

GEF-8 PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM (PIF)

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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 ID

10294

Executing Partner

Centre for Development and Environment (CDE), University of Bern

Executing Partner Type

CSO

GEF Focal Area (s)

Land Degradation

Submission Date

4/28/2025

Project Sector (CCM Only)

Taxonomy

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

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

260,000.00

PPG Amount: (e)

49,850.00

PPG Agency Fee(s): (f)

4,736.00

PPG total amount: (e+f)

54,586.00

Total GEF Resources: (a+b+c+d+e+f)

2,244,586.00

Project Tags

CBIT: No NGI: No SGP: No Innovation: Yes

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. The explanation and justification of the project should be in section B "project description". (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

Achieving Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) is a key objective of the UNCCD and of 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 Small Island Developing States and countries with hyper-arid areas, face serious challenges in generating reliable LDN data, integrating national knowledge into assessments, and institutionalizing effective monitoring systems. These gaps hinder countries' ability to report 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) producing open-access knowledge products and tools tailored to improve estimation of the three LDN indicators and their integration into the UNCCD reporting process; (ii) scaling national participatory processes in at least 5 pilot countries, 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 global scale.

Indicative Project 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 (\$)
520,000.00	50,000.00
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) 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 (\$)
1,109,000.00	

Outcome:

2.1 The participatory approach to LDN M&A, decision making is championed in at least 5 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 5 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 5 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 the 5 selected 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 M&A, decision making

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
181,000.00	100,000.00

Outcome:

3.1 Enhanced regional and global collaboration on capacity development, knowledge exchange, and scaling of the WOCAT Participatory Approach for LDN M&A

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 (\$)
80,000.00	

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	520,000.00	50,000.00
2. Enhanced capacity for an upscaled national participatory approach supports informed and evidence-based decision making on LDN in pilot countries	1,109,000.00	
3. South-South cooperation and learning fosters increased capacity to implement and institutionalize the participatory approach to LDN M&A, decision making	181,000.00	100,000.00
M&E	80,000.00	
Subtotal	1,890,000.00	150,000.00
Project Management Cost	110,000.00	110,000.00
Total Project Cost (\$)	2,000,000.00	260,000.00

Please provide justification

PROJECT OUTLINE

A. PROJECT RATIONALE

Briefly 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. The IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Land^[1] reviewed 24 different processes of LD, and 17 different LD pathways have been identified in a review of more than 500 scientific articles.^[2] Moreover, the IPBES Assessment Report on Land Degradation and Restoration^[3] 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 vegetation index), 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 World Atlas of Desertification^[4] 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^[5], UNCCD Country Parties have through voluntary targets alone committed to restore an estimated total of over 450 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.^[6]

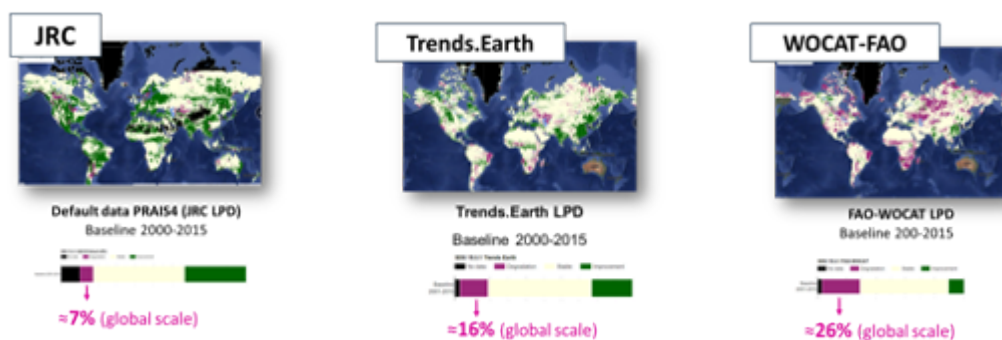


Figure 1: Alternative estimations of SGD indicator 15.3.1 and extent of land degradation for the baseline period using different Land Productivity Dynamics Maps. Source: Tools4LDN LPD Product comparison - <https://maps.tools4ldn.org/> (CI, WOCAT & FAO, 2022).

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^[1], 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 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.

Another barrier to scaling up of SLM is linked to the **weak capacity in monitoring and assessment (M&A) 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^[2].

Mapping LD 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, such as hyper-arid areas and SIDS. 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 three 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-DSS. 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^[3]. 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^[4]. During the 2022 UNCCD reporting process, WOCAT and FAO supported six countries in this process — as presented in the plenary during the UNCCD CRIC 21 and showcased in a recent publication^[5] — 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 the basis to scale this process, allowing for wide replication in different contexts that face particular difficulties in monitoring and participatory assessment of LDN due to their biophysical characteristics. It will do so in collaboration with several LDN related initiatives including the Group on Earth Observation Land Degradation Neutrality Flagship (GEO-LDN). GEO-LDN is a stakeholder-driven initiative that was launched in 2018 during the Group on Earth Observations Week in Kyoto, Japan, responding to a request by the UNCCD's Conference of the Parties (Decision 9/COP.13). It brings together EO data providers and governments to develop minimum data quality standards, analytical tools and capacity building needed to strengthen LD monitoring and reporting, using remote sensing and data collected on site. GEO-LDN, in collaboration with WOCAT, helps governments to access the necessary datasets and tools to prioritize interventions, monitor outcomes to manage land better and more sustainably and report on SDG indicator 15.3.1. In 2024, GEO-LDN established a new working group led by WOCAT on decision support for LDN (Working Group 4).

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)^[6] 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 collaborate with several baseline programs, such as the GEO-LDN and the G20 Global Initiative on Reducing Land Degradation and Enhancing Conservation of Terrestrial Habitats (G20 Global Land Initiative (GLI)) with the goal to achieve a 50% reduction in degraded land by 2040. The G20 GLI focuses on showcasing success stories; engaging the private sector; empowering civil society and the public; and sharing knowledge to build capacity among G20 members as well as interested non-member countries and other stakeholders. The proposed project will collaborate with these initiatives on knowledge exchange and South-South learning.

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^[7]. This includes GEF support to 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). 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. The project will create strong synergies with several ongoing GEF-funded global initiatives to enhance alignment and complementarity across the UNCCD implementation landscape. It will directly support the GEF-8 Enabling Activities led by FAO with enhanced technical support by providing technical knowledge products (Component 1). Through collaboration with CI, the project will ensure 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 by strengthening LDN decision-making in at least 5 countries through participatory land use planning tools that operationalize the LDN counterbalancing mechanism. Finally, it will support the UNEP/GEF Global Support Program on Strengthening UNCCD reporting – enhancing the implementation of the UNCCD by translating key elements of the forthcoming 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 trends in land productivity, subnational reporting, and comparisons among periods. Collectively, these linkages ensure broader dissemination, mutual reinforcement of outcomes, and strengthened UNCCD 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 six 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 at least 5 interested Parties from regions with specific challenges regarding LD M&A and stakeholder participation.
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: *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 [...]*.

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 organisations (CSOs), non-governmental organisations (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. As of September 2024, the Sub-Saharan Africa Cluster has been set up with partners, including the Alliance Bioversity & CIAT (International Center for Tropical Agriculture) in Nairobi, Kenya, the African Union Development Agency for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD), Landdev research lab at the University of Antananarivo, Madagascar, and other national and regional partners across Sub-Saharan Africa. In 2025, the establishment of further Clusters in Latin America and the Caribbean, Near East and North Africa, Central Asia and the Hindu Kush Himalaya are foreseen. Other relevant partners include research networks in the different regions, such as the Pacific Community (SPC), The Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS), the Centre of Excellence for Soil Research in Asia (CESRA), and Digital Earth Africa, that bring together stakeholders to expand the internet in Africa and make EO data free and accessible. Table 1 summarizes the roles of key stakeholders that will be involved in the project.

Table 1. Project stakeholders.

Stakeholder	Why included (interests)	Participation methods		Consultation date
		Method	Responsibility	
UNCCD	LDN is a goal of the UNCCD and linked to its reporting processes.	The UNCCD is a partner in the project and sits on the project steering committee	Project alignment with ongoing UNCCD processes, new PRAIS reporting cycle, capacity development initiatives and other related programmes and projects. Support global outreach and	Ongoing, monthly, throughout the project formulation process

			South-South exchange of knowledge on LDN M&A at UNCCD COPs and CRICs and through its various communication channels	
GEF	GEF finances the project as a financial mechanism for the UNCCD	Partner	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.	during project formulation
Observatoire du Sahel and Sahara (OSS)	Working in arid and hyper arid areas on SLM and LDN, Organizational Member of WOCAT	Regional partner for work in arid and hyperarid areas	regional coordination, capacity development, support to national processes, South-South exchange	during project formulation
ICARDA	WOCAT Consortium partner and member of the WOCAT Executive Management Team, working in drylands	Regional partner for work in arid and hyperarid areas	capacity development, support to national processes, South-South exchange	Ongoing interaction as part of the WOCAT Management
African Union Development Agency - NEPAD	In the process of signing an MoU with WOCAT to become an Organizational Member and lead of AfrioCAT - WOCATs Regional Cluster in Sub-Saharan Africa	Partner for engagement with African countries	Outreach to countries, capacity development, South-South exchange	Several meeting from Nov. 2024 throughout April 2025 in the context of the WOCAT MoU
Conservation International (CI)	CI has developed and hosts the Trends.Earth Platfor that will be used by the project.	Partner for implementing latest developments on Trends.Earth	Collaboration on use of Trends.Earth for LDN	Ongoing
FAO	FAO is a Consortium Partner of WOCAT (Land and Water Division); WOCAT also collaborates with the FAO Regional Offices	Partner for production of knowledge products in Component 1 and South-South collaboration	Capacity development, south-south exchange, alignment with the umbrella and other ongoing initiatives	ongoing exchange with Land and Water Division as part of the WOCAT Consortium meetings

		activities under Component 3		
GEO-LDN	GEO LDN supports countries in using Earth observation and geospatial data to monitor, plan, and make informed decisions for achieving Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN).	Partner for production of knowledge products and dissemination	Collaboration on the production of knowledge products and dissemination	Ongoing
CIFOR-ICRAF	<i>CIFOR-ICRAF is a WOCAT Organizational Member</i>	Regional partner for work in Sub-Saharan african countries	capacity development, south-south exchange	UNCCD COP16, Riyadh
Drynet	WOCAT is a member of Drynet	Synergies with the IUCN/Both ends Drynet CSOs GEF MSP	capacity development, south-south exchange	3 July 2024 at the Drynet Board meeting and ongoing
Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)	CSOs in selected countries will be invited to participate in co-creation of LDN M&A knowledge	Beneficiary	CSOs will be expected to share knowledge on land resources, including socio-economic aspects and inclusion of marginalized groups, such as women and Indigenous People	Ongoing
Private Sector Digital Africa	Brings together stakeholders to expand the internet in Africa		Make EO data free and accessible	In PPG phase
Apacheta Foundation	Develops interactive tools and high resolution datasets for UNCCD reporting , Co-leads GEO LDN Working Group 4.	Partner for capacity building and development of tools	Capacity Building, Developer of tailored LDN DSSs.	Ongoing

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[1] <https://www.ipcc.ch/srccl/>

[2] For summary see: Olsson, L., Cotrufo, F., Crews, T., Franklin, J., King, A., Mirzabaev, A., Scown, M., Tengberg, A., Villarino, S., and Wang, Y. 2023. The State of the World's Arable Land. *Annu. Rev. Environ. Resour.* 2023. 48:13.1–13.25. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-environ-112320-113741>

[3] <https://www.ipbes.net/assessment-reports/ldr>

[4] Cherlet M, Hutchinson C, Reynolds J, Hill J, Sommer S, von Malitz G. 2018. *World Atlas of Desertification*. Luxmb.: Publ. Off. Eur. Union

[5] <https://www.pbl.nl/en/publications/goals-and-commitments-for-the-restoration-decade>

[6] <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023/Goal-15/>

B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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 PIF guidance document. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

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 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 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 second pathway focuses on championing the capacity development process and institutionalization of the participatory approach to LDN for enhanced decision making in at least 5 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.

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.

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.

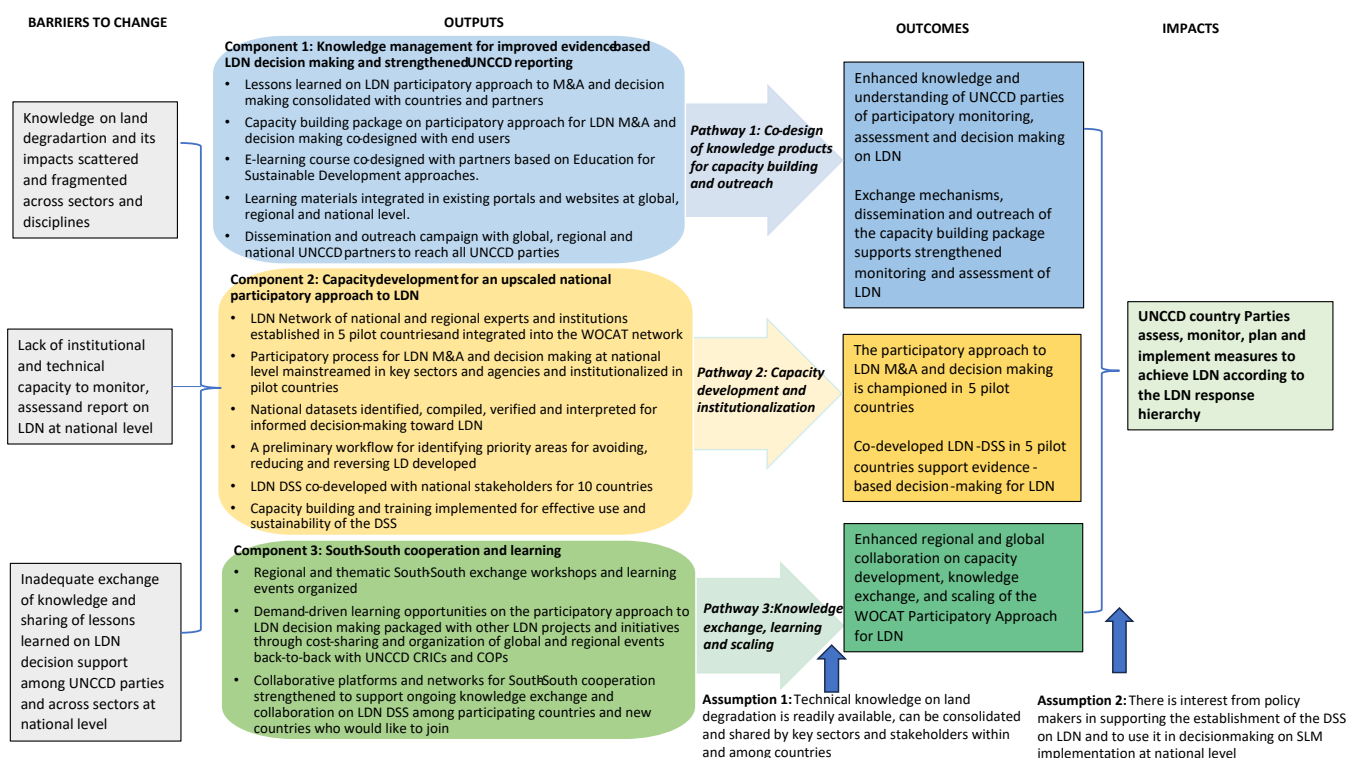


Figure 2. Project Theory of Change with assumptions.

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 UNCCD response hierarchy. 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 20 countries under the GSP. Finally, the work from this project will be closely linked with platforms like Trends.Earth, incorporating the latest innovations by CI, and will be part of the GEO LDN Toolbox, ensuring wide accessibility and alignment with global efforts to enhance LDN reporting. 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. These include 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 forthcoming 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: Capacity building package on participatory approach for LDN M&A and decision making, co-designed with end users in collaboration with countries and partners. 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 1). 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. 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 and including high-resolution datasets specifically tailored for SIDS, will directly support countries in using more representative data sources. These tools are already referenced in the Addendum to the SDG Indicator 15.3.1, GPG 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 LPD s	Web Application	UNCCD National Focal Points (NFPs), national experts
6. Publication on Lessons Learnt and Recommendations for Hyper-Arid Areas and SIDS (<i>supported under Component 3</i>)	Case studies and insights with specific recommendations for these 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
11. Guidelines on LDN and UNCCD reporting processes	Guidance for UNCCD focal points on UNCCD reporting process	Document (Guidelines)	UNCCD Focal Points and facilitators

Output 1.1.3: E-learning course co-designed with partners based on Education for Sustainable Development approaches. This will involve co-design the course blueprint on the participatory approach to LDN M&A and decision making together with partners such as UNCCD, GEO-LDN, 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^[1], 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.

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.

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) 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 CRIC 23 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 at least 5 pilot countries to gain insights and learn lessons for further dissemination and scaling up under Component 3. 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. 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 and SIDS contexts, 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, efforts to improve spatial resolution for SIDS will directly benefit other countries with mountainous, fragmented, or highly heterogeneous landscapes, while alternative methods for assessing land productivity in hyperarid zones, 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 will be launched through the UNCCD. Countries that are eligible for GEF funding and are members of one of the UNCCD Regional Annexes will be eligible for selection. Particular encouragement will be given to SIDS and countries with hyper-arid areas to submit applications. The selection process will be based on clearly defined criteria, including the country's demonstration of ongoing efforts to strengthen its Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) targets and implementation measures; a strong political commitment to lead a national process to enhance LDN targets and establish an LDN Decision Support System (LDN-DSS); and the presence of a solid technical and institutional foundation for the development of the LDN-DSS. The final selection will be undertaken jointly by the UNCCD Secretariat, the University of Bern's Centre for Development and Environment (CDE), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Countries will be ranked according to the established criteria, with additional consideration given to potential synergies with other relevant initiatives.

Outcome 2.1: The participatory approach to LDN M&A, decision making is championed in the 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, 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 5 pilot countries and integrated into the WOCAT network (i.e. linked to the GEO-LDN Working Group 4). Relevant national and regional institutions and experts will be selected from academia, NGOs, CSOs, 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 dialogues^[2] 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 5 pilot countries. Participatory inter-sectoral workshops (Environment, Agriculture, Forestry, Water, Energy, Meteorological Office, etc.) using Dialogues (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 and analysis of relevant LDN data and indicators, as well as reporting following the FAO-WOCAT approach for the Participatory Assessment of LDN indicators and SDG 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 for SDG Indicator 15.3.1.

Outcome 2.2: Co-developed LDN-DSS in at least 5 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, and interpreting 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

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 5 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 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. 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 (in preparation). 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^[3]. The systems will include four key functionalities:

- Visualization, comparison, and calculation of statistics for LD and additional indicators.
- Multi-criteria analysis to prioritize intervention areas.
- Land cover transitions analysis for tracking changes over time.
- 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 3 below.

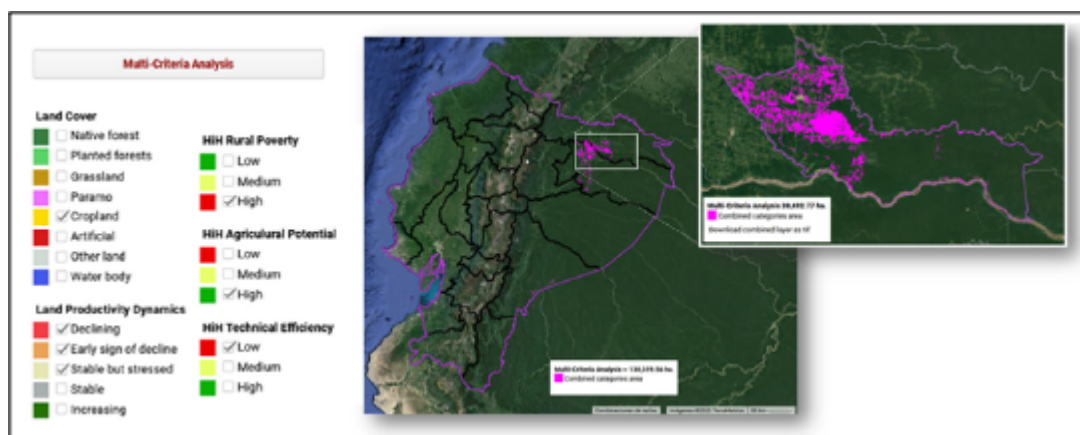


Figure 3. Results of a combination of 5 maps at national and subnational level using the multi-criteria toolbox of Ecuador LDN-DSS. Areas that meet the criteria selected (croplands with declining or stressed productivity, high rural poverty and high agricultural potential but low agricultural technical efficiency) in Ecuador and in Shushufindi Canton are shown in pink. Black and grey lines represent province and canton borders, respectively^[1].

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, NGOs and CSOs involved in land management and planning. 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, 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 and 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, GEO-LDN, UNDP, CI 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 GEO-LDN and 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 with GEO-LDN Working Group 4, using different communication tools and channels, such as social media, blogs, short video statements from participants, presentations and recordings on different fora 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 at least 5 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 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 prioritization of SLM interventions to avoid, reduce or reverse LD.

[1] Teich, I., Harari, N., Caza, P., Henao-Henao, J.P., Lopez, J.C., Raviolo, E., Díaz-González, A.M., González, H., Bastidas, S., Morales-Opazo, C. and García, C.L. (2023), An interactive system to map land degradation and inform decision-making to achieve Land Degradation Neutrality via convergence of evidence across scales: a case study in Ecuador. *Land Degrad Dev.* 2023;34:4475–4487. DOI: 10.1002/ldr.4645

[1] Herwegetal_2021_tdLearningforSD_150dpi_online_eng.pdf (unibe.ch)

[2] <https://www.besnet.world/trialogues/>

[3] <https://unbiodiversitylab.org/en/maps-of-hope/>

Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing Initiatives and Project.

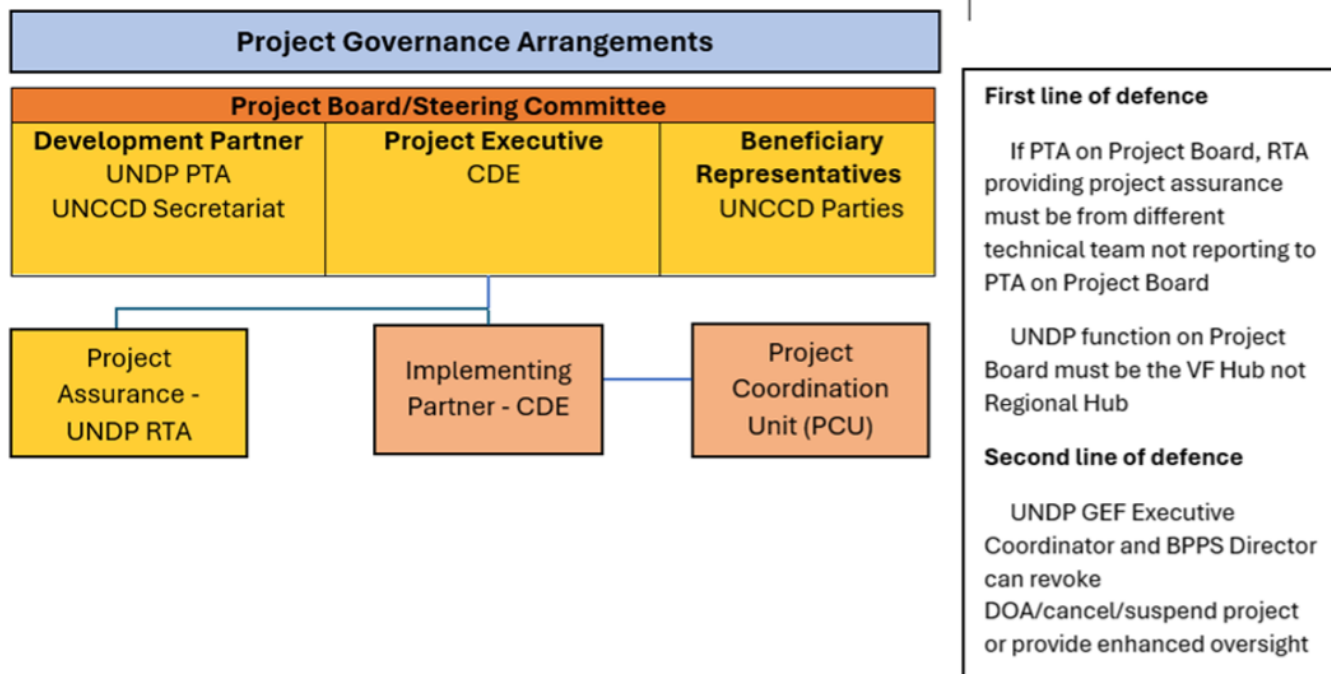
Does the GEF Agency expect to play an execution role on this project?

If so, please describe that role here. 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

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

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 and hosted by 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 programmes related to LDN and include UNDP, CDE, and UNCCD, as shown in the diagram 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 Programme 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.

During the PPG, a minimum of five (5) countries will be identified for piloting of some of the project activities. Once these countries are identified, country-level specific arrangements will be discussed and agreed with the key government institutions and national partners, with the guidance of the GEF OFP and UNCCD National Focal Point.

Coordination and synergies will be ensured with the second phase of the LDN Target Setting Programme (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, and the CI/GEF project on Enhancing Data and Analytical Capacity to support UNCCD Country Parties in National Reporting and targeting of efforts to achieve LDN 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. Through its Saudi Arabia Country Office, UNDP is also in discussions with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's National Center for Vegetation Cover and Combatting Desertification (NCVC) to design an initiative with similar objectives to this GEF project and could contribute significantly to Component 3. Through this initiative, Saudi Arabia could also be among the additional countries that participate in the GEF program and potentially contribute financial resources (co-financing) to support the participation of additional countries. 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 5 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 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 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 current 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.

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 data on land degradation, especially 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 realised 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

Project Core Indicators		Expected at PIF
1	Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management (hectare)	
2	Marine protected areas created or under improved management (hectare)	
3	Area of land and ecosystems under restoration (hectare)	
4	Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectare)	
5	Area of marine habitat under improved practices (hectare)	
6	Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated (metric tons of CO ₂ e)	
7	Shared water ecosystems under new or improved cooperative management (count)	
8	Globally over-exploited marine fisheries moved to more sustainable levels (metric ton)	
9	Chemicals of global concern and their waste reduced (metric ton of toxic chemicals reduced)	
10	Persistent organic pollutants to air reduced (gram of toxic equivalent gTEQ)	
11	People benefiting from GEF-financed investments disaggregated by sex (count)	Direct beneficiaries: 500 (250 women and 250 men) Indirect beneficiaries: 4,000 (50% women)

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 100 individuals (50% women) each from the 5 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 5 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.

Core Indicators

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			
Male	2,250			
Total	4,500	0	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 100 individuals (50% women) each from the 5 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 5 selected pilot countries.

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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 will be minimized by pre-assessment of countries interested in participating in the project in terms of 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 M&A systems for cross-sectoral implementation of SLM. Pilot countries will be 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. Selected pilot countries need to demonstrate that the technical baseline is adequate.
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 will be 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

Describe 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.

Confirm if any country policies that might contradict with intended outcomes of the project have been identified, and how the project will address this.

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. (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 will be aligned with the UNCCD National Action Plans (NAPs) of the selected pilot countries and strengthen their capacity to monitor, assess and report on LDN and take informed decisions about SLM implementation.

D. POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment:

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

Yes

Stakeholder Engagement

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

Yes

Were the following stakeholders consulted during project identification phase:

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities: Yes

Civil Society Organizations: Yes

Private Sector:

Provide a brief summary and list of names and dates of consultations

CSOs linked to the WOCAT Regional Clusters have been consulted and will be beneficiaries of the project and be invited to co-create knowledge on LDN M&A indicators under Component 1 with a special focus on socio-economic benefits and inclusion of marginalized groups, such as women and indigenous people. CSOs in the 5 selected pilot countries will be consulted during the PPG phase of the project.

(Please upload to the portal documents tab any stakeholder engagement plan or assessments that have been done during the PIF development phase.)

Private Sector

Will there be private sector engagement in the project?

Yes

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

Yes

Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS) Risks

We confirm that we have provided indicative information regarding Environmental and Social risks associated with the proposed project or program and any measures to address such risks and impacts (this information should be presented in Annex D).

Yes

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE

Low

E. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Knowledge management

We confirm that an approach to Knowledge Management and Learning has been clearly described in the Project Description (Section B)

Yes

ANNEX A: FINANCING TABLES

GEF Financing Table

Indicative 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)

Is Project Preparation Grant requested?

true

PPG Amount (\$)

49850

PPG Agency Fee (\$)

4736

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Grant / Non-Grant	PPG(\$)	Agency Fee(\$)	Total PPG Funding(\$)
UNDP	GET	Global	Land Degradation	LD Global/Regional Set-Aside	Grant	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

Indicative Focal Area Elements

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing(\$)	Co-financing(\$)
LD-1	GET	2,000,000.00	260000
Total Project Cost		2,000,000.00	260,000.00

Indicative Co-financing

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
Others	UNCCD	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	15000
Total Co-financing				260,000.00

Describe how any "Investment Mobilized" was identified

UNDP co-finance: Mobilizing 45,000 USD in in-kind co-financing, UNDP will contribute technical inputs to Component 3 on South-South cooperation and learning by leveraging other UNDP-led initiatives to share lessons and exchange knowledge on LDN assessment, monitoring, measurement and implementation.

CDE Co-finance: CDE/WOCAT Website and Database Enhancement and Maintenance (Running cost 50'000 USD per year, total of 100,000 USD); IT staff, staff time: 10,000 USD; Senior Researchers staff time: for communication activities on different WOCAT communication channels, WOCAT network care (exchange with partners), synergies with other projects: 90,000 USD

UNCCD Co-finance: Staff time of the UNCCD Secretariat staff, especially from the Science Technology and Innovation (STI) Unit, to collaborate on the project, provide inputs to specific activities and facilitate coordination and synergies with other projects (15,000 USD)

ANNEX B: ENDORSEMENTS

GEF Agency(ies) Certification

GEF Agency Type	Name	Date	Project Contact Person	Phone	Email
GEF Agency Coordinator	Nancy Bennet	4/16/2025	Nancy Bennet		nancy.bennet@undp.org

Project Coordinator	Goetz Schroth	4/16/2025	Goetz Schroth		goetz.schroth@undp.org
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Record of Endorsement of GEF Operational Focal Point (s) on Behalf of the Government(s):

Name	Position	Ministry	Date (MM/DD/YYYY)
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ANNEX C: PROJECT LOCATION

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

Will be added when the 5 pilot countries have been selected in the PPG phase.

ANNEX D: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS SCREEN AND RATING

(PIF level) Attach agency safeguard screen form including rating of risk types and overall risk rating.

Title
PIMS10294 LDN Capacity for UNCCD Parties_SESP_PIF stage_16April2025 for submission

ANNEX E: RIO MARKERS

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

ANNEX F: TAXONOMY WORKSHEET

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Influencing models			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Transform policy and regulatory environments		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Convene multi-stakeholder alliances		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Demonstrate innovative approaches		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Deploy innovative financial instruments		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stakeholders			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous Peoples		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Sector		
		<input type="checkbox"/> Capital providers	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Financial intermediaries and market facilitators	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Large corporations	
		<input type="checkbox"/> SMEs	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Individuals/Entrepreneurs	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Grant Pilot	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Project Reflow	

	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Beneficiaries		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Local Communities		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Civil Society		
		<input type="checkbox"/> Community Based Organization	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Governmental Organization	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Academia	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Trade Unions and Workers Unions	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Type of Engagement		
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Dissemination	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partnership	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consultation	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Participation	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communications		
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Awareness Raising	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Education	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Campaigns	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Behavior Change	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Capacity, Knowledge and Research			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Enabling Activities		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Capacity Development		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Knowledge Generation and Exchange		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Targeted Research		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Learning		
		<input type="checkbox"/> Theory of Change	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Adaptive Management	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Indicators to Measure Change	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Innovation		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Knowledge and Learning		
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Knowledge Management	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Innovation	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Capacity Development	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learning	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder Engagement Plan		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender Equality			
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender Mainstreaming		
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Beneficiaries	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Women groups	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sex-disaggregated indicators	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender-sensitive indicators	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Gender results areas		
		<input type="checkbox"/> Access and control over natural resources	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Participation and leadership	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Access to benefits and services	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Capacity development	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Awareness raising	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Knowledge generation	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focal Areas/Theme			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Integrated Programs		
		<input type="checkbox"/> Commodity Supply Chains (Good Growth Partnership)	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainable Commodities Production
			<input type="checkbox"/> Deforestation-free Sourcing
			<input type="checkbox"/> Financial Screening Tools
			<input type="checkbox"/> High Conservation Value Forests
			<input type="checkbox"/> High Carbon Stocks Forests
			<input type="checkbox"/> Soybean Supply Chain
			<input type="checkbox"/> Oil Palm Supply Chain

		<input type="checkbox"/> Beef Supply Chain
		<input type="checkbox"/> Smallholder Farmers
		<input type="checkbox"/> Adaptive Management
	<input type="checkbox"/> Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Resilience (climate and shocks)
		<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainable Production Systems
		<input type="checkbox"/> Agroecosystems
		<input type="checkbox"/> Land and Soil Health
		<input type="checkbox"/> Diversified Farming
		<input type="checkbox"/> Integrated Land and Water Management
		<input type="checkbox"/> Smallholder Farming
		<input type="checkbox"/> Small and Medium Enterprises
		<input type="checkbox"/> Crop Genetic Diversity
		<input type="checkbox"/> Food Value Chains
		<input type="checkbox"/> Gender Dimensions
		<input type="checkbox"/> Multi-stakeholder Platforms
	<input type="checkbox"/> Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainable Food Systems
		<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Restoration
		<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainable Commodity Production
		<input type="checkbox"/> Comprehensive Land Use Planning
		<input type="checkbox"/> Integrated Landscapes
		<input type="checkbox"/> Food Value Chains
		<input type="checkbox"/> Deforestation-free Sourcing
		<input type="checkbox"/> Smallholder Farmers
	<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainable Cities	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Integrated urban planning
		<input type="checkbox"/> Urban sustainability framework
		<input type="checkbox"/> Transport and Mobility
		<input type="checkbox"/> Buildings
		<input type="checkbox"/> Municipal waste management
		<input type="checkbox"/> Green space
		<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Biodiversity
		<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Food Systems
		<input type="checkbox"/> Energy efficiency
		<input type="checkbox"/> Municipal Financing
		<input type="checkbox"/> Global Platform for Sustainable Cities
		<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Resilience
	<input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Protected Areas and Landscapes	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Terrestrial Protected Areas
		<input type="checkbox"/> Coastal and Marine Protected Areas
		<input type="checkbox"/> Productive Landscapes
		<input type="checkbox"/> Productive Seascapes
		<input type="checkbox"/> Community Based Natural Resource Management
	<input type="checkbox"/> Mainstreaming	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Extractive Industries (oil, gas, mining)
		<input type="checkbox"/> Forestry (Including HCVF and REDD+)
		<input type="checkbox"/> Tourism
		<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture & agrobiodiversity
		<input type="checkbox"/> Fisheries
		<input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure

			<input type="checkbox"/> Certification Standards (National Standards)
			<input type="checkbox"/> Certification Standards (International Standards)
		<input type="checkbox"/> Species	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Illegal Wildlife Trade
			<input type="checkbox"/> Threatened Species
			<input type="checkbox"/> Wildlife for Sustainable Development
			<input type="checkbox"/> Crop Wild Relatives
			<input type="checkbox"/> Plant Genetic Resources
			<input type="checkbox"/> Animal Genetic Resources
			<input type="checkbox"/> Livestock Wild Relatives
			<input type="checkbox"/> Invasive Alien Species (IAS)
		<input type="checkbox"/> Biomes	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Mangroves
			<input type="checkbox"/> Coral Reefs
			<input type="checkbox"/> Sea Grasses
			<input type="checkbox"/> Wetlands
			<input type="checkbox"/> Rivers
			<input type="checkbox"/> Lakes
			<input type="checkbox"/> Tropical Rain Forests
			<input type="checkbox"/> Tropical Dry Forests
			<input type="checkbox"/> Temperate Forests
			<input type="checkbox"/> Grasslands
			<input type="checkbox"/> Paramo
			<input type="checkbox"/> Desert
		<input type="checkbox"/> Financial and Accounting	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Payment for Ecosystem Services
			<input type="checkbox"/> Natural Capital Assessment and Accounting
			<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation Trust Funds
			<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation Finance
		<input type="checkbox"/> Supplementary Protocol to the CBD	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Biosafety
			<input type="checkbox"/> Access to Genetic Resources Benefit Sharing
	<input type="checkbox"/> Forests		
		<input type="checkbox"/> Forest and Landscape Restoration	
			<input type="checkbox"/> REDD/REDD+
		<input type="checkbox"/> Forest	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Amazon
			<input type="checkbox"/> Congo
			<input type="checkbox"/> Drylands
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land Degradation		
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainable Land Management	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Restoration and Rehabilitation of Degraded Lands
			<input type="checkbox"/> Ecosystem Approach
			<input type="checkbox"/> Integrated and Cross-sectoral approach
			<input type="checkbox"/> Community-Based NRM
			<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainable Livelihoods
			<input type="checkbox"/> Income Generating Activities
			<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainable Agriculture
			<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainable Pasture Management
			<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainable Forest/Woodland Management
			<input type="checkbox"/> Improved Soil and Water Management Techniques

			<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainable Fire Management
			<input type="checkbox"/> Drought Mitigation/Early Warning
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land Degradation Neutrality	
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land Productivity
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land Cover and Land cover change
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carbon stocks above or below ground
		<input type="checkbox"/> Food Security	
	<input type="checkbox"/> International Waters		
		<input type="checkbox"/> Ship	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Coastal	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Freshwater	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Aquifer
			<input type="checkbox"/> River Basin
			<input type="checkbox"/> Lake Basin
		<input type="checkbox"/> Learning	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Fisheries	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Persistent toxic substances	
		<input type="checkbox"/> SIDS : Small Island Dev States	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Targeted Research	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Pollution	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Persistent toxic substances
			<input type="checkbox"/> Plastics
			<input type="checkbox"/> Nutrient pollution from all sectors except wastewater
			<input type="checkbox"/> Nutrient pollution from Wastewater
		<input type="checkbox"/> Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis and Strategic Action Plan preparation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Action Plan Implementation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Large Marine Ecosystems	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Private Sector	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Aquaculture	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Marine Protected Area	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Biomes	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Mangrove
			<input type="checkbox"/> Coral Reefs
			<input type="checkbox"/> Seagrasses
			<input type="checkbox"/> Polar Ecosystems
			<input type="checkbox"/> Constructed Wetlands
	<input type="checkbox"/> Chemicals and Waste		
		<input type="checkbox"/> Mercury	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Artisanal and Scale Gold Mining	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Coal Fired Power Plants	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Coal Fired Industrial Boilers	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Cement	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Ferrous Metals Production	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Ozone	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Persistent Organic Pollutants	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Unintentional Persistent Organic Pollutants	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Sound Management of chemicals and Waste	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Waste Management	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous Waste Management
			<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Waste
			<input type="checkbox"/> e-Waste
		<input type="checkbox"/> Emissions	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Disposal	

		<input type="checkbox"/> New Persistent Organic Pollutants	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Polychlorinated Biphenyls	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Plastics	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Eco-Efficiency	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Pesticides	
		<input type="checkbox"/> DDT - Vector Management	
		<input type="checkbox"/> DDT - Other	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Emissions	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Open Burning	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Best Available Technology / Best Environmental Practices	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Green Chemistry	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Climate Change		
		<input type="checkbox"/> Climate Change Adaptation	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Climate Finance
			<input type="checkbox"/> Least Developed Countries
			<input type="checkbox"/> Small Island Developing States
			<input type="checkbox"/> Disaster Risk Management
			<input type="checkbox"/> Sea-level rise
			<input type="checkbox"/> Climate Resilience
			<input type="checkbox"/> Climate information
			<input type="checkbox"/> Ecosystem-based Adaptation
			<input type="checkbox"/> Adaptation Tech Transfer
			<input type="checkbox"/> National Adaptation Programme of Action
			<input type="checkbox"/> National Adaptation Plan
			<input type="checkbox"/> Mainstreaming Adaptation
			<input type="checkbox"/> Private Sector
			<input type="checkbox"/> Innovation
			<input type="checkbox"/> Complementarity
			<input type="checkbox"/> Community-based Adaptation
			<input type="checkbox"/> Livelihoods
		<input type="checkbox"/> Climate Change Mitigation	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture, Forestry, and other Land Use
			<input type="checkbox"/> Energy Efficiency
			<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainable Urban Systems and Transport
			<input type="checkbox"/> Technology Transfer
			<input type="checkbox"/> Renewable Energy
			<input type="checkbox"/> Financing
			<input type="checkbox"/> Enabling Activities
		<input type="checkbox"/> Technology Transfer	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Poznan Strategic Programme on Technology Transfer
			<input type="checkbox"/> Climate Technology Centre & Network (CTCN)
			<input type="checkbox"/> Endogenous technology
			<input type="checkbox"/> Technology Needs Assessment
			<input type="checkbox"/> Adaptation Tech Transfer
		<input type="checkbox"/> United Nations Framework on Climate Change	<input type="checkbox"/> Nationally Determined Contribution
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rio Markers		
		<input type="checkbox"/> Paris Agreement	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainable Development Goals	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Climate Change Mitigation 0	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Climate Change Mitigation 1	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Climate Change Mitigation 2	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Climate Change Adaptation 0	

	<input type="checkbox"/> Climate Change Adaptation 1	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Climate Change Adaptation 2	