

**GEF-MSP GRANT NO. TF 053932**  
**Supporting Capacity Building for the elaboration of National Reports and Country Profiles**  
**by African Parties to the UNCCD**

**IMPLEMENTATION COMPLETION MEMORANDUM**

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ANNEX 1: Table of initial budget allocations and the actual project expenditure.

## **I. Basic Data:**

### **(1) Date of Completion Report:**

10<sup>th</sup> October 2005

### **(2) Project Title:**

Supporting Capacity Building for the elaboration of National Reports and Country Profiles by African Parties to the UNCCD

### **(3) GEF Allocation:**

US\$ 900,000

### **(4) Grant Recipient:**

IFAD/UNCCD Secretariat

### **(5) World Bank Manager/Task Team:**

Mr. Christophe Crepin

### **(6) Goals and Objectives:**

The goal of this project was to support the African country Parties to enhance their capacities to analyze the current status of land degradation and identify barriers for sustainable land management. This included the elaboration of national reports so as to assist countries to fulfill their obligations under the UNCCD.

#### **The following outcomes were expected:**

1. Strengthened capacity to implement the UNCCD and awareness raised among national level key stakeholder groups on land degradation;
2. The National Coordination Body established by country Parties to address the country's land degradation issues through the implementation of the UNCCD is strengthened;
3. High quality national reports including country profiles prepared

#### **The project activities were:**

Component 1: Elaboration of National Reports (Global Mechanism/ World Bank funds)

- 1.1 Each country to provide a request on their capacity building needs as a precondition for national reports financing.
- 1.2 Strengthen the national coordinating body with representatives from key line ministries in selected country Parties.
- 1.3 Involve stakeholders in the drafting and submission of national reports based on data gathering and broad inputs.

*Component 2: Stakeholder Participation*

- 2.1 Hold a series of three sub-regional (East and South, Central, West and North Africa) workshops to exchange lessons learned and good practices.
- 2.2 Hold national multi-stakeholder consultations to strengthen stakeholder participation in activities related to combat land degradation.
- 2.3 Validate sustainable land management priorities with various stakeholder groups.

*Component 3: Capacity Building*

- 3.1 Countries commit to continued support to institutional mechanisms and dialogue processes for regular reporting processes.

*Component 4: Project Management and Coordination*

- 4.1 To coordinate the activities in the regional level that brings regional perspectives and share information, a program level coordination mechanism is envisioned.

**(7) Financial Information:** All project funds were disbursed according to the approved project budget, and there were thus no major changes from the original financing plan

Co financing (Type/Source)	IA own Financing (mill US\$)		Government (mill US\$)		Other* (mill US\$)		Total (mill US\$)		Total Disbursement (mill US\$)	
	Propo sed	Actua l	Propo sed	Actua l	Propo sed	Actua l	Propo sed	Actua l	Propo sed	Actual
Grants	900	900			700	700	1.600	1.600	1.600	1.600
Loans/Concessio nal/ market rate										
Credits										
Equity investments										
Committed in- kinds support			200	200			200	200	200	200
Other										
<b>Totals</b>	900	900	200	200	700	700	1.800	1.800	1.800	1.800

## II. Project Impact Analysis

### (1) Project Impacts:

#### (a) Achievement of project objectives

No.	Project Component	Level of achievement
1	Elaboration of national reports	<p>This activity was very successful: all but one of the countries involved produced the reports and the country profiles in time for the global review. Without the GM contribution with World Bank financing, it is likely that very few would have been finished so quickly. Although the time limit affected stakeholder participation in the preparation of the reports, they contributed to the thorough review at the national validation workshops held in most countries with the support of IFAD. Nevertheless, the quality of the reports was variable, and there is clearly room for improvement in this respect. There is also room to achieve more consistency of approach so that it becomes easier to evaluate overall progress towards implementation of the Convention.</p> <p>The country profiles were submitted for the first time, and they indeed contribute to the evaluation of the reports, although they varied considerably in quality and in depth of information.</p>
2	Stakeholder Participation	<p>All countries except one have reported that national meetings to validate the national reports and to discuss SLM priorities have been held. The workshops reviewed the information contained in the reports and provided a broad-based acceptance / validation to the reports, while also confirming the participants' commitments to long term SLM and identifying priority activities. In general, workshops emphasized the need for additional human and material resources to establish sustainable programs. There was frequent comment on the value of the meetings in raising awareness, deepening knowledge and understanding of the dryland and desertification issues, in building capacity for better coordination of efforts at national level, and also in the dissemination of lessons learned. It is unlikely that these meetings</p>

		would have been held without the external support of IFAD and it is clear that the activity has contributed to a substantial broadening of the understanding of the SLM issues. The execution of this activity is judged to have been very successful.
3	Capacity Building	The need for additional institutional strengthening and capacity building clearly continues to exist, not only in the policy areas but also in the technical sectors, and the reports received from the African countries had many comments on this issue. The respective component under the MSP cannot be considered to have been completed within the relatively short reporting period; rather the need for further efforts in and support to continuous capacity building has been underlined by the countries concerned.
4	Project management and coordination	The implementation of this component, realized due to cooperation and support received through UNOG and UNDP was successful in that the African countries received the funds in time so that major objectives of the MSP were achieved. The UNCCD secretariat played a major role in communicating with countries and subregional organisations and making frequent follow ups to ensure that funds were received on time. Much depended also on the Secretariat to provide overall management coordination as well as to elaborate various documents and accomplish the reporting tasks.

**(b) Achievement of performance indicators.**

No.	Performance indicator	Level of achievement
1	The selected African country Parties to the UNCCD successfully submit their national reports on implementation progress.	<p><b>Minutes of the Meeting of the National Steering Committee.</b> 30 out of 44 countries submitted minutes of these meetings.</p> <p><b>Country capacity building requests.</b> 44 out of 45 countries completed the requests</p> <p><b>National Reports</b> were prepared and delivered to the UNCCD in time, containing high quality information, which reflected investment opportunities and development priorities (such as those set out in PRSPs</p>

		<p><b>and CASs).</b> 43 national reports were delivered in time and included in the synthesis document submitted to CRIC 3. The last, 44<sup>th</sup> report was delivered in March 2005. The reports described initiatives for combating desertification, and indicated that reflecting the internationally recognized relationship between combating desertification and reducing poverty in concrete projects and activities requires further effort. For the first time, the countries provided statistics (biophysical and socio-economic indicators) with the aim to demonstrate and further develop the linkages between the UNCCD national action programmes and strategies to reduce poverty. The quality of the reports varied however, and some were still very descriptive and insufficiently analytical.</p>
2	<p>National and regional institutional mechanisms and dialogue processes to address the country's land degradation issues are enhanced.</p>	<p><b>Minutes of the stakeholder consultations.</b> Minutes are available from 29 countries. The countries have nevertheless reported that numerous meetings were held in most countries, although most were relatively informal and minutes were not always kept.</p> <p><b>Workshop proceedings:</b> Proceedings of the national workshops including a list of participants have been submitted by 41 countries. Document ICCD/CRIC(3)/2/Add.4 'Results of the sub-regional workshops of affected African country Parties' synthesizes the proceedings and a document on "Consolidated results" is also available.</p>
3	<p>Countries continue to support the relevant reporting agency(ies) through the provision of technical and financial resources so as to ensure that agencies are able to carry out their mandates</p>	<p><b>Documentation of the formalization of institutional mechanisms and dialogue processes.</b> The need to improve the effectiveness of mechanisms for inter-sectoral coordination is reaffirmed in all the national reports submitted, but the means of moving forward in not always identified. This is being addressed on an ongoing basis in more than half the countries, but the anticipated outcome has not yet been achieved in most countries under the MSP.</p> <p><b>Minutes of meetings held.</b> Minutes of NCB meetings have been provided by the majority of the countries, but only a few referred to the formalization of processes. This is due to the fact that in nearly all countries the institutional mechanism, the NCB, is already formally established. The major challenge is to maintain continuous dialogue processes. But this</p>

		<p>outcome is deemed to be successful in a general sense.</p> <p><b>Capacity needs identified in country capacity building assessments have been addressed.</b></p> <p>Capacity building needs for the process of preparing the national reports were successfully addressed through the grants made available to assist with the process. But additional capacity building is still clearly required to provide sustained contributions to the UNCCD processes and the reduction of land degradation.</p>
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**(2) Project Sustainability –**

The project was not designed as an ongoing or sustainable project, but the project is intended to strengthen the process of preparing national reports for the UNCCD by reinforcing the institutions and involving a broader range of stakeholders in this third exercise of reporting by African country Parties.

The project has been successful in achieving this goal in that all but one of the involved countries (Somalia as the exception) now have strengthened the national coordinating bodies that played a key role in the preparation of the national report at country level; and they have also broadened the range of stakeholders involved in the discussion on sustainable land management and to some extent also in the process of preparing their national reports to the UNCCD.

Although the capacity building supported by the MSP was successful in supporting the reporting process, there is little evidence so far that many country Parties have committed to the financial sustainability of these processes from their own budgetary resources. External resources will be required to help the coordinating institutions to function in the future. ICCD/CRIC (3)/8 notes:

“44. It is often stated that the quality of the national reports by affected developing country Parties and the related presentations could have been improved if the funding for reporting activities had been more predictable and consistent. Reporting obligations under the various MEAs often overstretch the technical and financial capacities of developing country Parties.”

**(3) Replicability -**

The Parties to the Convention during CRIC3 and COP7 hailed the value of experience gained thanks to the MSP in the African region. They unanimously called for replication of this project in the other regions before the fifth session of CRIC in 2006, so as to complete the UNCCD monitoring cycle in a manner that is methodological consistent (ref. Paragraph 9 COP7 decision on “Improving the procedures for communication of information, as well as the quality and format of reports to be submitted to the Conference of Parties”).

Completion of the reporting cycle and further lessons gained in the continuity of this exercise will undoubtedly be channeled through the fifth session of the CRIC and shall influence a revised UNCCD procedure for communication of information in the light of decision 8/COP7.

#### **(4) Stakeholder Involvement –**

According to the country reports, meetings were held with stakeholders during the process of preparing the national reports and all the validation workshops involved a wide range of actors. Most countries also incorporated processes of public involvement in the preparation and implementation of their national action programs. The involvement of the wider constituencies in the actual drafting of the national reports to UNCCD was however very limited.

Therefore the project has been successful in reinforcing the institutions and involving a broader range of stakeholders in the process of preparing national reports for the UNCCD (Somalia as the exception) strengthening the national coordinating bodies that played a key role in the preparation of the national report at country level. On the other hand they have also broadened the range of stakeholders involved in the discussion on sustainable land management and to some extent also in the process of preparing their national reports to the UNCCD.

#### **(5) Monitoring and Evaluation –**

No funds were specifically set aside for Monitoring and Evaluation as a distinct or separate activity, but financial resources were allocated for data collection and the evaluation through various project activities, including management and supervision activities as part of project implementation. The M&E incorporated into project activities included a close follow up of country Parties in the process of elaboration of national reports, a compilation, synthesis, and preliminary analysis of the national reports focusing on stakeholder participation and institutional issues as well as consideration of ways and means of improving procedures for the dissemination of sustainable land management information. Documents prepared for the CRIC3 addressed these issues in the wider context of the convention as a whole; this completion report is limited to the implementation of the MSP itself.

Overall monitoring and evaluation fell largely to the UNCCD secretariat in its role as task manager and its responsibility for the compilation of reports and financial audits, including this completion report that outlines the success of the project in achieving its objectives in general terms. The Grant agreements signed by the countries specified monitoring and evaluation requirements such as costs and outputs. The NCBs did play a role in ensuring that their national reports were prepared and submitted on time.

### **III. Summary of Main Lessons Learned**

The MSP resulted in a number of lessons that will benefit future activities of this kind.

**With regard to the preparation of the reports**, the lessons learned were covered in detail in document ICCD/CRIC3/ (2/) Add1. The main points of direct relevance to the MSP include:

- Some national reports tend to emphasize the description of activities carried out but are insufficiently analytical. The nature of the information provided does not always make it possible to appreciate the ongoing trends and the factors involved.
- Despite the requested use of a single proposed framework for all the national reports, there were still many variations in approach.



- The data supplied in the Country profiles are of uneven value. Most of the reports contain no quantified indications of the scale of the processes of land degradation, or of actual achievements (areas regenerated or developed, structures built, etc.).
- Very few of the reports provide details on how Parties are using impact indicators, or whether these indicators are being tested in the field, as requested by various decisions of the COP. More accurate data are needed to provide a clear picture of what is going on at the national level; to this end, the use of benchmarks and indicators would be useful.
- No reasons have been given as to why the decisions proposed by the CST on specific technical and scientific activities undertaken to combat desertification have not been more widely adopted.
- It is clear that the reporting obligations under the various MEAs often overstretch the technical and financial capacities of developing country Parties. While the capacity has been improved under this MSP, the ongoing problem of the allocation of time and money to these tasks remains.

The analysis of the reports in ICCD/CRIC (3)/5 page 2, highlights a few major lessons for more effective implementation of the Convention. Although peripheral to the implementation of the MSP itself, they are closely related, and form useful supplementary reading to this report.

With regard to the administration of the MSP itself, the experience shows that the UNCCD secretariat played a crucial role in facilitating the smooth execution of the project. Without the time and resources devoted by the secretariat to detailed follow up of the activities in all the countries, a postponement of the CRIC would almost certainly have been required.

In the early stages of the implementation of the MSP it became clear that the rather complicated funding arrangements, including cost sharing of some components, meant that two separate Grant agreements were going to be required between the UNCCD and each country Party. This placed a large administrative burden on the secretariat, UNOG and UNDP. The costs of this, both hidden and revealed, were especially onerous in time and resources, especially in proportion to the size of each single Grant (no more or less than \$14,000 each).

Component 3 was the least successful component. Like Activity 1.1, this was funded and executed by the country Parties themselves, but there was a strong incentive for the countries to complete Activity 1.1 in order to access the MSP funds. The results show that Component 3 was only partially successful. Of course, it is difficult for a government to establish approval and sustainable financing for long term, ongoing programs in their regular budgetary process within a short time frame, and this is at least partly the cause of this shortfall. Inadequate documentation and reporting may also explain some of this weakness, but the lack of direct incentive to follow through during the time period appears also to be a contributory factor that could be borne in mind in framing such activities in the future.

#### **IV. Financial Management Status**

The final audit exercise of the UNCCD trust funds for the biennium 2004-2005 will be conducted in the 1st quarter of 2006 and the report should be ready by May or June, 2006. Most of the UN agency base their audit and financial exercise on a biennium. It is also very common to ask external auditors to review specific projects during the course of their regular audit.

UNCCD external auditor will conduct an interim audit in December 2005, only afterwards they are in a position to send to IFAD an audit report concerning this project.

Based on the agreement signed between IFAD and UNCCD the last installment corresponding to 5% of the overall amount (USD 40,120) could be disbursed by IFAD only upon receipt of the following documentation:

- Statement of expenditures
- Progress Report , and
- A final audit report.

At this very moment IFAD has already received the statement of expenditures and the progress report, however according to the UNCCD audit cycle, as explained above, we will receive the audit report not earlier than the end of December 2005.

Here below, we are attaching the statement of expenditures as at today, the 13<sup>th</sup> of December. It should be noticed that all the expenditures directly related to the project have been fully disbursed. The remaining 5%, at the moment undisbursed, is related to the UNDP and UNOG operating costs.

Task Team Leader: Christophe Crepin

Date Submitted: December 13, 2005

Manager: Mary Barton-Dock



Date Approved: 12/19/2005

12/19/2005

Comment:

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Mark D. Tomlinson  
Director, AFC16

Situation as at:

28 November 2005

Donor:

IBRD

DRAFT UNAUDITED

Grant Code:

1

Agreement Signed:

05.08.2005

Effective Date:

09.09.2004

Project Comp. Date

31.12.2005

Grant Amount:

USD 900 000

Received

USD 600 000 29.10.2004  
USD 300 000 02.02.2005

GRANT COFINANCING

Category	Description	Allocation	Received	Disbursed	Undisbursed Balance
1	Consultants Services	30 000.00	30 000.00	29 780.00	220.00
2	Training and Workshops	180 000.00	180 000.00	180 000.00	0.00
3	45 Micro-grants	510 000.00	510 000.00	510 000.00	0.00
4	Operating costs (UNOG and UNDP)	82 400.00	82 400.00	42 500.00	39 900.00
5	Advances of funds	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	TOTAL	802 400.00	802 400.00	762 280.00	40 120.00

IFAD OPERATING COSTS

97 600.00 97 600.00 78 185.70 19 414.30

GRAND TOTAL

900 000.00 900 000.00 840 465.70 59 534.30