



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Science writing and editing services in support of the UNCCD science agenda

Consultancy reference number: CCD/22/STI/C/74

Background

Established in 1994, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)¹ is the sole legally binding international agreement linking environment and development to sustainable land management. The vision embraced by the Convention's 197 Parties in its 2018-2030 Strategic Framework² is for "a future that avoids, minimizes, and reverses desertification/land degradation and mitigates the effects of drought in affected areas at all levels and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world consistent with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".

This vision is underpinned by the science agenda of the UNCCD, which supported in the secretariat by the Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) unit, which facilitates the realization of some of the core functions of the UNCCD and the two subsidiary bodies of the Conference of the Parties (COP)³, including the provision of information and advice on scientific and technological matters relating to desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD). This work will be conducted under the auspices of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST)⁴ and its Science Policy Interface (SPI)⁵.

With the aim of having high impact among policy makers practitioners and the general public, the services of a science writer/editor with extensive relevant experience and the highest level of expertise are required to contribute to the accomplishment of the broad scope of the UNCCD science agenda through the sixteenth session of the COP, which is envisioned to take place in 2024.

The science agenda for the UNCCD for the 2022-2024 triennium is defined in the policy decisions made by the COP, particularly decisions 16/COP.15 through 21/COP.15⁶. Delivering on this science agenda will involve two dimensions of science writing and editing. The first concerns the scientific and technical products (technical reports, guidance documents, science-policy briefs, etc.) produced under the work programmes of the CST and SPI. The second involves the creation of science-based media articles, features, editorials and press releases, and social media content produced by the secretariat. Both dimensions:

- aim to inform, educate, or raise awareness of science-related topics relevant to the mission of the UNCCD in an accurate, accessible, and contextualized way;
- require research, writing and editing, with precision, clarity, and a logical approach to their structure; and
- meet the needs of an informed but non-technical audience, ensuring that scientific insights and discoveries and their underlying scientific and technical complexities are communicated in accessible and easy to understand language.

Objective of consultancy

UNCCD science publications and documents are written and edited in time and in accordance with UNCCD communications and branding strategy and United Nations editorial rules.

¹ <https://www.unccd.int/>

² https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/2022-02/cop21add1_SF_EN.pdf

³ <https://www.unccd.int/convention/conference-parties-cop>

⁴ <https://www.unccd.int/convention/governance/cst>

⁵ <https://www.unccd.int/science/overview>

⁶ https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/2022-10/ICCD_COP%2815%29_23_Add.1-2208672E.pdf#page=52



Duties and Responsibilities:

Under the overall management of the Chief of the Science, Technology and Innovation unit of the UNCCD, the scientific oversight of the Lead Scientist, the direct supervision of an assigned Officer, and through consultation with the lead authors of the publications being developed, the consultant shall assist the UNCCD secretariat by providing science writing and editorial services for science publications of the UNCCD.

The consultant will be required to meet established deadlines while performing the following activities, among other duties as appropriate, in collaboration with publication content authors:

- Provide science writing and editing leadership and expert advice on the intricate and complex technical papers to the working groups of scientists responsible for the substantive contributions to science-based communications of the UNCCD.
- Write and edit research-based content for technical reports, guidance documents, science-policy briefs, and other science-based communications designed to communicate scientific and technical information to a non-technical audience, including policy and decision makers of signatory countries, the public and the media.
- Write and edit research-based content designed to form the basis for websites, news, editorials, social media and/or press releases in clear, concise, and accurate language that can be understood by the general public.
- Ensure that all deliverables are backed up with data, consistent with high scientific standards, properly referenced, and are logically organized.
- Conduct text revision, précis editing, copy editing and final proofing for design and publication by Communications Unit of the UNCCD secretariat in conformity with internal production processes and timelines.

The consultant will perform the outlined activities with the understanding that a) the proposed writing is of is done in collaboration with Lead Scientist and other assigned officers as well as the substantive authors, b) the editing is of an advisory nature, and c) the final responsibility for the language in documents lies with the authors.

Deliverables

Key deliverables:

- ✓ Research-based content for technical reports (4), guidance documents (2), science-policy briefs (4) and other journalistic science communications (4) are, in collaboration with substantive authors, researched, drafted, submitted for scientific review, edited and proofed.
- ✓ Conformity of writing to UNCCD communications standards is ensured.
- ✓ Conformity of editing with the UN editorial practices and policies is ensured.
- ✓ Writing and editing is completed within one week of submission and verification.

Contractual terms

The service of the selected consultant is estimated to be for a period of 115days over the period of 21 months. This contract is based on deliverables and payment is defined by outputs. The consultancy is home based. Tentative start dates 10 January 2023.

Requirements

- An advanced University Degree (Master's degree or equivalent) in journalism and/or natural/environmental science or related discipline is required
- A minimum 10 years of experience in science writing
- A minimum of 10 years of experience in scientific/technical manuscript refinement, précis editing, copy editing and proofreading



- Substantial record of science-based communications/publications in the natural/environmental sciences that target a non-technical audience
- Fluency in English, both oral and written is required. Fluency in another UN language is 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 Form⁷, CV/P11 and cover letter, specifying the reference number: **CCD/22/STI/C/74**.

The deadline for applications is **27 December 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: 13 December 2022

⁷ UNCCD P-11 form in electronic fill-in .pdf OR .docx format available: <https://www.unccd.int/about-us/secretariat/vacancies/applying-unccd>