



Convention to Combat Desertification

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The UNCCD reporting and review process in view of the post-2015 development agenda

Additional procedures or institutional mechanisms to assist the Conference of the Parties in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention

Additional procedures and institutional mechanisms to assist the Conference of the Parties in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention at its thirteenth session (CRIC 13) invited Parties to provide feedback on Non-paper 2 entitled “Additional procedures or institutional mechanisms to assist the Conference of the Parties in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention”.

Non-paper 2 has been revised by the secretariat, taking into account: (a) the relevant provision of decision 18/COP.11; (b) the input provided by Parties and regional and interest groups; (c) the report by the Intergovernmental Working Group contained in document ICCD/COP(12)/4; and (d) the report on CRIC 13, which includes recommendations from Parties on the further improvement of the implementation of the Convention, as contained in document ICCD/CRIC(13)/9.

This document has been prepared for submission to CRIC 14 for consideration and any decision Parties may wish to take at the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties on improving the efficiency and the effectiveness of the reporting and review process under the Convention.



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I. Background

1. At the thirteenth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 13), the secretariat submitted, for information, Non-paper 2 entitled “Additional procedures or institutional mechanisms to assist the Conference of the Parties in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention”.
2. Non-paper 2 was based on an internal assessment of the reporting and review process under the Convention, its assets and challenges in terms of relevance, efficiency and effectiveness, and proposed some options for change.
3. At CRIC 13, the Committee agreed that feedback on the above-mentioned matters would be required from Parties, and invited them to provide inputs to the secretariat, including through their regional and interest groups, by 1 June 2015. The Bureau of the CRIC, at its meeting on 11–12 June, decided to postpone the deadline to 1 July 2015. A total of 42 written contributions were received by the secretariat, 40 from Parties and 2 from Regional Implementation Annexes to the Convention. These contributions are included in their entirety in document ICCD/CRIC(14)/MISC.1, where an informal translation of the contributions received in languages other than English has been provided, as requested by the Bureau of the CRIC.
4. The present document builds upon Non-paper 2 presented at CRIC 13, which has been revised taking into account:
 - (a) The relevant provisions of decision 18/COP.11;
 - (b) The input provided by Parties and regional and interest groups as referred to in paragraph 3 above;
 - (c) The report by the Intergovernmental Working Group (IWG) on the follow-up to the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, as contained in document ICCD/COP(12)/4;
 - (d) The report on CRIC 13, containing recommendations by Parties on further improvements to the implementation of the Convention, as contained in document ICCD/CRIC(13)/9.

II. Options for change

5. Following the same structure as that of Non-paper 2, the options for increasing the relevance and efficiency of the current reporting and review process are presented in three sections as follows:
 - (a) Focusing the review exercise on substance rather than on institutional processes; and adjusting the frequency of the reporting and review process accordingly;
 - (b) Enhancing the relevance of the review process, restoring the original mandate of the CRIC and facilitating the integration of scientific advice into policy deliberations;
 - (c) Ensuring regional governance and continuity of the process in the period when the CRIC and the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) would not meet intersessionally.

A. Focusing the review exercise on substance

6. Starting from and including the biennium 2016–2017, national reporting would be streamlined as follows:

(a) Reporting against performance would focus on key performance indicators, including those for which global targets on operational objectives have not yet been achieved; this would ensure continuity with the previous reporting exercises (2010–2014) and monitoring of trends on matters of specific relevance to the process. Performance reporting would take place at the same time as reporting on progress indicators, that is, every four years;

(b) Data from accredited global sources would be compiled by the secretariat for a core set of progress indicators,¹ to be further validated and complemented by affected country Parties.² The frequency of reporting against progress indicators would remain unaltered, that is, every four years;

(c) Affected country Parties would be requested to report on the implementation of national action programmes and the achievement of national voluntary targets³ of land degradation neutrality, or any other global target relevant to the Convention that the United Nations General Assembly adopts within the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as any deliberations of the IWG adopted at COP 12, making use of the set of progress indicators referred to in paragraph 7 (b) above;⁴

(d) Data reported by developed country Parties, including in fulfilling other relevant reporting commitments,⁵ would be used for the assessment and review of financial flows for the implementation of the Convention.⁶

7. In accordance with paragraph 7 above, affected and developed country Parties, and other reporting entities as relevant, would be requested to report every four years;⁷ the CRIC would review this information with the same frequency, convening its ordinary intersessional sessions every four years, unless differently decided by the COP.

8. Should this proposal be accepted by Parties at COP 12, the next reporting exercise would take place in 2017. This would allow countries enough time to engage with the progress indicators reporting,⁸ including setting national targets for land degradation neutrality, on a voluntary basis.

¹ See document ICCD/COP(12)/CST/3-ICCD/CRIC(14)/7, which contains an assessment of the set of progress indicators adopted by decision 22/COP.11 and the test implemented by the secretariat in response to the request contained in paragraph 17 of the same decision.

² In accordance with the relevant provisions of decision 22/COP.11, particularly those contained in paragraphs 7, 8 and 9 and the specific task given by COP 11 to the secretariat.

³ See documents ICCD/COP(12)/4 and ICCD/CRIC(14)/4.

⁴ For the establishment of targets using the progress indicators, see decision 22/COP.11, paragraph 12; see also the aforementioned document ICCD/COP(12)/CST/3-ICCD/CRIC(14)/7, which contains guidance on the formulation of national voluntary targets on land degradation neutrality.

⁵ Particularly within the Creditor Reporting System of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee.

⁶ See document ICCD/CRIC(14)/8, which contains proposals by the secretariat and the Global Mechanism on streamlining the reporting on financial flows in accordance with decision 14/COP.11.

⁷ Similarly to the reporting obligations of other multilateral environmental agreements, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

⁸ Parties may recall that the prescribed six-month period was never sufficient for the preparation of national reports, and reporting deadlines always had to be postponed. This also happened in 2014, when the preparation for the reporting exercise had started on time. By 31 July 2014, the original

9. The reporting period would then coincide with availability of funding for enabling activities under the sixth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF). In this regard the secretariat would like to inform that consultations are ongoing with the secretariat of the GEF with a view to securing the required technical and financial support to strengthen the monitoring and assessment capacity of affected country Parties.⁹

B. Enhancing the relevance of the review process

10. The review process would be restructured along the following lines:

(a) The provisional agenda and programme of work of the CRIC at intersessional sessions would focus on the review of the implementation of the Convention, discarding other matters that have recently been added to its mandate as contained in decision 11/COP.9;¹⁰

(b) The CRIC would convene its intersessional sessions subsequent to sessions of the CST,¹¹ which in turn would advise the CRIC on the reliability of data on progress indicators and related methodologies in measuring progress towards achieving strategic objectives and/or targets and ensure that the CRIC relies on solid, scientifically sound information;

(c) CRIC sessions held between ordinary sessions of the COP (intersessional sessions) and held in conjunction with sessions of the CST would last one week, including the duration of the session of the CST; both national focal points and science and technology correspondents would be invited to attend;

(d) The frequency of the meetings and the provisional agenda of sessions of the CRIC held during sessions of the COP would remain as they currently stand; the purpose of the session would be to translate policy recommendations into actionable decisions by the COP, according to the current terms of reference of the Committee.¹²

deadline for submission, only 48 per cent of affected country Parties and 31 per cent of developed country Parties had submitted their reports, that is, less than half of the national reports that were submitted by the extended deadline.

⁹ See document ICCD/CRIC(14)/4 for more information on the expected support from the sixth replenishment of the GEF for enabling activities.

¹⁰ Including those of relevance to the COP, such as synergies with other conventions, governance of the Global Mechanism and progress reports of ad hoc intergovernmental groups, including on the mid-term review of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018) (The Strategy) and on land degradation neutrality, which have been added to the mandate and the task of the CRIC through a series of COP decisions following the adoption of its terms of reference (as contained in the annex to decision 11/COP.9).

¹¹ See paragraph 18 of the terms of reference of the CRIC, whereby the COP decided that “sessions held between ordinary sessions of the COP shall be held every two years, the second of which will be held subsequent to the intersessional sessions of the CST”.

¹² According to the terms of reference of the CRIC, at sessions held in conjunction with ordinary sessions of the COP, the CRIC shall, with a view to elaborating draft decisions, where necessary, assist the COP in: (a) reviewing the multi-year workplans of the Convention’s institutions and subsidiary bodies, including against performance indicators; (b) reviewing its report at sessions held between ordinary sessions of the COP on performance review and assessment of implementation, as it relates to information provided by Parties and other stakeholders; (c) carrying out a performance review of the Convention’s institutions and subsidiary bodies; (d) reviewing the performance and effectiveness of the CRIC; (e) reviewing the collaboration with the GEF; (f) providing advice on issues as requested by the CST; and (g) evaluating The Strategy.

11. Should this proposal be accepted by Parties at COP 12, the CRIC will continue meeting every two years at sessions of the COP and every four years at sessions held between sessions of the COP. Intersessional sessions of the CST will be convened immediately prior to a session of the CRIC; the total duration of such CST and CRIC sessions will be of five working days. Such CST and CRIC sessions will be preceded by consultations of the Regional Implementation Annexes of a maximum duration of two working days.

12. Parties may recall that, should the need arise, special sessions of the CRIC may be convened by the COP at any time the COP decides;¹³ in this regard, Parties may consider convening extraordinary intersessional CRIC meetings to address specific or emerging issues that are relevant to the review of implementation of the Convention, similarly to CRIC 7, which focused on methodological matters relevant to the reporting and review process and did not review reports by Parties and other reporting entities.¹⁴

13. The proposed adjustments to the schedule of the reporting and review exercise from 2016 onwards is illustrated in the chart contained in annex I to this document.

14. If the frequency of the sessions of the CRIC is maintained as currently, that is, every year, Parties should consider allocating core budget resources for convening the intersessional sessions, including for the participation to the meetings, as contributions to the Supplementary Fund and the Special Fund are not predictable and not sufficient to cover more than one official meeting of the governing bodies per biennium.

C. Ensuring continuity and regional governance

15. In the period when the CRIC and the CST would not meet between sessions of the COP, one of the following two measures would be taken:

(a) Meetings of the Regional Implementation Annexes would be organized, with the assistance of the Regional Coordination Units,¹⁵ as stand-alone meetings, to be convened in the regions with the support of a host country from the region, including for the cost of the participation of entitled countries. In the event that extrabudgetary resources do not allow organizing stand-alone regional meetings, such meetings would be convened back-to-back with any other regional and subregional meeting where United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) national focal points are invited to attend, such as the GEF extended constituencies workshops.¹⁶ The meetings of the Regional Implementation Annexes would not replace the global review of implementation; rather, they would address methodological issues relating to reporting, setting targets, capacity development needs, etc., and provide advice to the secretariat and the Global Mechanism

¹³ See paragraph 20 of the terms of reference of the CRIC, in relation to extraordinary sessions of the CRIC.

¹⁴ See document ICCD/CRIC(7)/5 containing the report of CRIC 7, held in Istanbul, Turkey, from 3 to 14 November 2008.

¹⁵ See document ICCD/COP(12)/12, where proposals are made on improved mechanisms to facilitate regional coordination of the implementation of the Convention, including Regional Coordination Units.

¹⁶ The GEF extended constituencies workshops convene national focal points of the three Rio Conventions and their schedule is communicated well in advance. In this case, the UNCCD would contribute only the daily subsistence allowance for the additional stay of UNCCD focal points, while the GEF would bear the cost of travel.

on adjustments required to improve the quality and relevance of information submitted to the subsidiary bodies;¹⁷

(b) The Bureaux of the CRIC and the CST would convene joint meetings every six months, and be supported by an additional officer from each regional and interest group.

III. Conclusions and recommendations

16. Parties at CRIC 14 may wish to consider the proposals contained in this document, as well as the other documents relating to the improvement of the reporting process, notably documents ICCD/COP(12)/CST/3-ICCD/CRIC(14)/7, ICCD/CRIC(14)/8 and ICCD/CRIC(13)/9, with a view to preparing a draft decision to be forwarded to COP 12 for consideration, whereby the COP would:

(a) Decide that performance reporting shall focus on key performance indicators and request the secretariat and the Global Mechanism to devise the required reporting tools and outline the reporting procedures accordingly;

(b) Encourage affected country Parties to include in their reports national targets of land degradation neutrality as indicated in documents ICCD/COP(12)/4 and ICCD/CRIC(14)/4;

(c) Also decide that reporting on financial flows for the implementation of the Convention shall take place according to the procedures outlined in document ICCD/CRIC(14)/8 and, to the extent possible, make use of default data to be further validated by Parties; and request the secretariat and the Global Mechanism to implement the required procedures;

(d) Reiterate that progress reporting shall take place in accordance with the provisions of decision 22/COP.11 and focus on the core set of progress indicators as outlined in documents ICCD/COP(12)/CST/3-ICCD/CRIC(14)/7 and ICCD/CRIC(14)/8; and request the secretariat and the Global Mechanism to implement the relevant provisions of that decision, with particular regard to the provision of data from accredited global datasets, reporting tools and relating procedures;

(e) Decide that performance and progress reporting, as well as reporting on financial flows, shall take place every four years, starting from the biennium 2016–2017;

(f) Also decide that: (i) the review of the implementation of the Convention, based on information provided by Parties and other reporting entities, shall take place at intersessional sessions of the CRIC, to be convened every four years starting from the biennium 2018–2019; (ii) the intersessional sessions of the CST shall be convened immediately prior to the intersessional sessions of the CRIC; (iii) the total duration of such CST and CRIC sessions will be of five working days; and (iv) meetings of the Regional Implementation Annexes shall be convened immediately prior to the joint CST and CRIC intersessional sessions;

¹⁷ For instance and on the assumption that this proposal is acceptable to Parties, regional meetings to take place in 2016 would address the question of progress reporting and validation of data from global sources; complementary indicators and data provided in addition to the core set of progress indicators; reporting on financial flows; capacity-building requirements and training to be organized to facilitate the 2017 reporting exercise; etc.

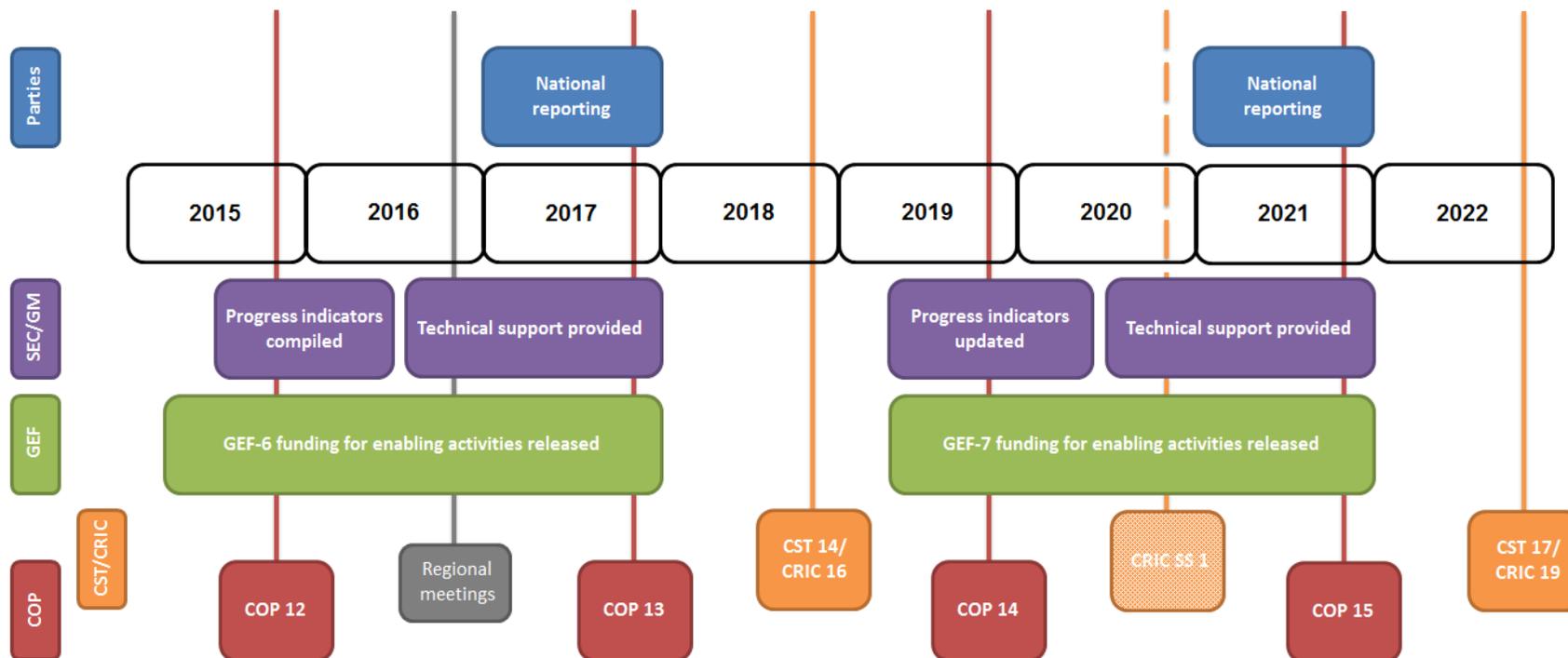
(g) Decide that stand-alone meetings of the Regional Implementation Annexes shall take place, subject to availability of funding and regional hosts, in the period when the CRIC and the CST would not meet between sessions of the COP; in the same period, the Bureaux of the CRIC and the CST would convene two joint meetings per year and be complemented by an additional officer per region, to be appointed by the regional and interests groups as indicated in the rules of procedure of the COP and the other applicable provisions of the relevant COP decisions. If this decision is taken, then the core budget financing the Bureaux of the CRIC and the CST should be adjusted to bear the costs.

17. Annex II to this document contains an estimate of the financial requirements for the implementation of the activities of the secretariat and the Global Mechanism, as referred to in paragraph 16(a), (b) (c) and (g) above, to be funded from extra-budgetary resources.

Annex I

Proposed revised schedule of the reporting and review exercise starting from 2016

[English only]



Abbreviations: COP = Conference of the Parties; CRIC = Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention; CST = Committee on Science and Technology; GEF = Global Environment Facility; GEF-6 = the sixth replenishment of the GEF; GEF-7 = the seventh replenishment of the GEF; GM = Global Mechanism; SEC = secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

Annex II

Financial requirements

The table below indicates the financial requirements for the implementation of the activities referred to in the recommendations contained in paragraphs 16 (a), (c) and (d) of this document, to be funded from extrabudgetary resources, as well as a possible source of funding if known. The activities mentioned in the table will be implemented only if the required funding is secured in time.

Table
Activities, cost estimates and possible source of funding

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Cost (euros)</i>	<i>Possible source of funding</i>
The secretariat and the Global Mechanism (GM) devise the reporting tools required for the performance reporting limited to key performance indicators	75 000	This activity will be implemented only if a successor Global Support Programme (GSP) is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), or other resources are made available
The secretariat and the GM implement the procedures for the reporting on financial flows outlined in document ICCD/CRIC(14)/8, making use, to the extent possible, of default data to be further validated by Parties	160 000	EUR 90,000 from the available budget of the current GSP Additional EUR 70,000 to be secured if a successor GSP is funded by the GEF, or other resources are made available (see also document ICCD/CRIC(14)/4)
Facilitate stand-alone meetings of the five Regional Implementation Annexes, in the period when the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) and the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) would not meet between sessions of the Conference of the Parties (COP)		
Facilitate two joint meetings per year of the Bureaux of the CRIC and the CST, with an additional officer per bureau and per region, in the period when the CRIC and the CST would not meet between sessions of the COP	152 000	Increase of core budget