Mainstreaming and Scaling-Up Sustainable Land Management Practices

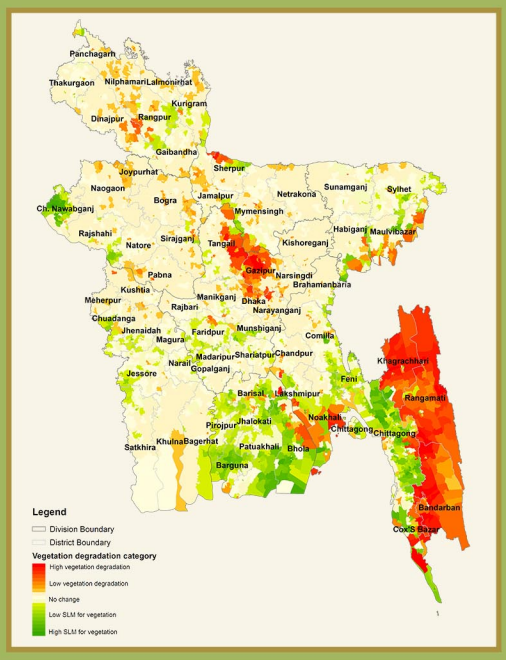
Sustainable land management (SLM) is fundamental to address global as well as national and local land degradation issues, in addition to enhance food security, address mitigation and adaptation to climate change and conservation of biodiversity.

Context

In last few decades, land degradation became an alarming issue for Bangladesh, which is impacting soil fertility management and land productivity. About 50,000 km^2 of land is below the threshold for sustainable land management and during the period 1973-2011, 1.47 million acres of agricultural land was converted to other non-agricultural uses, considerably for human settlements. As a result, the Government of Bangladesh set-up a target to avoid the degradation of an area of 5,000 km^2 (land degradation neutrality target) by 2030.

However, benefits from SLM practices in Bangladesh are poorly documented and the status of land degradation not monitored. As a consequence, decision-makers are not properly informed about the potential benefits of scaling-up successful SLM practices.

In this context the project titled "Decision support for mainstreaming and scaling up of sustainable land management" aims at improving the capability and the decision making of the country in the mainstreaming and scaling up of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) to combat Land Degradation (LD).



Vegetation degradation in Bangladesh at Union Level during the period 2000-2014 (Ritu et al. 2018).

Objectives

- To engage national stakeholders involved in sustainable land management and strengthen their capacities in documenting and promoting SLM;
- To provide an improved understanding of the status and process of land degradation (vegetation, soil and water);
- To support decision makers to identify best SLM practices and provide recommendations for mainstreaming and up scaling them to national and local levels.

Process

- **Operational strategy for SLM:** To identify national SLM objectives, best SLM practices, barriers, impacts to achieve, opportunities for scaling out SLM practices in line with existing national targets, an operational strategy was developed through workshop on knowledge status of SLM and Land degradation in Bangladesh and inception workshop.
- **Mapping land degradation:** For national level assessment, LD is assessed as a combination of three indicators – soil, vegetation and water.
- **Stratification of the land area changes:** Identifying priority landscapes for integrating various SLM sources of information related to vegetation, soil and water is needed. Positive changes may indicate successful implementation of SLM practices. Negative changes may identify degraded land areas to introduce or improve SLM practices.
- **Strengthening technical capacities for assessing SLM practices:** The World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) network, methodological tools and guidelines support planning and decision-making by allowing SLM specialists to identify fields of action, find appropriate SLM technologies and approaches, and share their valuable knowledge in land management.
- **Documenting SLM practices using WOCAT methodologies:** A technical expert team conducts the national SLM practices assessment survey using WOCAT tools. This documentation of SLM practices provides valuable knowledge in land management, support evidence-based decision-making and scale up identified good practices, thereby contributing to preventing and reducing land degradation and to restoring degraded land.
- **Feasibility analysis of SLM technologies:** Assess adoptability, adaptability and feasibility of SLM practices to the conditions of a given landscape and considering local communities.
- **Formulate recommendations for decision makers and farmers to scale up SLM:** The findings from the national survey of SLM practices by technical experts and feasibility analysis of SLM practices in degraded land areas are compiled and synthesized into recommendations for up scaling SLM to local and national levels.

Expected outcomes

- Field interventions will be guided by geospatial information on land degradation and potential for SLM.
- Knowledge of national SLM practices will be shared and made accessible through national and global platforms to national and international stakeholders.
- Recommendations will be provided for mainstreaming and up scaling feasible SLM practices used in decision making processes for natural resources management and reducing land degradation.

Selected references

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