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Funding Ecosystem Restoration in Europe

A summary of trends and recommendations to inform practitioners, policymakers and funders

Restoring ecosystems can increase biodiversity, safeguard the ecosystem services on which people and nature depend, and contribute to climate change mitigation. However, over 75% of Earth's land area is currently degraded and, within Europe, an estimated 77% of ecosystems are degraded or deteriorating.

2020 and beyond brings opportunities for significant scaling up of ecosystem restoration. Ambitions such as the European Green Deal (2019), the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 (2020), the EU Nature Restoration Plan (2019), and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030), present a tremendous opportunity to bring about transformational change. In order to be successful, decision making must consider current and past ecosystem restoration activities, the amount and focus of past and current funding, and the range of actors involved. Until now, this information has been unavailable.

In response to this information gap, the UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre and Fauna & Flora International, supported by the Endangered Landscapes Programme, compiled a database of over 400 ecosystem restoration projects within Europe. A report, available in both English and French, accompanies the database, and contains high-level analysis of what was funded, where, by whom, how much, and for what purpose.

Together, these resources provide a much-needed tool for policymakers and practitioners that will:

- enable more informed and coordinated decisions on prioritisation of funding and effort
- provide a baseline against which future decisions and funding allocations can be measured
- enable practitioners to identify opportunities for funding and collaboration in relation to their own projects

Improving understanding now, as significant new international commitments begin, will ensure that ecosystem restoration in Europe is supported by a dynamic, enabling and aligned policy and funding environment.

The full report and searchable database are available at www.restorationfunders.com.

This project was funded by the Endangered Landscapes Programme, a Partnership between the Cambridge Conservation Initiative and Arcadia – a charitable fund of Lisbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin.

Key findings

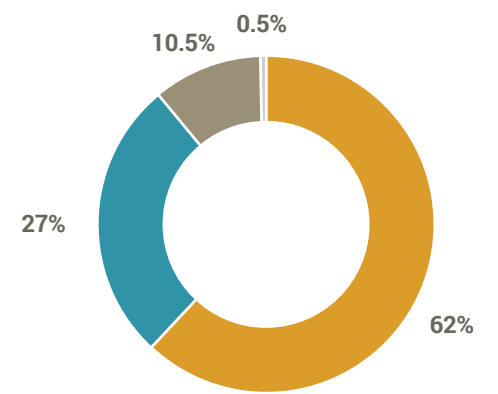
▶ More than 200 funders committed more than €847 million in primary funding since 2010, with a further €360 million committed as co-funding. While significant, the increased interest and support for ecosystem restoration means the scale of funding allocations must increase to match the pace and scope set by ambitious national, regional and global targets.

▶ Over 85% of the restoration projects identified focused on terrestrial ecosystems, with the majority focusing on forests, grasslands and wetlands. Projects restoring European seas focused primarily on coastal marine ecosystems. Europe’s waters are some of the most heavily used in the world, and there is a need to proactively address restoration of marine ecosystems.



▶ 62% of projects focused on restoring natural ecosystems. However, Europe’s increasing urbanisation and widespread agriculture mean restoration projects that aim to increase the functionality of modified ecosystems may be necessary in order to make significant progress in protecting biodiversity and ecosystem functionality in Europe.

- €774.9 million Restoring a degraded natural ecosystem to a functional/more intact natural ecosystem
- €338.2 million Restoring a modified ecosystem to a natural ecosystem
- €129.7 million Restoring a degraded modified ecosystem to a functional/more intact modified ecosystem
- €5 million Multiple



▶ Biodiversity conservation was the stated primary goal of 81% of projects, and received nearly 80% of known funding (multiple goals were recorded). There is a clear opportunity to increase recognition of, and action on, the significant role ecosystem restoration can play in achieving multiple climate and developmental goals, in addition to biodiversity benefits.

