

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION AND NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS: WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

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The need to **restore ecosystems** in order to halt ecosystem degradation, mitigate the effects of climate change, and stop the accelerated loss of global biodiversity is not new. **nature-based solutions (NbS)**, on the other hand, are a newer concept and have entered the conversation with great force on how to approach current environmental problems.

The main difference is that [in ecosystem restoration the focus central to restoration is nature itself](#). The objective is to improve natural parameters: water quality, biodiversity, connectivity, etc.

On the other hand, nature-based solutions aim to manage natural processes to [provide benefits to both people and ecosystems](#). Its main objective, therefore, although it should include gains in terms of biodiversity or improvement of the ecosystem, is focused on improving the services that the ecosystem offers to humans: Reduction of flood risk, capture of atmospheric pollutants, noise reduction , etc.

Both concepts are similar and mutually supportive, but in the case of **nature-based solutions, the focus is the needs and goals of society** . This, of course, makes nature-based solutions very valuable tools to face the challenges that society faces in the face of the current environmental crisis. And yet, this societal-focused approach **carries inherent risks** that cannot be ignored.

The greatest of these risks is undoubtedly falling into the temptation of focusing on those aspects of nature that guarantee us clear ecosystem services, useful for society and easily quantifiable, such as water supply or the regulation of climate. However, nature is rarely so simple, rather it tends to be complex and dynamic, and there are different interconnected processes underlying these services. This implies that there is a significant risk of overlooking numerous irreplaceable ecosystem services that nature generates, and that do not directly respond to the needs of society. In addition to not taking into account that [nature has intrinsic value significant](#) and is worthy of conservation and restoration in its own right.

For all this, it is important to differentiate what is implicit when we talk about restoration versus when we propose solutions based on nature. The needs and circumstances will dictate which is more appropriate, but **we should not forget the central role of nature in either of the two cases**.

Photo: Christian Cruzado

