



ELD Initiative Newsletter

1st Issue - 30 March 2021

Dear friend of the ELD Initiative,

We are pleased to release the first issue of the 2021 ELD Newsletter. This is our quarterly update on all things ELD. If you want to hear about our work - keep reading.

Enjoy!



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Forward

Setting the future direction of ELD



First of all, we wanted to fill you in on some developments at the ELD Initiative. This update follows from our Strategy Meeting in February, where we shared our accomplishments and ongoing ELD-related activities, as well as set the future direction of ELD.

The future direction of ELD has shifted: our focus on awareness-raising has transitioned to the implementation and investment phase. As a result, our core workstreams for the next three years are:

- Generating evidence and knowledge on the economic consequences of land degradation and the benefits of sustainable land management using research and studies following the ELD approach.
- Promoting stakeholder dialogue using results to inform global discourse and network management.
- Capacity development to assess the economics of land management using the ELD Campus, training courses and ambassador program.

If this sparks ideas and feedback, we would love to hear from you about your thoughts on the future of ELD. We encourage you to provide input in the survey below.

[Take survey](#)

ELD News

ELD has been extremely busy over the past year across a variety of topics. Read about the current activities of ELD below, and if you want to check out our past work, take a look at our [website's news page!](#)

Financing

State of Finance for Nature: Tracking capital flows to land-related Nature-based Solutions



ELD, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Tropical Forest Alliance 2020, hosted by the World Economic Forum, are working on a forthcoming joint report, "The State of Finance for Nature: Towards a framework to track financing for Nature-Based Solutions". The report is set to be released later this year.

'Nature-based solutions' (NBS) place nature at the heart of addressing societal challenges. They are considered to be important tools to address the triple crisis of Finance, Food and Climate Change. However, there is a need to understand the level of investment in NBS so as to find solutions to mobilise capital.

This seminal report will detail the degree of existing public and private finance that is directed to activities and assets that can be considered NBS. It will feature practical cases as a means to stimulate replication, and represents the first product in the collaborative initiative.

The report forms the first step in an ongoing process, which will involve an annual tracking analysis to monitor the future trends.

Economic valuations of terrestrial ecosystem services

ELD Study: More sustainable Mezcal in Oaxaca, Mexico (on-going)



In cooperation with GIZ's Project [Mainstreaming of biodiversity within Mexican agriculture \(GIZ IKI-IBA project\)](#) and local partners, the ELD Initiative is conducting a study on agave use for Mezcal production in three districts in Oaxaca/Mexico.

In the last 5 years, the demand for mezcal has led to a significant increase in agave crops in the districts of Miahuatlan, Tlacolula and Yautepec. This has led to the loss of forest cover and biodiversity, so much so that the issue has been deemed a high priority for the Oaxaca State government.

The objectives of the ELD Study are:

- To improve policy-relevant information on the value of biodiversity/ecosystem services and to demonstrate how this information can be integrated in planning and decision-making processes in order to directly support the Ministry of environment and agriculture at state and region level.
- To provide insights on the integration of ecosystem services in planning tools, which will inform national level decision-making processes and methods in Mexico.

The report will be released later this year. For updates, see [here](#).

Economic valuations of terrestrial ecosystem services

Wrapping up the Regreening Africa Project



ELD is close to completing its role in the Project "Reversing Land Degradation in Africa by Scaling-up Evergreen Agriculture", which aims to improve livelihoods, food security and climate change resilience by restoring ecosystem services.

Since 2017, ELD has provided training on the 6+1 step economic approach for policy-makers and researchers, and produced a series of case studies in the partner countries of Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, and Somalia. Targeting key institutions from national research and policy sectors, ELD facilitated the joint development of economic assessments in consideration of multiple land use options. Read more about the work in the project [here](#).

Take a look at the synthesis report and the series of ELD case studies [here](#). We will be hosting a dissemination workshop in April, and further details will be available on our website soon.

Natural Capital

Achieving green growth through terrestrial natural capital restoration in India, Kyrgyzstan and Rwanda



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 Economics of Land Degradation (ELD) Initiative joined forces.

Together with local institutions and experts, we developed and applied new methods for achieving the SDGs through terrestrial natural capital restoration. Country studies in India, Kyrgyzstan and Rwanda demonstrate how restoring terrestrial natural capital can create co-benefits in social and human capital that go hand in hand to achieve several SDG targets.

Country case studies in Kyrgyzstan and India will be featured in the next newsletter. Check out the case of Rwanda below.

Find out more:

- **GGKP-ELD Webinar**

SDGs Erosion: How terrestrial natural capital will save the 2030 Agenda

Partners in India, Kyrgyzstan and Rwanda gave an insight to the country case studies and discussed with experts from around the world economic, social and environmental benefits of land restoration and measures to foster sustainable land management at a national level ([watch the recording](#)).

Natural Capital

Case study Rwanda:

Achieving green growth through terrestrial natural capital restoration



GGKP and ELD's first case study on natural capital restoration was conducted in Rwanda by a team of experts led by Montclair State University. This study aims to highlight the critical role of natural capital in macro-economic outputs, and to facilitate improved decision-making in green growth policies and to achieve national SDG targets.

Through integrated and innovative methods, the study explores five policy scenarios on sustainable use of land and green growth: (1) expansion of agroforestry, (2) cropland consolidation, (3) consolidation of agroforestry and cropland, (4) agricultural improvement in fertilization and irrigation and (5) comprehensive implementation of policies combining scenarios 3 and 4. The results help to understand how land degradation due to erosion can affect not only economic indicators such as GDP, poverty reduction, genuine savings, and unemployment, but also land assets, land use changes, ecosystem service supply, and terrestrial natural capital.

For more information, take a look at the [report](#) and [policy brief](#).

ELD and the Watershed Organisation Trust (WOTR) joint study shows the benefits of locally-run watershed development in India



In collaboration with WOTR, ELD conducted a study in India's east Madhya Pradesh, titled 'Economic valuation of reducing land degradation through watershed development in east Madhya Pradesh under risks of Climate extremes'.

WOTR has been implementing watershed development (WSD) with climate change adaptation in eastern Madhya Pradesh for the last two decades. This region is an important case study because it is a centrally located state with the largest forest cover in India.

The study indicates that WSD as implemented by NGOs is an economically beneficial developmental intervention for both periods of normal rainfall and extreme events. The results of the study also suggest that enabling the local community to implement WSD with climate adaptive measures and to maintain the structures constructed is economically viable.

For more information, take a look at the [report](#).

Scenario development

GEO-LDN Competition winner announced



The Group on Earth Observation Land Degradation Neutrality (GEO-LDN) Initiative announced the winner of its international technology innovation competition on the development of tools to support land use planning for LDN.

ELD is a part of the GEO-LDN Initiative, and contributed to the GEO-LDN Competition. The international technology innovation competition sought design and build software analytics solutions to support more transparent and well-informed land use decisions at the local to national level across the globe.

The team that presented the "LUP4LDN"(Land Use Planning for Land Degradation Neutrality) tool won the competition, and will now transform their prototype into an operational and scalable tool. LUP4LDN integrates LDN into participatory land use planning via an interface that allows users to evaluate land use and land management transition scenarios, providing visual and quantitative representation of land degradation gains and losses. [Read more...](#)

ELD Campus updates



ELD CAMPUS offers a high-quality learning and teaching toolkit for the valuation of ecosystem services. The ELD Campus is now available in English, French and Russian - and soon Spanish!

This free and openly accessible resource can be used at all levels in all fields of scientific background. We are increasing its availability in different languages and the latest addition is our Russian material, which you see [here](#).

Stay tuned also for one more ELD Campus module on 'Scenarios for better informed land use decision making' which is currently under development. We encourage you to get in touch if you are seeking more information.

Upcoming Events



19-22 April 2021

Global symposium on soil biodiversity

This event will discuss how we can achieve the SDGs through the conservation and sustainable use of soil biodiversity. [Read more...](#)



2-3 June 2021

Global Landscapes Forum Africa

Restoring Africa's Drylands: Accelerating Action On the Ground.

[Read more about the forum](#)



17 June 2021

World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought

This year's World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought will focus on turning degraded land into healthy land. [Read more...](#)



14-18 June 2021

CBA15: Local solutions inspiring global action

This event aims to discuss how we can drive ambition for a climate-resilient future. [Read more...](#)



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