

Accelerating the Great Green Wall: Fostering the Africa-Europe partnership for a just rural transformation in the Sahel.

Nurturing the Great Green Wall Initiative:

Stretching along the southern edge of the Sahara Desert from Senegal to Djibouti, the Great Green Wall initiative seeks to **restore land, preserve biodiversity and regenerate agricultural systems**. It also aims to provide answers to the ever-growing **challenges of climate change, land degradation, food insecurity, access to energy, high levels of poverty and unemployment, and issues related to stability, security and mobility in the Sahel region**.

As showcased in recent IPCC reports, the drylands of the Sahel are suffering ever-more volatile patterns of rainfall, bringing greater risks of flooding and harsher droughts. Heavy pressure from farming has squeezed grazing lands, degraded soils and vegetation, bringing a fall in crop yields and rising conflict between livestock and crops. But pockets of green hope exist where more resilient rural landscapes have been created, and people's incomes and livelihoods improved. We need to share solutions from existing actions which offer lessons for policy and practice, and demonstrate how to accelerate the Great Green Wall Initiative across the region.

The Great Green Wall Initiative was initially created by leaders of the African Union to plant a green barrier of trees across the drylands. Over the years, it has evolved to create a mosaic of green landscapes, building on the knowledge and resources of local people, to generate local prosperity and greater resilience. The GGW initiative needs to remain focused on people on the frontlines fighting every day to build better livelihoods. These voices from the field provide a better understanding of the challenges but also the opportunities offered by the initiative, and how better to support local efforts which can achieve global impact.

Revitalised by France's President Emmanuel Macron and Heads of States from the Pan African Agency of the Great Green Wall at the One Planet Summit in 2021, with the creation of the Great Green Wall Accelerator, the Great Green Wall initiative (GGWI) is the most ambitious nature-based solution on Earth and has the potential to contribute to multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the aspirations of Agenda 2063.

Purpose of the conference:

This high-level conference on May 25th 2023 builds on the growing international momentum around the GGWI and follows up on the One Planet Summit, the 6th AU-EU Heads of State Summit and international conferences such as the Biodiversity, Desertification and Climate COPs.

It also complements the launch of the Global Gateway where the Great Green Wall is one of the flagships, as well as new EU regulations, including on deforestation-free products which may have implications for the Great Green Wall.

The conference will **bring together key stakeholders from Africa and Europe with the objective** to enhance our partnership, as Africa and Europe, and develop credible mid (2030) and long-term (2063) strategies for investment in the Great Green Wall.

This conference aims to demonstrate concrete success stories from the field, offering testimony which illustrates the key ingredients needed to make progress, and presenting practical and replicable measures. Such examples of local initiative and action must provide the foundation stones for scaling up the implementation of the Great Green Wall Initiative.

Scope for deepening Africa-Europe Cooperation:

At COP26, the European Commission President committed additional support to the GGW initiative with €700M per year, but there remains a lack of visibility on the EU strategy towards the long-term ambitions of the Great Green Wall. For Sahelian countries, financial support needs to be directed towards GGW national transformative programmes, developed by national coalitions, to facilitate the necessary coordination, and ensure monitoring and evaluation. Learning lessons from actions today will enable better practice tomorrow.

As we approach the mid-term point of the Great Green Wall Accelerator (2021-2025), the **critical challenge now is to provide up-to-date information to European and African decision-makers, for them to become stronger advocates for driving the mobilization of further resources to achieve the 2030 goals.**

Coordinated efforts between the EU and Africa could boost the cross-continental partnership while advancing a collective action agenda to put the Sahel on the road to prosperity by 2030. Over the past year, the French and Senegalese presidencies of the EU and AU respectively provided a unique opportunity to give a revised impetus to the region, as demonstrated with the Food and Agriculture Resilience Mission (FARM), aimed at countering risks of rising food insecurity and famine in Africa. **Now, and for the upcoming year, it is up to Sweden, Spain and Comoros to take up this challenge, as respective presidents of the EU and AU.**

Strategic opportunities in 2023 and towards 2030:

- **Within the framework of the Great Green Wall**, there have been serious commitments from the EU, the AfDB, the World Bank and the AFD among others, but **much more is needed, including to evaluate lessons learned to date.**
- The initiative was endowed at the One Planet Summit in 2021 with a financial envelope of US\$19 Billion for the period from 2021-2025. Today, **a clear mapping of the pledges is needed to build strong partnerships and develop credible mid (2030) and long-term (2050) strategies.**
- The Great Green Wall initiative needs to be further supported by Europe and Africa in order to **demonstrate the social, economic and environmental benefits it can bring to the Sahel's development.**
- Despite the billions mobilised for the GGW, institutional capacity is lacking to coordinate the countless actors and instruments involved. There is a need to **strengthen the capacities of national structures of the GGW so that they perform their coordinating role, as platforms for learning lessons from good practice.**
- Both the **AU and EU should take more leadership of the GGW**, as one of the EU-AU summit's flagships, **and work together towards the next financing phase.** To achieve the 2030 goal, it is estimated that an additional \$33bn are needed.
- **The African Union, together with partners should better integrate and strengthen the Pan African Agency for the Great Green Wall**, to enhance institutional capacity, policy coherence and coordination, and to represent African interests on the GGW with one voice.
- **Ensure that the current political cycle of the EU (European Commission & Parliament) leaves a tangible legacy to the next cycle; enshrining the Great Green Wall in future programming; and calling on EU delegations in the Sahel to work closely with the national agencies of the Great Green Wall, the Pan African Agency, and relevant actors.**

- Furthermore, **there is a need for a paradigm shift at micro and local levels**, from tree planting to farmer managed natural regeneration, by farmers protecting and managing woody species that regenerate spontaneously on their land, improving soil fertility and producing livestock fodder. **Farmer-led greening is key to scaling solutions rapidly** across the region.
- Governments need to **ensure and enforce enabling agricultural policies and forestry legislation** that confirm user rights to the trees and land which farmers nurture.
- Organisers of the conference **urge the AU-EU Partnership to address the challenge of channelling increased funding to local NGOs.**
- **Encourage partners to support ‘Great Green Wall Transformative Programmes’, under the leadership of UNCCD and PAAGGW**, which aim at taking a multi-sectoral approach to include agroecological value chains, sustainable energy, and land and water management.



TFPs	Disbursements 2021	Contributions	Pledges 2025
	Total disbursed 2021 (Millions USD)	Total contribution (Nov 2022) (Millions USD)	OPS 2021 Pledge (Millions USD)
AFDB	679	7469,74	6 583
FAO	nc	47,15	0
EU	nc	714	3 975
AFD	99	206,67	729
WB	1120	5312	5 591
EIB	324	284,9	1 215
IFAD	77,5	594,5	464
GEF	nc	Nc	173,36
GCF*	**	1100	924
Total	2575	15729	19655

Pledges One planet summit : **US\$ 19 655 000 000 for 2025**

Total amount disbursed in 2021 : **US\$ 2 575 000 000**

Total contributions by November 2022 : **US\$ 15 729 000 000**

Percentage of disbursements : **13 %**

Percentage of contributions : **80 %**

*GEF finished its replenishment GEF8 in June 2022

**UNCCD estimated USD 275M, GCF provides up to date information on <https://www.greencimate.fund/themes/great-green-wall>

Overview of the One Planet Summit US\$19 billion financial envelope for the period from 2021-2025