Sustainable Land Management

FAO develops and promotes methods and tools for the assessment, documentation and dissemination of sustainable land management (SLM) practices and approaches.

SLM is the use and management of land resources – soil, water, animals and plants – for the production of goods to meet changing human needs, while ensuring the long-term productive potential of these resources and maintenance of environmental functions.

What we do

Sharing and enhancing knowledge about sustainable land management practices and implementation processes and its use for informed decision making to prevent or reduce land degradation, through the conservation, management and restoration of soil, water and biological resources and maintenance of ecosystem services.

This includes:

1) Demonstrate the multiple benefits that SLM measures generate: productivity, food and livelihood security, biodiversity conservation, resilience to climate change (adaptation), carbon sequestration / reducing GHG emissions (mitigation) and risk aversion; and

2) Support stakeholders in SLM adoption at individual and community level as well as for scaling up best practices and adapted land use systems across wider territories or landscapes.

Outputs & outcomes

Adoption of good sustainable land management practices, backed up by an enabling environment, allow land users to:

- minimize land degradation and rehabilitate degraded areas;
- improve soil management for fertility (nutrient and organic matter) and resilience to erosion;
- optimize water cycling, storage and efficient use of water/ water productivity;
- enhance above and below ground biodiversity.
- optimize the production of healthy food, animal feed, fibre and forest products;
- derive sustained livelihoods and benefits (income; well being; culture) from the land;
- maintain the provisioning of ecosystem services for future generations;
- enhance resilience to natural disasters (flood, drought, storms and landslides).

Together with partners and collaborating networks, the Land and Water Division supports capacity development of SLM players in:

- developing and promoting use of standardized tools and methods for SLM assessment, analysis, mapping, knowledge management and decision support;
- making available national, regional and global knowledge on SLM through databases and communications as well as partnership among interested stakeholders;
- strengthening stakeholders and institutions involved in SLM, through policy guidance, integrated land resources /territorial planning, land governance, incentive mechanisms, as well as extension, participatory learning–action–research, training and education.

Partners

The main partner is the recently expanded WOCAT International (World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies) that comprises a global network of soil and water conservation specialists and a consortium of partners (CDE/ University of Bern, CIAT, FAO, GIZ, ICARDA, ICIMOD, ISRIC, SDC, University of Kwazulu Natal)

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