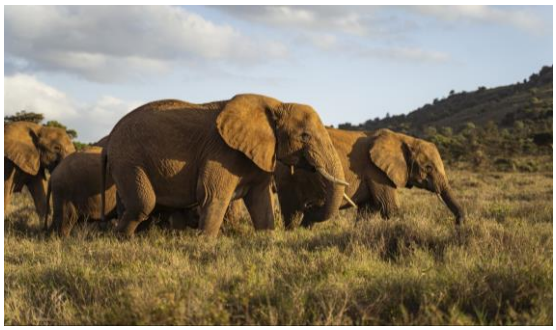
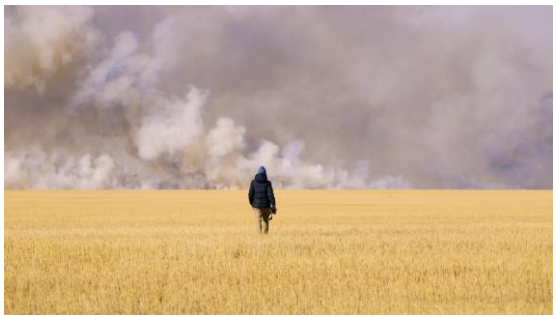
FOUR NEW WORLD RESTORATION FLAGSHIPS AWARDED BY THE UN DECADE ON ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION IN 2025

December 2025

The United Nations have named four new World Restoration Flagships for 2025 under the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. Recognizing global efforts to heal degraded ecosystems, boost community incomes, and support food security, the announcement was made during a high-level side event at the World Food Forum in Rome, ahead of World Food Day.

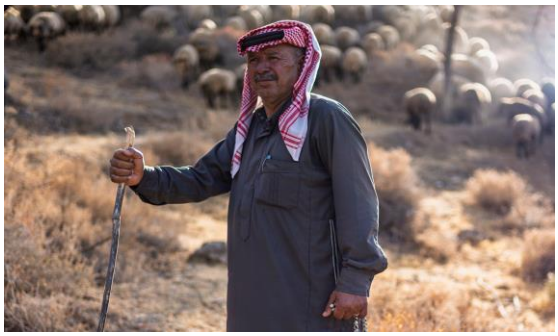
The World Restoration Flagship awards, led by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), spotlight some of the most ambitious and promising large-scale restoration efforts to halt land degradation and ensure healthier, more resilient agrifood systems.





The World Restoration Flagship awards are part of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration led by UNEP and FAO, which aims to prevent, halt, and reverse the degradation of ecosystems on every continent and in every ocean. The awards track notable initiatives that support global commitments to restore one billion hectares by 2030. World Restoration Flagships are chosen as the best examples of ongoing, large-scale and long-term ecosystem restoration by a group of experts from the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration's network. Selection follows a process with 15 criteria, embodying the 10 Restoration Principles of the UN Decade.

The awards track and celebrate initiatives that contribute to global commitments to restore one billion hectares. In 2022, the inaugural 10 World Restoration Flagships were recognized, followed by seven initiatives in 2024 and three ocean-related initiatives in 2025.



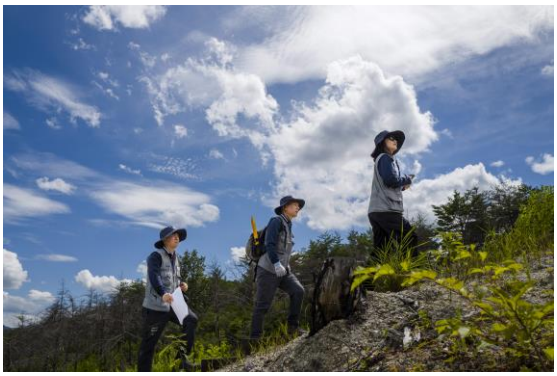
The four new flagships recognized in 2025 comprise the following restoration initiatives:

Collaborative Rangelands Restoration – Jordan.

Tel al-Rumman, north of Amman, is an open mountainous forest area, which had been severely degraded due to illegal overgrazing. When Jordan set out to establish its first botanic garden, instead of unclaimed forest land, ecologists met 4 500 sheep and the communities tending to them. What could have led to conflict resulted in partnership instead. The Royal Botanic Gardens is now working together with traditional herders on reviving sustainable practices.Biomass production is already growing more than eight-fold, benefiting local herders. Communities can now make use of seven times more grazing days, lower feed costs, and income that more than doubled. The number of herding families has also grown more than 10 times

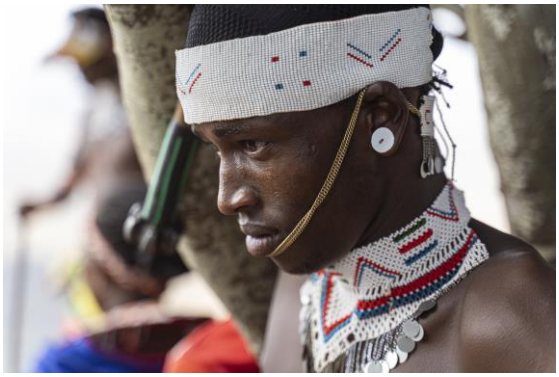
over. The program's participatory model demonstrates that restoring biodiversity can strengthen food production and community trust, using both scientific methods and traditional knowledge on range practices, livestock diseases and medicinal plant use.

Revitalizing Korea's Forests after Fire – Republic of Korea.



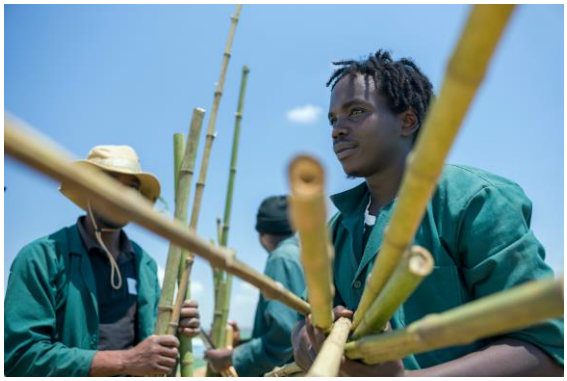
The Uljin forest fire will be remembered as one of the Republic of Korea's worst ecological disasters, burning through over 20 000 hectares in about ten days. This initiative is restoring the country's valuable forests while prioritising community livelihoods and post-fire resilience. This includes reviving native plant species such as the endangered spike rosebay and the habitat of the long-tailed goral, a small goat-like mammal. The entire fire-damaged area is expected to be restored by 2030. The Republic of Korea took a unique approach to post-fire restoration, focused on bringing back biodiversity over economically viable tree species, and involving communities along the way. The country is home to one of only two major doomsday seed vaults worldwide.

The Restoration Initiative working across Africa and Asia.

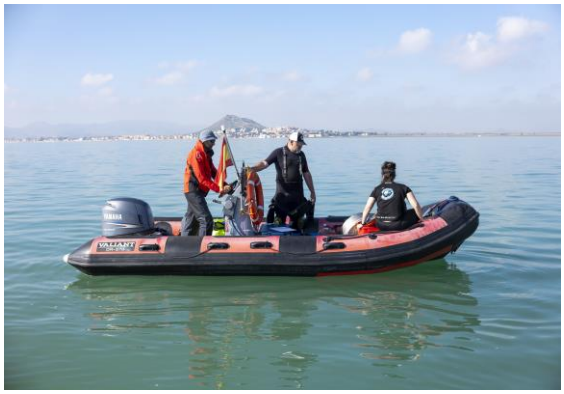


This initiative brings together nine countries: Cameroon, China, Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Pakistan, Sao Tome and Principe, and Tanzania. Supported since 2018 by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), FAO, UNEP and the Global Environment Fund (GEF, the initiative aims to overcome barriers to large-scale restoration, sharing know-how on improving awareness, monitoring, supporting businesses, and drawing investments. To date, over 420,000 people have directly benefited from the initiative, while mitigating over 30 million tonnes of CO_2 equivalent to emissions from eight coal-fired power plants in one year. The Restoration Initiative is designed to translate global restoration goals to local contexts – for example by boosting local restoration economies, such as nurseries, training smallholder farmers and pastoralists, removing invasive species and informing government policies.

Bamboo-based restoration – multiple countries.



Across nine countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America (Cameroon, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Peru, Sri Lanka, Uganda and Viet Nam), bamboo is being harnessed as a fast-growing, sustainable plant for land restoration, reversing the impacts of intense agriculture, logging, demand for fuelwood and charcoal and climate change. Bamboo-based restoration supports poverty reduction, creating livelihoods, carbon storage, land degradation and biodiversity loss, including iconic bamboo lemurs, gorillas and the giant panda. The initiative has already restored about 200,000 hectares. This is being achieved through knowledge development and capacity building of governments and local communities. Key enabling factors for this initiative include the harmonization of policies, the participation of multiple sectors in the economy, respecting Indigenous People's rights and cultural considerations, and scientifically choosing appropriate bamboo species and building appropriate value-chains.



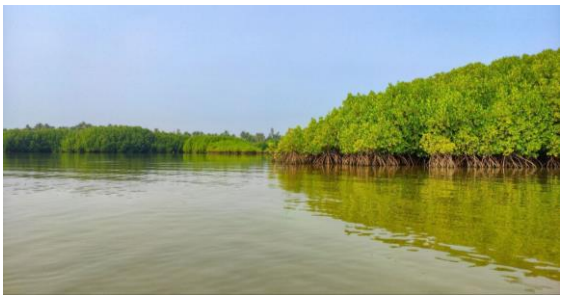
The four newly recognized World Restoration Flagships span 18 countries on four continents. They are already restoring more than 500 000 hectares. By the end of the decade, the initiatives expect to have under restoration almost 500,000 additional hectares of forests, mountains, farmlands, grasslands, shrublands and savannahs, as well as coastal and freshwater ecosystems.

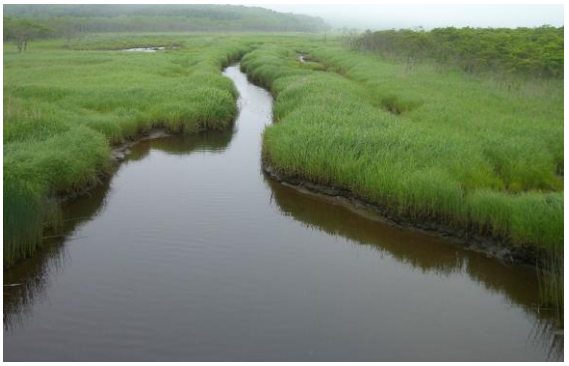
The UN General Assembly has declared 2021-2030 as the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. Led by the UN Environment Programme and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization FAO, together with the support of partners, it is designed to

prevent, halt, and reverse the loss and degradation of ecosystems worldwide. It aims at reviving billions of hectares, covering terrestrial as well as aquatic ecosystems. A global call to action, the UN Decade draws together political support, scientific research, and financial muscle to massively scale up restoration.

Countries have already promised to restore 1 billion hectares as part of their commitments to the Paris climate agreement, the targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the Land Degradation Neutrality targets and the Bonn Challenge.However, little is known about the progress or quality of this restoration. With the World Restoration Flagships, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration is honouring the best examples of large-scale and long-term ecosystem restoration in any country or region, embodying the 10 Restoration Principles of the UN Decade. Progress of all World Restoration Flagships will be transparently monitored through the Framework for Ecosystem Restoration Monitoring, the UN Decade's platform for keeping track of global restoration efforts.

In 2022, ten inaugural World Restoration Flagships were recognized as part of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, followed with the recognition of seven initiatives in 2024, and seven in 2025.





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World Restoration Flagships

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