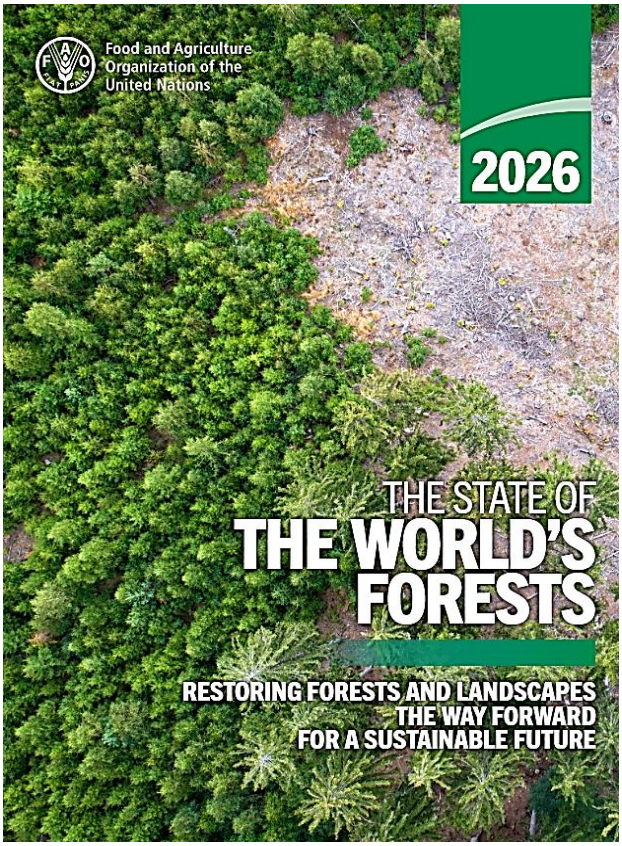
THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S FORESTS - FAO REPORT 2026

RESTORING FORESTS AND LANDSCAPES: THE WAY FORWARD FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

November 2026



The flagship State of the World's Forests (SOFO) 2026 report: Restoring Forests and Landscape the way forward for a sustainable future was published in September 2026 as part of FAO's 28th Session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO 28) and its 10th World Forest Week.

The 2026 edition examines how forest and landscape restoration can be expanded to deliver lasting benefits for people and the environment. Drawing on evidence and experiences from around the world, it identifies four pathways for accelerating progress: empowering people and strengthening rights; implementing restoration at the landscape scale; mobilizing finance and business models that support restoration; and creating coherent policies, institutions and laws.

As stated in the report's foreword by the FAO Director-General QU Dongyu "The State of the World's Forests 2026 makes clear that forest and landscape restoration is more than an environmental priority; it is a strategic investment in resilient agrifood systems and rural development."

Forests cover 4.14 billion hectares (about 32 percent of the Earth's land surface), store 714 gigatonnes of carbon and host up to 80 percent of the world's terrestrial biodiversity. They also underpin resilient agrifood systems, with nearly one-third of the global population depending on forests and trees for food security and livelihoods.



However, an estimated 489 million hectares of forest were lost between 1990 and 2025 through deforestation, while more than 460 million hectares are degraded worldwide. In total, 1.56 billion hectares of land are degraded, driven by population growth, land-use change and rising demand for natural resources. At the same time, threats are intensifying. Every year, around 127 million hectares of forest are affected by fires, with further damage caused by insects, diseases and severe weather events.



As demand for forest products rises and competing land uses increase pressure on natural resources, the report argues that there is a need to restore degraded forests and landscapes at scale, emphasizing that inaction carries a far greater economic burden than restoration.

Progress is underway, with large-scale restoration increasingly recognized as crucial for achieving global targets on land degradation neutrality, climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity conservation and ending hunger. According to the report, governments across 91 countries and areas have pledged more than 190 million hectares for forest restoration.



Examples of notable restoration projects among 18 case studies are presented by the Report, demonstrating the potential of forest and landscape restoration (FLR) to help build a sustainable and resilient future. The case studies showcase inspirational FLR initiatives across various regions and ecosystems that generate replicable lessons at different scales and contexts worldwide. The case studies showcase initiatives in Burkina Faso, Niger and Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya, Senegal, Zimbabwe, China, Indonesia, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Türkiye, Denmark, France and Spain, the European Union, Canada, the United States of America, Australia, Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay and Brazil. The case studies reinforce key insights and recommendations provided in other chapters. Some of the case studies presented are part of initiatives recognized as *World Restoration Flagships* under the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030 (UN Decade). However, progress remains insufficient, with only 206.5 million hectares of forests currently under restoration.





Forest and landscape restoration is a winning option for achieving the transformation of agrifood systems when it builds on the development of profitable value chains. It demonstrates the relevance of restoration options aimed at enhancing the productive capacity of forested and agricultural landscapes, including production and planted forests and agroforestry systems. Agroecological approaches and agroforestry practices are critical enablers of restoration outcomes. By restoring soil health through increased organic matter inputs, enhanced biological activity and improved soil structure, these approaches strengthen ecosystem functionality and productivity. Integrating trees, crops and livestock within diversified systems supports nutrient cycling, reduces erosion and enhances resilience, thereby contributing to both ecological integrity and sustainable livelihoods. Across contexts, combining restoration approaches and aligning them with local conditions can enhance cost-efficiency, reduce risks and improve long-term sustainability of outcomes.





The report points to four mutually reinforcing pathways to scale up high-quality restoration:

- People must be at the centre, ensuring that their rights, knowledge and priorities shape restoration outcomes;
- Restoration must be planned and implemented at the landscape scale, balancing conservation, production and livelihoods through context-specific approaches;
- Financing must be aligned with the realities of restoration; public and private resources need to be mobilized to support long-term, high-quality outcomes;

- Coherent policies, laws and institutional frameworks are crucial for enabling restoration at scale and ensuring its sustainability over time.

Across landscapes around the world, restoration is delivering results. Forest and landscape restoration helps restore essential ecosystem services, including water, soil and biodiversity. It strengthens agrifood systems, enhances livelihoods and communities' resilience to climate change, sequesters carbon and stabilizes the land on which communities depend.

The restoration interventions that last are those shaped through participatory approaches, in which science and local knowledge come together to guide action and empower communities as stewards of their landscapes. Measuring impact, not just hectares, is what turns restoration into lasting results. These pathways show what is possible.

To know more

Report in FAO knowledge repository

Report in FAO Press Release

The State of the World's Forests 2026 pdf

The State of the World's Forests 2026 Interactive Story

The State of the World's Forests 2026 Digital report

Report Executive Summary

Case Studies presented by the Report

Report Core Messages

In brief to the State of the World's Forests 2026

Report in decadeonrestoration.org

FAO Forestry Division

Recent FAO Forestry Publications





