

## 1 What is the Sustainable Land Management Knowledge Base?

The [Knowledge Base](#) is an Internet-based tool that facilitates the access, the exchange and methodical accumulation of key knowledge to implement [Sustainable Land Management \(SLM\) in Africa](#). It has been developed by the [TerrAfrica Partnership](#)<sup>1</sup>.

The Knowledge Base is freely available to any stakeholders seeking information on SLM in Africa, at any level. Typical users include representatives of national SLM task force, civil society, research and development organizations, among others.

The Knowledge Base contains a large [selection of information resources](#) related to SLM in Africa. These resources comprise the most relevant information available for African countries and partners to scale-up SLM. Information comes in different formats including text documents, multimedia documents, maps, statistics, websites, etc. The [initial screening](#) of these resources was done on the [basis of quality and relevance](#) but new resources can be easily added by registered users of the Knowledge Base.

In addition to these information resources, the Knowledge Base provides a number of [user-friendly interactive tools](#) allowing SLM stakeholders to form virtual communities, exchange knowledge on any SLM issues and strengthen cooperation for optimal development impact. In particular, the Knowledge Base tools allow users to: 1) build different user communities (thematic, geographic) using restricted or public discussion boards, 2) exchange and upload information, 3) develop a common understanding and knowledge on any SLM related issues.

The Knowledge Base is managed through a [decentralised system](#) that enables members to create user-defined [country and thematic workspaces](#) according to the specific needs and objectives of a country or a topic.

The Knowledge Base is **not** an exhaustive repository of documents nor a utility for socializing. It is not a news aggregator about SLM events. Rather it is designed to be a user-friendly tool to connect SLM stakeholders, foster collaboration and promote the scaling-up of SLM practices across Africa.

## 2 Why a Knowledge Base on SLM?

Knowledge resources on SLM are difficult to access, fragmented, incomplete and insufficiently operational for many partners working on SLM issues in Africa. Lack of access to knowledge serves as a barrier to improved land management. In response, a methodical and regular effort is being made to [collect, package and customize the existing information](#) so that it can be used at various levels of SLM implementation; from community planning up to national policy-making and financing.

Because of nearly continuous consultations required of land management stakeholders, it is necessary to [facilitate the sharing and implementation of this knowledge](#) in an open, user-friendly manner. To meet these demands, a state-of-the-art knowledge management approach is needed to establish a dedicated Knowledge Base, whose [overall objective](#) is to:

- Provide one-stop access to key information on complex issues related to rural land management in Africa.
- Exchange numerous data and information on cross-cutting issues among different users at various levels.
- Build consensus and foster alignment on action, understanding, and enhance monitoring of results and impact.

The Knowledge Base is open to all stakeholders involved in mainstreaming and scaling-up SLM in Africa. It does **not** endorse any particular technique or process relating to the SLM agenda. The Knowledge Base does not represent the views of any particular member of the TerrAfrica partnership. Its sole purpose is to serve as a

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1 TerrAfrica has been developed as a multi-partner platform and a primary vehicle for consultation and action with the direction and support provided by a group of African governments, [NEPAD](#), [the World Bank](#), [the UNCCD's Global Mechanism \(GM\)](#), [the UNCCD Secretariat](#), [the GEF Family](#), [IFAD](#), [the FAO](#), [UNEP](#), [AfDB](#), regional and sub-regional organizations, as well as multilateral organizations including [the European Union](#) and [the European Commission](#), bilateral donors, civil society and scientific organizations including [FARA](#) and [CGIAR](#) centers.

"public good" to facilitate the mainstreaming and scaling-up of SLM practices across Africa.

### 3 What can you do with the Knowledge Base?

You can participate in sharing knowledge and growing this community three ways: as a **visitor**, as a **registered user** or as a **workspace registered user**. Joining as registered users is **free and simple**: just [submit a simple form](#) on-line.

As a **visitor** you can:

- Access resources either by browsing through the chapters and sub-chapters outlining the SLM vision or directly by searching through the database using multiple search criteria.
- View public forum discussions.
- Ask a question or send comments to an administrator by using a simple contact form.

As a **registered user** you can:

- Use the interactive tools to add a resource to the Knowledge Base.
- Participate in a discussion forum.
- Edit your own profile in the directory of users.

As a **workspace registered user** you can also:

- Access a specific **country/thematic workspace** which contains additional **resources** (documents and forum discussions) specifically tailored to meet the needs and priorities of a country-specific investment program or a working group dealing with a specific SLM topic.

### 4 How to access the information resources?

There are three different ways to access the resources:

1. **Browse by the shared SLM vision of partners**: the information resources have been organized hierarchically in chapters and sub-chapters based on themes developed in the shared SLM vision. **Summaries of key available knowledge** have been prepared for each of the 4 chapters and 12 sub-chapters:
  1. **Demands on and threats to Africa's land resources: the rationale for SLM**
    - The increasing demand for land goods and services
    - Land degradation
  2. **Building on data and experience**
    - Lessons learned, case studies, projects and programmes implemented
    - Directories and portals
    - Maps and statistics
    - Multimedia (photos, videos and audio)
  3. **Sustainable land management - the basis for the new vision**
    - Concepts, principles, frameworks and approaches
    - Basket of technologies and techniques
    - Extension and training
    - Challenges in up-scaling and mainstreaming SLM, knowledge gaps and barriers
  4. **TerrAfrica: strengthening implementation of SLM**
    - Vision and guidelines
    - Diagnostics and investment frameworks
2. **Search engine**: find information using a simple free-text search or by more advanced options such as searching by country, TerrAfrica activities, list of keywords, etc.
3. **Country and thematic workspaces**: contain public as well as restricted resources used by working groups

to organize efforts towards program-based approaches to SLM, such as by preparing and implementing SLM investment frameworks. These workspaces are managed by a **workspace administrator** and are accessible only to selected workspace registered users.

## 5 What can be done with the interactive tools?

The **interactive tools** in the Knowledge Base can be used to find information resources and communicate with other **registered users** or with **administrators**:

1. **Forum discussions**: any visitor can browse [forum discussions](#) but only registered users can post messages, share documents, send comments, etc.
2. **Add a resource**: any registered user can [add a resource](#) (text, documents, multimedia documents, maps, statistics, websites, etc.) by submitting a simple form. The submission will be reviewed by an administrator before publication in the Knowledge Base.
3. **Register/Edit your profile**: joining the Knowledge Base community is completely free and easy with a [simple form to fill](#). Once registered the user can always update his/her profile to reflect some changes. They have the possibility to post messages in the forum, browse the community directory or add resources.
4. **Directory of registered users**: they can browse this tool to discover who are the [other registered members](#) of the Knowledge Base community and use their details to contact them directly.
5. **Ask an administrator**: anyone can send comments, suggestions or questions using a [simple contact form](#). The administrators will be informed by email and answer the users within the next 48 hours.

## 6 What is the value-added of the Knowledge Base?

Compared to existing websites related to SLM, the Knowledge Base offers the following advantages:

1. **SLM vision**: the Knowledge Base information resources are organized around the vision shared by TerrAfrica partners for achieving SLM in Africa. It facilitates the alignment around a common body of knowledge.
2. **Country and thematic workspaces**: administrators and users can build and own knowledge bases containing resources (public and restricted) focusing on specific country/topic priorities and needs.
3. **Quality control**: all the resources available from more than a 100 different sources have been hand-picked and reviewed by the Knowledge Base administrators for relevance and quality.
4. **Interactive tools**: can be easily used by any registered user to interact dynamically with the Knowledge Base and other users.
5. **Decentralized management**: the management and administration of the Knowledge Base is completely decentralized. Anyone with an access to Internet can interact with the Knowledge Base.
6. **Community building**: one of the Knowledge Base's goal is to gather national and international development experts who are committed to develop SLM practices in Africa and who seek to share their knowledge, resources, ideas and experiences in this domain.
7. **Intuitive interface**: the Knowledge Base has been designed to be as intuitive and easy-to-use as possible. Its is proposing a flat structure and simple navigation based on simple icons that minimize reading and enable consultative processes.

## 7 How do we manage the Knowledge Base?

The Knowledge Base is managed by a **group of networked international administrators** composed of staff members from the following organisations: World Bank, FAO, NEPAD, CGIAR. The administrators play a supportive role in controlling the quality of the resources proposed by the users, monitoring and facilitating the discussions in the forum or replying to e-mails inquiries.

In addition, there is another group of **workspace administrators** who are responsible for building up **country- or topic-specific SLM workspaces**. Their task is to identify profiles and upload country/topic-specific and -relevant resources as well as decide if a resource is meant to be **public** (shared with everyone) or **restricted** (shared with registered members of the workspace working group).

## **8 What is the future of the Knowledge Base?**

One of the key challenge is to **create a true community of users and nurture its evolution**. The Knowledge Base could evolve from a simple, but efficient, directory of resources related to SLM toward an active community of regional, national and international experts supporting effective SLM practices across Africa.

To visit the Knowledge Base, click <http://knowledgebase.terrafrica.org/>