



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Review of the Great Green Wall Accelerator

Consultancy reference number: CCD/22/EO/C/44

1. Introduction

The Great Green Wall is a pan-African initiative to restore and sustainably manage land in Sahara and the Sahel region to address land degradation and poverty. It was first envisioned in 2005 and gained momentum in 2007 when the African Union adopted a “Decision on the Implementation of the Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel Initiative”. Its aim was originally to create a long plant barrier along the Sahel, but over time this vision has evolved into an integrated ecosystem management approach in the “dry corridor” of the region, striving for a mosaic of different land use and production systems, including sustainable dryland management and restoration, the regeneration of natural vegetation as well as water retention and conservation measures, with parallel aims of creating new jobs and improving the livelihoods of the people in the region. The GGW is a flagship initiative for the African Union, seeking to generate approaches and lessons that can be replicated elsewhere.

Eleven countries¹ in the region participate in the Initiative, and in 2010 they established a Pan-African Agency of the GGW to coordinate its implementation and support resources mobilisation. Several other African countries² around the GGW area and also in other regions of Africa (Gambia, Benin and Cote d’Ivoire), central (Cameroon), north (Algeria) and the SADC region are more and more expressing their willingness to be involved in this Pan-African Initiative and have started the process. In addition, a range of other stakeholders have become involved, including international organizations, the private sector, and civil society who all work together under pan-African coordination to halting land degradation. International partners include the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Bank (WB), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the European Union (EU) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) among others.

In September 2020, the Ministers of Environment of the Great Green Wall countries met and called on the international community to better coordinate efforts following the release of a progress report on the Great Green Wall³ and the challenges it highlighted. In January 2021, at the One Planet Summit hosted by the French President Macron, several multilateral and bilateral organizations pledged over 19 billion US dollars for the Great Green Wall (the eleven countries). The establishment of a Great Green Wall Accelerator was announced, to help all actors for the Initiative to better coordinate, monitor and measure the impact of their actions. The Accelerator unit has been initially set up to the UNCCD in April 2021, with the aim for it to be transferred to the Pan-African Agency later on.

To make an evidence-based consideration of its progress, success and challenges, and to further enhance its services, the Accelerator unit, with support of the UNCCD secretariat, is commissioning an independent review of its results and performance so far. The terms of reference for that review are presented in this document.

¹ Burkina Faso, Chad, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Sudan

² Algeria, Benin, Cameroon, Cote d’Ivoire, Gambia and several countries in Southern Africa

³ The Great Green Wall: Implementation status & way ahead to 2030. September 2020.

<https://www.unccd.int/resources/publications/great-green-wall-implementation-status-way-ahead-2030>



2. About the Great Green Wall Accelerator

The Great Green Wall Accelerator (GGWA) aims to help all actors for the Great Green Wall Initiative to better coordinate, monitor and measure the impact of their actions. It seeks to support partners and stakeholders to speed up plans for implementation, to better coordinate investments and to track progress.

The Great Green Wall Initiative has evolved from its initial focus on tree planting towards a comprehensive rural development initiative aiming to transform the lives of Sahelian populations by creating a mosaic of green and productive landscapes across the participating eleven countries. Progress has been achieved into the second decade of the initiative, with almost 18 million hectares of degraded lands restored and 350.000 jobs created across the countries. However, the 2020 progress report of the implementation status of the GGW highlighted several challenges that the participating countries had identified for achieving the GGW ambitions, including:

- Weak organizational structures and processes for the implementation of larger environmental development initiatives or programmes such as the GGW, partially deriving from the lack of high-level political support for the environmental policy agenda;
- Limited coordination, exchange and flow of information at the regional and national levels;
- Lack of monitoring and evaluation expertise at the project and national levels as well as at the level of the GGW Initiative, including difficulties to observe international standards for financial and project planning, management, monitoring and reporting, which hinders finance flows for the GGW;
- Limited capacity to design bankable projects and to use the existing channels and processes to access finance; and
- Technical challenges in sustaining the environmental improvements after the conclusion of the projects.

From the side of the donors, challenges in investing in GGW include the low level of investment needs per project (the costs of land restoration projects are often below the minimum for the donors to engage), length of time needed for observing any tangible results, uncertainty of long-term sustainability, and the risk of political problems/conflicts in the area.

GGWA was created to address many of these challenges, as a small and agile actor beyond the participating countries, donors and other stakeholders. It would act in the best interest of the GGW as a whole, and guide and motivate the GGW countries and partners to coordinate and collaborate for effective implementation. Its key functions are as follows:

- Coordinate the efforts of all actors through the harmonization of impact measurement indicators
- Support the implementation of the Great Green Wall initiative through a multi-stakeholder and structured approach
- Enable a more comprehensive mapping of available funding and projects
- Connect actors to scale up successful initiatives and promote the Sahel as a land of opportunity
- Integrate the private sector, civil society, and research/innovation into Great Green Wall efforts

The Accelerator aims to ensure that the financial commitments pledged at the One Planet Summit generate significant, lasting results by mobilizing resources and capacity building for the establishment of high-standard monitoring and reporting systems, improving policy frameworks and governance for the GGW interventions, and improving coordination to accelerate GGW progress.

The planned main tasks for GGWA over the period of 2021-2025 are as follows:



2021	Design a GGW Online Platform for monitoring, tracking, and connecting financing flows with project needs
2021 – 2022	Support GGW countries in establishing enhanced monitoring and reporting systems
2021 – 2023	Track implementation progress in beneficiary countries against the GGW results targets
2023 – 2024	Transfer of the GGWA unit to the Pan African Agency
2025	Review and evaluate the impact of Accelerator investments and progress made towards the 2030 GGW ambition

3. Principles, objectives and scope of the GGWA review

The GGWA review will be independent – it will be structurally separate from the GGWA management and implementation functions, and impartial. Its findings and conclusions will be based on sound evidence and objective analysis, clearly documented in the review report. Information will be triangulated as far as possible, and when verification is not possible, the single source will be mentioned. Analysis leading to conclusions will be clearly spelled out.

Objectives

In the context of the background information on GGWA as outlined in section 2 of this document, the review will be formative and focusing on learning, both during the review process and in the communication of review findings and key lessons. The review will clarify how well the GGWA logic and setup have supported the generation of the intended outcomes, whether the assumptions behind the GGWA establishment were accurate and the choices concerning its aims and working modalities suitable – and on this basis, contribute to further developing GGWA and its functioning. The review will identify successful tasks and approaches, as well as suggestions for potential alternatives or corrections, which will contribute to the refinement and development of the GGWA strategy and work programme.

The main audience of the review will be the GGWA management in the UNCCD secretariat and the Global Mechanism as well as the GGWA staff and the UNCCD colleagues whose work is linked with the GGWA tasks. The findings and conclusion will be useful also for the GGWA counterparts in the Pan-African Agency and the national GGW agencies, and the implementation partners.

Criteria for the review

The criteria for the review will be loosely based on the OECD/DAC criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability, with the understanding that as a learning process, the review may result in observations and options for further consideration rather than strictly defined, specific findings and recommendations. The provisional focus areas are outlined below; they may be further developed if deemed appropriate.

Relevance:

The review will assess, in line with the OECD/DAC definition of relevance, ‘the extent to which the activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor’. It will include consideration of the GGWA relevance in relation to the overall objectives of the Initiative and particularly those of the Pan-African Agency. It will also consider the GGWA alignment with the policies and strategies of the partners. Furthermore, the review will assess the extent to which GGWA is suited, or is responding to, the stated concerns and needs of the countries participating in the GGW Initiative.



Coherence: The review will consider the compatibility of GGWA with the actions of the GGWA participants and partners in capacity building, monitoring and other key areas of the GGWA work, with the aim to clarify the current and potential added value of GGWA.

Effectiveness and progress to impact:

The review seeks to respond the two criteria on effectiveness and impact jointly. The latter is here converted into “progress to impact”, taking into account the formative nature of the review and the relatively sort existence of GGWA. It will assess the GGWA success in producing the programmed outputs and achieving milestones as per the plans. Any modifications/revisions made during the GGWA functioning will be considered as well. The delivery of outputs will be assessed in terms of both quantity and quality. Furthermore, the review will consider their ownership by, and usefulness to, the Pan-African Agency, the GGW countries and partners, and the timeliness of their delivery. The review aims to briefly explain the reasons behind the success or shortcomings in delivering the GGWA programmed outputs and meeting the expected quality standards.

For facilitating the measurement of the achievement of direct outcomes, the inception phase of the review will include a (re)construction of the GGWA theory of change, building on the plans and other documentation on GGWA. If some outputs or outcomes are inaccurately stated in the plans, their amendments will be included in the reconstructed theory of change.

The review will identify major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the programmed outputs and outcomes. Based on the articulation of the overall objective of the project in the documentation describing GGWA and the theory of change, the review will assess the likelihood of the intended, positive impacts becoming a reality. Any unintended positive effects will also be identified, as well as the likelihood that the intervention would contribute to unintended negative effects.

The review will look at the communication, experience-sharing and learning processes between GGWA and the Pan-African Agency, the countries and the partners participating in the GGW Initiative; as well as the public awareness activities that have been undertaken so far. It will consider whether existing communication channels and networks were used effectively and what new channels were established.

Efficiency:

In keeping with the OECD/DAC definition of efficiency, the review will assess the extent to which GGWA has delivered maximum results from the given resources. This will include an assessment of the cost-effectiveness and timeliness of executing its activities. The review will consider whether the project was implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternative interventions or approaches. It will give special attention to efforts by GGWA to make use of/build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency.

Sustainability:

Sustainability is understood as the probability of direct outcomes being maintained and developed after the close of the project. For GGWA, it is largely about the likely success of its future setup within the Pan-African Agency, and the added value it will generate to the participating countries and particularly to the implementation partners. The review will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the persistence of achieved direct outcomes. Such factors may include

- the level of ownership, interest and commitment among the Pan-African Agency, the participating countries and the implementation partners, and
- the extent to which GGWA delivery of its work programme is dependent on future funding, and whether that funding can be made available.



Cross-cutting issues:

In addition to the above criteria, the review will consider the quality and effectiveness of participatory approach throughout the project, with particular attention to the role of women.

4. Approach, methods and deliverables of the GGWA review

The findings of the review will be based on a study of relevant documentation and interviews with the GGWA team, representatives of participating countries, Pan-African Agency and partners. List of these contacts will be included in the inception report. The consultant to be selected to conduct the review will prepare the following main products, to be submitted to the UNCCD Evaluation Office and through that Office, also to GGWA, with adequate time for preparing feedback:

Inception report including a draft reconstructed theory of change of GGWA, a framework and a tentative schedule of the review process;

Preliminary summary of the main content of the draft report of the review, which will be a 2-5 page overview of the findings and emerging conclusions and recommendations. The summary will be used for discussion with the GGWA team to ensure that all essential information sources have been accessed, to factually check and to verify emerging findings, and get first reactions of the involved staff to the conclusions and recommendations;

A half-day workshop bringing together the GGWA team and involved UNCCD staff to consider the findings and the emerging recommendations of the review, with the aim to prepare a basis for an updated strategic approach and scheduled work programme for GGWA; and

Final report containing detailed analysis of the review findings organised by the criteria and supported with evidence; lessons learned and recommendations. The review will be carried out in the following three phases:

Inception phase will include

- a preliminary desk review and introductory interviews with project staff ;
- drafting of the reconstructed theory of change;
- preparation of the review framework;
- development of the desk review and interview protocols;
- planning of the review schedule; and
- preparation of the inception report.

Data collection and analysis phase will include

- further desk review and in-depth interviews or questionnaires addressing key stakeholders: representatives of the Pan-African Agency, participating countries and implementing partners; and possibly,
- preparation of a few country case studies for more in-depth information of the GGW implementation.

Reporting phase will include

- drafting of the preliminary summary of the main content and its presentation to the GGWA team;
- planning, preparation and moderation of a workshop to consider the findings and reemerging recommendations of the review; and
- drafting of the final report.



Contractual terms

The consultant for the review is recruited and managed by the UNCCD Evaluation Office. GGWA and involved UNCCD staff will be actively participating and regularly informed of progress in the review and they will support the process by facilitating access to relevant information and contacts, and by providing feedback on the review approach, notes and reports delivered by the consultant.

The assignment will start in September 2022 or as agreed with the consultant. At least one mission is expected to Bonn (the UNCCD headquarters) for the organisation of the workshop, possibly also for the inception phase; to be clarified at the beginning of the contract/review.

The fee will be based on the UN standards for consultancy remuneration, taking into account the level of expertise of the consultant, the workload and the travel required for completing the assignment. It will be a lump sum arrangement, which may be paid in instalments. Costs related to the travels will be covered separately, unless otherwise agreed

Requirements

The candidate should meet the following qualifications:

- Advanced academic degree (Master's or higher) in a field relevant to this assignment;
- Professional expertise as a team leader or similar in evaluating and/or reviewing development cooperation projects, including in the UN context;
- Knowledge of international cooperation concerning topics relevant to this assignment, such as sustainable land management, drought mitigation or rural development;
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills; experience in producing high quality written reports.
- For this consultancy excellent writing and oral skills fluency in both, English and French language is required.

The candidate to carry out the review may not have prior involvement in the activities concerning GGWA.

Special notice

Only individuals who can act as independent, individual economical operators are qualified to apply. Individuals who can provide their services only on account of an institution or enterprise not in their individual capacity are not eligible under this procedure.

Individuals engaged under a consultancy or individual contract will not be considered "staff members" under the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations Secretariat and will not be entitled to benefits provided therein (such as leave entitlements and medical insurance coverage). Their conditions of service will be governed by their contract and the General Conditions of Contracts for the Services of Consultants and Individual Contractors. Consultant and individual contractor is responsible for determining tax liabilities and for the payment of any taxes and/or duties, in accordance with local or other applicable laws.

Submission of application

Applications should be submitted by e-mail to staffing@unccd.int with a UNCCD Personal History Form⁴ and/or CV and cover letter, specifying in the subject line only the reference number:

CCD/22/EO/C/44

⁴ UNCCD P-11 form in electronic fill-in .pdf OR .docx format available: <https://www.unccd.int/convention/work-with-us/guidelines>



The deadline for applications is **31 August 2022**. Only applications submitted by the deadline and with complete documentation will be taken into consideration.

Due to the volume of applications received, receipt of applications cannot be acknowledged individually. Please address your application as indicated above and please do not address or copy your application to an individual at the Secretariat or Global Mechanism. Candidates who do not receive any feedback within three months of the deadline should consider their application as unsuccessful.

Date issued: 01 Aug 2022