

GCOM VVB Criteria

CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITING
VALIDATION/VERIFICATION BODIES (VVB)

Criteria and specifications for a validation/verification body to be accredited in Saudi Arabia's voluntary Greenhouse Gas Crediting & Offsetting Mechanism (GCOM)

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1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose

1.1.1. The Validation and Verification Body (VVB) Accreditation Criteria document outlines the essential criteria that must be met by entities seeking to become eligible under the Greenhouse Gas Crediting and Offsetting Mechanism (GCOM). This document serves as a comprehensive guide for VVBs, detailing the necessary qualifications and ongoing compliance expectations for maintaining eligibility for accreditation. By adhering to these criteria and requirements, VVBs safeguard the integrity and credibility of GCOM's carbon crediting process, thereby contributing to KSA's efforts in mitigating climate change. This document, coupled with the other relevant documents under GCOM, is designed to uphold the highest standards of environmental integrity, transparency, and accountability in the validation and verification of carbon reduction and/or removal projects. This document will be updated regularly to reflect any developments.

1.2. Background

1.1.2. The Project Proponent shall choose a DNA-accredited VVB to validate the PDD, and/or verify the monitoring report, and other relevant documents. The selected VVB must attest that no conflict of interest exists between it and any of the project or activity stakeholders. Any fees associated with the validation function shall be agreed upon by the Project Proponent and the selected VVB, independent of the GCOM. The VVB that performs validation for a project cannot also perform verification for the same project. Upon completion of the validation function, the VVB is expected to issue a validation report that is consistent with the relevant GCOM forms.

1.1.3. Selected Committees comprised of DNA Members and other relevant stakeholders (based on the sector) shall accredit a list of independent third-party national/ regional/ international VVBs to conduct the validation and/or verification function of the projects or activities undertaken by Project Proponents. VVBs shall be accredited for project validation and verification in the sector of the applicable methodology according to the competency requirements and standards set out by the DNA in this document and any other relevant documents.

2. Entry into Force

2.1. *Entry Into Force*

2.1.1. This version of the procedure is effective as of [x].

3. Validation and Verification

3.1. *Validation*

- 3.1.1. **Purpose of Validation:** The primary objective of validation is to ensure an independent, thorough assessment of proposed project activities submitted for registration as GCOM projects. This assessment is critical to confirm that the project activities meet all applicable GCOM guidelines and requirements.
- 3.1.2. **Validation Report:** Upon completion of the validation process, the VVB must prepare a comprehensive validation report. This report must be submitted by the project proponent to the DNA through the GCOM portal, and it should only be submitted in the case of a positive validation opinion if the project is fully compliant with the relevant GCOM guidelines and requirements.
- 3.1.3. **Validation Approach:** VVBs are responsible for assessing whether the design of the proposed project meets all GCOM requirements, utilizing objective

evidence throughout the process. VVBs must employ a thorough evaluation approach, ensuring that all evidence is complete, accurate, and conservative. It is crucial that no relevant evidence is omitted, especially if such omissions could alter the validation outcome.

3.1.4. **Validation Techniques and Methods:** VVBs must apply standard auditing techniques, including document review, interviews, and consulting with relevant stakeholders.

3.2. *Verification*

3.2.1. **Purpose and Scope of Verification:** The aim of the verification process is to independently confirm that the emission reductions reported by a GCOM project are real, verified, and additional in line with the stringent requirements in the Project Design Document (PDD) following GCOM's guidelines and requirement. Verification acts as a quality assurance mechanism, ensuring that the project's activities result in the anticipated greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions. The VVB is tasked with a thorough evaluation of the project's performance, validating that the emission reductions are not only real but also accurately quantified.

3.2.2. **Reporting and Certification:** Following the verification process, the VVB must compile a comprehensive verification report. This report serves as a formal document that details the findings of the verification and is submitted by the project proponent to DNA through GCOM's portal. The report is crucial for the issuance of Certified Emission Reductions (CERs), providing the necessary validation that the project has achieved its emission reduction targets in compliance with GCOM guidelines.

3.2.3. **Verification Approach:** The verification process under the GCOM requires that VVBs apply consistent methodologies and criteria across all projects. This uniformity ensures that similar projects are assessed in a comparable manner, maintaining fairness and objectivity throughout the verification process. The

VVB must adhere to the most recent GCOM guidelines and requirements, applying them consistently to all projects under review.

3.2.4. **Verification techniques and methods:** VVBs must apply standard auditing techniques, including document review, and consulting with relevant stakeholders.

4. Eligibility Criteria

4.1.1. To be eligible for accreditation under the Greenhouse Gas Crediting and Offsetting Mechanism (GCOM), a Validation and Verification Body (VVB) must hold valid accreditation from at least one of the standards and programs recognized by the Saudi Designated National Authority (DNA). Recognized accreditation programs include, but are not limited to:

- **ISO 14065:** Greenhouse Gas activities accreditation, particularly those offered under internationally recognized accreditation bodies such as ANSI, UKAS, or equivalent.
- **UNFCCC-CDM Accreditation:** Entities must hold either Accredited Independent Entity (AIE) or Designated Operational Entity (DOE) status under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) of the Kyoto Protocol.
- **Paris Agreement Crediting Mechanism “PACM - Article 6.4” Accreditation:** Entities must have formally received recognition by the PACM’s Supervisory Body confirming they have complied with all requirements in accordance with the PACM’s rules and regulations once it begins accrediting Designated Operational Entities (DOEs).

4.1.2. Additional accreditations may be recognized over time, contingent upon a thorough review and approval by the DNA.

- 4.1.3. VVBs must notify the DNA of any discrepancies or conflicts between the requirements set by any recognized accreditation and those outlined in this document. The DNA will provide guidance on resolving such discrepancies.

5. Principles for Validation and Verification

5.1. Consistency

- 5.1.1. VVBs shall implement GCOM's standards consistently throughout the same project and across multiple projects, and within the VVB's operations.
- 5.1.2. VVBs shall ensure that consistency is maintained in the projects which they are conducting validation and verification activities for.

5.2. Transparency, Impartiality and Confidentiality

- 5.2.1. **Transparency:** VVBs must document all assumptions made during validation and verification activities. The relevant background information must be cited accurately. Any modifications to the documentation should be clearly noted and described.
- 5.2.2. VVBs must transparently provide all required documentation and supporting information to the results of the validation and verification process.
- 5.2.3. **Impartiality:** VVBs must operate without biases or conflicts of interest, both real and perceived. The operations must be conducted with credibility, independence, fairness, and transparency. For VVB affiliated with larger organizations, it is essential to clearly outline relationships with other units to avoid conflict of interest. All findings and conclusions should be based on objective evidence and follow the established GCOM procedures set by DNA. Reports must accurately and truthfully represent the outcomes of the validation and verification process.

5.2.4. **Confidentiality:** VVBs must ensure the protection of all information gathered or generated during the validation and verification process, in line with GCOM standards established by DNA.

6. Legal, Financial and Operational Matters

6.1. Legal Standards and Requirements

6.1.1. VVBs must be legally registered entities capable of entering into contracts and subject to the laws of their respective jurisdictions. They must possess the legal capacity to operate independently within Saudi Arabia and to undertake responsibilities associated with GHG validation and verification under GCOM.

6.1.2. VVBs must comply with all relevant laws and regulations in their respective countries and in Saudi Arabia. This includes laws related to environmental protection, corporate governance, and labor standards.

6.2. Financial Capabilities

6.2.1. The VVB must demonstrate financial competence to be able to fulfill its validation and verification functions and conduct proper assessments to identify and mitigate financial risks.

6.3. Operational Capabilities

6.3.1. VVBs should demonstrate operational capacity to handle multiple, potentially complex validation and verification tasks simultaneously.

6.4. Management Structure (Entity Management)

6.4.1. The entity must have a robust structure to maintain and oversee the operations and their quality, as well as maintain clear documentation for its management features.

6.5. *Quality Management Measures*

6.5.1. The VVB's top management shall ensure it has robust quality measures and systems in place for consistent compliance with GCOM's requirements, as well as measures to address non-compliance.

6.6. *Information Management*

6.6.1. The VVB shall maintain some information relevant to its policies and the projects it has validated and/or verified publicly available on its website, as well as adhere to the confidentiality standards as detailed in "GCOM's accreditation standard" document.

7. Human Resources and Competence

- 7.1.1. A VVB shall establish, document, implement, and maintain a procedure for determining whether human resources have the competence and requirements prescribed in GCOM's VVB Accreditation Standards document to perform its validation and/or verification functions.
- 7.1.2. A VVB may outsource some of its validation and/or verification functions and shall be responsible for the work undertaken by those personnel, and the consistent assessments of the sufficiency of the personnel's competence throughout GCOM's accreditation period.

8. Validation and Verification Processes

- 8.1.1. A VVB shall establish, document, implement, and maintain a procedure for determining whether human resources have the competence and requirements prescribed in GCOM's VVB Accreditation Standards document to perform its validation and/or verification functions.
- 8.1.2. A VVB may outsource some of its validation and/or verification functions and shall be responsible for the work undertaken by those personnel, and the

consistent assessments of the sufficiency of the personnel's competence throughout GCOM's accreditation period.

- 8.1.3. The VVB shall establish, document, and implement measures and procedures to undertake corrective and preventative actions.

9. Complaint, Dispute and Appeal Processes

- 9.1.1. The VVB shall establish, implement, and maintain processes to enable stakeholders to file complaints, disputes, and appeal against a project, project developer, auditors, and other involved parties.
- 9.1.2. The processes shall be disclosed to DNA and shall become accessible upon request, as well as be aligned with international best practices.

10. Glossary, Definitions, and References

Abbreviation	Term
DNA	Designated National Authority
GCOM	Greenhouse Gas Crediting & Offsetting Mechanism
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
PACM	Paris Agreement Crediting Mechanism – Article 6.4
VVB	Validation Verification Body
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
GCOM	Greenhouse Gas Crediting & Offsetting Mechanism
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
PDD	Project Design Document