

Regional Action Programme to combat desertification, land degradation and drought in Central and Eastern Europe: a synthesis

*Endorsed by the decision of the
Regional Consultation Meeting at
COP12, 23 October 2015
Ankara, Turkey*



United Nations

Convention to Combat
Desertification

Regional Action Programme to combat desertification, land degradation and drought in Central and Eastern Europe: a synthesis

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Abbreviations & Acronyms

ACP	Affected Country Parties
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
COP	Conference of the Parties
CRIC	Committee of Review of Implementation of Convention
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CST	Committee of Science and Technology
DLDD	Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought
DMCSEE	Drought management Center for Southern Eastern Europe
EBRD	European Bank of Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GM	Global Mechanism
GSP	Global Soil Partnership
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFS	Integrated Financing Strategies
IIF	Integrated Investment Framework
LDN	Land Degradation Neutrality
NAP	National Action Programme
NCB	National Coordinating Body
NFP	National Focal Point
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PRAIS	Performance Review and Assessment of Implementation System
RAP	Regional Action Programme
RC/CEE	Regional Committee for Central and Eastern Europe
RCM	Regional Cooperation Mechanism
REC	Regional Environmental Centre
RIA	Regional Implementation Annex
RTN	Regional Thematic Network
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SPI	Science Policy Interface
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNCBD	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WB	World Bank
WMO	World Meteorological Organization

Regional Action Programme to combat desertification, land degradation and drought in Central and Eastern Europe

(Endorsed by the National Focal Points through the decision of the Regional Consultation Meeting at COP12, 23 October 2015, Ankara, Turkey)

1. Background to land degradation and desertification in Central and Eastern Europe

1. The UNCCD is the global environmental agreement to combat desertification, land degradation and drought. Established in 1994, the Convention initially had four regional implementation annexes (RIAs) (Annex I for Africa, Annex II for Asia, Annex III for Latin America and the Caribbean, Annex IV for Northern Mediterranean). The UNCCD's regional Annex V entered into force in 2001 by the Decision of COP 5, being titled "The Regional implementation Annex of the Convention for the region of Eastern and Central Europe". Currently, nineteen countries of Central and Eastern Europe region (CEE) are the Parties to the UNCCD. Fifteen of these Parties have declared their status of the affected country Parties.

2. CEE countries are distinctively heterogeneous in their spatial distribution, natural resources and their political and economic structures. Fifteen out of nineteen countries in the region have declared the status of being affected by "the variety of forms of land degradation" while their varying standards of living, NGO operations, as well as environmental regulation and implementation of environmental protection, create a range of difficulties when it comes to protecting land.

3. Despite their existing socio-economic and political idiosyncrasies, CEE countries share similar environmental, historical, and instrumental backgrounds as well as resources for combating land degradation. Moreover, they face common problems of sustainable management of land resources caused mainly by the diversity in various forms of land degradation, non-sustainable models of land management, and by specific conditions of social and economic development. Likewise, NGOs acting in the field of SLM are not adequately developed nor sufficiently active in the CEE region.

4. The following features are characteristic of the CEE region in terms of its particular environmental and geographical conditions:

- Wide-spread occurrence of water and wind erosion within humid lowlands and mountain areas;
- Soil fertility depletion due to the use of unsustainable and ineffective agricultural practices, in particular within irrigated and ameliorated areas;
- Imperfect territorial planning and landscape organization practices;
- Wide-scale and diverse soil contamination, in particular as a result of agricultural and industrial activities, as well as mining of mineral resources;
- Unsustainable land degradation and drought models of forestry, combined with insufficient afforestation and reforestation measures as well as insufficient creation of forest shelterbelts;
- Significant losses in agriculture and forestry due to droughts.

5. The commonalities shared by the countries of the CEE region which could contribute to a successful, regional management programme are as follows:

- A joint high level political platform for solving environmental concerns (the Environment for Europe Ministerial Conferences);
- Similar challenges deriving from the international environmental agreements (UNCCD, UNFCCC, UNCBD, etc.);
- A high scientific potential of CEE countries;
- A high educational level of CEE population in the region;
- A relatively high level of technical and environmental academic competence.

2. Objectives

6. The Regional Implementation Annex also provides a framework for regional coordination and collaboration. Specifically, the regional action programme should **“harmonise, complement and increase the efficiency of national programmes”** (Article 11, UNCCD) **effectively encouraging regional collaboration and joint action between countries and their individual national action programmes.**

7. The regional dimension of the Programme will aim at providing an efficient response to key challenges, in particular where the sharing of best practices and the creation of networks can bring an added value.

3. Progress so far

8. Since the adoption of Annex V in 2001, Central and Eastern European countries have undertaken a series of preparatory activities for a RAP. To support the process of identifying priorities for regional cooperation, the UNCCD secretariat administered preparation of the survey entitled “Regional cooperation Kit” for CEE region in 2003. The results of the survey were discussed at the CEE regional meeting in December 2003 in Minsk and after a long process of discussion and improvement of the priority areas of regional cooperation were finalized in the decision on RAP preparation in 2013. The Priority areas were further reflected in the Work Programme of the UNCCD Secretariat.

9. CEE countries acquired additional incentive to strengthen regional cooperation after the UN Conference on Sustainable Development “Rio+20” held in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) in June 2012 and adoption by the UN General Assembly of Resolution 66\288 from 27.07.2012 «The Future We Want». The resolution recognized the economic and social significance of good land management, particularly its contribution to economic growth, biodiversity, food security, eradicating poverty, addressing climate change and improving water availability. The resolution further stated land degradation as the global challenge, included combating land degradation into the Sustainable Development Goals, and declared the target of the «Land Degradation Neutral World».

4. Phases of the RAP

10. The RAP is conceptualized as a living document with the evolving priority areas and activities. It is recommended to phase the programme, which allows a sequential planning and implementation, namely:

- **2016 – 2018-** 1st Phase will focus on raising awareness and recognition of DLDD process. At the same time, the inventory, stock-taking and consolidation of scientific evidence for DLDD processes in the region will take place to support the political processes. RAP 1st phase will end

with the termination of the 10Years Strategy. The planning of the 2nd phase of the RAP should go in line with future strategic vision and development of the UNCCD.

- **2019-2021** -2nd Phase while continuing the awareness raising activities, the second phase will shift its attention to the realisation of the regional projects (trans-boundary and sub-regional).

11. By the end of each phase the results of RAP's activities and its implementation will be assessed. Based on this assessment, the issues of RAP effectiveness, correction and continuation will be considered.

5. Priority Areas

12. **Priority areas** of regional cooperation of the CEE countries have been defined as following:

- ➔ Strengthening regional cooperation at policy level
- ➔ Increase knowledge on DLDD processes in the CEE region
- ➔ Achievement of LDN target
- ➔ Capacity building
- ➔ Development of sustainable agriculture, including (or in particular) organic agriculture (OA)
- ➔ Elaboration and implementation of joint SLM projects

5.1. Priority area 1: Strengthening regional cooperation at policy level

Under the Priority Area 1 the RAP CEE will focus its activities on consolidation of the regional efforts on DLDD issues in the CEE region at the level of decision-makers, improved actions planning at the national and regional levels and the mobilization of the adequate financial resources for SLM.

13. In order to strengthen regional cooperation at the policy level, the following platforms could be used: - UN Conferences on Sustainable Development; - Ministerial Conferences "Environment for Europe"; - Conferences of the Parties of the UNCCD, especially their high- level segment; and regional CEE meetings of the NFP of the UNCCD.

14. Ministerial Conferences "Environment for Europe" is a unique platform (since 1991) for raising the political significance of SLM and DLDD issues in CEE region. The platform carried out analysis of agendas and adopted declarations, conclusions and reports of the Ministerial Conferences under the "Environment for Europe" 1-7 brings to the conclusion that SLM and DLDD issues have been addressed insufficiently, and there is a need to utilise more actively this high-level platform to further progress the UNCCD implementation.

15. The official UNCCD events like Conferences of Parties, session of its subsidiary bodies, i.e. CRIC and CST, are the important instrument for developing and further progressing the UNCCD process at the global and regional levels. The sessions of the High-Level Ministerial Segment are being convened at COPs; in order to promote and advocate the interests of the region it is important to ensure regular and active participation of CEE high-level representatives in the Ministerial Segment sessions of COP UNCCD.

16. Regional Meetings of the UNCCD National Focal Points should be held on a regular basis (at least once every two years) with the purpose to review the progress of the UNCCD implementation on the national (NAP) and regional (RAP) levels, and to develop proposals on strengthening cooperation in the UNCCD implementation. Awareness raising on the subject of land degradation problems in CEE

region at the policy level and development of policy dialogue are among the principal issues for the successful implementation of this priority area.

5.2. Priority area 2: Increase knowledge on DLDD processes in the CEE region

Under priority Area 2 the objective of the RAP is to increase the contribution of scientific knowledge in understanding of the scope of DLDD process and evaluation of the progress in combating DLDD in the region, as well as to promote advanced environmental knowledge and technologies.

17. During the last decade of UNCCD development, great importance has been attached to the role of scientific advice in convention implementation. The establishment at the COP 11 the UNCCD Science-Policy Interface of the view "to facilitate a two-way science-policy dialogue and ensure delivery of policy-relevant information, knowledge and advice on desertification/land degradation and drought" (Decision 23/COP11) demonstrates the growing call for a more prominent role for science and technology.

18. The general tendency towards integration of national and regional efforts, as well as an increase in the role of scientific knowledge regarding the UNCCD implementation, has not reached yet its momentum in the CEE region. The lack of scientific advice to the UNCCD process in the CEE region caused partly a lack of financial resources in the period of transition, different priorities and models of current country development, absence of generally recognised scientific coordination centre, and finally due to language barriers.

19. The following institutional capacities are in place for the development of regional scientific cooperation in CEE region:

- Countries of the CEE region at the national level possess great scientific potential in terms of perspective and relevance for the UNCCD issues (sustainable land use, assessment and combating land degradation, restoration of degraded lands, development of environment friendly technologies, reforestation, monitoring and mitigation of drought events, etc.);
- Science and technology correspondents have been selected in almost all CEE countries. They should play the key role in building-up scientific cooperation and practical application of the available scientific potential in the region;
- CEE region representatives to the Science Policy Interface have been selected;
- Regional Reference Center, Brno, Czech Republic and Drought Management Center for South-Eastern Europe, Slovenia, represent the additional facilities and instruments for the development of regional scientific cooperation in CEE region.

5.3. Priority Area 3: Achievement of LDN target

Under priority Area 3 the objective of the RAP is to achieve a land-degradation-neutral region using baseline evaluation, development of progress indicators and implementation of SLM options.

20. The outcome document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) in June 2012, "The Future We Want", recognized the economic and social significance of sustainable land management, particularly its contribution to economic growth, biodiversity, food security, eradicating poverty, the empowerment of women, addressing climate change and improving water availability. It proclaimed land degradation as the global challenge, included land degradation into the Sustainable Development Goals, and declared the target of the «Land Degradation Neutral

World». LDN is not a global target, which requires a new protocol or international agreement. Every country and/or region should declare its own level of ambition.

21. The outcomes of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development show growing international awareness of the need to combat land degradation and to assign LD issues a high priority in achieving the sustainable development goals. The CEE region can, and must, contribute to the implementation of the decisions of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development “Rio+20” at the global, regional and national levels.

22. To correspond to the new global challenge and task, the Soil Leadership Academy initiative was launched at COP 11 in September 2013 in Windhoek, Namibia. This initiative represents an important platform for capacity building for policy makers to address land management issues, and in particular to engage Parties to achieve LDN objectives.

23. Additional experience will be gained through the demo-project "Towards achieving land degradation neutrality: turning the concept into practice" that is being implemented in two countries in the CEE region (Armenia and Belarus). The project aims to mainstream the LDN approach as the cornerstone of NAP alignment and implementation, including establishment of specific LDN voluntary national target.

5.4. Priority area 4: Capacity building

Under Priority Area 4 the objective of the RAP is capacity building within the affected country Parties in order to facilitate successful and effective implementation of NAPs and RAP.

24. Eight CEE affected countries have prepared their NAPs in 2015, and two more countries are finalizing this process, i.e. the most of the affected country Parties of CEE region are starting the new stage of the UNCCD process that is the stage of implementation of NAPs. Strengthening and further development of capacities of the country Parties, National Focal Points, and all involved stakeholders in the achievement of new goals is a very important issue for successful implementation at this stage.

25. The UNCCD NFPs from CEE countries at their regional meetings have supported the initiatives of Armenia and Bulgaria on using the expertise of the existing research centers:

- The research centre «Zikatar» in Armenia could offer the training courses on afforestation and combating forest degradation;
- The Institute of Soil Science Agrotechnologies and Plant Protection (ISSAPP) Nikola Poushkarov in Bulgaria has reconfirmed in 2015 the interests to organize training courses on combating soil erosion, monitoring and sustainable land management on the basis of Scientific Institute of Soil Science Nicola Poushkarev.

26. The implementation of regional initiatives on the establishment of regional training centres and organization of training courses has been hindered for the last few years by the lack of sufficient financing. In order to resolve this issue the interested countries are invited to prepare detailed concept notes for carrying out training courses, and together with RC/CEE and GM, to mobilize possible international and/or national public and/or private sources of financing.

27. Also, while implementing RAP, it is expedient to utilize training potential of international entities (European Union, FAO, etc.), and other regional Annexes of the UNCCD to exchange experiences, and disseminate best practices in sustainable land management.

28. CEE countries should actively participate in opportunities available within the fellowship program under the UNCCD. Additional opportunities are provided by the UNCCD Marketplace that offers various capacity building tools for country Parties of the UNCCD.

5.5. Priority Area 5: Development of sustainable agriculture, including (or in particular) organic agriculture

Under priority Area 5 the objective of the RAP is development of long-lasting sustainable models of rational land use in the agricultural sector through the application of environmentally friendly technology.

29. Organic agriculture is one of the sustainable and balanced solutions to achieve sustainable land management, food security, improved employment, and increased incomes in one of the most vulnerable and critically important economic sector. Promotion of the sustainable agriculture is one of the basic principles of Green Economy declared at Rio+20 Summit.

30. Organic agriculture is referred to as a recognised worldwide solution to environmental problems in the agricultural sector. OA practices do not lead to pollution of soil, air and groundwater with chemical fertilizers and pesticides. OA not only eliminates negative consequences but also restores disturbed ecosystems through the implementation of biological methods which increase soil fertility and biodiversity. Compared to traditional agricultural practices, the organic technologies are 50% less energy-intensive and allow for a decrease of two-three times the current greenhouse gases emissions¹.

31. At present the implementation of organic agriculture is a worldwide-acknowledged trend. It is practiced in 164 countries. The world market of OA is the fastest growing among the sectors of material production with the annual increase of 20%.

32. In CEE, while some countries have a relatively high share of OA area - Estonia (15.3% of the agricultural land), Czech Republic (11.5%), Latvia (10.8%), Slovakia (8.8%), OA in the majority of CEE countries is in the embryonic state and its share is less than 1 % (Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Serbia, Russian Federation, Ukraine). There is great potential in the region for exchange and dissemination of OA experience from EU member states to CEE countries.

5.6 Priority Area 6: Elaboration and implementation of joint SLM projects (regional, sub-regional, cross-border)

Under priority Area 6 the objective of the RAP is application of SLM best practices at the regional, sub-regional and trans-boundary levels.

33. The main strategy for project activities in the CEE region consists largely of the use and dissemination of positive experiences, including the results of national projects for combating land degradation, as well as the planning, preparation and implementation of joint trans-boundary, sub-regional and regional projects.

34. At present, national projects tend to be the focus of activity in order to achieve SLM, combat land degradation and restore degraded lands in the region. The experience of implementation of these projects, and the positive results they can achieve, will be extended to other countries in order to obtain regional and/or sub-regional benefits.

35. The share of positive experience of implementation of national projects between CEE countries will be carried out through the following instruments:

- Organization of regional workshops;
- Posting of information on regional and national UNCCD web sites;

¹Statistics: Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FIBL) - <http://www.fibl.org>

- Regular publication of relevant information in periodicals, presentation at scientific conferences organised by the UNCCD;
- Exchange of experts and representatives of local communities;

36. Preparation and implementation of regional, sub-regional, and trans-boundary projects is one of the most important tools of CEE RAP successful implementation. The region is lacking in large ambitious projects for combating land degradation, e.g. similar to Green Wall in Africa, Land restoration project for Latin American and Caribbean 'Initiative 20x20' on restoration of 20 million hectares of degraded land by 2020, etc., that could draw the donor community to the support of national efforts in achieving significant results both on the national and regional levels.

37. Promising areas for preparation of such projects are:

- ✓ Ambitious regional projects on restoration of degraded lands;
- ✓ Elaboration and implementation of approved common systems of land degradation indicators;
- ✓ Elaboration of the atlas of degraded and deserted areas in CEE region;
- ✓ Development of organic agriculture;
- ✓ Elaboration and implementation of early drought warning systems;
- ✓ Sustainable use of forest and meadow resources in mountain ecosystems.

6. Resource Mobilisation Strategy

38. Financial resources and mechanisms of the UNCCD implementation in the CEE region are stated in Article 7 of the Annex V, in which it specifies that "...affected country Parties of the region should, individually or jointly: (a) adopt measures to rationalize and strengthen mechanisms to supply funds through public and private investment with a view to achieving concrete results in action to combat DLDD; (b) identify international cooperation requirements in support of national efforts, (c) seek the participation of bilateral and/or multilateral partners and financial cooperation institutions with a view to ensuring implementation of the Convention, including programme activities which take into account the specific needs of affected country Parties of the region".

39. Consequently, the financial resources for RAP implementation will be mobilized from different sources, both national (budget, private), and international (developed Parties, international investment funds and organizations). Project ideas for the priority areas are proposed Annex 6.6 of the Background Information document and represent the general concept which could be used in future to develop comprehensive project proposals according to the specific requirements of various donor agencies.

40. In 2013, the GM together with the UNCCD secretariat prepared publication on «Funding opportunities in the field of SLM for the Annex V countries of the UNCCD» (2013) (<http://global-mechanism.org/gm-publications/documents-and-publications/gm-publications/view-category>). The paper presents an overview of existing and unused bilateral and multilateral financing instruments and mechanisms, and financial resources available for the mitigation and prevention of DLDD in the CEE region. First of all it provides a comprehensive overview of relevant financial instruments and programmes under the EC, as well as an overview of some of the multilateral donors, regional banks, international organizations and innovative funding opportunities that exist outside the EC framework.

41. The RC, affected country Parties, GM are encouraged to explore funding opportunities from national, regional and international sources. From the beginning of RAP implementation the bilateral and multilateral donors and organizations will be incorporated into the consultations process with RC

and affected country Parties. The GM will play the significant role in building up partnership platform for RAP implementation.

42. Articles 20 and 21 of the Convention set out Parties' funding obligations and the financial architecture, including mechanisms, to combat DLDD. This included the establishment of the Global Mechanism (GM) "in order to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of existing financial mechanisms ...[and]... promote actions leading to the mobilization and channelling of substantial financial resources" to affected country Parties to the Convention. The affected CEE Parties expect real and focused participation of GM in building up a partnership platform for RAP implementation.

43. CEE region is open to cooperation and partnership with all concerned parties (e.g. donor parties, private sector, philanthropic funds, etc.). A partnership through the implementation of NAPs and RAP may develop on a bilateral basis (e.g. donor - recipient), or alternatively on the basis of a multilateral international partnership platform.

7. Governance, Monitoring and Evaluation of the RAP

44. In accordance with its provisions the Convention is being implemented primarily at the national level. The purpose of RAP is to harmonise, complement and increase the efficiency of national programmes, and to facilitate solving of common trans-boundary, sub-regional, and regional problems. Therefore, CEE country Parties will be the main organizing and managing entities of RAP implementation, and National Focal Points and National Coordination Bodies will play the principle role in the monitoring and governance of RAP implementation.

45. The system of monitoring and coordination of RAP implementation will include the following 3 basic levels (Figure 1):

- Coordination - Regional Committee with the support of the Secretariat/GM;
- Implementation Country Parties of the Regional Implementation Annex V.
- Civil society and the scientific community will be invited to participate in all levels of monitoring and coordination of RAP implementation.

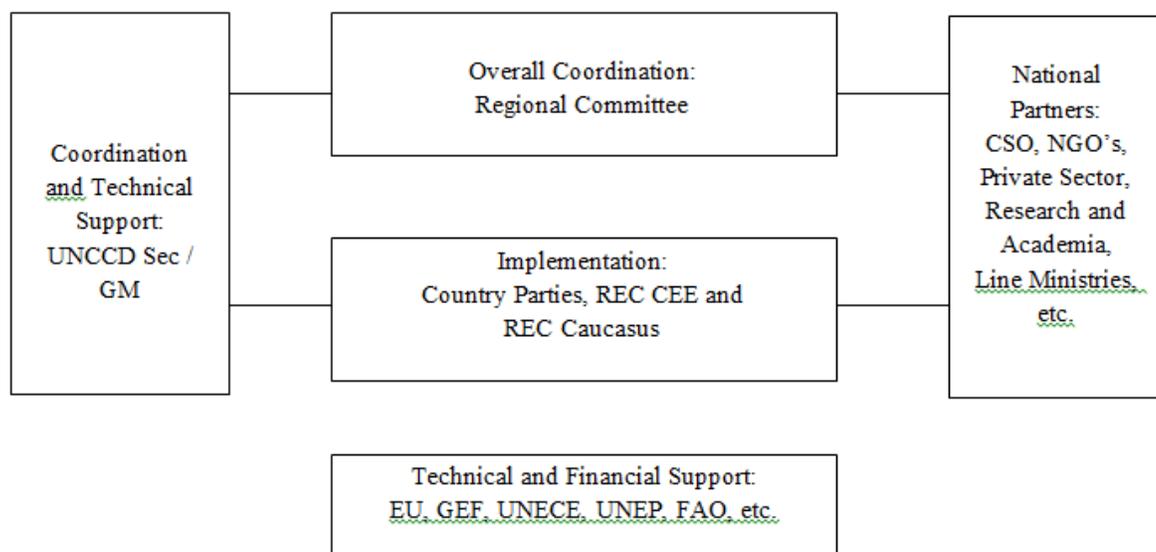


Figure 1. Organizational structure of CEE RAP governance

46. **Regional Meetings of the UNCCD National Focal Points** organised at least once every two years will be used as a forum to review current implementation of RAP and to prepare proposals on RAP corrections. Between the Meetings of NFPs these functions will be fulfilled by RC with technical support of Secretariat and GM.

47. At the national level the National Focal Point office and the relevant national coordination structures in charge of UNCCD or the international environmental agreements, where exists, will coordinate implementation of the UNCCD. To coordinate the RAP implementation the UNCCD National Focal Point should have the appropriate status, as well as financial and other operational capacities.

Reporting on the RAP implementation

48. Biennially the RC, with the assistance of UNCCD secretariat, prepares the summary report on the RAP implementation. The Global Mechanism and other UNCCD NFPs will contribute to the report as deemed appropriate. The summary report, when approved by RC, should be submitted to the CEE Parties for the review, and discussed at the nearest NFP meeting with the purpose of assessment of RAP implementation, identification of problems (gaps), and elaboration of recommendations on their elimination. Meeting resolutions and recommendations should be formalised properly and posted on the UNCCD website.

49. The agreed by Parties regional entity (Decision 13/COP 9) prepares regular Reports on the UNCCD Implementation in CEE region in accordance with the CRIC recommendations and COP decisions. After consideration by RC and CEE Parties the Report should be submitted through the UNCCD PRAIS portal.

50. The countries of CEE are encouraged to second their representatives to strengthen the Regional Coordination Unit. In order to properly assess the results of RAP implementation for the years 2016-2018 it is reasonable to employ the independent international expert who will point out strengths and weaknesses of the process, assess the efficiency of implementation, prepare recommendations on strengthening of regional cooperation, as well as on RAP correction and adjustment. Based on the analysis carried out under supervision of RC, the Regional Meeting of CEE NFPs (or Meeting of Ministers) will make a decision on RAP correction or revision.

8. Conclusion

51. Through the effective prioritisation of the RAP's 6 areas of regional cooperation, collaboration between CEE country Parties and their NAPs can be significantly improved. The RAP serves to "harmonise, complement and increase the efficiency of national programmes" (Article 11, UNCCD) promoting joint action between countries and their individual NAPs. Through strengthening regional cooperation, increasing shared knowledge, achieving a LDN target, enhancing capacity building, developing OA and implementing joint SLM projects, countries can work to manage and halt the processes of land degradation in CEE more effectively.

52. With the use of a variety of financial resources, mobilized from various sources, CEE country Parties will adopt the role as the main organizing and managing entities of RAP implementation. National Focal Points and National Coordination Bodies will also play the key role in the monitoring and governance of RAP implementation. Every two years the Regional Committee will prepare a summary report on RAP implementation and progress, with the help of the secretariat.

Annex: List of the activities under the priority areas

In red are the activities which the regional group would like to focus at as a priority

№	Priority Area 1: Strengthening regional cooperation at policy level	Implementers and potential partners	Main deliverables
	Follow up on the processes of the Ministerial Conference EfE for further broadening the cooperation and ensuring that land issues are prominently addressed in future.	RC, NFPs	Land issues are adequately addressed at 9 th MC
	Development of common position at negotiations on new MoU between the UNCCD and the GEF, on the implementation of 6 th GEF replenishment cycle. Preparation and promotion of the regional position on the 7 th GEF replenishment cycle	RC, NFPs, GEF	Proposals on common position of CEE countries submitted to the UNCCD secretariat and GEF
	Undertaking actions aimed at ensuring that regional conditions, including land degradation in different ecosystems, are properly taken into account in the framework of the UNCCD process	RC, NFPs,	Corresponding reference in the decision(s) of UNCCD COP
	Guaranteeing of participation of minimum 5 high-level representatives of the affected country Parties from CEE region in the Conference of Parties	RC, NFPs, COP organizing committee	Participation of minimum 5 high-level representatives of CEE ACP in the COP
	Establishment or reinforcement of cooperation with relevant global and regional organizations and institutions (FAO, WMO, UNECE, EU and EC, UNDP, UNEP, WB, EBRD, REC CEE, REC Caucasus etc.)	NFPs, relevant international organizations	Partnership initiatives
	Exploring further possibilities of cooperation with EU countries in particularly with non-affected Parties of the CEE	NFPs, EU, EC	Joint initiatives and projects
	Awareness raising, including but not limited, through the media workshops	NFPs, media	Workshops for journalists from CEE region, Media training programmes,
	Strengthening role of CSOs in DLDD processes	NFPs, CSOs, REC CEE, REC Caucasus	CSO networking strengthened, SCOs contributes to reporting and review process

Priority Area/Pillar 2: Increase knowledge on DLDD processes in the CEE region	Implementers and potential partners	Main deliverables
Establishment of cooperation with the Economics of Land Degradation Initiative, and to explore a possibility to fulfill of case study of the selected affected country Parties	CST, STCs, National Coordinating Bodies, ELD initiative	Demo-projects of selected CEE country Parties on implementation of ELD initiative
Development of a database of scientific institutions involved in the UNCCD process in the region	NFPs, STCs, EU	Database of CEE scientific institutions
<p>Exploring the cooperation with the scientific organizations of the CEE countries with the view to elaborate and implement the regional research projects within the defined priority areas, including the :</p> <p>Elaboration of the framework of common indicators of land degradation approved at regional level established with respect to conditions of individual countries and mapping of degraded areas in CEE region</p>	STCs, National research centers, EU research centers, CST, FAO	<p>Regional Thematic Networks, joint projects</p> <p>System of common indicators of land degradation in CEE region. Agreed methodology and techniques of mapping of degraded land in CEE region</p> <p>Identification of pilot countries, set of maps of degraded land in selected CEE countries as an example of land mapping in CEE</p>
Preparation of joint reviews, reports, assessments and forecasts on the relevant issues of defined priorities	STCs, National and EU research centers, CST	Joint reviews, reports, assessments and forecasts
Establishment of cooperation with FAO and FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia on elaboration of the system of indicators of land degradation, on mapping of land degradation processes, and on implementation of organic agriculture practices	CST, STCs, National Coordinating Bodies, FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia	Joint initiatives, joint projects
Participation in the further development of common indicators with UNFCCC and UNCBD	CST, STCs, National Coordinating Bodies, UNFCCC, UNCBD	Joint workshops on elaboration of common environmental indicators
Promotion of the involvement of scientific institutions and/or initiatives at the regional and subregional levels in the UNCCD process	CST, STCs, National research centers	Participation of scientific community in the reporting and NAPs implementation
Establishment of cooperation between CEE region and European and Eurasian GSP on the issues of mutual interest	NFPs, CST, STCs, National scientific centers, GSP	Joint initiatives and events of CEE country Parties and GSP
Promotion of the involvement of scientists in the preparation and participation at the UNCCD scientific conferences	CST, STCs, National research centers	Growing amount of presentations of CEE scientists at the UNCCD scientific conferences

Priority Area 3: Achievement of LDN target	Implementers and potential partners	Main deliverables
Synthesis of approaches and the most successful LDN practices and their dissemination in CEE countries	STCs, National research centers, EU research centers, CST, FAO	Workshops on LDN practices, review of case studies on LDN practices in CEE countries
Development of institutional and technical capacities, encouraging mechanisms and cooperation relating to land degradation neutrality	NCB, REC CEE and REC Caucasus	Training of NFPs and STCs on LDN issues
Elaboration of common key indicators of achievement of target LDN approved at the regional level	STCs, National research centers, EU research centers, CST, FAO	Set of agreed indicators on LDN
Resources of Soil Leadership Academy are utilized for the CEE policy-makers	CST, NFPs, CEE policy-makers, Soil Leadership Academy	Training courses at Soil Leadership Academy, participation of minimum 7 policy-makers from CEE countries in training courses
Facilitate outreach of outcomes and experience of LDN project in Belarus and Armenia	STCs, RC, NFPs of Armenia and Belarus,	Electronic information and publications on the progress in implementation of demo-projects on LDN
Organization of regional workshop on relevant issues of achievement LDN target, also in the context of NAP implementation (see Activities 4.1. and 4.4)	RC, CST, NFPs	Regional workshop on relevant issues of achievement LDN target
Support to affected countries in developing trans-boundary project proposal on LDN	NFPs, GM, GEF	Three project proposals

Priority Area 4: Capacity building	Implementers and potential partners	Main deliverables
Support to affected countries in developing their capacities to negotiate within the framework of the UNCCD	RC, National Coordinating Bodies	Training of NFPs, successful participation of CEE representatives in negotiations at the UNCCD events
Developing capacity in resource mobilization , including GEF resources, IFS and IIF development or other relevant mechanisms/instruments development	RC, NFPs, RC, GM, GEF	Case study on elaboration and implementation of IFS and IIF in selected ACP of CEE E-mail consultations and workshop on the access to and utilization of GEF resources
Identification and building of partnerships for providing targeted capacity building on UNCCD issues, particularly NAP and RAP implementation, also through organization of the regional workshops	NFPs, REC CEE, REC Caucasus, Sec, GM	Identified priorities and key stakeholders for capacity building. Established partnership network for capacity building Two regional workshops (in 2016 and 2019)
Sharing of information of regional/subregional capacity building activities that have relevance to SLM, also using the resources of the UNCCD Capacity Building Marketplace tools	REC CEE, REC Caucasus, NFPs, RC, FAO	Timely update of information on capacity building activities on the UNCCD web site Presentation n the UNCCD Capacity Building Marketplace resources at the CEE regional meeting
Submission of best practices according to the reporting guidelines Development of regional database of best practices	NFPs, RC, CST, CSOs	National reports include information on best practices. Database of best practices
Explore training opportunities on soil erosion, monitoring and sustainable management with the Institute of Soil Sciences Agrothechnologies nad Plant Protection (ISSAPP) Nikola Pushkarov and training opportunities on SLM and forestry using the capacities of regional training center in Armenia	RC, NFPs, CST, NFP of Armenia	Training courses
Strengthening cooperation with Drought Management Center for SEE region (DMCSEE) in Slovenia including participation of CEE representatives in related meetings	RC, NFPs, CST, DMC SEE	Share of information, participation of CEE representatives in the DMC SEE meetings, joint initiatives
Development of cooperation with Regional Reference Centre within the Mendel University in Brno, Czech Republic	RC, National Coordinating Bodies, CST, STCs, RRC	Share of information, participation of RRC representatives in the CEE regional events subject to available resources
Consultation and selection of regional reporting entity under PRAIS portal	RC, National Coordinating Bodies	Identified regional reporting entity agrees with the status and tasks, CEE regional report

Priority Area 5: Promotion of organic agriculture		Implementers and potential partners	Main deliverables
№	Priority Areas Activities		
	Increase in awareness on organic agriculture in CEE region, also through organization of regional workshop to demonstrate successful experience in development of organic agriculture in the region and the elaboration of the roadmap for further promoting OA	NFPs, EU, FAO, REC CEE, REC Caucasus, IFAD, IFOAM, Sec, GM	Growth of awareness of organic agriculture in CEE countries Regional workshops on organic agriculture. Roadmap of OA promotion
	Preparation and realization of the demonstration projects in several CEE countries to promote OA	NFPs, RC, EU, FAO, GM, GEF, private sector	Organic agriculture demonstration projects, dissemination of project results
	Involvement of the CSOs to outreach the idea of OA and setting up the local OA farms	NFPs, CSOs, EU, FAO, private sector	List of involved CSOs, training of CSOs representatives
Priority Area 6: Elaboration and implementation of joint SLM projects (regional, sub-regional, cross-border)		Implementers and potential partners	Main deliverables
	Organization of the regional and sub-regional discussions and meeting to identify the priority themes and areas for joint projects	NFPs, STCs, REC CEE, REC Caucasus, GEF and its Implementing Agencies	E-mail discussion, regional or sub-regional meetings, list of priority joint projects
	Designing ambitious regional project on land restoration in the CEE countries	NFPs, STCs, REC CEE, REC Caucasus, GEF, FAO	Project proposal on land restoration in the CEE countries
	Development of synergetic projects focusing on both climate change adaptation and combating land degradation activities	NFPs of 3 Rio Conventions, STCs, REC CEE, REC Caucasus, UNFCCC, Sec/GM, GEF and its IAs	Project proposals on both climate change adaptation and combating land degradation activities
	Support to affected countries in developing regional, sub-regional and trans-boundary project proposal within the framework of the UNCCD	RC, National Coordinating Bodies, GEF and its IAs, Sec/GM	E-mail consultations, workshops and guidelines on developing of regional, sub-regional and trans-boundary project proposals
	Support to countries in preparing projects on NAP and RAP implementation for submission to the GEF and other IFIs	RC, National Coordinating Bodies, GEF and its IAs, other IFIs	Workshops and guidelines on preparation project proposals