

## Announcement of GEF-8 Enabling Activity Support to National Reporting to the UNCCD

### 1. Background

The Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) are required to communicate through the UNCCD secretariat on measures undertaken to implement the Convention. From 2018 the national reporting process monitors progress made in meeting the five strategic objectives (SOs) set force in the UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework for implementing the Convention adopted at the thirteenth session of the COP (decision 7/COP.13).

National reporting is an indispensable tool to enable effective planning and implementation of the Convention and the achievement of the SOs at global and national level. Progress made in the implementation of the UNCCD Strategic Framework has been regularly reviewed through the national reporting process in UNCCD the Performance Review and Assessment of Implementation System (PRAIS)<sup>1</sup>.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) has been supporting the national reporting process through funding of so-called enabling activity (EA) projects since 2010 throughout the GEF-5, GEF-6, and GEF-7 funding cycles. COP14 invited the GEF to continue supporting Parties to meet their reporting obligations under the Convention and to provide adequate financial resources in a timely manner. In response, the GEF will continue its support in the current GEF-8 funding cycle. Furthermore, as recommended by the CRIC21, the GEF will make the funding available up to 2 years ahead of the reporting deadline in 2026 to allow for sufficient time for disbursement of funding, data collection, and preparation of national reports.

The objective of this announcement is to inform parties of the support options offered to facilitate access to resources in an efficient and timely manner.

### 2. Eligibility for Funding

Affected Parties to the UNCCD that are developing countries and have reporting obligations, including on voluntary LDN targets.

### 3. Support Offered

Funding support available in GEF-8 is USD 120,000 per eligible country, inclusive of GEF agency fees<sup>2</sup>. The funding can be made available two years prior to the 2026 reporting deadlines to allow Parties' reporting to the UNCCD to have sufficient time to collect and analyze the necessary data.

The support will be made available via one of two options, based on countries' demand:

**Option 1:** "Basic Enabling Activity disbursement with full national execution modality." This option is offered by UNEP through umbrella projects. This option is the default option provided to an unlimited number of eligible parties.

**Option 2:** "Enabling Activity disbursement with agency execution support for enhanced data/reporting." This option is offered by FAO. It is provided on a pilot basis for a maximum number of 20 countries, based on selection criteria as specified further below. Details on the technical offer by FAO are further described in Annex 1.

---

<sup>1</sup> The reporting procedures, as well as the role and responsibilities of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) in reviewing the reports, are spelled out in decisions 13/COP.13 and 15/COP.13.

<sup>2</sup> Funding support is subject to availability of funds in the GEF trust fund.

**Overview of Option 1 and Option 2 supported activities and implementation arrangements:**

<b>Main Activities, Outcomes and Outputs and Estimated Budget</b>	
<b>Option 1 – Basic EA (UNEP)</b>	<b>Option 2 – Enhanced Data EA (FAO)</b>
<b><i>UNEP executed activities and budget \$0</i></b>	<b><i>FAO executed activities and budget (\$39,590)</i></b>
	<p>Including: FAO experts and travel costs (\$26,000); National experts travel costs to Regional Event (\$7,500); Support for Regional Workshop (\$6,090).</p> <p>FAO will support the country to implement a participatory process for the national assessment of SO1 indicators and estimation of SDG 15.3.1 by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Facilitating 2 national workshops /trainings,</li> <li>- Integrating national data/knowledge,</li> <li>- Co-developing tools to support decision making processes.</li> </ul> <p>FAO will also organize a Regional Knowledge Exchange Workshop and support the co-production of regional knowledge products.</p>
<b><i>Recipient country executed activities and budget (\$109,590)</i></b>	<b><i>Recipient country executed activities and budget (\$70,000)</i></b>
<p>Recipient country, through the UNCCD National Focal Point and National Executing Entity identified by the country, to organize <b>National Workshops and engage relevant stakeholders in a participatory and inter-institutional process</b> to achieve the following Outcome and outputs:</p> <p><b>Outcome 1.1:</b> Enabling technical and coordination conditions allow efficient reporting</p> <p><b>Output 1.1.1:</b> Processes and institutions in place and capacitated to support data (default data, spatial mapping, drought status, land-based progress and recovery indicators on LDN targets, LDN, knowledge and technologies inventory, financial flows) collection, review, analysis and monitoring. <b>(\$55,000)</b></p> <p><b>Output 1.1.2:</b> 2026 National Report to UNCCD compiled and validated with participation of key stakeholders and submitted within deadline by GEF-eligible Parties <b>(\$35,000)</b></p> <p><b>Output 1.1.3:</b> Communication and advocacy on reporting and LDN targets achievement at national level <b>(\$19,590)</b></p>	<p><b>Organize 2 National Workshops:</b> Identify the stakeholders to invite; Provide the national data sets relevant for the report in case they exist; Organize the 2 workshops (venue, invitations, logistics, etc.); Cover the costs of the 2 national workshops using the country managed funds (venue, participation of national experts, etc.)</p> <p><b>Engage relevant stakeholders in a participatory and inter-institutional process to compile and validate data for national reporting, and submit the report within the reporting deadline:</b> Engage the relevant institutions and organizations to guarantee a sustainable and representative process; involvement of the UNCCD FP in workshops, activities, etc.; involvement of reporting officer in all activities and the co-production of final reports; propose a mechanism for institutionalization of the monitoring process, final submission of the report.</p>
<b>Enabling Activity budget \$109,590</b>	<b>Enabling Activity budget \$109,590</b>
<b>Agency fee \$10,410</b>	<b>Agency fee \$10,410</b>

**Notes:**

- 1) The financing figures for individual activities in this table are tentative and may be slightly adjusted in the respective grant agreements with countries.
- 2) Other eligible activities for funding not mentioned in the table may be included in the grant agreements as appropriate, based on country context and needs, such as: training and capacity building, including gender responsive activities, National Action Plan (NAP) alignment, and monitoring and evaluation.

#### 4. Selection Criteria for Option 2

Option 2 is offered on a pilot basis to a maximum number of 20 countries, to be selected from a maximum of 3 regions. FAO's approach aims to maximize capacity development at national and regional levels, and therefore countries to be selected should fulfil the following criteria to participate in the pilot:

- Having ongoing or completed FAO-GEF projects on LDN or Sustainable Land Management in the country, and
- Whether other countries in the region are interested in joining option 2, leveraging learning at regional level.

#### 5. Application Process

The GEF-8 Enabling Activities will follow the GEF Project and Program Cycle Policy and Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy. According to these Guidelines, letters of endorsement from the GEF Operational Focal Point (OFP) are required for Enabling Activities. The UNCCD National Focal points are encouraged to engage with the GEF OFPs in their respective countries to discuss the support options.

The requests of eligible countries for Enabling Activity support will be submitted to the GEF Secretariat by the two GEF agencies as umbrella projects using an Enabling Activity template through the GEF Portal. The GEF agencies will engage with countries in due time to discuss their preferences and provide further information on the application process, as needed.

#### 6. Grant Agreements and Disbursement of Funding

After the approval of the Enabling Activity umbrella projects, the signing of grant agreements with countries and subsequent funding disbursement will be handled by the GEF implementing agency offering either option 1 or option 2.

#### 7. Key Dates

- GEF-8 EA support announcement date: August 15, 2024
- Period for informal discussion between GEF OFPs, UNCCD NFPs, and the GEF agencies: up to 4 months, until December 15, 2024
- Selection of countries to participate in either option 1 or option 2, and subsequent submission of Letters of Endorsement of the GEF OFP to the respective GEF agency (on a rolling basis)
- Submission of GEF Operational Focal Point (OFP) Letters of Endorsement for the GEF-8 Enabling Activity funding is on a rolling basis, with a final deadline of **June 30, 2025**.

#### 8. Contact Information

For further information, please contact [uapel@thegef.org](mailto:uapel@thegef.org), GEF Secretariat.

## Annex 1 - Agency support under option 2 to support national reporting to the UNCCD

From the \$39,590 managed by FAO, \$26,000 will be used to facilitate 2 national workshops (organized by the country) to implement a participatory approach to map the SO1 indicators, integrating national data sets and knowledge, and to strengthen national capacities. The remaining \$13,590 will be used to organize regional events and exchange, co-produce knowledge products and for the dissemination of national and regional results in international events. The participation of 2 national experts in the regional workshop will be covered. As a result, it is expected that the country will implement an enhanced reporting process, with re-calculated data for SO1, and partially for SO2, SO3 & SO4 (Fig. 1).

### **Main activities from FAO for technical support for National Work**

#### **1- Facilitation of Participatory Workshops**

FAO international LDN experts will support the country further develop its national capacities to monitor LDN and map land degradation following the UNCCD guidelines. FAO experts will guide national experts to make the decisions necessary to obtain national maps of the 3 LDN indicators considering national context and data sets. In the absence of national datasets, alternatives will be explored, to compare and choose the best available data sets and obtain maps that are representative of national realities. When necessary, sub-national assessments will be implemented. For this, FAO experts will support the country to co-organize and facilitate 2 national participatory workshops. The first workshop will focus on capacity development and the participatory assessment of the LDN indicators; the estimation of SDG indicator 15.3.1, the mapping of implemented actions and LD targets (SO1). The second workshop/training will focus on further capacity development, national dissemination and validation of results as well as institutionalization of the monitoring process.

#### **2- Integration of National Data in the National Report**

In order to integrate national data and knowledge, FAO experts will support the national teams identify and process national/regional data sets relevant for the national reporting, prior to the workshop. The most appropriate tools and datasets for the national context will be identified in consultation with the national experts.

#### **3- Co-development of Tools**

To facilitate decision making during the mapping of indicators by non-GIS experts and to integrate national knowledge, tools will be co-developed with national experts (i.e. LPD Comparison Apps). These tools will facilitate easy access and the visualization, integration and exploration of alternative data sets to select the most appropriate ones.

#### **4- Support to submit the report**

In case it is needed, tailored support to fill and submit PRAIS with the results from the participatory workshops and national datasets will be provided.

#### **5- Enhancement of synergies**

FAO experts will support the coordination with on-going GEF projects, and other ongoing processes, such as the Global Support Program, national target setting and revision, implementation and documentation of SLM practices, and activities to implement the other Rio Conventions (e.g. CBD).

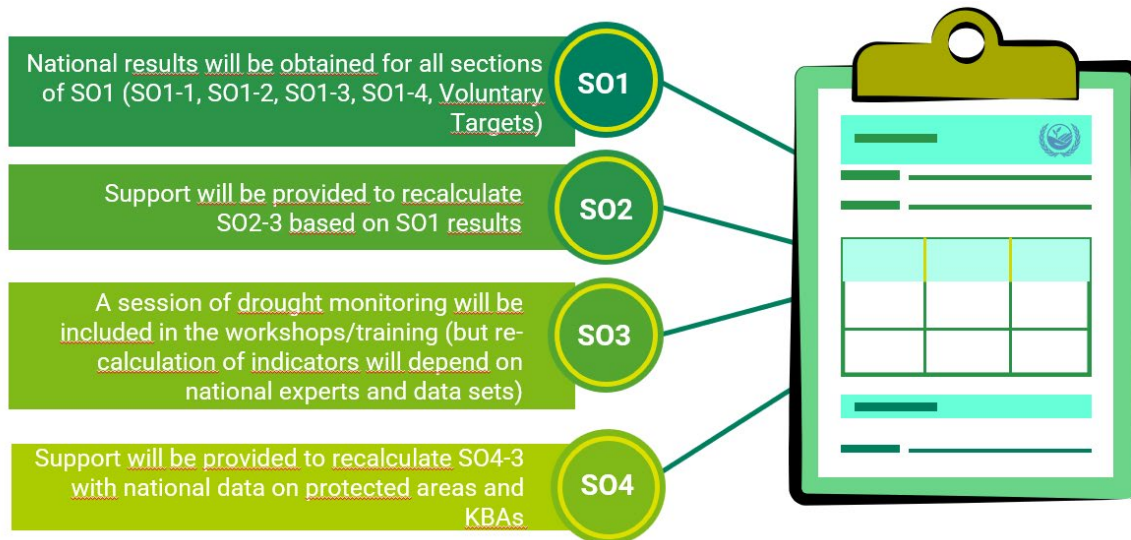


Figure 1: Section of the national report that will include re calculations of the default data sets.

### **Main activities from FAO for technical support for Regional Exchange**

#### **1- Regional Workshop for Knowledge exchange**

FAO will organize a Regional Workshop to facilitate exchange among countries on how to improve national reporting, based on identified interests/needs. FAO experts will support national experts prepare products and interventions in the workshop.

#### **2- Co-production of Regional Knowledge Products**

Based on the results obtained from the discussions and exchange activities, FAO will support the co-production of a policy brief and/or knowledge products. These will be presented at international events and through official FAO dissemination channels.

#### **3- Organization of events at international meetings**

Based on identified synergies as well as common needs and strengths, the organization of different events will be supported at international meetings (CRIC, COPs, etc.).