



## UN World Restoration Flagships

**For Prelims:** [United Nations](#), World Restoration Flagship Award, Restoring Mediterranean Forests Initiative, Living Indus initiative, Terai Arc Landscape Initiative, [UN Environment Programme](#), [Food and Agriculture Organization](#)

**For Mains:** World Restoration Flagships, Environmental Pollution & Degradation, Conservation

**Source:** DTE

### Why in News?

The [United Nations](#) has recognized **seven initiatives** from regions spanning Africa, and Latin America, the Mediterranean, and Southeast Asia as **World Restoration Flagships**.

- These initiatives, aimed at **reviving ecosystems on the brink of degradation**, hold promise for environmental conservation and socio-economic development.
- The combined efforts of these initiatives are projected to restore approximately **40 million hectares of land** and generate around **500,000 employment opportunities**.

### What are the 7 World Restoration Flagships recently Recognized by the UN?

- **The Restoring Mediterranean Forests Initiative:**
  - Involves the countries of Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, and Türkiye.
  - It consists of a novel approach said to have protected and restored natural habitats and vulnerable ecosystems.
  - Around **2 million hectares of forests have been restored since 2017**; aims for over 8 million by 2030.
- **The Living Indus initiative:**
  - Approved by Pakistan parliament post-2022 [climate change-induced floods](#). Its official launch took place at the [27<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change](#) in Sharm el-Sheikh.
  - Aims to restore 25 million hectares of the [Indus river basin by 2030](#).
  - It designates the **Indus River as a living entity with rights**, a measure taken to protect rivers elsewhere as well.
  - It involves Australia, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Ecuador, **India**, New Zealand, Peru and Sri Lanka.
- **The Acción Andina Social Movement:**
  - It is led by the non-profit Andean Ecosystems Association (ECOAN) and aims to protect and **restore one million hectares of Andean forests**.
    - Andean forests are a type of [tropical and subtropical forest](#) that grow along the slopes of the Andes mountains in **South America**.
  - The initiative also works to **secure land titles for local communities** and protect the forest from mining and timber exploitation.
- **Sri Lanka Mangrove Regeneration Initiative:**

- It is a science-driven programme co-led by **local communities**. It focuses on the **restoration of natural balance in the ecosystem**.
- Since its launch in **2015**, **efforts have led to 500 hectares of restored** mangroves, according to the UN statement.
- Targets restoration of **10,000 hectares of mangroves by 2030**.
- **Terai Arc Landscape(TAL) Initiative:**
  - Aimed to restore the forests of critical corridors of the **TAL in collaboration with local communities** working as citizen scientists, community-based anti-poaching units, and forest guards, among others.
    - TAL spans an 810 km stretch between the **river Yamuna in the west and the river Bhagmati in the east**.
    - It comprises the **Shivalik hills**, the adjoining **bhabhar areas**, and the Terai floodplains, covering parts of the Indian states of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and the low-lying hills of Nepal.
  - Initiative covers measures like the **restoration of 66,800 hectares of Nepal's forests**, which is said to improve the livelihoods of about 500,000 households in the country.
    - It also supported the **tiger population in the landscape** shared by India and Nepal, which increased to 1,174.
  - **Aims to restore 350,000 hectares of forests by 2030**.
- **Regreening Africa's Agriculture:**
  - It increases **carbon storage**, boosts crop and grass yields, makes soil more resilient (by preventing floods) and treats it with fixed nitrogen that acts as a natural fertiliser.
- **Growing Forests in Africa's Drylands Initiative:**
  - Expands **restoration from 41,000 to 229,000 hectares by 2030**.
  - Involves African farmers, planting tens of millions of trees annually.
  - Creates over 230,000 jobs, supporting sustainable development.

## What are UN World Restoration Flagships?

- **About:**
  - The World Restoration Flagships are part of the **UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration** led by the **UN Environment Programme (UNEP)** and the **Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO)** which aims to prevent, halt, and reverse the degradation of ecosystems on every continent and in every ocean.
    - The **UN General Assembly** has declared **2021-2030 as the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration**.
  - The UN recognizes the World Restoration Flagships through the **World Restoration Flagship Award**.
    - This award is part of the **UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration**, spearheaded by UNEP and FAO, which aims to counteract ecosystem degradation across all continents and oceans.
    - Recipients of this award become eligible for **technical and financial assistance from the UNO**.
    - The awards track notable initiatives following **global commitments to restore one billion hectares** (an area larger than China).
- **Significance:**
  - Global recognition and celebration of their restoration success stories.
  - Technical and financial support of up to USD 500,000 per selected initiative (only for developing countries).
  - Attraction of global attention and investments.
  - Feature in the UN Decade's publications, campaigns, outreach, advocacy, and education efforts.
  - Listing in the UN Secretary-General's Report to the General Assembly.

## What is Ecological Restoration?

- **About:**
  - It is the process of **aiding the recovery of ecosystems** that have been degraded, damaged, or destroyed.

- **Causes of Degradation:**
  - Human activities like selective logging, road building, poaching, overfishing, invasive species, land clearing, urbanization, [coastal erosion](#), and [mining](#) can lead to damage, degradation, or destruction of ecosystems.
- **Aims and Objectives:**
  - Ecological restoration aims to **initiate or accelerate ecosystem recovery by creating conditions for plants, animals, and microorganisms** to carry out the recovery process themselves.
- **Methods and Actions:**
  - Restoration may involve actions like removing invasive species, reintroducing lost species or functions, altering landforms, planting vegetation, changing hydrology, and reintroducing wildlife.
  - Restoration is not a one-time activity; it continues as the ecosystem recovers and matures. Unforeseen barriers may arise during the recovery process.
- **Restoration and Conservation:**
  - **Restoration is not a substitute for conservation.** While it can restore biodiversity, structure, and function to ecosystems, **it should not be used to justify destruction or unsustainable use.**
- **India's Restoration Initiatives:**
  - [Sundarbans Mangrove Restoration.](#)
  - [National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Ecosystems \(NPCA\).](#)
  - [National Mission for a Green India \(GIM\).](#)
  - [Western Ghats Forest Landscape Restoration.](#)
  - [Green Wall.](#)
  - [National Afforestation Programme \(NAP\).](#)
  - [National Biodiversity Action Plan.](#)

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

### Prelims

**Q1. Which of the following can be threats to the biodiversity of a geographical area? (2012)**

1. Global warming
2. Fragmentation of habitat
3. Invasion of alien species
4. Promotion of vegetarianism

**Select the correct answer using the codes given below:**

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only  
(b) 2 and 3 only  
(c) 1 and 4 only  
(d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

**Ans: (a)**

**Q2. Biodiversity forms the basis for human existence in the following ways: (2011)**

1. Soil formation
2. Prevention of soil erosion
3. Recycling of waste
4. Pollination of crops

**Select the correct answer using the codes given below:**

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only
- (b) 2, 3 and 4 only
- (c) 1 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

**Ans: (d)**

### **Mains**

**Q.** How does biodiversity vary in India? How is the Biological Diversity Act,2002 helpful in the conservation of flora and fauna? **(2018)**

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