



**Convention to Combat
Desertification**

Distr.: General
16 July 2015

Original: English

**Conference of the Parties
Committee on Science and Technology
Twelfth session**

Ankara, Turkey, 13–16 October 2015

Item 4 (a) of the provisional agenda

Linking scientific knowledge with decision-making

Work programme of the Science-Policy Interface for the biennium 2016–2017

**Science-Policy Interface: progress report and work
programme 2016–2017**

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The Conference of the Parties (COP), by its decision 23/COP.11, established the Science-Policy Interface (SPI) and, in paragraph 16, requested the secretariat to report to the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) at its twelfth session on the implementation of that decision.

This document (a) reports on the establishment of the SPI and its activities to date; (b) reports on the progress made with regard to the implementation of the SPI work programme 2014–2015; and (c) presents a draft work programme for the biennium 2016–2017.

The current work programme 2014–2015 comprises four objectives. The work done by the SPI with regard to objective 1 is reported under agenda item 3(a) (ii), while the work conducted with regard to objective 2 is reported under agenda items 2 and 3(b). Progress made on objectives 3 and 4, which relate to the cooperation with the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and the Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils respectively, is reported in the present document.

The CST may wish to consider the progress made by the SPI during the first biennium 2014–2015 and make recommendations to the COP with regard to the proposed work programme for the next biennium 2016–2017.



Contents

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Establishment of the Science-Policy Interface and its activities to date.....	1–7	3
II. Implementation of the Science-Policy Interface work programme 2014–2015	8–28	4
A. Objective 1	8	4
B. Objective 2	9	4
C. Objective 3	10–21	5
D. Objective 4	22–28	7
III. Draft Science-Policy Interface work programme 2016–2017	29–38	8
A. Objectives	30–33	9
B. Coordination activities	34–37	11
C. Budget.....	38	12
IV. Proposals	39–40	12
 Annexes		
I. Terms of reference of the Science–Policy Interface.....		14
II. List of members and observers of the Science-Policy Interface.....		18
III. Science-Policy Interface work programme 2014–2015		20

I. Establishment of the Science-Policy Interface and its activities to date

1. In its decision 23/COP.11 the Conference of the Parties (COP) decided to establish a Science-Policy Interface (SPI) to facilitate a two-way science-policy dialogue and ensure delivery of policy-relevant information, knowledge and advice on desertification/land degradation and drought (DLDD). The mandate of the SPI is defined in paragraph 3 of the same decision.
2. As a first step in establishing the SPI, the Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST), in accordance with paragraph 10 of decision 23/COP.11, developed the terms of reference of the SPI (see annex I) and endorsed them during its meeting on 4-6 February 2014.¹ Furthermore, the modalities and criteria for the selection of scientists, the code of conduct and the conflict of interest policy were adopted.
3. Subsequently, a call for scientists to become members of the SPI was opened from the beginning of March 2014 up to April 2014. Ninety-one applications were received from 43 countries, thus jointly covering all regions. Applications were evaluated and ranked as agreed in the modalities of selection. During its meeting on 30 April 2014,² the Bureau of the CST collectively selected 10 scientists to become members of the SPI and 10 scientists to serve as alternates taking into account the overall balance of the scientists in the SPI in terms of interdisciplinarity and gender, in particular bearing in mind the 5 nominated scientists from the regions. The list of members of the SPI is contained in Annex II to this document.
4. At its meeting on 23–24 June 2014,³ the Bureau of the CST discussed the draft elements for the work programme of the SPI for the period June 2014–October 2015.
5. The first meeting of the SPI took place on 24–26 June 2014.⁴ Next to organizational matters and procedures for internal and external communications, the focus of this meeting was on finalizing the SPI work programme. The draft elements for the work programme were reviewed and complemented by defining deliverables and timelines. The work programme was then adopted as contained in Annex III to this document. In order to facilitate the implementation of the work programme, working teams were formed and took up responsibility for specific deliverables. Furthermore, the SPI elected a scientist as co-Chair and appointed a rapporteur. In addition, the SPI agreed on the need to develop a partnership policy and a related infrastructure to enable the interaction of the SPI with its partners, including the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and the Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils (ITPS).
6. The second meeting of the SPI was held in Cancun, Mexico on 7–8 March 2015 in the context of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) 3rd

¹ See the report of the Bureau of the CST meeting, 4–6 February 2014, Bonn, Germany. Available at: <http://www.unccd.int/Lists/SiteDocumentLibrary/CST/Final%20Report%20CST11%20BM_4-6Feb2014.pdf>.

² See the report of the Bureau of the CST meeting, web teleconference, 30 April 2014. Available at: <http://www.unccd.int/Lists/SiteDocumentLibrary/CST/BMR_April2014.pdf>.

³ See the report of the Bureau of the CST meeting, 23–24 June 2014, Bonn, Germany. Available at: <http://www.unccd.int/Lists/SiteDocumentLibrary/CST/BMR_June2014.pdf>.

⁴ See the report of the first meeting of the SPI, 24–26 June 2014, Bonn, Germany. Available at: <http://www.unccd.int/en/programmes/Science/International-Scientific-Advice/Documents/Report_1st-SPI-meeting_24-26June2014_fin.pdf>.

Scientific Conference.⁵ SPI members presented and discussed their work on implementing the objectives of the 2014–2015 work programme and agreed on the way forward for finalizing the respective deliverables. Moreover, draft elements for the future work programme for the biennium 2016–2017 were developed. SPI members also played a key role as keynote speakers, facilitators and rapporteurs at the UNCCD 3rd Scientific Conference.

7. An additional meeting of SPI members was held in Berlin, on 19–23 April 2015 in the context of the Global Soil Week. The meeting took place upon invitation of the conference organizers in order to facilitate the cooperation between the SPI and the ITPS through a joint dialogue session. Moreover, the draft work programme for the biennium 2016–2017 was further developed during this meeting.

II. Implementation of the Science-Policy Interface work programme 2014–2015

A. Objective 1

Objective 1: Bring to the other Rio conventions the scientific evidence for the contribution of sustainable land use and management to climate change adaptation/mitigation and to safeguarding biodiversity and ecosystem services

8. The work done by the SPI with regard to objective 1 is reported under agenda item 3(a) (ii) and the following corresponding documents:

ICCD/COP(12)/CST/3-ICCD/CRIC(14)/7 – Refinement of the UNCCD monitoring and evaluation framework in view of the post-2015 development agenda: strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3. Note by the secretariat

ICCD/COP(12)/CST/INF.1 – Monitoring the contribution of sustainable land use and management to climate change adaptation/mitigation and to safeguarding biodiversity and ecosystem services. Note by the secretariat

B. Objective 2

Objective 2: Increase the effectiveness of the UNCCD scientific conferences in delivering policy-relevant information, knowledge and recommendations

9. The work done by the SPI with regard to objective 2 is reported under agenda items 2 and 3(b) and the following corresponding documents:

ICCD/CST(S-4)/3 – Report of the fourth special session of the Committee on Science and Technology. Note by the secretariat

ICCD/COP(12)/CST/2 – Outcomes and policy-oriented recommendations from the UNCCD 3rd Scientific Conference. Report by the Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology

⁵ See the report of the second meeting of the SPI, 7–8 March 2015, Cancun, Mexico. Available at: <http://www.unccd.int/en/programmes/Science/International-Scientific-Advice/Documents/Report_2nd-SPI-meeting_7-8march2015.pdf>.

ICCD/COP(12)/CST/4 – Improving the efficiency of the Committee on Science and Technology, including impacts from the previous conferences and recommendations for future institutional arrangements. Note by the secretariat

ICCD/COP(12)/CST/INF.2 – Assessment of the impacts of the outcomes of the UNCCD 1st and 2nd Scientific Conferences in supporting the UNCCD decision making process. Note by the secretariat.

C. Objective 3

Objective 3: Ensure that the thematic assessment on land degradation and restoration conducted by the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services is of relevance to the UNCCD and its Parties

10. In January 2013, the IPBES issued a call for scientific and technical matters to be included in its first work programme. Responding to this call, the Bureau of the CST requested the IPBES to conduct an “Assessment and valuation of sustainable land management (SLM) in maintaining and enhancing ecosystem services and biodiversity by combating DLDD in affected areas”. This, together with similar submissions from several other countries addressing land degradation, were bundled into one “Thematic assessment of land degradation and restoration” (LDRA) whose initial scoping, compiled by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel (MEP) of IPBES, was presented to the IPBES second plenary (IPBES-2) in December 2013.

11. Against this background, the COP, in its decision 23/COP.11, paragraphs 3 (iii) and 13 respectively, mandated the SPI to “interact with existing multiple scientific mechanisms, in particular the IPBES” and requested “the Bureau of the CST to provide input to the IPBES [...] with support from the SPI”. Given that a LDRA would address the subject matter of the UNCCD and would be relevant to the land degradation neutrality (LDN) concept, the SPI (in its first meeting in June 2014) recognized the need to engage in the LDRA and included it as objective 3 in the SPI 2014–2015 work programme.

12. Following the consideration of the initial LDRA scoping, the Chair of the CST, in his capacity as an observer at the IPBES 3rd joint MEP and Bureau meeting (10–14 March 2014), highlighted the significance of the LDRA for the UNCCD process and the option of adapting the initial LDRA scoping to become instrumental for UNCCD policy-making. In their response, the co-chair and the Executive Secretary of IPBES asserted their recognition of UNCCD as a strategic partner of IPBES and as a major stakeholder, contributor to and user of the findings of the LDRA. Subsequently, the Bureau of the CST, with the support of the SPI, prepared an input document for the LDRA, which was submitted to the IPBES chair and secretariat on 1 July 2014, and presented verbally in the IPBES 4th MEP and Bureau meeting (8–10 July 2014) by the Chair of the CST. Based on the IPBES conceptual framework, the document proposed a modified conceptual framework for scoping the LDRA, such that it addresses the needs of the UNCCD more explicitly. Furthermore, a layout of LDRA chapters was proposed.

13. Yet, while the objective in the initial scoping document was to assess “the effect of land degradation on biodiversity values, ecosystem services and human well-being”, the UNCCD priority places greater emphasis on the direct effects of land degradation on land users than its effect on “biodiversity values”. Furthermore, the UNCCD focus is on the state and trends of the provisioning services of terrestrial ecosystems used for their biological products that are essential to the sustainable livelihood of land users and a critical life support for all humanity. It is the changes in the rate of this supply that indicate whether land use is degrading, in a state of rehabilitation/restoration, or sustainable. The UNCCD

input document also included attention to natural ecosystems that support the service provision of cultivated lands and rangelands.

14. Following the approval of the MEP's initial scoping of the LDRA by IPBES-2 and its decision to initiate a full scoping of the LDRA, and anticipating that this assessment *"would contribute to the implementation of the 10-year strategic plan and framework (2008–2018) of the UNCCD and Aichi Biodiversity Targets 14 and 15 on safeguarding and restoring ecosystems that provide essential services"*, the IPBES 4th joint MEP and Bureau meeting selected, out of 235 nominees, 35 experts for a 3-day workshop (Beijing, 9–11 September 2014) on the full LDRA scoping. The UNCCD input document was circulated to this scoping team, but only the IPBES "background note" and the "initial scoping" document were discussed and used by the team, chaired by a member of the IPBES Bureau and the IPBES Executive Secretary. Even though the UNCCD input on the full scoping draft and on another post-workshop draft produced by a small team has not been fully endorsed, the third and final version of the scoping document prepared by the MEP/Bureau and presented at the IPBES third plenary (IPBES-3) (in January 2015) improved significantly in terms of its relevance for the UNCCD. However, obviously and understandably, the full scoping remained biodiversity-focused rather than tailored to the needs of the UNCCD.

15. During the IPBES 4th joint MEP and Bureau meeting, a proposal was made for coupling the LDRA with the IPBES regional and subregional assessments, motivated mostly by financial considerations, but also with the suggestion that this would make LDRA more visible than if it were simply presented in the global assessment of land degradation. However, since the regional and subregional assessments are of "biodiversity and ecosystem services", being already focused on biodiversity and ecosystem services, the LDRA would lose much of its identity and visibility, thus reducing its value for the UNCCD.

16. In preparations for IPBES-3 and upon the request of the UNCCD secretariat, the Bureau of the CST, supported by the SPI, developed an analysis of the LDRA process, including recommendations relevant for future UNCCD–IPBES interactions. The following suggestions were made to the secretariat: advocate that the original integrity and independence of LDRA is secured (see paragraph 15 on the coupling proposal made at the IPBES 4th joint MEP and Bureau meeting) and avoid postponing its completion to 2018 so that its findings would meet the deliberation of the upcoming sustainable development goal (SDG) on LDN; encourage the LDRA to focus on land ecosystems used for their biological productivity and highlight the support already provided to the LDRA; and explore options enabling the UNCCD, as a major user/stakeholder of the LDRA, to continue contributing to the LDRA process.

17. The UNCCD secretariat representatives in IPBES-3 reported that member countries expressed diverging opinions on linking LDRA to the regional and subregional assessments. Nevertheless, IPBES-3 adopted the full scoping and, as part of the IPBES first work programme (2014–2018), decided to carry out a budgeted and timetabled full assessment of LDRA as a stand-alone assessment, but strongly coupled with IPBES biodiversity and ecosystem service regional/sub-regional and global assessments. This extended the period of the LDRA compilation to 2015–2018.

18. In February 2015, the Chair of the IPBES launched a call for experts for the LDRA preparation. In response to this call, the UNCCD secretariat notified all national focal points (NFPs) and encouraged them to liaise with the IPBES focal points and recommend qualified experts on land degradation and restoration for the assessment. After consulting

with the SPI Co-Chairs and the Bureau of the CST, the UNCCD secretariat also encouraged some experts to submit their application as experts nominated by the UNCCD.⁶

19. In conclusion, the emergence of IPBES offers a science-policy interface to provide assessments on terrestrial ecosystems addressing themes relevant to UNCCD. If this opportunity materializes and the findings of the LDRA prove relevant to the UNCCD, the SPI would suffice in terms of incorporating the LDRA findings into decision- and policy-making. It is therefore important for the UNCCD to support the LDRA as much as IPBES will allow. If in spite of continued future efforts the LDRA fails to meet the needs of the UNCCD, this would suggest the UNCCD needs to develop its own assessment mechanism (for possible modalities see document ICCD/COP(12)/CST/4).

20. Document ICCD/COP(12)/CST/INF.3 contains more detailed information on the LDRA conducted by the IPBES.

21. Some proposals to ensure that the LDRA conducted by the IPBES is of relevance to the UNCCD and its Parties were made by the SPI. These proposals are contained in Chapter IV of this document for consideration by the CST and any recommendations the Committee may wish to make to the COP.

D. Objective 4

Objective 4: Cooperate with the Intergovernmental Technical Panel of Soils process in areas of relevance to the UNCCD and its Parties

22. The rationale for developing a mechanism for collaboration between the SPI and the ITPS of the Global Soil Partnership (GSP) is based on the recognition that the subject matters of the UNCCD and the GSP – land and soil respectively – overlap but are not identical; while soil constitutes one of the most essential natural resources of our planet, the land comprises a multifunctional ecological system, whose natural capital, soil and biodiversity, interacting with water and atmosphere, generate the flow of ecosystem services that support human wellbeing by securing the life and livelihood of individuals and communities.

23. An effective collaboration between the SPI and the ITPS would (a) ensure a regular exchange of information between both science advisory bodies, (b) avoid duplications of efforts, and (c) support synergies in action for the mutual benefit of both bodies.

24. The SPI started discussing options for collaboration between the SPI and ITPS in June 2014 at its inaugural meeting in Bonn. Discussions with the Chair of the ITPS were initiated immediately after that meeting. An initial message (see Annex I of document ICCD/COP(12)/CST/INF.4) was sent from the SPI to the 2nd Plenary Assembly of the GSP (21–24 July, 2014). In response to this communication, the GSP recognized the need to “*interface with other key organs with interest in soils*” but also highlighted that “*while the GSP has been aiming to connect [to] the UNCCD at all levels, it was noted that effective mechanisms for collaboration are yet to be formally established. A close collaboration with*

⁶ At the time this report was written, the list of experts selected to conduct the LDRA had not yet been made publicly available. It is also to be noted that a similar approach had been followed by the UNCCD secretariat during the call for experts to scope the LDRA in April 2014.

*the newly established UNCCD SPI should be actively pursued and supported by both concerned secretariats (GSP and UNCCD)”.*⁷

25. The first joint ITPS–SPI meeting was organized to coincide with the 3rd Global Soil Week held in Berlin (20–23 April 2015) with the support of the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS). This joint session addressed the “land degradation neutrality and its contribution to climate change mitigation and adaptation” theme. The session was open to all conference participants.

26. During the joint session, SPI and ITPS members exchanged views regarding the structure, mandates and work programme of their respective bodies in order to identify potential items of a collaboration mechanism under their specific mandates. As a result, ITPS and SPI members agreed to establish a collaboration mechanism in order to avoid duplication of efforts and to maximize synergies. The IASS, which sponsored the first joint meeting of the SPI and the ITPS at the GSW, offered to provide a platform for facilitating future joint ITPS–SPI meetings in conjunction with the GSW.

27. The session led to the identification of three major topics/entry points that will serve as an agreed basis for the collaboration mechanism between the SPI and the ITPS:

(a) The SDGs, if adopted in September 2015 by the United Nations, and particularly the proposed SDG 15.3 related to land degradation: “By 2020, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land-degradation-neutral world”. The SPI and the ITPS acknowledge that LDN can be achieved through sustainable land-based practices that avoid degrading land use and restore the productivity of degraded lands;

(b) The need for indicators addressing soil and land issues to assist in the implementation of the three Rio conventions (namely the UNCCD, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)). It is recognized that land and soil issues are also key elements of the proposed SDGs, which will require substantiation in terms of indicators;

(c) Soil organic carbon, which is relevant on both a global and local scale, underpins various ecosystem services (e.g. global climate regulation), and is an important component of others (e.g. biological productivity). Most importantly, it provides a basis for interacting with the large and diverse land user and decision-making communities.

28. Another central aspect is that both the ITPS and the SPI recognize the need for a strong regional approach for the effective implementation of their activities on the three selected entry points and an effective collaboration between the SPI and the ITPS. The full report of the joint session is given in Annex II of document ICCD/COP(12)/CST/INF.4.

III. Draft Science-Policy Interface work programme 2016–2017

29. In line with its terms of reference, the SPI developed a draft work programme for the biennium 2016–2017 for consideration by the CST. The draft work programme consists of two parts: objectives and coordination activities. Objectives target specific topics whereas coordination activities relate to cooperation with external processes and bodies. An overview of objectives and coordination activities are provided in table 1 and 2. The SPI will select the most appropriate mechanism to carry out the task and will implement it in coordination with the UNCCD secretariat. A budget proposal for the implementation of the

⁷ See document GSPPA: II/2014/4 titled “Work of the Intergovernmental Technical Panel of Soils (ITPS)”. Available at: <<http://www.fao.org/3/a-mk644e.pdf>>.

work programme 2016–2017 is contained in table 3 and in documents ICCD/COP(12)/6-ICCD/CRIC(14)/2 and ICCD/COP(12)/INF.4.

A. Objectives

Objective 1: Provide guidance to operationalize the land degradation neutrality target

30. Rationale: The SDGs to be adopted by the United Nations Summit in September 2015 may include a target on LDN.⁸ The implementation of an LDN target would require the operationalization of the LDN concept, including setting out implementation stages and monitoring frameworks to measure progress towards achieving LDN.

Objective 2: Highlight the science-based synergistic potential of sustainable land management practices to address land degradation, climate change mitigation and adaptation

Objective 2a: Foster and facilitate the adoption of sustainable land management practices which reduce land degradation while mitigating climate change

31. Rationale: Land management practices can contribute significantly to climate change mitigation, through carbon sequestration and/or a reduction in land-generated emissions of CO₂, CH₄ or N₂O. However, some land-based climate change mitigation strategies may be inconsistent with SLM practices. It is therefore necessary to consider synergies and trade-offs by identifying SLM practices that contribute to land degradation as well as to climate change mitigation.

Objective 2b: Foster and facilitate the adoption of sustainable land management practices which reduce land degradation while enhancing climate change adaptation

32. Rationale: Measures to adapt to the current and the projected impacts of climate change, and especially to the increasing frequency, intensity and spatial extent of droughts are mandatory. Current SLM practices are expected to increase resilience to these impacts, and science-based policy options for supporting these practices and additional practices which qualify as land-based climate change adaptations are required. Given the inherent exposure of drylands to droughts, it is useful to revisit traditional and local land use knowledge and experiences responding to dryland droughts, and assess their potential for climate change adaptation in drylands and other areas.

Objective 3: Encourage the development and implementation of specific rehabilitation, restoration and reclamation measures and practices in degraded lands

33. Rationale: Currently no clear distinction exists between measures used in applying sustainable and, hence, non-degrading land management practices and in addressing land already degraded by implementing rehabilitation, restoration, reclamation practices to reverse or halt land degradation. Given the need to address already degraded land to implement LDN, guidelines are required to classify different degrees of degradation of

⁸ This document was drafted and translated before the adoption of the SDGs and related targets and does not intend to prejudge or anticipate the expected outcomes of the United Nations Summit on the post-2015 development agenda that will be held from 25–27 September 2015. The CST will be provided with a full briefing of these outcomes at its twelfth meeting so that they may be fully taken into consideration when discussing this document.

already degraded lands, to be matched with the appropriate measures for enhancing the productivity of these lands in view of socio-economic realities.

Table 1
Objectives and deliverables of the Science-Policy Interface work programme 2016–2017

<i>Objective</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>
1: Provide guidance to operationalize the land degradation neutrality (LDN) target	A user guide for implementing LDN at the country level
2: Highlight the science-based synergistic potential of sustainable land management (SLM) practices to address land degradation, climate change mitigation and adaptation	
2a: Foster and facilitate the adoption of SLM practices which reduce land degradation while mitigating climate change	<p>A report on the findings of an assessment process that will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Explore the potential of SLM practices to contribute to both climate change mitigation and management of land degradation; (b) Review incentives and disincentives for the adoption of sustainable land use practices at different scales; and (c) Provide options for enhancing climate change mitigation (increasing carbon sequestration and/or reducing emissions) and managing land degradation through SLM practices.
2b: Foster and facilitate the adoption of SLM practices which reduce land degradation while enhancing climate change adaptation	<p>A report, presenting state-of-the-art knowledge on experience of land management practices that can qualify as land-based climate change adaptation practices. The report will also summarize land users' responses to drought in the drylands over several millennia, as well as information on responses to emerging occurrences of droughts in non-dryland areas. Based on this information the report will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Provide guidelines for SLM practices that could increase adaptability to climate change projections in drylands and non-dryland areas; (b) Provide relevant information for supporting informed policy-making and provide information to policy-makers, research funding bodies and the scientific community on existing knowledge gaps in terms of achieving land-based climate change adaptation; and (c) Identify existing knowledge gaps in terms of achieving land-based climate change adaptation.
3: Encourage the development and implementation of specific rehabilitation, restoration and reclamation measures and practices in degraded lands	<p>A report providing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) An assessment of existing land management practices suitable for the rehabilitation, restoration and reclamation of degraded lands including associated costs (b) Guidelines and policy options for addressing degraded lands subject to different degrees of degradation severity in different biomes and regions, based on these assessments and available best case studies.

B. Coordination activities

Coordination Activity 1: Follow up and contribute to the thematic assessment on land degradation and restoration conducted by the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

34. Rationale: At IPBES-3, the UNCCD was recognized as a key user and contributor to the LDRA to be undertaken from 2015 to 2018.

Coordination Activity 2: Contribute to the development of the Global Land Outlook

35. Rationale: The Global Land Outlook (GLO) will be a new flagship publication of the UNCCD on the status of land and its use. It is likely to be published every four years. SPI members may participate in the review process of the GLO.

Coordinating Activity 3: Follow up current collaboration and explore further means of collaboration with the Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils

36. Rationale: Under the SPI 2014–2015 work programme, activities were undertaken to initiate collaboration with the ITPS. Collaboration during the next biennium will continue and focus on the agreed topics of the joint SPI–ITPS meeting.

Coordinating Activity 4: Initiate and coordinate interactions of the UNCCD with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

37. Rationale: the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) assessment reports have often addressed desertification in their vulnerability chapters, and recently the IPCC discussed a possible climate change and desertification initiative. The SPI will explore opportunities for collaborating with the IPCC on these topics.

Table 2

Coordination activities of the Science-Policy Interface work programme 2016–2017

<i>Coordination area</i>	<i>Activity</i>
1: Follow up and contribute to the thematic assessment on land degradation and restoration (LDRA) conducted by the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)	The Science-Policy Interface (SPI) will contribute to the LDRA in accordance with the procedure established by the IPBES
2: Contribute to the development of the Global Land Outlook (GLO)	SPI members may participate in the steering committee and the review process of the GLO
3: Follow up current collaboration and explore further means of collaboration with the Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils (ITPS)	Collaboration will be based on the jointly agreed topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable development goal (SDG) related to land degradation neutrality (LDN) • Indicators serving the 3 Rio conventions • Soil organic carbon
4: Initiate and coordinate interactions between UNCCD and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)	With the support of the secretariat, the SPI will explore the possibility for the IPCC to address the link between climate change and land degradation in its future work.

C. Budget

38. The total budget needed for the implementation of the SPI work programme in the biennium 2016–2017 is 510,000 euros. Information on the estimated cost of the work of the SPI is contained in Table 3 and in documents ICCD/COP(12)/6-ICCD/CRIC(14)/2 and ICCD/COP(12)/INF.4. Parties may note that the proposed core budget for the SPI and the available extrabudgetary resources cover just 310,000 euros of the total estimated budget of 510,000 euros needed for the full implementation of the work programme. Parties may therefore decide to either make additional resources available or to prioritize the proposed objectives and activities based on available resources.

Table 3

Budget of the Science-Policy Interface work programme 2016–2017

<i>Objective/Activity</i>	<i>Source of funds</i>	<i>Cost (euros)</i>
Objective 1	Extrabudgetary	145 000
Objective 2	Extrabudgetary	160 000
Objective 3	Extrabudgetary	65 000
Coordination activities	Extrabudgetary	30 000
Annual SPI ^a meetings	Core budget	110 000
Total		510 000
Proposed core budget		110 000
Available extrabudgetary resources		200 000
Budget gap		200 000

^a SPI = Science Policy Interface

IV. Proposals

39. The CST may wish to consider the following proposals made by the SPI regarding objective 3 and 4 of its 2014–2015 work programme and recommend that the COP:

- (a) Request the SPI to contribute to the review process of the LDRA in a timely manner and in accordance with the procedure established by the IPBES;
- (b) Urge experts included in the UNCCD Roster of Independent Experts and other independent experts with relevant expertise and/or publications to contribute to the review process of the LDRA in a timely manner and in accordance with the procedure established by the IPBES;
- (c) Request the secretariat to:
 - (i) Notify Parties, the SPI and experts included in the UNCCD Roster of Independent Experts when the call for expert reviewers for the LDRA is launched, and draft versions of the LDRA become publicly available for peer review;
 - (ii) Continue to facilitate the participation of the Chair of the CST in the IPBES MEP as an observer;
- (d) Encourage the SPI to continue the collaboration with the ITPS with a focus on the topics agreed during the joint SPI–ITPS meeting.

40. The CST may also wish to consider the following proposals made by the SPI regarding its work programme 2016–2017 and recommend that the COP:

- (a) Adopt the SPI work programme for the biennium 2016–2017;**
- (b) Request the SPI to:**
 - (i) Present a synthesis report, including policy-oriented recommendations, for each objective included in its work programme 2016–2017 at the thirteenth session of the CST (CST 13);**
 - (ii) Report on the coordination activities conducted during the biennium 2016–2017 to the CST 13.**

Annex I

Terms of reference of the Science–Policy Interface

I. Background

1. In accordance with decision 23/COP.11, paragraph 1, the Conference of the Parties (COP) decided to establish a Science–Policy Interface (SPI) to facilitate a two-way science–policy dialogue and ensure the delivery of policy-relevant information, knowledge and advice on desertification/land degradation and drought (DLDD).

II. Mandate

2. In accordance with decision 23/COP.11, paragraph 3, the mandate of the SPI is to:

(a) Establish the approach to deliver each task assigned to it by the Committee on Science and Technology (CST);

(b) Analyse, synthesize and translate relevant scientific findings and recommendations from DLDD-related scientific conferences, including upcoming United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) scientific conferences, the roster of independent experts, as well as from relevant stakeholders and networks into proposals to be considered by the CST for the consideration of the COP;

(c) Interact with existing multiple scientific mechanisms, in particular the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils and other new and existing scientific networks and platforms; and

(d) Assist the Bureau of the CST in organizing the UNCCD scientific conferences and assessing their results.

3. The SPI will operate up to the end of the 13th session of the COP, at which time it will be reviewed.

III. Scope and activities

4. The SPI shall:

(a) Identify the need for scientific and/or technological knowledge requirements for implementing the UNCCD and/or making it a global authority on science and technology relating to DLDD issues;

(b) Explore and select mechanisms to address the prioritized identified needs and/or needs brought to the attention of the SPI by the CST, such as existing and/or new assessment processes, research activities and other mechanisms operated by relevant existing and/or new institutions, organizations and other relevant entities at either global,

regional or national level (such as, *inter alia*, an independent consortium of scientist networks and regional science and technology platforms);

(c) Initiate, support and follow up on the implementation of the selected mechanisms for knowledge acquisition;

(d) Analyse, synthesize and translate the results obtained (see para. 4.c.) into a language that is comprehensible to policymakers and decision-makers, thus enabling, promoting and facilitating the use of the scientific and technological findings for DLDD-relevant policy-/decision making; and

(e) Provide requested support to the Bureau of the CST.

IV. Composition

5. The SPI is composed of 20 members and 3 observers. Taking into account paragraph 3 above, the duration of membership to the SPI will end following the 13th session of the COP.

6. In accordance with decision 23/COP.11, paragraph 4, and its Corrigendum, as contained in document ICCD/COP(11)/23/Add.1/Corr.1, the membership of the SPI shall comprise: (a) members of the Bureau of the CST; (b) five scientists, one nominated by each region; (c) ten scientists selected by the Bureau of the CST through an open call taking into account regional and disciplinary balance; and (d) three observers: one from a civil society organization, one from an international organization and one from a relevant United Nations organization.

7. The SPI shall be co-chaired by the Chair of the Bureau of the CST and a scientist elected by all the members of the SPI from among the 15 scientists mentioned in paragraph 6.

8. In the event that the scientist who is co-chairing the SPI resigns or is unable to perform or complete her/his assigned tasks and functions, the members of the SPI shall choose another member to replace her/him. Until a new chair is elected, the other Co-Chair serves as the only acting Chair.

9. If a scientist of the SPI resigns, s/he will be replaced by an alternate using the same procedure of appointment.

10. The Rapporteur of the SPI will be appointed at its first meeting.

V. Modalities of work

11. The official working language of the SPI is English only.

12. The mode (i.e. physical meeting or teleconference), dates and duration of the SPI meetings are defined by the Co-Chairs of the SPI in consultation with the UNCCD secretariat in line with the available budgetary resources. However, no more than two physical meetings should be held per year and shall take place in Bonn unless a Party/institution makes an offer to host the meeting and bear the associated costs. Physical meetings of the SPI shall also take advantage of the meetings of the Bureau of the CST or any other suitable occasion linked to the schedule of other UNCCD meetings or conferences.

13. Members of the SPI shall attend each meeting physically or electronically. If, due to circumstances beyond their control, a member is unable to attend a meeting fully or

partially, s/he shall, through the secretariat, immediately inform the Co-Chairs of this fact. Input from the absent members shall be provided via electronic means.

14. Should any member fail to fulfil her/his assignments and/or to attend three consecutive meetings of the SPI, s/he will be replaced by an alternate.

15. Travel costs and daily subsistence allowances (DSAs) will be covered for all members in accordance with United Nations rules and regulations.

16. Institutional partners or individual experts might be invited to participate in the meetings/discussions of the SPI on an ad hoc basis, based on a proposal from the Co-Chairs.

17. The Co-Chairs are responsible for coordinating the work of the group during and between meetings and for facilitating a free exchange of views and information among members and between the secretariat and members.

18. Only the Co-Chairs of the SPI are permitted to sign and send letters and other official communications from the SPI to other entities.

19. The SPI will be responsible for developing the work programme for its first biennium of operation (2014–2015). For the biennium 2016–2017, the SPI will present its draft work programme to the CST for submission to the COP for approval/endorsement.

20. The SPI will report to the COP at each session on progress made and the status of implementation of its tasks and obligations, including precise and workable recommendations, with a view to seeking guidance for its next steps and activities.

21. The SPI will communicate updates to the process through UNCCD mechanisms.

22. The UNCCD secretariat will be the sole owner and possess all rights, titles and interest in all proprietary intellectual property, including copyrights for methodologies and products developed and delivered by the SPI and its members. The secretariat will duly acknowledge and/or share, as appropriate, any copyright with SPI members having contributed to a particular output. No special permission from the copyright holder is required for the reproduction, distribution and/or co-sharing of the said methodologies and products, provided that the source is acknowledged and that no alterations are made to the original work. Once the secretariat authorizes the reproduction, distribution and/or co-sharing of the methodologies and products, they will be in the public domain subject to proper acknowledgement of the source and any limitation stipulated by the secretariat as appropriate.

VI. Role of the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

23. The UNCCD secretariat will provide administrative and secretariat support to the work of the SPI, including to its meetings as needed. Tasks include:

(a) Inviting the members and observers to the meetings of the SPI pursuant to the date and venue of a meeting of the SPI, arranging the travel arrangements of the members and funded invitees and providing a daily subsistence allowance as required;

(b) Preparing the provisional agenda in consultation with the Co-Chairs of the SPI and handling the related substantive documentation prepared by the SPI;

(c) Assisting the Rapporteur in the preparation of the reports (including the list of participants) of each meeting;

(d) Maintaining, reviewing and continuously updating the SPI website/webpage;

- (e) Making arrangements for meetings of the SPI;
- (f) Providing legal support as required; and
- (g) Communicating with other entities through official channels as required.

VII. Governance

24. The SPI will operate in accordance with COP decisions pertaining to its activities.
25. Decisions of the SPI shall be made by consensus. The Co-Chairs will moderate discussions among the SPI members and help them achieve consensus. If no consensus is reached, decisions on procedural matters shall be taken by a simple majority of the members present and voting. Decisions on matters of substance shall be decided by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting. If the question arises as to whether a matter is one of a procedural or substantive nature, the decision shall be taken by a simple majority of the members present and voting. Any other matter unforeseen in this paragraph shall be decided in accordance with the standard practice of the United Nations.
26. The two Co-Chairs of the SPI have the same power and will jointly ensure that all SPI members comply with the terms of reference. The two Co-Chairs remain, through the Bureau of the CST, under the authority of the COP.
27. All disputes arising out of or in connection with the work of SPI members will be settled in line with the code of conduct and the conflict of interest policy of the SPI. Compliance with the code of conduct and the conflict of interest policy and its implementation procedures is mandatory. An individual is not permitted to participate in the work of the SPI if s/he has not complied with the policy and procedures.
28. The Bureau of the CST will review the terms of reference of the SPI as needed.

Annex II

[English only]

List of members and observers of the Science-Policy Interface

<i>Member</i>	<i>Member</i>
<p>Elena Maria Abraham Argentine Institute for Research on Arid Lands. National Council for Scientific and Technical Research (IADIZA-CONICET) Argentina</p>	<p>Alan Grainger School of Geography University of Leeds United Kingdom</p>
<p>Mariam Akhtar-Schuster German Aerospace Center (DLR) Project Management Agency Germany</p>	<p>Oleg Guchgeldiyev National Institute of Deserts, Flora and Fauna Turkmenistan</p>
<p>Nicole Edel Laure Bernex Centro de Investigación en Geografía Aplicada (CIGA-INTE) Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú Perú</p>	<p>Klaus Kellner School of Biological Sciences North-West University South Africa</p>
<p>Martial Bernoux Joint Research Unit Eco&Sols Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD) France</p>	<p>German Kust Department of Soil Erosion and Conservation Moscow State University Russia</p>
<p>Annette Cowie NSW Department of Primary Industries Australia</p>	<p>Matthias Magunda Kawanda Agricultural Research Institute National Agricultural Research Organization Uganda</p>
<p>Hamid Čustović Institute of Soil Science, Faculty of Agriculture and Food Science University of Sarajevo Bosnia and Herzegovina</p>	<p>Graciela Metternicht Institute of Environmental Studies The University of New South Wales Australia</p>
<p>Mihail Daradur Research and Project Centre Republic of Moldova</p>	<p>Barron J. Orr Office of Arid Lands Studies, School of Natural Resources and the Environment University of Arizona USA</p>
<p>Karma Derma Dorji National Soil Services Centre (NSSC) Ministry of Agriculture and Forests Bhutan</p>	<p>Rajendra Prasad Pandey National Institute of Hydrology India</p>

<i>Member</i>	<i>Observer</i>
<p>Vanina Pietragalla Department of Land Conservation and Combat Desertification (DCSyLcD), School of Agriculture University of Buenos Aires Argentina</p>	<p>International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)</p>
<p>Uriel Safriel Centre for Environmental Conventions, The Jacob Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Israel</p>	<p>United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)</p>
<p>Joris de Vente Soil and Water Conservation Research Group, Centro de Edafologia y Biologia Aplicada del Segura (CEBAS) Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) Spain</p>	<p>CSO representative Nathalie van Haren (Both ENDS)</p>
<p>Tao Wang Key Lab. of Desert and Desertification, Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) Cold and Arid Regions Environmental & Engineering Research Institute, CAS China</p>	

Annex III

Science-Policy Interface work programme 2014–2015

Objective 1 – Bring to the other Rio conventions the scientific evidence for the contribution of sustainable land use and management to climate change adaptation/mitigation and to safeguarding biodiversity and ecosystem services

Deliverables:

- 1(a) Make recommendations on the most useful indicators found to be used by each Rio convention for joint reporting on land issues – *by May 2015*
- 1(b) Assess the outcomes of the workshop on agroecosystem resilience organized by Global Environment Facility–Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (GEF–STAP) – *by March 2015*

Objective 2 – Increase the effectiveness of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification scientific conferences in delivering policy relevant information, knowledge and recommendations

Deliverables:

- 2(a) Translate the outcomes of the UNCCD 3rd Scientific Conference into recommendations for the consideration of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) – *by May 2015*
- 2(b) Assess the impacts of the outcomes of the 1st and 2nd Scientific Conferences in supporting the UNCCD decision making process – *by May 2015*
- 2(c) Recommendations on topics for future UNCCD Scientific Conferences – *by June 2015*

Objective 3 – Ensure that the thematic assessment on land degradation and restoration conducted by the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) is of relevance to the UNCCD and its Parties

Deliverables:

- 3(a) Comments on the proposal of the Bureau of the CST to the IPBES on the scoping of the thematic assessment on land degradation and restoration – *by 30th June 2014*
- 3(b) Recommendation to the Bureau of the CST on IPBES 3 in terms of land degradation and restoration – *by January 2015*
- 3(c) Input to the initial preparations of the IPBES thematic assessment on land degradation and restoration – *from January 2015 onwards*

Objective 4 – Cooperate with the Intergovernmental Technical Panel of Soils (ITPS) process in areas of relevance to the UNCCD and its Parties

Deliverable:

- 4(a) A mechanism for collaboration between the SPI and the ITPS is agreed and established – *by December 2014*

Other deliverables (OD) – Report and recommendations to the twelfth session of the Conference of Parties (COP 12)

Deliverables:

- OD 1(a) Report of the SPI on its activities to COP 12 – *by June 2015*
 - OD 1(b) Work Programme 2016–2017 – *by June 2015*
 - OD 2 Recommendations by the SPI to the COP 12 based on work carried out from June–October 2015 – *by October 2015*
-