



## ICROA Code of Best Practice and CCB and SOCIALCARBON Standards

### Background

**The International Carbon Reduction and Offset Alliance (ICROA) is:** the leading membership organisation for carbon reduction and offset providers in the voluntary carbon market. ICROA members sign up to and report against the ICROA Code of Best Practice. The ICROA Code has specific requirements for how members provide their carbon footprinting, GHG reduction advice and offsetting services. ICROA also responds as a unified voice on voluntary carbon market issues. For more information on ICROA, please visit [www.icroa.org](http://www.icroa.org)

**The Climate, Community and Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA) is:** a partnership between leading companies, NGOs and research institutes seeking to promote integrated solutions to land management around the world. With this goal in mind, the CCBA has developed the Climate, Community & Biodiversity (CCB) Standards to help design and identify land management activities that simultaneously minimize climate change, support sustainable development and conserve biodiversity. For further information on CCBA and the CCB Standards, please visit: <http://www.climate-standards.org/>

**The Ecologica Institute:** is a non-profit organisation focused on climate change mitigation and community development. Its practical experience during the past ten years resulted in the creation of the SOCIALCARBON Standard. The SOCIALCARBON Standard is based on the principle that transparent assessment and monitoring of the social and environmental performance of projects will improve their long-term effectiveness and demonstrate the project's contribution to sustainable development. For further information on SOCIALCARBON, please visit: <http://www.socialcarbon.org/>

### Use of CCB Standards and SOCIALCARBON Standard by ICROA Members

ICROA promotes best practice in the voluntary carbon market. Members may only use certain types of offset standards which meet the criteria that ICROA has established for offsets. According to ICROA, offset credits need to be real, unique, measurable, permanent, independently verified and additional. Offset standards currently permitted by the ICROA Code of Best Practice are: Voluntary Carbon Standard (VCS), Climate Action Reserve (CAR), Gold Standard and Clean Development Mechanism/Joint Implementation (CDM/JI). ICROA members may also use units issued under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and qualifying Verified Emission Reductions (VER<sup>1</sup>) carbon

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<sup>1</sup> I.e. VER offset standards permitted by the ICROA Code of Best Practice. CCB and SOCIALCARBON Standards currently can be tagged with Voluntary Carbon Units (VCUs). CCB and SOCIALCARBON Standards could also potentially be tagged with Climate Reserve Tonnes (CRTs) and Gold Standard VERs.



accounting standards that have been combined or “tagged” with CCB Standards and SOCIALCARBON Standard.

CCB Standards and SOCIALCARBON are assessment standards (which are not carbon accounting standards), which when applied to carbon offset projects help ensure that these offset projects provide additional and essential environmental, biodiversity and sustainability benefits. CERs or VCUs that are generated by projects that have been verified against the CCB Standards or SOCIALCARBON satisfy ICROA’s recommendations for sustainability and biodiversity as described in the ICROA Code of Best Practice. The voluntary carbon market is championed in the large part because it facilitates community-focused projects that are innovative and have defined sustainability and environmental benefits. These are the types of projects that are developed when CCB and SOCIALCARBON standards are implemented together with carbon accounting standards.

The CCB Standards may be used for all land-based emissions reductions activities, including reforestation, avoided deforestation, agro-forestry, improved forest management, improved agricultural practices.

The SOCIALCARBON Standard is applicable for a variety of projects activities. Currently the SOCIALCARBON methodology has been applied for renewable energy, forestry, landfill and switching fuels projects, however any type of projects that could demonstrate improvement in livelihoods would be eligible.

**The “Carbon Component”: How do the CCB and SOCIALCARBON standards work with carbon accounting standards and how does this apply to the ICROA Code of Best Practice?**

- Projects<sup>2</sup> seeking to use the CCB Standards or SOCIALCARBON Standard must do this together with an ICROA-approved carbon accounting standard. The qualifying VER or CER demonstrates the rigorous carbon accounting component while CCB Standards and SOCIALCARBON help ensure premium environmental, biodiversity and sustainability benefits.
- The project needs to be designed for and validated against the ICROA-approved carbon accounting standard and can also be designed for and validated against CCB Standards or SOCIALCARBON Standard.
- The VCS registries all have the capacity to include a CCB Standards or SOCIALCARBON ‘tag’ in the serial number of the VCU. This tag will only be applied after verification against the CCB

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<sup>2</sup> For further information on project examples, please contact ICROA on [www.ICROA.org](http://www.ICROA.org) “



Standards or SOCIALCARBON Standard. The tag cannot be applied retroactively, so verification against these standards must be completed at the time of VCU issuance.

- The rules of the CCB Standards, SOCIALCARBON Standard, CDM and VCS permit the same auditor to perform validations or verifications against both standards at the same time, potentially reducing audit costs.
- CCB Standards and SOCIALCARBON Standard require regular periodic verification of the project throughout the project lifetime to ensure that the environmental, biodiversity and sustainability benefits are retained.
- The SOCIALCARBON Standard requires the projects to use the standard's methodology tool box of indicators that points at degrees of sustainability correlated to six resources: social, human, financial, natural, biodiversity and carbon. The Methodology is reapplied periodically and independently verified to demonstrate project's contribution to sustainable development. Projects must evidence continual improvement of performance on social and environmental aspects.
- To conform to the CCB Standards, independent 3rd-party auditors must determine that the project satisfies all required criteria which together demonstrate the project will mitigate climate change, conserve biodiversity, and improve well-being for local communities. The criteria further ensure that the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities are respected, environmental and social monitoring programs are in place, no invasive species are used, local stakeholders are effectively involved, carbon property rights are clear and there are no unresolved land tenure disputes.
- CCB Standards and SOCIALCARBON Standard provide different key benefits. Project developers don't actually need to select between using CCB or SOCIALCARBON Standards, it is possible to combine both of these standards simultaneously with a carbon accounting standard.