

Press release

Soccer teams to fly to South Africa with intact CO2 balance

A South African climate protection project from the portfolio of South Pole AG allows the Swiss national team and other World Cup teams a climate-neutral participation at the games in South Africa.

Zurich / Johannesburg, 11 June 2010 - The football event of the year will not only bring millions of fans to South Africa, but also lead to increased emissions of greenhouse gases - according to a study by the governments of Norway and South Africa there will be 2.7 million tonnes of CO₂e, which is eight times more than during the World Cup 2006 in Germany. This is mainly because of the wide flights of many fans from around the world, but also because of the bad climate record of the South African power grid, which is still on coal.

This World Cup will not leave an oversized environmental footprint in the sports history, so the South African Ministry of Environment (DEA) launched together with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is a big environmental initiative. Besides the installation of sustainable power generators and an information campaign, a UNEP initiative will offset the travel emissions of the football teams, with expected emissions of up to 6000 tons per team, including coaching staff.

This initiative consists of five GHG reduction projects selected according to the strictest criteria, including one developed by South Pole, a composting program near Cape Town: It ensures the organic waste is composted separately from normal waste in a controlled manner. Improper dumping usually leads to anaerobic decomposition processes, resulting in large amounts of methane, which heat up the climate significantly. With careful treatment high-quality compost is now produced, which has moisture storing and soil-improving properties and provides a contribution to a green South Africa.

The project owner donates part of their production to social institutions and thus also supports social improvements. South Pole has enabled the project to develop carbon credits for its TÜV-approved methane capture, thus supporting the financial viability of the project. Today, companies can implement private and voluntary climate reductions with the purchase of these certificates and thus support in concrete terms South Africa's transition to a sustainable future.

So far, half of all participating teams have known about this initiative and will compensate for their arrival, the journeys between the venues and their hotel stays. In the case of the teams of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ivory Coast, England, Greece, Italy, Japan, Cameroon, New Zealand, The Netherlands, Nigeria, Serbia, South Korea, Switzerland, USA, Uruguay and the host country South Africa their sponsor PUMA pays the costs for CO₂ offset.

"The fact that the national teams from around the globe and our company can prove our common responsibility for the global climate amazes me especially in this UN initiative." Said Renat Heuberger, Partner at South Pole. And adds with the smile of a real soccer fan: "I wish Ottmar Hitzfeld and the Swiss team that they have a bigger impact on the soccer field than on our climate."

Bruce Wylie, who heads the South Africa office of the Swiss company, "With the World Cup the whole world looks to our country. This is the right moment to point out the huge potential that South Africa has in terms of a climate-friendly future. Our composting project ultimately reduces not only methane, one of the most powerful greenhouse gases. It will also strengthen public awareness on issues of climate change and the environment in a South Africa which is still too much on fossil fuels. I very much hope that the World Cup with initiatives such as this can give a decisive boost. "

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The Swiss based climate experts from South Pole Carbon Asset Management AG develop and support since 2006 over 150 projects to reduce emissions around the world. As a leader in high-quality Gold Standard certificates, with ten offices in all corners of the world and about 80 employees, South Pole has shaped the market-based fight against climate change with transparent, effective and sustainable solutions. The as local as global company offers footprinting calculations and customized solutions from emission reduction strategies to a webshop with self-developed projects in it.

The Spin-off from Swiss Institute of Technology with the penguin in the logo is led by previous myclimate-founders, experts from the UN and with McKinsey and World Bank background.