

# Land degradation neutrality of mountain landscapes in Lebanon

Project 00102170



## General Information

Short Title:	<b>LDN Mountains</b>
UNDP Programme/Portfolio:	<b>Environment &amp; Energy</b>
Geographic Coverage:	<b>Lebanon</b>
Project Status:	<b>Ongoing</b>
Start Date:	<b>01 June 2019</b>
Expected End Date:	<b>31 May 2024</b>
Implementing Agency:	<b>UNDP (Direct Execution) (UNDP)</b>
Last Updated:	<b>01 November 2019</b>

## Classification

MDG Goal:	<b>18. Ensure environmental sustainability</b>
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## Contact Information

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## Donors & Budget

GEF	<b>\$4,621,005.00</b>
UNDP	<b>\$120,000.00</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,741,005.00</b>

## Target Groups /Beneficiaries

- Public at large
- Rural local communities

## Project Details

### Background

The current land management practices in Lebanon are not sustainable as they continue to erode the country's natural resource base (soil, water, green cover, and landscape). While traditional practices such as terracing, controlled grazing and forest management have helped protect the land, modern practices have significantly altered the natural and social make-up of the land including perceptions of natural resources. Population growth, the continued loss of arable land and biodiversity, concerns about food security and the expanding infrastructure due to population growth and urban sprawl are major factors impacting land resources and the natural environment. Land degradation has been flagged as a serious environmental problem in Lebanon, resulting in losses estimated at US\$132 million yearly. This is bound to be an underestimate due to the incomplete data, and damages and associated costs of environmental degradation are certainly higher. Unsustainable growth is having a heavy toll on Lebanon's natural resources with losses in forest cover, biodiversity and natural ecosystems, degradation of rangeland and desertification.

Despite recent incipient efforts, there is no systematic practice of sustainable land management in Lebanon and this is especially so in mountain areas. Little effort has been made for an integrated and holistic approach to achieve land degradation neutrality, whether at the central level or at the local level with the community and particularly with farmer groups. To date, this has prevented the development of an approach to landscape management and regeneration that would maintain / increase agricultural productivity and the continued delivery of multiple benefits from forest and rangeland ecosystems. Such an approach is impeded at the local level by three main barriers in particular - 1 Weak institutional framework for addressing land degradation; 2 Weak regulatory framework and lack of capacity and experience in applying and promoting sustainable land management practices; 3 Limited models and technologies for sustainable land management and financial barriers for up-scaling. In spite of an impressive baseline of activities, efforts remain fragmented, land degradation barriers have not been overcome and mountain lands in Lebanon continue to be subjected to impacts from competing land uses. Without a fresh and comprehensive approach, land use in mountain regions will remain unsustainable.

### Achievements & Expected Results

Expected Results:

- Landscape-scale survey of mountain lands and high country areas in Akkar and Jbeil Districts
- Degraded forests replanted and restored at 2-3 pilot project sites and sustainable forest management applied
- Degraded high country grasslands restored in 2-3 pilot sites
- Degraded quarries rehabilitated
- Degraded farmland in 2-3 pilot projects sites rehabilitated in collaboration with farmers and others in the mountain regions to restore soil fertility and move towards environmentally sound production
- Enabling environment established for responsible tourism and minimum impact outdoor recreation
- Improved Land Use Planning process to reflect sustainability principles

- EIA process as applied to development proposals strengthened so as to achieve sustainable land management
- Input provided to the Quarries Master Plan review and the MoE Master Plan for Protection of Mountain Plateaus to reflect the principles of land degradation neutrality
- Capacity and know-how in relevant central government agencies as well as at local government level, enhanced
- The project implementation process is monitored and evaluated on a continuing basis according to the adopted M&E Plan
- Communication and Knowledge Management Strategy developed and implemented
- The MoE supported in its efforts to develop the Mountain Lands Database
- Effective sustainable financing mechanisms developed so as to provide the means for scaling-up and replication of best practices for rehabilitation of degraded land, the prevention of further degradation and achievement of land degradation neutrality

### **Issues & Difficulties**