



# African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative

Overview prepared by the World Resources Institute (WRI), New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the World Bank

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\*Annexes in English available upon request



## Overview

AFR100 (the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative) is a country-led effort to restore 100 million hectares of deforested and degraded landscapes across Africa by 2030. **AFR100 will accelerate restoration to enhance food security, increase climate change resilience and mitigation, and combat rural poverty.**

AFR100 responds to the African Union mandate to bring 100 million hectares of degraded land into restoration by 2030, as expressed in the political declaration endorsed by the Africa Union in October 2015 for the creation of the umbrella Africa Resilient Landscapes Initiative (ARLI). It complements the African Landscapes Action Plan (ALAP) and the broader Climate Change, Biodiversity and Land Degradation (LDBA) program of the African Union. AFR100 contributes to the achievement of domestic restoration and sustainable development commitments, the Bonn Challenge, and New York Declaration on Forests among many other targets. The initiative directly contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris climate agreement. It builds on the experience and progress achieved through the TerrAfrica Partnership and related landscape restoration efforts.



The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD Agency), World Resources Institute (WRI), Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the World Bank have launched the initiative and are building a "platform for implementation" that provides technical support and facilitates financing for partner countries. In its initial project phase, AFR100 is in the process of building up and strengthening the partnership, and leveraging additional resources to scale up successful forest landscape restoration practices in targeted landscapes in participating African countries.

## Problem statement

Every year nearly 3 million hectares of forests are lost in Africa. 65 percent of land in Africa is affected by degradation, and 3 percent of GDP is lost annually from soil and nutrient depletion on cropland. Among the many challenges facing Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), forest loss and land degradation stands out. Exacerbated by climate change and poor management of agricultural lands, forest degradation threatens the ecological functions vital to all SSA economies. Rural smallholder farmers and households suffer the most from degraded land as their activities are largely dependent on stable weather patterns, healthy soils and tree cover, and water. Framework conditions such as governance of natural resources and policy coherence often do not favor restoration at scale, and numerous barriers impede progress. These barriers include weak institutional coordination, a failure to devolve resource management authority to local resource users, and insufficient economic incentives for local and foreign investments in sustainable land management. More work is needed to take stock of the successful cases of forest landscape restoration, expand communications and outreach, and to support the implementation of comprehensive strategies and concrete plans to trigger the widespread adoption of forest landscape restoration practices.

## What is the landscape approach, what is forest landscape restoration, and how does it relate to Africa?

The landscape approach entails managing multiple land uses in an integrated manner, taking into consideration both environmental conditions and the human needs that depend on healthy ecosystems. Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) can restore ecosystem services and landscape functionality, boost and stabilize land use productivity and enhance resilience to climate change through the restoration of forests and tree cover outside of forests. AFR100 recognizes the benefits that forests and trees can provide in restored and resilient African landscapes: improved soil fertility, enhanced agricultural productivity and food security, greater availability and improved quality of water resources, reduced desertification, increased biodiversity, green jobs, economic growth, and increased climate change mitigation and resilience. Accelerated FLR can contribute significantly to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the implementation of the Paris agreement for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

### Box 1: Successful Restoration in Niger.

Around 1985, farmers in densely populated parts of Niger began to protect and manage trees and bushes, which regenerated spontaneously on their farmland. By doing so they have created a new agroforestry parkland on at least 5 million ha. They have added about 200 million new trees across rural landscapes without relying of government assistance for seedling production and tree planting. In some areas, *Faidherbia albida*, a nitrogen-fixing tree, is a dominating species. The increase in the number of on-farm trees has had a positive impact on crop yields, while also providing fodder for livestock, poles, firewood and edible leaves, fruits and other products for consumption and sale. The annual additional cereal yield is about 500,000 tons, which is enough to feed 2.5 million people. 20 years ago women spent 2.5 hours/day to collect firewood from distant remnants of open access woodlands, but now on average need only 30 minutes/day to harvest firewood from trees growing in nearby fields.

## The opportunities and challenges for restoration in Africa

There are numerous opportunities for African countries to scale up FLR by restoring both deforested forest lands and degraded agricultural and pastoral landscapes where the tree cover has been depleted. **Africa is unique in that it has the largest restoration opportunity of any continent in the world, with more than 700 million hectares of degraded land.** Experiences in multiple countries, including Ethiopia and Niger, have demonstrated that FLR delivers a wide range of benefits and can be achieved on millions of hectares. Successful experiences with proven restoration practices such as farmer managed natural regeneration, improved management of smallholder woodlots, reforestation, evergreen agriculture with intercropped trees, and associated sustainable land management practices such as water harvesting and erosion control have been documented, along with practical steps that can be supported to catalyse their adoption at scale (See Box 1).

The opportunities for scaling up restoration in ways that generate multiple benefits for local communities can be realized if concerted action is mobilized to address the key challenges. These include:

- Unclear delegation of rights to farmers and rural households to manage trees and forest resources
- Insufficient empowerment of community based institutions to support sustainable land management
- Difficulties in accessing markets for products from sustainable forestry and agriculture production systems
- Low capacities for supporting the widespread adoption of sustainable land use practices
- Lack of integrated land use planning and management, limited institutional capacities and limited coherence between sector policies
- Insecurities for long term investments and lack of funds reduce opportunities for scaling up promising FLR approaches
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In order to address these challenges policy makers, producers, communities and development partners need to work together to improve framework conditions for accelerating the widespread adoption of restoration practices by providing more effective planning and management processes, incorporating income generation opportunities for smallholder farmers, improving rural livelihoods and providing socially, economically and ecologically responsible incentives for increased public and private sector investments in restoration. Increased support for communication and outreach about restoration successes, along with more robust economic analysis of the benefits and costs of forest landscape restoration are also important.

## AFR100 Goals

AFR100 seeks to restore forests and tree cover on 100 million hectares of land in Sub-Saharan Africa by 2030. Restoration of productive landscapes through **AFR100 will help lift people out of poverty, stabilize food production, protect biodiversity, help African economies grow, and contribute to adapting to and mitigating climate change.**

### Brief history

AFR100 was launched in December 2015, during the Global Landscapes Forum at COP21 in Paris by representatives of participating African countries and a wide range of financial and technical partners (including (NEPAD, BMZ, World Bank, WRI and others; see Annex 1). Prior to the launch, informal consultations with African technical staff working on FLR were held at the World Forestry Congress in September 2015 in Durban, South Africa. The African Union endorsed the 100 million hectares goal in October 2015.

It was conceived as a partnership to boost the contribution of the African region to the Bonn Challenge and The New York Declaration on Forests, to the ARLI and other initiatives to restore deforested and degraded forest lands.

### Value proposition

AFR100 brings together political leadership with financial and technical resources to support a large-scale FLR movement across Africa. It provides a platform to more effectively work together to accelerate restoration successes. Activities are driven and owned by partner countries. Contributions by international partners support national efforts and deploy resources to partner countries. Promising FLR experiences will be documented, publicized and scaled up.



AFR100 is working to translate ambitious commitments into action with support from private sector investors, foundations, development banks, and bilateral and multilateral donors. AFR100 leverages grants, equity investments, loans, risk management guarantees and funds for specific interventions designed to support restoration champions and mobilize local communities committed to land care.

Under the political framework of the Africa Resilient Landscape Initiative (ARLI), AFR100 works to accelerate scaling of restoration in Africa in coordination with the African Landscapes Action Plan (ALAP), the African Climate Smart Agriculture Alliance, and numerous related initiatives including the Great Green Wall (see Annex 2). AFR100 also leverages strong partnerships with regional economic communities, the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC), and the Global Partnership for Forest Landscape Restoration (GPFLR). It is aligned with and designed to contribute to the relevant international initiatives, including the Bonn Challenge, a global commitment to restore 150 million hectares of land by 2020 and the New York Declaration on Forests that builds on and extends the Bonn Challenge to 350 million hectares by 2030. AFR100 will also contribute to the implementation of the SDGs and the Paris Agreement on climate change adaptation and mitigation, and to achieving the targets of the UN Convention of Biodiversity and the UN Convention on Combating Desertification.

## Strategy and principles

African ownership, country-level drive and grassroots mobilization are key elements to the success, leadership, identity and sustained impacts of AFR100. FLR outcomes will have to materialize at national level under the leadership of national partners. AFR100 will complement these efforts where needed.

AFR100 provides a platform for communication and exchange, as well as technical support, which aims to:

- Inspire ambitious commitments to restoration in African countries
- Enable better regional and global coordination
- Provide services to develop national FLR strategies
- Support development of in-country partnerships
- Facilitate peer-to-peer learning exchanges

**Stakeholder engagement is a key principle of AFR100.** Engaging all relevant stakeholders in the assessment of restoration opportunities and identification, testing and active upscaling of promising FLR solutions is considered key for successful restoration.

AFR100 seeks fair and equitable access to land and forest resources for all relevant stakeholders and promotes the rights of local and indigenous communities and women. AFR100 is developing a set of common good practices and principles for FLR, tested tools and guidelines for governance assessments, stakeholder participation, tree tenure and land tenure, and monitoring and other critical aspects (Box 2). However, the responsibility of safeguarding ecological integrity and social interests remains with the national authorities and implementing partners. AFR100 support is provided through existing institutions. AFR100 aims to create an enabling environment for FLR over the long-term in close partnership with decision-makers and stakeholders at the national and regional levels.

## Box 2: Principles for FLR

- Leveraging experiences with successful restoration to scaling up successes from individual sites
- Introducing or increasing trees and shrubs in landscapes where appropriate
- Employing a range of restoration strategies and applying a gender approach
- Avoiding strategies that lead to the conversion of natural ecosystems
- Restoring functionality and ecosystem services through the development of tree cover and increasing productivity across the landscape (which, however, may not re-create the “original” forest cover)
- Balancing local needs with national priorities

## Governance

AFR100 is based on a lean governance structure, aiming at catalyzing national efforts and providing support where needed:

- **The AFR100 Secretariat** serves as the main contact for the initiative. Housed at the NEPAD Agency, the Secretariat’s tasks include coordinating partners to jointly mobilize and sustain political support, providing technical assistance and facilitating investment, coalition building, knowledge management, monitoring and reporting. It also liaises with regional economic communities (REC). NEPAD’s mandate, given by the African Union Heads of State and Government, provides a strong legitimacy to AFR100 and its ownership by African countries.
- **The AFR100 Board**, comprised of African country representatives, donors, and financial partner representatives, provides strategic guidance for achieving AFR100’s goals, and advice to enhance the effectiveness of the Secretariat and the Technical Assistance Platform. The Board leads on resource mobilization efforts as well as building and sustaining partnerships.
- **The AFR100 Technical Assistance Platform (TAP)** operates as a clearinghouse to facilitate partners’ engagement to support AFR100. TAP provides technical support to assess restoration opportunities and support the implementation of FLR at scale, and facilitates information sharing, communication about FLR opportunities and successes, joint learning and capacity development.

## Partnerships

**As of September 2016, 21 African countries have expressed their commitment to restoration or expressed interest in being part of AFR100.** AFR100 technical partners are supporting national FLR processes in countries following the step-wise FLR approach described below. These efforts are carried out under the framework of ARLI and in close coordination with existing initiatives in support of integrated landscape management, including the work of the Landscapes for People Food and Nature initiative (LPFN) and the African Landscapes Action Plan (ALAP) supported by NEPAD, the Government of the Netherlands, the World Bank and others. AFR100 builds on a broad foundation of existing FLR experience gained by IUCN, FAO, GEF and other GPFLR partners working in the Africa region and globally, the TerrAfrica Partnership, Great Green Wall and related initiatives to enhance conditions for upscaling successful solutions.



As noted in Annex 1, the partnership includes restoration champions, governments, civil society, development organizations, the private sector, and other actors. AFR100 is relevant for a broad range of partners as restoration at scale can contribute significantly to addressing climate change, avoiding deforestation, improving food and water security and achieving other sustainable development goals (see Annex 3).

AFR100 partners are liaising with governments, technical and financial partners, other donors and organizations interested in restoration and sustainable development in Africa to enhance coordination with related initiatives and secure additional political support and resources for AFR100. Following the initial launch phase, BMZ will mainstream FLR into bilateral country portfolios where possible. On behalf of BMZ, GIZ and KfW are providing support to the AFR100 Secretariat to advance FLR work in selected countries. The World Bank is contributing significant funding to AFR100 via its landscape restoration portfolio.

## Step-by-step implementation

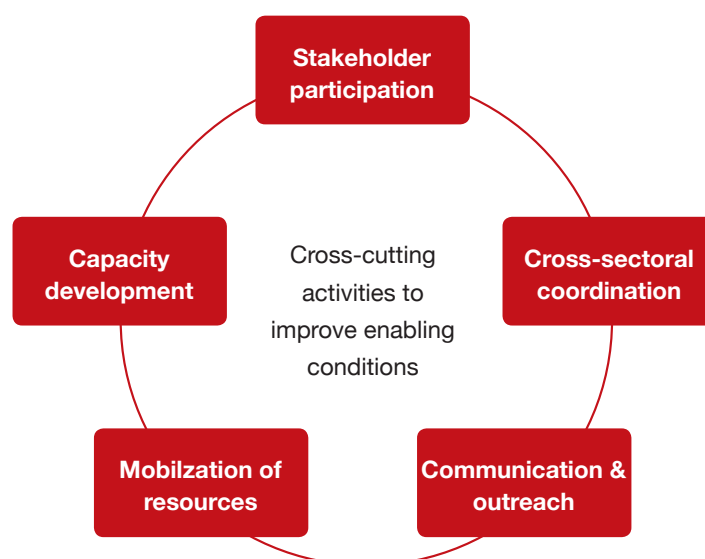
AFR100 proposes a step-wise approach to engage supporting countries and partners in planning and implementing FLR activities.

At the outset, countries propose to join AFR100 by submitting a letter of commitment to the AFR100 secretariat. These letters indicate the types of restoration that governments and other stakeholders seek to implement at scale, and identify how the national commitment to FLR aligns with national policies, initiatives and commitments (NDCs, SDGs, REDD+, FLEGT and others).

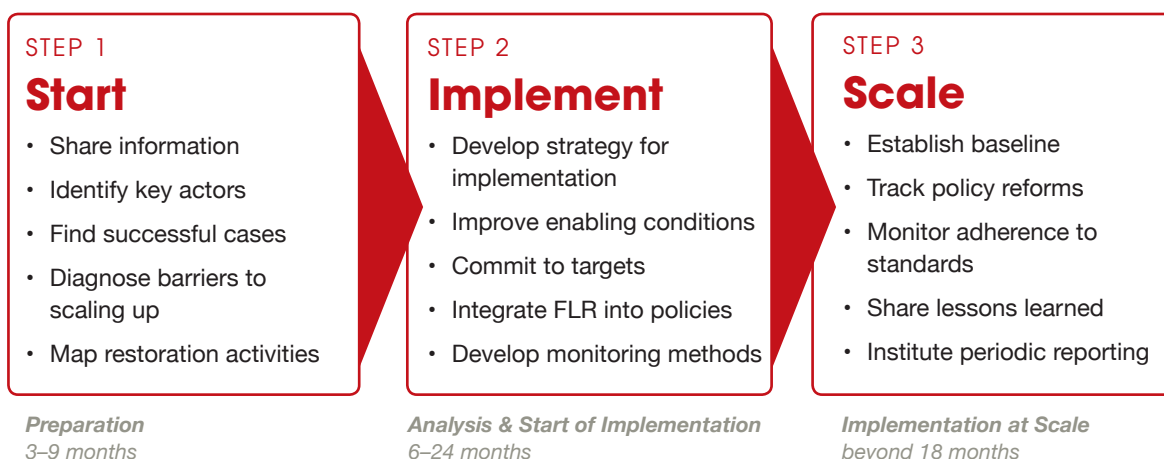
With technical support from the AFR100 secretariat and TAP, countries then inform and engage the appropriate stakeholders, take stock of restoration activities, assess restoration opportunities, identify key success factors, enhance the enabling conditions for FLR implementation at scale and implement restoration activities.

Figure 1: Step-wise approach to FLR implementation

### Processes to improve enabling conditions for FLR implementation at scale



## Key activities to scale FLR step-by-step



Restoration opportunity assessments inform national FLR strategies and support effective, cross-sector policy harmonization to drive FLR implementation. AFR100 assists countries to identify and connect with relevant restoration finance options, and provides guidance on monitoring systems to track progress on restoration activities. Key activities in each of the phases are summarized in Figure 1, below, and more detailed information is provided in Annex 6.

## Opportunities for collaboration

Restoring forests and tree cover outside of forests on 100 million hectares in SSA by 2030 is a challenge of continental dimensions. It will require broad engagement from countries, communities, civil society, donors, investors and technical assistance providers. **AFR100 will leverage strong partnerships to successfully create a continental restoration movement in Africa.** As the secretariat for both the AFR100 and ARLI /TerrAfrica, the NEPAD Agency will play a key role in strengthening collaboration on the continent. Current AFR100 partners are listed in Annex 1, with more partners expected to join in the near future. The AFR100 team will continue supporting partners to determine their focal geographic scope, sectors, and actions with reference to their various goals, perspectives, and delivery modes.