TERMS OF REFERENCE

Consultancy to produce a Global Land Outlook Regional Thematic Report on Central and Eastern Europe

Consultancy Reference: CCD/20/ERPA/39

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 GLO features a series of the regional thematic reports which illustrate various aspects of a complex interlinkage of land degradation, social and economic development and ecosystem restoration practices in the regions. The Regional Thematic Report for Central and Eastern Europe1 will address the challenges and solutions for ecosystems restoration in the region. As a communication and advocacy tool the Report will target national and regional policy makers, influencers, campaigners, civil society organizations and media. The Report will be based on the recent peer-reviewed publications, the reports published by the UN, international and regional organizations, institutes and think-tanks.

Thematic content of the regional report
The COVID-19 outbreak has amplified existing socio-economic problems worldwide and in the Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), leading to disruptions in food supply, growing vulnerability of rural communities, massive return of labor migrants and loss of jobs. Simultaneously, the global pandemic and its far-reaching social and economic consequences provides a “window of opportunity” for decisionmakers and broad public to re-think our relationship with nature in a way that ensure smart recovery from the global and regional economic crisis. Stable and healthy land resources are the backbone of local and national economies. They can help in overcoming the challenges of creating jobs, protecting vulnerable communities and steering post-crisis recovery towards a more resilient future.

Increasing recognition of nature-based solutions opens up an avenue of economic opportunities for both the private and public sectors demonstrating the value of land and the way it can be effectively managed for various ecosystem services, such as climate and water regulation, biodiversity, disaster risk reduction, food security and societal benefits.

In the global context, the proportion of degraded lands in CEE compared to other regions is the smallest, making up 6.7% in CEE, 17.2% in Africa, 24% in Asia, 27.7% in LAC and 13.7% in Northern Mediterranean (UNCCD 2018 reporting). However, this kind of comparison could be misleading as it does not reveal the trends within the region and therefore often leads to a common assumption of

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1 Central and Eastern Europe in the context of UNCCD Regional Implementation Annex V includes 15 affected country Parties: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Georgia, Latvia, Moldova, Montenegro, Northern Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Russian Federation, Ukraine.
abundance and stability of land resources in the region. However, trends show that nearly all the countries in the Eastern Europe are running biocapacity deficits² with land-use change being the main driver of the loss of ecosystem service and biodiversity³.

The report will elaborate on evidence-based elements including (i) a brief overview of land-use change trends and their various drivers, with a spotlight on key ecosystem services and fragility caused by COVID-19 pandemic (ii) more detailed treatment of ecosystem restoration initiatives in the region (as part of Land Degradation Neutrality, post-2020 biodiversity targets, national determined contribution to climate change, Bonn Challenge and national restoration campaigns) and the ways in which enhanced synergies among various commitments could help secure sufficient financial resources to achieve transformational change and (iii) pathways to a more secure future including the lessons learned through COVID-19 recovery strategy to build more resilient food supply systems, secure land-based employment, broader application of nature-based solutions and the long-term land-use planning.

The report will also provide strategic recommendations to guide intergovernmental negotiations, regional policy making, and facilitate advocacy of land degradation neutrality as an accelerator for achieving SDGs in the regional context.

Duties and Responsibilities

Under the overall guidance and supervision of the Regional Liaison Officer (RLO) for Central and Eastern Europe, ERPA of the UNCCD Secretariat, the consultant is responsible for the production of the publication.

More specifically, the consultant will perform the following activities:

1. Conduct a target literature review on landscape transformation and ecosystem restoration in Central and Eastern Europe. Analyze the main drivers of land degradation in the context of the changing political and socio-economic settings within the region and how resilient is the region to face increasing and competing demands for land under a changing climate. Collect evidence-based information and data on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in the region, particularly in land use sector. Analyze the challenges and opportunities for the restoration activities in the region taking into account the on-going commitments and pledged initiatives.

2. Identify a relevant and representative set of experts, governmental, non-governmental, private sector, civil society and international organizations that carry out land management and restoration activities in this area.

3. Where realistic, given the availability of relevant data, provide quantitative and qualitative data disaggregated by sub-regions.

4. Compile a broad range of case studies and good practices covering equally all sub-regions to illustrate the content of the report. Source unique and relevant high-resolution photographs and develop at least 5 unique colored infographics to be included in the publication.

5. As part of the initial work plan, produce the draft structure of the publication with suggested tentative number of text-only pages per chapter, with the total size of text-only pages to be around 60 pages.

³ https://ipbes.net/sites/default/files/spm_2b_eca_digital_0.pdf
6. Prepare a first draft of the report to present it for a discussion in order to collect observations, comments, and suggestions to strengthen the document.

7. Prepare the final draft of the report while ensuring stylistic editing of the entire text to clarify meaning, ensure coherence and flow.

**Monitoring and reporting requirements**

Work-progress reporting/monitoring meetings will be held with consultant on a regular basis. All activities of the consultant shall be discussed and agreed upon with the supervisor. UNCCD will be the final authority to control the quality and evaluate the work.

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.

**Contractual Terms**

The consultancy will be home-based for four months starting from October 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.

**Qualifications**

- A Master’s or PhD degree in natural resource management, land resources management, environmental economy, sustainable development or other fields relevant for the consultancy;
- A minimum of 10 years working experience related to the above disciplines, including in-depth knowledge of sustainable land/water management and restoration policies, programmes and good practices.
- Substantial record of research and publications with an emphasis on environmental or natural resource management and sustainable development, including non-scientific communications.
- Excellent demonstrated writing skills and fluency in English is required.

**Submission of application**

Applications should be submitted by e-mail to staffing@unccd.int together with a UN Personal History Form and CV4, specifying the position CCD/20/ERPA/39 in the subject line. Please also submit a cover letter including your expectations for remuneration.

The deadline for applications is 23 September 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: 10 September 2020

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