TERMS OF REFERENCE

Consultancy (one position)
to develop for the Science-Policy Interface of the UNCCD thematic and illustrative examples of how the approaches and tools of integrated land use planning and integrated landscape management can be applied to achieve land degradation neutrality (LDN) targets.

Consultancy reference number: CCD/20/STI/32

[NB: These TOR are related to work of a consultant whose responsibilities are outlined in TOR ref: CCD/20/STI21/31]

Background

The objective of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought, through effective action at all levels, supported by international cooperation and partnership arrangements, in the framework of an integrated approach which is consistent with the 2030 Agenda, with a view to contributing to the achievement of sustainable development.

In 2013, the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the UNCCD established the Science-Policy Interface (SPI) to facilitate a two-way dialogue between scientists and policy makers in order to ensure the delivery of policy-relevant information, knowledge and advice on desertification/land degradation and drought (DLDD).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015 include SDG 15.3 as a target on Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN). In order to implement the LDN target, the COP, at its twelfth session, decided to include in the SPI work programme 2016-2017 an objective to provide scientific guidance for the operationalization of the voluntary LDN target (decision 21/COP.12). The SPI developed a Scientific Conceptual Framework for LDN, taking into consideration decision 3/COP.12 to develop guidance for formulating national LDN targets and initiative.

Building upon the Scientific Conceptual Framework for Land Degradation Neutrality, and upon the latest SPI technical report from the work programme 2018-2019, Creating an Enabling Environment for Land Degradation Neutrality and its Potential Contribution to

1In the context of LDN, integrated land use planning is defined as land use planning that seeks to balance the economic, social and cultural opportunities provided by land with the need to maintain and enhance ecosystem services provided by the land-based natural capital. It also aims to blend or coordinate management strategies and implementation requirements across multiple sectors and jurisdictions. With respect to scale, the entire continuum between integrated land use planning (ILUP) and integrated landscape management (ILM) is relevant to this TOR. Integrated land use planning is an umbrella term that includes more specific approaches such as, but not limited to territorial planning and spatial planning.

2https://knowledge.unccd.int/science-policy-interface


Enhancing Well-being, Livelihoods and the Environment⁴, country Parties requested the SPI to gather science-based evidence on the potential contribution of integrated land use planning and integrated landscape management to positive transformative change, whilst achieving LDN and addressing desertification/land degradation and drought issues (i.e. objective 1 of the SPI work programme for the biennium 2020-2021, decision 18/COP.14)⁵. Lastly, country Parties requested the SPI to deliver, for COP15, a report synthesizing science-based evidence of how integrated land use planning and integrated landscape management can potentially contribute to positive transformative change in the context of LDN. Providing this science-based evidence on land use planning and landscape management options is needed for policy design and implementation, and for projects by development partners, the private sector and governmental agencies involved in the phases that follow LDN target setting, to advance SDG 15.3.

Consultant’s tasks

Under the direct supervision of an assigned Programme Officer of the Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Unit and the overall supervision of the UNCCD Lead Scientist, the consultant will support the SPI members working to deliver on SPI Work Programme Objective 1 to provide science-based evidence of how, in the context of working to achieve or exceed LDN targets, integrated land use planning and integrated landscape management can contribute to positive transformative change, including examples of cases where these approaches have been applied.⁶ These TOR refer to several related inputs that the SPI will consider in their efforts to deliver on this objective.

To support the SPI in their work, a consultant is expected to develop thematic and illustrative examples for a background paper of how the approaches and tools of integrated land use planning and integrated landscape management can be applied to achieve LDN targets in the context of major DLDD issues confronting policy makers today. The thematic examples will take the form of problem cases, ultimately to be formatted as break out boxes in the SPI technical report. They will be designed by the consultant to reinforce the background research findings of another consultant who will be providing the science-based evidence of approaches and tools to support integrated land use planning and integrated landscape management to achieve LDN targets. They will also contribute to a ‘lessons learned from implementation’ chapter. The consultant is also expected to collaborate regularly and fluidly with a second consultant (see note at the top of this document for the reference number) to produce a background paper which brings together the science-based evidence of approaches and tools to support integrated land use planning and integrated landscape management to achieve LDN targets. Both consultants are also expected to communicate with the SPI co-leads in regular basis for refinement of their work.

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Furthermore, the consultant is expected to assist the SPI and the other consultant to translate the science-based evidence documented in the background paper and reinforced by the thematic examples, into policy proposals. In responding to these TOR, the consultant will take into account gender dimensions responsive to the concerns of women, youth and girls in land-use planning and in the design of interventions towards achieving LDN. The consultant’s tasks are as follows:

1. Support the preparation of a background paper for the SPI technical report through the identification and development of illustrative thematic examples supported by scientific literature of how the approaches and tools of integrated land use planning and integrated landscape management can be applied to achieve LDN targets in the context of major DLDD issues confronting UNCCD and other policy makers today. These major DLDD issues include:

   a) **Building back better in the COVID-19 era.** Noting that land use change is a primary transmission pathway for emerging infectious decisions, prevention of pandemics is in part a land use planning challenge. Moreover, in the face of the expanding COVID-19 pandemic, replacing some of the significant loss of resilience in global systems may be possible through more strategic land use decisions in local and regional systems. The continuum of integrated land use planning approaches and tools may offer effective ways to meet these needs.

   b) **Sand and dust storm source mitigation.** Managing sites of soil erosion deposition is insufficient for managing the source of sand and dust storms because that deposition is typically tied to erosion process across an entire landscape. The approaches and tools of integrated landscape management are thus critical for effective sand and dust storm source mitigation.

   c) **The food, energy and nature trilemma.** Recognizing that over 70% of the Earth’s ice-free terrestrial ecosystems have already been transformed from their natural state, it is clear that the challenges of making up the food gap, drawing down carbon from the atmosphere through renewable energy and conserving biodiversity are challenges that can no longer be addressed individually. The continuum of integrated land use planning approaches and tools applied in the context of LDN provide governments the framework for optimizing land use while safeguarding the environment and people.

   d) **Strengthening urban-rural socio-ecological systems.** Traditionally urban and rural systems have been considered by policy makers and planners independently. Integrated land use planning bolstered by tools that facilitate generating scenarios could enhance the capacity of policy makers and planners enhance livelihoods in urban and rural areas simultaneously.

   e) **Increasing drought resilience.** While drought is frequently viewed as a meteorological phenomenon, water scarcity is also driven by both land use decisions (such as crop choice) and land degradation (which, for example, can reduced the water holding capacity of the soil). Integrated land use planning and integrated landscape management tools which take into consideration drought and water scarcity could support efforts at the national to local level to build community and ecosystem resilience to drought.
Recognizing that land degradation and its impacts are correlated with gender inequality, the consultant will need to design an approach to develop illustrative thematic examples that focus on gender-responsive approaches/interventions based on women’s participation in decision-making for enabling inclusive land governance. Previous experience with LDN would be beneficial but is not required. However, it is strongly recommended that, prior to applying to this consultancy, applicants review the aforementioned Scientific Conceptual Framework for Land Degradation Neutrality and the report on Creating an Enabling Environment for Land Degradation Neutrality.

2. Further enrich the illustrative thematic examples identified through the inputs of knowledgeable stakeholders by virtually conducting key respondent interviews. These stakeholders are familiar with the major themes and the application of planning and management tools to support land use and management decision making.

3. Create, through writing in language accessible to non-experts, the development of infographics, and the use of other communication tools, break out boxes or some similar mechanism to set them apart from core chapter text in the SPI technical support. These break out boxes will be designed by the consultant to reinforce the background research findings of another consultant who will be providing the science-based evidence of approaches and tools to support integrated land use planning and integrated landscape management as a means to encourage positive transformative change, whilst achieving LDN and addressing DLDD issues in the context of the often competing demands for limited land resources, and the potential to achieve multiple benefits through optimization of the spatial mix of land uses.

4. Ensure the production of the illustrative thematic examples will appeal to diverse audiences interested in the major DLDD issues listed above, and how they may be addressed through integrated land use planning and integrated landscape management.

5. Noting that these illustrative thematic themes will be one of several elements of a background paper which the SPI will use to develop the overall SPI technical report, the consultant will

   a) work collaboratively with a second consultant (see note at the top of this document for the reference number) who will be responsible providing the SPI background research on the science-based evidence of approaches and tools to support integrated land use planning and integrated landscape management to achieve targets;

   b) in consultation with the second consultant, incorporate the illustrative theme breakout boxes resulting from these TOR into the background paper; both consultants will then work with the SPI to integrate the background paper into the SPI technical report,

   c) develop a concluding ‘lessons learned from implementation’ chapter for the background paper and work with the second consultant to ensure smooth integration of this chapter into the background paper.

   d) after its review by the SPI, and in collaboration with the second consultant, assist the SPI in integrating the approved background paper into the SPI technical report,

   e) in collaboration with the second consultant, translate the science-based evidence gathered by the other consultant, reinforced through the thematic examples produced in
this consultancy, into policy proposals for consideration of the SPI and their technical report,

f) assist the SPI in responding to comments received following each of the reviews of the SPI technical report,

g) support the SPI in the integration of reviewer comments relevant to the consultant's background paper into the post-review draft of the SPI technical report.

6. The selected consultant will be expected to work closely with SPI members, especially with co-leads, and be responsible for collaborating with the second consultant for the integration of their work. Both consultants will collaborate with the SPI on the integration of their work into the larger technical report produced by the SPI.

7. Attend virtual (and, if feasible, physical) meetings with SPI members to discuss the progress of the work and preliminary results.

8. Perform other duties as requested by the Lead Scientist.

**Deliverables and timeline**

The consultant shall produce the following deliverables:

- Preliminary outline of the background paper crafted in collaboration with the second consultant and the SPI (by September 2020)
- Identify and confirm the illustrative thematic examples and identify their most appropriate placement in the background paper with the SPI (by October 2020)
- Share 1st draft of the illustrative thematic examples (e.g., breakout boxes) and a 1st draft of the ‘lessons learned from implementation’ chapter with the SPI (by November 2020)
- Integration of work of both consultancies into the background paper (by December 2020)
- Submit 1st draft of the breakout boxes for the thematic examples and the ‘lessons learned from implementation’ chapter (by January 2021)
- Final draft of background paper (with all elements from both consultants) which is designed to feed into an SPI technical report (by the end of March 2021)
- Refinement of inputs to and support in responding to the review of the SPI technical report (April 2021)

**Qualifications/special skills**

- Advanced university degree (Master’s degree and above) which addressed both the biophysical and human dimensions of environmental change
- Demonstrated extensive knowledge of integrated land use planning, integrated landscape management, landscape ecology, spatial sciences, environmental sciences, or related fields;
- A minimum of 5 years of relevant professional experience in the domains listed above;
- Demonstrated extensive experience in qualitative research methods (please highlight any publications where you have documented your application of these methods);
• Demonstrated experience in conducting gender-responsive research and capturing the gender dimension in resulting publications;
• Demonstrated experience in technical writing for non-experts and/or science journalism in English (please provide a link in your cover letter to a published example of a product where you effectively translated a highly technical topic into language accessible to non-expert);
• Excellent computer skills, including Microsoft Office applications (in particular Word and Excel), as well as software to create visualizations such as infographics;
• Fluency in English is required (verbal and written);
• Demonstrated strong analytical, technical, organizational and communication (written and verbal) skills;
• Technical facilities (i.e. computer, software) available to carry out above tasks;
• Experience in working in an international environment.

**Contractual terms**

This consultancy may require a half-time (home-based) commitment over a period of 10 months, tentatively starting August 2020. The consultant will prepare an overall work plan for the contract period at the beginning of the assignment to be agreed with the STI Unit of the UNCCD secretariat and the co-leads of the SPI Work Programme Objective 1. Consultants will be collaborating with each other to develop the requested deliverables. Final decisions concerning content will be made by the SPI co-leads in consultation with the UNCCD secretariat. The fee will be defined based on the qualifications of the incumbents and may be paid in instalments upon the successful delivery of the expected deliverables.

All products developed and delivered through this consultancy shall remain the exclusive property of the UNCCD secretariat and shall not be divulged and/or used without prior written authorization. Participation by the consultant in authorship of publications derived from this work, including the technical report and any other publications, is encouraged, under agreement of the SPI and the UNCCD Lead Scientist, and if the contribution of the consultant meets the criteria of ICMJE Role of Authors and Contributors.  

**Submission of application**

In delivering on these TOR, a resume of your current Curriculum Vitae (CV) (maximum 4 pages, including a list of your most relevant publications to this topic) and a UNCCD Personal History Form (P11), should be submitted by e-mail to staffing@unccd.int specifying the consultancy reference number CCD/20/STI/32 in the subject line.

The **deadline for applications is 09 August 2020**. Only applications submitted by the deadline will be considered.

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8 UNCCD Personal History Form: [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)
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: 24 July 2020