

## **Title/Heading**

Year of the Tree: Seeding the Age of Restoration

## **Context and rationale.**

While there have been unprecedented commitments on carbon emissions and forests at the global policy level, now it is time for implementation and the acceleration and scaling up of efforts that is focused on supporting the Earth's community first and foremost.

- 2011 Bonn Challenge - plant 350 million hectares of deforested and degraded land by 2030.
- 2014, governments, indigenous peoples organizations, businesses, and NGOs pledged to halve deforestation by 2020 and end natural forest loss by 2030 in the New York Declaration on Forests (NYDF).
- 2015 Paris Agreement, forest nations pledged to reduce emissions from the forest sector.

The world is not on track to meet these goals. Sequestration through major rapid planting of trees and soil management is urgent as current mitigation efforts are not enough to avoid dangerous warming. If fully implemented, national pledges to the Paris Agreement will increase warming at least 3 degrees Celsius by the end of the century - putting us at risk for passing tipping points.

The scale of the problem requires a call that mobilises citizen engagement with implementation that is adapted to the needs of local peoples and landscapes.

## **An overview of the contribution**

Year of The Tree: Seeding the Age of Restoration is a call to action for citizens, businesses, governments and organizations to give back to nature. It is a global campaign to reseed trees in the hearts and minds of humanity through outreach, media, and mobilization through people sharing educational resources. This contribution consists of two overarching components: awareness raising and resource sharing.

- 1) Year of The Tree campaign puts our relationship with understanding trees at center stage as a solution for global efforts to combat climate change, provide safe drinking water, alleviate poverty, empower women and meets sustainable development goals.
- 2) Provide an online platform for information exchange around local species, planting practices, social inclusion, ethical and legal frameworks alongside practical support to turn around deforestation and degradation

This is a massive, multi sector, collaborative initiative designed to create:

- awareness and adoption of seeing our human function as restorers
- shared goals, coherence and mutual support within the tree sector
- mapping tools for easy navigation of available lands, methods and planting partners
- significant celebrity support and social reach
- planet wide education that touches all levels of society
- shared public ownership of personal role within a planetary solution
- global mobilisation around forest protection and restoration, and
- appropriately scaled forest restoration and the end of the destruction of ancient forests

### **How the contribution leverages living natural systems as a solution to avert climate change?**

At its core, Year of The Tree is setting a new precedent for the human relationship to nature. It is a mass awakening to the human reciprocal relationship with the preservation and health of living natural systems. It recognizes that nature-based solutions are the most cost-effective, have beneficial outcomes for the well-being of rural communities, supporting food production, and sustainable and inclusive economies.

Through resource and information sharing, the wisdom and local practices to enhance living natural systems will be expressed to a global audience. This will support individual and local-level leadership to support landscapes in a way that is appropriate for local ecosystems and communities. The collaborative infrastructure for this is already being established.

### **How might the contribution support both climate, mitigation and adaptation as well as other important co-benefits and social, economic and environmental outcomes in coming years. They may include:**

- **Reduction in carbon emission and carbon capture (GTonnes)**

Scientists tell us it is possible to double the Bonn Challenge goals by using land that is available but currently not part of the government pledges. This level of scaling up will require the support of the global community at a grassroots person to person level. The 1.2 trillion trees that could be planted offers to draw down 10 years of global CO2 emissions. Over 100 GTonnes<sup>1</sup>.

- **Increasing climate resilience**

Working at the community level to support the local landscape provides climate resilience on multiple fronts. Trees support waterways, mediate rivers, draw carbon and other greenhouse gases out of the atmosphere which safeguard the oceans, creates habitats for biodiversity, preserve the soil. Trees create rain and ozone, maintain global weather systems, provide food,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://e360.yale.edu/digest/planting-1-2-trillion-trees-could-cancel-out-a-decade-of-co2-emissions-scientists-find>

fuel and building materials for local communities, as well as having outstanding emotional roles in resilient cultures.

- **Social impact (job increase; poverty reduction; Just transition, etc.)**

This focus of financial support into ethical planting partners and projects that have arisen from directly from the inspiration of local communities creates revenue streams that honours local guardianship, creates jobs and supports households, and significantly contributes to gender equality and rural education.

- **Net economic impact (total in US\$; how was it achieved?)**

There are multiple reforestation planting partners, global conservation NGOs and policy groups gathering around the Year of the Tree. Currently the call to work this way is spear-headed by TreeSisters. They are working at a planting rate of 2.2 million trees per year and that means they employ 2,300 people directly and impact 16,200 people directly. Please contact us for updated figures on the net economic impact.

- **Impact on realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (in particular SDGs 1,2,6,12,13,14,15,16)**

Beyond directly supporting Goal 15, it is well recognized that preserving forests is important for progress across other SDGs, including 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 11, 12, and 13.

- **Food security**

Food security requires rainfall, regular weather cycles, good soil and clean water. These are all things that trees both regulate and need themselves. Forests directly provide food for 1 billion people and Cifor states that “forest, biodiversity conservation and agro-ecology should feature prominently in political and scientific discourse on agricultural production”<sup>2</sup>.

- **Minimising species extinction and ecological losses and fostering an increase of biodiversity.**

In terms of protecting species and ecological losses and fostering an increase of biodiversity the ecological needs of trees are also those which protect nature. They are the road map to ecosystem health providing habitats above and below ground. Their needs for healthy mycelial networks, water and soil are the basis for the microbial and insect life that sustain our wider biofauna.

**Which countries and organisations are involved in the contribution?**

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cifor.org/library/4103/>

Year of The Tree involves global participation across multiple stakeholders: civil society, governments, businesses, indigenous peoples, and local communities and individuals. Currently our network of relationships cover over 60 countries throughout the Tropics and in the global North and South.

**How have stakeholders (for example local communities, youth and indigenous peoples, where applicable) been consulted in developing the contribution?**

The nature of this contribution is multi-stakeholder driven. Local groups come together to take care of their land, supported by planting partners to manage the due diligence and then funded through donation platforms supported by individuals, corporations and governments. Creating Year of the Tree is a call for collective action with mass participation and individual ownership. Importantly, it will elevate the experience of indigenous peoples and amplify existing efforts to protect and enhance living natural systems.

**Where can the contribution be put into action?**

Anywhere. Like the forest floor, this contribution will operate through bottom-up approaches with rich resources circulating and flowing towards ripe areas for planting and flourishing. Through an online global citizen-led earth regeneration map and tree network it is possible for anyone with internet to have access to available resources. Those skills are also shared through direct experience. Partnerships between planting and reforestation partnerships promote sharing information generated across the tree network and projects.

**How the contribution will be delivered? How will different stakeholders be engaged in its implementation? What are the potential transformational impacts?**

This contribution involves both bottom-up and top-down and delivery. A grassroots movement where individuals are empowered to take steps to protect and nourish nature that can be championed by leaders across government, civil society, and business.

**Is this initiative contributing to other Climate Action Summit workstreams (industry transition; energy transition; climate finance and carbon pricing; infrastructure, cities and local action; resilience and adaptation; youth and citizen mobilization; social and political drivers; mitigation strategy)?**

Year of the Tree contributes to several above work streams, including climate finance and carbon pricing, cities and local action, resilience and adaptation, youth and citizen mobilization, social and political drivers.

**How does this contribution build upon examples of experience to date? How does the contribution link with different ongoing initiatives?**

Year of the Tree involves the co-creation a global campaign that will belong to everyone. In the same way that Earth Day was a concept designed to activate the creativity of the masses, TreeSisters' is seeding the concept with International Tree Foundation. Our initial vision with the intention that the Year of the Tree campaign will operate through emergence between us all so that we can harvest the most powerful expression of shared wisdom, knowledge and generosity possible.

In addition to Earth Day, Year of The Tree will draw upon lessons of the most successful international agreement to date: the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. During the campaign to save the ozone layer, the image of the hole from space brought the problem down to Earth. Suddenly people could grasp the scale of the problem with urgency. And everyone had a part to play in the solution: stop using dangerous aerosols and refrigerants. Unlike the drivers of global warming that cut across the entire economy, ozone-depleting substances came from a narrow set of sectors. Similarly, we are focusing on a single, unifying image: trees. Climate change feels so vast and people become overwhelmed and disempowered to act. Images and media can make the problem less distant and create resources to make action simple.

Year of The Tree might be timed to launch the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration. It follows the 2011 Year of the Forests.

The website infrastructure of the Tree Network is has four different partner groups currently housing information and a team ready to populate the database. Creating a global citizen-led reforestation and landscape regeneration hub pointing people to relevant information via a global map is achievable in a short time frame and includes funding streams.

### **What are the mechanisms for funding (with specific emphasis on potential for partnerships)?**

The global initiative and reforestation Tree Network funding platform allows for donations from private and corporate partnerships. We are looking to support restoration to be embedded in every financial transaction and to remove barriers to councils and business invest in ethical sequestration that have been created through the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol.

### **What are the means of stewardship, metrics for monitoring?**

An implementation plan for Year of the Tree will include the following metrics and goals:

- Accelerate progress of existing goals for forests, climate, and biodiversity
- Social inclusion
- Adoption of ethical frameworks
- Diversity and protection of endangered species
- Significant collective financial flows towards living natural systems
- Embedding giving to natural living systems into financial transactions

**What is the communication strategy?**

The communication strategy includes media, arts, support from movement builders, conferences and the recruitment of high level champions. By uniting those working for trees and landscape into a global tree network we are better able to articulate and highlight the excellent work that is already happening which fuels hope and encouragement to act.

**What are the details of proponents (indicating the degree of commitment among the countries and organizations that are named).**

TreeSisters is a UK based global charity currently funding the planting of over 2 million tropical trees a year through grassroots donation.

International Tree Foundation works with communities in Africa and the UK to carry out sustainable community forestry projects which protect, regenerate and cultivate trees and forests to conserve habitats rich in biodiversity and to enhance human and environmental well-being.

This is a collaborative multi-stakeholder effort. On May 1st, representatives from 20 global reforestation and conservation NGOs seeded Year of the Tree during a day long event in Oxford hosted by TreeSisters and International Tree Foundation. The NGO network to support Year of The Tree has already being established and represents a great wealth of practical wisdom and scientific research.