SUPERB
Upscaling Forest Restoration

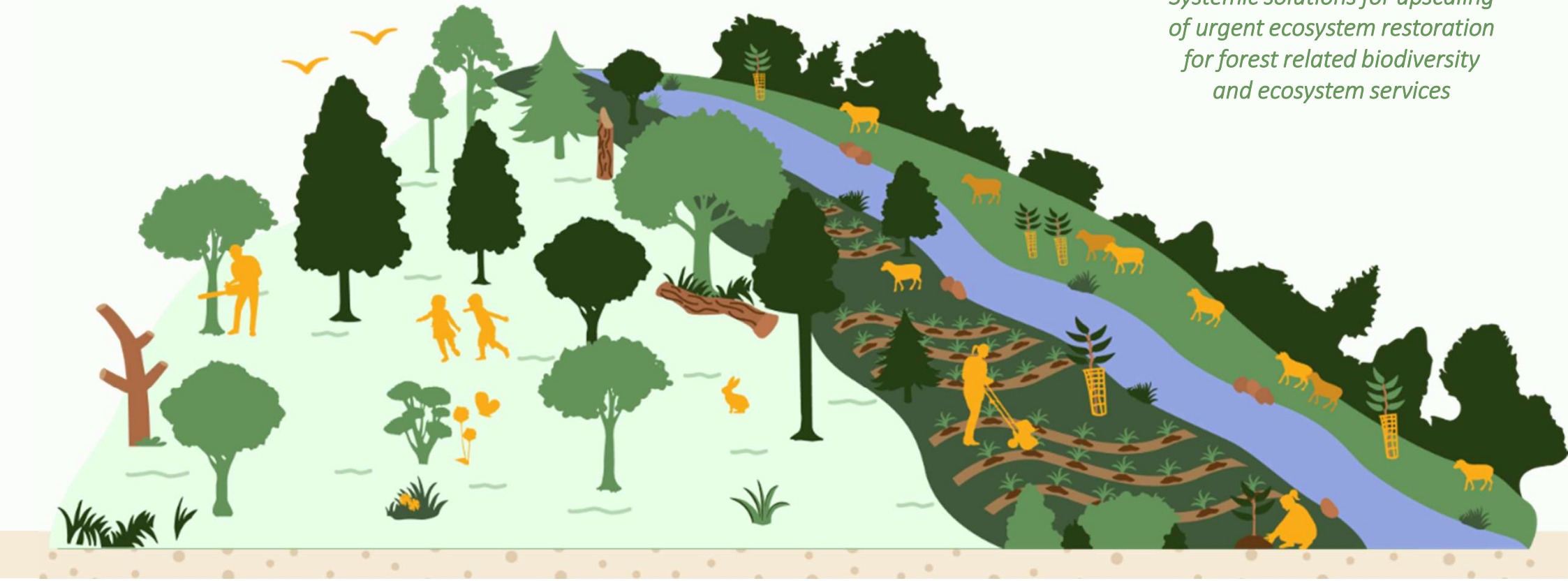
LIFE Platform Meeting, Brasov

3rd of June 2025

Elisabeth Schatzdorfer, EFI
SUPERB Coordinator

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101036849.

EU Nature Restoration Law and EU Forests - Systemic solutions for upscaling of urgent ecosystem restoration for forest related biodiversity and ecosystem services



Project opening by HM Charles III
Sibiu, RO, 2023

Overall goal

SUPERB aims to restore forest landscapes across Europe by creating an **enabling environment** for the implementation of **forward-looking** forest restoration and **management** at different scales.

Project scope

#UpscalingForestRestoration

0.6M ha completed or initiated restoration

4 years (started in 12.2021)

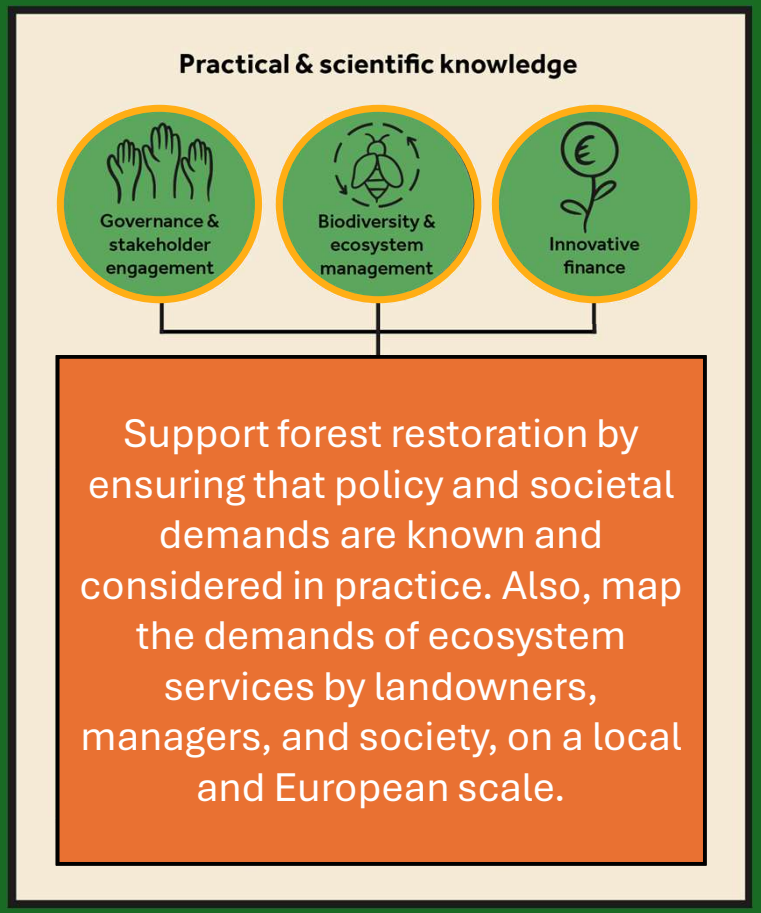
36 Partners led by EFI

16 European countries

€20M EU funds

€90M External resources

SUPERB collects **practical** and expands **scientific knowledge** on successful forest restoration and **synthesises it for action.**



Transformative change through:

1. Demonstrateing and test successful restoration approaches in 12 large-scale demonstration areas

2. Improving societal support for restoration and benefits from restoration

3. Delivering evidence-based practical and latest scientific knowledge

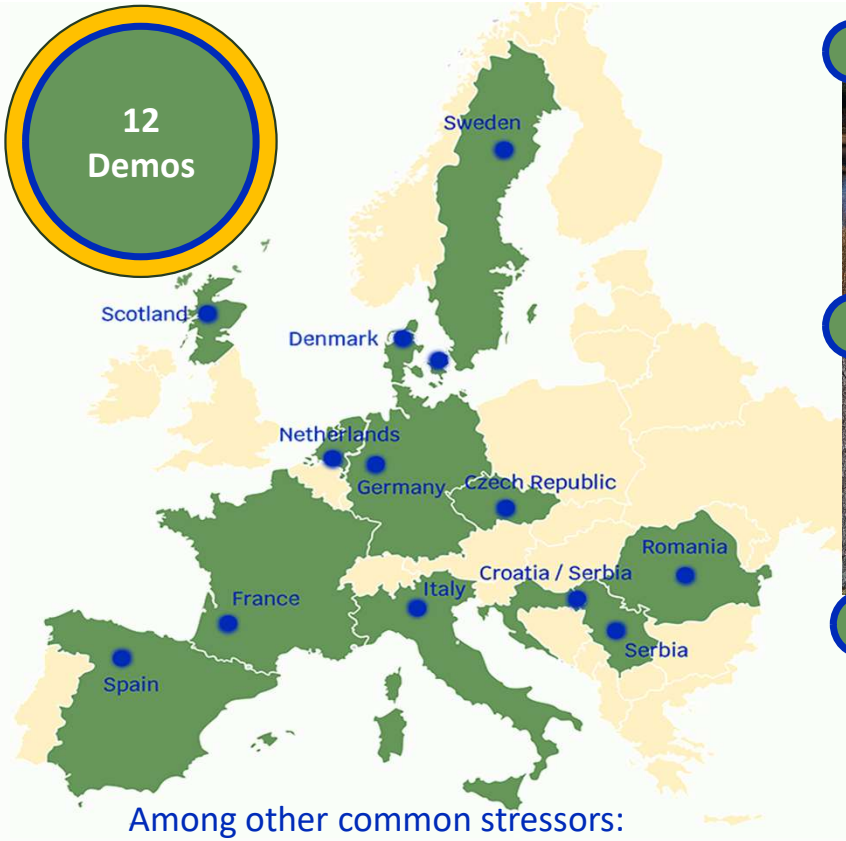
4. Delivering a stakeholder targeted multi-language Forest Knowledge Gateway

5. Launching an interactive online Marketplace

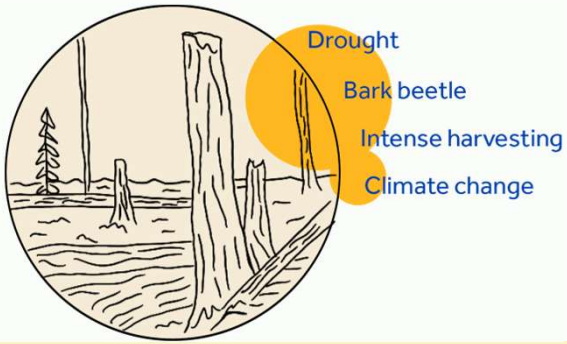
6. Creating a large & powerful multi-stakeholder network and movement for transformative restoration

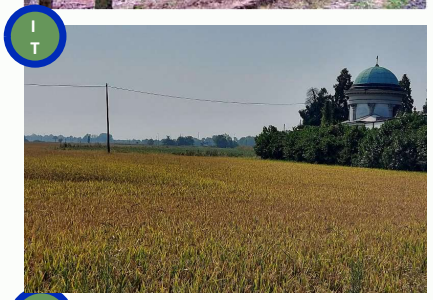
UNITED NATIONS DECADE ON ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION 2021-2030

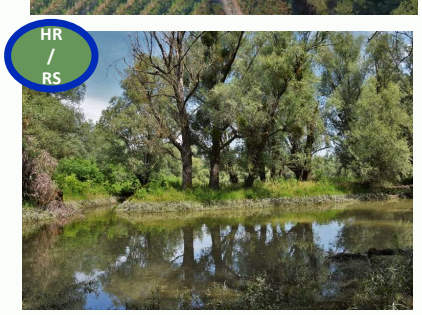
12 Demos



Among other common stressors:





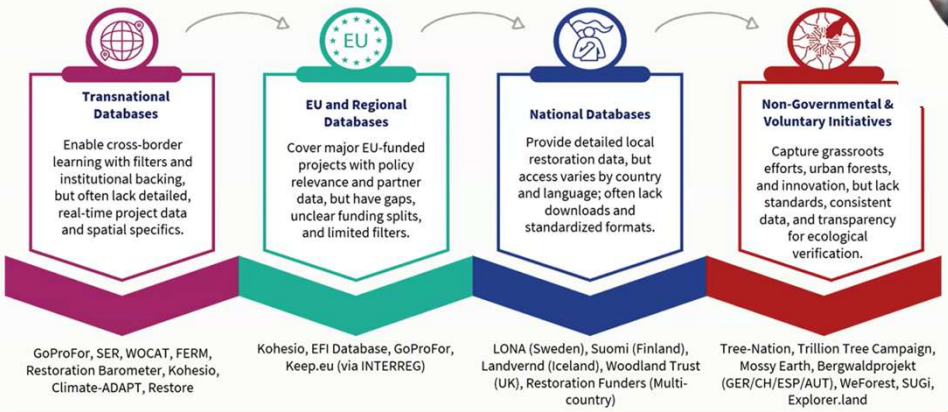


Toolbox of restoration measures:

Practical restoration experience

- ~1700 forest restoration projects in last 30y
- 84 indicators on effort and success
- Very diverse degradation causes, restoration objectives and restoration methods

Existing data platforms for restoration projects



Different phases:

- **Disaster risk reduction**
- **Production**
- **Multifunctionality**

10 Forces Shaping the Evolution of Forest Restoration in Europe

Insights from expert narratives across 18 European countries

Analyzing expert national narratives provides a unique lens into the long-term, large-scale evolution of forest restoration, revealing how environmental, technical, political, legal, social and economic forces have driven successes and setbacks over the past two centuries. Below we summarized the findings into 10 key lessons learnt to guide future restoration efforts.

1 Natural disasters

Restoration often began after catastrophic natural disturbances (e.g., floods, moving dunes) resulting from deforestation. Currently, environmental crises are influencing restoration approaches.

2 Geopolitical turmoil

Wars contributed to forest degradation, halted restoration efforts and spurred large-scale afforestation for timber, leaving lasting impacts.

3 Forest ownership and governance

Centralized forest management often succeeded, while fragmented property and governance slowed progress. Innovative solutions to address property fragmentation are needed.

4 Funding mechanisms

Strong, stable funding has been key to restoration success; insufficient and inconsistent funding remains a major obstacle today. Innovative, resilient funding solutions urgently needed.

5 Market fluctuations

Changing demand for forest products and services has shaped restoration; marketable benefits are crucial for long-lasting engagement in restoration.

6 Sociodemographics and societal values

Rural abandonment enabled regeneration but risked unmanaged forests. Increased environmental awareness of society has diversified restoration objectives.

7 Policies

Balanced but strict national forest laws and specialized institutions, along with international policies, have facilitated restoration success.

8 Convergence of multidimensional drivers

Social, economic, political, and environmental drivers must align to enable impactful forest restoration changes.

9 Conflicting goals

Conflicts among stakeholders and policies hinder restoration efforts. A holistic landscape approach helpful to minimize tradeoffs among sectors.

10 Short-term solutions

Short-term fixes have created long-term vulnerabilities. Long-term thinking and awareness of system interconnectedness are key for success.

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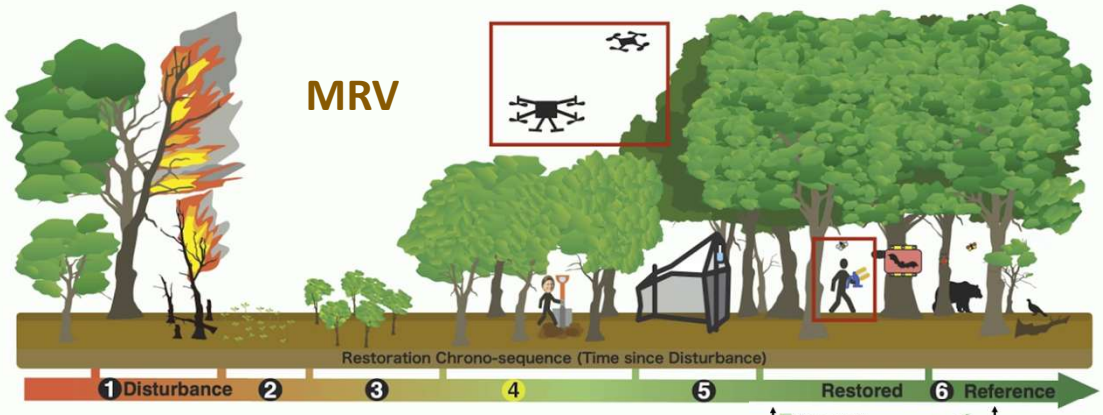
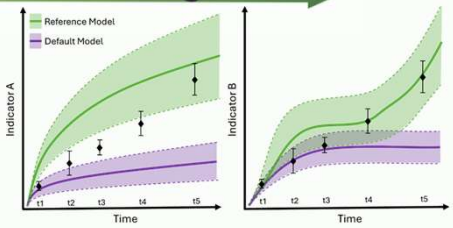
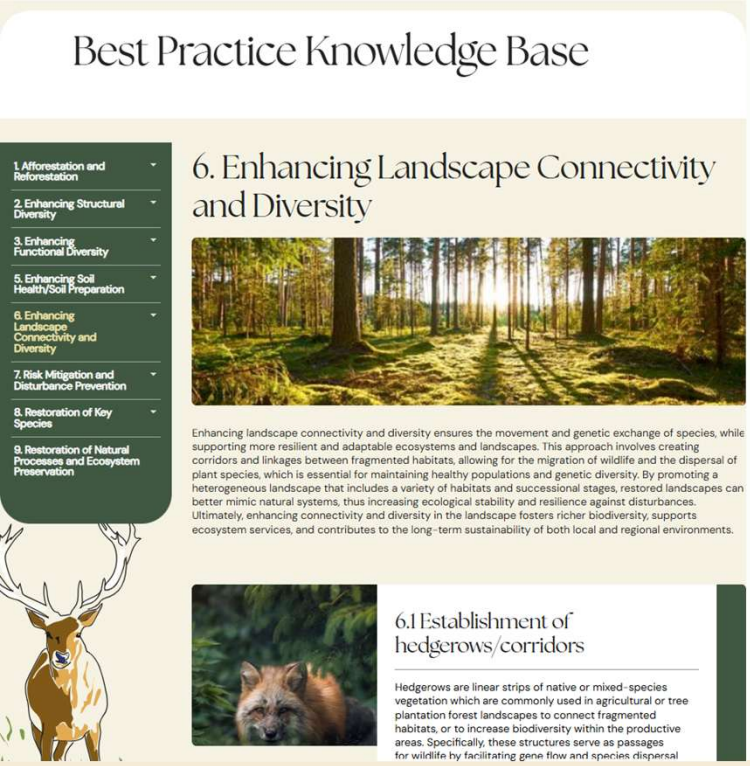
Read full study here: Erdozain, M., Alberdi, I., Aszalós, R. et al. The Evolution of Forest Restoration in Europe: A Synthesis for a Step Forward Based on National Expert Knowledge. *Curr. For. Rep.* 11, 4 (2025). https://doi.org/10.1007/s40725-024-00235-3







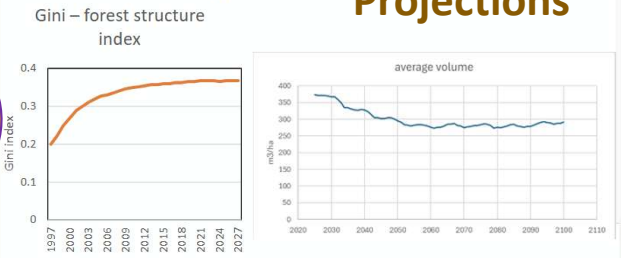
Biodiversity & Ecosystem Management Tools & Guides

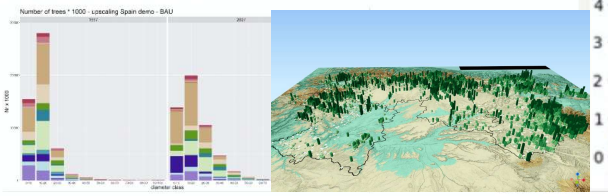
Species and provenance selecition tool SEED4FOREST

https://app.seed4forest.org/

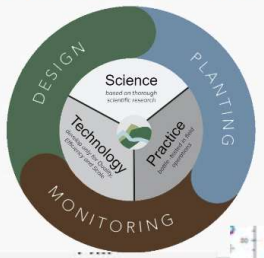
National and regional scale – EFISCEN-Space

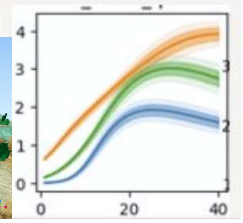
Projections

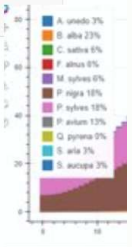


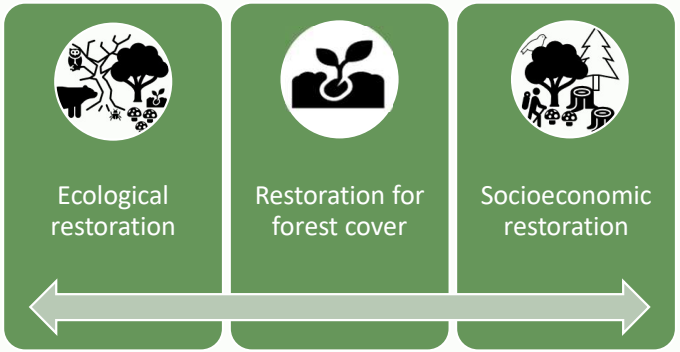


Site level - FastTrack





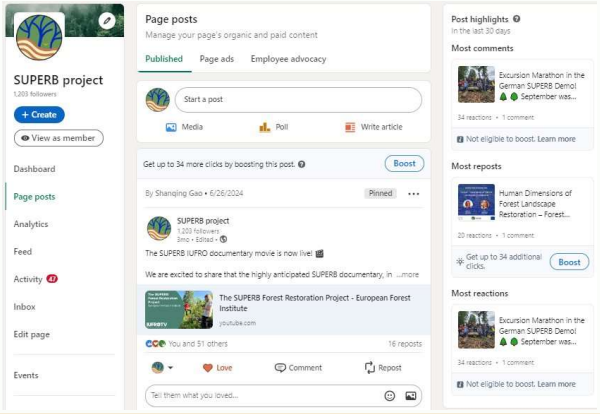


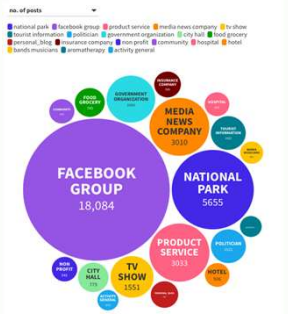


Restoration conflicts

Topic at core of conflict	Restoration conflicts
Public administrations	Coordination conflicts due to ambiguous and conflicting administrative competencies
	Top-down decision-making misaligned with local interest
Policies and legislation	Horizontal and vertical incoherences and conflicts in national/regional forest policy
Stakeholders	Conflicts between stakeholder groups
	Historical powerful imbalances between stakeholders
Decision-making processes	Case study specific

Social media analysis, Online debate mapping

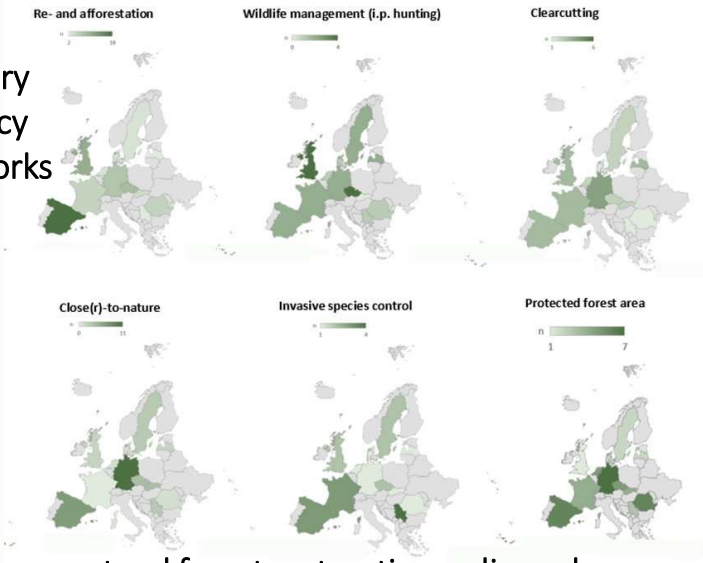




The "silent majority" **supports forest restoration,** but **lower support in disturbed areas.**
Perceived or expected negative impacts of restoration **must be taken serious** to not **risk conflicts** and **decreasing general support** of forest restoration!

Governance and Society

National regulatory and policy frameworks



EU cross-sectoral forest restoration policy coherence

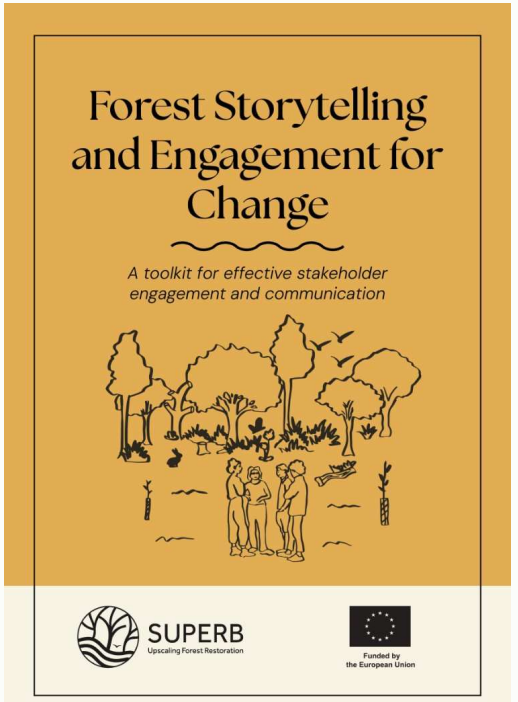
Forest-related policy objectives / Forest restoration objectives	CLIMATE POLICY: Reach net carbon removals target of 310 million tons of CO_2 equivalent by 2030	RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY: Strengthening the socio-economic fabric of rural areas	NATURE CONSERVATION POLICY: Enable the long-term and sustained recovery of biodiverse and resilient nature	BIOECONOMY POLICY: Reduce dependence on non-renewable, unsustainable resources	WATER POLICY: Combat water pollution and ensure sufficient water supply to flora and fauna and human needs	ENERGY POLICY: Increase the share of energy produced from renewable sources to at least 42.5% until 2030
O¹: Increase the share of standing and lying deadwood	0,30	-0,24	1,21	-0,48	0,55	-0,68
O²: Increase the share of uneven-aged forests (incl. through natural regeneration)	0,91	0,55	1,56	0,24	1,00	0,06
O³: Improve forest connectivity	0,97	0,73	1,30	0,53	1,09	0,26
O⁴: Increase the stock of organic carbon in forests	1,41	0,15	0,94	0,12	0,66	-0,21
O⁵: Foster strict forest conservation (in particular of primary and old-growth forests)	0,47	-0,52	1,03	-0,70	0,74	-0,76
O⁶: Foster afforestation (e.g. through planting at least three billion trees in Europe by 2030)	1,38	0,79	0,71	1,18	1,00	1,06
O⁷: Avoidance of clearcutting	0,44	-0,22	0,62	-0,27	0,70	-0,79
O⁸: Combat invasive (alien) species	0,33	0,53	1,18	0,18	0,42	0,18
O⁹: Ensure adapted cloven-hoofed game populations in forests	0,45	0,77	1,17	0,33	0,47	0,39

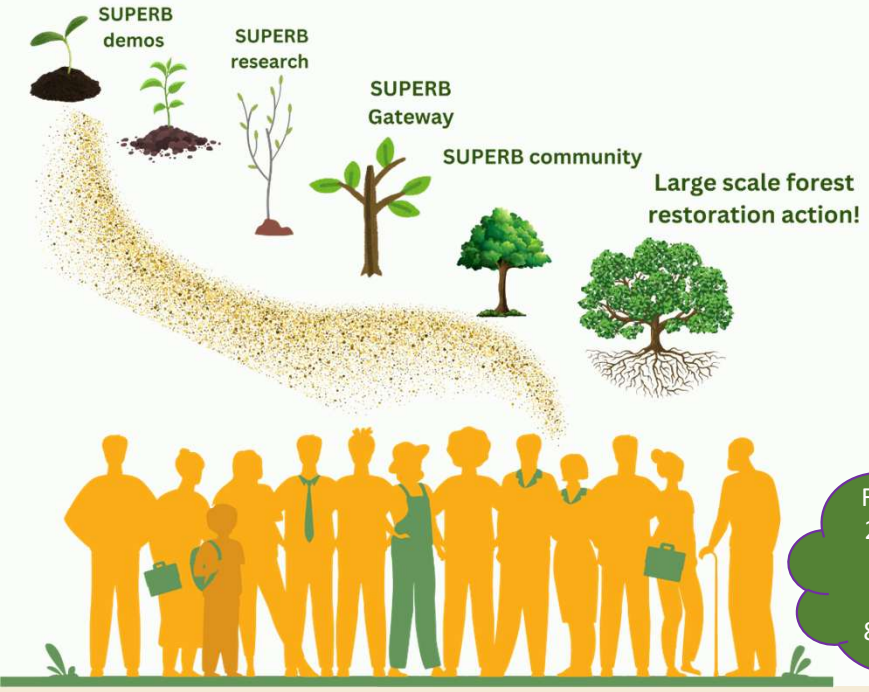
Fleckenstein, S. (2024). From sectoral policy change to cross-sectoral (dis) integration? A longitudinal analysis of the EU's forest and rural development policy. *Forest Policy and Economics*, *169*, 103319.

Media engagement

Societal support →
Political support →
Financial support →
Benefit for nature!

Public engagement

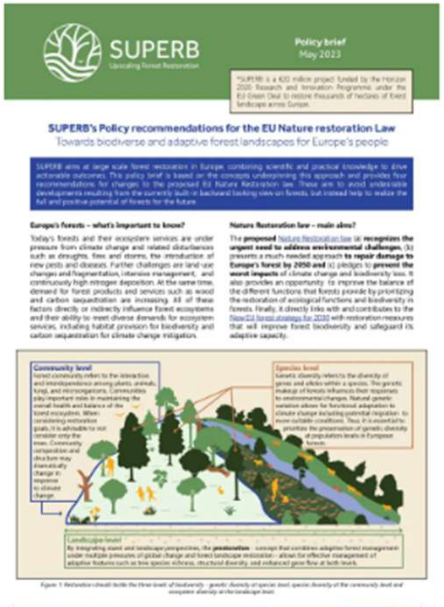




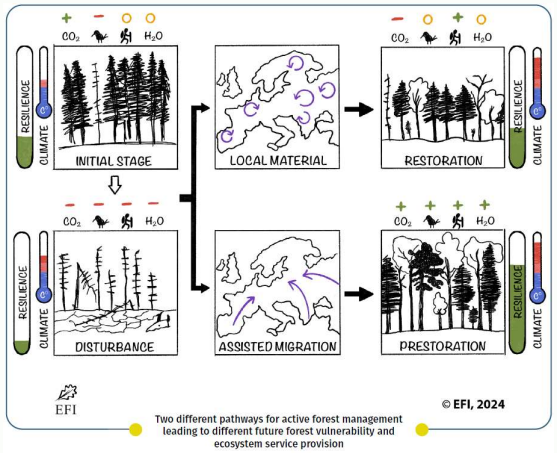
Stakeholder Engagement & Community Building

Final events 2025
26-28 May, Bonn
23-26 June, Edinburgh
8-12 Sep, Leuven

Building the Upscaling Community with key restoration actors



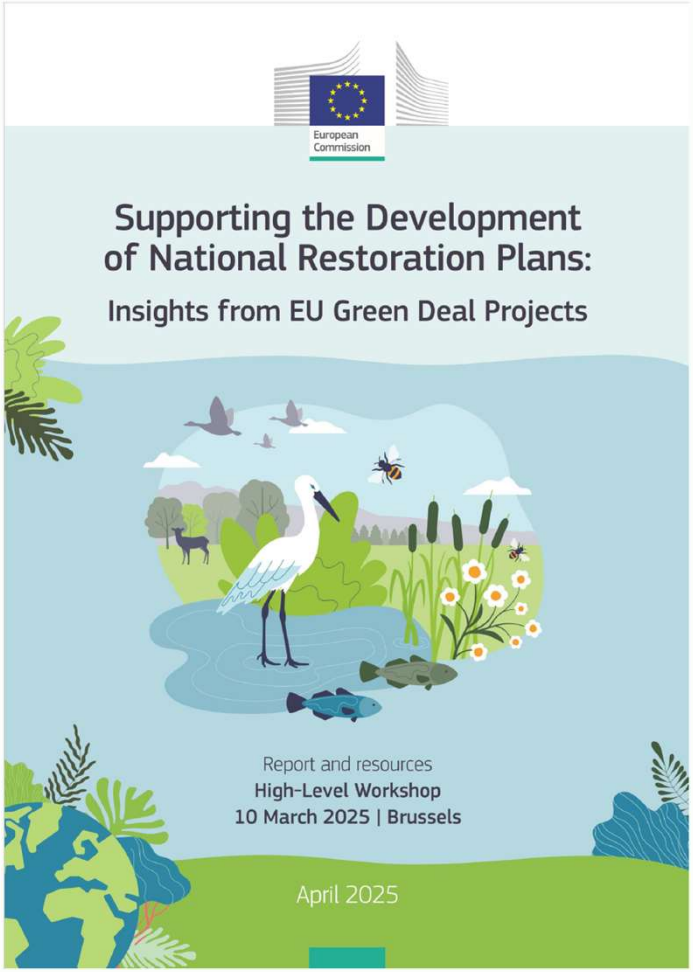
MERLIN
WaterLANDS
REST-COAST
SUPERB



NRR support

Chakraborty, D., et al. *2024.* ***How to strengthen the European forest carbon sink through prestoration: integrating active restoration and adaptation.*** *Policy Brief 11. European Forest Institute.* *https://doi.org/10.36333/pb11*

- Joint Policy Brief and Science publication
  Daniel Hering *et al.*, Securing success for the Nature Restoration Law. *Science* **382**,1248-1250(2023). DOI:10.1126/science.adk1658
- Participation in DG ENV Expert Group on NRR (observer)
- In-person invitation-only event on **10th of March 2025** targeted at EC and national competent authorities + **report**
- Joint Session on Landscape Restoration at SERE '24, + Joint Session with UN Decade, SERE, UNEP-WCMC,…



SER EUROPE SOCIETY FOR ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION
UNITED NATIONS DECADE ON ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION 2021-2030
UN WCMC environment programme

Forest Knowledge Gateway

Making knowledge on
forest restoration
and integrative management
accessible to everyone.

This Gateway is being developed as part of EU-funded projects SUPERB and TRANSFORMIT.

SUPERB
Upscaling Forest Restoration

TRANSFORMIT

Funded by the European Union

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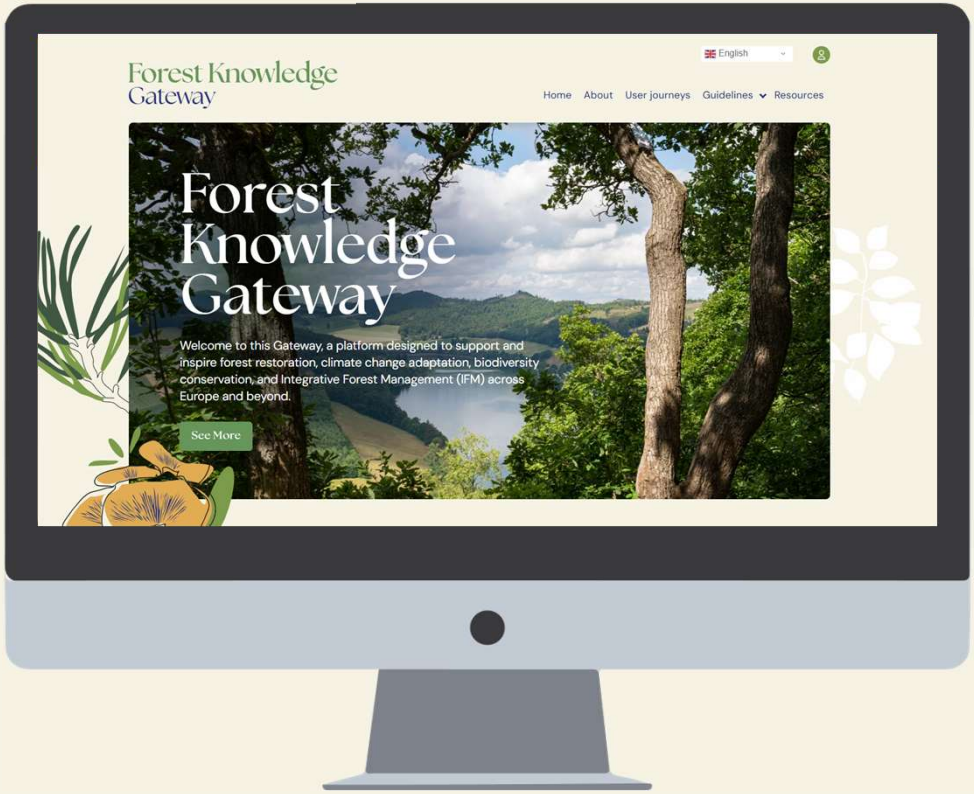
Forest Knowledge Gateway - About

...designed to support and inspire **forest restoration, climate change adaptation, biodiversity conservation, and Integrative Forest Management** across Europe and beyond.



Get to know the Gateway!
www.forestknowledge.eu

*The platform will officially be launched in September 2025.

Resources that you will find in the Gateway

Educational material

Tools & Methods

Projects

Publications

Stories

External platforms

Restoration journeys 4 you

Based on stakeholder specific major restoration barriers and enablers, we have developed “Stakeholder Journeys", which will guide people through the topics and synthesized knowledge most relevant for their work.

Landowners and practitioners

Planners and implementers

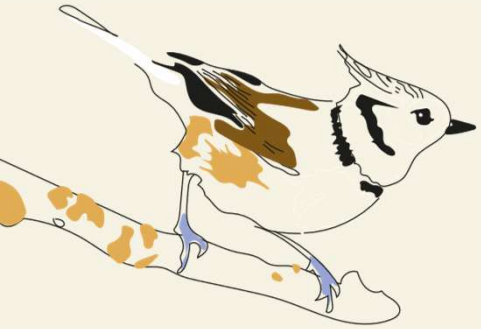
Policy actors

Funders and investors

Your contributions are welcome!

Make your insights or hands-on experience in forest restoration or forest management accessible!

We’re building this Gateway together – contribute your resources and help others learn from your work.



Stay in touch!

For questions, feedback, or if you would like to connect,
contact **elisabeth.schatzdorfer@efi.int** or **gesche.schifferdecker@efi.int**

Follow us for more updates on:

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SUPERB Project

www.transformforests.eu

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