



Restoration Barometer

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MetLife

2022 Pledge Implementation Progress Report

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2022 1T.ORG PLEDGE IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS REPORT

MetLife

5 Million Trees to create resilient forests and communities

Reporting period

January 2020 – December 2021

Pledge status

Somewhat on track

Intervention locations

United States, Mexico, Brazil, Malaysia, Singapore



Progress summary

MetLife's goal to plant five million trees by 2030 is an effort to reduce carbon emissions and help reforest areas that have been impacted by natural disasters, including hurricanes, floods and wildfires.

Thus far, we have contributed progress to this goal via large-scale reforestation programmes in national and state forests, distribution of trees to homeowners in communities impacted by disaster and employee volunteer projects in urban areas around the world. We are finding it valuable to engage a large number of stakeholders in this commitment, educating our employees, customers and community members about the importance of trees. We have also been highlighting the impact of climate change by tying tree-planting initiatives around the world to customer engagement and sales.

Our biggest lesson learned has been planning projects far in advance to allow adequate time for local partners, especially globally, to effectively develop a project, identify the right tree species and timeframe, and obtain the necessary approvals. Oftentimes, having funding provided early in the process allows partners to develop more effective projects.

This year's reporting focuses purely on the trees we have planted with Arbor Day Foundation. In 2020 and 2021, we planted more than 135,000 trees via the Arbor Day Foundation in the United States, Mexico, Brazil, Malaysia and Singapore. This represents 131 hectares (323 acres) and 147,681 metric tonnes of CO₂e avoided and sequestered. Sites are primarily selected for their ability to support recovery and build resilience in response to natural disasters. In addition, MetLife prioritises locations where we have operations.



Implementation method

On-the-ground restoration through own operations or supply chains

Financial support to Arbor Day Foundation

Ecosystems and restoration interventions concerned

United States

Forests and woodlands

- Restoring cultural forest ecosystems
- Post-fire reforestation via erosion control, mulching, planting, etc.
- Planting or direct seeding (Post-hurricane reforestation)

Urban areas

- Increasing extent and complexity of tree canopy
- Creation / enhancement of habitat for native species of wildlife
- Creation of green spaces / green belts (native flora) for cooling, air filtration and mental health

Mexico

Forests and woodlands

- Agroforestry/Silvopastoral systems
- Planting native trees on private pastoral farmlands

Brazil

Urban areas

- Increasing extent and complexity of tree canopy
- Creation / enhancement of habitat for native species of wildlife
- Creation of green spaces / green belts (native flora) for cooling, air filtration and mental health

Malaysia, Singapore

Urban areas

- Increasing extent and complexity of tree canopy
- Creation of green spaces / green belts (native flora) for cooling, air filtration and mental health



Policies and strategies

An important part of our restoration strategy is identifying reputable partners who prioritise planting the right species of trees in the right locations at the optimum time. Based upon our due diligence, the Arbor Day Foundation was identified as a suitable partner, who follows appropriate safeguards. When evaluating partners, MetLife looks for organisations that partner with local government and landowners, work with tree planting experts (such as arborists) and are able to provide reporting to MetLife on the number and species of trees planted. In addition, we prioritise that the partner has plans to maintain the trees and follow best practices for survivability. Within our publicly stated 2030 Climate Goal language, we also describe that through our five million trees planted by 2030 goal, we are prioritising areas that have experienced, or are likely to experience, severe weather impacts in areas where MetLife operates. MetLife is focused on planting trees through funding of large-scale reforestation projects and through employee volunteerism in urban areas. MetLife also educates our stakeholders, including employees, customers and suppliers about restoration programmes, and ties engagement goals to tree planting.

MetLife has created incentives for employees across the organisation to plant trees and education programmes to encourage stakeholders to plant trees on their properties and in their communities. MetLife has established programmes to plant trees on behalf of new hires, retirees and employee milestone anniversaries; plant trees as a form of rewards and recognition for employee performance in alignment with company values; and by planting trees for customers in association with our products in certain markets— such as planting trees for a certain number of policies sold or for customers opting into paperless billing. For each of these programmes, employees or customers are notified about the trees being planted and provided with information on the restoration project. These programmes have encouraged our stakeholders to learn about restoration projects and the associated benefits of trees. For example, via our pilot programme MetLife Legacy Trees™ in the US, we will be planting one tree on behalf of each individual for whom MetLife has paid a Group Life Insurance benefit in 2022. Beneficiaries are notified about this programme and encouraged to visit a website that provides additional information on the project, including estimated water runoff, air pollution and carbon dioxide avoided by each tree.

Supporting documentation

- [MetLife Sustainability Report 2021](#)
- [2030 Climate Goals](#)

Area of land

United States: 100.76 hectares (249 acres)

Please see below for restoration details on each project supported in 2020 and 2021.

Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida 2021

In October 2018, Hurricane Michael passed directly over Tyndall Air Force Base near Panama City, Florida. The Category 5 hurricane caused major wind and surge damage including 12,000 acres of mature slash pine trees snapped in half. While the air force base had funding for the clean-up effort, support has been needed to replace the trees.

- 100,000 trees planted – with 680 trees per acre (1,681 per hectare) and 147 acres restored (59.49 hectares)
- Species planted: longleaf pine

Angeles National Forest, California 2021

Severe wildfires took their toll on this national forest, leaving a charred landscape in their wake. Stands of big cone Douglas fir, which are only found naturally in southern California, were greatly affected. Native big cone Douglas fir and pine stands were restored along with the critical habitat they provide for a variety of sensitive animal species. Replanting also helped to rehabilitate the watersheds above the cities of Los Angeles and Santa Clarita.

- 19,575 trees planted – with 195.75 trees per acre (483.69 trees per hectare) and 100 acres restored (40.47 hectares)
- Species planted: Coulter pine, big cone Douglas fir, Ponderosa pine

Shasta-Trinity National Forest, California 2021

A lightning strike in 2015 sparked a wildfire that raged through Shasta-Trinity National Forest and Six Rivers National Forest in California, charring more than 221,000 acres. Reforestation efforts are focused on establishing conifer cover in areas that burned at a higher intensity, while allowing areas with adequate seed source to naturally regenerate. This active rehabilitation aims to restore the tree cover while reducing the long-term adverse effects of high-intensity wildfire on watersheds and wildlife.

- 425 trees planted – with 141.67 trees per acre (349.92 trees per hectare) and approximately 2 acres restored (.78 hectare)
- Species planted: ponderosa pine, douglas fir, incense cedar

Cary Urban Planting, North Carolina 2020

This project resulted in a huge impact on the Cary Tree Archive's progress. The Cary Tree Archive is an ecosystem restoration project transforming over seven acres of land into a forest populated by native Old Growth tree species. Not only do these trees provide an aesthetically pleasing addition to the archive, but they are also adjacent to a few of the busiest roadway systems in Cary, providing invaluable reduction in air, noise and light pollution.

- 0 acres, 50 trees planted
- Species planted: red maple, river birch, American hornbeam, shagbark hickory, fringetree, yellowwood, dogwood, tuli-poplar, magnolia little gem, black gum, sourwood, dawn redwood, bald cypress, hawthorn, longleaf pine

Aurora Urban Planting, Illinois 2020

The City of Aurora had been working to revitalise the downtown area and Central Business District through expanding the area's green spaces and gardens. The downtown River Edge Park draws over 100,000 visitors each year. With the park being situated between the Fox River Trail and a number of large parking lots, the planting of these trees provides benefits beyond shade and attractiveness in this key space in Aurora's downtown. These newly planted trees also help sequester excess stormwater runoff containing pollutants generated by motor vehicles and support wildlife dependent on the nearby riparian ecosystem.

- 0 acres, 27 trees planted
- Species planted: bald cypress, tupelo, exclamation planetree, red oak, chinkapin oak, redbud, river birch, hop hornbeam

Cary Urban Planting, North Carolina 2021

Since the original project in 2020, the Cary Tree Archive in Cary, North Carolina has developed into a seven-acre property that serves as an ecological oasis and educational resource to the public. It provides visitors with a chance to learn about the community's native trees and the benefits they bring. This project completed the longleaf pine savanna of the Cary Tree Archive, which provides visitors with a glimpse into the forest landscape that had historically dominated the terrain of North Carolina up until the 19th century. The savanna also makes a statement to the community, expressing how the longleaf pine and its endemic ecosystem needs to be protected and promoted back into prosperity. Furthermore, the new trees also help protect the watershed area that feeds the White Oak Creek by absorbing stormwater runoff, stabilising the stream bed, and capturing pollution from excess runoff.

- 0 acres, 56 trees planted
- Species planted: longleaf pine, sable palm

Charlotte Urban Planting, North Carolina 2021

In Charlotte, North Carolina, the Little Sugar Creek Greenway is home to an area that has significantly lacked shade and trees, particularly around its walking trails that attracts many visitors. Additionally, the lack of trees and proper water retention has left Little Sugar Creek prone to frequent flooding along this part of the stream and into the surrounding community. This tree planting event helped install over 50 large maturing shade trees that will provide much needed shade along the greenway. Several maturing flower trees were also planted around a bench area to enhance the area's aesthetic and beauty. These trees will also help slow down the excess stormwater to mitigate flooding events, as well as filter out pollutants from the stormwater and the air.

- 0 acres, 57 trees planted
- Species planted: chestnut oak, exclamation sycamore, marley's pink styrax, nuttall oak

Brooklyn Urban Planting, New York 2022

Prior to this initiative, Scarangella Park had not seen significant tree planting efforts for more than 30 years, leaving a gap of canopy from mature shade trees lost through the years. Consequently, the neighbourhood surrounding Scarangella Park is ranked in one of the higher categories on New York City's Heat Vulnerability Index. The index shows communities whose residents are more at risk of dying during and immediately following periods of extreme heat, which has become an increasingly common occurrence in major cities across the country. This planting project also helps compliment the City's municipal forestry plan, as it speeds the greening of deserving neighbourhoods sooner than the New York City Parks Department's measured budget would otherwise permit.

- 0 acres, 28 trees planted
- Species planted: London Planetree, flowering dogwood, kousa dogwood, prairie fire crabapple, Persian ironwood, redmond American linden, crimean linden, swamp white oak

Somerville, New Jersey 2021

Firehouse Field is a small, seven-acre park in Somerville that provides community members with access to tennis courts, a soccer field and a walking path. The field is also part of the Peters Brook Greenway, a stretch of green space that runs through Somerville and follows Peters Brook. The brook floods frequently, and its banks are eroding rapidly. In September 2021, the park experienced severe flooding during Hurricane Ida – an issue which trees can help alleviate. There is also very little shade along the walking path and areas where sports spectators gather. The trees that were planted in this project will help bring shade and beauty to the park, as well as a number of environmental benefits that will increase over the coming decades. Trees work to absorb stormwater, stabilise soil, clean the air and water, filter out pollutants, and provide habitat for native wildlife.

- 0 acres, 20 trees planted
- Species planted: dawn redwood, river birch, serviceberry, sugar maple

St. Louis Urban Planting, Missouri 2021

Prior to this initiative, Gwen Giles Park had a tree canopy coverage of just 12%, with several existing mature trees beginning to decline. According to community plant staff, the surrounding neighbourhood is active and on the cusp of a revival, but the park's recently installed walking path is currently unshaded, which deters people from enjoying the park in the hot summer months. This project planted an alley of oak trees along the walking path in addition to the installation of large shade trees in a grove of elder trees. For the surrounding community, several redbuds were planted next to a residential cul-de-sac where neighbours are engaged and willing to help maintain the trees as they grow. Ultimately, these trees will help bring shade to the community and park visitors, as well as air filtration and noise barriers for the large industrial roadway across from the park.

- 0 acres, 51 trees planted and distributed
- Species planted: bur oak, catalpa, chinkapin oak, Kentucky coffee tree, nuttall oak, overcup oak, redbud, shumard oak, sycamore

Employee Tree Distribution – Community Canopy Project 2020 & 2021

Trees were distributed to employees located around the United States to reward them for their participation in MetLife's annual EcoChallenge, a competition focused on taking environmentally friendly actions. Employees opted into the programme and were given a choice of tree type based upon their location and hardiness zones. Employees were encouraged to use the Community Canopy tool to learn how to properly plant the tree. This included getting personalised recommendations of where to plant the tree on their properties to generate energy savings for their home.

- 0 acres, 350 trees planted
- Species Planted: Japanese tree lilac, amur maple, tulip, Japanese zelkova, chase, shumard oak, live oak, crape myrtle, river birch, redbud, sycamore, serviceberry, red maple, northern red oak, bald cypress, dahoon holly

Oaxaca & Chiapas smallholder farms, Mexico 2021

Smallholder farmers in southern Mexico heavily depend on the land for their livelihoods, and the increase in frequency of drought, deforestation and subsequent soil erosion and nutrient depletion has strained the once-fertile area to produce less and less each year. This has led to many problems for farmers and families in the area, such as malnutrition, lack of sustainable income, and further vulnerability to illness and disease stemming. Together with MetLife and Plant With Purpose, this project was able to mobilise farmers to plant thousands of trees in an effort to revitalise the area's soil, prevent further erosion, promote biodiversity and ultimately improve agricultural crop yields. Participating farmers are actively engaging with other community members and farmers to share their knowledge, resulting in a multiplication effect that will hopefully extend beyond the work done during this project.

- 15,000 trees planted – with 202.7 trees per acre (500 trees per hectare), and 74 acres restored (30 hectares)
- Species planted: apple, avocado, cedar, Oaxacan pine, peach pomegranate

Sao Paulo Urban Planting, Brazil 2020

Founded in 2014, the Sorocaba Botanical Garden is an important centre for biodiversity conservation that operates under the objectives to plant, reproduce, maintain and display collections of living and conserved plants, especially those representing local and regional flora, with an emphasis on rare or threatened species. To help expand the garden's arboretum, this project gathered community volunteers to help plant Brazilian native shade trees and savannah trees. These trees will not only provide valuable biodiversity benefits, but also offer an educational opportunity to the public who visit the arboretum and are wanting to learn more about how to be a good steward of the environment.

- 0 acres, 90 trees planted and distributed
- Species planted: angelim doce, alecrim de campinas, angelim do cerrado, bico de pato, cabreúva, canela de veado, carvalho nacional, cerejeira, gonçalo alves, pau de oleo, tarumã azeitona

Kuala Lumpur Urban Planting, Malaysia 2020

The Pulai Trail area – formerly a degraded rubber estate – is a forested area in Bukit Persekutuan, just minutes from the centre of Kuala Lumpur. Despite relatively good vegetation, this site is sterile in terms of biodiversity. As local organisations aim to increase public awareness of one of the last remaining green spaces in the area, beautifying this space through increased plantings, trail enhancements and rubbish removal has been a key focus. This project not only helped to plant trees, but also increased awareness of the value of this forest to the public. The enrichment of trees and plants will boost the ecosystem as a refuge for urban fauna and migratory bird species, as well as rehabilitate the overall forest structure that is missing understory and emergent layers. Revitalising this site and maintaining community trails helps conserve and protect one of Kuala Lumpur's last urban forests in the face of rampant overdevelopment.

- 0 acres, 100 trees planted
- Species Planted: Neobalanocarpus heimi, Clerodendrum paniculatum, Zingiber zerumbet, Ardisia elliptica, Baccaurea parviflora, Bouea macrophylla, Cananga odorata, Dialium indum, Ficus benjamina, Garcinia xanthochymus, Baccaurea motleyana, Garcinia atrovirdis, Rhodomyrtus tomentosa, Baccaurea polyneura, Fragraea fragras, Tristaniopsis whiteana, Saraca thaipingensis, Rhapsidophora tetrasperma, Monstera deliciosa, Selaginella plana

Singapore Urban Planting, Singapore 2020

For every tree that is planted in Singapore between 2020 – 2030, each one will contribute to the region's National Parks Board's One Million Trees movement, which aims to restore nature back into the city and create a more liveable environment for all residents. This planting of 90 native trees in West Coast Park has provided increased biodiversity in the park and also contributes to creating cooler temperatures for park visitors by mitigating the area's urban heat island effect. As the trees grow and reach maturity, they will also provide further environmental benefits, such as clean air and water, flood mitigation and noise reduction from busy urban roadways.

- 0 acres, 90 tree planted
- Species Planted: *Cratoxylum cochinchinense*, *Planchonella obovate*, *Calophyllum soulattri*, *Horsfieldia irya*, *cynometra ramiflora*, *Dendrolobium umbrellatum aureum*, *Cratoxylum maingayi*

Supporting documentation

- Arbor Day Foundation has internal shapefiles available for their reforestation projects. In most cases, MetLife is contributing to a portion of a project, rather than funding an entire project. For these cases, Arbor Day Foundation uses the number of trees planted per acre and the number of trees planted in connection with a financial contribution and performs a calculation to identify the proportionate number of acres that MetLife's contribution reforested.

Climate

United States:

144,564 metric tonnes of avoided and sequestered CO₂e

Mexico:

2,739 metric tonnes of avoided and sequestered CO₂e

Brazil:

51 metric tonnes of avoid and sequestered CO₂e

Malaysia:

153 metric tonnes avoided and sequestered CO₂e

Singapore:

174 metric tonnes avoided and sequestered CO₂e

We do not currently count the estimated emissions sequestered associated with trees planted towards any of our location-based emissions reduction goals. We look at the estimated CO₂e sequestration to educate ourselves on the potential of trees to be a climate change solution and we use this estimation to help communicate the positive benefits associated with planting trees.

Estimation method

- Emissions and removal factors obtained from open-source tool: iTree

Supporting documentation

- Information compiled by company staff





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