



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Consultant to produce a GLO working paper and policy brief on the urban-rural interface and land restoration

Consultancy reference number: CCD/20/ERPA/18

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

The world is becoming increasingly urban, with half of the population already living in cities and likely to increase to 68 percent by 2050. Urbanization results in land and ecosystem degradation both within and outside the city limits. Urbanization is projected to cause the loss of between 1.6 and 3.3 million hectare of prime agricultural land per year in the period between 2000 and 2030. With the most rapid rates of urban expansion, Africa and Asia are projected to experience 80% of the global cropland loss due to this urban expansion which, most concerning, will take place on agricultural lands that are twice as productive as national averages. When soil sealing takes place during urban development, it is generally irreversible.

Urban growth and peri-urban sprawl are formal and planned or informal and unplanned. Currently over 1 billion people live in slums both within urban areas and on their peripheries. The majority in most African cities live in unplanned informal settlements without water or sanitation systems and without any form of land documents. Often the residents of these slums come from rural areas, with over half of those forcibly displaced. Based on 135 national reports for the 2018 UNCCD reporting process, artificial areas (primarily urban areas) grew by 32.2 per cent between 2000–2015, representing an additional 168,000 km² of land lost to other uses or nature.

The interface between urban and rural areas is often the place where communities fail or flourish together. The UNCCD COP14 Delhi Declaration “encourages local governments to adopt integrated land use management and enhanced land governance to rehabilitate the natural resource base that makes cities sustainable, taking into consideration the New Urban Agenda, including by reducing rates of land consumption and soil sealing along with biodiversity and ecosystem loss”. The challenge lies in finding solutions at the local level.

There is an understanding that local governments are drivers of local action and through local policies can improve governance and planning mechanisms, especially in peri-urban areas. Local governments can prioritize land use, develop municipal action plans, adapt existing land use plans and create green jobs. A joined-up approach is vital for ensuring a healthy dynamic between urban and rural communities. Land and ecosystem restoration activities can provide potential entry points associated with land management and planning, food production and distribution, tenure security, migration and employment schemes, housing, transportation and infrastructure development, cultural identity and the preservation of natural areas. Urban and rural communities need to act as partners and not competitors just as the public and private sector need to work together to ensure sustainable supply chains. While



there are no agreed definitions of urban-rural interfaces (or their boundaries), there is some consensus around several key characteristics, such as they:

- occur in a range of contexts such as metropolitan areas, big cities and small market towns;
- include physical, biological and socio-cultural paradigms;
- are transitional and dynamic in nature particularly regarding social change;
- include a range of typologies such as for example population densities, functions and multiple types of uses, markets;
- have multiple linkages between rural and urban communities with two-way flows;
- are particularly complex regarding governance and institutional arrangements because of jurisdictional boundaries and land and planning governance arrangements;
- change as a result of physical configuration, economic activities and social relationships;
- have rural and urban features co-existing both within urban areas and beyond their limits.

Some of the questions to address include: How is large-scale restoration currently being implemented in urban-rural interfaces and what is the role of local and regional governments? What are the enabling political and economic factors within the policy and implementation environment, including land administration, tenure and spatial planning approaches? What are the most popular nature-based solutions for enhancing the resilience of cities and towns? What is the most practical definition that provides a unified understanding and coherent framework for multi-functional land and ecosystem restoration in urban-rural interfaces? What are the lessons learned from the work of local and regional governments, how can we strengthen urban-rural synergies for achieving LDN?

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 literature review, including relevant reports and best practices from local and regional governments addressing urban-rural interfaces from a policy and evidence-based perspective. Emphasis should be on policy and institutional alignment, land administration and governance, and spatial planning for multi-functional land use at scale; linking land and ecosystem restoration initiatives to the rapid and dynamic processes found in urban-rural interfaces; identifying mechanisms for increasing the participation of urban and rural stakeholders in land restoration activities at the interface.
- Document evidence-based tools, frameworks, models and approaches that drive policy and implementation by a range of urban and rural stakeholders. Draw on good practice examples and case studies from various sources, such as ICLEI local and regional government partners and the Greening Drylands Partnership (GDP) cooperation between Korea Forest Service, UNEP and UNCCD.



- Compile, in annotated form, a broad range of evidence-based case studies and good practice examples, from high, medium and low-income countries, of how land and ecosystem restoration is currently being undertaken in urban-rural interfaces. Describe the policy and practice regarding the people-oriented interventions to address rapidly transforming landscapes; informal and unplanned urban sprawl; institutional fragmentation (formal, informal, rural, urban, jurisdictions, planning and tenure); biophysical or ecosystem fragmentation; increasing land values putting pressure on smallholders; land degradation, soil sealing and the provision for ecosystem services; the politicization and contested nature of the land tenure and land use; water quality, sanitation and other environmental issues; infrastructure and market linkages; changing nature of livelihoods; and increasing population pressures due to in-migration.
- Use a common analytical framework that can accommodate a wide range of case studies of land and ecosystem restoration in the urban-rural interface and elaborate in detail five comprehensive case studies, at least one each from Latin America, Africa and Asia identifying many of the following elements: the problem being addressed; the context; the pathways used; political will and entry points; if known, cost of project and financing model; the global science and knowledge/indigenous knowledge behind the restoration; ecosystem services before and after; land and resource rights, land governance and planning before and after; stakeholders involved; drivers of change; role of soft environmental /land law; the legal, regulatory and institutional framework used; the enabling institutional and governance environment including multi-level and jurisdiction alignment and coordination; levers of change; continuum of activities; conflict management approaches; gender and social justice; rights, rewards and responsibilities; data collection methods; whether it was mainstreamed or remains experimental/pilot; outcomes, evidence, results, impact; what we can learn about scaling and multiple scales; lessons learned for governments, civil society, business/private sector, and other stakeholders; blockages and enablers and challenges; and an overall story about the factors affecting implementation, the process of implementation, and the results of implementation, including on how to promote replication and large-scale use.
- Produce a 30-50 page Working Paper that presents the analysis and results from the above tasks and documentation on land and ecosystem restoration activities in the urban-rural interface.
- 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 science, urban studies, natural resources management or other field relevant for the consultancy;



- Research experience and publishing with an emphasis on environmental or natural resource management;
- Experience in transdisciplinary work in urban-rural dynamics;
- 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 Form¹ and CV, specifying the position **CCD/20/ERPA/18** 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

¹ UNCCD P-11 form in electronic fill-in .pdf OR .docx format available: <https://www.unccd.int/about-us/secretariat/vacancies/applying-unccd>