

Madagascar sells first forest carbon credits to Microsoft

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Makira Forest: a 400,000 hectare landscape containing one percent of the world's biodiversity.

The Wildlife Conservation Society announced today that the Government of Madagascar has approved carbon sales with Microsoft and its carbon offset partner, The CarbonNeutral Company, and Zoo Zurich. The carbon credit sales will support the Government of Madagascar's REDD+ Project (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation "plus" conservation) in the Makira Natural Park and mark the first sale of government-owned REDD+ credits in Africa.

Through carbon credit sales from avoided deforestation, the Makira REDD+ Project will finance the long-term conservation of one of

Madagascar's most pristine remaining rainforest ecosystems harboring rare and threatened plants and animals while improving community land stewardship and supporting the livelihoods of the local people.

Through a unique funding distribution mechanism designed by WCS and the Government of Madagascar, the funds from carbon sales will be used by the Government of Madagascar for conservation, capacity building, and enforcement activities, and by WCS to manage the Makira Natural Park. The largest share of the sale – half of the proceeds – will go to supporting local communities in the areas surrounding Makira for education, human health and other beneficial projects.

"The Government of Madagascar is thrilled to have played the role of pioneer in carbon sales in Africa. Makira is a highly valued part of our natural heritage and the revenues from this sale will not only protect this outstanding area, but represent an important step in our plan to develop sustainable sources of financing for the whole protected area network. We hope that other organizations will follow the lead of Microsoft, The CarbonNeutral Company, and Zoo Zurich and join us in this effort to conserve Madagascar's unique biodiversity through the sale of future [carbon credits](#)," said Pierre Manganirina Randrianarisoa the Secretary General of the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

Said WCS President and CEO Cristián Samper "These sales represent a first for WCS, a first for Africa, and a first for Madagascar in advancing the use of carbon credits to fight climate change while protecting biodiversity and human livelihoods. We are thankful to Microsoft, The CarbonNeutral Company and Zoo Zurich, and we look forward to future purchases by other forward-thinking organizations."

Said Rob Bernard, Chief Environmental Strategist at Microsoft: "Supporting forest conservation and community building projects like Makira is an important part of Microsoft's strategy to reduce its

environmental impact, support sustainable economic growth, improve health and education, and address societal challenges. The project's important role in protecting a crucial area of biodiversity value also aligns with Microsoft's own focus on using technology, information and research to develop new approaches and solutions to sustainability."

Said Jonathan Shopley, Managing Director of The CarbonNeutral Company: "Increasingly our clients are looking for opportunities to manage the entire environmental impact of their organisation, driven by the need to build resilience in their supply chains. The Makira project enables clients to do this by selling carbon credits while also delivering biodiversity value and community support."

Makira contains an estimated one percent of the world's biodiversity including 20 lemur species, hundreds of species of birds, and thousands of plant varieties, including many found nowhere else on earth. The Makira forest spans nearly 400,000 hectares (more than 1,500 square miles), making it one of the largest remaining intact blocks of rainforest in Madagascar. In addition, Makira's forests serve as a zone of watershed protection, providing clean water to over 250,000 people in the surrounding landscape.

WCS, which has worked in Makira since 2003, is the delegated manager of the park and is responsible for implementing the REDD+ project that aims to safeguard the Makira Natural Park, one of Madagascar's largest protected areas.

Last September the Government of Madagascar and WCS announced that 710,588 carbon credits had been certified for sale from the Makira Forest REDD+ Project. WCS estimates that it will prevent the release of more than 32 million tonnes of CO₂ over the next thirty years. REDD+ is an international framework that assigns a financial value to the carbon stored in forests, offering compensation to developing countries for

reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation while investing in low-carbon paths to sustainable development. REDD+ additionally includes the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

The Makira REDD+ Project is validated and verified by the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS), and has received a 'Gold' level validation by the Climate, Community, and Biodiversity Alliance.

Avoided deforestation has been identified as a key mechanism for reducing [carbon](#) dioxide emissions. In Madagascar, burning for agricultural land and extraction of wood for household energy leads to around 36,000 hectares (139 square miles) of natural forest being lost each year.

Provided by Wildlife Conservation Society

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