

February 2022

Economics of Land Degradation Initiative Newsletter



News from the ELD Network
A Service by the ELD Secretariat



Photo: Nina, ELD.

Dear fellow ELDies, friends and colleagues,

After a longer break, I am happy to introduce this next edition of our ELD Newsletter. There is a lot to report since the last time, and a lot of interesting upcoming activities and announcements. First, there have been some changes within the ELD Secretariat. After a long time as the ELD Secretariat Coordinator, Mark Schauer has decided to dedicate himself to the exciting task of ecosystem restoration in Africa and is moving with his family to Rwanda. In July last year, I was therefore pleased to take over the management and coordination of the ELD Secretariat from him. This coincides with an important watershed moment for our network; ELD has now been in operation for a decade!

To commemorate our decade of achievement together, we have produced a '10 years of ELD' video, which celebrates our work over the years.

There is a lot we can look back to and celebrate what we have achieved so far, and at the same time, a new decade for ELD begins. This is an opportunity to reflect: what political demands and

needs will and should shape ELD's work in the coming decade? What do we want to contribute to with our network - with which toolbox and on which strategic tracks? This is what we will be looking at our next meeting in early February. I am very much looking forward to this exchange with representatives from the political sphere, which can inspire and orient the reflections and considerations in our network. But of course, not only ELD has been busy over the last year. Several exciting projects and initiatives by our partners and in our network have been launched or finalised. They include the State of Finance report in the cooperation with UNEP and the World Economic Forum, which will continue this year in an expanded form. There was also the launch of a three-year collaboration between ELD, ANU und WOTR to develop an Integrated Farming Model tool for resilient agricultural and food systems in Australia and India. We are also setting up a new ELD study on behalf of the Mekong River Commission to assess the costs and benefits of nature-based solutions in a sub-basin of the Mekong River.

We would like to take this time to thank you, as a partner and member of the ELD network, for working to reveal the true value of land together with us and supporting the ELD Initiative over the past 10 years. We look forward to continuing to work with you for the next decade!

And now, I wish you happy reading!

Best regards,
Nina

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Enhancing terrestrial natural capital restoration to achieve the SDGs



Photo: Binh Dang, © GIZ.

Given the critical role that natural capital and ecosystem services play in maintaining biodiversity, enabling green growth, and achieving the SDGs, the Green Growth Knowledge Partnership (GGKP) and the ELD Initiative joined forces to develop and apply new methods for terrestrial natural capital restoration.

In the first phase, country studies in India, Kyrgyzstan, and Rwanda were conducted, demonstrating how restoring terrestrial natural capital and capitalist co-benefits can go hand in hand to achieve this. See publication section below for reports.

In an upcoming second phase, studies in Cameroon and Mauretania build the core of the joint work in cooperation with GIZ partner projects. GGKP will also apply this method in marine ecosystems and degraded land in Nigeria.

Integrated Farm Modelling to Improve Resilience and Sustainable Prosperity



Photo: Amol Sonar, Unsplash.

The project began in September 2021, supported by the Australian Research Council, ELD, and National Australia Bank. Scientists at the Australian National University will be working with regional farms and farmers and Watershed Organisation Trust (WOTR) to measure, model and improve management of natural resources. The modelling tools will incorporate daily environmental inputs of climate, water, carbon and nutrients to simulate above and below ground plant growth of different crops and pasture systems. This is a new effort that looks at the fact that agro-ecosystems are complex, dynamic systems that operate on regional, national and global scales and in multiple economic frameworks. The farm simulation model will address the government's soil and water science and research priorities by providing a modelling framework across the soil-atmosphere-water system, allowing better understanding of the sustainable limits for productive use of soil, freshwater, river flows and water rights, and develop solutions for restoration and remediation of soil and water. It will allow farmers, bankers, and land managers to better assess the value of natural, social, human, and built capital assets on farms and make better investment decisions. This will improve resilience, long-term prosperity, and well-being, for farmers, bankers, and society as a whole.

In a second phase, spatially explicit models will aid land managers in making decisions about mixed land use and seasonal rotations to provide options to weather extreme conditions of drought and/or flood. Plant growth, yield, and management options were valued economically inclusive of natural capital, ecosystem services and agronomic outputs to justify investment decisions for long term sustainability and prosperity for farmers, communities, and agro-ecosystems.

Integrated Land Use Planning: A participatory process



Photo: Imagineearth, Unsplash.

To facilitate easy access to different types of data relevant for integrated land use planning (ILUP), ELD partnered with GEO-LDN, WOCAT, and UNCCD to develop a participatory process with user groups to create a data hub and practical tool for ILUP. This will provide space to gather fragmented data and tools, to formulate comprehensive scenarios that help identify, design, implement, and monitor land use policies and programmes, with a focus on targeting current challenges of ILUP implementation. These include a lack of vertical and horizontal integration of data among government departments and private sectors as well as enhancing global access to data on best practices while strengthening individual country capacity.

In a workshop series amongst key stakeholders such as land use planners, data providers, tool developers, scientists and decision makers, the outputs will be oriented by and aligned with practical needs and capacities. The workshops will start in spring 2022 and open up ongoing opportunities for networking and collaboration. For more information we welcome you to watch the [trailer](#) and visit the [ELD website](#), where more information on this process will be published soon.

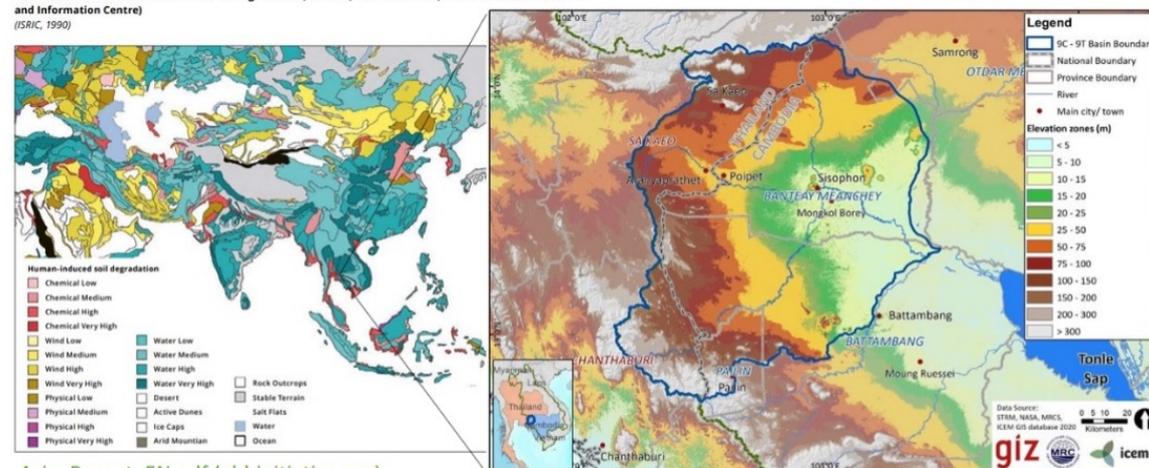
The Land Use Planning tool for Land Degradation Neutrality (LUP4LDN)

During 2021, ELD partnered with WOCAT, ICARDA, the University of Sassari, and SCiO to develop a geoinformatics Land Use Planning tool for Land Degradation Neutrality (LUP4LDN). The tool won the GEO-LDN technology innovation competition in March 2021 and is expected to be used by interested countries and parties to the UNCCD. It helps identify the best LUP solutions in terms of least-cost transitions from current degradative land use (LU) and land management (LM) practices to better options for both. The development of LU-LM transitions will be achieved via a participatory process that integrates stakeholder interests, needs, and knowledge in a planning process with science-based tools to identify plausible and economic and socially relevant SLM options.

LUP4LDN uses WOCAT's global database, ICARDA's Geoinformatics options by context tool, and ELD's database to support national and sub-national planners by i) mapping geographic patterns of past land degradation (LD) for a user defined region of interest using LDN indicators adopted by the UNCCD (SDG 15.3.1 indicators), ii) helping users anticipate future LD by identifying land that is unsustainably managed, iii) partitioning LD areas into spatial domains of socio-ecological contextual similarity with suitable SLM options, and iv) providing an interactive process for participatory LU-LM

ELD study on Nature-based solutions with the Mekong River Commission

Global assessment of human-induced soil degradation (GLASOD) - Asian section (International Soil Reference and Information Centre)
(ISRIC, 1990)



[Asia Report EN.pdf \(eld-initiative.org\)](#)

The ELD Initiative recently started a study in close cooperation with the MRC-GIZ Transboundary Cooperation Programme in the Lower Mekong Basin to support the Mekong River Commission (MRC), implemented by GIZ on behalf of BMZ. The study will be carried out in the frame of the Joint Project for Transboundary Cooperation on Flood and Drought Management in the 9C-9T Tonle Sap sub-basin shared by Cambodia and Thailand. It will provide scientific evidence on the costs and benefits of the nature-based and hybrid solutions (NbS) planned across the sub-basin. The NbS will orient the implementation of the recently agreed on 9C-9T Strategic Masterplan, designed to restore, protect, and sustainably manage ecosystems to increase their resiliency and ability to manage flood and drought challenges. This will enable sustainable financing of planned measures and promote ecosystem-based adaptation for flood and drought resilience in the Lower Mekong Basin.

Introduction to ELD in Tunisia



In cooperation with the Directorate General for Agricultural Land Management and Conservation (DG ACTA) and the GIZ project “Soil Protection and Rehabilitation of Degraded Soil for Food Security” (ProSol) in Tunisia, ELD supported a training on the introduction to ELD in Tunis in November 2021.

This training was intended for the benefit of the executives of the different directorates of the Ministry of Agriculture, Hydraulic Resources and Fisheries, as well as for practitioners and researchers. Facilitated by Prof. Hamed Daly, Director General of ONAGRI (Observatoire National de l'Agriculture), case studies on economic analyses and methodologies from Tunisia, Madagascar, Georgia and Ghana were discussed. The objective of the training was to provide sound economic arguments as a basis for land use decision-making, while supporting an ongoing ELD study in the North-Western part of the country. Results of this study, which is facilitated by Sara Hernandez Consulting, and led in cooperation with the DG ACTA and the ProSol project, are expected to be published later this year.



Events

■ February 7 and 8 2022: ELD virtual meeting

To honor the achievements of the past 10 years and set out the next steps for moving into a new decade together, core members of the ELD network will meet virtually in February. There will be inputs from ELD partners, an overview of current activities and projects, and discussions around topics relevant to the work of those in our network. Stay tuned for outcomes of this meeting in our next newsletter!



Publications

- **The economics of pasture management in Georgia:** ELDs newest case study in the Kakheti region of Georgia compares pathways to sustainable management of pastures, their impact on pastoral household economies and land productivity. Rangeland management practices covered include, de-stocking under continuous grazing and two types of rotational grazing amongst village and migrating pastoralists.

Further information:

[Case Study](#)
[Policy Brief](#)
[Legal Analysis](#)

- **Somalia under Re-Greening Africa.** In partnership with University of Leeds, University of York and Agribusiness Solutions Hub, ELD published two new case study reports on the economic impact of land degradation in Somaliland and Puntland.

Further information:

Featured publications

State of Finance for Nature: Tripling investments in nature-based solutions by 2030; UN Environment, World Economic Forum, ELD (2021). The State of Finance for Nature report presents the results of a global analysis which tracks investment flows into nature-based solutions and identifies future investments needed to meet the biodiversity, climate and land restoration targets. Report authors— including UNEP, WEF, and the ELD Initiative, hosted by GIZ in collaboration with Vivid Economics – urge governments, financial institutions, and businesses to overcome this investment gap by placing nature at the heart of economic decision-making in the future.

Further information:

Case Study Somaliland

Case Study Puntland

Video about land degradation in Somaliland

- **Achieving green growth through terrestrial natural capital restoration.** Country case studies conducted under joint GGKP/ELD project in India, Kyrgyzstan, and Rwanda show how restoring terrestrial natural capital can create co-benefits in social and human capital that go hand in hand to achieve several SDG targets.
- **The costs of increasing precision for ecosystem services valuation studies, (2022).** Kubiszewki, I., Muthee, K., Rifaee Rasheed, A., Costanza, R., Suzuki, M., Noel, S., and Schauer, M. *Ecological Indicators* (135).

- ELD Initiative Natural capital & Financing workstream
- Report with supplementary material, practical cases and video

The State of Finance for Nature in the G20 report | UNEP - UN Environment Programme; This brand new report by UNEP, WEF and ELD tracks global trends in public and private investment in nature-based solutions. It was launched on January 27, 2022 during the event “From Davos to COP 15: G20 leadership in directing capital flow to nature-based solutions”.



From elsewhere

Join the Green Forum

Our partner, Green Growth Knowledge Partnership (GGKP), invites you to join the [Green Forum](#) —an online interactive community space for green growth professionals to share knowledge, discuss insights, and collaborate. [Sign up](#) to engage with a dedicated global community working toward to a sustainable economic transition.



Image: Green Forum.

Green Forum is also hosting Stockholm+50's [official community space](#). Environmental and sustainability experts, practitioners, and enthusiasts are invited to [submit short contributions](#) to their blog series, which will inform the discussion and build momentum around Stockholm+50.

Natural capital gaps in achieving SDG targets

In December 2021, the GGKP & the Basque Centre for Climate Change BC3 released a [new study](#) assessing financial investment gaps for 20 countries that must be met in order for them to achieve their natural capital related SDGs, as well as the costs and benefits of meeting those goals. They will host a webinar in February 2022 exploring the report.

Interested in learning more about GGKP's Natural Capital work?

- [Read their Expert Group on Natural Capital's Year in Review 2021](#)
- The GGKP and ELD Initiative study on land restoration in Rwanda is highlighted in [Tools for achieving the UN decade on ecosystem restoration](#)



If you have any relevant news, events, or publications you would like to share with the ELD network through this newsletter, please submit them to info@eld-initiative.org.

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