



ICROA Offset Standard Review Criteria



2017



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New offset standards under the ICROA Code may be proposed at any time by any ICROA member. New Standards are accepted into the Code if they meet the Offset Standard Review Criteria, and the ICROA Executive votes to accept the new standard.

- ICROA developed the Offset Standard Review Criteria using the principles laid out in the ICROA Code of Best Practice.
- The key principles in the ICROA Code of Best Practice are that offsets validated and verified by permitted by offset standards must be: Real, Measurable, Permanent, Independently Verified, Additional and Unique.
- The Offset Standard Review Criteria are divided into essential and discretionary criteria. A standard must meet the essential criteria, to be included in the ICROA Code of Best Practice and should meet the discretionary criteria.

Essential Criteria

1. The offset standard was designed and is managed by an independent¹ organisation or group of organisations.
2. The offset standard has a robust governance² process and is well managed³.
 - a. The governance process is transparent.
 - b. Independent decision makers manage the standard.
 - c. Standard provides oversight to the validators¹/verifiers¹ work, and ensures the work is impartially and rigorously conducted, appropriate to the requirements of the standard.
3. The offset standard is linked to a publically accessible registry, independent of the offset provider, which tracks issued emission reduction credits to ensure uniqueness for each tonne.

¹ Independent is defined as a non-conflicted organisation and evidence is required to demonstrate that the organisation/s are not conflicted for example, by dual roles in the carbon market.

² Governance defined by Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountability (CIPFA –UK) as:

- Openness: access to information, communication with stakeholders and appointments to posts
- Financial and performance management: annual reports and corporate planning
- External review: audit arrangements and regulation
- Due process: compliance with the law, standards of behaviour and conflicts of interest
- Redress: complaints mechanisms and independent review

³ i.e. Standard achieves its specified programme objectives through soundly managed day to day operations.



4. The offset standard requires that offset projects and emission reduction claims are independently validated and verified. Validation and verification must be carried out by a suitably qualified, independent organisation.
5. The offset principles⁴ identified within the ICROA Code of Practice are met by offset credits generated using the standard.
 - a. Independently Verified:
 - b. Unique:
 - c. Real:
 - d. Measurable:
 - e. Permanent:
 - f. Additional:
6. Legal requirements regarding the avoidance of environmental and social impacts are fulfilled.

Provided the offset standard is of sufficient quality (i.e. essential criteria in points 1-6 above are deemed to be met), the offset standard is reviewed against the following discretionary criteria:

7. The 'do no harm' principle is fulfilled regarding environmental and social impacts⁵.
8. Industry stakeholder views were solicited and considered during⁶ the offset standard's development.
9. Local stakeholder views were solicited and considered during the offset standard's development.
10. The standard is innovative and has or could reasonably be expected to develop relevant market share: ICROA gives preference to standards that bring new and innovative qualities to the voluntary carbon market, and discourages those that are minor variants of existing standards to prevent standard proliferation and market confusion. It is not the intent of ICROA to pick winners in the standards space, and therefore standards with significant global or regional market share may be selected⁷. Delays with the standard's generation of offset credits should be taken into consideration, when considering market share.

⁴ Offsets must be real, measurable, permanent, additional, independently verified, and unique.

⁵ In application, this principle implies no 'net' harm.

⁶ Or process such as ISEAL has been implemented. <http://www.isealalliance.org/>

⁷ Market share will depend on the region.