



**REGIONAL CENTRE FOR SPECIAL
EDUCATION IN AGRICULTURE (CRESA)**



Farmer-Led Regreening in Niger

Background

With support of the Turing Foundation, CRESA, Both ENDS and WRI successfully regreened drylands in Niger from 2010 till 2016. By introducing the method of Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR – Farmer-Led Regreening in short), physical buffers of trees and bushes are built by applying traditional local agro-forestry techniques. These practices protect native trees and regenerate the underground forest to sprout spontaneously, turning the landscape into a robust savannah forest with an increased plant and animal biodiversity, contributing to higher production and yields.

This is significantly different from conventional reforestation methods (e.g. soil preparation, composting and planting), which are more labour and knowledge intensive and thus costly and less easy to spread on a large scale. Moreover, reforestation efforts sometimes use non-native crops or trees that prove unsuitable for the harsh climates. For the Farmer-Led Regreening method of restoring the original, drought-resistant vegetation, special techniques have been developed to minimize water use. The regenerated trees and shrubs are integrated into farmland and grazing pastures. They help to improve soil fertility by fixing nitrogen in the soil, increase the water holding capacity of the soil through shedding of leaves (mulch), and provide shade, fruit, fodder, timber and ingredients for medicinal use. The full regeneration of native trees typically takes 20 years, but farmers already notice benefits within 5 to 7 years.

Results (2010-2016)

# Municipalities	(4) Dongonkiria, Soucoucoutane, Tébaram, Sanam
# Village Committees (VCs) # hectares regreened	80 VCs Area of ca. 360.000 ha - final stocktaking: 11 339 ha regreened (twice national park 'Hoge Veluwe')
# Households ('champion farmers'):	1.996 households
# Tree density (/ha):	39/ha
# Women in VCs:	93 women
Yield increase (millet, sorghum, cowpea):	Increase of 100kg/ha to 350 kg/ha
Biodiversity increase	Habitat for migratory birds Tree species diversity increased from 5 to 42 species
Land governance agreements	Agreements between Hausa, Peul & Touareg, Fulani (herders).



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Overall, and probably most importantly, Farmer-Led Regreening has induced a positive change in attitude and behaviour towards the landscape. Farmers and the targeted communities have become aware of the high cost of environmental degradation and its relation to high poverty levels, malnutrition and a loss in economic possibilities. Finally, the project contributed to a more favourable policy framework for Farmer-Led Regreening. By having local authorities participating in the training sessions, organising field visits for them and update councilors and village chiefs on the progress of Farmer-Led Regreening, local formal and customary policy-makers are involved in the Farmer-Led Regreening activities. As a result of these advocacy activities, the Farmer-Led Regreening-approach was included in local and national agriculture support programs and policies.

Financing possibilities

The project was financed by Turing Foundation between 2010 and 2016. With their support, Both ENDS and local partners (a.o. CRESA in Niger) were able to lay the foundations for replication of Farmer-Led Regreening practices and a upscaling through policies. With the support of DOB Foundation, a regional 10-year programme will enable us to develop Farmer-Led Regreening further and gear towards independency in practice by farmers themselves, supported by policies and programmes favorable for Farmer-Led Regreening, and backed by economic perspectives through value chain development. The Farmer-Led Regreening initiatives became more complex over time, i.e. more actors are involved, scale increased, different issues are covered (a.o. ecological, economic, (land) governance issues), and the financial inputs will augment.

While the financial resources until now came from private foundations, there are several ways forward to finance Farmer-Led Regreening on the long-run:

- Small-scale investments in value chain development (NTFPs, etc)
- National and/or local public support programmes put in place after lobby and advocacy efforts
- Climate finance such as the Green Climate Fund
- Impact investing possibilities through for instance the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund
- Loans and saving mechanisms
- International public support by multilateral organisations and/or governments.
- Etc.

More information

- Re-greening the Sahel: making the difference in Niger:
http://www.bothends.org/uploaded_files/document/LR_Niger.pdf
- Regreening Niger: <http://www.bothends.org/en/Themes/Projects/project/44/Regreening-Niger>