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# Policy recommendations

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Land and ecosystem degradation and desertification:  
Assessing the fit of responses



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## Policy analysis approach

- ▶ Key research question: **“how do policies modify socio-economic and ecological characteristics of socio-ecological systems and impact their resilience?”**
- ▶ **Different** LEDD issues and policy sets in different study sites
- ▶ **Three levels of analysis:** study site, EU and International level
  - ▶ **Study site level** (e.g. soil, water, nature protection policies, agriculture policy, regional development policy, tourism policy)
  - ▶ **EU level** (e.g. CAP, WFD, Habitats Directive, Birds Directive)
  - ▶ **International level** (e.g. UNCCD, CBD, UNFCCC, Voluntary Land Use Guidelines)

## Policy analysis approach

- ▶ Policy effectiveness: **“extent to which the implemented policy has achieved its stated and/or other goals”**
- ▶ Policy **implementation** aspects:
  - ▶ Policy object, goals and objectives, policy actors, policy measures and policy instruments
  - ▶ Synergies between policies and policy instruments
- ▶ Policy **impact on LEDD**:
  - ▶ Direct or indirect, positive or negative



**Table 2:** Overview of policy effectiveness in the Matera socio-ecological system

| Policy Effectiveness | Forest Policy | Nature Protection Policy | Soil & drought policies | Tourism Policy | Agricultural Policy | Horizontal Policy |
|----------------------|---------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Impact               | High          | High                     | Medium                  | Medium         | Medium-High         | Medium-High       |
| Societal             | Medium        | High                     | n/a                     | Medium-High    | Medium-High         | Medium-High       |
| Side-effects         | Low-Medium    | Low-Medium               | Medium                  | Medium-High    | Medium              | n/a               |
| Institutional        | High          | Medium-High              | Medium                  | n/a            | Medium              | Medium-High       |
| Target group         | Medium        | Medium-High              | n/a                     | High           | Medium-High         | Medium-High       |

*Evaluation categories: High, Medium, Low, No, n/a - no answer (No information available)*

## Policy findings - study site level (1/4)

- ▶ Policies and instruments in place are **largely sufficient** to stop or reverse key LEDD problems => **ineffective implementation** => do not reach **intended impacts**:
  - ▶ Lack of institutional capacity, skills and knowledge
- ▶ **Worse implementation of environmental policies** in comparison to regional development policies:
  - ▶ Lack of funding
  - ▶ Ineffective cooperation and collaboration between stakeholders
  - ▶ Weak local community trust in institutions

## Policy findings - study site level (2/4)

- ▶ **Absence of environmental components** in the sectoral, regional development and horizontal policies (lack of enforcement)
- ▶ **Mandatory policies are better implemented** vs. voluntary standards
- ▶ **Overlapping competencies and roles**, superposition of different levels of governance
- ▶ **Lack of inspections** (e.g. incorrect application of cross compliance)
- ▶ **Differences in knowledge, understanding and perceptions of LEDD problems** among scientists, administrators and stakeholders

## Policy findings - study site level - examples (3/4)

- ▶ Policy interventions promoting socio-economic development of the area often result in:
  - ▶ **Decline in natural capital** (unintentionally)
  - ▶ Consequent **abolishment of farming activities**
  - ▶ **Land abandonment**
- ▶ Use of oil-mill waste water policy in agriculture (IT) to sustainably use waste from olive-oil industry and ensure soil and water protection:
  - ▶ Does not suit lower level needs => limited (intended) policy impact and favouring abandonment of small olive groves





**Table 1:** Evaluation of policies regarding their impacts on LEDD-problems, land abandonment and regional development in the Matera socio-ecological system

| Policy  | Forest policy | Nature protection policy | Soil and drought policies | Tourism policy | Agricultural policy | Horizontal policy |
|---|---------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| LEDD problems                                 |               |                          |                           |                |                     |                   |
| Forest fragmentation and productivity decline | ++            | +                        | +                         | n/a            | +                   | 0                 |
| Biodiversity loss                             | ++            | ++                       | n/a                       | -              | +                   | +                 |
| Soil erosion/ protection, desertification     | ++            | +                        | +                         | -              | --                  | +                 |
| Water Stress                                  | ++            | +                        | +                         | n/a            | n/a                 | n/a               |
| Other issues                                  |               |                          |                           |                |                     |                   |
| Land abandonment                              | n/a           | +                        | n/a                       | n/a            | -                   | +                 |
| Regional development (incl. tourism)          | n/a           | +                        | n/a                       | ++             | +                   | +                 |

*+ Some/Medium positive impact, ++ Strong positive impact, - Some/Medium negative impact, -- Strong negative impact; 0 – no impact, n/a - no answer (No information available)*

## Policy findings - study site level (4/4)

- ▶ **“How do policies modify socio-economic and ecological characteristics of socio-ecological systems and impact their resilience?”**
  - ▶ **Policies act as drivers to LEDD** => opposite effect as the anticipated goal
  - ▶ **Policies initiate unanticipated changes** in socio-economic and environmental conditions
  - ▶ **Imbalance** among natural, economic and social capitals => **negatively affects resilience**



## Policy recommendations - study site level (1/4)

- ▶ First priority: policies or mix of policy instruments must target at **improving all three capitals** (natural, economic and social):
  - ▶ Financial incentives to **support sustainable management practices** (e.g. agri-environment measures, sustainable forest management practices, cross compliance)
  - ▶ Financial incentives to **support multi-functionality** of rural areas (support rural on-farm diversification, e.g. agri-tourism)
  - ▶ Consider **differences between land themes** (e.g. croplands have more chances for diversification)

## Policy recommendations - study site level (2/4)

- ▶ Improve policy implementation (increasing effectiveness):
  - ▶ **Facilitate access to land** (common land and abandoned areas) in particular to young people
  - ▶ **Strengthen environmental policy integration (EPI)** and inter-sectoral integration of environmental components
  - ▶ **Explore synergies btw. different policies**, promote inter-sectoral agreements (e.g. between agriculture and tourism on a local basis)



## Policy recommendations - study site level (3/4)

- ▶ Policies should support a **shift from a reliance** on “external” funding to **“internal” financing system**:
  - ▶ Effectiveness of the external funding (e.g. EAFRD) **depends on their future availability**
  - ▶ Need to **support business start-ups, broader access to credit**
  - ▶ Consider the **differences btw. land themes** (e.g. long-term benefits from sustainable forest management practices => need of alternative sustainable short-term income sources)

## Policy recommendations - study site level (4/4)

- ▶ **Simplify and tailor the application of EU and national standards** to the local context and needs (create a dialogue with farmer organizations!)
- ▶ Support the development of **networks and partnerships, learning, knowledge transfer and application** at multiple spatial scales and between different actors (e.g. via RDP instruments)
- ▶ Promote awareness raising schemes, training courses on **‘optimal’ cropland management, maintenance of ‘traditional’ management knowledge** (e.g. encouraging dialogue between generations)
- ▶ Facilitate an **adaptive co-management approach** (taken into account the results from dynamic learning & sharing of responsibilities)

## Policy findings – EU level (1/2)

- ▶ **Many policies relevant in addressing LEDD issues**, directly and indirectly (e.g. CAP, Tourism, Soil Protection Strategy, WFD, Birds and Habitats Directive, Renewable Energy Directive, EIA)
- ▶ **Ineffective in directly or indirectly addressing LEDD issues:**
  - ▶ Lack of coherent and integrated approach to LEDD within the EU political agenda
  - ▶ Ineffective implementation of EU legislation (e.g. cross compliance, WFD)
- ▶ Soil quality improvement is mainly attributed to implementation of the **agri-environmental schemes (CAP)**



## Policy findings – EU level (2/2)

- ▶ **Economic interests are often undermining environmental or sustainable land use interests (e.g. Regional Policy)**
- ▶ **Mandatory measures are better implemented** than voluntary ones
- ▶ **Failure to integrate and coordinate various measures** addressing LEDD (constant call for integration has not worked, e.g. soil)
- ▶ High number of separate measures and initiatives addressing LEDD **increases administrative burden and creates confusion**



## Policy recommendations – EU level (1/2)

- ▶ Strengthening **consideration of environmental aspects** in projects financed under the structural funds
- ▶ “**Land as a resource**” should be highlighted in existing funds: RDPs, direct CAP payments, Regional and structural funds, LIFE+, Research projects, National funding => No new funding is needed
- ▶ **Strengthening the role of land as a resource** (e.g. broaden the scope in the Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe)
- ▶ Soil and land degradation indicators should be covered by environmental **sustainability indicators and sustainable food labelling**



## Policy recommendations – EU level (2/2)

- ▶ Both, a **binding instrument** targeting the resource and **integration** are necessary (to address barriers and ensure policy coherence)
- ▶ Need to look **beyond sector specific policies** and “**silo**” thinking and reflect synergies and trade-offs
- ▶ **Up-scaling of results** needs to recognize what problems and success factors are **transferable** and **which are context-specific**
- ▶ **Strengthen dialogues btw. EU and local stakeholders** (incl. farmers, NGOs) and exchange knowledge and experiences
- ▶ **Raise awareness** for the problems and solutions

## Policy findings – International level (1/2)

- ▶ International agreements are **generally ineffective at addressing LEDD** issues worldwide - LEDD problems are increasing
- ▶ **Barriers** limiting effective implementation (selected):
  - ▶ **Low prioritisation and difference in perceptions of LEDD issues** at various political levels
  - ▶ **Limited understanding of the costs** of land degradation
  - ▶ **Insufficient scaling-up and dissemination for broader application** of successful actions
  - ▶ **Failure to mainstream NAP actions into national platforms for development and investment schemes**

## Policy findings – International level (2/2)

- ▶ In contrast to EU level, **mandatory measures unlikely to gain consensus** at the international level
- ▶ **Many recent initiatives** aiming to improve the implementation of the UNCCD and to ultimately reduce LEDD - “**progress is being made**”:
  - ▶ The 10 Years Strategy (2007), Nagoya 2010 (CBD), the Changwon initiative (2011), Rio+20 (2012), FAO Guidelines on Land Tenure Security (2012), etc
  - ▶ Synergies between the international policies (e.g. Joint Work Plan between UNCCD and CBD PoW on dry and sub-humid lands)

## Policy recommendations – International level (1/2)

- ▶ **Implement a thorough integration/mainstreaming**
- ▶ **Adopt a “horizontal” thematic Annex** to the UNCCD => a chance to emphasize “soil issues” and to overcome the current geographical limitations => increases **flexibility** of the UNCCD
- ▶ **Develop an international legal instrument** for sustainable use of soils => contribute to the Land Degradation Neutral World goal
- ▶ **Highlight problems of soil degradation and desertification** as an additional issue to broader land and ecosystem topics
- ▶ **Establish a monitoring** for comprehensive, consistent collection of data => consolidate existing data

## Policy recommendations – International level (2/2)

- ▶ **Improve use of existing financing sources, enhance synergies** btw. different policy fields and various levels of actors and stakeholders:
  - ▶ Use synergetic outcomes to alleviate land degradation and reduce climate change impact (package for a win-win situation)
  - ▶ Use economic return of SLM practices for self financing
  - ▶ Consider costs of inaction vs. the benefits of action
- ▶ **New forms of international governance** => a multi-level governance concept and efficient stakeholder participation process
- ▶ Get away from top-down-approaches! A fresh start is needed => **bottom-up and involving land owners**



# Thank you for listening.

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