

Geophysical Research Abstracts,
Vol. 10, EGU2008-A-11957, 2008
SRef-ID: 1607-7962/gra/EGU2008-A-11957
EGU General Assembly 2008
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European Desert-Net, the scientific knowledge for stakeholders and policy-makers. Some facts.

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Despite long-term efforts from the international community, land degradation and desertification are progressing in many drylands. With regard to the scientific components of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the main priority will be bio-physical and socio-economic monitoring and assessment of desertification and land degradation, **to support decision-making in land and water management.**

European DesertNet (EDN) is in keeping with this stance. It was established by a foundational workshop in October 2006 at the UNCCD in Germany. EDN is an interdisciplinary group of scientists to improve scientific research in combating and preventing desertification in Europe and at global scale and to support communication with policy makers and with other stakeholders. To date, EDN has 251 members from 43 countries in and outside Europe (<http://www.european-desertnet.eu>).

During this short pace, the different *Working Groups* of E-DN have attended important meetings and organised symposiums or workshops in order to accomplish their objectives.

In spring 2007, the *Science Policy Interface Working Group* received an official ministerial request from Germany to assess the IIWG 10-Year Strategic Plan and to analyse the Framework to Enhance the Implementation of the UNCCD (2008 – 2018). A re-

port was delivered to the Ministry prior to the IIWG meetings in Namibia and Geneva in April and May 2007. In May 2007, the WG also analysed the GoE document on “Communication and Information Strategy”.

EDN together with Desert*Net Germany organised a Stand at COP8 (3rd – 14th September 2007), informing members of national delegations and NGOs about the current status and activities of science to support the aims of the UNCCD.

On 4th September 2007 at COP8 in Madrid, EDN jointly with Oasis - a

global agricultural research-for-development partnership against desertification – organised and carried out the Side Event titled “**Desertification: Science, Policy and the Web of Stakeholders**”. Both scientific bodies signed a Memorandum of Understanding which shall be in effect for the next five years.

Considering that NGOs play a crucial role in the issues of the UNCCD, E-DN also invited Drynet, an association of international 14 NGOs to give a presentation at the Side Event.

On 6th and 7th September 2007, the *Dryland Observation Working Group* carried out its 1st two-day international and interdisciplinary workshop on *Observation of Desertification* in Hamburg, Germany. The meeting formulated a **Declaration** on 7th September 2007 in Hamburg.

The Training and Capacity Building Working Group started the process for the delineation of a “**Manual on Desertification**”. This Manual will be a practical tool for technicians “working on the field”, by providing best practices in the field in a simple, clear and useful way. The response we are having from the international scientific community of EDN is very promising.

On 27th November 2007, a delegation of EDN was received by Members of European Parliament (MEPs) in the European Parliament to discuss closer cooperation between scientists and policy makers for supporting sustainable development in Drylands. Both sides agreed to cooperate closely in agricultural topics. A follow-on workshop is currently being planned in Brussels by the *Economic Drivers & Social-Economic Consequences Working Group* in close cooperation between scientist of European DesertNet and MEPs. The event scheduled for 2008 is entitled “**Desertification - Socio Economic, Agriculture and Forestry Impacts and their Political Consequences**”.

Many scientist from EDN have contacted thanks to networking, in order to present proposals in the next call of the FP7 Cooperation Work Programme: Env. 2008 2.1.3.1. Assessment of Methods to Combat Desertification. Support actions.

EDN network means today a complete scientific program with multiple implications,

and EDN researchers strive to address the maximum number of these implications to build a strong interdisciplinary perspective. The aim of this presentation is to highlight this free network that is open to all scientists interested in collaborating to strengthen and support research capabilities regarding global desertification. World researchers are invited to join the network.