Airport Carbon Accreditation Communication

Communication No:	1 of 2026
To:	Accredited Airports, Approved Verifiers and Programme Stakeholders
Subject:	Programme Updates to Level 3+ and Level 4+
Date:	February 2nd, 2026

The purpose of this Communication is to provide information regarding updates to *Airport Carbon Accreditation* in line with relevant decisions of the programme stakeholders.

1. Phasing Out of Level 3+

A decision has been taken to phase out Level 3+ of *Airport Carbon Accreditation*. While carbon credits can play a role in addressing residual emissions, the programme's priority is to drive meaningful, on-site emission reductions at airports. Phasing out Level 3+ reinforces programme credibility, strengthens the programme's focus on internal decarbonisation, promotes equity and aligns with global expectations.

New Applications

- From April 1st, 2026, the programme will no longer accept entry applications for Level 3+. Airports that plan to apply for a Level 3+ certification by March 31st, 2026, should take note of the provisions below.

Airports Certified at Level 3+[1]

- Airports certified at Level 3+ with an expiration date up to 31st December 2026 may continue to renew at Level 3+ up until 31st December 2026.
- Airports certified at Level 3+ with an expiration date from 1st January 2027 onwards will not be permitted to renew at Level 3+.
- These airports shall transition to any other level of the programme for which they meet the applicable requirements.

2. Transition of Level 4+ to Carbon Offset Removals

To ensure *Airport Carbon Accreditation* remains aligned with evolving global best practices in carbon credit procurement and the treatment of residual emissions as well as grounded in robust decarbonisation principles, the programme will introduce an update to the offsetting requirements for airports certified to Level 4+.

Currently, airports at Level 4+ are required to purchase carbon credits (i.e., reduction projects or removal projects) to address their residual Scope 1, Scope 2 and business travel emissions from Scope 3. The revised requirement will better align Level 4+ with Level 5, whereby airports certified to Level 4+ will be required to source a specific portion of their carbon credits from emission removal projects. Further details regarding the exact portion as well as the timing of implementation are expected to be shared by the 3rd quarter of 2026, allowing adequate time for preparation and adjustments.

For any questions, please contact the Airport Carbon Accreditation Helpdesk at
aca@environmental-minds.com

[1] For airports currently certified at Level 3+ on a 3-year cycle, provisions 2B of Communication 3 of 2025 continue to apply.