TERMS OF REFERENCE

Senior Consultant to support the Food Systems Summit 2021
Action Track 3: Boosting Nature-Positive Production

Consultancy reference number: CCD/20/ERPA/41

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 UN Secretary-General António Guterres will convene a Food Systems Summit (FSS) to raise global awareness and land global commitments and actions that transform food systems to resolve not only hunger, but to reduce diet-related disease and heal the planet. The Secretary General is calling for collective action of all citizens to radically change the way we produce, process, and consume food. The FSS seeks to energize and accelerate our collective journey to eliminate hunger, create more inclusive and healthier food systems, and safeguard the health of our planet.

The FSS will build on the many existing global events and platforms and the resulting agreements, commitments, and collaborative actions. Preparations for the Summit will seek to discover synergy between the multiple regional and national initiatives and alliances that already exist or are forming to support the transformation of food systems. The FSS will deliberately look to draw evidence and knowledge from these efforts to inform the Summit’s global ideas and recommendations. https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/food-systems-summit-2021/

The FSS will have five Action Tracks: (1) ensuring access to safe and nutritious food, (2) shifting to sustainable consumption patterns, (3) boosting nature-positive production, (4) advancing equitable livelihoods and (5) building resilience. Action Track 3 is based on the premise that systemic change towards nature-positive production requires cross cutting levers of joined-up policy reform, coordinated investment, accessible financing, innovation, traditional knowledge, governance, data and evidence, and empowerment. These solutions must manage the impacts of climate change, mainstream biodiversity, reduce emissions and increase sequestration, regenerate and protect critical ecosystems, and reduce food loss and energy usage, without undermining health or nutritious diets. https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2020/09/five-priority-areas-for-action-revealed-as-part-of-un-food-systems-summit-engagement-process/

The FSS will be held in September or October of 2021. The UNCCD is the UN Anchor Agency for Action Track 3 on Boosting Nature-Positive Production and, along with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) as the Chair of the Action Track, will work in a collaborative team environment that will be supported by other UN and international partners and organizations. It is expected that issues related to the FSS Action Tracks and the implementation of the UNCCD will be discussed at the High-Level Segment (HLS) of the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP15) expected to be held in December 2021.
Consultant’s tasks and deliverables
Under the overall supervision of the Chief of the External Relations, Policy and Advocacy (ERPA) unit of the UNCCD and the direct supervision of an assigned Officer, the consultant will primarily provide the administrative, technical, and policy support required to ensure the success and sustained impact of the work undertaken in FSS Action Track 3, and secondarily enhance FSS linkages with the UNCCD’s 2018-2030 Strategic Framework, pathways for land-based response and recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, and other UNCCD work priorities, including preparations for thematic dialogues and other events on food systems expected to take place at the HLS of the UNCCD COP15.

For FSS Action Track 3, the consultant’s tasks will include, but not be limited to:

- continuous liaison and participation in virtual meetings with UNCCD, WWF and other partners in the Action Track team, including collaboration with the FSS Scientific Group, Modelling Group, and Dialogues as well as the UN System Task Force,
- defining the core questions in structuring the work programme, milestones, and deliverables of the Action Track to ensure consistent, meaningful, clear, and focused inputs to the FSS,
- producing and reviewing background materials, discussion papers, policy briefs, and communications content on a wide range of issues, such as ensuring policy coherence across processes and sectors, re-aligning incentives and promoting sustainable finance, and assessing the benefits of restorative agriculture and deforestation free supply chains,
- building out the evidence base, relevant issues, and knowledge gaps, including supporting a comprehensive compilation of key papers, activities, organizations, and thinkers as a contribution to the FSS Dialogues and digital platform,
- participating in mechanisms of collaboration and facilitating interlinkages with the FSS Scientific and Modelling Groups, Dialogues, and other Action Tracks,
- developing partnerships and reaching out to diverse stakeholders for inputs, buy in, and subsequent implementation (International, National, Local, Civil Society, Private Sector, etc.), and
- assisting in the setup of mechanisms and other modalities to drive implementation of proposed recommendations after the summit at individual, institutional, and political levels.

For UNCCD work priorities and HLS at COP15, the consultant’s tasks will include, but not be limited to:

- preparing all relevant documentation (e.g., background notes, discussion papers, policy briefs) and organize participation and engagement in high-level dialogues, side events, and other thematic discussions on land-based issues related to building more resilient food systems.

Contractual terms
The consultancy will be home-based for 12 months starting from 15 November 2020. The consultant must be available to participate all virtual meetings and convening events (generally in the afternoons European time) to be held on a regular if not weekly basis. If travel is required, all reimbursement will be given separate from this contract.

At the beginning of the assignment, the consultant will prepare an overall work plan based on the established priorities and expected milestones of the FSS, Action Track 3 team and UNCCD executive
management as regards preparations for COP15. The work plan will be reviewed and adjusted periodically.

Requirements

- A Master’s or PhD degree in agri-business, agro-ecology, natural resource management or other field relevant for the consultancy;
- Extensive research experience and publishing with an emphasis on food production policy and practice, environmental and natural resource management;
- Experience in transdisciplinary work on the sustainability and resilience of food systems;
- Strong ability to communicate effectively to diverse stakeholder groups in English with demonstrated writing skills is absolutely required.

Submission of application

Applications should be submitted by e-mail to staffing@unccd.int together with a UN Personal History Form\(^1\) or CV, specifying the position CCD/20/ERPA/41 in the subject line. Please also submit a cover letter with your expectations for monthly remuneration.

The deadline for applications is 15 October 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.

---

\(^1\) UNCCD P-11 form in electronic fill-in .pdf OR .docx format available: [https://www.unccd.int/about-us/secretariat/vacancies/applying-unccd](https://www.unccd.int/about-us/secretariat/vacancies/applying-unccd)