



CLOSED as of 26 March 2025

CALL FOR INDEPENDENT SCIENTISTS TO SERVE ON THE UNCCD SCIENCE-POLICY INTERFACE

This open call ran from 27 February to 26 March 2025, and is now closed to new applicants.

We are seeking visionary scientists to serve over the 2025-2026 biennium on the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)¹ Science-Policy Interface (SPI). The SPI provides the best opportunity for global scientists to ensure that efforts to combat land degradation and drought are based on solid evidence. During the 2022-2024 period its accomplishments included publication of a widely circulated and cited document highlighting extent of changes in aridity, and other products that supported landscape-scale approaches to avoiding, reducing and reversing land degradation. Your expertise is needed to:

- contribute to the next Global Land Outlook², the UNCCD's flagship report,
- contribute to the development of other products providing scientific support for the UNCCD, and
- collaborate with other intergovernmental science bodies and panels as appropriate.

The work of the SPI over the next two years will help policy makers and practitioners advance in how we address land system challenges and build resilience of communities and ecosystems in a rapidly changing world.³ The key task here is to help us transform the latest scientific breakthroughs into a compelling, evidence-based narrative that supports global action on sustainable land and water management and building resilience to drought.

The SPI is governed by the [Committee on Science and Technology \(CST\)](#), the scientific subsidiary body of the UNCCD.⁴ The Bureau of CST is responsible for the merit-based review and selection of new SPI members, taking into account requisite disciplines as well as regional and gender balance. To this end, the Bureau of CST has opened the public call for candidature opening on **27 February 2025** and closing on **26 March 2025 (midnight CEST)**. The call is open to scientists from all regions and all organisations, including early career scientists.

¹ The UNCCD (<https://www.unccd.int/>) is one of the three "Rio conventions" resulting from the 1992 Earth Summit. It is the intergovernmental process responsible for global policy development on land and drought. Within this context, the interface between science and policy is the domain of the UNCCD SPI (<https://www.unccd.int/science/overview>).

² Earlier editions of the flagship Global Land Outlook as well as for focused GLO thematic reports and regional reports can be access here: <https://www.unccd.int/resources/global-land-outlook/glo2>.

The SPI contributed to these and has produced a number of other technical reports and science-policy briefs, which can be accessed [here](#).

³ For more details on the functioning of the SPI and its 2025-2026 work programme, please see decisions 20/COP.16 and 21/COP.16, contained on pages 61-66 of the COP16 Report Addendum: https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/2024-12/cop24add1%20-%20advance_0.pdf#page=61

⁴ The SPI Terms of Reference of members and related SPI governance documents: <https://www.unccd.int/resources/manuals-and-guides/spi-governance-documents>



Requirements / Criteria for selection

This merit-based review and selection of new SPI members takes into account a robust mix of the requisite disciplines, as well as regional and gender balance. SPI members ideally:

- Have an advanced degree and widely recognized academic knowledge in discipline(s) relevant to the UNCCD process;
- Have at least five years applied and acknowledged interdisciplinary scientific work experience and/or interdisciplinary practical/project experience in scientific domains relevant to land and drought. Social scientists, economists, experts in land tenure in drylands and experts in Indigenous and traditional knowledge are encouraged to apply.
- Have substantive evidence of significant, peer-reviewed publications in international journals corresponding to career stage, with demonstrated evidence of scientific impact (e.g. h-index) and evidence of broader impact;
- Have experience working with intergovernmental/international/interorganizational scientific panels and bodies;
- Have experience in providing scientific advice to decision makers and practitioners at global, regional, national and/or sub-national levels in thematic areas relevant to the UNCCD;
- Have experience in communicating, promoting and incorporating science into policy development processes and in synthesizing information for non-specialists;
- Be willing to work in a multicultural and multidisciplinary team and be accepting of other views and comments from different perspectives in order to reach consensus;
- Be fluent in English (the working language of the SPI is English only);
- Be willing to commit the time and effort necessary to contribute to the work of the SPI (estimated to be between 10-20% of the member's time); and
- Have full access to email and web-based information and communication systems in order to ensure participation in SPI activities conducted electronically.⁵

Selection process

The selection process, using the above requirements as criteria, will be conducted by the Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology with the support of the UNCCD secretariat based on applications submitted in response to this public call before deadline.

Selected scientists will be contacted individually. They will have to confirm their availability and interest in becoming a member of the SPI as well as their agreement with the Terms of Reference and other SPI governance documents. Only candidates who submit their complete application by the deadline will be considered. Early application ahead of the deadline is encouraged. Female candidates are strongly encouraged to apply. Selected members of the SPI will be contacted individually and the final composition of the SPI will be posted on the UNCCD website. Please note that there will be no response to the unselected applicants.

⁵ While most SPI work will be conducted electronically, it is anticipated that members will meet in person at least twice over the 2025-2026 biennium.



To respond to this call, please:

The application process is now closed

For more information, please visit:

Overview of the SPI

<https://www.unccd.int/science/overview>

SPI structure and governance

<https://www.unccd.int/science/structure-governance>

Current (and former) SPI members and observers

<https://www.unccd.int/science/members>

Past editions of the Global Land Outlook

<https://www.unccd.int/resources/global-land-outlook/overview>

Past publications of the SPI

<https://www.unccd.int/science/resources>

The SPI Work Programme

[SPI Work Programme 2025-2026](#)