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## Climate Care's response to Defra's consultation on a Code of Best Practice for the voluntary offset market

The UK Government has today released proposals for a code of best practice in the voluntary carbon offset market, including a standard targeted at offset providers. Following a period of consultation, the code will provide guidance to consumers choosing to offset all or part of their carbon footprint.

Climate Care is delighted Defra has recognised the importance of the market and support Defra's goals of establishing best practice; we believe that strong and common standards are vital to ensure voluntary offsets are high quality and genuine.

The details of the standard have only been revealed to Climate Care today, but on first look the consultation appears to address the important issues. Critically, we are encouraged by the inclusion of a question addressing which type of offset credits should be used by the standard, and sincerely hope this will result in a genuine discussion of that issue.

**However, Climate Care retains concerns that the exclusive use of compliance offsets (such as Certified Emission Reductions credits generated within the formal Kyoto markets) in the standard has been pre-judged.**

In Defra's press release, a limited number of providers are noted who 'already meet the Government's standard by offering Certified Emission Reduction Credits'. As the consultation has only just been launched, and therefore the standard remains to be formalised, such a statement implies that this most critical issue has already been decided.

Issues within the compliance markets, notably the failure to deliver sustainable development benefits, mean that **compliance credits should not be the only offsets** used within the voluntary market. Voluntary offsets typically support projects with strong sustainable development benefits that would be unfeasible under the bureaucratic and costly compliance markets. These projects often use highly innovative methods, which can also act as learning ground for the more restricted formal markets.

**Climate Care welcomes convergence between the compliance and voluntary markets over the longer term, and will offer the proposed government approved compliance market credits *alongside* voluntary offsets. We will participate fully in the consultation process, and will push for genuine consideration of key issues.**

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Notes to editors (continues overleaf):

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### **Background on Climate Care**

Climate Care was founded in 1998. One of the world's leading 'carbon offsetting' organisations, we make reductions of greenhouse gases (such as CO<sub>2</sub>) on behalf of individuals and companies. Climate Care makes these reductions through its portfolio of projects which avoid, reduce or absorb greenhouse gases. Sustainable energy projects (renewable energy and energy efficiency) are set to make up 95% of this years project portfolio.

Climate Care's founder, Mike Mason, is an eco-entrepreneur with a number of green businesses. These include innovative biofuel production ([www.biojoule.co.uk](http://www.biojoule.co.uk)) and the first insurance with carbon offsets built in ([www.climatesure.co.uk](http://www.climatesure.co.uk)).

### **Press pack:**

Available at:

[http://www.climatecare.org/media/documents/pdf/Climate\\_Care\\_PressPack\\_Sept06.pdf](http://www.climatecare.org/media/documents/pdf/Climate_Care_PressPack_Sept06.pdf)

### **Recent report surveying key offset providers**

Clean Air – Cool Planet is 'the leading non-profit working in the Northeast USA to find and promote solutions to global warming'. Their report, the first of its kind, which surveying retail offset providers and rated performance on categories such as offset quality and transparency is available at: <http://www.cleanair-coolplanet.org/ConsumersGuidetoCarbonOffsets.pdf>