



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Consultant to produce a GLO working paper and policy brief on youth and land restoration

Consultancy reference number: CCD/20/ERPA/17

Background

Established in 1994, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is the sole legally binding international agreement linking environment and development to sustainable land management. The mandate of the Convention and its 197 Parties is to support “a future that avoids, minimizes, and reverses desertification/land degradation and mitigates the effects of drought in affected areas at all levels – and to achieve a land degradation-neutral world consistent with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.” The Global Land Outlook (GLO), the UNCCD’s flagship publication released every 4 years, is a state-of-the-art strategic communications product providing a transformative vision and framework for land management practice, policy and planning at global, regional and national scales.

The UNCCD is now commissioning a small number of working papers, of which this is one, for the second edition of the GLO (GLO2). The UNCCD, as with normal United Nations practice, will hold the copyright of the working paper. The publication of working papers in this format does not prevent authors from publishing them elsewhere, especially in peer-reviewed journals provided that UNCCD is properly acknowledged. Wider dissemination of the work done by working paper authors is encouraged, taking advantage of social media, public presentations and other venues. Each working paper will be published on the GLO digital platform and is expected to provide essential background and inputs for the GLO2 production team. All published GLO products can be found at: <https://knowledge.unccd.int/glo/global-land-outlook-glo>

GLO2 will primarily aim to support the effective implementation of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, being led by FAO and UNEP (<https://www.decadeonrestoration.org/>). It will showcase implementation pathways for meeting the objectives of the Decade, including achieving targets on Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN). GLO2 will build upon the key findings in GLO1 and the GLO regional thematic reports as well as those in recent peer-reviewed literature, scientific assessments, and reports published by the UN, international organizations, institutes and think tanks. GLO2 will focus on terrestrial ecosystems and will not directly address the coastal and marine. The human face of land and ecosystem restoration projects and programmes will be highlighted throughout GLO2. A positive narrative and future scenarios will stress the potential and opportunities afforded by a continuum of land management and restoration activities.

Restoration continuum: A wide range of activities and interventions that improve environmental conditions (e.g. ecological productivity) by avoiding, minimizing and reversing land and ecosystem degradation. These activities can often be designed to deliver multiple benefits (i.e. goods and services) that contribute to the current and future sustainability of communities and the planet.

In addition to providing substantive content and diverse policy perspectives for GLO2, working papers are expected to compile innovative case studies, on-the-ground examples and good practices



from a wide variety of sources and countries. GLO2 will be launched at the UNCCD's 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to be held in September or October 2021.

Thematic Content of the Working Paper and Policy brief

Most of the world's 1.2 billion youth, aged 15-24, reside in developing countries. Their numbers are growing far more rapidly in lower income than in higher income countries where youth make up a larger share of the rural population than of the urban population. As they are often engaged in land-based production activities, land management and restoration in the agricultural sector can be understood as a youth issue, especially in those countries that rely heavily on agriculture.

Approximately one in five of the world's youth are not employed nor engaged in any formal education or training, with young women outnumbering men two to one. On average, the youth unemployment rates are 3 times as high as those of adults. Many young people, and especially women, are likely to be employed in the informal economy often with low-paid and insecure jobs that are unable to lift them out of poverty. Young women face many more social constraints than men, especially in rural settings, while young men are more likely to migrate to urban areas than women which can result in skewed gender distribution in rural areas.

Transforming land management and engaging in restoration activities generally involves having rights or access to land and related resources. However, youth are the least likely to have such rights and access, and thus less likely to have agency over decisions around land management and restoration. Furthermore, half as many young women are likely to own land outright in comparison to men. As a result, youth are significantly more likely to either rent land or work as laborers on someone else's land. Improving tenure security and land governance factors for youth is thus considered an important enabler for future restoration efforts.

In the developing world, the levels of educational attainment are relatively low for rural youth and the lowest for young women. In addition, the learning outcomes of these educational systems are often insufficient in developing the skills and awareness to promote youth engagement in green rural jobs and a new restoration economy. Re-tooling skill sets for young people through education and capacity building should be about expanding the opportunities for them to engage with land restoration for themselves, their society and for the planet.

The youth and subsequent generations will bear the brunt of human- and climate-induced natural disasters, food and water shortages, biodiversity loss, destruction of natural ecosystems, security threats, refugee and global health crisis, and declines in economic productivity. These impacts will, and are, already affecting millions of youth globally, especially those living in developing countries. A new age of respect for planetary boundaries will require a transformation in the way people consume, produce, work, and live together to reduce major pressures on land resources, namely soil, water and biodiversity. Transformation to sustainable lifestyles should take place as soon as possible to minimize the burden for youth being created by the irreversible planet wide changes being caused by the current generation. In this regard, education and youth will be central to long-term strategies to ensure that future generations enjoy the benefits that nature provides to people.

Education and capacity building for engaging youth in land restoration, whether formal or informal, should support them with, among other things, agency and voice in local, (sub-) national and international decision-making bodies,¹ including engaging with or establishing NGOs, civil society and peer group organizations to better serve the youth constituency. It should also support their

¹ <https://www.desertification-youth-caucus.org/youth-engagement>



capacity to: adapt to new livelihood environments; process complex information about new technologies; analyze and address risks around land management and restoration; become embedded in local administration development and investment strategies that have land restoration as a component; and become influencers and champions for land restoration in their communities.

In order to foster a global restoration movement that is practical and relevant, youth need to be empowered and supported with access to knowledge and tools, new skill sets and legitimate representation.² What can be learned from recent youth engagement and capacity building on the issues of climate change, green jobs and biodiversity conservation that could support concerted and aligned activities, such as restoration, to address land degradation? Are there different approaches for different types of youth target audiences? What are the key educational, capacity building and livelihood opportunities that would support youth? If different, what are the key opportunities to specifically support young women? What are the best approaches to promote youth engagement in amplifying land restoration messages?

Youth participation in the land restoration agenda could involve a range of activities, including: small projects and best practices; livelihoods and job creation; global and national youth policies and youth strategies following status reports; civic engagement, inclusion and participation; dedicated events and conferences (youth and global); social media, blogs, photos, videos, peer communities, influencers and followers; youth sharing needs and perceptions; message amplification, awareness raising and advocacy; creation of NGOs, youth as agents of change, integration of youth issues into public policy; youth partnerships; youth as social entrepreneurs (those devising agile solutions to society's biggest issues).³

Consultant's tasks and deliverables

Under the overall supervision of the coordinator of the External Relations, Policy and Advocacy (ERPA) unit of the UNCCD and the direct supervision of an assigned Officer, the consultant will prepare a Working Paper and Policy Brief for GLO2. This will entail the following tasks:

- Conduct a targeted global literature and media review of youth and land and ecosystem restoration, including the relevant lessons learned from youth engagement on issues such as climate change, green jobs and biodiversity conservation. The major focus should be on how best to create and support the enabling environment for youth engagement and message amplification through education and capacity building, livelihood opportunities, improved land governance/tenure, etc. Other relevant perspectives, initiatives and socio-political contexts should be covered to the extent possible.
- Document successful initiatives, good practice examples and case studies of youth engagement in land and ecosystem restoration or other land-based and community initiatives across the spectrum of terrestrial ecosystems. Cover a range of target audiences such as youth from the low, medium and high-income countries, urban, peri-urban and rural areas, young women and men and indigenous youth. Examples should describe to the extent possible: the land degradation problem being addressed; the context; approach being adopted; the youth-responsiveness aspects; land governance/land tenure before and after; stakeholders involved; any aspects of implementation, including the factors affecting implementation, the process of implementation, and the results of implementation; what can be learnt about scaling; lessons learned for other youth, government, civil society, business/private sector, development aid programs, and other stakeholders; blockages, enablers and challenges.

² <https://www.unmgcy.org/>

³ <https://www.youthenvironment.org/restorationdecade>



- Document tools, approaches, methods, tool kits, frameworks that are being used, or could be used to support youth and their increased engagement in land and ecosystem restoration initiatives from local to global scales.
- Produce a 30-50 page Working Paper that gives a status assessment, based on the above tasks, of how youth are or could be engaged and supported in land and ecosystem restoration activities as well as the lessons learnt from recent youth networks, campaigns and initiatives.
- Produce a 4-6 page Policy Brief that distills the key findings and messages for decision-makers and UNCCD stakeholders.

Contractual terms

The consultancy will be home-based for three months starting from 15 June 2020. The consultant will prepare an overall work plan at the beginning of the assignment, which will be discussed and agreed with the supervisors at the UNCCD.

Requirements

- A Master's or PhD degree in social or political science or another field relevant for the consultancy;
- Research experience and publishing with an emphasis on environmental or natural resource management;
- Experience in transdisciplinary work on land and youth issues;
- Ability to communicate effectively in English with demonstrated writing skills is required.

Submission of application

Applications should be submitted by e-mail to staffing@unccd.int together with a UN Personal History Form⁴ and CV, specifying the position [CCD/20/ERPA/17](#) in the subject line. Please also submit a cover letter with your expectations for remuneration.

The deadline for applications is 30 May 2020. 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.

Date of issuance: 30 April 2020

⁴ UNCCD P-11 form in electronic fill-in .pdf OR .docx format available: <https://www.unccd.int/about-us/secretariat/vacancies/applying-unccd>