

Achieving Land Degradation Neutrality at the country level

Building blocks for LDN target setting



Foreword

From global ambition to country action



The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development embodies the bold and global ambition to shift the world to a more sustainable and resilient trajectory. The target of achieving a land degradation-neutral world is a centrepiece of this agenda.

More than 100 countries have already committed to translating the global Land Degradation Neutrality target into country-specific targets and actions. Actions that generate multiple benefits: from climate change mitigation and adaptation to zero hunger; from ensuring access to clean water to creating decent work and green jobs.

The UNCCD Secretariat and the Global Mechanism, in collaboration with a dozen bilateral and multilateral partners are supporting countries on the LDN target setting journey. The building blocks of this journey presented here are the result of extensive discussions with country Parties and stakeholders. They also draw on the lessons from 14 pioneer countries' experiences of how to put the evolving LDN concept into practice.

The LDN target setting process provides a major opportunity for countries to increase coherence, scale, and resource mobilization by:

First, using LDN as a lens to foster coherence of national policies, actions and commitments – from agricultural policy to climate action and restoration commitments;

Second, moving from pilots to scale, from a plethora of small scale, sometimes scattered and fragmented projects, to large scale, transformative, bold projects to achieve the country's LDN targets; and

Third, creating blended finance packages to finance the transition towards Land Degradation Neutrality, creatively combining public and private, national and international, climate and development resources.

Together with our partners, we are committing to supporting countries in tapping these opportunities. Let us boldly move ahead on the journey of achieving a Land Degradation Neutrality, country by country.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a stylized 'M' and 'R'.

Markus Repnik
Managing Director
Global Mechanism of the UNCCD

Introduction

Desertification is threatening the livelihoods of 1 billion people in over 100 countries¹, and each year 12 million hectares of arable land are lost to drought.² The extent and severity of land degradation worldwide combined with the negative effects of climate change, population growth and an ever-increasing demand for natural resources requires immediate and assertive action. The economic costs of desertification and land degradation are estimated at USD 490 billion per year. Avoiding land degradation through sustainable land management can generate up to USD 1.4 trillion of economic benefits³.

Policies and programmes to halt and reverse land degradation have long suffered from the absence of a clear overarching goal and quantitative, time-bound targets to guide action and make progress measurable. In October 2015, UNCCD country Parties reached a breakthrough agreement on the Land Degradation Neutrality concept (LDN).

The LDN Target Setting Programme: The process

The twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties of the UNCCD (COP 12) agreed to integrate the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and target 15.3 on Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) in particular, into the implementation of the Convention, stating that “striving to achieve SDG target 15.3 is a strong vehicle for driving implementation of the UNCCD” (decision 3/COP 12). Moreover, COP 12 recognized that “a significant proportion of land degradation occurs beyond arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas” and that “Parties may use the UNCCD to guide their policies relating to Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD) and voluntary targets when striving to achieve LDN at the national and sub-national levels”.

These decisions integrate SDGs and the target 15.3 on Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) into the implementation process of the UNCCD and invite countries to formulate voluntary targets to achieve LDN by 2030.

In order to support countries into translating these decisions into action at the country level, the UNCCD’s Science Policy Interface (SPI)⁴ developed a LDN conceptual framework that provides a scientifically sound basis for understanding LDN and developing practical guidelines for implementing and monitoring national processes for achieving LDN.

COP12 has given countries a clear roadmap for the next 15 years – now the challenge is to capitalize on this momentum. The LDN Target Setting Programme (LDN TSP) led by the Convention’s Global Mechanism is currently supported by more than 10 bilateral and multi-lateral partners. The programme is assisting countries in making the LDN concept a reality by 2030, by providing practical tools and guidance for the establishment of voluntary LDN targets, accelerating the implementation of transformative programmes and projects, with positive changes.



What is Land Degradation Neutrality?

The Twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD defined LDN as “a state whereby the amount and quality of land resources necessary to support ecosystem functions and services and enhance food security remain stable or increase within specified temporal and spatial scales and ecosystems”.

The LDN concept was developed to encourage implementation of an optimal mix of measures designed to avoid, reduce and/or reverse land degradation in order to achieve a state of no net loss of healthy and productive land. LDN aims to balance anticipated losses in land-based natural capital and associated ecosystem functions and services with measures that produce alternative gains through approaches such as land restoration and sustainable land management⁴.

LDN is a simple idea and a powerful tool. It means securing enough healthy and productive natural resources by avoiding degradation whenever possible and restoring land that has already been degraded. At its core are better land management practices and better land use planning that will improve economic, social and ecological sustainability for present and future generations.

Numerous direct links exist between LDN and the Sustainable Development Goals, such as eradicating poverty, ensuring food security, protecting the environment and using natural resources sustainably. LDN serves as a catalyst in achieving these goals.

LDN and climate change

LDN provides significant benefits in terms of mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

Halting and reversing land degradation can transform land from being a source of greenhouse gas emissions to a sink, by increasing carbon stocks in soils and vegetation. Furthermore, LDN plays a key role in strengthening the resilience of rural communities against climate shocks by securing and improving the provision of vital ecosystem services.

These links between land and climate were reflected in the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) submitted by countries to COP 21 of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Paris, in 2015. More than 100 of the INDCs included land-based activities for mitigation and adaptation. LDN targets and associated measures contribute to and depend on the implementation of national climate plans and vice versa. Such synergies should be taken into account when developing national plans for LDN and revising and updating the NDCs under the Paris Agreement.

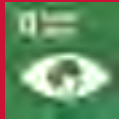
6.1 Active access to safe drinking water for all
6.4 Increase water-use efficiency
6.5 Implement integrated water resources management
6.6 Protect and restore water-related ecosystems



15.1 Ensure conservation of ecosystems and their services
15.2 Promote sustainable management of forests
15.4 Ensure conservation of mountain ecosystems
15.5 Reduce degradation of natural habitats
15.8 Reduce impact of invasive alien species
15.9 Integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values in policy



13.1 Strengthen resilience to climate-related hazards
13.2 Integrate climate change measures in policy



1.1 Eradicate extreme poverty
1.2 Halve % of people in poverty
1.4 Ensure equal rights to resources, ownership over land
1.5 build resilience, reduce vulnerability



12.3 Halve per capita global food waste



2.1 End hunger
2.2 End all forms of malnutrition
2.3 Double agriculture productivity and incomes
2.4 Ensure sustainable food production systems



7.2 Increase share of renewable energy



15.3

Achieve a land degradation neutral world by 2030

LDN as an accelerator of the Sustainable Development Goalsⁱ

LDN target setting: the building blocksⁱⁱ

Four building blocks form the basis of the LDN target-setting process, developed on the scientific guidance provided by the UNCCD's Science- Policy Interface and feedback received from countries and stakeholders. They build on the early lessons from the LDN Target Setting Pilot Project with 14 pioneer countries, representing all regions. The building blocks are:

1.

Leveraging LDN

LDN target setting is not a stand-alone process but provides opportunities for coordination across ministries and sectors involved in land management. By finding common answers to: Why does LDN matter? What should we leverage? Who should be engaged? countries can succeed in leveraging LDN.

2.

Assessing LDN

Assessing the current state of land degradation and its drivers is the basis for setting LDN targets, making informed decisions on what action to take, and tracking progress.

3.

Setting LDN targets & associated measures

LDN targets define a country's ambitions in terms of combatting land degradation. LDN measures comprise a whole range of interventions to avoid, reduce or reverse land degradation.

4.

Achieving LDN

An enabling environment is a prerequisite for achieving LDN. It makes integrating the LDN concept into national policies easier, and identifying transformative LDN programmes and projects possible.

1.

Leveraging LDN

key outcomes/outputs

- A 'National LDN Target Setting Leverage Plan' is established to identify and tap into country specific opportunities for LDN leverage
- Senior government and major international partners are mobilized to endorse and actively support the LDN target setting process
- Multi-Stakeholder engagement is secured to ensure full participation of key stakeholders throughout the LDN target setting process

3.

Setting LDN targets & measures

key outcomes/outputs

- LDN targets are established to define the country's ambition to reach LDN
- Key policy/technical measures to achieve LDN are identified
- Governmental high level note of measures to avoid, reduce and reverse land degradation is prepared

2.

Assessing LDN

key outcomes/outputs

- The LDN baseline is established and mapped to define the LDN frame of reference
- The LDN legal and institutional environment is analyzed to identify key opportunities and threats to achieving LDN
- LDN trends and drivers are mapped to identify priority areas for action to achieve LDN

4.

Achieving LDN

key outcomes/outputs

- LDN is included in selected national policies and commitments
- Transformative LDN projects/programmes and innovative financing are mapped out

BUILDING BLOCK 1: Leveraging LDN

LDN target setting is not a stand-alone process: it provides opportunities for leverage and coordination across various line ministries and sectors involved in land management. To activate these opportunities, three questions need to be answered: Why does LDN matter to the country? What to leverage? Who needs to be engaged?

As a country-led process, successful LDN target setting and implementation depend on the highest level of political commitment and involvement of a wide variety of sectors and stakeholders.

Why does LDN matter to the country?

By answering this question, countries will be able to showcase and effectively communicate the multiple benefits that LDN offers to address national development priorities such as food security, poverty reduction and climate action.

LDN advocates increasing awareness and communication on the cross-sectoral and multiple benefits of LDN related measures, making sure that key decision makers understand the ground-breaking opportunities that setting an LDN target can bring.

LDN is a “lens” that helps focus on the multiple services that land provides, creating coherence among sustainable development policies. Setting a LDN target provides clear direction for action.

While the LDN target-setting process is consistent with international guidelines (e.g. SDGs and the Rio Conventions), to be successful it must be aligned with national development priorities and build on national sustainable development processes.

LDN target setting is linked to a variety of global and regional sustainable land management, land restoration and rehabilitation initiatives. Among these are the Bonn Challenge on Forest and Landscape Restoration (FLR)⁵, the New York Declaration on Forests⁶ and the 4 per 1000 Initiative⁷, as well as related regional initiatives such as the Initiative 20x20 for Latin America and the Caribbean⁸, the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100)⁹ and TerrAfrica.¹⁰

While LDN falls under the thematic scope of the UNCCD, developing cross-cutting actions that encompass the interests of the other Rio Conventions is vital for its success. Actions to achieve LDN can also help reach the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans established under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and become a core element of the Nationally Determined Contributions in the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Building Block 1: Leveraging LDN

Creating a National LDN Target Setting Leverage Planⁱⁱ

HOW? LDN Leverage Plan

WHY does LDN matter?

- Multiple benefits
- Policy coherence
- Climate action
- Financing opportunities

WHO to engage?

- Senior government
- National coordination mechanisms
- International development partners
- National stakeholders

WHAT to leverage?

- National development priorities
- Country commitments and engagements

Building Block 1: Leveraging LDN

Who to engage in this process?

Taking into account the variety of functions of land, a wide range of stakeholders and sectors must be actively involved in LDN target setting and implementation:

- **Governmental agencies:** Those in charge of developing and implementing policies and plans on land-related issues at the national and sub-national levels. Key line ministries in agriculture, environment/forestry, water, mining, energy, trade, economic development and statistics can become entry points for pursuing the LDN agenda through national the focal points of the Rio Conventions and associated funds, e.g. the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF).
- **Land users:** Those who make direct decisions on land management based on the type of land ownership rights they hold. This diverse group includes small and large-scale farmers/pastoralists, forest harvesters and private companies. Many land users are also active outside the agricultural sector in the mining, urbanization, energy, roads and infrastructure industries.
- **Private service providers:** Those who support land users and are involved indirectly in land management. This diverse group includes banks; suppliers of seed, fertilizer and machinery; energy and communication service providers; traders, manufacturers and chambers of commerce.
- **Civil society organizations (CSOs):** Those who connect other stakeholders on land-related issues at every level, cooperating with local land users, their associations and governmental agencies.
- **Development partners:** The multilateral and bilateral stakeholders who provide financial and technical support to those involved in land management.
- **National and international research institutes:** Those who offer scientific advice on good land use practices and related policy options, such as national agriculture research institutes, universities and institutes.

LDN national working groups

LDN national working groups should bring these stakeholders together and serve as platforms for information exchange among representatives of all interested parties directly connected to land degradation processes and able to contribute to the achievement of LDN.

While countries may establish new forums dedicated to LDN target setting, the LDN process favours the use of established ones. National level coordination mechanisms should be screened in order to identify suitable platforms to serve as LDN working groups.

Building Block 1: Leveraging LDN

Stakeholder engagement:
the LDN working groupⁱⁱⁱ



What are the expected outputs/ outcomes?

- A 'National LDN Target Setting Leverage Plan' is established to identify and tap into country specific opportunities for LDN leverage
- Senior government and major international partners are mobilized to endorse and actively support the LDN target setting process
- Multi-stakeholder engagement is secured to ensure full participation of key stakeholders throughout the LDN target setting process

What support does the LDN TSP provide to participating countries?

- Support in identifying country-specific opportunities for creating LDN leverage, including the preparation and implementation of the 'National LDN Target Setting Leverage Plan'
- Support in facilitating and fostering the engagement of key senior government and international partners in the LDN target setting process
- Support in facilitating full stakeholder participation by establishing or mobilizing national LDN working groups and organizing national consultation workshops

BUILDING BLOCK 2: Assessing LDN

An assessment of the current status, trends and drivers of land degradation is needed to set sound LDN targets, make decisions on potential interventions, forecast changes in land-based natural capital and track progress. The assessment uses a set of three indicators that reflect land-based natural capital and its associated ecosystem services. It also examines the local context and the direct and indirect drivers of land degradation in particular.

LDN indicators

The minimum set of indicators recommended for tracking progress towards LDN against a baseline are:

- land cover
- land productivity (metric: net primary productivity)
- carbon stocks above and below ground (metric: soil organic carbon)

These indicators are part of a set of six progress indicators used by the UNCCD to track progress in the implementation of the Convention through national reporting. They have also been recommended as sub-indicators for the indicator 15.3.1, “Proportion of land that is degraded over total land area”, adopted to measure progress toward the SDG target 15.3 and are intended to reduce the reporting burden on country Parties. These indicators may be enhanced and complemented by other relevant national (or sub-national) indicators, in order to obtain an even more accurate picture of the current status and progress made.

The indicators monitor changes in different yet highly relevant ways. Land cover provides a first indication of a reduction or increase in vegetation, habitat fragmentation and land conversion. Land productivity offers an indication of ecosystem health and sharpens the focus on ecosystem services. Soil organic carbon denotes overall soil quality.

When does land degradation occur?

A positive change in one of the indicators cannot compensate for a negative change in another – therefore, if one of the indicators shows a negative change, degradation is considered to occur, following the “one out, all out” rule. Thus, land degradation occurs if:

- negative land cover change occurs, or
- net primary productivity shows a significant negative trend, or
- soil organic carbon shows a significant negative trend.⁴

Changes in the indicators must be interpreted in the context of local conditions. Interpreting such changes is up to the national and local authorities and institutions that coordinate LDN assessment.

Building Block 2: Assessing LDN

Framework for monitoring and reporting on SDG target 15.3^{iv}

SDG

**Indicator
15.3.1**

Proportion of land
that is degraded
over total land
area



**Sub-
Indicators**

UNCCD (CBD,
UNFCCC)
Reporting
Mechanisms

Land
Productivity



Land Cover and
Land Cover Change



Carbon stocks above/
below ground



**Data from
multiple
sources**

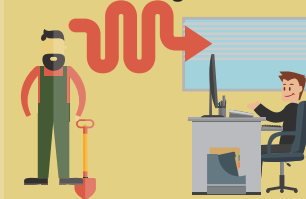
Official Statistics and
Earth Observation



Land Use and
Management Practices



Surveys, Sampling and
Citizen Sourcing



Building Block 2: Assessing LDN

How to develop a comprehensive assessment of LDN?

Setting the LDN baseline

The baseline is the initial numerical value of the three indicators used as proxies to reflect the land-based natural capital. Since the aim is to achieve LDN with no net loss, the minimum level of ambition of a LDN target should equal the baseline for a given year.

Assessing land degradation trends

Setting the baseline is a stock-taking exercise of the current land-based natural capital - it does not evaluate the level of land degradation. However, since many countries have already conducted assessments of the status and trends of land degradation and implemented land evaluation to assess the potential of the land, these results can be utilized in the LDN target-setting process. In the absence of such assessments, countries may perform a retrospective trend analysis spanning a 10-15 year period, using the same indicators.

Areas affected by negative trends should be further scrutinized to pinpoint land degradation "hot spots" and evaluate whether these should be priority areas for LDN action. Available information and technologies, such as archive maps, satellite images, aerial photographs and field visits can all support hot spot analysis.

Identifying drivers of land degradation

Once the trends of land degradation have been identified, quantified and localized, an analysis of the drivers of degradation in the areas affected should be performed to better understand the dynamics of land degradation at the (sub-) national level. There are two types of drivers: proximate drivers that are directly linked to local land-use systems and underlying drivers that can be local, national or global and reflect demographic, economic and socio-political circumstances that impact local land-use systems indirectly.

Analyzing the legal and institutional framework of land management

This analysis is of utmost importance for identifying gaps, inconsistencies, weaknesses and opportunities in order to create or strengthen the national regulatory environment for LDN. In this context, the UNCCD National Action Programmes (NAPs) can provide a starting point, as in principle they provide background on the technical, legal, policy and financing aspects of sustainable land management.

The LDN assessment provides the evidence base needed to set LDN targets, make decisions about potential interventions and prioritize efforts in areas where degradation is happening.

Building Block 2: Assessing LDN

Data Sources

Setting the LDN baseline and assessing land degradation trends require reliable data. The indicators should be computed primarily, and to the largest extent possible, using comparable and standardized national official data sources. Only in their absence or to complement such data should global data sources be used.

In the long term, all countries should ideally be able to perform relevant data collection, analysis and report on land degradation, independently.

A tiered approach is recommended for the computation of the indicators:

Tier 1 (default method):

Global/regional earth observation, geospatial information and modelling

Tier 2:

National statistics based on data acquired for administrative or natural reference units (e.g. watersheds) and national earth observation

Tier 3 (most detailed method):

Field surveys, assessments and ground measurements

This approach enables national authorities to use methods consistent with their capacities, resources and data availability and facilitates comparability at global level.

What are the expected outputs/outcomes?

- LDN baseline is established and mapped to provide the LDN target setting reference framework
- LDN legal and institutional environment is analyzed to identify key opportunities and gaps to achieving LDN
- Trends and drivers of land degradation are mapped to identify priority areas for LDN action

What support does the LDN TSP provide to participating countries?

- Access to default estimates from global data sources on the LDN baseline and trends
- Guidance on the use of sound methodologies and approaches for the assessment of the LDN baseline and trends at country level
- Support in the implementation of targeted analysis of the LDN legal and institutional environment



BUILDING BLOCK 3: Setting LDN targets and associated measures

LDN target setting is a political process that utilizes the best available knowledge to set ambitious, yet realistic targets. It means defining broad, yet clear, time-bound and measurable objectives on what a country wants to achieve in terms of halting and reversing land degradation and restoring degraded lands through a wide range of possible measures.

LDN response hierarchy

As a planning principle, LDN involves making land-use decisions according to a response hierarchy⁴ that prioritizes the avoidance of land degradation: "Prevention is better than cure".

Avoidance of land degradation is beneficial from both ecological and economic perspectives. Restoration efforts can succeed in bringing back important ecosystem functions, but often it is not possible to fully restore all of the previous ecosystem services, and restoration can prove to be more costly than prevention.

Some losses are unavoidable as a result of population growth and the need to expand agricultural or settlement areas. In the case of unavoidable degradation, land-use planners should consider counterbalancing this new degradation (losses) by restoring other tracts of land (gains).⁴ This is what distinguishes the LDN concept from other land degradation approaches.

To achieve this, countries may wish to complement national LDN targets with sub-national ones:

- LDN at the national level: the ambition is no net loss for the whole land area of a country and all its land cover classes
- LDN at the sub-national level: LDN targets can also be set for specific regions or defined ecozones

Geographically bound targets for achieving a neutral (no net loss) or improved (net gain) state allow countries to focus on areas that have been identified as degradation hot spots and of high worth in terms of achieving LDN.

The LDN approach also embraces the articulation of more specific targets, which although not conceived in terms of neutrality, contribute to avoiding, reducing and reversing land degradation.

Countries may choose to set their voluntary LDN targets by adopting one or a combination of these approaches.

Building Block 3: Setting LDN targets and associated measures

The LDN response hierarchy^v

1. Avoid

Many forms of land degradation can be avoided through proactive measures to confer resilience and prevent adverse change in the quality of non-degraded land via appropriate regulation, planning or activity design.

2. Reduce

Land degradation can be mitigated through reactive practical actions that reduce in situ impacts on land currently undergoing degrading use (e.g. sustainable land management).

3. Reverse

Where feasible, some (but rarely all) of the productive potential and ecological services of degraded land can be restored or rehabilitated through actively assisting the recovery of ecosystem functions.

As a planning principle, LDN involves making land-use decisions according to a **response hierarchy** that prioritizes the avoidance of land degradation: "Prevention is better than cure".⁴

Building Block 3: Setting LDN targets and associated measures

Examples of LDN targets

LDN at the national level

- LDN is achieved by 2030 compared to the 2015 baseline (no net loss)
- LDN is achieved by 2030 compared to the 2015 baseline plus an additional 10% of the national territory has improved (net gain)
- LDN is achieved by 2025 as compared to the 2015 baseline (earlier target year)

LDN at the (sub-) national level

- LDN is achieved in the Western province of country X by 2030, compared to the 2015 baseline (no net loss)
- LDN is achieved in the Southern province of country X by 2030, compared to the 2015 baseline plus an additional 25% of the province territory has improved (net gain)

Specific targets to avoid, reduce and reverse land degradation

- Improve productivity and Soil Organic Carbon (SOC) stocks in cropland and grasslands by 2030, compared to the 2015 baseline
- Rehabilitate X million hectares of degraded and abandoned land for crop production by 2030
- Halt the conversion of forests and wetlands to other land cover classes by 2020
- Increase forest cover by 20% by 2030, compared to the 2015 baseline
- Reduce the rate of soil sealing (conversion to artificial land cover) by 50% by 2030, compared to the 2015 baseline

Building Block 3: Setting LDN targets and associated measures

Counterbalancing unavoidable land degradation (losses)
through restoration or rehabilitation efforts elsewhere (gains)^{vi}

In the case of unavoidable degradation, land-use planners should consider counterbalancing this new degradation (losses) by restoring other tracts of land (gains). This is what distinguishes the LDN concept from other land degradation approaches.



land which may degrade



**anticipated
future losses**

Land where new and
unavoidable degradation
is likely

land to be improved



**proposed
future gains**

Land where efforts to
avoid, reduce or reverse
degradation may lead to
improvements



Building Block 3: Setting LDN targets and associated measures

Key policies and technical measures to achieve LDN targets

There are no prescribed measures to achieve LDN targets. The measures comprise a whole range of possible interventions designed to avoid, reduce or reverse the loss of productive land – the options are as diverse as the forms and drivers of land degradation.

The same diversity applies to the level and scale of activities. Measures may be implemented in the form of policies or plans at the (sub-) national level or in the form of programmes or projects that are tailored to specific ecological and socioeconomic challenges at a given geographical scale.

The involvement of local stakeholders in the selection of options is critical to successful planning and implementation.

Combining approaches for participatory planning with scientific and socioeconomic assessment tools that facilitate the understanding of complex humanecological systems, is recommended.¹¹

A strategic social and environmental impact assessment (SEIA) is another important part of the planning process for large-scale interventions. A SEIA will anticipate likely consequences of an intervention and identify ways to avoid and reduce potential adverse impacts, such as establishing environmental or social safeguards to reduce risks.

Sustainable land management interventions can also play an important role in fighting land degradation and can be used for various land use classes.

Building Block 3: Setting LDN targets and associated measures

Four categories of sustainable land management measures¹²

Agronomic measures: measures that improve soil cover (e.g. green cover, mulch), measures that enhance organic matter/soil fertility (e.g. manuring), soil surface treatment (e.g. conservation tillage), subsurface treatment (e.g. deep ripping).

Vegetative measures: plantation/reseeding of tree and shrub species (e.g. live fences, tree crowns), grasses and perennial herbaceous plants (e.g. grass strips).

Structural measures: terraces (bench, forward/backward sloping), bunds, banks (level, graded), dams, pans, ditches (level, graded), walls, barriers, palisades.

Management measures: change of land use type (e.g. area enclosure), change of management/intensity level (e.g. from grazing to cut-and-carry), major change in the timing of activities, control/change of species composition.

What are the expected outputs/outcomes?

- LDN targets are established
- Key policies and technical measures to achieve LDN are identified
- A Governmental high-level note on measures to avoid, reduce and reverse land degradation is prepared

What support does the LDN TSP provide to participating countries?

- Support in setting measurable, verifiable, time-bound national voluntary LDN targets
- Support in identifying specific measures to achieve these targets
- Support in elaborating a high level note on the implementation of the LDN response hierarchy at the country level
- Establishes the LDN target setting help-desk platform for technical enquiries from participating countries and for peer learning

BUILDING BLOCK 4: Achieving LDN

An environment that facilitates the implementation of LDN actions is a prerequisite for achieving LDN. An enabling environment makes integrating the LDN concept and actions into national policies easier and helps identify large-scale, innovative and transformative LDN programmes and projects.

Mainstream LDN

Once LDN targets and measures are set, they must be effectively mainstreamed into national development priorities, including the SDGs and national planning processes.

The UNCCD NAPs, which were designed to be the basic national planning documents for UNCCD implementation, frequently include an assessment of the enabling environment. The LDN target setting process can be used to update and complement these assessments and to propose specific ways of enhancing policy, legislative, institutional and coordination frameworks essential for achieving LDN.

Strategic mapping of mainstreaming opportunities is recommended to identify relevant policy processes at (sub-) national and sectoral levels.

Integrated land-use planning is based on the evaluation of the potential impacts of different land-use options. LDN must become an essential component of integrated land-use planning.

LDN targets and measures must be effectively communicated at the national level across various channels, reaching a wide variety of stakeholders, from local communities to policy makers.

Achieve LDN through increased investments

Identifying new investment opportunities for financing key measures to achieve LDN is crucial. This may involve the pre-identification and subsequent formulation of transformative LDN proposals for projects and programmes targeting multiple sources of finance such as the national budget, multilateral and bilateral donor agencies, development banks and emerging finance mechanisms, including the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the LDN Fund spearheaded by the UNCCD's Global Mechanism.

Securing private sector involvement and assessing innovative sources of finance through the LDN target setting process at the country level are ways to support the development of bankable LDN projects, and a milestone in achieving LDN on a large scale.

Building Block 4: Achieving LDN

Long-term sustainable financing for LDN^{vii}

Long-term
sustainable
financing for LDN

National
budget

Private
sector

International
funding
mechanisms

Innovative
funding
sources

Multilateral
& bilateral
donors

Building Block 4: Achieving LDN

Establish LDN-related partnerships

Strong partnerships must be forged between a range of stakeholders involved in land management and stewardship on order for LDN to become a reality. The following elements are key to this process.

- Integration of LDN as guiding principle by all land-related ministries and on all levels - central, provincial and local, including in local development plans
- Establishment of public-private partnerships through which private companies invest in sustainable management practices, including development of bankable transformative LDN projects and programmes
- Mobilization of blended finance from a broad spectrum of public and private sources, including the GCF, GEF, multilateral development banks, regional development banks and other partners
- Participation in national, regional and global initiatives that promote upscaling SLM and restoration activities to create the synergies required for LDN implementation.

What are the expected outputs/ outcomes?

- LDN is included in selected policies and commitments
- Transformative LDN projects/programmes and innovative financing sources are mapped out

What support does the LDN TSP provide to participating countries?

- Support in identifying global and national policy processes and country commitments with potential for LDN inclusion
- Support in mapping of transformative LDN projects/programmes and innovative finance
- Support in creating awareness of the benefits of LDN and the LDN target-setting process
- Support in establishing partnerships with key stakeholders to promote and scale up implementation of the LDN response hierarchy



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i Adapted from Akhtar Schuster, M et al.: Operationalizing land degradation neutrality: unravelling the semantics to support action and synergies among the Rio Conventions. Environmental Management. (submitted manuscript)

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iv Adapted from UNCCD, CBD, FAO, STAP. 2016. Framework and Guiding Principles for a Land Degradation Indicator- (under preparation). Washington, DC

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