



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Consultancy – producing the Global Land Outlook Small Island Developing States: (1) Asia/Pacific Ocean (2) Americas/Caribbean, and (3) Africa/Indian Ocean (3 positions)

Consultancy reference number: CCD/25/C/23

Background

Established in 1994, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is the sole legally binding international agreement linking the environment and development to sustainable land management. The vision of the UNCCD and its 197 Parties is to realize “a future that avoids, minimizes, and reverses desertification/land degradation and mitigates the effects of drought in affected areas at all levels – and to achieve a land degradation-neutral world consistent with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.” The objective of the Convention is to support countries and communities with the rehabilitation, conservation and sustainable management of land and water resources, leading to improved living conditions.

The United Nations recognizes Small Island Developing States (SIDS) as a group of 39 countries and territories that span the globe (<https://www.un.org/ohrrls/content/list-sids>). A review of the Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) target setting process amongst SIDS confirmed that the rapid upsurge in economic activities over the past few years has led to the expansion of agriculture, mining, logging, and a growth in urban and rural areas and settlements which has depleted essential soil nutrients and soil organic carbon content, undermining healthy soil and water functions. Further aggravating the situation, the lack of tenure security means that farmers have little incentive to invest and maintain good agricultural practices. SIDS are also challenged by their limited data processing capacities and data availability, which are key to monitoring LDN and reporting on the SDGs and MEA targets and commitments (<https://www.unccd.int/resources/publications/land-degradation-neutrality-small-island-developing-statestechnical-report>). The limited availability of high-resolution data for the land surface and the need for capacity development support in SIDS have also been highlighted in recent COP decisions (see: decision 2/COP.16 and decision 4/COP.16).

The Global Land Outlook (GLO) is the UNCCD’s flagship publication – from the full edition every 4-6 years to more frequent regional and thematic reports (<https://www.unccd.int/resources/global-land-outlook/overview>). These strategic communications products offer an evidence-based narrative on the drivers and impacts of desertification, land degradation and drought as well as the opportunities to mitigate them through sustainable land and water management, with an emphasis on improving local livelihoods. While SIDS share many common land and freshwater challenges and solutions, the GLO SIDS Thematic Report will explore financing and investment opportunities while highlighting good practices for land and knowledge management and the lessons learned from their application in specific regional and sub-regional contexts (e.g., Caribbean, South Pacific, Indian Ocean).

The UNCCD secretariat is recruiting three consultants to draft the report: one with experience in the Americas/Caribbean SIDS, one with experience in the Asia/Pacific Ocean SIDS, and one with experience in Africa/Indian Ocean SIDS that is related to the expert knowledge domains elaborated below. The secretariat will facilitate coordination among consultants to ensure coherence in the development of the report. To the extent necessary, the final drafts of the consultants will be edited and integrated into one GLO SIDS Thematic Report of approximately 100 pages in final layout.



Objective of consultancy

High quality, professionally written 100-page (in final layout) GLO SIDS Thematic Report (with Summary for Decision Makers) that is comprehensively researched, fully referenced, and which takes into account consultations with experts and key stakeholders, including:

- An introduction on the status and trends and a persuasive rationale for integrated land and water management and restoration into national development priorities (e.g., urban development, food and energy production, and tourism) aligned with SDG, LDN, NDC, NBSAP, DRR and related targets.
- An engaging narrative and vision containing regional, national, and context-specific entry points for governments, civil society and the private sector to invest and act, including examples of good policy, investment, and management practices that demonstrate how inclusive governance, gender equality, youth engagement, public-private partnerships and innovative finance can contribute to sustainable development objectives at national and sub-national levels.
- An inspiring presentation of the empirical evidence and success factors for integrated land and water management in specific regional and sub-regional contexts, including a theory of change for the replication and/or scaling up of transformative projects and programmes.
- Infographics, figures, tables, maps, photos, and other graphic elements.
- Extensive references to both the peer-reviewed and grey literature

Duties and responsibilities

Under the overall supervision of the Chief of the Global Policy Advocacy and Regional Cooperation (GPARC) unit and direct supervision of the assigned officer, each consultant will have the following duties and responsibilities:

- Produce text, references, graphics, etc. according to an agreed upon distribution of SIDS and thematic issues to be addressed in the report, starting with a high level situational analysis, including an examination of existing policy and investment frameworks for sustainable land and water management and restoration in the face of increasing human-induced land degradation, biodiversity loss and climate change.
- The GLO SIDS Thematic Report will outline entry points for identifying, financing, implementing and monitoring integrated management approaches that promote land and water stewardship, climate change mitigation and adaptation, resilient livelihoods and other green growth and investment opportunities, including an assessment of good practices and case studies as well as governance/institutional capacities at regional, national and local levels.
- The GLO SIDS Thematic Report will consider the specific enabling environment for implementing existing ecosystem restoration commitments and targets at the national level, including those pledged in their LDN country reports, NDCs, NBSAPs, SDGs, and other relevant action plans and programmes.
- The GLO SIDS Thematic Report will consider the current state of knowledge and identify potential opportunities, data gaps, capacity needs, and long-term benefits for integrating Earth Observation (EO) data, models, and tools to assess the drivers and impacts of desertification, land degradation and drought as well as for LDN monitoring and reporting.
- The GLO SIDS Thematic Report will include a Summary for Decision Makers that clearly highlights the challenges and opportunities for integrated planning and management practices that can be tailored to local circumstances for the benefit of people, nature, and climate. The Summary will feature evidence-based, policy-relevant recommendations for national and sub-national authorities with a focus on sustainable land and water use, participatory and inclusive governance, knowledge sharing and data access, increasing data availability, regional cooperation and partnerships, and financing and investment opportunities.
- Organize virtual expert and stakeholder consultations to assess capacity needs and review report drafts; provide material support for the launch of the GLO SIDS Thematic Report expected in late 2025 or early 2026.



Deliverables

The combined output of the consultants will be compiled into a GLO SIDS Thematic Report of approximately 100 pages in final layout (with Summary for Decision Makers and annexes as appropriate). The envisioned process is as follows:

- Develop a work plan, conduct desk research, and propose a structure for the report and brief;
- Consult with and seek contributions from relevant experts, organizations, and networks;
- Produce a first draft of the report (with references or annotated bibliography);
- Organize an expert consultation on first draft;
- Revise draft based on comments received;
- Conduct a broader stakeholder consultation on the second draft, with the assistance of the UNCCD secretariat;
- Produce final draft of the report and Summary for Decision Makers (with graphics ready for layout);
- Help develop communications and other materials for launch and media events.

Contractual terms

The service of the selected consultant is estimated to be for 10 months starting 01 May 2025 till 30 March 2026. The consultancy is home-based. UNCCD does not provide health insurance to consultant and individual contractors. Incumbents selected for the consultancy are fully responsible for arranging, at their own expense, such life, health and other forms of insurance covering the period of their services as they consider appropriate. Proof of valid health insurance will be required before signing of the contract.

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

Requirements

- Advanced university degree in land use planning, integrated land and water management, or other related subjects;
- A minimum of 15 years' experience and expertise in designing/implementing policies, projects and programmes that promote integrated and sustainable land and water management in SIDS geographies is required;
- Experience working on land and water management issues in the region and engagement with relevant stakeholders on the ground is required;
- Excellent understanding of the policy and technical aspects of integrated land and water planning and management, including related GIS, governance, institutional, and finance considerations is required;
- Experience in drafting and preparing concept notes, technical briefs, guidance documents, and/or implementing development projects with significant integrated land and water management components is required or desirable;
- Experience working with national, regional, international and multilateral partners is required or desirable;
- Knowledge of the UNCCD and related UN and intergovernmental processes and global environmental policy issues is an advantage is required or desirable;
- Ability to meet agreed deadlines and Attention to detail;
- Fluency in English (both oral and written) is required. knowledge of other UN languages is an advantage.

Special notice

Only individuals who can act as independent, individual economical operators are qualified to apply. Individuals who can provide their services only on account of an institution or enterprise are not eligible under this procedure.



Individuals engaged under a consultancy or individual contract will not be considered “staff members” under the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations Secretariat and will not be entitled to benefits provided therein (such as leave entitlements and medical insurance coverage). Their conditions of service will be governed by their contract and the General Conditions of Contracts for the Services of Consultants and Individual Contractors. Consultant and individual contractor is responsible for determining tax liabilities and for the payment of any taxes and/or duties, in accordance with local or other applicable laws.

Submission of application

The following documents should be sent to staffing@unccd.int as **one document**: UNCCD Personal History Form¹ /CV and cover letter, specifying the following in the email subject line: **CCD/25/C/23**.

The deadline for applications is **26 April 2025**. Only applications submitted by the deadline and with complete documentation will be taken into consideration.

Due to the volume of applications received, receipt of applications cannot be acknowledged individually. Please address your application as indicated above and please do not address or copy your application to an individual at the Secretariat or Global Mechanism. Candidates who do not receive any feedback within three months of the deadline should consider their application as unsuccessful.

Date of issuance : 12 March 2025

¹UNCCD P-11 form in electronic fill-in .pdf OR .docx format available: <https://www.unccd.int/convention/opportunities/vacancies/guidelines>