



# CIFOR-ICRAF PRINCIPLES FOR SUCCESSFUL TREE PLANTING

Photo by Axel Fassio/CIFOR



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## THE RIGHT TREE

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Trees (provenances, species genotypes) from the right seed sources should be suited to their purpose and environment. Planters, whether individuals or communities should carefully consider what they wish to achieve and what their choice may imply in terms of cultivation and management requirements, and possible effects apart from the main purpose, including effects of societal, environmental and biodiversity value.

# THE RIGHT TREE FOR THE RIGHT PLACE AND THE RIGHT PURPOSE

## THE RIGHT PLACE

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Trees should be fit for their environment, the planting site. They should be of known performance, adapted and adaptable, able to survive and grow healthy for many years under variable conditions as an element of a healthy system. The right source of the right species ensures the adaptability in the right place. Trees should be planted where sufficient resources are supportive and where there are clear rules governing land use, robust community participation and long-term provision for planning and monitoring.

## THE RIGHT PURPOSE

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The choice of species and source of planting material is guided by the conditions and requirements of the planting site and the aspirations of the tree planter. The purpose could be for products (foods, timber, fodder etc) and/or services (erosion control, shade, water sheds management, carbon, etc).

In multi-purpose, landscapes (forests, farms, woodlots, parklands etc.) trees support livelihoods and environment.

# THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES ARE DESIGNED TO HELP MAKE TREE PLANTING INITIATIVES AS SUCCESSFUL AS POSSIBLE:



## 1. It starts with the seed

Tree planting is not simple. Consider when you will plant, which species or genotypes, where you will get the planting materials well in advance of the tree-planting season. Think about the advice you'll need, the costs and benefits, methodologies and planting procedures.



## 2. Plant using diverse species

Planting multiple tree species improves biodiversity and builds ecological resilience. Choosing native species over introduced species can further bolster biodiversity by providing homes for native animals and plants.



## 3. Be mindful of non-forest ecosystems

Planting trees isn't the only way to restore landscapes. Other ecosystems like grasslands serve important functions and shouldn't be converted to forests.



## 4. Rebuild multi-purpose landscapes

Forest landscapes can do much more than just store carbon. They produce fruits, nuts and wood, support livelihoods, improve soil nutrition, and regulate the water cycle. Mosaic landscapes and agroforestry systems that combine tree planting with agriculture can make the most of the forest's many functions.



## 5. Engage stakeholders

Deciding where, when and how to plant trees requires ongoing negotiation with all stakeholders. Community members, seed source custodians, small-scale nursery networks, scientists, non-governmental organizations, businesses, governments, and international organizations all need to be actively involved in the tree planting project to ensure its success.



## 6. Plan with people in mind

People should be at the center of tree planting projects and tree planting should be based on expressed demand of future beneficiaries of tree planting and through developing local networks of seed sources and nurseries rather than short-term project production of seeds and seedlings. Careful consideration should be given to how the planted trees will affect nearby communities and project leaders should seek to create landscapes that benefit all community members regardless of gender, age, economic and social status.





## 7. Develop knowledge networks

Information about the suitability of species and sources, management of species and development of value chains for products should be an integral part of tree planting. This will enable development of networks of knowledgeable producers, distributors and tree growers.



## 8. Engage communities and give them the tools they need

Seedlings have a greater chance to become healthy, productive trees when communities and individuals are given the resources and training they need. Community members and smallholder farmers of all ages, genders and status require equal opportunities to participate in tree planting from planning to monitoring.



## 9. Consider natural regeneration vs. planting

Assisting forests to grow back naturally is often the better choice for forest restoration if good sources of natural regeneration are available and if natural succession is actively facilitated. It can cost less than traditional tree planting and can result in landscapes that are better matched to their environments - although climate change may necessitate assisted migration.

### Further reading:

[People-Centric Nature-Based Land Restoration through Agroforestry: A Typology](#)

[A systematic review of the socio-economic impacts of large-scale tree plantations, worldwide](#)

[When is a forest a forest? Forest concepts and definitions in the era of forest and landscape restoration](#)

[Do timber plantations contribute to forest conservation?](#)

[Forest restoration: Getting serious about the 'plus' in REDD+](#)

[Participatory monitoring to connect local and global priorities for forest restoration](#)

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### CIFOR-ICRAF

Founded in 1993 and 1978 respectively, CIFOR and ICRAF are centres of scientific and development excellence that have united to conduct research-in-development on the most pressing challenges facing the world's landscapes. We are committed to an equitable world of sustainable landscapes that foster human well-being. We strive to use the world's best science to eradicate hunger, reduce poverty, provide affordable and clean energy, protect life on land, and combat climate change.



CIFOR-ICRAF are members of the CGIAR, a global research partnership for a food-secure future, focusing on poverty reduction, increased food and nutritional security, and sustainable natural-resource systems. Our work also strongly addresses the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement.