

Conserving and restoring natural spaces, both on land and in the water, is essential for limiting carbon emissions and adapting to an already changing climate. Conserving and restoring nature would provide one-third of the mitigation effort needed in the next decade. It would also improve rural livelihoods, build resilience, support COVID-19 recovery and help prevent the spread of future zoonotic diseases. Nature-based solutions offer cost-effective ways to tackle the inter-linked crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.



## Key messages

- **Ecosystem conservation and restoration** can make a substantial, high-return contribution to building resilience to climate change. Large-scale investments in dryland agriculture, mangrove protection and water management can generate benefits worth around four times the original investment.
- **Nature-based solutions are cost-effective, easily available and proven.** Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) is the cheapest option for large-scale climate change mitigation and is ready for increased financial flows, including from the private sector.
- **Nature is not a substitute for other decarbonization pathways.** It is essential to decarbonize and invest in nature.
- The UN system is using its convening power to support ambitious and transformative action on nature. Key initiatives include the **UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030** and **Turning the Tide on Deforestation**. Both provide large-scale contributions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ensure food security and address climate change.
- 2021 provides the opportunity to translate the growing political ambition for nature into real commitments and a decade of action. This can be done through the **three Rio Conventions and action platforms**, such as the UN Decade of Action for the SDGs and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030.
- **New programmes on oceans, forests and food systems** could accelerate climate action and mobilize private investments. UNEP and partners propose three new initiatives:
  - **A new Global Ocean Challenge** within the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030 to lead a global alliance **to restore at least 350 million hectares of coastal and marine ecosystems by 2030**, and launch the missing marine equivalent to the 'Bonn Challenge'.
  - **The Green Gigaton Challenge:** with the UN-REDD Programme, boost the market for forest-based carbon, lifting REDD+ from a niche solution to a major pillar of the Paris Agreement.
  - **Transforming Food Systems:** Mobilize 100 million farmers and 1 billion consumers for climate and nature friendly food systems, to boost the outcomes of the UN Food Systems Summit.

## Key data

- **Over half of global GDP has a high or moderately high dependency on nature.** Investments of \$350 billion a year in sustainable food and land use systems could create more than 120 million new jobs and \$4.5 trillion in new business opportunities worldwide each year by 2030.
- Investments in nature-based solutions create fast-implementing jobs – on average, **between 7 and 40 jobs per \$1 million invested**, which is up to 10 times the job creation rate of investments in fossil fuels.
- The business opportunities associated with transforming **food, land and ocean systems could generate almost \$3.6 trillion of additional revenues** or cost savings by 2030, while creating 191 million new jobs.

## Further Reading

[Making Peace with Nature  
Global Assessment Report](#)  
[Special Report 1.5C; Special Report Climate Change and Land; Special Report on Oceans](#)  
[The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration](#)  
[Ten Years of UN-REDD and UN-REDD 2021-2025](#)

## NbS Potential for Climate

