GEF-8 REQUEST FOR CEO ENDORSEMENT/APPROVAL

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General Project Information

Project Title	
Scaling the capacity of UNCCD Parties for inclusive decision support in Land Degradation Neutrality	
Region Global	GEF Project ID 11935
Country(ies) Global	Type of Project MSP
GEF Agency(ies): UNDP	GEF Agency Project ID 10294
Project Executing Entity(s) Centre for Development and Environment (CDE), University of Bern	Project Executing Type CSO
GEF Focal Area (s) Land Degradation	Submission Date 1/30/2026
Type of Trust Fund GET	Project Duration (Months) 24
GEF Project Grant: (a) 2,000,000.00	GEF Project Non-Grant: (b) 0.00
Agency Fee(s) Grant: (c) 190,000.00	Agency Fee(s) Non-Grant (d) 0.00
Total GEF Financing: (a+b+c+d) 2,190,000.00	Total Co-financing 245,000.00
PPG Amount: (e) 49,850.00	PPG Agency Fee(s): (f) 4,736.00
Total GEF Resources: (a+b+c+d+e+f) 2,244,586.00	
Project Tags CBIT: No NGI: No SGP: No Innovation: Yes Competitive Window: No	
Project Sector (CCM Only)	

Taxonomy

Influencing models, Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making, Demonstrate innovative approache, Convene multi-stakeholder alliances, Stakeholders, Beneficiaries, Civil Society, Non-Governmental Organization, Academia, Type of Engagement, Consultation, Participation, Information Dissemination, Partnership, Communications, Awareness Raising, Public Campaigns, Capacity, Knowledge and Research, Knowledge Generation, Capacity Development, Learning, Gender Equality, Sex-disaggregated indicators, Gender Mainstreaming, Gender-sensitive indicators, Participation and leadership, Gender results areas, Knowledge Generation and Exchange, Focal Areas, Land Degradation, Sustainable Land Management, Land Degradation Neutrality, Carbon stocks above or below ground, Land Cover and Land cover change, Land Productivity, Sustainable Development Goals

Rio Markers

Climate Change Mitigation	Climate Change Adaptation	Biodiversity	Land Degradation
No Contribution 0	No Contribution 0	No Contribution 0	Principal Objective 2

Project Summary

Provide a brief summary description of the project, including: (i) what is the problem and issues to be addressed? (ii) what are the project objectives, and if the project is intended to be transformative, how will this be achieved? iii), how will this be achieved (approach to deliver on objectives), and (iv) what are the GEBs and/or adaptation benefits, and other key expected results. The purpose of the summary is to provide a short, coherent summary for readers. (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

Achieving Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) is a key objective of the UNCCD and the 2030 Agenda, which calls on Parties to improve land-based ecosystems through effective monitoring, assessment, and evidence-based decision-making. However, many countries, especially countries with hyper-arid areas and Small Island Developing States, face serious challenges in generating reliable LDN data, integrating national knowledge into assessments, and institutionalizing effective monitoring systems. These gaps hinder countries' ability to monitor meaningfully on progress and implement Sustainable Land Management (SLM) practices to achieve LDN. This project aims to strengthen the capacity of all UNCCD Parties to monitor and assess land degradation through a participatory, inclusive, and evidence-based approach. It will do so by: (i) co-producing open-access knowledge products and tools tailored to improve estimation of the three LDN indicators and their integration into the UNCCD reporting and national decision making processes; (ii) scaling national participatory processes in 10 pilot countries (Belize, Cambodia, Chad, Egypt, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Palau, Sri Lanka, Turkmenistan), ensuring sustainable institutional uptake; and (iii) fostering South-South knowledge exchange to strengthen cooperation and learning. The project will deliver enhanced capacity to 500 direct and 4,000 indirect beneficiaries, while addressing critical global gaps in capacities, tools and approaches, particularly for countries with challenging environments. It will contribute to improved global LDN monitoring and achievement by co-developing methods for areas with specific challenges for mapping land degradation and support transformative change by embedding LDN assessments in national decision-making systems. In doing so, the project will significantly strengthen the UNCCD reporting process and catalyze more informed actions to achieve SDG target 15.3 and LDN at the global scale.

Project Description Overview

Project Objective

To strengthen the capacity of UNCCD Country Parties on LDN through inclusive decision support

Project Components

1. Knowledge management for improved evidence-based LDN decision making and strengthened UNCCD reporting

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing ($)	Co-financing ($)
510,000.00	61,823.00

Outcome:

1.1 Enhanced knowledge and understanding of UNCCD Parties of participatory monitoring, assessment (M&A), decision making on LDN

Indicated by:

a) Number of knowledge products on participatory LDN M&A, decision making, and lessons learned with at least one focusing on advancing gender equality and women's/ gender experts' engagement

b) Distance learning (number of courses in different UN languages and users)

1.2 Exchange mechanisms, dissemination and outreach of the capacity building package supports strengthened monitoring and assessment of LDN

Indicated by:

LDN Learning materials used by UNCCD Parties with different LD M&A challenges with number of users disaggregated by sex

Output:

1.1.1 Lessons learned on LDN participatory approach to M&A and decision making consolidated with countries and partners into knowledge products

1.1.2 Capacity building package (written and audio-visual training material, tutorials and guidelines in UN languages) on participatory approach for LDN M&A and decision making, co-designed with end users in collaboration with countries and partners

1.1.3 E-learning course co-designed with partners based on Education for Sustainable Development approaches

1.2.1 Learning materials on the participatory approach to LDN M&A and decision making integrated in existing portals and websites at global (e.g., WOCAT, UNDP, UNCCD, GEO-LDN, G20 GLI, GEF, FAO e-learning Academy), regional (e.g., GGW, AUDA-NEPAD, OSS, SPC) and national levels

1.2.2 Dissemination and outreach campaign launched with global, regional and national UNCCD partners, promoting the availability and use of the LDN decision support learning materials by all UNCCD parties and country focal points

2. Enhanced capacity for an upscaled national participatory approach supports informed and evidence-based decision making on LDN in pilot countries

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing ($)	Co-financing ($)
1,063,000.00	128,889.00

Outcome:

2.1 The participatory approach to LDN M&A, and decision making is championed in 10 pilot countries

Indicated by:

a) Number of technical experts from government counterparts, NGOs, CSOs, etc. (50% women) with capacity to support informed decision-making on LDN and SLM implementation to achieve SDG target 15.3

b) Number of land degradation maps in accordance with UNCCD Good Practice Guidance (GPG) validated by national experts and supplemented with national LD indicators

c) Long-term capacities for LDN institutionalized in key ministries (Environment, Agriculture, Forestry, etc.) in pilot countries measured through Capacity Scorecard

Rating:

0 – Non existent

1 – Low

2 – Low- Medium

3 – Medium

4 – Medium- high

2.2 Co-developed LDN-DSS in 10 pilot countries support evidence-based decision-making for LDN

Indicated by:

a) Country-owned LDN-DSS guide decision-making on LDN M&A and SLM implementation in pilot countries (number of DSS and users from different sectors (Environment, Agriculture, Forestry, etc. disaggregated by sex))

Output:

2.1.1 LDN network of national and regional experts and institutions established 10 pilot countries and integrated into the WOCAT network

2.1.2 Participatory process for LDN M&A and decision making at national level mainstreamed in key sectors and agencies and institutionalized in pilot countries

2.2.1 National datasets identified, compiled, verified, and interpreted for informed decision-making toward LDN

2.2.2 A preliminary workflow for identifying priority areas for avoiding, reducing, and reversing land degradation developed according to the LDN response hierarchy

2.2.3 LDN-DSS co-developed with national stakeholders for 10 countries

2.2.4 Capacity building and training implemented for effective use and sustainability of the LDN-DSS

3. South-South cooperation and learning fosters increased capacity to implement and institutionalize the participatory approach to LDN decision making

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing ($)	Co-financing ($)
171,000.00	20,706.00

Outcome:

3.1 Enhanced regional and global collaboration on capacity development, knowledge exchange, and scaling of the WOCAT Participatory Approach to LDN decision making

Indicated by:

Scaling up of the LDN participatory and gender sensitive approach to M&A and the LDN-DSS to selected thematic areas and new countries (number of countries)

Output:

3.1.1 Regional and thematic South-South exchange workshops and learning events organized

3.1.2 Demand-driven learning opportunities on the participatory approach to LDN decision making packaged with other LDN projects and initiatives through cost-sharing and organization of global and regional events back-to-back with UNCCD CRICs and COPs as relevant

3.1.3 Collaborative platforms and networks, including women's networks (e.g. Women+ in Geospatial), for South-South cooperation strengthened to support ongoing knowledge exchange and collaboration on LDN-DSS among participating countries and new countries who would like to join

M&E

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing ($)	Co-financing ($)
75,000.00	9,082.00

Outcome:

4.1 M&E assesses project impacts and guides adaptive management

Indicated by:

a) 100% of the M&E plan targets are met

b) Satisfactory or better TE and PIR quality rating

Output:

4.1.1 Monitoring, evaluation and reporting plan implemented

4.1.2 Gender Action Plan implemented and customized to each pilot country and gender targets aggregated and linked to UNCCD Gender Action Plan reporting

4.1.3 Project Terminal Evaluation conducted

Component Balances

Project Components	GEF Project Financing ($)	Co-financing ($)
1. Knowledge management for improved evidence-based LDN decision making and strengthened UNCCD reporting	510,000.00	61,823.00
2. Enhanced capacity for an upscaled national participatory approach supports informed and evidence-based decision making on LDN in pilot countries	1,063,000.00	128,889.00
3. South-South cooperation and learning fosters increased capacity to implement and institution-alize the participatory approach to LDN decision making	171,000.00	20,706.00
M&E	75,000.00	9,082.00
Subtotal	**1,819,000.00**	**220,500.00**
Project Management Cost	181,000.00	24,500.00
Total Project Cost ($)	**2,000,000.00**	**245,000.00**

Please provide Justification

PROJECT OUTLINE

A. PROJECT RATIONALE

Describe the current situation: the global environmental problems and/or climate vulnerabilities that the project will address, the key elements of the system, and underlying drivers of environmental change in the project context, such as population growth, economic development, climate change, sociocultural and political factors, including conflicts, or technological changes. Describe the objective of the project, and the justification for it. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

Current situation
Land degradation (LD) is a complex issue and challenging to monitor and assess, hampering evidence-based decision-making processes that optimize resource allocation as pointed out in the scientific conceptual framework developed to monitor Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) . This is further underlined by the

IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Land that reviewed 24 different processes of LD, based on which 17 different LD pathways were identified in a review of more than 500 scientific articles. Moreover, the IPBES Assessment Report on Land Degradation and Restoration outlined differences in assessments due to different methodological approaches, shifting baselines, different reference frames, and complicating processes such as time lags, regime shifts, and spatial connections. Several proxies have been suggested (often based on trends of a satellite-derived data), but not even this is straightforward (Figure 1), since drivers of LD change over space and time as well as with changing social perceptions of the value of ecosystem services. The Global Outlook on Land (GOL2) highlights the urgency of action by projecting that, without transformative change, up to 16 million km² of land could degrade further by 2050, exacerbating biodiversity loss, food insecurity, and climate risks .

The World Atlas of Desertification has, therefore, introduced the principle of convergence of evidence, which is a measure based on accumulated evidence that certain core issues related to LD coexist at a given location. These core issues include a combination of biophysical attributes such as aridity, water stress, decreasing land productivity, climate-vegetation trends, fires and tree loss, as well as socioeconomic factors such as population density, population change, income level, built-up area change, agricultural practices and livestock density. Consequently, LD is context specific and addressing LD through sustainable land management (SLM) requires a clear understanding of the drivers of change and the system boundary at the watershed or landscape scale, as well as farm characteristics, household conditions, access to the market, gender inequality and agricultural extension services coverage.

Achieving Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) is one of the targets of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15, which promotes “Life on Land”. SDG target 15.3 states: ‘By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land-degradation-neutral world’. SDG Indicator 15.3.1 measures the proportion of land that is degraded over total land area. According to a recent global assessment , UNCCD Country Parties have through voluntary LDN targets alone committed to restore an estimated total of over 600 million hectares of degraded lands. However, in many countries, solutions to avoid, reduce, and reverse LD are not being implemented at sufficiently large scales to achieve LDN by 2030. Between 2015 and 2019, at least 100 million hectares of healthy and productive land were degraded every year, affecting food and water security globally. The loss is equivalent to twice the size of Greenland, impacting the lives of 1.3 billion people, who are estimated to be directly exposed to LD. If current trends continue, restoring 1.5 billion hectares of land by 2030 will be necessary to achieve a land-degradation-neutral world.

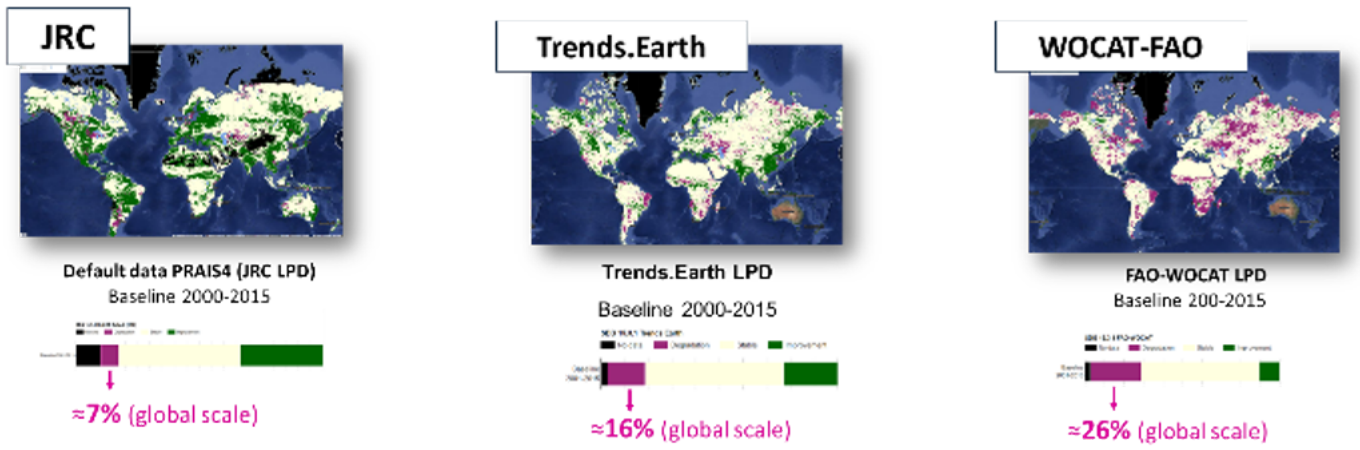


Figure 1: Alternative estimations of SGD indicator 15.3.1 and extent of land degradation for the baseline period using different Land Productivity Dynamics Maps. Source: Tools4LDN LPD Product comparison - https://maps.tools4ldn.org/ (CI, WOCAT & FAO, 2022).

Barriers to be addressed and baseline initiatives
One of the main barriers to achieving LDN through scaling up of SLM is fragmented and scattered knowledge on LD and its impacts on ecosystem services and livelihoods. According to a recent GEF report , numerous information gaps still exist in setting, updating, revising and monitoring voluntary LDN targets. Data accessibility varies between countries, from defining baselines to monitoring progress against targets. Access to relevant geospatial data — which is central to LDN implementation to identify gains and losses of productive land — is particularly challenging. By building capacity and engaging with key stakeholders, ensuring participation and inclusivity, LDN monitoring could become a key entry point to build ownership and sustainability and long-term impact of SLM interventions.

There is already a substantive GEF-supported baseline of LDN projects in place, comprising 67 projects approved between 2016 and 2022 (GEF6&7) implemented in a total of 56 countries with a total investment of USD320 million in GEF grants and around USD2.5 billion in total . This includes GEF support for monitoring of LDN and development of the Trends.Earth online tool and platform led by Conservation International (CI), the LDN target setting process which a total of 130 countries have participated in, but also multi-focal area projects supporting LDN as an approach. For example, the project Tools4LDN led by CI provided improved methods and tools for assessing land degradation and understanding the socio-economic conditions of vulnerable communities in affected areas through the integration of free and open platforms. The Drylands Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program (DSL-IP), led by FAO, is supporting countries to achieve LDN at local scales through integrated land use planning (ILUP). The Blue and Green Islands Integrated Program (BGI IP) led by UNDP is a transformative initiative, with close linkages to LDN, designed to reduce ecosystem degradation in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) by valuing nature and applying nature-based solutions. These initiatives have also generated best practices on LDN monitoring frameworks that facilitate cross-sectoral coordination that this project will build on. GEF-8 continues to support LDN projects on, inter alia, tenure and integrated programs that address LDN as part of ecosystem restoration and food systems transformation. Incremental funding to Component 1 of the project on Knowledge Management will build on this baseline and create strong synergies with ongoing global initiatives, including GEF-funded LDN projects, to enhance alignment and complementarity across the UNCCD implementation landscape. It will engage with the GEF-8 Enabling Activities led by FAO with enhanced technical support by providing technical knowledge products.

Another barrier to scaling up of SLM is linked to the weak capacity in monitoring and assessment (M&A) and mapping of LDN at country level and inability to support decision making related to prioritizing SLM interventions following the LDN response hierarchy of avoiding, reducing and reversing LD. This is underpinned by lack of guidance on how to establish nationally owned LDN M&A and decision support systems (DSS) that build on existing monitoring, maps and data, while meeting UNCCD requirements for reporting on SDG indicator 15.3.1 . Mapping LD at country level is imperative to achieve LDN. To reach a status of no net loss of productive land, it is necessary to estimate the effects of land use and offset projected losses by rehabilitating or restoring an equal area of the same land type. In this process, mapping and quantifying LD is crucial to spatially identify and strategically plan actions to counterbalance LD. To achieve this, meaningful national or sub-national datasets and knowledge coupled with a participatory approach are needed to validate results from Earth Observation (EO) analysis. Integrating different types of expert knowledge (e.g. scientific, indigenous, etc.) has advantages over only relying on satellite-derived data, as it provides a more comprehensive assessment that includes drivers and types of LD, along with recommendations for implementing SLM relevant for different stakeholder groups, such as Indigenous People, women and other disadvantaged groups present in LD-affected areas. Once LD is mapped, it is crucial to facilitate open access to maps and products generated in a transparent and easy-to-use way, so stakeholders can base their decisions on reliable evidence. Moreover, facilitating integration of additional indicators that provide information on socio-economic characteristics, biodiversity, climate and other datasets is key to making informed decisions that optimize investments and achieve multiple benefits.

However, mapping LD is not easy, particularly at large spatial scales. The impacts of LD on ecosystem services as well as the drivers and processes involved are spatially diverse and change over time, and so does the social perception of the severity and effects of degradation. Therefore, a single map of LD cannot take into consideration all views or needs. However, mapping and quantifying LD is crucial to spatially identify and strategically plan actions to counterbalance loss of natural capital, as well as to monitor and report progress towards LDN at landscape scale. Common challenges faced by countries include:

- Global estimations and maps are usually not representative of countries' reality and underestimate the proportion of land degraded (SDG 15.3.1). This is particularly relevant for hyper-arid areas where global datasets can be deficient, and SIDS where the scale/resolution of global datasets is not fine enough.
- Technical difficulties exist to integrate national data and indigenous and local knowledge.
- Time and resources to implement a comprehensive interinstitutional participatory process are limited.

In response to this, the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) has, over the past years, in collaboration with FAO and national governments, co-developed a participatory approach that makes use of cloud computing to support multi-stakeholder participatory processes to map LD, and to support decision makers with LDN-DSSs. Cloud computing allowed the development of spatially explicit applications that provide dynamic interfaces for GIS experts and non-experts alike to integrate local and national LD and SLM data with global information . The LDN-DSS allow users to implement the principle of Convergence of Evidence for mapping LD and SLM, as introduced in the World Atlas of Desertification . During the 2022 UNCCD reporting process, WOCAT and FAO supported six countries in this process (Colombia, Panama, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Türkiye and Ecuador) — as presented in the plenary during the UNCCD CRIC 21 and showcased in a recent publication — aiming to:

a) allow for an inclusive, participatory, inter-institutional, multi-stakeholder process versus an individual/consultant-based process;

b) develop long-term capacities for LDN within the Ministries, using the reporting process as an opportunity and momentum; and

c) develop a country-owned system useful beyond the reporting process to guide decisions in land management and restoration overall, also in relation to climate and biodiversity targets.

The proposed project will provide incremental support to scale the participatory approach to map LD, and to support decision makers with LDN-DSS in different contexts that face particular difficulties in monitoring and participatory assessment of LDN, reflected by the selection of 10 pilot countries ranging from hyper-arid countries to SIDS with strong existing commitments, both financial and political, to achieve LDN by 2030. These regions also have much to share and learn from each other related to stakeholder engagement and involvement of disadvantaged groups, such as indigenous communities and women. The proposed project will work with these countries in collaboration with several LDN related initiatives including the 2026 UNCCD Reporting Process.

Finally, inadequate exchange of knowledge and sharing of lessons learned on LDN monitoring and assessment among UNCCD Parties and different LDN initiatives is also a major barrier to scaling of LDN. A recent WOCAT survey on South-South Cooperation (SSC) found that there is an untapped potential for knowledge exchange. There is a pool of relevant knowledge and experience about SLM that can and should be shared among countries and regions of the world to stimulate implementation, especially when it comes to areas with specific challenges related to M&A of LDN where EO data cannot always capture small but important changes in vegetation cover, productivity and soil organic carbon (SOC). These regions also have much to share and learn from each other related to stakeholder engagement and involvement of disadvantaged groups, such as indigenous communities and women. It is important to match expertise with demand for exchange and establish SSC platforms that provide a neutral space for informal exchange of knowledge among different types of stakeholders. To address this barrier, the project will align with the Joint Work Program led by the UNCCD for the 2026 reporting process, which supports countries in strengthening data systems, improving indicator methodologies, and enhancing the quality and consistency of national reporting.

In this context, the project will also strengthen the capacities of the regional centers engaged in the Joint Work Program, including CBAS, JRC, NCVC, OSS, PISLM, RCMRD, SPC/SPREP, and FAO. The proposed project will contribute to and benefit from these coordinated efforts through knowledge exchange, harmonized methodologies, and South–South learning. The project will build on these initiatives and provide incremental funding to strengthen South-South learning on LDN M&A and mapping under its Component 3.

Through collaboration with CI, the project will promote country-level innovations, and inform upgrades to the Trends.Earth platform. It will also complement the efforts to integrate LDN into ILUP led by IUCN/UNCCD GM using GEF incremental funding to strengthen LDN decision-making in 10 countries through participatory land use planning tools that operationalize the LDN counterbalancing mechanism. It will collaborate with the UNEP/GEF Global Support Program on Strengthening UNCCD reporting – enhancing the implementation of the UNCCD by translating key elements of the SDG 15.3.1 Good Practice Guidance Addendum into user-friendly tools and tutorials—helping countries apply updated guidance on key LDN indicators such as high resolution datasets, subnational assessment, and the estimation of the counterbalancing mechanism. The project aims to strengthen linkages between different project-level interventions and national-level UNCCD policy-related processes. It will optimize investments by promoting the use of existing national knowledge and datasets alongside global knowledge products, e.g., through cloud computing, facilitate knowledge flows through participatory workshops and inter-sectoral cooperation, and create an environment for learning and capacity building. Collectively, these linkages ensure broader dissemination, mutual reinforcement of outcomes, and strengthened UNCCD monitoring and reporting capacities globally.

Justification
The project will thus build on this baseline and address the key barriers and gaps related to scaling the capacity of UNCCD Parties for inclusive decision support in LDN to achieve SDG target 15.3. To do this, it follows WOCAT's principles for knowledge management (KM) to enhance the robustness and durability of KM processes and products and, most importantly, to generate trust and ownership for knowledge, data and evidence. The overall objective is to strengthen the capacity of UNCCD country Parties to assess, plan, implement, monitor and report on LDN through inclusive decision support. Inclusive decision support refers to the inclusion of end users in co-development and co-production, engaging multiple institutions, ministries and departments within countries, as well as NGOs and CSOs representing women, youth and Indigenous People. The specific objectives are to:
1. Strengthen knowledge management for improved LDN monitoring, assessment (M&A) and decision making to enable scaling up the successful participatory approach realized with 6 countries during the 2022 UNCCD reporting process to map LD, estimate SDG indicator 15.3.1, refine LDN targets, and plan LDN interventions to avoid, reduce or reverse LD through suitable SLM good practices.
2. Build capacities for the co-development, use and sustainability of LDN-DSS and facilitate the integration of local/landscape/national data to allow a national-to-global as well as national-to-local use of LD evidence both for reporting as well as for ILUP. The focus will be on 10 interested Parties from regions with specific challenges regarding LD M&A and stakeholder participation (Belize, Cambodia, Chad, Egypt, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Palau, Sri Lanka, Turkmenistan).
3. Enable South-South exchange and learning on LDN with focus on lessons learned under objectives 1 and 2.

Stakeholders and partners
The UNCCD Secretariat, WOCAT, UNDP and key partners such as FAO as well as regional and national partners are seeking to scale the process of inclusive decision support in LDN, allowing for wide replication in areas with specific LDN challenges within the context of Decision 20/COP.15: 'invites Parties to explore ways to integrate satellite data information into their capacity development efforts and data analytic tools for evidence-based decision-making to support land degradation neutrality implementation through integrated land use planning informed, as appropriate, by the Group on Earth Observations Land Degradation Neutrality Initiative and its partners and other relevant stakeholders', and ; UNCCD decision 12/COP.15: 'Requests the

Global Mechanism and the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, within their respective mandates and subject to the availability of financial resources, and in collaboration with relevant financial and technical partners in a position to do so, to: Further develop training and capacity-building support at both national and regional level, particularly related to (i) land degradation neutrality assessment, data collection, monitoring and national reporting; and (ii) the development of national land degradation neutrality monitoring and decision-support systems that use the best available data, building on relevant existing platforms and initiatives such as Trends.Earth, the performance review and assessment of implementation system and the Group on Earth Observations Land Degradation Neutrality Initiative'.

More specifically, this Project will help UNCCD country Parties to:

- establish and/or refine national targets and commitments related to LDN.
- prioritize areas for interventions in the LDN response hierarchy through informed decision-making.
- mainstream LDN into national policies and support policy coherence.
- optimize investments by finding synergies among UN Conventions and SDGs.
- monitor progress towards LDN.
- strengthen inter-sectoral cooperation for LDN.
- enhance engagement with civil society organizations (CSOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and social groups for LDN.
- improve the quality of the reporting to the UNCCD.

The project will also engage with the WOCAT Regional Clusters that are official representatives of WOCAT in a number of regions. The Clusters act as catalysts for mainstreaming SLM and LDN in strategic agendas and for enhancing capacities, through SSC, with other Clusters and partners, in implementing and scaling up SLM. Launched in November 2025, AfriOCAT is the African Regional Cluster of the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT), established in collaboration with AUDA-NEPAD. AfriOCAT strengthens sustainable land management (SLM) across the continent by connecting partners, sharing knowledge, and supporting action on the ground. Other relevant partners include research networks in the different regions, such as the Pacific Community (SPC), The Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS) and Llandev in Madagascar. Table 1 summarizes the roles of key stakeholders that will be involved in the project.
Table 1. Project stakeholders and their roles and responsibilities in the project.

During project design, stakeholder consultations were undertaken from global to national level, through the WOCAT Network, to identify key actors engaged in LDN decision making, target setting and monitoring. This was followed by consultations with selected pilot countries through the Expression of Interest process in the PPG phase to assess their capacity development needs related to LDN decision support. The results of the country consultations and names of national focal points are provided below in the stakeholder engagement plan and inform the strategy for engaging these stakeholders during implementation. This plan articulates how these stakeholders will be engaged and the roles they will play across the different project components, outputs and activities.
Major global actors setting LDN agendas and influencing implementation, such as UNCCD, UNDP and the GEF, will be key partners throughout the project to align it with global LDN processes and events. CDE, through WOCAT, will be the UNDP implementing partner/GEF Executing Entity and will be accountable to UNDP, in line with UNDP policies, procedures and standards and in compliance with GEF PCM Policy and Guidelines. UNDP, in turn, is accountable to the GEF for implementation of the project in line with GEF policies and standards.
Lead Ministries for the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in the 10 pilot countries (Belize, Cambodia, Chad, Egypt, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Palau, Sri Lanka &Turkmenistan) will be involved in co-creation of LDN M&A knowledge and co-development of a national LDN-DSS. Detailed stakeholder engagement plans will be developed for each pilot country in the project's inception phase to ensure full engagement of multiple actors, including from government, non-government/CSOs, research and academia, indigenous peoples' groups, youth representatives and others in the co-development of a national LDN DSS.

Multiple stakeholders including government, non-government, research and academia, regional bodies, indigenous and youth groups in the participating countries (Belize, Cambodia, Chad, Egypt, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Palau, Sri Lanka and Turkmenistan) linked to the existing WOCAT network, as well as new ones identified in the inception phase, will be beneficiaries of the project and be invited to co-create knowledge on LDN M&A indicators. From the private sector, Digital Earth Africa brings together stakeholders to expand the internet in Africa and is expected to make Earth Observation data free and accessible to countries. See Table below for further details on stakeholder involvement in the project.
The stakeholder engagement process for this project shall be informed by a set of principles and defining core values based on International Best Practices. These are listed below:

- There is a level of commitment that is established early in the process when there is a need to understand, engage and identify the stakeholders;
- There is integrity during the engagement process that fosters mutual respect and trust;
- There is respect for cultural beliefs, rights and values, along with the interest of the stakeholders;
- There is transparency when stakeholder concerns are responded to in a timely, open and effective manner;
- There is a level of inclusivity that is nurtured through broad participation;
- There is trust that is manifested through open and meaningful dialogue that respects and upholds a community's beliefs, values and opinions.

The project implementation strategy, by its nature, is highly participatory, as the deliverables will be developed through a co-creation approach with the identified stakeholders, primarily the 10 countries. The deliverables from the project will also be tested and endorsed through this co-creation process, which is also the envisaged method for getting feedback on the suitability and applicability of the tools and guidelines to be developed by the projects.

The key stakeholders are listed below and their roles and methods and frequency of engagement outlined.

Stakeholder	Why included (interests)	Participation methods		Timeline	Cost
		Method	Responsibility and role in the project		
UNCCD	LDN is a goal of the UNCCD that is supporting the Target Setting Program at the country level with support from, e.g., the GEF and the Global Mechanism.	The UNCCD is a partner in the project and sits on the Project Steering Committee/Project Board. PSC/PB meetings will be held a minimum of once a year, possibly twice. Atleast twice a month, the WOCAT team will meet with the UNCCD to	Support global outreach and South-South exchange of knowledge on LDN M&A at UNCCD COPs and CRICs and through the UNCCD Regional Liaison Offices. UNCCD Science, Technology and Innovation Unit and the Global Mechanism team involved in LDN Target Setting	Throughout project implementation and throughout all the project components as PSC/PB member.	Participation in PSC/PB included in PMC costs.

		coordinate with the ongoing related initiatives, including the Global Support Program on Strengthening UNCCD reporting to strengthen alignment and interoperability .	will be a key contributor to implementation of activities under Component 1 and will also support Component 3.		
CBD	Synergies between the Rio conventions, methodological work on monitoring and land use planning	CBD and WOCAT are in the process of establishing a partnership agreement	Seek alignment with regards to monitoring efforts under CBD and in the context of Rio Convention synergies.	Throughout project implementation i n targeted meetings/discuss ions relating mostly to Component 1 and 2 of the project.	Self-financed
UNDP	UNDP is the GEF Implementing Agency of the project	UNDP provides oversight and supervision throughout project implementatio n and for all the components in line with UNDP Financial Regulations and Rules and its Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures.	UNDP is accountable to the GEF for the implementation of this project. This includes overseeing project execution undertaken by the Implementing Partner (GEF Executing Entity/Agency) to ensure that the project is being carried out in accordance with UNDP and GEF policies and procedures and the standards and provisions. UNDP also sits in the Project Steering Committee/Proje	Throughout project implementation and throughout all project components and activities in an oversight and quality assurance role.	Included in GEF Agency project fee, so no cost to the GEF project grant.

			ct Board as a Quality Assurance member and in a non-voting capacity.		
GEF	GEF finances the project as a financial mechanism for the UNCCD	Partner and financier that UNDP will report to on the project progress, results and impact.	The GEF is accountable to the GEF Council for implementation of the GEF funds in line with the decisions of the Council and UNCCD COP and in alignment with the approved GEF Strategy for the Land Degradation Focal Area. UNDP will report project progress to the GEF through annual Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) as well as the TE.	Throughout project implementa-tion including specific official milestones at PIR and TE stages in line with the project M&E plan. The key components are the M&E and PMC. The GEF will also interact with the project through specific events such as workshops and webinars, including at global meetings such as COPs.	Reporting to the GEF is included in the PMC budget as well as in Agency Fees.
CDE	CDE at the University of Bern is the Implementing Partner, hosting the WOCAT Secretariat	UNDP Implementing Partner	CDE is accountable to UNDP for the execution of the project in line with UNDP policies, procedures and standards. CDE will report periodically to UNDP through quarterly narrative and financial reporting and will respond to specific UNDP requests for information on project progress	Throughout project implementation and across all project components.	Included in project budget

			and finances. CDE is also a member of the Project Steering Committee/Project Board, which will meet once a year at a minimum.		
WOCAT • WOCAT Consortium: Alliance Bioversity & CIAT, ICARDA, FAO, GIZ, ICIMOD, ISRIC and CDE • Landdev research lab at the University of Antananarivo, Madagascar • Royal University of Agriculture, Cambodia • AUDA-NEPAD • CESRA	WOCAT Secretariat is hosted by the CDE at the University of Bern and is a key project partner	UNDP Responsible Party	WOCAT and its Regional Clusters will support the project together with national stakeholders and support the establishment of a national LDN-DSS in each participating country. WOCAT will also in collaboration with UNCCD support SSC and exchange.	Throughout project implementation and across all project components.	Included in project budget
Governments • Lead Ministries for the Multilateral	Technical staff of lead ministries will be involved in co-creation of	The 10 countries and the focal government institutions as	The Governments will make key staff available for co-creation of knowledge and	Throughout project implementation and across all	Included in project budget in all

Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in 10 countries (Belize, Cambodia, Chad, Egypt, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Palau, Sri Lanka & Turkmenistan) as well as national research organizations	LDN M&A knowledge and co-development of a national LDN-DSS	well as the key identified stakeholders at country levels, including academic institutions, researchers, local communities and IPs with a stake in how land is managed are the main targets and beneficiaries of the project activities. They will be engaged throughout project implementation, from launch to closure, through training workshops, online and virtual webinars and by email communication.	training, and will share existing data and knowledge on land resources. Workshops and training sessions are planned under all project components. In-person engagement is planned during CRIC and COP meetings as well, including UNCCD CRIC 24 and UNCCD COP 17.	project components.	components.
Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)	CSOs in the 10 selected countries will be invited to participate in co-creation of LDN M&A knowledge. Dr ynet will participate to codevelop knowledge products, and align activities with CS4LDN project.	Similar to government institutions, CSOs and their members and representatives are a key stakeholder and target group for the co-development of knowledge products and tools under the project. They	CSOs will participate and contribute by sharing knowledge and perspectives on land degradation and management, including socio-economic aspects and inclusion of marginalized groups, such as women and Indigenous People. Country	Throughout project implementation and across all project components.	Included in project budget in all the project components, including M&E.

		will be participants at workshops and training throughout project implementation.	level activity implementation, including workshops and training sessions, will take a highly participatory approach, ensuring that beyond government institutions, other groups, including CSOs, local community groups and IP groups working on LDN-related matters participate in meetings, workshops and training sessions and inform the content of the knowledge products, tools and guidance that the project will develop/produce.		
Private Sector Digital Earth Africa	Brings together stakeholders to expand the internet in Africa	Partner	Make EO data free and accessible	Throughout project and in Component 3.	Self-financed
Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC)	CAREC supports Central Asian Countries with capacity on LDN, including Turkmenistan which is one of the Pilot countries in the project	Partner for capacity building and engagement of country stakeholders in CAREC countries, regional exchange in member countries, adoption of tools and scaling-up through other	Capacity building events and workshops throughout implementation.	Ongoing	Included in project budget

		funding and initiatives. They will participate in workshops and training sessions under all project components.			
Observatoire du Sahel et Sahara (OSS)	OSS supports countries across Africa with capacity on LDN, including Egypt, Chad and Liberia as pilot countries in the project	OSS will be contracted through an agreement with WOCAT to support country-level activities in the Africa region for partner capacity building, regional exchange and development of tools.	Capacity building, developer of tailored LDN DSSs through workshops and training sessions.	Ongoing and throughout project implementation timeframe.	Included in project budget under Component 2.
Other GEF Agencies implementing related projects and initiatives, including Conservation International, FAO, UNEP	CI-MSP on data for SIDS is a complementary initiative. CI is also a global technical advisor for the UNCCD reporting process. FAO has an e-learning academy that will host some of the training courses. UNEP is executing the umbrella programme on Strengthening	In-person and virtual meetings, including at CRIC, COP, also through emails and workshops.	CI and FAO will participate in Component 1 activities for development of knowledge products and tools.	Ongoing and throughout project implementation. Engagement is frequent.	Component 1 budget.

	UNCCD Reporting.				

B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This section asks for a theory of change as part of a joined-up description of the project as a whole. The project description is expected to cover the key elements of good project design in an integrated way. It is also expected to meet the GEF's policy requirements on gender, stakeholders, private sector, and knowledge management and learning (see section D). This section should be a narrative that reads like a joined-up story and not independent elements that answer the guiding questions contained in the guidance document. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

Project Description

The project theory of change (Figure 2) is designed to address the three main barriers discussed above to participatory monitoring and assessment of LDN and its integration into decision-making. The barriers are related to: i) scattered and fragmented knowledge on LD and its impacts across sectors, scales and disciplines important for informed decision making; ii) lack of institutional and technical capacity to monitor, assess and report on LDN at national level; and iii) inadequate knowledge exchange across countries and relevant sectors, including sharing of lessons learned on LDN. The expected long-term impact of participatory LDN M&A and decision support is that UNCCD country Parties assess, monitor, plan and implement measures to achieve LDN in a cost-effective and inclusive way according to the LDN response hierarchy of avoiding, reducing and restoring degraded lands. To achieve this, three impact pathways have been identified.

The first impact pathway focuses on the co-production of knowledge products that will enable the scaling up of a successful approach to develop DSS and co-design relevant LD maps. These knowledge products, including tutorials, guidelines and manuals, will be used by WOCAT, UNCCD and its partners to support scaling up of participatory approaches to LDN M&A and decision making to new countries facing similar challenges and/or organizations after the project ends, empowering UNCCD Parties to make informed decisions in their efforts to achieve LDN. There will also be co-design of exchange mechanisms for dissemination and outreach of the capacity building package to support strengthened reporting on SDG indicator 15.3.1, including on gender-sensitive indicators for national LDN M&A systems. The knowledge products will integrate the experience and lessons generated in the pilot countries, providing tested models that can be replicated and adapted in other countries, including those with similar ecological or institutional conditions, thereby facilitating scaling in a structured and context-sensitive manner.

The second pathway focuses on championing the capacity development process and institutionalization of the participatory approach to LDN for enhanced decision making in 10 pilot countries. This includes the participatory assessment of LDN indicators using national datasets and knowledge as well as the co-development of LDN-DSS in the selected countries with equal participation of women and men to support mainstreaming and evidence-based decision-making for LDN. This pathway responds to strong global demand. During the project preparation phase, more than 70 applications were received from interested countries. These were systematically reviewed to identify opportunities for engagement and potential synergies with ongoing initiatives, ensuring that countries not selected as pilots can still benefit from the project through tailored scaling pathways adapted to their specific regional and institutional contexts.

The third pathway is about knowledge exchange, learning and scaling of the participatory approach to LDN for informed and evidence-based decision making to more UNCCD country Parties that need to improve UNCCD reporting and implementation of SLM. SSC and learning on the LDN participatory approach to decision making will be enhanced in cooperation with other global initiatives on LDN, such as the GEO-LDN. This pathway will serve as a primary mechanism for scaling beyond pilot countries, including through linkages with ongoing GEF-funded projects and regional and global initiatives such as the UNEP/GEF Global

Support Program (GSP IV, GEF ID 11836) and the UNCCD reporting process, ensuring broad outreach while allowing adaptation to diverse regional circumstances.

The success of the project is based on the assumptions that (i) technical knowledge on LD is readily available, can be consolidated and shared by key sectors and stakeholders within and among countries, and (ii) there is interest from policy makers in supporting the establishment of LDN-DSS and to use them in decision-making on SLM implementation at national level.

Three project components on knowledge management, capacity development and scaling, and South-South exchange and learning are supporting each pathway through a series of tailored outputs that are described more in detail below.

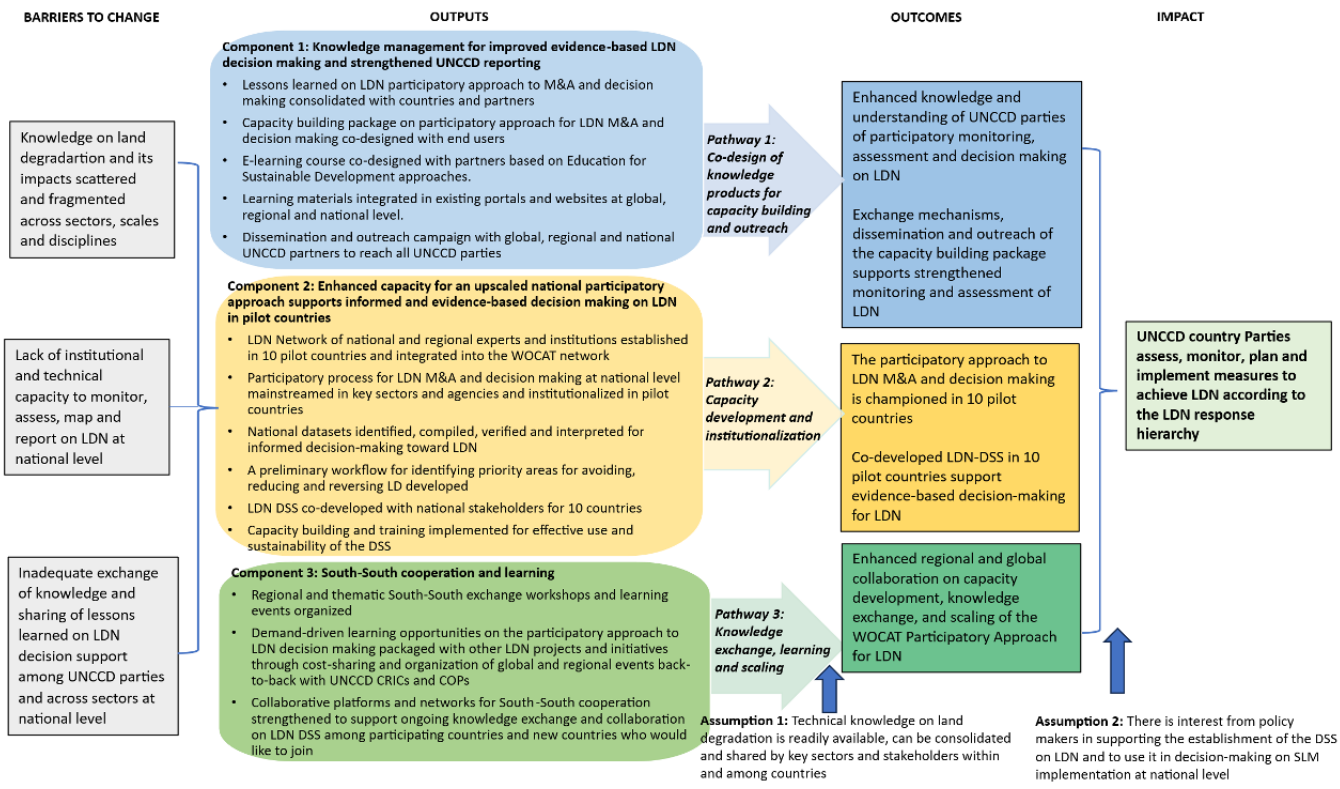


Figure 2. Project Theory of Change with assumptions.

Component 1: Knowledge management for improved evidence-based LDN decision making and strengthened UNCCD reporting. There is a need to consolidate existing knowledge and develop guidelines and manuals on how to assess and map LD at national level through participatory processes involving national experts from Government, NGOs, CSOs, etc. that integrate the UNCCD global LDN indicators with available national datasets on LD. Additional indicators need to be considered to prioritize areas for different types of SLM response options according to the LDN response hierarchy, particularly in hyperarid areas and SIDS. This knowledge also needs to become available and made easy to access and understand through case studies and examples, as well as through web courses, etc. The activities under this component will generate a suite of knowledge products that respond directly to all UNCCD Parties' needs in estimating LDN indicators and SDG indicator 15.3.1, an essential part of UNCCD reporting, particularly for Strategic Objective 1 (SO1). These materials will serve as essential inputs for both the UNEP/GEF Global Support Program (GSP) on Strengthening UNCCD reporting and the technical support provided by FAO to 21 countries under the GEF-8 Enabling Activity Support to National Reporting to the UNCCD. Finally, the work from this project will be closely linked with platforms like Trends.Earth, incorporating the latest innovations by CI, ensuring wide accessibility and alignment with global efforts to enhance LDN reporting. Lessons learned and best practices

on integrating gender equality will be incorporated into these knowledge products and disseminated widely through partner networks, academic channels, and outreach activities. These knowledge products are designed for scalability and will be disseminated globally through established platforms and partnerships, enabling uptake by countries beyond the pilot group, including those that expressed interest during the application process. Particular attention will be given to ensuring that materials can be adapted to different regional contexts, including SIDS and hyper-arid environments. The component has two major outcomes with associated outputs and activities.

Outcome 1.1: Enhanced knowledge and understanding of UNCCD Parties of participatory M&A, decision making on LDN. This outcome will lead to enhanced knowledge products on participatory LDN M&A, reporting and decision support, including reports on lessons learned. At least one guideline explicitly including gender aspects of LDN will be produced. This material will be used to support distance learning in different UN languages. Building on the successful methodologies developed jointly by WOCAT and FAO during the 2022 reporting process, the materials developed under this component will scale up the application of participatory, evidence-based approaches to improve LDN indicators estimation for all UNCCD Parties. The knowledge products will provide targeted support to the UNEP/GEF Global Support Program (GSP) by developing specific tools and video tutorials that help countries apply the latest refinements of the SDG 15.3.1 Good Practice Guidance (GPG) and the UNCCD reporting manual. It would support the training of trainers and strengthening of the regional centers that UNCCD has selected to support parties during the 2026 reporting process (In line with decision 2/COP.16, selected regional institutions will provide technical support to Parties during the reporting process). This includes guidance on selecting the most representative land productivity dynamics (LPD) datasets, implementing subnational reporting for Strategic Objective 1 indicators, and applying methods for comparing trends across different periods. As many of these refinements are currently outlined only in the GPG Addendum , the outputs will play a key role in expanding and translating this guidance into accessible formats to support the GSP's broader goals.

Output 1.1.1: Lessons learned on LDN participatory approach to M&A and decision making consolidated with countries and partners in knowledge products. This output will be realized through webinars for evaluation of country processes and experiences when applying the LDN participatory approach, jointly with multiple stakeholders previously involved in the process, and co-development of key lessons including challenges, opportunities and recommendations. A light needs assessment will be undertaken of UNCCD country Parties and data analysis of WOCAT's 2023–2024 South-South survey.

Output 1.1.2: This includes written and audio-visual training material, tutorials and guidelines in UN languages, and involves co-development of manuals and other training materials, in multiple languages, on the development and application of the participatory assessment of LD, gender-sensitive indicators, and on the use of LDN-DSS (Table 2). There will also be development of concrete local and national use cases on the LDN-DSS, presented in the form of a video series. Knowledge products will be developed with regional partner institutions, UNCCD Science and Technology Correspondents (STCs) and national focal points as well as researchers on the participatory approach to gain scientific credibility and allow for wide dissemination across academia involved in LDN. These knowledge products will also document and highlight lessons learned and best practices in integrating gender equality in LDN monitoring, assessment and decision-making processes. The knowledge products will also support the work of the UNCCD Science-Policy Interface (SPI), the GEF STAP and others using scientific evidence to support environmental policy processes. Key outputs, such as the Guidelines for the Participatory Assessment of LDN Indicators, will provide step-by-step instructions for countries to report on SO1, integrating the latest datasets, tools, and methodological improvements. Moreover, the LPD Comparison Apps, covering all UNCCD Parties, will directly support countries in using more representative data sources. These tools are already referenced in the GPG Addendum to the SDG Indicator 15.3.1, and are expected to be central to the 2026 reporting process. Additional knowledge products, such as annotated scripts and codes in open repositories, along with video

tutorials on integrating national datasets and expert knowledge into LDN assessments using Google Earth Engine (GEE), will further empower countries to adapt global methodologies to their specific contexts.

Table 2. Potential training materials (content, type, target group):

Training Material	Content	Type	Target Group
1. Guidelines for the participatory assessment of LDN indicators	Step-by-step guidance for country experts on implementing participatory assessments for LDN	Document (Guidelines)	Country experts and facilitators
2. Guideline for identification of gender-sensitive indicators at national level for LDN M&A	Guidance for country experts on gender-sensitive indicators for LDN M&A	Document (Guidelines)	Country experts and facilitators
3. Step-by-Step Tutorial on Developing and Managing LDN-DSS in GEE	Detailed instructions on developing and managing LDN-DSS using GEE	Tutorial (Document) and script (code)	Developers, advanced GIS and programming experts
4. Step-by-Step Tutorial on Using an LDN-DSS	User manual for decision-makers, land users, and GEF projects on using the system	Tutorial (Document)	Decision makers, land users, project designers
5. LPD Comparison Apps for all UNCCD Parties	Interactive application comparing LPDs	Web Application	UNCCD National Focal Points (NFPs), national experts
6. Publication on Lessons Learnt and Recommendations for Hyper-Arid Areas and SIDS *(supported under Component 3)*	Case studies and insights with specific recommendations for these eco-regions	Publication (Report)	General public, outreach professionals, stakeholders
7. Annotated Scripts and Codes in Open Repositories to Integrate National Expert Knowledge in LDN Assessment	Open access scripts and codes for land degradation assessment	Open Repository (Scripts)	Experts and developers working on LD mapping
8. Audiovisual Tutorials on Developing and Using LDN-DSS	Visual demonstrations on how to develop and use LDN-DSS	Audiovisual Tutorials	GIS experts, developers, decision makers
9. Audiovisual Materials with Real-Life Examples of Implementing LDN-DSS	Case studies and practical examples showcasing the approach	Audiovisual Material	General public, decision makers, stakeholders
10. Video Tutorials on Integrating National Datasets and Knowledge into LDN Indicators using GEE	Instructional videos on integrating national datasets into GEE for LDN indicator assessments	Video Tutorials	National experts, developers

Output 1.1.3: E-learning course co-designed with partners based on Education for Sustainable Development approaches. This will involve co-designing the course blueprint on the participatory approach to LDN M&A and decision making together with partners such as UNCCD, CBD, FAO and national and regional stakeholders (including the course target group), specifying learning objectives and outcomes. The course will follow Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) approaches with a strong focus on knowledge, skills and attitudes , co-development of the course content including integration of training materials developed under 1.1.2., translation of the course into French and Spanish, and presentation and promotion of the e-learning course with partners, e.g., through a series of webinars. The course content will also incorporate

lessons learned and best practices on integrating gender equality in LDN monitoring, assessment and decision-making.

Outcome 1.2: Exchange mechanisms, dissemination and outreach of the capacity building package support strengthened monitoring and assessment of LDN. The learning materials on LDN decision support will target wide uptake and use by UNCCD country Parties with different LD challenges, including both women and men, across the world. Dissemination activities will also ensure that lessons learned and best practices related to gender equality integration are shared.

Output 1.2.1: Learning materials on the participatory approach to LDN M&A and decision making integrated in existing portals and websites at global (e.g., WOCAT, UNDP, UNCCD, GEO-LDN, G20 GLI, GEF, FAO e-learning Academy), regional (e.g., GGW, AUDA-NEPAD, OSS, AfriOCAT, SPC) and national levels. Identification and assessment of relevant portals and websites will be undertaken and LPD comparison applications and guidelines will be integrated into relevant portals and platforms.

Output 1.2.2: Dissemination and outreach campaign launched with global, regional and national UNCCD partners, promoting the availability and use of the LDN decision support learning materials to all UNCCD Parties and country focal points. This will involve organization of joint webinars, social media campaigns, advertisement during conferences, through UNCCD regional offices, and through UNCCD CSOs, and side events at CRICs 24 and 25 and COP17.

Component 2: Enhanced capacity for an upscaled national participatory approach supports informed and evidence-based decision making on LDN in pilot countries. This component will address the capacity gap of UNCCD country Parties in LDN M&A, reporting and decision making by working with 10 pilot countries (Belize, Cambodia, Chad, Egypt, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Palau, Sri Lanka, Turkmenistan) to gain insights and learn lessons for further dissemination and scaling up under Components 3 and 1. It will create a network of regional and national experts that together with WOCAT can support national training workshops and institutionalization of inclusive and participatory LDN M&A and decision making in countries, ensuring the active engagement of Indigenous Peoples organizations as key stakeholders and partners alongside NGOs and CSOs, and recognizing Indigenous Peoples' lands and territories, including through their appropriate consideration in spatial analyses and decision-support tools, in accordance with the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) as appropriate. The direct engagement with pilot countries under this component will significantly contribute to their national reports, not only for the 2026 reporting process but also in the longer term, as the deeply participatory and institutionalized approach being applied will help establish sustainable national processes that extend beyond the project's duration. This component also strengthens regional ownership, with the active involvement of regional institutions setting the foundation for these actors to continue supporting additional countries in the region. Through the activities of this component, the project will explore cutting-edge approaches in challenging environments to ensure no country is left behind and to help bring all Parties to a more equal footing in LDN implementation and reporting. This component will highlight the specific challenges faced by countries in hyperarid contexts and in SIDS, which often lag behind in UNCCD SO1 implementation and reporting due to their unique data and methodological limitations. By addressing these gaps, the project will not only provide tailored support to those most in need but also generate innovative solutions with broader relevance. For example, alternative methods for assessing land productivity in hyperarid zones and SIDS, such as the use of subnational stratification or alternative indicators, can offer valuable lessons for improving LDN assessment and monitoring globally.

During the Project Preparation Grant phase, a global call for expressions of interest to become a pilot country was launched through the UNCCD, UNDP, and the Centre for Development and Environment (CDE), University of Bern, in collaboration with WOCAT. Selection criteria included:

- The country provides information on ongoing efforts to strengthen its LDN targets and implementation measures.
- Demonstrates high-level political commitment to lead a national process to enhance LDN targets and establish an LDN-DSS.
- The country belongs to one of the UNCCD Regional Annexes and is eligible for GEF funding.

Particular encouragement was given to SIDS and countries with hyper-arid areas to submit applications. Countries were ranked according to the established criteria, with additional consideration given to potential synergies with other relevant initiatives, such as the Blue-Green Islands IP. Few SIDS applied, but many hyper-arid countries were interested in participating in the project . The 10 selected countries are included in Figure 3 below.

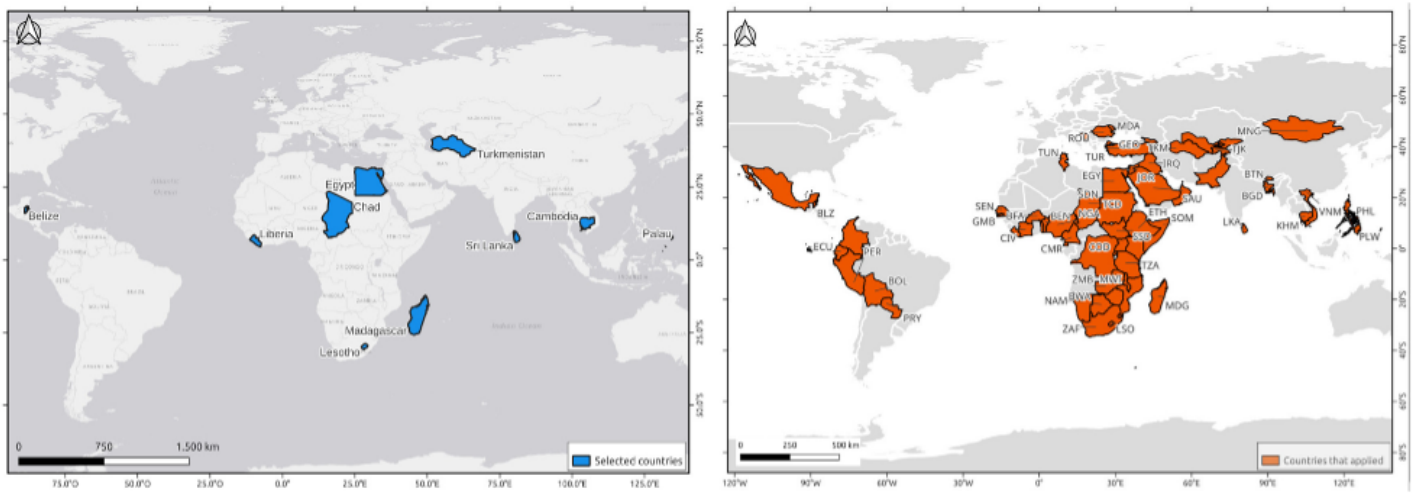


Figure 3. Map of the 10 countries selected for the project – Belize, Cambodia, Chad, Egypt, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Palau, Sri Lanka, and Turkmenistan (left) and map of the countries that applied to participate in the project, which are considered for scaling up (right).

There were many countries that showed interest and ranked highly in the evaluation of the applications. They will be targeted through Component 3 on South-South Cooperation and Learning (see Figure 3) which will provide the main global space to facilitate wide scaling.
In addition, concrete opportunities for scaling have already been identified through alignment with ongoing GEF-funded projects and related initiatives. For example, in Burkina Faso, activities are being aligned with the GEF–UNDP project “Sustainable Land Management to Strengthen Social Cohesion in the Drylands of Burkina Faso” (GEF ID 11003/UNDP PIMS 6678), while in Eritrea, entry points have been identified through the project “Promoting Sustainable Land Management to Achieve LDN” (GEF ID 12080/UNDP PIMS 10304). Similarly, countries such as South Sudan, Libya, and Togo, which have ongoing or pipeline GEF projects related to SLM and LDN, are being considered for integration of relevant activities, in collaboration with UNDP. For Small Island Developing States (SIDS), scaling will be supported through close collaboration with the Blue and Green Islands Integrated Program and related initiatives. Participation in virtual LDN clinics has already created a basis for engagement with at least 15 SIDS, with particular opportunities identified in Seychelles, Comoros and the Federated States of Micronesia, while ensuring that approaches are adapted to the specific environmental, data and institutional contexts of island states.
Further scaling opportunities are being explored through partnerships such as with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), including in countries where SDC is operating such as Benin, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chad, Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Rwanda, Senegal, Somalia, South Sudan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Zimbabwe.

At the global level, scaling will also be facilitated through established mechanisms such as the UNEP/GEF Global Support Program (GSP) and the UNCCD reporting process, ensuring broad dissemination and uptake across Parties through ongoing joint training and learning opportunities.

Outcome 2.1: The participatory approach to LDN M&A, and decision making is championed in 10 pilot countries. Participatory M&A of LDN will be mainstreamed and institutionalized, with long-term capacities for LDN in key ministries in the selected pilot countries. Technical experts from government counterparts, Indigenous Peoples organizations, NGOs and CSOs representing women, youth and indigenous people as well as the private sector (aiming for 50% women) will be trained to gain capacity to support informed decision-making on LDN and SLM reporting and implementation to achieve SDG target 15.3. Long-term capacities for LDN will be institutionalized in key ministries, such as Environment, Agriculture, Forestry, etc.

Output 2.1.1: LDN Network of national and regional experts and institutions is established in 10 pilot countries and integrated into the WOCAT network (i.e. linked to AfriOCAT). Relevant national and regional institutions and experts will be selected from academia, NGOs, CSOs, Indigenous Peoples organizations, Regional Economic Commissions (RECs), etc. based in WOCAT's network and through surveys and consultations. This output is key to expanding LDN capacities beyond government institutions, to include stakeholders that are key for an inclusive LDN process using trialogues that bring together communities of science, policy and practice in a participatory and constructive dialogue involving members of NGOs, community organizations, private sector, unions and Indigenous Peoples groups to build a diverse set of evidence for decision making.

Output 2.1.2: Participatory process for LDN M&A and decision making, at national level mainstreamed in key sectors and agencies and institutionalized in 10 pilot countries. Participatory inter-sectoral workshops (Environment, Agriculture, Forestry, Water, Energy, Meteorological Office, etc.) using Trialogues (see above) will be organized at national level and a sustainable inter-sectoral mechanism for LDN M&A will be established in each pilot country to ensure harmonized collection, analysis and co-development of relevant LDN data and indicators, ensuring that participatory processes involving Indigenous Peoples organizations are conducted in a manner consistent with FPIC principles, as well as reporting following the FAO-WOCAT approach for the Participatory Assessment of LDN indicators and SDG indicator 15.3.1. Participants in the workshop will discuss and make the necessary decisions to select the best available land cover, LPD and SOC data, as well as the most appropriate algorithms to analyze these data sets, following UNCCD's PRAIS4 reporting manual guidelines and the GPG and GPG Addendum for SDG Indicator 15.3.1.

Outcome 2.2: Co-developed LDN-DSS in at least 10 pilot countries support evidence-based decision-making for LDN. Country-owned LDN-DSS will guide decision-making on the LDN response hierarchy in the selected pilot countries, indicated by the number of DSS and users from different sectors (Environment, Agriculture, Forestry, Water, Energy, etc.) disaggregated by gender. The LDN-DSSs will incorporate recent developments in the operationalization of counterbalancing, as reflected in the SDG 15.3.1 GPG Addendum. These contributions are critical for embedding LDN targets into national planning frameworks.

Output 2.2.1: National datasets identified, compiled, verified and interpreted for informed decision-making toward LDN. The project activities will focus on identifying, compiling, verifying, interpreting and developing national datasets for the three LDN indicators and other complementary indicators. These datasets will be crucial for implementing the principle of the Convergence of Evidence, ensuring that decision-making towards LDN is based on the best available information. The process will include a comprehensive analysis of national data sources relevant to identifying LDN hotspots, bright spots, and areas suitable for the implementation of SLM and restoration activities. Special attention will be given to the use of national data and to incorporate relevant indicators for the other Rio Conventions, such as the CBD and the UNFCCC. Examples of these complementary datasets include, but are not limited to:

- key biodiversity areas (KBA)
- precipitation trends
- SOC sequestration potential
- protected areas (PAs)
- fire recurrence data
- socio-economic indicators

Where relevant and available, spatial data reflecting Indigenous Peoples' lands and territories will be considered, in consultation with Indigenous Peoples organizations and in line with FPIC principles, to ensure respectful and context-appropriate use of such information. The integration of these datasets will allow for a more comprehensive understanding of LD and restoration potential, which will be included in the national LDN-DSS to target actions that align with national priorities and contribute towards achieving LDN. This will also help enhance national capacities to report on multiple conventions, leverage synergies and strengthen cross-sectoral collaboration for implementation of SLM.

Output 2.2.2: A preliminary workflow for identifying priority areas for avoiding, reducing, and reversing LD developed according to the LDN response hierarchy. This will enable countries to identify priority areas for action within the LDN response hierarchy: 1) avoiding LD, 2) reducing existing degradation, and 3) reversing degradation. The workflow will build upon the datasets compiled and interpreted in the previous output and will serve as a crucial input for the LDN-DSS and the development of national strategies, action plans, and the revision of national LDN targets.

Each country will propose a specific combination of indicators identified in Output 2.2.1. This workflow will allow them to map and categorize areas based on the LDN response hierarchy, prioritizing areas where action is most urgently needed and providing a basis to identify relevant SLM practices from the WOCAT SLM database. Countries will be able to create spatially explicit maps that guide decision-makers in implementing targeted actions. The workflow will provide key inputs for preparing national LDN strategies and action plans, helping countries to align their efforts with their commitments towards achieving LDN by 2030. It will also support the revision of national LDN targets, ensuring that they are evidence-based and responsive to the latest scientific data and policy priorities.

Output 2.2.3: LDN-DSS co-developed with national stakeholders for the 10 selected countries. This output focuses on the collaborative development of an LDN-DSS with national stakeholders, tailored to each country's specific needs and datasets. Participants, including experts and decision-makers, as well as representatives from Indigenous Peoples organizations, NGOs and CSOs will define the layers and functionalities to be included in the DSS, ensuring that the system is adaptable and responsive to local contexts.This may include, where appropriate and agreed, the integration or visualization of data related to Indigenous Peoples' lands and territories, ensuring that any such use is based on consent and aligned with FPIC principles. Key data layers such as national land cover datasets, soil types, and basin delineation will be integrated into the DSS. Additionally, functionalities such as the multi-criteria analysis toolbox and the land cover transitions toolbox will be customized to meet the needs of national stakeholders. The system will incorporate the results of participatory processes, including the mapping of LD and the estimation of SDG 15.3.1 (Outcome 2.1), which includes the three LDN sub-indicators as well as the final degradation map. Beyond the core LDN indicators, countries will have the flexibility to include additional national, regional, and global datasets relevant to their context. Examples of such datasets include maps of LD, soil properties, PAs, KBAs, precipitation trends, fire intensities, and SLM practices, identified in Output 2.2.1. This flexibility will ensure that the DSS is fully aligned with national priorities and supports the implementation of the principle of convergence of evidence for informed decision making in LDN.

The LDN-DSS will be designed to empower decision-makers by allowing them to easily compare results and obtain statistics across spatial scales and landscapes. This includes predefined spatial units such as countries,

provinces, cantons, basins, sub-basins, mapping units, and land-use systems. The system will also feature a multi-criteria module, enabling users to identify areas with specific characteristics to prioritize interventions that contribute to LDN goals. Additionally, the DSS will integrate maps reflecting the LDN response hierarchy (avoiding, reducing, and reversing LD), helping to guide strategic actions toward land restoration. Additionally, statistics to monitor counterbalancing of improved and degraded land within the same land-use class will be included, following the methodologies in the GPG 15.3.1 Addendum. The LDN-DSS will be interactive systems co-developed with national experts, stakeholders, and decision-makers, and it will be available in both the national language and English. The systems will leverage cloud computing and will be built as GEE applications. GEE is a platform for Earth science data and analysis, offering access to a vast catalogue of satellite imagery and public geospatial datasets, and enabling geospatial analyses using Google's cloud infrastructure. This includes the UN Biodiversity Lab, hosted by UNDP, and the Restoring Hope project that in partnership use spatial data to map essential life support areas for nature, climate, and sustainable development in countries around the world . The systems will include four key functionalities:

1. Visualization, comparison, and calculation of statistics for LD and additional indicators.
2. Multi-criteria analysis to prioritize intervention areas.
3. Land cover transitions analysis for tracking changes over time.
4. Participatory mapping to integrate locally sourced data and insights into the decision-making process.

This output will result in a highly functional, user-driven DSS that integrates national and global datasets, helping countries make informed decisions to achieve their LDN targets and implement evidence-based land management strategies. An example of a national DSS is provided in Figure 4 below. The LDN-DSS is innovative in its design and inherently scalable, as it leverages cloud-based platforms (e.g., Google Earth Engine) and integrates both global and national datasets, allowing it to be adapted and replicated across countries with different environmental, institutional and data contexts. Its modular structure and participatory co-development process ensure that it can respond to diverse regional needs while maintaining methodological consistency aligned with the SDG 15.3.1 Good Practice Guidance and its Addendum.

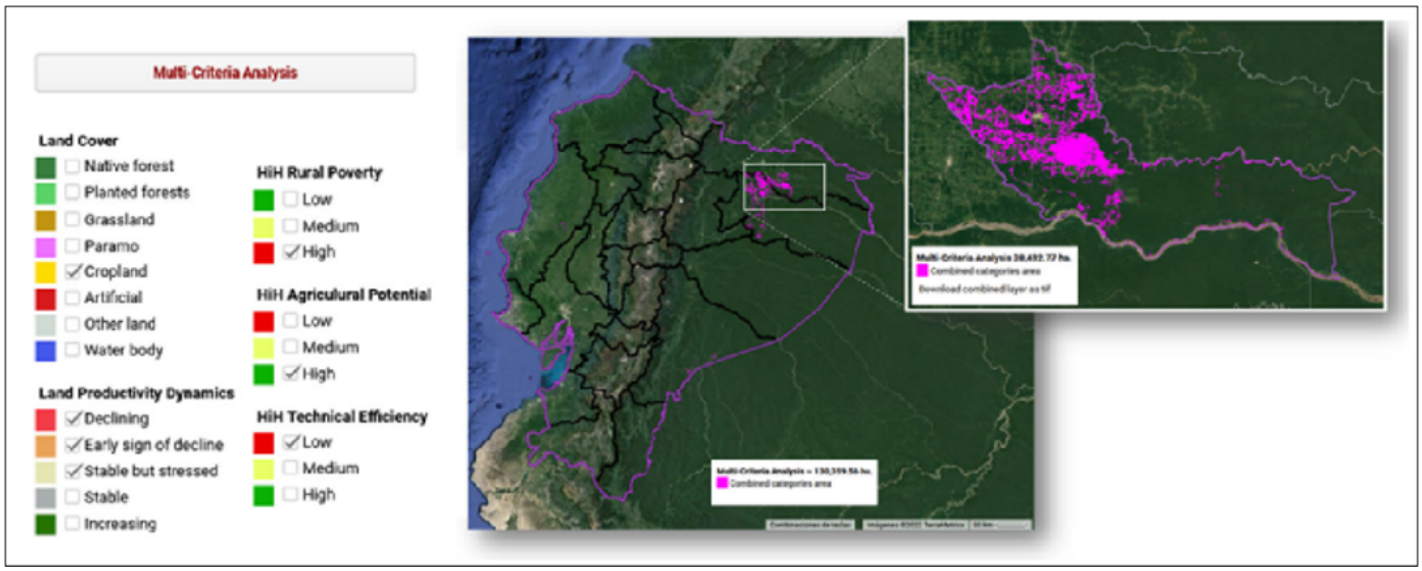


Figure 4. Results of a combination of 5 maps at national and subnational level using the multi-criteria toolbox of Ecuador LDN-DSS. Areas that meet the criteria selected (croplands with declining or stressed productivity, high rural poverty and high agricultural potential but low agricultural technical efficiency) in Ecuador and in Shushufindi Canton are shown in pink. Black and grey lines represent province and canton borders, respectively .

Output 2.2.4: Capacity building and training implemented for effective use and sustainability of the LDN-DSS. Two comprehensive training sessions will be conducted in each participating country:

Training 1: Using the LDN-DSS for LD Assessments and Participatory Planning. This training will focus on providing participants with the skills to use the LDN-DSS for baseline assessments, identifying priority areas, and supporting participatory planning processes. By understanding how to leverage the tool's functionalities, participants will be able to produce detailed analyses that inform national strategies for achieving LDN. Ideally this training will include a one day working session in the field to experience the use of the DSS in situ and the verification of outputs.

Training 2: Ensuring Sustainability of the LDN-DSS. This second training will focus on how to maintain and adapt the LDN-DSS over time to meet evolving national needs. Participants will learn how to continuously update and modify the LDN-DSS, ensuring that the tool remains an asset for decision-making in land management and restoration.

The training will be targeted toward national stakeholders from Government, academia, Indigenous Peoples organizations, NGOs and CSOs, as well as Regional Centers involved in land management and planning and the UNCCD reporting process. The audience will consist of participants who have already used the LDN-DSS and possess basic knowledge of GEE and remote sensing. These participants will be able to apply the knowledge gained to enhance their roles in supporting national LDN targets and related sustainability objectives. By providing this training, the project will ensure that national teams are equipped not only to use the DSS for immediate project goals but also to maintain and expand its capabilities in the future. This output will contribute to the long-term integration of LDN targets into national decision-making and monitoring processes, enhancing the overall sustainability of land management efforts across participating countries.

Component 3: South-South cooperation and learning fosters increased capacity to implement and institutionalize the participatory approach to LDN M&A, and decision making. This component will support the scaling of the participatory LDN approach and DSS to 10 new countries beyond the project pilot countries, contributing towards the growing number of UNCCD country Parties that assess, monitor, report plan and implement SLM measures to achieve LDN according to the LDN response hierarchy. By bringing countries together, this component not only enhances the relevance and applicability of the knowledge products for enhanced reporting developed and tested through the project but also ensures that these are further improved based on real-world feedback and collaboration. Moreover, SSC will support the co-creation of approaches for reporting that are rooted in diverse regional contexts, improving the collective ability to report more effectively to the UNCCD. These joint efforts will be shared and highlighted in global platforms and events such as CRICs and COPs, giving visibility to countries' collaborative actions to strengthen their national LDN monitoring and reporting systems, while also contributing to the overall goal of enhanced implementation of the UNCCD.

Outcome 3.1: Enhanced regional and global collaboration on capacity development, knowledge exchange, and scaling of the WOCAT Participatory Approach for LDN M&A. The enhanced SSC will support scaling of the LDN-DSS with focus on the selected pilot countries through exchange workshops, webinars and wide dissemination of knowledge products on LDN M&A, reporting and decision support to a wide range of countries.

Output 3.1.1: Regional and thematic South-South exchange workshops and learning events organized. A series of two regional and thematic workshops and learning events (online and in-person) will be organized to facilitate knowledge exchange on challenges and common needs to effectively make evidence-based decisions to achieve LDN. The national stakeholders will present lessons learned, highlighting both successes and limitations encountered during the implementation of participatory LDN assessments and the development of DSS. A publication on lessons learned and recommendations for hyper-arid areas as well as SIDS will be

produced. These insights will be used to achieve results on a larger scale, tailored to specific themes and challenges. The SSC workshops will aim to:

- facilitate knowledge exchange among stakeholders and GEF projects
- raise awareness about LDN in the regions
- discuss ways to enhance and amplify the impact of actions toward achieving LDN
- strengthen coordination between GEF projects and national LDN processes
- identify common challenges in monitoring progress towards LDN

Output 3.1.2: Demand-driven learning opportunities on the participatory approach to LDN decision making packaged with other LDN projects and initiatives through cost-sharing and organization of global and regional events back-to-back with UNCCD CRICs and COPs as relevant (in collaboration with WOCAT Consortium Partners, OSS, UNDP, CI, CBD and others). An assessment of existing demands and needs will be carried out and validated with the participating countries through regional events through cost sharing and co-financing from ineligible countries (e.g., Saudi Arabia). This will guide global actions by data suppliers, UNCCD and organizations like FAO, and inform the further development of their strategies and contribute to the planning and implementation of the GEF-9 cycle.

Output 3.1.3: Collaborative platforms and networks for SSC strengthened, including women's networks (e.g. Women+ in Geospatial), to support ongoing knowledge exchange and collaboration on LDN-DSS among participating countries and new countries who would like to join. These platforms will serve as a mechanism for sharing experiences, best practices, and technical solutions in LDN and SLM implementation. They will also facilitate continued exchanges beyond the project lifecycle through integration using different communication tools and channels, such as social media, blogs, short video statements from participants, presentations and recordings on different forums such as LinkedIn groups.

Component 4: Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). The M&E component will support results-based adaptive management in line with GEF and UNDP policies and also monitor the implementation of the project's Gender Action Plan and contribution to the overall UNCCD Gender Action Plan.

Outcome 4.1: M&E assesses project impacts and guides adaptive management. The following outputs will ensure that project targets are met and results are satisfactory:

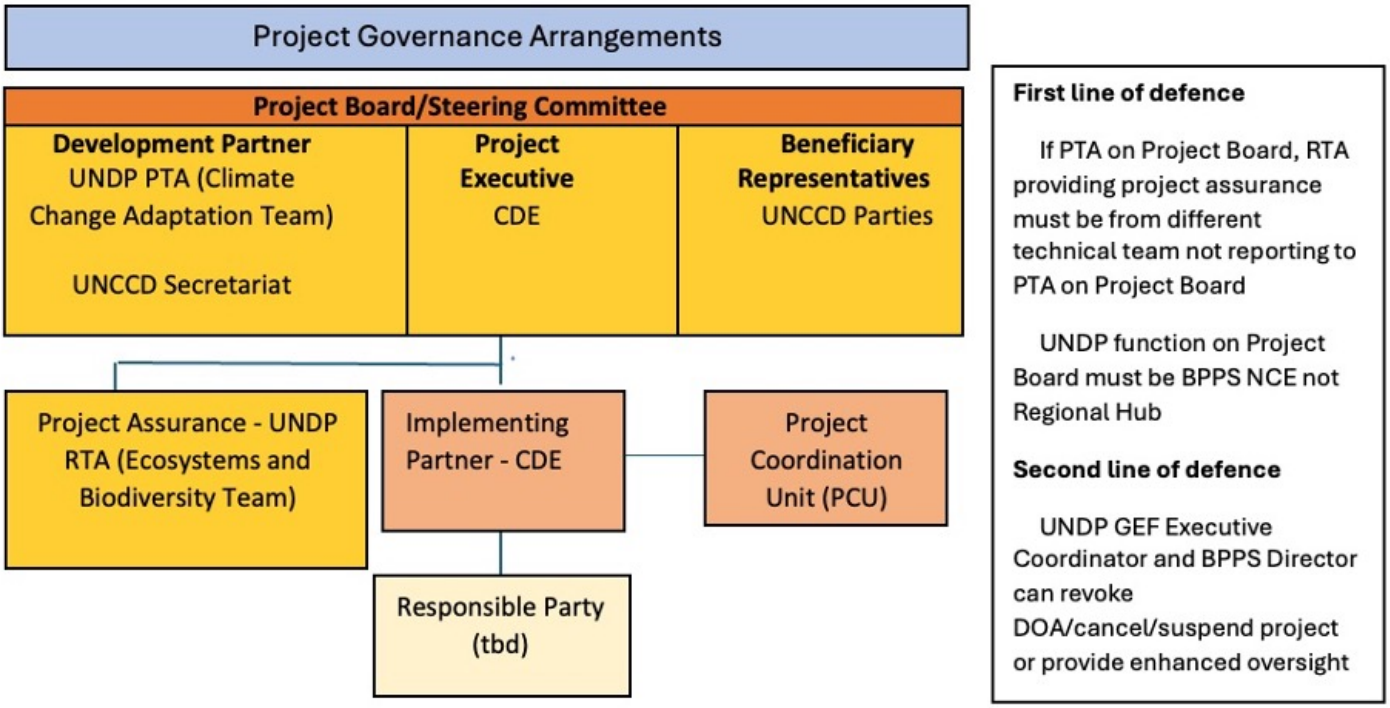
4.1.1 Monitoring, evaluation and reporting plan implemented
4.1.2 Gender Action Plan implemented and customized to each pilot country and gender targets aggregated and linked to the UNCCD Gender Action Plan reporting
4.1.3 Project Terminal Evaluation conducted

Components 1 and 2 of the project will strengthen the capacity of 10 UNCCD country Parties to implement the Convention and report on LDN targets. Component 3 will support wider dissemination and uptake of the participatory approach to LDN M&A and DSS among at least 10 new countries with specific LDN challenges. The project has the potential to have a transformative impact on countries' abilities to monitor and assess LDN and on UNCCD reporting, which will facilitate evidence-based decision making and prioritization of SLM interventions to avoid, reduce or reverse LD.

Institutional Arrangement and Coordination with Ongoing Initiatives and Project.

Please describe the Institutional Arrangements for the execution of this project, including financial management and procurement. If possible, please summarize the flow of funds (diagram), accountabilities for project management and financial reporting (organogram), including audit, and staffing plans. (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

Institutional Arrangement and Coordination with Ongoing Initiatives and Project.
The project will be executed by the Center for Development and Environment (CDE) at the University of Bern, Switzerland, that hosts the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT), a global CSO Network launched in 1992 that shares the project's aim to document, share, and apply SLM knowledge. The Project will be governed by a multi-stakeholder steering committee established to review performance based on M&E, and implementation issues to ensure quality delivery of results. The steering committee will ensure coordination between various donor projects and programs related to LDN and include UNDP, CDE, and UNCCD, as shown in Figure 5 below.



UNDP BPPS Nature Hub assumes full responsibility and accountability for oversight and quality assurance of this Project and ensures its timely implementation in compliance with the GEF-specific requirements and UNDP's Program and Operations Policies and Procedures (POPP), its Financial Regulations and Rules and Internal Control Framework. A UNDP BPPS Nature Hub representative will assume the assurance role and will present assurance findings to the Project Board, and therefore attends Project Board meetings as a non-voting member.
The project will also engage with the WOCAT Regional Clusters that are official representatives of WOCAT in a number of regions. The Clusters act as catalysts for mainstreaming SLM and LDN in strategic agendas and for enhancing capacities, through SSC, with other Clusters and partners, in implementing and scaling up SLM.

Will the GEF Agency play an execution role on this project?

If so, please describe that role here and the justification.

UNDP's role in this project will be limited to the GEF Agency role of oversight and quality assurance, covered by the GEF fee.

Also, please add a short explanation to describe cooperation with ongoing initiatives and projects, including potential for co-location and/or sharing of expertise/staffing (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

Coordination and synergies will be ensured with the second phase of the LDN Target Setting Program (LDN TSP 2.0) and support its scaling up to a larger number of countries. Synergies will also be sought with the GEF funded project on Strengthening Civil Society Role in Achieving Land Degradation Neutrality , the CI/GEF project on Enhancing Data and Analytical Capacity to support UNCCD Country Parties in National Reporting, and the GEF Support to the 2026 UNCCD National Reporting Process - Umbrella I, implemented by UNEP , as well as ongoing initiatives under GEF-8 Integrated Programs (such as Blue and Green Islands IP, Food Systems IP, Ecosystem Restoration IP), and other relevant initiatives (like the National Ecosystem Assessments supported through the BES-Net Initiative) in participating countries. UNDP's Restoring Hope project will also be leveraged to contribute to the learning and facilitate access to additional earth observation data hosted through the UN Biodiversity Lab . As part of in-kind co-financing from UNDP, the UNDP Learning for Nature platform could also host an online course/s developed under this project to expand access to a wider audience.

In the 10 selected pilot countries, ongoing relevant GEF-financed and non-GEF projects implemented by UNDP will be leveraged to contribute to the outcomes of this project through knowledge exchange and sharing of data and lessons learnt with the country-level activities under this project. Where possible, UNDP-supported projects at the country level may integrate and support scaling up of lessons from this project. UNDP and non-UNDP GEF projects under implementation at country-level of relevance include:

Country	Relevant ongoing projects with expected synergies
Belize	• Integrated management of production landscapes to deliver multiple global environmental benefits - UNDP/GEF (#9796) • CSIDS SOILCARE Phase 2 - Caribbean Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) multi-country soil management initiative for integrated Landscape Restoration and climate-resilient food systems – FAO/GEF (#11390), also part of the Blue and Green Islands IP.
Cambodia	• BES-Net – UNDP & IPBES • Building Resilience of Cambodian Communities Using Natural Infrastructure and Promoting Diversified Livelihood – UNEP/GEF (#9927) • Integrated Natural Resource Management (INRM) in the Productive, Natural and Forested Landscape of Northern Region of Cambodia – UNDP/GEF (#97819 • Sustainable Management of Peatland Ecosystems in Mekong Countries – IUCN/GEF (#9232)
Chad	• RESILAND: Restoring Degraded Land and Strengthening Resilience – WB/GEF (#11744) • Strengthening the resilience of smallholder farmers and ecosystems to the effects of climate change (STRADAP) – IFAD/GEF (#11550) • Promoting Integrated Natural Resources Management in Support of GGW in Chad (PINAMAC) – UNEP/GEF (#11459)
Egypt	• Sustainable Management of Kharga Oasis Agro-Ecosystems in the Egyptian Western Desert – FAO/GEF (#9928)

	• Mainstreaming the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity into Tourism Development and Operations in Threatened Ecosystems in Egypt – UNEP/GEF (#5073)
Lesotho	• Regeneration of Livelihoods and Landscapes (ROLL) Project – IFAD/GEF (#10723) • Integrated Watershed Management for Improved Agro-pastoral Livelihoods in the Sepabala Sub-catchment – UNDP/GEF (#10020)
Liberia	• Promoting Sustainable land management for the achievement of Land Degradation Neutrality for Improved Equity, Sustainability, and Resilience in Rice Landscapes of Liberia – FAO/GEF (#11720) • Strengthening agricultural resilience through transformational livelihood adaptation in Liberia (SARTLA) – UNDP/GEF (#11447)
Madagascar	• Madagascar Science-based management of Biodiversity and Natural Resources for Economic Development Project – WB/GEF (#11694) • Evaluation of Natural Capital to Support Land Use Planning, Improved management effectiveness of Terrestrial Protected Areas, deployment of SLM practices and Creation of Eco-Villages in Central Madagascar – UNEP/GEF (#10389) • Sustainable Agriculture Landscape Project – WB/GEF (#9330)
Palau	• GEF Support to the 2026 UNCCD National Reporting Process - Umbrella II (#11909) • Scaling up biodiversity-positive and culturally inclusive agrifood and agritourism systems in Palau (#11583) • Transforming productivity in Palau's food systems through nature positive innovations (#11258) that is also part of the GEF-8 Blue and Green Islands IP
Sri Lanka	• Healthy Landscapes: Managing Agricultural Landscapes in Socio-ecologically Sensitive Areas to Promote Food Security, Well-being and Ecosystem Health – UNEP/GEF (#9409) • Managing Together: Integrating Community-centered, Ecosystem-based Approaches into Forestry, Agriculture and Tourism Sectors – UNDP/GEF (#9372) • Addressing tenure governance and gender equality in land rights to strengthen LDN initiatives - FAO/GEF 11501 • LDN Target Setting Programme 2.0 • Integrating Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) into land use planning frameworks to strengthen national UNCCD enabling environments IUCN/ GEF (#10909)
Turkmenistan	• Coordinated approach for Land Restoration in Vulnerable Ecosystems of Central Asia – FAO/GEF (#11379) • Catalyzing the Nature-Positive Transformation of the Agricultural Sector in Turkmenistan towards Enhanced Resilience to Climate Change project – FAO/GEF (#11384) • Conservation and Sustainable Management of Land Resources and High Nature Value Ecosystems in the Aral Sea Basin for Multiple Benefits – UNDP/GEF (#10352)

UNDP is also supporting the GEF-financed global project for review and update of NBSAPs which includes 69 countries, and another initiative supporting over 100 countries to update their NDCs. Linkages between those initiatives and this project will be crucial for ensuring that government institutions leading these processes ensure synergies in these Rio Convention processes in recognition of the importance of the targets under each Rio Convention targets for the achievement of others.

The IUCN/GEF project on Strengthening Civil Society's Role in Achieving Land Degradation Neutrality is addressing the lack of understanding of LDN amongst many who are not directly involved in the UNCCD, including policy makers, politicians, public servants, local authorities and CSOs, and within the wider community. All products under Component 1 of the current project are also relevant for CSOs and can be utilized by them to support LDN related activities. Collaboration with the executing agencies, Drynet and Both Ends, will be put in place for dissemination and outreach as well as integration of the products in existing platforms. CSOs in the pilot countries will also be encouraged to be involved in the LDN-DSS process under Component 2, and to exchange experiences under Component 3. Collaboration with the above-mentioned CI/GEF project will focus on analysis of high-resolution images using the FAO-WOCAT LPD algorithm in Trends.Earth, addressing data needs to support national reporting by organizing joint participatory workshops. CDE will also contribute to dissemination of results of the CI/GEF project as part of its support to SSC.

The UNDP-led GEF-8 Blue and Green Islands (BGI) IP seeks to facilitate nature-positive development and reduce ecosystem degradation in SIDS by valuing nature and applying nature-based solutions with specific application to the food, tourism, and urban sectors. The program offers a holistic approach to achieve global environmental benefits, sustainable development, and climate resilience in SIDS, including achieving LDN by 2030. UNDP will ensure that lessons learned from Belize and Palau on participatory LDN M&A and decision making are shared across the BGI with Pacific, Caribbean and African SIDS.

The potential for scaling this project and its outcomes is significant, as the project strategy and proposed interventions are of relevance to all UNCCD parties. Many countries could benefit from more systematic access to methodological guidance and knowledge on land degradation, especially to produce and use relevant geospatial data which is central to LDN implementation to identify gains and losses of productive land. LDN targets and their implementation have the potential to transform landscape level action for addressing land and ecosystem degradation for multiple benefits, in alignment with countries' priority targets under other multilateral environmental agreements, especially the other two Rio Conventions - CBD and UNFCCC - where there are many overlaps and synergies could be gained. Many countries still pursue these processes in isolation, but there are examples of cases where countries have realized the benefits of a coherent approach to setting Rio Convention targets and designing and implementing landscape interventions to jointly address biodiversity loss, climate change, land degradation under the MEAs, alongside livelihood, economic and other development outcomes. This project could play a key role in strengthening the capacity of planning institutions to streamline and synergize policy, decision-making and planning processes and reduce fragmentation and siloed approaches to addressing key environmental challenges at national and landscape levels. This in turn could support the development of clear and measurable commitments, facilitate joint implementation and smart and efficient investments and align financial flows with key priorities across many policy streams.

Core Indicators

Indicate expected results in each relevant indicator using methodologies indicated in the GEF-8 Results Measurement Framework Guidelines. There is no need to complete this table for climate adaptation projects financed solely through LDCF and SCCF.

Indicator 11 People benefiting from GEF-financed investments

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Female	2,250	2,250		
Male	2,250	2,250		
Total	**4,500**	**4,500**	0	**0**

Explain the methodological approach and underlying logic to justify target levels for Core and Sub-Indicators (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

This is a knowledge management and capacity development project that will contribute towards the achievement of LDN in UNCCD country Parties and effective implementation of SLM. It will contribute to core indicator 11 on People benefitting from GEF-financed investments disaggregated by gender. In component 2, the project will reach 500 direct beneficiaries comprising 50 individuals (50% women) each from the 10 pilot countries that will participate in training workshops organized by the project representing different government sectors important for LDN as well as NGOs, CSOs and the private sector with a future role in implementing SLM response options. A capacity assessment using the Capacity Scorecard will be done at both project start and end, targeting project stakeholders disaggregated by gender and functional role in LDN M&A, reporting and decision making. This will be complemented by questionnaire surveys and interviews with project beneficiaries during project implementation in the 10 selected pilot countries.

Additionally, in Component 1, the project has 3,000 indirect beneficiaries comprising the 3,000 registered users of WOCAT using the best practices database and other online tools. In Component 3, the scaling of the DSS to new countries through outreach of the capacity building package through the exchange mechanisms established by the project will indirectly reach many more individuals and organizations, indirectly benefiting at least 10 new countries and 1,000 individuals. Moreover, the project is designed to develop capacities within institutions at regional level, which increases the long-term impact and number of UNCCD parties that will benefit from the project's online tools. The scaling of the LDN DSS will be assessed through surveys and interviews at UNCCD CRICs and COPs.

Key Risks

	Rating	Explanation of risk and mitigation measures
CONTEXT		
Climate	Low	Climate change does not pose a risk to this knowledge-based and capacity strengthening project. The project will enhance the capacity of UNCCD country Parties to assess, monitor, plan and implement measures to achieve LDN according to the LDN response hierarchy thereby reducing the risk for adverse climate change impacts on land resources.
Environmental and Social	Low	This risk is low, as the project will not undertake direct field activities, but will develop a DSS that will integrate environmental and socio-economic indicators to inform decision-making about SLM. This will reduce the risk of negative

		environmental and social impacts when implementing SLM. As a capacity building project, it will contribute positively to social and environmental safeguards by strengthening rights holders' and duty bearers' capacities for environmental stewardship and decision-making towards improved outcomes.
Political and Governance	Low	This risk has been minimized by pre-assessment of countries interested in participating in the project and their existing policy and institutional enabling environment and political commitment to achieve LDN and SDG 15.3. By design, the project will contribute to stronger and more informed decision-making on management of land and for addressing degradation, which can contribute to stronger natural resources governance outcomes.
INNOVATION		
Institutional and Policy	Low	The project will develop novel LDN mapping and decision-making systems for cross-sectoral implementation of SLM. Pilot countries have been selected based on having a conducive enabling environment for LDN monitoring. For participating and beneficiary countries, it is expected that institutional capacities will be strengthened for policy-making and management to achieve LDN.
Technological	Low	The project will develop solutions that will improve countries' access to geospatial information for monitoring LDN through new applications. Pilot countries have been selected based on an adequate technical baseline.
Financial and Business Model		Not relevant for this knowledge management project.
EXECUTION		
Capacity	Low	CDE, the executing agency, has implemented a large number of projects on LD and SLM over the last 30 years, including with UN agencies.
Fiduciary	Low	Execution of project funds will be in line with rules and procedures of the University of Bern, CDE, and in compliance with UNDP Financial Rules and Regulations and those of the GEF.
Stakeholder	Low	International and regional stakeholders of the UNCCD and WOCAT were consulted during project preparation. Participating countries have been selected based on expressions of interest addressing the participation and inclusion aspects of LDN and how inclusion of local communities, women, youth and Indigenous People will be ensured in co-creation of LDN knowledge and in downstream LDN practice. The development of the LDN-DSS during project implementation is designed to be highly participatory.
Other		
Overall Risk Rating	Low	The overall risk is rated as low, as all risk categories were rated as low, as explained above.

C. ALIGNMENT WITH GEF-8 PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES AND COUNTRY/REGIONAL PRIORITIES

Explain how the proposed interventions are aligned with GEF- 8 programming strategies and country and regional priorities, including how these country strategies and plans relate to the multilateral environmental agreements.

For projects aiming to generate biodiversity benefits (regardless of what the source of the resources is - i.e., BD, CC or LD), please identify which of the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework the project contributes to and explain how.

Confirm if any country policies that might contradict with intended outcomes of the project have been identified, and how the project will address this. (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

This global project aligns with GEF-8 LD Objective 4 to Improve enabling policy and institutional framework for LDN and the Focal Area set aside objectives for global and regional projects to promote cross-cutting thematic issues such as innovation, land tenure, gender mainstreaming, capacity building, and knowledge exchange in context of the LDFA strategic objectives. It will support scaling of the capacity of UNCCD Parties for inclusive decision support in LDN through development of country-based participatory and inclusive LDN M&A, reporting and decision support systems linked to the WOCAT database. This will enable countries to better integrate LDN into existing national planning and monitoring frameworks across relevant sectors and governance levels. The project will also contribute to the consolidation of actionable knowledge by integrating LDN learning materials into existing portals and websites at global, regional and national levels. In addition, it will contribute to knowledge sharing and south-south learning on LDN that will inform downstream LDN practice.
The project responds to the UNCCD Decision 20/COP.15: The Conference of the Parties [...] requests the secretariat, the Global Mechanism and the Science-Policy Interface and invites the designated World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies Database, as well as other relevant agencies/bodies of multilateral environmental agreements, acting within their respective mandates, subject to the availability of resources, to explore options for targeted capacity-building and development and knowledge and technology transfer to support approaches to the implementation of the Convention [...].
and
UNCCD Decision 9/COP.15, paragraph 5: Recommends the Global Environment Facility to promote, as appropriate, the use of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification-designated World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies database into the Global Environment Facility projects and programmes to support knowledge-sharing and the dissemination of sustainable land management best practices

In addition, the project contributes to: UNCCD decision 8/COP.15: 'invites Parties to explore ways to integrate satellite data information into their capacity development efforts and data analytic tools for evidence-based decision-making to support land degradation neutrality implementation through integrated land use planning informed, as appropriate, by the Group on Earth Observations Land Degradation Neutrality Initiative and its partners and other relevant stakeholders', and ; UNCCD decision 12/COP.15: 'Requests the Global Mechanism and the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, within their respective mandates and subject to the availability of financial resources, and in collaboration with relevant financial and technical partners in a position to do so, to: Further develop training and capacity-building support at both national and regional level, particularly related to (i) land degradation neutrality assessment, data collection, monitoring and national reporting; and (ii) the development of national land degradation neutrality monitoring and decision-support systems that use the best available data, building on relevant existing platforms and initiatives such as Trends.Earth, the performance review and assessment of implementation system and the Group on Earth Observations Land Degradation Neutrality Initiative'.

The project is aligned with the UNCCD National Action Plans (NAPs) of the 10 selected pilot countries, Belize, Cambodia, Chad, Egypt, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Palau, Sri Lanka and Turkmenistan as well as key national and sectoral policy frameworks (see Annex 8: Stakeholder Engagement Plan in UNDP ProDoc), and will strengthen their capacity to monitor, assess and report on LDN and take informed decisions about SLM implementation at national level.

D. POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

We confirm that gender dimensions relevant to the project have been addressed during Project Preparation as per GEF Policy and are clearly articulated in the Project Description (Section B).

Yes

1) Does the project expect to include any gender-responsive-measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women's empowerment?

Yes

If the project expects to include any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women empowerment, please indicate in which results area(s) the project is expected to contribute to gender equality:

Closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources;

Improving women's participation and decision-making; and/or

Yes

Generating socio-economic benefits or services for women.

2) Does the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators?

Yes

Stakeholder Engagement

We confirm that key stakeholders were consulted during Project Preparation as required per GEF policy, their relevant roles to project outcomes has been clearly articulated in the Project Description (Section B) and that a Stakeholder Engagement Plan has been developed before CEO endorsement.

Yes

Select what role civil society will play in the Project

Consulted only;

Member of Advisory Body; Contractor;

Co-financier; Yes

Member of project steering committee or equivalent decision-making body ; Yes

Executor or co-executor; Yes

Other (Please explain)

Private Sector

Will there be private sector engagement in the project?

Yes

And if so, has its role been described and justified in section B project description?

Yes

Environmental and Social Safeguards

We confirm that we have provided information regarding Environmental and Social risks associated with the proposed project or program, including risk screenings/ assessments and, if applicable, management plans or other measures to address identified risks and impacts (this information should be presented in Annex E).

Yes

Please provide overall Project/Program Risk Classification

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
Low	Low		

E. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Knowledge management

We confirm that an approach to Knowledge Management and Learning has been clearly described during Project Preparation in the Project Description and that these activities have been budgeted and an anticipated timeline for delivery of relevant outputs has been provided.

Yes

Socio-economic Benefits

We confirm that the project design has considered socio-economic benefits to be delivered by the project and these have been clearly described in the Project Description and will be monitored and reported on during project implementation (at MTR and TER).

Socio-economic benefit will be indirect and accrue from better targeted SLM investments based on improved mapping of land degradation and LDN at national level in the 10 selected pilot countries. It is therefore essential to include representatives from CSOs, women and other disadvantaged groups in the co-production of knowledge and development of maps to support SLM implementation to achieve LDN targets. This has been provided for in the participatory and inclusive design of the project and elaborated on in the stakeholder engagement plan and Gender Action Plan.

ANNEX A: FINANCING TABLES

GEF Financing Table

Trust Fund Resources Requested by Agency(ies), Country(ies), Focal Area and the Programming of Funds

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Grant / Non-Grant	GEF Project Grant($)	Agency Fee($)	Total GEF Financing ($)
UNDP	GET	Global	Land Degradation	LD Global/Regional Set-Aside	Grant	2,000,000.00	190,000.00	2,190,000.00
Total GEF Resources ($)						**2,000,000.00**	**190,000.00**	**2,190,000.00**

Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

Was a Project Preparation Grant requested?

true

PPG Amount ($)

49850

PPG Agency Fee ($)

4736

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	PPG($)	Agency Fee($)	Total PPG Funding($)
UNDP	GET	Global	Land Degradation	LD Global/Regional Set-Aside	49,850.00	4,736.00	54,586.00
Total PPG Amount ($)					**49,850.00**	**4,736.00**	**54,586.00**

Please provide Justification

Sources of Funds for Country Star Allocation

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Sources of Funds	Total($)
Total GEF Resources					**0.00**

Focal Area Elements

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing($)	Co-financing($)
LD-4	GET	2,000,000.00	245000
Total Project Cost		**2,000,000.00**	**245,000.00**

Confirmed Co-financing for the project, by name and type

Please include evidence for each co-financing source for this project in the tab of the portal

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount($)
GEF Agency	UNDP	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	45000
Civil Society Organization	CDE	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	200000
Total Co-financing				**245,000.00**

Please describe the investment mobilized portion of the co-financing

N/A

ANNEX B: ENDORSEMENTS

GEF Agency(ies) Certification

GEF Agency Type	Date	Project Contact Person	Phone	Email
GEF Agency Coordinator	1/30/2026	Nancy Bennet		nancy.bennet@undp.org
Project Coordinator	1/30/2026	Goetz Schroth		goetz.scroth@undp.org

Record of Endorsement of GEF Operational Focal Point (s) on Behalf of the Government(s):

Please attach the Operational Focal Point endorsement letter(s) with this template.

Name of GEF OFP	Position	Ministry	Date (MM/DD/YYYY)

Milagro Matus	CEO & GEF Operational Focal Point for the Government of Belize	Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change & Solid Waste Management	11/20/2025
San Vanty	Operational Focal Point Secretary of State, Kingdom of Cambodia	Ministry of Environment, Kingdom of Cambodia	12/5/2025
Oumar Gadji Soumaila	GEF Operational Focal Point / General Director of the Environmental Special Fund, Republic of Chad	Ministry of Environment, Fisheries and Sustainable Development, Republic of Chad	10/1/2025
Qongqong Hoohlo	GEF Operational Focal Point, Lesotho	Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Lesotho	10/23/2025
Eng. Ali Abo Sena	Operational Focal Point Chief Executive Officer Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency	Ministry of Environment, Arab Republic of Egypt	10/1/2025
Dr. Hery Andriamirado Rakotondravony	Operational Focal Point, Madagascar	Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, Madagascar	11/5/2025
Dr. Emmanuel King Urey Yarkpawolo	Operational Focal Point Executive Director/ CEO	Environmental Protection Agency of Liberia (EPA)	9/30/2025
Mr. Nury Jumashov	Operational Focal Point Deputy Minister	Ministry of Environmental Protection of Turkmenistan	11/19/2025
Mr. K. R. Uduwawala	Operational Focal Point Secretary	Ministry of Environment of Sri Lanka	12/2/2025
Ms. Lincy Marino	GEF Operational Focal point, GEF 7 Project Manager	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Environment, Palau	1/2/2026
Dr. Hery Andriamirado Rakotondravony	GEF Operational Focal point	Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development,	11/5/2025

ANNEX C: PROJECT RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Please indicate the page number in the Project Document where the project results and M&E frameworks can be found. Please also paste below the Project Results Framework from the Agency document.

Contribution to the Sustainable Development Goal (s): *SDG 15.3*
Intended Outcome as stated in the UNSDCF Programme Results and Resource Framework: Strengthen capacities to ensure sustainable land and water management practices are adopted and maintained, thereby protecting ecosystems, enhance food security and promote resilient livelihoods.

Applicable Output(s) from the UNDP Strategic Plan: *4.1 - Natural resources protected and managed to enhance sustainable productivity and livelihoods*						
Project title and Quantum Project Number: Scaling the capacity of UNCCD Parties on LDN through inclusive decision support in Land Degradation Neutrality						
Objective and Outcome Indicators **(no more than a total of 20 indicators)**	**Data Source**	**Baseline**	**Mid-term Target**	**End of Project Target**	**Data Collection Methods**	**Risks/ Assumptions**
Project Objective: ***1-4 indicators maximum***	To strengthen the capacity of UNCCD Country Parties on LDN through inclusive decision support					
Mandatory Indicator 1: # direct project beneficiaries disaggregated by gender, age and IP&LC groups (individual people) a) Number of technical experts from government counterparts, NGOs and CSOs (50% women) with capacity to support informed decision-making on LDN and SLM implementation to achieve SDG 15.3.1 b) Long-term capacities for LDN institutionalized in key ministries (Environment, Agriculture, Forestry, etc.) in 10 pilot countries Measured through Capacity Scorecard Rating: 0 – Non-existent 1 – Low 2 – Low-Medium 3 – Medium	WOCAT database	0	a) 5 countries * 50 individuals =250 (125 women and 125 men) with medium to high capacity in LDN M&A b) 2 sectors with medium to medium high capacity in LDN M&A and DSS per country	a) 10*50 =500 (250 women and 250 men) with medium high to high capacity in LDN M&A b) 3 sectors with medium high to high capacity in LDN M&A and DSS per country	Capacity assessment using the Capacity Scorecard. This will be complemented by questionnaire surveys and interviews with project beneficiaries during project implementation and TE.	*Technical knowledge on LD and its impact is readily available, can be consolidated and shared by key sectors and stakeholders within and among countries* *There is interest from policy makers in supporting the establishment of LDN decision support systems and use them in decision-making on SLM implementation at national level*

	4 – Medium-high 5 – High						
	Mandatory GEF Core Indicators: *Core Indicator 11: People benefiting from GEF-financed investments disaggregated by gender, age and IP&LC groups (count)* Number of Individuals trained on LDN M&A: a) Direct beneficiaries: Government counterparts, NGOs and CSOs in pilot countries participating in global, national and regional forums and workshops (total number of participants; % female) virtual or otherwise b) Indirect beneficiaries: Government counterparts, NGOs and CSOs in non-pilot countries accessing online training material through LDN exchange mechanisms and participating in global and regional training events c) Inclusive, national participatory LDN Decision Support Systems established in	*WOCAT database*	*a) 0* *b) 0*	a) 5 countries * 50 individuals= 250 (125 women and 125 men) with medium high capacity in LDN M&A *b) 250 (125 women and 125 men) with medium capacity in LDN M&A*	a) 10*50= 500 (250 women and 250 men) with medium high to high capacity in LDN M&A *b) 500 (250 women and250 men) with medium high capacity in LDN M&A*	a) Capacity assessment using the Capacity Scorecard. This will be complemented by questionnaire surveys and interviews with project beneficiaries during project implementation and TE. *b) Indirect beneficiaries will be assessed through surveys and interviews with country parties at UNCCD CRICs and COPs*	*Technical knowledge on land degradation and its impact is readily available, can be consolidated and shared by key sectors and stakeholders within and among countries* *There is interest from policy makers in supporting the establishment of LDN decision support systems and use them in decision-making on SLM implementation*

	pilot countries (number)		*c) 0 countries*	*c) 5 countries*	*c) 10 countries*		
Project Component 1	*Knowledge management for improved evidence-based LDN decision making and strengthened reporting on SDG indicator 15.3.1*						
Project Outcome[1] 1.1 Enhanced knowledge and understanding of UNCCD parties of participatory M&A and decision making on LDN	*Indicator 2: project specific* a) Number of knowledge products on participatory LDN M&A, decision making, and lessons learned with at least one focusing on advancing gender equality and women's/gender experts' engagement (written and audio-visual training material, tutorials and guidelines in UN languages) b) Distance learning (number of courses in different UN languages and users)	*a) WOCAT database* *b) FAO E-learning Academy*	*a) 0* *b) 0*	*a) 5* *b) 1 course in 3 UN languages used by 500 people (50% women)*	*a) 10* *b) 2 courses in 3 UN languages used by 1,000 people (50% women)*	*Review of documents uploaded on WOCAT database* *Number of people accessing and completing the E-learning course registered in the FAO E-learning Academy disaggregated by gender age and IP&LC groups*	
Outputs to achieve Outcome 1.1	1.1.1 Lessons learned on LDN participatory approach to M&A and decision making consolidated with countries and partners in knowledge products 1.1.2 Capacity building package on participatory approach for LDN M&A and decision making co-designed with end users in collaboration with countries and partners 1.1.3 E-learning course co-designed with partners based on Education for Sustainable Development approaches						
Outcome 1. 2 Exchange mechanisms, dissemination and outreach of the capacity	*Indicator 3: project specific* LDN M&A Learning materials used by UNCCD Parties	*WOCAT database* *UNCCD*	*0*	*500 (50% women)*	*1,000 (50% women)*	*Number of hits in WOCAT database* *Surveys at UNCCD CRIC*	

building package supports strengthened monitoring of SDG indicator 15.3.1	with different LD challenges) with number of users disaggregated by sex						
Outputs to achieve Outcome 1. 2	1.2.1 Learning materials on the participatory approach to LDN M&A and decision making integrated in existing portals and websites at global (e.g., WOCAT, UNDP, UNCCD Learning for Nature, PANORAMA, GEO-LDN, G20 GLI, GEF, FAO e-learning Academy), regional (e.g., GGW, AUDA-NEPAD, OSS) and national levels. 1.2.2 Dissemination and outreach campaign launched with global, regional and national UNCCD partners, promoting the availability and use of the LDN decision support learning materials						
Project Component 2	*Enhanced capacity for an upscaled national participatory approach supports informed and evidence-based decision making on LDN in pilot countries*						
Outcome 2.1 The participatory approach to LDN M&A and decision making is championed in 10 pilot countries	*Indicator 4: project specific* a) Number of technical experts from government counterparts, NGOs and CSOs (50% women) with capacity to support informed decision-making on LDN and SLM implementation to achieve SDG 15.3.1 disaggregated by gender age and IP&LC groups b) Number of land degradation maps in accordance with GPG validated by national experts and supplemented with national LD indicators c) Long-term capacities for LDN institutionalised in key ministries (Environment, Agriculture, Forestry, etc.) in 8–12 pilot countries measured	*WOCAT database*	*0*	a) 5 countries * 50 individuals= 250 (125 women and 125 men) with medium high capacity in LDN M&A b) 5 maps c) 2 sectors with medium to medium-high capacity in LDN M&A and	a) 10*50=500 (250 women and 250 men) with medium high to high capacity in LDN M&A b) 10 maps c) 3 sectors with medium high to high capacity in LDN M&A and DSS per country	Capacity assessment using the Capacity Scorecard. This will be complemented by questionnaire surveys and interviews with project beneficiaries during project implementation and TE.	

	through Capacity Scorecard Rating: 0 – Non existent 1 – Low 2 – Low-Medium 3 – Medium 4 – Medium high 5 – High			DSS per country			
Outputs to achieve Outcome 2.1	2.1.1 LDN Network of national and regional experts and institutions is established and integrated into the WOCAT network 2.1.2 Participatory process for LDN M&A and decision making at national level mainstreamed in key sectors and agencies and institutionalized in pilot countries						
Outcome 2.2 Co-developed LDN-DSS in 10 pilot countries support mainstreaming and evidence-based decision-making for LDN	*Indicator 5: project specific* a) Number of country-owned LDN-DSS guide decision-making on LDN M&A and SLM implementation in pilot countries b) Number users from different sectors (Environment, Agriculture, Forestry, etc. disaggregated by sex)	*WOCAT database* *UNCCD*	*a) 0* *b) 0*	*a) 5* *b) Minimum 2 sectors per country =2 sectors*20 individuals *5 countries =200 (100 women and 100 men)*	*a) 10* *b) Minimum 3 sectors per country= 3 sectors *30 individuals *10 countries =600 (300 women and 300 men)*	Questionnaire surveys and interviews with project beneficiaries during project implementation	
Outputs to achieve Outcome 2.2	2.2.1 National datasets identified, compiled, verified and interpreted for informed decision-making toward LDN 2.2.2 A preliminary workflow for identifying priority areas for avoiding, reducing, and reversing land degradation developed according to the LDN response hierarchy 2.2.3 LDN-DSS co-developed with national stakeholders for the 10 selected countries 2.2.4 Capacity building and training for effective use and sustainability of the LDN-DSS						
Project Component 3	South-South cooperation and learning fosters increased capacity to implement and institutionalize the participatory approach to LDN M&A						
Outcome 3.1 Enhanced regional and global	*Indicator 6: project specific* Scaling up of the LDN	*WOCAT database*	*0*	*5 countries*	*10 countries*	*Questionnaire survey and interviews in connection with UNCCD COP/CRIC*	

collaboration on capacity development, knowledge exchange, and scaling of the WOCAT Participatory Approach for LDN	participatory and gender sensitive approach to M&A and the LDN-DSS to selected thematic areas and countries (number of countries)	*UNCCD*					
Outputs to achieve Outcome 3.1	3.1.1 Regional and thematic South-South exchange workshops and learning events organized 3.1.2 Demand-driven learning opportunities on the participatory approach to LDN decision making packaged with other LDN projects and initiatives through cost-sharing and organization of global and regional events back-to-back with UNCCD CRICs and COPs as relevant 3.1.3 Collaborative platforms and networks for SSC strengthened to support ongoing knowledge exchange and collaboration on LDN-DSS among participating countries and new countries who would like to join						
Project Component *(no indicators required)*	**Monitoring & Evaluation**						
Outcome 4.1 M&E assesses project impacts and guides adaptive management	*Indicator 7: project specific* a) Percent of project indicators are realized b) PIR rating	*UNDP/GEF PIR*	*0*	*a) 50%* *b) Satisfactory or better PIR rating*	*a) 100%* *b) Satisfactory or better PIR rating*		
	Indicator 8: project specific Project Terminal Evaluation with lessons learned	*UNDP TE*	*0*	*0*	*Satisfactory or better TE quality rating*		
Outputs to achieve Outcome 4.1	4.1.1 Monitoring, evaluation and reporting plan implemented 4.1.2 Gender Action Plan implemented and customized to each pilot country 4.1.3 Project Terminal Evaluation conducted						

[1]

ANNEX D: STATUS OF UTILIZATION OF PROJECT PREPARATION GRANT (PPG)

Provide detailed funding amount of the PPG activities financing status in the table below:

Project Preparation Activities Implemented	GETF/LDCF/SCCF Amount ($)		
	Budgeted Amount	Amount Spent To date	Amount Committed
International Consultant to support Social and Environmental Safeguards Risk Screening and Risk Mitigation Strategy; Gender Analysis and Action Plan and stakeholder consultations and engagement to inform project strategy and implementation plan	24,894.80	24,863.15	31.65
Capacity assessment for Executing Entity (HACT)	3,907.20	3,907.20	0.00
International consultant to articulate the project strategy, TOC, project results framework and budget, implementation and governance arrangements, and project management strategy, including M&E, KM and scaling, to inform the GEF CEO ER package	21,048.00	13,155.00	7,893.00
Total	**49,850.00**	**41,925.35**	**7,924.65**

ANNEX E: PROJECT MAP AND COORDINATES

Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place

Please provide any further geo-referenced information and map where project interventions are taking place as appropriate.

Given that this project focuses primarily on capacity development and knowledge exchange, most in-person activities (such as workshops, training sessions, and knowledge-sharing events) are expected to take place in the capital cities of the participating countries. The selected countries include Egypt, Turkmenistan, Liberia, Madagascar, Belize, Palau, Lesotho, Cambodia, Chad, and Sri Lanka. In Table E1 the geographic coordinates of the capital cities have been included. In addition, a map showing the location of the participating countries is provided (Figure E1).

Country	Capital City	Latitude	Longitude
Egypt	Cairo	30.0444	31.2357
Turkmenistan	Ashgabat	37.9601	58.3261
Liberia	Monrovia	6.2907	-10.7605
Madagascar	Antananarivo	-18.8792	47.5079
Belize	Belmopan	17.2510	-88.7590
Palau	Ngerulmud	7.5000	134.6242
Lesotho	Maseru	-29.3632	27.5144
Cambodia	Phnom Penh	11.5449	104.8922
Chad	N'Djamena	12.1348	15.0557
Sri Lanka	Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte	6.8941	79.9025

Table E1: Geographic coordinates (decimal degrees) of the capital cities for the selected countries, where workshops and trainings will most probably take place.

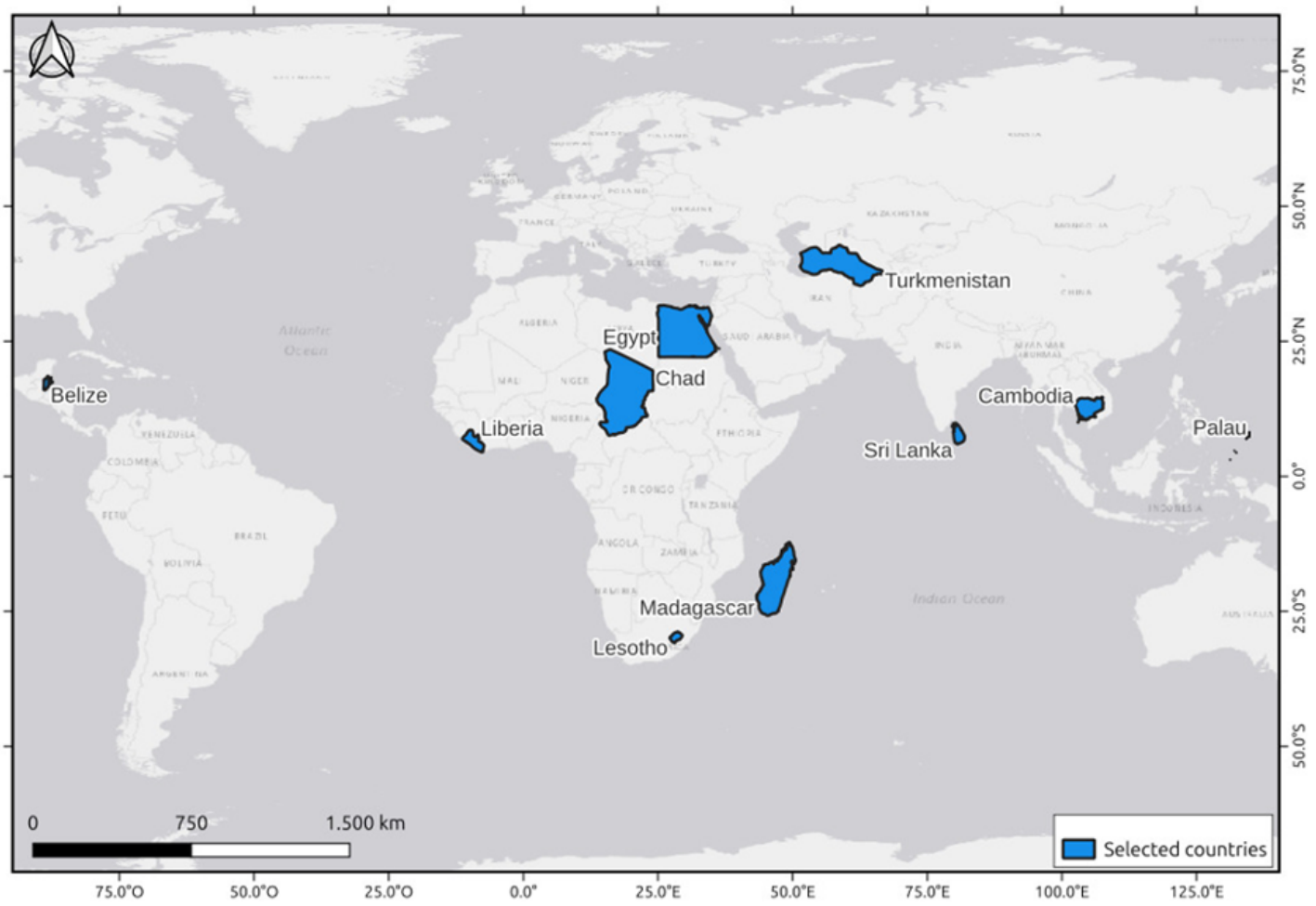


Figure E1: Global map with the location of the selected countries.

ANNEX F: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS SCREEN AND RATING

Attach agency safeguard datasheet/assessment report(s), including ratings of risk types and overall project/program risk classification as well as any management plans or measures to address identified risks and impacts (as applicable).

Title
PIMS 10294 LDN Annex 5_SESP for clearance before MSP CEO ER submission_final

ANNEX G: BUDGET TABLE

Please upload the budget table here.

Expenditure Category	Detailed Description	Component (USDeq.)						Total (USDeq.)	Responsible Entity (Executing Entity receiving funds from the GEF Agency)[1]
		Component 1	*Component 2*	*Component 3*	*Sub-Total*	*M&E*	*PMC*		
Contractual services-Individual	International Consultant for LDN DSS Training Course Development: develop full training course on GEE for creating, updating and adapting LDN DSS targeting software engineers and technical experts. Sub-total: USD 50,000	50 000			50 000			50 000	WOCAT
Contractual services-Individual	International Consultant for Knowledge Material Production: produce annotated scripts, step-by-step tutorials and audiovisual demonstrations on developing and using FAO/WOCAT LDN DSS. Sub-total: USD 25,000	25 000			25 000			25 000	WOCAT
Contractual services-Individual	International consultant for Instructional Video Production: produce instructional videos and scripts on integrating national datasets into GEE for LDN indicator assessments. Sub-total: USD 15,000	15 000			15 000			15 000	WOCAT
Contractual services-Individual	Project Terminal Evaluation: independent evaluation of project results, outcomes and impact against GEF core indicators and project results framework, including travel costs. Sub-total: USD 45,000					45 000		45 000	WOCAT
Sub-total Contractual services-Individual		**90 000**	**-**	**-**	**50 000**	**45 000**	**-**	**135 000**	WOCAT
Contractual services-Company	Regional Intergovernmental Organizations (hyper-arid areas): - support organization of trainings in selected countries (USD 15,000); coordination for LDN DSS ownership and sustainability in hyper-arid regions (USD 10,000); documentation of co-development process (USD 15,000). 1 contract x USD 40,000 - coordination and facilitation of participatory LDN assessments, national stakeholder engagement, technical backstopping on land degradation mapping, and documentation of LDN indicator estimation processes. 1 contract x USD 59,000		99 000		99 000			99 000	WOCAT

Contractual services-Company	National Organizations and experts to co-produce and provide feedback on the knowledge products produced, adding relevance to the national contexts, by procuring the services of national and regional organizations (Universities, NGOs, consulting firms, etc.) in 10 countris (Belize, Cambodia, Chad, Egypt, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Palau, Sri Lanka, Turkmenistan) Component 1: USD 5,000 per each country Component 2: USD 44,500 per each country Component 3: USD 1,500 per each country	50 000	445 000	15 000	510 000			510 000	WOCAT
Contractual services-Company	1 service contract - GEE-based LDN DSS development and GEE training facilitation for 10 pilot countries, including nationally tailored DSS development (GEE scripts, remote sensing, national dataset integration) and facilitation of at least 4 GEE training courses (2 virtual + 2 in-person) for country experts. Sub-total: USD 147,000		147 000		147 000			147 000	WOCAT
Sub-total Contractual services-Company		**50 000**	**691 000**	**15 000**	**756 000**	**-**	**-**	**756 000**	WOCAT
Salary and benefits / Staff costs	Senior Research Scientist: - establishment of LDN expert network, lead facilitation of participatory inter-sectoral workshops and institutionalization of LDN M&A processes Sub-total: USD 86,870 - lead national dataset compilation and verification, LDN response hierarchy workflow development, LDN-DSS co-development and capacity building training Sub-total: USD 110,376 - lead consolidation of lessons learned, co-development of capacity building package and e-learning course blueprint Sub-total: USD 104,244 - organization and facilitation of regional S-S exchange workshops, packaging of demand-driven learning opportunities and strengthening of collaborative LDN platforms Sub-total: USD 51,100 - oversight of GEF core indicator reporting, Gender Action Plan monitoring and adaptive management Sub-total: USD 6,132	104 244	197 246	51 100	352 590	6 132		358 722	WOCAT

	Research Associate: - GIS analysis, national data integration and technical backstopping support for DSS development and training delivery Sub-total: USD 28,624 - technical and logistical backstopping support for regional workshop organization and knowledge exchange events Sub-total: USD 7,250 - M&E data compilation, safeguards monitoring and reporting support Sub-total: USD 4,684		28 624	7 250	35 874	4 684		40 558	WOCAT
	Research Scientist: - technical support for knowledge product development and quality assurance Sub-total: USD 25,756 - technical content support for learning materials integration and stakeholder engagement Sub-total: USD 14,800 - technical support for participatory workshop facilitation, stakeholder engagement and SEP/GAP development Sub-total: USD 16,130 - data collection, analysis and reporting against project results framework and GEF core indicators Sub-total: USD 9,184	40 556	16 130		56 686	9 184		65 870	WOCAT
	Communications Officer: - coordination of dissemination campaign, portal and website integration, social media and outreach Sub-total: USD 25,200 - production of communications materials and support for strengthening of collaborative S-S platforms Sub-total: USD 1,650	25 200		1 650	26 850			26 850	WOCAT
	Project Manager: 39 days/yr @ USD 1,022/day. Sub-total: USD 79,716 (Y1: USD 39,858 | Y2: USD 39,858) - overall project coordination, UNDP/GEF reporting, workplan management and stakeholder liaison						79 716	79 716	WOCAT
	Administration Manager: 55 days/yr @ USD 617/day. Sub-total: USD 67,284 (Y1: USD 33,642 | Y2: USD 33,642) - financial management, procurement support, administrative coordination and audit support						67 284	67 284	WOCAT
	Procurement Officer: 15 days/yr @ USD 800/day. Sub-total: USD 24,000 (Y1: USD 12,000 | Y2: USD 12,000) - procurement planning, tendering support and contract administration				-		24 000	24 000	WOCAT

	in compliance with UNDP procurement rules								
Sub-total Salary and benefits / Staff costs		**170 000**	**242 000**	**60 000**	**472 000**	**20 000**	**171 000**	**663 000**	WOCAT
Training, Workshops, Meetings	Costs for 2 regional/global South-South exchange workshops and learning events (online and in-person): audiovisual equipment, venue hire, interpretation services and catering. Estimated at USD 15,000 per event. Total: USD 30,000			30 000	30 000			30 000	WOCAT
Training, Workshops, Meetings	M&E Inception Workshop and Inception Report – USD 10,000: Establishment of the project MEL system, including inception workshop, MEL framework, tools, and inception report.				-	10 000		10 000	WOCAT
Sub-total Training, Workshops, Meetings		**-**	**-**	**30 000**	**30 000**	**10 000**	**-**	**40 000**	
Travel	Travel for 2 regional workshops: 1-3 experts per country @ USD 2,000 per expert (USD 1,000 airfare + USD 1,000 DSA/accommodation over 3 days) x 10 countries + 1 CDE representative (USD 3,000). Total: USD 66,000 Travel lump sum covering international flights, DSA and accommodation for international and regional experts attending national participatory LDN workshops. Estimated at USD 5,000 per workshop. Total: USD 50,000 Travel, DSA and accommodation for at least 6 trips of international experts from CDE and UNCCD to jointly develop the capacity building package (Bonn and Bern). Estimated at USD 3,000-4,000 per trip. Total: USD 20,000 Travel, DSA and accommodation for international experts attending national LDN DSS capacity building workshops and trainings in 10 pilot countries. Estimated at USD 8,000 per event (10 events). Total: USD 80,000	20 000	130 000	66 000	216 000			216 000	WOCAT
Sub-total Travel		**20 000**	**130 000**	**66 000**	**216 000**	**-**	**-**	**216 000**	WOCAT
Other Operating Costs	Total cost for Audits: US$ 10,000 (Annual audits, $5,000 per year)				-		10 000	10 000	WOCAT
Other Operating Costs	Technical supervision and coordination of AV content development to ensure alignment with UNCCD guidelines: USD 26,000 Y1 + USD 15,000 Y2. Sub-total: USD 41,000	41 000			41 000			41 000	WOCAT

Other Operating Costs	Production, editing and dubbing of audiovisual content for at least 3 AV products: USD 14,000/yr x 2 years. Sub-total: USD 28,000	28 000			28 000			28 000	WOCAT
Other Operating Costs	Translation of at least 4 publications into Russian, Spanish and French: USD 35,000 Y1 + USD 16,000 Y2. Sub-total: USD 51,000	51 000			51 000			51 000	WOCAT
Other Operating Costs	Production of online e-learning course through FAO E-learning Academy: USD 60,000 Y2. Sub-total: USD 60,000	60 000			60 000			60 000	WOCAT
Sub-total Other Operating Costs		**180 000**	**-**	**-**	**180 000**	**-**	**10 000**	**190 000**	WOCAT
		510 000	**1 063 000**	**171 000**	**1 704 000**	**75 000**	**181 000**	**2 000 000**	

Please explain any aspects of the budget as needed here

ANNEX I: RESPONSES TO PROJECT REVIEWS

From GEF Secretariat and GEF Agencies, and Responses to Comments from Council at work program inclusion and the Convention Secretariat and STAP at PIF.