GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY
INVESTING IN OUR PLANET

Sustainable Forest Management Impact Program

Dryland Sustainable Landscapes


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Program Rationale

Drylands are home to more than 2 billion people and contain 44% of the world's agricultural land that supports over half of the world's food production. Drylands also host the most fragile ecosystems on the planet, including a quarter of all global biodiversity hot spots and many threatened and endemic species. Drylands provide much of the world's grain and livestock, many tree products and vegetable species, as well as globally important agro-biodiversity.

Climate change, a growing population, and especially overgrazing of rangelands will exacerbate problems in dryland areas and further induce land degradation, negatively affecting the livelihoods of its inhabitants, including 600 million smallholder farmers.

Investing in the sustainable management of drylands is becoming ever more urgent, given the convergence of a number of global trends: high population growth rates; increasing water scarcity, sometimes exacerbated by climate change; increasing food insecurity; out-migrations of young people; loss of cultural heritage; and decreasing habitats for wild species with detrimental effects for biodiversity. Such forces are highlighting the value of healthy drylands to the world, and their role in a secure global future.

For dryland landscapes to be sustainable:

- They must be resilient, adaptive, and biologically functional;
- Their management must be responsive to social and landscape trends over time and capable of generating food, income, and ecosystem services in a sustainable manner; and
- Effective governance conditions must exist for the goods and services that they generate, and for the local resource managers and users, to be distributed equitably among different stakeholder groups.

Program Overview

The objective of the **Dryland Sustainable Landscapes (DSL) Impact Program** is to avoid, reduce, and reverse further degradation, desertification, and deforestation of land and ecosystems in drylands, through the sustainable management of production landscapes. The program will transform the management of drylands in selected regions and countries, establishing the basis for the scaling out of sustainable dryland management to regional and global levels. The program will focus specifically on three geographical dryland clusters: the Miombo and Mopane ecosystems of southern Africa; the savannas of west Africa; and the temperate grasslands, savannas, and shrublands of Central Asia.

The Impact Program directly engages 11 countries that demonstrate strong alignment with the program vision and have high potential to generate global environmental benefits through investments in promoting transformational change. The countries are: **Angola, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Malawi, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania**, and **Zimbabwe**. The Impact Program will benefit participating countries by helping them to reconcile competing social, economic, and environmental objectives of land management, and move away from unsustainable sectoral approaches.

The program will also engage with many other countries facing similar challenges through its global coordination project and out-scaling efforts made in the three geographical clusters.

Program Approach

To achieve transformational change, the Impact Program framework takes a three-pronged approach:

1. Support the development of effective governance systems, including improved coordination and collaboration across sectors and strengthening of land/resource tenure;

2. Mobilize national and international stakeholders, strengthen important dryland value chains, and leverage investments from the private sector by catalyzing public/private funds to scale up sustainable land management (SLM) and sustainable forest management (SFM) strategies in target countries;

3. Implement comprehensive monitoring, assessment, and knowledge management programs based on innovative spatial assessment tools developed by all implementing partners supporting shared learning and co-production of knowledge with local stakeholders – contributing directly to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals 2 and 15.

Program Delivery Framework

The program delivery framework includes two main levels of operation: *country level investments* that are focused primarily on three geographic clusters of dryland ecoregions; and *global-level engagement* to harness strategic partnerships with key entities and initiatives that will support the country-level efforts while positioning the overall program for influencing systemic change to achieve impactful outcomes.

Country-level Engagement

1. **Miombo and Mopane ecosystems of Southern Africa** *(Angola, Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, Zimbabwe).*

   The Miombo and Mopane woodlands are central to the livelihoods of 2.6 million people, providing valuable products such as non-timber forest products, energy, and food. In Angola, for example, around 54% of small-scale farmers were found in the Miombo ecoregion in 2014 and 10% in the Mopane ecoregion. Crops are important for livelihoods and are mostly grown in rain-fed areas with low productivity associated with poor soils. In Mopane regions, small-scale farmers are mainly agro-pastoralists, raising cattle and goats as their main livelihood. Farmers cultivate millet, sorghum, and maize in the short rainy season. but face a high risk of failure due to the unreliability of rainfall.

   In this cluster, investments will focus on: reversing degradation and supporting sustainable resource management, including pastoral and agro-pastoral resources through an integrated management framework; decreasing pressures on biodiversity and ecosystem integrity in protected areas (conservancies, national parks, reserves); and promoting cross-sectoral approaches to accelerate restoration of woodlands for sustainable forest management and biodiversity conservation.

2. **Savannas of West Africa** *(Burkina Faso)*

   Burkina Faso is dominated by the West Sudanian Savanna ecoregion, a hot, dry, wooded savanna composed mainly of large tree species and elephant grass. The habitat has been greatly reduced, degraded, and fragmented by agricultural activities and clearance for wood and charcoal, while populations of most of the larger mammal species have been decimated by over-hunting. This ecoregion extends westwards to Senegal and eastwards to Niger. To the north, it blends into the Sahelian Acacia Savanna ecoregion, which stretches across the entire width of North Africa from Mauritania in the west to Sudan in the east. Both ecoregions form part of the tropical and subtropical grasslands, savannas, and shrublands biome.

   In this cluster, investments will focus on the restoration and maintenance of cropland fertility through water and soil conservation techniques. Linkages and collaboration with the Great Green Wall Initiative will be an opportunity to out-scale and transform landscapes and livelihoods in the Sahel.

3. **Temperate grasslands, savannas, and shrublands of Central Asia** *(Kazakhstan and Mongolia)*

   This biome includes a large number of ecoregions, such as the Eastern European forest steppe, the Pontic steppe, the Kazakh forest steppe, the Kazakh steppe, and the Mongolian-Manchurian grasslands. To the north, steppes generally give way to forest ecoregions (boreal forests, conifer forests, mixed forests, and taiga) and to the south to deserts and semi-deserts.

   In this cluster, investments will focus on community-centered conservation and sustainable management mechanisms for critical ecosystems within the productive landscape. The introduction of pasture management, development of forage production, and improving the watering of pasture lands will be important elements of sustainable rangeland management.


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Global-level Engagement

The Global Coordination Project (GCP) will be crucial in increasing the effectiveness, sustainability, and scale of impact of the GEF's efforts at regional and global levels. The GCP will ensure region-wide coordination and informed prioritization of investments in sustainable management of drylands. It will foster cooperation between participating countries in addressing common management challenges, boost the cumulative impact of the program, and increase global environmental benefits.

The DSL Impact Program envisions dryland landscapes that are sustainably managed at a global scale and will lay the foundation for effectively and permanently addressing environmental threats and development challenges in the long term. Lessons learned through DSL projects will be fed into national, regional, and global knowledge hubs so that they contribute to the global resource of knowledge on best practices, and are disseminated to stakeholders both within and beyond the target areas and countries.

Strong emphasis will be placed on engagement of the private sector in the development and implementation of the program as a precondition for transformational change, scale of impact, and sustainability. The private sector has huge influence in determining farmers' production systems and resource management practices through value chains and financing mechanisms, and has potential to complement the capacities of weak government institutions. Private sector actors will be involved at various levels, including community-level value chain actors and innovative financing mechanisms (e.g. in the case of charcoal value chains), companies, corporate groups and sector organizations, and financing entities at national and regional levels. This will also include gender and equity aspects in engagements with producer organizations and cooperatives.

Expected Results

The program will reach more than 1 million direct beneficiaries and bring 12 million hectares of drylands under sustainable land management, including 1.2 million hectares primarily benefitting biodiversity and avoiding deforestation of 240,000 hectares of high conservation value forests. In addition, the program will improve the management effectiveness in 1.58 million hectares of protected areas and restore 1.2 million hectares of degraded land in the drylands. All these activities will result in total GHG emission reductions of 81 million tCO_2e.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) was established on the eve of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit to help tackle our planet's most pressing environmental problems. Since then, the GEF has provided close to **$20 billion** in grants and mobilized an additional **$107 billion** in co-financing for more than **4,700 projects** in **170 countries**. Through its Small Grants Programme, the GEF has provided support to nearly 24,000 civil society and community initiatives in 128 countries.

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