

The Forests Dialogue's

Field Dialogue on Ecosystem Restoration

4-8 May 2026 | Bahia, Brazil

Concept Note

Engaging the private sector to support ecosystem conservation and restoration to increase biodiversity in Bahia, Brazil

Hosted by the Bahia Forest Forum and the Brazilian Forests Dialogue, in association with The Forests Dialogue (TFD)

ABOUT THE ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION INITIATIVE

Responding to calls to scale-up Ecosystem Restoration in degraded landscapes in line with the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (UNDER) and other international commitments¹, The Forests Dialogue (TFD) Ecosystem Restoration Initiative seeks to understand the opportunities for the forest sector to contribute and drive restoration efforts worldwide. Ecosystem restoration is the process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged, or destroyed.

In collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Advisory Committee on Sustainable Forest-based Industries (ACSFI), TFD convened a Restoration Roundtable in October 2022 to enhance the forest sector's engagement in ecosystem restoration. Discussions then progressed to identify key strategies to guide private-sector actions and to identify the need to form coalitions with other stakeholder groups.

From 31 January to 1 February 2023, TFD convened a Scoping Dialogue to explore a range of stakeholder perspectives and understand potential paths forward for the Initiative. Participants determined that the initiative should focus on the role of the forest sector in ecosystem restoration, in particular the private forest sector, in collaboration with other stakeholders and in the context of actors' roles, rights, and contributions to ecosystem restoration.

The following fracture lines emerged as key themes in need of further dialogue:

- The role and contribution of economically driven reforestation and related restoration activities in meeting restoration goals and expectations.
- The challenges and opportunities of climate/carbon/biodiversity-focused financing.
- The pitfalls of incentivizing restoration at the expense of conservation or halting deforestation and conversion.
- Uncertainty around top-down vs. bottom-up approaches to scaling restoration.
- Meeting restoration targets while also meeting the needs of people.
- Credible verification of performance.

A summary of the Ecosystem Restoration Scoping Dialogue can be found here:

https://theforestdialogue.org/sites/default/files/tplscoping_dialogue_cochairsummaryfinal.pdf

¹ Such as the Bonn Challenge, UNFCCC (Paris Agreement) and 30x30 initiative.

The first field dialogue of the Ecosystem Restoration Initiative was hosted by Mulawarman University in East Kalimantan, Indonesia, from 22-26 April 2024, in collaboration with TFD and the Advisory Committee on Sustainable Forest-based Industries (ACSFI) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

Participants identified the following key opportunities for change:

- Partnerships between companies and communities.
- Political support and clearer policies.
- New financing models (e.g., carbon, blended finance, green bonds).
- Recognition of traditional rights.
- Greater inclusion of Indigenous peoples and women.

A summary of the Ecosystem Restoration Field Dialogue in Indonesia can be found here:

https://theforestdialogue.org/sites/default/files/tfd_ecosystem_restoration_indonesia_cochairsummary_english.pdf

ABOUT THE BRAZILIAN RESTORATION DIALOGUE

The Bahia Forest Forum, The Brazilian Forests Dialogue, and TFD will bring together Brazilian and international experts and rights holders for a multi-stakeholder field dialogue on 4-8 May 2026 in Bahia, Brazil. The field dialogue phase of the initiative has the following goals:

- Clarify ecosystem restoration needs and engage a broader range of stakeholders in Bahia.
- Understand how the private sector can better support forest restoration and increase engagement.
- Explore collaboration opportunities to co-create successful ecosystem restoration approaches.
- Explore successful cases of partnerships between companies and communities, political support and clearer policies, new financing models, recognition of traditional rights and greater inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and women.
- Examining the key success factors and challenges within the local context.

The dialogue will include both plenary and small working-group formats as well as field visits to hear directly from local participants about existing ecosystem restoration needs, opportunities, and challenges. Outputs of the dialogue include a Background Paper that will synthesize key science and knowledge related to ecosystem restoration in Brazil, a Co-Chairs' Summary highlighting key learnings and recommendations emerging from dialogue, and a co-developed action plan of identified strategies and collaborative next steps.

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION IN THE ATLANTIC FOREST AND BRAZIL

The Atlantic Forest (Mata Atlântica), where this dialogue will be held, represents one of the world's most threatened biodiversity hotspots, having experienced centuries of deforestation due to urban expansion, agricultural development, and logging. The Atlantic Forest once covered a vast swath of Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina, covering approximately 17% of Brazil's territory alone.² Its size has been severely reduced over centuries of human activity. In recent decades, deforestation has been severe due to expanding cities and agriculture, a result of more than 70% of the Brazilian population living in and around the forest.³

² "INPE - Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas Espaciais". www.inpe.br

³ Seibt, Tais and Duda Menegassi. 2022. Brazil's Atlantic Forest gets a chance at a fresh start through restoration. <https://news.mongabay.com/2022/03/brazils-atlantic-forest-gets-a-chance-at-a-fresh-start-through-restoration/>

Although the Atlantic Forest was once reduced to approximately one-quarter of its original area, restoration initiatives are making progress.² Atlantic Forest deforestation dropped 27% according to 2024 government reports.⁴ The continuous portion of the Atlantic Forest experienced decreased deforestation in 2023, representing progress in conservation efforts.⁵

Brazil has established ambitious restoration targets as part of its international climate commitments. Under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the country aims to restore 12 million hectares of forests and implement 5 million hectares of integrated crop-livestock-forestry systems by 2030, reflected in the National Plan for the Recovery of Native Vegetation (PLANAVEG).⁶ The restoration commitments in Brazil's NDC overlap with its restoration commitments to the Bonn Challenge and 20x20 Initiative, where the country has committed to restoring 22 million hectares of forests by 2030. Across Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay, a combined initiative to restore 15 million hectares of forests in the Atlantic Forest has been named a World Restoration Flagship.⁷ In the Global Environment Facility's Ecosystem Restoration Integrated Program, Brazil is the country project that dwarfs all the rest, with a goal of restoring 600,000 hectares through policy coordination, stakeholder engagement, financial innovation, and knowledge sharing across the Amazon, Cerrado, Atlantic Forest, Caatinga, Pampa, and Pantanal biomes.⁸ Considering the many targets in multiple frameworks, it's not clear how the private sector will contribute to achieving these targets. Other topics to be explored are the role of certification, legal frameworks around restoration and restoration as a business model itself.

Most agree that to achieve restoration at scale, private sector engagement is crucial. The BRB Finance Coalition aims to mobilize \$10 billion for forest conservation and bioeconomy by 2030, conserving and restoring at least 5 million hectares of Brazilian forests and contributing to Brazil's efforts to halt and reverse deforestation.⁹ Restoration programs such as those supported by the Atlantic Forest Restoration Pact (PACTO) offer economic and technical assistance to private landowners.¹⁰ The Union4Restoration, a major alliance of Brazilian environmental organizations (CI, TNC, WRI, and WWF), has committed to promoting the forest restoration of 4 million hectares in the Amazon, Cerrado, and Atlantic Forest by 2030.¹¹

⁴ Atlantic Forest deforestation drops 27%. 2024. *Brazilian Government Communications Secretariat*. <https://www.gov.br/secom/en/latest-news/2024/05/atlantic-forest-deforestation-drops-27>

⁵ Boehm, Camila. Deforestation down in continuous portion of Atlantic forest in 2023. 2024. *Agência Brasil*. <https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/en/geral/noticia/2024-05/deforestation-down-continuous-portion-atlantic-forest-2023>

⁶ Waack, Roberto. Brazil: Its Forest Capital and a Promising Future in the Production of Food, Fiber, and Energy. *World Bank*. March 16, 2024. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/latinamerica/brazil-its-forest-capital-and-promising-future-production-food-fiber-and-energy>

⁷ UN recognizes effort to restore South America's Atlantic Forest with special award. *UN Decade on Restoration*. <https://www.decadeonrestoration.org/stories/un-recognizes-effort-restore-south-americas-atlantic-forest-special-award>

⁸ Ecosystem Restoration Integrated Program: Brazil. <https://www.ecosystemrestoration.org/countries/brazil>

⁹ Brazil Restoration & Bioeconomy Finance Coalition Launched to Mobilize \$10 Billion for Forest Conservation and Bioeconomy by 2030. *Conservation International*. <https://www.conservation.org/press-releases/2024/11/17/brazil-restoration-bioeconomy-finance-coalition-launched-to-mobilize-10-billion-for-forest-conservation-and-bioeconomy-by-2030>

¹⁰ Combined effort amplifies restoration in Brazil's Atlantic Forest. *IUCN*. June 27, 2022. <https://iucn.org/news/forests/201611/combined-effort-amplifies-restoration-brazil%E2%80%99s-atlantic-forest>

¹¹ CI, TNC, WRI Brazil, and WWF-Brazil unite to promote the forest restoration of 4 million hectares. *The Nature Conservancy*. <https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/latin-america/brazil/stories-in-brazil/union-4-restoration/>

DIALOGUE HOSTS

Fórum Florestal da Bahia (Bahia Forest Forum)

It is the first regional Forest Forum of Brazilian Forest Dialogue. Since 2005, it has brought together different stakeholders to address challenges and define common solutions with a focus on the south of Bahia State. It developed guidelines with good practices for forest partnership programs, agreements with participants, and it was the basis for the creation of the Southern Bahia Environmental Fund (FASB), which provides resources for restoration and productive recovery. It promotes the coordination of actions aimed at building a sustainable landscape, focusing on the environmental adequacy of rural properties, stimulating the production of multipurpose timber, and the implementation of Ecological Corridors. Through its monitoring platform, it provides historical data on land use and cover for its operating territory.

Diálogo Florestal (Brazilian Forests Dialogue)

With 250 members in seven regional Forest Forums, the Brazilian Forests Dialogue, since 2005, has promoted dialogue and collaboration to build solutions related to the use and conservation of sustainable landscapes. Since its foundation, inspired by TFD, the Brazilian Forests Dialogue has facilitated collaborative approaches to restoration through local engagement, collaborating with TFD in many international initiatives, such as the Land Use Dialogue (LUD). The first LUD was launched in the Upper Itajai Valley of Santa Catarina in 2016, hosted by Apremavi (Association for the Preservation of the Environment and Life) in collaboration with The Brazilian Forests Dialogue and IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature). This platform has successfully organized regional working groups, developed priority area mapping, and established joint restoration projects. Nowadays, BFD is hosting six LUD in Brazil, and it's part of the coordination council of the Pact for the Restoration of Atlantic Forest (PACTO).

The Forests Dialogue

TFD brings a reputation for facilitating neutral multi-stakeholder dialogue, built on twenty years of experience successfully convening private sector, government, civil society, Indigenous peoples, and local communities on forest issues. TFD provides a neutral platform for dialogue where diverse stakeholders feel welcome and empowered, leading to outcomes that are made durable by the sense of ownership shared by all participants. TFD's process ensures broad participation that enables strong uptake of dialogue outcomes. Recent initiatives that highlight TFD's work engaging the private sector and restoration include Tree Plantations in the Landscape, Bioenergy from Forests, and the Land Use Dialogues. The Forests Dialogue is a program of The Forest School at Yale School of the Environment (YSE). Founded in 1900, YSE is a fundamental interdisciplinary institution home to robust forestry and environmental sustainability programs.