

Your impact as a **Carbon Balanced** supporter

Nature-based solutions to the climate crisis, funded by you

Mobilising real change at a pivotal time for the planet

This past year Carbon Balanced supporters have delivered more than ever for climate, conservation and communities

As a corporate supporter of World Land Trust's Carbon Balanced programme, you are part of a growing community of businesses driving the transformative climate action that the world needs right now. You've seen the effects of manmade climate change and are taking steps to address the environmental impact of your business activities: measuring your carbon footprint, reducing your emissions as much as possible, and only then offsetting your unavoidable residual emissions.

With the UN reporting that 2014–2021 were the eight hottest years to date, your proactive business measures are being undertaken at a truly critical juncture in the global effort to combat climate change. As the climate warms, you're fighting back by operating an increasingly sustainable business. Made up of businesses large and small, together our Carbon Balanced community is taking steps towards lessening its environmental impact, through measures that include switching to renewable energy, improving recycling and waste management, responsibly sourcing materials, and becoming signatories to industry sustainability charters.

As you continue to develop the sustainability strategies that contribute to a lower-carbon economy, we're delighted to support your journey by offering Verified Carbon Units (VCUs) in our partner FUNDAECO's REDD+ Conservation Coast project in Guatemala. The project is certified by VERRA and adheres to the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) and the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Standard (CCB). The project directly advances 12 of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which provide progress towards your sustainability targets and deliver tangible benefits to people and wildlife.

A KEY PART OF A GLOBAL MOVEMENT

For many years, major economies and historical emitters have often failed to back up their environmental pledges with the necessary actions; but with every new WLT supporter we see who is taking responsibility for their environmental impact, our optimism for the future grows, fuelled by what is being achieved by our Carbon Balanced community.

In 2021, Carbon Balanced supporters collectively offset 82,966 tCO₂e (tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent). This year has already seen a 48% increase on this figure – due in part to the 20 new businesses that have joined the programme in this time – with 122,950 tCO₂e offset as of October 2022. Reflecting the growth of the Carbon Balanced community, this is a sure sign of progress, an indication that climate action is now increasingly regarded as an essential part of running a business. In the years to come, progress will also be measured by a decrease in the tCO₂e offset through the Carbon Balanced programme, as we transition to a less carbon-intensive society. Your offsetting is an integral part of this transition, and we're incredibly grateful for your continued support.

You've already demonstrated how emission measurements and

reductions can minimise the need for offsetting, and we expect this need to shrink further and further across the globe as time goes on. What we will always have a need for is the protection of standing forests – among the world's greatest carbon sinks – which should be prioritised now and forever.

Over the past year we've welcomed new supporters and seen existing ones strengthen their commitments, including some who have been with us since the Carbon Balanced programme was established in 2005. There has never been a greater desire from global citizens to make a difference for the planet, and as a Carbon Balanced supporter, you're setting the example that we hope many more will follow as this worldwide movement grows.

MUCH MORE THAN OFFSETS

We've put together this new report to celebrate the considerable impact you've made as a supporter of the Conservation Coast Carbon Balanced project in Guatemala. Thanks to you, local communities are diversifying their income with over 1,000 hectares of sustainable crops, with the goal of achieving commercial scale. Women and girls are receiving improved access to healthcare and education, empowering them to make decisions about their future. Landowners are being supported in the registration

of land titles, correcting present inequalities in the region.

All in all, your contribution to this project is bringing positive impacts to over 100 local and indigenous communities, the members of which are participating in consultation, decision-making, and implementation of activities. The Conservation Coast protects tropical forests, wetlands, mangroves and lagoons: habitats which provide ecosystem services to local people and a home for threatened wildlife. Without your support, these habitats would likely fall victim to slash-and-burn agriculture, monoculture plantations and cattle ranching, endangering the future of Endangered species like Yucatán Black Howler Monkey.

Read on to find out more about the impact you're having in Caribbean Guatemala and why your VCUs are the best they can be.

For a general overview of the Conservation Coast project, visit the Carbon Balanced section on the WLT website to access a project brief and a programme brochure. WLT also offers a portfolio of Carbon Balanced projects, currently in Ecuador, Mexico and Vietnam, that are self-certified by WLT and our local in-country partners.

Community

Find out how this project is transforming thousands of lives

The Conservation Coast project is situated in Guatemala's Izabal region, home to some of the country's most underserved and lowest-income communities. Your support is helping FUNDAECO to uplift these communities through healthcare, education, and livelihood support.

One significant development funded by the project is the sustainable agroforestry systems utilised by local farmers, who now produce timber, fruits such as lychee and rambutan, xate (a jungle leaf used for ornamental purposes) and spices such as pepper, cardamom and cinnamon. Support is also being provided to vulnerable women who are now pursuing pastry and hen farming businesses and selling artisanal stoves as alternative livelihoods.

Addressing gender inequality is a key objective of the project. FUNDAECO are helping young women to finish their elementary education and continue high school, providing direct training to increase employment opportunities. In 2021, 248 women and girls received such training; 123 had their access to or quality of education improved; and 53 were employed full-time in project activities. During the pandemic lockdowns, 93 indigenous girls enrolled in a scholarship programme received smartphones to allow them to continue their education from home. A network of nurses, midwives and social workers continue to ensure project-funded healthcare services are culturally sensitive and gender-focused.

Support for the Conservation Coast also allows FUNDAECO to provide time-sensitive aid to the communities of Izabal when required. Between July and December 2020, our partner was able to provide food, shelter, water, sanitary supplies and logistical help to almost 8,000 families following the outbreak of COVID-19 and two hurricanes that caused severe flooding.



YOUR IMPACT AT A GLANCE

Here are just some of the impacts that the Conservation Coast project has provided since its inception in 2012:

- **£7.3 million** contributed to the local economy
- **487 jobs** created or supported for indigenous and local communities
- Training in improved agricultural practices and ecotourism provided to **658 local people**
- **24 health clinics** established, providing sexual and reproductive health services to **2,030 local people** and family planning services to **1,131 families**
- Almost **4,000 local people** trained in ecosystem conservation
- Over **100,000 students** from **118 schools** have participated in environmental education activities or visited the project ecotourism sites

Biodiversity

The Conservation Coast is a haven for terrestrial, aerial, and aquatic animals

Your purchase of VCUs with WLT is funding a project with huge biological significance. The project area spans the entire Caribbean coastline of Guatemala and falls within a Key Biodiversity Area (KBA), an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) and a Bi-National Ramsar Site (indicating a wetland of international importance). It also forms part of the Mesoamerica Biodiversity Hotspot and the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor, and is a key “flyway” for Neotropical migratory birds like the Cerulean Warbler (globally Near Threatened).

The lagoons here provide important breeding and nursing grounds for the region’s West Indian Manatees, a Vulnerable species with a low reproductive rate. The project’s lowland, mid-elevation, and pre-montane tropical forests are home to an array of wildlife, including Endangered species like Baird’s Tapir (extinct in much of Guatemala) and the Yellow-headed Parrot, whose population has fallen by over 90% since the 1970s. There are also five cat species present: Jaguar, Jaguarundi, Margay, Ocelot and Puma.

Funded by your support, FUNDAECO’s protection of the land’s considerable biodiversity has paid dividends. In 2015, FUNDAECO staff began searching for the Critically Endangered frog *Craugastor campbelli*, known to survive in just a single 30 km² location in the project area. They finally made a sighting of the frog in 2021, a discovery that they say gives them a “big hope” that their “protection activities are helping to provide a quiet habitat for such a delicate species”.

In 2020, FUNDAECO established a 17,000 ha no-take fish replenishment zone to help species recover in the project’s waterways, like the Atlantic Tarpon (Vulnerable). FUNDAECO are supporting sustainable fisheries with local communities elsewhere in the project area, surveying 201 ha of coastline in 2021 to support this initiative.

YOUR IMPACT AT A GLANCE

- Since the Conservation Coast project’s inception in 2012, **54,157 ha** of threatened forest have been protected and **2,406 ha** of land reforested
- A total of **30 threatened species** are protected here, including **nine Critically Endangered** amphibians
- In 2021, **23 personnel** received training on amphibian conservation and chytrid fungus prevention protocols to help protect these highly threatened animals
- **1,475 patrols** were carried out in the project area in 2021 to monitor biodiversity and guard against deforestation
- **504 bird species** have been recorded here – that’s **65%** of all Guatemala’s birds in just **0.5%** of the country’s land area
- **120 migratory bird species** use the forests of Guatemala as their main wintering or transiting habitat

The standards your VCUs are delivering

CERTIFICATION AND VERIFICATION

Carbon offsetting projects can be certified by a number of third-party certifying bodies. Certification of a project will ensure that its carbon credits are of high quality and offer measured emissions reductions or sequestration, which have been subject to a rigorous auditing process.

Certification also ensures that the projects protect the rights of local and indigenous peoples, provide additional and measured value to the communities in which they operate, and do not negatively impact the ability of local communities to earn their livelihoods.

VCS

The Conservation Coast project is certified by Verra, which manages the world's leading and most widely used voluntary emissions reductions standard, the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS). Unlike other standards, the VCS also requires projects to establish mechanisms for communication with local stakeholders during project design and implementation, where concerns can be raised about any potentially negative impacts. These concerns must be relayed to the auditor at the validation stage and at every subsequent verification. The managers of the project must demonstrate that they have taken due account of all concerns and any input received.

CCB

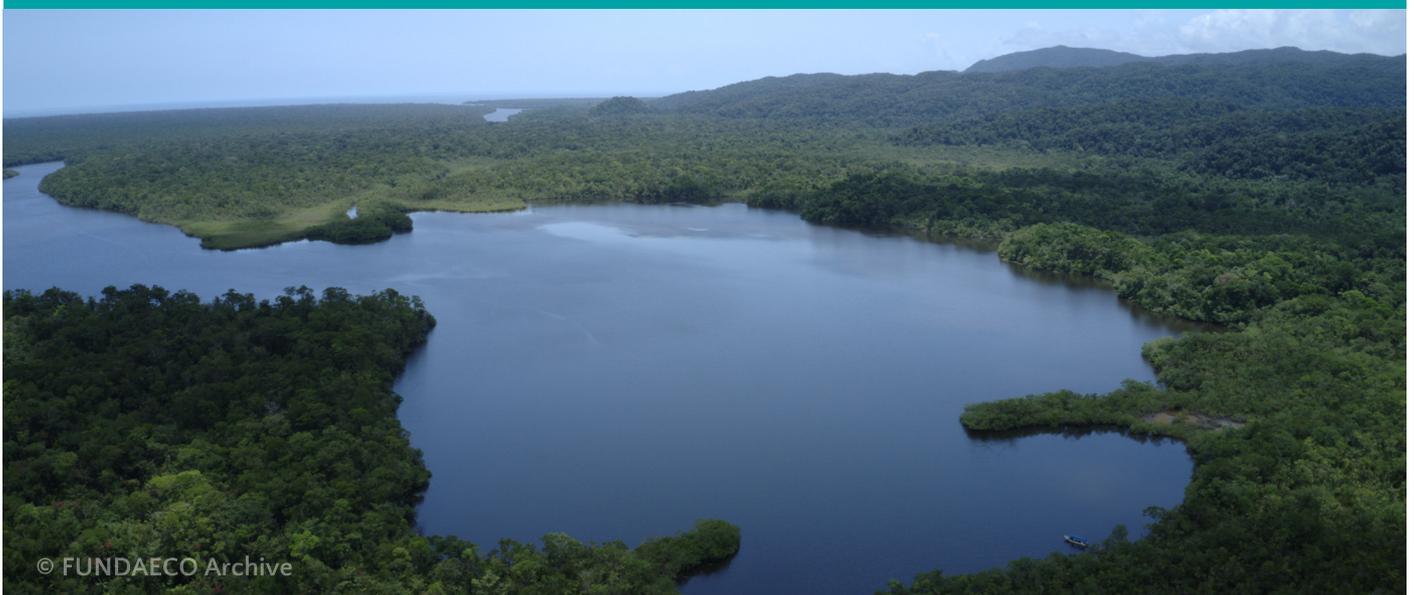
The Climate, Community and Biodiversity (CCB) Standards are also managed by Verra and offer an additional level of certification. As the name indicates, projects certified to CCB Standards deliver impacts in three major areas and provide the best offsetting option for organisations interested in protecting the natural world.

Such projects can bring sustainable livelihoods to local people through initiatives like ecotourism and the diversification of agriculture, while also helping communities to become more resilient to the effects of climate change. CCB-certified projects also support biodiversity by saving threatened species from extinction and restoring and protecting the world's ecosystems. Verra has certified the Conservation Coast project to CCB standards, recognising in particular the incredible benefits to the region's biodiversity.

REDD+

This is a methodology applied in conservation projects around the world as a mitigation measure against climate change. Verra's certification of the Conservation Coast ensures that the project reduces emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) while also providing forest conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (+).

To date, **5.3 million tCO₂e** of deforestation emissions have been avoided thanks to the Conservation Coast project. That's the equivalent of switching off heating and hot water in 1.97 million UK homes for an entire year. The average annual climate benefit for the project is **728,161 tCO₂e**.



Working towards a better future

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) advanced by your Carbon Balanced contributions

As businesses increasingly align and measure their Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) strategies against SDGs, WLT is delighted to support the targets of our Carbon Balanced supporters. The Conservation Coast project in Guatemala directly advances 12 UN SDGs, supporting your sustainability strategy and stakeholder communications.

Your purchase of VCUs is contributing to economic and social development in one of the poorest regions of Guatemala, funding sustainable enterprises, agricultural training, and a community-led food production system. You're improving access to legal and financial resources, as well as sexual and reproductive health services. By protecting and restoring forest habitat, the project you support is also benefiting the global climate, acting against biodiversity loss, and increasing resilience to climate-related hazards.





Thank you!

To keep updated with the latest information on the Carbon Balanced projects you're supporting, and WLT's work more widely, you can head to the news section of our website for all the latest stories.

If you don't already get but would like to receive our monthly eBulletin or WLT News, which is posted three times per year, or if you have any questions, please contact us at corporate@worldlandtrust.org

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