

The contribution of the Spanish Court of Audit to governance in the fight against wildland fires



TRIBUNAL DE CUENTAS

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REPORT ON MEASURES FOR DEFENSE AGAINST DESERTIFICATION AND FIRE PREVENTION AND FIGHTING



- Released in October, 2020.
- Included in the Anual Audit Plan and submitted to the Spanish Parliament.

JOINT REPORT OF THE COURTS OF AUDITORS OF SPAIN AND PORTUGAL ON DEFENSE AGAINST DESERTIFICATION AND WILDLAND FIRES FIGHTING AND PREVENTION



- It is an exercise in international cooperation, the result of the Bilateral Meeting held in Trujillo in 2018.
- It has been prepared by combining the results of both countries' reports.



Since 2015, the Spanish Court of Audit has included environmental sustainability as a cross-cutting principle for the of public sector audit.

The 2018 Strategic Plan included the promotion of environmental audits as an initiative.

The Court has released many reports recommending measures to improve management and promoting environmental sustainability.

Spain is one of the countries in the European Union that suffers from these phenomena most severely, so the Report, released in October 2020, highlights issues of utmost interest for managers and citizens.



In the area of defense against desertification, it pointed out that no mechanisms had been foreseen for monitoring the degree of achievement of the Program's objectives and that no specific financial resources had been allocated.

In the area of wildland fires fighting, the report underlined the reduction of resources allocated by Spain to prevention, and some issues regarding data collection. In addition, the need to continue improving coordination of all the entities involved was remarked.

The report makes 23 recommendations, which are currently being followed up. In the field of wildland fire fighting, it suggests updating planning instruments, strengthening resources, prevention and coordination, as well as exploiting technological innovations.



It has been prepared jointly by teams from both institutions, constituting a remarkable cooperation exercise of great relevance and usefulness.

It summarizes the results of the audits of both institutions, highlighting multiple common issues.

It addresses, in addition to the wildland fire fighting the defense against desertification. In this respect, fires originate desertification processes and, conversely, some of the desertification factors (aridity, loss of plant health) increase the risk of wildland fires

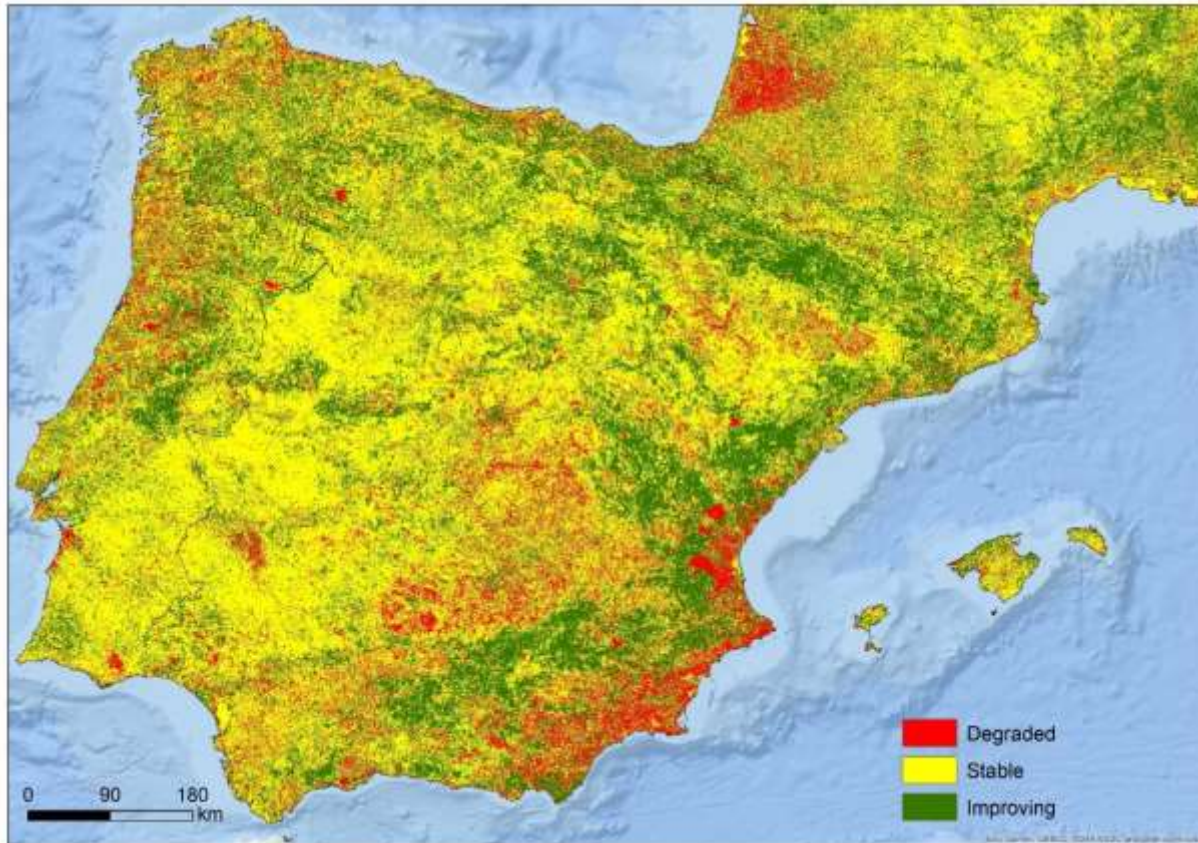
SDG 15, "Life on land" incorporates a target directly related to desertification and an indicator, 15.3.1 to measure whether "land degradation neutrality" is achieved.

According to the data now reported, in the following four years (2016-2019), the proportion of degraded land would have increased in Spain from 5.2 % to 11.1 %, while in Portugal it would have decreased from 14.5 % to 6.1 %.

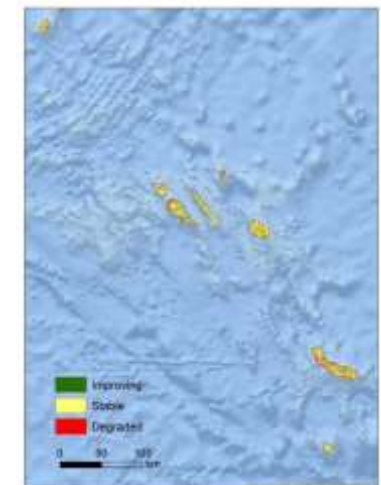
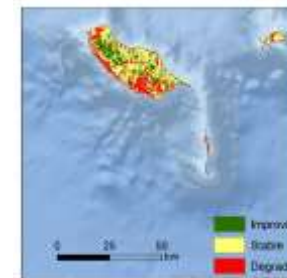
The report highlights that desertification does not distinguish territorial boundaries and represents a significant threat to the ecosystems of the Iberian Peninsula, aggravated by climate change.

However, the magnitude of the differences, due to the use of different methodologies for which there is no scientific unanimity, makes it difficult to compare the parameters and to obtain a clear conclusion on the respective results





- Large areas of both countries are affected by land degradation processes (16% of the total).
- In addition, the model does not sufficiently capture the degradation suffered by already degraded areas.



Identified weaknesses

- The organizational structure of national programs has not been fully developed;
- Economic resources have not been specifically allocated to defense against desertification;
- Soil management and protection measures have not been planned and completed;
- Program, desertification and land degradation monitoring frameworks have not been sufficiently developed; and
- There are no transboundary cooperation projects.

Recommendations to both countries

- ⑩ Implement improvements in the monitoring of desertification and land degradation, and in the organizational development and in the promotion, monitoring and evaluation of the Programs to combat desertification and in the cooperation between the two countries.



Thank you very much for your attention

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