



THE INTEGRITY COUNCIL
FOR THE VOLUNTARY CARBON MARKET

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SECTION

DEFINITIONS

January 2024, Version 2

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are applicable to the Core Carbon Principles, the Summary for Decision Makers, the Assessment Framework and the Assessment Procedure and may be revised or updated from time to time.

APPLICATION

A detailed Application containing appropriate supporting information, documentation and evidence by the applicant carbon-crediting program submitted through the Assessment Platform.

ASSESSMENT PLATFORM

The secure online Application and Assessment Platform for Program-level requirements as referred to in the Assessment Procedure.

ASSESSMENT REPORT

The document prepared by the Integrity Council on the basis of the Application from the carbon-crediting program containing, at a minimum, summary information about the applicant carbon-crediting program, and an assessment of whether the carbon-crediting program satisfies the requirements set out in the CCPs and the Assessment Framework, including agreed remedial actions, if any.

BASELINE SCENARIO

A description of the situation and the outcome that is predicted or assumed to occur in the absence of the incentives created by the carbon credits and their associated mitigation activities, while holding all other factors constant.

CANCELLATION

The permanent removal of a carbon credit in an electronic registry without claiming the associated emission reductions or removals towards any voluntary or mandatory targets or other purposes. Cancellation may include the following purposes: compensating for reversals; compensation for any previous excess issuance; administrative cancellation for the purpose of re-issuing carbon credits for the same emission reductions or removals under a different carbon-crediting program. Only one single use should be associated with each cancellation and the use should be clearly specified.

CARBON CREDIT

A tradeable intangible instrument that is issued by a carbon-crediting program, representing a GHG emission reduction to, or removal from, the atmosphere equivalent to one metric tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent. This is calculated as the difference in GHG emissions or removals from a baseline scenario to the emissions or removals occurring under the mitigation activity, and any adjustments for leakage. The carbon credit is uniquely serialised, issued, tracked and retired or administratively cancelled by means of an electronic registry operated by an administrative body, such as a carbon-crediting program.

CARBON-CREDITING PROGRAM

A standard-setting program that registers mitigation activities and issues carbon credits.

CATEGORY (OF CARBON CREDITS)

A group of carbon credits that have the following characteristics in common: (1) the carbon credits are from the same type of mitigation activity as defined by the Integrity Council; (2) the mitigation activity is registered under the same carbon-crediting program and complementary standard as applicable; (3) the emission reductions or removals were quantified using the same version of the same quantification methodology, including any tools or modules referred to in the quantification methodology; and (4) the carbon credits have other common features as defined by the Integrity Council in its assessment of Categories of carbon credits, as necessary, such as the geographical location or technical features.

CATEGORY ASSESSMENT

An assessment by the Integrity Council of which Categories meet the relevant CCPs using the criteria and requirements applicable to the Category-level in the Assessment Framework.

CCP-APPROVED

Categories of carbon credits deemed approved pursuant to the Category-level assessment. Such credits may be tagged by CCP-Eligible programs.

CCP ATTRIBUTE

A CCP Attribute refers to a characteristic associated with a carbon credit, such as quantified positive SDG impacts.

CCP-ELIGIBLE PROGRAM

A carbon-crediting program that has satisfied the relevant CCPs and the Program-level criteria and requirements in Part I of the Assessment Framework and in respect of which a Decision approving the carbon-crediting program has been taken by the Governing Board.

CORSIA

The Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation, a global GHG emissions reduction program developed by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to address the CO₂ emissions of international air travel.

CORSIA-ELIGIBLE PROGRAM

A carbon-crediting program that has been approved by the ICAO Council to supply CORSIA Eligible Emissions Units as listed on the CORSIA website.

CREDITING PERIOD

The period in which verified GHG emission reductions or removals attributable to a mitigation activity can result in the issuance of carbon credits.

CWG

A multi-stakeholder working group that operates pursuant to terms of reference that will be made public on the ICVCM website. The CWG will be tasked to review different categories of carbon credits, including their underlying methodologies, based on, *inter alia*, publicly available academic literature, information from ratings agencies and ratings organisations, and other public information. The CWG will review Categories of carbon credits at the highest possible level of aggregation across the VCM and will not review individual mitigation activities or carbon credits.

DECISION

Per the Assessment Procedure, a decision of the Governing Board of the ICVCM that includes supporting rationale.

DOUBLE CLAIMING

A type of double counting in which the same GHG emission reduction or removal is claimed by two different entities towards achieving mitigation targets or goals: once by a country, jurisdiction or other entity that reports lower GHG emissions or higher GHG removals for the purpose of demonstrating achievement of a mitigation target or goal, and once by the entity retiring the carbon credit for the purpose of making a GHG emission offsetting claim.

DOUBLE COUNTING

A situation in which a single GHG emission reduction or removal is counted more than once towards achieving mitigation targets or goals. Double counting can occur through double issuance, double use, and double claiming.

DOUBLE ISSUANCE

A type of double counting in which more than one carbon credit is issued for the same emission reduction or removal. Double issuance leads to double counting if more than one of these carbon credits is claimed towards achieving mitigation targets or goals.

DOUBLE USE

A type of double counting in which a single carbon credit is claimed twice towards achieving mitigation targets or goals.

EVALUATION REPORT

The document prepared by the Integrity Council containing, at a minimum, an assessment of whether the Category satisfies the relevant criteria and requirements set out in the CCPs and the Assessment Framework, including remedial actions agreed by the relevant carbon-crediting program, if any, and which may, but is not required to, include policy considerations and recommendations. It may also include additional information provided by the CCP-Eligible program, if any.

GHG EMISSIONS REDUCTION

A net reduction in anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions by sources.

GHG EMISSIONS REMOVAL

A net enhancement of anthropogenic removals by sinks.

GREENHOUSE GAS (GHG)

Greenhouse gases are those gaseous constituents of the atmosphere, both natural and anthropogenic, that absorb and emit radiation at specific wavelengths within the spectrum of thermal infrared radiation emitted by the Earth's surface, the atmosphere itself, and by clouds. This property causes the greenhouse effect.

INDEPENDENT REVIEW

An Independent Review is intended as a final arbitration process, as further set out in the Terms and Conditions for assessment.

JURISDICTION

The administrative unit such as a nation, state, province, region, department or district, or an ecoregion or other defined area, specified in the jurisdictional program description.

JURISDICTIONAL REDD+ PROGRAM

A type of mitigation activity which is implemented by a Jurisdictional REDD+ Program Proponent and for which emission reductions and removals are quantified at the scale of a national or sub-national jurisdiction (the REDD+ Jurisdiction). Such programs may include multiple mitigation actions in the forestry sector, including the sustainable management of forests and the conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks. They may include multiple actors, including governmental authorities and/or non-state actors.

JURISDICTIONAL REDD+ PROGRAM PROPONENT

A form of mitigation activity proponent that seeks the registration of a Jurisdictional REDD+ Program with a carbon-crediting program. This is a public entity or authority. See also MITIGATION ACTIVITY PROPONENT.

LEAKAGE: ACTIVITY-SHIFTING

A type of leakage where the mitigation activity causes emissions to shift location. Mitigation activities can shift emissions to locations not targeted, or emissions not monitored, by the activity. An example is the displacement of agricultural activities from land that is afforested.

LEAKAGE: ECOLOGICAL

A type of leakage where a mitigation activity affects emissions indirectly in areas that are hydrologically connected. An example is carbon dioxide emissions from soils in a wetland if the water level is lowered due to the implementation of the mitigation activity.

LEAKAGE: MARKET

A type of leakage where mitigation activities have an impact on the supply or demand of an emissions-intensive product or service, thereby increasing or decreasing emissions elsewhere. For example, forest management or conservation activities may reduce timber harvests within an intervention area, leading to increased harvesting in other areas to meet demand for wood products.

LEAKAGE: UPSTREAM/DOWNSTREAM EMISSIONS

A type of leakage where emissions occur upstream or downstream of a mitigation activity and are impacted by the mitigation activity. An example is the emissions associated with the production of a fuel or feedstock used under the mitigation activity (e.g., methane emissions from natural gas production).

MITIGATION ACTIVITY

An activity that reduces anthropogenic emissions of a GHG or enhances removals by sinks relative to GHG emissions or removals in the activity's baseline scenario and seeks registration and issuance of carbon credits under a carbon-crediting program. The term refers to activities that may be implemented at different scales, including projects, programmatic approaches, policies, jurisdictional REDD+ programs, and other interventions. They may also be implemented at one or more sites.

MITIGATION ACTIVITY PROPONENT

The legal entity requesting the registration of a mitigation activity and issuance of carbon credits under a carbon-crediting program. The mitigation activity proponent may be a public or private entity. See also JURISDICTIONAL REDD+ PROGRAM PROPONENT

MITIGATION ACTIVITY WITHIN A JURISDICTIONAL REDD+ PROGRAM (PROJECT-BASED)

Refers to a project-based mitigation activity aimed at reducing emissions and/or enhancing removals (e.g., reduced emissions for deforestation and forest degradation, enhancement or conservation of forest carbon stocks, sustainable management of forests) that is located within a jurisdiction covered by a registered Jurisdictional REDD+ Program and for which the accounting boundaries overlap with the Jurisdictional REDD+ Program.

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER WORKING GROUPS (MSWG)

Multi-Stakeholder Working Groups (MSWGs) that operate pursuant to terms of reference that will be made public on the ICVCM website. The MSWGs will be tasked to assess relevant criteria and requirements of specific Categories, including their underlying methodologies based on, *inter alia*, public classifications of Categories, publicly available academic literature, information from ratings agencies, carbon-crediting program-specific information, including information submitted as part of its Application, and other public information relating to Categories.

NEW MITIGATION ACTIONS OR ENHANCED IMPLEMENTATION OF ONGOING MITIGATION ACTIONS

Refers to new or enhanced implementation action taken by a Jurisdiction that is explicitly designed and reasonably expected to address key drivers of deforestation and degradation in order to reduce emissions (and where applicable to the relevant Jurisdictional REDD+ Program, enhance removals) and may include, *inter alia*, policies, laws, technical assistance programs, enforcement measures, regulations, legal rights frameworks and/or incentive mechanisms. See Criterion 8.9 of the Assessment Framework.

PROGRAM DOCUMENTS

The documents adopted by carbon-crediting program that specify requirements, procedures and administrative and operational aspects of the carbon-crediting program. These documents include, but are not limited to, general carbon-crediting program standards, quantification methodologies, procedures, provisions, manuals, guidance and forms.

PROGRAM-LEVEL ASSESSMENT

An assessment by the Integrity Council of whether an applicant carbon-crediting program satisfies the relevant principles in the CCPs using the Program-level criteria and requirements in Part I of the Assessment Framework.

REMOVAL

Removal refers to the anthropogenic removal of carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere and durable storage of the carbon in terrestrial or geological reservoirs or products.

RETIREMENT

The permanent removal of a carbon credit in a registry for the purpose of claiming the associated emission reductions or removals towards compliance requirements or voluntary goals. Only one single use should be associated with each retirement and the use should be clearly specified.

START DATE

The calendar date on which the mitigation activity proponent committed to implementing the mitigation activity (e.g., the date when contracts for the purchase or installation of equipment required for the mitigation activity were executed or the date when the first expenditures are incurred). In the case where a mitigation activity does not involve expenditure, it refers to the date when the first physical actions were taken to implement the mitigation activity (e.g., the discontinuation of the cultivation of land so that natural revegetation or succession may occur).

SUSPENSION DECISION

A Suspension Decision is a Decision by the Governing Board that, as a minimum, contains the grounds for the suspension, sufficient information for the carbon-crediting program to understand how the Integrity Council came to the view that suspension was necessary and proportionate, and the conditions to be satisfied by the carbon-crediting program for the program or Categories to be reinstated.

TERMINATION DECISION

A Termination Decision is a Decision by the Governing Board that, as a minimum, contains the grounds for the termination, and sufficient information for the carbon-crediting program to understand how the Integrity Council came to the view that termination was necessary and proportionate.

VALIDATION

The process of independent, third-party evaluation of a mitigation activity requesting registration under a carbon-crediting program by an accredited Validation and Verification Body (VVB) against the program provisions of the applicable carbon-crediting program.

VALIDATION AND VERIFICATION BODY (VVB)

An independent third-party entity that is accredited for performing validation and/or verification audits. Verification and validation bodies are often also referred to as auditors.

VERIFICATION

The process of periodic independent, third-party *ex-post* evaluation by a VVB of requests by a registered mitigation activity to issue carbon credits against the program provisions of the applicable carbon-crediting program.

VINTAGE

The calendar year in which the emission reduction or removal associated with a carbon credit took place. Because the verification process is conducted after the emission reductions or removals have occurred, carbon-crediting programs may issue carbon credits after the vintage year.

WORKING DAY

A day on which banks are open for normal business in London, United Kingdom.