Online Only Summary

From both social and ecological perspectives, investments in tree planting are often made poorly. This unsatisfactory situation is despite knowledge being available on how to do things better, but a number of measures are needed to bridge the knowledge–action gap. In this Comment we discuss one of the measures that we consider to be important for improvement, which is related to the ‘sourcing’ of tree planting material for planting projects. We suggest that in circumstances where potential planters of trees apply for funding from investors to undertake tree planting, they should have to explain clearly the trees they intend to plant and how they are going to source the necessary seeds and seedlings of these trees. Our view, expressed in this Comment and supported by a survey of the global tree planting community, is that investors should make the receipt of funds for planting conditional on an adequate explanation on these points.