The Great Green Wall Observatory: A Multipurpose Digital Platform

In 2007, the African Union initiated the Great Green Wall (GGW) Initiative in 11 countries: Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, Chad, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Djibouti. Today this effort is spearheaded by the Pan-African Agency for the GGW (PAGGW). In 2021, a new framework was proposed by the GGW Accelerator to monitor the progress of this ambitious program in collaboration with the PAGGW. The mobilization of adapted tools for its implementation is crucial in tracking and achieving the GGW goals to restore 100M hectares of land, create 10M jobs, and sequester 250M tCO2e emissions.

Why the Great Green Wall Observatory?

The GGW Observatory is the first multi-stakeholder, multipurpose digital solution to monitor the progress of the GGW Initiative. It is supported in the back end by a Project Management Platform for the Great Green Wall from which all of its data is aggregated to compile meaningful analysis and visualizations. The GGW Observatory allows registered users to collect, report, and aggregate committed financial resources and reported results against the GGW Harmonized Results Management Framework. The platform displays analyzed data with visualizations in a central and publicly available format in four portfolios:

- The Legacy Projects Portfolio (prior to 2018),
- The One Planet Summit Projects Portfolio (a donor-approved project database for pledges)
- The United Nations Agencies' Projects Portfolio (excluding OPS projects), and
- The Complimentary GGW Projects Portfolio (i.e., civil-society projects).

The platform provides cutting-edge solutions for GGW parties to showcase data on the respective projects, best practices, and scalable knowledge generated by communities, governments, and stakeholders across the 11 GGW countries. It also provides local communities, businesses, civil society, and advocacy groups with evidence to plan and mobilize resources to participate and advocate for accountable and transparent interventions.

With funding from
Austrian Development Cooperation

Features of the Project Management Platform

The GGW Project Management Platform is designed to highlight data from the GGW initiative for different portfolios, donors, and countries.

Currently, the most prominent ones are the One Planet Summit pledges from eight donors: the World Bank, European Commission, African Development Bank, Green Climate Fund, Global Environment Facility, European Investment Bank, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, and Agence Française de Développement. To best showcase this data, the system has a log-in solution and a publicly accessible dashboard: the GGW Observatory.

The GGW Observatory is a project management system with limited user access that houses key project financial and impact data. Focal persons from country GGW Agencies and Technical and Financial Partners will use password-protected accounts to enter project financial and reporting data. Aggregate data will be viewed through the publicly accessible dashboard and disaggregated by country, donor, and pillars.

The GGW Observatory's objective is to facilitate access to GGW data to all stakeholders (front line communities, academia, industry, and governments) worldwide. The dashboard also provides a repository for geospatial maps and best practices documented by the projects and can be accessed through the link (www.ggwobservatory.org) or by scanning the QRcode. Four functionalities of the Project Management Platform are:

1. Donor data

This page is a summary of the donor pledges by country and pillars. The donor page consists of specific donor profile pages for the six main donors. The eight individual donor GGW profiles showcase the total commitments disaggregated by countries, pillars, and projects. Individual donor profile pages are downloadable as PDFs.

2. Country data

The country data page is a summary of the GGW pledges disaggregated by donor, country, and pillar. The "countries" page consists of specific country GGW profile pages for the six main donors. The 11 individual donor profile pages are a summary of total commitments disaggregated by donors, pillars, and projects. Individual donor profile pages are downloadable as PDFs.

3. Results

The results page is a summary of the outcomes and outputs of GGW interventions in line with the GGW Harmonized Results Framework. The results page is custom-made to provide an up-to-date summary of the following data that is disaggregated by country, donor, pillar, and project:

- Number of hectares of land under
- restoration,
  Number of carbon dioxide equivalents
- sequestered and/or mitigated,
  Number of employment opportunities
- created,
  Quantity of renewable energy consumed
- annually, and
  Number of GGW beneficiaries.

4. Geospatial services

This functionality involves high-level data

exploration features for users, with visualizations in the form of maps. The system allows overlapping of project data with satellite imagery to track changes in landscape and tree cover and estimate carbon dioxide sequestration.

The Great Green Wall Harmnized Results Management Framework (HRMF)

It is worth noting that the Great Green Wall Accelerator (GGWA) has defined an approach towards project-based monitoring targeting macro-level results referred to as GGW Core Indicators measuring:

- Number of jobs created (direct beneficiaries),
- Number of hectares under land and ecosystemic restoration,
- Number of MWh produced annually,
- Quantity of carbon sequestered and/or mitigated,
- Number of total GGW beneficiaries (indirect beneficiaries).

Further, the HRMF is clustered around five pillars, 20 pillar indicators, and 43 sub-pillar indicators. Each of the GGW countries has selected indicator priority indicators for tracking and reporting until 2030.

Pillar 1: Investment in small and medium-sized farms and strengthening of value chains, local markets, organization of exports.
Pillar 2: Land restoration and sustainable management of ecosystems.
Pillar 3: Climate resilient infrastructures and access to renewable energy.
Pillar 4: Favorable economic and institutional framework for effective governance, sustainability, stability, and security.
Pillar 5: Capacity building.

Opportunities for scaling the GGW Observatory

The use of the GGW Observatory has immense opportunities for scaling within Africa and other regions globally. Numerous global commitments were made to meet climate change mitigation goals and often without a mechanism for monitoring and holding countries accountable to their pledges. The platform has the capacity for scaling to track the commitments made during the Africa Climate Summit 2023, the 28th Conference of Parties of the UNFCCC, and the Southern Great Green Wall of the Kalahari and Namib Deserts.

About the Great Green Wall Observatory

In 2021, the GGWA, hosted by the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD was created to monitor funding and results of the GGW Initiative. In 2023, UNCCD contracted a firm to develop and roll out the platform as a monitoring system to inform local, national, and regional programming, with support from the Austrian Development Agency. The platform is designed to overcome challenges identified in the GGW Implementation Status and Way ahead to 2030 Report, published in September 2020 by the UNCCD in partnership with the Pan African Agency of the Great Green Wall (PAGGW). The report identified four key challenges in the implementation of GGW namely: i) governance and institutional weakness, ii) monitoring and reporting, iii) funding (both domestic and local private sector contributions), and iv) technical challenges and tree survival.