



**Global Initiative on Reducing Land
Degradation and Enhancing
Conservation of Terrestrial Habitats**
An initiative launched by G20

Version 4.1

As of September 16, 2020



1 Land degradation and the associated loss of natural terrestrial habitats are major drivers of environmental and
2 natural resource depletion worldwide with significant impacts on terrestrial habitats, on biodiversity and its
3 ecosystem services, including weather systems and the absorption of emissions in addition to causing significant
4 socioeconomic impacts. Fortunately, land restoration and avoidance of habitat loss are often cost-effective
5 solutions to address biodiversity loss and other key environmental challenges yielding high social and economic
6 returns, and are closely connected to ecosystem restoration contributing to achieving SDG 15, and in particular
7 its target 15.3. There are several existing initiatives that aim to address land degradation and habitat loss at the
8 local, regional, and global levels. Despite this good work, the rate of land degradation and habitat loss continues
9 to be alarming with significant human, environmental, economic and social consequences, highlighting the
10 urgent need to support existing efforts to prevent land degradation and to restore land. In that regard, the land
11 degradation and restoration assessment by IPBES points out that most of the UN Sustainable Development Goals
12 cannot be achieved unless the causes of land degradation and habitat loss are addressed simultaneously.

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14 This initiative, which is based on voluntary participation, aims to support existing efforts to prevent, halt, and
15 reverse land degradation and habitat loss through sharing of knowledge and best practices on protecting,
16 conserving, sustainably managing, restoring, and rehabilitating degraded land, and by showcasing and
17 disseminating publicly available data and information on degraded lands and conservation/restoration efforts.
18 The initiative will also contribute to capacity building and encourage greater private sector support and general
19 public engagement in land restoration efforts. The initiative focuses on complementing and supporting existing
20 efforts while striving to avoid any duplication of efforts. The Initiative will seek synergies with existing relevant
21 initiatives including the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and the implementation of the post-2020 Global
22 Biodiversity Framework.

23 24 **1. Overall Objective of the Initiative**

25 The initiative seeks, on a voluntary basis and according to members' capacity, to enhance collaboration among
26 G20 members and non-member countries to implement relevant SDG goals and related targets under the 2030
27 Agenda for Sustainable Development, by targeting three inter-related objectives:

- 28 I. **Conserving land and halting habitat loss, fragmentation and land¹ degradation**, notably through sharing
29 knowledge and best practices on conservation incentives, including strengthening physical and functional
30 connectivity and quality of protected areas, enhancing land conservation, promoting sustainable land
31 management practices, promoting active fire management and implementation of other policies and best
32 practices to enhance land conservation and reduce land degradation.
- 33 II. **Promoting integrated, sustainable, and resilient land and landscape management** through: nature-based
34 solutions or ecosystem-based approaches; financing mechanisms; urban and land use planning processes at
35 different levels and scales; stronger implementation of international agreements and local environmental
36 governance and laws; the empowerment of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (including women,
37 youth, and smallholders) in land management; secure land tenure, property and land-use rights in
38 accordance with national legislation, as well as supporting sustainable land and water management policies
39 and sustainable agricultural practices, including traditional practices, in order to maintain and enhance
40 ecosystem functionality.
- 41 III. **Restoring degraded land** through sustainable and locally or regionally appropriate reforestation,
42 afforestation, natural regeneration/revegetation, restoration of ecosystem services, sustainable agricultural
43 practices, and deployment of nature-based solutions or ecosystem-based approaches for biodiversity
44 conservation, among others, in order to restore ecosystem functionality in a landscape context. This
45 objective will seek to prevent transfer of degradation (i.e. avoid restoring one area to the detriment of
46 another).

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

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¹ Including, but not limited to, forests, rangelands, croplands, mangroves, peatlands, wetlands

2. Initiative activities

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- A. Land conservation, sustainable management, and restoration website:** the initiative will establish a website that showcases publicly available information on degraded lands, national and international commitments on land conservation and restoration, best practices, and success stories on land restoration, progress-made, results achieved, and lessons learned. The website will serve as an information sharing hub to provide easier access to information on land degradation, conservation, sustainable management, and restoration and foster collaboration and broader engagement of various stakeholders in land conservation and restoration efforts. The information gathered by the website will be compiled from information and data shared on voluntary basis by participating countries and organizations and will cite attribution of information sources where possible.
- B. Engagement of private sector and civil society:** the Initiative will engage the private sector to encourage it to support land restoration efforts and adopt sustainable land management practices. This activity will comprise an outreach/encouragement function to promote needed investments and provide information to link investors/contributors to interested initiatives. Similarly, with strong calls from society for urgent environmental action, the Initiative will encourage direct engagement of civil society, including by mobilizing the general public.
- C. Sharing knowledge and building capacity:** the initiative will support the exchange of know-how and capacity building between G20 members, non-member countries, and other partners and additional stakeholders, as well as support efforts to accelerate exchange of best practices to enhance land conservation and restoration efforts.

3. Initiative Implementation Framework

74 The initiative will be implemented through the Initiative Coordination Office (ICO) under oversight of the UNCCD.
75 The ICO will receive guidance and strategic direction by the **Steering committee** consisting of all interested G20
76 members, the Secretariats of the UNCCD, FAO, UNEP, as well as non-member countries and other institutions
77 that contribute to the work of the ICO.

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79 **The Initiative Coordination Office (ICO)** will have dedicated full-time staff and an annual budget from which it
80 will fund its core activities. The ICO will receive administrative and financial oversight from the UNCCD
81 Secretariat as part of a formalized collaboration agreement. The ICO would undertake the following:

- 82 • Creating and administering the Land conservation, sustainable management, and restoration website;
- 83 • Managing the administrative budget allocated to the ICO;
- 84 • Showcasing existing knowledge-sharing products on reducing land degradation and organizing capacity
85 building and knowledge sharing activities
- 86 • Preparing reporting on the Initiative for consideration and approval by the initiative Steering Committee
87 and transmission to key stakeholders, such as the G20 and concerned IOs.

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89 **Reporting:** an annual report will be submitted to the G20 members and published on the initiative website,
90 containing information on progress on national and international pledges based on publicly available
91 information and data shared on a voluntary basis by participating countries and organizations, as well as on
92 progress of the initiative activities listed in Section 2.

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94 **Financial considerations:** Funding of the ICO budget will be provided on a voluntary basis by G20 members, non-
95 member countries, and by other institutions. To support the launch of the initiative, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
96 will provide a financial contribution sufficient to fund the initiative ICO budget for the first 10 years. Other G20
97 members are encouraged to contribute voluntarily as well.

4. Voluntary country pledges

100 To support the Initiative's overall objectives, G20 members and other non-member countries and stakeholders
101 are invited to make, on a voluntary basis and according to members capacity, country pledges and commitments
102 via the relevant forum / fora or other suitable means such as:

- 103 - Pledges to protect, conserve, sustainably manage, restore or rehabilitate degraded land



- 104 - Direct contributions, including to existing funds and initiatives aimed at land and ecosystem conservation,
105 sustainable management, and restoration
106 - Capacity building contributions such as training for grass-roots projects and/or policy support for
107 government officials
108 - Any other in-kind contribution
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110 **5. Next Steps**

111 The Saudi Presidency proposes the following timeline for next steps on the Initiative:

- 112 ▪ Following endorsement at the Environment Ministers Meeting, the Initiative will be submitted for Leaders'
113 endorsement at the G20 Riyadh Summit on Nov. 21-22
114 ▪ Implementation of the Initiative will start in 2021, in line with the launching of the UN Decade on Ecosystem
115 Restoration

