



Convention to Combat Desertification

Distr.: General
19 November 2012

Original: English

Committee on Science and Technology

Third special session

Fortaleza, Brazil, 4–7 February 2012

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

Progress made in refining the impact indicators relating to strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018)

Progress report on the refinement of the set of impact indicators on strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018) (The Strategy)

Note by the secretariat

Summary

By its decision 19/COP.10, the Conference of the Parties at its tenth session (COP 10) decided to establish an ad hoc advisory group of technical experts, to be tasked with continuing the iterative participatory contribution from the scientific community, National Focal Points and Science and Technology Correspondents on impact indicator refinement and the monitoring and assessment of impacts.

This document includes information on progress made in the establishment of the ad hoc advisory group of technical experts (AGTE) and in the refinement of the set of impact indicators from COP 10 up to mid-October 2012. In particular, the document outlines the selection process of the members of the AGTE and presents the results of their first meeting. A verbal update on progress made will be presented by the Chair of the AGTE to the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) for any recommendations the CST may wish to make on the process of impact indicator refinement.

Contents

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction	1–5	3
II. Selection of the members of the ad hoc advisory group of technical experts on impact indicator refinement	6–11	4
III. First meeting of the ad hoc advisory group of technical experts on impact indicator refinement	12–16	4
IV. Conclusions	17	5
 Annexes		
I. Terms of reference for an ad hoc advisory group of technical experts on impact indicator refinement		6
II. List of members of the ad hoc advisory group of technical experts on impact indicator refinement		10
III. Draft outlines of the working papers and/or chapters to be produced by the ad hoc advisory group of technical experts on impact indicator refinement		12

I. Introduction

1. While adopting the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018) (The Strategy), the Conference of the Parties, at its eighth session (COP 8), by its decision 3/COP.8, paragraph 10, requested the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) to provide advice on how best to measure progress on strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of The Strategy.

2. Based on a series of studies carried out in the biennium 2008–2009,^{1,2,3} the Conference of the Parties, at its ninth session (COP 9), decided to provisionally accept the proposed minimum, but not exclusive, set of 11 impact indicators attached as an annex to decision 17/COP.9. The Conference of the Parties (COP) requested the secretariat, under the guidance of the Bureau of the CST and using an iterative process, to develop proposals for consideration at future sessions of the COP commencing with its eleventh session (COP 11), to refine the set of impact indicators and associated methodologies, taking account of:

- (a) Application and review of the impact indicators by affected countries;
- (b) Scientific peer review of the relevance, accuracy and cost-effectiveness of the impact indicators;
- (c) Possible synergy with relevant programmes, projects and institutions, including those associated with the other Rio conventions;
- (d) Relevant contributions from UNCCD scientific conferences.

3. In the biennium 2010–2011, the secretariat, under the guidance of the Bureau of the CST, implemented a participatory and formative process which mobilized over 100 technical experts (ICCD/COP(10)/CST/2). This process led to the production of Version 1 of a White Paper⁴ which includes: (i) a refined conceptual framework, (ii) a refinement of the indicator set hierarchy, (iii) proposals of metrics/proxies to be considered for testing or further development, and (iv) proposals for consideration by the CST.

4. At its tenth session, by its decision 19/COP.10, paragraph 3, the COP decided to establish an ad hoc advisory group of technical experts, to be tasked with continuing the iterative participatory contribution from the scientific community, National Focal Points

¹ Berry, L., Abraham, E and W Essahli. 2009. “The UNCCD recommended minimum set of impact indicators”. Consultancy report. 99 pp. Available online:

<http://www.unccd.int/en/programmes/Science/Monitoring-Assessment/Documents/Final-Report_UNCCD-Min-Set-of-Impact-Indicators.pdf>.

² Randriamiarana, D. 2010. “Synthetic report: Regional consultations on methodologies related to the minimum set of impact indicators to measure progress in the implementation of strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of the UNCCD 10-Year Strategic Plan”. Consultancy report. 24 pp. Available online:

<http://www.unccd.int/en/programmes/Science/Monitoring-Assessment/Documents/Final-report_Regional-consultation-on-methodologies.pdf>.

³ Johnstad, M. 2009. “Data and information available at UN agencies and IGOs related to impact indicators for strategic objective 1, 2 and 3 of the UNCCD Strategy”. Consultancy report. 28 pp. Available online: <http://www.unccd.int/en/programmes/Science/Monitoring-Assessment/Documents/Final-Report_Study-on-data-availability-at-N_IGOs.pdf>.

⁴ Orr, B. J. 2011. “Scientific review of the UNCCD provisionally accepted set of impact indicators to measure the implementation of strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3”. White Paper - Version 1, 4 February 2011. Consultancy report. 145 pp. Available online:

<http://www.unccd.int/en/programmes/Science/Monitoring-Assessment/Documents/White%20paper_Scientific%20review%20set%20of%20indicators_Ver1.pdf>.

and Science and Technology Correspondents on impact-indicator refinement and the monitoring and assessment of impacts.

5. The information provided in this document includes progress made in the refinement of the set of impact indicators from the tenth session of the COP (COP 10) up to mid-October 2012.

II. Selection of the members of the ad hoc advisory group of technical experts on impact indicator refinement

6. By its decision 19/COP.10, the COP also requested the Bureau of the CST, with the support of the secretariat, to develop terms of reference for the ad hoc advisory group of technical experts and to select its members in consultation with Parties through the regional and interested groups, and based on written submissions received in response to a public call for experts.

7. At its meeting on 17 and 18 February 2012, the Bureau of the CST agreed on the terms of reference for the ad hoc advisory group of technical experts on impact indicator refinement (AGTE) (see annex I, below) as well as on the modalities for the selection of its members.⁵

8. The public call for experts was open from 1 to 31 March 2012. A total of 122 applications were received.

9. The secretariat compiled all received applications and prepared a shortlist of 10 applicants per region according to the competence requirements as agreed by the Bureau of the CST and using a grading system developed by the secretariat itself. Each shortlist was then submitted to the respective region to undertake regional consultations and pre-select 4 candidates per region out of the 10 shortlisted ones.

10. The selection of the experts was finalized at the meeting of the Bureau of the CST on 29 and 30 May 2012.⁶ The Bureau of the CST collectively selected 2 experts per region out of the 20 pre-selected regional candidates. In addition, taking into account the overall balance of the group in terms of gender and multidisciplinaryity, the Bureau of the CST selected 5 “global experts” based on applications received from representatives of major synergistic efforts, relevant conventions and organizations and using a shortlist of 10 applicants prepared by the secretariat.

11. The list of members of the AGTE is contained in annex II, below.

III. First meeting of the ad hoc advisory group of technical experts on impact indicator refinement

12. The first meeting of the AGTE was held on 23 and 24 July 2012, in Bonn, Germany. It was convened with the generous financial support from the Republic of Korea, under the Changwon initiative.

⁵ For details on the agreed modalities of selection see the Report of the CST Bureau meeting held 17–18 February 2012. Available online: <http://www.unccd.int/Lists/SiteDocumentLibrary/CST/BMR_17-18Feb2012.pdf>.

⁶ For details on the selection process see the report of the CST Bureau meeting held 29–30 May 2012. Available online: <<http://www.unccd.int/Lists/SiteDocumentLibrary/CST/BMR-29-30%20May%202012-eng.pdf>>.

13. The AGTE members elected Dr. Gunilla Björklund and Mr. Guillermo Dascal as Chair and Co-Chair of the AGTE respectively.

14. The AGTE members worked in groups and in plenary to identify and prioritize issues and elements to be addressed under each of the four main areas of work mandated by decision 19/COP.10, as follows:

(a) Identifying the best scientific approach to operationally delineate affected areas, including an evaluation of how this delineation was undertaken during the pilot tracking exercise;

(b) Developing a mechanism or framework that encourages country Parties to identify nationally and locally relevant impact indicators and integrate these in their contribution to the global impact assessment effort;

(c) Further refining the set of the provisionally adopted impact indicators, based on national limitations, the findings of the scientific review and on lessons learned through applications by affected country Parties in the pilot tracking exercise and in the reporting process in 2012, to identify the most meaningful, globally applicable and cost-effective set of impact indicators; and

(d) Developing a scientifically-based approach for integrating, analysing and interpreting impact-indicator information, so that the overall set of impact indicators, when taken together, has the potential to generate at national level relevant information that can be harmonized and used to produce regional and global baseline assessments.

15. The meeting culminated in the development of rough outlines of the working papers and/or chapters to be produced by the AGTE on the above-mentioned issues. After the meeting, these outlines were further refined by the AGTE through electronic exchanges and during a teleconference on 5 September 2012. The revised outlines are included in annex III, below.

16. The meeting also helped to delineate working modalities and allocation of tasks among the AGTE members. A short-term and a long-term timetable were also agreed upon by participants.⁷

IV. Conclusions

17. This document only includes progress made in the refinement of the set of impact indicators up to mid-October 2012. A verbal update will be presented by the Chair of the AGTE to the CST for any recommendations the CST may wish to make on the process of impact indicator refinement.

⁷ For more details, see the report of the meeting. Available online: http://www.unccd.int/Lists/SiteDocumentLibrary/science/AGTE%201st%20Meeting_Final%20Report.pdf.

Annex I

Terms of reference for an ad hoc advisory group of technical experts on impact indicator refinement

1. These terms of reference outline the tasks and responsibilities assigned to an ad hoc Advisory Group of Technical Experts for impact indicator refinement (hereinafter referred to as AGTE) to be established by the Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) and to be tasked with continuing the iterative, participatory contribution from the science and technology community to the indicator refinement process.

I. Background

2. By its decision 17/COP.9, the Conference of the Parties (COP) decided to provisionally accept the recommended set of 11 impact indicators annexed to the same decision to assist measurement, at the national and global levels, of progress made under national action programmes in implementing strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of The Strategy.

3. In the same decision, the COP requested the secretariat, under the guidance of the Bureau of the CST and using an iterative process, to develop proposals for consideration at future sessions of the COP commencing with its eleventh session, to refine the set of impact indicators and associated methodologies, taking account of:

- (a) Application and review of the impact indicators by affected countries;
- (b) Scientific peer review of the relevance, accuracy and cost-effectiveness of the impact indicators;
- (c) Possible synergy with relevant programmes, projects and institutions, including those associated with the other Rio conventions;
- (d) Relevant contributions from UNCCD scientific conferences.

4. The COP also requested the CST to review the status of this iterative process during its sessions and to recommend a minimum set of impact indicators for consideration at the eleventh session of the COP (COP 11).

5. The secretariat, under the guidance of the Bureau of the CST, devised a roadmap for the development of the iterative process to refine the set of impact indicators.⁸ This process was designed to be participatory and formative. It is participatory in that scientists from around the world and across disciplines were invited to contribute. It is formative in that multiple avenues of communication and engagement with technical experts were pursued, and at three junctures, what was learned in previous stages became the basis of the next discussion. Contributions from about 100 technical experts led to the production of Version 1 of a White Paper⁹ including: (i) a refined conceptual framework, (ii) a refinement of the

⁸ See documents ICC/CST(S-2)/8 and ICCD/COP(10)/CST/2.

⁹ Orr, B. J. 2011. "Scientific review of the UNCCD provisionally accepted set of impact indicators to measure the implementation of strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of The Strategy". White Paper - Version 1, 4 February 2011. Consultancy report. 145 pp. Available online: <http://www.unccd.int/en/programmes/Science/Monitoring-Assessment/Documents/White%20paper_Scientific%20review%20set%20of%20indicators_Ver1.pdf>.

indicator set hierarchy, (iii) proposals of metrics/proxies to be considered for testing or further development, and (iv) proposals for consideration by the CST. The final version of the White Paper, which will include feedback from the pilot impact indicators tracking exercises¹⁰ held from June to October 2011, is currently being finalized.

6. By its decision 19/COP.10, paragraph 1, the COP decided that the core principles identified in the participatory scientific peer review process and contained in document ICCD/COP(10)/CST/2 set the stage for the development of proposals to refine the set of impact indicators and associated methodologies based on national capacities and circumstances.

7. By paragraph 3 of the afore-mentioned decision, the COP further decided to establish an ad hoc advisory group of technical experts, not exceeding 15 members, to be tasked with continuing the iterative participatory contribution from the scientific community, National Focal Points and Science and Technology Correspondents on impact-indicator refinement and the monitoring and assessment of impacts.

II. Areas of work

8. In accordance with decision 19/COP.10, the AGTE will be tasked with addressing the following four fundamental issues:

(a) Identifying the best scientific approach to operationally delineate affected areas, including an evaluation of how this delineation was undertaken during the pilot tracking exercise;¹¹

(b) Developing a mechanism or framework that encourages country Parties to identify nationally and locally relevant impact indicators and integrate these in their contribution to the global impact assessment effort;

(c) Further refining the set of the provisionally adopted impact indicators, based on national limitations, the findings of the scientific review and on lessons learned through applications by affected country Parties in the pilot tracking exercise and in the reporting process in 2012, to identify the most meaningful, globally applicable and cost-effective set of impact indicators;

(d) Developing a scientifically-based approach for integrating, analysing and interpreting impact-indicator information, so that the overall set of impact indicators, when taken together, has the potential to generate at national level relevant information that can be harmonized and used to produce regional and global baseline assessments.

III. Main outputs

9. The AGTE will produce the following main outputs:

(a) A peer-reviewed working paper (or a series of peer-reviewed working papers) on the above-mentioned topics: in accordance with the participatory and formative nature of the iterative process for the refinement of the set of impact indicators, the working

¹⁰ Schulte- Herbrüggen, B., Mapendembe, A., Booth, H., Jaques, M. and J. Smith (2012) "The UNCCD Impact Indicators Pilot Tracking Exercise: Results and Conclusions". UNEP-WCMC, Cambridge.

¹¹ Tierney, M., Mapendembe, A., Perez, L. and D. Stanwell-Smith (2011) "UNCCD Pilot Impact Indicator Tracking Exercise Workshop Report". Mexico City, Mexico 11–13 July 2011. UNEP-WCMC, Cambridge. Available online: <http://www.unccd.int/en/programmes/Science/Monitoring-Assessment/Documents/Pilot_WS1_Report.pdf>.

paper(s) should be reviewed within the AGTE and with contributions from the science and technology community from around the world and across disciplines, as well as from National Focal Points and Science and Technology Correspondents;

(b) A progress report for the CST at its third special session;

(c) A report containing precise and workable recommendations on the above-mentioned topics for consideration by the CST at its eleventh session (CST 11).

10. The AGTE will also report on progress made at each meeting of the Bureau of the CST held before CST 11.

IV. Modalities of work

11. The AGTE shall operate under the guidance of the CST and its Bureau. In particular, the AGTE shall consult with the Bureau of the CST to develop its priorities of work.

12. The AGTE shall appoint a Chair and a Co-Chair from among its members to coordinate the work of the group and to facilitate a free exchange of views and information among members and between the secretariat and members.

13. The AGTE may appoint ad hoc technical sub-working groups to address specific topics according to the established priorities. The Chair and the Co-Chair will identify the need for such sub-working groups and designate AGTE members to serve on them. Sub-working groups shall determine the most efficient manner for accomplishing their work.

14. The meetings of the AGTE may be held either with their members being physically present or by electronic participation. Normally the AGTE shall physically meet once a year. The dates, the mode (i.e. physical or electronic meeting) and the meeting agendas shall be determined by the secretariat in consultation with the Chair and the Co-Chair of the AGTE, bearing in mind available resources.

V. Membership

15. The AGTE should serve for a term of approximately one year and a half, beginning with the first meeting of the AGTE (to be held tentatively at the end of June 2012) and ending at COP 11 (autumn 2013).

16. Members of the AGTE shall be selected by the Bureau of the CST in consultation with Parties through the regional and interested groups and with the support of the secretariat, based on applications submitted in response to a public call for experts.

17. The AGTE shall be composed of 15 members and yet be geographically balanced and functionally representative, including participation by representatives of major synergistic efforts, and relevant conventions and organizations. Regional balance shall be ensured by selecting two experts from each regional group. The additional five experts shall be selected as 'global experts' among representatives of major synergistic efforts, and relevant international conventions, organizations and institutions.

18. Members of the AGTE should act in their personal capacity and not represent the views of the organizations, country or region they belong to.

19. Members of the AGTE are expected to make the following commitments:

(a) To attending approximately three or four meetings each calendar year (including both physical and electronic meetings);

(b) To participate in sub-working groups (if any), in telephone conferences and interactions via e-mail;

- (c) To prepare timely and good quality substantive inputs on the priority topics identified by the AGTE as agreed;
- (d) To review documents produced by the AGTE.

VI. Terms and conditions

20. Travel costs and daily subsistence allowance will be paid to AGTE members attending a meeting of the AGTE in accordance with the relevant rules and regulations of the United Nations.

21. In order to maintain the independent nature of the AGTE, the participation costs of all the members should be covered, regardless of whether the member comes from a developed or developing country.

22. If a member of the AGTE is requested to carry out a specific and substantive task between meetings (e.g. drafting a working paper or a chapter of a working paper), the member shall be compensated for the task undertaken by means of a payment of a lump sum subject to the timely provision of good quality input. The lump sum shall be determined in accordance with the relevant rules and regulations of the United Nations. Assessment of the complexity of the task shall be made by the secretariat in consultation with the Chair of the AGTE.

23. Methodologies and products developed and delivered under this consultancy remain exclusively the property of the secretariat, and shall not be divulged and /or used without the prior written authorization of the secretariat.

Annex II

List of members of the ad hoc advisory group of technical experts on impact indicator refinement

Member

Dr. AJAI

Marine, Geo and Planetary Sciences Group
Space Applications Centre
Indian Space Research Organisation
India

Dr. Gunilla BJÖRKLUND

GeWa Consulting
Sweden

Dr. Valentin CIUBOTARU

NGO BIOS
Republic of Moldova

Mr. Guillermo DASCAL

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)
Chile

Dr. Jesus David GOMEZ DIAZ

Universidad Autonoma Chapingo
Mexico

Dr. German KUST

Institute of Ecological Soil Science
Moscow State University
Russian Federation

Dr. Geertrui LOUWAGIE

European Environment Agency (EEA)
Denmark

Dr. Elizabeth MIGONGO-BAKE

Dryland Ecosystem
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
Kenya

Dr. Juan PUIGDEFABREGAS

Estacion Experimental de Zonas Aridas (CSIC)
Spain

Dr. James F. REYNOLDS

Division of Environmental Science & Policy
Duke University
United States of America

Member

Dr. José SANTOS

Department of Marine Sciences
Escuela Superior Politecnica del Litoral
Ecuador

Dr. Michael STOCKING

Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel of the Global Environment Facility (GEF-STAP)
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
Kenya

Mr. Graham Paul VON MALTITZ

Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)
South Africa

Dr. Guosheng WANG

Academy of Forest Inventory and Planning
State Forestry Administration
China

Annex III

Draft outlines of the working papers and/or chapters to be produced by the ad hoc advisory group of technical experts on impact indicator refinement

A. “Identify the best scientific approach to operationally delineate affected areas and how to monitor trends”

1. Introduction

What is an affected area?

Causes and types of land degradation

Modelling techniques and frameworks used in the DLDD context

Terms of reference

2. Delineating affected areas

Criteria for delineating/defining affected areas

Trends in the delineation of affected areas

Methods

Multi-criteria analysis

3. Scientifically based conclusion

4. References

B. Develop a mechanism or framework that encourages country Parties to identify nationally and locally relevant impact indicators and integrate these in their contribution to the global impact assessment effort

1. Introduction

Background

Terms of reference

Linkages/interdependencies with other issues at stake

2. Effective frameworks and mechanisms

Current UNCCD actions, including the alignment of the National Action Programme and the Performance Review and Assessment of the Implementation System

DSPIR (driving force-pressure-state-impact-response) as a tool to encourage country Parties to identify nationally and locally relevant impact indicators

The approach of the Global Environment Facility on land degradation issues in its fourth and fifth replenishment

Overview of the relevant effective practices at international, regional and national levels

3. Needs assessment

Motivation analysis

Availability assessment

Up- and down-scaling mechanisms for the indicators set application

4. Matching analysis of existing or proposed framework/mechanism approaches to the needs of, and incentives for, Parties

5. List of proposed national benefits to contribute to the global impact assessment effort adapted/adjusted to different groups of countries and stakeholders

6. Examples of frameworks/mechanisms that could be used to encourage country Parties to identify nationally and locally relevant impact indicators

7. Conclusions

8. Future actions

C. Further scientific refining of the set of provisionally adopted impact indicators based on scientific reviews and lessons learned from drylands stakeholders in the past to identify the most meaningful, globally applicable and cost-effective set of impact indicators

1. Introduction

Background

Terms of reference

2. **Executive summary**
3. **Current provisional list of indicators and associated measurement metrics**
4. **Review of national limitations of reporting on the provisional list of impact indicators**

National limitations of the list of provisionally adopted impact indicators

Findings of the scientific peer review process for the refinement of the set of impact indicators

Findings of the pilot impact indicator tracking exercise

Findings from the 2012–2013 reporting and review process

5. **Proposals on further refinement of the set of minimum and voluntary provisionally adopted impact indicators based on the findings of the analysis of sources under section 4**
6. **Conclusions and recommendations**

D. Develop a scientifically based approach for integrating, analysing and interpreting impact indicator information so that the overall set of impact indicators, when taken together, has the potential to generate at national level relevant information that can be harmonized and used to produce regional and global baseline assessments

1. **Introduction**

Terms of reference and aims of the paper/chapter

Integration of indicators: what does it mean?

Analysing and interpreting impact indicator information

Disclaimer

2. **Use preliminary agreed framework to map proposed indicators against strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of The Strategy**
3. **A structure/framework for an indicator set and an analysis and interpretation process**

Why do we need a framework?

Overview of the proposed indicator framework

Proposal for an upgraded indicator framework

Guidelines for interpreting results from this framework

4. **Test cases/case studies illustrating the approach**
 5. **Guidelines and recommendations**
-