

New playbook offers guide to developing validation and verification bodies for Africa's growing carbon market

New report outlines priority actions to address current shortage of Africa-based validation and verification bodies causing up to 50 per cent of project delays

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, February 26, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A new playbook sets out steps to fill the gap for Africa-based validation and verification bodies and improve the efficiency of the continent's carbon credit market and unlock socio-economic benefits.

Pathways for Strengthening Validation and Verification Body (VVB) Capacity in Africa highlights that Africa still relies on international VVBs and non-African auditors for more than 90 per cent of carbon project verification activities. Project developers estimate that between 10 and 50 per cent of total project delays and cost overruns are attributable to VVB bottlenecks.

The report, produced by Perspectives Climate Group, was commissioned by the Voluntary Carbon Markets Integrity Initiative (VCMI) for its Access Strategies program, and German Agency for International Cooperation, GIZ as part of its Global Carbon Market Project. The Eastern Africa Alliance on Carbon Markets and Climate Finance, and the West African Alliance on Carbon Markets and Climate Finance, have supported the report's findings.

Africa issued approximately 12.2 million carbon credits in 2024, with voluntary market issuance comparable to that of Asia. However, a lack of VVBs in Africa results in higher transaction costs and limited local ownership and economic benefits, while demand for carbon credits is expected to continue to rise. The report outlines that strengthening Africa's VVB ecosystem would deliver a range of climate, economic and social benefits including reduced greenwashing risks, more green jobs and greater retention of the value of carbon markets within African economies.

"Demand for validation and verification services is expected to rise significantly by 2030, as countries implement activities under the Paris Agreement's Article 6 mechanisms and governments drive consistent guidance on corporate use of carbon credits as part of credible decarbonization plans," said Mark Kenber, Executive Director of VCMI.

"Building Africa's capacity to validate and verify emissions reductions through carbon credit projects is fundamental for fulfilling its potential to meet rising demand for high-integrity carbon credits and to ensure that the value of these services remains on the continent. The opportunity

cost for the continent is considerable – without coordinated action to scale Africa-based VVB capacity, Africa risks losing out on approximately USD \$ 1 billion of economic benefits over five years.”

Despite strong potential, Africa's carbon credit market, representing about 11 per cent of global issuance, has tapped only two per cent of its maximum capacity, the report finds.

VVBs play a central role in carbon markets, providing independent assurance that emission reductions and removals are real, additional, permanent, and properly monitored. VVBs are therefore essential to the credibility of African credits for voluntary and compliance uses.

“The supply of carbon credits in Africa has increased significantly in recent years, but it continues to represent a fraction of retirements globally,” said Andrew Ocama, Coordinator of the Eastern Africa Alliance on Carbon Markets and Climate Finance.

“An understanding of local context is important for auditing community related projects, which form the majority of projects in Africa. This report is a welcome resource that will guide countries in Eastern Africa and beyond looking to bolster domestic audit infrastructure for high-integrity carbon markets and reduce reliance on international auditors.”

The report authors call for a phased and coordinated approach, moving from rapid deployment of Africa-based auditors in the near-term to the establishment of durable African VVB institutions in the longer term, through accreditation and training pathways, targeted de-risking of private sector investment, and integration of digital monitoring, reporting and verification tools.

“For Africa to fully participate in high-integrity carbon markets, it must build the systems and structures that underpin them. Validation and verification are core market infrastructure. Strengthening this capacity locally is essential for credibility, competitiveness, and climate sovereignty,” said Ritah Rukundo, Manager of the Global Carbon Market Project at GIZ.

“This report clearly shows that addressing this gap and ensuring carbon markets deliver critical climate finance and wider economic and community benefits for Africa will require coordinated action across policy, institutions, workforce development, and financing.”

The nine priority actions identified by the report include:

1. Providing clear policy signals on the role of carbon markets in Nationally Determined Contribution implementation and embed VVB functions within national Measurement, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) frameworks.

2. Strengthening regional and national accreditation and training pipelines aligned with ISO standards and priority sectors in the African project pipeline.

3. Harmonizing regional training-to-accreditation pathways as a structural precondition for scaling with integrity, including mutual recognition where feasible.
4. Rapidly scaling Africa-based auditors' engagement in VVB services for carbon market activities through co-auditing, mentorship, and permanent regional audit teams.
5. Improving and addressing auditor retention and career progression through demand-linked professional pathways.
6. Deploying targeted financial de-risking instruments to address accreditation costs, working capital needs, and early-stage risk.
7. Exploring durable domestic financing options such as allocating a share of proceeds from carbon levies to fund verification capacity, reducing dependency on short-term donor cycles, and aligning incentives for market credibility.
8. Integrating digital MRV tools as efficiency-enhancing complements within robust institutional and accreditation frameworks.
9. Embedding inclusivity pathways throughout all priority actions such as targeted outreach and scholarships for women and under-represented groups, multilingual materials and delivery, and deliberate representation of least developed countries and smaller markets within regional hubs.

"Africa's rapidly growing carbon markets are constrained by a critical shortage of local validation and verification capacity. As demand for carbon credits increases, Africa's reliance on international auditors leads to higher costs, delays and limited local value creation," said Sergi Cuadrat, Managing Director for Carbon Markets at Perspectives Climate Group.

"Beyond identifying practical pathways to strengthen VVB capacity, the report has informed the design of a strategic accelerator concept to translate evidence into implementation. The accelerator combines targeted policy coordination, accreditation training, supervised audit deployment and catalytic financial instruments to scale high-integrity, Africa-based VVB capacity. By addressing systemic bottlenecks rather than isolated skills gaps, it provides a credible roadmap to unlock private investment and strengthen institutional resilience across Africa."

"Communities across West Africa stand to gain significantly from a mature and well-regulated carbon markets ecosystem. Building strong VVB capacity will not only create skilled green jobs, but also ensure high-integrity carbon projects are designed, implemented, and audited with African priorities at the forefront. This report sets out the critical actions required to scale VVB capacity and unlock the full climate and economic potential of carbon markets," said Ousmane Fall Sarr, Coordinator of the West African Alliance on Carbon Markets and Climate Finance.

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