



Regional Policy Coherence Analysis to Scale Up Action and Achievements of the Great Green Wall Initiative

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ClimBeR

ClimBeR seeks to address challenges to adaptation by small-holder farmers through science and innovation aimed at transforming the climate adaptation capacity of food, land, and water systems, working closely with partners at the local, national, regional, and global levels. ClimBeR focuses on generating knowledge to unlock public and private finance, foster climate- and peace-sensitive policies and backstop the Great Green Wall Initiative (GGWI), Africa's flagship programme to address climate change and desertification.



ClimBeR: Building Systemic Resilience Against Climate Variability and Extremes



Knowledge Series



SECTION 1

Context and emergence of the GGW

Context and emergence of the GGW



The GGWI is a pan-African flagship programme of the African Union (AU) that aims to restore 100 million hectares of currently degraded land stretching across 8 000 km of Africa from west to east, sequester 250 million tons of carbon, and create 10 million green jobs by 2030 across the Sahel region (UNCCD, 2020; GGW website).



Strong political will was a central driver of the GGW, which is one of the most recognized programmes on the continent and one of the largest development programmes in Africa.



The GGW is in line with the array of multilateral environmental agreements and multi-stakeholder initiatives by public, private and civil society actors that promote restoration at the international level, e.g. UNFCCC, the Convention on Biological Diversity - CBD, UNCCD, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the UN Forum on Forests (Sewell and al., 2020).



Preliminary results from the most recent GGW assessment report showed that only 4–20% of the initial land restoration target was reached by 2020 (UNCCD, 2022). The current round of the initiative (2021–2030) is therefore intended to significantly scale up interventions (Mansourian and Berrahmouni, 2021).

Objectives of the Regional Policy Coherence Analysis

In an effort to scale up action and impact of the GGW initiative, the Regional Policy Coherence Analysis aimed to:



Understand and provide an overview of the existing strategies, investment plans and approaches guiding the 11 member states of the GGW as well as the key existing continental and regional policy processes related to land restoration and sustainable land management.



Provide an overview of the existing policy framework to scale land restoration efforts in four selected GGW member countries, namely Ethiopia, Mali, Senegal, and Sudan.



Highlight the regional dynamics that constitute the main bottlenecks for the implementation of the GGW in the Sahel



Offer cross-cutting recommendations to address those bottlenecks and scale up land restoration and GGW implementation.

Existing GGW strategies, investment plans and approaches



Global Harmonized Regional Strategy in 2012: blueprint for the GGW initiative that identifies cross-cutting actions required to address a wide range of concerns.

New strategy document and a ten-year continental plan to guide the further implementation of the GGW to be released in 2023 by PAA-GGW.

The GGW Accelerator: hosted by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification since January 2021, it aims to develop a harmonized monitoring and evaluation system for GGW projects as well as contribute towards the mobilisation of funding (\$10 billion funding envelope), to support the acceleration of the GGWI initiative. The GGW Accelerator unit is hosted by the UNCCD but should be transferred permanently to the PA-GGW after an interim period of three years.

Decennial Priority Investment Plan (DPIP) 2021-2030:

- developed by the PAA-GGW to improve the approach and overall framework for mobilizing investment and financing and to facilitate the identification and control of objectives, strategic indicators, added value and impact.
- the first priority programme of the DPIP is on restoration and development of land and protection of biodiversity and constitutes the framing orientation for implementing the restoration agenda in the Sahara and Sahel.

SECTION 2

Regional agenda for land restoration and addressing desertification

Degree of political will and leadership to drive a regional agenda for land restoration and addressing desertification

Several strategies, agendas, plans and initiatives at the regional level demonstrate the political will and leadership to drive a regional agenda for land restoration and combatting desertification. The GGW is aligned with all these strategic frameworks.

THIS INCLUDES:



Agenda 2063:

The GGW initiative is a flagship programme of Agenda 2063



The African Union Green Recovery Action Plan 2021-2027:

The GGW initiative is cited under its Axis 3 “Biodiversity and Nature-Based Solutions” as one of the key initiatives aimed at combatting habitat degradation.

The Pan-African Action Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration for

Increased Resilience:

The second phase (2021-2025) focuses on launching and implementing ambitious ecosystem restoration projects and programmes to make tangible progress towards achieving the commitments and targets made by countries under various initiatives, including the GGW.

The African Forest Landscape Restoration

Initiative: The GGW contributes to and is closely aligned with the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative.

The Sustainable Forest Management Framework for

Africa 2020-2030: it highlights the GGW as a crucial opportunity for sustainable forest management.

The African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development

Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2032 and the Climate Investment Plan for the Sahel Region

2018-2030: it highlights regional flagship initiatives such as the GGW.

SECTION 3

**Focus on the Africa Union
and Regional Economic
Community policies on
Agriculture**

Focus on the Africa Union and Regional Economic Community policies on Agriculture



The adoption of the **Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in Africa, 2003 (Maputo Declaration)**, the launching of the **Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)** in the same year, and the adoption of the **Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods 2015-2025 (Malabo Declaration)** were key to the renewed focus on agriculture as the basis for development and economic transformation.

The most significant policy advance in agriculture was the commitment to allocate at least 10% of national budgetary resources for agriculture and rural development, which was articulated in the Maputo Declaration and reaffirmed in the Malabo Declaration.



Focus on the Africa Union and Regional Economic Community policies on Agriculture



The **Agricultural Policy of West African States (ECOWAP)**, COMESA Agricultural Policy and IGAD Regional Agricultural Investment Plan are in line with CAADP.

- ECOWAP adopted in 2005 contains a specific objective on “reducing food dependence and achieving food sovereignty” and recognizes that climate change poses a critical challenge to increasing agricultural productivity in West Africa while protecting the natural resources base (ECOWAS Commission, 2005).



Focus on the Africa Union and Regional Economic Community policies on Agriculture



- The COMESA Agricultural Policy aims to achieve the twin objectives of sustainable food security and enhanced regional integration. It includes a commitment to promote sustainable agricultural practices through technologies that include soil conservation measures and the optimal use of fertilizers (ASFA, 2020).



Focus on the Africa Union and Regional Economic Community policies on Agriculture



- The IGAD Regional Agricultural Investment Plan objectives include intensifying sustainable production systems and supporting the capacity development of actors along value chains. Among the strategic interventions for the investment priority area on increasing food production and reducing hunger is “increased use of high technology inputs, especially improved seeds, fertilizers and other agrochemicals (herbicides, etc.)” (ASFA, 2020).

SECTION 4

Supporting GGW objectives

The AU Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2032) and how it supports the GW objectives



The AU Climate Change Strategy is providing key enabling environment linkages at the regional level between the scaling of land restoration and protecting land-based ecosystems, strengthening climate action, and supporting food system transformation under a changing climate.



The Strategy aims at enhancing the resilience of food systems against climate effects, while emphasising nutritional outcomes and integrated planning, also emphasising production towards agro-ecological transition to reduce GHG intensity (including methane and other gases), and the reduction of dependencies on external inputs (AU, 2022).

The AU Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2032) and how it supports the GW objectives



The Strategy also recommends conducting a systematic review of existing policies, strategies, and incentive mechanisms that support/inhibit transitions to sustainable food systems and to develop synergies across sectoral planning and investments in infrastructure and related investments (AU, 2022).



It also aims at aligning food system visions and targets with other national strategies and commitments (for example, NDCs, UNCCD net-zero land degradation targets, AFR100 and CBD biodiversity frameworks, SDGs, and national development plans) (AU, 2022).

The AU Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2032) and how it supports the GW objectives



The Strategy highlights several priority actions for protecting land-based ecosystems and carbon sinks, including building technical capacity for implementing and investing in regenerative and biodiversity-positive agricultural systems across the region, the removal of perverse incentives that lead to destructive activities (e.g., fossil fuel subsidies) and encouraging nature-positive activities/ecosystem-based approaches.

SECTION 5

Policy coherence at regional level

Policy coherence at regional level



Overall, most strategies, agendas, plans, and initiatives are coherent between themselves, and the level of incoherence is rather at the level of interpretation of these policies and implementation on the ground (personal communication with Elvis Tangem, 2022).

Policy coherence at regional level



There is inherent tension within Agenda 2063, CAADP and some REC' agricultural policies between the commitment to sustainable agricultural practices that preserve the integrity of ecosystems, on the one hand, and on the other hand, the vision of modernisation and commercialisation of agriculture that pushes for adoption of technologies that contribute to soil and environmental degradation and increase greenhouse gas emissions, such as the use of tractors in ploughing and the application of herbicides and chemical fertilizers (ASFA, 2020). The RECs articulate common principles to be considered in national policy designs, so these same issues may be replicated at national level in the different GGW member states.



Policy coherence at regional level



The AU Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2032) highlighted that the CAADP and National Agricultural Investment Plans (NAIP) did not sufficiently address adaptation to climate change (AU, 2022). To address this issue, the New Partnership for Africa's Development Planning and Coordinating Agency and the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture of the AU Commission have established a framework for the CAADP agenda for adaptation to climate change and are building capacity to support Member States in developing climate-friendly NAIPs and apply climate-smart agricultural methods.

Policy coherence at regional level



The ECOWAS Climate Strategy has been criticised because it was expected to develop a more aggressive and ambitious sub-regional climate mitigation commitment for reducing GHGs, particularly from agriculture, forestry, and land use, and promoting significant renewable energy technology development and deployment (Jeffang, 2022). The Strategy does not specifically address the problems caused by climate change in the region and rather focuses on bureaucratic issues such as partnership and competence building (Jeffang, 2022).

SECTION 6

Policy context and policy coherence for addressing land degradation and targeting land restoration



Ethiopia

- Ethiopia has launched **several national and regional initiatives to address climate change** and has institutionalized its climate change response in the form of a green growth economy that emphasises increasing agricultural productivity, ending poverty, and achieving middle income status.
- **The Climate Resilient and Green Economy Strategy**, launched in 2011, anchors the climate change policy framework and has placed emphasis on conservation, land restoration and climate change in the agriculture sector.
- **Sustainable Land Management Plan (SLMP)-I (2008-2013) and SLMP II (2014-2019)** helped to restore productive capacity and build resilient livelihoods in Ethiopia's highlands but had very little relevance to the arid and semi-arid pastoral areas of Afar and Somali regions that fall under the GGW geographic sphere.



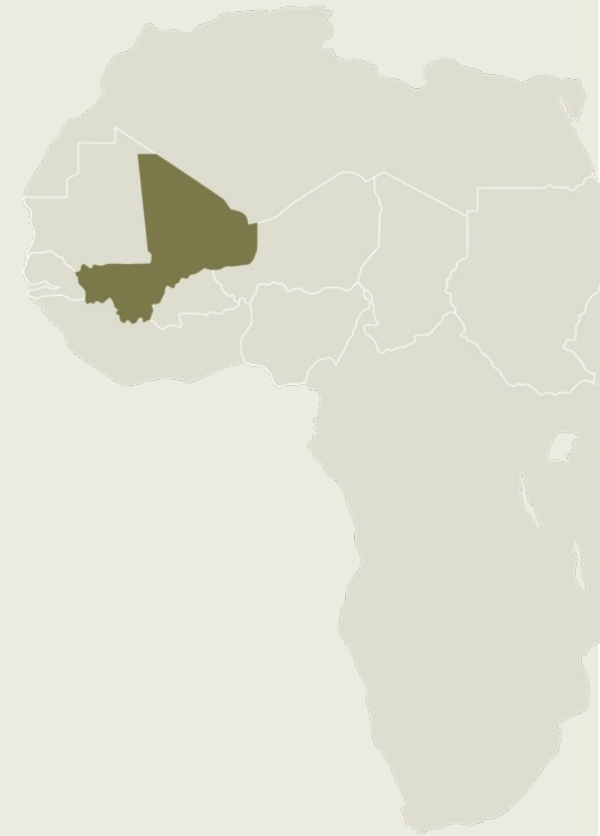
Ethiopia

- **The launch of the Green Legacy Campaign** demonstrates political willingness to contribute to the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030.
- **The Growth and Transformation Plan 2016-2020**, the 2002 National Food Security Programme and the Agriculture Sector Strategy 2020-2030 all emphasize restoration and the conservation of natural resources.
- However, **policies related to land degradation**, land use, environment and climate change lack coherence and an efficient coordination mechanism to produce more measurable outcomes.

- In Mali, national efforts to implement the **UNCCD constitute the historical benchmark for sustainable land management (SLM) policies**. A national action programme was adopted in 1998 for the implementation of the UNCCD but has proven ineffective to reach the UNCCD goals due to a lack of vision, reference data and indicators.
- **The government initiated the Sustainable Land Management (SLM) Action Plan and Strategic Investment Framework for Sustainable Land Management (CSI-GDT) in 2010**. The CSI-GDT has informed the Strategic Framework for Economic Recovery and Sustainable Development 2019-2023, supporting environmentally sound development in the country and setting land degradation neutrality targets for the country.

**Mali**

- **Several existing policies and strategies related to the environment are expected to contribute to the achievement of land degradation neutrality in the country by 2030**, including the National Environmental Protection Policy (1998), the National Forest Policy (2017), the National Sanitation Policy (2009), the National Policy on Climate Change (2011), the National Drought Plan 2021-2025, the National Wetlands Policy (2003), the Strategy for Safeguarding and Integrated Management of River Niger Resources, the Investment Strategy for Sustainable Land Management and the National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy (2016).
- Overall, Mali has a **coherent and integrated vision of addressing environmental concerns** through the mainstreaming of land degradation, restoration, sustainable agro-sylvo-pastoral resource management and climate change in the countries' sectoral policies, strategies, and plans.



Mali

Senegal



- In Senegal, the **Emerging Senegal Plan** is the central social and economic development framework document. Senegal has clearly defined its priorities in terms of the restoration of degraded lands. Land degradation is dealt with in a cross-sectoral manner and there are several legal instruments that contribute to the effective management of the problem, including the country's Nationally Determined Contribution, and the National Forest Policy 2005-2025.

Senegal

Senegal also has a national strategic investment framework for land restoration and management that was revised to better align with the Emerging Senegal Plan objectives, including:

- **The policy letter for environment and sustainable development (LPD/SEDD).**
- **The Agro-Sylvo-Pastoral Orientation Law** which emanated from the national domain law and served basis for the development of medium-term operational programmes such as the National Agricultural Development Programme and the National Pastoral Development Plan.
- **The national land laws** (national domain law), and related decrees.
- **Sectoral laws** (water code, hunting and wildlife code, mining code, forestry code, environmental code) that also contribute to SLM and land restoration (Ndiaye, pers. Com 2022).





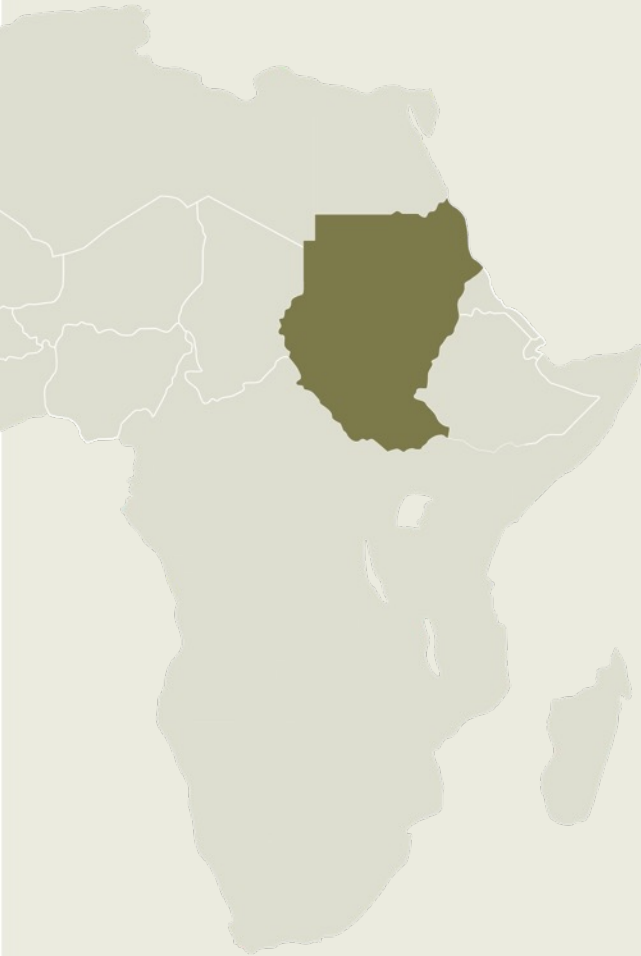
Senegal

- Senegal has created funds to finance SLM such as the **National Agricultural and Agrifood Research Fund** and the **National Agrosylvopastoral Development Fund**.
- Overall, Senegal has a **coherent and integrated vision of addressing environmental** concerns through the mainstreaming of land degradation, restoration, sustainable agro-sylvo-pastoral resources management, and climate change into the country's sectoral policies, strategies, and plans.



Sudan

- In Sudan, **land degradation is not strongly prioritised in national and state level development frameworks** and there is a lack of a clear policy to combat land degradation.
- Despite the existence of **Comprehensive National Strategies (1992-2002 and 2003-2027)** promoting sustainable resource use and management, appropriate and coherent policies for sustainable natural resource management and for addressing existing inequalities in access to land and natural resources are not currently in place.



Sudan

- **The Agriculture Strategy and Action Plan** supports the expansion of mechanized farming for agricultural development. There is lack of clarity over the semi-mechanized farming sector, with some policy recommendations made by the study “Sustainable Development of the Semi Mechanized Farming Sector in Sudan” prepared for the Government of Sudan and sponsored by the World Bank administered Multi Donor Trust Fund that have not been implemented because of resistance from big landholders.

SECTION 7

Bottlenecks

Key common bottlenecks observed in the Sahara and Sahel region for the implementation of the Great Green Wall



Political bottlenecks

1. Lack of harmonized mainstreaming of land restoration across sectors and jurisdictions.
2. Conflicting policy orientations (e.g., between the promotion of “modernized” agriculture and agroecology).
3. Absence of a specific legal, regulatory, policy or strategic framework for agroforestry in the countries, together with the lack of systematic integration of agroforestry into forestry, agricultural or livestock policies.
4. Insecure land tenure and unclear land rights.
5. Bias against pastoralists in existing land policies.

Key common bottlenecks observed in the Sahara and Sahel region for the implementation of the Great Green Wall



Governance and institutional bottlenecks

1. Internal dysfunction in the governance and regional coordination of the GGW initiative.
2. Lack of sufficient capacity in the national GGW agencies or focal points and national governments in terms of technical knowledge, capacity to generate bankable projects and address the complex and demanding requirements set by financial institutions.
3. Lack of a stable institutional infrastructure with a clear mandate to drive implementation of the GGW, together with uncertain and overlapping institutional mandates.
4. Lack of coordination between the GGW and other land restoration activities and programmes.
5. Incomplete decentralisation processes limiting the effectiveness of local institutions, including those in charge of land management.
6. Lack of involvement of local populations and non-state stakeholders.

Key common bottlenecks observed in the Sahara and Sahel region for the implementation of the Great Green Wall



Resources constraints, especially the slow and insufficient release of funds from donors and difficulties in accessing the various climate funds.



Lack of gender and youth consideration in natural resource, land and environment policy formulation and implementation.



Physical infrastructure constraints such as insufficient irrigation systems in moisture-stressed areas.



Local dynamics linked to instability and political unrest.



Weak monitoring and evaluation due to:

1. Scarcity of monitoring and evaluation expertise in the region
2. Absence of a common framework and corresponding system to monitor, verify and report on GGW progress and achievements.
3. Insufficient resources for developing long-term measurement, reporting and verification capacities.

SECTION 8

Opportunities and recommendations to improve the enabling policy and institutional environment and ensure that the ambitions for the Great Green Wall are realized



Promote Great Green Wall institutionalisation at the highest political level and enhance multi-level implementation and governance arrangements across scales while balancing security and development priorities.



Support policy reforms and policy harmonisation efforts, including developing and operationalizing agroforestry policy, addressing security of land and tree tenure, and promoting a decentralized approach to the use and management of natural resources.



Strengthen institutional governance through clarifying the various institutional mandates and setting a clear mandate to drive the implementation of the Great Green Wall; setting up multi-actor, multi-sector coordination mechanisms around the objectives of the Great Green Wall; and increasing the capacity of stakeholders.



Mobilize finance from public and private sources to support the acceleration of land restoration through the Great Green Wall, including leveraging opportunities with multilateral and bilateral stakeholders; and promoting a market-based approach with investment in small and medium-sized farms and strengthening commercially viable tree crop value chains.



Strengthen community participation and decision making, including by youths and women through grounded consultation and co-design with communities; and securing a youth-oriented agenda focused on protecting future generations by involving youths in policy formulation.



Develop monitoring and evaluation learning mechanisms, with the support of the Great Green Wall Accelerator, and



Invest in physical infrastructure (e.g., irrigation systems) in moisture-stressed areas.

Conclusion

- With the **GGW now in its second decade of implementation**, there is a need to accelerate impact and address institutional, policy and implementation gaps.
- **This policy coherence analysis has sought to highlight challenges and opportunities at the regional and national levels**, focusing on four GGW member countries (Ethiopia, Mali, Senegal, and Sudan). Key bottlenecks have been highlighted and a series of recommendations presented to support GGW ambitions.
- **Concerted action is required to improve policy coherence and coordination**, which will in turn drive enhanced impact and support the mobilisation of funding for the further scaling of regional and national GGW actions.





Place contact details here.