



Open Call for Expressions of Interest for Independent Experts to Join the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Future Strategic Framework (IWG-FSF) for the biennium 2026–2028

Deadline for submission of applications: 12 November 2026 (23:59 CET)

Desertification, along with climate change and the loss of biodiversity were identified as the greatest challenges to sustainable development during the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. Established in 1994, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is the sole legally binding international agreement linking environment and development to sustainable land management. The Convention seeks to support countries to address Desertification, Land Degradation, and Drought (DLDD) (www.unccd.int).

In line with decision 6/COP.17 on the Final Report of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Future Strategic Framework, the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is pleased to launch an open call to invite expressions of interest from qualified independent experts to fill the three regional representative positions allocated to Central and Eastern Europe¹ and serve on the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Future Strategic Framework for the biennium 2026–2028 (hereafter referred to as IWG-FSF #2).

Mandate of the IWG-FSF

Pursuant to decision 6/COP.17, the mandate of the IWG-FSF 2024–2026 (hereafter referred to as IWG-FSF #1) has been renewed and extended for the duration of the 2026–2028 biennium.

In accordance with paragraphs 1 and 2 of annex I to the decision, the IWG-FSF for 2026–2028 (hereafter referred to as IWG-FSF #2) is mandated to:

1. Conduct a thorough analysis of the current indicators as contained in the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, with a view to making them more relevant and responsive for a post-2030 strategic framework of the Convention, while ensuring that future methodologies are feasible, accessible and within the capacities of Parties, and taking into consideration decision 8/COP.16
2. Develop a draft post-2030 strategic proposal based on the aforementioned analysis, which shall include goals and targets for a post-2030 strategic framework of the Convention, building on (i) the key elements and draft vision identified in document ICCD/COP(17)/2, as well as (ii) the statements issued

¹ As listed among the UN regions in the footnote to paragraph 3(a) of annex I to decision 6/COP.17



in the plenary of the Committee of the Whole during its consideration of agenda item 3 at the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 17).

Responsibilities

This open call for expressions of interest for independent experts is being launched to fill the allocated quota of regional representatives for Central and Eastern Europe in IWG-FSF #2.

Candidates should draw upon their relevant policy, scientific and/or technical expertise in matters related to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) to contribute to the deliberations and deliverables of IWG-FSF #2.

Selected experts will be expected to:

- Participate in IWG-FSF #2 meetings (in-person and virtual) and ensure that their views reflect experiences and geographically contextualized expert perspectives of the region under consideration of this open call.
- Provide input on strategic planning and indicator analysis;
- Collaborate in the preparation of the interim and final reports;
- Engage with relevant stakeholders and support transparent consultation processes.

Criteria for selection as per Annex II of decision 6/COP.17

1. Experts applying to become members of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Future Strategic Framework of the Convention for the biennium 2026-2028 (IWG-FSF #2) shall demonstrate capabilities in policy, scientific or technical expertise in relation to the matters of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) by fulfilling at least three of the following criteria:
 - (a) An advanced university degree (Masters or PhD) and a strong academic and/or professional background in any of the following fields: desertification, land degradation, drought, sustainable land management, ecosystem restoration, climate science, or environmental monitoring; or
 - (b) Substantive relevant professional experience in scientific research, science-policy analysis, or programme implementation in areas related to land degradation, desertification or drought; sustainable land management or ecosystem restoration; indicator development and monitoring, or reporting frameworks; multilateral environmental



agreements (MEAs), conventions or governance; or strategic policy development; or

- (c) Substantive evidence of significant, peer-reviewed publications in international journals, technical assessments, or contributions to intergovernmental processes; or
- (d) Experience in strategic policy development, indicator design or data analysis, or related technical/scientific assessments at international, regional or national levels; or
- (e) Experience in providing policy, scientific or technical advice to decision makers and/or practitioners at global, regional, national and/or subnational levels in thematic areas relevant to the UNCCD; or
- (f) Understanding of the UNCCD processes/procedures, related United Nations and/or intergovernmental processes, and/or MEAs.

2. In addition, the expert shall:

- (a) Have full professional fluency in English (the working language of the IWG-FSF #2) (oral and written);
- (b) Be willing to commit the time and effort necessary to contribute to the work of the IWG-FSF #2.

Application Procedure

Interested candidates are invited to submit the following documents:

1. A letter of interest (max. 2 pages) outlining relevant expertise and motivation.
2. A curriculum vitae (max. 4 pages), including contact information and a list of relevant publications and projects.
3. A reference letter or contact details of one referee familiar with the candidate's work (optional).

Applications should be submitted by e-mail to **iwg-fsf@unccd.int**, with a subject line **“IWG FSF #2 – independent experts”**. The deadline for applications is **12 November 2026 23:59 CET**. Only applications submitted by the deadline will be considered.



Selection process

Following decision 6/COP.17, an ad hoc Selection Committee, composed of the Presidents of UNCCD COP 16 and COP 17 and the Presidency of COP 18, will assess the candidates and undertake the selection of the independent experts from the region under consideration in accordance with the established selection criteria, with no more than one expert selected from any one country.

Terms of appointment

The independent experts selected through this open call will be appointed for the 2026–2028 biennium, and until the eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 18).

IWG-FSF #2 members will not receive financial remuneration from the UNCCD secretariat. However, where required, travel costs and daily subsistence allowance (DSA) will be covered for eligible members in accordance with applicable United Nations rules and regulations.