

# UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030

## Terms of Reference of the Science Task Force

### Objectives of the Science Task Force

The Science Task Force will provide an authoritative reference point for the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030. The Task Force will provide the scientific backstop for the UN Decade's Advisory Board and Strategy Group, including through supporting or peer-reviewing the work of other Task Forces (on Best Practice, Finance, Monitoring, and Youth).

It will tackle restoration-related issues that are key to unlocking large implementation potential (e.g. how to assess/materialize the benefits of ecosystem restoration) or are potentially controversial (e.g. the role of plantations). While maintaining its scientific independence, the Science Task Force will work closely within the UN Decade's governance structure, provide inputs to the work of other Task Forces, and select topics to cover in coordination with IUCN, the Strategy Group, Advisory Board, and with the other Task Forces of the UN Decade.

The Task Force can choose to address specific topics selected in coordination with the UN Decade Strategy Group, Advisory Board, and Task Forces and produce written advice on the selected topics. In addition, the Strategy Group (UNEP/FAO), in consultation with IUCN, can mandate the Science Task Force with specific tasks on which it will report back to the Strategy Group or to the Advisory Board. The Science Task Force should only focus on topics of greatest strategic importance for the success of the UN Decade, drawing inter alia on the list of topics in the UN's Decade strategy and priority topics and/or identified by the Strategy Group or Advisory Board as a result of the Decade's implementation.

The outputs of the Science Task Force will be written scientific advice that will help ensure that restoration actions aligned with the Decade are consistent with and build upon the best current understanding of ecosystem restoration from the perspective of natural and social science. These outputs will offer balanced perspectives and schools of thought, responding to the current demands of ecosystem restoration and ready to be taken up into practical implementation.

The Task Force can also function as sounding board for the Advisory Board or the Strategy Group of the UN Decade, and to the Executive Board of the UN Decade's Multi-Partner Trust Fund, upon their request.

### Science Task Force activities

The Science Task Force can achieve their objectives through a variety of means, including:

- Peer-review outcomes of the other Task Forces or key publications in the context of the UN Decade
- Convene expert groups with additional participants tailored to the specific topic to be addressed
- Organize workshops or webinars for broader scientific and technical audiences to advance understanding based on the advice produced
- Issue recommendations to relevant scientific bodies and platforms, such as IPBES and IPCC, for inclusion of relevant restoration topics into forthcoming assessments
- The Chair, Co-chair and members of the Science Task Force can represent the Task Force at events or meetings organized on topics related to the UN Decade

### Operation and coordination of the Science Task Force

The operation of the Task Force is subject to available resources. IUCN convenes and organizes the Science Task Force on behalf of the co-lead agencies of the UN Decade (FAO and UNEP). The Science Task Force will be set up and operated in consultation with other official partners of the UN Decade. As needed, the Task Force will invite and coordinate with other UN Decade Task Forces, partners, and stakeholders to address respective items, especially as identified by the Strategy Group or Advisory Board, and when peer-reviewing the outputs of other Task Forces.

The Task Force is encouraged to report regularly on its activities and provide advice and recommendations to the UN Decade's Coordination Group and to the UN Decade's other Task Forces.

## Science Task Force composition

### Membership and appointments

The Science Task Force is part of the official governance of the UN Decade while maintaining independence with regards to its composition and written advice and recommendations. It is comprised of experts in issues related to ecosystem restoration, including an understanding of enabling conditions and cross-cutting topics.

Members will be selected considering geography, gender and type of expertise to keep a well-balanced set of inputs and views. It is recommended that the membership of the core Task Force does not exceed 20 people. Task Force membership is of two years, subject to renewal. Appointments will be made by invitation from IUCN, including through suggestions by UNEP or FAO. The Science Task Force members will bring together a range of skill sets, including members with:

- Published high-level scientific work
- Practical experience in restoration
- Experience with balancing views within volunteer groups of experts
- Experience in using science and practice to advance policy objectives
- Strong communications abilities across cultures, disciplines and regions.

### Chair

IUCN as the lead organization of the Task Force will nominate a Chair and Co-chair for the period of two years, subject to renewal.

### Quorum

Quorum is reached when at least one third of Task Force members and the Chair or Co-Chair are present. With their prior approval, meetings of the Task Force (e.g. sub-groups) can be held without the Chair or Co-Chair.

### Frequency of Meetings

The Task Force is to decide the frequency of the meeting. However, it is encouraged that it meets at least quarterly per annum or as required by the Chair. Meetings should be held virtually.

### Notice of Meeting

Unless otherwise agreed, notice of each meeting confirming the venue, time and date together with an agenda of items to be discussed and supporting papers, will be forwarded or notified to each member of the Task Force and any other person required to attend, no later than ten working days before the date of the meeting.

### Additional experts

Task Force members will nominate additional experts to participate in topic-specific Expert Groups to offer more specific input and expertise as needed.

### Changes to these Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference can be changed by the UN Decade Strategy Group, in consultation with IUCN.