



SUPPORT TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GREAT GREEN WALL FOR THE SAHARA AND THE SAHEL INITIATIVE

First Project steering committee meeting

26 – 27 September 2011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

FINAL REPORT

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AFF	African Forest Forum
AMU	Arab Maghreb Union
AUC	Africa Union Commission
CILSS	Comité permanent Inter Etats de lutte contre la sécheresse dans le sahel (Inter State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel)
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
ECA	UN Economic commission for Africa
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ETH	Ethiopia
FAO	Food and Agriculture organization of the United Nations
FAO RAF	FAO regional office for Africa
FAO SFE	FAO sub regional office for Eastern Africa
GGW	Great green wall
GGWSSI	great green wall for Sahara and Sahel initiative
GM	The Global Mechanism of the UNCCD
GoETH	Government of Ethiopia
Gon	National government
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority for Development
LTO	Lead Technical Officer
MDG Centre	millennium Development Goals Centre
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NFP	National Focal point of the great green wall
OSS	Observatoire du Sahara et du Sahel / Sahara and Sahel Observatory
PAAGGW	Pan African agency for the great green wall
PAFO	Pan African Farmers Organizations
PCU	Project coordination Unit
PNSC	Project National steering committees
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations

1. Introduction

The first steering committee meeting of the project entitled « support to the implementation of the great green wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative » was organized on 26 and 27 September 2011, at the UN Conference Center ECA, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Funded by the European Union and implemented by the FAO of the UN, this African Union Commission's project aims at contributing to a successful implementation of the GGWSSI and at making this initiative a powerful tool for poverty alleviation, desertification control and climate change resilience. Specifically, it aims at supporting eight countries (Algeria, Burkina Faso, Egypt, The Gambia, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal and Sudan) to prepare national investment plans, as well as national and cross border projects for the implementation of the GGWSSI. It also aims at building regional and sub-regional capacities (African Union Commission, the Pan African agency for the great green wall, Regional Economic communities, including Cen-Sad Secretariat, ECO-WAS commission, AMU General Secretariat and IGAD Executive Secretariat) for a coordinated and harmonized implementation of the GGWSSI.

The meeting was attended by all the key stakeholders of the project : representatives of the eight participating countries, representatives of the five participating countries to the FAO TCP funded project which are expected to benefit from the cross-cutting activities of the project (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Mali, Niger, Chad), as well as the regional and sub-regional organizations and development partners. Participants' list is attached in annex 1.

The meeting objectives were:

- a. Review and adopt the Terms of reference of the project steering committee (PSC) and officially establish the PSC ;
- b. Review and adopt the work program (October 2011 – September 2012) presented by the project coordination unit ;
- c. Review and adopt the terms of reference of the project technical committee ;
- d. Review and adopt the guidelines for the project national steering committees;
- e. Review and clarify roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders in the implementation of the project, particularly roles and responsibilities of the World Bank, the Pan African Agency for the GGW, the Pan African Farmers Organization (PAFO) and the RECs.

The meeting agenda is attached in Annex 2.

2. Main conclusions of the meeting

2.1.Terms of reference of the PSC

2.1.1. The Status of the Steering committee

Recalling the African Union Assembly Decision taken in Malabo in July 2011 and requesting the AUC to coordinate the implementation of the GGWSSI and to report on progress made to the AU Assembly, AUC asked the project coordination unit to prepare the terms of reference of the PSC in such a way to have it be a steering committee for all the GGWSSI.

Analyzing the political implications of this request from the AUC, especially the jurisdiction conflict it may lead to between the AUC and the PAAGGW, the meeting decided to have the steering committee be settled only for the EU funded project or the AUC. The participants also requested to the AUC and the PAAGGW to quickly explore ways for solving this kind of institutional problems in the implementation of the GGWSSI and to help stakeholders implement the GGWSSI in a coordinated and harmonized manner.

2.1.2. Membership of the PSC

Participants agreed on the following membership of the PSC based on the PSC mandate, the need for African countries and institutions to keep the ownership of the project and the need to avoid jurisdictional conflicts and overlaps with the other bodies of the project, mainly the technical committee:

Core members:

- The African Union Commission (AUC), Chair of the PSC;
- The Pan African Agency for the Great Green Wall (PAAGGW), Vice Chair;
- The eight countries benefiting directly from the project (Algeria, Burkina Faso, Egypt, The Gambia, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal and Sudan);
- The five countries benefiting from the cross-cutting activities of the project and directly from the FAO TCP project (Chad, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Mali and Niger);
- The Regional Economic Communities directly concerned by the project (ECOWAS, Cen-Sad, UMA, IGAD);
- The Pan African Farmers Organization (PAFO).

Observers

- European Union;
- FAO ;
- The Global Mechanism of the UNCCD ;
- The World Bank.

The participants recommended that, based on points on the agenda of the Steering Committee, the Chair of the PSC can call on any resource person or institution that could provide clarification and enable well informed decision-making by the PSC.

2.1.3. Tasks and responsibilities of the PSC

The proposal submitted by the Project coordination unit was found too detailed by the participants and a working group was asked to fine-tune it. An agreement was reached on the following tasks and responsibilities:

1. Oversee and validate overall direction and policy of the project;
2. Provide guidance to the project coordination unit, especially on how emerging issues that are relevant to the successful implementation of the project could be integrated;
3. Review and approve the main project documents, including the project technical and financial annual reports, the project annual work plan and related budget ;
4. Identify constraints and opportunities for the project, including financial opportunities and make recommendations to the project coordination unit on how to overcome constraints and benefit from opportunities, in order to ensure complementarity and visibility of the project with other initiatives.

2.1.4. Functioning

The entire proposals made by the project coordination unit under this point (functioning) were approved.

The consensus reached on the membership, the mandate and the functioning of the PSC allowed the participants to officially establish the PSC and to start reviewing the different items of the agenda of the first project steering committee meeting. *The adopted version of the PSC's ToR is attached in annex 3.*

2.2. Annual work program October 2011 – September 2012.

A report on the implementation of the inception phase of the project, as well as the work plan for the period « October 2011 – September 2012 » and the entire budget of the project were presented. The discussions led to the following conclusions and recommendations:

- Referring to the commitments taken with the FAO of the UN and the European Union, the AUC was requested to speed up the process for (i) the recruitment and the establishment early 2012 of the project coordinator, and for (ii) providing an office space early October 2011 for the secretary of the project.
- The project coordination unit, with full support from FAO and the AUC, is requested to consider as a key priority, the mobilization of additional financial resources to implement the entire annual work program and to help national coordinators to ensure full participation of national stakeholders in the identification of national priorities and the formulation of national action plans and investment plans for the GGWSSI implementation at national and sub-regional level.
- The project coordination unit, with full support from the AUC, is requested to establish and develop working relations with the PAAGGW and to ensure synergies between its actions and those of the PAAGGW.

- In order to enable the PSC to fulfill its mandate towards the successful implementation of the project, the project coordination unit is invited to translate the project document into French and to send it to the participating countries and organizations at his earliest convenience, but no later than December 2011.

The work program adopted by the PSC is attached in annex 4.

2.3.Review of the terms of reference of the technical committee

The need for a technical committee was seen by the AUC and FAO as a tool to ensure quality control of the project outcomes, products and activities. One of the main activities of the inception phase was to prepare draft terms of reference of a technical committee to be submitted to the PSC at its first session.

Considering the terms of the project (a 30 month project) and the current efforts of the PAAGGW to establish a committee of science and technology for all the GGW initiative, the PSC found not relevant the establishment of the technical committee foreseen in the project document. It entails the project coordination unit to convene when necessary, national, sub regional and international experts' meetings to look into technical issues (preparation of the harmonized strategy, monitoring and evaluation, external reviews of national investment plans) that may arise and require cooperation and coordination between implementing countries and institutions.

2.4.Review of guidelines for project national steering committees

Project National steering committees (PNSC) are foreseen as described in the project document to support the national governments to:

- Oversee and validate the overall direction and policy of the implementation of the GGW in the country;
- Facilitate dissemination and use of the project's outcomes and results at national level.

The guidelines for the preparation of terms of reference including the membership, the mandate and the functioning of PNSC that the project coordination unit presented were reviewed and adopted by the PSC. Countries were invited to build on the existing committees and to open the PNSC to private sector, parliamentarians, journalists, EU Delegation in the country, UNCCD focal point, World Bank country office, FAO country office and other relevant stakeholders, as appropriate.

The adopted guidelines are presented in annex 5.

2.5.Role of partners in the implementation of the project

2.5.1. World Bank

The meeting was informed about an initiative of the World Bank (**the Sahel and West Africa Program (SAWAP) in support to the Great Green Wall**) covering 12 countries and aiming at contributing to the implementation of the great green wall initiative. Supported by the GEF, the budget for the WB initiative is USD: 108 million. Because of natural linkages between countries with Sahelian ecosystems, benefiting countries are: Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nige-

ria, Senegal, Soudan, Chad and Togo. Nine (9) of those countries are the same than the countries directly and indirectly covered by the EU-funded project. The World Bank is therefore interested in collaborating with the project by bringing directly to the countries, the resources they need to implement the action plans they are preparing with the support of the EU-funded project. Countries are requested to develop inclusive mechanisms of internal cooperation between national institutions. In order to speed up the World Bank contribution, the nine countries are asked to develop as soon as possible a five-page project concept note. Each participant was invited to get in touch with the World Bank Country office to have more information about the process to be followed. The project coordination unit will also get in touch with the World Bank in order to provide additional information on the process to the countries.

2.5.2. The Pan African Agency for the great green wall (PAAGGW)

The PAAGGW reiterated its availability to work with the AUC and the project. The representative committed to send to AUC its institution views on how to enhance the collaboration of the two institutions in the implementation of the project and, widely, in the implementation of the GGWSI. He invites the project coordination unit to keep the PAAGGW informed about its activities and progress made in the implementation of the project. He insisted on the need for cooperation between all stakeholders, in order to look in the same direction for the success of the great green wall initiative.

2.5.3. Inter State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS)

CILSS informed the meeting about the launching in March 2011 of a regional initiative on sustainable land management in West Africa, covering 15 CILSS and ECOWAS member States. This initiative is funded by the EU and four (4) of the participating countries to the EU funded project are covered (Burkina Faso, Gambia, Nigeria, Senegal) as well as three (3) participating countries to the FAO TCP project (Mali, Niger et Chad). CILSS expressed its willing and availability to use the resources of its regional project to fund the implementation of the National action plans arising from the implementation of the EU as well as from the FAO funded projects.

CILSS invited the project coordination unit to join its efforts to mobilize resources for the implementation of the cross border projects CILSS has already identified.

2.5.4. Pan African Farmers Organization (PAFO)

The Pan African Farmers Organization (PAFO) expressed its availability to contribute to the project implementation, through lobbying for farmers participation to the identification of national priorities and formulation of national action plans for the implementation of the great green wall initiative. PAFO is represented in the entire Africa Five sub regions. Its membership covers: ROPPA in West Africa; SACAU in Southern Africa; EAFF in Eastern Africa; UMAGRI in Northern Africa and PROPAC in Central Africa. PAFO constituencies cover farmers, as well as ranchers and growers.

2.5.5. African Forest Forum (AFF)

AFF expressed its availability to put its network of researchers and experts to the disposal of the project to support the formulation of the national action plans and the harmonized strategy for GGW implementation. The meeting was informed about the partnership among AFF, CILSS, MDG Centre and the PAAGGW to develop capacities for resources mobilization in support to the implementation

of the national action plans. AFF and its partners are ready to support FAO and the AUC to mobilize resources for the implementation of the action plans deriving from the implementation of the EU funded project.

2.5.6. Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

ECOWAS expressed its availability to support the implementation of the project and to mainstream the Great Green Wall concerns in its major policy and program, particularly, its forestry program and in the sub regional action program to combat desertification in West Africa (SRAP-CCD).

3. Next steps.

The next PSC meeting is convened for next September (2012). The venue will be decided by the project coordination unit, in close consultation with the AUC and FAO. The project coordination unit will decide the venue, taking into account offers of hosting from participating countries and institutions and cost implications of such invitations and offers.

Priorities for the three next months are:

- f. Preparation and dissemination by the project CTA of the meeting report. The CTA has two weeks to prepare and send to all participants the meeting report. The participants have two weeks to propose amendments to the report. Amendments received after two weeks will not be included in the final report and outcomes of the meeting.
- g. Translation in French of the project document.
- h. Preparation and signature of MOUs with countries and institutions to speed up the process for the formulation of national action/investments plans.
- i. Preparation by each national focal point of the terms of reference of the project national steering committee. It is advisable for each national focal point to share the draft with the project coordination unit and with the other participating countries.
- j. Engage the process for the formulation of the harmonized strategy for the GGWSSI implementation.

4. Annexes

4.1. Annex 1: list of participants

Nom & Prénoms	Fonction	Pays / Institution	Adresse électronique
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Mr Almami Dampha	Policy Officer	Commission de l'Union Africaine	
Mr Abderrahmane Khecha	Policy Officer, rural Infrastructure and Marketing	Africa Union Commission	Abderrahmanek@africa-union.org
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4.2. Annex 2 : Agenda de la première réunion du comité de pilotage du projet

<i>Jour</i>	<i>Heure</i>	<i>Activités</i>	<i>Responsable/Présentateur</i>
<i>Day 1 26 September Monday Morning</i>	08:30 – 09:00	Registration	Secretariat
	09:00 – 09:15	Welcome Address	Dr Abebe Haile Gabriele, Director, rural Economy and Agriculture, AUC
	09:15 – 09:45	Key Note	Ambassador Koen VERVAEKE, EU Delegation to the Africa Union Commission
		Key Note	Joachim Laubhouet, FAO regional office for Africa, Accra, Ghana
		Opening speech	State Minister for Agriculture of Ethiopia, SE Mr. Sileshi Getahun
		Introduction of participants	
	10:00 – 10:30	Coffee break	Secretariat
	10:30 – 11:30	Presentation and adoption of the objectives and agenda of the meeting Brief recall to the project objectives and components	Dr François Tapsoba, Project CTA
	11:30 – 13:30	Consideration and adoption of the TORs of the RSC and establishment of the RSC	Mr Almami Dampha, Policy Officer, AUC
	13:30 – 14:30	Lunch	Secretariat
<i>Day 1 26 September Monday Afternoon</i>	14 :30 – 16 :00	Consideration and adoption of the TORs of the RSC and establishment of the RSC (cntd)	Mr Almami Dampha, Policy Officer, AUC
	16 :00 – 16 :30	Coffee break	

Jour	Heure	Activités	Responsable/Présentateur
	16 :30 – 17 :00	Presentation and review of the project “inception phase” report	Ms Nora Berrahmouni, Forestry Officer, Lead technical officer for the project , FAO-Rome
	17 :00 – 18 :00	Presentation of the Work Plan October 2011 – September 2012 (Result 1 to Result 6)	Dr François Tapsoba, Project CTA
	18 :00	End of day 1	
Day II 27 September 2011 Tuesday morning	08:30 – 10 :00	Discussion of the Work Plan October 2011 – September 2012 (Result 1 to Result 6)	Mr Almami Dampha, Policy Officer, AUC
	10.00 – 10:30	Coffee Break	Secretariat
	10:30 – 11:00	Presentation and discussion of the Budget	Koffi Honouga, FAO RAF
	11:00 – 13:30	Terms of Reference of the Project Steering Committee: Presentation and discussion of the outcome of the working group	Adama Doulkom GGW Focal Point for Burkina Faso
	13:30 – 14:30	Lunch	Secretariat
	14 :30 – 15 :15	Roles of countries and partners in the project implementation: Review and validation of the guidelines for the TORs of the National Steering Committees and the national project coordinators	Dr François Tapsoba, Project CTA
Day II 27 September 2011 Tuesday afternoon	15 :15 – 15 :45	Roles of countries and partners in the project implementation: Review and validation of the TORs of the Technical Committee	Dr François Tapsoba, Project CTA
	15 :45 – 16 :00	Coffee Break	Secretariat
	16:00 – 17:00	Roles of countries and partners in the project implementation: commitments by Institutions Partners	World Bank, Pan African Agency for the Great green wall, CILSS, PAFFO, AFF, ECOWAS
	17:00 – 17:30	Next steps	Mr Almami Dampha, Policy Officer, AUC
	17:30	Closing remarks	Mr Almami Dampha, Policy Officer, AUC

4.3. Annex 3: Terms of reference of the project steering committee

A. Membership

The Members of the PSC shall comprise core officers nominated by the following institutions:

1. African Union Commission, Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (1);
2. Pan African Great Green Wall Agency (1);
3. Participating countries of the FAO-AUC-EC project and the FAO-AUC TCP Project (13);
4. ECOWAS Commission (1);
5. AMU Secretariat (1);
6. IGAD Executive Secretariat (1);
7. The Pan African Farmers Organization (PAFO)

Countries and organizations are encouraged to be gender sensitive in the composition of their respective delegations.

Other key partners shall also be invited to be represented as Observers:

1. European Union (1) ;
2. FAO
3. The Global Mechanism of the UNCCD (1)
4. World Bank (1)

When required and as appropriate, the Chair of the PSC can invite to the PSC, any resource person or specialized institution capable to provide clarification and enabling well informed decision-making by the PSC.

B. TASK AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Le PSC is responsible to oversee and validate the overall direction and policy of the project. Among others, the PSC will perform the following tasks:

1. Provide overall guidance to the project coordination unit, especially on how emerging issues that are relevant to the successful implementation of the project could be integrated;
2. Review and approve the main project documents, including the project technical and financial annual reports, the project annual work plan and related budget ;
3. Identify constraints and opportunities for the project, including financial opportunities and make recommendations to the project coordination unit on how to overcome constraints and benefit from opportunities, in order to ensure complementarity and visibility of the project with other initiatives.

Experts' meetings may be convened to support the project steering committee and/or the project coordination unit to look into technical issues that may arise and require cooperation and coordination between implementing countries and organizations.

C. FUNCTIONING

1. The PSC will meet once a year. When required and if so requested by 3 out of 4 members of the Committee, an extraordinary meeting may be convened on an exceptional basis. All meetings of the PSC are convened by the PSC Chairperson.
2. Between two regular meetings, requests for comments, for no objection would be made by email or facsimile, as required for the smooth and timely implementation of the project.
3. The representative of the AUC will act as Chairperson of the committee and the representative of the Pan African Agency for the great green wall as Vice Chair.
4. The Project Coordination Unit will serve as the secretariat for the PSC and will act as rapporteur at PSC meetings. It will be responsible for ensuring the necessary logistic support to the PSC and, as such, its tasks will include: the production and dissemination of background documents for the meetings, the production and dissemination of meetings reports. Background documents, updated work-plans and related budgets, as well as the draft agenda, and any other relevant documentation for the meetings are sent to participants at least two weeks prior to the meetings. After each meeting, the draft report must be sent to participants no later than two weeks after holding such meetings. After reception of the meeting reports, participants have two weeks to send the inputs and amendments to the report. The project coordination Unit has no obligation to consider inputs or amendments received after this delay.

4.4. Annexe 4 : Work Program Octobre 2011 - septembre 2012

4.5. Annex 5 : Guidelines for the project national steering committees

A. MEMBERSHIP

Each participating country establishes a NSC, taking advantage of and building on existing committees and platforms set up in the framework of current processes such as: CAADP Country team; UNCCD National Coordinating Body; TerrAfrica national advisory committee; etc.

The NSC is a multisectoral and multidisciplinary body comprising:

1. State Actors: primarily those of the rural development sector (Ministry of Agriculture, Rural development, Forestry, Ministry of Environment/ Nature protection, Ministry of livestock, Ministry of water resources). It is advisable, for resources mobilization purpose, as well as for sustainability of the activities of the project at national level to include in the NSC Academic/Research institutions, the ministries in charge of Planning, of financial resources allocation and of Trade. Parliamentarians, journalists may also be member of the national steering committee
2. Non State Actors: representatives of Community Based Organizations, representatives of Farmers organizations, representatives of NGOs, as well as representatives from decentralized institutions/governments and from the private sector.

Other key partners shall also be invited to be represented as Observers, especially:

1. The donors and cooperation agencies (through their Chef de file for the Environment Sector or for the rural development sector);
2. EU country Office ;
3. FAO country office ;
4. The national representations of the RECs and of the Technical regional/sub regional bodies.

B. TASKS

The NSC is responsible for the overall guidance, orientation and coherence of the GGWSS Initiative implementation at national level, as well as the dissemination and use of the results and outcomes of the project by national stakeholders. In particular, it will perform the following tasks:

1. Provide general guidance to the Ministry or Agency responsible for the GGWSSI, in particular to the National Project Coordinator, Oversee and validate the overall direction and policy of the implementation of the GGW, Facilitate dissemination and use of the project's outcomes and results at national level;
2. Develop with all the stakeholders a common vision and an harmonized approach for the implementation of the great green wall at national level;
3. Review and approve the national action/investment plan, as well as the projects proposals;
4. Prepare the country's inputs to the project steering committee meetings;

5. Support the resource mobilization for the implementation of the project as well as the efforts of the Ministry or national agency in charge of the GGWSSI to mainstream the GGWSSI in the national and sectorial programs;
6. Promote the use of the project's outcomes and results at national level.

C. FONCTIONNEMENT

The NSC will meet twice annually depending on availability of resources. Extraordinary meetings may be foreseen, if so decided by the ministry / Institution in charge of the implementation of the GGWS-SI. Costs for PNSC's meetings are shared by the project and by the national budget.

Between two regular meetings, requests for comments, for no objection would be made by email or facsimile, as required for the smooth and timely implementation of the project.

In view of promoting synergies and complementarities between the project activities and other initiatives at country level, precise roles and responsibilities may be given to CAADP Focal point and to UNCCD focal point.

4.6. Press release



Great Green Wall for Sahara and Sahel Initiative

Africa and Europe joint efforts to combat desertification, while improving food security and contributing to climate change adaptation

26 September 2011, Addis Ababa - A €1.75 million African Union project, supported by the European Union and FAO, aiming to address desertification, land degradation and drought in the Sahara and Sahel, was launched at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa today. This is an initial contribution to the initiative. More substantial funding is anticipated in the coming years.

The project was developed in support of the Great Green Wall initiative, endorsed by the African Heads of State and Government at their 8th Ordinary Session in Addis Ababa in 2007 to combat desertification by restoring and managing arid zones in the Sahara and Sahel. It is based on an integrated approach, with the purpose to tackle the detrimental social, economic and environmental impact of land degradation and desertification in the region, in particular by supporting local community's efforts in sustainable management and use of natural resources (land, water and vegetation).

In Africa two-thirds of the land cover consists of dry lands and deserts. Desertification, resulting in part from climatic variations and human activities, affects over 1 billion people worldwide, and has potentially devastating consequences in terms of social and economic costs, ranging from the reduction of agricultural productivity to migration and regional conflicts. Desertification, often misunderstood as the advance of existing deserts, is a result of the combined effects of demographic pressures, land degradation, deforestation and climatic change.

The Great Green Great Wall initiative aims at combating desertification through curative and preventive measures, including sustainable management of forests, range lands and natural resources. At the same time, its actions are designed to contribute to climate change adaptation and poverty alleviation of the population in the areas concerned.

A shared vision

The Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel Initiative is an African Union programme which brings together more than 20 countries from the Sahelo-Saharan region, with regional and international organizations, including the African Union Commission, the Pan-African Agency for the great green wall, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in Eastern Africa (IGAD), The Community of Sahelian and Sahelian States (CEN-SAD), the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), the European Union and the FAO. Other regional and development partners include the Interstate committee for drought control in the Sahel (CILSS), the Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS), the Global Mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the World Bank, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Dry Land Centre, World Agroforestry Centre in Kenya (ICRAF), World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) and African Forest Forum (AFF).

Promotion of best practices

From the initial vision focusing on tree planting, the Great Green Wall initiative evolved into a more ecologically appropriate and socio-economically sustainable holistic approach, which would be more effective and directly benefit local land and water users through the identification and up scaling of best land management practices.

Priorities for action will vary from country to country, taking into account the socio-economic and environmental circumstances. For some, the priorities include combating sand encroachment, reversing pasture land degradation, restoring degraded land by favouring natural regeneration and re-forestation. While for others the priorities lie with developing the agroforestry sector, developing new harvesting techniques, up scaling sustainable land management practices, including soil and water conservation.

The scope and aim of the project funded by the EU

The African Union project launched today will develop activities in Algeria, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Mauritania, Nigeria, the Gambia, Senegal and the Sudan. Other partner countries include Chad, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Mali and Niger which are being supported through a Technical Cooperation Project (TCP) provided by the FAO.

The thirty-month project received € 1.4 million in funding from the European Union, topped-up with co-financing of over € 350,000 by the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD and FAO. The Commission of the African Union provides in-kind contribution by hosting the project management.

The EU supports the initiative as it addresses the root causes of land degradation and can contribute to poverty alleviation in the long term. Moreover, the initiative involves countries, who have collectively embraced the proposal as a platform to mobilize partnerships with the aim of effecting an environmental and development transformation in the region that will mitigate the risk of desertification and land degradation while at the same alleviating poverty.

The project entitled “*Support of the implementation of the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative (GGSSI)*” is developed in the framework of the first Action Plan (2008-2010) of the Africa-EU strategic partnership (under theme 6-Climate change) as well as the Joint Africa-EU strategy Action Plan 2011-2013 adopted in 2010 in Tripoli. The aim of the project is to assist the countries concerned in the development of their national action plans, to support the development of trans-border programs and provide favorable conditions to enable the implementation of action plans that will be developed.

It will focus on capacity development for the planning and implementation of best practices at local level and international levels, establishing a networking platform for knowledge sharing and technology transfer, developing a harmonized strategy for the Great Green Wall initiative and setting up a platform for partnership and resource mobilization.

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