



International Conference on Economics of Land Degradation in Central Asia

November 28-29, 2016

Plaza Hotel, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

Press Release

The annual cost of land degradation in the Central Asian region are estimated to be about **USD 6 billion**. It is often caused by inadequate land management. These are the main findings of research conducted under the **International Economics of Land Degradation (ELD) Initiative** that will be discussed at **the International Conference in Bishkek on November 28-29**.

Representatives of corresponding ministries and agencies from all countries of the Central Asian region, international industry experts, representatives of NGOs, scientific circles, and international donors will come together to share their experiences deliberate the recommendations for the future development of the Central Asian region.

Land degradation and desertification especially in Central Asia are a pressing issue, which not only represent a threat to the diverse regional ecosystems, but also severely affect human wellbeing and economic development. Despite being an extremely large area with varied geography; from highlands and mountains to valleys and vast deserts, Central Asian countries face many similar environmental and agricultural challenges.

Via individual presentations and group discussions, conference participants will discuss how land resources can be managed for a sustainable development. This two-day event will focus on key findings of the research conducted in each of the countries and present the costs of continuing the degradation of land resources. The conference will additionally discuss the benefits of countries' changing the way that land is managed.

This International Conference has been organized by the ELD Initiative in Central Asia in collaboration with its partners: the CGIAR Research Program on Dryland Systems, the GIZ Regional Program for Sustainable and Climate Sensitive Land Use for Economic Development in Central Asia, and the American University of Central Asia.

More information on this event can be received from the Organizing Committee consisting of:

[Hannes Etter](#) | [Nariman Nishanov](#) | [Kanat Sultanaliev](#) | [Tohir Pollaev](#)

*FOR YOUR INFORMATION: In 2015, the Economics of Land Degradation ([ELD](#)) Initiative launched the transnational research project “An Assessment of the Economics of Land Degradation for Improved Land Management in Central Asia.” The project includes **Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan** and aims to uncover the costs and benefits of sustainable land management practices as well as opportunities. This information will serve as the basis for drafting relevant and robust evidence-based policy recommendations for national governments and key decision makers in the private and public sectors.*

“Turkmenistan has 38 million hectares of desert pastures, but 50% of these are degraded, decreasing fodder yields. This is caused by a discrepancy in land ownership and livestock ownership, and uncontrolled grazing. The NPV of the ecosystem services of these pastures has decreased from USD 40 to USD 30. An organized pasture management structure is needed to ensure equitable and sustainable use of land which does not exceed the carrying capacity of the pastures,” said Elmar Mamedov, a Team Leader for the Turkmenistan report.

“57 years of studying forest degradation in Kazakhstan informed us that 5.5 thousand hectares of green forests are lost each year due to degradation and fire – equivalent to USD 1.5 million. We need to improve land management and conservation practices to protect our forests and livelihoods,” said Sabit Baizakov, a Team Leader for the Kazakhstan report.

The loss of agricultural production, poor harvest and dying of livestock are all manifestations of a globally widely spread problem: land degradation. Often caused by mismanagement of this important resource, it threatens the very nature of human survival by reducing the amount of food we can yield from our environment. Climate change and population growth are likely to aggravate this problem: we need more from the land at the time when there will be less available. This will lead to greater insecurity – food, energy and water, as well as migration and conflict. But it also presents a threat to economic growth: each year USD 870 to USD 1,450 per person is being lost due to destroyed land.