



United Nations

ICCD/COP(13)/CST/8



Convention to Combat Desertification

Distr.: General
19 June 2017

Original: English

Conference of the Parties

Committee on Science and Technology

Thirteenth session

Ordos, China, 6–9 September 2017

Item 3 (c) of the provisional agenda

Interfacing science and policy, and sharing knowledge

Promoting the analysis, dissemination and accessibility of best practices and the UNCCD Knowledge Hub

Promoting the analysis, dissemination and accessibility of best practices and the UNCCD Knowledge Hub

Note by the secretariat

Summary

By decision 20/COP.12, Parties requested the secretariat to expand the Scientific Knowledge Brokering Portal (SKBP) with best practices, inter alia, through cooperation with the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) on the “sustainable land management technologies, including adaptation” theme. Also in decision 20/COP.12, Parties requested the secretariat to continue developing and enhancing the SKBP in cooperation with partners in order to increase relevance for the various target groups and to expand the collection of information accessible through the portal to national and subnational actors, in particular.


In 2016, the SKBP was rebranded as the UNCCD Knowledge Hub. At the fifteenth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention, Parties noted the work done by the secretariat in improving the UNCCD knowledge sharing services for Parties, and encouraged the secretariat to continue to develop the Knowledge Hub.

This document contains reports on activities carried out by the secretariat with regards to: (i) promoting the analysis, dissemination and accessibility of best practices and the cooperation with WOCAT, and (ii) the on-going development of the UNCCD Knowledge Hub. The information presented in this document is intended to assist Parties in considering progress made in the dissemination of best practices and the development of the UNCCD Knowledge Hub and in making recommendations to the COP, as appropriate.

GE.17-10025(E)



* 1 7 1 0 0 2 5 *

Please recycle 



Contents

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Background	1–7	3
II. Promoting the analysis, dissemination and accessibility of best practices	8–16	4
III. Development of the UNCCD Knowledge Hub	17–21	5
IV. Conclusions and recommendations	22–23	6

I. Background

1. By its decision 15/COP.10, the Conference of the Parties (COP) decided to review the accessibility of information on best practices, and requested the secretariat to identify recommended databases, to which data and information stored in the performance review and assessment of implementation system (PRAIS) should be transferred.
2. The World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) was selected as the primary recommended database for best practices on “sustainable land management (SLM) technologies, including adaptation”,¹ and on 15 April 2014, an agreement was signed to carry this out. The revised WOCAT platform supporting the work under this agreement was launched in 2016 and by May 2017, the database contained 1136 SLM practices, searchable in a structured way.
3. By decision 20/COP.12, Parties are encouraged and other reporting entities invited to continue submitting cases of relevant best practices through the WOCAT database in order to increase the SLM knowledge base. Furthermore, the COP requested to channel knowledge and information on other relevant topics through the UNCCD Scientific Knowledge Brokering Portal (SKBP) and the Capacity Building Marketplace (CBM).
4. By decision 3/COP.8, the COP mandated the Committee on Science and Technology (CST), in cooperation with relevant institutions, to create and steer knowledge management systems aiming to improve the brokering of scientific and technical information to and from institutions, Parties and end users. This mandate² led to the development of the SKBP, for which a pilot was launched in 2014, and which was rebranded as the UNCCD Knowledge Hub in 2016.
5. Further COP decisions requested the secretariat to ensure the interoperability of the systems for the transferability of information when further developing the knowledge management infrastructure within the secretariat, including the UNCCD reporting platform PRAIS and the SKBP.³ The secretariat was also requested to integrate the roster of independent experts database into the SKBP to enable easier and more efficient use of this database.⁴
6. The secretariat presented the UNCCD Knowledge Hub at the fifteenth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention in Nairobi in 2016. Parties recognized the importance of sharing best practices and information among Parties and other stakeholders in order to support the implementation of the UNCCD. Parties noted with appreciation the work done by the secretariat in improving the UNCCD knowledge sharing services, and in integrating various knowledge tools under one UNCCD Knowledge Hub. Parties also encouraged the secretariat to continue to develop the UNCCD Knowledge Hub, including further integration of various UNCCD knowledge tools under one platform.
7. This document contains reports on activities carried out by the secretariat, as prescribed by the aforementioned decisions, with regards to: (i) promoting the analysis, dissemination and accessibility of best practices and cooperation with WOCAT, and (ii) the on-going development of the UNCCD Knowledge Hub.

¹ By decision 17/COP.11.

² Further refined by decisions 21/COP.10, 24/COP.11 and 20/COP.12.

³ Decision 17/COP.11.

⁴ Decision 22/COP.12.

II. Promoting the analysis, dissemination and accessibility of best practices

8. The agreement between the UNCCD secretariat and the University of Bern/Centre for Development and Environment stipulates, inter alia, that WOCAT shall establish an online facility to allow country Parties and other reporting entities to continue to upload information on SLM best practices, and make data and information on SLM best practices available by allowing access through the UNCCD portal/SKBP.

9. In 2015 and 2016, WOCAT completed the development of this online facility, incorporating feedback received from country Parties and other stakeholders at the twelfth session of the CST in Ankara. In June 2016, country Parties were invited to test the new online facility, including the final revision of the template, and provide their feedback to WOCAT via an online survey.

10. The revised online facility for best practices on SLM technologies, including adaption, was made available to all stakeholders in August 2016. This platform includes the final version of the revised template based on responses received through the survey, as well as all best practices previously submitted by country Parties through the PRAIS platform. The revised template contains graphic illustrations and practical forms to assist reporting entities in submitting their information.

11. Throughout 2016 and 2017, a number of learning tools were developed to support UNCCD stakeholders in submitting best practices in line with the WOCAT template. These learning tools are also available through the UNCCD Knowledge Hub.

12. In 2017, the WOCAT Secretariat expanded the number of best practices available with information from previous and current WOCAT projects. By May 2017, the new WOCAT platform contained 1,136 SLM practices, published by 119 countries. This included 666 SLM technologies, 17 SLM approaches, and 453 UNCCD PRAIS practices.⁵

13. As stipulated in the aforementioned decisions, the WOCAT online facility enables a structured exchange of information on SLM best practices, and allows this information to be channelled to all UNCCD stakeholders through the UNCCD Knowledge Hub.

14. The secretariat plans to further its support to country Parties, subject to the availability of funds, with reporting on SLM practices through available databases and uploading these in the required format. For support on best practices in relation to the next reporting and review exercise, please also refer to document ICCD(CRIC16)/5.

15. In addition to the best practices provided through the WOCAT database, the Knowledge Hub provides a structure to channel information on other relevant topics to UNCCD stakeholders, e.g. with a cataloguing system (tagging with metadata) structured in line with the UNCCD process and topics.

16. The setup of the Knowledge Hub offers the flexibility to efficiently adapt the structure to ensure the Knowledge Hub meets the possible future needs of UNCCD stakeholders in sharing success stories, lessons learned and best practices related to their implementation activities. The secretariat will ensure that this structure remains aligned with the new strategic framework for the UNCCD.

⁵ Source: <<http://qcat.wocat.net>>, as of 24 May 2017.

III. Development of the UNCCD Knowledge Hub

17. In 2016, the SKBP pilot was expanded and rebranded as the UNCCD Knowledge Hub. The secretariat has also continued to improve its knowledge management infrastructure, including the PRAIS portal, the UNCCD website, the CBM, and the Knowledge Hub, to ensure system interoperability for the transferability of information. The knowledge management infrastructure is based on open-source and open-standard solutions to enable easy collaboration with partners and other institutions, where needed.

18. Also launched in 2016, the new UNCCD website has been designed to work in close collaboration with the Knowledge Hub to offer UNCCD stakeholders seamless access to relevant information. More information on the development of the UNCCD website is available in document ICCD/COP(13)/4.

19. The Knowledge Hub is designed to function as the main knowledge platform for UNCCD stakeholders, providing easy access to information from multiple sources, including:

(a) **Information to support the land degradation neutrality (LDN) target-setting programme spearheaded by the Global Mechanism (GM), in collaboration with the UNCCD secretariat and several partners.** At present, a section of the Knowledge Hub is structured in line with the ‘building blocks’ for LDN target-setting, developed by the GM, based on the LDN conceptual framework developed by the UNCCD Science-Policy Interface (SPI), with feedback from countries and stakeholders. As Parties further engage in the LDN process, the Knowledge Hub can provide further tools, knowledge and information for implementing LDN within this framework;

(b) **Access to a wide range of relevant knowledge-sharing systems from around the world.** This includes all knowledge-sharing systems, as reported by country Parties in the 2016 reporting process. By May 2017, there were 942 knowledge-sharing systems listed in the database,⁶ which offer varied, compelling content, often based on local experiences. As such, the database provides a good starting point for expanding the search component (SKBP) of the Knowledge Hub with new links, thus improving the search and textual analysis of the information shared through these systems;

(c) **All up-to-date information on relevant publications, articles and information resources from the UNCCD e-Library, with an average of seven updates per day, as well as access to data, research and knowledge from partners.** The latest updates are shared through various UNCCD communication channels, including the email newsletter;

(d) **The roster of independent experts, to enable easier and more efficient use of the database.**⁷ The Knowledge Hub allows the user to search for experts, inter alia, by discipline and by country. Furthermore, the Knowledge Hub provides all experts with an opportunity to update their information.⁸ By May 2017, there were 1292 experts nominated by country Parties listed in the database. The experts are frequently invited by the secretariat to participate in activities relevant to the UNCCD;

⁶ <<http://knowledge.unccd.int/home/knowledge-sharing-systems>>.

⁷ By decision 22/COP.12.

⁸ <<http://knowledge.unccd.int/home/roster-independent-experts-roe>>.

(e) **All best practices from the WOCAT platform are channelled through the Knowledge Hub.** Country Parties are invited to update their existing best practices and upload new ones.⁹

20. For the further development of the Knowledge Hub, the secretariat is planning, subject to the availability of funds, to:

(a) **Enable country Parties, civil society organizations and other stakeholders to share experiences, stories and best practices, for LDN and other UNCCD implementation-related topics.** The content of the Knowledge Hub will continue to evolve as countries advance in achieving LDN, for example, by focusing on success stories in leveraging LDN, SLM practices, and transformative LDN projects. The Knowledge Hub can also disseminate knowledge related to available tools and sources to support countries in assessing degradation trends and drivers, and in monitoring and reporting on LDN. The secretariat will partner with organizations in developing such knowledge tools to ensure they meet the needs of UNCCD stakeholders;

(b) **Improve access to technical and scientific information on desertification, land degradation and drought related topics via a customizable search navigation tool, and to expand the number of partners able to connect their database through a direct search (SKBP).** This tool is designed to help users achieve better search results across various research topics and information formats (including multimedia and maps) through an automated and in-depth analysis of the content of partner databases;

(c) **Further support the SPI in ensuring delivery of policy-related information, knowledge and advice to a wider audience of users.**¹⁰ The Knowledge Hub will help promote the work of the SPI. Information products on desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD) and other topics addressed by the SPI will be made available through the Knowledge Hub, ensuring accessibility by a wider audience of users.

21. The Knowledge Hub's ambition is to become the main information source for UNCCD stakeholders, inter alia, through channelling relevant information from various sources and structuring this information in line with stakeholder needs as they engage in the UNCCD process. As such, the Knowledge Hub provides a framework for organizing scientific and technical information, providing links to and information on useful tools, and sharing success stories, lessons learned and best practices between stakeholders. By capturing, structuring and delivering this information from various sources, the Knowledge Hub will connect national, regional and global platforms and networks to create an access point for sharing knowledge on SLM, DLDD and LDN. Therefore the Knowledge Hub is designed to improve connections and knowledge flows between information sources and information-seekers in order to strengthen the capacity of all UNCCD stakeholders to deliver their contribution within the UNCCD strategic framework and the broader SDGs.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

22. **Having considered the progress made in the dissemination of best practices and the development of the UNCCD Knowledge Hub, the CST may wish to propose the following for consideration by the COP.**

23. **The COP may:**

⁹ <<http://knowledge.unccd.int/knowledge-products-and-pillars/access-capacity-policy-support-technology-tools/best-practices-slm>>.

¹⁰ See document ICCD/COP(13)/CST/6.

(a) Note with appreciation the work done by the secretariat on the development of the SKBP and the UNCCD Knowledge Hub, and improvements to the UNCCD knowledge-sharing services, integrating various knowledge tools under one platform;

(b) Acknowledge the efforts by the secretariat and the WOCAT in promoting the analysis, dissemination and accessibility of best practices on SLM;

(c) Request the Secretariat to continue the expansion and further enhancement of the Knowledge Hub, facilitating UNCCD stakeholders in sharing success stories, lessons learned and best practices related their implementation activities, and providing access to knowledge sources from partners in order to facilitate the dissemination of relevant knowledge to all stakeholders;

(d) Encourage Parties and invite other stakeholders to continue to share information on knowledge-sharing systems and other relevant DLDD/SLM information through the Knowledge Hub, and invite experts nominated by country Parties to continue to ensure the information in their profile on the Knowledge Hub is up to date, inter alia, by adding links to recent relevant publications;

(e) Also encourage Parties and invite other reporting entities to continue submitting cases of relevant best practices in order to increase the knowledge base on SLM;

(f) Invite developed country Parties, other countries in the position to do so and financial institutions to support the expansion and further enhancement and development of the Knowledge Hub.