



INTEGRITY INITIATIVES

[High-quality carbon credits](#) have the potential to significantly enhance climate action and bridge the gap between existing commitments and the much-needed decarbonisation of the global economy. Conversely, the effectiveness of climate action is compromised if carbon credits are of low environmental and social integrity.

It is crucial to provide reliable and practical advice to assist purchasers in an ever more complex VCM. Such guidance will empower buyers to differentiate between high-quality and low-quality credits.

There are different tools and initiatives available that provide an assessment of carbon credits. We present some of them in more detail below.

The Carbon Credit Quality Initiative ([CCQI](#))

This initiative is steered by three non-for-profit organisations namely the Environmental Defense Fund, World Wildlife Fund (WWF-US) and Oeko-Institut. It offers an online scoring tool to assess different types of carbon credits. The methodology behind the [free and interactive tool](#) is based on seven quality objectives including robust determination of GHG emissions, avoiding double-counting, addressing non-permanence, facilitating a net-zero transition, institutional arrangements and processes, environmental and social impacts as well as host country ambition. Carbon credits are rated from one (lowest score) to five (highest score).

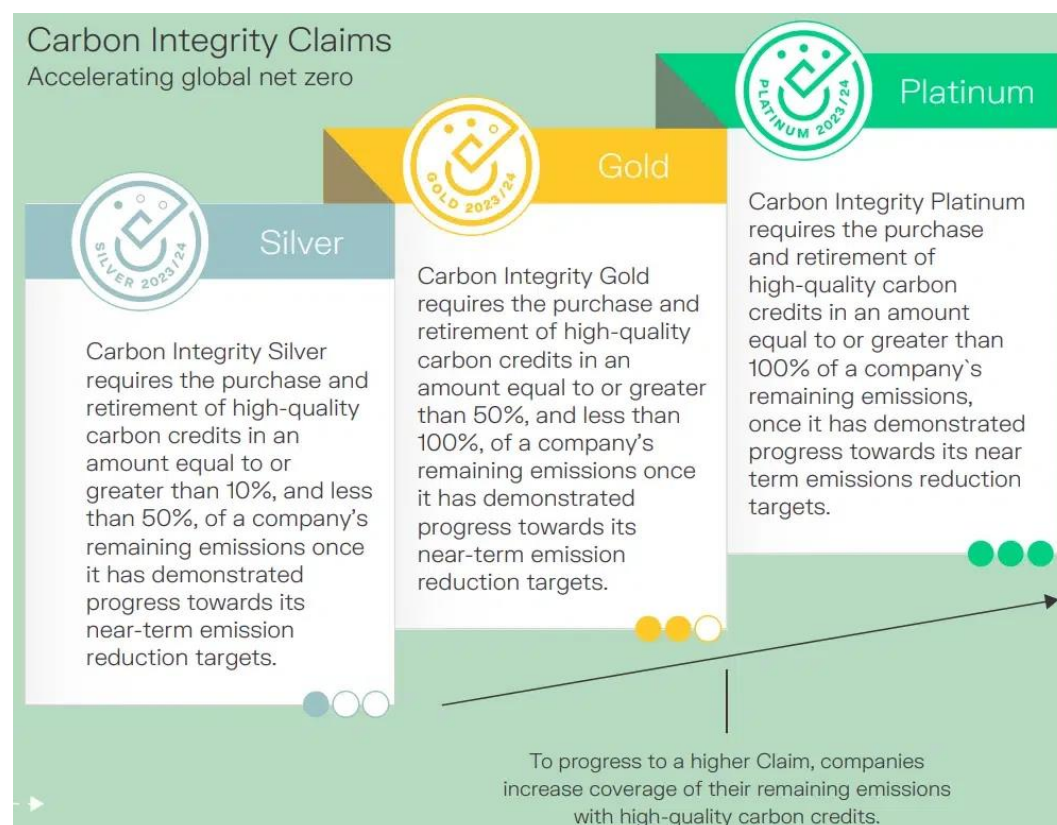
The Voluntary Carbon Markets Integrity Initiative ([VCMi](#))

VCMi is an international non-profit organisation. In November 2023, it released a [Claims Code of Practice rulebook](#) on how companies can make voluntary use of carbon credits as part of credible, science-aligned net-zero decarbonisation pathways. It is meant to build trust and confidence in how companies engage with VCMs and helps them in making credible climate claims. On the supply-side, the

[VCM Access Strategy Toolkit](#) provides guidance for countries to engage in high-integrity VCMs in support of national climate targets and economic prosperity.

As Figure 1 shows, VCMI differentiates between distinctive marks for companies depending on the percentage of carbon credits they intend to purchase and retire. Silver, Gold, or Platinum. The recently issued guidelines are designed to aid companies in communicating their achievement of Carbon Integrity Claims more effectively.

Figure 1: VCMI Carbon Integrity Claims associated with the credible use of carbon credits



Source: [VCMI \(2023\)](#)

The Integrity Council for the Voluntary Carbon Market ([ICVCM](#))

IC-VCM seeks to create a benchmark to raise the quality of carbon credits. It aims to set and enforce global standards and thereby foster high-quality carbon credits that channel finance towards real and additional greenhouse gas reductions and removals.

Through collaboration with stakeholders across the market, the Integrity Council has developed 10 **Core Carbon Principles (CCPs)**. These principles serve as fundamental guidelines for carbon credits of high integrity, as depicted in Figure 2.



Figure 2: ICVCM 10 Core Carbon Principles



Source: [ICVCM \(2023\)](#)

The Integrity Council's Core Carbon Principles [Assessment Framework](#) sets out the detailed criteria it will use to assess whether carbon-crediting programmes and categories of carbon credits meet the [Core Carbon Principles \(CCPs\)](#). Carbon-crediting programmes assessed as CCP-eligible will be able to use the **CCP label** on carbon credits from approved categories.

Programmes can apply for assessment by submitting evidence that they meet the CCPs through the [Integrity Council's application portal](#).

The complete document including the CCPs, the summary for decision-makers, and the assessment framework, procedure and other useful resources is available [here](#).

Other relevant efforts

- Public actors, including governments and regulatory bodies enforce regulations to govern carbon markets; others run capacity building initiatives to enhance the skills of market participants, raise awareness and educate stakeholders about carbon markets, engage in international collaboration to harmonise approaches, and establish monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess performance and impact.
- Legislative actions and directives are being adopted in several countries and constituencies, for example;
 - The [EU green claims directive](#), seeking to protect consumers from greenwashing. The proposed directive mandates companies to



validate the voluntary green assertions they communicate in business-to-consumer commercial practices. This involves adhering to specific requirements concerning their evaluation, such as adopting a life-cycle perspective.

- Marketing and advertising agencies are also taking steps to provide guidance to monitor carbon neutral/net zero claims being made and the type of evidence that underpins them.

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