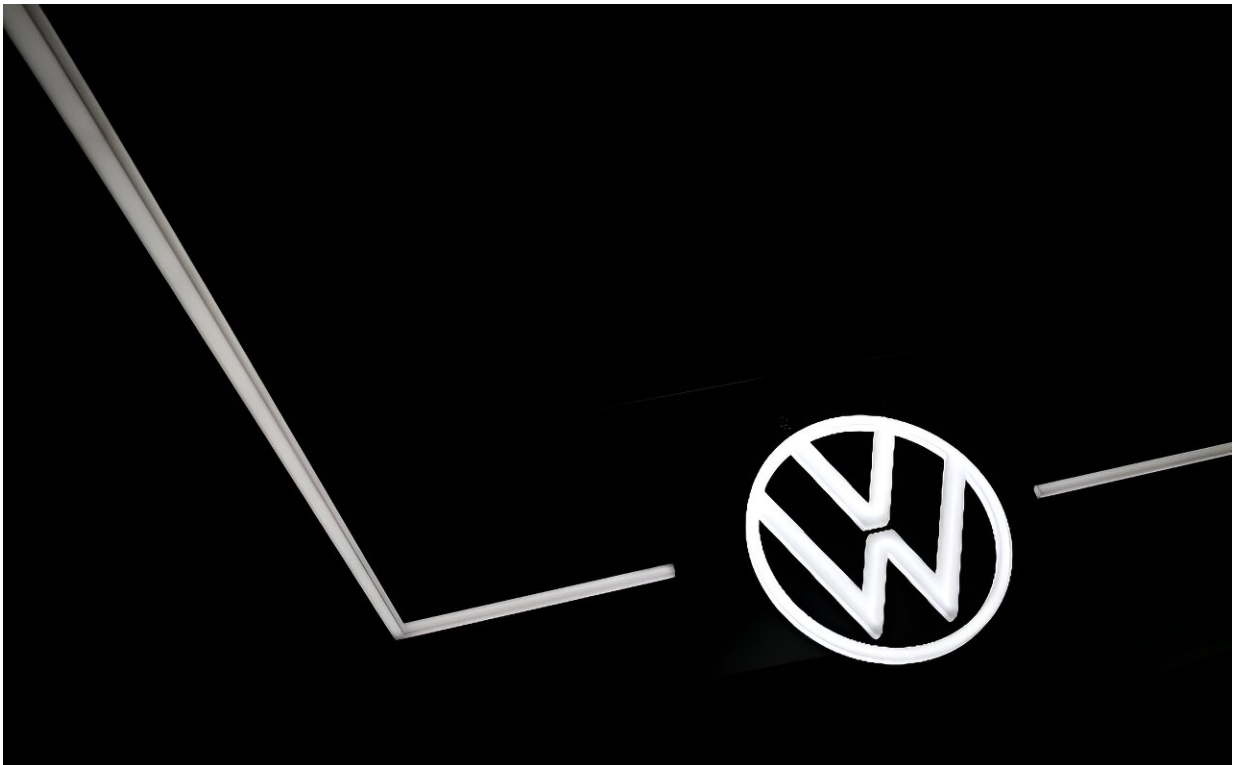


# World's biggest companies snap up 'likely junk' carbon offsets: analysis

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A new analysis by Corporate Accountability found that household names including Disney, Volkswagen, Air France and many more were among brands that heavily invested in likely worthless carbon offset credits.

Globally recognized companies—from oil and gas majors to the banking sector and tech—are contributing to greenwashing by snapping up vast quantities of "likely junk" carbon offsets, a watchdog warned Thursday.

A new analysis by Corporate Accountability found that household names including Disney, Volkswagen, Air France and many more were among corporations heavily investing in probably worthless credits from environmental projects meant to count towards their [emissions reductions](#).

"These trends are extremely worrying," Rachel Rose Jackson, the nonprofit's director of climate research and policy, told AFP.

She added the massive uptake of carbon credits seemed designed "to enable continued greenwashing" or deceptive practices aimed at creating a false impression of environmentally friendly policies.

On paper, the voluntary carbon markets (VCMs) allow corporations to cancel out a portion of their emissions by purchasing credits in emission-reducing activities, for example, reforestation projects or replacing polluting cookstoves in the developing world.

The sector is currently worth around \$2 billion per year—but a growing body of research has raised concerns that claims of reduced emissions under the schemes are often grossly exaggerated or entirely unfounded.

The new findings build upon a first analysis carried out by Corporate Accountability in collaboration with the Guardian newspaper last fall, which exposed 39 of the largest 50 emission offset projects as "likely junk."

Re-scoring the top 50 projects from the AlliedOffsets Database for the current study, which looked at data until December 31, 2023, they found an increased 42 projects rated as "likely junk," despite emerging industry standards aimed at reform.

Seven projects were deemed "potentially junk," and one lacked

sufficient information for classification.

Surprisingly, the buyers of these questionable credits spanned numerous sectors, not just the fossil fuel industry.

Thirty [large corporations](#), including Shell, Nestle, and Boeing, purchased high volumes of "notoriously junk" credits, where "you'd have to have your head in the sand to not know these projects were under extreme scrutiny," said Jackson.

Earlier this week, President Joe Biden's government threw its weight behind VCMs, publishing a set of non-enforceable guidelines it said would signal [best practices](#) that would ensure the schemes actually worked to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Prominent advocates of carbon markets, including former US climate envoy John Kerry, argue that [government funding](#) alone is insufficient to meet the Paris accord's goal of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

But Jackson remained skeptical. "While it's all well and good to launch yet another set of principles, those have not proven to be actionable," she said.

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