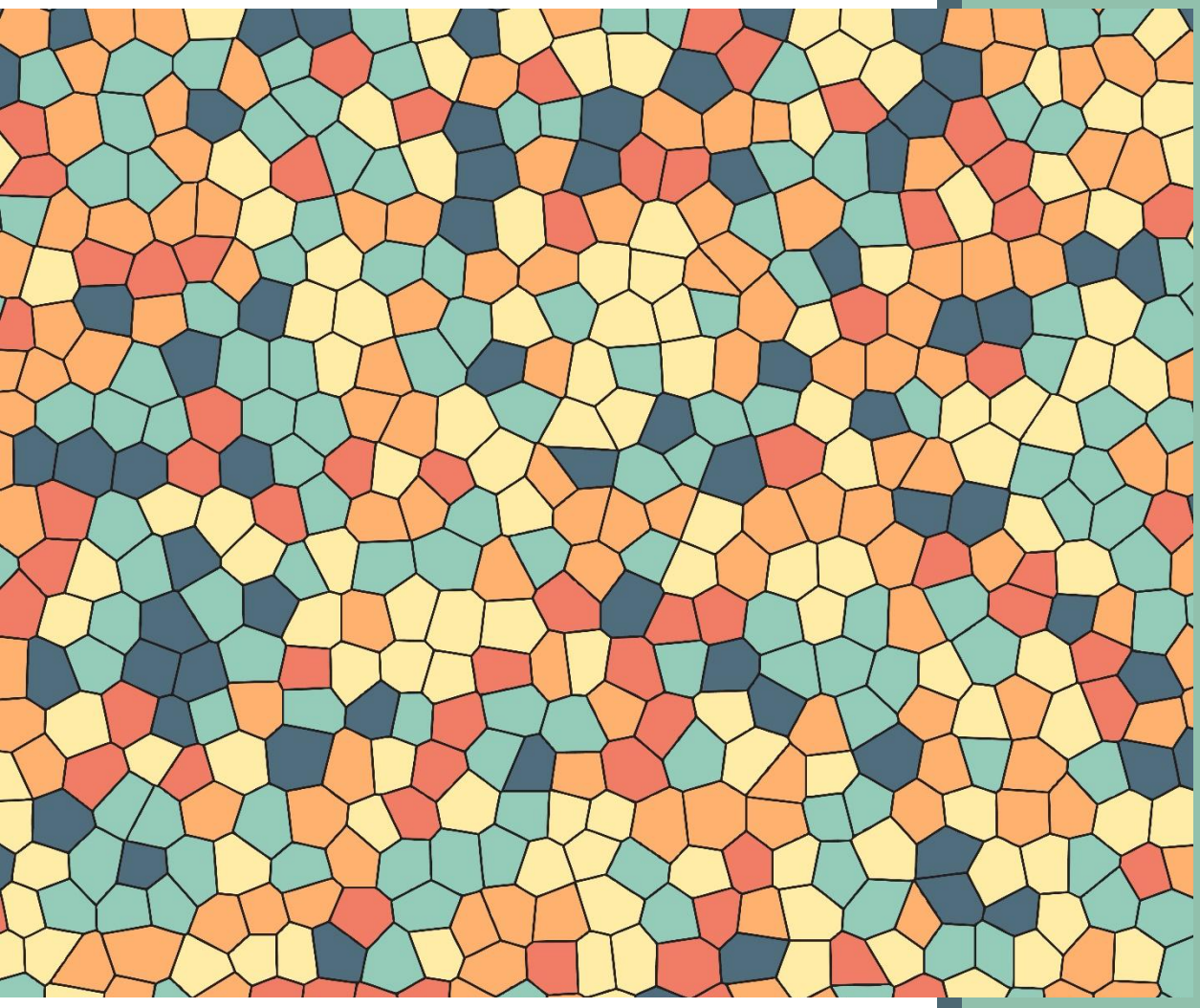
2022

The Mosaic PROGRAMME: A Sahelian renaissance



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1. CONTEXT

The Sahel is known as a melting pot of challenges, but it also offers opportunities for sustainable development. The impacts of rapid population growth, weak governance and climate change are leading to land degradation, growing food insecurity and rising competition around natural resources. These factors result in the exacerbation of poverty, political instability and insecurity, leading to armed conflict and mass migration which further heightens existing vulnerabilities, particularly for marginalised groups including women and youth[1].

The region is identified by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as a "climate change hot spot", that is, an area where human security is threatened due to current and projected climate change impacts[2]. Despite the proven adaptive capacity of the population[3], unprecedented rates of climate change are jeopardising their ability to adapt to unpredictable climate trends and new conditions[4]. This sensitivity to climate change arises from a strong dependence on natural resources driven by the lack of economic alternatives; while communities' degrading adaptive capacity can be explained by poor access to services, poor governance, and weak and inequitable institutions and markets[5]. Higher temperatures, variable rainfall and climate extremes are additional stresses that result in loss of assets, loss of crops, food price shocks and changes in water availability and contribute to land degradation[6].

The Sahel is largely dependent on agriculture as the main economic activity, with about 80-90% of the population actively engaged in agriculture[7]. This is why the degraded security and environmental conditions have fostered rural-urban and forced migration in the region, with the UN estimating that by 2045, they will be responsible for the displacement of some 135 million people. Land degradation is estimated to reduce the GDP of Sahelian countries by up to 8% every year through its harmful impact on agricultural productivity, which leaves populations vulnerable to food insecurity or even famine and decreases their capacity to adapt to rapid climate and environmental changes. Land degradation arises from a combination of inappropriate farming methods (the removal of shrubs and trees leads to soil fertility and its water holding capacity decline) and badly managed grazing by farmers and nomadic pastoralists, both exacerbated by unclear land and tree tenure and degraded natural resource governance systems. This trend has already brought about a sharp decline in soil fertility, accelerating the loss of vegetation cover.

These challenges are not particularly new, which is why most Sahelian governments have adopted decentralised policies on natural resources management designed to empower local authorities and communities to sustainably manage their natural resources. These laudable initiatives are based on the principle that local inhabitants have a granular understanding of local context than more distant authorities. However, because of scant expertise, the lack of an enabling environment and of support to communities, and the very limited human and financial resources local governments can deploy, they have seen very limited implementation. Furthermore, policies governing land and tree tenure and usage rights are often lacking, not properly implemented, or not fit for purpose. All countries suffer from the legal system's limited recognition of, and alignment with, customary land and tree (use) rights, meaning farmers have limited/no incentives to invest in their land. Finally, remediation efforts, whether initiated by governments or donor-

[1] Sultan and Gaetani 2016; Serdeczny et al. 2017

[2] Diffenbaugh and Giorgi, 2012, de Sherbinin, 2014; IPCC, 2019: 197

[3] Mortimore and Adams 2001; van der Geest and Dietz 2004

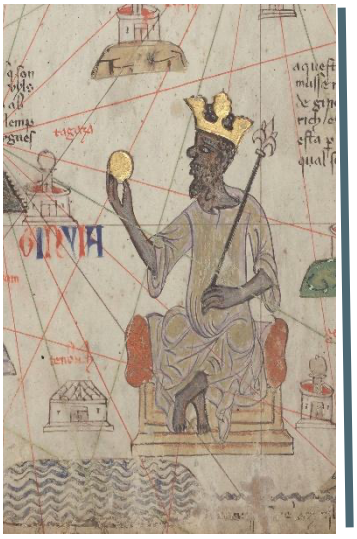
[4] Connolly-Boutin and Smit 2016; Serdeczny et al. 2017

[5] Jayne et al. 2014; McDonald et al. 2013; Pomati and Nandy 2019

[6] Source: USAID. 2018. Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced (RISE) II Technical Approach Working Paper

[7] Source: UNEP. 2012. Sahel Atlas of Changing Landscapes: Tracing trends and variations in vegetation cover and soil condition. United Nations Environment Programme. Nairobi

funded projects, tend to focus their outreach to local communities on environmental themes rather than on that which is most important to them: gaining better livelihoods, greater food security, and additional cash income.



Yet the region was once amongst the world's richest, a land of opportunity, where communities and precolonial states deployed nature-based solutions benefiting people and the environment through perfectly adapted, sustainable socioecological systems. Evidence for that success is abundant. The first written reports from the region, whether by Arab or European explorers, suggest a landscape of healthy, settled communities operating in lands rich in trees, livestock and wildlife. Timbuktu was once a global centre of learning, a status the city could hardly have achieved unless its hinterland was bountiful enough to feed armies of scholars, clerks, and students.

This proposal, the Mosaic Programme for a Sahel Renaissance, aims to renew this prosperity by drawing and acting upon key lessons from the successes - and the challenges - across the region.

This ambition is supported by propitious public objectives and rising private sector interest. Governments and development partners are committed to purposeful forest and landscape restoration. The AFR-100 and the Great Green Wall (GGW) initiatives have committed to restore millions of hectares of land by 2030 as contributions to the Bonn Challenge, UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, the SDGs, the Aichi Targets and these countries' Nationally Determined Contributions to the Paris climate ambitions.

Less encouragingly, however, we must note that after a decade of efforts, the GGW initiative is very far from reaching its targets.[8] A recent report, "The Great Green Wall Implementation Status and Way Ahead to 2030", outlines some of the main challenges the GGW initiative faces:

1. "A lack of consideration in national environmental priorities";
2. "Weak organizational structures and processes for the implementation";
3. "Lack of mainstreaming of environmental change and action into the respective sector strategies, policies and action plans";
4. "Insufficient coordination, exchange, and flow of information at the regional and national levels";
5. "The lack of monitoring and evaluation expertise combined with high monitoring and reporting standards and insufficient funds to develop local monitoring, evaluation and verification capacities".

These challenges are often rooted in organisational issues. First is a silo effect: important line ministries like Finance are often unfamiliar with the foundational importance of land regeneration to economic development, while environment ministries struggle to explain the benefits of the measures, they promote in hard cash terms. Second is a tendency to create new implementation agencies for these individual commitments rather than institutionalising support into a single, effective implementing organisation (a glance at state-level governance challenges elsewhere, from Asia through Europe to the Americas, suggests that these issues are far from being unique to the region).

[8] UNCCD/PAGGW, 2020; Vinceti et al., 2020

Set against these problems are the region's very real, if often unrecognised, assets: a young population, a remarkable diversity of potential agroforestry value chains, plentiful but hardly tapped aquifers, solar energy, political decentralisation efforts designed to boost local participation in, and control over, landscape restoration, a rich network of civil society organisations (CSOs), and the two key tools needed to rapidly regenerate landscapes: trees and livestock.

The importance of CSOs cannot be overemphasised. They are often deeply embedded within their communities as legitimate entities and, in zones of political instability or insecurity, can be the primary actors to help populations boost their prospects[9]. The CSOs in the Mosaic programme will be chosen based on a set of criteria including their political neutrality. By being able to mediate between different interests and formulate and enforce natural resource management bylaws, these bodies can gain an influence far beyond their size or formal status.

Despite having this latent capacity, CSOs face a number of obstacles:

- They are typically constrained by state-level rules and regulations that are often not fit for purpose. Such hurdles are sometimes steep and cannot be addressed by individual CSOs on their own.
- They struggle to attract direct funding and the very demanding processes and reporting requirements of international donors can prevent them from playing an effective role.
- They have limited capacities to communicate their impacts externally, to share their knowledge, and to scale up their successful practices.
- They have a limited capacity to evaluate their own impact in a way that can be communicated externally.
- They have little access to the insights of modern agroecological science and often fail to realize the immense value of the traditional knowledge their members embody.
- Many face difficulties coordinating with each other and cannot present a united front with respect to interested outsiders.

For these many reasons, most CSOs face almost insurmountable challenges when seeking to achieve, communicate and scale up successful land regeneration models. Lessening these challenges as far as possible is a key component of this programme.

2. OVERVIEW OF THE MOSAIC PROGRAMME

Land restoration outcomes can only be delivered on a large scale if they lead to significant improvements in the economic prospects of the communities living within those landscapes. Strategic scaling approaches must therefore provoke transformational changes of livelihoods by reforming and restoring effective local socioecological systems.

The Mosaic programme: a Sahelian Renaissance aims to do so by releasing the powerful potential of CSOs across the GGW area and beyond in the Sahel by empowering them, supporting them in the development of natural resource management visions, plans and bylaws, and bringing them together to realise land restoration at scale and then communicate the process.

Doing so will see their capacity to plan, act and enforce agreed natural resource management plans improved. It will also make them better able to integrate and act on data flowing from

[9] Sultan and Gaetani 2016; Serdeczny et al. 2017

monitoring, evaluation, and verification systems, and boost their capacity to mobilise funds and access technical assistance. Crucially, these community-boosting measures must happen in partnership with national and sub-national governments, whose ability to modify, shape and offer relief from the application of some regulations in deference to locally evolved and agreed bylaws will be crucial.

The outcome of this community-based management of landscapes will be a rekindling of ecosystem functions and will thus increase the availability of biomass for harvest, consumption, and sale. This in turn is the foundation upon which a range of local economic activities can start to develop and grow, ranging from those who buy, transform and transport agricultural and non-timber forest products to those who supply and repair tools such as farm implements and motorbikes.

Within these regenerated landscapes, the restoration of ecosystemic and economic functions happens hand in hand. Our approach is rooted in a particular geography, which is why we propose to introduce a new concept here, that of the "Special Regeneration Zones". These are geographically contiguous areas where development, land restoration and other interventions are closely coordinated under local management. This novel approach is, we propose, key to mitigate the above-mentioned challenges in the region and achieve sustainable prosperity through large-scale restoration. The programme will initially be implemented in 11 Great Green Wall countries: Mauritania, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Chad, Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Djibouti, with the potential to scale to other countries in the region.

2.1. Objectives

The Mosaic programme: a Sahelian Renaissance will pursue four interlocking objectives:

1. Restore a total of 3 million hectares across a mosaic of dozens of geographically contiguous regeneration zones;
2. Utilise the rising biomass productivity flowing from that land restoration to help increase the incomes of at least 1 million farming and pastoralist households;
3. Encourage the creation of around half a million new rural jobs; including through the development of new productive non-timber forest product value chains.

What makes the Mosaic programme: a Sahelian Renaissance unique is that:

1. It puts governance at the centre of restoration efforts by working through and with grassroots communities and CSOs;
2. It develops and tailors appropriate technical assistance in a process of co-development with these local institutions and communities;
3. It attaches land restoration objectives to the greater goal of effective rural economic development by explicitly pursuing land restoration for livelihood purposes;
4. It identifies and uses local ecosystemic resources and management approaches, such as the managed regeneration of trees, the development of agroforestry value chains and planned grazing, to achieve rapid ecosystem restoration at low cost;
5. It ensures a process of coordination, monitoring, reflection and learning across a wide network of CSOs to ensure implementation is guided by the best information and that local innovations are adapted and scaled across new areas.

2.2. PROJECT COMPONENTS

COMPONENT I: Restoration, reduction and prevention of further degradation

To achieve the objective of 3 million hectares of degraded land restored, the programme, together with national authorities and key stakeholders, will identify areas that are degraded or are undergoing degradation and where drivers of degradation are of concern. The programme will identify the CSOs working in these areas of focus within each country and screen them to select the most respected ones. The selected CSOs will go through a training programme to work with their communities to identify a local vision, enhance land restoration (tree planting, farmer managed natural regeneration, soil and water conservation, nurseries…) and sustainable value chains linked to that restoration. The restoration activities will be decided with the local communities considering the environmental and socio-economic context of each restoration area and village according to the vision they have defined. This will require assessing site specific conditions.

Activities will focus both on addressing the drivers of degradation and identifying low-cost restoration practices such as Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration to allow for large scale, effective and sustainable restoration. The adoption of sustainable land restoration and management techniques will improve soil structure and increase water infiltration, retention and availability leading to an increase in soil fertility, crop yields and land productivity. The increase in land productivity will help reduce pressures on existing natural resources and conversion of forest to agricultural land. In addition, the increase in crop yields will lead to an increase in household income, improving the resilience of the local community including to climatic shocks. With improved productivity, farmers and their families will also benefit from a more food secure and diverse diet.

By the end of programme, the objective is to increase the income of at least 1 million farming and pastoralist households. The increase in tree cover will also contribute to the increase in non-timber forest product availability in the area providing income-generating opportunities all year round through a portfolio of value chains. By the end of the project around half a million new rural jobs will be created including through the development of new non-timber forest product value chains.

The CSOs will be financially and technically supported to undertake the restoration work in collaboration with the local communities as well as support the development of sylvo-agro-pastoral value chains. Value chain development activities will focus on strengthening markets so they are efficient, resilient and inclusive; professionalising economic businesses; developing and extending formal financial inputs, and technical services to local communities; and enhancing the business environment through improved policy implementation and enhanced transparency. Capability enhancing activities will focus on the enhancement of livelihood profitability for local communities through increased human capacity, access to finance and productive assets, formation into economic groups, and business networking. The CSOs will conduct market assessments, coaching, capacity enhancement, resource transfers, and group formation as necessary to help beneficiaries pursue the most promising value chain. Finally, the CSOs will be supported in developing their monitoring, evaluation and verification skills. The CSOs will then be able to report on their progress on the ground as well as on their financial expenditure.

COMPONENT 2: Governance

Effective governance of institutions and organisations is a key component of this programme as it affects the delivery of services, access to resources, and coordination of activities that promote progress in technical sectors. Strengthening governance is essential to the sustainability of the programme outcome and to achieve the transformative change of enhanced community leadership of local development.

More specifically, the programme will promote an enabling policy, legislative, regulatory, and institutional framework conducive to the sustainable and equitable management of natural resources. The programme will tackle issues - financial, managerial, technical, and regulatory – as a holistic set. The programme will advocate for the development and/or the implementation of the decentralised natural resource management policies. The appropriation and governance of the local natural resources by the local communities is essential for the sustainability of our restoration activities. The programme will support the establishment or strengthening of local natural resource management bodies which will have the capacities to take decision over the restoration, protection and use of local resources. These bodies will include representatives of local CSOs, village groups, local and/or national authorities, traditional leaders, technicians, and researchers. To make these management bodies inclusive, women, youth, pastoralists as well as other marginalised groups need to have a voice in decision making processes and so need to be represented. The members will be trained and empowered to assume the management of their zones. This will include training around decentralised laws. These bodies will facilitate the restoration and protection of the environment as well as the exchange of information and knowledge. They will also provide technical support to the farmers, manage conflicts linked to natural resources and support the development of sustainable income generating activities. As a result, thousands to hundreds of thousands of hectares will be locally managed following the decentralised government policies.

Once the national policy framework is in place and the various stakeholders involved in the management of the restoration areas know each other and know how to work together, some discussions around the creation of Special Regeneration Zones will start taking into consideration the existence of local development plans thus paving the way for continuity beyond the programme lifespan. The programme will support the stakeholders who are keen to create or strengthen a Special Regeneration Zone.

Our approach will engage stakeholders in a polycentric governance model to regain lost functionalities of a degraded ecosystem, considering the differences in opportunities, hurdles, preferences, and responses among various social classes[10]. To do this, stakeholders will be empowered to express concerns and actively make decisions about restoration models to foster sustainability11 . Finally, this will require collective participation action based on resilient social capital with restoration embedded in territorial planning[12].

What are Special Regeneration Zones?

A Special Regeneration Zone (SRZ) is a geographically defined area set up by government charter. Each SRZ is run by a management committee comprised of stakeholder representatives (from the relevant ministries, from development actors, from CSOs and research institutes) operating under

[10] Mansourian 2017
[11] Gann et al. 2019; Minang et al. 2015
[12] Fossey et al. 2020

an agreement reached through the SHARED process[13]. All issues related to natural resource management (environment, agriculture, forestry etc.) are devolved to the SRZ management committee. For that reason, the powers of this committee will generally include policing and the right to modify or adapt relevant laws, rules and regulations and to meet that area's needs (think of the way Special Economic Zones are typically organised). The size of each SRZ will vary and they may be developed from existing management efforts.

State services are adapted to meet the needs of the SRZ (for example, to provide services to nomadic pastoralists). Donors are invited to collaborate to support various aspects of the work within the SRZs. To ensure effective coordination and the pursuit of the overall SRZ strategy, the SRZ management committee has decision-making powers over investments, whether from institutional donor- or private funds. The SRZs charter may be reviewed after a substantial number of years, typically 10 or 20.

Establishing SRZs will be a gradual process, starting on agreement of intent and geographical scope.

COMPONENT 3: Coordination and learning

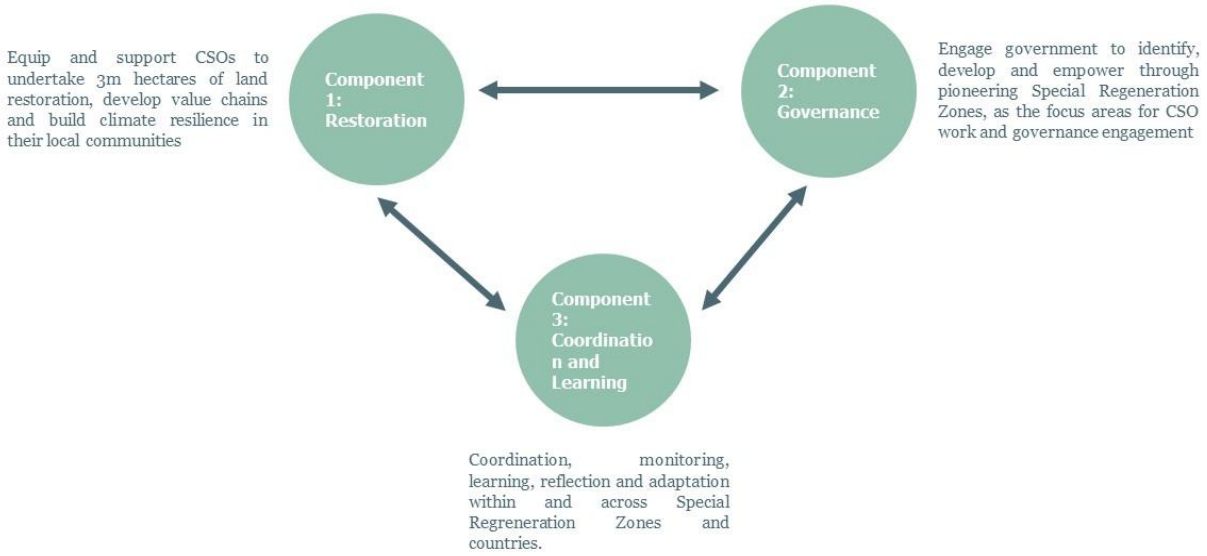
Component 3 aims to construct a system of managing natural resources and incoming funding across the region while maximising adaptive management of the programme. The different local management bodies supported by the programme will involve relevant stakeholders in the participatory diagnostics of local resources, leading to the development of the local development and management plans which include the right to use land as well as the responsibilities of each actor in the protection and rehabilitation of local natural resources. So, each local management body will negotiate and agree on an overarching natural resource management and development plan through inclusive evidence inspired by a participatory negotiation process involving most CSOs in its perimeter. The management bodies will then be responsible to implement the management and development plans in their area with technical assistance of the CSOs when needed.

To ensure a harmony and synergy between the different restoration activities, methodologies used, policies, management plans and reporting and monitoring mechanisms, the programme will organise learning and experience sharing events/platforms at different levels. Using the SHARED approach, structured stakeholder engagement, joint reflection of evidence, progress and innovations and cross-learning dialogues will take place to inform adaptive management and maximise learning and scaling. In this way, each group will work in coordination with others and learn from each other at multiple scales: all the CSO groups and/or management bodies within a restoration area, all the restoration areas within a country, and all the participating countries. To be able to share the results of this programme with other national and international organisations, governments and donors, the programme will develop a high standard Monitoring, Evaluation, Assessment and Learning (MEAL) framework that all the CSOs will have to follow. The CSOs will receive training and support to be able to meet those standards. As an example, baselines and trends will be continuously monitored using the Land Health Surveillance Framework. All the key indicators mentioned in this brief as well as additional ones on land health and land restoration

[13] SHARED, the Stakeholder Approach to Risk Informed and Evidence-based Decision-making (http://www.worldagroforestry.org/shared), provides an innovative and tested framework that is tailored to each decision context and brings together processes and evidence to shift decision-making towards inclusive, inter-sectoral and inter-institutional propositions capable of tackling complex issues while delivering optimised outcomes. By centering dialogue around data and evidence from multiple sources and ensuring a range of stakeholders are actively included, the SHARED process can address power dynamics and structure engagement towards agreed and impactful outcomes.

will be measured. All the evidence collected by the different CSOs will be gathered and validated before being shared widely.

The CSOs will also be trained and supported in mobilising funds. By building the technical, as well as MEAL and fundraising capacities of the CSOs, the programme will ensure the sustainability and the scalability of its actions. After the programme is completed, the CSOs will be able to mobilise new funds to implement new land restoration activities and report on activities to donors and international organisations such as the GGW.



3. PROJECT STRUCTURE

The programme will be led by a consortium of three international organisations: Tree Aid, ICRAF/CIFOR and ReSaD. The three organisations have extensive experience in the Sahel, in land restoration activities and in building CSOs capacities. The three organisations will respectively take the role of Lead Managing Agency, Knowledge Management lead and Civil Society Lead. The three organisations will be supported in the programme implementation by a steering committee composed of representatives of Pan African Agency for GGW, UNCCD Accelerator, and the donor(s).

3.1. Consortium members

Tree Aid is an International NGO established in 1987 with offices in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Ethiopia. Tree Aid offers over 30 years' experience working with national and local governments, national NGOs and communities in the drylands of Africa to tackle poverty and the effects of the climate crisis by growing trees and restoring and protecting land. Led by local people, our projects make sure trees provide nutritious food and incomes today, and look after the environment for tomorrow. We support people to manage their land and resources in a way that helps slow down the effects of the climate crisis and stops fertile soil being lost. Tree Aid exists to help communities break the cycle of poverty and environmental degradation in vulnerable countries in the African drylands. Over the last 30 years, Tree Aid has grown nearly 24 million trees and directly supported 1.85 million people out of poverty. Since 2014, we have restored and protected over 150,000 hectares of degraded land. In addition, since 2017, Tree Aid has supported

the creation of approximately 1,000 small enterprises focused on the transformation and commercialization of non-timber forest products and worked directly with almost 300,000 people. More than 50% of these beneficiaries are women who have seen their income increase by at least 25%.

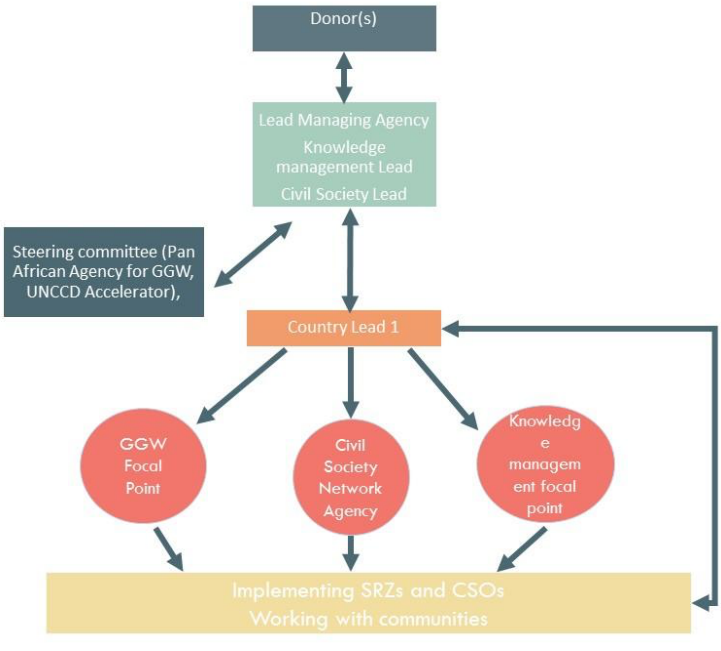
The **merged Centre for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry Center (CIFOR-ICRAF)** is a world-class research institution which delivers actionable evidence and solutions to transform the way land and renewable resources are used, and how food is produced. With headquarters in Indonesia and Kenya and offices in more than 30 countries in the Global South, CIFOR-ICRAF has more than 65 years of combined global and local levels expertise. CIFOR-ICRAF Sahel office in Bamako, Mali, is a hub for landscape restoration, climate change adaptation and mitigation, sustainable and gender sensitive tree-crop-livestock climate smart production systems. CIFOR-ICRAF has developed and scaled up innovations in the domestication of indigenous tree species, tree-based farming systems, landscape restoration, non-timber forest product value chains, with win-win engagement with private sectors for demand driven tree-based value chains and rural enterprises development in the Sahel. Our decades of experience and technical expertise in the Sahel region has enabled millions of people to improve their livelihoods, and contributed to restoring over one million hectares of degraded land.

The **Réseau Sahel Désertification (ReSaD)** is an initiative of civil society active in the fight against desertification in the Sahel, coordinated by the French association CARI. It brings together national civil society platforms: CNCOD in Niger, GTD in France, SPONG in Burkina Faso, and REFEDE in Mali. ReSaD supports an organised civil society in the field of combating desertification. Since 2010, it has been offering a collective and concerted response, bringing together stakeholders in the fight against desertification and sustainable land management. Through its five areas of intervention below, ReSaD is at the interface between field actions and decision-making spaces. It addresses a wide range of actors: associations, NGOs, scientists, local authorities, international decision-makers and the general public in the Sahel and in France.

1. Building a common voice for civil society
2. Strengthen the capacities of actors
3. Supporting local initiatives
4. Raise awareness of the fight against desertification
5. Develop common sub-regional projects.

3.2. In country structure

The programme will identify in each country of implementation an organisation - Country Lead - which will have the capacities and knowledge to implement the programme at the national level. This Country Lead will be supported by a committee made up of key government institutions and partners to coordinate the network of CSOs working in the restoration area/SRZs. The government GGW focal points as well as the knowledge management focal point will be able to support this coordination, ensure alignment with national strategies, and benefit from the collective evidence of impact. The Country Lead will have overall responsibility for the successful implementation, monitoring and reporting of programme activities and will work with the CSOs to deliver the programme on-the-ground and in synergy with local government authorities.



4. PROJECT SCHEDULE

The timeframe of the project is 7 years, made of the following activities:

- Year 0 - Use seed funding to build a coalition behind initial regeneration zones, detail concept, secure ongoing funding commitments and coalition arrangements;
- Year 1 - Planning, establishing network structure, baselining, establishment of grant facility, deployment of community human resource recruiters, launching first special regenerative zone;
- Year 2-6 - Project implementation, action-oriented learning, capacity building, network information sharing and coordination, annual reporting, launching next series of special regenerative zones;
- Year 7 - Consolidation, capitalization, policy briefing;
- Year 8-10 - Integration of the Special Regenerative Zones concept into national development plans, replication to new sites and new countries.

5. BUDGET

Budget $140,000,000

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