Background
Land degradation is an increasingly serious problem in Sub-Saharan Africa, with major implications for the region's society, economy, health, and natural environment. Unless collectively effective and widespread action is taken, about two-thirds of arable land in Sub-Saharan Africa could be lost by 2025. About 45 per cent of Africa's population is affected by land degradation and agricultural production is already falling at about 3 per cent per year as a result of land degradation. The loss in gross annual income due to land degradation is estimated at USD 9 billion for Africa. Land degradation is also closely linked to food security, and with current trends in land degradation and yield improvements, the number of hungry people in Sub-Saharan Africa is expected to increase by 25 per cent between 2000 and 2030. Considering that agriculture provides employment for two-thirds of working Africans and generates one-third of the continent's Gross National Income, it is clear that land degradation is a genuine constraint to economic growth.

The direct manifestation of land degradation, such as forest clearance, overgrazing, salinization, loss of soil fertility and erosion, have already been the subject of much analytical research and the application of many technical solutions. However, neither the indirect impacts nor the root causes of land degradation have had the same level of analysis. Similarly, insufficient attention has been paid to the barriers and disconnects between demand for investments in support of SLM and the major delivery and financing mechanisms at the domestic and international levels. These include significant institutional and policy barriers, limited access to markets for inputs and produce, financing institutions and capital to invest in land management improvements as well as in related enabling conditions, insufficient dissemination of knowledge and support to analytical underpinnings to guide decision-making and to assess socio-economic costs and benefits of up-scaling and advocacy work, and lack of long term financing. Past efforts have therefore proven inadequate compared to the scale of the threat, and land degradation continues to accelerate. Scaling up Sustainable Land Management (SLM) is needed to reverse this trend by addressing not just the root causes of land degradation but also its root causes.

*Sustainable Land Management combines technologies, policies, and activities aimed at integrating social, economic, and environmental benefits in a way that enables current and future generations to meet their needs.*

TerrAfrica: moving SLM into the Mainstream
TerrAfrica aims to provide a collective approach to the problem of unsustainable land management and its consequences, with a framework based on a new business model which includes a focus on identified bottlenecks and improved cooperation and harmonization between all involved, including African countries, donor agencies, researchers, and civil society. The approach will provide the domestic and international know-how, policies, advocacy and investment packages to put SLM more at the center of governments’ and other stakeholders’ priorities, attract new investment, and scale-up successful programs.

TerrAfrica is a regional initiative, designed to enable governments of Sub-Saharan Africa, the international development community and other global, regional and national stakeholders to cooperatively work together to scale up the financing and mainstreaming of effective and efficient nationally-driven SLM strategies. To achieve this goal, collaboration will focus on three key Activity Lines:

1. **Coalition Building** - TerrAfrica aims to mobilize a coalition with a common vision for SLM financing and implementation in Sub-Saharan Africa, share analyses, conduct joint assessments, set the foundations for strengthening and harmonizing advocacy, policy dialogues and strategies, and improve coordination at all levels.

2. **Knowledge Management** - TerrAfrica will support high quality knowledge-based mechanisms to identify and generate stronger analytical underpinnings based on collective gap analysis to selectively guide investments and decision-making and to harmonize monitoring and evaluation systems.

3. **Investments** - At country level, TerrAfrica will support the process of programmatic mainstreaming of SLM, policy and investment dialogue, and efforts to improve the enabling environment in order to maximize benefit in collective harmonization of investments at national and local levels, with a goal of reaching at least USD 4 billion over a twelve year period.

In short, TerrAfrica aims at generating coalition, advocacy, ‘know how,’ policies and investment packages necessary for full and effective mainstreaming, up-scaling and financing of SLM.

**TerrAfrica: Operates at Several Levels**

**Country Level** - TerrAfrica supports nationally driven processes and depends on the leadership and commitments of African countries. Responsibility for the development of country level SLM initiatives, their financing, implementation, monitoring and evaluation rests with national governments in consultation with key stakeholders, civil society and development partners. The successful implementation of SLM strategies at country and local levels is the cornerstone of TerrAfrica’s mission.

**Regional Level** - A regional platform will provide ways to engage a broad coalition, take stock of national experience, share targeted knowledge and to escalate issues which cannot be resolved at the country level. This regional partnership, built on the initiative of African countries, will benefit from the leadership of the international development community, in particular the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD). Rather than duplicating these efforts, TerrAfrica aims to amplify synergies based on comparative advantages and scale up such activities to achieve more efficient SLM.

Effective political, strategic and technical backing at the regional and global level is necessary in order to support the primary goal of TerrAfrica: sustained and harmonized efforts on a national level.

**Resource Mobilization**
To facilitate the implementation of TerrAfrica’s objectives, the TerrAfrica Leveraging Fund (TLF) is being established. The TLF is a multi-donor trust fund administered by the World Bank. It provides a flexible and selective financing mechanism to address targeted needs that are not already adequately covered by existing funding mechanisms. The TLF is to be established for an initial cumulative amount of USD 15 million. In addition, the Strategic Investment Program for SLM in Sub-Saharan Africa (SIP) is conceived as a twelve-year phased investment program supported by the GEF that will allow beneficiaries to access GEF resources on a programmatic basis.

**TerrAfrica as a Partnership**
The TerrAfrica business model is based on the assumption that no one institution can address this problem alone. A partnership is required that includes African countries, the donor community, technical and research organizations, civil society and farmers and herders who are the final custodians of the land. TerrAfrica has been developed as a partnership and based on the calls for action, in particular, from the UNCCD and NEPAD. TerrAfrica responds to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of March 2008, while recognizing that the volume of aid must increase, also emphasizes the principles of ownership, harmonization, partnership, result orientation and mutual accountability.

**The TerrAfrica Launch and Beyond** - In October 2005 TerrAfrica was simultaneously launched at the 7th Conference of the Parties of the UNCCD in Nairobi, Kenya, and at the NEPAD Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Program's donor retreat in Pretoria, South Africa. The launching was the culmination of a comprehensive consultative process concerning TerrAfrica’s founding documents, in particular the Strategy and Business Planning Framework. Active in this dialogue were African governments, sub-regional organizations, civil society organizations, donor governments, NEPAD, the European Commission, the UNCCD Secretariat, the UNCCD Global Mechanism, GEF, IFAD, World Bank, UNDP, UNEP, FAO and scientific organizations including the CGIAR centers.

At the launch, the TerrAfrica Executive Committee endorsed a Joint Annual Work Program, which marked the first concrete steps towards the initiative’s goal of mainstreaming and scaling up SLM in sub-Saharan Africa. The Joint Annual Work Program is now under implementation at all levels and under all Activity Lines, and a dialogue is underway on the development of country SLM programs between a number of African governments and TerrAfrica partners. The latest details on the TerrAfrica Joint Annual Work Program and progress to date can be found on the TerrAfrica website at www.TerrAfrica.org.