

CASE STUDY

Inclusive by Design



Company Name

Ecosia

Category

Ethical Search Engine & Tech-for-Good Platform

Location

Berlin, German

Website

<https://www.ecosia.org>

Ecosia is the world's first **non-profit search engine** that uses 100% of its profits to plant trees and restore ecosystems. Beyond its environmental mission, Ecosia embeds **inclusive design, digital accessibility, and diversity** into its core operations, proving that **tech can be a democratizing force for climate action.**

The company's ethos: *"Search the web, grow trees, and leave no one behind."*

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Accessible Digital Product Design

Screen-Reader Optimization: Ecosia's search interface is WCAG 2.1 compliant, with alt-text for all visuals and keyboard navigation for motor-impaired users.

Low-Bandwidth Mode: Lightweight version for users in developing regions with slow internet (e.g., rural Kenya).

Multilingual Support: Available in 56 languages, including Indigenous languages like Māori and Sami, with dialect-sensitive results.

Diverse Team & Equitable Hiring

Refugee Tech Apprenticeships: Partners with **ReDI School of Digital Integration** to train refugees in coding and hire them as engineers.

Gender Parity: 50% of leadership roles are held by women, and the company publishes annual diversity reports.

Neurodiversity-Friendly Workplace: Offers flexible schedules, quiet workspaces, and specialized tools for autistic employees.



Search the web to plant trees...



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Community-Led Reforestation

Indigenous Partnerships: 60% of tree-planting projects are co-designed with Indigenous communities (e.g., Brazil's Kayapó people), ensuring land sovereignty and cultural preservation.

Local Employment: Hires women and marginalized groups as tree-planting coordinators in Burkina Faso, Indonesia, and Peru.

Transparent Impact: Publishes monthly financial reports and satellite imagery of reforested areas, with data disaggregated by community demographics.

Ethical Tech Advocacy

Algorithmic Justice: Ecosia's search algorithm prioritizes eco-friendly businesses and downranks climate misinformation.

Privacy by Default: No user tracking or personalized ads—a deliberate choice to protect vulnerable populations (e.g., activists in authoritarian regimes).

Open-Source Tools: Shares its carbon-negative server code publicly to help other tech companies decarbonize.





If you're not willing to risk everything, you're not entitled to anything.

Richard Branson

Challenges

Market Dominance of Google: Competing with tech giants that have unlimited ad budgets.

Balancing Growth & Mission: Scaling while maintaining non-profit integrity and inclusive practices.

Cultural Localization: Ensuring search results respect regional sensitivities (e.g., LGBTQ+ content in conservative regions).

Opportunities:

Voice Search for Illiterate Users: Developing audio-based search in partnership with literacy NGOs.

Global Digital Literacy Programs: Teaching underserved communities to use Ecosia as an empowerment tool.

Green Tech Incubator: Funding diverse founders building climate solutions with open-source Ecosia tools.

