

LOCAL ACTION FOR LAND RESTORATION IN AFRICA IN 2024 IN THE FRAMEWORK OF AFR100 INITIATIVE

Launched in 2015, with over than 100 projects currently underway across 27 countries, the [African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative \(AFR100\)](#) continues its work on implementing projects and enterprises with a focus on local development.

The *African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative* AFR100 is a country-led effort to bring 100 million hectares of land into restoration by 2030. Involving 32 partner countries, it aims to accelerate restoration, enhance food security, increase resilience to and mitigation of climate change, to improve livelihoods and combat rural poverty. The African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) acts as the AFR100 Secretariat.

Since its launch, widespread political leadership has been mobilized across partner countries. Priority restoration areas were mapped, and designated, and national plans and strategies were created in all participating countries. Significant effort was made by the promoters to identify the partners willing to finance the concrete activities and, with the support of an initial group of donors, the [TerraFund for AFR100](#) was established to finance the first projects.

In 2021, the AFR100 Initiative managed to select 80 community projects and 20 enterprises working across 27 countries, funding them through grants and loans. These projects are managed by non-profit community organizations and for-profit local businesses in their territories, restoring thousands of hectares, planting millions of trees and engaging thousands of community members.

The TerraFund for AFR100's first cohort restores land across 27 African countries. Thanks to support from the Bezos Earth Fund and six financial partners, the Initiative issued a call for project proposals in September 2021 and received more than 3,200 applications. Following an extensive [selection process](#) in 2022, TerraFund deployed its first grants and loans of \$50,000 to \$500,000 to 100 of these innovators. Together, they form the TerraFund's "Top 100" cohort. [The 100 projects in progress are presented on the TerraFund website](#) providing insights into their activities. The website highlights the promising pathways these projects have demonstrated in reversing land degradation in Africa, proving that there is a better way to sustain economic growth while supporting community-based organizations and entrepreneurs to restore their land, forests, and natural ecosystems. These restoration projects employ a wide variety of tree-based restoration techniques, ranging from agroforestry (growing trees on farms to improve food security) through assisted natural regeneration (helping trees regrow to revitalize biodiversity).



The new landscapes cohort of AFR100

An [article published in November 2022 on the AFR100 website](#) reported that at the COP27 event, three financing partners have announced new commitments of a \$2 billion fund for the AFR100 Initiative, to build local capacities and make grants and loans available for local communities and entrepreneurs which are restoring degraded land in Africa.

After identifying a network of restoration champions across Africa, the Initiative decided to concentrate its impact in three landscapes where hundreds of champions operated, government have made significant commitments, and the need was greatest: Kenya's Greater Rift Valley, the Lake Kivu & Rusizi River Basin of Burundi, DRC, and Rwanda, and the Ghana Cocoa Belt.

Thanks to support from the Bezos Earth Fund and The Audacious Project, the Initiative issued a second call for project proposals via the TerraMatch platform in April 2023 and received 601 applications. [After a rigorous selection process, they allocated \\$17.8 million to 78 non-profits and 14 enterprises through grants, loans, and equity investments.](#) By 2030, the cohort will grow 12.7 million trees, restore 47,000 hectares, create 52,000 jobs, and benefit 580,000 people. The projects of this new cohort financed in 2023 are presented on the AFR100 website.

The AFR100 Initiative was launched by African leaders recognizing that the degradation of the continent's agricultural land threatens economic and is an environmental ruin for millions of farmers. At the same time, the effects of climate change, such as lower crop yields, erratic rainfall, prolonged droughts, are making life harder for millions of people. AFR100 has also been designed with the recognition that local leadership is a key aspect because communities manage nearly 70% of African land and they know how to build ecologically and socially sustainable projects.

The projects supported by the AFR100 Initiative, many of which are small-scale, include not only activities tackling reforestation, but also promoting greater use of organic food production, more efficient food processing to reduce pressure on land from agriculture, the reduction of chemical fertilizers, soil protection and water conservation among many others. In addition, the projects are adopting principles for a landscape approach to reconciling agriculture, conservation, and other competing land uses to achieve social, economic and environmental objectives in areas where agriculture, mining, and other productive land uses compete with environmental and biodiversity goals.

Restoring denuded African landscapes and addressing the associated economic and social damage continues to be a tough challenge. According to a [Report published in 2021 by FAO and the African Union Development Agency](#), up to 65% of productive land in Africa has been degraded, while 45% of the continent's land areas have been affected by desertification and both processes have been exacerbated by climate change.

In this context, by adopting a local development approach within national strategies, the AFR100 Initiative represents an important point of reference for community-based organizations and local-based enterprises that carry out projects for the recovery of degraded areas, bringing environmental, economic and social benefits to local population with a sustainability perspective. AFR100 contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda and to the objectives of the [United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration](#).



The [TerraFund for AFR100](#) website offers new interested actors with a guidance on the criteria and methods adopted with the aim of joining the Initiative.

Information on the new steps of this important initiative can also be found in the website of the [World Resources Institute WRI](#), which collaborates with the Secretariat established by the African Union Development Agency. For example, through the [Land Accelerator Africa](#), the WRI is also providing technical assistance to 100 enterprises, getting them ready to receive and pay back loans within the framework of the AFR100 Initiative.

To know more

[AFR100 Initiative website](#)

[News on new funds announced at COP27 in afr100 website](#)

[100 projects restoring landscapes in Terra Fund website](#)

[7 Ways African Leaders Are Restoring Their Landscapes - AFR100](#)

[How 4 African Champions Are Restoring Land and Improving the Lives of Rural Farmers in Rwanda - AFR100](#)

[AFR100 Resources](#)

[News in AUDA-NEPAD website](#)

[Financing Africa's Land Restoration Enterprises and Projects - TerraFund for AFR100 in AUDA-NEPAD](#)

[Report 2021- FAO and African Union Development Agency](#)

[Top 100 Land Restoration Projects and Enterprises in World Resources Institute \(wri.org\)](#)

[Roots of Prosperity: The Economics and Finance of Restoring Land - World Resources Institute \(wri.org\)](#)

[Request for Proposals 2021 - AFR100Terramatach](#)

[Article in Ecofin Agency](#)

[Article in impact-investor.com](#)

[2nd Continental Report on the Implementation of Agenda 2063 - AUDA-NEPAD](#)

