



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Consultant to produce a GLO working paper and policy brief on tenure, resource rights and land restoration

Consultancy reference number: CCD/20/ERPA/19

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 health and well-being of 3.2 billion people is directly or indirectly impacted by desertification and land degradation. The IPCC ‘Special Report on Climate Change, Desertification, Land Degradation, Sustainable Land Management, Food Security and Greenhouse Gas Fluxes in Terrestrial Ecosystems’ identifies land as a key factor in addressing climate change and land degradation. Secure land tenure, property and land-use rights of individuals and/or communities, framed by a legal, regulatory and multi-level institutional framework, are critical enabling conditions for the restoration continuum to address land degradation. Security of tenure gives people the confidence that their land will not be taken by others, including the state. Land rights holders are encouraged to invest in their land which in turn leads to increased productivity in both managed and natural ecosystems over the long-term. Secure tenure therefore is a critical leverage point for land and ecosystem restoration resulting in reduced GHG-emissions, carbon sequestration, and biodiversity conservation which underpin greater food, water and livelihood security.

Global and local development need to be aligned, taking into account also the needs of local communities using the land. The legitimate land rights of people, including those of the poor and women, and land governance issues need to be at the center of any ecosystem restoration approaches. There is no more vacant land that is not already claimed and being used, often by the poor. Only 30 percent of people in developing countries hold registered ownership rights. The remaining 70 percent of people have legitimate rights, but these are often insecure. Often traditional tenure systems are under threat from urbanization, conflict or large-scale land-based investments known as ‘land grabbing’. Land is often held by elites and is not equitably distributed. More than 1 billion people in urban areas live in slums and informal settlements often on prime agricultural land. Land governance issues need to be addressed, as corruption and elite capture are common features of land systems, with the poor and women being the most vulnerable. Therefore, to achieve land and ecosystem restoration at scale, tenure security for most people on the planet needs to be addressed.

Conventional land administration, land use planning, land valuation and land information systems cannot meet the need of security of tenure for the majority nor are they suitable for the land management necessary for restoration at scale. Governments need to: recognize that their land governance regimes should provide more security of tenure and resource rights to its citizens, especially women and other vulnerable groups; together with enabling ecosystem restoration to address land degradation to promote a new restoration economy.

In the framework of the UNCCD process, the COP14 adopted decision 26/COP14 on land tenure.¹ This was the first time the Parties explicitly recognized the importance of addressing land tenure within the context of the implementation of the UNCCD and achieving LDN targets. Furthermore, the Science – Policy interface has identified the necessary elements to create an enabling environment for LDN and its potential contribution to enhancing well-being, livelihoods and the environment.² In addition, the UNCCD CSO Panel highlighted the linkages between land rights and land degradation to support the COP decision³; there is also working paper on tenure that was produced for GLO1.⁴

Innovative tools, frameworks, approaches and case studies need to be identified which address both tenure security and ecosystem restoration together and at scale so that everyone can contribute to, and benefit from, the new restoration economy. These need to include: some form of land documents for the majority of people in both rural, peri-urban and urban areas; political processes at (sub-) national

¹ <https://www.unccd.int/official-documents/cop-14-new-delhi-india-2019/decisions>

² <https://knowledge.unccd.int/publication/creating-enabling-environment-land-degradation-neutrality-and-its-potential>

³ <https://www.unccd.int/publications/civil-society-organizations-cso-panel-land-rights-sustainable-life-land>

⁴ <https://knowledge.unccd.int/publication/land-tenure-and-rights-improved-land-management-and-sustainable-development>



levels to address land reform, land use change, the role of the private sector and large investors; and dispute resolution, among other things. These tools, frameworks and approaches should encourage investments by the community including: the planting of economically beneficial trees; use of hedgerows; the construction of terraces, irrigation and drainage ditches and other water and erosion control and soil protection features; soil conserving and soil enhancing techniques such as rotational and fallow land uses designed to let agricultural, grazing, forest and other landscapes (re)acquire productive features.

Global and regional frameworks for the environment and land already exist such as: the Sustainable Development Goals with specific land indicators (1.4.2, 5.a.1, 15.3.1); the Rio+ conventions and IPCC and IPBES reports on land, the key global document of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of land, fisheries and forests in the context of national food security; the New Urban Agenda; and the only regional equivalent document to date from Member States of the African Union, African Development Bank and UNECA on the Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa. Forthcoming publications include: the UNCCD and FAO technical guide on the integration of the VGGT in the implementation of the UNCCD and LDN; and the UNGGIM Framework on Effective Land Administration being produced by Member States on innovative tools and approaches.

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:

- Building on the work of the SPI and CSO Panel (footnoted above), conduct a targeted literature review on land governance, land tenure, resource rights, land administration, land management, SDG land indicators, land use planning, land (natural resources) valuation and women's land rights through the lens of land degradation and ecosystem restoration. Emphasis should be laid on land governance policy implementation for multi-functional land use at scale; linking ecosystem restoration with innovative land tools, frameworks and approaches; and identifying mechanisms for increasing linkages to a new restoration economy so that all stakeholders have a stake and can play their part. It should cover rural, urban and peri-urban areas, as well as their interface, and take into account socio-political and legal and institutional contexts.
- Document innovative land tenure tools, frameworks and approaches that will drive implementation by a range of stakeholders and which will support the implementation of the three Rio conventions on land degradation, climate change and biodiversity, as well as the resolutions on land tenure from COP 14 and support the activities to be implemented in the framework of the Decade for Ecosystem Restoration.
- An assessment of the available tools, frameworks and approaches should be made also using case studies. This should cover: whether the tools, which can deliver ecosystem restoration alongside tenure security to people, already exist and are being used, and can be further scaled up; lessons learned about what does or does not work; and how existing ecosystem restoration and land tenure tools can be combined, adapted and re-tooled for a restoration economy.
- Compile, in annotated form, a broad range of case studies and good practice examples, from developed and developing countries, of how ecosystem restoration approaches linked to innovative land governance and land tenure approaches were undertaken
- Detail five comprehensive case studies, at least one each from Latin America, Africa and Asia, describing to the extent possible: the problem being addressed; the context; the pathways used; economic and political will and entry points; cost/benefit and financial



models; relationship between investment and tenure security; the global science/indigenous knowledge behind the restoration; ecosystem services before and after; land rights and land governance before and after; how the ecosystem restoration and land governance was undertaken jointly; stakeholders involved; land degradation decision support tools used; drivers of change (direct and indirect); role of soft environmental /land law and its integration into national law; the enabling (land) governance environment; the legal, regulatory and institutional framework used including for land tenure, resource rights, land use planning and land value; the management of trade-offs; the levers of change; gender responsiveness and social justice, if any; rights, rewards and responsibilities issues; data collection methods; whether it was mainstreamed or remains experimental/pilot; outcomes, results, impact; what we can learn about scaling; lessons learned for governments, civil society, business/private sector, and other stakeholders; blockages and enablers and challenges.

- Participate in the online stakeholder consultation to be organized by the UNCCD secretariat and FAO for the preparation of the technical guide and extract the elements that could be integrated into this assignment.
- Produce a 30-50 page Working Paper that outlines a compelling rationale and practical policy and implementation options, including annotated forms of the five detailed case studies for ecosystem restoration, also recognizing the land rights and practices of local communities, indigenous/customary people and women. This should include pathways for stakeholders to operationalize the available innovative tools, frameworks and approaches, including the VGGTs, to secure the tenure and resource rights of the majority of people; and show how existing ecosystem restoration for land degradation neutrality and innovative land tenure tools can be used together to foster a restoration economy in which everybody has a stake and a role to play.
- 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 a land administration related discipline, social science, natural resource management or other field relevant for the consultancy;
- Research experience and publishing with an emphasis on environmental or natural resource management;
- Experience in trans-disciplinary work;
- 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 Form⁵ and CV, specifying the position **CCD/20/ERPA/19** in the subject line. Please also submit a cover letter with your expectations for remuneration.

⁵ UNCCD P-11 form in electronic fill-in .pdf OR .docx format available: <https://www.unccd.int/about-us/secretariat/vacancies/applying-unccd>



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