



THE ECONOMICS OF
LAND DEGRADATION

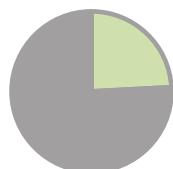
A global initiative
for **sustainable**
land management



www.eld-initiative.org
#ecolandeg

Economics of Land Degradation (ELD) Initiative

A global initiative for sustainable land management



24%

of the world's
usable lands
are degraded

The growing loss of arable land: An alarming development

Land degradation and desertification threaten fertile land and the benefits human society derives from it throughout the world. On a global scale, around 10 to 20% of drylands and 24% of the world's usable lands are degraded. The consequences are alarming: reduced availability of clean water, increased vulnerability of the affected areas to climate change, food insecurity and poverty. It is appraised that 1.5 billion people in all parts of the world are already directly affected through reduced income or food security. The annual economic losses due to deforestation and land degradation were estimated at 1.5–3.4 trillion Euro in 2008, equaling 3.3%–7.5% of the global GDP in 2008. (ELD, 2013). Competition for the scarce resources of soil and water is further intensified by the growing world population and increasing demand for alternative land management products.

Every year, around 24 billion tons of fertile farmland worldwide is lost due to soil sealing, erosion and desertification. The on-going degradation of fertile soil must be halted if Earth is to sufficiently provide land based ecosystem services for its ever growing number of inhabitants.

The huge costs of land degradation call for investments in actions reducing land degradation such as adoption of sustainable land management practices. More work is required to obtain reliable figures for the economic costs of land degradation as the basis for decision making.

Better data for better policies

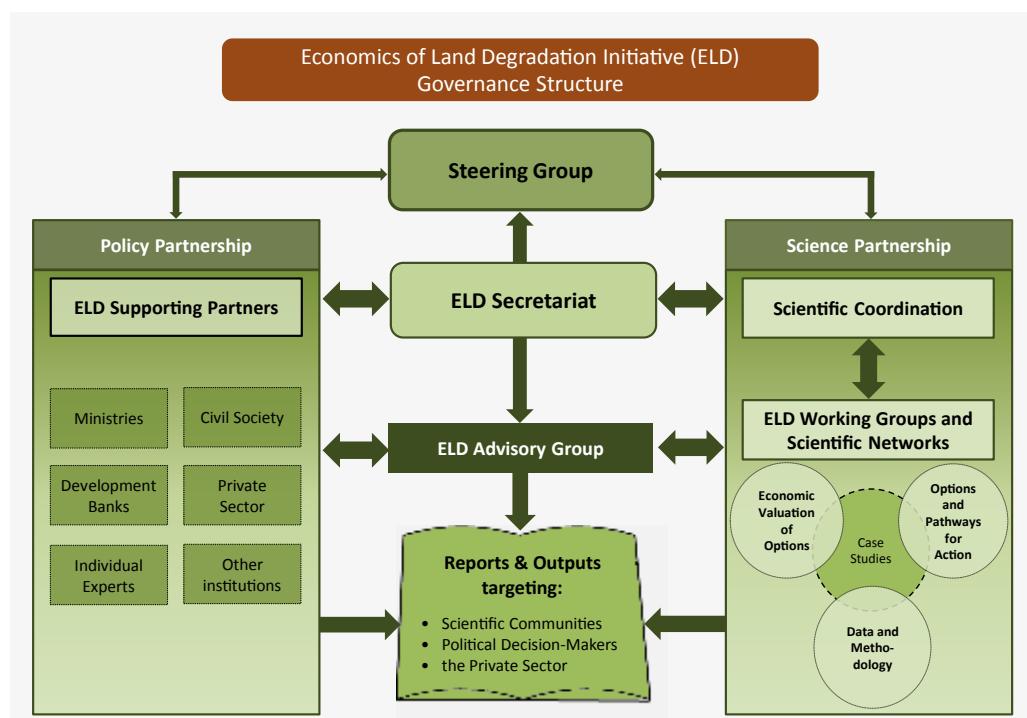
The ELD Initiative aims to provide data on the vital questions, which need to be addressed in order to solve the problem of progressing land degradation: How high are the social and economic costs of land degradation? What are the short- and long-term benefits of applicable sustainable land management (SLM) approaches? What costs and efforts would suitable counteractions involve and what specific measures need to be implemented?

Policy-makers, businesses, farmers' organizations, finance institutions and other stakeholders need a scientifically sound basis for making decisions that will ensure the long-term conservation of productive land. A global scientific assessment of the economic dimension of land degradation and the added value of sustainable land use is essential as a foundation for strategies and decisions in pursuit of preventing a further loss of the natural resource base.

The ELD Initiative seeks to draw the attention of decision makers on all levels to the economic aspects of land degradation and ensure that this is integrated into natural resource accounting and decision-making processes.

Who we are

The ELD Initiative is a platform for stakeholders from the policy sector, science and the private sector, aiming at a globally relevant data on the economic benefits of land



and land based ecosystems. It highlights the potential benefits derived from adopting SLM practices and seeks to establish a universal approach for analysis of the economics of land degradation.

Our Vision

To transform global understanding of the value of land and to create awareness for the economic case based on both market and non-market values for SLM in preventing the loss of natural capital, preserving ecosystem services, combating climate change and addressing food, energy and water security.

Our Objectives

To prepare and present a cost-benefit analysis in the context of land degradation. It will enable decision-makers in politics and business to take the necessary measures for better rural development, food security, long term economic returns and promotes SLM.

In the scientific realm, the ELD Initiative systematizes available studies of the economics of land degradation and facilitates agreements on scientific and methodological standards. This approach will provide reliable data and application-oriented tools urgently needed as a basis for policy-making, investment decisions and public awareness raising.

Reports

The ELD reports, based on state of the art research provided by a world-wide network of researchers and practitioners will be published aiming at the three ELD target groups: namely Scientific Communities, Political Decision Makers, and the Private Sector.

The on-going scientific research, conducted within three working groups will contribute to each of the reports, based on relevance of material to audiences. These working groups (WG) include:

- WG Data and Methodology
- WG Policy Options and Pathways for Action
- WG Economic Valuation of Options

Publication of the reports is planned successively for the first half of 2015. This is with a view to impact the debate about development policy, food security, green growth and rural development in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and in recognition of 2015 as the International Year of Soils.

Steps accomplished

Since its establishment in 2010, the key working bodies of the Initiative namely the ELD Secretariat, the scientific co-ordinators and the WGs have been established and a number of case studies, selected on the basis of a thorough gap analysis, are under way. This, with the support from the partners has enabled the successful production of two publications, ELD Scientific Interim Report and ELD Business Brief. The Initiative continues to generate widespread interest that has seen a growth in its networks with scientists and experts from different disciplines worldwide.



The Initiative has succeeded in raising awareness on the importance of the study on economics of land degradation and its contribution in promoting the practice of SLM. It also commands attention from the international development discussions, e.g. in the UNCCD COP 11 decisions, which recognizes the need for economic assessment of desertification, SLM and resilience of arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas.

Let's create a strong partnership!

The Memorandum of Understanding between the ELD core partners created an avenue for additional partners to join the Initiative.

The ELD Secretariat is now running under GIZ and is responsible for coordinating the ELD work process. It also serves as the contact point to the partners in providing political, financial and administrative coordination to the network.

Throughout the year 2014–2015, ELD Initiative will present interim results and key reports at a number of international key events namely the World Economic Forum (WEF), United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and the 12th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP 12).

***Soil counts –
preserve it!***

Join us in the ELD Initiative

We are open to contributions from governments and the private sector, from multilateral and bilateral donors, from foundations and development organizations. Our Initiative seeks cooperation with NGOs, international businesses, finance institutions, farmers and agricultural associations, universities and research institutions. We appreciate and call upon the continued support from our broad network of scientists in different disciplines, expert economists and experts from the world of business.

We offer:

- State of the art findings of the ELD Initiative for better decision making.
- Guidance and support through the ELD structure and our extensive network.
- Visibility and outreach in the exchange with science, policy and the private sector
- Engagement in international framework setting processes.

Become part of this important worldwide partnership and contribute to a rich harvest for the benefit of all.



THE ECONOMICS OF LAND DEGRADATION

ELD Initiative Mission Statement

Through an open inter-disciplinary partnership:

- We develop a holistic framework for the consideration of the economic values of land in political decision making processes;
- We compile and build a compelling economics case for benefits derived from sustainable management practices the sustainable management of land and soil on a global and local scale;
- We estimate the economic costs resulting from the degradation of land and related ecosystem services and compare them to costs of protecting the land;
- We sharpen awareness of the value of land and related ecosystem services;
- We will propose effective solutions, policies and activities to reduce land degradation, mitigate climate change and deliver food, energy and water security worldwide.

More information at:

www.eld-initiative.org

BMZ



Federal Ministry
for Economic Cooperation
and Development



INTERNATIONAL
FOOD POLICY
RESEARCH
INSTITUTE
Supported by the CGIAR

THE GLOBAL
MECHANISM
UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION
TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION

SEI
STOCKHOLM
ENVIRONMENT
INSTITUTE

UNITED NATIONS:
UNU-INWEH
UNIVERSITY

Zentrum für Entwicklungsforschung
Center for Development Research
University of Bonn

UNIVERSITY
OF WYOMING

This brochure was published with the support of the Partner Organizations of the ELD Initiative and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

For further information and feedback please contact:

ELD Secretariat

Mark Schauer

c/o Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Godesberger Allee 119
53175 Bonn (Germany)

T + 49 228 24934-400
E eld@giz.de

Photography:

Cover © Pascal Eisenschmid - Fotolia.com, Page 3: © GIZ / Michael Tsegaye
Design: MediaCompany – Agentur für Kommunikation GmbH, Bonn Office

Printed in the EU on FSC-certified paper
Bonn, December 2014 ViP
© 2014



www.eld-initiative.org
#ecolandeg