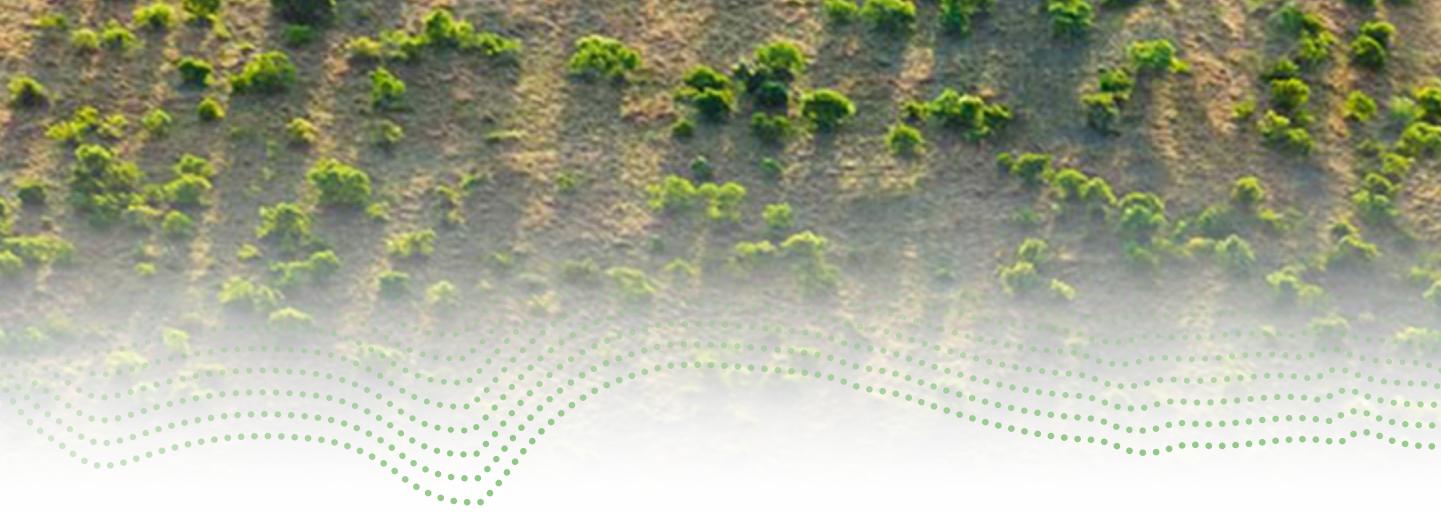




European Union
support to the
Great Green Wall
initiative



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The **Great Green Wall (GGW) initiative is an African flagship** initiative that seeks to re-green the regions of the Sahel and the Horn of Africa from Senegal to Somalia – an area stretching across 8000 km. The GGW aims to transform the lives of the people in these regions by building a mosaic of green and productive landscapes that both improve livelihoods and foster environmental sustainability, while helping land use systems resiliently adapt to uncertainty and climatic extremes. It is one example of how the EU contributes to investing in sustainable connections that work for people and planet, through the Global Gateway.

Africa's Sahel and Horn of Africa regions are disproportionately facing the consequences of climate change while simultaneously experiencing heightened levels of insecurity. As a result, local communities face more persistent droughts, a lack of food, increased conflict over dwindling natural resources and mass migration. The Great Green Wall initiative provides the necessary momentum to tackle the threat of desertification and the degradation of natural ecosystems, while providing alternative livelihood opportunities for local communities.

The GGW Initiative was launched in 2007 by the African Union and has evolved from its initial focus on tree planting towards a comprehensive rural development initiative aiming at transforming the lives of Sahelian populations, combining ecological, economic and social action with the following objectives to be reached by 2030:

- Restore 100 million hectares of actually degraded land
- Create 10 million jobs
- Sequester 250 million tons of carbon
- Improve food security for 20 million people
- Support the millions of people living in communities across the Sahel
- Provide access to 10 million smallholder farmers to agricultural technologies resilient to climate change



The EU is a long-standing supporter of Great Green Wall initiative. Since 2021, the EU has sought to further boost its support, with President von der Leyen pledging assistance to the tune of **EUR 700 million per year**.

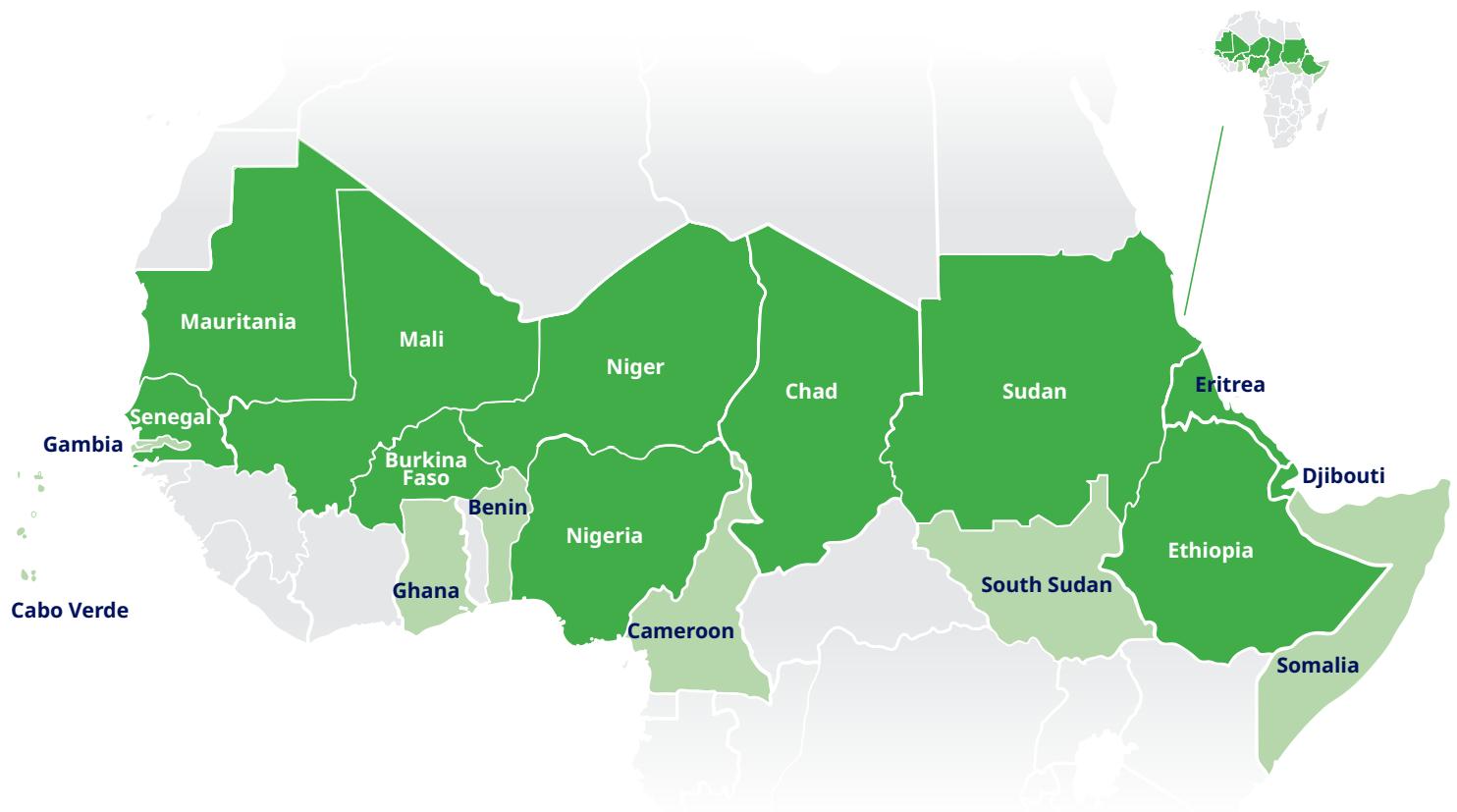
The EU's support to the Great Green Wall is part of the [EU-Africa Global Gateway Investment Package](#). The GGW is also a key enabler of commitments announced by the EU under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, such as the Paris Agreement, and the Convention on Biological Diversity. EU support promotes the external dimension of the European Green Deal, with a specific focus on its [Farm-to-Fork Strategy](#), its [Biodiversity Strategy 2030](#), and its [Soil Strategy 2030](#). Moreover, it reflects the EU's ambitions in combatting desertification worldwide, also under the **United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification**.

Support to the GGW initiative is largely driven by country programmes in the 18 countries, complemented by regional programmes, creating a medley of cross-sectoral country actions. The Pan-African Agency of the Great Green Wall (PAAGGW), under the aegis of the African Union, and national GGW agencies play a coordination and monitoring role. They are being supported by the GGW Accelerator team, nested within the Global Mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

Since 2021, the EU has supported 70 actions explicitly aiming to boost the Great Green Wall. Support has been increasing each year, bypassing the targeted EUR 700 million in 2023.

Supporting programmes can operate in the fields of, for example, food security, climate change and biodiversity loss, sustainable agri-food systems, addressing desertification or sustainable energy. Where possible, the EU seeks to deploy an integrated approach to sustainable land management, which combines rural agricultural development with biodiversity conservation, sustainable use and climate action.

Supporting countries in the Great Green Wall initiative



- Main Great Green Wall countries
- Additional countries committed to the Great Green Wall

EU contribution: EUR 1,540 million (2021-2023)

Examples of EU support contributing to the Great Green Wall across a number of countries

Benin

In Benin, the PADIAP programme seeks to enhance the resilience of agriculture and pastoral value chains by supporting family farming and territorial approaches in central Benin (south Borgou, Donga, Collines, Zou). Here, the EU seeks to increase access to finance for agricultural and pastoral infrastructures for communal use, accompanying local producers in their private investments. The initiative promotes the development of sustainable agriculture, with a focus on poverty reduction, food and nutrition security - while securing a sustainable food system which pays due consideration for climate challenges and the preservation of biodiversity.

Burkina Faso

In Burkina Faso, the EU seeks to promote better economic resilience of local populations through an integrated territorial approach, targeting i) the development of rural and peri urban agroecology and its value chains; ii) sustainable management of natural resources (such as forests) and water resources; and iii) professional training and development of urban markets. The programme works in the Ouagadougou-Koudougou-Dédougou-Bobo Dioulasso triangle, an area with a high potential for agriculture and rich in natural resources – an excellent opportunity to boost local food security.





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Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, the EU aims to boost drought resilience, reduce vulnerability to climate shocks and limit dependency on humanitarian assistance. It is doing this through supporting the Ministry of Water and Energy and local basin operators, by helping improved access to accurate information on the water resource availability, variability, and quality. By improving watershed and land planning capacities, this will lead to effective, efficient and sustainable water resources development and management which includes information on climate, hydrology, water resource use, as well as socio-economic activity in the basin or sub-basins and their impact in term of pollution. Support will also help improve capacities of regional and Woreda administration disaster risk management institutions in efficient early warning systems. The EU assists in restoring livelihoods and living conditions of disaster-affected communities, ensuring they are better prepared to withstand future disasters, especially through adoption of appropriate water conservation and management techniques at the farm level.



Mauritania

In order to combat significant land degradation and a fragile ecosystem, accentuated by the impacts of climate change, in Mauritania the EU seeks to support the structuring and consolidation of agro-pastoral value chains which have a high nutritional and commercial potential. The priority focus is on improving the sustainable agri-food system, in harmony with the environment and resilient to climate shocks, in order to help local consumption patterns and nutritional practices gain from local products that are already resilient to climate change. These efforts align with Mauritanian climate policies at the national level which seek to improve productivity and restore the fertility of agricultural land. EU support will also contribute to regional efforts concerning rural and ecosystem development in the fight against land degradation, climate change and loss of biodiversity – which have a strong impact on poverty and food insecurity in Sahelian countries.

Niger

In Niger, where 80% of the population depend on agriculture, EU support helps to scale up ecosystems that are resilient to climate change through the restoration of degraded land and the development of green jobs. By supporting a number of value chains (such as moringa, marula, honey) that are environmentally-friendly and resilient to climate change, the EU aims to support local governance in restoring 50 000 hectares of degraded land in the Maradi and Agadez regions as well as boost reforestation in order to produce and promote local forest products and sub-products for multiple uses.

Sudan

In Sudan, the EU helps to tackle the impacts of climate change and desertification by supporting populations manage access to land, water and pasture in order to ensure food security and at the same time manage potential conflicts between host and displaced communities as well as farmers and herders. For example, one programme seeks to increase the productivity and profitability of smallholder agriculture and livestock value chains through the promotion of agroecological practices. Further support helps provide sustainable and decent jobs for youth, including for internally displaced persons, refugee populations and people with disabilities. A focus on equal and sustainable access to natural resources helps contribute to food security and mitigate conflicts, thereby providing the opportunity for the voluntary return of conflict-displaced people (in Darfur, South Kordofan, Northern State, Blue Nile, Gedaref, Kassala and Red Sea).



Regional programmes

Besides supporting countries with national and local activities, the EU also provides support through regional and thematic programmes.

Action Against Desertification

Launched in 2014 and implemented by FAO and partners with funding from the European Union in the framework of the 10th European Development Fund to (EDF) implementing land restoration programmes on the ground in 10 countries of the Great Green Wall initiative. The programme has built capacity of rural communities, government and NGO partners to create an enabling environment, large-scale restoration and sustainable land management (SLM) of degraded agro-silvo-pastoral lands, landscapes and forests; disseminated SLM good practices; created income-generating activities and employment opportunities in rural areas, through the sustainable production, processing and marketing of agricultural products and forest goods and services; promoted farmer field schools and knowledge exchanges about the causes and the best ways to combat and prevent desertification. Main achievements of this global programme in Africa have been: 51 000 ha restored; 4 700 000 nursery seedlings produced and planted; 103 tons of seeds sown; 100 native species used; 81 000 direct beneficiaries.

Knowledge for Great Green Wall Action (K4GGWA)

The EU supports K4GGWA to empower key GGW stakeholders to enhance their knowledge management and sharing mechanisms, develop learning and data platforms, foster dialogue at national and regional levels, and fund innovations. The initiative also aims to strengthen policies and institutions and enhance the capacities of national and regional GGW agencies, and will act as a crucial regional backbone to the many GGW-relevant European Union projects funded at national level.

K4GGWA is specifically designed to:

- strengthen the knowledge base to inform GGW action;
- address drivers of land degradation, including socioeconomic (e.g., gender, business, security) and ecological factors;
- improve GGW-relevant interventions and monitoring of key actors' activities;
- scale sustainable land management approaches adapted to both pastoral and cropping systems (including communal and state lands) that fit local contexts;
- develop the right enabling environment by tackling governance issues and policy environments that build on the use of evidence to develop and implement effective interventions at scale.



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Regreening Africa

A programme funded by the European Union as a partnership of research organisations and implementing NGOs, with the core objective to scale-up evergreen agriculture, using locally appropriate techniques including Farmer-Managed Natural Regeneration, tree planting and other forms of agroforestry and complementary sustainable land management interventions. Activities include Developing Land Restoration Approaches; Scaling-up Land Restoration and Regreening; Developing Value Chains that Support Agroforestry; Influencing Policy and Developing Evidence-based Recommendations; Training for Implementors and Policymakers; and Analysing Target Areas and Facilitating Cross-Country Learning. The programme covers six countries in the GGW region of interest – Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Somalia (plus Kenya and Rwanda) – with the objective of reversing land degradation among 500,000 households and across one million hectares.

Winner of the World Restoration Flagship Awards (part of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration)



[Watch the video](#)



