What is a Carbon Offset?

A carbon offset is an intangible commodity representing a specific reduction in GHG emissions. It is typically sold in metric tons of carbon dioxide-equivalent (mtCO2e).

In the voluntary market, it’s purchased in order to negate or diminish the impact of the recipient’s own GHG emissions. Reductions occur at projects located far away from the source of emissions being offset.

Green-e® Climate Certified Offsets Meet the Most Rigorous Quality Standards & Provide:

Transparency between end-use consumers, resellers, and the carbon offset project. The third-party certification program follows the chain of custody of the carbon offsets transacted. Certified offsets contain only verified reductions from projects that meet high-quality, endorsed standards.

Accountability for participating offset sellers who must obtain and retire correct volumes and types of eligible emissions reductions on behalf of their customers. A third-party verification audit reviews what is sold against what is delivered, preventing double-selling. Marketing Compliance Reviews ensure accurate advertising and disclosure to customers.

Credibility as third-party certification streamlines all of the vital elements of a credible offset into a single, consumer-facing certification. The program strengthens the voluntary carbon market and supports purchasers reducing their GHG footprints.

“The Green-e Climate program is the first program to address retailer accountability for the voluntary market and fills an important niche for quality assurance.”

—Stockholm Environment Institute

“It’s kind of like the Wild West out there, and that’s why we’re glad that there’s this credible certification program.”

—Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)
Benefits of Certification

1. **Verified Projects.** Only verified GHG emissions reductions that come from projects that meet high-quality project standards are permitted. We require project additionality and emissions reductions must be permanent, verified, enforceable, and real.

2. **Exclusive Ownership.** Green-e® Climate ensures that the correct type and quantity of reductions are actually and fully delivered by the retailer. An annual verification of sales prevents double selling.

3. **Accurate Disclosure.** Sellers are required to provide customers with information about the certified carbon offsets at the time of purchase. Green-e® Climate checks for false or misleading advertising.

4. **Open Program Development.** Green-e® Climate’s environmental and consumer-protection standards are developed through an open stakeholder review process and overseen by an independent governance board.

For Corporate Purchasers

Certification protects the purchaser, and reduces risk by guaranteeing that the carbon offsets are correctly delivered and exclusively owned by the purchaser. Certified offsets can be used to earn points under environmental standards like Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) and the Living Building Challenge.

For Carbon Offset Sellers

Green-e® Climate certifies carbon offsets and bundled offset programs, like carbon offset natural gas. Program participation requires sellers to complete an annual verification audit and semi-annual Marketing Compliance Reviews.

Find Out More

Contact Green-e® Climate at climate@green-e.org or (415) 561-2100.

To read program documents or learn where to buy Green-e® Climate certified carbon offsets, visit www.green-e.org/climate.

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