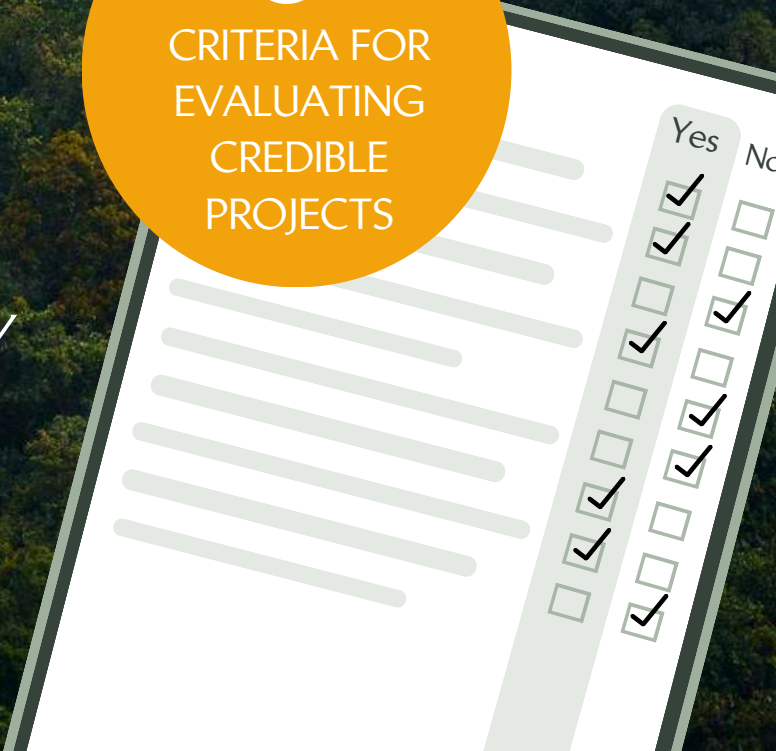


BEFORE YOU BUY: A GUIDE TO HIGH-QUALITY, DURABLE FOREST CARBON CREDITS

USE OUR CHECKLIST TO
DISTINGUISH HIGH-QUALITY
REDD+ PROJECTS FROM
FRAGILE ONES

AND STAND UP TO SCRUTINY

8
CRITERIA FOR
EVALUATING
CREDIBLE
PROJECTS



DEFINING HIGH-QUALITY FOR A NEW ERA



DURABILITY: THE UPDATED FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATING HIGH-QUALITY NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

OUTDATED

Is this project permanent?

Permanence primarily evaluates carbon storage outcomes, overlooking many of the conditions required to sustain them over time.



UPDATED

Is this project durable?

Durability evaluates the ecological, governance, economic, and operational systems that reduce reversal risk and make long-term climate outcomes possible.



Permanence frameworks were originally designed to solely evaluate long-term carbon storage. Buffer pools and insurance mechanisms remain important safeguards, but for nature-based systems, durability is a more comprehensive framework for assessing whether the project design is strong enough to sustain climate outcomes over time.

WHAT CONDITIONS DELIVER DURABILITY?

01

Community Co-Ownership and Management

Communities co-create and co-manage from day one, not just participate.

02

Holistic Project Design & Direct Management

Biodiversity treated as core to carbon durability. Operational readiness to manage risks.

03

Fair, Accurate Baselines

Reflects real threat and produces stable, predictable revenue.

04

Direct Revenue & Embedded Core Benefits

Addresses opportunity costs, funds social development, builds economies.

05

Land Rights & Governance Capacity

Strengthens land tenure rights and shared recognition across stakeholders.



PROJECT DURABILITY CHECKLIST

Projects that score well against this checklist are not just better climate investments—they are more defensible to boards, regulators, and scrutiny.

Durability is becoming the new benchmark for high-quality.

WANT TO GO DEEPER?

Explore the research behind this guide

↳ [Read the technical breakdown](#)

BUYER CHECKLIST

8 REDD+ PROJECT CRITERIA FOR HIGH-QUALITY

- Community-governed revenue share**
Is revenue governance community-led and transparent?
- Robust, continuous FPIC grounded in community co-ownership**
Is consent ongoing, not just a one-time consultation?
- Community land tenure & governance capacity built into the project design**
Are the community's land rights, land use practices, and customary boundaries recognized through formal or informal systems?
- Equitable, independently verified baselines accounting for recent threats, degradation, & deforestation**
Do baselines reflect real, independently verified threat conditions?
- Long-term, field-based operator presence - not a broker or intermediary**
Is there long-term operational presence and field capacity?
- Demonstrated community outcomes that strengthen local economic resilience**
Are community-determined economic & social outcomes measurably strengthening conservation resilience?
- Project risk management includes robust operational readiness with community co-management, not just buffer pools.**
Are communities and project teams equipped to prevent and respond to fires and other natural disasters?
- Co-Benefits as core investments: Biodiversity, water, gender equity, other SDG outcomes built into project design**
Are biodiversity and community outcomes built into the project design as core investments, not treated as add-ons?

CREDIBLE CLIMATE CLAIMS BACKED BY SUCCESSFUL REDD+ PROJECTS

HIGH-QUALITY PROJECTS ARE DURABLE PROJECTS
PROJECTS ARE MOST DURABLE **WHEN COMMUNITIES LEAD**



WHEN REDD+ PROJECTS SUCCEED

- Communities choose to protect forests
- Economic incentives align
- Governance power is local

The projects that last are the ones where communities have chosen to protect their forests because they have access to the economic and governance power to keep doing so for generations.

WHY THIS MATTERS FOR BUYERS

- Stronger climate defensibility
- Greater resilience to reputational and regulatory scrutiny
- Lower long-term reversal risk

For corporate buyers and climate strategy teams, durability is a stronger framework for evaluating long-term climate credibility and project resilience.



WILDLIFE WORKS

See how Wildlife Works
projects stack up

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