



Transformativefin Hub

LEARN, CONNECT, IMPACT

2025

CERTIFIED CARBON MARKETS ADVISOR CCMA CHARTER

The CCMA Charter is designed as a legacy framework for developing long-term capacity in climate markets. Earning the CCMA connects you to a diverse professional network of policymakers, project developers, consultants, and corporate leaders shaping the future of carbon markets.

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Certified Carbon Markets Advisor (CCMA) Charter

1. Qualification Definition and Purpose

The Certified Carbon Markets Advisor is a credential for practitioners in carbon markets, convened by TRANSFORMATIVEFIN HUB. It certifies individuals' competence to design, finance, and manage carbon credit projects and policies from concept to monetization. CCMA serves both voluntary and compliance markets, emphasizing real-world impact and market integrity.

The program is private-sector led and is aligned with international standards and frameworks, including ISO/IEC 17024 for personnel certification and ISO 10015 – Training and Competence Management, as well as the Paris Agreement Crediting Mechanism and the Integrity Council's Core Carbon Principles, among others, to ensure consistency with climate governance norms.

By meeting these benchmarks, CCMA aims to be the “benchmark” credential that stakeholders—industry, governments, investors—trust to signal high integrity and competence in carbon markets.

2. Eligibility and Prerequisites

Candidates must demonstrate a combination of education and practical experience in climate, energy or environmental fields.

Academic background: A bachelor's degree in environmental science, engineering, economics, law, or related discipline is strongly recommended. Alternatively, a technical diploma or significant professional training in carbon/climate fields is acceptable for experienced practitioners.

Professional experience: Only applicable for recognition of prior learning certification pathway (see Section 7). A minimum of 10 years of relevant work experience. This may include roles in project development, climate finance, environmental policy, GHG accounting, or verification. Candidates should be able to understand carbon markets and basic business finance. A current profile and references must be submitted. A background check shall be undertaken to verify identity, education and experience.

3. Qualification/Program Structure and Tracks

CCMA consists of two specialist tracks plus a common foundation of cross-cutting knowledge:

3. Qualification/Program Structure and Tracks

3.1 Core Knowledge

All CCMA candidates must master foundational concepts of carbon markets, including the structure of voluntary and compliance markets, carbon pricing mechanisms, registry systems, and key international frameworks.

This also covers MRV standards, legal/regulatory compliance (national ETS rules, accounting, and double-counting rules), and stakeholder engagement (project safeguards, community consent, social co-benefits). Competency in these areas ensures all advisors share a common base in market integrity and sustainability.

3.2 Policy track

Designed for professionals focusing on carbon market policy, regulations and strategy. Key focus areas: developing and comparing carbon policies, international carbon trading rules, carbon market infrastructure (registries, exchanges), and advising governments and credit buyers on market strategy.

Policy-track candidates learn to interpret UNFCCC rulebooks, domestic regulations, and industry standards, and design market interventions that adhere to scientific integrity. They also study stakeholder consultation and legal compliance. Typical roles: climate policy advisor, regulator, corporate sustainability strategist.

3.3 Project Cycle Management track

Focused on the project side of carbon markets. Candidates master the full carbon project lifecycle: from concept and baseline design to MRV and credit issuance. Emphasis areas include project scoping, the selection and application of approved methodologies, financial modelling, and technical monitoring.

They learn project finance, verification protocols, and safeguards implementation. Example skills: writing Project Design Documents, drafting monitoring plans per ISO 14064-2, and coordinating third-party verification. Typical roles may include carbon project developer, verification consultant, Carbon Finance Associate and Expert.

Both tracks share an integrated curriculum on carbon market fundamentals, registries, MRV practices, compliance obligations and stakeholder engagement.

4. Examination Framework

CCMA certification is earned by passing a rigorous exam tailored to each track. Exams are designed to be relevant, fair and reliable assessments of the targeted competencies. Key features:

- **Knowledge testing (MCQs):** A proctored 90-question, 3-hour-long multiple-choice exam covering both policy and project cycle fundamental knowledge.
- **Knowledge application (practice task):** An extended scenario-based exam where candidates apply concepts. For the Policy track, a case might involve drafting a policy brief or analysing ETS design; for Project track, it might include designing a project baseline or interpreting MRV data. This component shall include short and long answer essays and calculations.
- **Content Focus:** Exams emphasise track-specific learning outcomes. Policy-track tests concentrate on market rules, accounting, carbon pricing, and legal frameworks. Project-track exams emphasise project design, MRV calculations, credit quantification, and risk/finance. The knowledge examination covers the shared core knowledge topics, whereas the application examination focuses on the candidates' selected track.
- **Passing Standards:** Candidates must achieve the minimum competency level from both exams. The passing grades are 70% and 65% for the MCQ and practice exam, respectively. Candidates who do not pass shall re-sit after remedial study; typically, the first retake is allowed within three months without re-learning (no administrative fee applies). Candidates are limited to three attempts; after this, retaking final exams requires repeat study with no extra charges within 24 months.
- **Exam Administration:** Exams shall be offered in secure, live or automated online proctored settings (with ID checks, environment scan, and monitoring via webcam). Test design includes random question banks and versioning to prevent reuse. Candidates must agree to the Security and Ethics, pledging not to cheat or disclose content. Any evidence of fraud (unauthorised aids, proxies, or collusion) leads to score invalidation.

5. Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

To ensure CCMA professionals remain up to date with evolving carbon regulations and methodologies. Maintaining CCMA status requires ongoing CPD to ensure advisors stay current. The CPD requirements emphasise practical, project-based learning rather than purely academic refreshers. CCMA holders must accumulate at least 300 hours of practice per year, averaged over a five-year period, drawn from activities directly relevant to carbon markets. Acceptable CPD activities include:

- **Professional practice:** On-the-job activities count towards CPD. Leading or contributing to actual carbon projects (design, monitoring, stakeholder consultation) can earn credit.
- **Research and Publication:** Publishing papers, giving presentations or participating in expert panels on carbon topics.
- **Professional Engagement:** Serving on standards committees, working groups, or teaching in carbon courses.
- **Training and Conferences:** Attending carbon market workshops, webinars, or training courses.

At least 25% of required CPD credits should come from active project participation or engagement in the public policy process, reinforcing real-world competence. CPD claims must be documented in a portfolio (logs, certificates, project summaries) and are subject to periodic audit. Hours cannot be earned solely by repeating the CCMA course; instead, CCMA prioritises experiential learning.

6. Recertification

CCMA certificates are valid for a fixed term (5 years). To recertify, holders must demonstrate continued competence through CPD and compliance with standards. Requirements shall include:

- **CPD fulfilment:** Attainment of the required CPD hours (detailed section 5) during the certification cycle.
- **Ethics and Compliance:** Continued adherence to the CCMA Code of Conduct (no sanctions or ethics violations).
- **Recertification Audit:** An applicant may undergo an audit of their CPD portfolio and employment verification.

Re-examination and repeating the CCMA course shall NOT constitute a requirement. A recertification committee shall ensure that candidates' CPD portfolios are aligned with the latest market or policy developments. If the requirements are not met, certification shall be temporarily suspended. All recertified members receive updated certificates with new expiration dates.

7. Training Provider Accreditation, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), and Exemptions

The TRANSFORMATIVEFIN HUB shall establish a registry of approved training providers whose courses or capacity-building activities cover the CCMA Body of Knowledge. Accreditation criteria for providers include qualified instructors, a curriculum aligned with the CCMA structure and adequate learning resources. Accredited providers and activities shall be reviewed periodically to ensure training quality (comparable to ISO 10015 training guidelines). This helps standardise and expand the variety of preparatory courses globally.

To acknowledge existing expertise, this charter permits Recognition of Prior Learning and test exemptions, but not final exam exemptions, in specific cases. For example, a candidate with extensive verified experience (e.g. a CDM/JI verifier or published carbon specialist) may submit a portfolio to waive prerequisite training or parts of the exam.

Such RPL processes follow international practice: rather than forcing all candidates through identical training, RPL “grants access to education by shortening the duration of training” for those who already meet competency benchmarks. CCMA’s Recognition Committee reviews RPL application against the CCMA Competency Framework. After the RPL application is verified and approved, applicants shall be invited to take a two-part exam within three months.

An administrative fee of USD 100 will be charged upon acceptance of the RPL application, and no additional costs will be payable. For transparency, all accepted RPL applications shall be made publicly available.

8. Examination Integrity and Appeals

8.1 Security and Proctoring

CCMA examinations are delivered under strict security protocols with live remote proctoring, which includes mandatory identity verification and environmental checks. The exam system randomly selects question pools to minimise content exposure. In online mode, screen recording and live monitoring prevent the use of unauthorised materials.

Integrity Measures: The CCMA’s integrity program adheres to best practices through continuous monitoring. Candidate exam data are analyzed to detect irregular patterns. Software flags potential “proxy testing” or cheating (such as multiple candidates sharing IP addresses). Any confirmed violation leads to invalidation of results.

8.2 Appeals Process

The TRANSFORMATIVEFIN HUB shall maintain a transparent appeals procedure. Candidates found to be in violation of exam rules may appeal sanctions within a 30-day window by submitting a written appeal, accompanied by evidence and a rationale. An independent Appeals Panel shall adjudicate all appeals.

Consistent with other credentialing bodies, appeals are limited: they can address process irregularities or administrative errors, but cannot be used to challenge exam content, grading decisions, or simply to overturn a failing score. Panel decisions shall be final. Successful appeals may result in retesting or reinstatement, while unsuccessful ones uphold the original outcome.

All CCMA candidates and certified members must acknowledge the Appeals Policy as part of the certification agreement.

9. Quality Assurance and Governance

The CCMA qualification is governed by a multi-stakeholder Certification Board and Secretariat (TRANSFORMATIVEFIN HUB), ensuring ongoing credibility and alignment with global best practice. Governance features include:

- **Standards-Based Design:** This certification is built to ISO/IEC 17024 – Conformity Assessment of Personnel Certification Bodies and ISO 10015 – Training and Competence Management standards. The curriculum and exam structure are based on defined competency frameworks and priority technical capacity needs.
- **Stakeholder Advisory Council:** Representatives from business, NGOs, academia and government advise on evolving market needs. The Council reviews CCMA Competency Frameworks and Exam structure to incorporate new competencies or update certification requirements.
- **Quality Management:** A continuous improvement program includes regular audits of exam procedures, data analysis of pass/fail rates, and candidate surveys for feedback. Recertification and CPD audits ensure compliance. Key performance indicators, including exam relevancy, reliability, and stakeholder satisfaction, shall be assessed and openly published.
- **Ethics Oversight:** Complaints or allegations of breach of ethics shall be handled by an ad-hoc Ethics Committee to be composed based on the context at hand. This will ensure that CCMA holders not only have knowledge but also uphold integrity in practice (echoing ICVCM’s governance principle of accountability).