

December 2013

	منظمة الأغذية والزراعة للأمم المتحدة	联合国 粮食及 农业组织	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture	Продовольственная и сельскохозяйственная организация Объединенных Наций	Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura
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NEAR EAST FORESTRY AND RANGE COMMISSION**TWENTY-FIRST SESSION****THIRD NEAR EAST FORESTRY WEEK****Amman, Jordan, 26 - 30 January 2014****GLOBAL GUIDELINES FOR RESTORING THE RESILIENCE OF
FOREST LANDSCAPES IN DRYLANDS****Secretariat Note***Summary*

- As a follow-up to the Twentieth session of the Commission, FAO launched the process for the development of global guidelines for restoring the resilience of forest landscapes in drylands. This note gives an overview of the process, relevant developments and actions taken by FAO towards the preparation of the guidelines and describes its main elements.

I. Background

1. FAO was requested by various forestry fora¹ to conduct, in collaboration with its Member countries and local and international partner organizations, a comprehensive analysis, evaluation and documentation of relevant afforestation, reforestation and restoration projects and programmes in drylands. The study found that dryland restoration offers real opportunities for environmental and economic gain because it:

- helps increase the resilience of landscapes, ecosystems and social systems to global change;
- helps increase the natural capital on which rural livelihoods depend;
- if well planned and managed, can respond to the interests and needs of a variety of stakeholders.

¹ i.e. in sessions of the FAO Near East Regional Forestry and Range Commission in 2011 and 2012 and the FAO Committee on Forestry in 2012.

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2. The global guidelines for restoring the resilience of forest landscapes in drylands are being developed for:

- decision-makers from the forest and rural development sectors;
- managers of afforestation, reforestation and forest restoration programmes and projects;
- officers and technicians of international and regional organizations, bilateral and multilateral development cooperation agencies and non-governmental organizations.

3. The initiative is contributing to the implementation of the ten-year strategy (2008–2018) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD); the Convention on Biodiversity Strategic Plan for Biodiversity for 2011–2020; and the adaptation and mitigation efforts being made within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

4. The guidelines will help in achieving the global target set out in the Bonn Challenge to restore 150 million hectares of degraded lands worldwide by 2020. They will also contribute to ongoing initiatives supported by FAO and partners, such as:

- the programme in support of the African Union’s Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative, which involves more than 20 countries in North Africa and the Sahel, and other dryland restoration initiatives in the Near East;
- the AFWC/EFC/NEFRC Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions (known as *Silva Mediterranea*), particularly in the framework of its working group on combating desertification and restoring forest ecosystems in arid zones;
- the Collaborative Partnership on Mediterranean Forests;
- the FAO Forestry Programme in Central Asia and neighbouring countries;
- the Turkish Action Plan in the framework of the United Nations Action Programme for the Least Developed Countries.

II. The process for guidelines development

5. The process for developing the guidelines was launched in May 2012 in Konya², Turkey, at an international workshop on “building resilient forest landscapes to global changes in drylands”. This workshop was convened by the Turkish Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs, FAO, the Turkish International Cooperation Agency (TIKA) and the German Agency for International Cooperation. The event brought together over 90 international experts on drylands restoration from forestry departments, research institutions, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, representing 24 countries in Africa, Central Asia, the Near East and the Mediterranean region as well as international development agencies and other technical and financial partners.

6. With the financial support of TIKA, a second international workshop was organized in Dakar³, Senegal, in February 2013 by FAO, Senegal’s Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and its technical institutions, the Turkish Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs and the African Union Commission. This workshop gathered over 80 international experts on drylands restoration with the aim of:

- contributing to the formulation of guidelines for building resilient forest landscapes in drylands based on the expertise and experience of participants;

² <http://www.fao.org/forestry/aridzone/82538/en/>

³ <http://www.fao.org/forestry/aridzone/82537/en/>

- identifying gaps and challenges that need to be addressed and appropriate actions to be taken to build resilient forest landscapes in Great Green Wall countries.

III. The approach for guidelines development

7. The approach to developing the guidelines was based on:
- an analysis of lessons learned and experiences from afforestation, reforestation and restoration projects and programmes in the field;
 - the application of a comprehensive forest restoration monitoring tool developed by FAO⁴;
 - the results and recommendations of the Konya and Dakar workshops;
 - the outcomes of regional consultation workshops⁵ on forest genetic resources held in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) and in Tabarka (Tunisia) in July 2012;
 - feedback on a draft version received from a network of experts through online consultation, side-events organized at the 21st session of the FAO Committee on Forestry in Rome, Italy, in September 2012;
 - feedback at the 10th Session of the UNFF in Antalya in May 2013, and at the 19th session of the UNCCD COP, in Windhoek, Namibia, in September 2013.

IV. The guidelines in a nutshell : structure and components

8. The guidelines are structured according to four major strategic components.
- a) **Putting in place an enabling environment to address the underlying causes of forest degradation and desertification in drylands.** This would entail working on ensuring favourable policy framework, developing capacity and sustainable financing. Attention should be put to the following intervention areas:

Policy

- Establishing supportive governance mechanisms.
- Improving national policies and legal frameworks.
- Strengthening intersectoral cooperation and partnerships.
- Supporting the institutional development of grassroots organizations.

Capacity development and education

- Raising awareness of approaches to landscape restoration.
- Supporting multidisciplinary and applied research.
- Implementing strategies for long-term multisectoral capacity development.
- Supporting the development of training modules on forest landscape restoration based on up-to-date research findings and including them in the curricula of training institutions.
- Supporting the development and sustainable functioning of tree seed centres and nurseries.
- Strengthening extension services and promoting farmer-to-farmer extension approaches.
- Establishing networks and forums for sharing knowledge and skills.

Sustainable financing

- Promoting long-term cost-sharing strategies to fund restoration programmes, including public and private sources and contributions from local people.

⁴ <http://www.fao.org/forestry/aridzone/restoration/en/>

⁵ <http://www.fao.org/forestry/fgr/81076/en/>

- Developing innovative funding mechanisms such as payments for ecosystem services (e.g. watershed services, biodiversity conservation and carbon sequestration).
- Incorporating restoration costs in development initiatives and conservation efforts.
- Creating small community-based enterprises addressing the entire value chain (from seed to end-product).
- Promoting alternative cost-effective technologies.

b) Planning

Formulating restoration priorities and goals

- Conducting biophysical and socio-economic baseline studies, including in-depth multistakeholder analyses and studies on land and forest tenure.
- Undertaking GIS analysis and mapping to assess restoration needs, plan restoration actions and monitor their impact.
- Defining and balancing ecological, economic, social and cultural objectives.
- Developing inclusive land use planning that integrates water consumption by vegetation, soil protection, disaster risk reduction, production and biodiversity considerations.
- Selecting priority sites and interventions.
- Defining cost-effective restoration options and technical operations, for example assisted natural regeneration, farmer-managed natural regeneration, enrichment planting and direct sowing.
- Defining tradeoffs between socio-economic interests and sustainable land uses.
- Improving ecosystem services across the full range of land uses.

Supporting the active participation of relevant stakeholders

- Involving people as a central element of landscapes.
- Supporting multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral mechanisms for collaborative planning and action.
- Identifying clear roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder in planning and implementation.
- Defining the costs and socio-economic benefits for each stakeholder.
- Developing strategic cooperation among private-sector investors, land managers, the public sector and civil-society actors.

Selecting the right species and related genetic material for the right place and ensuring high-quality reproduction material

- Selecting species using participatory approaches with local communities and relevant stakeholders.
- Selecting high-value species (trees, shrubs and herbaceous species) based on a combination of socio-economic and environmental criteria and benefits that can serve multiple purposes.
- Favouring the use of native and adaptive species.
- Carefully considering the use of exotic species to ensure minimal negative effects on local ecosystems.
- Undertaking provenance evaluation studies of the genetic material in the targeted sites (e.g. adaptation to drought and soil type, resistance to disease and fire, and the variability of the genetic pool), where possible making use of existing studies to avoid the duplication of effort.
- Supporting the production and use of high-quality reproduction material and high genetic diversity.

c) Field implementation

In field implementation, there is a need for :

- Favouring assisted/farmer-managed natural regeneration.

- Combining assisted natural regeneration with direct sowing or planting.
- Using agroforestry and conservation agriculture technologies.
- Implementing measures for soil and water conservation, erosion control, forest protection and rotational grazing, forest management.
- Using innovative technologies for improving plant production in nurseries and on-site planting and field operations, including with respect to: (i) planting operations and technologies to improve site conditions, (ii) planting density; (iii) sowing seeds; (iv) planting period, (v) soil preparation for seedlings; (vi) watering during planting and maintenance operations, (vii) planting techniques that mimic ecological interactions.
- Managing fire.
- Developing and implementing management plans for restored areas.

d) Monitoring and evaluation

There is a need for:

- Incorporating objectives, performance standards and protocols for monitoring in restoration plans;
- Monitoring forest landscape restoration programmes over long periods to detect major environmental and socio-economic processes and dynamics;
- Monitoring, backed by the compilation of lessons learned, to inform adaptive management and the sharing of know-how.

V. Points for consideration

9. The Commission may wish to:

- provide further comments and insights to FAO to be taken into consideration during the compilation of the final version of the guidelines, to be published and launched during next session of COFO in Rome in June 2014;
- discuss next steps to be undertaken for dissemination of the global guidelines and their implementation in Near East countries;
- discuss how to intensify the regional cooperation within the Near East Region to better use regionally available resources and south-south cooperation to foster the guidelines implementation on the ground.