

African Union Great Green Wall Initiative Strategy and Ten-Year Implementation Framework: *Ecosystem Restoration and Livelihoods Resilience (2024-2034)*

SUMMARY BRIEF



Strategic Intervention Axis 3: Enhancing the implementation of resilient landscape restoration through resource mobilisation, partnerships, inclusion, knowledge exchange and capacity development

BACKGROUND

The Great Green Wall Initiative (GGWI) is a flagship project of the African Union (AU), launched in 2007 to combat desertification and land degradation in the Sahel and Sahara regions. Initially, it was conceived as a narrow belt of trees stretching across Africa to halt the spread of the desert. However, the initiative has since evolved into a broader land restoration and sustainable development programme, aiming to revitalise degraded ecosystems, support agriculture, pastoralism, and forests, while improving livelihoods and resilience in affected communities.

Originally focused on 11 countries, the initiative has now expanded to include 25 additional nations from across Africa, with South Sudan, Kenya, and Uganda also expressing interest. Recognising the need for a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to land degradation, desertification and climate change, and cognisant of the need for its urgent revision, the African Union Commission (AUC) developed a revised strategy and ten-

year implementation framework. This new GGWI Strategy encourages an integrated and holistic approach to land rehabilitation and climate-resilient development among its Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Agencies and partners. It emphasises ecosystem restoration, climate resilience, and economic opportunities for smallholder farmers, pastoralists, and local communities, positioning itself as a transformative continent-wide solution for achieving land restoration at scale.

The revised GGWI Strategy is a ten-year strategic planning document (2024-2034) that defines the vision, specific objectives, intervention and action areas required to scale up land restoration and resilience building activities associated with agricultural, grazing, and forest landscapes across the African continent. The new GGWI Strategy drew upon the findings and key recommendations of the independent evaluations which have been conducted since its inception in 2012.¹

This brief presents Strategic Intervention Axis 3 of the new GGWI Strategy.



1. **UNCCD. 2020.** The Great Green Wall implementation status and way ahead to 2030. Pan African Agency of the Great Green Wall and Government of Ireland.

UNCCD. 2023. Independent Evaluation of the GGW Accelerator. UNCCD.

Transparency International. 2023. Governance mapping and assessment of the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel Initiative.

STRATEGIC FRAMING OF THE GGWI STRATEGY

The new GGWI Strategy comprises four strategic intervention axes, designed to support the achievement of the GGW vision and objectives. Within the GGWI Strategy, specific suggested priority actions are articulated for each of the intervention areas identified under Strategic Intervention Axes 1-4.

Aspirations and objectives of the Strategy



VISION

By 2034, Africa's dry regions are transformed into socially, economically, and environmentally resilient and stable regions.



OVERALL OBJECTIVE

Enhance the resilience of communities, ecosystems, and economies in the African drylands by improving the living conditions of populations, improving the state and health of ecosystems, advocating and mobilising resources, strengthening institutional collaboration and promoting policy coherence.



SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Promote locally led land planning, land restoration and resilience building initiatives and nature-based entrepreneurial and livelihood activities that improve the well-being and incomes of communities, as well as empower them, particularly women and youth.

Catalyse inclusion, alignment, cooperation and ownership of land restoration and resilience-building in related strategies, policies, programmes and plans.

Promote policy coherence, alignment and a common narrative in strategies, policies, programmes and plans.

Invest in, and scale up, nature-based practices and inclusive landscape approaches to sustainable land, water and biodiversity restoration and management to support resilient value chains.

Enhance Africa's capacity to mobilise resources at multiple scales.

Develop, invest in, and support, economic and environmental infrastructure facilitating the move to a green and circular economy.

Enhance the linkage and effective collaboration among community, practice, science, policy and private sector stakeholders fostering knowledge sharing and learning from experience and building upon a harmonised knowledge management system.

Encourage systems-oriented, cross-sectoral and coordinated decision-making and adaptive management environments that facilitate the integration of activities across all stakeholders, sectors and scales.



AXIS 1

Enhancing leadership, governance and political commitment



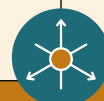
AXIS 2

Co-design and deliver pathways toward transformative restoration, resilience and development



AXIS 3

Enhancing the means of implementation for resilient landscape restoration



AXIS 4

Leveraging existing initiatives



AXIS 3

Enhancing the implementation of resilient landscape restoration through resource mobilisation, partnerships, inclusion, knowledge exchange and capacity development

Strategic Intervention Axis 3 focuses on the key approaches, partnerships, capacity development, finance and knowledge exchange and tools that serve as supportive means of implementation for Axis 1 and 2. This axis has six intervention areas.



Intervention Area 3.1

Enhance finance flows and resource mobilisation



Intervention Area 3.2

Develop creative partnerships and effective coordination



Intervention Area 3.3

Ensure inclusive leadership and participation, especially of women and youth



Intervention Area 3.4

Capacity development and knowledge exchange based on skills building and behavioural change



Intervention Area 3.5

Use engagement and planning tools



Intervention Area 3.6

Develop effective communications, advocacy approaches and visibility



Intervention Area 3.1

Enhance finance flows and resource mobilisation



Indicative priority actions:

- Ensure the full responsibility of African institutions to mobilise and leverage financial resources for the implementation of the GGW.
- The AUC should develop a resources mobilisation strategy focused on the principle of 'Africa taking full responsibility for financing the Initiative' and tapping into traditional, innovative and carbon resources.
- AU Members States in the drylands should commit to allocate a percentage of their National Budget to the implementation of the GGW.
- The AUC to advocate for climate finance funding based on the GGW contribution to the public goods and global environmental benefits.
- Synergise the sources of GGW investments from international donors and development agencies, climate finance, multi-lateral and bilateral agreements, private sector investments, philanthropic organisations, and national budgets.
- Synergise national and local capacities to mobilise domestic and international financial resources.
- Integrate subnational authorities in funding initiatives and ensure land restoration is an integral part of development plans.
- Encourage private sector actors in natural resources-based activities to expand their corporate social responsibility (CSR) and shared value investments, as a means of ensuring sustainable financing.
- Encourage the application of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) frameworks to undertake evaluation of business-level carbon and social footprints.



Intervention Area 3.2

Develop creative partnerships and effective coordination



Indicative priority actions:

Coordination among existing partners:

- Carry out institutional analysis and mapping to clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of the different GGW agencies and institutions, RECs, national coalitions and cross-sectoral arrangements.
- Test coordination arrangements under different drivers and uncertainties to ensure capacities for institutional coordination and functioning are in place.
- Clarify and ensure agreement on resource flows, use and accountability mechanisms among institutions and agencies.

Integrating community, practice, science and policy partnerships:

- Map the stakeholder groups and representative institutions from community, science, practice and policy at all levels.
- Create mechanisms to link scientists, practitioners, and policymakers.
- Co-design measures to implement strategies and practices and monitoring frameworks.
- Design mechanisms to provide evidence and experience to inform policy and Investment shifts.
- Design mechanisms to provide evidence and experience to practitioners to assist them in adaptively managing landscapes under changing conditions.

Partnerships among market, public and civil sectors:

- Develop formal partnerships between national government entities, land restoration

practitioners and community leaders, and private sector companies.

- Incentivise partnerships in the development, implementation and benefit sharing of nature-positive value chains and enterprises.
- Leverage CSR initiatives and take advantage of impact investing, green bonds, sustainable agriculture, pastoral and forest investments, and payments for ecosystem services.
- Develop awareness raising and experience, evidence and capacity sharing among all stakeholders.

Partnerships and coordination among different sectors:

- Encourage integrated systems and cross-sectoral approaches among ministries and focal points at regional and national levels.
- Use root cause analyses to understand deeper issues and contributions, roles and responsibilities of different sectors.
- Create formal mechanisms for knowledge sharing of evidence and experience among ministries and focal points at national and subnational levels and within regions.
- Synergise reporting efforts among ministries and focal points that simultaneously contribute to United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Create cross-sectoral platforms at national and subnational levels.

Partnering with faith-based organisations:

- Directly work with faith leaders of different faiths, as appropriate, at national, subnational and community levels.
- Work directly with civil society organisations and non-governmental organisations that are faith-based and focused on landscape restoration, resilience, and watershed management.

Partnering with traditional leaders and guardians of indigenous knowledge in Africa:

- Create intentional and robust partnerships with traditional leaders.
- Create mechanisms for recovery and valorisation of local knowledge.



Intervention Area 3.3

Ensure inclusive leadership and participation, especially of women and youth



Indicative priority actions:

- Increase women's and youth representation in land restoration and resilience building policies and bylaws notably on access to land and tree resources.
- Support innovations and social learning that catalyse changes in sociocultural norms and behaviours to promote greater gender and youth equity in access to land and natural resources, decision-making power and benefit sharing from interventions.
- Create an enabling environment including regulatory frameworks, investment programmes and economic norms for increasing participation of women and youth.
- Enhance gender and youth participation, capacities and leadership in the inclusive co-design, co-development processes and co-implementation and monitoring of land restoration and resilience building efforts.
- Enhance the education, knowledge sharing and sensitisation of gender and youth transformative approaches.
- Conduct regular advocacy and awareness programmes on youth and gender equality, inclusivity and leadership in resilience building policies, programmes, protocols and processes.
- Ensure regreening, regenerative and resilience building practices are gender and youth sensitive, as appropriate.
- Ensure community groups with diverse gender and age membership that are managing natural resources, agricultural, pastoral or forested landscapes have the combined technical and planning, management and monitoring skills.
- Remove barriers towards accessing the funding for youth and women led land restoration projects and increase the financial incentives and financial and technical support to youth and gender organisations.
- Create and support local community campaigns and movements and cross-learning on landscape restoration and resilience building.
- Ensure women and youth are engaged in community level monitoring of and information sharing related to landscape and livelihoods resilience.
- Promote youth and women in entrepreneurial activities and nature positive value chains' production, processing and marketing.



Intervention Area 3.4

Capacity development and knowledge exchange based on skills building and behavioural change



Indicative priority actions:

Institutional capacity for governance, coordination, transparency and policy development including:

- Develop capacities to implement cross-sectoral, multi-stakeholder and multiscale approaches, engagement, consultations, organisation, communications and knowledge sharing.
- Develop structured, inclusive and evidence-based design, planning, implementation and monitoring capacities and approaches.
- Develop a standardised and harmonised knowledge management initiative.
- Develop capacities for systems thinking and causal analyses and linkages.
- Build capacities for foresight analysis.
- Develop skills in the facilitation of human-centred design and people-centred approaches.
- Build soft skills for catalysing social movements for landscape restoration and Livelihoods resilience.
- Create self-directed cross-disciplinary learning modules with certification on landscape governance and management.
- Incentivise professional development related to critical skills.
- Develop strategic capacity for systemic policy and bylaw design.
- Promote the capacity of community-based natural resource management groups to carry out parliamentary procedures.

Formal education:

- Integrate training in agroecology, ecosystem function and services, landscape management and resilience principles into primary through university education.
- Develop the capacities of primary and secondary teachers to train students in agroecology, landscape management and resilience principles.
- Where applicable, integrate practicums and exercises related to home gardens, nurseries, agroforestry, pastoral and silvopastoral systems, and management of forests.
- Create opportunities for citizen science and research for students and how to interpret evidence and data.

Local technical skills development:

- Carry out an assessment of training approaches and modules used in Africa for developing core competencies and supporting behaviour changes for land users that support landscape restoration, land, water and biological diversity.
- Elaborate a consolidated menu-based toolkit for local level capacity development for land restoration and resilience building in different contexts and mechanisms and incentives for carrying out training and monitoring success.
- Create a networking platform of trainers.
- Carry out training on comparable local level monitoring frameworks and citizen science tools.
- Carry out training for the development of locally led advocacy plans.
- Promote expos and field days for farmers, pastoralists and other land managers to share their successes, experiences and expertise.



Intervention Area 3.5

Use engagement and planning tools



Indicative priority actions:

- Invest in consolidating trends and drivers analysis across related sectors and conducting regular interval scanning of current data to inform adaptive management.
- Use foresight analysis to elaborate unanswered questions around which practical evidence and models can be developed.
- Conduct an inclusive stakeholder engagement process building on the SHARED approach to develop a co-shared and robust vision for the GGWI Strategy.
- Conduct participatory foresight analysis processes for the overall GGWI Strategy and its implementation.
- Apply foresight analysis to jointly plan across scientists, practitioners and policymakers using a systems perspective.
- Develop the capacity of a network of GGWI affiliated foresight analysis experts.



Intervention Area 3.6

Develop effective communications, advocacy approaches and visibility



Indicative priority actions:

- Assess the historical GGW visibility and communications efforts and their impacts.

Develop a cohesive visibility and communications plan that:

- Defines key messages tailored to the goals and objectives of the GGWI Strategy at different scales.
- Clarifies target audiences among stakeholder groups, partners and the general public.
- Includes a flexible content plan and deploys the key messages, and communications pathways, media form and timelines.
- Articulates methods for measuring communications impact.
- Investments in the mobilisation of local, subnational and national movements and campaigns that can support the massive scaling of land restoration and resilience building efforts.
- Bringing policymakers from regional, national and subnational levels into dialogue with farmers, pastoralists and forest-dwellers to understand their successful efforts and to underscore why enabling policies and bylaws are needed.
- Create specific opportunities for sharing evidence of successful landscape restoration and resilience building to inform policy design and development.

Develop an advocacy plan that includes, for example:

- Urgent action to scale landscape restoration and resilient agrosilvopastoral systems.

Based on the institutional arrangements, develop an internal communications and knowledge sharing approach that supports the coordination and adaptive management of the GGWI Strategy implementation.



For additional information about the meeting and how you could get involved, please contact:

Harsen Nyambe Nyambe

Director, Sustainable Environment
and Blue Economy

Email: NyambeH@AfricanUnion.org

Dr. Jihane El Gaouzi

Head of Sustainable Environment
Division

Email: ElgaouziJ@AfricanUnion.org

Leah Wanambwa Naess

Senior Policy Officer and Focal Point for
the Great Green Wall Initiative

Email: Wanambwal@AfricanUnion.org