

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## The Forest Declaration Assessment Partners have said it before:

A radical transformation of development pathways, finance flows, and governance effectiveness and enforcement is required to shift the world's trajectory to achieve the 2030 forest goals. Global economic models must be re-structured to value forests for the benefits that they provide over the long term, rather than for the superficial and short-term gain that comes with clearing them.

The first step toward progress on shifting the global forest trajectory is to clearly understand the problem and the efficacy of efforts already underway—which requires data. **The Forest Declaration Assessment Partners therefore urge the signatories of the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration, as well as other pledgers, to shine the spotlight on themselves.** They must ensure full transparency on the implementation of commitments, so that progress can be tracked and pledgers held accountable. Endorsers and signatories to forest commitments must set clear interim milestones and publicly available strategies to align their economic and development priorities with forests. The Partners also urge governments and companies to invest in data collection and actively report on restoration, forest regrowth, and forest degradation data, which is significantly lacking, making it difficult to track progress towards 2030 forest goals. Without data and transparency, progress will remain difficult—and pledgers will not be held accountable for their promises.

### KEY:



Public sector recommendations



Private sector recommendations



Grassroots recommendations

## Sustainable production & development



**The Forest Declaration Assessment Partners call on governments to re-define “business-as-usual” for forests.** The world cannot

sustain its “business-as-usual” exploitation and destruction of forests. Economic systems that rely on extraction and consumption of natural resources have already destabilized six of the nine planetary boundaries that comprise the Earth's life support system, including the boundary for land use.<sup>1</sup> Without a widespread, transformative embrace of alternative development models, the world will not meet its ambitious goals for sustainable development, climate, and nature.

**Governments must build a regulatory and fiscal environment that mandates and incentivizes the protection, sustainable management, and restoration of forests and ecosystems.** Governments should adopt and enforce stronger mandates for corporate action, disclosure, and accountability.

- Resources: [CDP's Principles for High Quality Mandatory Disclosure](#)

**Governments must ensure their forest governance and regulations are ambitious, science-based, and rights-based.** It is not enough to address forest risks at the margins; forest protection and sustainable use interventions must be bold and binding. These could include due diligence regulations, supply chain regulations, mandatory disclosure, moratoria, designation of “no-go” zones, and recognition and respect for Indigenous rights. These mandates should be comprehensive, covering all forest- and conversion-risk commodities, legal and illegal deforestation and degradation, human rights, and Indigenous Peoples' (IPs) and local communities' (LCs) rights.

**Governments must encourage leading private-sector actors to continue their voluntary efforts to pioneer the development and implementation of best practices for deforestation- and conversion-free production and supply chains.** Voluntary and collaborative efforts are essential for developing alternative economic models that recognize the true value of standing forests, as well as for demonstrating the potential and viability of forest-aligned production and economic approaches. Landscape and jurisdictional approaches, for example, can foster innovation while tackling the complexities of achieving sustainable commodity production.



**The Forest Declaration Assessment Partners call on companies to urgently increase the scope and stringency of their efforts** to

eliminate deforestation, ecosystem conversion, and forest degradation and violations of human rights, particularly those of IPs’ and LCs’, from commodity production and trade. Whether voluntary or mandated, corporate actions are essential.

**Companies must support efforts by national and subnational jurisdictions and international bodies to develop holistic approaches to addressing forest and ecosystem loss and degradation.** These include approaches where corporate action is enabled and supported by appropriate legislative and policy frameworks, trade standards, and financial instruments and incentive structures.<sup>3</sup>

**Agricultural companies, forestry companies, and those sourcing from and financing them, should follow the best available guidance for setting goals, taking action and reporting on progress towards removing deforestation, conversion, human rights violations, and degradation from their supply chains.** Where available, they should follow recognized sector- or industry-specific guidelines, and report on their progress and volumes through existing reporting frameworks.

**Sectoral bodies, like trade and commodity associations, should expand the deforestation- and conversion-free movement to include domestic markets and small- and medium enterprises to reach a critical share of market coverage for all forest-risk commodities.** They should also ensure the inclusion of standards addressing forest degradation.

- Resources: [The Accountability Framework](#)

**Extractive companies, and those sourcing from them, should adopt biodiversity commitments and policies that address direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts on forests, other ecosystems, and ecosystem services following the mitigation hierarchy.** Extractive companies should embed the necessary processes and mechanisms in their standard operations to realize these commitments, including systems for monitoring and transparent public reporting. Voluntary sustainability schemes targeting the mining sector should require site operators and downstream purchasers

<sup>3</sup> Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF). (2021). Call to action. October 12, 2022, <https://deforestation-free.panda.org/call-to-action/>.

to assess and manage not just the direct forest and ecosystem impacts of extraction, but the indirect and cumulative impacts as well.

- Resources: [The Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance: Towards Sustainable Mining](#)

**Companies in the agricultural, wood products, and extractives supply chains should also consider opportunities to conduct or invest in activities that support forest and ecosystem conservation and restoration not just within but also beyond their own supply chains.**

These activities can mitigate business risks at landscape or jurisdictional scales, support climate and biodiversity targets beyond the company level, and provide benefits to affected stakeholders.

- Resources: [Forest-Smart Mining guidance for Nature-based Solutions](#)



**The Forest Declaration Assessment Partners call on public, private, and grassroots actors to prioritize pro-active, transparent, and good-faith collaboration** to leverage their relative strengths to reduce commodity-driven deforestation and degradation and work toward sustainable production and development.

## Finance for forests



**The Forest Declaration Assessment Partners call on financial institutions, companies, and governments to put their money where their mouth is.**

Forests still receive negligible funding compared to other global investments, and take low priority in government spending. Public finance committed to activities that have the potential to drive deforestation or forest degradation (“gray” finance) continues to far outweigh finance committed to forest protection (“green” finance). We estimate that between 2010-21, gray public finance flows averaged over USD 46 billion per year, while green flows averaged just USD 2.2 billion per year. Even with recent finance pledges made in the wake of Glasgow Leaders’ Declaration, forest funding is still a drop in the bucket: only an additional USD 4 billion in public and private finance for forests per year

from 2021-27. There is still a yawning gap between current and needed finance for forests. Financial actors must invest in activities that nurture forests, not destroy them; and invest directly in the most effective forest stewards: IP and LCs.



**Governments must prioritize efforts to redirect harmful subsidies and other incentives that drive deforestation and forest degradation.**

They must align fiscal and financial policies with forest goals, and accelerate efforts to shift finance away from harmful activities. Crucially, they must also report on progress. They should prioritize the delivery of finance to high-impact activities, such as the protection and management of high-integrity forests. Public regulatory frameworks can create incentives for driving additional private finance towards these vital ecosystems.

**Governments must recognize IPs and LCs as rights-holders and partners and create new finance mechanisms through processes that are locally led, fully transparent, and culturally-tailored.**

Finance mechanisms should provide IPs and LCs direct access to finance, reduce dependency on donors, have fair benefit-sharing arrangements, and account for both short- and long-term needs.

**Public actors should leverage the power of innovative financing mechanisms—while ensuring just and clear governance of these tools.**

Market- and non-market based finance mechanisms, such as payment for ecosystem service schemes, debt-for-nature swaps, and carbon credits, can accelerate and diversify the delivery of finance to forests. At the same time, governments should develop, adopt, and advocate for governance frameworks that establish harmonized rules for public and private use of, and claims about, forest-based carbon credits that ensure additionality, prevent leakage, and do not undermine ambition toward decarbonization in other sectors.



**Public and private sector actors must use forest-based carbon credits only for the purposes of addressing residual emissions or making additional climate change mitigation contributions, not in place of making direct emission reductions to achieve internal, science-based decarbonization targets.**

Credits should be prioritized by their ability to meet essential social and environmental integrity criteria, and where possible, belong to a larger jurisdictional programme of activities.

- Resources: [Tropical Forest Integrity Guide](#)



**Financial institutions and companies across sectors must recognize and act on the inherent risks presented by deforestation and forest degradation.**

Measures and policies must be put in place to combat these risks, including developing full understanding of institutions' exposure and contribution to climate- and forest-related risks and impacts in the short, medium, and long term. Private sector actors must embed processes for identifying, managing, and mitigating risks into standard operations.

- Resources: [Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures \(TNFD\); CDP Forests; Sustainability due diligence obligations for financial institutions \(Climate & Company, Germanwatch and Rechtsanwältin Günther\); WWF's criteria for credible climate and nature transition plans for financial institutions; WWF's Call to Action to Ensure Transition to a Net Zero and Nature Positive Economy; Deforestation-free Finance: Finance Sector Roadmap; OECD-FAO Business Handbook on Deforestation and Due Diligence in Agricultural Supply Chains](#)

**Financial institutions and companies must implement robust reporting requirements and mechanisms to bring forest risks to light and foster responsible investment.**

For these measures to be truly effective, support and investment for compliance in producer countries is essential, as well as wider adoption of regulations in consumer countries.

- Resources: [WWF's Greening Financial Regulation Initiative](#) and [Sustainable Financial Regulations \(SUSREG\) Framework](#)

## Forest rights & governance



**The Forest Declaration Assessment Partners call on governments to adopt a rights-based, comprehensive, and resilient approach to forest conservation that prioritizes inclusive and participatory governance that endures through political shifts.**

All countries share the responsibility to turn the tide on the unfolding tragedy of lost and degraded forests. Some geographies have demonstrated what it takes to make a difference: Brazil's turn to increased enforcement and the rapid downturn on Amazon deforestation in 2023, for example, or the European Union's striking advancements in both domestic and international forest policy.

**Governments must adopt an inclusive and rights-based approach to forest and biodiversity conservation, working with IPs and LCs to expand**

the protection of natural ecosystems in ways that respect their rights, knowledge, and livelihoods. They must secure IPs' and LCs' land tenure rights, including by developing and implementing clear and coherent laws that legally recognize and protect these rights, halting efforts to roll back rights, and clamping down on violence and threats against environmental and Indigenous rights defenders, including by State authorities. They must also embed the inclusive participation of forest-dependent communities in forest decision making into legal frameworks and ensure that IPs and LCs are consulted on and have consented to decisions around their forest lands.

**Governments must structure reforms aimed at strengthening forest protections to ensure that reforms last beyond political cycles**, respond to the needs and priorities of forest-adjacent communities, and enjoy popular support. They should invest in the capacity of civil servants at national and sub-national levels to implement reforms, and provide adequate finance, mandates, and training to agencies tasked with implementing and enforcing forest laws, while also ensuring adequate oversight to minimize risks of corruption and abuses of power. Finally, they should recognize and strengthen the role of civil society, IPs, and LCs in enforcing forest laws and ensure they have sufficient finances, mandates, and capacities to carry out this role.

**Governments must focus on strengthening and aligning their existing forest legal frameworks and institutional capacities to meet their national targets and international commitments**—rather than weakening them. Before amending forest frameworks, governments should assess the long-term implications of recent rollbacks for sustainable development and forest protections.

**Governments should adopt demand-side policies that reflect the shared responsibilities of developed and developing countries**, ensuring fairness and addressing deforestation and degradation in all—not just tropical—forests, while also applying the same or higher standards to their domestic policies. Furthermore, they should include resources for producer countries to strengthen rights and governance frameworks, initiatives for international collaboration, support for smallholders, and measures to address illegality.

<sup>1</sup>Richardson, K., et al. (2023). Earth beyond six of nine planetary boundaries. *Science Advances*, 9(37), eadh2458. <https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.adh2458>.

