

Verra - Northmore Gordon

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Verra

Verra is a not-for-profit organisation that administers the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) Program, under which Verified Carbon Units (VCUs) are created. Operating since 2006, Verra manages the largest voluntary greenhouse gas program in the world. VCUs represent verified reductions or removals of greenhouse gas emissions and are created through projects that meet Verra's rigorous standards and verification requirements. The organisation plays a significant role in the global voluntary carbon market by ensuring project integrity and unit authenticity.

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What is Verra?

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What are Verified Carbon Units (VCUs)?

VCUs (Verified Carbon Units) are tradeable carbon credits issued under Verra's Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) Program. Each VCU represents one tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent that has been verified as reduced or removed from the atmosphere through an eligible project. VCUs belong to their own programme with specific standards, methodologies and verification requirements. Like other carbon instruments such as ACCUs, VEECs and ESCs, VCUs should not be compared as though they were identical units—each operates under distinct eligibility criteria and regulatory frameworks.

How do VCU projects differ from government-administered carbon schemes like ACCUs?

VCUs operate within Verra's voluntary market framework, whereas ACCUs are issued under Australia's government-administered Australian Carbon Credit Unit Scheme. VCUs are created through projects meeting Verra's Verified Carbon Standard methodologies and verification processes, while ACCUs require registration under approved methods with the Clean Energy Regulator. Both represent quantified emissions reductions or removals, but they operate under different regulatory bodies,

eligibility rules, and administrative requirements. Each should be assessed on its own terms within its applicable framework and market.

What types of projects can generate VCUs under Verra's program?

Verra's VCS Program applies to a broad range of emissions reduction and removal projects across sectors including renewable energy, energy efficiency, methane capture, forestry and land use, and industrial processes. Project eligibility depends on the specific methodology approved by Verra, the location, technology, implementation date and compliance with additionality and baseline requirements. As with all carbon-credit schemes, a technically sound project does not automatically qualify—the activity must meet Verra's particular standards, evidence requirements and verification procedures. We can assist in assessing whether a proposed project aligns with available Verra methodologies and determining appropriate evidence requirements.

What is the difference between VCUs and other carbon instruments in the global market?

Carbon instruments belong to distinct programmes with their own eligibility, creation and use rules. VCUs operate under Verra's voluntary standard; ACCUs under Australia's government scheme; ESCs under NSW's Energy Savings Scheme; and REGOs under the Renewable Electricity Guarantee of Origin scheme. Each has different methodologies, verification processes, applicable frameworks and market characteristics. Do not compare their quantities as though they represent identical emissions reductions or financial value. Selecting the appropriate instrument requires understanding your specific project, location, timeline and intended claim—a decision that should be informed by specialist assessment rather than headline price comparisons.

What role does verification play in VCU creation under Verra?

Verification is central to Verra's credibility and the integrity of VCUs. Projects must be independently verified by qualified third-party verifiers who assess whether the project has achieved the claimed emissions reductions or removals according to Verra's methodologies and standards. Baseline establishment, monitoring, reporting and independent audit are essential components. This verification framework distinguishes VCUs from unverified claims and supports their acceptance in global carbon markets. The cost and rigour of verification should be considered as part of a project's overall economics and evidence strategy.

Can an organisation use VCUs to support renewable electricity or sustainability claims?

VCUs represent verified emissions reductions or removals and serve specific accounting purposes within carbon-management and voluntary offset strategies. However, VCUs do not establish renewable electricity claims—those require renewable energy certificates such as REGOs, LGCs or STCs, each with their own frameworks and eligibility rules. Similarly, purchasing VCUs should not be assumed to eliminate Scope 3 emissions or support all possible environmental claims without careful boundary definition and framework compliance. Before selecting VCUs or combining them with other instruments, establish your inventory boundary, applicable reporting framework and intended public claim. We can assist in clarifying the distinction between different instruments and their appropriate uses within your sustainability strategy.

How should an organisation assess whether VCUs are appropriate for their carbon strategy?

Start by identifying your specific business need: whether you require physical emissions reductions on-site, purchased offsets to address unavoidable emissions, renewable electricity attributes, or compliance with a particular reporting framework. Determine your inventory boundary, applicable standards (such as GHG Protocol) and reporting obligations. VCUs are one instrument for supporting carbon-offset strategies in a voluntary context; they are not a substitute for operational emissions reductions or the correct choice for every carbon-management situation. Before relying on VCU purchases in your climate strategy or public claims, establish their role clearly, the pricing assumptions

and the evidence of verified unit authenticity. We can support carbon advisory work including opportunity assessment and instrument selection to help align your choices with your organisational strategy and reporting requirements.