QAS Quality Assurance Standard

Beyond doubt

Quality Assurance Standard for Carbon Offsetting

40 point QAS checklist

Application checks

1. Companies applying with carbon offset products for approval must be registered with a national authority.
2. A board director must sign off the company's QAS applications and the QAS requirements.
3. Agreement made that carbon offset projects used against QAS-approved offsets must carry one of the following high quality certificates: CERs, ERUs, AAUs, EUAs, Gold Standard VERs or VCS version 2007 onwards.
4. Agreement must be made that no approved offsets will use project methodologies using hydro>20MW.
5. Agreement must be made that no approved offsets will use HFC23 project methodologies.
6. Agreement must be made that approved offsets based on land use employ sustainable REDD+ project methodologies.
7. Agreement must be made that the company is not promoting the purchase of carbon credits for investment purposes.
8. Agreement must be made that offline usage of the Quality Mark must be marked with the dates of approval and a permanent URL which carries a full description of the offset online.

Emissions calculations

9. QAS approved carbon offsets must be calculated from a particular activity over a defined period of time.
10. Emissions calculations must be based on the most recent datasets available.
11. Summary methodology information must be accurate and concise.
12. Emissions calculations must adhere to the hierarchy of emissions calculation methodologies provided in Annex 1 of the QAS ARRP.
13. Where standard emissions methodologies are not applicable, non-standard methodologies must be justified on reasonable grounds and this must be made clear at the point of purchase.
14. A Radiative Forcing Index (RFI) of 1.9 is recommended, any other RFI must be used consistently and transparently.
15. Country-specific emissions must be calculated from an appropriate dataset.

16. Organisation-derived emissions datasets must be appropriately calculated, eg data derived from airline fleets.
17. Uplift of 15% must be applied to car test cycle emission factors to convert to ‘real-world’ emission factor values.
18. Uplift of 8% to be applied to average flight distance or actual Great Circle flight distances to take into account indirect routing and delays.
19. Aviation calculations must take account of class of travel or other loading factors.
20. If the manufacturer standard European test cycle is used for car or van calculations, estimates must be included for emissions of CH_4 and N_2O from DCF Annex 6 or 7.
21. Average journey distances must comply with the data in Annex 1 of the QAS ARRP.

Website checks

22. All references made to a QAS approved offset must either refer prominently to the activity and period of time against which it is made, or link to a page where that information is displayed prominently.
23. All non-QAS offsets must be clearly separated from QAS offsets.
24. QAS Quality Mark must be used within brand guidelines, including only being used in association with approved offsets and linking to the approvals page on the QAS website.
25. Summary methodology information should be made available at the point of purchase.
26. Any non-standard methodologies must be made clear at the point of purchase.
27. Any RFI other than 1.9 must be made clear at the point of purchase.
28. Websites comply with the DEFRA Green Claims Guidance.
29. The appropriate dataset for any international emissions must be displayed prominently at the point of purchase.
30. The purchase of carbon credits for investment purposes is not advocated.
31. Pricing per tonne should be easily found and made clear whether inclusive or exclusive of tax Total price and price per tonne should be made clear as a minimum at the point of sale and in any case before the consumer is committed to purchasing an offset.
32. General information must be provided on the role of carbon offsetting in tackling climate change and the ethical importance of reducing native carbon footprints (‘internal reduction’) before carbon offsetting (‘external reduction’).

33. Information must be provided on how to reduce the measured carbon footprint; alternatively, clear signposting to a suitable information source should be made available to the consumer or organisation.
34. If social benefits are being claimed for VCS projects without double tagging (Social Carbon & CCBA accreditation), a specific disclaimer must be prominently displayed.
35. CO_2 emissions must be clearly differentiated from CO_2.

Renewal checks

36. Statement of account for all QAS-approved offsets sold during the 12 month period of QAS approval must be signed off by a chartered accountant.
37. QAS approved carbon offset projects must carry one of the following high quality certificates: CERs, ERUs, AAUs, EUAs, Gold Standard VERs or VCS version 2007 onwards.
38. All credits sold during the 12 month period of approval must have been cancelled (retired) in an appropriate registry and direct evidence sought from that registry.
39. Carbon credits from contentious methodologies outlined at application must not have been used for QAS-approved offsets during the period of renewal.
40. All QAS approved offsets should undergo renewal 12 months later. If not, a note will be made against that offset on the QAS website.

Contact us

To find out more about how the QAS can put your environmental credibility Beyond Doubt, visit or email us at:

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