



30.10.03 Swiss Re goes carbon-neutral over 10 years (Point Carbon)

Swiss Re announced today that it plans to become carbon-neutral over the next ten years. The company aims to do so by reducing its own emissions and by investing in a World Bank carbon fund.

The financial services group aims to reduce its emissions by 15% over the next ten years, for example by improving efficiency in its buildings and cutting flights that employees take, Chris Walker, who heads Swiss Re's Greenhouse Gas Risk Solutions team said.

The remaining 85% will be offset by investing US\$2.5m in the World Bank's Community Development Carbon Fund (CDCF). Through this investment, Swiss Re expects to offset a minimum of 37,000 tonnes of CO₂ per annum in emission reduction units (ERUs). This would mean paying a price of US\$6.76 per tonne of CO₂.

At the moment Swiss Re emits approximately 47,000 tonnes of CO₂ per annum, it said. The emissions are split between electricity use (44%), combustion of heating fuels (13%) and business travel (43%).

Swiss Re did not have a figure for the climate risk that the company faces, but Walker said: "As reinsurers we have to look ahead of the game and we see climate change as a threat. The concern with climate change is that it will cross business lines. From a life insurance point of view, it will change mortality rates. Disease factors change – we have a disease in North America we have never seen before, in Western Nile Fever. We also have droughts and flooding in Europe for example. While we can't link all these to climate change, the concern is that they all add up."

Last updated: 30.10.03