

18 December 2023

FTA Coordination Section
Free Trade Agreements and Stakeholder Engagement
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Barton ACT 0221

By email only: UAECEPA@dfat.gov.au

Re: Support for an Australia-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement

The Aboriginal Carbon Foundation (AbCF) welcomes the opportunity to support the development of an Australia-United Arab Emirates (UAE) Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).

Firstly, I would like to congratulate Dr Sultan Al Jaber, the COP28 President, for leading negotiations to achieve an historic agreement to transition away from fossil fuels, pledging to triple renewable energy and a commitment to stop adding carbon dioxide to the atmosphere by mid-century.

Following on from the success of COP28 the UAE is ideally placed to become an international hub for carbon trading in the multi-billion dollar voluntary market and harmonization of relationships with the global South.

From the start of COP21 to the end of COP28 the Verified Carbon Market has delivered more than 1.4 billion tons of verified emission reductions and removals plus protected more than 10 million hectares of threatened forests, provided clean, safe cook stoves to thousands of vulnerable households, and transferred billions of dollars from the global North to the global South. All of this has been achieved prior to Article 6.4 which establishes a new UNFCCC mechanism for the validation, verification and issuance of high-quality carbon credits being agreed.

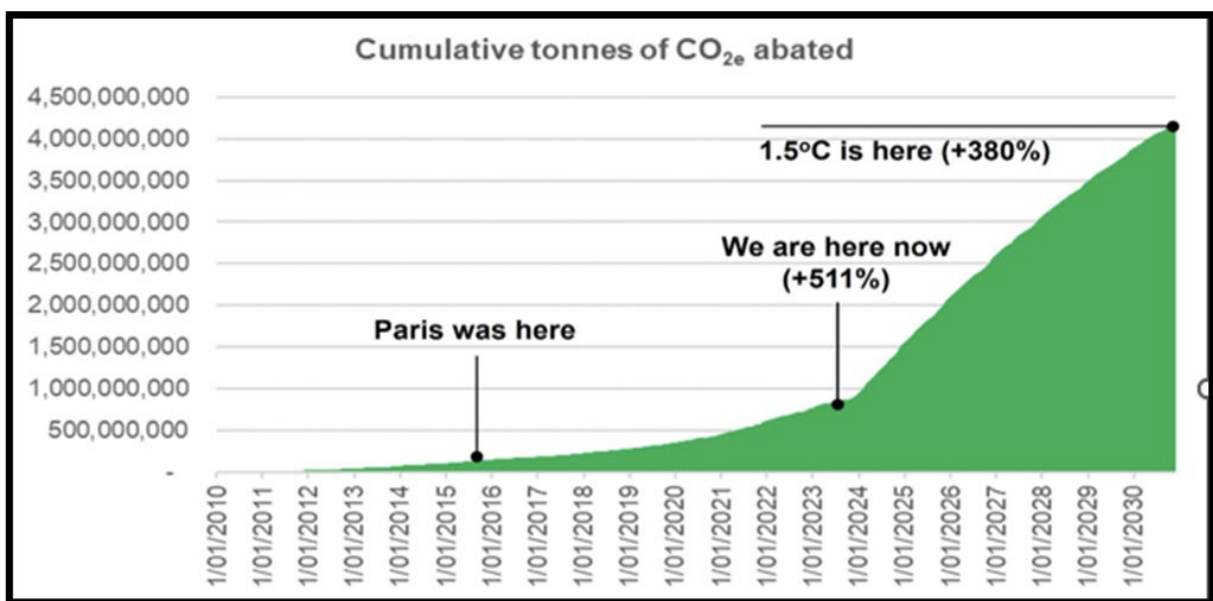
'Carbon credit purchases linked to cuts in the carbon dioxide emitted by burning fossil fuels and deforestation could create the largest marketplace the world will have ever known' US Climate Envoy John Kerry

AbCF Chair Mr. Barry Hunter, Ms. Lisa McMurray and I recently attended COP28 over several days. Our chair hosted a presentation at the Australian Pavilion including the Timor-Leste President of the National Designated Authority for Combating Climate Change Mr. Pedro Marcal da Costa, titled *'Developing a High Integrity Carbon Industry in the Indo-Pacific'*. Mr. Hunter also presented on an Indigenous Peoples Organisation panel and participated in IUCN discussions.

The work being undertaken by AbCF in Australia and the Indo-Pacific can benefit the UAE through our demonstrated experience in building carbon industry infrastructure to develop high integrity carbon projects. We avoid eco-colonial approaches and believe the local environmental, social and cultural core benefits of a carbon project are fundamental to sustainability and authenticity.

Achieving high integrity through nature-based solutions is increasingly the benchmark in the voluntary carbon market. The UAE is in an ideal position to show leadership that is acknowledged and welcomed in the global South. However, in far too many presentations at COP28 disappointment was openly expressed by Indigenous people and communities from the Indo-Pacific, Africa and South America towards the standard global North carbon mechanisms which chose to administer eco-colonial methods potentially leading to 'land grabs' and disempowerment.

In accordance with the Paris Agreement, achieving carbon neutrality by 2050 will require long term investments and the development of high integrity voluntary carbon markets that generate genuine core benefits to local communities in the global South. Furthermore, adopting a peer-to-peer strengths based approach, pioneered by AbCF, is one way of supporting local communities.



Carbon Abatement Required to Achieve 1.5c

As such, the AbCF recently signed an agreement with the Timor-Leste Government at the 'International Business Forum 2023 – Discovering Blue and Green Opportunities for Sustainable Investment'. We are now supporting the development of respective infrastructure for a domestic carbon industry which will involve the establishment of legislation, public registry, code of ethics, carbon methodologies, verification of core benefits impact framework and a trading platform. We are also in the process of signing an agreement with First Nation Resources Foundation in Fiji to undertake a similar endeavor in 2024.

The UAE has a central role to play as a connection point between the global North and global South, while leveraging Australia's unique experience with designing, implementing and operating robust carbon markets within national boundaries.

We would like to meet with you to discuss how this program of work could be structured and deployed, including the following features:

- Create a hub for developing carbon trading systems owned and operated by the global South,
- Bringing equity and positive outcomes for local communities from carbon markets and nature-based climate solutions,
- Mobilising finance for indigenous and local community carbon solutions,
- Building capacity and knowledge sharing for community owned strength-based climate solutions,
- Provide capacity building, knowledge sharing, formal training and ongoing coaching for the many community groups, civil society and government officials who are creating domestic and regional markets for driving climate investments.

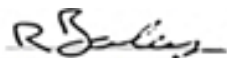
We look forward to exploring these opportunities with the UAE over the coming months and leveraging our deep expertise in driving positive outcomes from carbon markets.

AbCF is a Founding Signatory to the Australian carbon industry Code of Conduct and has a 100% assessment record. We operate on the cutting edge of ideas and community-based solutions. We bring together people with fresh ways of working, professional experience and a desire to achieve outcomes that tackle Indigenous poverty and climate change through a strengths-based approach. With a strong culture of innovation and collaboration, the AbCF supports communities in the Global South who want to be independent through owning their lands as well as carbon projects generating premium carbon credits with environmental, social and cultural core benefits.

The AbCF is a registered not-for-profit company limited by guarantee established in 2010 in Australia and is a Corporate Authorised Representative of Australian Financial Services License No. 298851. AbCF is a proud member of the Carbon Market Institute.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss this submission further. Please contact Rowan Foley CEO at rowan@abcfoundation.org.au or on +61 427 013 318.

Yours sincerely,



Rowan Foley
Chief Executive Officer
Aboriginal Carbon Foundation