



Soil Leadership Academy: Launch of Simulation Workshops

The SLA is an UNCCD initiative mobilizing a capacity building platform aimed at supporting public and private decision makers to consider the Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) objective. The Soil Leadership Academy (SLA) launched its simulation workshop program during the UNCCD COP12's High Level Segment.

Following the discussions on LDN during COP12, the workshops encouraged public and private decision-makers to start considering LDN implementation within their country or business. SLA proposes a policy cycle approach and a partnership network to support this process. The simulation workshops walked decision-makers through the range of knowledge products and capacity building resources available to achieve LDN; offered by a wide range of initiatives and organizations brought together by the SLA.

Using an interactive simulation tool, decision-makers were guided through each step of the decision-making cycle, identifying the priorities and particular issues faced by their country or business, and navigating a unique path to LDN. The Geneva Graduate Institute collaborates with SLA for the development of the simulation tool and facilitation of the workshops.

At each decision-making stage, SLA partners gave presentations on how to most effectively resolve challenges and benefit from opportunities that decision-makers are likely to face. First, decision-makers were proposed an approach for the assessment the extent of land degradation, as well as the economic and social pressures that would influence their decision-making path. FAO, as a partner underlined the social implications of land degradation, and its effect on food security.

Subsequently, decision-makers determined the priority given by their country or business to achieving LDN. At this stage, WBCSD spoke about the benefits of involving multiple stakeholders when building a LDN strategy, and Syngenta presented on how business management decisions can positively influence sustainable farm management. The ELD Initiative demonstrated the economic benefits of sustainable land management, while representative from WRI gave a brief on how to scale decisions in the face of climate change.

While considering options for policy action, decision-makers explored the available pathways. Partners like the UNCCD Global Mechanism demonstrated the range of market-based mechanisms that effectively promote SLM, and the opportunities provided by the UNCCD's LDN Fund. Leeds University spoke about how to expand LDN policy beyond the agriculture department.

At the Implementation step, decision-makers considered the various capacity building tools available, how to secure help to scale up, and how to involve communities. WOCAT identified effective SLM techniques, and the IUCN explored mainstreaming SLM practices. The Turkish Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock demonstrated the large-scale afforestation and desalinization programs implemented successfully throughout Turkey.



For monitoring and evaluation, decision-makers reviewed the importance of monitoring progress against initial targets, flexibly responding to new challenges and building on lessons learned. The UNCCD Secretariat spoke about LDN indicators and how to evaluate progress towards LDN.

Building on this launch, the Soil Leadership Academy considers opportunities to deliver tailored workshops and capacity building support to countries and businesses that decide to address the LDN objective. SLA and its partner network is prepared to work together with decision makers to explore the best solutions to achieve LDN.

Soil Leadership Academy (SLA)

SLA is an initiative of the UNCCD Secretariat and it has been supported by the members of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development. The initial investment for the setting up of the project and development of its activities has been provided by Syngenta a member of WBCSD. It is an open, transparent and inclusive framework that stimulates knowledge and experience exchange in areas relevant to LDN implementation. The purpose of the SLA is to inspire decision makers to take practical action for LDN and to scale up the implementation of sustainable land and water management practices.

The SLA is developing a simulation methodology to support decision makers to navigate through the complexity of achieving LDN and other proposed SDGs related to land and soil. The SLA simulation exercise is based on the latest scientific knowledge, methodologies and case studies from around the world. Through the SLA consortium of partners, this information will be constantly updated. SLA promotes bottom-up, community-involved land policies, proven to be the most effective method of achieving sustainable, society-wide benefits.

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