

Author's Accepted Manuscript

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Ecosystems

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PII: S2211-4645(17)30337-8
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envdev.2018.07.001>
Reference: ENVDEV395

To appear in: *Environmental Development*

Received date: 15 December 2017
Revised date: 23 June 2018
Accepted date: 2 July 2018

Cite this article as: R.P. Sapkota, P.D. Stahl and K. Rijal, Restoration Governance: An Integrated Approach Towards Sustainably Restoring Degraded Ecosystems, *Environmental Development*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envdev.2018.07.001>

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Restoration Governance: An Integrated Approach Towards Sustainably Restoring Degraded Ecosystems

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Abstract

Global ecosystems are increasingly threatened and altered by anthropogenic pressures and multiscale environmental disturbances. These disturbed ecosystems need to be restored to maintain vital ecosystem services. Strategies which do not consider integrated approach of restoration interventions may shift the ecosystems to more degraded states. In this study, we reviewed previously published primary articles to determine and describe the importance of ecosystem restoration governance components, viz. legal, financial, social and technological, and proposed an integrated framework of ecological restoration. We determined that without tracking restoration practices into restoration governance framework, the short-term restoration efforts are less likely to drive the ecosystem towards desired reference site conditions. Success of restoration can typically be observed only after years or decades (depending on the scale of the project and environment), so there should be an accountable institution overseeing the project for this period of time. We recommend integrating governance components from project planning to monitoring and evaluation phase. Further, we propose implementing restoration activities through a stable institutional entity that can foster collaboration and coordination with partners and stakeholders. Integrating components of restoration governance increase the likelihood of the restoration programs to be successful and sustainable, and provides opportunities to learn from the experiences.

Key words: *ecosystem services; governance components; restoration governance; restoration interventions*

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