

# Package ‘GPvecchia’

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**Description** Fast scalable Gaussian process approximations, particularly well suited to spatial (aerial, remote-sensed) and environmental data, described in more detail in Katzfuss and Guinness (2017) <[arXiv:1708.06302](#)>. Package also contains a fast implementation of the incomplete Cholesky decomposition (IC0), based on Schaefer et al. (2019) <[arXiv:1706.02205](#)> and MaxMin ordering proposed in Guinness (2018) <[arXiv:1609.05372](#)>.

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**License** GPL (>= 2)

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### calculate\_posterior\_VL

*Vecchia Laplace extension of GPVecchia for non-Gaussian data*

#### Description

Vecchia Laplace extension of GPVecchia for non-Gaussian data

#### Usage

```
calculate_posterior_VL(
  z,
  vecchia.approx,
  likelihood_model = c("gaussian", "logistic", "poisson", "gamma", "beta", "gamma_alt"),
  covparms,
  covmodel = "matern",
  likparms = list(alpha = 2, sigma = sqrt(0.1)),
```

```

max_iter = 50,
convg = 1e-06,
return_all = FALSE,
y_init = NA,
prior_mean = rep(0, length(z)),
verbose = FALSE
)

```

**Arguments**

<code>z</code>	an array of real numbers representing observations
<code>vecchia.approx</code>	a vecchia object as generated by <code>vecchia_specify()</code>
<code>likelihood_model</code>	text describing likelihood model to be used for observations. Can be "gaussian", "logistic", "poisson", "gamma", or "beta"
<code>covparms</code>	covariance parameters as a vector
<code>covmodel</code>	type of the model covariance or selected elements of the covariance matrix
<code>likparms</code>	likelihood parameters for the <code>likelihood_model</code> , as a list. Default values are <code>sqrt(.1)</code> for Gaussian noise and 2 for the alpha parameter for Gamma data.
<code>max_iter</code>	maximum iterations to perform
<code>convg</code>	convergence criteria. End iterations if the Newton step is this small
<code>return_all</code>	Return additional posterior covariance terms, TRUE or FALSE
<code>y_init</code>	Specify initial guess for posterior mode
<code>prior_mean</code>	specify the prior latent mean
<code>verbose</code>	if TRUE messages about the posterior estimation will be displayed

**Value**

multivariate normal posterior parameters calculated by the Vecchia-Laplace approximation

**Examples**

```

z=rnorm(10); locs=matrix(1:10,ncol=1); vecchia.approx=vecchia_specify(locs,m=5)
calculate_posterior_VL(z,vecchia.approx,"gaussian",covparms=c(1,2,.5))

```

---

`createL`

*create the sparse triangular L matrix for specific parameters*

---

**Description**

create the sparse triangular L matrix for specific parameters

**Usage**

```
createL(vecchia.approx, covmodel, covparms = NULL)
```

**Arguments**

- `vecchia.approx` object returned by [vecchia\\_specify](#)  
`covmodel` covariance model. currently implemented: matern: with covparms (var,range,smoothness) esqe: exponential + squared exp with covparms (var1,range1,var2,range2) If covmodel is a function it has to be able to take a distance matrix and return a vector with distances which is of length k.  
`covparms` vector of covariance parameters

**Value**

list containing the sparse lower triangular L,

**Examples**

```
z=rnorm(9); locs=matrix(1:9,ncol=1); vecchia.approx=vecchia_specify(locs,m=5)
L = createL(vecchia.approx, covparms=c(1,2,.5), 'matern')
```

createU

*create the sparse triangular U matrix for specific parameters*

**Description**

create the sparse triangular U matrix for specific parameters

**Usage**

```
createU(vecchia.approx, covparms, nuggets, covmodel = "matern")
```

**Arguments**

- `vecchia.approx` object returned by [vecchia\\_specify](#)  
`covparms` vector of covariance parameters  
`nuggets` nugget variances – if a scalar is provided, variance is assumed constant  
`covmodel` covariance model. currently implemented:

**Value**

list containing the sparse upper triangular U, plus additional objects required for other functions

**Examples**

```
z=rnorm(9); locs=matrix(1:9,ncol=1); vecchia.approx=vecchia_specify(locs,m=5)
U.obj=createU(vecchia.approx,covparms=c(1,2,.5),nuggets=.2)
```

---

`getMatCov`

*extract the required elements from the covariance matrix*

---

### Description

This function takes the entire covariance matrix and creates a matrix of covariances based on the vecchia approximatio object

### Usage

```
getMatCov(V, covariances, factor = FALSE)
```

### Arguments

V	the object returned by vecchia_specify
covariances	The full covariance matrix or a covariance function
factor	True if we are passing a factor of a matrix

### Value

matrix of size n x (m+1) with only those elements that are used by the incomplete Cholesky decomposition

---

`getMatCovFromFactorCpp`

*Calculate the covariance values required by HV for matrix factors passed as sparse matrices*

---

### Description

Calculate the covariance values required by HV for matrix factors passed as sparse matrices

### Usage

```
getMatCovFromFactorCpp(F, revNNarray)
```

### Arguments

F	factor of a matrix in a sparse format
revNNarray	array with the neighbourhood structure

### Value

matrix with covariance values

GPvecchia

*GPvecchia: fast, scalable Gaussian process approximations***Description**

The package can be used for parameter inference and prediction for Gaussian and non-Gaussian spatial data using many popular GP approximation methods.

**ic0**

*Incomplete Cholesky decomposition of a sparse matrix passed in the compressed sparse row format*

**Description**

Incomplete Cholesky decomposition of a sparse matrix passed in the compressed sparse row format

**Usage**

```
ic0(ptrs, inds, vals)
```

**Arguments**

ptrs	pointers to the beginning of the row
inds	indices of nonzero elements in a row
vals	nonzero values

**Value**

vector of the values of the incomplete Cholesky factor

**ichol**

*Wrapper for incomplete Cholesky decomposition*

**Description**

Wrapper for incomplete Cholesky decomposition

**Usage**

```
ichol(M, S = NULL)
```

**Arguments**

- M                   the matrix to be decomposed  
 S                   sparsity pattern matrix given

**Value**

the incomplete Cholesky factor in the sparse format

**Examples**

```
A = matrix(runif(25), ncol = 5)
A = t(A) * A + 2 * Matrix::Diagonal(5)
S = Matrix::Matrix(c(rep(1, 5), c(0, 1, 1, 0, 0), c(0, 0, 1, 0, 1),
c(0, 0, 0, 1, 0), c(0, 0, 0, 0, 1)), ncol = 5, byrow = TRUE)
I1 = ichol(A, S)
I2 = ichol(A * S)
```

MaternFun

*Calculate Matern covariance function***Description**

Calculate Matern covariance function

**Usage**

```
MaternFun(distmat, covparms)
```

**Arguments**

- distmat           A matrix with distances between points  
 covparms         A vector with parameters (marg. variance, range, smoothness)

**Value**

A matrix with covariance values corresponding to the distance matrix

`order_coordinate`      *Sorted coordinate ordering*

### Description

Return the ordering of locations sorted along one of the coordinates or the sum of multiple coordinates

### Usage

```
order_coordinate(locs, coordinate)
```

### Arguments

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <code>locs</code>       | A matrix of locations. Each row of <code>locs</code> contains a location, which can be a point in Euclidean space $R^d$ , a point in space-time $R^d \times T$ , a longitude and latitude (in degrees) giving a point on the sphere, or a longitude, latitude, and time giving a point in the sphere-time domain.             |
| <code>coordinate</code> | integer or vector of integers in $\{1, \dots, d\}$ . If a single integer, coordinates are ordered along that coordinate. If multiple integers, coordinates are ordered according to the sum of specified coordinate values. For example, when $d=2$ , <code>coordinate = c(1, 2)</code> orders from bottom left to top right. |

### Value

A vector of indices giving the ordering, i.e. the first element of this vector is the index of the first location.

### Examples

```
n <- 100          # Number of locations
d <- 2            # dimension of domain
locs <- matrix( runif(n*d), n, d )
ord1 <- order_coordinate(locs, 1 )
ord12 <- order_coordinate(locs, c(1,2) )
```

`order_dist_to_point`      *Distance to specified point ordering*

### Description

Return the ordering of locations increasing in their distance to some specified location

### Usage

```
order_dist_to_point(locs, loc0, lonlat = FALSE)
```

**Arguments**

locs	A matrix of locations. Each row of locs contains a location, which can be a point in Euclidean space $R^d$ , a point in space-time $R^d \times T$ , a longitude and latitude (in degrees) giving a point on the sphere, or a longitude, latitude, and time giving a point in the sphere-time domain.
loc0	A vector containing a single location in $R^d$ .
lonlat	TRUE/FALSE whether locations are longitudes and latitudes.

**Value**

A vector of indices giving the ordering, i.e. the first element of this vector is the index of the location nearest to loc0.

**Examples**

```
n <- 100          # Number of locations
d <- 2            # dimension of domain
locs <- matrix( runif(n*d), n, d )
loc0 <- c(1/2,1/2)
ord <- order_dist_to_point(locs,loc0)
```

order\_maxmin\_exact      *Maximum minimum distance ordering*

**Description**

Return the indices of an exact maximum-minimum distance ordering. The first point is chosen as the "center" point, minimizing L2 distance. Dimensions d=2 and d=3 handled separately, dimensions d=1 and d>3 handled similarly. Algorithm is exact and scales quasilinearly.

**Usage**

```
order_maxmin_exact(locs)
```

**Arguments**

locs	Observation locations
------	-----------------------

**Value**

A vector of indices giving the ordering, i.e. the first element of this vector is the index of the first location.

**Examples**

```
n=100; locs <- cbind(runif(n),runif(n))
ord <- order_maxmin_exact(locs)
```

**order\_maxmin\_exact\_obs\_pred***Maximum minimum distance ordering for prediction***Description**

Return the indices of an exact maximum-minimum distance ordering. The first point is chosen as the "center" point, minimizing L2 distance. Dimensions d=2 and d=3 handled separately, dimensions d=1 and d>3 handled similarly. Algorithm is exact and scales quasilinearly.

**Usage**

```
order_maxmin_exact_obs_pred(locs, locs_pred)
```

**Arguments**

locs	Observation locations
locs_pred	Prediction locations

**Value**

A vector of indices giving the ordering, i.e. the first element of this vector is the index of the first location.

**Examples**

```
n=100; locs <- cbind(runif(n),runif(n))
locs_pred = cbind(runif(n), runif(n))
ord <- order_maxmin_exact_obs_pred(locs, locs_pred)
```

**order\_middleout***Middle-out ordering***Description**

Return the ordering of locations increasing in their distance to the average location

**Usage**

```
order_middleout(locs, lonlat = FALSE)
```

**Arguments**

locs	A matrix of locations. Each row of locs contains a location, which can be a point in Euclidean space $R^d$ , a point in space-time $R^d \times T$ , a longitude and latitude (in degrees) giving a point on the sphere, or a longitude, latitude, and time giving a point in the sphere-time domain.
lonlat	TRUE/FALSE whether locations are longitudes and latitudes.

**Value**

A vector of indices giving the ordering, i.e. the first element of this vector is the index of the location nearest the center.

**Examples**

```
n <- 100          # Number of locations
d <- 2            # dimension of domain
locs <- matrix( runif(n*d), n, d )
ord <- order_middleout(locs)
```

order_outsidein	<i>Outside-in ordering</i>
-----------------	----------------------------

**Description**

Return the ordering of locations decreasing in their distance to the average location. Reverses middleout.

**Usage**

```
order_outsidein(locs, lonlat = FALSE)
```

**Arguments**

locs	A matrix of locations. Each row of locs contains a location, which can be a point in Euclidean space $R^d$ , a point in space-time $R^d \times T$ , a longitude and latitude (in degrees) giving a point on the sphere, or a longitude, latitude, and time giving a point in the sphere-time domain.
lonlat	TRUE/FALSE whether locations are longitudes and latitudes.

**Value**

A vector of indices giving the ordering, i.e. the first element of this vector is the index of the location farthest from the center.

**Examples**

```
n <- 100          # Number of locations
d <- 2            # dimension of domain
locs <- matrix( runif(n*d), n, d )
ord <- order_outsidein(locs)
```

SelInv

*selected inverse of a sparse matrix***Description**

selected inverse of a sparse matrix

**Usage**

SelInv(cholmat)

**Arguments**

cholmat      cholesky factor L of a positive definite sparseMatrix A

**Value**

sparse inverse of A, with same sparsity pattern as L

**Examples**

```
A=Matrix::sparseMatrix(1:9,1:9,x=4); L=Matrix::chol(A)
SelInv(L)
```

V2covmat

*compute covariance matrix from V.ord Do not run this function for large n or n.p!!!***Description**

compute covariance matrix from V.ord Do not run this function for large n or n.p!!!

**Usage**

V2covmat(preds)

**Arguments**

preds      Object returned by vecchia\_prediction()

**Value**

Covariance matrix at all locations in original order

**Examples**

```
z=rnorm(5)
locs=matrix(1:5,ncol=1)
vecchia_specify=function(z,locs,m=5,locs.pred=(1:5)+.5)
V2covmat(vecchia_prediction(vecchia.approx,covparms=c(1,2,.5),nuggets=.2))
```

vecchia_estimate	<i>estimate mean and covariance parameters of a Matern covariance function using Vecchia</i>
------------------	--

**Description**

estimate mean and covariance parameters of a Matern covariance function using Vecchia

**Usage**

```
vecchia_estimate(
  data,
  locs,
  X,
  m = 20,
  covmodel = "matern",
  theta.ini,
  output.level = 1,
  reltol = sqrt(.Machine$double.eps),
  ...
)
```

**Arguments**

<code>data</code>	data vector of length n
<code>locs</code>	n x d matrix of spatial locations
<code>X</code>	n x p matrix of trend covariates. default is vector of ones (constant trend). set to NULL if data are already detrended
<code>m</code>	number of neighbors for vecchia approximation. default is 20
<code>covmodel</code>	covariance model. default is Matern. see <a href="#">vecchia_likelihood</a> for details.
<code>theta.ini</code>	initial values of covariance parameters. nugget variance must be last.
<code>output.level</code>	passed on to trace in the <code>stats::optim</code> function
<code>reltol</code>	tolerance for the optimization function; by default set to the sqrt of machine precision
<code>...</code>	additional input parameters for <a href="#">vecchia_specify</a>

**Value**

object containing detrended data z, trend coefficients beta.hat, covariance parameters theta.hat, and other quantities necessary for prediction

**Examples**

```
n=10^2; locs=cbind(runif(n),runif(n))
covparms=c(1,.1,.5); nuggets=rep(.1,n)
Sigma=exp(-fields::rdist(locs)/covparms[2])+diag(nuggets)
z=as.numeric(t(chol(Sigma))%*%rnorm(n));
data=z+1
vecchia.est=vecchia_estimate(data,locs,theta.ini=c(covparms,nuggets[1]))
```

**vecchia\_laplace\_likelihood**

*Wrapper for VL version of vecchia\_likelihood*

**Description**

Wrapper for VL version of vecchia\_likelihood

**Usage**

```
vecchia_laplace_likelihood(
  z,
  vecchia.approx,
  likelihood_model,
  covparms,
  likparms = list(alpha = 2, sigma = sqrt(0.1)),
  covmodel = "matern",
  max.iter = 50,
  convg = 1e-05,
  return_all = FALSE,
  y_init = NA,
  prior_mean = rep(0, length(z)),
  vecchia.approx.IW = NA
)
```

**Arguments**

<code>z</code>	an array of real numbers representing observations
<code>vecchia.approx</code>	a vecchia object as generated by vecchia_specify()
<code>likelihood_model</code>	text describing likelihood model to be used for observations
<code>covparms</code>	covariance parameters as a vector

likparms	likelihood parameters for the likelihood_model, as a list
covmodel	describes the covariance model, "matern" by default
max_iter	maximum iterations to perform
convg	convergence criteria. End iterations if the Newton step is this small
return_all	Return additional posterior covariance terms
y_init	Specify initial guess for posterior mode
prior_mean	specify the prior latent mean
vecchia.approx.IW	an optional vecchia approximation object, can reduce computation if method is called repeatedly

**Value**

(multivariate normal) loglikelihood implied by the Vecchia approximation

**Examples**

```
z=rnorm(10); locs=matrix(1:10,ncol=1); vecchia.approx=vecchia_specify(locs,m=5)
vecchia_laplace_likelihood(z,vecchia.approx,"gaussian",covparms=c(1,2,.5))
```

`vecchia_laplace_likelihood_from_posterior`

*Wrapper for VL version of vecchia\_likelihood*

**Description**

Wrapper for VL version of vecchia\_likelihood

**Usage**

```
vecchia_laplace_likelihood_from_posterior(
  z,
  posterior,
  vecchia.approx,
  likelihood_model,
  covparms,
  likparms = list(alpha = 2, sigma = sqrt(0.1)),
  covmodel = "matern",
  max_iter = 50,
  convg = 1e-05,
  return_all = FALSE,
  y_init = NA,
  prior_mean = rep(0, length(z)),
  vecchia.approx.IW = NA
)
```

**Arguments**

<code>z</code>	an array of real numbers representing observations
<code>posterior</code>	posterior distribution obtained from calculate_posterior_VL()
<code>vecchia.approx</code>	a vecchia object as generated by vecchia_specify()
<code>likelihood_model</code>	text describing likelihood model to be used for observations
<code>covparms</code>	covariance parameters as a vector
<code>likparms</code>	likelihood parameters for the likelihood_model, as a list
<code>covmodel</code>	describes the covariance model, "matern" by default
<code>max_iter</code>	maximum iterations to perform
<code>convg</code>	convergence criteria. End iterations if the Newton step is this small
<code>return_all</code>	Return additional posterior covariance terms
<code>y_init</code>	Specify initial guess for posterior mode
<code>prior_mean</code>	specify the prior latent mean
<code>vecchia.approx.IW</code>	an optional vecchia approximation object, can reduce computation if method is called repeatedly

**Value**

(multivariate normal) loglikelihood implied by the Vecchia approximation

`vecchia_laplace_prediction`

*Wrapper for VL version of vecchia\_prediction*

**Description**

Wrapper for VL version of vecchia\_prediction

**Usage**

```
vecchia_laplace_prediction(
  vl_posterior,
  vecchia.approx,
  covparms,
  pred.mean = 0,
  var.exact = FALSE,
  covmodel = "matern",
  return.values = "all"
)
```

**Arguments**

vl_posterior	a posterior estimate object produced by calculate_posterior_VL
vecchia.approx	a vecchia object as generated by vecchia_specify()
covparms	covariance parameters as a vector
pred.mean	provides the prior latent mean for the prediction locations
var.exact	should prediction variances be computed exactly, or is a (faster) approximation acceptable
covmodel	covariance model, 'matern' by default.
return.values	either 'mean' only, 'meanvar', 'meanmat', or 'all'

**Value**

(multivariate normal) loglikelihood implied by the Vecchia approximation

**Examples**

```
z=rnorm(10); locs=matrix(1:10,ncol=1); vecchia.approx=vecchia_specify(locs,m=5)
vl_posterior = calculate_posterior_VL(z,vecchia.approx,"gaussian",covparms=c(1,2,.5))
locs.pred=matrix(1:10+.5,ncol=1)
vecchia.approx.pred = vecchia_specify(locs, m=5, locs.pred=locs.pred )
vecchia_laplace_prediction(vl_posterior,vecchia.approx.pred,covparms=c(1,2,.5))
```

vecchia\_likelihood      *evaluation of the likelihood*

**Description**

evaluation of the likelihood

**Usage**

```
vecchia_likelihood(z, vecchia.approx, covparms, nuggets, covmodel = "matern")
```

**Arguments**

z	the observed data
vecchia.approx	a vecchia object as generated by vecchia_specify()
covparms	covariance parameters as a vector
nuggets	either a single (constant) nugget or a vector of nugget terms for the observations
covmodel	covariance model, 'matern' by default

**Value**

(multivariate normal) loglikelihood implied by the Vecchia approximation

## Examples

```
z=rnorm(5); locs=matrix(1:5,ncol=1); vecchia.approx=vecchia_specify(locs,m=3)
vecchia_likelihood(z,vecchia.approx,covparms=c(1,2,.5),nuggets=.2)
```

vecchia_lincomb	<i>linear combination of predictions compute the distribution of a linear combination Hy</i>
-----------------	--

## Description

linear combination of predictions compute the distribution of a linear combination Hy

## Usage

```
vecchia_lincomb(H, U.obj, V.ord, cov.mat = FALSE)
```

## Arguments

H	sparse matrix with n.all columns specifying the linear combination
U.obj	U matrix is the full joint approximated cholesky matrix
V.ord	ordered V matrix from vecchia_prediction() or U2V()
cov.mat	logical TRUE or FALSE – should the entire covariance matrix be returned (only do if H has a small number of rows)

## Value

Variance of linear combination of predictions.

## Examples

```
n=5; z=rnorm(n); locs=matrix(1:n,ncol=1); n.p=5
vecchia.approx = vecchia_specify(locs,m=3,locs.pred=locs+.5)
preds=vecchia_prediction(z,vecchia.approx,covparms=c(1,2,.5),nuggets=.2)
H=Matrix::sparseMatrix(i=rep(1,n.p),j=n+(1:n.p),x=1/n.p)
vecchia_lincomb(H,vecchia.approx,preds$V.ord,cov.mat=TRUE)
```

---

vecchia_pred	<i>make spatial predictions using Vecchia based on estimated parameters</i>
--------------	---

---

**Description**

make spatial predictions using Vecchia based on estimated parameters

**Usage**

```
vecchia_pred(vecchia.est, locs.pred, X.pred, m = 30, ...)
```

**Arguments**

vecchia.est	object returned by <a href="#">vecchia_estimate</a>
locs.pred	n.p x d matrix of prediction locations
X.pred	n.p x p matrix of trend covariates at prediction locations. does not need to be specified if constant or no trend was used in <a href="#">vecchia_estimate</a>
m	number of neighbors for vecchia approximation. default is 30.
...	additional input parameters for <a href="#">vecchia_specify</a>

**Value**

object containing prediction means mean.pred and variances var.pred

**Examples**

```
n=10^2; locs=cbind(runif(n),runif(n))
covparms=c(1,.1,.5); nuggets=rep(.1,n)
Sigma=exp(-fields::rdist(locs)/covparms[2])+diag(nuggets)
z=as.numeric(t(chol(Sigma))%*%rnorm(n));
data=z+1
vecchia.est=vecchia_estimate(data,locs,theta.ini=c(covparms,nuggets[1]))
n.p=30^2; grid.oneside=seq(0,1,length=round(sqrt(n.p)))
locs.pred=as.matrix(expand.grid(grid.oneside,grid.oneside))
vecchia.pred=vecchia_pred(vecchia.est,locs.pred)
```

---

vecchia_prediction	<i>Vecchia prediction</i>
--------------------	---------------------------

---

## Description

Vecchia prediction

## Usage

```
vecchia_prediction(
  z,
  vecchia.approx,
  covparms,
  nuggets,
  var.exact,
  covmodel = "matern",
  return.values = "all"
)
```

## Arguments

<code>z</code>	observed data
<code>vecchia.approx</code>	a vecchia object as generated by <code>vecchia_specify()</code>
<code>covparms</code>	covariance parameters as a vector
<code>nuggets</code>	nugget
<code>var.exact</code>	should prediction variances be computed exactly, or is a (faster) approximation acceptable
<code>covmodel</code>	covariance model, 'matern' by default.
<code>return.values</code>	either 'mean' only, 'meanvar', 'meanmat', or 'all'

## Value

posterior mean and variances at observed and unobserved locations; V matrix

## Examples

```
z=rnorm(5); locs=matrix(1:5,ncol=1); vecchia.approx=vecchia_specify(locs,m=3,locs.pred=locs+.5)
vecchia_prediction(z,vecchia.approx,covparms=c(1,2,.5),nuggets=.2)
```

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<code>vecchia_specify</code>	<i>specify a general vecchia approximation</i>
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## Description

specify the vecchia approximation for later use in likelihood evaluation or prediction. This function does not depend on parameter values, and only has to be run once before repeated likelihood evaluations.

## Usage

```
vecchia_specify(
  locs,
  m = -1,
  ordering,
  cond.yz,
  locs.pred,
  ordering.pred,
  pred.cond,
  conditioning,
  mra.options = NULL,
  ic0 = FALSE,
  verbose = FALSE
)
```

## Arguments

<code>locs</code>	nxd matrix of observed locs
<code>m</code>	Number of nearby points to condition on
<code>ordering</code>	options are 'coord' or 'maxmin'
<code>cond.yz</code>	options are 'y', 'z', 'SGV', 'SGVT', 'RVP', 'LK', and 'zy'
<code>locs.pred</code>	nxd matrix of locations at which to make predictions
<code>ordering.pred</code>	options are 'obspred' or 'general'
<code>pred.cond</code>	prediction conditioning, options are 'general' or 'independent'
<code>conditioning</code>	conditioning on 'NN' (nearest neighbor) or 'firstm' (fixed set for low rank) or 'mra'
<code>mra.options</code>	Settings for number of levels and neighbors per level
<code>ic0</code>	Specifies if ic0 decomposition should be used as opposed to regular Cholesky
<code>verbose</code>	Provide more detail when using MRA calculations. Default is false.

## Value

An object that specifies the vecchia approximation for later use in likelihood evaluation or prediction.

**Examples**

```
locs=matrix(1:5,ncol=1); vecchia_specify(locs,m=2)
```

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