

Decision 12/COP.10

Modalities, criteria and terms of reference for the mid-term evaluation of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention

The Conference of the Parties,

Noting with appreciation the work undertaken by the Bureau of the Committee for the Review of Implementation of the Convention in preparing the draft modalities, criteria and terms of reference for the mid-term evaluation of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018) (The Strategy), provided in document ICCD/CRIC(10)/17,

Recalling decision 11/COP.9, annex, paragraph 2 (e), which requests the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention to assist the Conference of the Parties in evaluating the implementation of The Strategy, including its mid-term evaluation by 2013,

Recalling also decision 3/COP.8, which affirms that the Conference of the Parties will be the main body for assessing and reviewing the overall implementation of The Strategy,

Mindful that the mid-term evaluation presents Parties and stakeholders with a unique opportunity to provide strategic guidance and direction in order to enhance the implementation of the Convention and The Strategy, building on experience gained in the period since its adoption,

Recognizing that significant steps have been taken in order to monitor and assess the implementation of The Strategy, such as the establishment of the performance review and assessment of implementation system (PRAIS) and the first reporting cycle by Parties and observers based on quantifiable provisionally adopted indicators in 2010–2011, and that important lessons can be learned from these activities,

Recognizing also the urgency of commencing the preparations for the mid-term evaluation as soon as possible in order to allow for necessary consultations with the Parties to take place before 2013,

1. *Decides* to adopt the terms of reference of the mid-term evaluation of The Strategy as contained in the annex to this decision and that this will include an evaluation of the fulfilment by the Committee on Science and Technology of operational objective 3 on how best to measure progress on strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of The Strategy as an integral part of the evaluation, which will take place at the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties in 2013;
2. *Also decides* to establish an ad hoc Intersessional Working Group, subject to available funding, with a mandate to prepare recommendations on the mid-term evaluation under the direction of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties;
3. *Decides* that in the event of insufficient funding to support the Intersessional Working Group, all functions associated with the Group in this document will be assumed by the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties;

4. *Further decides* that the ad hoc Intersessional Working Group will consist of 14 members, comprising the President of Conference of the Parties, the Chairperson of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention, the Chairperson of the Committee on Science and Technology, two members from each of the five regional groups, and one representative from civil society organizations accredited to the Conference of the Parties, to be nominated no later than 1 February 2012;
5. *Requests* the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties to develop, by January 2012, terms of reference covering the roles and responsibilities of the Intersessional Working Group, as outlined in this decision and its annex;
6. *Decides* that the Intersessional Working Group may decide to draw on the expertise of consultants and institutions, as and when it deems necessary, in accordance with the terms of reference and within the financial provisions contained in paragraph 12 below;
7. *Requests* the secretariat to facilitate the work of the Intersessional Working Group, supported by the Global Mechanism where relevant and in accordance with its mandate;
8. *Decides* that the Intersessional Working Group will present an update on the process at the eleventh session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention;
9. *Requests* the Intersessional Working Group to consult with Parties, as well as with other stakeholders, to further its work, making use of electronic communication facilities and other meetings whenever possible, and seeking comments on documentation provided through a dedicated webpage established on the UNCCD website;
10. *Also requests* the Intersessional Working Group to report periodically to the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties on its activities and on progress made, and to transmit such reports and other outputs to the secretariat for posting on the UNCCD website;
11. *Further requests* the Intersessional Working Group to complete its work by 30 June 2013 and to transmit its report and findings, as outlined in the attached terms of reference, to the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties;
12. *Invites* Parties to contribute on a voluntary basis, either to the Supplementary Fund or in kind, to cover the additional cost of an Intersessional Working Group, and *authorizes* the Executive Secretary to seek contributions in this regard;
13. *Also recommends*, in the event that voluntary contributions are not received, that a mandate be assigned to the Bureau of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention to prepare the mid-term evaluation under the supervision of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties;
14. *Decides* that the Conference of the Parties will consider the report at its eleventh session.

*9th plenary meeting
21 October 2011*

Annex I

Terms of reference for the mid-term evaluation of The Strategy

A. Mandate

1. Parties at the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties decided that a mid-term evaluation of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (The Strategy) should be undertaken by the Conference of the Parties, based on the performance monitoring system, six years after the adoption of The Strategy, that is at the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties in 2013.¹²

B. Objective

2. The overall objective of the mid-term evaluation is to recommend appropriate measures for improving performance and furthering implementation of The Strategy.¹³

C. Scope and timeframe of activities

3. The mid-term evaluation will comprise an evaluation of The Strategy (the overall framework and scope) as well as an evaluation of its building blocks (evaluation of progress made in implementing The Strategy;¹⁴ evaluation of the performance and effectiveness of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention;¹⁵ evaluation of the PRAIS;¹⁶ and review of the Regional Coordination Mechanism arrangements¹⁷). Additionally, the mid-term evaluation will include an evaluation of the performance and effectiveness of the Committee on Science and Technology in fulfilling operational objective 3 on how best to measure progress on strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of The Strategy.

4. The mid-term evaluation should consider, where relevant, earlier UNCCD reports and/or documents that have already identified matters relevant to the evaluation, including in relation to the alignment of national action programmes, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and omission of key issues. The evaluation should not only cover the status of implementation of the Convention, but also identify possible causes and potential solutions where implementation is incomplete;

5. The following indicative deadlines for documentation emerging from the evaluation are proposed, subject to revision based on UNCCD meeting schedules:

(a) Evaluation of The Strategy

29 February 2012

¹² Decision 3/COP.8, paragraph 42.

¹³ Decision 3/COP.8, annex, paragraph 26.

¹⁴ Decision 3/COP.8, paragraph 42.

¹⁵ Decision 11/COP.9, paragraph 7.

¹⁶ Decision 11/COP.9, paragraph 7.

¹⁷ Decision 3/COP.9, paragraph 8.

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| (b) | Evaluation of progress made in the implementation of The Strategy | January 2013 |
| (c) | Evaluation of the performance and effectiveness of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention | August 2012 |
| (d) | Review of the Regional Coordination Mechanisms | May 2012 |
| (e) | Evaluation of the performance and effectiveness of the Committee on Science and Technology in fulfilling operational objective 3 on how best to measure progress on strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of The Strategy | April 2013 |
| (f) | Final output of the mid-term evaluation | 30 June 2013 |

6. The following indicate the timeframe for meetings during which mid-term evaluation-related issues will be discussed, subject to revision based on UNCCD meeting schedules:

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| (a) | Regional meetings preparatory to the eleventh session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention ¹⁸ | fourth quarter 2012 |
| (b) | The eleventh session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention | March 2013 |
| (c) | Regional meetings preparatory to the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties ¹⁹ | July–October 2013 |
| (d) | The eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties | fourth quarter 2013 |

D. Methodology

7. The following evaluation criteria will be used for the evaluation of The Strategy and each of its building blocks:

- (a) **Relevance:** the extent to which the objectives of The Strategy are consistent with the Parties' needs, priorities and policies, and a measure of whether the objectives or their design are still appropriate given changed circumstances;
- (b) **Effectiveness:** the extent to which The Strategy's objectives have been achieved, or are expected to be achieved, in the context of the provisions of decision 3/COP.8;
- (c) **Impact:** the extent to which there has been progress towards achieving the overall objectives of the Convention that can be attributed to the implementation of The Strategy;

¹⁸ Subject to Parties providing such additional financial resources as may be required.

¹⁹ Subject to Parties providing such additional financial resources as may be required.

(d) Efficiency: a measure of how efficiently the resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) invested in the implementation of The Strategy have been converted into results;

(e) Sustainability: The likelihood of continued long-term benefits from the implementation of the Convention resulting from the implementation of The Strategy.

E. Substantive elements

1. Evaluation of the overall framework and scope of The Strategy

8. The overall relevance, effectiveness, impact, efficiency and sustainability of The Strategy will be evaluated by assessing how it has achieved the following aspects²⁰ of its aim and mission:

(a) Enhancing Parties' capacities to integrate objectives of the Convention into regional, subregional and national development policies, plans and strategies;

(b) Engaging the international community in setting targets and defining indicators for progress;

(c) Making the Convention a centre of excellence in scientific and technical knowledge and best practices;

(d) Enhancing synergies between combating desertification and land degradation, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and biodiversity conservation;

(e) Contributing to the fulfilment of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals;

(f) Improving political will and commitment to the Convention;

(g) Raising awareness of desertification/land degradation and drought and the profile of the Convention;

(h) Improving the engagement and commitment of the Parties to the Convention;

(i) Ensuring better targeting of existing resources and mobilizing new resources for the implementation of the Convention;

(j) Building the capacities of affected developing country Parties to access financial resources, especially the Global Environment Facility, for funding activities to combat desertification/land degradation and drought;

(k) Improving resourcing for the implementation of action programmes and other activities to combat desertification and land degradation, especially through the Global Environment Facility.

9. Input:

(a) A policy document highlighting substantive developments in the implementation of the Convention, as outlined in The Strategy, against points (a) to (k) above, as well as an appraisal of the external context in which the Convention needs to be implemented;

²⁰ The above-mentioned elements were included among those used by the intergovernmental intersectoral working group which assisted in the preparation of The Strategy (decision 3/COP.7, paragraph 10).

(b) A qualitative evaluation, encompassing consultations as well as interviews and survey(s) featuring feedback from country Parties and relevant international organizations and experts, including on the implementation of action programmes;

(c) A report by the Executive Secretary on progress in the implementation of the comprehensive communication strategy.²¹

10. Expected outputs:

(a) A comprehensive evaluation of The Strategy and the context in which it is implemented, which contains proposals for improving the implementation and effectiveness of The Strategy and on its timespan;

(b) An assessment of the interrelationship between the strategic and operational objectives contained in The Strategy, together with related impact and provisionally adopted performance indicators, in order to establish the linkages between expected outcomes in the implementation of The Strategy and expected impacts in the implementation of the Convention.

11. Expected outcome:

Recommendations for the Conference of the Parties at its eleventh session on how to improve the implementation and performance of The Strategy.

2. Evaluation of progress made in implementing The Strategy

12. The basis of this evaluation will be the review undertaken at the ninth (for provisionally adopted performance indicators) and the eleventh sessions of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (for impact indicators) as well as the analysis of trends in provisionally adopted performance indicators that will have been undertaken at the eleventh session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention. It will address the specific issues which emerge from the review of progress made, including on financial flows and best practices. Analysis of the achievement of the provisionally adopted targets set by decision 13/COP.9 will be conducted in the context of the iterative process established by the same decision for performance and impact indicators, in order to adjust these indicators, targets and associated methodologies, if and where necessary, including the alignment of the sets of impact indicators of the Global Environment Facility land degradation focal area and The Strategy.

13. For provisionally adopted performance indicators, this process will take account of:

- (a) Definitions of provisionally adopted performance indicators;
- (b) Definitions of targets, including their timeframe;
- (c) The data collection methodology and quality control;
- (d) Simplification of reporting templates and provision of an additional framework for qualitative input;
- (e) Time constraints in collecting and analysing data;
- (f) Coordination with other relevant international organizations in order to complement the data collection, in particular on financial flows and best practices;
- (g) The content and format of any future reporting process for civil society organizations;

²¹ Decision 4/COP.9.

- (h) The cost-effectiveness of the process.
14. For impact indicators, this process will take account of:²²
- (a) The application and review of the impact indicators by affected countries;
- (b) The findings by the scientific peer review on the relevance, accuracy and cost-effectiveness of the impact indicators;
- (c) The outcome of and lessons learned during the pilot-tracking exercise on impact indicators;
- (d) Possible synergies with relevant programmes, projects and institutions, including those associated with the other Rio conventions;
- (e) Relevant contributions from the Convention's Scientific Conferences.
15. Inputs:
- (a) Analyses prepared by the Convention institutions, particularly information from the assessment of implementation based on provisionally adopted performance indicators for 2008–2009 and 2010–2011 as well as the first assessment of implementation based on impact indicators for 2008–2011;
- (b) Decisions emerging from the Conference of the Parties at its tenth session (following the recommendations of the ninth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention), as well as draft decisions prepared for the Conference of the Parties at its eleventh session as they relate to the assessment of implementation of the Convention and The Strategy;
- (c) Documents on the iterative process for indicators submitted to the tenth sessions of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention and the Conference of the Parties for decisions on this matter, as well as documents on this matter submitted to the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention at its eleventh session, which take account of the feedback provided by the Parties and relevant international organizations;
- (d) Documents prepared by the Committee on Science and Technology on how to measure the progress achieved in the implementation of strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3, and related decisions by the Conference of the Parties;
- (e) A qualitative evaluation, including consultations, as well as interviews and survey(s) featuring feedback from Parties and relevant international organizations and experts.
16. Expected outputs:
- (a) A comprehensive evaluation of progress made in the implementation of The Strategy containing proposals for a minimum set of performance and impact indicators for consideration at the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties, as requested by decisions 13/COP.9²³ and 17/COP.9,²⁴ together with a revised set of targets and relevant methodological information on how to implement indicators;
- (b) Harmonization of the sets of impact indicators in The Strategy, with particular regard to the Global Environment Facility land degradation focal area.

²² Decision 17/COP.9.

²³ Decision 13/COP.9, paragraph 3.

²⁴ Decision 17/COP.9, paragraph 5.

17. Expected outcome:

Recommendations to the Conference of the Parties at its eleventh session relating to the revision of elements of decision 13/COP.9 (indicators and related targets).

3. Evaluation of the performance and effectiveness of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention

18. The assessment of the performance of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention will be conducted by applying the following criteria:²⁵

(a) Relevance: the extent to which the Committee's overall objectives, purpose and results are in line with the needs and expectations of the Parties, in particular as they relate to the support by the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention to the Parties in their achievement of the outcomes of and objectives set by The Strategy;

(b) Impact: the extent to which there has been progress towards achieving the overall objectives of the Convention which can be attributed to the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention, inter alia through relevant action taken by the Conference of the Parties on approaches, policies and strategies to strengthen the implementation of the Convention and The Strategy;

(c) Effectiveness: the extent to which the Committee has responded to its mandate and functions as defined in decisions 3/COP.8 and 11/COP.9;

(d) Sustainability: The extent to which the work of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention is contributing to continued long-term benefits for the implementation of the Convention and The Strategy;

(e) Efficiency (cost-effectiveness of its meetings): the extent to which the outcomes of the Committee are commensurate with the resources invested, in terms of both the quantity and the quality of its deliberations;

(f) Appropriateness of format: the extent to which the format of the sessions of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention is conducive to interactive discussions and learning-based interaction leading to a transparent and flexible review of implementation.

19. Inputs:

(a) Reports prepared by the secretariat and the Global Mechanism on the performance review of the Convention institutions and subsidiary bodies;

(b) The work programme of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention for the biennia 2008–2009, 2010–2011 and 2012–2013, as well as the workplans for 2010–2014 and 2012–2015;

(c) Qualitative evaluation, including consultations, as well as interviews and survey(s) featuring feedback from Parties and relevant international organizations and experts.

20. Expected output:

²⁵ Similar criteria were used for the review of the terms of reference of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention at the seventh and eighth session of the Conference of the Parties (decision 7/COP.6).

A comprehensive evaluation of the performance and effectiveness of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention with possible proposals for revised (new/adjusted) terms of reference of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention where needed.

21. Expected outcome:

Recommendations to the Conference of the Parties at its eleventh session on how to improve the performance and effectiveness of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention.

4. Evaluation of the performance and effectiveness of the Committee on Science and Technology in fulfilling operational objective 3 on how best to measure progress on strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of The Strategy

22. An assessment of the performance of the Committee on Science and Technology in fulfilling operational objective 3 on how best to measure progress on strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of The Strategy will be conducted, building on previous decisions made by the Conference of the Parties on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Committee on Science and Technology,²⁶ on the functioning of the Committee on Science and Technology²⁷ and on reshaping the operations of the Committee on Science and Technology in line with the recommendations of The Strategy.^{28,29}

23. Expected output:

Comprehensive evaluation of the performance and effectiveness of the Committee on Science and Technology in fulfilling operational objective 3 on how best to measure progress on strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of The Strategy, with possible proposals for a revised work programme of the Committee on Science and Technology where needed.

24. Expected outcome:

Recommendations to the Conference of the Parties at its eleventh session regarding the role of the Committee on Science and Technology in, or contribution to, the implementation of The Strategy.

5. Evaluation of the performance review and assessment of implementation system

25. The evaluation of PRAIS will entail an assessment of:

(a) The interaction between different elements of the system (assessment of implementation, performance review, review of financial flows and collection and dissemination of best practices) in the light of their cross-fertilization and mutual reinforcement;

(b) The feedback provided on the performance of the Convention institutions and subsidiary bodies through the reports received on the implementation of their respective work programmes;

(c) The operational modalities enabling results-based budgeting by the Convention institutions and subsidiary bodies to capture the necessary substantive elements worked out by the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention;

²⁶ Decision 15/COP.7.

²⁷ Decision 12/COP.8.

²⁸ Decision 16/COP.9.

²⁹ If Parties agree to include the Committee on Science and Technology in this evaluation, further details on this part of the evaluation will be provided.

(d) The input provided by the Committee on Science and Technology to the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention and the interaction between the two subsidiary bodies.³⁰

26. Inputs:

(a) Review and assessment of the PRAIS portal against its objectives, including the reporting tools associated with it, and of the way PRAIS has been translated into an effective means for Parties to monitor and report on the implementation of action programmes, as well as the feedback by the Parties on their use of the portal;

(b) Reports prepared by the secretariat and the Global Mechanism on the performance review of the Convention institutions and subsidiary bodies;

(c) The work programmes of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention for the biennia 2010–2011 and 2012–2013, as well as the workplans for 2009–2011 and 2012–2015;

(d) Official documents and decisions by the Conference of the Parties relating to the interaction between the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention and the Committee on Science and Technology, with specific reference to best practices and knowledge management;

(e) Documents containing input from the Committee on Science and Technology to the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention;

(f) Qualitative evaluation, including consultations, as well as interviews and survey(s) featuring feedback from country Parties and relevant international organizations and experts.

27. Expected outputs:

(a) Comprehensive evaluation of PRAIS, including proposals for improvements in the operational modalities of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention;

(b) Revised reporting templates, guidelines and glossary.

28. Expected outcome:

Recommendations to the Conference of the Parties at its eleventh session relating to the revision of decisions 12/COP.9 and 13/COP.9.

6. Comprehensive review of Regional Coordination Mechanism arrangements

29. The review will address the three elements of the Regional Coordination Mechanisms: (a) the Regional Committees; (b) the Thematic Programme Networks; and (c) the Regional Coordination Units.

30. For each element, analysis will be conducted according to the following criteria:

(a) Relevance: the extent to which the Regional Coordination Mechanisms are responsive to existing and emerging challenges, capacity and the specific issues of the regional implementation annexes;³¹

(b) Impact: the extent to which there has been progress in facilitating the required coordination of implementation of the Convention and The Strategy at the regional

³⁰ Decision 11/COP.9, annex, paragraph 17(f); and decision 13/COP.9, attachment, paragraph 9.

³¹ Decision 3/COP.9, preamble.

level which can be attributed to the establishment and functioning of the Regional Coordination Mechanisms;

(c) Effectiveness: the extent to which the various element of the Regional Coordination Mechanisms have responded to their mandate and functions, as defined by Parties;

(d) Sustainability: the extent to which the resources invested in the establishment and functioning of the Regional Coordination Mechanisms could be maintained in the medium and long term, and the political support provided by the various stakeholders involved in their implementation;

(e) Efficiency: the extent to which the outcomes of the Regional Coordination Mechanisms are commensurate with investment, in terms of both internal and external resources.

31. With specific regard to the Regional Coordination Units, the following aspects will also be assessed:³²

- (a) Institutional arrangements;
- (b) Reporting arrangements;
- (c) Staffing requirements;
- (d) Budgetary requirements;
- (e) Hosting arrangements;
- (f) Work programmes and outcomes.

32. Inputs:

- (a) Performance reports of the Convention's institutions (2010–2011);
- (b) Information received from the Convention's institutions on joint activities as contained in the joint work programme;
- (c) Information on subregional action programme/regional action programme analysis produced by the secretariat, including guidance received from regional implementation annexes on how to proceed;
- (d) Information on reference centres that could be given a share of work related to the implementation of the Convention as part of the Regional Coordination Mechanisms;
- (e) Reports by the Executive Secretary on the implementation of decision 3/COP.9;
- (f) Qualitative evaluation, including consultations, as well as interviews and survey(s) featuring feedback from country Parties and relevant international organizations and experts.

33. Expected output:

Comprehensive review of existing Regional Coordination Mechanisms undertaken, including proposals for future modalities of work for the Regional Coordination Mechanisms.

34. Expected outcome:

³² Document ICCD/COP(9)/3.

Recommendations to Conference of the Parties at its eleventh session on how to improve the performance and effectiveness of mechanisms to facilitate regional coordination of the implementation of the Convention.

F. Consultative process

35. In order for the mid-term evaluation to be effective and truly participatory, a consultative process will be established between the tenth and the eleventh sessions of the Conference of the Parties, facilitated by the following means:

- (a) Taking advantage of the regional meetings in preparation for the eleventh sessions of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention and the Conference of the Parties, during which one full day would be dedicated to the formulation of regional views on the mid-term evaluation;
- (b) Consultations steered by the regional implementation annexes and the regional executive committees;
- (c) Online consultations (e-forums);
- (d) Broad dissemination of all relevant documents and information through a dedicated webpage in the UNCCD website.

G. Support by the secretariat and external assistance

36. The secretariat will facilitate these terms of reference and assist in the consultative process. It will seek external assistance, as necessary, in compiling the required information and producing background documentation, according to the terms of reference contained in Annex I of document ICCD/CRIC(10)/17. The Global Mechanism will assist in the facilitation of the exercise, where relevant and in accordance with its mandate.