

Canada's Forest-related Contributions to Sustainable Development

A Report to UNFF in support of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals under Review in 2019

1. Summary

Forests are essential to sustainable development. The following report describes Canada's forest contribution to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and illustrates how Canada is using sustainable forest management to ensure its forests provide a range of environmental, social, economic and cultural benefits for current and future generations. It was produced at the request of the United Nations Forum on Forests as a contribution towards the 2019 review of SDGs 4 (education), 8 (growth and employment), 10 (reduced inequalities), and 13 (climate action). This report seeks to demonstrate the relevance of forest to the success of Agenda 2030 by highlighting select actions, research and approaches being undertaken by Canadian governments and stakeholders in support of sustainable development, noting their simultaneous support to the United Nations' Global Forest Goals. Several of the examples provided in this report apply to more than one of the Goals and associated targets under review.

The key points of emphasis in this report are:

- Forests are essential to sustainable development and are relevant to all SDGs
- Public awareness and education are key elements in the sustainable management and use of natural resources
- Sustainable forest management and economic growth work in tandem to create "win-win" scenarios
- Reducing inequality in the forest sector means meaningfully engaging and empowering women and Indigenous people
- There can be no solution to climate change without forests, but forests are also impacted by climate

2. Introduction

In 2015, United Nations member states, including Canada, adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Agenda includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 associated targets aimed at improving the world's social, economic and environmental well-being in a sustainable manner. Forests will be a key part in realizing these Goals. Forests purify air and water; provide food, shelter, renewable energy, timber and jobs; as well as recreational and cultural benefits.

Given that forests cover 30% of the Earth's land area, improving sustainable forest management (SFM) can have significant positive impacts on the SDGs. Canada's forests cover 347 million hectares,

for about 9% of the world's forest cover¹. SFM in Canada is based on rigorous laws and scientific research, indicators, planning and public participation. The majority of the policy on that governs forestry activities is developed and administered by provincial and territorial governments.

Forests are dynamic in nature with most forest cover loss characterized as temporary due to natural disturbances, such as fire and insects. These disturbances are part of the natural regeneration of Canada's forests.13.1 (3 (io)-5(e)-3 (n)2.3 ()(g)83 (s)-1.3 4 BDC 1883 (s)d(re)t(s)-1i71 (at)-3sC

2.2. Sustainable Forest Management in Canada

Sustainable forest management (SFM) is a way of using and caring for forests to maintain their environmental, social and economic values and benefits over time. Canada is a world leader in SFM, applying it across the country's publicly owned forests, which account for about 91% of Canada's forest land. This is an important commitment and it provides assurance to the international marketplace that Canadian forest products are sourced from forests that are managed sustainably.

Most of Canada's forest (a little less than 90%) is owned and managed on behalf of Canadians by provincial and territorial governments as public land, just under 2% is federally controlled, 2% is owned by Indigenous Peoples, and the remaining 6% is under private ownership. As a result, federal, provincial and territorial governments have all set legislation and regulations for the protection and management of their respective forests. The different levels of responsibility are as follows:

Canada's federal, provincial and territorial governments have long recognized that forests and their many resources are essential to the long-term well-being of Canada's environment, communities, and economy. Managing forests sustainably is therefore critical for Canada, not only to balance

[Sustainable Forestry Initiative](#) and the [Canadian Parks Council's](#) diverse networks. This investment is critical at a time when the need to fill the aging workforce is at an all-time high in the forest sector.

The Green Jobs in Green Spaces initiative is building skills in our youth – providing them with hands-on learning to develop skills like identification and navigation, teamwork, research, communication, and time management. These transferable skills will help to build future forest and conservation leaders. These experiences are taking place in forests across Canada, engaging urban and rural youth, women, new Canadians, and Indigenous communities. It is necessary to provide experiences for youth to explore a career in the forest, and with over \$7 million being invested in our youth to explore green jobs, it is clear that the Government of Canada believes that this can be achieved by providing support for employers to increase those opportunities.

Public awareness is as equally important as economic opportunity. Established in 1972, the

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4. Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

Canada has supported SFM internationally for many years. More recently, advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is a key priority for Canada. Canada's new [Feminist International Assistance Policy](#), launched in June 2017, is evidence-based and takes into account Canada's expertise and comparative advantage. It supports the Sustainable Development Goals, which aim to eradicate poverty by 2030, and it is also aligned with the Paris Agreement on climate change, which seeks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect the environment. Among other things, this new policy supports women's leadership and decision making in climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts, resilience-building and sustainable natural resource management.

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5.3 Clean Energy for Rural and Remote Communities

Many rural, remote and Indigenous communities are heavily dependent on diesel and other fossil fuels for reliable heat and power. Replacing these systems with renewable energy projects represents a significant o

6. Goal 13: Climate Action

“Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts”

There is no solution to climate change without forests.

needs of the forest sector and communities within forested landscapes. Regionally-based approaches to climate change adaptation facilitate stakeholde

7. Conclusion

Forests are an essential component of sustainable development. They provide a variety of ecosystem and livelihood benefits that simultaneously work toward multiple development objectives, directly or indirectly contributing to all of the SDGs that support Agenda 2030.

As demonstrated above, Canada has world-renowned science in areas of forest monitoring, carbon accounting, and in the development of new forest products and applications. Canada is also a policy leader in sustainable forest management through cooperation and multistakeholder engagement. With a long track record of success and collaboration, as well as a deep well of scientific expertise, Canada will be able to retain its adaptive capacity and ensure the sustainability of our forests for decades to come.

With respect to the SDGs highlighted in this report, we have seen that: public awareness and education around the multiple benefits and functions of forests are as important as economic opportunity when it comes to sustainable development (SDG 4). In fact, Canada believes that economic opportunity and nature conservation are complimentary. The programs and innovations taking place in Canada promoting sustained and sustainable economic growth and decent work highlight this (SDG 8); reducing inequalities (SDG 10) means, among other things, encouraging women and Indigenous Peoples' participation in the domestic workforce as well as in official development assistance.

Of all of the Goals explored in this report, SDG 13 is most directly related to forests. We stated that there is no solution to climate change without forests, while forests are also influenced by climate. Sustainable forest management based on scientific research, innovative approaches to wood product development and use, and partnerships, combined with robust legislative and regulatory tools, is fundamental to adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change.