



Harmonised regional strategy for implementation of the “Great Green Wall Initiative of the Sahara and the Sahel”

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World Overview of
Conservation Approaches
and Technologies



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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ODA	Official Development Assistance
APGMV	Panafrican Agency responsible for the Great Green Wall
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
CEDEAO	Communauté Economique Des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest
CEEAC	Communauté Economique des Etats de l'Afrique Centrale
CEN-SAD	Communauté des Etats Saharo-Sahéliens
CILSS	Comité Permanent Inter Etats de lutte contre la sécheresse dans le Sahel
CIRAD	Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement
STC/CCD	Science and Technology Committee of the UNCCD
AUC	African Union Commission
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
GEF	Global Environment Facility
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
ICRAF	World Agroforestry Centre
IFDC	International Centre for Soil Fertility and Agricultural Development
IGAD	Autorité intergouvernementale de développement (de l'Afrique de l'Est)
GGWSSI	Great Green Wall Initiative of the Sahara and the Sahel
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
IRD	Institut de Recherche pour le Développement
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
GM/CCD	UNCCD Global Mechanism
NEPAD	Nouveau Partenariat pour le Développement de l'Afrique
OCB	Organisation communautaire de base
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NGO	Non-governmental organization
CSO	Civil society organization
OSS	Sahara and Sahel Observatory
NAP	National Action Plan to Combat Desertification
RAP	Regional Action Plan to Combat Desertification
SRAP	Sub-Regional Action Plan to Combat Desertification
PDDAA ou CAADP	Programme détaillé pour le développement de l'agriculture en Afrique
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
RAF	FAO Africa Regional Office

IFS	Integrated Financing Strategy
TCP	Technical Cooperation Plan (FAO)
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
AMU	Arab Maghreb Union
UN	United Nations
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
WOCAT	World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies

1. Introduction

The Great Green Wall Initiative of the Sahara and the Sahel was the result of a threefold observation:

1. Desertification, climate change the loss of biodiversity are crucial problems for arid regions of Africa where they combine to exacerbate people's food insecurity and affect both countries' development efforts and the livelihoods of the poorest populations on the planet.
2. Climate previsions in Africa show a serious risk of extension of arid areas both in the southern and northern parts of the Sahara, which threatens to prevent efforts to fight poverty on the continent.
3. Efforts agreed in the context of the implementation of the United Nations Convention to combat desertification (UNCCD) and the improvement of the resilience of human and natural systems to climate change do not match the objectives, be it for the conservation of natural resources or poverty reduction.

These observations resulted in a strong political will in the African continent to form an **African partnership** supported by international solidarity, in order to halt and reverse land degradation tendencies (water, soil, vegetation) in Africa's arid lands through a coherent and cooperative set of actions with the following three aims:

1. Conservation, development and management of renewable natural resources and ecosystems;
2. Building of infrastructures and maximizing rural potential;
3. Consolidating and diversifying economic activities and improving living conditions of local rural communities.

The partnership idea was translated into the Great Green Wall by President Obasanjo in reference, on the one hand, to various experiments carried out in Africa to protect human systems against sand dune movement (green belt, green barrier, earth front, etc.), on the other, to popular perceptions according to which deserts move and therefore advance and trees are the best or the only means to protect, save the vegetation and stop "desert encroachment".

Since 2005, the Great Green Wall concept has developed considerably. In 2005, the aim was to erect a 15 km wide tree barrier linking Dakar to Djibouti in order to stop "desert encroachment" and protect ecosystems and human communities in the south and north of the Sahara from the harmful effects of desertification and drought on their economic and social development. Most

stakeholders now need to use it as an arid land sustainable development programming tool complementing ongoing regional and continental initiatives (TerrAfrica, PDDAA/NEPAD, NEPAD Environmental Action Plan, etc.) and capable of attracting a large flow of financial resources for the rehabilitation of degraded land in the area surrounding the Sahara, thereby **enhancing peace and security in this area**.

This development made it possible to eliminate scepticism and questions surrounding the initiative at the start and mobilise large sectors of Sahel and Saharan countries and numerous international partners, including the scientific and NGO communities, and United Nations Organizations. The following related projects and programmes are currently being implemented:

- African Union Commission projects currently implemented by the FAO, i.e. the **TCP/RAF/3212**¹ project financed by the FAO and project **GCP/INT/120/EC**² financed by the European Union, the FAO and the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD.
- The Sahel and West Africa project approved by the Global Environment Fund (GEF) with the World Bank as implementing agency, which directly supports 12 countries³.
- The CILSS regional sustainable land management programme.
- The operationalization project of the Millennium Villages concept on Great Green Wall pilot sites in CILSS countries led by the CILSS and the West and Central Africa MDG Centre.
- Etc.

However, this keen interest in the initiative is not without its problems, as, due to the lack of a clear reference system, everyone contributes in a different way. There is therefore a considerable risk of ending up with a programme whose performance and impacts are difficult to measure due to a lack of common and shared vision and direction. This “Harmonized Regional Strategy for the Implementation of the Great Green Wall of the Sahara and the Sahel” has therefore been developed, its main challenge being to develop capacity to cooperate for the well-being of arid land people. The document is based on:

1. The brainstorming meetings conducted by the AUC, the CEN-SAD Secretariat and various sub-regional and regional organizations such as the OSS and the Senegal Government aimed at making the concept of a great green wall to stop desert

¹ The **TCP/RAF/3212-Assistance pour la mise en œuvre de l’initiative de la grande muraille verte** » covers five countries: Djibouti, Ethiopia, Mali, Niger and Chad.

² The «GCP/INT/120/EC – **Appui à la mise en œuvre de l’initiative de la grande muraille verte** » covers eight countries: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Gambia, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal and Sudan.

³ The SAWAP project covers the following countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan, Chad and Togo.

encroachment operational, attractive and attainable. These ideas are reproduced in extensor in the action plan documents of recipient countries of the FAO TCP project;

2. The Green Wall strategies and action plans of Djibouti, Niger, Mali (non-validated draft) and the five-year consolidated action plan of the Panafrican Agency responsible for the Great Green Wall;
3. The UNCCD Ten-year Strategy (2008-2018), the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011 – 2020, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and biodiversity preservation targets ;
4. The results of the technical discussion held in Ouagadougou in December 2012 to identify key elements for a regional Green Wall implementation strategy;
5. The results of the harmonized strategy validation meeting held in Banjul, Gambia, in April 2012 and comments received by email from other partners.

This document focuses on the following main points:

- The Great Green Wall concept;
- The Great Green Wall strategic approach;
- The implementation framework;
- Capacity development;
- Resource mobilization;
- Communication and awareness raising;
- Monitoring and evaluation.

2. The Great Green Wall concept

The Great Green Wall concept is rooted in past experiences on the African continent, where, in the early 1960's, countries faced with the threat of sand-covering of human and natural systems or scarcity of fuelwood due to excessive population growth in urban areas developed protection and/or production initiatives such as the Green Belt, the Green Barrier, the Earth Front, etc. Among experiments in this field are the Algerian Green Barrier (developed and rectified over time) and the Mauritanian Green Belt, aimed at sand dune fixation and sustainable management of paths combine with infrastructure development and sustainable improvement of population incomes. In countries where these experiments have been widely broadcast or applied, the focus of efforts is no longer on trees, but on humans. Indeed, actors quickly understood that conservation and forest policies cannot be built “on the back” of the poor, but should be in their economic interest in order to be successful. As the saying goes in Niger, “you can put a ranger behind each tree, but if people need them to survive, they will cut them”. Action taken to address environmental degradation must go hand in hand with an increase in economic and social well-being. Improving food security and livelihoods among the rural population implies containing desertification, preserving biodiversity and reducing vulnerability to climate change. Safeguarding the livelihoods of peasants, shepherds and oasis peoples requires the protection of the ecosystems they depend on for their food and habitat.

The Great Green Wall is a metaphor for:

- *Raising awareness among development actors, especially decision-makers, on the characteristics and urgency of arid land development;*
- *Enhancing local best practice in environment management and sustainable development;*
- *Implementing a multitude of integrated responses addressing the multisector problems affecting the life of people in Sahelo-Saharan regions of Africa (production system restoration, development of the natural potential and tangible and intangible heritage in arid areas, development of rural production and sustainable development hubs).*
- *Finding long-term solutions to the urgent problems of desertification/land degradation and drought.*

In this context and through discussions held mainly between 2007 and 2008 under the aegis of the African Union Commission and the CEN-SAD Secretariat, a consensus was reached among the actors to define the Great Green Wall as being a set of management and development actions that are:

- √ Covering a specific territory, including village land;
- √ Essentially sylvo-pastoral in nature;
- √ A Long-term investment, therefore of unlimited lifetime;
- √ Aimed at combatting desertification in the UNCCD sense;
- √ Targeting protection and, if possible, production, particularly in the context of energy shortage and where hydro-edaphic conditions allow it;
- √ Implemented to remedy and/or prevent a situation;
- √ Spatially fragmented in relation to human settlements;
- √ Integratable and integrated in national and local rural development programmes or at least in synergy with them (CAADP) ;
- √ Supporting the “mining” of natural resources through alternative activities such as trade, transport, small assembly or tool manufacture workshops useful with reforestation programmes...

In other words, the Great Green Wall Initiative is not solely aimed at creating forest from East to West Africa, despite being greatly focused on strengthening the land cover. It mainly consists in a set of integrated actions addressing the multisectoral problems affecting the lives of people in African Sahelo-Saharan areas. These multisectoral and multidimensional actions transversally address a wide range of concerns, including natural resource management, sustainability of rural production systems (agriculture, breeding, forestry, etc.), the development of rural production and trade infrastructures, diversifying economic activities and wealth creation; taking into account gender and wealth issues in development.

3. Great Green Wall Strategic Approach

3.1 Geographic cover

Given the alarming prevailing situation on the southern and northern limits of the Sahara, priority is being given to those two sides of the Sahara desert. It should be noted that the main political and technical objective, which is to put a stop to “desert creep” in a **thrust of African solidarity** not only concerns the progression of desert or desertified land in the South of the continent, but also in the North. The Great Green Wall does not therefore apply to the 11 sub-Saharan countries of the Sahel, but to all the countries surrounding the Sahara, including enclaves such as Cape Verde. As its name suggests, it covers the Sahara and the Sahel (Great Green Wall Initiative **of the Sahara and the Sahel**), and it should be noted that, from a scientific viewpoint, that the term “Sahel” means regions bordering the Sahara, whether they be to the North, the South, the East or West of it.

At national level, three principles could guide identification of the intervention area:

- Firstly, the principle defined by the AUC and the CEN-SAD Secretariat, which stipulates that the initiative will cover the vulnerable geographic areas of the Sahel and the Sahara. Priority will be given to the belt defined by the isohyetal lines under 400 mm at the southern and northern borders of the Sahara. However, as the GGWSSI plays both a remedial and a preventive role, some countries could need to go beyond this area to combat soil degradation and improve livelihoods in order to reduce poverty.
- Secondly, the GGWSSI should not replace the UNCCD and its implementation instruments (NPACD, SPACD, RPACD). The GGWSSI should not develop a programme which duplicates NPACDs. On the contrary, its implementation is part of NPACD implementation in Sahel and Sahara vulnerable areas. The initiative should therefore cover a specific region rather than the whole national territory.
- Tools produced under the CCD aimed at providing a more scientific basis to PACDs could be used by countries to identify priority response areas.

3.2 Vision

The Great Green Wall Initiative for the Sahara and the Sahel (GGWSSI) is an enterprising vision of African Union leaders for a “green, fertile and prosperous Africa” rid of famine and images of malnourished children and livestock lease linked to famine”. When the Great Green Wall Initiative is implemented:

- Repeated humanitarian crises in the African Horn and Sahel will be a thing of the past and

- By 2025, land degradation trends are reversed and people become more resilient to climate change;
- By 2050, the vast arid lands of the Sahara and the Sahel are transformed into rural production and development hubs.

The GGWSSI mandate is therefore the following: To take effective and urgent action in arid lands of Africa to put an end or reverse land degradation, loss of biodiversity and ensure that, by 2050, ecosystems are resilient to climate change and continue to provide essential services and contribute to human well-being and poverty reduction. In order to ensure this, pressures on natural resources and the tangible and intangible heritage will be reduced, ecosystems will be restored, biological resources will be used sustainably and the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources will be fairly and equitably shared. Sufficient financial resources will be provided, capacity developed and decision-making processes on the development of African Arid lands will be based on a firm scientific basis.



Different ongoing programmes, mechanisms and projects have the same vision and the aim of the GGWSSI is not to duplicate them but to improve their efficiency and the arid and humid (oasis) areas of the Sahara and the Sahel. They include the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), NEPAD's environment programme as well as regional, sub-regional and national actions to combat desertification (NPACD, SPACD and PAN). The aim is to encourage synergy and effective coordination between the activities of various national and sub-regional bodies working to combat land degradation and desertification mainly in the Sahel and Saharan areas. The aim is also to ensure collaboration and coordination among actors at continental, regional and national levels in order to improve the chances of achieving the common objective of reducing land and natural resource degradation in areas on the northern and southern limits of the Sahara. Furthermore, this synergy should make it possible to maximize the mobilisation and use of resources in each country and region, which is difficult for them to achieve individually.

3.3 Objectives

3.3.1 Overall Objective

The overall objective of the GGWSSI is to improve the resilience of human and natural systems in Sahel and Saharan areas faced with climate change through healthy ecosystem management

and sustainable development of natural resources (water, soil, vegetation, fauna, flora), protection of tangible and intangible rural heritage, the development of rural production and sustainable development hubs, improvement of living conditions and livelihoods of people living in these areas.

3.3.2 Strategic Objectives

As a special initiative by heads of States and Government aimed at implementing the UNCCD in Africa and improving resilience of human and natural systems to climate change, reaching the global objective and the condition that it should contribute to materialising the general vision presupposes that all actors have aligned their actions with the ten-year UNCCD Strategy developed and adopted by 195 States and party institutions, including all African countries, as a reference to the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of their actions to combat desertification in the context of climate change and biodiversity loss. This ten-year strategic framework plan sets out guidance for the joint implementation and development of synergies in the implementation of the three Rio Conventions (Desertification, Climate Change and Biological Diversity). The following “Strategic Objectives” are intended to guide the action of all stakeholders and partners engaged in the GGWSSI implementation.

Strategic Objective 1: Improve living conditions of local populations in arid lands of Africa and making them less vulnerable to climate and drought changes and variability.

Expected outcome 1.1 Livelihoods of affected populations are improved, more diversified and provide income from sustainable land management.

Expected outcome 1.2 Affected populations are less vulnerable to climate change, climate variability and drought at socio-economic and ecological level.

Expected outcome 1.3 Populations of affected areas are less subject to migrations, live in harmony and peace and security is strengthened in these areas.

Strategic Objective 2: Improve the state and health of African arid land ecosystems and their resilience to climate change and variability and to drought.

Expected outcome 2.1 Land productivity and ecosystem goods and services in affected areas are sustainably improved, contributing to the development of livelihoods.

Expected outcome 2.2 Affected ecosystems are less vulnerable to climate change, climate variability and drought.

Expected outcome 2.3 Sustainable land management and combatting desertification/land degradation contribute to the preservation of biodiversity and sustainable use of natural resources as well as climate change mitigation.

Strategic Objective 3: Mobilize resources in support of the Great Green Wall Initiative by establishing effective partnerships between national and international actors.

Expected outcome 3.1 By 2015, all countries involved in the GGWSSI have developed and adopted an effective, participatory and updated Nation Strategy and Action Plan to implement the GGWI and started to implement it.

Expected outcome 3.2 Financial, technical and technological resources are mobilized to support the implementation of the Initiative and are directed straight to local communities or devolved “territorial communities”.

Expected outcome 3.3 National Action Plans and transboundary and/or common interest projects developed under the GGWI are implemented through an effective mobilization of African national resources, innovative funding sources and international cooperation resources.

3.3.3 Operational objectives and expected outcomes

The GGWSSI requires first of all the development and implementation of integrated development action plans and projects at local and national level.

The following “operational objectives” will guide the preparation of these plans and any action to be taken by African countries, government and intergovernmental institutions, and civil society to implement the GGWSSI.

Operational Objective 1: *Actively influence international, continental, regional, national and local relevant actors and processes to efficiently address desertification/land degradation and drought problems in Sahelo-Saharan areas.*

Outcome 1.1: African decision-makers are well informed about specific arid area development challenges and develop and implement actions to address desertification/land degradation, drought, adaptation to climate change and biodiversity conservation.

Outcome 1.2: The problems of desertification/land degradation and drought in Africa are addressed, first by Africans themselves, in relevant international forums, in particular those dealing with issues related to agricultural trade, adaptation to climate change, biodiversity preservation and sustainable use of natural resources, rural development, sustainable development and poverty alleviation.

Outcome 1.3: Civil society organizations and the scientific community are largely involved as stakeholders in GGWSSI implementation activities and their advocacy, awareness raising, research, capacity-building and education initiatives lead to long-term solutions to desertification/land degradation and drought problems.

Operational Objective 2: *Work towards the development of favorable climate conditions in order to help arid land populations to remain on their land and ensure their equitable and peaceful access to land resources.*

Outcome 2.1: Each country participating in implementation of the GGWSSI develops and implements an action plan based on biophysical and socio-economic data and incorporates it in integrated investment frameworks, in particular TerrAfrica.

Outcome 2.2: Action plans developed under GGWSSI implementation integrate initiatives aimed at improving communities' livelihoods, the state and health of ecosystems and their biodiversity, climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Outcome 2.3: Countries integrate their Green Wall action plans, sustainable land management and soil degradation related issues in their development plans and relevant sectoral investment plans and policies.

Outcome 2.4: Technical and financial partners align their Great Green Wall implementation activities with national priorities established in their NAPs, including actions to support CSOs.

Operational Objective 3: *Improve knowledge of the social, economic, biophysical and cultural processes of arid lands*

Outcome 3.3: Biophysical and socio-economic economic factors and their interactions in affected areas are better known, thus improving decision-making.

Outcome 3.5: Effective data collection and information exchange mechanisms, including traditional knowledge, are developed to help decision-makers and end users, including the identification and exchange of best practice and examples of success.

Outcome 3.6: Relevant scientific and technological networks in the areas of desertification/land degradation and drought are invited to support GGWSSI implementation

Operational Objective 4: *Mobilize financial and technical resources at national, bilateral and multilateral level and ensure their better targeting and coordination to increase their impact and effectiveness.*

Outcome 4.1: Countries set up integrated investment frameworks aimed at mobilizing national, bilateral and multilateral resources to increase the efficiency and impact of responses.

Outcome 4.2: Efforts are made to access financial mechanisms aimed at climate change mitigation and adaptation, the preservation of biodiversity and sustainable use of natural resources, hunger and poverty reduction and achieving the MDGs.

Outcome 4.3: South-South cooperation, in particular in countries surrounding the Sahara and a triangular South-North-South cooperation are developed to facilitate access of local actors to adapted technologies.

4. Implementation framework

4.1 Guiding principles

The success of the GGWSSI implementation will depend on various factors, including:

- Capitalization and exchange of experiences in green belts, green barriers, etc. South-South cooperation is essential to enable all to build on past successes and avoid mistakes made. It also allows a less costly transfer of technologies developed by various countries in areas such as assisted natural regeneration, production and genetic improvement of plant material, restoration and management of agro-sylvo-pastoral systems, sustainable agriculture, water collection and management systems, gender issues, forest and agroforestry product diversification and marketing, pastoralism, etc.
- Taking into account the existing situation, developing synergies and an effective coordination of responses. The GGWSSI is based on the different regional and national ongoing efforts to improve livelihoods in the Sahelo-Saharan area. Following the wishes of the main stakeholders and to insure the success of the initiative, the programme will need to be integrated in national and regional rural programmes for rural development, combatting land degradation and desertification, climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as communal and local development plans, in order to address as much as possible community concerns and enable them to manage it.
- Applying a more integrated and comprehensive approach clarifying and strengthening links between the different environmental aspects and intervention sectors. Such a planning model should take into account the different decision-making and implementation levels. Land management experiences have shown that certain technical interventions require the direct participation of users at village level or groups of villages, which others need to be implemented on a large scale, such as the province, Wilaya, etc. Developing Green Wall Action Plans could and should build on country support instruments for the scaling of SLM developed for Sub-Saharan African countries in the context of the TerrAfrica partnership platform.
- Participation of local communities, whose role remains fundamental. Experiments carried out in North Africa, West Africa and Eastern Africa show that sustainability of “green belts” will remain a hopeless dream as long as people and local communities are not involved in the planning, implementation and post-investment stages. To ensure management, the initiative needs to be adopted by local communities. In the case of reforestation for example, experience has shown that managing and planting trees outside peoples’ activity range makes the project anonymous or public with the risk of making them disinterested, with all accompanying problems and destruction risks.

- Ownership of the process and strengthening project management by local communities. It is essential that all stakeholders should master planned operations, including activity funding methods, monitoring and evaluation, selection procedures and support structure control. This is essential to guarantee sustainability of adopted responses.
- Partnership. In this context, partnership refers to a contract of trust between the different actors involved in implementing the initiative, to reach an objective defined collectively on the basis of their respective land use concerns. The Great Green Wall of the Sahara and the Sahel is a long term vision of arid land development issues. Each partner (not only governments but all stakeholders, including technical and financial partners) needs therefore agree to commit to it long term and bear in mind that this long term commitment depends mostly on:
 - a. Mutual trust and recognition of the rights of each partner;
 - b. Defining a withdrawal strategy from the start;
 - c. Each partner agreeing that sharing responsibilities in programme implementation must depend on the abilities and capacity of each and everyone and not wanting to do what others might do better (subsidiarity);
 - d. The ability of the partnership national leading or managing institution to always prioritize what brings partners together.

4.2 Effective stakeholder commitment

The GGWSSI has many interested parties. All stakeholders can and must contribute to the implementation of the Great Green Wall Initiative. According to their level of responsibility and field of expertise, everyone develops operational objectives leading, as the case may be, to various projects, plans, programmes along with outcome indicators as far as possible.

4.2.1 At operational level,

4.2.1.1 National and local administrations

The main role of government should be to create conditions in which rural communities can constructively and sustainably use resources. In this respect, the State and sub-national authorities have the following responsibilities:

- Guide policy development;
- Guarantee coherence between different policies and initiatives;

- Conduct consultations with different stakeholders in sustainable land management (SLM);
- Develop an enabling environment by improving the legal, regulatory and institutional framework. In many cases, the sustainability of the Great Green Wall will on the capacity and will of governments to (i) revise/simplify laws and regulations; ii) consider land as a public good to be accompanied by large-scale investments at local level.
- Mobilize necessary resources (financial, material and human) for programme implementation.

4.2.1.2 Territorial communities (Regions and urban or rural communes)

The main role of rural territorial communities is to guide/boost local development and ensure that it benefits all citizens. In the GGWSSI context, territorial communities will need to:

- Participate in planning and management of natural resources within their territory;
- Manage resources transferred or put at their disposal by the State;
- Lead consultative frameworks (partnership platforms) at regional or local level;
- Promote employment and revenue generating activities;
- Ensure the application of GGWSSI project and action plan management at transboundary (cooperation between communities), regional or local level.

4.2.1.3 Civil Society Organizations (NGOs, GCOs)

Implementation of the initiative must rest on grassroot communities and therefore on the great accountability of the grassroot community organizations (GCO), NGOs, CSOs and devolved territorial communities, mainly rural communes. Government entities should give necessary support to these rural communities, including capacity development, to enable them to play their role. Clearly, the GGWSSI strategy must be based on an upstream approach and enable involvement of all actors. It should also enable strengthening of project management by local communities. It is essential that actors should master all operations resulting from the planning process, including funding methods of actions, selection procedures and support structure control, in order to guarantee sustainability of adopted interventions.

Under the direction of local districts and with the support of advice structures, rural populations and other village and rural community development actors will have the following responsibilities:

- Express communities's SLM needs in regard to their specific land constraints and potentials;
- Participate in programme development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation ;
- Initiate local development microprojects;
- Ensure project management;
- Manage their land resources in an agreed manner;
- Promote income generating/economic opportunities in the rural environment.

4.2.1.4 Technical and financial partners

The term “technical and financial partners” refers here to all bilateral, multilateral and international institutions supporting African countries and institutions in implementing the GGWI. It not only involves those acting in the rural sector, but all those whose actions influence, in one way or another, the behaviour of rural and poor people towards the environment and land, as well as on government structures and rural sector support.

These actors also include African sub-regional organizations which, due to their dependence on the same donors as are the States that created them, provide direct support and investments on the ground or specialise in the development of tools or exchange of experience (CILSS, OSS, etc.).

They also include international NGOs or intergovernmental organizations (IUCN, IFDC, etc.) and research institutes working on SLM background data and technological packages adapted for land resource use (WOCAT, FAO/LADA, CIRAD, USGS/Eros Data Center, ICRAF, IIED, etc.).

The main role of these partners is the following:

- Participating in political dialogue with African governments and institutions and cooperating with the different actors;
- Supporting the development and implementation of GGWSSI investment programmes;
- Participating in mobilizing necessary resources for GGWSSI development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation;

- If necessary and at the request of governments and/or African institutions, providing relevant technical assistance for systemic, institutional and operational capacity development.

It is crucial that these partners coordinate their efforts in the GGW context and avoid initiating or encouraging duplication of efforts. The “One UN” directive applied by the institutions and agencies of the United Nations System could serve as an example of such coordination, implementing in GGW territory the “Global Drylands: A UN system-wide response” launched in October 2011 during COP.10/UNCCD in Changwon, South Korea.

4.2.2 At political and strategic level

The main actors are: the African Union Commission, the Panafrican Agency responsible for the Great Green Wall and regional economic communities, particularly CEDEAO for West Africa, UMA for North Africa, CEEAC for Central Africa, IGAD for East Africa, and CEN-SAD.

To date, the role, terms of reference and responsibilities of these three categories of actors remains to be specified, particularly as current imprecisions are a serious handicap to the harmonized implementation of the initiative and effective coordination of partners and actions. Because the political leadership of the AUC is recognised by all, this institution is responsible for clarifying terms of reference and establishing a coherent continental institutional system to implement the GGWSSI. One of the possible options in this regard would be to make the Panafrican Agency Responsible for the Great Green Wall a specialised AUC agency attached to the Rural Economy and Agriculture Department, like panafrican institutions such as SAFGRAD, AU/PANVAC, IBAR, etc.

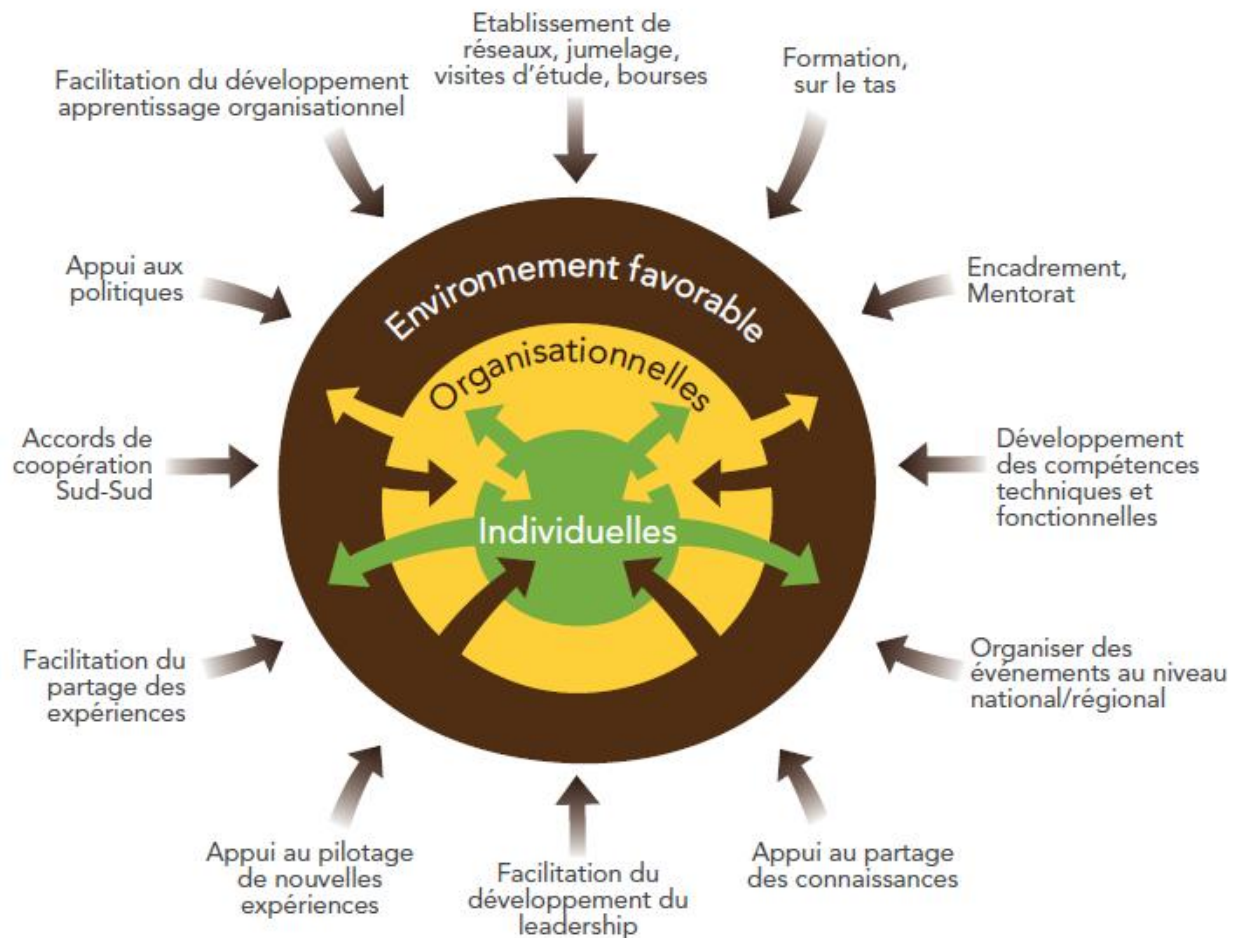
5. Capacity development

One largely accepted definition of “capacity” is the “ability of individuals, organizations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully”. It encompasses the ability to create, understand, develop, plan and reach set objectives, to reflect on results of actions, to have a vision and to change. The definition adopted in the FAO Capacity Development Strategy explains it as “the process whereby “people, organizations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time”. Capacity development (CD) addresses political and social as well as technical aspects, among other things (the figure below taken from the FAO Capacity Development document illustrates some methods used in the CD process).

5.1. Capacity development needs

Natural resource and environmental management CD is not only a question of filling knowledge gaps through training. Even with a sufficient level of knowledge and skills, men and women are not always able to use these in support of development or to ensure good monitoring of documentation. To be skilled increasingly implies being capable of managing unstable and complex situations, which many managers involved in managing environmental issues cannot do due to their physical, legal or institutional environment. It should also be noted that universities and research institutions have scientific and technical skill that are however not sufficiently developed outside their “niches”. Capacity development should be carried out at the following three levels:

- System level (enabling environment) to facilitate coordination and harmonization of practices and approaches in implementation of GGWSSI actions;
- Institutional level (organization of actors) to facilitating streamlining of Frameworks for Concerted Action and increase their efficiency and effectiveness;
- Individual level (level of individuals) to strengthen and develop the scientific and technical skills of each individual actor.



Problems at all three levels (with specific tools and approaches) must be identified in order to obtain coherent information layers. For this purpose, mapping is required to identify capacity development needs. Each “developed capacity” offer to be proposed should take into account the sustainability aspect by integrating environmental issues.

Training courses (individual capacity development) should be based on natural resource management methods. Dialogue and information sharing during exchange visits between partners is also important. Requirements need to be identified according the targeted public. Training should also address everyone’s concerns and be decentralised. Targets are the following: civil society, GCOs, national and local decision makers (townships and districts), opinion leaders, sectoral and production groups, ministerial managers, devolved State service agencies and MPs. Because the rural environment is

far-reaching, every action should involve the different services. In addition, the following measures should be taken:

- Provide continuing education and diplomas in ecosystem management of challenges relevant to the GGWSSI. Development of new information and communication technologies should also be considered, because enclaving is extensive in the GGWSSI area and could adversely affect progress and reduce action visibility.
- Capacity development in monitoring and evaluation should be considered to equip GGWSSI actors to measure baseline data and the environmental, economic, social impact of activities on the ground.
- Research and Development should be linked to all GGWSSI capacity development programmes.

5.2 Needs assessment

Assessment of national needs can come from GGWSS national action plans, but mainly, where appropriate, from the self-assessment project of national capacity needed to strengthen global environmental management (ANCR). In most countries this project assesses and identifies national capacity development needs for implementation of the Rio Conventions (UNFCCC, CBD, UNCCD), POPs and conventions related to water management. ANCR is also a basis for mobilizing partnerships with national and global environmental institutions. It also emphasizes collaboration with technical and financial partners.

Furthermore, it is important to consider how capacity development in one country might be relevant to another (regional and sub-regional needs).

Endogenous knowledge should also be considered. Populations have adapted over time by developing tools and adaptation capacity. Such local knowledge should be identified, capitalized and transferred. Knowledge of languages of local communities is therefore required and NGOs which play a crucial role in needs assessment should be supported. As communication tools, local languages can help make training generally accessible, community radios can assess training needs and increasing the level of education of local communities leads to better resource governance.

A monitoring system should be established for training to assess its effectiveness and impact. A large number of people should preferably be trained (critical mass) and a new capacity development approach should be adopted funding the restitution of training by the trained person at their intervention area level or with partners with whom they work. Such a new approach should make it possible to reduce the number of initiatives.

Farmer organization and training (weakened by different policies) should be restored to avoid an increase in the number of costly projects at local level.

6. Mobilizing resources

Because the Great Green Wall is an African initiative, financial resources for its implementation should first and foremost come from national, even local sources. Resource mobilization policy for the GGWSSI should be based on an integrated finance approach. As it is designed as a cross-sectoral regional initiative, it should be integrated into the national and/or local framework, including in national resource allocation and it must therefore be an integral part of national environmental and natural resource management priorities, along with other State priority sectors.

The rapid development and complexity of international finance means that local, national and regional actors must implement resource mobilization strategies that are increasingly integrated and from diverse sources, particularly in the light of international cooperation policies of recent years, such as the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Accra Declaration and more recently the Chang Won Initiative and resulting Busan Declaration.

At national level, ongoing and planned investments with financial, human and technological resources should be identified in order to assess the financial gap and ensure effective implementation of an integrated ecosystem approach by the GGWSSI. Establishing such an investment framework for the GGW enables the necessary stages and a roadmap for mobilizing additional resources to be planned. Compacts signed by African countries under the CAADP (Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme) form the main national agricultural investment channels through which donors support rural development in Africa, particularly Sub-Saharan Africa. To benefit from these funds, GGW action plans should therefore be integrated or derive from these investment plans.

Harmonization of the GGW with the UNCCD Ten-Year Strategy also offers opportunities to explore additional funding sources, including those linked to climate change, South-South cooperation, microfinance and many others. Such an alignment promotes the essential role played by state and non-state actors in GGW implementation. These innovative funding sources could help significantly increase available resources, diversifying sources of funding and supplement traditional resources.

Finally, GGW implementation needs to be started by developing projects and programmes in countries with GGW action plans and developing action plans for countries which don't yet have any.

At regional level, the GGW resource mobilization strategy has four priority fields of action: capacity development; transboundary projects; South-South cooperation; and developing an innovative financing approach.

As an integral part of the overall capacity development programme, the main objective of the supporting resource mobilization programme is to enhance knowledge and use of procedures to access the main finance sources.

Regarding priority transboundary project implementation, an analysis should first be carried out to identify and integrate transboundary projects into the GGW. This work will be done by stakeholders and facilitated by the regional partnership platform, to enable sub-regional and specialized organizations to support resource mobilization for ongoing projects such as PGIE/Niger-Nigeria. Actions in the context of South-South cooperation such as that on Saharan camel ranges proposed by Algeria to neighbouring countries (Mali, Mauritania, Niger) serve as a first step towards partnership by providing a methodology and exchange of lessons learned. Countries will integrate these actions into their development action plans and submit them to Joint Commissions and in the context of South-South Cooperation.

South-South (or decentralized) Cooperation provides significant additional GGW financing opportunities and supports local participation and its contribution to this regional initiative. Other financing schemes such as promoting microfinance in GGW regions through national approaches and by identifying specific budget lines promoting sustainable management of natural resources can enhance GGW action at local level.

Innovative financing approaches include non-traditional financing sources and mechanisms beyond ODA and national budgets. They include internal and external financing sources whether public or private, that can be mobilized through various financial mechanism and instruments.

An analysis carried out by the UNCCD Global Mechanism in partnership with research centres distinguishes the following four categories of financing mechanisms or sources:

1. Actors and institutions – They can provide funds or investments for GGW activities and include philanthropic foundations, the private sector, CSOs, emerging donors (e.g. BRICS) and local governments (decentralized cooperation);

2. Thematic entry points- they include large processes and sectors related to UNCCD/SLM which can mobilize finance for UNCCD implementation in synergy with other instruments, for example sources linked to climate change, rural development, poverty reduction, food security and agriculture, biodiversity conservation, water and forests, South-South Cooperation and empowerment of women.
3. Market-based incentives – these mechanisms provide economic incentives for SLM activities and involve transferring financial resources from those who want to pay for an environmental service (e.g. the private or public sectors) to those who wish to supply it (e.g. farmers). They include taxation tools (taxes and subsidies), marketing carbon emission reductions, the purchase of management rights, payment of environmental services, ecological certification and labelling;
4. Investment-based mechanisms – they provide finance for UNCCD implementation and SLM activities through savings or credit and include microfinance, environmental facilities, environmental performance vouchers, and facilities for eco-risk capital.

Need for a partnership and resource mobilization platform

The international, regional and national Development Cooperation context also explains why the GGW needs a dedicated partnership and resource mobilization platform. As part of the Great Green Wall Platform led by the African Union Commission, this platform would include all partners and cover all categories of actors involved in the financing and implementation of the GGW from local to international level and from CSOs to bilateral and multilateral organizations. It would support the initiative mainly in order to increase support and mobilize all actors. With timely meetings on key themes, the GGW platform would also be a virtual support tool designed to be a flexible and adapted action framework promoting interrelations at regional level and strengthening partnerships.

More specifically, the platform's main mission would be to offer a discussion forum accessible to all GGW relevant actors interested in forming partnerships, exchanging information on existing resource mobilization, exchanging experience and capacity development opportunities and best practice.

Analysing the policies of multilateral and bilateral donors will help identify means and procedures of accessing their funds. This relevant information will in turn give substance to the capacity development programmes that will be placed on line on the platform.

Moreover, the platform will enable the study of potential innovative approaches to support and implement the GGW. It would contain relevant information on existing financing, funding methods, the themes and priority cooperation areas of each partner, request and/or invitations to bid submission schedules, project proposal submission procedures, ongoing projects financed the main multilateral and bilateral donors under Official Development Assistance.

The dedicated GGW SLM-Finance Platform will capitalize and develop Sustainable Land Management platforms such as those created in the TerrAfrica process and at national level, for example the Sustainable Land Management platform in some countries.

Finally, the GGW platform will strengthen synergies and economies of scale by creating South-South partnerships and developing capacity to understand financial resource mobilization processes, support for the development of federal and integrated projects, identifying financing sources for their implementation, while promoting cooperation and negotiation with different financial partners at international and regional level.

7. Communication and initiative visibility

Communication is a key instrument for supporting the GGWSSI implementation, including strengthening the commitment of actors through advocacy, awareness raising and education to support resource mobilization efforts.

The overall communication strategy for the GGWSSI aims to:

- Involve all stakeholders in GGWSSI implementation and finance;
- Inform the main interest groups (African Governments, technical and financial partners, local actors in the areas of intervention of the initiative, public opinion at national African and international level) on progress and performance in implementation of GGW actions by all actors and partners, and on the results and impacts of the initiative;
- Obtain continuous political support for the initiative.

Any communication action at national, regional and international level will be based on the following messages:

- Land degradation and desertification have considerably harmful economic, social and environmental impacts in the Sahelo-Saharan region;
- The Great Green Wall Initiative for the Sahel and the Sahara aims to prevent, control and curb desertification and land degradation, mitigate the effects of drought in the Sahara and the Sahel, contribute to reducing the effects of climate change and to adaptation to climate change, while improving food security of people in these areas;
- Partnerships strengthen action by all major actors involved in combatting desertification (instead of acting alone and individually).

At national and regional levels, GGW actors could set up a core of communication experts to coordinate and harmonize communication efforts on the challenges and results of the GGWSSI. At continental level, the African Union Commission and the Pan-African Agency Responsible for

the Great Green Wall should develop and implement a joint communication plan with the support of partners and in coordination with GGW focal points.

The following communication tools could be used:

- Developing a joint website hosted by the African Union Commission and/or the Pan-African Agency responsible for the GGW, with links to websites of partners and dedicated to their specific GGWSSI activities. An information charter could be negotiated by the AUC with all the actors so that documents produced at national, regional and continental levels and all relevant GGWSSI information are posted on the joint website;
- Developing a unique and shared GGWSSI label or logo to identify activities, efforts or projects implemented under the GGWSSI. Under the leadership of the African Union Commission and in close collaboration with the Pan-African Agency Responsible for the Great Green Wall, a group of African and international experts could work on defining the “GGW” labelling criteria for Sustainable Land and Water Management projects initiated at country and international level (transboundary or joint projects), including the implementation of National Action Plans to combat desertification.
- Production of a biweekly newsletter “Les nouvelles de la Grand Muraille Verte ” by the AUC and the Pan-African Agency to exchange information on GGW implementation, the schedule of event, partners’ activities, projects, etc.
- The media – e.g. producing timely video news releases (VNR), press releases, interviews – on GGW implementation, when they are likely to get media attention.
- Producing content for communication products (e.g. videos, publications, brochures, illustrated articles, photo shoots) by organizing field trips.
- Advocacy and awareness-raising through both institutionalizing the African Arid Land Week and organizing field trips for journalists or side events during conferences such as the COPs of the different Rio conventions, the UN Conference on Environment and Sustainable Development (UNCESD), the sessions of the African Union Conference, etc.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

Formulating common goals, objectives and baseline criteria to measure progress and the exchange lessons learned among actors is at the heart of any serious multisectoral effort to improve the quality and quantity of investments. In countries and at sub-regional level, monitoring and evaluation of GGWSSI implementation should have the following functions:

- Strengthening knowledge management and benchmarking;
- Guiding the design and implementation of individual investment operations on the ground;
- Strengthening adherence and alignment around shared goals and a common vision of the GGWSSI, as well as the climate of trust between the actors.

Given the particularity of the GGWSSI and its relations with initiatives such as CAADP and CCD, it is difficult to establish a single M&E system capable of capturing the complete picture of each country, territorial community or operation. Individual project performance is better grasped by project M&E systems based on countries and local priorities. But each M&E project should have a minimum set of common strategic indicators agreed in advance. Ongoing AUC and Pan-African Agency efforts could build on the work of the CST/CCD and on the tools being developed by TerrAfrica partners and made freely available to countries, and propose a minimum set of indicators centred on the following aspects linked to National Action Plan objectives, impacts and expected outcomes:

- Improvement of the livelihoods of people likely to be affected by the DDTs process (proportion of the population in the areas concerned living above the poverty threshold);
- Maintenance or increase in ecosystem functions, including net primary productivity;
- Increase in carbon stocks (surface and soil);
- The surface area of forest, agricultural and aquacultural ecosystems under sustainable management;
- Plant and animal biodiversity.

At institutional level, all GGW actors could and should agree on a joint dialogue forum on the challenges and solutions to its implementation. Such a forum could also serve to examine progress in achieving the objectives and expected outcomes and adopt a common scoreboard. It could take the form of the annual organization of a single Steering Committee for all multi-country initiatives. The Committee would have the following responsibilities:

1. Examine and approve annual reports, work plans and budgets of different initiatives;
2. Evaluate progress in implementing the initiative and make recommendations on actions and measures to be taken to ensure achievement of the objectives and operational outcomes of the initiative;
3. Approve the initiative's progress report, to be submitted by the AUC at its Summit of Heads of State (Malabo Decision).

The Committee would be chaired by the Head of the Rural Economy and Agriculture Department of the AUC; its Vice-Chairman would be the Executif Secretary of the Pan-African Agency Responsible for the Great Green Wall and its Secretariat led by the Green Wall Coordinator based in the AUC Rural Economy and Agriculture Department.

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