



## IKI Focus

# #GenerationRestoration: the right tree in the right place

## How the IKI is supporting forest conservation and restoration

Worldwide, about a third of the Earth's surface – amounting to roughly four billion hectares – is covered by forests. According to estimates, roughly ten million hectares of natural forest are lost every year ([FAO 2020](#)). The continued expansion of large-scale agriculture is the biggest driver of this loss, with examples including animal husbandry, the cultivation of soy and rubber, or oil palm and eucalyptus plantations. This can be observed in particular in the tropical and subtropical countries of the global South. The consequences are serious. Recent research findings are now suggesting that tropical forests are currently undergoing a change of roles: while they have been net carbon sinks in the past, deforestation effects are turning them into net carbon emitters.

Modern consumption patterns and unsustainable lifestyles are causing huge damage to forests, with some of their vital ecosystem functions being irretrievably lost. Alongside the loss of forested areas per se, the degradation of forests due to fire, selective logging and unsustainable agriculture is also increasing in many countries (IPCC 2021). This leads to a decline in biological productivity and ecosystem functions, which in turn works to amplify the impacts of climate change.

### Why forests are so important

To safeguard the future of human society, we must act now to stop the ongoing loss and degradation of forests. Beyond a

mere change in our awareness and values, this process must be reversed. By working to restore forest landscapes that are already degraded, humanity can recover natural habitats for itself as well as for animal and plant species.

Simultaneously, positive developments of this kind will strengthen key ecosystem services such as the storage of carbon in biomass or regulation of the water cycle. Stable forest landscapes also work to preserve the livelihoods of local populations in the long term and have proven to be conducive to a sustainable local economy. In this way, forest landscape restoration helps to achieve the targets of the three UN conventions on climate change (UNFCCC), biodiversity (CBD) and combating desertification (UNCCD), as well as the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

### Global initiatives are working towards forest restoration

There is now growing international recognition for the importance of protecting our forests. In 2011, the German federal government and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) launched the [Bonn Challenge](#), an initiative that aims to restore a total of 350 million hectares of degraded and deforested areas by 2030. As of 2021, more than 60 countries have made corresponding pledges for over 210 million hectares ([Bonn Challenge 2021](#)). Several regional Bonn Challenge initiatives have also since started, including [AFR100](#) in Africa, the [Initiative 20x20](#) in

## Forest Landscape Restoration by means of sustainable wood energy value chains

BMU grant: EUR 4,500,000, duration: 04/2019 to 05/2023

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**Tree nursery in Ghana:** the IKI is supporting reforestation and the sustainable use of wood energy

Latin America, the Initiative from the Central American Integration System ([SICA](#)) and [ECCA30](#) in Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus. The [UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030](#) is also targeting the restoration of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, which naturally includes forest landscapes.

### How the IKI is contributing to the restoration of degraded forest landscapes

The International Climate Initiative (IKI) supports projects that are trialling innovative approaches to the restoration of forest ecosystems, and developing finance and monitoring instruments to ensure their widest possible dissemination and visibility. In 2021, the IKI supported a total of 43 bilateral, regional and global projects in the category of 'Forest and Land Use' with a funding volume of around EUR 224 million. A number of these projects are helping to set up over-arching processes and platforms for forest restoration work. They are supporting the development of new business models, as well as promoting capacity building in both land use planning and monitoring. IKI projects are implementing sustainable management models while mobilising public and private investments. In promoting integrated land use concepts, ecological, social and economic aspects can be taken into account, and different requirements for the use of an area can be balanced while recognising land rights and involving local stakeholders.

### Lessons learned so far

A transboundary reforestation strategy can be implemented only as a result of constructive cooperation between neighbouring countries as well as transformative partnerships at an international level. With the aim of securing large-scale achievements over a short time frame, the IKI is focusing on a strategic evaluation of the respective results alongside project financing and support. In this context, it is of great importance to identify successful approaches to sustainable management concepts in specific pilot regions and, if possible, to disseminate them further in other countries or regions and make them known worldwide.

Providing local actors with high-quality seeds of local tree species is just one aspect of ensuring the sustainable restoration of a forest ecosystem, for example. In comparison with plantations, which offer a low species density, the combination of climate-resilient and site-adapted tree and shrub species offers decisive advantages for biodiversity and the local population.

The success of forest restoration projects is also heavily dependent on direct participation and engagement from rural communities, such as the Global Landscapes Forum [GLFx](#), as well as support from women's collectives and youth groups. All of these factors help to raise awareness and change values in the various communities. Large-scale, high-profile tree-planting campaigns can also provide additional support here. One example is the [Youth in Landscapes Initiative](#) (YIL), a voluntary initiative with over 60,000 members, which is using networks and local events to create a positive impact on agriculture and the climate worldwide. Another important factor for project success is recognising the rights of indigenous and local communities, while promoting their expertise and engagement. As can be seen, the restoration of forest ecosystems is a major challenge. Global initiatives are among the most effective responses to the three global crises: the Covid-19 pandemic, global warming and biodiversity loss.

Projects funded by the IKI are supporting [#GenerationRestoration](#) in order to make a decisive turnaround possible this century and thus permanently preserve our valuable forest ecosystems.

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