

Action Planning Guide

Use this guide to help you rapidly develop an Action Plan for implementing the High-Quality Blue Carbon Principles and Guidance into your workstream. Break down big actions into smaller ones and modify this list as needed for relevance to your work.

The *High-Quality Blue Carbon Principles and Guidance* present a set of principles and recommendations to guide the development and procurement of high-quality blue carbon projects and credits. We recognise that these principles and guidance define a vision for high-quality blue carbon across every project characteristic. We also recognise that few projects will likely meet every element of the guidance in full today.

Our intent is not to set a bar that is impossible to reach and therefore exclusionary, but rather to provide a pathway for stakeholders to deliver the best possible outcomes for people, nature, and climate. We hope this guidance helps all users reach their goals to protect people, nature, and climate.

Overarching Actions

- ☐ Reference and include the principles and guidance in requests for proposals (RFPs), questionnaires, rubrics, and contracts and share templates of such work products whenever possible.
- ☐ Develop individual project plans consistent with the principles and guidance.
- ☐ Monitor to ensure that project plans and implementation are consistent with the guidance.
- ☐ Develop toolkits that enable practitioners to quickly implement the principles and guidance.
- ☐ Publish case studies to show what the principles and guidance look like and showcase their impact.
- ☐ Build capacity so blue carbon projects and/or crediting efforts that fall short of the principles and guidance can make necessary improvements to achieve high quality.
- ☐ Internalise the principles and guidance in all aspects of project assessment, design, and implementation.

Action Checklist for the Five Principles

Tip: Convert each action into a question(s) to help you consider how your project is tracking against the principles. 'How might we' questions are great for planning and 'how are we' questions are great for evaluation.

Safeguard Nature

- ☐ Conserve the remaining intact ecosystems on our planet.
- ☐ Design projects in accordance with science-based ecological restoration protocols.
- ☐ Do no harm.

Empower People

- ☐ Ensure that free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) is established.
- ☐ Ensure that inclusive participation and leadership of IPLCs, women, and other marginalised groups in project design, governance, and management.
- ☐ Promote locally relevant gender integration.
- ☐ Ensure that feedback, accountability, and grievance mechanisms are available to all rightsholders and stakeholders.
- ☐ Respect traditional land use and legal rights to land, resources, and carbon.
- ☐ Provide equitable access to the global VCM by empowering local communities with the means to participate and lead.
- ☐ Empower local communities to define equitable benefit sharing.

Employ the Best Information, Interventions, and Carbon Accounting Practices

- ☐ Use the most appropriate interventions and the best available scientific knowledge, including indigenous, traditional, and local knowledge.
- ☐ Ensure transparent and accurate greenhouse gas accounting and monitoring by using a scientifically sound methodology and protocol.
- ☐ Establish accurate carbon baselines through evidence-based assessments of the ecosystem and the amount of carbon it may store or capture.
- ☐ Demonstrate additionality using clear evidence and reasoning.
- ☐ Assess threats to durability.
- ☐ Establish measures to mitigate risk of reversal.
- ☐ Employ adaptive management protocols.
- ☐ Weigh the trade-offs between actual and anticipated credit types.

Operate locally and contextually

- ☐ Design projects according to the local social and ecological context.
- ☐ Account for the local implications of international policies.
- ☐ Advance policies to promote high-quality blue carbon project development.
- ☐ Establish a network of diverse local government partners to ensure the success and longevity of the project.

Mobilise high-integrity capital

- ☐ Set science-based targets for reducing emissions in line with limiting global average warming to 1.5° Celsius and compensate for any remaining emissions with high-quality carbon credits.
- ☐ Design agreements and contracts to promote fair and transparent pricing and compensation.



Action Checklists by Stakeholder Type

Suppliers and Project Developers

- ☐ Apply these principles and guidance in project design, implementation (RFPs & contracts), and assessment.
- ☐ Create holistic budgets and invest in high-quality long-term relationships.
- ☐ Develop toolkits and guides to enable practitioners to adhere to the principles and guidance.
- ☐ Publish case studies to demonstrate what the principles look like in practice.
- ☐ Build capacity so blue carbon projects and crediting efforts that currently fall short of these principles can make necessary improvements to achieve high quality.
- ☐ Develop toolkits and guides that enable practitioners to quickly implement the guidance.
- ☐ Publish case studies to demonstrate what these principles look like in practice.
- ☐ Promote the guidance on your website and advocate with your stakeholders.

Investors and Buyers

- ☐ Use principles and guidance to select, design, and evaluate high-quality projects (RFPs & contracts).
- ☐ Prioritise projects that align with the principles and guidance.
- ☐ Monitor to ensure that project plans and implementation are consistent with this guidance.
- ☐ Set science-based emissions reduction targets and make progress toward decarbonization in your operations and supply chains (before purchasing offsets).
- ☐ Prepare for a higher cost for high-quality credits and support the market to maintain the highest standards.
- ☐ Adopt a long-term mindset and consider cost, value, and quality when evaluating the price of blue carbon credits.
- ☐ Provide philanthropic finance to develop and trial blue carbon methodologies, collect baseline data, and build project development capacity.
- ☐ Develop toolkits and guides that enable practitioners to quickly implement the guidance.
- ☐ Build capacity so blue carbon projects and crediting efforts that currently fall short of these principles can make necessary improvements to achieve high quality.
- ☐ Publish case studies to demonstrate what these principles look like in practice.

Government

- ☐ Strengthen protection for blue carbon ecosystems.
- ☐ Accelerate public investment in blue carbon.
- ☐ Build national capacity to develop investable projects.
- ☐ Provide technical assistance.
- ☐ Develop blue carbon policies and regulations based on the principles and guidance.
- ☐ Respect land tenure and rights.
- ☐ Clarify land and carbon tenure issues to expedite project development.
- ☐ Clarify the implications of Article 6 and NDCs.
- ☐ Provide robust regulatory and policy frameworks based on principles and guidance.
- ☐ Build understanding and awareness of the principles and guidance for Suppliers and Buyers.
- ☐ Develop toolkits and guides that enable practitioners to quickly implement the principles.
- ☐ Build capacity so blue carbon projects and crediting efforts that currently fall short of these principles can make necessary improvements to achieve high quality.
- ☐ Publish case studies to demonstrate what these principles look like in practice.
- ☐ Demonstrate leadership in blue carbon and champion the guidance with other governments.

Early Adopters

- ☐ Demonstrate leadership by adopting and adhering to the principles and guidance to help align the market around high quality.
- ☐ Develop an action plan for using the guidance.
 - Use the guidance in RFQs, frameworks, policies, contracts, etc.
 - Reference the guidance in publications.
- ☐ Promote the guidance and promote being an early adopter.
 - Socialise the principles and guidance within your organization and externally with your network.
 - Reference the guidance at conferences and speaking events, on websites and in communications.
 - Openly share lessons learned and stories of success.
- ☐ Share how you are using the principles and guidance to amplify your impact.
- ☐ Harness and contribute your 'superpowers' to progressing high-quality blue carbon (e.g., philanthropy, communications, purchasing power, advocacy, networks, etc.)

Rapid Risk Assessment

Some key risks to consider when developing, investing in, and regulating blue carbon.

- ☐ Partners - Are you working with partners who share your commitment to quality?
- ☐ Government land ownership – Have carbon rights to government-owned land been signed over to project developers without community engagement and input?
- ☐ Land tenure – Is there clarity around who owns relevant land and carbon rights? Could this tenure be contested or changed over time?
- ☐ Policy certainty – Are blue carbon policies, regulations, and national mandates stable and secure or are these likely to be overturned by changing government?
- ☐ Duplication – Has the same plot of land been sold to numerous project developers?
- ☐ Bad contracts – Are you entering a fair contract that is well constructed, includes fair pricing that allows for market growth, and empowers local people and nature?

