



EUROPEAN COMMUNITY
Report to the Fourth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations
Convention to Combat Desertification (COP-4)

Support provided to countries in regions other than Africa
in implementation of the UNCCD

CONTENTS

Executive summary
Overview
Asia
Latin America
Southern and Eastern Mediterranean
Central and Eastern Europe
Trans-regional research programmes
Conclusion

Executive summary

The European Community's longstanding tradition of concluding partnership arrangements with developing countries puts it in the unique position of meeting one of the most important recommendations of the Convention and being able to contribute to the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in affected countries using the various financial instruments attached to these agreements.

This report deals with a selected number of the numerous programmes and projects funded by the Community within the context of the UN CCD in regions other than Africa over the period 1994-2000. The regions covered are Asia, Latin America, Southern and Eastern Mediterranean and Central and Eastern Europe.

As there were no direct requests for funding for the elaboration or implementation of National and Regional Action Programmes (NAPs and RAPs) during the period under review there is no separate part in this report dealing specifically with such actions. Instead we describe the major programmes and projects funded by the Community which are directly relevant to addressing land degradation and desertification.

Between 1990-1999, the European Community made available over €1 billion to the developing countries from which desertification-related projects have been funded. Substantial amounts are being devoted to addressing the problem, in addition to a variety of research activities funded by the Community.

The selected projects highlighted in this report are in India, Pakistan, Central Asian Republics, China, Indonesia and Chile. They range from soil stabilisation and regeneration to water management, reforestation and training and they have been and are being carried out in accordance with the principles laid down in the Convention as regards in particular the bottom-up approach, the participation of Non-Governmental and community-based organisations and the enhancement of the role of women. The projects, which altogether represent a sum of approximately €83 million, show clearly that the Community has continued to provide substantial resources to addressing dryland degradation and desertification in regions other than Africa, improving food production and food security and contributing to the alleviation of poverty.

Overview

This report provides information on measures taken by the European Community in support of countries in regions other than Africa to implement the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. It focuses on the period 1994-2000, but includes programmes and projects which began earlier but were implemented or extended to this period or have only just started.

As there were no direct requests for funding from affected developing country Parties for the formulation or implementation of National and Regional Action Programmes between 1994 and 2000, there is no separate part in this report dealing with measures specifically taken by the European Community to support the NAP and RAP processes. Instead the report focuses on a selected number of programmes and projects funded by the Community during this period which fall within the context of the UNCCD.

Partnership arrangements

The European Community has a longstanding tradition of concluding Partnership Arrangements with developing countries under which it provides them with, among other things, financial and technical assistance. These agreements, which are renewed every four or five years, conform with one of the most important recommendations of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification regarding partnership arrangements and provide affected developing country Parties with opportunities to seek EC assistance in implementation of their national and regional action programmes to combat desertification. In this regard, the EC is thus in a unique position: it does not need to conclude new partnership agreements for the purpose of the Convention.

Thirty countries in **Asia and Latin America** and eleven in the **Southern and Eastern Mediterranean** have signed such an agreement with the European Community over the past twenty years at bilateral or at regional level. These agreements provide, among other things, for co-operation on sustainable development and environmental protection. They have matching funding instruments: ALA Funds for Asia and Latin America and MEDA Funds for the Mediterranean (both collectively referred to as ALA-MED).

Although support for any particular project or programme is contingent upon a request being made or proposal being put forward by the partner country, the Community sometimes takes specific measures to ensure that reasonable allocations are made to priority sectors. An EC Council Decision, for example, adopted in direct response to the Rio Earth Summit, requires that 10% of ALA funds be committed to projects concerning the protection of the environment and natural resources.

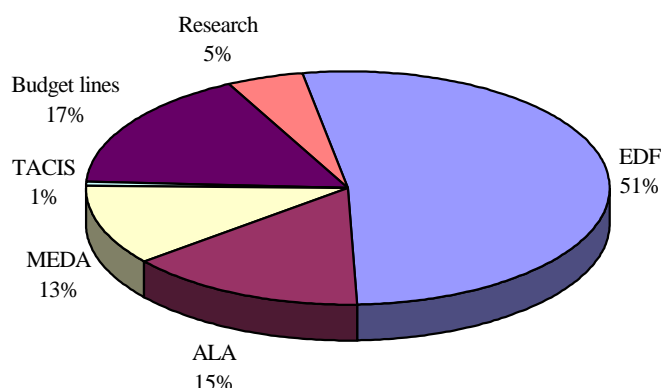
Over €1 billion was made available by the European Community to the developing countries under bilateral or multilateral agreements between 1990-1999. Twenty-eight per cent of this amount (approximately €295 millions) were ALA-MED Funds.

Budgetlines

The European Community has also a diverse range of thematic budgetlines which allow the promotion of sustainable development in developing countries. The majority of these funds are small and are used to promote pilot projects, usually small-scale projects which focus on particular sectors rather than geographical areas. Of particular importance are the budgetlines for *Environment in the developing countries* and *Tropical Forests* under which €5 millions and €200 millions respectively have been put at the disposal of the developing countries over the past five years.

Funds contributing to addressing desertification in developing countries 1990-99

Total amount: Euro 1,054,191,757



The Community has also specific programmes such as LIFE and TACIS which allow funding of actions in the Mediterranean and in the Central Asian Republics.

Although the LIFE programme is generally used for supporting EU internal environmental policy, the Community has extended the programme to countries bordering the Baltic and Mediterranean Seas. Five per cent of LIFE Funds are reserved for actions in the 16 countries of that region.

The TACIS programme is for technical assistance co-operation with the economies in transition in Central Asia (i.e. the New Independent States and Mongolia). It is aimed at assisting the process of structural economic reforms, including in the area of sustainable development and environmental protection.

Scientific and technological assistance

Since the early 1980s, the European Community research programmes have been extended to include scientific co-operation with non-EU countries (INCO). Between 1994 and 1998, this co-operation focused, among other things, on the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. Practically all regions of the world benefit from these research programmes. The INCO-DEV sub-programme under the current Fifth Framework Research Programme (1998-2002) seeks to build on earlier work to strengthen and add value to ongoing research and provide training opportunities in the developing countries. There have been over 70 research projects involving the developing countries, many of which in Asia, Latin America and in the Mediterranean.

In addition to the INCO programmes, all regions of the world benefit from co-ordinated research projects carried out directly by the European Commission through its Joint Research Centre (JRC) at the Space Applications Institute in Ispra (Italy). These activities focus on the use of satellite imagery for environmental monitoring and management. Many are directly relevant to desertification issues. Again Asia, Latin America and the Mediterranean basin have benefited.

It is not possible at present to calculate the overall amount committed by the European Community to desertification control in these regions from the various forms of development assistance described above. However, the total sum committed between 1990-2000 to the selected number of projects described below is approximately €82 millions.

ASIA

Since the late 1980s, most of the EC-funded rural development projects in Asia have had environmental components, particularly reforestation (in order to protect against soil erosion resulting from unsound land use practices), better management of forest resources and fire prevention measures.

Ten projects have been co-funded in the drylands since the early 1990s with the respective Governments under the ALA agreements. They cover forest resource protection and the regeneration of badly degraded pastoral and agricultural lands. The majority of these projects are in northern and eastern India. Several have adopted a successful participatory approach focusing, in particular, on the role of women - empowering them in community decision-making.

In Central and East Asia and in the Pacific, the Community's interventions have focused on water resource management and improvement in agricultural productivity. Two projects have been developed in these areas under TACIS since 1994, one in Uzbekistan and the other on a regional level. Two irrigation projects have also been financed in China.

In southeast Asia the Community's attention has been drawn to the series of fires which have broken out in recent years destroying swaths of forests and animal habitats. It is assisting in setting up preventative measures.

Approximately €144 millions were committed to anti-desertification projects in Asia between 1992 and 1999. Below are descriptions of the most relevant:

India

Haryana: Rehabilitation of Common Lands in the Aravalli Hills

EC contribution: €23 200 000. Duration: 1990-1999

The Aravalli hills area comprises over 100 000 hectares of semi-arid land, large parts of which had become degraded and desertified as a result of demographic pressures and the lack of rational management over several decades. This programme sought to protect commonly owned village lands by restoring vegetation over 38 000 ha and 17 000 ha respectively, reducing soil erosion, conserving fertility and water resources

as well as re-establishing the natural hydrological balance. The projects aimed to enable the villagers to meet their needs in fodder, firewood and timber in a sustainable manner.

In order to address more comprehensively the ecological problems, the project moved away from a system of free access to the common lands towards a regulated system controlled by the user community. This involved building up village-level institutions and introducing formal safeguards for equity and the interests of the most deprived groups.

A major challenge throughout the course of the project has been to train and actively involve women in the management and protection of the rehabilitated lands. This was crucial for sustainability, as women are the primary collectors of fodder, firewood and other produce. An extensive women in development (WID) programme, involving eleven different components, was carried out. Over one third of the local labour force paid to work in the project areas were in fact women.

Timber species and fruit trees were planted along with grasses and leguminous herbs, surviving rootstocks treated and the soil protected with contour trenching and stonewall fencing.

Since capacity-building was a key component, workshops and training courses were provided for community decision-makers, resource managers, technicians and extension workers. Training in sustainable pasture management was also provided to women's groups.

As a complementary activity, fuel-efficient stoves using waste biomass like dry leaves, twigs and agricultural waste were introduced. A cheaper clay version of the project model was produced on the initiative of the women who now manage this activity themselves. Other activities include setting up of Village Forest Committees and the inclusion of women in technical training on nursery planting and transplanting techniques as well as silage and haymaking.

A study conducted recently with the help of satellite imageries revealed that the overall vegetation cover in the project area has increased by 34%. There has been increased availability of fodder and firewood and the ground water levels are slowly recharging This is having a direct impact on the livelihood of the people.

Haryana Community Forestry

EC contribution: €23 300 000. Duration: 1995-2004

Following the good results achieved in the project described above, the Haryana Community Forestry project was launched in 1995 with an EC funding of € 23 millions to build on the experiences of working with village-level institutions in the development of community-based sustainable management of forests and natural resources. A greater involvement and empowerment of women, castes, landless and other disadvantaged groups in decision making is being pursued through Village Resource Committees.

This project focuses particularly on degraded wastelands, village common land, farm boundaries, etc., and although the emphasis is on forests, land, water, trees, crops and livestock are dealt with in a holistic manner.

Community management of natural resources in Gujarat.
EC contribution: €14 000 000. Duration: 1994-2001

This project is the first large NGO project funded through bilateral funds in India. The total cost is €18.8 millions, of which the EC is providing €4 millions. It is being implemented by two major Gujarat-based NGOs in four Districts of the province. Approximately 750 000 people and 460 villages are concerned.

The project areas are characterised by environmental degradation, overuse of ground water resources and deforestation, alongside widespread rural poverty resulting in distress and labour migration, mainly in the tribal belt of eastern Gujarat.

The objective of this project is to increase household incomes and reverse environmental degradation and migration, through the establishment of self-sustaining village institutions which will eventually take over the management of the different components of the project - water resources development structures, lift and canal minor irrigation systems, watershed development activities, afforestation of public and private land, construction of biogas plants, etc.

In order to improve the management of water and land resources in a sustainable manner, the participation of local village groups is the main implementation strategy. Men and women chosen from these villages participate in study tours to other areas and undergo a number of training courses to develop their organisational and technical capabilities.

Thanks to the NGO partners, the project has now developed viable models for different aspects of participatory natural resources management, including Participatory Irrigation Management, Joint Forest Management, Water Resources Development through water harvesting and ground water recharge structures. These models are based on people's needs and are adapted to the socio-economic and ecological conditions of the project areas.

The innovative approaches developed by the project are now being actively promoted by the agencies themselves, with a view to incorporating them into the Government natural resources management policies.

Ravine Stabilisation in Uttar Pradesh
EC contribution: €7 900 000. Duration: February 2000-2005

This project is aimed at soil stabilisation and conservation of forests in Uttar Pradesh to improve the lives of rural communities in the ravines. By preventing soil erosion and stabilising the ravines, the project will establish a practical and viable model for the development of similar topographies in Uttar Pradesh or in other countries. The specific objectives include participatory planning and community involvement at all stages of the project to address environmental and social problems and to increase land productivity.

The project will cover 75 villages involving approximately 13 000 farming households, focus at stabilising over 13 500 hectares of land, developing horticulture on 1 600 ha and planting of trees on 8 900 ha.

Pakistan

The Asian NGOs conference on combating desertification, Islamabad (January 27-30, 1996). EC contribution: €23 000

The EC contributed € 23 000 to SCOPE (the Asian Regional Focal Point of International NGOs network on combating desertification) to organise this conference in recognition of the importance of political and economic co-operation between the EU and Pakistan in dealing with such problems.

The objectives of the conference were: to develop a strategy for NGOs involvement in the National Action Programmes to combat desertification, to reach out to community-based organisations and groups and create opportunities for information and experience-sharing as well as mobilise regional co-operative organisations in the implementation of the UN CCD.

SCOPE is following up the recommendations of the seminar through its partner NGOs in Asia.

Environmental rehabilitation in North West Frontier Province and Punjab
EC Contribution: €25.200 000. Duration 1996-2003

This project is aimed at halting and reversing ongoing processes of environmental degradation in three upland regions of Pakistan (two in the North West Frontier Province -NWFP- and one in Punjab) through integrated measures of rehabilitation/conservation of natural resources, sustainable socio-economic development and community participation. The activities foreseen include: increasing environmental awareness; arriving at a consensus on the need to adopt protection measures at a local level; developing local economic potential and income to improve the living standards of the estimated population of 1.1 million (particularly women); improving water run-off control and the management of approximately 35000 ha of rangeland; stimulating a process of community development (creation of village organisations, women's organisations, NGOs and associations in approximately 200 villages).

The Central Asian Republics

Two projects have been developed under the TACIS programme in the Central Asian Republics to address environmental degradation and loss of agricultural productivity due to excessive exploitation of water.

Regional: Water resources management and agricultural production
EC contribution: €4 750 000. Duration: 1995-1997

This project to which the European Community contributed €4 750 000 commenced in 1995 for a period of two years. It centred on the Aral Sea which is a landlocked body of water surrounded on all sides by deserts and semi-arid grasslands. The Aral Sea's only recharge had been from two rivers, the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya.

The rapid expansion of cotton production and irrigation schemes in the 40s and 50s reached its height in 1960s with the exploitation of 4.5 million hectares of land in the surrounding areas such that annual water consumption was running at 50-55m cubic metres. The resulting consequences are well known. By 1990, the sea level had fallen 14 metres from its 1960 level and the sea area had shrunk by more than 40%, an area greater than the size of Belgium. The effects on the adjacent lands are multiple: salt deposited through the dust whipped up from the exposed sea bed and diminished rainfall cycle.

The weather has changed significantly to endanger the production of cotton. High summer temperatures increase the evapotranspiration rates of plant stands which are already stressed by the salinisation of soil. The Amu Darya used to spread out into a wide delta creating 15 000 sq. kms of seasonally flooded grassland and the forests supported almost 400 species of birds and mammals. The delta has since dried up, killing vegetation, destroying biodiversity and with it the traditional livelihood of the local peoples.

To contribute to addressing this dramatic problem, the WARMAP programme aims to provide technical assistance to improve Inter-republic water apportionment and the development of principles and institutions. It is working on providing a legal basis for international and national water resources management with allocation between economic sectors and users based on criteria which are economically, equitably and ecologically sound, giving proper regard to the preservation and downstream usages.

China

Ganzu Provincial Irrigation Experiment and Training centre
EC contribution: €1.700 000. Duration: 1993-1995

This project was aimed at consolidating the results of an earlier project on the Jiangxi sandy wastelands. The Centre provides training on irrigation to farmers, teaching them how to utilise scarce water resources more efficiently to improve crop yields in order to improve food security and increase incomes in Ganzu province.

Indonesia

Forest Fire Prevention and Control
EC contribution: €4 100 000. Duration: 1999-2001

This project, which is based in Palembang, South Sumatra, is a joint undertaking between the European Commission and the Indonesian government whose contribution is in-kind. It is aimed at helping the government develop an integrated vegetation fire management system (prevention, detection and suppression) following the recent fires that ravaged the country. Indeed, during the fires of 1997/98 the EU set up a special response group to co-ordinate the design of an assistance package worth €300 000 under which expertise, equipment and training in fire fighting were provided to the Indonesian government.

LATIN AMERICA

Two relevant projects have been funded under the main ALA Funds in Latin America for a total cost of €17 m. The first was an integrated rural development programme in the two northernmost regions of Chile at the edges of the Atacama desert and the

second was a project aiming at improving the agricultural production of rural smallholders in the dry northern region of Nicaragua. Eight other projects relating to desertification control in Latin America have been financed under the Environment and Tropical Forest budget lines over 1990-1999 to the tune of just under €6m. An example of such project is described below.

Chile

Activities to combat desertification in region IV, Chile, Phases I and II
EC Contribution €168,075 and €330,000 respectively. Duration 1992-97

The first phase of this project involved a study which estimated that 40.9% of the region's total land surface was in the process of desertification. The study identified the principal cause of desertification to be the unsustainable agro-pastoral production systems. An inadequate focus on the threat of desertification within the educational system and excessive pressures on biomass fuel were also highlighted. Overexploitation of wood for fuel was a major problem throughout the region (fuelwood represented 95% of household energy consumption).

The second phase began in 1994 with awareness-raising activities (seminars and workshops) targeted at local and regional authorities, professionals, students, grassroots organisations and other sectors of the community. The regions' goat farmers were offered training in more sustainable production methods.

Alternative technologies were also promoted to reduce the pressure on scarce firewood resources by substituting traditional woodstoves with solar-powered ovens. Mist-trapping systems were developed in the coastal Caleta Hornos community to increase the potential for rational use of the region's scarce water resources. The project also promoted the implementation of existing environmental laws within the framework of Chile's Action Plan to combat Desertification and contributed to the processes of developing an effective land law.

This project received UNEP's Saving the Drylands Award as a model for initiating the sustainable management of dryland areas.

SOUTHERN AND EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

The European Community's relations with Southern and Eastern Mediterranean had, until four years ago, been governed by bilateral agreements. These agreements are being progressively replaced by Association Agreements within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) which was adopted in July 1996. They have components on environment enabling funding of programmes aimed particularly at the establishment of administrative capacity in the conservation or restoration of important habitats of endangered flora and fauna as well as pilot actions promoting sustainable development.

Twenty-four projects focusing on the management of water resources and remote sensing have been funded over the past ten years. The total amount committed to projects relevant to desertification and biodiversity in the Mediterranean during this period was approximately € 130 millions. This amount includes eight projects funded under the MED-Campus programme which provided support to a network of Universities undertaking research studies or training in the management of environmentally sensitive arid zones. A regional programme was launched in 1999 for

the Middle East at a cost of €4 millions to control natural resources degradation and desertification and, where applicable, restore productivity through the implementation of pilot activities. The project includes germplasm for arid and range lands, livestock management, etc.

The enhanced relations under the Euro-Med Partnership gave rise to the preparation of a framework Short and Medium Term priority environmental Action Programme (SMAP) for the region. Launched in November 1997 the programme has five priority areas, one of which concerns desertification control. The sum of € 810 310 was allocated from this programme in 1999 to combating desertification, increasing agricultural production in 2000 hectares of land and training 200 farmers in organic agricultural production across the region.

CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

The European Community has contributed €60 000 to the CCD Secretariat for the organisation of a Workshop in Brussels on land degradation and desertification in Central and Eastern Europe conscious of the need to strengthen co-operation between the EU and countries of the region, increase awareness of the UN CCD and encourage accessions and ratifications of the Convention in anticipation of a regional implementation annex for Central and Eastern Europe to be negotiated and approved by Parties to the UN CCD.

TRANS-REGIONAL RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

The European Community, as already indicated, carries out a variety of research activities in developing countries - over 70 since 1990, some of which are in the drylands in Asia, Latin America and the Mediterranean basin. Others concern countries in different regions. Below is an example.

IMPACT OF CLIMATE VARIABILITY ON AGRO-ECOSYSTEMS AND WATER RESOURCES
IN DRYLANDS (CLIWARDA)

EC contribution: €465 000
Source of funding: INCO-DC
Date of signature: 1996
Project duration: 3 years

During the last 150 years, there has been a dramatic increase in the areas under irrigation. To a large extent this growth has been concentrated in the drylands of the developing world, particularly in those regions with a relatively scarce, but renewable water supply. The study has been carried out in five countries (Argentina, China, Egypt, India and Niger) and covered two broad physiographic regions (continental deserts and arid zones in the vicinity of high mountain ranges depending on melting water and zones where water supply originates in areas of higher rainfall which is transported by rivers over large distances).

Due to the variability of precipitation in these areas, reservoirs have only a short term mitigating effect. To some extent, irrigated agriculture has developed a significant resilience to this variability, but increasing competition for water resources and continuously increasing agricultural water use has contributed to higher vulnerability of dryland agricultural production systems.

The above issues have been addressed by the scientific community at various levels of detail. This research project endeavoured to analyse the mechanisms deployed by different societies to adapt to this variability, trying to resolve such questions as how hydrological conditions vary in the recent past, and what impact they have on agricultural production, how societies react to water scarcity, and if local findings can be applied more effectively in a wider context.

CONCLUSION

It is evident that the European Community has continued to provide substantial resources to addressing dryland degradation and desertification in regions other than Africa. The majority of the programmes and projects funded over the past five years range from soil stabilisation and regeneration through water resources management to animal husbandry, reforestation, irrigation and training. Although not funded specifically within the context of the implementation of national and regional action programmes, EC's approach nevertheless embraces the cardinal principles of the UN CCD regarding, in particular the bottom-up approach, the participation of Non-Governmental and community-based organisations and the enhancement of the role of women. These projects are contributing to the achievement of the objectives of increasing food production and food security and the alleviation of poverty.