United Nations ICCD/CRIC(23)/5

Convention to Combat Desertification

Distr.: General
12 September 2025

Original: English

Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention
Twenty-third session
Panama City, Panama, 1–5 December 2025
Item 2 (a) of the provisional agenda
Effective implementation of the Convention at national, subregional and regional levels
Update on the implementation of the voluntary land degradation neutrality targets and related implementation efforts

Implementation of the voluntary land degradation neutrality targets and related implementation efforts.

Report by the Global Mechanism

Summary

Decision 12/COP.14 requested the secretariat to include regular stocktaking of the voluntary Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Programme (LDN TSP) in official documentation prepared for intersessional sessions of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC). Building on this, by decision 13/COP.16, Parties decided to include an update on the implementation of voluntary LDN targets and related implementation efforts on the agenda of the twenty-third session of the CRIC (CRIC 23) for Parties to review and discuss.

Drawing on the mandate of decisions 3/COP.15, 11/COP.15, 12/COP.15 and 13/COP.15, decision 3/COP.16 invited Parties to refine their voluntary LDN targets by ensuring that they are specific, time-bound, policy-coherent, quantitative, spatially explicit, gender-responsive and well-integrated into planning frameworks. It also requested the Global Mechanism (GM) and secretariat to support voluntary LDN target setting beyond the current 18 countries in the second phase of the LDN TSP (LDN TSP 2.0). This includes coordinating with other conventions, integrating targets into national land use planning frameworks, and facilitating knowledge-sharing on LDN implementation.

Decisions 13/COP.15 and 3/COP.16 request the GM and the secretariat to strengthen partnerships to accelerate the development of a geographically balanced project preparation pipeline on both sustainable land management and drought resilience. Decision 3/COP.16 emphasizes the need to focus on large-scale, high-impact, multi-country flagship initiatives, projects and programmes, and scale up the GM's capacity-building to countries and relevant stakeholders, including local authorities, civil society and the private sector, where applicable, to help in accessing funding from a variety of sources.

This report provides an update on the status of the LDN target setting and implementation process. It also highlights progress made in project development, including efforts to mobilize resources, identify innovative finance and engage with the private sector. It outlines achievements, identifies challenges and presents conclusions and recommendations to inform the discussions of Parties at CRIC 23.

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I. Evolution of land degradation neutrality implementation

1. When countries first set land degradation neutrality (LDN) targets, they followed the basic conceptual framework and concentrated on avoiding, reducing and reversing land degradation. The second phase of the LDN Target Setting Programme (LDN TSP 2.0) now takes a more comprehensive approach that recognizes the complexity of land degradation issues. While targets continue to aim to maintain sufficient land resources to support healthy ecosystems, LDN TSP 2.0 has expanded to include gender-responsive integrated land use planning. This broader approach considers different timeframes and geographical scales, and seeks to create synergies with other important development frameworks, particularly those addressing climate change and biodiversity conservation. This evolution opens up opportunities for further development of approaches that engage multiple sectors.

A. Sustainable Development Goals and the maturing land degradation neutrality framework within the Convention

2. Since decision 3/COP.12, country Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), UNCCD institutions, and a range of institutional, technical and financing partners have cooperated to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Target 15.3 through multiple relevant approaches. These include LDN target setting using the best available data; advancing LDN financing and implementation through transformative project partnerships; and continuously improving access to data, robust methodologies, and technical capacity for effective monitoring and reporting. Significant global progress has been made in voluntary LDN target setting, land restoration commitments, and sustainable land management (SLM), as reflected in previous reports of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC).

3. In the context of LDN, the LDN TSP[1] has supported a total of 131 participating countries to date in setting voluntary LDN targets. As of 30 June 2025, 113 countries have successfully set and technically validated their voluntary LDN targets and associated measures with support of the LDN TSP, and 107 final national LDN reports are publicly available on the UNCCD website[2]. In total, 76 countries have officially adopted LDN targets with high-level endorsements, and 66 of these are publicly available on the UNCCD website.

4. The first global assessment of land restoration commitments published in 2020[3] indicated that this process resulted in voluntary commitments by country Parties to restore over 450 million hectares of degraded land. According to the same global assessment, these voluntary commitments are complemented by an additional 250 million hectares covered by Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and some 90 million hectares included in the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The latest global assessment undertaken in 2024[4] indicates that the voluntary commitments of countries under LDN targets has now reached almost 600 million hectares (see figure 1).

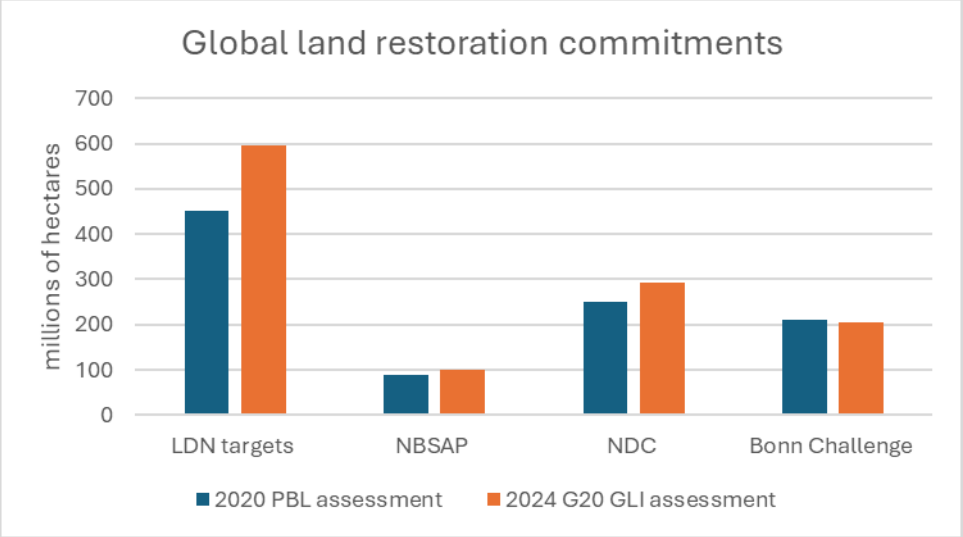
[1] https://www.unccd.int/land-and-life/land-degradation-neutrality/projects-programmes/ldn-target-setting.

[2] https://www.unccd.int/our-work/country-profiles/voluntary-ldn-targets.

[3] 2020 assessment by PBL (the Dutch research institute on the environment and spatial planning): https://www.pbl.nl/en/publications/goals-and-commitments-for-the-restoration-decade.

[4] 2024 assessment by the Group of Twenty Global Land Initiative: https://grih.info/reports/.

Figure 1
Global land restoration commitments assessed in 2020 and 2024



(LDN: land degradation neutrality; NBSAP: National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans; NDC: nationally determined contributions; PBL: the Dutch research institute on the environment and spatial planning; GLI: Global Land Initiative)

5. It is expected that these figures will continue to rise as countries update their NDCs and NBSAPs, and as ongoing review and strengthening of LDN targets take place as part of LDN TSP 2.0. This collective effort represents a significant step towards achieving SDG 15.3 and the goals of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, while also generating a wide range of co-benefits such as improved food and water security, enhanced biodiversity conservation, and increased resilience to climate change. These outcomes contribute to SDG Target 15.3 as well as supporting progress across multiple other SDGs.

B. Decisions taken by the Conference of the Parties at its sixteenth session

6. At its sixteenth session, the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the UNCCD adopted several decisions to guide the voluntary LDN TSP and related implementation efforts.

7. Decision 3/COP.16 invited Parties to refine their voluntary LDN targets by ensuring that they are specific, time-bound, policy-coherent, quantitative, spatially explicit, gender-responsive and adequately integrated into planning frameworks. The same decision invited developed country Parties and other Parties, relevant United Nations entities, international financial organizations and private sector institutions to provide substantial financial and non-financial resources to strengthen Convention implementation activities related to the roll-out of the LDN TSP 2.0 process, the provision of technical assistance for project and programme preparation, and private sector engagement. It also invited the Global Mechanism (GM) to enhance its collaboration with regional organizations in resource mobilization for the development of multi-country, large-scale projects addressing desertification, land degradation and drought as well as sand and dust storms.

8. Furthermore, decision 3/COP.16 requested the GM and the secretariat, within their respective mandates and subject to the availability of financial resources, and in collaboration with relevant financial and technical partners, to:

(a) Contribute to building the capacities of Parties in project development, programme design and access to finance;

(b) Support and roll out, through effective partnerships, the process of (i) setting and/or refining voluntary LDN targets beyond the 18 pilot countries participating in the LDN TSP 2.0; (ii) streamlining the process with other Conventions and associated processes; (iii) integrating the targets into (sub)national integrated land use planning frameworks and national development plans in those country Parties that may wish to engage in this process;

and (iv) supporting relevant knowledge-sharing efforts on LDN target setting and implementation;

(c) Contribute to developing the capacities of country Parties to improve, in their national context, synergies with biodiversity and climate change processes and intersectoral coordination with relevant sectors, policies and plans, such as those relating to finance and planning, agriculture, energy, water, infrastructure development, and disaster risk management;

(d) Continue to strengthen partnerships to grow the geographically balanced project preparation pipeline, through a partnership model, to (i) facilitate gender-responsive, large-scale, integrated landscape investment programmes; and (ii) scope and nurture additional geographic and thematic flagship initiatives, including through the Peace Forest Initiative (PFI);

(e) Further focus on large-scale, high-impact, multi-country flagship initiatives, projects and programmes and scale up the GM's capacity-building to countries and relevant stakeholders, including local authorities, civil society and the private sector, where applicable, to help in accessing funding from a variety of sources (e.g. through the Green Climate Fund, regional development banks, different Global Environment Facility (GEF) focal areas, philanthropies, the private sector and innovative funding sources).

9. Finally, by decision 13/COP.16, Parties decided to include an update on the implementation of voluntary LDN targets and related implementation efforts on the agenda of the twenty-third session of the CRIC (CRIC 23) for Parties to review and discuss.

II. Implementation of the second phase of the Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Programme

10. This chapter outlines the implementation approach of LDN TSP 2.0, noting its increased complexity. It highlights early progress, country engagement, technical support, and challenges that have shaped the programme's design and delivery.

A. Programme launch and country participation

11. Following the mandate received by country Parties at COP 15, the GM and the secretariat of the UNCCD, in collaboration with strategic partners,[5] officially launched LDN TSP 2.0 on 12 May 2023.[6] On 3 July 2023, the UNCCD announced[7] the selection of the following 18 countries for participation in the LDN TSP 2.0 and the related Enabling Activity project "Integrating LDN into land use planning frameworks to strengthen national UNCCD enabling environments" under the seventh replenishment of GEF (GEF-7): Argentina, Benin, Central African Republic, Georgia, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Republic of Moldova, Saint Lucia, South Africa, Sri Lanka and Türkiye.

12. Technical guidance was provided to participating countries both through the development of supplementary guidelines on strengthening land restoration targets and a dedicated capacity-building workshop[8] held from 20 to 22 February 2024 in Doha, Qatar.

[5] The Changwon Initiative, Global Environment Facility, International Union for Conservation of Nature, Global Affairs Canada, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the Group of Twenty Global Land Initiative.

[6] https://www.unccd.int/news-stories/notifications/call-requests-support-assist-countries-strengthening-ldn-targets.

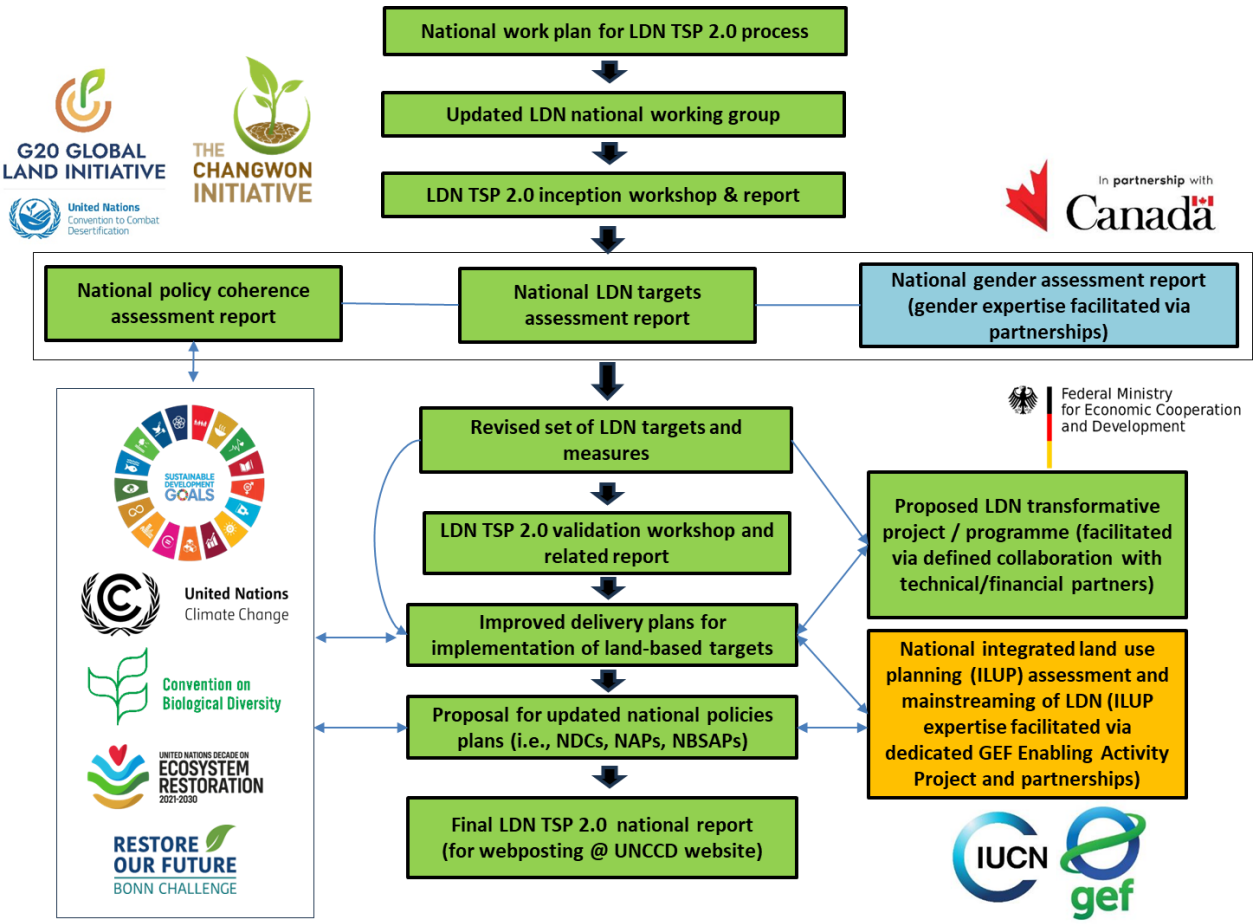
[7] https://www.unccd.int/news-stories/notifications/18-countries-selected-support-strengthen-ldn-targets-and-integrated-land.

[8] https://www.unccd.int/news-stories/stories/new-horizons-land-restoration-18-nations-spearhead-next-phase-ldn-tsp.

13. National LDN TSP 2.0 processes were initiated by the respective country Parties immediately after the workshop in collaboration with a significant number of technical partner agencies engaged by the GM to support country-level activities.[9]

14. By June 2024, most countries had already held relevant national stakeholder consultations and designed country-tailored processes that follow the country-level activities proposed under the LDN TSP 2.0 (see figure 2), adapted to specific national circumstances.

Figure 2
Overview of the country-level activities supported through the LDN TSP 2.0



(LDN TSP 2.0: second phase of the Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Programme; NDC: nationally determined contributions; NAP: national adaptation plan: NBSAPs: National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans; GEF Global Environment Facility; ILUP: integrated land use planning)

B. Results: progress and key metrics

15. As part of knowledge management, internal monitoring and evaluation under LDN TSP 2.0, the GM developed a dashboard to track both overall and country-level progress. The following table shows the progress by the 18 participating countries based on the LDN TSP 2.0 dashboard, as of 30 June 2025:

[9] The United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Forum on Forests, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the Sahara and Sahel Observatory, and the Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus.

Table 1
Progress made by the 18 participating countries based on the second phase of the Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Programme

Activity	*Number of countries completed*	*Number of countries in progress*	*Number of countries yet to begin*
National workplans in place; aiming to complete activities by end-2025.	18 (100%)	0	0
National land degradation neutrality (LDN) working groups activated with broad stakeholder engagement	16 (89%)	2	0
Inception workshops conducted	16 (89%)	1	1
Policy coherence assessments completed on Rio convention-aligned land policies	9 (50%)	8	1
LDN targets critically assessed (specific, time-bound, quantitative and spatially explicit targets)	10 (56%)	5	3
LDN targets revised and enhanced	6 (33%)	5	7
Revised LDN targets validated through formal consultations	6 (33%)	2	10
Improved delivery plans for land-based implementation efforts (identifying financial and implementation gaps)	0 (0%)	6	12
Communications for integration into national policies (e.g. nationally determined contributions, National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans)	0 (0%)	3	15
Definition of bankable, transformative projects	0 (0%)	3	15

16. As the LDN TSP 2.0 country level activities continue during the third and fourth quarters of 2025, it is expected that most activities will be completed by participating countries, in collaboration with the engaged partner agencies, by the end of 2025 in time to present interim results and enrich relevant discussions during CRIC 23.

C. Gender integration and social inclusion

17. To strengthen the enabling environment for gender equality, and in response to findings from the evaluation of the first phase of the LDN TSP and the COP 15 mandate, the GM is ensuring that the revised LDN targets in all 18 countries participating in LDN TSP 2.0 are gender responsive. This work is supported by a grant from the Government of Canada.

18. In 2024, the GM pursued multiple avenues to secure gender expertise for national LDN gender assessments, including discussions with the United Nations Programme for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and engagement with national partner agencies. Through this comprehensive approach, the GM successfully established partnerships with national agencies to provide the required expertise. Despite the time that was required to identify and formalize these partnerships, national gender assessments are now underway through these partnerships and expected to be completed in all countries by the end of 2025.

D. Integrated land use planning

19. The operationalization and timelines of integrated land use planning (ILUP) related work posed another challenge to the GM during this phase. Although the GEF-7 Enabling Activity project “Integrating LDN into land use planning frameworks to strengthen national UNCCD enabling environments” was approved in June 2022, the start of activities was substantially delayed for several reasons, including delays in the negotiation and formalization of the project implementation agreement and the recruitment of a project coordinator. Despite these setbacks, the project inception workshop was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in May 2025, and the hiring process for an ILUP specialist to

technically coordinate the project activities has been completed. Country-level implementation is expected to begin in 2026 in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), and national partners.

III. Analysis: success factors and implementation challenges

20. As countries advance under LDN TSP 2.0, lessons learned on progress and challenges have emerged. This analysis highlights both achievements and difficulties to inform a constructive debate. Understanding these dynamics is essential to refine support strategies, drive policy integration, and scale up land restoration efforts globally. Given the complexity of LDN TSP 2.0, internal dynamics, and GM support limitations, a key lesson learned is the importance of providing agile, tailored services to each Party, and addressing challenges in real time as they arise.

A. Key success factors and best practices

1. Effective stakeholder engagement models

21. A key success factor of LDN TSP 2.0 is the use of proven stakeholder engagement models from the first phase, particularly national LDN working groups. These platforms bring together stakeholders and representatives connected to land degradation processes to exchange information, guide target setting, and validate outcomes. All participating countries have reactivated their national LDN working groups, typically building on existing coordination mechanisms for land-related issues or Rio Conventions agendas. Following GM guidance through the UNCCD supplementary guidelines, countries have reviewed and expanded their working group membership to include new stakeholders, re-engage key participants, and ensure a balanced representation with attention to gender equality and social inclusion. However, ongoing assessments indicate that private sector engagement remains challenging for most countries, highlighting the need for more targeted outreach efforts moving forward.

2. Data-driven decision-making

22. While the COP 15-mandated scope of LDN TSP 2.0 did not include baseline assessment updates from the original phase, an emerging pattern shows participating countries strategically leveraging existing national land degradation datasets to optimize current processes. This approach suggests countries recognize the value proposition of building upon prior investments in data infrastructure rather than starting from zero.

23. The integration strategies vary by national capacity and existing systems. Jordan, Panama and Türkiye have demonstrated institutional learning by incorporating previously developed LDN Decision Support Systems (DSS) into their LDN TSP 2.0 frameworks, indicating effective knowledge transfer between programme phases. This pattern suggests that countries with established technical infrastructure can achieve greater process efficiency.

24. Beyond LDN TSP 2.0 and in relation to ongoing LDN target setting processes, the importance of sound data systems has also been demonstrated by the Bahamas, which is incorporating customized high-resolution data into its LDN baseline assessment calculations via Trends.Earth, and Brazil, which has recently published[10] the results of its national LDN baseline assessment work with a calculation of SDG Indicator 15.3.1, disaggregated by biomes. These examples confirm that LDN target setting functions as a technically sound and data-driven policy mechanism where data system robustness directly correlates with process effectiveness and outcome reliability.

[10] https://odsbrasil.gov.br/objetivo15/indicador1531.

3. Political leadership and vision

25. Political leadership emerges as the primary determinant of LDN target setting effectiveness within this voluntary, country-driven framework. The process requires the coordination of multiple stakeholders across diverse institutions and sectors, creating implementation challenges that can only be overcome through sustained high-level commitment.

26. UNCCD's experience supporting this process since 2016 reveals a clear correlation: regardless of available resources or technical assistance, countries with robust political leadership consistently achieve superior process outcomes and target quality. This finding underscores that technical capacity, while important, is no substitute for political will as the foundational success factor.

27. Political engagement becomes particularly critical for institutional coordination, as LDN processes must integrate multiple multilateral environmental agreement focal points within national governments. Strong leadership facilitates coherent policy alignment between LDN targets and complementary national commitments, including land-based elements of NDCs and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) under UNFCCC, and NBSAPs under CBD.

28. Panama's emerging Nature Pledge[11] exemplifies this integrated approach with an innovative strategic framework designed to maximize policy coherence and operational synergies across the three Rio Conventions. This model demonstrates how political leadership can translate into institutional mechanisms that operationalize multi-convention coordination.

4. Strategic partnerships

29. Another key success factor of the LDN TSP 2.0 is the active collaboration and meaningful partnerships developed with various partner agencies to support country-level implementation of LDN TSP 2.0 activities.

30. UNCCD is grateful for the productive collaborations and related partnership agreements developed with FAO (currently supporting activities in Argentina, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Panama, South Africa and Türkiye), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP – currently supporting activities in Jordan, Namibia, Nigeria, Peru and Sri Lanka), the United Nations Environment Programme (recently engaged to support activities in Kenya), the Sahara and Sahel Observatory (currently supporting activities in Benin and Central African Republic), Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus (currently supporting activities in Georgia) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN – currently supporting gender assessment activities in Pakistan).

31. UNCCD does not have a presence in countries. These partnerships have been a key factor allowing the LDN TSP 2.0 activities to move forward, both in terms of the facilitation of relevant stakeholder consultation processes (i.e. national inception and validation workshops, technical meetings) and the provision of direct technical support, including for gender assessments. These partnerships have facilitated direct linkages and better policy integration with national processes of the other Rio Conventions (i.e. national processes to update NDCs and NBSAPs), as some of these agencies (notably FAO and UNDP) are also supporting the same country Parties in these processes. It is also worth noting that these partnership agreements enabled additional contributions to be leveraged from partner agencies, both financial and in-kind, to increase the support provided to national LDN TSP 2.0 processes.

5. Knowledge exchange and scaling up support under the second phase of the Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Programme

32. It is important to note that throughout the ongoing LDN TSP 2.0 process, UNCCD is documenting and sharing good practices and lessons learned from the experience working with countries and partners. In this context, and in addition to the first LDN TSP 2.0 knowledge exchange webinar delivered on 15 November 2024, the GM is planning two

[11] https://unfccc.int/documents/648666.

additional knowledge-sharing webinars for the third and fourth quarters of 2025, and also plans to publish a briefing note together with the UNCCD supplementary guidelines on strengthening land restoration commitments and targets under the LDN TSP 2.0 in the near future. These will be useful resources to support the scaling up of these activities.

B. Critical implementation challenges

1. Technical capacity and continuity of support at national level

33. Limited technical expertise at the national level emerged as a key implementation challenge for LDN TSP 2.0. While the GM onboarded national consultants in all 18 countries, three consultancy contracts required discontinuation due to performance or institutional issues. The GM adapted by engaging national partner agencies, which maintained continuity but caused temporary delays and required workplan adjustments.

2. Institutional coordination and policy continuity challenges

34. Institutional coordination barriers and siloed approaches within national governments, especially regarding the work on the Rio Conventions, hinder the effective development and implementation of LDN TSP 2.0 activities. Political transitions, including elections, focal point turnover, and resource reductions, disrupted progress in several countries. Pre-existing capacity gaps, such as limited geographical information system expertise for spatial target definition, compounded these challenges.

3. Capacity constraints within the Global Mechanism and UNCCD secretariat

35. The reduced number of staff dedicated to target setting activities and an increasingly diverse portfolio of resource mobilization responsibilities along with COP 16 preparations limited our ability to provide sustained country support. These constraints have continued into 2025, though strong country leadership and partner engagement have helped maintain momentum.

4. Resource mobilization – for target setting and beyond

36. The GM maintains its commitment to supporting countries in LDN target setting through extra-budgetary resources, where available. This ongoing support includes active target setting processes in the Bahamas, Brazil and Tuvalu, with planned activities in Malaysia and emerging opportunities for engagement in Nauru.

37. Despite the importance of the LDN target setting and review process as a foundation for national policy development and a key contribution to the global land restoration agenda, as reflected in the nearly 600 million hectares of land pledged for restoration to date, it has become increasingly difficult to secure the financial resources needed to sustain and expand this work.

38. Stronger investment in national systems, sustained funding and coordinated support from bilateral donors, international institutions and regional actors through more flexible financing approaches are necessary in addition to diverse and creative funding approaches. These may include bespoke asymmetric, opportunistic and/or regionally adapted mechanisms to mobilize the necessary resources at national, regional and global levels. While going beyond target setting, it might also involve the adoption of a more programmatic approach to the enabling environment to secure efficiency and resource gains.

5. A Programmatic approach to the enabling environment

39. A programmatic approach is a strategic methodology that organizes multiple related activities, projects or interventions under a unified framework to achieve common objectives more effectively than individual, standalone efforts. In the LDN context, notably, but not limited to GEF Enabling Activities funding, a programmatic approach means uniting elements under a large, coordinated framework, rather than leading separate, disconnected projects for target setting, capacity building, monitoring systems, and policy integration – each managed by different agencies with their own timelines and approaches.

40. Currently, several enabling activity projects and technical assistance efforts are taking place. These include the development of LDN DSS, Trends.Earth, target setting through the LDN TSP, the review and update of targets in the second phase of the LDN TSP (LDN TSP 2.0) and related ILUP efforts, drought management strategies, alignment with NAPs, global and regional capacity projects such as the Global Support Programme, national capacity-building through the Umbrella Project, the development of the performance review and assessment of implementation system (PRAIS), and other related initiatives. These efforts are largely delivered by various UNCCD partner agencies, including the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), FAO, World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT), Conservation International, UNDP and IUCN.

41. This programmatic framework would emphasize harmonized methodologies and standardized platforms – including Trends.Earth, WOCAT, PRAIS, and DSS – to ensure consistent, comparable monitoring, assessment, planning, and reporting processes. By integrating activities, resources can be utilized more efficiently while strengthening the connections between LDN target setting, ILUP, drought management, and alignment with national and international policy frameworks. This ensures that Parties receive consistent support, agencies work collaboratively rather than competitively, and resources are used more efficiently to achieve the overarching goal of LDN.

42. A programmatic approach would also allow for identification of limiting gaps and bottlenecks, sharing of lessons and best practices, and enhanced coordination at subnational, national, regional and global levels. Improved coordination of UNCCD enabling activities and technical assistance would also improve synergies among the Rio Conventions, facilitate, foster and catalyse new partnerships, technological innovation and alignment with current and future developments in artificial intelligence, and potentially leverage new financing.

6. Private sector engagement

43. UNCCD stakeholders have learned that private sector engagement is essential for scaling land restoration solutions through mobilized finance, innovation and business leadership. Private sector engagement in national processes, from target setting to programme design, has been insufficient.

44. To strengthen private sector contributions, the GM is working closely with the Science Based Targets Network[12] and the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures through the Business for Land (B4L) Initiative.[13] These collaborations ensure that company actions impacting on land are aligned with science-based methodologies for measuring, avoiding, reducing and reversing land degradation. By harmonizing reporting frameworks, providing technical guidance and offering capacity-building, this partnership supports companies in setting robust land-related targets that meet both national and global objectives. By doing so, the B4L initiative ensures that private sector contributions are not only aligned with national LDN targets but also with globally recognized standards for sustainability, nature-positive outcomes and accountability.

IV. Synergies with climate change and biodiversity frameworks

45. Achieving LDN increasingly requires strategic alignment with national climate and biodiversity commitments. LDN TSP 2.0 operationalizes COP 15 and COP 16 mandates for stronger integration between UNCCD, UNFCCC and CBD processes through systematic policy alignment mechanisms. This integration enhances policy coherence, improves resource efficiency, and maximizes cross-sectoral impact across the Rio Conventions through coordinated implementation of NDCs, NAPs and NBSAPs.

46. This approach encompasses several key integration areas:

[12] https://sciencebasedtargetsnetwork.org/.

[13] https://www.unccd.int/our-work/business4land#:~:text=What%20is%20Business%20for%20Land,to%20land%20degradation%20and%20drought.

(a) Alignment with Paris Agreement commitments, NDCs and adaptation measures through land-based mitigation strategies;

(b) Integration with the Global Biodiversity Framework through ecosystem restoration and conservation approaches;

(c) Implementation of integrated landscape approaches, nature-based solutions and coherent reporting systems.

47. The LDN TSP 2.0 design incorporates specific institutional entry points to strengthen inter-convention coordination. National LDN working groups systematically include UNFCCC and CBD focal points to ensure direct linkages with climate and biodiversity processes from the outset.

48. Policy coherence assessments evaluate alignment across relevant frameworks – including NDCs, NAPs, NBSAPs, the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100), the Bonn Challenge, Freshwater Challenge commitments and SDG strategies – to identify overlaps, synergies, and gaps in land-based commitments. These assessments inform LDN target revisions through stakeholder consultation processes that engage all three Rio Convention focal points, among others.

49. Following validation processes, countries develop practical recommendations to enhance integration with national policies. These may include proposals for NDCs, NBSAPs and NAPs to explicitly acknowledge and build upon established LDN targets, with formal communication mechanisms between respective focal points supported by joint technical meetings.

50. Improved delivery plans developed under LDN TSP 2.0 address financing and implementation gaps while creating opportunities for coordinated resource mobilization and implementation strategies across the Rio Conventions. These coordination mechanisms gained prominence during the GEF-7 Enabling Activity project inception workshop in Johannesburg, South Africa in May 2025, which emphasized operational coherence imperatives in the currently constrained funding environment.

Coordinated implementation strategies

51. The GM promotes coordination among Rio Convention focal points and fosters synergies in project design and financing through strategic partnerships with key initiatives including the Joint Capacity Building Programme (JCBP), the NBSAP Accelerator, the NDC Partnership, AFR100 and the Freshwater Challenge.

52. The GM supports cross-convention exchange and capacity-building, particularly for planning and monitoring. GM contributions have informed the new JCBP phase, which emphasizes project preparation and financing to help countries transition from planning to implementation.

53. A beta version of the Rio Conventions Synergies Toolbox, developed by University of Minnesota students, could help project developers and partners assess and enhance synergies across the three conventions. It uses NDCs, NAPs, NBSAPs and LDN targets to promote nature-based solutions and integrated planning.

54. Since 2025, the GM has matched country requests with financial and technical support through the NBSAP Accelerator, participating in coordination meetings on synergies, monitoring, financing, policy coherence, gender integration and resource mobilization.

55. There is also an ongoing dialogue as part of the NDC Partnership that aims to align LDN and SLM priorities within NDCs, strengthening access to climate finance, integrating investment planning, and maximizing technical and financial synergies.

V. Linking target setting to project development and finance

56. Achieving LDN requires a structured process that links national commitments to concrete actions. This chapter presents an integrated approach connecting target setting with

project development and ultimately monitoring and reporting. It also highlights recent innovations in results-based finance and national reporting capacities.

A. Establishing a land degradation neutrality target-to-implementation pipeline

57. Countries participating in the LDN TSP have increasingly adopted a systematic approach that connects national LDN targets with the design and implementation of transformative projects. Under LDN TSP 2.0, countries must prepare delivery plans with financing and implementation gap analyses, and define at least one bankable, transformative project in coordination with partners.

58. This structured pipeline from target to implementation has already led to significant progress.

59. As of August 2025, multiple country Parties have engaged with the Partnership for Project Preparation (PPP), leading to the development or ongoing preparation of more than 130 project concept notes at national, regional, and global levels. Notably, 24 of these projects have successfully mobilized a total of USD 1.6 billion in financing and co-financing. In addition, the PPP is supporting four demonstration projects that showcase innovative approaches in technology transfer, gender leadership, regenerative agriculture, and innovative finance.

60. Effective coordination mechanisms recognize the critical role of regional bodies, economic commissions, LDN regional hubs and thematic networks in helping countries coordinate actions, monitor progress and share resources. Building on successful models like the Great Green Wall Initiative (GGWI) or the PFI demonstrates how pooled resources can create regional added value and generate political momentum.

61. The GM is strengthening the pipeline through the B4L Initiative which helps countries identify investment-ready projects and connect with the private sector, unlocking capital and technical resources for LDN implementation.

B. Monitoring, reporting and verification of projects

1. Monitoring and reporting

62. Since the 2022 reporting exercise, the fourth generation of PRAIS (PRAIS4) enables country Parties to submit spatially explicit information on LDN targets and implemented actions, facilitating map-based visualization for improved monitoring, reporting and decision-making. Ten countries have already submitted spatially explicit data, while 18 countries participating in LDN TSP 2.0 are currently developing spatially explicit revised targets. The 2026 reporting exercise anticipates expanded participation in spatially explicit reporting.

63. The LDN targets tracking tool,[14] developed with European Commission support, represents the first query-enabled data platform serving as a central repository for monitoring 940 LDN targets, with an average of eight individual LDN targets and subtargets per country (i.e. defined at national or subnational level, indicator-specific, and/or area-specific), which were formally communicated by 124 country Parties through various processes (LDN pilot project, LDN TSP, PRAIS 2018 and 2022, and LDN TSP 2.0). It includes a spatial data viewer for targets and actions and pre-populates data for PRAIS 2026. Currently an internal system, future plans include expanding functionality and public access, depending on resources.

2. Decision Support Systems and planning tools

64. UNCCD and strategic partners, including WOCAT, FAO and UNDP, are advancing data-driven LDN decision-making through two key initiatives: LDN DSS development,

[14] https://ldntargets.unccd.int/.

building on earlier pilot exercises with an open call supporting ten additional countries, launched on 16 June 2025; and new technical guidelines with an LDN planning tool for incorporating LDN principles into existing ILUP frameworks, to be developed through partnerships with Conservation International, IUCN, FAO and GIZ under LDN TSP 2.0 and the GEF-7 Enabling Activity project "Integrating LDN into land use planning frameworks to strengthen national UNCCD enabling environments".

3. Additional digital infrastructure and information management

65. The GM is collaborating with the United Nations International Computing Centre to establish a project-tracking platform that will streamline project management across the organization. This digital system will enable GM staff to input, update and monitor projects – including transformative programme proposals and flagship initiatives – within an integrated environment that promotes data consistency, accessibility and strategic alignment. The platform will feature interactive dashboards for dynamic analysis, reporting, and visualization capabilities, enabling users to generate analytical insights, fulfil reporting obligations, and effectively communicate progress to stakeholders. An ongoing assessment of existing tools and practices is a defining requirement to keep the platform scalable and adaptable to evolving needs.

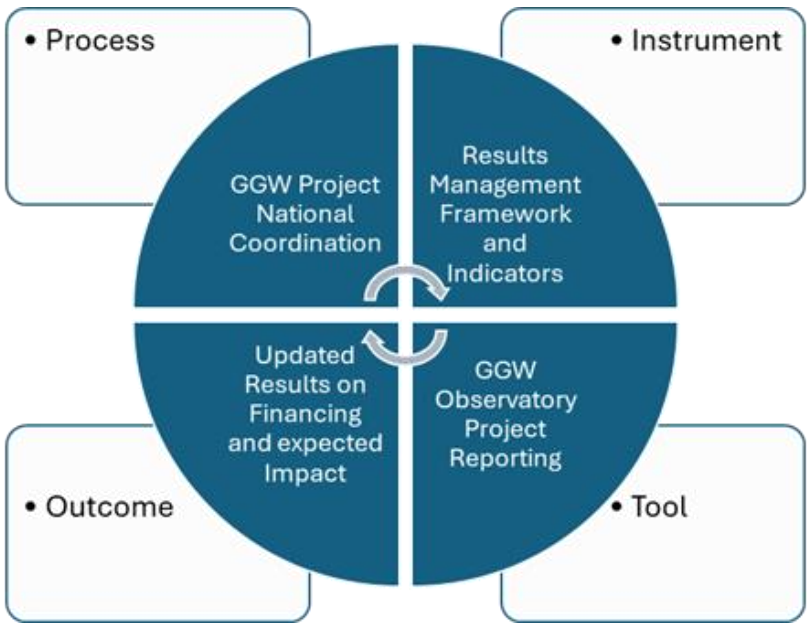
4. Great Green Wall results-based financing mechanisms

66. The GM's evidence-based resource mobilization approach for the GGWI operates through a results-based management system that aggregates indicator values from past and present projects. The harmonized results management framework consolidates indicators from the SDGs, strategic partners, GGW projects, and environmental standards, structured around the GGW Accelerator's five-pillar logic.

67. Reporting is managed through the GGW Observatory, a digital platform that allows stakeholders to track project financing and progress in accordance with country validated results management frameworks. Currently, nine GGW countries are actively applying this monitoring process to their GGW projects.

68. The portfolio monitoring follows a clear sequence: beginning with the management process, applying the harmonized framework as an instrument, operationalizing through the digital tool, and achieving measurable results (see figure 3).

Figure 3
Sequence of portfolio monitoring



GGW: Great Green Wall

VI. Resource mobilization for the implementation of the Convention

69. Recognizing the critical scale of financial resources needed to implement the UNCCD, estimated at USD 278 billion per year according to the UNCCD financial needs assessment,[15] it is crucial to continue strengthening the capacities of countries to mobilize additional and substantial financial resources.

A. Tracking financial flows

70. As the 2026 UNCCD reporting cycle approaches, the GM is strengthening support for reporting on strategic objective 5 (SO5 – resource mobilization) in line with COP mandates. Efforts include refining templates to better track domestic resources and financial needs, improving the availability and quality of default data for progress indicators, and further developing user support tools such as good practice guidance, manuals, glossaries and instructional videos.

71. The GM currently executes the Global Support Programme, which assists country Parties with national reporting through the development of the PRAIS4 online portal, providing default data from global sources, technical support through consultants and helpdesks, capacity-building workshops, and financial flow assessments. The project is entering its fourth phase to support the upcoming reporting cycle. The results of the reporting will frame future resource mobilization efforts. For instance, 2022 reporting showed encouraging trends in domestic financing for combating land degradation. Forty-six countries reported against this indicator (SO5-2), revealing that USD 9.3 billion is targeted at activities related to desertification, land degradation and drought.[16] This was the first time that countries had provided quantitative information on domestic financial flows. However, tracking of domestic financial flows must be further enhanced through available default data and more countries participating in reporting. The results will further encourage decision-makers and stakeholders to invest in land rehabilitation and restoration as an increase in domestic funding could be a major tool in bridging the financing gap. The key challenge is the massive scale of funding needed versus what is currently available. Up to 40 per cent of the planet's land is degraded, directly affecting half of humanity and threatening roughly half of global gross domestic product (USD 44 trillion). The cost of inaction far exceeds the investment required for restoration, yet this economic case has not been effectively communicated to the right stakeholders (notably Ministries of Finance) to mobilize resources. USD 1 billion per day is needed to contribute to land restoration by 2030. However, this shortfall is compounded by the misallocation of existing financial flows. USD 2.6 trillion is spent annually to subsidize activities that are harmful to the environment, e.g. USD 635 billion is spent every year to subsidize the use of fertilizers instead of supporting farmers' actions to reduce land degradation. Annually, USD 700 billion in fossil fuel and agricultural subsidies could be redirected toward restoration efforts.

B. Resource Mobilization Toolbox

72. The GM is currently developing a Resource Mobilization Toolbox (RMT), as requested by decision 3/COP.16, to enhance capabilities across different action areas related to resource mobilization, including strategic planning, financial instruments, project preparation and partnerships. The RMT aims to support countries in addressing their financing gaps by enabling them to identify, formulate and implement financial solutions. It is envisioned to equip countries and stakeholders with essential guidance, tools and resources for formulating effective financing solutions to close the financing gap, and expected to launch at COP 17.

[15] https://www.unccd.int/resources/publications/investing-lands-future-financial-needs-assessment-unccd.

[16] https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/2023-09/2316264E.pdf.

C. Resource mobilization – project preparation

73. Resource mobilization, supported by innovative partnerships and financing models, is essential to scale up action, address priorities and enable countries to meet their commitments under the Convention. COP 15 emphasized the GM's role in supporting project preparation through partnerships while Parties highlighted the need for gender-responsive, cross-sectoral, large-scale landscape solutions and stronger coordination across governance levels. The GM business model fosters interactions among a wide range of stakeholders to amplify the global impact of a synergistic approach to achieving land-based solutions. This approach helps address existing gaps in capacity-building, resource mobilization and political influence, which have historically limited the UNCCD's ability to secure funding for large-scale projects. The model places strong emphasis on leveraging partnerships and cost-sharing for long-term sustainability.

74. The GM platform business model creates value by facilitating interactions, partnerships, and resource exchanges among various stakeholders, serving as a collaborative hub where project development, capacity building, financial solutions, knowledge sharing, and solutions can be developed and scaled up. This approach fosters synergies among the Rio Conventions and multiple sectors, ultimately helping to advance the UNCCD's goals while contributing to biodiversity conservation and climate resilience through coordinated land-based solutions.

75. However, resource mobilization is becoming more complex. Public and philanthropic resources alone will not suffice to achieve LDN by 2030 and available public and Official Development Assistance finance is under pressure. Parties face challenges in securing financial resources due to domestic competition for resources amongst sectors or, increasingly, due to debt burden. Domestic public budget allocations could be further improved and simplified access to finance facilitated, particularly for developing countries, at very low or no cost. It is particularly urgent that multilateral development banks be systematically engaged.

76. Financial innovation, including green bonds, blended finance, public-private partnerships and the bringing together of NAPs currently siloed under the UNCCD, CBD and UNFCCC, represents an immediate opportunity to align targets and maximize returns on investment. New financial instruments and intermediaries as well as enabling conditions could be deployed to catalyse private capital.

D. Global Mechanism-led flagships

1. Greening Drylands Partnership

77. The Greening Drylands Partnership was launched by UNCCD, UNEP and the Korea Forest Service (KFS) at COP 10 in 2011. It aims to improve community livelihoods, restore degraded ecosystems, protect biodiversity and create enabling conditions for SLM and green growth opportunities, while implementing on-the-ground pilot projects to advance the achievement of LDN. Since 2012, it has completed 18 pilot projects across Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America. Building on KFS financial support, the Partnership scales up successful approaches and replicates proven models across regions.

78. On progress, the Partnership developed long-term strategies (2024–2027) for Africa and the Pacific Islands regions in 2024. These strategies focus on (i) capacity-building, technical assistance and finance access; (ii) pilot projects to scale land restoration and climate resilience solutions; and (iii) coordination and knowledge-sharing across regions. Annual pilot projects are now underway, aligning local actions with regional and global frameworks.

79. The Ethiopia pilot project, completed in 2024, restored dryland ecosystems and improved livelihoods through agroforestry. In 2025, new projects in Tonga and Fiji aim to restore island ecosystems by managing invasive species and supporting community-based resource management.

2. The Great Green Wall Accelerator and the Sahel Flagship

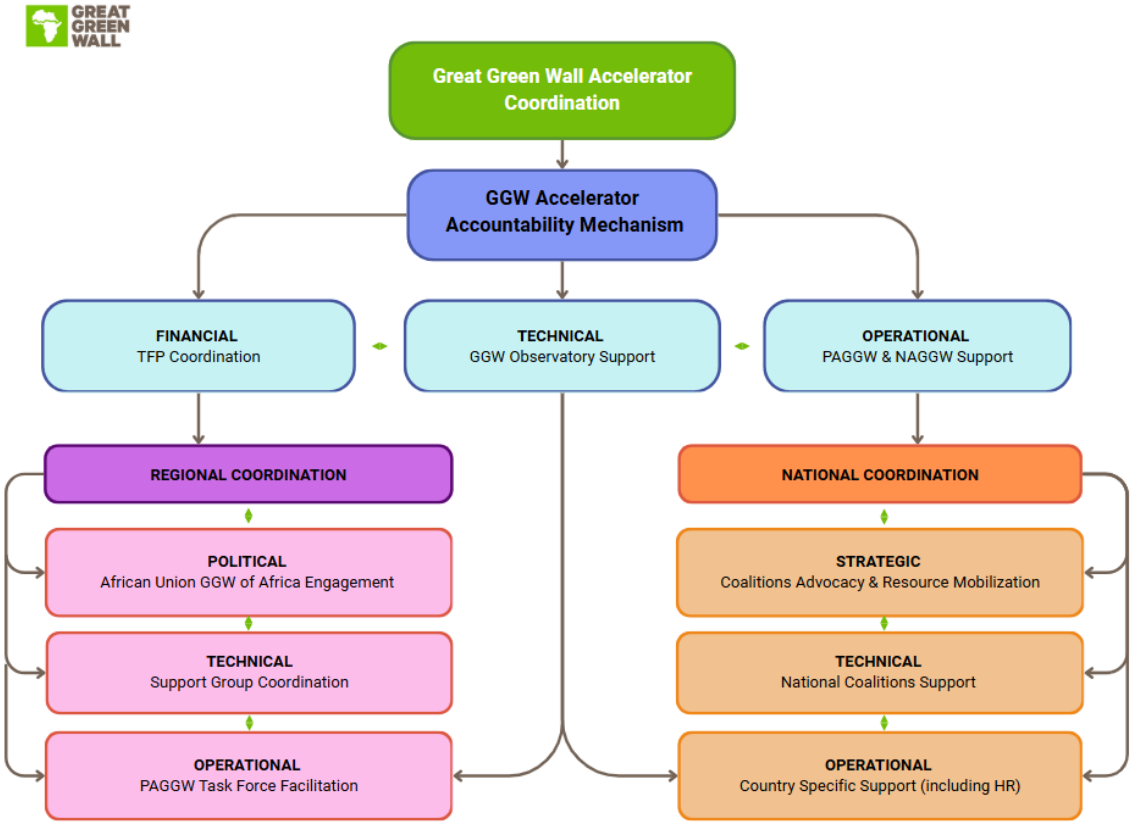
80. Established in 2021 and hosted by UNCCD, the Great Green Wall (GGW) Accelerator was created to address institutional and coordination gaps identified in the 2020 assessment, "The Great Green Wall: Implementation status and way ahead to 2030".

81. The Accelerator plays a key role in translating financial commitments into tangible results across Africa's drylands. At the 2021 One Planet Summit, more than USD 19 billion was pledged by leading technical and financial partners, such as the World Bank, African Development Bank (ADB), International Fund for Agricultural Development, European Commission, European Investment Bank, GEF, Green Climate Fund and the French Development Agency, highlighting the need for a dedicated coordination unit.

82. Without a centralized funding mechanism, the GGW Accelerator is responsible for tracking financial flows, enhancing project implementation, and providing a structured framework to better align stakeholder actions from local to regional level. On progress, the GGW Observatory was successfully launched in May 2024 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, and the project "Strengthening Coordination and Implementation of the Great Green Wall Initiative", funded by the Austrian Development Agency, was successfully completed. Its follow-up, "Phase 2: Enhancing Sustainability and Expansion of the Great Green Wall Initiative", was approved for EUR 2.85 million, with the inception phase currently underway. A representative of the Austrian Government commended the GM at COP 16 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, for both the project's success and the signing of its continuation.

83. Additionally, regarding the Sahel Flagship, the Sahelian landscapes project, "Creating lands of opportunity: Transforming Livelihoods through Landscape Restoration in the Sahel" (LOGMe), funded by the Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy Security, was successfully completed, while its follow-up, "Sahelian Landscapes, a Land of Opportunities – Widen Proven Furrows" (LOGMe II), was approved for EUR 11 million. The Italian Government presented LOGMe II at a high-level side event during COP 16 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and the project was officially launched in May 2025 in Dakar, Senegal, with country-level launches scheduled between July and September 2025.

Figure 4
The Great Green Wall Accelerator Coordination Apparatus



(GGW: Great Green Wall; TFP: technical and financial partners; PAGGW: Pan-African Agency of the Great Green Wall; NAGGW: National Agency for the Great Green Wall: HR: human resources)

84. To ensure transparency and effectiveness, the GGW Accelerator has established an accountability mechanism that monitors financial progress from pledges to disbursements. Investments are aligned with the five core pillars of the GGW: (i) value chains; (ii) land restoration; (iii) renewable energy; (iv) governance; and (v) capacity-building, promoting coherence across thematic areas and enhancing impact. Supporting this results-oriented approach are two key tools: the Harmonized Results Management Framework (HRMF) and the GGW Observatory (developed with French and Austrian government support), which serves as the technical foundation for harmonized reporting, data-driven decision-making and transparent tracking across 11 GGW countries and technical and financial partners.

85. The GGW Accelerator works closely with the Pan African Agency of the Great Green Wall (PAGGW) to coordinate regional implementation, ensure alignment with national policies and foster cross-border collaboration. In response to leadership challenges, the Accelerator supports PAGGW in strengthening institutional performance, improving coordination and mobilizing high-level political and financial support.

86. At the regional level, the Accelerator supports implementation of the African Union's new GGW strategy, Great Green Wall 2.0 (2024–2034). A major milestone was achieved at COP 16 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, where Sahelian and Southern African initiatives were politically unified under One Great Green Wall of Africa. The Accelerator also coordinates the GGW Regional Support Programme technical group, bringing together key partners to streamline contributions and identify synergies. The PAGGW, Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel, Sahara and Sahel Observatory and UNCCD task force ensure coherent monitoring and strategic oversight of multi-country land

restoration programmes. At the national level, the Accelerator provides support to GGW National Coalitions, enabling continuous coordination of national contributions from diverse stakeholders and facilitating reporting against the harmonized framework indicators.

3. Great Green Wall Southern Africa

87. All 16 countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) have committed to accelerating multi-sectoral transformation through a regional initiative inspired by the GGW in the Sahel, or the Southern Africa GGWI (SA GGWI). The SADC Initiative aims to create productive landscapes in the Southern Africa region that contribute to regional and socially inclusive economic prosperity and environmental sustainability. The initiative has an indicative USD 27 billion budget target with an Investment Forum, championed by South Africa, scheduled for late 2025, to provide further impetus to this green transformation. The SA GGWI benefits from extensive institutional support including from multiple United Nations agencies, the African Union, ADB, African Union Development Agency and the Commonwealth Secretariate, in collaboration with the SADC Secretariat. The Initiative seeks to learn from experiences and best practices from the Sahel to strengthen its operational modalities and coordination framework, positioning the SA GGWI as a critical component of Africa's continental approach to combating land degradation and building climate resilience. The SA GGW pipeline includes a portfolio of projects focusing on the Zambezi Watercourse, the largest river basin in Southern Africa, funded by the ADB, Climate Investment Funds, the World Bank, GEF and KFS-funded Greening Drylands Partnership. An ADB-supported "Gender-Transformative Resilience to Drought in Transition States in Southern Africa" project was launched in 2025, aimed at improving drought resilience among women and girls in Madagascar, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, three of the Southern African countries hit by devastating droughts. In order to consolidate and accelerate the development of the SA GGWI project pipeline, an investment strategy will be designed, with GEF support, to underpin implementation going forward. The SA GGWI has gained further political mileage through its promotion as a South Africa G20 Presidency Legacy Initiative.

4. Riyadh Global Drought Resilience Partnership

88. At COP 16, held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in December 2024, drought resilience was established as a central agenda item, marking a shift from reactive response to proactive global management. As countries move towards a consideration of a new global framework to address drought, the Riyadh Global Drought Resilience Partnership (RGDRP) was launched as a flagship initiative of the Saudi Arabian COP 16 Presidency.

89. The RGDRP serves as a global facilitator and enabler, connecting vulnerable countries to drought resilience resources while drawing on ongoing public and private efforts. The Partnership received a pledge of USD 150 million in grant support from Saudi Arabia, and USD 1 billion each in pipeline investments from the Islamic Development Bank and the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Fund for International Development, each through to 2030. In addition, the Arab Coordination Group has committed up to USD 10 billion for desertification and drought activities over the coming years, reflecting strong political and institutional support for the initiative.

90. Operationally, the RGDRP is built on three interconnected pillars: (i) a Readiness Facility to support countries in developing drought resilience strategies and investment pipelines; (ii) an Investment Facility to channel financial resources into resilience-building projects; and (iii) a Knowledge Platform to enable the exchange of data, tools and best practices.

91. The Partnership targets 74 low and lower middle-income countries based on the World Bank 2024/2025 classification: 54 in Africa, 18 in Asia and 4 in Latin America and the Caribbean. While pooled funding is reserved for these countries, others affected by drought can still benefit from RGDRP’s knowledge platform, technical support and parallel funding opportunities.

92. The RGDRP Inaugural Conference, organized by the UNCCD and held in Cologne, Germany, in June 2025, marked a major step towards operationalization. Participants endorsed the governance framework, including UNCCD’s role in hosting the partnerships

secretariat in Bonn, Germany, supported by a Technical Committee, and confirmed the United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund as the Fund Trustee to manage pooled contributions with transparency and accountability.

93. Five governance elements were adopted: the Steering Committee, Secretariat, Trustee, Independent Review Mechanism, and Assembly of Partners (to be held in association with UNCCD COPs). A 12-seat Steering Committee was established with a three-year term for non-permanent members and a primary–alternate structure to strengthen representation and ensure continuity. With the agreement on its governance and financing structure, the Inaugural Conference launched the RGDRP's preparatory phase, positioning the Partnership as a key instrument to enhance global drought resilience under UNCCD leadership.

5. The Peace Forest Initiative

94. The PFI addresses desertification, land degradation and drought in fragile and conflict-affected settings (FCAS) at both national and regional levels. Building on LDN principles, it focuses on cross-border cooperation on land and ecosystem restoration, highlighting the links between environment and security – including food, water and climate security – and aims to unlock new resource mobilization opportunities by combining environmental and peacebuilding efforts. The PFI promotes integrated, inclusive approaches to land use planning, SLM, biodiversity and climate actions, maximizing synergies. Through collaborative solutions, PFI fosters international cooperation for the sustainable management and restoration of land, water, soil and forests, contributing to peacebuilding and trust, and demonstrating the connections between SDGs 15 and 16.

95. By 2025, the GM had partnered with organizations such as the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, UNDP, FAO and others to launch PFI processes in seven locations and support 37 countries on land and ecosystem restoration. This led to joint action plans focused on conflict sensitivity and resilience. In 2025, three pilot projects were launched in Central Asia, Indonesia–Timor Leste, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

96. Through PFI, the GM strengthens global advocacy on land, peace and security at international fora, such as the Munich Security Conference 2025, the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4), and Geneva Peace Week 2025. It highlights the issue of underinvestment in both peace building and sustainable land management issues and explores a new de-risking funding modality, especially in relation to land restoration and climate action in FCAS contexts.

97. Initiatives on rangelands and sand and dust storms are being developed for COP 17 in Ulanbaatar, Mongolia. The Rangelands Flagship Initiative, guided by the Global Land Outlook, will contribute to the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists in 2026. Decision 29/COP.16 urges the GM and secretariat to enhance public–private partnerships for transformative projects on rangeland health and pastoralist resilience. They are also tasked with supporting countries through awareness-raising, capacity-building and resource mobilization with inclusive, participatory approaches. A situation analysis and screening tool for rangeland LDN projects has been developed, informed by extensive stakeholder consultations.

6. Business for Land and private sector finance

98. The private sector plays a key role in scaling up action to achieve LDN, not only through sustainable practices but also as a source of finance, innovation and technology. In response to decision 6/COP.15, the GM developed the B4L initiative to systematically engage private actors in land restoration, SLM and drought resilience, contributing directly to the convention's resource mobilization and implementation efforts. In 2024, the GM launched consultations with businesses, financial institutions and global networks such as the World Business Council for Sustainable Development to shape B4L as a platform for collaboration.

99. The initiative offers pathways for private investment through strategic partnerships with land-intensive industries, blended finance instruments, green bonds and integration into ecosystem service markets. It also engages small- and medium-sized enterprises and provides access to technical tools and reporting systems aligned with SDG Indicator 15.3.1. B4L offers

clear entry points and incentives for business participation while aligning with ongoing UNCCD processes. It enhances the enabling environment for attracting private capital, technology and innovation, and serves as an instrument for closing the LDN financing gap and accelerating implementation.

7. Sustainable land management-related insurance models

100. To address growing climate and drought risks, the GM will begin piloting SLM-related insurance models that reward proactive restoration practices. These instruments tie insurance premium discounts to the adoption of land management strategies, thus incentivizing smallholder farmers to build long-term resilience while expanding their access to financial protection. Initial pilots across Africa, the Pacific and Latin America aim to demonstrate how integrating land use data into index insurance can reduce vulnerability and crowd in private insurers.

8. UNCCD-friendly carbon models

101. The GM is shaping standards for "UNCCD-friendly" carbon credits that integrate land restoration, LDN principles and co-benefits, such as drought resilience. Case studies show how carbon finance can support local livelihoods while maintaining environmental integrity. Complementary instruments such as resilience and biodiversity credits are also under exploration.

9. The Drought Resilience Investment Facility

102. As a blended finance platform, the Drought Resilience Investment Facility (DRIF) is under development, with support from Luxembourg, to scale up parallel private sector investment in drought resilience alongside the RGDRP. DRIF aims to demonstrate that investing in sectors such as drought-resilient infrastructure, water systems, regenerative agriculture and nature-based solutions can generate both measurable impact and market-level returns by combining concessional and commercial capital. DRIF will also reduce investment risk and expand private sector engagement in climate-resilient development. The fund will be supported by a technical assistance facility to build a pipeline of investable projects in lower- and middle-income countries.

VII. Conclusions and recommendations

103. Since CRIC 23 is an intersessional session and therefore not producing draft decision text, this section of the report is highlighting key points and proposals for Parties' consideration. Following the adoption of the final report of CRIC 23, draft decision text on this agenda item will be prepared in time for the twenty-fourth session of the Committee.

A. Conclusions from the implementation of the second phase of the Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Programme

1. Validated approaches and success factors

104. LDN TSP 2.0 is successfully validating a new generation of target setting approaches that integrate multiple dimensions of SLM. The process has demonstrated that effective LDN implementation depends on three critical success factors: political leadership, strategic use of existing national data systems, and meaningful engagement through reactivated national LDN working groups. Countries with strong political commitment consistently achieve superior outcomes regardless of available resources, while those leveraging existing technical infrastructure and data systems achieve greater process efficiency. An agile and bespoke process works but is time and resource intensive.

2. Persistent implementation challenges

105. Despite these successes, systemic challenges continue to constrain optimal implementation. Technical capacity limitations at the national level, institutional coordination barriers within governments and resource mobilization difficulties represent significant obstacles. The current funding environment makes it increasingly difficult to secure resources for target setting and review processes, while private sector engagement remains challenging across most participating countries.

3. Global progress and impact

106. The LDN target setting process has generated global momentum with commitments reaching nearly 600 million hectares of land pledged for restoration. This represents a significant contribution toward achieving SDG 15.3 and the goals of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration while supporting food and water security, biodiversity conservation and climate resilience.

B. Strategic recommendations

1. Scaling and institutionalizing target setting

107. In order to better support countries' efforts related to setting and updating their LDN targets, it is recommended to:

(a) Adopt a programmatic approach to future LDN processes that consolidates multiple related activities under unified frameworks, reducing duplication and improving resource efficiency. In this case, we would recommend integrating LDN TSP activities into GEF-9 Enabling Activities as a foundational element around which additional resources could be mobilized and leveraged;

(b) Embrace complexity by strengthening the ILUP components and providing countries with tools to incorporate LDN as a planning principle into existing ILUP frameworks;

(c) Nurture diverse funding modalities for target setting,[17] including bilateral donor programming, domestic resource allocation from countries' own GEF System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR) allocations and, if additional finance is not made available, develop self-guided national processes with technical guidance support.

[17] Options for the potential scaling up of LDN TSP 2.0 activities during 2026 to a larger number of countries, and the possible modalities of engagement are under discussion both internally and with financial and technical partners, and may include:

- A more integrated programmatic approach to the ninth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF-9) Enabling Activities that explicitly includes LDN TSP 2.0 activities, building on the successful experience of the LDN target setting project funded by the Global Environment Facility in 2016 which constituted a foundational element of the LDN TSP around which additional resources were mobilized and leveraged to scale up the support to 100+ countries.
- Dedicated programming of resources by interested bilateral donors, building on the successful examples in supporting LDN activities set by relevant initiatives, such as the Changwon Initiative by the Republic of Korea and the Ankara Initiative by Türkiye, which provided solid and regular funding support.
- Programming by countries of their own GEF resources, either from their own System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR) allocation or from resources allocated under the Umbrella Programme supporting the national reporting process.
- Self-guided national processes with allocation of domestic resources, building on the available technical guidance, good practices and lessons learned from the LDN TSP 2.0 and with supplementary in-kind technical guidance from the UNCCD and/or partner agencies.

2. Enhancing resource mobilization and financial innovation

108. Innovations that could be adopted to enhance resource mobilization include:

(a) Scale up innovative financing mechanisms, including the DRIF, SLM-related insurance models, and UNCCD-friendly carbon credit standards;

(b) Complete the Resource Mobilization Toolkit;

(c) Explore additional de-risking options in the most vulnerable regions;

(d) Implement parallel finance models following the GGW and RGDRP approach, using Common Results Frameworks to align independently financed projects under shared objectives without requiring pooled funding structures;

(e) Strengthen private sector engagement through the B4L initiative, providing clear entry points and incentives for business participation while aligning with science-based targets.

3. Institutional strengthening and capacity development

109. An effective approach to building the skills and capacities of key institutions would involve systematic efforts to:

(a) Invest in long-term capacity building programmes targeting ministries of finance, technical expertise development, and cross-ministerial coordination mechanisms;

(b) Harmonize digital tools and platforms (Trends.Earth, PRAIS4, DSS) to reduce transaction costs and enhance data consistency across national systems;

(c) Strengthen knowledge management and sharing through regular webinars, briefing notes and good practice documentation to support the scaling up of activities.

4. Deepening the integration and implementation of the Rio Conventions

110. Joined-up implementation of the Rio Conventions could be achieved by taking steps to:

(a) Systematically include Rio Convention focal points in national LDN working groups to ensure direct linkages with climate and biodiversity processes;

(b) Align policy frameworks through coordinated assessments of NDCs, NAPs, NBSAPs and LDN targets to identify synergies and close implementation gaps;

(c) Develop coordinated resource mobilization strategies across the three conventions to maximize returns on investment and avoid funding competition;

(d) Advance multisectoral programmes and projects that capitalize on the land and water nexus with other related sectors such as agriculture, energy, urban development, green infrastructure and economic development to enhance resource access and mobilization, deliver synergistic outcomes and strengthen financing in support of integrated Rio Convention goals.

5. Strengthening monitoring and accountability

111. This would encompass critical areas for enhancement:

(a) Expand spatially explicit reporting, building on the 18 countries currently developing spatially explicit revised targets under LDN TSP 2.0;

(b) Enhance the LDN targets tracking tool to enable public access and improve transparency in progress monitoring;

(c) Implement results-based management frameworks following the GGW Observatory model to track financing flows and project outcomes systematically.

C. Conclusion and future direction of target setting

112. These recommendations recognize that achieving LDN at scale requires coordinated action across multiple fronts – from technical capacity-building to innovative finance, institutional strengthening to private sector engagement. The experience of LDN TSP 2.0 provides a solid foundation for this next phase of implementation, but success will depend on sustained political commitment, adequate resource mobilization and continued innovation in approaches and methodologies.

113. The LDN TSP 2.0 process constitutes the proof of concept of a new and improved approach to LDN target setting, providing participating countries and partners with a dedicated space in which new ideas, innovation and methodologies are being tested in the context of an overall programme design that is agile and adaptable to national circumstances. The main results of the LDN TSP 2.0 process will be presented and discussed by the 18 participating countries and partner agencies during a dedicated plenary session at CRIC 23, as well as through associated side events.

114. The setting and reviewing of LDN targets remain a very important policy development process for which it is becoming increasingly difficult to mobilize resources from multilateral and bilateral donors given the current funding environment. Future LDN target setting and review efforts will require diverse and possibly asymmetric and/or opportunistic approaches at national, regional and global levels to mobilize adequate resources for its upcoming scaling up. The GM maintains a waiting list of countries that have formalized an expression of interest to engage in LDN TSP 2.0 activities, so they can be considered for potential future support during the scaling up process.