



**Conference of the Parties
Committee on Science and Technology
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Item 4 of the provisional agenda

Consideration of progress made in the organization of international, interdisciplinary scientific advice in the Convention process

Final report on the e-survey to support the assessment of how to organize international, interdisciplinary scientific advice

Note by the secretariat

Summary

In its decision 18/COP.9, the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) requested the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) to conduct an assessment at its next two sessions of how to organize international, interdisciplinary scientific advice, taking into account the need to ensure transparency and geographical balance, and to consider options for determining agreed channels for the consideration of the advice within the Convention process. The Bureau of the CST therefore agreed to conduct an electronic survey (e-survey) on how to organize international, interdisciplinary scientific advice as part of the assessment. The e-survey was intended to give the Parties, the scientific community and relevant stakeholders an opportunity to participate in the assessment process.

Preliminary results of the e-survey were presented and discussed at the tenth session of the CST. The present document contains the final report of the UNCCD e-survey to support the assessment of how to organize international, interdisciplinary scientific advice.

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I. Background

1. The e-survey on how to organize international, interdisciplinary scientific advice was made available online in English, French and Spanish in mid-July 2011 for one month. Owing to the holiday season, the deadline for contributions was later extended to the end of August 2011 in order to achieve a higher level of participation.

2. The e-survey contained a combination of open and closed questions which were grouped into four sections:

(a) Background information on the participants, their relationship to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and their region;

(b) Expectations concerning the organization of international, interdisciplinary scientific advice by asking about respondents' understanding of the terms "scientific" and "transparent", about the importance of different requirements and objectives in ensuring effective advice, and about respondents' opinions on existing mechanisms;

(c) An introduction of the following four options, on which respondents' opinions were sought:

Option 1: The use of existing scientific networks: Official UNCCD bodies, governmental representatives and other stakeholders would use the output of existing scientific networks as a basis for international, interdisciplinary scientific advice;

Option 2: The establishment of a new scientific network focused on specific topics: A new network could be created to provide international, interdisciplinary scientific advice to the UNCCD, taking into account the existing networks, but focusing on specific topics relating to desertification/land degradation and drought (DLDD) that are not effectively covered by existing networks;

Option 3: The use of existing intergovernmental scientific advisory mechanisms: Existing intergovernmental scientific panels/platforms are formal processes that serve as a science-policy interface. Their findings, where they relate to DLDD, could help provide international, interdisciplinary scientific advice to the UNCCD;

Option 4: The establishment of a new intergovernmental scientific panel on land and soil: A new intergovernmental panel on land and soil could be established to cover the full range of interdisciplinary activities needed in order to provide international, interdisciplinary scientific advice to the UNCCD, taking into account the unique approach of the UNCCD with its Regional Implementation Annexes;

(d) Comparisons of the four options, along with views and recommendations on them, respondents' suggestions for a possible fifth option, and any other comments.

3. Regarding the two options on using existing mechanisms for the provision of scientific advice (options 1 and 3), respondents were asked to suggest mechanisms that they knew of, stating whether or not they were involved in these mechanisms, and to give their opinions on how effectively these mechanisms covered issues relating to the UNCCD. Respondents were also asked to name the most important topics relevant to the UNCCD that they found missing from the current mechanisms, give their opinions on the suitability of existing mechanisms to cover the regional approach of the UNCCD, and give their opinions on whether or not the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) should undertake a specific gap analysis to identify topic gaps.

4. Regarding the two options on the establishment of new mechanisms for the provision of scientific advice (options 2 and 4), participants were asked to answer questions on modalities for the organization of such mechanisms, including the role of UNCCD scientific conferences. Participants were also asked to rate how effective they thought each of the four options might be.

5. Document ICCD/COP(10)/CST/6 presented a report on the assessment as at mid-August 2011. It contained an overview of the provision of scientific advice under the Convention, of the assessment process and of the four possible options with regard to how to organize international, interdisciplinary scientific advice. A further document, ICCD/COP(10)/CST/MISC.1, extended this analysis.

6. The present document incorporates further pertinent material from ICCD/COP(10)/CST/6 and ICCD/COP(10)/CST/MISC.1 and extends the analysis presented therein. It also outlines how the findings can inform the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group to Further Discuss the Options for the Provision of Scientific Advice Focusing on Desertification/Land Degradation and Drought Issues (AGSA) (see ICCD/COP(11)/CST/3).

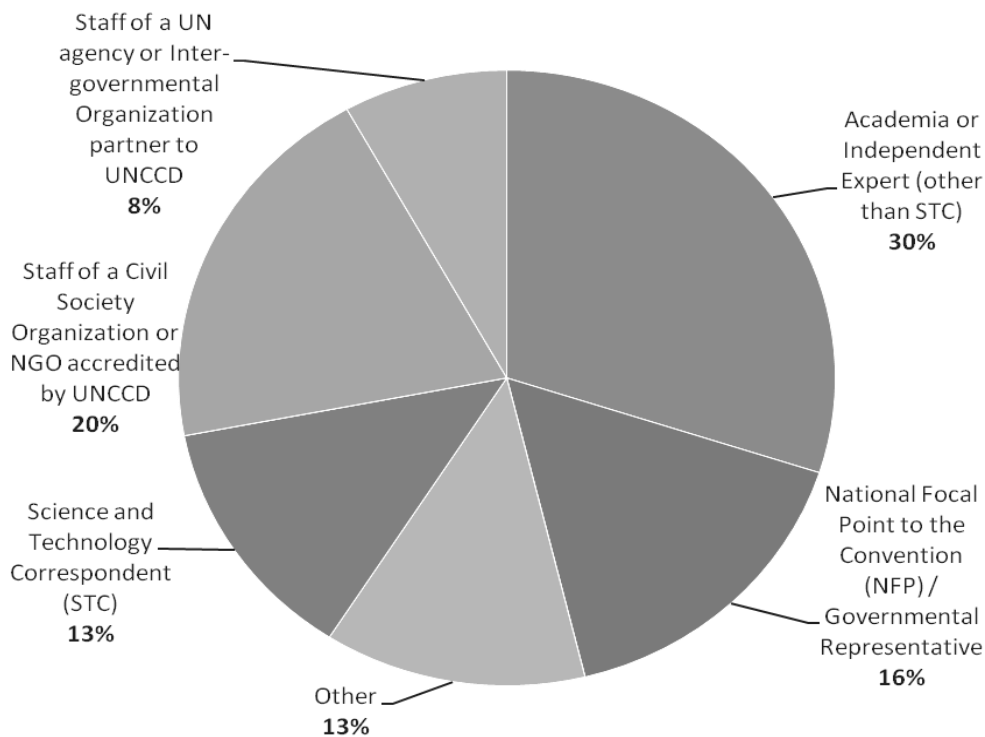
7. A total of 457 participants from 122 countries took part in the e-survey. If not stated otherwise, the percentages given in this report refer to the number of respondents per question. It should be noted that not all participants answered all questions.

II. Section 1 of the e-survey: Who are you?

1. What is your relationship with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification?

8. Thirty per cent of the respondents were working in academia or as independent experts (other than science and technology correspondents (STCs)); 20 per cent were staff of a civil society organization (CSO) or non-governmental organization (NGO) accredited to the UNCCD, 16 per cent were national focal points (NFPs) or government representatives, 13 per cent were STCs, and 8 per cent were staff of a United Nations agency or intergovernmental organization (IGO) partner to the UNCCD. Thirteen per cent chose “other” as their relationship to the UNCCD. The “other” category includes interested individuals, students, observers, and people linked to different NGOs, CSOs, research institutes or government institutions. These results are represented in figure 1.

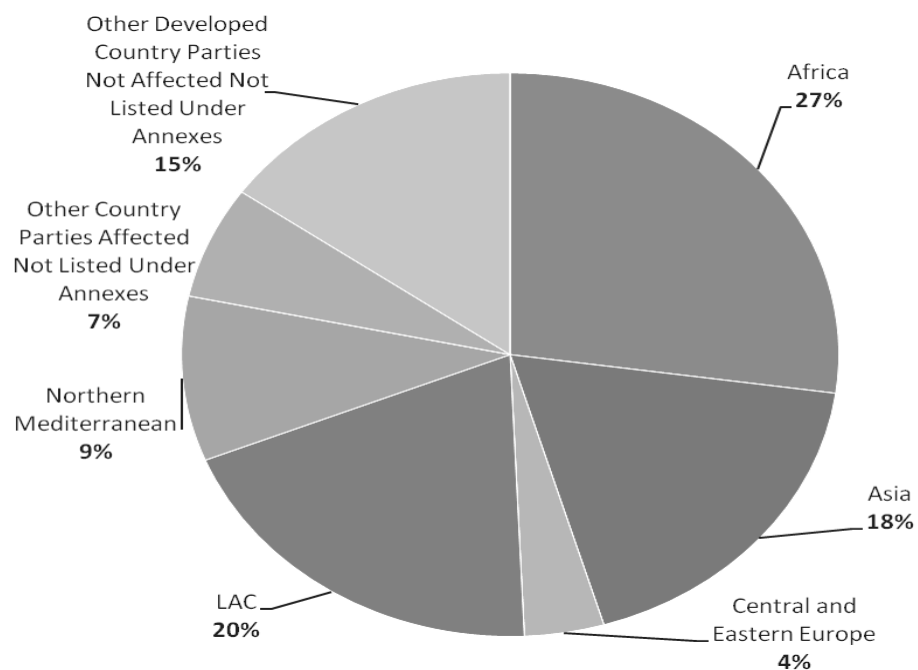
Figure 1
Pie chart showing respondents' relationships with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification



2. Where is your duty station located?

9. All UNCCD Regional Implementation Annexes were represented in the survey. Twenty-seven per cent of respondents reported that their duty station was based in Africa, 20 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), 18 per cent in Asia, 9 per cent in the Northern Mediterranean, and 4 per cent in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). Fifteen per cent of respondents' duty stations were located in non-affected developed countries, which are Parties to the UNCCD but not listed in the UNCCD Annexes. Seven per cent were located in other affected country Parties not listed in the UNCCD Annexes (see figure 2). Sixty-four per cent of the e-surveys were completed in English, 18 per cent in French and 18 per cent in Spanish.

Figure 2
Summary of the location of respondents' duty stations



Summary of section 1

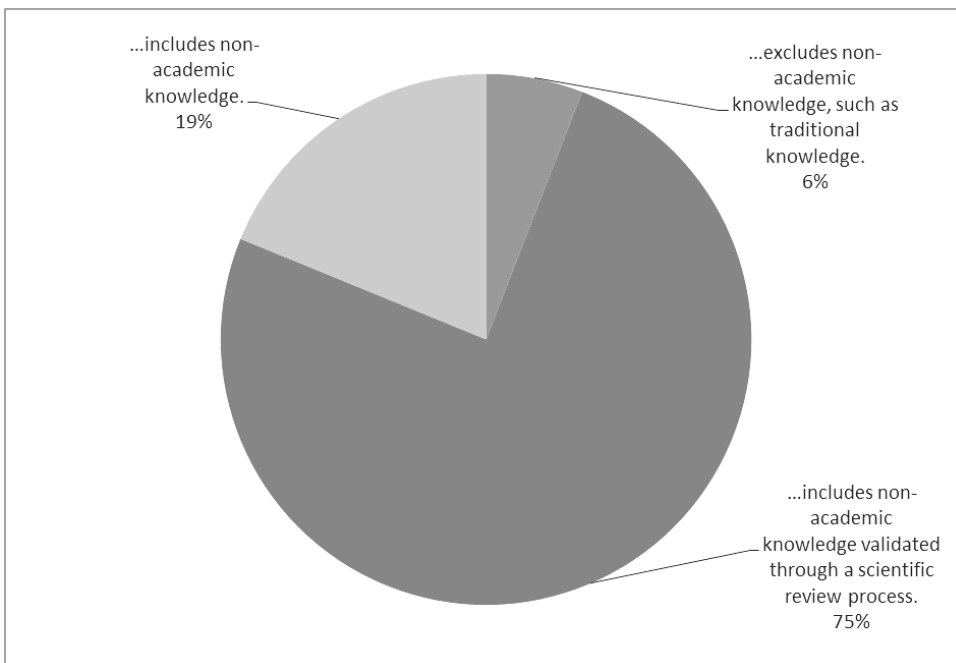
10. Findings from the questions in section 1 demonstrate that the e-survey attracted a spread of respondents across different stakeholder groups and regions. This suggests that the dataset has good coverage and provides a sound basis for analysis.

III. Section 2 of the e-survey: What are your expectations concerning the organization of international, interdisciplinary scientific advice?

1. Please tell us what you expect from the term “scientific” in the context of international, interdisciplinary scientific advice.

11. Respondents suggested that “scientific advice” should include non-academic knowledge such as traditional knowledge. Only six per cent of respondents opposed this broad interpretation of scientific knowledge, and responses stressed that this should be validated through a scientific review process (suggested by 75 per cent of respondents) (see figure 3).

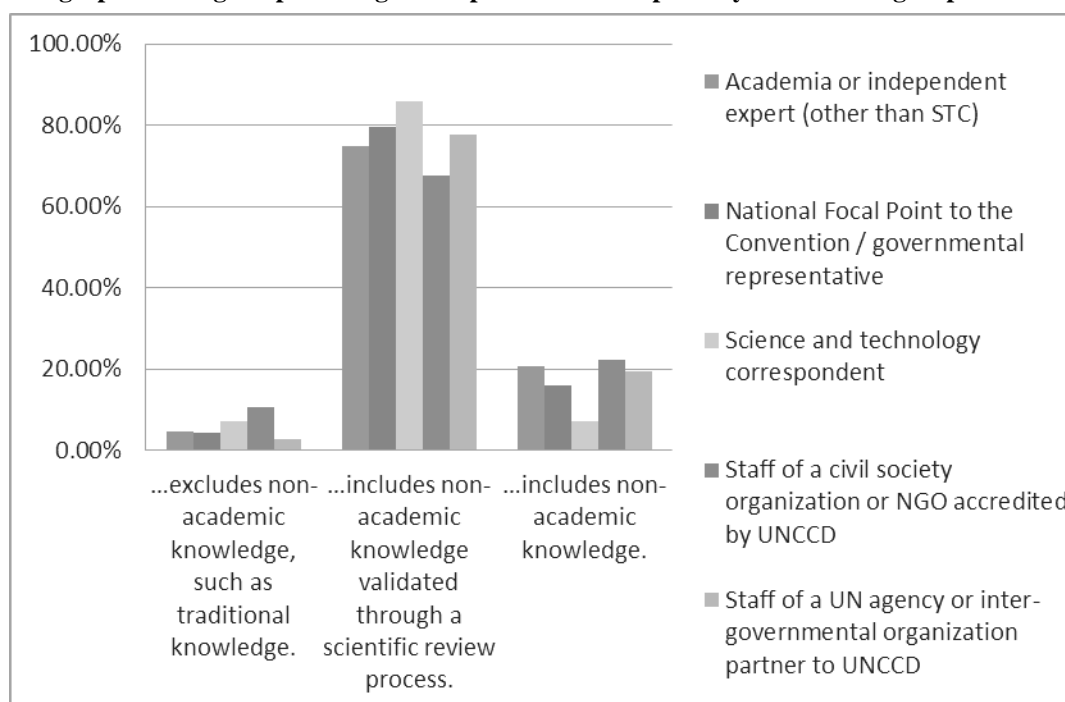
Figure 3
Respondents’ expectations from the term “scientific” in the context of international, interdisciplinary scientific advice



12. Answers from respondents with different relationships to the UNCCD were found to be similar. This suggests broad support across all groups for an interpretation of scientific knowledge that includes non-academic knowledge validated through a scientific review process (see figure 4).

Figure 4

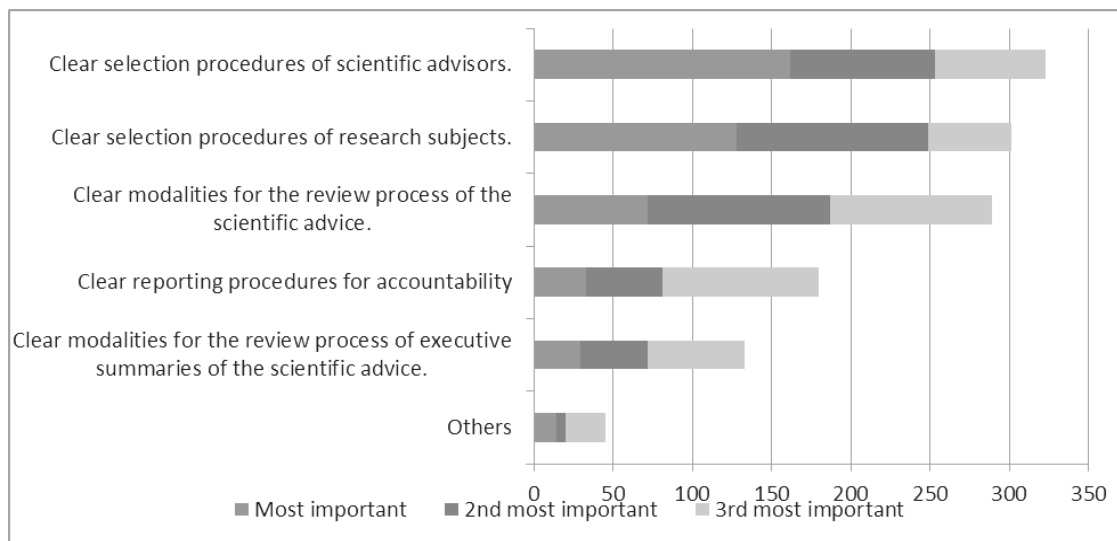
Bar graph showing the percentage of responses to each option by stakeholder group



2. In your view, how important are the following ways of ensuring transparency as required by the Conference of the Parties in the context of international, interdisciplinary scientific advice?

13. Participants in the e-survey were given the chance to rank aspects relating to transparency and accountability (see figure 5). “Clear procedures for selection of scientific advisers” was considered by respondents the most important aspect in order to ensure transparency. This was followed by “Clear procedures for selection of research subjects” and “Clear modalities for the process of review of the scientific advice”. In the “other” category, four respondents noted that it was difficult to prioritize among the different criteria as they considered them to be equally important in relation to transparency. Ways in which these aspects can be addressed need careful consideration in terms of steps towards the development of new mechanisms for providing scientific advice to the UNCCD.

Figure 5
Ranking of aspects relating to transparency in the context of international, interdisciplinary scientific advice

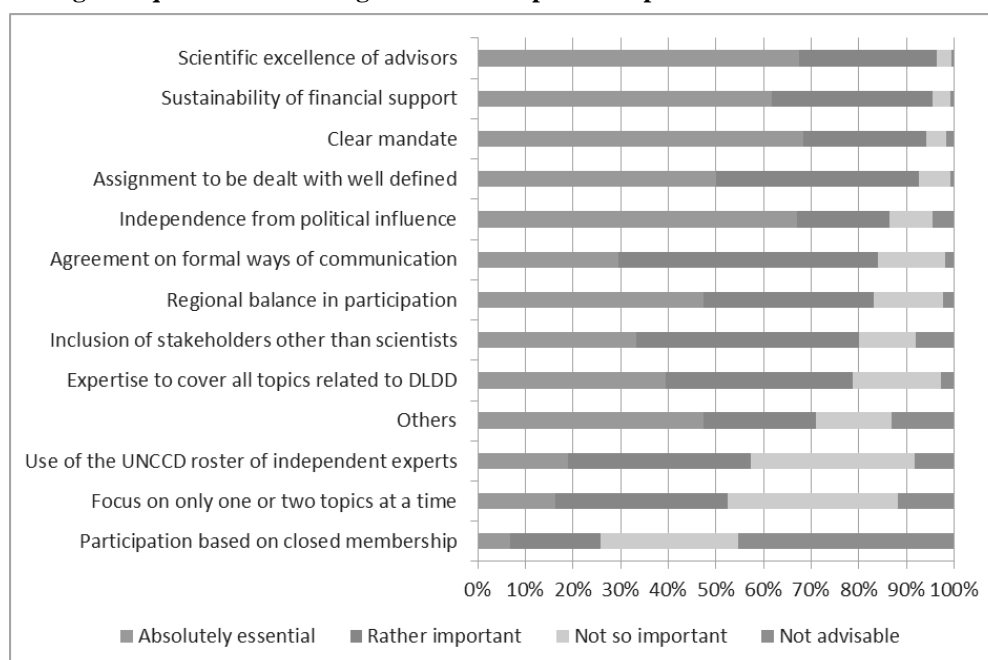


14. Under the “other” category, a range of responses was received. Many of the suggestions related to aspects covered in later questions in the survey. They included, for example, the importance of multi-stakeholder approaches, regional representation, and the need for links to subject-specific scientific societies. To avoid duplication with later parts of this report, the other categories have not been discussed in full here.

3. In your opinion, how important are the following requirements in ensuring effective and credible international, interdisciplinary scientific advice?

15. The options from which respondents could select in answering this question are listed below. The results are presented and discussed for each option (see figure 6 for a summary of the results).

Figure 6
Rating of requirements relating to membership for all options



(a) Scientific excellence of advisors

16. Sixty-seven per cent of respondents agreed that scientific excellence in those providing scientific advice is absolutely essential. This requirement received the highest rating overall in the combined totals of the “absolutely essential” and “rather important” categories.

(b) Participation based on closed membership

17. Forty-five per cent of respondents believed that participation based on closed membership was not advisable. Less than 7 per cent of respondents considered closed membership to be absolutely essential.

(c) Inclusion of stakeholders other than scientists

18. The inclusion of stakeholders other than scientists was highlighted as absolutely essential by 33 per cent of respondents, and seen as not so important or not advisable by 20 per cent. In total, 80 per cent of respondents thought inclusion of stakeholders other than scientists to be either “absolutely essential” or “rather important”.

(d) Regional balance in participation

19. Forty-seven per cent of respondents considered regional balance in participation to be absolutely essential. Only 4 per cent said this was not advisable. There were no significant differences between regions or stakeholder groups in voting behaviour in relation to this question.

(e) Use of the UNCCD roster of independent experts

20. Approximately 42 per cent of respondents felt that use of the UNCCD roster of independent experts was not so important (34 per cent) or not advisable (8 per cent). Approximately 19 per cent said it was absolutely essential and 38 per cent said it was rather important.

(f) Focus on only one or two topics at a time

21. Fifty-two per cent of respondents thought it was absolutely essential or rather important to focus on only one or two topics at a time. Forty-eight per cent considered it not advisable or not so important. This suggests that there is no strong preference among respondents on this issue.

(g) Expertise to cover all topics relating to DLDD

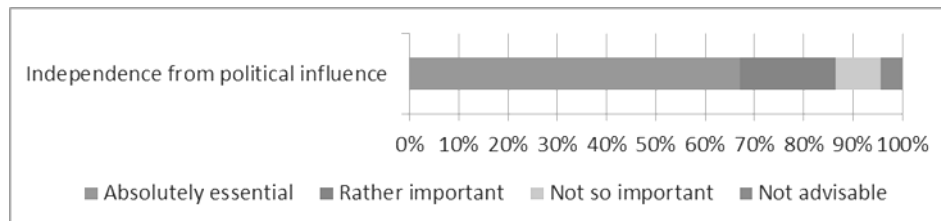
22. Seventy-eight per cent of respondents suggested it was absolutely essential or rather important that expertise covered all topics relating to DLDD. Only 3 per cent thought it was not advisable, and 18 per cent considered it not so important. This indicates that more than three quarters of respondents appreciated that DLDD crosses a range of sectors, disciplines and issues.

(h) Independence from political influence

23. The majority of respondents (67 per cent) suggested that it was absolutely essential that a scientific advisory mechanism for the UNCCD be independent from political influence (see figure 7).

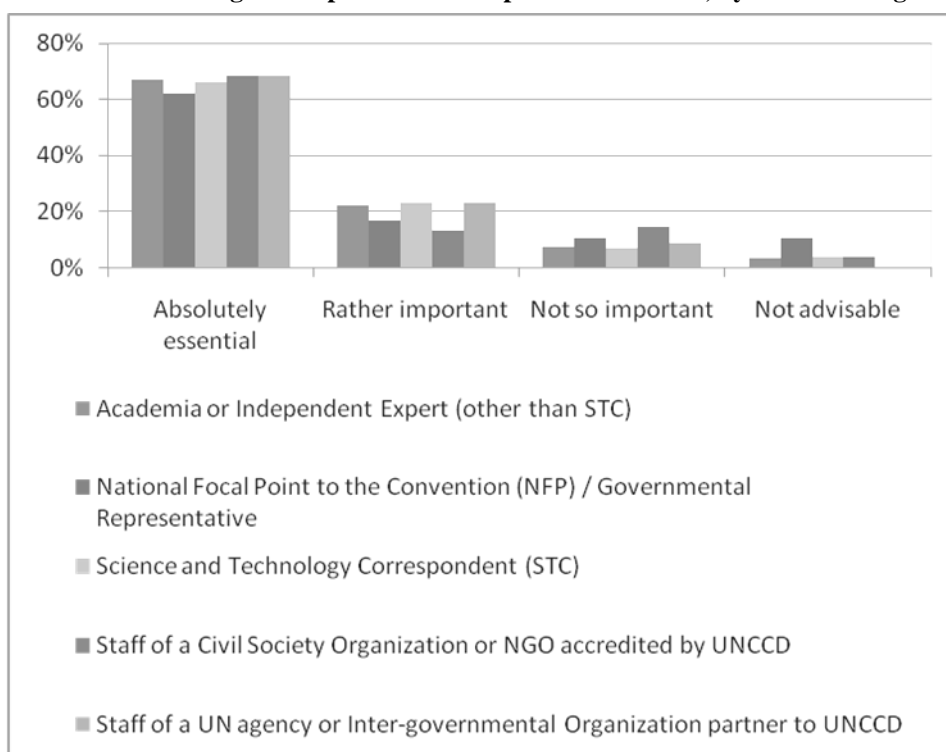
Figure 7

Rating of independence from political influence



24. The pattern of responses does not correlate with the relationship of the respondents to the UNCCD (see figure 8).

Figure 8
Breakdown of rating of independence from political influence, by stakeholder group



25. When the results were analysed by region, there were no clear differences (see figure 9). That a panel should be independent from political influence was considered absolutely essential by more than 50 per cent of participants in all regions. Indeed, all regions showed the highest number of respondents voting for the “absolutely essential” option (table 1).

Figure 9

Breakdown of rating of independence from political influence, by region

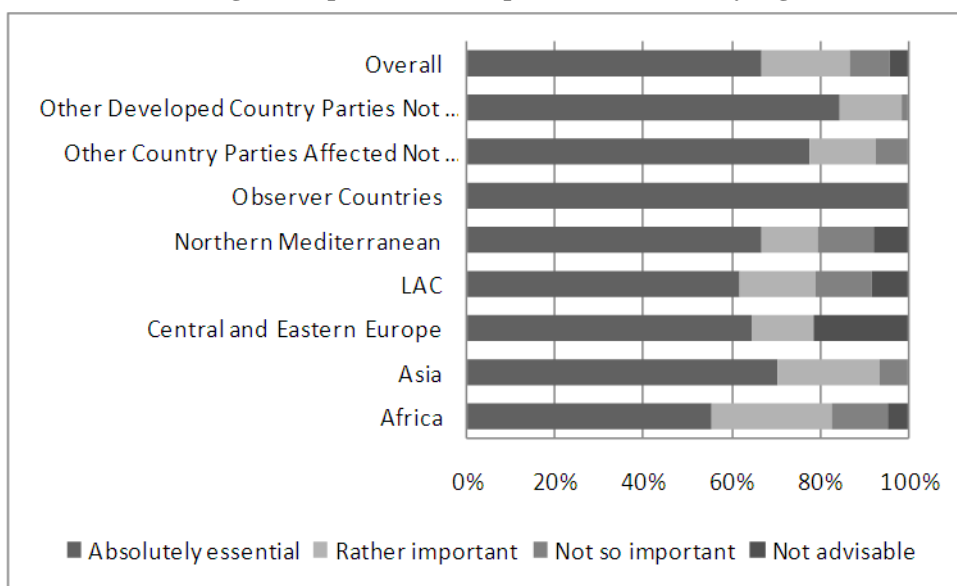


Table 1

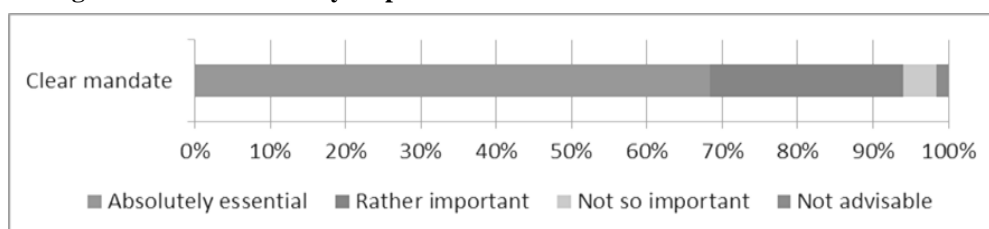
Percentage of respondents from each region suggesting that independence from political influence is absolutely essential

<i>Region</i>	<i>Percentage of respondents</i>
Africa	55
Asia	71
Central and Eastern Europe	64
Latin America and the Caribbean	62
Northern Mediterranean	67
Observer countries	100
Other country Parties affected but not included in the Regional Implementation Annexes	78
Other developed country Parties not affected and not included in the Regional Implementation Annexes	84
Overall	67

(i) Clear mandate

26. Sixty-eight per cent of respondents believed that a clear mandate was absolutely essential. This is the highest “absolutely essential” score achieved in the entire e-survey (see figure 10).

Figure 10
Rating of “clear mandate” by respondents



(j) Sustainability of financial support

27. Financial sustainability is considered absolutely essential for 62 per cent of respondents and rather important for a further 34 per cent. Financial sustainability is therefore a core aspect in need of consideration by the AGSA.

(k) Assignment to be dealt with well defined

28. Ninety-two per cent of respondents considered it absolutely essential or rather important that the assignment to be dealt with be well defined.

(l) Agreement on formal ways of communication

29. Eighty-four per cent of respondents considered that agreement on formal ways of communication was absolutely essential or rather important.

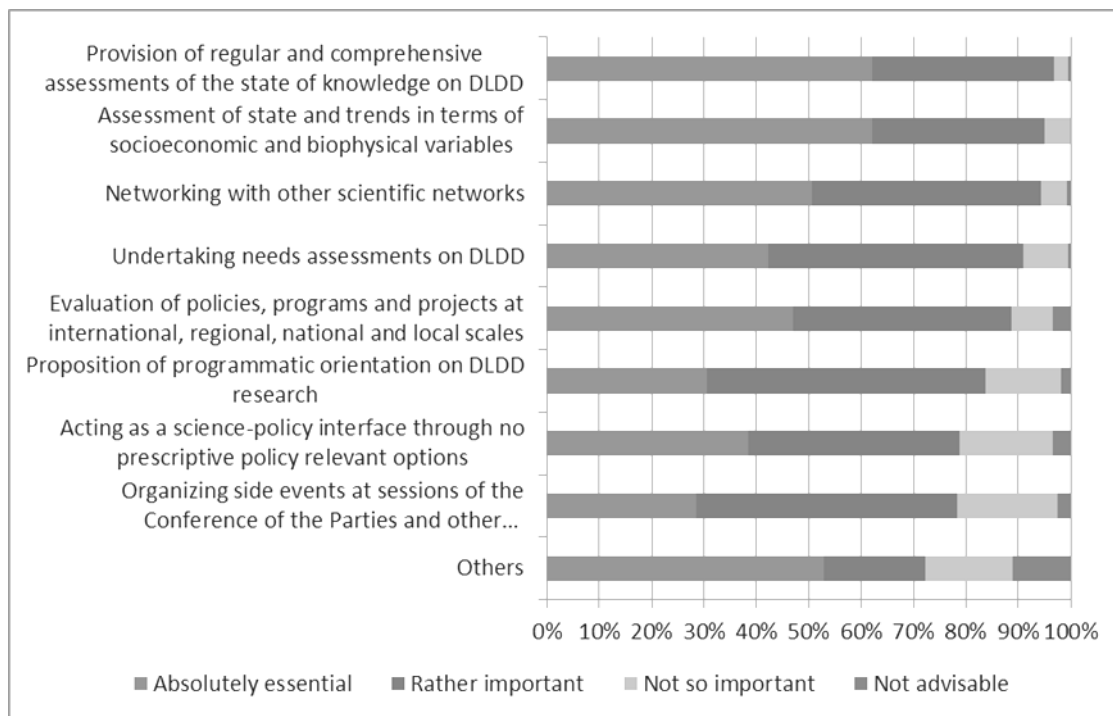
(m) Other (specified)

30. Participants responding with “other” proposed the following additional considerations to ensure effective and credible international, interdisciplinary scientific advice: (a) Combination of intergovernmental sponsorship and independent science; (b) Transparency; (c) Interdisciplinarity; (d) Involvement of all stakeholders in drawing up ideas and requests for scientific advice; (e) Verifiable sustainability in output and investments; sustained political will and scientific commitment; (f) Clear indications of the limits and uncertainties associated with the scientific advice; (g) The need to involve subject-relevant international scientific societies in peer review; (h) Inclusion of existing capacities; (i) Appropriate documentation and outputs; (j) In-built mechanisms in any provision of advice to broaden scientific input through links to global programmes, universities and so on as required. Some of these aspects are covered elsewhere in the analysis of later questions.

4. In your opinion, how important are the following objectives of the provision of international, interdisciplinary scientific advice?

31. The participants’ ratings of selected objectives of the provision of international, interdisciplinary scientific advice are presented in figure 11.

Figure 11
Ranking of objectives of the provision of international, interdisciplinary scientific advice



32. Of the eight objectives proposed in the e-survey, the majority of respondents assessed the following four as being “absolutely essential”:

(a) “Provision of regular and comprehensive assessments of the state of knowledge on DLDD” (62 per cent “absolutely essential”, 35 per cent “rather important”);

(b) “Assessment of state and trends in terms of socio-economic and biophysical variables” (62 per cent “absolutely essential”, 33 per cent “rather important”);

(c) “Networking with other scientific networks” (51 per cent “absolutely essential”, 44 per cent “rather important”); and

(d) “Evaluation of policies, programmes and projects at international, regional, national and local scales” (47 per cent “absolutely essential”, 42 per cent “rather important”).

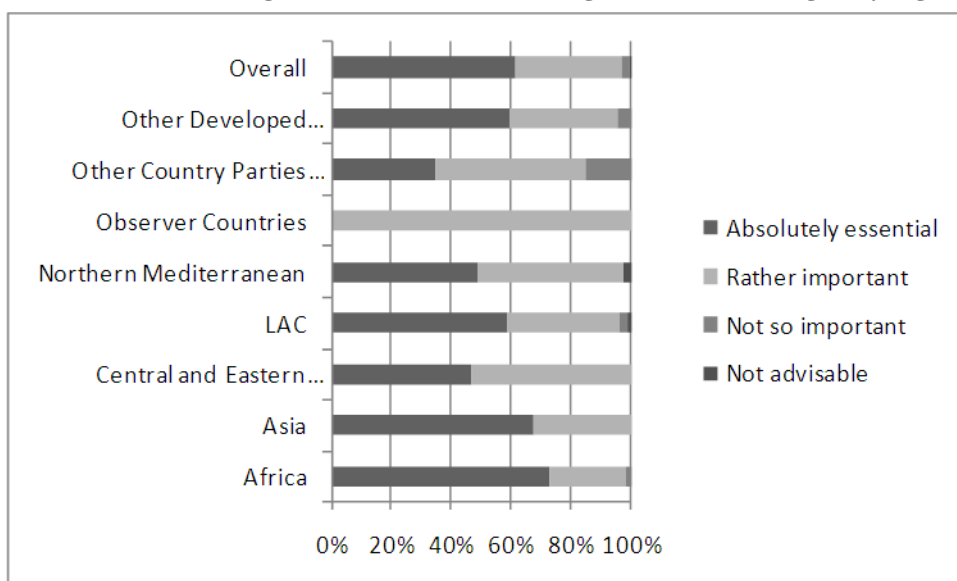
33. An analysis of all options by region is presented below in paragraphs 34 to 42.

(a) Provision of regular and comprehensive assessments of the state of knowledge on DLDD

34. Overall, 97 per cent of respondents considered the provision of regular and comprehensive assessments of the state of knowledge on DLDD to be absolutely essential or rather important. There were no significant differences in the composition of responses from each region. Most regions saw 96–100 per cent of respondents voting in this way. Responses from other affected country Parties not included in the regional implementation Annexes on were only marginally lower, with 85 per cent of respondents selecting “absolutely essential” or “rather important” (see figure 12).

Figure 12

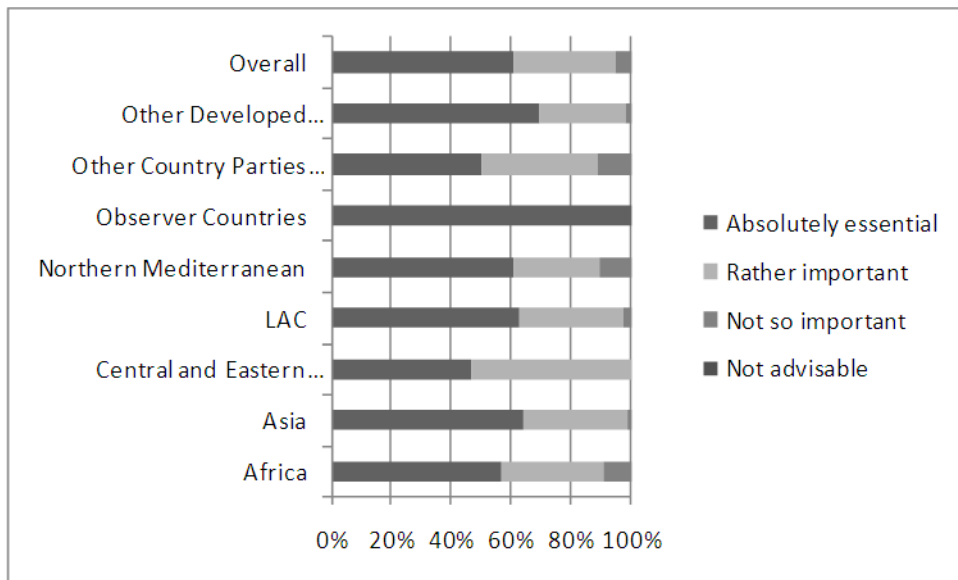
Ranking of the importance of the provision of regular and comprehensive assessments of the state of knowledge on desertification/land degradation and drought, by region



(b) Assessment of state and trends in terms of socioeconomic and biophysical variables

35. Overall, 95 per cent of respondents considered the assessment of state and trends in terms of socioeconomic and biophysical variables to be absolutely essential or rather important. There were no significant differences in the composition of responses from each region, although 11 per cent of respondents from the Northern Mediterranean region considered this to be not so important (see figure 13).

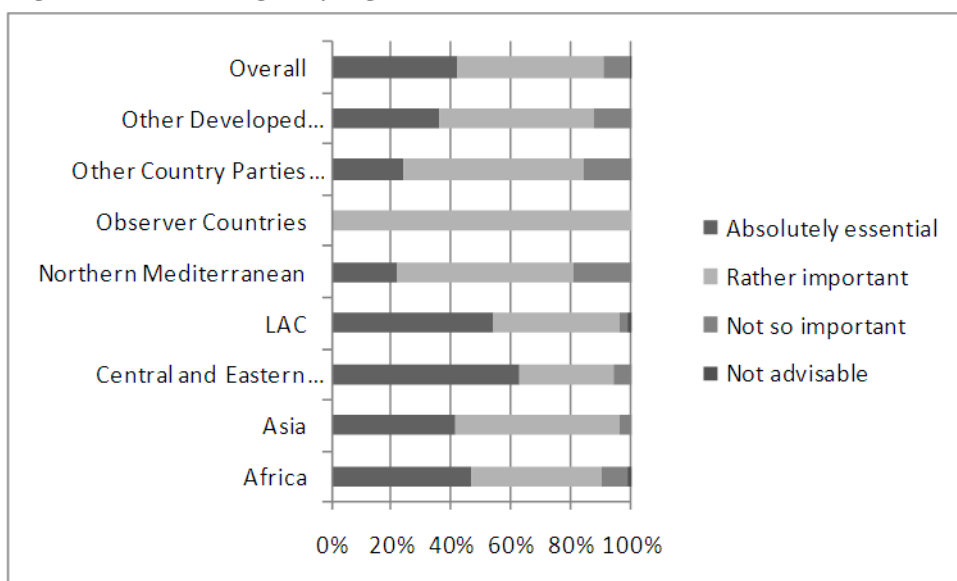
Figure 13
Ranking of the importance of the assessment of state and trends in terms of socioeconomic and biophysical variables, by region



(c) **Undertaking needs assessments on DLDD**

36. Figure 14 shows the ranking by region of the importance of undertaking needs assessments on DLDD. There are no significant differences between regions in their ranking. Overall, 91 per cent of respondents selected “absolutely essential” or “rather important”.

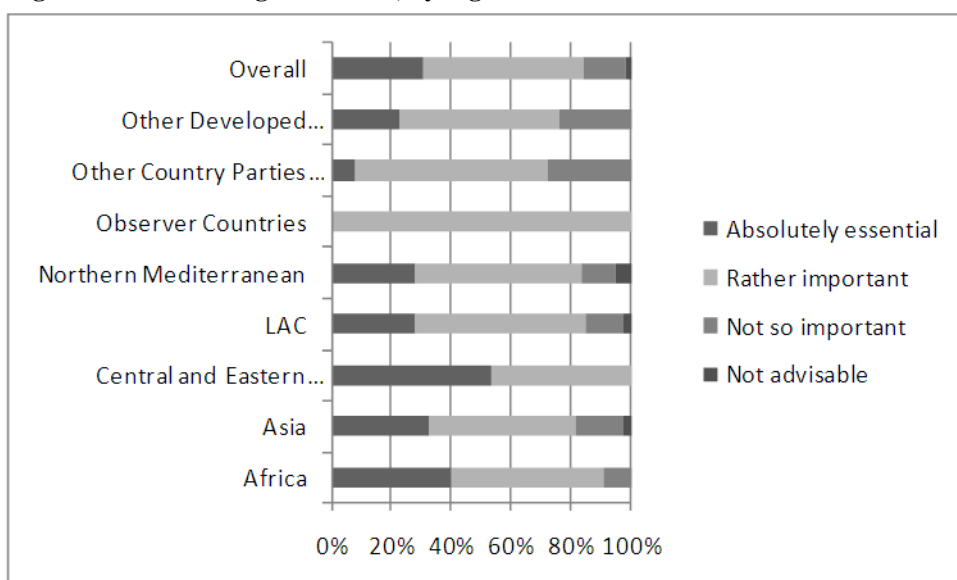
Figure 14
Ranking of the importance of undertaking needs assessments on desertification/land degradation and drought, by region



(d) Proposal for programmatic orientation on DLDD research

37. Figure 15 shows the ranking of the proposal for programmatic orientation on DLDD research by region. The majority of respondents from all regions selected “absolutely essential” or “rather important”.

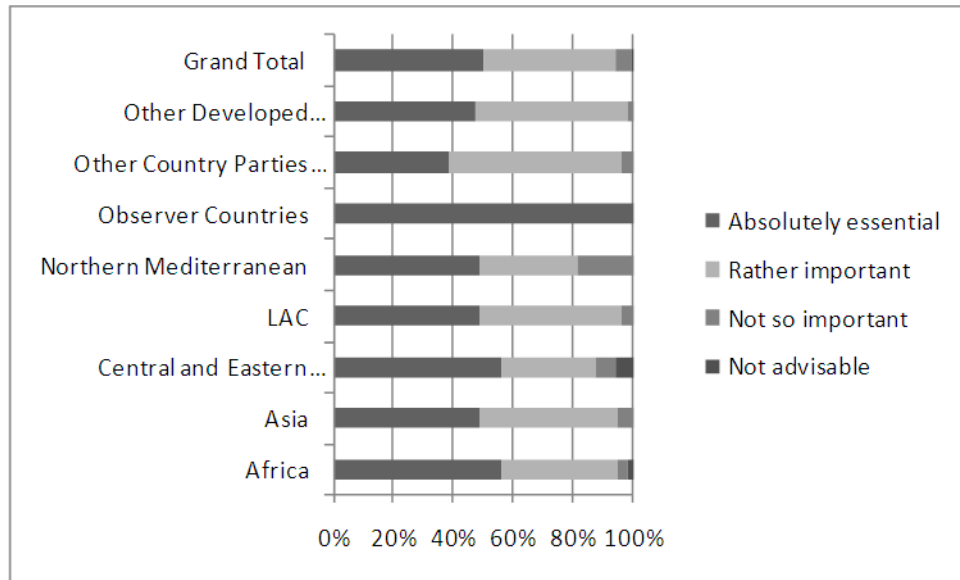
Figure 15
Ranking of the proposal for programmatic orientation on desertification/land degradation and drought research, by region



(e) Networking with other scientific networks

38. Figure 16 shows the ranking by region of networking with other scientific networks. For all regions, networking with other scientific networks was seen by more than 80 per cent of respondents to be absolutely essential or rather important.

Figure 16
Ranking of networking with other scientific networks, by region

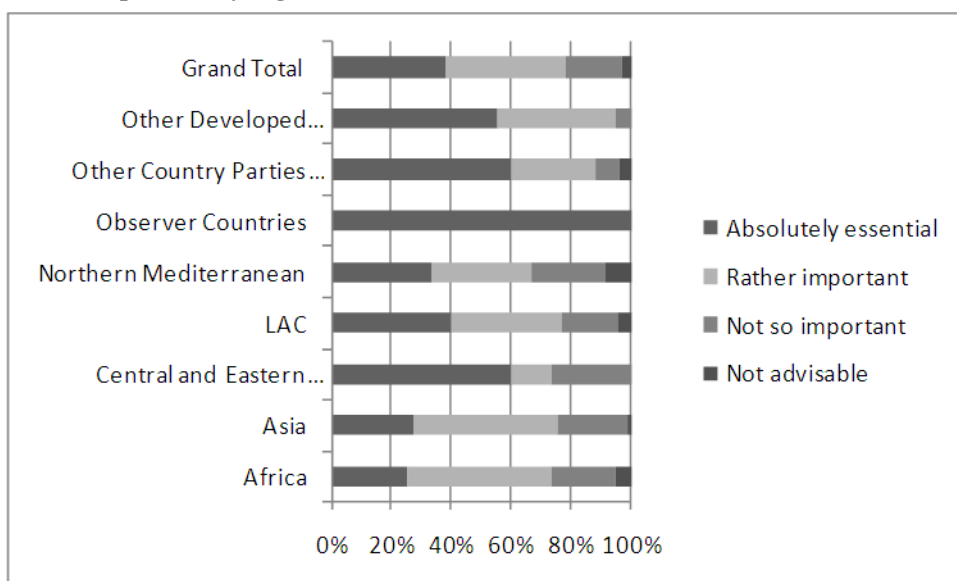


(f) Acting as a science–policy interface through non-prescriptive policy-relevant options

39. Figure 17 shows the extent to which respondents felt that the provision of scientific advice should take the form of non-prescriptive policy-relevant options through a science–policy interface. More than 80 per cent of respondents considered this absolutely essential or rather important. Respondents from the Northern Mediterranean region gave the lowest scores, with just 66 per cent of respondents considering it absolutely essential or rather important.

Figure 17

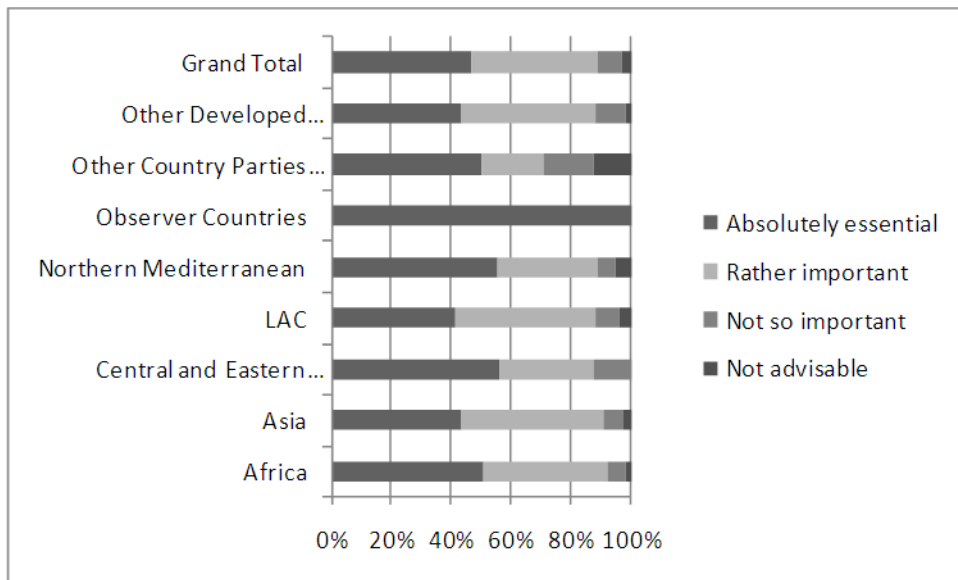
Ranking of “Acting as a science-policy interface through non-prescriptive policy relevant options”, by region



(g) Evaluation of policies, programmes and projects at international, regional, national and local scales

40. Figure 18 shows the ranking by region of the evaluation of policies, programmes and projects at international, regional, national and local scales. Between 41 per cent (LAC) and 100 per cent (observer countries) considered this to be absolutely essential. Between 41 per cent and 56 per cent of respondents from the majority of the regions considered it absolutely essential. Thirteen per cent of respondents from other non-affected countries considered such an evaluation not advisable.

Figure 18
Ranking of evaluation of policies, programmes and projects at international, regional, national and local scales, by region

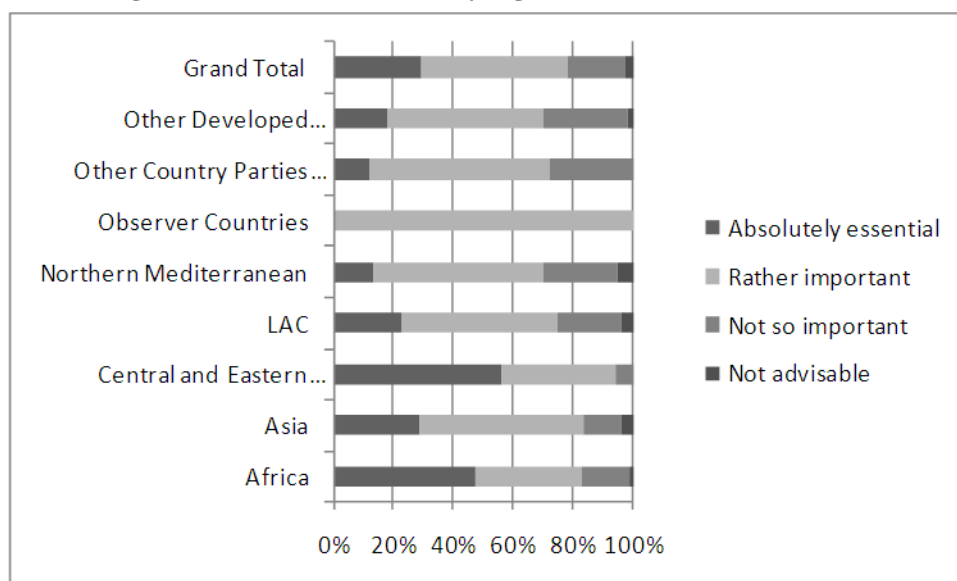


(h) Organizing side events at sessions of the Conference of the Parties and other intergovernmental conferences

41. Less than 50 per cent of respondents across all regions considered that organizing side events at sessions of the Conference of the Parties (COP) and other intergovernmental conferences should be undertaken as part of providing scientific advice to the UNCCD (see figure 19). Respondents from CEE (56 per cent) and Africa (47 per cent) returned the highest proportion of votes ranking this option as absolutely essential. Between 0 per cent and 29 per cent of respondents from the remaining regions considered this option to be absolutely essential. Grouping the responses from all regions together, 29 per cent considered the option to be absolutely essential, 49 per cent considered it rather important, 19 per cent considered it not so important and 3 per cent felt it was non-advisable.

Figure 19

Ranking of “Organizing side events at sessions of the Conference of the Parties and other intergovernmental conferences”, by region



(i) Other objectives

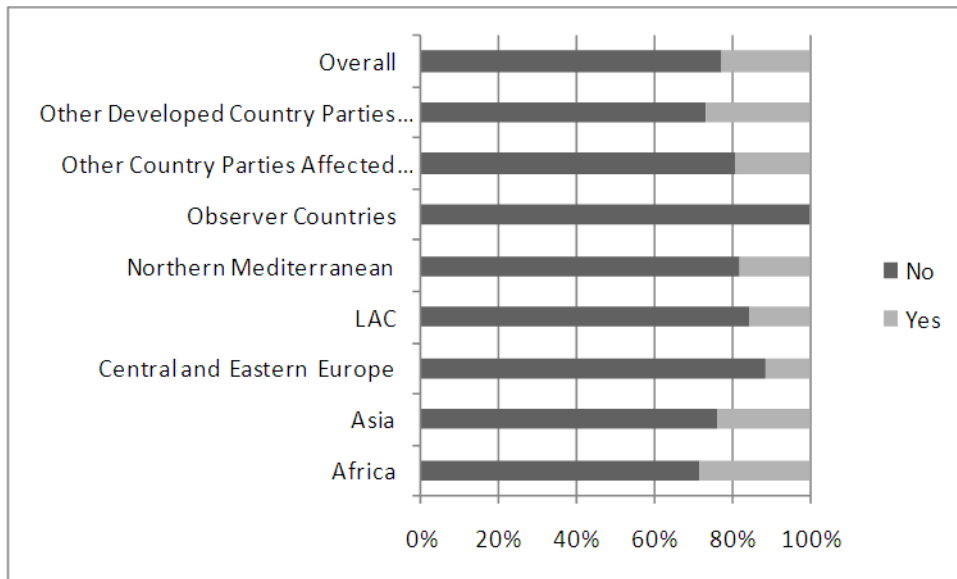
42. Thirty respondents made suggestions as to other objectives of providing international, interdisciplinary scientific advice. Those mentioned on more than one occasion include:

- Regional networking in affected States;
- Raising public awareness of DLDD issues, building on scientific understanding, and drawing on political advocacy and a range of communication tools and methods; and
- Close collaboration with CSOs/NGOs.

5. In your opinion, is there currently a mechanism which could provide international, interdisciplinary scientific advice that meets the above-mentioned expectations?

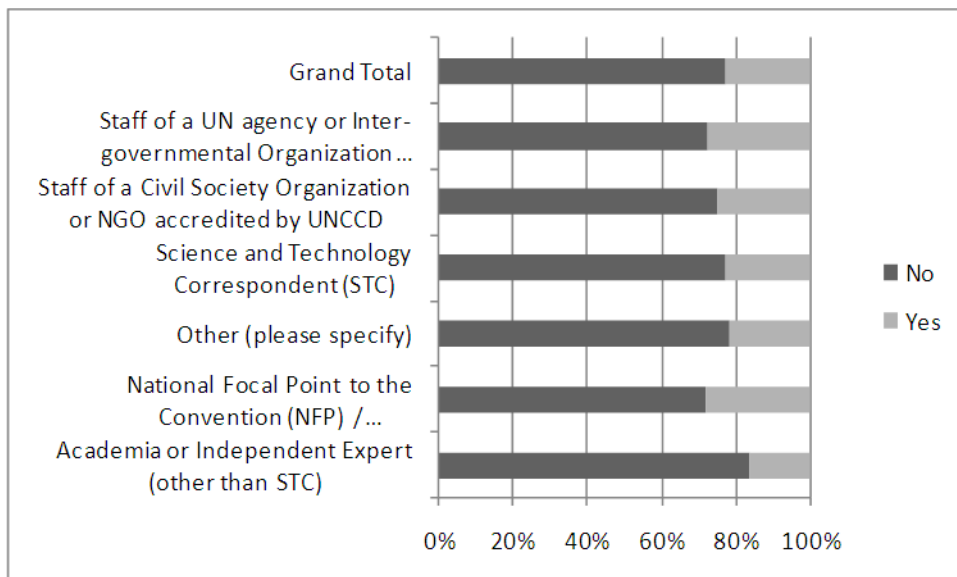
43. Seventy-seven per cent of respondents stated that there is currently no existing mechanism that could effectively provide international, interdisciplinary scientific advice to the UNCCD that would meet the above-mentioned expectations (see figure 20).

Figure 20
Responses by region as to whether there is currently a mechanism which could provide international, interdisciplinary scientific advice that meets the above-mentioned expectations



44. Analysis by stakeholder group shows that voting was very similar across groups, with at least 72 per cent of all groups sharing the view that there is currently no mechanism which could provide international, interdisciplinary scientific advice to the UNCCD.

Figure 21
Responses by stakeholder group as to whether there is currently a mechanism which could provide international, interdisciplinary scientific advice that meets the above-mentioned expectations



45. This suggests that there is a gap for such a mechanism in order to help the UNCCD meet its strategic objectives.

Summary of section 2

46. Respondents indicated clearly that they viewed “scientific knowledge” broadly and that it should include non-academic knowledge that has been validated through scientific review.

47. Respondents further indicated that they considered the top three ways of ensuring transparency in the context of international, interdisciplinary scientific advice to be through (a) clear procedures for selecting scientific advisers; (b) clear procedures for selecting research subjects; and (c) clear modalities for the process of reviewing scientific advice.

48. In ensuring effective and credible international, interdisciplinary scientific advice, respondents suggested that the scientific excellence of advisers is most important, followed by the sustainability of financial support and the development of a clear mandate, and that the assignment to be dealt with needed to be clearly defined. Further considerations assessed by more than 50 per cent of respondents to be either absolutely essential or rather important were: independence from political influence, the need for agreement on formal ways of communication, a regional balance of advisers, the need for inclusion of stakeholders other than scientists, and also that expertise is needed to cover all topics relating to DLDD. Many of the considerations listed under the “other” category were covered elsewhere in the survey. However, the importance of acknowledging the uncertainties and limits in scientific input is essential and is not covered anywhere else.

49. Respondents indicated that they saw the objectives of the provision of international, interdisciplinary scientific advice as being: (a) the provision of regular and comprehensive assessments of the state of knowledge on DLDD; (b) assessments of the state and trends in terms of socioeconomic and biophysical variables; (c) networking with other scientific networks; (d) undertaking a needs assessment on DLDD; and (e) the evaluation of policies, programmes and projects at international, regional, national and local levels.

50. Suggestions as to how these responses to questions under section 2 of the e-survey may be addressed by the AGSA are provided in chapter V of this document.

IV. Section 3 of the e-survey: Which option would most effectively ensure the provision of international, interdisciplinary scientific advice?

51. Four options were presented to respondents:

Option 1: Use of existing scientific networks: Official UNCCD bodies, governmental representatives and other stakeholders would use the output of existing scientific networks as a basis for international, interdisciplinary scientific advice.

Option 2: Establishment of a new scientific network focused on specific topics: A new network could be created to provide international, interdisciplinary scientific advice to the UNCCD, taking into account the existing networks but focusing on specific topics relating to DLDD not effectively covered by existing networks.

Option 3: Use of existing intergovernmental scientific advisory mechanisms: Existing intergovernmental scientific panels/platforms are formal processes that

serve as a science–policy interface. Their findings, where they relate to DLDD, could add support to international, interdisciplinary scientific advice to the UNCCD.

Option 4: Establishment of a new intergovernmental scientific panel on land and soil: A new intergovernmental panel on land and soil could be established to cover the full range of interdisciplinary activities needed to provide international, interdisciplinary scientific advice to the UNCCD, taking into account the particularity of the UNCCD with its Regional Implementation Annexes.

1. Please list up to three scientific networks in your region and at global level relating to DLDD. Are you involved in one of these?

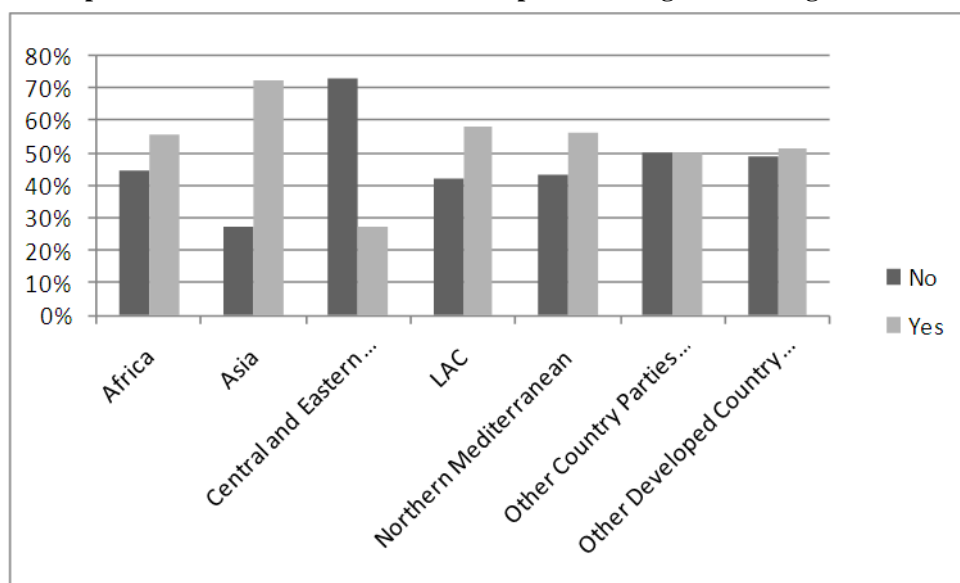
52. Respondents to the e-survey listed up to three scientific networks in their region and up to three networks at global level relating to DLDD. A very wide range of responses was received, cutting across a diverse selection of topics, scientific disciplines and geographical areas.

53. Many respondents listed global (or national) networks that were active in their region in the boxes for “regional networks”, while many regional level networks were listed in the section asking about those at “global” level. Annex I thus compiles the list of networks in its entirety without a regional breakdown, instead including all networks mentioned at all levels. Those that are more clearly discernible as operating at a regional level (or, in some cases, national level) are shaded in grey. Some respondents provided the names of individual research institutes, research projects, development projects or NGOs rather than networks that extend beyond a single institution. As far as possible, a data-cleaning process has removed entries that do not apply to ensure the list considers networks only. Some responses provided only an abbreviation which could apply to multiple organizations and/or networks. Those that could not be defined through Internet searches have not been included.

54. More than 50 per cent of respondents from all regions except CEE said that they were members of the DLDD-related networks they had listed for their region and at global level. This suggests that respondents are actively participating in scientific networks at regional and international levels.

Figure 22

Participation in scientific networks in the respondents’ regions and at global level

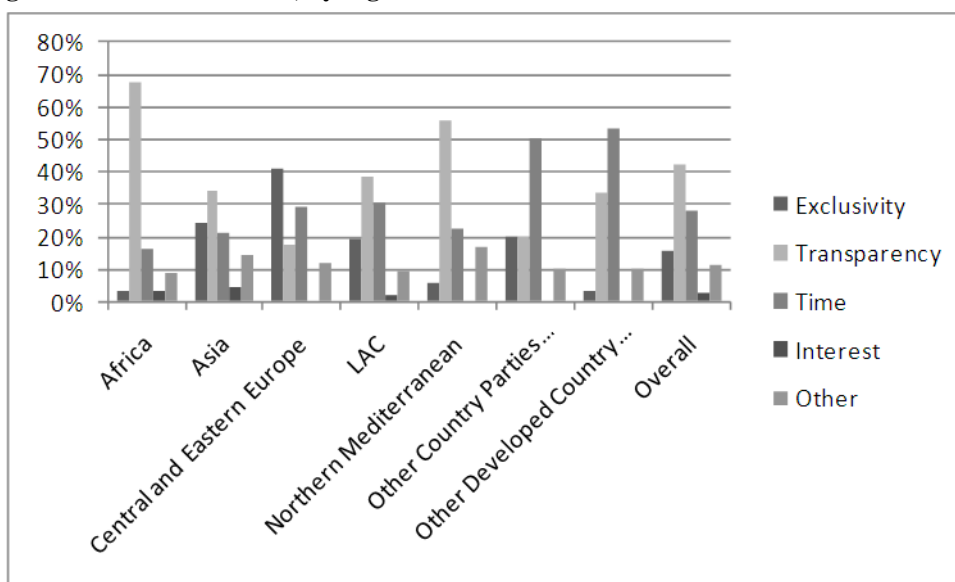


2. If you are not involved in the process of existing regional or global scientific networks, what prevents you from getting involved?

55. It should be noted that the responses to this question are linked with the responses given for question 1. As such, only general, overall analyses can be undertaken. Figure 23 shows that in general, transparency is the main barrier to involvement in the processes of existing regional or global scientific networks. This was followed by time, exclusivity, and other reasons. Lack of interest does not seem to be an important reason for not being involved in any region. The most frequently provided “other” reasons included a lack of funding and resources for participation and a lack of connectivity to networking processes (e.g. a lack of information, insufficient notice given with regard to network activities, among other reasons).

Figure 23

Respondents’ reasons for not being involved in the process of existing regional or global scientific networks, by region

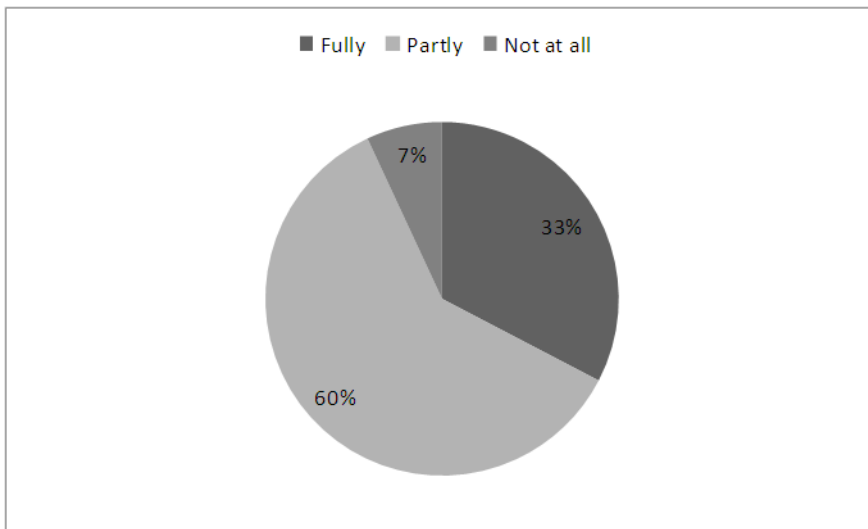


3. To what extent do you think the existing scientific networks listed by you could effectively cover issues relating to the UNCCD?

56. In interpreting the responses to this question, it should be noted that responses are dependent upon the answers provided to question 1, and therefore only broad conclusions can be drawn. It was not possible to analyse these responses by region or by relationship to the UNCCD.

57. Responses indicated that 60 per cent of respondents considered that existing scientific networks could partly cover matters relating to the UNCCD, 33 per cent felt that existing scientific networks could fully cover matters relating to the UNCCD and 7 per cent considered that existing networks would not at all be able to deal effectively with matters relating to the UNCCD (see figure 24).

Figure 24
Respondents’ answers on considering whether existing scientific networks could cover matters relating to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification



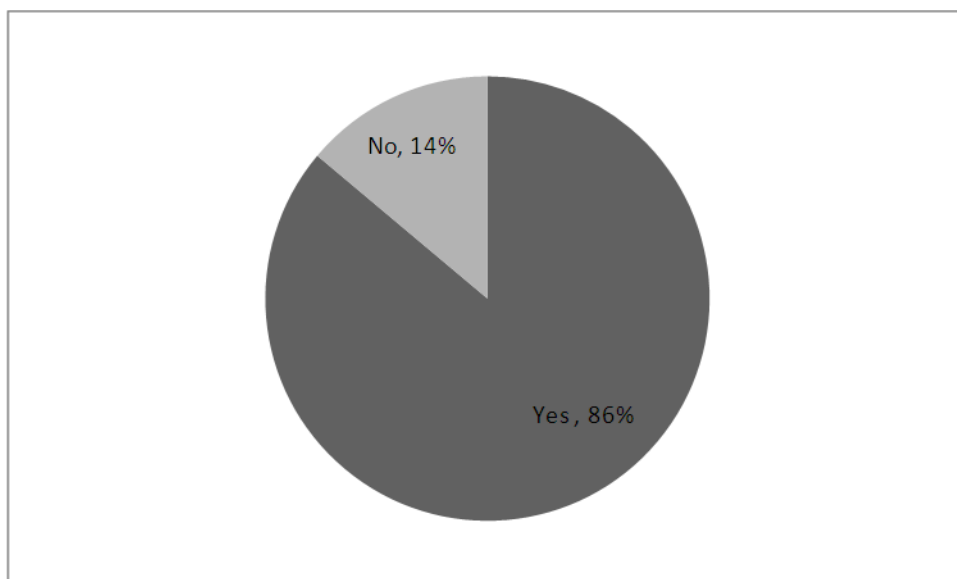
4. What are the most important topics relevant to the UNCCD that are missing from the existing scientific networks listed by you?

58. Answers provided to this question are inherently linked to the particular networks listed by respondents, many of which have a single thematic focus. In addition, a definition of what is meant by the term “network” was not provided, which means that answers are highly dependent on the respondents’ interpretation of the term. Finally, the networks listed and topics covered by these networks are dependent upon the respondents’ area or discipline of expertise. The data are therefore not amenable to the same type of statistical analysis afforded to other responses within the survey. They do, however, suggest that respondents with an interest in the provision of scientific advice to the UNCCD cover an extremely diverse range of thematic areas and recognize the importance of a range of topics beyond their immediate area of expertise and/or the focus of the networks they listed. This underscores the need for any new network(s) to be closely linked to other networks with more specific thematic expertise, and demonstrates the importance of interdisciplinarity in the scientific study of DLDD issues.

5. Should the CST undertake a specific gap analysis with regard to the existing scientific networks?

59. Eighty-six per cent of respondents thought that the CST should undertake a specific gap analysis with regard to the existing scientific networks. Only 14 per cent indicated that this was not necessary (see figure 25).

Figure 25
Responses regarding whether the Committee on Science and Technology should undertake a specific gap analysis



6. Please rate how effective you think the use of existing scientific networks could be to ensure the provision of international, interdisciplinary scientific advice to support decision-making in the UNCCD.

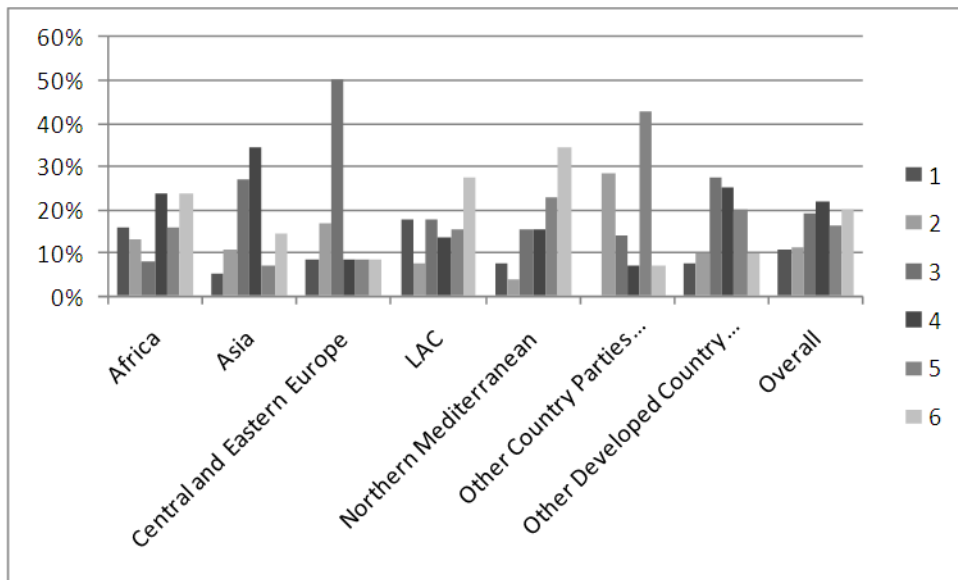
60. Overall scores for this question in relation to the existing scientific networks at regional level are summarized in table 2. A score of 1 indicates “ineffective” and a score of 6 indicates “very effective”.

Table 2
Scores on the effectiveness of the use of existing scientific networks

Score	1	2	3	4	5	6
Percentage	11	11	19	22	16	20

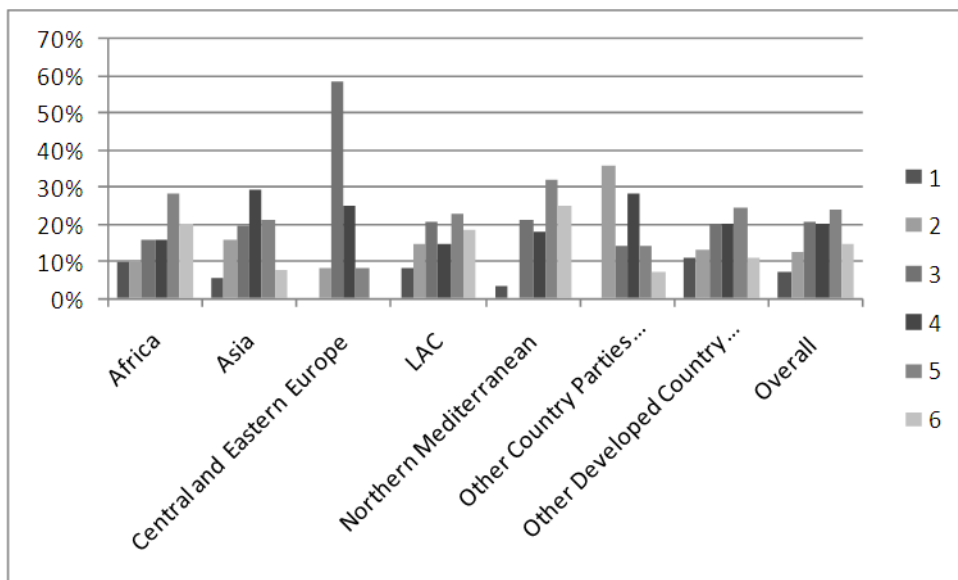
61. Answers were rather scattered among the different scores, although the score of 4 received the most votes overall. Twenty per cent of responses considered that the use of existing regional scientific networks would be very effective in ensuring the provision of international, interdisciplinary scientific advice to support decision-making in the UNCCD, and thus gave a score of 6. The differences in the distribution of scores by region are shown in figure 26.

Figure 26
Scores by region on the effectiveness of the use of existing networks at the regional level in ensuring the provision of scientific advice



62. The scores by region on the effectiveness of the use of existing networks at the global level in ensuring scientific advice was deemed the least effective by respondents from CEE, with 50 per cent of respondents giving a score of 3. Most responses from the “Other country Parties” group gave a score of 2 (see figure 27).

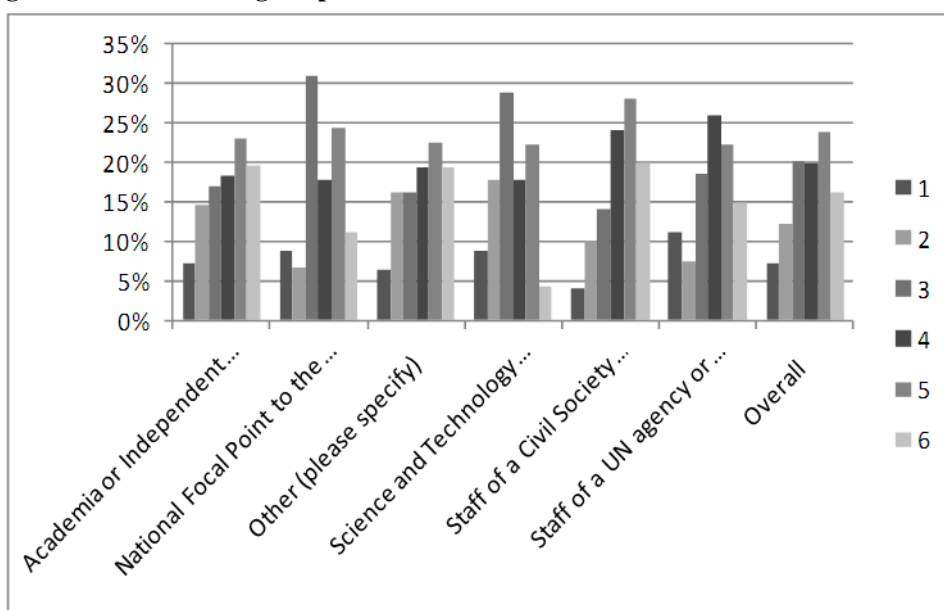
Figure 27
Scores by region on the effectiveness of the use of existing networks at the global level in ensuring the provision of scientific advice



63. Scores by stakeholder group show that a score of 3 was given most frequently by NFPs and STCs. Respondents from academia and civil society considered existing global networks to be most effective. In both of these groups, a score of 6 was returned by 20 per cent of respondents (see figure 28).

Figure 28

Scores by stakeholder group on the effectiveness of the use of existing networks at the global level in ensuring the provision of scientific advice



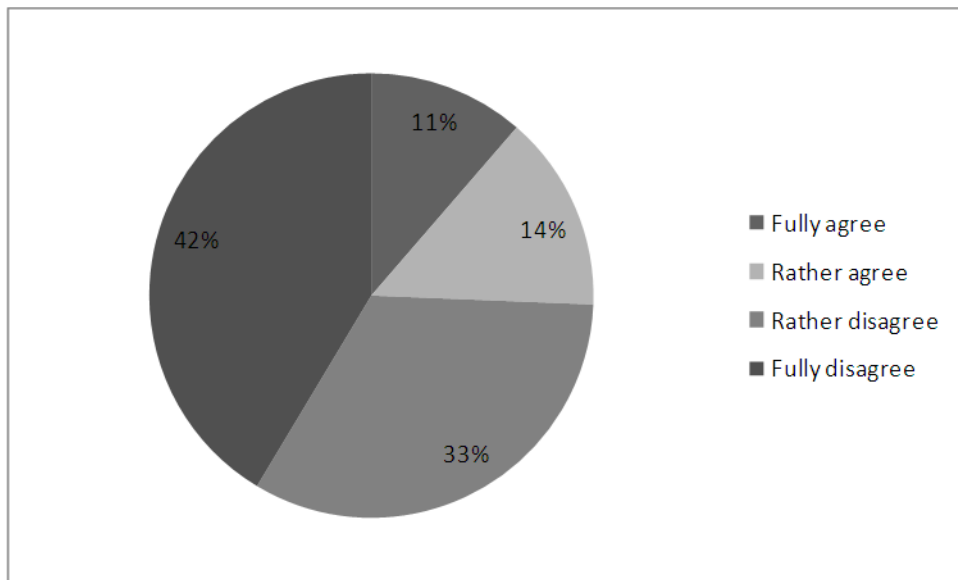
7. Please tell us your opinion on how a new scientific network could be organized.

64. Four possible options were provided (see (a)–(d) below). Participants were asked whether they fully agreed, rather agreed, rather disagreed or fully disagreed with those options. The results are presented below.

(a) Global network without specific regional concerns

65. Seventy-five per cent of respondents suggested that a scientific network should not be without specific regional concerns. The results are summarized in figure 29.

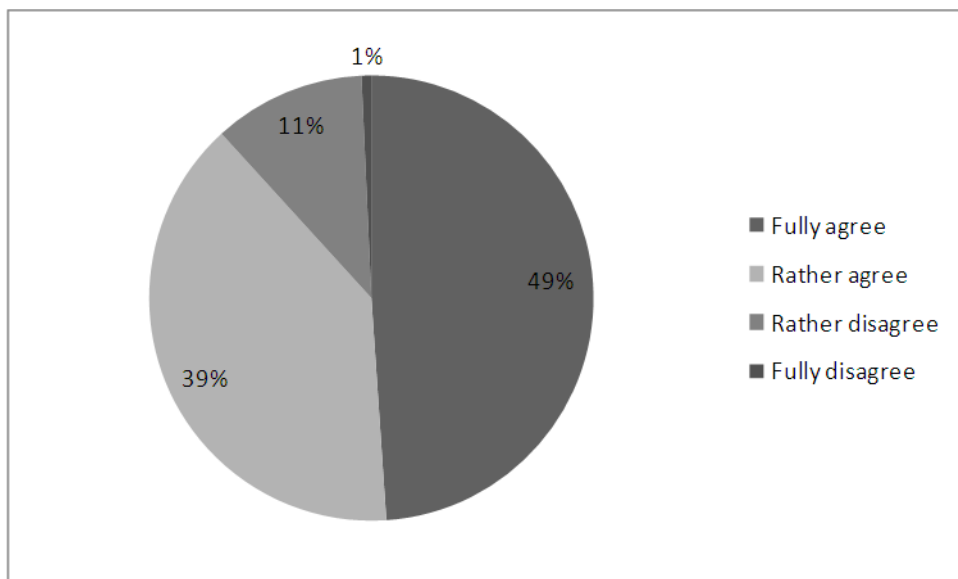
Figure 29
Pie chart showing the extent to which participants agreed that any new network should be global without specific regional concerns



(b) Global network containing interregional working groups for cross-cutting issues

66. Eighty-eight per cent of respondents fully agreed or rather agreed that any new network should be global and contain interregional working groups on cross-cutting issues. This is shown in figure 30.

Figure 30
Pie chart showing the extent to which participants agreed that any new network should be global and contain interregional working groups on cross-cutting issues

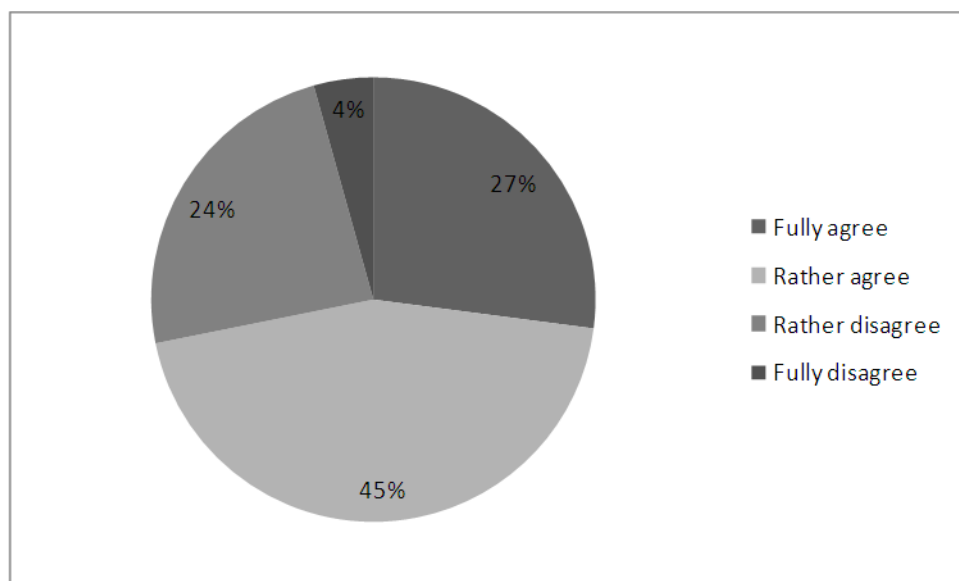


(c) **Global umbrella organization of existing regional networks**

67. Seventy-two per cent of respondents fully agreed or rather agreed that a global umbrella organization of existing regional networks could provide interdisciplinary international scientific advice to the UNCCD (see figure 31).

Figure 31

Pie chart showing the extent to which participants agreed that a global umbrella organization of existing regional networks could provide scientific advice to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

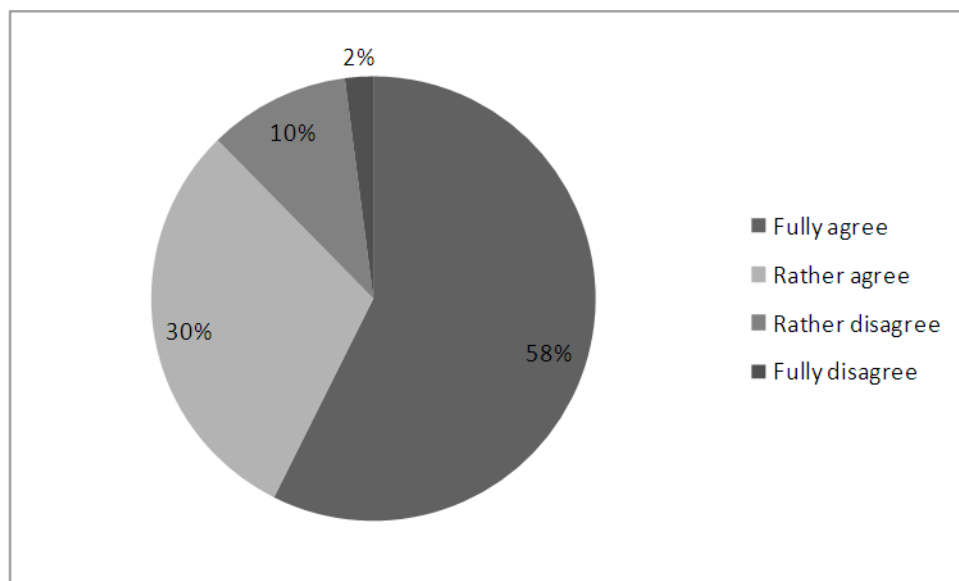


(d) **Global network containing regional subnetworks dealing with region-specific topics**

68. Eighty-eight per cent of respondents fully agreed or rather agreed that any new network should be global and contain regional subnetworks dealing with region-specific topics (see figure 32).

Figure 32

Pie chart showing the extent to which participants agreed that any new network should be global and contain regional subnetworks dealing with region-specific topics



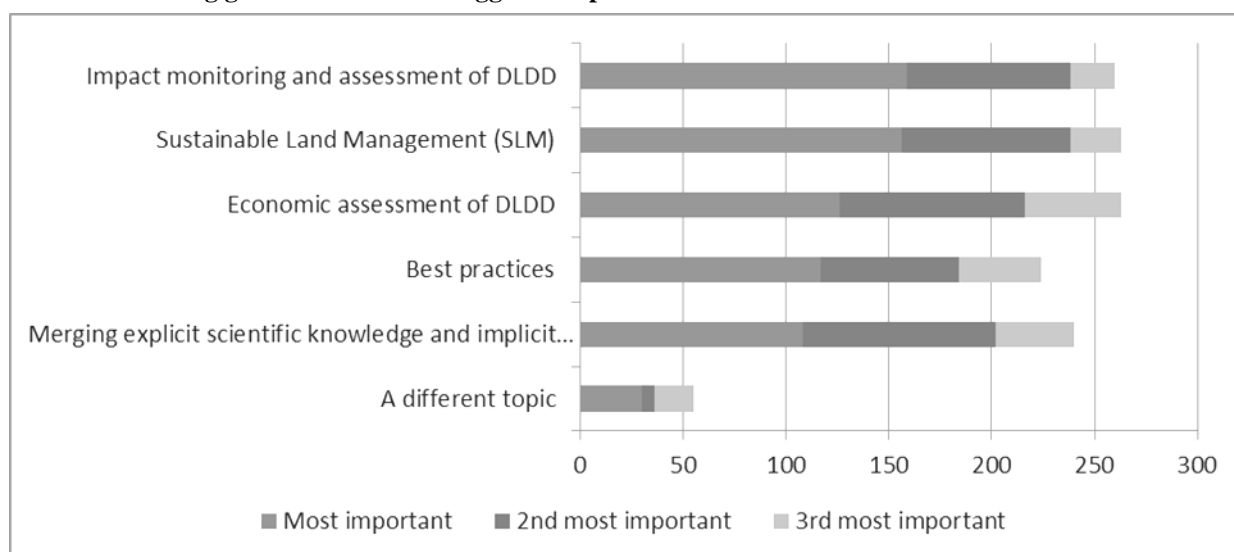
69. Overall, analyses of these options and the responses show that respondents considered a regional approach to be vital. Of all respondents, 88 per cent fully agreed or rather agreed that any new network should be global and contain interregional working groups on cross-cutting issues; similarly, 88 per cent fully agreed or rather agreed that any new network should contain regional subnetworks dealing with region-specific topics. There were no significant differences between regions or stakeholder groups with regard to the pattern of responses.

8. A new international scientific network could be organized around specific topics relating to DLDD that are not effectively covered by existing scientific networks. Which topics would you find most relevant?

70. The options provided for this question were: (a) economic assessment of DLDD; (b) impact monitoring and assessment of DLDD; (c) merging explicit scientific knowledge and implicit traditional knowledge on DLDD with policy advice; (d) sustainable land management (SLM); and (e) best practices. Respondents were also given space to list other ideas; these can be found in annex II.

71. The proposed topics were valued very similarly by respondents (see figure 33). Impact monitoring and assessment of DLDD was considered most important by the largest number of respondents, closely followed by SLM. Overall, the option “economic assessment of DLDD” received the highest number of votes. Topics frequently suggested by participants in the survey responding to the “other” category included “knowledge exchange” and “science–policy interface”. It should be noted that, as has been the case in previous questions having an “other” category, the responses provided are likely to link closely to the respondents’ thematic areas of expertise. The list of “other” responses in annex II thus needs to be viewed with this awareness in mind and should not be considered as exhaustive.

Figure 33
Rating given to each of the suggested topics

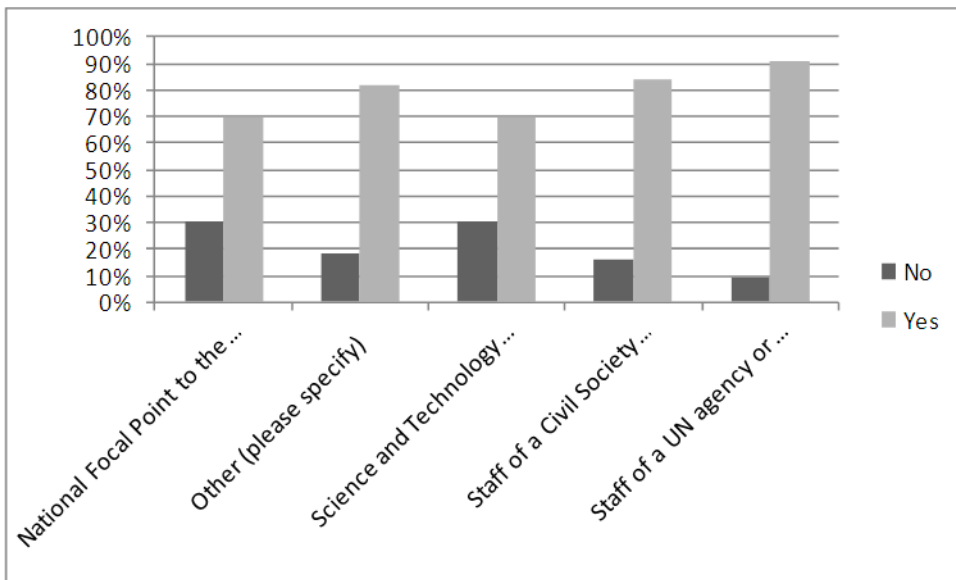


72. It should be further noted that the topics given as options are themselves extremely broad. Each can be addressed from a variety of different disciplinary perspectives. Again, this highlights the importance of ensuring wide disciplinary diversity in the provision of scientific advice.

9. Could the current series of UNCCD scientific conferences be used to build a new scientific network?

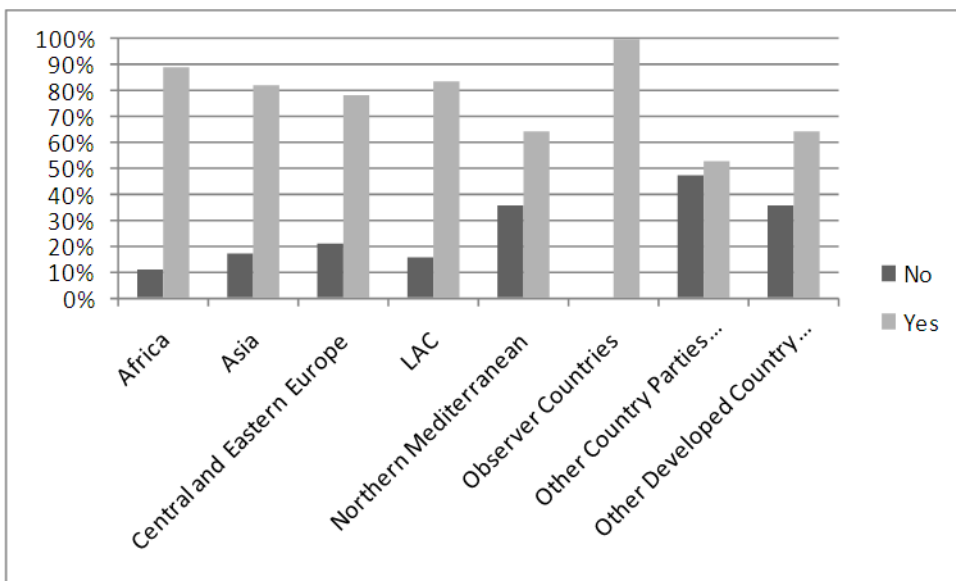
73. The current series of UNCCD scientific conferences could be used to build a new scientific network according to 78 per cent of all respondents. Analysis by stakeholder (see figure 34) suggests that staff of a United Nations agency or IGO partner to the UNCCD provided the largest percentage of responses indicating that the UNCCD scientific conferences could be used to build a new scientific network. Thirty per cent of NFPs and thirty per cent of STCs selected “no” for this question.

Figure 34
Percentage of respondents in each stakeholder category regarding whether the current series of UNCCD scientific conferences could be used to build a new network



74. Some small differences emerge when analysing the data by region. More than 80 per cent of African, Asian, LAC and observer countries considered that the scientific conferences could be used to build a new network. Respondents from the remaining regions were less convinced. Overall, more than 50 per cent of respondents in each region answered “yes” (see figure 35).

Figure 35
Percentage of respondents from each region who think that the current series of UNCCD scientific conferences could be used to build a new network

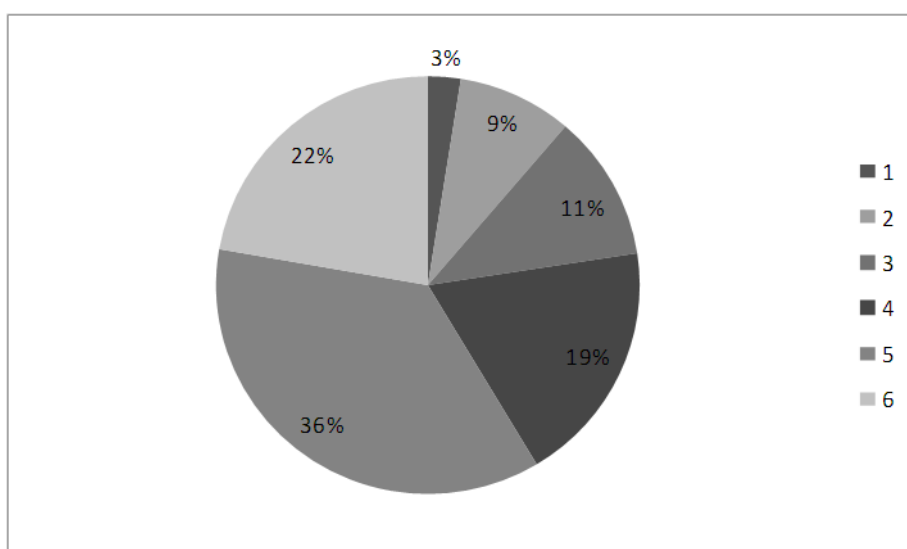


10. Please rate how effective you think a new scientific network would be in ensuring the provision of international, interdisciplinary scientific advice to support decision-making in the UNCCD? (A score of 1 indicates “not effective”; 6 indicates “very effective”)

75. Responses to this question are summarized in figure 36. In reality, the effectiveness of a new scientific network in ensuring international, interdisciplinary scientific advice to support decision-making in the UNCCD would depend on a number of factors that respondents were not asked to consider. Thus, although 58 per cent of survey respondents considered that a new scientific network would be effective, the data only shows a perception among respondents that a new scientific network would be warranted.

Figure 36

Ratings of perceived effectiveness of a new scientific network to provide scientific advice to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

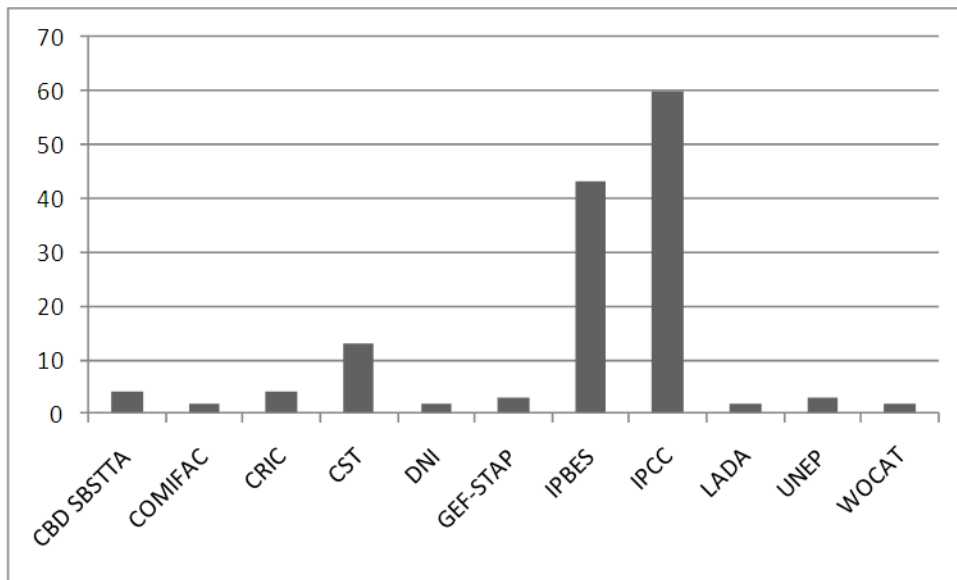


11. Please list up to three intergovernmental scientific panels/platforms which provide international, interdisciplinary scientific advice to the UNCCD. Are you involved in the process of any of these?

76. A list of intergovernmental scientific panels/platforms mentioned by respondents can be found in annex III. It should be noted that some of the panels/platforms mentioned are clearly national-level mechanisms. The complete list has been provided, however, to illustrate respondents’ range of interpretations of the term “intergovernmental scientific panels/platforms”. In many cases, only abbreviations were provided.

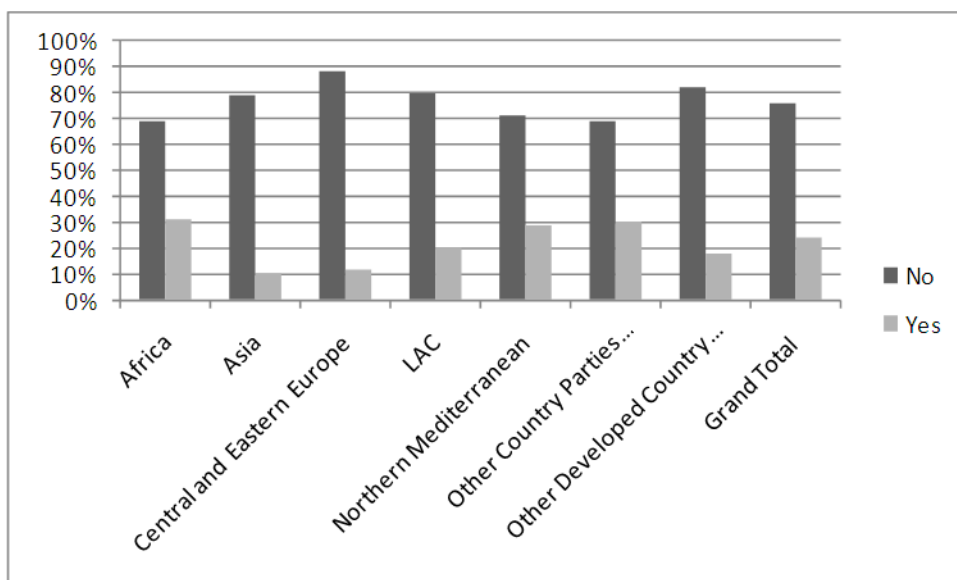
77. Figure 37 shows the most frequently listed intergovernmental scientific panels/platforms. A number of others were mentioned but often only by one respondent. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and the CST were mentioned by 60, 43 and 13 respondents, respectively, making them the three panels/platforms referred to most frequently.

Figure 37
Number of times the most frequently listed intergovernmental scientific panels/platforms were mentioned



78. Seventy-five per cent of respondents reported that they were not involved with the intergovernmental scientific panels/platforms they listed. Respondents from CEE, other developed country Parties and LAC showed the least involvement in the intergovernmental scientific panels/platforms they listed (see figure 38).

Figure 38
Membership by region in the intergovernmental scientific panels/platforms that were mentioned

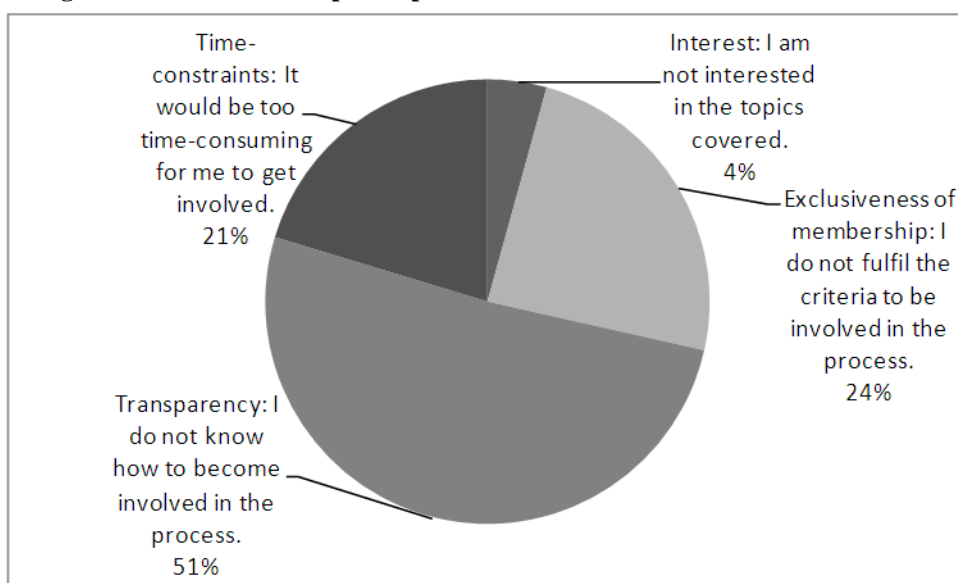


12. If you are not involved in the process of an existing intergovernmental scientific panel/platform, what prevents you from getting involved?

79. Of the respondents who answered that they were not involved in the processes of existing intergovernmental scientific panels/platforms and who selected from the options provided, 51 per cent attributed this to issues of transparency; they did not know how to become involved in the process. Twenty-four per cent of respondents did not fulfil the criteria for being involved, while 21 per cent did not have the time to participate. Four per cent were not interested in the topics covered (see figure 39).

Figure 39

Respondents' reasons for not being involved in the processes of existing intergovernmental scientific panels/platforms

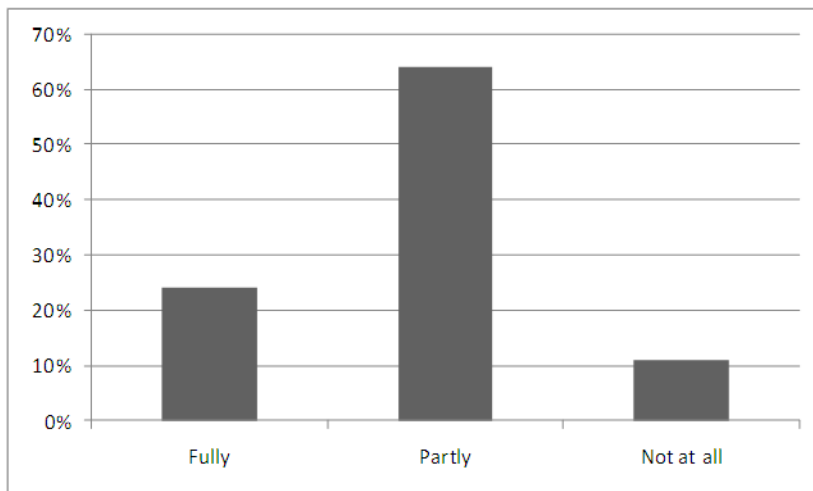


80. The “other” reasons provided by respondents for not being involved included: some panels/platforms required government nomination; poor communication and limited capacity; a lack of resources; and the respondent’s expertise was in DLDD issues, not the issues covered by existing intergovernmental scientific panels/platforms.

13. To what extent do you think the existing intergovernmental scientific panels/platforms listed by you could effectively cover issues relating to the UNCCD?

81. Sixty-four per cent of respondents suggested that existing scientific panels/platforms partly covered issues relating to the UNCCD. This response is not surprising given the cross-cutting nature of tackling DLDD. Eleven per cent of respondents considered that existing mechanisms did not cover issues relating to the UNCCD at all, whereas 24 per cent considered them to be fully covered (see figure 40).

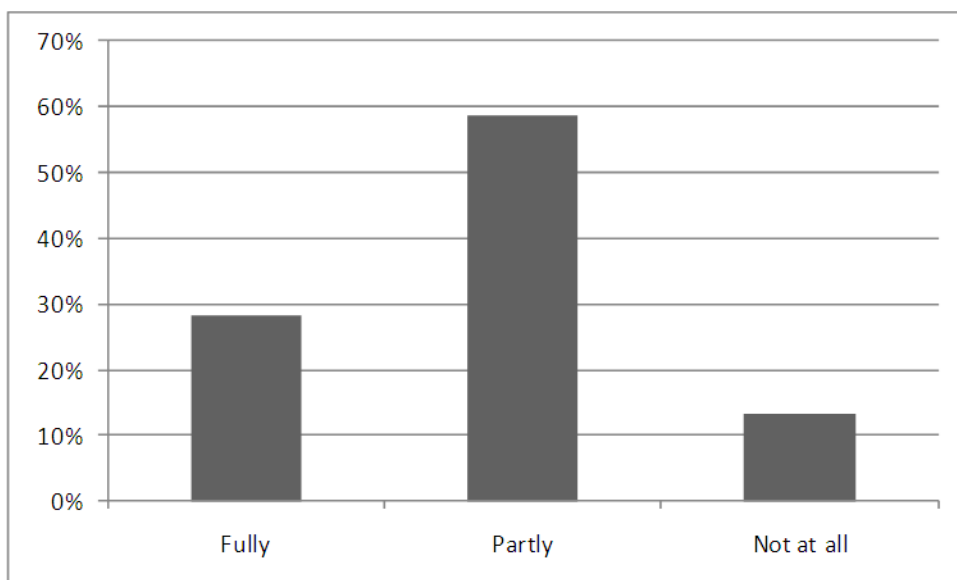
Figure 40
Respondents' views on the extent to which existing intergovernmental scientific panels/platforms that they listed effectively cover issues relating to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification



14. In your opinion, to what extent could the existing panels/platforms listed by you take into account the UNCCD regional approach?

82. Overall, 27 per cent considered that existing scientific panels/platforms fully take into account the UNCCD regional approach, 59 per cent considered that it is partly taken into account and 14 per cent considered that it is not taken into account at all (see figure 41).

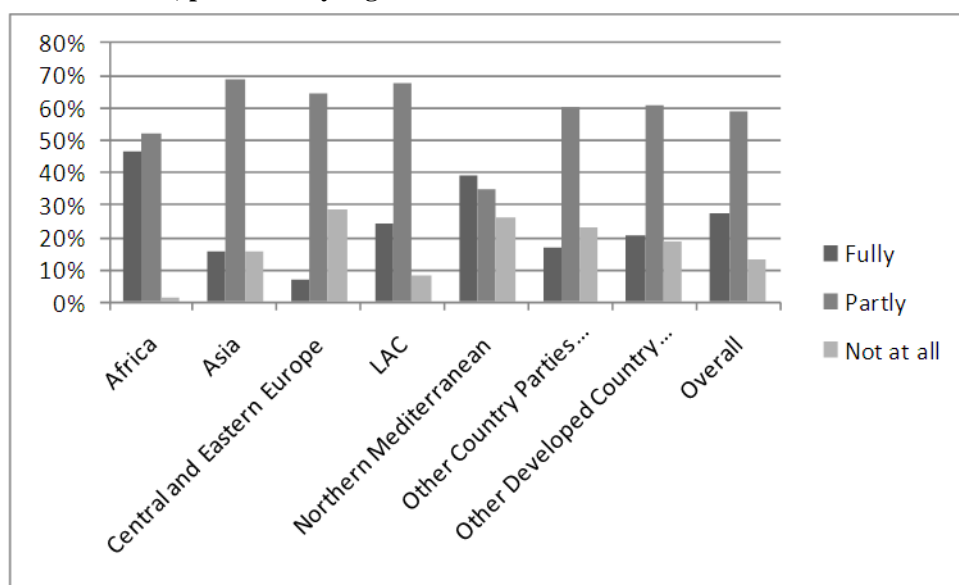
Figure 41
Respondents' opinions on the extent to which existing scientific panels/platforms take into account the regional approach of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification



83. When the responses are analysed by region, it becomes clear that the respondents from Africa assigned the highest proportion of votes to the “fully covered” category (see figure 42). The regions with the highest proportions of respondents who considered that existing scientific panels/platforms did not take the UNCCD regional approach into account at all were CEE and the Northern Mediterranean (29 per cent and 26 per cent of votes, respectively). Interestingly, the Northern Mediterranean was the only region with the majority of their votes indicating that the regional approach is “fully covered”. For all other regions, the option “partly covered” was selected most frequently.

Figure 42

Respondents’ opinions on the extent to which existing scientific panels/platforms take into account the regional approach of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, presented by region



15. What are the most important topics relevant to the UNCCD that are missing in the existing intergovernmental scientific panels/platforms listed by you?

84. Frequently-suggested missing topics included traditional knowledge and the social and economic aspects of DLDD. It should be noted that, as has been the case with previous questions, the responses provided are likely to be closely linked to the respondents’ thematic areas of expertise. The list of “other” responses in annex IV thus needs to be viewed with this in mind and should not be considered exhaustive.

16. Should the CST undertake a specific gap analysis with regard to the existing intergovernmental mechanisms?

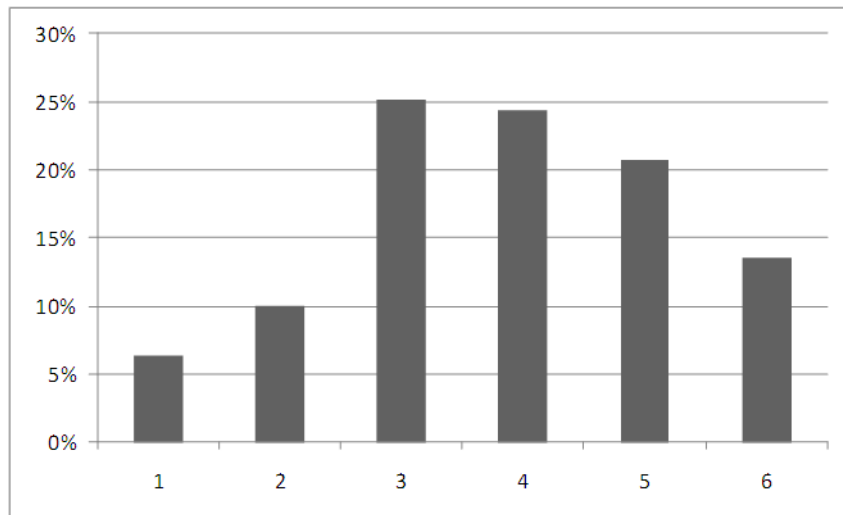
85. Eighty-eight per cent of respondents felt that a specific gap analysis is required with regard to existing intergovernmental mechanisms. The AGSA may wish to employ the support of a consultant to undertake this work.

17 Please rate how effective you think the use of existing intergovernmental scientific advisory bodies would be in ensuring international, interdisciplinary scientific advice to support decision-making in the UNCCD? (1: totally ineffective; 6: very effective)

86. The majority of respondents to this question provided scores of 3 or 4 (see figure 43).

Figure 43

Respondents' scores on the effectiveness of using existing intergovernmental scientific advisory bodies to support decision-making in the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification



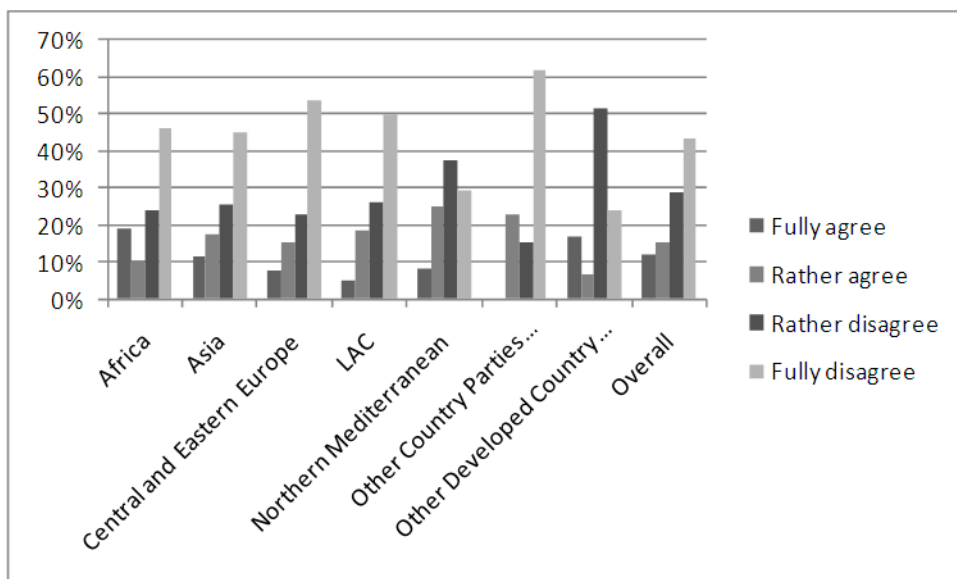
18. Please tell us your opinion on how a new intergovernmental scientific panel on land and soil could be organized?

87. Four options (see (a)–(e) below) were presented to respondents, who were asked whether they fully agreed, rather agreed, rather disagreed or fully disagreed. The responses are described below.

(a) Global scientific panel without specific regional concerns

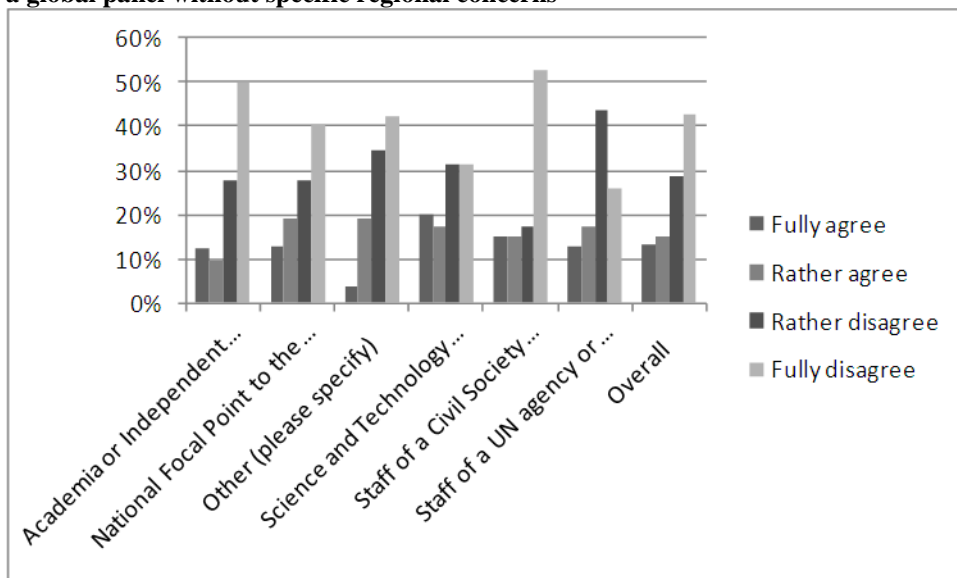
88. Overall, 43 per cent respondents fully disagreed and 29 per cent rather disagreed that a new intergovernmental scientific panel on land and soil should be a global panel without specific regional concerns. This pattern of response did not show any correlation with the regions of the respondents (see figure 44).

Figure 44
Percentage of votes by region on whether a new scientific panel should be a global panel without specific regional concerns



89. A similar pattern of responses is seen when the results are analysed by stakeholder group, with the majority across all groups selecting “rather disagree” or “fully disagree” (see figure 45). These analyses suggest that any new scientific panel will need to take into account the specific concerns of the UNCCD regions.

Figure 45
Percentage of votes by stakeholder group on whether a new scientific panel should be a global panel without specific regional concerns

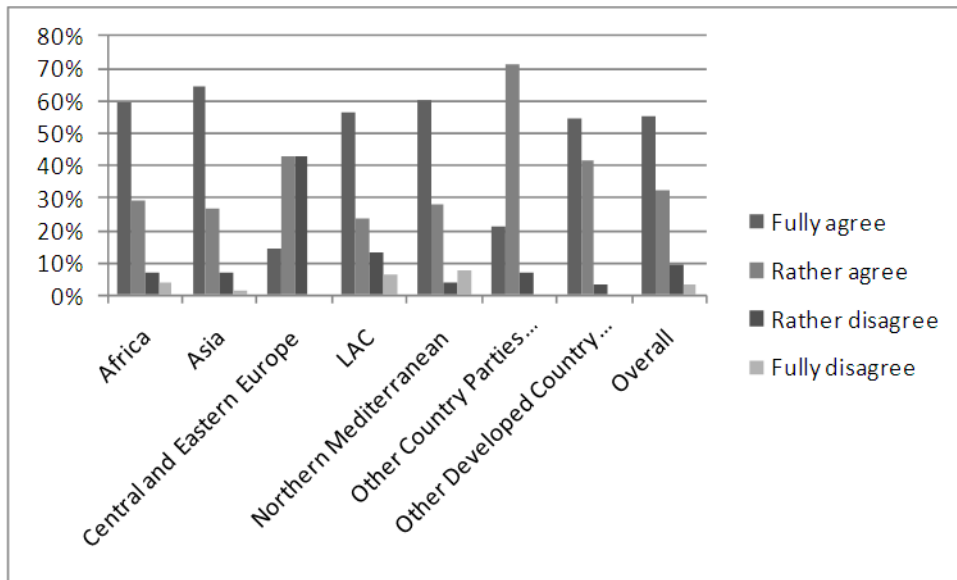


(b) Global scientific panel containing interregional working groups on cross-cutting issues

90. Most regions followed a similar pattern in that the majority of regions either fully agreed or rather agreed that a new scientific panel should be a global panel containing interregional working groups on cross-cutting issues (see figure 46). It is notable that 43 per cent from CEE rather disagreed.

Figure 46

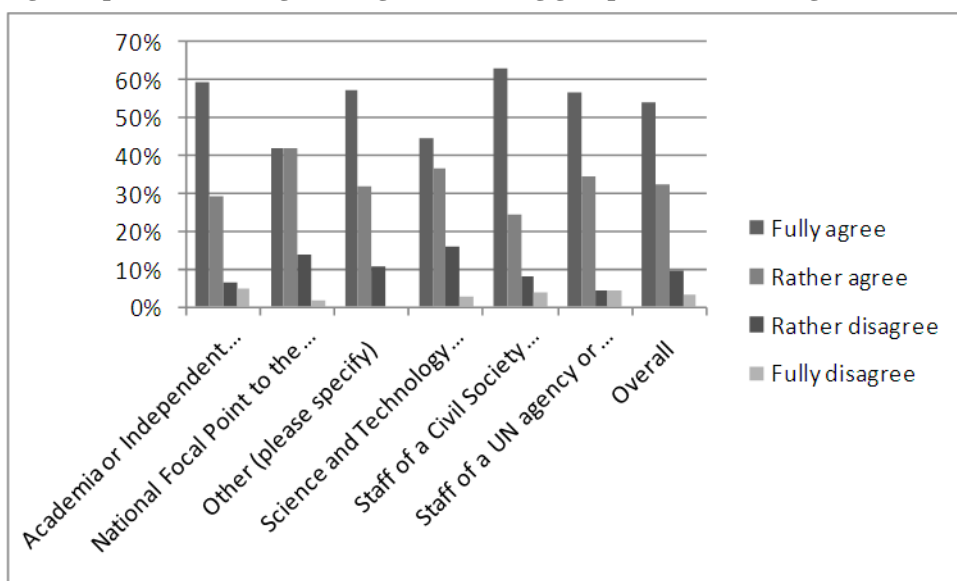
Percentage of votes by region on whether a new scientific panel should be a global panel containing interregional working groups on cross-cutting themes



91. When analyses are undertaken by stakeholder group, it is clear that, again, most respondents fully agreed or rather agreed across all groups (see figure 47).

Figure 47

Percentage of votes by stakeholder group on whether a new scientific panel should be a global panel containing interregional working groups on cross-cutting themes

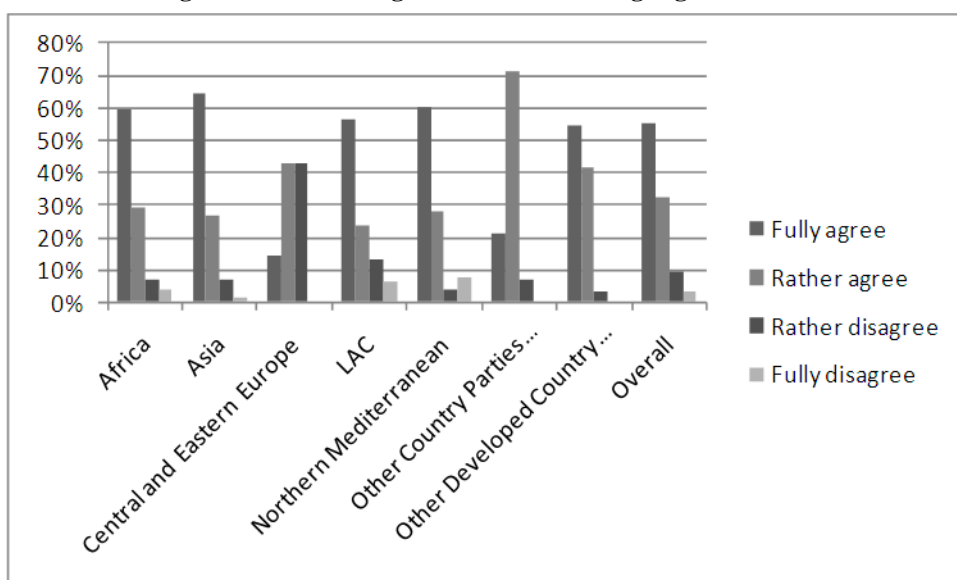


(c) Global umbrella organization of existing regional networks

92. Overall, 85 per cent of respondents fully or rather agreed that any new scientific panel should act as a global umbrella organization for existing regional networks. When responses are analysed by region, a similar pattern is apparent, except for responses from CEE, where 43 per cent rather disagreed (see figure 48).

Figure 48

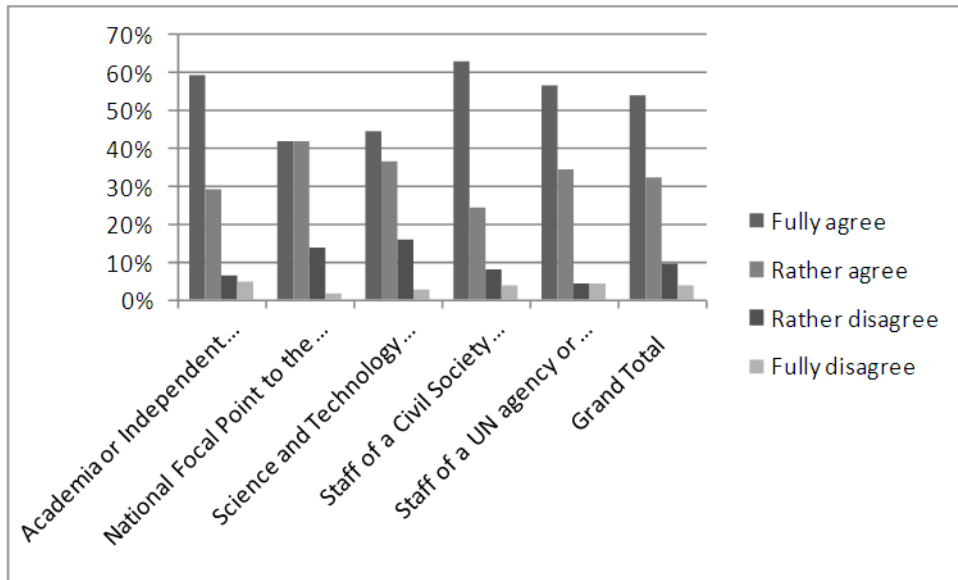
Responses by region on the extent to which participants think a new scientific panel should act as a global umbrella organization for existing regional networks



93. Analysis by stakeholder group produces a similar distribution of answers (see figure 49).

Figure 49

Responses by stakeholder group on the extent to which participants think a new scientific panel should act as a global umbrella organization for existing regional networks

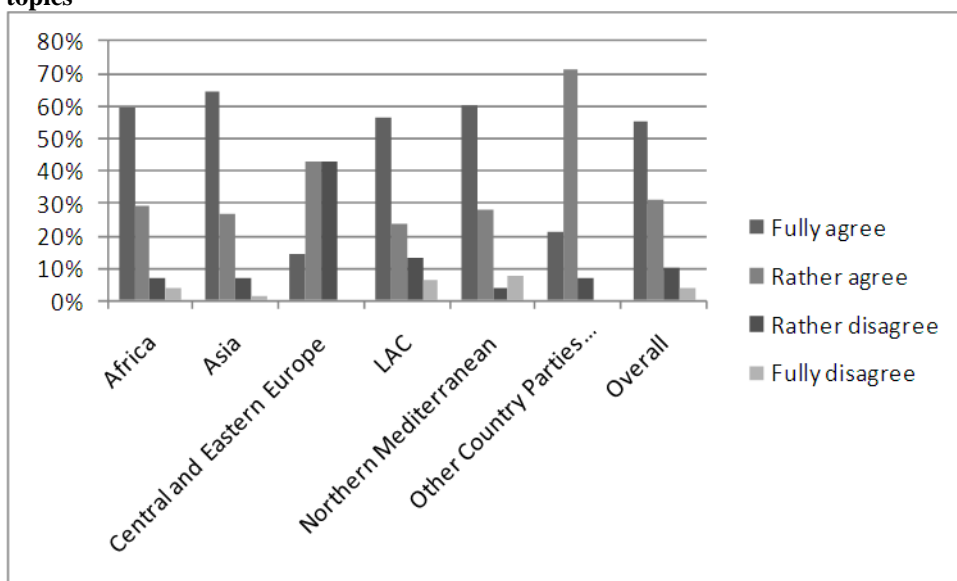


(d) Global scientific panel containing regional subpanels dealing with region-specific topics

94. Overall, more than 80 per cent of respondents fully agreed or rather agreed that any new scientific panel should be a global panel containing regional subpanels dealing with region-specific topics. Most regions gave most votes to the “fully agree” category, except for CEE and other country Parties (see figure 50).

Figure 50

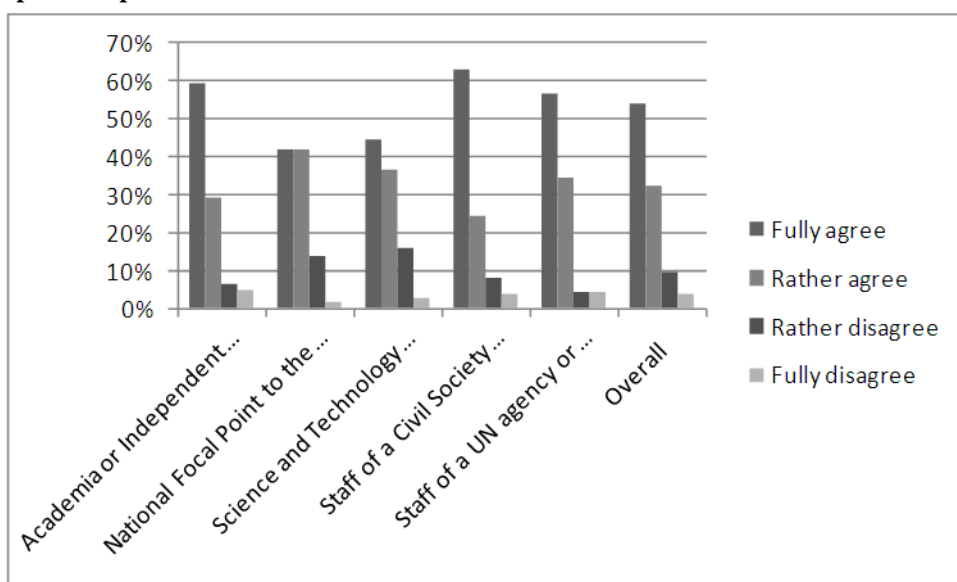
Results by region on the extent to which participants think a new scientific panel should be a global panel containing regional subpanels dealing with region-specific topics



95. An analysis by stakeholder group shows that all groups gave the most votes to “fully agree” (see figure 51).

Figure 51

Results by stakeholder group on the extent to which participants think a new scientific panel should be a global panel containing regional subpanels dealing with region-specific topics



(e) **Other**

96. Thirteen per cent of respondents answered the open question on a possible fifth option as to how to organize international, interdisciplinary scientific advice (see figure 52). Many respondents to this question took the opportunity to reiterate that they either strongly agreed with the need for a panel or that existing structures just need to be replaced – that is, efforts should be made to improve the efficiency of what already exists rather than developing an additional body/level of input. Respondents also stressed the importance of learning from existing panels and structures, such as the new IPBES and the IPCC. The majority of respondents proposing a fifth option suggested that it should be a combination of two or more of the four options provided in the e-survey, in particular building on existing mechanisms; they did not find the establishment of a new advisory mechanism and the use of existing mechanisms (networks and panels/platforms) to be mutually exclusive. Finally, respondents stressed the importance of interdisciplinarity, particularly if a regional approach is pursued.

97. The responses to questions about both networks and panels suggest that respondents want something new that is built on something that already exists. Thus, the four options are not mutually exclusive. It is actually quite the contrary: a new network and/or panel could benefit from linkages with existing networks and/or panels, particularly to allow for regional and global aspects to be integrated more closely. For example, a new panel could act as an umbrella for existing networks and panels at regional level.

98. The main arguments put forward by participants in favour of why the UNCCD should build on existing mechanisms were:

(a) Financial restrictions might hinder the evolution of a new mechanism. Further research is needed as to what the costs of a new mechanism might be, building on experience relating to the resourcing of existing mechanisms. Costs should be weighed in relation to the benefits that could be delivered by a new mechanism;

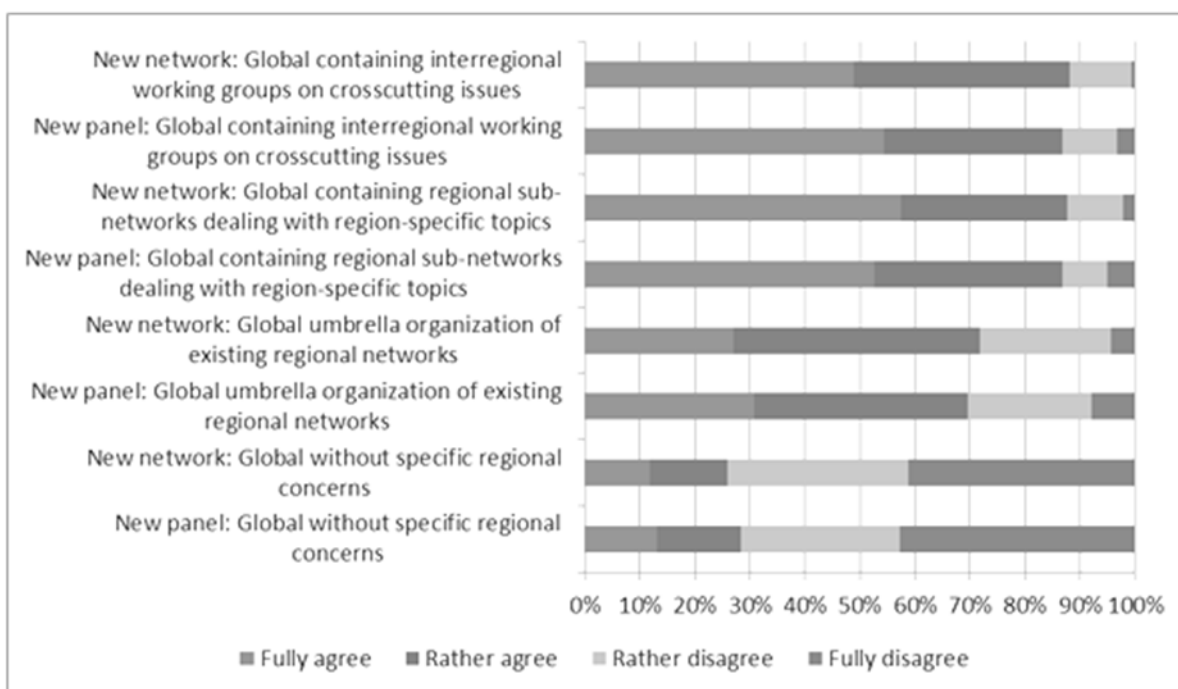
(b) The acceptance of a new mechanism would be low if it duplicated efforts of existing mechanisms; the limited capacity of existing networks should be considered and built upon;

(c) The evolution of a new advisory mechanism might be faster if built on existing mechanisms; for many countries, the same people who already participated in existing mechanisms could participate in a new mechanism, unless a new topic would require specific expertise;

(d) The inherent interlinkages between the Rio conventions make it necessary to link the existing scientific bodies of the other conventions to an advisory mechanism for the UNCCD. However, links to the scientific bodies of other (non-Rio) conventions are also important and need to be considered; and

(e) Sixty-four per cent of respondents stated that issues of importance to the UNCCD are partly addressed by existing scientific bodies; hence it is important to build upon the starting point this provides.

Figure 52
Synthesis of results showing the extent to which respondents agreed on how a new panel or network should be organized

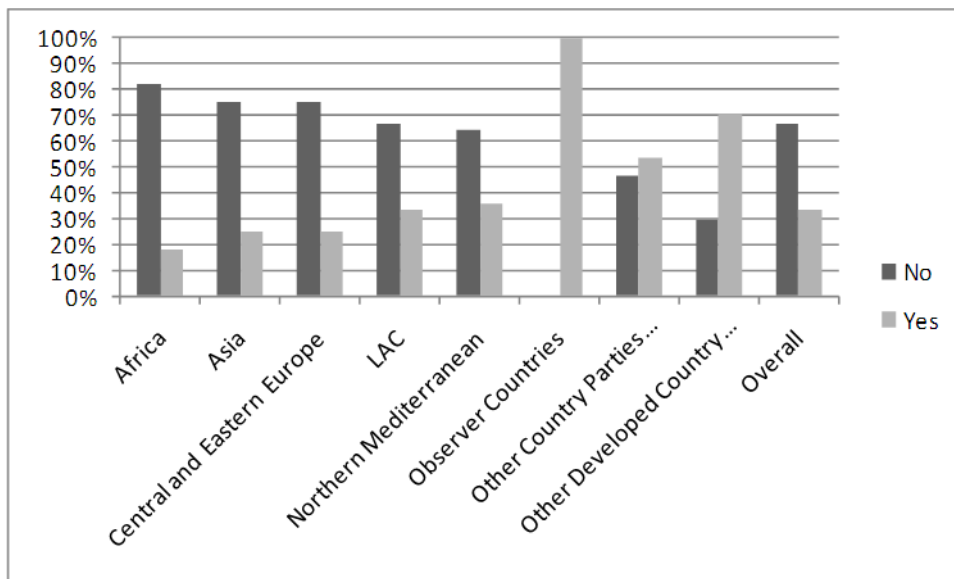


19. Should a new intergovernmental scientific panel on land and soil be: (a) independent of the UNCCD; (b) linked to the UNCCD; or (c) under the UNCCD?

(a) Independent of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

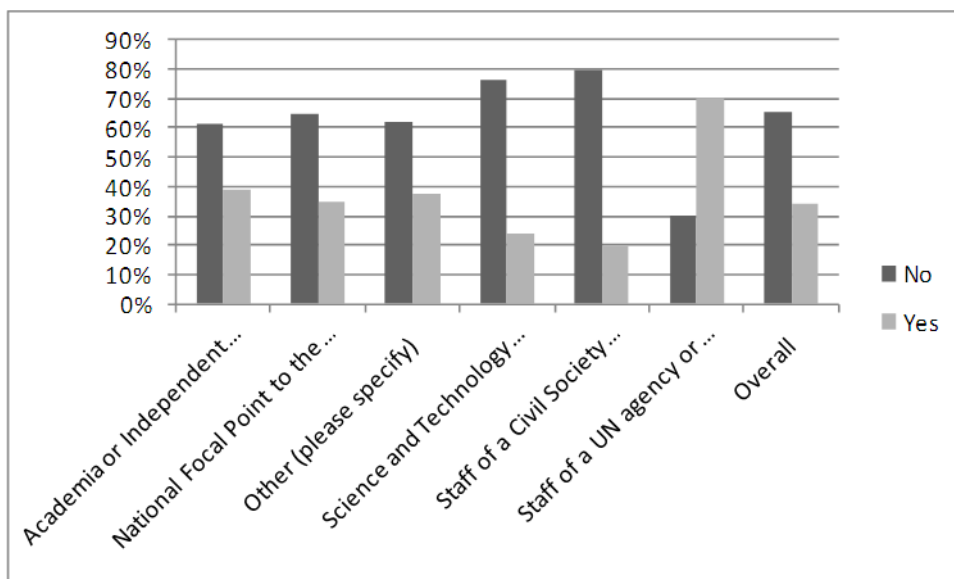
99. Overall, 66 per cent of respondents considered that a new panel should not be independent of the UNCCD and voted “no”, while 34 per cent voted “yes”. A similar pattern is apparent when analysed by region, except in three cases. All respondents from observer countries voted “yes”. It should nevertheless be noted that the sample from the observer countries was very small. Other country Parties (53 per cent) and other developed country Parties (71 per cent) also considered that a new panel should be independent from the UNCCD (see figure 53).

Figure 53
Presentation by region on the percentage of respondents who consider that a new intergovernmental scientific panel on land and soil should be independent of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification



100. The majority of most stakeholder groups voted “no”, except for staff from a United Nations agency or intergovernmental UNCCD partner institution, who considered that a new panel should be independent from the UNCCD. Seventy per cent of this group voted “yes” (see figure 54).

Figure 54
Presentation by stakeholder group on the percentage of respondents who consider that a new intergovernmental scientific panel on land and soil should be independent of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification



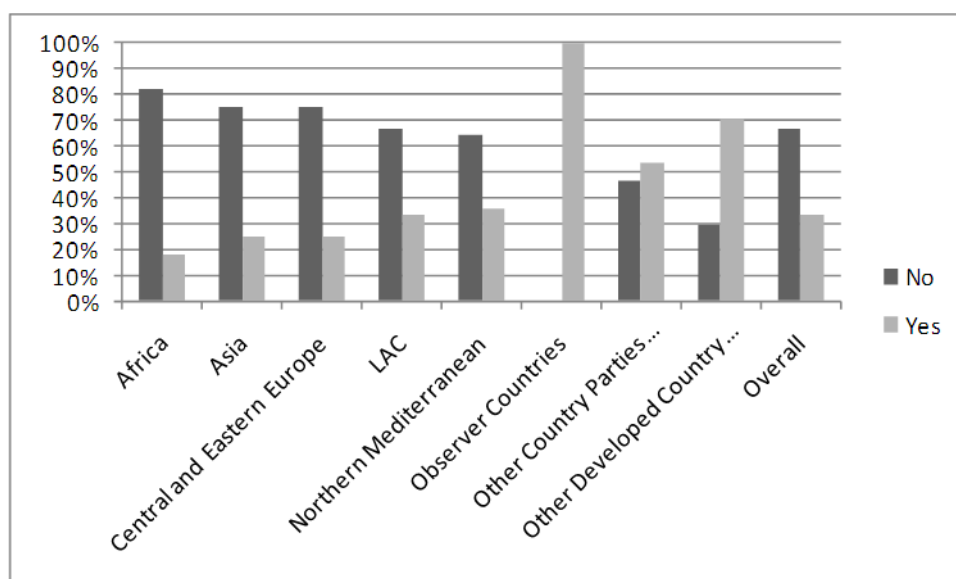
101. Respondents answering “yes” were asked to define how they interpreted “independent”. The majority of answers stated that a new panel should be independent from political processes and financially independent, yet at the same time closely involved in contributing to the decision-making process. Some respondents argued that a panel should set its own agenda in response to policy-relevant themes, and that it should be able to offer advice to other multilateral environment agreements, agencies and organizations as well as the UNCCD.

(b) Linked to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

102. Sixty-seven per cent of respondents considered that a new panel should not be linked to the UNCCD. Regions voting differently from this overall pattern included other affected country Parties (not included in the Annexes), 53 per cent of whom voted “yes”, and other developed country Parties that are not affected (not included in the Annexes), of whom 71 per cent voted “yes” (see figure 55).

Figure 55

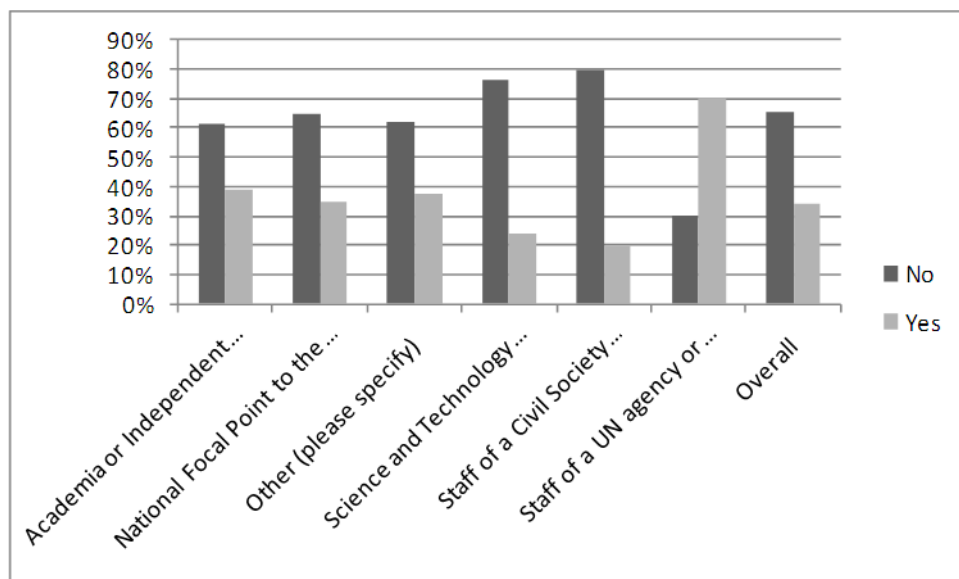
Responses by region as to whether a panel should be linked to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification



103. An analysis of responses by stakeholder group shows that all groups except staff of a United Nations agency or IGO partner to the UNCCD have a majority of “no” votes. Of the group which voted differently, 70 per cent of respondents voted “yes” (see figure 56).

Figure 56

Responses by stakeholder group as to whether a panel should be linked to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

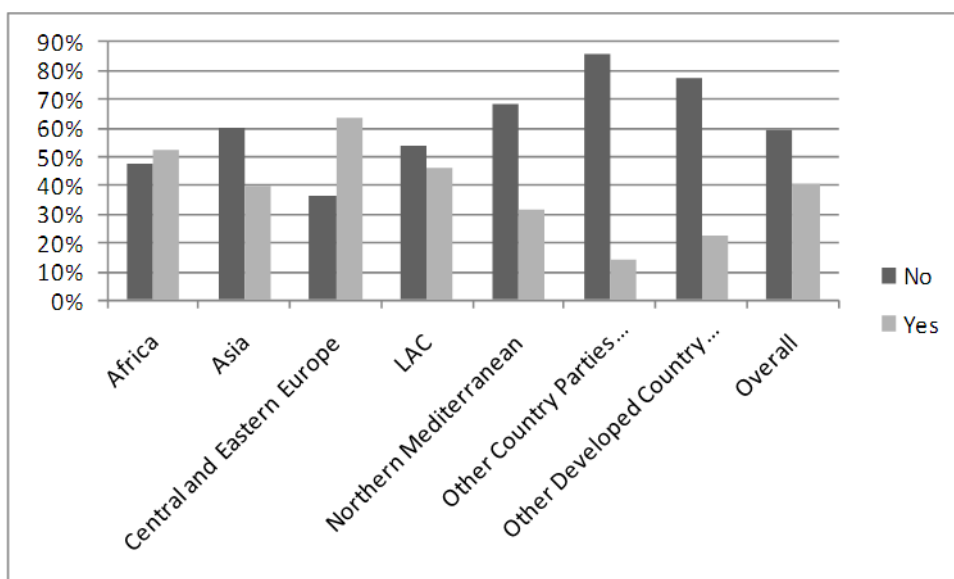


104. Respondents selecting “yes” were asked to elaborate on their understanding of “linked to the UNCCD”. The results show diverse opinions. Some respondents felt that the UNCCD should provide the mandate and terms of reference, as well as the funding, for a panel. Others considered “a panel linked to the UNCCD” to mean that independent scientific input should not be influenced by Parties but however that the panel should report to the COP through the CST. Several responses suggested the need for commonly identified priorities to be addressed independently and yet in line with the programmatic agenda of the UNCCD.

(c) Under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

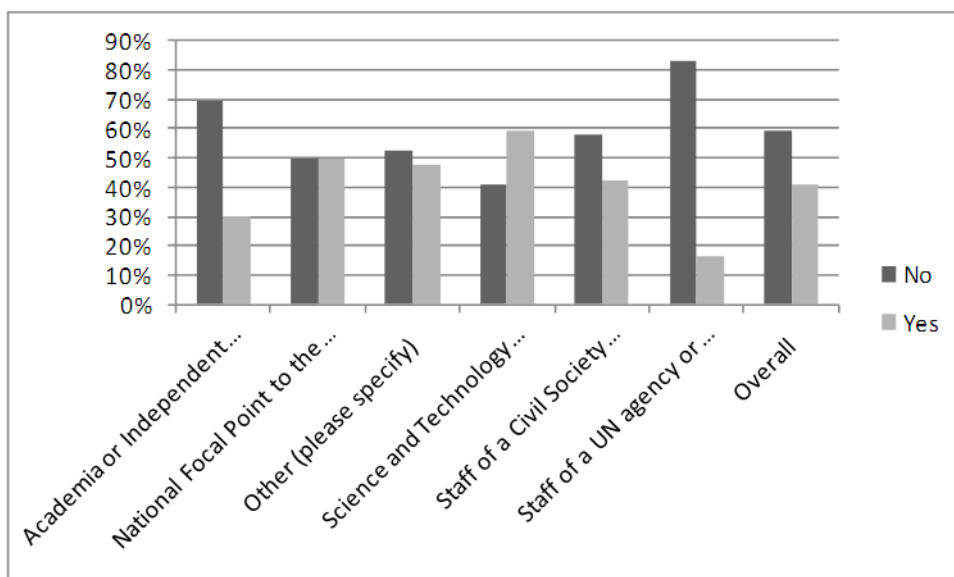
105. Nearly 60 per cent of respondents suggested that a new panel should not be under the UNCCD (see figure 57). When these results are analysed by region, it becomes apparent that respondents from Africa and CEE returned a greater proportion of “yes” votes than “no” votes. This is the opposite pattern from all other regions, where more respondents voted “no”.

Figure 57
Responses by region as to whether a panel should be under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification



106. When analysed according to different stakeholder groups (see figure 58), it is clear that all groups except STCs and NFPs of the UNCCD returned more “no” votes than “yes” votes.

Figure 58
Responses by stakeholder group as to whether a panel should be under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification



107. Respondents were asked about their understanding of “under the UNCCD”. A wide range of responses were received, with some respondents preferring a loosely defined

relationship with the UNCCD, suggesting a partnership in which the panel would report during COPs and meetings of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC). Others preferred less independence and considered that the new panel should be a subsidiary body of the UNCCD. Some respondents proposed that a new panel should come under the mandate of the UNCCD and the framework of its strategies, with the UNCCD being the coordinating arm for knowledge management and knowledge exchange.

108. These results suggest that there is a need for any new scientific panel to be independent from the political processes of the UNCCD. However, several respondents stressed the need for such a panel to provide policy-relevant but not policy-prescriptive advice to the UNCCD.

20. Please rate how effective you think a new intergovernmental scientific panel on land and soil would be in ensuring international, interdisciplinary scientific advice to support decision-making in the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (1= totally ineffective; 6= very effective)

109. The majority of respondents provided a score of 4 (17 per cent), 5 (36 per cent), or 6 (28 per cent). This pattern was similar across regions and stakeholder groups.

Summary of section 3

110. Questions on scientific networks at regional and global levels elicited a range of interpretations of the word “network”, suggesting that there is need for further clarification in activities of the AGSA.

111. Respondents reported their active participation in scientific networks, with more than 50 per cent being involved in a scientific network. Those not involved in a scientific network suggested that transparency was the key barrier, followed by a lack of time, exclusivity of membership and other reasons. The most commonly provided “other” reason was a lack of resources and/or funding.

112. The majority of respondents considered that existing networks partly covered issues relevant to the UNCCD. However, due to the way the questions were sequenced, it was difficult to tell whether topics described by respondents as “missing” are really missing from existing scientific networks, or whether they just reflect the disciplinary orientation and thematic expertise of the participants in the survey. It is suggested that a gap analysis be undertaken to allow proper assessment of this aspect.

113. There was no strong consensus on the perceived effectiveness of the use of existing scientific networks in providing advice to the UNCCD at regional or global levels.

114. Participants felt most strongly that any new scientific network that were to be established should be global with interregional working groups on cross-cutting issues, or global but linked to subregional networks dealing with region-specific topics. This highlights the importance of allowing for regional approaches within any global efforts.

115. Topics considered most relevant for a new scientific network were: (a) impact monitoring and assessment of DLDD; (b) SLM; and (c) economic assessment of DLDD.

116. UNCCD scientific conferences were suggested as a mechanism through which a new network could be built. This suggestion received widespread support from respondents.

117. More than half of respondents considered that a new scientific network could be effective in providing international, interdisciplinary advice to the UNCCD.

118. Most respondents were not involved with existing intergovernmental scientific panels/platforms, most commonly because of a lack of transparency (they do not know how to get involved), because they did not meet the criteria required for involvement, or because they did not have enough time.

119. The majority of respondents considered that existing scientific panels/platforms at least partly cover issues relevant to the UNCCD and that existing panels partly take into account the regional approach of the UNCCD. This suggests that ways in which existing scientific panels/platforms can link to any new panel need to be considered, along with measures to strengthen the regional approach.

120. The majority of respondents suggested that a gap analysis should be undertaken with regard to existing intergovernmental scientific panels/platforms.

121. Most respondents suggested that the effectiveness of existing intergovernmental scientific advisory bodies in supporting decision-making in the UNCCD would be moderate (attributing a score of 3 or 4 out of 6). This suggests that there is a need for the UNCCD to network with existing intergovernmental scientific advisory bodies in order to utilize those aspects of scientific knowledge relevant to UNCCD issues.

122. If a new advisory mechanism is to be established, the respondents prefer that it be organized globally, and that it either contain regional subnetworks dealing with region-specific topics or interregional working groups on cross-cutting issues. The option without a channel through which to feed in specific regional concerns is clearly opposed. Similarly, respondents strongly disagreed that any new scientific network should be established without including specific regional concerns. This suggests that, should a new network and/or panel be established, regional concerns need to receive special consideration.

123. Respondents preferred that any new scientific panel be independent of the UNCCD. They felt that a new international, interdisciplinary scientific panel on land and soil to ensure the provision of international, interdisciplinary scientific advice to support decision-making in the UNCCD would be likely to be effective, with 50 per cent of respondents suggesting a score of 5 or 6 for perceived effectiveness.

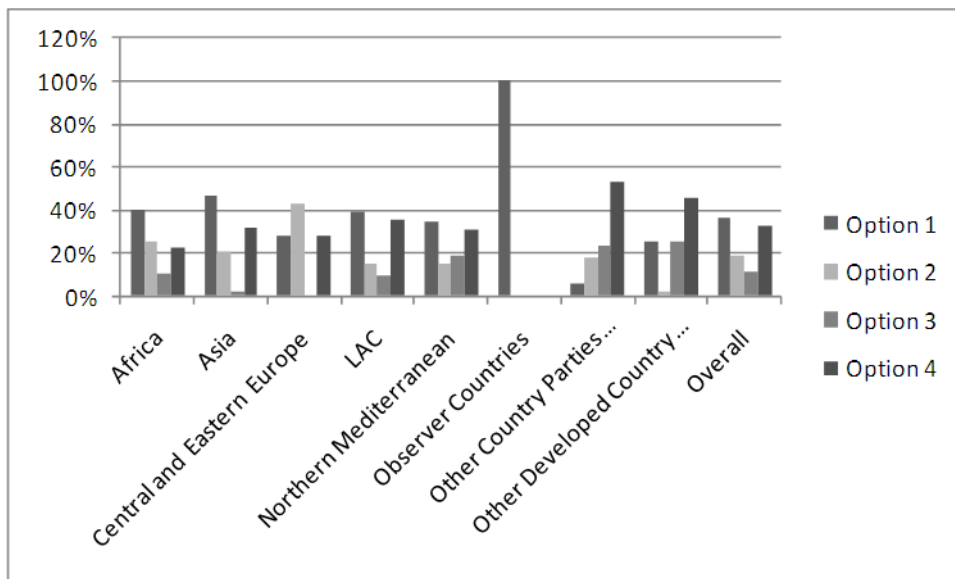
V. Section 4 of the e-survey: What are your recommendations on the four options?

1. **In your view, which one of the four options (option 1: Use of existing scientific networks; option 2: Establishment of a new scientific network focused on specific topics; option 3: Use of existing intergovernmental scientific advisory mechanisms; or option 4: Establishment of a new intergovernmental panel on land and soil) would be the most effective in achieving the following results?**

(a) **Regular global assessments**

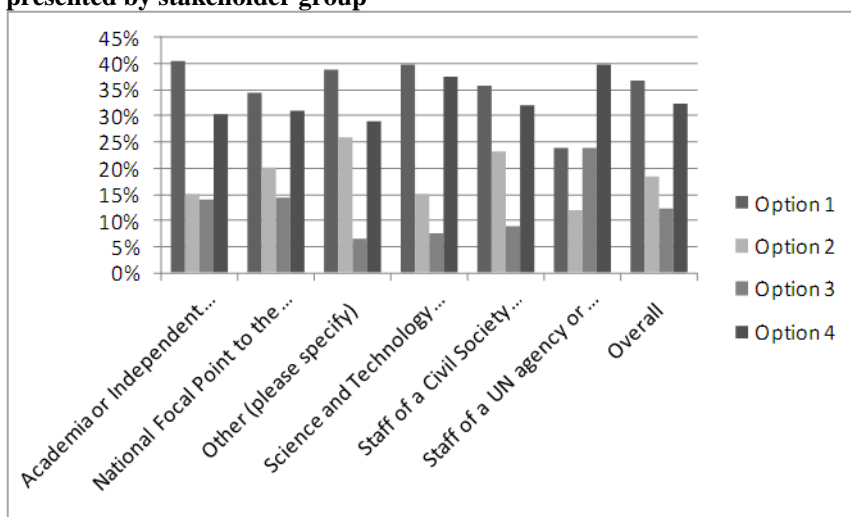
124. It was considered that options 1 and 4 would be the most effective in achieving regular global assessments. A total of 37 per cent and 33 per cent of respondents selected these options. Analysis suggests that most regions followed this pattern of voting (see figure 59). However, CEE favoured option 2. While other country Parties clearly favoured option 4 (53 per cent of votes), only 6 per cent selected option 1.

Figure 59
Ratings of the effectiveness of each option in providing regular global assessments, presented by region



125. Overall, all stakeholder groups favoured either option 1 or option 4. There was no difference in voting patterns between stakeholder groups (see figure 60).

Figure 60
Ratings of the effectiveness of each option in providing regular global assessments, presented by stakeholder group

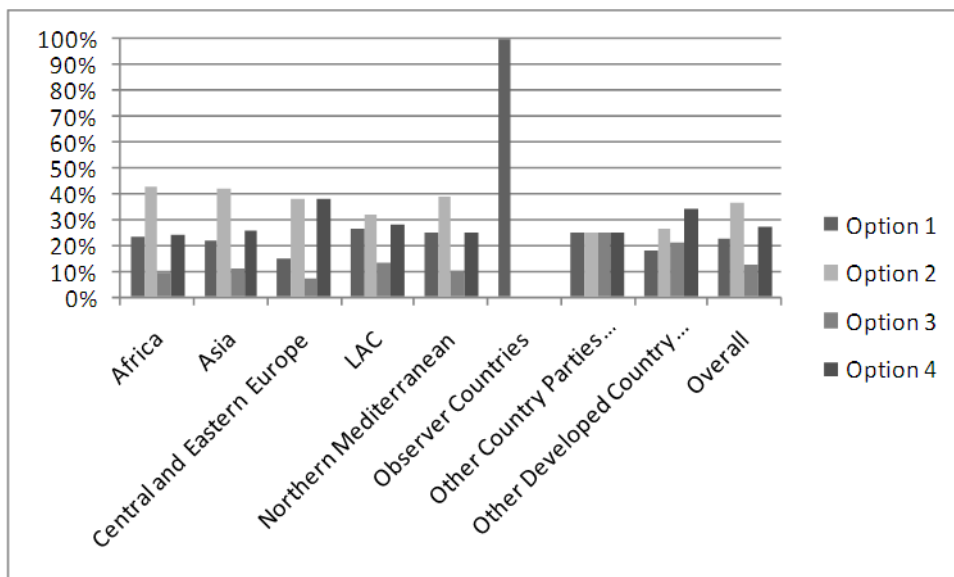


(b) Development of regional scenarios on future trends in land degradation

126. Overall, options 2 (36 per cent) and 4 (27 per cent) received the most votes. When analysed by region, option 2 was favoured by nearly all regions. Observer countries

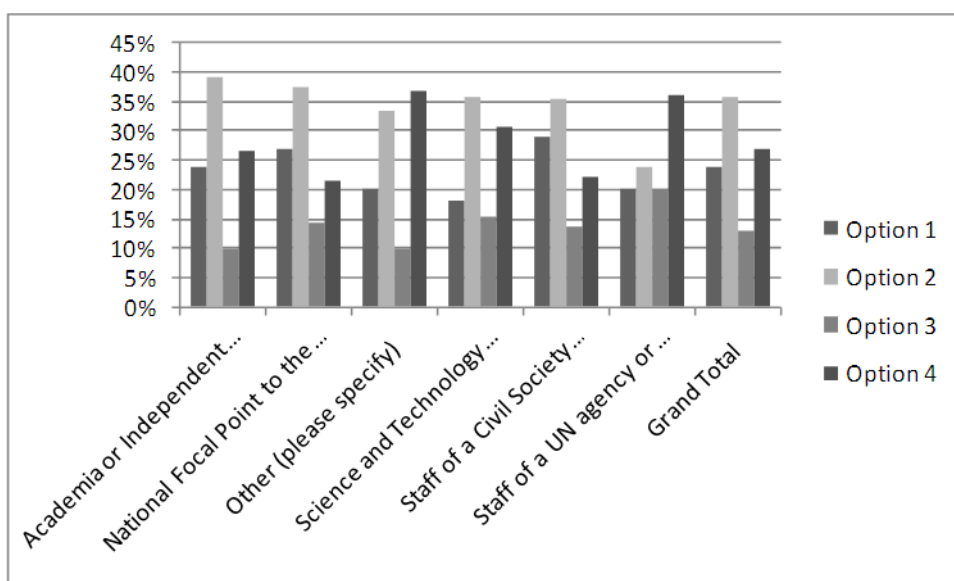
(constituting just one respondent) favoured option 1, while each option received equal votes from other country Parties (see figure 61).

Figure 61
Ratings of the effectiveness of each option in developing regional scenarios on future trends of land degradation, presented by region



127. Analysis by stakeholder group also provides a similar pattern of responses. Stakeholders from the “other” group and staff of a United Nations agency or IGO partner to the UNCCD nevertheless preferred option 4, with option 2 gaining the second highest number of votes in these groups.

Figure 62
Ratings of the effectiveness of each option in developing regional scenarios on future trends of land degradation, presented by stakeholder group

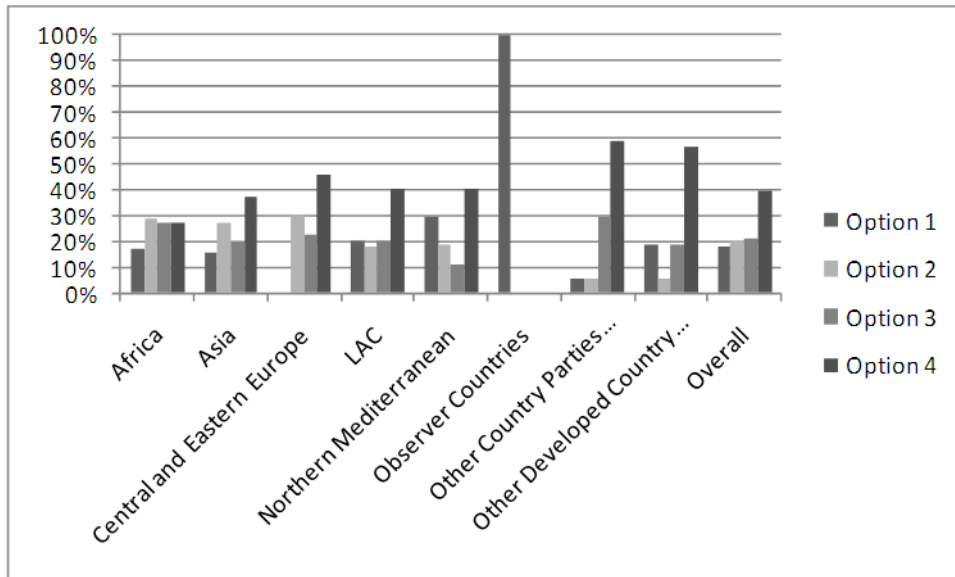


(c) **Development of global targets and scenarios**

128. Overall, 40 per cent of respondents selected option 4, giving this option the highest number of votes. Option 4 received most votes from nearly all regions. In Africa, option 4 received 27 per cent of the votes, option 3 also received 27 per cent, and option 2 received the most African votes with 29 per cent (see figure 63).

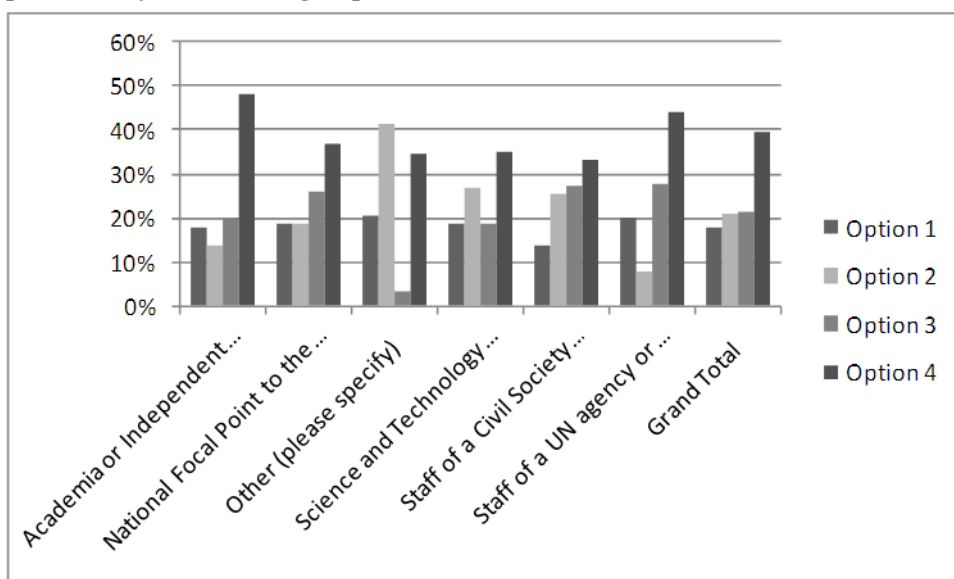
Figure 63

Ratings of the effectiveness of each option in developing global targets and scenarios, presented by region



129. When the results are analysed by stakeholder group, a similar pattern emerges, with the highest number of votes going to option 4 across all groups except “other stakeholders” (see figure 64).

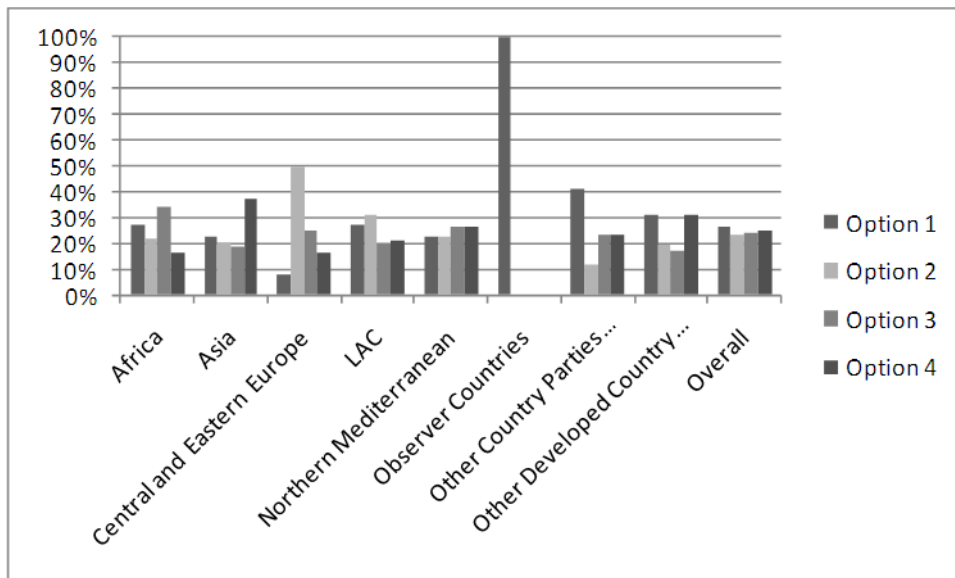
Figure 64
Ratings of the effectiveness of each option in developing global targets and scenarios, presented by stakeholder group



(d) Scientific review of national reports regarding evidence-based reporting criteria

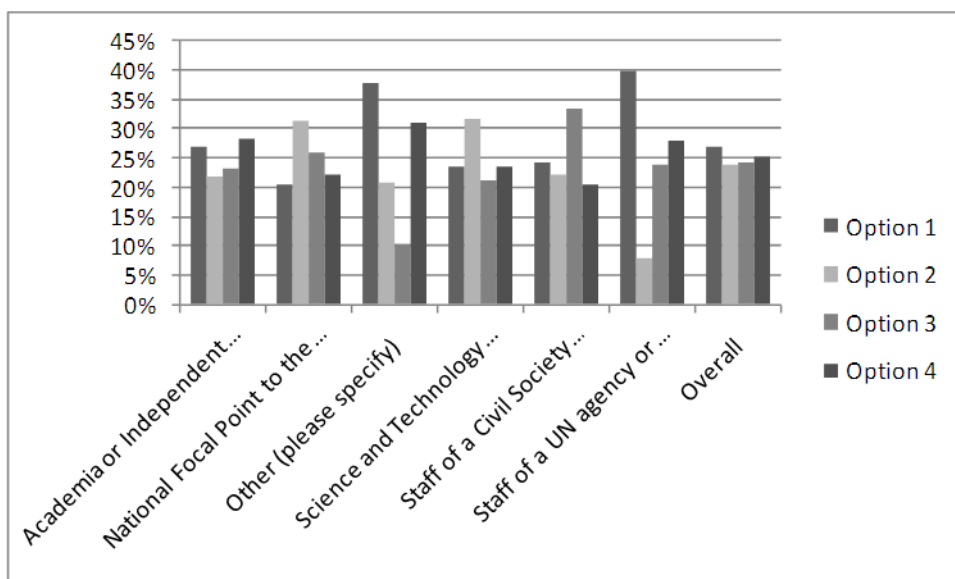
130. Overall, ratings were very similar for all options: option 1 received 27 per cent, option 2 received 24 per cent, option 3 received 24 per cent and option 4 received 25 per cent. This suggests that there is no strong overall preference. Regional differences were apparent in voting behaviour (see figure 65). Option 1 was preferred by respondents from observer countries, by other country Parties affected but not included in the Annexes, and by other developed country Parties not affected and not included in the Annexes. Votes from the latter group were identical in number to those received for option 4 (31 per cent). Option 2 was preferred by participants from CEE and LAC. Option 3 was preferred by participants from Africa and the Northern Mediterranean (although an identical percentage of votes – 27 per cent – was also allocated to option 4 by respondents from the Northern Mediterranean). Option 4 was preferred by participants from Asia.

Figure 65
Ratings of the effectiveness of each option in the scientific review of national reports regarding evidence-based reporting criteria, presented by region



131. Analysis by stakeholder group shows that option 1 was favoured by those in the “other” category and by staff of a United Nations agency or IGO partner to the UNCCD. Option 2 was favoured by NFPs and STCs; option 3 received the highest number of votes from staff of CSOs, whereas option 4 was marginally favoured over option 1 by academic or independent experts other than STCs (see figure 66).

Figure 66
Ratings of the effectiveness of each option in the scientific review of national reports regarding evidence-based reporting criteria, presented by stakeholder group

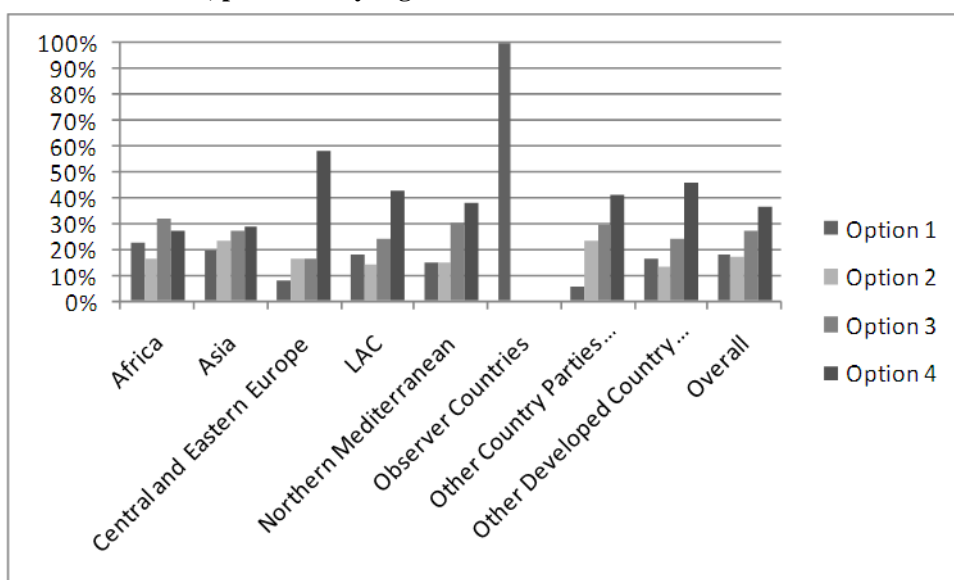


(e) **Policy-oriented recommendations**

132. Overall, option 4 received the most votes with 37 per cent, and option 3 came in second. This was evident in the voting patterns of respondents from all regions except Africa, where option 3 received marginally more votes than option 4 (see figure 67).

Figure 67

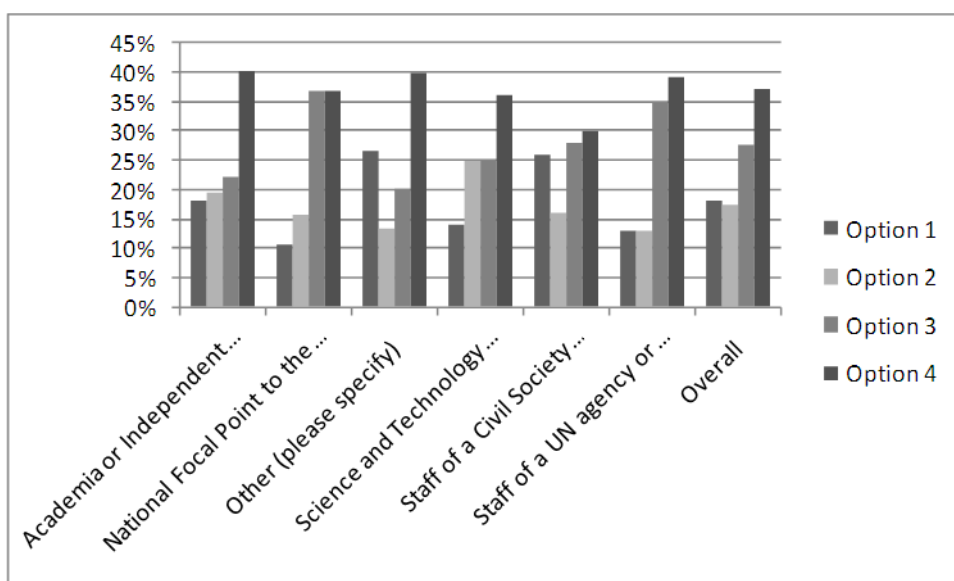
Ratings of the effectiveness of each option in providing policy-oriented recommendations, presented by region



133. Analysis by stakeholder group shows a similar pattern in that option 4 was most frequently selected, followed by option 3. NFPs rated options 3 and 4 equally (37 per cent each) (see figure 68).

Figure 68

Ratings of the effectiveness of each option in providing policy-oriented recommendations, presented by stakeholder group

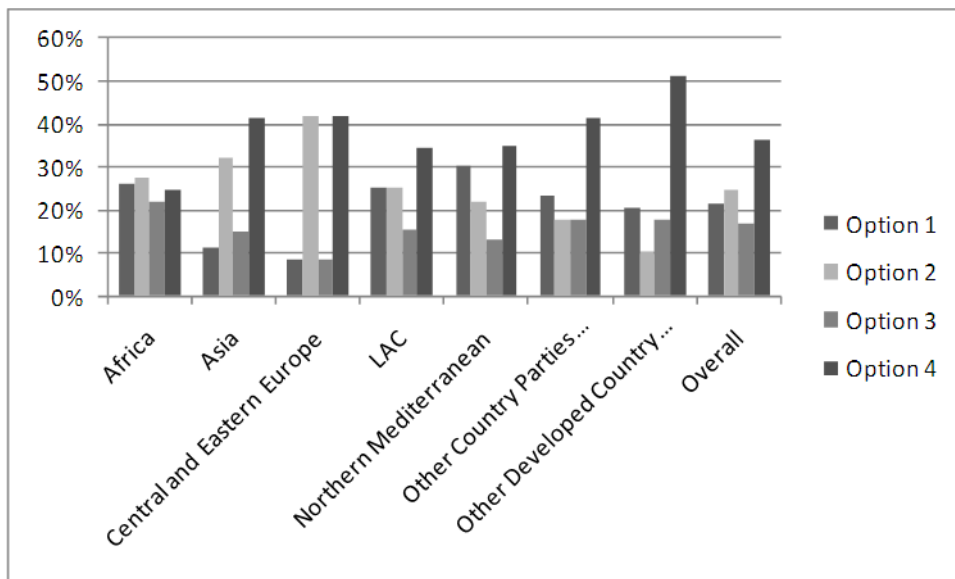


(f) Scientific advice on emerging issues

134. Overall, option 4 received the most votes, meaning it is considered the most effective in providing scientific advice on emerging issues. Option 4 received the most votes from all regions except Africa, where option 2 received one per cent more votes than option 4. Option 3 received the lowest number of votes overall, with only 17 per cent (see figure 69).

Figure 69

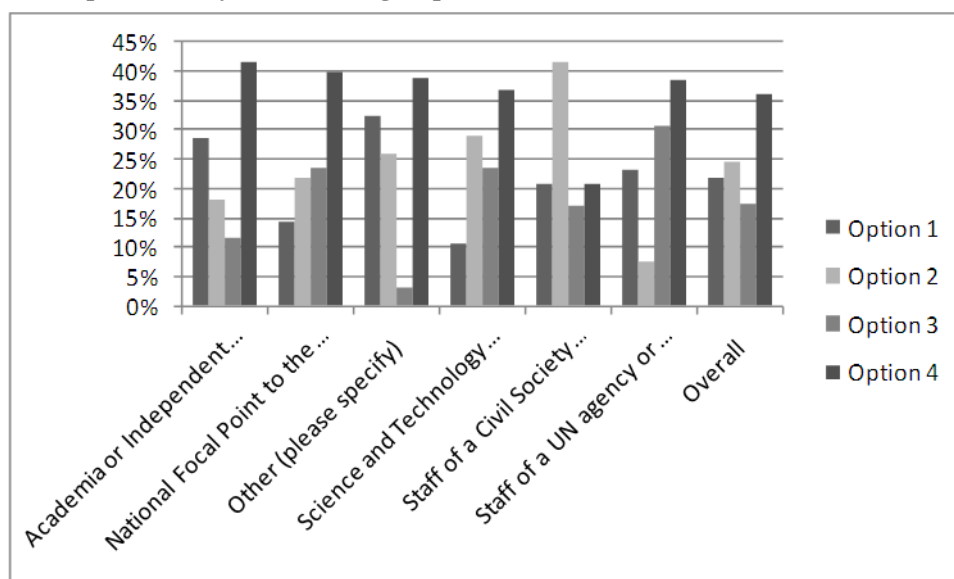
Ratings of the effectiveness of each option in providing scientific advice on emerging issues, presented by region



135. When analysed by stakeholder group, option 4 received the highest number of votes from all groups except for staff of a CSO, who rated option 2 the highest (see figure 70).

Figure 70

Rating of the effectiveness of each option in providing scientific advice on emerging issues, presented by stakeholder group



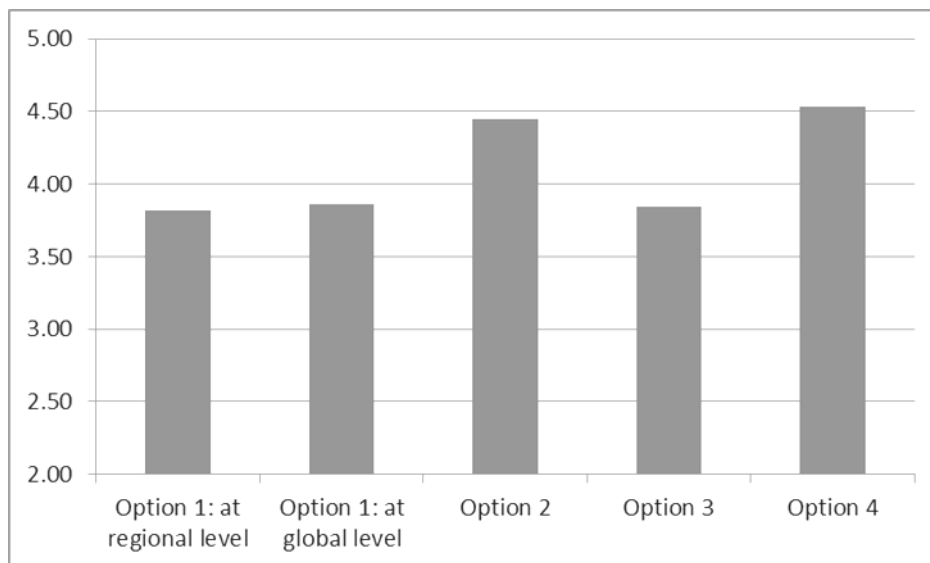
(g) Other output

136. Respondents suggested that other output might include: global awareness-raising (considered to be best achieved by option 4), synergy and syntheses of scientific work on land and land-related issues (considered to be best achieved by option 4), periodic evaluation of relevant networks (considered to be best achieved by option 4), and clear, consistent, scientifically-grounded communications to the general public (considered to be best achieved by option 1).

2. In your view, what would be the most effective option to ensure the provision of effective international, interdisciplinary scientific advice to the UNCCD?

137. The analysis of the concluding questions after each option shows that most respondents considered that the establishment of a new international panel on land and soil (option 4) would be most effective. The second most favoured option is the establishment of a new scientific network (option 2). This is followed by the use of existing networks at global level (option 1), the use of existing intergovernmental scientific advisory mechanisms (option 3), and the use of existing networks at regional level (option 1), all of which received a comparable degree of consent (see figure 71).

Figure 71
Normalized weighted sum of participants' ratings of the effectiveness of the proposed options (1= totally ineffective; 6= very effective)



3. Besides the four options introduced above, are there any other options not yet considered for the provision of international, interdisciplinary scientific advice that you think should be considered?

138. Other options that were suggested included the development of a global drylands observing system as a source of scientific input into the UNCCD process, the development of a database of relevant scientific organizations which different stakeholders (including the UNCCD) could go to when they wanted advice on a particular issue, and the use of existing scientific networks which work specifically with non-academic stakeholders to promote participatory and applied research in conjunction with a newly-developed scientific panel deriving its expertise from a scientific network of networks.

4. Do you have any final comments?

139. Respondents who answered this question largely repeated or elaborated upon their answers to other parts of the survey. Particular points that were highlighted included the need for sustainable financing of any new panel and/or network, the importance of linking to existing panels such as IPCC and IPBES, drawing on synergies between them rather than competing for resources, and the need to find ways of incorporating indigenous knowledge into any mechanism for providing scientific advice to the UNCCD. Overall, participants welcomed the opportunity to participate in the survey, and many acknowledged the urgency of improving scientific advice to the UNCCD in order to improve efforts to combat DLDD on the ground. Finally, it was stressed that the name of any new panel which may be established should be considered carefully in order to avoid an over-emphasis on biophysical elements.

Summary of section 4

140. Overall, option 4 (the establishment of a new international panel on land and soil) was most consistently considered to be the most effective option in providing international, interdisciplinary scientific advice to the UNCCD.

141. Options 1 and 4 were viewed as most effective for developing regular global assessments, while options 2 and 4 were considered most effective for developing regional scenarios on the future trends of land degradation. Option 4 was considered most effective for developing global targets and scenarios, whereas options 1 and 5 were considered most effective for the scientific review of national reports regarding criteria for evidence-based reporting. Options 3 and 4 were viewed to be most effective in developing policy-oriented recommendations, whereas option 4 was considered most effective in providing scientific advice on emerging issues. Where respondents considered other outputs, option 4 was seen as the most effective way of delivering these.

142. There were no notable differences in voting behaviour between regions or stakeholder groups.

143. Several respondents recognized that the four options provided were not mutually exclusive, and suggested that perhaps the most effective way forward would be to develop more than one mechanism in parallel. This would allow both short- and long-term scientific information needs to be addressed.

144. Despite the clear support for a new advisory mechanism, the use of existing networks and intergovernmental panels was not clearly rejected. Almost 40 per cent of respondents awarded the use of existing mechanisms (option 1 or option 3) with one of the two higher ratings. Ways in which to build upon these existing panels and networks need to be assessed further by the AGSA.

VI. Concluding summary and recommendations

145. The lack of sound and continuous scientific advice provided to the UNCCD has been an ongoing issue. This report has presented an extended analysis of the results of the e-survey conducted as a result of decision 18/COP.9. These results confirm that action needs to be taken urgently in order to find and implement a sustainable solution for the provision of effective and transparent interdisciplinary, international scientific advice to the UNCCD.

146. Several important considerations have emerged in the final analysis of the e-survey which the AGSA may wish to take into account as they develop a scenario setting out how scientific advice on DLDD issues may be provided to the UNCCD.

147. Overall, there is demand for something new which builds upon existing mechanisms. This represents an opportunity for the UNCCD to learn from existing modalities for the provision of scientific advice to multilateral environmental conventions, including the use of networks and panels/platforms. The necessary expertise could be acquired by drawing on the documentation provided by existing networks and panels/platforms, as well as through consultation with key individuals involved. Such analysis and consultation could aim to formulate a complementary approach, avoiding overlap in the work of existing networks and panels/platforms and developing possible new modalities for the provision of scientific advice to the UNCCD process. It is anticipated that the process of learning from previous initiatives will facilitate and streamline the development of the UNCCD scientific advisory mechanism.

Key considerations and recommendations

1. Status of the provision of scientific advice to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

148. Respondents clearly indicated that scientific knowledge is viewed broadly and that it should include non-academic knowledge that has been validated through scientific review. This needs to be considered when defining the limits of scientific advice and when developing membership criteria, including how non-academic stakeholders can be included in the process (see paragraphs 158 and 173–174 for further elaboration on processes by which this can be taken into account).

149. The implications of “international” versus “intergovernmental” advice needs to be analysed, bearing in mind that the majority of e-survey respondents from all regions stressed that independence from political influence is absolutely essential and that there is a need for the scientific independence of those providing advice to the UNCCD. The name of any new panel which may be established should clearly convey the status of independence of the scientific advice being provided.

2. Coverage of the core and non-core disciplines of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

150. There is a need to ensure that the process developed to provide scientific advice to the UNCCD is carefully designed in order to allow flexibility across core and non-core disciplines as well as clarity in selecting the topics on which scientific advice is sought. Seventy-eight per cent of respondents considered it absolutely essential or rather important that scientific expertise covers all DLDD topics. An important first step in addressing this consideration is therefore to identify the core DLDD topics, perhaps with a view to prioritizing topics based on an analysis of those topics that are not already being covered by other (existing) scientific panels. Given the cross-cutting nature of the UNCCD, a clear list of topics and disciplines would need to be developed to provide the basis for future steps.

151. The strong preference of respondents for expertise across all DLDD topics to be included highlights the importance of developing a flexible process for the inclusion of scientists with a range of disciplinary expertise. This should be taken into consideration when developing a process for the selection of advisers.

152. Respondents did not strongly agree that the use of the roster of independent experts should be central in the provision of international, interdisciplinary scientific advice. However, the AGSA may wish to develop a process incorporating use of the roster in some way.

153. Proposals on the possible involvement of existing panels/networks for input into the UNCCD were put forward in the e-survey. This has implications for the process of selecting panel members, as well as the ways in which the panel links to other bodies and networks. Use of existing panels/networks may be important in ensuring specific disciplinary advice on non-core topics. It may be that an overarching scientific advisory panel would need to have specific expertise and develop mechanisms through which broader disciplinary input, or input relating to topics beyond the expertise of the panel, can be brought in.

154. The AGSA may also wish to develop guidelines outlining the duration of panel membership and establish how long it could operate with scientific experts from particular disciplinary backgrounds. The need for both biophysical scientific disciplines and social science and economics disciplines is clearly recognized. Depending on the issues arising and their topic areas, it may be necessary to release periodic calls for short-term input from experts with specific expertise, in addition to the development of any new scientific panel.

155. Questions in the e-survey on network and panel membership were explicitly linked to the responses participants provided to earlier questions, making analysis of the real meaning of the responses difficult to interpret. It may be that the AGSA needs to undertake a specific gap analysis with regard to existing networks. Such a gap analysis could provide information on the effectiveness of existing networks in terms of their ability to cover scientific issues relating to the Convention. The analysis of perceived gaps in the coverage of issues, topics and disciplines, once verified with the existing networks concerned, could also provide a basis for improving the effectiveness of these networks in terms of their ability to address issues relating to the UNCCD process.

156. A variety of interpretations were received through the e-survey for “network” and “panel” as well as “regional” and “international”. In following up on this in order to identify how the UNCCD can interact with existing networks and panels to gain scientific advice, particularly on non-core topics, the AGSA would need to define the criteria that characterize a “network”. Considerations may include: (a) the number of institutions/organizations that would constitute the minimum number for a “network”; (b) the kinds of activities that would be typical of a “network” as opposed to a research project, organization or other grouping; (c) what constitutes “regional” and “international” – for example, whether a network is regional if it has a regional remit, or whether it is regional if it involves scientists from more than one country in a region; (d) the criteria through which scientists can become involved in each network, which is an important consideration in maintaining the scientific credentials of those providing advice to the UNCCD; and (e) the scientific topics and disciplines that a network and/or panel should cover in order to be deemed “relevant” to the UNCCD. These considerations apply equally at international and regional levels, and the AGSA may wish to develop a terms of reference for a consultant to look into these matters.

157. Many respondents were aware of and involved in existing panels/networks which they considered to be relevant to the UNCCD. The main barriers to respondents’ participation in these networks and panels were considered to be: (a) a lack of transparency – people were unsure how to become involved; or (b) they did not meet the membership criteria. This indicates that a transparent process is required as to the criteria for membership and the process of becoming involved. See paragraph 159 for further discussion on this subject.

3. Treatment of the regional approach of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification within the provision of scientific advice

158. The regional approach is specific to the UNCCD and distinguishes it from other initiatives and mechanisms. Respondents to the e-survey felt that it was vital that the provision of scientific advice should reflect regional concerns. This would add value and complement existing and evolving mechanisms which provide scientific advice to other conventions. The regional level is also perceived to be important for many existing networks. Interlinkages between networks at the same level (national or regional) need to be evaluated in addition to interlinkages between networks at different levels (regional or global, for instance). This finding suggests that the AGSA needs to develop a process that can facilitate participation from each UNCCD region, and that analysis of scientific networks (see paragraphs 153, 156 and 163) needs to cover both international and regional levels. See also paragraph 159 on membership.

4. Membership

159. The e-survey clearly suggested that respondents felt strongly that there was a need for those providing scientific advice to the UNCCD to have solid scientific credentials. The AGSA would therefore need to develop clear quality assurance procedures in order to

ensure that advisers had excellent scientific credentials, grounded in the latest scientific research and publications.

160. Similar considerations would need to be applied should the AGSA wish to identify “nodal” or “gatekeeper” scientific networks, as any advice received through links to scientific networks needs to be quality assured.

161. Selection criteria for those providing scientific advice to the UNCCD could include: (a) a strong track record of international peer-reviewed publications in the topic area; (b) editorial board membership of a leading international scientific journal or board membership of a leading scientific organization or society; and/or (c) a track record in obtaining funding for scientific research in the topic area.

162. Participation based on closed membership was largely rejected by respondents, and so the AGSA would need to develop a process for wider input. This could include, for example, calls for the nomination of experts distributed through particular networks and/or scientific societies which work on the theme in question. The regional approach needs to be considered in the development of membership criteria, alongside processes to ensure interdisciplinarity and the coverage of both core and non-core UNCCD topics.

5. Functioning and working principles (including both networking with other networks and the operation of activities within the group)

163. The precise nature of the ways in which networking with other scientific networks can be undertaken requires further analysis, as both horizontal links (between networks at the same level, either regional or global) and vertical links (between networks at different levels) appear to be important and need to be considered.

164. The process of identifying how this can be done most effectively and efficiently could involve a process of mapping out: (a) key topics of interest and relevance to the UNCCD; (b) key networks and panels working on those topics at both regional and global levels (with particular attention to the disciplinary mix of panellists/network members and any differences between regions); and (c) the links between the different networks working on different topics of interest and relevance to the UNCCD.

165. Such a mapping process would enable the identification of “gatekeeper” or “nodal” networks through which communications can be channelled in order to reach other networks or thematic areas. This will be especially important because it is highly unlikely that one single network or panel will be able to cover the entire diversity of thematic issues relevant to the UNCCD. Such an analysis would further help to identify which topics lack an existing network and/or scientific society at either regional or global level. The information on the range of existing networks at regional and global level will be crucial in assessing whether the advice from such networks could be international, taking into account regional input.

166. The proposal to use the current series of UNCCD scientific conferences to build a new network would need to be evaluated further, taking into account the assessment of UNCCD scientific conferences foreseen in decision 16/COP.9, which is to take place following the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference in 2013. This decision will shape the future process of organizing CST sessions in a preliminary scientific and conference-style format.

167. The functioning and working principles of a panel need not only consider interactions with those outside the group, but also how the interactions are to take place between panel members. It is suggested that full use be made of cost-effective communication mechanisms such as Skype (or similar), Google Docs (or similar) for sharing documents, and video conferencing. Face-to-face meetings will still be necessary,

but capitalizing on the wide variety of other communication media is likely to prove both time-efficient and cost-effective.

6. Science–policy interface and reporting process

168. In the process of developing a single scenario outlining a way forward, the AGSA may benefit from identifying the range of ways in which scientific advice can be reported to the UNCCD, taking into account the existing structures and subsidiary bodies of the UNCCD, as well as the timing of reporting processes. Ideally, a mechanism that permits two-way communication should be considered.

169. Careful thought is required as to how a panel providing scientific advice can be linked to Bureau of the CST, the CST as a whole, the COP and the CRIC. There should be links to the current efforts of the CST on knowledge management in order to connect existing networks and panels/platforms at global and regional level with the future scientific knowledge brokering system.

170. It is necessary to clarify to which body of the UNCCD a scientific panel would be required to report. This would depend on who is required to set the mandate and programme of work for the group tasked with providing scientific advice to the UNCCD. The e-survey results suggest that any new panel should be independent of the UNCCD political processes, and yet should provide policy-relevant (and not policy-prescriptive) advice.

171. The nature of tasks that a new panel could undertake (global assessments, assessments of regional trends, assessments of different policy scenarios, and so on) will also need to be taken into account when determining exactly how the science–policy interface should look, because what is possible will depend on the timing of reporting. A process also needs to be established for the review of the provision of scientific advice, which may involve scientists as well as users of research across different stakeholder groups.

172. At a broader level, there is currently no channel through which scientists can report on their activities under the UNCCD. Similarly, at the national and regional levels and drawing on the capacities of scientific networks, a review of mechanisms through which the scientific review of national action programmes (NAPs), subregional action programmes (SRAPs) and regional action programmes (RAPs) can take place may need to be considered. Possible links between the provision of international, interdisciplinary scientific advice to the UNCCD process and the development of a scientific knowledge brokering system could also be established. This highlights the need for agreement on formal ways of communicating scientific advice.

7. Involvement of non-academic stakeholders

173. Processes need to be developed for both selecting and involving stakeholders other than scientists in the provision of scientific advice, given the strong support of e-survey respondents for an interpretation of scientific advice that involves other forms of knowledge which have been scientifically validated.

174. This extends beyond the inclusion of local and indigenous knowledge, and suggests there is a need to involve research consumers and research users, both to address their information needs and to allow access to the knowledge they hold so that it feeds into the UNCCD process. Research users and consumers with relevant knowledge may include, for example, stakeholders such as the private sector and NGOs/civil society. The UNCCD list of accredited NGOs could serve as a useful starting point for identifying appropriate NGOs/CSOs.

8. Review of non-academic knowledge

175. It is necessary to develop a process through which non-academic knowledge will be peer reviewed in order to ensure scientific validation. Such a process could, if appropriate, broaden input beyond panel members by inviting members of scientific networks/societies to comment on/provide scientific evidence to validate information on topics for which other forms of knowledge are available. Targeting scientific research institutes with expertise in key areas to do this would be another possible way forward. It is necessary for the scientific reviewers of non-academic knowledge to have solid scientific credentials. Criteria as outlined in paragraph 159 in relation to the selection of panel members could also be applied in the selection of peer reviewers in order to ensure their scientific excellence.

9. Estimated cost

176. Participants in the e-survey commented that they see financial restrictions as a key challenge in establishing a new network or panel. An analysis of the estimated costs and benefits of various options for the provision of scientific advice, taking into account both international and regional considerations, would need to link closely to the functioning and modes of working of the group as presented in the final scenario delivered by the AGSA.

177. The AGSA would need to pave the way for financial sustainability, taking into consideration both the long and the short term, as well as define the relevant responsibilities. Investigation into the costs of different panel configurations is needed (taking into account different scenarios in terms of number of members, number of meetings, length of meetings, administrative requirements, translations and other support required, and so on) before the final way forward can be presented. See also paragraphs 163–167 on the functioning and working principles, as many different technological media can be employed to help reduce costs.

10. Expected outputs

178. In conducting its work, the AGSA will need to produce output ensuring that progress is made in a timely way and that they consider time frames for implementing a possible combination of options presented within a single scenario. This may include, for example, a report on progress made in discussing the options for the provision of scientific advice to the UNCCD for each meeting of the Bureau of the CST before the eleventh session of the CST (CST 11), and updates in the form of briefing notes and power point presentations to be shared at regional consultations held on the occasion of the third special session of the CST, the twelfth session of the CRIC and the eleventh session of the COP.

179. The final output from the AGSA would need to be a single scenario outlining the way forward for providing scientific advice, taking into account the results of the e-survey and the considerations, possible processes and need for further work/analyses outlined in this document.

180. The expected output from any new panel would also need to be proposed. This may include regional/global assessments; development of global targets, scenarios and trends; scientific reviews on particular key issues; policy-oriented recommendations; assessments of NAPs, RAPs and SRAPs; and/or scientific advice on emerging issues.

Annex I

Compilation of existing regional and global “networks”

Some items listed are panels or institutions rather than networks. However, these panels or institutions are considered by respondents to play a networking role.

<i>Regional network</i>	<i>Global network</i>	<i>Abbreviation</i>
AfricaAdapt		
African Conservation Tillage Network		ACT-AFRICA
African Forest Research Network		AFORNET
African Monsoon and Multidisciplinary Analyses		AMMA
African Network for Agriculture, Agroforestry and Natural Resources Education		ANAFE
African Network for Soil Biology and Fertility		AfNET
African Soil Science Society		ASSS
Agri4Dev		
	Agriculture Man Ecology Foundation	AMEF
	AgriCultures Network	
	AgriMet	
	Alerte précoce	
Animal Traction Network for Eastern and Southern Africa		ATNESA
Arab Desertification Monitoring & Assessment		
	Arbeitskreis Wüstenrandforschung	AK Wüstenränder
	Arid Zone Ecology Forum	AZEF
	Assessment, Research, and Integration of Desertification research network	AridNet
	Articulação Semi-Árido	ASA
Asia Pacific Association of Forestry Research Institutions		APAFRI
Asia Soil Conservation Network for the Humid Tropics		ASOCON
Asociación Española Agricultura de Conservación/Suelos Vivos		AEAC/SV
	Association Internationale de la Science du Sol	AISS

<i>Regional network</i>	<i>Global network</i>	<i>Abbreviation</i>
Association of Arab Environmental NGOs		
Austrian Soil Science Society		OEBG
	Biodiversity Indicators Partnership	BIP
	Bird Life International	
Camel Association of Pakistan		CAP
Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development		CNIRD
Center for Development Research (Zentrum für Entwicklungsforschung)		ZEF
Central African Forests Commission		COMIFAC
Central Asia and the Caucasus Association of Agricultural Research Institutions		CACAARI
Central Asian Countries Initiative for Land Management		CACILM
	Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza	CATIE
	Centre de Liaison pour l'Environnement International	
	Centre de Recherche Océanographique	CRO
Centre for Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa		CARDESA
	Center for People and Forests	RECOFTC
Centro del Agua para Zonas Áridas y Semiáridas de América Latina y El Caribe		CAZALAC
	Climate Action Network	CAN
Climate Change Action Network - Uganda		CAN-U
	Collaborative Group on Solid Waste Management in Low and Middle Income Countries	CWG
Comissão Nacional de Combate à Desertificação		CNCD
	Comité permanent Inter Etats de Lutte contre la Secheresse	CILSS
Comité Scientifique Français de la Désertification		CSFD
	Commission Economique du Bétail, de la Viande et des Ressources Halieutiques	CEBEVIRHA

<i>Regional network</i>	<i>Global network</i>	<i>Abbreviation</i>
	Commission on Ecosystem Management	CEM
Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South		COMSATS
	Commission on Sustainable Agriculture and Climate Change	
	Community Based Adaptation Network	
Conseil Ouest et Centre Africain pour la Recherche et le Développement Agricoles		CORAF
	Conservation Agriculture Network	
	Consortium of Research and Development Institutes and Centers for the Coordination of Agronomic and Forest Research and Technical Assistance	CCRAFAT
	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research	CGIAR
Croatian Academic and Research Network		CARNet
Danish Development Research Network		DDRN
Desert*Net Germany		
	DesertNet International	DNI
	DIVERSITAS	
Drought Management Centre for Southeastern Europe		DMCSEE
	DryNet	
Ecological Society of America		ESA
Economic Community of West African States		ECOWAS
Environment and Sustainable Development in Central Asia		CARNET
European Confederation of Soil Science Societies		ECSSS
European DesertNet		
European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Council		EEAC
European Environment Information and Observation Network		Eionet
European Land and Soil Alliance		ELSA
European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy		EPBRs
European Public Water Network		

<i>Regional network</i>	<i>Global network</i>	<i>Abbreviation</i>
European Society for Soil Conservation		ESSC
European Soil Bureau Network		ESBN
	Fire Effects on Soil Properties	FUEGORED
Food and Agriculture Organization Eastern and Southern Soil Knowledge Committee		
	Food and Agriculture Organization Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands	FAO LADA
Forest Carbon Asia		
Forestry Research Network for Sub-Saharan Africa		FORNESSA
Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa		FARA
	Forum for Climate and Global Change	ProClim
Fynbos Forum		
German Soil Science Society		DBG
	Global Environment Monitoring System	GEMS/Water
	Global Network of Dryland Research Institutes	GNDRI
	Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration	GPFLR
	Global Risk Forum	GRF
	Global Soil Partnership	GSP
	Global Water Network	
	Global Water Partnership	GWP
Global Water Partnership – Southeast Asia		GWP-SEA
Groupe de Travail Désertification		GTD
Grupo de Recursos Naturales de INTA Patagonia		
Grupo de REDD a nivel de Centro America		
Gulf Cooperation Council		GCC
	HELIO International	
Indian Council of Agricultural Research		ICAR
Indian Network on Cultural and Biological Diversity		INCBD
Iniciativa Latinoamericana y del Caribe sobre Ciencia y Tecnología		ILACCT
Institut de l'environnement et recherches agricoles du Burkina Faso		INERA

<i>Regional network</i>	<i>Global network</i>	<i>Abbreviation</i>
	Institut de recherche pour le développement	IRD
Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research		IAI
	Intergovernmental Authority on Development	IGAD
	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change	IPCC
	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services	IPBES
	International Academy of Science	IAS
	International Agency for the Development of Environmental Information	ADIE
	International Association of Hydrological Sciences	IAHS
	International Atomic Energy Agency	IAEA
	International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas	ICARDA
International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas – Middle East and North Africa Region Development		ICARDA-MENARID
	International Center for Tropical Agriculture	CIAT
	International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage	ICID
	International Committee for the Coordination of Agriculture	ICCA
	International Council for Science	ICSU
	International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics	ICRISAT
	International Food Policy Research Institute	IFPRI
	International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change	IHDP
	International Institute for Sustainable Development	IISD
	International Law Commission	ILC
	International Livestock Research Institute	ILRI
	International Network of Drinking-Water Regulators	RegNet
	International Pesticides Elimination Network	IPEN
	International Rainwater Catchment Systems Association	IRCSA

<i>Regional network</i>	<i>Global network</i>	<i>Abbreviation</i>
	International Sabo Network	
	International Soil Conservation Organization	ISCO
	International Soil Moisture Network	ISMN
	International Soil Tillage Research Organization	ISTRO
	International Union for Conservation of Nature	IUCN
	International Union of Soil Sciences	IUSS
	International Union of Forest Research Organizations	IUFRO
Japanese Association for Arid Land Studies		
Japanese Society of Irrigation, Drainage and Rural Engineering		
Joint Research Centre – European Commission		JRC
	Landcare	
	Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands of the Food and Agriculture Organization	LADA
	Latin American Remote Sensing and Forest Fires Network	RedLaTIF
	League for Pastoral Peoples	LPP
League of Arab States		LAS
	Linking Climate Adaptation Network	LCA
	Local Governments for Sustainability	ICLEI
L'Organisation Africaine de Cartographie et de Télédétection		OACT
Médiaterre		
National Ecological Observatory Network		NEON
	Network of National Meteorological or Hydro-Meteorological Institutions/Organizations	
New Partnership for Africa's Development		NEPAD
	Nexus Conference network	
North African partnership for taxonomy		BioNET-NAFRINET
Observatoire du Sahara et du Sahel		OSS
	Partnership for Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction	PEDRR

<i>Regional network</i>	<i>Global network</i>	<i>Abbreviation</i>
	Partnership Initiative for Sustainable Land Management	PISLM
Platform for African–European Partnership on Agricultural Research for Development		PAEPARD
	Population-Environment Research Network	PERN
	Poverty and Conservation Learning Group	PCLG
Programa Territorial Integrado Hídrico		PTI-HIDRICO
	Publish What You Pay	PWYP
	Red Académica del Agua	
Red Internacional de Lucha Contra la desertificación y la sequía		
Red de Desarrollo Sostenible de Colombia		RDS
Red de ecosistemas secos		
Red de Fondos Ambientales de Latinoamérica y el Caribe		RedLAC
Red de Información Regional sobre Desertificación para América Latina y el Caribe		
	Red Internacional de los Organismos de Cuencas	RIOC
Red Latinoamerica sobre Cosecha de Aguas Lluvias (Rainwater Partnership Network)		
Red latinoamericana de científicos en el tema de Sequia, dirigida por CAZALAC		
Red Latinoamericana de Cooperación Técnica en Manejo de Cuencas Hidrográficas		REDLACH
Red Latinoamericana de Restauración Ecológica		REDLAN
Red Latinoamericana sobre los recursos hídricos		
Red Mexicana de Cuencas		
Red Mexicana de Investigación Ecológica a Largo Plazo		Red Mex-LTER
Red Nacional de Formación e Investigación Ambiental		RedfiA
Regional Coordination and Development Commission of Alentejo		CCDR-A
Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment		ROPME
Renewable Fuels Association		RFA

<i>Regional network</i>	<i>Global network</i>	<i>Abbreviation</i>
ResearchGate		
Réseau africain d'action forestière		RAAF
Réseau Arabe des Experts en Environnement		
Réseau des Aires Protégées d'Afrique Centrale		RAPAC
Réseau des Institutions de Formation Forestière et Environnementale de l'Afrique Centrale		RIFFEAC
Réseau des Jeunes pour les forêts d'Afrique Centrale		REJEFAC
Réseau des Populations Autochtones et Locales d'Afrique Centrale		REPALEAC
Réseau Femmes Africaines pour le Développement Durable		REFADD
	Réseau International d'ONG sur la Désertification	RIOD
Réseau Sahel Désertification		
	Rio+20 Collaborative Online Platform	
Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel of the Global Environmental Facility		STAP-GEF
Scientific Research Institute of Irrigation		
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme		SPREP
Sociedad Colombiana de la Ciencia del Suelo		
Sociedad Dominicana de la Ciencia del Suelo		SDCS
Sociedad Española de la Ciencia del Suelo		
Sociedad Latinoamericana de la Ciencia del Suelo		SLCS
	Sociedad Mundial de la Ciencia del Suelo	
	Sociedad mundial manejo de agua	
	Society for Ecological Restoration	SER
	Society of Animal, Veterinary and Environmental Scientists	SAVES
	Soil and Water Research Management Network	SWMnet
Soil Science Society of East Africa		SSSEA
South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation		SAARC
Southern African Development Community		SADC

<i>Regional network</i>	<i>Global network</i>	<i>Abbreviation</i>
Southern and Eastern Africa Rainwater Network		SearNet
	Sustainable Management of Marginal Drylands	SUMAMAD
	SysTEM for Analysis, Research and Training	START
	Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation	CTA
TerrAfrica	The Access Initiative	TAI
	The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity	TEEB
United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries		UN-REDD
	Global Network on Water and Development Information for Arid Lands	G-WADI
	West Africa Regional Network – Global Observation of Forest and Land Cover	WARN-GOFC
	World AgroForestry Centre	ICRAF
	World Association of Soil and Water Conservation	WASWC
	World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies	WOCAT
	World Vegetable Center	AVRDC

Annex II

Topics missing from the work of existing scientific networks suggested by the participants and which could be relevant to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

The responses in this list are likely to link closely to gaps in respondents' thematic areas of expertise. The list of "other" responses in annex II thus needs to be viewed with this awareness in mind and should not be considered exhaustive.

Analysis of the status and trend of desertification

Applying and developing regional decision support systems

Capacity-building

Climate change and desertification control in drylands

Cold deserts: impact of climate change on ecosystems and livelihoods

Synthesis of all relevant scientific knowledge for the UNCCD process

Environmental past as key for the future

Flexibility in thematic focus to be able to provide advice on a range of issues (i.e. topics should not be predetermined)

Food security

Governance and institutional capacity

Implementation of good policies to combat desertification

Influence of culture and institutions on land management and soil protection

Knowledge exchange

Land tenure

Land-use change and links to broader development activities

Legal aspects contributing to DLDD

Linking science and indigenous knowledge

Poverty

Public policy/science-policy interface

Technology transfer (traditional and new technologies)

Topics determined by the Conference of the Parties

Water issues

Annex III

Intergovernmental scientific advisory mechanisms mentioned by respondents

The following caveats should be noted in relation to the list below. In many cases only abbreviations were provided. Many of the mechanisms are not intergovernmental or scientific; and translation has not been undertaken of the acronyms where answers were provided in French or Spanish.

ACSAD

ADIE

Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional (AECID)

Alerte précoce

CBD SBSTTA

CCT/grupos asesores formales

CEDEAO/CILSS

CEEAC/NEPAD

CEFDHAC

CILSS

COMIFAC

Comision Centroamericana de Ambiente y Desarrollo (CCAD)

Comité interinstitutionnel de Pilotage CCLCD

CONAF

Conservación de suelos en sistemas agroforestales Costa Rica

COP

CRIC

CST

DesertNet International

Drought Management Centre for South-Eastern Europe (DMCSEE)

Environmental Management Group (United Nations Environment Programme)

EPA

European Soil Bureau Network

European thematic soil strategy

Forest Carbon Asia

Foro ASPA
G77 and China
GEF-STAP
GLP
GM
GRF Davos
GSP (Global Soil Partnership)
ICLEI
ICSU
IFPRI
IGBP
IHDP
Indo-German bilateral collaboration
International Union of Soil Science
Interstate Committee on Sustainable Development
IPBES
IPCRI (Israel-Palestine Centre of Research and Information)
IPF
Italian National Soil Observatory
IUCN
IUFRO / SPDC (Programa Especial para Países en Desarrollo)
IUFRO-led Global Forest Expert Panels (GFEP)
JLG
Joint Research Center (JRC) together with related research/development projects such as
DESURVEY
LADA
Land care
Land coalition
Manejo de suelos degradados en Chile
MDGs
Monitoring and assessment of sustainable land management
National Committee to combat Desertification
Near east forestry and range commission, coordinated by FAO
NEPAD/FARA/CORAF

Network of the Regional PRAIS Reference Centres of the UNCCD and WMCM

Observatoire du Sahara et du Sahel (OSS)

Ozone

PDDAA

Plataforma Africa-Caribe-Pacifico

Plataforma de la EIRD

PNUE

PSFE

PSSA

Roster de la CNULD

SEA

Soil Science Society of America

SWM

TAIEX

TerrAFRICA

The Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern Central Africa (ASARECA)

UN ISDR

UNCCD roster of experts

UNCSD

UNEP

UNEP GEO

UNFCCC

UNFF

UN-Habitat

UNU

WOCAT

World Bank

Annex IV

List of topics missing in the scientific platforms/panels mentioned by respondents

Alternative energy

Awareness-raising

Best practices at grassroots level

Biodiversity

Capacity-building

Climate change adaptation potential of sustainable land management (SLM)

Cold desert ecosystems

Data and information

Contribution of desertification/land degradation and drought (DLDD) to climate change

Drivers of desertification

Drought and desertification

Drylands

Economic aspects of DLDD

Environmental history

Food security

Global observation

Growth and power paradigms

Indicators of drought and desertification

Interdisciplinary and cross-cutting activities

Involvement of multiple stakeholders

Land rehabilitation practices

Land-use conflicts

Land use/land-use planning

Legislation and laws to protect the desert environment

Link with policymakers

Migration

Mitigation and adaptation to degradation not caused by climate change

Monitoring, evaluation and assessment of DLDD and SLM

Participation of civil society organizations
Poverty reduction and combating DLDD
Practical views/applied aspects in combating DLDD
Property rights and land tenure
Regular assessment on the state and impact of DLDD
Rural development
Best practices in SLM for upscaling and replication
SLM indicators
Links between SLM and agriculture, forestry and other land use (AFOLU)
Social aspects of land degradation
Soil and forest degradation
Soil fertility
Sustainable agriculture emphasizing smallholder farmers
Synergy between the Rio conventions
Traditional knowledge and local perspectives
Urbanization and desertification
Vulnerability assessments
Water
