

## What is carbon offsetting?

# GS SUSTAINABILITY SPOTLIGHT

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nature-based investing in



### What is carbon offsetting?

Carbon offsetting is a nature-based solution that involves investing in projects that reduce or remove greenhouse gas emissions in order to compensate for one's own emissions. These projects can be nature-based, such as reforestation, afforestation, wetland restoration, or soil carbon sequestration, or they can be based on renewable energy or energy efficiency.

When an individual, company, or organization buys carbon offsets, they are essentially funding a project that reduces or removes carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. The project then generates carbon credits, which represent the amount of carbon dioxide that has been removed or avoided. These carbon credits can be sold on the carbon market, and the buyer can use them to offset their own emissions. By purchasing carbon credits, the buyer is essentially balancing out their own emissions by supporting emissions reductions elsewhere.

Nature-based carbon offset projects are particularly valuable because they not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions but also offer additional environmental and social benefits, such as biodiversity conservation, soil and water conservation, and community development. For example, reforestation projects can provide important habitat for wildlife, improve soil quality, and support local livelihoods.

However, it's important to note that carbon offsetting should not be seen as a substitute for reducing one's own emissions. The first step in addressing climate change should always be to reduce one's own carbon footprint by implementing energy efficiency measures, using renewable energy sources, and adopting sustainable practices. Carbon offsetting should be used as a complementary tool to achieve net zero emissions when it is not possible to eliminate emissions completely. Some best practices for implementing energy efficient measures are:

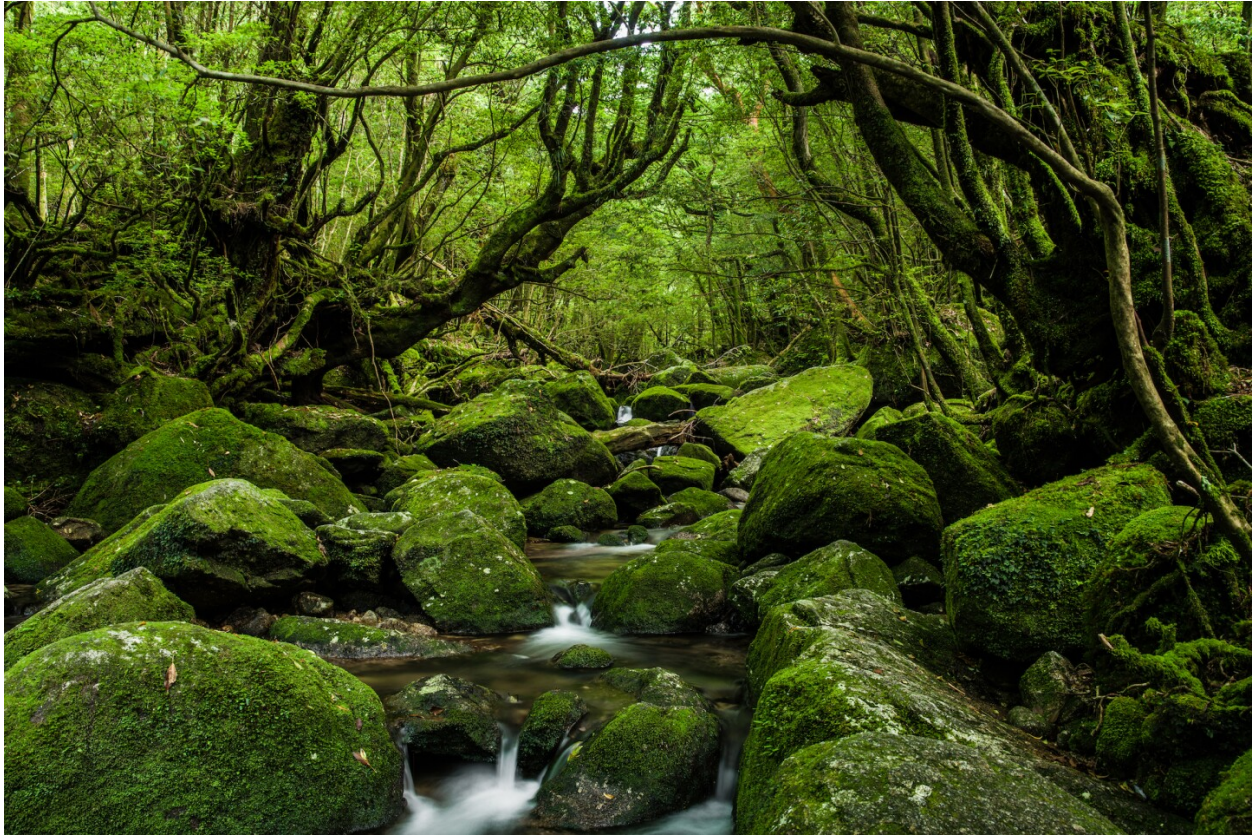
1. **Reduce carbon emissions:** The incentive travel industry can reduce its carbon emissions by encouraging low-carbon modes of transportation, such as using public transportation or hybrid and electric vehicles.
2. **Use sustainable accommodations:** The industry can encourage the use of accommodations that have implemented sustainability measures, such as energy-efficient lighting and water-saving measures. This can include sourcing food and beverages from local and sustainable sources, reducing plastic waste, and promoting sustainable tourism practices.
3. **Minimize waste:** Companies can minimize waste by encouraging the use of reusable items such as water bottles and utensils, and by implementing recycling programs. The industry can also work with local communities to implement waste reduction and recycling programs.
4. **Support local communities:** The incentive travel industry can support local communities by working with local suppliers and supporting community-based tourism initiatives. This can help to promote economic development and preserve local culture and heritage.
5. **Promote education and awareness:** Companies can promote education and awareness among their clients and employees about the importance of sustainability and the impacts of their travel activities. This can include providing information about local environmental issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices.

Why is this important to the incentive travel industry?

Carbon offsetting allows companies to balance out the carbon emissions associated with their business activities by supporting projects that reduce or remove greenhouse gas emissions elsewhere.

Want more information? Contact Jane Scaletta, Changemaker with Terra Focus  
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## What are ancient forests?



Ancient forests, also known as old-growth forests or primary forests, are forests that have developed over a long period of time without significant disturbance from human activities or natural disasters. These forests are typically characterized by their age, large trees, complex vertical structure, and high biodiversity.

Ancient forests can be found in many parts of the world, including the temperate rainforests of the Pacific Northwest in North America, the boreal forests of Siberia and Canada, and the tropical rainforests of South America, Africa, and Southeast Asia. They provide a wide range of ecological services, such as carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation, water regulation, and soil stabilization.

Ancient forests play an important role in mitigating climate change because they store large amounts of carbon, both in the trees themselves and in the soil. Trees absorb carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) from the atmosphere during photosynthesis, and in the process, release oxygen (O<sub>2</sub>) into the air. This process helps to balance the levels of CO<sub>2</sub> and O<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere, and is critical for supporting life on earth.

In addition to producing oxygen, ancient forests can also help to filter pollutants from the air. Trees have a complex system of roots, trunks, and leaves that can trap and absorb harmful particles, such as dust, smoke, and other pollutants. This process helps to improve air quality, and is particularly important in urban areas where air pollution can have significant negative impacts on human health.

When ancient forests are cleared or disturbed, this carbon is released into the atmosphere, contributing to greenhouse gas emissions and climate change.

However, ancient forests are under threat from human activities such as logging, agriculture, and infrastructure development. It is estimated that **only about 20% of the world's original ancient forest** cover remains intact, making their conservation a critical priority for both environmental and social reasons.

In addition to sequestering carbon, ancient forests also provide important habitat for a wide range of plant and animal species, and play a critical role in regulating local and global climate patterns. They also help to maintain soil health and prevent erosion, and provide important cultural and spiritual benefits for indigenous and local communities.

By protecting and restoring ancient forests, carbon offsetting programs can help to address climate change by reducing the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. They can also help to protect biodiversity and ecosystem services, and support the livelihoods and well-being of local communities.

Why is this important to the incentive travel industry?

So we can continue to visit beautiful destinations with clean and pure air. By protecting and restoring ancient forests, we can help to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

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