

THE MANAGEMENT OF SOIL EROSION CONSORTIUM (MSEC) : INTERDISCIPLINAIRE APPROACH TO RESEARCH AT A CATCHMENT SCALE

LE CONSORTIUM DE GESTION DE L'ÉROSION DES SOLS (MSEC) : UNE APPROCHE INTERDISCIPLINAIRE UTILISANT L'ÉCHELLE DU BASSIN VERSANT

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ABSTRACT

As part of the CGIAR soil, water, and nutrient management programme (SWNM), the management of soil erosion consortium (MSEC) comprises the first catchment-based research implementation program on land management in erosion-prone lands of the humid tropics. It integrates biophysical and socioeconomic sciences in an endeavour to find hard data on soil erosion in the humid tropics, and to identify practical solutions that are acceptable to the various users of the land. The purpose is not to stop soil erosion at all costs, but to find compromise solutions that will allow farmers to develop profitable farming opportunities while keeping the environment healthy.

It was agreed to measure soil gains and losses as well as related problems (e.g. biocides) at different scales between plots and micro-watersheds. Activities start with a review of local knowledge of conservation methods, and comprise a GIS based biophysical inventory of the catchments. After upgrading or establishing the equipment for monitoring water, soil and element balances, and a two year period of measuring the status quo, alternative land management practices will be implemented in a farmer-participatory manner within one catchments at each site while one will remain untouched as a control. The projects are designed for a 5-15 years period.

This approach is currently in the *establishment phase* in Asia (China, Laos, Vietnam, Philippines, Indonesia, Nepal, and Thailand). Options for a similar approach in Africa have to be discussed.

Key words : Catchment research, participatory approach, Asia, long-term experiments, on-site effects, off-site effects.



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