Terms of Reference
Consultants (5 positions)
Thematic assessments on Land Degradation Neutrality

Consultancy reference number: CCD/19/GM/18

Background

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) was established in 1994 and is the sole legally binding international agreement linking environment and development to sustainable land management. The Convention addresses specifically the arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, known as the drylands, where some of the most vulnerable ecosystems and peoples can be found. The Convention’s 197 country Parties work together to improve living conditions, to maintain and restore land and soil productivity, and to mitigate the effects of drought in affected areas.

In September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Sustainable Development Goals, including goal 15, which aims to “protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss”. As main expected results it aims, under target 15.3, to “combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world” by 2030. Responding to this global challenge, in October 2015, the 12th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP.12) of the UNCCD agreed to:

- Define Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) and endorse the concept as a strong vehicle for driving implementation of the UNCCD;
- Invite country Parties to formulate national voluntary targets to achieve LDN and to integrate LDN targets into UNCCD National Action Programmes;
- Establish LDN partnerships recognizing the unique role of the UNCCD in addressing target 15.3 and the contributions required from other bodies, agencies and Conventions to achieve LDN.

The Global Mechanism, the operational arm of the UNCCD, supports countries to translate the Convention into action and to achieve LDN at the national level. The GM and its international partners developed the Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Programme, whose objective is to help countries establish national voluntary targets for LDN and identify transformative projects to achieve these targets. To date, over 120 countries have committed to establish voluntary LDN targets.
The LDN approach encourages countries to pursue an optimal mix of measures designed to avoid, reduce and/or reverse land degradation to achieve a state of no net loss of healthy and productive land. LDN targets contribute not only to the achievement of national LDN goals, but have positive synergies with other national commitments. The LDN concept provides a useful framework for action in multiple policy areas, and is a known accelerator for the attainment of multiple SDGs beyond SDG15, such as poverty eradication (SDG1), zero hunger (SDG2), gender equality (SDG5), clean water and sanitation (SDG6), affordable and clean energy (SDG7), and climate action (SDG13).

With this in mind, it is critical that the LDN context be integrated into related policy areas, to promote synergies and strengthen coordination, which in turn will support achievement of the LDN targets. For this to happen, policy-relevant information, including guidance on how the LDN process and targets can be integrated with activities in other policy areas, is required.

**General objective**

The primary objective of the thematic assessments on LDN is to provide country Parties with policy-relevant information, including good practice examples and policy guidance, that demonstrates how the LDN targets and measures are relevant to these policy areas, generate multiple co-benefits, and help country Parties achieve several SDGs, including through a gender perspective. In this context, thematic assessments are envisaged in the following thematic areas:

1. Biodiversity;
2. Gender;
3. Forest and Landscape Restoration;
4. Small Island Developing States (SIDS);
5. Water

The Global Mechanism is hiring up to five consultants to support the preparation of LDN thematic assessments in the above thematic areas.

**Target audience**

The proposed assessments will target a wide audience comprising stakeholders involved in land management issues, including:

- Rio Conventions’ national focal points institutions, policy makers and government agencies;
- Research/academic institutions and extension services, including those involved in projects and programmes on the ground;
- Bi- and multilateral donors and financing institutions (e.g. GEF, World Bank, regional development banks) and the private sector, for potential investment opportunities and partnerships;
- Community organizations, civil society organizations, and land users.
Methodology/implementation

The consultants will support the development of a thematic assessment in one of the above thematic areas. Under the general supervision of the assigned Programme Officer, the overall supervision of the Managing Director of the GM and in close co-ordination with GM and UNCCD secretariat colleagues, the incumbent will perform the following duties:

- Support the development of a methodology and outline of the structure and content of the thematic assessment, in consultation with the assigned Programme Officer and in collaboration with selected partner agencies;
- Review the LDN country reports and other relevant documents, and prepare an overview of the targets and measures related to the relevant thematic area;
- Write a thematic assessment report and a thematic policy brief, including good practice examples and a gender perspective, for review by relevant staff members and stakeholders;
- Propose suitable photos, tables, maps and other graphics to be used in the report and policy brochure.

Deliverables

✓ Proposed methodology and workplan to carry out the assignment;
✓ Proposed outline of the thematic assessment report and policy brief;
✓ Thematic assessment report, including graphic elements;
✓ Policy brief, including graphic elements.

Qualifications

- Advance university degree in a relevant discipline (e.g. natural resources management, ecology, gender, water management, communications);
- At least three years of experience in policy research and writing linked to one or more of the proposed thematic areas;
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with demonstrated experience in producing high quality technical and policy papers;
- Ability to analyse and synthesise reports and data for a wide audience;
- Demonstrated ability to work independently and deliver assignments on time;
- English and French are the working languages of the UNCCD. For this consultancy, fluency in oral and written English is required. Knowledge of other official UN languages, particularly Spanish and/or French, is an asset.

Contractual terms

The consultancy will be home-based. The duration of the contract is for a maximum of 4 months, starting as soon as possible. The consultancy fee will be based on qualifications and level of experience.
Submission of applications

Applications should be submitted by e-mail to staffing@unccd.int together with a UN Personal History Form\(^1\) and CV, specifying the position: CCD/19/GM/18 – Thematic assessments on LDN. Please specify in your application the theme(s) for which you are applying. It is possible to apply for more than one theme.

The **deadline for applications is 12 April 2019**. Only applications submitted by the deadline will be considered.

Due to the volume of applications received, receipt of applications cannot be acknowledged individually. Please address your application as indicated above and please do not address or copy your application to an individual at the Secretariat or Global Mechanism. Candidates who do not receive any feedback within three months of the deadline should consider their application as unsuccessful.

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\(^{1}\) [https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/inline-files/UNCCD%20P-11%20Form_1.pdf](https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/inline-files/UNCCD%20P-11%20Form_1.pdf)