



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Evaluators for the midterm evaluation of the UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework

(two positions: 1 - Lead Consultant and 1- Assistant Consultant)

Consultancy reference number: CCD/22/EO/C/79

Introduction

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. Its 2018-2030 Strategic Framework states as the vision "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, within the scope of the Convention". The Convention's 197 Parties work together to improve the living conditions for people in areas affected by land degradation, to maintain and restore land and soil productivity, and to mitigate the effects of drought. The UNCCD is particularly committed to a bottom-up approach, encouraging the participation of local people in combating desertification and land degradation.

Decision-making under the UNCCD is done at the Conference of the Parties (COP) that brings together all signatories to the Convention every two years. The COP is assisted by two subsidiary bodies: the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) and the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC). The work under the UNCCD is supported by two entities: the UNCCD secretariat that organizes the intergovernmental process and facilitates cooperation and information exchange among countries, development partners, the scientific community, the civil society and other key stakeholders; and the Global Mechanism (GM) that promotes the mobilization of resources for sustainable land management.

At its thirteenth session in 2017, the Conference of the Parties (COP) adopted the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework and decided that it will go through a midterm evaluation of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework. COP 15 in 2022 launched this midterm evaluation, adopted its modalities, criteria and terms of reference, and established an intergovernmental working group to oversee the evaluation process. The report of this group will be submitted for the consideration of COP 16 in 2024.

As per its terms of reference, the midterm evaluation will be based on factual findings considered through a participatory process and eventually submitted to the COP for a decision on the way forward. The corresponding elements of the evaluation process will be as follows:

(a) An independent assessment, to be supervised by the intergovernmental working group and carried out by external evaluation experts using the evaluation criteria. The external expertise to be future functioning of the SPI. The terms of reference for the consultancy to conduct an external assessment for the basis of the second SPI review are presented in this document used should observe geographical and gender balance.

(b) A participatory consultation on the conclusions and recommendations of the independent assessment, to be conducted during an intersessional meeting of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention; and



(c) A COP decision, which will present Parties' agreement on the action to be taken to further enhance the implementation of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework.

The UNCCD secretariat was requested by the COP to support the midterm evaluation process and the work of the intergovernmental working group by providing the needed information and managing the experts carrying out the independent assessment, among other matters. This document presents the terms of reference for the consultancies to conduct the independent assessment. The modalities, criteria and terms of reference for a midterm evaluation of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework, as decided by COP 15, are contained in the annex.

Objectives and purpose of the consultancy: The midterm evaluation is to assess the progress made in implementing the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework and achieving its five strategic objectives. It will determine whether the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework is working as intended, whether its implementation is meeting the stated aims, and whether/how it is contributing to broader global priorities of sustainable development. The evaluation will inform Parties and other key stakeholders about the successes and challenges in the implementation and, through a participatory process, result in recommendations to further improve performance for the remaining period of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework.

This consultancy to prepare the independent assessment is a critically important element for the midterm evaluation process, as it will provide the factual, verified findings on which the intergovernmental working group and eventually the COP will build their analysis and decisions. The findings and conclusions of the assessment will be based on sound evidence and objective analysis, clearly documented in the assessment report. Information will be triangulated as far as possible, and when verification is not possible, the single source will be mentioned. Analysis leading to conclusions will be clearly spelled out.

The main audience of the independent assessment will be the intergovernmental working group. It will provide valuable information also to other UNCCD parties and stakeholders, as well as the secretariat and the Global Mechanism.

Ultimate result of service

An independent assessment report that will assist the intergovernmental working group established by the UNCCD COP to prepare for the midterm evaluation of the UNCCD 2018–2030 strategic framework, to be completed at COP 16 in 2024.

Duties and Responsibilities

The independent assessment will present findings on the five interrelated components of the midterm evaluation:

- (a) Continued relevance of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework;
- (b) Progress made in achieving the five strategic objectives;
- (c) Consideration of efforts to meet the aims and assignments that were set in the implementation framework of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework;
- (d) Efficiency of the reporting and review process concerning the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework; and
- (e) Sustainability of the achievements.

In addition, as a cross-cutting issue, the midterm evaluation will consider how gender-responsive policies and measures are taken into account in the implementation of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework and in the reporting and review process. Building on the findings, the assessment will also



present conclusions and provisional recommendations for possible future action to further enhance the implementation of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework.

The independent assessment will be built on the standard evaluation criteria of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, which comprise relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. As this is a midterm evaluation and thus focuses on further improvement to the implementation of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework in the second half of its term, the ‘impact’ criterion will take the form of “progress to impact”.

Deliverables

The findings of the independent assessment will be based on study of relevant documentation and direct feedback from key UNCCD stakeholders, including the UNCCD national focal points and science-technology correspondents, representatives of other UN system entities, civil society organisations, relevant scientific processes and institutions, and other key UNCCD stakeholders, as well as the UNCCD secretariat and the Global Mechanism. The format for collecting the direct feedback (surveys, questionnaires, interviews...) will be defined at the beginning of the assignment.

The consultants to be selected to conduct the independent assessment will prepare the following main products:

- Inception report including the conceptual framework, work programme and tentative schedule of the assessment process;
- Draft report for the consideration of the working group
- Final report containing detailed analysis of the findings of the assessment, organized by the criteria and supported with evidence; lessons learned and recommendations.
- Various briefings and presentations to the working group on different aspects of the independent assessment

Contractual terms

The contracts of the two consultants are expected to start in January 2023; they will last until mid-2024 or as otherwise agreed. The exact number of working days during this time period will be defined at the beginning of the assignment. Two consultants will be recruited, following geographical and gender balance, one of which will be the lead consultant and one a junior/assistant consultant. The latter may be asked to support also in the practical arrangements for the meetings of the working group. The consultancy is home-based with travel to UNCCD Bonn, Germany at least once, in February 2023. They will also travel to Uzbekistan in October 2024 for the second meeting of the working group.

Requirements

Lead consultant:

- Advanced university degree (master’s or above) in social sciences, economics, public administration, international relations or other sciences sustainable development.
- More than ten years of expertise as an evaluator, including assignments as an evaluation team leader or similar in evaluations and assessments in international development cooperation. Experience in assessing progress of implementing strategic plans or frameworks will be an asset.
- Expertise in evaluations in the UN context.
- Knowledge of international cooperation concerning topics or processes relevant to this assignment, such as sustainable land management, drought mitigation or resilience-building, as well as multilateral environment convention processes.
- Experience in international cooperation concerning the SDGs. Knowledge of land degradation neutrality will be an asset.



- Excellent writing skills and fluency in English language is required. Knowledge of another UN official language would be advantage

Assistant Consultant:

- Academic degree (bachelor's or above) social sciences, economics, public administration, international relations or other sciences sustainable development .
- Minimum 2 years (with Bachelor's degree) of working experience or 0 years (with Master's degree)
- Expertise (studies) and/or experience in development evaluations, results-based management, project management and/or monitoring, or similar fields relevant to this assignment is an asset
- Experience in working in an international organisation.
- Excellent writing skills and fluency in English language is required. Knowledge of another UN official language would be advantage.

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 Form¹ , CV and cover letter saved **as one document** preferably as pdf, specifying the reference number:

CCD/22/EO/C/79 – Lead Consultant
or
CCD/22/EO/C/79 - Assistant Consultant.

The deadline for applications is **10 January 2023**. 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: 15 December 2022

¹ UNCCD P-11 form in electronic fill-in .pdf OR .docx format available: <https://www.unccd.int/about-us/secretariat/vacancies/applying-unccd>



Annex:

Modalities, criteria and terms of reference for a midterm evaluation of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework

I. Objectives of the midterm evaluation

1. The purpose of the midterm evaluation is to assess the progress made in implementing the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework and achieving its five strategic objectives. It will determine whether the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework is working as intended, whether its implementation is meeting the stated aims, and whether/how it is contributing to broader global priorities of sustainable development. The evaluation will inform Parties and other key stakeholders about the successes and challenges in the implementation and, through a participatory process, result in recommendations to further improve performance for the remaining period of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework.

2. The main audience of the midterm evaluation are Parties to the Convention, both as participants in the Conference of the Parties (COP) and as countries implementing the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework, as well as United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) institutions and bodies. The evaluation will also provide valuable information to the scientific community involved in the UNCCD process at different levels, implementation partners and other interested stakeholders.

II. Evaluation scope and criteria

3. The midterm evaluation of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework will cover five interrelated components:

- (a) Continued relevance of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework;
- (b) Progress made in achieving the five strategic objectives;
- (c) Consideration of efforts to meet the aims and assignments that were set in the implementation framework of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework;
- (d) Efficiency of the reporting and review process concerning the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework; and
- (e) Sustainability of the achievements.

4. In addition, as a cross-cutting issue, the midterm evaluation will consider how gender-responsive policies and measures are taken into account in the implementation of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework and in the reporting and review process.

5. The evaluation will be built on the standard evaluation criteria of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, which comprise relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. As this is a midterm evaluation and thus focuses on further improvement to the implementation of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework in the second half of its term, the ‘impact’ criterion will take the form of “progress to impact”. The evaluation approach is outlined below.

A. Relevance and coherence

6. The midterm evaluation will assess the extent to which the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework continues to be suited to the changing priorities and approaches in global cooperation on sustainable development, most notably those concerning the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity. It will examine the responsiveness of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework to the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030) and to the intergovernmental efforts addressing the COVID-19 pandemic recovery. It will also consider the alignment of the implementation



of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework with the policies and strategies of major multilateral partners and the donor community in general.

B. Effectiveness and progress to impact

7. The midterm evaluation will assess the progress made toward the strategic objectives, building on the indicators that are being used for each objective and taking into account the expected impact that is stated in the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework. Of particular importance will be the linkage with SDG target 15.3 on land degradation neutrality (LDN).

8. With regard to the aims contained in the three fields specified in the implementation framework of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework, the midterm evaluation will seek to identify successes for potential replication and shortcomings as lessons learned, which may be used to improve the implementation of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework.

9. In addition, the midterm evaluation will assess the effectiveness of action taken by Convention institutions and bodies, as well as other relevant stakeholders, as feasible, to support Parties in implementing the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework, based on the tasks specified for each of them therein. This assessment will focus on the effectiveness of promoting LDN and planning for drought preparedness at country level.

C. Efficiency

10. Closely interlinked with the assessment of the effectiveness of action taken by Convention institutions and bodies, the midterm evaluation will briefly consider the efficiency of the UNCCD national reporting and review process.

D. Sustainability

11. The midterm evaluation will include a brief examination of the financial, social, environmental and institutional capacities of the systems that are needed to sustain, over time, the results achieved so far.

E. Cross-cutting issue: Gender

12. In addition to the above criteria, the midterm evaluation will consider how gender-responsive policies and measures are taken into account in the implementation of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework and in the reporting and review process.

13. Building on the evaluation criteria outlined above, the evaluation will be based on a number of evaluation questions that will be defined at the beginning of the evaluation.

III. Modalities and organization of work

14. The evaluation will be supervised by an intergovernmental working group, consisting of members that will be proposed by each regional group and nominated by the COP, as well as observers that include representatives of the Science-Policy Interface, selected partner organizations and civil society organizations. The secretariat will support the work of the intergovernmental working group.

15. The evaluation will be based on factual findings considered through a participatory process and eventually submitted to the COP for a decision on the way forward. The corresponding elements of the evaluation process will be as follows:

(a) An independent assessment, to be supervised by the intergovernmental working group and carried out by external evaluation experts using the evaluation criteria. The external expertise to be used should observe geographical and gender balance. The assessment will present findings on the evaluation components (continued relevance of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework; progress toward the strategic objectives; the implementation framework; the reporting and review process; sustainability of the results; and gender aspects) based on sound, verified evidence and objective analysis, and be clearly documented in the assessment report. The assessment will also present conclusions and provisional recommendations for possible future action to further enhance the implementation of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework.



(b) A participatory consultation on the conclusions and recommendations of the independent assessment, to be conducted during an intersessional meeting of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention; and

(c) A COP decision, which will present Parties' agreement on the action to be taken to further enhance the implementation of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework.

16. With regard to the background material to be used for the midterm evaluation, the national reports submitted by Parties in 2018 and 2022–2023 will provide the key data for assessing the progress made toward achieving the strategic objectives and for considering the aims of the implementation framework.