



Tropical Forest Forever Fund- Debate Task

The Tropical Forests Forever Fund is an initiative whereby some countries around the world fund others to look after their rainforests. It creates for developing countries an economic incentive to reduce deforestation. The idea was first introduced at COP28 in Dubai, since then the Brazilian government have been gaining support for the project, which has come from the governments of other countries, as well as NGOs and private organisations. The requirements for countries to receive money from the fund are as follows:

- Countries must not be high-income countries
- Countries must have a deforestation rate of less than 0.5%
- Countries will receive \$4 for every hectare of forest they have (Brazil has around 496million hectares of forest!)
- For every hectare which is deforested, \$400 will be taken off their sum
- For every hectare which is degraded, \$100 will be taken off their sum
- 20% of the total sum received must go to local and indigenous communities

For this task, each student should receive one country from this pack (students could also work as pairs). They will either be a potential financing country, a representative country, or a nation eligible for funding. Their aim in the debate will depend on their country,

Potential financing country- You must decide how much money you are willing to invest in the project. You might want to ask for new rules to be introduced to make your money worth it. Listen to the other countries and see if they can convince you to pay more.

Rainforest representative country- You must try to convince the financing countries to give as much as possible, and you must convince the eligible countries that this project is better for them than cutting down their forests.

Nation eligible for funding- You must decide whether you think it is worth being part of the project to protect your forests, or if it would be better for your economy to allow deforestation.

Give students some time to read about their country and consider their role in the Tropical Forest Forever Fund. Students should consider that they are playing the role of a countries governments whose views may not align with their own, they should try to play their part as 'realistically' as possible. All students should be given the opportunity to speak and be listened to. Other students should then be allowed to question and discuss with the speaker, speaking respectfully and one at a time. Students should try to convince each other based on the roles they are playing.

■ Potential financing nations

United Kingdom



GDP \$3.6 trillion

The UK is a high-income country with a very low area of forest cover (13%). The historical development of the UK led to serious environmental degradation, including high levels of deforestation and high greenhouse gas emissions. The UK wants to prevent deforestation, biodiversity loss and climate change partly due to the impacts these will have on global food security, water security, supply chains, etc., which will have great social and economic costs to all countries including the UK. The UK is also trying to meet its own goals for net zero carbon and nature restoration. The UK has made a commitment to provide \$15.7 billion in international climate finance between 2021 and 2026 and pledged \$2 billion to the Green Climate Fund in 2023.

The UK was a part of the initial committee who helped design the Tropical Forest Forever Fund; they have expressed that they would likely contribute financially to the project but have not said how much they would give- this may depend on how much influence they have on shaping the rules of the project (they will want to make sure it is very well run and monitored properly to make sure It is worth their money).

■ Potential financing nations

France



GDP \$3.2 trillion

France is a high-income country which has contributed to serious environmental degradation during its development, including high levels of deforestation and high greenhouse gas emissions. France wants to prevent deforestation, biodiversity loss and climate change partly due to the impacts these will have on global food security, water security, supply chains, etc., which will have great social and economic costs to all countries including France. In recent years, France has made a lot of commitments to protecting the environment and helping countries tackle climate issues. In 2023, France contributed \$8.43 billion in climate finance to developing countries; they also pledged \$117 billion to countries who protect their carbon and biodiversity reserves (not necessarily to the TFFF).

France has expressed interest in contributing to the project but have not said how much they would contribute- this may depend on how much influence they have on shaping the rules of the project (they will want to make sure it is very well run and monitored properly to make sure It is worth their money).

■ Potential financing nations

Germany



GDP \$4.7 trillion

Germany is a high-income country which has contributed to serious environmental degradation during its development, including high levels of deforestation and high greenhouse gas emissions. Germany wants to prevent deforestation, biodiversity loss and climate change partly due to the impacts these will have on global food security, water security, supply chains, etc., which will have great social and economic costs to all countries including Germany. In recent years, Germany has committed \$2.3 billion global forest conservation efforts, provided \$7 billion a year to global climate finance, and spent \$1.59 on conservation efforts in 2023.

Germany were one of 5 countries who committed to defining the framework for the TFFF, so they will probably have a say in how the project works. Germany have said they are interested in putting money into the project but have not said how much- they may want to have an important role in how the project is run, as they have already put time into helping to shape the project.

Norway



■ Potential financing nations

GDP \$483 billion

Norway is a high-income country which is a major exporter of oil and gas, which leads to high greenhouse gas emissions. Norway wants to prevent deforestation, biodiversity loss and climate change partly due to the impacts these will have on global food security, water security, supply chains, etc., which will have great social and economic costs to all countries including Norway.

Despite Norway's small population and relatively low GDP compared to other high-income countries, it is one of the world's largest contributors to global conservation. In 2023, Norway pledged over \$1.7 billion to global climate and nature programs and pledged \$100 million to the Amazon Fund. Since 2008, Norway has contributed over \$5.5 billion to countries who reduce tropical deforestation.

Norway were one of 5 countries who committed to defining the framework for the TFFF, so they will probably have a say in how the project works. They have said they are interested in putting money into the project but have not said how much. They already contribute a lot of money to ending tropical deforestation through their own project- Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative (NICFI); this means they will be valuable partners as they have lots of experience in managing similar projects but will also want to project to be really effective if they are going to spend even more money.

United Arab Emirates



■ Potential financing nations

GDP \$537 billion

The UAE is a high-income developing market country which is a major exporter of oil, which cause high levels of greenhouse gas emissions. The UAE wants to prevent deforestation, biodiversity loss and climate change partly due to the impacts these will have on global food security, water security, supply chains, etc., which will have great social and economic costs to all countries including the UAE.

In recent years, the UAE has put a lot of investment into environmental conservation around the world, and they hosted COP28 in 2023; at this time, they also pledged an investment of \$30 billion to Alterra- a project aimed at helping with climate transitioning. Recently, the UAE committed \$40 million to support environmental and sustainable development programmes in Brazil.

The UAE were one of 5 countries who committed to defining the framework for the TFFF, so they will probably have a say in how the project works. They have said they are interested in putting money into the project but have not said how much, although they could have significant spending power- they may want to have an important role in how the project is run, as they have already put time into helping to shape the project.

USA



Potential financing nations

GDP \$29.2 trillion

The USA has the highest GDP of any country in the world and also one of the highest historical contributions to climate change due to their high greenhouse gas emissions and deforestation. The USA wants to prevent deforestation, biodiversity loss and climate change partly due to the impacts these will have on global food security, water security, supply chains, etc., which will have great social and economic costs to all countries including the USA.

In 2023, the USA spent around \$375 million on biodiversity and forestry conservation. In 2023, the USA pledged \$3 billion to the Green Climate Fund, to add to \$3 billion they had pledged previously. However, only \$2 billion of this pledge was received, and the remaining \$4 billion was cancelled by the new government in 2025; they have also pulled out of the Paris Agreement to limit their contribution to climate change. In 2025, the USA has cut funding and protection for environmental services, including those related to climate change.

The USA was a part of the initial committee who helped design the Tropical Forest Forever Fund; they have expressed that they would likely contribute financially to the project but have not said how much they would give. However, as the administration in the USA has changed, it is possible that they will no longer choose to donate to the fund.

Brazil



Rainforest representative nations

GDP \$2.2 trillion

Around 58.5% of Brazil is covered in tropical rainforest, with around 60% of the Amazon Rainforest lying within its borders. In recent decades, Brazil has experienced significant deforestation, losing approximately 513,000km² of forested area, which represents about 6% of its national territory. However, recent efforts have led to a decline in deforestation rates. In 2023, deforestation in the Amazon decreased by 50%. In 2024, however, Brazil experienced a 40% increase in deforestation, partly due to fires and droughts exacerbated by climate change.

Deforestation in Brazil is largely caused by expanding agriculture land, particularly for beef and soy, with around two thirds of cleared land being used for cattle farming. In 2024, Brazil made £12.8 billion from beef exports and \$42.9 billion from soy exports.

Brazil introduced the TFFF concept during COP28 in Dubai and is hosting its official launch at COP30 in Belém. Brazil is actively seeking international support for funding. Brazil could also receive money from the fund if they meet the requirements (e.g. low deforestation rates).

Colombia



■ Rainforest representative nations

GDP \$419 billion

Around 35% of Colombia is covered in tropical rainforest, with around 10% of the Amazon Rainforest lying within its borders. Colombia also has many other types of forest, which means its total forest cover is roughly 58.5%. In recent decades, Colombia has experienced significant deforestation, losing approximately 666,000km² of its forested area. It is hard to estimate exactly how much has been lost as a lot of the deforestation is illegal and therefore not always recorded. Cattle ranching, logging, mining, and infrastructure development are the main causes of deforestation. Although deforestation has been generally decreasing in recent years (by 36% in 2023), in 2024, there was a rise in deforestation, partly due to fires and droughts exacerbated by climate change.

Although Colombia is making efforts to reduce deforestation to conserve its forests, illegal activities (logging, mining, the drug trade) are threatening protected areas.

Colombia was one of the countries who helped to set up the TFFF and helped to shape the rules and framework. Colombia is actively seeking international support for funding. Colombia could also receive money from the fund if they meet the requirements (e.g. low deforestation rates).

Democratic Republic of the Congo



■ Rainforest representative nations

GDP \$71 billion

Around 69% of DRC is covered with rainforest, with around 60% of the Congo Basin Rainforest lying within its borders. In recent decades, DRC has lost 180,000km² of rainforest, which is relatively low compared to deforestation rates in the Amazon. The main causes of deforestation are road development, transforming forest land into agricultural land, collection of fuelwood and charcoal, logging. These are generally informal and small-scale which means they are used for local people but do not have a big impact on the country's economy.

Some efforts have been made to conserve the rainforest; however, the government is now being offered a lot of money for gas and oil which lies underneath the rainforest, including in protected areas.

DRC was one of the countries who helped to set up the TFFF and helped to shape the rules and framework. The DRC government is organizing national workshops to inform its people and local stakeholders about TFFF, to think through how to benefit from it, and how to ensure that the funds are used effectively. With such a high amount of rainforest they could receive a lot of money from the fund if they meet the requirements (e.g. low deforestation rates).

Ghana



■ Rainforest representative nations

GDP \$83 billion

Around 35% of Ghana is covered with forest. In recent decades, Ghana has lost 14,100km² of rainforest, roughly 30% of its forests in 20 years. In 2018, Ghana was losing its rainforests faster than any other country.

The main causes of deforestation used to be logging, as Ghana was one of the biggest timber exporters in the world; much of the logging causing deforestation in Ghana is illegal logging. However, the main cause of deforestation in Ghana is now agriculture, with land being cleared mainly for cocoa farming.

Ghana made \$94 million from cocoa exports in 2024. Ghana runs the Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Programme, which aims to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation especially in cocoa-forest landscapes, and to promote more sustainable cocoa production. Illegal mining is also a huge cause of deforestation and can lead to dangerous elements leaking into soil and waterways, further damaging the ecosystem.

Ghana was one of the countries who helped to set up the TFFF and helped to shape the rules and framework. Ghana could receive money from the fund if they meet the requirements (e.g. low deforestation rates).

Indonesia



■ Rainforest representative nations

GDP \$1.4 trillion

Around 50% of Indonesia is covered with tropical forests, in the 1960's this was as high as 82%.

The main cause of deforestation in Indonesia is to clear land for palm oil plantations with palm oil exports making \$24 billion in 2023. In 2022, Indonesia introduced fines for people growing palm oil on certain forested lands and made it so that growing palm oil on protected forest land would cause the land to be taken by the government to regrow the forest. Mining is now a huge cause of deforestation in Indonesia; it is the largest nickel producer in the world, with nickel exports in 2024 bringing in \$38 billion to the country.

Indonesia was one of the countries who helped to set up the TFFF and helped to shape the rules and framework. Indonesia could receive money from the fund if they meet the requirements (e.g. low deforestation rates). However, there is a lot of pressure on the government to keep allowing deforestation on their land, as the agriculture and mining sectors in particular make a lot of money for the country.

Malaysia



■ Rainforest representative nations

GDP \$422 billion

Around 62% of Malaysia is covered with tropical forests, although only 18% of this is primary forest which has been unaffected by human actions. In recent decades, Malaysia has lost around 19,020k m² of rainforest.

Timber plantations are the main cause of deforestation in Malaysia, with trees such as rubber and acacia being grown on previously rainforest covered areas. Malaysia produces 85% of the world's palm oil, and much of Malaysia's deforestation happens for this reason. Palm oil exports made Malaysia \$22 billion in 2024. Agriculture (including palm oil plantations) create jobs for 10% of Malaysia's population, with 8% of Malaysia's GDP coming from agriculture.

Malaysia has pledged to maintain at least 50% of its land area as forest, but current projections show that if deforestation continues at its current rate, Malaysia will not meet this goal.

Malaysia was one of the countries who helped to set up the TFFF and helped to shape the rules and framework. Malaysia could receive money from the fund if they meet the requirements (e.g. low deforestation rates). However, there is a lot of economic opportunity in continuing to allow deforestation, as the plantations make a lot of money for the country and agriculture employs much of the population.

India



■ Nations eligible for funding

GDP \$3.9 trillion

Around 24% of India is covered with forest, with the majority of this being rainforest.

The main causes of deforestation in India are to expand agricultural land, to develop infrastructure such as roads, and mining.

India now has the largest population in the world (almost 1.5 billion) and more agricultural land is required to feed the growing number of people, as well as supply them with jobs- agriculture makes up about 18% of India's economy. As India's economy is growing, there is also a need for infrastructure such as roads, railways, dams, and power plants which make production and transport of goods easier and cheaper; industry makes up 28% of the economy.

In India, the rainforests support the lives of rural populations by supplying resources like food, fuel, and timber, and they regulate the climate and water cycle. India is experiencing increasing heatwaves, severe floods, and intense droughts due to climate change which threatens their food security, water supplies, and coastal communities.

Madagascar



■ Nations eligible for funding

GDP \$17.4 billion

Around 12% of Madagascar is covered with forest, with the majority of this being rainforest. Most of the deforestation happening in Madagascar is to make space for subsistence farming (farming food to eat, not to sell); around 80% of people in Madagascar rely on subsistence farming to survive. 80% of the plant animal species on Madagascar can only be found on this one island, and 5% of the world's species live here. Subsistence farmers are vulnerable to climate change due to droughts, cyclones, and unpredictable growing seasons leading to food insecurity.

Mexico



■ Nations eligible for funding

GDP \$1.9 trillion

Around 9% of Mexico is covered with tropical forest, with total up to 35% being forested overall. One of the main causes of deforestation in Mexico is cattle ranching, with over \$1 billion worth of cattle being exported to the USA in 2024. Agricultural land for crops such as soy, corn and avocados is also a significant cause of deforestation; agriculture in total made up almost 4% of Mexico's GDP in 2024. There is a lot of interest in Mexico for tourists and tourism made up 8.6% of Mexico's GDP in 2024. The growth of tourist infrastructure is also a big (and increasing) cause of deforestation. In Mexico, climate change is causing increased droughts, floods and storms which have led to food insecurity. This will be a big problem mostly for rural and poorer communities.

Vietnam



■ Nations eligible for funding

GDP \$476 billion

Around 44% of Vietnam is covered with tropical forest. Since the 1990's, Vietnam has seen an increase in forest cover, rather than a decrease; however, a lot of the forests that have been planted are plantations rather than natural forests (these do not have a lot of ecological value). Deforestation is still happening in Vietnam, the main cause of this is for large-scale farming, particularly coffee, rubber, and palm plantations. Coffee exports brought \$6 billion to the Vietnamese economy in 2024. Other types of agriculture are also leading to deforestation; between 30-40% of Vietnam's population are farmers, and the majority of these are small scale rural farmers growing crops like rice. The construction of infrastructure such as power plants is also causing high levels of deforestation in Vietnam. These are needed to provide energy to the growing population, and to improve the economy as energy is required for factories several industries. Vietnam is being impacted by climate change through rising temperatures, more severe floods and droughts and rising sea levels. These effects damage food security, water resources, infrastructure, and human health, threatening livelihoods and national economic stability.

Kenya



■ Nations eligible for funding

GDP \$124.5 billion

Only around 5.4% of Kenya is covered with forest and only a small part of this is tropical forest (The Kakamega Forest).

The main cause of deforestation in Kenya is agriculture, with space being used for cattle farming and to grow crops such as beans and maize. Agriculture makes up 33% of Kenya's GDP, and on top of this, another 27% of the economy is linked to the agricultural sector. 40% of Kenya's population work in agriculture. Kenya's population is also rapidly growing, and only around 20% of its land is suitable for farming.

Another significant cause of deforestation in Kenya is logging for timber and charcoal. Kenya had a ban on logging which they removed in 2023 to help create jobs, boost the economy, and supply timber to local communities.

Kenya is vulnerable to climate change due to increased droughts and floods, which affect food security, water availability, and infrastructure, and lead to displacement of people and high economic costs.