

# UK launches support package to protect tropical rainforests in Colombia

- World Environment Day sees COP26 President and Business Secretary Alok Sharma pledge support to help protect Amazon and tropical rainforests and its precious biodiversity
- UK funding and expertise will help to reduce and control deforestation, build institutions and create sustainable rural economies in regions where millions of livelihoods rely on the forest
- Colombia has been a regional champion of rainforest conservation in the wake of devastating fires and deforestation of the Amazon due to conflict and the coronavirus pandemic
- Colombia has been a long-standing partner on climate action, and 2020 marks one year of the UK-Colombia Sustainable Growth Partnership

COP26 President and Business Secretary Alok Sharma is marking World Environment Day with a £64m package of funding and support for tropical rainforests in Colombia, bolstering the nation's efforts to protect the Amazon and tropical forests in Colombia, and its fragile ecosystem from deforestation.

Part of the UK's commitment to fighting global climate change, the package will strengthen Colombia's land rights and criminal justice system, controlling deforestation while building a fairer, greener and more resilient rural economy in the region.

The Amazon and tropical rainforests are a powerful symbol of the fight against climate change, and accounts for 25% of all carbon emissions absorbed by the world's forests. Colombia is the second most biodiverse country in the world and has been a leading voice in South America on environmental issues, but has recently seen a spike in deforestation and forest fires in the wake of conflict and the impact of coronavirus.

COP26 President Alok Sharma, said:

We all have a duty to work together to protect our planet's precious biodiversity.

Our work with the Colombian government will help stop deforestation in the Amazon and across the country, protect precious ecosystems, and support sustainable, rural livelihoods for communities that depend on the forest.

Speaking on behalf of the Colombian government, Minister for the Environment, Ricardo Lozano said:

These cooperation resources correspond to the biggest bilateral grant that we have received so far for environmental purposes during this administration. They are the result of the bilateral Partnership for Sustainable Growth that we jointly signed in London in June of 2019, and that will focus on supporting the fight against deforestation and environmental crime, as well as the creation of sustainable economic livelihoods.

Moreover, they are a result of the excellent relationship that we hold with the United Kingdom, to whom we appreciate their invaluable support”.

The latest funding builds on £173 million of UK support to Colombia and comes as part of the UK’s International Climate Finance (UK ICF) programme and will provide £64 million in grant finance to tackle deforestation in conflict-affected, deforestation hotspots of rural Colombia. The programme will deliver the cadastre work through the World Bank, environmental crime measures through the UN Office of Drugs and Crime, as well as additional local partners working with communities to establish sustainable farming and forestry approaches and businesses.

The UK Government has committed to spending 20% of UK ICF on forest and land use interventions and our goal of reduced net carbon emissions. UK ICF is the government’s commitment to provide at least £5.8 billion between 2016-2020 to tackle global climate change.

Colombian President Iván Duque Márquez has been a regional leader and climate champion and has strengthened his leading role in the wake of the disastrous 2019 Amazon fires.

Today’s announcement has been welcomed by leading environmental groups, including the World Wildlife Fund.

Manuel Pulgar, the WWF’s Climate and Energy Leader and Friend of COP26, said:

As we struggle with the challenges of this pandemic, it has never been more evident that our very health and survival depend on the health of our planet. This is a critical moment for all of the world to take decisive action on climate and the loss of biodiversity.

This leadership from the governments of the UK and Colombia to drive greater ambition and lead by example to develop nature-based solutions that create opportunities for economic recovery post COVID, built on systemic changes for sustainability, inclusivity and equity.

The announcement follows the UK government’s confirmation that the UN climate change talks will be held in Glasgow in November 2021.

## Notes to editors

- Read details about the [International Climate Fund](#).
  - Colombia has consistently shown ambitious and committed leadership on deforestation.
  - UK commitments have contributed to reducing international deforestation and protecting standing forest in a variety of ways. For example:
1. through the REDD+ Early Movers Programme, we have supported over 5000 indigenous families to benefit from protected forest, with half our programmes run by indigenous women
  2. our silvo-pastoral systems work has planted over 2.6 million trees across 34,000 hectares of pasture, mitigating 1.1 million tonnes of CO2 and working with around 5.000 farmers in all five regions of Colombia