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### Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention

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Item 8 of the provisional agenda

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

### **Information on the review of draft modalities, criteria and terms of reference for the mid-term evaluation of The Strategy**

#### **Note by the secretariat**

##### *Summary*

At the request of the Bureau of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC), the UNCCD secretariat has prepared the present document which provides preliminary information on the objectives, scope and products of the mid-term evaluation of The Strategy and the services necessary for undertaking it effectively. Feedback from Parties at the ninth session of the CRIC is sought in order to guide the CRIC Bureau in its task of drafting final terms of reference for the mid-term evaluation for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its tenth session.

The conclusion and recommendations section of this document highlights areas in which guidance from Parties would be required.

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## I. Introduction

1. Parties at the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 8) decided that an independent mid-term evaluation of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (The Strategy) was to be undertaken by the COP, based on the performance monitoring system, six years after the adoption of The Strategy (that is, by COP 11 in 2013).<sup>1</sup> They also agreed that the evaluation will review progress made in implementing The Strategy and will recommend appropriate measures for improving performance and furthering implementation.<sup>2</sup>

2. The scope of the independent mid-term evaluation of The Strategy (hereinafter referred to as “the mid-term evaluation”) was further specified by Parties to include, inter alia and in addition to the review of the performance review and assessment of implementation system (PRAIS), an assessment and monitoring of the performance and effectiveness of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC).<sup>3</sup>

3. Decision 11/COP.9 entrusted the CRIC, through its Bureau, with the preparation of appropriate modalities, criteria and terms of reference for the mid-term evaluation; the terms of reference were to be forwarded to COP 10 for consideration and adoption.

4. At its meeting held in Bonn, Germany, on 21–22 June 2010, the CRIC Bureau decided that an informal exchange on the mid-term evaluation would take place at CRIC 9, in order to allow Parties to exchange views on the nature and scope of the review and to provide further guidance to the secretariat and the CRIC Bureau for the preparation of the terms of reference for that review to take place at CRIC 10; the Bureau also requested the secretariat to adjust the programme of work of CRIC 9 accordingly.

5. The CRIC Bureau requested the secretariat to prepare an information document for CRIC 9, which should include information on:

- (a) How the mid-term evaluation is conceptualized;
- (b) The possible sources of information for undertaking the mid-term evaluation;
- (c) The draft terms of reference for the external assistance needed to facilitate the process;
- (d) The consultative process which needs to be put in place to enable Parties to undertake the mid-term evaluation after CRIC 9 and in time for COP 11 in order to complete the exercise;
- (e) The financial implications that this exercise may entail.

6. The CRIC Bureau also decided that regional meetings prior to CRIC 9 should be used to prepare input to the informal exchange arranged to take place during the official session at CRIC 9.

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<sup>1</sup> Decision 3/COP.8, operative paragraph 42.

<sup>2</sup> Decision 3/COP.8, annex, paragraph 26.

<sup>3</sup> Decision 11/COP.9, operative paragraph 7.

## **II. Preliminary concept for undertaking the mid-term evaluation of The Strategy**

### **A. Objectives of the evaluation**

7. As outlined in the introduction, the objectives of the mid-term evaluation have been set by Parties to comprise:

- (a) Review of progress made in implementing The Strategy;
- (b) Assessment and monitoring of the performance and effectiveness of the CRIC;
- (c) Review of the performance review and assessment of the implementation system.<sup>4</sup>

8. The mid-term evaluation will identify, through a consultative process and by COP 11, appropriate means of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of The Strategy and will adjust, where necessary, the modalities by which the CRIC conducts its work in order to increase its performance and effectiveness.

### **B. Scope of the exercise**

#### **1. Review of progress made in implementing The Strategy**

##### *a. Assessment of implementation*

9. An assessment of implementation will be conducted in order to evaluate the efficiency of The Strategy, primarily by using the baseline assessment undertaken at CRIC 9 (as reflected in the pertinent decisions of COP 10) and the analysis of trends to be undertaken at CRIC 11.

10. During this assessment, Parties may wish to focus their attention on the provisionally adopted targets for performance indicators contained in decision 13/COP.9, with a view to resetting their time frame<sup>5</sup> or adjusting or discarding some of them. As additional input, Parties may also wish to make extensive use of the findings of the iterative process undertaken mainly in 2011 and 2012 in order to improve the monitoring of financial flows as well as the collection and diffusion of best practices called for in The Strategy.

11. Major issues to be dealt with during this review are therefore:

- (a) Resetting of targets for existing performance indicators;
- (b) Reformulation of performance indicators and related targets that are not seen as conducive to the implementation of The Strategy;
- (c) Specific issues that emerge from the review on financial flows and best practices.

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<sup>4</sup> As adopted by Parties through decisions 11 to 13/COP.9. [see notes re footnote 5 below]

<sup>5</sup> The majority of provisionally adopted targets as contained in decision 13/COP.9 indicate 2014 as the time by which achievements should have been reached. Since the mid-term evaluation will be completed by 2013, Parties may wish to seize this opportunity to reset the time frame of these targets in order to enable the CRIC to monitor performance throughout the lifespan of The Strategy.

12. As regards monitoring progress made against impact indicators, the timing of the mid-term evaluation (2012–2013) may prove to be too early for making amendments to indicators that will only just have been put into effect by PRAIS and tested by Parties. In this regard it is to be noted that a baseline assessment of impact indicators will take place in 2012, only one year prior to the completion of the mid-term evaluation. Recommendations put forward by the CRIC during its eleventh session on impact indicators may not be comprehensive enough for Parties meaningfully to assess progress made in evaluating the impact The Strategy may have had on the implementation of the Convention.

*b. Assessment of The Strategy*

13. The scope of reviewing progress made in implementation of The Strategy may also include an assessment of the relevance and effectiveness of The Strategy by relating it back to the Convention and its thematic coverage. Various meetings of the subsidiary bodies over the past two years have suggested that there are differences in perception as to whether The Strategy has a wider thematic coverage, which is not reflected in the text of the Convention, or whether the understanding of the Convention has evolved, resulting in The Strategy's explicitly reflecting those new developments. The mid-term evaluation may provide a suitable platform for discussing and agreeing a common understanding on its implementation and, where the need arises, recommending necessary adjustments such as the adoption of national voluntary targets in the implementation of the Convention and The Strategy. Questions relating to the timespan of The Strategy – the fixed time frame with 2018 being the final year of The Strategy – versus a rolling system, as applied in the results-based framework of Convention institutions' and subsidiary bodies' work plans, may also be considered.

14. In addition, assessing the scope of The Strategy may also have another positive side effect in terms of the funding base for its implementation. Considering the new developments that have occurred in the Global Environment Facility (GEF),<sup>6</sup> and following the example of the Convention on Biodiversity, Parties may wish to strive for closer and more direct funding from the GEF for activities that emerge from the implementation of The Strategy, in order to increase the predictability of funding and a clearer linkage between GEF investments and UNCCD objectives. This warrants consultation with the GEF secretariat and between the COP and the GEF Council, a matter that could be addressed in the consultations for the mid-term evaluation.

15. It is self-evident that the results of deliberations by Parties on the assessment of The Strategy itself would impact recommendations on the way progress of The Strategy would be monitored by the CRIC. It is suggested, therefore, that the mid-term evaluation with policy discussions on the relevance and effectiveness of The Strategy be begun (that is, by reviewing its operational objectives and outcome areas), and that the more technical work on its efficiency (the relevant performance indicators and their targets) be pursued later on.

**2. Assessment and monitoring of the performance and effectiveness of the CRIC**

16. Previous to the adoption of The Strategy and the decision containing the terms of reference of the CRIC,<sup>7</sup> the terms of reference, operations and schedule of meetings of the Committee were subject to review at COP 8. By its decision 7/COP.6, the COP decided that the criteria against which this review would have been conducted were:

<sup>6</sup> The 4th GEF Assembly (May 2010) accepted the recommendation of the GEF Council to declare the GEF as the financial mechanism of the UNCCD. As a result, the GEF Assembly agreed to amend the GEF instrument accordingly.

<sup>7</sup> Decision 11/COP.9 and its annex.

- Relevance
- Impact
- Effectiveness
- Appropriateness of format, and
- Cost-effectiveness of its meetings

17. In order to obtain coherence in the process, similar criteria could be established for the review of the CRIC to be conducted as part of the mid-term evaluation.

### **3. Review of the performance review and assessment of implementation system**

18. As targeted decisions emanating from the implementation of PRAIS will be adopted for the first time at COP 10, the year 2012 will demonstrate to what extent PRAIS will have enabled the CRIC to monitor the implementation of these targeted decisions or whether amendments to its operational modalities are needed in order to streamline this process.

19. Apart from the way in which the assessment of implementation is facilitated (that is, primarily through the analysis of reports submitted by various reporting entities), PRAIS will also be assessed, through the reports received on implementation of their respective work programmes, as to how well it has provided the necessary feedback on the performance of Convention institutions and subsidiary bodies. Due to the clear linkage between work plans (submitted to the CRIC at sessions held in conjunction with the COP) and the work programmes (which are part of the budgetary discussions at the COP), it has yet to be seen whether the operational modalities as set out in decision 11/COP.9 are effective enough to enable the results-based budgeting of the Convention institutions and subsidiary bodies to capture the necessary substantive elements worked out by the CRIC. The same applies to cooperation in terms of providing input to the CRIC by the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) which is determined in decision 13/COP.9.

## **C. Output**

20. The mid-term evaluation may produce the following output:

- (a) Revised decision 3/COP.8, with particular reference to performance indicators and targets;
- (b) Revised decision 11/COP.9, in order to enable the CRIC better to perform its duties and responsibilities vis-à-vis its mandate as given by the Parties;
- (c) Revised decision 13/COP.9, including clarification on the relationship between the CST and the CRIC, with particular regard to issues relating to best practices;
- (d) A decision clarifying the linkages between GEF investment and the objectives of The Strategy, through closer collaboration with the GEF secretariat in the process of the mid-term evaluation;
- (e) A decision initiating steps towards the adoption of voluntary national targets for the implementation of the Convention, with particular reference to the strategic objectives of The Strategy.

## **III. Sources of information**

21. The following sources of information will be made available to Parties during the mid-term evaluation:

(a) The PRAIS portal, for information on the assessment of implementation, including the reporting templates and the way PRAIS was translated into a tangible tool for Parties to use;

(b) Analyses prepared by the Convention institutions, particularly information from the assessment of implementation in 2011 and 2012 as well as the first assessment of implementation on impact indicator level in 2012;

(c) Findings from the iterative process on performance indicators, financial flow and best practices;

(d) Decisions emerging from COP 10, as well as draft decisions prepared for COP 11 as they relate to the assessment of implementation of the Convention;

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

(f) The work programme of the CRIC for the biennia 2010–2011 and 2012–2013, as well as the work plans for 2009–2011 and 2012–2015;

(g) A policy option document highlighting the substantive evolutions in UNCCD implementation as contained in The Strategy versus what is contained in the Convention text, including the workflow from the CST to the CRIC, in order to streamline the work of Parties during official sessions;

(h) Survey(s) featuring feedback from country Parties which may be requested by the terms of reference of the mid-term evaluation.

22. Considering the amount of information upon which Parties need to deliberate, it is important to ensure that all necessary information is provided to Parties well in advance and soon after the adoption of the terms of reference of the mid-term evaluation, in order to ensure consultations at regional level as well as an informed decision-making process at COP level. In order to facilitate this process, the secretariat may be requested to exert extra effort in preparing documentation for Parties' consideration immediately after the decision on the terms of reference has been made by COP 10.

#### **IV. Consultative process**

23. The scope of the mid-term evaluation would require facilitation of the exercise, particularly in between sessions of the COP. Parties may consider, among others, the following two options:

(a) Establishing an ad hoc mechanism for consultations (such as an intergovernmental working group). Chairs of the regional implementation annexes, the COP president and the CRIC and CST Chairs could steer the intergovernmental consultation process, to which representatives of accredited civil society organizations (CSOs) may be associated in order to ensure feedback from civil society;

(b) Tasking the CRIC Bureau with oversight of the overall process leading to the mid-term evaluation.

24. In order for the mid-term evaluation to be effective and truly participatory, a well-structured consultative process is needed in between COP 10 and COP 11. It is therefore necessary for Parties at CRIC 9 to provide guidance on the nature of this consultative process. Consultations could be conducted through the following means:

(a) Taking advantage of the regional meetings in preparation for CRIC 11 and COP 11, during which one full day would be dedicated to the formulation of regional views on the mid-term evaluation;

(b) Consultations steered by the regional implementation annexes and the regional executive committees;

(c) Online consultations (e-forums);

(d) Meetings of an intergovernmental ad hoc working group that would need to be decided upon, together with the adoption of the terms of reference for the mid-term evaluation.

25. It is nevertheless expected that the secretariat will be facilitating this process, making use of external expertise as required, in order to ensure an independent evaluation.

## V. External assistance

26. Should the secretariat be requested to facilitate the terms of reference of the mid-term evaluation and to assist in the intergovernmental consultative process as described in the above chapter, external assistance would nevertheless be required in producing the necessary documentation, the compilation and other relevant information documents.

27. The following external assistance is therefore proposed:

(a) A team of two consultants who will assist the secretariat in providing support during Parties' deliberations on the revision of outcome areas and operational objectives, including the performance indicators and targets relating to the changes (expertise in results-based management and indicators);

(b) A consultant who will assist the secretariat in working on policy-related matters such as interlinkages with the GEF, interaction between the CST and the CRIC, and implementation of The Strategy and the Convention.

28. Should the methodological options put forward in this document be considered and amended as advised by Parties at CRIC 9, the attached draft terms of reference for the external assistance (annex I) will be revised and adjusted in line with the terms of reference for the mid-term evaluation to be adopted by COP 10.

## VI. Financial implications

29. The detailed cost estimate to facilitate this process is given in annex II to this document.

30. Should the options put forward in this document be considered, allocations for a total amount of €184,981 (US\$163,700 plus 13 per cent programme support cost) should be included in the core budget allocations for the secretariat work programme 2012–2013.

## VII. Conclusion and recommendations

**31. The mid-term evaluation as preliminarily outlined in this document will cover a broad range of issues on which Parties need to receive specific information and for which they need time to consult and deliberate. Apart from the timely production of supporting documents that the secretariat may be requested to produce, Parties will**



need time to consider documentary output, to consult and then to agree on changes during COP 11.

32. The means of consultations that have been highlighted in chapter IV will have an impact on how effectively and efficiently the mid-term evaluation will be concluded during the eleventh session of the COP. It is therefore important to receive early guidance by Parties at CRIC 9 on the following issues:

(a) The concept and the methodology to be applied in undertaking the mid-term evaluation, against the scope and the objective as decided upon by the COP;

(b) The expected results of the exercise, including in particular possible changes to the objectives and outcome areas of The Strategy;

(c) The means by which the information and consultation process will be facilitated, in order to ensure effective and timely deliberations at COP 11;

(d) The need to allocate extra resources to the Convention budget, in order to support the information and consultation process leading to the mid-term evaluation;

(e) The possible linkages between The Strategy and the GEF investment framework, in order to align objectives and indicators and to enable assessment of the impact of combating desertification and land degradation.

## Annex I

### Draft terms of reference for external assistance

#### 1. Objectives of the consultancy

To assist in facilitating the mid-term evaluation of The Strategy, which will be conducted through:

- (a) The review of progress made in implementing The Strategy;
- (b) Assessment and monitoring of the performance and effectiveness of the CRIC;
- (c) The review of PRAIS.

#### 2. Review of progress made in implementing The Strategy

##### a. Assessment of implementation

A draft assessment of implementation will be conducted in order to evaluate the efficiency of The Strategy, primarily by using the baseline assessment undertaken at CRIC 9 and the analysis of trends to be undertaken at CRIC 11. The draft assessment will allow proposals to be made on the following matters:

- (a) Resetting of targets for existing performance indicators;
- (b) Reformulation of performance indicators and related targets that are not seen as conducive to the implementation of The Strategy;
- (c) Specific issues that emerge from the review on financial flows and best practices.

##### b. Assessment of The Strategy

A draft assessment of the relevance and effectiveness of The Strategy will be conducted, by relating it back to the Convention and its thematic coverage. The draft assessment will allow proposals to be made on the following matters:

- (a) The establishment of national voluntary targets in the implementation of the Convention and The Strategy;
- (b) The options of a rolling system, as compared to the fixed time frame for the timespan of The Strategy;
- (c) Alignment of the sets of impact indicators of the GEF land degradation focal area strategy and The Strategy.

#### 3. Assessment and monitoring of the performance and effectiveness of the CRIC

A draft assessment of the performance of the CRIC will be conducted by applying the following criteria:

- (a) Relevance
- (b) Impact
- (c) Effectiveness

- (d) Appropriateness of format, and
- (e) Cost-effectiveness of its meeting.

#### 4. Review of the PRAIS

A draft assessment of the PRAIS system will be conducted, in order to evaluate:

- (a) The effectiveness of the PRAIS system in enabling the CRIC to monitor the implementation of COP decisions relating to the implementation of the Convention, and to propose amendments to its operational modalities;
- (b) The feedback provided on the performance of the Convention institutions and subsidiary bodies through the reports received on the implementation of their respective work programmes;
- (c) The effectiveness of the operational modalities in enabling the results-based budgeting of the Convention institutions and subsidiary bodies to capture the necessary substantive elements worked out by the CRIC;
- (d) The effectiveness of input provided by the CST to the CRIC and the interaction between the two subsidiary bodies.

#### 5. Expected output

- (a) A policy option document highlighting the substantive evolution of the UNCCD as contained in The Strategy versus what is contained in the Convention text, including the workflow from the CST to the CRIC, in order to streamline the work of Parties during official sessions;
- (b) Survey(s) that feature feedback from country Parties which may be requested by the terms of reference of the mid-term evaluation.

#### 6. Sources of information

The following sources of information will be consulted:

- (a) The PRAIS portal for information on the assessment of implementation, including the reporting templates and the way PRAIS has been translated into a tangible tool for Parties to use;
- (b) Analyses prepared by the Convention institutions will be used, particularly information from the assessment of implementation in 2011 and 2012 as well as the first assessment of implementation on impact indicator level in 2012;
- (c) Findings from the iterative process on performance indicators, financial flow and best practices;
- (d) Decisions emerging from COP 10, as well as draft decisions prepared for COP 11 as they relate to the assessment of implementation of the Convention;
- (e) Reports prepared by the secretariat on the performance review of the Convention institutions and subsidiary bodies;
- (f) The work programme of the CRIC for the biennia 2010–2011 and 2012–2013, as well as the work plans for 2009–2011 and 2012–2015.

## Annex II

### Financial implications of the exercise (2012–2013)

Financial implications of the mid-term evaluation will emerge from the options Parties may wish to choose during CRIC 9 on the external assistance needed by the secretariat, but more importantly on the consultative process that needs to be put in place for Parties to share views and form regional positions before starting negotiations at COP 11. The following tentative financial plan has been established and highlights expenditures that may be budgeted for in the forthcoming budget discussions at COP 10:

#### A. Consultancies to assist in the preparation of the background analytical documents

<i>Number of consultants</i>	<i>Duration (m/m)</i>	<i>Unit cost</i>	<i>Lump sum remuneration</i>
2	5 m/m each = 10 m/m	€5,000	€50,000
1	3 m/m	€5,000	€15,000
Total			€65,000

#### B. Meetings of the intergovernmental ad hoc working group

Three meetings in 2012 and 2013, comprising five Chairs of the regional implementation annexes, the COP president, the CRIC and CST Chairs and two CSO representatives (10 persons).

<i>Number of eligible members</i>	<i>Number of days (3 days per meeting * 3 meetings * 9 members)</i>	<i>Air tickets (€1,500 per member * 3 meetings)</i>	<i>Daily subsistence allowances (€200 /day/member)</i>	<i>Total travel costs</i>
9	81	€40,500	€16,200	€56,700

#### C. Travel of UNCCD staff

Provisionally, 10 missions of the UNCCD secretariat for consultation purposes and/or participation in the meetings of the ad hoc working group.

<i>Number of staff (excluding the Executive Secretary)</i>	<i>Number of days (3 days per mission * 10 missions * 2 staff member)</i>	<i>Air tickets (€1,500 per staff member * mission)</i>	<i>Daily subsistence allowances (€200 /day/member)</i>	<i>Total travel costs</i>
2	60	€30,000	€12,000	€42,000

**D. Time of UNCCD staff**

Amount of time dedicated by UNCCD secretariat staff to the mid-term evaluation in the biennium 2012–2013.

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<i>Number of UNCCD staff</i>	<i>Dedicated time allocated by UNCCD staff (m/m)</i>	<i>Total amount</i>
1 P-5	1/6 of his/her work time = 4 m/m	Per memoire
1 P-4	1/4 of his/her work time = 6 m/m	Per memoire

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# Annex III

## Time frame of the mid-term evaluation

