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Based on experience from DESIRE sites



Field visit with farmers in Tunisia

Land-users, your views are essential for desertification research !

Why do researchers need your help ?

Researchers need a good understanding of the roles of land users in land management, and of the problems in daily life, in order to investigate better land management practices. As land users, you have excellent knowledge and understanding of your environment, and this is crucial to help researchers fully understand the local context. Studies of theoretical solutions can be useful, but the more that scientific research is applied to the real world context that affects your livelihood, the better it is for everyone.

Benefits for you

Researchers and scientists are usually politically neutral. They are often consulted by policy makers for balanced and unbiased advice when they need to make decisions that might affect the land users. If you meet researchers and tell them about the details of your environment as you see them, and your particular point of view of problems, you provide a much more complete picture of the local conditions and issues. Together you can pool all your expertise to develop local and regional strategies. The researchers can help you to choose the best technologies, that should support sustainable land management and sustainable livelihoods. All of this interaction also enables scientists to give better advice to policy makers.



Ways in which land users have helped with DESIRE research

Turkey



Eskişehir Osmangazi University



S. Acikalin

Scientists and stakeholders discuss possible options

In **Karapınar**, Turkey, the local farmers have met with researchers to discuss how to reduce land degradation, and soil loss by wind. From a selection of possible technologies they have chosen to protect pastures with fenced-off areas and promote more efficient use of scarce water resources with drip irrigation of crops. In **Eskişehir**, where there are steeper slopes on which gullies form easily, land users decided to try contour tillage and wooden terraces with soil bunds, to reduce soil erosion.

Morocco



University of Mohamed V

In **Sehoul**, Morocco, a stakeholder workshop was held to discuss soil protection options. Researchers made suggestions, but local technicians showed that some of these ideas were unrealistic and not practical. The researchers learned from the opinions of the technicians, and the farmers acknowledged that it is better to share ideas and take decisions as a group. The farmers agreed to try mulching and minimum tillage to reduce erosion on slopes used for cereals and other annual crops, and treatment for gullies on degraded steep pasture land.



C. Milloud

Trials to reduce soil erosion

Cape Verde



Instituto Nacional de Investigação e Desenvolvimento Agrário

In the **Ribeira Seca** area of Santiago Island, the annual rainfall may be less than 100mm per year, so agriculture is difficult. However, local people demonstrate how well their terraces can trap sufficient moisture in the soil to grow maize and beans without irrigation. Soil erosion continues to be a big problem, so researchers have suggested various ways to improve the protective vegetation cover. These include planting fruit trees and vegetation barriers to slow down erosion.



E. van den Eissen

Terraces for growing beans and maize

Compiled by **Nichola Geeson**, **Maude Gentit** and **Marie Jose Van der Werff ten Bosch**, December 2010

For more information see:

The DESIRE Harmonised Information System:

www.desire-his.eu and DESIRE website:

www.desire-project.eu

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