



2016 Joint Report on the IUCN-UNCCD Work Plan (2015-2020)

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Acronyms

- DLDD: Desertification, Land degradation and Drought
- LDN: Land Degradation Neutrality
- NBS: Nature Based Solutions
- SLM: Sustainable Land Management

Overview

Goal of the partnership: Support progress towards policies and programmes that deliver Land Degradation Neutrality through the application of Nature Based Solutions (at national and sub national levels)

Results by 2020 are categorised as:

1. Nature-Based Solutions

- a. **Result 1:** LDN voluntary targets are established in at least 15 countries and NBS implementation strategies are developed and initiated

2. Enabling Environment

- a. **Result 2:** Stronger enabling environment for delivery of NBS to key land management challenges in pilot sites/countries, including improved natural resource governance

3. Indicators

- a. **Result 3:** A Land Degradation indicator framework incorporating biodiversity-related metrics and harmonised reporting requirements with other international commitments is established

Highlights

Collaborative achievements during 2015-2016 include the successful fund raising and initiation of the Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Project (GEF) and implementation of a Journey on Land at the IUCN Congress.

Key next steps include strengthening collaboration on the links between desertification and governance, linking IUCN data sets like the RLE with LDN Target Setting, and strengthening monitoring of progress towards LDN and related targets, including indicators on dryland ecosystems and indicators of gender performance.

Achievements and next steps per result

Result 1: LDN voluntary targets are established in at least 15 countries and NBS implementation strategies are developed and initiated

Activity 1: Compilation of experiences, mapping of NBS approaches to LDN, and publication of NBS-LDN guidelines

- a) Publish a review of the role of the conservation sector in addressing DLDD, including the role of Protected Areas, Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas, Forest Landscape Restoration, Integrated Water Resource Management, gender mainstreaming etc.

Achieved: preliminary discussions with IUCN members and commissions during WCC 2016, in partnership between the IUCN and UNCCD Secretariats and the CEM.

Next steps: analyse proposed deliverables in the IUCN Intersessional Plan 2017-2020 (Target 27 on LDN) to assess the overall contribution to LDN (SDG Target 15.3) and gaps in reporting or programming and identify links with the UNCCD Target Setting Programme

- b) Publish a report on enhancing the contribution of the Bonn Challenge and the Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration to meeting LDN targets, exploring how the targets are related and the development of action plans for the targets.

Achieved: UNCCD secretariat has initiated dialogue with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests over adopting LDN as a thematic area for action under Goal 1 in the new UN Strategic Plan for Forests to be adopted in Jan 2017.

Next steps: WRI and the Global Mechanism are discussing linkages between LDN and the Bonn Challenge. IUCN is invited to participate in this discussion and examine how global restoration initiatives contribute to LDN and vice versa.

- c) Publish a handbook on the use of protected areas in protecting ecosystem services from land and their role in delivering LDN.

Achieved:

Next steps: IUCN to clarify what is meant by “protected areas”, “protected landscapes” and related terms and how these can contribute to LDN and rehabilitation/restoration goals. What is the role of protection of critical resources like oases in ensuring sustainable management of larger landscapes?

- d) Document the value of multiple environmental benefits of LDN, restoration and sustainable land management (e.g. to Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation, Disaster Risk Reduction, gender equality and women’s empowerment, Food Security, Water Security, progress in the implementation of the Aichi Targets and other international goals) drawing on the Human Dependency on Nature knowledge product, ecosystem service modelling, economic valuation and other tools.

Achieved: Publication of the Technical Brief on investing sustainably in rangelands (Homing in on the range): http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/technical_brief_investing_in_slm_2.pdf

Next steps: IUCN to explore further collaboration in Phase 2 of the Economics of Land Degradation. IUCN to identify further opportunities for economic valuation work through country-level projects.

- e) Publish guidelines to LDN target-setting and implementation, ensuring attention to biodiversity, ecosystems, governance, gender mainstreaming etc.

Achieved: publication of “Land Degradation Neutrality: implications and opportunities for conservation Nature Based Solutions to Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought”:

https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/import/downloads/tech_brief_land_degradation_neutrality_ver_2016.pdf

The GEF project in support of LDN Target Setting includes resources for publishing a Technical Guide on LDN implementation. This, together with the SPI Conceptual Framework on LDN, responds to recommendations from the IUCN consultations (outlined in the afore-mentioned publication), including an emphasis on governance, recognition of gender, and inclusion of biodiversity in monitoring LDN.

IUCN Gender programme is writing a GEF proposal with the three Rio Conventions to enhance the capacity of 3 countries in relation to gender. Concept note is complete and discussions are on-going with the GEF Gender Focal Point. IUCN is also preparing a gender working paper for the Global Land Outlook.

Next steps: IUCN to use continuing membership of the SPI to ensure recommendations are considered in further development of the LDN Conceptual Framework and the LDN Technical Guide.

IUCN and the Global Mechanism to evaluate implementation of the LDN Target Setting project for inclusion of biodiversity, ecosystems, governance and gender mainstreaming in country targets and implementation strategies.

IUCN to select three countries for the gender capacity project (probably Uganda, Peru and Nepal) as well as the development of a full proposal. IUCN to finalise Gender Paper for the GLO.

Activity 2: Engage a wider range of conservation actors in development of LDN guidelines, including tools for diagnosis, stock-taking of initiatives, options for progress etc.

- a) Strengthen engagement of IUCN members in UNCCD processes through key events and dialogue, including the World Conservation Congress 2016.

Achieved: Journey “Life on Land” organised at WCC 2016, reported separately

https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/content/documents/lof_journey_report_2.pdf.

Next steps: IUCN to identify a core group of members, commissions and offices to engage in further dialogue to raise the profile of LDN within the union.

- b) Champion biodiversity in LDN dialogue through LDN-fora and initiatives including the Global Land Outlook, Soil Leadership Academy, Science Policy Interface etc.

Achieved: IUCN have contributed a chapter on dryland biodiversity to the Global Land Outlook.

IUCN is championing biodiversity through engagement in the SPI.

Contribution of a chapter in the UNCCD Book “Living Land” (October 2015) by the IUCN secretariat and CEM.

Next steps: IUCN to consider developing a publication across IUCN constituencies on Biodiversity and LDN (for example in relation to the Great Green Wall).

IUCN to strengthen science and broader understanding of the value of below-ground biodiversity in relation to soil organic carbon.

Activity 3: Develop a funded initiative to support LDN target setting and development of implementation strategies in 15 countries

- a) Develop LDN targets based on multistakeholder consultation and ensuring safeguards delivered under Activity 1 and demonstrating contribution of LDN to other existing framework agreements (including Aichi targets).

Achieved: LDN Target Setting project funded by the GEF, implemented by IUCN and executed by the Global Mechanism, supporting approximately 100 countries to develop their National Voluntary Targets for LDN.

Next steps: IUCN and GM to monitor the target setting activities and identify ways to strengthen the application of good practices and agreed standards.

- b) Demonstrate how the use of the Red List of Ecosystems, Red List of Threatened Species, Environment Gender Index and other IUCN tools, databases and products contributes to LDN prioritisation work by providing internationally-accepted risk assessments.

Activities: no actions to date.

Next steps: Based on progress to date, IUCN to write a short paper on potential use of the RLE protocol for UNCCD issues (LDN, dryland ecosystem management). This will focus on the potential and actual use of RLE in helping to highlight risks to dryland ecosystems, and how RLE might contribute to LDN, for example in prioritising high-impact sites. This report could be presented and discussed at COP 16, for example in the form of a dialogue between the RLE team and UNCCD as a client to identify concrete actions to connect RLE with the LDN process.

IUCN and UNCCD to identify target countries for testing the application of RLE at the national level in refining or examining LDN targets. Suitable countries where RLE has been completed (or is ongoing) include Colombia, Chile and China. This work can examine issues such as identification of suitable sites for ecological restoration and spatial change and impacts on other processes.

IUCN and UNCCD to discuss use of RLE and other tools for examining risks of Sand and Dust Storms in key regions (e.g. West Asia, Central/Eastern Asia).

- c) Demonstrate the contribution of different rehabilitation/restoration initiatives and other SLM and environmental initiatives in target countries to achieving LDN, and identify opportunities to strengthen these synergies through harmonisation of policy implementation and a coherent policy implementation framework.

Achieved: communication with all IUCN regions and country offices to promote their engagement in national LDN target setting exercises in order to strengthen the breadth of approaches that are included in LDN strategies

Next steps: IUCN to ensure continuing communication of LDN target setting exercises as they occur and the GM to ensure information on national processes is available to IUCN offices (or publically available).

d) Support countries and Regional Economic Communities to revise NAPs and SRAPs and align them with emerging LDN processes and other initiatives (e.g. the Great Green Wall).

Achieved:

Next steps: IUCN to continue dialogue in countries (through IUCN regional offices), including support to SADC in rolling out the SRAP completed in 2015 under the AU commitment to scaling up the experiences of the Great Green Wall. Demonstrate the link also to the Africa 100 initiative (FLR) and identify links to energy which is a regional priority.

IUCN and UNCCD to maintain dialogue over emerging regional initiatives, including the Chinese Belt and Road initiative to be launched in 2017.

Result 2: Stronger enabling environment for delivery of NBS to key land management challenges in pilot sites/countries

Activity 4: Evaluate key governance dimensions of land degradation and develop initiatives for national-level capacity development to strengthen environmental governance for LDN

a) Publish a rigorous examination of governance failures as the structural drivers of land degradation and identify appropriate governance responses for achieving DLDD.

Achieved:

Next steps: UNCCD to share details of the proposed study of how to integrate the Voluntary Guidelines on responsible Governance of Tenure with LDN. IUCN commissions and offices to consider how to contribute to this study, for example building on the recent publication of a Technical Guide on implementing the VGGT in pastoral lands.

UNCCD to advise IUCN on potential partnership with the Government of Turkey as COP Chair.

b) Document evidence of the role of conflict resolution for SLM and provide guidance on conflict resolution to support progress towards LDN targets.

Achieved:

Next steps: IUCN to be invited to the Ministerial meeting in Marrakesh on the 3 S Initiative (Security, Stability and Sustainability)

c) Use the launch of the “Technical Guide on implementing the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure in Pastoral Lands” to convene multistakeholder dialogue on governance at UNCCD COPs in 2015 and 2017 and the IUCN WCC in 2016 and 2020, bringing lessons from practice to this discourse at the national and international level

Achieved: dialogue on the VGGT was convened at COP 12 and WCC but the extent of this dialogue has been limited and insufficient connection has been made between the VGGT and the LDN process.

Next steps: UNCCD is launching a study on the VGGT and LDN and IUCN is invited to apply to carry out this study.

IUCN to contribute to, or to lead (with FAO), a side event at COP16 to discuss governance in relation to LDN. UNCCD and IUCN to contribute to the development of a COP decision, or high-level debate, on governance based on the Civil Society debate at the COP 15.

- d) Support Parties to develop legal instruments to put LDN in concrete terms at country level and to influence legal reform related to the environment

Achieved: IUCN has co-operated with individual countries (e.g. Mongolia, Iceland) to draft and implement national legislation for soil protection. Presentations by WCEL on soil legislation reform, including LDN, at various national and international venues.

Next steps: Continue communication with individual countries and at international venues on the legal aspects of LDN. WCEL will identify examples of legal frameworks to effectively protect land and soils leading to LDN.

IUCN to be invited to organise or contribute to a proposed Parliamentary Forum on soil and LDN at COP16 and to present examples of model legislation on soil.

Activity 5: Develop funded initiatives to mobilise increased investments and financing on the ground for achieving LDN

- a) Develop projects to evaluate the costs and benefits of approaches for achieving LDN, taking into account the nature and distribution of cost and benefits (public vs. private) (building on Activity 1).

Achieved:

Next steps: GM is set to produce national cost-benefit fact sheets.

- b) Develop projects to strengthen capacity for mobilising investments and financing on the ground for achieving LDN.

Achieved: IUCN has launched the HERD initiative in Egypt, Jordan and with the League of Arab States and the GEF project “Closing the Gaps in the Great Green Wall”. An SLM project is under development in South Africa with UNEP-GEF.

UNCCD is developing a proposal for a “Technical Assistance Facility” in partnership with the GEF and with the CBD and UNFCCC to promote synergy in implementing the conventions.

Next steps: IUCN to expand the HERD initiative to additional countries, for example under GEF7 or EU funding. IUCN to report on other relevant field projects which contribute to this result.

- c) Collaborate in the on-going Private Sector dialogue on LDN, including under the auspices of the LDN Fund and the WBCSD.

Achieved: not reported

Next steps: not reported

- d) Publish a review of experiences in financing LDN (or initiatives that contribute to LDN), including conservation finance, taxes and incentives

Achieved: IUCN developed initial ideas to share with European members but no further progress has been made to date.

Next steps: IUCN and the GM to discuss funding opportunities in relation to development of the LDN fund.

Result 3: A Land Degradation indicator framework incorporating biodiversity-related metrics and harmonised reporting requirements with other international commitments is established

Activity 6: Pilot an LDN monitoring framework at country level, integrating indicators on biodiversity and environmental governance, as well as indicators to report across multiple environmental obligations/targets

a) Document the evidence of synergies between the 3 Rio Conventions through landscape restoration activities and use this to strengthen consensus on achieving LDN targets

Achieved: The IUCN Technical Brief on LDN (reported above), the UNCCD Technical Guide, and the SPI Conceptual framework provide the basis for demonstrating synergies, particularly in relation to above ground and below ground organic carbon (biodiversity).

Next steps: IUCN and UNCCD to continue promoting the role of LDN as a common denominator in achieving the goals of UNCCD, CBD and UNFCCC, demonstrating the link through the 3 LDN Indicators and the 3 indicators on Aichi Target 15.

UNCCD would invite the IUCN focal point for the CPF to strongly support a LDN thematic area for action in the new UN Strategic Plan for Forests and explore how the CPF and GPFLR can increase collaboration on LDN particularly at the national level

b) Support development of the three UNCCD indexes (biophysical, economic and governance)

Achieved: IUCN is supporting development of 3 biophysical indicators of LDN through observer status at the SPI. IUCN is also exploring ways to link these global indicators with local level monitoring through the Participatory Grassland Assessment methodology.

Next steps: More details on the three UNCCD indicators and the GLO index to be shared with IUCN.

c) Mainstream the Environmental Gender Index in the LD indicator framework

Achieved:

Next steps: IUCN and UNCCD to identify opportunities to influence LDN on mainstreaming gender, including through collaboration in a potential High level debate on gender at COP 16.

d) Report on synergies in work on the ground – e.g. to evaluate the impact on LD/SLM of projects addressing Climate Change, biodiversity, Disaster Risk Reduction etc.

Achieved: LDN has been adopted in IUCN's intersessional programme as Target 27: "New national, sub-national or corporate planning and investment frameworks are effectively implemented in productive ecosystems to contribute to biodiversity conservation, sustainably deliver ecosystem goods and services and promote 'land degradation neutrality'."

Next steps: IUCN to monitor progress in delivering on Target 27 during the next intersessional programme.

UNCCD to clarify if reporting on synergies will be included in the future Work Plan of the Science Policy Interface.

- e) Conduct assessments to validate global data at the national or sub-national level based on the 3 UNCCD indicators (Land Cover, Land Productivity, Soil Organic Carbon) and use for prioritisation of Nature Based Solutions actions

Achieved: Participatory Grassland Assessment project developed by IUCN and due to be implemented from late 2016 in 5 countries. This methodology will examine ways to link locally-relevant indicators with the globally-comparable UNCCD indicators.

Next steps: IUCN to identify programme contributions to achieving LDN from the intersessional planning exercise and initiate discussions over monitoring and assessment approaches.

IUCN and UNCCD to discuss the challenges of monitoring carbon stocks above and below ground and to propose further actions to improve understanding of organic carbon and soil biodiversity.

- f) Developing further indicators (together with soil science) for all threats to soil, including soil biodiversity loss and soil contamination

Achieved: Various threats to soil stability discussed at WCEL Congress (April 2016), WCC and with individual countries (e.g., Uruguay, China, Mongolia, Iceland).

Next steps: Continue on-going interaction between WCEL and soil science, legal institutions and individual countries on threats to soil stability. Prepare a plan to develop further indicators.

Operationalizing the Work Plan

- Collaborate in development of an LDN initiative funded by the GEF and other partners.

Achieved: LDN-TSP secured in 2016 and executed by the GM. IUCN continues to participate in UNCCD mechanisms and initiatives including the Science Policy Interface, the Inter Agency Task Force for the UNDDD, the Land Degradation Study of IPBES.

Next steps: successfully implement the LDN target setting work and report on outcomes.

- Identify joint fundraising opportunities for implementation of other priority actions in the joint Work Plan, including joint discussions with bilateral and multilateral institutions.

Achieved:

Next steps: Jointly define high priority activities that require further resources and discuss opportunities to mobilise resources.

IUCN and UNCCD to identify options for mobilising resources at country level to implement LDN, including from GEF and GCF. This could include dialogue with the UNCCD Country Consultants hired under the Target Setting Programme. In support of this IUCN should participate in the country consultations and target setting processes.

UNCCD to finalise the development of the Technical Assistance Facility.

- IUCN to continue active participation in UNCCD mechanisms and initiatives including the Science Policy Interface, the Inter Agency Task Force for the UNDDD, the Land Degradation Study of IPBES, and communication products including the on-going UNCCD Panel Study on SLM.

Achieved: IUCN is active in the UNCCD Science Policy Interface and is leading authorship of a chapter in the IPBES Land Degradation and Restoration Assessment. IUCN is also contributing at least 2 chapters to the Global Land Outlook.