



G20 GLOBAL  
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# EVENT REPORT

## EXPLORING THE ECONOMICS OF LAND RESTORATION

Hybrid Brown Bag Lunch - Bonn, Germany

Date: 25 July 2023 | Time: 12 to 13hr CEST

Guest speakers:



Dr Alisher Mirzabaev  
Senior Agricultural Economist,  
Unique land use, Bonn University



Dr Architesh Panda  
Senior Research Associate, United  
Nations University-EHS, Bonn

Host:



Song Kim  
Communications Team  
G20 Global Land Initiative





## **FINANCIAL INCLUSION AND SOCIAL PROTECTION OF LOCAL PEOPLE: A HIDDEN KEY FOR LAND RESTORATION**

Restoration of degraded ecosystems lies at the heart of building a stable climate, mitigating weather extremes and disease burdens, ensuring food production to meet the needs of a growing population, and sustaining global livability.

Yet, the world is currently witnessing the rapid degradation of ecosystems, endangering the very foundation of life. The gap between the necessary investments to restore degraded ecosystems and prevent further deterioration and the actual investments being made remains substantial. Governments are still grappling with the design and implementation of effective and efficient ecosystem restoration policies.

In light of these pressing challenges and opportunities, the 4th Brown Bag Lunch offered valuable insights into the economics of land restoration and explore strategies for sustainable and inclusive practices.

Dr. Alisher Mirzabaev, a Senior Agricultural Economist, at Unique land use, and Dr Architesh Panda, a Senior Research Associate at the United Nations University- Institute for Environment and Human Security. (UNU-EHS) shed light on the paramount importance of ecosystem restoration, the challenges faced during implementation, and potential solutions for more effective and inclusive land restoration.

In his presentation, Dr. Mirzabaev highlighted the urgent need for ecosystem restoration, emphasizing the critical role of investing in land restoration to stabilize the climate, secure food production, and maintain a livable world. He underscored the financial implications of restoration, stating, “Restoration is 10 times more expensive than restoration which highlights the LDN target setting of trying to avoid degradation in the first place. In Africa, to restore one hectare of degraded land costs 2 000 dollars on average. To maintain ecosystems, one hectare would cost 200 dollars on average.”

**“While the actual payout of environmentally harmful subsidies is small, the damage they generate in terms of environmental harm is about 10 times more than their actual value.”**

**- Dr. Mirzabaev**

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However, despite the clear benefits of restoration, Dr. Mirzabaev expressed concern about the existing gap between necessary investments and actual funding, particularly in light of the significant annual cost of land degradation to countries worldwide, which amounts to over \$6 trillion. “While the actual payout of environmentally harmful subsidies is small, the damage they generate in terms of environmental harm is about 10 times more than their actual value.” Said Dr. Mirzabaev.

However, despite the clear benefits of restoration, Dr. Mirzabaev expressed concern about the existing gap between necessary investments and actual funding, particularly in light of the significant annual cost of land degradation to countries worldwide, which amounts to over \$6 trillion.

Dr. Panda echoed the urgency of restoring degraded landscapes and brought attention to the shortfall in financing efforts, which leaves a gap of approximately \$300 billion each year. He stressed the potential of smart policies and innovative financing to combat climate change, halt biodiversity loss, and achieve successful restoration.

“What is happening at the global level, we also need to think for the local level. Land restoration at the end of the day depends on the people who are on the ground, who are depending on the forest and who are depending on the land for their livelihoods.” Dr. Panda emphasized the importance of community involvement and social protection, acknowledging the vital role of local populations who depend on forests and land for their livelihoods in the success of restoration initiatives. He underscored the interconnectedness of land restoration, local communities, and biodiversity, urging for a more inclusive approach that considers ecological, social, and economic aspects.

Furthermore, Dr. Panda highlighted that “Land degradation is not only about restoring degraded land but also about keeping biodiversity intact, about water scarcity and about economic costs. When we just go out and plant a tree, this is not land restoration. We need to think about the people who are dependent on the forest.”

He also pointed out a critical structural gap between available funding and the small-scale producers responsible for managing these ecosystems, underscoring the importance of financial inclusion and social protection for successful restoration initiatives “A major structural gap is between the funding available and the unbankable small-scale producers who are in charge of the ecosystems.”

He stressed that by understanding these connections, we can adopt more inclusive approaches to land restoration that ensure the resilience of both communities and ecosystems affected by degradation, desertification, and drought.

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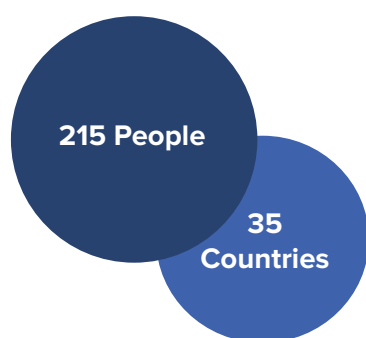
**- Dr. Panda**

In conclusion, the talks by Dr. Mirzabaev and Dr. Panda deliver a powerful message advocating for urgent action and a transformative shift in prioritizing ecosystem restoration. They call upon governments, policymakers, and the global community to invest in restoring degraded landscapes, fostering resilience in both communities and ecosystems, and creating a sustainable future.

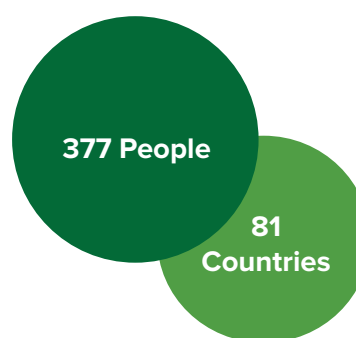
By addressing the financial gaps, involving local communities, and adopting inclusive strategies, we can collectively contribute to combating land degradation, preserving biodiversity, and securing a healthier, more prosperous world for generations to come.

The Brown Bag Lunch attracted close to 400 registrants from 81 countries, with 142 people from 35 countries eventually joining.

## Attendees



## Registrants



Replay the webinar on YouTube, [here >>](#)