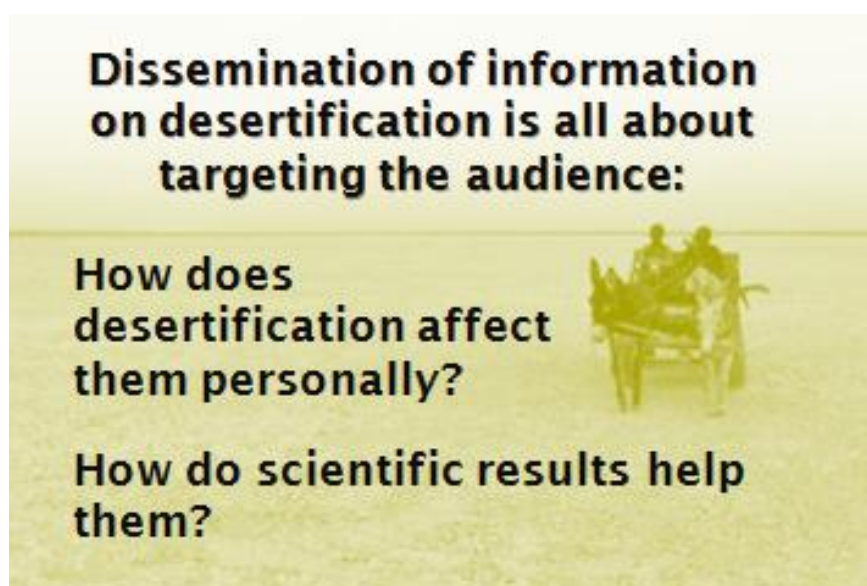


# **Harnessing the benefits of today's communication media: lessons on sharing research messages from the DESIRE Project**

The advent of the internet has made it much easier to share the results of scientific research with a wider range of audiences. Many scientific projects now host a website, but until recently few have exploited the communication possibilities to best advantage. The DESIRE Project (providing local solutions for global sustainable land management problems in drylands) has been large, international and interdisciplinary; and working to mitigate desertification by selecting and trialling sustainable land management practices with stakeholders. Therefore it has been very important to use a website, that includes a Harmonised Information System, to ensure that partners and stakeholders are able to understand the possible options for sustainability, and learn from one another.



The DESIRE project website <http://www.desire-project.eu/> has included many useful features, such as a project brochure, a schedule of future meetings and events, some publicly downloadable dissemination products, and the latest project news. Project partners may log on to a password-protected part of the site where they can share non-public documents and deliverables, and use features such as automatic registration facilities for meetings.

However the bulk of the research results are presented in the Harmonised Information System <http://www.desire-his.eu/>. Here, information can be accessed in non-scientific language according to the programme of research aims and also from the perspective of work in each study site. Interactive tools and video clips are among the features that are used to make the information as attractive and as accessible as possible.

## Organising the structure for knowledge management

The DESIRE Project has shown that information or knowledge management must be structured so that a wide range of users can access material of particular relevance to themselves as instantly as possible. The starting point is an analysis of the range of audiences. There is a big difference between providing “information” in general, and providing information in a structure designed to target a particular audience. Depending on the level of education or interests of the audiences, the information may need to be presented in different formats and styles of language. This may mean using scientific terms for researchers, more colloquial language for the educated general public, and more pictures and little or no text for the least educated audiences. Although English is the language of research it will not be understood by all other audiences, so translation facilities, either manually or semi-automatic on-line, are essential.



*Stakeholders attending a DESIRE workshop in Crete*

*“The starting point is an analysis of the range of audiences”*

The variety of audiences affects the choice of formats for information products, - in a range from a complex scientific paper in a journal to a simple pictorial poster. However, a critical question is: **what do people want to know?** People are most interested in information that is relevant to their job, or to improving their livelihood. For sustainable land management, land users are only likely to be interested in scientific developments if those developments help them in some way, particularly in a financial way. Therefore it is useful to highlight these features in any information management system.

Once the audience, or range of audiences has been determined they may be asked about their interests and existing knowledge. It is important to think carefully about how to respond: to provide the **Right Information** in the right **Format**, also at the right **Time** (the **RIFT** concept).

To do this we have to:

- make an analysis of who needs the information (**demand**)
- design a **structure** to house information in a logical way for easy retrieval
- optimise a mechanism to **share or exchange** information with recipients
- build in **flexibility** to rearrange the information content to respond to new information needs and to respond to demand



*What research is of interest to apple farmers on the loess plateau, China?*

## A checklist for planning information products

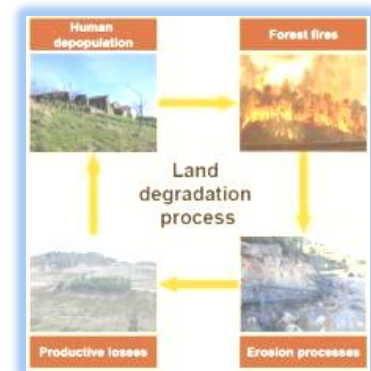
In DESIRE we have followed **8 steps** between identifying the audiences and providing dissemination products. More detail can be found in the DESIRE publication: **Manual of Communication and Dissemination** <http://tinyurl.com/6pras6e>

The **8 steps** are as follows:

1. Identify the range of stakeholder groups (**audiences**)
2. Identify the **complexity** of information required (will an audience appreciate scientific, simple, or mid-range material in non-scientific language?)
3. Identify the ideal **formats** for information that can be made accessible on-line (directly from an information system or from the choice of downloadable documentary and on-line formats, including leaflets, fact sheets, posters, video-clips, Twitter, etc.)
4. Choose the most relevant from all the **messages** coming out of the research tasks
5. Assemble **packages** of information. Material can be adapted for specific stakeholder groups



*Research detail for scientists*



*Pictures for schoolchildren*

6. Determine what needs to be **translated** to local languages
7. Determine the best ways or **events** for dissemination to happen, e.g. exhibitions, community events, social events, conferences, TV or radio interviews, DVDs, etc.
8. Plan **timetables** to put these methods into action.

A **video-clip** presentation of these ideas may be viewed at <http://vimeo.com/16466066>



*Booklets in non-scientific language*



*Round Table discussions with policy makers*

## DESIRE dissemination products



***Stakeholders are more confident to promote or try new ideas if they see evidence of success demonstrated in scientific experiments***

***Stakeholders cannot all visit the evidence for themselves, - but the evidence can be presented to them in attractive factsheets, booklets, policy briefs, posters, video clips, etc., - all in non-scientific language, and preferably in their native language***



### A selection of DESIRE dissemination products

# The DESIRE Harmonised Information System



Harmonised Information System

What's new? DESIRE Home Contact Site map © DESIRE 2010

Desire project :: Home Key messages Research themes Study sites Publicity Media

18 Jan, 2012

Language

Select English

Key messages

Overview

Global level

National level

Local stakeholder level

Booklets & factsheets

Promoting gender equality

Home > Key messages

## Key messages overview

This part of the Harmonised Information System contains all the key messages that have been concluded from the DESIRE research programme and study sites. The messages have been designed to be of interest at a number of spatial and organisational levels. Some of these messages have been circulated as news items, - as press releases, newsletters, podcasts and webcasts; and others are in booklets, leaflets, factsheets, policy briefs, or presentations.



### »Global level

White papers, briefs and other documents containing research results from DESIRE on the causes, consequences and management of [desertification](#) and [land degradation](#) that are part of the European Union's commitment to support the United Nations Convention to Combat [Desertification](#).



### »National level

Policy briefs demonstrating that research results from DESIRE are particularly relevant to the efforts, planning and policies of countries in which the study sites are located to combat, mitigate and ameliorate the effects of [desertification](#) and [land degradation](#).



### »Local stakeholder level

Factsheets and storylines illustrating that throughout DESIRE, the collaboration between scientists and local people has yielded an exchange of information that includes evaluations of different approaches and techniques to prevent or control [land degradation](#).



### »Booklets and fact sheets

A series of booklets (info-briefs) and shorter fact sheets demonstrating how DESIRE research is helping to mitigate different aspects of the problems of [desertification](#) in non-scientific language, the booklets are of interest to a wide range of audiences, from policy makers to school children.

search...



Tags Cloud

There are no tagged articles!

+ All tags

Translator login

Username

Password

Remember Me ☐

Login

Forgot your password?

Forgot your username?

Acknowledgement

The DESIRE project is co-funded by the European Commission, Global Change and Ecosystem. DESIRE brings together the expertise 26 international research institutes and non-governmental organisations. This website does not necessarily represent the opinion of the European Commission. The European Commission is not responsible for any use that might be made of the information contained herein.

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DESIRE - local solutions for a global problem ENGLISH SUBTITLES

by DESIRE project

11 months ago



Nowadays there are only two people living in Agra Velha.

<http://www.desire-his.eu/en/key-messages>

On the on-line DESIRE Harmonised Information System the top menus allow users to access information from the perspective of each of 17 study sites, as well as the perspective of the research themes. The **Key messages** from the research themes are collected together so that summary information is easy to find. Some of the messages are organised according to type of audience, from the global UNCCD level to the local stakeholder level in DESIRE study sites.

There are lists of products under each heading. These documents may all be read directly on-line, using an integral scroll-down facility, or they may be downloaded for saving or printing. Some products are available in multiple languages.

# Harnessing technology

In the Harmonised Information System new ways of presenting information in an attractive way are constantly becoming available. Here, clicking on the pictures on the web page leads to further information on each successive part of the research. In other areas drop-down menus help to organise information for each study site.

DESIRE has seen the benefit of the popularity of social networking, as on



The publication of new dissemination products can be advertised to a continually growing public audience at the press of a button or touch of a screen.



The DESIRE Project has received many enthusiastic responses from land users, for example view a video clip from Botswana <http://tinyurl.com/6wge8dr> DESIRE research was also presented to a meeting of Botswanan national media. Mr. Abraham Mamela, Communications Manager at the University of Botswana complimented DESIRE and said:

*"I must say, this is a quite stunning move towards communicating research, I wish most researchers had these skills that you have in your department/project. I have seen the videos and they are very informative to society. The technicalities are good, it was professionally done."*

## Written and compiled by:

Nichola Geeson, using material from various DESIRE partners

A video presentation of these ideas may be viewed at <http://vimeo.com/16466066>

## Further Reading:

The DESIRE website can be accessed at <http://www.desire-project.eu/>, and the DESIRE Harmonised Information System at see <http://www.desire-his.eu/>

See the DESIRE Manual of Communication and Dissemination <http://www.desire-his.eu/en/booklets-a-factsheets/794-manual-of-communication-and-dissemination> and DESIRE local solutions.... video <http://vimeo.com/19738629>

## See also:

"What is information management?" <http://www.aiim.org/what-is-information-management>

ESRC Impact Toolkit <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/tools-and-resources/impact-toolkit/index.aspx>

Top Twitter tips for academics <http://www.scribd.com/doc/60642119/Top-Twitter-Tips-for-Academics>

Sustainable Learning <http://sustainable-learning.org/?cat=6>

The DESIRE project (2007-2012) is funded by the European Commission, VI Framework Program, 'Global Change and Ecosystems' and brings together the expertise of 26 international research institutes and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

<http://www.desire-project.eu>

<http://www.desire-his.eu/>

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The opinions expressed in this document and on the website are those of the individual Project consortia and do not necessarily reflect the views of the funders.



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