



DESERTLINKS

**COMBATING DESERTIFICATION IN MEDITERRANEAN EUROPE
LINKING SCIENCE WITH STAKEHOLDERS**

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Desertification indicators and participatory approach
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Desertification indicators and participatory approach

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In several official documents, the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) of the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the UNCCD, provided guidelines and terms of reference to set up a participatory procedure to identify and select desertification indicators.

Guidelines are mainly in the form of recommendations: the procedure has never been formalised as such.

The table below represents the effort made by NRD to fill in this gap by defining a series of concrete operational steps.

We think it would be useful to check and evaluate this document in relation to the procedures you are already applying in the Target Areas.

Thanks to your suggestions we hope to be able, at the end of the project, to provide an improved and validated document to the UNCCD Secretariat.

Schematic procedure for the participatory production of desertification indicators

| Step | Annotations |
|---|---|
| 1. Identification of the general and specific <u>objectives</u> and their classification according to the specific field of application and users | <p>The NAP should serve as the point of departure for the discussion. The objectives it seeks to achieve should be arranged according to the following three criteria:</p> <p><i>nature</i> of the set objective;</p> <p><i>level</i>: regional, sub-regional, national, sub-national, local;</p> <p><i>target-users</i> of the action, at the different levels identified above. The research organizations are particularly necessary to provide support at all levels.</p> |
| 2. Establishment of a mechanism for consultation amongst all the potential <u>users</u> and the potential <u>providers</u> of data. | <p>Here it is required that the process of preparing indicators be participatory and encourage the inter-change between those possessing data and those needing it. This process should also encourage an assessment-monitoring system and instruments for the circulation of information.</p> <p>The actors of the spatial level concerned should be those to elaborate indicators and collect data, assisted when need be by organizations at other levels.</p> |
| 3. Integrated analysis of the objectives and <u>key issues</u> to which they pertain, referring the DPSIR logical framework. | <p>The scope of this step is to identify the key issues on which efforts should be focussed. It is essential that actors at each level endeavour to sum up the problem in a few key points which in turn will be identified and given priority along with the expected results.</p> <p>In particular for this purpose it will be necessary to:</p> <p>determine the causes and mechanisms of human or natural “pressures” on the environment.</p> <p>understand what action should be taken to reduce or eliminate sources of such “pressures”.</p> |
| 4. Identification of <u>indicators</u> able to best describe, at each level, the key issues identified above. | <p>It will be necessary to determine a limited number of indicators using at least the following selection criteria:</p> <p>relevance;</p> <p>simplicity;</p> |

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| | <p>ease of communication; comparability.</p> |
| <p>5. Identification and characterisation of <u>necessary data</u> to measure and/or derive the adopted indicators and benchmarks.</p> | <p>It will be necessary to draw up technical data forms (a suggested form will be presented below) to describe the needs of each indicator in terms of data, with particular mention of:</p> <p>data required to measure/derive the indicator;</p> <p>the spatial scale and the time scale necessary to produce the indicator;</p> <p>the source or sources of information;</p> <p>etc.</p> |
| <p>6. Analysis of national and/or local situations relative to production and/or <u>availability of data</u> on the different key issues identified.</p> | <p>What data is available ? When data exists, but has a low level of standardisation and/or availability, step 2 becomes particularly relevant.</p> <p>It is necessary to select indicators for which data is already available or can be obtained at reasonable cost. The real costs of developing indicators must be taken into account. The collection and analysis of a large quantity of data could require considerable resources in terms of funds, work force and time. This could dissuade country parties from attempting to develop indicators.</p> |
| <p>7. <u>Calculation/measurement</u> and analysis of indicators</p> | <p>The calculation should be supported by an analysis of the evolution of the indicator over time, in the specific context.</p> |
| <p>8. Preparation of an <u>action plan</u> to provide for the production of necessary but as yet unavailable data.</p> | <p>If the necessary data does not yet exist, it will be necessary to define a plan to produce missing data and which should include :</p> <p>who is going to produce it; when, how and at what price</p> <p>The time interval between the planning of a collection campaign and the start of the systematic collection must be taken into account. Especially if it is on a national scale, it could be of several years, therefore it is preferable that indicators be based as far as possible on existing data.</p> |
| <p>9. Dissemination of <u>results</u></p> | <p>The indicator must be interpreted and presented so as to be understood by the users. The collection of data and the dissemination of results must be strengthened on the local level in particular.</p> |
| <p>10. Testing <u>perception</u> (feed-back from users)</p> | <p>The true effectiveness of an indicator must also be assessed with respect to the response from users, especially at the local level. In this manner the less effective indicators can be revised.</p> |