PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

Project ID:	11839
Project Name:	GEF Support to the 2026 UNCCD National Reporting Process - Umbrella I
Countr(ies):	Global, Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Barbados, Belize, Botswana, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Comoros, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Djibouti, Dominica, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Eswatini, Eritrea, Ghana, Grenada, Micronesia, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Lesotho, Liberia, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Papua New Guinea, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Grenadines, Suriname, Gambia, Bahamas
Implementing Agency:	UNEP

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I. Overview

A. Description

Project name
GEF Support to the 2026 UNCCD National Reporting Process - Umbrella I

Country
Global, Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Barbados, Belize, Botswana, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Comoros, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Djibouti, Dominica, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Eswatini, Eritrea, Ghana, Grenada, Micronesia, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Lesotho, Liberia, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Papua New Guinea, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Grenadines, Suriname, Gambia, Bahamas

GEF ID	Implementing Agency
11839	UNEP

Executing Entity
Government Executing Agencies

Trust Fund	Project Type
GET	EA

PIR Submission	Fiscal Year , PIR Number
9/11/2026	FY 2026 , 1st PIR

Objective
In response to outcomes of COP 15 of UNCCD, decisions 9 and 11 of COP15, this project aims to support eligible countries to utilize GEF resources for implementing the Convention and the UNCCD Strategy (2018-2030), which is a comprehensive global commitment to avoid and reduce desertification and land degradation and to restore the productivity of degraded land to achieve Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN). The project will support Parties to enhance their national-level institutions and technical capacities for effective and timely preparation and submission of the 2026 UNCCD national reports. To achieve this, the project will offer technical support to the UNCCD National Focal Points, equipping them with the technical tools to collect data and submit national reports through the Performance Review and Assessment of Implementation System (PRAIS) reporting tool.

B. Ratings and Disbursements

Implementation Progress	Development Objective
Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Overall risk
Low Risk

Project Financing	Cumulative Disbursement
4,914,003.00	3,700,000.00

C. Key Dates

CEO Endorsement/Approval	Agency Approval
3/24/2025	5/29/2025
Implementation Start	First Disbursement
7/15/2025	7/15/2025
Expected MTR	Actual MTR
Expected Completion	Actual Completion
4/30/2028	

II. PROGRESS STATUS AND ISSUES

A. Progress: Information on progress and outcomes of project implementation activities

During the reporting period, 37 of the 39 Country Parties in this project signed legal agreements with UNEP and received their first cash advance of USD 100,000 each, representing a cash advance processing rate of 95 per cent. This has enabled the 37 Countries to commence implementation of their UNCCD National Reporting activities during the reporting period. The two Countries yet to sign agreements with UNEP and receive their funds, indicated their intention to access the funds during the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 17).

Project implementation has advanced significantly following the regional capacity-building workshops conducted under the Global Support Programme (GSP), which have provided Country Parties with a clearer understanding of their national reporting obligations. Most Country Parties are on track to meet their Strategic Objective 1 (SO1) reporting obligation by 30 November 2026.

Rating towards outcomes: S
The rating is Satisfactory because the project has made substantial progress in establishing the technical and coordination conditions necessary for eligible Country Parties to report efficiently against UNCCD indicators. Legal agreements have been concluded and first cash advances disbursed to 37 of 39 Country Parties, representing a 95 per cent processing rate, thereby enabling most Countries to commence national reporting activities within the reporting period. Regional capacity-building workshops conducted under the Global Support Programme (GSP) have strengthened Country Parties' understanding of their reporting obligations, and most Countries are on track to meet their Strategic Objective 1 (SO1) reporting deadline of 30 November 2026. The remaining two Countries, both Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS), are progressing

through the agreement preparation process, with no indication of substantive delay that would compromise the project's overall trajectory toward its intended outcome.

Rating towards outputs: S
The rating towards outputs is Satisfactory because most planned outputs under the project are progressing in line with expectations. Ninety-five per cent of Country Parties have signed agreements, received cash advances, and commenced implementation of national reporting activities, reflecting strong delivery against the output of establishing capacitated processes and institutions to support data collection, review, analysis, and monitoring. Preparatory steps for the remaining two Countries are actively underway, and no structural barriers have been identified that would impede their eventual onboarding. Overall, output delivery reflects consistent progress toward the timely compilation, validation, and submission of national reports by GEF-eligible Parties.

Overall risk rating: L

The overall risk rating is Low because the project has demonstrated a high rate of agreement signature and cash advance disbursement (95 per cent), with the remaining two Countries, actively engaged in the agreement preparation process rather than presenting indications of disengagement or non-participation. Both Countries have expressed clear intent to access project funds, reaffirmed during the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 17), and are at advanced stages of documentation and workplan preparation. A residual risk exists in relation to the limited technical capacity of some Country Parties, which may affect the timeliness of their national reporting given the technical demands of data collection, spatial analysis, and reporting under the UNCCD framework. This risk was mitigated through the regional capacity-building workshops conducted under the Global Support Programme (GSP), as well as the establishment of the regional technical support hub which remain available to avail technical support. This has strengthened national understanding of reporting requirements, alongside continued technical support from UNEP through country-level engagement and helpdesk assistance. Given these mitigation measures and the absence of any other significant financial, administrative, or governance risks identified during the reporting period, the risk to the achievement of project outcomes remains Low.

B. Challenges: Information on challenges of project implementation activities

Despite strong overall progress, implementation has faced some challenges. Two of the thirty-nine Country Parties, both Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS), have yet to sign legal agreements with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) or receive their first cash advance, delaying the commencement of their national reporting activities; both have indicated their intention to access funds following the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 17). More broadly, the limited technical capacity of some Country Parties presents a continuing risk to the timeliness of national reporting, given the technical demands of data collection, spatial analysis, and reporting under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) framework. This has been partially mitigated through regional capacity-building workshops conducted under the Global Support Programme (GSP) and the establishment of a regional technical support hub, alongside continued country-level engagement and helpdesk assistance provided by UNEP; however, sustained monitoring will be required to ensure remaining Country Parties are not further delayed in meeting their Strategic Objective 1 (SO1) reporting deadline of 30 November 2026.

C. Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement during the reporting period has been substantive and multi-layered, encompassing national governments, technical experts, and broader participation groups. At the national level, 37 of 39 Country Parties have signed agreements with UNEP and commenced implementation, supported by

continuous engagement between UNEP and national focal points on reporting requirements and helpdesk matters. Regional capacity-building workshops conducted under the Global Support Programme (GSP) have brought together national experts and technical focal points, regional support hubs and strengthening their understanding of UNCCD reporting obligations, data collection methodologies, and the use of PRAIS and Trends.Earth reporting tools. Engagement with Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS) has also been sustained, with the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands reaffirming their intent to participate during the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 17) and continuing to engage with UNEP on agreement preparation.
Stakeholder engagement has faced some constraints, particularly among Pacific Island Country Parties with limited technical capacity, where fewer in-country technical personnel and competing institutional priorities can slow the pace of consultation and data-sharing processes; broadening the participation of youth and indigenous peoples also requires sustained coordination effort, as the extent of such participation can vary between Countries depending on existing institutional arrangements. Nonetheless, sustained engagement has resulted in improved understanding of, and readiness to meet, national reporting obligations, with most Country Parties on track to submit their Strategic Objective 1 (SO1) report by 30 November 2026, while the broadened participation of diverse stakeholder groups is strengthening the inclusiveness and credibility of national reporting processes, and continued UNEP engagement with the two remaining Pacific SIDS is expected to bring the full cohort of 39 Countries into active implementation in the near term.

D. Gender Equality

Progress on gender mainstreaming during the reporting period has been advanced through the integration of gender considerations across national reporting processes, including within capacity building activities on Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN), desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD), and sustainable land management (SLM). Country Parties have received training incorporating gender analysis and integration as part of the broader package of technical support delivered under the regional capacity building workshops conducted through the Global Support Programme (GSP), positioning national teams to apply a gender lens to data collection, stakeholder consultation, and reporting processes for the 2026 National Report to the UNCCD. This reflects a deliberate effort to ensure that gender considerations are embedded within national reporting methodologies rather than treated as a standalone activity, consistent with the project's broader objective of producing inclusive and representative national reports.

Gender mainstreaming continues to face challenges at the national level, particularly where Country Parties have limited institutional capacity or established gender focal points to systematically apply gender analysis within reporting processes, which can result in uneven depth of gender integration across the 37 participating Countries. As implementation progresses, sustained technical support and follow up will be required to ensure that gender considerations are consistently reflected in the data review, validation, and stakeholder engagement stages of national reporting, rather than only in the initial capacity building phase. Encouragingly, the completion of gender training across the cohort of participating Countries represents a foundational outcome that strengthens the potential for more gender responsive national reports and continued monitoring during the remainder of the reporting period will help confirm the extent to which this training translates into consistent practice.

E. Knowledge Management

During the reporting period, knowledge management activities have advanced primarily through the delivery of regional capacity-building workshops under the Global Support Programme (GSP), which have served as a key vehicle for building national technical knowledge on Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN), desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD), and sustainable land management (SLM), including training on default data processing, spatial mapping, drought analysis, and land-based progress and recovery indicators

for LDN targets. These workshops have also included training on the Performance Review and Assessment of Implementation System (PRAIS) and Trends.Earth, strengthening national capacity to generate, process, and interpret reporting data using standardized UNCCD tools, alongside the development of knowledge and technology inventories to document existing national resources relevant to land degradation monitoring and reporting. Collectively, these knowledge products and capacity-building activities are equipping the 37 participating Country Parties with the technical foundation required to compile their 2026 National Reports, while also contributing to a broader base of institutional knowledge that Countries can draw on in subsequent UNCCD reporting cycles.

III: Minor Amendments

CONTEXT	
Result Framework	
Components and Cost	
Institutional And Implementation Arrangements	
Financial Management	
Implementation Schedule	
Executing Entity	
Executing Entity Category	
Minor Project Objective Change	
Safeguards	
Risk Analysis	
Increase of GEF Financing up to 5%	
Co-Financing	
Location of Project Activity	
others	

IV: Geographic Coordinates of Project Activities

V. ANNEX

Uploaded Document