



## PRESS RELEASE

# NetZero and ECOM announce pioneering partnership for large-scale biochar deployment in coffee farming

- French green tech NetZero and global coffee trader ECOM announce an industry first with the signing of a partnership to deploy biochar at scale and thus produce more sustainable coffee.
- The partnership will materialize this year with the construction of an industrial-grade factory producing 4,000 tonnes of biochar a year, which will also allow for the direct removal over 6,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere and the avoidance of tens of thousands of additional tonnes of emissions from current agricultural practices.
- Biochar is a one-off, highly efficient soil amendment made from residual biomass, also recognised by the IPCC as a major solution in the fight against climate change.
- This innovative partnership intends to address the global challenge of decarbonisation of agricultural supply chain while maintaining high crop productivity and raising farmers' income.

**Paris (France) and Pully (Switzerland), 1 February 2024** – NetZero, a French start-up pioneering the industrial production of biochar in the tropics, and ECOM Agroindustrial Corp. Ltd., one of the world's leading traders of agricultural commodities, announce a pioneering partnership to accelerate the large-scale deployment of biochar in coffee farming. Short term, the Brazilian subsidiaries of both companies will join efforts to build a biochar factory in the city of Machado, one of the largest hubs of coffee production in Brazil, with construction works expected to start in April.

A soil amendment produced from the carbon contained in crop residues, biochar acts as a “sponge” that durably retains water and nutrients at plant root level. This notably allows, with a single application, to increase coffee yields while significantly reducing the use of fertilisers, which currently contribute to a significant share of coffee's carbon footprint. Beyond reducing emissions, biochar is a carbon-removal technology recognised by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), locking carbon in soils for millennia. Last, biochar can play an important role in increasing the resilience of plants during droughts and other extreme weather events.

NetZero, which currently operates in Cameroon and Brazil, has received multiple international awards for its innovative biochar model in tropical areas. This model is based on an end-to-end, circular approach by which the farmers provide unused crop residues – such as coffee husks – to NetZero and get back biochar at a subsidised price thanks to the sale of carbon credits.

For their first joint project, NetZero and ECOM will bring together several hundreds of farmers from the Machado region. They will be offered a sustainable scheme to dispose of their crop residues and receive biochar in return. The factory will produce every year over 4,000 tonnes of biochar and will remove more than 6,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere, making it the world's first large-scale, in-value-chain deployment of biochar.

This partnership is part of ECOM's strategic roadmap to improve farmers' prosperity while protecting nature and sourcing higher quality coffee, with the particular aim to deliver truly carbon neutral products to its clients.

**Axel Reinaud, Co-founder & CEO of NetZero, said:** “NetZero partners with companies seriously committed about their sustainability roadmap. We are proud to welcome ECOM in this innovative project, which we hope to be the first of many. This partnership also demonstrates the increasing perception of biochar as a strategic agricultural and climate solution, being one of the few tools currently available that can reconcile productivity and sustainability in agriculture.”

**Teddy Esteve, Head of Coffee and Chief Carbon Officer at ECOM, said:** “We are very proud to partner with NetZero. 175 years after ECOM’s foundation, we want to continue to be at the forefront of agricultural innovation. Large-scale biochar deployment will help farmers produce more and will help our clients reduce their Scope-3 emissions. I cannot think of a better way of reaching our net-zero goals.”

#### ABOUT NETZERO

NetZero was founded in 2021 by Axel Reinaud, Dr. 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 is present in Cameroon and Brazil, operating mid-size industrial plants and currently working with over 600 farmers.

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, a Green Tech prize winner of the Tech for Good Awards, and a certified carbon-removal project under the Puro Standard. NetZero’s mid-term objective is to reach an annual removal capacity of 2 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> by 2030 while improving the standard of living of tens of thousands of farmers.

Learn more at: [www.netzero.green](http://www.netzero.green)

#### ABOUT ECOM

ECOM is a world-leading soft commodity services group specialising in coffee, cocoa, and cotton.

We employ more than a thousand agronomists and field staff worldwide, running innovative on-the-ground operations and sustainability programmes to help our customers and farming communities worldwide.

Our global presence, unparalleled experience, and strong, trusted relationships allow us to create a valuable and profitable environment for our suppliers, customers, shareholders, and employees.

Learn more at: [www.ecomtrading.com](http://www.ecomtrading.com)

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