



south pole
group

Coop Switzerland Case Study

Going beyond traditional carbon offsets: Coop & Insetting



About the client



The Coop Group is one of the largest retail groups in Switzerland. In addition to its supermarkets, the Group boasts a wide variety of different sales formats, as well as various wholesale and manufacturing companies. Coop is the clear market leader in environmentally friendly and fair-trade products.

Coop Switzerland is insetting its emissions along its value chain. This includes goods imported by air, the air miles by its staff on business trips and the CO₂ emissions caused by deliveries as part of the Coop@home online service. By insetting emissions, Coop is supporting Gold Standard projects and creating shared value along its supply chain, in cooperation with WWF and with technical support from South Pole Group.

The context

In 2008, Coop drew up its "CO₂-neutral by 2023" vision. To achieve this vision, Coop is cutting its absolute energy consumption by 20% each year and increasing the proportion of renewable energy to 80%. This will result in a reduction of around 50 per cent on absolute annual CO₂ emissions vis-à-vis 2008, and the remaining CO₂ emissions will be offset from 2023 onwards.

As early as 2007, Coop began offsetting every air mile travelled by its goods as well as by its staff on business trips and by the delivery service Coop@home. Here, Coop chooses projects that are located along

its value chain. Coop works with WWF to develop these projects from scratch, rather than selecting already existing projects.

The challenge

Coop wants all the projects it invests in to achieve the highest possible benefit for the environment and the local population involved in its value chain. As with all of its emission reduction projects, Coop wanted to ensure that this insetting project is not only real and verifiable, but also makes measurable contributions to sustainable development - benefiting the local communities involved in Coop's value chain.

The briefing

Coop wanted to go beyond traditional offsetting, in order to leverage synergies between carbon offsetting and its wider business and sustainability strategy, and also send a strong message to its customers and stakeholders.

The process

Developing emission projects from scratch in supply chains in developing countries, is not an easy task: it requires proven experience on the ground, a global outreach, and professional project management skills. This is why Coop selected WWF as its environmental partner, and, in turn, South Pole Group as technical expert, with innovation as a top priority.

Coop asked WWF and consequently South Pole Group to pioneer their "insetting" concept with emission reduction projects directly in Coop's operations, with a special focus on communities in the fair trade supply chain. Thanks to this early engagement and innovative approach developed by South Pole Group, the concept is now leading the way for other companies engaged in insetting.

As Coop only invests in certificates that meet the highest requirements and are supported by WWF, the Gold Standard certification for projects was a basic requirement before going forward with the insetting work.



The solution

The pioneering insetting project Coop invested in aims to employ local entrepreneurs to enable sustained supply of household water filters, while also focusing on awareness raising in the communities. This means that the project not only guarantees a reduction in CO₂-emissions, but also strong support for co-benefits regarding biodiversity, livelihood, health impacts and employment - all of which are prioritised by the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Coop has outlined the following key benefits it has gained from the insetting projects:

1 Premium carbon credits aligned with business strategy:

- Gold Standard carbon credits that ensure important benefits for the local communities involved in Coop's value chain.
- Ability to leverage carbon budget for CSR activities and increase the financial resources available for CSR.

2 Professional marketing-communications support:

- As offsetting is not easy to explain to customers, the tailored online and offline promotion materials in various formats - from video coverage and pictures to articles and interviews with local community members - help to illustrate Coop's commitment to offset.

3 Credible partners

- Coop benefits from the high credibility of WWF and South Pole Group in its communication activities.

"We at Coop are convinced that sustainability is the cornerstone of long-term corporate success. This includes preventing any negative impact resulting from our business activities and conducting our business in a sustainable manner. We are committed to reducing our emissions to the greatest extent possible, and are working to improve the livelihoods and the well-being of farmers along our supply chain with the help of WWF and South Pole Group."

Annina Böhlen

Responsible Coop Fund for Sustainability



"We are very happy about the project. In order to produce better coffee, people need to take care about their health and their families. The water filter project helps our farmers to have safe drinking water to stay healthy and us to ensure long-term supply of high quality coffee."

Leonard Kachebonaho

General Manager of Kaderes Peasant Development (KPD), the local company in charge of buying, processing and exporting the coffee for Coop.

Why work with us

Valuable solutions for you

With a long list of satisfied clients, South Pole Group has living proof in its ability to successfully carry out a full spectrum of services for investment climate impact assessment. South Pole Group helps clients meet their needs and prosper while, at the same time, operate in way that helps fight climate change.

Global Team

We are a truly global provider of sustainability solutions and services. Our team is made up of over 130 skilled and enthusiastic professionals from over 20 different countries, based in offices spanning 6 continents.

Proven impact

Since 2006, we have measured the climate impact of countless companies, projects and products worldwide. We have screened USD 50 bn+ of investments for their climate impact and we have developed 270+ projects in renewables, energy efficiency, forestry, agriculture, industry and households.

Through our efforts, 50 million tonnes of have been saved, almost as much as the CO₂ annual CO₂ emissions of Portugal. We have enabled the production of 35,000 GWh of renewable energy (more than the annual electricity consumption of Denmark), and mobilised over USD 6 bn for clean energy investments in emerging markets. We have protected or restored over 250,000 km² land, about as much as the total land mass of the UK.

In total, our projects have helped create almost 20,000 jobs in developing countries and we saved 17,000+ hectares of forest from deforestation, about the size of 24,000 soccer pitches.

Added value

We help you grow with groundbreaking solutions that benefit your business, the environment and society.