

TWO NEW GLOBAL PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPANTS JOIN LEAF COALITION AND ITS GOAL TO DIRECT MORE THAN \$1 BILLION TO CONSERVE TROPICAL FORESTS, ANNOUNCES EMERGENT

September 21, 2021 | Washington, D.C. — Two new global organizations have joined the LEAF Coalition, a large-scale public-private climate change initiative to mobilize more than \$1 billion in results-based payments for countries that protect their tropical forests, announced Emergent today, the U.S. non-profit that coordinates LEAF. The new organizations joining the initiative are Delta Air Lines and PwC.

The Lowering Emissions by Accelerating Forest finance (LEAF) Coalition was launched at the Leaders Climate Summit in April with initial participation from the governments of Norway, the United Kingdom, the United States, and a group of leading companies, which has grown to include Amazon, Airbnb, Bayer, BCG, E.ON, GSK, McKinsey, Nestlé, Salesforce, and Unilever. The addition of two new organizations brings the total number of private sector participants to 12 and increases the sectoral and geographic diversity of the initiative.

Participants in the Coalition must be committed to deep voluntary cuts in their own greenhouse gas emissions in line with science-based targets and consistent with the long-term temperature goals of the Paris Agreement. Their contributions to the LEAF Coalition come in addition to, and not as a substitute for, internal emissions reductions.

Eron Bloomgarden, Executive Director and founder of Emergent said that the organizations joining today are a clear signal of the strong interest from leading global private sector organizations in contributing to the fight against tropical deforestation by purchasing high-integrity emissions reductions. *“We’ve seen strong engagement from both the private and public sectors. Reducing tropical deforestation is a crucial part of meeting global climate goals, and LEAF is a significant step in the right direction. LEAF aims to mobilize \$1 billion in finance by the end of 2021. The addition of PwC and Delta get us closer to this goal,”* he said.

In April, LEAF Coalition issued a call for proposals from tropical forest countries and states – known collectively as “jurisdictions” – for emissions reductions from reducing deforestation verified against the independent and rigorous ART/TREES standard.

The response was extremely positive. LEAF has received proposals from more than 30 jurisdictions that together encompass over half a billion hectares of forest – equivalent to an area larger than the European Union – with potential volumes well in excess of LEAF's initial target of 100 million tonnes. This response clearly demonstrates the substantial resolve from jurisdictions to increase ambition to halt deforestation.

Proposals are under careful review by LEAF participants. LEAF participants aim to announce the first set of agreements by the end of the year. Payments to tropical forest countries will be made on an annual or bi-annual basis as reductions in deforestation are achieved in the years 2022 through 2026.

Forest protection programs that operate across entire states matter not only for achieving results at scale, but also because acting at the jurisdictional level unlocks a suite of crucial policy tools, such as improved land-use regulation. Results must be verified against the independent and rigorous ART/TREES standard. Before funding is provided, independent third-party validators will ensure total deforestation across a jurisdiction has been reduced, that efforts to reduce deforestation have not negatively impacted local communities, and that plans are in place to equitably share benefits with local communities.

In recognition of its novel public and private approach, in September LEAF received three Environmental Finance Awards: Innovation of the Year, Impact Investment of the Year, and Best Voluntary Carbon Market Initiative.

“As a global airline committed to carbon neutrality we rely on high-quality carbon offset projects,” said Ed Bastian, Delta’s CEO. “Protecting the world’s forests is pivotal if we are to truly impact climate change. It is why we are proud to join LEAF in its efforts to protect the vital tropical forests and the billions of people who depend on them, all while supporting sustainable societies.”

“We are excited to be joining this public-private initiative to provide incentives and results-based financing for forest protection at a scale not seen before. As part of our strategy to build trust with stakeholders and deliver sustained outcomes, we’re committed to playing our part to help address the climate crisis. Protecting tropical rainforests is essential to ensuring PwC can meet our global climate targets and address interlinked environmental and societal challenges such as biodiversity and nature loss,” said Bob Moritz, Global Chairman, PwC.

“We cannot solve climate change unless we stop deforestation, and we cannot stop deforestation without accelerated investment from the private sector. Large-scale tropical forest protection programs like those supported by the LEAF Coalition are critical and it’s encouraging to see more business leaders take meaningful climate action by joining LEAF. The urgency of the climate crisis demands that other companies follow suit, fast.” said Fred Krupp, President of the Environmental Defense Fund.

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Notes for Editors

How the LEAF Coalition Works

- On April 22nd the LEAF Coalition issued a global Call for Proposals, posted at www.LEAFCoalition.org, for emissions reductions from deforestation verified against the independent and rigorous ART/TREES standard.
- Interested jurisdictions were invited to submit proposals by July 30th 2021. Over 30 jurisdictions submitted proposals to LEAF.
- LEAF participants aim to announce the first set of agreements by the end of the year.
- Payments will be made annually or bi-annually upon the delivery of results for performance in the years 2022 through to 2026.
- Performance is measured against the ART/TREES standard. ART/TREES is a high integrity standard building on over a decade of progress in international support for reducing deforestation and ensuring environmental integrity.
- Payments will be made after actual emissions reductions have been achieved by reducing levels of deforestation and forest degradation, or restoring forests. These reductions are independently verified by third-parties, called Verification and Validation Bodies (VVBs). VVBs are publicly listed on the ART/TREES website, accredited by an internationally recognized body, and approved by the ART.
- Payments will help tropical forest countries set a course for sustainable economic development that conserves and restores forests, while supporting local communities and livelihoods.
- Emergent, a US non-profit, is providing a platform to facilitate transactions to provide finance to these programs and serves as LEAF’s administrative coordinator.
- Private sector participants may join the Coalition under the current terms at any time leading up to the signing of final agreements by the end of 2021.