

Management response: Evaluation of the Global Land Outlook

Overview

The evaluation concerning the Global Land Outlook (GLO) was scheduled to take place a few months after the launch of the GLO. It is designed as a formative assessment of the first GLO and its development process, with the main aim of advising the consideration of the second GLO.

The evaluation report provides a structured analysis of the relevance and effectiveness of the GLO vis-à-vis its expected users and planned use. It considers many key aspects of the GLO, such as its scientific credibility and the clarity of its future scenarios. Building on the user/stakeholder feedback, it carefully assesses the substantive merits and weaknesses of the first GLO.

The evaluation also looks at the GLO development as a process, including for example the approaches for managing and sharing the workload and the promotion of the GLO. While the general tone of the evaluation conclusions on these matters is positive, it also identifies several areas of improvement.

Close to one hundred stakeholders provided their feedback for the evaluation, and the evaluation report compiles this information into a meaningful overview of how the GLO was received and perceived. Using that overview, and further reflecting the GLO against recent developments in the UNCCD process, it succeeds in presenting practical, targeted conclusions and recommendations that are a valuable input to the development of the second GLO.

The secretariat particularly appreciates the finding that the GLO is being used by its primary audience, government employees, in their work, and thereby has direct relevance to country-level policy-making.

Recommendations

Evaluation recommendation 1: Capitalising on GLO1

- ***Efforts to promote the GLO should be redoubled and captured in a strategy which lays out steps to ensure the GLO is widely cited and made the centrepiece of the Secretariat's interaction with states.***
- ***The Secretariat should strategize with IPBES in advance of the publication of the LDRA in order that the LDRA benefits from, and contributes to sustaining, the momentum built by GLO.***

Management response: Partially accepted. The secretariat will continue to actively promote the GLO, and to use its content to support targeted advocacy and outreach.

With regard to strategizing with IPBES, the approach, scope and purposes of the LDRA are essentially different - LDRA is a scientific assessment while the GLO is an overview of what exists - and promoting the two on their own may yield better results than efforts to link them.

Evaluation recommendation 2: GLO2 scope and timing

- ***A new GLO, centred on an updated outlook of scenarios and trends, should be produced every four years to maintain the momentum and support the political purpose of GLO1.***
- ***Whether GLO2 itself meets demand for in-depth regional analyses and further exploration of key themes such as land and climate or whether these are published as supplementary outputs is less the issue than that this demand is met and that there is continuity and coherence to the overall package of GLO products.***
- ***Further development of a Global Land Index should reflect a clear view of opportunity costs and involve stop-go moments when the pros and cons of continuing would be reviewed. Ranking countries within particular regions / biomes should be explored as an alternative or interim option.***

Management response: Partially accepted. GLO2 is planned to be published in 2021, and an updated outlook of scenarios and trends will be at its core. It will also further explore selected key themes, either within the GLO report or as supplementary documentation. Inclusion of in-depth regional analyses will be considered, taking into account other regionally-focused material that is produced under the UNCCD, notably through the national reporting process.

The development of the Global Land Index is one of the current question marks in the GLO process, and the recommended review and analysis will be helpful for deciding how to proceed.

Evaluation recommendation 3: Planning for GLO2

- ***Planning for the next GLO should begin early with an initial phase of outreach to attract high-quality contributors, engage stakeholders with a shared agenda and ensure that topical issues can be adequately covered.***
- ***A wide range of contributors should be solicited to avoid the appearance or reality of regional bias; funding should ideally be provided to enable the participation of contributors from beyond developed countries.***
- ***Plans for GLO2 should learn from the experience of GLO1 by anticipating capacity bottlenecks, especially in relation to editing, the sourcing of images and promotion.***
- ***Contributors to the next GLO should be given clear, early guidance relating to the length, depth and style of their input and how it should be referenced. This guidance should specify the status that contributors' input will have in the final product and how authors will be acknowledged.***

Management response: Accepted. Planning for GLO 2 has started and the first steering committee meeting is planned for the first quarter of 2018. This meeting will start the consideration of, among other matters, the involvement of contributors – for what purpose, when, and how to ensure an optimal input. The meeting will also address the outcomes of this evaluation, with the aim to benefit from the lessons learned.