

THE ALLIANCE FOR THE GREAT GREEN WALL AN ACCELERATOR FOR ECOPRENEURS AND RESTORATION-FOCUS VALUE CHAINS

PRESS RELEASE

During the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting that convenes leaders from government, business and civil society to address the state of the world in Davos on January 16-20 2023, Regenopolis, ESPartners, Barka Fund and Reforest'Action launch a joint initiative to accelerate solutions for ecopreneurs and restoration-focus value chains in the Sahel, along the Great Green Wall. The Alliance will be backed by a Catalytic Facility managed by Regeneration, a partnership between advisory firm Systemiq and development specialist The Palladium Group. The Alliance is catalyzed by and anchored in the World Economic Forum 1t.org initiative, a platform for the trillion trees community.

Great Green Wall

Africa's Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative (GGW), led by the African Union, is a bold vision to restore 100 million hectares of degraded land across the continent by 2030, sequester 250 million tons of carbon and create 10 million green jobs. In a region highly vulnerable to climate change, grappling with drought, resource scarcity, conflict and migration, at-scale landscape restoration is urgent to counter desertification and ensure livelihoods for the population.

More than \$19 billion has been pledged to support the GGW, and finance continues to be mobilized, with increasing participation from the private sector. However, despite growing global support and the enormous potential for positive change, realizing the objectives of the GGW has been challenging¹ to date, in great part due to the lack of access to expertise, financing and visibility of ecopreneurs and small-holder farmers engaged in restoration-focus value chains. In this context, there is both an opportunity and a need to harness commercially viable restoration to help take advantage of the Sahel's potential and address its challenges.

The members of the Alliance believe that multistakeholder engagement and partnerships could accelerate and scale up the multiple social and ecological impact benefits of restoration-focused value chains and unlock development and carbon finance.

Objective of the Alliance

Diane Binder, Founder and CEO of Regenopolis, who is at the initiative of the Alliance, shares :

« We are launching a breakthrough initiative, in the sense that it is collaborative in nature, and based on the needs of the beneficiaries, to accelerate natural solutions to climate change, biodiversity loss, food security and rural livelihoods. Until now, the Great Green Wall Initiative has come short of the ambitious commitments. Only by coming together, as implementers, and by supporting restoration-focus value chains, can we drive change at scale and support the efforts led by ecopreneurs, small-holder farmers and SMEs in the region. As a collective, we can act as a one-stop shop for both the donor community and the ecopreneurs who will look for expertise and financing ».

For Eric Kacou, CEO and co-founder of Entrepreneurial Solutions Partners (ESPartners) : *« We are thrilled to join this Alliance as a founding member. We have been supporting entrepreneurs in Africa for more than 10 years. Only by the right mix of expertise and financing, what we call Intelligent Capital, can we support ecopreneurs in the long-run. In the Sahel, there are millions of entrepreneurs, invisible to international aid and finance, who need intelligent capital to consolidate, grow, and impact at scale. We believe that the Alliance is the right container to do so. »*

¹ Read the conclusion of the report commissioned by the World Economic Forum, « the Untapped Potential of Great Green Wall Value Chains : An Action Agenda to Scale Restoration in the Sahel », 2022.

For Stéphane Hallaire, CEO of Reforest'Action, a company specialized in carbon and agroforestry projects around the world, « *it is crucial to bridge market demand and producers of regenerative products to enhance rural livelihoods, protect natural ecosystems and accompany corporate net-zero commitments* ». *Working within the Alliance will allow us to bring a holistic solution for restoration and economic development, and give more power to Sabelian ecopreneurs* ».

Rekia Foudel, Founder and Managing Partner at Barka Fund, adds : « *We are excited to be founding members of the Alliance for the Great Green Wall, an initiative designed to solve the problem of how to move public and private capital directly to thousands of ecopreneurs and community projects, restoring vital landscapes, creating green jobs and contributing to mitigate climate change.* »

The Alliance will engage in the following activities :

- Facilitate the emergence of ecopreneurs: access to expertise, access to visibility, access to partnerships, access to finance, access to markets, access to carbon markets.
- Harness market demand and corporate net zero commitments to scale nature positive and low carbon tree crop value chains, enhancing and protecting landscapes and rural livelihoods.
- Provide advisory services to corporate off-takers to engage in restoration-focus value chains through sourcing, partnerships and investments.
- Support community-centered, restoration-focus agro-forestry projects.
- Enable restoration project-owners and SMEs to access the carbon and nature markets.

Ydir Vissers shares, for Regeneration : « *We are building on nearly 60 years of experience creating strategies, building partnerships, mobilizing capital, and implementing programs that transform societies, economies and lives. The Alliance initiative for the Great Green Wall is a great way to mobilize catalytic capital, i.e. the right mix of public and private funds, to drive change at scale.*

Diane Binder concludes : « *We are collectively raising €100 million over 5 years in grants, venture philanthropy and impact private capital. Funds will be allocated with rigorous due diligence, risk management and reporting processes put in place by Regeneration. In 2023, we are contemplating closing an initial round of €10 million that would support 100 ecopreneurs and invest in 15 projects. More than 50 projects are already identified in Senegal, Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali and Ethiopia, with 90% of funding requirements below €500.000. We are thrilled to see so much enthusiasm and support for this initiative. Solving issues at scale requires more collaboration and less competition, and putting the well-being of Sabelian communities at the heart of our endeavors.* »

Regenopolis brings a holistic solution to unlock eco-projects deal flow for regenerative cities and communities, and the restoration of surrounding natural capital assets, bringing tailored expertise, matching aligned capital, and leveraging technology solutions. It has a dedicated program for the Great Green Wall implemented through the Alliance.

Entrepreneurial Solutions Partners leverages intelligent capital to nurture the African prosperity ecosystem through business development support and advisory to entrepreneurs.

Barka Fund is an impact fund that supports and invests in African entrepreneurs taking measures to address urgent climate and environmental challenges in their communities. Barka supports their efforts to scale environmental and climate solutions and build sustainable companies.

Reforest'Action is a certified B Corp company that has specialised in forestry since 2010. The endeavour to preserve, restore and plant forest ecosystems to counteract climate change and the loss of biodiversity.

Regeneration is a partnership between Systemiq and Palladium that accelerates natural solutions to climate change and biodiversity loss by connecting market demand with green commodities and channeling investor capital towards productive landscape restoration projects.

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