



**Resource-Efficient Land Use –
Towards A Global Sustainable Land
Use Standard**

BMU-UBA Project No. FKZ
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Notes from the 4th International Expert Workshop

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convened in collaboration with UNEP and the UNCCD Secretariat

prepared by



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The 4th International Expert Workshop of the GLOBALANDS – Project took place in Paris at the 6th and 7th of October 2014 in co-operation with UNCCD Secretariat and UNEP.

The workshop focused on three main issues:

- First, most recent developments regarding sustainable land use on the global level was presented and discussed, especially the OWG proposal for the SDG and the UN General Assembly's reaction to that and recent work of the UNCCD on indicators.
- Second, the potential of *standards/certification* for sustainable land use for the private sector was discussed and recent associated developments presented taking in account the UN Global Compact and CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility), the World Bank Project Safeguard Guidelines/Policies etc..
- Third, the concept of *Systemic Indicators* was discussed further, seeking additional comments and views on the draft working paper. Including discussion on possible fora for implementation – e.g. SDGs, EU land communication etc.

These workshop notes provide an informal summary of inputs given by participants that contributed with presentations and resumes key points discussed by all.

The structure of the workshop followed the previous GLOBALANDS expert workshops, therefore each session had a session chair; presentations were followed by a comment and a plenary discussion.

The points made by the speakers, the commenters and the session chairs will be indicated with names. The results from the plenary discussion are under the Chatham House Rules.

On the first day there were three sessions presenting the recent developments concerning sustainable land use at the global level (SDGs, UNCCD indicator work and sustainable land use and the Private Sector).

On the second day, in the frame of the Systemic indicator presentation, Jacques Desalle presented the EU Land communication. Marcus Giger from WOCAT consortium (World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies) gave insights to their work program and objectives.

A list of all participants is attached at the end of the workshop notes.

Oct 6, 2014

SESSION 1: Sustainable Land Use in Global Processes: The SDGs

Session Chair: Knut Ehlers (UBA)

Status of the SDG Process and the Role of Indicators

Martina Otto (UNEP) – Comments by Alexander Müller (IASS/IINAS)

Martina Otto presented status on SDG proposal:

The Open Working Group (OWG) has finalized their work this summer. 17 goals + 167 targets are proposed, so there is one year left as the SDGs should be agreed upon in September 2015.

The SDGs have to take into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respect national priorities to be globally applicable. Land is included in several goals & targets (directly in goals: 1, 2, and 15; indirect links to goals: 6, 8, 11, 12, 13). The process on an indicator framework (under UNSDSN) started, but there is a real danger to “dilute” land wording in future negotiations. A general claim is to translate the SDG’s in a measurable tool. This could be achieved by reducing the number of targets and by merging some goals together and create something more transformative.

She gives a short insight into the monitoring framework: in September 2014, Independent Expert Advisory Group on the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development (IEAG) established a first report on its work, expected by early November, as an input to the UN Secretary-General's synthesis report on the post-2015 development agenda.

The report is expected to include a chapter to define the “data revolution,” an explanation of the need for the data revolution, relating to not only monitor sustainable development but achieving it, and a framing of the problem to enable the UN to decide on action in the short, medium and long term.¹

The next steps will be:

List the targets from other processes. Are they in line with existing frameworks from other processes/ reality check are the targets doable?

¹ <http://sd.iisd.org/news/expert-group-begins-work-on-data-revolution-for-sustainable-development/>

Framework in negotiations: several targets on implementation

Key issues:

1. financing/funding to get the framework into action (link to climate funds)
2. Importance of capacity building
3. Technology transfer, i.e. UNEP (technology facilitation mechanism in Rio agreed)

Knut Ehlers notes that the targets for land are quite ambiguous and are hardly measurable (different to others), therefore, it is now even more important to come up with precise indicators.

Alexander Müller fully agrees with “work in progress” and commented that many critical things have been lost, now hidden in fluffy language.

Six key points:

1. SDGs announced as a process where universal values should be considered but now it has a strong development component. We need some political lobbying to define what and how developed Countries are going to take this. Can we rely on this?
2. Integration is weak (no nexus, green economy etc.). There are no inter-linkages between various areas, only in a fluffy way open for interpretation, question: Can we make integration stronger again?
3. There are no measurable targets –weak wording) (e.g. 12.2 proposed goal very ambiguous *"by 2030 achieve sustainable management and efficient use of resources"*)
4. Strong language on monitoring (goal 17). Monitoring, Reporting and Verification can be a big issue. Some countries have their own system.
5. These SDGs rely on economic growth. (e.g. 8.1) Many targets rely on big economic growth. Green-growth, green economy. This means an acceleration of the BAU without changes since many are based on the economic growth. Economic growth as “key problem solver” ...can land be model for integration of sustainable natural resource management?
6. Important how can we influence this process - What do we have to do in order:
 - a. to join forces to strengthen land (management/ access/ tenure/)

- b. to make it an integration for natural resources (how can we use the different programs, have a joined goal related to land),
- c. to involve developing countries, more stakeholders.

Is it possible to present a way forward to present land and sustainability to fight hunger and poverty?

Martina Otto further adds, that it will be difficult to shorten list without losing content, a shorter list would have been better (energy one is most specific). Identify which are the critical indicators. The Accountability could be difficult in some cases. The whole discussion that development is something beyond GDP.

Can we show that land is a tool for integration? The Question "how can we provide input (the more convincing the case is the better)" needs to be answered quickly (until November) and needs text suggestions.

In the plenary discussion it has been noted, that the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) at its forty-sixth Session (3 - 6 March 2015) expected to discuss and agree on the process and modalities for the development of the indicator framework². At its subsequent forty-seventh Session, in February/March 2016, the UNSC is expected to discuss and agree in some form on the indicator framework (and the set of indicators) for the measurement and monitoring of the SDGs/post-2015 development goals and targets, and its implementation³. UNCCD has interest in joining forces for the land related issues.

Knut Ehlers wrapped up:

- So far we can't foresee if the land related SDGs and targets have a steering effect (it might be that they will not change anything, rather "extended business as usual"). To achieve an impact it will need good indicators.
- Once more: Consolidation (negotiations are not over), will be impossible to bring anything new in beyond OWG proposal, but even what's in proposal is in danger to become less meaningful.

² It is suggested that based on the discussion and inputs provided during the initial consultations on the indicator framework during September – November 2014, an expert group meeting will be held to discuss the various aspects of the development and design of the indicator framework. A report of this meeting could be provided as a background document to the forty-sixth session of the UNSC in March 2015.

³ Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities: Work on the indicator framework for the post-2015 development agenda. Note by United Nations Statistics Division; Rome, 11-12 September 2014
<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/broaderprogress/pdf/SA-2014-9-Post2015.pdf>

- We have to ask: how do we make sure the steering effect? How ensure that we have common approach?

SESSION 2: Sustainable Land Use in Global Processes: UNCCD

Session Chair: Alexander Müller (IASS/IINAS)

Indicators in the UNCCD – A view from the Secretariat

Victor Castillo (UNCCD Secretariat); Comments by Luca Montanarella (JRC Ispra) and Knut Ehlers (UBA)

Victor Castillo presented the land indicator issues from the UNCCD's Secretariat point of view: Experience is there, but "global mandate" is missing; role for Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) in this and what is the baseline? (ITPS report, IPBES assessment) *see presentation*

Luca Montanarella commented that the convention is not a global convention (only dry areas). The LDN aim might be door opener to make it global, Intercessional Working group who struggles: one group of countries wants to limit definition to certain regions others wants it global. EC is co-chairing this COM, there is currently even no single/common document, needs more informal discussions with these countries to hear their argumentation.

Concerning indicators, the issue of a baseline has been there since COP1. A baseline to know, where we are (proposal to have a global map – hopefully next year) is still missing. There is finally a noticeable change of focus towards restoration. Too much time was spend on indicators; the focus should be on 'doing' – generate positive messages. Actions are needed that goes to economic growth, creating jobs (EU priority) –these are the indicators that re looked at – This could be a big chance.

Knut Ehlers commented that defining indicators for land and soil is difficult because of its multifunctional character (prioritizing one function can conflict with another) - there are conflicting targets, almost impossible for compromise.

The SDG debate could be a good chance, indicators should be globally negotiated, but there is no need to agree on methodology (e.g. soil organic matter (SOM)). He suggests thinking of different methodologies: To move away from just measuring the results – towards action orientated indicators.

One commenter proposed to combine land degradation with the climate discussion.

Another commented that there is a global agreement that there is a problem with soil/land, but on the other side we are facing a growing demand on land. Concluding with stressing the need to rehabilitate land and to restore it. We must have a look at political economy of land and ask: What are meaningful activities?

Alexander Müllers conclusion of the Session:

- We have a common understanding of the difficulty of agreeing global indicators.
- We are still convinced that we need a global strong attention to land globally.
- There is a danger in concentrating too much on details, as this would lead to less (It is better to have a strong political document and a strong political call than none due to the lack of scientific agreement).
- All are coming up with results in 2015 the International year of soils – good situation, keeps land and soil on the international agenda, might prevent land and SLM to be kicked out.
- We can argue that for achieving eradication of poverty we need SLM and if we can provide evidence for that (a pity no one from FAO here – often there is lack of collaboration).
- Not to forget about the new climate agreement in 2015.

Plenary Discussion: The Status of Land Use in Global Processes

In the plenary discussion there were two points agreed on: First if "one" indicator is needed it should include the GDP somehow, e.g. productivity? But: Beware of tradeoffs.

Second globally negotiated indicators & reference datasets (e.g. like IPCC tier approach) need to be agreed, but the process for that is unclear.

SESSION 3: SUSTAINABLE LAND USE AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Session Chair: Franziska Wolff (Oeko-Institut)

Franziska Wolff made an input on sustainable land use and the private sector, with additions on relevant activities from the group. As it looks now, there is no “rush” of the private sector, but more evidence should be collected (UNCTAD etc.). She raised the question if considering the lack of governance in some countries and the large-scale investments, private initiatives and schemes are “enough”?

Examples of sustainability commitments by some companies: Coca-Cola, Kellogs. Regarding the CFS there is movement from accountability to effectiveness. CA and US are against monitoring, because they say it is based on a voluntary approach.

Points addressing the VGGT

- Civil society against the industry implementing it since they were targeted for the industry.
- Example of Addax in Sierra Leone: our obligation that e.g. German government monitor the implementation of the VGGT by German companies. Only when you put public money or extraterritorial funding. Private sector was not interested in the VGGT (“only the companies that sell fertilizers for small-scale farmers since they see a new business with these farmers as long as they secure their land tenure”).
- Why not start with countries that have the resources (i.e. Germany) to monitor this? Turn it around and put the burden on the companies, not on the small poor countries.
- Internal check between investors and reviewers need a prudent review. Private companies play their own rules; it is not the government, which takes part.
- Translate “high level language” into “technical operational guidelines”.

The emerging “fair land”-“land grab-free” labels could be not appropriate.

- Finland has provided systems (open source) for cadasters – so that they have the basic software to be adapted to the needs of countries) – FAO prepares one on pastoralism, gender already published, one on commons by Charlotte Beckh (IASS).

October 7, 2014

SESSION 4: DEVELOPING SYSTEMIC INDICATORS FOR SUSTAINABLE LAND USE
Session Chair: Stephanie Wunder (Ecologic Institute)

State of Indicator Development for Land Use Efficiency in the EU

Jacques Delsalle (EC DG ENV)

Jacques Delsalle presented that the new commission will be working from first of November - therefore priorities need to be discussed. DG ENV + EEA + JRC will elaborate a document with the land communication, including sustainability issues and indicators. The land communication is based on three issues:

1. Raising awareness
2. Defining the policies – mainstreaming into the EU policies
3. Increasing the knowledge base

Towards a definition for land use efficiency: maximizing the net socio-economic benefits from land use, without degrading natural capital and taking into account the suitability of land for different functions. It is very difficult to have only one indicator since there are many issues to be considered. Regarding the multiple functions of land use the high number of synergies and trade-offs make it difficult to implement indicators (there are many indicators). The process of identifying indicators for the final consultation ends before Christmas.

Discussion and comments by all:

The EU land communication shows current developments, how natural land is degrading in EU, showing that if we go in different directions (i.e. development of bioenergy, infrastructure) we are facing risks. Therefore, the communication is more “descriptive” and the issues raised have to be discussed at a regional level (e.g. municipal level). The Natura2000 is spatial planning. The idea to “mainstream in the EU policy” is to give some details for some aspects such as the IAE (Impact Assessment Evaluation) or land degradation into concrete policies.

- Land use claims with models. There are possibilities to analyze the impacts (synergies and trade-offs).
- On commenter was not convinced that there will be one target, even a target on land take (can have different results depending on urban agriculture,

degree of sealing, green infrastructure) –they rather want to halt degradation of natural capital

- One suggestion was to show the impact of development on land functions (show in spider graph (*see presentation*) when we go beyond “Tipping points/ threshold” -> xyz growth pattern is degrading natural capital in abc function), need to show synergies/ tradeoffs to shape policies.
- give more flexibility to MS/ regions to define their spatial planning
- look more at the impacts/ benefits/ synergies, look at stock of natural capital (difficult to have it in a specific indicator, show contribution to different dimensions of Land function)
- Proposal would be good to assess EU policies (e.g. CAP)
- It is difficult to integrate global level in the e.g. spider charts, NUTS 2 (Länder in Germany), but important to show that we rely on outside resources, we need to contribute and halt degradation inside EU, want to be in the position to calculate loss of natural capital/ increase land footprint outside Europe

Systemic Indicators: Updated Approach and Implementation Perspectives

Uwe R. Fritsche (IINAS)

We have to consider environmental (and economic) impacts, and some issues are hidden like traditional knowledge (that’s not to measure), but should be included in the discussion. We should consider that many actors have to be involved (not just one actor group) which are not homogenous and different scales

The systemic indicators are an additional approach for policy development to go beyond state indicators. It focuses on actors that apply practices in specific regions. But we still need state indicators to have an overall monitoring and the SI can just be a supplement.

The goal is to provide incentives to change practices. The question is how can we qualify practices as sustainable?

There is a stock of practices: but if those are beneficial is not on us to judge. It is important to narrow down the choice depending on regions and again look at actors. For example, not all actors can be found in all regions and some management options are not suitable for corporate actors.

Under the concept of SI we suggest measuring incidence of SLM practices and use it as a proxy rather than measuring capacities/ values of the lands.

Statements in the plenary discussion:

- Problem of the catalog of WOCAT of SLM: GMOs and conservation agricultural are very controversial.
- You need to make a discussion on regional or national level to qualify which are the SLM practices.
- The CAP has been done without a participatory process. Therefore, the safeguarding debate is important.
- Participatory process? Who is in, who is out? SI is an interesting approach depending on who participates on its development.
- Collecting data about compaction, for example, is very costly. Then you have to be sure that the outcomes are worth for the inputs you need.
- It is difficult to go with surveys from farmer to farmer so the parameters under the CAP have been focused on remote-sensing measures because this is a real cost-effective approach.
- We are not coming up with indicators that need to be checked on, but with SI concept. A process is described how we get there, example: go down and ask them (compare with poverty alleviation: process started give them chance of self-determination).

Knowledge Management and Decision Support for scaling-up SLM best practices

by Marcus Giger (WOCAT/CDE), comments by Sebastien Treyer (IDDRI)

Marcus Giger gave a short overview on the structure and work of WOCAT.

WOCAT has accumulated a lot of knowledge for 20 years, including inputs from many stakeholders. The WOCAT International Consortium Partners are: CDE, FAO, ISRIC, ICIMOD, ICARDA, CIAT, University Kwa Zulu Natal, GIZ, SDC. In the WOCAT regional and national Network 2014 are over 60 institutions worldwide.

WOCAT is the primary recommended database for UNCCD reporting on SLM Best Practices. There are more than 500 SLM Practices identified from over 50 countries. Moreover, degradation and SLM maps from 20 countries have been established.

There is an outstanding GEF funded project to define SLM practices for 14 countries.

Key objectives of WOCAT:

- Raising awareness about the role of SLM at local, national and global level - giving SLM the recognition and value it deserves.
- Investment in harmonized & standardized Knowledge Management / Sharing and Decision Support pays: avoiding costly mistakes, re-inventing the wheel & duplication of efforts
- Institutionalization of knowledge-based decision making: this means ongoing documentation of land management practices all become users and provider
- Selection and standardization of indicators is key for knowledge management (WOCAT has made an effort)
- Making joint efforts, locally, nationally and globally: contribution to a joint open access knowledge sharing platform
- Proving the impacts and benefits of SLM
- Investment into capacity building and involving the next generation

Conclusions:

- There are many promising technologies and approaches.
- WOCAT could be used to identify the practices for world regions in combinations with actors.

**Plenary Discussion on Implementing Systemic Indicators
moderated by Rolf Bräuer (BMUB)**

WOCAT provides a pre-selection of practices (repository of LU practices). This would be an input for further qualification of the practices. Therefore, we need to have a filter at some level to select WOCAT practices. Then, you need objective indicators to define the practices (problematic). The WOCAT SLM list is a catalog of “good practices”. When it is considered as an official catalog, problems could arise.

Another remark was the problem of complexity at the landscape level. As well as in the socioeconomic context of the evolution of the practices: How can be socio-economic aspects assessed? Possibilities: Jobs, income productive per worker.

Moreover, quantitative data could be included, but in many cases these data are "empty". General assumption of the implications could be made (e.g. on productivity) but that would be very rough estimates.

The CCD secretariat is not in the position to judge which of the practices are sustainable or not. Nor is WOCAT, who is just collecting the information from the countries. WOCAT is the primary database recommended.

Under the 11 UNCCD indicators, there is one called: “Land under SLM”. Tricky how to define “sustainability”.

Using the SI approach, we can move from impact indicator to **performance indicator**. We need evidence to demonstrate the positive impacts and transit.

Index, algorithm, etc. are very important A proposal was to use a multi-dimensional index, as for poverty.

The plenary discussion was concluded that we have to move from a very strict approach to a more flexible framework in the countries.

Way Forward and Closing Remarks, Uwe R. Fritsche (IINAS)

Following tasks for the finalizing of the SI approach:

- The development of participatory approaches within the SI concept needs to be more concrete.
- The practices identified by WOCAT have to be substantiated
- Give attention to cost-implications, applicability, etc.
- Important future technologies could be data from cell phones

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Finally, we are indebted to BMU and UBA for the support to the project. Unfortunately, Almut Jering (UBA, project lead) could not participate at the workshop in Paris, but gave valuable support in the preparations.

The workshop notes solely represent the view of the project team, and the responsibility for any error or omission remains with the GLOBALANDS team.

List of Participants

Last Name	First Name	Affiliation
Giger	Marcus	CDE/WOCAT
Launois	Lionel	French Ministry for Agriculture
Delsalle	Jacques	EC DG ENV
Montanarella	Luca	EC JRC IES
Müller	Alexander	IASS/IINAS
Otto	Martina	UNEP DTIE
Castillo	Victor	UNCCD
Silva	Laura	INRA-IFRIS
Sonntag	Ute	GIZ
Treyer	Sébastien	IDDR

Project Team		
Bräuer	Rolf	BMUB
Ehlers	Knut	UBA
Eppler	Ulrike	IINAS
Fritsche	Uwe	IINAS
Iriarte	Leire	IINAS
Lutzenberger	Alexa	Alrene
Seven	Jan	UBA
Wolff	Franziska	Oeko-Institut
Wunder	Stephanie	Ecologic Institute