

Africa's Great Green Wall Initiative

Landscape Protection Beyond Afforestation



The Great Green Wall (GGW) Initiative was introduced in 2007, involving 11 countries in the Sahel between Senegal and Ethiopia.

The Initiative has evolved into far more than just an afforestation project, aiming to **better manage and prevent degradation of key landscapes** in a variety of ways.

How has this **multifaceted approach** improved the efficacy of the Initiative, and assisted with progress towards various SDGs?

Examples of effective action...

...across the Initiative



Senegal

- Senegal is one of the Initiative's original participants, whose focus was to **build resilience**, especially within agroforestry
- Their restoration and reforestation action covers 817,500 hectares, aiming to maintain and strengthen key sources of economic growth while preventing loss of soil fertility from wind erosion
- This **synergistic action** has been facilitated by creation of windbreaks and the training of over 2,000 people



Burkina Faso

- Women in Burkina Faso currently face a disproportionate economic burden, participating in more unpaid care work and informal employment, and with male earnings on average 22% higher
- The Initiative has helped to create secure, green employment opportunities for women in four main sectors: forestry, agriculture, energy, and waste management, promoting more **equal, emancipatory development** along lines of gender while ensuring environmental protection



Ethiopia

- Tree planting in Ethiopia has **improved soil structure** by increasing water retention, enriching soil with organic matter and fixing nitrogen, all reducing the impacts of drought and the risks of erosion and landslides
- Planting **location-specific**, economically beneficial species such as Acacias and Eucalyptus helps to **simultaneously** ensure sustainable production and prevent localised hunger



Why has this multifaceted approach to restoration been effective?

Bottom-up projects



Empowerment of minoritised communities

Location-specific



Contextually appropriate, synergistic progress towards the SDGs

Conclusion

The Great Green Wall Initiative has proven thus far to be an effective strategy for landscape restoration and protection, contributing substantially - and simultaneously - to the social, economic and environmental pillars of sustainable development. This model of a large-scale Initiative comprised of smaller-scale, localised projects could certainly be modified to suit other landscapes in their pursuit of SDG15 alongside the other Sustainable Development Goals.