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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO SADC TO INSTITUTIONALIZE, MONITOR IMPLEMENTATION AND OUT-SCALE THE GREAT GREEN WALL (GGW) IN SOUTHERN AFRICA REGION

November 2024

SDGs:



Countries: Angola, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, the Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe

Project Code: TCP/SFS/3804

FAO Contribution: USD 500 000

Duration: 1 November 2021–31 October 2023

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Implementing Partners

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat, and the African Union Commission (AUC).

Beneficiaries

The SADC Secretariat and its Member countries, particularly the relevant government ministries and agencies responsible for forestry, environment, land use, and other related sectors in Southern Africa.

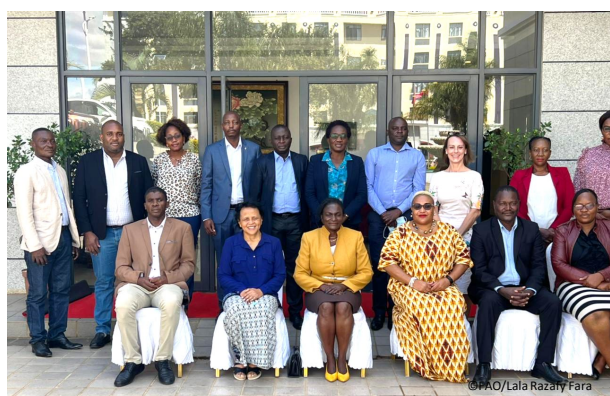
Country Programming Framework (CPF) Outputs

Country Programming Frameworks (CPF) of all 12 Member countries in Southern Africa; which are in support of the development and review of inclusive policies, regulatory frameworks and strategies, in alignment with natural resource management component in many of their CPFs.

Regional Initiative 2: Sustainable production intensification and value chain development in Africa.

Regional Initiative 3: Building Resilience in Africa's Drylands.

Contributes to the implementation of the FAO's 21st and 22nd sessions of African Forest and Wildlife Commission; Regional priorities of ARC31 (October 2020); SADC Protocols (On Forestry of 2002 updated in 2019 and on Environmental Management for Sustainable Development, 2014); and SADC's Sub Regional Action Programme to Combat Desertification (SRAP, 2015), under the overarching framework of the Great Green Wall Initiative.



BACKGROUND

Desertification and drought have been recognized as significant challenges to sustainable development in Southern Africa, with drylands occupying about 18 percent of the region's total land area. The Sub-Regional Action Programme (SRAP) to combat desertification has identified the degradation of land and other resources, especially in arid and semi-arid areas, as major impediments. Overcultivation, overgrazing and deforestation are the primary drivers of this degradation, underpinned by deeper socioeconomic issues, such as an overreliance on natural resources.

In response to these challenges, the AUC launched the Great Green Wall (GGW) initiative for the Sahara and the Sahel in 2007, which has since expanded to Southern Africa, with the endorsement of the SADC in 2016. The initiative aims to restore degraded lands and improve resilience against climate change.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has been a key supporter of the GGW since its inception, providing technical assistance and resources to help scale up this ambitious project. The GGW's expansion into the Southern Africa region, backed by FAO's support, was further recognized during the FAO African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (AFWC) sessions in 2018 and 2020. These sessions underscored the importance of extending the GGW concept to the SADC region, integrating it with existing land restoration and sustainable land management initiatives under SRAP, and aligning it with commitments to the SDGs. This extension aims to unify various efforts under a single coordination framework, including the implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and Land Degradation Neutrality strategies.

The project builds on this foundation, intending to promote synergies and effective coordination between national and subregional bodies working to combat land degradation, desertification, and biodiversity loss while mitigating the effects of drought. Through the FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), this project will provide catalytic resources and technical support for the initial steps toward the coordinated implementation of the GGW in Southern Africa.

IMPACT

The project will boost the resilience of ecosystems and communities in Southern Africa against the adverse effects of land degradation, desertification, and climate change. By promoting sustainable land management and restoration practices, the project will help restore degraded lands, improve biodiversity, and contribute to food security and livelihoods in the region. With this, the project will strengthen institutional capacities and foster regional cooperation, ensuring more coordinated and effective responses to environmental challenges. This will ultimately contribute to the long-term sustainability of the region's natural resources and the achievement of key SDGs.





ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS

The project promoted sustainable management and restoration of land and forest resources, contributing to the development and livelihoods of people in Southern Africa. Stakeholders and national governments actively participated in identifying the SADC GGW Strategy and contributed to developing solutions (action plans) for their respective countries.

An assessment was conducted in each country in alignment with the SADC GGW strategy. This assessment included identifying the main priorities and emerging issues to be considered in the national action plan. In each country, a national validation workshop was organized, with participation from government officials, experts, the private sector, academia, non-governmental organizations, and civil society organizations.

Following this, each country prepared its national action plan based on its national assessment and baseline report, which are now available.

The SADC Secretariat was strengthened by hiring and posting a Coordinator, who led regional work, conducted desk studies, and facilitated stakeholder consultations. The Coordinator also supported national consultants and prepared a guide to assist countries in their NAP reports, which was shared during the NAP review and validation workshops in each country.

Project proposals for resource mobilization were developed at regional level; one was submitted to the European Union, and at least two countries developed resource mobilization proposals (Eswatini and Malawi).

However, some delays were encountered in implementing certain activities. For instance, the drafting of national action plans only began after the national reports were discussed and agreed upon by the national GGW focal points. The delay in organizing validation meetings was primarily due to the extended review process, which was necessary to ensure thorough national consultations and feedback from the government and various national stakeholders.

IMPLEMENTATION OF WORK PLAN AND BUDGET

The implementation of activities was impacted by the delay in appointing the Regional Project Coordinator (SADC GGW Coordinator). Although the project was approved in September 2020, the Regional Coordinator was not appointed until December 2021. Besides, there were significant delays in identifying and recruiting national consultants, most of whom were hired between 2022 and 2023. The project was officially launched only after these recruitments, with the inception meeting marking the actual start of activity implementation.

The work of national consultants, particularly in conducting consultations and collecting baseline information at the national level (within each Member State), took considerably longer than expected. What was originally planned to take 30 days extended to between three and six months. Several factors contributed to this delay, including a lack of information, a slow mobilization process from both government focal points and the SADC level, as well as varying national circumstances that influenced the understanding of the process. These delays hindered the compilation and synthesis of national reports and the translation of these reports into national action plans.

As a result of these delays, no-cost extensions were granted to national consultants in some countries for at least three months to allow for the continuation and finalization of project activities. While most activities were implemented within the planned budget, the costs associated with consultancies and stakeholders' meetings exceeded the original budget.

FOLLOW-UP FOR GOVERNMENT ATTENTION

The follow-up for the governments' attention includes ensuring the continued coordination and implementation of the SADC GGW strategy and action plan, as well as integrating the project outcomes into national policies and strategies related to land restoration, climate change, and sustainable development. This ongoing commitment is crucial for sustaining the momentum of the project and achieving its long-term goals.



SUSTAINABILITY

1. Capacity development

While there were numerous multilateral, international, and regional agreements signed and ratified by SADC Member States to manage forest resources and environmental governance, there has been a lack of effective enforcement and comprehensive strategies for holistic approaches. The regional strategy, accompanied by national action plans, aims to ensure the implementation of national priorities, the harmonization and coordination of regional issues—particularly those of a transboundary nature—and the building of Member States' capacities.

Structures exist within the SADC Secretariat and its Member States to sustain the results achieved by the project. However, there is a need for continued support in monitoring the implementation of the SADC GGW strategy and their national action plans. It is also necessary to continue developing funding programmes and proposals, aligning them with various funding opportunities and initiatives at both the regional and country levels, with support from partners and experts.

Alliances between FAO, the SADC Secretariat, the AUC, and the governments of SADC Member States have been strengthened. Additionally, the project has fostered stronger alliances between the participating government departments. From the outset of the project, the SADC Secretariat was tasked with implementing project activities, and regular meetings were organized to report on the progress of these activities.

2. Gender equality

Roles for women and men were clearly defined, and equal consideration and opportunities were provided to both male and female participants in all consultative workshops conducted under the project. The participation of women in the project was encouraging, and the activities effectively addressed the needs and priorities of both women and men.



DOCUMENTS AND OUTREACH PRODUCTS

- ❑ Side event highlighting the transformative potential of the Great Green Wall Initiative in the SADC region was held during the Africa Climate Week 2022 in August 2022 in Libreville, Gabon.
- ❑ SADC Great Green Wall (GGW) Stakeholder Engagement and Capacity Building Workshop held from 2 – 4 August 2022 in Pretoria, South Africa, which brought together government representatives of the environment, land, climate change, and finance sectors, as well as technical and development partners. <https://www.nepad.org/news/accelerating-great-green-wall-initiative-southern-Africa>.
- ❑ Side event on accelerating the implementation of the Great Green Wall Initiative in the SADC region during the UNFCCC COP 27 held in November 2022 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt. <https://www.sadc.int/latest-news/sadc-green-great-wall-initiative-gets-support-member-states-urged-work-together-address>.
- ❑ National Action Plans (NAP-GGW) documents for the implementation of GGW in ten SADC countries: Angola, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, South Africa, and Zambia (<https://www.mgee.gov.zm/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/23.11.17-NAP-ZAMBIA-shared-after-validation-workshop.pdf>). (2023). (All documents are available on request).
- ❑ SADC. 2023. *Resource mobilization plan/strategy for the implementation of the SADC GGW strategy*.
- ❑ SADC. 2023. *Monitoring and framework for the implementation of the SADC GGW strategy*.
- ❑ SADC. 2023. *Gender and communication plan for the implementation of SADC GGW strategy*.
- ❑ SADC. 2023. *Private sector and CSOs engagement guidelines/plan for the implementation of the SADC GGW strategy*.
- ❑ SADC. 2023. *Guidelines for preparation of SADC GGW National Action Plan*.

ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS - LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Expected Impact	Sustainable management and restoration of land and forest resources are promoted to contribute to sustainable development and livelihoods of people in Southern Africa		
Outcome	Enhanced capacity of the SADC Secretariat and member countries to implement the Great Green Wall (GGW)		
	Indicator	Number of countries that have GGW action plan.	
	Baseline	0	
	End Target	12	
	Comments and follow-up action to be taken	By the end of the project, 10 out of 12 SADC Member States validated or endorsed the national action plan document for implementing the GGW.	
Output 1			
	Improved capacity to implement the GGW strategy at sub regional and country levels		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	Number of actions taken to implement SADC GGW strategy.	12	Yes
Baseline	0		
Comments	An assessment was conducted in each country in alignment with the SADC GGW strategy. This assessment included identifying the main priorities and emerging issues to be considered in the national action plan. In each country, a national validation workshop was organized, with participation from government officials, experts, the private sector, academia, non-governmental organizations, and civil society organizations. Following this, each country prepared its national action plan based on its national assessment and baseline report, which are now available.		
Activity 1.1			
	Support and coordinate implementation of GGW in the region		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	Each participating SADC Member State appointed its National Focal Point for GGW. The SADC Secretariat was strengthened by hiring and posting a Coordinator, who led regional work, conducted desk studies, and facilitated stakeholder consultations. The Coordinator also supported national consultants and prepared a guide to assist countries in their NAP reports, which was shared during the NAP review and validation workshops in each country.	
Activity 1.2			
	Organize lesson learned and experience sharing workshop		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	A lesson learned and sensitization workshop was held in each country at the national level, and an additional workshop was conducted at the regional/SADC level.	
Activity 1.3			
	Setting up and operationalize a Multidisciplinary Regional Steering Committee		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	It was established and is composed of GGW National Focal Points, SADC Focal Points, the SADC Secretariat, and partners including FAO, AUC, UNCCD, and others.	
Activity 1.4			
	Printing and distribution of the SADC GGW strategy documents		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	It was completed, and a few copies were distributed to members during an event at COP15 UNCCD in 2022.	

Output 2	Assessed ongoing and new GGW initiatives, and national action plans developed		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	M&E framework for GGW implementation.	1	Yes
Baseline	0		
Comments	The M&E Framework for SADC GGW was developed.		
Activity 2.1	Conduct biophysical baseline assessments for land restoration		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	A regional stakeholder consultation was conducted, along with a stocktaking of existing regional information and initiatives related to forestry, restoration, and sustainable land management. Additionally, expert reviews and evaluations of relevant forestry information at both country and regional levels were carried out.	
Activity 2.2	Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework for SADC's GGW developed and validated by RSC		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The M&E framework for tracking the implementation of the SADC Strategy was drafted based on key information gathered from the synthesis report and the regional stakeholders' consultation report. It was subsequently validated during the regional workshop in 2023.	
Activity 2.3	Support development of national GGW action plans		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	A national consultant was hired in each country to support the development of their respective GGW National Action Plans. In each country, at least two technical meetings were organized to review and validate the baseline information and draft National Action Plan documents.	
Activity 2.4	Development of a Private sector engagement strategy		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	Private sector engagement plan was developed.	
Output 3	Strategic programme developed to scale up GGW interventions at the SADC regional and national levels		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	Number of Programmes formulated on the basis of the GGW strategy.	7	Yes
Baseline	0		
Comments	The documents were produced for resource mobilization, and resource partners were engaged at both the regional and country levels.		
Activity 3.1	Resource mobilization (RM) strategy developed to scale up and scale out national and regional GGW efforts		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The resource mobilization strategy for SADC GGW was developed.	
Activity 3.2	Gender strategy, Communication and Knowledge management plan, and implementation framework for GGW developed		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The gender and communication plan were developed to support implementation of GGW at both national and regional (SADC) level.	
Activity 3.3	Fully-fledged multi - country programmes (proposals) developed		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	Project proposals for resource mobilization were developed at regional level; one was submitted to the European Union, and at least two countries developed resource mobilization proposals (Eswatini and Malawi).	

Partnerships and Outreach

For more information, please contact: Reporting@fao.org

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