



Credit: The World Bank Group.

MRV Can Help Bring in Social Justice as Well as CDR

By Mark Fogarty

The measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) of carbon removal can be key in establishing environmental justice, an Air Miners panel heard.

Tribal Carbon Solutions has been reporting on the Air Miners series on MRV as they happen because MRV is such an important element of carbon removal. This is the fifth report in our series.



Anu Khan, Deputy Director of Science & Innovation at Carbon 180.

Moderator Anu Khan, deputy director of science and innovation at Carbon 180, said her firm is not just an NGO focused on bringing carbon removal to gigaton scale “but doing so in a way that is equitable and just and really the best that we can make it. We’re thinking not just about the climate aspect, but the climate justice aspect and the environmental justice aspect.”

Explaining the panel’s theme, Khan said “It’s important how you build trust and credibility in the sector as a whole by having good MRV. And then there’s a separate conversation that’s happening around just carbon removal.”

Khan said she felt “these are actually quite connected.” And that’s because “MRV is fundamentally about accountability. And so, you need that accountability in order to work towards justice. It’s not the only thing you need to achieve justice, but it’s certainly a link in the chain.”

“MRV is fundamentally about accountability. And so, you need that accountability in order to work towards justice. It’s not the only thing you need to achieve justice, but it’s certainly a link in the chain.”

She told the webinar “We’ve been building out this idea that you can intentionally design MRV or think about MRV-related policy in a way to achieve more just outcomes in the CDR sector. And we call this our high accountability MRV work.”



MEASUREMENT

Direct accounting of removals and impacts

The best MRV protocols directly measure all variables associated with the project including removals and impacts to human health and ecosystems.

MONITORING

Traceability over time

After measuring the removal of CO₂ from the atmosphere, monitoring stored carbon and ongoing health and ecosystem impacts is needed to establish durability and safety. Even after a project ends, impacts persist.

REPORTING

Data transparency

How project information is made available to stakeholders is just as important as measurement and monitoring of the initial collection of data. Without data transparency and accessibility, there is no accountability.

VERIFICATION

Appropriate incentive structure

Verification of removals must take place within a financial incentive structure that minimizes fraud and maximizes public benefit.

“We think these four pieces together can bring you to a place where you're having a really highly accountable CDR sector that people can trust. But we're really in the early days of figuring out what implementation of this looks like.”

Credit: Maddie Mahoney, Carbon180.

Carbon 180 has come up with four core principles to support high accountability MRV work.

“Principle number one is direct measurement coupled to modeling to reduce uncertainty and ensure real impact. We want to get as close to certainty and understanding of the impact that we're having as possible.”

The second one, she said, is traceability over time.

“The third one is data transparency and accessibility. So, I just said that MRV kind of gives us the receipts, but do we have access to it? Can we see it?

Can we actually see what was done and do we have that evidence? And then the fourth piece is around incentive structures.”

Khan said “We think these four pieces together can bring you to a place where you're having a really highly accountable CDR sector that people can trust. But we're really in the early days of figuring out what implementation of this looks like.”

Besides Khan, speakers at the webinar were Alison Marklein, Senior Scientist at Eion; Will Burt, Chief Ocean Scientist for Planetary Technologies;

and Elizabeth Troein, Head of Science at Isometric.

Air Miners has more than a dozen videos, concerning both MRV and other CDR topics, on its YouTube channel. Air Miners describes itself as the place to start if you are thinking about having a company in the CDR space.

“It's going to take scientists, engineers, investors, marketers, lawyers, journalists, entrepreneurs, designers and many more to make this industry sing,” Air Miners claims.