Land for Life

FOUNDATION FOR ECOLOGICAL SECURITY (FES), INDIA—WINNER OF 2013 LAND FOR LIFE AWARD

FES has helped to restore the productivity in 200,000 hectares of common property range lands, forests and water resources in India through community governance and building local capacity for sustainable land management. The work of FES has improved the livelihoods of 17 million people living in more than 6,000 villages. It has also influenced national environmental policy.

“We will continue to dispel the notion that commons are ‘wastelands’ and that ‘everybody’s property is nobody’s property’,” said Jagdeesh Rao, Executive Director of FES.

CONSEJO CIVIL PARA LA SILENCIAM SOSTENIBLE (CCMSS), MEXICO—WINNER OF 2013 LAND FOR LIFE AWARD

CCMSS has taken an integrated approach to tackling the problems of its varied landscape. Through building the capacity of the local farmer’s union, they have strengthened the farmers’ ability to govern their own land. And the farmers have increased their knowledge for sustainable land management. For instance, CCMSS has developed workplans to improve the quality of soil on their plots using natural fertilizer. CCMSS also works with small forest landholders to promote better land use, such as preventing invasive weeds and taking appropriate restoration steps after forest fires.

SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT

SLM practices include the integrated management of crops (trees), livestock, soil, water, nutrients, biodiversity, disease and pest to optimize the delivery of a range of ecosystem services. The overall objective is to maximize provisioning services (e.g., food, water, energy) while enhancing the resilience of land resources and the communities that depend on them.
12 million hectares of productive land is lost each year and it costs the world about US $400 billion per year or approximately US $70 per person. In total, there are up to 2 billion hectares of land, equivalent to twice the size of China, which today needs to be restored and rehabilitated.

The Land for Life programme aims to demonstrate that Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) is compelling and achievable. Through its two components: (1) Land for Life Award and (2) Awareness and Knowledge Support, we hope to provide a quantum leap in the level of information that the public and policy-makers have on initiatives that have made a significant contribution in achieving Land Degradation Neutrality. Through a variety of activities in Awareness and Knowledge Support, the Land for Life programme will showcase and highlight how the existing local, national and regional measures are at risk of desertification. COAM’s multiple activities have made a significant difference in changing these conditions. COAM has reduced pressure for natural resources on vulnerable arid rangelands by 50%, providing health and livelihood benefits for women and families. COAM has mobilized 25,000 volunteers to plant trees in the region and operate income-generating activities that give trained women the opportunity to earn a living. It has enabled opportunities such as solar energy generation, to which COAM contributed with the support of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) through the Land for Life Award prize it received in 2014, GAN is replicating its success in other regions.

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