REGREENING AFRICA

Regreening Africa

Joint Reflective Learning Missions 2021

Image Below: Pamela Kimeto (back) watering seedlings at her nursery farm in Eldama Ravine, Baringo County. **Photo:** Regreening Africa/Brian Gathu.

A summary across country field visits and virtual events to reflect on evidence and experience for planning for Year 5 of the Regreening Africa Project (2021-2022)

Summary by C. Neely, M. Bourne, A. Gosling, C. Magaju, W. Achieng, F. Wanda, O. Kipruto

Funded by European Union

Introduction

Funded by the European Union (EU), the Regreening Africa program is an ambitious five-year project that intends to reverse land degradation among 500,000 households and across one million hectares in eight countries by incorporating trees into agricultural and pastoral landscapes. After four years of implementation and in the midst of the COVID19 pandemic, a mix of face-to-face field interviews and virtual joint reflection and learning events were designed using the Stakeholder Approach to Risk Informed and Evidence Based Decision Making (SHARED, See Box 1) approach.

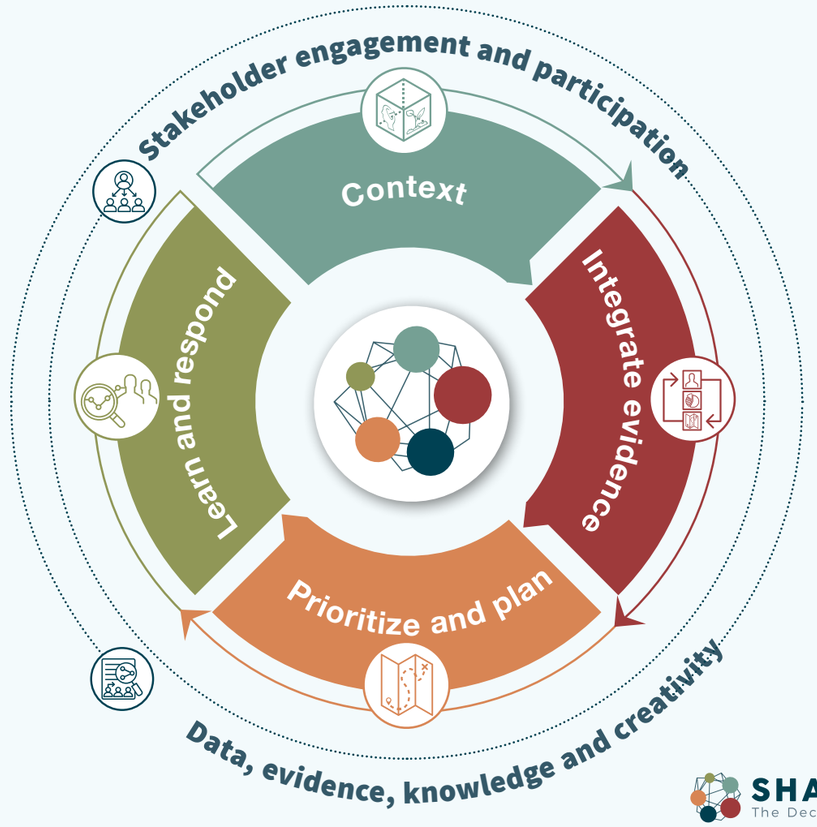
The Joint Reflective Learning Missions (JRLMs) create an innovative monitoring, reflection and learning opportunity among implementing Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), World Agroforestry (ICRAF) scientists, community members, and partners engaged in oversight at the national level. The reflective missions provide an opportunity to jointly query and learn from one another's evidence and experience, build upon project momentum, and consider revised implementation approaches and focus.

The JRLM events held in 2021 were intended to both take stock of progress to date within countries and across the project as well as to identify the priority efforts for the final year of implementation with an emphasis on ways to transition the country efforts for continuation and sustainability.

The objectives of the JRLMs that took place during July and August 2021 included:

1. Carryout country field site visits (as allowed based on COVID19 restrictions)
2. Review and reflect upon progress and findings from implementing partners and field visits
3. Review, reflect and integrate progress and findings from the ICRAF technical component teams into the next planning cycle and subsequent project implementation
4. Review leverage, policy, and communications efforts
5. Consider activities, partnerships and influence that can accelerate scaling and ensure sustainability beyond the life of the project
6. Agree upon priority efforts to carry out during the 2021-2022 work plan

The SHARED Decision Hub



The JRLMs were designed using the SHARED method, which is a key component in the project with a focus on cross-learning, wider practice and policy influence and tracking. Key elements of the SHARED method include:

- a **people centred and demand driven process;**
- tailored and rigorous **cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder engagement structure** and space for addressing power asymmetries, building trust and collaboration;
- **deliberative dialogue and communication,** co-learning, and negotiation;
- **brokered knowledge exchange,** recognising different knowledge sources;
- a **systems approach** that appreciates complexity and inter-relationship;
- addressing **root causes and behavioural drivers;** and
- enhanced **decision making capacities** for transformative change.

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Process

The 2021 JRLM country events consisted of two parts: A field visit to project sites and virtual national and global interactions.

Country teams and members of the National Oversight and Coordination Committees (NOCC) carried out field visits to project locations to monitor and reflect upon the implementation process and progress, understand key challenges, and to identify what practices or catalytic actions could be further developed to increase scaling and meet project goals.

These field visits were followed by virtually facilitated events among members of the project implementation team, NGO Headquarter leads, ICRAF scientists, the project management team and in some cases EU country delegates and NOCC representatives to review country project progress and evidence from scientific and process teams. The 2021 JRLM focused on key activities for scaling up the effort and buy-in to sustain, expand, and extend the progress made into Year 5.

Image Below: Rose Kiptoo in her avocado farm.
Photo: Regreening Africa/Brian Gathu

Field Interactions

A JRLM Year 4 guide outlined the purpose and protocol of the field visits and preparation for the virtual analysis. The facilitated interactions on-farm and in-community were guided by the lead implementing partner in close collaboration with project partners, and enabled dialogue between implementers, NOCC members, local field staff, women, men and youth farmers and community members. The purpose of each field visit was to better understand the challenges and opportunities facing female and male farmers, pastoralists, and community members, and for the implementing partners to consider improved strategies to reach project targets.

Country Team Annual Summary

Lead implementing partners and ICRAF with others, summarized the outcomes and implications of the field interactions combined with evidence and reflections on successful regreening practices, challenges observed, inclusion of gender and youth, marketing and value chain development, project messages to accelerate adoption, use of the Regreening App, lessons learned on scaling, the leveraging approach used, country targets achieved, policy engagement, the suggested focus of Year 5, and sustainability planning.

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Virtual Events

SHARED The Decision Hub

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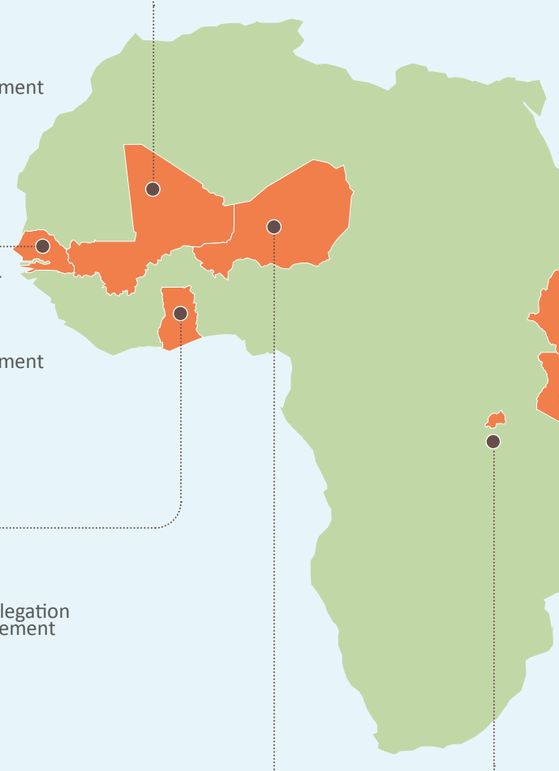
To jointly review the country teams' progress and field visit results, as well as the findings of the ICRAF-led components, the SHARED team designed country-focused virtual events bringing the broader range of stakeholders together including International NGO headquarters and regional actors. These events were facilitated using Zoom, a Miro web-based whiteboard, and, for **Senegal**, **Mali** and **Niger**, simultaneous interpretation.

Based on the presentations from individual countries and component leads, the full team identified key activities for the fifth and final year. Dates of the virtual events and participant numbers are shown below.

Dates of country virtual JRLM events, participants and presence of NOCC and EU members



Mali
27 July 2021
33 Participants
NOCC engagement

Senegal
18 August 2021
36 Participants
NOCC engagement

Ghana
5 August 2021
40 Participants
EU Delegation engagement

Niger
29 July 2021
45 Participants

Ethiopia
12 August 2021
40 Participants
EU Delegation engagement

Somalia
31 August 2021
28 Participants
NOCC engagement

Kenya
3 August 2021
30 Participants

Rwanda
19 August 2021
35 Participants

Key findings and outputs

This summary highlights major findings across the seven countries on dimensions of:

- Data sources and evidence of achievement of household and hectare targets and leveraging;
- Successful and preferred practices, management and priorities for capacity development and input;
- Gender and youth integration;
- Value chain development;
- Leveraging partnerships and sustainability;
- Policy engagement;
- Regreening App, Dashboards and communication of results; and
- External challenges.

Specific details of each country's progress, challenges and opportunities related to these elements can be found in the individual country JRLM reports as well as the 2020-2021 **Year 4 Regreening Africa Consolidated Annual Report**.

Achievement of Household and Hectare Targets

The data related to achievement of regreening targets for households and hectares draws upon multiple sources including:

- **A** Country project records of implementation partners' adoption and reach (Table 2);
- **B** Uptake surveys carried out by the Monitoring Evaluation and Learning team which provide results associated with direct intervention sites; and,
- **C** The Regreening App, which is a citizen science approach to capturing areas of farmer-managed natural regeneration (FMNR)/assisted natural regeneration (ANR), tree planting and nurseries. The three measures allow for a programmatic triangulation of different types and sources of information.

Image Above: A woman tends to tree seedlings in a nursery establishment in Rwanda.
Photo: World Vision Rwanda

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Image Below: A farmer in Ethiopia tending to tree seedlings by watering them.
Photo: Regreening Africa/May Muthuri

Country Reports

Reports submitted by each county team show partners reached out to 100,065 households, with 66,995 from direct intervention and 33,070 from indirect scaling sites in Year 4 (Figure 1). However, reach does not always translate to adoption of practices by households, as some of those reached may not take up the practices or may adopt them on a portion of their land only.

Niger

Directly facilitated Hectarage
11,406
Leverage Hectarage
5,527
Total Hectarage: 16,933

Directly facilitated Households
3,345
Leverage Households
2,798
Total Households: 6,143

Ethiopia

Directly facilitated Hectarage
30,651
Leverage Hectarage
5,313
Total Hectarage: 35,964

Directly facilitated Households
25,711
Leverage Households
2,415
Total Households: 28,126

Mali

Directly facilitated Hectarage
33,198
Leverage Hectarage
38,385
Total Hectarage: 71,583

Directly facilitated Households
18,301
Leverage Households
18,141
Total Households: 36,442

Somaliland

Directly facilitated Hectarage
722
Leverage Hectarage
2,206
Total Hectarage: 2,928

Directly facilitated Households
2,377
Leverage Households
90
Total Households: 2,467

Senegal

Directly facilitated Hectarage
4,900
Leverage Hectarage
1,751
Total Hectarage: 6,651

Directly facilitated Households
3,157
Leverage Households
516
Total Households: 3,673

Puntland

Directly facilitated Hectarage
150
Leverage Hectarage
212
Total Hectarage: 362

Directly facilitated Households
1,225
Leverage Households
1,925
Total Households: 3,150

Total

Directly facilitated Hectarage
142,308
Leverage Hectarage
81,438
Total Hectarage: 223,746

Directly facilitated Households
66,995
Leverage Households
33,070
Total Households: 100,065

Ghana

Directly facilitated Hectarage
5,307
Leverage Hectarage
11,700
Total Hectarage: 17,007

Directly facilitated Households
2,719
Leverage Households
5,200
Total Households: 7,919

Rwanda

Directly facilitated Hectarage
39,055
Leverage Hectarage
TBD
Total Hectarage: 39,055

Directly facilitated Households
6,428
Leverage Households
TBD
Total Households: 6,428

Kenya

Directly facilitated Hectarage
16,919
Leverage Hectarage
16,344
Total Hectarage: 33,263

Directly facilitated Households
3,732
Leverage Households
1,985
Total Households: 5,717

Figure 1. Progress toward the targets of hectares and households reached in Year 4

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Uptake Surveys

The uptake surveys completed for Years 3 and 4 in several project sites have verified at least 127,073 households and 331,200 hectares are under regreening practices (Table 1). These figures do not capture all the project's achievements as only direct intervention sites were measured, not all project sitaes were included in the surveys, and some surveys cover achievements up to Year 3 only.

COUNTRY	Households exposed to and taking up new and/or scaling-up regreening practices			Estimated hectarage under regreening practices (based on households taking up new and/or scaling-up regreening practices)			NOTES
	Total # of HHs in survey sites	Proportion of HHs taking up	# of HHs taking up	Average weighted land holding (Ha)	Average proportion under regreening	Estimated Ha under regreening	
Ethiopia	14,822	0.43	6,380	1.06	0.60	4,042	Year 3 not Tigray
Kenya	14,520	0.24	3,469	1.83	0.78	4,928	Year 3 not all sites
Rwanda	20,997	0.70	14,845	0.66	0.91	8,861	Year 3 not all sites
Somalia	6,456	0.78	5,055	3.52	0.61	10,851	Close-out survey
Senegal	25,143	0.34	8,218	6.53	0.37	19,695	Year 4 all sites
Ghana	46,422	0.83	38,521	3.53	0.44	59,122	Year 4 all sites
Mali	29,710	0.58	17,260	13.06	0.30	67,316	Year 4 all sites
Niger	40,071	0.83	33,325	7.12	0.66	156,385	Year 4 all sites
TOTAL	**198,141**		**127,073**			**331,200**	

*Estimated hectarage under regreening is calculated by multiplying the columns showing # of HHs taking up regreening practices by average proportion of land under regreening and by average weighted land holding

Table 1. Estimated number of households (HHs) and hectares (Ha) under regreening practices, verified through the uptake surveys for directly facilitated sites

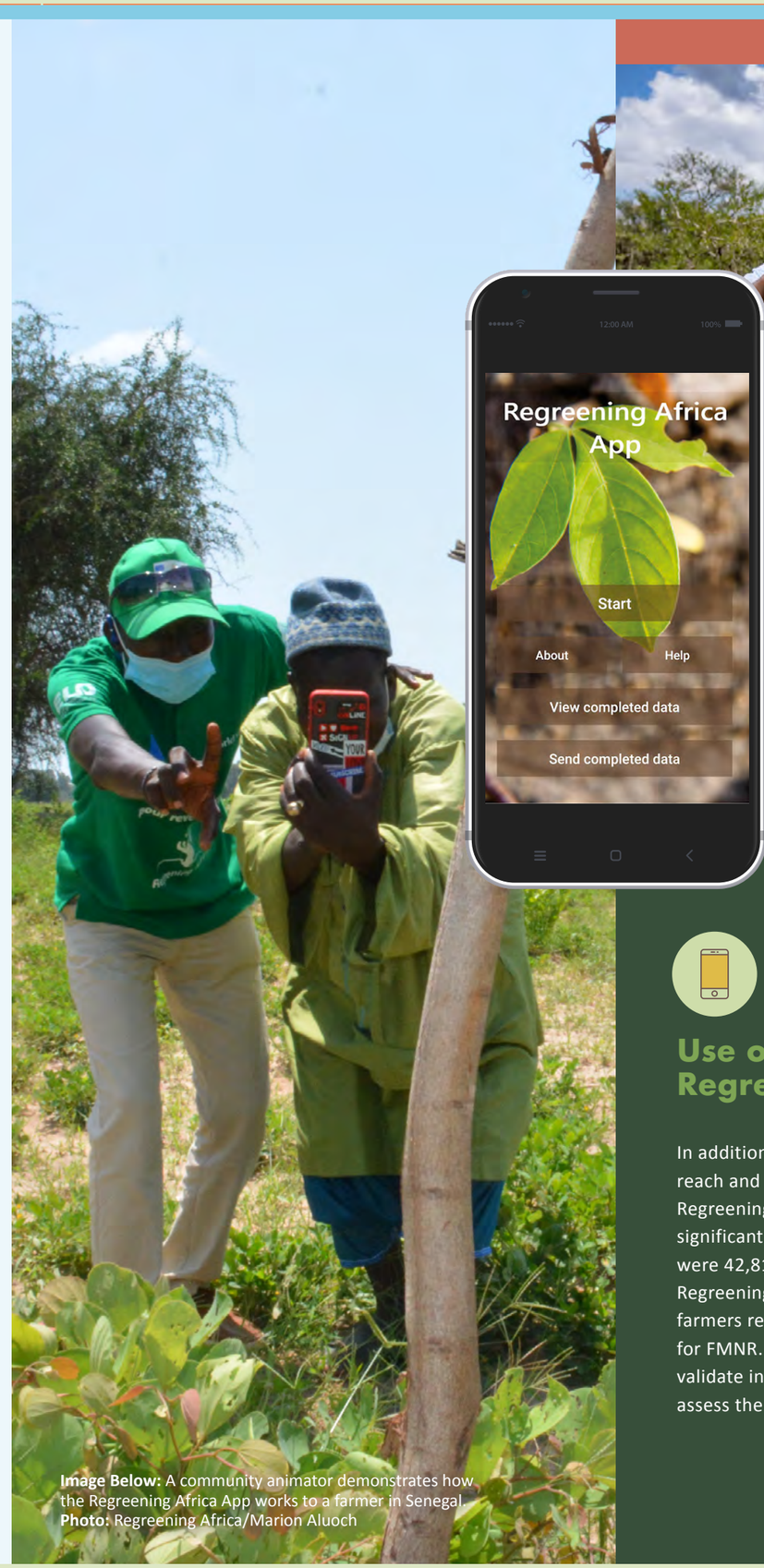

Image Below: A community animator demonstrates how the Regreening Africa App works to a farmer in Senegal.
Photo: Regreening Africa/Marion Aluoch

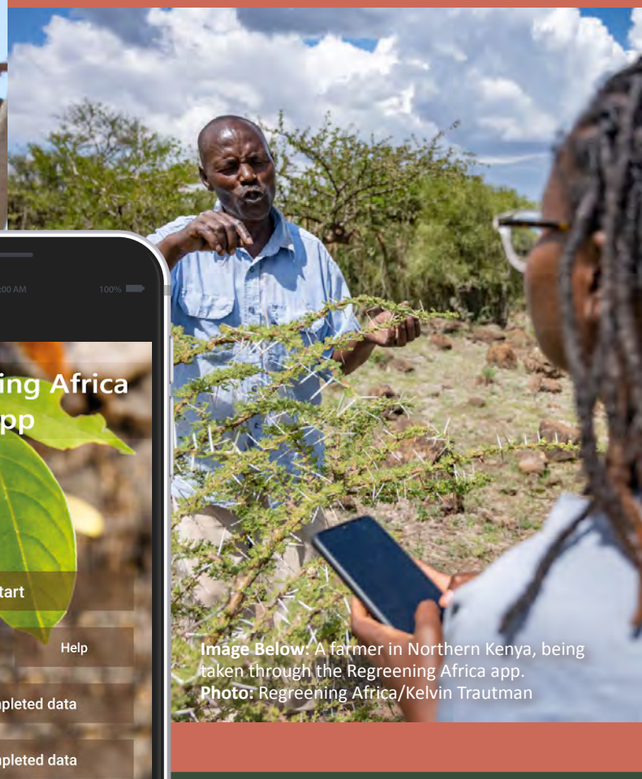

Image Below: A farmer in Northern Kenya, being taken through the Regreening Africa app.
Photo: Regreening Africa/Kelvin Trautman

Use of the Regreening App

In addition to implementing partner reported reach and uptake survey results, use of the Regreening App in Year 4 has accelerated significantly. As of September 2021, there were 42,814 farmers registered and using the Regreening App for tree planting and 27,725 farmers registered and using the Regreening App for FMNR. Results from the App will be used to validate indirect scaling in many countries and to assess the impact of restoration efforts over time.

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Successful and Preferred Practices, Management and Priorities for Capacity Development and Input

The preferred tree integration practices in all countries are based in FMNR, sometimes referred to as ANR, and tree planting. In some of the countries, additional practices such as soil and water conservation and soil improvement practices have also been incorporated to bolster successful restoration (Figure 2).

Mali

San
- FMNR
- Restoration of degraded soils
- Tree planting

Yorosso
- Improved cook stoves

Koutiala
- Natural regeneration
- Semi-direct planting
- Plantation and non-plantation ANR
- Composting
- Stone strip with planting or semi-direct seeding
- Zaï and tree planting or direct seeding

Tominian
- FMNR
- Tree planting
- Direct seeding
- Soil and water conservation
- One shea/néré tree for every woman initiative
- Live hedges
- Fascines
- Half-moon and planting or direct seeding
- Restoration of degraded pasture/ parkland areas with shea
- Nurseries
- Direct seeding of agroforestry trees

Niger

Simiri and Ouallam Hamdallaye
- FMNR
- Tree planting
- Zaï pits and organic manure
- Half-moon and tree planting
- Ziziphus in-grafting
- Improved stoves

Somaliland

Baki and Odweyne
- FMNR
- Nursery establishment
- Environmental conservation
- Agroforestry

Ethiopia

Ambassel
- Soil and water conservation
- FMNR
- Agroforestry

Dodota
- FMNR
- Enrichment planting in area enclosures
- Fruit orchard/agroforestry around homestead

Hula
- Agroforestry practice in private land

Jeju
- FMNR
- Agroforestry practice

Shashogo and Sire
- FMNR in farmland and area enclosure
- Enrichment planting in communal land with *Olea africana and Juniperus procera*
- Homestead agroforestry with fruit trees
- Boundary planting and woodlot
- Rural Resource Center

Puntland

Sanaag and Bari
- Agroforestry
- Establishment of nurseries
- FMNR
- Environmental conservation
- Planting of shade trees

Kenya

Migori and Homabay
- FMNR
- Agroforestry tree nursery establishment and seedlings production
- Tree planting
- Enrichment planting
- Fruit tree farming
- Savings for investment into landscape restoration
- Tree-based value chains

Rwanda

Bugesera, Gatsibo, Nyagatare and Kayonza
- Fertilizer trees with boundary planting
- Contour hedges
- Fodder trees/shrubs with boundary planting
- Woodlots with individual plots
- Timber with boundary planting
- Silvopastoralism with boundary and scattered planting
- Fruit tree growing with home gardens
- Orchards scattered in fields
- FMNR
- Biomass incorporation participatory trials

Ghana

Bawku West, Garu Tempane Districts
- Establishment of FMNR fields
- Tree planting
- Fire management
- Nursery establishment

Mion
- Tree planting on degraded lands
- Incorporating trees on farmlands
- Vegetable production
- Individual and community woodlots
- Tree nurseries

Senegal

Kaffrine, Fatick and Kaolack
- ANR
- Tree planting

Figure 2. Key regreening practices adopted in each country

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Image Below: Sulemana Afuugu is a farmer in the Sitande Community in Bawku West, Ghana, who practices.
Photo: Regreening Africa/Marion Aluoch

Biomass and Biological Diversity

An important part of restoration is increasing both biomass and biodiversity. The country teams recognize the need to diversify trees that are being planted and increase biological diversity in their regreening practices. In **Ghana**, tree diversity in the nurseries is considered good, with each having at least three species. In **Kenya**, over 60 tree species were incorporated, 22 of which are native, as the farmers prefer non-indigenous species. In **Rwanda**, five of 18 species were indigenous, and the reliance of farmers on a narrow range of species was acknowledged as needing to be addressed. In **Senegal**, the most dominant tree species is moringa, followed by mango and citrus.

Production Challenges to be Addressed

A number of production challenges were brought to light during the discussions. These included:

Rwanda

- Disease and pests in fruit
- Low germination and survival rates of seeds
- Lack of species diversity
- Lack of adequate knowledge on the use of pesticides
- Limited access to germplasm

Niger

- Access to agricultural land by women
- Rural-urban migration reducing the size of the workforce
- Social-cultural aspects

Kenya

- Landslides
- Low participation of men in nursery activities
- Land tenure rights
- Lack of tree species diversification
- Poor group management and leadership
- Over reliance of nursery groups on the county government for marketing

Senegal

- Insufficient seedlings
- A lack of buy-in due to a preference for fruit trees
- Some mayors do not support FMNR
- A shortage of staff

Somaliland

- Locust invasions
- Recurrent drought

In Ghana, Mali, and Senegal

- Tree damage by livestock is problematic. The **Ghana** team highlights the need for community engagement to determine how best to manage grazing and protect trees and shrubs. In **Senegal**, trees are being protected from livestock using locally available materials such as old tires. Additionally, the country team is integrating area restrictions for livestock in select communities.

Image Below: Avocbila Ananaba, a farmer in Ghana's Adonsi community, has embraced FMNR because it provides her with a sustainable source of firewood.
Photo: Regreening Africa/Marion Aluoch

What Are the Priorities and Areas of Improvement for Year 5?

Reflections identified several technical support priorities and intervention needs on tree value chain development.

The **Niger** team for instance, raised emerging concerns on potential negative impacts following the increasing interest of farmers in **planting eucalyptus trees**, as alternative options are missing.

The **Mali** team identified tree diversification and quantities supplied by available **nurseries** as a major challenge.

Improved access to quality germplasm was highlighted as a concern in **Ethiopia** and **Kenya** following **poor seedling performance** and survival in some sites.

Contributions from **Mali and Rwanda** identified that **germplasm access** had improved following investments in Rural Resource Centers (RRCs).

Pest and disease management technical know-how was identified as another constraint, especially in **Rwanda** and **Kenya**, where **farmers interest in fruit farming** has increased following project interventions. Trainings and the development of simple guides on pest and disease management were identified as important actions.

Following initial investment in RRCs in **Ethiopia**, the team asked for training on the RRC business model to increase its role in supplying **planting materials and youth employment** opportunities.

Further, technical support for **private tree nurseries** was reported as a priority for **Ethiopia** and **Senegal**, while in **Kenya**, the team mentioned a need for capacity building on improving **tree diversity in nurseries** and establishing new germplasm sources by setting up fruit mother blocks following major supply shortcomings.

With regards to **value chain development**, **all countries** identified a need to consolidate available resources to accelerate visibility on project tree-based value chain innovations.

Image Below: Penina Maathi, a member of the Likia nursery group in Nakuru County, tending to tree seedlings.
Photo: Regreening Africa/Brian Gathu

Training needs were identified for implementors in **Niger** to build on cross-country exchange conducted with the **Mali** team in 2021.

The **Mali** team was further challenged to investigate strategies to improve **participation by men**, as only women group value chain activities have been established.

Across all the countries there was consensus to conduct **national or at least regional-level value chain forums** on selected tree products to raise the visibility of project intervention and accelerate B2B linkages among actors and stakeholders.

Considering the levels of project support on sectors such as tree nurseries, teams from **Rwanda, Ethiopia, Kenya,** and **Mali** identified an emerging need to **support tree nursery entrepreneurship** away from free seedling supply schemes implemented by government in the past.

Image Below: Agnes Cheptoo, chairperson of the Chongoo Cheptengis Okilegei nursery group in Elgeyo Marakwet County hands over tree seedlings to some of the members of the group.
Photo: Regreening Africa/ James Dundo

Gender and Youth Integration

Women and youth integration have been viewed as critical dimensions to the application and scaling of regreening practices and products. **Senegal, Niger, Rwanda, Mali, Ghana, Somaliland** and **Puntland**, and **Ethiopia** teams demonstrated that women's involvement in regreening activities improved in Year 4. For example,

A In **Niger**, women and youth are involved in the management of community nurseries, production of improved cooking stoves, recovery of degraded sites and the growth of high value species;

B In **Rwanda**, women and youth are involved in tree planting and management, data collection and nurturing of tree seedlings;

C In **Ghana** and **Mali**, women are noticeably more involved in decision making and in **Ghana**, women comprise 56% of beneficiaries and in **Mali**, value chain development is benefiting women more than men;

D In **Somaliland**, women's groups and youth are involved in growing tree seedlings as well as tree planting activities;

E In **Puntland**, women and youth are actively being involved in regreening practices as well as value chain development, and in **Ethiopia**, men and women are equally benefiting from seedling sales. Similarly, in **Ghana** women constitute up to 56% of the beneficiaries.

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Some of the factors that are contributing to successful engagement include:

Niger and Mali

- Tailored group support to women

Senegal

- Savings groups
- Equipment
- Capacity strengthening
- Engagement of youth at all project levels

Rwanda

- Quick returning products with an established market, such as tree tomato

Ethiopia

- Incorporating youth in RRCs

All countries - Virtual cross-country learning events on

- Youth in land restoration in each country
- Gender transformative approaches for land restoration are planned to follow the JRLMs to share successes and lessons learned from within and external to the program

During 2021, a Youth Engagement Strategy was developed through a consultative process with the different country teams. The strategy comprises cross-cutting opportunities for youth engagement in all the countries of the project as well as youth engagement opportunities and proposed new interventions for youth engagement that are specific to each country.

Image Below: A pupil at Yogot Primary school in Elgeyo Marakwet, plants trees in their school compound.
Photo: Regreening Africa/ Marion Aluoch

Image Below: Members of the Regreening Club at Soke Bokucha School, water seedlings in their school garden in Oromia, Ethiopia.
Photo: World Vision Ethiopia/Habtamu Regasa

Image Below: Pamela Kimeto Avocado Farmer's staff, filling paperbags with nutrient rich soil.
Photo: Regreening Africa/ James Dundo

What Are the Priorities and Areas of Improvement for Year 5?

Across the country teams, areas of improvement were framed as:

Ethiopia, Niger, Senegal, and Ghana

- Greater technical capacity development and support activities
- Business development
- Entrepreneurship and access to materials for women and youth

Puntland and Niger

- Greater women's involvement in decision making

Senegal, Mali, Puntland, and Somaliland

- Greater involvement in regreening activities specific to women and youth

Mali, Senegal, and Ghana

- Greater sensitization and communication on gender transformative approaches

With a specific emphasis on youth, **Ethiopia** mentioned that there is need to come up with new and exciting regreening opportunities to generate income. **Rwanda** mentioned the need to identify areas of engagement with youth, such as FMNR training, and the need for capacity building in this area. **Somalia** noted the need for further information on youth engagement, to better understand engagement priorities. **Senegal** recognized the need to engage youth in regreening activities identified and chosen by them. **Ghana** is leveraging government to encourage youth to use the Regreening App, as well as empowering the youth on leadership skills such as teaching them to be 'trainers of trainers'. The **Niger** team emphasized the need for more community sensitization on the importance of youth participation in restoration. **Mali** suggested greater data disaggregation to accurately report on youth involvement in regreening practices and the need to increase the number of youths in data collection using the Regreening App.

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Value Chain Development

Project plans to accelerate value chain development through facilitating value chain actor negotiations through linkage forums and capacity development activities were limited due to COVID19 restrictions and in part, slowing down of related economic activities. Tremendous efforts were made to improve the business performance of producers and actors such as processors, fruit collectors, input dealers such as nurseries, and local vendors operating largely at the local level. Training on record keeping and basic financial management was supported to help grow businesses such as shea. In **Ghana**, small and medium-sized enterprises involved in shea nut and shea butter production were improved through the development of detailed business plans that assessed their strengths, weaknesses, and operational capacities. The main value chains in each country are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Value chain emphasis in Regreening Africa countries

What Are the Priorities and Areas of Improvement for Year 5?

Ghana and **Somalia** highlighted the priority of **further training on value chain development**. Value chain business plans and the RRC business models were viewed as a priority by **Ethiopia**.

Ghana has prioritized support in linking **women and youth involved in value chain development** to financial institutions and marketing channels.

In general, value chain development is considered an important entry point for youth and women and in **Senegal**, **entrepreneurship training for women** has been scheduled.

Senegal would like to host a **national forum** to allow various stakeholders to share their successes and discuss opportunities especially around the trade of **value chain products for economic growth**. A virtual cross-country learning event on expanding the role of value chains for land restoration has been planned to follow the JRLMs to share successes and lessons learned from within and external to the program.

In general, value chain development requires further support in the Regreening Africa countries. For example, in **Somaliland**, **180 farmers were trained on marketing and value chain development**, however, challenges such as limited budget allocation, drought, and a lack of capacity building affected the quality of the products.

In both **Somaliland** and **Puntland**, **several nurseries have been established** and the **adoption of fruit trees will help to promote value chain development**. Engaging with the communities on value chain development was found to be beneficial. The challenge is to align community wants and needs with the resource base. Further, for sustainability, the value chain development priorities were refined with the communities.

In **Kenya**, the partnership with **Habex can sustain the avocado market for the next 10 years**, but 10,000 farmers are needed to achieve this. The avocado value chain needs to be enhanced to make it more beneficial to the cooperatives. This could be achieved through linkages with the Horticultural Crop Development Authority.

In **Rwanda**, financing from Savings for Transformation benefits value chain development work indirectly, as some of the farmers and nursery operators are members of the group and **invest their savings in value chain development**. Bee keeping has been identified as the main value chain, with 16 bee keeping groups identified. There is a need to support and focus on linking farmers to markets, leverage on other projects, fruit grading and packaging. The **Ghana** team identified the need for further sensitization on the economic value of **indigenous tree species to increase regeneration and strengthen the value chain**.

Image Below: A farmer grafting mango seedlings in Rwanda.
Photo: World Vision Rwanda

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Leveraging Partnerships, Sustainability, and Communications

Leveraging

Regreening Africa countries recognize the importance of strengthening partnerships to reach targets, increase project reach and ensure sustainability. Leveraging of partners in the Regreening Africa program has focused on local and national government (**Ghana, Senegal, Puntland, Niger, and Somaliland**), faith inspired leaders and groups (**Ghana and Kenya**), other NGOs (**Niger**) and ongoing projects (**Senegal**), and in a few cases, the private sector (**Ghana**). **Ethiopia** reported that the team encountered resistance with leverage partner project staff, as they described the partnership as creating more work.

Country teams mentioned the advantages of partnering with government across scales, including

- **A** Enhanced impact of regreening practices (**Ghana**), effective implementation (**Somaliland**) and increased collaboration and coherence (**Ghana**);
- **B** Greater project delivery and grounds for project sustainability (**Puntland**); and
- **C** Increased receptiveness and involvement toward program objectives (**Senegal**), and the potential to influence policy (**Puntland**).

Sustainability

The importance of post-project sustainability is recognized by the different Regreening Africa country teams and a variety of measures are being put in place to achieve it such as establishing partnerships with NGOs and other development organizations and sourcing funding and instilling project ownership in communities. For example, to ensure project sustainability in **Rwanda**, the cooperatives are being linked to NGOs that support tree planting through buying seedlings. In **Ghana**, funding is to be sourced from the private sector (financial institutions) to support the implementation of the established project businesses beyond the life of the project.

In **Mali**, Oxfam and Sahel Eco will manage intervention areas in terms of the continuation of activities as well as the collection of data with the Regreening App. To ensure project sustainability the **Puntland** team plans to transition community management; to engage with local government, relevant ministries, and private stakeholders; and to source funds. Various extension methods have been incorporated for lead farmers, local government, and NGOs, which is also beneficial for sustainability.

The **Niger** team is planning to ask community leaders to provide future support as the project comes to an end. Nurseries are to be progressed to be self-supportive. All communities engaging in pastoralism will have a documented management plan to ensure restored land does not revert to being degraded. Ownership is to be instilled in the beneficiaries to ensure project sustainability post closure.

During Year 4, country-specific sustainability plans were developed with communities and the stakeholders identified. The approach will involve meetings with the community and other local stakeholders to ensure continuity of desirable land restoration practices promoted by the project. The sustainability planning process includes six steps with the first step driven by external actors, and the following five steps being purely community-driven and participatory (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Six steps of the sustainability planning process

The six-step sustainability planning process with community and local stakeholders was carried out in **Ethiopia, Kenya** and **Mali** guided by the **Sustainability Guidance Note**, that provides detailed demonstrations of the six steps to sustainability planning. Some of the key future aspirations reported included land restoration through tree planting, soil fertility improvement, food and nutrition security, knowledgeable communities on environmental/global issues, improved health and wealth, increased seedling production and water harvesting techniques.

Image Below: Mr. Bilgur, is a retired teacher and an environmental enthusiast in Mion District, Ghana. He inspires people in his community to protect and plant tree.
Photo: Regreening Africa

Awareness Creation and Communications for Scaling

A variety of methods have been used to enhance project awareness and scaling of regreening practices. Radio programs were a critical medium for raising awareness about regreening practices and were broadcast in a variety of countries. For instance, in **Ghana**, a three-month-long radio program on regreening practices reached approximately 18,000 people. In **Ethiopia**, broadcasts promoting regreening best practices and FMNR were used to increase adoption of the practices.

In **Mali**, radio messages on tree management and protection were aired, while in **Niger**, restoration messages were broadcast in collaboration with community radio stations to educate and raise awareness about restoration practices. Radio advertisements and tree planting campaigns were used in **Rwanda** to communicate critical regreening practices and scaling messages.

In **Senegal**, a combination of radio shows and caravans were used to raise awareness about land degradation and restoration in markets and villages, with the goal of promoting widespread adoption of regreening practices.

In **Somaliland**, radio messages on FMNR, tree planting, and management were disseminated, while in **Puntland**, prominent people such as poets, singers, and champions of FMNR hosted radio programs on the importance of the environment and best practices for addressing land degradation.

In **Kenya**, media outlets produced documentaries about lead farmers. Market visits by producer groups were also found to be beneficial in **Rwanda**, as they allowed producers to interact with sellers and buyers and exchange experiences. Similarly, in **Senegal**, producer field visits were effective in encouraging producers to adopt regreening practices. Additionally, a memorandum of understanding with farmer traders was signed to train additional farmers and expand the project's reach.

The **Senegal** team mentions social media as a useful tool for raising awareness about the project. Other methods used to raise awareness and scaling included government stakeholders, participation in regional and restoration events, distribution of success stories to policymakers and relevant government departments.

What Are the Priorities and Areas of Improvement for Year 5?

The focus of Year 5 is not only on improving implementation actions to date but **enhancing and strengthening relationships with leveraging partners across the stakeholder spectrum**, several actions are planned including radio engagement with leaders to increase community uptake (**Senegal**); **engagements with national and local stakeholders** on leveraging activities (**Ethiopia**); **fast-tracking the involvement of local governments** in implementation sites (**Mali**); and **national conferences** and a series of engagement to share project success and create an enabling environment (**Niger**).

In **Kenya**, capacity building is needed for local (County) **governments particularly in relation to visioning, leadership and resource mobilization**. **Senegal** suggests the **training of religious leaders on regreening practice**s and teachers in environmental education to assist with community sensitization and awareness

Continued interactions for community level sustainability will be undertaken in all countries. **National SHARED events will be held in most countries in 2022** to build broader relationships, link partners with evidence, and co-design ways forward for science, practice and policy and prepare concrete proposals.

Some proposed means for project awareness creation and scaling include:

Kenya

- The use of drama/theatre and community videos

Mali

- More field exchange visits with farmers
- Awarding prizes for restoration champions
- Establishing local fairs
- Focusing on peer-to-peer learning among farmers

Rwanda

- Use of savings groups as scaling up channels

Senegal

- The intensification of engagement with local communities

- In several countries (**Ethiopia**, **Ghana**, **Kenya**, **Niger**, **Rwanda**, **Mali**, and **Somalia**):
- More documentation of project success stories and activities such as trainings and exchange visits. The **Mali** team proposes write-up workshops to capture innovative ideas, lessons learnt and success stories for proposals to donors.

Image: World Vision (WV) Ghana project staff and their partner at DASTECH FM discuss the importance of regreening practices in the community.
Photo: WV Ghana

Policy Engagement

Aligning project activities with national restoration goals, plans and policies and the integration of certain regreening activities in policy and strategic planning is recognized as important by the project teams. Policy makers and stakeholders were reached in each of the countries with regreening success messages and policy arguments through a range of outreach and engagement approaches. Many of the engagements were through national, sub-national and local events, project communications and through engagement with the NOCC members and other important stakeholders. Several successful policy engagements emerged through the project and will be instrumental in scaling regreening practices.

In **Niger**, the decree on FMNR, which is currently in place, will be translated into different local languages and is currently being disseminated through radio communication. In **Ghana**, policy issues being addressed include the integration of agroforestry in livelihood programs, the promotion of tree-based value chains, FMNR, and species diversity. **Ghana** was successful in establishing environmental by-laws in 54 communities and the formation of the District Environmental Management Committee in the Mion District was an important milestone. Engaging with the executive regional government bodies in **Somaliland** has enabled a better understanding of the laws and forged a way forward. Further, the Ministry of Environment has ensured that FMNR will be mainstreamed in land restoration initiatives.

The **Kenya** National Landscape Restoration Scaling Conference was crucial for influencing policy and accelerating landscape restoration. In **Puntland**, a workshop to integrate FMNR into the national rangeland policy was successful. In **Senegal**, the dissemination of the new Forest Code was supported, with sessions held to enhance community understanding and improve the relationship between forestry officers and the community. District offices in **Ethiopia** are actively supporting project implementation through the provision of land, training on FMNR and the management of free grazing by sensitizing communities and strengthening village by-laws. In **Rwanda**, the project is working with government to establish a taskforce to oversee implementation of the agroforestry strategy and address challenges at the national level.

Image Below: A woman watering a tree seedling in Mali.
Photo: Sahel Eco

The gender dimension of policy engagement is also receiving wide attention in the program. Women's access to agricultural land is described as challenging by most of the regreening country teams, but action is being taken to rectify the situation. For example, gender research in **Ghana** has influenced the reallocation of homesteads to women in 13 out of the 15 research communities through a series of workshops and household support. In **Mali**, policy interventions at the local and regional levels are expected to improve women's land ownership, for example, there is a new law that allocates 15% of the country's farmland to women. The **Niger** team is developing an FMNR decree that assigns greater usage rights to land users. In **Senegal**, 45 women from the village of Koupetie Serere have gained access to land that was given to them by the mayor.

Image Below: National Oversight and Coordination Committee (NOCC), community members and World Vision staff planting tree seedlings at the Hula resource centre in Ethiopia.
Photo: World Vision Ethiopia/Habtamu Regasa

What Are the Priorities and Areas of Improvement for Year 5?

The **Rwanda** team highlighted the need for a **policy brief on FMNR** and the full establishment of an **Agroforestry Taskforce** to address policy issues related to tree species, nurseries, and agroforestry strategies.

Ghana has **prioritized the inclusion of regreening practices in policy**, with a focus on local-level implementation. Further, the team aims to capture regreening data in national commitments.

In **Kenya**, opportunities were identified to **enhance inclusion of FMNR in government strategies** and policies through intra-county and inter-country learning events.

The **Ethiopia** team intends to **integrate FMNR and agroforestry practices in regional strategic planning** and, with ICRAF's support, plans to take part in developing policy briefs on the free grazing aspect of FMNR at the national level.

Mali has established the need to **raise awareness and advocate for women's access to land**, to continue to share project results with national government departments, and to plan learning exchanges on policy issues with other countries.

The **Puntland** team identified the need to **review environmental policy** and other legal instruments to address gaps, and to identify further engagement points for the inclusion of FMNR in policy.

Somalia's priorities for Year 5 include collaborating with government to incorporate regreening practices in policy development, supporting communities with customary law implementation in **Puntland, reviewing existing natural resource management project policies**, and developing policies on institutional catchment planning and grazing land management.

Plans are underway for cross-country learning (face-to-face) through a field trip to **Niger** by **Senegalese** and **Malian** partners. The field trip will help partners to understand the lessons learned and how the FMNR/ANR Decree was developed. This policy learning event is crucial as it will stir discussion among teams on how tree rights and FMNR procedures enable and or limit restoration efforts in their national context. Each team will furthermore explore practical solution pathways to influence FMNR proceedings in their country.

All countries are to **promote scaling by leveraging relationships with government** as well as religious leaders and relevant organizations.

Regreening Africa

Regreening App and Dashboard

Regreening App

The **Regreening App** continues to be widely applied in the project countries as a tool for citizen science data collection on regreening activities (FMNR and tree planting), nursery establishment and species inventories, and training activities as part of the project. Through direct interactions between users of the App and the ICRAF developers, there have been improvements in the App and its use in the country settings. Over the last year, there has been increased use of the App in several of the countries, with **Rwanda** and **Senegal** having particularly high activity (Table 2).

In **Rwanda**, the high demand for the Regreening App was attributed to being able to visualize project data and results. **Kenya** has two other similar apps in circulation that are more popular with communities as they are deemed to be more adaptable, less tedious and more farmer friendly. **Mali's** Technical Team benefited from sharing experiences with its counterpart in **Niger** on using the Regreening App. As a result, the **Mali** team developed a data collection strategy as well as a follow-up plan for its operationalization. This was intended to resolve the differences between the results in the narrative reports and the data observed on the server.

Table 2. Number of farmers registered and using the Regreening App for collection of data on tree planting activities and FMNR by country (as of September 2021).

COUNTRY	Number of farmers registered and using the Regreening App for tree planting	Number of farmers registered and using the Regreening App for FMNR
Rwanda	25,526	5
Ghana	10,437	240
Kenya	3,696	4,025
Mali	2,113	4,776
Ethiopia	784	1,018
Senegal	145	11,074
Niger	103	6,494
Somalia	10	93

Table 2. Number of farmers registered and using the Regreening App for collection of data on tree planting activities and FMNR by country (as of September 2021)

Regreening Africa Dashboard

The development of the **Regreening Africa Dashboard** has continued throughout the last year, with inputs from project stakeholders captured in numerous ways, including through the project JRLMs. The dashboard is online (https://dashboards.icraf.org/app/ra_dashboard) and suggestions from users are being implemented and go live in near-real time. Additional modules are being implemented based on requests from project stakeholders.

The Regreening Africa Dashboard can now be used as a tool to explore land degradation dynamics interactively, including detailed assessments of indicator interactions. Users can further identify key constraints, highlight these on a map and download a spreadsheet or a spatial vector file to their own computers for use in the field. By building on globally consistent indicators and a robust sampling framework using the Land Degradation **Surveillance Framework**, stakeholders have access to accurate, high resolution, indicator maps covering all of the project countries. Figure 5 shows how data flows from the App and is curated before being integrated into the Dashboard.

The SHARED and Land Degradation Dynamics teams organized workshops and individual country calls with key stakeholders in each country to review and provide feedback on the dashboard on various aspects including the structure and the available information. During those sessions, stakeholders also provided input on

- **A** How the dashboard could be improved to make it more accessible in terms of navigating between the different modules and in how the data was visualized;
- **B** What they had learned from using the dashboard including any new information gained, additional data including data collected in the other projects around land restoration that could be added to the dashboard; and
- **C** The requisite capacity to ensure that the dashboard is used effectively.

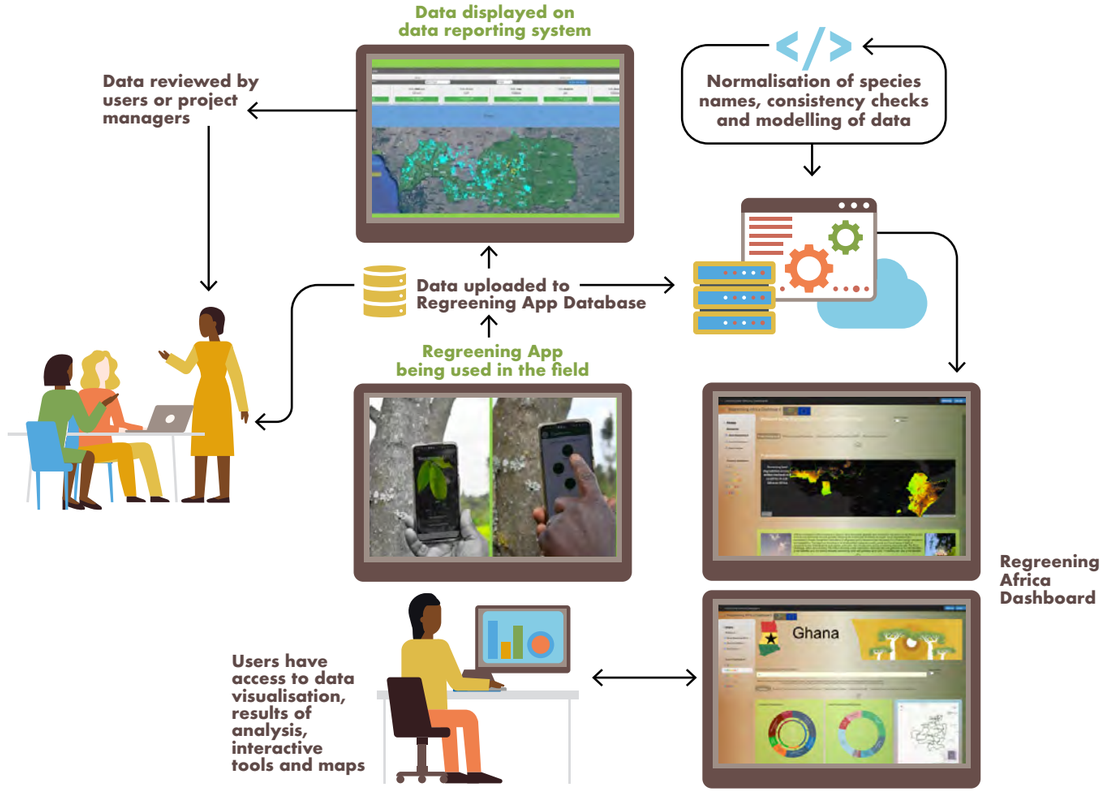

Figure 5. Schematic diagram illustrating how data flows from the Regreening App into the Regreening App Database and on to the Data Lake Engine at ICRAF, before it is presented to end-users as part of the Regreening Africa Dashboard

Regreening Africa

What Are the Priorities and Areas of Improvement for Year 5?

With growing demand, there will continue to be opportunities to build capacity and collect data through the Regreening App, including a data collection marathon. **Mali**, **Ghana**, and **Niger** intend to increase their usage of the **Regreening App**. The **Niger** team has suggested that countries with high Regreening App usage share their data to encourage other country teams to improve.

Training on the Regreening App and data collection are needed in **Ethiopia**, **Kenya**, **Senegal**, and **Somalia**. In addition, **capacity building on data analysis** is requested by most of the regreening countries (**Ethiopia**, **Ghana**, **Mali**, **Niger**, **Rwanda**, and **Senegal**).

Some country teams suggested **improvements to the Regreening App**, for example, **Mali** and **Rwanda** would like to be able to **capture more activities** using the App. The **Ethiopia** team highlighted that the **collection of GPS points and cleaning of data is time consuming**. **Mali** mentioned a need to enable the documentation and reporting of issues with the Regreening App to **solve technical problems such as data loss**. The **Senegal** team felt that their **Regreening App figures are not accurate** in terms of regreening practice adoption, as some data has not been captured due to a lack of resources, mostly in the leverage sites. Resources are needed by **Mali** and **Niger** to **improve smartphone accessibility** to increase data collection using the Regreening App. Similarly, in **Niger**, **additional smartphones are required to speed-up data capture** through the Regreening App.

Plans need to be put in place with regards to data hosting, costing and ownership as other projects become involved.

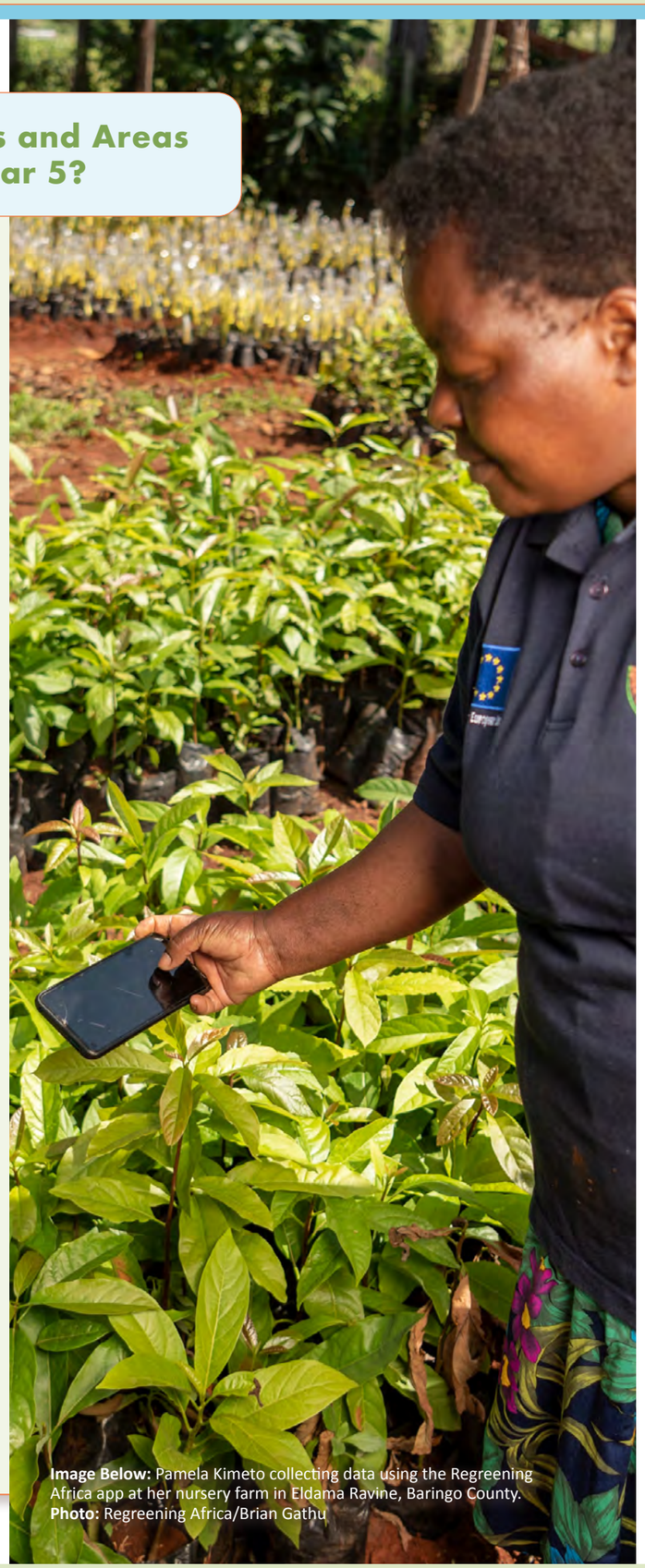

Image Below: Pamela Kimeto collecting data using the Regreening Africa app at her nursery farm in Eldama Ravine, Baringo County.
Photo: Regreening Africa/Brian Gathu

External Challenges

COVID19 continued to be a challenge in Year 4 and prevented the occurrence of many larger in-person events. Training was able to continue in the field with extensive COVID19 precautions and with smaller groups of people. Online meetings and workshops were used to overcome travel restrictions. The COVID19 pandemic interrupted project activities in **Kenya**, **Mali**, **Rwanda**, **Somaliland**, **Puntland**, and **Senegal**. In **Kenya**, Asset-based Community-Development work in Homabay was put on hold and the uptake survey was cancelled. In **Mali**, **Puntland**, and **Somaliland** the pandemic led to the temporary suspension of regreening activities and meetings, which affected the achievement of project targets. In **Rwanda**, market visits by producer groups were affected and in **Senegal** the number of participants in training were lower, which in turn affected the targeted number of people reached.

Insecurity across the different regions in **Niger** has impacted the implementation and monitoring of project activities. Security measures have restricted access to project established committees that are in villages located more than 4 km from the main roads. In **Senegal**, the project has reduced conflict between farmers and herdsmen through local leadership meetings involving all relevant stakeholders. All communities need to be trained equally to prevent conflict. Due to ongoing civil conflict in **Ethiopia**, the Regreening Africa implementation sites in the Tigray Region have been put on hold.

Thinking Forward

The program has gained a lot of ground in meeting its ambitious targets, it has bridged science, practice, and policy, brought in new stakeholders, and learned many lessons along the way. Year 5 is a critical year for all the countries, and the program as a whole, as it endeavors to build sustainability for the work it has accomplished, continues to scale what has worked, addresses the challenges to scaling and expands on the best of the program and country activities to undertake new work, new partnerships, and new policy influence. As COVID19 has impacted the progress of the program over the last four years, the EU donor has suggested that project implementation be extended by six months. The coming year will also include evaluations and the capture of learnings, not just of what has been done, but how it has been done and with whom. The focus will be on achieving the project objectives, ensuring the restoration efforts are beneficial to the communities and can be sustained into the future. Critical in this final period is supporting wider policy and practice dialogues and identifying how lessons from Regreening Africa can inform other processes and initiatives such as the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and the Great Green Wall and how the achievements of the project can be included in the African Forest Landscape Restoration (AFR100) initiative and other national and regional level commitments.

Regreening Africa

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