

Amazon and Nestle join public-private plan to save world's forests

23 April 2021



The United States, Norway and Britain joined forces with companies including Amazon (AMZN.O) and Nestle (NESN.S) on Thursday to launch a project aimed at protecting the world's tropical forests.

Announcing the Lowering Emissions by Accelerating Forest finance (LEAF) Coalition at the U.S.-convened Leaders Summit on climate, the public-private project aims to raise at least \$1 billion in initial financing, it said.

Governments and companies taking part will pay countries with tropical and subtropical forests for emissions reductions, a move it hopes will help reduce and eventually end deforestation.

As the world looks to move quickly to a low-carbon economy to prevent catastrophic climate change, protecting the forests that help remove carbon from the atmosphere naturally is seen as a crucial step, but one that has so far largely failed.

The pace of deforestation actually picked up in 2020, LEAF said, with data from Global Forest Watch showing a 12 percent increase from the prior year or more than 10 million hectares of primary tropical forest, roughly the size of Switzerland.

"The LEAF coalition is a groundbreaking example of the scale and type of collaboration that is needed to fight the climate crisis and achieve net-zero emissions globally by 2050," said U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry.

"Bringing together government and private-sector resources is a necessary step in supporting the large-scale efforts that must be mobilized to halt deforestation and begin to restore tropical and subtropical forests."

Countries looking to take part in the programme will need to have the reduction in deforestation-linked emissions verified by a new, more rigorous standard assessed at the national level by an independent third party, the coalition said in a statement.

With applications due by July 2021 and the aim of signing contracts before the end of the year, payments would be based on emissions reductions linked to reducing levels of deforestation or degradation, or by restoring forests, between 2022 and 2026.

Companies looking to take part in the project will only be allowed to join if they can show a commitment to "deep voluntary cuts" in their own emissions, in line with science-based targets and the Paris Agreement on climate.

"Climate change is the greatest threat to our planet, and the LEAF coalition offers us an opportunity to bring together governments and companies to fight it," said Jeff Bezos, Amazon founder and CEO.

"In uniting behind a common cause, the countries and companies of the coalition have a chance to end deforestation by 2030."

Among other companies to sign up to the project are Airbnb (ABNB.O), Boston Consulting Group, GlaxoSmithKline (GSK.L), McKinsey, Salesforce (CRM.N), Bayer (BAYGn.DE) and Unilever (ULVR.L), although more are expected to join over time.

US non-profit Emergent will oversee the administration of the project.

Source: <https://www.indiatoday.in/world/story/amazon-nestle-join-public-private-plan-save-world-s-forests-1794120-2021-04-23>