



# SER-EUROPE 21 AND BEYOND

SERE STRATEGY 2021-2027

## A WORD FROM THE CHAIR OF SER-EUROPE

Since we engaged in SER Europe strategy 2016-2021, the context of ecological restoration has substantially changed. Our concerns on global threats to climate, biodiversity and our own livelihoods have only confirmed the worst scenarios, and **the need for large-scale efforts to restore European and global landscapes is more pressing than ever**. Yet, international initiatives as the UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration and the European Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 - where ecological restoration should play a key role, provide **new opportunities** for ecological restoration and for SERE.

We must do our best to realize our expectations in terms of the extent of restoration, the quality of the actions, and their impact on nature and people. As our societies experience the **transition towards a systemic change** in our use of nature and natural resources, tensions arise. There are still many pressures to water down nature protection and restoration initiatives, led by people and organizations that are too attached to the current status-quo, concerned about the scale of the transformation, or simply unable to cope with the rate of change. We must make sure that restoration programs have the strongest impact on nature and the largest and well-distributed benefits to people at the lowest costs.

**Europe and SER Europe are well positioned to meet this challenge.** On one hand, we are part of a global organization which provides essential support and facilitates our engagement with global networks. On the other hand, SERE's ability to promote high quality restoration in Europe and the European countries is sustained by links with major pan-



European and national networks. They provide the capacity to amplify the scope and impact of our actions, while addressing the ecological and cultural diversity of our continent.

**SER Europe is in the forefront of evidence-based knowledge.** By nature and by vocation, our Society is the common house for experts in the science and practice of ecological restoration. Experts that populate the events organized and supported by SERE and make use of the multiple resources that we supply.

To achieve ambitious targets, **SERE must grow**, sustainably. We must keep increasing our presence in areas where ecological restoration and SERE are poorly established, strengthening the links with national networks, sister organizations, NGOs, and corporations to weave the European restoration network. We must engage youngsters, who are scarcely represented in SERE and should be major stakeholders of the future that we are contributing to build. We must attract experts from all fields of ecological restoration, progressing beyond past 'terrestrial' bias. We must enhance the involvement of practitioners and policymakers in SERE activities. And last but not less important, we must get the financial support to sustain these activities and increase the professional level of our management, while retaining the volunteerism, fraternity and enthusiasm that characterizes our Society.

This is why **SERE needs a wise, far-sighted, engaging, and feasible strategy** and why we have developed the participatory process whose results are presented here.





## SER's VISION

Ecological restoration becomes a fundamental component of conservation and sustainable development programs throughout the world by virtue of its inherent capacity to provide people with the opportunity to not only repair ecological damage, but also improve the human condition.

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## SER's MISSION

SER advances the science, practice, and policy of ecological restoration to sustain biodiversity, improve resilience in a changing climate, and re-establish an ecologically healthy relationship between nature and culture.



# SER's GUIDING VALUES

1

## **Ecological restoration is an engaging and inclusive process.**

Restoration embraces the interrelationships between nature and culture, engages all sectors of society, and enables full and effective participation of indigenous, local and disenfranchised communities.

2

## **Ecological restoration requires the integration of knowledge and practice.**

All forms of knowledge are essential for designing, implementing, and monitoring restoration projects and programs. At the same time, lessons learned from practical experiences are essential for determining and prioritizing the scientific needs of the field.

3

## **Ecological restoration is policy-relevant and essential.**

Restoration is a critical tool for achieving biodiversity conservation, mitigating, and adapting to climate change, enhancing ecosystem services, fostering sustainable socioeconomic development, and improving human health and well-being.

4

## **Ecological restoration is practiced locally with global implications.**

Restoration takes place in all regions of the world, with local actions having regional and global benefits for nature and people.







Picture: Mediterranean pine forests in Muela de Cortes (Valencia, Spain) (J.Cortina-Segarra)

## THE EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE ON SER'S VISION, MISSION AND GUIDING VALUES

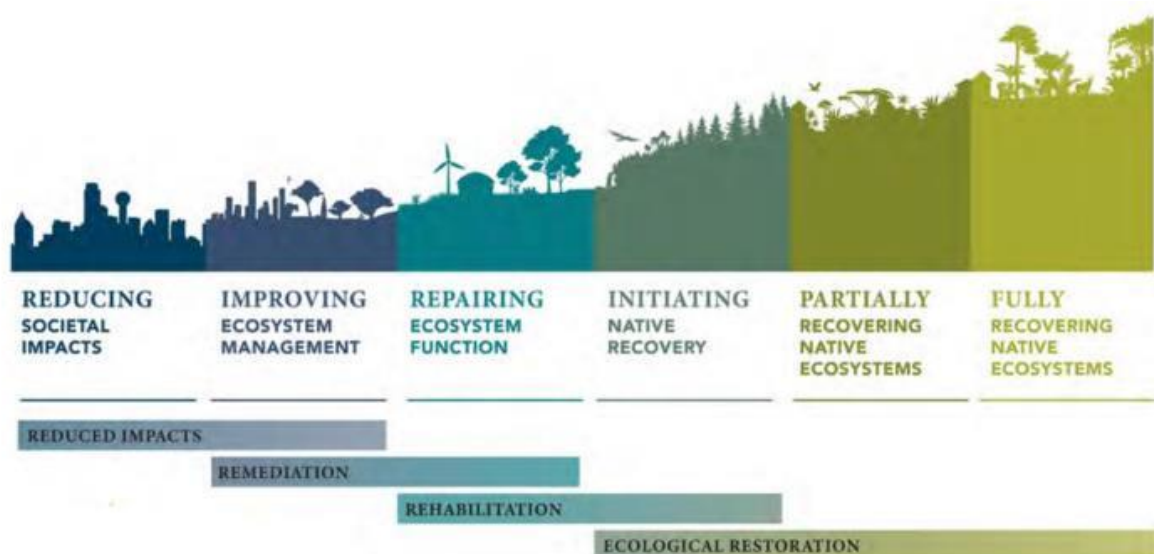
Within the global context we face two immense threats: the catastrophic loss of biodiversity and the accelerating climate emergency. Crucially, these two crises are mutually reinforcing. We cannot stop climate change without halting biodiversity loss and we cannot restore global nature without tackling climate change. There are vast and profound implications for our societies, economies, and communities. However, Ecological Restoration is one of the most critical ways to repair and restore nature, address the climate emergency, and improve the health and wellbeing of our societies. The UN Decade of Restoration and the EU Green Deal have tremendous potential to galvanise attention, funding, and coordination to achieve this. The role of SERE within Europe is now more important than ever to lead, drive and shape Ecological Restoration; in short restoring functional ecosystems are the building blocks to our recovery.

There are many distinctive and key features unique to the European region, which are key to shaping our vision, mission, and guiding values. These include long-term and large-scale modification of ecosystems, including their social and cultural impacts; the significance of some cultural landscapes and seascapes; Europe's historical contribution to the global environmental crisis; high levels of urbanization with resultant rural abandonment and ensuing socio-cultural implications; unprecedented evidence of habitat loss in coastal-marine environments; and the high levels of wealth and uneven distribution of social capital; amongst others.

There are also high levels of scientific knowledge and capacity to generate and share new research by means of well-established professional organizations and research, technology and development centers; large technical and logistic capacities, regional political integration and high diversity of socio-cultural contexts.

Thus, in addition to the guiding values mentioned above, at SERE we believe that ecological restoration in Europe, seeks to:

- Support the emerging global Nature Positive goal to both HALT and REVERSE the loss of nature at a planetary level (i.e., Zero Net Loss of Nature from 2020; Net Positive by 2030; Full Recovery by 2050).
- Protect and prioritize mature ecosystems, and always aim to achieve the most ambitious targets along the restoration continuum.
- Promote community engagement and actions that are aligned with national and EU Green Deal and other European strategies for maximizing local and global benefits.
- Acknowledge transboundary degradation and coordinate efforts with other regions to ensure global benefits of restoration actions.
- Lead global ecological restoration, planning and practice by example in addressing biodiversity loss and climate change.
- Encourage and enable socioeconomic regeneration through restoration within cities and urban areas, contributes to deter rural abandonment, and maximize the benefits of abandoned areas for nature and people.
- Recognize the need to promote science-based, cost-effective, innovative restoration actions of coastal and marine habitats and long-term restoration programs.
- Use community skills and resources to increase the quality and impact of ecological restoration, with restoration actions used to generate further knowledge that is shared globally.
- Shape and develop the restoration narrative among communities, cultures, and generations on how nature provides benefits for all from economic prosperity to human health and wellbeing, and facilitate dialog across communities, cultures, and generations.
- Contribute to enhance human wellbeing and sustain an equitable and fair distribution of benefits for all. Restoration embeds ecological and social systems, directly working towards the achievement of the CBD Global Biodiversity Framework.



The Restorative Continuum, SER international principles and standards for the practice of ecological restoration.



## SERE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES & TARGETS (2021-2027)

1

**Provide science-based evidence to mainstream SERE's influence on legal, political, and socio-economic agendas**

SERE is acknowledged by practitioners and policy makers in European Institutions, nation states of the European continent and on the global arena as the unified and foremost European voice of science on the role of ecological restoration in addressing the nature crisis, climate emergency and future wellbeing of society.

2

**Join efforts in promoting ecological restoration by further strengthening SERE's network and collaborations**

Peer organizations and environmental NGOs across Europe, national ER networks, the private sector and youth movements are actively engaged with SERE to promote ecological restoration.

3

**Develop SERE's capacities to take the leading role in driving and shaping the momentum of ecological restoration**

SERE has a clear profile and has the capacity to play a significantly larger and more important role through advocacy, improved fund raising, reinforced management, membership increase and proactive members' engagement.

4

**Promote societal awareness and build capacities by increasing SERE's visibility and outreach to individuals**

Across Europe, practitioners, private/public sectors and the wider public, recognize SERE and value its work in developing best practice, standards, and guidance for ecological restoration, including the application of principles through successful demonstration sites.

# 1

## Provide science-based evidence to mainstream SERE’s influence on legal, political, and socio-economic agendas

To improve SERE’s influence on legal, political and socio-economic contexts of ecological restoration, we will follow a multi-level approach and provide interdisciplinary science-based evidence for the benefits of ecological restoration on a national, continental and global level.

Our first priority is to **act on the European level and to support policy makers in European institutions**. We will do so by developing recommendations, contact and brief Members of European Parliament (MEP) and continue to collaborate and connect with other European initiatives engaged with policy makers such as European Green Belt.

Our second priority is to **support policy makers in nation states of the European continent**. We will do so by developing briefing notes for Member States to impact on National

Restoration Plans in collaboration with existing actors. We also aim at **highlighting the impact of ecological restoration on addressing the climate emergency and nature crisis** and the resultant benefits for human health and wellbeing by joining forces with existing organizations such as EcoHealth Global, Ecosystem Services Partnership, Ecohealth Alliance, International Federation of Landscape Architects, Rewilding networks, and the European Marine Research Network.

Finally, we will increase our **participation in the global agenda** by intensifying our cooperation with SER International. We also aim at **promoting qualified jobs in the field of ecological restoration** through providing training opportunities in collaboration with professional bodies and research centers in the field of ecological restoration.

PRIORITY	ACTION	OUTPUT	OUTCOME
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact and brief European Institutions and representatives</li> <li>Continue collaboration and connect with other European initiatives engaged with policy makers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SERE recommendations integrated in European policy concerning ER by 2026</li> <li>2 new collaborations established, and 3 joint activities organized by 2026</li> </ul>	<b>Policy makers in European Institutions supported</b>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop briefing notes for member States to impact on National Restoration Plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SERE recommendations integrated in 3 National Restoration Plans by 2024</li> </ul>	<b>Policy makers in nation states of the European continent supported</b>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Join forces with existing organisations at the intersect of conservation, human health, and wellbeing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cooperation established with 2 organisations by 2024</li> </ul>	<b>Impact of ER on the biosphere and it's benefits for human health and wellbeing highlighted</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intensify cooperation with SER by providing a distinctive European voice and viewpoint</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participation in SER Chapter relations and SER Board meetings with follow-up agenda by 2022</li> </ul>	<b>SERE participation in the global agenda increased</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate with professional bodies research centres to provide training opportunities in the field of ER</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 training event supported per year</li> </ul>	<b>Qualified jobs in the field of ecological restoration promoted.</b>



## 2

## Join efforts in promoting ecological restoration by further strengthening SERE’s network and collaborations

SERE will continue to actively engage with other networks, organizations and fora in order to join forces and collectively promote ecological restoration in a concerted way.

Our first priority is to **promote and strengthen national networks** active in the field of ecological restoration which will advocate a leading role for SERE at national level. Besides identifying local ER networks and developing joint actions with them, we will strengthen collaboration with our existing partners and affiliated organisations through the development of joint activities.

Our second priority is to **engage with environmental NGO’s and peer organisations at the European level**. We will do so by establishing new relationships and developing joint initiatives with European ENGOs, and collectively working towards proactive and positive outcomes for ER, such as our friendship agreement with Eurosite. We also

aim at facilitating a science-based and practice-based ecological informed path, in order to recognize emerging initiatives.

Furthermore, we aim at a better **engagement of the private sector** with SERE. We will do so by mapping relevant companies with a stake in ecological restoration and organising sectorial workshops. We will also consider joining the Business and Biodiversity Platform and cooperate with the Enterprise Forum.

Last but not least importantly, we will **promote youth engagement in ecological restoration** by supporting student associations and connecting with existing youth movements, e.g. the Young Rewilders Network. We will establish a Youth Forum within SERE that allows to engage students, connect with existing early career restoration professionals and disseminate information on training opportunities and job markets.

PRIORITY	ACTION	OUTPUT	OUTCOME
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify local ER networks and develop joint actions</li> <li>Strengthen collaboration with established networks, particularly affiliated organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National SERE champions appointed in 4 countries by 2024</li> <li>2 joint activities organized with established networks per year</li> </ul>	<b>National ER networks promoted and strengthened</b>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop joint actions with European ENGOs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cooperation established with 2 European NGO’s by 2023</li> </ul>	<b>European environmental NGOs engaged with SERE</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deepen collaboration with Eurosite</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 joint actions organized by 2025</li> </ul>	<b>Peer organizations across Europe join efforts with SERE</b>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involve restoration-relevant private sector stakeholders and organize membership meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 private sector stakeholders identified and 3 sectoral meetings organized by 2023</li> </ul>	<b>Private sector engaged with SERE</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote student associations and engage students across academic institutions and across scientific disciplines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth forum established in SERE by 2022</li> </ul>	<b>Youth engagement in ER promoted</b>



### 3

## Develop SERE’s capacities to take the leading role in driving and shaping the momentum of ecological restoration.

Developing our own organizational capacities is a key to successfully accomplish our mission, to implement the SERE Strategy 2021-2027 and for being recognized as a lead institution in providing assistance to ecological restoration at different levels, across marine, freshwater, transitional and terrestrial ecosystems.

We will **improve our fund-raising capacities** through approaching potential private sector donors and acquiring additional public funding. If needed, we will instore a fund-raising committee within SERE in charge of preparing a clear concept on how to approach and convince potential donors.

We will **reinforce human resources capacities** within SERE through the creation of internship opportunities for specific tasks and through the increase of working hours allocated to project management activities within SERE.

Through the implementation of the “towards 500EERs” – Campaign, we aim at **growing our memberships by 70%** by the end of 2022, which will provide further improvement of our funding and HR capacities.

A key to successfully develop our capacities also lies in the confirmed interest to **provide more opportunities for voluntary engagement of members**. We will therefore design a concept to inform members of possibilities to engage with themes, topics and working groups. We also aim at generally increasing members’ participation in SERE Board activities and decisions through keeping them regularly informed and contribute to surveys about ongoing activities and relevant decisions.

Finally, we will continue to **further shape the profile of SERE** for a clear and transparent communication with actors of institutions, the private sector and the civil society.

PRIORITY	ACTION	OUTPUT	OUTCOME
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a business plan and contact donors for achieving strategic funding</li> <li>Submit proposals to public calls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 potential funders / year contacted</li> <li>2 additional proposals submitted by 2024</li> </ul>	<b>Fund raising capacities improved</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create voluntary and paid internships for specific tasks within SERE</li> <li>Increase SERE project management capacities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secretariat reinforced 70% by 2023</li> <li>Project management working hours doubled by 2022</li> </ul>	<b>SERE human resources capacities enlarged</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct the "Towards 500EERs" – Campaign</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SER Europe Memberships increased by 70% by end 2022</li> </ul>	<b>SERE membership increased</b>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote volunteer working groups for the implementation of SERE strategy and actions</li> <li>Increase members’ participation in SERE Board activities and decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement plan ready by 2022 and updated yearly</li> <li>Members consulted at least twice / year on SERE activities</li> </ul>	<b>Opportunities for members’ engagement provided</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a communication strategy and plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication strategy ready by 2023</li> </ul>	<b>SERE profile shaped</b>



# 4

## Promote societal awareness and build capacities by increasing SERE’s visibility and outreach to individuals

Beyond reaching out to institutions, networks, and organizations, we aim at promoting societal awareness and facilitating dialogue among individuals, cultures, and generations.

We therefore will take further actions to **reach out to practitioners** by contributing to develop a European Knowledge and Information Network on ER including a map of demonstration sites, and continue to promote the Certified Ecological Restoration Practitioner (CERP) program with the objective to double the number of certified professionals by 2023.

Further, we will continue to regularly organize conferences and webinars with specific topics/side events/workshops to reach out to different individuals and professionals and to

**promote best practices and demonstration sites** of ecological restoration.

With different cultures and languages spoken being a distinctive feature of the European continent, we will contribute to **reduce language barriers** through the translation of key documents, the website and newsletters.

Finally, we will **increase our presence in social networks** and conduct actions to **raise social awareness** on ecological restoration. We will do so by promoting a series of short videos or podcasts on the concept and benefits of restoration by means of a contest, and by promoting the “Make a difference week” or another annual event involving the public in Europe.

PRIORITY	ACTION	OUTPUT	OUTCOME
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contribute to develop a European Knowledge and Information Network on ER</li> <li>Promote CERP (in relation with membership)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>European Knowledge and Information Network (EKIN) on ER created by the end of 2025</li> <li>Number of certified professionals doubled by 2023</li> </ul>	<b>Further actions to reach out to practitioners taken</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organise Conferences and webinars with specific topics/side events/workshops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One conference organized every 2 years, and one webinar per month with participants from the private sector/ practitioners/ young professionals</li> </ul>	<b>Best practices and demonstration sites are promoted</b>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify language barriers and translate documents, website and newsletters with help of SERE members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Website available in 3 European languages by 2023. Key documents translated in 4 languages and published</li> </ul>	<b>Language barriers reduced</b>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote a series of short videos/podcasts on the concept of restoration by means of a contest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contest organised and social media plan for screening established by 2024</li> </ul>	<b>Presence in social networks increased</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the “Make a difference week” or another annual event involving the public in Europe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 European restoration projects attracted to the MAD week</li> </ul>	<b>Social awareness on ER raised</b>





The Neretva River Delta, Croatia (M. Sabolić)

## SER-EUROPE 2021 AND BEYOND

### SERE STRATEGY 2021-2027

The SERE strategy 2021-2027 was developed following an iterative and participatory decision-making process involving – in different steps and at different times – all stakeholders directly or indirectly involved and concerned by the work of SERE.

At the heart of the process, a focus group composed of 5 members of the board of directors, 7 senior and junior members from academia, as well as 4 senior and junior professional members from the private and public sector have worked through the strategy development process in two consecutive workshops. Their reflexions were fed by results from member surveys and votes, public polls and interviews with key stakeholders.

#### Authors:

Jordi Cortina-Segarra (SERE Chair), Jordi Pietx (SERE Program Manager), Marc Haering (LISODE)

#### Co-authors of the focus group:

Kris Decler (Instituut voor Natuur- en Bosonderzoek Hoofdzetel), Elise Buisson (Université d'Avignon), Aveliina Helm (Tartu Ülikool), Patricia María Rodríguez González (Universidade de Lisboa), Edita Baltrėnaitė-Gedienė (Vilniaus Gedimino Technikos Universitetas), Jim Harris (Cranfield University), Rodolfo Gentili (Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca), Catherine Farrell (Trinity College Dublin), Sara Peláez Sanchez (University of Limerick), Rory Canavan (ARUP UK), Patricia Pinto da Silva (Sociedade Portuguesa de Botânica), Cristian Tetelea (Invisible Nature), Marija Sabolić (Ministarstvo gospodarstva i održivog razvoja), Stijn den Haan (Graduate Erasmus Mundus Master in Environmental Science, Policy and Management, MESPOM), Cristina Gambi (Università Politecnica delle Marche), Simonetta Fraschetti (Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II):

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