



Cognitud

**France Launches Charter to Support
High-Integrity Carbon Credit Use**



On April 24, 2025, during the ChangeNOW climate summit in Paris, France launched a pioneering Charter for Paris-Aligned and High-Integrity Use of Carbon Credits. Introduced by Agnès Pannier-Runacher, French Minister for Ecological Transition, Biodiversity, Forests, the Sea, and Fisheries, the charter seeks to create a transparent, credible, and responsible approach to corporate use of carbon credits to drive climate action and enable global net-zero ambitions.

This action draws upon the momentum from the COP29 UN Climate Conference in November 2024, where global agreement was achieved on standards under Article 6.4 of the Paris Agreement for validating, verifying, and issuing high-quality carbon credits. The charter will help establish a stronger international carbon market that separates high-integrity projects from low-quality projects and addresses one of the biggest challenges in carbon finance.

Key Features of the Charter

Decarbonisation First

Businesses should first minimize their own greenhouse gas emissions across all three scopes (Scope 1, 2, and 3). Carbon credits should only be used as a complement to verified emission and not as a substitute.

Businesses must have a time-bound transition plan and an independently verified net-zero pathway that complies with the Paris Agreement.

Use of High-Integrity Carbon Credits

Businesses must make sure that the carbon credits they buy comply with Article 6.4 requirements and have been authorized by the Integrity Council for Voluntary Carbon Markets (ICVCM) Core Carbon Principles. This guarantees that the credits reflect genuine, additional, permanent, and independently verified emission reductions or removals.

Transparency and Reporting

The charter requires separate and transparent reporting of gross emissions and any carbon credit utilization, encouraging transparency and accountability in business climate reporting. This is in line with global best practices, including the Voluntary Carbon Markets Integrity Initiative (VCMi) guidelines.

Corporate and Government Support



Early Corporate Signatories

Seventeen companies have already signed the pledge, which indicates strong corporate support for high-integrity climate action. During the ChangeNOW Summit, the immediate need of taking urgent climate action together with internal decarbonization was stressed. It was also pointed out that carbon credits should speed up and complement operational change, not substitute it.



Viewpoint of the Government

Minister Agnès Pannier-Runacher emphasized the need for global cooperation and business participation in funding high-impact projects in emerging economies. She also urged companies to take an active role in establishing a credible, inclusive, and economically efficient carbon market which supports their decarbonization efforts.

France's Climate Progress and Challenges

France has already achieved considerable progress in lowering greenhouse gas emissions, with a 31.2% decrease between 2005 and 2023. However, the challenges are still there, most importantly the reduction of natural carbon sinks like forests and land by over half in the same time frame. France needs to lower emissions by approximately 5% per year and rebuild its carbon sink to achieve EU's ambitious goal of a 55% net reduction in emissions by 2030

Strategic Importance of the Charter

Building Momentum from COP29

The charter enforces the standards agreed at COP29 for Article 6.4, which established a global benchmark for carbon credit quality and governance. It also underscores that the Article 6.4 mechanism provides funding to adaptation in vulnerable developing countries, including small island developing states (SIDS).

Complementing Emission Reductions with Carbon Credits

The charter supports a balanced portfolio strategy to climate solutions:

- Reduction/Avoidance Credits: Initiatives like forest preservation and renewable energy that prevent emissions now.
- Removal Credits: Initiatives that actively take carbon out of the atmosphere, such as direct air capture technology and reforestation.

Global Significance and Future Outlook

France's charter sends a strong message to the international carbon market: carbon credits are not a "free pass" but an instrument to supplement verified emission reductions. By insisting on alignment with high-integrity standards and transparent corporate commitments, France seeks to enhance the credibility and effectiveness of voluntary carbon markets globally.

VCMI Director of Policy and Partnerships Lydia Sheldrake commended France's leadership, adding that well-integrity carbon markets have the potential to deliver immediate progress toward international climate objectives but need strong mandates and simple demand signals.

The success of this initiative relies on broader adoption by other countries and businesses, but it represents a critical practical step toward building credible climate finance and speeding the world's transition to net-zero emissions.

