

Why should you care about forests?

Corporate FAQ



FORESTS FOR CLIMATE

AUGUST 2022

01 Why are forests important?

Forests are essential, not only to our livelihoods – almost 1.6 billion people depend on forests for food, water, wood and employment – but also to our ecosystems as they sequester carbon, regulate our climate, act as flood barrier, recharge groundwater, protect biodiversity and so much more.



Forests play a central role in the changing climate. They are both a solution and a cause, absorbing greenhouse gas emissions when protected and restored, releasing it when cut down or degraded. Because of the critical role of forests, reducing forest loss while also restoring and conserving forests is key to tackle climate change. It is that simple. But it needs to happen at a large scale right now.

02 Why are they in danger?

Agriculture, forestry and other land use are currently responsible for a quarter of global emissions, with deforestation alone contributing to half of these emissions. Today tropical deforestation and forest degradation through agricultural expansion, conversion to pastureland, destructive logging, forest fires, etc. accounts for 11 percent of total global greenhouse gas emissions (4.8 billion tons), larger than all global transportation.

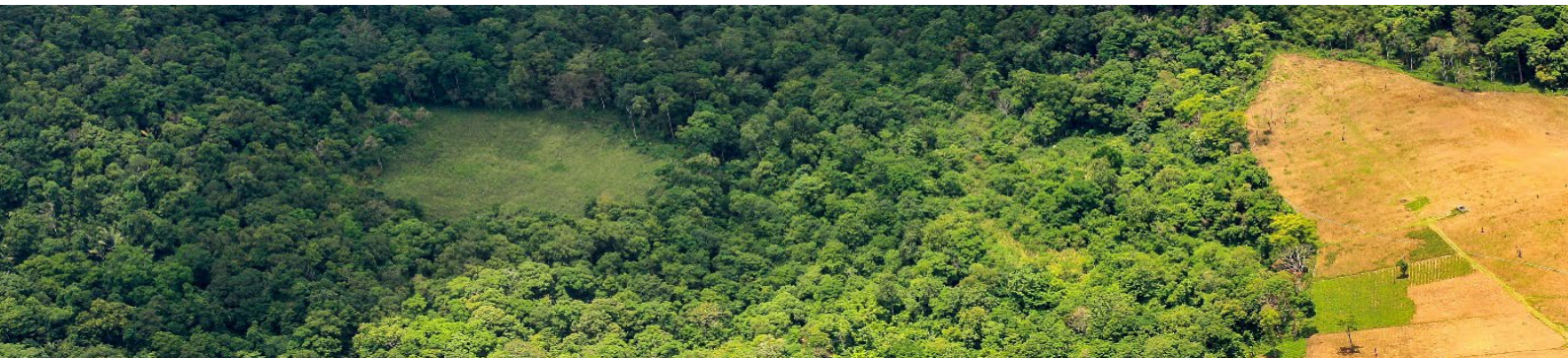
03 Why we need to stop deforestation

Halting and reversing deforestation could deliver up to 30 percent of the climate solution, making forests one of the most cost-effective and immediate solutions to curb climate change, protect invaluable biodiversity, while sustaining livelihoods. Targeting tropical and sub-tropical forests is particularly effective as they store more carbon, regenerate faster and often hold irrecoverable carbon¹. Therefore, we urgently need to conserve and restore our forests and to do it at a large-scale. Scaling-up forestry projects is key to sustaining livelihoods and tackling climate change and REDD+, a UN-led programme, is doing just that through its jurisdictional approach.

04 What is REDD+ and how can it help reduce deforestation?

REDD+ is defined as “reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries, and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks”. REDD+ aims to value the carbon stored in forests by creating incentives for developing countries to protect their environment. Put simply, forests today are economically worth more cut down and cleared, the best way to stop deforestation is to make forests more valuable standing than cleared.

Building on its longstanding experience, the attention is now turned from project-level to jurisdiction-wide programmes – JREDD+ – as they offer the opportunity to scale-up to cover an entire country, state or region and maximize both carbon sequestration and benefits for livelihoods and the entire forest ecosystem.



¹ “Irrecoverable carbon” refers to the vast stores of carbon in nature that are vulnerable to release from human activity and, if lost, could not be restored by 2050 — when the world must reach net-zero emissions to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. Conservation International.

05 Why do we need to large scale forest conservation programmes?

Scaling-up forest conservation programme to a jurisdiction level has numerous advantages in comparison to small-scale forest projects².

- Governments have the authority to decide and enforce law for the land-use in its jurisdiction. By providing a financial incentive among other benefits of protecting forests, JREDD+ programme encourage governments to take action and to support forest protection and sustainable land use.
- A jurisdictional approach can achieve greater cost-effective emissions reductions and potentially removals. Many risks are reduced with large-scale programmes, such as leakage as the entire jurisdiction is covered, reversals as it is less likely for a jurisdiction to be entirely damaged unexpectedly or also indigenous rights as they can be advanced at a jurisdictional level in addition to be protected by safeguards.
- Large scale forest protection programmes offer the opportunity for companies to encourage change in an entire jurisdiction, ensuring long-term impact. By signalling a demand from corporates towards jurisdictional credits, companies are playing an important role in unlocking the potential of JREDD+ and accelerating its development.

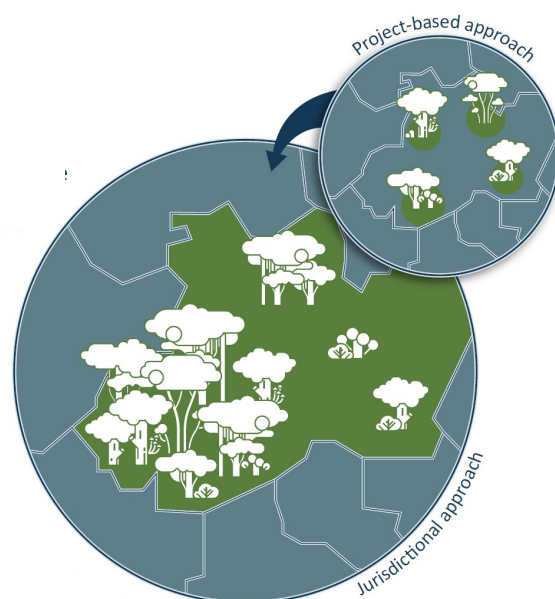


Figure 1 - LEAF Coalition, The deforestation factor, 2022

06 What is the GHG mitigation potential of JREDD+?

Forest loss and degradation contributes to GHG emissions and thus, climate change. Tropical forest loss generates almost 5 GtCO₂ e every year. However, forests are also valuable and natural carbon sinks. Around the world, forests absorb around 7.6 billion tonnes of CO₂e per year, which represents 50% more CO₂e than the US annual emissions. Therefore, conserving forests is a cost-effective, natural emission to reduce GHG in atmosphere and increase climate resiliency. Moreover, forests bring many other essential benefits to biodiversity and nature services that we depend on for our economies.

🗨️ Would like to know more?

Read our whitepaper **Scaling up Forest Conservation to Reach Net Zero**
Contact Forests for Climate

Email: forests4climate@weforum.org

Website: <https://www.weforum.org/forests-for-climate/home>

² <https://www.wri.org/insights/insider-4-reasons-why-jurisdictional-approach-redd-crediting-superior-project-based>