

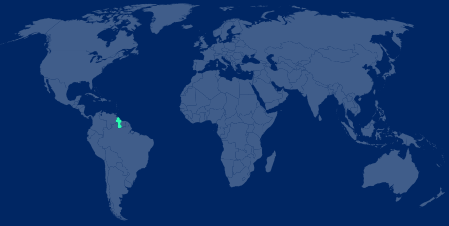
Natural  
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Natural Climate Solutions in Action

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# The Lower Zambezi REDD+ Project

<b>Project/Program Type</b>	The Lower Zambezi REDD+ Project (LZRP) generates carbon credits through avoided deforestation. It is the first REDD+ project in Africa to achieve eight consecutive verifications from Verra's Verified Carbon Standard (VCS).
<b>Description</b>	LZRP creates a buffer for wildlife around Zambia's Lower Zambezi National Park by implementing sustainable agriculture on nearby farms; hiring community-led forest patrols; and supporting development projects in local communities.
<b>Location</b>	The project is located on the northwestern edge of the Lower Zambezi National Park in Southern Zambia.
<b>Scale</b>	The project covers 40,126 hectares on privately owned land also known as Rufunsa Conservancy.
<b>Number of Credits Issued to Date</b>	1,769,827 VCUs.
<b>Project Proponent</b>	Biocarbon Partners



# Impacts

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## Impact To-Date

In 2021, the project prevented 199,631 tons of carbon emissions and delivered more than \$125,000 to local communities. Local incomes have risen by more than 50 percent since the project's start.

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## Projected Longer-Term Impact

LZRP was a pilot project for Biocarbon Partners (BCP) and proved the viability of REDD+ in Zambia. BCP aims to protect 11 million hectares of forest in Africa to benefit 3 million people and reduce carbon emissions by 30 million tons annually.

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# How Zambia's Farmers Are Protecting Forest and Boosting Yields

Twenty years ago, Phiri Edson built a farm on eight hectares of land near the northwestern border of Zambia's Lower Zambezi National Park. "The land is fertile and good," he says. Edson grows maize, beans and ground nuts to feed his six children and twelve grandchildren—but farming is more difficult now than when he started. "The first rain always used to come on time, but now sometimes it's late and sometimes it's early," he explains. "The weather is not normal."



Phiri Edson,  
Farmer,  
Zambia

**The first rain always used to come on time, but now sometimes it's late and sometimes it's early. The weather is not normal.**

The climate crisis has made droughts and flash floods more frequent in Zambia, creating challenges for farmers like Edson. Some of Edson's neighbors have cut down forest to expand their fields; others have turned to chopping trees for charcoal burning or even poaching wildlife in Zambezi National Park to feed their families. Local deforestation was drying out the land and making farming even harder. "When you cut trees, it means it will not rain for your area," Edson says. "We have to keep trees."

Since 2012, the Lower Zambezi REDD+ Project (LZRP) has protected more than 20 million trees across 40,126 hectares near Edson's farm. Not only has this served as an important buffer zone for elephants, lions, sable, roan antelope and other wildlife in Lower Zambezi National Park, but it has

created a source of income for farmers to adopt more sustainable agriculture and for local communities to fund development projects. By calculating the amount of carbon removed from the atmosphere by the forest in the project area, LZRP can sell carbon credits to corporations seeking to mitigate their unabated greenhouse gas emissions. "We've been able to ensure that this area is protected and local communities are seeing the benefits," says Solomon Kazadi, LZRP's project coordinator. "We provide alternative livelihoods and invest in the development of rural communities, and those are reasons for people not to go and poach or cut down trees."

Biocarbon Partners (BCP), a mission-driven social and conservation enterprise, started LZRP in 2012 as Zambia's first REDD+ project. The project is being implemented on a piece of private land known as Rufunsa Conservancy whose owner lacked the financial capacity to hire scouts to stop poaching and deforestation. BCP negotiated with the landowners to include more than 7,000 people from the surrounding community in Bunda Bunda Chiefdom as stakeholders in the project. These communities receive income from the sale of carbon credits and decide—through an inclusive, transparent, and community-wide process—how to spend their share of the revenue.



Phiri Edson,  
Farmer,  
Zambia

**When you cut trees, it means it will not rain for your area. We have to keep trees.**



**129%  
growth**

in average household income between 2012 – 2022



**692  
beehives**

hung for sustainable honey production

**20,624,764  
trees  
estimated to  
be protected**



**31 Lead  
Farmers**

have trained in conservation farming and taught these practices to 691 follower farmers

**Follow the  
progress**





Solomon Kazadi,  
Project Coordinator,  
LZRP

**We provide alternative livelihoods and invest in the development of rural communities, and those are reasons for people not to go and poach or cut down trees.**

LZRP has used some of the revenue to hire 34 scouts from local communities to patrol the conservancy to monitor wildlife and detect illegal activities. It has also used project revenue to train small-scale farmers in conservation farming. Not only do traditional tillage practices in Zambia fail to provide household food security, but they also deplete soil nutrients by increasing erosion and run-off—causing many farmers to chop down forest for new fields after just a few years. Conservation-farming practices enable farmers to increase water capture and retention; optimize seeding and input regimens; and finish land preparation prior to the first planting.

These practices have boosted productivity on existing fields and reduced the need to clear new land. With conservation farming, yields of maize have tripled, for example. “Now I am growing more food than before,” Edson says. He has become one of 31 “lead farmers” for LZRP, who help other farmers in the region adopt sustainable practices, improve their yields and access project resources. “They stopped cutting trees, because we are teaching them,” he says.

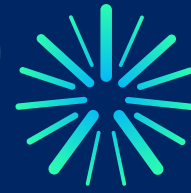
Edson’s community has also used revenue from the project to purchase a hammer mill, so local farmers can turn their maize to flour and sell it at the market at a higher price. Other communities have used project income to sink boreholes for water, hire teachers and build health clinics. LZRP has purchased nearly 700 beehives for local honey producers. In 2021, LZRP paid more than \$125,000 to communities in the Bunda Bunda Chiefdom. Since the project’s start, the annual incomes of local households have grown by more than 50 percent.



Solomon Kazadi,  
Project Coordinator,  
LZRP

**LZRP showed that REDD+ can work in Africa.**

Over the past few years, BCP has built on LZRP’s success to become the largest REDD+ project developer in Africa. In 2018, it started [the Luangwa Community Forests Project](#). This project protects nearly 1 million hectares on the other side of Lower Zambezi National Park with funding through REDD+. This larger project would never have been possible if LZRP hadn’t first succeeded. “LZRP showed that REDD+ can work in Africa,” Kazadi says.



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## About the NCS Alliance

The NCS Alliance (NCSA) conveys the voice of businesses, NGOs and solution providers on the need to mobilize a high integrity demand for high quality Natural Climate Solutions (NCS). The Alliance focuses on identifying opportunities and barriers to investment in the NCS voluntary carbon market and serves as a forum for knowledge sharing and technical capacity building to ensure natural climate solutions reach their full potential in abating climate change, while also tackling nature loss and socio-economic issues. NCS in Action was established to showcase how NCS are making a real difference in the world today.

For more information visit [www.naturalclimatesolutionsalliance.org](http://www.naturalclimatesolutionsalliance.org) and follow us on [LinkedIn](#).



## Statement of Acknowledgment

The NCS in Action are testimonials designed to highlight the benefits for people and nature associated with NCS projects and programs financed through the voluntary carbon market. The NCS Alliance strongly believes that the voluntary carbon market is necessary for financing NCS projects and programs. It is critical however that it rests on the integrity of the climate benefits, i.e. the ability of credits to truly represent real and verifiable carbon reductions.

The NCS Alliance recognizes the importance of staying up-to-date with the latest science and best practices as carbon-crediting programs evolve. We acknowledge that there have been challenges with certain methodologies and that improvements have not always been made as quickly as necessary. However, we believe that this is a valuable learning-by-doing process and that scaling up NCS is crucial in achieving global 1.5C goals. In support of this, the NCS Alliance will continue to highlight projects and programs in this space while also advocating for consistent improvement in standards and methodologies. For more information about how and when these methodologies are updated see [Verra](#), [Plan Vivo](#), [ACR](#), [ART](#).

NCS in Action is made possible with generous funding support from the We Mean Business Coalition.

## Disclaimer

Inclusion of an NCS project or program in the NCS in Action program does not imply a recommendation to purchase, trade or retire credits associated with the project or program.

The NCS Alliance and its members take no responsibility for the purchase, trade or retirement of credits from these projects and programs. Instead, it recommends that individuals, companies and other organisations procuring credits as part of their climate strategies conduct their own independent due diligence to validate the quality and environmental integrity of their purchases.

The NCS Alliance secretariat in no way benefits financially or by other means from the selection.

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