



CELEBRATING TWENTY YEARS
GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY
INVESTING IN OUR PLANET



Desert Margins Programme

Fast Facts

Achieved: Combated land degradation in Africa's desert margins and looked for ways to stem loss of food production, reduce growth in poverty rates and halt declining biodiversity.

Where: Burkina Faso, Botswana, Mali, Namibia, Niger, Senegal, Kenya, South Africa and Zimbabwe

Cost: GEF funds: \$10,944,178; Co-financing: \$10,232,000

When: July 2002 to December 2006

Partners: International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics, national research institutes including the Agricultural Research Department in Botswana, Department of Agricultural Research and Extension in Zimbabwe, Institut Economie Rurale in Mali, Institut National de Recherches Agronomiques du Niger, Institut d'Etudes et de Recherches Agricoles in Burkina Faso, Institut Senegalais de Recherches Agricoles, Bureau Pedologie in Senegal, Kenya Agricultural Research Institute, Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry in Namibia, National Department of Agriculture in South Africa



Achievements

The Desert Margins Program worked with partners on activities aimed at arresting land degradation in nine countries. Initially conceived as a three-part project, two phases were completed. The first chronicled land decline in the project sites. It identified a degradation indicator, measured the loss of biodiversity and linked these factors to climate change. Phase II implemented land management, biodiversity conservation and new technology at the sites.

Legacy

Lasting effects of the project include the development and implementation of:

- Eco-restore technology, a rangeland management and biodiversity enhancement system used in Namibia and South Africa.
- *Mise en defens*, a community-based ecosystem management program in Senegal.
- Biodiversity gardens in Mali, Burkina Faso and Senegal.
- A Sahelian Eco-Farm (SEF) in West Africa.
- Fertilizer micro-dosing in West Africa.
- Africa Market Gardens in West Africa.
- Reclamation programs for degraded lands in West Africa.
- Improvement in the livelihoods of people living in the regions that participated in the study.

Desert Margins Programme

Outputs and Deliverables:

The project succeeded in:

- Establishing a sound biophysical baseline of desert margins in the project areas.
- Analyzing the root causes of dry-land degradation.
- Creating a strong coalition of partners to tackle the problems of the desert margins.
- Documenting natural resource management policies in Kenya.
- Making creative use of desert margin resources including organic Rooibos tea production in South Africa, the *Pomme du Sahel* in West Africa, and micro-dosing in Niger.
- Involving target populations in decision making.
- Generating policy guidelines for sustainable use with lists of economically and ecologically endangered species.
- Summarizing best-bet technologies in a book.
- Better managing biodiversity in about 50,000 hectares of land in South Africa.
- Restoring about 3,000 hectares of degraded lands in Zimbabwe and Kenya.
- Facilitating community management of 150,000 hectares of rangeland in Namibia, Botswana and South Africa.
- Extending benefits from the Africa Market Gardens to 10,000 families.

Partners:

Regional networks: The Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa, Conseil Ouest et Centre Africain pour la Recherche et le Developement Agricole, West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development, Southern African Development Community - Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources. **Non-governmental organizations:** Se Servir de la Saison Sèche en Savane et au Sahe, Desert Research Foundation of Namibia, Environment Liaison Center International in Kenya, Environmental Monitoring Group in South Africa, Environment and Development Activities in Zimbabwe, Platform Rurale des Paysans des Etats Membres du CILSS in Senegal, Thusano Lefatsheng in Botswana. **International agricultural research centers:** World Agroforestry Centre, International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics, International Food Policy Research Institute, International Livestock Research Institute, Tropical Soil Biology and Fertility Institute, the Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical. **Advanced Research Institutes and Universities:** Center for Ecology and Hydrology in the United Kingdom, Centre de Cooperation Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Development in France, Institut De Recherche pour le Developpement in France, North-West University in Potchefstroom, South Africa. **Donors and international organizations:** The European Union, Danish International Development Agency, Global Environment Facility, the Government of France, International Development Research Centre in Canada, International Fund for Agricultural Development, International Center for Soil Fertility and Agricultural Development, Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit, The Government of Japan, The Government of Norway, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations – Kenya, United Nations Office Nairobi, United States Agency for International Development.

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Photo Credit: Deserts in Namibia. A. Gloor/UNEP; Gerhard Bluhm/UNEP

