



Networking to strengthen research and solutions on land degradation and desertification. European Desert-Net.

M.J. Marques (1), M. Ackhtar-Schuster (2)

(1) Departamento Agroambiental. IMIDRA. Consejería de Economía y Consumo. Finca El Encín, Ctra. A-2, km 38.2, 28800-Alcalá de Henares, Madrid, Spain, (mjose.marques@madrid.org / Tel. +34 918879459 / Fax +34 918879494, (2) Biocentre Klein Flottbek and Botanical Garden, University of Hamburg, Ohnhorststr. 18, 22609 Hamburg, Germany (makhtar-schuster@botanik.uni-hamburg.de / Tel +49 (0)40 42816 – 533, Fax +49 (0)40 42816 – 539)

This newly emerged scientific network, European Desert-Net (EDN), was created to strengthen and support research capacities on global desertification. The first step was the foundational workshop held on October 2006, at the UNCCD in Germany. 38 scientists from 8 european countries participated. Nowadays, 251 scientists from 43 countries are members of EDN.

It has an open and flexible structure that is particularly useful in promoting multidisciplinary efforts. Five working groups (WG) have been created, each one has its own particular tasks:

1. ***Internal Structures***, to coordinate the development and update of the structures of EDN and to carry out activities for funds acquisition to guarantee the operability
2. ***Science-Policy Interface***, to translate science into common language and communicate scientific findings to all relevant stakeholders (e.g. policy makers, land users)
3. ***Dryland Observation System***, to create multidisciplinary standards for monitor-

ing and evaluation of land use-induced changes (up-scaling)

4. ***Economic Drivers and Social-Economic Consequences***, to identify and articulate economic drivers and socio-economic consequences of desertification
5. ***Training and Capacity Building***, to facilitate the transmission of knowledge among the scientific community and from them to the stakeholders

Moreover, all of these WG have to identify gaps and priorities for stakeholders and public policies, they have to respond to demands for assessment and information, and disseminate knowledge. The EDN members can be part of one or more of these WG (<http://www.european-desertnet.eu>).

Not only scientists conform the EDN, there are also representatives of organisations that want to use EDN services or cooperate with it, like Oasis or Drynet, which are members of the User Board. Every organisation that wants to join the User Board can inform its Steering Committee.

EDN supports the goals of the UN Conventions on Desertification, Biological Diversity and Climate Change and promote synergies between them. Within its short existence EDN has shown that it has the scientific capacity to answer to the needs of the EU framework and other international scientific programmes. In order to continue the globally strengthening of the communication links between scientists, we encourage to all scientists within and outside Europe to join EDN and collaborate in this initiative.