



Guiding principles for delivering coastal wetland carbon projects



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Table of contents

List of abbreviations	v
Preface	vi
Glossary	vii
Executive summary	ix
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Background	2
1.2 Objective	3
1.3 Scope of guidance	3
1.4 Guidance structure	4
2 The state of knowledge on coastal blue carbon	5
2.1 Coastal wetlands as carbon reservoirs, sources and sinks	6
2.2 Distribution of intact and drained coastal wetlands	7
2.3 Response of coastal system to sea level rise and human impacts	8
2.4 Implications for coastal planning	9
2.5 Importance of conserving intact wetlands	9
2.6 Policy opportunities and new mechanisms for carbon management	9
3 Lessons learned from previous projects	13
3.1 The learning curve in coastal wetlands management	14
3.2 Broad lessons in wetlands conservation and restoration planning	17
3.3 Lessons from carbon project development	22
3.4 Lessons learned from community engagement	25
4 Planning a blue carbon project	31
4.1 Project concept	32
4.2 Preliminary feasibility assessment	33
4.3 Select a carbon standard and methodology	33
4.4 Community engagement	38
4.5 Design the project	38
4.6 Assess non-permanence risk and uncertainty	39
4.7 Secure project development finance and structure agreements	40
4.8 Assess social and environmental changes	44
4.9 Regulatory compliance	45
References	47
Appendices	51
A. Additional resources	52
B. Carbon project categories and methodologies	53
C. Permanence in AFOLU interventions	55

List of boxes and figures

Boxes

1. Case studies from the United States for incorporating climate change resilience into habitat restoration	15
2. Mikoko Pamoja – Conservation and management of mangrove forest in Kenya for community benefits through carbon credits	24
3. Adaptive capacity enhancement through participation in coastal field schools	26
4. The development of ecological mangrove rehabilitation in Indonesia	27
5. Steps in blue carbon project planning	32
6. International climate finance	41

Figures

1. Hypothetical illustrations of scenarios demonstrating net benefits of carbon management projects.	37
2. Blue carbon projects in an international climate perspective	42
C1. In a sink project (e.g. afforestation), CO ₂ is sequestered from the atmosphere and stored as carbon in the upgrowing wood biomass.	55
C2. In an avoidance project (e.g. peatland re-wetting, REDD+) less CO ₂ is emitted into the atmosphere.	56
C3. Emission reduction and then complete stock loss or emissions beyond the baseline rate (e.g. when a drained peatland is re-wetted and then re-drained at a higher level than ever before).	56

List of abbreviations

AFOLU	Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use [VCS project scope]
ALM	Agricultural Land Management [VCS project category]
A/R	Afforestation and Reforestation [CDM project category]
AR	Afforestation and reforestation [standard neutral]
ARR	Afforestation, Reforestation and Revegetation [VCS project category]
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
CER	Certified Emission Reduction [CDM]
GHG	greenhouse gas
GIS	geographic information system
GPS	global positioning system
IFM	Improved Forest Management [VCS project category]
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
ICER	Long-term Certified Emission Reduction
LoA	Letter of Approval [CDM]
MoU	memorandum of understanding
MRV	measurement, reporting, and verification
NGO	non-governmental organization
PD	Project Description [VCS]
PDD	Project Design Document [CDM]
PIN	Project Idea Note
PoA	Programme of Activities [CDM]
PRC	Peatland Rewetting and Conservation
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
REDD+	REDD, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks
tCER	Temporary Certified Emission Reduction
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
VCS	Verified Carbon Standard
VCU	Verified Carbon Unit [VCS]
WRC	Wetland Restoration and Conservation [VCS project category]

Preface

With the growing awareness of the role of coastal wetlands in climate change mitigation and adaptation, there are an expanding number project and policy interventions being developed and implemented to conserve and restore these ecosystems. There is a need to share lessons in best practice as activities grow into new territory of large-scale interventions.

This guidance document distils best practice principles for coastal wetland carbon projects, drawing on a long history of project development and implementation in fields of wetlands restoration, terrestrial carbon projects, carbon policy and community engagement. The primary focus is on experience gained in the management of intertidal wetlands, including tidal marshes and mangroves, although many broad lessons can be extended to seagrass meadows. This document is not a manual outlining a step-by-step guide to building or enacting a coastal carbon intervention, as each project will have their own nuances that would challenge such guidance. Here, we provide the overarching fundamental principles for framing coastal wetland carbon projects and avoiding missteps.

The intended audience of this guidance document are people familiar with carbon project and policy development or wetlands restoration who are seeking an overview of the additional requirements necessary for successful coastal wetland or *blue carbon* interventions.

In the appendix of this guidance document, the reader will find links to some additional key resources on carbon project planning, wetlands management and restoration planning, assessment of the importance of mangroves for REDD+, application of the forthcoming Verified Carbon Standard methodology for Wetland Restoration, monitoring mangroves restoration from space, and a manual on standardized field sampling approaches. It is recommended that the reader makes use of those resources and calls upon this guidance to assist in shaping the overall scoping of a potential carbon project. A sister document to follow, funded by Restore America's Estuaries, will illustrate the application of the VCS's methodology for restoration of tidal wetlands and seagrasses.

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