

Carbon offsetting through emission mitigation projects

Man-made global warming threatens the basis of life, foremost it is threatening the poorest countries, and increasingly it threatens the standard of living in the industrialized world. Which measures are suitable, beyond energy efficiency and savings, for the fight against climate change?

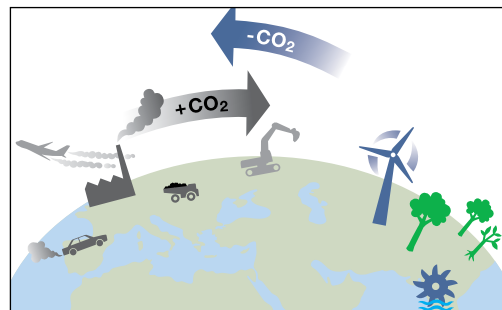
Facts

Present scientific research is expecting global temperatures to rise between 1.0 and 3.5°C, from now to 2050. As a consequence, droughts and heat waves will increase, while in Europe storms, landslides, and decreasing glaciers are evidence of the first signs of climate change. The consequences in the poorest regions of the world are already devastating.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) of the United Nations calculated, in a study, that the global output of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere must be reduced drastically in order to limit the worldwide temperature rise to a maximum of 2°C. This corresponds to a so-called “CO₂ equivalent” output reduction of 1 to 2 tons of CO₂ per person per year worldwide. The current average output is 4.6 tons per person of CO₂ worldwide and even reaches up to 10 tons per person in Europe.

What is carbon offsetting?

In order to limit climate change to a rate bearable for humans and the environment, we must try to release as little CO₂ as possible without compromising essential human comforts – nobody wants to freeze in winter. South Pole offers to offset unavoidable emissions such as your heating, and to neutralize the impact of your essential business processes or journeys through active climate warming prevention measures located around the world. Contrary to air pollution, where reductions must occur at the source of the emission, the reduction of greenhouse gases is not governed by the proximity of the emission source. Thus it makes sense that you can avoid emissions produced in one location through another source or location. This is called offsetting.



Consequently: Our experts calculate the quantity of effective emissions, for example those that result from your air travel or production processes. Your enterprise can then acquire the corresponding reduction in emissions, which come in the form of registered emissions certificates. These are linked directly with specific South Pole emissions reduction projects around the world to the value of your calculated greenhouse gas output, enabling South Pole to further invest in climate protection projects around the world to the value of your calculated greenhouse gas output. This is done preferably in developing countries, but also in emerging countries such as China, India or Brazil by, for example, replacing fossil fuel power plants with renewable energy plants or installing energy efficiency measures. Thus, a large quantity of greenhouse gas emissions are “saved”, which can compensate for inevitable emissions elsewhere.

In the end there are no additional greenhouse gases released to the atmosphere when compared to a status quo model. South Pole’s projects not only reduce the output of greenhouse gases, but also improve the quality of life of the affected local population in accordance with strict project standards.

Why are projects from only non-European countries offered?

We do not claim that climate change can be stopped exclusively by offsetting mechanisms. CO₂ mitigation strategies must be pursued within Europe as it is one of the most intense CO₂ emitting regions of the world. In the context of the 20-20-20 directive of the European Union, the member states are already obligated to reduce their greenhouse gas output by around 20%, to generate at least 20% of their power consumption from renewable energies, and to increase their energy efficiency by 20%, all by the year 2020.



Carbon offsetting is thus only one component of a global carbon mitigation strategy. Energy efficiency measures, as well as the development of renewable energies, are already a strong component of this strategy and are promoted and supported financially by the member countries of the European Union as well as by Norway and Switzerland. Intra-European projects would therefore generate no additional savings, which is one key requirement for the validation of carbon credits.



On the other hand no such political programs exist in the rapidly growing markets in Asia and South America with their increasing power requirements. In addition, the knowledge and awareness of environmental and climate issues is lower in these regions than in Europe. Offsetting projects can help to promote climate protection projects outside of Europe which would not be economical without the cash flow from CO₂ certificates.



Besides this, offsetting supports poorer countries with sustainable development and brings clean energy technologies into less developed regions. Apart from the creation of sustainable jobs, our climate protection projects have many positive social and ecological aspects, which can result in significant follow-on benefits in poorer countries. With this understanding and awareness, renewable energy and climate protection can be strengthened in order to build up countries towards active climate policies on a long-term basis, and ensure sensitization worldwide for careful handling of resources and the environment. South Pole focuses particularly on these additional aspects, proven by our Gold Standard Portfolio Pledge – over 50% of our projects are labeled with this strictest seal in the carbon world.



Carbon offsetting is an efficient and fast tool to reduce greenhouse gases. By participating in this established and sophisticated procedure, individuals, enterprises, and organizations can set an example and at the same time strengthen the fight against global warming – worldwide. In combination with internal reduction measures you can establish a coherent carbon strategy, demonstrating an advanced corporate regional and global awareness.



Which standards do climate protection projects have to fulfill?

Climatic protection projects must save so-called CO₂ equivalents (CO₂e) when compared to the "normal case" (as would occur without the project), and must be additional, i.e. they must not be economical without proceeds from carbon credits. This means that a project owner would not be likely to implement a project without receiving carbon credits. The proof of the CO₂e reduction is ensured by complex methodologies which are established by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and verified by independent auditors such as TÜV or SGS.

South Pole only works with established procedures guaranteeing the highest quality, transparency, and sustainability. Since carbon certificates are a virtual good, the choice of a serious partner is crucial - only through this can you trust that your commitment is fruitful. By registering and "retiring" your credits in a recognized Registry such as Markit Environmental, your certificates are guaranteed to not be re-used or resold. The assignment of credits reflects verifiable benefits associated to the respective project and ensures reliable reduction in the fight against global warming.

Resuming sources

Under the following links you will find more detailed information on the fight against climate change:

The Intergovernmental Panel On Climate Change:

<http://www.ipcc.ch/>

Real Climate: Climate science from climate scientists:

<http://www.realclimate.org/>

The BBC: Latest news on climate change issues

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/weather/hi/climate>

The BBC: How the Greenhouse Effect works:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/sci_nat/04/climate_change/html/greenhouse.stm

The David Suzuki Foundation on Climate Change:

http://www.davidsuzuki.org/Climate_Change/

The Markit Registry:

<http://www.markitenvironmental.com/>



Overview of Carbon Standards

Verified Carbon Units (VCUs)



VCUs follow the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS), a high-quality standard created by the Climate Group, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), and the Emissions Trade Organization. Credits generated under the VCS are based on UNFCCC or Climate Action Reserve recognized methodologies and ensure the additionality of the project.

Gold Standard (GS VERs)



Like the VCUs, GS VERs ensure greenhouse gas reduction in accordance with the rules of the UNFCCC. Furthermore, social, ecological, and economic aspects are recognized, guaranteeing additional criteria are fulfilled that bring benefit for local communities beyond the CO₂ reduction. The Swiss based Gold Standard Foundation was formed by WWF and Greenpeace, and promotes only renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. Gold Standard VERs are frequently purchased by enterprises that value the importance of sustainability in addition to CO₂ savings. Due to the higher price of GS VERs, when compared with VCUs, usually such buyers choose this standard when offsetting a smaller quantity of greenhouse gases.

Climate, Community & Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA)



CCBA is, at present, the highest quality standard for forest projects – be it reforestation, retaining forest, or controlled sustainable use. Besides the actual carbon mitigation factors such as the conservation of biodiversity, the effects on water, soil and of the communities are also examined. This standard represents more than just quality CO₂ savings, and is therefore often referred to in connection with other quality standards like the VCS.

The Social Carbon Standard (SC)



SC was developed by the Ecologica Institute, Brazil, to certify voluntary emission reduction projects for their contributions to sustainable development. It is founded on the principle that transparent assessment and monitoring of the social and environmental performance of projects can improve their long-term effectiveness and thus add value to the voluntary emission reductions generated. The Social Carbon standard is typically used in conjunction with a carbon accounting standard, such as the VCS, CCBS, or the CDM.



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