

Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030

Summary

- Ecosystem degradation is impacting billions of people, causing colossal economic loss and threatening species survival. This will be exacerbated by climate change and current development trajectories.
- Governments and non-state actors must take collective global action to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems worldwide. The Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, supporting the implementation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), is an opportunity to build a global movement for action.

Background

Land degradation through human activities is negatively affecting the well-being of at least 3.2 billion people, costing more than 10% of the annual global gross product in loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services and reducing productivity in 23% of the global terrestrial area¹².

Vegetative cover is declining, affecting croplands, forest lands, grasslands and rangelands, especially in vulnerable areas. Desertification impacts are severe for 38% of the world's population. Wetlands have suffered a reduction of 70% over the last century. The global forest area has been reduced by 100 million hectares since 2000.

Reversing this reality is possible and can generate tangible benefits: increase food and water security, contribute to climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience, and help address associated risks such as conflict and migration. Investing in ecosystem restoration generates benefits ten times the costs of the initial investment, whereas the cost of inaction is at least three times the cost of active ecosystem restoration¹. Restoration is a necessary complement of biodiversity conservation.

Restoration of ecosystems is a key undertaking across

global international conventions and agreements to achieve their goals on biodiversity, climate, desertification and sustainable development. As such, a global concerted effort is needed on restoring ecosystems to achieve an enhanced impact across these global priorities.



What should be done?

A global call for restoration at scale through implementation of ambitious ecosystem restoration goals and targets in the post-2020 global framework.

IUCN calls for Governments and non-state actors to take collective action to set the world on a transformational trajectory in the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, supporting implementation of the Post-2020 Framework³.

- Accelerate and scaleup restoration in 2 billion hectares of degraded ecosystems to reverse loss in area, integrity and connectivity of all ecosystems by 2030.
- Use integrated spatial planning in all land, freshwater and sea ecosystems, by 2030, to reduce pressure and regenerate natural ecosystems to maximize contributions to biodiversity and ecosystem services.
- Expand partnerships and collective action from all actors to tackle social, political and economic bottlenecks and place restoration implementation at the center of the world's agenda.

Why is this important?

Even though the importance of restoring ecosystems is widely acknowledged, degradation and ecosystem rates of loss are alarming. This negatively impacts not

¹ IPBES (2018).

² IPBES (2019).

³ <https://www.decadeonrestoration.org/>

only species and habitats but also, critically, people who depend on the ecosystems that provide for their livelihoods. At a global level, preventing, halting and reversing degradation and restoring ecosystems is fundamental to keep temperatures below 2 degree Celsius.

It is cost-effective and feasible to restore 2.5 billion hectares of forests, crop and grazing land as well as restoring natural ecosystems covering over 230 million hectares⁴. However, this requires systemic changes in the economic system combined with support for vulnerable people impacted by degradation.

The Decade supports the achievement of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. Its fundamental message is that everybody has a role to play in creating a global movement for restoration. From local and neighborhood-level action, business transformations to fundamental national reforms to restore ecosystems, signals of action can energize and replicate action elsewhere.

IUCN adopted [WCC-2020-Res-035](#) in its last World Conservation Congress, where members made express requests to raise the ambition on ecosystem restoration in line with the CBD Post-2020 global biodiversity framework, with specific support towards implementation. IUCN is playing a key leadership role during this Decade by i) mobilizing its constituency, ii) working with decision makers across stakeholders to build action, and iii) generating sound scientific underpinning of key aspects of ecosystem restoration to facilitate implementation.

Useful tools and references

Global restoration movement: The [Bonn Challenge](#) is a global restoration movement to bring 350 million hectares of degraded and deforested landscapes under restoration by 2030, underpinning the [Decade's efforts](#).

Monitoring restoration progress: through the [Restoration Barometer](#), a universally applicable and systematic framework, restoration actors can identify, assess and track action.

Using ecosystem risk assessment for ecosystem restoration: [this guide](#) based on the [Red list of Ecosystems](#) assesses the status of ecosystems and prioritizes restoration action to reduce risk of ecosystem collapse.

Ecosystem restoration from the bottom up: with the [Community Organizing Toolkit](#) leaders and groups can find guidance and tools to build grassroots movements

and make a difference in their communities.

Addressing drivers of ecosystem degradation and loss – Nature-based Solutions: [the NbS Standard™](#) helps design, implement and verify NbS actions.

Inform your advocacy work on Target 2 (ecosystem restoration) at COP15: watch this [webinar](#) and [article](#) with key messages and background on ecosystem restoration at the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

IPBES (2018). The IPBES assessment report on land degradation and restoration, E. S. Brondizio, J. Settele, S. Díaz, and H. T. Ngo (editors). IPBES secretariat, Bonn, Germany.

IPBES (2019). Global assessment report of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, Brondizio, E. S., Settele, J., Díaz, S., Ngo, H. T. (eds). IPBES secretariat, Bonn, Germany. 1144 pages. ISBN: 978-3-947851-20-1

United Nations Environment Programme (2021). *Becoming #GenerationRestoration: Ecosystem restoration for people, nature and climate*. Nairobi



300-ha, 6-year-old site in the Atlantic forest of Brazil restored by planting >60 species of trees © Karen Holl

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⁴ United Nations Environment Programme (2021).