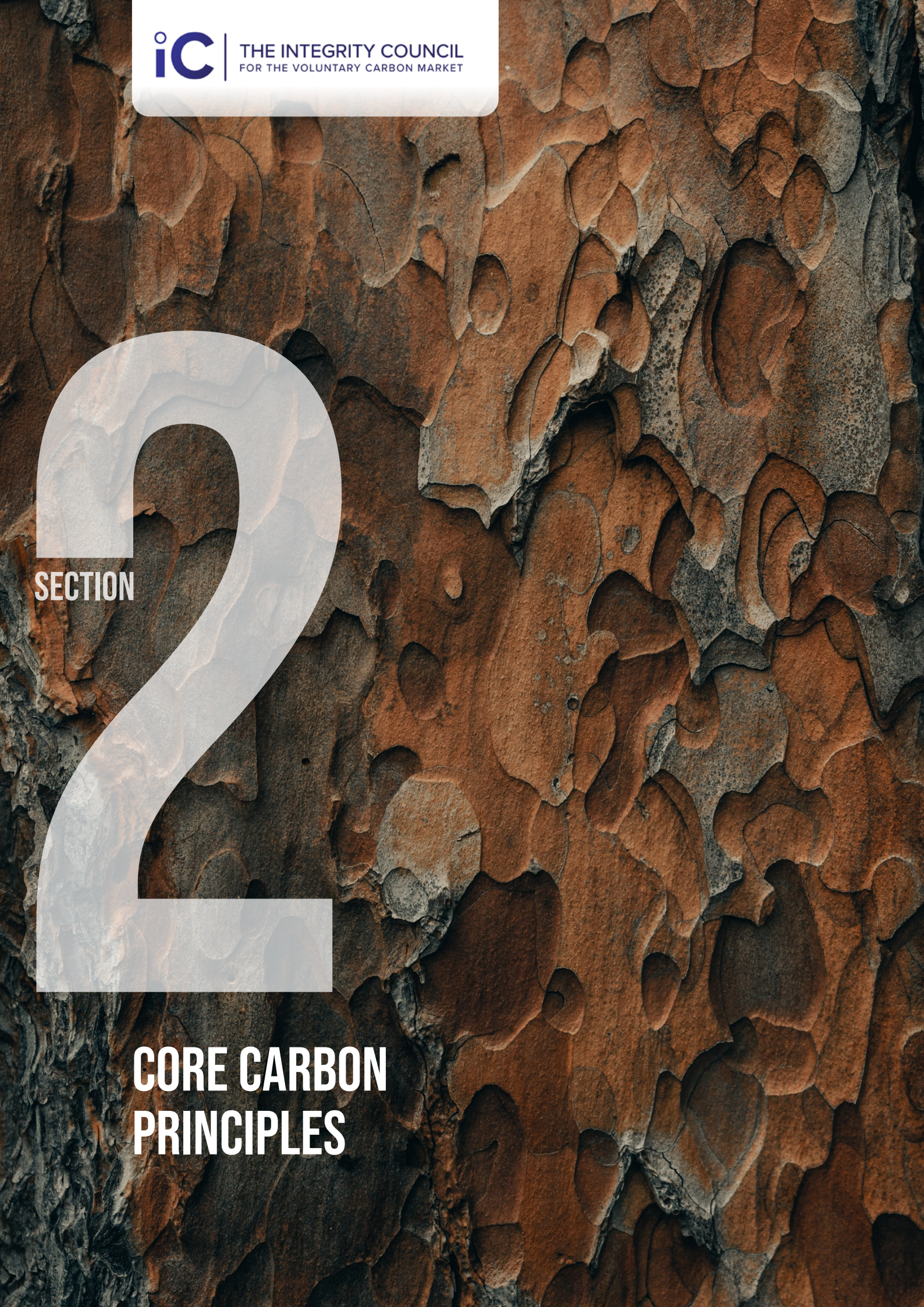
THE INTEGRITY COUNCIL
FOR THE VOLUNTARY CARBON MARKET
SECTION
2
CORE CARBON
PRINCIPLES

SECTION 2

CORE CARBON PRINCIPLES (CCPs)

Definition of Core Carbon Principles

This document defines CCPs for identifying high-quality carbon credits. The CCPs form the basis of the Integrity Council's Assessment Framework, which elaborates criteria to evaluate whether carbon credits and carbon-crediting programs reach a high-quality threshold.

The CCPs and Assessment Framework define a threshold standard focused on the integrity of the VCM. The CCPs and the Assessment Framework have been developed through an open dialogue with carbon-crediting programs and other stakeholders, and draw from multiple sources, including: the Taskforce on Scaling Voluntary Carbon Markets (TSVCM), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's Paris Agreement and Cancun Safeguards, Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and the work of Calyx Global and the Carbon Credit Quality Initiative.

The CCPs represent a full set of interlinked principles and are to be considered in their entirety. They inform and guide the assessment of carbon-crediting programs and different categories of carbon credits. The CCPs also enable the tagging of CCP-Approved carbon credits with additional attributes that attest to other verifiable features associated with the mitigation activity.

THE CORE CARBON PRINCIPLES

A. GOVERNANCE

Effective governance

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

Tracking

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.

Transparency

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 shall be accessible to non-specialised audiences, to enable scrutiny of mitigation activities.

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.

B. EMISSIONS IMPACT

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.

Permanence

The GHG emission reductions or removals from the mitigation activity shall be permanent or, where there is a risk of reversal, there shall be measures in place to address those risks and compensate reversals.

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.

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.

C. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable development benefits 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 industry best practices on social and environmental safeguards while delivering positive sustainable development impacts.

Contribution to net zero transition

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