

Request for Proposals: Pathways for Strengthening Validation and Verification Body (VVB) Capacity in Africa

1. Background

About VCMI:

The [Voluntary Carbon Markets Integrity Initiative](#) (VCMI) is an international non-profit empowering companies, governments and non-state actors to realize the full potential of high-integrity carbon markets. VCMI provides guidance on how different actors can make voluntary use of high-quality carbon credits to make a meaningful impact on climate action. The Claims Code of Practice enables companies to make ‘Carbon Integrity’ Claims, recognizing their achievements in going above and beyond science-aligned emissions cuts to accelerate global net zero. The Access Strategies Program supports host-country governments to establish policies and processes necessary to build and strengthen a cohesive governance of voluntary carbon markets (VCMs) that underpin their country’s participation in high-integrity carbon markets.

Through the VCMI Access Strategies program, VCMI offers support to policymakers in low- and middle-income countries to access high-integrity VCMs in complement to Article 6 and compliance markets, and channel finance into priority sectors. The program takes a country-or region specific perspective, considering prior experiences, national circumstances and existing carbon finance mechanisms and infrastructure. This includes providing information and supporting stakeholder engagement to inform decision-making on how to direct investment from high-integrity carbon markets into mitigation action and align VCMs with other financial instruments to deliver national climate and economic priorities.

Further information on Access Strategies projects and knowledge products is available [here](#).

About GIZ:

The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH is a German federal company with over 50 years of experience in technical cooperation across a broad range of areas, including economic development and employment promotion, energy, environment and climate change, and peace and security. GIZ works in partnership with various state and non-state actors, facilitating effective collaboration between development policy and other key areas

The German Federal Government regards the global carbon market as a critical instrument for advancing international climate change mitigation efforts. Through its Global Carbon Market (GCM) project, GIZ supports public sector decision-makers and the Private sector in designing and implementing high- integrity market-based instruments as part of their national climate strategies. With support from the GCM project and the UNFCCC Regional Collaboration Centre for East and Southern Africa, countries in Eastern Africa established the Eastern Africa Alliance on Carbon Markets and Climate Finance. The Alliance provides a platform for member countries to shape a common approach to carbon markets and enhance their preparedness to implement Article 6 and Voluntary Carbon Market mechanisms.

Further information on Global Carbon Markets project and knowledge products is available [here](#)

The project:

As carbon markets grow under both Article 6 of the Paris Agreement and independent carbon market standards there is an increasing need to assess the development pathways of Validation and Verification Bodies (VVB) and explore options for scaling their capacity within Africa. Carbon market projects in Africa are predominantly validated and verified by VVBs located outside the continent. This leads to longer delivery times (detrimental to the business case of project developers), results in a higher proportion of overall carbon revenue flow leaving the continent (e.g. VVB staff and travel costs) and does not contribute to building of local expertise on the ground.

To explore options to effectively build VVB capacity within Africa, VCMI and GIZ are seeking proposals for the delivery of a strategic report that will:

- Analyze global experiences in building VVB capacity within emerging markets.
- Assess the current and projected demand for VVB services across Africa.
- Identify barriers and opportunities for developing institutional and technical capacity of African VVBs.
- Provide an informed assessment of the potential economic and social benefits for Africa from developing a local program of capacity building in VVBs.
- Recommend pathways to regularize access to training and capacity development for verification auditors alongside the establishment of local institutions to serve as accredited VVBs in Africa.
- Evaluate how accreditation frameworks would enable or constrain local VVB development.
- Explore the potential of digital tools (e.g. remote auditing, AI, MRV platforms) to supplement or accelerate VVB capacity in Africa.

2. Priority Issue Description and Deliverable Details

Priority Issue

Africa currently faces a critical shortfall in local VVB capacity, posing challenges to the scalability and integrity of carbon markets. While there is growing recognition of this gap within the industry, there is limited in-depth analysis on its causes, consequences, and effective solutions to plug capacity gaps.

This shortage has several implications:

- Higher costs for project developers due to reliance on foreign VVBs, leading to additional travel and logistical expenses.
- Delays in project validation and verification, resulting in slower credit issuance and restricted financial flows.
- Questionable quality of output from VVBs divorced from a continental context
- Market inefficiencies that prevent timely project implementation and limit access to carbon finance.

- A higher proportion of overall carbon revenue flow leaving the continent, and the local labor market not benefiting from the implementation of carbon projects.

In some instances, minimal oversight and quality assurance for on-the-ground project monitoring, increasing risks of greenwashing, non-compliance, and reputational damage for African carbon credits is a potential risk. With carbon market activities expanding across the continent, through Article 6 and independent carbon markets, this gap could hinder the ability of African countries to participate effectively in high-integrity carbon markets.

A deeper understanding of supply-demand dynamics, institutional barriers, and technical capacity needs of African VVBs and auditors is necessary to inform targeted interventions and unlock new opportunities for carbon finance that contribute to countries' green growth.

Deliverable Details

WHAT: The selected consultant(s) will deliver a report containing the following components:

- A) Global benchmarking of VVB capacity development in other emerging markets, with analysis of key enabling factors such as policy frameworks, market size, support from standards bodies, and workforce development programs. Include lessons from stalled VVB capacity-building efforts in emerging markets and also assess replicability of successful similar initiatives in the African context.
- B) An analysis of Africa's carbon market and VVB landscape, including:
 - Quantification of the impacts caused by the lack of local VVB services, including average cost implications as a share of total project lifetime expenditure, and length of average delay to validation and verifications processes.
 - Continental-level assessment of carbon market activity status and trends, regional activity in sectors, credit types, etc.
 - Robust growth projections, grounded in realistic assumptions, identifying key drivers such as demand, evolving policy and regulatory environments (Article 6, CORSIA, independent and compliance markets), supporting structures (Registries and trading platforms), and shifting buyer expectations by 2030.
- C) A demand and capacity gap assessment focused on the following aspects
 - Quantification of current and projected demand for VVB services in Africa taking into account the volume of carbon market activity, private sector demand and investment trends, market growth, among other factors.
 - Identification of institutional, financial, regulatory, technical, and operational barriers that limit the development of local VVBs and auditing capacity.
 - Assessment of supply-demand mismatches, including risks associated with insufficient local audit expertise and limited availability of technically qualified auditors across key sectors and methodologies.
 - Analysis of gaps in technical capacity, including workforce availability, qualifications, accreditation processes, and the availability of specialized expertise for complex project types.

- Evaluation of the potential role of digital MRV tools (AI, blockchain, machine learning, etc.) in complementing traditional VVB services and alleviating technical capacity constraints.
- Identification of interventions (including by policymakers, technical assistance providers/ funders, and existing key market players) that would effectively address key barriers, with specific recommendations to strengthen local institutional and technical capacity.
- Assessment of auditor retention and career progression challenges, including risks of “brain drain” to international VVBs or unrelated sectors.

D) Evaluation of the viability of establishing regional training and accreditation pipelines (e.g. an auditor academy, training unit, or certification hub). An informed analysis of the potential benefits of investing in African VVB capacity answering the question: “What does the continent stand to gain?” This should include:

- Economic benefits, such as local technical job creation, cost savings for project developers, local VVB companies, etc.
- Social and institutional benefits, including enhanced local expertise, reduced dependency on external actors, stronger regional cooperation, etc.
- Long-term market development opportunities, such as positioning Africa as a competitive player in high-integrity carbon markets.
- Climate governance benefits, such as improved transparency, accountability, and sovereignty in MRV processes, thereby reducing the risk of data manipulation, greenwashing, or external market capture.
- Resilience benefits, including faster project cycles and better responsiveness to evolving methodologies or buyer requirements.

E) Provision of pathways for African countries to develop VVB capacity by 2030, covering:

- A brief overview of different VVB business models, considering the viability of a carbon market focussed validation body based on the prior demand analysis for the continent.
- VVBs Institutional development, including developing accreditation frameworks and operational structures.
- An evaluation of the role for enhanced presence of Africa-based auditors employed by international VVBs as a quicker route to scale, compared to the development of Africa based VVB service providers.
- Clarity on technical training and auditor certification and accreditation avenues required, providing clear guidance on course duration, curriculum depth, and delivery efficiency, as well as recommended levels of practical exposure e.g., to become a lead auditor, emphasizing scalable and regionally adaptable models.
- Effective regional collaboration mechanisms, knowledge-sharing platforms and a mapping of key stakeholders.
- Realistic implementation milestones and responsible actors for different scenarios, including recommended target number of institutions, auditors and technical jobs)
- Propose a sustainable financing model for VVB capacity development such as donor blending or carbon levy reinvestment etc.
- Propose pathways for inclusivity such as gender-sensitivity and sub-regional representation.

6. Risk Management Strategy for VVB Capacity Development in Africa

- F) A robust risk management strategy is essential to ensure that investments in local VVB capacity lead to sustainable, high-integrity outcomes. The report should include considerations on:
- Identification of institutional and governance risks, such as potential conflicts of interest, lack of transparency, weak enforcement, politicization.
 - Assessment of financial risks, including dependency on short-term funding, low profitability for local VVBs in early years.
 - Evaluation of operational risks, such as auditor turnover, inadequate quality control systems, or inability to keep pace with evolving standards and methodologies.
 - Any other potential risk and proposed mitigation strategies for each of the risks.
- G) To advance the outcomes from the report, the consultant will also be required to provide a separate 2- 4 page (max) strategic actions note/concept note for a potential accelerator program to support potential future fundraising.

HOW: The report shall be based on:

- Literature reviews (including analysis) of existing VVB capacity initiatives in emerging markets.
- Interviews and surveys with key stakeholders, such as approved VVBs/DOEs, standards bodies (Gold Standard, Verra, etc.), UNFCCC, government officials, project developers, etc. Market analyses and available data on African carbon market activities. Scenario analysis and projections of the global and continental carbon market landscape. (Financial models on country based carbon market potential)

The report must include an executive summary, clear and actionable recommendations, and visual elements (tables, graphs, infographics) to communicate key findings. It must be designed and copy-edited.

Ways of Working

The selected consultant(s) will work closely with VCMI and GIZ project leads to ensure alignment with organizational priorities and to facilitate coordination with related initiatives.

Deliverable Style and Formatting

The report must be objective, transparent, and rigorous. It should adhere to widely accepted citation standards and align with the principles and terminology of existing VCMI publications. The report should not exceed 30 pages, excluding annexes, and should incorporate graphics where appropriate to present key findings.

3. Submission Requirements

To be considered for this funding opportunity, applicants must include all requested materials, and send to george.hodgetts@vcmintegrity.org; <mailto:ritah.rukundo@giz.de> in copy, by 5 pm ET on 15th August 2025 with the subject line: 'RFP Submission: *Pathways for Strengthening Validation and Verification Body (VVB) Capacity in Africa* . '

We only accept electronic submissions. **We only accept proposals that are submitted using the [submission form](#) below.**

The financial budget should clearly specify the costs associated with each relevant category of deliverables, as deemed appropriate.

4. Evaluation criteria

Proposals will be assessed in accordance with the requirements including:

- Expertise of the applicant
- Overall quality and detail of the proposal
- Cost-effectiveness
- Demonstrated capacity to deliver the analysis in good time, and at a high quality.

5. Award and Reporting

The successful applicant will be notified electronically. After the award letter has been accepted, Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors (RPA), which serves as the fiscal sponsor for VCMI, will send the successful applicant a contract and any other required documents for execution. The grantee will submit the first invoice for payment after the award documents have been completed. The agreement will set forth other dates for invoicing. The contractor will be required to provide brief, periodic status reports to VCMI on the progress of the funded project in the form provided by VCMI. A final report with the last invoice will also be required.

Start date of 1st September 2025 with an advanced draft deliverable due by 17th October 2025, and the final deliverables due by 30th November 2025.

The grantee will be required to submit periodic progress reports and a final deliverable, including a power point presentation of findings.

Deliverable

The report must be of high quality, robustly supported with endnotes conforming to a widely accepted standard (e.g., APA) and include as appropriate, illustrative graphs, charts and data. The successful applicant will be required to give VCMI non-exclusive use of the document, in full or in part, including publication on its website and through other means of distribution. It is not anticipated that any travel will be required for this project.

Questions? If after having read this RFP thoroughly, you have an unanswered question about this opportunity, you may contact VCMI with your query at: george.hodgetts@vcmintegrity.org ; Ritah.rukundo@giz.de

VCMI Proposal Submission Form

The purpose of the [proposal submission form](#) is to outline and provide a comprehensive overview of a project seeking funding or support from VCMI. The document serves as a detailed plan that communicates the project's objectives, strategies, and expected outcomes. Below is a summary of the document's key elements.

- **Project Overview:** This section includes basic project information such as the title, applicant details, project timeline, and the total funding requested.

- **Organization and Project Team:** Provides an overview of the applying organization, including its mission and track record. It also details the expertise and roles of the project team and any external collaborators.
- **Project Details:** A comprehensive description of the project's scope, objectives, strategies, and the beneficiaries or target population it aims to serve.
- **Project Timeline & Deliverables:** Outlines the project's timeline with SMART KPIs, key milestones, and expected outcomes. A Gantt chart may also be included for a visual representation.
- **Project Risk Management:** Identifies potential risks and the mitigation strategies in place, with a focus on ongoing risk assessment throughout the project lifecycle.
- **Budget & Resources:** Breaks down the project's expenses and funding requirements, including justifications for each expense, as well as potential income sources or partner contributions.
- **Monitoring & Evaluation:** Describes how the project's success and impact will be measured through KPIs and metrics, as well as how results will be communicated to stakeholders.
- **Post Funding & Long-term Viability:** Explains how the project will have lasting impact, including plans for sustainability, knowledge sharing, and future funding or partnerships beyond the initial grant.