



THE ECONOMICS OF  
LAND DEGRADATION

## The Economics of Land Degradation (ELD) Initiative

The ELD Initiative makes the value of land count to inform, promote, and scale land solutions for transformative change. ELD is a global initiative that builds bridges between science, policy, and practice. It therewith contributes to a world in which land is managed in a sustainable manner that preserves and restores natural capital including healthy soils, enhances ecosystem services, ensures resilient landscapes and food systems, provides livelihoods, and secures the well-being of people. In this world, land degradation is at least net neutral and preferably significantly reversed.

### ELD's Case for Action

Land resources – soil, water, and biodiversity – provide the foundation for the wealth of our societies and economies. Without them national and international development goals are far out of reach. Land use therefore is the common denominator of the three Rio Conventions; the UNCCD, UNFCCC, and UNCBD.

But this foundation is at risk: 20-40% of the world's land area is degraded with staggering economic and social costs. Already in 2015, the ELD Initiative showed in the "The Value of Land" report that every year ecosystem services worth 10-17 percent of global GDP – 6.3 to 10.6 trillion USD – are lost due to land degradation. One of the major reasons is the persistent failure to account for the true value of land and the ecosystem services it provides.

### Transformative Action for Land

The ELD Initiative was established in 2011 between the UN Convention to Combat

Desertification, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the European Commission to raise awareness for the costs and benefits of land degradation and sustainable land management. Since then, ELD contributed to increase understanding and ambition, most recently evident in the reaffirmed commitment of the international community during the UNCCD COP 15 to restore one billion hectares of degraded land by 2030. The major challenge going forward is to support decision-makers in translating this to real political action for transformative change and the investments needed.

Embracing this vision and challenge, the theme for the new ELD strategy beginning in 2023 will be 'Transformative Action for Land'. The ELD Initiative will deliver its activities in three strategic and interconnected action areas:

#### Provide tools and data

Provide tools, methods, data, and datasets on the value of land that can inform the use of transformative land solutions as well as conceptual and cross-cutting knowledge on land solutions themselves.

#### Promote land solutions

Promote the use of land solutions by informing decision-making at global, national, or local level with evidence and knowledge and by supporting and engaging relevant stakeholders at all levels.

#### Partnerships and communication

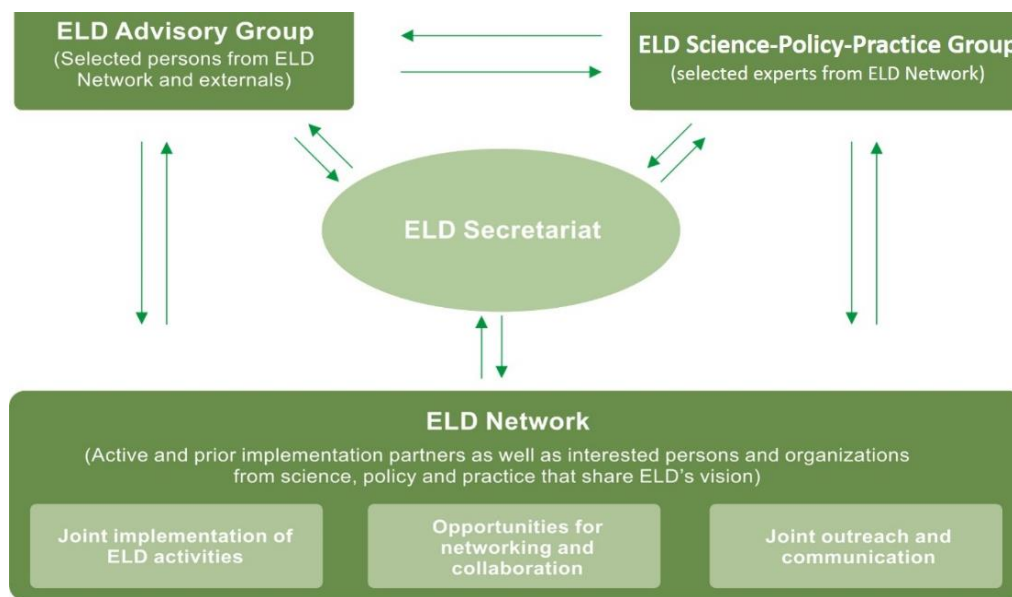
Scale approaches through working, exchanging, and learning in a multi-disciplinary network, with strong partnerships, capacity-building, and communication while linking to current policy discourses.



## How the ELD Initiative works

The ELD Initiative works at the interface of science, policy, and practice and draws on a global network of committed professionals from science, policy, civil society, practice, international and development organisations, and consultancies. The initiative is supported with funds from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) that are matched with project-related resources and in-kind contributions from its partners.

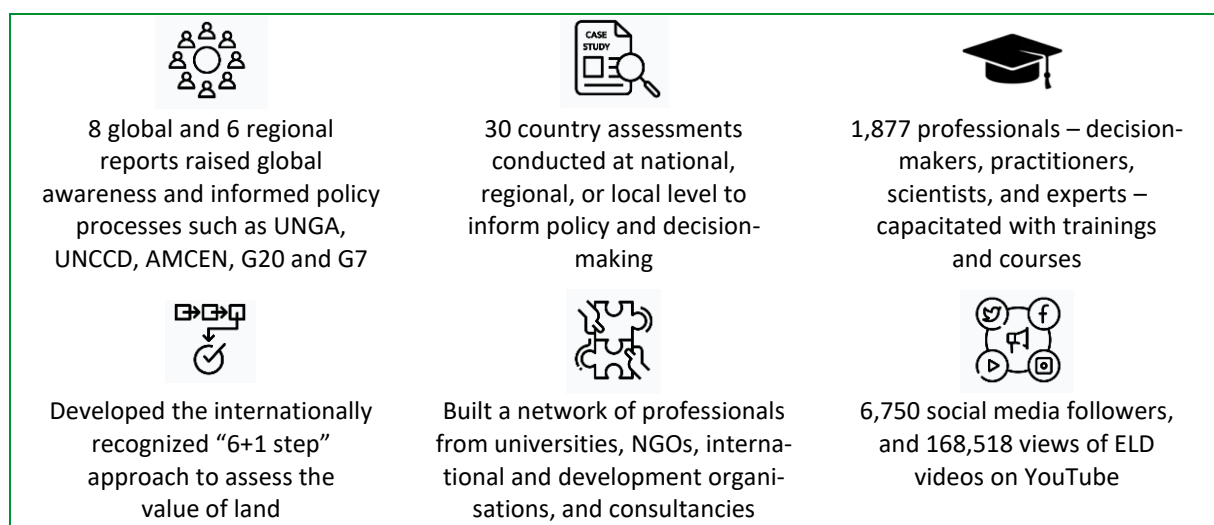
To strengthen its science-policy interface and leverage the unique ELD partner engagement, the initiative will enhance the formalisation of its structures. Core will remain the ELD Network of partners and the ELD Secretariat, which is hosted by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationalen Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). Strategic and technical guidance and support will be provided by two newly established bodies, the ELD Science-Policy-Practice Group and the ELD Advisory Group.



## What ELD has achieved

The ELD Initiative looks back at one decade of intensive action to raise awareness and

understanding for the costs of land degradation and benefits of sustainable land management around the world.



### Economics of Land Degradation (ELD) Initiative

A global science-policy initiative for sustainable land management and ecosystem restoration

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