



Linking climate change mitigation, biodiversity conservation and the rehabilitation of degraded land in southern Romania: Synergy through participation

L.C. Stringer (1), S.S. Scrieciu (2) and M.S. Reed (1)

(1) Sustainability Research Institute, School of Earth & Environment, University of Leeds, UK (l.stringer@see.leeds.ac.uk / Fax: +44 113 3436716), (2) Cambridge Centre for Climate Change Mitigation Research (4CMR), Department of Land Economy, University of Cambridge, UK

Three international environmental conventions were negotiated following the 1992 Rio Conference on Environment and Development: the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD), the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). Each of these global agreements has a different focus, yet each promotes participatory approaches to some degree. This paper considers the role of stakeholder participation in drawing together these three agreements, exploring how participatory activities to combat desertification in southern Romania interact with efforts to conserve biodiversity and mitigate the effects of climate change. Data from interviews, questionnaire surveys and transect walks are integrated with the literature in our case study, to examine participation of stakeholders from the southern Romanian community of Mârșani in efforts to rehabilitate desertified and degraded land. We identify areas of synergy where participation helped to achieve the shared goals of the three Rio Conventions, but also caution that in our case, efforts to reduce desertification and manage the effects of climate change could negatively impact biodiversity. This case study suggests that Romania's growing civil society sector has a potentially vital role to play in promoting synergy through participation and empowerment, and that participatory processes act as an important mechanism for harnessing multiple benefits. We argue that participation needs to be further institutionalised within the Romanian context and suggest that future participa-

tory processes could benefit from the involvement of relevant stakeholders at all levels in order to capitalise synergies. In doing so, participatory processes should emphasise empowerment, equity, trust and learning and integrate different knowledge bases to allow the development of sustainable and synergistic environmental solutions.