

3 innovations leading the fight to save our forests

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Forests are critical to the health of the planet. They sequester carbon, regulate global temperatures and freshwater flows, recharge groundwater, anchor fertile soil and act as flood barriers. They harbour 80% of the world's terrestrial biodiversity, and are a treasure trove of innovation and a source of subsistence and survival for 350 million people.

Conserving existing forests, restoring forest ecosystems and reforesting suitable lands is essential if we are to transition to a sustainable pathway for our economies and societies at the required speed and scale.

1t.org serves a global movement to conserve, restore and grow 1 trillion trees by 2030. A focus on forests is a key part of the solution to effectively address the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss, and offer opportunities to deliver greater sustainability, resilience and equity. As part of its work, 1t.org seeks to unlock innovative solutions to accelerate and scale forest conservation and restoration.

UpLink offers an inclusive digital platform to surface the best ideas and solutions for pressing issues and connect them to the world's decision makers. The platform brings together key stakeholders who are championing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): change-makers, social innovators, thematic experts, investors and technology titans.

The UpLink Trillion Trees Challenge was launched earlier this year and has sourced over 250 entrepreneurial solutions looking at how to scale and accelerate forest conservation and restoration, green our cities, unlock 4IR technology for trees, and stimulate the forest economy – all of which are a contribution to deliver on the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

The challenge culminated at the World Economic Forum's Sustainable Development Impact Summit 2020, where six finalists presented their ideas to a multi-stakeholder panel of judges.

"Seeing all of the submission to the UpLink Trillion Trees Challenge shows the willingness of young people and eco-preneurs to roll out the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration. Each and every person who has put forward a proposal is part of the solution," stated Inger Andersen, Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

“There is no vaccine for climate change,” added Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, President of the Association for Indigenous Women and Peoples of Chad (AFPAT) as she emphasized the need for people, community, and technology to work together for our planet’s forests.

The three winning innovations helping to save our forests are:

Borneo Nature Foundation

Over the last 10 years, Borneo Nature Foundation has developed and refined planting methods and techniques to reforest areas of degraded peatland, planted over 30,000 seedlings and established Community Seedling Nurseries in villages next to Borneo's last remaining tropical rainforests.

Now, with the experience, knowledge and skills developed over the last decade they are scaling up the project to plant more than 1 million trees, while recognizing that carbon sequestration and habitat restoration for endangered species, like the orangutan, comes hand-in-hand with the empowerment of local communities and the creation of green economies.

Borneo Nature Foundation was also the winner of the 'People’s Choice Award', an online poll conducted during the final of the Trillion Trees Challenge.

Reforestum & Ecosphere+

Reforestum and Ecosphere+ have partnered to enable companies and individuals to take climate action by financing forest conservation and restoration using technology solutions to access the carbon market.

Their approach mobilises support for high-quality, high impact forest projects at speed and at scale through technology that brings trust and transparency to carbon offsetting and works to aggregate the actions of many to make a huge collective impact.

Inga Foundation

Slash and burn farming is rapidly destroying the world’s remaining rainforests and sending vast amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Yet for more than 250 million farmers across the world, it is the only way they can survive.

Through implementing Inga Alley Cropping – the sustainable alternative to slash and burn – we can change this. By supporting farmers to take up this technique, the Inga Foundation gives them the ability to feed their families and improve their livelihoods, whilst keeping the rainforest and its rich biodiversity intact.

Source: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/09/3-innovations-leading-the-fight-to-save-our-forests/>