



DESERTIFICATION MITIGATION AND REMEDIATION OF LAND – A GLOBAL APPROACH FOR LOCAL SOLUTIONS

DESIRE-SPECIFIC MANUAL OF COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION

**Guidance for organisation of community work, writing
dissemination products, and dissemination activities**

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DESIRE-SPECIFIC MANUAL OF COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION

1. Introduction	6
1.1 The audience.....	8
1.2 Improving communication and understanding.....	9
1.3 Writing DESIRE dissemination products	10
1.4 Overview of this Manual.....	13
2. Preparation for production of dissemination products.....	14
2.1 Complexity and formats of dissemination.....	14
2.2 Key messages and basic products of DESIRE.....	15
2.3 Identification of the most suitable dissemination products to be used in each Study Site.....	17
2.4 Matching the complexity of dissemination products to the audience.....	17
2.5 Writing for different audiences	19
2.5.1 All audiences	19
2.5.2 Writing purely for scientists.....	20
2.5.3 Writing for educated stakeholders	20
2.5.4 Writing for less knowledgeable stakeholders and members of the general public.....	21
2.5.5 Writing for schoolchildren and their teachers.....	21
2.5.6 Writing for administrators and politicians.....	22
3. Developing and using dissemination products with stakeholders.....	23
3.1 Principles of stakeholder engagement.....	23
3.2 Keeping stakeholders involved.....	24
3.3 Developing dissemination products with stakeholders.....	30
3.4 Preparing the most suitable products for the intended audience.....	31
3.5 Spreading dissemination products and messages far and wide.....	31
3.6 Evaluation of dissemination products.....	33
4. Structure of the Harmonised Information System.....	34
4.1 Purpose of the HIS.....	34
4.2 How the HIS was planned.....	34
4.3 User requirements for the HIS, as suggested by DESIRE partners.....	35
4.4 New opportunities for dissemination within the HIS.....	36
5. First ideas for DESIRE dissemination products.....	38
5.1 First ideas of WB1 dissemination products	38
5.2 First ideas and examples of WB2 dissemination products	39
5.3 First ideas of WB3 dissemination products for the HIS	39
5.4 First ideas of WB4 dissemination products for the HIS	43
5.5 First ideas of WB5 dissemination products for the HIS	44
6. Practical considerations.....	46
6.1. Copyright and intellectual property.....	46
6.2 Cost-effective ways of promoting dissemination.....	49
7. Sources of dissemination material to use as it is with DESIRE stakeholders, or use for ideas for new dissemination products.....	50
7.1 General.....	50
7.2 For technicians and farmers	50

7.3 For Policy Makers.....	50
7.4 For Teachers and others involved in education.....	52
7.5 For Researchers.....	55
8. Further reading.....	56
8.1 Communication with stakeholders.....	58
Appendix 1: Stakeholder checklists.....	59
Appendix 2: Examples of dissemination products.....	64
Appendix 3: Writing press releases.....	69
Appendix 4: Writing a policy brief.....	74
Appendix 5: Making video clips and video podcasts.....	78
Appendix 6: Making DESIRE posters, fact sheets, booklets, brochures and PowerPoint presentations.....	79

Chapter 1:

Introduction

Many people are motivated to carry out research because they want to change the world around them. Many of these researchers assume that good research alone has the power to make the world a better place. While this may be true in theory, in practice only the best communicated research tends to have any effect on policy or practice. Unless your research is understood by the people who need to use it, even the best quality research simply sits on library shelves gathering dust, read by just a handful of other researchers.

The DESIRE project has the potential to develop strategies that could remediate land degradation over vast areas, with potentially enormous environmental, social and economic benefits. However this potential can only be realised if these strategies are actually adopted by stakeholders. In the DESIRE project, there is a broad definition of stakeholders as all those who are affected by land degradation, or who have the power to influence land degradation processes. In a project like this the stakeholders range from families who depend upon and manage land, to the policy-makers at district, national and international scales who design policies that affect land degradation. Therefore, if DESIRE is to be successful, we need a comprehensive, pragmatic approach that can enable us to communicate our findings effectively to diverse groups of people. The aim of this manual is to provide guidance that can help you communicate effectively with the full range of stakeholders in each study site and beyond. The manual is a compendium of ideas and guidance that will be used to develop strategies for communication and the final choice of dissemination methods and products.

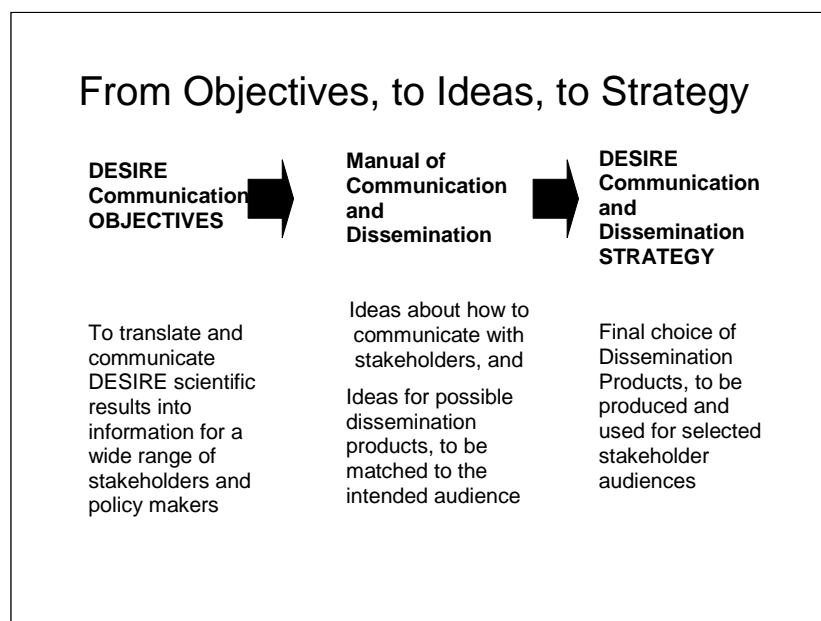


Figure 1.1 Purpose of the Manual of Communication and Dissemination (*N. Geeson*)

Specifically, the Manual of Dissemination aims to:

- I. Provide guidelines about how to continue sharing knowledge and building networks with stakeholders throughout the rest of the DESIRE project; and
- II. Provide ideas about how to effectively communicate or “disseminate” project outputs (results, messages and products) to all kinds of stakeholders, inside and outside the DESIRE project.

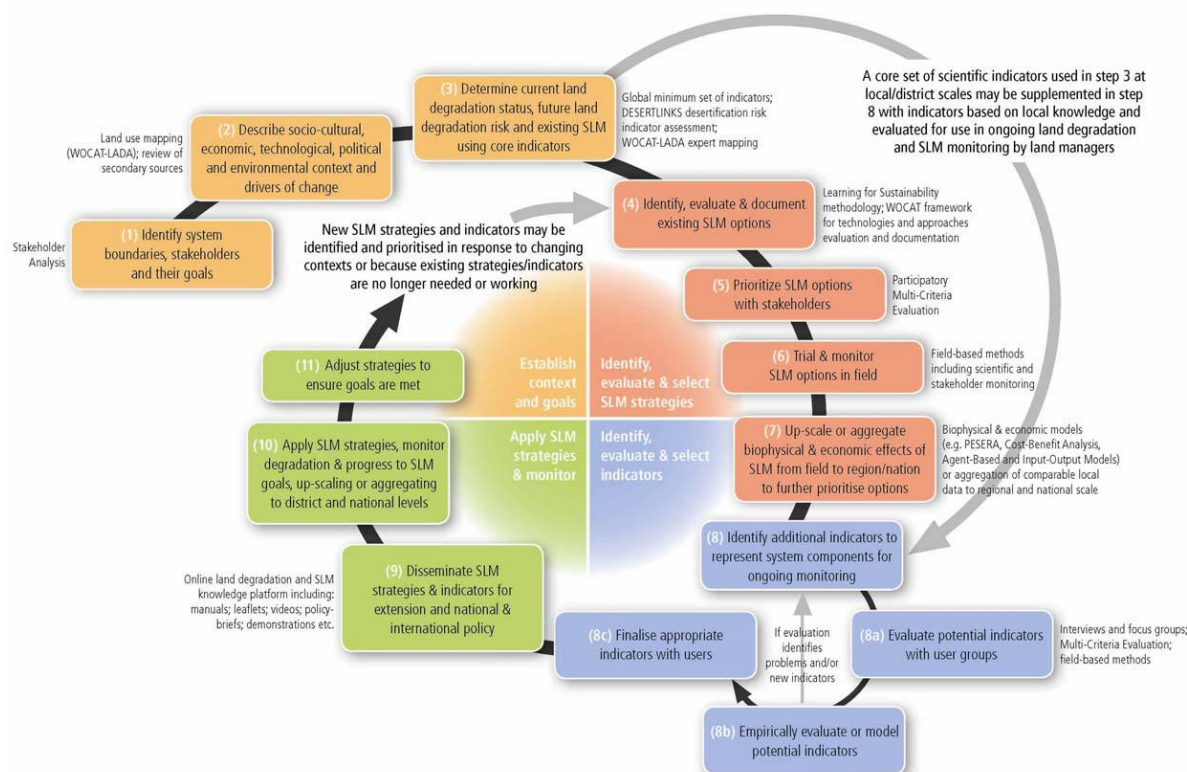


Figure 1.2 Conceptual model of vertical knowledge management. Examples show how each step is operationalised in the DESIRE project

In addition to working with stakeholders in study sites, there are many opportunities to talk about DESIRE at various meetings (at local, national and international levels), in the course of our work. So, whether we are actively involved in the study sites or just writing material for dissemination products, we all need to think about dissemination of information throughout the project.

There is an emphasis throughout this manual on designing dissemination approaches and products in collaboration with stakeholders. By working closely with the people who need the information, it is possible to better understand their needs and how best to communicate effectively with them. Although such “bottom up” approaches have the potential to communicate messages at a societal scale, it is necessary to co-ordinate the messages in a more “top-down” way, so that the right people get the Right Information, in the right Format and at the right Time (the RIFT principle, Gentit pers. comm.). It is also important to target people who are likely to act on new information, either to use it themselves or pass it on to others. The assemblage of basic pieces of information in different combinations in this RIFT context is the minimum achievement to aim for. Ideally there will be added design features to refine the value of the products for each particular group of people.

At the same time, there are limits to the amount of dissemination materials we can realistically produce. We have the 18 study sites, all with different problems, with different types of

stakeholders in each. On top of that there is information for stakeholders who are not directly involved in the project, e.g. national Focal Points, and the UNCCD. Multiplying all these numbers produces a huge number of bits of information, especially as a large part will also need to be translated into different languages. Additionally it is a challenge to keep everything organized in such a way that access to all information remains simple to use. We know we cannot address all stakeholders individually, but we need to do the best we can to provide something of relevance to them.

To break this challenge down into more achievable tasks, this manual proposes an approach that develops dissemination products at up to three levels of complexity: simple, middle-range and advanced. Some products will be developed across the project, and others will be developed for specific study sites and translated into local languages. It is planned that these basic pieces of information will be assembled in different combinations to suit particular types of stakeholder.

Whether all this information can be presented online or not, all dissemination products will be referred to in the project's Harmonised Information System (HIS). The HIS is the part of the DESIRE project website for collecting and re-organising project results, and information extracted from project deliverables. It is currently organised according to Work Blocks and Work Packages, but at the end of the project that terminology will be lost, leaving the story of what was done in DESIRE. At that stage the completed HIS will be public on the DESIRE website, as a lasting record of DESIRE achievements. The HIS will include a wide variety of material for dissemination, from individual photos to complete manuals, such as the Manual for describing land degradation indicators.

To achieve all these aims, this Manual of Dissemination is designed to help inform decisions about: i) the type of participation that is appropriate to your site; ii) practical guidelines on good practice in participation in general; and iii) guidelines for organising group planning sessions and stakeholder group facilitation. Chapter 8, Further Reading, provides a list of references to relevant literature, where these issues can be explored in greater depth.

This manual was designed to grow and change over the course of the project, for example providing examples of dissemination products that could be used as templates you can adapt to your site, or to inspire the development of new products in your site. The manual was also designed to support training for study site leaders, facilitators (e.g. local NGOs in the Study Sites who may assist dissemination), Work Block leaders and other experts. Examples of such training may include communication and network building, and the development of products at each complexity level.

1.1 The audience

Stakeholders in the DESIRE project have a very wide range of needs and interests. Individually they may be interested in different parts of the DESIRE project: perhaps the evidence for degradation or desertification, or the choice of remediation and sustainable strategies and measures, or the results of experiments with these strategies. DESIRE Deliverable 6.1.1 provides preliminary lists of stakeholder groups associated with each study site.

http://www.desire-project.eu/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=41&Itemid=26

The WB3 training manual provides information about how to identify, group and prioritise stakeholders in each study site. In addition to this, there are numerous check-lists available, that may help to improve inclusivity, and make sure that some groups are not forgotten (see Appendix 1).

WB1 gathered further information on stakeholders and stakeholder groups (WP 1.4.1), their environment and how they manage the natural resources (WPs 1.2.1, 1.3.1), and information use and needs. They used three questionnaires in each Study Site, aimed at: focus groups, natural resource management institutions, and individual stakeholders at household level.

Some land managers will need mostly pictorial information if they are illiterate, while others will be happy using the internet and may even read English, so with dissemination products it is not possible to simply label information for “land managers”. Where possible, by allowing stakeholders to select the level of complexity that is most accessible to them, it is not necessary to pre-judge or generalise the preferences of specific groups of stakeholders. This is important, given the diversity of individual capabilities and preferences within any one stakeholder group. Where possible in the HIS there is a graduation from simple to more complex information, so that readers can read as far as their interest takes them.

HIS users can be guided to suitable resources with directions on the website, but in the study sites there ideally need to be Facilitators or Moderators who can make a bridge between scientists and stakeholders. Personal testimony or local examples can be very persuasive for introducing new ideas. Facilitators from NGOs or extension agencies might, for example, help translate material between English and the language of the study site, and suggest the physical dissemination formats likely to be most successful. They will be best placed to communicate in both directions, so that information passes from WB6 to the study site leaders, to the facilitators, to the stakeholders, and also feedback comes back to WB6 in the reverse direction. We will be very reliant on the Study Site Leaders and/or Facilitators if we are going to try any innovative ideas with local media, demonstrations, tours, etc. Only they know what is likely to be successful with the local culture. Training for facilitation is explained in Chapter 3. Secondary dissemination is dissemination beyond the immediate study site areas. To achieve this, community and network-building skills are required, and these are also discussed in Chapter 3, along with dissemination strategies.

1.2 Improving communication and understanding

Communication refers to methods of transferring information between people, primarily from a source to a receiver, but it should not be considered to be only one-way. The most productive communication is often two-way interaction, where feedback between the receiver and the source can improve the quality of understanding.

Establishment of pathways and networks of communication helps to ensure the continuation of communication interaction over time. An example of a pathway is that from Project Coordinator and Work Block Leaders, to Project Study Site Leaders, to Study Site staff, to stakeholders local to the Study Site, to stakeholders on the periphery and beyond the Study Site. Communication is two-way, with scientists refining their ideas through interaction with stakeholders, just as stakeholders are

learning about new possibilities to combat desertification from scientists. This is a very important part of the DESIRE project. An example of a network is the expanding email circulation list for the receipt of DESIRE newsletters. Unlike the pathway there is no sense of hierarchy in the network. Using pathways and networks, DESIRE is at the centre of a sphere of influence. Information can travel in any direction, at varying velocity. The aim of dissemination in DESIRE is to maximise the sphere of influence.

The progress and velocity of information transfer depends on a number of attributes: a) the quality of the information and the degree of interest it raises, b) the strength, efficiency and protocols of pathway and network links, and c) opportunity. Success is interesting and eagerly circulated, but pathway and network links have to be maintained as they can easily be broken. Opportunity is a factor that cannot necessarily be pre-determined, as it depends on a complexity of psychology, recognition and chance. However, opportunities can be actively sought after, and can sometimes be manufactured. There are obvious pathways between scientists and stakeholders, as described above, and also other opportunities with peripheral actors in the community, who can prove to be remarkably responsive. For example, if groups of people who are interested in sustainability in a wider sense can be identified in the Study Sites, then they can be actively targeted and presented with information of suitable interest and complexity. Such groups might be school children learning about geography, a women's group meeting to discuss food supply, or charitable organisations seeking to combat poverty, etc.

It is important to capitalise on opportunities. For example, if the Mayor of an administrative district, or a key farmer that others look up to, become enthusiastic, their neighbours are much more likely to welcome and approve new ideas too. Opportunities need to be recognised and built on. A collection of like-minded people working in cooperation can achieve far more than isolated individuals.

Choice of words is very important for good communication, to avoid misunderstanding or ambiguity. It may be wise to check with colleagues that the sense you mean, in a spoken or written presentation, is clear, and then later check that a message has been understood in the way it was intended. Communication should have an aim, then a plan for how to achieve that aim, and finally a check that the aim was achieved.

1.3 Writing DESIRE dissemination products

In the HIS dissemination tools and methods (or catalogues directing to other websites) are used at scales from local events to international conferences. We can use video clips or video podcasts, and might also think about film, theatre, workshops, exchange visits (as proposed by WB3) etc. as dissemination products, if time and budgets allow. In WB6 we collect information on the needs and interests of the endusers in each Study Site. Some endusers will have access to the internet, but many will not. There will have to be a range of products to suit as many users as possible.

Some dissemination products will be produced specific to study sites and others will be written first in English. Then, within each study site portal they may be translated into the appropriate languages to make it accessible for stakeholders in those sites.

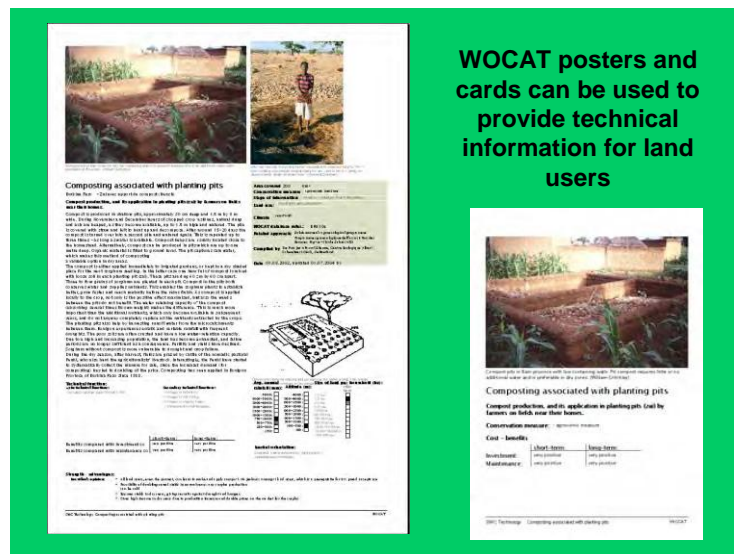


Figure 1.3 Examples of a WOCAT poster and a leaflet, available in English, French and Spanish (WOCAT)

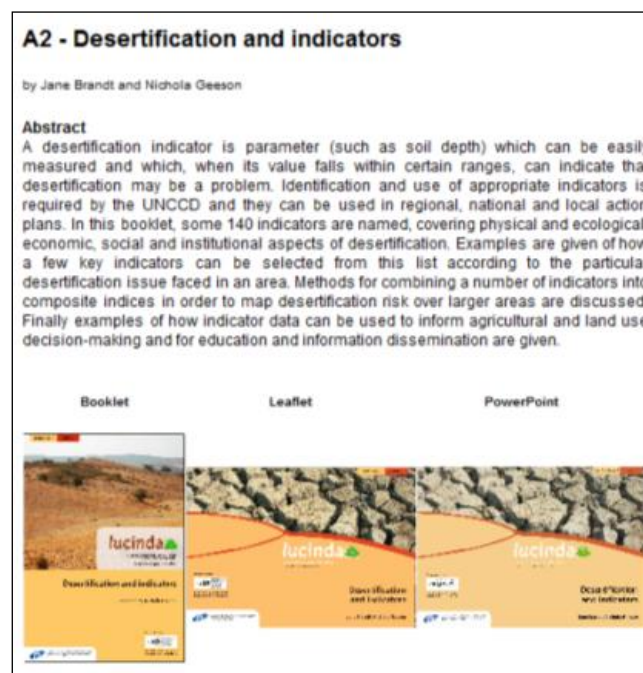


Figure 1.4 A model for booklets, leaflets and PowerPoint presentations from the LUCINDA project, downloadable to read and print in five languages from:

<http://geografia.fcsh.unl.pt/lucinda/default.html> (LUCINDA)

Since we need to provide a large amount of information in all the most useful languages, it is not practical or economic to write and print posters, leaflets and booklets ourselves and transport them

to users. The idea is to write newsletters, leaflets, etc. in English and pass them to the study sites for translation. Then documents can be emailed to those stakeholders who have computers and internet access, and printed off, for circulation in the study sites, for those who do not.

The HIS is currently recording the outcome of work done in each Working Block in non-scientific language where possible. However, there is a very wide range of stakeholders, with different interests, understanding, and education. We therefore propose a basic framework that offers a choice of up to three levels of information. We may find it becomes possible to provide more choices within this structure, but the basic categories would be:

- **Advanced, scientific material (as in scientific journals)**
- **Middle-range material in non-scientific language (as used on the HIS)**
- **Simple, mainly pictorial, material (also used on the HIS)**

Level of information	Messages to stakeholders			
	Overview of problems	Assessment of desertification, use of indicators	Selecting strategies and putting them into action	Evaluation of strategies
Advanced scientific material	Scientific overview, mainly from WB1, possibly WB5.	All about indicators, mainly from WB2, also WB5.	All about potential strategies, mainly from WB3, also WB5.	All about evaluation of strategies, mainly from WB4, also WB5.
Middle-range material in non-scientific language	Including downloadable, translated, posters, leaflet or booklet, maps, diagrams... to disseminate within and beyond study sites, about the overview..	Including downloadable, translated material about indicators...	Including downloadable, translated material about potential strategies...	Including downloadable, translated material about evaluation of strategies...
Simple, mainly pictorial material	Including downloadable, translated posters and carefully chosen photographs...	Including downloadable, translated pictorial material about indicators...	Including downloadable, translated pictorial material about potential strategies...	Including downloadable, translated pictorial material about evaluation of strategies...

Figure 1.5 Examples of dissemination products that could be developed to communicate different messages at differing levels of complexity (N. Geeson)

WB leaders and study site co-ordinators all need to think about the sorts of messages they want to communicate with stakeholders that are likely to arise from the research that is being conducted. Those who conduct the research are best placed to write these messages, and provide material for the HIS at the three basic levels wherever appropriate. Local information is specific to the local context for local people, and can be used directly. This local information can also be combined in different ways for other users, but more effort is required to achieve the combination, targeted to the particular user. Figure 1.5 shows examples of the sorts of dissemination products that could be developed to communicate different messages at differing levels of complexity. Study site leaders

and facilitators can choose which “boxes” in the Table will best suit the stakeholders in and beyond their study sites.

1.4 Overview of this manual

The next chapter provides more information about each level of complexity and then provides information about how to select the most suitable dissemination products to communicate messages at each level of complexity, including examples of dissemination products (for more examples, see Appendix 2). To help develop these products, there is guidance about how to write for different audiences. Appendix 3 gives advice on writing Press releases and Appendix 4 provides information on making video clips and video podcasts. Chapter 3 provides guidance on how dissemination products may be distributed, explained and actively used with stakeholders, and how to encourage dissemination of products far beyond those directly involved in the project through community and network building. Appendix 1 provides checklists for identifying stakeholders. Chapter 4 describes the developing structure of the Harmonised Information System and Chapter 6 explores first ideas for DESIRE dissemination products. Chapter 6 is Practical considerations, e.g. copyright, and Chapter 7 provides available sources of ready-to use dissemination material. Chapter 8 lists further reading.

Chapter 2:

Preparing for production of dissemination products

2.1 Complexity and formats of dissemination

What sort of products will be suitable in each Study Site? Bear in mind that there are no specific budgets for printing glossy booklets with colour photos, etc. Therefore we have to be imaginative with the resources we have. There are many products we can provide on the HIS, and we expect to make as much of the HIS as we can public later in the project. What we can do is provide downloadable manuals, booklets, leaflets, posters, maps, diagrams, etc. that can be either circulated by email (to those who have internet access), or printed on ordinary office printers for physical distribution by the Study Site Leaders or connected organisations. See some of the WOCAT products as examples of what we mean.

We can also include video clips, or video podcasts. Video material is often a more enjoyable educational medium than the written word, and the visual and spoken messages are probably more memorable. Video material might be supported by leaflets, which could be downloaded from the HIS, printed and circulated.

Study Site Leaders will be able to focus on providing products most suited to communicating the needs for change in their study site. For WBs 1-5 this is about writing the Messages coming out of the WBs in non-scientific language and formats. For Study Site Leaders this is about choosing which Messages will be suitable to be disseminated in each particular Study Site. Together we have to decide what sort of products we want to produce, mostly products that can be downloaded from the HIS, adapted to the specific needs of each Study Site if necessary, translated where necessary, either circulated by email or printed and distributed.

Appendix 3 gives guidance on writing press releases, and preliminary guidance on making video material is given in Appendix 5. Appropriate participation consent forms should be completed by all participants in audio-visual recording.

2.2 Key messages and basic dissemination products from DESIRE

Plans for dissemination products and the structure of the HIS have been made on the basis of the expected input from DESIRE project activities and deliverables in Work Blocks 1-5. The WBs are the source of the messages that DESIRE will disseminate as follows:

- WB1 is collecting available information and data from study sites and their regions
- WB2 is identifying and listing desertification indicators and collecting the data required to support their use, either directly or thorough other WBs. Maps of desertification risk will be produced
- WB3 has identified strategies and is documenting them in a pre-defined format using the WOCAT database
- WB4 will provide the results of field trials, implementation and monitoring

- WB5 will provide evaluation of strategies using models such as DESMICE, and PESERA at the regional scale

Further details of the material expected from each WB is presented in Deliverable 6.2.2, and the preliminary specifications for dissemination and training material are explained in Deliverable 6.2.3

Current progress with overall DESIRE dissemination material is summarised in Table 2.2. In addition to that there have been individual initiatives in every study site.

WB	Product	Main User
	DESIRE Project website	All
	DESIRE brochure	All
6	Harmonised Information System on DESIRE website	All DESIRE
1	Scientific review	Scientists
3	WOCAT training manuals and decision support tool	Study Sites
4	Monitoring manual	Study Sites
2	Indicator manual	Study Sites
6	Manual of Dissemination	All DESIRE
6	4 x DESIRE Newsletters, the first at 3 levels of complexity, the remainder at mid-level non-scientific complexity	All
	CRIC Discussion Paper: Is the UNCCD stuck in a knowledge traffic jam?	Scientists and policy makers
6	Info-brief 1: Tackling salinization of soils in arid and semi-arid regions	All
	Info-brief 2: Sustainable land management enhances our living soils	All
6	Factsheets on stakeholder participation	All
	Article for the MEA bulletin	Scientists

Table 2.1 Summary of available Products from DESIRE, at least at draft stage – August 2010

2.3 Identification of the most suitable dissemination products to be used in each Study Site

WB6 has worked with Study Site Leaders to determine the best information formats for the stakeholders in their study sites. It was suggested that the Study Site Leaders work through the following steps:

1. Identify the range of stakeholder groups and key stakeholder groups (done already)
2. Identify the complexity of information required by key stakeholder groups (possibly by asking the stakeholders directly)
3. Identify the ideal formats for information suitable for key stakeholder groups
4. Choose the most relevant from all the Messages coming out of WBs 1-5, to address

(These factors are being used for deciding what information is put IN dissemination products and the HIS. The next stages will utilise what is provided coming OUT FROM DESIRE deliverables and the HIS)

5. Assemble Packages of information from available material and products coming out of WBs 1-5 or the HIS, or adapt this material for specific stakeholder groups
6. Determine what needs to be translated into the local language
7. Use the Packages for key stakeholder groups and other suitable stakeholders
8. Adapt these Packages for other peripheral groups of stakeholders
9. Determine the best ways (participatory methods) for dissemination to happen, e.g. exhibitions, community events, social events, conferences, TV interviews, podcasts, videos, DVDs, other written material, etc.
10. Planning and timetables to put these methods into action.

2.4 Matching the complexity of dissemination products to the audience

Here is a quick checklist to help Study Site Leaders think about the needs of the stakeholder audiences. This also indicates how the provision of basic Advanced, Mid-range and Simple material can be matched to different audiences.

Defining audience expectations

1. Are the audience scientists?

- **Yes:** Use fully referenced scientific research papers, plus material suitable for a literate audience (*Advanced and Mid-range complexity*)
- **No:** Go to 2

2. Is the audience literate?

- **Yes:** Go to 3
- **No:** Use oral presentations, plus pictorial and video material to convey explanation and instruction (*Simple complexity*)

3. Will the audience expect technical detail?

- **Yes:** Go to 4
- **No:** Use less detailed explanations, less text and more visual material (*Simple and Mid-range complexity*)

4. Will technical detail be used for decision-making at higher than local level?

- **Yes:** Use clear concise explanation or instructions or policy briefs (*Advanced and/or Mid-range complexity*)
- **No:** Use explanations or instructions suited to local conditions (*Mid-range complexity*)

Figure 2.2a (N. Geeson)

What do we know about our audiences?



Are the audience scientists?

- Yes: Use fully referenced scientific research papers, plus material suitable for a literate audience (*Advanced and Mid-range complexity*)



Is the audience literate?

- No: Use oral presentations, plus pictorial and video material to convey explanation and instruction (*Simple complexity*)



Will the audience expect technical detail?

- No: Use less detailed explanations, less text and more visual material (*Simple and Mid-range complexity*)

Figure 2.2b Tailoring dissemination products to the audience (N. Geeson)

2.5 Writing for different audiences (See examples in Chapter 5)

Different groups of stakeholders will respond to different approaches, as outlined below. Guidance for writing for different audiences, and communication in general, is also dealt with very efficiently by the Economic and Social Research Council, UK:

Writing for the web

http://www.esrc.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/Images/An%20Introduction%20to%20Writing%20for%20the%20Web_tcm6-24542.pdf

Guide to creating a good website

http://www.esrc.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/Images/A%20Guide%20to%20Creating%20and%20Maintaining%20a%20Good%20Website_tcm6-24549.pdf

Communications toolkit

<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/CTK/default.aspx>

2.5.1 All audiences

There are a number of questions about the intended audience that the writer should consider before starting to write (Morris, 2001), including:

- What does the audience already know about the topic?
- What are their current practices and traditions?
- What barriers might there be to them adopting new procedures or innovations?
- What are their existing skills, and which skills can be built on?
- Are there misconceptions that particularly need to be addressed?

If these questions are not fully answered, the writer might still imagine the attributes of the audience, but may risk producing less relevant information material. Most non-scientific audiences will prefer text that is brief, accurate but without too much background detail, and well structured so that the key points are obvious. Topics and language must be culturally and linguistically appropriate.



Figure 2.3 Workshop participation in Boteti, Botswana (Photo by R. Chanda)

All audiences will appreciate photos and other visual material carefully chosen to illustrate the points made, plus maps, and diagrams. Personal testimony can be particularly persuasive. If the reader has access to the internet, they will be also becoming used to a huge choice of sources of knowledge in different formats and languages, including animated presentations.

2.5.2 Writing purely for scientists

This is what DESIRE partners are used to doing. Scientists expect arguments to be presented in a concise and logical format, without use of colloquial language. Paragraphs or sections are often numbered, so that it is easier to refer to them. Statements of fact or reports of previous work are always supported by lists of references from within other scientific literature. See instructions for writing research papers in any scientific journal. Scientific writing assumes the reader has prior knowledge of the subject, but if extra explanation is required, it is provided through the references.



Figure 2.4 DESIRE Plenary meeting in Eskisehir, Turkey (Photo by E. van den Elsen)

2.5.3 Writing for educated stakeholders



Figure 2.5 Implementation of WOCAT mapping in Tunisia (Photo by M. Ouassar)

DESIRE partners will need to simplify their writing for educated stakeholders. The focus is on scientific facts presented in a concise and logical way, but using a more reader-friendly format. The hierarchy of numbered sections and number of references should be limited. On the HIS, this style of writing will probably be of most use to stakeholders in the study sites. Diagrams can be used to show connections between ideas and concepts. The language used should avoid scientific terms and acronyms that would need accompanying definitions.

2.5.4 Writing for less knowledgeable stakeholders and members of the general public

DESIRE partners will need to use their imagination to decide how their key messages can be portrayed at the simplest level. To engage the interest of less-knowledgeable stakeholders, plenty of photos and examples are required. Colloquial language may be used, with novel coloured formats to attract attention. Oral communication, for example on local radio, or through village meetings, and well chosen photographs may be more effective than written words.



Figure 2.6 Vegetation poster for the Keskın area of Turkey (by S. Açıkalın, photo by E. van den Elsen)

2.5.5 Writing for schoolchildren and their teachers

Many schoolchildren are naturally very enthusiastic about caring for the environment. Sustainability is a good cause that they understand and support. Their view of the world is not restricted or constrained by economics (whether action is cost-effective) and other factors, as it is with politicians. Schoolchildren tell their parents what they learn about saving the planet, and can be very effective in persuading their parents to take action. Writing for schoolchildren therefore needs clear, concise facts presented in an attractive manner. Colloquial language may help get a child's attention.

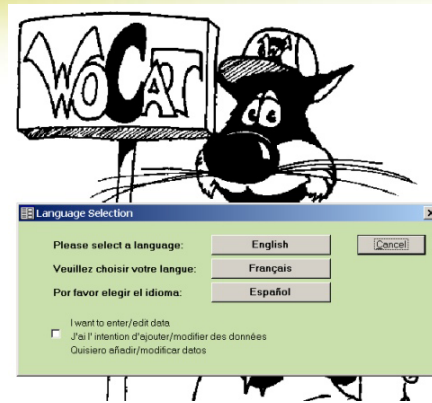


Figure 2.7 WOCAT cat helps communication in the Manual for the WOCAT databases

2.5.6 Writing for administrators and politicians

Administrators and politicians need guidance to tackle environmental problems in a practical, effective, and prudent way, using limited financial resources. They need the key scientific issues to be summarised so that they have a basis from which to prioritise their actions. To this purpose, maps are very useful for summarising and combining information. The language used should be clear, concise, report-style, and not colloquial. References should only be used if they are essential reading and the reader is likely to have easy access to such documents. Writers of policy briefs may need to provide added detail on technical and financial specifications, or provide details within a wider policy context. Results from a scientific research project can be used to encourage debate, highlighting a subject that requires policy action. If the scientific results are summarised in a digestible, understandable format, a wider range of persons may gain sufficient knowledge to comment effectively on policy options and make knowledge-based decisions on policy solutions.

An example is the discussion paper “Is the UNCCD stuck in a traffic jam”, presented to CRIC7 in October 2008, by the DESIRE, Drynet and enID projects. This can be downloaded from the News items on the DESIRE website:

http://www.desire-project.eu/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=114&Itemid=2

Chapter 3:

Developing and using dissemination products with stakeholders

We have discussed how different messages emerging from the DESIRE project can be communicated at differing levels of complexity, so that we can reach as many stakeholders as possible. There is a wide array of dissemination products that could be developed in study sites. However, just developing relevant dissemination products does not mean that they will necessarily be used by stakeholders. Only by achieving widespread uptake of dissemination products can we hope to inform the decisions made by land managers, policy-makers and other stakeholders that will determine whether land degradation continues or is remediated. This chapter considers how dissemination products can be introduced to stakeholders who have already been engaged in the DESIRE project, and then how these messages and products can be spread far beyond those directly involved with the project. To do this, the chapter will first introduce a series of best practice guidelines for working with stakeholders. It will then consider how messages and products can be spread further through community and network-building activities.

3.1 Principles of stakeholder engagement

Many methods exist for engaging with stakeholders, and have been covered extensively in the WB3 manual. See: Guidelines for WB3 Part I: Stakeholder Workshop 1 Identification of existing and potential prevention and mitigation strategies.

http://www.desire-project.eu/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_details&gid=97&Itemid=26

Within this, Exercise 4, for example, describes how to analyse stakeholder influence, and their motivation to implement sustainable land management.

There is a danger that such a manual may be viewed as a “tool-kit”, where as long as you choose the right tools for the job, you will be successful. Instead, it is increasingly being recognised that the process in which these tools are used has a far greater impact on the end result. Instead of the “tool-kit”, perhaps a more appropriate metaphor for this view of participation is a “service contract” (such as one might draw up for office cleaning or boiler maintenance). This view emphasises the people who use the tool-kit in the context of a long-term relationship where the parties develop mutual trust and respect as they learn from each other to negotiate potential solutions. To be successful, this process needs to be underpinned by an appropriate philosophy, and consider how to engage the relevant stakeholders at the most appropriate time and in a manner that will enable them to fairly and effectively shape the research. The rest of this section reviews six key features of best practice participation that have emerged from recent literature. By following these principles, it should be possible to work more effectively with stakeholders to develop and use dissemination products together in the DESIRE project.

First, it should be noted that stakeholder participation is only appropriate if participants really will have the power to influence the way in which dissemination products are developed. There is little point in simply consulting stakeholders about products that have already been developed and that you do not have time or resources to significantly revise in response to feedback from stakeholders.

If participation is deemed to be relevant, then it is necessary to consider the degree of participation that is relevant. As will be seen, this can only be decided once clear objectives have been set and the relevant stakeholders have been identified systematically. There are many degrees of stakeholder participation that can be used, from simply communicating research findings through to active participation in the research process. Information dissemination to passive recipients maybe termed “communication”, gathering information from participants is “consultation” and “participation” can be conceptualised as two-way communication between researchers and stakeholders where information is exchanged in some sort of dialogue or negotiation (Rowe and Frewer, 2000).



Figure 3.1 The Mayor and villagers in the Messara valley welcome DESIRE scientists to Crete (Photo by E. van den Elsen)

The following text summarises six key features of best practice participation (for more details, see: Reed, 2008):

1. Where relevant, stakeholder participation should be considered **as early as possible and throughout the process**, to ensure the project meets local needs and objectives and to increase local ownership of the project;
2. **Relevant stakeholders need to be represented systematically**. Bear in mind that although there will be a limit to the number of stakeholders involved, the risk of omitting key stakeholders should be minimised.
3. **Clear objectives for the participatory process need to be agreed among stakeholders at the outset**. It needs to be laid out at the beginning how minority views will be included, whether a consensus is sought, or whether a compromise be acceptable. This may require negotiation, as different stakeholders may have irreconcilable objectives. Only by defining clear objectives will it be possible to determine the appropriate level of

- engagement, who should be engaged, and how best to engage them;
4. **Methods should be selected and tailored to the decision-making context**, considering the objectives, type of participants and appropriate level of interaction. There are a wide range of methods that can be used to communicate, consult or participate with stakeholders (see Chapter 3, Appendix 2, Appendix 4). Methods must be adapted to the decision-making context, including socio-cultural and environmental factors, such as the level of literacy, the time available for participation, conflicting commitments, age-structure, and power dynamics;.
 5. **Highly skilled facilitation is essential** to get the most out of participation. The outcome of any participatory process is far more sensitive to the manner in which it is conducted than the methods that are used. Good facilitation is particular important where there are conflicts between participants. Different facilitators can use the same methods with radically different outcomes, depending on their skill level. Such skills include technical expertise in the use of different methods. However, it is sometimes the most seemingly simple of methods, such as informal group discussion, which require the greatest expertise. A successful facilitator needs to be perceived as impartial, open to multiple perspectives and approachable. They need to be capable of maintaining positive group dynamics, handling dominating or offensive individuals, encourage participants to question assumptions and re-evaluate entrenched positions, and get the most out of reticent individuals. Such skills are difficult to learn and tend to be developed through years of experience, intuition and empathy. For a list of practical tips for facilitators, see: <http://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/free/facilwsh.pdf>
 6. **Local and scientific knowledge should be integrated**. In combination with local knowledge, scientific knowledge can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of complex and dynamic natural systems and processes. By comparing different local and scientific knowledge sources, it may be possible to investigate uncertainties and assumptions and develop a more rigorous understanding. Following from this, it has been argued that land management and policy decisions based on such knowledge are likely to be more robust.

3.2 Keeping stakeholders involved

For **all DESIRE Project activities**, as many opportunities should be explored as possible for dialogue with stakeholders, and it is very rewarding to scientists if land users are eager to learn and also offer their own invaluable local knowledge. The WOCAT methodology used in WB3 includes many of the considerations described in this section. Some stakeholders are keen to secure their own livelihood whilst others are more concerned about environmental impacts. Some own land while others only rent, and may not worry about long term productivity. Some farms cover huge areas, while others are fragmented holdings resulting from inheritances. Scientists, land users, land owners, agricultural associations, extension worker, NGOs, SMEs, local/national government representatives, etc. all provide their own perspectives, and all have contributions to make to a successful outcome.

There is a strong argument that those who are affected by, or who can affect, proposals to remediate degraded land should have a chance to have their say, and this is a right that is becoming enshrined in law. The Aarhus Convention¹ stipulates that all environmental decisions must involve

¹ UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, see <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/>

stakeholders. There is some evidence that environmental decisions taken in collaboration with stakeholders may be higher quality and more durable. Although empirical evidence has yet to be collected, many other benefits have been claimed. For example, by establishing common ground and trust between participants and learning to appreciate the legitimacy of each others' viewpoints, participatory processes may have the capacity to transform adversarial relationships and find new ways for participants to work together. This may lead to a sense of ownership over the process and outcomes. If this is shared by a broad coalition of stakeholders, long-term support and active implementation of decisions may be enhanced.

Good communication can be a challenge especially when scientists speak a different language to stakeholders. Ways to optimise this include:

- Look for persons who communicate well to introduce key messages
- Involve as many stakeholders as possible, from elders to children
- Key messages must be repeated many times to ensure the intended sense is understood
- Different types of communication (e.g. demonstrations, local radio, photographic exhibitions) suit different messages, for different types of stakeholders
- Do not assume your message is understood, check that it really is. Also check that the intended meaning in responses from stakeholders is understood, too. Ask stakeholders about what they would like to hear about, as well as informing them of a scientific message

It is not always easy to see how to instigate or **optimise participatory processes**, but some suggestions are listed below:

- Meetings with stakeholders should have clear benefits and not be too time-consuming. Consideration of the following practical issues can improve the success of meetings with stakeholders and subsequent cooperation:
- Land users are busy people and may not always have time to stop to talk or attend meetings at times most convenient to scientists
- Stakeholder meetings may be held at places where such as temple or mosques where people already gather naturally.
- Consider what format, size and make-up of discussion group might be optimal, e.g. open days, lectures, demonstrations, exchange visits, etc.
- Stakeholder involvement in scientific experiments and trials, perhaps using some stakeholders as contacts for larger groups, saves time, since the scientific research is validated
- Local facilitators or promoters, e.g. teachers, NGOs, can be used to bridge the potential gap in understanding between scientists and stakeholders
- Providing information packages on agriculture can be used as a means of engaging stakeholders
- Questionnaires that can be collected next day may provide better results than on-the-spot answers
- Always involve the most influential stakeholders and organisations closely, and look for stakeholders who will be interested in different stages of the project. Find out what is common and what is different in their needs to combat desertification.
- Bring policy makers from the nearest capital city to talk to stakeholders and discuss the reality and causes of their situation.
- Stakeholders are likely to want to discuss socio-economic benefits and whether the proposed strategies are convenient, as well as hear about the scientific benefits.

- At the end of a piece of work or project a wrap-up meeting or workshop should be held where stakeholders can be thanked for all their help.
- Remember that the land belongs to farmers not scientists.

Sometimes the stakeholder group assembled for participation may prove to be unrepresentative. Stakeholders with more power in a community may persuade other stakeholders for or against suggestions from scientists. Here are some suggestions to address this **representation** problem:

- In larger groups it is easier to see which actors are, or are not, in agreement
- Consideration should be given to the needs and views of both men and women
- Triangulation is a method to check the consistency of information, so that people with local power (including scientists) do not exert unfair pressure. Voting systems could also be used
- Stakeholders may sometimes say what they think scientists would like to hear, and scientists may do the same.

Initial stakeholder enthusiasm may be diluted, perhaps if the success of “scientific solutions” is not immediate, or if stakeholders think their ideas are not listened to. Therefore it is best to check that **stakeholder expectations** are not raised to an impossible level by considering the following points:

- It is essential to be transparent, since land users are sceptical and not easily persuaded.
- Sometimes development agencies arrive with large budgets for “improvement” activities, that may be more persuasive than the words of scientists that come without supporting finance
- There should never be promises of scientific solutions, just opportunities to take part in experiments
- Cooperation with NGOs, land user organisations etc., needs to be maintained
- Always remember to provide feedback after an event or meeting
- Remember that current land use technology used by stakeholders may be part of the desertification problem, so the environmental benefits of suggested changes may have to be introduced with tact and diplomacy
- It is very important to make sure that stakeholders understand the background, the reasons why land degradation and desertification may be happening. For analysing **drivers** of desertification it may be possible to:
 - Use focus groups, talk to village leaders and NGOs, and survey land use change.
 - Make a survey of land use change in the last few decades.
 - Make a survey of the rural economic conditions, using questionnaires or interviews. Explain the basic problem to stakeholders and explain why desertification may be happening in the study site.
 - Ask stakeholders what things seem to make their situation worse or better.
 - Map the problems conceptually, or think in terms of a problem tree or objective tree.
 - Think broadly in terms of the influence of migration, political stability/instability, feuds and conflicts, water rights, food supplies.
- Read the UNCCD’s National Action Plan for each study site country, as well as national and regional agricultural and environmental plans

Indicators help scientists and stakeholders to assess the extent, degree and consequences of desertification. For receiving suggestions for **local indicators** it is important to visit the site and discuss it. There is a need to collect different viewpoints, and different perceptions from all kinds of stakeholders. To do this one might:

- Prepare mental or roughly drawn maps of the region with stakeholders. It is necessary to establish good relationships with farmers and ask for their help and permission to investigate their land.
- Clarify issues of land ownership.
- Use field visits and transect walks to illustrate subtle differences.
- Question land users on how they know whether the situation is improving or deteriorating.
- If stakeholders are asked what they look for when they buy land, then they understand the concept of indicators better and also find it easier to map the land.
- Organise interviews with officials in e.g. government departments for agriculture and water.
- Collect information, e.g. from elders, on past crop yields and the history of natural disasters.
- Determine whether there are local or cultural factors that could be barriers to getting scientific solutions implemented.
- Facilitate the use of existing data sources.
- Get help with validating estimations that are to be used as indicators.
- Use multi-criteria evaluation of local indicators to reach a short list of indicators.

Scientists and stakeholders should describe potential **approaches and strategies** together. They might consider the following points:

- Large group meetings of diverse types of stakeholders, perhaps with the ambience of a meal, can create a good balance of cooperation and understanding
- Stakeholders may be shown examples of technologies that do or do not work elsewhere.
- For implementing trial technologies, discussions of designs, materials and costs with stakeholders are vital.
- Goodwill gestures, such as providing some free materials, help to maintain trust and commitment
- Groups of stakeholders may be able to apply for further funding for new initiatives, or find a partner to help secure further funding
- Individual personal contacts with stakeholders are vital, so that it is easier to ask for more details if necessary
- Decisions on what approaches and technologies to use should be the result of negotiation, ensuring input from various parties. This might happen in small groups. Their expectations, favoured indicators and challenges should be listed.
- Farmers may be asked to help design and/or implement the measures.
- Proposed strategies should be discussed with stakeholders to find out if they will be efficient enough to implement in the long term
- Village committees or sub-committees may be set up
- Some free materials for experimental technologies, e.g. cement, may be provided
- Sharing costs of costs for starting up new methods might be an option
- If village leaders or land users who are respected are involved, then other land users will follow their lead
- Demonstrations of the technologies to local groups with more marginal interests, e.g. women's groups. This may help to build support for new ideas.

Once stakeholders are involved in choices of approaches and experimental technologies, it is vital that they should be kept involved, in **monitoring** the experimental plots etc, in the study sites. Unless land users are involved throughout DESIRE, they may not learn enough to carry on with the strategies after DESIRE ends. Establishment of a common methodology streamlines monitoring and measurement across the areas and facilitates integration and comparison. Stakeholders should be involved according to their knowledge and interests. They hold invaluable information about

weather, yield, planting, sowing, ploughing, weeding and the physical state of the crop. Monitoring trials of technologies can be time consuming, so cooperation is important. Sharing information on yields, farm activities, weather conditions, etc. through logbooks ensure that all key information is collected, and provides a focus for discussion. Land user stakeholders may like to be asked how they can be involved. In particular they might:

- Use photos to record changes in the landscape through the seasons.
- Warn of significant events (weather, crop disease, etc.).
- Be invited to make measurements themselves or at least to observe when measurements are taken.
- Be paid to guard scientific equipment.
- Fill in a weekly “log book”, plus a short questionnaire after harvest.
- Use regular transect walks for group discussions.
- Inform farmers’ associations, local authorities, extension services, NGOs, etc. of progress, regularly.
- Suggest further parameters to monitor.
- Suggest and use their own indicators.
- Report on the balance between yields and the availability of water.

Evaluation of the degree of success of technologies may be different for different types of stakeholders, according to their personal perspective. Multi-criteria analyses, WOCAT evaluation, cost-benefit analyses, photographic records, and stakeholder votes are examples of possible evaluation methods. In addition, the following points may be considered:

- Ask for the land user’s own analysis of the experiments, according to given criteria.
- List key criteria of success or failure: physical, social, economic, institutional, political, cultural, according to gender, according to age, etc.
- Ask marginal stakeholders, if they have noticed any changes.
- Collect regular photographic evidence of seasonal changes.
- Discuss the possible interpretations of site data, including socio-economic data.
- Organise demonstrations of pilot areas where methods can be copied by outsiders.
- Ask whether farmers will continue to use recommendations.
- Advertise the results of stakeholder participation and/or success of strategies with local media.
- A final workshop will allow discussion of the research methods used as well as the results, and determine the extent to which the trialled technologies and approaches may be used in the long term.

Dissemination of the results of the DESIRE project to a much broader range of stakeholders, from school children to policy makers at national level, is essential, and many different methods, in local languages and through various agencies, will be employed. It may be important to ask and check what kind of information stakeholders want. As well as using the Harmonised Information System, brochures, leaflets, reports, posters, video-clips, press releases, PowerPoint presentations, etc. additional ideas include:

- Use education experts, involve local schools
- Use the local press, local radio, workshops, SME visits
- Produce short on-line videos and other visual multimedia
- Use existing community meetings to introduce results of DESIRE
- Form reflection groups of stakeholders, to give feedback

- Use podcasts, policy briefs, Wikis (user editable web pages)
- Involve communication experts for developing communication products
- Mount a photographic exhibition
- Encourage influential local people, extensions services and NGOs to spread the word about DESIRE
- Actively distribute leaflets or booklets.
- Lobby for funding to extend dissemination activities and development of dissemination products.

3.3 Developing dissemination products with stakeholders

By developing dissemination products with stakeholders, it may be possible to develop products that are more relevant to local needs and priorities, that can be used more effectively by local stakeholders and that provide information that can lead to land management and policy decisions that are likely to remediate land degradation more effectively. So far, this manual has focussed on the more “top-down” task of co-ordinating the content and targeting of messages. This section now asks how this can be combined with “bottom-up” methods for developing these products with stakeholders and ensuring that they are used as widely as possible.

It is important to note that different levels of participation are likely to be relevant at different stages in the dissemination process. High levels of stakeholder **participation** are most appropriate at the outset, identifying the kinds of information people need and matching these information needs to the kinds of products that could be provided by the project. DESIRE Deliverable 6.1.1 collected preliminary information on the range of dissemination products that would be useful in the Study Sites.

http://www.desire-project.eu/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_details&gid=191&Itemid=26

The results of this exercise are described in Chapter 4. Study Site Leaders are encouraged to continue to consider suitable dissemination products with the stakeholders they meet.

Examples of methods covered in Guidelines for WB3 Parts 1-3

http://www.desire-project.eu/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=38&dir=DESC&order=name&Itemid=26&limit=10&limitstart=10

that could be used to engage stakeholders in identifying relevant dissemination products and developing materials including transect walks.

As with all forms of stakeholder participation there is a danger that this level of stakeholder participation can raise unrealistic expectations, for example if participants expect that the project will supply products that can meet all the needs and priorities they express. Managing expectations at an early stage and being clear about what the project can and cannot deliver is essential to avoid later disappointment and potential disengagement.

The suggested three levels of complexity outlined in Chapter 1 may require specialist input. Advanced scientific material ideally has to be written by scientists with the background scientific knowledge and a previous record of publication. The middle ranging material can be difficult to write because the writer has to combine extensive knowledge with non-scientific language, using a conversational tone without being patronising. The simple more pictorial level of complexity can be most difficult of all to get right, requiring good layout skills as well as recognition of the most suitable content.

Once relevant dissemination products have been identified and developed in collaboration with stakeholders, it is necessary to move from a participatory mode to a more **consultative** mode of communication, where stakeholders are asked to provide feedback on draft dissemination products. This increases the likelihood that final products meet stakeholder expectations, needs and priorities. This can be done with all the original participants, or key people who have volunteered to provide additional assistance. The final Stakeholder Workshops for WB4/WB5 may be used for this purpose. Feedback may be elicited during interviews or focus group discussions. Alternatively, if there is time, trial use of dissemination products can provide invaluable practical feedback that can enhance the utility and value of the product.

Finally, once dissemination products have been fully developed in response to feedback from stakeholders, it is possible to move from consultation to communication, distributing dissemination products to the people who will use them. Information from stakeholders can be invaluable at this point too, as we will explore in the next section.

3.4 Preparing the most suitable products for the intended audience

The first step is to determine the key message or messages for the audience, and then next consider the possible formats for presenting the message (leaflets, DVDs, etc.). The third step is about the level of detail (complexity) needed to convey the message, what are the components of the basic text and what can be left out. Consolidation of the message should result in an accurate and concise product. Thought should be put into making the products interesting and motivating. It is important to present information logically, including an introduction, development of ideas, and conclusions. Care should be taken not to make sentences or paragraphs too long or dense. Language, that is choice of words, should suit the user. Style, layout, typeface and use of colour also contribute to readability. The aim is to provide pages that look balanced and pleasing. Detailed discussion and advice on all these important attributes is provided by Morris, 2001.

3.5 Spreading dissemination products and messages far and wide

The previous section has discussed how stakeholder involvement in the development of dissemination products may be able to enhance their relevance and quality. Once dissemination products have been developed, the final challenge is to get them used as widely as possible. This doesn't necessarily have to be a costly undertaking, as some of the most effective ways of disseminating our findings will often be by word of mouth. By developing a communication strategy in collaboration with stakeholders, it may be possible to exploit far more modes of communication far more effectively than we could do otherwise. For example, stakeholder organisations may be

able to distribute materials via their often very extensive networks via post, email and meetings. DESIRE Deliverable 6.3.1 is a collection of email circulation lists for this purpose: within Study Sites plus a wide range of other contacts and networks.

Choosing the right mode of communication can be critical e.g. depending on the access of certain groups to the internet, or their literacy. For many groups, it is essential to introduce dissemination products to users face-to-face, for example at a stall or exhibition in an agricultural show, at village meetings, or through an event designed to launch the products which can be advertised through the mass media. Given the amount of material that lands on most policy-makers' desks, securing an appointment or presentation slot can be an invaluable way of explaining key messages, and getting key decision-makers interested in dissemination materials which may otherwise end up in the recycling bin. Stakeholders will be able to guide you towards the most appropriate mode of communication for different groups. Generally however, the more different ways that messages can be communicated, the more likely it is that different users will be able to access the information.

Getting buy-in from local extension agencies can be an excellent way to get dissemination products introduced personally to a target audience. Most extension agencies will very happily distribute materials and provide guidance to land managers who want to implement remediation strategies on their land, so it is worth investing time visiting their offices and convincing the decision-makers within the organisation.

Although extension services can be invaluable, they do not always have the capacity to reach all land managers, and in some countries extension services have been accused of marginalising certain (often disadvantaged) groups. So how can we promote oral dissemination, i.e. farmers telling other farmers? How do we persuade stakeholders to demonstrate new ideas to other stakeholders? In the Study Sites it is not only written material which helps to disseminate messages, but also, or maybe even **mainly** oral communication and discussions which are most effective. The WB3 stakeholder workshops, which are based on the methodology 'learning for sustainability', have already begun such a networking and learning process.

Dissemination of innovations in agriculture mainly happens through farmer to farmer networks. Community building takes time, and may not be possible at all study sites, but awareness of the principles will allow us to make the most out of opportunities to strengthen community/relevant networks. This will then facilitate dissemination of the results and initiate future positive developments throughout DESIRE.

Besides involving the communication of information, participation may be a social event, - it should be fun! It can be effective to provide some food and drink to encourage attendance, or to attach the participation to an existing community meeting that already has good attendance. It may be worthwhile making invitations personal, rather than general, and to contact key players verbally. If persons of some importance are known to support the participation, others in the community will follow their lead.

The DESIRE WB3 workshops are excellent examples of how a number of facilitation tools can be used flexibly to allow a large group of individuals from different backgrounds to meaningfully contribute

to an engaging process. A list of online publications providing useful tools and methods is provided in Chapter 8: Further Reading.

So far, most of the material in this chapter has focussed on communicating with stakeholders who have direct decision-making power over the adoption of land degradation remediation strategies. The chapter will conclude by considering modes of communication that can reach those who have indirect influence over decisions relating to land degradation and those who have no influence but retain an interest in the issues. To reach these groups of people, all dissemination materials that are developed within study sites will where possible be made available online via the HIS website. Online dissemination products may include for example PowerPoint presentations and video that could be used by e.g. administrators, NGOs, and teachers in schools and colleges. The project is producing regular newsletters that can be adapted and distributed in each study site. We may use a newsletter template with common information followed by a section that can be filled in by each Study Site individually, as done successfully by the DryNet Project. It can also be useful to develop regular press releases for use on local radio and television. In addition to disseminating project outputs more widely, media coverage can significantly raise the profile of the project in a study area, increasing the degree to which stakeholders perceive the project to be legitimate and worthwhile and hence enhancing their participation in the work.

3.6 Evaluation of dissemination products

Success of dissemination products and relevance of the information material to the intended audience can be checked by using an evaluation procedure. This should include consideration of minimum standards of content, readability, comprehensibility and presentation. Feedback from a sub-set of the intended audience can be used particularly to improve the products prior to widespread use, but feedback at any subsequent stage of product revision or dissemination is always very useful too. Obtaining such feedback may be done orally, individually or in groups, or by using a short written questionnaire. More details of evaluation procedures, and possible questions and questionnaires, are provided by Morris, 2001.

Chapter 4:

Structure of the Harmonised Information System

Preliminary plans for the Harmonised Information System were detailed in DESIRE Deliverable 6.1.1. The Harmonised Information System is part of the DESIRE Project website at:

http://www.desire-project.eu/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_details&gid=191&Itemid=26

4.1. Purpose of the HIS

The Harmonised Information System (HIS), accessed through the DESIRE website, is the centre for comprehensively archiving, documenting, and giving access to all the material developed in DESIRE. It also gives access to relevant data available from other interdisciplinary research projects funded under other EU projects, government or civil society initiatives, and the results of literature searches.

The main factors considered for dissemination products and the HIS are: user friendly presentation, easy-to-understand use of language, and a simple structure. For the HIS there should be an appropriate menu structure, simple navigation of the menus, signposts with directions to different parts of the HIS. Some material for the HIS will be direct from partners, e.g. posters produced for workshops and international meetings. Other material may require abstraction, re-organisation or re-wording within WB6 to provide the user-friendly format.

4.2. How the HIS was planned

User/stakeholder requirements on the HIS have been defined in terms of the expected eventual output and dissemination products. This idea of expected output has helped to define the scientific input to the HIS required from WBs 1-5, but the actual output and dissemination products will depend on what is actually written and provided for the HIS from WBs 1-5. So, the DESIRE consortium and associated stakeholders are deciding together the requirements for output, that is the dissemination products to be made available both inside the project and for a wide range of users outside the project. Although we hope that the HIS will eventually serve a much wider range of stakeholders, ideas about such user requirements was initially sought from stakeholders in the study sites. The methodology for Deliverable 6.1.1 was as follows:

- a. It was necessary to find out basic information about stakeholders in the study sites so that the HIS could be planned to address their needs. The first step was to study the information about study sites in the DOW to assess the potential range of stakeholder types.
- b. All DESIRE partners were asked for their views on the role of the HIS for stakeholders, and to comment on the ideas presented, via the Forum on the DESIRE website.

- c. In April/May 2007 consultation began with WB1 with a view to using a collaborative questionnaire with the study site coordinators.
- d. In November 2007 a WB6 questionnaire, incorporating some questions from WB1, was circulated to study site coordinators.
- e. Responses to the questionnaires were received and analysed in December 2007/January 2008.

4.3. User requirements for the HIS, as suggested by DESIRE partners

The range of requirements of stakeholders and users of the HIS and its products has been assessed by the project partners, particularly the site coordinators. In April 2007 DESIRE partners were asked to comment on the proposed contents of the HIS on the DESIRE website Forum. This list was derived from the DESIRE project Description of Work, especially the list of deliverables, and general discussions at the plenary meeting in Crete, March 2007.

PROPOSED CONTENTS OF HIS - what else is needed? April 2007

General

- Common (where possible) protocols for Study Site data and information
- Reports from WB 1.
- Indicator lists, indicator database, examples of use of indicators (WB2)
- Strategies identified in WB3 following monitoring and evaluation of field trials
- Evaluation of strategies on a regional scale (WB5)
- General questionnaire guidelines and workshop guidelines
- Possible training material includes training for i) facilitators; ii) stakeholders to understand and assess desertification risk; iii) stakeholders to evaluate strategies; iv) training stakeholders for dissemination of successful strategies
- Downloadable (multi-language?) possibilities: manuals, leaflets, posters, CDs, DVDs, assessment and teaching aids, workshop games
- Interactive and diagnostic tools, decision support tools, models, maps (dependent on these being provided from research in WBs 1-5)
- Meta data lists, links to other databases, links to other websites as related to specific issues ?
- Comparisons between Study Sites?
- Most email and other circulation lists will be on the main DESIRE website

Individual Study Site Portals

- Basic partner contact details, stakeholder email circulation lists, etc.
- Study Site maps
- Study Site data collections and metadata lists
- Lists of indicators in use, and descriptions of how to use them

- Results and evaluations of strategies and technical field trials, and other implementation and monitoring in WB4
- Reports after workshops with stakeholders and other endusers
- Reference lists, bibliographies

Figure 4.1 Proposed contents of the HIS in 2007 (*N. Geeson*)

The results of discussion at this time included the following decisions:

- The study site parts of the HIS should be in English and in the local language, so that it would be easier to compare strategies used to combat desertification and exchange local knowledge.
- There should be protocols for collecting data from study areas to aid comparison of sites
- As well as maps, photographs will be very important for conveying messages about strategies
- It is a challenge to make the HIS useful for a wide range of users, but this is a fundamental objective. Project partners will have access to all the material in DESIRE, but maybe stakeholders will only have access to information displayed through the individual Study Site portals. There may be some information that is private through most of the project, and public at the end.
- The website needs to be structured so that people can find what they are looking for as simply as possible, without being put off by detail they may not need or understand.

Responses to the questionnaires to study site coordinators in November 2007 were analysed to determine: the range of likely stakeholders, their potential access to information, and the suggested range of useful dissemination products. The preliminary list of stakeholder groups and the analysis can be seen as part of DESIRE Deliverable 6.1.1

http://www.desire-project.eu/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_details&gid=191&Itemid=26

4.4 New opportunities for dissemination within the HIS

The HIS is now becoming populated with research results and other material from WBs 1-5. Some of this material, e.g. photos and maps, can be used now, either directly or printed to paper, to help demonstrate ideas to stakeholders. In the initial format, all the menus were listed down the left hand side. Now the main classes of information are presented horizontally at the top, leaving the side to accommodate sub-menus. Figure 4.2 shows the main menu across the top, including Themes and Study Sites. The Themes represent the Work Blocks and have sub-sections according to Work Packages. The Overview provides the “Big Picture”, the context of the research, plus ways in which DESIRE is contributing to a wider debate. The Policy section is the first point of call for policy makers who would like to know how the research results from DESIRE can inform their own decisions. The Archive includes photo libraries, glossary and bibliography.



Figure 4.2 Front page of the HIS showing the menu organised by both Themes and Study Sites

Under Study Sites, all Study sites are listed, and sub-sections link to the Themes of the Work Blocks in the DESIRE Project work plan.



Figure 4.3 Information for each study site on the HIS

Some maps of study sites are provided through a links to Google Earth. The Google Earth facility allows the viewer to zoom in, to see more detail of the study site, according to the quality of Google coverage, or zoom out to see a wider area or context.

Chapter 5:

DESIRE dissemination products

Every WB Leader should think about what messages they expect to provide from their WB and then the study sites should select and decide what is suitable for their stakeholders, in whatever format and language, respecting both the target audience levels and the complexity level of information. Study Site Leaders will then adapt the messages for their particular study sites.

The minimum key dissemination products from DESIRE should include guidelines of how to implement remediation strategies in the most relevant way in the most relevant place.

DESIRE has designed templates for posters, newsletters, leaflets, brochures, PowerPoint presentations, etc. All the templates have similar design features so that the DESIRE brand is recognisable. Guidance for using these templates is given in **Appendix 6**.

5.1 WB1 dissemination products

A scientific literature review has been written, and a summary placed on the HIS.

http://www.desire-project.eu/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=36&Itemid=26

WB1 also provides context material. i.e. desertification in the context of sustainable development, plus an overview of what is known and what is being done. An analysis of the State of the Art, will help to highlight the achievements and innovations of the DESIRE project.

Other outputs from WB1 that can be used as reports, or have dissemination material abstracted from them, include:

- An inventory of relevant stakeholders, identifying the key players and their roles with regards to desertification and restoration in the study sites and extrapolated to the study area in general
- A detailed report on the analysis of the main drivers of desertification (law and policy) as well as of the impact of desertification on social, economic and natural capital and on the ecological and economic functions will result from the analysis of questionnaires.
- An overview of desertification problems in the study areas (digital maps & report), showing the extent and impact of desertification in the study areas as well as the extent and effectiveness of protection and restoration methods.

All study sites have been making land-use based maps of desertification using the WOCAT-LADA-DESIRE mapping method. A GLADA inventory and clips of maps for the Mediterranean and the loess plateau of China will also be available. The GLADA map is based on trend analysis of NDVI from satellite images.

5.2 WB2 dissemination products

WB2 manual and questionnaires for describing land degradation indicators, November 2008.

http://www.desire-project.eu/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=37&Itemid=26

Audience: scientists and educated stakeholders

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Classification of indicators
3. Identify potential land degradation indicators
4. Evaluation and short-list of proposed indicators
5. Explanatory for filling the information sheets
- 5.1 General information
- 5.2 Climate characteristics indicators
- 5.3 Water indicators
- 5.4 Soil indicators
- 5.5 Vegetation indicators
- 5.6 Water runoff indicators
- 5.7 Forest fires indicators
- 5.8 Agricultural indicators
- 5.9 Cultivation indicators
- 5.10 Husbandry indicators
- 5.11 Land management indicators
- 5.13 Water use indicators
- 5.14 Tourism indicators
5. 15 Social indicators
6. Farm survey research
7. Focus group approach
- References

Output from deliverables, to be used as they are, or abstracted for further dissemination products, include:




- Maps of changes in water resources, desertification risk and sensitivity to desertification will be developed for each study site. An overview of desertification problems in the study areas (data base, digital maps & report), showing the extent and impact of desertification in the study areas as well as the extent and effectiveness of protection and restoration methods will be provided.
- A report on the comparative analysis of indicators existing in the study areas
- A report on the developed methodology for evaluation of applied land management practices and techniques in terms on land degradation and economic feasibility for combating desertification using indicators
- A final manual on “Using Indicators for Identifying Best Management Practices for Combating Desertification”.

5.3 WB3 dissemination products for the HIS

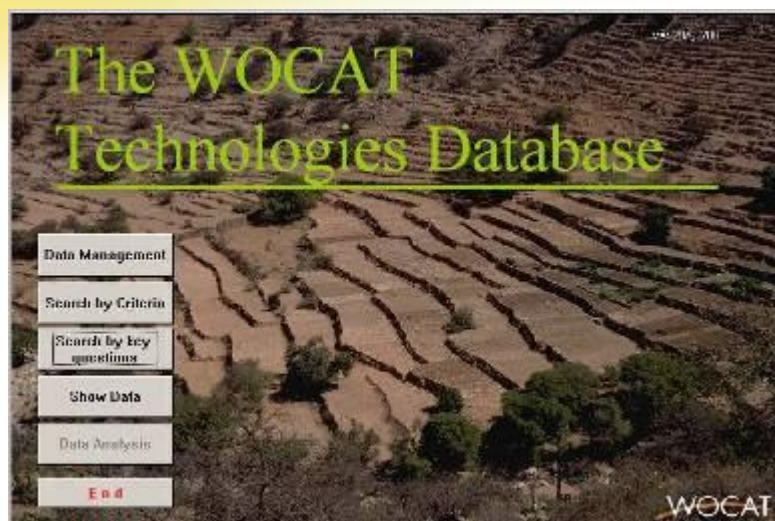
There are two main findings which can be used as messages to stakeholders:

1. The methodology applied in WB3 itself: 3-step methodology for appraising and selecting strategies based on stakeholder participation and best practices. Audience: agricultural advisors, project teams, local agriculture authorities, NGOs, etc. Here we could use the guidelines I, II and III which might need to be slightly rewritten for a more general audience than study site teams. But they would also need to be translated into various languages.
2. The documented and tested mitigation strategies: These can be made available in various formats for various audiences, ranging from literate land users over decision makers to scientist. To make them available also for illiterate land users would need local experts, as such a simplification might be ‘dangerous’. There are various formats possible: ranging from the on-line database to the 4-page-summaries and to simple poster or 1-page formats. Whereas translation of the full database might be impossible, selected promising mitigation strategies could be translated.

Possible WB3 dissemination formats are illustrated below. However, the most valuable dissemination is through the participatory process in WB3.

Message	Target audience	Format	Example
3-step methodology for appraising and selecting strategies together with stakeholders	agricultural advisors, project teams, local and regional agriculture authorities, NGOs, researchers, etc	Guidelines (ideally disseminated through training workshops)	See Guidelines for WP3.1, WP3.2 and WP3.3. Step III includes a decision support tool applied within a stakeholder workshop.
Promising mitigation strategies	Scientists, advanced agricultural advisors, national and subnational ministries of agriculture, etc.	(On-line) database with search facilities	
	Agricultural advisors, local and regional agriculture authorities, NGOs, etc	4-page summaries of technologies and approaches	
	Literate land users, decision makers, agricultural advisors, local and regional agriculture authorities, NGOs, etc	Poster or 1-2 page summaries of technologies and approaches	

(The illustrations are in larger format also copied below)



WOCAT Technologies - Search by Criteria

General

Key words: and

or or

Name of technology:

Description of techn:

Language

☒ E

☒ F

☒ S

Tip: Don't be too restrictive by selecting many different criteria!

[Start Search](#)

[Clear Criteria](#)

[Close](#)

[Search Profiles](#)

Geographic

Continent: Region: Country:

Problems / Means

Measures:

or

SWC Category:

or

Main means:

or

Soil deg. addressed:

or

Please doubleclick!

Natural environment

Climatic regime: or

Avg. annual rainfall (mm): or

Elevation (m): or

Slope: or

Avg. soil depth:

or

Land forms:

or

Soil fertility: or

Soil texture: or

Human environment / land use

Land use type:

or

Market orient. (Crops):

or

Market orient. (Grazing):

or

Market orient. (Forest):

or

Land ownership: or

Land use rights:

or

Area per household (ha)

Cropland: or

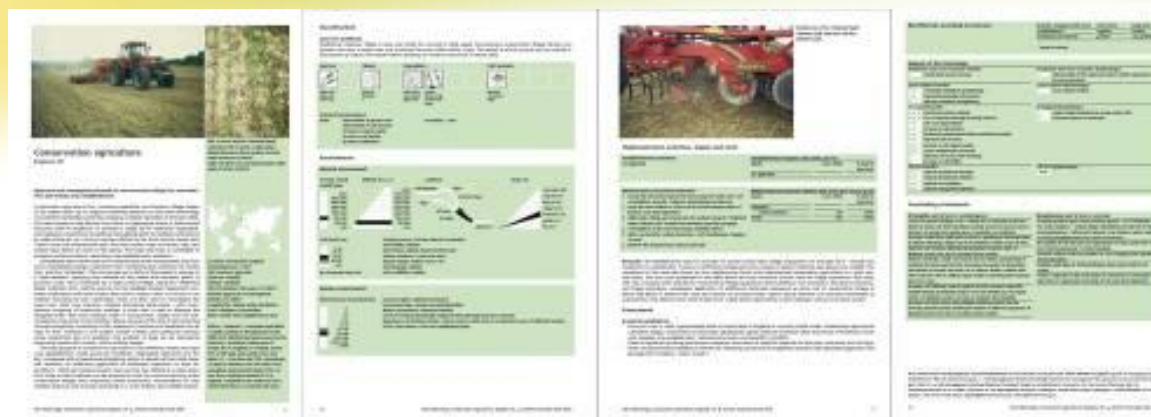
Grazing land: or

Forest land: or

Costs

< US\$/ha < US\$/ha

Initial Requent



WOCAT material, accessible through the HIS, includes training programme for moderators/facilitators. WOCAT also provides advice for using this material in education, so a wide range of stakeholders are addressed. Output from first stakeholder workshops have been added to the HIS. Simple lists of identified strategies (applied and potential) are a basis for further assessment. Users: People interested in the specific study site, SLM experts, researchers. Details will be available for each study site, and within a summary synthesis.

Professional, basic and light versions of SLM questionnaires and all material needed for these processes are downloadable from WOCAT through the HIS. Individual study site reports use a report template, in English and translated to the local language. A SLM Questionnaire serves as a framework for evaluation and assessment of identified strategies. Input from study sites contributes to the global WOCAT database. Users: anyone interested in SLM and with internet access. Various

output formats can be produced from the database (summaries, posters, cards, see above), additionally search by criteria is possible; all this may be used by advanced users but prepared for simple level users (+ translated). Database records for DESIRE available in English only.

Guidelines for workshops and workshop support material are on the HIS and linked to WOCAT, in English and translated to local languages. There are individual study site reports of first stakeholder workshops in local languages and in English, based on a report template. Users: scientists, decision-makers, project staff. They are applied in moderated stakeholder workshops, so it is indirectly used by all stakeholders involved in SLM (including land users). Guidelines for workshops and workshop support material (on HIS) to be used for moderators/facilitators. The synthesis is mainly for researchers.

Reports and synthesis on second stakeholder workshops provide Guidelines for workshops and workshop support material (on HIS and link to WOCAT), in English and translated to local languages. There are individual study site reports of second stakeholder workshops in local languages and in English, based on a report template. Users: scientists, decision-makers, project staff. This is applied in moderated stakeholder workshops, so it is indirectly used by all stakeholders involved in SLM (including land users). Guidelines for workshops and workshop support material (on HIS) can be used for moderators/facilitators. The synthesis is mainly for researchers. A scientific paper about the methodologies has been accepted by the journal: Land Degradation and Development.

5.4 WB4 dissemination products for the HIS

From WB4 Deliverables the following products will be available:

- Manual: Field measuring and monitoring methods for on-site effects of Soil and Water Conservation Measures. This will be up-dated before the end of the project.
- Compilation of site implementation plans (SIPs) and a list of available data
- A report with a summary of the scientific findings, in which the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of the conservation measures in each hotspot area are described
- Improved set of indicators
- Report with a description of common, widely applicable conservation measures and integration of the results across the hotspot areas. Translation of the results and presentation to the stakeholder communities, assistance in drafting good agricultural practice guidelines

Material for dissemination will be abstracted from these Deliverables, in a range of formats, for a range of users.

In the study sites the base-line situation has been assessed. A total of 15 different technologies are being trialled in DESIRE. These are not completely novel as farmers are resistant to risk, but some are new to individual sites and others are revivals of former methods.

The Spanish site is using a log book to record activities and results on a regular basis, and this idea will be extended to other sites. This will summarise the experiments on approaches and technologies for the HIS, and be suitable for providing land users with a record of their part in DESIRE, and for explaining the use of the technologies to their neighbours.

It is essential to keep stakeholders involved in the development and monitoring of the chosen strategies. Stakeholders should not presume that monitoring has to be done by scientists and technicians, and can be asked to think about local indicators. Among the activities suggested for involving stakeholders in the study sites were:

- field visits and transect walks, involving stakeholders or the local community in general
- involvement of special interest group activities (such as women groups)
- school activities
- activities to keep DESIRE research prominent in the local community, e.g. informal presentations at social gathering places such as local tea houses or mosques
- maintenance of publicity with local media
- exchange visits between farmers

Direct involvement of stakeholders, making measurements or observations in field or catchment monitoring activities, has also been promoted. Dissemination products such as posters and leaflets can be designed to be used to support these local activities. By the end of the project when all results are available, there will be a much wider range of dissemination products, for a much wider range of audiences, using available technology, such as video podcasts.

WB4 will be holding end-of-project workshops with stakeholders to consider the evaluation of strategies.

5.5 WB5 dissemination products for the HIS

Output from WB5 Deliverables will include the following:

Overview of WB5 modelling in the context of the rest of the project, with links to: i) HIS web page about PESERA providing overview and links to a) PESERA external website where the model and manuals can be downloaded, b) example input data sets, and c) descriptions of model development that has taken place in DESIRE; ii) HIS webpage describing socio-economic modelling with sections/links to a) land use change analysis and model; b) agent-based model detailed methodology (that could be replicated elsewhere) and model description; c) input-output economic model detailed methodology and model description; d) cost effectiveness model with detailed methodology and model description.

The following will be developed for all study sites, as a section of each study sites' part of the HIS, called "regional effects of remediation strategies": i) PESERA map(s) of study area region, including easily accessible and concise text description of likely biophysical effects of remediation strategies at regional scale; ii) brief text description of cost-effectiveness of remediation strategies in different biophysical contexts, drawing on economic modelling and WOCAT questionnaires; iii) brief text description of national/regional economic implications of remediation options based on input-output modelling.

The socio-economic DESMICE model has been developed in WB5, using readily available socio-economic data. Part of the required information will be obtained from the WOCAT QT questionnaires, but some additional data is also needed. The DESMICE quick guide to data

requirements explains in more detail what information is needed and why. The data requested will allow a financial cost-benefit analysis of the technologies to be assessed.

Under the Spanish study site section of the HIS and accessible via WB5, there will be a section about the more detailed socio-economic modelling done there. This will include text in the following sections: i) land use change analysis including land use maps from 1950s, 1970s and 2004, showing how land use has changed, and how we can predict future land use change from changes in neighbouring land (e.g. if one land use declined, how this would affect other land uses); ii) an analysis of the key internal (motives or decision rules) and external drivers that influence individual land managers' decision-making for agro-ecosystem management in general, and for adopting remediation strategies in particular; iii) scenario analysis addressing the following questions: which stakeholders are likely to adopt which remediation strategies where and why? How are land managers likely to respond to different future policy scenarios? What are the likely regional biophysical effects of these adoption patterns and the way people respond to these scenarios (illustrated by PESERA maps)? iv) analysis of likely national or regional economic effects of adopting remediation strategies based on input-output modelling, illustrated by input-output tables.

WB5 will be engaging national level policy communities in end-of-project workshops to consider with them potential policy recommendations as well as recommendations for extension services (where relevant). This will include UNCCD focal points and members of relevant ministries at national and regional level.

Chapter 6:

Practical considerations

This chapter provides guidance for considering copyright and intellectual property, and suggestions for maximising dissemination opportunities in cost-effective ways.

6.1 Copyright and intellectual property

Copyright laws require us to think about and label the origin of any material that will eventually be put in the public domain. Therefore include reference to the authors of all maps, photos, diagrams, etc. now. If we use maps etc. from outside sources then permission must be granted by the original authors and the copyright description of this permission must also be approved by the original authors.

Everything that is provided for the HIS or the DESIRE website becomes the property of the DESIRE Project unless it is shown otherwise. Therefore photos in the HIS and DESIRE website have captions including the name of the photographer where known, to preserve the identity of the property of the photographer. Some written material in the HIS will have authors, but much will be a synthesis of collective achievement.

EU IPR Helpdesk

Who is the owner of the results of the project (knowledge)?

Broadly speaking, the results of the project (knowledge) are the property of the contractor who has generated them.

However, there will be situations where it will not be easy to determine ownership, due to the fact that different contractors have worked together on the results.

Where several contractors have jointly carried out work generating such results and their respective share of the work cannot be ascertained, they shall have joint ownership thereof. However, they shall agree among themselves on the allocation and terms of exercising the ownership of the knowledge in accordance with the FP7 model contract.

<http://www.ipr-helpdesk.org/controlador/documentos?seccion=documentos&len=en>

Comprehensive copyright advice for the United Kingdom can be found at

<http://www.copyrightservice.co.uk/copyright/>

but each country is likely to have slightly different laws.

For audio-visual or video material it is essential to pay attention to copyright. Participants being filmed should sign consent forms and all images and soundtracks must be copyright-cleared. In the same way as you cannot use images without permission, you can only copy music for a video background if you have ownership, or it is licensed as free to use, or permission is granted. For more details, see:

http://www.copyrightservice.co.uk/protect/p07_music_copyright

If you need to get permission to use a piece of music, normally the best place to start is with the last known publisher for the work. They will certainly know how to get permission to use the work, (as they must have permission themselves), so they will certainly know who you would need to contact.

If the work is by an U.S. artist, you could contact the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, BMI (Broadcast Music, Inc), or SESAC.

If your work is a joint venture, such as a book or website written by more than one author, then it may be difficult to establish exactly who owns what. It is useful to clarify this from the outset as this may help to avoid unnecessary disputes and animosity later.

Be sure you know exactly who will own what rights, and what happens when someone leaves. You should then draw up an agreement to describe what you have decided, this should be signed by each member to signify their agreement. This does not necessarily have to be a document drawn up by a solicitor, (this may be overkill in a non-business/commercial environment), but it should nevertheless be regarded as a serious and comprehensive agreement.

Here are some points to bear in mind when coming to agreement:

- What happens if someone leaves. Can they use the work in their own right? Can the collective still use the work of the person that left?
- Is it worth treating this joint ownership as a separate entity - such as a limited company, which can hold assets in its own right.
- What happens to royalties and commissions if any work is later published or sold? Will they be split evenly, or should you work out a percentage based on input?

The key point is to think ahead; even if you think things will end amicably they may not.

Exploring website copyright and specific considerations that apply to website designers,

Advice from: http://www.copyrightservice.co.uk/protect/p11_web_design_copyright

Copyright notices

Although notices are not a requirement under the Berne Convention, (which states that copyright is automatic, whether you mark your work or not), it was a requirement of some countries covered under the Universal Copyright Convention (UCC). It is strongly recommended that you properly mark your work as the use of notices will make it clear that

copyright exists, and help to deter infringement. Please see our fact sheet [P-03: Using copyright notices](#) for information on wording you notices.

Websites are particularly open to abuse, especially theft of content and images. You should assume that files will be accessed randomly, downloaded as individual chunks, and distributed out of context. It is therefore important to include a copyright notice on as many individually deliverable items as possible:

- Image file properties should include a notice.

Under Windows for example, right clicking on a image will allow you to bring up the properties dialogue where you may enter details about the file, (though this will only work with certain file types). More typically, your image software will provide a way to insert comments into the file; this is preferred as these are harder to remove.

- Every page should contain a notice in the visible text (text shown on screen), or at least link to your notice in the body of the page.
- Every delivered file should include a notice in non visible text.

For example, in HTML files and CSS stylesheets a copyright notice can be included as a comment.

[Watermarking](#) may be worth considering if you have a lot of valuable images on your site.

Creating websites for third parties

If you design web sites for others, it is important for all parties to understand ownership.

- *Ensure that rights are granted as appropriate, this may mean that the copyright to the site is passed to the client upon payment, or in the case of work undertaken in stages, rights to individual features may be handed over for work completed to date.*
- *Where material for the web site is sourced from elsewhere, or where third party technologies are to be used, appropriate licenses should be obtained.*
- *Moral rights: Will the developer be credited for the work on the web site? If so, the developer will also want to reserve the right to remove the credit if the site is later developed in a way that would discredit the original developer.*

Copyright registration

Websites are one of the easiest things to copy, particularly any written content and images, so registration is particularly important. For information on how to register a website, please see the factsheet [P-23: Registering websites](#).

Detecting infringement

[Copyscape](#) is a useful tool that will compare your web pages to others indexed by Google and return any it finds with matching text.

Dealing with infringement

If you notice another web site using your content, the best place to start is by reading the [copyright infringement fact sheet](#)

It is a good idea to get a copy of the site as it exists at the time, this is useful if the site owner later changes their site in an attempt to disguise the infringement. [Wget](#) is a good tool for this and is available as free software under the GNU General Public License.

Besides the points outlined in the [copyright infringement fact sheet](#), in some countries the (such as the UK), the ISP (Internet Service Provider), may also have an obligation to uphold the law. An ISP that continues to host infringing material is knowingly permitting the infringement to continue and may therefore be liable.

You would need to check that the ISP is covered by this legislation, (as it will vary due to differences in national laws), but this is often a good additional route to pursue, particularly if you have trouble contacting the domain owner, (we have seen occasions where domain records have been falsified to avoid tracing).

If you need help tracing an domain owner, [Uwhois.com](#) provide a search facility that will display the contact details of the web domain owner.

http://www.copyrightservice.co.uk/protect/p11_web_design_copyright

6.2 Cost-effective ways of promoting dissemination

To produce books, booklets, etc. with glossy coloured photos, and distribute them, is beyond the scope and budget of the DESIRE project. Therefore other cost-saving opportunities, particularly on the internet, will have to be exploited. It is “free” to send and receive material by email or through websites, so it is easy to provide a wide range of material that viewers can choose to copy, download or print for themselves. Viewers such as NGOs can also be encouraged to disseminate material to their own networks of contacts, either through the internet or by printing material and circulating it by hand.

Chapter 7:

Sources of dissemination material to use as it is with DESIRE stakeholders, or use for ideas for new dissemination products

(including contributions from Marie José van der Werff ten Bosch and Maude Gentit)

In this chapter there are useful website addresses, and examples, or “tasters” of available dissemination material, or dissemination styles to copy or adapt.

7.1 General

CARI have made a very nice folder in three languages, a sort of a starting kit on desertification, with 10 leaflets in it. It is called "**Desertification and civil society**", and you can see it at:

<http://www.cariassociation.org/gtd/?section=documentation&subsection=deserten>

Both ENDS has made similar information packages for Civil Society Organisations, on desertification, on the Rio Conventions, etc, to explain more about the subject but also about the institutional and political context. See <http://www.bothends.org/service/standard.html>.

They also issue donor newsletters in which there is information on which donors are open to applications by NGOs on the different topics, such as desertification.

Both ENDS produces policy-oriented documentation rather than community-oriented documentation on desertification. Those publications are either very technical and specific, or are meant to inform the public on a specific topic (usually to do with consumer consciousness). You can find examples of them on the site:

http://www.bothends.org/project/project_info.php?id=45&scr=tp (specific for desertification/UNCCD topic) or <http://www.bothends.org/service/publ.html> (other publications on other topics). There is also an Encyclopaedia of Sustainability in which case studies are collected that are innovative, sustainable and local, see <http://www.bothends.org/encycl/encycl.php?page=se>

Furthermore, Both ENDS and CARI are both involved in a project called “Drynet”: <http://www.dry-net.org/> The website has newsletters, policy papers and success stories among other features.

7.2 For technicians and farmers

The AGRODOK series. This is a series of publications on small-scale agriculture. The series is published by the Agromisa Foundation (<http://www.agromisa.org/>). The books are aimed at people who work directly with the small-scale farmers in the south.

7.3 For Policy Makers

The Issues papers of the GTZ. (The GTZ is an international cooperation enterprise for sustainable development with worldwide operations) <http://www.gtz.de/en/index.htm>

The Policy Brief of DCG (The Drylands Coordination Group) <http://www.drylands-group.org/>

Les fiches thématiques du CSFD (French Scientific Committee on desertification) http://www.csf-desertification.org/dossier/dossier2_5.php

Both ENDS' series:

Both ENDS Working Paper: *preliminary and unpolished results of analysis that are circulated to encourage discussion and comment*

Both ENDS Briefing Paper: *present in depth information and analysis on important environmental and developmental issues*

Both ENDS Policy Note: *tackle current policy issues in the field of environment and development and present both information on and alternatives to standard policy solutions*

See examples at <http://www.bothends.nl/index.php?page=6> (our new website in Dutch, will be expanded, and the new English website will follow soon!!)

INSPIRE <http://www.inspire-geoportal.eu/#>

INSPIRE Community Geoportal

INSPIRE is a Directive of the European Parliament and the Council aiming to assist **policy-making** in relation to policies and activities that may have a direct or indirect impact on the environment. INSPIRE is based on the interoperable infrastructures for spatial information that are created by the Member States.

Welcome

The INSPIRE Community Geoportal is Europe's Internet access point to a collection of geographic data and services within the framework of the infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe ([INSPIRE](#)) Directive. INSPIRE aims at making available relevant, harmonised and quality geographic information to support formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and activities which have a direct or indirect impact on the environment.

The geoportal does not store or maintain the data. It acts as a gateway to geographic data and services, distributed around Europe, allowing users to search, view or, subject to access restrictions, download geographic data or use available services to derive information.

GEOSS <http://earthobservations.org/index.html>

What are GEO and GEOSS?

The Group on Earth Observations (or GEO) is coordinating international efforts to build a Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS). This emerging public infrastructure is interconnecting a diverse and growing array of instruments and systems for monitoring and forecasting changes in the global environment. This “system of systems” supports **policymakers**, resource managers, science researchers and many other experts and **decision-makers**.

7.4 For Teachers and others involved in education:

7.4.1 Educational suitcases

For example the educational suitcase of the UNCCD

<http://www.unccd.int/publicinfo/unescoKit/unescoKit.php> or the educational suitcase of Eau vive

<http://eau-vive.org/en/getinvolved/kit.php>

7.4.2 Useful article

An innovation systems perspective on strengthening agricultural education and training in sub-Saharan Africa

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Keywords:

Agricultural education

Agricultural development

Innovation systems

Sub-Saharan Africa

a b s t r a c t

This paper examines the role of postsecondary agricultural education and training (AET) in sub-Saharan Africa in the context of the region’s agricultural innovation systems. Specifically, the paper looks at how AET in sub-Saharan Africa can contribute to agricultural development by strengthening innovative capacity, or the ability of individuals and organisations to introduce new products and processes that are socially or economically relevant, particularly with respect to smallholder farmers who represent the largest group of agricultural producers in the region. The paper argues that while AET is conventionally viewed in terms of its role in building human and scientific capital, its also has a vital role to play in building the capacity of organisations and individuals to transmit and adapt new applications of existing information, new products and processes, and new organisational cultures and behaviours. The paper emphasizes the importance of improving AET systems by strengthening the innovative capabilities of AET organisations and professionals; changing

organisational cultures, behaviours, and incentives; and building innovation networks and linkages. Specific recommendations in support of this include aligning the mandates of AET organisations with national development aspirations by promoting new educational programs that are more strategically attuned to the different needs of society; inducing change in the cultures of AET organisations through the introduction of educational programs and linkages beyond the formal AET system; and strengthening individual and organisational capacity by improving the incentives to forge stronger linkages

7.4.3 Material from websites

SCIENCE IN SCHOOL www.scienceinschool.org

About Science in School

Submitted by sis on Fri, 2006-05-12 12:28.

Science in School aims to promote inspiring science teaching by encouraging communication between teachers, scientists, and everyone else involved in European science education.

It addresses science teaching both across Europe and across disciplines: highlighting the best in teaching and cutting-edge research. It covers not only biology, physics and chemistry, but also maths, earth sciences, engineering and medicine, focusing on interdisciplinary work.

The contents include teaching materials; cutting-edge science; education projects; interviews with young scientists and inspiring teachers; European education news; reviews of books and other resources; and European events for teachers.

The journal is published quarterly and is available free on this website; free print versions in English are distributed across Europe. Online articles are published in many European languages (see the links on the right of each page); the print version is in English.

Science in School is published by EIROforum (a collaboration between seven European inter-governmental scientific research organisations) and is based at the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL) in Heidelberg, Germany.

Science in School is a non-profit activity, part of the NUCLEUS project supported by the European Union.

SOIL-NET <http://www.soil-net.com/>
(Cranfield University, UK)

Soil-Net.com is a free and compelling environmental Internet resource for Key Stages 1-4 providing teachers and students extensive curriculum-based information about soil. As one of the three major natural resources, alongside air and water, soil is vital to the existence of life on earth. Soil-Net.com will help you discover what soil is, the teeming life in soil and about the many environmental threats facing soils. Remember, soil is all around us, just under our feet!

As a topic, soil is increasingly making its way up the political agenda in the UK and in wider Europe. At this time, when forthcoming UK legislation and the proposed EU Soil Framework

Directive will make specific reference to sustainable soil management, there is a lack of sound advice and reference on how soil affects our lives, for all age groups. We often read about air pollution and water pollution but only more rarely do we hear of soil pollution or the importance of soil management and yet as the third 'media' of our natural environment, protecting the scarce and fragile soil resource is now more important than ever.

DESERTIFICATION

The world's great deserts were formed by natural processes over a long period of time and a study of fossil pollen in the Sahara shows how, over the centuries, the land can change between desert and fertile savanna. Such changes are chiefly the result of differing rainfall patterns and of human activities.

Desertification is the change in arid and semi-arid regions from formerly productive land to desert. It can occur all round the world, and not just on the edges of existing deserts.

The causes of desertification

In modern times there has been a great increase in desertification. The many and complex causes include increasing populations and the need to graze animals and grow crops. Over-grazing can be a great problem. Herds of animals also compact the soil, making water less able to penetrate so that the dry soil is more likely to be eroded by the wind. When the soil surface is dug for the growing of crops, this also makes the land more vulnerable to wind erosion. Such problems are particularly likely to happen in the fragile transition zones around the edges of deserts, but can also happen elsewhere if the conditions are applicable. A well-known example was the creation in the 1930s of the 'Dust Bowl' in the American mid-west, which was caused by drought and poor farming practices. Many people were forced to abandon their farms and livelihoods.

The climate is clearly a factor, but droughts are not necessarily in themselves a cause. Well-managed lands can recover when the rains return, but if the land is mis-used during periods of drought, then this can make the situation worse. An example of this would be if nomads move during a period of drought to a less arid area, they and their flocks could upset the eco-system there and cause further deterioration of the soil. Rainfall is linked to some extent with plant cover and if this is lost then it may cause a decrease in the rainfall of the area.

The fewer plants there are, the more impact the strong winds will have, with little to break their destructive force. Fewer plants also mean less shade, so that evaporation increases, bringing salts up to the surface. This salination means that some plants will be unable to survive, causing further evaporation to occur. So the cycle of desertification continues.

Off-road vehicles can destroy in moments soils which have taken years to develop.

What can be done?

With climate change likely to disrupt rainfall patterns, the problems are likely to intensify. We need to try to understand the causes better, so that we can improve the situation. At a local level it is possible to provide windbreaks of fencing or trees belts and in some areas grids of straw have been laid, with shrubs planted in the straw, to provide some protection from evaporation and wind.

Better farming methods are needed, with the best possible use made of existing water resources and the control of salinization. Irrigation can help if there is enough water available. A suitable rotation of crops must be introduced, enabling the fragile soil to be protected. Most important is the need to educate the people into how to manage their local area.

7.5 For Researchers

7.5.1 EOPORTAL

About www.eoPortal.org

The eoPortal aims to open the door to the world of Earth Observation resources.

By giving access to a large variety of information and services, eoPortal aims to provide a single access point for Earth Observation information and services including satellite imagery, a directory to locate data and resources, direct access to earth-observing satellite data as well as map servers and cartographic resources.

Chapter 8:

Further reading

8.1 Communication with stakeholders

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8.2 Product preparation skills

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Appendix 1: Stakeholder Checklists

A number of check-lists have been developed for identifying stakeholders. Some are lists of questions you can ask to make sure you've included everyone (Boxes 1 and 2). Others are lists of example stakeholders. Deliverable 6.1.1 provides preliminary lists of stakeholder groups associated with each study site in the DESIRE project. Box 3 provides one way of grouping these stakeholders – do you have representatives from each of these groups? Boxes 4 and 5 provide alternative lists of stakeholders developed into checklists for other projects.

Box 1: Stakeholder Checklist 1²

- Have all primary and secondary stakeholders been listed?
- Have all potential supporters and opponents of the project been identified?
- Has gender analysis been used to identify different types of female stakeholders (at both primary and secondary levels)?
- Have primary stakeholders been divided into user/occupational groups, or income groups?
- Have the interests of vulnerable groups (especially the poor) been identified?
- Are there any new primary or secondary stakeholders that are likely to emerge as a result of the project?

Box 2: Stakeholder checklist 2³

- What are the perspectives necessary to credibly and effectively define the issues and create solutions? Who are the people and organizations that speak for these perspectives?
- What are the interests that must be represented in order to reach agreements that can be implemented and who can speak for these interests?
- Who are the people, groups and organizations who are necessary to implement solutions, can block action and control resources?
- Who are the people who cause or are affected by the issues, and who will be affected by the solutions?
- Who are the people who, if they could reach agreement about problems and solutions, could generate the political and institutional will to create significant change?

² Taken from: <http://www.euforic.org/gb/stake1.htm#box1>

³ Adapted from: "Collaborative Leadership: How Citizens and Civic Leaders Can Make a Difference". David D. Chrislip and Carl E. Larson, Jossey-bass, 1994.

Box 3: Stakeholder Checklist 3⁴

Stakeholders can be loosely grouped into a minimum of four types:

Land users and technicians (farmers, land managers, -, technical services, lecturers at agricultural colleges, women's groups...)

These kinds of stakeholder need technical guides to good practices or technical information sheets, maps, tools to assess local desertification risk, etc. at suitable levels of complexity.

Scientific researchers (in universities and other institutions)

These kinds of stakeholder need detailed scientific data, models, research tools, etc.

Policy makers (UNCCD, politicians, local administrators, ...)

These kinds of stakeholder need research summaries, fact sheets, maps, decision making tools, etc.

Teachers (teachers in schools, lecturers at agricultural colleges, schoolchildren, , ...)

These kinds of stakeholder need educational guides and information sheets at suitable levels of complexity.

Local organisations (field and advisory NGOs, lobby groups, grassroots organisations, farmer associations etc) – since they often are the chain between local communities and land users, and the policy makers and sometimes also scientists. DESIRE should try to reach out much more actively to such organisations, as they know the communication channels and how to convey messages best.

Box 4: Stakeholder Checklist 4⁵

Private sector Stakeholders	Public sector Stakeholders	Civil society stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporations and businesses Business associations Professional bodies Individual business leader Financial institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministers and advisors (executive) Civil servants and departments (bureaucracy) Elected representatives (legislature) Courts (judiciary) Political parties Local government/ councils Military Quangos and commissions International bodies (World Bank, UN) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media Churches / religions Schools and Universities Social movements and advocacy groups Trade unions National NGOs International NGOs

⁴ Developed by CARI for the DESIRE project

⁵ Taken from www.odi.org.uk/RAPID/Tools/Toolkits/Communication/Stakeholder_analysis.html

Box 5: Stakeholder Checklist 5⁶

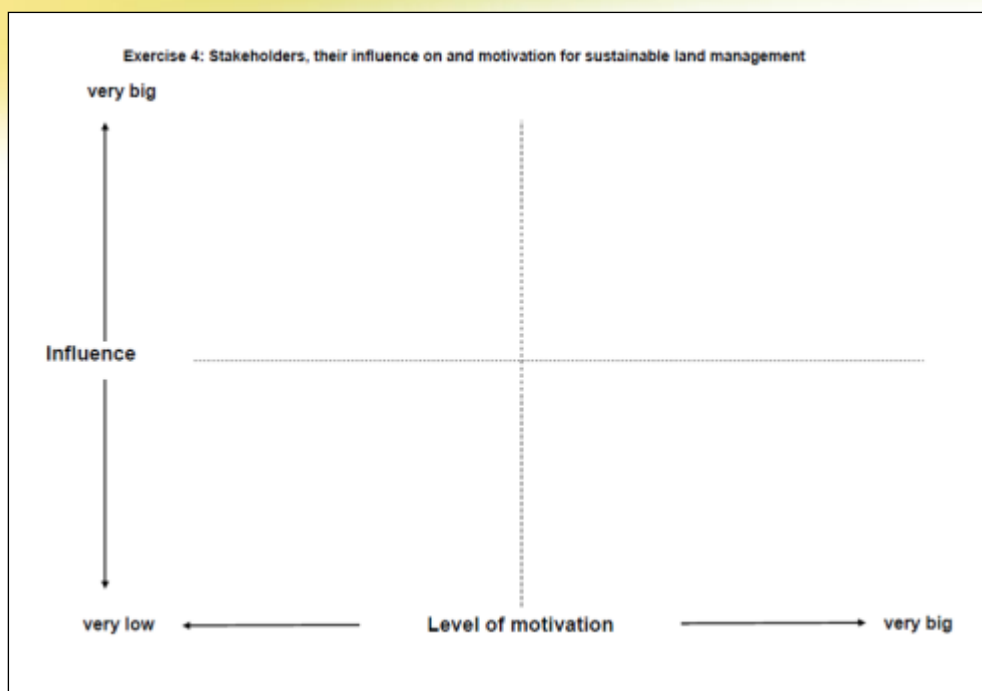
Place a check next to any of the listed groups would be relevant in your particular plan (add names later). Then, add as many other stakeholders as you can think of.

- Elected officials
- Planning commissioners and staff
- The public (does anyone in particular stand out? Why?)
- Environmental groups
- The business community, the Chamber(s) of Commerce
- Local economic development officials
- Local non-profits
- Realty association or local realtors
- Farmers
- School Board representatives
- ...

The following Table is taken from DESIRE WP3.1 Guidelines, and gives examples of stakeholder groups and their specific fields of intervention. The roles and responsibilities of stakeholders as well as their level of influence need to be identified according to the specific local context.

⁶ http://www.extension.purdue.edu/streaming/lcd/MODEL_STAKEHOLDER_CHECKLIST.doc

Field of intervention	Stakeholder	Role and responsibility	Level of influence x = low xx = medium xxx = high
Implementation	Large-scale farmers	Implementation of technical and management measures	
	Small-scale farmers	Implementation of technical and management measures	
	Forestry services	Technical advise	
	Extension service	Training and consulting at the farm and community level	
	Local farmer associations	Collaboration in the implementation of technical measures, and of locally agreed upon rules and regulations	
	Planner / operator of infrastructure projects (street, train, dam, etc.)	Impact assessment of infrastructure projects on natural resources (soil, water, vegetation)	
	Spatial planner		
	Planner / operator of big service providers in tourism	Implementation of protective measures	
Policy	Ministry of Agriculture	Enabling measures eg. incentives, subventions, pricing policy, agricultural policy	
	Ministry of Environment	Environmental policy and enabling measures	
	Ministry of Finances	Allocation of financial resources, customs duty	
	Ministry of Economy	Economic policy and enabling measures	
	Economic and trade organisations	Lobbying, elaboration of draft laws	
Legislation	Parliament	Pass new laws and regulations	
	Ministry of Justice	Draft laws and regulations on: sustainable use of natural resources, inheritance, land rights	
	Police, technical services	Implementation of laws, controlling the observation of laws and decrees	
	Court	Sanction of infringements	
Information and training	Ministry of Education	Awareness building, information, technical training on sustainable use of natural resources and desertification risks	
	All levels of education: vocational training, adult education, etc.		
Research	Agricultural research institutions, universities, etc.	Research on technical, socio-economic, legal and political measures to mitigate land degradation, and to rehabilitate soils and regions at risk	
Civil society	NGOs	Supporting farmer associations, lobbying, training, etc.	
	Media	Public information, information on desertification and its impacts	
	Private businesses	Invest in and operate production and service providers which directly influence land management (construction, tourism)	
	Banks	Finance investments in activities which directly influence land management	



WOCAT-DESIRE stakeholder matrix, to examine the range of influence and motivation of chosen stakeholders

Appendix 2: Example Dissemination Products

(by Mark Reed)

Manual-style decision support system developed for Botswana Study Site

[The following is an excerpt from: Reed MS, Dougill AJ (in press) Linking Degradation Assessment to Sustainable Land Management: a decision support system for Kalahari pastoralists. *Journal of Arid Environments*]

Literacy levels are high in Botswana (average 81%): 65% and 98% in Study Areas 1 and 2 respectively (rates are not known for Study Area 3 but are believed by key informants to be above average) (Central Statistics Office, 2004). In Study Area 1, where literacy was lowest, interviews showed that overstretched extension services tended to focus on more wealthy farmers. It is therefore hoped that manuals can free up extension workers to work with poorer farmers who tend to be less literate.

Separate manuals have been developed for each study area in response to the different indicators and management options deemed relevant for each area by local communities (Reed *et al.*, 2007; in press). They have been peer-reviewed by international experts and policy stakeholders and are currently being translated into local languages.

Manuals are designed for regular use by pastoralists to identify detrimental environmental change and to guide sustainable management responses. Although some of the worst land degradation occurs during drought, the manuals are not designed to help farmers predict when a drought will occur. However, they can help farmers work out if lasting damage has been caused by livestock during a drought (or at any other time) and choose the best way to respond.

The manuals also provide basic practical information about rangeland management. The recommended assessment procedure is relatively flexible, and designed to make recording and interpretation of results simple for users (Table 1). Wheel diagrams (Figure 3) borrow conceptually from published visualisation techniques such as sustainability polygons (Herweg *et al.*, 1998), sustainability AMEOBAs (Ten Brink *et al.*, 1991), sustainability webs (Bockstaller *et al.*, 1997), kite diagrams (Garcia, 1997) and sustainable livelihood asset pentagons (Scoones, 1998). Short textual descriptions of indicators are illustrated with photographs representing healthy and unhealthy rangeland states (Figure 4). Detailed photographs or diagrams are provided to help identify key species where necessary. Each indicator is cross-referenced to a range of management options (Figure 5). There are a range of options to suit different budgets and time-frames.

The Decision Support System described in this paper integrates land degradation indicators with adaptive management options in a manual that is designed to be easy for land managers to use. The design of the DSS has been optimised using an innovation-decision approach combined with expert review to enhance the likelihood of widespread uptake and application by land managers in the Kalahari.

Table A1. Recommended assessment procedure for Kalahari rangeland decision support system, based on text from the manual (*M. Reed*)

Instruction	Description
1. Find the kind of rangeland you are aiming for	Find parts of the rangeland you know recover well from drought to support livestock year after year. If this is not possible, find an area that is used less by livestock but beware that this is an unrealistic target unless you are prepared to reduce your herd. Check that your target rangeland is in healthy condition using indicators from this manual (see Step 4). Once you have been looking for indicators for a few years, you can start comparing your rangeland to the way it used to be instead, which will give you a more accurate indication of whether your management is having the desired effect.
2. Choose where you want to regularly check the health of your rangeland	Choose a number of different places, close to the borehole, further away and in between (at least two places in each area). Make sure you can find these places the following year (e.g. choose places near landmarks or paint trees or poles).
3. Choose which warning indicators you will use	Choose indicators (chapter 4 of the manual) that you will look for regularly in each of the places you have chosen. Choose at least three from each of the following categories: i) plants; ii) soil; and iii) insects & wild animals/ livestock/ or people. Write each indicator next to a spoke on a wheel chart (Figure 3). Use the same indicators each year so that you can see how they change. You will notice that there are also wheel charts with early warning indicators – these have been chosen to show if there is a danger that future problems are about to happen in your rangeland.
4. Look for the warning indicators	At each of the places you have chosen: (1) look for the indicators you have chosen; and (2) look for the early warning indicators listed in chapter 4 of the manual and marked on the smaller wheel charts in the middle of the manual. Decide if they are very healthy, quite healthy, quite unhealthy or very unhealthy and place a mark on the relevant spoke of each wheel chart. Join up the marks you have made on the spokes to see what shape of wheel represents your rangeland (it may be easier to see if you colour in the shape).
5. Decide what to do about the current health of your rangeland.	On the large multicoloured wheel chart, look at the lumps (quite and very healthy indicators that show your rangeland is doing well) and dents (quite and very unhealthy indicators that show you have problems) in your wheel. If your wheel is generally large and circular (most indicators are quite or very healthy), your rangeland is healthy – keep up the good work. If it is small (most indicators are quite or very unhealthy) or there are particularly big dents in certain places, you may need to take action. Refer back to the pages describing the indicators that were unhealthy (chapter 4 of the manual), and these pages will suggest management options you could try to improve the quality of your rangeland.
6. Decide what to do about the future health of your rangeland.	On the second (smaller) wheel chart, look for the lumps (quite and very healthy indicators that show your rangeland is going to be healthy in the future) and dents (quite and very unhealthy indicators that show you are going to have problems in the future) in your wheel. If it is small (most indicators are quite or very unhealthy) or there are particularly big dents

	<p>in certain places, you may need to take action to prevent future problems from happening. Refer back to the pages describing the indicators that were bad (chapter 4 of the manual), and these pages will suggest management options you could try to prevent future problems in your rangeland (chapter 5 of the manual).</p>
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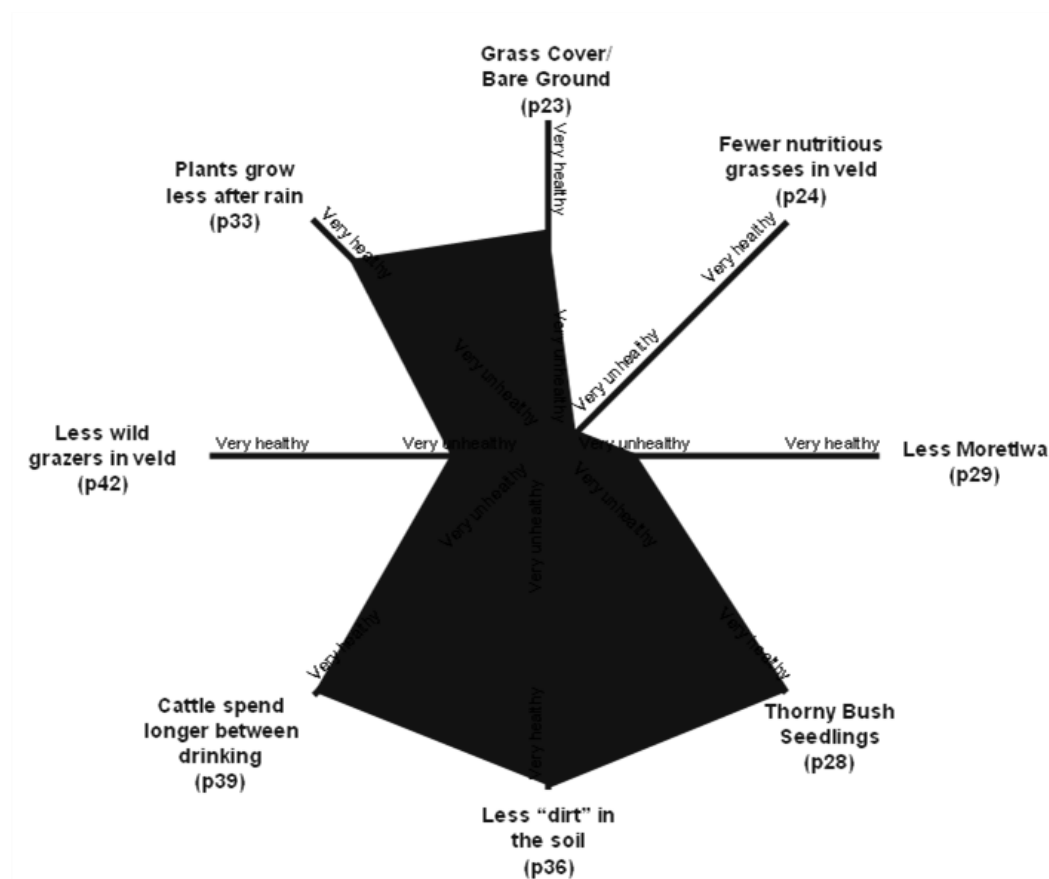


Figure A1 An example of a wheel diagram for recording measurements of early warning indicators (*M. Reed*)

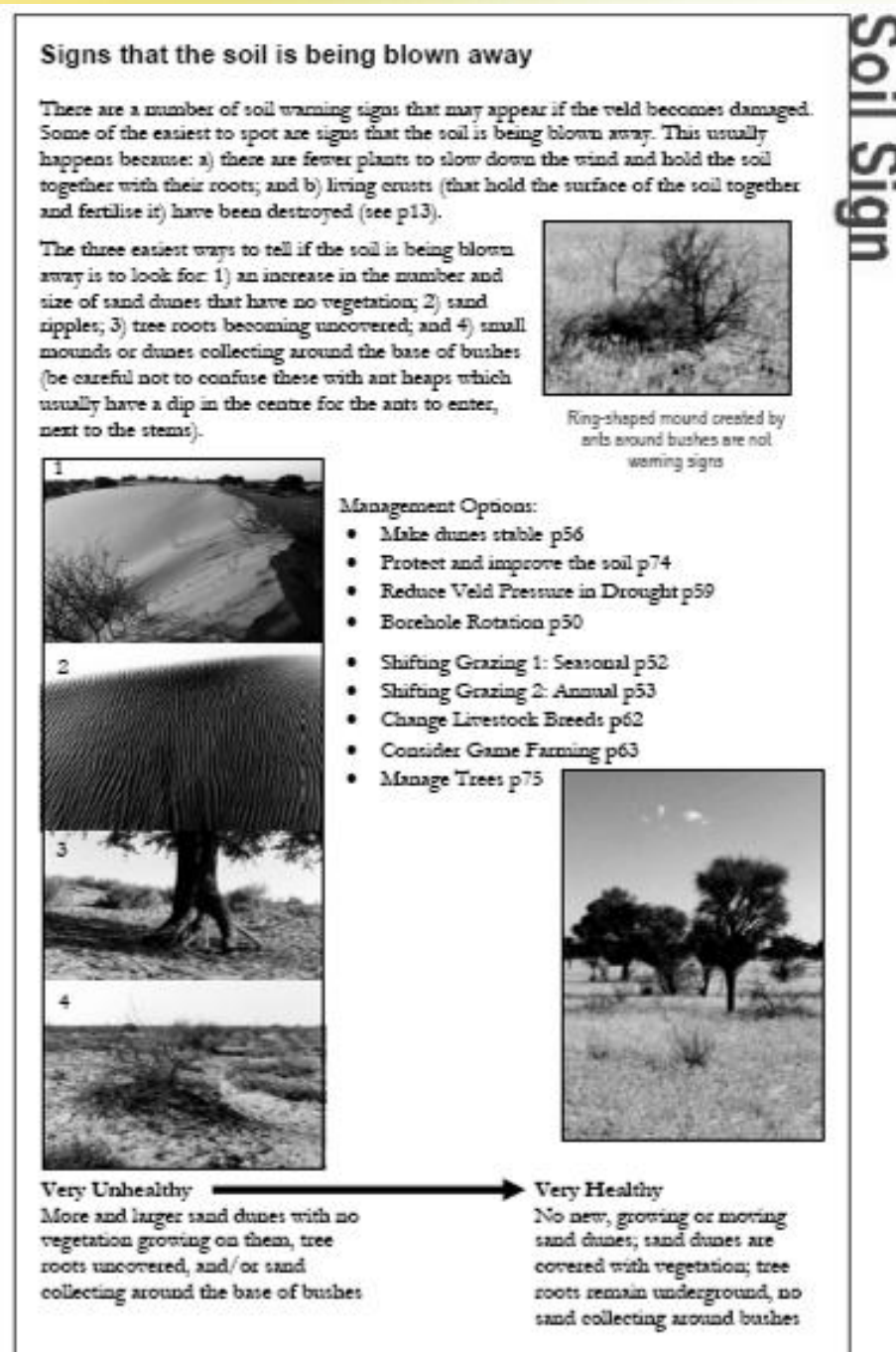


Figure A2 Example page from Study Area 3 Manual showing indicator description

Make dunes stable

Summary

Two methods for making dunes stable are described. Although likely to be less effective than fencing and re-seeding, cuttings from bush clearance are a significantly cheaper alternative.

What are the benefits?

Bar dunes are no use to livestock and can threaten buildings and roads. Plants are unable to take root and get established on moving dunes. However, if dunes can be made stable, grasses and other nutritious plants have a chance to grow, making the dunes even more stable, as well as useful.



What do I need?

- Fencing or material from bush clearance to protect dunes from livestock while they are being treated
- Seeds collected from local plants if no bush material is available

How do I do it?

a) Fence and seed

1. Fence off dunes, leaving corridors for livestock to reach water if dunes are located around a borehole.
2. Collect seeds from local plants: nutritious grasses that come up year after year have well developed root systems that will help make the dune stable, and will be useful for livestock at a later date. Kalshan Dune Grass (Kalshan Dune Grass or *Lophopus* *amblyus*) (p73) is well suited to dunes and will grow easily, in addition to being palatable for cattle, sheep and donkeys (especially after rain) and useful for darning. Seeds from trees and/or bushes are also needed. Choose species that will be useful for browse and that you have observed growing successfully on dunes e.g. *Vallixaneisdonag* (Mokholo, Grey Camel Thorn or *Acacia* *haemaphysalis*) (p73).
3. Leave to begin vegetation cover. Once the dune is stable, you can try allowing a small number of animals in to the enclosure to use the fodder that has grown. This must be done with the agreement of other syndicate owners, perhaps prioritizing



sick animals. However it is important to check carefully that there are not too many animals and to remove them if they are reducing the vegetation cover.

b) Stabilise with bush cuttings

1. If you are clearing an area of bush (see Bush Control, p60), you can use the cuttings to make dunes stable. First, clear the bushes and remove branches roughly (they do not need to be cut small, but bushes should not be left whole).
2. Spread bush cuttings over dunes soon before the rainy season. Fods from the bushes will provide seeds to help make the dune even more stable, and the branches will also trap grass (and other) seeds from the wind. This gives you little choice over the plants that end up growing on the dune, but you can add seeds that you have collected from plants you want to grow. If bush cuttings are laid densely enough, they are likely to offer seedlings enough protection from livestock to give them a chance to establish themselves.

What problems might I encounter?

Chopping and spreading thorn bush branches is an unpleasant task. Although likely to be less effective than fencing and re-seeding, it is significantly cheaper.



Figure A3 Example page from Study Area 3 Manual showing a management option (M. Reed)

Appendix 3: Writing Press Releases

What is a Press Release?

To increase the chances that your research will be covered by journalists, it is important to provide them with information about your work in a format that they can easily assess for newsworthiness. Think of a press release as an advertisement for your research. If they like it, you will have the opportunity to tell them more. Most news desks receive hundreds of press releases every day, and most are not newsworthy and discarded within 10 seconds. You need to grab the journalists' attention within those first 10 seconds, convince them to read on and take up your story. To do this, you need to convince them that your work is newsworthy. It must be new, important and focused. It may provide an interesting angle on a current or breaking news story.

Introduction

The first paragraph of any press release should be a summary that captures all the key aspects of your story and explains why it is newsworthy. This first paragraph summary is usually just one sentence, and should not be more than two. You should aim for less than 30 words. Ask yourself what, who, when, where and how? Make sure you have encapsulated as much of the most important information as possible.

Content

Figure A4 shows how to structure a press release, cramming in as much of the important information as possible early on. To develop the content of your press release:

- List and then prioritise ideas and information, dealing with them in descending order of importance. The further down your press release, the more likely the journalist is to cut the material out
- Link to relevant context (ideally that's in the news)
- Include quotes (once you've written the article, go back and see which paragraphs could be turned into quotes, and simply put quotation marks around them and attribute them to yourself and colleagues – with their permission of course)
- Include date of press release at top

Style

The style of writing in your press release should be:

- Simple, not academic
- Avoid or explain technical jargon
- Short sentences, one idea per sentence
- Short paragraphs – rarely more than two or three sentences to a paragraph
- Print on one side A4 only (2 absolute maximum)
- 12-14 point font, 1.5/ double-spaced

Headline

The headline should be:

- Short, snappy (and if possible, witty)
- High impact
- Can include strap headline if need to convey more detail

Notes for Editors

At the end of your press release, you should include a section titled “Notes for Editors” where you:

- Provide contact details
- Explain availability for interviews
- Provide relevant background info including more detailed context
- May also contain details about any wider project this work is part of
- Photo

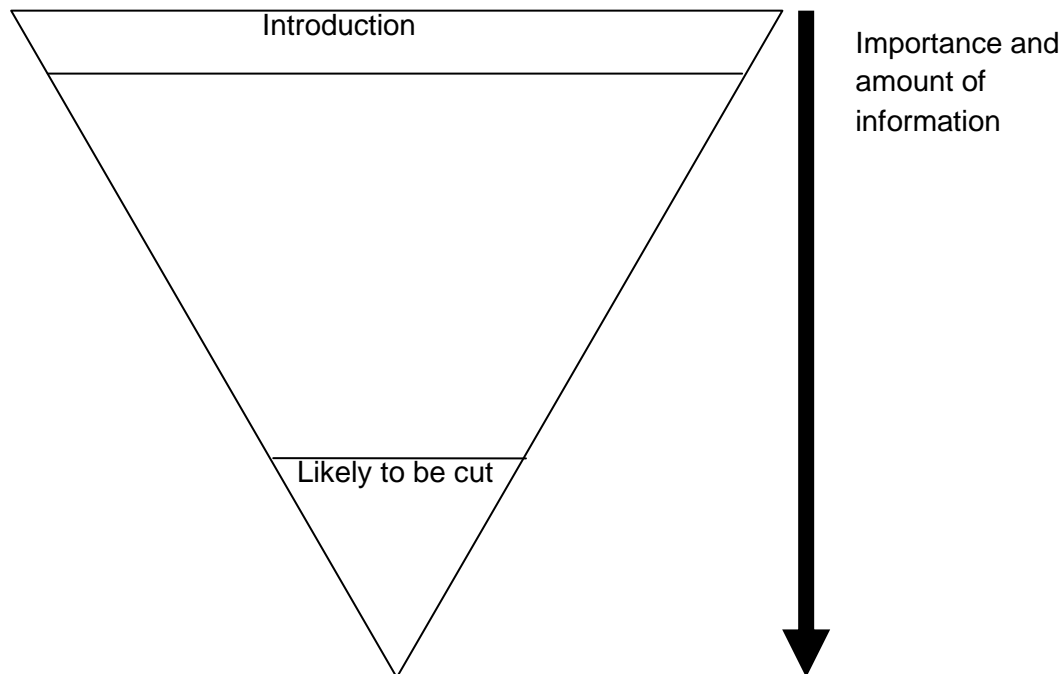


Figure A4 Structure of a Press Release (M. Reed)

Example of good practice

Halting the march of empty deserts

The silent spread of deserts into once fertile grazing land is one of the world's most burning environmental problems, threatening a third of the planet's surface - about the same size as Europe.

The University of Leeds is at the sharp end of a £6.1 million (€9 million) European Union research project that will use cutting-edge science and local ingenuity to transform 16 desert hotspots around the world back into productive land.

There is a great deal at stake - safeguarding the livelihoods of more than 250 million people living in dry regions who are affected by declining crop yields, scarcity of food and global warming. But the crucial question is: can land degradation be reversed?

The five-year 'Desire' project involves 28 partners from every continent, including universities, research institutes, government agencies and local communities.

Dr Mark Reed, a lecturer in participatory conservation from the School of Earth and Environment, helped to write the funding proposal for the project and feels "very optimistic" that it will be a success. He previously worked in Botswana for six years, investigating ways to revive grazing land invaded by thorn bushes in the Kalahari Desert.

Dr Reed now leads a team of seven scientists at Leeds with international expertise in computer modelling. Their role will be to analyse and evaluate the effects of antidesertification techniques applied at each of the 16 hotspots over three years, such as mulching, mixed cropping, windbreaks, terraces and bunds, and livestock and crop rotation.

The other members of the team are Professor Mike Kirkby, and Drs Joseph Holden, Mette Termansen, Klaus Hubacek, Andy Dougill and Evan Fraser.

Dr Reed believes that foreign experts often overlook the complex political, economic and social factors that contribute to land degradation: "For example, Botswana has a trade agreement with the UK to supply us with organic, free-range beef, which represents their second biggest export. As a result, since the 1970s the Botswana government has carried out a massive programme of putting bore holes into Kalahari grasslands to graze huge numbers of cattle on the land. Unfortunately the cattle eat all the best plants and nothing else, so thorn bushes have taken over, creating a 'green desert'."

Encouraging local farmers to get directly involved at each of the 16 sites will be crucial to the success of the Desire project, explained Dr Reed.

"We want to develop an enormous database of shared solutions based on local insights as well as scientific data, and then spread this knowledge as widely as possible."

“We can empower people to recognise and respond to land degradation in simple, cost-effective ways, without having to rely on ‘top-down’ government interventions. In Uganda for example, farmers already use banana leaves to collect rainwater from trees, gathering up to 200 litres in a single storm.”

And in Botswana, local farmers have discovered that after cutting back thorn bushes, they can spread them over dry ground to protect it from wind erosion. This reabsorbs plant nutrients back into the earth, and stops cattle eating the grass before it has fully recovered.

The 16 hotspots chosen for the Desire project are located in parts of Africa, the United States, South America, southern Europe, China, Russia and Australia. After the trials, farmers will be given field manuals to help them identify the warning signs of land degradation, and facilitators will run practical workshops in dozens of villages.

Notes for Editors:

For more information about this project, visit: www.desire-project.eu

For photographs to accompany this story, visit:

http://www.desire-project.eu/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=50&Itemid=26

Prof. Coen Ritsema is project leader and based at Alterra Soil Science Centre in Wageningen, the Netherlands, and is available for interview: Tel +31 317 486517; Fax +31 317 419000; email Coen.Ritsema@wur.nl

Dr Mark Reed is available for interview: Tel 0113 3433316/2659294; Fax 0113 3436716; Email m.reed@see.leeds.ac.uk

Example of poor practice

Parliamentarians address next steps lawmaking bodies can take in helping combat desertification

A two-day meeting of the Steering Committee of the Seventh UNCCD Parliamentarians' Forum ended on Tuesday, December 2, with an agreement of measures that lawmaking bodies can do to help combat desertification and land degradation as well as mitigate the effects of drought (DLDD).

In his opening statement to the committee, UNCCD Executive Secretary Luc Gnacadja urged members to mobilize resources so that countries can accelerate the implementation of the Convention in light of the UNCCD's new 10-year Strategy Plan adopted last year in Madrid.

"The UNCCD Parliamentarians' Forum is one of the most important platforms for the exchange of views for action. I have no doubt the outcome of the Praia meeting could contribute providing guidance on the course of actions in implementing the strategy," Mr. Gnacadja said.

The Steering Committee was founded in 2003 to enhance stronger parliamentary commitment and political will for the implementation of the Convention both in developed and developing countries. Since then, the Parliamentary Round Tables/Forums have become a platform for exchange of views and interaction among parliamentarians on desertification issues.

One month after key negotiations by UNCCD parties in Istanbul, Turkey,¹ lawmaking bodies are expected to intensify and improve their participation in the implementation of the 10-year Strategy Plan. At the Praia meeting, the Steering Committee sought greater commitments on the part of parliaments and MPs to place desertification issues on government agendas, to create specific line items in budgets to combat DLDD, and to build more partnerships with policy-makers, scientists, the private sector, and NGOs as well as community-based organizations. The parliamentary role of monitoring actions taken by governments should also be enhanced. In this regard, better and increased use of the Parliamentary Network of the UNCCD (PNoUNCCD) is expected.

Further, to facilitate a more effective assessment of parliamentary efforts, the Steering Committee is to examine the establishment of performance indicators, as well as create a two-year work program (2010-11) of the PNoUNCCD.

Following the Praia meeting, the Parliamentarians' Forum can now set a strong example by focusing on the four strategic objectives of the Convention: improving livelihood of affected populations; improving productivity of affected ecosystems; generating global benefits; and mobilizing resources to support implementation of the Convention.

Appendix 4: Writing a Policy Brief

Consider what the policy brief is for and who will read it

A policy brief is used to translate a collection of scientific results into concise factual information to support a decision relating to a policy question. It is aimed at someone who does not need to understand the fine detail but needs to be able to rely on proven facts in order to make important decisions. This person is professional, inevitably busy, and with an agenda that may be influenced by e.g. financial considerations of profit and loss. Their agenda may not match the agenda of pure scientists. Do not assume that you know what sort of information the policy maker needs. If possible, ask them first!

Planning a policy brief

A policy brief must be very succinct. That is not only concise, but focussed too. The subject matter must be limited to the interest of the intended reader, without too much extra background. Most policy briefs should not exceed about 6 pages. The introduction and conclusions are the most important parts. These will be skim-read first, and if they fail to make an impression, the middle part of the brief may not be read at all. The introduction briefly explains the basis of the scientific results, and why they are new or at least important to a current debate. The middle section must include all recognised or valid arguments and aim to be unbiased. The conclusions should provide recommendations, or at least a set of clear facts related to the debate, that allow the reader to make an informed decision.

Each sentence should be kept short and concise. Imagine you are explaining your scientific work to an interested, intelligent relative and use appropriate understandable language. The use of scientific jargon words or acronyms should be avoided as they interrupt the reader's thought process.

A short bibliography, relating to policy rather than science, may be added at the end, and/or an Appendix if absolutely necessary. A list of the sources consulted may also be appropriate.

The introduction or summary

This might include:

- The area of research, or the broad subjects or issues addressed
- The specific issues, or debate, or decision, that this information can help to resolve
- An indication of what is covered in the main text of the policy brief
- A summary of the conclusions or recommendations

The UN Convention to Combat Desertification

Lindsay C. Stringer

1 October 2006 | EN

Summary

Desertification first attracted political attention in the 1970s, and remains important today, particularly for developing countries. This policy brief explores the world's response — the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) — considering why, on its tenth anniversary, debate over desertification persists.

The brief describes how and why the convention started, what it is, its aims and how it operates, including its finances. The text then examines the role of science and reflects upon the convention's successes and limitations.

Finally, the brief looks beyond the convention, and at its possible future. Whether or not a convention is still the best approach to tackle poverty and environmental problems in drylands, political commitment and financial resources remain vital to success.....

An example from the UNCCD website: <http://www.scidev.net/en/south-east-asia/policy-briefs/the-un-convention-to-combat-desertification.html>

The main text of the policy brief

Choose sub-headings that convey the most important points. Make sure those sub-headings match points made in the introduction and conclusions. The first sentence under each sub-heading should summarise the rest of the paragraph, e.g. "This section explains the criteria used to choose apples for the finest apple pie". Use bullet points, tables or diagrams to convey ideas accurately with minimum text. Edit out unnecessary words, unnecessary explanations, or points that are of interest to the scientist but not to the policy maker.

The conclusions or recommendations

The scientist must put themselves in the position of the intended reader, to decide what factors will most influence the policy decisions that need to be made. List those factors and if possible group them into definite recommendations.

The choice of apples to make the finest apple pie is large, and they can be listed according to their attributes. It is possible to recommend a particular variety that does not oxidise and brown quickly, and retains a firm texture when cooked. Such a variety, e.g. Cox's Orange Pippin, could be best for an upside-down apple pie (Tarte Tatin). The Bramley apple, that browns easily, and does not retain its structure so well when cooked, is more suited to the traditional English apple pie.

NG

The International Society for technology in Education <http://www.iste.org/> has issued the following:

Tips and Template for Writing a Policy Brief (from ISTE)

Policy makers seldom have the time to read through all the literature related to a specific policy question. To make well-informed decisions, they rely on short, tightly written briefs that quickly and cogently relay the important policy facts, questions, and arguments about an issue.

Characteristics of a Good Policy Brief

A policy brief must advance a persuasive argument in a concise, clearly organized fashion. A policy brief does not include a lengthy analysis or review of the literature.

General Outline for a Policy Brief:

Introduction:

Begin with a brief **overview** and **state the problem or objective**.

Map where your argument will take the reader and **explicitly outline your thesis**.

Recommendations:

Clearly state your **recommendations** up front.

Background:

Outline brief history or **background** relevant to the theme.

Analysis:

Constructively criticise arguments, ideologies, and the quality of technical evidence.

Use **evidence** from literature and other sources to support your perspectives and advance your recommendations.

Conclusion:

Conclude with a **persuasive argument** and **summary statement**.

Note: Place recommendations and most effective evidence in sidebars or boxes. However, be sure not to overuse such graphics and sidebars.

See also:

- The policy brief. <http://www.policy.hu/ipf/fel-pubs/samples/PolicyBrief-described.pdf>

- How to write a policy memo. <http://www-personal.umd.umich.edu/~atthral/writememo.pdf>
- Policy brief.org, a website for publishing and advertising policy briefs on-line: <http://www.policybrief.org/>

Appendix 5:

Making video clips and video podcasts

See information from Mark Reed, as used for making video material for student education, at:

<http://www.lts.leeds.ac.uk/bulletin/issue19/page8.php>

With the low cost of digital video equipment and the ready availability of free and easy-to-use video-editing software, producing your own video content is now within reach of even the most ardent technophobe. Free software such as Windows Moviemaker may be used to edit and produce videos.

Some pointers to make the process easier:

- Plan thoroughly and write a script – this will ensure you get the shots you want and you don't video more than you need, thus making editing much easier;
- Pay attention to the sound – if possible use an external microphone for interviews, or make sure the speaker is near enough to the camera's built-in microphone, and watch out for background noise;
- Always use a tripod for filming static shots and avoid zooming or moving the camera around unless it is absolutely necessary;
- Make the editing software work for you – use titles, transitions and effects to convey meaning and make your video look more polished, but beware: over-using effects can be distracting;
- Have a go! Learn by doing it, but don't be too ambitious on your first attempt;
- Get clearance – getting signed consent forms from participants and using only copyright-cleared materials for things like images and soundtracks could save you massive potential headaches later on;
- Think about delivery – how will your audience watch your video? You may need to convert it into appropriate formats, or use a system like Utube for online delivery.
- Make videos available in as many formats as you have time to create in order to improve accessibility (eg. podcast, embedded, links to download files in .mp4 and .wmv formats);
- Keep videos short to keep file sizes manageable – ideally under five minutes (certainly no more than 15 minutes);
- Keep viewer interest by making videos entertaining where possible, and using a variety of styles, e.g. expert interviews, site visits/tours, documentary, biographical, profiles, videos made by students;
- Attempt to make videos look as professional as possible, e.g. by adding introductory and end titles/credits.

Appendix 6

Making DESIRE posters, newsletters, factsheets, booklets, and PowerPoint presentations



Now you have seen a selection of DESIRE posters, newsletters, etc. please consider what products you yourself could plan and make that would be useful for stakeholders. As you compile material from the study sites, what can you say about results so far?

Templates for newsletters, posters, brochures and PowerPoint presentations can be downloaded from the DESIRE website, - some in a choice of Microsoft and InDesign formats. These templates can also be adapted to make leaflets, factsheets, policy briefs, etc. Find the Downloads at (first login): http://www.desire-project.eu/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=22&Itemid=26
All the templates have a similar border and design features that will make DESIRE products instantly recognisable.

Level of complexity:

In DESIRE we are trying to provide information for all audiences by considering three levels of complexity: advanced with scientific detail; middle range in non-scientific language; simple, with less text and many pictures.

If you are writing at one of these levels of complexity, this can be shown by a coloured box on the front of the product. As in skiing slope grades, blue can denote simple, red is for moderate and black indicates scientific levels of information.

All products funded wholly or partly by DESIRE should have:

- The DESIRE logo displayed prominently
- The FP6 logo, this is important as it denotes our funding
- Date of issue

All products funded wholly or mostly by DESIRE should also have:

- A DESIRE disclaimer box. (see the version in the latest downloadable Newsletter and poster guidelines templates)

In addition:

- Say who wrote/compiled/edited the product
- Give contact details of the author or the institution making the product (plus logo if applicable)
- Preferably use standard fonts as chosen by DESIRE
- Add the name of the photographer to photos, and also the date when the photo was taken if known
- Compress photo files so that the document can be circulated by email more easily
- Obtain a DESIRE publication number if the product will be part of a DESIRE series (e.g. Newsletters, Factsheets, Info-briefs) so that all products can be catalogued more easily. PLEASE ASK ME FOR A NUMBER
- Ask a non-scientist friend or relative to comment on your draft product, to check that the language and layout are attractive, balanced, and easy to understand
- Consider whether you can translate existing products to your local language, for local dissemination. Google translate <http://translate.google.com/#> may save you some effort, by providing an instant translation that can be adjusted as necessary
- Products available in more than one language may be labelled accordingly, (e.g. Newsletter 1_spa), using language abbreviations as used by the UNCCD
- Send a copy of your product to me for placement on the HIS