Tree Funding
Guide & Application
For potential project partner

This funding is generated by a global network of women who donate monthly towards tropical reforestation. Funds are also donated from our wider network and aligned corporates, these are then pooled and split between the reforestation partners and projects that we have chosen.

This funding aims to regrow trees to change lives of poor farming or fishing communities, or indigenous or tribal peoples of the tropical forests. TreeSisters is primarily looking for projects where local people play a central part as the agents of change on their way to full forest landscape restoration - and especially projects led, inspired, targeting and empowering women of the South or indigenous peoples.

What we fund

TreeSisters finances the re-establishment of forests and tree planting, that can still support forests today under current climate conditions. TreeSisters sometimes uses the short term 'reforestation projects' in its communications, as an umbrella term for the large panel of projects that TreeSisters support hereafter.

- **Reforestation/afforestation**

  TresSisters funds the re-establishment of forest on lands that have been cleared and can still support forests today under current climate conditions —to regain forest cover or to relieve the pressure off nearby natural forests. The re-establishment of forest on lands that have been deforested for less than 50 years is referred to the term 'reforestation'. When the process takes place on lands that have been without forest for more than 50 years but did historically, it refers to 'afforestation'.

  Qualifying projects or project activities could regrow natural forests in protected areas, such as International Tree Foundation in Kenya (in Mount Kenya Forest Reserve), or grow well-managed forests such as Eden Reforestation Projects in Nepal (Community forestry).

  Moreover, in order to combat land degradation and ultimately desertification in the context of highest poverty and food insecurity, TreeSisters funds emergency planting of trees to restore woodlands and savannas on lands that were recently cleared or degraded and can still support today trees under the current climate conditions. The process is called re-greening degraded or cleared woodlands and savannas (drylands).

- **Ecologically-focused forest restoration**

  TresSisters funds ecologically-focused restoration efforts that aim to restore the structure, the biodiversity (composition), and the ecological function(s) of degraded forests [1] or secondary forests[2] —back to a natural and living forest system under regeneration in size and conditions.

  Qualifying projects or project activities could restore natural forests in protected areas or around (buffer), or grow an ecological corridor to connect two protected areas, and remaining tiny natural forest patches along the way, to enable cross-pollination and wildlife movements essentials for many plant and animal species, such as WeForest in Brazil.

- **Planting trees on farms**

  TresSisters funds the smart integration of trees under farming systems, with trees providing multiple ecological services — to improve agriculture production systems' sustainability finding an improved livings, balanced with trees.

  Qualifying projects or project activities could be planting trees through agroforestry systems such as Project Green Hands (Trees for Life) in India to combat land degradation and despair-driven exodus. It also includes restoring "nature-based" farming systems that goes beyond agroforestry such as Ernst Gotsh's syntropic farming.

- **Forest Landscape Restoration**

  Restoration at a landscape scale, balancing a mosaic of interdependent land uses with a focus on trees and forests. It can involve a mix of vegetation from grassland to scrub, regenerating forest to dense forests with a high canopy.

- **Indigenous projects[3]**

  Projects developed, run by, or supporting indigenous and tribal peoples (including aboriginal peoples) of the tropical forests are very important to TreeSisters. We recognize the strong correlation between intact rainforest and the presence of indigenous and tribal forest peoples, and also the overlap between their presence and high biodiversity areas.

- **Other possibilities**

  Possibly something that's not covered under the above classes which involves planting or assisting the natural regeneration of trees that could possibly help people live in harmony with trees in the tropics.

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[1] Degraded forests are formerly forested lands severely impacted by intensive and/or repeated disturbance (such as mining, repeated fires or overgrazing) with consequently inhibited or delayed forest regrowth. Chokkalingam, U. and Wil de Jong. 2001. International Forestry Review 3 (1): 19-26. Available at: http://www.cifor.org/publications/pdf_files/secondaryforests.pdf
[2] Secondary forests are forests which have lost the attributes which makes it a natural forest.
[3] Not requested to follow the regular application procedure.

TreeSisters supports holistic projects. While the majority of the funding must primarily finance reforestation activities, TreeSisters engages beyond tree planting and forest regrowing. TreeSisters funds what it takes to remove the pressure of High Conservation Value Forests[4] (HCVF) by saving them from imminent threats of being cleared.

TreeSisters can fund what's needed for the community to elaborate rules and measures at the community level such as what it takes to stop using fire or other destructive habits. It can be through finding and the use of alternatives to fuelwood and shifting to greener sources of income (other than charcoal making). Moreover, community awareness activities are key to increase forest stewardship. Projects could include activities which are preliminary steps to the creation of a protected area by organizing community-based meetings, and gathering the required documentation, to have a particular forest area recognized as a HCVF in its country. Projects could be helping forest people drafting their community forest plan, based on their ethno values and recuperates traditional knowledge.

Eligibility requirements

Project requirements:

- **Regrowing, caring for and protecting trees/forests**
  As listed in the above section (What we Fund)

- **Located in the tropical biome**
  - Tropical moist climate (tropical rainforest, moist deciduous forest and swamp forests including mangroves);
  - Monsoon climate (tropical dry forests);
  - Tropical mountain climate (montane/cloud forests);
  - Tropical wet and dry climate or tropical savanna climate (tree savannas). At the frontier of tropical humid/tropical dry forests and tropical deserts.

- **Located in developing countries in the tropics**

  TreeSisters Reforestation funds projects located in developing countries[5] in the tropics.

  Our network of TreeSisters women can't fund projects located in developed tropical countries, or overseas territories or outermost regions of non-tropical developed countries –unless developed, run by, or supporting indigenous and tribal peoples of the tropical forests (refer to 'Indigenous project' section).

- **Focused on desired impacts**

  - **Environmental impacts:**

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[4] High Conservation Value Forest encloses: primary forests/old growth forests; High Conservation Value Forests; Intact Forest Landscapes; High Carbon Storage forests.
[5] We follow the United Nations Development Programme's definition of developing and emerging countries, which can be found at : http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/developing-regions.

- Expand natural forest cover
- Restore topsoil (land fertility)
- Restore and maintain watersheds
- Control soil erosion
- Avoid further deforestation and forest degradation of High Conservation Value Forests[6], and in particular [Intact Forest Landscapes](#).

- **Socio-economic impacts:**
  - Improve local culture and livelihoods
  - Foster women's participation and empowerment. *Treesisters supports projects that mainstream (or seek to mainstream) women at all project stages. These projects would also focus on empowering women's economic situations, enhancing their voices, leadership and influence in their communities; so that women can improve their quality of life, their families' quality of life, for sustainable communities, healthier forests and for the well-being of the future generations.*

- **Regrowing a majority of native trees**

  The projects should promote the planting and the natural regeneration of trees that are endemic or native (indigenous) to the region as much as possible - Especially where located in or near primary forests.

  Introducing non-native tree species is prohibited in projects when regrowing natural forests because of the effects of competition or parasitism. This is particularly important on tropical islands with exclusive forest ecosystems and when historically isolated and thus harbouring a tremendous number of endemic species.

  Non-native trees, that are proven non-invasive, can be tolerated for the purpose of communities' livelihood, if allowed by law and if there is sufficient historical information to ensure the species won't become a threat for soils, water quality and water table, as well as and to the native flora and fauna.

- **Majority of broad-leaved trees**

  Treesisters primarily supports the planting/seeding, assisted natural regeneration or avoided deforestation/forest degradation of broadleaved trees - as the best carbon sequesters.

  However, TreeSisters may fund the planting of some conifers in mixed broadleaved/coniferous montane forests where they naturally occur, especially of high conservation value and/or providing the desired environmental impacts outlined above.

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[6] High Conservation Value Forest encloses: primary forests/old growth forests; [High Conservation Value Forests](#); [Intact Forest Landscapes](#); High Carbon Storage forests.

- **Operated for at least 5 years with measured outcomes**

  TreeSisters is a hands-off funding charity, and thus we can only welcome project applications that have a history of achievements. We can however support (totally new) projects brought by a long-term reforestation partner, with satisfactory records, if they are partnering with a local implementing partner that has been operating reforestation and/or forest conservation for at last 5 years at the project location.

- **Earmarked restoration sites**

  It is our duty to accurately report to our network of supporters and sponsors. We can't risk any confusion - particularly with respect to the risk of 'double-counting' (or 'over-valuation') of the number of planted trees, in the case of projects that are funded by multiple donors and/or operated by several organizations. After closing the project, the site can't be reassigned to another reforestation funder.

- **Robust tree accounting and reporting system/method**

  As a hands-off charitable organization, TreeSisters can't support projects without sound and robust monitoring and reporting of the trees (net planted seedlings, regenerated trees, 1-year survival rate), and of socio-economic indicators (generated income, employee count, count of female employees and female occupying managerial positions, number of project direct/ indirect beneficiaries).

Organization requirements:

- **(Legally) registered organization**

  Meaning organization or association registered according to the laws and/or customs of the country.

- **Non-profit, non-governmental or community-based organization/association**

  As a UK-based charity funded by a network of women, TreeSisters can't support projects held by the corporate sector (private company or individuals with private land) or State/local governmental organizations/institutions.

- **With at least 3 non-executive trustees or directors**

  TreeSisters seeks to work with independent, "non-profit-driven" individuals.

- **At least 3 years of financial accounts**

  Externally done or prepared by a qualified accountant.

Application process

TreeSisters is continuously looking for new reforestation projects to fund. There is no specific deadline - although most of the proposals are reviewed on the first quarter of the year to prepare for a major fundraising campaign organized around the celebration of Earth Day.

If you are not one of our current reforestation partners, please submit only one proposal and choose a single project that best matches our selection requirements.

TreeSisters requires all applicants —except projects run by, or supporting indigenous and tribal peoples of the tropical forests, to take the following steps:

1. Take the Quiz to self-check your eligibility.
2. Read thoroughly the Project Partner Tree Funding Guide, and in particular the eligibility requirements before preparing your application.
3. Download, complete and return the application form.

   You will be requested to provide the following information by the application form:

   - Application text
   - Financial & Administrative (fill in a project budget form)
   - Basic facts about the application organisation
   - Basic facts about the local implementing partner(s)
   - Attach to your application a list of supporting documents

Indigenous Projects

We invite project holders of indigenous projects to contact us at info@treesisters.org for an initial brief description of their project and the indigenous and tribal peoples. TreeSisters acknowledges that the eligibility requirements may not necessarily apply to Indigenous Projects. TreeSisters want to respond accordingly by paying a particular attention to such applications and reviewing them in a differently —because such projects are of prime importance and special.

Funding priorities

Priority will be given to:

- The following types of projects:
    - Planting actions to avoid further encroachment into High Conservation Value Forests (and especially Intact Forest Landscapes).
    - Emergency planting actions (including Re-Greening of Drylands)
- projects initiated and being run by women and projects that directly support or empowers women with dedicated project activities. For example, which encourage increasing women's participation, influence, and leadership, as well as projects where women are the direct beneficiaries of the project (be it in indirect benefits or direct economic benefits).
- organizations that conduct cost-effective reforestation activities, with local, renewable, low carbon, and natural solutions. We estimate project based on detailed budget provided. It is TreeSisters' responsibility to select projects with a reasonable price per tree for our

network of generous donors. For information purpose, our current project's cost per tree[7] vary from £0.08 up to £1.15.

- organizations that focus on sustainable and/or harmonious livings. Approaches that seek to strengthen the relationship and dependence between people and trees.
- organizations that have chosen to root the reforestation activities on indigenous or traditional ecological knowledge.

Geographic focus

To embrace the environmental and social priorities above, priority is given to reforestation projects taking place in the countries listed hereafter. These are tropical countries, with at least one of the following characteristics:

- with remaining tropical frontier forests (as defined by Greenpeace/WRI);
- experiencing important land degradation or water scarcity;
- with lower Gender Environment Index scores (Table 1 of Appendix I - Audit of the EGI);
- with highest tropical forest cover loss.

List of priority countries:

- **Latin America and the Caribbean:**

  Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Venezuela.

- **Africa:**

  Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Rep. of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Zimbabwe.

- **Asia:**

  Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Vietnam.

Projects taking place in a tropical forested, developing or emerging country[8], which are not listed above (e.g. Uganda or Belize), are eligible but are not considered the highest priority in terms of geographic focus.

Accepted spending

TreeSisters finances the necessary labor and materials, as well as the core function costs (overheads and running costs) of the reforestation partner holding the project, and that of its possible implementing (local) partners.

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[7] Cost per tree = total project cost divided by number of planted/regenerated trees. Total project costs are all costs associated with the different project's activities and project administrative and management costs (including staff expenses). So beyond the tree establishment cost.
[8] Here is a list of developing/emerging countries: http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/developing-regions

A non-exhaustive list of funded materials include:

- equipment to run small tree nurseries, for cultivation/silviculture (shovels, picks, poly bags, cutting equipment, boots, attire, etc.);
- office furniture;
- all that's required for the workers' safety and security (helmet, gloves, etc.).

If appropriate, absolutely needed and cost-effective, TreeSisters will not turn away your application, if your project budget includes renting or purchasing the following list of larger materials:

- non-motorized (dugouts/canoe/bikes), and possibly motorized vehicles (cars, tricycles, motorbikes, boats) to collect seeds and patrolling; It is not expected that private cars or motorised transport be funded for staff. Before funding such equipment the project should validate with TreeSisters that the intended use is appropriate.
- small mechanized materials such as trimmers and chainsaw for pruning purpose under agroforestry systems;
- energy efficient or low-carbon technologies to avoid deforestation (e.g. fuel efficiency cooking stoves or biogas stoves);
- small equipment which will ease women' work, help women free time and increase their safety;
- small equipment for monitoring and reporting (e.g. GPS, smartphone);
- materials needed to build/re-do tree nurseries, small and low-cost warehouse and facilities, as well as small-scale irrigation systems;
- in-kind donations (of poultry for instance) to start a small business in order to ease the natural regeneration of trees;
- hiring security guard(s) to ensure security/protection of the staff and beneficiaries (while we encourage seeking to partner with the Forest Authority to provide the support of Park Rangers or other law enforcement and protective services).

However, TreeSisters may not finance these, and you will have to find an other source of funding. — **Applicants must be fully transparent about their type, number, purpose and usage modalities, in their application.**

No-Go areas

- Funding of major infrastructure (roads, harbors, piers, etc.)

- Funding of major equipment including major agriculture, silviculture and technical equipment, such as tractors with seed drills, planting or spraying drone-swarms, and other large spraying mechanisms for pesticide, fertilizer and water.

- Funding of materials and labor to build or renovate a large construction such as metal warehouse and offices.

- Genetically modified plant materials and animals which employ molecular genetics.

  Exception: clones for tree reintroduction of very rare species (from secured sources and methods such as from botanical gardens).

- Plant materials procured from large commercial nurseries.

  We prefer projects to purchase plant materials (e.g. tree seeds, seedlings/saplings and cuttings) from the local communities involved in the project or the project central nurseries for quality assurance, as well as to support the local communities' livelihood.

- Seed funding of individuals' or enterprises' microloans

  Project beneficiaries are encouraged to make use of their extra income in traditional or non-traditional forms of money-lending as they wish.

- Microfinance or commercial banking systems.

  We can't fund the setting of microfinance and commercial banking systems. This has to be covered by another sponsor. Your communities may opt for a financial scheme such as community banking/lending instead.

- Social and scientific studies, Research/R&D.

  TreeSisters won't finance research/R&D, this would have to be taken by another donor/sponsor. Projects are encouraged to partner with academic and scientific partners.

- Monoculture and/or exotic tree plantations.

- Funding farming/crops/agriculture (except agroforestry trees).

- Large production of timber or non-timber forest products for industrial use.

  TreeSisters can't fund major production of timber and non-timber forest products for forest product industries.

  However, TreeSisters acknowledges and recognizes communities' ownership rights to forest resources, both timber and non-timber forest products. Hence, communities' access, use, and extraction of forest resources, for commercial purposes or subsistence are accepted, when allowed by law, and under certain land allocation such as community forests.

  Project beneficiaries may collect up to a certain percent of wood for subsistence, such as fencing or household firewood. Adjacent people can harvest of fruits, nuts, leaves, shoots, branches - for food, fodder and firewood for personal use when permitted by law.

- TreeSisters does not fund forest conservation per se (forest management planning and maintaining). However, TreeSisters may fund steps that would help conserve these forests, but . TreeSisters may fund a reforestation or ecological forest restoration project, which can pave the way for conservation to be taken over by other organizations and the countries' responsible authorities.

How we fund

In an approach to treat all projects equally, all of our projects approximately receive an equal share of the total annual awarded amount every quarter. We notify three months in advance of the expected amount to be transferred each quarter.

Given the uncertain nature of the crowd-funding mechanism, TreeSisters cannot guarantee the funding amount if crowdfunding of trees is unsuccessful and insufficient funds are raised. However, we do have some visibility since part of the funds for reforestation is coming from donors who are engaging in monthly donations.

We make the decision to add more projects only if we have secured sufficient funding to sustain our current partners' project for the coming year.

TreeSisters seeks ongoing partnerships where we can see the impact of the project over a number of years. The only limits are your organization's capacity, our fundraising capacity and land availability for reforestation.

For more information

For more information on TreeSisters Tree Funding, please send us an email message to info@treesisters.org.

The Tree Page of the TreeSisters website is also a great resource to learn about the kind of projects we fund.