



WWF

BRIEF

2011

WWF and REDD+ Forest Carbon Credits from Voluntary Offsets

REDD+¹ is an effort to make tropical forests more valuable standing than cut down by providing financial incentives to developing countries to maintain their forests. REDD+ early action projects and programmes are one of the strategies WWF pursues in reducing CO₂ emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. We are working with forest dwelling communities, governments, civil society and the private sector to establish systems for implementing REDD+ at scale. These programmes and projects provide an opportunity to pilot practical mechanisms on the ground to help inform and achieve national REDD+ programmes, build local capacity, and generate learning and knowledge.

WWF's forest carbon programmes and projects

REDD+ hold a great deal of promise as a way to cut global greenhouse gas emissions. WWF's goal is zero net emissions from deforestation and forest degradation by 2020 – which means we are working to ensure that forests are a key part of tackling climate change. Because forests are valuable for much more than the carbon they store, REDD+ must also benefit people and nature.

- **WWF believes that** forest carbon demonstration activities, when done at scale, are a key part of establishing national-level REDD+ programmes by testing approaches and implementing activities in forest countries. WWF focuses on forest carbon demonstration that scale-up to national programmes and provide lessons on such things as methods to monitor and measure the carbon in forests, means to distribute carbon finance benefits to local and indigenous communities, and local capacity building.
- **WWF recommends that** such forest carbon programmes and projects are carried out according to [Guiding Principles for REDD+](#) so they reduce CO₂ while maintaining or enhancing biodiversity, contribute to sustainable livelihoods, recognize the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, and mobilize fair and effective funding for REDD+. [WWF's Green Carbon Guide-book](#) lays out guidelines to ensure that forest carbon programmes and projects meet high standards for project design and performance.
- **WWF believes that** funding for REDD+ activities, including demonstration activities, can and should come from various sources. Examples are auctioning revenues from emissions trading, direct public funding by Governments and Aid Agencies (GAA), levies on bunker fuels as well as private direct investments. All these sources are necessary to generate the scale of financing necessary to make REDD+ an effective part of the solution to stabilizing climate change.

¹ Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and conserving, sustainably managing and enhancing forest carbon stocks (REDD+)

Forest carbon credits and voluntary offsets

A forest carbon credit is a way to quantify the emissions that are saved through lowering the rate, or avoiding altogether, deforestation and forest degradation. This enables either verification (under voluntary schemes) or certification (under compliance regimes) of the amount of emissions reduced through REDD+. A carbon offset is a type of carbon credit sold as part of a balancing exchange, which means that for an amount of carbon released from one source, an equivalent amount is locked away elsewhere to essentially 'cancel' the emissions released. Offsets can be bought on the compliance or voluntary markets.

Forest & Climate Initiative

POSITION BRIEF

For further information, please contact:

Kirsten Schuyt
Sr Policy & Science Advisor
Forest & Climate Initiative
Tel: +31-654702766
KSchuyt@wwf.nl

Melissa Tupper
Communications Director
Forest & Climate Initiative
WWF-US
Tel: +1 202 495 4182
Melissa.Tupper@wwfus.org

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- **WWF believes that** REDD+ should be complementary to the need for industrialized countries to make deep cuts in their emissions where the majority of cuts are needed. Such emissions should not continue as usual, enabled through offsets from forest carbon projects.
- **WWF will not:**
 - Make a profit from any carbon credits generated by our forest carbon programmes and projects, though WWF has a role in developing forest carbon projects and sharing the lessons learned from the
 - Trade carbon credits from our forest carbon projects or broker deals between buyers and sellers of carbon credits
 - Enter into commitments that incur a long-term obligation for WWF to deliver forest carbon credits
- **WWF recommends that** its forest carbon programmes and projects that generate credits intended for use as **voluntary offsets** must:
 - Contribute real emissions reductions at scale that would not otherwise occur
 - Demonstrate a new methodology
 - Contribute to the body of understanding of effective approaches to REDD+
- **WWF will not** develop forest carbon programmes and projects that generate credits for a future compliance market so as to help ensure environmental integrity rather than a financial gain.
- **Sponsors of WWF forest carbon projects must** retire any credits generated from the project immediately. Any partner, sponsor or investor wishing to offset emissions through **voluntary forest carbon credits** generated from a WWF forest carbon project must comply with existing WWF Business & Industry and Climate Savers guidelines for offsetting of emissions.



Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

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forestclimate@wwf.panda.org
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