

MARINE CONSERVATION CREDITS

MCC-001 Charter and Constitution v2.0

Revised to integrate Environmental and Social Safeguards, Sustainable Development Contribution, Host Country Authorisation, Corresponding Adjustments, Buffer Pool, and Operational Roadmap

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ESTABLISHMENT AND MISSION

0001 The Marine Conservation Credits (MCC) programme is hereby established as an independent, ocean-scoped environmental credit programme.

0002 MCC shall operate with the mission to develop, administer, and govern a credible, transparent, and scientifically rigorous system for issuing marine environmental credits.

0003 MCC credits shall represent verified, independently validated contributions to marine environmental outcomes including blue carbon sequestration, blue carbon protection, marine ecosystem conservation, and marine pollution prevention.

0004 The MCC programme shall serve as a global registry and governance structure for marine environmental credits and shall establish the standards, methodologies, and operational procedures governing credit issuance, trading, and retirement.

0005 MCC shall be open to project developers, host countries, verifying bodies, credit buyers, and other stakeholders operating in marine conservation and climate mitigation.

0006 The MCC programme shall be guided by scientific rigor, environmental integrity, transparency, and human accountability.

0007 MCC credits shall not be issued unless they meet all requirements of the MCC Charter, applicable methodologies, and all applicable cross-cutting frameworks.

0008 All operations of MCC shall be conducted in accordance with this Charter and shall be subject to public scrutiny and independent oversight.

0009 MCC shall maintain permanent, publicly accessible records of all credits issued, retired, and cancelled.

0010 The MCC programme shall be reviewed and assessed periodically to ensure ongoing alignment with international best practices and evolving scientific understanding.

INSTITUTIONAL IDENTITY

0011 MCC shall operate as an integrated standard-setting body, registry operator, and programme administrator, with three distinct operational functions that are structurally integrated but governancely separated.

0012 The Standard-Setting Function shall encompass the development, approval, and maintenance of MCC methodologies, programme rules, safeguards frameworks, and cross-cutting policy frameworks.

0013 The Standard-Setting Function shall be vested in the Methodology Review Committee and shall be overseen by the MCC Board.

0014 The Registry Operator Function shall encompass the technical operation of the MCC credit registry, including serialisation of issued credits, maintenance of the public registry, tracking of retired credits, and provision of transparent, publicly accessible data on all credits and transactions.

0015 The Registry Operator Function shall be vested in the Registry Operations Team and shall be subject to independent audit and assurance.

0016 The Programme Administrator Function shall encompass project oversight, coordination with third-party validation and verification bodies (VVBs), compliance monitoring, safeguards oversight, and ongoing governance of active projects.

0017 The Programme Administrator Function shall be vested in the Project Governance Team and shall be subject to Board oversight.

0018 These three functions shall be operationally integrated to ensure consistency, transparency, and efficiency, but shall be governancely separated to prevent conflicts of interest.

0019 No single individual, committee, or operational unit shall simultaneously hold decision-making authority within both Standard-Setting and Programme Administrator functions.

0020 Standard-setting decisions shall establish rules and requirements for all projects; programme administration shall apply those rules consistently and transparently.

0021 The governance separation principle shall preclude, for example, the same committee from both approving a methodology and subsequently approving individual projects under that methodology.

0022 The MCC Board shall maintain oversight of all three functions and shall ensure appropriate governance separation, preventing any function from dominating decision-making.

0023 Operational integration shall be achieved through shared information systems, regular inter-functional coordination meetings, and aligned strategic planning.

0024 All three functions shall operate under the authority and accountability of the MCC Board and shall be subject to this Charter and the MCC governance structure defined in Section 4.

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

0025 MCC shall adhere to the following fundamental principles in all operations:

0026 Marine Scope: MCC shall cover only marine and ocean-related environmental activities and shall not issue credits for terrestrial or freshwater activities.

0027 Independent Verification: Independent third-party verification shall be mandatory for all credits issued by MCC, and no credit shall be issued without documented evidence of third-party validation and verification.

0028 AI Assistive Only: MCC shall employ artificial intelligence and automated systems as assistive tools only, never as sovereign decision-makers. All final decisions regarding credit issuance, project approval, and safeguards compliance shall be made by human actors with documented accountability.

0029 Human Accountability: Every material decision in the MCC system shall be traceable to a named individual or committee with explicit responsibility and accountability.

0030 Full Public Transparency: All MCC methodologies, programme rules, decisions, credit registers, and performance data shall be publicly available and freely accessible.

0031 Environmental and Social Safeguards Mandatory: All MCC methodologies and projects shall integrate environmental and social safeguards requirements in accordance with MCC-ESS-v1.0 (Environmental and Social Safeguards Standard), and credit issuance shall be conditioned on demonstrated safeguards compliance.

0032 Sustainable Development Contribution Mandatory: All MCC methodologies and projects shall integrate sustainable development assessment in accordance with MCC-SDCF-v1.0 (Sustainable Development Contribution Framework), and sustainable development contributions shall be measured, reported, and made publicly transparent.

0033 Double Counting Prevention Mandatory: All MCC methodologies and projects shall incorporate double counting prevention requirements in accordance with MCC-CADCP-v1.0 (Corresponding Adjustment and Double Counting Prevention Framework), and no credit shall be issued where overlapping credits or regulatory compliance claims exist.

0034 Host Country Authorisation Required: No MCC credit shall be issued for a project activity unless the host country has provided authorisation or documented non-objection, in accordance with MCC-HCA-v1.0 (Host Country Authorisation Framework).

0035 Scientific Rigor: All methodologies shall be based on the best available scientific evidence and shall be subject to peer review, stakeholder consultation, and independent scrutiny.

0036 Permanence and Risk Management: MCC shall establish requirements for addressing permanence risks and shall maintain provisions for credit retirement or replacement where environmental outcomes are at material risk.

0036.1 Family-Differentiated Permanence Horizons: Permanence horizons differ by methodology family in recognition of the heterogeneous nature of marine and coastal interventions. The family-specific permanence horizons and post-crediting monitoring requirements are codified in MCC-200 Methodology Framework §0031.1–0031.3 and shall apply as a normative constraint on all projects registered under any MCC methodology. Amendment of family-specific permanence horizons shall require Methodology Review Committee approval in accordance with MCC-700 §11 and shall be subject to public consultation in accordance with MCC-100 stakeholder consultation requirements.

0037 Stakeholder Engagement: MCC shall engage with project developers, host countries, VVBs, environmental organisations, indigenous communities, and civil society in developing standards and overseeing programmes.

0038 Adaptive Management: MCC shall review, monitor, and adapt its standards and operations in response to scientific advances, operational experience, and changing environmental and social contexts.

0039 Non-Discrimination: MCC shall apply standards and procedures consistently and equitably across all geographies, methodologies, and project types.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

0040 MCC shall be governed by a Board of Directors vested with ultimate decision-making authority.

0041 The Board shall comprise representatives of host country governments, international environmental organisations, scientific institutions, and independent experts.

0042 Board composition shall ensure geographic balance, expertise in marine science and conservation, and representation of diverse stakeholder interests.

0043 The Board shall meet at least quarterly and shall maintain a public record of all meeting minutes and decisions.

0044 Board decisions regarding methodology approval, major policy changes, and charter amendments shall require consensus or documented supermajority approval.

0045 The Board shall delegate operational authority to a Methodology Review Committee, a Registry Operations Team, and a Project Governance Team.

0046 The Methodology Review Committee shall be responsible for developing, reviewing, and approving all MCC methodologies and cross-cutting frameworks.

0047 The Methodology Review Committee shall comprise marine scientists, methodology experts, and independent reviewers with documented expertise.

0048 The Methodology Review Committee shall conduct peer review and stakeholder consultation for all new methodologies.

0049 The Registry Operations Team shall be responsible for technical operation of the MCC credit registry, issuance, serialisation, and public data provision.

0050 The Registry Operations Team shall be subject to independent audit and shall maintain documented quality assurance procedures.

0051 The Project Governance Team shall be responsible for project oversight, VVB coordination, compliance monitoring, and safeguards oversight.

0052 The Project Governance Team shall not make decisions regarding methodology approval or standard-setting.

0053 All committees and teams shall maintain documented procedures, meet regularly, and report to the Board.

0054 The Board shall annually assess the effectiveness of the governance structure and shall make amendments as necessary to ensure accountability and effectiveness.

0055 All Board members and committee members shall operate under a documented code of conduct including conflict of interest disclosure.

0056 The governance structure shall be transparently described in a separate MCC Governance Framework (MCC-700).

PROGRAMME COMMITMENTS

0057 MCC hereby commits to the following binding programme commitments:

0058 Safeguards Commitment: MCC commits to establishing, maintaining, and enforcing environmental and social safeguards standards at the programme level in accordance with MCC-ESS-v1.0 (Environmental and Social Safeguards Standard). All projects shall be required to conduct appropriate environmental and social impact assessment, shall establish mitigation and monitoring measures, and shall demonstrate ongoing compliance with safeguards requirements. Safeguards compliance shall be a mandatory condition for credit issuance.

0059 Sustainable Development Commitment: MCC commits to establishing, maintaining, and enforcing sustainable development contribution assessment at the programme level in accordance with MCC-SDCF-v1.0 (Sustainable Development Contribution Framework). All methodologies shall define methodology-specific sustainable development indicators aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. All projects shall measure and report on sustainable development contributions. MCC shall annually report aggregate sustainable development contributions across all active projects.

0060 Corresponding Adjustment Commitment: MCC commits to establishing, maintaining, and enforcing corresponding adjustment and double counting prevention tracking at the programme level in accordance with MCC-CADCP-v1.0 (Corresponding Adjustment and Double Counting Prevention Framework). MCC shall maintain a public register of corresponding adjustments, shall track cross-reference with external programme registries where available, and shall ensure no credit is issued where overlapping environmental benefits or claims exist.

0061 Host Country Authorisation Commitment: MCC commits to requiring and documenting host country authorisation or documented non-objection for all projects in accordance with MCC-HCA-v1.0 (Host Country Authorisation Framework). No credit shall be issued without evidence of host country engagement and authorisation.

0062 Transparency Commitment: MCC commits to making all programme data including methodologies, rules, decisions, credit registers, and project information publicly accessible at no cost and in accessible formats. MCC shall maintain a public dashboard of key performance metrics and outcomes.

0063 Operational History Commitment: MCC acknowledges that institutional credibility and track record are essential to claims of programme quality. MCC therefore commits to maintaining and demonstrating at least two years of documented operational history, including projects under development, validated projects, issued credits, and verified outcomes, before claiming conformity with external programme standards or seeking external programme equivalence assessments. This commitment ensures that MCC's claims regarding programme maturity and effectiveness are grounded in actual operational experience rather than theoretical design.

0064 Data Integrity Commitment: MCC commits to maintaining secure, auditable, and tamper-proof records of all credits, transactions, and supporting documentation, subject to independent audit.

0065 Adaptive Management Commitment: MCC commits to reviewing and updating standards, methodologies, and operational procedures at least every five years or upon material scientific or policy change, and shall engage stakeholders in all major review processes.

Commitment	Framework Reference	Key Requirements	Oversight
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Safeguards	MCC-ESS-v1.0	ESIA, mitigation, compliance monitoring	Board, Project Governance Team
Sustainable Development	MCC-SDCF-v1.0	SD indicators, reporting, annual aggregation	Board, Methodology Review Committee
Corresponding Adjustment	MCC-CADCP-v1.0	Overlap prevention, registry tracking	Registry Operations Team, Board
Host Country Authorisation	MCC-HCA-v1.0	Documented authorisation, project engagement	Project Governance Team, Board
Transparency	MCC-001 Section 5	Public data, open access, dashboard	Registry Operations Team, Board
Operational History	MCC-001 Section 5	2-year track record, documented projects	Board, independent assessment
Data Integrity	MCC-001 Section 5	Secure records, audit trails	Registry Operations Team, independent auditor
Adaptive Management	MCC-001 Section 5	5-year reviews, stakeholder engagement	Board, Methodology Review Committee

REGULATORY POSTURE

0066 MCC acknowledges that institutional credibility, programme design, and operational track record are prerequisites for claims of conformity with external regulatory frameworks or equivalence with international standards.

0067 MCC shall not claim specific regulatory programme status (such as conformity with Article 6.4 of the Paris Agreement, Voluntary Carbon Market standards, or other international frameworks) until such status has been formally assessed and granted by the relevant external authority.

0068 Until formal external assessment occurs, MCC shall use carefully disciplined language in all public communications regarding external programme alignment:

0069 MCC shall use the phrase 'designed to satisfy' or 'structured to satisfy' when describing alignment with external frameworks, which accurately reflects design intent but not formal external approval.

0070 MCC shall use the phrase 'developed with the intention to support future assessment' or 'structured to support potential future eligibility' when describing aspirational alignment with external frameworks.

0071 MCC shall never claim compliance with, conformity to, or equivalence with external regulatory frameworks unless formal external assessment has been completed and publicly documented.

0072 Claims discipline applies equally to all external frameworks including but not limited to Article 6.4 of the Paris Agreement, voluntary carbon market standards, biodiversity credit standards, or any national or international regulatory programme.

0073 External programme eligibility is acknowledged as a long-term aspiration that may occur in the future, subject to successful external assessment, but is not a current claim or guarantee.

0074 All public marketing, website content, programme documentation, and stakeholder communications shall adhere strictly to this claims discipline.

0075 The Board shall annually review all external claims for consistency with this section and shall correct any non-compliant claims.

0076 This regulatory posture reflects MCC's commitment to credibility, transparency, and honest communication and shall not be interpreted as limiting MCC's eventual external programme engagement.

0077 MCC shall proactively seek external programme assessment and conformity determination once operational history and evidence of programme quality are sufficiently documented.

DOCUMENT HIERARCHY

0078 MCC operates under a five-tier document hierarchy that establishes authority levels, decision-making scope, and amendment procedures.

0079 Tier 1 (Constitutional): MCC-001 (Charter and Constitution) is the supreme constitutional document and may be amended only through supermajority Board approval with documented stakeholder consultation and 90-day public notice.

0080 Tier 2 (Governance): MCC-700 (Governance Framework) establishes the governance structure, roles, responsibilities, and decision-making procedures and may be amended through Board approval with stakeholder consultation and 60-day public notice.

0081 Tier 3 (Programme Rules): MCC-100 series documents establish programme-level rules including programme eligibility, credit types, baseline requirements, and operational procedures and may be amended through Board or delegated committee approval with stakeholder consultation and 30-day public notice.

0082 Tier 4 (Technical Standards): MCC-200 (Methodology Framework) and individual methodologies (M001-M010) establish technical standards for credit quantification, verification, and integrity and may be amended through Methodology Review Committee approval with peer review and stakeholder consultation and 30-day public notice.

0083 Tier 5 (Operational Policies): Cross-cutting frameworks including MCC-ESS-v1.0 (Environmental and Social Safeguards Standard), MCC-SDCF-v1.0 (Sustainable Development Contribution Framework), MCC-HCA-v1.0 (Host Country Authorisation Framework), MCC-CADCP-v1.0 (Corresponding Adjustment and Double Counting Prevention Framework), MCC-BPM (Best Practices Manual), MCC-ORS (Operations and Registry Standards), and MCC-PPF (Project Preparation Facility procedures) establish operational and technical guidance and may be amended through operational team approval with Board oversight and 14-day notice.

0084 Lower-tier documents shall not contradict higher-tier documents; any conflict shall be resolved in favour of the higher tier.

0085 Each document shall include a clear identification of its tier level, authority, and amendment procedure.

0086 The MCC Board shall maintain and publish a document registry showing all current documents, versions, effective dates, and amendment history.

0087 All documents shall be publicly available and freely accessible in open formats.

Tier	Document Type	Examples	Amendment Authority	Public Notice
1	Constitutional	MCC-001	Board supermajority + consultation	90 days
2	Governance	MCC-700	Board + consultation	60 days
3	Programme Rules	MCC-100 series	Board or delegated committee	30 days
4	Technical	MCC-200, M001–	Methodology	30 days

	Standards	M010	Review Committee + peer review	
5	Operational Policies	MCC-ESS, MCC-SDCF, MCC-HCA, MCC-CADCP, MCC-BPM, MCC-ORS, MCC-PPF	Operational teams with Board oversight	14 days

AMENDMENT PROCEDURE

0088 This Charter (MCC-001) may be amended only through a formal amendment procedure designed to ensure deliberation, stakeholder engagement, and legitimacy.

0089 Any proposed amendment to this Charter shall be submitted to the MCC Board with documented rationale and impact analysis.

0090 The Board shall cause the proposed amendment to be circulated for public consultation for a minimum of 90 days.

0091 During the consultation period, the Board shall hold at least one public stakeholder forum inviting comments from project developers, host countries, environmental organisations, VVBs, scientists, and civil society.

0092 Following the consultation period, the Board shall consider all comments received and shall prepare a written response to material comments.

0093 The Board shall vote on the proposed amendment using a supermajority threshold (at least two-thirds of Board members present and voting).

0094 A supermajority vote shall be required for any amendment that alters fundamental principles, governance structure, or programme commitments.

0095 Upon supermajority approval, the amended Charter shall be effective on a date specified in the amendment resolution, which shall be no less than 30 days from approval.

0096 All amendments shall be publicly announced and documented, and the full amendment history shall be maintained in the Charter archive.

0097 This amendment procedure reflects MCC's commitment to democratic governance and stakeholder legitimacy and shall not be bypassed or abbreviated.