



**Date:** 11<sup>st</sup> Sept, 2011  
**Reference:**

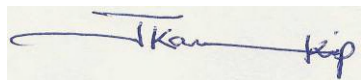
## AMESD PROGRAMME



### TRAINING REPORT

COMBATING LAND DEGRADATION: NEW THINKING AND  
METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

26-30 Sept, 2011

	NAME	RESPONSIBILITY	SIGNATURE
<b>PREPARED BY</b>	JOHN KAPOI	AMESD PROJECT RCMRD: SENIOR GIS TECHNICIAN	

## Introduction

**Rhodes University (RU or simply Rhodes)** is a public research university located in Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. It is the province's oldest university, being one of four universities in that province. It is the fifth or sixth oldest university in the country

Rhodes was founded in 1904 as Rhodes University College, named after Cecil Rhodes, through a grant from the Rhodes Trust. It became a constituent college of the University of South Africa in 1918 before becoming an independent university in 1951.



## Training Theme

The training is combating land degradation: New thinking and Methods of Assessment. Land degradation as a slow onset disaster has contributed largely to desertification, food insecurity, competition and conflicts as well as undermining the national economies (James Gambiza, 2011, Hoffman and Ashwell, 2001).

It is for this reasons that new thinking and methodologies of assessment is deemed necessary. The disaster has ever since early 1970's have attracted international responses from United Nations agencies e.g. UNEP, UNFCC, UNCCD, UNCBD, and UNPACD among other international organizations and governments. Despite this international response and attentions, the responses put in place seems inadequate to address the challenge posed by the land degradation menace, this could be as a result of the methodologies and understanding of the land degradation context.

## Objectives

The main objective for the short course is to introduce a new thinking and methods of assessment of land degradation at small scale or plot scale level to better understand the changes that built up from the smallest units, while taking care of local experts and community perceptions and thinking of the same changes that happens within their local environment.

To draw students from large scale methods of assessment to small scale methods to better understand the status of land degradation at their local environments'.

## Training Modules

### *i. Theory*

- The training modules for the land degradation course undertaken in Rhodes University are as follows:
- Use of Repeat Photography in assessing land degradation
- Methods of Evaluating dry land degradation
- Ostrom Framework: A general framework of Analysis
- Rapid Plant Diversity assessment, and influence of scale on degradation
- Landscape function Analysis (LFA)

- Carbon sequestration and Restoration providing a context for rehabilitation
- Carbon Farming: Potential for investing in sustainability
- Case studies on land degradation in South Africa

## **ii. Practical**

The participants were introduced to the LFA methodology, a methodology developed by D.J Tongway and N.L Hindley of Australia, which has been tested extensively in Australia and Republic of South Africa, in plot scale assessment.

The team (participants) were taken to Peddie (RSA) to meet the district government officials for brief interviews with an objective of getting more information on the subject from the local experts and the thinking of the local community on the subject, and later proceeded to Mgwalana communal land for plot scale Assessment field practical

## **Assessment Criteria**

The University assessment criterion is based on the group discussions and presentations made as group in the class sessions. The second assessment is based on the field practical results in student's case study area submitted in a written report, detailing the practical exercise findings, results and conclusions, based on the LFA methodology developed by D.J Tongway. The potential credits based on 46 hours represent about 5 credits in this course module.

## **Conclusion**

LFA methodology is crucial in assessing land degradation at plot scale level. Linking this methodology with other scientific methods especially the methods applied at IGAD region in land degradation is likely going to bring better understanding of the land degradation levels.

LFA Methodology is able to predict the dominant ecological species in the assessment area that may trigger further ecological investigations on the dominance and possibility of soil, nutrients or physical and chemical changes in an area over time.

## **Acknowledgement**

RCMRD/ICPAC: I would like to acknowledge the Director General, Dr.H Farah, *PhD (RCMRD)* Prof.L Ogallo *PhD, ICPAC* and Director Remote Sensing GIS and Mapping (AMESD Thematic Expert) Dr T.Korme *PhD (RCMRD)*, Mr. Vincent Mtaroni (AMESD Project Manager, RCMRD) AMESD ICPAC Thematic experts, Mr. Florent Lasry, and Z. Atheru, ICPAC/RCMRD Finance and HR department for allowing me to participate in this training and making the necessary logistical arrangement. And finally Rhodes University training coordinator Dr. James Gambiza, *PhD*, and Zelda Odendaal for the efforts they made in course material preparation.

Field Photos:



Dr. Gambiza, Lecture on LFA



Course Participants



Lecture Session



Mgwalana communal land