakeholders” is used in Plastic Program documents, it may refer to a person, entity or stakeholder group.

*Note – Interested stakeholders comprise any person, group of persons, or entity that has shown an interest, or is known to have an interest, in the activities of the project but that will not be materially affected by those activities. Throughout the Plastic Program, unless otherwise specified, the term “stakeholder” used on its own excludes interested stakeholders. Other potentially interested stakeholders – e.g., local or international NGOs – are identified as such.*

- 3.13.3 Stakeholders who have rights to resources or land that may be affected by project activities shall be clearly identified in the project description and updated as necessary in the monitoring report.

#### Stakeholder Consultation and Participation

- 3.13.4 Stakeholders identified in Section 3.13.1 shall be notified of the project development process.
- 3.13.5 Effective consultation (see Box 2) shall be used to enable project stakeholders, including all stakeholder groups, to influence the design and implementation (including benefit sharing) of the collection and/or recycling activities organized by the project proponent. The consultation shall be carried out with respect for local customs, values and institutions. It shall provide an ongoing opportunity for self-identification of stakeholder groups that are vulnerable (i.e., lacking ability to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from stresses or shocks due to physical, social, economic and environmental factors or processes) and/or marginalized (i.e., unable to participate fully in economic, social, political and cultural life). Where those groups are identified, the project proponent shall emphasize optimizing benefits to them.

## Box 2: Guidance on effective consultation

Effective consultation requires project proponents to inform and engage broadly with stakeholder groups using socially and culturally appropriate methods to enable meaningful influence on the subject of consultation. Consultations must be gender-sensitive and inter-generationally sensitive, with special attention to vulnerable and/or marginalized people, and conducted at mutually agreed locations and through representatives who are designated by the groups themselves in accordance with their own procedures. Such special attention shall be mutually acknowledged and agreed upon by both project proponents and marginalized and/or vulnerable people. Different approaches may be appropriate for different stakeholder groups.

Stakeholders should have an opportunity to evaluate impacts and raise concerns about potential negative impacts, express desired outcomes and provide input on the project design, both before the project design is finalized and during implementation. Consultations should include participatory identification of ecosystem services important for stakeholders (e.g., through participatory mapping). Consultations should also include an evaluation of the type and magnitude of impacts resulting from project activities and participatory design of feedback and grievance redress procedures.

3.13.6 Free, prior and informed consent (see Box 3) shall be obtained from directly impacted stakeholders or their legitimate representatives.

## Box 3: Definition of free, prior and informed consent

**Free** means no coercion, intimidation, manipulation, threat nor bribery. **Prior** means sufficiently in advance of any authorization or commencement of activities and respecting the time requirements of any decision-making processes. **Informed** means that information is provided that covers (at least) the following aspects:

- The nature, size, pace, reversibility and scope of any proposed project or activity;
- The reason(s) or purpose of the project and/or activity;
- The duration of the project and/or activity;
- The locality of areas that will be affected;
- A preliminary assessment of the likely economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts, including potential risks and fair and equitable benefit sharing in a context that respects the precautionary principle;
- Personnel likely to be involved in the execution of the proposed project (including Indigenous Peoples, private sector staff, research institutions, government employees and others); and
- Procedures that the project may entail.

**Consent** means that there is the option of withholding consent and that the parties have reasonably understood that option.

*Note – Collective rights holders shall be able to participate through their own freely chosen representatives or institutions following a transparent process that they have defined for obtaining their free, prior and informed consent.*

- 3.13.7 All communications, consultations and participatory processes shall be undertaken with stakeholders directly or through their legitimate representatives, ensuring adequate and timely information sharing with the members of the stakeholder groups in a form they understand. Information sharing shall include provision of information about potential costs, risks and benefits to all stakeholder groups. Different stakeholder groups may require different communication and consultation methods; communication and consultation shall be implemented in a culturally appropriate and gender-sensitive manner.
- 3.13.8 The project proponent shall document consultations in the project description and indicate whether and how the project design and implementation has been revised based on such input. Special attention paid to marginalized and/or vulnerable groups shall be mutually acknowledged and agreed upon by both project proponents and marginalized and/or vulnerable groups.
- 3.13.9 A plan shall be developed, described in the project description and implemented to continue communication and consultation between the project proponent and all stakeholder groups about the project and its impacts. This information exchange should facilitate adaptive management throughout the life of the project. This plan shall include measures to enable the meaningful influence of all stakeholder groups that want and need to be involved in project design, implementation, monitoring and assessment throughout the project lifetime.

#### Anti-Discrimination

- 3.13.10 Appropriate measures shall be taken to ensure that the project proponent and all other entities involved in project design and implementation are not involved or complicit in any form of sexual harassment or discrimination on the basis of, among others, gender, race, caste, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, cooperative membership or political affiliation with respect to the design, implementation or operation of the project.

#### Grievance Redress Procedure

- 3.13.11 Projects shall establish a clear feedback and grievance redress procedure to address disputes with stakeholders that may arise during project planning and implementation. The feedback and grievance redress procedure shall take into account traditional methods that stakeholders use to resolve conflicts.
- 3.13.12 The feedback and grievance redress procedure shall be set out in the project description as well as publicized and accessible to all project stakeholders, including any interested stakeholders. Grievances and project responses, including appropriate redress, shall be documented in the next project description or monitoring report.

*Note – Where a complaint is an objection to a decision taken by Verra or an aspect of how it operates the Plastic Program, or a claim that the Plastic Program rules have had an unfair, inadvertent or unintentional adverse effect, it shall be submitted following the procedure set out in the Verra Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Policy, which is available on the Verra website.*

## Access to Information

- 3.13.13 Full project documentation, including project description and monitoring reports as they become available, shall be accessible to all stakeholders, including interested stakeholders. Special attention shall be paid to making full project documentation accessible to marginalized and/or vulnerable stakeholder groups.
- 3.13.14 Stakeholders shall receive timely information about the validation/verification body's site visit before a site visit occurs. The project proponent shall facilitate direct and independent communication between stakeholders or their representatives and the assessor.

## Public Comment Period

- 3.13.15 All projects are subject to a 30-day public comment period at the beginning of each assessment (validation, verification and crediting period renewal), which will be hosted on the Verra website. The date on which the project is listed on the Verra Registry marks the beginning of the project's first 30-day public comment period (see the *Plastic Program Guide* for more information on the project listing process).
- 3.13.16 The public comment function shall remain on the project record on the Verra Registry for the entirety of the project's 30-day public comment period so that the public and stakeholders are aware of the upcoming assessment and can provide feedback on project performance.
- 3.13.17 Any comments shall be submitted to Verra through the public comment function on the project record on the Verra Registry, and respondents shall provide their name, organization, country and email address. At the end of the public comment period, Verra provides any comments received to the project proponent. All comments received are posted publicly on the project record on the Verra Registry.
- 3.13.18 The project proponent shall take due account of any comments received during the consultation, which means it will need to either update the project documentation or demonstrate the insignificance or irrelevance of the comment. It shall demonstrate to the validation/verification body the action it has taken and shall address all comments received during this period prior to the project's certification.

## 3.14 Safeguards

### Concept

Project activities should not negatively impact the natural environment or local communities, including informal waste workers where relevant. Project proponents shall identify and address any negative social and environmental impacts of project activities.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Use of one or more causal chains is recommended, in combination with consistent stakeholder engagement, to identify and mitigate the risk of negative intended or unintended outcomes and impacts resulting from the implementation of project activities. A causal chain is a conceptual diagram tracing the process by which an activity leads to positive/negative impact(s) through a series of interlinked logical and sequential stages of cause-and-effect relationships.

## Requirements

3.14.1 The project proponent shall identify potential intended or unintended negative social and environmental impacts, including but not limited to the impacts addressed in Sections 3.14.2-3.14.15, and shall take steps to mitigate them in a manner appropriate to the local context.

## Health and Safety

3.14.2 Preventative measures shall be put in place to avoid negative health impacts, within the project activities, on the project actors and community. Preventative measures may include, among others, pollution prevention measures, provision of equipment ergonomically appropriate for the project activity to project actors and avoided exposure of project actors to toxic substances.

3.14.3 The project proponent shall implement measures to address potential hazards and safety risks associated with implementation of the project activity. These may include, among others, education and training on safe working practices, provision of adequate gear (such as personal protective equipment) and development and communication of emergency protocols.

## Labor

3.14.4 In its communications with relevant stakeholders, the project proponent shall include a list of all relevant laws and regulations covering workers' rights in the host country.

3.14.5 The project proponent shall ensure that any employment provided in the course of project activities is fairly and equitably compensated in, at minimum, the following ways:

- 1) There shall be no forced labor<sup>13</sup> (including contractually bound labor without compensation) in the implementation of the project activity.
- 2) In the absence of legally recognized employment contracts, the project proponent shall ensure that all project actors earn at least a regionally prevailing industry wage and strive to ensure a living wage for all project actors, where a living wage is sufficient to meet basic needs.<sup>14</sup> The living wage for a region may be determined from the Global Living Wage Coalition database.<sup>15</sup>
- 3) The project proponent shall not withhold wages as a means of disciplinary action.

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<sup>13</sup> All work or service which is exacted from any person under the threat of any penalty and for which the person has not offered themselves voluntarily. Modified from International Labour Organization (1930). *C029 - Forced Labour Convention (No. 29)* by the substitution of "threat" for "menace" and "themselves" for "himself." Available at: [https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100\\_ILO\\_CODE:C029](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C029).

<sup>14</sup> A living wage is the remuneration received for a standard work-week by a worker in a particular place sufficient to afford a decent standard of living for the worker and their family. Elements of a decent standard of living include food, water, housing, education, healthcare, transportation, clothing and other essential needs including provision for unexpected events. Modified from Global Living Wage Coalition (n.d.). *What is a Living Wage?* by the substitution of "their" for "her or his." Available at: <https://www.globallivingwage.org/about/what-is-a-living-wage/>. A living wage must at least meet legal or industry minimum standards or collective bargaining agreements. From Social Accountability International (2014). *Social Accountability 8000 International Standard*. Available at: <https://2imd8u2t64kh14line52j2jh2-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/SA8000Standard2014.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> Global Living Wage Coalition (n.d.). *Giving Workers a Decent Standard of Living*. Available at: <https://www.globallivingwage.org/>.

- 4) The project proponent shall ensure that project actors are compensated for hours worked beyond the regionally recognized work-week.
- 5) The project proponent shall demonstrate that project actors involved in volunteer work<sup>16</sup> are willingly working without remuneration and are under no contractual obligation to engage in the project.

3.14.6 The project proponent shall strive to eliminate the involvement of all project actors under the age of 18.

3.14.7 The project proponent shall eliminate child labor<sup>17</sup> in the implementation of project activities by ensuring that project actors under the age of 18:

- 1) Are older than the nationally determined age of completion of compulsory schooling, or 15 years of age, whichever is greater;<sup>18</sup>
- 2) Do not work in conditions likely to jeopardize their health, safety or morals;
- 3) Receive protective equipment where relevant;
- 4) Are paid equivalent wages to other project actors;
- 5) Work outside of school hours when subjected to compulsory education laws; and
- 6) Do not have school, work and transportation time exceeding a combined total of 10 hours per day.<sup>19</sup>

*Note – Project proponents may include project actors under the age of 18 in awareness raising and educational campaigns as long as the requirements in Section 3.14.7 are met.*

3.14.8 The project proponent shall ensure that income-generating activities are maximized and economic growth is prioritized to the extent possible for the most vulnerable workers. Should loss of employment be greater than creation of employment as a result of the project, the situation shall be described and justified in the project description. Where a project proponent must eliminate existing income-generating activities (e.g., of informal waste workers), the project proponent shall ensure the creation of alternative activities that generate the same or increased income and require similar knowledge, skills and working hours.

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<sup>16</sup> Unpaid non-compulsory work, that is, time individuals give without pay to activities performed either through an organization or directly for those outside their own household. From International Labour Organization (2011). *Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work*. Available at: [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---stat/documents/publication/wcms\\_162119.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---stat/documents/publication/wcms_162119.pdf).

<sup>17</sup> Work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. It refers to work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous to children and/or interferes with their schooling by: depriving them of the opportunity to attend school; obliging them to leave school prematurely; or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work. From International Labour Organization (n.d.). *What is Child Labour*. Available at: <https://www.ilo.org/ipecc/facts/lang-en/index.htm>.

<sup>18</sup> International Labour Organization (1973). *C138 – Minimum Age Convention (No. 138)*. Available at: [https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100\\_ILO\\_CODE:C138](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C138).

<sup>19</sup> Social Accountability International (2016). *Guidance Document for Social Accountability 8000 (SA8000: 2014)*. Available at: <https://sa-intl.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/SA8000-2014-Guidance-Document.pdf>.

### Energy Efficiency and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- 3.14.9 The project proponent shall ensure that energy consumption is conservative for the activity type. Measures to manage consumption of energy include, among others, installation of energy meters, use of energy efficient air filters and lighting and use of on-site combined heat and power.
- 3.14.10 The project proponent shall demonstrate using primary data and/or secondary literature that all technologies used in the project activity have energy efficiencies similar to or greater than equivalent technologies used in the region.
- 3.14.11 The project proponent shall monitor greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and ensure that any increase in emissions as a result of project activities, where unavoidable, is minimal. Sources of GHG emissions in the project activities may include, among others, energy consumption, transportation and land-use change. Measures to manage GHG emissions (with varying relevance for different project activity types) may include, among others, maximum compression of plastic waste for increased transportation efficiency, replacement of fossil fuel with renewable energy sources and fuel switching.
- 3.14.12 The project proponent shall, where feasible, implement the least GHG emission-intensive activities and/or technologies.
- 3.14.13 The project proponent shall ensure that energy recovery included in the project activities is displacing a more GHG-intensive source(s) of energy.

### Condition of Natural Resources

- 3.14.14 The project proponent shall, where appropriate, use the following strategies, among others, to identify and avoid or mitigate direct impacts of project activities on natural resources:
- 1) Air quality: technology or proper operational controls for air pollution, no open burning of plastic waste, controlled incineration and properly managed landfills
  - 2) Water quantity and quality: water risk assessments, monitoring of water consumption, efficient water usage, water treatment and management of effluents to meet regional or national water quality standards before release into the environment
  - 3) Soil quality: adequate treatment of effluents before release into the environment and properly managed landfills
  - 4) Biodiversity and ecosystem health: monitoring of habitat conversion and proximity to protected areas

3.14.15 Negative impacts on threatened and endangered species, as defined by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, shall be avoided.<sup>20</sup>

### Additional Impact Certifications

3.14.16 Additional certification standards may be applied to demonstrate positive social and environmental impacts beyond those that are included in the Plastic Program. If the period of the additional certification fully encompasses the Plastic Program lifetime or monitoring period, the additional certification may be referred to as evidence for meeting relevant requirements of the Plastic Program in a project description or monitoring report (respectively).

If the period of a qualifying additional certification fully encompasses a Plastic Credit vintage period, the Plastic Credits may be labeled with the additional certification. See the Verra website for more detail on labeling, including the criteria for qualification of an additional certification for labeling.

## 3.15 Methodology Deviations

### Concept

Projects may deviate from the procedures set out in methodologies in certain cases, where alternative methods may be more efficient for project-specific circumstances, and where the deviation will achieve the same level of accuracy or is more conservative than what is set out in the methodology.

### Requirements

- 3.15.1 Deviations from the applied methodology are permitted where they represent a deviation from the criteria and procedures relating to monitoring or measurement set out in the methodology (i.e., deviations are permitted where they relate to data and parameters available at validation, data and parameters monitored, or the monitoring plan).
- 3.15.2 Methodology deviations shall not negatively impact the conservativeness of the quantification of collected and/or recycled plastic waste, except where they result in increased accuracy of such quantification. Deviations relating to any other part of the methodology shall not be permitted.
- 3.15.3 Methodology deviations shall be permitted at validation or verification and their consequences shall be reported in the validation or verification report, as applicable, and all subsequent verification reports. Methodology deviations are not considered to be precedent-setting.

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<sup>20</sup> For more information about identifying such species and monitoring potential project impacts, please refer to the following resources: 1) BirdLife International, Conservation International, IUCN and UNEP-WCMC (n.d.). *Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool*. Available at: <https://www.ibat-alliance.org>. 2) UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2020). *Protected Planet: The World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA)*. Available at: <https://www.protectedplanet.net/en/thematic-areas/wdpa>. 3) Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) (2018). *Global Site Map*. Available at: <https://zerextinction.org/site-identification/2018-global-aze-map>.



## 3.16 Project Description Deviations

### Concept

Projects may deviate from the validated project description in certain cases in order to accommodate changing circumstances post-validation. Such deviations shall be described and assessed by a validation/verification body during the next project verification.

### Requirements

3.16.1 Deviations from the project description are permitted at verification.

3.16.2 The procedures for documenting a project description deviation depend on whether the deviation impacts the applicability of the methodology, additionality or the appropriateness of the baseline scenario. The procedures are as follows:

- 1) Where the deviation impacts the applicability of the methodology, additionality or the appropriateness of the baseline scenario, the deviation shall be described and justified in a revised version of the project description. This shall include a description of when the changes occurred, the reasons for the changes and how the changes impact the applicability of the methodology, additionality and/or the appropriateness of the baseline scenario.

An example of such a deviation is a change in project capacity where a different baseline scenario would be more plausible, the applied methodology would no longer be applicable or there would be a significant impact on the investment analysis used by the project to demonstrate additionality. Other examples include changes to the project that might have similar impacts such as the addition of a new source of plastic waste or new types of project activities.

- 2) Where the deviation does not impact the applicability of the methodology, additionality or the appropriateness of the baseline scenario, and the project remains in compliance with the applied methodology, the deviation shall be described and justified in the monitoring report. This shall include a description of when the changes occurred and the reasons for the changes. The deviation shall also be described in all subsequent monitoring reports.

Examples of such deviations include changes in the procedures for measurement and monitoring, or project design changes that do not have an impact on the applicability of the methodology, additionality or the appropriateness of the baseline scenario.

Note that project proponents may apply project description deviations for the purpose of switching to the latest version of the methodology, or switching to a different methodology. For example, a project proponent may want to switch to the latest version of a methodology where such version includes additional types of project activities.

- 3.16.3 The deviation shall be assessed by a validation/verification body and the process, findings and conclusions shall be reported in the verification report. The assessment shall determine whether the deviation is appropriately described and justified, and whether the project remains in compliance with Plastic Program rules. The deviation shall also be reported on in all subsequent verification reports. Project description deviations are not considered to be precedent-setting.
- 3.16.4 The validation/verification body assessing the project description deviation shall be accredited for the validation, recognizing that assessment of project description deviations is a validation activity, as further set out in the *Plastic Program Guide*.

## 3.17 Records and Information

### Concept

The project proponent shall make relevant information available to the validation/verification body during each validation and verification, and retain documents and records related to the project for future reference.

### Requirements

#### Records Relating to the Project

- 3.17.1 The project proponent shall ensure that all documents and records are kept in a secure and retrievable manner for at least two years after the end of the project crediting period.

#### Information for the Validation/Verification Body

- 3.17.2 For validation, the project proponent shall make available to the validation/verification body the project description, evidence of project ownership and any requested supporting documentation needed to support statements and data in the project description.
- 3.17.3 For verification, the project proponent shall make available to the validation/verification body the project description, validation report, monitoring report applicable to the monitoring period and any requested supporting documentation needed to support statements and data in the monitoring report.

# 4 VALIDATION AND VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

This section sets out the rules and requirements for validation and verification of projects participating in the Plastic Program as well as accreditation requirements for third-party validation/verification bodies. Validation/verification bodies must assess projects' compliance with Plastic Program rules and requirements and the applied methodology or methodologies in accordance with the sections below. Validation/verification bodies must be approved by Verra to participate as validation/verification bodies under the Plastic Program, and meet the eligibility criteria set out in the *Plastic Program Guide*.

## 4.1 Introduction and General Requirements

### Concept

Validation is the independent assessment of a project by a validation/verification body through the provision of objective evidence and of the reasonableness of the project design and its conformance with the *Plastic Standard*. Verification is the periodic ex-post independent assessment by a validation/verification body, conducted in accordance with Plastic Program rules, of the plastic waste collected and/or recycled by the project during the monitoring period.

### Requirements

#### General

- 4.1.1 Validation and verification are risk-based processes and shall be carried out in conformance with *ISO 14065:2013*.<sup>21</sup> Additional requirements with respect to validation and verification are set out in this section and shall be adhered to.
- 4.1.2 The validation/verification body shall select samples of data and information to be validated or verified, and the following shall apply:
  - 1) The level of assurance shall be reasonable, with respect to material errors, omissions and misrepresentations, for both validation and the first verification, and for every third year after the first verification. The level of assurance may be limited for all other years.

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<sup>21</sup> *ISO 14065:2013* will be valid until Verra communicates a required transition to *ISO 14065:2020*. The scope of *ISO 14065:2020* is aligned with the requirements of *ISO/IEC 17029* and will be expanded to include all areas of environmental information. Verra plans to develop accreditation requirement(s) specifically for validation and verification of plastic waste collection and recycling, and for the accreditation requirements of validation/verification bodies.

- 2) The criteria for validation and verification shall be the *Plastic Program Version 1*. The validation or verification shall ensure conformance of the project with Plastic Program rules.
  - 3) The objectives of validation or verification shall be in conformance with Plastic Program rules and the methodology applied to the project.
  - 4) The threshold for materiality with respect to the aggregate of errors, omissions and misrepresentations relative to the total reported collected and/or recycled plastic waste shall be five percent where a reasonable level of assurance is required. The threshold for materiality shall be dependent on the expert judgment of the validation/verification body where the level of assurance is limited.
- 4.1.3 The project shall be validated and plastic waste collected and/or recycled verified by a validation/verification body that meets the eligibility requirements set out in the *Plastic Program Guide*.
- 4.1.4 Validation and verification of the project may be undertaken by the same validation/verification body, noting the rules on rotation of validation/verification bodies set out in Section 4.1.21. Validation may occur before the first verification or at the same time as the first verification.
- 4.1.5 The project shall be listed on the Verra Registry before the validation/verification body begins the validation process (i.e., before the opening meeting between the validation/verification body and the project proponent; however, this does not include any pre-engagement activities required to create proposals to conduct validation/verification services). The validation/verification body is responsible for checking that the project is listed on the Verra Registry and shall not conduct the opening meeting or otherwise begin validation until such time as the project is listed.
- 4.1.6 The public comment period for the verification documents shall be open on the Verra Registry before the validation/verification body begins the verification process (i.e., before the opening meeting between the validation/verification body and the project proponent; however, this does not include any pre-engagement activities required to create proposals to conduct verification services). The validation/verification body is responsible for checking that the public comment period is open on the Verra Registry and shall not conduct the opening meeting or otherwise begin verification until the project's status is updated to *under verification*.
- 4.1.7 Validation/verification bodies are expected to follow the guidance provided in the *Plastic Standard Validation and Verification Manual (to be developed)* when validating or verifying projects and conducting methodology assessments under the Plastic Program.

#### Validation and Verification Process

- 4.1.8 Where the project does not fully comply with the methodology, the validation/verification body shall determine whether this represents a methodology deviation or a methodology revision (in accordance with the specifications for each), and the case shall be handled accordingly.

- 4.1.9 Where the project does not meet the criteria for validation or verification, the validation/verification body shall produce a negative validation or verification conclusion and provide the validation or verification report and project description, or monitoring report, to Verra. The project shall be ineligible for registration until such time as corrective action is taken and the (same) validation/verification body has provided a positive validation or verification.
- 4.1.10 Validation/verification bodies may conduct batch verifications, for which a validation/verification body shall be selected by Verra to conduct all verifications of eligible projects in a particular region in a given year.

### Competence

- 4.1.11 The validation/verification body and validation and verification team shall meet the competence requirements set out in *ISO 14065:2013*.<sup>22</sup>
- 4.1.12 The validation/verification body shall demonstrate competence in environmental and social auditing, with preferred experience in waste management systems, as set out in the *Plastic Program Guide*.
- 4.1.13 Verra shall provide a roster of qualified local experts for approved validation/verification bodies to utilize. The roster is not exhaustive and serves as a resource for approved validation/verification bodies seeking to recruit local experts, as needed. Validation/verification bodies may recruit local experts not included on the roster.

### Validation and Verification Reporting

- 4.1.14 The validation report describes the validation process, any findings raised during validation and their resolutions, and the conclusions reached by the validation/verification body. The validation/verification body shall use the *Plastic Program Validation Report Template* or an approved combined validation report template available on the Verra website, and adhere to all instructional text within the template. The validation report shall be accompanied by a validation representation, which shall be prepared using the *Plastic Program Validation Deed of Representation Template*.
- 4.1.15 The verification report describes the verification process, any findings raised during verification and their resolutions, and the conclusions reached by the validation/verification body. The validation/verification body shall use the *Plastic Program Verification Report Template* or an approved combined verification report template available on the Verra website, and adhere to all instructional text within the template. The verification report shall be accompanied by a verification representation, which shall be prepared using the *Plastic Program Verification Deed of Representation Template*.

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<sup>22</sup> *ISO 14065:2013* will be valid until Verra communicates a required transition to *ISO 14065:2020*. The scope of *ISO 14065:2020* is aligned with the requirements of *ISO/IEC 17029* and is expanded to include all areas of environmental information. Verra plans to develop accreditation requirement(s) specifically for validation and verification of plastic waste collection and recycling, and for the accreditation requirements of validation/verification bodies.

4.1.16 Where a monitoring report and associated verification report divide a verification period into vintages, separate Plastic Credit issuance records in accordance with vintage periods may be issued, as set out in the *Plastic Program Guide*.

#### Validation and Verification Statement

4.1.17 The validation report and the verification report shall contain a validation statement and a verification statement, respectively.

4.1.18 Validation and verification statements shall:

- 1) Describe the level of assurance of the validation or verification;
- 2) Describe the objectives, scope and criteria of the validation or verification;
- 3) Describe whether the data and information supporting the assertion of plastic waste collected and/or recycled are hypothetical, projected and/or historical in nature; and
- 4) Include the validation/verification body's conclusion on the assertion of plastic waste collected and/or recycled, including any qualifications or limitations.

4.1.19 The verification statement shall state the amount of plastic waste collected and/or recycled during the monitoring period that has been verified.

#### Records of Validation and Verification

4.1.20 The validation/verification body shall keep all documents and records in a secure and retrievable manner for at least two years after the end of the project crediting period, even where they do not conduct verification for the whole project crediting period.

#### Rotation of Validation/Verification Bodies

4.1.21 Rotation of validation/verification bodies is required with respect to validation and verification, as follows:

- 1) Validation (including project crediting period renewal validation) and the verification of the first three consecutive years of a project (in a given 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, where validation and verification are undertaken at the same time, and the joint validation and verification covers a monitoring period of three years, the subsequent verification shall be undertaken by a different validation/verification body. Where validation is undertaken first (i.e., separately), the first verification of up to three consecutive years may be undertaken by the same validation/verification body, but the subsequent verification shall be undertaken by a different validation/verification body.

- 2) A validation/verification body may not verify more than three consecutive years of a project's collected and/or recycled plastic waste. The validation/verification body may undertake further verification for the project only when at least three years of the project's collected and/or recycled plastic waste have been verified by a different validation/verification body. Additionally, where a validation/verification body verifies the final three consecutive years of a project crediting period, the project crediting period renewal validation shall be undertaken by a different validation/verification body.

#### Validation and Verification Requirements for Grouped Projects

- 4.1.22 Validation and verification of grouped projects shall assess conformance of the project with the requirements for grouped projects set out in the Plastic Program rules.
- 4.1.23 New project activity instances shall be validated, based on the information reported in the monitoring report, against the applicable set of eligibility criteria. The validation/verification body shall specify which instances meet the eligibility criteria for inclusion in the project. Such validation may be reported in the verification report or a separate validation report.
- 4.1.24 Where, due to the number of project activity instances, it is unreasonable to undertake an individual assessment of each initial or new instance, the validation/verification body shall document and explain the sampling methods employed for the validation of such instances. Such sampling methods shall be statistically sound. The number of instances included in the project that are eligible for monitoring and generation of Plastic Credits shall be proportional to the percentage of sampled instances found to be in compliance by the validation/verification body.
- 4.1.25 The verification report for grouped projects shall document and explain the sampling methods employed by the validation/verification body for the verification of plastic waste collected and/or recycled by the project. Such methods shall be statistically sound. Any subsequent changes to the sampling method(s) required as a result of the verification findings shall be documented.

# APPENDIX 1: DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version	Date	Comment
v1.0	10 Feb 2021	Initial version released under Plastic Program Version 1.





## Standards for a Sustainable Future



**Verified Carbon  
Standard**



**Climate, Community  
& Biodiversity Standards**



**Sustainable Development  
Verified Impact Standard**



**Plastic Waste  
Reduction Standard**