Nature Based Carbon Standards[1]

BSI Flex 703 v1.0:2025-03 Nature markets[2] *– Supply of nature-based carbon benefits – Specification*

Source: BSI

Committee: *ZZ/1 - Generic committee reference used for BSI Standards Solutions projects*

Categories: *Unclassified documents*

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Number of comments: 9

Scope

This BSI Flex specifies requirements for driving a consistent level of quality across projects delivering nature-based carbon removals and greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions taking place within the UK's territories and ascribed to UK production-based accounts. It is intended to provide a credible means of identifying projects that are capable of yielding high-integrity carbon[3]) units that represent additional, real and verified outcomes, based on the latest science and best practice.

This BSI Flex is intended to:

- *apply the principles set out in BSI Flex 701 to nature-based carbon projects;*
- *drive the increased supply of projects delivering high-integrity nature-based carbon removals and GHG reductions;*
- *provide a level of consistency for these projects across all habitats and land use types;*
- *provide set criteria for any programme that is intended to generate credits that can be used to support voluntary carbon mitigation claims; and*
- *align with international best practice, building on the emerging consensus from the Integrity Council for Voluntary Carbon Markets' (ICVCM) Core Carbon Principles.*

This BSI Flex covers the monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) of domestic (i.e. UK-derived, excluding overseas dependent territories) carbon removals and GHG reductions (i.e. robust measurement of the baseline and projections for the benefits of proposed interventions), in a manner that is consistent across different types of natural capital.

This BSI Flex does not cover:

- *uses of and claims made about purchased credits;*
- *activities of corporate buyers or their reporting requirements;*
- *engineered GHG removals utilizing natural systems or materials, such as biochar, enhanced rock weathering etc; and*
- *avoidance of future emissions, including Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) projects that seek to avoid future deforestation.*

This BSI Flex is intended for use by carbon market participants, including:

- *suppliers of nature-based projects (or credits);*
- *nature-based carbon crediting programmes, including codes, standards and schemes that facilitate the generation of carbon credits; and*

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[1] *https://defraenvironment.blog.gov.uk/2025/03/31/have-your-say-on-a-new-nature-based-carbon-standard-consultation/*

[2] *https://standardsdevelopment.bsigroup.com/projects/9025-11648#/section*

- *registries, trading platforms and other market intermediaries.*

This BSI Flex might also be of interest to:

- *consultants;*
- *non-governmental organizations (NGOs);*
- *buyers of nature-based credits;*
- *investors in nature-based projects;*
- *nature market verification and validation bodies;*
- *regulators;*
- *policy analysts; and*
- *researchers.*

This BSI Flex is intended for use in the UK.

Comments included (there are no questions just the opportunity to comment on the standards)

0.2 The need for new standards

The integrity of the process would benefit from mandating the adoption of the Green Claims Code (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/green-claims-code-making-environmental-claims/environmental-claims-on-goods-and-services), which has the following principles:

- *claims must be truthful and accurate*
- *claims must be clear and unambiguous*
- *claims must not omit or hide important relevant information*
- *comparisons must be fair and meaningful*
- *claims must consider the full life cycle of the product or service*
- *claims must be substantiated*

0.3 Alignment with internationally agreed principles

Consider the inclusion of guidance about how to calculate the impact of additional carbon emissions caused by changes in land use, such as for those businesses that will be developing on deep peat (which is an alarming number of developments). Whether the peat is piled or removed, there will be a huge carbon emissions event, even if the peat is no longer capturing carbon effectively.

For other businesses, increased emissions may occur as a consequence of fires (such as peat burning or battery storage systems setting themselves on fire, which, if the risk materialises, would result in any carbon benefits being totally negated).

Given that Local Authorities and Health Authorities have declared climate emergencies, and many have carbon neutral action plans, this guidance would be useful for them too and could include the carbon emissions caused by Bonfire Night burning.

1 Scope

Calculations should recognise the benefit potential of different land types and solutions. It is recognised that peatlands, for example, offer a more efficient, long-term solution for carbon capture and sequestration than alternatives, such as tree planting (which, whilst valuable, can offer more limited benefits).

One of the many advantages of carbon sequestration via peatland is its own negligible carbon footprint. There is no requirement for manufacturing of major technology or equipment and no ongoing use of fossil-fuel based power (although we do recognise that restoration techniques might involve some initial machine-using groundwork and some installation of plastic dams or pipes).

Restored peat mosses require relatively low maintenance, perhaps some weed incursion control, but mostly it is over to the forces of nature and time to deliver the benefits.

Calculations should also take into consideration any deliberate damage to natural capital assets and, whilst degraded peatlands can be a source of carbon emissions, their restoration would not only reduce current carbon emissions but would provide a repository to support climate mitigation.

Given their value to nature-based carbon storage, development on peat should result in significant penalties within the calculations.