



AFRICAN RESILIENT LANDSCAPES INITIATIVE

Concept Note



African Resilient Landscapes Initiative Concept Note

Background

The challenges and opportunities of managing the land and water resources of Africa are intrinsically tied to the development objectives of this continent. The ways in which Africa's natural resources are managed by governments, communities, development partners and civil society organizations will determine either the success or the failure of development initiatives. The continent's multi-dimensional challenges of poverty, population growth rates, climate variability, land degradation, deforestation, unsustainable watershed management, and unsustainable land use in Africa have undermined its resilience to natural and economic shocks and require integrated solutions across boundaries.

To overcome these challenges, the African Union has committed to build an Africa Resilient Landscapes Initiative (ARLI), to be mobilized through the NEPAD Agency and TerrAfrica platform¹. While the initial focus would be Sub-Saharan Africa, the program aims to expand globally (with a possible global resilient landscape initiative drawing synergies and bringing experiences together for other regions to learn from Africa). ARLI will promote the use of a landscape approach to ensure that natural resources are used and managed in an inclusive manner to advance people's social, economic and environmental welfare.

The landscape approach combines a geographical and socio-economic approach to managing the land, water and forest resources that form the foundation for meeting the goals of food security and inclusive green growth. It is about collaborative land use planning and connecting protected areas, forest, woodlands, pastures and rangelands, watersheds, and rainfed and irrigated croplands.



¹ TerrAfrica is a NEPAD-led partnership that supports scaling up of innovative, evidence-based solutions to sustain landscapes, address land and water degradation and adapt to a changing climate. TerrAfrica has succeeded in generating continuous interest and support among African governments to pursue a programmatic approach and now boasts of about 26 active African member countries. (<http://terrafrica.org>).



Goal

The African Resilient Landscapes Initiative (ARLI) will contribute to integrate multiple sectoral initiatives, facilitating linkages and coordination among them. The ARLI will move beyond single-sector interventions in order to restore and increase the resilience of both ecosystems and livelihoods. The ARLI will work with agricultural lands, forestlands and rangelands through interventions related to climate smart agriculture, forest and ecosystem restoration, biodiversity conservation and rangeland management.

The African Resilient Landscape Initiative (ARLI) commits, through the implementation of the African Landscape Action Plan (ALAP), to advance landscape governance, policy, finance, capacities, business development, and research for integrated landscape management and, through the African Forest and Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100), to bring 100 million hectares of degraded and deforested land under restoration in Africa by 2030. By doing so, the ARLI and its supporting initiatives will contribute to improved soil fertility and food security, improve access to clean water, combat desertification, increase biodiversity and habitat, create green jobs, bolster economic growth and livelihood diversification, and increase the capacity for climate change resilience and adaptation.





The ARLI will assist African countries to (i) promote an inclusive and sustainable use and management of natural resources, centered on people's social, economic and environmental welfare; (ii) present an opportunity to scale up and leverage sectorial interventions such that the whole is greater than the sum of individual interventions in terms of ecological, social and economic gains; and (iii) collectively aim to ensure the integrity, resilience, restoration and sustainable management of landscapes across regions.

The initiative will mobilize financial and technical resources from multiple sources to help design and implement country-specific integrated landscape approaches and strategies for sustainable land and water management, and forest and landscape restoration in partnership with the NEPAD Agency, African governments and other partners.

In October 2015, the African Union endorsed the African Resilient Landscape Initiative (ARLI) to support sustainable land and water management, and its commitment to implement the Africa Landscape Action Plan (ALAP) and the African Forest and Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100) through a resolution adopted at the Conference of the Specialized Technical Committee (STC1/ARDWE/EXP/1) on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment.

Links and contributions with other initiatives and targets

ARLI will contribute to achieving many of the Sustainable Development Goals, agreed in September 2015 and which intend to mobilize the international community and African countries towards poverty eradication, food security, access to water, adaptation to climate change, promotion of sustainable patterns of consumption and production, and sustainable management of the natural resource base for economic and social development. The ARLI will particularly contribute to Goal No. 15: *Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss.*

ARLI will build on and aim to integrate the targets and goals established by different sectors and international and regional entities, including: the *Africa Climate Smart Agriculture Alliance* that will support the uptake of climate smart agriculture practices by at least 6 million farming households in Sub-Saharan Africa by 2021; the *Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods* where the African Union Heads of State and Government committed to accelerate agricultural growth by at least doubling current agricultural productivity levels by the year 2025 and also ensure that, by the year 2025, at least 30% of our farm, pastoral, and fisher households are resilient to climate and weather related



risks; the *Bonn Challenge* launched by world leaders in 2011 as a global aspiration to restore 150 million hectares of the world's deforested and degraded lands by 2020 and the New York Declaration on Forests endorsed by world leaders in 2014 with the goal of cutting natural forest loss in half by 2020 and initiating restoration on 350 million hectares by 2030; the *Durban Declaration -2050 Vision for forests and forestry-* which calls for forests and trees to be integrated with other land uses, such as agriculture, in order to address the causes of deforestation and conflict over land; the *Aichi Targets*, with the global goal that by 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes; and, the *Nouakchott Declaration* that aims to increase the gross output of livestock production by at least 30% in the 6 concerned countries² by 2018.



² Currently participant countries are: Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal.



Implementing the ARLI

The objectives of ARLI will be achieved through implementation of various programs. These include the African Landscapes Action Plan prepared by NEPAD and partners of the Landscapes for People, Food & Nature Initiative at a Conference held in July 2014. The African Landscapes Action Plan (ALAP) is mobilizing diverse stakeholders—farmer and community organizations, NGOs, local and national governments, private companies, research and training institutions and others—to partner together to mobilize and sustain integrated landscape management. Integrated landscape management is already being undertaken in more than 87 landscapes in Africa, and many countries are putting place policies and programs to support them. The major areas of collaborative action under the ALAP are landscape governance, policy, finance, capacity strengthening, business and market development, and research. In addition, NEPAD's other programs will play a key role, including the Sustainable Land Management, Desertification, Biodiversity and Adaptation to Climate Change (LDBA) in Africa Flagship program and the African Agriculture Development Program (CAADP).

The successful realization of the ambitions of ARLI will also be supported through the implementation of the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100), a collaboration of African countries, regional institutions, public and private sector partners and international development programs to restore 100 million hectares of degraded and deforested lands in Africa by 2030. Restoring degraded landscapes to natural forests and woodlands, community forests and woodlots, and agroforestry and silvopasture systems will bring substantial economic and social benefits while helping to protect the climate, biodiversity and the ecosystem services of resilient landscapes across Africa. The AFR100 initiative is designed to catalyze a large scale and transformative restoration movement across Africa through the mobilization of increased technical and financial support needed to achieve local, national, regional and global ambitions for forest and landscape restoration.

International Development Partners

The endorsement of ARLI reflects widespread support of African nations for resilient landscapes. In response to this call for action, a number of international development partners have already come forward to support ARLI through financial support for integrated landscape management, including the World Bank through support by TerrAfrica program and investments; Government of Germany (BMZ) through support for AFR100; and the Government of the Netherlands, through support for ALAP.



Benefits

By promoting a landscape approach through the ARLI, participating African nations will help achieve coordinated actions on natural resources management at the landscape level, across sectors and among stakeholder groups, and in consequence: (i) increase natural resource and agriculture productivity; (ii) improve food and water security; (iii) enhance resilience and adaptation to climate change; (iv) improve ecosystem integrity and biodiversity; (v) improve livelihoods; and (vi) support good governance and increase security.



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African Landscapes Action Plan

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