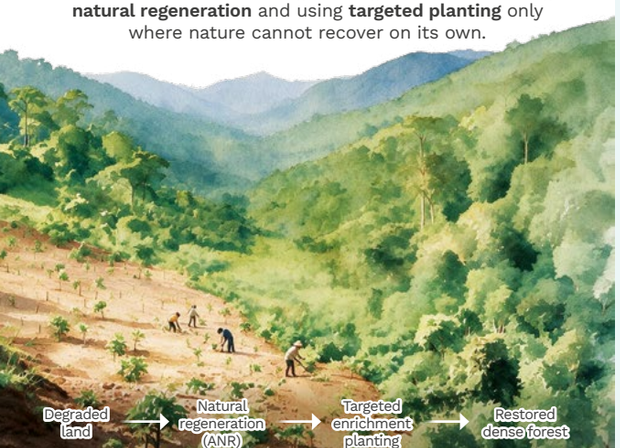
What is Forest Restoration?

Forest restoration helps degraded forests recover their natural structure, biodiversity, and functions (soil and water protection, climate resilience, and livelihoods). It works with nature first, **protecting existing forests, supporting natural regeneration** and using **targeted planting** only where nature cannot recover on its own.



Restoration often combines complementary approaches, protecting what is still alive (seedlings, sprouts, remnant trees), helping nature regenerate itself through Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) and planting native trees only where needed, through Enrichment Planting (EP). Strengthening community stewardship, rules, and sustainable management.

Why is Forest Restoration Important?

Forest restoration matters because healthy forests protect your land and water, keep soils fertile, reduce erosion and flooding, attract pollinators that boost crop yields, regulate temperature, and provide valuable products like timber, fruits, honey, that strengthen household income.

BENEFITS FOR NATURE
Enhances water infiltration & reduces flooding

- Protects soil from erosion & improves soil health
- Protects watersheds
- Supports wildlife & biodiversity
- Stores carbon & regulates climate

BENEFITS FOR PEOPLE
Provides food & income

- Provides clean water
- Improves soil fertility & supports pollinators
- Supports livelihoods & local resilience
- Provides timber & fuelwood

Where Should Forests Be Restored?

Restoration can take place on many types of **degraded land,** including previously **forested** or **overgrazed areas.**


Cut stumps & charcoal pits


Overgrazed & compacted soil


Invasive grasses & few seedlings


Overgrazed areas with exposed roots, compacted soil, and livestock trails


Gullies & sediment in streams

Look for these positive signs:


Remaining trees or nearby forest patches (seed sources and connective).


Natural seedlings, saplings, stump sprouts or root suckers.

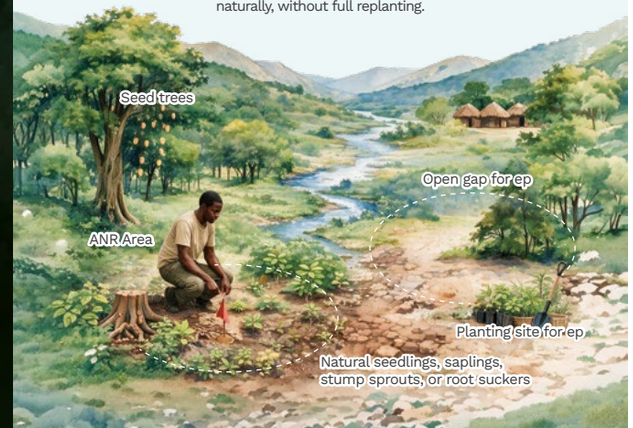

Forest gaps with sunlight but still some shade and soil moisture for trees.

IMPORTANT: DO NOT PLANT TREES IN NATURAL GRASSLANDS OR SAVANNAS, WETLANDS OR WATERLOGGED AREAS

Degraded sites can recover naturally if you see:

- Seedlings, saplings, stump sprouts, or root suckers
- Remnant trees or nearby forest as seed sources
- Vegetation returning on abandoned land
- Existing forest gaps

Presence of these signs means the site can regenerate naturally, without full replanting.



How to Establish Cover Crops (Step-by-Step)

Step 1) Establish Restoration Area

Community engagement and co-design: Agree on goals, rules, and coexistence (where croplands or grazing remains).



Field assessment and mapping: Walk on land, look for signs in the field, map and identify the best restoration approach.



What you see in the field	What to do
Seedlings and seedbed; sprouts presence; Easier to protect	**Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR)**
Very few or no seedlings; gaps need planting	**Enrichment Planting (EP)**

Step 2) Protect First - Stop Ongoing Damage

Protection is the foundation of all forest restoration. Before planting or ANR, remove the pressures and harmful activities that caused the degradation:

1. Stop harmful activities and remove pressures



2. Allow co-existence: restoration areas protected against degrading pressures and sustainable managed cropping maintained outside

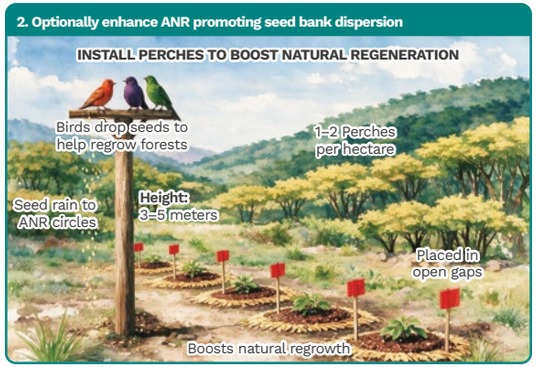


Step 3) Support Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR)

1. After identifying natural regenerating resources (seedlings, rootstocks, stump sprouts, soil seedbanks, woody plants) apply enabling techniques



2. Optionally enhance ANR promoting seed bank dispersion



Step 4) Target Enrichment Planting (EP)

1. Looking for forest gaps

Looking for forest gaps and natural regeneration sparse vegetation or poor biodiversity microsites.



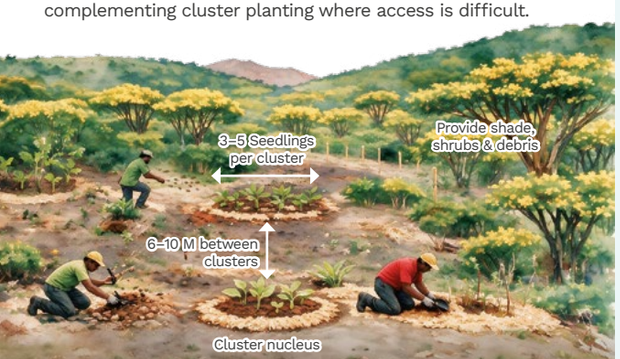
2. Prepare the land.

Prepare carefully to create planting spots and prevent erosion.



3. Plant Vegetation.

Plant at the onset of the rainy season. Water at planting, and only irrigate later as emergency support during long dry spells. Use hand made seed balls placed in small gaps, complementing cluster planting where access is difficult.



AIM FOR 400–800 SEEDLINGS/ha IN DEGRADED GAPS (AVOID BLANKET PLANTING)

Recommended Cluster Combinations

Avoid alien trees that use too much water and can damage soil and local ecosystems. Prefer indigenous tree species and match with community goals and restoration function.

Upland/hill-slope native forest clusters: restore high rainfall uplands and cool escarpment forests.



Transition zone (farm-forest edge): increase tree cover while supporting household nutrition.



Agroforestry + community benefit clusters: increase tree cover while supporting household nutrition.



Mixed native transition clusters: improve connectivity between farms and natural forest patches.



Community Roles in Restoration



Landowners: set aside restoration blocks



Local leaders/committees: create by-laws (rules) for protection



Extension and NGO technicians: provide training and support



Youth and schools: grow seedlings and help replant



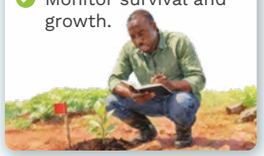
Smallholder farmers: keep livestock out; use agroforestry

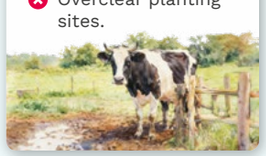
DOs and DON'Ts

DO	DON'T:
Protect natural regeneration first.	Plant in grasslands or wetlands.
Keep firebreaks maintained.	Burn or clear inside blocks.
Use native species for planting.	Let livestock into new areas.
Monitor survival and growth.	Overclear planting sites.
Strengthen community agreements.	Introduce invasive species.
Retain shrubs and fallen wood.	Plant everywhere.

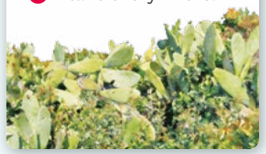












Monitoring, Maintenance and Success Checklist

Care and maintenance:

- Plants growing well.
- No tall weeds.
- No trash in streams.
- Safe paths and fences.
- Over 80% survival.
- Trees growing strong.



Important tasks:

- Weed and mulch monthly.
- Check livestock weekly.



Signs of progress:

- More wildlife.
- Clean water.
- Better harvests.
- Healthy livestock.



If problems happen:

- Replant weak spots.
- Fix broken fences.
- Add more mulch.



Who to Contact for Help

County Environment Office

Local conservation NGOs

Community forest associations

Agricultural extension officers

Research Institutes

The Nature Conservancy

Community Practical Field Guide for Forest Restoration



PROTECTION • RESTORATION • MANAGEMENT