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**Programme and budget**

**Note by the secretariat\***

**Addendum**

**Report on the implications of results-based planning,  
programming and budgeting**

*Summary*

The Conference of Parties (COP), by its decision 23/COP.7, requested the Executive Secretary to prepare a report for the COP at its eighth session on the implications of results-based planning, programming and budgeting.

This document, prepared with the assistance of external expertise, should be seen in the light of the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) “Review of the Management, Administration and Activities of the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)” (ICCD/COP(7)/4) and the report based on the review undertaken by the Intergovernmental Intersessional Working Group (IIWG) of the JIU report, including how best to address the recommendations therein (ICCD/COP(8)/10/Add.1). This present report’s implications are derived from the draft ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the UNCCD (2008–2018) that has been submitted by the IIWG for adoption by the COP (ICCD/COP(8)/10/Add.2).

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\* The submission of this document was delayed due to the short time available between the fifth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention and the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties.

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## I. Background reference

1. By its decision 23/COP.7, the Conference of Parties (COP) requested the Executive Secretary to prepare a report for the COP at its eighth session on the implications of results-based planning, programming and budgeting. The consultant who assisted the secretariat in drafting the present report<sup>1</sup> consulted with a number of United Nations system organizations on results-based management. He reviewed the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) “Review of the Management, Administration and Activities of the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)” (ICCD/COP(7)/4) and the report based on the review by the Intergovernmental Intersessional Working Group (IIWG) of the JIU report, including how best to address the recommendations therein (ICCD/COP(8)/10/Add.1). He also examined the draft ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the UNCCD (2008–2018) that has been submitted by the IIWG for adoption by the COP (ICCD/COP(8)/10/Add.2). In addition, he consulted the JIU in preparing his analysis.

## II. Results-based management in the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

2. Results-based management (RBM), which includes planning, programming, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation, has been adopted by most organizations of the United Nations system over the past decade. Considerable experience has been obtained and, having analysed it, the JIU has set out a number of benchmarks against which to appraise any given organization’s progress in implementing RBM:<sup>2</sup>

- (1) A clear conceptual framework for RBM exists as a broad management strategy;
- (2) The respective responsibilities of the organization’s main parties are clearly defined;
- (3) Long-term objectives have been clearly formulated for the organization;
- (4) The organization’s programmes are well aligned with its long-term objectives;
- (5) The organization’s resources are well aligned with its long-term objectives;
- (6) An effective performance monitoring system is in place;
- (7) Evaluation findings are used effectively;
- (8) RBM is effectively internalized throughout the organization;
- (9) A knowledge management strategy is developed to support RBM.

3. For the UNCCD, the JIU recommended that “The COP should endorse the benchmarking framework for results-based management” (recommendation 10).

4. The adoption by the COP of the ten-year strategic plan would satisfy benchmarks 1–3. The other benchmarks will need to be attained over the next biennium and are the subject of this report.

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. John Mathiason, Professor of International Relations at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs of Syracuse University.

<sup>2</sup> JIU/REP/2004/6.

5. Under the proposed ten-year strategic plan (especially chapter VI: Implementation framework), each of the subsidiary bodies of the COP will have to prepare its own plans, usually of four years duration. Consistent with the benchmarks, the plans should be based on the ten-year strategic plan, which has a two-level structure. At the top level are four strategic objectives to be achieved by 2018:

**Strategic Objectives of the Ten-Year Strategic Plan and Framework (2008-2018)**

- (1) To improve the living conditions of affected populations;
- (2) To improve the condition of affected ecosystems;
- (3) To generate global benefits through effective implementation of the UNCCD;
- (4) To mobilize resources to support implementation of the Convention through building effective partnerships between national and international actors.

6. Within each objective, there should be up to five operational objectives:

**Operational Objectives in the Strategic Plan and Framework (2008-2018)**

- (1) Advocacy, awareness raising and education;
- (2) Policy framework;
- (3) Science, technology and knowledge;
- (4) Capacity building;
- (5) Financing and technology transfer

7. In RBM methodology, objectives should describe the end-state to be reached by a specific time. Some of the proposed objectives are drafted as action statements rather than as activities, but they imply end-states. For example, strategic objective 4 would mean that by 2018, resources adequate to achieve the other objectives would have been mobilized.

8. The Committee on Science and Technology (CST), the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC), the Global Mechanism (GM) and the secretariat will each have to define the outcomes that they expect to induce during each planning period in order to achieve the strategic objectives or the operational objectives for which they are responsible.

9. In United Nations system practice, the basis for results-based planning is the logical framework, or logframe. As defined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee,<sup>3</sup> the logframe is a:

“Management tool used to improve the design of interventions, most often at the project level. It involves identifying strategic elements (inputs, outputs, outcomes, impact) and their causal relationships, indicators, and the assumptions or risks that may influence success and failure. It thus facilitates planning, execution and evaluation of a development intervention.”

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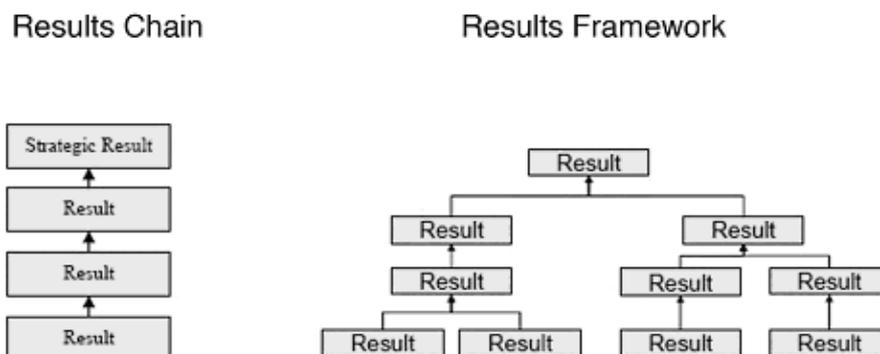
<sup>3</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Development Assistance Committee, *Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management*, Paris, OECD, 2002.

10. The logframe works backward from objectives, by identifying what changes have to occur if the objective is to be achieved (outcomes), and what outputs will lead to those changes, what activities will produce the outputs and the resource needs to undertake the activities. Each of the outcomes can be seen as a set of promises of what can happen if the organization is given the resources to produce its output. The logframe then requires planners to show how they will prove that the results have been obtained by requiring performance indicators for each. Then, it requires the planners to show where they will obtain the information on the indicators and how they will extract it. Finally, the planners are required to specify the assumptions they are making about elements in the environment that they do not control.

11. For the CST, which organizes its sessions around themes, the expected outcomes would be what were agreed about each theme and the extent to which the agreement led to changes at the national or international level. For the secretariat, the outcomes would be the use made of the reports that they present, or the advice that they provide.

12. In results-based planning, outcomes are seen as a hierarchy, sometimes called a results chain or results framework, in which, in order to achieve a strategic result, intermediate results must be obtained.<sup>4</sup> The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) uses these extensively to map the sequence in which results are expected (see figure below). The results chain will be applied to determining the results expected from UNCCD.

### Results chain and results framework



13. For the medium term, the results contributing during the period to the achievement of the ten-year objective would have to be defined as an end-state (what would be seen when the result was obtained), and linked back to what UNCCD could produce. For example, the CST organizes its biennial sessions around priority themes. In its medium-term plan it would have to specify at least two priority themes that it considers would lead to achieving the ten-year operational objective “To become a global authority on scientific and technical knowledge pertaining to desertification/land degradation and the mitigation of the effects of drought.” It might focus more specifically on outcome 3.2 under that objective: “A baseline based on the most robust data available on biophysical and socio-economic trends is developed and relevant scientific approaches are gradually harmonized” (ICCD/COP(8)/10/Add.2, annex II). In determining its

<sup>4</sup> UNICEF, *Understanding Results Based Programme Planning and Management: Tools to Reinforce Good Programming Practice*, New York: UNICEF, September 2003.

themes for 2008–2011, it might consider the areas where most robust data can be mobilized and determine an outcome such as “a baseline agreed on [trend x].” This would allow the Committee as well as the secretariat to prepare outputs that could lead to that agreement.

14. For the secretariat, the process of determining outcomes for each four-year period will be based on considering what, given its substantive mandate and capacities, the secretariat could influence relating to the objectives of the ten-year strategic plan. The secretariat has a large but limited repertoire of outputs, and these would be connected to the desired results specified by the COP when it adopts the ten-year plan. Each medium-term plan, and subsequently the biennial budgets within it, would be structured according to the strategic objectives. The plan, like those of operational agencies such as UNICEF, would show the expected outcomes,<sup>5</sup> the performance indicators, means of verification, key assumptions and partnerships with other organizations in obtaining the outcomes.

15. In preparing the first plan, the secretariat will conduct the desk-to-desk workload analysis as part of a needs assessment review of the human and financial resources required to deliver the expected results under the medium-term plan, as recommended by the JIU (recommendation 12).

16. The medium-term plan will become the basis for the biennial programme budgets that are intended to implement it. The budget for the next biennium (2008–2009) focuses on the objects of expenditure rather than the programmatic results. In future budgets, the resource requests will be linked to the expected results, by showing how the output produced with those resources will lead to the results. In this way, recommendation 13 of the JIU will be achieved (the Executive Secretary should put forward results-based budget proposals based on the findings of the needs assessment review, and linked to a medium-term plan, in line with the benchmarking framework for results-based management). When this is done, JIU benchmarks 4 and 5 will be achieved.

17. The existence of clearly defined outcomes will make it possible to monitor and evaluate the performance of the programme, because at key points the extent to which the expected results have been observed can be measured. The secretariat will monitor the extent to which expected results have been observed. This, in turn, will allow subsequent plans and budgets to be more realistic, and will enable in-course corrections in programme implementation. With respect to establishing credible benchmarks and indicators to monitor progress towards achieving the stated goals, the secretariat will need to take into consideration the progress indicators on the UNCCD process and the impact indicators on combating desertification that will be identified in the context of the revised guidelines for reporting.

18. The implementation of results-based programme planning and budgeting, as well as monitoring and evaluation, will slightly change the schedules of programme planning and budget reviews. The table below shows the schedule to be followed from 2007 to 2018.

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<sup>5</sup> Although most United Nations system organizations refer to this level of results as outcomes, the United Nations secretariat calls them “expected accomplishments”. Because the most important linkages of the UNCCD are with United Nations system organizations, the term “outcome” is used in UNCCD planning and programming documents.

19. The programme budget for 2008–2009 is structured according to the old format. However, it will provide a starting point for elaborating the first secretariat medium-term plan to cover the period 2010–2013 that will be adopted at COP 9. Beginning in the autumn of 2007, a pilot results-based programming exercise will take place in the secretariat, in which the approved programme for the biennium 2008–2009 will be adjusted to the approved strategic plan and framework. The exercise should combine training in results-based management for secretariat personnel with the preparation of a first draft medium-term plan for the secretariat and the design of a monitoring and evaluation framework. As noted, it will include the desk-to-desk review recommended by the JIU.

20. The proposed medium-term plan will be shared with the Convention's partners, to obtain their input and to link the expected results of the Convention with those of the partners. This is particularly important with the other United Nations bodies concerned with the Rio Conventions including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), as well as the partners in the GM.<sup>6</sup>

21. In addition, the secretariat will prepare model templates for the CST and CRIC to assist those bodies in defining their respective biennial and four-year plans.

22. With these activities, the remaining benchmarks suggested by the JIU can be achieved.

### **III. Conclusions and recommendations**

23. Once the strategic plan has been adopted by the COP, the secretariat and the subsidiary bodies of the COP can begin to implement results-based management. The implementation can fulfil the benchmarks set out by the JIU and can place the Convention on a comparable footing with other United Nations system organizations dealing with issues relating to desertification.

24. The COP may wish:

(a) To request the Executive Secretary to implement results-based management along the lines set out in this report;

(b) To request the CST and the CRIC, as well as the GM, to undertake the planning and review exercises set out in the table below;

(c) To take note that it will be necessary for the secretariat to raise supplementary funding for the RBM programme elements that should occur during the biennium 2008–2009, because the financial elements were not included in the budget submitted for that biennium;

(d) To request the Executive Secretary to report on progress in implementing results-based management at COP 9.

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<sup>6</sup> The UNFCCC does not have a medium-term plan, but it now includes expected outcomes in its programme budget proposals (FCCC/SBI/2007/8/Add.1). UNEP has a two-year strategic framework covering 2008–2008 (A/61/6/Rev.1 (Programme 11)). Both can be harmonized with UNCCD's plan in related areas.

**Table. Schedule of planning and budgeting (2007–2018)**

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Conference of the Parties session	8		9		10	
Strategic plan (2008–2018)	Adoption		Adopt four-year strategic plan (2010–2013) Adopt 2010–2011 budget		Adopt 2012–2013 budget	
Committee on Science and Technology			Adopt biennial programme (2010–2011)		Adopt biennial programme (2012–2013)	
Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention		CRIC 7 Adopt multi-year programme (2009–2012)		Appraise results (2008–2009)		Adopt multi-year programme (2013–2016) Appraise results (2008–2011)
Global Mechanism Programme (four-year strategic plan)	budget 2008–2009 approved		Propose four-year strategic plan (2010–2013) Propose 2010–2011 budget			
Secretariat	Programme budget 2008–2009 approved		Propose four-year strategic plan (2010–2013) Propose 2010–2011 budget		Propose 2012–2013 budget	

2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
11		12		13	
Review UNCCD strategic plan Adopt four-year strategic plan (2014–2017) Adopt 2014–2015 budget		Adopt new plan Adopt 2016–2017 budget		Adopt 2018–2019 budget	
Adopt biennial programme (2014–2015)		Adopt biennial programme (2016–2017)		Adopt biennial programme (2018–2019)	
			Adopt multi-year programme (2017–2020) Appraise results (2012–2015)		
Propose four-year strategic plan (2014–2017) Propose 2014–2015 budget				Propose four-year strategic plan (2018–2021) Propose 2018–2019 budget	
Propose four-year strategic plan (2014–2017) Propose 2014–2015 budget		Propose 2016–2017 budget		Propose four-year strategic plan (2018–2021) Propose 2018–2019 budget	

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