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K4GGWA Innovation Facility

Context

The Knowledge for Great Green Wall Action (K4GGWA) initiative seeks to accelerate the adoption of sustainable land management and livelihood strategies across the Great Green Wall area. It will work with, and to the benefit of, all the relevant stakeholders, including the Commission of the African Union, the Pan-African Agency of the Great Green Wall, national and sub-national governments, non-governmental and civil society organisations, the private sector and EU Delegations.

The Initiative has three specific objectives:

1. The enhanced uptake and effectiveness of sustainable land management, land restoration and integrated landscape management practices within the broader Great Green Wall area.
2. Improved monitoring of land health and vegetation trends and the enhanced targeting of intervention across the broader Great Green Wall area.
3. An enhanced policy and institutional enabling environment for sustainable management and livelihoods within the broader Great Green Wall area.

To support the enhanced uptake of optimised, sustainable land management, land, restoration and landscape management practices, K4GGWA proposes to establish a facility to support innovation and acceleration, known as the Innovation Facility.

The K4GGWA Innovation Facility

The objective of the Innovation Facility is to identify and select promising and/or innovative initiatives and approaches, to support them along a growth, scaling-up and/or scaling-out pathway, and to extend that support using a variety of tools, most notably a small grants instrument.

The facility will seek to identify and promote initiatives that are not merely promising, but also scalable. These could include any initiatives that support the broader biophysical, sociopolitical and gender objectives of the Great Green Wall. Their focus could be on practices, approaches, governance issues, technologies, business models, and innovative institutional arrangements – in short, anything that shows promise in the acceleration of the broader Great Green Wall objectives.



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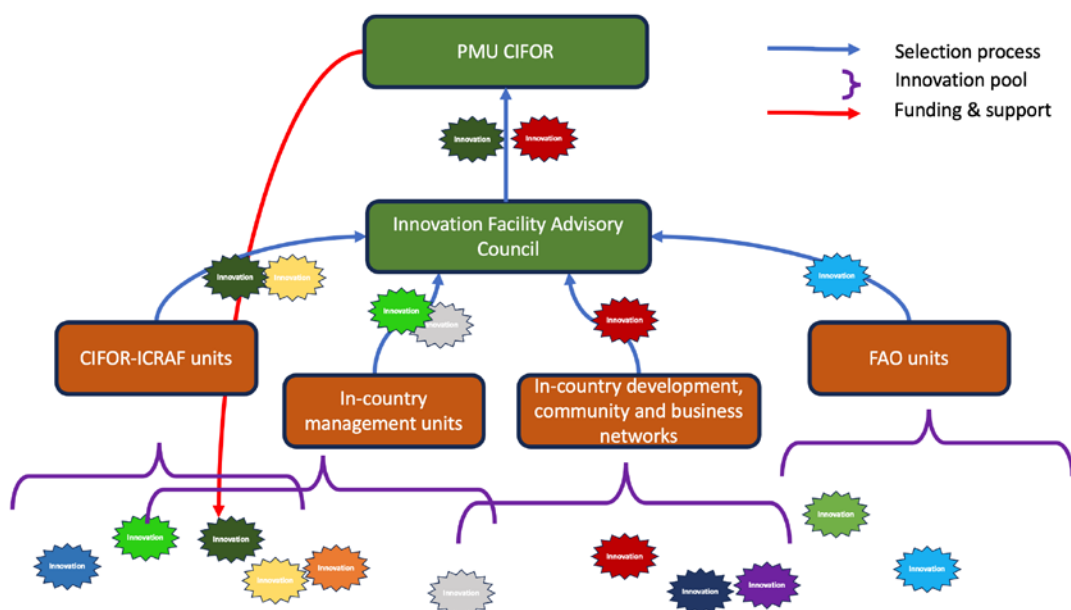
Because the innovation facility's primary focus will be on scalability, it will explicitly seek to overcome the all too common "not invented here" syndrome by identifying and encouraging the spread of innovative approaches across the GGW area, irrespective of where they originated.

The drivers of landscape-scale transformation

Whether the observed trend in land health is degradation or regeneration, it is almost always the result of human management, which is strongly influenced by knowledge and incentives. Those in turn depend on cultural knowledge, education, access to expertise, customary and formal governance systems, gender interactions, farmer-pastoralist interactions, the way local markets are established, grow and work; and the foibles of human psychology (for example, the difficulty most of us have to accurately discount future benefits).

Innovations are required to deal with all of those issues, and thus the remit of the innovation facility will be relatively broad. It may identify and encourage innovations to do with value chains, the financing of rural enterprises, the governance of natural resources, the accessibility of data, educational systems, the integration of nutrition, the design of extension systems, the tweaking of incentive pathways to encourage more equal gender relations, and more – in short, any aspect of human behaviour that will influence the management of natural resources and the restoration of landscapes within the great green wall area.

Innovation Facility Operating Principles



The innovation facility will build and activate a network of so-called field agents who will be encouraged to bring forward innovators for consideration (potential innovators can be individuals or organisations, for profits, non-for profits or public sector-based). The facility



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will run two competitions a year in order to select those innovators most worthy of support. To select those innovators, the facility will lean on an advisory council of specialists.

The field agents are organisations including NGOs, religious networks, chambers of commerce and other business groupings, regional authorities, civil society organisations, and donor-funded projects: organisations with their ears on the ground that we motivate to bring innovations they consider interesting to the Council's attention.

The advisory Council is further described below.

Innovation facility timeline

This indicative timeline is subject to the contributions of a network of institutions and individuals, and may therefore shift.

Jan-Mar 2024	Develop GADIH hub (see below) protocols and discuss with potential hub partners. Recruit advisory board members.
Feb-Mar 2024	Recruit and reach out to field agent network, finalise advisory council terms of reference and convene introductory advisory council meeting, finalise hub collaboration protocols, prepare first draft of innovation submission documents.
Apr-May 2024	Innovation submission documents agreed by hub partners. Development of hub brand and communications toolkit.
May-Jun 2024	Hub brand and communications toolkit deployed.
Jun 2024	Call for proposals on project website, hub website and social media. Encourage field agent network to distribute news widely.
Jun 2024	Ongoing communications about innovations support.
Jul 2024	Deadline for submission of proposals.
Aug 2024	Second meeting of the advisory council, selection of winners.
Sep-Oct 2024	Award ceremonies.



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Advisory Council

To review and select initiatives worth encouraging from such a vast range of potential transformation pathways will require a broad pool of experts. For that reason, the innovation facility will be managed by the PMU with the support of an Innovation Facility Advisory Council, comprised of individuals from the following fields:

- Innovation Facility Head (Patrick - confirmed)
- PMU Co-Head (Mieke - confirmed)
- PMU Co-Head (Ibrahim - confirmed)
- Governance (Mawa Karambiri - confirmed)
- Private sector (Rekia Foudel, Barka fund - confirmed)
- Private sector (Aïssata Diakité, Zabbaan - confirmed)
- Private sector (Rokiatou Traoré, Herou Alliance)
- IFAD (Maxime Thibon, confirmed)
- Gender (Gloria Adeyiga - confirmed)
- Nutrition (Stepha McMullin, confirmed)
- Education (Cora Van Oosten, confirmed)
- Natural Resources (Peter Akong Minang)
- Serious games (Meine van Noordwijk)
- FAO (Moctar Sacande)



This Council will meet online about twice a year to review candidate innovations/innovators, select those worthy of further study, and approve those selected for support.

The PMU will act upon these recommendations by drawing up the relevant support facilities (contracts, MoUs etc.) with the selected beneficiaries.

The beneficiaries may receive support in several different modalities, including but not limited to:

- cash grants
- training
- consultancies
- the delegation of embedded experts,
- targeted scaling-up support such as marketing, communications, business services, influencing operations,
- stakeholder management
- mentoring support.

The facility will operate in ways inspired by the approaches of angel investors in the technology sector, whose support usually extends beyond capital injections to specific



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business expertise ranging from R&D through marketing and sales. Far from attempting to impose a one-size-fits-all approach to innovation support, the facility will devote substantial energies to tailoring support mechanisms to its grantees.

Institutionalising innovation in the GGW - and beyond in Africa's drylands

Donor-funded initiatives are subject to the usual project cycle, wrapping up within a limited number of years. Innovation support, however, is something that requires a long-term presence. It requires institutions that are present for the duration and can build, and bank on, good reputations, and so are able to support innovators for the duration. This is the object of the Green African Drylands Innovation Hub: it aims to provide a permanent home for an ever-changing cast of individual projects that all aim to support rural innovation in Africa's drylands.

The Green African Drylands Innovation Hub will develop a brand and market itself through a common communications platform that will federate the calls for proposals and evaluation mechanisms of the parties to this MoU. The underlying institutional, legal and financial arrangements proper to each party will be maintained in the details of the awards.

GADIH, the Green African Drylands Innovation Hub, will not replace the existing institutional frameworks within which the partners pursue their support of innovation. It will complement them by proposing a federating platform that offers common instruments for the use of its partners. These may, *inter alia*, include: a common brand, a common communications platform, tools to market the calls for candidates of the various innovation facilities, and a set of innovation evaluation mechanisms that may support, complement, or be adopted by each partner as they see fit.

