In the age of climate crisis, initiatives to offset carbon emissions and contribute to a healthier planet are proliferating. Without credible data, verifying the claimed environmental benefits is a challenge. Groundtruth data collection enables organisations to accurately validate success, engage community members, and optimise impact.

Akvo’s proven approach
Akvo’s approach ensures organisations get the highest quality data that is standardised globally, with the potential to scale.

1. Understand the data sources
   - What data needs to be verified

2. Define the model
   - Measuring: what, when, how, frequency, standard

3. Select area(s) to monitor
   - From global to local, and back

4. Train local enumerators
   - Partner team or external people

5. Data collection
   - The campaign itself; people go into the field

6. Quality check & assurance
   - Monitor and check data to continuously improve and optimise performance

7. Validate and calibrate
   - Once ‘done right’, the model itself can now be validated and calibrated

8. Scale
   - Scale up to other regions and contexts
Why Akvo

Local presence and global scale
For groundtruthing to be logistically feasible and sustainable, as well as contextually relevant, it’s important to have enumerators on the ground who can collaborate with local actors. We have local teams on five continents and operate on a global scale.

Data and sector knowledge
The actors collecting the data must understand the models behind the remote data collection technologies as well as the sector in which they are operating. We have over 15 years of experience in data as well as expert leads with 10+ years of sector experience in water, agriculture, and climate.

Data standardisation and sharing
Ensuring that groundtruth data is collected and recorded consistently is essential for accurate validation. We provide standardised protocols and comprehensive training in order to ensure accuracy and allow scalability.

A proven approach
We have piloted our ground truthing methods in numerous contexts and countries, and we know what works. We combine data and sector expertise, work with local experts to validate our assumptions, and the scale of our operations around the globe enables us to iterate and learn as we go.

Groundtruth data collection at scale with Rabobank’s Acorn

Challenge
Acorn uses financial incentives to encourage agroforestry, a farming practice in which carbon is removed from the atmosphere. To properly assess tree growth and the sequestered carbon, Acorn needs ground truth inputs from local partners. The ground truth process can be time and labor-intensive.

Solution
Akvo is responsible for implementing the ground truth data collection. We train and supervise the data collectors, and monitor data quality to ensure the timely and high-quality collection of ground truth data globally.

Impact
Through this work, Acorn can achieve high accuracy and reliability in estimating tree biomass from satellite imagery. By outsourcing the data collection work to Akvo, Acorn can make reliable claims and informed decisions, leading to the development of sustainable practices in agriculture and forestry.

Our partners

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