

Terms of Reference for the Continuous Improvement Work Programs

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 the VCM accelerates progress toward the objective of combatting climate change. To achieve this, the Integrity Council has established a global threshold standard for carbon credit quality with a view to ensuring that high-integrity carbon credits efficiently mobilise finance towards urgent climate action.

The Core Carbon Principles (CCP) provide a credible, rigorous, and readily accessible means of identifying high-integrity carbon credits.

The Integrity Council's Continuous Improvement Work Programs (CIWPs) are designed to ensure the market evolves with the latest science, emerging technologies and innovative approaches.

These Terms of Reference ("TOR") outline the mandate of the CIWPs and the requirements for and selection of CIWP participants. It should be read together with the related CIWP Modalities and Procedures. The CIWP Modalities and Procedures describes role, composition, duties and processes for the CIWPs. These TOR may be updated from time to time.

1. Mandate of the Continuous Improvement Work Programs

1.1. Each CIWP shall aim to:

- a. Address areas where emerging best practices, innovative approaches, and technologies are expected to enhance integrity. This includes strengthening alignment with the Core Carbon Principles, improving transparency, scaling up mitigation efforts, and mobilizing carbon finance to support the goals of the Paris Agreement;
- b. Convene experts and key stakeholders for the specified topic in a collaborative effort;
- c. Identify specific recommendations, where applicable and appropriate to possible refinements to the Assessment Framework and/or identify recommendations for action by ICVCM or other stakeholders and carbon market actors, as appropriate.

2. CIWP Delivery Modes

- 2.1. Each CIWP takes the suitable delivery mode based on the nature of the issue and budget considerations, selected from one of the following delivery modes below and subject to a decision from the ICVCM Governing Board (“Governing Board”):
 - a. CIWP Working Group. Each CIWP Working Group is expected to hold around 4-6 virtual meetings, each of up to 3 hours duration, over a period of around six months.
 - b. CIWP Workshop or short series of workshops. For narrow specific topics or as follow-up to a CIWP Working Group, a single virtual or in-person workshop of a short series (2-3) workshops could be convened.
 - c. Offline CIWP. Main activities could include commissioned research, structured or semi-structured interviews and surveys, and pilot activities. Draft recommendations would be considered by a virtual or in-person meeting in accordance with these CIWP TORs and Modalities and Procedures.
- 2.2. All CIWPs will have at least one meeting, which could be virtual. Participants will be notified of the CIWP delivery mode selected for a particular topic.
- 2.3. Additional meetings may be scheduled as needed.
- 2.4. Participants will be notified of the CIWP delivery mode selected for a particular topic.

3. CIWP Participants and Facilitators

- 3.1. CIWP participants will be recruited based on the selection criteria and according to the process contained in the CIWP Modalities and Procedures.
- 3.2. Each CIWP may be chaired by up to two facilitators (in the case of two, each a co-facilitator), drawn in accordance with the CIWP Modalities and Procedures.

4. CIWP Findings and Recommendations

- 4.1. The findings and recommendations of a CIWP are compiled into a summary report. The report reflects the relevant discussions that occurred in the CIWP and provides context to the recommendations.
- 4.2. The recommendations of a CIWP:
 - a. Inform further development and refinement of the Integrity Council’s Assessment Framework.
 - b. Address improvements and evolutions needed in the market more broadly that may be more appropriately addressed or implemented by other actors and/or by the Integrity Council (through other work than evolution of the Assessment Framework).

5. Governance and Coordination of CIWPs

- 5.1. CIWPs are launched by decision of the Governing Board based on priority areas for Assessment Framework development and refinement, market considerations, stakeholder input, as well as resourcing and budget considerations.
- 5.2. The CIWP Coordination Group, comprised of representatives of the Governing Board, the Expert Panel and the Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Engagement Forum, provides strategic support and direction to the continuous improvement work programs area of work of the ICVCM, in particular by supporting the Executive Secretariat in its strategic delivery of CIWPs.
- 5.3. The Executive Secretariat coordinates the planning, design, and implementation of CIWPs and ensures the implementation of the provisions of these TORs and CIWP Modalities and Procedures.

Document history

Version	Date	Summary of revisions
2	Approved by Governing Board on 18.09.2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CIWP mandate updated to align with the approach agreed by the Governing Board. • New section on CIWP Delivery Modes added. • New section on participant selection added, now titled as CIWP Participants and Facilitators. Selection criteria relocated to the CIWP Modalities and Procedures. • Selection process section removed, now fully covered in the CIWP Modalities and Procedures. • New section on CIWP Findings and Recommendations added. • New section on Governance and Coordination added, detailing the governance and operational roles in overseeing CIWP coordination.
1.1	21.01.2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added reference to a CIWP Board member representative as part of the Coordinating Co-Chairs, alongside the SOC Co-Chairs. • Minor typo fixes.
1.0	19.01.2024	First version