



REGREENING AFRICA

Introduction

Regreening Africa is a United Nations World Restoration flagship that has been recognised as one of the best examples of large-scale and long-term ecosystem restoration in any country or region, embodying the **10 Restoration Principles** of the **UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration**.

It is a continent-wide initiative focused on halting degradation, restoring degraded landscapes, improving food and nutrition security, and strengthening community resilience to climate change across Ghana, Somalia, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Mali, Senegal, and Niger. This initiative is funded by the European Union and implemented by CIFOR-ICRAF in collaboration with World Vision, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), CARE, Sahel Eco, and Agronomes & Vétérinaires Sans Frontières (AVSF). It seeks to:



Support and incentivise smallholder farming and pastoral households to adopt and refine diverse, appropriate, and profitable regreening practices through a supportive policy environment, conducive local governance, women and youth empowerment, and enhanced knowledge and investment.



Enable smallholder farmers and pastoralists, along with local and national governments, civil society, and private sector partners, to increasingly use restoration evidence to inform, enhance, and adapt their decision-making.



Strengthen green and restoration-focused rural enterprises, promote youth- and women-oriented employment opportunities, and develop tree-based value chains.

This initiative builds on the **achievements of the first phase of the Regreening Africa programme (2017-2023)** which promoted sustainable land management practices that supported over 600,000 households, covering nearly one million hectares of land across eight African countries. It also contributes the Great Green Wall's vision of a restored and resilient Sahel landscape.

What is regreening?

Regreening refers to the process of restoring degraded landscapes through sustainable practices that improve its health, productivity, and resilience. These practices include agroforestry, soil health improvement, Farmer-Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR), soil and water conservation, grazing and pastoral management, and access to improved seed

and seedling sources, among others. When applied—especially in combination—these practices lead to visible landscape restoration and meaningful improvements in the well-being of communities that depend on the land. They also strengthen community resilience to climate change, as healthier land supports more diverse and productive livelihoods. This is important, as resilience is essential for effective climate change adaptation.

Regreening Africa Approach:



1. Systems Scaling and Incentives:

Regreening Africa applies a systems scaling approach to address the underlying drivers of land degradation while actively promoting landscape restoration. This approach operates at two main levels:

- **Direct implementation areas:** These are low-cost, community-led intervention sites—often facilitated through farmer-to-farmer exchanges—that serve as innovation and engagement hubs.
- **Scaling interventions:** These target levers for widespread adoption through outreach campaigns that promote behaviour change, policy and governance reform, and investment in local value chains.

To sustain and scale restoration, Regreening Africa strengthens policy and institutional frameworks to ensure that communities, women, and youth receive greater incentives and benefits from restoration efforts. This is achieved by promoting an enabling policy environment that supports local governance and creates favourable conditions for land managers to undertake restoration activities with the assurance of accessing the resulting benefits.



2. Options by Context: Regreening Africa promotes landscape restoration through proven and effective approaches that are not only adaptable to local contexts but that can also be accurately monitored, verified, and evaluated and scaled to other contexts. It embraces the Options by Context approach, which involves tailoring restoration practices to the specific social, agroecological, and livelihood conditions of each location.



3. Evidence-Based Decision Making:

Regreening Africa is a Research in Development programme that relies on evidence to guide decision-making that ensures large-scale restoration efforts are effective, inclusive, and equitable. The programme systematically collects, analyses, and synthesises data at multiple levels. In addition, it uses evidence on restoration processes and impacts—as well as on the drivers and incentives influencing the adoption of sustainable land management and restoration practices—to inform its strategies and actions.



Why is regreening important?



It is estimated that at least 65% of Africa's productive land is currently degraded. This has led to reduced agricultural productivity, increased food insecurity, declining livelihoods, and weakened community resilience to climate change. The Regreening Africa programme seeks to address these challenges and contribute to sustainable development across the continent.



Restoring agricultural livelihoods in Africa's drylands is inextricably linked to the restoration of the land itself. Land is the foundation for food and nutritional security, as well as human well-being and overall development. It is also the engine of economic development in many African countries.



Land degradation renders entire landscapes more susceptible to the increasingly extreme weather events brought about by climate change - such as unpredictable rainfall patterns, high temperatures, severe droughts, intense rainfall and floods. Effective integrated land restoration interventions are therefore urgently needed at a much larger scale to mitigate climate change and build the resilience of communities against its adverse effects.



The role of land restoration in capturing carbon for climate change mitigation, enhancing the resilience and adaptive capacity of communities to climate shocks and stresses, and sustaining healthy ecosystems is widely acknowledged.



4. Local Value Chains: Regreening Africa promotes green value chains—including those based on trees and livestock—as a key driver of resilience and income. It also supports rural entrepreneurship by facilitating the registration of microbusinesses, delivering start-up and business training, and encouraging local innovation. These efforts help communities to derive tangible economic benefits from restoration.



5. Inclusion and Sustainability: The programme integrates gender-transformative and youth-inclusive approaches across all its activities. It works closely with community-based groups and incorporates future climate scenarios into its planning. This approach ensures that social equity is upheld, and the long-term sustainability of restoration efforts is achieved.



6. Effective Stakeholder Engagement: A dedicated stakeholder engagement methodology facilitates continuous learning and adaptation. This includes structured dialogues, policy advocacy, Joint Reflection and Learning Missions (JRLMs), and inclusive workshops that drive ongoing improvement in both implementation and impact.

Expected benefits

The Regreening Africa (Phase II) programme is expected to yield multiple cross-sectoral benefits responding to the above-mentioned challenges, including:



Adoption and refinement of diverse, appropriate, and profitable regreening practices by an additional 200,000 smallholder farming and pastoral households, with hundreds of thousands more incentivised to do the same through a supportive policy environment, conducive local governance, women and youth empowerment, and enhanced knowledge and investment.



Strengthened resilience of communities through improved adaptive capacities, healthier land, and more diverse and productive agricultural systems.



Increased land productivity and the production of nutritious crops that lead to improved household incomes and better food and nutrition security.



Expanded green and restoration-focused rural enterprises, with greater employment opportunities for youth and women, and strengthened tree-based value chains.



Wider use of restoration evidence by smallholder farmers, pastoralists, local and national governments, civil society organisations and private sector actors to enhance and adapt their decision-making for more effective restoration outcomes.

Alignment to regional and global commitments

- The Regreening Africa Programme aligns with several regional commitments that many African countries have endorsed and actively support. These include the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100), the African Union (AU) Green Recovery Action Plan, and the Great Green Wall Initiative, which aim to restore the continent's degraded landscapes and transform millions of lives in the Sahel region.
- Furthermore, the programme aligns with global commitments including the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Land Degradation Neutrality targets under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), as well as the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and the Bonn Challenge.



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Implementing Partners:

