



PRESS RELEASE

NetZero inaugurates in Brazil world's largest biochar factory using crop residues

- French start-up NetZero inaugurates in Brazil the world's largest facility producing biochar from crop residues, being also Latin America's first biochar plant.
- This factory will allow to remove of over 6,500 tonnes of CO₂ from the atmosphere every year while durably improving crop productivity for 400 coffee growers.
- Before the end of 2023, NetZero will build two other production plants in Brazil, leveraging its unique model to bring biochar at scale.

Paris (France) and Rio Casca (Brazil), 20 April 2023 – NetZero, an award-winning French start-up whose mission is to bring biochar at scale in the tropics, announces the inauguration of its first factory in Brazil. Located in the State of Minas Gerais, this plant was built in just 6 months and is the first of its kind in Latin America. Its annual production capacity of over 4,500 tonnes of biochar will allow to remove the equivalent of more than 6,500 tonnes of atmospheric CO₂, while bringing a durable fertilisation solution for agriculture.

Named after Guy Reinaud in tribute to one of the pioneers of biochar, the factory is nestled in Lajinha, 250km East from Belo Horizonte, in the coffee region of Matas de Minas. It is Latin America's first plant dedicated to biochar production, as well as the world's largest facility producing biochar from crop residues. Thanks to a partnership with Coocafé, a cooperative of more than 10,000 farmers, NetZero will collect thousands of tonnes of residues from coffee dehusking to turn them into biochar. This soil amendment will be used by 400 coffee growers to improve their crop yields while allowing to store atmospheric carbon in soils for hundreds of years.

Similar to small charcoal particles, biochar is obtained by extracting the carbon contained in residual plant matter through pyrolysis. This process allows to durably stabilise the carbon initially captured by plants in the atmosphere during photosynthesis. On top of its IPCC-validated climate benefits, biochar has remarkable agronomic properties: it acts in the soil as a carbon sponge that retains water and nutrients at plant root level, allowing to durably reduce the use of fertilisers while improving crop productivity, and thus farmer's standard of living.

On top of this plant in Lajinha, which already counts 30 Brazilian employees, NetZero will launch the construction of two other plants in Brazil by the end of the year: one in the State of Minas Gerais, the other in the neighbouring State of Espírito Santo. This very rapid growth come only a few months after a capital raise that welcomed three new shareholders of NetZero, all leaders in the respective industries: Stellantis, L'Oréal et CMA CGM. This momentum started in 2022 when NetZero was recognised as one of the world's 15 most promising carbon removal projects in Musk Foundation's XPRIZE Carbon Removal competition, using NetZero's pilot plant in Cameroon as a basis.

Fernando Cerqueira, President of Coocafé, said: *"Innovation and sustainable development are integral to Coocafé's DNA. We are proud of this pioneering partnership with NetZero to develop biochar's production and use in Brazil. This factory will allow us to give value to previously unused residues by turning them into a soil amendment that will improve the quantity and quality of our production. We are convinced that biochar is a major solution for making our coffee production more sustainable."*

Pedro de Figueiredo, Co-founder & Brazil CEO of NetZero, said: *"Brazil is a strategic geography for NetZero, offering all conditions for a rapid scaling of our model. It is one of the largest agricultural countries in the world, with immense amounts of crop residues available for biochar production. Its farmers are not only innovative, but also increasingly focused on sustainability and keen to explore new solutions. Furthermore, Brazil is a country with cutting-edge industrial culture, possessing the infrastructure and skills to ensure top performance."*

Axel Reinaud, Co-founder & CEO of NetZero, said: *“Building a factory in such a short time is a challenge in itself, both in terms of technical and human resources. Doing so in a completely different geography from our pilot site is even more so. Implementing major technological improvements on top of that makes it a remarkable achievement: more than twice as productive, significantly more automated, operating with a vast majority of specifically developed equipment... it truly is a technological leap. This plant demonstrates our ability to execute, replicate, and rapidly converge towards our target model.”*

ABOUT NETZERO

NetZero was founded in 2021 by Axel Reinaud, Prof. Jean Jouzel, Aimé Njiakin, Olivier Reinaud, and Pedro de Figueiredo. Its mission is to bring at scale biochar, one of the few climate solutions that can durably remove carbon from the atmosphere, as well as one of the few agricultural solutions allowing to reconcile productivity and sustainability.

By leveraging biochar in the tropics along a unique model, NetZero simultaneously tackles three pressing challenges in developing countries: climate change, sustainable agriculture, and overall rural development. The company currently has two operational sites: a full-scale pilot plant in Cameroon and a commercial factory in Brazil.

NetZero is a Milestone Award winner of Musk Foundation’s XPRIZE Carbon Removal competition, a recipient of the ‘Efficient Solution’ label from Solar Impulse Foundation, and a certified carbon-removal project by the Puro Standard. NetZero’s mid-term objective is to reach an annual removal capacity of 2 million tonnes of CO₂ by 2030 while improving the standard of living of tens of thousands of farmers.

Learn more at: www.netzero.green

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