



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

## *News Release*

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### **Forest experts ensure policy makers can see the wood for the trees**

Experts are joining forces to tackle challenges facing the world's forests, which are under increasing pressure from changing climates and growing demand for resources.

A new centre of expertise will address the challenges posed by conflicting demands for land use – be it for agriculture, or timber production – and political debate on how land is used and managed.

These will be considered alongside the changes that landscapes face as a result of warming climates and extreme weather, especially in tropical regions.

The centre, hosted by the University of Edinburgh, will seek to be a hub for industry and community discussions on how best to manage forests and landscapes into the future.

Those taking part will also focus on how to work with and support people who rely on forests and other natural spaces for their homes or livelihoods.

It will aim to challenge issues such as deforestation, responsible logging, conservation, and landscapes' role in ensuring sustainable food supplies.

The Centre for Sustainable Forests and Landscapes will seek to build on the University of Edinburgh's ongoing research activities and capitalise on its links with industry and political partners, and community and conservation agencies.

It will also give researchers, businesses, policymakers and other stakeholders at national and international level access to the latest scientific discoveries and technology.

A postgraduate degree programme underpinning the work of the Centre, hosted by the University, is scheduled to begin in 2019.

Professor Jaboury Ghazoul, Director of the Centre for Sustainable Forests and Landscapes, said: "Our natural landscapes face myriad demands for resources, alongside political and climate-driven pressures. We hope the Centre for Sustainable Forests and Landscapes can be an honest broker in facilitating informed progress to shape and manage these valuable habitats."

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Fergus Ewing, Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy, said: “We have a superb forest resource in Scotland and have big ambitions for the future of forestry.

“However, to achieve our desire to plant more trees and manage this valuable resource, we need to inspire action in a shared national endeavour. I believe the creation of this new centre is very timely and will act as a catalyst in our joint efforts to reach our goal.

“Work to drive forward our vision is gathering pace. Only last week I launched a consultation on a draft Forestry Strategy For Scotland which sets out a long-term strategic approach to managing our forests. This strategy has sustainable forest management and expansion at its core and I would welcome the expert views from this new centre.”

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