

Independent evaluation of partnerships involving the UNCCD secretariat and/or the Global Mechanism

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The purpose of this evaluation is to provide an independent assessment of the different (types of) partnerships involving the UNCCD secretariat and the Global Mechanism (GM). The evaluation is based on the OECD/DAC criteria, with focus on the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and, as possible, impact of the partnerships. Time-wise, the partnerships launched from January 2008 to December 2014 are covered.

This evaluation is based on an extensive review of partnership-related documentation, meta-analysis of more than 60 partnerships (23 partnerships involving the secretariat and 38 involving the GM) and semi-structured individual and/or phone interviews with key informants and stakeholders. Five partnerships involving the UNCCD secretariat (with WOCAT, the Joint Research Centre of the EU, the Economics of Land Degradation Initiative, the Xinhua News Agency, and WMO, FAO and UN Water on drought policies) and four involving the GM (the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, TerrAfrica, the Great Green Wall, and Niger) were studied as cases, with the aim to complement the document review findings with concrete examples. A debriefing session was organized in Bonn in mid-September, at which staff from the secretariat and the GM provided feedback on initial findings.

This evaluation was conducted primarily to foster internal learning and to further develop the UNCCD approach to partnership-building in a productive and cost-efficient way. It was commissioned by the UNCCD Evaluation Office and authored by Katerina Stolyarenko in June - September 2015. The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the secretariat or the GM.

I. Context

The UNCCD has adopted a multi-stakeholder approach for maximum effectiveness in combating land degradation and desertification. Successful implementation of the Convention requires coordination with and support from multiple partners at all levels, from global to local.

Partnerships provide capacity and resources that are important for advancing the Convention, and that the UNCCD secretariat or the GM themselves do not have. Such partnerships may lead to various types of outputs, such as including key UNCCD aspects in a project of a partner, or delivering a joint publication, among others. They may also take many forms, ranging from participation in a working group to a long-term multi-million dollar project or process. The defining characteristic of a partnership is a **joint interest** – partnerships involve mutual cooperation and responsibility for the achievement of a shared aim.

Partnerships are an important modality for both the secretariat and the GM to deliver their tasks and thus to respond to the expectations of the Parties to the Convention. During the last seven years (from 2008 on), the secretariat has entered into more than fifty partnerships that have the above-defined characteristic of mutual cooperation and responsibility, while the GM has established 39 country level partnerships and 5 global level partnerships.

The secretariat has defined its values and principles concerning partnerships, specified its 2014-2015 approach, and also established a guide to building partnerships, although the use of this guidance by secretariat units is not monitored. The results of partnerships are usually reported as part of the overall results-based performance reporting under the UNCCD, and most of the partnership agreements do not contain specific provisions for monitoring and evaluation. Some partnerships of the secretariat and the GM have produced significant benefits to the UNCCD and its stakeholders, while for some others the results are less obvious. Being involved in partnerships requires considerable human and financial resources, and it is important to ensure that this resource use leads to tangible outcomes. Functional, productive partnerships are vital also for the public image of the secretariat and the GM.

II. Methodology

Partnerships are established for a purpose, and the evaluation assessed the extent to which UNCCD partnerships have achieved, or are achieving, said purpose. The evaluation considered UNCCD partnerships in terms of both processes and outcomes.

Under **processes**, the evaluation looked at both operational and functional relationships in the UNCCD partnerships including sharing of values, responding to recognized needs, having defined purpose and objectives, available capacity and resources, capable leadership, well established management structures, communication practices, internal reporting and monitoring. Meanwhile, under **outcomes** of the partnerships, the evaluation measured the

progress toward achieving objectives, leveraged resources, policy or systems changes, and partnerships growth.

The evaluation was built on the OECD-DAC criteria: relevance¹, efficiency², effectiveness³, possible impact⁴ and sustainability⁵ of these partnerships and sought to answer the following questions:

Relevance and efficiency (Partnership process)

1. How responsive are the partnerships to the goals and objectives set under the UNCCD?
2. How well are partnership activities planned?
3. How functional is partnership governance?
4. How productive are the partnerships?
5. How satisfied are the partners with the partnerships?

Effectiveness, (potential) impact and sustainability (Partnership outcomes)

6. Are the partnerships successful in accomplishing their goals and to what extent are their results sustainable?
7. Have they succeeded in bringing forward UNCCD aims and the work of the secretariat or the GM?
8. Have particularly effective or ineffective strategies or approaches for partnership implementation been identified?

The conceptual tool for the analysis was the partnering cycle, which consists of four main stages of a partnership: (i) Scoping and Building, (ii) Managing and Maintaining, (iii) Reviewing and Revising, and (iv) Sustaining Outcomes. The partnering cycle allows to make a proper assessment of partnerships relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact (see Table 1 below for more details).

¹ considers whether the partnership is designed in a suitable way to target a particular problem.

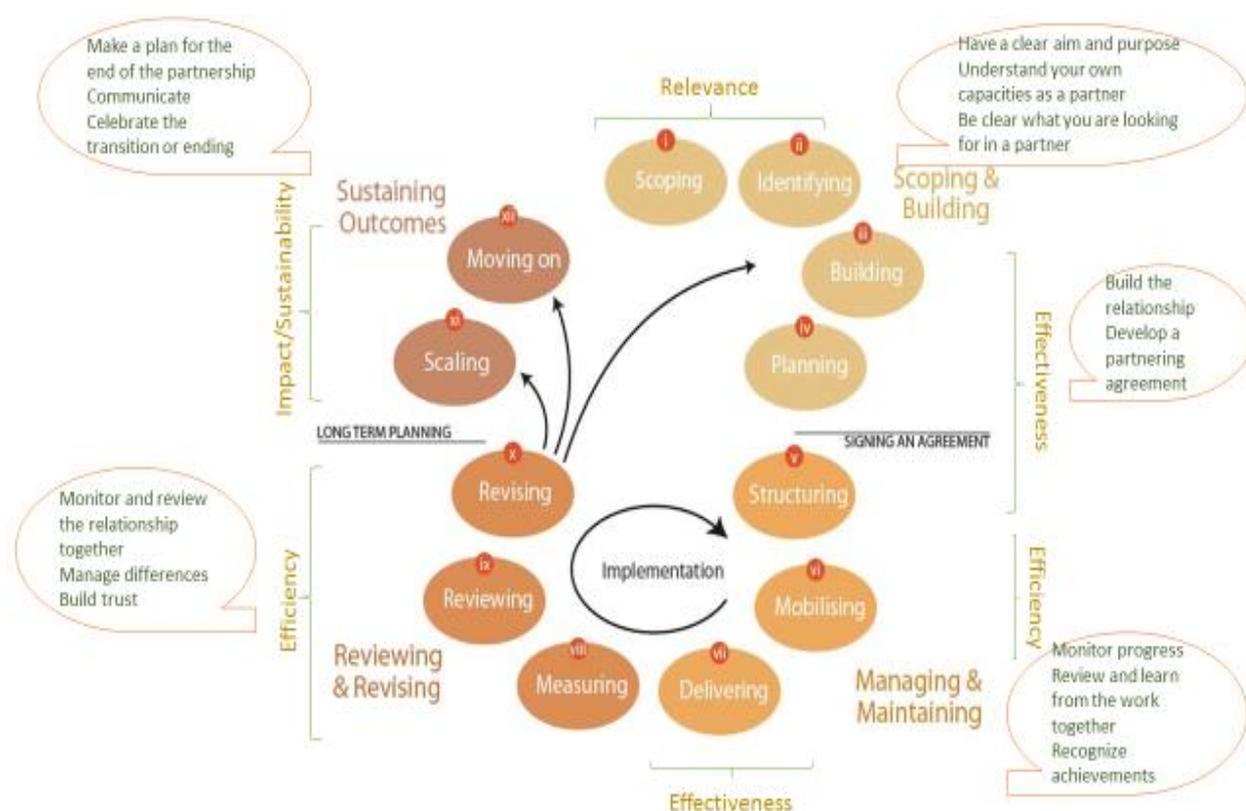
² considers how the partnerships are managed.

³ considers partnerships objectives and desired outcomes compared with actual outcomes.

⁴ considers to what extent partnerships generate any impact (positive or negative, intended or unintended).

⁵ considers to what extent the results of the partnerships will be sustained after partnerships will be over.

Table 1. The Partnering Cycle



The Terms of reference for the evaluation specified the need to categorize various partnerships involving the secretariat or the GM, with the aim to identify good practices or approaches for each category. However, during the evaluation process it became clear that such categorization would not be particularly useful, as most partnerships serve more than one purpose and cannot be labelled as a certain “partnership type”. Instead, the evaluation focused on qualities and nominators that could be applied to all partnerships. The evaluation was limited to cover partnerships that could be defined as ‘voluntary and collaborative relationships between partners that agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task and to share risks and responsibilities, resources and benefits. This definition is loosely based on the definition used in the UN General Assembly resolutions concerning partnerships.’⁶

III. Findings

This section examines UNCCD (covering both the secretariat and the GM) partnerships from the following perspectives: (1) partnership process and (2) partnership outcomes.

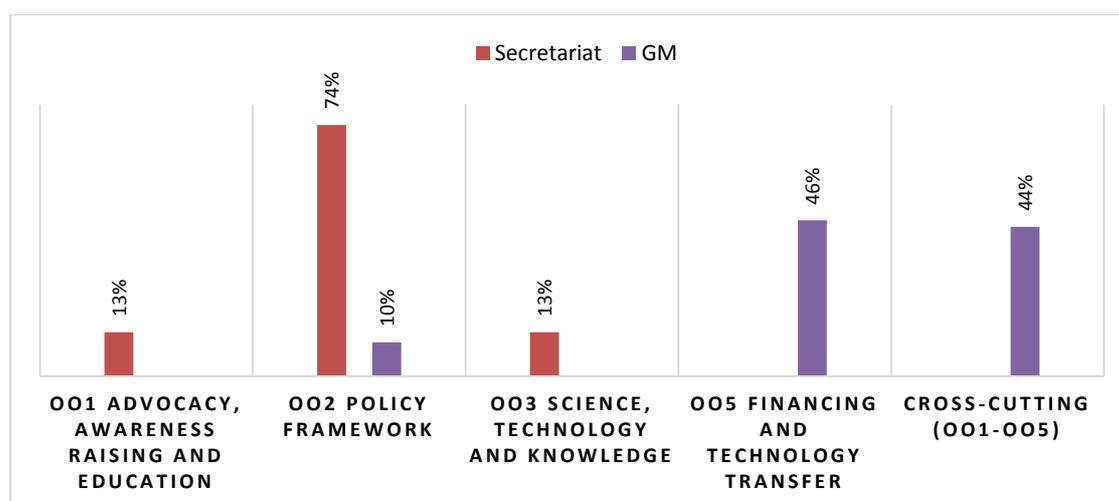
⁶ See, for example, RES 60/215.

III.1. Partnership Process

Finding 1: The secretariat and the GM do not systematically plan their partnership building with the view of achieving their objectives and priorities. Nevertheless, their partnerships launched are in line with their workplans and programmes.

The secretariat and the GM follow the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018, The Strategy in planning their priorities and activities. Overall, their partnerships are in line with the objectives and priorities set out in The Strategy and the respective workplans. 74 per cent of the secretariat’s partnerships correspond with OO2 (Policy framework), the rest are either linked with OO1 (Advocacy, awareness raising and education) or OO3 (Science, technology and knowledge). Close to half of the GM’s partnerships are connected to OO5 (Financing and technology transfer), while 44 per cent are cross-cutting over OO1-OO5. The majority of the partnerships (over 50 per cent) directly respond to COP decisions or needs contained in the workplans of the secretariat or the GM, while the rest respond to more ad hoc needs.

Figure 1. Level of Partnerships Correspondence with the UNCCD 10-Year Strategy
(Sample: Secretariat – 23 partnerships, GM – 39 partnerships)



With a few exceptions, the secretariat and the GM do not systematically use partnership building as part of their tools or resources in planning to meet their objectives, e.g. by defining what kind of partnerships would be needed for certain tasks, or how existing partners could (be modified to) contribute directly to a given priority. The secretariat has developed a guide to building partnerships, but there are no explicit criteria or guidelines for selecting partner organizations, with the exception of private sector partners.⁷ Many decisions for engaging with partner organizations appear to be based on the knowledge and assessment of individual UNCCD staff members. None of the partnership agreements or other partnership documents that were reviewed in the course of this evaluation describe how the partnerships link to UNCCD long-term priorities and objectives, as described in The

⁷ http://www.unccd.int/en/Stakeholders/private_sector/Pages/default.aspx.

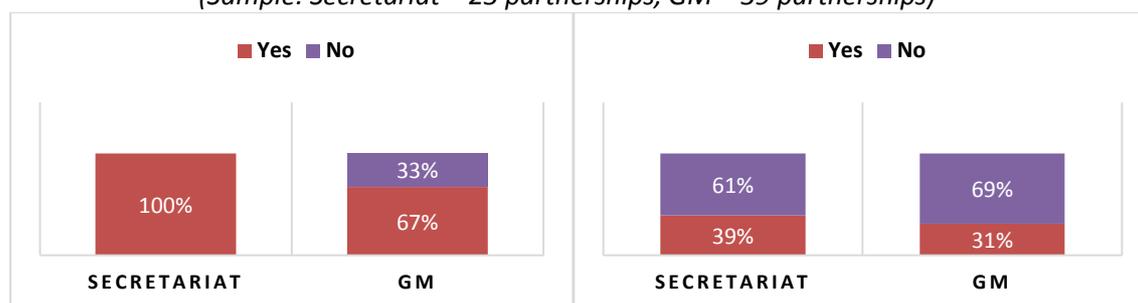
Strategy or the four-year workplans.

All reviewed partnerships of the secretariat have a workplan specifying the expected outcomes, but many do not have a schedule of the implementation of activities; meanwhile, only about 70 per cent of the reviewed GM partnerships have workplans. About 40 per cent of partnerships involving the secretariat and more than 30 per cent of those involving the GM do not have secured resources other than staff time. Neither the secretariat nor the GM has specified budgets for partnerships.

Figure 2. Existence of Workplans

Figure 3. Availability of Funding

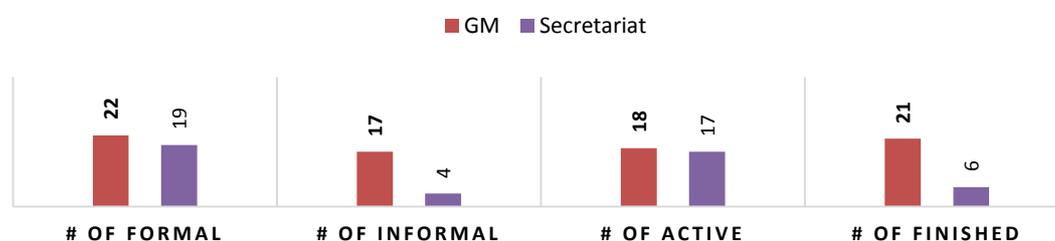
(Sample: Secretariat – 23 partnerships, GM – 39 partnerships)



There is no corporate guidance with regard to deciding what resource allocation (staff time, financial resources) for a partnership. It was not possible to define the total amount of resources the secretariat or the GM has invested in partnerships since 2008, but the available information indicates that working on partnerships is a significant part of staff time, and an important factor also in travel and consultancy spending. Furthermore, many partnerships entail additional funding for activities - publications, meetings and other – for which there is no identified source of funding. The decisions about the secretariat and GM investments in partnerships are made on a case-by-case basis and largely influenced by resource availability. All in all, resource planning concerning partnerships is not systematic, even though it is clear that partnerships are costly in terms of both human and financial resources.

Figure 3. Number of UNCCD partnerships formal vs. informal/active vs. finished

(Sample: Secretariat – 23 partnerships, GM – 39 partnerships)



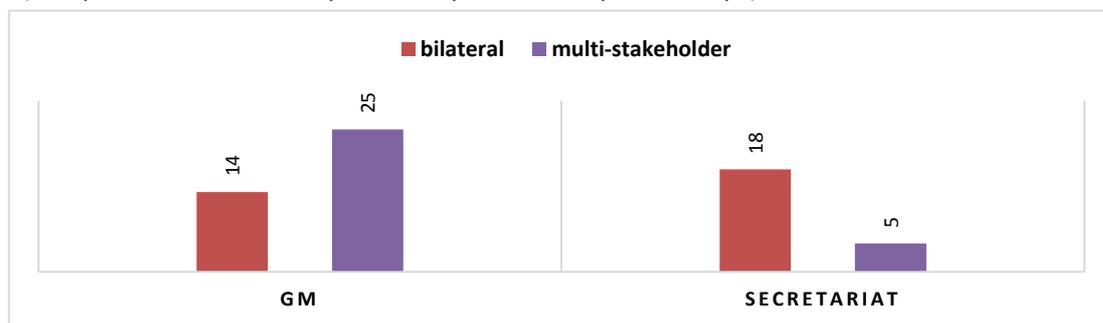
Most secretariat partnerships are of a general nature (science, knowledge and capacity building, policy work, communication), while there is also a small number of thematic partnerships (biodiversity, climate change, food security, forests, gender, and water scarcity and drought), which appear to bring more tangible results. In contrast, the GM establishes

partnerships around specific stakeholders with potential for mobilizing resources, including development cooperation agencies, international financial institutions, businesses, capital investors, south-to-south cooperation platforms and decentralized cooperation authorities, and undertakes thematic partnerships (landscape, soil, forests, etc.) at regional and/or global levels.

The vast majority of GM partnerships (65%) are multi-stakeholder, while the secretariat has more bilateral partnerships (78%).

Figure 4: Type of UNCCD partnerships

(Sample: Secretariat – 23 partnerships, GM – 39 partnerships)



The secretariat and the GM are actively launching partnerships and also entering existing partnerships as a new member. Coordination within the partnerships is usually done by other partners. Frequency of communication within partnerships varies – it seems that the bigger the partnership, the more regularized the communication. Each partnership has a nominated contact person in the GM or the secretariat. In the majority of cases, the roles and responsibilities of different partners are clear. However, coordination between the GM and the secretariat contact points in partnerships involving both was reported to be occasionally limited. In worst cases, this resulted in diverse UNCCD messages and aims, which made it difficult for the partner to understand the needs of the UNCCD.

Finding 2: UNCCD partnerships are established and managed individually on a case-by-case basis.

A variety of different approaches are used to manage partnerships. For the most part, they are managed individually by the relevant secretariat or GM staff members and governed by partnership arrangements that vary significantly in terms of formality, duration, objectives and resources allocated. The individualized nature of managing partnerships provides some key benefits: partnerships are context specific, responsive, accessible, and personalized. But it also has limitations:

- Changes in staffing or task assignments could significantly affect the partnerships; and
- Diversity of management approaches makes it difficult to compare partnerships.

Finding 3: UNCCD partnerships are managed by activities and outputs rather than by longer-term results. All new partnerships⁸ have defined objectives, but these remain rather general than specific, making it difficult to measure partnership impact.

The secretariat and GM partnerships are not seen as ends in themselves, but as a means for working towards broader changes. However, in practice the secretariat and the GM manage most of their partnerships with a focus on outputs/short-term achievements, and they also monitor and report of output level results. The longer-term objectives that individual partnerships may contribute to remain implicit: results are not being systematically tracked and documented over time. Consequently, the value of partnerships may be underestimated and misunderstood, which may hinder further partnership building and resource mobilization.

Finding 4: Most UNCCD partnerships are not well documented, especially those involving the GM. Sharing of information about partnerships and their performance both internally and externally is limited.

The majority of UNCCD partnerships are not well-documented. This is especially the case for GM partnerships. In recent years, many GM staff members have either retired or changed to another job, and their institutional memory on partnerships has been lost. There has been no systematic filing of information about partnership progresses.

The secretariat maintains comprehensive records of formal partnership documentation – agreements, memoranda of understanding and similar - since 2005. However, other information of the partnerships such as meeting reports, workplans, correspondence and contact lists, is individually stored by the staff members working on each partnership and can only be obtained upon request.

Less than half of UNCCD partnerships have clearly defined outputs; indicators for measurement of success are frequently absent. Monitoring and reporting on partnerships focuses on completed activities (e.g. meetings, round tables) or output-level products (e.g. publications, policies, events). This applies equally to results deriving from short-term and longer-term partnerships. The actual or envisaged contribution of these results to UNCCD's broader objectives in the work programmes remains largely implicit. There is no culture of reporting on partnerships at the level of impact, or even outcomes, and of using this reporting for internal or external purposes.

The type of products that UNCCD partnerships have produced include technical and financial support, knowledge exchange, advocacy campaigns, articles, videos, investment analysis, trainings/workshops, publications, policy papers, reporting tools, joint events, lectures and conferences.

The GM has had very positive experiences on partnerships with CSOs, especially in the framework of developing integrated financing strategies at the country level. This cooperation could be replicated in other countries. The secretariat has also intensified its support to the CSO involvement in the UNCCD process, and this development may lead to effective advocacy partnerships in the future.

⁸ launched after 2011.

Until recently, the number of private sector partnerships has been low, and mostly about expert consultation and data exchange activities and, to a lesser extent, policy dialogue and regulatory framework processes. In the last years, there has been a notable increase, with some sizable financial agreements and the active role of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, in promoting business engagement to sustainable land management. Among the tools to support this progress have been the SLM Business Forums that were successfully organized in 2011 and 2013. Nevertheless, the business interest in the UNCCD intergovernmental process remains low, with only six companies having requested, and been granted, observer status for this purpose.

Finding 5: Consulted partners satisfied with UNCCD partnerships with some caveats.

According to the interviews that were carried out during this evaluation, there appears to be general satisfaction with the UNCCD as a partner. While UNCCD financial contributions are relatively modest, partners stressed the helpfulness of UNCCD presence,⁹ experience-based advice and ongoing encouragement. Among the main UNCCD contributions to partnerships, the interviewees described its role as an “honest broker” and its ability to work with multiple constituencies, the worldwide information resource it provides and its outreach. Most partners were motivated to continue the partnerships with the secretariat or the GM.

With regard to challenges, some of the interviewed partners mentioned the slow pace of completing partnership negotiations, lack of in-house technical expertise in some thematic areas, lengthy financial and administrative arrangements, limited coordination between the secretariat and the GM, and non-observance of deadlines as problems that they had faced in partnerships with the secretariat or the GM. These problems had undermined the effectiveness of the partnership and conveyed a negative impression of the UNCCD as a partner.

III.2. Partnerships Outcomes

Finding 6: There is considerable evidence that UNCCD partnerships have resulted in positive short-term and some medium-term changes.

Most of the UNCCD partnerships have met their stated objectives and succeeded in bringing forward the aims of the secretariat or the GM.

The evaluation found evidence of a wide range of positive achievements and changes that the UNCCD partnerships have contributed to, in particular the following:

- Enhanced capacities among UNCCD parties and among other secretariat and GM stakeholders
- Enhanced cooperation on land issues among UNCCD parties secretariat and GM and stakeholders at national, regional and global level
- Increased synergies among development partners on land GM

⁹ UNCCD as a global legally binding instrument on desertification/land degradation and mitigating the effects of drought.

issues

- Improved awareness on land issues, SLM finance and economics of land degradation among UNCCD parties and stakeholders secretariat and GM
- Completed development of and start of implementation of IFSs and IIFs in affected countries GM
- Improved knowledge to access innovative sources of finance and financing mechanisms relating to SLM GM
- Increased commitment to SLM through regional and sub-regional platforms and international forums GM
- Increased implementation of UNCCD NAPs, mainstreaming SLM into national policy processes, and NAP alignment secretariat and GM

The documented results fall into the realm of short- or medium-term changes. They are mostly relevant and meaningful in terms of their potential (future) contribution to further changes - improving the living conditions of affected populations and the condition of affected ecosystems.

As evident from the desk review and interviews, the most effective components of UNCCD partnership implementation include mobilization of committed partners, ensuring a proactive and cross-sectoral approach accompanied by follow up activities, establishing continuity in partnerships in spite of changes in the focal points, setting well-defined goals for the partnership and clear boundaries to the intended outputs and outcomes, installing a robust formal and informal communication systems and decision-making mechanisms at operational and policy levels, limiting to a manageable number of partners, avoiding overlaps and competition with other partnerships, ensuring existence of the implementation, cost, communication and outreach plans.

On the other hand, the least effective components in UNCCD partnership implementation include the preparation of a formal agreement with every partner, formulation of the partnership in general terms rather than for a specific purpose, creation of new partnerships or modalities within a partnership rather than using existing modalities, experience or networks, and developing workplans in too much detail (i.e. no flexibility to adjust).

Finding 7: Consulted stakeholders widely agree that UNCCD partnerships have the potential to contribute to longer-term impact. However, there is no systematic data collection or analysis practices to prove that this has been indeed the case.

The assessment of the impact of UNCCD partnerships is not possible as there is no system of tracking partnership contributions to complex, long-term development impacts and attributing such impacts to specific partnerships. While the evaluation collected some anecdotal evidence of such linkage, there was little if any objective evidence available to support it. The absence of verified evidence to prove impact of UNCCD partnerships does not mark a weakness in partnership performance. However, it highlights the need to spell out the relationship between the expected short-term results and the intended longer-term

impact, in order to confirm the UNCCD and the partners, as well as illustrate and track the relevance of interim results in the broader context of long-term changes in SLM.

Finding 8: The UNCCD pays insufficient attention to the sustainability of partnership results (i.e. the continuation as well as the dynamic adaptation of what has been achieved during a partnership).

For instance, UNCCD partnerships have generated knowledge and tools, but beyond the facts of their production and publication, no information is available on whether and to what extent UNCCD and/or the partner organizations have systematically tracked the actual use and effects of particular knowledge products or tools. Partners interviewed provided examples of their enhanced capacities as a result of UNCCD partnerships. However, it is difficult to determine whether these are sustainable, as it is not always clear whether the cited examples were one-time initiatives (e.g., a time-bound advocacy campaign or a specific workshop or training) or part of an ongoing process of applying and developing stakeholder awareness, knowledge, skills and commitment that is likely to continue without further support from the UNCCD and its partners.

Another issue related to sustainability is the extent to which the UNCCD and its partners track and document their progress and results. To date there is very limited, if any, systematic data available that documents change processes over time (in particular related to capacity development) or that provide at least exemplary indications of the extent to which beneficiaries of the partnerships have been able to use or adapt knowledge products or tools over time to accommodate new needs and contexts (e.g. ability to update training programs so that they remain relevant). While tracking results does not affect the sustainability of results, it is relevant in terms of the UNCCD ability to plan and report on the sustainability of its partnerships and their ongoing relevance.

IV. Conclusion

Partnerships are instrumental in raising the profile of the Convention and assisting the UNCCD in achieving its aims on sustainable land management.

The UNCCD objectives and priorities are presented in The Strategy that guides all activities under the Convention, including the workplans of the secretariat and the GM, but there is no systematic planning of the use and role of partnerships in this context. The secretariat and the GM also lack an approach for deciding on partnerships on the basis of their “success potential” – how relevant, effective, efficient or sustainable a given partnership could be, against their results framework and operational modalities.

Feedback from the majority of consulted UNCCD partners suggests general satisfaction to the quality and technical support provided by the UNCCD. The UNCCD is described as a respected and valued partner, and most partners are motivated to continue the partnerships with the secretariat and GM.

There is considerable evidence that UNCCD partnerships have contributed to a number of short-term and some medium-term results including enhanced capacities and cooperation, increased knowledge and awareness of land issues among country parties and stakeholders at national, regional and global level. While the UNCCD is aware of and appreciates this, the organization may be doing itself an injustice by not systematically tracking and reporting this information to others.

The major areas in the UNCCD partnering cycle which require further improvement include strategic planning and prioritization of partnerships and securing related resources, monitoring, documentation and regular reporting of partnership progress and results, impact assessment, and ensuring the sustainability of partnership results.

V. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this evaluation, the following recommendations are made:

Recommendation 1: The UNCCD secretariat should further focus its partnerships to support its priorities, and better plan the resources needed for partnering particularly if additional resources need to be mobilized.

Recommendation 2: The GM should be more active in finding key partners for country level activities.

Recommendation 3: The secretariat and the GM should develop a more strategic approach to partnership building, keeping in mind that often “less is more”.

The secretariat and the GM should plan more carefully for the partnerships that will be needed for achieving their workplan objectives and priorities, including, for example, identification of the types of partner that are needed for specific tasks. They should rather engage a small number of committed and motivated partners than be involved in numerous partnerships that relate to, but do not directly contribute to, their priorities. They should also carefully think what expertise or resources they have for contributing to the partnership implementation. The role of outreach and communication should be also planned at an early stage of a partnership.

Recommendation 4: UNCCD corporate tools or internal policies should be developed to guide and inform the decisions of the secretariat and the GM on whether and why to enter, maintain or close partnerships.

The secretariat and the GM should establish criteria for entering, continuing or terminating partnerships. It could be helpful to identify a set of concepts and terminology to characterize or even categorize particular types of partnerships.

Recommendation 5: The secretariat and the GM should monitor and evaluate their partnerships on a regular basis to ensure that the partnerships are leading to results and functioning efficiently.

Recommendation 6: The secretariat and the GM should develop an approach for tracking, analyzing and making public the results delivery / performance in each partnership. Information of the achievements in each partnership should be more systematically shared internally and among partners, and also made publicly available.

In addition to the regular UNCCD reporting on results, the secretariat and the GM should consider ways and means for reporting on the successes and lessons learned in each partnership. The partnership achievements should be linked with the broader, long-term results framework for the UNCCD. Due attention should be given to clarifying how the partnership achievements can be attributed to progress toward the long-term results.

Recommendation 7: The secretariat and the GM should invest more in servicing partnerships, particularly by planning ahead for the needed staff time for effective partnerships implementation and ensuring that the staff involvement remains at an appropriate seniority level.

Recommendation 8: The secretariat and the GM should improve their information-sharing and coordination on partnerships, and define more explicitly their roles and responsibilities in partnerships involving both of them.

Systematic sharing of information about partnerships, their functioning, successes and challenges, can be a key learning tool for the secretariat and the GM to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of partnerships. Information sharing is crucial also for ensuring a coordinated approach to working with various partners. Moreover, the secretariat and the GM should clearly agree on their roles and responsibilities in partnerships involving both of them.

Recommendation 9: The secretariat and the GM should develop their partnership building beyond public sector partners, particularly toward civil society organisations and the private sector.

CSOs are often key agents of change in land issues, and significant results could be achieved through partnerships with major non-governmental organisations. Similarly, partnerships with private sector companies could lead to major outcomes. The secretariat and the GM should include CSOs and the private sector in their strategic planning for partnerships, and further develop their approaches to engaging large CSOs and private companies.

VI. Lessons Learnt

A number of lessons can be drawn from the UNCCD experience of partnerships implementation.

The absence of an overall partnership framework that identifies clear and specific objectives and expected mutual benefits of the partnership and relates these to the respective partners' own objectives and strategies can lead to sparse and not always strategic activities.

It also leaves the partnership vulnerable to leadership and/or context changes.

Key ingredients of successful partnerships include (1) a clear shared vision, (2) active participation of all partners (3) adequate resources that are provided by all partners, (4) solid substantive basis, including the use of scientific knowledge to support decisions and activities, (5) purposive capacity building and organizational strengthening, and (6) systematic communication and planned advocacy.

VII. Case studies

Case 1

Title of the partnership	The Economics of Land Degradation (ELD) Initiative
Year when it was launched	2011
Status	ongoing
Type of partnership	Informal, multi-stakeholder
Role of UNCCD	The secretariat initiated the collaboration and is a part of the Steering Committee. GM (Land Private finance and Investments Unit) is a scientific partner of the ELD.
Purpose of the partnership	To increase political and public awareness of economic costs and benefits of healthy and productive land.
Members	50 partners (universities and research institutions, NGOs, international businesses, financial institutions, farmers and agricultural initiatives, partners from political decision making processes) Very motivated as ELD gives them a platform where they can present their work.
Management structure	ELD Secretariat and Steering Committee. Steering Committee consists of 5 organizations and the ELD Secretariat has seven staff members that are contracted by the German development cooperation agency (GIZ).
Communication	Bi-weekly calls with Steering Committee and key scientists, at least once per week calls with UNCCD Secretariat and GM. ELD has its own web-site (http://eld-initiative.org), where all information and produced materials are available, it has also developed a communication strategy.
Resources invested	EUR 4,5 million for 2011-2015 plus in-kind contributions for the case-studies (around 50% from partners). Sources of funding: German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, the European Commission, Korea Forest Service and contributions from a number of partners
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Research and reports ○ Capacity-building ○ Outreach
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Built a network of senior experts with economic expertise on LD ○ Conducted country specific trainings and webinars ○ Developed a number of communication materials and movies ○ Prepared 35 case-studies
Impact	ELD supports political decision-makers in taking informed decisions that take into account the real value of land and land-based ecosystem services. It has increased awareness of land issues and their value, and influenced exchanges and debates in the context of the UNCCD and beyond.
Challenges faced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To meet the needs of different partners (politicians, private sector, scientists). ○ To negotiate and obtain consensus across different institutions on initiative's products (case-studies, reports, etc).

Factors contributing to success

- Content of the initiative is in demand and timely as decision makers would like to see not just ethical consideration, but also analysis of the economics of land degradation;
- Funding from different sources and by different partners;
- Establishment as an independent entity under GIZ, which allowed to have fast decision-making and easier recruitment procedures;
- Selection of the right coordinator of the initiative (GIZ), which has knowledge on process and procedures of management of such type of initiative;
- Creation of a platform for discussion between different stakeholders from the policy, science, and private sectors;
- Dedication of a number of people being involved;
- Informal arrangements which allowed flexibility;
- Regular monitoring of the ELD performance.

Case 2

Title of the partnership	The Xinhua News Agency
Year when it was launched	2012
Status	Finished (September 2015)
Type of partnership	Formal (MoU), bilateral
Role of UNCCD	The Xinhua News Agency approached the secretariat with a proposal on cooperation for distributing information on desertification, land degradation and drought, particularly on the Chinese experiences.
Purpose of the partnership	To increase awareness on desertification, land degradation and drought (DLLD) in China and worldwide.
Management structure	No formal management structure, one focal point from the secretariat and three focal points on different activities from Xinhua News Agency.
Communication	Regular, on needs basis, primarily via e-mails
Resources invested	Xinhua News Agency and the Government of China funded the activities; the total budget is not known. , The secretariat provided technical and expert support (development of training manual for journalists, editing of stories, assisting with the development of scripts for videos).
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Capacity building ○ Communication and promotional work (articles, interviews, social media, conference participation)
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Trained 8 environmental journalists from across Asia in 2012, 23 articles on land degradation, desertification and drought have been developed by them ○ Produced two films ○ Published stories for the World Day to Combat Desertification in 2015 (coverage 85 media outlets) ○ Conducted interviews of the UNCCD Executive Secretary during 2012-2015, with high reach of the Chinese audience
Impact	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reached out the public worldwide on land degradation issues; 2. Trained journalists became agents of change on the national level as still reporting on land degradation, desertification and drought; 3. Availability of show cases (videos) for further usage in outreach work.
Challenges faced	Administrative burden and lack of time to make follow up
Factors contributing to success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Availability of funding; ○ Effective use of available resources of both partners, i.e. Xinhua used its over 150 bureaus around the world to provide media support to the secretariat, while the secretariat supported Xinhua's reporting through its network and web-site; ○ Committed partners and clearly defined purpose.

Case 3

Title of the partnership	The University of Bern through World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT)
Year when it was launched	2011
Status	ongoing
Type of partnership	Formal (Agreement with WOCAT and MOU with SDC), bilateral
Role of UNCCD	In response to COP decisions, the secretariat has to compile and disseminate the database for the best practices on SLM technologies, including adaptation. Through an open competition, WOCAT was selected to carry out this assignment.
Purpose of the partnership	To create and maintain a centralized best practices database.
Management structure	Joint Steering Committee consists of the University of Bern and the secretariat. Responsible focal point on the secretariat side was Facilitation and Monitoring of Implementation Unit up to 2014, since 2015 Knowledge Management, Science and Technology Unit. On the WOCAT side there are two focal points (director and coordinator).
Communication	Regular, on needs basis
Resources invested	Over 200,000 CHF, the Swiss development cooperation agency is the donor.
Activities	Consolidation of existing information on SLM best practices of UNCCD member countries.
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reached agreement on the format of database, which will be linked to the WOCAT's global online database system on SLM Practices; ○ Developed classification system which is now in the process of testing; ○ Pilot version will be presented at COP 12 in Ankara, Turkey and by the end of 2015 it is expected that the database will become operational.
(potential) Impact	The created database will provide an easy access to SLM best practices.
Challenges faced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Delays with deliverables as one year was spent for selection of technical partner (WOCAT) and two years for negotiation and finalization of the Framework Agreement; ○ Different interests of partners and misunderstanding of the purpose of the partnership; ○ Technical problems in the beginning with retrieving the data from the UNCCD PRAIS database;¹⁰ ○ Low quality of data provided by UNCCD parties created difficulties with data categorization and classification; ○ Search for funds for maintaining the database on SLM best practices.
Factors contributing to success	Experienced partner (scientific institution) with strong technical capacity in databases creation and maintain, in particular global online database system on SLM Practices.

¹⁰ Performance Review and Assessment of Implementation System, which is the on-line reporting platform of the UNCCD.

Case 4

Title of the partnership	Capacity Development initiative on National Drought Management Policies
Year when it was launched	2013
Status	Finished (May 2015)
Type of partnership	Formal (Framework of Cooperation), multi-stakeholder
Role of UNCCD	The partnership emerged at the High-level Meeting on National Drought Policy in Geneva in 2013 as response to the needs expressed by the participating countries, who called for the formulation of related capacity building The secretariat was one of the founding members of this partnership, the others included WMO, FAO, and UNW-DPC.
Purpose of the partnership	To support to the development of national drought management policies.
Members	WMO, FAO, UNW-DPC, and UNCCD
Management structure	UNW-DPC was a coordinator of the partnership, focal point on the secretariat side was a representative of the External Relations, Policy and Advocacy Unit.
Communication	Regular, on needs basis, primarily via e-mails Information about the initiative has been displaced at UNW Activity information System - http://www.ais.unwater.org/ais/course/view.php?id=37
Resources invested	USD 326,000 (UNW-DPC -74%, WMO-9%, FAO -7%, and UNCCD-3%), UNCCD also provided expert support (preparation of one of the four training modules).
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sub-regional capacity building workshops; ○ Global drought conference.
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Kick-Off event at the High-level Meeting on National Drought Policy with more than 100 participants from 42 countries; ○ 6 regional capacity building workshops for Eastern Europe, Latin America and Caribbean, MENA and North Africa, East and Southern Africa, Central and Western Africa, Asia and Pacific, involving 179 governmental stakeholders from 69 countries ○ Scientific document on 'Best Practices on National Drought Management Policy' and policy document on National Drought Management Policy.
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Change of attitude towards drought by participating countries: from reactive to pro-active; ○ Mexico and Brazil repeated workshops on drought on their own ○ South Africa and Nigeria started their work on the national policies; however, no national drought management policy has yet been completed.
Challenges faced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No resources to follow up the workshops to find out the status of the development of national drought management policies; ○ Lack of funding and low priority status of drought policy work in the countries Lack of suitable data for drought characterization in countries and varying methodologies for drought assessment.

Factors contributing to success

- Importance of the topic for each partner and recognition of the issues of droughts by all UN agencies involved in the partnership;
- Participant-centered and cross-sectoral approaches;
- Partnership coordinator was an UNW-DPC (interagency mechanism) which allowed to avoid high administrative burden.

Case 5

Title of the partnership	EU Joint Research Center (JRC)
Year when it was launched	2013
Status	ongoing
Type of partnership	Formal (Letter of Agreement), bilateral
Role of UNCCD	JRC provided data to UNCCD parties for reporting on three progress indicators, namely trends in soil organic carbon, land productivity, and land cover/use.
Purpose of the partnership	To create databases for UNCCD reporting
Management structure	One focal point from the secretariat and one focal point from JRC.
Communication	Regular, on needs basis, primarily via e-mails
Resources invested	JRC undertook the testing free of charge.
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ JRC prepared to test the data in 14 countries (10% of the affected countries parties); ○ Countries received compiled information in June 2015.
(potential) Impact	UNCCD can set the baseline and review & assess progress concerning the three indicators on the basis of accurate, comparable data.
Challenges faced	Took about 6 months to receive a letter from the EU JRC to undertake this assignment.
Factors contributing to success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Common understanding of the needs; ○ Mutual interests in creation of a partnership (EU JRC increases its profile through collaboration with the UN agency, while UNCCD receives technical expertise).

Case 6

Title of the partnership	The Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel Initiative (GGWSSI)
Year when it was launched	2007, GM of the UNCCD is a partner since 2014
Status	ongoing
Type of partnership	Formal (MOU with GGWSSI is in process of signature, Cooperation Agreement for implementation of FLEUVE project), multi-stakeholder.
Role of UNCCD	GGWSSI has evolved into a regional sustainable landscape program. FLEUVE is a part of a number of projects falling under the GGWSSI. The others are Action Against Desertification, BRICKS, and SAWAP.
Purpose of the partnership	To combat land degradation and desertification in Sahel and Sahara, boost food security, and support communities to adapt the climate change.
Members	GGWSSI members include 14 African countries and 18 international organizations. FLEUVE members are FAO and its programme on the GGWSSI, and three CSOs networks (RESAD, RADD0 and Drynet).
Management structure	The GGWSSI is coordinated by African Union. The coordination between the GGWSSI and UNCCD is done by focal points from the GM Land, Governance and Policy Programme Unit.
Communication	Weekly communication, daily contact with African Union via e-mails and phone; meetings every 2 months. Has in place Communication Strategy and Plan. Developed a regional harmonized strategy, regional capacity development strategy and action plan.
Resources invested	GM contribution through EU-funded FLEUVE “Front Local Environnemental pour une Union Verte” project (10million EUR)
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Knowledge Platform ○ Micro-investment projects
Outputs	GM on behalf of GGWSSI partners developed an online knowledge platform (http://www.greatgreenwallinitiative.org) to support decision-makers, development partners, scientists, and local communities to share knowledge, upscale best practices and stimulate dialogue on how to combat the effects of climate change and desertification and boost investments in the region.
(potential) Impact	Improved local resilience to climate change, preserve rural heritage and improve livelihoods of the local population by promotion of SLM within initiative.
Challenges faced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lack of prioritization of joint targets by the GGWSSI; ○ Coordination and governance of the GGWSSI; ○ Time for hiring the project team.
Factors contributing to success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Spirit of solidarity to facilitate South-South learning; ○ Local community participation and ownership; ○ Mobilized resources for cooperation, knowledge management, capacity development, monitoring and transboundary actions.

Case 7

Title of the partnership	Collaborative Partnership on Forest (CPF)
Year when it was launched	2001, UNCCD is an official partner since 2010
Status	ongoing
Type of partnership	Informal, multi-stakeholder, global level
Role of UNCCD	Formed in response to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) resolution that established the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF). The UNCCD secretariat is one of the eight founding institutions of CPF. The secretariat focuses on forest degradation, while GM on forest financing.
Purpose of the partnership	To support the work of UNFF and its member countries and enhance cooperation on and coordination of forest issues.
Members	14 international forest-related organizations (CIFOR, FAO, ITTO, IUFRO, CBD, GEF, UNCCD, UNDP, UNFF, IUCN, UNFCCC, UNEP, ICRAF, WB)
Management structure	Chair: FAO; Secretariat: UNFF Secretariat; Vice Chair: CBD Secretariat. Focal points are the UNCCD Liaison Office New York and the GM Liaison, Land Security and Resilience Programme Unit. CPF has annual Frameworks, work plans and progress reports.
Communication	Regular, formal meetings and informal working meetings (on the needs basis). CPF has its web-site http://www.cpfweb.org/en/ , where CPF meetings reports, publications, members news are available. CPF developed its Constitution as well as established the Communicators Group during the International Year of Forests in 2011 to enable greater coordination in communication products and events produced by CPF members.
Resources invested	Absence of dedicated funding; voluntary contributions of both human and financial resources by CPF member organizations and contributions from donor governments.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Participation in events; ○ Preparation and distribution of policy papers and studies.
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Celebrations of International Day of Forests; ○ Organization of Global Landscape Forum; ○ Improving data & information on forest finance; ○ Reporting on SFM & NLBI implementation; ○ Integrating forests into the post-2015 development agenda.
(potential) Impact	Contribution to saving and maintaining the world's forests and sustaining healthy, productive landscapes
Challenges faced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clarity of roles and responsibilities between the secretariat and GM.
Factors contributing to success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Complementarity of the mandates of its members; ○ Shared goal of promoting sustainable forest management ; ○ Mutual interest due to the importance of the topic; ○ Informal initiative and flexible arrangements for its activities.

Case 8

Title of the partnership	TerrAfrica
Year when it was launched	2005
Status	ongoing
Type of partnership	Informal, multilateral, global level
Role of UNCCD	UNCCD is a founding partner. Policy level – the secretariat and country level – GM.
Purpose of the partnership	To address the land degradation in Sub-Saharan Africa by promotion of SLM.
Members	26 Sub-Saharan African countries, the civil society, the research community and international partners. Formed partnerships with GGWSSI, EcoAgriculture Partners, Connect4Climate, Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program.
Management structure	TerrAfrica Secretariat: African Union's NEPAD Planning Coordinating Agency TerrAfrica Executive Committee (meets annually).
Communication	Regular, on needs basis, preliminary via e-mails. Developed 5 years Strategy and Business Plans and comprehensive joint annual workplans disaggregated by each partner country and consolidated for TerrAfrica as a whole, launched a web-site http://terrafrica.org/ and knowledge platform on SLM.
Resources invested	Donors include Norway, France, Netherlands, European Union 50 million EUR.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Participation in events; ○ Preparation and distribution of policy papers and studies; ○ Capacity building.
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ TerrAfrica agenda and country engagement strategy; ○ TerrAfrica Business Plan and its implementation, including joint sub-regional workshops, and enhanced resource mobilization approaches and practices; ○ Alignment of TerrAfrica activities with the five operational objectives of UNCCD 10 Years Strategy.
(potential) Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Long-term broad-based SLM in Africa; ○ Changed focus from land degradation in agricultural lands to sustainable land and water management on a broader scale.
Challenges faced	Big investments, however not producing fully what was expected due to big number of partners and comprehensive planning and M&E system.
Factors contributing to success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inclusive partnership; ○ Mobilization of financing for SLWM and diversifying sources/channels; ○ Countries leadership and ownership; ○ Establishing linkages with relevant regional, continental, and global policy frameworks.

Case 9

Title of the partnership	Niger
Year when it was launched	2014
Status	Finished (2015)
Type of partnership	Formal (Cooperation Agreement), country level
Role of UNCCD	GM is assisting Niger in promoting the sustainable use of natural resources, and building resilience to desertification, DLDD and climate change.
Purpose of the partnership	To support the country in increase of finance for SLM.
Members	IOM (co-implementer), ECOWAS, the Permanent Interstates Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), the Government of Niger.
Management structure	GM is one of the implementing partners of the project; one country focal point from Niger and two focal points from the GM Liaison, Land Security and Resilience Programme.
Communication	Regular, weekly basis, preliminary via e-mails and phone
Resources invested	Funded by the Italian Development Cooperation – Ministry of Foreign Affairs through three-year project “Promoting sustainable land management in migration-prone areas in West Africa through innovative financing mechanisms in Burkina Faso, Niger and Senegal” (2014-2016).
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Workshops ○ Round-tables ○ Assessments ○ Assistance with development project proposals
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2 workshops ○ Several assessments of SLM ○ Several project proposals ○ Donor round-table on SLM ○ Integrated Investment Framework (IIF) for SLM
(potential) Impact	To prevent land degradation and restore degraded land areas in Niger by increasing investments in SLM
Challenges faced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dependency on the country focal point engagement as it is not a paid position ○ Absence of UNCCD staff/consultants at country level ○ Securing long-term funding ○ Follow up of the implementation of the IIF by Niger ○ Problems with Internet in Niger
Factors contributing to success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strong national ownership ○ Country driven rather than donor driven ○ Good coordination with the secretariat (donors round-table, workshops)