



THE ECONOMICS OF
LAND DEGRADATION

A Global Initiative for
Sustainable Land
Management



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In this issue:

The meeting in Antalya laid the foundation for the implementation of the ELD Initiative in Central Asia

The ELD CA Initiative held a working meeting in Ashgabat
Communication issues have been identified

A working meeting of the group of Tajik specialists

ELD CA paths of cooperation are being determined

A 6-step approach to issues of the Economics of Land Degradation

The meeting in Antalya laid the foundation for the implementation of the ELD-Initiative

From 23 to 25 February 2015, in Antalya, Turkey, an introductory and training workshop “Valuation of Economics of Land Degradation to Improve Management of Land Resources in Central Asia” was held. The primary organizers of the event included the Secretariat of the Economics of Land Degradation (ELD Secretariat), hosted by GIZ, and the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA). The Turkish Government, with the involvement of the Turkish National Focal Point for the

Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), contributed to, and cofounded, the meeting. The meeting invited representatives of Focal Points of Central Asian UNCCD parties, prospective project partners from Central Asia and Europe, specialists involved in the project, as well as representatives of Turkish science and business circles. During the meeting, the participants familiarized themselves with the economic valuation, looked at possible research methods, and discussed the attraction of prospective partners. For instance, the meeting discussed opportunities for the involvement of Turkish specialists in the study of Kazakh forests. The meeting resulted in the Initiative’s draft action plan for the region.



Photo (left): Participants of the ELD Meeting in Antalya; Photo (right): Working meeting of ELD specialists in Ashgabat. Photo by: O. Guchgeldyev

The ELD CA Initiative held a working meeting in Ashgabat

As part of the International Water Conference as organized and held by the Turkmen Government on 2-3 April 2015, specialists of ELD teams participating in the conference held a working meeting with the involvement of the ELD Regional Focal Point, a representative of the Regional Office and an Ecological Economist of ICARDA. The main objectives of this two-day meeting included reviewing research plans by countries, discussing the research methodologies in countries, discussing logistical and contractual issues, and agreeing on a detailed workplan.

The meeting resulted in the discussion of the selection of pilot areas in each country and the agreement of technical aspects of field studies. The economist responded to all questions concerning the selection of research methods and participated in the discussion of information collection techniques. In addition, the meeting utilized the experience of the economic valuation's application in the Central Asian region. The meeting participants gained the necessary information and report to study and adapt best practices as part of the Initiative.

The meeting was supported by the Turkmen Government that provided facilities, lodging and catering for the participants.

Communication issues have been identified

Issues of communication among specialists and provision of information about operations to all stakeholders are key to a successful

implementation and introduction of the

The Initiative's main milestones:

Preparation of the visit schedule – 25 April 2015

Description of the current state of land, identification of land management alternatives – 12 June 2015

Economic analysis including the cost-benefit analysis – 31 July 2015

Preparation of the first draft of National Reports – 28 August 2015

Presentation of the final draft of National Reports – 15 September 2015

Initiative's results.

During a recently held meeting in Ashgabat, ELD specialists discussed and agreed issues concerning communication among research participants, project partners and stakeholders. Regular online-based communication was agreed to be used for better coordination of teams' activities. In order to receive scientific support, there will be also be a regular exchange to ICARDA specialists. In addition, all information will be transmitted by specialists as part of a general regular e-mail to include e-mail addresses of all specialists and partners. In order to inform national partners about project results, the meeting participants decided to prepare a monthly newsletter to be disseminated among all stakeholders. Additionally, the specialists prepared a list of informational online resources and projects that can be used to study best sustainable land use practices.

A working meeting of a group of



Tajik specialists

As part of a regional conference “Adaptation to Climate Change in Central Asia – enhanced resilience through ecosystem-based Adaptation” run by GIZ in Dushanbe on 9 April 2015, a working meeting was held by ELD specialists in Tajikistan. The meeting was attended by local GIZ representatives Claudia Haller and Umed Vakhobov as well as the Initiative’s Regional Focal Point Oleg Guchgeldyev. The Tajik team includes Rakhmon Shukurov, Lead Specialist, Murod Ergashev, Data Specialist, and Khisravshokh Shermatov, GIS Specialist.



Photo by: O. Guchgeldyev

Primary points of the discussions included research and traveling plans, methods of economic valuation of ecosystem services, and other organizational aspects. In particular, the meeting resulted in an agreement to engage Madina Imaraliyeva into the Initiative’s team activities who will join the team as an intern Economist. Madina holds a master’s degree in environmental science from Wageningen University, The Netherlands, as well as a master’s degree in Economics from the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University. With GIZ Regional Program’s support, Madina will be able to join the team after 27 April 2015.

The ELD CA paths of cooperation are being determined

The Initiative is actively working to engage in cooperation as many stakeholders as possible. Currently, the Initiative’s political partners include national focal points for the UNCCD. The Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development approved the Initiative and directed Commission’s Science and Information Center to identify paths of cooperation with ELD CA by November 2015. The Initiative established a working partnership with GIZ and its FLERMONECA Project, is working to establish cooperation with the Regional Ecological Center in Central Asia (REC CA), and is negotiating with similar UNDP projects in Kazakhstan. In addition, the ELD Secretariat is actively negotiating with the FAO World Food Programme to cooperate under the upcoming Phase 2 of the Central Asian Initiative for Land Management (CACILM II). Currently, the World Bank commences the implementation of a climate change project whose major components will include socioeconomic research. The Secretariat is actively negotiating with this project too.

A 6-step approach to issues of the Economics of Land Degradation

Step 1. Determine the size, area, location, spatial scale and strategic focus of the study, prepare narrative materials on the socioeconomic and environmental content of the study.

Step 2. Identify geographic characteristics including assessment of quality, geographic distribution and ecological characteristics of types of cover as distributed among agriecological zones and analyzed using GIS.

Step 3. Types of ecosystem services including an analysis of the stock and flow of ecosystem

services for each type of cover based on a system of ecosystem services.

Step 4. Role of ecosystem services and economic valuation including the role of assessed ecosystem services in the lives of communities residing in the study area as well as their role in the overall economic growth of the area.

This Step includes the assessment of the Total Economic Value of these ecosystem services to identify the cost of action or inaction.

Step 5. Identify trends, drivers and pressure of land degradation on sustainable land management.

Step 6. Assess options for sustainable land management. Select and assess options from the perspective of environmental and economic viability of strategic decision making or introduction of technologies.

Next step, naturally, must be about implementing actions!

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