

Thema 2: Landdegradatie en verwoestijning

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In search for remediation on the ground

Land degradation and desertification imply the reduction of ability of land to provide ecosystem services vital for human existence, specifically in dry areas. Causes derive from combinations of social, political, economic and natural factors which vary from region to region. Examples are population pressure or policies leading to the unsustainable use of water or land.

Scientists believe that 10 to 20% of the world's drylands are affected by desertification (MA, 2005). There is a great deal at stake - safeguarding the livelihoods of more than 250 million people living in dryland regions. But the crucial question is: can desertification, initiated and exacerbated by climate change, be remediated?

The largest international initiative for remediation is the UNCCD. It has yielded limited results in the past decades, and needs support from science in guiding the way to getting remediation strategies implemented on the ground.



Local solutions should be the departure point for reaching success in remediating desertification on a global level.

Sound scientific evidence of implementation on the ground is required for an increased public support for and investment in the mission of the UNCCD.

Support and political commitment to institutional reforms at national and international levels are key to combating desertification.

Research projects from Wageningen UR have strong characteristics to help remediation on the ground:



Stakeholder involvement

Stakeholders addressed include land managers, local scientists, regional governments and policy makers. Land managers are involved at various levels of the research (identifying, selecting, trialing remediation strategies, dissemination). The UNCCD is addressed in the DESIRE project.

Policy effects

Policy effects are incorporated and quantified in modelling frameworks (DESIRE, LUPIS) to assess effects of remediation strategies.

Capacity building

In all projects, local scientists and land managers are trained on aspects of sustainable land management, in using models and in facilitating stakeholder meetings.

Variety of instruments

A variety of instruments has been developed and applied in Wageningen UR projects: participatory methods for identifying, documenting and selecting SLM measures, for land use planning, and modeling frameworks to assess the effects of SLM strategies.

Integration

WUR projects in LDD research have a strong focus on the integration of different domains within science (biophysical/technical vs socio-economical), the use of indigenous knowledge on SLM strategies, and the integration between scientists from developed and developing countries.

Upscaling

DESIRE is one of the first research initiatives upscaling biophysical and socio-economic assessments of remediation strategies to regional and global scales.