

Riyadh Global Drought Resilience Partnership (RGDRP)

Steering Committee - Terms of Reference

1. Background:

The Riyadh Global Drought Resilience Partnership stands as the leading international platform dedicated to advancing global drought resilience. Launched to address the rising frequency and severity of drought events worldwide, the Partnership supports 74 eligible countries, primarily low income and lower middle income economies, in building long-term capacity to manage and reduce drought risks. By connecting global financing with country led action, it focuses on protecting vulnerable populations from the devastating social, environmental, and economic impacts of drought.

At the heart of the Partnership's approach is a clear mission: to shift the global response to drought from reactive crisis management to proactive, anticipatory risk reduction. Through mobilizing resources, fostering partnerships, and facilitating knowledge sharing, the Partnership works to strengthen preparedness, response, and recovery capacities at national and community levels. The goal is not simply to respond to drought after it occurs, but to prevent drought from becoming a humanitarian disaster in the first place.

The Partnership operates a dual financing model that combines pooled funding, channeled through the United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF), and parallel funding provided by a wide range of contributors. This structure enables both coordinated and flexible resource mobilization, allowing countries to access the financial support needed to strengthen drought resilience based on their individual needs and circumstances.

Strategically, the Partnership focuses on four pillars: (1) advancing systematic drought preparedness by supporting national drought management strategies and early warning systems; (2) mobilizing resources and promoting financial innovation through grants, blended finance, and insurance solutions; (3) fostering inclusive, equitable development that prioritizes the most vulnerable populations, including women, youth, and indigenous communities; and (4) coordinating partnerships and ensuring transparent, accountable governance.

The Partnership is committed to supporting comprehensive drought resilience interventions. This includes strengthening water supply systems, introducing climate-smart agricultural practices, promoting nature-based solutions, expanding digital tools for monitoring, and building drought-resilient economies. Special attention is given to empowering local communities, integrating traditional knowledge, and supporting smallholder farmers and marginalized groups who are often hardest hit by drought.



To deliver on its objectives, the Partnership utilizes three key support mechanisms:

- The Readiness Facility, which funds capacity building, technical assistance, and project pipeline development.
- The Investment Facility, which provides grant-based support for resilience-building investments across five core areas: early warning systems, water and agriculture, economic resilience, drought finance, and emergency response.
- The Knowledge Bank, serving as a global hub for drought resilience best practices, innovations, and technical guidance.

In delivering on its ambitious objectives, the Riyadh Global Drought Resilience Partnership is guided by a strong commitment to transparency, fairness, and inclusiveness. These principles are embedded in its governance framework, which brings together a diverse range of stakeholders to guide strategic decisions and ensure accountable management of resources.

At the heart of this structure is the **Steering Committee**, the Partnership's primary decision-making body. Composed of 12 representatives from UN agencies, donor countries, beneficiary states, international organizations, private sector partners, and civil society organizations, the Steering Committee ensures that all relevant voices are heard and considered. It plays a central role in shaping the Partnership's direction, overseeing pooled resource allocations, monitoring results, and upholding transparency and accountability throughout the Partnership's operations.

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and its Global Mechanism (GM), as the lead agency hosting the RGDRP Secretariat, play a central role in supporting the Steering Committee by providing technical guidance, operational leadership, and day-to-day coordination to advance the Partnership's goals.

The following section outlines the mandate, composition, and working modalities of the Steering Committee, which serves as the cornerstone of the Partnership's governance.

2. Mandate

The Steering Committee (SC) serves as the principal decision-making and oversight body of the Riyadh Global Drought Resilience Partnership (RGDRP). Its primary role is to guide the strategic direction of the Partnership, ensuring that resources are allocated effectively and that activities align with RGDRP's mission of strengthening global drought resilience. The Steering Committee is responsible for approving key financial and operational decisions, safeguarding transparency, and ensuring accountability to all stakeholders.

As the main governance body, the SC oversees the implementation of the Partnership's objectives, working to shift global drought management from reactive crisis response to proactive risk reduction and resilience building. It plays a critical role in supporting integrated, country-driven approaches and fostering collaboration across governments, UN agencies, donors, technical organizations, private sector partners, and civil society.



3. Functions

The Steering Committee shall perform the following core functions:

- Provide strategic direction and approve operational policies.
- Review and approve the Partnership's multi-annual investment plans and annual budgets.
- Allocate pooled funding and set reporting and risk management frameworks.
- Approve performance frameworks with key indicators and monitor implementation progress.
- Guide the Readiness Facility, Investment Facility, and Knowledge Platform.
- Promote coordination with donors, stakeholders, and regional partners.

4. Composition

The 12-seat Steering Committee was confirmed by beneficiary countries during the RGDRP High Level Inaugural Conference held in June 2025 in Cologne, with a three-year term for non-permanent members and a primary/alternate system to enhance representation and continuity.

- 2 UN agencies (UNCCD - permanent, UNDP - primary, WMO - alternate)
- 3 Funding entities (KSA - permanent, IsDB and GEF - primary, OPEC Fund - alternate)
- 3 Beneficiary countries (Ethiopia, Cameroon, Pakistan - primary; Chad, Kenya, Uzbekistan - alternates)
- 2 International technical organizations (CILSS and IDRA)
- 1 Private sector representative (to be selected)
- 1 NGO/CSO/community-based organization (to be selected)

5. Membership Terms

Permanent members include UNCCD and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as founding member. Other members serve staggered three-year terms to ensure continuity. Primary and alternate representatives shall be designated for eligible constituencies to ensure inclusive participation and continuity of representation.

6. Selection Process

Members were selected through a transparent, consensus-based process facilitated by UNCCD. Beneficiary country representation ensure regional balance and rotate among UNCCD regional annexes. Private sector and NGO/CSO representatives will be identified via an open call managed by UNCCD.



7. Decision-Making Process:

The Steering Committee operates on the principle of equal voting rights for all its members. To prevent conflicts of interest, beneficiary countries abstain from voting on funding proposals related to their own projects. Decision-making is primarily consensus-based, with discussions guided by the Co-Chairs. In cases where consensus cannot be reached, the Co-Chairs work together to establish a balanced and fair position that reflects the diverse views of Committee members.

8. 6. Meetings

The Steering Committee shall meet at least twice annually, preferably alongside major international forums such as UNCCD COPs. Additional virtual meetings may be scheduled as needed to address urgent matters or ensure continuous oversight. Meeting minutes are published for transparency.