To effectively address land degradation and desertification, policies must consider the societal...
The LEDDRA research demonstrated that land and ecosystem degradation and desertification (LEDD) does not only result from ineffective design and implementation of environmental policies. Effective responses should also seek to address a range of socio-economic concerns which contribute to land and ecosystem-related problems. In her presentation “Policy recommendations - findings from the LEDDRA project,” Ruta Landgrebe of Ecologic Institute highlighted this need for a socio-ecological fit of responses to LEDD. To achieve this, policies should address environmental, economic, and social impacts in an integrated manner and contribute to sustainable development in LEDD-affected areas. The presentation slides are available for download.

A key challenge is to develop policies that are flexible enough to be useful within various local contexts and serve as adaptive policies which can respond to anticipated and unanticipated changes in the future. The Complex Adaptive Systems paradigm and Resilience Thinking were main concepts applied throughout the LEDDRA research, yielding many insights to improve policy adaptation. Several examples include:

- shifting reliance from external to internal financing systems,
- facilitating access to land for younger generations, and
- programming policy reviews and making re-adjustments in
accordance with local stakeholders' feedback.

Under the LEDDRA project, policy options were developed for the eight different study sites located in cropland, grazing land, and forests/shrubland regions. Many different local and regional stakeholders were involved in this process through the participatory approach. These policy options were then scaled up to the EU and international levels by applying shared concepts to different contexts.

The 2014 LEDDRA Policy Conference [3] marked a milestone in the LEDDRA project research and also closed this research project. The primary aim of the Policy Conference was to present policy-related project findings and to discuss associated policy recommendations, as well as to develop new critical thinking to support future initiatives addressing LEDD.

The conference brought together LEDDRA researchers, policy makers from international, EU organisations, and Member States, as well as stakeholder groups and NGOs. The discussion and questions raised by the presentations and dialogue at the conference will be integrated into the project conclusions, which will contribute to the ongoing efforts to combat land degradation and desertification at the international, European, and national levels.


Links
[1] https://www.ecologic.eu/480