

THIRD-PARTY ASSESSMENT OF CARBON CREDITING PROGRAMMES FOR ENDORSEMENT BY ICROA

Request for Proposals – April 2024

1. Purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP)

ICROA is an Accreditation Programme aimed at advancing best practice in the voluntary carbon market (VCM). The Accreditation Programme assesses applicants' compliance with the ICROA Code of Best Practice (the Code) which defines international best practice for carbon management service providers. The Code represents the minimum requirements that ICROA-accredited organisations must meet to be accredited, including a list of endorsed carbon crediting programmes ("Programmes") from which they may source carbon credits.

Programmes are endorsed after applying to ICROA and undergoing a third-party assessment by an independent Assessor. The purpose of this RFP is to find an additional Assessor in response to the growing number of applications by Programmes.

2. About ICROA

Founded in 2008, ICROA promotes GHG emissions reductions and carbon credit usage to the highest standards of environmental integrity in support of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement goals. ICROA is a non-profit initiative housed within IETA.

ICROA provides a framework for responsible corporate climate action by promoting **integrity** in the use of carbon credits, **quality** of carbon credit supply, and delivering **impact** to raise ambition. We are guided by the science of climate change, the need for economy-wide decarbonization to reach net zero by 2050, and we believe in the critical need for carbon finance to enable urgent climate action. We advocate for offsetting as a valuable complement to Paris-aligned reduction pathways and we believe that proactive efforts by corporates to finance emissions reductions and removals through the carbon market should be recognised and rewarded.

3. The ICROA Code of Best Practice

3.1. About

The ICROA Code of Best Practice aims to define international best practice in carbon crediting and represents the minimum requirements that all ICROA-accredited organisations must meet. A list of ICROA-accredited organisations is available here.

The Code ensures ICROA-accredited organisations, and their clients, undertake carbon management strategies that lead to ambitious and impactful climate action. The Code is structured as follows:

- Section 1: Transacting & Retiring Carbon Credits
- Section 2: GHG Emissions and Removals Inventories (Footprinting)
- Section 3: GHG Emission Reductions Advisory Services

The Code evolves as the VCM develops to always encompass best practice. The current version is available [here](#).

3.2. Endorsed Carbon Crediting Programmes

When ICROA-accredited organisations are transacting/retiring carbon credits (or doing so on behalf of a client), they shall only use carbon credits sourced from projects that are validated, verified, and certified under one of the following¹ Programmes currently endorsed by ICROA:

UN and Government Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emissions Reduction Fund of the Australian Government • The UK Woodland Carbon Code • The UNFCCC Clean Development Mechanism² • The British Columbia Offset Program
Independent Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The American Carbon Registry • The Architecture for REDD+ Transactions and The REDD+ Environmental Excellence Standard • BioCarbon Standard • Cercarbono • City Forest Credits • Isometric • The Climate Action Reserve • The Global Carbon Council • The Gold Standard • Plan Vivo • Puro.earth • Social Carbon (<i>conditionally endorsed</i>) • Verra's Verified Carbon Standard

4. Current Evaluation of Crediting Programmes

4.1. Process

Programmes can apply for endorsement at any time. They are accepted into the Code if they are deemed to meet ICROA's endorsement criteria by the third-party assessor. This process is described in detail in the [Procedure Guide](#).

Starting in 2024, endorsed Programmes will be asked to undertake a new assessment every three years to ensure ongoing compliance with the endorsement criteria.

4.2. Endorsement Criteria

To evaluate a Programme, the third-party assessor reviews the application against specific criteria. A Programme that meets these criteria may then be officially endorsed by ICROA and listed in the Code.

¹ As of February 2024.

² Further clarity is expected following the approval of Article 6 of the Paris Agreement at COP26.

The current criteria are fully explained in the [Endorsement Criteria Document](#).

Any Programme that seeks ICROA endorsement needs to fill out a comprehensive [Application Form](#) based on these criteria and provide evidence where needed.

5. RFP Specifications

5.1. Qualifications

The third-party assessor (the “Assessor”) is an independent, third-party company responsible for assessing the Programme’s compliance with the Endorsement Criteria and providing an independent recommendation for endorsement to the ICROA Secretariat. The Assessor applies standard auditing practices and techniques. The Assessor may make recommendations to the Secretariat for improving the Endorsement Criteria. Assessors must meet the following qualifications before they are considered for the Endorsement Procedure.

Company-level qualifications include one or more of the following:

- Accreditation to ISO 17029 Conformity Assessment
- Experience managing initiatives similar to ICROA
- Other criteria as deemed appropriate by the Secretariat and AC

Individual-level qualifications for the lead assessor include one or more of the following:

- Minimum 5-years of experience in GHG programme management, project development, or verification CV that demonstrates similar experience
- Training to ISO 14065 General Principles and Requirements for Bodies Validating and Verifying Environmental Information
- Training to ISO 14064-2 Specification with guidance at the project level for quantification, monitoring and reporting of greenhouse gas emission reductions or removal enhancements, or ISO 14064-3 Specification with guidance for the verification and validation of greenhouse gas statements
- Other criteria as deemed appropriate by the Secretariat and AC

The Assessor must testify to having no conflicts of interest with each Programme they are asked to assess before commencing assessment. Should the Assessor fail to declare a conflict, the assessment will be terminated and no costs for work undertaken will be paid.

5.2. Points to Note

To support the independence of the assessments and guard against conflicts of interest, a company is ineligible to be an Assessor if they (or an affiliate) act in the capacity of a project developer, carry out the role of a VVB with crediting programmes, or earn a commission or any form of income from Programmes.

The Assessor is required to attend occasional training webinar(s) hosted by the Secretariat to ensure that the endorsement criteria and spirit of the endorsement procedures are understood, and to ensure consistency of assessments within and across all Assessors. Please note that this is considered an essential requirement to successfully undertake assessment and is not chargeable. The Secretariat will complete an annual systematic performance review of all Assessors.

The Assessor may not complete more than two sequential assessments of the same Programme (i.e., initial assessment and first renewal).

5.3. Elements of Proposal

Your Proposal must include the following elements:

- I. The name and role of the primary contact for this Proposal (name, email address).
- II. An overview of the organisation.
- III. Evidence that the points under section 5.1 are met.
- IV. The name of the organisation who will perform the evaluations, and their qualifications.
- V. Please include a quote per assessment (based on the description provided in Section 4.0 of the [Procedure Guide](#)), noting ICROA anticipates up to [6] assessments in the next 12 months.
- VI. Confirmation that you are able to meet the availability, frequency and volume requirements described in 5.2.

5.4. Evaluation Frequency, Timeline, and Expected Volume

- A test assessment³ will be conducted by the shortlisted respondent(s) to this RFP in May/June 2022. The Program to be evaluated will be selected from the current pool of Programmes that have applied for ICROA endorsement.
- Following a successful test assessment, the successful respondent to this RFP will then be onboarded before beginning independent assessments.
- It is then expected that assessments will be conducted on a rolling basis with continuous check-in from the Secretariat to confirm capacity/availability.
- Each assessment is expected to take 4-12 weeks, depending on the number of reviews required for the Programme. See details on expected timelines in Section 4.1(7) of the [Procedure Guide](#).
- Availability is required in the short term to conduct up to six [6] evaluations between June and December 2024, and long term as applications are received in 2025.

6. How to Respond to this RFP, timeline

Using the outline in 5.3., provide detailed responses to [I.-VI.] Only complete applications will be considered by ICROA. You may submit your Proposal as a Word or PDF document.

Please submit your Proposal to the ICROA Programme Coordinator, Franco D'Aprile (daprile@ieta.org) by **Friday 26 April 2024**. ICROA will review each application in detail in May 2024 and select the successful third-party organisation(s) soon thereafter. Feel free to contact us with any questions.

³ The test assessment will be unpaid and will consist of the first review of a Programme as outlined in 4.1(7) Review #1 of the Procedure Guide.