



United Nations  
Convention to Combat  
Desertification



G20 GLOBAL  
LAND INITIATIVE



Annual Report 2024



OUR AMBITION:

# REDUCE 50% OF GLOBAL DEGRADED LAND BY 2040

*GLI's activities in 2024 follow the approved Implementation Strategy and Theory of Change.*

## OUR MANDATE

- 1** Conserve land
- 2** Stop habitat loss, fragmentation and land degradation
- 3** Promote integrated, sustainable and resilient land and landscape management
- 4** Restore degraded land
- 5** Support the implementation of current commitments for land protection, sustainable management and restoration

## OUR APPROACH



Showcase best practice and share knowledge



Empower civil society



Build capacity of G20 Member and non-Member countries and other Stakeholder



Engage the private sector

## OUR PARTNERS



Support existing restoration commitments



Work in synergy with the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (UNDER) and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF)



Collaborate with other partners



# ACRONYMS

<b>ACSAD</b>	Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands	<b>KMGBF</b>	Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
<b>AI</b>	Artificial Intelligence	<b>LaRSSA</b>	Land Rehabilitation Society of Southern Africa
<b>AIT</b>	Asian Institute of Technology	<b>LDN</b>	Land Degradation Neutrality
<b>ANCA</b>	African Natural Capital Alliance	<b>NbS</b>	Nature-based Solutions
<b>AOAD</b>	Arab Organization for Agricultural Development	<b>NBSAPs</b>	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans
<b>BRICS</b>	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa	<b>NDCs</b>	Nationally Determined Contributions
<b>CAMRE</b>	Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment	<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>CBD</b>	Convention on Biological Diversity	<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>COP</b>	Conference of the Parties	<b>PBL</b>	Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency
<b>CPD</b>	Continuing Professional Development	<b>PES</b>	Payment for Ecosystem Services
<b>ECSWG</b>	Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group	<b>PIK</b>	Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research
<b>ECTS</b>	European Credit Transfer System	<b>REDD+</b>	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation Plus
<b>ES</b>	Executive Secretary	<b>RwK</b>	Rising with Kindness Conference
<b>ESCWA</b>	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia	<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>EU</b>	European Union	<b>SDSN</b>	Sustainable Development Solution Network
<b>FIG</b>	Federation of Surveyors and Spatial Planners	<b>SERE</b>	Society for Ecological Restoration for Europe
<b>FIG</b>	International Federation of Surveyors	<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>FSD Africa</b>	Financial Sector Deepening Africa	<b>UNCBD</b>	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity
<b>G- CAP</b>	Global Changemaker Academy for Parliamentarians	<b>UNCCD</b>	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
<b>G20</b>	Group of Twenty	<b>UNDER</b>	United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration
<b>G7</b>	Group of Seven	<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>GEA</b>	Global EverGreening Alliance	<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>GEF</b>	Global Environment Facility	<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>GIS</b>	Geographic Information System	<b>UNIVASF</b>	Federal University of São Francisco Valley
<b>GLI</b>	Global Land Initiative	<b>UNSSC</b>	United Nations System Staff College
<b>GRIH</b>	Global Restoration Information Hub	<b>UNU-FLORES</b>	United Nations University Institute for Integrated Management of Material Fluxes and Resources
<b>ICBA</b>	International Center for Biosaline Agriculture	<b>WIPO</b>	World Intellectual Property Organization
<b>ICO</b>	Initiative Coordination Office	<b>WUF12</b>	Twelfth Session of the World Urban Forum
<b>IFAD</b>	International Fund for Agricultural Development	<b>YEA</b>	Young Entrepreneurs Alliance
<b>ITC</b>	International Trade Centre	<b>YECO</b>	Youth Ecopreneur Program
<b>IUCN</b>	International Union for Conservation of Nature	<b>YNU</b>	Yokohama National University
<b>IUFRO</b>	International Union of Forestry Research Organizations		



Matheus Fontes, Liaison Officer, UNCCD-G20 GLI  
visiting ReGreen in Brazil

<b>1</b>	<b>DIRECTOR'S LETTER</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>THE GLOBAL LANDSCAPE OF LAND RESTORATION</b>	<b>7</b>
	Global Policy Environment	8
	Taking Stock of Restoration Commitments	9
<b>3</b>	<b>REPORT OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>G20 GLI AT GLOBAL AND REGIONAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL PROCESSES</b>	<b>12</b>
	Engagement with the G20 Presidency	13
	Executive Secretary's Mission to Brasilia	14
	G7 Meeting	15
	Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment	15
	UNCCD 16th Conference of the Parties	16
	CBD 16th Conference of the Parties	19
	Faith Community Engages Rio Conventions	19
	Regional engagements in the Arab Region	20
<b>5</b>	<b>BUILDING SYNERGIES WITH EXISTING AND NEW INITIATIVES</b>	<b>24</b>
	UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (UNDER)	25
	Generation Restoration, Miyawaki Forests & Urban Forests	26
	Nature Restoration Labs Workshop	26
	Linking up the Miyawaki Practitioners	27
	Global Evergreening Alliance	28
<b>6</b>	<b>PILLARS OF ACTION</b>	<b>29</b>
	Showcase Best Practice	30
	Build Capacity	43
	Empower Civil Society	47
	Engage the Private Sector	52



## DIRECTOR'S LETTER

The year 2024 was pivotal for the Global Land Initiative. Land degradation and restoration remained prominent on the global policy agenda throughout.

The UN Environmental Assembly, G7 Leaders' Summit, G20 Environment and Climate Change Ministers' meeting, and Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) Leaders' Summit addressed land degradation and committed to scaling up land restoration efforts.

The European Union passed a new Restoration Law mandating quantitative targets for land restoration. The conferences of the parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), all held during the last quarter of the year, reinforced land restoration as a crucial solution to combat land degradation, biodiversity loss and climate change.

Building on this favorable policy momentum, the Global Land Initiative continued to develop and deliver a robust program. In collaboration with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), we completed a database on Global Restoration Commitments by countries, under the UNCCD, UNCBD, UNFCCC and the Bonn Challenge.

Representing a significant increase in global commitments since 2021, the total global commitment now stands at 1.2 billion hectares, with 30 countries, including 11 G20 members, pledging to restore over 10 million hectares each.

The UNCCD, with financial support from the Global Land Initiative, published the first global restoration economy international report titled, *Global Land Restoration Economy: State of play and recommendations for upscaling*. The report defines the private sector's growing role in land restoration and its potential for creating green jobs.

*In 2024, global commitments to land restoration soared to 1.2 billion hectares, driven by unprecedented collaboration across governments, the private sector and young ecopreneurs—proving that restoring our planet is not just a goal, but a movement.*

**- Dr Muralee Thummarukudy**  
Director, G20 Global Land Initiative Coordination Office





The study outlines key recommendations to support the growth of the restoration economy, which has an associated market survey value of US\$37 billion globally, grows at 8.2% annually and is projected to reach US\$70 billion by 2031. Together, these studies stressed the need for focused policy action to encourage private sector investment and engagement in the restoration economy.

Working with the International Trade Centre (ITC), the Global Land Initiative launched the first cohort of the “Global Ecopreneurs Program,” training 100 young entrepreneurs with restoration Start-Ups. They received training on improving business plans and pitching to investors. We plan to scale this program regionally to reach 10,000 ecopreneurs by 2029.

Training remained a cornerstone of the Global Land Initiative, with programs on restoring land through biosaline agriculture, and on restoring mining and urban areas, lowland-based systems and drylands. These trainings consistently attracted more applications than the available slots. To accommodate this high demand and broader participation, we also conducted online webinars on these topics, in English, Arabic and French.

The first University Curriculum Course on Sustainable Agriculture for Land Restoration was launched this year. It reached over 400 university teachers, with over 100 trained on implementing the curriculum. A university module on urban land restoration is in its final stages.

Representatives from 25 countries attended the second Global Changemaker Academy for Parliamentarians held in Bonn. With the European Union Restoration Law’s passage, global best practices can now be discussed and adapted to national contexts.

The Global Land Initiative’s visibility surged with participation in the G20 Environment and Climate Change Working Group meetings in Brazil, the COPs of the UNCBD and UNCCD and seven other international exhibitions. In December, the Initiative, in partnership with Bundeskunsthalle (The Art and Science Exhibition Hall of the Federal Republic of Germany), opened the *Save Land: United for*

*Land Exhibition*, the first museum exhibition on land restoration, which will run until June 2025.

Online engagement grew, reaching over 30,000 newsletter subscribers and over 14,000 followers across social media platforms, and a global reach of nearly 450,000. The Global Photography Festival, which attracted 17,000 entries from 153 countries, further boosted visibility.

The Global Restoration Information Hub was launched in July 2024. It is a compilation of globally available data on land restoration from credible sources. The site provides information on global best practices, restoration commitments, best practice legislations, documentaries, restoration actors and other databases.

The Initiative issued a global call for communities and NGOs to submit their restoration projects for small grant support, receiving over 600 submissions from 100 countries. Forty-one projects from 24 countries were selected for funding.

A global stocktake of faith actors engaged in land restoration was conducted, and the [report](#) is being finalized. There is great enthusiasm among faith actors for coordinated action in land restoration.

The G20 Global Land Initiative Steering Committee was kept informed of developments through regular communication. It met in July and continues to provide guidance on program implementation. It received the work plan for 2025-26. An exciting period of action lies ahead.

**Dr Muralee Thummarukudy**  
Director, G20 Global Land Initiative  
Coordination Office





# The **Global** Landscape of Land Restoration

In 2024, land restoration took center stage on the global policy agenda. Key events, including the UN Environmental Assembly, G7, G20 and “Triple COP” meetings, underscored its importance in tackling climate change, biodiversity loss and desertification. Amid this momentum, the Global Land Initiative drove progress by fostering collaboration, advancing restoration commitments and promoting sustainable solutions.



# GLOBAL POLICY ENVIRONMENT

The year 2024 was an exceptional year for land restoration, as the subject featured prominently on the international environmental policy agenda.

**In February**, the UN Environmental Assembly adopted its first resolution calling for strengthening international efforts to: combat desertification and land degradation; restore degraded lands; promote land conservation and sustainable land management; contribute to land degradation neutrality; and enhance drought resilience.

**In April**, the Group of Seven (G7) leaders in Italy welcomed the Italian Presidency initiative to establish a voluntary Hub on Sustainable Use of Land. This hub fosters collaboration on sustainable land use initiatives in Africa and in the Mediterranean Basin among international organizations, such as United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and UNCCD, and relevant global and national partners, including the private sector.

**In June**, the World Environment Day was celebrated and themed around land restoration, desertification and drought resilience. The European Union also

adopted its new European Restoration Regulation, the first legislation to set legally binding restoration targets for the long-term recovery of Europe’s ecosystems.

**In early October**, the G20 Environmental Ministers met in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and reaffirmed their respective commitments to address the challenges posed by climate change, biodiversity loss, desertification, ocean and land degradation, drought and pollution. In late October, at the meeting of the BRICS countries, leaders of Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates issued a joint statement calling for increased financial resources and partnerships to combat land degradation, desertification and drought.

**Between October and December**, the “Triple COP” of the UNCCD, UNFCCC and UNCCD met to discuss land restoration, ecosystem restoration, nature-based solutions and land degradation neutrality.



**February:**  
UN Environmental Assembly adopts resolution to combat land degradation and promote restoration.

**April:**  
G7 Leaders endorse Italy’s Hub on Sustainable Use of Land to foster collaboration in Africa and the Mediterranean Basin.

**June:**  
World Environment Day focuses on land restoration and resilience; EU adopts legally binding European Restoration Regulation.

**October:**  
G20 Environmental Ministers reaffirm commitments to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and desertification.

**October:**  
BRICS nations pledge increased financial resources for land degradation and drought resilience.

**October–December:**  
“Triple COP” highlights land restoration, nature-based solutions and land degradation neutrality.





# TAKING STOCK OF RESTORATION COMMITMENTS

Land restoration has gained global attention in addressing land degradation, biodiversity loss and climate change. It is a top international priority, with countries committing to conserve biodiversity, re-establish ecosystem functions and address the impacts of climate change.

In 2024, the Global Land Initiative worked with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to produce a global update on restoration commitments made by countries. The results are contained in a report titled, [Global Restoration Commitments and Pledges 2024 Report](#). The key international processes assessed in the report are:



## UNCCD STRATEGIC INITIATIVES AND TARGETS

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) champions sustainable land management and ecosystem restoration as strategies to combat land degradation. In 2015, it proposed a goal of land degradation neutrality (LDN) by 2030, aiming to stabilize or enhance land resources to support ecosystem functions, enhance food security and combat desertification.

Since 2020, significant progress has been made in achieving LDN and broader ecosystem restoration objectives, with LDN commitments rising by 32.02% from 2020 to 2024.

Key initiatives, including the Saudi and Middle East Green Initiatives announced in March 2021, aim to restore approximately 240 million hectares of degraded land in this region. These efforts reflect a strong dedication to addressing desertification, boosting biodiversity and reducing carbon emissions. Such ambitious initiatives are in line with global goals, such as the G20's target to cut degraded land by 50% by 2040, signaling a major shift toward improved land management worldwide.



## COMMITMENTS UNDER CONVENTION FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

In December 2022, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) adopted the Post-2020 Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) at CBD COP15. One of its targets is to restore at least 30% of degraded ecosystems, demonstrating the CBD's commitment to large-scale ecosystem restoration. The new National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs) are still coming in, but as of October 2024, the total commitments under NBSAPs are 99.2 million hectares, a modest increase of 11.14% over the previous report.



## COMMITMENTS UNDER UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) succeeded in integrating ecosystem restoration into global climate action strategies with initiatives such as the REDD+ Initiative, which aims to reduce deforestation and forest degradation emissions, promote sustainable forest management and enhance forest carbon stocks. Adopting the Paris Agreement in 2015 also represented a

landmark moment in global climate efforts, compelling nations to include ecosystem restoration in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). These NDCs emphasize maintaining and enhancing the health of forests and other terrestrial ecosystems in meeting international climate goals. The total land restoration commitments under NDCs are 291.4 million hectares, a 28.42% increase over the previous report.

## THE BONN CHALLENGE

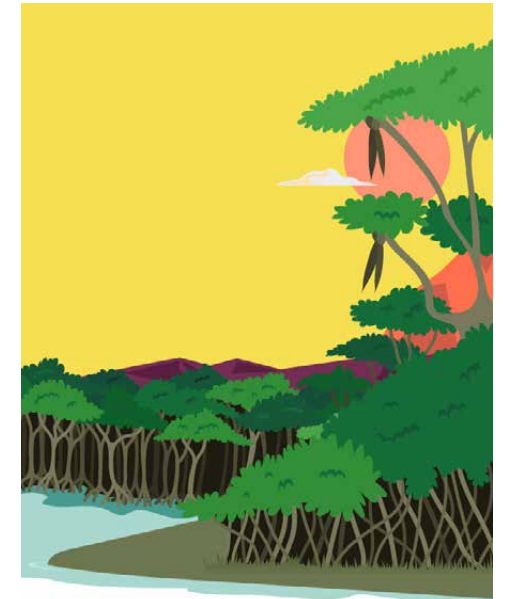
Initiated in 2011 by Germany and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Bonn Challenge has been pivotal in ecosystem restoration. It set an ambitious target of restoring 150 million hectares of land by 2020, and extended this goal to 350 million hectares by 2030.

Post-2020, the Bonn Challenge continues to advance towards its restoration target. Per the latest update, 210 million hectares have been restored, a 1.92% marginal decline over the previous report. This decline can be attributed to several factors, especially financial constraints as many countries struggle to secure funding for large-scale restoration projects.

Robust data and documentation are crucial in achieving these commitments. For example, the significant increase in LDN commitments results from reliable data that enables countries to track degradation, identify priority areas for restoration and align their efforts with international frameworks. This same data-driven approach is essential for NBSAPs and NDCs because improvements in data collection allow countries to track

biodiversity and climate progress more effectively. Conversely, the decline in Bonn Challenge commitments highlights challenges when inconsistent frameworks make facilitating success and ongoing support more difficult.

The Global Land Initiative will continue tracking restoration commitments in the coming years and present them in a consolidated fashion in the public domain.





## REPORT OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

The 4<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee Meeting of the G20 Global Initiative on Reducing Land Degradation and Enhancing Conservation of Terrestrial Habitats (G20 GLI) took place on 22 July 2024, chaired by Dr. Osama Faqeeha, Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Dr. Faqeeha highlighted the alarming extent of land degradation, which affects 3.2 billion people worldwide. Without intervention, it will worsen significantly by 2050 to impact 5.7 to 6.4 billion hectares of land. He also highlighted the 400% increase in drought across Europe over the past two decades.

The Steering Committee reviewed significant achievements of the Global Land Initiative, including the launch of the Global Restoration Information Hub (GRIH), a comprehensive database showcasing best practices, reports and data on land restoration.

Over the past two years, the Initiative’s Coordination Office (ICO) participated in 19 events across 18 countries with training programs and global outreach. Future efforts aim to scale up these initiatives to teach one million students about land restoration by 2030 through educational programs, which include new modular university courses on land restoration and the school’s Nature Labs initiative.

The ICO also highlighted its Youth Ecopreneur Program (YECO), which has empowered young entrepreneurs in 37 countries through training, seed funding and opportunities to showcase their innovations in land restoration. It discussed engaging the private sector, especially industries such as mining, which hold significant potential for restoration activities. It also discussed preparations for the UNCCD COP16 that was to be held in Riyadh in December 2024.

Strategically, the Steering Committee agreed to expand the Initiative’s membership to non-G20 countries and organizations under the status of “associate members.” This expansion will broaden the Initiative’s reach while maintaining streamlined governance. Other proposals included developing a unified terminology for land restoration and strengthening collaboration across the UNFCCC, CBD and UNCCD.

While significant progress has been made, challenges remain in achieving restoration commitments. Robust monitoring and modeling systems to project land degradation impacts are needed to support decision-making and guide future strategies.

The meeting also agreed to establish a documented tracking system to monitor decisions and ensure regular follow-ups. The meeting also agreed that the Steering Committee members visiting Saudi Arabia would hold an informal meeting during the visit.



UNCCD Executive Secretary Ibrahim Thiaw (r), Dr Osama Faqeeha (c) and Minister of Environment Senegal Daouda Ngom (l) at UNCCD COP 16

The alarming extent of land degradation highlighted by Dr. Faqeeha:

**3.2**

billion people affected by land degradation.

**5.7-6.4**

billion hectares at risk by 2050.

**400%**

rise in European droughts in 20 years



From left: Matheus Fontes -Liason officer, Ms Paula Padrino Vilela - Programme Management Officer, and Dr Muralee Thummarukudy, Director, G20 GLI during the ECSWG Climate meeting, Manaus, June 2024

## G20 GLI at Global and Regional Intergovernmental Processes

In 2024, the Global Land Initiative amplified its impact on the global stage by engaging in key intergovernmental processes, including Brazil's G20 Presidency, G7, and other global meetings, driving forward commitments to combat land degradation, promote ecosystem restoration, and integrate sustainable land management into broader climate and biodiversity strategies.



## ENGAGEMENT WITH THE G20 PRESIDENCY

On 1 December 2023, the Government of Brazil assumed the G20 presidency after India. In 2024, UNCCD continued collaborating with the Brazil G20 Presidency, particularly through the Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group (ECSWG).

The Brazilian Presidency emphasized the critical role of bioeconomy, adaptation to extreme weather events and payment for ecosystem services (PES) in sustainable development and environmental conservation, which is aligned with the UNCCD's mission to combat land degradation through ecosystem restoration.

UNCCD's engagement with the Brazil G20 Presidency in 2024 reinforced global efforts to combat land degradation and promote ecosystem

restoration. By participating in high-level discussions, field visits and collaborative initiatives, UNCCD continued to advocate for sustainable land management practices. Integrating land restoration into broader economic and environmental strategies emphasizes the critical role of healthy land in achieving climate resilience, biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

UNCCD participated in the second, third and fourth ECSWG meetings in Brasília, Manaus and Rio de Janeiro, and provided substantive input on the priorities discussed by the working group.

During the Second ECSWG Meeting in April 2024 in Brasília, which focused on oceans and adaptation to extreme weather events, UNCCD emphasized: the need for land restoration as an adaptation strategy especially for vulnerable countries already allocating resources toward climate resilience; greater investment in adaptation measures; and sharing best practices among G20 members.



Ms Paula Padrino Vilela, Programme Management Officer, UNCCD G20 GLI speaks at the ECSWG G20 meeting in Brasília, Brazil



Dr. Muralee Thummarukudy, Director of UNCCD G20 GLI, speaks at the ECSWG G20 Meeting in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

The focus of the Third ECSWG Meeting in Manaus in June 2024 was waste management and PES. Dr. Muralee Thummarukudy, Director, G20 GLI, presented the UNCCD's perspective on PES, emphasizing the need to compensate landowners and communities for restoration efforts to address worsening land degradation globally.

G20 GLI also participated in the Fourth ECSWG Meeting and at the Environment and Climate Ministers meeting held in October 2024 in Rio de Janeiro.



## EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S MISSION TO BRASILIA

G20 GLI, with Brazil's Ministry of Environment and Climate Change and Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, led the coordination of UNCCD Executive Secretary (ES) Ibrahim Thiaw's mission in June 2024 to Brazil.

The purpose of the mission was to promote sustainable land management in addressing the country's challenges with desertification and drought resilience, to build momentum for UNCCD COP16 and to strengthen Brazil's restoration efforts.

The mission included a joint field visit with Brazil's Minister of Environment and her delegation, including parliamentarians,



From left: Ms. Paula Padrino Vilela and Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, UNCCD, during the field trip in Brazil with the country's Environment Minister Ms. Marina Silva and UNCCD Goodwill Ambassador, Ms. Inna Modja.

to the Caatinga region, a semi-arid landscape severely impacted by soil degradation. They engaged with the "Fundo de Pasto" community in *Malhada da Areia*, to emphasize the power of local initiatives in combating desertification.

The ES addressed Brazil's Parliamentary Committee for Environment and Sustainable Development. He also held high-level bilateral meetings as well as extensive talks with the Secretary of the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples on expanding indigenous peoples' representation at COP16.

Recognizing the communication barriers faced by indigenous communities in international forums, the G20 GLI has committed to greater inclusivity of these communities in UNCCD's work.

During the environmental meetings, G20 GLI delegations took the opportunity to visit restoration sites in Brazil:

- ReGreen Restoration Site in Bahia where the Brazilian company aims to restore one million hectares of degraded land in the Amazon and Atlantic rainforests;
- Instituto Terra in Minas Gerais, which has transformed over 700 hectares of degraded land into a thriving rainforest over the past 25 years;
- Instituto Zag (see the section on Empower Civil Society).

Recognizing the importance of the private sector and youth in land restoration, UNCCD organized and moderated a panel at the G20 Young Entrepreneurs Alliance (YEA) Summit in Goiânia. The "Business for Land: Land Restoration Entrepreneurship and the Start-Up Sector in Brazil and G20 Countries" panel influenced the G20 YEA Communiqué, which encourages G20 leaders to support multi-stakeholder dialogues and actions toward halting land degradation and deforestation.



G20 GLI Liaison officer Matheus Fontes visits Instituto Terra, Brazil

*"One of the standout moments of G20 GLI's engagement during the Brazilian Presidency was forging a promising partnership with Instituto Terra, a symbol of restoration for over 25 years.*

*The once barren and degraded land from overgrazing is now thriving as a vibrant stretch of Mata Atlântica rainforest, a testament to the power of restoration. In the rainforest's lush greenery, smallholder farmers are cultivating coffee creating innovative agroforestry systems, which are weaving together livelihoods and ecological recovery into a tapestry that inspires hope for the future."*

**- Matheus Ferreira Gois Fontes**  
G20 GLI Liaison Officer  
Brazilian Presidency



# OTHER INTERGOVERNMENTAL PROCESSES IN 2024

## G7 MEETING

In 2024, the G20 Global Land Initiative engaged further in key intergovernmental forums and earned more recognition as a vital mechanism for tackling land degradation and promoting sustainable land management. The Initiative was prominently referenced in 2024 in two significant political meetings: the G7 Climate, Energy, and Environment Ministers’ Meeting, held under Italy’s presidency in Torino; and the 35th Session of the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE) held in Saudi Arabia.

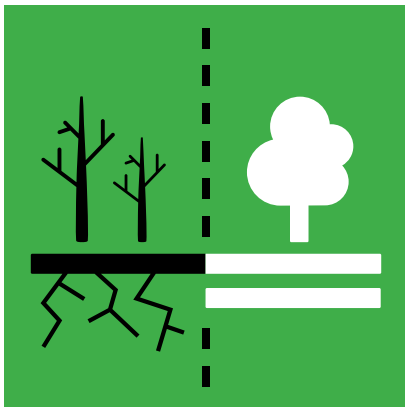


## G7 RECOGNITION OF THE G20 GLOBAL LAND INITIATIVE

During the G7 Climate, Energy and Environment Ministers’ Meeting in April 2024, the ministers reaffirmed their commitment to combating land degradation and desertification, with explicit reference to the G20 Global Land Initiative. The ministers acknowledged the Initiative’s critical role in the global effort to achieve a 50 percent reduction in degraded land by 2040, on a voluntary basis, and its alignment with SDG 15.3 (Land Degradation Neutrality by 2030). The G7 Climate, Energy, and Environment Ministers’ Meeting Communiqué, 2024 states:

*“Recalling also our common objectives under the G20 Global Land Initiative to achieve a 50 percent reduction of degraded land by 2040, on a voluntary basis.”*

**TARGET 15.3**



## COUNCIL OF ARAB MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

The Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE), which met for its 35th Session in Saudi Arabia in 2024, reaffirmed its 2023 Decision No. 635 committing to collaboration, following the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States’ presentation of the summary of the joint activities conducted with the G20 Global Land Initiative throughout 2024.

In a new decision, CAMRE called on its secretariat at the League of Arab states

to continue and enhance cooperation with the G20 Global Land Initiative Coordination Office, which is hosted by the UNCCD Secretariat, to promote land restoration and the conservation of natural habitats. The decision states:

*“CAMRE calls upon its Technical Secretariat and Arab countries to strengthen cooperation with the Coordination Office of the G20 Global Land Initiative for Land Restoration and Habitat Conservation, hosted by the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).”*



CAMRE 35th Session in Saudi Arabia in 2024



# Sixteenth Session of the Conference of The Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP16)

The UNCCD Conference of the Parties met from 2-16 December in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and agreed on their requests to the G20 GLI.

G20 GLI's activities centered mainly on publicizing UNCCD COP 16, engaging the Convention's stakeholders and showcasing G20 GLI at COP16. In turn, UNCCD Parties took decisions that invite direct collaboration with G20 GLI in 2025.

## UNCCD PARTIES REQUESTS TO G20 GLI

Decision 8/COP 16, which is on the promotion and strengthening of relationships with other relevant conventions and international organizations, institutions and agencies, in the opening paragraphs, inter alia, states:

*“Welcoming the progress made in enhancing existing and establishing new partnerships, such as the Group of Twenty Global Initiative on Reducing Land Degradation and Enhancing Conservation of Terrestrial Habitats....”*

Paragraph 7(a) of the decision:

*“Requests the secretariat and appropriate Convention bodies and institutions, within their respective mandates and existing resources, to: (a) Continue to strengthen existing and seek new partnerships that enhance the implementation of the Convention, address desertification, land degradation and drought, and help achieve voluntary national land degradation neutrality targets, collaborating notably with the Group of Twenty Global Land Initiative....”*

In Decision 2/COP16, which is about the promotion of capacity building to further implementation of the Convention, UNCCD Parties, in paragraph 1:

*“Requests the secretariat and the Global Mechanism, within their respective mandates and subject to the availability of financial resources, and in collaboration with the Group of Twenty Global Land Initiative and other related initiatives as well as external partners, to continue to respond to capacity needs expressed by Parties.”*

Its Paragraph 4 and sub-paragraph (b)

*“Requests the secretariat, subject to the availability of financial resources, in collaboration with the Global Mechanism and other relevant initiatives to.... Maintain an annual work programme for capacity development activities undertaken by Convention institutions, the G20 Global Land Initiative and other related initiatives, as well as by external partners for monitoring purposes, and to assess needs for additional resources.”*



A segment of UNCCD COP16 plenary in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia





## SPECIAL REPORT ON LAND

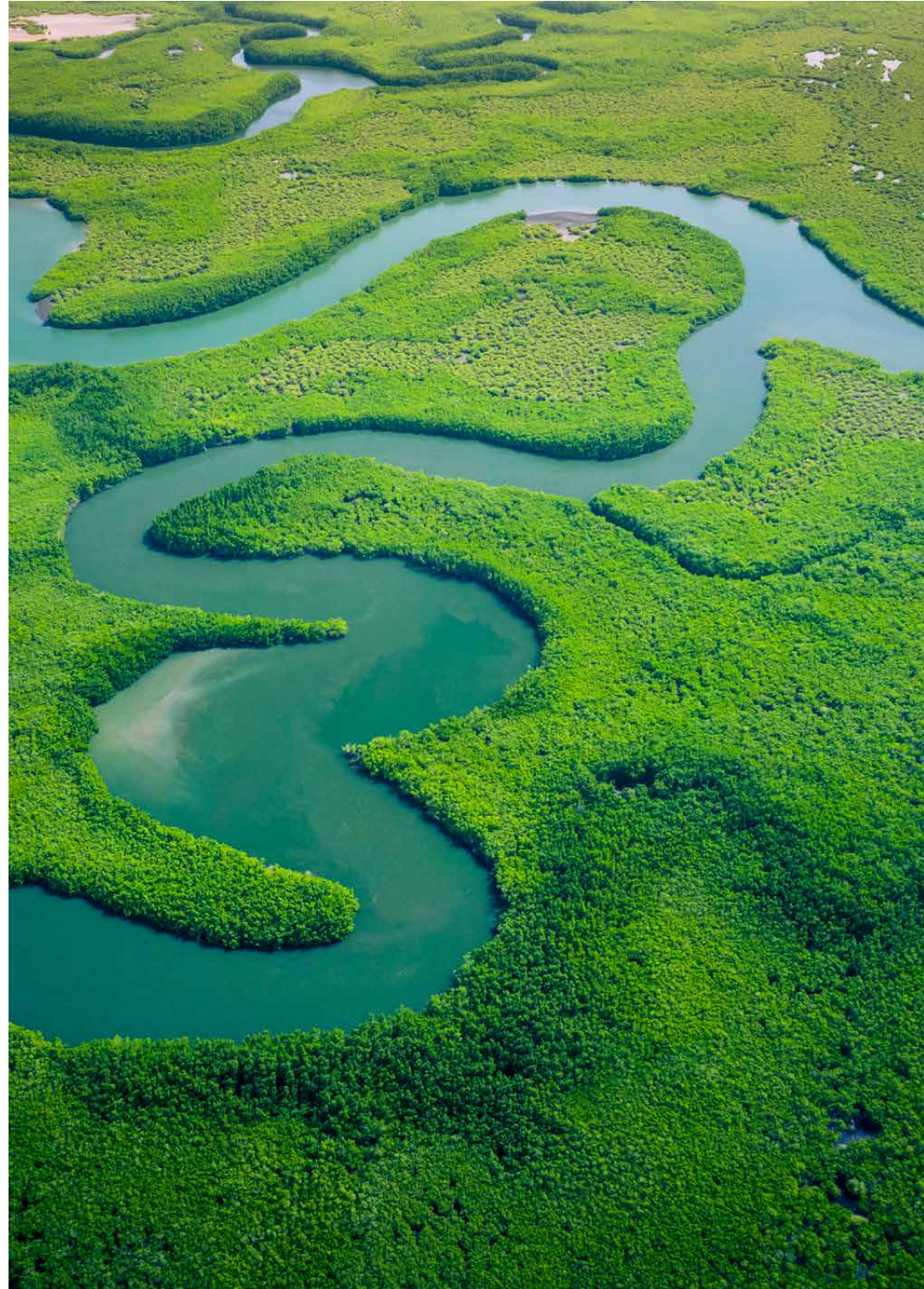
Land is a cornerstone of Earth's systems. It influences climate change, biodiversity and freshwater cycles and sustains human life by providing food, water and resources. However, human activities, including unsustainable agriculture, deforestation and urbanization, are accelerating land degradation.

A special report on land titled, [Stepping back from the precipice: Transforming land management to stay within planetary boundaries](#), was produced for the UNCCD COP16 by the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK), facilitated by the G20 GLI. The report was presented to the COP16 Plenary session attended by ministers and senior delegates from member states.

The report found that land degradation pushes Earth's systems beyond safe operating limits. Six of the nine planetary boundaries have been crossed, including the high-risk threshold for land-system change, which is threatening agricultural productivity, food security, biodiversity, climate and the amount of carbon in the atmosphere.

The report calls for transformative action to mitigate land degradation and protect Earth's systems. These actions include:

- **Sustainable Land Management:** Implementing practices like regenerative agriculture, integrated water resource management and ecosystem restoration;
- **Policy and Governance:** Strengthening policies and governance frameworks to support sustainable land use, including secure land tenure and responsible resource management;
- **Innovative Finance:** Investing in sustainable land practices and incentivizing environmentally friendly behaviors;
- **International Cooperation:** Collaborating on efforts to address global challenges and share knowledge and adopt best practices.





# RESTORATION PAVILION

G20 GLI hosted the first Pavilion dedicated to land restoration from 2-11 December 2024 at the UNCCD COP16. The Pavilion's three key objectives were to: foster discussions on land restoration, promote GLI's activities and increase its visibility.

The Pavilion, which was hosted at the Conference's Blue Zone and ran non-stop for eight hours every day, was curated to include substantive input from the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (UNDER) Land Restoration Challenge Partners and other external partners. It attracted 85 partner organisations and featured 244 speakers, 46 side events, fireside chats, innovation stage sessions and movie screenings, 5 product launches and the first land restoration film generated with artificial intelligence.

Outreach for the Pavilion was conducted through a dedicated microsite, social media, flyers, GLI-branded items and livestreaming of the events. At least 510 people registered for the online events. The social media growth across platforms during this

Followers	3 Dec 2024	16 Dec 2024
Instagram	2769	2865
LinkedIn	8611	8876
Facebook	2400	2466
YouTube	1164	1280



Dr. Muralee Thummarukudy, G20 GLI Director, with Dr. Musonda Mumba, Secretary-General, Convention on Wetlands, at the Restoration Pavilion

period is summarized in the table below. The YouTube channel garnered 4,500 livestream views and 106k impressions, highlighting the global interest in the Pavilion. The Pavilion featured content from a diverse array of the most critical topics, ranging from cutting-edge restoration technologies to women's and Indigenous Peoples land rights, restoration partnerships and financing strategies.

Each day began with a meditation session. Side-events provided in depth discussions on topical issues. The Innovation Stage



Pape Camara, UNCCD staff member watching the UNDER virtual reality film at the Restoration Pavilion

featured pathbreaking solutions for scaling land restoration. Fireside chats offered personal insights to land restoration from keynote and high-level speakers. Movie screenings provided new learning and networking opportunities. *Imagine Land 2040*, the first AI movie on land restoration, was one of the Pavilion's highlights, alongside the speech delivered by Ibrahim Thiaw, UNCCD Executive Secretary, at the Pavilion opening.



Attentive delegates during a plenary session at the Restoration Pavilion

A survey of participants' impression of the Pavilion, conducted immediately after its closure, shows high praise for all events, and matches sentiments shared in person during the 10 days. In the open-ended feedback, the Restoration Pavilion was lauded as the best among numerous pavilions at the COP, standing out for its remarkable arrangements and vibrant, nonstop schedule of activities. The G20 GLI team earned praise for its attentiveness, swift responses to inquiries and constant support throughout the event.

## SUREVEY RESPONSES OF THE EVALUATION OF THE PAVILION

# 96.4%

of respondents rated the **Pavilion design** as "Excellent" or "Very Good."

# 96.4%

of respondents rated the **the variety of programs** as "Excellent" or "Very Good."

# 96.4%

of respondents rated the **the speaker diversity** as "Excellent" or "Very Good."

# 92.7%

of respondents rated the **the reception and guidance** as "Excellent" or "Very Good."

# 92.7%

of respondents rated the **the session quality** as "Excellent" or "Very Good."



## SIXTEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF PARTIES TO THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY (CBD COP16)

During the 16th session of COP to UNCBD held in October and November 2024 in Cali, Colombia, G20 GLI introduced its new course, *Trigger Change! Innovative Sustainable Agriculture Solutions for Land Restoration*, presented the Global Restoration Information Hub and organized a side event on Post-mining land restoration in Latin America.

G20 GLI with the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (UNDER) co-hosted an Exhibition to showcase restoration initiatives and engage stakeholders in the Convention. UNDER's virtual game, *SuperMario*, attracted many participants, particularly young people to the exhibition.

Additional engagements are reported in the segments below.

## FAITH COMMUNITY ENGAGES RIO CONVENTIONS

Throughout 2024, G20 GLI engaged faith communities in all three Rio Conventions (on Biological Diversity, Climate Change and Desertification) through a coordinated approach to faith-based restoration advocacy. This tri-convention engagement strengthened faith voices in environmental governance while building momentum for faith-led restoration.

At CBD COP16 in Colombia in October, the G20 GLI organized three events alongside high-level engagements. These included an event at the Nature Positive Pavilion to present the Triple COP Interfaith Statement and show faith-led efforts in the Global Biodiversity Framework implementation. This was followed by Faith Hub side events, including a workshop with the Wellbeing Economy Alliance on faith-based restoration.

The delegation also presented the Interfaith Statement to the CBD Executive Secretary and conducted meetings with faith leaders for the Faith Stock-take.

At UNFCCC COP29 in November, in Baku, Azerbaijan, G20 GLI organized

a flagship event at the Faith Pavilion titled, *Ecosystem Restoration as a Driver for Action on Climate and Nature*. The event unveiled the intersections between climate action, biodiversity conservation and land restoration from faith perspectives.

At UNCCD COP16 in Riyadh, G20 GLI organized three events: Faith Stories of Restoration, the Faith Stock-take report and action plan's launch, and a side event with high-level faith leaders on the Interfaith Rio Trio statement.

Participants at these events shared knowledge, built partnerships and mobilized faith communities for restoration action at multiple scales.

This coordinated engagement has both strengthened interfaith collaboration and made G20 GLI a key actor in the faith-based restoration community.





## REGIONAL ENGAGEMENTS IN THE ARAB REGION

Regional engagements keep the Initiative's efforts contextually relevant and impactful. In 2023, the G20 Global Land Initiative significantly expanded its engagement in the Arab world, following Decision No. 635 adopted by the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE) on 26 October 2023, during its 34th session in Oman.

The decision welcomes the G20 Global Land Initiative and requests the CAMRE Secretariat at the League of Arab States to collaborate with the Initiative's Coordination Office on activities related to capacity building, raising awareness and monitoring land degradation.

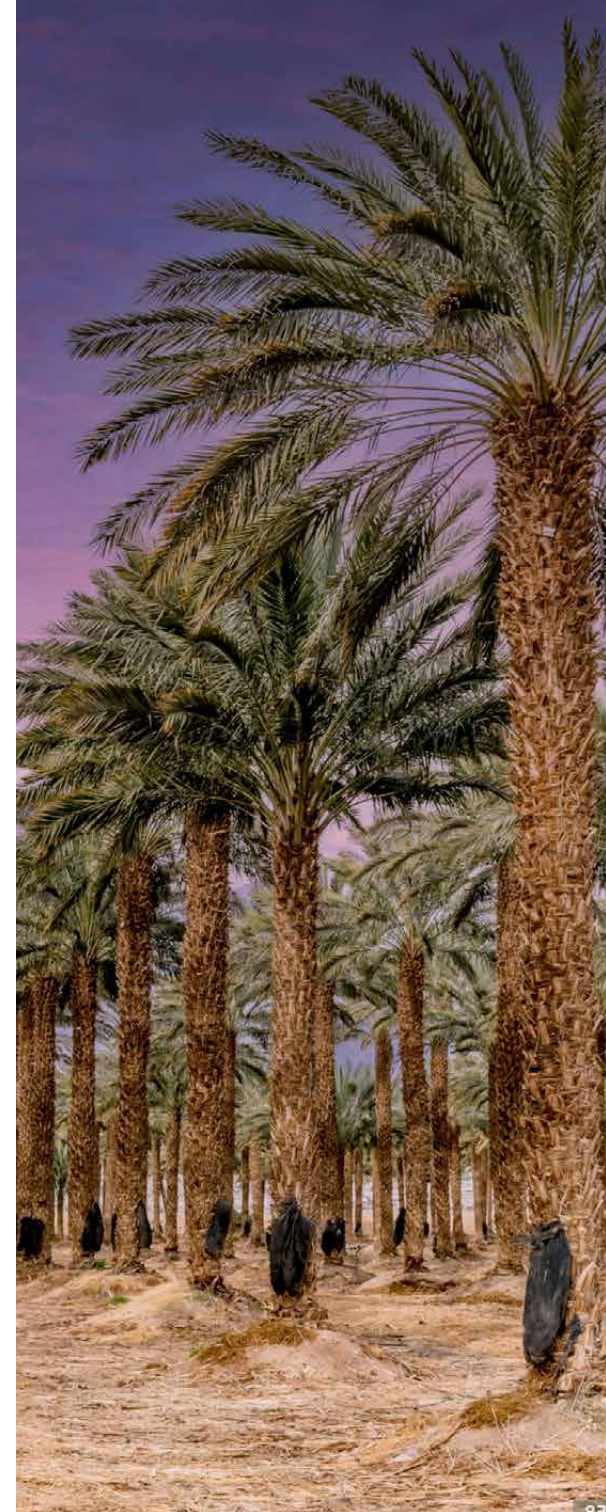


### REGIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

In response to the CAMRE 2023 decision, the G20 Global Land Initiative Coordination Office, in collaboration with the League of Arab States and its specialized agencies — Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD) and the Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD)— and the Global Mechanism of UNCCD, conducted a comprehensive Needs Assessment Survey across the Arab region in early 2024.

The survey, disseminated in January 2024 by the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States to all 22 member countries of the League, received responses from 14 countries. The results show a diverse range of geographical and socioeconomic contexts; from the Gulf states to North Africa, to the conflict-affected regions, such as Yemen and Syria. The survey offers valuable insights into the land degradation challenges and environmental priorities across the Arab region, and a firm basis for developing targeted actions by the G20 Global Land Initiative.

The survey identifies climate factors, such as drought and floods, as the primary drivers of land degradation, alongside unsustainable agricultural practices and urban expansion. The responses show that desertification, reduced agricultural productivity and water scarcity are the main impacts, which affect food security and livelihoods. The findings highlight a strong demand for capacity building in areas such as geographic data analysis, sustainable agriculture and innovative financing mechanisms.





## REGIONAL TRAINING WORKSHOP ON BIOSALINE AGRICULTURE IN THE ARAB REGION

In response to the results of the Needs Assessment Survey, G20 GLI, in collaboration with the International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA) and the League of Arab States and its specialized agencies, delivered a tailored Regional Training Workshop on Biosaline Agriculture in Cairo, Egypt, from 29 September to 3 October 2024.

The training was based on a four-day global course developed by ICBA at the request of the G20 Global Land Initiative. This global course is accredited by CPD Accreditation Services from the United Kingdom, and is delivered internationally by G20 GLI and ICBA jointly.

The workshop in Cairo customized the program to respond to the specific challenges of the Arab region. But as the content of an accredited course cannot be altered, an innovative model was conceived.

The first four days of the training followed the established global



curriculum, covering the fundamentals of biosaline agriculture and land restoration. A fifth day of training was added to address the region-specific challenges. Participants focused on local perspectives, case studies and solutions tailored to the environmental realities of the Arab region, such as water scarcity, desertification and saline soil management.

It also featured experts from the specialized technical agencies of the League of Arab States, including the Arab Organization for Agricultural

Development (AOAD) and the Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD).

This customization not only enriched the learning experience but also significantly boosted participant engagement. The level of interactive participation from attendees during the regional course exceeded that observed during the global delivery, underscoring the effectiveness of combining global frameworks with localized expertise. The workshop was attended by 24 participants from 13 Arab countries, with a 35% improvement in

participant knowledge as recorded through a knowledge impact assessment.

This model proved to be highly successful. It highlights the flexibility of the G20 Global Land Initiative to adapt its global training programs to local contexts without compromising the integrity of the original course. The success of this approach suggests its potential application in other regions, enabling further regional tailoring of the Initiative's global courses in the future.



The skyline of Dubai, a modern city in a dryland area

### SHAPING NATURE-POSITIVE CITIES IN THE ARAB REGION

In response to the Needs Assessment Survey findings, which shows urban expansion as a key driver of land degradation in the Arab region, the G20 GLI in November 2024 organized a high-profile event titled, *Nature, Land, and Cities: What Nature-Positive Cities Look Like in the Arab Region*, at the Twelfth Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF12) held in Cairo, Egypt.

The event focused on how Arab cities can integrate Nature-based Solutions (NbS) to enhance urban resilience, combat land degradation and contribute to the G20’s ambition of reducing degraded land by 50% by 2040. The event was collaboratively organized by G20 GLI, UN-Habitat Regional Office for Arab States, the League of Arab States and the High-Level Climate Champions.

The first interactive panel addressed global frameworks and guidelines for integrating NbS and land restoration into urban planning, with a particular focus on how these frameworks can be adapted and applied in the Arab region.

The second panel delved into practical examples and challenges of implementing NbS in Arab cities, drawing from case studies that showcased successful strategies for addressing climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction and urban resilience. The case studies demonstrate how cities in the region can benefit from NbS by strengthening their ecosystems and improving the quality of life for urban populations.

Participants shared best practices and discussed challenges related to fostering nature-positive urban environments, drawing on both regional insights and global experiences. There was strong emphasis on actionable strategies for integrating sustainable land management practices into urban planning and the importance of strengthening urban-rural linkages to achieve long-term environmental sustainability. This event strengthened collaboration among and participation of the Arab Region at the UNCCD COP16 held in December 2024.

### DISSEMINATION OF THE TRIGGER CHANGE! COURSE IN THE ARAB REGION

As part of its ongoing efforts to expand the reach of its global programs, G20 GLI collaborated with the League of Arab States to adapt and disseminate the *Trigger Change! Global Course on Innovative Sustainable Agriculture Solutions for Land Restoration* in the Arab Region.

The collaboration reflects G20 GLI’s commitment to build the capacity of G20 non-member countries and other stakeholders by responding to and

meeting the needs and challenges identified by different regions.

The course was first introduced in the Arab region through a webinar held in May 2024. The dissemination of the global course at the regional level is designed to empower a new generation of land restorers in a region facing severe land degradation challenges. By equipping local practitioners and decision-makers with innovative agricultural solutions, the course aims to build regional capacity to combat desertification, restore degraded lands and promote sustainable land management practices.





## Participation in regional consultations and regional conferences

G20 GLI actively participated in a series of regional consultations and conferences throughout the year in order to: align the Initiative's objectives with regional priorities; advance collaboration in finding solutions to the Region's shared environmental challenges; strengthen G20 GLI's collaborative ties within the Arab region; and discuss the Initiative's contributions to the region's efforts to mitigate land degradation, enhance climate resilience and promote sustainable development practices.

G20 GLI participated and delivered a presentation at the regional consultation titled, *Reinforcing the Environmental Dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainability and Peace in the Arab Region*, co-organized with the UN Economic and Social Commission of West Asia (ESCWA) and the League of Arab States.

The presentation showed: the Initiative's ongoing work in the Arab region and how it aligns with multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); and how its efforts contribute to other crucial SDGs,

including SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

G20 GLI also participated in the 10th Regional Conservation Forum (RCF) of the IUCN Regional Office for West Asia, held in September in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. GLI presented its key activities, particularly the GLI data platform for land restoration and the findings from the "Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Arab Countries on Combating Land Degradation through Sustainable Land Management, Land Restoration and Conservation." GLI also discussed with the regional organizations the areas with potential for collaboration.

At the *Fourth International Conference & Exhibition on Advanced Geospatial Science & Technology* held in October in Tunisia, the G20-GLI team promoted the *Global Restoration Information Hub* and shared knowledge on the role of geospatial technologies in monitoring vegetation health, tracking land degradation and enhancing decision-making in restoration projects.



Dr Abd Salam El Vilaly, Programme Officer, UNCCD-G20 GLI, speaks at one of the Arab region conferences



## Building Synergies with Existing and New Initiatives

In 2024, the G20 Global Land Initiative built synergies with the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and global partners, advancing collaborative actions such as the Land Restoration Challenge, the Miyawaki Forest initiatives and the Nature Restoration Labs to combat land degradation, restore ecosystems and inspire a Generation Restoration.





## UN DECADE ON ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION (UNDER)

G20 GLI worked in synergy or in collaboration with the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration during the year under review.

### LAND CHALLENGE

Through 2024, G20 GLI participated in partners' meetings under the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030) and co-organized exhibition spaces and events at global conferences.

The collaboration emphasized the global call to action to stop land degradation, combat climate change and enhance food security, water supply and biodiversity.

The G20 GLI also led the Land Restoration Challenge under the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

The network includes partnership with over 130 organizations from 40 countries. During a partners' call in March, participants discussed priorities for the three upcoming Rio

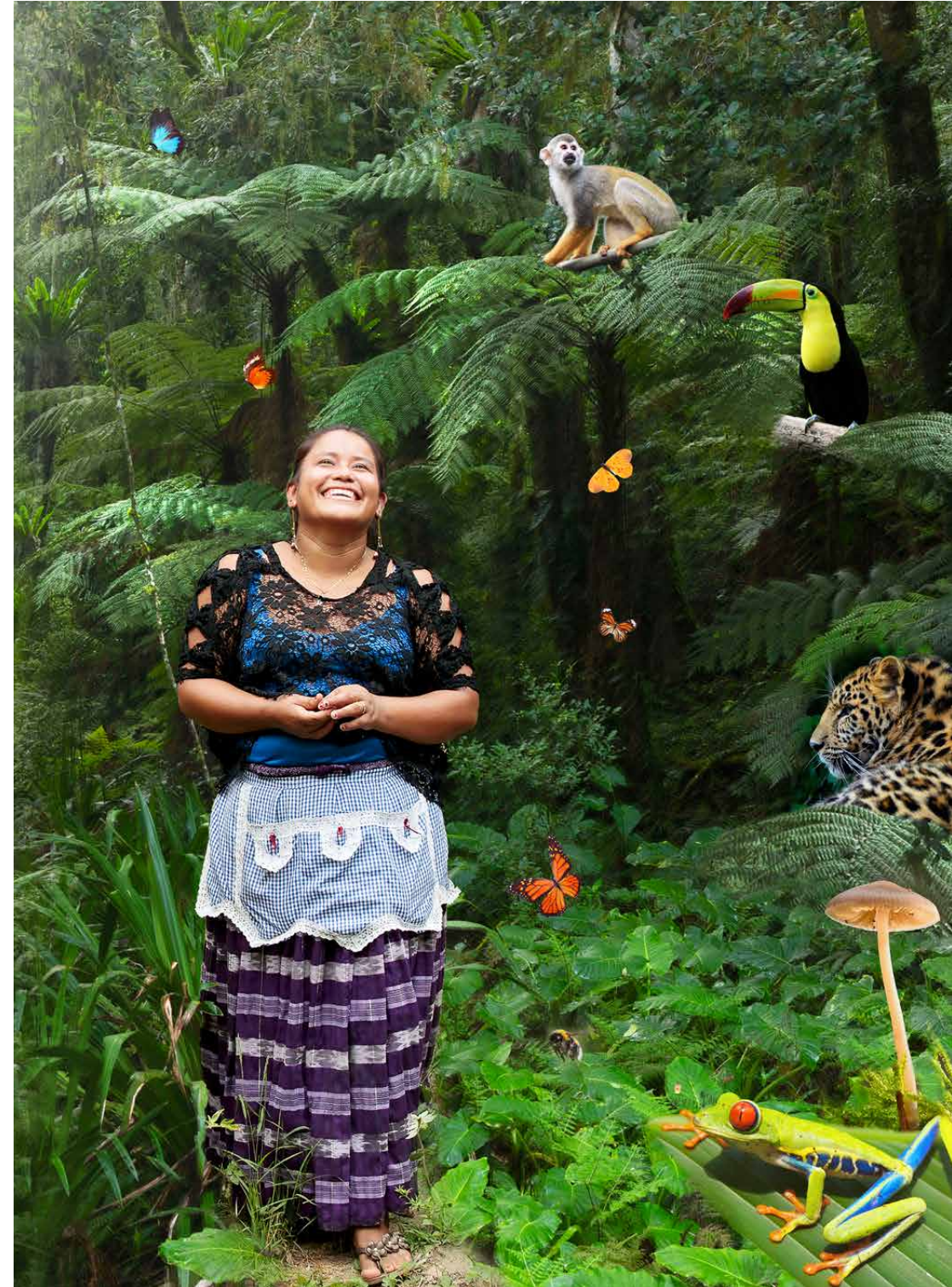
Convention COPs and learned about opportunities for restoration projects, including the G20 GLI small grants, the Youth Ecopreneur programme and the UN Decade World Restoration Flagships.

Land Challenge partners learned of activities related to land restoration and participated in the trainings and workshops organized by the G20 GLI during the reporting year.

Participants were invited to the UNCCD COP16 Restoration Pavilion, and some participated or organized events, including at a side event event on the Land Restoration Challenge and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

A global conference to bring together the Land Challenge partners to focus on land restoration is still planned for 2025, in Bonn.

G20 GLI also set in motion activities to nurture generations of people living in harmony with nature, which complements UNDER's mission to develop a Generation Restoration.





# GENERATION RESTORATION, MIYAWAKI FORESTS AND URBAN FORESTS

A UNESCO analysis (2021) of 100 national curricula found that 47% do not mention the climate crisis and only 23% of the teachers feel educated enough to address climate action. Seventy percent of the students were also not able to explain climate disruption, revealing some curriculums' inadequacies.

To close this knowledge gap, curricula on land restoration need to be implemented for easy adoption in schools. The curricula should emphasize holistic learning attached to core academic areas that promote development through real-world experiences and community impact.

Educators need the resources, training and incentives to bring land restoration education into the classroom. Thus, it is critical going forward to nurture generations of children who know and appreciate



Planting 500 trees with the local community in Shonan International Village Meguri-no-Mori

the significance of land restoration to a sustainable future, by enabling children to reconnect with nature amid rapid urbanization.

In this context, G20 organized two consultative events to plan for future actions aiming to support schools, teachers and urban communities globally in order to give children a practical learning and experience with nature.

## NATURE RESTORATION LABS WORKSHOP

In June 2024, G20 GLI, in collaboration with the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), convened a workshop focused on developing Nature Restoration Labs for school curricula. Participants shared pedagogical strategies, project experiences and collaboration opportunities.

Key presentations emphasized the Rewilding Academy's modular curriculum, UNESCO's Greening Curriculum Guidance and local projects, such as the Miyawaki Forest Outreach Program, to show the role of education in addressing land degradation challenges and creating youth-driven environmental action.



Potted seedling-making to cultivate native tree species for forest restoration projects

Participants explored the Nature Restoration Labs' pedagogical aspects, practical experiences with environmental youth-led projects, effective land restoration strategies and opportunities for collaboration.

Both school-based and extracurricular initiatives brought together some or all of the whole-of-school approaches, experiential learning and project-based learning. Together, the approaches helped in developing effective curricula and teaching materials that could be easily used by educators.

G20 GLI plans to develop the Nature Restoration Labs starting in 2025, with the aim of reaching one million students in 100 countries over the next 3 years.



Workshop participants brainstorming on integrating sustainable nature labs in schools



## LINKING UP THE MIYAWAKI PRACTITIONERS

In October, the Morino Project and G20 GLI convened the International Symposium on Miyawaki Forests and Urban Forests at Yokohama National University (YNU), in Japan. The five-day symposium titled, *Towards the Creation of Miyawaki Forests as Nature Labs in Schools*, brought together 150 participants from 27 countries, representing a diverse group of stakeholders.

This symposium served as a knowledge-sharing hub for students, researchers and seasoned experts to exchange practical insights into the Miyawaki method, but it also marked the start of collaboration to promote sustainable practices, such as the Miyawaki method for restoring ecosystems.

The Miyawaki Forest method pairs the dense planting of native species with mulching to support disaster resilience and biodiversity, and it has been effective in around 2,900 projects globally. The method can be implemented in areas as small as 50 square meters. The forests achieve high growth (often three times that of other forestry techniques) and use only native vegetation, making it popular in urban areas, residential communities, factory premises and schools.

The increasingly popular Miyawaki method was pioneered by Professor Akira Miyawaki of Yokohama National University. Although its large-scale implementation requires further innovation, the Miyawaki method has contributed to environmental conservation and ecosystem restoration in both urban and suburban settings around the world, including in Belgium, India, Japan, Kenya, Lebanon and Thailand.

The symposium included keynote speeches, panel discussions and interactive sessions on the ecological

benefits, biodiversity, restoration and sustainability of Miyawaki forests. Participants visited a seedling production workshop and took part in tree-planting ceremonies around the city.

Participants showcased Miyawaki forests from their countries, the positive impacts that the forests have made. They shared guidance on implementing Miyawaki projects for cities as well as funding strategies for school-based Miyawaki projects.

The event concluded with the adoption of the Yokohama Declaration to symbolize a collective commitment to address modern ecological challenges while securing a harmonious future for generations to come.

The declaration:

- promotes the global implementation of Miyawaki forests;
- contributes to the resolution of global environmental challenges;
- helps to build a sustainable future;
- establishes a global Miyawaki Forest Practitioners Network for exchanging information, promoting advancements and developing policy related to Miyawaki forests and;
- establishes Miyawaki chairs and fellowships at universities to honor the life and vision of Professor Miyawaki; and
- will recognize global leaders in Miyawaki land restoration through annual awards for those who make significant contributions.

The declaration also refers to the establishment of Nature Labs in academic institutions as living laboratories to reconnect students with the natural environment. This initiative hopes to strengthen the physical and spiritual connection that humanity once shared with nature.



Ms Joann Lee, Program Officer, UNCCD-G20 GLI, participates in planting a Miyawaki forest in Yokohama, Japan



## Global Evergreening Alliance

In March 2024, the Initiative was represented at the Accelerating Nature-based Solutions Conference held in Radisson-Blu Mosi-oa-Tunya, Zambia.

The Conference was organized by the Global Evergreening Alliance (GEA), the Government of Zambia, AFR100, African Natural Capital Alliance (ANCA), FSD Africa and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

The conference enabled participants from the around 300 organizations represented to learn about GEA's Restore programs, providing a framework to discuss complementary skills, capacities of implementing partners, community-led planning, carbon offsetting methodologies and finance.

Most participants were from Africa or had projects in Africa. They discussed targeting small-holder farmers, financing restoration through carbon and biodiversity offsets, developing a capacity-



building programme for partners and using farmer managed natural regeneration to restore land. They also discussed restoration innovations, such as the Kijani App and the use of Bamboo and Biochar.

G20 GLI identified new actors in the land restoration space, the scope and nature of their activities and potential partners in GLI's four pillars of work.

The G20 GLI found there is potential to collaborate in capacity-building initiatives involved with civil society organizations and work with the Faith Community involved with land restoration.

G20 GLI advocated its own value addition of scaling land restoration, including through motivating the private sector to restore degraded mines and building youth-driven Start-Ups to restore land.



Center, Ms Mmakwena Moetsi, UNCCD-G20 GLI Youth Ecoopreheur, after winning the GreenTech Festival Start-Up Slam in Berlin, Germany

## Pillars of Action

The Pillars of Action include showcasing success stories that benefit nature and livelihoods, engaging the private sector in sustainable practices, empowering civil society on land stewardship and sharing knowledge to mobilize collective efforts for land conservation and restoration.



ACTION PILLAR 1

# SHOWCASE BEST PRACTICE

G20 GLI showcased its work through its websites, general and specialized events and communications activities with a view to reach its wide and diverse audiences. G20 GLI added the Global Restoration Hub and the Geospatial Data Platform for Land Restoration to its web platforms. G20 GLI organized and sponsored exhibitions at events attended collectively by at least 10,000 in-person participants. G20 GLI social media reached nearly 450,000 views and increased its followers to over 14,000 solely through organic growth.

## 10,000

in-person participants attending the exhibitions

## 450,000

organic social media views

## 14,000

new followers on social media

## GEOSPATIAL DATA PLATFORM FOR LAND RESTORATION

Development of the Geospatial Data Platform for Land Restoration, a geographic information system (GIS)-based website of the G20 GLI, commenced in the second half of the year.

This platform incorporates geospatial data and analytical tools that reduce the time and resources needed to select, download, host and process raw datasets on restoration efforts.

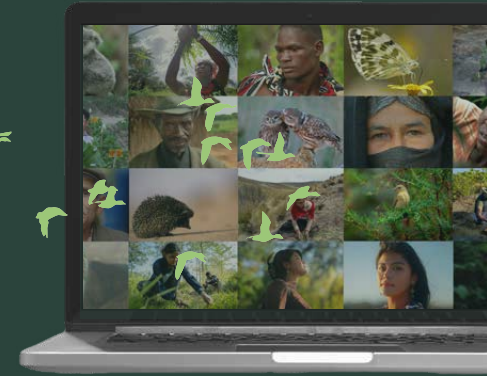
As a data explorer system, the Platform tracks countries' commitments to land restoration, offering geospatial data and trend indicators to identify areas where efforts are needed most.

The information is compiled from voluntarily shared data by participating bodies, with proper attribution where possible. The Platform also consolidates data from various sources into a geodatabase.

By making information on land degradation and restoration accessible and in consistent formats to policymakers and other stakeholders, the Platform allows for evidence-based policymaking, review and learning.

The Platform includes country dashboards that showcase land restoration and degradation achievements as well as land status, threats, trends, impacts, efforts and progress in combating desertification and improving land conditions for 197 countries through interactive maps and graphs.

# grih.info



The latest global data



- ▶ Global Commitments
- ▶ Community Practices
- ▶ Legislations and Policies



The goal is to boost collaboration and to create constructive, multi-sectoral policy debates and information exchanges on land restoration best practices among national stakeholders.

Once completed, the Platform will be a hub for sharing geospatial data on land degradation, conservation, sustainable land management and restoration, making engagement in conservation and restoration efforts easier for stakeholders.

The Platform will empower decision-makers, researchers and practitioners to implement effective land management and restoration strategies towards the goal of reducing degraded land by 50% by 2040.

#### Its key features are:

- **Reporting Tool:** Offers a concise summary of each country, with an option to export as a PDF document.
- **Dataset Report:** Provides information on datasets, including automated updates for external, additional data.
- **Document Geolocation Tool:** Enables the addition of geolocation information to relevant documents.
- **Knowledge Archive:** Shares datasets and documentation on land, all geospatially linked to the country dashboards.

The country profiles deliver information on land statuses, threats, trends, impacts, efforts and progress in combating desertification and improving land conditions. They help identify sectors in each country that require targeted efforts to achieve land degradation neutrality.

Moreover, these profiles promote sustainable land management practices on a global scale, highlighting collaboration among the Convention's 197 countries to enhance dryland living conditions and preserve land and soil resources.

## URBAN PLANNING TOOLS FOR ADDRESSING LAND DEGRADATION AND PROMOTING LAND RESTORATION

As cities grow, especially in areas with poor planning, the risk of harming ecosystems increases, leading to soil erosion, loss of biodiversity and depletion of natural resources.

In July 2024, G20 GLI and Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) organized the “Urban Planning Tools for Addressing Land Degradation and Promoting Land Restoration” training workshop in Bangkok, Thailand.

The workshop brought together 21 participants, including urban planners, government representatives, civil society and other key stakeholders from 16 countries, to share knowledge and learn best practice focused on tackling land degradation through sustainable urban planning.

The workshop showcased effective urban planning solutions to stop or reverse environmental damage as well as the tools and strategies needed to fight land degradation.



Participants at the urban planning training at the Asian Institute of Technology in Bangkok

Through lectures, case studies, field visits and group activities, participants saw real-world examples of urban planning, emphasizing the need for good planning by showing how bad planning worsens land degradation.

Many participants pledged to promote land restoration in their home countries by creating action plans, integrating land restoration into environmental laws and launching educational campaigns.

Participants also pledged to promote green infrastructure and protect biodiversity by working with government agencies, NGOs, local communities and other organizations to advocate sustainable urban planning in planning efforts.



## YOUTH ECOPRENEUR PROGRAMME 2024

The Youth Ecopreneur Programme (YECO) 2024 is a comprehensive one-year programme that equips young ecopreneurs with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in their entrepreneurial journeys. YECO is fostering a vibrant community of game-changers in land restoration whose initiatives can, at once, scale land restoration and create a restoration economy globally.

G20 GLI and the International Trade Center, which co-lead the program, work in partnership with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Google's Start-Ups for Sustainable Development program and the multinational law firm Sidley Austin to support the delivery of the Programme.

YECO 2024 attracted over 850 applications from more than 100 countries. The 100 young entrepreneurs selected for the land restoration category presented business models with novel solutions for land restoration across several key areas: the use of modern technologies, sustainable land management, soil enrichment and conservation, afforestation, restoration and carbon farming.

G20 GLI support to these young ecopreneurs goes beyond the YECO programme. During the year, G20 GLI created opportunities for the ecopreneurs to learn, to get exposure at international conferences, to promote their business and to showcase the work of G20 GLI.



YECO 2024 at UNCCD COP16 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

*The YECO programme has been very resourceful for me as a founder and also for the team that I lead, equipping us with skills for growth. The exposure we have gotten from here is transformative and gives us the much needed validation for more partnerships, clients and impact investors as well. Thank you for highlighting our work at AgriTech Analytics.*

- **Maryanne Gichanga**  
YECO 2024 winner and CEO and co-founder of AgriTech Analytics Limited





The 2024 Youth Ecopreneur Programme was structured into three progressive phases:

**1. The “Global Bootcamp,” for the selected 125 applicants,** who participated in 10 weeks of intensive training and e-learning sessions on investment readiness, business modeling, legal essentials, intellectual property, marketing strategies, soft skills and pitch training.

**2. The top 25 participants advanced to the next phase, the “Global Accelerator,”** and received tailored coaching, mentorship and masterclasses to enhance their capabilities to attract investment, achieve growth and maintain efficiency.

**3. Youth Ecopreneur Award took place in New York, USA, at the Summit for the Future.** The top eight finalists pitched their business ideas live on-stage to an international audience. Maryanne Gichanga’s Agritech Analytics Limited won the Land Restoration category. Their AI-powered tools assist farmers in combating soil degradation and enhancing crop yields. The top award included a cash prize of US\$10,000 and services from the committed organizations to help scale the business. Additionally, Ferando de Lucca’s Ceres Seeding won the People’s Choice with over 100 votes from the event’s attendees and online viewers.

In August, three ecopreneurs from the 2023 YECO cohort presented their inventions on land-restoration at the Global Changemaker Academy for Parliamentarians with a view to give the parliamentarians insights on how to imagine and implement effective and inclusive land policies within their own countries. Two ecopreneurs from the 2024 cohort also joined two of the G20 GLI led trainings: one on Biosaline Agriculture in November in Dubai and the Second Dryland Summer School in September in Nairobi.

To showcase youth potential for land restoration beyond UN circles, G20 GLI sponsored two finalists of the 2023 competition to pitch and present their projects at the Start-Up Jam competition at the GreenTech Festival in Berlin. One of the youth participated as a Center Stage keynote speaker. The other participant, emerged as the overall winner in the pitch competition, earning consulting services valued at US\$200,000 from the renown Boston Consulting Group X and an undisclosed amount of financial resources from an Angel Investor.

The 2025 YECO Programme will build on these achievements to nurture young talent, expand the programme’s impact, broaden the audience, incorporate more diverse perspectives, foster inclusivity in ecopreneurship and enhance the curriculum through partnerships with education organizations.

YECO shows the G20 GLI’s commitment to empower and celebrate the next generation of leaders in the restoration industry. By equipping them with the skills, mentorship and networks to succeed, YECO not only addresses land degradation but also fosters a spirit of innovation towards a more sustainable and resilient future.



Part of the YECO 2024 Cohort



# SAVE LAND: UNITED FOR LAND EXHIBITION

The *Save Land: United for Land* exhibition, a collaboration between the Bundeskunsthalle (Art and Science Exhibition Hall of the Federal Republic of Germany) and G20 GLI, opened on 5 December 2024 and runs until 1 June 2025.



An exhibit at the Save Land. United for Land exhibition

The exhibition combines contemporary art, cultural history, the natural sciences and the latest media technologies to engage visitors' five senses to communicate the global situation of land.

To inspire visitors towards land restoration for the common good, it addresses questions on the state of soils in urban and rural as well as natural habitats, the impact of human activity and actions to protect land.

About 50,000 in-person participants are expected, the average turnout for in-person events of similar duration. At least 100,000 views are expected of the [saveland.art](https://saveland.art) website as well as the connected webpages of G20 GLI and Bundeskunsthalle.

As the first large museum exhibition on land restoration combining art and science, *Save Land: United for Land* responds to the 2020 mandate to show best practice and share knowledge to help countries reduce degraded land by 50 percent by 2040.

The exhibition also commemorates UNCCD's 30th anniversary in leading the international community in actions to reduce degraded land and build resilience to drought.

The curatorial team from G20 GLI and Bundeskunsthalle developed the concept in collaboration with masters students involved in the "Strategic Product and Innovation Development" programme of the Faculty of Design & Art of Wuppertal University.

They worked on the mission statement for the exhibition and conducted research to test the communication ideas and technologies that would best attract the public. The exhibition and choice of objects and artworks was then conceptualized by the Bundeskunsthalle, together with the curators, from G20 GLI.

The exhibition has four key parts:

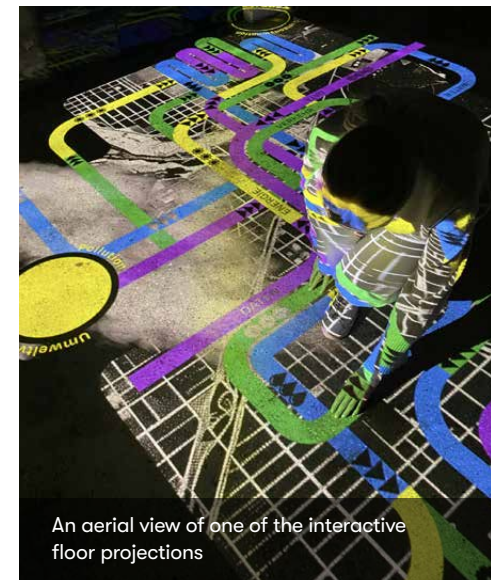
- **A physical space** located in the Bundeskunsthalle in Bonn;
- **A virtual space** ([saveland.art](https://saveland.art) and social media channels);
- **A book;** and
- **A travelling exhibition.**



Visitors interact with the floor projections

**The physical, immersive exhibition covers 1500 square meters divided into five rooms.**

The first room called "Land is Life" explores the different meanings of land, such as soil, property and culture, through an interactive encyclopedia of seven animated films. It also features an impressive digital globe that uses visuals to simplify science and data about the situation of land worldwide. Visitors can explore a wide range of issues about land degradation, such as the amount of degraded land and its impacts on people. The room also features an immersive panoramic cinema, where a 12-minute film evokes different emotions through beautiful images and sounds from different forest, grassland, wetland, desert and polar region ecosystems.



An aerial view of one of the interactive floor projections

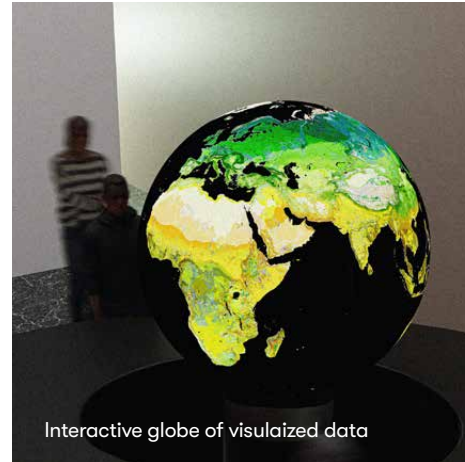


The three exhibition rooms that follow are titled, “Cities – The Material World,” “Rural Land – The Big Harvest” and “Natural Habitats – Nature’s Core.” The rooms show the drivers of land degradation associated with cities: urban construction, overconsumption and pollution and its drivers in rural areas, such as deforestation for agriculture. It also shows ecosystems with minimal human impact.

The information is shared through films and interactive floor projection maps as well as exhibits that show land degradation in a historical context and the technologies that can degrade or restore land. Each room also presents poignant contemporary artworks that underpin and stir emotions on these topics.



Exhibits on display



Interactive globe of visualized data

The fifth room, the “Take Action room”, shows four potential areas for action: food, clothing, energy and well-being. It invites visitors to pledge a particular action, including: raising awareness, advocating, changing personal behavior or actively restoring degraded land. The room also features stories of youth actively involved in restoring degraded lands.

The book accompanying the exhibition, by the same title, **Save Land. United for Land**, includes articles from experts, who emphasize the same issues. Illustrations of the exhibits also inspire readers to take action. Contributions include art and science authors from the global North and South, including indigenous perspectives. The book contains 260 pages and 183 illustrations, and is published in English and German.

The saveland.art website, which features the same ideas via the web platform, introduces virtual visitors to the topic and gives them a chance to view the actual exhibition.

The travelling exhibition will launch once the main exhibition at the Bundeskunsthalle in Bonn closes, with most of the procured exhibits for the exhibition forming the key materials.

Bundeskunsthalle and G20 GLI are exploring museums in other regions of the world that could host the exhibition once the event ends. Another approach entails using the materials from this event in future GLI exhibitions, especially the digital core of the exhibition.



Promotional flyer of the exhibition





## OTHER EXHIBITIONS 2024



Ms Wagaki Wischnewski (r), Communications Coordinator, UNCCD-G20 GLI, poses with Ms. Ritika Gupta, University of Toronto, at IUFRO

### IUFRO EXHIBITION

G20 GLI hosted an exhibition at the International Union of Forestry Research Organizations (IUFRO) World Congress, held in June 2024, in Stockholm, Sweden. IUFRO meets every five years and is one of the largest global forest-related events, with over 4,000 participants in 2024, drawn from academia, governments, industry, NGOs and civil society.

Over four days, G20 GLI exhibited its work at the Conference to:

- engage foresters in the Initiative's new agricultural course, *Trigger Change! Innovative Sustainable Agriculture Solutions for Land Restoration*;
- publicize GLI's capacity-building work to develop university courses and raise awareness of its planned 2025 courses on forest restoration and urbanization; and

- reach new restoration communities building on the *Save Land: United for Land* Exhibition campaign of writing love letters to land.

The uniquely designed exhibition stood out and was one of the most visited, with nearly 500 love letters to land written in many local languages, which ramped up GLI's social media reach. Many of the visitors showed interest in the GLI's university course due especially to its modular nature.



Ms Georgina Bwango (l), Finance Officer, UNCCD-G20 GLI, interacts with the booth visitors at SERE

### SOCIETY FOR ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION EUROPE

The Society for Ecological Restoration for Europe (SERE) Congress took place at the end of August 2024 in Tartu, Estonia, and was attended by about 600 participants from Europe. G20 GLI was one of the event's three gold sponsors. The objective was to

strengthen GLI's brand visibility in Europe's restoration community.

The conference's program included two full-page advertisements on GLI's work and the *Trigger Change!* agricultural course. Information on GLI's work and sponsorship of the conference was also shared through their social media. G20 GLI's banners were strategically positioned in the registration area. UNCCD lanyards were distributed with the conference badges, while GLI flyers and pens were distributed in all the conference bags.

### THE GLOBAL SPIRITUALITY MAHOTSAV 2024 – A CELEBRATION OF UNITY, NATURE AND SPIRITUALITY

The Global Spirituality Mahotsav, co-organized by Heartfulness and India's Ministry of Culture, took place in March at Kanha Shanti Vanam in Hyderabad, India.

Narendra Modi, President of India, inaugurated the Mahotsav, a space for the exchange of ideas on spiritual and environmental stewardship.

Over 70,000 participants from diverse backgrounds, including politicians, spiritual leaders and visionaries,



Ms Apoorva Bose at the Global Spirituality Mahotsav

gathered in the festival to celebrate unity, diversity, spirituality and nature's bond.

G20 GLI exhibited its work among faith leaders to advocate sustainable land management.

G20 GLI representatives engaged with participants about the Initiative's work in and impact on land restoration, shared stories of transformation through improved land management practices and explained the Miyawaki forest method.

Participants visited the Kanha Shanti Vanam's ecosystem, which was awarded the IGBC Platinum Award in 2019 for its transformation through land restoration. This model of ecological renewal and spiritual connection gave visual form to G20 GLI's team's shared vision for a sustainable future.



## OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATIONS

### G20 GLI communications objectives for 2024 were to:

- increase global awareness about land degradation challenges and land restoration solutions;
- support the Initiative's activities' coverage;
- increase global awareness of the Initiative; and
- motivate the Initiative's audience to join the restoration movement and campaigns.

Key activities involved targeted communication campaigns, capacity building, live coverage of key and sponsored G20 GLI events, sharing regular updates of strategic land restoration activities globally, collaboration with strategic partners and innovating to maximize the use of new digital tools and channels to reach target audiences efficiently and effectively.

### CAMPAIGNS

GLI organized communication campaigns to:

- Launch the [Trigger Change!](#) course on innovative land restoration solutions, the [Restoration Field Projects Grant](#) award and the RestorLife Awards;
- Announce the winners of the global photo competition themed [Beautiful Landscapes](#);
- Support the World Environment Day campaign on land, titled *Our Land. Our Future*; and
- Promote the [Youth Ecopreneur Programme 2024](#), the [Global Changemaker Academy for Parliamentarians 2024](#) and the [Restoration Pavilion](#) at UNCCD COP16.

### CAPACITY-BUILDING

G20 GLI organized a capacity building workshop in July for 26 participants from 19 countries, including the G20 GLI teams, and selected communicators from the Land Challenge of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

The workshop reviewed the Initiative's communications work and achievements since operations began and discussed opportunities for growth.

Participants shared their work and participated in Master Classes on,

*inter alia*, design and generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) in communications, and gained insights in global communication trends and technologies. They also visited a restored coal-mine in Germany.

The post-workshop survey received a 62% response rate from the participants, and high ratings in all aspects of the workshop. The workshop's outcomes are available in this [report](#).



Participants at the UNCCD-G20 GLI communications retreat in Bonn, Germany

*“The Communications Workshop was an invaluable experience. I got insights and tools that have greatly influenced our approach. The workshop’s collaborative spirit and knowledge-sharing were transformative, laying the foundation for impactful and inclusive communication strategies in land restoration.”*

— **Cristal Ange**, Executive Director, Fundación Herencia Ambiental Caribe, Colombia



## PARTNERSHIPS

G20 GLI initiated two communications partnerships in the year under review, in addition to the continuing photo competition partnership with Greenstorm Foundation.

G20 GLI, in partnership with Restor, the largest network of community-led restoration and conservation efforts across the globe, launched the RestorLife Awards to recognize the achievements of nature stewards and offer support for their restoration journeys. The first awards will be given in July 2025.

Under the partnership with the London School of Economics, G20 GLI will develop and conduct Master Classes to support communication for land restoration. The first Class will take place in 2025. The training will equip communication influencers with knowledge in land restoration, enhance the skills of land restoration communicators to create engaging content.



Photo by G20 GLI Greenstorm finalist Myo Min Kywe



Photo by G20 GLI Greenstorm finalist Morteza Salehi

From its continuing partnership from 2023, G20 GLI used the high-quality photographs submitted for the competition organized in partnership with Greenstorm, reducing the purchase of photographs. The design ideas for the *Save Land: United for Land* Exhibition at Bundeskunsthalle served as the basis for the Initiative’s exhibition designs and resources in 2024.

From the partnership with Greenstorm, G20 GLI collected over 17,000 photos from 153 countries, providing a rich resource to draw on for photographs, while giving visibility to the world’s landscapes and the photographers. G20 GLI used the 54 finalist photos selected for multiple activities, particularly the “Love Letters to Land” campaigns, presentations and posters.

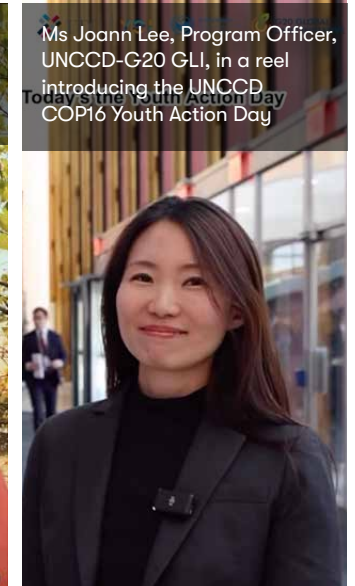
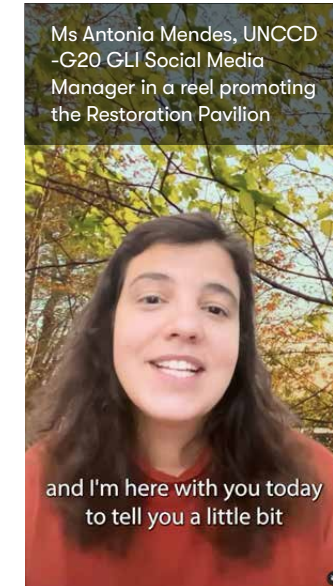
G20 GLI also collaborated with many partners in its communications campaigns, as reported below.

## COVERAGE OF EVENTS

The increase in G20 GLI activities in 2024 saw an increase in the live coverage of many events, often over three weeks: before, during and after the event. Overall, 98 posts were published about key events, with 261 cards and over 100 reels produced and posted across social media.

G20 GLI published a newsletter each month, which was circulated to the over 22,000 general subscribers as well as 8,000 specialized community members in addition. The newsletter opening rates for both categories are above industry levels, and the unsubscribers are few.

In 2025, the Initiative will continue segmenting subscribers to increase engagement and interest in the Initiative and its work.





# COMMUNICATION OUTPUTS AND TRENDS

The Initiative’s communications efforts continue to be data-driven. In 2024, the Initiative conducted two reviews of its communications activities: an internal assessment of the communications achievements since establishment in 2022 and an external survey of G20 GLI’s work by the subscribers.

The internal evaluation assessed communication plans against the communication principles developed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which are considered best practice and focus on the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of communications activities.

The evaluation found that current activities are effective and impactful and that disaggregating the respondents’ data could improve G20 GLI’s communication strategies.

The external evaluation found:

- a high approval rating of G20 GLI’s communication efforts;
- a need to engage youth and enhance digital and social media presence by using digital

forums, targeting practitioners and leveraging partner organizations; and

- a need to reach the heart through facts, examples, visuals and technology in order to grow at scale;

The activity report below summarizes the Initiative’s achievements in 2024, and in comparison to the growth in 2023.

## Social Media Growth

G20 GLI prioritizes communication through social media, in keeping with the global shift to digital communication through mobile and social media tools. Overall, the social media reach increased by 64 percent. But the overall reach through digital media, including the website traffic, increased significantly by 70 percent compared to last year.

G20 GLI reach grew across all channels, with content from 100 reels and 261 cards raising the number of followers to 14,792. The total social media reach across Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and X (X\_Arabic) was an impressive 689,609 users, initiated through direct outreach and 118 collaborations.



Newsletter

22,000

SUBSCRIBERS DEC 2023

30,000

SUBSCRIBERS DEC 2024



Facebook

2,400

FOLLOWERS DEC 2024

47,000

POSTS REACH/USERS 2024



Instagram

2,840

FOLLOWERS DEC 2024

87,000

POSTS REACH/USERS 2024



LinkedIn

9,100

FOLLOWERS DEC 2024

428,000

POSTS REACH/USERS 2024



Website

374

FOLLOWERS DEC 2024

34,030

POSTS REACH/USERS 2024



Overall Digital Media

404K

IMPRESSIONS 2023

690K

IMPRESSIONS 2024

(Rounded to the hundred of the number reached)



### LINKEDIN, INSTAGRAM AND FACEBOOK

LinkedIn grew fastest, with the Initiative’s followers more than doubling from 4,195 (on 1 January 2024) to 9,100 (on 31 December 2024), approximately a 117% increase. Instagram grew from 1,795 followers to 2,840, a 58% increase. The Initiative’s Facebook followers grew from 1,519 followers to 2,400, also achieving a 58% increase.

A total of 2,188 posts was shared across all platforms during the year. On the Initiative’s Facebook and LinkedIn, posts featuring photos achieved the highest reach, with 142,000 and 38,000 users reached, respectively. In contrast, videos and reels on these platforms recorded the lowest reach. Specifically, the Initiative’s Facebook achieved a total

reach of 47,609 users in 2024, while the Initiative’s Instagram reached 87,688 users. This data highlights the impact of visual content in engaging audiences and driving reach across platforms.

The top LinkedIn post was from the World Environment Day Raffle, receiving 155 reactions and 73 shares. The top collaborative Instagram reel was with Sadhguru during COP16, which received 106 comments, 107 shares, 11,700 likes and a reach of over 512,000.

Most of G20 GLI’s followers are between 25–34 years old, crucially, the prime target of G20 GLI activities, as it is the generation best placed to carry through to 2040, the G20 ambition of reducing degraded land by 50 percent.

The Initiative’s largest social media audiences are in India, Germany, Brazil and Indonesia, which may be linked to history. UNCCD, which hosts the Initiative, is based in Germany, and Indonesia, India and Brazil are three of the four countries that have held the G20 Presidency since the Initiative was set up in 2022.

### X (FORMERLY TWITTER)

In November 2023, the Initiative created twitter accounts (now known as X) for the Initiative Director (@G20GLI) and for Arab speakers (X\_Arabic).

X\_Arabic continues to grow, reaching 34,030 post impressions and 374 followers. The post engagement rate, which includes likes, replies, retweets, clicks or shares, averaged 8.63%, were as high as 88.96% for top tweets.

Despite the limited following on X\_Arabic, the engagement rate is higher than the 1% that experts rate as good engagement. While a high ratio is expected for a smaller following, such a high engagement level still implies that the content and audience strategies are relevant.



### YOUTUBE

The YouTube channel was active during campaigns when capacity was enhanced.

In November prior to UNCCD COP16, 45% of social media views came from the YouTube shorts feed, a significant increase from October’s 0.4%.

Short form content attracted more views than long form.

Additionally, there was a noticeable shift in the audience.

The United States had the highest (16%) number of views, followed by Brazil (7%), India (3%) and Canada (1.6%). Seventy-six percent of October’s views were from India.

Men were 80% of October’s views but only 70% of November’s.







# WEBSITE VISITS AND TRENDS

Six important trends emerged in 2024. First, the g20land.org website in 2024 attracted over 126,000 page views, an increase of 314% over the past year.

Second, the g20land.org website's users and session visits grew significantly compared to 2023. Active web users grew 369% from 12,000 to 44,305. Moreover, the web users made more web visits. The users returned, on average, four times more compared to the return rate in 2023. In short, more users engaged with the web content in 2024 compared to 2023.

Third, while the traffic was driven by both the existing content and



new content, the stories and blogs published were significantly higher in 2024. See Figure 1.

Fourth, most visitors came directly to the website. An equal number came either as referrals from other sites or through page searches. Social media and email subscriptions contributed a lot less to this traffic. The results are consistent with those of an internal survey conducted for the year 2023. See Figure 2.

Fifth, the pages featuring substantive projects or activities together accounted for 29% of the total page views. This is followed by page visits to the GLI team page (7%), the ICO team page (3%) and the subscription page (Contact us). See Figure 3.

Sixth, most viewers spent one-and-a-half minutes on the page, on average. That is half-a-minute longer than they did in 2023 and longer than readers are presumed to spend on a typical social media post.

Lastly, about 51% of the active web users came from just 10 countries, seven of which are G20 countries. Figure 4 shows the countries and the percentages of active G20 GLI web users.

	2023	2024
<b>Website Users</b>	<b>12,000</b>	<b>44,305</b>
<b>Total user sessions</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>76,800</b>
<b>Total page views</b>	<b>40,096</b>	<b>126,000</b>

FIGURE 1: COMPARISON OF NR OF ITEMS PUBLISHED 2023 VS 2024

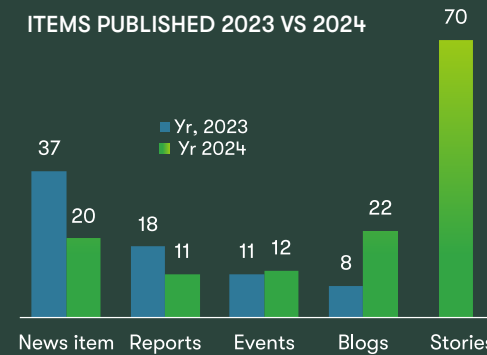


FIGURE 2: ORIGIN OF WEB VISITS

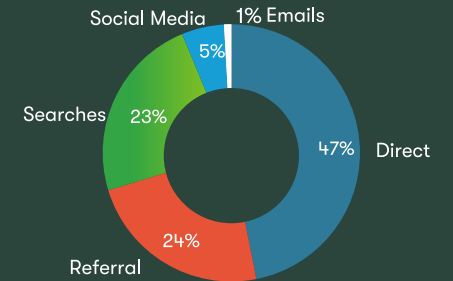
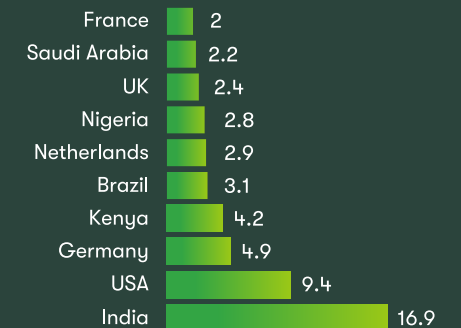


FIGURE 3: MOST VISITED PAGES IN 2024



FIGURE 4: TOP 10 ACTIVE USERS BY COUNTRY





“It’s truly inspiring to see our website’s analytics soar, reflecting a rapid surge in interest for our work. This growth is not just numbers—it’s a powerful signal of the global momentum toward reversing land degradation and tackling climate change. Our digital platforms are playing a pivotal role, helping shape the decisions that drive real progress in land restoration efforts.”

- **Murat Güngör**, Website and Online Strategy Consultant

Considering that the articles published in 2024 were not significantly more than those published the previous year, two factors may account for the changes observed.

First, the decision was taken to build all the campaign micro-sites within the main G20 website, which helped to capture all the web traffic.

Second, the publication of more substantive content as well as stories and blogs that are easier to read and understand may have increased the duration visitors spent on the pages.



Mobile version of the UNCCD-G20 GLI webpage

## MEDIA COVERAGE

With the changing media landscape, G20 GLI has not actively sought media engagement. However, this year, some of the Initiative’s activities in Germany, India, Japan and the United Arab Emirates attracted media coverage.

The Exhibition in Bonn, Germany, has already attracted media coverage from at least 58 German media outlets, such as the leading cultural channel, *Der Erste/ARD*, radio outlets like *Deutschland Funk* and other press and online media, such as art-magazin, *die Welt*, *Die Zeit*, *General Anzeiger*, *WDR 5*, *Sueddeutsche*, *ttt-titel*, *thesen* and *temperamente*.

The capacity building event in Cairo, Egypt, organized by the International Center for Biosaline Agriculture received coverage from several Egyptian news outlets, including *Almasry Alyoum*, *Alyoum Alsabea* and *Cairo 24*. The official news agencies of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Kuwait also covered the event.

The field trips in Germany by the Global Changemaker Academy for Parliamentarians and the UNCCD G20 Communications Workshop received coverage in German regional press that include *Aachener Zeitung* and the TV channel *ARD mediathek*.

An UNCCD-G20 GLI tree planting event organized for children and youth during the Heartfulness meeting in India received publicity through 18 regional print and online media channels, including: *Deccan Chronicle*, *Hindustani Express*, *Telangana Today* and *Devdiscourse*.



## ACTION PILLAR 2

# BUILD CAPACITY

G20 GLI organized 12 capacity-building events in 2024. Of the over 4,526 applications received, 352 participants from 128 countries attended the in-person trainings. The events included training workshops, master classes or post-training webinars targeting G20 GLI audiences such as parliamentarians, youth, traditional chiefs, professionals, academics, policy implementers, primarily government officials and communicators as well as civil society and private sector representatives.

# 4,526

Applications received for our 12 capacity building events in 2024

# 352

Participants attended the in-person trainings

# 93

Countries of origin of the participants

## DATA AND KNOWLEDGE HUB

G20 GLI launched the *Global Restoration Information Hub* (GRIH) in July 2024. GRIH is a repository of land restoration information and resources.

It consolidates publicly available data to support governments, practitioners, researchers and communities in accessing reliable, comprehensive information on land restoration.

GRIH is also a network for collaboration in identifying key actors and organizations involved in global restoration efforts. It is a crucial resource within the GLI for policymakers, researchers, land managers and other stakeholders to analyze land degradation, restoration potential and effective practices.

The initiative aligns with the global sustainable development agenda, addressing climate change, biodiversity loss and food security.

Through GRIH, users can explore restoration data, best practices, reports and instructional videos focused on sustainable land management. The platform also emphasizes community-driven insights, detailing strategies by different communities worldwide.

GRIH integrates various databases to provide users with data sources on biodiversity, soil health and ecosystem restoration.

The Hub has an interactive database on restoration initiatives, emphasizing the need to address local network issues and hardware limitations for successful community-led restoration.

The platform offers courses, training materials and knowledge exchange opportunities to build skills and develop capacity in land restoration.

GRIH also tracks global restoration commitments made under international frameworks, such as the Bonn Challenge and UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. These commitments, which were initially in the “Global Restoration Commitments Database” developed by PBL, Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, can be generated from GRIH in various forms and displayed in different formats, such as:

- **Data Visualization:** Maps, tables and graphs that offer clear and comparative insights;
- **Interactive Filtering:** Tailored user searches for specific data; and
- **Regional Aggregation:** Enabling data comparison by region for targeted analysis.

These features enhance informed decision-making by making the data accessible.



# THE GLOBAL CHANGEMAKER ACADEMY FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS (G-CAP)

The second Global Changemaker Academy for Parliamentarians (G-CAP) took place in August in Bonn, Germany.

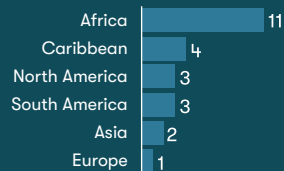
Organized by the G20 GLI in partnership with the UN System Staff College (UNSSC), the Academy united parliamentarians from around the world for empowerment in combatting land degradation through policy and action.

Thirty Members of Parliament from 29 countries were selected following a rigorous evaluation of 136 applications from 37 countries, with 24 parliamentarians representing 23 countries eventually attending G-CAP.

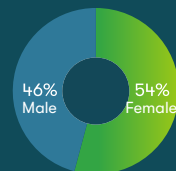


Parliamentarians from GCAP 2024 cohort meets with Ibrahim Thiaw, ES UNCCD

REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION (OF MP'S)



GENDER DISTRIBUTION (OF MP'S)



## The objectives in 2024 were:

- increasing awareness of land restoration's role in global crises and
- giving participants tools to strengthen land policies in their countries.

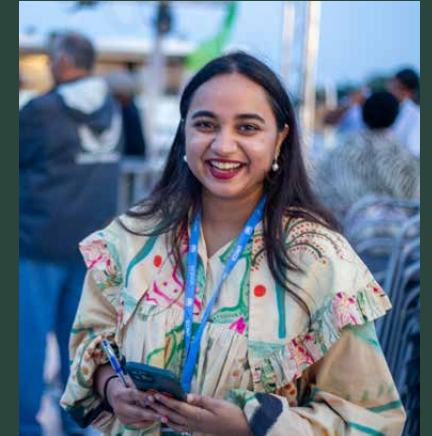
Through masterclasses, workshops and field visits, the lawmakers engaged with topics such as gender and land, financing sustainable agriculture and community rights.

The sessions prompted peer learning on actionable strategies to combat land degradation. This exchange of ideas left participants committed to changing policy to support land conservation and restoration.

G-CAP 2024 was addressed by experts such as, Former President of Costa Rica Carlos Alvarado Quesada, UNCCD Executive Secretary Ibrahim Thiaw, Director of G20 GLI Dr. Muralee Thummarukudy, Ms Cecilia Kinuthia-Njenga, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs at UNFCCC, a representative of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and an Indonesia activist who spoke about the role of law in indigenous-led restoration.

Former Minister of Education from Nepal and a distinguished member of the inaugural G-CAP 2023 cohort Sumana Shrestha said: "G-CAP has been instrumental in equipping leaders with the understanding needed to shape resilient land policies. It's a platform that doesn't just share knowledge but instills a sense of purpose."

She emphasized how the academy strengthened her ability to craft land-related policies with a broader perspective. Her experience shows G-CAP's impact in creating champions for sustainable land management within and beyond their national contexts.



*"Our capacity-building efforts reinforced the global land restoration movement. We equipped diverse stakeholders—from policymakers to grassroots leaders—with the knowledge and tools to drive impactful change. Our targeted trainings and collaborative learning strengthened networks, empowered action and advanced sustainable land management worldwide."*

**– Apoorva Bose,**  
Project Coordinator (Capacity Building), G20 GLI



## DEVELOPMENT OF UNIVERSITY COURSES ON LAND RESTORATION

Aligned with the G20 Leaders' Declaration's goals in November 2020 to reduce land degradation, capacity-building is one of the four pillars of G20 GLI. Putting land restoration in university curricula worldwide is one component of this pillar.

New courses, especially transdisciplinary courses, often require several years of review by academic boards to be put in university programmes. At the same time, the need for qualified workers in land restoration is increasing. Further, the current education system is limited in its capacity to deal with this increase or answer questions such as: What typical situations should students master within these fields of work? What competencies do they need to master to foster land restoration?

*Trigger change for land restoration!* is the Land Restoration's University course collection under development by G20 Global Initiative. The collection has modular, transdisciplinary, open-access and expert-created courses, which can be tailored to relevant university programmes.



Cover page of the course manual of the course on innovative sustainable agriculture solutions for land restoration

Each course has 48 contact hours of course materials. This is equivalent to three European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), but it can be expanded to 6 ECTS, targeting upper-level Bachelor of Science, post-graduate or doctorate-level programs.

The course package has a comprehensive training manual of 130 pages containing 48 lectures and 10 case studies on global sustainable agriculture practices for land restoration.

**The first course titled, *Trigger Change! Innovative Sustainable Agriculture Solutions for Land Restoration***, was launched in April 2024 for universities and training institutions enrolled in agriculture-related programs.

This comprehensive course resource for educators on sustainable agriculture, innovation and ecopreneurship was developed over six months by 18 university professors and sustainable agriculture experts.

At the close of the year, over 500 individuals and 200 universities and training institutions have downloaded the course.

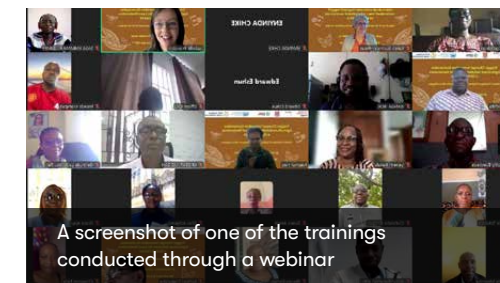
The program was launched in 2024 through four webinars in four regions (Africa, Arab States, Latin America and Southeast Asia), a session at the Landscape 2024 conference, and three regional "Training of Instructors" events held in India (in-person), Africa and Southeast Asia (online).

**The second course titled, *Trigger Change! Innovations in Sustainable Urban Land Restoration***, is being developed. The targets are urban planning, landscape architecture and urban environmental programs.

The course promotes urban greening with land restoration using nature-based solutions as a response to the growing challenges of climate change, urban growth and more extreme weather events in cities. The course being developed was presented at the World Urban Forum in Cairo and is to be launched in April 2025.

Communities of practice in the form of a [LinkedIn group](#) in these subject areas are now emerging because of each "Training of Instructors" workshop.

As part of the University courses, UNCCD secretariat and G20 GLI are developing 10 documentary films on best practices in land restoration to accompany the University courses. A Massive Open Online Course associated with these courses will be developed in 2025 to expand the reach of the course content beyond university classrooms.





# G20 GLI INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

## Igniting Passion, Inspiring Change

Over the past two years, 36 interns at the G20 GLI have engaged in inspiring projects in land restoration, ecosystem recovery and sustainable development, contributing to global efforts while honing their skills and knowledge.

Interns contributed to land restoration initiatives, including through the development of content for the G20 GLI Global Courses on innovative agriculture and urban land restoration.

They supported the production of a documentary series on global land restoration by coordinating case studies, meetings and project organization.

G20 GLI Interns researched potential collaborators for key initiatives and merchandise for public relations. They assessed grant proposals for field restoration projects and identified partners for COP16 events.

And they supported the communications activities, including the: preparation of the monthly newsletters; designing exhibitions; organizing outreach and events, such as webinars; and organizing and running the Innovation Stage at the UNCCD COP16 Restoration Pavilion.

At COP16, they presented Voices for Land, a video collage of each intern's perspective on land restoration.



Ms Georgina Bwango (fourth left), Finance Officer, UNCCD-G20 GLI, with the volunteers at the COP16 Restoration Pavilion

*“My internship with the G20 Global Land Initiative was a profound journey, both professionally and personally. Contributing to projects like the Small Grants deepened my understanding of the connection between people and the land. For me, this was the beginning of rebuilding my relationship with the earth and appreciating its resilience.”*

**- Fabiola Nava**  
Stakeholder Management Intern



### ACTION PILLAR 3

# EMPOWER CIVIL SOCIETY

In 2024, The G20 GLI empowered civil society by offering small grants for community-driven land restoration projects, fostering sustainable practices, capacity-building and inclusive benefits for local stakeholders, while inspiring global collaboration and expanding future restoration efforts.

## 650

applications from 100+ countries for the G20 GLI grants program

## 41

organizations awarded grants for restoration projects

## 200+

faith-led restoration initiatives mapped across 65 countries

## 5,000+

youth engaged at the Rising with Kindness Conference in India

## SMALL GRANTS FOR FIELD RESTORATION PROJECTS

In February, the G20 GLI launched the application phase of its inaugural programme to support restoration projects with small grants ranging from US\$5,000-15,000. Regardless of their location, civil society organizations engaged in community-driven land restoration efforts were eligible to apply. Priority was given to the organizations accredited with UNCCD.

The programme encouraged restoration activities across various ecosystems to maximize its global impact.

During the application phase, over 650 applications were submitted from 100 countries.

Following a thorough review and selection process, G20 GLI selected 41 organizations to receive funding for a wide range of activities: projects on soil restoration, agroforestry, water resource management, sustainable agriculture and capacity-building.

Capacity-building initiatives empower communities to enhance land productivity and ecosystem health through sustainable practices, improving livelihoods and strengthening food security.

The programme fosters environmental benefits while ensuring active community engagement that benefits local stakeholders, including Indigenous Peoples, youth, elders and women.

Three of the highest-scoring organizations showed their projects at a side event at the UNCCD COP16 in Riyadh.

Future collaboration opportunities will be explored, even for applicants not selected for funding, ensuring that interest in field restoration continues to grow.

In 2026, G20 GLI will call for the second round of applications, increasing the number of beneficiary organizations and the amount contributed to the projects.



*Across the globe, organizations are working with unwavering dedication to restore degraded lands. However, many of these projects face significant barriers due to limited access to financial resources, preventing them from scaling up and reaching their full potential. This year, we took a significant step towards supporting civil society organizations by launching our Small Grants Program. This program is designed to provide vital financial support to organizations who are actively restoring land, enabling them to expand their activities and have a greater impact. With these efforts, we are planting the seeds for a greener, more sustainable future.*

**– Maria Rother**  
Research Associate,  
G20 Global Land Initiative



## OTHER CAPACITY-BUILDING PROCESSES IN 2024

### INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF SURVEYORS (FIG) ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND WORKING WEEK

FIG Working Week 2024 titled, *Your World, Our World: Resilient Environment and Sustainable Resource Management for All*, and the leading global conference and gathering of the surveying and spatial professional community was held in May in Accra, Ghana.

Over 900 participants from more than 83 countries attended the three-day conference, which focused on the use of geospatial technologies for environment resilience and sustainable natural resource management.

G20 GLI, continuing its strong collaboration since 2023, partnered with FIG, and included land degradation and restoration as thematic areas in planning the 2024 Annual Working Week.

G20 GLI worked with Commission 8's Working Group on Spatial Planning and the Working Group of Commission 7 dedicated to women's land rights. G20 GLI also co-chaired and designed a technical session on "Addressing Land Degradation and Restoration through Spatial Planning."



To heighten the Initiative's visibility, given the around 80 competing sessions, G20 GLI also participated as a bronze sponsor of and exhibitor at the conference.

G20 GLI, with a select group of experts, co-developed three professional papers on awareness creation and capacity building for presentation in various technical sessions. The papers are titled:

- *Improving Gender and Women's Access to Land by Increasing Land Availability through Land Conservation and Land Restoration (G20 GLI);*
- *Land Use and Spatial Planning—A Veritable Tool to Prevent, Halt and Reverse Land Degradation (G20 GLI and FIG Commission 8);* and
- *Spatial Planning Tools for Halting and Reversing Land Degradation in Peri-Urban Towns in Nigeria (Rivers State University and G20 GLI).*

### ROUNDTABLE ON GENDER ISSUES IN POST-MINING LAND RESTORATION

A three-day Roundtable on Gender Issues in Post-Mining Land Restoration took place in May in Takoradi, Ghana, back-to-back with the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG) Annual Conference and Working Week held in Accra. The roundtable, co-organized with the University of Mines and Technology in Tarkwa, COLANDEF Land and Property Rights and FIG, emphasized the role of women in land restoration after land is mined.

Forty-one participants from 10 countries, including governmental officials and Queen Mothers from Ghana, discussed the challenges women face in post-mining land restoration, especially in artisanal and small-scale mining.

A senior gender expert with G20 GLI emphasized the impact of women's land rights, access and empowerment on the success of restoration projects. This gender lens explored the obstacles women face, particularly in livelihoods, when reclaiming and restoring mined lands.

Participants exchanged insights and identified specific challenges, expressing a need for greater awareness and

inclusion to elevate women in restoring post-mining landscapes.

Presentations, discussions and field visits showed the environmental damage caused by unregulated mining.

Participants learned that post-mining land restoration can only be effective when talking with women, especially unauthorized small-scale women miners. This cooperative approach is a step towards better land restoration practices.

Participants committed to develop programs that empower women, provide skills training and create opportunities for women to do restoration work.

Following the roundtable, the co-organizers also developed a *Working Paper on Gender Issues in Post-Mining Land Restoration* and organized a webinar in July 2024, building on the discussions from the roundtable.







# FAITH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN LAND RESTORATION

G20 GLI deepened its engagement with faith communities in 2024 because they have a strong influence on educational and social networks and administer vast amounts of habitable land.

The partnership is strategic in enabling G20 GLI to mobilize stakeholders who can accelerate land restoration through their institutional resources, community networks and moral authority, thereby increasing the possibility for G20 GLI to reduce degraded land by 50 percent by 2040.

## FAITH EXECUTIVES MEETING

This engagement began at a meeting of experts who work with the faith communities. The experts meeting planned the mobilization of faith communities towards immediate, actionable land restoration outcomes. The meeting, which was held in March in Bonn, was organized by G20 GLI and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

Participants developed action plans with capacity building, partnerships, communications and advocacy, solidifying expanded faith engagement in 2024. They also formed a Faith Working Group to guide ongoing activities, a stock-take and a multi-year action plan.



Participants at an event in NYC

## FAITH WORKING GROUP

This sparked the emergence of the Faith Working Group as an interfaith site for collaboration on land restoration, where faith representatives and restoration experts can share best practices, exchange knowledge and build partnerships.

The Group is now an essential advisory body that provides guidance and shapes the G20 GLI's faith engagement strategy. The Working Group holds regular consultations, during which they identify key international moments and opportunities for members to collaborate in advocating for land restoration.

## FAITH-BASED POLICY PRIORITIES

A pillar of the G20 GLI's faith engagement strategy is the Triple COP Call to Action issued in November by over 100 faith leaders and organizations worldwide. This multi-faith statement

emphasizes aligning faith advocacy with all three Rio Conventions—UNCBD, UNCCD and UNFCCC—elevating restoration as a priority in environmental care.

Over 60 faith community leaders and representatives affirmed their commitment to restoration and launched this statement during the high-level week of the UN General Assembly in New York City.

GLI worked with faith partners to prominently feature land restoration in faith policy platforms at the UNCBD and UNFCCC COPs. This was a big step in establishing restoration within faith-based environmental advocacy. This approach creates a more united and powerful faith voice for global restoration efforts.

## FAITH STOCK-TAKE

In 2024, the G20 GLI carried out its first assessment of faith communities' involvement in restoration, known as the Faith Stock-take. The virtual mapping exercise showed over 200 faith-led restoration initiatives across 65 countries and revealed the scale and diversity of faith-based environmental stewardship.

The Stock-take was requested at the high-level Faith Executives Meeting held in March 2024 in Bonn. Faith leaders expressed the need for it to guide future engagement and investment.

The Stock-take process involved in-person consultations at international gatherings throughout the year, including events held on the sidelines of the Summit of the Future in New York and at the CBD COP16 in Colombia.



Charles McNeill, Meridian Institute, and Gopal Patel, Consultant, UNCCD-G20 GLI

*“G20 GLI made a very significant contribution to advancing the goals of the UNCCD by engaging religious leaders and faith communities at COP16.*

*The substantive “Faith and Land Restoration Stocktake” commissioned by the G20 GLI points to the enormous potential for faith actors and institutions to help fight land degradation and promote innovative and effective land restoration initiatives.”*

**— Charles Ian McNeill, Ph.D.**  
Senior Fellow, Meridian Institute



# RISING WITH KINDNESS YOUTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

The Rising with Kindness” Conference (RwK) was organized with a view to reconnect youth with the land. The event was hosted in the world’s largest meditation center, Kanha Shantivanam, in Hyderabad, India.

During the three days, over 5,000 young participants engaged in an immersive experience of nature to bridge the gaps between personal commitment, community action, and global challenges, learning through workshops, dialogues and collaborative activities.

The conference helped to demonstrate that restoring land can be both righteous and profitable.

A G20 GLI representative joined the opening ceremony, which had high-level representatives from the Indian Government, the Commonwealth and Heartfulness.

During the orientation session, G20 GLI introduced attendees to “A Land of Opportunities,” a concept on driving change in communities through sustainable land management. It



connected participants’ aspirations with actionable pathways to support environmental resilience.

A Reel Competition, where youth created and shared short videos capturing their connection to the land, encouraged youth to reflect on their personal experiences or calls-to-action related to land stewardship. Using the hashtag #alandofopportunities, the Competition attracted significant engagement on social media, amplifying the G20 GLI message by expanding the digital community committed to it.

A fireside chat on peace centered on the evolving meaning of peace. A G20 GLI representative explained the idea that land degradation is one of the main causes of conflict and how land restoration can promote conflict prevention. Rehabilitating land creates

more stable, hopeful communities while addressing the drivers of conflict, leading to long-term peace. Many participants shared their insights on this discussion, especially the link between peace and environmental action.

The Conference also had community-building activities, such as writing “Love Letters to Land,” where participants reflected on their personal connections with the earth. Hundreds of attendees contributed messages, which were shared in an area with lights and other nature-themed decorations. This exploration of participants’ emotional connections to the land promoted unity and commitment towards environmental stewardship. The letters, collected at the end of the event, emphasized participants’ dedication as reminders of the impact of collective actions.



The final day concluded with the G20 GLI workshop titled, *A Land of Opportunities—Reconnecting Land and Youth*. This session showed G20 GLI’s key youth programs on how young people can become ecopreneurs and leaders in restoration. Participants also took an educational yet engaging quiz assessing their knowledge of land-related topics. The workshop culminated with the announcement of the Reel Competition winners, whose dedication and creativity towards land-related issues were celebrated.

Through the RwK Conference, G20 GLI connected with thousands of youths, inspiring them to view land restoration as an opportunity. Creating this global network of empowered youth advanced land restoration while contributing to a more resilient, peaceful world.



## FIELD VISIT: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

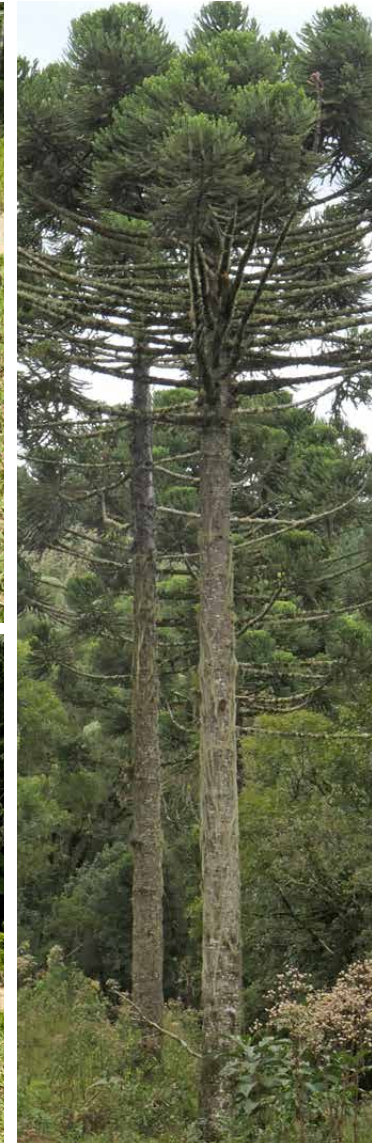
A representative of G20 GLI in July visited the indigenous-led conservation *Instituto Zag*, based in Santa Catarina, Brazil, to engage and gain insights as well as first-hand experience and understanding of land restoration from an Indigenous People's perspective.

The G20 GLI representative learned how the Institute's team collects, nurtures and plants araucaria seedlings. The araucaria tree, which the Xokleng community reveres, is now critically endangered, making preservation efforts not only an environmental priority but also a cultural imperative for the community.

The community shared the traditional tree growing methods used to collect and tend seedlings for tree planting, which demonstrated intimate ecosystem knowledge.

The contrast between their biodiverse landscapes and the surrounding areas was visible. Deforestation and invasive species are common in the areas managed by non-indigenous groups. This not only shows the impact of indigenous efforts on the local ecology but demonstrates the importance of supporting the restoration efforts of the Indigenous Peoples and of protecting the ecosystems under their care.

Ms Paula Padrino Vilela, Programme Officer, UNCCD-G20 GLI together with Isabel Gakran and Carl Gakran, representatives of Instituto Zag





#### ACTION PILLAR 4

## ENGAGING THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Throughout 2024, G20 GLI catalyzed global land restoration by engaging the private sector, fostering a ‘Restoration Economy’, advancing sustainable business practices, empowering youth entrepreneurship and championing collaborative, science-backed approaches to ecosystem recovery across diverse industries and regions.

**50**

participants from 30+ countries joined a post-mining restoration workshop in Germany

**7,000+**

visitors engaged with G20 GLI’s booth at START Summit 2024

**344**

hectares restored using drones and community efforts in Bahia, Brazil

**70**

hackers in 18 teams tackled wildfire land restoration at START Hack 2024

## PRIVATE SECTOR ROLE IN CATALYZING GLOBAL LAND RESTORATION

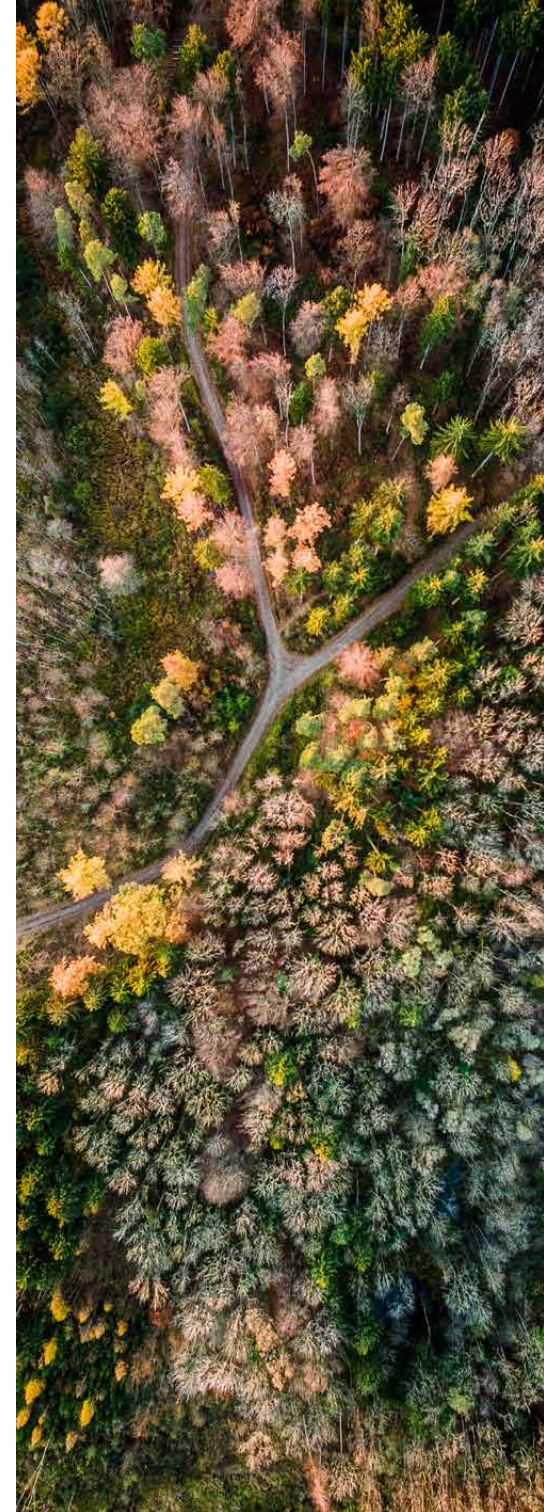
As climate change worsens globally, the private sector becomes more important in restoring ecosystems. The message is clear: economic growth and environmental stewardship are essential partners. In 2024, G20 GLI strengthened corporate partnerships in land restoration.

G20 GLI emphasizes the value of a “Restoration Economy,” focused on regenerating degraded natural ecosystems, and includes various industries and practices to improve environmental, social and economic resilience, and prevent future degradation.

Going beyond simply minimizing environmental impact, this framework promotes landscape restoration, the development of sustainable value chains and the application of circular economy principles.

G20 GLI’s framework incorporates resilience within business models and builds a coalition among restoration-focused industries.

The Initiative offers a roadmap for businesses across diverse sectors—from agriculture and forestry to mining and finance—to integrate restoration and climate resilience into their operations.





## POST-MINING LANDSCAPE RESTORATION TRAINING WORKSHOP

In April, the “Post-Mining Landscape Restoration” training was held in Dresden, Germany, with around 50 participants from over 30 countries.



Participants at the post-mining land restoration training in Dresden

The workshop brought together regulatory leaders, private sector representatives and sectoral experts from the United Nations University Institute for Integrated Management of Material Fluxes and Resources (UNU-FLORES).

It was two days of discussion and collaborative work and two days of site visits to rehabilitated coal and uranium mines in Lusatia and the Ore Mountains (Erzgebirge).

The workshop took a holistic approach to post-mining land development, with a range of experts sharing their field experience—spanning soil science,

mining engineering, water management and social science.

The workshop curriculum had case studies and mitigation efforts for the participants to learn from, including open-cast and underground mines, park and forest re-vegetation, lakes and flooding, the stabilization of renewable energy production and remediation to reduce risk.

Along with classroom time, the site tours gave insight into virgin ecosystem restoration and how to maintain the balance between ecosystem services and socioeconomic development.



Participants on a field visit of a rehabilitated mining site in Lusatia



## GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR POST-MINING CLOSURE RESTORATION AND TERRESTRIAL HABITAT CONSERVATION

To further integrate land restoration principles in the mining sector, G20 GLI has prepared a guidance document with a collection of advanced methods for mine closure and landscape restoration.

The approaches are a toolkit for mining stakeholders. By studying and applying them, companies can develop strategies to reduce environmental harm, support sustainable land use and enhance socioeconomic resilience in post-mining landscapes.

These transitions call for a collaborative, adaptive and forward-thinking approach to restore land while building lasting environmental health and community prosperity.

The toolkit was developed by experts in the subject who were drawn from private enterprise, academicians, NGOs and international organizations.



# SUPPORTING BUSINESSES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE: START SUMMIT X HACK 2024

G20 GLI considers land ‘a land of opportunities’, and is committed to entrepreneurship and advancing technology to promote and scale sustainable land management.

To support businesses created by young people, G20 GLI participated actively as a sponsor through exhibits, workshops and hackathon challenges at the START Summit x Hack 2024 Conference held in March in St. Gallen, Switzerland.

G20 GLI Director Muralee Thummarukudy delivered the keynote speech. He emphasized the role of land in human well-being, the urgent need to combat land degradation and the economic opportunities within the land restoration industry. He encouraged young entrepreneurs to see land restoration not only as an environmental duty but also as a career path, offering the G20 GLI’s ecopreneur initiatives as paths toward this vision.

G20 GLI’s “Land of Opportunities” booth at the START Summit offered an immersive experience, with a living



tree symbolizing unity and environmental commitment. The setup was meant to draw the attention of the Summit’s over 7,000 visitors to the site as a space for meaningful engagement.

Visitors made personal commitments to sustainable practices through the “Love Letters for Land” initiative.

G20 GLI representatives shared educational materials on land restoration being ripe for innovation and investment.

Three Youth Ecopreneur Award finalists positioned in the “Ecopreneur Corner” of the booth shared their journeys and projects with the booth visitors as examples of ecopreneurship in action.

G20 GLI hosted the *Land of Opportunities: Overcoming Challenges in Green Start-Ups* workshop for 20 participants. They engaged with successful ecopreneurs to learn about the business and regulatory aspects of green Start-Ups.

Through parallel discussions led by each ecopreneur, attendees explored funding, profitability, community engagement and regulatory hurdles. The ecopreneurs’ stories gave insight into the rewards and obstacles of sustainable land businesses, revealing green Start-Ups’ potential to transform landscapes and lives.

The Swiss Sustainable Impact Award enabled 12 Start-Ups to present their ideas before a jury comprising G20 GLI members. The jury awarded the winning pitch to *Openversum*, a Start-Up producing advanced water filters, creating opportunities for individuals to become water entrepreneurs supplying clean filtered water.

At START Hack 2024, Europe’s leading hackathon, G20 GLI presented a hack case created with *Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya*, also known as Barcelona Tech - UPC, on combating wildfire-induced land degradation in Brazil.



*“At START Summit and Hack 2024, we showed land as A Land of Opportunities— a place where business still meets purpose. Connecting with students, Start-Ups and investors, we showed the limitless potential of restoration as a profitable business venture.”*

**— Paula Padrino Vilela**  
Programme Officer, G20 GLI

It tasked participants to use AI, drone technology and data from Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to create an early warning and damage assessment system. The challenge attracted 70 hackers spread into 18 teams. With mentorship from G20 GLI and Barcelona Tech, the participants refined solutions to address this degradation challenge.

The hackathon concluded with pitch presentations judged by G20 GLI and Barcelona Tech experts, who emphasized the winning team’s dedication.





LaRSSA Conference Keynote speech

### LAND REHABILITATION SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA CONFERENCE

G20 GLI, in September, participated and delivered a keynote address at the Land Rehabilitation Society of Southern Africa (LaRSSA) Annual Conference in Johannesburg.

G20 GLI team:

- focused on understanding the broader impacts that stakeholders have on the Southern African region and ways to amplify this impact across other nations in the Global South;
- gained insights about the vital role of local partnerships and regional strategies in achieving sustainable land management against degradation; and
- learned about the “Restoration Economy” active in Southern Africa and developed relationships with the key players involved in land restoration.

The team identified obstacles hindering the expansion of private sector-led restoration initiatives, especially in the mining sector where financing remains a challenge.

### FIELD VISIT: REGREEN’S RESTORATION SITE IN BAHIA

ReGreen has become a vital player in land restoration through its goal of restoring one million hectares across Brazil’s Amazon and Atlantic rainforests. G20 GLI’s field visit strengthened the Initiative’s commitment to support community-led restoration projects such as ReGreen.

G20 GLI visited ReGreen’s regional office in Eunápolis and its Bahia restoration sites, where they work with local communities. GLI saw:

- innovative strategies on large-scale land restoration and community collaboration;
- connections of the organization to the key stakeholders;
- strategies that combine ecological restoration, carbon offset production and sustainable hardwood management; and
- the use of drone technology to access and collect native seed in remote areas and to maximize restoration efficiency, which has been used effectively to restore 344 hectares by a local nursery, *Floravista Viveiro*, in collaboration with local university experts.

These efforts show the importance of a science-backed approach tailored to regional needs for forest restoration.

*Floravista Viveiro*, ReGreen’s partner, stressed the importance of:

- partnerships with communities for the achievement of missions and the empowerment of local communities;
- nurturing regional biological diversity;

- expanding community-driven land restoration; and
- partnerships that embody the power of collaborative efforts in environmental sustainability, and that emphasize biodiversity conservation alongside social impact.

The “*Mulheres da Mata*” (Women of the Forest), a group of local women, essential to the Bahia restoration industry, was particularly inspiring. The group acquires seedling cultivation and forest management skills through hands-on training and mentorship. Their goal is to establish a nursery of their own, which shows how restoration projects can empower local communities.

The determination of these local groups resonates with G20 GLI’s perspective of promoting social development alongside ecological resilience.



Visit at the ReGreen regional in Eunápolis, Brazil



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nature and humanity.”*



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