Abstract

Soil as a Basis to Create Enabling Conditions for Transitions towards Sustainable Land Management as a Key to Achieve the SDGs by 2030 [†]

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Abstract: The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can be grouped into three domains, the environmental domain, the social domain and the economic domain. These different layers influence each other; hence sustainable progress in the economic layer cannot be achieved without good progress in the two other layers. To achieve the SDGs, transitions in the current system are needed and actions should be taken that support transitions and contribute to short term needs and long term (global) goals. Therefore, it is necessary to have knowledge of transitions and understand the different phases of transition. In this paper we discuss the key role of the soil-water system in these transitions and the achievement of the SDGs by 2030. The increasing pressure on land calls for multi-use of land and for the restoration of degraded land. Healthy soils and healthy land are the basic conditions for the successful implementation and realization of the SDGs. To enable a sustainable management of the soil and water system a transition approach is a prerequisite. In the X-curve used to describe transitions, soil and land stakeholders are given a framework, which provides perspective for action, specifically for science and governance stakeholders in each phase of the transition. This framework can provide the required intensive guidance to (i) analyze the impact of provided incentives, (ii) identify new reference points in the transition and (iii) stimulate transition catalysts, and (iv) innovate by testing cutting edge policy instruments in close cooperation with society. The key to make the necessary transitions and realize the SDGs by 2030 lies in the intensive guidance to combining initiatives, steering knowledge flows and continuously assessing the stage of the transition, in order to plan specific steps needed to progress in the transition framework. Both scientist and policy makers have an important role in this guidance.

Keywords: sustainable development goals; land degradation neutrality; transitions; sustainable land management; new business models; transition science

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