

# The Telegraph

## China to plant forest the size of Ireland in bid to become world leader in conservation

By Jamie Fullerton, Xiamen  
5 JANUARY 2018



China wants forests to cover 26 per cent of its land by 2035 CREDIT: GETTY

China has announced plans to plant new forests in 2018 that will cover at least 6.6 million hectares, an area roughly the size of Ireland.

The move is China's latest bid to shed its polluting image and become world leader in environment protection, since President Donald Trump chose to withdraw the US from the Paris Climate Agreement last year.

China's State Forestry Administration target is to increase the number of hectares of forest in the country to 23 per cent of the total land by 2020, with the figure currently at 21.7 percent. Zhang Jianlong, head of the administration, said that by 2035 the figure will be up to 26 per cent.

"Companies, organisations and talent that specialise in greening work are all welcome to join in the country's massive greening campaign," he said. "Cooperation between government and social capital will be put on the priority list."

In 2014 China, which has seen its cities blighted with chronic air pollution due to rampant industrial expansion in the past few decades, declared a "war on pollution". As well as cracking down on polluting companies and punishing officials who break environmental rules, forest expansion and cleaning up polluted rivers have become top priorities.

This year the new forest areas will be built in the northeast Hebei province, Qinghai province in the Tibetan Plateau, and in the Hunshandake Desert in Inner Mongolia, an autonomous region in the north.

Mr Zhang said that the country had spent over 538 billion yuan (£61bn) on planting forests in the past five years, raising the total amount of it in China to 208 million hectares.

The government has also introduced "ecological red line" policies that require local governments to curb what they deem to be "irrational development" and construction near forests, rivers and national parks

Source: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/01/05/china-plant-forest-size-ireland-bid-become-world-leader-conservation/>