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**The 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018)  
Report on the implementation of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018)**

**The 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of  
the Convention (2008–2018)**

**Report by the Executive Secretary on the implementation of The Strategy\***

**Addendum**

**Alignment of action programmes with The Strategy**

*Summary*

1. By decision 3/COP.8, the Conference of the Parties (COP) urged affected country Parties to align their action programmes with The Strategy, and also other relevant implementation activities relating to the Convention. Furthermore, at the seventh session of the Committee to Review the Implementation of the Convention, Parties recommended improving the alignment of action programmes, and requested joint financial and technical support from the Global Mechanism and the secretariat, depending on their respective mandates, to undertake the activities necessary for carrying out this recommendation.
2. In response to the above request from Parties, the secretariat has prepared draft guidelines for the alignment of action programmes which were developed through an interactive process involving discussions at a series of subregional workshops, and a final review at an inter-agency meeting.

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\* The submission of this document was delayed to take into consideration comments made by country Parties at subregional workshops on the alignment of action programmes, held from June to August 2009.

3. The draft guidelines contained in this document are submitted to the COP for consideration and possible adoption, with a view to pursuing the aligned implementation of action programmes within a coherent and consistent framework.

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## I. Background

1. The 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (The Strategy), adopted through decision 3/COP.8, provides the legal basis for the alignment of action programmes. By this decision (paragraph 5) the Conference of the Parties (COP) urges affected developing country Parties, and any other affected country Party within the framework of its regional implementation annex, to align their action programmes (APs), and other relevant implementation activities relating to the Convention, with The Strategy by, inter alia, addressing the outcomes under the five operational objectives and revising their implementation activities to ensure that they comply with these outcomes.

2. By the same decision (paragraph 45), the COP further recognized the need for Parties to realign their national action programmes (NAPs) with The Strategy, and invited Parties, with the assistance of the Global Mechanism (GM) to mobilize international and national resources, both technical and financial, to assist countries with this realignment. Furthermore, at the seventh session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 7) Parties recommended that the alignment of the implementation of APs be enhanced, and requested joint financial and technical support for this from the GM and the secretariat, depending on their respective mandates, in undertaking the activities which would be necessary.

3. In addition, outcome 2.2 of The Strategy requests affected country Parties to revise their NAPs into strategic documents supported by biophysical and socio-economic baseline information, and to include them in integrated investment frameworks; outcome 2.3 requests affected country Parties to include their NAPs and sustainable land management (SLM) and land degradation issues in development planning and relevant sectoral and investment plans and policies.

4. The above COP provisions were complemented by specific recommendations from CRIC 7 by which: (a) the need to integrate NAPs, subregional action programmes (SRAPs) and regional action programmes (RAPs) into overarching development plans such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers was emphasized (paragraph 21), (b) the application and monitoring of the new and standardized reporting guidelines was addressed (paragraph 86), (c) it was recommended that a process be established through which the Parties of a subregion or region could harmonize available information at the national level in order to prepare SRAPs and RAPs as appropriate, in the context of the forthcoming regional mechanisms (paragraph 102), and (d) the need to develop an indicator system that should go hand in hand with the alignment of APs was also stressed (paragraph 109). The first special session of the Committee on Science and Technology further recommended that improved economic and biophysical baselines be used, as well as lessons drawn from similar alignment experiences.

5. It is within this context that the secretariat has prepared guidelines for the alignment of APs with The Strategy. The formulation of the guidelines has followed a process of five major steps. In the first step, three regional consultants (for Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean) prepared draft guidelines, which in the second step were discussed at a series of subregional workshops (see annex II). In the third step the outcome of this process was reviewed at an inter-agency meeting, with a view to finalizing the guidelines before their submission to COP 9 for consideration. It is foreseen that after COP 9, affected country Parties will use these

guidelines in implementing the alignment process, and will provide additional feedback in order to improve the process further.

## **II. Introduction**

### **A. How to use the guidelines**

6. The following guidelines are intended to assist affected country Parties in aligning their NAPs, SRAPs and RAPs to combat desertification with The Strategy, in conformity with the relevant provisions of decision 3/COP.8. Section I of the guidelines clarifies the definition of alignment and revision, provides background information, and outlines the purpose, objectives and expected outcomes of the alignment process, while section II describes the methodology used as well as generic and specific guidelines to be applied for the alignment of APs, according to each specific level and situation.

7. Annex I provides concise background information on (a) the various legal provisions of the Convention regarding AP processes, (b) lessons learned from the preparation and implementation of the first generation of APs, (c) various COP decisions relating to APs, and (d) a review of the Convention's changing external environment. The guidance was developed and validated through an extensive process of review and analysis of the literature, as well as subregional and inter-agency consultation.

8. It is intended that these guidelines should be capable of being both specifically and universally applied. Because of the broad variations in the state of development and implementation of APs, the guidelines classify them into four categories:

(a) APs that have not yet being prepared;

(b) APs that are in preparation;

(c) APs that have been completed but which are facing difficulties in implementation; these need to be improved in order better to comply with all five operational objectives of The Strategy;

(d) APs that have been completed and effectively implemented; these reflect well the five operational objectives of The Strategy and thus need only to have their activities aligned to these operational objectives.

9. Annex III provides a flowchart presenting the different categories of AP as well as the alignment pathway, which is divided into three phases:

(a) Preparation or finalization of APs (classes 1 and 2);

(b) Revision of APs where implementation is limited or has stalled (class 3);

(c) Alignment to The Strategy for those APs that are currently being implemented (class 4).

10. Specific guidance has been developed for each phase. In this respect, annex IV provides a decision-support tool to assist alignment with the five operational objectives, while annex V provides a decision-support tool to assist identification of revision requirements.

11. It should be noted that the core guidelines developed for alignment to the operational objectives are applicable to all categories of AP, including SRAPs and RAPs.

### **B. Clarification of key terms used in the guidelines**

12. In the context of these guidelines, a distinction is made between the two processes of alignment and revision of APs.

#### **1. Alignment of action programmes**

13. According to decision 3/COP.8, alignment refers to the need for APs and other relevant implementation activities to comply with the outcomes areas under the five operational objectives of The Strategy. This means that all APs need to be checked against the five operational objectives and then each activity linked with the operational objective it addresses. This should result in the overview table's listing all existing activities relating to the five operational objectives as well as highlighting the overlaps and gaps. Where the requirements set under the five operational objectives are reflected in the APs, there is no need to change the activities planned. If the requirements are not reflected in the APs, the Party should formulate relevant corrective measures. (See the proposed tool and annex IV.)

#### **2. Revision of action programmes**

14. The revision of APs is a provision of the Convention (articles 9 and 10) to ensure that the programmes are dynamic frameworks responding to changing environments and taking into account lessons learned. In the context of The Strategy, revision is a requirement of outcome areas 2.2, and 2.3 which request APs to be (a) transformed into a strategic document, and (b) incorporated into development planning and relevant sectoral investment plans and policies.

15. In addition to the above-mentioned elements, it should be noted that the alignment and revision processes need to be based on an integrated programming cycle linking planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and reporting. While in the case of alignment the M&E requirement is to apply performance indicators linking the activities to the operational objectives, in the case of revision the requirement is to provide the baseline for the application of impact indicators linking activities to strategic objectives.

### **C. Purpose, objectives and expected outcomes**

16. Alignment and revision are two critical processes which contribute to the achievement of the new vision of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) articulated in its 2008–2018 strategy, (that is, “to forge a global partnership to reverse and prevent desertification/land degradation and to mitigate the effects of drought in affected areas in

order to support poverty reduction and environmental sustainability”). Their ultimate goals are to improve the conditions and modalities for the implementation of NAPs, RAPs and SRAPs.

17. The immediate objective of the alignment process is to identify and give priority to those activities of the APs which lead to achievement of the five operational objectives of The Strategy. Conversely, the objective of the revision process is to identify key activities which promote effective implementation of the APs and enable sound evaluation of performance and impact.

18. The expected outcomes from these processes are that aligned APs: (a) are clearly identified with national and/or regional development priorities and incorporated into national and relevant sectoral planning, budgeting and implementation frameworks, and (b) make provision for the establishment of an integrated investment framework for the promotion of SLM approaches and practices.

### **III. Draft guidelines**

#### **A. Proposed methodology**

19. The methodology proposed for the alignment and revision of APs builds on the main provisions of the Convention, decision 3/COP.8 and other relevant decisions of the COP, the relevant recommendations of CRIC 7 and of the first special session of the Committee on Science and Technology, and the review key SLM tools developed by the Global Environment Facility (with reference to the Country Partnership Program), the GM (with reference to the Integrated Investment Strategy) and the TerrAfrica Platform (with reference to the Country Strategic Investment Frameworks).

#### **B. Core guidance for alignment to the operational objectives**

20. As indicated in the introduction, the following core guidance is to be applied to all APs. While countries falling into classes 1-3 need to engage further in the revision process, those countries falling into class 4 need only consider the core guidance provided below. Annexes IV and V provide tools to assist in cross-checking how the key elements of any given AP relate to the operational objectives and their related expected outcomes. This should lead to an overview table highlighting compliances and gaps. The following elements aim to help fill the gaps by suggesting activities that could contribute to the achievement of the operational objectives and expected outcomes. The following list should be used as a menu from which Parties can choose what fits to their particular situation and needs.

21. Operational objective 1 (Advocacy, awareness-raising and education) aims actively to influence relevant international, national and local processes and actors in adequately addressing desertification/land degradation and drought (DLDD)-related issues.

22. The formulation of a national, subregional and regional communication and education strategy falls under operational objective 1 and is meant to contribute to its expected outcomes. (For the communication component refer to the UNCCD comprehensive communication strategy on “land matters”). Activities to be considered could include:

(a) Identification and mobilization of the target groups. In order to reflect the views of a wide range of institutions and actors, the process must actively engage (whenever appropriate and possible) all the relevant central and local government ministries and public agencies (agriculture, livestock, forestry, fisheries, environment, economy, finance and trade, interior and local administration, science and technology, education, and so on), plus landowners and leaseholders or land managers (of private, communal and government lands), community-based organizations, private sector organizations, regional and local traditional authorities, non-governmental organizations, research and academic institutions, development partners and the media;

(b) Definition of key messages according to target groups;

(c) Definition of communication methods and approaches to be applied; a participatory and inclusive approach in the definition of the roles and responsibilities of actors to be involved;

(d) Review of existing communication tools and identification of possible new ones:  
(i) a “charismatic champion” (an individual or group) invested with social and political authority. He/she should provide the leadership and visibility needed for successful advocacy of the AP. The primary audiences to be targeted should be the populations affected and policy makers; and  
(ii) the media (radio, television, journals) for the diffusion of messages and popularization of The Strategy.

23. Operational objective 2 (Policy frameworks) seeks to support the creation of enabling environments for promoting solutions to combat desertification/land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought. Priority alignment activities likely to contribute to the realization of the expected outcomes under operational objective 2 are:

(a) Stock taking of current policy, institutional situations and progress achieved under the strategic priority areas of the Bonn Declaration. This activity could include the following:

- (i) Analysis of the scope and limits of national and regional policies and regulatory frameworks relevant to SLM, with attention given to land tenure issues, integrated water management, protected areas, pastoralism as climate-adaptive practice and so on;
- (ii) Analysis of the evolution of the SLM institutional landscape;

(b) Building or firming up cross-sectoral institutional mechanisms which aim:

- (i) To enhance coordination and partnership platform building at local, country and regional levels;
- (ii) To facilitate the initiation of the mainstreaming of APs and its decentralisation in order better to address area-specific problems and take advantage of territorial governance and local development opportunities in order to be able to deal with area-specific problems more effectively and to take advantage of opportunities in local government and local development.

(c) Undertaking review, harmonization, revision and popularization of national and regional legislative and regulatory frameworks for SLM.

24. Operational objective 3 (Science, technology and knowledge) is: “To become a global authority on scientific and technical knowledge pertaining to desertification/land degradation and mitigation of the effects of drought”. Priority themes and activities that would contribute to operational objective 3 and its related expected outcomes are:

(a) The creation of improved knowledge management systems and tools: critical review of existing knowledge, knowledge sources and knowledge management mechanisms (policies, strategies, activities and infrastructures), with a view to facilitating access to “dormant” information worldwide and within regions and countries by proposing the establishment of an integrated and fully functional system. This should lead, fairly rapidly, to the development of common/harmonized tools and procedures for information and data collection, storage, analysis and dissemination.

(b) The establishment of a basis for sound monitoring of the evolution environment and analysis of trends and their impact on ecosystem structures and functions. This could be achieved through smart mobilization of, and partnership building with, local and regional research and development (R&D) institutions. The objective of this medium-term priority action is to contribute to:

- (i) Understanding of the specific local/regional causes, consequences and impacts of land degradation and drought occurrences;
- (ii) The establishment of a network of national observatory sites representative of the major ecosystems, for a continuous and in-depth study of the evolution of the key biophysical and socio-economic factors (in particular assessment of the impacts of climate change and human activity);
- (iii) Evaluation of the impacts of land degradation and drought on countries’ macro-economies and people’s livelihoods;
- (iv) The establishment of a regional collaborative programme on M&E of the environment (with the objective of connecting the various national observatory sites and using, where and when possible, spatial observations to describe regional situations);

(c) Enhancement of the technical capabilities of national coordinating bodies and national focal points of the Rio Conventions and other multilateral environmental agreements, through the provision of an institutional and coordinated scientific back-up. This can be done through the establishment of a unified national or regional scientific advisory committee, with a mandate:

- (i) To identify and to facilitate access to and use of relevant local and international knowledge;
- (ii) To provide support and guidance for informed decision-making;
- (iii) To facilitate coordination and concerted action amongst the various conventions.

(d) Documentation of SLM best practices; the specific objective of this short-term priority action focuses on the tracking, collection, analysis and documentation of successful experiences in land degradation prevention and control as well as drought forecasting and coping mechanisms (including traditional knowledge). This should lead to the development of appropriate tools, knowledge transfer and successful scaling up.

25. Operational objective 4 (Capacity building) is: “To identify and address capacity-building needs to prevent and reverse desertification/land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought”. Priority activities that could contribute to the realization of the expected outcomes of operational objective 4 are listed as follows:

26. In the case of completed National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA), the task will be to review the status of DLDD components. The following elements could further help to guide implementation of the activity:

(a) Check as to whether a capacity-building programme is included (targeting planning, research and advisory service providers, and government officials at central and local levels) and that due attention is given to the need for focused training for finance bureau and local government officials and decision makers on the role of land in economic development and on why the NAP is critical to sustainable development;

(b) Check whether a people-centred learning approach is proposed (targeting ecological literacy and stewardship) aiming particularly to reach non-governmental stakeholders and local area development programmes (LADP);

(c) Cross-review existing NCSA and decisions 1/COP.7 and 1/COP.8 to check whether:

- (i) Land tenure management, and also institutional and human capacity relating to decentralization, are well addressed;
- (ii) Matters relating to strengthening of the capacity of the national focal points and national coordinating bodies are considered (with regard to position, budgetary support, human resources), with a view to their influencing policy-making processes;
- (iii) Public/private partnerships are in place to support implementation of the APs (at all levels);
- (iv) Provision has been made to reinforce capacity for cross-sectoral approaches and to promote synergies between the three Rio Conventions and other relevant instruments.

27. In cases where NCSA has not yet been prepared, the capacity assessment should be undertaken, drawing on directives provided by decisions 1/COP.7 and 1/COP.8.

28. Operational objective 5 (Financing and technology transfer) invites Parties “To mobilize and improve the targeting and coordination of national, bilateral and multilateral financial and technological resources in order to increase their impact and effectiveness”; this should be carried out by:

(a) Synchronization of the NAP planning schedule with each country's general development planning programme and budgeting cycle (in most cases this is a five-year cycle);

(b) Financial diagnosis, which generally requires a mix of cross reviews (barriers to financing are found in many areas including policy, law, institutions, knowledge access and so on), and analyses targeting:

- (i) Sources (internal and external) and instruments (market-based, fiscal, insurance schemes, trade);
- (ii) Various categories of barriers;
- (iii) Trends in financial flows;
- (iv) Funding modalities;
- (v) Factors that trigger and/or influence funding mobilization.

(c) Formulation of an integrated financing strategic framework which should include an optimal blend of all existing financing sources and modalities.

### **C. Guidelines for the revision of national action programmes**

29. As indicated in the introduction, the guidelines make a distinction between alignment and revision processes, and they group APs into four different classes (see annex III) according to the state of their development and implementation. This section aims to provide guidance to Parties which fall into categories 1, 2 or 3 and thus need to engage in the revision of their APs. It should be noted that all three categories are expected to give a high priority to the specific requirements included in outcomes 2.2 and 2.3 of The Strategy. Countries falling into classes 1 and 2 need, in addition, to consider articles 9 and 10 and other provisions of the Convention in the preparation and/or finalization of their APs.

#### **1. Requirements of outcome 2.2**

30. Outcome 2.2 calls for a revision of NAPs into strategic documents, with the support of biophysical and socio-economic baseline information, and their inclusion into integrated investment frameworks. The objective of this outcome is to improve the link between planning and implementation and reporting/monitoring and evaluation as well as resource allocation and resource mobilization.

31. Since impact indicators and performance indicators are part of the new reporting guidelines of The Strategy (to help monitor and assess progress made against the achievement of strategic and operational objectives), the revision of the APs should aim to facilitate application of the new reporting guidelines.

32. In this regard, it is important to re-emphasize the importance of access to, and the use of sound biophysical and socioeconomic data to support the establishment of baselines, as well as to document performance and impact made in implementation of the APs, within the context of the periodic reporting time frames (every two or four years). In the case where biophysical and socio-economic baselines cannot be provided, the setting up of a monitoring and data management system should be a high-priority activity within the revised AP.

33. It should be further noted that the objectives set by outcome 2.2. (which calls Parties to revise their APs into strategic documents) have been further refined by a recommendation made by CRIC 7 (refer to ICCD/CRIC(7)/5, paragraph 86) which states that APs should set targets, set out baseline information, identify indicators and a time frame, specify the range of activities envisaged in order to reach such targets, and identify indicators for measuring progress in achieving these targets.

34. In addressing the requirements of outcome area 2.2, it is recommended that relevant existing tools should be used, such as the Integrated Investment Framework developed by the GM, or the country support tool and its related Country SLM Investment Framework developed by TerrAfrica in the context of the sub-Saharan Africa region.

## 2. Requirements of outcome 2.3

35. Outcome 2.3 calls affected country Parties to integrate their NAPs and SLM and land degradation issues into development planning and relevant sectoral and investment plans and policies. It is to be noted that the terms “integration” and “mainstreaming” are used interchangeably in this document. The objective of integration is to ensure (a) synchronization of the NAP with a country’s planning and budgeting cycles, (b) cross-sectoral planning and implementation, and (c) recognition of SLM as an essential element to be considered in national planning and budget allocation mechanisms.

36. For the revision process, this implies that the planned activities of the NAP need to address the main elements of national development planning and relevant sectoral and investment plans. In addition, a strategy advocating the integration of the elements of the NAP into these plans needs to be developed.

37. The following is a sample of themes and activities that could be considered in the process of revision of APs:

(a) The identification of priority areas and themes that underpin the transformation of APs (and the NAP in particular) into a strategic planning document:

- (i) The formulation of a shared vision which will help to set long-term objectives, the development of mechanisms for integrated activity planning, resource allocation, outcomes delivery, M&E of performance and impacts cycles, and the encouragement of cross-sectoral coordination and partnership;
- (ii) Assessment of constraints on, and the contribution of SLM to, the national economy and people’s livelihoods;
- (iii) Enhancing synergy with other national environmental plans (climate change, biodiversity, wetlands and coastal zones management, sustainable forest management, integrated land and water management, food security/sovereignty strategies, the preservation of traditional people’s livelihoods, and so on).

(b) The formulation of powerful and convincing messages to support the incorporation of the NAP into national development and investment plans and policies which are supported by sound socio-economic analysis documenting SLM contributions to wealth creation, poverty reduction and the mitigation of conflicts and security problems. This should be linked closely to the national communication strategy document already discussed in the alignment section.

38. It is important to underline that to ensure successful translation of the NAP into strategic documents and their integration into development and investment policies and plans, effective R&D infrastructures must be developed to generate the required relevant information and data.

#### **D. Guidelines for the preparation of action programmes**

39. For a NAP under preparation, the task would be to compare the current process (and draft if available) with the provisions of The Strategy and then to make the proper adjustments needed (in particular the adoption of a programmatic approach) to ensure total compliance. For the NAP to be initiated, the task will be much simpler and confined to full adoption of the directives of The Strategy.

##### 1. Paradigm shifts and indicative focus areas

40. The literature review shows that successful alignment processes are, generally, subject to the ability of the Parties concerned to draw on lessons from past experience, by considering what has worked and omitting what has not worked with regard to knowledge and technologies, institutions, policies and governance, the economy and finances and capacity building. It will also depend on the Parties' ability to recognize and to factor in positive external changes that occur in a number of development-related fields.

41. The following is a review of some of the major conceptual changes which are taking place in fields critical to the design and implementation of the APs. Each review has generated specific recommendations on the choice of priority focus areas of action that would be consistent with, and responsive to, the strategic and operational objectives of The Strategy. These recommendations have been incorporated into the relevant sections of the guidelines.

42. The premisses and assumptions underpinning the identification and choice of the priority focus areas are as follows: The systematic identification, access to and use of relevant and credible scientific and technical information and data are seen as a crucial factor for the improvement of the quality of the processes of AP preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Lessons from the AP reviews as well as The Strategy have pointed to a pressing need to improve:

(a) Monitoring and evaluation of the evolution of the environment and in particular the "health" of its various ecosystems (functions and services);

(b) Understanding of the nature, root causes, consequences and impacts of land degradation, as well as of the barriers and obstacles to the protection and sustainable use of land resources, factoring this into the APs;

(c) Appreciation of the economic, social and cultural contribution of the land resource to “economic development” and to people’s livelihoods;

(d) Expression of the interconnectedness between land degradation, climate change and biodiversity loss phenomena, and the identification of more tangible and promising opportunities for synergy;

(e) Documentation of the linkages between local, national and global developmental and environmental objectives.

43. The effective application of the “programmatic approach” as advocated by The Strategy will require:

(a) Development/improvement of cross-sectoral planning, programming, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation tools as well as appropriate performance and impact indicators (consistent with the relevant objectives set out in The Strategy) in order to facilitate the incorporation of the SLM approach and activities into economic development and poverty reduction agendas.

(b) Improvement and rationalization of existing policy and regulatory frameworks in order to create an environment more conducive to investment in SLM operations.

(c) Development of a cohesive capacity-building (institutional and human) strategy and programme tailored to the realities and needs of the affected countries and their regions.

44. The successful alignment process will depend greatly on the establishment of a functional knowledge management and communication system, which is necessary in order more effectively:

(a) To reach out to the broad range of stakeholders, (ii) to build trust and effective partnerships;

(b) To use existing traditional knowledge and know-how.

## 2. Changes in key concepts

### (a) Knowledge and technology

45. Major analytical efforts have been initiated (mainly at global level) over the past two decades in order better:

(a) To assess the state of the world environment;

- (b) To understand the structure, functions and evolution of key ecosystems;
- (c) To be aware of the threats, risks and consequences attached to the current trends.

46. A number of new concepts (all targeting better management of the natural resource base) were born from these processes, and older ones were adjusted/refined. The following is a summary of some of the key conceptual changes noted.

(a) New research trends focus more on understanding the multiple and interrelated root causes, nature, consequences and impacts (socio-economic, ecological, and institutional) of DLDD, rather than looking simply and only at symptoms. It is expected that the new ongoing research efforts will help to generate the quality data that are needed (i) to improve the design and implementation of APs, and (ii) better to inform and guide planning and decision-making processes in integrated natural resource management;

(b) New research trusts also promote a more balanced strategy and approach to combating land degradation (with increased emphasis on its prevention and on the protection of ecosystem functions and services), rather than a focus on the rehabilitation option only.

(c) Development practices tend to move away from isolated and ad hoc interventions and towards more programmatic approaches which promote long-term planning, coordinated cross-sectoral coordination, integrated financing schemes and a better linkage between priority setting, resources allocation and impact assessment. This shift has led to the development of a number of new management concepts and tools. The concept of integrated natural resource management (probably the most widely used) is translated into: integrated land and water management, SLM, sustainable forestry management, and integrated agro-sylvo-pastoral systems. The growing use of the landscape or watershed as operational units for the management of natural resources reflects similar trends.

47. Focus actions recommended in the core guidelines address mainly (i) knowledge management, (ii) R&D infrastructure development to help monitor the evolution of the environment and guide decision-making processes, and (iii) enhancing Parties' coordination and implementation technical capacities.

(b) Policy, institutions and governance

48. Policy and institutional development researches have analysed and documented the scope and limits of development models and approaches used during recent decades. They have noted that the lack of significant and lasting results of the earlier development models (based on centralized, supply-driven, and opaque management approaches) have led to:

(a) A shift away from individual sectoral or subsectoral approaches toward cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder strategic partnerships for integrated NRM:

- (i) Bonded by a shared vision, and coherent national/regional policy and regulatory frameworks for SLM;

- (ii) Supported by a coherent and effective approach incorporating SLM into national and sectoral development planning and budgeting mechanisms;

(b) A shift away from inadequate, poorly enforced and conflicting legal and regulatory frameworks toward incentive-oriented legislation promoting (i) participatory management of natural resources, (ii) decentralized tenure systems and local governance of natural resource assets, and (iii) design and management land and ecosystem management programmes better tailored to local needs;

(c) A shift away from the current situation where ownership of the AP processes is vested in the hands of the lead institution toward a genuine cross-sectoral ownership assumed by all key stakeholders:

Moving from ownership at planning level toward ownership at implementation level;

(d) Emphasizing the adoption of cultural and gender-sensitive approaches which actively involve women and other marginalized groups;

(e) Emphasizing the need to institutionalize computerized, integrated and participatory planning, programming, resource allocation, M&E and reporting systems and tools;

(f) Emphasizing systematic documentation of impacts and on the diffusion of successful experiences.

49. Recommended focus actions deal with issues relating (i) to creating enabling policy and legal frameworks, (ii) enhancing cross sectoral coordination, and (iii) to developing appropriate communication strategies.

(c) *Economy and finance*

50. The following gradual changes have been noted:

(a) A shift away from a centralized and opaque budget management culture toward a management system based on transparency, traceability, accountability and efficiency;

(b) Reform of inadequate economic policies that discouraged investment in natural resources management:

Improved investment climate through the adoption of innovative fiscal and legislative incentive;

(c) Adapting policies and strategies for the mobilization of financial resources for the new local and international funding trends and requirements;

(d) Adoption of a programmatic and cross-sectoral approach providing a basis for long-term and coordinated funding of agreed priorities;

- (e) Formulation of an integrated investment strategy for SLM:
  - (i) Identification and unlocking of key barriers to SLM;
  - (ii) Placing more emphasis on domestic resource mobilization and tapping new and innovative funding sources.

51. The subsequent recommended focus actions dealt with issues relating to:

(a) The economic value of land and the need to document its contribution to the economy and people's livelihood;

(b) Integrated investment strategy.

(d) *Capacity-building*

52. Lessons learned from the preparation and implementation of APs have identified a lack of capacity as the major impediment to successful implementation. These findings confirmed similar analyses undertaken in almost all the development sectors. There is a need to evolve from ad hoc and fragmented project-driven capacity-building efforts to cross-sectoral, and strategic capacity-building approaches that differentiate and address capacity needs at system, institution and individual levels and across all fields (science and technology, policy, socio-economic and financial, knowledge management, institutional development and governance).

#### **IV. Conclusions and recommendations**

53. The COP at its ninth session may consider reviewing and adopting the present guidelines for the alignment of APs with The Strategy, and may also consider:

(a) Urging those affected country Parties which have not yet started this process to initiate aligning the implementation of NAPs as soon as possible, with a view also to ensuring that the next reporting process will be based on compliance with the intended outcomes of the five operational objectives of The Strategy;

(b) Requesting the secretariat, in close partnership with relevant subregional, regional and international organizations, to provide technical assistance to affected country Parties in the review and alignment of APs at all levels;

(c) Requesting the GM, in accordance with its mandate, to financially assist affected country Parties in developing integrated investment frameworks in conjunction with the review and alignment process, with a view to fostering resource mobilization for the aligned implementation of APs;

(d) Calling upon developed country Parties, financial organizations and the Global Environment Facility to provide the required financial assistance to affected country Parties, according to their needs, in the review and alignment of APs at all levels.

## Annex I

### **General provisions of the Convention with regard to action programmes and lessons learned from past action programme preparation and implementation processes**

1. The Convention's provisions on national action programmes (NAPs), subregional action programmes (SRAPs) and regional action programmes (RAPs) are contained in articles 9, 10 and 11 of the Convention, and the following articles of its Regional Implementation Annexes: articles 8 to 13 of Annex I, articles 3 to 6 of Annex II, articles 3 to 5 of Annex III, articles 3 to 7, 8 and 10 of Annex IV, and articles 3 to 5 of Annex V.
2. The basic principles underlining these provisions call for: (a) participation, consultation, and partnership, (b) building upon existing relevant successful national plans and programmes, SRAPS and RAPs, and (c) updating action programmes (APs) through a continuing participatory process on the basis of lessons learned from activities in the field, as well as the results of research.
3. The Convention core body provides generic advice on "priority focus areas and operational guidelines" for the coordinated formulation and implementation of the APs, while the regional implementation annexes define the region-specific objectives and measures to be included in the NAPs (for more details refer to <[www.unccd.int](http://www.unccd.int)>).
4. In accordance with article 26 of the Convention, each Party to the Convention is required to report on measures undertaken to implement the above-mentioned provisions. Four reporting cycles have been organized to date.

### **I. Lessons from the action programmes preparation and implementation processes**

5. The overall findings from the NAP reporting cycles show that:
  - (a) A sizeable number of affected Parties have completed the preparation of their NAPs and initiated an implementation process. Some of these Parties have gone further, into revision of the NAP to reflect new orientations resulting from COP decisions and to take advantage of the opportunities stemming from the evolving global and regional environments.
  - (b) There is a high variability in the quality of NAP documents and in the state of their preparation, within and between regions. The great majority of NAP preparation processes have suffered, among other things, from (i) a lack of a vision as well as a lack of an articulated and cohesive multisectoral perspective and strategy, (ii) the lack of a credible scientific base, and of socio-economic information, (iii) a shortage and weakness of institutional and human capacity, (iv) a deficit in political leadership and an inability to persuade governments of the value of desertification/land degradation control, and (v) a drift in goal and approach, thus making the NAP a resource mobilization instrument rather than a strategic framework to help

address structural policy, and institutional and capacity deficiencies in the land degradation and poverty linkages.

(c) There is, overall, little progress in implementation and impact because of (i) a scarcity of financial resources, (ii) a disconnection from main national development planning and budgeting frameworks and processes, and an inability to build on and align projects and initiatives predating NAPs, (iii) a lack of an effective legal framework and of land tenure policies, (iv) a lack of incentive to adopt economic policies which protect from externalities and market failures, (v) limited and superficial involvement of local communities and end-users, and (vi) a lack of awareness on the part of various government officials and local authorities, and a lack of an overall perception of the urgent need for massive action.

(d) There are a number of isolated and local-scale successes which have not been sufficiently documented and shared. Private/public partnerships are perceived as potentially valuable but so far these have been successful only to a limited extent in a few countries.

(e) The main lessons drawn from the above overview are: (i) Institutional aspects are crucial to successful NAP implementation. Countries which have completed their NAPs are those which have well-established institutional capacity. Others are still struggling to finalize their NAPs or to begin any implementation; (ii) Political will and leadership are, also, a precondition for successful planning, mainstreaming and implementation and need therefore to be fostered; (iii) The role of non-traditional stakeholders such as civil sector organizations, the private sector and research and development and academic institutions needs to be given greater attention; (iv) Details of successful local area development programmes need to be systematically documented and integrated into the NAP process in order to enable up-scaling and replication; and (v) Synergies with sister United Nations environmental frameworks and congruent initiatives should be considered as a priority and should be fully realised.

6. The review of contemporary SRAPs and RAPs shows similar trends, but with much less progress in implementation. Their design and implementation were constrained by:

(a) Governance issues. The ownership of the SRAP/RAP processes by the national Parties concerned was, in general, judged to be insufficient and the established coordinating mechanisms to be not functional. The linkages between the three levels of planning (national, subregional and regional) were, in most cases, not clearly established;

(b) A shortage of financial and human resources. It has been noted in the case of RAPs that most of their key components (such as the thematic programme network) were in a “dormant” state. The funding for regional programmes appears to receive very little attention in countries’ and development partners’ priorities;

(c) Management issues. Many of the appointed lead institutions lacked the required technical and financial leverage capacities.

7. The key lessons to retain from the SRAP/RAP processes are:

(a) Linkages and complementarities between the three levels of planning must be described, using the principles of added value and subsidiarity;

(b) The methodology for thematic programme networking at regional level must be strengthened;

(c) The capacity and role of the lead executing institutions must be critically reviewed. Robust criteria need to be established for the selection of new lead institutions;

(d) More attention needs be given to problems such as drought forecasting and preparedness. Transboundary problems (including drought, food crises and so on) require subregional cooperation and the NAP and SRAP alignment process should be a catalyst for renewed thinking about how best to approach such problems, which can affect several countries at the same time.

## **II. Key Conference of the Parties decisions and Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention assessments relating to action programme preparation and implementation**

8. In the light of the findings of the periodic AP reviews, Conferences of the Parties (COPs) have taken a number of decisions aimed at providing Parties with further guidance on improving methods of preparation and implementation. Decisions 8/COP.4, 1/COP.7 and 1/COP.8 were landmarks as they provided new impetus, direction and cohesion in further developing (improving focus areas and content) and implementing APs. Above all, they reaffirmed the Convention's main thrust, which is "to protect threatened ecosystems and eradicate poverty". Furthermore the successive Committee for the Review of the Convention (CRIC) reports provide a synthesis of results achieved and related guidance over the past 10 years.

## **III. The Convention's changing environment**

9. While the Convention secretariat pressed on internally with AP design and implementation, the external environment of the Convention was going through rapid and sustained changes affecting the areas of knowledge management, development policy and financing. This evolution of the external environment exacerbated some of the Convention's recurrent challenges, introduced new ones and, above all, generated a number of new opportunities for better addressing the land degradation, poverty and economic development nexus.

10. On the knowledge and technology front, several reviews relating to the evolution of the world's ecosystems (for example, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment), the status of land degradation (Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands), the nature and scope of the climatic changes threats (reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), and the relation between agricultural and environmental sciences (International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology Development) helped better understanding and appreciation of the magnitude of the threat posed by land degradation and the urgency for a programmatic, participatory, holistic and integrated approach to the management of natural resources.

11. On the development policy and financing fronts, the combined effects of the ongoing ecological, economic, financial and food crises on the economies of developing countries prompted the international community to renew its commitment (a) to increase the volume and effectiveness of its development assistance (Monterrey, Rome, Paris and Accra), (b) to establish a more equitable trade system, and (c) to address in a more cohesive and decisive way all the global environment threats.

12. On the policy side, this led to increased attention being given to agriculture (food crises), poverty reduction (Millennium Development Goals) and the environment (climate change), as well as a necessary shift towards integrated approaches for development and partnership (especially among the sister conventions). On the funding side, changes focused on the financing architecture and the shift from project to programme approaches, efficient donor coordination, and as the creation of new financing mechanisms (such as payment for environmental services, the carbon market) and the related shift towards integrated financing strategies.

Annex II**Formulation of the guidelines**

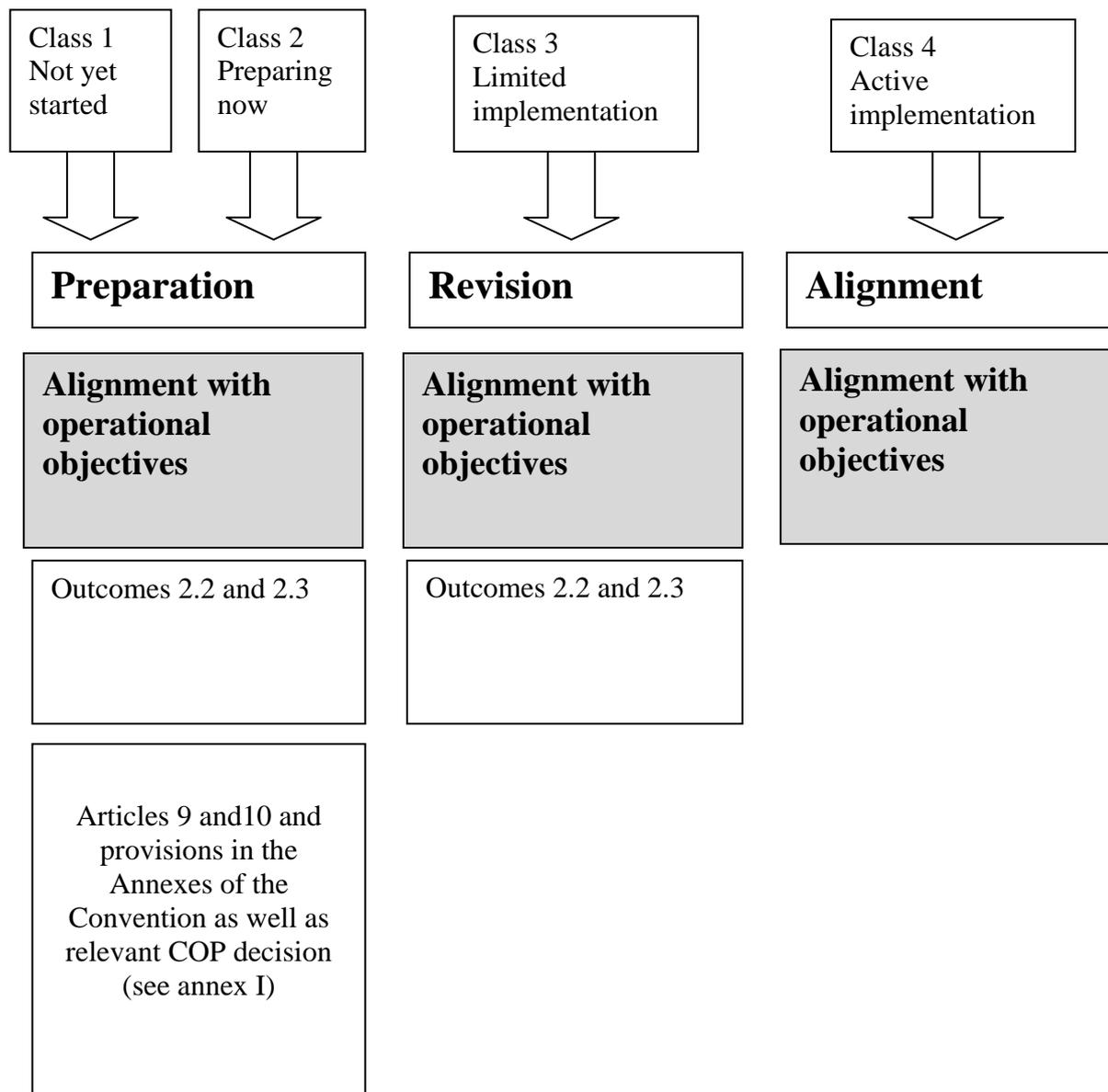
The process of formulating the guidelines has taken place in several stages. First, three consultants (one from Asia, one from Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and one from Africa) formulated draft guidelines which were discussed at a series of subregional meetings (see table below). The results were presented at an interagency meeting before being tabled for COP 9 in Argentina. The alignment process will be initiated after the Conference of the Parties (COP), the guidelines being applied within countries; feedback from this experience will be used in further elaboration of the guidelines.

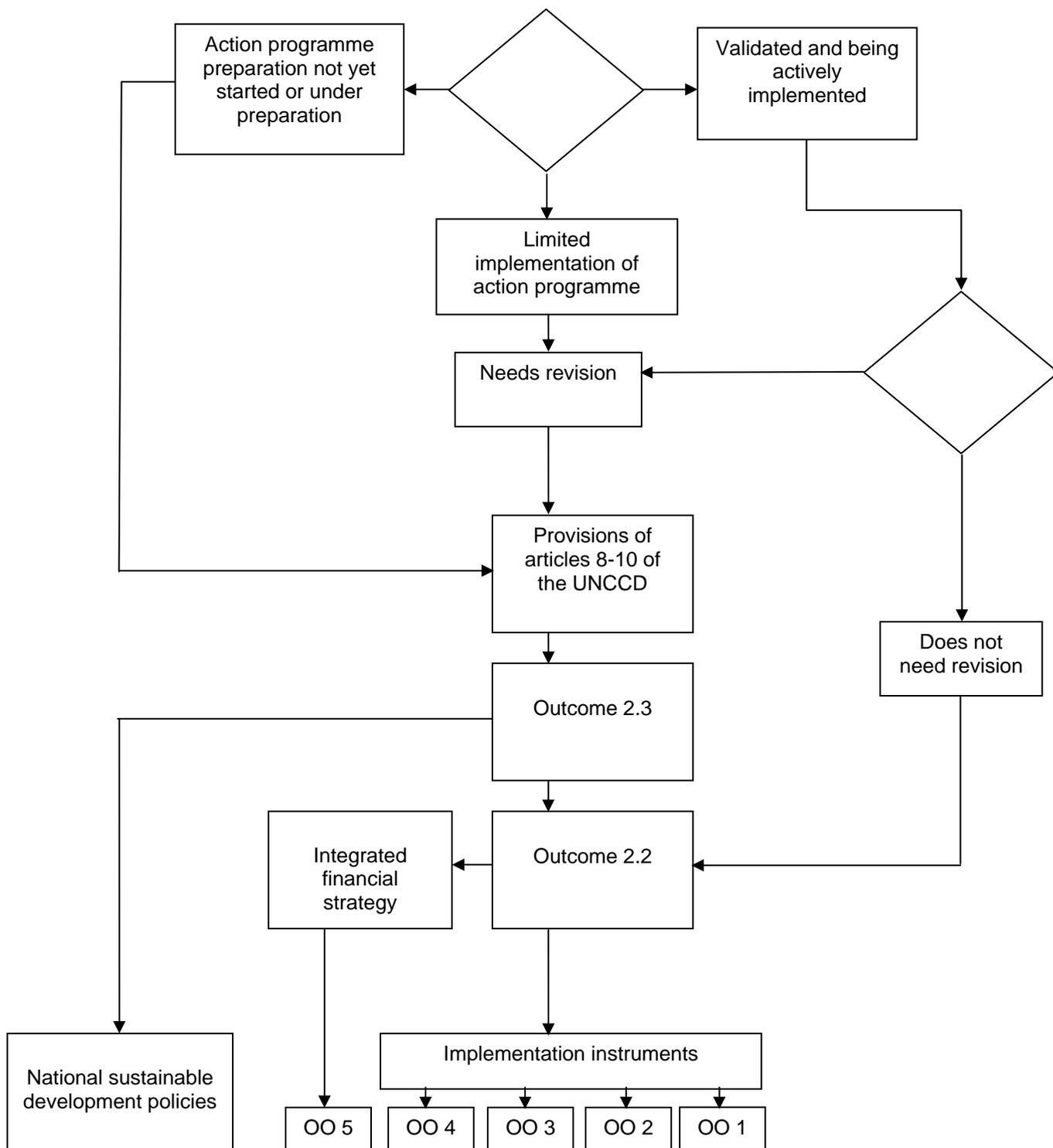
<b>Schedule of the workshops for consultation on preparation of the guidelines</b>		
	<b>Region</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Africa</b>	Workshop for Eastern and Southern African countries, in Kampala, Uganda	1–2 June
	Workshop for West-African countries, in Ouagadougou (back to back with the Global Mechanism workshop on integrated investment frameworks)	26–27 June
	Workshop for North African Countries, in Tunis (back to back with the Africa regional meeting)	1–2 August
<b>Latin America and the Caribbean</b>	LAC workshop for Caribbean countries, in Kingston, Jamaica	17–18 June
	LAC workshop for Latin American countries, in Montevideo (back to back with the LAC regional meeting)	6–7 July
<b>Central and Eastern Europe</b>	Workshop for CEE countries in Banja Luka (Bosnia and Herzegovina) (back to back with the CEE regional meeting)	24 July
<b>Asia/Pacific region</b>	Workshop for Asia and countries of the Pacific region in Bangkok (back to back with the Asia regional meeting)	11–12 July
<b>Inter-agency meeting</b>	United Nations agencies meeting in Tunis (back to back with the Africa regional meeting)	31 July

Annex III

**Flow chart for alignment pathways**

The flow chart below shows how the *overall alignment process* has been adapted to the four main scenarios. The overall alignment process is divided into three phases: (a) Preparation or finalization of action programmes (APs) (classes 1 and 2), (b) Revision of APs where implementation is limited or has stalled (class 3), and (c) Alignment to The Strategy for APs currently being implemented (class 4).





Annex IV**Decision support tool to assist alignment with the five operational objectives**

1. The decision support tool below aims to assist affected country Parties to align their action programmes (APs) with the five operational objectives by indicating which activity applies to which operational objective.

2. As a first step, the activities in the APs should to be listed in the rows of the spreadsheet below. The second step is to indicate (with a cross in the relevant column or columns) to which of the operational objectives the activity contributes, or whether it does not contribute to achievement of any of the operational objectives. In a third step, the activities under each operational objective should be analysed in order to determine whether they are sufficient to reach the operational objective.

	Not addressing any operational objective	Addressing operational objective 1	Addressing operational objective 2	Addressing operational objective 3	Addressing operational objective 4	Addressing operational objective 5
Activity 1						
Activity 2						
Activity 3						
Activity ...						

Annex V

**Decision support tool to assist in identification of revision requirements<sup>1</sup>**

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**Key questions relating to operational objective 2 (Outcome 2.2)**

<p><b>1. Review for compliance</b> - <b>strategic document</b></p>	<p>Is the present NAP a strategic document as defined by decision 3/COP.8? If not, what steps do you need to take to make it compliant?</p>
<p><b>2. Baselines</b> - <b>socio-economic</b> - <b>biophysical</b></p>	<p>Is it supported by socio-economic baseline information? Is it supported by biophysical baseline information? How can you incorporate baseline information into an integrated investment framework?</p>
<p><b>3. Monitoring assessment</b></p>	<p>Does the country have a desertification monitoring assessment system? Is it considered in the NAP?</p>
<p><b>4. National self assessment</b></p>	<p>Has there been a needs analysis (manpower, finance, technical support)?</p>
<p><b>5. Links between national, regional and subregional action programmes (NAPs, RAPs and SRAPs)</b></p>	<p>Are they linked? Are the priorities for regional cooperation defined?</p>
<p><b>6. Review process for the NAP</b></p>	<p>How often does this take place? Who is involved? Does the NAP address local and national needs?</p>
<p><b>7. Indicators</b> - <b>socio-economic</b> - <b>biophysical</b></p>	<p>Has a set of indicators and a benchmark been established for each broad category? Are there databases and information on physical and socio-economic factors? What is their source? Can you use this as a baseline?</p>
<p><b>8. Targets and timelines</b> - <b>time frame</b></p>	<p>Has a time frame been defined? Is funding tied to a time frame? Does the NAP include targets and timelines?</p>
<p><b>9. Funding strategy</b> - <b>sourcing</b> - <b>investment priorities</b></p>	<p>Does the country have an integrated strategy for funding NAP implementation? Does the NAP receive funding from central government or provincial or state governments? Have priorities been defined in the NAP?</p>

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<sup>1</sup> This is a tool aimed at assisting countries to assess whether the NAP needs to be revised to comply with decision 3/COP.8. Questions 1, 2, 7, 10, 11, 12 and 14 are “markers” and negative responses to these questions mean that revision of the NAP is required. Otherwise, the alignment process can proceed (see above-referred flow chart).

<b>Key questions relating to operational objective 2 (Outcome 2.3)</b>	
<b>10. Integration into national development plans</b>	Has the NAP been incorporated into national development strategy with a budget, targets and timelines?
<b>11. Links with other programmes: climate change, food security, water scarcity and forest protection</b>	Has account been taken in the NAP context of other programmes such as poverty alleviation, climate change, food security, water scarcity, forest protection or others? Are institutional links in place?
<b>12. Cross-sectoral cooperation</b> - overlap - mandates	Is there a national coordination committee with delegates from all key Ministries? If so, how often do they meet? To what extent do the mandates of key Ministries overlap or conflict? Is it likely that potential difficulties can be resolved through cross-sectoral coordination?
<b>13. Who are the key stakeholders</b> - are they involved in NAP review and implementation	Were representatives from government agencies and all major groups, including non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, trade unions, women's organizations, the academic community and private sector entities, involved in NAP formulation and implementation? Is there an institutional mechanism to integrate all these actors, such as a national commission?
<b>14. Legislation and policy framework</b> - enabling environment	Is there a favourable enabling environment for NAP implementation? What needs to be done to improve it.?
<b>15. Role of science and technology</b>	To what extent is the science and technology community involved in combating desertification, land degradation and drought? Is the research and development sector actively involved in finding solutions to problems of land degradation/desertification and drought
<b>16. Funding sources</b> - budget allocations: where, how	Is the Global Mechanism (GM) involved in resources mobilization? Have you ever received any funds from bilateral and multilateral agencies Have funds been received from national, provincial and local government? Are funds allocated through the budget of a line ministry or from a dedicated fund?

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