



**G20 GLOBAL
LAND INITIATIVE**

Implementation Strategy and Work Plan



*Reducing Land Degradation
and Enhancing Conservation
of Terrestrial Habitats*

**G20 Global Land Initiative
Coordination Office**

United Nations Convention to
Combat Desertification

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United Nations
Convention to Combat
Desertification

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Background





BACKGROUND

The Group of Twenty (G20) is an international forum made up of 19 countries and the European Union. They represent the world's major developed and emerging economies. G20 members account for 85 per cent of global gross domestic product (GDP), 75 per cent of international trade and two-thirds of the world's population. The G20 plays a crucial role in setting the global agenda because of its size, representation and strategic importance.

The leaders of the G20 met in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in November 2020, and came out with a Leaders' Declaration that expresses "... [their] conviction that coordinated global action, solidarity, and multilateral cooperation are more necessary today than ever to overcome the current challenges and realize opportunities of the 21st century for all by empowering people, safeguarding the planet, and shaping new frontiers. [They are also] committed to leading the world in shaping a strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive post-COVID-19 era."¹

Within the framework of ensuring sustainable development, the Leaders' Declaration also states that "building on existing initiatives, we share the ambition to achieve a 50 per cent reduction of degraded land by 2040, on a voluntary basis". In this context, they launched the "Global Initiative on Reducing Land Degradation and Enhancing Conservation of Terrestrial Habitats to prevent, halt, and reverse land degradation."

The commitment of the G20 leaders was built on the communiqué issued by the G20 Environment Ministers Meeting, also held in Riyadh in September 2020. It recognizes "the urgent need for bold, coordinated, and collective initiatives on land protection and restoration and on sustainable land management and use to strengthen existing efforts, such as the Bonn Challenge, the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, and other multilateral initiatives, as well as to promote new ones".

The ministers supported the "launch of a Global Initiative on Reducing Land Degradation and Enhancing Conservation of Terrestrial Habitats which aims to support existing efforts to prevent, halt, and reverse land degradation and habitat loss through sharing of knowledge and best practices on protecting, conserving, sustainably managing, restoring, and rehabilitating degraded land, and by showcasing and disseminating publicly available

data and information on degraded lands and conservation/restoration efforts. The initiative will also contribute to capacity building and encourage greater private sector support and general public engagement in land restoration efforts. The initiative focuses on complementing and supporting existing efforts while striving to avoid any duplication of efforts. The initiative will seek synergies with existing relevant initiatives including the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and the implementation of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. We further acknowledge the benefits of the existing efforts and commitments such as those developed for Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN), Forest Landscape Restoration, Ecosystem-based Adaptation, and Disaster Risk Reduction, as well as targets under the Convention of Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification."²



OBJECTIVES

The Global Initiative for Reducing Land Degradation and Enhancing Conservation of Terrestrial Habitats has the following three objectives:

➤ OBJECTIVE 1

Conserving land and halting habitat loss, habitat fragmentation and land degradation, notably through sharing knowledge and best practices on conservation incentives, including on strengthening physical and functional connectivity and quality of protected areas, enhancing land conservation, promoting sustainable land management practices, promoting active fire management, and implementing other policies and best practices to enhance land conservation and reduce land degradation.

➤ OBJECTIVE 2

Promoting integrated, sustainable, and resilient land and landscape management through nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches; financing mechanisms; urban and rural land use planning; stronger implementation of international agreements and local environmental governance and laws; the empowerment of indigenous peoples and local communities (including women, youth, and smallholders) in land management; secure land tenure, property, and land-use rights in accordance with the national legislation; as well as support for sustainable land and water management policies and sustainable agricultural practices, including traditional practices, in order to maintain and enhance ecosystem functionality.

➤ OBJECTIVE 3

Restoring degraded land through sustainable and locally or regionally appropriate reforestation, afforestation, natural regeneration/revegetation, restoration of ecosystem services, sustainable agricultural practices, and deployment of nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches for biodiversity conservation, among other things, in order to restore ecosystem functionality in a landscape context. This objective will seek to prevent transfer of degradation (i.e., avoid restoring one area to the detriment of another).





OBJECTIVES



The initiative also proposes to “seek to enhance collaboration among G20 members and non-member countries, as appropriate, to support the implementation of current commitments for land protection, sustainable land management, and restoration, as well as seek additional voluntary commitments from participating countries to raise ambition in this respect and contribute to SDG 15, in particular target 15.3”.²

The communiqué further elaborates that “to support the Initiative’s overall objectives, G20 members and other non-member countries and stakeholders are invited to make, on a voluntary basis and according to members capacity, country pledges and commitments via the relevant forum/fora or other suitable means, such as:

- Pledges to protect, conserve, sustainably manage, restore, or rehabilitate degraded land.
- Direct contributions, including to existing funds and initiatives aimed at land and ecosystem conservation, sustainable management, and restoration.
- Capacity building contributions such as training for grass-roots projects and/or policy support for government officials.
- Any other in-kind contribution”.



This strategy is developed to translate the vision of the G20 leaders into action.



Ambition





AMBITION

The ambition of the G20 Global Initiative on Reducing Land Degradation and Enhancing Conservation of Terrestrial Habitats (G20 Global Land Initiative or G20 GLI) is to achieve a 50 per cent reduction in degraded land by 2040.

Cross-Cutting Principles

➤ **Global and inclusive of all countries:**

While initiated by G20 members, the initiative will seek to be inclusive of all countries that are interested in being associated with it. All countries will have opportunities to both contribute to the initiative and benefit from it.

➤ **All terrestrial ecosystems are included:**

The initiative stresses that ecosystems including, but not limited to, forests, grasslands, drylands, rangelands, croplands, peatlands, mangroves, soil, tundra, karst and wetlands, are essential for the existence, survival, and sustainability of biodiversity as well as food security and human well-being. Therefore, the initiative will cover the entire range of ecosystems, which also include riverine systems and watersheds.

➤ **The important role played by cities and local bodies:**

While global initiatives often operate at the national level, cities and local bodies can play an important implementation role. The initiative will place particular emphasis on working with city and local governments to increase green cover within cities as well as improve ecosystem protection in peri-urban areas.

➤ **Multi-stakeholder-based:** The initiative will work not only with governments but also with all other stakeholders, such as the private sector, academia, the media, communities, non-governmental organizations, faith-based institutions, financial institutions, etc. The initiative will establish a number of new platforms to bring together the stakeholders who are interested in the domain of land restoration and to develop strategies and action plans to increase their participation.

➤ **Networks and partnerships:**

The initiative will connect and generate functional partnerships with: the Rio conventions (United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)); global initiatives (Bonn Challenge, United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration); multilateral agencies (European Commission, Global Environment

Facility (GEF), Green Climate Fund (GCF), Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services, United Nations, World Bank); regional bodies (African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative, Aga Khan Rural Support Programme, Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Great Green Wall of the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative, Initiative 20x20); financial initiatives (Land Degradation Neutrality Fund, Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures, Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures, United Nations Capital Development Fund); and private sector entities (The Sustainable Trade Initiative, Lowering Emissions by Accelerating Forest finance (LEAF) Coalition, World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), World Economic Forum (WEF), corporations; and other relevant actors (Global Soil Hub, International Law Commission, United Nations Forum on Forests, World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies).



AMBITION

► Importance of leadership:

Transformative action in the domain of land restoration happens when visionary leadership takes up land restoration and habitat conservation issues as one of its priorities and steers it towards scaling up and implementation. Learning from such leadership actions, and recognizing them, including through global awards, provides important signals for leadership elsewhere. It is also important that emerging leaders

from all sectors – politics, the public sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and academia – are sensitized and trained to take up restoration and conservation issues so that interest in this topic continues from the current generation of leaders to the next.

► **Aligned with other initiatives:** There are many ongoing initiatives, both national and global, to reduce land

degradation and increase restoration and conservation. This Initiative will work with all such initiatives, to promote and project them to achieve the common objective of land restoration. In particular, this initiative will work closely with the Decade on Ecosystem Restoration by taking the lead in their action plan on land restoration and coordinating with all other relevant segments, such as education, youth, women and the private sector, etc.

► The ambition of the G20 Global Initiative is to reduce degraded land by 50 per cent by 2040 ◀

Pillars of Actions

The State of Finance for Nature – Tripling Investments in Nature-Based Solutions by 2030 report, produced by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for G20, documents that in 2020, the G20 countries collectively invested USD120 billion in nature-based solutions. This represents 92 per cent of the global investments made every year for nature-based solutions. This is broadly in line with the G20's 80 per cent share of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The vast majority of current spending (USD105 billion) by the G20 countries is allocated internally for domestic government programmes. One third of it

is invested in programmes to promote the protection of biodiversity and landscapes. In order to achieve all future biodiversity, land degradation, and climate targets, G20 countries would need to scale up their internal annual nature-based solution spending by 140 per cent, an additional USD 165 billion by 2050. This estimate is based on an immediate action scenario that supports the international community response to keep global warming to 2°C, which would slow land degradation and stabilize biodiversity and reverse its loss by 2050, maintaining both healthy land and biodiversity at present-day levels.

Achieving a 50 per cent reduction in degraded land by 2040 will require ramping up actions within existing commitments to prevent (i.e., through conservation), halt (i.e., sustainable land management), and restore (i.e., ecological rehabilitation/restoration) degraded land. Promoting increased investments in nature in the G20 and non-G20 countries will be key to achieving this target. The initiative will work towards achieving increased resource flows for land restoration in the coming two decades.



AMBITION

The initiative will work through **four pillars of action**.



SHOWCASE success stories that benefit nature and safeguard people's lives, jobs, and incomes.



ENGAGE the private sector in sustainable land management, land restoration, and habitat conservation.



EMPOWER civil society and the public in land stewardship for sustainable development.



SHARE KNOWLEDGE and develop and mobilize capacity between the G20 members, non-member countries, and other stakeholders to collectively deliver on land conservation and restoration outcomes.

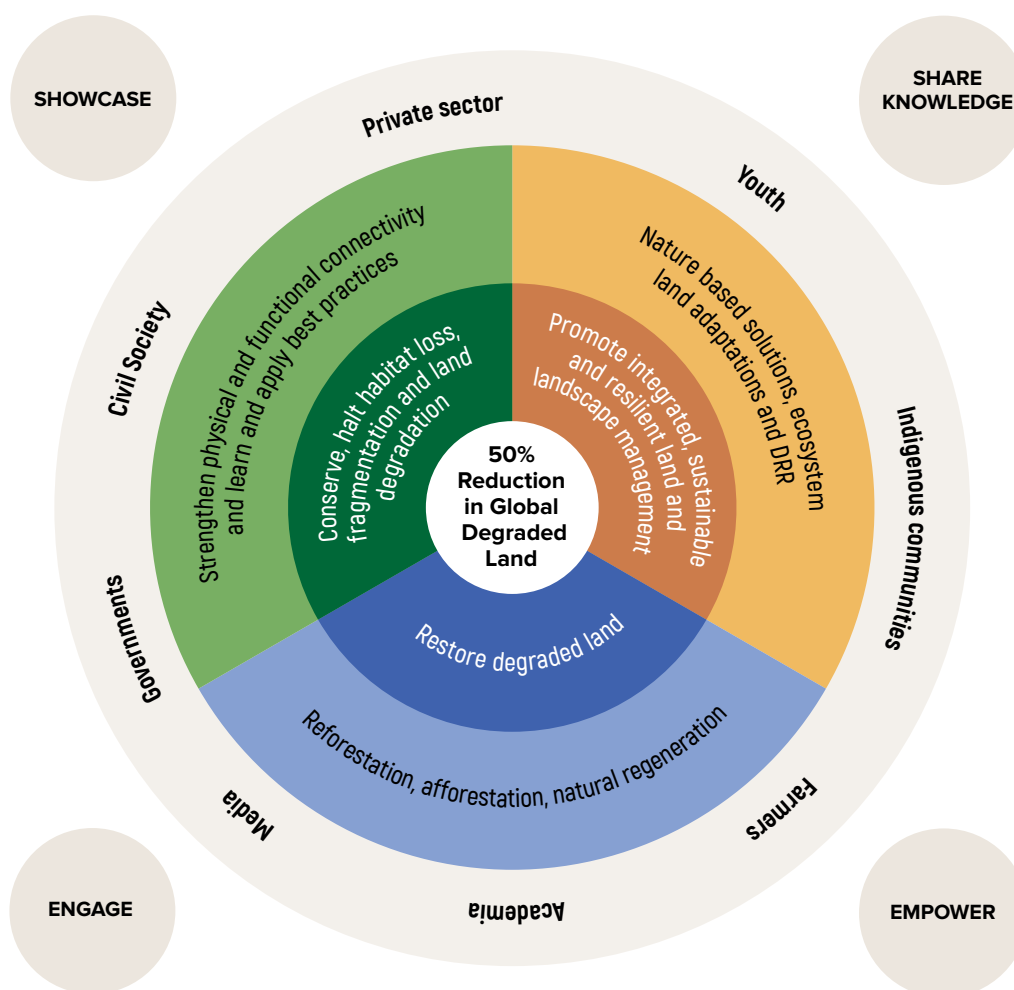


Figure 1. Pillars of action of the G20 Global Initiative on Reducing Land Degradation and Enhancing Conservation of Terrestrial Habitats

PILLAR 1

Showcase





PILLAR 1: SHOWCASE

Showcase success stories and recognize leadership to promote replication

Good examples of field projects, programmes, private sector initiatives, community initiatives, and legislation can help to scale up land restoration and habitat conservation. Therefore, they need to be identified, documented and projected. To this end, a comprehensive information hub, which is geographically tagged as well as searchable is planned. However, some institutions have already compiled some of this information. For example, since 1992, the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT), a global network, has been compiling the best practices in Sustainable Land Management. International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has been tracking commitments and achievements under the Bonn Challenge. Therefore, the information hub the initiative is developing will not create any new database. Instead, it will increase the visibility of existing efforts and also showcase publicly available information on degraded lands, national and international commitments on land conservation and restoration, best practices, success stories in land restoration, progress made, results achieved, and lessons learned.

The website will serve as a platform to document progress using cutting edge technological approaches, including the use of artificial intelligence and machine learning. The platform will be developed for use in decision-making and support on where and how to focus the restoration efforts. The objective is not to create a new database. It is to provide a successful “front end” to confederate and blend existing databases and services. The strategy

is to bring together sustainable land management and restoration opportunities and to ensure the usefulness, interoperability, data coherence, and accessibility of the website for policymakers, the private sector and the public.

The website will not only serve as an information-sharing hub to provide easier access to information on land degradation, conservation, restoration and sustainable land management. But it will also promote the institutions currently compiling such information and foster collaboration and broader engagement of various stakeholders in land conservation and restoration efforts. The content of the website will be compiled from information and data shared on a voluntary basis by the participating countries and organizations, and will cite attribution of information sources where possible.

In addition to establishing a website to serve as the primary platform for showcasing success stories, the initiative will:

- › Identify best practice legislation and their implementation successes (or otherwise) at any scale, from across the globe. A key lever for achieving restoration is forming a legislative framework to ensure that restoration is undertaken, be it at the national or local levels.
- › Confederates a range of data providers working on these issues, notably the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration Task Force on Monitoring, the UNCCD reporting framework and PBL, the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency.
- › Establish a systematic process to continuously review and distil international best practices in the domain of restoration and conservation for their projection and promotion across the world.
- › Create application process interfaces from existing databases for use by the media, social media influencers and other interested actors.
- › Develop high-quality data visualization products based on the existing database and make them available to the media, including social media.
- › Establish partnerships with accomplished documentary film directors and media houses to produce and promote high-quality documentaries on case studies of conservation successes.
- › Create an immersive visual analytics space for international exhibitions/meetings that allows participants to inhabit current and future environments; and to interactively test, compare, debate, and share ‘data journeys’ into the current and future impacts of the decisions made.
- › Establish global awards to recognize leadership efforts in land restoration and conservation. Subject to the availability of additional partners and resources, the initiative will propose establishing a highly prestigious Restoration Leadership Award for game-changing national land restoration policies and programmes so that leadership at the highest level can be recognized and given visibility, including at the G20 Leaders’ Summits.

PILLAR 2

Engage





PILLAR 2: ENGAGE

Engage the private sector in land restoration and the conservation of terrestrial habitats

The strategy of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration identifies six key challenges to achieving widescale ecosystem restoration. Three of these relate to the active participation of the private sector in the conservation, sustainable management and restoration of land: (i) limited motivation by decision-makers in the public and private sectors to invest in long-term restoration activities; (ii) a dearth of legislation, policies, regulations, tax incentives and subsidies that incentivize investments towards large-scale restoration and sustainable production systems; and (iii) insufficient financing to invest in large-scale restoration due to the perceived and/or real risks involved.⁴

Commercial financial institutions, investors, corporations and philanthropic organizations all play a pivotal role in influencing land use and land management – whether positively or negatively. Investing to prevent land degradation and to restore degraded land makes sound economic sense, with benefits generally far exceeding costs.⁵ Despite the promising economic returns from ecosystem restoration and the conservation of terrestrial ecosystems (in addition to the environmental and social benefits), the gap between supply and demand for appropriate financing is estimated at USD 2.5 trillion per year in the developing countries alone.⁶ If the world is to meet its land degradation,

climate change and biodiversity targets, investment in land-based solutions needs to at least triple in real terms by 2030 and increase four-fold by 2050. The private sector contributes only 14 per cent of all finance for nature-based solutions.³

In order to turn this situation around and increase private sector investments in land restoration and habitat conservation, the initiative will engage the private sector to encourage it to support land restoration efforts and adopt sustainable land management practices. This activity will comprise an outreach/encouragement function to promote the needed investments and provide information to link investors/contributors to interested initiatives. Two aspects are fundamental for the participation of the private sector:

- Improved conditions for investment: This G20 workstream will aim to understand private sector thinking and trigger change. It will explore: (i) what private institutional investors are looking for in their strategies and asset allocation; and (ii) the conditions (including taxes, subsidies and incentives) under which sustainable land use activities would offer sufficiently attractive investment opportunities. The aim is to make a business case for private sector finance in ecosystem restoration, to advocate for greater private sector investment and to

assess how the integration of a business case in land restoration project design can be considered at an early stage to enable private sector involvement and to scale up the projects.

- More sustainable production/value chains: Nature-positive food, feed and fibre production keeps the soils healthy and the water flowing. It also helps to store carbon and provides homes for a range of terrestrial biodiversity that are above or below the ground. But it is a complex challenge that is both site-specific and global in nature, with the problem of imported land degradation becoming increasingly obvious. This G20 workstream will encourage land users and the producers (of those products coming from the land) to move their value chains towards greater sustainability. At the same time, people under 25 years old currently make up 60 per cent of the population of many developing countries. Millions of young people are entering the job market each year. In many cultures and countries, young people have lost their connection to the land. Despite young peoples' desire to make a positive contribution to the world, land restoration and/or land-based jobs in sustainable agriculture/sustainable pastoralism are seen as hard labour with little obvious reward.



PILLAR 2: ENGAGE

In this context, it is important to understand that the private sector is not monolithic, given its varied interests in the land management agenda. In the context of land stewardship, the following groups within the private sector can be considered as stakeholders:



Private sector companies which are involved in land management, in particular restoration, as an economic activity in itself, and thus have an economic incentive to increase sustainable land management.



Companies that may not work directly on land, but whose activities may have a direct or indirect impact on land, such as agrochemical companies and companies that contribute in a significant way to climate change, such as power plants and airline companies.



Private sector companies and philanthropic organizations that invest in reforestation and land restoration as part of their corporate social responsibility.



Private sector companies, including multinational corporations, working in the domains of oil, gas, mining and agriculture with concession areas of millions of hectares under their direct legal ownership/management, thus having a duty of care

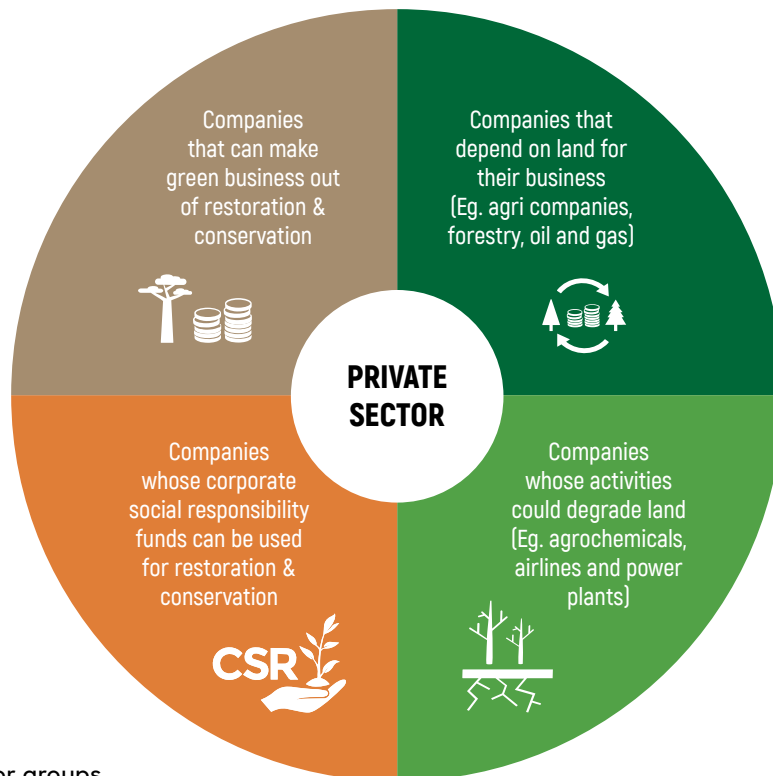


Figure 3. Private sector groups to engage with



PILLAR 2: ENGAGE

The proposed action areas for implementing Pillar 2 are:

- Establish a Private Sector Land Restoration Forum that focuses on the topic of restoration and conservation and work with them to scale up restoration efforts.
- Conference series: In partnership with Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), WEF and WBCSD, the initiative will design and launch a research and policy conference series exploring options to repurpose taxes, incentives and subsidies to drive investment into sustainable land management and the restoration of terrestrial landscapes and ecosystems. We will engage with and encourage commitment and input from the Research and Development (R&D) departments of large private companies. The series will explore relations with carbon finance/green bonds to underline synergies with climate change adaptation and mitigation. The outcomes of these dialogues will refine the work of the initiative going forward and be an integral part of the report back to the G20 members. These should lead to good/best practices guidelines and practical tools for the private sector (and recommendations for an enhanced policy framework).
- Collaborate with other private sector initiatives: Trillion Trees, Ark, Land Degradation Neutrality Fund, etc. We will work collaboratively to showcase and leverage the achievements of private sector creators and investors.
- Establish partnerships with Sustainable Development Goal-oriented business schools (such as the Hoffmann Global Institute for Business and Society at INSEAD) with the aim of: changing the narrative on investment in land restoration; establishing partnerships for outreach with consumer associations, youth movements, etc; and promoting the launch of the sourcing challenge with the marketing departments of major producers in collaboration with WBCSD/WEF.
- Nurture young people's creativity and entrepreneurial spirit by supporting training on entrepreneurship development for the most innovative and creative start-ups and social enterprises.
- Conduct systematic analyses for developing a good understanding of what the private sector is seeking from their investments and how land-based solutions can offer investment opportunities while providing environmental and social benefits.
- Conduct dialogues between the private sector and governments to formulate economic policies, which will stimulate private sector investment in land conservation and restoration.
- Work with the private sector, including with existing private sector groups, to promote the uptake of land stewardship as a business or part of corporate philanthropy.
- Promote to the private sector the availability of blended finance, including the post-pandemic economic recovery packages, for incentivizing and rewarding sustainable land management and creating enabling conditions for long-term land stewardship.
- Study and make recommendations on eliminating perverse subsidies that incentivize habitat degradation and fuel climate change and biodiversity loss.
- Establish a private sector guidance for engaging in land restoration and sustainable land management.

PILLAR 3

Empower





PILLAR 3: EMPOWER

Empower civil society and the public in land restoration and conservation of terrestrial habitats

The social and environmental dimensions of land management and land stewardship go together and are linked in complex ways. Participatory community management is a proven way to achieve the desired outcomes, secure livelihoods, enhance social and environmental resilience, and protect natural ecosystems.⁷ Land governance, including land tenure and land rights, is key to achieving these objectives, particularly for vulnerable, marginalized and poor people.⁸

Awareness about the importance of secured rights – including those of Indigenous peoples and women – is increasing among stakeholders. However, the limited integration of rights-related issues in land degradation programmes, initiatives and policies remains a key challenge.⁹

Integrating gender-responsive actions to promote equality and female empowerment is critical to achieving land degradation neutrality. Women, in particular, play critical roles in natural resource management, agriculture and related agricultural value chains.

Therefore, securing their rights to land and resources is key to sustainable land management. However, women's access to land remains weak, despite encouraging efforts in this direction. Such rights may even be threatened by tenure formalization programmes, as shown in recent evidence from Africa, Asia and Latin America.^{10,11}

Women also face social and cultural barriers when participating in capacity-building activities. It is also critical to promote the roles of the indigenous people, as they make important contributions and are knowledge carriers on soil conservation, climate and biodiversity. It is crucial to assess all activities under this initiative against established social and environmental safeguards. They need to be clear and developed in a participatory manner to avoid perpetuating activities that are harmful for people and/or nature. In addition, insufficient coordination across sectors and spatial scales, combined with fragmentation of institutions and too few initiatives that align community priorities and aspirations with national programmes, hinder

the achievement of win-win sustainable land management solutions that have the potential to foster long-term land stewardship. This has often resulted in high levels of rural-to-urban migration among the youth, leading to labour shortages and the erosion of local knowledge on sustainable resource use. Although many factors determine out-migration, evidence suggests that land degradation, scarcity of productive land, insufficient rights and leadership opportunities, and the lack of decent employment opportunities in the rural areas for youth all play a role.^{12,13}

The initiative will encourage the direct engagement of the civil society, including by mobilizing the general public for urgent action in the field of sustainable land management. The successful implementation of Pillar 3 relies on building societal assets and rights-based approaches, combined with place-based responses to reduce land degradation and promote the restoration of degraded landscapes and habitat conservation.



PILLAR 3: EMPOWER

The proposed action areas include:

- **Create a Social Forum for Land Restoration** that includes indigenous peoples, women and youth and that is active in the field of sustainable land management, and conduct periodic consultative meetings.
- **Create a citizen science community:** Citizen science (also known as community science, crowd science, crowd-sourced science, civic science, or volunteer monitoring) is scientific research conducted, in whole or in part, by amateur (or non-professional) scientists. Citizen science is sometimes described as “public participation in scientific research”, participatory monitoring and participatory action research. Its outcomes are often advancements in scientific research by improving the scientific community’s capacities as well as increasing the public’s understanding of science. We will challenge young people to design a platform/network for citizens to document land degradation and progress in the restoration of land (through photography, video and interactive games or exercises) and call on the community to crowdsource innovation (ideas incubator/hackathon), possibly with the use of the blockchain technology for transparency.
- **Ecosystem Restoration Camps:** Collaborate with the Ecosystem Restoration Camp organization to: encourage and manage a flow of volunteers of all ages, but especially young people, to restore agricultural and natural ecosystems; train people in techniques for restoring land; and provide practical opportunities for people to practice new approaches to landscape restoration. The camps would help to teach large numbers of people how to restore degraded land whilst giving them the opportunity to work with local farmers who need support in transitioning to regenerative agriculture. At the camp, young people acquire the knowledge and information they require in order to put theory into practice. This gives farmers who are struggling financially the ability to try regenerative techniques, thanks to the voluntary manual labour. At the same time, it gives people valuable experience in landscape restoration. These Ecosystem Restoration Camps have the potential to give millions of people around the world the chance to reconnect with the natural world, with ripple effects, as the participants bring this knowledge and connection back into towns and cities across the world.
- **Media Award:** Mass media plays an important role in creating awareness among people. Studies show that an increase in media coverage of an issue correlates with an increase in public concern for that issue, which eventually plays a determining role in relevant policy change. To increase and maintain mass or social media coverage of issues related to land degradation and terrestrial habitat loss and increase its quality, the Initiative Coordination Office (ICO) will aim to partner with an existing and established media award to create an award category for a distinguished example of explanatory reporting, using any journalistic tool that illuminates a complex subject related to land degradation and terrestrial habitat loss.
- **Promote land-based solutions that endorse Indigenous communities,** women and youth as major agents of change. The initiative will work together with these stakeholders individually and collectively to develop projects and programmes, which will provide increased access to them in decision-making regarding land management.
- **Organize events to harness the power and reach of faith-based organizations** to increase the involvement of communities and leadership in land restoration.



PILLAR 3: EMPOWER



FIGURE 4. Civil society groups to engage with

Abbreviation: NGO: non-governmental organization

PILLAR 4

Build Capacity





PILLAR 4: BUILD CAPACITY



Develop and mobilize capacity between G20 members and non-member countries

Access to clear, evidence-based information on effective land management practices is critical to achieving sustainable land management and long-term land stewardship. A lack of access however, hampers the full ownership of local problems, leading to limited adoption of new methods, norms and policies. Further, important lessons learned are often not documented. And solutions for a given land management problem may remain localized, preventing their uptake and adaptation for replication and scaling. The lack of systems and networks for the exchange of knowledge around evidence-based land management approaches through updated, easily accessible, collaborative and culturally appropriate media also hampers technology transfer and innovation and its scaling up.

Adaptive learning and knowledge-sharing as well as accelerating collaboration between local, national and global communities of practice in and among member countries will enhance synergies. It is widely agreed that mutually supportive climate, biodiversity conservation and land management policies have the potential to sustainably and efficiently use resources, enhance social resilience, support restoration, enhance conservation of terrestrial ecosystems, and foster engagement and collaboration between multiple stakeholders and across scales.

The initiative will support the exchange of know-how and capacity-building between the G20 members, non-member countries, and other partners and stakeholders as well as support efforts to accelerate the exchange of best practices to enhance land conservation and restoration efforts. The initiative can facilitate the analysis of knowledge, identify capacity-building bottlenecks and encourage investments to address them. In order to achieve this, the initiative will:

- › **Establish a Global Research and Academic Network on Land Restoration**, linking collaborating institutions from the G20 member countries and beyond in promoting land restoration and a sustainable land management agenda. Collaboration with CGIAR (formerly Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research), World Agroforestry (formerly International Center for Research in Agroforestry), the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), and other established academic and research networks will be explored.
- › Hardwire land restoration and sustainable land management into the curriculum of agricultural universities and forestry institutes around the world so that future generations of agricultural scientists and forestry experts are fully familiar with the science, technology and economics of land restoration and habitat conservation.
- › Establish a Global Leadership Programme with United Nations University to sensitize future leaders on climate change, biodiversity loss and the importance of sustainable management as a basis for sustainable development.
- › Build targeted capacity-building among champions, changemakers and opinion leaders on land stewardship, particularly focusing on youth, women, and indigenous peoples.
- › Foster communities of practice of experts working in the area of sustainable land management.
- › Make use of modern online and hybrid (online and in-person) approaches, including by partnering with online educational platforms, to achieve capacity-building at scale for those who are outside the conventional academic system.
- › By sharing and exchanging knowledge about technology through (virtual) innovation hubs, the initiative would: (i) contribute to the development and maturing of innovative technologies and the testing and evaluation of new and previously unused technologies; and (ii) eliminate barriers to the uptake and use of the technologies. For implementation, the initiative will develop financing mechanisms, including seed funding, and facilitate networking through the (virtual) innovation hubs to identify market opportunities.

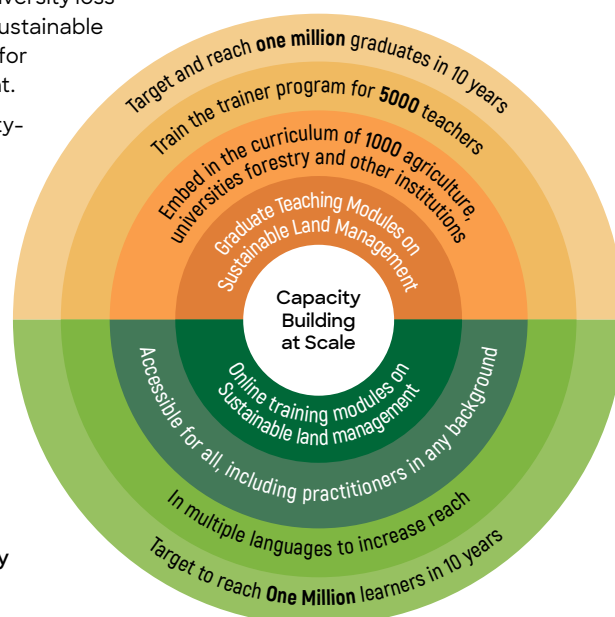


FIGURE 5. Capacity Building at Scale

Collaboration and Leveraging





COLLABORATION AND LEVERAGING

Engaging with other ongoing initiatives

Restoration projects, both small- and large-scale, have been ongoing for decades, if not centuries. However, there is a realization, increasingly, of the degree of damage humanity has imposed on land ecosystems. There are collective global efforts to redress the situation through national efforts. They include the Bonn Challenge for forest landscape restoration, the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans of CBD, the Land Degradation Neutrality targets of UNCCD and the Nationally Determined Contributions under UNFCCC.

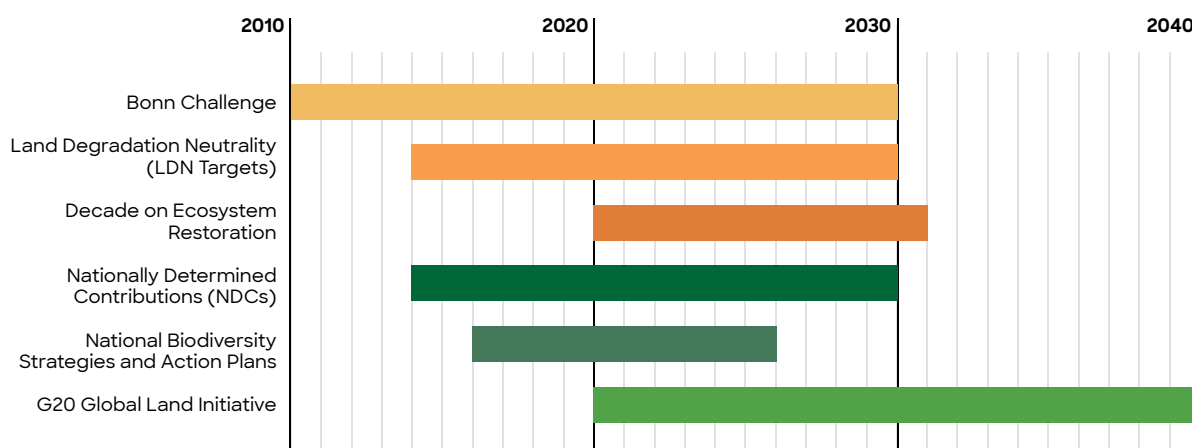


FIGURE 6. Ongoing ecosystem restoration initiatives

The importance of the overarching Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, adopted by the UN General Assembly in March 2019, (Resolution 73/284, United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030)) requires special attention. The Resolution decided to proclaim 2021-2030 as the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, within existing structures and available resources, with the aim of supporting and scaling up efforts to prevent, halt, and reverse the degradation of ecosystems worldwide and raise awareness of the importance of successful ecosystem restoration. The initiative is led by UNEP and FAO and is currently comprised of 200 partners. UNCCD is already a partner in the Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. The initiative is committed to work with the Decade on Ecosystem Restoration to ensure the objectives are aligned, information is shared and activities are coordinated.



UNITED NATIONS DECADE ON
**ECOSYSTEM
RESTORATION**
2021-2030





COLLABORATION AND LEVERAGING

Important role of emerging technologies

Over the past ten years, developments in the field of artificial intelligence, robotics, the Internet of Things and drones have started to demonstrate their potential to change many domains of human activity. Land management will be no exception. Artificial intelligence will assist experts to pinpoint land restoration opportunities at a very localized scale, which was not possible before. The Internet of Things can provide early warnings about degrading land. Drones have the capability to support restoration and monitoring efforts.

Good case studies of the application of modern technologies for land restoration are available around the world, but they need to be compiled, compared with existing approaches and calibrated to the local conditions. There is a need to support pilot efforts that will demonstrate technology use in countries, change legislative frameworks to enable the use of the technologies and create a skill base in the communities to increase the chances for the technology to take off.

The initiative will provide dedicated attention to developments in new technologies and make technology a cross-cutting element in the four pillars of the initiative. Bringing in modern technology can upskill youth, especially the rural youth, in using modern technologies, and create jobs that no longer require any specialized skills. Upskilling rural youth by applying modern technologies will have other beneficial impacts, such as reducing rural-to-urban migration and its associated socioeconomic impacts.

Leveraging the power of the G20

The greatest strength of the G20 Initiative is of course the collective power of the G20, which represents large land areas (60% of the world's total land area), good restoration practices and massive economies as well as some of the world's best expertise in land restoration. How these elements are combined to achieve increased restoration within the G20 countries as well as support to non-G20 countries to achieve the same will determine if the initiative meets its ambition.

In order to achieve the objectives of the initiative, we will prepare profiles of the G20 countries in the domain of land restoration. This will include the land area classified as degraded or having ongoing or planned restoration projects as well as national institutions engaged in restoration, and academic institutions with technical expertise on restoration. This will be followed by a policy and a financial analysis to understand the existing policy frameworks and financial flows in the domain of land restoration. This information will form the basis for a comprehensive opportunity analysis for both scaling up land restoration within the countries and for

cooperation between and beyond the G20 countries.

While the Global Initiative was launched under the Environment (and Climate Change) stream under the Sherpa track, land restoration spans more than one Ministry. In order to achieve land restoration and reduce land degradation, for example, working with the ministries of agriculture is critical. Similarly, disasters have the potential to cause large-scale land degradation, whereas large-scale nature-based solutions have also become an integral part of disaster risk reduction. Therefore, working with the disaster risk reduction track is also a potential opportunity to restore land. In addition to working with the government tracks in G20, following up the engagement tracks is also critical, especially with the Youth (Y20), Women (Y20) and Business (B20) groups. The Global Land Initiative will work with a Think Tank (T20) to map the linkages between land degradation and other sectors, such as trade, transportation and health, to understand where there are potential synergies.

The rotational basis of the G20 presidency presents an excellent opportunity to expand the restoration agenda gradually. Among the G20 countries, all key terrestrial ecosystems are covered, such as forests, grasslands, drylands, rangelands, croplands, peatlands, mangroves, soil, tundra, karst and wetlands. While Saudi Arabia's G20 Presidency set the broad framework for land restoration, the Indonesian Presidency decided to focus on peatlands and mangroves, the two ecosystems in which it has significant expertise. Indonesia can thus become a focal country for promoting policy and technical expertise in the restoration of mangroves and peatland across the G20 countries and beyond. This model could be followed by subsequent presidencies, and thereby develop guidance for each of the terrestrial ecosystems as well as establish a series of capacity-building programmes on the different ecosystems. A network of G20 collaborating centres and a community of practitioners on land restoration can eventually be developed, which would be the main body for outreach efforts of the initiative.



COLLABORATION AND LEVERAGING

Links between the Rio conventions

The CBD, UNCCD and UNFCCC all emerged from the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, and are referred to collectively as the Rio Conventions. These conventions have developed independently with their own focal areas, governance mechanisms and priorities. However, there is a realization that these three issues are interlinked and the conventions should be working together to reinforce their messages.

Ecosystem restoration is a topic that links the three conventions in a strong thematic manner. Restoring ecosystems contributes directly to combating desertification. Restored ecosystems improve and benefit biodiversity. And land and ecosystem restoration have the potential to be used for both adaptation and mitigation of climate change. The initiative, therefore, has the potential to work with each of the conventions and benefit from their expertise and financing arrangements.

Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) is developed by UNCCD and supported by its members. The Parties to the Convention define LDN as “a state whereby the amount and quality of land resources, necessary to support ecosystem functions and services and enhance food security, remains stable or increases within specified temporal and spatial scales and ecosystems”.

To date, over 120 countries have engaged with the LDN Target Setting Programmes, with considerable progress made to achieve LDN, since the adoption in 2015 of the 2030 Agenda. The Global Land Initiative will work closely with the UNCCD Secretariat to review the implementation of the LDN agenda with a view to achieve Land Degradation Neutrality by 2030. The reporting on LDN will also provide a valuable database for the Global Land Initiative to identify key and potential opportunities for land restoration.

The recently concluded Conference of Parties of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity adopted the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). One of the targets, Target 2, is specifically on restoration. It states: “Ensure that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of areas of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and coastal and marine ecosystems are under effective restoration, in order to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, ecological integrity, and connectivity.”

In addition, the new GBF also calls for increasing resource flows, requesting to substantially and progressively increase the level of financial resources from all sources, in an effective, timely, and easily accessible manner, including domestic, international, public and private resources, to implement national biodiversity strategies and action plans by 2030, and mobilizing at least 200 billion United States dollars per year. The Global Land Initiative will leverage the opportunity created by the new GBF.

Land is an important factor when it comes to climate change mitigation and adaptation. Land degradation reduces the ability of land to store carbon. When the vegetation is burnt, it releases the stored carbon. Therefore, reducing deforestation and land degradation have been identified as priority actions by the climate change community. At the 26th session of UNFCCC Conference of the Parties in 2021 in Glasgow, United Kingdom, leaders from 145 countries signed the Glasgow Leaders’ Declaration on Forests and Land Use. They committed to “working collectively to

halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030, while delivering sustainable development and promoting an inclusive rural transformation.” They promised further to “facilitate the alignment of financial flows with international goals to reverse forest loss and degradation, while ensuring that robust policies and systems are in place to accelerate the transition to an economy that is resilient and advances forest, sustainable land use, biodiversity and climate goals”. These global initiatives will work together with the countries to follow up on the commitments of the Glasgow Leaders’ Declaration and to build synergies.

The initiative will engage with all these specific activities of the conventions. It will also consider bringing the respective actors together under a “land restoration cluster”. This may be expanded to involve other partners of the Decade on Ecosystem Restoration to improve coordination and avoid duplication. These conventions and their respective meetings will also be used as opportunities to increase awareness about ecosystem restoration and conservation.

Linking the three conventions brings the possibility of leveraging climate finance for land restoration by increasing investments in nature-based solutions. The initiative will aim to create a coalition of the willing parties to promote a concept for 30 per cent of climate financing to be directed towards nature-based solutions, which will create multiple benefits for biodiversity conservation, land restoration, livelihoods and disaster risk reduction, in addition to the benefits of climate change adaptation and mitigation.



COLLABORATION AND LEVERAGING

From the G20's Ambition to a Global Movement

The ambition of G20 countries to reduce degraded land by 2040 will require field-level action at an unprecedented scale, not just in the G20 countries but across the world. The initiative can only be a catalyst for such actions.

There are signs already that land restoration is becoming a topic of global interest and importance. The Great Green Wall of the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative in Africa, a concept which was first put forth in the 1970s, formally announced its commencement in 2007. However, in recent years, it has received increased attention and offers of financial and technical assistance. Currently, more than 20 countries in Africa have joined hands to transform their landscapes, improve livelihoods and fight climate change, with support from donors and international organizations.

The Government of Saudi Arabia has also proposed a Middle East Green Initiative, which includes countries that stretch from Morocco to Yemen, with an option of including up to 46 countries in Africa and Asia. The Middle East Green Initiative, whose ambition is to restore 200 million hectares of degraded land, will be a major contributor to achieving the objectives of the Initiative.

In addition to governments, the private sector is also showing increasing interest in the topic of land restoration. The Bezos Earth Fund announced USD

2 billion for landscape restoration and food systems transformation. This bold move is expected to set a trend and attract more philanthropic and private sector funds into the land restoration domain.

Both GEF and GCF have been supporting land restoration projects, which also offer biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation as co-benefits. There will be more resources available for land restoration in the coming decades as the funds available for climate change mitigation increase.





COLLABORATION AND LEVERAGING

As important as these funding streams are, they only contribute a small portion of the USD 4.1 trillion financing gap estimated by the United Nations Environment Programme in their 2021 report titled, *State of Finance for Nature – Tripling Investments in Nature-Based Solutions by 2030*. Therefore, the activities proposed in this initiative can only be enablers to move two major actors to scale up their efforts for land restoration in a systematic manner.

Firstly, a large portion of land is in private hands, from small farmers to

large mining companies. They work on these lands on a regular basis, and their interventions often cause the degradation of the land. Legislative pressure and economic incentives need to be created to ensure more resources are deployed for the sustainable management of land, including for the restoration of lands owned and operated by private actors.

The most important actor in the domain of land restoration, both as custodian of the land (including community land) and investor in land management is clearly the

government (national, provincial, and local). Therefore, government policies have to be steered so as to ensure sectoral policies do not lead to the degradation of new land. Rather, the incentives created help to restore degraded land. The activities highlighted in this strategy are all geared towards steering governments across the world to consider land restoration as a serious issue in national policy and to provide both legislative and investment incentives in their domains of influence in order to meet the objectives and make impactful progress.

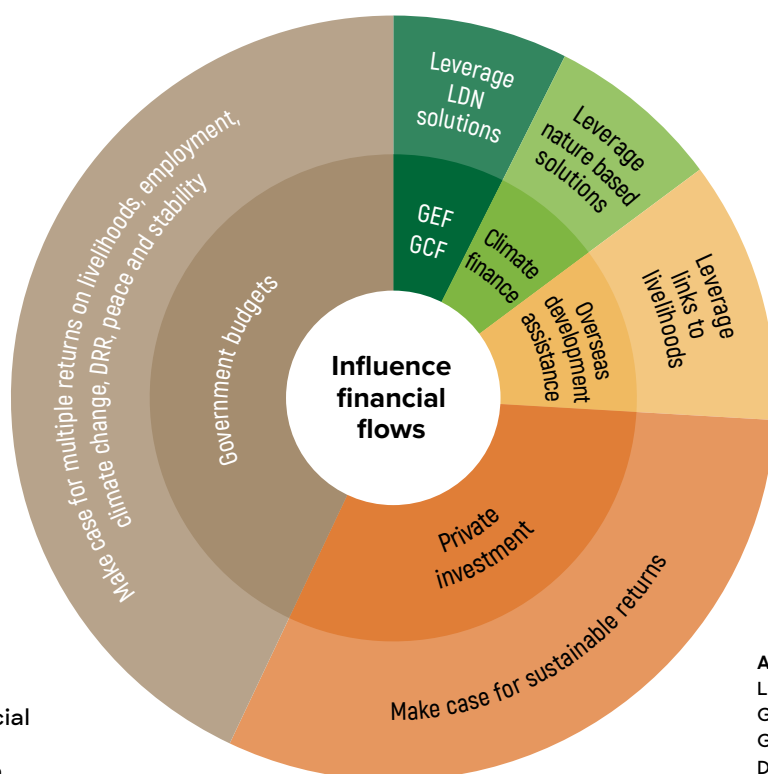


FIGURE 6.
How to influence financial flows towards land restoration

Abbreviations:
LDN: Land Degradation Neutrality
GEF: The Global Environment Facility
GCF: Green Climate Fund
DRR: Disaster Risk Reduction



The biggest actor in land restoration and investor in land management is, clearly, the government.



Annex I: Theory of Change

<p>Impact</p> <p>Sustainable Land Management leads to increased food security, conservation of biological diversity, climate change adaptation & mitigation and disaster risk reduction, thus reducing conflicts, improving livelihoods and ensuring sustainable development.</p>			
<p>Intermediate State</p> <p>Efforts of G20 countries and non-member countries reverse land degradation and restore 50% of degraded land across the globe by 2040, through bold and coordinated initiatives among G20 Members and also other countries</p>			
<p>Outcomes</p> <p>New policies, laws and programs in at least 100 countries around the world which promote land restoration; 2. Increased resource flows, to the tune of 1 trillion USD, from government and private sector for land restoration, and; 3. A massive increase in the technical capacity, of about a million graduates and professionals, trained in land restoration and 4. At least 10,000 new "Ecopreneurs" who use restoration projects as business opportunities and are engaged in the restoration domain.</p>			
<p>Outputs</p> <p>A. Development of a Land Restoration Information Hub, which provides up-to-date information on degraded land, sustainable management, restoration opportunities and best practice case studies.</p> <p>B. Empower communities of practice on land restoration and habitat conservation.</p> <p>C. Undertake leadership action promoting ecosystem restoration and conservation of terrestrial habitats</p> <p>D. Draft legislations and guidance for government officials and policy makers on land restoration and ecosystem conservation.</p>	<p>E. Development of a private sector platform, which promotes increasing engagement in land restoration, habitat conservation and sustainable land management practices.</p> <p>F. Create a start-up support system for ecopreneurs who are involved in land restoration and habitat conservation.</p> <p>G. Draft legislations and guidance for private sector on land restoration and ecosystem conservation.</p>	<p>H. Create civil society forums, bringing together women, youth and indigenous peoples to promote land restoration and habitat conservation efforts.</p> <p>I. Leverage reach of faith leaders to promote land restoration and habitat conservation.</p>	<p>J. Train graduates in land restoration and habitat conservation by mainstreaming these topics in university curricular.</p> <p>K. Train a massive number of professionals on land restoration and habitat conservation using online platforms.</p> <p>L. Train a new crop of young leaders around the world in the importance of land restoration and habitat conservation to meet the goals of the three Rio Conventions.</p>
<p>Activities</p> <p>1. Confederation a range of data providers working on these issues, notably the Task Force on Monitoring for the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, the UNCCD reporting framework, and the PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency;</p> <p>2. Establish a systematic process to continuously review and distill international best practices in the domain of restoration and conservation so that they could be projected and promoted across the world;</p> <p>3. Create application process interfaces from existing databases to be used by the media, social media influencers and other interested actors;</p>	<p>1. Establish a Private Sector Land Restoration Forum that focuses on the topic of restoration and conservation and work with them to upscale restoration efforts;</p> <p>2. Conference series: In partnership with Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), WEF and the WBCSD, the Initiative will design and launch a research and policy conference series exploring options to re purpose taxes, incentives and subsidies to drive investment into sustainable land management and the restoration of terrestrial landscapes and ecosystems.</p>	<p>1. Create a Social Forum for Land Restoration that includes Indigenous peoples, women and youth and is active in the field of sustainable land management and conduct periodic consultative meetings;</p> <p>2. Create a citizen science community: Citizen science (also known as community science, crowd science, crowd-sourced science, civic science, or volunteer monitoring) is scientific research conducted, in whole or in part, by amateur (or non-professional) scientists. Citizen science is sometimes described as "public participation in scientific research", participatory monitoring, and participatory action research. Its outcomes are often advancements in</p>	<p>1. Establish a Global Research and Academic Network on Land Restoration, linking collaborating institutions from G20 member countries and beyond for promoting land restoration and a sustainable land management agenda;</p> <p>2. Hardwire land restoration and sustainable land management into the curricular of agricultural universities and forestry institutes around the world so that the future generation of agricultural scientists and forestry experts are fully familiar with the science, technology and economics of land restoration and habitat conservation;</p>

3. Develop high-quality data visualization products based on the existing database and make them available to the media, including social media;
4. Establish partnerships with accomplished documentary directors and media houses to produce and promote high-quality documentaries on case studies of conservation successes;
5. Create an immersive visual analytics space for international exhibitions/meetings that allow participants to inhabit current and future environments and interactively test, compare, debate and share 'data journeys' into the current and future impacts of decision-making;
6. Establish global awards to recognize leadership efforts in land restoration and conservation efforts. Subject to the availability of additional partners and resources, the Initiative will propose establishing a highly prestigious Restoration Leadership Award for game-changing national land restoration policies and programmes so that leadership at the highest level can be recognized and given visibility, including at the G20 Leaders' Summits.

3. We will engage with and encourage commitment and input from the research & development departments of large private companies. The series will explore relations with carbon finance/green bonds to underline synergies with climate change adaptation and mitigation. The outcomes of these dialogues will refine the work of the initiative going forward and be an integral part of the reporting back to G20 members. It should lead to good/best practice guidelines and practical tools for the private sector (and recommendations for an enhanced policy framework);
4. Collaborate with other private sector initiatives: Trillion Trees, Ark, Land Degradation Neutrality Fund, etc.. We will work collaboratively to showcase and leverage the achievements of private sector creators and investors;
5. Establish partnerships with Sustainable Development Goal-oriented business schools (such as the Hoffmann Global Institute for Business and Society at INSEAD) with the aim of changing the narrative on investment in land restoration; establish partnerships for outreach with consumer associations, youth movements, etc.; and promote the launch of the sourcing challenge with the marketing departments of major producers in collaboration with WBCSD/WEF;
6. Nurture young people's creativity and entrepreneurial spirit by supporting training on entrepreneurship and creative start-ups and social enterprises;

scientific research by improving the scientific community's capacities as well as increasing the public's understanding of science. We will challenge young people, design a platform/network for citizens to document land degradation and progress in the restoration of land (through photography, video and interactive games or exercises) and call on the community to crowdsource innovation (ideas incubator/hackathon), possibly around the use of blockchain for transparency.

3. Ecosystem Restoration Camps:

Collaborate with the Ecosystem Restoration Camp organization to encourage and manage a flow of volunteers of all ages, but especially young people, to restore agricultural and natural ecosystems; train people in techniques for restoring land; and provide practical opportunities for people to practice new approaches to landscape restoration. The camps are helping to teach large numbers of people how to restore degraded land whilst giving them the opportunity to work with local farmers who need support in transitioning to regenerative agriculture. At the camp, young people acquire the knowledge and information they need in order to put theory into practice. This gives farmers who are struggling financially the ability to try regenerative techniques, thanks to the voluntary manual labour, and gives people valuable experience in landscape restoration. The Ecosystem Restoration Camps have the potential to give millions of people around the world the chance to reconnect with the natural world, causing ripple effects as they bring this knowledge and connection back into towns and cities across the globe.

3. Establish a Global Leadership Programme with United Nations University to sensitize future leaders on climate change, biodiversity loss and the importance of sustainable management as a basis for sustainable development;
4. Build targeted capacity-building among champions, changemakers and opinion makers on land stewardship, particularly focusing on youth, women and indigenous peoples;
5. Foster communities of practice of experts working in the area of sustainable land management;
6. Make use of modern online and hybrid (online and in-person) approaches, including by partnering with online educational platforms, to achieve capacity-building at scale for those who are outside the conventional academic system; and
7. By sharing and exchanging knowledge about technology through (virtual) innovation hubs, the Initiative would (i) contribute to the development and maturing of innovative new technologies and the testing and evaluation of new and previously unused technologies; and (ii) eliminate barriers to the uptake and usage thereof. For the implementation, the Initiative will develop financing mechanisms, including seed funding, and facilitate networking through the (virtual) innovation hubs to identify market opportunities.

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|---|--|
| <p>7. Conduct systematic analyses for developing a good understanding of what the private sector is seeking from investment and how land-based solutions can offer investment opportunities while providing environmental and social benefits;</p> <p>8. Conduct dialogues between the private sector and governments to formulate economic policies which will stimulate private sector investment in land conservation and restoration;</p> <p>9. Work with the private sector, including with existing groups of private sector, to promote the uptake of land stewardship as business or part of corporate philanthropy;</p> <p>10. Promote the availability of blended finance to the private sector, including during the post-pandemic economic recovery packages, for incentivizing and rewarding sustainable land management and creating enabling conditions for long-term land stewardship;</p> <p>11. Study and make recommendations on eliminating perverse subsidies that incentivize habitat degradation and fuel climate change and biodiversity loss; and</p> <p>12. Establish guidance for the private sector for engaging in land restoration and sustainable land management.</p> | <p>4. Media Award: Mass media plays an important role in creating awareness among people, and studies have shown that an increase in media coverage of an issue correlates with an increase in public concern for this issue, which eventually plays a determining role in relevant policy change. To increase and maintain mass or social media coverage of issues related to land degradation and terrestrial habitat loss and increase its quality, the Initiative Coordination Office (ICO) will aim to partner with an existing and established media award to create an award category for a distinguished example of explanatory reporting, using any journalistic tool that illuminates a complex subject related to land degradation and terrestrial habitat loss.</p> |
| | <p>5. Promoting land-based solutions that endorse Indigenous communities, women and youth as major agents of change. The Initiative will work together with these stakeholders individually and collectively to develop projects and programmes, which will provide increased access to them in decision-making regarding land management.</p> <p>6. Organize events to harness the power and reach of faith-based organizations to increase their involvement.</p> |

<p>Drivers</p> <p>The technology sector, particularly digital and modern technologies, can actively contribute to achieving land restoration and habitat conservation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Databases, with significant contributions from G20 countries and their respective best practice case studies, compile information on national and international commitments on land conservation and restoration. • Major global media may cover issues around land restoration and conservation to inform and sensitize society. • Modern technologies such as AI, AR and VR allow people to visualize alternative scenarios. • Remote sensing technologies, such as satellites, airborne technology, and drones, and ground deployed technologies, such as GPS telemetry, camera-trapping, and wireless sensor networks bring advantages to the monitoring of both degraded and restored area. 	<p>The private sector can support land restoration and habitat conservation efforts through needed investments, and existing global fora, such as the World Economic Forum.</p> <p>This support can be enhanced with the support of G20 countries' policies to further involve the private sector in restoration and conservation efforts. Additionally, existing global mechanisms such as GEF and GCF may wish to fund private sector projects.</p>	<p>There continues to be strong calls from civil society for urgent environmental action.</p> <p>Civil society, in particular youth, women and indigenous peoples, could play an active role in restoration and conservation efforts, with the support of G20 countries.</p>	<p>Academic/ educational institutions are drivers of knowledge sharing and capacity building.</p> <p>G20 countries, as well as non-member countries, may work in conjunction with these institutions and further build on the "blended learning" COVID-19 legacy on academic systems.</p>
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Assumptions

1. There are many existing international best practices and ongoing global initiatives for land restoration and habitat conservation.
2. G20 countries, and interested non-member countries, are committed to sharing their experiences and building global capacity for upscaling land restoration and habitat conservation efforts to achieve 50 per cent reduction in degraded land by 2040.
3. Resource flows into degraded land restoration and conservation from public and private funding can be increased many times if there is informed leadership, increased awareness about success stories, better incentives for the private sector and increased civil society pressure on both Government and Private Sector
4. Land restoration can be converted into a profitable business with the right incentives, technology and policy instruments

Link to relevant SDG

SDG 15: *Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss:*

- **Target 15.3:** *By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world.*
- **Indicator 15.3.1:** *Proportion of land that is degraded over total land area.*

Main problem/global challenge

Land degradation is a fundamental threat to sustainable development, as it undermines livelihoods, puts pressure on biodiversity, contributes to climate change, and increases disaster risks across the world.

Annex II: Implementation arrangements

The implementation of the G20 Global Initiative on Reducing Land Degradation and Enhancing Conservation of Terrestrial Habitats is a collective responsibility of all the G20 members. In order to support and facilitate its implementation, an Initiative Coordination Office (ICO) will be established.

The ICO will have dedicated full-time staff and an annual budget from which it will fund its core activities. The ICO will receive administrative and financial oversight from the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) secretariat as part of a formalized collaboration agreement. The ICO will:

- Create and administer the website on the conservation, sustainable management, and restoration of land.
- Manage the administrative budget allocated to the ICO.
- Showcase existing knowledge-sharing products on reducing land degradation and organize capacity-building and knowledge-sharing activities.
- Prepare reporting on the initiative for consideration and approval by the Initiative Steering Committee and transmission to key stakeholders, such as the G20 and concerned international Organizations.

The funding of the ICO budget will be provided on a voluntary basis by the G20 members, non-member countries, and other institutions. To support the launch of the Initiative, Saudi Arabia has agreed with UNCCD to provide a financial contribution which will be sufficient to fund the ICO budget for the first 10 years. Other G20 members are encouraged to contribute voluntarily as well.

G20 Global Initiative Steering Committee

The G20 Global Initiative will have a Steering Committee consisting

of all the interested G20 members, the secretariats of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, UNCCD, and the United Nations Environment Programme, as well as non-member countries and other institutions that contribute to the work of the ICO. The Steering Committee will have the following important functions with regards to the initiative:

- The Steering Committee members would inform the ICO of activities, initiatives and policies within their countries which are aligned with the objectives of the Initiative.
- The Steering Committee members from the G20 will help to identify institutions within their members that could act as collaborative centers for the initiative to lead or collaborate on topics relating to land restoration.
- The Steering Committee will be presented with periodic reports about the activities of the ICO.
- The documentation, once considered by the Steering Committee, will be made publicly available.
- The Chair of the Steering Committee will be selected from among the current G20 Troika countries (i.e., previous, current, and future G20 presidencies).
- The Chair will convene meetings, as appropriate, and set the agenda, with input and support from the ICO.
- The Steering Committee will meet at least once annually, either in person or virtually, to guide the execution of the initiative.
- The Steering Committee will also be supported in its role and functions by the ICO, which will serve as the Secretariat of the Steering Committee and will prepare meeting logistics, operational plans, briefing papers and progress reports, and provide all the necessary support, information and evidence required for informed decision-making.

- The initiative, through the Chair of the Steering Committee, will report to the G20 environment deputies and the G20 environment ministers as requested.
- A very important role of the Steering Committee members is to take the collective knowledge gained on land restoration back to their country or organizations so that it can inform their policies, programmes and projects.

Roles and responsibilities of key actors in the G20 Global Initiative

1. THE G20 COUNTRIES

All the G20 countries will:

- Nominate a member to the ICO Steering Committee and participate actively in the Steering Committee meetings.
- Consider, on a voluntary basis and according to interest and capacity, dedicating financial and/or human resources for the delivery of the initiative through participation in activities delivered by the initiative.
- Encourage and advocate for land-related issues during their own G20 presidencies and all other international forums where the countries have influence.
- Review and refine the country's own (domestic) commitments to reducing land degradation and preserving terrestrial ecosystems.
- Explore options to review bilateral and multilateral international development financing in order to reduce land degradation and conserve and sustainably manage terrestrial ecosystems.
- Nominate one or more institutional partners who could act as a hub for capacity-building for the conservation and restoration of degraded land.

2. PARTNERS

There will be three kinds of partners associated with the G20 Global Initiative. Initially, there will be a set of implementation partners, which will be identified by UNCCD to take on an active role in the implementation of the various activities identified. Such partners could be international organizations, government bodies, non-governmental organizations, or private sector entities based on their comparative advantages and cost effectiveness. The number of implementation partners will be few, ten at most, to maintain the economies of scale and minimize oversight responsibilities. Contractual arrangements will be made between implementation partners and the UNCCD for the timely implementation of the project activities.

At a second level, there will be a network of collaborative centers and organizations that will be interested in working with the initiative to promote its objectives. This will be a coalition of the willing, and they would agree to a set of principles for collaborative or cooperative actions.

- All partners are committed to achieving the objectives of the initiative.
- Organizations and institutions that wish to become committed partners may submit a letter of interest to the ICO. The ICO will respond with a formal letter of collaboration once the letter is reviewed.
- Each partner will individually determine the nature and extent of its participation in the activities of the initiative.
- Each partner will undertake the activities considered by the initiative within their respective operating domains.
- Partners will be encouraged to actively participate in the biannual Forum of Partners; foster the exchange of information, knowledge, and technologies,

consolidate lessons learned and good practices, and promote them across/between countries and continents; capitalize on and add value to ongoing initiatives; and be open to collaboration with the public and private sectors (such as development banks, research institutions, advisory services, academia, civil society, farmers' organizations, agribusinesses, and other relevant institutions).

3. SAUDI ARABIA

A significant portion of the ICO's budget (staff, operations, and activities) has been pledged for an initial 10-year period as a financial contribution of Saudi Arabia to the initiative. Saudi Arabia will work with the ICO as well as the current presidency of the G20 to prepare for the annual meeting of the Steering Committee. Saudi Arabia will work with all the future G20 presidencies to keep the G20 Global Initiative on the G20 agenda and building on it with special focus areas during each Presidency.

4. UNCCD SECRETARIAT

The UNCCD secretariat will:

- Provide administrative services and oversight to the initiative and will support the establishment of the ICO.
- While leveraging opportunities for partnership and synergy, the UNCCD will ensure that the ICO maintains separate and distinct operations.

A living document

The strategy for the Initiative was developed over the past 12 months through a consultative process with the UNCCD secretariat, technical experts and the Steering Committee members. The original strategy was prepared by the International Center for Research in Agroforestry, which

was refined significantly by the ICO, based on inputs from the Steering Committee members and other technical experts.

The objective of the G20 Global Land Initiative is to reach a 50 per cent reduction in degraded land by 2040. As such, the strategy document needs to be structured within that timeframe. However, in a complex world with multiple changes, not only in the domain of land restoration but also in other areas that impact the land restoration agenda (e.g. food security). Therefore, it is counter productive to freeze a strategy for such a long time.

The ICO has therefore set out the overall approach for the next ten years, with a detailed work plan lasting until 2024. This will allow the initiative to set up its activities, identify key partners and begin implementation. As implementation commences, there will be opportunities to review the strategy, activities and lessons learned, not only from the G20 Global Land Initiative but also from other initiatives dealing with land restoration.

This strategy document also recognizes that within this overall framework, more detailed individual approaches need to be developed on communication, data management, civil society and private sector engagement, and the role of technology for restoration. These 'sub-strategies' will be developed based on working group meetings on each of those topics in the early part of the project implementation.

As a consequence, this strategy document is not the final word on how the initiative will be run for the next twenty years. It is a starting point for engagement with all the stakeholders. The strategy, including the sub-strategies, will be developed over the initiative's implementation period.

Annex III: Workplan

Action Item	2023												2024			
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1 Initiative Coordination Office Establishment																
Finalise Staff Recruitment																
Hiring of Consultants																
Internship Programme																
Team Retreat																
2 Coordination with Government of Saudi Arabia																
Regular reporting of activities and progress																
Coordination with Middle East Green and Saudi Green Initiatives																
Full time Liaison Officer in Riyadh																
Coordination Missions to Saudi Arabia																
3 Steering Committee																
Regularly update steering committee members																
Organise steering committee meeting																
4 Establishing a Senior Expert Group																
Monthly expert group meetings focusing on specific themes																
Organise monthly webinars																
Working paper series																
5 Engage with G20 Members																
Develop a conceptual framework for G20 Members' engagement in the Global Initiative																
Prepare country profiles for land restoration																
Organise multi-stakeholder meetings in G20 Countries																
Review legal framework to promote restoration																
Facilitate technical exchanges for capacity building																
Compile best practices from the G20 countries																
Compile publicly available data on restoration																
6 Engagement with G20 Presidencies																
Work with the Steering Committee Members to prepare an annual engagement plan																
Organise technical side events and exhibitions																
Agree on follow up actions beyond the presidency term																
7 Working with G20 Engagement Groups																
Identify the key engagement groups from G20																
Work with the engagement groups to promote land restoration																
8 Engagement with other UN Agencies in Bonn																
Map Activities of all UN Agencies in Bonn																
Structured Engagement Plan																
Implement joint activities																
9 Engagement with other relevant agencies in Bonn																
Map Activities of all UN Agencies in Bonn																
Structured Engagement Plan																
Implement joint activities																
10 Engagement with Decade for Ecosystem Restoration																
Preparing an Engagement plan for the Decade																

Action Item	2023												2024			
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Arrange for meeting of cluster partners on land restoration																
Engage with data management team the Decade																
Engage with Communication Partners in the Team																
Implement the engagement plan																
11 Consultative Meetings and Workshops																
Global Data Systems on Land Restoration and Conservation																
Capacity Building for Land Restoration																
Private Sector and Restoration																
Civil Society and Restoration																
Corporate Round Table on Restoration																
Institutions and legislations for land restoration																
12 Developing a Communication Strategy																
Internal consultations within UNCCD																
External consultations, including with Decade for Ecosystem Restoration																
Prepare draft communication strategy																
Finalise communications strategy																
Finalise contracting of the commercial agency																
Prepare TOR for documentaries and other communication products																
Develop a communication plan																
Implement Strategy and Plan																
13 Engage in External Events																
Land Restoration related events																
Climate Change Linked Events																
Biodiversity Linked Events																
G20 Linked Events																
Identify media events to engage																
Identify youth and women events to engage																
Identify technology events to engage																
14 MOUs and Agreements with Partners																
MOU for Data and Information Management on Land Restoration and Conservation (UNEP/IUCN/WCMC)																
MOUs for Capacity Building (UNU/UN Staff College)																
MOU for Creating fixed and Mobile Exhibitions (Museum)																
MOUs for private sector engagement (WEF)																
MOU India Center of Excellence for Land Restoration																
MOU with Global Landscape Forum																
MOU with Society for Ecological Restoration																
MOU with Indian Institute of Forest Management																
MOU with Recultivation Center in Germany																
MOU with Commonwealth Secretariat																
MOU with START Global for Hackathons																
Implement activities linked to the MOUs																

Action Item	2023												2024			
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
15 Contracting of Commercial Providers																
Commercial Provider for Design, AR/VR and other communication products																
Commercial providers for documentaries																
Organisers of exhibitions																
Commercial Providers for Printing																
Journals and publications																
Implement activities linked to the contracts																
16 Substantive Activities																
Establish Global Restoration Information Hub to showcase best practices of restoration, legislation, finance, experts, institutions and training																
Establish a protocol to distill best practices, financing, legislations and capacity building from around the world																
Update the website regularly																
Prepare periodic reports on national and international commitments on land conservation and restoration, results achieved, and lessons learned																
Global Competitions on Land Restoration																
Land Restoration Exhibition Museum including AR/VR																
Land Restoration Exhibition at Global Events																
Monthly newsletters																
Documentaries on land restoration																
Media Fellowships and content creation																
Land Restoration linked Awards and Recognitions																
Promote land restoration events through social media channels																
17 Engagement of private sector																
Establish a Private Sector Restoration Forum to engage the private sector to encourage it to support land restoration efforts and adopt sustainable land management practices																
Work with Global Mechanism and others to promote needed investments and provide information to link investors/ contributors to interested initiatives																
Engage Ecopreneurs to reach scale in numbers and volume of work																
Engage with new generation technology providers to identify how technology can be used to leverage restoration and conservation																
Work with mining companies to increase restoration of mined areas																
Engage with B20, Business Engagement Group of G20 to mainstream land into their agenda																
Engage with the Restoration Challenge Business within the Decade for Ecosystem Restoration																
18 Engagement with Civil Society																
Establish a Social Forum for Restoration to empower civil society and promote land restoration efforts and adopt sustainable land management practices																

Action Item	2023												2024			
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Empower youth, women and indigenous community activists to develop strong advocacy programme for urgent environmental action, including mobilizing the general public																
Conduct global hackathons among students on land restoration																
Engage with G20 Engagement Groups (Youth 20, Women 20, Civil Societies 20) to mainstream land into their topics																
Engage with Decade for Ecosystem Restoration Challenge leads on Communities and Youth																
19 Capacity Building at Scale																
Engage with Agriculture and Forestry Schools and Universities to mainstream restoration into the curriculum																
Organise specific training on mine restoration, including technical exchange visits																
Work with Society for Ecological Restoration for Courses on Ecological Restoration																
Establish a "Leadership of Future" Programme at UN Staff College																
Establish a Land Restoration Fellowship at UN University																
Establish partnership with SDG Academy or equivalent to reach one million learners through online learning																
Training on Peatlands with ITPC and GPI																
Training on Mine Restoration with India and Germany																
Training on Restoration Standards (Australia)																
Training on Biosaline Agriculture with ICBA																
Training for ecopreneurs in South America with UNEP																
20 Supporting Field Restoration Projects																
Identify ongoing restoration projects around the world																
Identify 5 ongoing projects which have high potential for success and would benefit from support																
Conduct scoping mission to understand the specifics of support requirement																
Financial Due Diligence of the executing agencies																
Prepare a technical assessment and monitoring plan																
Sign MOUs and initiate partnership																
Follow up																
21 Annual Reporting																
Compile information from each implementing partner about activities undertaken																
Compile information from Initiative Coordination Office on the activities undertaken																
Compile information from G20 members on their pledges and progress in land restoration and habitat restoration																
Identify developments in the annual theme on land restoration and habitat conservation																
Prepare the draft annual report on the Global Initiative on Land Stewardship																
Review the report with technical committee and steering committee																
Launch the final report																

Annex IV: Theory of Change visual



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**G20 Global Land Initiative
Coordination Office**

**Tel.: +49 228 815 2801
E-mail: G20ICO@unccd.int
Web: g20land.org**

**United Nations Convention to Combat
Desertification (UNCCD)
UN Campus, Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1
D-53113 Bonn, Germany**



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