



Standards for a  
Sustainable Future

# Sustainable Development Advisory Group

## Terms of Reference

Verra is establishing a Sustainable Development Advisory Group (SDAG) to serve as a strategic and technical resource to Verra to ensure that its frameworks promote and advance sustainable development through results-based market mechanisms.

### **Background**

Verra's mission is to support climate action and sustainable development with standards and programs that credibly, transparently, and robustly assess environmental and social impacts and enable funding for sustaining and scaling up these benefits. As such, all Verra standards programs have sustainable development components, and Verra offers projects different ways to report on their sustainable development impacts.

Projects under the Sustainable Development Verified Impact Standard (SD VISta), launched in 2019, can make verified claims about their sustainable development impacts against the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Projects under the Verified Carbon Standard, Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards, or the Plastic Waste Reduction Standard, also produce verifiable sustainable development benefits, such as reducing emissions or responsible consumption and production. Projects under these unit-generating programs have two options to report on these benefits:

1. Use SD VISta to make verified claims about the sustainable development benefits they generate. SD VISta also allows for the generation of standardized, transactable units that represent these contributions.
2. Use the Sustainable Development Contributions Report (Contributions Report), launched in 2020, to make self-reported claims about their contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Contributions Report is a standardized reporting tool that allows projects to make claims about the sustainable development contributions that they have generated. The report is not

verified by an independent third-party auditor and therefore cannot be used to label any associated units. Verra does not support any specific claims made in the report.

## **Objectives and Role**

The objectives of the SDAG are to

- Provide strategic guidance on the evolution and positioning of Verra's sustainable development programs;
- Offer technical support on the implementation and monitoring of activities that contribute to the SDGs;
- Give input on potential updates to the content of Verra's sustainable development programs;
- Recommend ways for Verra's programs to further advance sustainable development;
- Share insight into the sustainable development certification needs of current and potential Verra stakeholders; and,
- Advise on existing and prospective market opportunities of projects with sustainable development impacts.

The SDAG will be a consultative body whose input and recommendations will be used to guide Verra's thinking on various programmatic issues.

## **Membership Composition and Commitment**

To support the continued evolution of the sustainable development endeavors of Verra, the SDAG will reflect a balance between various program stakeholders, including project proponents, SD VISTA asset/VCU sellers and buyers, civil society, the finance sector, intergovernmental organizations, academics, and auditors.

Members are expected to represent their organizational perspectives, but, where necessary and appropriate, members may also present their individual views. Verra expects the group to be comprised of approximately 15 individuals. Two of the members of the SDAG will be from Verra's Board of Directors.

Participants in the SDAG should meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Possess deep and/or broad knowledge of sustainable development and working experience with the SDGs. Strong technical expertise in implementation, monitoring, evaluation, reporting of impactful sustainable development activities is desirable.

- Experience working with programs or initiatives that have the goal of promoting or implementing sustainable development, and/or of achieving the SDGs.
- Strong understanding of the potential demand sources for sustainable development contributions or claims. Preference for participants that have experience with or understanding of donation-funded activities, as well as the market dynamics for sustainable development outcomes embedded in other traded units (i.e., labeled Verified Carbon Units (VCUs)), and/or corporate sustainability measurement and reporting.
- Be a user or other stakeholder of the SD VISta Program.

SDAG members are expected to participate in the SDAG via email and three to six (60-90 minute) conference calls each year. Members may be required to spend up to two hours preparing for conference calls, including reviewing proposed rule changes. No in-person meetings are expected, though side meetings at relevant conferences may be organized.

Members of the SDAG shall be appointed to serve a single three-year term, which may be extended in special circumstances, as determined by Verra. Each person shall be a member of the SDAG until the meeting closest to the date on which their term expires and until his/her successor has been duly appointed. Former SDAG members may be reappointed if three years have passed since the expiry of their term. The appointment of SDAG members shall be at Verra's sole discretion.

### **Operation of the Advisory Group**

The SDAG will be convened by Verra. Verra staff will be responsible for organizing and facilitating SDAG meetings, preparing and disseminating agendas and minutes, producing plans for ongoing program development, developing draft updates to rules and accompanying documents, organizing input and review by the SDAG, facilitating communication and consultation with other stakeholders, and supporting the use of Verra's sustainable development programs. Verra may create smaller ad hoc groups for different issues related to the work of the SDAG. Members of these ad hoc groups may come from the SDAG but also include non-SDAG stakeholders depending on the groups' needs, participant interest, availability, and expertise.

Members of the SDAG will adhere to a confidentiality and conflict of interest policy.

Participation in the SDAG is on a voluntary (unpaid) basis. Limited stipends may be available where needed.

The working language of the SDAG will be English, although we are happy to accommodate written communication between individual SDAG members and Verra in Spanish, Portuguese, and French.

**Termination**

SDAG members or Verra may give notice of termination of member participation in the SDAG at any time. Verra reserves the right to terminate the SDAG at any time.

**Application for Membership**

Applicants are invited to apply for membership in the Sustainable Development Advisory Group until 30 April 2021. An [application form is available here](#). Please send applications and a CV/resume to Senior Program Officer Christopher Chapman at [cchapman@verra.org](mailto:cchapman@verra.org).