

# Dryland Restoration: Challenges and Opportunities



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# Dryland's nature and major problems

**Drylands** are defined by a scarcity of water. Are complex, evolving structures whose characteristics and dynamic properties depend on many interrelated interactions between climate, soil, and vegetation.

They are zones where precipitation is balanced by evapotranspiration. The United Nations Environment Program defines drylands as tropical and temperate areas with an aridity index of less than 0.65. One can classify drylands into four sub-types:

- dry sub-humid lands
- semi-arid lands
- arid lands
- hyper-arid lands
- Some scholars regard hyper-arid lands as deserts

Drylands cover 41.3% of the earth's land surface and constitutes over 60 percent **of Ethiopia's land cover**, of which the hot arid agro-ecological zone is predominant.

In Ethiopia dry land resources have national and global significance.

Ethiopia, is a dry land country whose resources are yet to be managed properly if they are to contribute meaningfully to the country's socio-economic development and environmental resilience.

# Major challenges in managing dryland resources in Somali Region

The fundamental **challenge** posed by **drylands** in Somali Region is their vulnerability brought about by variability in amount of rainfall, lack of investment, **lack of appropriate policy** (insecure land and **resource** tenure), lack of spatial information about degraded dryland, Expansion of alliance invasive species mainly prosopis juliflora and Partheniam and lack of awareness creation.

The causes of desertification are myriad and interconnected: among the causes are:

- Overgrazing
- Overcutting for bushlands for multiple purposes
- Conversion of communal rangeland into private
- Poor irrigation-leading to salinity
- Mining
- Insecurity-leading to reduced grazing corridors

These factors together with limited constructive policies constrain the survival efforts of the local communities. Efforts in restoring drylands are underfunded and poorly coordinated

# Efforts for Dryland restoration should aim to achieve:

- Resilient local community livelihood
- Wise use of dryland resource while maximizing production
- Increased contribution of dryland's national and local economies

# Cont....

- The above objectives can be realized through strong commitments, ownership while sufficient resource with comprehensive coordination are ensured in place.

# How current efforts in restoring DLs are working and the major gaps

- Dryland initiatives are underfunded in general and are poorly coordinated.
- In Somali region cluster coordination task forces-such as livestock, agriculture, WASH exist but no attention is given for the hosting ecosystem.
- Donors, UN agencies, NGOs and Local governments all focus easy and soft works-very few projects currently focus dryland resource management
- While initiatives for dryland are limited in number and budget they are also not coordinated rather work independently



# What works and should be scaled up? What is not working and needs changing? What is missing?

- In this region, dryland restoration initiatives were in place since long ago.
- SERP was one of the project initiated during Derge regime.
- MERIT was also active for several decades
- All previous programs used technologies designed for the highland areas of Ethiopia context tuned failed
- Currently, Water spreading weirs, a technology from West Africa by GIZ SDR is tested

# Cont....

- The technology is proved relevant and replicated by the few projects meant for restoring the dryland-such as DRDIP, RPSNP and some NGOs like Ethiopian Red Cross Society.

What weirs looks like

With one flood, about 2000M3 of soil sediments were documented



Cont.....



Illustration 1: a WSW spreads water and its sediment and reduces the velocity of water flow by enhancing the length of the water way

# Need for improved coordination and collaboration among stakeholders?

Improved coordination and collaboration will help

- Enable more informed decision making.
- Lead to greater **stakeholder** satisfaction.
- Improves chances of project/initiative success.
- Promote open, two-way communication.

Thus, coordination unit should be set both nationally and regionally so that other steps of developing coordination process are achieved:

# Cont.....

- Key **stakeholders** Determined
- Clear roles established
- The basic elements of the coordination Identified
- Concepts for the coordination developed.
- Tackle the content
- Address the visual design of the programs
- Allow time for development.

# How can we develop an appropriate policy framework for dryland restoration?

- Research based information is required
- Locally driven policy and programs needed
- Dryland information center as national wide is paramount
- Inclusive participation -gender etc

Are the right policies and laws in place at national/regional level, and if not, what needs to be done?

- No ,they are not local based (in context of pastoralists )
- Researches based evidence required
- Locally context policy and laws should be there through active participation of local pastoralists and local researchers





**Some of the Dry forest products in Somali Region**

