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From: Science and Development Network, More from this Affiliate
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Training tree fellers helps cut carbon emissions

Improved management of tropical forests can substantially reduce global carbon dioxide emissions and should be given high priority in negotiations for the 2009 Copenhagen [Climate change](#) agreement, write Francis E. Putz and colleagues in *PLoS Biology*.

Discussions on reduced emissions due to deforestation and degradation (REDD) tend to focus on tropical deforestation. But degradation should also be taken into account, say the authors, as it could cause carbon losses of the same magnitude as those from deforestation.

Currently, loggers harvest around 1—20 trees per hectare. But for every tree logged using this selective method, up to 20 others are severely damaged due to poorly trained fellers and machine operators.

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Studies show that implementing adequate training for forest workers can reduce more than half of this damage. The authors cite two examples — Amazonian Brazil and Malaysia — where “improved management reduced carbon emissions by approximately 30 per cent, relative to conventional logging”.

Putz and colleagues point out that emissions reductions made through improved management could equal at least ten per cent of those achievable by curbing tropical deforestation.

But, currently, improved forest management is practised in less than five per cent of tropical forests, and economic incentives to boost this number would represent “a big step towards sustainability”.

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