



The GEF and WOCAT: Connecting Sustainable Land Management Investments, Knowledge and Action

Land degradation threatens the health, livelihoods, and security of millions of people worldwide. Scaling sustainable land management (SLM) and combating land degradation and desertification requires shared systems of learning and reporting that translate individual project results into comprehensive programs and policy change. The GEF and WOCAT have partnered to fill this gap by connecting project implementation to a global learning network.

UNCCD Decisions Strengthening GEF–WOCAT Collaboration

Successive UNCCD decisions have encouraged collaboration between GEF and WOCAT, creating a stronger connection between project implementation and global knowledge sharing. COP15 Decision 9 recommended promoting the use of the UNCCD-designated WOCAT Global SLM Database in relevant GEF projects and programmes. COP16 Decision 9 invited further capacity-building through partnership. The GEF and WOCAT responded by creating a direct link on the

WOCAT website to improve visibility of GEF-financed projects. Additionally, GEF and WOCAT partnered to close geographical knowledge gaps in the Database by identifying countries to support in documenting and uploading SLM practices. The GEF conducted online workshops and capacity-building sessions with implementing agencies FAO and UNDP, and worked to expand knowledge exchange across regions and ecosystem types.

Global Environment Facility (GEF)

As the financial mechanism for the UNCCD since 2003, the GEF has provided \$5.7 billion to restore land and sustain livelihoods across 144 countries, leveraging an additional \$37.6 billion in co-financing. From 2022 to 2025 alone, these investments restored 15.2 million hectares of land, brought 44.5 million hectares under sustainable management, and benefited about 4.4 million people.

World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT)

Launched in 1992, WOCAT is a global network dedicated to documenting, assessing, and sharing SLM knowledge. Through evidence-based decision support tools and knowledge management systems, WOCAT helps countries improve sustainable governance, strengthen ecosystem resilience, and make informed decisions grounded in validated strategies.

WOCAT Consortium Partners:

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The WOCAT Global SLM Database: Connecting GEF Projects to Global Knowledge

The **Global SLM Database** is the world's leading repository and information hub for documented, field-tested SLM practices. It provides more than 2,000 SLM practices from over 100 countries, in a standardized and comparable format. Each entry includes detailed information on the practice, its implementation approach, environmental and socioeconomic impacts, and the enabling conditions for success. Entries undergo a structured review and quality-assurance process, making the database a trusted source of information for practitioners, researchers, and policymakers seeking evidence-based solutions.

Selected SLM Practices from GEF Projects Across Key SLM Themes

So far, the Database contains 380 GEF-linked SLM practices from 28 countries. The following examples from the WOCAT Global SLM Database illustrate how GEF-supported projects apply SLM practices across three priority themes: rangeland management, drought resilience, and ecosystem restoration.



RANGELANDS

Buryat Sheepfold-Style Fencing Enclosures | **MONGOLIA**

Protective enclosures around springs and wetland edges reduce trampling, overgrazing, erosion and water contamination while allowing vegetation to recover.

Silvopastoral Systems (available in Spanish) | **ECUADOR**

Trees, forage, pastures and livestock are integrated to improve shade, fodder, biodiversity, pasture productivity and farm resilience.

Controlled Grazing | **GEORGIA**

Strategic livestock movement and grazing intensity stimulate grass growth, improve pasture quality and reduce erosion and bare soil.



DROUGHT RESILIENCE

In-Field Rain Water Harvesting | **LESOTHO**

Infiltration pits capture rainfall, increase infiltration, reduce erosion and support vegetation regeneration, soil organic carbon and productivity.

Livestock Keepers Initiative for Continued Dry Season Animal Drinking Water Supply | **TANZANIA**

Livestock keepers and local authorities collaborate to manage ponds and watering troughs and maintain reliable water supplies during the dry season.

Drought-Resistant Crops to Enhance Forage Production and Prevent Erosion in Desert Areas | **UZBEKISTAN**

Drought-tolerant fodder plants secure livestock feed under rainfed desert conditions while stabilizing soils and reducing erosion risk.



RESTORATION

Protective Reforestation (available in Spanish) | **COLOMBIA**

Tree planting combined with grazing exclusion restores forest cover in groundwater recharge areas and transforms degraded grazing land.

Afforestation of Bare Land in Karst Areas | **BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

Tree planting restores vegetation on degraded karst landscapes, increasing water-holding capacity and reducing erosion.

Rehabilitation of Fallow Land Through Agroforestry | **BHUTAN**

Long-abandoned agricultural land is restored with fruit trees, high-value perennial species and seasonal crops, improving land productivity and local benefits.

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