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Programme and budget

Programme and budget for the biennium 2025–2026

**Committee for the Review of the Implementation of
the Convention**

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Item 2 (b) of the provisional agenda

**Effective implementation of the Convention at
national, subregional and regional levels**

**Multi-year workplan for Convention institutions and
subsidiary bodies**

**Comprehensive multi-year workplan for the Convention
(2025–2028) and two-year costed work programme for the
Convention (2025–2026)**

Note by the secretariat*

Summary

This document contains the proposed workplan and work programme of the secretariat and the Global Mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. This document also provides an overview of the human and financial resources required by each programme and should be considered in conjunction with the document on the programme and budget for the biennium 2025–2026 ([ICCD/COP\(16\)/5](#)) and documents [ICCD/COP\(16\)/7](#) and [ICCD/CRIC\(22\)/3](#) on the performance in the triennium 2022–2024.

* This document was scheduled for publication after the standard publication date owing to circumstances beyond the submitter's control.



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I. Introduction

1. By its [decision 1/COP.15](#), the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) requested the secretariat and the Global Mechanism (GM) to prepare a multi-year workplan for the Convention (2025–2028), utilizing the results-based management approach, to be considered at the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 16). By its [decision 10/COP.15](#), the COP further requested the Executive Secretary to prepare a results-based budget and work programme for the biennium 2025–2026. This document presents the comprehensive four-year workplan (2025–2028) and the costed two-year work programme (2025–2026) for the secretariat and the GM.
2. The workplan contributes to the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework that was adopted by the COP at its thirteenth session.¹ It is formulated as a brief four-year results framework that focuses on substantive and organizational goals and related indicators.
3. The two-year costed work programme is derived from the results framework. It outlines a practical proposal for work to be carried out in the next biennium in order to meet the aims of the results framework. It is structured around the programmes of the secretariat and the priority areas of the GM.
4. This document should be read in conjunction with document [ICCD/COP\(16\)/5](#) on the proposed programme and budget for the biennium 2025–2026, and documents [ICCD/COP\(16\)/7](#) and [ICCD/CRIC\(22\)/3](#) on the performance in the triennium 2022–2024.

II. Four-year perspective: 2025–2028

5. During the last decade, the scope and depth of matters considered under the UNCCD have significantly evolved while its modalities of work have also changed. The COP has adopted numerous important decisions, such as those on land degradation neutrality (LDN), drought policies and preparedness, gender, land tenure, sand and dust storms (SDS) and synergies, which are guiding the actions of Parties and Convention institutions and bodies. The provision of scientific advice has been developed through the establishment of the Science-Policy Interface (SPI), and the involvement of key stakeholders has been fostered through the establishment of a UNCCD Gender Caucus and targeted strategies for engaging the private sector, as well as youth.
6. At the midpoint of its 2018–2030 Strategic Framework, the UNCCD has accumulated many important achievements. As detailed in the midterm evaluation of the Strategic Framework,² the Convention remains relevant for addressing policies, plans and projects around land and drought as well as related synergies. The LDN framework, with the conceptual and methodological definitions, target setting and project preparation support, has engaged almost two thirds of the world's countries. Together, their voluntary LDN targets represent a significant share of global commitments to land restoration. LDN influences various processes, policy frameworks and major programmes and projects, from the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to programming under the Global Environment Facility (GEF). It is the basis for supporting successful resource mobilization under the UNCCD. For example, for the triennium 2022–2024, the GM reports³ that 19 projects developed through its support were approved for implementation, representing approximately USD 946 million in financial terms.
7. The UNCCD has become a key player in global advocacy, policy-making and cooperation concerning drought, and that role is further growing as droughts become more widespread and severe. The Convention process offers a platform for multiple stakeholders to agree on policy and normative frameworks and approaches to enhance action on drought, and the UNCCD agenda on drought is relevant to the needs and approaches of countries all

¹ [Decision 7/COP.13](#).

² See [ICCD/COP\(16\)/2](#).

³ See [ICCD/CRIC\(22\)/5](#).

over the world. In the follow-up to the report of the Intergovernmental Working Group on Drought, the importance of that agenda will further increase.

8. While progress is being made, more effort is needed in many critically important areas to ensure the sustainability of the results achieved so far as well as further achievements. The decisions and products generated in the UNCCD context must be translated into effective action on the ground. In fact, the latest UNCCD national reporting indicates that more land is becoming degraded at an alarming rate. More political commitment and media attention are needed to build the necessary willingness and resources for large-scale implementation. Targeted scientific and science-policy support and capacity-building are also important. Further stakeholder involvement, particularly a shift in private sector practices toward protecting land, will be necessary for progress at scale.

9. In this context, the UNCCD proposes an ambitious 2025–2028 workplan and 2025–2026 work programme that continue to build global collaboration and commitment to protect land and mitigate the effects of drought. Particular emphasis is placed on introducing a strong UNCCD drought agenda, ensuring continuity of action on gender equality and secure tenure as critically important factors for land restoration, strengthening UNCCD science-policy guidance, and improving the capacity of the GM to support the preparation of projects.

10. The UNCCD results framework for 2025–2028 is presented in table 1.

Table 1:
Results framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification for 2025–2028

<i>2025–2028 main outcomes</i>	<i>Outcome indicators</i>
1. Improved enabling environment to reduce desertification and land degradation	<p>Number of countries supported in setting voluntary land degradation neutrality (LDN) targets</p> <p>Number of countries supported in implementing the second phase of the LDN Target Setting Programme</p> <p>Number of operational Peace Forest Initiative programmes</p>
2. Improved preparedness for and resilience to the impacts of drought	<p>Extent of partnerships supporting the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) drought agenda</p> <p>Number of information products and tools concerning drought that are produced or upgraded</p> <p>Number of users in each region for the Communities of Learning and Practice on drought issues</p> <p>Number of countries supported in translating drought plans into a prioritized investment strategy</p>
3. Gender equality integrated into UNCCD implementation	<p>Cumulative number of transformative projects, developed with support from the UNCCD, that include interventions promoting gender equality</p> <p>Number of information products and tools concerning gender equality that are produced or upgraded</p> <p>Number of male and female staff in the secretariat and the Global Mechanism (GM)</p>
4. Secure tenure integrated into UNCCD implementation	<p>Cumulative number of transformative projects, developed with support from the UNCCD, that include interventions promoting secure tenure</p> <p>Number of information products and tools concerning secure tenure that are produced or upgraded</p>
5. The UNCCD is an active partner in global	Number of inputs into the Decade on Combating SDS involving the UNCCD

<i>2025–2028 main outcomes</i>	<i>Outcome indicators</i>
collaboration on sand and dust storms (SDS)	Number of information products and tools concerning SDS that are produced or upgraded Number of countries supported in developing SDS assessments
6. UNCCD decision-making and implementation guided by up-to-date science-policy information	Extent of the Science-Policy Interface work programme implemented Number of UNCCD guides, reports and policy briefs
7. An updated UNCCD Performance Review and Assessment of Implementation System	Extent of updates made to the reporting platform Number of capacity-building events and individuals trained in reporting modalities Number of new or upgraded datasets, information products and tools for reporting that are made available to countries
8. A bigger profile for the UNCCD on the global agenda through strategic communication	Number of media reports referencing land and drought issues and the UNCCD Engagement on UNCCD digital channels (number of website visits, downloads and social media followers)
9. Growth in strategic partnerships and stakeholder engagement in support of the UNCCD	Number of accreditations to the Conference of the Parties (COP) Number of new strategic partnerships/collaborations per year
10. Enhanced resource mobilization by the secretariat and the GM	Extrabudgetary resources received per year for the implementation of the UNCCD workplan Total funds raised by UNCCD and its partners for projects and initiatives addressing desertification/land degradation and drought (DLDD) Number of donor countries/organizations engaged by the secretariat and/or the GM
11. An accelerated pipeline of flagships, programmes and projects to mobilize financing for DLDD	Cumulative success rate of proposals approved versus proposals supported Cumulative total budget of proposals approved Cumulative number of proposals supported that contribute to the implementation of country commitments to the three Rio conventions (UNCCD, Convention on Biological Diversity and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) Cumulative number of partners engaged to support project preparation, piloting and execution through the Partnership for Project Preparation Cumulative number of multi-country/regional project design capacity-building workshops convened with multi-sector focal points
12. Enhanced private sector engagement with the UNCCD and on land issues	Cumulative number of private sector entities mainstreaming land/drought in a recognized Environmental, Social and Governance framework/reporting process Cumulative number of partnerships established with private sector entities. Cumulative amount of private and innovative finance leveraged Number of dialogue meetings organized with the private sector or philanthropic foundations.

<i>2025–2028 main outcomes</i>	<i>Outcome indicators</i>
13. The secretariat and the GM operate effectively	<p>Per cent of COP decisions targeting the secretariat and/or GM implemented</p> <p>Number of UNCCD official meetings, including those of the Bureaux, organized in a timely and efficient manner</p> <p>Per cent of staff having participated in training</p>
14. The administration of the secretariat and the GM functions efficiently and in accordance with United Nations rules	<p>Per cent of budget spent</p> <p>Extent of improvements recommended by auditors</p>

III. The costed two-year work programme for 2025–2026

A. Overview of resource requirements

11. In line with [decision 10/COP.15](#), the Executive Secretary is requested to present two scenarios for the 2025–2026 programme and budget: one presenting zero nominal growth, and the other presenting possible adjustments to the zero nominal growth scenario. As presented in the document on the programme and budget for the biennium 2025–2026 ([ICCD/COP\(16\)/5](#)), deciding on a zero nominal growth scenario for the 2025–2026 UNCCD budget would entail a large-scale reduction in the services and activities under the UNCCD. Should Parties choose that option, the affected activity areas would need to be carefully considered at the COP as they would include some of the secretariat’s core work.

12. This document is based on the second budget scenario, presenting possible adjustments to zero nominal growth. This scenario seeks to meet the current budgetary shortfall vis-à-vis approved staff, and increase the budget to cover the necessary human resources for several core tasks of the secretariat and the GM which are currently either unfunded or at risk of becoming so. To cover the costs of currently approved staff positions, the UNCCD budget would need to grow by EUR 1,841,708, which represents approximately 12 per cent of the currently approved budget. To cover the core tasks of the secretariat and the GM, which are currently either unfunded or at risk of becoming so, the UNCCD budget is proposed to be increased by EUR 2,214,574 to include the costs of eight new staff positions. Further adjustments to the budget, including some additional funding and some reductions to the current budget allocations, would amount to a EUR 482,934 increase. Together, the proposed increase for new staff and other adjustments would amount to EUR 2,697,508, representing an almost 19 per cent increase on the current approved budget. When combined, meeting the shortfall and funding the proposed increases would amount to EUR 4,539,218 with a 31 per cent variance on the currently approved budget (all amounts in this paragraph exclude the programme support costs).

13. The presentations of the secretariat programmes and the GM in section C below assume that the 2025–2026 UNCCD budget is decided according to the second budget scenario, presenting possible adjustments to zero nominal growth.

B. Analysis of organizational structure and staffing

14. By [decision 10/COP.15](#), the Executive Secretary was requested to “further analyse the organizational structure and staffing to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in the implementation of the approved work programme, looking notably at the impact of the Science-Policy Interface”, and to report to COP 16 on the outcomes of the analysis.

15. During the second half of 2022, the secretariat and the GM conducted an internal review of the organizational structure, with the aim of organizing UNCCD staff to make best

use of its capacity and remove any obstacles to success. This review resulted in refocusing some of the UNCCD programmes and tasks (through lateral moves). The functions relating to external relations and partnerships, including the outreach and collaboration concerning the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations, civil society organizations (CSOs), youth and other major groups, as well as donor relations and corporate resource mobilization, were integrated into the Communications programme. The former External Relations, Policy and Advocacy programme was revised into Global Policy Advocacy and Regional Cooperation, consisting of the policy team (including drought, gender, land tenure, SDS, urban-rural linkages/migration, as well as the Global Land Outlook (GLO) series) and the Regional Liaison Offices. Administrative services were strengthened by three recruitments (under programme support costs). To further increase effectiveness and efficiency, all staff were encouraged to commit to “matrix management”, by which staff talents and skills as well as resources are shared across functions and programmes.

16. During the first half of 2024, the secretariat considered staffing from different perspectives, notably in preparation for the informal budget consultations in March and May 2024.⁴ Among other topics, the secretariat assessed workload changes in view of changes to the availability of staff and non-staff resources under the UNCCD during the last decade, the share of staff costs in the context of the overall core budget, and the ratio of staff and non-staff resources under the core budget and voluntary funding. The responsiveness of the current staff structure to the main tasks requested from the secretariat and the GM in the Convention text and various COP decisions was also considered. The specific case of the SPI, including related resources, was considered in detail in an external assessment of the SPI,⁵ which contributed to the review of the SPI as presented in document [ICCD/COP\(16\)/CST/6](#).

17. The findings of the analyses of the organizational structure and staffing include the following:

- The workload of the secretariat and the GM has significantly expanded in scope and depth in the last decade while resources under the core budget remain the same;
- Several areas of work currently rely on only one staff member. This is a high-risk situation: if that one person is unable to assume their duties, the entire area is likely to be halted or severely downscaled. “Matrix management” works well on special processes such as the organization of the COP but is not feasible for managing long-term absences;
- Closely related to the above, the organizational structure has no redundancy. On the contrary – several key areas of work have no assigned staff under the core budget. Such areas include gender equality, land tenure and SDS. Unless new core budget positions are established, their continuation is dependent on the availability of voluntary contributions;
- Most voluntary contributions do not provide funding for human resources other than short-term consultancies. This poses a risk of using core funded staff to deliver activities funded from voluntary contributions.

18. The proposals under the budget scenario on the proposed adjustment to the zero nominal growth scenario aim to respond to the challenges identified in the analyses of the organizational structure and staffing.

19. The organizational structure of the secretariat and the GM is presented in annex I while the distribution of the proposed core budget posts for the UNCCD secretariat by programme and for the GM are shown in table 2.

⁴ <https://www.unccd.int/news-stories/notifications/budget-consultations-ahead-unccd-cop16>.

⁵ <https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/inline-files/SPI%20external%20assessment%20June%202024.pdf>.

Table 2
Distribution of core budget posts for the secretariat by programme and for the Global Mechanism for the biennium 2025–2026

<i>Grade</i>	<i>EO</i>	<i>GBLA</i>	<i>CERP</i>	<i>GPARC</i>	<i>STI</i>	<i>AS</i>	<i>GM</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Variance from 2024</i>
Under-Secretary-General	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Director	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0
Professional	1	2	3	10	7	1	10	34	6
Subtotal	3	2	3	10	7	1	11	37	6
General Service	3	0	4	3	2	0	4	16	2
Total	6	2	7	13	9	1	15	53	8

Abbreviations: AS = Administrative Services, CERP = Communications, External Relations and Partnerships, EO = Executive Office, GPARC = Global Policy Advocacy and Regional Cooperation, GM = Global Mechanism, GBLA = Governing Bodies and Legal Affairs, STI = Science, Technology and Innovation.

C. Resource requirements of the secretariat

1. Executive Office

20. The Executive Office (EO) coordinates the secretariat in the support provided to the Convention bodies and ensures the overall effectiveness and coherence of the work of the secretariat. The Executive Secretary provides strategic direction for the secretariat and the GM and represents the organization externally. They consult with Parties, coordinate cooperation with other organizations and reach out to stakeholders worldwide to encourage their commitment to the objectives and implementation of the Convention. The Deputy Executive Secretary supports the Executive Secretary in managing the secretariat and in liaising with Parties and institutions at the highest level.

21. In 2025–2026, the EO will focus on advancing effective implementation towards meeting the objectives of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework while simultaneously contributing to global commitments, notably the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the SDGs, and the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration which will run from 2021–2030. Particular emphasis will be placed on promoting partnerships and cooperation for concrete action to meet the LDN targets set by Parties, and to further advance the UNCCD drought agenda.

22. Internally, the EO strives to develop the secretariat into a top-performing organization with solid expertise and recognized efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery. The EO will coordinate results-oriented planning and monitoring, through which the secretariat will continue to focus and prioritize its activities to ensure that its limited resources are used in an optimal manner to respond to the mandate given by Parties. The Evaluation Office, which reports to the Executive Secretary, will continue to facilitate internal learning for improved effectiveness and, through the evidence-based measurement of achievements, further improve the transparency and accountability of the secretariat and the GM.

23. Reporting to the EO, the New York Liaison Office (NYLO) ensures the visibility of UNCCD issues in United Nations bodies and events of high political importance, notably the General Assembly, the Security Council and the High-level Political Forum. NYLO undertakes targeted outreach to constituencies at United Nations Headquarters and provides information on UNCCD matters to United Nations Member States, regional groups and interest groups, such as the Group of 77, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, and Small Island Developing States. NYLO also assists the Group of Friends on DLDD and promotes land-related partnerships and initiatives involving various stakeholders, notably youth, women, civil society and academia. The office prepares the annual report on UNCCD activities presented to the United Nations General Assembly through the United Nations Secretary General, and contributes to other relevant reports on sustainable

development. Furthermore, NYLO serves as secretary in the negotiation of resolutions concerning the UNCCD before the General Assembly. In collaboration with other programmes of the secretariat and the GM, it advocates for further attention to be paid to UNCCD priorities in the global processes and events, including in the GEF and the World Bank programmes.

24. The Group of Twenty launched its Global Land Initiative (G20 GLI) in November 2020. The GLI aims to prevent, halt and reverse land degradation and reduce degraded land by 50 per cent by 2040. It is implemented through a Coordination Office that is overseen by the UNCCD Executive Secretary. GLI work is based on four main pillars focusing on: (i) showcasing success stories that benefit nature and safeguard people’s lives, jobs, and incomes; (ii) engaging the private sector in SLM, land restoration and habitat conservation; (iii) empowering civil society and the public in land stewardship for sustainable development; and (iv) sharing knowledge and developing and mobilizing capacity between the G20 members, non-Member countries, and other stakeholders to collectively deliver on land conservation and restoration outcomes. While the GLI Coordination Office serves the Initiative, its aims and activities are directly responsive to the UNCCD priorities and complement the work done by the secretariat and the GM.

25. The EO resource requirements are presented in table 3. They include a proposal for one new general service staff member and additional funding for travel costs.

Table 3
Core budget of the Executive Office for the biennium 2025–2026 by object of expenditure
 (euros)

<i>Object of expenditure</i>	<i>Approved budget 2022–2024*</i>	<i>Proposed budget 2025–2026</i>
Personnel costs	1 037 736	1 728 490
Contractual services	65 975	65 975
Travel**	259 826	426 007
Operating and other direct costs	68 511	22 330
Supplies, commodities and materials	-	-
Equipment, vehicles and furniture	-	-
Total	1 432 048	2 242 802

*Presented as a biennium for comparative purposes.

**Also includes the costs of the COP Bureau meetings

Note: Core budget posts: 1 Under-Secretary-General, 1 D-2, 1 P-4, 3 GS.

Abbreviations: COP = Conference of the Parties, D = Director, GS = General Service.

2. Governing Bodies and Legal Affairs

26. The Governing Bodies and Legal Affairs (GBLA) programme assists the Executive Secretary in advising the President and Bureau of the COP, coordinates the secretariat support for related activities and provides institutional, procedural and legal advice.

27. The GBLA is in charge of planning and general coordination of the sessions of the COP and its subsidiary bodies, and other core meetings of the UNCCD process. The programme establishes the Host Country Agreement and coordinates the preparation of the conference facilities plan in liaison with the host country. It liaises with the United Nations for the conference services to be provided from the United Nations regular budget, and coordinates and processes all documentation for the official sessions. In 2025–2026, one COP session and one intersessional Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) are expected to be organized; the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) and the CRIC will also hold meetings in conjunction with the COP sessions.

28. The GBLA coordinates the provision of technical procedural support for the COP and its subsidiary bodies, which includes: (i) identifying emerging issues pertaining to the

intergovernmental process and the mandates of the secretariat; (ii) analysing the implications and making corresponding procedural recommendations; (iii) developing scenarios for and scheduling the proceedings of plenary meetings; and (iv) preparing speaking notes for the respective chairpersons. During the sessions, the GBLA: (i) coordinates the provision of guidance and advice to the Chairs as well as to other elected officers on the organization of work, status of negotiations, conduct of business, and rules of procedure; and (ii) supervises the conduct of proceedings for the conference. The programme prepares the official programme of the meetings and summaries of proceedings for inclusion in the daily Official Journal of the session. It also prepares the reports on proceedings of the COP and its subsidiary bodies.

29. The budget for the GBLA, presented in table 4, consists of funding for two professional posts, and consultancies for editors, logisticians and translators for UNCCD conferences.

Table 4
Core budget of the Governing Bodies and Legal Affairs programme for the biennium 2025–2026 by object of expenditure
 (euros)

<i>Object of expenditure</i>	<i>Approved budget 2022–2024*</i>	<i>Proposed budget 2025–2026</i>
Personnel costs	736 890	668 498
Contractual services	101 500	101 500
Travel	15 225	15 225
Operating and other direct costs	-	-
Supplies, commodities and materials	-	-
Equipment, vehicles and furniture	-	-
Total	853 615	785 223

*Presented as a biennium for comparative purposes.

Note: Core budget posts: 1 P-5, 1 P-3.

Abbreviation: P = Professional.

3. Communications, External Relations and Partnerships

30. The Communications, External Relations and Partnerships programme (CERP) was revised in 2022 and comprises the following areas of work: (i) strategic communications, including outreach and media relations, digital communications, knowledge management/library and audiovisual functions; and (ii) external relations and partnerships, including partnership development, engagement with non-Party stakeholders, such as CSOs, the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations, academia, the private sector, youth, Indigenous peoples and local communities, women and local governments, as well as donor relations and corporate resource mobilization.

31. During the biennium 2025–2026, the main aims and focus areas of CERP are as follows:

- (a) Increase the profile of UNCCD on the global agenda through strategic communication;
- (b) Ensure growth in strategic partnerships and stakeholder engagement in support of UNCCD;
- (c) Enhance resource mobilization for the implementation of the UNCCD workplan.

32. CERP will seek to raise the profile of the Convention and its priorities, increase audience engagement, and deliver high-impact outreach campaigns. Central to this period will be communicating and promoting COP 16 outcomes, leveraging annual observances of

Desertification and Drought Day, and mobilizing new influential voices in support of the Convention. The focus in the next biennium will be:

(a) Aligning UNCCD Parties and stakeholders around a consistent and inspiring narrative on the importance of SLM, its contribution to addressing the interconnected challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss, and its central and catalytic role for the achievement of the SDGs;

(b) Developing and implementing impactful campaigns that: (i) highlight successes by UNCCD Parties and stakeholders in the implementation of the Convention, including at-scale land restoration and drought resilience initiatives; (ii) underscore the urgency of addressing DLDD as well as the environmental, human and economic costs of inaction; (iii) and position LDN as a critical yet achievable objective in the context of the SDGs;

(c) Leveraging key opportunities to place land issues high on the global agenda and reach new audiences, with particular focus on leading the annual observance of Desertification and Drought Day, further increasing the impact of outreach programmes, and actively contributing to the implementation of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030) and the United Nations Decade on Combating SDS (2025–2034);

(d) Strengthening partnerships and the capacity for raising the visibility of land issues and positioning UNCCD as the go-to authoritative source of information on these issues with media and other key stakeholders, with special attention paid to providing high-quality, science-based information in relevant formats, channels and languages. To do so, scientific and technical data, information and policy recommendations from the SPI, the GLO and other major scientific assessments will be fully employed;

(e) Mobilizing new and influential voices in support of the Convention's objectives and related advocacy and communications activities, such as the UNCCD Goodwill and Land Ambassadors programme, and the Land Heroes campaign, and leaders from government, business and civil society, with a particular emphasis on engaging youth, women and girls from communities affected by DLDD.

33. EUR 791,100 will be required for strategic communication.

34. In recognition of the growing importance of partnerships to deliver on the Convention's mandate, CERP will continue to coordinate UNCCD efforts to effectively establish and lead partnerships. Active outreach and collaboration will continue with stakeholder groups that are critical for the effective implementation of the Convention, notably CSOs, youth constituencies, small farmer organizations, women's organizations and faith-based groups. CERP will encourage the accreditation of different stakeholders in the Convention processes and seek to establish one or two new strategic partnerships or collaborations per year in support of the Convention's objectives.

35. Partnerships with non-Party stakeholders, particularly CSOs and youth, will be strengthened. On Desertification and Drought Day 2024, the secretariat, with partners, launched the Youth Engagement Strategy (YES). The strategy recognizes youth as a key actor in SLM and lays the foundations for strong and meaningful youth engagement in UNCCD processes. The secretariat will ensure that YES is implemented, monitored and evaluated to facilitate the full participation of this key stakeholder group.

36. To expand synergies, partnerships and stakeholder involvement in all aspects of the Convention in 2025–2026, CERP will continue engaging United Nations entities, international organizations and multilateral environmental agreements, including the Rio conventions, to promote synergies in addressing the interconnected crises of land degradation, biodiversity loss and climate change. CERP will also continue serving the Joint Liaison Group of the Executive Secretaries of the three Rio conventions with the aim of enhancing information-sharing and collaboration on topics of mutual interest.

37. In collaboration with the GM, CERP will continue to: (i) encourage private sector participation in meetings and processes of the UNCCD; (ii) promote the active involvement of the private sector in the fulfilment of the objectives of the Convention through initiatives

such as Business for Land and its proposed restoration pledges; and (iii) promote the establishment of sustainable value chains for land-based products.

38. EUR 680,998 will be required to expand synergies, partnerships and stakeholder involvement in all aspects of the Convention.

39. CERP assists the Executive Secretary in reaching out to decision-makers in donor countries and donor organizations. It also ensures a daily relationship with strategic partners, coordinates and supports the preparation of proposals for voluntary contributions, prepares and negotiates donor agreements, and ensures effective planning, management and reporting of voluntary contributions. The focus over the next biennium will be to roll out the new corporate resource mobilization strategy for the secretariat and the GM, with the overall aim of ensuring predictable, sustainable and flexible funding to enable effective programme delivery and positive impact. Specific activities will include:

- Engaging with existing donor countries and organizations;
- Targeted outreach to broaden the donor base and increase voluntary contributions;
- Analysing corporate needs to implement the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework and COP 16 decisions, and make arrangements to secure necessary funds to deliver the workplan;
- Monitoring and reporting on the use of voluntary contributions, including reports to the donors as well as internal updates.

40. As the secretariat does not have any core budget resources for corporate resource mobilization, both extrabudgetary funding and staff will be needed to carry out the above tasks.

41. The Chief of CERP manages the programme, coordinates with other programmes, and ensures that CERP functions according to internal policies, rules and standards. The Chief is the primary representative of the programme in internal management and coordination meetings, and in external relations.

42. Resource requirements for the management of CERP amount to EUR 379,638.

43. An overview of the resource requirements for CERP, including a proposed increase in the funding for contractual services and travel, are presented in table 5. It may be noted that most of the difference in the personnel costs is due to the extended scope of the programme to also cover external relations and partnerships, in addition to communications. This extension was achieved through a lateral move of existing staff.

Table 5
Core budget of Communications, External Relations and Partnerships for the biennium 2025–2026 by object of expenditure
 (euros)

<i>Object of expenditure</i>	<i>Approved budget 2022–2024*</i>	<i>Proposed budget 2025–2026</i>
Personnel costs	1 021 090	1 670 236
Contractual services	101 500	151 500
Travel	-	30 000
Operating and other direct costs	-	-
Supplies, commodities and materials	-	-
Equipment, vehicles and furniture	-	-
Total	1 122 590	1 851 736

*Presented as a biennium for comparative purposes.

Note: Core budget posts: 1 P-5, 1 P-3, 1 P-2, 3 GS.

Abbreviations: P = Professional, GS = General Service.

4. Global Policy Advocacy and Regional Cooperation

44. The Global Policy Advocacy and Regional Cooperation (GPARC) programme develops policy frameworks for effective decision-making and the accelerated implementation of the Convention. Its mission is to prepare and deliver persuasive policy messages that elevate DLDD as a political priority and support national efforts in implementing the Convention objectives. As part of GPARC, the Regional Liaison Offices facilitate UNCCD and GM cooperation and outreach within and among regions, encouraging partnerships, advocacy and coordination under each Regional Implementation Annex.

45. During the biennium 2025–2026, GPARC will focus on the provision of evidence-based policy guidance, tools and capacity-building for the following critical factors for the effective implementation of the Convention:

- Drought resilience;
- Integration of gender equality into UNCCD implementation;
- Secure tenure rights as an enabler of effective land restoration;
- The potential of land restoration to promote food security, create jobs and prevent forced migration;
- Urban-rural linkages;
- SDS source mitigation;
- Enhanced regional advocacy, collaboration and information sharing.

46. As next steps in implementing the UNCCD drought agenda, GPARC will coordinate the follow-up to the report of the Intergovernmental Working Group (IWG) on Drought, the outcomes of the Drought Resilience +10 conference, and the respective COP 16 decisions. GPARC will seek to ensure a high-level global commitment to building drought resilience, strengthening existing partnerships and forging new ones in support of inter-agency collaboration, coordination and information-sharing for effective action on integrated drought risk management. GPARC will keep abreast of new and emerging issues related to drought and water scarcity by providing substantive backstopping for global efforts related to the drought and water scarcity portfolio, including the implementation of any of the options put forward by the IWG on Drought. GPARC will facilitate the continuation and expansion of the Communities of Learning and Practice on Drought Management; further development of methodologies to track drought impacts; capacity-building for the development and implementation of national drought plans; enhanced utilization of the Drought Toolbox; and access to information and practices concerning drought preparedness.

47. EUR 1,026,436 will be required for the further development of the drought agenda.

48. For gender equality in the implementation of the UNCCD, GPARC will step up its efforts to incorporate a gender-responsive approach to activities concerning drought and land tenure. In line with the Gender Action Plan and Roadmap, GPARC will conduct further policy research, produce guidance materials, conduct capacity-building and expand broad-based stakeholder engagement, particularly with the other Rio conventions and key partners, including the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature. In close cooperation with the GM, GPARC will aim to assist countries in applying a gender-responsive approach to their planning and activities. GPARC will oversee the implementation of the UNCCD corporate Gender Policy and spearhead internal staff training and assessments in line with the standards set forth by the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP). GPARC will also implement measures to ensure continued gender parity across the Convention, with a particular focus on encouraging the participation of female delegates in official meetings.

49. On promoting secure land tenure, GPARC will use the lessons learned from the first set of national consultations held in 2023–2024 to organize and conduct further consultations.

In addition, GPARC will build on the business case for investing in tenure security and implement the tenure checklist to identify financing opportunities and sustainable public and private investments to strengthen land governance and tenure. GPARC will also conduct awareness-raising activities on good land governance to address DLDD, explore existing global indicators and data sets relevant to land governance and women's land rights, and work with relevant partners and institutions to pilot options for including potential indicators in future reporting processes under the UNCCD.

50. Regarding SDS, GPARC will maintain its active collaboration with the United Nations Coalition on Combating SDS, including the development of a global SDS implementation programme. Furthermore, GPARC will refine the SDS Toolbox, including the Global SDS Source Base-map and other geographic information system platforms, data and tools, and provide user support to country Parties. GPARC will collaborate with the GM to create a comprehensive list of existing SDS-related tools and technologies and make it available in an easily accessible format to Parties through the SDS Toolbox. GPARC will also provide support to countries and regions with SDS strategies and action plans, as well as assist with the implementation and financing of SDS-related projects and programmes.

51. GPARC will continue to assist Parties, upon request, in strengthening urban-rural linkages through territorial governance systems, using principles and guidance from existing frameworks described in the Primer on Urban-Rural Linkages and Land, as a way of scaling up SLM and restoration activities, implementing more effective land use planning to achieve voluntary LDN targets, and enhancing the implementation of the Convention. Furthermore, GPARC will continue to reinforce its collaboration with other United Nations agencies and programmes, regional and international organizations, and other stakeholders to facilitate the exchange of information and foster a deeper comprehension of urban-rural linkages, including the dissemination of exemplary practices. GPARC will also continue to support regional and international cooperation and initiatives that aim to advance sustainable land and water management as a solution to mitigate drivers of migration.

52. EUR 1,202,856 will be needed for work on gender equality, land tenure, SDS, as well as urban-rural linkages and migration.

53. For enhanced regional collaboration, the Regional Liaison Offices will focus on four major areas or work:

(a) Representation and advocacy of the Convention, its objectives and its benefits for Parties in the regions;

(b) Regional policy and coordination, with the aim of supporting Regional Implementation Annexes in exchanging views, identifying topics and measures of shared interest, and carrying out joint action to implement the Convention;

(c) Partnership-building and resource mobilization for the specific requirements and needs of the various Regional Implementation Annexes; and

(d) Capacity-building and communication support, allowing the different regions to properly advocate for their priorities within the framework of the Convention to other regions and stakeholders.

54. Key activities during the biennium 2025–2026 will include the identification of key stakeholders to support collaboration and engagement in the different regions, and outreach and advocacy towards these stakeholders. New Regional Liaison Offices are being established for Annexes II, III and IV. Outreach, capacity-building and supporting Parties to advance the implementation of the UNCCD will continue.

55. EUR 1,600,301 will be required for enhanced regional collaboration.

56. The Chief of GPARC manages the programme, coordinates with other programmes, and ensures that GPARC functions according to internal policies, rules and standards. The Chief is the primary representative of the programme in internal management and coordination meetings, and in external relations.

57. Resource requirements for the management of GPARC amount to EUR 396,366.

58. An overview of the resource requirements for GPARC, including new staff positions for drought (P4 and GS), gender/land tenure (P4) and SDS (P3), as well as the proposed increase in the funding for activities on drought, contractual services and travel, are presented in table 6.

Table 6
Core budget of global policy advocacy and regional cooperation for the biennium 2025–2026 by object of expenditure
(euros)

<i>Object of expenditure</i>	<i>Approved budget 2022–2024*</i>	<i>Proposed budget 2025–2026</i>
Personnel costs	1 928 500	3 830 584
Contractual services	52 881	92 881
Travel	150 728	170 728
Operating and other direct costs	51 766	131 766
Supplies, commodities and materials	-	-
Equipment, vehicles and furniture	-	-
Total	2 183 874	4 225 959

*Presented as a biennium for comparative purposes.

Note: Core budget posts: 2 P-5, 6 P-4, 2 P-3, 3 GS.

Abbreviations: P = Professional, GS = General Service.

5. Science, Technology and Innovation

59. The Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) programme supports scientific cooperation, facilitates national reporting and the related review process, and manages the data submitted by Parties. The STI is also in charge of planning and general coordination of the meetings of the two subsidiary bodies of the Convention and the work programme of the SPI. In addition, the programme supports capacity-building and spearheads the innovation agenda.

60. Scientific cooperation is mostly supported through the CST and its SPI. The STI will support them in the provision of information and advice on scientific and technological matters relating to DLDD. The STI will: (i) prepare the meetings of CST and its Bureau, including the organization of thematic dialogues with the SPI; (ii) organize the meetings of the SPI and its working groups, and participate in the preparation of many of its substantive outputs; and (iii) coordinate collaboration between the Bureaux of the CST and CRIC on methodological matters of reporting as well as the organization of regional consultations through science and technology correspondents. During the biennium 2025–2026, the STI will support the Bureau of the CST in refining the terms of reference of the SPI, the recruitment, selection and renewal of the membership of the SPI, and the maintenance of the Roster of Independent Experts of the UNCCD.

61. The STI represents the secretariat in various scientific meetings and processes, and in networking and cooperation with scientific partners. It provides scientific advice in response to requests received from Parties and other UNCCD stakeholders and supports all programmes of the secretariat as well as the GM in matters concerning science. In particular, the STI helps ensure the scientific integrity of science-based communication products and guidance documents produced by the secretariat and the GM.

62. The results of the review of the SPI and the science outcomes from the midterm evaluation of the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework suggest that future work programmes of the SPI may be scheduled to last two intersessional periods (usually four years) to focus on two objectives: (i) the delivery of GLO products or similar high-profile, science-based flagship reports; and (ii) the provision of rapid response information. If this approach is embraced by Parties, the SPI 2025–2026 work programme would mark an intersessional transition period for the SPI through, inter alia: (i) supporting the completion of a third edition

of the GLO; (ii) piloting rapid response assessments; and (iii) developing procedures for receiving and prioritizing requests put to the SPI for its work programme, and procedures for the preparation of flagship reports and the development of rapid response information products.

63. The SPI will continue its coordination activities for relevant assignments of the Intergovernmental Science–Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils, the International Resource Panel of the United Nations Environment Programme, the Global Land Indicators Initiative of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, and the Integrated Drought Management Programme.

64. In line with its terms of reference, the SPI will identify the most optimal way to carry out its work programme, which may include commissioning an individual or group of experts to prepare a given task, organizing expert meetings or networking with scientific institutions. For the coordination activities, selected SPI members may be sponsored to attend related meetings.

65. **EUR 1,087,623 will be required for scientific cooperation.**

66. National reporting enables Parties, through the CRIC, to assess the implementation of the Convention using credible data and an indicator framework aligned with the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework and synchronized with that of SDG target 15.3. Through the assessment, Parties decide on medium- to longer-term priorities and thereby ensure a focused and targeted approach to implementing the Convention. The STI prepares and coordinates the process of national reporting, including capacity-building among Parties, and analyses the information in the reports for consideration by the CRIC. The STI spearheads efforts to ensure that the UNCCD is the authoritative source of information and knowledge on DLDD through, inter alia, the development of a data dashboard aimed at improving the modalities and approach of the secretariat and the GM to collecting, organizing and sharing data. The programme also prepares for meetings of the Bureau of the CRIC and supports the Bureau in the organization and handling of CRIC sessions. It further facilitates exchanges with the Bureau of the CST on issues relating to indicators and methodological work on reporting.

67. The next national reporting cycle is scheduled to start in mid-2025, culminating in the review of submitted information by Parties at CRIC 25 in 2027. The online portal where Parties compile and eventually submit their national reports is currently being updated following requests made by Parties at CRIC 21. For the forthcoming reporting process, several upgrades and new features will be implemented to continue with the trend of supporting Parties in using geo-spatial information, and allow for data mining, data visualization tools and updates to reporting forms. Methodological guidelines will also be integrated. The upgraded fourth generation of the Performance Review and Assessment of Implementation System (PRAIS4) will be fully compatible with Trends.Earth⁶ by Conservation International, which operationalizes standardized methodologies for SDG indicator 15.3.1 and for national reporting on strategic objective 3 on drought. This allows countries to take control in producing their own estimates based on country data and nationally determined assumptions, thereby improving ownership while ensuring harmonization and comparability across countries, strengthening country capacity for data production and use, and reducing reliance on externally produced estimates.

68. After the launch of the reporting process in 2025, the secretariat and the GM will provide technical assistance and backstopping for the preparation of national reports in coordination with partner organizations. Both virtual and in-person support will be provided to Parties. Updates to the e-tutorials and pre-recorded videos for interpreting data and filling in the requisite information in the reporting forms will be made available as well as in-person training sessions at regional or subregional levels. Some online events will include question and answer sessions where Parties can clarify challenges encountered during the reporting period.

⁶ See: <https://www.conservation.org/about/trends-earth>

69. In order to realize the vision of an open-access ecosystem of tools for use by country Parties when preparing their national reports, the secretariat has initiated and will continue to build data-driven partnerships under the auspices of the Group on Earth Observations LDN Flagship initiative. Partnerships with, inter alia, the FAO, United Nations Development Programme, World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies and Conservation International⁷ have been initiated and will contribute to technical expertise on reporting provided to Parties by a wider range of actors. Efforts will also be made to replicate the example of regional or subregional institutions assisting Parties in accessing funds from the GEF and capacity-building, together with interested Parties or groups of Parties. Partnerships will also be forged in order to create reporting synergies with other processes, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and/or the SDGs, when it comes to utilizing pre-validated country data or indicators in reporting by Parties, thereby reducing the reporting burden.

70. According to the tentative timeline for the 2026 UNCCD reporting process, the deadline for national report submission is November 2026. However, following requests made by some Parties at CRIC 21, an assessment will be made in 2026, allowing the Executive Secretary and the CRIC Bureau to take a final decision on the reporting deadline. Once the reports are received, the secretariat will accordingly compile and analyse the information contained in the reports and provide the necessary documentation and other preparatory arrangements for the CRIC to conduct its review at its next intersessional session.

71. Along with the national reporting process, the secretariat will continue to further develop the data visualization and data discovery interface for the management, analysis and display of reported data, with the aim of facilitating and improving the use of reporting data for decision-making by Parties and their partners, and making it more accessible for the policy and advocacy work by the secretariat and the GM.

72. EUR 1,156,349 will be required to facilitate the national reporting and review process and improve data management.

73. The capacity-building activities and spearheading of the innovation agenda of the secretariat are aimed at increasing the knowledge, technical skills and expertise of UNCCD stakeholders while facilitating the exchange of practical experiences, leveraging partnerships and providing a space to become engaged in supporting the effective implementation of the Convention, keeping abreast of digital and technological advances. All programmes of the secretariat and GM are engaged in various aspects of capacity-building and innovation.

74. The Capacity Building Marketplace (CBM) has made remarkable achievements over the years, which have been praised by the broader global community and reaffirmed by various COP decisions. However, the operationalization of the CBM is encumbered by several challenges relating to, inter alia, inadequate staffing and budgetary limitations. The biennium 2025–2026 will focus on the re-conceptualization, design, development, and management of the secretariat’s capacity-building and development, as well as the innovation programme at all levels, i.e., national, subregional, regional and global. This will include reorientating the capacity-building approaches and strategy, and resuscitating the CBM. Pathways will be explored and undertaken towards an innovation-driven UNCCD to upscale capacity-building and development initiatives, including facilitating and strengthening the distribution of innovative solutions to achieve LDN and enhance the resilience of people to the impacts of drought.

75. During the biennium, the STI will work to strengthen and deepen both formal and informal partnerships to better facilitate the UNCCD capacity-building process. The STI will also continue to lead information events and lectures in schools and universities, upon request, leveraging on South-South, North-South and Triangular Cooperation and partnerships. The forming of partnerships to support and facilitate capacity-building and further development of the innovation agenda, will specifically target subregional intergovernmental

⁷ See section B of document [ICCD/CRIC\(22\)/7-ICCD/COP\(16\)/CST/8](#), entitled “An ecosystem of tools for national reporting driven by data-centred partnerships”.

organizations, universities and research institutions, while selected CSOs, development agencies and regional organizations will also be approached.

76. The capacity-building and innovation agenda will continue to support the national reporting process, where both in-person and online interventions will be explored during the biennium 2025-2026 through e-learning video tutorials, online support from technical experts, and in-person regional workshops.

77. The secretariat will continue to support and engage in the Joint Capacity-Building Programme of the Rio conventions, which aims to strengthen the capacities of relevant national institutions and individual policymakers and practitioners to integrate and foster synergies among the three Rio conventions.

78. **EUR 357,198 will be required for capacity-building.**

79. The Chief of STI manages the programme, coordinates with other programmes, and ensures that the STI functions according to internal policies, rules and standards. The Chief is the primary representative of the programme in internal management and coordination meetings, as well as in external relations.

80. **Resource requirements for the management of the STI amount to EUR 390,258.**

81. A summary of the resource requirements for the STI, including a new staff position to support the SPI (P3), and a proposed increase in funding for the SPI meetings, contractual services and travel, are presented in table 7.

Table 7

Core budget of Science, Technology and Innovation for the biennium 2025–2026 by object of expenditure

(euros)

<i>Object of expenditure</i>	<i>Approved budget 2022–2024*</i>	<i>Proposed budget 2025– 2026</i>
Personnel costs	2 827 790	2 578 128
Contractual services	98 455	98 455
Travel	146 972	168 120
Operating and other direct costs	132 153	146 725
Supplies, commodities and materials	-	-
Equipment, vehicles and furniture	-	-
Total	3 205 370	2 991 428

*Presented as a biennium for comparative purposes.

Note: Core budget posts: 2 P-5, 2 P-4, 2 P-3, 1 P-2, 2 GS.

Abbreviations: GS = General Service, P = Professional.

6. Administrative Services

82. The Administrative Services programme is tasked with ensuring the effective and efficient delivery of services to the secretariat and the GM with regard to financial management, human resources, procurement and information technology, in accordance with the regulations and rules of the United Nations and the UNCCD.

83. In the biennium 2025–2026, Administrative Services will continue improving administrative processes to meet the evolving needs of the organization. Building on the recommendations of the United Nations Board of Auditors,⁸ expanding the use of the Umoja system will be studied and related training organized. A move to an integrated budget, including the update of the financial rules of the Conference of the Parties, will be prepared, with the aim of presenting a first integrated budget to COP 17. In close collaboration with

⁸ <https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/inline-files/2024-07-24%20BoA%20Report%20on%20UNCCD%20FY%202023%20-%20Signed.pdf>.

the EO and the GM, the update of key internal policies and standard operating procedures will continue, building on the common United Nations system standards and adjusted to the specific nature of UNCCD operational modalities. Staff training opportunities will continue to be provided. The UNCCD digital environment will be enhanced to improve the organization and use of data, and enable the optimal exchange of and access to information among the programmes. This development will also include improvements to cybersecurity.

84. A summary of the resource requirements for the Administrative Services, including a new staff position (P3) to work on digitalization and cybersecurity and a proposed increase for information and communication technology hardware and software, is provided in table 8.

Table 8
Core budget of Administrative Services for the biennium 2025-2026 by object of expenditure
 (euros)

<i>Object of expenditure</i>	<i>Approved budget</i>	
	<i>2022–2024*</i>	<i>Proposed budget 2025–2026</i>
Personnel costs	121 800	296 360
Contractual services	176 889	176 889
Travel	19 285	19 285
Operating and other direct costs	1 659 196	1 685 418
Supplies, commodities and materials	35 525	35 525
Equipment, vehicles and furniture	35 525	280 000
Total	2 048 220	2 493 477

*Presented as a biennium for comparative purposes.

Note: Core budget posts: 1 P-3.

Abbreviations: P = Professional.

D. Resource requirements of the Global Mechanism

85. The GM of the UNCCD is mandated to assist countries in the mobilization of financial resources from the public and private sector for activities that prevent, control or reverse DLDD. As the operational arm of the convention, the overall aim of the GM is to support countries in translating the Convention into action.

86. The GM is currently spearheading several initiatives to implement its resource mobilization mandate, including by encouraging donors and partners to finance initiatives to combat DLDD, and by supporting countries in the development of a pipeline of projects and programmes. The GM also promotes multi-sector, multi-stakeholder approaches to facilitate the financing and implementation of projects contributing to synergies across the objectives of the three Rio Conventions.

87. The GM assists Parties in creating an enabling environment to achieve their voluntary national LDN targets, including the modalities for more responsible governance of land and tenure security. Its areas of focus include efforts to increase sustainable and gender-responsive approaches to land restoration, the engagement of relevant stakeholders, especially the private sector, and better access to innovative financing sources.

88. During the biennium 2025–2026, the GM will structure its tasks around three broad aims:

- (a) Strengthening the enabling environment for UNCCD implementation;
- (b) An accelerated pipeline of programmes and projects to mobilize financing; and
- (c) Private sector engagement and innovative financing options.

89. To strengthen the enabling environment for the UNCCD implementation, the GM continues to support Parties in setting and/or refining voluntary LDN targets, notably

broadening the second phrase of the LDN Target Setting Programme (2.0) beyond the 18 pilot countries. The GM will seek to streamline the process with other conventions and associated processes, and facilitate the integration of these targets into (sub)national integrated land-use planning frameworks and national development plans of the participating Parties. Knowledge-sharing efforts on LDN target-setting and implementation will continue.

90. With the aim of generating a better understanding of finance flows for UNCCD implementation, the GM will work on the development of harmonized definitions, methodologies and data collection options that may provide country Parties with more information, offer a more comprehensive overview of financial resources targeting DLDD, and increase comparability between the sets of national data provided by Parties. A good practice guide on tracking financial flows, including the identification of improved financial data sources, will be integrated into the enhanced national reporting template on strategic objective 5 for future reporting rounds.

91. The financial needs assessment will be revised and updated, as needed, based on the submission of additional and refined targets and plans, to further guide resource mobilization.

92. Further to developing an enabling environment at the national level, the GM will facilitate the operationalization of national drought plans or policies and frameworks, and forge partnerships to identify, prioritize and mobilize technical and financial support. A global SDS initiative will be developed, building on available information, including the SDS Compendium, as a contribution to the United Nations Decade on Combating SDS (2025–2035), and to build the capacity of Parties to develop policies and plans to address SDS.

93. The GM will continue to implement the Peace Forest Initiative (PFI) by promoting multi-stakeholder cooperation on the sustainable management of land-based resources (land, soil, water, forests), for country Parties in fragile and conflict affected situations. Countries participating in the PFI will be supported in galvanizing collaborative action, including joint activities, strategies, frameworks, initiatives, projects and programme ideas. Partnerships will be forged to mobilize dedicated technical and financial support to build confidence, stability and peace via land restoration at scale.

94. To secure increased funding for initiatives addressing desertification, DLDD, the GM will engage diverse stakeholders through targeted outreach. These stakeholders will include traditional bilateral donors, multilateral organizations, private sector entities, and philanthropic foundations. The outreach will highlight the interconnectedness of DLDD issues with climate change, food security and sustainable development. The GM will present compelling arguments, demonstrating the high return on investment in terms of both environmental and socio-economic benefits, emphasizing how addressing these challenges aligns with donors' existing priorities and offers opportunities for innovative financing mechanisms and public-private partnerships.

95. To accelerate the pipeline of programmes and projects and mobilize financing, the GM will support the development of national, regional and global projects, ensuring gender-responsiveness and synergies among the Rio conventions and other sectors in implementing SLM practices. Project design capacity-building will be provided through intersectoral collaboration and partnerships with various stakeholders, including technical partners, multilateral development banks, and the private sector, to enhance project funding and implementation. Pilot projects will be used to spur innovation, demonstrate proof of concept, leverage larger-scale project financing, and check the viability of project and programmatic approaches.

96. The GM will engage in various global thematic and regional programmes and initiatives, such as the Great Green Wall, PFI, SDS Initiative, Rangelands, and Freshwater Challenge to promote large-scale (landscape or cross-border) land restoration and sustainable management of resources by supporting the development of flagship project pipelines and “Accelerators”.

97. The GM will require the integration of gender equality and land tenure considerations into project designs, ensuring that these critical issues are addressed in land restoration initiatives.

98. On private sector engagement, the GM seeks to bring about a paradigm shift in how the private sector engages with the UNCCD and on land issues via effective partnerships with the private sector and through the identification of innovative financing opportunities.

99. The GM will continue implementing the Business for Land strategy with a focus on harmonization and integrating land and water use decision-making into Environmental, Social and Governance standards and investment decisions. It will carry out advocacy with private sector bodies to promote engagement and build a robust network of private sector partners, and nurture innovative projects and their appeal to the private sector, particularly in regenerative food, feed and fibre value chains, finance and trade. The GM will also explore options for Corporate Social Responsibility contributions by the private sector, and collaborate with the G20 Land Restoration Initiative on the development of the restoration industry.

100. With regard to innovative finance, the GM will identify and promote impact investment opportunities in SLM and drought resilience. Pilot projects will be developed to evaluate the viability and benefits of innovative financing mechanisms, and options to scale out models developed or piloted (technology transfer, insurance, venture capital, etc) to other regions will be explored. The GM will follow the UNCCD carbon and biodiversity credit markets and share lessons learned with Parties. It will continue to explore options to utilize market mechanisms (such as debt or incentives, etc.) to leverage blended finance.

101. A summary of the resource requirements for the GM, including a new staff position (P3) to work on resource mobilization/ project preparation is provided in table 9.

Table 9

Core budget of the Global Mechanism for the biennium 2025–2026 by object of expenditure

(euros)

<i>Object of expenditure</i>	<i>Approved budget 2022–2024*</i>	<i>Proposed budget 2025–2026</i>
Personnel costs	3 272 360	4 108 316
Contractual services	166 460	166 460
Travel	78 155	78 155
Operating and other direct costs	155 600	113 953
Supplies commodities and materials	22 330	22 330
Equipment vehicles and furniture	-	-
Total	3 694 905	4 489 214

Note: Core budget posts: 1 D-1, 1 P-5, 3 P-4, 4 P-3, 2 P-2, 4 GS.

Abbreviations: GS = General Service, P = Professional.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

102. Parties may wish to consider the proposed comprehensive multi-year workplan (2025–2028) and two-year costed work programme (2025–2026) for the Convention and guide the secretariat and the GM accordingly. They may also decide on the budget for 2025–2026 on this basis, taking into account the specific requests and tasks addressed to the secretariat and the GM that may be raised in other decisions at COP 16.

Annex

Organizational structure of the secretariat and the Global Mechanism

[English only]

