



*Location of the four affected regions*

## Problems to be solved

This project comes at a time when political and scientific initiatives on European desertification are moving in a parallel direction. The UNCCD have developed a strategy for combating desertification that requires affected countries to develop monitoring techniques and national and regional action programmes involving stakeholders. Desertification indicators have been identified as a potentially useful tool for both management and monitoring, and the Northern Mediterranean countries are searching for a common methodology for identifying and using such indicators.



*Irrigated cultivation in the Guadalentín*

Valuable and useful results, knowledge and expertise, including proto-type indicator systems at different scales, have been obtained from previous research into land degradation and desertification in Mediterranean Europe. This will be combined with new kinds of indicators, identified by the local stakeholders in a number of desertification-affected areas. The resulting indicator system will be a significant contribution to the work of the UNCCD, and in particular the Northern Mediterranean countries.



*Soil erosion on the Greek island of Lesbos*

## Scientific objectives and approach

There will be extensive collaboration with local stake holders in desertification affected regions of Alentejo (Portugal), Guadalentín (Spain), Agri (Italy) and Lesbos (Greece) in order to identify: impact indicators relating to perceptions of land function; driving



*Torreavilla, Nogalte catchment, Spain*

force and pressure indicators relating to decision making; and response indicators relating to land management measures taken to combat desertification. A conceptual and database framework will be developed for these and the other indicators identified in the project.

Composite indicators will be developed combining these stakeholder-identified indicators with bio-physical and socio-economic state indicators already developed for Mediterranean Europe. Together they will form an environmentally sensitive area



*Water brought by canal to irrigate the Guadalentín*

identification system, for use at the sub-national scale. In addition, coarse scale modelling of soil erosion, salinisation and channel processes will provide a regional degradation index at the Mediterranean-wide scale.

The indicators of different scale and type will be combined into a desertification indicator system for Mediterranean Europe. The system will be used to explore different management options identified by the local stakeholders.



*Biancana badlands in the Agri valley*

There will be close collaboration with both local stakeholders and the National Committees to test the application of the indicator system to new regions and to validate the local identification of high risk areas and the implications of local scenario analyses. Finally the experiences gained in both the testing and validation will be formulated into guidelines for the UNCCD on the development and use of indicators to manage desertification.

## Expected impacts

The principal product will be a Desertification Indicator system for Mediterranean Europe, which has been tested and evaluated by both the local stakeholders and the Annex IV National Committees. The indicator system will be used by local stakeholders to explore alternative management scenarios and by the National Committees for national and regional management and monitoring.



*Irrigated crops in the Guadalentín*

For further information about the project:

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## Combating Desertification in Mediterranean Europe: Linking Science with Stakeholders



DESERTLINKS is combating desertification in four affected regions of Europe:

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