



THE INTEGRITY COUNCIL
FOR THE VOLUNTARY CARBON MARKET



Part 2: Core Carbon Principles

Definition of Core Carbon Principles

This document defines Core Carbon Principles (CCPs) for identifying high-quality carbon credits. The CCPs form the basis of the Integrity Council's Assessment Framework, which elaborates criteria for evaluating whether carbon credits and carbon-crediting programs reach a high-quality threshold. The CCPs are therefore intended to be read in conjunction with the Assessment Framework.

The CCPs define a threshold standard to ensure the integrity of the voluntary carbon market (VCM). The CCPs and the Assessment Framework have been developed in open dialogue with carbon-crediting programs and other stakeholders and are drawn from several sources. Sources include the Core Carbon Principles developed under the Taskforce on Scaling Voluntary Carbon Markets (TSVCM), the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's Paris Agreement and Cancun Safeguards, the Emissions Unit Criteria under the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSA) of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), [the Guidelines for avoiding double counting for CORSA](#), and the work of Calyx Global and the Carbon Credit Quality Initiative.

The CCPs are a full set of strong interlinked principles and must be read in their totality.

The CCPs are principles used to inform and guide the assessment of carbon-crediting programs and different types of carbon credits. Under the Integrity Council, carbon credits can also be tagged with additional attributes that point to a carbon credit's specific quality features. The attributes can be found in section 3 of this part.

The Core Carbon Principles

Additionality

The greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions or removals from the mitigation activity shall be additional, i.e., they would not have occurred in the absence of the incentive created by carbon credit revenues.

Section 8 of Assessment Framework and section G of Summary for Decision-Makers

Mitigation activity information

The carbon-crediting program shall provide comprehensive and transparent information on all credited mitigation activities. The information shall be publicly available in electronic format, and scrutiny of mitigation activities shall be accessible to non-specialised audiences.

Section 6 of Assessment Framework and section E of Summary for Decision-Makers

No double counting

The GHG emission reductions or removals from the mitigation activity shall not be double-counted, i.e., they shall only be counted once towards achieving mitigation targets or goals. Double counting covers double issuance, double claiming, and double use.

Section 4 of Assessment Framework and section C of Summary for Decision-Makers

Permanence

The GHG emission reductions or removals from the mitigation activity shall be permanent, or if they have a risk of reversal, any reversals shall be fully compensated.

Section 9 of Assessment Framework and section H of Summary for Decision-Makers

Program governance

The carbon-crediting program shall have effective program governance to ensure transparency, accountability and the overall quality of carbon credits.

Section 1 of Assessment Framework and section A of Summary for Decision-Makers

Registry

The carbon-crediting program shall operate or make use of a registry to uniquely identify, record and track mitigation activities and carbon credits issued to ensure credits can be identified securely and unambiguously.

Section 5 of Assessment Framework and section D of Summary for Decision-Makers

Robust independent third-party validation and verification

The carbon-crediting program shall have program-level requirements for robust independent third-party validation and verification of mitigation activities.

Section 3 of Assessment Framework and section B of Summary for Decision-Makers

Robust quantification of emission reductions and removals

The GHG emission reductions or removals from the mitigation activity shall be robustly quantified, based on conservative approaches, completeness and sound scientific methods.

Section 2 and 10 of Assessment Framework and section I of Summary for Decision-Makers

Sustainable development impacts and safeguards

The carbon-crediting program shall have clear guidance, tools and compliance procedures to ensure mitigation activities conform with or go beyond widely established best industry best practices on social and environmental safeguards while delivering on net positive sustainable development impacts.

Section 7 of the Assessment Framework and section F of Summary for Decision-Makers

Transition towards net-zero emissions

The mitigation activity shall avoid locking in levels of emissions, technologies or carbon-intensive practices that are incompatible with achieving net zero emissions by mid-century.

Section 11 of the Assessment Framework and section J of Summary for Decision-Makers

Annex A

Attributes of carbon credits

This section describes which attributes apply to carbon credits deemed CCP-eligible. If introduced, the first attribute, "type of mitigation activity," shall be tagged to each carbon credit that is CCP-eligible. The other types of attributes may be voluntarily assigned to CCP-eligible carbon credits that fulfil additional requirements. Additional information on the application of attributes is contained in the Summary for Policy Makers, III Requirements relating to attributes.

The Integrity Council is seeking feedback on whether an attribute should be introduced in relation to the type of mitigation activity (see point 1 below).

1. Type of mitigation activity

This attribute could refer to whether the outcome of the mitigation activity constitutes a net reduction ("emission reduction") or a net enhancement of removals by sinks ("removal") and what type of removal process is employed (biological versus technological removals). It should be noted, however, that some activities, such as improved forest management, may involve emission reductions and removals. Moreover, some activities, such as biomass energy carbon capture and storage (BECCS), may involve biological and technological elements.

Another attribute could relate to whether the mitigation activity constitutes an "emergent" or "break-through" technology. However, it may be technically challenging to delineate which technologies qualify as such and which do not.

2. Authorisation for Article 6 purposes

This attribute can be assigned if the carbon credit's associated mitigation activity is authorised by the participating host Party (or, where applicable, the relevant country where the emission reductions or removals occur) for uses towards "other purposes" under Article 6.2 of the Paris Agreement.

3. Quantified SDG impacts

This type of attribute can be assigned if the mitigation activity can quantitatively demonstrate a substantive net positive contribution to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in addition to SDG13.

4. Adaptation co-benefits

This attribute can be assigned if the proponent of the carbon credit's associated mitigation activity wishes to inform on contributions to adaptation consistent with the host country's priorities, consistent with the provisions under Article 7.1 of the Paris Agreement.

Section 12 of the Assessment Framework and section K of Summary for Decision-Makers