

REDD+ - Northmore Gordon

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REDD+ is a carbon offset created from reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) in developing countries under the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) framework. It represents a mechanism for generating carbon credits by avoiding forest loss, which would otherwise release stored carbon. REDD+ projects operate differently from energy efficiency or renewable energy projects: they create offsets representing emissions reductions achieved outside an organization's direct operations. Organizations considering REDD+ offsets should understand that purchased offsets are used separately from emissions inventory accounting and must be evaluated through environmental-attribute due diligence processes to verify their integrity before procurement and retirement.

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What is REDD+ and how does it function as a carbon offset?

REDD+ is a carbon offset created from reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) in developing countries under the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) framework. It represents a mechanism for generating carbon credits by avoiding forest loss, which would otherwise release stored carbon. REDD+ projects operate differently from energy efficiency or renewable energy projects: they create offsets representing emissions reductions achieved outside an organization's direct operations. Organizations considering REDD+ offsets should understand that purchased offsets are used separately from emissions inventory accounting and must be evaluated through environmental-attribute due diligence processes to verify their integrity before procurement and retirement.

How do REDD+ offsets differ from other carbon instruments like ACCUs?

REDD+ offsets and ACCUs (Australian Carbon Credit Units) belong to different schemes with distinct governance and assessment pathways. ACCUs are issued under Australia's domestic scheme administered by the Clean Energy Regulator for eligible abatement activities meeting specified methods and registration requirements. REDD+ offsets are generated through the UNFCCC framework in developing countries and are tracked through international registries such as Verra VCS (Verified Carbon Standard). Both instruments represent greenhouse gas reductions but use different methodologies, eligibility criteria and verification processes. Organizations must treat them as separate

instruments in carbon accounting and not compare their quantities as though they were identical units of environmental value.

Under which international framework was REDD+ established?

REDD+ was established under the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) framework, which provides the governance structure for international climate action. The UNFCCC framework establishes methodologies, reporting requirements and recognition mechanisms for REDD+ projects operating in developing countries. This international governance distinguishes REDD+ from domestic carbon schemes like Australia's ACCU program. Organizations seeking to incorporate REDD+ offsets into their carbon strategy should confirm the offset's registration status, methodology compliance and retirement evidence through recognized international registries before making procurement and accounting decisions.

Where have REDD+ projects been registered and how does this affect offset credibility?

REDD+ projects have been registered under the Verra VCS (Verified Carbon Standard), a major international standard for voluntary carbon market projects. Registration through recognized standards provides third-party verification that projects meet methodological requirements and deliver genuine emissions reductions. When evaluating REDD+ offsets for purchase, organizations should verify the project's registration status, crediting period, issued-unit records and retirement pathway through the relevant registry. Environmental-attribute due diligence assessment before procurement helps confirm the offset's integrity and ensures that purchased instruments support the organization's carbon accounting and environmental claims appropriately.

How should organizations account for REDD+ offsets in their carbon reporting?

REDD+ offsets must be accounted for separately from an organization's emissions inventory and physical reductions. Purchased offsets are contractual instruments representing emissions reductions achieved outside the organization's boundaries, distinct from operational changes or energy efficiency improvements. When incorporating REDD+ offsets into carbon accounting, organizations should establish a clear boundary statement documenting the offset acquisition, retirement evidence and the specific claim being supported. The GHG Protocol provides standards for how purchased offsets integrate with inventory accounting. Our carbon advisory services include guidance on maintaining claim files, selecting appropriate instruments and ensuring that offset accounting complies with the applicable reporting framework and organizational sustainability claims.

What is the practical role of REDD+ in organizational decarbonization strategies?

REDD+ offsets serve as a potential component of transition planning and carbon management strategies, particularly for organizations seeking to address emissions that cannot be eliminated through physical reductions or renewable energy procurement. However, offsets should not substitute for primary decarbonization efforts. A credible transition workplan separates physical reductions—such as energy efficiency, electrification and renewable energy adoption—from purchased offsets. Organizations considering REDD+ should first establish their inventory baseline, identify achievable physical reductions with assigned owners and implementation timelines, and then evaluate offsets as a complement to, not replacement for, operational emissions reduction. Our carbon advisory services support organizations in developing transition pathways that integrate physical improvements with appropriate use of verified offsets.

What due diligence should organizations undertake before purchasing REDD+ offsets?

Environmental-attribute due diligence is a critical assessment process to verify the integrity and validity of REDD+ offsets before procurement and retirement. Organizations should confirm the offset's registration under a recognized standard such as Verra VCS, verify its issuance and project crediting period, assess the methodology used to quantify emissions reductions, and confirm retirement

procedures. Due diligence should also establish who owns the offset rights and whether its retirement will genuinely support the organization's intended environmental claim. Our carbon advisory services include environmental-attribute due diligence specifically designed to help organizations evaluate purchased instruments and ensure that offset procurement aligns with their carbon accounting framework and public commitments before retirement.

How does REDD+ fit within Australia's carbon management regulatory context?

REDD+ offsets operate outside Australia's domestic carbon schemes. While the Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU) scheme and Renewable Energy Target provide domestic pathways for generating credits, REDD+ represents an international voluntary market instrument. Australian organizations using REDD+ offsets for sustainability reporting or carbon claims must ensure appropriate accounting under applicable frameworks such as NGER or ASRS sustainability reporting standards. The treatment of purchased offsets in corporate inventories requires explicit boundary statements and claim-file documentation. Organizations considering REDD+ as part of their carbon strategy should obtain guidance on how offsets integrate with their Australian reporting obligations and whether their intended use complies with applicable accounting standards and public commitment criteria.