

UNDESERT abstract

UNDESERT aims at combating desertification and land degradation in order to mitigate their impacts on ecosystem services and, consequently, on human livelihoods. By integrating regional information with sound field data on biodiversity and soil as well as socioeconomic and climate data, we aim to create improved understanding of the effects of desertification and degradation processes in West Africa on a local and regional scale. On this basis, decision support models and tools will be developed and introduced to natural resource managers. UNDESERT also includes two very practical aspects, 1) restoration through tree planting, which will be certified for CO₂ marketing as the first restoration site in West Africa and 2) ecosystem management based on scientific data and best practices developed in close collaboration between scientists and local communities. UNDESERT activities will be implemented by employing 17 young PhD students, who will receive training to enhance future capacities to manage risks and uncertainties in the frame of future demographic and climatic changes. The scientific results will be used to combat desertification and degradation directly and will be transferred to international programs in order to contribute to the implementation of relevant international strategies.