United Nations
Convention to Combat Desertification

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TERMS OF REFERENCE

Consultancy to support Panama in strengthening Land Degradation Neutrality Targets (LDN TSP 2.0)

Consultancy reference number: CCD/23/C/44

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 vision embraced by the Convention's 197 Parties in its 2018-2030 Strategic Framework 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". The ambition expressed by countries to achieve this vision is significant: the international community has pledged to restore one billion hectares of degraded land by 2030, half of which are land degradation neutrality (LDN) targets.

LDN offers a framework for optimizing land use and management decisions, and thus can help accelerate the achievement of multiple co-benefits, including biodiversity conservation and the mitigation and adaptation to climate change. Avoiding, reducing, and reversing land degradation can transform land from being a source of greenhouse gas emissions to a sink, by increasing carbon stocks in soils and vegetation. Furthermore, LDN plays a key role in strengthening the resilience of rural communities against climate shocks by securing and improving the provision of vital ecosystem services. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has documented, with high confidence, that policies promoting LDN – which is integral to SDG Target 15.3 – can also enhance food security, human wellbeing and climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Since its launch in 2016 and as of December 2022, the LDN Target Setting Programme[1] (LDN TSP) has supported a total of 130 participating countries, with 108 countries having successfully completed this voluntary process and 102 countries having already published its outcomes in the UNCCD website[2].

However, despite the substantial progress achieved to date, the findings of the Second Edition of the Global Land Outlook3 presented in 2022 clearly indicate that the global community needs to do more, faster and better in order to address the global crisis of land degradation in a timely manner.

In this context and through various decisions4, COP 15 provided concrete guidance on LDN target setting by:

(i) Encouraging Parties which have already set targets to consider reviewing and refining them, ensuring that LDN targets are specific, time-bound, policy-coherent, quantitative, spatially explicit, gender-responsive and adequately integrated into planning frameworks (decision 3/COP.15, para 1, decision 12/COP.15 para 1, and decision 13/COP.15 para 1).

(ii) Inviting Parties to explore complementarities between LDN targets, Nationally Determined Contributions, and National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and related planning,

[1] LDN Target Setting Pogramme: https://www.unccd.int/land-and-life/land-degradation-neutrality/projects-programmes/ldn-target-setting
[2] UNCCD country profiles: https://www.unccd.int/our-work/country-profiles
[3] Global Land Outlook 2: https://www.unccd.int/resources/global-land-outlook/glo2
[4] COP15 Decisions: https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/2022-10/ICCD_COP%2815%29_23_Add.1-2208672E.pdf

programming, reporting and monitoring in order to achieve the Convention's objectives (decision 8/COP.15, para 2); and

(iii) Requesting the secretariat and the Global Mechanism to support Parties in reviewing and refining their voluntary LDN targets and in delineating their location and extent in order to ensure that they are quantifiable, spatially explicit and time-bound, in line with levels of national ambition (decision 11/COP.15, para 5a, and decision 12/COP.15 para 1); and also support the process of setting and/or refining voluntary LDN targets, streamlining it with other Convention and associated processes, and integrating these targets into (sub)national integrated land-use planning frameworks in those country Parties that may wish to engage in this process (decision 13/COP.15 para 6c);

Strengthening LDN targets and integrated land use planning frameworks will be key to support the enabling environment that countries need to close LDN implementation gaps and deliver a pipeline of programmes and projects that meet land-based restoration targets and achieve a status of healthy and productive land in balance by 2030. This approach will improve joint implementation efforts among the Rio Conventions and make key contributions to multiple SDGs and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

For this purpose, the Secretariat and the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD and its partners developed the second phase of the LDN TSP (2.0), which includes a GEF-funded Enabling Activity project to facilitate "Integrating Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) into land use planning frameworks to strengthen national UNCCD enabling environments" which will be rolled out in a coordinated manner in countries selected by the UNCCD through an official call for requests for support that was opened on 12th May 2023[5].

Objective of consultancy

The professionals hired through this consultancy will provide operational technical support in each of the LDN TSP 2.0 participating countries in order to strengthen their land-based targets and ensure their land-based agendas can be financed to bring UNCCD policy and implementation efforts to the next level.

Duties and Responsibilities

Under the overall supervision of the Managing Director of the Global Mechanism and the Coordinator of the LDN Programme, the direct supervision of the Team Lead of the LDN Target Setting Programme, in coordination with relevant national specialists in gender mainstreaming and integrated land use planning, in consultation with relevant officers of the UNCCD secretariat, and under the leadership of the UNCCD National Focal Point(s) in the country of duty, the consultant will be responsible for supporting the LDN TSP 2.0 national process and related country activities.

Following the COP 15 mandate and in line with the established LDN TSP 2.0 logic framework and the LDN TSP 2.0 supplementary guidelines, the consultant must provide the UNCCD National Focal Point(s) in the country of duty with direct technical assistance to successfully guide the LDN TSP 2.0 national process, with a focus in the following key areas:

- Developing a work plan and tentative schedule for the overall LDN TSP 2.0 national process, updating the composition of the LDN national working group and supporting the mobilization and engagement of key stakeholders.
- Facilitating the organization and delivery of relevant stakeholder consultation workshops/events (i.e., inception workshops, technical meetings, validation workshops) and related reporting.
- Analysing and assessing the policy coherence of existing land-based commitments/targets and their complementarity and overlap at country level, and making specific recommendations for

[5]LDN TSP 2.0 Call for requests for support: https://www.unccd.int/news-stories/notifications/call-requests-support-assist-countries-strengthening-ldn-targets

improvement, including for future updating of LDN targets and measures, NDCs, NAPs and NBSAPs.

- Assessing and making specific recommendations on how to make LDN targets and measures more quantitative, specific, time-bound, and spatially explicit.
- Undertaking gap analyses and making specific recommendations for improved delivery plans for implementation of land-based targets, with a focus on LDN and including estimated funding gaps and a proposed investment case.
- Defining concrete collaborations and partnerships with technical and financing partners to support the development of relevant transformative projects and programmes for LDN implementation.

Deliverables

The ultimate result of the service is the successful completion of voluntary and country led LDN TSP 2.0 national processes in participating countries.

Expected outputs will be discussed and agreed with the Coordinator of the LDN Programme and the Team Lead of the LDN Target Setting Programme, and would include:

• Work plan with defined timeframe for deliverables and revised composition of LDN national working groups (by end October 2023)
• Iinception workshop and related report (by November 2023)
• National policy coherence assessment report (by January 2024)
• National LDN target assessment report (by February 2024)
• Revised set of LDN targets and measures (by March 2024)
• Validation workshop and related report (by April 2024)
• Improved delivery plans for land-based implementation (by May 2024)
• Proposal for updated national policies/plans (NDCs, NAPs, NBSAPs) (by June 2024)
•Proposed transformative project/programme with defined collaboration/partnership with technical/financial partners (by August 2024)
• Final LDN TSP 2.0 country report (by September 2024)

Contractual terms

The service of the selected consultant is estimated for the period of 12 months, to be started on 15 September 2023 and to be concluded by 15 September 2024 possible. This contract is based on deliverables and payment is defined by output. The consultancy is home based. Travel of the consultant to attend the capacity building workshop in Uzbekistan in October 4-6th 2023 (exact dates to be confirmed) to be arranged separately by the Global Mechanism.

All products resulting from this contractual arrangement are the exclusive property of the UNCCD.

Requirements

- ✓ Advanced university degree in Environmental Sciences, Environmental Management, Natural Resource Management, Land and Water Management, Earth Sciences, Geography, Global Change, Biodiversity Conservation, Climate Change, or related disciplines.
- ✓ Extensive knowledge on natural resource management, integrated land/water management, climate change mitigation/adaptation and/or biodiversity conservation, including related policy development and implementation.
- ✓ Solid knowledge of the UNCCD process and excellent conceptual understanding of land degradation, DLDD, LDN, and its interactions with climate change and biodiversity conservation. Experience in working with UNCCD stakeholders in the country is an asset.

- ✓ Familiarity with the CBD and UNFCCC processes and related policy development and implementation processes at country level is an asset.
- ✓ Demonstrated technical knowledge of GIS and remote sensing applied to natural resources monitoring and assessment at (sub)national level and methodologies for monitoring and assessing land use change, land productivity and soil organic carbon.
- ✓ Demonstrated experience in the effective facilitation of complex multi stakeholder consultation and capacity building processes.
- ✓ Demonstrated ability to work independently, handle multiple tasks, work under pressure and deliver assignments on time
- ✓ Professional knowledge of English is required. Knowledge of the official language in the country of duty is required. Knowledge of additional UN languages, particularly French or Spanish, 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

The following documents should be sent to **staffing@unccd.int** as **one document**: UNCCD Personal History Form[6] /CV and cover letter, specifying the following in the email subject line: **CCD/23/C/44.**

The deadline for applications is **15 August 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. Candidates who do not receive any feedback within three months of the deadline should consider their application as unsuccessful.

Date of issuance: 10 July 2023

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