PROGRESS ON THE NEW YORK DECLARATION ON FORESTS

Restore degraded landscapes and forestlands

February 2022

Goal 5

5 Restoration

Increase global restoration of degraded landscapes and forestlands to restore and maintain 350 million hectares of landscapes and forestlands by 2030.

Restoring natural forests and other degraded lands is critical for limiting climate change and recovering ecosystem function and services.

There is currently a high degree of political will to restore degraded landscapes, but **translating commitments into action remains a challenge**.

The Bonn Challenge launched in 2011 with the goal of bringing 150 million hectares of the world's deforested and degraded land into restoration by 2020. In 2014, the NYDF adopted the 150-million-hectare goal and extended a new ambition: to **restore and maintain 350 million hectares of landscapes and forestlands by 2030**.

The target of restoring 150 million hectares of forest by 2020 was not met.

By 2019, **only 18% of the 2020 goal had been met**. Just 26.7 million hectares of forests were documented to have undergone restoration since 2000. Latin America and East Asia (China) represent the majority of areas under forest restoration between 2000-2019.

Increase in forest area through forest restoration (reforestation and afforestation activities) from 2000–19

North America
1.8 Mha

Europe
and Russia
1.3 Mha

East Asia
9.5 Mha

South Asia
0.1 Mha

Southeast Asia
2.5 Mha

Latin America
10.7 Mha

Sub-Saharan
Africa
0.7 Mha

Oceania
0.004 Mha

Since 2011 the average annual rate of forest restoration has decreased by over 1 million hectares, and only 3.1 million hectares have undergone forest restoration since 2011.

The majority of the forest cover gained through forest landscape restoration activities 2011 since was in North America, Latin America, and Sub-Saharan Africa. Most restoration types were active ecological restoration, woodlots, natural and assisted regeneration, agroforestry, and afforestation.

Types of restoration by region and time period

Region	2000–10	2011–19
Latin America		
East Asia		
Southeast Asia		no data
North America		

Region	2000–10	2011–19
Europe and Russia		no data
Sub-Saharan Africa		
South Asia		
Oceania		no data

Legend:
- Regeneration
- Active Ecological Restoration
- Timber Plantation or Woodlot
- Agroforestry
- Afforestation

*Middle East and North Africa: no data

The complexities of technical monitoring make it difficult to assess restoration progress.

Restoration and deforestation activities are **decentralized and highly dynamic**, with high numbers of trees gained and lost annually.

While **satellite data on tree cover gain and loss is used as a proxy** for restoration progress, this data cannot identify why that change is happening. For instance, tree cover gained via plantations, abandoned land, or active restoration interventions are often indistinguishable in remotely sensed data.

Progress can be difficult to interpret because restoration involves many kinds of interventions – from restocking areas of dense forest cover, to regenerating individual trees on agricultural land, to improving soil stability and productivity.

Trends in both Central America and the Mekong region show that areas of high tree cover gain frequently experience the highest rates of loss.

Gain in tree cover (left) and net change in tree cover (right) for the period of 2011-18 across six countries of Central America

Percent gain in tree cover 2011–2018
- < 5%
- 6% to 25%
- 26% to 50%
- > 50%
- No Data
- Not Part of Study

Net change in tree cover 2011–2018
- High Net Loss (<-15%)
- Net Loss (-14.9% to -3%)
- Neutral (-2.9% to 3%)
- Net Gain (3.1% to 15%)
- High Net Gain (>15.1%)
- No Data
- Not Part of Study
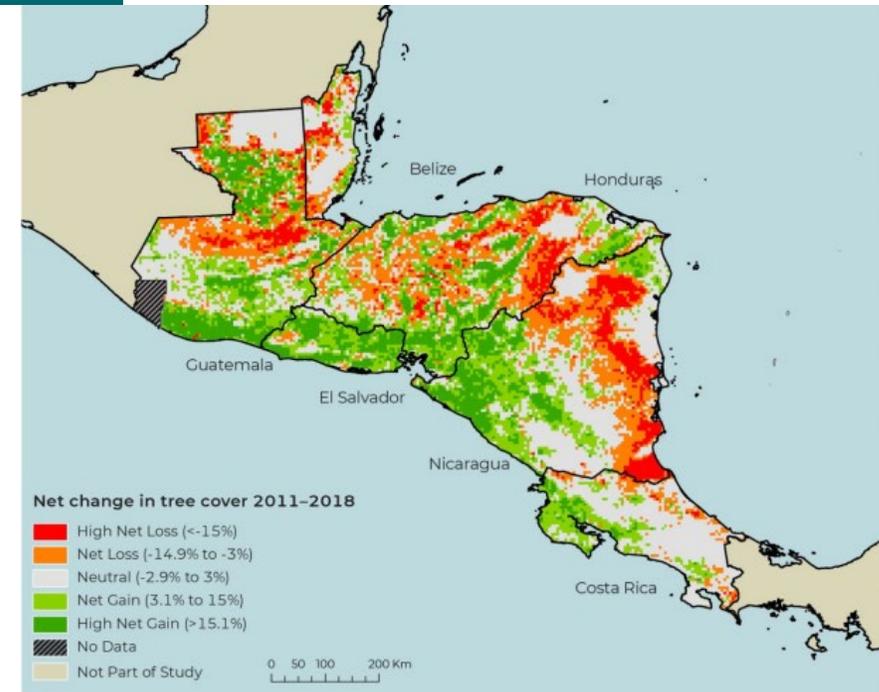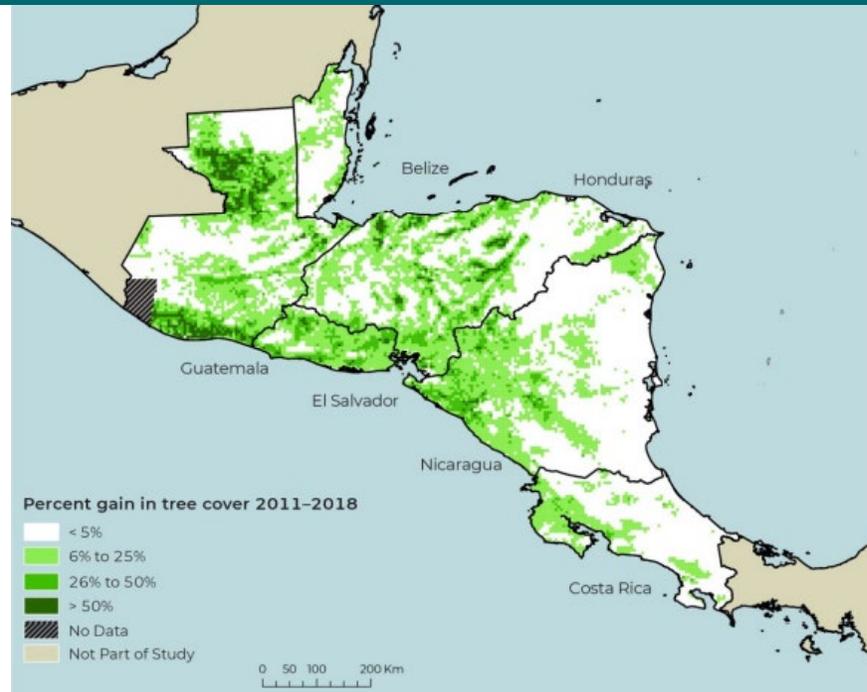
In **Central America**, since the Bonn Challenge began in 2011, Belize, Cost Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua **collectively experienced 1.9 billion hectares of gross tree cover gain**...

...but those gains were **offset by 2.2 billion hectares of tree cover loss**, resulting in a 320 million hectares net loss of tree cover in the region overall.

Signs of progress include the many new initiatives to increase capacity for restoration implementation and monitoring.

Driving implementation:

➤ e.g. The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration kicked off in 2021, with FAO developing the Framework for Ecosystem Restoration Monitoring (FERM) to support implementation across scales.

Driving consistency in methods:

➤ e.g. The Global Restoration Observatory (GRO), coordinated by Climate Focus, convenes a multi-stakeholder network to strengthen capacity for restoration monitoring.

Streamlining finance:

➤ e.g. WRI's Terra Match is designed to link the people who run vetted tree-growing projects with those who want to fund their work; while Land and Carbon Lab offers data, insights, and partnerships towards addressing the global land squeeze.

Linking practitioners to resources:

➤ e.g. Restor is a science-based open data platform aiming to support local-level restoration.

Embedding regenerative strategies in business strategies:

➤ A small but growing number of companies are embedding restoration in their business models, supply chains, or sustainability and net-zero commitments.

Restoring degraded lands will require transforming the enabling environment including policy, finance flows, and monitoring tools and systems.
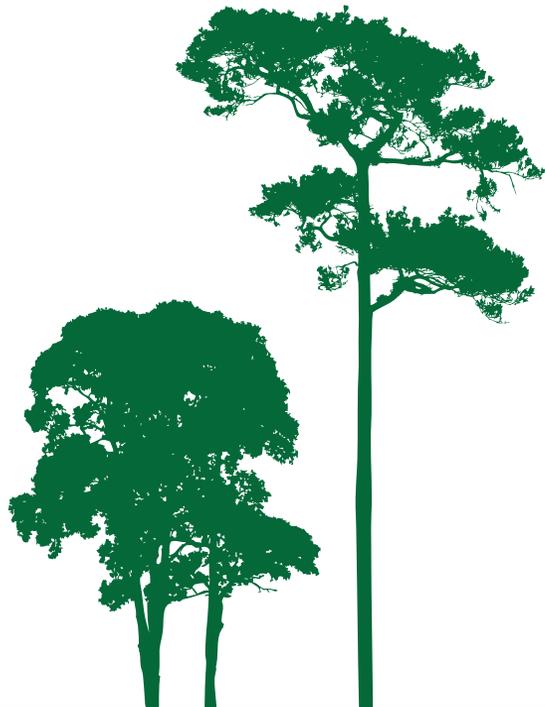
Strengthening targets:

Countries, companies, and other stakeholders should set explicit, quantified targets, such as hectares under restoration, number of trees, or amount of money to be invested or donated. Many existing commitments are simply pledges of support to individual restoration projects – not overarching targets.

Building the enabling environment:

Countries and companies must back up their restoration commitments with **strengthened policy and finance** to support restoration implementation.

Driving monitoring coordination and consistency:

Restoration monitoring frameworks should strive **for consistency and comparability while integrating** bottom-up approaches (such as participatory and collaborative monitoring) with top-down approaches (such as remote sensing). **Multiple data sources and restoration tools are needed** to understand the variety of restoration approaches and their impact.