Recultivation of degraded soils in Morocco

IPROconsult

Client:
German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ)

Services provided:
Soil recultivation

Cooperation partners:
ARGE, IPRO, AMykor, C.M.E.R.

Execution period:
2008-2012

Within the scope of the GIZ program for the protection of nature and to combat desertification (PRONALCD), the consortium IPRO and AMykor as well as the Moroccan partner C.M.E.R. developed new methods for recultivation of demoted zones and will realized an exemplary agricultural and forestry after use.

Initial situation

Morocco's agriculture and forestry are characterized by sensitive arid ecosystems whose stability and productivity are increasingly affected by degradation and desertification. Soils used for agricultural and forestry purposes are especially jeopardized. Competing land uses of soils that are only limitedly suitable for economic use are aggravated also in Morocco by increasing overexploitation, partially insufficient irrigation or unsuitable tillage methods. Usable soils are irreversibly lost due to unhampered erosion and intensifying desertification.

Objectives

The project "Recultivation of degraded soils in Morocco" was aimed at establishing professional and technical know-how in terms of recultivation options for degraded soils by using mycorrhizae as well as pilot applications for reutilization by agriculture and forestry.

Application of mycorrhizal products (soil auxiliary agents) has the potential of improving root-taking conditions and biomass production. Local resources in Morocco for development and application of soil conditioners have not yet been sufficiently developed; respective technologies and infrastructures (e.g. to obtain carrier materials) are non-existent.

The method of recultivation by mycorrhization* was initiated in three pilot regions with different degrees of degradation to demonstrate under local conditions that the use of soil auxiliary agents can contribute to preservation and quality enhancement of existing soils. The pertinent, targeted erosion protection measures make a direct contribution to fighting desertification.

In order to disseminate this recultivation method also beyond the pilot regions, a practice-oriented training program was developed and topic-specific events were held to familiarise planting farms, specialist institutes and training centers (universities) with potential recultivation measures on devastated and degraded soils by appropriate cultivation and rooting methods. The key Moroccan partner was the National Agronomic Research Institute (INRA Morocco).

The project referred directly to the UNCCD (United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification) which reflects the urgent need for action to safeguard ecosystems as resources of livelihood and economy.

** Mycorrhizae are not fertilisers but fungal spores that enable plants to better absorb soil nutrients and cope with stress factors such as aridity, unfavorable pH, high salt content and attacks by pathogens, and are totally harmless for man and animal.*

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