



W+ LABELED VCS PILOT PROJECTS

TERMS OF REFERENCE

August 2024

These Terms of Reference define the objective, scope, responsibilities, and criteria related to pilot project application and selection for the W+ Standard certification of Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) projects.

1. Context

WOCAN's mission through the W+ Standard aims to support and scale women's empowerment outcomes within projects, including those of Verra. Verra's mission is to support climate action and sustainable development with standards programs that credibly, transparently, and robustly assess environmental and social impacts and enable funding for sustaining and scaling up these benefits.

WOCAN and Verra have collaborated to enable project proponents to utilize both the W+ Standard and the VCS Program to demonstrate outcomes for both women's empowerment and carbon sequestration through the application of W+ Standard label to Verified Carbon Units (VCUs). This generates high quality, high integrity carbon credits with verified social impacts.

Where project proponents follow the respective rules and requirements of both programs, companies and investors will be able to buy W+ labelled VCUs to support high-quality projects and local communities while derisking their value chains and contributing to a nature-positive world.

To ensure the appropriateness and usability of the W+ Standard within various ecosystems, geographies, and contexts of VCS projects, WOCAN is seeking pilot projects that are interested to obtain joint certification with the VCS Program and the W+ Standard. Selected projects will receive guidance from the W+ Standard on how to properly apply the W+ Standard to existing or aspiring VCS Program projects.

Selected projects will be featured on a webinar to be held later in 2024.

2. Piloting Objective

The piloting process aims to test the clarity, reasonableness, local appropriateness, scalability, and ease of use of the process in real-life projects.

Information on the W+ optional pilot and how to sign up for it can be found here: To Be added

For any questions please contact coordinator@wplus.org.

3. Benefits for Pilot Projects

By participating in the pilot process, projects will receive the following benefits:

- Having the opportunity to demonstrate leadership amidst growing interest of buyers and project developers to rigorously quantify gender co-benefits to further contribute to integrity improvements within the voluntary carbon market.
- Joining a pipeline of projects ready to start the registration process under the VCS Program and the W+ Standard.
- Having the opportunity for project to be showcased in a webinar and announcements on the social media channels of the W+ Standard and Verra.

4. Scope and Responsibilities

Pilot project proponents will be responsible for developing a draft project description (PD) document for the VCS Program and Project Idea Note (PIN) for the W+ Standard, and submitting these with supporting documents for review by the W+ Standard. The draft PD for Verra should include detailed project design and implementation information and define how the project conforms to the W+ Standard.

The W+ Standard will conduct a desk review of the information and provide pilot projects with technical guidance and clarifications regarding the W+ Standard requirements.

5. Pilot Project Characteristics

This pilot program is open to project proponents interested in providing insights while testing the implementation of the W+ Standard, procedures, and ease of registering under both the VCS Program and W+ Standard for projects that span a diverse range of ecosystems, activities, and geographies.

Each project is expected to have the necessary approvals from appropriate authorities to claim ownership of its benefits, and a certain maturity level (e.g., capacity to collect data, knowledge of the project area's legal and policy characteristics or threats, and, if possible, progress in project implementation).

6. Pilot Project Selection

The W+ Standard plans to select 2-3 projects to pilot the W+ labeling of VCUs with existing or aspiring VCS Program projects, distributed across the following criteria:

- Projects should demonstrate their intentionality for women's empowerment through descriptions of plans, activities and other commitments
- Project activities should demonstrate a linkage between emissions reduction and women's empowerment
- Activities can use any VCS methodology; the use of the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Standards (CCBS) Program is a plus
- Projects should indicate which of the six W+ Standard domains they intend to use

In addition to the above characteristics, the W+ Standard will also consider additional attributes when selecting projects:

- Degree of engagement with women's groups or organizations
- Magnitude of potential benefits or outcomes for women's empowerment
- Scalability and replicability
- Technical capability of the proponent
- Availability of funding
- Buyer or investor interest
- Project type and geography

7. [Piloting Activities and Estimated Timeline](#)

Over six months between August 2024 and December 2024, project proponents must be able to commit to the following without remuneration:

1. Submit to the W+ Standard an initial draft Project Idea Note (PIN) for the W+ Standard and the PD for the VCS Program by September 2024 (or indicate an existing VCS PD) for a W+ Standard desk review
2. Submit a second draft PIN within a month after receiving comments from the W+ Standard that addresses the comments received from the W+ Standard

8. Operation

The W+ Standard staff will organize calls, facilitate communication, and consult with Verra staff and other stakeholders as needed during the piloting.

Verra will help answer questions from selected projects, compiled by the W+ Standard and submitted to Verra by email, on the following (subject to volume of questions and Verra capacity):

- how to interpret new VCS program updates, effective dates, and template requirements
- Where to find the best information on how to list a VCS project on the pipeline as under development or under validation, and how to request registration under the VCS Program

The W+ Standard and Verra will promote a webinar hosted by the W+ Standard on their respective social media channels showcasing the chosen pilot projects, so long as the chosen projects are in good standing with Verra.

9. Application

Interested project developers are invited to apply for piloting by August 30, 2024, via this [application form](#). If you have questions about the W+ Standard methodology, please contact the W+ Coordinator at coordinator@wplus.org.

The W+ Standard aims to select pilot projects by September 2024. The appointment of pilot projects will be at WOCAN's discretion via direct invitation from the list of applicants.