

Building landscapes resilient to global changes in drylands: The Guidelines

Second International Workshop

- Dakar, Senegal, 27-31 January 2013

Introduction

FAO upon recommendation of its members identified the need to initiate a comprehensive analysis, evaluation and documentation of relevant forestation and restoration programmes in and projects in drylands in collaboration with its member countries, local partner organizations and international organizations and institutions. This endeavour aims at compiling and evaluating the lessons learnt and developing operational guidelines for the restoration of degraded forests and lands within the difficult environmental socio-economic framework conditions in drylands, for the benefits of the local population. The study focuses on Mediterranean type ecosystems (Mediterranean basin, South Africa, SW Australia, Chile and NW America), the Sahel and other dryland countries in Africa, West and Central Asia, Northern China and Latin America.

This initiative contributes to the implementation of the 10-year strategy (2008-2018) of the United Nations Convention to Combat desertification (UNCCD); the United Nations Convention on Biodiversity (UNCBD) Strategic plan for biodiversity 2011-2020 as well as to the adaptation and mitigation efforts under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). In particular it will contribute to achieve the Bonn challenge targets related to the restoration of 150 million hectares of degraded lands and ongoing initiatives supported by FAO and partners such as:

- The programme in support to the African Union Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative, involving more than 20 countries around the Sahara (North Africa and the Sahel);
- The Collaborative Partnership on Mediterranean Forests and the Committee on Mediterranean forestry questions “*Silva Mediterranea*” in particular in the framework of its working group on “combating desertification and restoration of forest ecosystems in arid zones”;
- The FAO Forestry Programme in central Asia and neighboring countries ;
- The Turkish Action Plan in the framework of the United Nations Action Programme for the Least Developed Countries.

Methodology and Process

The compilation of the guidelines is based on the following :

- The analysis of lessons learnt and experiences from restoration programmes and projects through on-line research and literature review on the subject and of available documentation related to restoration projects and programmes;
- The development of a Restoration Monitoring Tool and its dissemination to experts and practitioners inviting them to test the application of the tool while sharing experiences and lessons learnt from field restoration projects and programmes of degraded lands;
- Organisation of a series of international workshops to identify in a participatory manner, the factors of success and failure based on the analysis of past and current restoration projects and programmes, share experiences as well as agree on objectives, structure and content of the guidelines and discuss and finalise them;
- Contributions and comments received from experts and practitioners, through email on the draft version of the guidelines.

1. Development and application of a restoration monitoring tool

Restoration techniques in drylands have improved in recent decades, due to the inclusion of environmental and socio-economic methodologies, such as participatory rural appraisal, community-based natural resource management, ecological landscape restoration, water harvesting, and bio-engineering. However, there is still lack a structured track record of proven and tested case studies of best field practices, which demonstrate that dryland restoration has

successfully contributed to re-establishing environmental and socio-economic resilience against human-induced disturbances.

For this purpose, FAO developed a comprehensive Restoration Monitoring Tool to analyse and evaluate field projects/programs and to help guide project implementers in compiling the lessons learnt, analysing and monitoring the performance and impacts of forest restoration projects and programmes. It will serve as a tool to gather information on good practices and to facilitate the sharing of know-how on effective restoration approaches, strategies, methodologies and techniques among dryland regions. In the framework of this study, the applicability of this tool was field-tested on 22 projects and programmes.

2. Organization of the first international workshop, Konya, Turkey, May 2012

As a first step to start the compilation of the lessons learnt from past and current restoration efforts and the development of the expected guidelines, a first international workshop on “Building forest landscapes resilient to global changes in drylands” was organized on 28-31 May in Konya, Turkey by the Turkish Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs, FAO, the Turkish International Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ).

The event gathered over 90 international experts on drylands restoration from forestry departments, research institutions, the private sector, NGOs and international development agencies, representing twenty-four countries in Africa, Central Asia, the Near East and the Mediterranean region. This first International workshop was as well supported through their active participation, by international and inter-governmental organizations such as the African Union Commission, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Secretariat, the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD (the “Global Mechanism”), the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Secretariat, the Permanent Interstate Committee for drought control in the Sahel (CILSS), the African Forest Forum (AFF), the Millennium Development Goals Centre for West and Central Africa, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the Walloon Region of Belgium, the World Agroforestry Center (ICRAF), the World Wide Fund for Nature, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and *Silva Mediterranea*, a technical statutory body of FAO.

During this event participants shared experiences through presentation and discussions on a great number of case studies/ projects, identified key elements of success and failure in drylands restoration projects and discussed the comprehensive Restoration Monitoring Tool, newly developed by FAO, to guide planning, implementation and evaluation of field restoration projects and programmes. A one-day field trip showcased comprehensive technical and institutional experience in Turkey. Participants appreciated the opportunity to establish and extend their professional networks through this event and to contribute to amending the Restoration Monitoring Tool through their expertise and feedback. They also gave valuable guidance on the structure and content of the expected guidelines on restoration of degraded lands in drylands.

Participants to the Konya workshop agreed on the following recommended next steps:

- Reinforcing their support to the process of formulation of the operational guidelines for the restoration of degraded landscapes
- Organization of a second international workshop focusing on field techniques and contributing information for the finalization of the guidelines; to be held possibly in Senegal by the end of the year. Senegal was chosen for hosting the workshop because of its wide experience in combating desertification and the already implemented actions in the framework of the Great Green Wall;

- Formulation of a draft version of the guidelines and circulating it for comments;
- Follow-up on networking efforts for sharing know-how on restoration in drylands through the establishment of a platform / working group on combating desertification and drylands restoration;
- Publication of the finalized guidelines on drylands restoration to be launched at the UNFF 10th session in Istanbul, Turkey (April, 2013).

In response to the Konya workshop recommendations, FAO has prepared a draft version of the guidelines, based on the results of the first workshop, the literature review as well as the findings of the survey using the restoration monitoring tool. Moreover, FAO took the opportunity of the 21st session of its Committee on Forests (COFO) (held in Rome, Italy, September 2012) to organise in collaboration with the Turkish Government (Ministry of Forests and Water Affairs as well as TIKA) a side event that aimed at:

- Presenting the outcomes of the Konya workshop ;
- Presenting the preliminary findings of the analysis and guidelines on drylands restoration ;
- Gathering views and comments from participants on the process for the guidelines finalization and implementation.

The Draft version of the guidelines was sent for comments through email to a wide network of experts and practitioners on drylands restoration (including the participants to the Konya Workshop).

3. Organization of the Second International Workshop in Dakar, Senegal, January 2013

FAO agreed, with the financial support of the Turkish Ministry of Water and Forest Affairs, the Turkish International Cooperation Agency (TIKA), and in collaboration with the African Union Commission and the Ministry of Ecology and Sustainable Development of Senegal and its technical Institutions (Directorate of Water, Forestry and Hunting and the National Great Green Agency of Senegal) to organize the second international workshop in Senegal from the 27th to the 31st of January 2013 under the theme “Building landscapes resilient to global changes in drylands: the guidelines”.

Workshop objectives:

- Discuss, amend and validate the draft version of the “ guidelines for building landscapes resilient to global changes in drylands”;
- Support the mainstreaming of the developed guidelines into the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel Initiative (GGWSSI) implementation;
- Launch a platform of experts for knowledge and experience on restoration of degraded lands;
- Initiate discussions about the development of a collaborative institutional partnership on drylands restoration.

Expected outputs from the workshop:

- Recommendations for finalization of the guidelines;
- Recommendations to improve technical aspects of quality of reproductive material, plant production, and field restoration operations in the Great Green Wall partner countries;
- A road map for the establishment and functioning of an Experts platform on drylands restoration;

- A proposed concept for the establishment of a collaborative institutional partnership on drylands restoration.

Workshop duration, participants and procedures:

- **The first part (27-29 January 2013)** will involve about 30 technical experts on drylands restoration (tree nurseries, seeds, planting techniques, soil and water management and conservation, natural regeneration, etc);
- **The second part (30-31 January 2013)** will involve the experts who participated to the first part as well as representatives of governmental institutions at national and regional level, research, NGOs, private sector and development partners.

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