



## **Global Support Programme III: Strengthening Capacities of Country Parties for UNCCD Monitoring and Reporting**

### **Part I: Project Information**

#### **GEF ID**

#### **Project Type**

EA

#### **Type of Trust Fund**

GET

#### **CBIT**

☐ CBIT

#### **Project Title**

Global Support Programme III: Strengthening Capacities of Country Parties for UNCCD Monitoring and Reporting

#### **Countries**

Global

#### **Agency(ies)**

UNEP

#### **Other Executing Partner(s)**

The Global Mechanism of the UNCCD

#### **Executing Partner Type**

Others

#### **GEF Focal Area**

Land Degradation

#### **Taxonomy**

Focal Areas, Land Degradation, Land Degradation Neutrality, Carbon stocks above or below ground, Land Cover and Land cover change, Land Productivity, Food Security, Sustainable Land Management, Income

Generating Activities, Sustainable Pasture Management, Ecosystem Approach, Drought Mitigation, Sustainable Livelihoods, Sustainable Agriculture, Restoration and Rehabilitation of Degraded Lands, Sustainable Forest, Integrated and Cross-sectoral approach, Improved Soil and Water Management Techniques, Community-Based Natural Resource Management, Sustainable Fire Management, Forest, Forest and Landscape Restoration, Influencing models, Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making, Transform policy and regulatory environments, Convene multi-stakeholder alliances, Demonstrate innovative approaches, Stakeholders, Indigenous Peoples, Communications, Education, Public Campaigns, Strategic Communications, Behavior change, Awareness Raising, Civil Society, Academia, Non-Governmental Organization, Trade Unions and Workers Unions, Community Based Organization, Type of Engagement, Information Dissemination, Participation, Partnership, Consultation, Beneficiaries, Local Communities, Gender Equality, Gender Mainstreaming, Gender-sensitive indicators, Sex-disaggregated indicators, Women groups, Gender results areas, Capacity Development, Knowledge Generation and Exchange, Access to benefits and services, Access and control over natural resources, Participation and leadership, Capacity, Knowledge and Research, Learning, Knowledge Generation, Training, Workshop, Seminar, Enabling Activities, Knowledge Exchange, Field Visit

#### **Rio Markers**

##### **Climate Change Mitigation**

Climate Change Mitigation 0

##### **Climate Change Adaptation**

Climate Change Adaptation 0

**Type of  
Reports**

**Submission  
Date**

**Expected  
Implementation  
Start**

**Expected  
Completion  
Date**

**Expected Report  
Submission to  
Convention**

#### **Duration**

24in Months

#### **Agency Fee(\$)**

190,000.00

**A. FOCAL/NON-FOCAL AREA ELEMENTS**

<b>Objectives/Programs</b>	<b>Trust Fund</b>	<b>GEF Amount(\$)</b>	<b>Co-Fin Amount(\$)</b>
LD-EA	GET	2,000,000.00	545,000.00
<b>Total Project Cost(\$)</b>		<b>2,000,000.00</b>	<b>545,000.00</b>

**B. Project description summary**

**Project Objective**

To enhance technical and institutional capacity for land degradation monitoring and reporting in the context of the UNCCD Strategic Framework 2018-2030 and SDG15.3

<b>Project Component</b>	<b>Expected Outcomes</b>	<b>Expected Outputs</b>	<b>GEF Project Financing(\$)</b>	<b>Confirmed Co- Financing(\$)</b>
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Project Component	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	GEF Project Financing(\$)	Confirmed Co-Financing(\$)
1. Facilitating UNCCD reporting against agreed indicators through updated and improved tools	1.1 UNCCD country Parties use the reporting platform and regularly produce national reports that meet UNCCD reporting standards	Output 1.1.1	869,182.00	300,000.00
		An Improved UNCCD reporting system to collect, assess and utilize data on Land Degradation, Desertification and Drought (DLDD) and LDN indicators.		
		Output 1.1.2		
		Standardized quality assurance guidelines for UNCCD reporting produced and disseminated to key stakeholders and country Parties in five regional annexes.		
		Output 1.1.3		
		Preliminary analysis of UNCCD reporting submitted by Parties and dissemination of results		
		Output 1.1.4		
		Revised and updated user manual guidelines, e-learning modules, and online training material developed to support country Parties		

<b>Project Component</b>	<b>Expected Outcomes</b>	<b>Expected Outputs</b>	<b>GEF Project Financing(\$)</b>	<b>Confirmed Co-Financing(\$)</b>
2: Enhancing capacities of Country Parties for reporting against UNCCD indicator base and improved versions of technical facilities	2.1: County Parties able to apply UNCCD guidelines and equipped with technical understanding of the reporting requirements for UNCCD and SDG 15.3	Output 2.1.1 Stakeholders? knowledge and capacity enhanced through five Regional level capacity building training workshops on data collection, management, analysis; gender mainstreaming in SLM, and monitoring of land degradation.	780,000.00	120,000.00

Project Component	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	GEF Project Financing(\$)	Confirmed Co-Financing(\$)
3: Enabling Parties to monitor and develop integrated approaches to address Desertification , Land Degradation, and Drought (DLDD) and gender mainstreaming	Outcome 3.1.	Output 3.1.1.	115,000.00	70,000.00
	UNCCD country Parties monitor land degradation and mainstream gender in Land Degradation Neutrality	Guidelines and tools for National Focal Points on land degradation monitoring to inform Land Use Planning and interventions to combat land degradation, desertification and drought and gender mainstreaming in SLM developed and disseminated.		
	Outcome 3.2	Output 3.2.1		
	Parties are able to incorporate reliable financial resources data into the activities to address DLDD planning.	Financial monitoring framework for tracking resources for UNCCD-related interventions developed.		
4: Monitoring and performance assessment	Outcome 4.1:	Output 4.1.1.	56,500.00	30,000.00
	Project Monitoring and adaptive management ensured	Project implementation is adequately monitored, and relevant performance assessment are conducted.		

Project Component	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	GEF Project Financing(\$)	Confirmed Co-Financing(\$)
Sub Total (\$)			1,820,682.00	520,000.00
Project Management Cost (PMC)				
179,318.00				25,000.00
Sub Total(\$)		179,318.00		25,000.00
Total Project Cost(\$)		2,000,000.00		545,000.00



**C. Source of Co-Financing for the Project by Name and by Type**

<b>Sources of Co-financing</b>	<b>Name of Co-financier</b>	<b>Type of Co-financing</b>	<b>Investment Mobilized</b>	<b>Amount(\$)</b>
Other	UNCCD Secretariat	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	310,000.00
Other	The Global Mechanism	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	235,000.00
<b>Total Co-Financing(\$)</b>				<b>545,000.00</b>

**Describe how any "Investment Mobilized" was identified**

Not applicable

D. GEF Financing Resources Requested by Agency, Country and Programming of Funds

Agency	Trust Fund	Country	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Amount(\$)	Fee(\$)
UNEP	GET	Global	Land Degradation	LD Set-Aside	2,000,000	190,000
Total Gef Resources(\$)					2,000,000.00	190,000.00

## Part II. Enabling Activity Justification

### A. ENABLING ACTIVITY BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Provide brief information about projects implemented since a country became party to the convention and results achieved

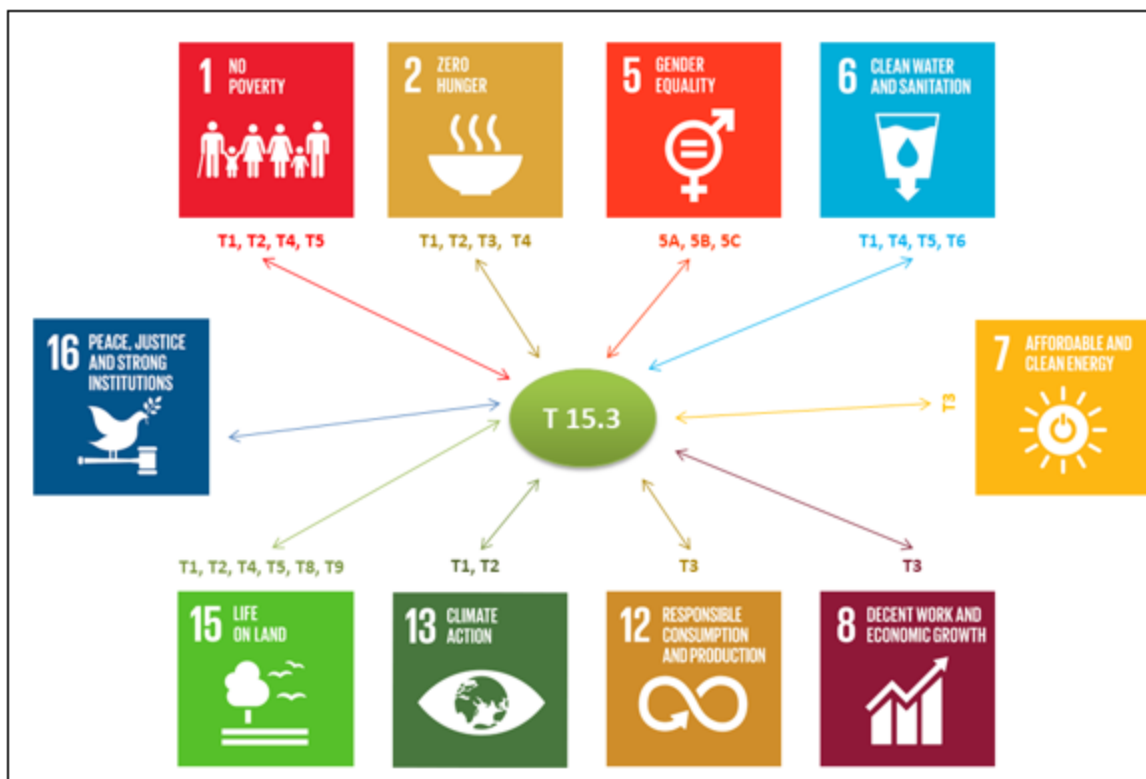
#### A1: Enabling Activity Context:

Desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD) are challenges of a global dimension. They contribute to and aggravate economic, social and environmental problems, such as poverty, poor health, lack of food security, biodiversity loss, water scarcity, reduced resilience to climate change, and forced migration. They continue to pose serious challenges to the sustainable development of all countries, particularly affected countries. According to UNCCD Science and Policy Interface report<sup>[1]</sup>, 'Nearly half the world's population feels the impact of degraded land, while there are over two billion hectares suitable for restoration. Although there have been major advances in how to do that, progress has been slow in how to prevent the degradation of other areas, to reach overall neutrality. The unbreakable relationship between land, biodiversity and climate change means that improvements in one area can also create opportunities for the others. However, realizing this potential requires a cohesive policy environment, which fosters the land governance and planning necessary for effective and responsible investment.'

At the thirteenth session of the Conference of Parties (COP13) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) held in September 2017 in Ordos, China, Parties adopted a new strategic framework for implementing the Convention (Decision 7/COP13). The new UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework ('The Strategy') is the most comprehensive global commitment to achieve Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); in particular SDG target 15.3.1 Proportion of land that is degraded over total land area' focusing primarily on the use of three sub-indicators including land cover and land cover change, land productivity, and carbon stocks above and below ground striving to achieve a land degradation-neutral world. In October 2015, at the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 12) of the UNCCD, Parties endorsed SDG target 15.3, which includes the concept of land degradation neutrality (LDN), as a strong vehicle for driving the implementation of the Convention (decision 3/COP.12). LDN has, therefore, become a guiding principle for UNCCD implementation, while at the same time contributing to other SDGs, in generating multiple co-benefits including those relating to climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration, food and water security, disaster risk reduction, and poverty reduction. (Figure.1). At the fourteenth session of the Conference of Parties of the UNCCD (COP14), held in September 2019 in New Delhi, India, Parties restated the importance of the LDN concept as a guiding principle driving action towards achieving the Convention's DLDD objectives (Decision 2/COP.14).

Figure 1: LDN, an Accelerator of SDGs <sup>[2]</sup>

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The figure depicts an important element of LDN being an SDG accelerator. An important contribution of LDN is that better management of land is central to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Avoiding, reducing and reversing land degradation is essential for reaching many of the SDGs, including poverty reduction, food and water security and gender equality as well as biodiversity conservation. A recent expert assessment [1] found that land degradation was relevant to the targets of all 17 Goals, and that synergies were available in every case. Scientists recognize that many measures associated with LDN, including sustainable land and forest management, ecosystem conservation and land restoration, contribute to climate change adaptation and mitigation[2]. The UN General Assembly has acknowledged that LDN can accelerate the achievement of multiple SDGs[3]<sup>3</sup> Figure 1 shows some of the SDGs with the strongest links to LDN.

The adoption of Strategy necessitated an overhaul of reporting modalities and procedures; decision 15/COP.13 requested the Secretariat to consider the further simplification of the reporting templates and other reporting tools for future reporting processes, including making the Performance Review and Assessment of Implementation System (PRAIS) more user-friendly. With the adoption of ?The Strategy,? the reporting requirements became increasingly technical, demanding a different approach to capacity building with a clear focus on quantitative data related to land-based indicators. The 2017?2018 reporting process constituted the first attempt by Parties to report on land-based indicators under the first strategic objective, using a standardized methodology and data. Three bio-physical progress indicators adopted by previous COPs, namely ?trends in land cover?, ?trends in land productivity or functioning of the land?, and ?trends in carbon stocks above and below ground?, also serve as sub-indicators to compute the SDG 15.3.1 indicator: ?Proportion of land that is degraded over total land area?, as a means to understanding the status of land degradation and the potential for land restoration.

To allow all Parties to report and assist with capacity gaps, Parties requested the Secretariat to make default data available for the three land-based indicators at COP 11 (Decision 22/COP11). Adhering to

this decision and recognizing that Parties face difficulties in collecting and compiling data using a standardized methodology, default data was made available to the Parties for the first time in cooperation with the European Space Agency, the International Soil Reference and the Information Centre and the Joint Research Centre, which ensured the availability of default data for all Parties for 2017-18 reporting process.

Support provided to the Parties for 2017-18 UNCCD reporting process was appreciated by the Parties at COP14. Parties recognized that the 2017-2018 UNCCD reporting process established baselines against which future assessments will be made (Decision 11/COP14). Through this decision, parties further requested the Secretariat to strengthen coordination efforts with the United Nations agencies involved, especially when considering synchronization between a potential follow-up Global Support Programme and other projects relevant to enabling activities funded by the Global Environment Facility, to ensure adequate and timely technical and financial support for the next reporting process.

The regional capacity-building workshops were conducted at a large scale during 2017-18 reporting cycle, which involved a wide range of stakeholders at the regional level. These workshops built the capacity of UNCCD National Focal Points for the 2018 reporting cycle, including using the default data made available as well as on approaches to replace such default data with other datasets more suitable to their national circumstances, when available. The GSP II played a key role by organizing these workshops and highlighting the significance of the UNCCD indicators to monitor land resources and creating a stronger awareness of the nexus of land degradation and desertification and the UNCCD agenda in the context of SDGs.

Moving to a four-year reporting cycle was decided by Parties at COP13 to grant UNCCD bodies and institutions more time to prepare reporting tools and capacity-building activities. The cycle will also provide sufficient time for Parties to compile data and submit their reports.

With this change in the reporting cycle and a long-term solution to reporting challenges, Parties expect enhanced quality of support for completing the UNCCD reporting process but also to monitor land degradation at national level. COP14 requested the Secretariat to use the available resources to (a) apply an efficient planning schedule for all aspects of the reporting process; (b) improve reporting tools (i.e. the provision of default data for all strategic objectives; capacity-building activities; establishment of a geo-spatial platform; quality assurance process for submitted reports; and quality control audit of the data presented) and (c) enable Parties to utilize the services provided for the UNCCD reporting and improve their capacity to monitor the implementation of the Convention at national level (Decision 11/COP14) and (d) enable country Parties to mainstream gender in long-term land use planning and land resources monitoring.

Decision 11/COP14 adopted the criteria, methodology and tiered approach for the establishment of a new indicator and monitoring framework for United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification strategic objective 3 related to drought. Through this decision, affected Parties are requested to report individually or in combination for level 1 indicator 'trends in proportion of land that is under drought over total land area?', level 2 indicator 'trends in proportion of population exposed to drought over total population?', and/or level 3 indicator 'trends in degree of drought vulnerability?', as deemed appropriate according to national and subnational conditions and circumstances. Global Support Programme will provide support and assistance to country Parties to report against the drought indicator also in addition to already adopted land-based progress indicators.

#### Barriers to UNCCD Reporting

The GSP III activities are structured to address key challenges and barriers identified during the implementation of GSP I and GSP II during previous reporting cycles. GSP III will assist countries in preparing their UNCCD national reports by providing the updated and processed dataset, capacity building and online tutorial and guidance required for the reporting process.

***Barrier 1: Limited capacity to develop national data***

The GSP I and II projects have contributed to reduce the capacity gap of UNCCD parties to fulfill their reporting obligations to the Convention. However, further support is required given the evolving context of the reporting needs. Country Parties have limited ability to more systematically access, collect and utilise data on DLDD. To meet the UNCCD reporting standards, Parties need to conduct quality assurance and require improved and updated tools including an updated PRAIS Portal that allow them to do preliminary analysis and dissemination of reports. However, Parties are not currently equipped with tailored improved tools to meet the reporting needs and standards of the UNCCD.

A study was conducted by UNCCD in 2019 on monitoring of biophysical indicators to explore the possibilities for the use of national data for biophysical indicator. The study<sup>[4]</sup> based on 128 country reports revealed that only 19% of countries reported on the land cover using national data, only 5% of countries used national data for land productivity reporting and only 7.5% of countries used national data on national soil carbon data reporting. These figures are very low and is unlikely to change drastically.

Likewise, the UNCCD CRIC17 report<sup>[5]</sup> on *Improving the procedures for communication of information as well as the quality and formats of reports* submitted to the COP14 underscored that the provision of default data contributed to achieving higher reporting rate for SO1 (improve the condition of affected ecosystems, combat desertification/land degradation, promote sustainable land management and contribute to land degradation neutrality) compared to the 2012-2013 reporting process. The study on the establishment of coordination mechanisms for monitoring UNCCD biophysical indicators and land degradation trends at national level also acknowledged that monitoring of biophysical indicators is demanding and requires expertise for trend analysis.

Country Parties should be receiving capacity building and support in the process of data collection, analysis and usage of an updated reporting platform guidelines for reporting. Since national datasets to monitor Land degradation are not available with many country Parties, in this situation, the most viable option is to provide to countries estimates derived from regional and global sources to increase the number and quality of reports. The countries capacity to use and manipulate these estimates will need also to be built [

***Barrier 2: Lack of skilled human resources to prepare a quality report in the context of the UNCCD reporting process***

Country parties agreed at COP14 that the 2017-2018 reporting process marks the first time that Parties to the Convention have followed a standardized methodology for the provision of information on land-based indicators for the strategic objectives of the 2018-2030 UNCCD Strategic Framework. Due to the adoption of land-based indicators and interpretation of default data and other associated requirements, Parties find challenging to complete the reporting process and also monitor the land degradation at national level using the land-based indicators and they would require regular technical assistance especially during the reporting time period. Countries often have shortage of skilled human resources, financing, and planning to follow-up on the commitments of global conventions. Without additional support and guidance, national skilled human resources are often not sufficient to report according to requisite technical and scientific standards for UNCCD reporting obligations.

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***Barrier 3: Lack of capacity to track financial flows for UNCCD implementation and long-term monitoring of land degradation and development of integrated land use planning at national level***

An OECD report<sup>[6]</sup> reveals that SDGs least targeted by funds and facilities are biodiversity and natural resources SDG14: and SDG15: Therefore, it is important to raise awareness among the parties and continue exploring a systematic approach to track financial flows related to UNCCD implementation. Keeping this in view, a standardized financial monitoring system needs to be developed so that countries can track UNCCD related finance and make case for its increase

Tracking financial flows related to the implementation of the UNCCD is challenging. The report published during CRIC17<sup>[7]</sup> on global analysis of financial data on UNCCD implementation acknowledged the challenge to monitor the entirety of UNCCD related financial and non-financial resources due to the cross-sectoral and cross-thematic nature of land-related issues. The report also underscored that desertification related Official Development Assistance (ODA) by members have remained relatively stable, whereas its relative share with respect to total ODA is declining. This suggests that the allocation of aid to UNCCD related activities has been losing its relative importance with regard to other sectors and environmental objectives. In addition to ODA, other sources of funds are also spent on land degradation related activities e.g. public funds, private investments, multilateral funding etc. but there is no systematic way financing for combating land degradation.

Furthermore, a study<sup>1</sup> on the establishment of coordination mechanisms for monitoring UNCCD biophysical indicators and land degradation trends at national level was carried out under Global Support Programme II. This study highlighted that one of the main challenges in monitoring land degradation at national level is absence of coordination amongst the relevant and stakeholder institutions and adequate capacity to monitor land resources at national level. Countries require a tailor-made coordination mechanism suited to the country's situation and circumstances which serves the purpose of not only coordination with all relevant stakeholders for monitoring the degradation of land but also assist in making informed decisions at the government level for long term policy development. In several instances, countries also need skilled personnel who not only keep the coordination system functional but also possess technical knowledge of land monitoring indicators.

**A2: The baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects**

Seven reporting cycles have been completed so far since the beginning of the UNCCD reporting in 1999. In order to support country Parties in using the PRAIS portal, a GEF funded Enabling Paradigm Shift on Monitoring and Assessment within the UNCCD (2010-2011) was developed by the Secretariat, the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD and UNEP to strengthen the reporting and review process for implementation of the Convention and its 10<sup>th</sup> Year Strategy and National Action Plan. After completion of the 'Enabling Paradigm Shift on Monitoring and Assessment within the UNCCD' project in 2011, a decline in a number of reports was noted during COP 11. A survey conducted among the country Parties for CRIC 12 highlighted the need of an additional support mechanism for the reporting process. As a result, GSP-I was developed and executed by the GM in close coordination with the Secretariat and with the implementing partner, UNEP, with financial assistance by the GEF. Based on lessons learned from the GSP I, Country Parties at COP 13 expressed the need for continuation of capacity building for the next reporting process. Decision 15/COP.13 requested the Secretariat, the GM and UNEP to provide targeted and timely support to capacity-building for reporting at the national and global level. This led to the development and implementation of the GSP II. GSP-II provided support and capacity building of Parties for 2017-18 reporting cycle. GSP III will be based on the achievements and lessons learned from previous Global Support Programmes (I and II).

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## **Global Support Programme I**

GSP I started in 2014 to increase the quantity and improve the quality of information available for the 2014-2015 reporting cycle. The Programme supported the simplification of the PRAIS reporting platform and provided technical assistance through capacity building workshops, the development of a user guidance manual, online training and the development of data quality framework. During 2014 ? 15 reporting cycle, a 90 % reporting rate (177 Parties) was achieved with the support from the GSP I. The quality of data and information was also improved through the quality assurance mechanism put in place by the Programme.

## **Global Support Programme II**

The GSP II started in 2017, to support Country Parties in establishing sound reporting and monitoring systems to report against the UNCCD strategy. In the context of the GSP II, the Secretariat provided for the first-time default data related to biophysical indicators to country Parties for the 2017 ? 2018 reporting cycle. During the 2017- 18 reporting cycle, six regional training workshops were organised and a 71% reporting rate was achieved thanks to the support of GEF financed GSP II. The Programme also helped country Parties in increasing the consistency and reliability of the data and information provided by the reporting entities. A total of 141 national reports were received with 48 from Africa, 37 from Asia, 27 from Latin America and Caribbean, 9 from North Mediterranean, 12 from Central and Eastern Europe, and 8 from Parties not belonging to any regional implementation annex.

The **following lessons** can be drawn based on the outcomes of the GSP I and GSP II:

1. The 2017-2018 reporting process highlighted the need to include a solid and robust e-learning platform for any future support to the UNCCD reporting cycles which would enable designated reporting officers to study and learn online while also being able to avail assistance from experts on stand-by regarding any difficulty that may emerge;
2. Capacity building on UNCCD reporting still needs technical and financial support especially since reporting requirements are shifting and evolving;
3. Due to the technical nature of UNCCD indicators, a regular and specialized backstopping is required for Parties to comply with the reporting obligations. This support is to be provided through face-to-face workshops, webinars, online tutorials etc.;
4. Considering that a robust analysis produced for CRIC is reliant on a critical number of reports submitted, the timing of regional workshops would need to be carefully considered in the future allowing sufficient time for the preparation and the approval of national reports before their submission to the UNCCD;
5. The enhanced coordination with national statistical offices can help increasing data ownership and to create synergies between the UNCCD reporting and national SDG processes. Cost-effectiveness of funds would increase while additional participants (GIS experts and/or NSO officers could be more easily funded through GSP resources);



6. Strengthen collaboration and partnership with development data repositories like Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is required to develop a standardized and systematic approach to track financial flows for implementation of the Convention; and
7. Monitoring overall financing for UNCCD implementation is challenging. Therefore, it is important to continue exploring methodologies and develop a systematic approach to track financial flows for the implementation of the Convention.

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[1] IPBES. 2018. Op. cit., p.12

[2] IPCC. 2019. Op. cit.

[3] UN General Assembly resolutions 71/229 (available at: <https://www.un.org/en/ga/71/resolutions.shtml>) and 72/220 (available at: <https://www.un.org/en/ga/72/resolutions.shtml>)

[4] UNCCD, 2019. A study on coordination mechanisms for monitoring UNCCD biophysical indicators and land degradation trends at national level. United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), Bonn, Germany, 51 pp

UNCCD, 2019. Improving the procedures for communication of information as well as the quality and formats of reports to be submitted to the Conference of the Parties. ICCD/CRIC(17)/8

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2017. Making Blended Finance Work for the Sustainable Development Goals.

[7] UNCCD, 2019. Global analysis of financial data. ICCD/CRIC(17)/INF.3.

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[1] In the forward UNCCD Science and Policy Interface Report "Creating an Enabling Environment for Land Degradation Neutrality and its potential contribution to enhancing well-being, livelihoods and the environment, 2019.

[2] The Global Mechanism (2019), Practical Guide for the Development of LDN Transformative projects and Programmes

## **B. ENABLING ACTIVITY GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIVITIES**

The proposal should briefly justify and describe the project framework. Identify also key stakeholders involved in the project including the private sector, civil society organizations, local and indigenous communities, and their respective roles, as

applicable. Describe also how the gender equality and women's empowerment are considered in project design and implementation

Consistent with the COP 14 decision, the proposed GSP III is conceived to provide tailored technical capacity and tools for Parties on land use planning including on national-level coordination and cooperation based on, inter alia, integrated land use planning, to guide the implementation of transformative projects and programmes. This also includes strengthening capacities of technical institutions and human resources by providing guidance on estimating and monitoring soil organic carbon for land-use planning, land degradation neutrality monitoring and other applications (Decision 18/COP.14).

With respect to drought issues, the GSP III would, in response to the COP14 decision (Decision 2/COP.14/b and c), provide support to i) Foster collaboration on drought impact mitigation capacity-building activities by building on existing partnerships with, but not limited to, the World Meteorological Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme, the National Drought Mitigation Centre, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and United Nations Water, and establishing new partnerships; and ii) Conduct online as well as face-to-face United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Drought Toolbox training sessions. These will support countries in their drought preparedness as well as resilience to sand and dust storms.

UNCCD Secretariat and Global Mechanism are currently leading the formulation of a global GEF Enabling Activity to establish practical linkages on LDN-drought at the global scale. Where applicable and appropriate, Trend-Earth products will be used to provide improved methods and tools for assessing drought and land degradation and understanding the socio-economic conditions of vulnerable communities in affected areas through the integration of free and open platforms to support country level implementation and drought reporting to the UNCCD. The proposed project enables the UNCCD Parties to implement relevant decisions on drought and supports the countries use the information derived from the UNCCD to complete and implement national drought plans for drought preparedness, regional advocacy, and capacity building in the framework of an intergovernmental working group (IWG) and Drought Initiative implementation, while emphasizing the importance of a holistic, integrated approach to disaster risk reduction and enhancing the resilience of communities to shocks and natural disasters (29/COP. 13; 23/COP.14).

The GSP III will provide technical assistance within the framework of GEF enabling activities focusing on three major components based on the lessons learned and issues identified during previous reporting cycle. The project will build on GSP I and GSP II experience in support UNCCD reporting.

The overarching project objective is: *to enhance technical and institutional capacity for land degradation monitoring and reporting in the context of the UNCCD Strategic Framework 2018-2030 and SDG15.3.*

The GSP III project will focus on enhancing Parties' capacities to report in the context of the UNCCD strategic framework 2018-2030 for monitoring the progress of UNCCD implementation. The proposed GSP III will provide technical assistance to the countries focusing on three components with associated expected outcomes and outputs.

Component 1: Facilitating UNCCD reporting against agreed indicators through updated and improved tools

Component 2: Enhancing capacities of Country Parties for reporting against UNCCD indicators

Component 3: Enabling Parties to monitor and develop integrated approaches to address DLDD.

## **B.2. EA Stakeholders**

Following are the key stakeholders who will be involved during the project implementation:

Stakeholders	Respective roles	Mean of engagement
<b>National Government/Country Parties including CSO</b>	<p>At National level, the GSP III will work together with UNCCD National Focal Points, who are in charge of the UNCCD reporting process at the national level</p> <p><b>The UNCCD Focal Points will engage with CSOs throughout the reporting process, including during data gathering and validation.</b></p>	<p>The programme will provide methodological as well as technical guidance to the national counterparts on the reporting process, reporting tools etc. This will include close cooperation between the UNCCD National Focal Points and the National Statistics Offices, in charge of the national SDG process. Country Parties are the key stakeholders who will participate in this programme to improve their reporting in the context of UNCCD. The Parties will work with the UNCCD institutions and technical partners to deliver against the output 1.1.1 and output 2.1.1. The support provided from workshop host Parties and completion of national reports is key for successful delivery of these outputs.</p>

<b>Scientific and research organizations:</b>	<p>The GSP III will further collaborate with a research institution, scientific organisation particularly supporting in data extraction, providing updated data, tools, methodologies to guide the Parties in developing a quality report and support relevant national actions.</p>	<p>At national level, the UNCCD National Focal Points and the UNCCD Science and Technology Correspondent (CST) will engage scientific and research organizations throughout the reporting process, including identification of possible national data sources and validation of results. Organizations specialised in remote sensing and GIS will be involved in delivering the outputs 1.1.1 and 2.1.1 to 1.2.1 to 1.2.4. . The activities under these outputs would help in developing a new reporting platform, providing default data, technical backstopping and quality assurance procedures. These partners would also help in output 2.1.1 by delivering technical sessions of the workshop related to strategic objectives.</p>
<b>Workshop host organizations</b>	<p>The workshop host organizations (to be identified) will support the organization of the training workshops in the respective regional implementation annexes in close collaboration with UNCCD Secretariat, its Regional Liaison Office (RLO) and the Global Mechanism.</p>	<p>The workshop host organizations will be identified by Regional Liaison Offices (RLOs) and the Global Mechanism and discussed with host countries and agree with them on the expectation of the secretariats as Capacity Building Workshop host countries at regional level. These organizations will be equipped with sufficient technical and administrative capacity for organizing and delivering the regional workshops. This arrangement will support in successful delivery of output 2.1.1.</p>

<p><b>Multilateral/international organizations</b></p>	<p>UNEP is the UN Agency leading in the supporting the convention implementation through mobilisation of GEF resources for global level support and at national level.</p> <p>Other UN agencies and other multilateral organizations (FAO, IUCN, CI etc.) will be involved in various interventions especially capacity building, Drought and gender mainstreaming activities.</p>	<p>Acts as the GEF Implementing Agency of the project</p> <p>Support project implementation</p> <p>Provide guidance and advise for achieving results</p> <p>Member of the Project Steering Committee</p> <p>Participate to the convention meetings to support project advocacy together with GEF and UNCCD Secretariats</p> <p>These organizations provide assistance to the national governments in alignment of activities with the UNCCD strategic framework and also mainstreaming gender in the policies and programmes for combating land degradation and desertification. Information and dialogue with those Agencies will be maintained as they may be involved in future global projects with potential connections with the themes addressed in this GSP III, notably on drought issues.</p>
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<p><b>The Convention's institutions:</b> UNCCD</p>	<p>Secretariat and Global Mechanism are the key stakeholders in the reporting process. The UNCCD Secretariat and the Global Mechanism will provide technical assistance and guidance to the Parties, ensuring availability and sound utilization of templates, guidelines and appropriate platform/system for reporting. The project will also provide a platform to allow for the continual exchange of information and experiences among all stakeholders as the project progresses, thus ensuring that lesson learned are shared readily.</p>	<p>Global Mechanism as the Project Executing Agency and the UNCCD Secretariat as Executing Partner and they would work together to achieve the intended outputs of the project.</p>
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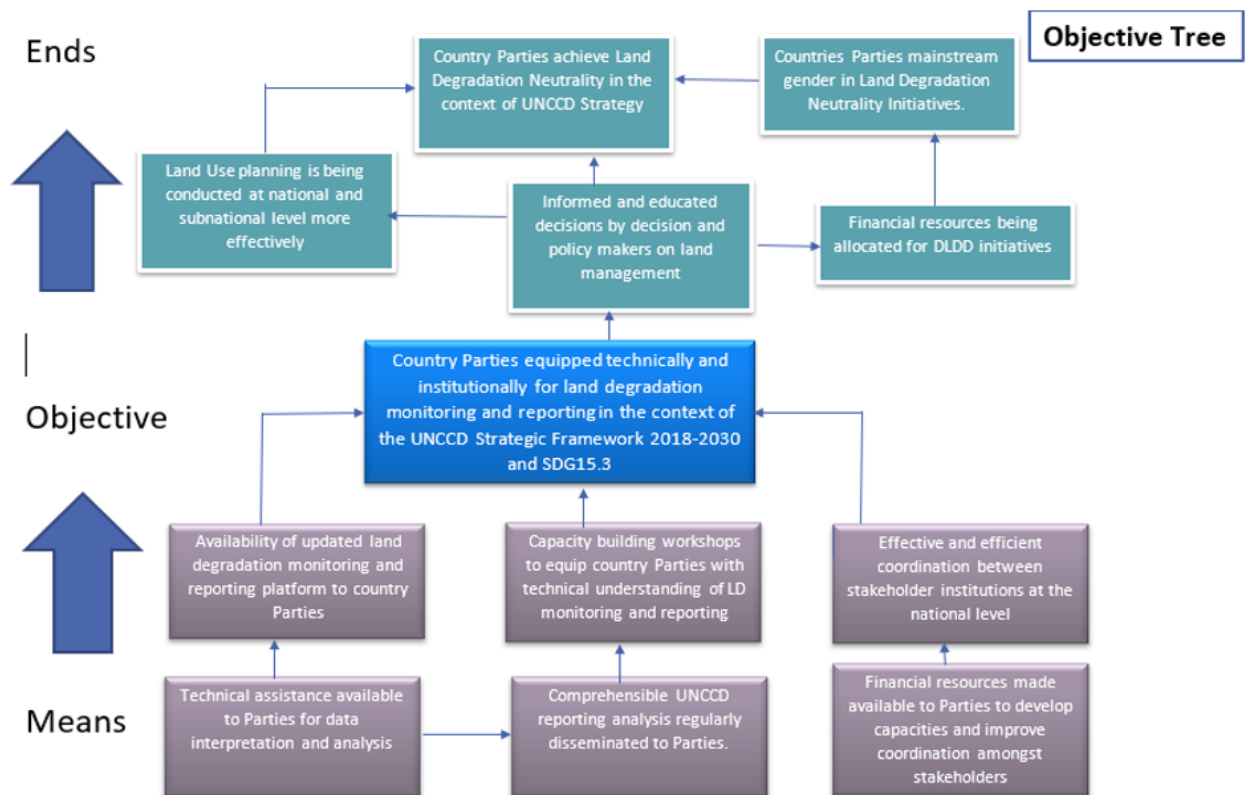
At the global level, the GSP III will coordinate with the GEF and the implementing agency UN Environment. The UN Environment, Ecosystem Division will be part of the Project Steering committee reviewing the progress, providing regular feedback and guidance as necessary for the project implementation. The UNEP Law Division as the corporate entity in charge of the Environment Convention will be part of the Steering Committee and its participation will be supported by the project. Depending on matter to be discussed, the Steering Committee can on ad hoc basis invite any other UN or international institution which participation because relevant to the UNCCD Reporting process.

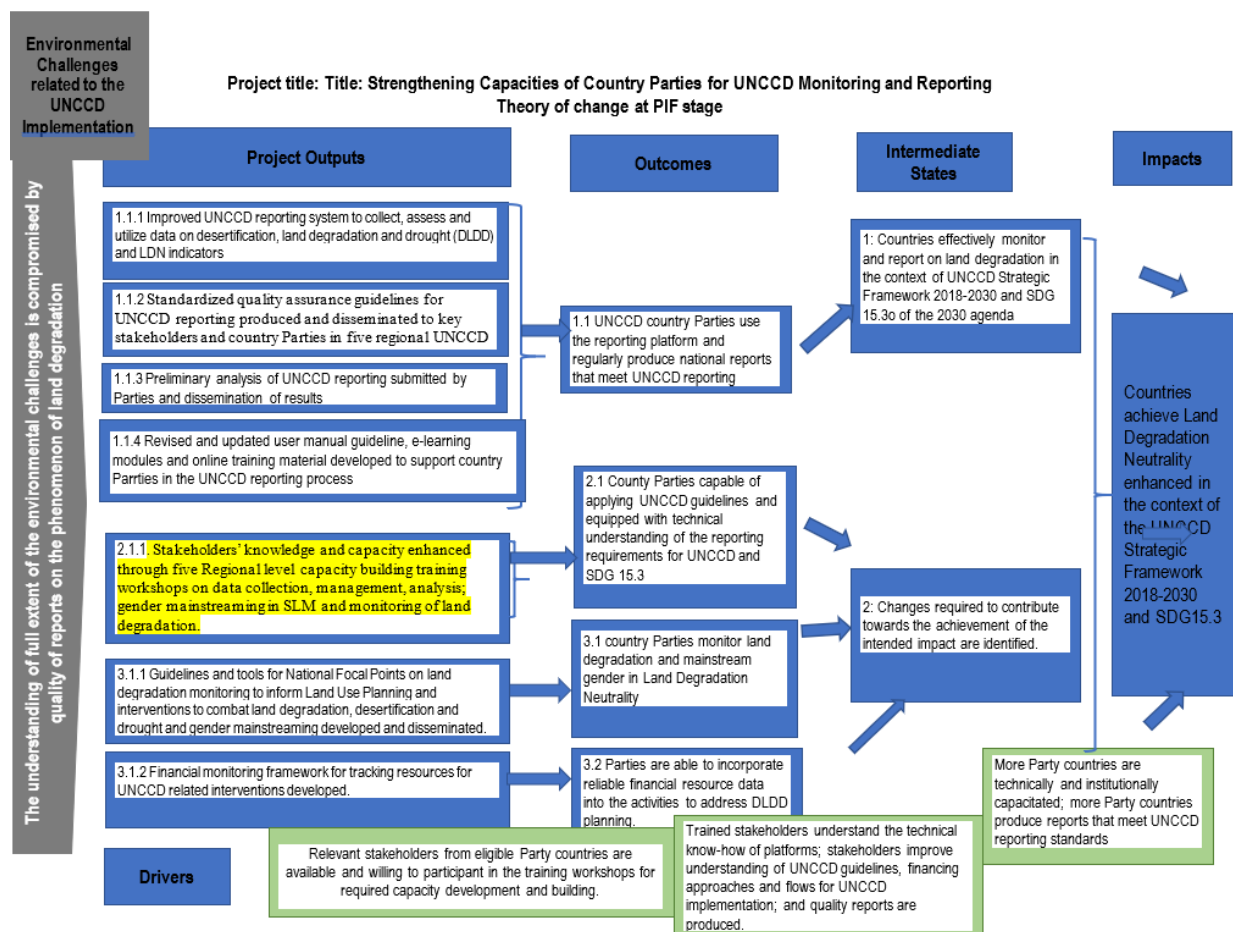
Private sector representatives will be engaged as appropriate by the National UNCCD Focal Points in the UNCCD reporting process at national level. The engagement may include the provision of UNCCD related-data, and the validation of country report. To the extent possible, the UNCCD National Focal Points will involve existing UNCCD related coordination mechanisms, which normally include private sector representatives, in the reporting process. Given the increased importance of private financial flows, the private sector will be one of the stakeholders engaged on capacity building events, particularly on matters related to SO5.

### B.3. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

Gender equality is a core cross-cutting objective of UNCCD recognized by the Parties. At COP 13, the Gender Action Plan (GAP) was adopted to support and enhance the implementation of gender-related decisions and mandates. The Strategy[1] acknowledges that gender equality is crucial in implementing the UNCCD Strategic Framework 2018-2030 and achieving the goal of the 2030 Agenda. The document[2] ICCD/CRIC(17)/CRP.1 presented at CRIC 17 highlights the progress made in addressing gender equality and women's empowerment in the implementation of the UNCCD. It also acknowledges that the 2017-18 reporting process did not include any specific entry points for reporting the gender related matters. 57 (out of 140 reported) country reports provided information on experiences engaging women and youth in promoting alternative livelihood while 88 country reports provided information on practices implemented at the country level to promote alternative livelihood. Decision 11/COP14 *requests* the secretariat to align the reporting process for strategic objectives 1-5 with the gender-responsive indicators and guidelines under development as part of the Gender Action Plan activities to ensure that the gender dimensions of land degradation are fully captured. Regular reporting on the interventions of the Parties in order to assess progress, gaps and challenges as well as to capture lessons learned would ensure that interventions deliver meaningful results for women effectively in accordance with their needs and priorities, contribute to sustainable land management, and do not exacerbate gender inequalities or overburden women. In submitting their national reports, Parties will include the efforts to address gender equality and women's empowerment in UNCCD implementation and the lessons learned.

GSP III will follow the guidance outlined in the UNCCD Gender Action Plan, ensuring women's participation during the design, planning, implementation of the project activities, particularly capacity building. As also noted in the project description section, the GSP III will further implement COP 14 decisions on integrating gender in reporting exercise. The plan of activities will be further refined as the project enter implementation after inception ensuring women's participation in all relevant activities.





[1] Decision 7/COP.13 Paragraph 8

[2] The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Gender Action Plan as a mechanism for improving the living conditions of affected populations first experiences and the way forward (ICCD/CRIC(17)/CRP.1) [https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/sessions/documents/2019-01/ICCD\\_CRIC%2817%29\\_CRP.1-1900678E.pdf](https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/sessions/documents/2019-01/ICCD_CRIC%2817%29_CRP.1-1900678E.pdf)

### C. DESCRIBE THE ENABLING ACTIVITY AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Discuss the work intended to be undertaken and the output expected from each activity as outlined in Table A

The project objectives will be achieved through three components described below:

#### Component 1: Facilitating UNCCD reporting against agreed indicators through updated and improved tools



Component 1 would focus on establishing or updating reporting tools to support Parties' efforts on reporting to the Convention. This component will be further guided by COP 14 decision for improving the reporting platform, prefilled data (default data) and reporting tools. Through component 1, pre-filled default data in country-specific reporting template will be made accessible to the Parties in all UN languages.

Based on previous experiences and COP 14 decisions, the GSP III will update guidance notes, provide tools and methodologies, online and on-site training on use of these tools. GSP III will also focus on establishing e-learning courses, including targeted learning material to support the reporting process. In addition to capacity building workshops, GSP III will also develop webinars and e-learning material that will remain a reference on the web for a longer period. This approach will ensure that the Programme will guide countries more effectively in the application of the appropriate tools for the reporting, through the proposed guidance notes and trainings.

The UNCCD incorporated the use of the Trends.Earth toolbox during the regional capacity building workshops supported by the GSPII. This toolbox was developed by Conservation International as a part of the 'Enabling the use of global data sources to assess and monitor land degradation at multiple scales' project, funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF-6). Trends.Earth supports the calculation and analysis of the three land-based indicators used for reporting on Strategic Objective (SO) 1 and for estimating SDG indicator 15.3.1 (i.e. the proportion of land degraded over the total land area), in compliance with the UNCCD and SDG reporting requirements. The toolbox gave users the opportunity to substitute default datasets with other national datasets, thereby meeting the request to steadily enhance country ownership of the reporting process. Parties appreciated the introduction of Trends.Earth toolbox in the 2017-18 reporting process and requested the enhancement of Trends.Earth, suggesting additional features. GSP III envisions the continuation of this collaboration for future reporting. Under GEF7, a land degradation focal area enabling activity project titled 'Strengthening Land Degradation Neutrality data and Decision Making through free and open access platforms' is currently under preparation. Such project would support the development of additional functionality of Trends.Earth, GSP III will collaborate with Conservation International to incorporate the updated version of the Trends.Earth toolbox into the UNCCD reporting process and to facilitate country parties' efforts to identify potential land degradation hotspots and bright spots for improvement.

Based on both the benefits gained and lessons learned in the previous reporting cycle, in decision 11/COP.14, Parties requested the secretariat to improve reporting tools, including the establishment of a *geospatial data management platform* that integrates map files (geospatial data heretofore not directly reported by countries), PRAIS reporting templates (tabular data summarizing the geospatial data inputs), analytical and decision support tools (including Trends.Earth) and visualization tools (both for analysis prior to reporting and communication of the results afterwards). Global Support Programme would support the development of this platform which will be undertaken in stages to meet the requirements detailed by Parties at the 17th session of the Committee for the review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 17) and at COP 14, effectively elevating UNCCD reporting to the highest levels in terms of national relevance and utility (e.g., ease of use; decision support; capacity development; meeting the national to global monitoring need while being relevant at the national to sub-national levels) comparability (e.g., facilitating data and methodological harmonization) and security (e.g., data, data management and flows and the application itself).

An important consideration in designing a geospatial platform to support *national* reporting among country Parties seeking to collectively monitor the impact of a global environmental agreement like the UNCCD is that each government submission is effectively a unique data set. While the approach mandated by Parties begins with the consideration of default global data sets, countries are encouraged to conduct their own analysis with national data, albeit using globally agreed upon methods.

The expected outcome and associated outputs from component 1 are to be the following: UNCCD country Parties use the reporting platform and regularly produce national reports that meet UNCCD

reporting standards(outcome 1.1) The outputs to be delivered will be: an improved UNCCD reporting system to collect, assess and utilize data on land degradation, desertification and drought (DLDD) and LDN indicators. (output 1.1.1);

Standardized quality assurance guidelines for UNCCD reporting produced and disseminated to key stakeholders and country Parties in five regional UNCCD annexes.

(output 1.1.2); Preliminary analysis of UNCCD reporting submitted by Parties and dissemination of results (output 1.1.3); and Revised and updated user manual guideline, e-learning modules and online training material developed to support country Parties in the UNCCD reporting process (Output 1.1.4)

## **Component 2: Enhancing capacities of country Parties for reporting against UNCCD indicators base and improved versions of technical facilities**

This component will respond to country needs highlighted during CRIC 17[1] to provide clear guidelines and technical support for future reporting. Targeted and timely workshops will be organized at the regional level involving Country Parties relevant for reporting. These workshops will be organized in cooperation with the host countries and host organizations. Parties will demonstrate their commitment to capacity building for UNCCD implementation by hosting the regional workshops through their own resources. In addition to facilitating the convening of these workshops, the country governments will also utilize their own administrative and human resources for completion of UNCCD reporting as part of their in-kind co-financing. The workshops will provide an opportunity of hands-on training for the country Parties on data analysis, monitoring of land degradation and gender mainstreaming One or two representatives from key national agencies responsible for reporting will be invited to participate in the workshops. Considering the lessons learned from previous regional workshops, GSP III will target to strengthen countries' capacity requirements for regular reporting under the Convention. These regional workshops are intended to:

- i. Enable Country Parties to participate effectively in the UNCCD reporting process
- ii. Inform Country Parties about the contribution of the UNCCD reporting to the reporting process of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular, target 15.3 on Land Degradation Neutrality

A helpdesk feature will be implemented to assist parties in communicating their request and inquiries related to reporting. A dedicated team, including data and regional experts, will be established for addressing queries in a timely manner.

The expected outcome and outputs under this component will include Country Parties able to apply UNCCD guidelines and equipped with technical understanding of the reporting requirements for UNCCD and SDG 15.3

(outcome 2.1) Stakeholders' knowledge and capacity on data collection, management, analysis; gender mainstreaming in SLM and monitoring of land degradation enhanced through five Regional level

capacity building training workshops on data collection, management, analysis; gender mainstreaming in SLM and monitoring of land degradation (output 2.1.1)

### **Component 3: Enabling Parties to monitor land degradation and develop integrated approaches to address DLDD and gender mainstreaming.**

Parties at CRIC 17[2] stressed the importance of establishing sustainable monitoring systems at the national level and requested the Secretariat and the GM and invited financial and technical partners to take actions to support the countries in the preparation of their national data, including the development of national monitoring systems and the improvement of national indicators. Decision 16/COP.14 also encouraged country Parties for strengthening capacities of technical institutions and human resources by providing guidance on estimating and monitoring soil organic carbon for land-use planning, land degradation neutrality monitoring and other applications;

This component seeks to take a long term perspective that is beyond a single reporting cycle and will be built on two analyses: i) the study[3] carried out on the tracking of financial flow with the support of GSP II and ii) the report on coordination mechanisms for monitoring UNCCD biophysical indicators and land degradation trends at the national level. This report focused on the use of national data for UNCCD reporting, identifying options for integrating the monitoring of LDN indicators into existing national monitoring mechanisms and proposing specific recommendations on action to establish a coordination mechanism to monitor the biophysical indicators at the national level.

This component will develop guidelines and/or online tools for country Parties that pursue the establishment of monitoring systems at the national level for land degradation and its integration in the land use planning system. The intent is to provide guidance and share successful country experiences which should lead to better land management decisions at the country level. The component will also be used to partner with interested and relevant institutions to further assist Parties in the establishment of monitoring systems. This guideline or tools development will be developed in coordination with the Parties and will be disseminated to the national focal points and stakeholders to support in long term land use planning process. The guidelines will also focus on the role of women, youth and marginalized communities in land use planning and tools to track the gender mainstreaming.

To complement the information shared by country Parties on strategic objective 5 (SO 5) Financial Flows, the Global Mechanism analyzed global financial flows supporting the implementation of the Convention. The analysis concluded that the monitoring the entirety of UNCCD related financial and non-financial resources is challenging due to cross-sectoral and cross-thematic nature of land-related issues as well as the multiple sources, institutions and instruments supporting activities that combat desertification/land degradation and drought. The study also highlighted that due to lack of desertification markers for financial flows beyond bilateral ODA, it is important to continue exploring methodological and data advances to develop a comprehensive and systematic approach to track financial flows for the implementation of the Convention and improving partnership with financing entity. Furthermore, the Parties at CRIC 17 requested the GM to explore options to strengthen coordination with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development to (i) provide meaningful and quantitative information from reporting on SO 5; and (ii) continue developing a more integrated financial monitoring framework for tracking and better monitoring the resources for interventions under the Convention.

Component 3 will also build on UNCCD's effort to explore additional opportunities of financing for UNCCD implementation. This component will target the development of new partnerships to strengthen the financial monitoring framework in the context of UNCCD implementation.

The expected outcome and outputs under this component will include: country Parties monitor land degradation and mainstream gender in Land Degradation Neutrality (outcome 3.1.) Parties are able to incorporate reliable financial resources data into the activities to address DLDD planning. (outcome 3.2) and Guidelines and tools for National Focal Points on land degradation monitoring to inform Land Use Planning and interventions to combat land degradation, desertification and drought and gender mainstreaming in SLM developed and disseminated (output 3.1.1). Financial monitoring framework for tracking resources for UNCCD-related interventions developed. (output 3.2.1).

Component 4: All project activities and outputs described in each of the Components and Outcomes will be monitored. The project team and partners will monitor the implementation of all activities that are undertaken. In other words, when the project undertakes any activity, the implementation and results of that activity will be monitored. This will lead to the project team and partners making conscious decisions about the activities that are undertaken ?questioning why the activity is necessary, what will be the intended result or impact, and how the result or impact should be demonstrated through monitoring processes. The Outcome and output related to this component are: Project Monitoring and Evaluation and adaptive management ensured (Outcome 4.1) and Project implementation is adequately monitored, and relevant evaluations are conducted (Output 4.1.1)

Annex A: Project log frame

Annex B: Project Key Deliverables and Benchmark

## **C2. Enabling Activity [global environmental benefits \(GEFTF\)](#) and/or [adaptation benefits \(LDCF/SCCF\)](#);**

The proposed project is in line with the GEF land degradation focal area, LD set-asides for supporting UNCCD Enabling activities with a view to mainstream SDGs. This project is in alignment with GEF's mandate to generate global benefits through enabling activities that contribute to address DLDD. GSP III will assist the Parties to meet their reporting obligations under the UNCCD as well as monitoring trends for SDG reporting in the context of LDN.

The project is aimed at supporting the UNCCD reporting against the Strategic Framework of the UNCCD aligned with SDGs especially SDG 15.3. This SDG supports several global and regional initiatives which promote sustainable land management and restoration/rehabilitation of land e.g. Bonn Challenge on Forest and Landscape Restoration (FLR), the New York declaration on Forests and the 4 per 1000 Initiatives, Aichi Biodiversity Targets of CBD and regional initiatives such as Initiative for Latin America and the Caribbean, and the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR 100). The reports by country Parties will provide an overview of how countries are implementing UNCCD at the national level. The progress indicators used to monitor trends of LDN will reinforce the achievement of other SDGs related to food security, environmental protection and enhance resilience to global environmental change[4]. The information on tracking financial flows for UNCCD implementation will enable country Parties to mainstream LDN into their national policies and inform the designing of multi-focal area projects to generate multiple global environments and socio-economic benefits for local populations.

## **C3. Enabling Activity Innovation, sustainability and potential for scaling up.**

The long-term sustainability of this proposed GSPIII is underpinned on its aim to build the capacity of UNCCD country parties to incorporate innovative tools and approaches to monitor, report, and integrate into long term planning DLDD indicators. The project has a significant component on capacity building of national entities to ensure long term monitoring of LDN indicators for SDG reporting. Based on the UNCCD indicators, countries can report on land-based indicators on the SDG indicator 15.3.1. The Parties will be able to monitor land degradation status and trends and formulate plans and policies for SLM practices, to avoid land degradation. The long-term monitoring of UNCCD indicators will subsequently be integrated in the land use planning contributing to the sustainability of activity. It represents a sizeable opportunity for governments to create sustainable development leverage by using the multiple benefits of LDN as an accelerator for UNCCD implementation as well as for the achievement of other SDGs. The global UNCCD related financial flows have remained rather unclear because of cross-sectoral nature of interventions. The project will venture in developing a financial monitoring framework which will be step towards adequately estimating the global financing geared towards combating land degradation. This will help the country Parties in making a case for increase in this funding. The project innovatively brings together the UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework as well as the SDGs into a suite of development interventions to respond to socio-economic and environmental impacts of land degradation. The project makes a case for the embeddedness of the UNCCD strategic priorities within the global development agenda, particularly SDG 15.3. By focusing on supporting Parties to improve their abilities to report, to enhance their institutional capacities and monitoring, the project is posed to support countries to more effectively respond to the multiple challenges of the continued degradation of productive landscapes across the globe.

#### **C4. Institutional structure of the project, including monitoring and evaluation coordination at the project level.**

The GSPIII programme, due to its nature supporting the reporting process, will have a link with other parallel and related initiative. The programme will closely work with related initiative including the following:

##### **Coordination with successor UNEP Umbrella Project**

While GSP III will provide an enabling environment for UNCCD reporting at the global and regional level, it will build operational level synergy with the Umbrella Project at the national level. The Umbrella projects will continue providing timely and coordinated support at the national level. Umbrella project will support the national-level implementation in accordance with countries obligation to the convention. The synergies between the two projects will be ensured through close coordination between the UNCCD Secretariat/Global Mechanism and UN Environment, a coordinated information exchange with countries, systematic cooperation between staff/consultants of both projects, and collaboration in the organization of capacity building events.

##### **Coordination with Strengthening Land Degradation Neutrality and drought resilience data and decision-making (Trends.Earth)**

The GEF-6 funded Land Degradation Monitoring Project (LDMP), which was implemented by Conservation International in cooperation with UNCCD, NASA, CSIRO and other partners, developed the Trends.Earth<sup>[5]</sup> tool for monitoring land use change using earth observations in an innovative

desktop and cloud-based system. In this context, Trends.Earth was introduced in the UNCCD reporting process and was instrumental during the 2017-18 reporting process to harmonize methods, enhance the comparability of the data and facilitate the integration of national data based on specific national circumstances. Decision 11/ requests the secretariat to collaborate with Conservation International to ensure that Trends.Earth can support the preparation and analysis of data for reporting in a form that can be automatically transferred to the performance review and assessment of implementation system (PRAIS) and that the functions of Trends.Earth are expanded to help generate reports to serve at the national level;

GSP III will continue coordinating with the successor project updating the current Trends.Earth tool with additional functionalities, including to assess drought in the context of land degradation for future reporting. The GSP III will encourage Parties to the use of tools and provide hands-on exercises during regional capacity building workshops. The successor project **of Conservation International** ?Strengthening Land Degradation Neutrality data and decision-making through free and open access platforms? is expected to be financed under GEF 7 replenishment cycle.

#### **Coordination with FAO and IUCN on LDN, Land Use Planning and Drought:**

Following COP14 decisions, UNCCD Secretariat and the Global Mechanism will further strengthen its partnerships on capacity building for drought monitoring and mitigation activities. In this context, synergies will be developed with the enabling activity implemented by FAO, titled, Enabling Activities for Implementing UNCCD COP Drought Decisions. The objective of this EA is to enable the UNCCD parties to implement national drought plans according to the principles of Integrated Drought Management. This EA is already approved under GEF-7 and is expected to start implementation in near future. IUCN is also working on developing an enabling activity which will focus on Integrating Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) into land use planning frameworks to strengthen national UNCCD enabling environments. This activity is also expected to be financed by GEF-7 and will build close linkages with GSP-III activities with respect to integrating LDN into long-term national land use plans.

#### **C5. Consistency with National Priorities**

The Project is consistent with the following national strategies, reports and assessments:

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

UNCCD Reporting

UNCCD National Action Plans (NAPs)

Parties to the Convention are required to communicate, through the UNCCD secretariat and report on measures undertaken to implement the Convention as provisioned in article 26 of the convention and the decision 11/COP.1. The information communicated by Parties through reporting is valuable also for other stakeholders that work on the implementation of the UNCCD at national and local levels.

The GSP III is directly linked to UNCCD Reporting. The UNCCD reporting process monitors progress made in the implementation of the UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework for implementing the Convention adopted at the thirteenth session of the COP (decision 7/COP.13). In line with this new strategic framework, national reporting involves two main types of information: data on the progress

towards the five strategic objectives and narratives stories of cases on actual implementation efforts under Convention.

The project will also build on and create synergies with other national strategies including the national SDG process and relevant national policies developed in the context of the Rio convention, including national action related to the UNFCCC (e.g. National Communication, Biennial Update Report (BUR), National Determined Contribution (NDCs) and CBD (CBD National reports, NBSAPs, Cartagena Protocol National Report, Nagoya Protocol National Report).

#### **C6: Enabling Activity Knowledge Management.**

Knowledge management approach will be applied to all three components of the project. Data acquired from different sources are processed and made available to the Parties as default data. The reporting platform, reporting tools and guidelines for reporting will be made accessible to all Country Parties. Parties will also have access to UNCCD e-learning courses and online tutorial videos guiding the reporting process through the UNCCD Knowledge Hub.

The national reports submitted by the Parties will be made available online allowing access to final reports. In addition, a comprehensive analysis of the reports will be prepared for intersessional CRIC deliberations tentatively expected in 2022. The analysis report will be made available as official documents.

The outreach material on UNCCD reports will be disseminated through different channels. The case study on the establishment of a national monitoring system and information document on financial monitoring framework will be disseminated in line with COP decisions.

#### **C7. Enabling Activity Risks.**

Potential Risk	Level	Proposed measure (to be further developed during the project design)
Participants attending the capacity building workshop may not be involved in reporting	Low	Capacity building workshops will target relevant personnel in countries who are involved in UNCCD reporting processes. This will be determined with support from UNCCD National Focal Points
Lack of country capacity to produce a quality report	Moderate	Organization of capacity building workshop, availability of technical backstopping through helpdesk, online tutorial, guidelines for reporting. That is, this project will seek to build the very capacities that are lacking to ensure improved quality reporting
Availability of updated data in time	Low	The project will seek to sequentially prioritise the development and updating of tools to ensure the access, collection and analyses of data in a timely manner
Staff turn over	Moderate	Efforts will be done to work with relevant personnel, and with support from the UNCCD Focal Points, ensure stability in the staff whose capacities will be built for UNCCD reporting. Additionally, there will be technical backstopping.



Potential Risk	Level	Proposed measure (to be further developed during the project design)
Low consideration of resilience and sustainability; human rights, gender equality and women empowerment, accountability and leave no one behind--are still applicable for low risk.	Low	Special attention will be given to potentially affected marginalized and vulnerable population in terms of project's proposed capacity building for national level policy and strategies development.
COVID-19 (see a brief global overview in the section below this table)	Moderate to High	The core activities of the proposed project will focus on capacity development at regional level to enhance technical and institutional capacity for land degradation monitoring in the context of the UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework and SDG15.3. To the extent possible, the project will seek to organize trainings/workshops virtually to limit and minimize the potential of spreading the disease through physical contacts. Therefore, the proposed project will adopt the 'human resource first' approach to ensure that the health of stakeholders is not endangered. This means that the proposed project will develop strategies that will ensure and support the full participation of stakeholders in virtual trainings/workshops, including a platform for knowledge sharing among participants/stakeholders.
Climate Change (see a brief global overview in the section below this table)	Low	The proposed project will focus on providing technical assistance at global level for Parties to enhance their technical and institutional capacity for land degradation monitoring in the context of the UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework and SDG15.3. Given this biased focus on 'software interventions' that do not require on-the-ground direct responses to the six 'life-supporting sectors' that are impacted by climate change (i.e. food, water, health, ecosystem services, habitat and infrastructure), the potential risk of climate change on the proposed project is low. Additionally, given the centrality of the health and socioeconomic value of land to food production; water resources; human and animal health, ecosystem services, human habitat and infrastructure, building and enhancing technical and institutional capacities for land degradation monitoring will keep countries better informed, more resilient and better prepared to respond to the impacts of climate change on the 'life-supporting sectors'.

**Covid-19 global situation**



Countries participating in the GSPIII are low-income developing countries (LIDCs) or transition economies (TEs). As of first week of December, 2020, [WHO](#) regional data[1] indicate the following confirmed cases of COVID-19: the Americas have recorded about 28.6 million; Europe has recorded about 20.2 million; South-East Asia has recorded about 11.2 million; Eastern Mediterranean has recorded about 4.3 million; Africa 1.6 has recorded about million; and Western Pacific has recorded about 0.9 million.

The dawn of COVID-19 has sent economic shockwaves around the globe, and the LIDCs and TEs are in a particularly vulnerable situation owing to their compromised ability to effectively respond and recover from the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic. LIDCs and TEs have experienced economic domestic contractions due to the lockdown measures to contain the spread of COVID-19. According to the [IMF](#), limited resources and weak institutions constrain the capacity of many LIDC governments to support their economies in times of shocks such as COVID-19. Additionally, many LIDCs are still bearing the brunt of high public debt levels. In some of these countries, the dawn of COVID-19 has led to a sharp contraction in real exports, lower export prices, especially for oil, less capital and remittances inflows, and reduced tourism receipts.

The pandemic reveals the faults in global conservation efforts. This is because the pandemic has been linked to human-wildlife interaction. Nonetheless, the pandemic is first and foremost, taken as a humanitarian crisis rather than a conservation crisis. In this regard, more financial resources are channeled towards handling the pandemic as a humanitarian crisis, thereby limiting resources for enhancing institutional capacities for avoiding, reducing and reversing land degradation in affected countries. Additionally, due to limited resources for natural resources management, and financial benefits that accrue to local communities (through for example, community natural resource management models), the pandemic limits economic opportunities - this increases reliance on the exploitation of natural resources, leading to resource degradation.[2] As LIDCs and TE struggle with financial deficits accentuated by the pandemic, the proposed project will support the countries in responding to potential elevated levels of land use changes that are likely to increase due to constrained socioeconomic opportunities of particularly direct land-dependent communities.

Global measures to limit the spread of COVID-19 include health certificates for travelers. Also, there might be lockdowns in some countries depending on the evolution of the COVID-19. Therefore, this is very likely to thwart the possibility for trainings/workshops where participants physically meet in conference halls. Additionally, this will limit the possibility for participants from different countries and regions to exchange knowledge/experiences, an aspect which is always cherished during training/workshop sessions when participants physically meet.

## Climate Change global situation

The scientific consensus regarding how climate change affects land use and land cover is that the changes in temperature and rainfall patterns (or climate envelopes) lead to the emergence of new, hot climates in the tropics and increases in the frequency, intensity and duration of extreme events (e.g., heatwaves, very heavy rainfall, drought). These emergent hot climates will negatively affect land use (through changes in crop productivity, irrigation needs and management practices) and land cover through loss of vegetation productivity in many parts of the world, and would overwhelm any benefits to land use and land cover derived from increased atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations.[3]

Climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of the extreme weather and climate events that are affecting all countries. However, because of their geographical location, reliance on climate-sensitive natural resources and development gaps in general, developing countries, and low-income countries in particular, are at the greatest risk of climate hazards. Left unattended, climate hazards are likely to increase poverty, worsen inequalities, exacerbate food insecurity and cause health problems, among other hardships, which may reverse years of development progress in some countries. This is because climate change has debilitating effects on six "life-supporting sectors," namely: food production; water resources; human and animal health, ecosystem services, human habitat and infrastructure. According to the Notre Dame Adaptation Index[4] (ND-GAIN [here](#)), countries at the highest risk of climate change are concentrated in Africa and South and South-East Asia, where the capacity to prevent (or even cope with) most negative impacts is poor. Many countries participating in the GSPIII fall within this "highest risk," while others fall within the high or moderate risk (see the World Economic and Social Survey 2016 [here](#)). Climate hazards also have differential impacts on people and communities within countries. These impacts are largely determined by deep-rooted socioeconomic inequalities. As a result, they tend to be particularly detrimental to the most disadvantaged groups of society, which are hence disproportionately exposed and vulnerable to climate hazards.

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### **C8: Communication Strategy:**

Communication and public awareness is one of the pillars of the implementation of the Convention at the national level. This will be achieved by this project both in ensuring stakeholders' participation and communication and mainstreaming strategy. The public participation will include (i) involvement of key stakeholders, including the Civil society, in the national reporting process; (ii) organization of inclusive meetings during the processes and results validation meetings; (iii) special meetings with Government officials to address the issues of SLM and national development policies and strategies; and (iv) targeted media involvement in the delivering key messages to the larger public particularly during the stakeholder's meetings. Decision 4/COP14 requested the Secretariat to i) review the communication plan and base it on the UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework in its entirety. ii) identify key audiences, such as policy-makers, line ministries in charge of land-based sectors, the private sector, the farmer community and pastoralists, and propose relevant options for increasing awareness about the objectives of the Convention in support of its implementation, taking into account

particular national and regional conditions; and iii) build on experience in the observance of the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification (2010?2020) to actively contribute to the implementation of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021?2030) by identifying and developing possible activities, as appropriate The communication and mainstreaming activities of this project will be mainly the implementation of some activities at national level as part of the implementation of the Communication Plan called for by the COP 14 Decision 4.

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[1] World Health Organisation. (December 8, 2020). WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Dashboard. <https://covid19.who.int/>

[2] Lindsey et al. (2020). Conserving Africa?s wildlife and wildlands through the COVID-19 crisis and beyond. *Nature, ecology & evolution*. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-020-1275-6>

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[1] UNCCD. 2019. Report of the seventeenth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention, held in Georgetown from 28 to 30 January 2019. ICCD/CRIC (17)/9.

UNCCD. 2019. Report of the seventeenth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention, held in Georgetown from 28 to 30 January 2019. ICCD/CRIC (17)/9.

[3] The Global Mechanism, 2019, Global analysis of financial data (ICCD/CRIC (17)/INF.3)

[4] Orr, B.J., A.L. Cowie, V.M. Castillo Sanchez, P. Chasek, N.D. Crossman, A. Erlewein, G. Louwagie, M. Maron, G.I. Metternicht, S. Minelli, A.E. Tengberg, S. Walter, and S. Welton. 2017. Scientific Conceptual Framework for Land Degradation Neutrality. A Report of the Science-Policy Interface. United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), Bonn, Germany.

[5] More on Trends.Earth [here](#)

**D. DESCRIBE, IF POSSIBLE, THE EXPECTED COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROJECT**

Cost effectiveness will be ensured in the project at all levels. The Global Support Programme III will provide the default data for strategic objectives, e-learning module/platform as well as capacity building support to Parties for the reporting on UNCCD implementation. The report submitted by Country Parties will provide reliable data for SDG target 15.3. The progress towards Strategic Objective 1 (SO 1) related to improve the condition of affected ecosystems, combat desertification/land degradation, promote sustainable land management and contribute to land degradation neutrality that will be reported by Parties enable the countries to monitor land degradation trends and progress towards SDG target 15.3[1].

Without the GSP III, Country Parties will not have technical capacity and resources to acquire and process default data and generate a report to be submitted to UNCCD following a standardized methodology. The provision of default data contributed to achieving a higher reporting rate for SO 1 ?land cover and land productivity ? compared to the results obtained as part of the 2012?2013 reporting and review process. In 2017?2018, out of 141 country reports, 134 (around 97 per cent of reporting countries) and 127 (around 92 per cent of reporting countries) Country Parties reported on land cover and land productivity respectively, versus 49 (around 69 per cent of reporting countries) and 12 (around 17 per cent of reporting countries) for the same indicators in 2012?2013. The provision of default data also contributed to achieving a higher reporting rate for SO 1 compared to SO 2, SO 3 and SO 4[2]. Therefore, without GSP III, the Parties may not be able to access or generate good quality data required for the reporting, which would lead to a substantial decrease in the number of reports submitted by the Parties. The report submitted by the Parties will provide reliable data for SDG target 15.3.1 reporting. Without enough good quality reports, the assessment and monitoring of SDG target 15.3 trends as well as facilitating the assessment of the new UNCCD strategy will be difficult.

GSP III will ensure capacity building, technical support, reporting tools and data availability for submission of report by the Parties, which will help COP in providing adequate guidance for UNCCD implementation. GSP III, besides targeting good quality country reports, also focusses on establishing a proper monitoring system on indicators and financing approach for UNCCD implementation. The recommendations from the reports will be shared with relevant stakeholders for better response to UNCCD implementation.

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[1] UNCCD. 2015. Integration of the sustainable development goals and targets into the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the Intergovernmental Working Group on land degradation neutrality. Decision 3/COP12

UNCCD, 2018. Improving the procedures for communication of information as well as the quality and formats of reports to be submitted to the Conference of the Parties (ICCD/CRIC (17)/8). United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), Georgetown, Guyana.

## **E. DESCRIBE, DESCRIBE THE BUDGETED M & E PLAN**

The project will follow the UNEP standard monitoring, reporting and evaluation process, templates and procedures. The project M&E Plan (see Annex G enclosed to the project document) is consistent with the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy. The project results framework presented in Annex A and includes SMART indicators for each expected outcome as well as mid-term and end-of ?project targets.

These indicators along with key deliverables and benchmarks included in Annex I will be the main tools for assessing project implementation progress and whether project results are achieved. The means of verification associated with obtaining the information to track the indicators are summarized in Annex A. Other M&E related costs are also presented in the costed M&E plan and fully integrated in the overall project budget.

The project Steering organs will receive semi-annual reports on progress and provide guidance on project implementation, including possible adjustments of the project results framework or M&E plan. The UNEP Project Task Manager will provide project oversight to ensure that the project meets UNEP and GEF policies and procedures. The executing agency will submit periodic progress and financial reports to UNEP, which will ensure that the outputs produced by the project are in line with the expected deliverables. The UNEP Task Manager will provide technical guidance as necessary for project implementation, feedback to the project partners, and establish peer review procedures to assess the quality of the project outputs according to UNEP standards.

Project supervision will take an adaptive management approach. The UNEP Task Manager will develop a project supervision plan at the inception of the project, which will be communicated to the project partners. The emphasis of the UNEP supervision will be on outcome monitoring without neglecting project financial management and implementation monitoring. Project risks and assumptions will be regularly monitored both by all project partners, including UNEP. Risk assessment and rating is an integral part of the Project Implementation Review (PIR). The quality of project monitoring and evaluation will also be reviewed and rated as part of the PIR. Key financial parameters will be monitored annually by UNEP to ensure cost-effective use of financial resources.

An independent terminal evaluation (TE) will take place at the end of project implementation. The UNEP Evaluation Office (EO) will be responsible for the TE and liaise with the UNEP Task Manager and Executing Agency (through the Task manager) throughout the process. The TE will provide an independent assessment of project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine the likelihood of impact and sustainability. It will have two primary purposes:

- (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and
- (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP and executing partners.

The TE report will be sent to project stakeholders for comments. Formal comments on the report will be shared by the EO in an open and transparent manner. The project performance will be assessed against standard evaluation criteria using a six point rating scheme. The final determination of project

ratings will be made by the EO when the report is finalized. The evaluation report will be publicly disclosed and will be followed by a recommendation compliance process.

The direct costs of terminal evaluation will be charged against the project evaluation budget.

M&E budget and workplan containing above mentioned activities is attached as **Annex G**.

**F. EXPLAIN THE DEVIATIONS FROM TYPICAL COST RANGES (WHERE APPLICABLE)**

N/A

**Part III: Approval/Endorsement By GEF Operational Focal Point(S) And GEF Agency(ies)**

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

<b>Focal Point Name</b>	<b>Focal Point Title</b>	<b>Ministry</b>	<b>Signed Date</b>
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**B. Convention Participation**

Convention	Date of Ratification/Accession	National Focal Point
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**ANNEX A: Project Budget Table**

**Please attach a project budget table.**

Please see Annex F in the documents section