DesertNet International Newsletter n. 4/2017

This quarterly electronic newsletter is intended to inform the scientific community about dryland-relevant research matters. The deadline for receipt of material for the next issue is 07.01.2018. Please send your contributions (1000 characters max, including spaces) to nrd@uniss.it.

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1. Information relevant to DesertNet members

Science-relevant decisions taken at UNCCD COP.13 in Ordos, China (September 2017)

At the 13th Session of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP.13) in Ordos, China (6-16 September 2017), the Conference of the Parties of the UNCCD acknowledged the outcomes of the work conducted by its Science-Policy Interface (SPI) in implementing the SPI work programme 2016-2017.

The Parties endorsed the scientific conceptual framework for Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN), which had been developed by the SPI in the biennium 2016-2017 upon request of the Parties in 2015. This conceptual framework for LDN will provide guidance to countries and other stakeholders for planning, implementing and monitoring progress towards LDN, and thus support the operationalisation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15, and particularly its target 15.3. The conceptual framework also features in the ‘future strategic framework of the Convention’ (2018-2030) by “Welcoming the endorsement of the scientific conceptual framework for land degradation neutrality and the work done by the Global Mechanism, particularly to put this concept into action through the voluntary Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Programme”.


For details on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) see: [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300)

Parties at the UNCCD COP.13 also welcomed the assessment report of the SPI on strategies for Sustainable Land Management (SLM). This report offers countries scientific practical guidance for selecting and implementing SLM practices that address Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD), climate change adaptation and mitigation. Countries were invited to consider the use of such locally adapted SLM practices, thereby also taking into consideration synergistic actions related to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity.


Parties have also been invited to institutionalize meaningful stakeholder engagement with e.g. land users, policy makers, scientists, and CSOs, in order to facilitate the use of scientific and local knowledge for effective planning, implementation and monitoring of SLM strategies.

In Ordos, Parties were also invited to initiate and support the development of transdisciplinary research programmes aimed at: (i) performing multi-objective assessments, including synergies and trade-offs for the natural environment and human well-being; (ii) identifying barriers and enabling conditions for the implementation of SLM practices; and (iii) building on participatory research methods.

COP.13 requested the SPI to provide refined guidance for the implementation of LDN, and to continue working on the assessment to provide science-based evidence on the contribution of SLM to enhancing the livelihoods and socioeconomic conditions of people affected by DLDD as central objectives of its work programme for 2018-2019. The SPI has also been requested to highlight the potential of appropriate land-based interventions to mitigate the effects of drought on populations.

Further details on science-relevant decisions taken at UNCCD COP.13 as well as science-based documents and presentations at UNCCD COP.13 can be found here: [http://www2.unccd.int/convention/conference-parties-cop/unccd-cop13-ordos-china](http://www2.unccd.int/convention/conference-parties-cop/unccd-cop13-ordos-china)

*Synthesis provided by the DNI Bureau, based on the decisions of UNCCD COP.13*
DesetNet International participation in the work meeting of the UNCCD Committee on Science and Technology (CST) during the 13th Conference of the Parties

Wafa Essahli, former Chair of DesertNet International (2015-2016) was selected by the Civil Society Panel of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) to attend the 13th Conference of the Parties held in Ordos, in Inner Mongolia, China from 6 to 16 September 2017.

In this capacity, DNI represented civil society during the work of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST), a subsidiary body of the UNCCD, whose mission is to strengthen and consolidate the scientific and technical content of the Convention.

The work of the CST focused on the adoption of the scientific framework for land degradation neutrality (LDN) in the 13th session.

The scientific framework was developed by the UNCCD Science and Policy Interface (see the previous article) to support country Parties in defining their voluntary national targets on land degradation neutrality.

Delegates adopted the conceptual framework and made several comments related notably to: intergenerational rights, definition of the situation of reference, difficulties in measuring soil carbon and monitoring change in land net productivity and the need to complete the monitoring with local indicators beside the three global LDN indicators\(^1\).

Civil Society expressed its satisfaction that the conceptual framework takes into account their concerns, especially:

- The need to implement LDN, while measuring LDN with a number of sound indicators based on good principles for responsible land governance, among which the protection of land user rights is particularly important
- Recognition of the social aspects of LDN (e.g. critical migration points, land rights, governance and gender issues, capacity-building for small-scale farmers).

Cultural and social dimensions and the involvement of local communities were highlighted as prerequisites to define LDN target-related transformative projects.

SPI’s existence and work was also at the core of the agenda of the 13\(^{th}\) Session of the CST. Delegates welcomed outcomes and recommendations of the internal assessment developed by the SPI of the UNCCD. They underlined some concerns mainly related to the involvement of Scientific and Technical Correspondents (STCs) in the SPI’s work and identified the need to improve exchanges and communications between all stakeholders; the need to build on outputs and results issued from the work of other international platforms in order to not reinvent the wheel, as well as the need to fill the financial gap and to allow SPI sufficient resources to undertake its work. While the SPI’s Work Programme for 2018-2019 was appreciated by Delegates, they expressed their concern that more attention should be given to drought and sand storm issues in the SPI’s work.

The knowledge hub of UNCCD was welcomed by Delegates who underlined the need to better manage the different kinds of information available on the platform, to enable access to national reports in this platform, and to allow countries to update them in a timely way. Delegates recommended that scientific documents elaborated by CSO Forum should be uploaded in the Knowledge hub. Delegates highlighted WOCAT’s contribution to best practices and indigenous knowledge sharing.

\(^1\) Land cover (land cover change)- Land productivity (net primary productivity) - Carbon stocks (soil organic carbon)
DNI members present at Ordos exchanged views, under the direction of Dr. Mélanie Réquier-Desjardins (DNI and ICoN SLM Chair), to identify actions to be taken to pursue DNI’s commitment to the implementation of the UNCCD, improving scientific knowledge on desertification and making it available to decision-makers and stakeholders in the development arenas.

Information provided by: Wafa Essahli, former chair of DNI

DNI, ICoN SLM and CARI side-event at UNCCD COP.13, Ordos, China on 7th September, 2017

During the 13th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD (UNCCD COP. 13) in Ordos, China, DNI, ICON-SLM and CARI jointly organised and hosted a side-event on Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN), some perspectives for action. The side event was attended by 45 experts from various countries and institutions.

The main purpose of the side event was to discuss the social and economic aspects of ‘neutrality’. Official presentations at the CST session at COP.13 were more dedicated to the environmental aspects of implementing LDN SDG15.3. The focus of this side event facilitated a more balanced perspective on LDN implementation by reflecting on socio-economic challenges and opportunities.

It was all the more a success as ICoN SLM was officially accredited at the UNCCD convention as a CSO contributing to the LDN topic during COP.13.

This side-event provided useful feedback from the audience. Discussions touched on vital issues. The interest of the participants in the discussion and its outcomes was evident. However, the need for further clarification about vital issues concerning the socio-economics behind LDN was clearly expressed. Prof. Pier Paolo Roggero moderated this session with dynamic inputs and a wrap up, which will support the organisation of further discussions on this issue.

The side-event was a success: In fact, the event had to be closed thereby interrupting the fruitful discussions due to external regulations in the building!

In detail:

An introduction was given by the co-chair of the DNI, Prof. Wang Fei, who welcomed the DNI and its partner networks to Ordos, China. Mr Fei emphasised the links that need to be addressed between SDG 15.3 and other SDG targets, rather than treating them in a disconnected manner. The Chair of DNI, Dr. Mélanie Réquier-Desjardins, also put emphasis on the necessity to consider that LDN is not just an environmental issue but also a developmental process with a strong socio-economic dimension. She developed several specific points on this issue looking at their consequences from development and cooperation perspectives.

Dr. Mariam Akhtar Schuster (DNI) presented the main outcomes of the Global Soil week 2017 (GSW): how to adopt an approach framed by the 2030 agenda based on universality and inclusion? Suggestions considered exploring the links...
between LDN SDG and SLM. Five key messages developed by the GSW 2017 were presented. These had been delivered by the GSW to the High Level Political Forum in summer 2017. The analyses of these key messages at the side event showed that there is a need for increased investments in SLM and responsible governance to promote LDN as a tool for sustainable production chains, to enhance spatial planning and national approaches, to consider the land tenure issue as being both sensitive and central to the achievement of LDN, to build a bridge between SDG 2 (‘hunger’) and SDG 15 (‘life on land’), and to increase the role of scientific networks and research in the implementation of the SDGs in order to ensure that progress is sustained.

Nathalie Van Haren (BothEnds) gave an extensive presentation on the voluntary guidelines for Responsible Governance of Land Tenure (VGGT), as a central tool for LDN implementation. She furthermore underscored the need to ensure transparent and participatory decision making processes to prevent conflicts and many other relevant aspects that could emerge during LDN implementation. The VGGT should be considered part of the human rights framework. It is complementary to other similar guidelines.

Ms Wafa Essahli, the former Chair of DNI, presented the main results of the LDN workshop held at Desertif’Actions 2017 (“DA17”, with CARI as co-organizer). Key questions emerging from the LDN DA17 workshop include: (1) how to link the national level and the local level for project implementation: how can local projects contribute to LDN? The operationalization of LDN addresses particularly local governance and territorial scales. There is also a crucial need to respect the response hierarchy outlined in the scientific conceptual framework for LDN that has been developed by the UNCCD Science-Policy Interface (SPI): prevent land degradation, mitigate land degradation and, finally, reverse land degradation. Measures to prevent land degradation have to be considered as central in this hierarchy.

Last but not least, Ms Manon Albagnac (CARI) presented feedback from civil society experiences in studying LDN and participating in its implementation. Civil society platforms that form the Sahel Desertification Network (ReSaD, coordinated by CARI), have been involved in trying to understand what LDN is since the first discussions about it during UNCCD COP.12 in 2015. In Niger and Burkina Faso, LDN target setting programs have been launched under governmental leadership. ReSaD’s platform represents civil society in national LDN processes. At the same time ReSaD’s platform participates in technical committees along with representatives of ministries and central technical services. However this participation remains mainly symbolic. As National LDN targets are to be set from a national scale to local scales, CSOs should be seen as key stakeholders who must be involved in LDN implementation processes besides local authorities. A first step for local authorities could be to integrate LDN targets in their local development planning activities. Three essential dimensions must also be taken into account to define and implement LDN: the population, ecosystems and local scale characteristics. Manon Albagnac (CARI) underscored the necessity to include specific components regarding population and socio-economics for evaluating LDN implementation impact and monitoring, and not to restrict the evaluation solely to biophysical measurements.

Synthesis provided by Mélanie Requier-Desjardins, based on the DNI, ICoN SLM and CARI side-event UNCCD COP.13

ICoN SLM obtained accreditation as an observer to the UNCCD COP13

The thirteenth session of the Conference of Parties (COP 13) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) decided to grant observer status to the Independent Consortium of Scientific and Knowledge Networks on Land Degradation, Desertification and Sustainable Land Management (ICoN SLM). ICoN SLM international
association, founded by DesernetNet International (DNI), the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) and the Global Network of Dryland Research Institutes (GNDRI), is now on the list of civil society organizations with accredited status with the Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD.

More information available at: http://www2.unccd.int/sites/default/files/sessions/documents/2017-09/ICCD_COP%2813%29_17-1714932E.pdf

Information provided by the DNI Bureau

AFR100 and the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative

AFR100 is an unprecedented joint effort led by 24 African countries to restore 100 million hectares of land by 2030. The goal is to increase food security, alleviate poverty, and make Africa more resilient to climate change. Forest Landscape Restoration is the process of recovering ecological functionality and enhancing human well-being across degraded forest landscapes. Niger hosted the second AFR100 partnership meeting in its capital, Niamey in September 2017.

The initiative is supported by the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), and German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ).

To view specific country commitments please visit: http://www.landscapes.org/afr100/#a-country-commitments

Information provided by: María José Marqués. Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

DesertNet International attended the Francophone Day organized by the Institut Francophone du Développement Durable (IFDD)

DNI attended the Francophone Day organized by the Institut Francophone du Développement Durable (IFDD) on Thursday 7 September 2017. The day consisted of three main stages: the presentation of the negotiating guide of the UNCCD, the presentation of a special issue of the Bulletin Liaison Énergie Francophonie no.105, “desertification and land system: from recognition / knowledge to action”, and an exchange workshop on the operationalization of LDN.

The guide to the negotiations is available in French and English at: http://www.ifdd.francophonie.org/ressources/ressources-pub.php?id=13. The document not only highlights the facts, but also targets some hot issues or key points that should be closely followed.

Niger’s delegates announced the organization of a high level conference on desertification and green economy initiated by the President of the Republic of Niger. The Conference is due to be held in Niamey, from 11 to 13 December 2017.

The Liaison Énergie et Francophonie’s special issue on “desertification and land system: from recognition/knowledge” is a broader publication covering a full range of different aspects of desertification and land degradation written by numerous authors. It is available at: http://www.ifdd.francophonie.org/ressources/ressources-pub-desc.php?id=709, a synthesis in English will be available soon here: http://www.ifdd.francophonie.org/ressources/ressources-pub.php?id=1
This special issue of LEF provides a comprehensive overview of the state of knowledge on desertification and measures to combat land degradation. It involved different types of stakeholders: politicians, scientists, civil society actors and representatives of international scientific and political organizations and panels. Several important points emerged, including emphasis on:

- Recognition of the global character and societal dimension of desertification
- Demonstration of the need to take into account the multidimensional, multiscale, multi-level character of desertification
- The best compromise is to be sought in 3 directions: short-term goals vs. long-term vision – Integrated actions (agro-socio-ecological) on small territories vs. sectoral actions on vast territories – social and environmental dimensions integrating wealth balance.

This was the starting point to identify scientific axes to be investigated by research programs:

- In Complex Systems Science: To invent, consolidate and generalize approaches, models and tools
- In social and cognitive sciences: to define organizational rules for societies and their territories that recognize the rights of all
- At the interface of social and environmental sciences: to enrich knowledge about the mechanisms that bind people to the environment, supporting their health and wellbeing
- In engineering sciences and technological innovations: to innovate and mobilize more technologies that can make better use of the natural resources of these dry regions while improving access to services for populations.

Civil Society representatives argued on the need to anchor science in regions to be able to consolidate scientific knowledge of communities and to take stock of traditional knowledge to develop, in a participatory and inclusive manner, scientific research programs which will benefit all.

A presentation by CARI based on the document stemming from the the Desertif’Action Summit held in Strasbourg in June 2017 highlighted the efficiency of preparatory meetings of non-State actors before international negotiation meetings. In Strasbourg, the meeting focused more on the role and responsibilities of local authorities in combating land degradation. Some of the twelve key points discussed in working groups have been summarized as needing more attention: water management, migration, decentralized cooperation, energy and the 4 per 1000 initiative.

www.desertif-action.org

The third session of the Francophone Day was dedicated to LDN. IRD’s representative presented the conceptual framework for LDN, which had been developed by the SPI (see the first article of this newsletter). Emphasis was given to the scientific content and the need for its local adaptation, and especially the use of the outlined set of indicators. The Global Mechanism (GM) gave an overview of the current status of the LDN target setting program. Delegates from Burkina Faso, Madagascar and Niger shared their national experiences on setting national LDN targets.

Delegates were particularly concerned about the availability and quality of data to elaborate the baseline assessment of LDN and for monitoring their targets. Financing issues also raised concerns. Also, the need to develop the capacities of stakeholders not only for collecting data, but also in the use of indicators was underlined. The added value of investments in bright spots to up-scale good practices was noted as a way to promote transformative projects not only in identified spots but also in the other zones where economic profitability of particular actions can be attested.

The role and place of civil society was seen as indispensable in all phases of the integration of target 15.3 (in the elaboration of a baseline reference, in transformative projects, in monitoring and evaluation activities). Delegates also highlighted the new impetus of the new LDN commitment and a new dynamic characterized by a more critical and more realistic approach: Targeting LDN defines what needs to be done and whom and what mechanisms are needed
to do the work. Capacity building of new generations on green entrepreneurship was identified as necessary in order to cope with natural resource scarcity and to take advantage of opportunities.

_Information provided by: Wafa Essahli, former chair of DNI_

**The Global Land Outlook (GLO)**

The first edition of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification’s (UNCCD) Global Land Outlook (GLO) was published in September 2017. The GLO is a strategic communications platform and publication. The first edition of the GLO provides a new strategy of the UNCCD, and was launched in September 2017 during the UNCCD COP.13. The report emphasizes the crucial importance of land’s quality to sustain human well-being. This comprehensive report provides a new and transformative vision for land management policy, planning and practice at global and national scales. It also reports on the current and future state of the land resources globally.

The reports of the GLO are intended to be published regularly every four years, and will address land rehabilitation and restoration and also its management in the context of sustainable development. Important links with food, water, energy and human security; biodiversity conservation; development; land tenure, governance, gender and migrations are outlined in the GLO.

The key messages of this communication platform and report can be found at
[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5694c48bd82d5e9597570999/t/595218ac20099e11d3ec0cb6/1498552493099/GLO_Key_Messages.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5694c48bd82d5e9597570999/t/595218ac20099e11d3ec0cb6/1498552493099/GLO_Key_Messages.pdf)

The full report and working papers can be downloaded at [www.unccd.int/glo](http://www.unccd.int/glo)

_Information provided by: María José Marqués. Universidad Autónoma de Madrid_

**AgreenSkills a Postdoctoral Fellowship Programme**

This Programme is co-funded by the European Union and coordinated by INRA, in collaboration with the French Agricultural, Veterinary and Forestry Institute to promote international mobility for early career scientists (post PhD) with up to 10 years of research experience. There are no conditions regarding nationality, or country of origin; the only aim being to attract the best researchers, and bring together researchers with complementary expertise, from around the world.

Research projects can be basic or applied from all fields of Life, Food and Environmental Sciences which may contribute to scientific domains of Agreenium-IAVFF members i.e. Agriculture and Forestry, Food and Nutrition, Environment, and Animal Health.

The next call for applications is 13th October.

More information at [https://www.agreenskills.eu/Applications/Submission-schedule](https://www.agreenskills.eu/Applications/Submission-schedule)

_Information provided by: María José Marqués. Universidad Autónoma de Madrid_
Dr. Victor M. Castillo has left the UNCCD Secretariat and returned to the CSIC in Murcia (Spain) as research professor

At the end of September 2017, after 8 years working in the UNCCD Secretariat as a member of the Science, Technology and Implementation (STI) sector, Dr. Victor M. Castillo left the UNCCD Secretariat and went back to his position as research professor at the Soil and Water Conservation Research Group of the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) in Murcia (Spain) (http://www.cebas.csic.es/dep_english/soil/erosion/erosion_lineas_en.html ; http://www.soilwaterconservation.es/). DNI, as all CSOs with an observer status to the UNCCD, received a message from Dr. Victor M. Castillo in which he expressed his thanks for their contribution to the work of the UNCCD.

Information provided by the DNI Bureau

2. Researchers’ Updates

The FAO starts a three-country project on the use of non-conventional water

The Food and Agriculture Organization for the United Nations (FAO) organized inception meetings in Muscat, Algiers and Cairo, as a start of a three-country (Algeria, Egypt and Oman) project on the use of non-conventional water for sustainable integrated agri-aquaculture development in the Near East and North Africa region. This project will be gathering relevant stakeholders working in the fields of inland aquaculture and water management in arid lands. In Cairo the meeting was opened by FAO Egypt representative, Hussein Gadain, who stated that "this project aims to coordinate, promote and develop the national potential on effective water-smart integrated agriculture-aquaculture production in the region, enhancing rural employment and food security, while considering the sustainable use and conservation of the aquatic resources."


Information provided by: Gerard Begni, DNI – CSFD/CAC

New fund launched to support the achievement of Land Degradation Neutrality

Most of the funding to tackle land degradation (c. 90%) comes from public funds. In order to diversify the funding landscape and help boost resourcing to tackle land degradation, the UNCCD’s Global Mechanism has been working with private sector partners and investors to develop a new form of funding. With an initial target size of US$300 million, the new Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) fund is a novel investment vehicle that leverages public money to raise private capital to help with landscape restoration activities linked to Sustainable Development Goal target 15.3 “striving towards a land degradation neutral world”. Information about the launch of the new fund at the UNCCD COP in Ordos, China can be found through the following links:

[http://www2.unccd.int/news-events/ldn-fund-officially-launched](http://www2.unccd.int/news-events/ldn-fund-officially-launched)


Information provided by: Lindsay Stringer, Sustainability Research Institute, University of Leeds
3. Important upcoming events

List of links to next meetings regarding desertification, water conservation and land degradation.

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<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<td>Forty-fourth Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS 44)</td>
<td>Rome, Lazio, Italy</td>
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<tr>
<td>6-9 Nov</td>
<td>6th International Conference on Deserts, Drylands &amp; Desertification (DDD)</td>
<td>Negev, Israel</td>
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<td>6-17 Nov</td>
<td>UNFCCC COP23</td>
<td>Bonn, Germany</td>
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<td>28–30 Nov</td>
<td>Sustainable Intensification</td>
<td>Harpenden, Herts UK</td>
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<td>28-30 Nov</td>
<td>2017 Global Science Conference. Climate Smart Agriculture</td>
<td>Johannesburg, South Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 Oct - 14 Nov</td>
<td>39th Session of the UNESCO General Conference</td>
<td>Paris, France</td>
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<tr>
<td>12-14 Dec</td>
<td>2nd International Conf. Improving Sustainability Concept in Developing Countries</td>
<td>Cairo, Egypt</td>
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<td>19-20 Dec</td>
<td>Global Landscapes Forum</td>
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<td>22-24 Jan</td>
<td>Living Territories</td>
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<td>20–22 Jun</td>
<td>Environmental Impact 2018</td>
<td>Naples, Italy</td>
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<tr>
<td>12-13 Sep</td>
<td>6th International Conference on Sustainable Development 2018</td>
<td>Rome, Italy</td>
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Information provided by DNI Bureau

World Soil Day 2017- "Land, Soils and Science" Conference

This year’s celebration of World Soil Day is devoted to the topical research needs for soil and land use. The "Land, Soils and Science" Conference will be held in IBGE in Brussels/Belgium from 4th to 6th December 2017 and will present and discuss current state-of-the-art and pressing gaps in European research on land and soils from the perspectives of policy makers, funders and end-users of research and scientists.


The event is organised by the EU H2020 CSA INSPIRATION - [http://www.inspiration-h2020.eu/](http://www.inspiration-h2020.eu/)
You can register to take part in the entire event or parts of it. Further information will be provided at [http://www.worldsoilday2017.eu/](http://www.worldsoilday2017.eu/) soon. Register on this website or by email to peggy.koenig@uba.de

Information provided by: Lindsay Stringer, Sustainability Research Institute, University of Leeds

4. Publications and Special Issues


Information provided by DNI Bureau

Abstract

The application of remote sensing in land cover change monitoring is a very efficient tool for landscape management in arid regions. To assess the spatial-temporal dynamics, of vegetation, in the southern region of Sidi Bel Abbes, for the period (2001- 2014), Landsat and MODIS NDVI data were processed and analysed using remote sensing software. The obtained results confirm that the steppe region is highly degraded in the south and in the south-east, with light progression of vegetation noticed in the north and the north-west of the study area. The increase of vegetation cover is related to the reforestation actions, engaged by the forest services. For decision makers, the use of satellite imagery can improve the strategic conservation and management plans of the steppe ecosystem.

Keywords: Steppe; Land use; Vegetation dynamics; Landsat; MODIS; Sidi Bel Abbes

the text is available at: https://www.nepjol.info/index.php/IJE/article/view/18098/14729

Information provided by: Wael El Zerey, Djillali Liabes University

Restore desertified areas with an innovative tree growing method to increase resilience: the green link project in Valencian community (Spain)

In the Mediterranean area, semi-arid regions are suffering temperature increases and significant declines in water availability. It is necessary to implement adaptation measures aimed at reducing the vulnerability of ecosystems and strengthening their resilience. The Green Link Project (LIFE15 CCA/ES/000125) is aimed to prove the advantages of an innovative tree growing method based on a “water bucket” system: The Cocoon. This system, made out of recycled carton, is very water-efficient, low-cost and 100% biodegradable. The research is addressed by scientists from the Desertification Research Centre (CIDE) and the Fundació General Universitat de València (Gimeno-García, E; Campo, J. and Andreu, V.)

The Desertification Research Centre is working in two trial areas in the Valencian Community (Jijona and Tous). In Jijona the goals are to improve the extremely dry and eroded soils in an abandoned cropland by planting adapted species (Quercus ilex, Ceratonia siliqua, Arbutus unedo, etc.), and to offer an economic alternative by planting Olea europea. In Tous, the objective is to recover an area burned in 2012 by using also autochthonous species with this technology.

Information provided by: Julián M. Campo, Centro de Investigaciones sobre Desertificación CIDE (CSIC-UV-GV)
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A beautiful camel culture is dying

Cholistan desert is one of the most precious, beautiful, diversified and living deserts of the world. This desert is home to a wide diversity of animal genetic resources nonetheless the camel is the most unique and special as it provides accessibility in the desert and ensures milk provision in conditions where other animals ceased to be productive.

The camel in the Cholistan desert is mainly kept and managed by the Marrecha (a tribe in the desert known as the custodian of the Marrecha camel), hence gets its name as the Marrecha. Marrecha camel is a multipurpose camel,
gifted with the special genetic traits, providing accessibility in the deep desert as well as providing food (especially milk) in the harsh and hostile conditions of the desert.

Unfortunately, this precious camel heritage is dying because of many reasons, all man-made. Some of the main issues are (1) the neglect of camel keepers during the policymaking so their voices are not heard, (2) misguided development projects, (3) land grabbing and (4) climate change impact.

The reality is sour; the desert is changing into the wreckage of the dead and failed projects and the emerging but noxious agricultural fields on grabbed lands.

For details, please go to the links below:


Information provided by: Abdul Raziq, Camel Association of Pakistan

---- Editorial Board ----

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