



**Research support to address barriers and
accelerate the impact of the Great Green
Wall Initiative**

Suggested citation

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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

Regional Policy Coherence Analysis
to scale up action and achievements of the Great Green Wall Initiative

UNEP
GCHT
GIZ

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

UNEP
GCHT
GIZ

Considering barriers to and solutions for accelerating impact in the Great Green Wall Initiative

Summary Report of a Virtual Event Series
October 26 and 24 November 2022

UNEP
GCHT
GIZ

Considering barriers to accelerating impact in the Great Green Wall Initiative.

A summary of participant feedback. Virtual Event Series: 26 October, 24 November 2022.

Background

The Great Green Wall (GGW) is a flagship project of the African Union (AU) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to combat desertification and land degradation in the Sahel and West Africa. The GGW is a 8,000 km long natural barrier of trees and shrubs that will protect the lives and livelihoods of 250 million people living in the region. The GGW is a key element of the AU's Agenda 2063 and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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Examining solutions to accelerating impact in the Great Green Wall Initiative.

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Ethiopia
Great Green Wall Initiative
-Country Review

UNEP
GCHT
GIZ

Mali
Great Green Wall Initiative
-Country Review

UNEP
GCHT
GIZ

Senegal
Great Green Wall Initiative
-Country Review

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Sudan
Great Green Wall Initiative
-Country Review

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Enhancing Policy Coherence and Strengthening Policy Engagement
to promote the goals of the Great Green Wall Initiative

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Research support to overcome barriers and accelerate the impact of the Great Green Wall Initiative

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Policy coherence at regional level



The Africa Union's Great Green Wall Initiative Strategy and ten-year Implementation Framework, drafted in December 2022, reiterates the need to facilitate collaboration between stakeholders – including strengthening linkages with the research community – to coordinate and scale actions towards achieving its goals.

In addition the recent UNCCD Landmark Report on the implementation status of the GGWI highlighted the lack of its prioritisation in national environmental and climate priorities, and the resultant lack of integration in relevant sector strategies, policies, and action plans.

UNCCD. *The Great Green Wall: Implementation Status and Way Ahead to 2030*. 7 September 2020.

Policy coherence at regional level



The report also highlighted weak institutional and coordination structures for implementation, including the exchange and flow of information at multiple scales. The African Union and partners of the GGWI call upon all stakeholders, and the research community, to assist in addressing these challenges.

there is a renewed momentum for research that is tailored in response to national and regional government priorities and community needs, through demand-driven processes of adequate stakeholder engagement and inclusivity.

SECTION 1

Addressing bottlenecks of the GGWI

Enhance governance, coordination and inclusion



There is **difficulty with adopting a landscape approach that transcends jurisdictional boundaries and traditional sectors** (agriculture, environment, forestry, water, energy, land use and decentralization).

There is also a lack of policy stakeholder involvement in the operational and strategic management of the GGWI initiative, including of local authorities, producer organisations and civil society. Some practical research tools that can be developed to overcome this hurdle, including research that maps policy linkages and commitments between GGWI and other multilateral processes, ie. the action plans of the UNCCD, UNFCCC and UNCBD, as well as establishing multi-stakeholder, multi-sector platforms to promote coordination and dialogue at various scales.

Promote research, science, technologies and innovation, as well as strengthen the policy to science interface



Knowledge developed through UNCCD processes, and other SLM adaptation/mitigation projects is poorly disseminated and largely unknown.

In addition, the role of science and research in informing the GGWII is not well emphasized.

There is no specific scientific advisory structure at the African or national levels. It is therefore important that the research community assists with the integration of research within national coalition. It is also important that research is packaged in a way that it meets the needs of policy makes and helps to inform decision making.

There is a need for the mapping and organisation of research initiatives. The GGWI secretariat can undertake an initial scoping exercise to determine the direction and focus of its research needs in order to ensure that research partners are supporting a unified, coherent, overall objective.

Advocacy, communication, awareness raising, education



There is a **lack of understanding of the importance and value of GGWI, as well as drylands in general**. There is also a need to emphasise that the GGWI is a development plan for drylands and not a tree planting initiative.

The GGWI therefore needs to build/ market itself better as a resilience building initiative. Research organisations can assist with the development and sharing of success stories for the capitalisation and popularisation of good practices of sustainable land management, including community practices and traditional knowledge.

Equally, important lessons can be learnt through sharing failed experiences. Experiences in the economic valorisation and monetisation of natural resources that strongly encourage local communities to adopt and adapt the concept and operational modalities of the GGWII. Research entities can contribute to dialogue forums to share lessons among stakeholders, member states and project partners.

Promotion of livelihood opportunities



A key need of the GGWI is the **promotion of a green/ restoration economy through the valorisation of natural resources within the framework of the creation of value chains, including the implementation of non-timber forestry products processing infrastructures and the creation of green jobs.**

This includes efforts to facilitate access to finance for SMEs and overcome market-entry barriers to international markets arising from complex standards and regulations, as well as the economic diversification, on-site processing of products and marketing and the creation of value addition at the local level.

Research can assist with scoping and lesson sharing to promote context-specific livelihood alternatives in the dryland areas, as well as to explore the enabling environment to enhance their success. This includes, for example, the creation of polyvalent vegetable gardens for women for income generation and ensuring food and nutrition security.

Promotion of livelihood opportunities



With the **onset of COVID-19, as well as regional security issues, the GGWI is no longer viewed as a government priority** as it has been in the past in some countries. It has failed so far to deliver the large-scale change that was originally envisaged, and therefore not only has this resulted in a lack of commitment from sectoral ministries to coordinate finances, but the funding that is available, is being prioritized elsewhere.

The draft AU GGWII Strategy further highlights the need to facilitate dialogues for enhanced Public – Private – Philanthropic – Partnerships, including the exploration of new areas of financing opportunities i.e. through carbon markets and trust-based grants. Building national capacity to mobilize domestic and international financial resources with a view to mastering the procedures for accessing the main sources of financing is also key.

Policy and Enabling Environment



The **lack of land use policies and laws are being challenged within GGWI member states**, particularly in countries like Ethiopia and Sudan. The GGWI countries need land use policies and governance structures so that the communities have ownership, tenure and resource use rights to successfully restore degraded lands and avert recurrent droughts and loss of livelihoods. Other challenges include the lack of synergy at the national level, and the issue of ministries working in silos.

Communities often do not believe that they will receive the benefits of the GGWI, particularly in the initial phase where they do not readily see the benefits. Government support is critical to help encourage communities to participate in GGWI activities, until the point where they start to see the benefits of the initiative.

Institutional Relationships and Partnerships



Partnerships are not being funded, given that this is not a traditional funding line item. There is also a need for more national engagements to break down the silos that are a major barrier to effective communication and coordination. An example of a success partnership includes the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and AGRHYMET's development of a national platform to work together across countries and create a common programme of work.

Research and Academia



There is a **lack of availability and sharing of information between research houses and government departments.** This is associated with the lack of funding available for research, as well as the absence of clear communication pathways to share knowledge, particularly indigenous knowledge. While it is critical that science is linked to policy, it is equally critical that indigenous knowledge is taken into consideration when policies are developed and updated.

Promoting Practice and Capacity Development



With regards to **promoting practice and capacity development, technologies exist, but these are not always accessible, particularly at the grassroots level.** The GGWII needs to reach out to civic societies and the private sector to mobilise resources and enhance the resilience of communities. Research support and capacity development can be directed to assist designated implementing institutions as well as local communities, both of whom play key roles in the outcome of the GGWI projects.

SECTION 2

Research that can help to overcome the GGWI challenges and barriers

Research that can help to overcome the GGWI challenges and barriers



One CGIAR – the unified Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers - is well placed to provide overall analytical and strategic guidance to support the GGWI Secretariat, regional bodies and partners achieve its key strategic objectives.

Through its long history of focus in the areas of land management, natural resource governance, climate change and climate resilient development, One CGIAR research is contributing to achieve the objectives of the GGWI, both from a country and regional perspective.



Research that can help to overcome the GGWI challenges and barriers



For example, there are **abundant technologies, best practices, scientific information and experiences** that can be mainstreamed into GGWI from existing research sites and through **documenting good indigenous practices**. There is also new research that is being undertaken to highlight promising technologies and practices to support farmers and local communities.



Research that can help to overcome the GGWI challenges and barriers



One CGIAR attempts to produce research that promotes a nexus approach to sustainable land, water, and soil management integrates biodiversity conservation and governance across sectors and scales. Its various research houses produce scientific, practical and traditional knowledge that promote multidisciplinary and participatory research and the R&D, tailored to Africa's unique position. Its initiatives look to develop and strengthen appropriate knowledge management, sharing and coordination mechanisms, including the establishment of science-policy working groups to promote the uptake of science into decision making.



Research that can help to overcome the GGWI challenges and barriers



One CGIAR can help to clarify the conceptual framing for the GGWI and to help emphasise its shift from a focus on tree planting to a more integrative development perspective that aims to transform the lives of those living in the Sahel by creating a mosaic of green and productive landscapes.



Research that can help to overcome the GGWI challenges and barriers



There is part of a growing response that **highlights the role of regenerative grazing and silvopastoral systems as a central part of a holistic response to curb climate change and promote ecosystem and human health.** GGWI needs to clearly define its value-add at the country level and One CGIAR research can align to make this ‘pathway’ clearer.

One CGIAR research encourages countries to investigate the systemic challenges of land degradation and climate change, to build transformative systemic climate resilience of small-scale farmers and rural communities.



Regenerative grazing for climate ecosystem and human health (for COP27). November 2022.
<https://savory.global/regenerative-grazing-for-climate-ecosystem-and-human-health-cop27-document/>

Research that can help to overcome the GGWI challenges and barriers



One CGIAR research encourages countries to investigate the systemic challenges of land degradation and climate change, to build transformative systemic climate resilience of small-scale farmers and rural communities.

One CGIAR also has expertise in partnership brokering and can help to develop and enhance partnerships through promoting strategic knowledge alliances for actions and innovations.

Through its experience in facilitating multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral platforms, the One CGIAR projects and initiatives (such as ClimBeR) are facilitating stakeholder dialogues in the region to promote the coordination of various groupings.



SECTION 3

Recommendations

Recommendations



■ The GGWI can be seen as a unifying platform for sustainable development and poverty reduction policies and activities in the drylands of Africa, focused currently on the Sahel/Sahara.

■ The GGWI provides a point of mutual convergence and synergy for other Rio conventions, including for climate change, biodiversity, land degradation, disaster risk management and health.

■ There are enormous opportunities to leverage GGWI to achieve food security and poverty reduction goals through diversification of agriculture and production systems to boost food production and create employment opportunities, particularly for women and youth in arid zones. However, ccoherent and coordinated research efforts are still needed to support the challenges experienced in the implementation of the GGWII over the past ten years.

Recommendations

The One CGIAR and other global, regional and local research organisations are playing a key role in developing and fulfilling this agenda.

There are many opportunities to expand research efforts and ensure that research offerings are aligned with the strategic priorities of the GGWI under different strategies.

There is a need for the mapping and organisation of research initiatives. In principle, the GGWI regional bodies should undertake the initial scoping exercise to determine the direction and focus of its research needs in order to ensure that research partners are supporting a coherent, overall objective.

GGWI should engage research partners in the national coalitions to promote greater integration and more capacity for adaptive learning and reflection. The GGWI partners can then use the research findings and recommendations to influence its political and institutional power to achieve its objectives.





Place contact details here.