



WWF®

REPORT

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THE GLOBAL GOALS  
For Sustainable Development

# FORESTS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

THE ROLE OF SDG 15 IN DELIVERING THE 2030 AGENDA

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Front cover photo: Women carrying home firewood through Sal forest (Shorea robusta). Mankanthpur, Uttarakhand, India.  
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WWF is one of the world's largest and most respected independent conservation organizations, with more than 5 million supporters and a global network active in over 100 countries. WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the Earth's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.



**THE GLOBAL GOALS**  
For Sustainable Development

# THE ROLE OF SDG 15 IN DELIVERING THE 2030 AGENDA

**There has never been a more globally important set of aims than the ones behind the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The UN sums up their scope and ambition as ‘a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity.’**

Adopted in 2015, the SDGs embody what's become known as ‘the 2030 Agenda’ – a global commitment to a better, sustainable future for people and planet alike.

By breaking this crucial vision down into 17 distinct goals encompassing 169 targets, the SDGs act as a roadmap to the different areas where effort and resources must be focused to bring about change on a planetary scale.

The High Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2018 provides an urgent opportunity for the global community to discuss the details of how we're going to get to where we need to be in 2020 and 2030, to assess progress against current targets, to set new ones, and to see how the ambition can be enhanced during the next 2-12 years.

It's a critical phase in the lifecycle of the SDGs, as many of the initial targets expire in 2020. Now is the time to redouble collective efforts to hit this first wave, while also looking further into the future and making plans for what comes next.

## HLPF 2018 FOCUSES ON SIX OF THE SDGS:



**GOAL 6:**  
Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.



**GOAL 7:**  
Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.



**GOAL 11:**  
Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.



**GOAL 12:**  
Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.



**GOAL 15:**  
Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.



**GOAL 17:**  
Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.



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A key point is that **the SDGs interlink with each other**: we're not going to find a solution to one without considering the others, and nothing is going to happen in a vacuum.

Each SDG has specific aims and targets, but it's important to understand them as part of an indivisible, interlinked package. Focused efforts to achieve each one are needed, but only under a **coherent overall approach**. If this is missing, progress in one area might be set back by badly planned actions in another, resulting in inefficiency, ineffectiveness and even long-term harm.

Taking a holistic view of the SDGs in the spotlight at HLPF 2018 will allow stakeholders to benefit from potential synergies and advance objectives in several areas at once. **Goal 15 – Life on land** will play an integral role in achieving all the others – and vice versa.



## LIFE ON LAND: SDG 15 AND WHY FORESTS ARE CRITICAL

The delivery of the 2030 Agenda depends on nature continuing to be able to produce the goods and services that underpin every aspect of life on Earth. Without the riches that spring from biodiversity and healthy ecosystems, human health and well-being suffer. Everyone has the right to share in the benefits of a healthy planet, and this has to be the backdrop against which the SDGs are realized.

Goal 15.2 explicitly underlines the centrality of biodiversity in a sustainable future:

*By 2020 protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.*

It's important to note that this target under Goal 15 also puts an emphasis on restoration: it's not enough to stop the damage, what has been degraded also needs to be fixed and the fact is, we've been degrading the planet beyond its capacity for decades. **Urgent action is required.** Target 15.2 - which aims to have global forests managed on a sustainable footing with widespread restoration underway - expires in 2020, so there is no time to lose.

The first step towards SDG 15 is to **embed its core elements in all other policy areas and production sectors**. The role of biodiversity and ecosystem services has to be acknowledged in social, economic, financial and environmental policies, along with their centrality to agriculture, fisheries, forestry, tourism, energy and mining, infrastructure, manufacturing and processing, and health industries. This awareness will be fundamental to achieving the Goal.

**Effective coordination** is also crucial in an area as complex and wide-ranging as SDG 15. Policies must be coherently aligned at all levels, with agreed aims and indicators as well as reporting mechanisms and financing models. It will be essential to integrate initiatives under the SDGs with other relevant frameworks like the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Aichi Targets and the UNFCCC.

**Picture opposite:**  
A canoe on the Dja river, the border between Cameroon and Congo.

As for where to concentrate resources to meet SDG 15, **the world's forests are key**: they're the greatest store of biodiversity and ecosystem services on the planet, providing habitats for more than 80 per cent of terrestrial plant, animal and insect species.

**We have to protect what's left and restore what we can, and the benefits will be felt in many different ways.** Healthy forests purify and recharge clean water sources which serve millions. They prevent land degradation and restore damaged areas. Agroforestry offers income and food security. Trees store carbon and sequester more of it from the atmosphere. All of these benefits contribute directly to other SDGs.



**51%**

IN 2016, GLOBAL TREE COVER LOSS WAS 51 PER CENT HIGHER THAN THE PREVIOUS YEAR

It's particularly important to protect primary, stable forests that are free from anthropogenic disturbances as they are most likely to maintain their ecological functions, stability, and carbon stocks. Buffering and reconnecting these areas will help them to thrive, along with the services they provide.

There's no time to waste: in 2016, global tree cover loss was 51 per cent higher than the previous year, totalling an area about the size of New Zealand.<sup>4</sup> Urgent action is needed by 2020.

WWF is working all over the world to protect and restore forests, and we're collaborating with everyone from local indigenous communities to national governments to do it. Our primary aims are to:

- Ensure effective protection and improved management
- Halt deforestation and eliminate it from forest production and agricultural supply chains
- Restore degraded landscapes in line with Bonn Challenge targets – 150 million hectares by 2020, and 350 million hectares by 2030.

Forests are integral to SDG 15, and SDG 15 underpins the 2030 Agenda. We'll be redoubling our efforts in the years to come, and we call on everybody working to achieve the SDGs to support this work.

HERE'S A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF HOW SDG 15 INTERLINKS WITH THE OTHER GOALS IN THE SPOTLIGHT AT HLPF 2018.



## SDG 6: CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

### WHAT IS AT STAKE?

We need good water resources for sustainable development, as well as for drinking, sanitation and hygiene. However, increasing numbers of people – 2 billion and counting – are affected by water stress, primarily due to agriculture, and the effects of poor water management are seen everywhere. A new form of integrated water resource management that places water extraction in the broader ecosystem context is needed.

### LINK TO SDG 15

Forests play a central role in maintaining water resources; however, policymakers around the world often fail to recognize their importance. **Forest ecosystems directly control downstream water availability and quality, as well as water storage and flow regulation, filtration, and flood and drought protection.**

Key functions of forests relating to water include:

- Trees recharge atmospheric moisture and contribute to rainfall through evapotranspiration.
- Trees capture, cool and redistribute the sun's energy.
- Trees produce microbial flora and organic compounds which promote rainfall.
- Trees enhance soil infiltration and improve groundwater recharge.
- Trees filter precipitation to deliver purified ground and surface water.

The mutual linkages between SDG 6 and SDG 15 are obvious – but SDG 6 lacks targets for effective and integrated management of natural freshwater ecosystems, with indicators focusing too closely on humans as the sole beneficiaries. In addition to suffering from over-extraction, water courses are too often seen as waste removal systems, as a way of transferring a problem downstream with little thought for the environmental consequences. Similarly, building dams in one area – whether for water supplies or power – often causes environmental damage elsewhere.

This kind of narrow thinking needs to be replaced by an integrated, cross-sectoral approach which recognizes the interlinkages between forest ecosystems, water provision and sanitation for sustainable development.



FOREST ECOSYSTEMS DIRECTLY CONTROL DOWNSTREAM WATER AVAILABILITY AND QUALITY

## SDG 6 – CLEAN WATER IN THE PANTANAL

*Clean water and healthy ecosystems are inseparable in the remarkable Pantanal region*

The Pantanal provides an extraordinary level of benefits to millions of people, from livelihoods and resources to ecosystem services and climate mitigation. But its future hangs in the balance – the world’s largest wetland depends on clean water and healthy forests, the interlinked aims of SDG 6 and SDG 15.

Spanning the borders of Brazil, Paraguay and Bolivia, the Pantanal covers more than 17 million hectares. It has a unique hydrological cycle, flooding like a giant reservoir from October to March, then slowly draining away from April to September. This creates an ecosystem that provides ideal aquatic habitat, nutrient renewal, and flood protection downstream. The biodiversity is exceptional: the region contains more than 4,700 plant and animal species.

People depend on it too, from indigenous groups in Paraguay to cattle ranchers in Brazil. More than 1.2 million rely on the Pantanal for income, food and clean drinking water, while millions more downstream depend on the wetland for flood control. Its irreplaceable ecosystem services – from river flow for navigability, to groundwater recharge and carbon sequestration – have been valued at \$112 billion.

However, in recent years the Pantanal has been coming under increasing pressure from land-use change for agriculture and cattle ranching, upstream pollution from human, industrial and agricultural waste, and the effects of climate change. If development trends continue unchanged, the Pantanal’s native vegetation will disappear by 2050.

WWF has been working in the Pantanal for 20 years on a breadth of projects aimed at securing its long-term future. Several of these initiatives advance SDGs 6 and 15 at the same time: in a wetland forest region, clean water and biodiversity depend on many of the same factors.

The key is in collaborative, climate-smart, transboundary approaches to sustainable development and conservation.

The condition of the headwaters of the Pantanal makes a difference all the way through the region, so one area of WWF’s focus has been to promote

a pact between local authorities, businesses and communities to guarantee its quality. Some 750km of river have so far been protected through the Pantanal Pact, and it has also seen the restoration of waterside ‘gallery’ forests and about 30 of the springs that feed the headwaters.

The natural flow of the rivers matters too. Infrastructure needs to be planned holistically, and preserve the integrity of the Pantanal’s flood pulses and river connectivity. WWF is working with developers and government agencies to ensure that the basin-wide impact of future projects is effectively assessed.

Similarly, the impact of agriculture and cattle ranching is in focus. Eradicating deforestation is a priority, and WWF is targeting supply chains in the region with this in mind, while also scaling up our work to spread best practice in ranching.

Protected areas have an important role to play in preserving the Pantanal too. By working with governments, environmental groups, civil society and academia, WWF is pushing to increase the (currently small) area under protection and create a protected network across the region. We’re also strengthening the system by promoting financial mechanisms, training programmes, and management and business plans to ensure protected areas function effectively.

The most important achievement of all, though, has been to bring together the governments of Brazil, Bolivia and Paraguay to sign up to a joint strategy, the Trilateral Initiative for the Integrated and Sustainable Development of the Pantanal. This multiyear plan creates a shared vision for the development of the region, aimed at guaranteeing cross-border economic, social and environmental benefits for humans and nature alike. From on-the-ground projects to forums and international meetings, WWF continues to foster strong ties between the three countries.

The future of the Pantanal depends on continuing international cooperation and a holistic approach to sustainable development. If SDG 6 and SDG 15 remain in focus, this global resource can be preserved for generations to come.

**Picture opposite:** *Victoria water lily (Victoria regia) in the Pantanal Rio Paraguay, Mato Grosso, Brazil.*





## SDG 7: AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

### WHAT IS AT STAKE?

Energy is essential for development. However, this could become one of the most challenging SDGs to achieve, and it's one where progress has been notably unequal so far – although 85 per cent of the global population have access to electricity, more than 65 per cent of the population of sub-Saharan Africa do not. Similarly, while modern renewables are becoming more popular (accounting for 60 per cent of all new power-generating capacity in 2014), the absolute number of people relying on polluting fuels and technologies for cooking has increased, to an estimated 3 billion.<sup>2</sup>

### LINK TO SDG 15



In the short term it's likely that countries will focus on increasing traditional energy infrastructure to meet demands and targets under SDG 7 – but this would have serious consequences for SDG 15 as ecosystems are further degraded through pollution. The continuing prevalence of fuelwood and charcoal, particularly in Africa, remains an issue that must be addressed.

### CLEAN ENERGY HAS A POSITIVE IMPACT ON BIODIVERSITY

Relative to this, clean energy would have a positive impact on biodiversity (not to mention health and well-being benefits to humans), but even large-scale renewable energy systems can cause problems. While some bioenergy may use the by-products of existing agriculture and forestry, cultivating biofuel crops can drive land-use change. Hydroelectric infrastructure, too, has severe impacts on freshwater biodiversity, including pollutants, restricted migration and habitat destruction; while local communities' land and heritage may be lost. Large wind farms can also bring unwanted environmental consequences.

These trade-offs have to be balanced when we consider the two goals side by side. The best way of integrating their aims is to push for clean energy technology that reduces waste and requires as few non-renewable resources as possible, and increased investment in clean energy infrastructure – including small and local-scale production and storage. This is the point at which win-win outcomes begin to emerge.

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**Picture opposite:**  
Charcoal, Madagascar.

## CASE STUDY

# BIOGAS IN NEPAL – SDG 7: AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

*A new approach to cooking in Nepal brings progress towards two SDGs*

Providing people with access to sustainable energy sources can come with great benefits for ecosystems and biodiversity. A WWF project in Nepal is a good example of how the two go together.

Nepal's lowland Terai Arc Landscape is densely populated, home to some 6.7 million people with an average annual income of US\$100. It's also critically important for biodiversity, a habitat for tigers and rhinos as well as thousands of other animal and plant species.

The majority of households in the Terai use wood from the forests for cooking.<sup>3</sup> By the 1990s, the region's formerly lush woodlands were seriously depleted from overuse and poor management. What's more, having to find firewood for cooking meant that male villagers spent many hours a day in the forests, while women would have to spend hours at a time cooking meals with the slow, smoky fuel.

Socially and environmentally, cutting down forests like this had to stop – and clean energy showed a way forward. WWF-Nepal started working with villagers through grassroots community forest programmes, to take pressure off the threatened resources and promote alternative management models.

In 2007, WWF-Nepal began to work with people in the Terai install biogas units to produce clean energy and reduce the need for firewood. The simple units use a combination of animal dung and water to produce methane, a clean gas for cooking and heating. They cook much more quickly than wood fires, and produce no smoke.

As households installed the units – usually financed by loans through local cooperatives – benefits began to cascade through the community. Research indicates that an average size biogas unit (6m<sup>3</sup>) saves nearly five tonnes of firewood each year, as well as reducing CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent emissions by four metric tonnes. There are now 15,500 biogas units in the Terai Arc, and each one is making a difference to people's lives. Together, the units are helping conserve nearly 516 hectares of forest annually, or the equivalent of 69,750 tonnes of fuel wood. The project has also served as an important mechanism for accessing carbon financing, with €2 million already received from the sale of carbon credits and channelled back into communities to install more biogas units.

With fewer people cutting down trees, it becomes possible to keep the forests more intact, allowing sustainable management for future generations. And just as importantly, villagers can use their time for other activities – farming brings in income and increases food security, while healthier forests strengthen the ecosystem that provides services to the farmers.

Meanwhile women in the region are empowered. Today they're more engaged in the community, taking part in village meetings and education programmes, running micro-enterprises.

All of this contributes to the 2030 Agenda, and shows how SDG 7 and SDG 15 can work in tandem.

**Picture opposite:**  
*Mixing dung for the family's domestic biogas generator. Terai Arc Landscape, Nepal.*





11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



## SDG 11: SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

### WHAT IS AT STAKE?

By 2030, 60 per cent of the world's population will be living in urban areas.<sup>4</sup> Slums are rife and in 2014 about half the urban population worldwide was exposed to air pollution levels at least 2.5 times above the World Health Organization (WHO)'s safety standard.<sup>5</sup> Uncontrolled urban sprawl is eating up agricultural land, harming surrounding ecosystems and overwhelming water and sanitation services. None of this is conducive to human health and well-being.

### LINK TO SDG 15

Sound environmental management matters. Forests and green spaces help improve air quality in urban areas, while playing an important role in maintaining the physical and mental health of city populations. They remove pollutants caused by traffic and industry, they regulate the climate, and they take in carbon. In addition, they aid in rainwater filtration and contribute to flood management.

When well planned and managed, cities can offer economies of scale on many levels. However, cost-effective provision of goods and services can also have highly detrimental impacts on biodiversity in surrounding natural environments, and effective spatial planning and consultation is vital.

People need to be aware of the value of green spaces, in particular forests, in urban development policies. Toolkits and guidance for decision-makers are increasingly available. Taking an ecosystem approach to planning decisions will be an important step towards SDGs 11 and 15 alike, and move the world closer to the 2030 Agenda.



**FORESTS AND GREEN SPACES HELP IMPROVE AIR QUALITY IN URBAN AREAS**

**Picture opposite:**

A multilayer forestry development module developed to set up a recycle system between fir forest, ducks, fishes and endemic birds, in Zhangdu Lake, Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China.

## CASE STUDY

# SDG 11 – PLANNING FORESTS INTO YAOUNDÉ'S FUTURE

*A forward-looking development plan in Central Africa puts green space into urban areas*

Home to some 2.5 million inhabitants, the city of Yaoundé is the capital of Cameroon. Faced with the pressure of planning for the future with a growing urban population, city authorities invited WWF to collaborate on efforts to manage biodiversity and restore ecosystems in and around the city. It's a far-reaching project that shows how central a role forests and the natural world can play in sustainable cities, reflecting the size of the contribution SDG 15 can make to efforts to achieve SDG 11.

Yaoundé's city council has an impressive vision for the future of their city and its people. Instead of taking short-term decisions geared towards economic development at all costs, they're looking at a much bigger and better picture.

The goal is for Yaoundé to be filled with thriving green urban and semi-urban landscapes that contribute to residents' quality of life, strengthen ecosystem services, boost tourism and mitigate carbon emissions. This will partly be achieved by restoring areas that have been damaged by development over the past decades, as well as proactively identifying opportunities to protect and preserve other vulnerable areas of environmental value.

Trees are at the centre of the plan. Where ecosystems have been damaged by agriculture and other human activities, particularly in the foothills around the city, some major reforestation projects are underway. Yaoundé has already gained five urban forests in targeted zones over the last decade – although it should be noted that once the trees

are in the ground they need careful management if they're to thrive, which is another challenge to be overcome).

Notably, Yaoundé city authorities are aiming to plant trees along an 18km stretch of canal under construction. On top of environmental and aesthetic benefits, the tree planting will also provide employment opportunities. Activities like this contribute to several SDGs at once, and having local populations actively involved in efforts to conserve their neighbourhoods is far more effective than remote management. The mindset spreads, too: residents living at the nearby Lake Efoulan have asked the authorities for support in restoring damage done to it over recent years.

The city also has ambitious plans for a 40-hectare zoological and botanical garden across three of the seven hills on which Yaoundé sits. Again, this is an initiative that has a wide range of benefits: residents will enjoy it, tourists will come to visit it, jobs will be created, and biodiversity and ecosystems will be protected. WWF is collaborating with the authorities to establish nurseries that can supply the sheer range and volume needed for the plans, while also working to build up the city's capacity to one day supply its own nurseries.

More broadly, WWF is supporting the city authorities on several levels with the hope that the work in Yaoundé will act as a model for similar initiatives around the world in future – particularly ones like this where several SDGs can be interlinked into an overall strategy to advance the 2030 Agenda.

**Picture opposite:**  
*Morning view over Yaoundé, capital of Cameroon.*





## SDG 12 – RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

### WHAT IS AT STAKE?

Sustainable growth depends on natural capital, but as the global population increases and standards of living develop, we're using too much of it – we're currently consuming 1.6 planets' worth of resources, as well as generating too much waste and too many pollutants.<sup>6</sup> Our natural heritage is under threat. To deliver the sustainable future promised by the 2030 Agenda we must consume less, produce better, waste less and use resources more efficiently.



### LINK TO SDG 15

SDG 12 also puts agriculture in the frame. The conversion of natural habitats to agricultural land accounts for some 70 per cent of the projected loss of terrestrial biodiversity, reflecting the hidden costs of greater productivity.<sup>7</sup> All aspects of the equation must be considered when making decisions for the future – food production practices need to balance farmer well-being, crop yields, biodiversity, soil health, water quality and greenhouse gas emissions.

90%

OF THE 570 MILLION FARMS WORLDWIDE, PRODUCING MORE THAN

On a human level, more than 90 per cent of the 570 million farms worldwide – producing more than 80 per cent of the world's food – are managed by an individual or a family.<sup>8</sup> Many of these smallholder farms are part of a food system that traps them in poverty and powerlessness. However, proper management of biodiversity and efficient use of resources can help them become more productive, effectively reducing poverty and increasing food security while safeguarding natural capital.

80%

OF THE WORLD'S FOOD ARE MANAGED BY 1 INDIVIDUAL OR FAMILY

Stakeholders can take a joint approach to implementing many aspects of SDG 12 and SDG 15. For example, through tackling production processes that cause pollution it's possible to support aspects of sustainability including economic development, health, poverty alleviation and nature conservation. Strong legislative frameworks and procurement policies need to enable better production and consumption patterns while halting deforestation and the conversion of natural habitats, and there's a need to promote credible sustainability standards for business which equally support SDG 12 and SDG 15. Agro-ecological farming practices should be adopted, increasing productivity, efficiency and climate protection in food production.

None of this will be possible without close cooperation and collaboration between governments, civil society, local communities and the private sector – and at all times the rights and livelihoods of small producers should be protected.

**Picture opposite:**  
Zebu Brahmin cattle in dusty sunset, Pantanal, Brazil.

## SDG 12 – CHANGING CONSUMPTION PATTERNS TO REDUCE THE EU FOREST- FOOTPRINT

*Sustainable production and an end to deforestation go hand in hand*

### WHAT'S AT STAKE?

Much of the frontline work towards achieving the SDGs takes place in developing countries, but many of the issues they're facing are directly linked to demand from the developed world. This is particularly clear in the overlap between SDGs 12 and 15, sustainable production and life on land: when forests are cleared without a thought for the future to produce food, the impact is global.

Unsustainable agricultural production has been disastrous for ecosystems around the world. Agriculture is responsible for 80 per cent of deforestation.<sup>9</sup> Apart from the environmental damage locally, deforestation accounts annually for more greenhouse emissions than the total EU economy.<sup>10</sup>

Demand from the EU itself plays a key role in this deforestation. The EU, India and China are the main consumers of palm oil, while the EU is the second largest importer of soy.<sup>11</sup> Between 1990 and 2008, it's estimated that EU consumption of commodities like palm oil, soy and beef led to deforestation of an area the size of Portugal.<sup>12</sup> Contributing to such a harmful situation sits at odds with the EU's commitments under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, the Paris Agreement, and the SDGs themselves.

### LINK TO SDG 15

Industry and business players are taking steps to address supply chain issues, aiming to put production on a sustainable footing – if the EU as a trading bloc brought its collective weight to bear and imposed specific policies to stop deforestation, the beneficial impact would be significant.

The momentum for policy measures is already there: the Amsterdam Declarations,<sup>13</sup> signed by seven EU countries, promise 100 per cent sustainable palm

oil and an elimination of deforestation in relation to agricultural commodities by 2020. The signatory countries are calling for 'a roadmap toward EU action,' and a series of options for how to get there were published in March 2018 by the European Commission.<sup>14</sup>

### WHAT'S NEEDED: A POLICY PERSPECTIVE

WWF is working with a number of other NGOs to accelerate this momentum from a policy and advocacy perspective. The focus is on tackling the drivers of deforestation with policies aimed at delivering sustainable, resource-efficient production and consumption, including the minimisation of food waste and overconsumption of products.

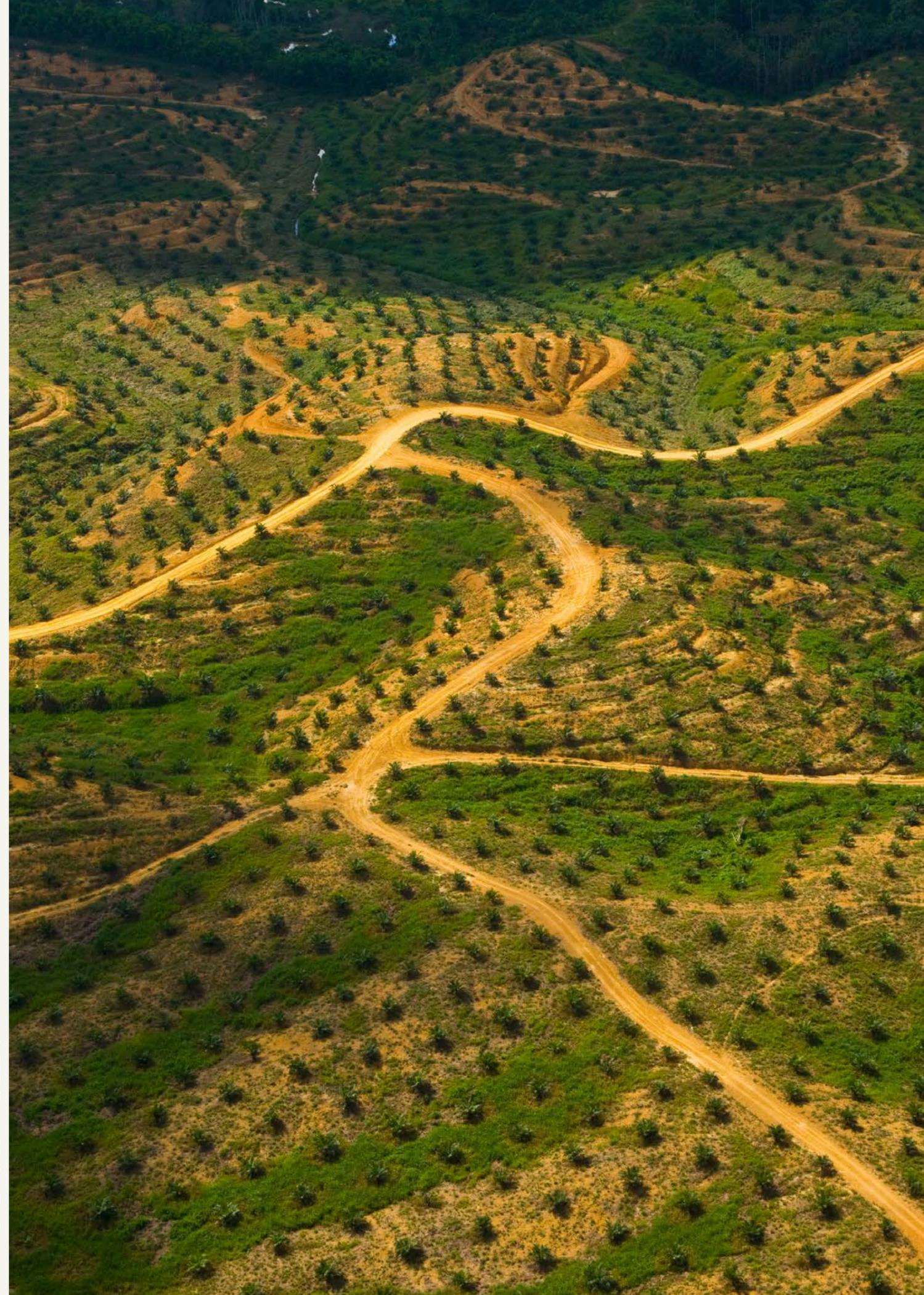
The solution will need to include three different aspects. First, strict legislation to ensure EU market supply chains are sustainable and deforestation-free (as well as in line with other international standards on the rights of indigenous peoples, etc.) is essential.

The financial backdrop also needs careful scrutiny: there should be forest-specific provisions in EU trade and investment agreements ensuring that banks and other institutions do not back activities that contribute to deforestation or other activities that harm forests and the people who live in them.

Finally, the EU needs to increase the financial and technical assistance it gives to producer countries to help them protect, maintain and restore forest and other critical ecosystems.

If these initiatives are brought together into a serious EU Action Plan on deforestation and forest degradation, it would make an enormous contribution to global efforts on SDG 12, SDG 15 and others.

**Picture opposite:**  
*Aerial view of palm oil plantation on deforested land, Sabah, Borneo, Malaysia.*





## SDG 17 – PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



### A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE IS ESSENTIAL

#### WHAT IS AT STAKE?

Partnerships are vital to the 2030 Agenda, and they're at the heart of SDG 17: sound management, financial resources, capacity-building and policy coherence are indispensable if we're to have any chance of reaching a sustainable future. Successfully strengthening our global approach in all of these areas will also directly contribute to SDG 15.

A global perspective is essential. Many of the biggest challenges are faced by the poorest countries, and debt relief and innovative financial mechanisms (e.g. debt-for-nature swaps) must play a part in development assistance. International knowledge transfers, local enterprises, technological progress, triangular capacity-building and south-south cooperation must all be part of the mix.

#### LINK TO SDG 15

There are very few areas where improved international, regional and local cooperation under SDG 17 wouldn't also benefit SDG 15. Effective governance with an eye on the future is fundamental to both, and the value of biodiversity and ecosystem services is gradually being incorporated into forward-looking financial models.<sup>15</sup>

The global management of forests and the trade in forest-related products provides a good example of the importance of sustainable development actively working in partnership with biodiversity. Millions of lives depend on healthy forests, and climate change adds an economic incentive for forest conservation – but forest ecosystems are overexploited by competing pressures, from agriculture to timber extraction, fuelwood and bushmeat for local and international markets. Many different groups including governments, the private sector, indigenous peoples and local communities must be involved in the creation of effective management plans to ensure livelihoods are maintained and well-being needs are met, while also allowing for economic development and sustaining planetary health.

**Picture opposite:**  
Close up of Zaineb Malicha's hands as she plants a green on her farm. She is a member of WWF's Chemi Chemi Dry Land Women's Farming Project in Lake Naivasha, Kenya, and they have received training on drip irrigation.

## CASE STUDY

# GUYANA: STRONG PARTNERSHIPS DELIVER MULTIPLE SDGS

*A WWF partnership in Guyana shows how SDG 17 helps achieve SDG 15*

Guyana's size belies its importance: it's a relatively small country, with the second-lowest population density on Earth. But it sits at the heart of the Guiana Shield, one of the largest remaining blocks of tropical forest in the world. As well as producing up to 15 per cent of the world's freshwater, this region is critical for global efforts to mitigate climate change.

Guyana itself is largely made up of pristine and highly biodiverse rainforest, which stores three times as much carbon per hectare as most other Amazon forests. It's also home to 116 indigenous groups, who hold title to 3 million hectares – 16 per cent – of the nation's forests.

In recent years, Guyana's forests have come under threat. Rising gold prices, growing international demand for raw natural resources and the spread of industrial soybean plantations offer the prospect of economic development – but they carry a heavy social and environmental cost, polluting and destroying areas that support vital ecosystem services and traditional livelihoods.

By contrast, preserving the forest and protecting the rights of the people who depend on it contributes to several SDGs and points the way to a different, sustainable future for Guyana and beyond – and WWF has been part of a successful partnership that's doing exactly that.

The project itself centres on REDD+, the international process to reduce carbon emissions by preventing deforestation and forest degradation.

In 2009, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) signed the first ever national-scale REDD+ agreement with the government of Guyana: this committed the government to keeping deforestation below an annual level of 0.057 per cent, in exchange for US\$250 million of funding over five years.

As is required under REDD+, a measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) system was created to operationalize the agreement and ensure it delivered the anticipated emissions savings.

WWF oversaw a project which built on this achievement. It involved developing a participatory MRV to support Guyana's indigenous communities to opt in to REDD+ and receive its economic benefits, while preserving their traditional forests and making better-informed decisions about land management. The project is focused on sharing the capacity to build and maintain an MRV system by local communities; with a view to sharing it widely across the nation, the Guiana Shield and Latin America.

The project focused on the remote Wai Wai Kanashen community, whose forests cover some 3 per cent of Guyana. In partnership with the Guyana Forestry Commission, the North Rupununi District Development Board, Norad and the Wai Wai themselves, WWF worked to train and equip community members to monitor the health of the forest, focusing on carbon stocks, natural resource indicators and community well-being.

Six community members were trained over a 10-week period, in an MRV process shaped by local values and tailored to their needs and technological capacity – then the system was put into action. Results have been really positive, and the Wai Wai are now empowered to monitor and manage their own lands, with all the social, economic and environmental benefits this brings.

The MRV project has been a successful exercise for everyone involved, and the model is being spread from community to community across the country. In addition, Guyana has hosted events to share its experience internationally.

Building strong partnerships to achieve the other SDGs is a Goal in itself: SDG 17. The work on forests in Guyana shows how bringing together diverse stakeholders, creating scalable models and sharing experiences widely (SDG 17) is driving progress towards the broader 2030 Agenda, promoting sustainable forest management (SDG 15), strengthening communities (SDG 11) and helping climate action (SDG 13).

*Picture opposite: Mission to look for environment deterioration due to gold mining and mercury.*





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**Picture opposite:**  
Women carrying wood from community forests that are managed by Community Forest Co-ordination Committees (CFCC). The CFCCs were established with the help of WWF in order to allow communities to manage their forests sustainably. Thagugwara area, Royal Bardia National Park, Western Terai, Nepal.

# WWF IN SHORT

**+100**

WWF is in over 100 countries, on 5 continents

**+5000**

WWF has over 5,000 staff worldwide



**1961**

WWF was founded in 1961

**+5M**

WWF has over 5 million supporters



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To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

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