



Criteria to Assess Voluntary Market Biodiversity and Marine Methodologies

The following criteria will be used by the Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport to assess biodiversity and marine methodologies for voluntary market endorsement.

These criteria build on, and should be read in conjunction with, the Assessment Framework for Carbon Removals.¹

Applicability to other types of methodologies	
Indigenous biodiversity (including in a marine context)	
Readiness criteria	Information required
Measurable How clearly evidenced is it that there is a quantifiable net improvement in indigenous biodiversity outcomes?	• A key additional step for biodiversity is variable choice – for example, indigenous ecosystem extent, condition or functioning, pressures that can be attributed to the relevant activity. • Otherwise, a similar explanation and peer-reviewed evidence should be provided as per the carbon information requirement: – explanation of the activities proposed and rationale for selection (intervention logic linking to indigenous biodiversity outcomes) – explanation of variables measured and their appropriateness for both the activities and capturing the expected improved biodiversity outcomes – evidence that these attributes/parameters/variables are reliable and appropriate for use in the location (given past and current ecosystem and ecological region or district) and activities. • The choice of variables and measurement approach should be proportionate to project scale, complexity and risk.
Validated As per carbon criteria	As per carbon criteria information requirement
Additional • What does the evidence show about how the improved biodiversity outcomes are caused by the activity? • How is it shown that the biodiversity outcomes from this activity are additional to	• Explanation of how additionality is being calculated, that directly relates to the variable choice. • For indigenous biodiversity, the quantified baseline and any status quo forecast should directly relate to the objective/s of the activity, for example, indigenous ecosystem extent, condition or functioning, pressures.

¹ Ministry for the Environment. 2026. [Assessment Framework for Carbon Removals](#). Wellington: Ministry for the Environment.

Applicability to other types of methodologies

Indigenous biodiversity (including in a marine context)

Readiness criteria	Information required
the biodiversity outcomes over time without the activity?	- Modelling scenarios – showing different outcomes for the variable with and without activity should have clearly: - quantified baseline of the relevant variable measured and rationale of baseline selection - comparison of the status quo forecast to various other scenarios which, at a minimum, include the deployment of the activity.
Permanent/Permanent and durable - What peer-reviewed evidence is there of long-term maintenance of indigenous biodiversity outcomes achieved from the activity? - What is the planned duration of the activity and effects of this activity?	Long term impacts – showing outcomes are permanent, persistent, long term and durable. - Explanation of how the activity will result in improved biodiversity outcomes over an ecologically meaningful period for the location. This will include description of the duration of the activity and plan for transition should the activity be time bound (eg, fixed-term habitat restoration, pest control for x years). - Peer-reviewed evidence that the time frames selected are ecologically meaningful for use in the location (given past and current ecosystem and ecological region or district) and activities. - Assessment of factors that may affect the permanence of biodiversity outcomes (eg, coastal squeeze, coastal development, anchoring, natural disturbance), and how this will be mitigated (proportionate to project scale, complexity and risk).

Indigenous biodiversity (including in a marine context)

Sufficiency criteria	Information required (for example, to check framing for each one and clarify)
Material Not applicable	Not applicable
Carbon dioxide leakage Not applicable	Not applicable
Sustainable/Contribution As per carbon criteria	- Clear evidence of the location of the activity and how biodiversity gains there could contribute more widely to the region and nation, including via (proportionate to project scale, complexity and risk): - endangered ecosystems representation: supporting ecosystems assessed as endangered or ecosystems with less than 20% of pre-human extent remaining, eg, seagrass and saltmarsh in a marine environment) - endangered species habitat provision: providing habitat to endangered species - representativeness: activities that restore/recreate habitats in the whole of their natural range rather than all in the same area/region - connectivity: improving how habitat patches within a landscape can act as an ecological network

Indigenous biodiversity (including in a marine context)	
Sufficiency criteria	Information required (for example, to check framing for each one and clarify)
	– ecosystem services: providing services to wider landscape including pollination, water filtration, erosion control, nursery habitats, filtration, coastal protection. • Where negative environmental impacts are possible (eg, on oceanic primary productivity in a marine project context), an outline of: – the scale of risk of this impact – effective strategies for mitigating and managing this risk – the relative size and scale of the trade-off between the impact and the potential gains.
Transparent As per carbon criteria	• Clear and accessible documentation setting out: – scientific methods, approaches used to measure and monitor biodiversity attribute/parameter/variable – where possible and as appropriate connect with existing infrastructure, such as Global Biodiversity Information Facility. • Clear and accessible documentation of the impacts of the activity: – What is the change? – How is it different from BAU? – How durable is the change? – What does the change mean? Impacts?
Scalable Carbon criteria partially applicable to voluntary markets methodologies – noting that differing measurement approaches may be appropriate at differing project scales.	Carbon information requirements partially applicable to voluntary markets methodologies – noting that differing measurement approaches may be appropriate at differing project scales.