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English only

# United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

## Committee on Science and Technology

### Twelfth session

Ankara, Turkey, 13–16 October 2015

## Compilation of comments provided by Parties on Non-paper 1\*

### Regional Implementation Annex I – Africa

Sustainable Land Management (SLM) technologies and best practices are applied and must emphasise on the ground practices which are better analysed within regions where the specific bio-physical and socio-economic conditions are better understood and will be taken into account. Non-involvement of regional institutions in the analysis of best practices is a concern. Secondly, regional institutions in the affected regions should be involved in the analysis as this would enhance regional capacity for the analysis and use of the information for decision making and policy within the regions.

The system of communication and structure of the request for expression of interest did not give much room for regional competent institutions especially from affected developing countries to apply or participate.

The link, access and exchange of information on SLM technologies and best practices should go beyond the desk top. Additional mechanisms are needed to facilitate access by communities and actors at local level especially in the affected regions.

Owing to the very limited participation of parties from the region at the Fourth Special session of the CST where more information and demonstration of the operation of Scientific Knowledge Brokering Portal (SKBP) was provided, we are unable to provide informed comments on section two of the Non-paper 2.

### Regional Implementation Annex IV – Northern Mediterranean

The Regional Implementation Annex for the Northern Mediterranean is pleased to share its overall views on the issues addressed in the letter of the UNCCD Executive Secretary of 31st March 2015. Additional and more specific

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\* Please note that the contributions contained in this document are published as received without formatting or formal editing and that an informal translation of the contributions received in languages other than English is provided herein, as requested by the Bureau of the CRIC.



information on different issues might be provided individually by country Parties of Annex IV in subsequent submissions.

### **Non-paper 1 - Consideration of best practices in the implementation of the Convention: accessibility of information on best practices**

We thank the information provided in non-paper 1 on best practices on sustainable land management technologies, including adaptation. Information provided reflects an adequate response by the Secretariat to the requests made by COP, namely the ones in decision 17/COP.11. We also note the fact that non-paper 1 was prepared in response to a request by the Bureau of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention.

Non-paper 1 states (in §8) that “*the secretariat recalled that WOCAT should cover the cost of the operation through its own human and financial resources*”. Annex IV Parties believe that this idea is in line with paragraph 3 of decision 17/COP.11 and therefore commend the intention of promoting cost-efficiency and control within the UNCCD. However, we also believe that functioning of the database and maintenance of the integrity of data must be ensured at all times, avoiding the risk of interruption of the activity because of lack of financial resources needed to manage the database. If not already done, a work programme including plans on how to support this activity for a specified number of years should be agreed between the Centre for Development and Environment of the University of Bern and the UNCCD Secretariat.

Annex IV Parties take note of the recommendations of the Steering Committee contained in paragraph 14 of Non-paper 1 and propose the following:

- Reception and categorization of data on SLM best practices –It would be useful to have the adjusted template for reporting on SLM best practices distributed and with the possibility of incorporating Parties contributions ahead of CRIC14/COP 12. Ultimately Parties will be the ones filling the templates and using the information on national SLM best practices which is why we think that the involvement of Parties in adjusting the template can only be beneficial to this process.
- Establishment of an online facility to allow Parties to continue submitting SLM best practices and retrieving the information – A report on the testing phase of the online system could be elaborated ahead of CRIC14/COP 12 since not all Parties were involved in testing.
- Further, Annex IV Parties welcome the information provided in non-paper 1 on the Scientific Knowledge Brokering Portal. On this regard we would appreciate it if the
- Secretariat could provide Parties with detailed information on important issues mentioned in paragraphs 20 and 21 of Non-paper 1, namely:
  - Estimated long-term and running cost as well as technical constraints of the SKBP, and;
  - Required next steps and estimated annual costs associated with software, hardware and maintenance of the SKBP.

Annex IV Parties note the information on the work done by the Secretariat in this regard and believe that full advantage of this work can only be taken if it is made available to all interested Parties so that decisions can be taken on the basis of best available information.

## **Argentina**

[English translation]

Regarding Non paper 1 we point out the following:

"Consideration of best practices in the implementation of the Convention accessibility of Information on best practices:" in general terms, this is an informative document. In point II.B, "Update on the development of the Scientific Knowledge Brokering Portal," a reference is made to the "land degradation neutrality best practices ..." but no reference is made to the DLDD, which has priority and should be the basis on which to build the guidelines that will be used to identify the best practices for SLM.

As long as the originally established mandates are kept by the Parties as part of the text of the Convention, any submission that allows an improvement of the implementation is welcome.

## Australia

Australia appreciates the action taken with regard to the improved accessibility of information on best practices. We also agree with the proposed improvement in processes to review the implementation of the Convention. The move to report on the implementation of national action programmes rather than institutional processes is a sound move and provides a benchmark for subsequent reporting.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the documents. Note that Australia's Department of Agriculture has been consulted in providing our comments.

## Bangladesh

**General comments:** Preparation of database on Sustainable Land Management (SLM) best practices and access to it is very encouraging. It would benefit Country Parties especially affected Parties to handle Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD) issues at country level as well as regional level. Also it would serve as a platform for exchange and sharing of experience and knowledge.

**Specific comments:** Comments furnished in the table below:

Sl.No.	Items	Comments
1	I B (9): In January 2014, the secretariat initiated consultations with the University of Bern (Switzerland) and WOCAT with a view to concluding the required administrative and legal arrangements in order to transfer the data and information on SLM best practices that are stored in the Performance Review and Assessment of Implementation System (PRAIS) database.	According to para B (7, 8), World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) is one of the two institutions whose proposal was positively considered for the services. However, involvement of University of Bern at this point needs clarification.
2	I B (10): An agreement was signed on 15 April 2014 between the Centre for Development and Environment (CDE) of the University of Bern and the Secretariat on improving accessibility to information on SLM best practices. The University of Bern/CDE identified the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) secretariat as executing agency of the agreement, while remaining accountable for the implementation of, and meeting its obligations under, the agreement.	It is unclear whether a Party needs to obtain permission from CDE/WOCAT in order to access to the database.  Provision should be kept for providing detail information on one or more SLM best practices if asked by any Party. Also capacity building program on SLM best practices should be included.
3	I B (13b): Establishment of an online facility to allow Parties to continue submitting SLM best practices and retrieving the information.	A suitable format for submitting SLM best practices should be developed
4	I B (13c): Involvement of the other interested organizations:	As Affected Countries Parties (ACP), Bangladesh would like to be involved in the testing of the online facility.
5	II. A. Reporting	UNCCD secretariat / GEF should arrange

		extensive/appropriate training workshop on reporting template (PRAIS portal) in terms of duration; and ensure participation of Country Reporting Officers. Because there are items in the reporting template those need explanation for clarification in order to report appropriately
6	II. A. Para 11:	For 2016 reporting, the secretariat should allow sufficient time along with financial (The GEF) and capacity building support for the ACPs.
	II. A. Para 10:	The secretariat should come forward with financial and technical support for conducting research on land degradation as well as capacity building of the researches in LDCs. To get data in consistent manner, a research protocol could be developed to get solid information on land degradation.
7	III. A. Para 22:	Reporting every four years may give feeling to reporting officers that there is ample time. Then it will be difficult for collection of four years data at a time from different organizations (GOs/NGOs, STCs, CSOs etc.). However, UNCCD should keep pace with other Rio conventions.
8	III. C. 24C:	Need to ensure participation of Science and Technology Correspondent (STC) and additional officers.

**Note:** Comments have been given on behalf of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Bangladesh

## Benin

[English translation]

The document submitted for our appraisal after analysis generates the contributions hereafter:

In accordance with the decisions of COP10 regarding the consideration, funding and promotion of best practices, the PRAIS system created for preparing reliable reports on implementation of the Convention have allowed a range of best practices to be identified.

Benin welcomes the results obtained by the institutions mandated for ensuring consistency and suggests the validation and publication of the best practices identified and which will be disseminated for judicious use within the framework of the evolution of the Convention.

With regard to the scientific results which can help in good decision-making for relevant and effective action in the fight against the effects of desertification. To do this, Benin suggests that the relevant scientific proposals or opinions be compiled and communicated to help the countries affected and other interested institutions. Not all the aspects raised by the document were well understood because the document received was in English only.

## Brazil

Decisions 15/COP.10 and 17/COP.11 requested the UNCCD Secretariat to identify recommended databases for the transfer of existing sustainable land management best practices in the PRAIS, "in order to assist the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) in compiling and disseminating the information."

According to Non Paper 1, the UNCCD Secretariat carried out, as requested by decision 17/COP.11, the identification of recommended databases as well as the establishment of the necessary legal and administrative arrangements with WOCAT and the University of Bern.

The creation of a Steering Committee in which the UNCCD Secretariat, WOCAT and University of Bern, but no Party countries, have seats and which shall provide "strategic guidance on the implementation of the agreement, with particular reference to the relevant decisions of the COP and the recommendations made by its subsidiary bodies and their bureaux" seems to have extrapolated the mandate in decisions 15/COP.10 and 17/COP.11. The new databases should provide support for CRIC's activities and remain accountable to UNCCD Parties. Strategic guidance recommendations reached within the Steering Committee should be submitted to UNCCD Parties during COP meetings for approval. No new policy or monitoring structures should be created outside the existing UNCCD institutions

In this sense, it is recommended that the services that WOCAT/University of Bern will provide CRIC should be made clear. There can be no misunderstanding on a possible replacement of CRIC by external institutions regarding the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Convention. UNCCD Parties should remain at the center of the evaluation process.

## **Burundi**

[English translation]

The purpose of the document is to provide CRIC with information on the status of implementation of the pertinent decisions of the COP on the best practices of Sustainable Land Management (SLM).

### **I. Best practices regarding SLM technologies including adaptation**

#### **A. Context**

Based on COP.10, Party countries review the accessibility to information on best practices. COP.11 asked the Secretariat of the Convention and the Global Mechanism to complete the database on SLM best practices, to identify the institutions that would help the CRIC to gather and disseminate these best practices. It asked the developed Party countries and financial and technical institutions to contribute to the continuing development of a scientific knowledge brokering portal (SKBP) and databases on SLM best practices.

#### **B. Preliminary report on SLM best practices**

Out of five organizations identified (November 25, 2013) through the call for expression of interest in setting up a database for best practices, only two proposals were received from the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) and ENDA –Energy, Environment, Development. WOCAT's proposal was the one chosen.

Other institutions are involved in the implementation of the initiative: The University of Bern (Switzerland) and WOCAT to transfer the data and information on SLM best practices stored in the PRAIS database.

### **II. Scientific Knowledge Brokering Portal**

#### **A. Context**

COP.8 charged the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) and other competent institutions with creating and guiding the knowledge management systems in order to improve the transmission of scientific and technical information.

#### **B. Development of a Scientific Knowledge Brokering Portal**

A pilot SKBP was produced in 2014, with a platform integrating the data and knowledge bases of five partner organizations, in addition to a large number of materials made available on the Convention site.

The pilot SKBP centralizes the knowledge bases on the best practices for fighting land degradation and relevant scientific knowledge so that users can search for the data needed.

It also allowed the defining of the partnership models needed to expand the base of knowledge suppliers and users, recycling and drawing increased attention to the knowledge bases of the partners through the SKBP.

**Comments:**

Our comments pertain to the necessity of strengthening the abilities of the users of the database on SLM best practices, including scientists, policy makers and practitioners, so that they can consult numerous resources on land degradation from a research portal and use the content of primary sources of information on SLM best practices. It is also important to make the SKBP even more accessible to a wide range of final users.

## Chile

[English translation]

The document describes the actions adopted by the Executive Secretariat of the UNCCD Convention regarding best practices for Sustainable Land Management, including adaptation and the Knowledge Brokering Portal, in order to inform CRIC-13 of the document so that it may be considered in the following CRIC-14 session. Although Chile was not present at the CRIC-13 session, our country has been an active party of the Convention process, especially during the negotiation, preparation and adoption of the 10 Year Strategy, which is the context for the following comments.

Comments

I. Best Practices for Sustainable Land Management including adaptation.

A. Background.

The reasons that the Parties had to decide to migrate the best practices for sustainable land management database from the PRAIS Portal are not clearly stated.

B. Preliminary Report on the Best Practices for Sustainable Land Management by the UNCCD Executive Secretariat.

Apparently, identifying the database as the best practices database for sustainable land management under the UNCCD Convention and its Member countries was not included in the agreement with the University of Bern. Without this designation, it would be very hard for Chile to commit to submitting any new information.

II. Knowledge Brokering Portal.

A. Background.

No comments.

B. Updates on the development of the Knowledge Brokering Portal.

Upon reading the text, doubts persist regarding the ownership of the Convention Portal itself.

## Colombia

[English translation]

Regarding the best practices for sustainable land management, we are concerned that the initial gathering of information was based on the information found in the PRAIS databases, which Latin American countries have claimed is incomplete, due to the lack of information and financing for the respective countries to access and collect the information. This was a subject of debate during the Support Meeting for the preparation of the National Reports, which took place in Lima, Peru, in May of 2014.

To continue with this information gathering task in the future, the information databases provided by the Parties would have to be incorporated, which also requires financing and human resources dedicated to that activity and to its subsequent publication. The usefulness of the Scientific Knowledge Portal is clear. However, the Parties must analyze the project and state their positions with regard to its cost-to-benefit and to the real possibilities that the UNCCD has to contribute the necessary resources or to raise donations that could provide the needed financing. Maintaining the Portal does not only require that the Parties support it with information. It also requires yearly software, hardware and maintenance expenses for the Portal. Therefore, it is important to identify the source of financing that will maintain and generalize this initiative.

## Cuba

[English translation]

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To continue with this information gathering task in the future, the information databases provided by the Parties would have to be incorporated, which also requires financing and human resources dedicated to that activity and to its subsequent publication. The usefulness of the **Scientific Knowledge Portal** is clear. However, the Parties must analyze the project and state their positions with regard to its cost-to-benefit and to the real possibilities that the UNCCD has to contribute the necessary resources or to raise donations that could provide the needed financing. Maintaining the Portal does not only require that the Parties support it with information. It also requires yearly software, hardware and maintenance expenses for the Portal. Therefore, it is important to identify the source of financing that will maintain and generalize this initiative.

## Dominican Republic

[English translation]

The document provides an adequate background for the CP requests and the decisions reached at COP 15/COP 10, 17/COP 11. It provides a detailed account of the process, the organization to gather and publish the best practices for SLM, the management of Prais information, the Role played by WOCAT and especially about the **Agreement dated 04/15/14 between the Center for Development and Environment (CDE) and the University of Bern (Switzerland) and the Secretariat for Improvements in Information Access for the Best Practices of SLM.**

In that sense the document covers the process and commitments that may be dependent on the Parties and/or not documented for different reasons, including not being systemized or the lack of follow-up.

Based on the above, we would be analyzing the level of compliance of every country with said agreement, such as:

Advances in compliance with the requirements of the **online reference mechanism and the quality of the information provided** according to the guidance received by the Conference of the Parties.

## **Ecuador**

[English translation]

### Summary

This document does not mention how the convention would support the Parties in the validation and implementation of the best practices in order to achieve neutral degradation.

### Para. I. B. 10

To support the implementation in decision-making on strengthening the building capacities SLM assessment methodologies Land Degradation and identification of Good Practices for Sustainable Land Management.

Provide support for the implementation of decision making that strengthens SLM capacities for the methodologies that evaluate Land Degradation and to identify Good Practices for Sustainable Land Management”.

### Para. II. B. 17

All best practices for SLM contribute to the purpose of neutral degradation, I do not understand why the differentiation. Alluding to what interest?

### Para. II. B. 18 (c)

The requirements that are necessary for the implementation of this section are not contemplated as part of the pilot, especially in affected countries.

### Annex: Additional Comments on Non Paper 1 and 2 Documents

Non Papers 1 and 2 make reference to a Neutral Degradation, which raises some questions given that it is a concept that is still being studied by the intergovernmental workgroup and is yet to reach a consensus as to what it means specifically and is yet to be a conceptual option in the Fight Against Desertification, Degradation and Drought within the framework of the Convention.

Every country's role is to report on the advances on the matter with regard to the operational objectives of the 10 Year Strategy, and therefore, the relevant efforts must be made to have the procedures and financing framework that is needed to comply with the reporting and indicator monitoring process that is necessary to verify the implementation of the Convention with CRIC and not from global informants.

According to the operational objectives, there is still work to be done for the affected Member Countries that contributes to the reduction of degradation, desertification and drought, in this sense; we call upon the Convention to find the financing mechanisms needed to achieve these goals. In that sense, we find that the justification for a structural change in the Convention is not sufficiently robust.

The regional meetings being proposed in these documents, as well as the general budget for the Secretariat, must be financed by the Parties of the Convention. This budget must be included for the proper performance of the regional coordination mechanisms of the 10 Year Strategy.

In paragraph 20<sup>a</sup> of Non Paper 2, more reference is made to a substantial review than to institutional processes. This paragraph is given to several interpretations and considerations, which raises concerns regarding its context and scope.

## **European Union**

The EU and its Member states welcome the information provided and appreciate the Secretariat's efforts with regards to the consideration of best practices in the implementation of the Convention. However we would like to note that in

some aspects clarification is needed from the Secretariat The EU could broadly support the position taken in the submission by the Annex IV region and would like to underline the following :

### **Part one: best practices on SLM technologies including adaptation**

We support WOCAT's efforts to integrate best practices from UNCCD-documentation into the WOCAT databank as far as their format is compatible to this databank. However, the database for best practices in the implementation of the Convention managed by WOCAT seems to refer only to technologies and to exclude approaches, methods and tools.

Best practices on approaches, methods and tools seem to us as pertinent as the ones on technologies in order to combat desertification, land degradation and the effects of drought in an effective and sustainable way. Therefore we think it would be advisable for the database to take into consideration these types of best practices too.

The EU would like to share a number of additional comments:

We see the need for an uploading of best practices exercise that is permanent but systematically appreciated through high quality standard-sets. If other organizations are willing to be involved in the process, they should be invited to participate

- The continuous functioning and maintenance of the database should be ensured;
- It would be of interest to provide detailed information on the terms of financial issues contained in the agreement between CDE and University of Bern;
- It would be useful to circulate the SLM reporting template for comments;
- Sharing information on the testing phase of the online system would be also beneficial.

The EU would be grateful for an answer to the following questions:

- Question 1: Categorization according to the classification adopted by the COP : which classification ? When was it adopted?
- Question 2: Will the proposed deadlines be observed?

### **Part two: SKBP**

- With regard to SKBP,

We support knowledge management efforts with regard to sustainable land management and welcome the practical demonstration (pilot) of the SKBP in order to evaluate practicability, costs and added value. Based on the pilot, an evaluation of the use, practicability, efficiency and relevance of SKBP for partners and countries should be made in due time. The consideration of WOCAT both as main database for best practices and as part of the SKBP is appreciated for most possible efficiency and to avoid double structures. Effective use, applicability, needs and user-friendly-level, associated with the corresponding costs of SKBP need to be considered and budgeted on time. These results have to be sent to all parties. Information on the long-term running costs and annual costs, as well as on the next steps and the technical constraints would be welcomed

The EU would be grateful for an answer to the following questions:

- Question 1: Which were the evaluation and issues of SKBP mentioned during CST-4?
- Question 2: Will the proposed presentation (with the observations during CST-4 to improve the portal) take place at COP-12?

## **Ghana**

I write to submit that all recommendations are in place for both Non papers 1 and 2. However consideration should be given to the new UNCCD Focal Point in Ghana in terms of capacity building on reporting.

Specifically on Non paper 1, reporting on best practices is a welcome development. Fact is, some projects have been implemented in Ghana, like other countries with various achievements in combating drought and desertification.

Results on these projects have been monumental while benefits are greatly impacting on the lives of the beneficiary communities as witnessed by their testimonies (reversing the trend of land degradation and improved household food security) although on pilot basis. These are best practices and practical results among others that need to be included in the country reporting.

## Grenada

The World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) database is a very good initiative by the UNCCD to assist Parties to take proactive approach to SLM and best practices.

Decision 3/COP.8 which mandates the CST to cooperate with relevant institutions to create and steer knowledge management systems, which aims to improve the brokering of scientific and technical information from and to institutions, will certainly enhance greatly data quality and integrity provided on the Scientific knowledge Brokering Portal (SKBP). However, the issue of lack of usability of global data sets, due to low resolution remains a challenge for small island states. Every effort should be made to support small countries in the collection of satellite and other island or sub-regional specific data sets that can be incorporated into the WOCAT database.

## Guatemala

[English translation]

Paragraph 14.a explains that among the recommendations made by the committee is the gathering and classification of data on the best practices for Sustainable Land Management; it is important to take into account that the information collected must be clear, in a format that includes what is needed to prepare a report on the best practices for sustainable land management, and with categories that are adequate for each region.

Paragraph 14.b establishes an online service for the Parties to submit their information on sustainable land management, in light of the above we recommend that this format is designed to facilitate the sending of information but, once again, it is essential for it to be clear on the routes to follow.

Paragraph 17 makes reference to land degradation neutrality, and therefore it bears mentioning that this concept has yet to be considered by the Conference of the Parties, also this concept is still in the assessment stage and the implementation of this mechanism would require new technology especially for our regions, not only because of the limited financing available but also at a socio-cultural level; for these reasons it is not appropriate to take land degradation neutrality into account.

## Guyana

Page No.	Statement in CRP 1	Comment
3	“Best practices on sustainable land management technologies, including adaptation”	Since the UNCCD Secretariat endorses climate change as another element of land degradation, then ‘adaptation’ should include adaptation to climate change so that the efforts could be included under Best practices on SLM technologies.
5	“Reception and categorization of data on SLM best practices ... Establishment of an online facility to allow Parties to continue	These recommendations are excellent.

	submitting SLM best practices and retrieving the information ...”	Best practices in SLM may be extensive, therefore a list of examples of Best practices should be provided to guide the information provided by countries.  Best practices should not only be considered to be improvement of populations and eco-systems but in terms of qualitative and environmental data such as land restoration, reforestation and land reclamation, and conserving (natural) resources.
7	“Demonstrations of all the components of the SKBP pilot were given at the fourth special session of the CST, and the same will be given during COP 12 for country Parties to view and experience.”	This is also an excellent recommendation for Scientific Knowledge Brokering Portal (SKBP).  The demonstration should be placed on-line as a downloadable video so that non-participants at COP 12 could also review and experience the components of SKBP.

## Japan

Overall comment for Non-paper 1: Japan shares the view that there is much work to be done to mobilize financing from all existing sources and ensure that both existing and emerging finance mechanisms function more effectively and accessibly.

- About the Scientific Knowledge Brokering Portal

The SKBP should be 1) fit to both PCs and mobile devices such as smart phones, 2) be reviewed regularly about the information input by partners.

- About Journal map (Para 17)

Para 17 seems to be a very important activity, hence a large number of researchers should be able to participate to standardize the quality of input data.

## Malaysia

Document No.:	Non-paper 1 (Part I)
Document Title:	Consideration of best practices in the implementation of the Convention: accessibility of information on best practices
Section:	
14(b) <u>Establishment of an online facility to allow Parties to continue submitting SLM best Practices and retrieving the information</u> : a detailed time line for the SLM best practices mandate has been presented, which includes the development of the online system in early 2015, testing in April 2015 and final release of the system in September 2015, by which time all PRAIS data would be imported into the new system and be	

available for external query, and the compilation of new data would start.	
Comments:	
<p>Malaysia takes note and supports the UNCCD's effort in establishing an online facility for country Parties to submit or retrieve the information on sustainable land management (SLM) best practices.</p> <p>Malaysia will consider to submit relevant papers with regard to SLM best practices in its effort to combat issues related to desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD). At the same time, Malaysia is also concerned on the issues of the legal matters that may arise for the country Parties that contribute or submit relevant SLM best practices resources to the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) secretariat, including on the property rights, data and information on SLM best practices if they were to be implemented by other country Parties or interested organizations.</p>	
Document No.:	Non-paper 1 (Part II)
Document Title:	Consideration of best practices in the implementation of the Convention: accessibility of information on best practices
Section:	
<p>18 The successful pilot represented the first major milestone in the development of the SKBP. It has demonstrated that it can serve to: (a) increase awareness of national and regional land degradation findings; (b) simplify the information-finding process so that users can consult many land degradation resources from one search portal; and (c) enable the consolidated search results found in the SKBP to potentially link to mobile applications and other "on-the-ground" tools that can be used to make sustainable practices easier to implement on the ground.</p>	
Comments:	
<p>Malaysia finds the SKBP to be very useful as it provides interactive access to existing DLDD-related scientific information using advanced search technologies whereby a spatial (mapping) interface is incorporated to assist users in finding the most relevant information sources.</p> <p>In this regard, Malaysia is interested to know more about the SKBP and will seek further information during the upcoming COP 12, especially on how the SKBP may benefit Malaysia in the context of land degradation and drought affecting the country.</p>	

## Mexico

[English translation]

### 1. Best Practices regarding technologies for Sustainable Land Management, including adaptation.

Mention is made of the follow-up advances in the implementation of 15/COP.10, and 17/COP.II decisions with the purpose of making the information on best practices for sustainable land management (the fight against desertification and land degradation and drought mitigation) accessible to the Parties and other interested and relevant entities, acknowledging the efforts made by the Secretariat and by the Global Mechanism. We especially note and support the decision to formalize the agreement between the Convention, the Center for Development and Environment at the

University of Bern and WOCAT, acknowledging the latter as the main database recommended for best practices on sustainable land management (SLM).

The following statements are comments and points of view that are specific to this subject:

- a) We recommend that the Secretariat extends a permanent invitation to the Parties and to other relevant entities, to continue identifying and sending best practice proposals, in accordance with the adjusted/updated format to that effect (see next item), stating the process to be followed to submit their proposals and the time period in which they may be sent.
- b) With the purpose of ensuring the quality and completeness of the information needed for the integration of contributions for new best practices submitted by the Parties and other relevant entities, we recommend that the adjusted format with the minimum information needed for the best practices for SLM reports be distributed together with a guide on how to properly complete the form.

In this sense, as the referenced document points out, it is convenient for the format to be properly categorized or structured and that visual or multimedia elements, definitions, explanations and specifications can be included, as necessary.

We recommend that an online or electronic format be developed as much as possible to facilitate the process of entering and sending the information on best practices.

- c) During the process of identifying and sending new SLM best practices proposals, we recommend the involvement, as much as possible, of the Regional Coordination Units to work with and offer guidance to the Member Countries of their respective Regional Annexes.
- d) We consider the proposal to involve other interested organizations in gathering and publishing SLM best practices information to be appropriate, as well as to involve some of the Parties in the format testing process and of any other tool used to report best practices (including online applications).

Regarding the selection of the Member Countries that, in such cases, would participate in this testing phase, we recommend the selection of 3 or 4 countries from among the potentially interested Parties within each Regional Annex, and the Regional Executive Committees, supported by the Regional Coordination Units, should be the ones in charge of the process.

- e) We recommend the development of training activities for the Parties and other relevant entities on how to use the online tool needed to continue identifying, registering and consulting the information on best practices for SLM, as part of the activities towards implementing said tool, including the preparation of guides, user manuals and/or tutorials, among other possibilities.

Finally, we urge the Secretariat to gather together the comments and opinions issued by the Parties regarding this point in particular of the Non-paper, and to make them available as soon as possible, so that they can be examined and considered during the following CRIC and COP sessions.

## **2. The Scientific Knowledge Brokering Portal.**

We recognize the follow up advances made on the implementation of the decisions reached in *3/COP.8*, *21/COP.10* and *24/COP.11*, aimed at creating and implementing this platform, acknowledging the efforts made by the Committee Bureau on Science and Technology and by the Secretariat towards compliance with this mandate.

We wish to express our acknowledgement and gratitude to the governments and entities for their valuable financial and in kind contributions which have helped in the development of the tool and allowed the advances and results obtained and reported so far.

In regard to paragraph 17 of the document, we consider it appropriate to refer specifically to the best practices and scientific knowledge relevant to sustainable land management and not to those referring to land degradation neutrality, since this is a concept that is still being studied and considered by the Parties and has not yet been formally adopted by the Conference of the Parties.

We request that the Secretariat provide timely reports on its findings regarding the implementation, operation and maintenance costs that are necessary for the platform as well as on its identified technical limitations, on the development of potential alliances to increase the information user and provider base, and in general on the actions that are needed to point out the importance of this platform as an efficient and cost-effective tool for collaboration.

Likewise, we urge the Secretariat to propose actions that identify and continue to use the sources of financing that allow us to continue with this task, so that the Parties may consider them during their next session.

Finally, we urge the Secretariat to gather together the comments and opinions issued by the Parties regarding this point in particular of the Non-paper and to make them available as soon as possible so that they can be examined and considered during the following CST and COP sessions.

## **Oman**

The Sultanate of Oman has no views and comments with regard to CRIC 13 deliberations with regard to Non Paper 1.

## **Panama**

[English translation]

We consider reporting on the implementation of the best practices for sustainable land management as well as the platform for knowledge brokering to be good initiatives, however, some of the components mentioned in the document deserve greater debate.

We would like to see communications channels established so that we can be effectively informed of some of the topics mentioned in Non-paper 1, such as:

1. We request clarification on who are the 5 organizations that have been identified for the implementation of the best practices and its database, and those that have been recommended to cover its cost.
2. Panama has agreed to implement the Land Degradation Neutrality project, for which we require greater implementation strategies for this concept. This will allow the establishment of National Action Plan implementation goals that are appropriate to our reality.

## **Paraguay**

[English translation]

This document contains the preliminary reports by the Secretariat regarding the measures adopted with respect to:

- Best practices regarding the technologies for sustainable land management, including adaptation; and
- The Scientific Knowledge Brokering Portal.

Although the reasons for which the Parties decided to migrate the good practices for sustainable land management database from the PRAIS portal were not clearly stated; Paraguay considers that the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) database is a very good UNCCD initiative to help the Parties to assume a proactive stance towards SLM and best practices, but points out that it does not clearly state that the Portal will be owned by the Convention itself, and more and better data on the same is required.

## **Peru**

[English translation]

The best practices for sustainable land management technologies to be considered, as well as the scientific knowledge brokering portal, must include their relationship to the 2008-2018 Ten Year Strategic Plan in their development, particularly with the operational objectives indicators and their contribution to the strategic objectives.

## **Philippines**

We recognized the importance of making SLM best practices in the PRAIS be more accessible to land users. The selection of WOCAT as the primary recommended database of SLM best practices is very timely as WOCAT goes new and is further strengthened by the creation of the WOCAT consortium. One of the advantages of using the WOCAT database in submitting SLM best practices is the generation of a 4-page summary which could be compiled into SLM overview book for dissemination to land users, SLM advocates, and policy and decision makers. However, the accomplishment of the WOCAT questionnaire on approaches and technologies as templates for SLM best practices documentation needs training particularly for those who are not familiar with the WOCAT tools and methodologies. In this respect, we suggest that the introduction of WOCAT tools be included as one of the agenda of regional meetings that will be held in the future.

## **Slovakia**

Slovakia fully supports the statement of EU especially comments concerning the involvement of approaches, methods and tools into the database of best practices.

## **Switzerland**

The paper compiles and resumes correctly the history of how this cooperation came to life and where the cooperation actually stays between the respective UNCCD Secretariat section and the WOCAT Secretariat.

But what is not being highlighted it that there remains a basic problem of perception on both sides of the contractors/partners, i.e. WOCAT Secretariat and UNCCD Secretariat:

The contract stipulates that WOCAT takes over the data structure and the content of the Best Practices from PRAIS without changing and/or restructuring anything. However, the analysis done by WOCAT of the PRAIS data content and the structure concludes and recommends that neither the structure nor the data can be taken over and integrated into the WOCAT platform on SLM without being transformed and or re-managed in a certain way to be adopted. It makes no sense to take over as they are right now and hence would also not benefit because the data from the PRAIS on best practices cannot be used, compared etc. as they are in the system right now.

This non-paper No1 does not take into account and discuss this major dilemma/problem. This paper would need to state precisely that a transfer into the existing WOCAT Platform/Data System makes certain adjustments necessary and also that these adjustments are being demanded/requested to enable not only the integration of the so far collected best practices but also to make them a useful asset to be used by parties for their benefit. And this precisely, to my understanding, were also the reasons and the objective of the COP decision.

Unfortunately until now, one year after the signature of the agreement of the PRAIS data transfer into the WOCAT system, the UNCCD Secretariat remained with the view that NOTHING can, needs, has to be changed when transferred from PRAIS to WOCAT. This practically means that the secretariat is refusing to make use of the PRAIS best practice data in a constructive way. We do not know if the Secretariat has understood that the collected Best Practice data from

the parties in the PRAIS format CANNOT be further used, if not adopted to a format that allows exchange, comparisons etc.

In the agreement it is stated that "...Committee recommended that the UNCCD original template should be maintained as a minimum format for reporting on SLM best practices,..." „.....and adjusted in order to improve the quality of data to be reviewed and further compiled“.

Especially the second statement of the Steering Committee should be underlined in the non-paper to enable the WOCAT Secretariat to do its work.

Switzerland requests that WOCAT Secretariat together with the UNCCD Secretariat are presenting the actual state of implementation and the difficulties that go with it at the CRIC 14 so that parties are made aware of the implementation difficulties and that if a successful transfer of the data to be used for something useful and also for the future collection of best practices, parties are being motivated to collect and document. If the difficulties with the compatibility remain and if the UNCCD Secretariat does not show any willingness to deal with the issue in a more constructive way, it will be very difficult to do a successful and useful job, and this would certainly serve nobody.

The non-paper also does not discuss/present the funding obligations of all involved parties, i.e. WOCAT and the other Organisations/NGOs/CSOs that have been selected to contribute to the best practice documentation and also the UNCCD Secretariat as it says in Para 6 on the non-paper:

„to participate in joint fundraising activities with the University of Berne/CDE to further expand and improve the functionality of the online platform on SLM best practices“. This clearly states that the UNCCD Secretariat has a duty to support the further development and improvement of a best practice platform and that this cannot be the sole duty of WOCAT and the other affiliated organizations.

## **Thailand**

### **I. Best practices on sustainable land management technologies, including adaptation**

- It is suggested that the Secretariat with the help of the Steering Committee reports to the CRIC Bureau on detailed quality and the completeness of the data reported by Parties and reporting entities.
- It is suggested that the Secretariat submits a new developed guideline and a reporting template for reporting on best practices for consideration by the Bureaux of CRIC and CST.
- Up on adoption of the new developed guideline and reporting template by the COP, inform Parties and reporting entities on the availability of a new online facility and encourage them and interested organizations to submit more SLM best practices.

### **II. Scientific Knowledge Brokering Portal**

The SKBP pilot has proved to be a useful tool for knowledge access with its uniqueness on spatial information, maps and best practices. A full scale operation of the SKBP and maintenance needs more resources and cooperation. It needs adequate and timely financial support and effective cooperation of Parties and scientific communities. In addition, to enable developing Parties to be able to implement knowledge and technology, they need financial resource and capacity building. Therefore, it would be helpful if UNCCD establish a funding mechanism for technology transfer and capacity building.

## **Trinidad and Tobago**

Kindly be informed that the Ministry has reviewed Non-Papers 1 and 2, the “Consideration of best practice in the implementation of the Convention” and “Additional procedures or institutional mechanisms to assist the COP in review of implementation” respectively.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago has no substantive comments or objections to the premises and suggested options Non-papers 1 and 2 as presented. There is however some level of concern regarding section C, paragraph 24 (a) of Non-paper 2 which pertains to “ensuring continuity and regional governance”. Whilst the option for increased frequency of meetings of the Regional Implementation Annexes is welcomed, previous attempts at regional meetings have been impeded by financial constraints experienced by potential host countries.

In light of this, it is suggested that information on the modalities of the paper’s proposals be presented in the appropriate document format for more detailed discussion (or possibly negotiation) at the earliest opportunity.

## **United Republic of Tanzania**

Tanzania has no objection with the suggestions made and the progress towards on the issues of Best Practices.

Tanzania have produced and published the Compendium of Best Practices for SLM so once all the primary recommended Data base for SLM are finalized we will rank ourself regarding on our information we have.

We can also share with you on the compiled document we have.

## **United States of America**

The United States appreciates the Secretariat’s efforts to address the SLM Best Practice Database and the SKBP, but has some concerns with how both are being addressed.

### *Sustainable Land Management (SLM) Best Practices*

We are concerned that the Secretariat has inadvertently created unnecessary bureaucratic costs for this process, which it is now obligated to pay as part of its agreement with WOCAT. We are particularly concerned that this not be used as a model for future best practices. The decision simply requested that an SLM best practice database be identified for the Parties to contribute, should they wish to do so, to transfer the contents of PRAIS. For example, it is unclear to us why a Steering Committee, and particularly one with in-person meetings, is required, nor why so many other organizations need to be involved. Parties’ motivation and ideas articulated in their discussions were to reduce costs for both the Secretariat and Parties as the concept was to have been a relatively simple technical issue. Unfortunately, the extraordinarily complex requirements developed appear to have gone far beyond the mandate of the decision and the Parties vision. We strongly urge the Secretariat to consider simpler and more cost effective approaches for future best practices.

### *Scientific Knowledge Brokering Portal (SKBP)*

We support the continued development of the SKBP. The response of Parties at the CST Third Scientific Conference was exceptionally positive to this approach and we are pleased to note that it is already being used. However, in light of the concerns we have described above, we sincerely hope that it will continue to serve as a mechanism for increasing Parties’ access to best practice knowledge and information in existing knowledge bases.

## **Uzbekistan**

We have few proposals on PRAIS and SLM best practices:

1. To develop a guideline on monitoring of the effectiveness, dissemination and impact of the SLM best practices;
2. To develop and apply a common standard of data quality to ensure security and use of data for training and project planning;
3. To complement/expand the template for best practice (cost, results of application, technical limitations,) following the criteria of priority and demand in technologies for joint PRAIS/WOCAT database.
4. Uzbekistan is interested in the testing the online software and template to report on SLM best practices and expansion of the database for broad range of end-users

## Vietnam

**Part I: best practices on sustainable land management technologies, including adaptation:** we don't have any comment or request for part I. However, information of best practices are useful for SKBP or DLDD information system.

**Part II: Scientific knowledge brokering portal:** we want to add into point "19. The SKBP is planned to be a "bridge to bridges".....making it available to a wide range of end users, including scientists, policymakers and practitioners. *In additional, progress indicators of parties in national reports should be integrated on SKBP.* Although SKBP pilot was produced in 2014 but it has achieved success. We appreciate this success and wishes the effort of each party (progress indicators) will be updated into SKBP.

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