



Landscape Restoration Evidence Series



RESTORATION BEGINS ON THE GROUND

02

Farmers as critical stewards of land to scale up restoration



Addressing land degradation is key to achieving food and nutrition security. It requires the active and deliberate engagement of multiple stakeholders including farmers, NGOs, government and researchers. In order to reach the land restoration targets set by National Governments and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), successful restoration efforts need to reach larger numbers of farmers and extend over larger areas than has previously been achieved.

Farmers are innovators, experimenters and importantly, stewards of the land. This makes them key players in global restoration efforts. From testing new seeds to adopting more efficient water and soil management techniques, farmers apply innovations every day to improve the productivity and health of their land. These improvements can have significant impacts in tackling biodiversity loss, unsustainable food systems and other global challenges when implemented at scale.

A key constraint to scaling restoration is that the ecological, economic, social, political and institutional context varies from household to household, as well as from village to village. There is no one technology suits all. This means active, continual learning and communication between and among all stakeholders is crucial to ensure context relevant solutions are implemented to meet food and nutrition needs as well as restoration targets.

Farmer Centred Learning Through Communities of Practice

A Community of Practice (CoP) is a group of people with similar **interests, goals and context** who are committed to engage in continuous exchange and co-learning around a particular topic.



Farmer centred CoPs aim to scale context-specific restoration options and increase the inclusion of evidence into decision making and increase the inclusion of evidence into decision making. Furthermore, the lessons learned are encouraged to be shared within and between stakeholder groups.

Key aspects of the farmer CoPs include:

Understanding farmers' perceptions of the performance of the various land restoration options.

Identifying farmers' motivation and livelihood expectations in implementing the land restoration options using the planned comparison approach.

Sharing data collection and field work results with farmers to get validation and feedback and further interpret results

Discuss lessons learned from project implementation and real-time modifications required in implementation

Engage farmers in the research approach and discuss scaling strategies for sustainability of interventions beyond the project timelines.

Act as a neutral space to share feedback amongst diverse partners

Impact of Farmer COPs across 4 African dryland countries undertaking restoration

Lead centre

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MALI

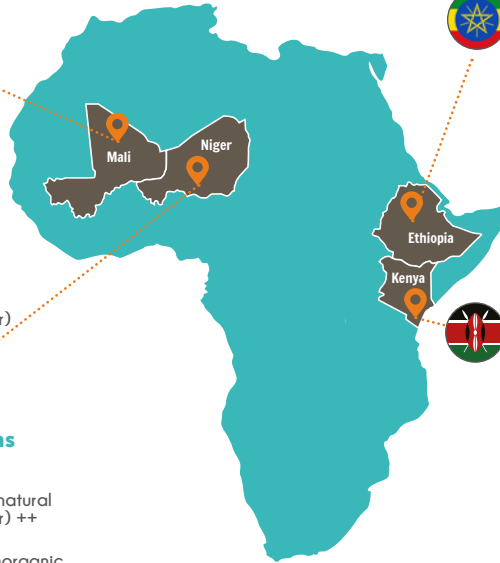
Restoration Options tested

- Tree planting agroforestry
- Soil and water conservation
- In-situ grafting with farmer managed natural regeneration (fmr)

NIGER

Restoration Options tested

- Farmer-managed natural regeneration (fmr) ++
- Micro-dosing of inorganic fertilizers and manure



ETHIOPIA

Restoration Options tested

- Pasture management
- Tree planting agroforestry
- Community-based rangeland management

KENYA

Restoration Options tested

- Pest control
- Tree planting agroforestry
- Planting basins with manure

- Communities of Practice (CoPs)** with key stakeholders (farmers, community facilitators, NGOs, government and researchers) fostered co-learning and sharing with evidence. Five years of implementation experience and insight from numerous CoPs set up in Mali, Ethiopia, Kenya and Niger.
- High levels of farmer involvement** Farmers who were involved in decision making (for example on tree species and restoration options), were more likely to cultivate a sense of ownership of the project and its activities.
- Encouraged scaling to more farmers and across more communities, including the organic development of some farmers to be trainer of trainees (TOTs).
- Sustainable co-learning beyond the project** Facilitating farmer CoP groups formed by the farmers increased ownership of implementing on-farm

restoration options and encouraged co-learning and knowledge sharing among the farmers.

- Establishing CoPs at the onset of projects or initiatives cultivates inclusion and trust. Farmers could see that their voices were being heard and actions being taken, and thus were encouraged to continue sharing and learning throughout the project.
- Encouragement of the farmers to modify the restoration options to suit their context** and sharing these innovations with other farmers. Modifications of the land restoration options were discovered early on and suggested changes from the farmers were implemented within the next season.
- Gender responsive options** CoPs were deliberately designed to encourage inclusivity, including the participation of men, women and youth, which lead to gender-responsive interventions.

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Further resources

- Further Information on the Landscape Restoration TPP
- Restoration of degraded land for food security and poverty reduction in East Africa and the Sahel
- Resilience for restoration



This evidence series was developed by researchers and practitioners spearheading the new Landscape Restoration TPP, with support from GLF www.globallandscapesforum.org

