Partnerships
FOR SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
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A Joint Publication of the Facilitation Committee of the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD
This paper was prepared by an inter-agency team drawn from the Facilitation Committee of the Global Mechanism of the U.N. Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) under the leadership of Enos E. Esikuri. The team included: Enos E. Esikuri, Mathew Corbett (consultant) and John B. Collier of the World Bank, Washington, DC; Simone Quatrini, Global Mechanism, Rome, Italy; Khalida Bouzar, International Fund for Agricultural Development, Rome; Anna Tengberg, United Nations Environment Programme, Nairobi, Kenya; Richard J. Thomas, Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, Aleppo, Syria; Gregoire De Kalbermatten, UNCCD Secretariat, Bonn, Germany; and Robert Everitt and Daniele Ponzi, Asian Development Bank, Manila, Philippines.

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Seventy-five percent of the global poor are rural and mainly agrarian. Agriculture is the driver of economic growth in many developing countries, where it often represents at least 25 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). Most countries whose economies depend on agriculture are also the most severely affected by land degradation and other critical global environmental concerns. Many of these countries are in Africa. At its July 2005 summit at Gleneagles, the G-8 noted that in order to promote growth, investment is needed in sustainable agriculture in many of the developing countries, especially in Africa. Much of the shift towards sustainable agriculture can be achieved largely through promotion of Sustainable Land Management technologies and practices. Sustainable Land Management (SLM) can be defined as a knowledge-based procedure that helps integrate land, water, biodiversity, and environmental management (including input and output externalities), to meet rising food and fiber demands while sustaining ecosystem services and livelihoods (World Bank, 2005).

In less than 25 years, income and population growth may double global food demand. Agricultural growth is the cornerstone of long-term food security. Since 38 percent of the world’s land is already devoted to agriculture (crops and permanent pasture) (FAO, 2002), the influence of agricultural land management practices on ecosystem health is substantial. Agricultural growth and the practices used to achieve it will largely determine natural resource management (NRM) regimes in both agricultural and non-agricultural landscapes. Historically, conversion of land to agricultural use has usually led to degraded biodiversity and eventually loss of soil fertility. But the search for food security does not have to involve unsustainable land management practices. Improvements in agriculture productivity can be achieved with SLM practices. Given the multi-dimensionality of land use and land degradation issues, SLM offers a platform for integrating various agendas and stakeholders in a way that provides multiple benefits in both the short- and long-term. And because many natural resources, such as river basins, are shared, it makes sense to forge partnerships at different levels — community, watershed, national, sub-regional, global — that help address shared resource issues. The international community is increasingly aware that isolated and uncoordinated activities and actors will not adequately address environmental and conservation issues into the future. For example, as increased awareness of climate change and desertification has shown, the earth’s critical environments must be protected by all, not just a few specialists.
Recognizing joint responsibility for natural resources allows all concerned to make rational choices on the farm, in the village, in the river basin, or on the continent.

While recognizing that partnerships can be challenging and costly, this paper makes the case that there are indeed justifiable cases where multi-stakeholder partnerships are not only needed but are essential to ensuring collective stewardship of land resources. This paper lays out the key principles for effective SLM partnerships, and presents a number of promising SLM partnerships established around the world at the local, national, regional/international and global levels, dealing with private and public land. These examples help provide an understanding of the entry points, strengths and weaknesses of SLM partnerships. Finally, the paper highlights the attributes of a partnership required to achieve success.

The objective of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought in countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa. The UNCCD recognizes the importance of international cooperation and partnerships in achieving this objective. Specifically, Articles 2 and 3 of the Convention note that for land degradation mitigation actions to be effective at all levels, they must be supported by appropriate international cooperation and partnership arrangements.

A partnership provides an opportunistic mechanism for stakeholders to come together to achieve a shared goal by using their comparative advantages. It enables organizations to achieve results that are greater than the sum of their individual efforts. It seeks to optimize the effectiveness of investments by establishing and coordinating a common program and assigning specific objectives to different partners. Thus a partnership can overcome the ad hoc nature of unrelated projects in separate administrative areas. At its best, it can actually direct activities at the causes of a land management problem, rather than merely at the symptoms.

In the context of SLM, partnerships can create an effective entry point to mainstreaming land management issues into country development frameworks by creating a critical mass that can engage policy dialogue with a wide range of interested partners at various levels.

(a) Goals and Structure

SLM partnerships can take a number of forms and can involve a broad mix of stakeholders. They usually have a unifying focus, either the management of a specific resource or the achievement of theme-based objectives, or a combination of both. A resource-based partnership may have the goal of improving river water quality, whereas a theme-based goal may be poverty reduction through the adoption of a range of SLM practices.
SLM partnerships usually have objectives at different levels, from local through to national, international/regional, and global. They usually run for an extended period, which is necessary to improve degraded soil, water, and vegetation resources, and to effect sustainable change. They are usually tied to a geographic area, commonly a natural system (e.g. river basin, forest area), but may be based on an administrative area (e.g. province, country), a theme or an activity. Global partnerships tend to be based on a theme (e.g., desertification, biodiversity) or an activity (e.g. information sharing, policy sharing, resource mobilization) rather than a geographic area.

Partners can include any combination of international agencies, governments (national, state, and local), departments, research and learning institutions, business/industry, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), communities, and/or individual resource users. These partners may be integrated vertically and/or horizontally. The partnership structure commonly includes a dedicated management/administrative body responsible for the overall management, program coordination, and activity facilitation. This body is usually governed by a committee comprised of representatives of the key partners.

Partners usually make financial contributions to cover the core functions of management, technical expertise, implementation, research, labor, and funding. The costs of running partnerships must be proportional to the overall program to ensure the funds are primarily being directed towards tangible on-the-ground activities rather than administration and process meetings.

(b) Strengths and Benefits

Above all else, SLM partnerships provide the enabling conditions for desired land-management activities. Providing these conditions are usually beyond the financial means, technical capability, and/or geographic influence of a single entity. These enabling conditions need to be underpinned by an effective coordination mechanism that a partnership arrangement can provide.

A partnership can raise the profile of an issue, so that it gets on a government’s agenda. It can make an issue widely known and supported at international, political, departmental, community, and land-user levels. This public recognition is particularly important for rural issues where the cause of the problem is often remote or dispersed, and the issue is not well understood by the urban population,
which retains much of the political power. Everywhere, urban dwellers become disconnected from their sources of food, fiber, and wood and the environmental impacts that can result from their production. This disconnection is increasing as the world’s urban population increases. In 2005, the world’s population residing in urban areas is projected to reach 50 percent, rising from only 14 percent in 1900 (United Nations Secretariat, 2005).

A partnership motivates its members to meet their agreed obligations through regular coordination. Without the partnership, individual efforts can often lose momentum and direction. Partnerships provide the long-term continuity necessary to achieve results. Because they are less susceptible to changes of government and subsequent funding priorities, they can endure well beyond a single political term.

Partnerships can effectively address economic, social, and environmental dimensions of land management issues by exploring mutually beneficial linkages and actions between stakeholders and concerned sectors. In these cases, SLM is less focused on “land” and more on development.

Partnerships open channels for regular strategic dialogue and exert leverage at a country or even regional level. They can break down traditional rivalries to bring combined effort and expertise to bear on a set of issues. Stakeholders become focused on shared results, rather than on their differences. International partnerships can improve relations and help avoid resource-use conflicts.

A partnership can develop a unified management framework and action program, avoiding piecemeal, possibly duplicative, actions. Alignment of partnership objectives can help in policy alignment among participating governments.

Partnerships allow a plan to be implemented across an entire landscape, regardless of its division into political units. Partnerships can be more cost effective than uncoordinated actions because they can target key components of a system and monitor across the entire system (more value per dollar spent), leverage resources, and make more efficient use of funds by avoiding duplication and treating the cause, not the symptoms. Specialist agencies can contribute their expertise and financial resources in a coordinated manner on significant issues that are either beyond the scope or means of one agency or more efficiently solved through the cooperation of multiple participants.

Partnerships facilitate, coordinate, and streamline funding, and can generate new funding sources by creating a “brand” (e.g., sponsorship by those wanting to associate with the initiative). Well-executed partnerships reduce the lead time for activities (i.e. from activity identification to effectiveness), especially for repeat projects/activities. In addition, partnerships have the potential to enhance and broaden the funding base for SLM initiatives by opening channels with non-traditional players in the public and private sectors.

Partnerships can strengthen monitoring and evaluation processes by coordinating and standardizing data collection, and by facilitating the sharing of expertise, program experience and results, research, and resource data.
Inappropriate Situations and Weaknesses

Not all SLM situations are amenable to partnerships. A partnership is inappropriate where the potential gains to participants are outweighed by the “costs” of establishing and maintaining the partnership. For this reason, a short-term partnership is unlikely to be worthwhile, let alone suitable to overcoming significant land management issues.

A partnership is not applicable where there is insufficient shared interest and no common goal. A partnership cannot and should not be all encompassing, targeting a broad diversity of unrelated individual interests.

To succeed, a partnership should be composed of voluntary members and fully self-supporting, with contributions that all partners consider equitable. A partnership cannot successfully be held together by a single highly motivated partner. A partnership is not and should not be used as an opportunity to offload individual obligations to address specific SLM issues. The structure of a partnership should be such that it discourages free-ridership by any individual member.

Some of the most prominent SLM partnerships are transboundary river basin initiatives, where upper watershed land use practices have caused stress on vital downstream water resources. Partnership initiatives are also highly suited to the effective management of regional and global environmental issues such as transboundary nomadic grazing, drought management, slash-and-burn agriculture, bushfires (and their effects on biodiversity and release of carbon) and dust storms, as well as other large scale land management issues that require substantial and prolonged investment.

Another prime opportunity for SLM partnerships is in mitigating drought and flood disasters. Many countries are vulnerable to frequent droughts, and devastating floods, that often have severe socio-economic impacts at local, national and regional levels. Droughts and floods can present a significant challenge to both rain-fed and irrigated agriculture, including livestock and inland fisheries. They can pose a significant barrier to investments in agriculture, livestock, fisheries, hydropower and other key sectors.

In sub-Saharan Africa, consequences of drought are often transboundary as people and livestock displaced by drought in one region move to seek relief in other jurisdictions. Therefore, partnership arrangements that coordinate investments in appropriate drought mitigation measures are needed to reduce impacts, improve productivity, and enhance economic performance (Esikuri 2005).

With global climate change projected to lead to more frequent and extreme droughts, mechanisms to help countries reduce their vulnerability to drought will be needed on a regional scale.

This section presents five success stories in which cooperation and combined manage-
ment achieved far greater results than could be achieved through actions by individual agencies. The following examples highlight certain conditions that make these SLM partnerships effective. They include cases in which:

- Countries in Central Asia coordinated to steer donor funding to priority areas for dryland management.
- Several states and the U.S. Government united to deal with pollution in the country’s largest estuary.
- Nine countries bordering or traversed by the Nile River formed a partnership for the economic development of the river basin.
- A partnership between China, GEF Implementing and Executing Agencies, other donors secured long-term funding and is distributing resources for dryland management over the life of a 10-year program.
- Development of the Landcare Programs in Australia created a “brand” that raised local awareness and built ownership around a number of coordinated local land management programs.

EXAMPLE 1. Multi-Country Coordinated Action to Address Desertification and Land Degradation in Central Asia

Land degradation is a serious economic, social, and environmental problem in the transition economies of the Central Asian Countries (CACs) of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The Central Asian Initiative for Land Management (CACILM), is a multi-country and donor partnership to support the development and implementation of national programmatic frameworks for comprehensive and integrated approaches to sustainable land management in the region (see Box 1).

Land degradation is common in all countries and the causes—while multiple, complex and variable—have some similarities. The CACILM provides a multi-country transfer mechanism to facilitate exchange of SLM knowledge, technology, experience and expertise.

Box 1
Central Asian Initiative for Land Management — A Multi-Country Coordinated Action to Implement the UNCCD

Since its inception in October 2001, the Strategic Partnership Agreement for Implementation of the UNCCD in the Central Asian Countries (SPA) has evolved into a fully functional, multi-agency partnership. A critical mass of partners has been brought together by the Global Mechanism (GM), with current membership including: GM, Asian Development Bank (ADB), Canadian International Development Agency, UNCCD Project of GTZ, SDC, IFAD, ICARDA and UNDP.

The CACILM partnership will be implemented over a ten year period (2005 – 2014) to support the development and implementation of national programming frameworks (NPF) for more comprehensive and integrated approaches to sustainable land management directed towards the overall goal of combating land degradation and improving rural livelihoods. CACILM is being implemented by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) under the direction of the CACILM Task Force, which is comprised of the SPA members and UNCCD Focal Points from the five Central Asian Countries. The CACILM design phase is being co-financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), $700,000, the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD, $50,000, and ADB, $500,000.

The design phase of CACILM is expected to produce four outputs: (i) NPFs for each country, including a prioritized program of projects and technical assistance, and related concept papers; (ii) the CACILM Multi-country Partnership Framework and supporting GEF documentation prepared in accordance with GEF guidelines on the programmatic approach; (iii) established mechanisms for consultation and coordination within and amongst countries that enhance the participation of stakeholders; provide efficient and effective mechanisms for the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of CACILM; and enhance harmonization of funding agencies; and (iv) increased awareness and commitments by national and funding agencies stakeholders.

CACILM aims to leverage $700 million over 10 years from the respective countries, GEF, and multilateral and bilateral sources. Current earmarked financing includes $450 million from ADB over 10 years and $20 million from GEF’s third replenishment.
**Box 2  The Chesapeake Bay Program**

The Chesapeake Bay, the largest estuary in the United States, encompasses parts of five states (Delaware, Maryland, New York, Virginia, West Virginia) and the entire District of Columbia. The bay ecosystem covers 64,000 square miles, encompassing 150 major rivers and streams and is home to 15.1 million people (Cestti et al, 2003).

For more than 300 years, the bay and its tributaries sustained the region’s economy. But as human and livestock numbers grew and use of agrochemicals became widespread, the bay experienced excessive nutrient loading, which led to a drastic decline in water quality and subsequently in the bay’s famous fishery. Studies revealed that the leading threats to the health of the bay were excess nitrogen and phosphorus, primarily from agriculture; sewage treatment plants; urban runoff; and air pollution from vehicles, factories, and power plants.

In 1983, the Chesapeake Bay Agreement was signed in order to restore the bay’s ecosystem quality and productivity. In 1987, the key stakeholders agreed to reduce the total nitrogen and phosphorus reaching the bay by 40 percent (based on 1985 levels) by the year 2000. A tributary strategy agreement was adopted in 1992 and specific limits for nitrogen and phosphorus were set for each of the bay’s 10 major tributaries. States then developed strategies to achieve the assigned nutrient limits.

Federal and state support is provided to farmers to develop and implement total resource management plans that use best management practices (BMPs) to prevent nutrients, sediments, and pesticides from reaching the bay. The emphasis is on stakeholder participation and incentives for voluntary adoption of BMPs, under appropriate regulatory frameworks.

Key lessons from the Program are:

- SLM partnerships require long-term commitment and action at all levels.
- A participatory approach works best when stakeholders, especially farmers, are empowered with adequate technical and financial support.
- Appropriate legislative and regulatory frameworks are critical to the success of large, transboundary SLM programs.
- Clear economic benefits from BMPs are vital for sustaining farmer interest.
- Determination of baselines, goals, benchmarks, indicators and a rigorous independent monitoring and evaluation system is crucial for measuring and communicating program progress.
- Incentive systems, such as cost-sharing, tax credits and transfer payments, are critical in encouraging voluntary adoption of BMPs.
- Partnership programs should be targeted, promote inexpensive changes in existing land use practices, and have tangible (visible) environmental benefits.
EXAMPLE 3. River Basin Economic Development

Alternatively, a partnership may be established to foster sustainable economic development of a shared resource. This is the case in the Nile Basin where nine countries work within a mechanism to develop and share Nile waters for domestic supply, power, industry, and agriculture.

Box 3
Nile Basin Initiative: Basin-Wide International Cooperation

The Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) is a regional partnership of nine countries established in 1998 to fight poverty through the long-term development and management of Nile waters. The partnership was initiated by the Council of Ministers of Water Affairs of the Nile Basin (Nile-COM), incorporating all countries that share the basin (Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda). Half of these countries are among the 10 poorest nations in the world. About 160 million people live in the 3.4 million square kilometer basin, with a 70 percent rural population.

Partners developed an agreed basin-wide framework “to achieve sustainable socio-economic development through the equitable utilization of, and benefit from, the common Nile-based water resources.” The NBI has launched interrelated strategic actions: the Shared Vision Program (SVP) and the two Subsidiary Action Programs (SAPs) — Eastern Nile and Nile Equatorial Lakes.

The SVP includes seven basin-wide technical assistance projects that form a coordinated regional program. Four projects are theme-based, addressing issues related to environmental management, power trade, efficient water use for agriculture, and water resources planning and management. The other three are facilitative, strengthening confidence-building and stakeholder involvement, applied training for water resources management, and socio-economic development, benefit-sharing, and coordination.

The two SAPs are being developed to seek mutual benefits and concrete investments: the Eastern Nile currently includes Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia; while the Nile Equatorial Lakes Region includes Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda (the downstream riparians), as well as Sudan and Egypt. These subsidiary groups are considering joint investment opportunities built on the partnership enabled by the NBI. The NBI is administered by three member-funded administrative bodies: Nile-COM, the Nile Technical Advisory Committee, and the Secretariat.

The NBI programs are supported by donor partners including Canada, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the European Union, the African Development Bank, the Global Environment Facility, UNDP, and the World Bank.

The NBI member countries pay annual dues to cover the core costs of the administrative bodies. Riparian countries also provide counterpart funds for all projects, contribute additional funds to the NBI Secretariat, and sponsor SVP project management units. Coordinated by the World Bank at the request of the NBI, donors contribute funds to support programs and projects through the Nile Basin Trust Fund, where funds are mingled and allocated according to NBI objectives. Alternatively, donors can provide support to individual projects or to the NBI Secretariat.
EXAMPLE 4. Coordinated Large-Scale and Long-Term Investment

The creation of a partnership between government, various funding agencies, implementing and executing agencies, and/or resource users provides an effective mechanism for securing adequate funds and distributing these efficiently to implement activities over a long period of time. Without a coordinating body, it would be difficult to orchestrate a large program with multiple financiers over an extended period (i.e., over 10 years) of time.

Box 4

PRC/GEF Partnership on Land Degradation in Dryland Ecosystems in China

The Partnership on Land Degradation in Dryland Ecosystems was initiated by the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), with the PRC requesting the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to take a lead role in facilitating the preparation of the partnership.

The partnership, begun in 2002, targets the six provinces and autonomous regions with the worst dryland degradation in the western region of China (Gansu, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, Qinghai, Sha'anxi and Xinjiang). More than 350 million people reside in this region that encompasses 6.8 million square kilometers (71 percent of the PRC). The region contains 97 percent of wind-eroded and desertified land in China, and 54 percent of water-eroded areas (ADB, 2002).

The 10-year partnership has the overall goal of reducing land degradation, alleviating poverty, and restoring dryland ecosystems in the western region. It is governed by a Country Programming Framework (CPF) in effect from 2003 to 2012 and consists of sequenced priority activities that will strengthen the enabling environment and build institutional capacity for integrated approaches to combat land degradation, and demonstrate viable integrated ecosystem management models for widespread replication.

The total program cost is projected to be US$1.5 billion, to be financed by the GEF (US $150 million in grant assistance for eligible incremental costs), ADB (US $250 million), PRC (US $700 million) and other sources. The ADB takes the lead with regard to GEF programming but other GEF Implementing (e.g., World Bank) and Executing Agencies (e.g., IFAD) participate actively in this partnership.

Participation in the CPF by multilateral and bilateral organizations and foundations, especially the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Bank and bilateral donors, has been achieved through donor coordination activities.

EXAMPLE 5. SLM “Brand” Creation and Community Mobilization

A partnership can create an identity or “brand” for a single SLM issue or a broad range of SLM issues that would otherwise have gone unrecognized. Raising the profile of an SLM issue or initiative can make local people more aware of the problem and the proposed solutions, which might spark community support and even participation. An issue with a high profile usually finds it easier to obtain funds. This can help not only to make the business case for SLM, but can also sustain long-term political commitment and accountability with regard to land management issues.

A partnership can establish administration channels and procedures that ease financial and technical support and reduce
Box 5
Landcare, Australia

Australia’s National Landcare Program is a government-community-business partnership that aims to achieve sustainable natural resource management on both private and public land. It is based on voluntary collective community action at the local level supported by federal government funding and assistance.

The program, established by the Australian Government in 1992, provides funding to local Landcare action groups, based on several successful state government community-based land management programs. It emerged at a time when the full consequences of past land management practices—including land salinization, declining river water quality, tree dieback, and erosion—were starting to be felt in different regions and it was recognized that government action alone could not reverse land degradation. The program facilitates financial partnerships between the National and State Governments and Landcare groups, with each sharing about one third of the cost of implementing activities on the ground.

A Landcare group is formed by local community members based on a natural resource management issue that they have identified. The group can focus on on-the-ground action, research, education, or community awareness raising. The Landcare group sets its own goals and actions within established guidelines, but a broad range of land, water, and vegetation management issues can be accommodated. Examples of focus issues are dryland salinity, wetland restoration, feral animal control, sand dune stabilization, and bushland protection. The issues can be tackled at a catchment or regional level. Issues commonly span numerous private and government landholdings and are most effectively dealt with by collective action. The Landcare group applies for funding and/or technical assistance from the Federal Government through state bodies.

The program places primary responsibility for resource management with local stakeholders, who have the greatest investment in the resource and stand to gain the main benefits from changes in how it is managed. By asking group members to look beyond their farm gates and identify the issues of most common concern, the program builds ownership among the partners. Group ownership of an issue has partly replaced the traditional view that the Government is responsible for taking care of resource management issues that are larger than a single farm.

A key achievement of Landcare has been the establishment of a single identity for land management improvement across Australia. The “brand” identity of the Landcare program has raised community awareness about natural resource management issues, created the administrative mechanism for the funding and management of local activities, created pressure for the allocation of adequate government funding, and provided the resources and support to local action groups to enable them to implement works.

Landcare is administered by three national bodies: Australian Landcare Council (policy advice to Ministers), Landcare Australia Limited (corporate sponsorship, marketing and publicity) and the National Landcare Facilitator (linkage between Landcare groups and government).

Landcare mainly operates in rural Australia; about 40 percent of all farmers are members. But there are also groups in cities and towns. Over 4,500 Landcare groups now exist, incorporating previous programs such as Coastcare, Bushcare, and Waterwatch groups. Other innovations include business sponsorship, research, and improved communication links between groups.
To be effective, SLM partnerships need to capture the following key attributes:

- **Unifying focus**: A clear and agreed goal or shared vision is required as the basis for a SLM partnership. Partners must focus on mutual benefits and opportunities rather than on competing for a limited resource.

- **Long term program**: SLM is rarely achieved over a few years because a natural resource usually takes multiple seasons to be restored or improved. The overall goal is long-term sustainability, commonly requiring both biophysical and socio-economic improvements.

- **Strong self interest**: Partnerships work when each partner clearly sees the benefit to itself from the arrangement. The overall benefit must be greater than the benefit any single partner could achieve alone. Clear benefits engender commitment and active participation.

- **New resources**: A partnership can be justified if it brings new and additional resources that would otherwise not be available to address the SLM agenda at hand.

- **Local beneficiary ownership**: Initiating and setting the objectives and agenda for a partnership should be done by the users or managers of the land resources rather than by external agencies. The land users/managers have the most invested in the land and are the principal beneficiaries of improved land management. Since they control actions on the ground, they must be motivated to change their practices and ideally take collective action to maximize results.

- **Phased establishment and actions**: A robust administrative structure with a clear program framework is needed before program implementation begins. The progressive phases of effective partnership development are commonly: agreement on scope and objectives; establishment of partnership structure; funding coordination; program framework formulation; comprehensive issue investigation; program development and implementation (project preparation and approval, pilot implementation, expanded implementation); and evaluation.

- **Value adding contributions**: Partnerships work when each member adds to the partnership. A range of contributions are required including coordination, provision of funding, provision of expertise, and on-site management. Strong partnerships are formed when stakeholders contribute different strengths and play different roles to achieve the shared focus. Equitable contributions from partners are based on the benefits that each stands to derive.

- **Clear and limited roles and responsibilities**: Each partner needs a defined role and tasks that intermesh with the roles of other members, exploiting strengths and interests, with accountability for accepted obligations.

- **Trust and mutual recognition of resource rights**: Trust and transparency among partners must either exist before the partnership is formed or develop in its early stages. Trust is tied to mutual recognition of stakeholders’ resource rights.

- **Coordinated planning, action, and funding**: Coordinated funding avoids overlaps and misses, and facilitates more rapid start-up. A successful partnership requires strategic planning and program development based on comprehensive land resource system diagnosis. The program must prioritize objectives and activities, and be compatible with existing initiatives where appropriate. Understanding the
cause and effect of the issue and identifying the necessary priorities to deliver maximum benefits should occur before major actions are initiated. Coordinated data collection and monitoring provides standardized whole-of-system data that can be used by all. For example, the objective of the Danube/Black Sea Basins Strategic Partnership (one of the first Strategic Partnerships in the GEF) was developed following a comprehensive whole-of-system Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis that identified the key threats and root causes affecting the sustainability of the Danube/Black Sea basins. Pollution from land-based sources, principally phosphorus and nitrogen nutrient pollution, was identified as the major threat, therefore the partnership focused on reducing the flows of these nutrients into the Black Sea.

- **Decentralized action:** While centralized coordination and administration is preferable, decentralized control of implementation is most effective. The resource custodian/user (e.g., country members, states or community groups) is usually the stakeholder who is most motivated to achieve long term improvement. Devolving responsibility creates ownership. Indeed an effective partnership should allow individual members to achieve objectives that would not be achievable separately. A partnership should not “crowd out” desired but non-partnership activities.

- **Compatibility with governance systems:** A partnership needs to operate within existing governance systems otherwise it will face administrative, funding, and/or implementation obstacles that will prevent goals from being achieved, principally by failing to gain the support and commitment of key stakeholders on the ground.

- **Active management:** Regular dialogue, evaluation, and progress meetings are required to sustain and direct a partnership. However, it is crucial to ensure that the governance structure of a partnership is designed to be lean and light so as not to overwhelm partners with administrative tasks.

- **Cost-effectiveness:** It is crucial for an SLM partnership to demonstrate cost-effectiveness; otherwise there would be no added value for partners, especially countries and communities, to join such an arrangement. Therefore, partnerships must develop cost-effectiveness (qualitative and or quantitative) metrics that identify the cheapest way to achieve their SLM objectives. Only by doing this, can partnerships be justified against traditional project/program approaches.

- **Exit strategy:** A clearly defined and agreed-upon exit strategy is vital to ensure the sustainability of outcomes through a gradual withdrawal, and to avoid self perpetuation of the partnership once the goal has been achieved.
# Appendix — Examples of Existing Sustainable Land Management Partnerships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partnership</th>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Main partners and key roles</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interagency</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands (LADA)</td>
<td>Assess causes, status, and impacts of land degradation in drylands in order to improve decision making for sustainable development in drylands at local, national, subregional, and global levels.</td>
<td>GEF, UNEP, the Secretariat, Global Mechanism (GM) of the UNCCD and FAO (executing agency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agency/Government</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>PRC/GEF Partnership on Land Degradation in Dryland Ecosystems, China</td>
<td>Reduce land degradation, alleviate poverty, and restore dryland ecosystems in the western region of China.</td>
<td>PRC – implementation and funding&lt;br&gt;GEF – funding&lt;br&gt;ADB and other GEF Implementing/Executing agencies (e.g., World Bank) – funding, project preparation and implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEF Strategic Partnership for Nutrient Reduction in the Danube/Black Sea Basins</td>
<td>Address the root causes of Black Sea/Danube environmental degradation.</td>
<td>17 basin countries - implementation&lt;br&gt;GEF - funding&lt;br&gt;World Bank - implementation&lt;br&gt;UNDP and UNEP - implementation&lt;br&gt;Regional Basin Secretariats&lt;br&gt;European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nile Basin Initiative</td>
<td>Achieve sustainable socio-economic development through the equitable use of, and benefit from, the common Nile-based water resources.</td>
<td>9 participating Nile Basin countries – funding and implementation&lt;br&gt;International donor partners - funding&lt;br&gt;World Bank – support and facilitate NBI development, and donor coordination</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| GEF Country Pilot Partnerships (CPPs) - Cuba, Namibia, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Vietnam, Central Asia (regional) | Implement coordinated SLM actions through the development and harmonized execution of strategic interventions that are coherent with other GEF and donor activities in the target countries.  

E.g., The Country Program for SLM, Ethiopia aims to conserve and restore landscapes of global and national ecological, economic, and social importance through the adoption of SLM policies, practices and technologies. | Partners differ for each CPP, but variously include:  
Individual countries – funding and implementation  
GEF – funding  
Bilateral donors;  
GEF Implementing and Executing Agencies (IFAD, UNDP, ADB, UNEP, FAO, World Bank); GM;  
Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development  
Federal Environment Protection Authority  
The World Bank  
Local communities  
Bilaterals; GM;  
Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) | Achieve sustainable food security and reduce poverty in developing countries through scientific research and research related activities in the fields of agriculture, forestry, fisheries, policy and environment. | 15 International Agricultural Research Centers  
46 countries (24 developing and 22 industrialized)  
4 private foundations  
13 regional and international organizations (FAO, IFAD, UNDP and the World Bank are cosponsors)  
Government/Government  
Murray-Darling Basin Initiative, Australia | Promote and coordinate effective planning and management for the equitable, efficient, and sustainable use of water in the Murray-Darling Basin. | Federal Government – coordination and funding  
4 state governments and 1 territorial government – funding and implementation  
Community – advisory role  
Government/Community  
Chesapeake Bay Program, USA | Protect and restore Chesapeake Bay’s ecosystem quality and productivity to prior levels by reducing point and non-point sources of pollution (by 40 percent from 1985 levels of total nitrogen and phosphorus reaching the Bay by 2000). | The States of Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia  
Chesapeake Bay Commission  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Local governments, industry, farmers, environmentalists, conservation associations, educational/research institutions, citizen groups and interested individuals |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partnership</th>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Main partners and key roles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Landcare, Australia | Achieve the sustainable management and use of private and public natural resources across Australia. | Australian Federal Government - funding and coordination  
State Governments – administration, technical assistance, funding  
Community – funding, implementation |
| **Other (e.g., public-private partnerships, etc)** | | |
| The World Bank’s Carbon Finance Business  
(including Prototype Carbon Fund (PCF), BioCarbon Fund, Community Development Carbon Fund (CDCF), OECD Country Funds and Technical Assistance Facilities) | Catalyze a global carbon market that reduces transaction costs, supports sustainable development and benefits the poorest communities in developing countries. | A public-private partnership arrangement  
World Bank - management  
Governments (e.g. Canada, Italy, Netherlands, Austria)  
Private companies (e.g. Statoil of Norway; Nippon Oil, Okinawa Electric, Idemitsu Kosan and Daiwa Securities SMBC of Japan; BASF of Germany; ENDESA of Spain; Swiss Re of Switzerland)  
Participants contribute monies to the Funds in exchange for a pro rata share of the emission reductions and access to the Funds’ acquired knowledge base. Countries and communities where project activities are implemented benefit from these initiatives. |
| International Land Coalition | Empower the rural poor by increasing their access to productive assets, especially land, water and common property resources, and by increasing their direct participation in decision making processes at local, national, regional and international levels. | A global consortium of intergovernmental, civil society and bilateral organizations.  
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)  
Regional partners -  
National partners - |
| Land Alliances for National Development (LAND Partnerships) | A global initiative meant to alleviate rural poverty by strengthening country-level collaboration between state, civil society, bilateral and international stakeholders. | International Land Coalition - coordination  
30-plus countries - implementation  
Farmers, indigenous organizations, trade and women |
1. The UNCCD defines ‘desertification’ as land degradation in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas resulting from various factors, including climatic variations and human activities.

2. Eritrea participates as an observer to the NBI and is expected to become a full member at some point.

NOTES


Chesapeake Bay Program, 2005. www.chesapeakebay.net/agreement.


REFERENCES
Rwandan farming village
This paper was prepared by an inter-agency team drawn from the Facilitation Committee of the Global Mechanism of the U.N. Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) under the leadership of Enos E. Esikuri. The team included: Enos E. Esikuri, Mathew Cobett (consultant) and John B. Coaller of the World Bank, Washington, DC; Simone Quatrini, Global Mechanism, Rome, Italy; Khalida Bouzar, International Fund for Agricultural Development Rome, Anna Tengberg, United Nations Environment Programme, Nairobi, Kenya; Richard J. Thomas, Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, Aleppo, Syria; Gregoire De Kalbermatten, UNCCD Secretariat, Bonn, Germany; and Robert Everitt and Daniele Ponzi, Asian Development Bank, Manila, Philippines.

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