

Project Verification Report

Name of Reviewers:

Pablo Rodríguez-Noriega (RRA Reviewer. Draft Verification report)

Joris Bens (Team leader)

Hernán Zaldivar (Team member)

Date of Review: 19/05/2026

Project Name: Agroforestry Project Solidaridad

Project Description:

Solidaridad works with around 80 cooperatives and farmers' groups in Nicaragua. One of the largest is Aldea, which served as a pilot to start the carbon project, focused on improving the quality of life through families with health and education; competitive and resilient farms; in empowered rural communities.

Solidaridad started working mostly with Fundación Aldea because their members have been implementing agroforestry systems since 2016 with the aim of improving coffee quality and yields of member farmers and contributing to environmental conservation. This organization is one of several cooperatives working with Solidaridad in a subcontractor role, and is the largest cooperative in the coffee sector.

This project adds on a component of carbon market access for coffee and cacao farmers, improving the financial performance of production units. The project aims to transition small coffee and cacao farmers to agroforestry systems and connect them to high-value carbon markets as a mechanism to reward farmers for their contribution to reduce carbon emissions by planting and looking after trees within their farms. In addition to climate change mitigation, the agroforestry systems promoted by Solidaridad and its subcontractors, also serve as a climate change adaptation strategy in low- to mid-level coffee landscapes. Since the project is implemented through a network of multiple subcontractors, the project's planting tree started, on average, since 2018.

At the time of project verification, the total number of project plots with CRUs calculated was 4,637 (4,155 coffee plots and 482 cacao plots) on 4,246 farms (3,818 coffee farms and 428 cacao farms), with a total area of 9,485.08 ha (8,570.56ha of coffee and 914.52ha of cacao) and a total amount of CRUs generated of 42,755 (40,968 for coffee and 1,787 for cacao).

List of Principal documents reviewed (including list of sites visited and individuals/groups interviewed):

- Project ADD
- Legal/contractual documents
 - Participant Agreement

o Solidaridad Nicaragua-Rabobank Partnership Agreement

- Project Business Case
- Evidence of training activities
- Evidence of farmer engagement
- KPI & SDG Surveys
- Agroforestry design
- Council meeting minutes
- Farmers database
- Land tenure documents
- Bank account documents

Visited sites:

Plot Name	Farm	Village	Plot Area	Date
NI011319 - 21695	NI011319	Las Cruces 2	2.23	18/11/2024
NI225634 - 395030	NI225634	Los chagüitones	4.72	18/11/2024
NI225640 - 395036	NI225640	Cmca los chagüitones	3.86	18/11/2024
NI225655 - 395081	NI225655	Loma alta	0.52	18/11/2024
NI225656 - 395084	NI225656	Loma alta	1.42	18/11/2024
NI225658 - 395090	NI225658	Loma alta	2.26	18/11/2024
NI122048 - 140661	NI122048	Quebraditas de Yacalwas	4.11	19/11/2024
NI279077 - 487245	NI279077	Las quebraditas	7.3	19/11/2024
NI279225 - 487690	NI279225	Las quebraditas 2	6.84	19/11/2024
NI279242 - 487740	NI279242	Quebraditas de yakalwas	1.97	19/11/2024
NI279249 - 487761	NI279249	Quebraditas de yacalwas	2.97	19/11/2024
NI279249 - 487762	NI279249	Quebraditas de yacalwas	4.18	19/11/2024
NI018783 - 29585	NI018783	El Amparo	2.46	20/11/2024
NI019079 - 29881	NI019079	El Amparo	3.2	20/11/2024
NI019954 - 30775	NI019954	El Amparo	1.43	20/11/2024
NI220723 - 382516	NI220723	El amaparo	3.64	20/11/2024
NI225538 - 394721	NI225538	El amparo	9.83	20/11/2024
NI225707 - 395237	NI225707	El bosque	3.03	20/11/2024
NI215369 - 368401	NI215369	CAÑO LOS MARTINEZ	4.34	21/22/2024

NI215461 - 368610	NI215461	CAÑO LOS MARTINEZ	1.53	21/22/2024
NI215461 - 368611	NI215461	CAÑO LOS MARTINEZ	2.25	21/22/2024
NI215461 - 368612	NI215461	CAÑO LOS MARTINEZ	1.01	21/22/2024
NI230762 - 408067	NI230762	CAÑO LOS MARTINEZ	1.54	21/22/2024
NI230805 - 408157	NI230805	EL GUANO	4.9	21/22/2024

List of individuals interviewed:

Project Participants (farmers):

- Santa Maria de Pantasma: 6 farmers interviewed
- East of Wiwili: 6 farmers interviewed
- San Sebastian de Yali: 6 farmers interviewed
- Waslala: 6 farmers interviewed

Solidaridad Nicaragua staff :

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

Stakeholders :

- Representative from Cooperative La Providencia
- [REDACTED]z, Coffee project council
- [REDACTED] Foresolution, consultant for ground truth
- [REDACTED], Technician from Cooperative El Gorrión
- [REDACTED] Coopereative Caja Rural
- Nursery La Pitilla en el Cua
- [REDACTED], treasurer Cacaonica
- [REDACTED], farmer and technical responsible Cacaonica
- [REDACTED], Caja Rural
- [REDACTED], Caja Rural
- [REDACTED], Nua Waslala
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED], Ingemann
- [REDACTED] ONUS
- [REDACTED], Manager Cacaonica
- [REDACTED] Manager Nua Waslala
- [REDACTED], Cacao project council
- [REDACTED] Cacao project council
- [REDACTED], Cacao project council

Description of field visit:

The field visit was a 5-day onsite work, interviewing the local partner, some project participants, and other stakeholders, and visiting the project farms and the nursery, as described in the following table:

Activity	Location	Date/time
Opening meeting	Solidaridad Nicaragua office, Matagalpa	18 Nov 2024 Morning
Site visit and data collection; Interviews with farmers	Farmer plots in Santa Maria de Pantasma (6 plots)	18 Nov 2024 Afternoon
Site visit and data collection; Interviews with farmers, interview with field technician from cooperative La Providencia, and interview with Member from project council (██████████)	Farmer plots East of Wiwili (6 plots)	19 Nov 2024 Morning and afternoon
Site visit and data collection; Interviews with farmers, interview with field technician from cooperative El Gorrión (██████████) and interview with consultant from Foresolution (██████████)	Farmer plots in San Sebastian de Yali (6 plots)	20 Nov 2024 Morning and afternoon
Site visit and data collection; Interviews with farmers and interview with field technician from cooperative Caja Rural (██████████)	Farmer plots in Waslala (6 plots)	21 Nov 2024 Morning and afternoon
Stakeholder meeting	Cacaonica office, Waslala	21 Nov 2024 Evening
Audit team internal meeting	Solidaridad Nicaragua office, Matagalpa	22 Nov 2024 Morning
Interview to nursery (La Pitilla in Driessen Cua)	Solidaridad Nicaragua office, Matagalpa	22 Nov 2024 Morning
Closing meeting	Solidaridad Nicaragua office, Matagalpa	22 Nov 2024 Morning
Documentation review (Business Case, T-5 check, KPIs and SDGs), meeting with Rabobank-Acorn representatives	Hotel Vizcaino, Matagalpa	22 Nov 2024 Afternoon

Verification Opinion:

After 3 assessment rounds, the VVB concluded that the project meets all the verification requirements of the Acorn Framework and Methodology, providing a **Positive Verification Opinion** for the 2018-2024 verification period.

The evidence obtained in the project documents and during the field visit resulted in 2 CARs and 3 NIRs. In the second assessment round (06/02/2026), NIR 01 and NIR 02 were closed and CAR 01 was converted to FAR 01. In the third assessment round (19/05/2026), the remaining CAR 02 and NIR 03 were closed, concluding with the Positive opinion.

Table 1. Summary of draft report on Corrective Actions

Theme	CARs	NIRS	PCARs
Project council			
Other stakeholder consultation			
Signed Agreements			
Benefit Sharing Mechanism			
Carbon regulations			
Agroforestry Design			
Business Case			
Grievances			
Monitoring Plan			
Buffer Pool		1 (closed)	
Livelihoods Monitoring			
Ecosystem Monitoring			
Reporting-Annual reports		1 (closed)	
Double-counting		1 (closed)	
Applicability conditions			
Carbon Baseline			

Model development	1 (converted to FAR)		
Model application			
Pre-project trees adjustment factor			
Uncertainty adjustment factor	1 (closed)		
Leakage adjustment factor			
Quantification of carbon benefits			

Table 2. Summary of open Forward Actions (if any)

Forward Action Requirement (FAR)	Description	Process to Resolve	Time Frame to be Closed By
<i>FAR 01/2024 VER (CAR 01/2024 VER)</i>	Acorn shall demonstrate quality assurance and control procedures regarding the ground truth are correctly implemented in the field.	Improve and monitor the implementation of the SOP Collecting and Processing Ground Truth	Next verification

Table 3. Assessments requested by reviewers from ADD and/or technical specification review process

Relevant requirements within Methodology	Description of concern	VVB comments	Corrective actions (if any)	ACORN response	Resolved?
		<i>After assessing the project against the raised concerns, please include comments on whether any aspects of the project are non-compliant with the Plan Vivo Standard.</i>	<i>Please write “none” if no correction actions required.</i>	<i>If corrective actions required, ACORN must provide response detailing changes made to address concerns.</i>	<i>(for VVB) Has ACORN’s response resolved the concerns.</i>

Acorn Framework & Methodology

requirements to assess

Theme: Smallholder farmer (Eligible Stakeholder)

Sub- Theme: Project Council

Requirement 4.2.3 and 4.2.18	
A. Requirement:	<i>4.2.3 Acorn projects shall have a defined project council governance structure at the start of a project intervention, in which participants or community groups collectively, (i) nominate project representatives who have the capacity to operate on their behalf, and (ii) determine a decision-making mechanism for the project council. At a minimum, project councils should be organized twice per year.</i> <i>4.2.18 The Local Partner should actively inform and involve participants about/in the decision-making process throughout the project, from design, to monitoring, to implementation, to field management, and to payments, by organizing regular project council meetings. Participants should actively contribute to the selection and design of activities, considering:</i> <i>Local livelihood needs and opportunities</i> <i>Local customs</i> <i>Land availability and tenure</i> <i>Food security</i> <i>Inclusion of marginalized groups</i> <i>Opportunities to enhance (agricultural) biodiversity</i>
B. Guidance Notes for VVBs	For new participants/farmers onboarding during verification, assess whether a project council has been established and actively engaged in by project participants. This includes confirming that members of the project council were chosen fairly by participants. For participants that were already onboarded check that the project meetings have taken place twice per year and also that the participants have been involved in the decision-making process specially for the field management, payment and monitoring. All the above requirements may be done through: - Records/minutes/photographs of community meetings and training workshops etc. - Project staff able to demonstrate that they are familiar with the communities/target groups and able to interact with them easily through meetings facilitated during the validation.

	- Participants are aware who their Lead Farmer is, and feel able to communicate with them on matters relating to the project. - Lead Farmers are aware of their responsibilities and feel able to actively represent the needs of the participants in project council meetings. - Through interviews with Local Partner and participants, assess whether the Local Partner complies this.		
C. Findings (describe)	It has been confirmed in the review of the ADD (Part G and Annex 7) that a project governance structure has been designed. In the interviews with the local partner staff and in the review of the available documents, it was clarified that this council structure has started to work on the project and that council meetings take place at least twice a year. Nevertheless, it was confirmed that most farmers do not have information about the council and its governance structure (i.e: how many meetings they will have per year, and when the next meeting is scheduled), and no evidence could be gathered about how farmers are represented in the council or how their representatives are selected/elected, and evidence of non-democratic processes has been found. In many cases, the farmers don't know who their representative is. The established Project council doesn't comply with the Acorn Framework requirements, therefore CAR 04/2024 was issued in the validation report. See Validation report CAR 04/2024. The ADD has been updated, a training strategy implemented and all participants have signed the participant agreement. This CAR has been closed in the validation report.		
D. Conformance	☒ Yes	☐ No	☐ N/A
E. Corrective Actions (describe)	None		
F. Acorn's Response (if applicable)	N/A		
G. Status (if applicable)	N/A		
H. Forward Actions (describe, if applicable)	None		
I. Others	N/A		

Sub- Theme: Other stakeholder consultation (Not including the

project council)

Requirement 4.2.16			
A. Requirement:	4.2.16 The local partner should provide a stakeholder map to identify key communities, organizations, and local and national authorities that are likely to be affected by or have a stake in the project. See stakeholder map in ADD. The local partner is responsible for taking appropriate steps to inform these stakeholders about the project and seek their views, and secure approval where necessary.		
B. Guidance Notes for VVBs	Assess the stakeholder consultations carried out during the reporting period (if applicable). The above requirement may be done through: - Records/minutes/photographs of community meetings and training workshops etc. - Through interviews with stakeholders demonstrate that they are familiar with the project and able to interact with them easily through meetings facilitated during the verification. - Participants are aware who their Lead Farmer is, and feel able to communicate with them on matters relating to the project.		
C. Findings (describe)	The local partner and Acorn have provided a stakeholder map in the ADD and a list of stakeholders potentially impacted by the project, providing their interest and influence within the project (Part K). During the conversations with Solidaridad the main entities affected by the project were described and the validation team had the chance to meet and interview some of them (cooperatives, local organizations, nurseries, etc.). Consulted stakeholders have been informed about the project and their views have been considered.		
D. Conformance	☒ Yes	☐ No	☐ N/A
E. Corrective Actions (describe)	None		
F. Acorn's Response (if applicable)	N/A		
G. Status (if applicable)	N/A		
H. Forward Actions (describe, if applicable)	None		

I. Others	N/A
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Theme: Local Partner

Sub-theme: Sample Signed Agreements

Requirement 4.2.11	
A. Requirement:	<i>4.2.11. The Local Partner shall provide a formal Participant Agreement ("Project Implementation and Carbon Removal Unit Purchase Agreement") for each project participant, including a consent for data sharing and confirmation of payment arrangements.</i>
B. Guidance Notes for VVBs	For new participants onboarding during verification, assess whether the local partner has provided them with the agreement. Randomly sample participants and request their Participant Agreement to confirm that one has been signed. Through conversations with the participant, check that they: • Have access to the agreement in an accessible language and format • Understand and are happy with their key responsibilities If participants are yet to sign agreements, check that prospective participants will be happy with the above bullet points and that there is a plan in place for participants to sign agreements
C. Findings (describe)	During the site visit and in the interviews with the farmers it was confirmed that most project participants (18/24) were not able to show a copy of their contract. The others showed their signed agreement during the visit and explained the main contents of this contractual document. The participants who joined recently, usually had their contracts. Also, Solidaridad could only show 4 out of the 18 requested contracts during the document review. Because both Solidaridad and the farmers are missing participant agreements, CAR 05/2024 was issued. The visited farmers understand the benefits of being part of the project, showed interest in the implementation of agroforestry practices (planting trees), and are happy with the idea of getting future revenues for these activities. However, most of the participants do not know all their responsibilities. Most farmers have general information about the project: they have some knowledge about climate change and carbon removals, but only some know they will receive some seedlings and they must plant them when provided. Almost all know that they shall maintain these trees, but most did not know that the project will last 20 years. It was noticed during the interviews that participants who joined recently had a much better understanding of their responsibilities. See also the CAR with requirement 5.1.1.

	Regarding the language and the format of the agreement, the format was on paper, and the language was Spanish, which is suitable for the participating farmers. See Validation report CAR 05/2024. The ADD has been updated, a training strategy implemented and all participants have signed the participant agreement. This CAR has been closed in the validation report.		
F. Conformance	☒ Yes	☐ No	☐ N/A
G. Corrective Actions (describe)	None		
H. Acorn's Response (if applicable)	N/A		
I. Status (if applicable)	N/A		
A. Forward Actions (describe, if applicable)	None		
k. Others	N/A		

Requirement 4.2.15	
A. Requirement:	<i>The Local Partner should provide information in an applicable language and/or format that suits all participants and avoid discrimination of illiterate groups.</i>
B. Guidance Notes for VVBs	For new participants onboarding during verification, check that the materials that participants should be able to access are in an appropriate language and/or format. Materials that can be requested include: • Participant Agreement • Relevant Standard Operating Procedures or support documents • Information on process for submitting grievances • Information or leaflets on Project Council meetings or meeting outputs/minutes
C. Findings (describe)	As confirmed during the on-site visit, in the interviews with the local partner and the farmers, all documented information is provided in Spanish. It was verified that training, meetings in local communities, technical support, and all verbal communication, conducted by Solidaridad staff, the farmers, and field technicians, took place in the appropriate local language (Spanish). The main

	contractual/legal documents (Participant Agreement and consent) between Solidaridad and the local farmers are also in Spanish. Additionally, recently two training platforms have been developed, one for field technicians online and one for farmers through Whatsapp. The training platform for farmers is made using voice messages, to cater for farmers that might have difficulties reading. No evidence of discrimination against the illiterate was gathered and it was confirmed that both illiterate and non-illiterate were onboarded in the project interchangeably. Related to the contents of this requirement, please see the CARs for requirement 5.1.1, related to the lack of knowledge of the responsibilities for the project, requirement 4.2.11, related to the missing participant agreements, and requirements 4.2.19 and 4.2.20, related to the grievance mechanism.		
D. Conformance	☒ Yes	☐ No	☐ N/A
E. Corrective Actions (describe)	None		
F. Acorn's Response (if applicable)	N/A		
G. Status (if applicable)	N/A		
H. Forward Actions (describe, if applicable)	None		
i. Others	N/A		

Sub-theme: Benefit Sharing Mechanism

Requirement 4.2.12	
A. Requirement:	<i>The Local Partner shall be responsible for annual and traceable carbon benefit payments to the participants, as detailed in the "Standard Terms to Project Implementation and Carbon Removal Unit Purchase". At least 80% or more of the proceeds from CRU sales should accrue to participants as either cash payments or individual in-kind contributions. See Annex 7.4 of ADD for</i>

	<i>a list of in-kind contributions that may be used in Acorn projects and detail or cash payment criteria.</i> <i>The project coordinator ensures that payments are made in a transparent and traceable manner.</i>
B. Guidance Notes for VVBs	Confirm with the new participants for this verification through interviews or participatory meetings, the following things: • They are happy with the types of payments being offered by the project, including in-kind contributions if relevant. • Are aware of the benefits that they might expect from the project (due to ACORN's nature, the exact amount will be difficult to know, but evidence of extreme expectations from participants may be of concern and should be noted). • Understand that payments are conditional upon the sale of CRUs and therefore are not guaranteed. • Discuss with a small sample of participants from different socio-economic groups to determine their level of understanding of the benefits they are likely to get from the project. Confirm that the Local Partner: • Has an appropriate system for disbursing and recording payments to project participants. • Is aware of the limit on income from CRU sales that they can claim for operational costs and are happy with this limit. Confirm with participants already included during validation through interviews or participatory meetings, the following things: • The payments have been made during the reporting period as detailed in the "Standard Terms to Project Implementation and Carbon Removal Unit Purchase".
C. Findings (describe)	During the validation process, this requirement was confirmed. In the interviews with the local partner and in the review of the signed agreements, it was evidenced that the redistribution of income from the sale of CRUs, and the way of payment, is clear for the local partner and included in the main project documents. Regarding the distribution of 80% of the proceeds from CRU sales, in cash and in-kind, it was agreed during one of the council meeting that farmers will get paid in a generalized way according to the size of their farm and the sale value of the CRUs generated. Only a part of the farmers had received CRUs payments. And those were happy about the payment. These farmers are the first cohorts of participants, now Acorn can only sell CRUs again upon finalization of the V&V process. Farmers understand they will get paid for their participation in the project and were able to explain the carbon project in a simplified way. Most farmers interviewed requested information from the validation team about the payment schedule, as they wanted to know when they will be paid.

D. Conformance	☒ Yes	☐ No	☐ N/A
E. Corrective Actions (describe)	None		
F. Acorn's Response (if applicable)	N/A		
G. Status (if applicable)	N/A		
H. Forward Actions (describe, if applicable)	None		
I. Others	N/A		

Sub-theme: Carbon regulations

Requirement 4.2.14			
A. Requirement:	<i>The Local Partner should be aware of local, national and international laws and regulations, align project activities to comply accordingly, and integrate proper employment law.</i>		
B. Guidance Notes for VVBs	Keep a look out for any illegal activities that the Local Partner may be engaging in, whether in the capacity of coordinating the ACORN project or otherwise. Through interviews with Local Partner staff, assess their awareness of relevant laws and regulations.		
C. Findings (describe)	In the interviews with Solidaridad, it was confirmed that local staff are aware of the main regulations related to project activities. The main legislation and regulations concerning agroforestry activities are mentioned in the ADD (Part H, 6) and during the site visit and in the interviews with stakeholders no evidence was found of illegal activities carried out by Solidaridad.		
D. Conformance	☒ Yes	☐ No	☐ N/A
E. Corrective Actions (describe)	None		

F. Acorn's Response (if applicable)	<i>N/A</i>
G. Status (if applicable)	<i>N/A</i>
H. Forward Actions (describe, if applicable)	<i>None</i>
I. Others	<i>N/A</i>

Sub- Theme: Agroforestry Design

Requirement 4.1.7	
A. Requirement:	4.1.7. Acorn projects should plant tree species that are native or naturalized, and draw on local and expert knowledge for agroforestry designs. Naturalized species will only be integrated into the design if: - There are livelihood benefits that make the use of the species preferable to any alternative native species. - The use of the species will not have a negative impact on biodiversity or other provision of key ecosystem services in the project and surrounding areas.
B. Guidance Notes for VVBs	For new participants/farmers onboarding during verification, check the agroforestry design and assess that only naturalized species are integrated into the design if complied with Acorn requirements. Please give an opinion as to whether the concept of agroforestry is followed or pursued and tree species being planted meet these criteria. This can be checked using a number of sources: - Visual observations of local tree-growing practices - Discussions with farmers, communities, and project staff - Discussions with local experts (forestry and biodiversity experts) - Published information (refer to this in the validation report if used)
C. Findings (describe)	The ADD includes in Part F the list of species selected for the new agroforestry system, classifying them as native or naturalized and including a description of the potential impacts and/or benefits of naturalized species. According to the local partner and the nursery, all of them are native or naturalized. It was confirmed during the interviews with the farmers that the species are commonly used in the forestry and silvicultural sectors.

	No negative potential impacts of these species have been confirmed. The project species have been observed in the project area, outside the project boundary, as common tree species used in agroforestry activities. During the visit it was confirmed that the local partner is aware of the importance of using native species and that the planting activities are done using a mix of species with different objectives (fruit, shade, soil improvement). However, the agroforestry design includes <i>Gmelina arborea</i> species, a naturalized species in Nicaragua, but a reason why it is preferable to any alternative native species was missing from the ADD, therefore CAR 01/2024 was issued. See Validation report CAR 01/2024. The ADD has been updated and the new signed off agroforestry designs shared. This CAR has been closed in the validation report.		
D. Conformance	☒ Yes	☐ No	☐ N/A
E. Corrective Actions (describe)	None		
F. Acorn's Response (if applicable)	N/A		
G. Status (if applicable)	N/A		
H. Forward Actions (describe, if applicable)	None		
ii. Others	N/A		

Sub- Theme: Business case

Requirement 4.2.17, key concept 1.4, table 4 extract	
A. Requirement:	<u>4.2.17</u> <i>The Local Partner should coordinate and provide a business case, including a financial analysis, monitoring and implementation plan, at the start of the project.</i> <u>Key concept 1.3</u>

	<i>For the farmer, the increased annual income from both agricultural production and carbon sequestration needs to exceed the costs associated with the transition to agroforestry and the generation and trading of CRUs.</i> <u>Table 4 extract</u> <i>The Local Partner does not draw more than 10% of sales income for ongoing coordination, administration and monitoring costs. Exceeding this percentage is only possible in exceptional circumstances where justification is provided and Acorn formally approves a waiver.</i>		
B. Guidance Notes for VVBs	For new participants/farmers onboarding during verification, check the business case. The business plan will have been checked by Plan Vivo Foundation, however it is difficult to assess the appropriateness of some aspects remotely and without knowledge of local context. Therefore, for the new onboarded farmer during the verification request to see this business case and assess whether: - Check business case is underwritten by agronomist(s) and community representatives through interviews. - Costs detailed in business plan (e.g. cost of seeds, labour etc.) are appropriate for the local context - Participants believe that the income they will receive from the project (direct and in-kind) will be enough for their activities to take place.		
C. Findings (describe)	The business case has been provided to the VVB and has been developed by Acorn and Solidaridad. Prices and costs considered in the Business Case are in accordance with the Nicaraguan rural context and with reference numbers of local crop production. Key concept 1.3. is confirmed in the Business Case spreadsheet (see Dashboard Sheet). The requirement included in Table 4 extract could be confirmed when reviewing the data from the last CRU payment. There is a discrepancy between the business case and the ADD regarding the planting densities and planting distances, therefore CAR 06/2024 was issued. See Validation report CAR 06/2024. The ADD and BUCA have been updated. This CAR has been closed in the validation report.		
D. Conformance	☒ Yes	☐ No	☐ N/A
E. Corrective Actions (describe)	None		
F. Acorn's Response (if applicable)	N/A		

G. Status (if applicable)	<i>N/A</i>
H. Forward Actions (describe, if applicable)	<i>None</i>
I. Others	<i>N/A</i>

Sub-theme Grievances

Requirement 4.2.19 and 4.2.20	
A. Requirement:	<u>4.2.19</u> <i>The Local Partner shall be available to handle grievances and provide feedback mechanisms on the project design, in a transparent, fair and timely manner and should organize regular council meetings to provide participants and their local community with a setting in which they can raise any concerns or grievances about the project to the Local Partner.</i> <u>4.2.20</u> <i>The Local Partner should ensure that a proper grievance mechanism is developed, described in detail in the project documentation, communicated to the local communities and followed-up. A summary of grievances received, the manner in which these are dealt with and details of outstanding grievances shall be reported to an Acorn representative(s) within 35 working days. These grievances are detailed by Acorn in annual reports to the certifier.</i>
B. Guidance Notes for VVBs	For new onboarding farmers determined through checking: - That the grievance mechanism is in place. E.g., if the states that it will create a box for submitting feedback, can it be found in an appropriate location? - Checking through interviews that project participants are aware of grievance and feedback mechanisms, and know how to access them, and are satisfied with these mechanisms - Check through interviews with relevant project staff that they have appropriate knowledge of the grievance mechanism process For farmers already included in the project determined during the reporting period through checking: - Check project council meeting minutes for evidence of grievances being reported, and check whether these have been resolved and whether the resolution has been communicated to participants - Check whether feedback thus far from project participants has been incorporated into the project, and if not, whether there is a reasonable justification for this.

C. Findings (describe)	The project grievance mechanism is described in ADD (Part G.4). During the document review and in conversations with the local partner, it was identified that Solidaridad has a project grievance mechanism in place. There is also evidence (i.e. minutes) that during the first council meeting the grievance mechanism was discussed. In the discussions with the local farmers, they expressed that if they have any grievance concerning the project, they would talk to their field technician, but they have no other knowledge about the grievance mechanism, therefore CAR 08/2024 was issued. In the interviews with the farmers, no significant grievances or disputes were identified. See Validation report CAR 08/2024. The ADD has been updated, a training strategy implemented and all participants have signed the participant agreement. This CAR has been closed in the validation report.		
D. Conformance	X Yes	No	N/A
E. Corrective Actions (describe)	None		
F. Acorn's Response (if applicable)	N/A		
G. Status (if applicable)	N/A		
H. Forward Actions (describe, if applicable)	None		
I. Others	N/A		

Sub-theme Monitoring Plan

Requirements 4.2.21 and 4.2.22	
A. Requirement:	4.2.21 <i>The Local Partner shall be responsible for the secure storage of project information, including project designs, business case details, proof of payments, records of participant events and monitoring results.</i> 4.2.22 <i>The Local Partner shall follow the Acorn monitoring plan as outlined in the Methodology and contribute to on-the-ground data collection, validation,</i>

	<i>and verification activities while coordinating the support of participants and local communities on this monitoring plan.</i>
B. Guidance for VVBs	Notes Check that Local Partner has stored this information safely, and that records can be produced when asked. • Are there appropriate back-up systems for important information? • Monitoring and reporting systems and capabilities may be determined through: 1. Staff and participating communities able to explain the monitoring system (how each of the indicators in the ADD will be monitored) 2. Records of any monitoring already undertaken e.g. baselines or other information. 3. Visiting plots and watching Local Partner collect data on the ground, and assessing whether this is in keeping with procedures outlined in Acorn Methodology.
C. Findings (describe)	Req. 4.2.21: As confirmed in the conversations with Solidaridad, and shown during Solidaridad office visit, project information is stored safely. They have backup copies of the main information and Acorn-Rabobank has also copies of the project documents and farmers database. Req. 4.2.22: Acorn and Solidaridad are following The Acorn Framework and Methodology, considering timelines and responsibilities to conduct the continuous monitoring described in ADD section E.7. Regarding socioeconomic and environmental aspects, the ADD (Part E, Baseline Assessment) describes the results of the first survey and how the identified indicators will be monitored. In the discussion with Solidaridad and Acorn staff, they explained how they did the first survey and how they are planning to do the monitoring, the next surveys. As the project is currently in its early stages, during the validation, only the results of the first survey were available. With regards to carbon accounting and the CRUs calculations, during the on-site visit, the validation team had the opportunity to see how Acorn is collecting ground truth data in collaboration with the local partner and with the support of a consultancy firm (Foresolution). Acorn has developed a specific methodology and protocol in line with The Acorn Framework and Methodology for ground truth data collection, that has been provided to the validation team. During this validation, Solidaridad facilitated the on-site visit, coordinating the process with local farmers, field technicians, and other stakeholders.

	During the audit, no evidence of non-compliance with this requirement was identified.		
D. Conformance	☒	☐	☐
	Yes	No	N/A
E. Corrective Actions (describe)	None		
F. Acorn's Response (if applicable)	N/A		
G. Status (if applicable)	N/A		
H. Forward Actions (describe, if applicable)	None		
I. Others	N/A		

Sub-theme: Buffer pool

Requirements 4.9.1, 4.9.3 and 4.9.4	
A. Requirement:	4.9.1 Acorn projects shall supply 15% of generated CRUs to the buffer pool for the duration of the project to cover unforeseen premature loss of carbon stock. 4.9.3 Every two to five years, the buffer pool percentages should be assessed on coverage ratio and adjusted accordingly. 4.9.4 If premature reversal is not recovered within five years, BCRUs should be provided from the buffer pool.
B. Guidance Notes for VVBs	Check the buffer pool auditing the excel spreadsheet provided by Acorn of CRUs calculations.
C. Findings (describe)	Based on the review of the provided Excel files with project GHG calculations (Data package Solidaridad Nicaragua Coffee) it can be confirmed that the buffer pool percentage rate included in the calculation of CRUs is 15% and the value has been correctly applied in the CRU calculations sheet, according to the Acorn methodology. As the data package for cacao has not been shared, NIR 01/2024 VER was issued.

D. Conformance	☒ Yes	☐ No	☐ N/A
E. Corrective Actions (describe)	NIR 01/2024 VER A data package for cacao shall be shared.		
F. Acorn's Response (if applicable)	Acorn response (09/01/2026) Acorn shared a data package for cacao, which conforms with the applicable requirements. VVB response (06/02/2026) The evidence shared by Acorn is sufficient to close this NIR.		
G. Status (if applicable)	Closed		
H. Forward Actions (describe, if applicable)	None		
I. Others	N/A		

Monitoring Indicators

Sub-theme Livelihoods Monitoring

Requirements 4.4.6	
A. Requirement:	4.4.6 <i>In addition to the carbon baseline, a project baseline should be provided by local partners on a project level at the start of a project intervention. This project baseline should describe the current socioeconomic conditions and explain how these conditions are most likely to develop over time (positively and/or negatively) as a result of the project intervention.</i>
B. Guidance Notes for VVBs	Check a sample of the surveys that were made to collect the information from the local livelihood indicators for this reporting period.
C. Findings (describe)	In the on-site visit, by direct observation and during the interviews with farmers, it was confirmed that the current land use of all farms visited during the validation is cropland. Both coffee and cacao crops, sometimes accompanied by different food crops. Some of the farmers visited have

	already started with agroforestry practices, planting some trees on their farms. The ADD Part E Project Baseline Assessment describes the socioeconomic impacts that have been identified that are likely to develop over time as a result of the project intervention.		
D. Conformance	☒ Yes	☐ No	☐ N/A
E. Corrective Actions (describe)	None		
F. Acorn's Response (if applicable)	N/A		
G. Status (if applicable)	N/A		
H. Forward Actions (describe, if applicable)	None		
II. Others	N/A		

Sub-theme Ecosystem Monitoring

Requirements 4.4.2 and 4.1.5	
A. Requirement:	4.1.5 Acorn projects should strive to not contribute, or to do their utmost to avoid, environmental or (agricultural) biodiversity harm (e.g. reduction of long-term food security, water pollution, deforestation, soil erosion). All potential negative effects are identified, mitigated and monitored. These negative effects are detailed in annual reports to Acorn and the certifier. 4.4.2 As part of the carbon baseline, project areas should identify species with a high local environmental and social conservation value and describe how these species are likely to be affected by the project intervention, and how these effects are monitored. The conservation value of species can be determined by local Indigenous knowledge and/or by referring to the IUCN red list¹ or the Forest Stewardship Council².

¹ [IUCN, 2021](#)

² [Forest Stewardship Council, n.d.](#)

B. Guidance Notes for VVBs	Check a sample of the surveys that were made to collect the information from the ecosystem monitoring indicators for this reporting period.						
C. Findings (describe)	The project activity consists of tree planting manually (digging the holes and planting) for a new agroforestry system, as well as improving existing agroforestry in all areas within the farmer's land. Due to the type of intervention and considering the scale (low planting density), the potential negative impact during the project implementation is expected to be negligible. Based on consultation with local stakeholders and on direct observations in the field visit, the project is growing natural and naturalized species, commonly used in the silvicultural and forestry sectors leading to an increase of biodiversity in the vegetation and potentially in the fauna. During the site visit, no negative impacts were identified. In the interviews with local partner staff and with farmers, it has been confirmed that they also have not identified potential negative impacts, and therefore, no mitigation measures are being or will be undertaken. The ADD includes a description of the current land use and habitat species within a project area, and explains how these are most likely to change over a period of ten years without the project intervention (Part D and E) The ADD also includes a list of species with a high local environmental and social conservation value in the project area (Part D and E.3). In the on-site visit, by direct observation and during the interviews with farmers, it was confirmed that the current land use of all farms visited during the validation is cropland. All of them are coffee or cacao crops, sometimes accompanied by different food crops. Some of the farmers visited have already started with agroforestry practices, planting some trees on their farms.						
D. Conformance	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>☒</td><td>☐</td><td>☐</td></tr> <tr> <td>Yes</td><td>No</td><td>N/A</td></tr> </table>	☒	☐	☐	Yes	No	N/A
☒	☐	☐					
Yes	No	N/A					
E. Corrective Actions (describe)	None						
F. Acorn's Response (if applicable)	N/A						
G. Status (if applicable)	N/A						

H. Forward Actions (describe, if applicable)	<i>None</i>
III. Others	<i>N/A</i>

Sub-theme: Reporting-Annual reports

Requirement 5.8.3	
A. Requirement:	<i>From the start of a project intervention, the local partner is asked to provide annual reports on the project's progress. At a minimum, the following information should be provided in these annual reports:</i> <i>Total number of farmers participating*</i> <i>Number of new farmers participating*</i> <i>Average hectares per farmer*</i> <i>Number of CRUs generated (metric ton CO₂eq sequestered)*</i> <i>Number of CRUs sold*</i> <i>Total payments to participants</i> <i>Local partner expenditure</i> <i>Any significant updates in the project</i>
B. Guidance Notes for VVBs	Check that the annual report provided by Acorn contains all the above information.
C. Findings (describe)	An annual report (Acorn_Annual_Report Nicaragua y01) has been provided at the moment of verification, for a reporting period between July 2022 and July 2023. The report includes the information required as per requirement 5.8.3. A reference to the ADD for the average hectares per farmers as been included, however, the average hectares per farmer value is not included in the annual report. Besides, the number of farmers and total project size (Table 2.6a) are not updated as per the updated ADD after validation rounds of findings, and the number of CRUs generated is not updated as per the Data Package provided. Because of this missing information NIR 02/2024 VER was issued.

D. Conformance	☒ Yes	☐ No	☐ N/A
E. Corrective Actions (describe)	NIR 02/2024 VER The annual report shall be updated to reflect the updated information required in this requirement.		
F. Acorn's Response (if applicable)	Acorn response (09/01/2026) Acorn shared an updated annual report, which conforms with the applicable requirements. VVB response (06/02/2026) The evidence shared by Acorn is sufficient to close this NIR.		
G. Status (if applicable)	Closed		
H. Forward Actions (describe, if applicable)	None		
I. Others	N/A		

Sub-theme: Double-counting

Requirement 4.7.1 and 4.7.2	
A. Requirement:	<i>4.7.1 In order to prevent double counting, issuance, use or claim of project emissions reductions, all CRUs shall be registered in a public register with a unique serial number, highlighting when (year), where (country, GPS coordinates) and by whom (local partner) the CRUs were generated.</i> <i>4.7.2 An Acorn project shall not be incorporated by any other accounting program (e.g. compliance, voluntary or national GHG program) unless upon Acorn approval and with official agreement that demonstrates that no double counting is taking place.</i>
B. Guidance Notes for VVBs	Check the possibility of double counting from other accounting programs through discussions with local experts, the Local Partner and other projects (including any national or regional level GHG coordination unit).
C. Findings (describe)	Req. 4.7.1: All the required information is available in the Acorn registry. Req. 4.7.2: During the site visit and validation process, no evidence was found that there is an official letter from the national climate change secretary that

	the project areas certified under the ACORN protocol are not incorporated into national initiatives. As such a letter was present for the part of the project that falls under Aldea, it is likely that another confirmation for the entire project will be provided by the government. Solidaridad has been communicating with the Nicaraguan government about this, but expects that it will take time to get this confirmation as the relevant government entities are reorganizing. There is also some overlap with another carbon project “Taking Root”, discussions between Solidaridad, Taking Root and Plan Vivo have been working on a solution, to avoid double counting. But final proof of this still needs to be provided, therefore NIR 03/2024 VER was issued.		
D. Conformance	☒ Yes	☐ No	☐ N/A
E. Corrective Actions (describe)	NIR 03/2024 VER Evidence shall be provided to demonstrate that: - The project areas under the ACORN protocol are not incorporated into national initiatives - There is no overlapping between the Plan Vivo “Taking root” Project and this project		
F. Acorn’s Response (if applicable)	Acorn response (09/01/2026) Acorn shared evidence that there are no national initiatives. The local partner is working on solving the overlap, but in the meantime all plots with any overlap with Taking Root are removed from the verification package and the geojson-files. In this case even if the plot with overlap finally belongs to the Acorn project, these plots are not part of this verification. This is the most conservative solution while proceeding with the verification. The updated geojson file, where overlapping plots with the taking root project are removed, was shared. VVB response (06/02/2026 & 19/05/2026) The evidence shared by Acorn is sufficient to the first part of this NIR. And after confirmation from Plan Vivo that there currently is no overlap with “Taking root” Project, the second part of this NIR can be closed as well.		
G. Status (if applicable)	Closed		
H. Forward Actions (describe, if applicable)	None		

II. Others	N/A
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Carbon benefits

Sub-theme: Applicability conditions

Requirement 4.5 and 4 Applicability conditions from the methodology	
A. Requirement:	<i>Framework:</i> 4.5.1 All Acorn CRUs shall be generated based on the applicability conditions addressed in the Methodology. <i>Methodology:</i> 4.The applicability conditions from the methodology are the following one: a) The project intervention meets the agroforestry definition (see Section 3), and any trees planted are native or naturalized species. b) <i>The project area must not have been cleared of native vegetation within 5 years of the start of the project intervention.</i> c) <i>The project area consists of individual plots that are between 0.1 and 10 ha.</i> d) <i>All land within the project area is either cropland or degraded land and not on wetlands in the baseline scenario.</i> e) <i>The project interventions must not include activities that increase the total number, weight or number of grazing days for any livestock type, relative to the baseline scenario.</i> f) <i>The project intervention must not include the planned harvesting of planted trees during or after the crediting period.</i> g) <i>Heavy machinery must not be used for site preparation or management.</i> h) <i>The project intervention must not increase the use of synthetic (nitrogen-containing) fertilizers relative to the baseline scenario.</i> i) Soil disturbance attributable to the project intervention must not occur on more than 10% of the plot that is under any of the following types of land: ○ Land containing organic soils;

	○ Land which, in the baseline, is subjected to land-use and management practices and receives inputs listed in Annex 2 of Methodology.
B. Guidance Notes for VVBs	Check the following issues for the new farmers onboarding the project: -Through interviews with Local Partner and participants, assess whether the Local Partner promotes the use of native species in agroforestry systems. -Assess the evidence to demonstrate that the land was not cleared prior to the project intervention with satellite imagery (5 years prior to the smallholder joining the project). -Prior or during the site visit, the VVB can check that the areas of sampled project sites are less than 10ha via the remote-sensing polygons previously obtained by Acorn. If, when visiting the site, the boundary of the polygon appears to map appropriately onto the boundary of the smallholder's land, then the smallholder's land is likely less than 10 ha. -During site visits and interviews with the smallholders, check with the smallholders whether the activities of the project, or income from the project, have or will likely result in an increase in their total number, weight or number of grazing days for any livestock type.
C. Findings (describe)	In the on-site visit, by direct observation and during the interviews with farmers, it was confirmed that the current land use of all farms visited during the verification is cropland. All of them are coffee or cacao crops, sometimes accompanied by different food crops. Some of the farmers visited have already started with agroforestry practices, planting some trees on their farms. During the interviews and site visit, it was confirmed that none of the lands included in the project are used for cattle ranching. No wetlands were identified during the visit and based on the reviewed documentation; the project boundary does not include wetlands. The ADD includes in Part F the list of species selected for the new agroforestry system, classifying them as native or naturalized and including a description of the potential impacts and/or benefits of naturalized species. According to the local partner and the nursery, all of them are native or naturalized. It was confirmed during the interviews with the farmers that the species are commonly used in the forestry and agricultural sectors. No negative potential impacts of these species have been confirmed. The project species have been observed in the project area, outside the project boundary, as common tree species used in agroforestry activities. During the visit, it was confirmed that the local partner is aware of the importance of using native species and that the planting activities are done using a mix of species with different objectives (fruit, shade, soil improvement) and no harvesting of planted trees is planned during or after the crediting period.

	The use of heavy machinery is prohibited for site preparation. It was confirmed during the site visit and interviews that the farmers do not use heavy machinery for planting or harvesting. The GIS file provided to the validators shows that all the farms included are less than 10 ha. During the field visit the boundary of some randomly selected plots was measured using GPS, and it was confirmed that the plots size is less than 10 ha.		
D. Conformance	☒	☐	☐
	Yes	No	N/A
E. Corrective Actions (describe)	None		
F. Acorn's Response (if applicable)	N/A		
G. Status (if applicable)	N/A		
H. Forward Actions (describe, if applicable)	None		
III. Others	N/A		

Sub-Theme: Carbon Baseline

Section 6 Carbon Baseline pre-project tree adjustment factor from Methodology	
A. Requirement:	<i>Methodology:</i> If the potential change in pre-project tree biomass is less than 5% of the expected increase in tree biomass expected to result from the project intervention, estimated using an appropriate tree or stand growth models, the carbon stock aboveground and belowground biomass of pre-project trees can be set at zero in the baseline scenario. Otherwise, measurements from sample plots must be used to define an appropriate adjustment factor with Equation 1 to Equation 3 and Table 3. of the methodology. The sample plot data used must allow for distinction between pre-project trees and trees planted as part of the intervention. In project regions where pre-project tree biomass varies substantially between plots (e.g. by more than 10%),

	calculating a separate adjustment factor for each stratum is likely to reduce the number of samples required to obtain an acceptable level of precision. A minimum of 30 randomly selected sample plots must be measured per stratum. Project may further stratify or use y-1 to optimize measurement.		
B. Guidance Notes for VVBs	Check the pre-project tree adjustment factor via the adjustment factor calculation spreadsheet provided prior by Acorn. Check the formulas in the excel provided and the re-measurement some plots during the on-site visit. Are the formulas correctly applied in the excel spreadsheet?		
C. Findings (describe)	As remote sensing is used for the monitoring of tree biomass, carbon baseline cannot be set as zero. Therefore, Acorn has estimated Pre-project adjustment factor based on the Acorn methodology at 50. The adjustment factor for baseline removal has been calculated using growth models and not using measured data. This adjustment factor has been estimated by comparing project year 2018 and year 2024. The estimated percentage change in tree biomass in year “y” that is attributed to pre-project trees (EETBy) plus the Adjustment for the uncertainty of EETBy,s (AdjUEETBy,s) was calculated between 50% and 75%. However, based on the observations in the field visit and on the forestry expertise of the audit team, there is enough information to confirm that this value should be close 100% or at least higher than 50%. In the big majority of the 24 visited plots, project trees have not been planted. The current biomass changes in these first project years are mainly due to the growth of pre-existing trees. The use of an average adjustment factor for 6 years is not considered a conservative approach for the first years of the project, when, because of the sigmoid growth of the biomass, the growth is slower. The Data package provided shows the estimated growth of pre-existing trees compared to the total number of trees, modelled and real. The adjustment factor for the baseline is calculated based on the estimated pre-project tree biomass growth and its uncertainty adjustment factor. The formulas are correctly applied, and the Adjustment factor is properly estimated.		
D. Conformance	Yes ☒	No ☐	N/A ☐
E. Corrective Actions (describe)	None		
F. Acorn's Response (if applicable)	N/A		

G. Status (if applicable)	N/A
H. Forward Actions (describe, if applicable)	None
I. Others	N/A

Sub- Theme: Model development

Requirement 4.5.4. and Section 7.1.1,7.1.2., 7.1.3. and 7.1.4 from methodology	
A. Requirement:	<i>Framework:</i> <i>4.5.5. Acorn shall check the accuracy of the satellite measurement on a sample basis every year, and satellite measurements shall be verified every three years by an independent and qualified verification body.</i> <i>Methodology:</i> <i>7.1.1. Data from sample plots are used to calibrate models for estimating tree biomass from satellite imagery. Sample plots used for model calibration must meet the requirements 1-4 of the methodology.</i> <i>7.1.2. Sources of satellite imagery that can be used include, but are not limited to, those given in the Table 4 of the methodology.</i> <i>7.1.3 Machine learning models for estimating tree biomass from satellite imagery must be calibrated using sample plot data for each ecoregion they are applied to. A minimum of 30 sample plots⁷ must be used to calibrate the model for each eco-region, and a further set of at least 20 sample plots that are not used for model calibration must be used to assess model uncertainty. The number of plots used for model calibration and accuracy assessment should be determined based on data availability, variability in the landscape and the desired level of precision.</i> <i>7.1.5 The accuracy criteria is based on the withheld validation dataset. The expected accuracy of the model is 70% (with an uncertainty of 30%), calculated on 90% of the validation set. If multiple remote sensing partners are building models for the same ecoregion, the model with the lowest uncertainty is selected for use.</i>
B. Guidance Notes for VVBs	During field visit(s) collect ground truth data, do the plots meet the above requirements and does it appear that the trees have been appropriately measured?

	Check the model uncertainty and model calibration calculation spreadsheet provided prior by Acorn. Check the formulas in the excel provided and the re-measurement some plots during the on-site visit. Are the formulas correctly applied in the excel spreadsheet?		
C. Findings (describe)	During the site visit, the following findings were identified regarding ground truth data collection: Field measurements: during the GT collection, the verification team visited, together with Acorn staff (Acorn team) and the field team (Foresolution) doing the GT collection. During the visit, it was possible to measure some plots with them and to re-measure some plots with the Acorn team. Acorn has provided a SOP document, including Quality assurance and control procedures, adapted from section 4.3.4 of the good practice guidance for Land Use, Land-Use change and Forestry, from the IPCC. The data collected following the protocol can be made available to the verifier/validator if required. Acorn has implemented an additional step incorporating high-resolution imagery and Lidar data. Verification team remeasurement: During the on-site visit, the verification team measured 3 GT subplots from the 30 GT plots measured. As we are still lacking information from Acorn on which plots in the data package match with the plots that were measured by the verification team, further evaluation of the correctness of the ground truth data is not yet possible. As not all information is shared with the VVB to check the ground truth plots CAR 01/2024 VER is issued.		
D. Conformance	Yes ☐	No ☒	N/A ☐
E. Corrective Actions (describe)	CAR 01/2024 VER converted to FAR 01/2024 VER Information on witch plots match the GT plots measured by the verification team shall be shared. FAR 01/2024 VER Acorn shall demonstrate quality assurance and control procedures regarding the ground truth are correctly implemented in the field.		
F. Acorn's Response (if applicable)	Acorn response (09/01/2026 & 02/02/2026) Acorn shared updated data packages for coffee and cacao, including information to match the GT plots measured by the verification team. VVB response (06/02/2026) While some of the measurements from the GT team and the verification team are very similar, some plots show significant differences (>5%). These		

	discrepancies are likely due to the inherent difficulty of measuring exactly the same plot. Since the GT team's measurements do not affect the conservativeness of the verification results, we believe it is reasonable to convert the CAR into a FAR , with the requirement that quality assurance and control procedures are implemented before closing the FAR.		
G. Status (if applicable)	Outstanding		
H. Forward Actions (describe, if applicable)	Forward Action	Why Unresolved	How to resolve
	See section E. Corrective Actions, and Table 2– Summary of open Forward Actions	See section E. Corrective Actions, and Table 2– Summary of open Forward Actions	See section E. Corrective Actions, and Table 2– Summary of open Forward Actions
I. Others	N/A		

Sub-Theme: Model application

4.5.2. Requirement, Section 7.2.1 and Section 7.2.2

A. Requirement:	<i>Framework:</i> 4.5.2 All Acorn CRUs shall incorporate AGB and BGB. In this version of the Framework, soil is excluded for conservativeness. <i>Methodology:</i> 7.2.1 Aboveground biomass is estimated using a machine learning model. The model is applied to satellite imagery acquired at the time of farmer onboarding (or when required). The model makes an estimate of the total biomass within the plot. 7.2.2. If tree biomass is estimated using satellite imagery, change in tree biomass must be calculated using Equation 5. This approach estimates the change in carbon stock in trees as the difference between two successive and independent carbon stock estimates. $\Delta TB_{y,s} = (AGB_y - AGB_{y-1}) \cdot (1 + R) \cdot CF \cdot \frac{44}{12} \cdot (1 - AdjU)$ Equation 1 <i>Where:</i>
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	$\Delta TB_{y,s}$ = Change in carbon stock in aboveground and belowground tree biomass in stratum s , in year y (t CO ₂ eq) after uncertainty discount AGB_y = Aboveground tree biomass per plot in year y (metric tons of dry matter) AGB_{y-1} = Aboveground tree biomass per plot in year $y-1$ (metric tons of dry matter) R = Root-shoot ratio to calculate the belowground biomass factor CF = Carbon fraction of tree biomass $\frac{44}{12}$ = Conversion from carbon to carbon dioxide $AdjU$ = Adjustment factor for uncertainty		
B. Guidance Notes for VVBs	At desk review check whether above equation has properly been executed and result in real and measurable results in the excel spreadsheet provided by Acorn. Are the formulas correctly applied in the excel spreadsheet?		
C. Findings (describe)	Based on the review of the provided Excel files with project GHG calculations (Data package Solidaridad Nicaragua Coffee) it can be confirmed that the calculation of the Change in carbon stock in aboveground and belowground tree biomass was performed following The Acorn Methodology V1.1. and its Equation 6.		
D. Conformance	Yes ☒	No ☐	N/A ☐
E. Corrective Actions (describe)	None		
F. Acorn's Response (if applicable)	N/A		
G. Status (if applicable)	N/A		
H. Forward Actions (describe, if applicable)	None		
I. Others	N/A		

Sub- Theme: Uncertainty adjustment factor

Requirements 4.5.4. from Framework and 7.3 from the Methodology

A. Requirement:	<i>Framework:</i> <i>4.5.4 All Acorn CRUs shall be adjusted, if required, for uncertainty in the AGB estimates derived from the carbon model. Acorn aims for conservative estimates that take model error and sampling error into account. Further details can be found in the Methodology.</i> <i>Methodology:</i> <i>7.3 The uncertainty value per project is calculated by dividing the confidence value for individual project by the change in above ground biomass within one measuring period (Equation 7).</i>		
B. Guidance Notes for VVBs	Check the uncertainty adjustment factor via the adjustment factor calculation provided prior by Acorn. Can this be justified/confirmed on a project level? Are the formulas correctly applied in the excel spreadsheet?		
C. Findings (describe)	In the review of the documentation provided by Acorn, it was confirmed that the Uncertainty adjustment factor was calculated following the methodology and using equations 1 and 7. The audit team has estimated the uncertainty for the 30 GT plots measured by the Acorn team at the time of verification, during the site visit. The uncertainty value for the GT plots collected during the site visit is similar to the one estimated for the GT plots measured, used for model validation (0.09). Nevertheless, 14 plots out of the 30 GT plots have been discarded from the 2024 measurements, which does not meet the Acorn methodology requirement. Furthermore, the uncertainty adjustment factor has not been applied at the individual plot level. Therefor CAR 02/2024 VER was issued.		
D. Conformance	Yes ☒	No ☐	N/A ☐
E. Corrective Actions (describe)	CAR 02/2024 VER According to the Acorn Methodology, to calculate the error of the Acorn model, measurements from 30 plots are needed. All 30 plots shall be considered for the verification assessment to calculate the error of the model. The Data package shall be updated to include the 30 plots.		
F. Acorn's Response (if applicable)	Acorn response (09/01/2026 & 02/02/2026) Acorn shared updated data packages for coffee and cacao, including updated uncertainty adjustment factor and pre-project tree adjustment factor, calculated using 20 plots, which is the minimum number of plots to take into		

	account to calculate model error is 20 according to Methodology V1.0 Section 7.1.3. VVB response (06/02/2026) The evidence shared by Acorn is sufficient to close the first part of this CAR, related to the number of plots taken into account. However the uncertainty adjustment factor is still applied at the ecoregion level and not at the individual plot level. Acorn response (15/05/2026) Acorn shared updated data packages for coffee and cacao where the uncertainty adjustment factor has been applied at the individual plot level. VVB response (19/05/2026) The evidence shared by Acorn is sufficient to close this CAR.		
G. Status (if applicable)	Closed		
H. Forward Actions (describe, if applicable)	Forward Action	Why Unresolved	How to resolve
	See section E. Corrective Actions		
I. Others	N/A		

Sub-theme: Leakage

Requirement 4.6.1, 4.6.2 from Framework and 8 from Methodology.	
A. Requirement:	<i>Framework:</i> 4.6.1 All Acorn projects should identify potential sources of negative leakages and the location(s) where this leakage may occur. 4.6.2 Where leakage is likely to be significant, a specific leakage mitigation and monitoring plan should be established and a conservative adjustment factor should be applied to the CRU calculations according to the Methodology. <i>Methodology:</i> 8. The likelihood of activity shifting leakage (displacement of farmer activity leading to an increase in emissions outside the project area) must be assessed using Equation 9 to determine an appropriate leakage adjustment. To come up with a conservative deduction, the following three parameters are evaluated: i) which activities may be displaced?, ii) where would the

	<i>activity be displaced to?, and iii) what amount of emissions would be associated with the displacement? Market leakage from changes in production by smallholders is not expected to be significant and is assumed to be zero.</i>		
B. Guidance Notes for VVBs	Check the listed sources of leakage and, by comparing against discussions with local experts, the Local Partner and participants, comment on the appropriateness of the: - o Sources of leakage listed and their perceived significance. Is the leakage adjustment factor (AdjL) therefore appropriate for the level of leakage risk? - o Mitigation measures. Have they already started? - o Check the leakage adjustment factor via the adjustment factor information provided prior by Acorn. Can this be justified/confirmed on a project level with what the VVB sees during the field visits? For projects where leakage is significant, please double check the calculation in the excel spreadsheet provided by Acorn and against equation 9 of the methodology. Are the formulas correctly applied in the excel spreadsheet?		
C. Findings (describe)	The ADD in Part M. 2. gives an adjustment factor for Leakage of 0%. Leakage is not expected, and the project activity is not expected to lead to GHG emissions outside the project boundary. Solidaridad Nicaragua and Acorn do not expect potential displacement of pre-project activities due to the project implementation. During the site visit enough evidence was gathered to confirm that, if existing, potential leakage will be negligible. In the case of livestock, it is not a common practice in the project area due to incompatibilities with coffee production; none of the farmers interviewed have animals, and if they do, they are outside of the project farms. Agroforestry is expected to increase the productivity of the current crops, or at least not decrease it, therefore, no displacement of agricultural activities is expected.		
D. Conformance	Yes ☒	No ☐	N/A ☐
E. Corrective Actions (describe)	None		
F. Acorn's Response (if applicable)	N/A		
G. Status (if applicable)	N/A		
H. Forward Actions	None		

(describe, if applicable)	
I. Others	N/A

Sub-Theme: Quantification of carbon benefits

Requirement 4.5.3 from Framework and Section 9 Quantification of carbon benefits from methodology			
A. Requirement:	<i>Framework:</i> 4.5.3. All Acorn projects should be monitored by satellite monitoring technologies to calculate the available CRUs per plot per year according to the Methodology. <i>Methodology:</i> 9. Carbon Removal Units (CRUs) are calculated using equation 11. $CB_y = PR_y \cdot \frac{1}{1+BP} \cdot (1 - AdjB_s) \cdot (1 - AdjL)$ Equation 11 <i>Where:</i> CB_y = Carbon benefit for a plot in year y (t CO₂eq) PR_y = Carbon removal for a plot in year y (t CO₂eq) BP = Buffer pool percentage $AdjB_s$ = Adjustment factor for baseline removal for plots in stratum s $AdjL$ = Adjustment factor for leakage		
B. Guidance Notes for VVBs	Please double check the calculation in the excel spreadsheet provided by Acorn and against equation 11 of the methodology. Are the formulas correctly applied in the excel spreadsheet?		
C. Findings (describe)	Based on the review of the provided Excel files with project GHG calculations (Data package Solidaridad Nicaragua Coffee) it can be confirmed that the calculation of CRUs was performed following The Acorn Methodology V1.1. and Equation 11.		
D. Conformance	Yes ☒	No ☐	N/A ☐

E. Corrective Actions (describe)	None
F. Acorn's Response (if applicable)	N/A
G. Status (if applicable)	N/A
H. Forward Actions (describe, if applicable)	None
J. Others	N/A