



Two Decades of GEF Investments in Land

Over the past two decades, the **Global Environment Facility (GEF)** has provided **\$5.2 billion** to **674 land degradation projects and programs** in **144 countries**—leveraging another **\$35.4 billion** in co-financing.

The world urgently needs to restore damaged ecosystems, with nearly **40% of the planet's land degraded**, impacting **3.2 billion people**. Reversing ecosystems degradation can help to improve livelihoods, combat climate change, and conserve biodiversity.

Droughts are an increasingly visible sign of climate change with severe consequences for people, freshwater, and water security. They could impact three-quarters of the global population by 2050, and lead to disasters, food insecurity, migration, conflicts, and unrest.

The GEF seeks to achieve healthy and resilient ecosystems by promoting sustainable land management (SLM) and supporting land degradation neutrality (LDN).

Policy coherence on the national level is crucial to addressing land degradation and drought. As a financial mechanism for the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the GEF will continue to support countries' efforts to reduce land degradation, desertification, and mitigate the effects of drought.



GEF-8 LAND DEGRADATION STRATEGY (2022–2026)

The GEF's land degradation work has four programming objectives:

- **Avoid and reduce land degradation** through SLM
- **Reverse land degradation** through landscape restoration
- **Address land degradation, desertification, and drought issues**, particularly in drylands
- **Improve the enabling policy and instrumental framework** for LDN

The GEF also provides enabling activity support for countries to report to the UNCCD and formulate national strategies and plans.

GEF RESULTS ON THE GROUND

- **19.7 million hectares** of land and ecosystems under restoration
- **74.8 million hectares** brought under SLM in production systems
- Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Uses sector projects reduced **510 million metric tons** of carbon dioxide
- **101.4 million people** benefit from restored ecosystems and SLM, including 49.6 million women

SELECTED KEY GEF INVESTMENTS

- 67 LDN projects in 56 countries, with investments of **\$320 million** and cofinancing of \$2.5 billion since 2015.
- 195 projects implemented in 53 dryland countries, with investments of **\$1 billion** since 2006.
- 108 projects focusing on drought mitigation and adaptation in 60 countries, with investments of **\$608 million**.
- Drought issues are addressed in an integrated way and financed by the GEF Trust Fund, the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF), and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF).

Integrated Programs and Multiple Benefits

The GEF's projects and programs generate multiple environmental and socioeconomic benefits and create synergies with other environmental conventions goals and objectives, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

As the unique financial mechanism of all three Rio Conventions, GEF programs strive to generate simultaneous environmental benefits in the biodiversity, climate, and land degradation areas—for example through programs targeting forest conservation and restoration.

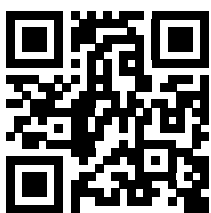
Four out of the GEF's 11 Integrated Programs are strongly aligned with the multiple strategic objectives of the UNCCD:



These four Integrated Programs invest **\$724 million** through 80 projects focusing on land. They address major drivers of environmental degradation, promote LDN, and catalyze the transformation to sustainable food systems. They also restore degraded land, apply nature-based solutions at scale that support socio-economic development, and invest in the conservation and effective governance of critical forest biomes that sustain the planet's health and flow of vital ecosystem services.

Two additional programs, including 12 country-based projects, are also aligned with combating land degradation: the **Great Green Wall Initiative** and the **Central Asia Water and Land Nexus**.

Learn more:



GEF Report to UNCCD COP16

ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE UNCCD COP15

Since the last UNCCD COP in 2022, the GEF's work has resulted in 7.4 million hectares of land under restoration, and 4.6 million hectares of landscapes in production systems brought under SLM. This helps maintain and restore environmental services, sustain food security, and improve livelihoods.

Since January 2022, the GEF has approved 201 projects that address land degradation, with **\$1.6 billion** in funding and more than \$12.4 billion in leveraged co-financing.

The GEF-8 replenishment includes **\$618 million** specifically for the Land Degradation Focal Area. Halfway through the cycle, 69% of these resources have already been programmed, benefitting 107 countries (36% in Africa, 20% in Asia, and 17.5% in Latin America and the Caribbean).

In addition, \$46 million from the LDCF and \$3 million from the SCCF for adaptation were programmed jointly in six multi-trust fund projects.

The GEF promotes active engagement and economic empowerment of women in value chain development for agricultural products, and promotes engagement with civil society, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, youth, and the private sector.