United Nations
Convention to Combat Desertification

Telephone: + 49 (0) 228 815 2800
Fax: + 49 (0) 228 815 2898/99
Twitter @UNCCD
Email: secretariat@unccd.int

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Consultancy Communications Specialist

Consultancy reference number: CCD/21/ERPA/90

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."

Conflicts over natural resources are among key peace and security challenges of the twenty-first century. With the right approach, cooperation in the management of natural resources can offer countries recovering from fragility and conflict an opportunity to achieve stability and trust while re-building livelihoods and economies. To meet this need, the new Peace Forest Initiative (PFI) is designed to promote cooperation between countries to rehabilitate degraded ecosystem including land and forest in fragile and post-conflict locations while promoting peace and confidence.

The PFI is meant to serve as a partnership framework to facilitate exchanges and joint action on ecosystem restoration including LDN implementation in fragile and post-conflict areas through transboundary environmental cooperation. The PFI aims to help improve the basic living conditions of populations affected by land degradation and contribute to achieving the SDGs (1, 2, 6, 12, 13, 15, 16). LDN and SDG 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions) can also be effectively linked through the PFI.

Furthermore, the Parties to the UNCCD have adopted a Gender Action Plan and took a landmark decision on land tenure at COP 14. The inclusion of women, youth, indigenous groups to name a few, is central for the implementation of the Convention. Highlighting their specific role and contribution is critical to transform results and improve policies and programmes.

Sand and Dust Storms (SDS) are a global challenge that requires immediate action at all levels. SDS have multiple impacts on environment, climate, health, economic activities, urban infrastructure, agriculture and livelihood. As a result of human induced climate change and unsustainable land and water use practices, the frequency and intensity of SDS is increasing in some areas. The UNCCD Parties adopted decisions on SDS to address SDS impacts at all levels, particularly anthropogenic SDS sources, with a view to achieving land degradation neutrality (LDN), Sustainable Development Goals 15.3. Guided by these decisions, the secretariat has been developing the Sand and Dust Storms Compendium: Information and Guidance on Assessing and Addressing the Risks (SDS Compendium) and a toolbox, in collaboration with other UN organizations to assist Parties in addressing SDS. The Compendium is a science-based communications product with an aim to complement the more technical knowledge about SDS in the implementation of the Policy Advocacy Framework for SDS[1]. The SDS toolbox aims to provide SDS stakeholders with easy access to tools, methodologies, approaches, case studies and other resources to support the development and implementation of SDS policy plans at various levels.

[1] https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/sessions/documents/2017-08/ICCD_COP%2813%29_19-1711042E.pdf

The UNCCD secretariat seeks an experienced and highly motivated communications strategist to develop an advocacy strategy with comprehensive action plans for the PFI, supporting outreach to the right audience through global campaigns, and communicating strong and compelling narratives on the linkages between ecosystem restoration, including sustainable land and forest management, and peace and security, with a view to the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, where the PFI could be a flagship activity in demonstrating these linkages. The strategist will also support the development of key messages as well as the implementation of strategic activities related to the UNCCD Gender Programme.

Objective of consultancy

The objective of this consultancy is to support the UNCCD secretariat to conceptualize and develop targeted and strategic advocacy for the PFI in order to mobilize and coalesce stakeholders in land rehabilitation and restoration in fragile and conflict affected situations while promoting peace and confidence. The incumbent will also develop an overall plan to spread reinforced messages, inspire people to act, increase visibility, attract diverse actors including donors, local civil society and private sector stakeholders, and elevate the profile of the UNCCD and the PFI.
Furthermore, the consultant will support targeted communications activities related to the Gender, Youth, and Land Tenure work of the UNCCD secretariat. This includes support to research and capacity development projects as well as the drafting and dissemination of key messages.

Duties and Responsibilities:

Under the overall supervision of the Chief of External Relations, Policy and Advocacy (ERPA) unit and in consultation with the substantive officers in the UNCCD secretariat, the consultant will undertake the following tasks:

1. Develop a comprehensive advocacy plan for the PFI that gives guidance on specific pathways for message dissemination and amplification. Specific areas of focus should include, but not limited to the following:
    - Identify and profile the most effective target audiences to achieve the goals of the PFI, including from high-level audiences, global leaders, governments, political influencers, private sector, and individuals, as well as women and youth, in different geographies across the world;
    - Inventory of the most relevant data and evidence on the potential of the PFI;
    - Define a workable, cohesive, positive storyline, narratives and key messages, targeted to the identified audiences, ensuring consistent messaging across all platforms and services for UNCCD external relations and outreach for multiple advocacy means including campaigns;
    - Identify the appropriate communication channels and partners/influencers who could amplify the outreach efforts;
    - Identify the types of materials and activities that need to be produced for effective advocacy works;
    - Develop the brand and visual identity;
    - Develop an advocacy strategy and comprehensive implementation roadmap which includes timelines, tasks and who should carry out these tasks;
    - Design and develop a budget for the roll-out/implementation of the advocacy plan.
2. Support communications activities related to the Gender, SDS, PFI, Youth and Land Tenure programmes. Specific areas of focus should include, but not limited to the following:
    - Collection of impact stories on policies, SLM technologies, research and policy dialogues
    - Development of communications plans for flagship activities on the occasion of international days, relevant intergovernmental meetings, etc.
    - Drafting and dissemination of key messages relating to the above-mentioned priority areas
    - Elaboration and implementation of social media plans, in close collaboration with the UNCCD communications team
    - Drafting of reports, policy briefs, factsheets, information materials

- Support to the Women in the UNCCD project through the design and implementation of a communications and outreach plan

Support other initiatives related to Gender, Youth and Land Tenure as required.

Deliverables

- Work plan/Inception report;
- Advocacy strategy and action plans for the PFI, including:
  - Key messages;
  - Differentiated narrative, topline messaging and engaging storylines;
  - Identified and profiled target audiences;
  - Product and content recommendations;
  - Roadmap for implementations;
  - Overview of required resources for implementation;
  - Design and budget for the roll-out/implementation of the advocacy plan.
  - Presentation of the plan to the UNCCD secretariat.
- Development of communications plans for other flagship activities on Gender, Youth, and Land Tenure
- Collection of impact stories on Gender, Youth, and Land Tenure
- Writing of information and communications materials on gender, youth, SDS, land tenure.

Development of publications and audio-visual materials.

Contractual terms

The consultancy will be full time, home-based and virtual for 7 months starting as soon as possible. The consultant will receive a monthly fee which will be defined on the basis of the qualifications of the incumbent. The consultant must be in possession of all the equipment and software necessary to conduct this work. The UNCCD will not purchase any equipment. Candidates are kindly requested to specify in their applications the software and equipment that will be used to carry out this assignment.

Requirements

- Master's degree in public relations or other fields relevant for the consultancy.
- A minimum of 5 years of work experience in the field of public relations or media;
- Demonstrated experience in developing international advocacy strategies and campaigns;
- Strategic ability to see opportunities, design innovative approaches backed by strong analysis and planning;
- Have a strong sense for messaging, themes and techniques that resonate with the media in general;
- Demonstrated ability to work with diverse teams, including virtually;
- A commitment to environmental issues linked to the planet and humanity;
- The ideal candidate will have worked with the distillation of large amounts of information for diverse audiences, and the synthesis and translation of scientific information, concepts and language into clear, compelling content on multiple platforms for non-technical audiences. This includes being at ease with working in a global UN environment and with scientists and researchers.
- For this consultancy excellent writing and oral skills and fluency in English is required. Knowledge of the French language would be an asset.

Special notice

Only individuals who can act as independent, individual economical operators are qualified to apply. Individuals who can provide their services only on account of an institution or enterprise not in their individual capacity are not eligible under this procedure.

Individuals engaged under a consultancy or individual contract will not be considered "staff members" under the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations Secretariat and will not be entitled to benefits provided therein (such as leave entitlements and medical insurance coverage). Their conditions of service will be governed by their contract and the General Conditions of Contracts for the Services of Consultants and Individual Contractors. Consultant and individual contractor is responsible for determining tax liabilities and for the payment of any taxes and/or duties, in accordance with local or other applicable laws.

Submission of application

Applications should be submitted by e-mail to **staffing@unccd.int** with a UNCCD Personal History Form[2] , CV and cover letter, specifying the reference number: **CCD/21/ERPA/90.**

The deadline for applications is **10 January 2022**. Only applications submitted by the deadline and with complete documentation will be taken into consideration.

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: 16 December 2021

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