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The Integrity Council for the Voluntary Carbon Market (Integrity Council or ICVCM) is an independent governance body for the voluntary carbon market (VCM). Its purpose is to ensure that voluntary carbon markets accelerate progress toward the objective of combating climate change. It will set and enforce a global threshold standard for carbon credit quality, drawing on the best science and expertise available, with a view to also ensuring that high-quality carbon credits efficiently mobilise finance towards urgent climate action.

The threshold standard is based on the Integrity Council’s Core Carbon Principles (CCPs). It is implemented through an Assessment Framework applied at the level of both the carbon-crediting program and the category of carbon credits, to define which carbon-crediting programs and categories are CCP-Eligible. The result is a threshold standard and label that provide a credible, rigorous, and readily accessible means of identifying high-quality carbon credits. The Integrity Council's work on the high-integrity supply of carbon credits is complementary to the work of the Voluntary Carbon Markets Integrity Initiative (VCMI) to develop a claims code of practice for the high-integrity use of carbon credits, and the work of other demand-side organisations.

This March 2023 publication includes the Program-level criteria of the Assessment Framework and the Assessment Procedure. This will enable carbon-crediting programs to better understand the Integrity Council process and the operational requirements against which they will be assessed if they apply to the Integrity Council. In Q2 2023, the Integrity Council will publish the Assessment Framework’s Category-level criteria and requirements, which will be Part II of the Assessment Framework.
**Section Two** of this document lays out the **Core Carbon Principles**. These ten individual principles identify carbon credits that create real, additional and verifiable climate impact with high environmental and social integrity, based on sound science and evolving best-practice. The CCPs underpin the Integrity Council's Assessment Framework, which elaborates criteria to evaluate whether carbon-crediting programs and the categories of carbon credit carbon credits they issue reach a high-quality threshold.

**Section Three** is the **Summary for Decision Makers**. This Summary provides the context and supporting rationale for the Core Carbon Principles and their application through criteria and requirements in the Assessment Framework.

**Section Four** is the **Assessment Framework**. The Core Carbon Principles are operationalised through the Assessment Framework, which outlines the criteria and requirements to be met for each principle.

**Section Five** contains **Definitions** applicable to the Core Carbon Principles, the Assessment Framework and the Assessment Procedure.

**Section Six** is the **Assessment Procedure**, the process through which carbon-crediting programs will apply to become CCP-Eligible and carbon credits may become CCP-Approved.
The Integrity Council plans to publish the Category-level part of the Assessment Framework in the second quarter of 2023 and to initiate its assessment of carbon-crediting programs shortly after. It expects to begin announcing CCP-Eligible programs and CCP-Approved Categories in Q3, enabling approved carbon-crediting programs to issue the first CCP-labelled carbon credits soon after. Approval of additional carbon-crediting programs and categories eligible under the CCPs will be announced on a rolling basis thereafter.

The Integrity Council will engage in a process of continual improvement of the CCPs and their related criteria and requirements in the Assessment Framework to drive greater ambition in the VCM. It expects to launch the first revision process for the CCPs in 2025, aimed at implementation starting in 2026. This will be informed by a series of thematic multi-stakeholder work programs, which will be announced in the coming months.

The Integrity Council has also identified issues related to existing assessment criteria for which there will be new requirements in the next version of the Assessment Framework. These issues are distinct from the criteria and requirements and are included in appropriate sections of the Assessment Framework in order to indicate a direction of travel for the next version. In certain cases, the Integrity Council may seek input from stakeholders on such issues.

The Governing Board of the ICVCM is pleased to present the CCPs, the Summary for Decision Makers and the program-level criteria of the Assessment Framework and related Attributes, along with the Assessment Procedure (and its related Terms and Conditions).

From mid-2023, carbon-crediting programs may start their application to the ICVCM, via the Application Platform, to be assessed against the program-level criteria in the Assessment Framework for CCP Eligibility. Applications will be assessed in accordance with the process set out in the Assessment Procedure, with the accompanying Terms and Conditions specifying how the relationship between the ICVCM and eligible carbon-crediting programs will be managed.

The Integrity Council continues to encourage feedback from the public and from stakeholders of ICVCM, which can be submitted to info@icvcm.org and include the word “feedback” in the subject line of the email. All feedback will be considered by the ICVCM.