

"High-Quality Blue Carbon Principles and Guidance" Seeks to Drive Sustainability and Equity in the Blue Carbon Market

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Principles to build investable high-quality blue carbon projects to ensure positive outcomes for people, nature, and climate are being launched today at the COP27 [2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference](#). The final "High-Quality Blue Carbon Principles and Guidance" issued by a global coalition of ocean leaders is a first-of-a-kind blue carbon framework to guide the development and purchasing of high-quality blue carbon projects and credits.

The development of the framework was driven by a collaborative effort between Salesforce, Conservation International, The Nature Conservancy, the Ocean Risk and Resilience Action Alliance (ORRAA), Friends of Ocean Action/Ocean Action Agenda at the World Economic Forum, and the Meridian Institute.

"This framework is one contribution to the growing dialogue around high-quality blue carbon," said Dr. Whitney Johnston, Salesforce Director of Ocean Sustainability. "We hope these principles will serve as a foundation for actions that ensure equity, accountability, transparency, and sustainability in the blue carbon space."

The High-Quality Blue Carbon Principles and Guidance seeks to provide a consistent and accepted framework for blue carbon credits for credit purchasers, investors, suppliers, and project developers. This shared vision for quality can serve a foundational role in building confidence and momentum around blue carbon project development and investments.

The five principles, each of equal importance, are:

1. Safeguard nature
2. Empower people
3. Employ the best information and carbon accounting principles
4. Operate contextually and locally
5. Mobilize high integrity capital

High-quality nature-based carbon credits are a powerful tool for driving climate mitigation and resilience through the conservation and restoration of nature. As organizations race to achieve their net zero commitments, the global voluntary carbon market is estimated to [grow to \\$50bn by 2030](#).

Blue carbon – or the carbon captured and sequestered by marine ecosystems – is experiencing a particularly rapid increase in demand. The Principles and Guidance seeks to channel this demand toward optimizing outcomes for people, nature, and climate in a transparent and equitable way.

"Because we're seeing such high demand for blue carbon credits, it's important that we maintain their quality as the market expands," said Dr. Jennifer Howard, Vice President of the Blue Carbon Program at Conservation International's Center for Natural Climate Solutions. "We want to ensure that every blue carbon credit is high quality, and these principles will help us get there."

The principles were derived through a global consultative process, consolidating existing knowledge and best practices to provide a shared vision for achieving high-quality blue carbon projects and credits for all stakeholders.

"They're designed to guide us – on both the developer and buyer ends of the transaction – in finding the credits that best serve the nature and people they're intended to support," Dr. Howard added.

"People must be at the center of our nature and climate strategies. It's imperative that we open pathways for local and indigenous communities to equitably participate in and benefit from blue carbon projects, while we work to reverse nature loss and combat climate change." Dr. Johnston added.

Additional Quotes from Sponsors:

"Blue carbon stakeholders are advised to select quality blue carbon projects that prioritize sustainable and equitable outcomes for people, climate, and nature. We are defining a way forward that ensures inclusive participation and leadership of communities and other local groups, as well as equitable access to benefits and capacity-building for all those who have a stake in these coastal ecosystems. The first-of-its-kind High-Quality Blue Carbon Principles and Guidance will act as a strong compass to help blue carbon stakeholders navigate this unique space and opt for blue carbon projects that offer real and lasting positive impact," said Karen Demavivas, Ocean Action Agenda Lead at the World Economic Forum.

"We set out to define a vision for high-quality blue carbon across all aspects of a project over its lifetime. We recognize that it's unlikely that any given project will meet every element of the guidance in full tomorrow. Our intent is not to set a bar that is impossible to achieve and therefore exclusionary, but rather to provide guidance and perhaps more importantly a pathway for delivering the best possible outcomes," said Dr. Jennifer Howard, Conservation International.

Karen Sack, Executive Director of the Ocean Risk and Resilience Action Alliance, said: "Our goal was to collaborate with like-minded partners to ensure the development of the blue carbon credit marketplace was underpinned by clear principles and guidelines. Looking forward, our hope is that governments, investors, buyers, and sellers will adopt these high-quality principles and guidelines as the foundation for their engagement in this marketplace so that we see a race to the top for blue carbon investments that benefits communities, businesses, and nature."

"To effectively confront climate change, we must harness the full power of nature – including marine systems," said Emily Landis, Climate and Oceans Lead for The Nature Conservancy. "As the demand for Blue Carbon continues to grow, it is imperative that we use the latest science to continually raise the bar of excellence, so buyers, civil society, and others fully trust these credits are accelerating climate progress. These new principles and guidance will help ensure Blue Carbon credits are being developed equitably, transparently, and at the highest levels of quality."

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