

Brazil's 'innovative' reforestation agenda discussed in Davos (commentary)



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Comments

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- *At the World Economic Forum 2025 in Davos this week, a coalition of leaders from across Brazilian sectors will discuss the integrated, pre-competitive agenda needed to scale forest restoration.*
- *Forest restoration is a key part of successful climate action, providing carbon removal, biodiversity protection and sustainable economic growth, but it requires immediate investment and action, the authors of a new op-ed write.*

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In the quiet Swiss town of Davos, Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain* unfolds as young Hans Castorp's brief visit to a sanatorium turns into a seven-year exploration of ideas, intrigue, and debates. The story ultimately becomes a metaphor for Europe's isolation and decline before World War I.

Since the novel's publication in the early 20th century, its themes have transcended Europe to reflect a world beset by geopolitical tensions. These tensions are compounded by escalating international conflicts and the [repeated failure](#) of United Nations conferences to address urgent climate and biodiversity challenges.

Amid this complex backdrop, the world's leading economic and political figures are gathering once again in the symbolic town of Davos from January 20th to 24th for the 2025 World Economic Forum (WEF). Unique to this event is the mobilization of the private sector to lead the solutions-based agenda for the environmental and climate crises.

A coalition of leaders from the business and financial sectors is joining the conversation from Brazil, which is the host of this year's COP30 in the heart of the Amazon. They are [advancing](#) one of the most strategic solutions for achieving climate balance and safeguarding nature: [forest restoration](#).

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Drone view of Amazon rainforest in Brazil. Image by Rhett A. Butler for Mongabay.

Forest restoration is widely recognized as one of the most effective strategies for removing carbon from the atmosphere. Enhancing ecosystem services as a whole supports sustainable supply chains and creates pathways for long-term environmental and financial resilience. Yet, despite their promise, restoration projects require significant time to mature, and immediate action is needed to meet long-term goals.

The urgency of this work is underscored by the commitments of global tech leaders like Google, Microsoft, Meta, and Salesforce, which have pledged to purchase up to 20 million nature-based carbon removal credits by 2030. Apple has also doubled its Restoration Fund to expand high-quality [nature-based solutions](#). However, these companies have raised concerns that their net-zero targets for 2030 may be at risk due to a shortage of available credits.

To bridge this gap, forest restoration efforts must scale rapidly. This requires increased investment and the establishment of shared standards to strengthen the tropical forest restoration industry and ensure timely, impactful results. Planting must begin now to generate the credits needed to meet ambitious climate goals within this critical timeframe.

In response to these challenges, the Brazilian coalition present at Davos has developed an approach based on an integrated pre-competitive model for restoration — one that blends mitigation, climate adaptation, and innovative business strategies. Their model aims to accelerate restoration efforts while ensuring alignment with environmental and economic priorities, providing a roadmap for scaling solutions at the required pace.

Brazil's innovative agenda for restoration is both a response to pressing challenges and a reflection of its vast potential. Boasting the world's greatest biodiversity, abundant water resources, favorable terrain and climate, the country is further supported by its institutional framework, an organized civil society, and a private sector eager to develop this new economy. It is estimated that approximately \$528 million has been invested in restoration in Brazil in the last 18 months from across financial, conservation, and commodity industries.

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Planting native tree species in Brazil. Image by Raquel Maia Arvelos/CIFOR via Flickr (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0).

Restoration is also gaining momentum beyond the borders of the Amazon, with Europe and the UK recognizing it as a key component of their climate and biodiversity strategies. In 2024, the EU committed to restoring 20% of degraded ecosystems by 2030, and the UK increased investments in rural reforestation to enhance climate resilience and water security. Denmark has also allocated 15% of farmland to reforestation to reduce fertilizer use and protect biodiversity. While these initiatives mark important global steps, they often face challenges in scale and integration, particularly in the coordination of stakeholders and alignment with local ecosystems.

Among the major innovations underway in Brazil is the ability of operators, financiers, and off-takers to coordinate around a pre-competitive restoration agenda. This strategy offers a solution to navigating the challenges of a promising yet demanding industry by emphasizing collective action to bring real progress.

The impact of the Brazilian restoration agenda is found by dividing these efforts into three action fronts: the sharing of operational experiences, developing effective markets for carbon, timber, and biodiversity products (essential to transform restoration into a viable asset class and ensure sustainable investment returns), and the creation of an institutional agenda focused on advancing public policies.

At the meeting in Davos, named “Collaboration for the Intelligent Age,” leaders of the pre-competitive forest restoration agenda will reaffirm the importance of this initiative through new investments and the commitment of a diverse group of stakeholders to work together. The cross-sector collaboration happening within Brazil will extend to the rest of the attendees at the WEF and help advance the coordinated global effort of nature-based solutions.

The restoration of forests provides a beacon toward climate and biodiversity protection – they are nature’s systems, developed over billions of years – which can help us return to a more prosperous and less turbulent era.

Guilherme Leal is a Brazilian businessman, socio-environmental entrepreneur and philanthropist, co-founder of Natura & Co and the Dengo chocolate brand, and is also the leader of The B Team. Paulo Hartung is Executive President of the Brazilian Tree Industry (Ibá), a leading organization representing the planted tree sector in Brazil. Roberto Waack is Chairman of the Board at the Arapyáú Institute and co-founder of the Brazil Climate, Forests, and Agriculture Coalition and the Amazon Concertation, and serves on the boards of organizations including Natura & Co, re.green S.A., Marfrig S.A., Wise Plásticos S.A., and WWF Brazil.

Related audio from Mongabay's podcast: A new forest finance fund known as the Tropical Forest Forever Facility (TFFF) will work like an investment portfolio and if enacted as intended, it will reward 70 tropical nations billions in annual funding for keeping their forests standing. Listen here: