Cool Earth

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**Cool Earth** is a [UK](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UK)-based international [NGO](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-governmental_organization) that protects endangered [rainforest](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rainforest) in order to combat [global warming](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_warming), protect [ecosystems](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecosystems) and to provide employment for local people.

The organisation receives its income through business partnerships, trust funds and individual contributions from over 50,000 sponsors in order to secure specific tracts of endangered rainforest. Through the Cool Earth website, an individual can donate to support rainforest and [indigenous](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indigenous_peoples) communities to protect their rainforest.

In 2015, it was named Charity of the Year in its category at the Civil Society Media Charity Awards[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cool_Earth#cite_note-5) and best International NGO at the PEA Awards. It is supported by various celebrities including Professor [James Lovelock](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Lovelock), Dame [Vivienne Westwood](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vivienne_Westwood), [Kelly Hoppen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kelly_Hoppen), [Ricky Gervais](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ricky_Gervais), and [Sir David Attenborough](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sir_David_Attenborough).

## **History**

Cool Earth was founded in 2007 by entrepreneur [Johan Eliasch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johan_Eliasch) and MP [Frank Field](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frank_Field_%28British_politician%29) out of their common interest in protecting the rainforest. They argued that it was unacceptable that the 20% of carbon emissions created by tropical deforestation were ignored by the [Kyoto protocol](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kyoto_protocol) and that urgent, direct action was needed to put a stop to deforestation, lest it take up to twenty years to get an idea adopted by the political bureaucracy.

## **Activities**

Cool Earth's ethos is that the most effective custodians of rainforests are the people who have lived there for generations as they have the most to lose from its destruction. Their approach is to work with indigenous and rainforest-based communities to secure threatened rainforest that, within 18 months or less, would otherwise be sold to loggers and ranchers. The charity provides local people with the support they need to get income from the forest without cutting it down so that the forest is worth more intact. This is done by concentrating on three key areas, these are:

* Forest Protection
* Income Generation
* Partner Support

The provision of resources for these areas enables the building of sustainable livelihoods, better schools, better clinics and the empowerment of partner villages to monitor their forest and secure it from [illegal logging](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illegal_logging). This basic model used by Cool Earth has been described as "simple but so intelligent" by the Times journalist Deborah Ross.[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cool_Earth#cite_note-10) The charity is currently working alongside 118 rainforest villages in [Peru](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peru), the [Democratic Republic of the Congo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democratic_Republic_of_the_Congo) and [Papua New Guinea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Papua_New_Guinea) and previously worked with communities in Brazil and Ecuador, so far helping to protect over 500,000 acres of forest.The charity argues that to be selected each project must fulfill the following criteria:

* They are located where rainforest is immediately threatened by human activities like [logging](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logging) and [cattle ranching](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cattle_ranching);
* Their location or their conservation acts as a protective blockade for the forest beyond them, ensuring optimum protection of forests;
* They are mature rainforests with high levels of [biodiversity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biodiversity).

In Peru the charity is working with two indigenous communities at the frontline of deforestation, the [Ashaninka](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ash%C3%A1ninka_people) and the [Awajún](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aguaruna_people).

Cool Earth has been partnered with villages in the Asháninka community since 2008, after they contacted the charity desperate to be able to turn loggers away despite living below the poverty line. The project has expanded to 14 other Asháninka villages and the support from Cool Earth has enabled the villages to carry out activities such as strengthen register community associations, demarcate their community borders, carry out voluntary patrols, enable emergency evacuations, establish a cacao and coffee producers association, provide mosquito nets for every villager, build medical outposts and improve primary schools. The partnership with the Awajún villages in Northern Peru, near the Ecuadorian border is aiming to protect 56,000 acres of forest. The key activities being supported are the development of cacao production, fish farms and traditional jewellery. The jewellery producers use seeds harvested from the rainforest and their work has inspired Vivienne Westwood’s Gold Label Collection and featured in her Paris fashion show.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the charity has been working since 2014 with five rainforest villages in the remote province of [Maniema](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maniema). Here civil war has resulted in the people living in extreme poverty. So far Cool Earth has helped improve the villages rights over their forest through training of local people in GPS mapping and plotting 600,000 acres of community forest.

Cool Earth's youngest project is in Papua New Guinea and was launched in September 2015. It is working with three indigenous and rainforest coastal villages on the edge of the [palm](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_and_environmental_impact_of_palm_oil) plantation frontier. They are aiming to build sustainable livelihoods to enable the villagers to halt the advance of the palm plantations from the east and protect the pristine rainforest behind.

Cool Earth is one of three bodies supporting The [Queen's Commonwealth Canopy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queen%27s_Commonwealth_Canopy), a project launched in 2015 to preserve and promote forested areas throughout the Commonwealth.[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cool_Earth#cite_note-RT-18)[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cool_Earth#cite_note-19)

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## **Criticism**

The Brazilian TV show [*Fantástico*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fant%C3%A1stico) accused Cool Earth of buying up rainforest land. Three points of correction were provided to the Guardian at the time of publication highlighting the article's factual errors relating to how Cool Earth operates:

1. "Every single Cool Earth partnership adheres to all local regulations. In addition, Cool Earth insists upon full financial transparency in every dealing with community associations."
2. "All of Cool Earth's partnerships establish Free Prior and Informed Consent well beyond the recommendations of the UN's Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention."
3. "The logging concession that was acquired and closed down by Johan Eliasch in order to protect an area of Brazilian rainforest has no link whatsoever with Cool Earth and predates the founding of the charity."

The corrections also clarified that Cool Earth never has and never will acquire rainforest, instead providing grant funding and technical support to communities wanting to protect their rainforest. The charity states that sponsoring rainforest is not the same as buying it and that donated money goes toward helping local communities protect rainforest land. A column in the *Guardian* concluded that "The reality is that the organisation could not buy up the Amazon, even if it wanted to, since much of it is already in public hands."