

EXPERIENCE AND PERSPECTIVES ON THE REHABILITATION OF STEPPE ECOSYSTEMS IN ALGERIA

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The steppes of Algeria represent approximately 25% of the country's surface area and contain some forested but mainly rangelands territories made up of herbaceous plant ranges and with a central activity which is extensive sheep breeding. Algeria today suffers from the phenomenon of desertification and land degradation linked mainly to the decline in plant resources and the increase in animal numbers, thus creating overgrazing; this last; has caused the desertification of a large part of these territories and climate change has exacerbated the phenomenon of land degradation. To address this observation, a research project was set up aimed at the rehabilitation of degraded territories by the establishment of enclosure rangelands and pastoral plantations, diachronic monitoring was carried out on these territories over 10 years to understand the evolution of the vegetation after rehabilitation but also to study the behavior of the indigenous populations in the light of the new plantations brought by the project. The results of the monitoring have proven that the possibility of restoring degraded rangelands is possible even if the impact of climate change is very present in these areas but the new uses of enclosure lands and plantations have shown that a large majority of new pastures were once again devastated by overgrazing; and breeders have built new strategies based on increasing herd size. Ultimately, the developed rangelands are today experiencing the same practices of overexploitation and overgrazing, which questions us about the impact of these projects to combat desertification.