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PROGRAMME

CSR Policy

SUMMARY

Our CSR policy outlines our commitment to ecosystem restoration, robust stakeholder engagement, and transparent reporting. It details our current initiatives following the SDGs framework. The policy also covers our future CSR endeavours, explaining the objective and timeline for each project.



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Introduction

At ERS, our dedication to social and environmental considerations goes beyond mere obligations. Our decisions are rooted in our commitment to create positive change, a belief we see as integral to our business's enduring profitability and success.

Since April 2023, ERS has been recognised as an “Entreprise à mission,” a French legal status given to companies that publicly state their missions and one or more social and environmental objectives.

Our primary legal objective is “to empower people and organisations to restore the natural world”. To do so, we have set five (5) objectives that will shape our actions in the coming years:

1. Restore the health and function of natural ecosystems by certifying restoration projects;
2. Regenerate natural carbon sinks;
3. Restore and protect local biodiversity, including biodiversity hotspots;
4. Improve the living conditions of local communities and conserve their heritage and ancestral knowledge; and
5. Promote direct investment from carbon markets towards restoration projects.

Our commitment is visible in our Standard and its three pillars: Ecological Recovery, Carbon, and Livelihoods. By taking a holistic approach, we ensure that the projects we endorse combat climate change, champion biodiversity, and uplift local communities.



Commitment *Statement*

At ERS, we are on a mission to empower individuals and organisations to restore the natural world. By 2030, our goal is to contribute to the restoration of 1% of our planet. Our efforts focus on the health of the natural environment, the conservation of diverse and vibrant species, and the well-being of local communities thriving within these ecosystems.

Our actions and internal policies must reflect this ambition. Our CSR policy is a crucial step in this direction, anchoring our commitment to “be the change we want to see.” Looking to the future, we aim for B-Corp certification, further solidifying our pledge to be a force for good in the world. And to hold ourselves accountable, we publicly report our progress through an annual CSR report.

Thibault Sorret – CEO at ERS – Ecosystem Restoration Standard



Current **CSR** Initiatives

To systematically address significant global challenges, we have aligned our CSR initiatives with the SDGs framework, a globally recognised set of guidelines established by the United Nations. Using the SDGs, we can clearly demonstrate to our stakeholders where our efforts are concentrated, ensuring we work towards universally accepted sustainability goals.

SDG 8: DECENT WORK

1. Monitor employee satisfaction

Description

We actively seek to understand our employees' well-being. To gain a comprehensive view, we conduct two employee satisfaction surveys annually, exploring various facets of their work-life within our company. The feedback gathered is used to develop bi-annual employee satisfaction action plans.

Impacts

Our commitment goes beyond merely collecting feedback. After these surveys, we share our action plan bi-annually, emphasising key actions and upcoming projects derived from the feedback. We aim high, targeting an eNPS (employee net promoter score) of over eighty (80), even though a score above thirty (30) is considered "excellent." These surveys cover critical areas, including overall happiness, communication effectiveness, relationships with colleagues, personal growth opportunities, recognition, and compensation benefits. Ensuring anonymity in these surveys is vital, as we want our employees to share their genuine feelings without reservations.



2. Financial & Operational Performance Transparency

Description

After fundraising, our investors requested monthly and quarterly financial and operational reports. Embracing a culture of transparency, we proactively decided to make these reports available to all our employees.

Impacts

By sharing these detailed insights, we empower our team to have a comprehensive understanding of the company's current standings and activities. This not only nurtures trust but also promotes a sense of ownership and involvement. Employees can see the bigger picture, understand our financial health, and feel more connected to the company's overarching goals and challenges.

3. Healthcare coverage

Description

We have implemented enhanced healthcare coverage for our France-based employees by providing private supplementary insurance that extends beyond standard coverage to include additional healthcare expenses.

Impacts

Our team now has access to enhanced medical care with the comfort of knowing they have coverage that extends to 400% of the social security basis for general healthcare and hospital fees. We also recognise the value of alternative treatments, providing up to five annual reimbursements for alternative medicine. Due to our high coverage rates, optical and dental expenses, which often come with hefty price tags, are now more affordable for our employees.



4. Regular employee reviewing process

Description

We have established a regular employee review process to improve communication and personal development within our teams. In addition to weekly one-on-one meetings, this includes quarterly performance reviews between team members and their managers and bi-annual one-on-one meetings with the HR team to ensure continuous dialogue.

Impacts

These quarterly and bi-annual one-on-one sessions are not just about work; they allow team members to discuss their feelings, job satisfaction, and any recognition they might need. Managers also use this time to acknowledge achievements and dive deeper into performance metrics, future objectives, feedback sharing, and career planning. The aim is simple: to nurture a culture where both employees and managers can grow together through a continuous exchange of feedback.

5. Employees well-being

Description

Our organisational policies are designed to prioritise the well-being of our employees. Central to this commitment is the assurance of our employees' right to disconnect, safeguarding their work-life balance and mental health. By providing dedicated time off and fostering a culture that respects personal boundaries, we aim to cultivate a supportive and nurturing work environment where employees can thrive both personally and professionally.

Impacts

The implementation of the right-to-disconnect policy has had a profound impact on our organisational culture. This policy helped our employees feel more empowered



to manage their workload effectively. Moreover, by promoting a healthy work-life balance, we hope

SDG 10: REDUCED INEQUALITIES

1. Livelihoods pillar

Description

At the heart of our mission to restore ecosystems is the belief that communities are essential for achieving sustainable ecological restoration. Therefore, we have developed a standard that emphasises community engagement, socio-economic upliftment, and the preservation of cultural heritage.

Impacts

Livelihoods are one of our Standard's three key pillars, requiring ERS-certified projects to positively impact local communities. Some of the expected positive impacts include:

- **Empowerment, Well-Being, and Equity:** Certified projects are designed to reduce community vulnerability, making them more resilient to extreme weather, natural disasters, social conflicts, and economic uncertainties.
- **Employment & Fair Wages:** Ensuring the health and safety of project workers is essential. We also require that all workers receive fair compensation in line with the nation's living wage standards wherever applicable.
- **Preserving Cultural Heritage & Traditional Knowledge:** Developers must collaborate with communities to protect and promote cultural heritage and traditional knowledge, while ensuring fair compensation for its sharing.
- **Benefit Sharing:** Profits from the sale of Restoration Units are shared among community members, with clear documentation of disbursement included in the annual reports submitted by project developers.



For a comprehensive overview of all Livelihoods requirements, please consult the Livelihoods section of our [Methodology for Terrestrial Forest Restoration](#).

2. Empowering diversity in recruitment

Description

Our organisational policies are dedicated to fostering diversity and inclusion at every level of our company. Through the integration of inclusive hiring practices and the establishment of diversity initiatives, we strive to create a workforce that celebrates the wide variety of our society. By actively recruiting talent from diverse backgrounds and providing equal opportunities for career advancement, we aim to build a culture of inclusivity where every voice is heard and valued.

Impact

By offering equal opportunities for career advancement to all employees, regardless of background or identity, we have created a more equitable workplace where everyone has the chance to succeed based on their merits, fostering a culture of trust and collaboration.

SDG 13: Climate Action

1. “Entreprise à mission” Status:

Description

We have embraced the “entreprise à mission” status, a specialised French legal designation for companies dedicated to environmental or societal objectives integrated into their legal statutes.

Impact



Bearing the "entreprise à mission" status entails profound responsibility and oversight:

- **Mission Committee Oversight:** Our mission and objectives are meticulously overseen by a dedicated committee. Comprising both internal team members and external advisors, this committee ensures the unwavering commitment to our mission.
- **Transparent Reporting:** Transparency is fundamental. Every six months, the committee delivers a comprehensive report detailing our progress towards our mission and objectives. This report is disseminated to our board, fostering transparency and accountability.
- **Thorough Independent Audits:** In demonstrating our commitment to genuine impact and transparency, our mission and objectives undergo rigorous audits biennially. These audits, conducted by impartial third parties, provide an unbiased assessment of our effort.

2. Carbon footprint calculation

Description

To hold ourselves accountable in the fight against climate change, we annually calculate our company's carbon footprint, thoroughly examining scopes 1, 2, and 3 of our emissions.

Impact

- **Comprehensive Assessment:** Our calculation is thorough, relying on multiple data sources including our File of Accounting Entries (FEC), employee consultations, and specific physical data for key areas.
- **Progress Tracking:** We do not just measure; we compare and analyse. By tracking our emissions per employee and per hectare certified, we gain insights into our performance trends and areas for improvement.
- **Transparency:** We believe in being open about our environmental impact. Our carbon footprint is shared with all our employees, and we are contemplating



the idea of disclosing this information to the public annually, showcasing our commitment to transparency and responsibility.

You can access our 2022 carbon footprint [by clicking here](#).

3. Purchasing policy

Description

Our commitment to the environment extends to our purchasing decisions. We have established a purchasing policy that not only favours eco-friendly products but also emphasises ethical practices in vendor relationships.

Impact

- **Eco-friendly Selection:** Every purchase we make undergoes scrutiny for its environmental impact. Our aim is always to lean towards the option with the least ecological harm.
- **Promoting Refurbished Products:** When quality is not compromised, we encourage the purchase of refurbished items, further reducing environmental waste.
- **No Conflict of Interest:** Integrity in our business dealings is essential. ERS ensures due diligence in vendor relationships, guaranteeing that no conflicts of interest exist. Should any arise, our FLA Department is promptly informed to assess and guide the next steps.
- **Promoting Diversity:** ERS is dedicated to promoting a diverse range of suppliers. This means actively seeking partnerships with Small Businesses (SBE), Small Disadvantaged Businesses (SDM), Women-owned Businesses (WBE), and Minority-owned Businesses (MBE). Our approach transcends simple procurement; we are dedicated to empowering communities and championing inclusivity within our business ecosystem.



4. Travel policy

Description

Mindful of the environmental impact of transportation, we have instituted a travel policy that champions sustainable modes of transport, prioritising their utilisation over more polluting alternatives.

Impact

- **Promotion of Train and Public Transport:** Recognising the lower carbon footprint of trains and public transport, we advocate for their usage over cars and planes whenever feasible
- **Strict Reimbursement Rules:** Our commitment is not just in words; it is reflected in our actions and fiscal planning. We have established unequivocal guidelines: reimbursements for plane and car journeys are contingent upon the unavailability of more eco-friendly options, such as trains. This approach not only mitigates our environmental footprint but also fosters an environmentally conscious ethos within our team.

5. Reduction of in-person meetings

Description

Embracing the advantages of technology and acknowledging the environmental impact of travel, our company has pivoted towards a remote-working model, drastically reducing the need for in-person meetings.

Impacts

- **Virtual Meetings:** With our team dispersed globally, virtual meeting technology has become our primary mode of communication. Employees are encouraged to opt for this environmentally friendly alternative, thereby diminishing our carbon footprint from travel.



- **Fewer Seminars:** Recognizing the environmental consequences of in-person meetings, we have halved the number of in-person seminars from four (4) to two (2) annually.
- **Going Fully Remote:** As a testament to our dedication, we proudly operate as a fully remote company. This decision not only conserves resources but also champions a flexible and modern work culture.

SDG 15: Life on land

1. Ecosystem restoration pillar

Description

One of our Standard's core three pillars is Ecological Recovery. Our objective is to ensure that the ecosystem restoration projects we certify must have tangible positive impacts on biodiversity.

Impacts

- **Ecosystem Restoration:** Our certified projects are required to focus on revitalising natural areas, making them healthy and lively again.
- **Ecosystem Services:** Certified projects must prioritise the conservation of water sources, maintenance of soil health, and preservation of forests to support their local ecosystems, including animals and plants, whenever feasible.
- **Habitat Provision:** Projects must strive to enhance and expand habitats where native species can flourish.
- **Genetic Diversity:** Diversity is key. Certified projects must ensure promoting a healthy mix of plant and animal life to maintain the ecosystem's equilibrium and resilience.
- **Connectivity and Buffer Zones:** Projects we certify should prioritise the establishment of diverse natural areas and corridors to facilitate connectivity between ecosystems. For ecosystems at risk, creating protective areas is a priority.



- **Adaptation and Resilience:** With the increasing impact of global warming, projects must select plant species that can adapt and withstand environmental challenges over time.

This list is non-exhaustive. To review all requirements for restoration projects, please refer to the “Ecological Restoration” section of our [Programme](#).

SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

1. Code of Ethics

Description

As part of our Standard document, we have implemented a Code of Ethics to ensure that all ERS employees understand our expectations for their conduct and decision-making.

Impacts

- **Guidance:** The code provides our team with clear guidelines on handling various situations that may arise, aiming to enable them to conduct business with integrity and in compliance with ethical and legal standards.
- **Knowledge Check:** To ensure a thorough understanding of our Code of Ethics, all team members are required to complete a test on the Code. A minimum score of 70% is required to pass.
- **Accountability:** Non-compliance with the code may result in consequences, including disciplinary actions and up to legal steps.

2. Anti-Corruption training

Description

We have initiated a training program focused on anti-corruption, demonstrating our commitment to uphold integrity, transparency, and compliance in every aspect of our business.



Impacts

- **Informed Decisions:** This training provides our team with valuable insights into identifying and preventing fraud.
- **Best Practices:** The course educates and equips our employees with the best methods for handling potential corruption issues related to ERS activities.
- **Mandatory Learning:** Participation is compulsory for all ERS employees. They must complete the training and achieve a minimum score of 80% to ensure a solid understanding of the key points.



Future **CSR** Endeavours

Key Metrics

1. Objective

As our company continues to grow and evolve, we must measure our impact in a consistent and meaningful way. To achieve this, we are in the process of identifying a comprehensive list of internal and external key metrics to track on an annual basis. These metrics will encompass areas such as our carbon footprint, workforce diversity, pay equity, employee satisfaction, and the amount of degraded land reforested. By establishing and tracking these benchmarks, we aim to gain a clearer picture of our progress, challenges, and areas of opportunity in relation to our CSR goals.

2. Timeline

- Our CSR team is currently curating potential metrics for evaluation.
- By the end of Q3 2024, our Mission committee will convene to finalise and endorse the chosen metrics.
- By the end of Q3 2024, we will release our inaugural CSR report detailing our 2023 baseline data for the selected metrics. This report will serve as a foundation for future assessments and progress tracking.

Involve Our Investors

1. Objective

To ensure that our strategic decisions are deeply informed and influenced by our CSR efforts, we aim to involve our lead investors in CSR-related matters. The main goal is to provide them with a comprehensive understanding of our current position and help them validate and guide our objectives.



2. Timeline

- By the end of Q3 2024, our CSR report will be prepared, encapsulating our key metrics, recent initiatives, and future objectives.
- This report will be disseminated to our investors for a comprehensive evaluation.
- Post-review, the investors will validate and offer insights on the objectives proposed by the CSR team for the subsequent year.

Achieve B-Corp Certification

1. Objective

We are pursuing the prestigious B-Corp certification to further affirm our commitment to equitable and sustainable business practices. This certification aligns perfectly with ERS values, such as fostering economic inclusivity and ensuring our business benefits all stakeholders. We view this as an essential step, not only to endorse our internal efforts to uphold employee welfare but also as a testament to our transparent and equitable approach to enabling externally large-scale ecosystem restoration.

2. Timeline

- Assessment submission: 30th November 2023.
- The review and audit phase spanned between Q4 2023 and Q2 2024.
- This first try was unsuccessful due to a lack of operational data at the end of 2023.
- New application with updated operational data during the first semester of 2025.



Build a pathway toward Net Zero

1. Objective

As a certification body in the carbon markets, we play a key role in enabling companies to achieve their net zero objectives. We should also strive to implement a similar pathway for ourselves.

As a young, fast-growing company, we still need more data and perspective to set a Net Zero target. However, it is essential to work towards establishing a science-based Net Zero target in the medium term while committing to monitoring and minimising our impact now. Specifically, we will:

- Monitor our direct and indirect emissions (scope 1, 2, and 3) on a yearly basis.
- Reduce or minimise the increase of our direct and indirect emissions (scope 1, 2, and 3) in a context of growth.
- Commit to contributing to global carbon sinks by financing restoration projects that result in carbon removal equal to or greater than our yearly emissions now and retroactively since the start of ERS.

2. Timeline

- By the end of Q3 2024, we will assess and disclose our 2023 direct and indirect emissions (scope 1, 2, and 3).
- By the end of Q4 2024, we will have developed a plan in place to minimise the increase of our direct and indirect emissions in a context of growth.
- By December 31, 2025, we will contribute to global carbon sinks that result in carbon removal equal to or greater than our emissions from the start of ERS to December 2025.
- By December 31, 2026, we will have formulated a plan toward net-zero emissions in line with the decarbonisation trajectories set by the Paris Agreement.



Stakeholder *Engagement*

At ERS, stakeholder engagement is paramount to our corporate social responsibility (CSR) approach. Our employees play an essential role in what we call "Comité d'entreprise à mission," a dedicated committee overseeing our commitment to outlined objectives in our statutes. They are entrusted with producing bi-annual reports, ensuring transparency and accountability.

Additionally, our employees actively contribute to our environmental commitments by annually participating in calculating our carbon footprint. They stay informed of our progress through our annual CSR report, strengthening their engagement in our mission. Moreover, they undergo training to equip them with the tools to combat corruption and ensure operational integrity.

On the investor front, we prioritise transparency by committing to deliver a comprehensive annual CSR report, starting in 2025, within six months following each calendar year's end. This report must be publicly available on our website.

Finally, project developers certified by our Standard are mandated to actively promote biodiversity, enhance carbon capture, and improve local community quality of life. We've established an open email address and dedicated WhatsApp number for associated communities to voice grievances or concerns, ensuring their perspectives are heard and addressed.



Measurement & *Reporting*

At ERS, we support robust reporting and monitoring to uphold transparency and demonstrate our commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility goals. Starting in 2025, our mission committee will conduct thorough follow-ups every six months to assess ongoing activities and progress. Following this biannual assessment, the committee must meticulously review findings from the CSR team, compiling a concise report promptly shared with our board for further insights and direction.

In addition to these biannual checks, ERS will prepare an annual CSR report during the first two quarters of each year. This report must offer an in-depth analysis of key metrics, review actions over the previous twelve (12) months, and outline objectives for the upcoming year. Disseminated to employees, investors, and board members, it will ensure that all stakeholders are well-informed about our ongoing CSR endeavours.

Furthermore, an independent third-party auditor must conduct a comprehensive audit every two years to maintain alignment with our mission and objectives outlined in our statutes, with the first slated for 2025. This rigorous external review ensures our actions remain consistent with promises and transparent to all stakeholders.