



Case Study

Driving the Transition Toward an Equitable & Scaled Verified Carbon Market (VCM+)

ABOUT

High Tide Foundation is a philanthropic organization focused on accelerating ambitious climate action by strengthening carbon policy and markets, scaling high-integrity climate finance, and ensuring benefits flow equitably to communities and nature. Through its Carbon Policy and Markets Initiative, High Tide works with partners across the ecosystem to build the rules, tools, and coalitions needed for the next generation of carbon markets.

GKS synthesized the views of many stakeholders, results of discussions and market sentiment to provide a succinct roadmap tailored to our capabilities.

– Dee Lawrence,
Co-Founder & Director,
High Tide Foundation

STRATEGIC ROADMAP ELEMENTS

Priority Area #1	Priority Area #2	Priority Area #3	Priority Area #4	Priority Area #5
Goal	Goal	Goal	Goal	Goal
Strategic Activities	Strategic Activities	Strategic Activities	Strategic Activities	Strategic Activities
Audience	Audience	Audience	Audience	Audience
Near-Term KPIs	Near-Term KPIs	Near-Term KPIs	Near-Term KPIs	Near-Term KPIs
Longer-Term KPIs	Longer-Term KPIs	Longer-Term KPIs	Longer-Term KPIs	Longer-Term KPIs
Resources	Resources	Resources	Resources	Resources
Implementation	Implementation	Implementation	Implementation	Implementation

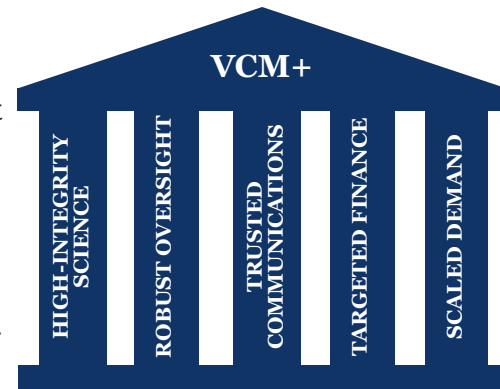
Pictured are the strategic roadmap elements and for each identified Priority Area (PA), it carried a goal statement, a series of four supporting Strategic Activities (SAs), an Audience description, short and long-term Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), resource needs, and an associated implementation plan.

THE CHALLENGE

Despite its potential, the voluntary carbon market has historically underdelivered on integrity, equity, and scale, leaving billions in climate finance unrealized and trust strained among key stakeholders. High Tide and its partners needed a clear, accessible roadmap to move from today's fragmented voluntary market toward a verified carbon market (VCM+), guided by a shared vision and practical coordination across the ecosystem.

OUR SOLUTION

Together with High Tide, Gordian Knot Strategies synthesized inputs from research, draft concepts and stakeholder conversations. Gordian Knot structured this input into a clear Theory of Change, Logic Model, and pillar-level building blocks to reflect how the reforms, investment, and coordination could collectively deliver a high-integrity, equitable, and scalable VCM+. Upon further coordination with HTF, the VCM+ vision became a roadmap anchored in five guiding pillars.



THE IMPACT

High Tide was able to reveal the VCM+ Coalition during New York Climate Week in September of 2025 and included:

50+ ORGANIZATIONS united across sectors

GOAL BETWEEN 2026 AND 2035:

\$100 MILLION mobilized in climate finance

5 BILLION TONS OF CO₂E could be reduced/removed

4
MONTHS

LENGTH OF ENGAGEMENT

7
STRUCTURED
INTERVIEWS
DELIVERABLES

5
PRIORITY
ACTIVITY AREAS
(PILLARS)

1
ROADMAP
FRAMEWORK

1
BOULDER
CONVENING
FEB '25

CONTACT: info@gordianknotstrategies.com

LINKEDIN: www.linkedin.com/company/gordian-knot-strategies

WEBSITE: www.gordianknotstrategies.com

**BOOK A
DISCOVERY CALL**