

This text below is the Editorial entitled “The Guardian view on carbon offsetting: a model with dangerous flaws” published on the 26th of January of 2023.

The strong reaction to the Guardian’s joint investigation into carbon offsetting shows how much is at stake when the effectiveness of market mechanisms in combating global heating is challenged. Already, in Australia, politicians and scientists have renewed their criticism of public entities using international carbon credit schemes to offset local emissions. Verra, the Washington-based non-profit at the centre of the story, is the world’s leading carbon standard, certifying the credits that companies use to make claims about their environmental impact. It is a blow to anyone committed to the idea that emissions trading can help the world to reach net zero, to learn that 90% of the rainforest credits analysed are unlikely to represent genuine carbon reductions.

The problem, which was uncovered by journalists working alongside experts using satellite images, is the methodology used by Verra to certify its credits. While Verra disputes the findings, and is due to publish its own assessment, the researchers found that the evidence used to calculate offsets was flawed. Predictions of what would have happened in the absence of credits were unreliable, and benefits were overstated.

Given Verra’s importance, the significance of the findings goes beyond a single organisation. What happens next is crucial, and will be closely watched by governments and businesses around the world. The question is: can existing processes be improved? Here, academics and environmental campaigners are divided. Carbon markets have long been controversial, with some arguing that any attempt to protect nature by assigning it monetary value is doomed. According to this view, the focus on nature conservation and restoration of recent years has been co-opted and corrupted by corporate interests, including fossil fuel producers who are among the biggest purchasers of carbon credits.

Defenders of emissions trading, however, insist that while such greenwashing must be called out, carbon markets have a role to play. Governments will not provide the necessary funds to protect the world’s rainforests. Therefore there is no alternative but to direct private capital towards them and other carbon sinks and biodiversity hotspots. If the existing ways of doing this don’t work, better ones must be developed. Our investigation discovered three projects in Madagascar that were excellent. Carbon market optimists think these results can be replicated.

Shell is planning a massive expansion of its offsetting operations. And there is no question that an emissions trading system in which big oil is the largest customer has gone horribly wrong. If carbon credits are to be more than a dangerous distraction from the task of ending our dependence on fossil fuels, they must not be treated as licences to pollute. Instead they should be viewed as a last resort, and companies should only be able to access them as part of an overall net zero strategy. Schemes that charge individuals fees to cancel out emissions from flights or other high-carbon activities should be ended. They do more harm than good by encouraging the idea that lifestyles don’t need to change.

The carbon offsets market is worth around \$2bn, and is expected to be worth 10 times that by the end of the decade. It is emphatically not the solution to the enormous threat posed by dangerously high emissions. But with much tougher oversight and regulation, it ought to be possible to design a system whereby forested nations are financially incentivised to protect nature. Exposing the weakness in the current system is a necessary first step in that direction.

Questões a serem respondidas a partir da interpretação do texto:

- I) Após atribuir V (Verdadeiro) ou F (Falso) às sentenças abaixo escolha a opção que representa a sequência correta:
- 1.() De acordo com o jornal a emissão de créditos de carbono não é efetiva uma vez que 90% dos créditos emitidos e certificados pela empresa Verra provavelmente não representam reduções efetivas de carbono.
 - 2.() De acordo com a investigação feita pelo jornal, pesquisadores verificaram que as evidências utilizadas pela empresa Verra para calcular as compensações estavam corretas, contudo os seus benefícios foram superestimados.
 - 3.() De acordo com o jornal os mercados de carbono estão consolidados haja vista que vários pesquisadores argumentam que a proteção da natureza passa pela atribuição de valor monetário a ela.

4.() Os defensores do comércio de emissões de carbono argumentam que os mercados de carbono são importantes para a proteção ambiental porque os governos não proverão recursos para proteger as florestas tropicais do mundo.

5.() Em função das críticas apontadas na investigação feita pelo jornal 'The Guardian', a empresa Shell planeja interromper a expansão das suas operações de compensação uma vez que o sistema de comércio das emissões tem dado errado.

Opções:

A – 1.V, 2.V, 3.F, 4.V, 5.V

B – 1.V, 2.F, 3.V, 4.V, 5.F

C – 1.F, 2.F, 3.V, 4.F, 5.V

D – 1.V, 2.F, 3.F, 4.V, 5.F

E – 1.V, 2.V, 3.V, 4.V, 5.F

Chave de resposta: A sequência correta é 1.V, 2.F, 3.F, 4.V, 5. Portanto, a opção correta é a letra D.

II) Cite a(s) parte(s) do texto que dá(ão) a entender que o vigente comércio de emissão de créditos de carbono pode prejudicar o desenvolvimento sustentável e que o seu aperfeiçoamento é necessário.

Chave de resposta:

If carbon credits are to be more than a dangerous distraction from the task of ending our dependence on fossil fuels, they must not be treated as licences to pollute.

It is emphatically not the solution to the enormous threat posed by dangerously high emissions. But with much tougher oversight and regulation, it ought to be possible to design a system whereby forested nations are financially incentivised to protect nature.