



Date: 21 July 2022

CALL FOR INDEPENDENT SCIENTISTS TO JOIN THE UNCCD SCIENCE-POLICY INTERFACE

The [United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification \(UNCCD\)](#) is the intergovernmental process responsible for global policy development on land and drought. Making land part of the solution to the global environmental challenges of our time requires a strong interface between science and policy. Service on the Science-Policy Interface (SPI), which is voluntary, provides scientists the opportunity to help policy makers address critical bottlenecks in achieving the mission of the Convention through the scientific assessment and synthesis of existing science as well as the review and analysis of major assessment reports of other intergovernmental scientific panels and bodies. In this way the SPI helps ensure that future global policy development will be grounded upon a solid scientific foundation.

The SPI is governed by the [Committee on Science and Technology \(CST\)](#), a subsidiary body of the UNCCD. 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.¹ To this end, the Bureau of CST has opened the public call for candidature opening on **21 July 2022** and closing on **15 August 2022** (midnight CEST). The call is open to scientists from all regions and all organisations, with priority given to those with direct experience in the thematic areas of work identified in the [SPI Work Programme for the 2022-2024 triennium](#).

Mandate and purpose of the SPI

The mandate of the SPI is to facilitate a two-way science-policy dialogue and ensure the delivery of policy-relevant information, knowledge and advice on desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD). The SPI pursues this through work programmes agreed at each session of the UNCCD Conference of the Parties (COP). It is collaborative by design and thus cooperates with other intergovernmental panels and bodies and seeks synergies among the global multilateral environmental conventions. The SPI ultimately transforms scientific advice into a policy-relevant format for consideration in the decision-making process of the 197 signatory Parties to the UNCCD. To learn more about the mandate of the SPI and the Terms of Reference for its members, please visit <https://www.unccd.int/science/mandate-and-tor-spi>.

¹ As per decision 23/COP.11 and amended by decision 21/COP.13, decision 19/COP.14 and decision 19/COP.15.



Work Programme of the SPI

During the 2022-2024 triennium, the SPI will focus on two thematic objectives and seven coordination activities with other scientific mechanisms. These activities were mandated by the UNCCD Conference of the Parties (COP) by its [decision 18/COP.15](#), and are summarized below:

- **Objective 1:** Provision of science-based evidence on **sustainable land use systems** and their potential to address desertification, land degradation and drought while also contributing to the achievement of multiple United Nations goals and targets, taking into account environmental, economic and sociocultural conditions.
- **Objective 2:** Provision of science-based evidence on the **historical regional and global aridity trends and future projections** that may contribute to expanding drylands and affected populations and the adaptation approaches that reduce risks to environmental, social and economic systems.
- **Coordination activities:** In addition to providing quality assurance for the UNCCD's flagship publication, the Global Land Outlook, the SPI will cooperate, through scientific review of new reports and analysis of recently published reports, with the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services (IPBES), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils (ITPS), the International Resources Panel of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP-IRP), the Global Land Indicators Initiative (GLII) of UN Habitat and the Integrated Drought Management Programme (IDMP).

Responsibilities of SPI members

Members of the SPI:

1. Uphold and implement the principles and procedures of the SPI as described in the SPI [Terms of Reference](#) and its Code of Conduct, [Communications Strategy](#) and Conflict of Interest Policy;
2. Contribute directly to delivering the work programme of the SPI as agreed by the UNCCD COP through the provision of timely, clear and well-defined thematic guidance developed from:
 - a. scientific assessment (e.g., systematic review, analysis, synthesis and communication of vital scientific knowledge and evidence);
 - b. translation of science into accessible knowledge and policy-relevant recommendations;
 - c. production of technical reports, and deriving from those, science-policy briefs as well as manuscripts for publication in peer-reviewed literature;
 - d. contribution to and cooperation with other international scientific panels and bodies dealing with DLDD issues in order to develop synergies and avoid duplication of efforts;
 - e. peer-review of scientific and technical results produced by other international scientific panels and bodies as well as UNCCD science-based communications (in adherence to the procedures developed by those bodies);
3. Communicate in a clear and balanced way about what the SPI produces, including uncertainties, without compromising accuracy;
4. Communicate how the SPI works, in a credible, transparent, balanced and authoritative manner;
5. Maintain the highest standards of scientific and technical excellence, professionalism and collegiality; and



6. Ensure scientific exchange with scientists from their regions and/or domains on SPI activities.

Requirements / Criteria for selection

Scientists applying to become members of the SPI shall:

- 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 thematic areas relevant to the [SPI Work Programme 2022-2024](#);
- Have substantive evidence of significant, peer-reviewed publications in international journals in the last ten years;
- Have experience working with intergovernmental/international/interorganizational scientific panels and bodies;
- Have experience in providing scientific advice to natural resource management and/or agriculture policy 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.

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 the deadline on 15 August 2022.

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 of the SPI, the SPI Communications Strategy, the SPI Code of Conduct, and the SPI Conflict of Interest Policy. Scientists will have one week to communicate their answer. 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. 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.



To respond to this call, please:

- Complete and submit the SPI Online Application Form available through the link below: https://www.surveymonkey.de/r/SPI_2022-2024, and
- Upload your Curriculum Vitae (**maximum of four pages, English only**). The CV should include a short biosketch (maximum 250 words), education, professional experience, science-policy interface experience, and relevant publications.

For more information, you can visit

Historical information on the SPI:

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

To get a sense of past and current SPI members please visit:

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

The SPI produces several peer-reviewed technical reports and science-policy briefs each biennium.

For examples please visit:

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

SPI Work Programme:

[SPI Work Programme 2022-2024](#)