

# Forests crucial to green growth

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The value of forests and tree-based ecosystems extends far beyond carbon sequestration; they are the foundation of sustainable societies.

A new report, launched in Jakarta, Indonesia on 21 March - the International Day of Forests – promotes REDD+ and the Green Economy as together providing a new pathway to sustainable development that can benefit all nations. It claims this approach can conserve and even boost the economic and social benefits forests provide to human society.

Building Natural Capital – How REDD+ Can Support a Green Economy was developed by the International Resources Panel. It outlines how REDD+ can be integrated into a Green Economy to support pro-poor development while maintaining or increasing [forest](#) cover.

According to the report, REDD+ needs to be placed in a landscape-scale planning framework that goes beyond forests to consider all sectors of a modern economy and the needs of agriculture, energy, water resources, finance, transport, industry, trade and cities.

In this way, REDD+ would add value to other initiatives, such as agroforestry projects that are being implemented within these sectors, and be a critical element in a [green economy](#).

The report provides recommendations on how to integrate REDD+ and Green Economy approaches, such as through better coordination, stronger private sector engagement, changes in fiscal incentive

frameworks, greater focus on assisting policymakers to understand the role forests play in propping up economies, and equitable benefit sharing.

While it is recognized that what lies ahead is a long process of societies adapting to new conditions, REDD+ could be integral to increasing agricultural and forestry outputs to meet future needs, while at the same time enhancing the conservation of forests and ecosystem services.

Each year, the International Day of Forests highlights the unique role of forests in the environment and in sustaining livelihoods. The theme this year is Celebrating Forests for Sustainable Development.

"It is important day to remind us to save our planet as it is the only one we know which has trees says Tony Simons the Director General of the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF). "Trees are what made the Earth habitable for mammals, and destruction of forests will lead to the ultimate destruction of mammals – including humans. Trees are one of the few things which live longer than humans—a true intergenerational gift. He added.

Forests and trees are key to [sustainable development](#). Not only do they store carbon, they support biodiversity, regulate water flows and, reduce soil erosion. Nearly 1.6 billion people worldwide depend on forests as a source of food, medicines, timber and fuel.

Provided by World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF)

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