TERMS OF REFERENCE

Support the activities of the science-policy interface of the UNCCD and cooperation with other entities to promote ecological connectivity

Consultancy reference number: CCD/20/STI/35

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 20230 Agenda with a view to contributing to the achievement of sustainable development.

In 2017, the Conference of the Parties to UNCCD, adopted a Strategic Framework for 2018-2020 which, among others, set the objective of generating global environmental benefits through the effective implementation of the UNCCD by enhancing synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements and processes and contributing to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and addressing climate change.

In 2019, the Conference of the Parties to UNCCD, requested the Secretariat of the UNCCD to continue promoting and strengthening relationships with other relevant conventions and international organizations, institutions and agencies as well as to seek news ones also in the context of emerging issues such as the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030.

Furthermore, the UNCCD Work programme of the Science-Policy Interface for the biennium 2020–2021, instructed the Science-Policy Interface (SPI) to contribute to the implementation of the IPBES rolling work programme up to 2030 specifically on two of the prioritized topics: (a) Understanding the importance of biodiversity in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and (b) Understanding the underlying causes of biodiversity loss and determinants of transformative change and options for achieving the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity.

The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) is the primary specialised intergovernmental global framework for cooperative efforts in relation to the conservation of migratory species and their habitats. Ecological connectivity is a key word for the Convention – it is an expression of the migration process itself and is essential for a variety ecosystems functions which are at the basis of land degradation neutrality (LDN). In 2003, the Secretariats of the UNCCD and CMS entered a formal partnership agreement and have been working since then on numerous initiatives with several policy outcomes. For example, CMS COP 12 adopted decisions which invited Parties to consider exploring the
integration of biodiversity requirements into the LDN) delivery at appropriate scale, in support of the Action Plan for Migratory Land Birds in the African-Eurasian Region (AEMLAP). More recently, the Secretariat of the UNCCD working with the Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology, as well as the secretariats of CMS and the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (WHC) collaborated in shaping the rolling program of work of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), adopted at its seventh session, especially on the role of connectivity in ensuring integrity and resilience in socio-ecological systems.

Collaboration on the topic of connectivity continued in the context of meetings convened by CMS related to the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, with a view to articulate a concept for ecological connectivity as relevant to multiple processes, including those of the UNCCD. These resulted in an agreed definition of connectivity that encompasses conditions that are needed to support the movement of species and the flow of natural processes which also help maintain land-based natural capital and ecosystem services being at the basis of LDN, as well as a set of elements that could be included in the post-2020 framework. Through these meetings, cooperation among CMS, the UNCCD, other intergovernmental entities and the IUCN specialist group on connectivity was furthered, and inputs were provided to help shape the forthcoming IUCN guidelines on connectivity which will be a key tool for countries and partners to adopt relevant actions at the country level.

**Responsibilities**

Under the overall supervision of the Lead Scientist, based in the Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) unit, and overseen by the Chief of the unit, and in close collaboration with CMS Secretariat the consultant will assist with the implementation of cooperative activities with CMS focusing on supporting the following tasks:

- Promote opportunities to strengthen joint work to optimize spatial land use planning and management and integrated approaches for the conservation of migratory species and land resources;
- Contribute to the formulation of inputs to the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, especially in terms of targets and indicators on connectivity, and participate in relevant consultations
- Follow the IPBES processes and contribute to the scoping exercises and development of relevant assessments of the IPBES rolling work programme;
- Review and outline options for addressing ecological connectivity in other relevant fora and processes (e.g., SDGs, UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, IUCN World Conservation Congress);
- Explore the possibility to operationalize connectivity-based measures and support related projects including through collaboration with IUCN, UNDP and other partners;
- Explore funding opportunities for country implementation of connectivity-based measures through the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Green Climate Fund, UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration Trust Fund and others;
- Support communication with CMS and other relevant partner organizations;
• Explore further opportunities of collaboration including in building a response to the COVID-19 pandemic by addressing land use change and the consequent species habitat degradation and fragmentation as among the primary transmission pathways for emerging infectious diseases.

**Deliverables**

- Joint work plan between the Secretariats of the UNCCD and CMS for 2020-2023 on activities promoting integrated approaches for the conservation of land resources and migratory species in accordance with the mandates of both Conventions
- Review of and contributions to draft documents for the dedicated Open-Ended Working Group on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and the Subsidiary Body on Implementation under the Convention of Biological Diversity with a view to improve the formulation of targets and indicators on ecological connectivity
- Review of and contributions to IPBES ongoing assessments i.e. Nexus and Transformative change assessments in cooperation with and support of the UNCCD SPI and the CMS Scientific Council
- Mapping of ongoing initiatives and processes addressing connectivity-based measures
- Project proposals under the seventh replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund (GEF-7), Green Climate Fund, UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration Trust Fund as well as inputs to the development of the four-year framework of programme priorities for GEF-8 promoting country implementation of connectivity-based measures;
- Joint study, subject to the availability of extra funds, and/or a series of web pieces on the role of land use change and the consequent species habitat degradation and fragmentation in the spread of zoonotic diseases.

**Requirements**

- Advanced university degree (MSc. or equivalent) in the field of environmental sciences or international law.
- A minimum of two (2) years of relevant work experience especially in scientific and technical aspects relating to environmental issues and in intergovernmental processes. Demonstrated analytical, technical, organizational, communication (verbal and written) skills. Very good knowledge of Word, Excel and PowerPoint, and use of internet and research tool.
- Fluency in oral and written English is required. Knowledge of another official UN language is an asset.

**Contractual terms**

The consultant will work on a full-time basis in Bonn, Germany, at the UNCDD Headquarters for the duration of a year from September 2020 to September 2021. All of the above activities are ongoing throughout this timeframe.

All products developed and delivered through the consultancy support shall remain the exclusive property of the UNCCD and CMS Secretariats and shall not be divulged and/or used without prior written authorization by the Executive Secretariat.
Submission of application

Applications should be submitted by e-mail to staffing@unccd.int together with a UN Personal History Form and CV¹, specifying the position CCD/20/STI/35 in the subject line. Please also submit a cover letter including your expectations for remuneration.

The deadline for applications is 21 August 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: 07 August 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