



INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP.
NATURAL SOLUTIONS.
SHARED PROSPERITY.

CARBON MARKETS 101

A foundational guide to understanding
carbon markets, credits, and opportunities
for Indigenous Nations.



UNDERSTAND
THE BASICS



EXPLORE
OPPORTUNITIES



DRIVE CLIMATE
SOLUTIONS



BUILD COMMUNITY
PROSPERITY



BIRCH CARBON PROGRAM

INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP. NATURAL SOLUTIONS.
SHARED PROSPERITY.

BIRCH CARBON PROGRAM SUMMARY

KEY INSIGHTS. REAL IMPACT. STRONGER COMMUNITIES.

Birch Carbon Program Summaries provide Indigenous Nations with quick, easy-to-understand insights from important resources — highlighting what matters most and how it can support environmental stewardship, community priorities, and long-term prosperity.

WHAT YOU'LL FIND INSIDE



KEY TAKEAWAYS

The most important points from the original resource.



INDIGENOUS FOCUS

Why it matters to your Nation, your lands, and your future.



BIRCH CARBON PERSPECTIVE

Our insights on opportunities, benefits, and real-world impact.



COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES

How this information can create value for your people and territory.



ORIGINAL SOURCE

Direct links to the full document and official resources.



OUR COMMITMENT

We are committed to making complex information accessible and relevant for Indigenous Nations so you can make informed decisions, protect your lands, and build prosperity for future generations.



PROTECT
OUR LANDS



SUPPORT
OUR PEOPLE



BUILD
PROSPERITY



SECURE OUR
FUTURE

[BIRCHCARBONPROGRAM.COM](https://www.birchcarbonprogram.com)

BIRCH CARBON PROGRAM SUMMARY

About This Summary

This summary has been prepared by the Birch Carbon Program to help Indigenous Nations better understand the fundamentals of carbon markets and how they relate to community-owned environmental stewardship.

Rather than replacing the original Government of Canada publication, this document highlights the key concepts, explains why they matter, and connects them to the opportunities available to Indigenous Nations through responsible land stewardship.

Original Publication
The Essentials: Carbon Markets 101

Environment and
Climate Change Canada

This Edition

An educational
companion prepared by
the Birch Carbon
Program for Indigenous
Nations.

THE STARTING POINT

Why This Matters

For thousands of years, Indigenous Nations have managed forests, wetlands, rivers, grasslands, and traditional territories in ways that naturally store carbon and protect biodiversity.

Today, governments, businesses, and investors are increasingly recognizing the value of these natural ecosystems.

Carbon markets create a framework that may allow this stewardship to generate measurable environmental and economic value when projects meet recognized standards and program requirements.

THIS REPRESENTS MORE THAN CARBON CREDITS

It represents recognition that healthy ecosystems provide real value to both local communities and the global climate.

CONTENTS

What's Inside

KEY CONCEPTS EXPLAINED

01	What are Greenhouse Gases?	7
02	What are Carbon Markets?	8
03	What is a Carbon Credit?	9
04	What is an Offset Project?	10
05	What Determines the Value of Carbon Credits?	11

BIRCH CARBON INSIGHTS

06	Our Perspective	13
07	How We Support Communities	14
08	Where a Nation Can Begin	15

CLOSING

09	Resources & References	17
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KEY CONCEPTS EXPLAINED



CONCEPT 01

What are Greenhouse Gases?

Greenhouse gases are naturally occurring and human-generated gases that trap heat within the Earth's atmosphere. As concentrations increase, they contribute to climate change.

Different greenhouse gases have different warming effects, which is why emissions are measured using a common unit called **carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e)**.

WHY IT MATTERS TO INDIGENOUS NATIONS

Understanding greenhouse gases is the foundation of every carbon project. Without measuring carbon stored in forests, wetlands, peatlands, and other ecosystems, carbon credits cannot be generated.

CONCEPT 02

What are Carbon Markets?

Carbon markets allow verified greenhouse gas reductions or removals to be bought and sold as carbon credits. There are two primary markets:

Compliance Markets

Established through government regulations.

Voluntary Markets

Used by organizations choosing to reduce their environmental footprint beyond regulatory requirements.

WHY IT MATTERS TO INDIGENOUS NATIONS

Carbon markets create potential buyers for verified environmental outcomes. Communities that successfully develop eligible carbon projects may be able to generate long-term revenue while maintaining stewardship of their lands.

CONCEPT 03

What is a Carbon Credit?

1 tonne

EQUALS ONE CARBON CREDIT

One carbon credit represents one verified tonne of greenhouse gas emissions reduced or removed from the atmosphere.

Credits are only issued after projects meet strict technical, scientific, and verification requirements.

WHY IT MATTERS TO INDIGENOUS NATIONS

Carbon credits transform measurable environmental stewardship into a recognized environmental asset that may have market value.

CONCEPT 04

What is an Offset Project?

Offset projects create verified environmental improvements beyond what would have occurred under normal conditions. Examples include:

- Forest conservation
- Improved forest management
- Tree planting
- Wetland restoration
- Methane capture
- Regenerative agriculture

WHY IT MATTERS TO INDIGENOUS NATIONS

Many Indigenous territories already contain the types of ecosystems that may be suitable for carbon projects, subject to eligibility rules, approved methodologies, and independent assessment.

CONCEPT 05

What Determines the Value of Carbon Credits?

The value of carbon credits changes over time based on:

- Supply and demand
- Market type
- Project quality
- Co-benefits
- Buyer confidence
- Registry credibility

WHY IT MATTERS TO INDIGENOUS NATIONS

Not all carbon projects are valued equally. Projects demonstrating strong environmental integrity, community benefits, and long-term stewardship may be more attractive to certain buyers, particularly in voluntary markets.



Birch Carbon INSIGHTS



OUR PERSPECTIVE

Carbon markets are not simply about selling carbon.

They are about recognizing the value of Indigenous stewardship.

For generations, Indigenous Nations have protected forests, wetlands, wildlife habitats, and watersheds that now play an increasingly important role in addressing climate change.

Carbon markets provide one mechanism that can recognize this stewardship through measurable environmental outcomes and, where projects qualify, potential economic opportunities that remain connected to the land rather than requiring its development.

ALWAYS IN A GOOD WAY

Value that stays with the land, and with the people who have always cared for it.

OUR ROLE

How the Birch Carbon Program Supports Communities

The Birch Carbon Program works alongside Indigenous Nations to help communities navigate every stage of project development. Our role includes:

- Identifying potential carbon opportunities
- Explaining complex regulations in plain language
- Coordinating technical and scientific assessments
- Supporting project registration and verification
- Connecting verified credits with qualified buyers
- Helping ensure communities remain informed throughout the process

OUR GOAL

To simplify a complex system while supporting Indigenous-led decision-making and long-term stewardship.

NEXT STEPS

Where a Nation Can Begin

Every Nation starts from a different place. There is no obligation at any stage, and no land use changes while questions are still being answered.

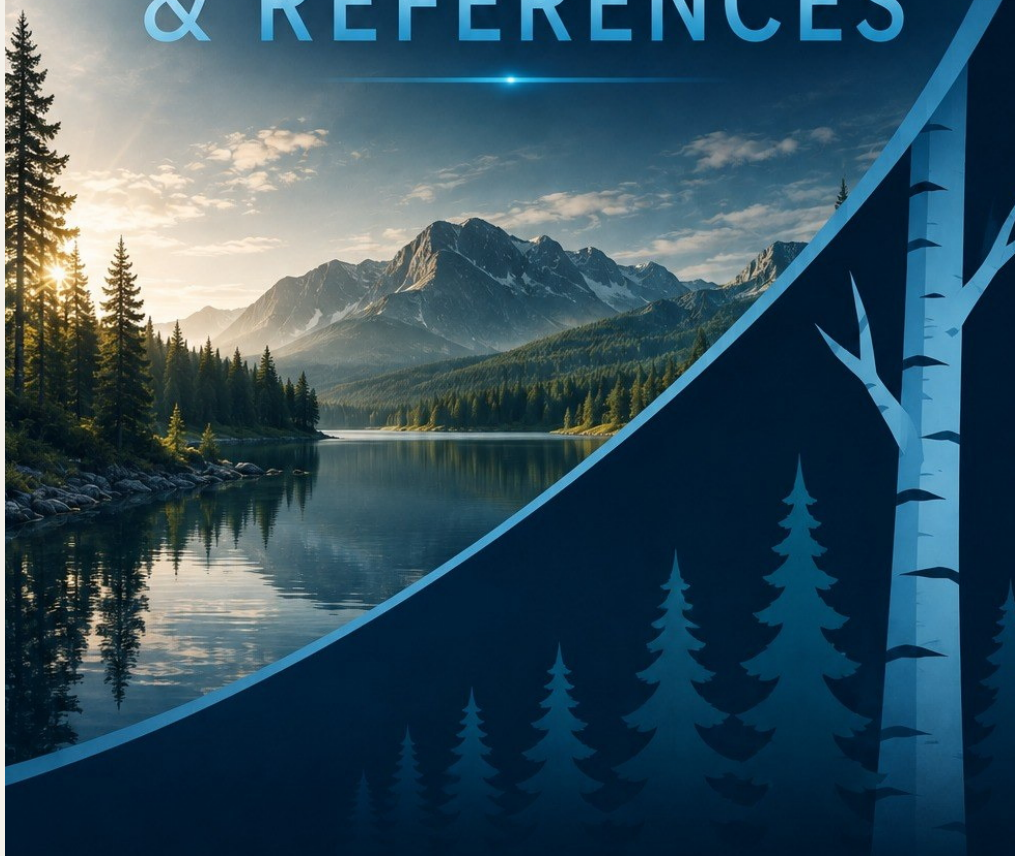
- **Understand the basics.** This summary, and the full Government of Canada publication behind it, are a starting point.
- **Talk it through.** We can meet with Chief and Council, staff, or community members to answer questions in plain language.
- **Look at the land.** A preliminary review helps identify whether territory may contain ecosystems suited to eligible project types.
- **Decide together.** Any next step is the Nation's decision, on the Nation's timeline.

TO BEGIN A CONVERSATION

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birchcarbonprogram.com



RESOURCES & REFERENCES



ORIGINAL SOURCE

Resources & References



ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE
CANADA

The Essentials: Carbon Markets 101

[Read the original publication ↗](#)



GOVERNMENT OF CANADA · GREENHOUSE
GAS OFFSET TOOLKIT

Section: Carbon markets 101

[Open that section of the toolkit ↗](#)

Attribution. *The Essentials: Carbon Markets 101* is a publication of Environment and Climate Change Canada, Government of Canada, published under the Greenhouse Gas Offset Toolkit. All rights in the original publication remain with the Government of Canada.

About this summary. This Birch Carbon Program Summary has been prepared as an educational companion to the original publication. It is intended to improve accessibility and understanding while encouraging readers to consult the complete Government of Canada document for full technical guidance. It is not legal, financial, or technical advice.



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Part of the Indigenous Carbon Knowledge
Centre. Plain-language summaries of the
publications that matter most to Nations.

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