

Edito

Since one year, this newsletter has become a real meeting place. It has not stopped evolving, as the carbon market itself and the initiatives in favour of the environment. Still, with the same enthusiasm of its initiation, Action Carbone team shares with you its projects and important topics about our climate.

In this new issue, we treat a crucial matter: responsible communication. In a market economy where green is trendy, we give you some tips to tell the difference between honest actions and opportunistic ones.

Happy holidays to all!

The Action Carbone team

Offset zoom project

Solar cookers in the Andean countries

Solar energy is the world's most available source of energy . It is clean, renewable and easily accessible. The diffusion of solar cookers encourage the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by replacing gas and/or wood which excessive exploitation is one of the major causes of deforestation. Action Carbone finances a project of this kind in South America.

This offset project developed by the association Bolivia Inti- Sud Soleil aims to diffuse as broadly as possible - in South America (Bolivia, Peru, Chile) the use of solar energy through a simple and efficient technology: the solar cooker.

Being born from a visit to Bolivia by its founder in 1999, the association Bolivia Inti Sud Soleil promotes the use of solar energy as widely as possible in France, South America and Africa.

An innovative technology

The solar cooker works as a greenhouse and consists of a wooden box containing an interior metal case with reflecting surfaces. Between the two walls, it is insulated with locally available materials. This device can reach temperatures between 150 and 200°C allowing a homogeneous cook of food without taking any risks. This feature eliminates the need of surveillance. It even adapts to cloudy days, thanks to its design, 20 minutes of sunlight per hour are enough for the cooker to function properly.

Training to beneficiaries and regular monitoring programs make the future users aware of the solar technology through the construction of cookers and lessons on food recipes and respective cooking methods.



Numerous benefits

The solar cooker replaces, partially, fuel-wood used for cooking, decreasing deforestation and consequently soil erosion.

Above obvious environmental benefits, this project brings numerous socio-economical benefits. Women and children are "freed" 15 hours per week from collecting wood. This time becomes available for Education, Capacity Building and Family Care activities.

At the economical level, solar cooking reduces fuel expenditures (wood, charcoal, gas and kerosene), while solar cooker manufacturing creates jobs at a local level. This way of ecological cooking avoids eye and respiratory diseases (smoke) and back pains (wood collection). Moreover, water pasteurization practices eliminate intestinal diseases.

Projet details are to be found on www.actioncarbone.org

Carbone news

Carbon offsetting and responsible communication

Often denounced as "greenwashing", carbon offsetting is however a powerful tool for companies to engage in responsible activities, on condition that they would operate coherently through their whole actions.

What's greenwashing?

Since last few years, advertising largely took hold of the growing environment problem, for the best and the worst.

We talk about Greenwashing when a company invests more money and time to promote its green talk through communication and marketing actions, than to implement responsible attempts to reduce the environmental impact of its activity.

More and more initiatives are emerging to denounce this cheating (www.greenwashingindex.com). In 2006, in the United Kingdom, a 4x4 manufacturer included the cost of offsetting in the sale price of its vehicles and bragged about commercializing carbon-neutral vehicles!

The offsetting practice must protect itself from Greenwashing

Action Carbone is very careful when it comes to this kind of opportunistic behaviours since they represent a real threat, not only for its brand image but also for the voluntary carbon market as a whole. As a non-governmental organisation (NGO), GoodPlanet.org must be a trustful and uncompromising partner.

-For this to happen, a real screening process is performed upon the companies wishing to offset their activities with Action Carbone. What's the scope of their activities to offset? Is it relevant to the company's products or services? Is the offsetting integrated in an overall sustainable-development action?

Furthermore, to improve the guidance, Action Carbone undertakes Carbon Accounting (Bilan Carbone) services for companies wishing to go beyond neutralizing emissions. Finally, Action Carbone briefly evaluates a cost-benefit ratio.

While supporting a non-profit association in France, a company is constrained to legal limitations concerning its donation. Moreover, during its partners' communication campaigns, Action Carbone assists them on the message given to the consumer and makes sure that it is not just a one-shot action.

Responsible communication at stake

The lack of such a strict regulation of the advertising market slows down the development of a responsible communication. AdWiser, the pioneer group of responsible advertising actors, defines responsible communication as "a way of communication that gives priority to eco-designed media and use ecological arguments only when it is justified. Further, it refuses the promotion of

behaviors that would affect in a negative way the quality of our environment and social relations".

Although initiatives as Adwiser are worth of existing, they are still fragile. As an evidence of the slow evolution of mentalities, the Bureau de la Verification de la Publicité (French Advertising Verification Office) signed in April 2008 a "Code of Responsible Communication" barely restrictive for the announcers and strongly criticized by defenders of a responsible communication. A company can still present its products as respectful to the environment without any guarantee or security. However, pressure from NGOs and consumer's defence associations is constantly rising. Moreover, consumers are becoming aware but mostly educated to distinguish the reliability of the message. It's up to each one of us to find out about the origin, quality and environmental respect of the products we consume.

Responsible carbon offsetting

To include carbon offsetting to a Corporate Social Responsibility policy is totally relevant. When a company offsets greenhouse gas emissions related to its activities, it provides funds for emissions reduction projects. There is definitely a will for a concrete action. The threat is to use carbon offsetting as the unique commitment. The company forgets that the priority to fight against climate change is avoidance of GHG emissions at their source, here in France or wherever the emissions to be offset are taking place.

The ADEME (French Agency for the Environment and Energy Management) launched a code of voluntary carbon market, which is crystal clear towards those who

want to offset carbon emissions: they must commit themselves "to refer to the global emissions reduction they execute or plan to execute in the short term".

Carbon offsetting is a complimentary action, it must be part of a global commitment strategy, therefore associated to other means; for example, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and/or the optimization of the supply chain. Like that, a company presenting its responsible

actions would be coherent with its speech and would make the best out of the broad range of benefits in terms of brand image.

Find out the complete article on www.actioncarbone.org

To go further, find out the references on www.actioncarbone.org :

- AdWiser report on responsible communication
- Eco-responsible communication BVP's charter
- Criticism of the charter
- Ecocommunication ADEME's guide

News from our partners

Voyages-Sncf.com, a strong partnership

In line with the creation of the eco-calculator in partnership with ADEME, the French leader of online travel, Voyages Sncf, set a good example by offsetting its own CO₂ emissions (employees' travels, buildings' energy consumption, etc.) with Action Carbone.

Voyages-Sncf now proposes to its customers to follow its example by offsetting the emissions related to their travels bought on its website.

Since 2008, the agency launched www.voyageur-responsable.com, an attempt to encourage people to travel differently and make them discover new horizons. "Responsible Odyssey" follows famous personalities, and explains us how to perform, wherever your destination, both, entertaining and respectful activities on local people and the environment.



The following have joined us recently : Connect Factory, JupiterImages, Kalengo, Domaine Habrard, EcoWin

Zoom on Vélicab suggests you to visit Paris differently, since last July you can move with I-cabs in Paris, these are elegant and non-polluting tricycles proposed by Vélicab. www.veli-cab.fr

DPE-Editions : In the framework of its training cycles, Pro-environnement website organizes on September 25th a training on "ecological footprint". More information on www.pro-environnement.com

The striking fact

Below, arch collapses from Perito Moreno glacier in the national park of Calafate in Argentina. This glacier is one of the world's last glaciers to be not in decline. On the 6th of July 2008, for the first time of its history, Perito Moreno glacier collapsed in winter, suffering the effects of climate change as well.



Photo credit: stock.xchng database

Reduce your emissions and continue to support Action Carbone by promoting sustainable development:
www.actioncarbone.org. Spread the word around you!

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