

# Environmental Change and Forced Migration

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## The EACH-FOR Project

- Funded by EU in 6th Framework Program
- January 2007 – March 2009
- 8 Partners (demography, sociology, environmental sciences)
- [www.each-for.eu](http://www.each-for.eu)



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# Central Aims

- to explore and describe the causes of forced migration in relation to environmental change;
- to provide plausible future scenarios of environmentally-induced forced migration.



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# First Step

General overview studies for each of the regions considered in the project: Europe and Russia, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Central Asia.



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# General Overview Studies

The overall characteristics of the region

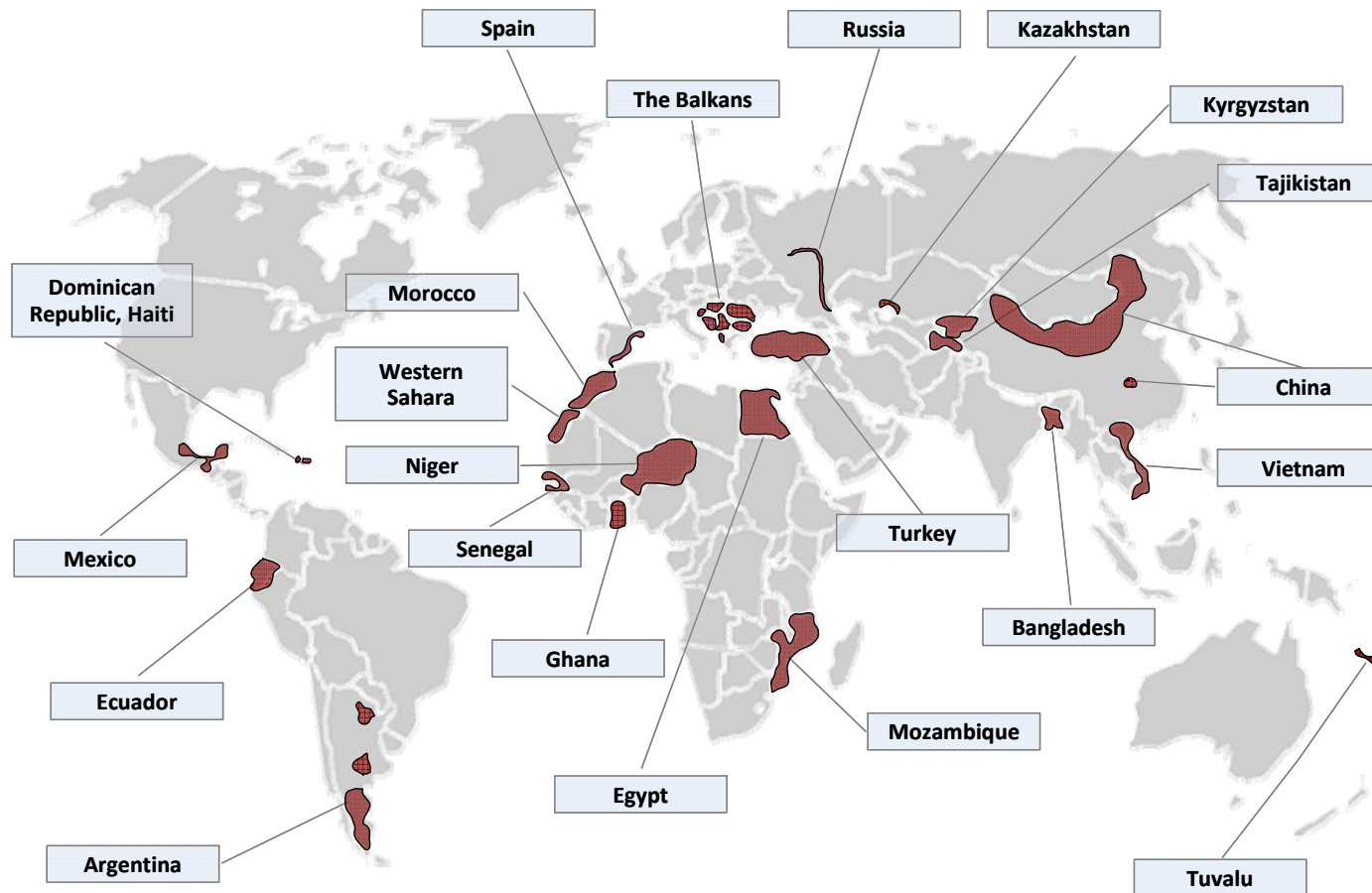
- demographic and socio-economic trends
- political context
- relevant socio-cultural aspects
- main types of environmental degradation
- migration processes in the region including their historical development, the main patterns, trends and networks as well as migration policies



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# 23 Case Study Areas



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# Fieldwork

- Who has been migrating away from situations of environmental degradation/change;
- Where migrants are coming from and where are they going to;
- Why people have migrated;
- How environmental degradation interplays with other social, economic and political factors when migration decisions are made;
- What might have prevented people from migrating in the first place;
- Why people who remained in areas of environmental degradation/change remained in their location while others migrated
- How the migration activities occurred (choice of destination, what networks were used to facilitate migration?).
- The effects of migration on the area of origin (remittances, etc.)



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# Sources of Information

- Expert interviews
- Migrant questionnaires
- Non-migrant questionnaires
- (Desk Research – Russia, Spain)



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# Case Study Reports

- Available on the web-site
- Policy Briefs:
  - 2 pages
  - Overview
  - Methods
  - Key Findings
  - Recommendations



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# Scenarios

- Used the GEO scenarios to provide possible pictures of the world in the future.
- The scenarios illustrate different possible developments depending on whether the pathway to the future are characterised by an emphasis on economic growth, on a strengthening of environmental governance or on regions isolating themselves.
- **What** would happen to environmentally forced migration **if** this kind of development were to take place?
- Analyses show that the largest increase in push factors is in the Security First scenario, but this is the scenario in which international migration is restricted.
- Need: a discussion of the scenarios with local stakeholders to elaborate the scenarios at the local level and produce a more differentiated analysis of the scenario implications.



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## Climate change is not the only potential environmental trigger for migration

- soil degradation and erosion;
- deforestation;
- water, soil and air pollution;
- water-logging and salinisation of irrigated lands;
- landslides and mudslides;
- radiation from nuclear waste;
- saltwater intrusion and accelerated coastal erosion;
- flooding and riverbank erosion;
- tropical cyclones;
- extreme aridity and irregular rainfall;
- and sea-level rise.



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## Migration is a traditional coping mechanism

- Migration has been used often as a means to cope with the effects of some periodic, environmental events, such as droughts or floods. A preferred option is temporary or seasonal migration.
- In some areas these traditional patterns have changed in recent decades, partly because of climate change but also because of other human-induced factors.



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## Migration occurs when livelihoods cannot be maintained

- The environment is the basis for agriculture (and fishing and herding), which is still the major income source for the majority of the population in the developing and transition countries studied in the EACH-FOR project.
- When this economic basis is threatened by the environmental degradation, people migrate elsewhere in search of an alternative livelihood.
- In many cases all sectors of society were impacted (not only the farmers); e.g. shop and restaurant owners, truck drivers, and merchants



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# Migration decisions are complex

- Many of the people who migrated due to environmental problems did not attribute the migration directly to environmental factors.
- Instead they referred to low income and bad living conditions, or in some cases to political and social conditions.
- However, in many cases one of the root causes of their loss of livelihoods is environmental.



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# A consistent finding

The research results repeatedly point to the interconnectedness of environmental factors with economic, social and political factors affecting the migration flows of people.



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## Who migrates?

- Many of the EACH-FOR case studies show unambiguously that people who want to leave their villages/regions/country can only do so if they have the necessary financial means and access to networks that support migration.
- In fact, the financial means are often not available, since the environmental degradation had a negative impact on their income or the overall political or economic context overrides the environmental push factor.



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## Internal or international migration?

An important outcome of the fieldwork is that migration induced by environmental hazards and degradation is mainly internal and seldom international.



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## The special case of forced displacement

- Need participatory processes
- Information on resettlement location
- Jobs and training
- Help with the compensation payment



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# Key Recommendations

## Implement sustainable development

- protection of natural resources
- strengthen sustainable productive, income-generating activities and improve quality of life (e.g. reviving some traditional regional industries or trad.agriculture)
- providing assistance for family agriculture, support for self-organisation and self-management, and ensuring continued access to land
- Fair agricultural and trade policies



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# Further recommendations

- **Improve the capacity to adapt**
- **Improve the livelihoods of seasonal migrants**
- **Mitigation is also necessary**
- **Training, education and networking**
- **Migration is not always a “bad thing”**
- **Resettlement must be carefully planned**



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# The responsibility of the EU

- Environmental change is one of the motives for migration, but mostly the migrants move within their country or region, not to Europe.
- This has three implications for the EU:
  - development policies of the EU should focus on **increasing the capacity to cope** of those people in developing countries affected by environmental changes and hazards;
  - when people cannot migrate because they have neither the money nor the networks to do so, they will suffer as a result of environmental changes and hazards, so the EU must be prepared to help them with **humanitarian aid**.
  - the EU has a responsibility to **reduce emissions and mitigate the effects of climate change** and thus the impacts on people in developing countries, who otherwise will face an increasing pressure to migrate.



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# *EACH* *FOR* Future research directions

- Expand the case studies (more questionnaires; more places..)
- Statistical analysis, meta-analyses, econometric modelling
- Link to development research and vulnerability research (and livelihoods approaches)



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## Scenario development and Analysis

**NEED:** to engage in a structured dialogue with local stakeholders in order to elaborate the scenario narratives for the local level and discuss the local implications for migration of the different scenarios. Without this step, it will not be possible to make reliable estimates of the potential effects of different pathways on migration patterns.



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Thank you for your attention!



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