GGW Accelerator

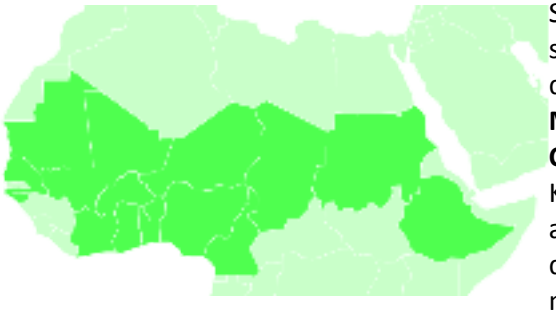
Accelerating SDGs growing a World Wonder

Supporting the Great Green Wall strategy towards 2030

The GGW Accelerator Strategy

Accelerating SDGs growing a world wonder

Strengthening, accelerating, and improving the implementation of the Great Green Wall in order to scale up rehabilitation and restoration activities over the coming decade by creating a structured approach mobilizing finance : a (re)new(ed) shared vision and common ambition towards 2030



Since 2007, the Great Green Wall Initiative stakeholders have comitted to achieve a common dream : growing over 11 countries (**Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, Chad, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti**) a 7000 Km long world wonder, fully aligned with the achievement of the 2030 sustainable development goals. Since then, close to 20 millions hectares were restored and 350 000 jobs created. Many lessons have been learned and as of 2020, the GGW Initiative is well into its second decade and has evolved into **an African-led pioneer initiative**, which receives strong support from the international community as a flagship programme **to combat land degradation, desertification, drought, climate change, biodiversity loss, poverty and food insecurity.**

The Great Green Wall is much more than a tree-planting program, it is an integrated ecosystem management approach, striving for a mosaic of different land use and production systems, including sustainable dryland management and restoration, the regeneration of natural vegetation as well as water retention and conservation measures. Whereas land degradation can occur in all climatic zones, **dryland regions are particularly vulnerable,** as they face a combination of physical challenges, including water scarcity and irregular precipitation, and critical demographic issues such as poverty, food insecurity and over-exploitation of natural resources due to unsustainable land use practices. Consequently, **the Sahel is among world's regions most severely affected by land degradation and desertification**, having experienced recurrent severe droughts and deterioration of soil quality and vegetation cover in the last decades. **Food, water and energy insecurity are major development barriers**, and communities are frequently exposed to environmental hazards, particularly drought.

The Great Green Wall is not anymore a dream, but a **growing reality that needs support, coordination, and method** in order accelerate action and achieve its goals by 2030 : **this is the purpose of the GGW Accelerator.**

The ambition to achieve by 2030 is :

- ➔ 100 million hectares restored
- ➔ 250 million tons of CO2 stored
- ➔ 10 million jobs created in rural areas

The GGW accelerator will enhance the mobilization of a $10Billions envelope, supporting the acceleration of the Great Green Wall Initiative through a multi-actors and structured approach based on 5 pillars :

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

1 common approach - 5 pillars - plenty of impacts

- Develop, protect and restore arable lands, one of the most precious goods offered by nature
- Develop economic opportunities for youth in the Sahel countries, one of world most dynamic areas demographically
- Develop food security in one of the region the most affected by malnutrition
- Develop and strengthen resilience in one of the world most vulnerable regions to the consequences of global warming
- Build a great wonder of the modern world over 8000 km across the African continent

The Great Green Wall (GGW) Accelerator **will build on and support the existing Great Green Wall institutions, entities and processes**. The overarching goal is to accelerate the realization of the GGW ambitions by 2030, as listed above, by supporting the GGW partners in accessing the full range of funding sources and options.

The first objective is to link up **more effectively the already available financing sources with the available project opportunities**. This requires sound coordination among current project generators, funders, implementors and beneficiaries under the GGW program. The second objective is to **record and bring in new sources of funds for the GGW program**. This involves both proper **tracking of ongoing activities** of multilateral and bilateral ODA partners that may already support the GGW objectives as well as **mobilizing additional financial resources** from private and public sources for GGW implementation.

The GGW multi-actors accelerator **needs is estimated at around 10 billion USD and aims to consolidate initial efforts and enhance the mobilization** of multiple national and international financial institutions, including the GCF and the GEF, WB, AFDB, IFAD, EC, bilateral donors, UN entities, GEF and GCF implementing agencies, the private sector as well as regional economic commissions, to invest in and support countries in implementing the GGW activities in the GGW areas of intervention. **It will ensure a more coordinated support to the existing GGW member states, structures and institutions**.

Contents :

Part I: The main stakes of the GGW Great Green Wall

The evolution of the vision and main objectives of the Great Green Wall

The Great Green Wall is **a pan-African initiative to restore and sustainably manage land in the Sahel-Saharan region in order to address both land degradation and poverty**. It was first envisioned in the late 80's by President Thomas Sankara and his peers, but it is only in 2005 that it became a formal project led by the former President of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, and strongly supported by President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal. In 2007 the Initiative gained momentum when the African Union Declaration 137 VIII was adopted, approving the "Decision on the Implementation of the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel Initiative" (AU 2007) (from here on referred to as GGW).

Endorsed in 2007 by the African Union (AU), **the GGWI is one of the earliest international land restoration initiatives that brings together African countries and international partners, under the leadership of the African Union (AU) and Pan-African Agency of the Great Green Wall (PAA).** A broad set of African and international partners are involved in the initiative through project implementation and development, or through the funding of several ongoing and future projects in all GGW countries. The aim of the GGW was originally to create a 15 km wide and 7,000 km long tree barrier across eleven countries of the Sahel[1]. **Since then, the project evolved : it isn't anymore a trees planting programme and the concerned area was broaden to respect ecosystemic constraints and support the creation of areas of development following agroecological principles.** Indeed, today it addresses both poverty and land degradation, to boost food security and support local communities to adapt to climate change at the scale of each of the 11 countries participating to the project**. Endorsed by the African Union in 2007 as a game-changer in Africa's drylands, the initiative aims to transform the lives of millions of people by creating a mosaic of green and productive landscapes across Sahel and the Horn.**

This truly Pan-African movement is now being supported by a number of countries across Africa as well as international partners and donors under the political auspices of the African Union. The GGW initiative is coordinated by the Pan-African Agency for the Great Green Wall, with its Secretariat in Nouakchott, Mauritania. **The objectives of the Great Green Wall by 2030[2] are to:**

- **Restore 100 million hectares of actually degraded land,**
- **Sequester 250 million tons of carbon,**
- **Create 10 million jobs**

In addition, the completion of the Great Green Wall by 2030[3] brings hope to:

- **Improve food security for 20 million people**
- **Support the millions of people living in communities across the Sahel**
- **Provide access to 10 million smallholder farmers to agricultural technologies resilient to climate change**

The Great Green Wall initiative contributes to 15 out of 17 SDGs, with direct contributions to six, and indirect links to another nine of the goals. The direct contribution are related to SDG 15 on the protection, restoration and sustainable use of ecosystems, SDG1, SDG2 and SDG8 on poverty alleviation, improving food security and decent economic growth through the creation of income

[1] Burkina Faso, Chad, Eritrea, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan
[2] https://www.greatgreenwall.org/2030ambition
[3] UN Climate Change Newsroom, 2015. Great Green Wall: 'Growing A World Wonder'. Restoring the Productivity and Vitality of the Sahel Region.
http://newsroom.unfccc.int/lpaa/resilience/great-green-wall-growing-a-world-wonder-restoring-the-productivity-and-vitality-of-the-sahel-region/

generating activities based on the sustainable production (SDG12) of non-timber and agro-pastoral products. The GGWI also has a strong climate action component (SDG13), with the different SLM activities not only increasing countries' resilience and adaptive capacities to extreme climate events, but also contributing to climate change mitigation through their carbon sequestration potential.

A 5 years cycle approach

In 2012, the GGW Initiative adopted a Harmonized Regional Strategy[4] (HRS), that consolidated national strategies of the GGW member states and arrived at **a coordinated approach for implementation, structured into five-year planning steps.** Drawing on the HRS, member countries have elaborated **National Action Plans** to develop clear steps for the implementation of the GGW national objectives.

The first cycle, 2011-2015[5], aimed at the establishment of the institutional and organizational framework of the GGW structures, the conceptualization, the awareness and the appropriation of the concept, as well as the establishment of **pilot activities at the level of each country**.

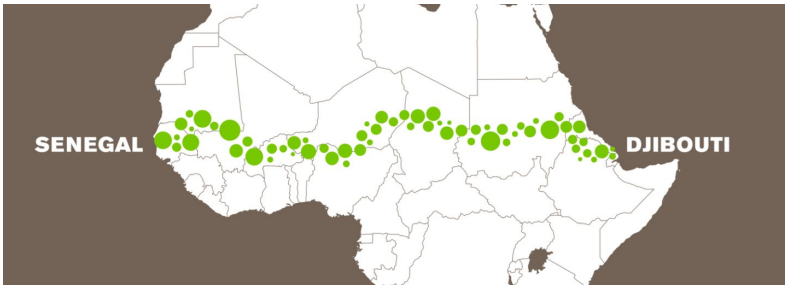
The second cycle 2016-2020[6] focused more on operational activities and aimed at **accelerating concrete actions**, so that 2020 is a good point in time to look backwards and assess what has been achieved so far.

The third cycle from 2021-2025 is expected to consolidate the activities and measures that have been implemented.

Finally, **the fourth cycle 2026-2030** would allow a **substantial contribution of the GGW to the achievement of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and to other international commitments of the member states under Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) such as the Rio Conventions (UNCCD, UNFCCC and CBD).

The elaboration of the GGW strategy 2021-2025 will take into account Agenda 2063, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, as well as all the national plans and strategies related to the GGW activities.

The Great Green Wall implementation status



The GGW Accelerator will work on the 11 countries regarding the importance of regional integration. For the first and second phase, the Great Green Wall Initiative **intervention zone** has corresponded to the entire geographical fringe of the Sahara between **the isohyet 100 mm and 400 mm** of average rainfall (PAA 2018).

[4] http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/europeanunion/pdf/harmonized_strategy_GGWSSI-EN_.pdf
[5] https://www.grandemurailleverte.org/index.php/plan-action/planification/plan-d-action-2011-2015
[6] https://www.grandemurailleverte.org/index.php/plan-action/planification/plan-d-action-2016-2020

Combining the intervention zones reported by the eleven Sub-Saharan GGW member states, the total area of the GGW initiative extends to 152 million ha, with the largest intervention zones located in Niger, Nigeria, Mali, Ethiopia and Eritrea[7].

Country	GGW intervention area (ha)	Source
Burkina Faso	9 270 900 (10 967 400)	PAA 2018 (as per Country data Dakar 2019)
Chad	3 000 000	PAA 2018
Djibouti	342 826	PAA 2018
Eritrea	12 432 000	PAA 2018
Ethiopia	13 150 194	Country data Dakar 2019
Mali	44 419 000	Country data Dakar 2019
Mauritania	n/a	n/a
Niger	2 250 000 47 250 000	PAA 2018 Country data Dakar 2019
Nigeria	17 417 200	Country data Dakar 2019
Senegal	817 500	PAA 2018
Sudan Sudan	2 280 000	PAA 2018
TOTAL	~ 152 000 000	(Rounded to the million)

Table 1 - GGW intervention area per country (source: UNCCD)

Within this intervention area, the land rehabilitation activities reported by GGW countries between 2007 and 2019 add **up to 20 millions ha.**

In most of the GGWI member states **several achievements have been recorded, with some countries being more successful than others**. As matter of fact, some countries have started the implementation of the GGW activities since 2007, while others have started as late as in 2014, when the GGW declaration was ratified. The disparities between the restoration achievements of different countries are also due to **country-specific conditions** which are slowing down the implementation process of the planned activities.

However, **despite these progresses, the impacts related to climate change keep increasing in the region and it not counter balanced by the actual pace of implementation of the GGW activities.**

[7] Intervention areas in Burkina Faso and Niger are subject to confirmation by countries, as they do not coincide between the two sources used.

Barriers in implementing the GGW Initiative

The main barriers and challenges identified during the elaboration of the strategy 2016-2020, and based on the analysis of the implementation of the harmonized strategy 2011-2015, were initially:

- Institutional, regularly and governance: leading to heavy procurement processes;
- National and international resource mobilization, including financial;
- Sub-optimum use of financial resources, resulting in limited impact, due to a disconnect between the different interventions, actors and scales of actions;
- Insufficient capacity, in particular technical;
- Need to strengthen political support

A more recent re-evaluation of the implementation status of the GGW and key barriers of the GGW highlighted the following barriers:

1) **Insufficient income generation in rural areas, due to the original vision of the GGW, which was originally focused on planting trees rather than a more holistic approach. This resulted in:**
    - Insufficient investment capacity in agricultural production activities and sustainable value chains;
    - Insufficient connection with, and dynamisms of local and national markets;
    - Insufficient technical knowledge;
    - Challenges in structuring and empowering SMEs;
    - Going beyond traditional grant-based and short-term development intervention is challenging;
    - Country risks: Currently, the majority of the GGW countries show high to even severe country risks;

2) **Technical barriers, which compile lack of knowledge and techniques to sustainably manage fragile ecosystems**
    - Scale issue: the nature of the restoration projects to finance is generally small in size, challenging to implement in practice, and also too small to be attractive to institutional investors;
    - Weak monitoring of the economic returns, whereas they can be substantive and have huge impacts, for example on food security;
    - More sustainable alternatives are not known or not easily accessible;
    - Overall insufficient, unpredictable, and insecure funding situation;

3) **Infrastructure:** Long-term low investment has created a legacy of insufficient physical infrastructure (irrigation systems, access to renewable energy, climate resilient roads....) that holds back development efforts;

4) **Institutional , governance and regularly barriers**, including :
    - Growing but still insufficient high-level political support for the environmental agenda;
    - Weak organizational structures and processes for the implementation of the GGW;
    - Difficulties of most GGW countries in establishing the required governance and project structure for attracting finance resources, implementing and reporting;
    - Insufficient mainstreaming of environmental issues into the different sector strategies, policies (including local) and action plans;
    - Weak involvement of farmer organizations;

5) **Insufficient capacity:**
   - Insufficient technical knowledge;
   - Insufficient coordination, exchanges and flow of information between the regional, national and local levels;
   - Limited absorption capacity, limiting the size of projects and pace of implementation;
   - Insufficient capacity to generate bankable projects and programs;
   - Complex and demanding requirements set by environmental financial institutions create major hurdles;
   - Monitoring, Reporting, Verification (MRV) is a major bottleneck to the implementation of the GGW Initiative. In particular: scarcity of monitoring and evaluation expertise in the region; absence of a common framework and corresponding system(s) to monitor, verify and report on GGW progresses and achievements (GIS/bio-physical changes, financial flows, etc), including projects and programs which have different geographical and administrative scales of implementation; absence of a single entity responsible for monitoring the progress of all GGW counterparts; insufficient resources for developing long term (in line with timeline horizon of land restoration activities) MRV capacities.

Furthermore, the covid-19 crisis is amplifying those barriers.

The post-covid situation and urgency to act now

Providing support to Africa is even more critical at this moment in time, when the continent is being highly impacted by the coronavirus outbreak, with devastating risks ahead. Local health systems have limited capacity to monitor and cope with the pandemic and weak institutions have no political, budgetary or economic shock absorbers to withstand the impact of a health crisis, declining revenue, collapsing social services. **The humanitarian crisis is particularly severe in Africa's Sahel region, one of the poorest areas of the world suffering a series of tensions and conflicts.**

Healthier diets, a key outcome of more resilient and sustainable food systems, would support stronger immune systems and diminish the impact of crises like COVID-19. Sustainable food systems would also reduce income inequality, which is a strong multiplier of the negative effects of pandemics. A smaller footprint on the planet and better climate resilience as a result of more sustainable food systems would limit negative interactions between ecological, animal and human health.

Food security has been recognised as an intrinsic element of health resilience and civil protection. High rates of malnutrition and infectious diseases, together with a weak state of health system and infrastructure, could have severe health impacts. **The breakdown of supply chains may make it difficult for SSA countries to access food and necessary medical supplies, putting food security and health at a high level of risk.** Border closures and restrictions on travel, transport and economic activities, the exogenous drop in global demand and commodities prices, the loss in commodity exports and the decline in tourism will negatively affect the already fragile economy of the region, which is likely to deteriorate significantly.

Additionally, the **global coronavirus pandemic intersects with the topics on climate change, which brings the need to accelerate sustainable investments**, especially in the energy sector, through a significant push on renewable sources.

Part II: Key elements on the the GGW accelerator

The GGW accelerator structured approach is based on 5 pillars :

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– Favourable economic and institutional framework for effective governance, sustainability, stability and security

Pillar 5 – Capacity building

Objective

As of early 2020, around 20 Mha land is under restoration or has been rehabilitated in the Great Green Wall member states. **To reach a total area of 100 Mha by 2030, it is necessary to significantly increase the pace of land restoration (1.8 Mha/year on average) to 8.5 Mha annually. This is the purpose of the GGW Accelerator.**

With the shift in focus of the GGWI **from tree-planting to a more comprehensive rural development, including improving the production systems that underpin livelihoods of smallholder farmers and pastoralist communities to increase food security, create jobs, boost local economy, through sustainable land management, countries are now tackling systemic challenges in an integrated and holistic manner for long-term sustainability of the entire Sahel region.** As countries in the Sahel continue to advance their collective vision under the GGWI, the need for stronger support and engagement by development partners, International Financing Institutions, and the private sector remains apparent. **This is not only critical for harnessing emerging technologies and innovations, but also for promoting policy options that unlock market opportunities and capital for scaling up.** Financial needs for impact at scale are estimated to average between $40–130 million per country annually. This will require the mobilization of more resources from a range of sources domestically and internationally, including Multilateral Development Banks, special financing mechanisms such as the GEF, the Least Developed Countries Fund, and the Green Climate Fund, as well as bilateral partners, Civil Society Organizations, and the private sector[8].

The GGW Accelerator is mobilizing all the GGW Partners for the 2021-2025 cycle to **strengthen, accelerate, and improve the implementation of the Great Green Wall** in order to scale up rehabilitation and restoration activities over the coming decade by creating a structured approach mobilizing finance : a (re)new(ed) shared vision and common ambition towards 2030.

Built on 5 essential pillars, the GGW Accelerator will provide **a more comprehensive mapping of the available fundings, and projects in need of fundings**, **monitoring and evaluating** the impact of the fundede projects, in order to follow up more precisely on the progresses of the GGWI.

[8] https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/publications/gef_great_green_wall_initiative_august_2019_EN_0.pdf

Description of the GGW accelerator structured approach

The GGW accelerator is based on **5 pillars that aims to set up an organisational and a financial framework to build on the progress and best practices** achieved since 2007 within the GGW and to identify **transformational approaches to better support countries in accelerating the implementation of actions** prioritized in their national development plans and strategies, contributing to the objectives of the GGW initiative.

The **transboundary nature** of the GGW accelerator is essential, because of the **cross countries realities on the ground**. In particular, some factors are involved as a direct consequence to the land degradation and biodiversity loss in the region :

- pastoralist practices (an important factor in land degradation in the Sahel)
- shared water resources
- connections to local and regional markets
- political instabilities and security issues
- rural depopulation/migration

Restoration interventions in the GGW are implemented **at the landscape scale,** and reinforcing land uses and production systems (e.g. forests, agroforestry, croplands, grasslands, and pastoral and fishery systems). **They involve many sectors and groups of actors, and put communities – and their livelihoods – at the center of each project**. Restoration must be understood, planned and tackled along **the entire value chain**, from land management and seed preservation, to end products and markets. Restoration success requires the following conditions:

- supportative policies
- good governance
- sufficient technical, operational and financial capacities
- incentives for communities to sustain their actions
- and continuous monitoring and learning

During the first and second cycle of implementation of the GGWI, many barriers have been identified. They are slowing down the implementation of the GGWI. **It is proposed to structure the GGW accelerator around the following mutually enforcing pillars.** This will significantly contribute to **livelihood enhancement, poverty alleviation, increased food security and ecosystem sustainability** across the GGW countries. **These pillars are:**

<table>
<tr><td>1 Investment in small and medium-sized farms and strengthening of value chains, local markets, organization of exports</td><td>2 Land restoration and sustainable management of ecosystems</td><td>3 Climate resilient infrastructures and access to renewable energy</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">4 Favourable economic and institutional framework for effective governance, sustainability, stability and security</td><td>5 Capacity building</td></tr>
</table>

Pillar 1: Investment in small and medium-sized farms and strengthening of value chains, local markets, organization of exports

➔ *Developing comprehensive value chains that benefit local communities and countries and enable the flourishing of green economies and enterprises will allow rural communities to have better access to markets and diversified income-generating activities.*

This pillar is focusing **on investments across agricultural value chains to better adapt them to changing climates and make them more resilient to climate shocks.** Investments in this pillar will also lead to an expansion of markets and improved connectivity for rural communities.

Increased access to markets, processing and storage facilities will enable local communities to **enhance their incomes and increase spendings in improved climate resilient best practices**. With increased inputs and investments into such practices (such as solar energy for processing or better storage solutions for agricultural products), pressure on natural resources will decrease, thereby reducing levels of land degradation and allow natural regeneration of biomass. Furthermore, the integration of Renewable Energy Technologies (RETs) will reduce demand on carbon-based energy.

Investments **at the "farm level" are key to achieve the GGW goals**, given that most of the lands the Initative ambitions to restore are located in farmlands and pastoral lands.

Small and medium scale farmers can invest in a large range of **agroecological practices to increase the level of biomass on their farms and at the same time improve their yields.** These techniques have a clear impact on their food security and the production of **marketable surpluses**. Farmers in some areas of the GGW have been knowing these techniques since decades and **this has led to re-greening hotspots** in the southern part of Niger (around 4 million ha), the central part of Burkina Faso (around 400,000 ha), the Tigray region in Ethiopia. The techniques the most employed are **planting pits, half-moons, hedgerows and assisted natural regeneration**, which is the human protection and preservation of natural tree seedlings in forested areas.

The **upgrade of these techniques, to achieve both increased food security and carbon sequestration, can be piloted in various ways** :

- mixing the techniques on the same plot, to increase their overall impact (example of the association of the Zaï technic, the stone lines and the ANR in Northern Burkina Faso),
- adjusting the use of both organic and synthetic fertilizers (micro-fertilization), with improved integration of crops and livestock in mixed agricultural production systems.
- integrating hedges as useful technic to protect irrigated plots from climate extremes, such as moringa and baobab to have a direct impact on nutrition.

Focus on an innovative solution

A private sector and civil society approach to maximize the impact of the GGW : the **IAM AFRICA Coalition "International Agroecological Movement for Africa"**

The Great Green Wall initiative has great ambitions, and in order to be realized, it needs to be adopted by local populations, answering their priorities and basics needs. This is why the GGW

accelerator will be in charge of connecting the private sector and civil societies with the GGW stakeholders, in order to ensure the realization of the objectives by 2030.

In partnership with the **"IAM AFRICA" Coalition** (International Agroecological Movement for Africa), the GGW Accelerator will gather a group of private companies and civil society actors. Getting involved in the achievement of the GGW goals by 2030, they will sign a chart and support "GMV projects" through private investments, sustainable sourcing or peer to peer training.

Using the value chain approach, the GGW accelerator will support the "IAM AFRICA" actors working on the same value chains to connect with GGW Stakeholders in order to achieve awaited results.

For example, it will connect research centers and universities with NGOS and cooperatives for **training and technical support**. It will connecte SMEs with local banks, investors, and buyers to support the **development of local economies and small businesses**. All together toward a specific tool for impact measurement, they will get involved in the realization of the GGWI targets : **job creation, value creation, CO2 sequestration, and land restoration.**

Each value chain identified **will integrate the 5 pillars in its implementation strategy.**

For exemple, the GGW accelerator working on the shea butter value chain in the GGW Countries will ensure :

- partners funds are directed to GGW countries SMEs and cooperatives working on shea butter production and transformation, and to international companies ready to create job opportuntiies in the GGW countries while supporting the achievement of the GGW goals by 2030.
- the shea trees are planted following agroecological principles, and ensure food security thanks to the creation of irrigated perimeters for communities and intercrops systems.
- the local populations have access to renewable energy, and transformation units are resilient infrastructures, participating in climate attenuation.
- the governments support and enhance the members of the value chain through an enabling system.
- all the stakes benefit from capacity building activities in order to work all together and achieve the awaited result.

All the stakeholders of each specific value chain **will track their records through the online plateforme, facilitating the task of the GGW accelerator team to process informations**, in order to mesurate the improvement, difficulties, or examplary models.

Thanks to this collective effort of track reccording, the IAM AFRICA Coalition and the GGW Accelerator team will be able to **connect the value chains to local, national and international buyers in order to facilitate the flow of production, and ensuring the economical viability of the whole process**, which is determinative for the success of the GGW initiative by 2030.

Pillar 2 – Land restoration and sustainable management of ecosystems

The GGW area has **more than 50 % of its area covered by pastoral land and dry forest/shrub land**. Investing in the sustainable management of these areas is key as livestock is one of the major source of livelihood in the region. For half of the rural population living in the area, **their livelihood directly depends from natural resources-based activities** (land, fish, forest...). According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change - hereunder IPCC - climate change has already affected food security due to warming, changing precipitation patterns, and greater frequency of extreme events. **Climate change has resulted in lower animal growth rates and productivity in pastoral systems in Africa and is affecting food security in drylands**, particularly those in Africa. In the same drylands, climate change and desertification are projected to cause reductions in crop and livestock productivity.

Meanwhile, one of the main improvements related to pastoral land restoration is to **set up private tree nurseries**, often managed by groups of women, providing seedlings of native trees. This contributes to **improve biodiversity and offers incomes to the most vulnerable** within the communities.

Restoring pastoral land **at scale** has a positive impact on carbon sequestration. Several techniques are employed, based on local specificities, and will be promoted by the accelerator.

The agricultural sector also has untapped potential to **stabilize the region through the creation of decent jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities for rural youth, as well as to reintegrate young former combatants into productive community life.** A key aspect of the programme would thus be to improve the livelihoods of young people in the Sahel region by creating entrepreneurial and employment opportunities along the agricultural value chains. This could include the **application of new technologies and innovations to address challenges associated with productivity, food availability and employment in fragile contexts, along with the use of cash transfers** through social-protection schemes.

Other actions to be promoted by the GGW accelerator will include for instance:

- Promoting **natural regeneration**, so farmers protect and manage the natural regeneration of native species on different types of lands.
- Investing in **large-scale land planning and enrichment planting** where degradation is so severe that natural vegetation will not regenerate on its own ; communities select the native woody and grass species to be used (most likely to be required in the arid and semi-arid zones).
- Fighting sand encroachment by establishing and **protecting native woody and grassy vegetation** adapted to sandy and arid environments (most likely to be required in the hyperarid zone).
- Mobilizing **high-quality seeds and planting materials of well-adapted native species** to build ecological and social resilience.

Exemple of project : to be filled out with a success story.

Pillar 3 – Climate resilient infrastructures and access to renewable energy

The 11 countries of the GGWI represent **the world's largest solar power zone**. Access to clean energy can consequently **alleviate rural poverty and youth unemployment whilst boosting the objectives of the Paris Agreement.**

Energy is considered to be **a key enabler for sustainable development** – from expanding access to electricity, to improving clean cooking fuels, from reducing wasteful energy subsidies to curbing deadly air pollution that each year prematurely kills millions around the world.

Access to **clean energy is key for the economic development, prosperity and security** of the GGW countries. Indeed, one of the main reason of land degradation in the Sahel is the use of shrubs and wood for domestic use as an affordable source of energy.

The accelerator could **invest in fostering small and medium enterprises active in the sector** of renewable energies, through capacity building activities, network facilitation and South-South exchanges, and specific financial support embedded in local banks. **Flexible solutions are needed,** such as portable solar pumping systems that can be hired by farmers and provide incomes to young entrepreneurs. Regarding mini-grids management, pay and go systems seem the most appropriate, and will create green jobs for young people, especially in rural areas.

In the same time, the **promotion of climate resilient infrastructures is critical in order to support an innovative approach for more sustainable cities in GGW Countries**. Climate-resilient infrastructure has the potential to improve the **reliability of service provision, increase asset life and protect asset returns**. Infrastructure networks will be affected by the physical impacts of climate variability and change, but will also play an essential role in building resilience to those impacts. Extreme events illustrate the extent of this potential exposure. Ensuring that infrastructure is climate resilient will **help to reduce direct losses and reduce the indirect costs of disruption**. New infrastructure assets should be prioritised, planned, designed, built and operated to account for the climate changes that may occur over their lifetimes.

Several challenges are related to these sectors :

- Scaling up **solar pumping solutions** for human consumption and agricultural purposes, in line with groundwater replenishment potential
- Promoting **micro and mini-grid solutions** to provide electricity at the community level and to rural SMEs.
- **"Climate proofing"** roads and other hard infrastructures
- Green infrastructure acting as **buffer zones** to protect wetlands and hard infrastructure investments

The Desert2Power Initiative

The Desert to Power programme intends to turn the Sahel region into a renewable powerhouse, harnessing its solar potential and creating the world's largest solar zone. By building solar PV capacity of 10 GW through both on and off-grid projects, DtP is expected to have a transformative impact on 250 million people across the 11 Sahel countries. From accelerating economic development, to facilitating innovations in agriculture, solar generation in the Sahel through DtP paves the way towards low-emission electricity access, while contributing to building resilience in the region. It fully aligns with and supports the vision of the Great Green Wall initiative.

Desert to Power is designed based on a programmatic approach across five priority-action areas:

i. Expand grid-connected solar power generation capacity in the region inter alia by supporting the development of regional solar parks in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger.

ii. Strengthen and expand national and regional grid networks through the region by supporting early stage development of identified critical regional interconnectors expected to facilitate power trade and evacuation of variable renewable energy sources including from the respective regional solar parks.

iii. Deploy decentralized energy solutions at scale, by supporting solar powered mini-grid programs with a focus on productive uses of energy (e.g. irrigation, agro-processing, and cold storage) and the electrification of social infrastructure (e.g. health and education facilities), as well as the provision of basic energy services in remote communities through solar home systems.

iv. Improve the financial and operational capacity of public electricity operators so as to foster the emergence of a local renewable energy/energy efficiency cluster to service local and regional markets.

v. Strengthen the enabling environment for increased private sector investments

Capacity building is a crosscutting component for all interventions implemented under the DtP Initiative.

The catalytic nature of DtP has already galvanized significant political and financial support at regional and global level. The initiative has been endorsed at the highest-level through the Heads of State of the G5 Sahel countries on which an initial focus has been placed. A large coalition of international donors, financial institutions and technical partners, such as Power Africa, AFD, IRENA, Africa50 and the GCF has been formed. National Desert to Power Roadmaps were developed with the G5 Sahel countries initially that outline the targets, the priority actions, and priority projects along the five pillars. If implemented, this would save the G5 Sahel countries about $1.8 billion by 2030 notably by replacing HFO with solar generation capacity. A first set of transformative projects have been approved, including the Yeleen Rural Electrification Project, which will connect 150,000 households to solar mini-grids and the Yeleen on-grid project that will increase electricity supply through four 52 MW photovoltaic plants, the 32 MW Djermaya PV plant in Chad the country's first IPP or the Sudan Solar PV Powered Pumping for Irrigation Project.

Pillar 4 - Favourable economic and institutional framework for effective governance, sustainability, stability and security

The need to **strengthen institutional frameworks, regulations and legislation to foster favourable conditions for the prosperity of local enterprises** that will lead to **greater climate resilience** of the economies is a major challenge in the GGW area of intervention.

In the context of the GGW countries, **community led interventions** have proven to be the most **successful and lasting method** to instill positive and permanent climate resilience in rural contexts. The GGW accelerator will support and encourage projects to **establish institutional and regulatory frameworks at a decentralized level**. This will help empower local decisions-making and build community buy-in to adopt best practices for their sustainability, stability and security.

Projets at this local level should **focus on mainstreaming climate resilience and adaptation measures into local regulatory frameworks and community led development plans**. Local government powers should also extend, where possible, to the regulation of watershed and landscape restoration activities. The decentralisation of responsibilities and strengthening of local frameworks will **empower and incentivise rural communities to drive climate resilience and adaptation** forward. The governance of the natural resources is **a key issue for their sustainable management and to increase social stability and peace in targeted dryland regions**. The accelerator will then support the **definition of rules in terms of access, use and management of the natural resources and contribute to the decentralized management of the natural resources** including by supporting the local authorities to delegate the management of these natural resources to local communities.

Working closely with governments **at national and local level will also be critical to create an enabling environment to attract investments and ensure youth employment and entrepreneurial opportunities are sustainable**.

Example of activities to be promoted by the GGW Accelerator :

- Supporting **local and national financial institutions**, as well as the private sector, to promote sustainable agriculture practices as well as land restoration activities, and align domestic, public and private financial flows, towards the objectives of the GGW ;
- Enhancing climate change related **insurance schemes** for the benefit of SMEs ;
- Strengthening **effective governance**, between sectors and at an administrative and geographical level ;
- Setting up some **enabling conditions for public-private-producer partnerships** ;
- Building governments capacity to attract **youth-focused investments in agriculture ;**
- Organising **capacity building activities** for groups of stakeholders involved in local policy processes
- Establishing or strengthening **systems to promote adoption of sustainable and climate resilient agricultural practices** including benefits sharing.

International policy and decision makers now recognize the **link between environmental change and migration**, and its serious consequences for human security. The paradigm of security has shifted away from purely states-centered models to a model that encompasses the greater idea of **human development as freedom.** The new model implies **greater international awareness of the importance of sustainable development for all people** – including an intact environment and the ability of all people to enjoy good health and respectable work.

This GGWI offers all the opportunities required to **secure the region, implementing a combined approach using agroecology and socio-economic development**, integrating the 3S approach (3S Initiative for Sustainability, Stability and Security in Africa) as part of the project.

As a result of this combined approach :

- **Stop and reverse the deterioration** of farm and grazing land and forests due to climatic changes will support the restoration of degraded farm and grazing land but also **help the restoration of degraded forests to their economic potential**.

- **Secure rural livelihoods and create new economic opportunities** in rural areas will improve secure land access for farmers, in particular women and the young and **create new sustainable or green land-based jobs** in agriculture, forestry and agro-industry.

- **Relieve pressures for long-distance migration** from rural areas due to climate change and land degradation will provide rural residents **incentives to invest in their lands** instead of abandoning them and migrate permanently.

As a result, this pillar will fight against migration and security issues by fighting desertification. Various studies have been made that global environmental change could drive anywhere from 50 to almost 700 million people to migrate by 2050. These studies underscore the complexity of the multi-causal relationship between coupled social-ecological systems and human mobility, yet they have fueled the debate about “environmentally induced migration”. The environmental signal in migration patterns may grow as the impacts of climatic and societal change become more apparent, and this is especially true for people living in drylands.

The cause-and-effect relationship between desertification and migration has only recently been recognized by different stakeholders, and empirical evidence is becoming available from UN, intergovernmental, research and policy institutes. Studies from Africa, including Egypt, Morocco, Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso indicate that land degradation and desertification contribute to human mobility, and worsening living conditions for both those who leave and those who remain behind (Source: UNU-EHS).

3S initiative

Pillar 5 – Capacity building

In order for the Great Green Wall initiative to be achieved, **countries must be able to take full ownership and leadership over their projects**, working with the GGW partner's organizations to develop their l**eadership and to support the capacities of stakeholders** to achieve Great Green Wall objectives. Among the possible activities to be implemented :

- **Assessing the capacities of project stakeholders** to achieve their Great Green Wall objectives.
- **Designing and implementing capacity development activities** to support the effective implementation of the Great Green Wall programme.
- **Monitoring and evaluating the results** of Great Green Wall activities, whilst tracking changes in the capacities of the stakeholders.

One of the major bottlenecks to expand climate resilient practices is the insufficient technical capacities of farmers and farmer organizations. **Supporting their own technical staff is an action that the accelerator should envisage**. In West Africa, the ROPPA network took in January 2020 the lead of the so-called West African initiative on agro-ecology and is a good entry point. In Niger, the network of chambers of agriculture is also a well known entity capitalizing on the best practices, with an impressive online data base. Farmers to farmers exchanges have proven to be a powerful tool in northern Burkina Faso to expand agroecological techniques.

Fostering a network of specialized training entities is also of special interest, to share knowledge and promote agro-ecological techniques throughout the region. The model of the Songhai center in Benin is a concrete example.

Another major bottleneck to expand climate resilient practices is **the small number of NGOs and service providers.** Less than half a dozen of the NGOs and service providers by country have the required skills on these matters. **Incubators fostering the development of such entities are a critical** need to increase absorption capacities when funds are available.

Furthermore, **addressing gender gaps through investment in women's technical and leadership skills and ensuring their equal participation in the land restoration and management projects** will be essential.

Exemple of project :

The GGW accelerator may be summarised as **a multi country, multi-actors, multi sectors programme aiming at sustainably transform the large geographical area of the GGWI, restoring degraded land for subsistence needs and reviving economic activity and livelihood along the region**. The amount of fundings which will be collected during this phase will provide the basic neeeds for this transformational phase to occur over the coming decade along the GGW.

Part III: Governance and organisational structure of the GGW accelerator

The GGW accelerator gouvernance and organisational structure

The GGW accelerator will build on and support the existing GGW institutions, entities and processes so they can better perform their role. It is “multi-actors”, and offering a structured approach.

The role of the accelerator is to be a catalyst : hosted by one of the GGW partners, it will be a light organisation in charge of reporting on the achievements of GGW Partners on a regular basis.

Objectives. The first objective is to link up more effectively the already available financing sources with the available project opportunities. This requires sound coordination among current project generators, funders, implementors and beneficiaries under the GGW program. The second objective is to record and bring in new sources of funds for the GGW program. This involves both proper tracking of ongoing activities of multilateral and bilateral ODA partners that may already support the GGW objectives as well as mobilizing additional financial resources from private and public sources for GGW implementation.

Functions. To achieve these objectives, the GGW Accelerator will perform six primary functions:

(a) tracking financial commitments and disbursements for activities that support the GGW objectives;
(b) tracking implementation progress in beneficiary countries against the GGW results targets;
(c) providing technical advice to GGW partners concerning causal pathways, results indicators, reporting frameworks and monitoring activities;
(d) mobilizing new resources for the GGW program from public and private sources;
(e) issuing annual progress reports on GGW implementation; and
(f) carrying out public information campaigns and targeted advocacy efforts for the GGW program.

Tools. A first and essential tool to facilitate the above functions is a comprehensive **online GGW information system**. This system will consist of a database to track financial commitments and disbursements as well as the implementation progress achieved against GGW results targets. The system will also contain information for prospective funders of project opportunities in GGW countries so as to connect the needs of beneficiary countries with the offerings from financiers.

A second required tool is a comprehensive, yet sufficiently concise **uniform GGW Results Management Framework** (RMF). The RMF will link up GGW objectives with expected outcomes and result indicators. It serves to track the implementation progress of the overall GGW program.

The RMF is also critical in order to determine the degree of overlap of the GGW objectives with those of projects and programs supported by public and private partners in GGW countries in order to determine whether to track their related financial flows and implementation achievements within

the context of the GGW program or not. Especially with respect to MDBs such as the World Bank and the EIB as well as major bilateral partners such as the European Commission, it will be critical to match the GGW RMF to the respective results architectures and impact reporting scorecards of these institutions. The objective is to achieve an automatic tracking of financial flows and results related to the GGW program from as many financing sources and implementing partners as possible.

GGW Accelerator Unit

A small GGW Accelerator Unit will be created and hosted by the UNCCD so as to perform the above-mentioned functions. This lean and agile coordination unit will be in charge of showcasing, monitoring and reporting on the achievements of all GGW partners on a regular basis. After an interim period of 3 years, the hosting of the GGW Accelerator Unit will be transferred permanently to the Pan-African Agency of the GGW (PA-GGW).

Responsibilities. The specific responsibilities of the GGW Accelerator Unit are envisaged to be the following:

1) Design, implement and manage a GGW Online Platform for tracking and connecting financing flows with project needs and implementation results
2) Design, implement and manage a unified GGW Results Management Framework, in consultation with key stakeholders and GGW partners
3) Define data transition rules in order to capture relevant financial flows and results information from major GGW partners, such multilateral lenders and bilateral donors, and integrate these into the GGW Online Platform
4) Track financial flows of bilateral and multilateral donors and private companies that have signed the GGW Accelerator Charter
5) Track implementation progress in beneficiary countries against the GGW results targets
6) Organize the provision of technical advice to GGW partners concerning causal pathways, results indicators, reporting frameworks and monitoring activities
7) Facilitate communication, knowledge management and outreach, including preparation of a GGW Accelerator Annual Report of the 'State of the Great Green Wall Initiative'
8) Coordinate on a regular basis with the GGW institutions in particular the PA-GGW and the African Union Commission
9) Support the resource mobilization efforts for the GGW Initiative, in particular from the private sector
10) Organize annual high level meetings composed of the GGW partners to:
    a. Review the main actions and achievements based on the GGW Accelerator Annual Report
    b. Update on the context and challenges in the GGW targeted areas
    c. Evaluate the progress and achievements at sector level
    d. Approve strategic orientations and action plan for the next period
    e. Define a common position between the donors for sectorial regional and national policy dialogues.

The governance of the Initiative could be envisaged as follows :

International level

High level meetings composed of the GGW partners could be organized annually to

- Review of the main actions and achievements based on the GGW Accelerator annual report on the Initiative;
- Update on the context and challenges in the targeted regions;
- Evaluate the progress and achievements at sector level;
- Approve strategic orientations and action plan for the cross cutting component of the Initiative for the next period.

The high level meeting will also contribute to define a common position between the donors for sectorial regional and national policy dialogue.

Regional level

At the regional level, the governance of the Accelerator will be built on the main existing sectorial coordination framework committees namely, (i) the ECOWAP group currently chaired by AFD and ECOWAS and the regional steering committee of the GGWI chaired by the AUC.

The Accelerator will strengthen the contribution of all the stakeholders of the GGW Accelerator on these existing regional committees and improve the coordination (i) between the donors and (ii) between the donors and the regional organizations.

Country level

At country level, financing partners will have the opportunity to participate as observers to the sub-projects steering committee financed.

The sub-projects will feed the strategic dialogue between the donors and the country partner on the supported policy and sectorial strategy implementation progresses. Thus, the initiative will allow fostering dialogue within the existing sectorial coordination frameworks.

The aim of the GGW Accelerator is to gather and focus all the efforts towards the realisation of the 2030 objectifs of the Great Green Wall Initiative, ensuring a better coordination between stakeholders, and reinforcing trust and support at the international level to the GGWI.

The IT solution for the data management automation in the GGW Accelerator

The idea is to create **an IT-based central plateform** with several online functions to improve access to additional funding and to develop a larger number of projects.

The role of the plateform will be to support the main mission of the accelerator : to make sure that the comitments taken are acheived/ That implique un instrument de monitorin et evaluation. La facon la plus proactive c'est de faire du data.

Data monitoring allows an organization to proactively maintain **a high, consistent standard of data quality**. By checking data routinely as it is stored within applications, organizations can avoid the resource-intensive pre-processing of data before it is moved. Recognizing the challenges of following up all the projects realized under the Great Green Wall initiative, digital tools are important to achieve the ambitious goals by 2030.