

Voluntary Carbon Markets: Social & Human Rights Gaps

Lessons from Nature-Based Solutions

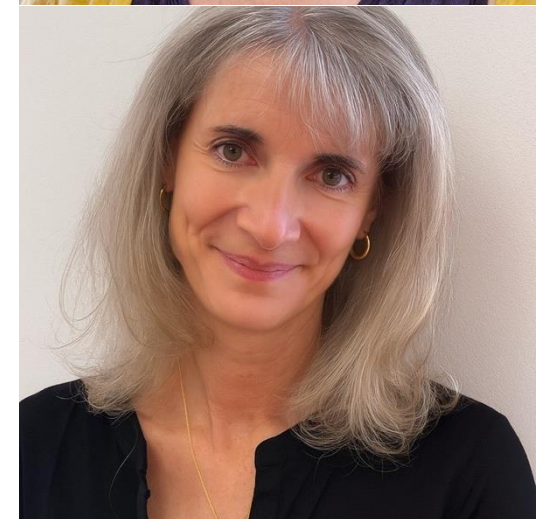


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The Promise of Voluntary Carbon Markets (VCM)

- Nature-Based Solutions (NbS) mitigate climate change
- VCM: Decentralized, voluntary market
- Social and biodiversity net gain
- Growing market: \$104B (2024)
- *But:* Social impacts and Human rights risks overlooked



Research Focus

Goal: Better understand status quo and strengthen protections

- Literature review (published and grey)
- High level analysis of major VCM standards
- Practitioner input including IAIA25 session
- Identified risks, impacts and implementation gaps
- Root causes of harm

The Problem

Reports of harm and human rights violations

Not solving climate change

Greenwashing accusations

- Livelihood displacement and resettlement Community security
- Community conflict
- Labour rights including child labour
- Community and workforce health and safety
- Unfair benefit sharing
- Corruption and bribery
- Grievance mechanism / remedy effectiveness

Key Gaps in Standards

- Partial inclusion of social and human rights elements or process
- No robust impact assessment process required
- Limitations in the implementation requirements
- Limited guidance e.g. Free Prior & Informed Consent
- Blind spot: Displaced stakeholders with no rights
- Weak grievance mechanisms
- Overfocus on carbon accounting

Root Causes of Harm

Standards and
implementation
requirements

Lack of impact
assessment

Time pressure

Social secondary
to financial
return

Optimism
bias: Assumed
"good" projects

Limited expertise
& experience

Project
proponent
maturity?

Call to Action



Strengthen requirements and guidance



Early ongoing engagement



Collaborate with practitioners



Involve specialists



Lessons learned



Enhance certification audits



Scrutiny by Rating Agencies



Q&A / Discussion

How can we balance carbon goals with equity?

Thank you!





Let's continue the conversation!

Message me your questions or comments in the IAIA26 app.

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