

The SDSN and Tropical Forest Science Panels Endorse the Tropical Forest Forever Facility and Call for Scaling Global Investment in Tropical Forests

September 24, 2026

This year's extreme weather events remind us all again of the impacts of a changing climate. The heatwaves that struck across Western Europe, the weakening monsoon and growing drought risk in India, the severe flooding that has displaced tens of thousands of people across southern China, Vietnam and West Africa, and a very strong El Niño, climate-related risks are increasingly affecting societies and economies across continents. The economic and social costs of climate change are increasing quickly.

Conserving tropical forests represents a cost-effective measure for responding to a changing climate. Consider some of these numbers: The [Amazon basin](#) recycles 30–50% of its rainfall, being responsible for significant water flows into South America's crop fields from the Flying Rivers; the [Congo Basin](#) is one of the world's largest tropical carbon sink, with its peatlands storing roughly 30 billion tonnes of carbon; and [Borneo](#), one of the world's great biodiversity and endemism hotspots, contains an estimated 12,000–15,000 plant species. Moreover, over 1 billion people live in or in close proximity to tropical forests, many of whom are Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities who play a critical role in maintaining forests standing. As these forests regulate climate, and sustain water cycles across continents, their conservation generates benefits beyond country boundaries, including adaptation to climate change. The IPCC's latest assessment highlights that protecting forests and other ecosystems could deliver around 2.3 GtCO₂-eq of mitigation annually at costs below USD 20 per tonne of CO₂-equivalent, with reduced deforestation in tropical regions offering the highest total mitigation potential among these measures.

Yet despite the immense contributions of tropical forests to humanity, these ecosystems remain significantly under threat. Around 18% of the Amazon has already been lost to deforestation, and an additional 38% are degraded. Globally, 4.3 million hectares of tropical primary forest (an equivalent to more than 11 football fields every minute) were lost in 2025 alone. A fundamental driver of this loss is economic: competing land uses such as cattle ranching and soy crops in the Amazon, smallholder and large-scale industrial agriculture in the Congo Basin, and industrial plantations (particularly oil palm) in Borneo can generate more immediate private returns than maintaining forests standing, while many of the benefits provided by tropical forests accrue broadly to society and remain largely uncompensated. These pressures are increasingly compounded by climate extremes. The 2023–2024 El Niño and the very warm Tropical Atlantic Ocean, for example, contributed to heat and drought across large parts of the Amazon, drying forests and intensifying fire risk. Such interactions between land-use pressures, drought, extreme heat, and wildfire can weaken forest resilience and reinforce cycles of degradation and forest loss, increasing the risk of irreversible ecosystem change in vulnerable regions—the tipping points of such biomes.

Tropical forests protection remains underfinanced. In a context of declining Official Development Assistance (ODA), tropical forests are already impacted because the majority of public spending for forests (83%) happens outside of the tropics and international public forest finance only allocates as little as USD1.6 billion per year to tropical forest countries. By 2030, UNEP estimates that **tropical forest regions will require at least USD 66.8 billion annually** to finance ecosystem conservation, ecological restoration, and sustainable production systems, such as agroforestry systems for a socio-bioeconomy. Closing this gap requires mobilizing greater private capital alongside public resources through innovative financial mechanisms designed for long-term landscape stewardship.

Encouragingly, innovative forest finance mechanisms are emerging. Blended finance approaches, landscape-scale investment strategies, long-term payment structures, and incentives that reward the conservation of standing forests are beginning to better align financial flows with the ecological and socio-bioeconomic functions of tropical forests. Meeting this gap requires more than public finance that lowers risk for private capital. Multilateral development banks and sovereign governments should scale up direct, grant-based and concessional finance for forest protection, while private capital that stands to benefit bears a fair share of the cost and the risk involved.

In this context, we welcome the **Tropical Forest Forever Facility (TFFF)**, launched by the Government of Brazil at the 30th Conference of the Parties (COP30) of the UNFCCC, as a significant innovation in the evolving landscape of tropical forest finance. Through a blended finance structure, the TFFF is designed to mobilise up to **USD 125 billion** over the long term for sustainable initiatives across tropical forest countries, recognising that standing tropical forests are providers of essential global ecosystem services while creating long-term incentives for their conservation through results-based payments, with a focus on halting deforestation, and degradation and recognising the intrinsic value of forests. It also acknowledges that the peoples who live in these forests should benefit directly from financial mechanisms that support their livelihoods, rights, knowledge systems, and enduring sociocultural connections to these landscapes.

On the occasion of the 2026 United Nations General Assembly, we are releasing the [issue brief](#) ***“Scaling Tropical Forest Finance: Perspectives From the Amazon Basin, the Congo Basin, and Borneo”***. Drawing on scientific evidence from the Amazon Basin, the Congo Basin, and Borneo, the brief demonstrates that tropical forests underpin livelihoods and socio-bioeconomic stability far beyond national borders. The research emphasises the need to scale financial mechanisms that recognise and reward these critical ecosystems, including the Tropical Forest Forever Facility.

The [Sustainable Development Solutions Network](#) convenes three Tropical Forest Science Panels— [Science Panel for the Amazon \(SPA\)](#), the [Science Panel for the Congo Basin \(SPCB\)](#), and the [Science Panel for Borneo \(SPB\)](#)—which together have produced a growing body of scientific evidence on the ecological, social, and economic importance of tropical forests. The

SPA's [Assessment Report \(AR\) 2025](#) highlights the importance of the Amazon forest for a living planet, and the need to scale climate-finance systems and develop innovative financial mechanisms capable of supporting conservation and restoration, while recognizing the value of the Amazon's socioecological services. Similarly, the SPCB's [2025 AR](#) documented the Basin's role in climate and water-cycle regulation, biodiversity conservation, and cultural values, while emphasizing the need for greater investment in research and sustainable management to guide future decisions to impact the entire Congo Basin. Likewise, the SPB's [AR executive summary](#) recommends incorporating Borneo's biodiversity into investment decisions and creating economic incentives that make sustainable practices financially competitive. These large-synthesis reports provide a strong scientific basis for the urgent need to conserve and restore tropical forests and to mobilize innovative forms of finance that reflect their global ecological and socioeconomic value.

Together, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network and the scientific leadership of the Science Panel for the Amazon, Science Panel for the Congo Basin, and Science Panel for Borneo recognise the Tropical Forest Forever Facility as an important initiative toward aligning financial systems with global services provided by tropical forests. While no single mechanism will address the global forest finance gap, the TFFF represents a meaningful opportunity to scale long-term investment in tropical forests and to strengthen the integration of climate, biodiversity, water, and sustainable development objectives within a single financing framework. By committing at least 20% of the proceeds to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, TFFF also mobilizes significant direct financing for populations that have historically accessed a small fraction of climate finance, despite being active managers and essential stewards of tropical forests.

We therefore call on governments, the finance sector, including multilateral development banks, and the private sector to work together in supporting, capitalizing, and advancing innovative financing mechanisms such as the Tropical Forest Forever Facility. This effort should be accompanied by broader reforms that shift public incentives and subsidies away from activities that drive forest loss and toward forest-positive production, restoration, and sociobiodiversity-based economies, while expanding direct and predictable finance to Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities, and Afrodescendant Peoples and strengthening their land rights and participation in benefit-sharing. Safeguarding tropical forests is an investment in global resilience, sustainable development, and our shared prosperity.



Carlos Nobre
SPA Co-Chair



Lydie-Stella Koutika
SPCB Co-Chair



**Science Panel
for the Amazon**
THE AMAZON WE WANT



**Science Panel
for the Congo Basin**



**Science Panel
for Borneo**

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Marielos Peña-Claros
SPA Co-Chair

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Bonaventure Sonké", is positioned above a horizontal line.

Bonaventure Sonké
SPCB Co-Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mazlin Mokhtar", is positioned above a horizontal line.

Mazlin Mokhtar
SPB Co-Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jatna Supriatna", is positioned above a horizontal line.

Jatna Supriatna
SPB Co-Chair