

Fighting deforestation in Ethiopia

Since 2010, Atos has supported its customers in their journey towards more sustainable operations and has offset each year the total carbon emissions of all its data centers. In 2018, Atos has expanded this program to cover 100% of residual emissions of its data centers, offices, and business trips. In 2019, in partnership with EcoAct, 242,986 tCO₂e were thus compensated. Thanks to a new investment made in 2020, Atos has enlarged its existing support to renewable energies to carbon sink preservation projects. An important development for the preservation of the climate.

Among the projects supported, **Atos invested in a REDD+ forest preservation project in Ethiopia**, as climate-science and market trends have demonstrated the importance of preserving and developing carbon sinks like forests or mangroves. A key leverage to ensure GHG emissions are still sequestered or captured, in addition to usual emissions reductions and contributing to UN Sustainable Development Goals 8,12,13 and 15.



Project

The project aims to fight against unplanned deforestation in the Bale Mountains eco-region, home to a very rich biodiversity. As a result of deforestation (11% to 6.6% annually on average), climate change affects even more the livelihood of an already extremely poor local population: increased drought, forest fires, lower river flows. To mitigate these impacts, the project intends to improve forest ecosystem and landscape management with the development and strengthening of community-based local institutions (cooperative type) and surveillance teams.

In addition, the project promotes sustainable agroforestry and livestock breeding activities, as well as tree plantation and water management. Overall, the project will result in a **62% reduction in deforestation against anticipated rate, leading to 22 MtCO₂e emissions reduction over a 20-years period** due to continued carbon sequestration. The project also provides an exceptional biodiversity benefit by protecting the natural ecosystems of the local fauna and flora.



Project Bale © Lisa Murray

ecoact

VCS | VERIFIED CARBON STANDARD

A Global Benchmark for Carbon

Trusted partner for your Digital Journey

Atos

Main achievements



Location

The project covers **333,924 ha in the Bale Mountains eco-region**, located in the Oromia Regional State in south-eastern Ethiopia. The region encompasses the largest area of Afro alpine habitat on the African continent.

Its central area is a high plateau at an altitude of 3,000m and with several peaks including the Tullu Dimtu (4,377m). On the south of the plateau, the land falls steeply into the moist tropical Haremma Forest, that distinctly shows several altitudinal vegetation stratifications within short distances.

The northern part of the eco-region is characterized by high ridges and broad valleys covered mainly with dry Afromontane vegetation.

1.6 million population live in this eco-region where rural people are directly dependent on the forest and other natural resources of the area.



Economic and Social Benefits

Economic development

Communities harvest fuelwood, construction materials and other subsistence products according to the participatory forest management plan developed. They also benefit from various trainings and capacity building supports, as well as material and technical support for improved quality and quantity production of forest products. **Over 3,000 people were trained in water management, land use planning, forest land management and GPS technology.**

The project also fosters the development of alternative income sources that are based on sustainable natural resources utilization to supplement household income and replace the traditional income from fuel wood collection. **Commercial production of non-timber forest products**, such as honey, wild coffee, fish farming, medicinal plants and essential oils, and eco-tourism activities are developed through trainings and market linkage facilitation. As a result, the annual household income grew from ETB 7,300 to ETB 22,000, enabling the payment of school fees for child education.

Social positive impacts

One of the project focuses is to improve the livelihoods of vulnerable groups. Especially, **women are empowered** through the governance of the project activities and their access to resources is improved. As an example, **3 women groups focused on agri-businesses** (milk, goat, poultry, gum/incense) were created.

The approach adopted by the project is fully inclusive for local communities. The whole program is structured around the participatory forest management approach where communities are the main implementer. For instance, **115 forest cooperatives were established/strengthened to manage the forest area.** Family planning is also a strong component of the project.



Environmental Benefits

Biodiversity impacts

The eco-region belongs to the **Conservation International's Eastern Afromontane Biodiversity Hotspot Area**, one of the 34 global biodiversity hotspots. The forests together with the Afro alpine plateau host a **globally unique and diverse fauna and flora**, including a significant number of rare and endemic species: Mountain Nyala, Abyssinian wolves, 280 bird species. The region is also known as a hotspot of Ethiopian medicinal plants and one of the birth places and centre of diversity of Arabic coffee (*Coffea arabica*).

Thanks to this project, the deforestation avoidance of this bio-rich tropical forest and the improved land management lead to the conservation of the biological diversity at ecosystem, species and genetic levels.

The project also establishes a **robust system for biodiversity monitoring** and research of the natural resources in the Bale Mountains Eco-region and its surroundings.

Other environmental impacts

The project has implemented **4 ponds, 3 tree nurseries, 150,000 seedlings** to contribute also to the rebuilding of the already damaged ecosystems. **9 water committees** for participatory integrated watershed management were created to improve access to water to local communities. **Over 800 households have now access to drinking water** including their livestock.

Key Technical facts

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| Standard | VCS - Methodology for Avoided Unplanned Deforestation and/or Degradation (VM0015 V1.1 - REDD+) |
| 3 rd party verifier | TÜV SÜD South Asia Pvt. Ltd. |

“Atos has provided carbon-compensated services to its customers since 2011. In 2019, Atos decided to focus its global offsetting program to both wind farm projects and reforestation in a bid to achieve net-zero emissions by 2030.”

Philippe Mareine

Head of Corporate Social Responsibility and Chief Digital & Transformation Officer, Atos

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