



United Nations Environment Programme

**Terminal Evaluation
of the Project GFL-2328-2770-4B25
"Enabling a Paradigm Shift Towards
Monitoring and Assessment within the UNCCD" - Performance
Review and Assessment of Implementation System (PRAIS)**

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December 2012

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACP	Affected Country Parties
AEWA	African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement
AMESD	African Monitoring of the Environment for Sustainable Development
CABI	(Formerly - now not used) Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux International
CATIE	Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CEPAL	Comisión Económica para América Latina
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
CMS	Convention on Migratory Species
CONAF	Corporacion Nacional Forestal of Chile
COP	Conference of the Parties
CRIC	Committee for the Review of Implementation of the Convention
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CST	Committee on Science and Technology
DCP	Developed Country Parties
DLDD	Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought
EA	Executing Agency
EC	European Commission
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EO	Evaluation Office (UNEP)
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FIELD	Financial Information Engine on Land Degradation
FNR-Rio	Facilitating National Reporting to Rio Conventions
GAMMA	Livestock and Environmental Management
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GEO	Global Environment Outlook
GM	Global Mechanism
ICA	Internal Cooperation Agreement
ICID	International Conference on Climate Sustainability & Development in Semi-Arid Regions
ICPAC	IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre
IGAD	Inter Governmental Authority on Development
INTRAC	International NGO Training and Research Centre
IT	Information Technology
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LADA	Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands
Logframe	Project Logical Framework Matrix
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MA	Millennium Assessment
MEA	Multi-lateral Environmental Agreement
MoC	Memorandum of Cooperation
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
NAP	National Action Program
NEMA	National Environmental Management Agency
NFP	National Focal Point
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OO	Operational Objectives

PIF	Project Identification Form
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PPS	Programme and Project Sheet
PRAIS	Performance Review and Assessment of Implementation System
Prodoc	Project Document
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RC	Reference Centre
RoR	Ruby-on-Rails
SFA	Standard Financial Annex
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely
SO	Strategic Objectives
SSGA	Small Scale Grant Agreement
TAG	Technical Advisory Group
TE	Terminal Evaluation
TM	Task Manager
TOR	Terms of Reference
TOT	Training of Trainers
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCCD	UN Convention to Combat Desertification
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNEP-WCMC	UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION TABLE

GEF project ID:	4017	IMIS number:	GFL-2328-2770-4B25
Focal Area(s):	Land Degradation (LD)	GEF OP #:	
GEF Strategic Priority/Objective:	LD-SP1, LD-SP2 & LD-SP3	GEF approval date:	03 February 2010
Approval date:	17 March 2010	First Disbursement:	19 April 2010
Actual start date:	01 January 2010	Planned duration:	18 months
Intended completion date:	30 June 2011	Actual or Expected completion date:	30 December 2012
Project Type:	FSP	GEF Allocation:	US \$ 2,545,454
PDF GEF cost:	n/a	PDF co-financing:	n/a
Expected MSP/FSP Co-financing:	US \$ 5,400,000	Total Cost:	US \$ 7,945,454
Mid-term review/eval. (planned date):	n/a	Terminal Evaluation (actual date):	June - October 2012
Mid term review (actual date):	n/a	No. of revisions:	0
Date of last Steering Committee meeting:	03 February 2011	Date of last Revision:	
Disbursement as of 30 June 2012:	US \$ 2,430,350	Date of financial closure:	N/A
Total co-financing realized as of 30 June 2012	US \$ 7,301,118	Leveraged financing:	US\$ 1,052,000

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The project “Enabling Paradigm Shift on Monitoring and Assessment within the UNCCD”, commonly referred to as the UNCCD PRAIS Project, was developed to contribute to the capacity-building efforts in support of the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). The driving force for the Project was the adoption by the Parties of the 10-Year Strategic Plan. The Strategy is based on two sets of objectives: four strategic objectives with seven expected impacts, and five operational objectives with 21 related outcomes. These expected impacts and outcomes are to be measured through two sets of indicators. The subsequent decision to move to national reporting using evidence-based indicators for the 2010 reporting cycle led logically to the need for a "Performance Review and Assessment of Implementation System" (PRAIS).

The project was funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The Executing Agency (EA) was the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), based in Cambridge, UK, in close cooperation with the UNCCD Secretariat, the Global Mechanism (GM) and other crucial project partners, particularly a group of co-operating sub-regional institutions referred to as "Reference Centres" (RCs).

At design, the total project cost was estimated at US\$ 7,945,454 with US \$ 2,545,454 funded by GEF and US\$ 5.4 million provided by the UNCCD Secretariat, GM and national government contributions from Country Parties. UNEP-WCMC provided an additional in-kind contribution equivalent to US\$ 50,000. Further mobilization of resources from bilateral donors was envisaged and resulted in the mobilization of additional co-financing in the amount of EUR 600,000 from the European Commission.

The main purpose was to assist Parties by building capacities for the 2010 Fourth Reporting and Review process of the implementation of the Convention. Its focus was on: (i) development of reporting tools based on the approved set of performance indicators established under the Monitoring and Assessment Framework of the Convention; (ii) building capacities of affected Parties for the preparation of their fourth national reports; and (iii) establishment of an on-line reporting platform (Web Portal) to facilitate the reporting process and improve knowledge management within the Convention.

There were two overall Project objectives:

- To establish a scientifically rigorous and credible assessment of the performance of the implementation of the UNCCD at the national, sub-regional, regional and global levels, and
- To build/strengthen capacity and knowledge management systems for subsequent assessments and reporting.

These objectives were realized through three Components:

Component 1: Review of indicators, and formulation of national, sub-regional guidelines and reporting formats.

Developed the reporting tools - guidelines, data entry templates, and training materials, and delivered the training of national focal points for the submission on-line of national reports.

Component 2: Assessment of current baseline, synthesis and preparation of reports at national, sub-regional, regional and global levels.

Oversaw the 4th national reporting process including technical backstopping for the Parties, and supported the synthesis and analysis of the results of the reporting.

Component 3: Knowledge Management System, Monitoring and Evaluation and Dissemination

Concerned with the technical development of a Web portal for on-line reporting and knowledge management.

The evaluation team consisted of a Team Leader and a Supporting Consultant. The Team Leader focused on on-site discussions with the Executing Agency, the UNCCD Secretariat, UNEP headquarters, and selected RCs, while the Supporting Consultant focused on the experiences of stakeholders (especially NFPs and RCs) in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The evaluation team found that the project was clearly directed at achieving the strategic and

operational objectives of the Convention by creating an on-going consistent, evidence-based means of assessing performance that will be of fundamental value to all stakeholders, and hence centrally relevant to the programmes and objectives of UNEP and GEF, in drylands, Sustainable Land Management, and DLDD.

The Project was well designed with a solid project management structure with, in general, well defined outputs and outcomes with realistic "SMART" indicators. It was efficiently managed with tight financial controls.

Despite challenges of tight time frames, the reality of a global scope of parties with widely varying capacity, and complex relationships between partners, the PRAIS Project was largely successful in achieving planned outputs and positive outcomes.

The sub-regional Reference Centre approach for delivering capacity-building and technical support built a global partnership of 14 regional and sub-regional institutions in support of the reporting process, including delivery of capacity-building and technical assistance in the fulfillment of the new UNCCD reporting requirements to all affected country Parties. At the national level, this has translated into the promotion of regional and south-south cooperation, and appreciation of available sub-regional institutional expertise. Considerable momentum was built during this process and there is enthusiasm amongst some sub-regional institutions to continue to support the objectives and programs of UNCCD stakeholders.

Starting with a training of trainers workshop, and elaborated by training workshops at the 14 sub-regional reference centers, over 350 national representatives received training, followed by technical support during the reporting process. As a result there has been a significant enhancement of national capacities to conduct indicator-based assessment, to report progress against comparable indicators, and to establish systematic national monitoring and assessment systems to inform UNCCD reporting. This increased capacity was reflected in a very high report submission rate amongst Affected Country Parties, contributing to the value of the baseline synthesis and accompanying synthesis of sub-regional, regional and global levels.

The UNCCD is committed to an iterative process of cycles of improvement of the quality of the monitoring and assessment process. A widely participatory Lessons-Learned process of the project served to provide essential feedback to this planned progressive improvement and refinement of the indicators and of the supporting guidelines and methodologies, and as well for improving the user-friendliness of the Reporting module of the Portal. These lessons were incorporated into preparations for the 2012 reporting cycle now underway, including revision of the impact indicator templates.

The PRAIS portal was successfully implemented for on-line input of systematic and comparable information of national reports providing an initial baseline of the status of the implementation of the Convention against the Strategic Plan Performance Indicators. As a consequence, for the first time in its history, the UNCCD has information that is objective, quantifiable and will become increasingly comparable across countries. Preliminary analysis of the baseline reporting at the global, regional and sub-regional level has been successful, identifying status and trends under each operational objective of the Strategy.

However, the development of the PRAIS Portal technology was not a smooth process and had difficulties at several levels, which affected the progress of the project, and the effectiveness of the Portal during the submission of the national reports. As well, currently the resources for supporting the Portal technology are not derived from stable core funding, posing a financial sustainability threat.

The Portal has proven itself a viable and valuable aid for national reporting, but currently the tools for broader knowledge sharing by a range of stakeholders, including both Country Parties and CSOs, were left incomplete at the end of the Project. This represents the principal and only shortcoming of this well managed and largely successful project.

The rating of the attainment of Outputs and Planned Activities is only Moderately Satisfactory because of the one principal failing - to provide the data access and knowledge sharing features that were planned for the Portal. In spite of the apparent success of the reporting cycle and clear capacity built, there is still work to be done to truly "*establish a scientifically rigorous and credible assessment...*". The credibility of the approach is not firmly established yet, due to concerns with validation of the

data reported, and of ensuring the consistency of methodologies of data collection.

Principal recommendations are:

- A continuance of some incarnation of sub-regional network of affiliated centres of expertise like the PRAIS Project Reference Centres for continued on-going support to the Parties and to facilitate networking and knowledge exchange.
- Placing a high priority on completing the development of a fully functioned Analytical Module for use by the Secretariat and GM and importantly, providing analysis tools available to the Parties through the Portal.
- Funding capacity-building for a few more years for national reporting (especially to add new impact indicators) and for adapting national data gathering and M&E regimes.
- Developing a data validation regime to increase reliability and consistency of indicators. This would entail procedural elements and tools built into the PRAIS Portal, as well as principles, guidelines, and capacity-building for Parties in national data quality management processes and systems.

An important lesson learned relates to preparedness for IT development: the technical development of the PRAIS Web Portal, seemingly straight forward, encountered unexpected problems, not unusual in IT projects involving a multi-user interface, and several implementing partners with existing IT infrastructure with implied needs for interoperability. The project plan then should include, at an early stage, reasonable time estimates for the collaborative definition of requirements and functional specifications.

In summary, the process of Paradigm Shift, now started, is not likely to be reversed, but there is some risk of slow progress if momentum is not maintained, and Country Parties do not quickly see positive benefits from the PRAIS system, by way of knowledge sharing, and ability to link performance with investment flows.

The overall rating of the Project is **Satisfactory**. A summary evaluation rating table by criteria can be found in Table 3 in Section 2.5 of the main report.

NOTE

Footnotes have been used primarily to refer to the source of evidence for an observation. Document references are indicated by square brackets as in [1] and can be found in Annex 3. UNCCD Conferences of the Party (COP) and of the Committee for Review of Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) are referred to as COP9, CRIC8 etc. The key ones are:

COP8 & CRIC6	Sep 2007
CRIC7	Nov 2008
COP9 & CRIC8	Oct 2009
CRIC9	Feb 2011
COP10 & CRIC10	Oct 2010
CRIC 11	Mar 2013
COP 11	Late 2013

Document names followed by codes that begin with ICCD provide the official document number as issued by the COP or CRIC as an aid to locating them through their web site.

1 EVALUATION BACKGROUND

1.1 Context

1. Established in 1994, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is the sole legally binding international agreement linking environment and development to sustainable land management. The Convention addresses specifically the arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, known as the drylands, where some of the most vulnerable ecosystems and peoples can be found. It is one of the three so-called "Rio Conventions" along with the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

2. After a decade of implementation, it is recognized that limiting factors have prevented optimal deployment of the Convention at national and regional levels. Chief among these factors are a lack of adequate and predictable financial resources, lack of mainstreaming, weak scientific basis, insufficient advocacy and awareness among various constituencies, institutional weaknesses, and difficulties in reaching consensus among Parties when compared with its two Rio sister conventions. Also, the UNCCD operates today in an environment that has evolved considerably since when it was first negotiated, and it faces different opportunities and constraints that will condition its implementation in the forthcoming decade. The scientific environment has also evolved with the work of the Millennium Assessment (MA) on dryland ecosystems, which has contributed to improved understanding of the biophysical and socio-economic trends relating to land degradation in global drylands, and their impacts on human and ecosystem well-being. The MA has also contributed to mapping out key gaps in data and knowledge on dryland ecosystems and people. In addition, the recent Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands (LADA) project, executed by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) with funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and other partners, assessed the causes and impacts of land degradation at global, national and local levels in order to detect hot spots and identify remedial measures. The project approaches land degradation as a biophysical, social, economic and environmental issue that must be dealt with through a combination of geo-informational, scientific and knowledge tools.

3. The Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention adopted at its 8th Session a 10-year (2008–2018) Strategic Plan [1] and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention. This strategic plan provides a unique opportunity to address some of the Convention's key challenges, to capitalize on its strengths, to seize opportunities provided by the new policy and financing environment, and to create a new, revitalized common ground for all UNCCD stakeholders. The Strategy has four objectives: (i) to improve the living conditions of affected populations; (ii) to improve the condition of affected ecosystems; (iii) to generate global benefits through effective implementation of the UNCCD and (iv) to mobilize resources to support implementation of the Convention through building effective partnerships between national and international actors.

4. The 10-year Strategic Plan (the Strategy) has paved the way for the evolution of a new monitoring and assessment process within the UNCCD. The new "Performance Review and Assessment of Implementation System" (PRAIS) will be based primarily on the derivation of performance indicators to measure progress against the operational objectives (OO) of the Strategy, and on impact indicators to measure progress against the strategic objectives (SO) contained in national, sub regional and regional profiles. Special attention will be placed on measuring investment flows for UNCCD implementation and on the establishment of a knowledge management system, including the dissemination of good practices emanating from the reports that will complement and reinforce the review process undertaken by the Committee for the Review of Implementation of the Convention (CRIC).

1.2 Project Description

1.2.1 Rationale

5. The overarching desire is implied in the project title of "Enabling a paradigm shift towards monitoring and assessment within the UNCCD", that is, a change of attitude or mindset towards

evidence-based assessment and concomitant decision-making and investment planning amongst UNCCD stakeholders.

6. The driving force for the Project was the adoption by the Parties of the 10-Year Strategic Plan [1]. The Strategy is based on two sets of objectives: four strategic objectives with seven expected impacts, and five operational objectives with 21 related outcomes. These expected impacts and outcomes are to be measured through two sets of **indicators**. The reporting guidelines were to be developed on the basis of this approach to serve as an aid to all the reporting entities submitting reports on the implementation of the Convention and The Strategy, enabling them to prepare reports which are organized in a way that facilitates analysis at all possible levels. More specifically Decision 13/COP.9 [3] to "adopt provisionally, the indicators, methodologies and procedures..." requested "the Secretariat together with the Global Mechanism (GM) to prepare reporting tools for the fourth reporting cycle in 2010; and requested developed Country Parties and invited international organizations and financial institutions to provide technical and financial assistance to eligible affected Country Parties in the fourth reporting cycle ..." leading logically to the need for a "Performance Review and Assessment of Implementation System" (PRAIS).

7. The main purpose of the UNCCD PRAIS project was to assist UNCCD Parties by building capacities for the 2010 Fourth Reporting and Review process of the implementation of the Convention. Its focus was on: (i) development of reporting tools based on the approved set of performance indicators established under the Monitoring and Assessment Framework of the Convention; (ii) building capacities of affected Parties for the preparation of their fourth national reports; and (iii) establishment of an on-line reporting platform (Web Portal) to facilitate the reporting process and improve knowledge management within the Convention¹.

1.2.2 Project Objectives

8. Based on the project Logframe, the **main project objective** of the UNCCD PRAIS project is to support Parties to "*establish a scientifically rigorous and credible assessment of the performance of the implementation of the UNCCD at the national, sub-regional, regional and global levels, and to build/strengthen capacity and knowledge management systems for subsequent assessments and reporting*".

9. The **long-term objective** of the UNCCD PRAIS project is to "*identify priorities for enhancing UNCCD's implementation, including on sustainable land management investments*"². [4]

10. To achieve this long-term vision, four **strategic objectives** guide the actions of UNCCD stakeholders and partners in the period 2008-2018:

- to improve the living conditions of affected populations;
- to improve the condition of affected ecosystems;
- to generate global benefits through effective implementation of the UNCCD; and
- to mobilize resources to support implementation of the Convention through building effective partnerships between national and international actors.

11. The UNCCD Strategy also identifies five **operational objectives** to guide short- and medium-term (3-5 year) actions that target the strategic objectives. The operational objectives are process-oriented and cover: (i) advocacy, awareness raising and education; (ii) policy framework; (iii) science, technology and knowledge; (iv) capacity-building; and (v) financing and technology transfer.

¹ The public interface of the portal was not explicitly part of the project, although the analytical module was

² Project Document p. 30.

1.2.3 Project Financing

12. At design, the total project cost was estimated at US\$ 7,945,454 with US \$ 2,545,454 funded by GEF and US\$ 5.4 million provided by the UNCCD Secretariat, GM and national government contributions from Country Parties. UNEP-WCMC provided an additional in kind contribution equivalent to US\$ 50,000.

13. Further mobilization of resources from bilateral donors was envisaged and resulted in the mobilization of additional co-financing in the amount of EUR 600,000 from the European Commission.

1.2.4 Project Components

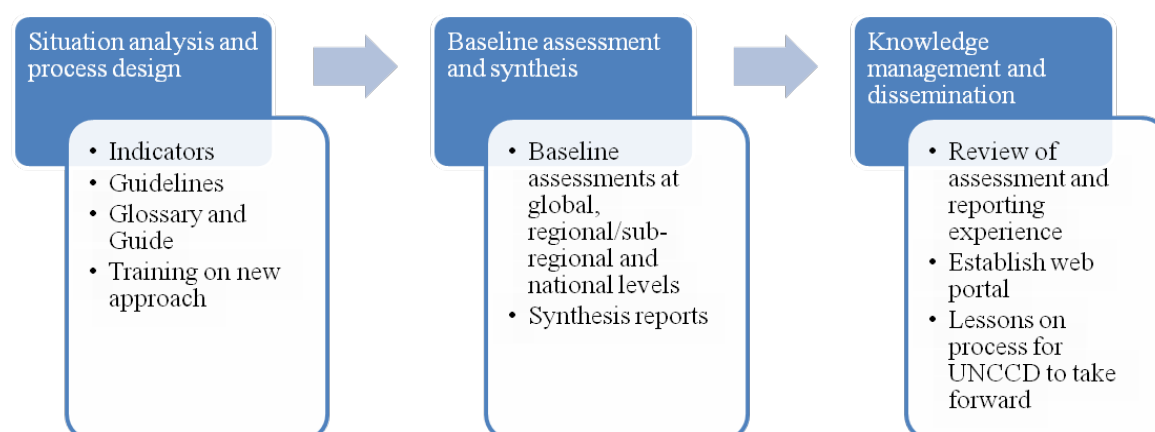
14. The project consists of three substantive technical components, as well as a dedicated project management component. The **expected results** for each of the components are described in the project document and for the purpose of this evaluation, will be considered as the **intended outcomes** of the project as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: UNCCD PRAIS Project Components and Expected Results

Project Component	Expected Results/Intended Outcomes
Component 1: A review of indicators and formulation of national, sub-regional guidelines and reporting formats.	Expected Result 1: Parties capacity built by providing clear and consistent guidelines for reporting on the implementation of the Strategy are available to Country Parties
Component 2: Assessment of current baseline, synthesis and preparation of reports at national, sub-regional, regional and global levels.	Expected Result 2.1: Credible and verifiable information of current baseline performance situation for future planning of investments and actions
	Expected Result 2.2: A credible and widely accepted understanding of current state of implementation of UNCCD
Component 3: Development of a Knowledge Management System, monitoring and evaluation, dissemination.	Expected Result 3: Capacities of affected Country Parties to assess performance of national action programmes (NAPs) as a mean to combating Desertification Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD) and of UNCCD implementation are enhanced

15. Figure 1 below presents a simplified diagram of the project components and results.

Figure 1: Simplified diagram of the project components and results



16. The original project duration was eighteen months, with an expected completion in June 2011. The effective project completion was the end of June 2012, but this was administratively extended to the end of December 2012 to accommodate administrative and financial closure activities. The planned activities/outputs under each of the three components are presented in the Table 2 below.

Table 2: Project Key Deliverables

Component 1: "Situational Analysis and Reporting Process Design"	
A review of indicators and formulation of national, sub-regional guidelines and reporting formats.	
Activity/Output 1.1: Sets of harmonized indicators for performance assessment of the implementation of UNCCD at national, sub-regional regional and global levels (available by COP 9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Review</u> sets of harmonized indicators. • <u>Recommendations</u> on indicators • <u>Consultative meeting</u> on guidance documents with experts and regional partners
Activity/Output 1.2: Finalized Guidelines for assessment of baseline and best practices using the COP 9 approved harmonized performance indicators and guidance's at national, sub-regional, regional and global levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Guidelines, formats and glossary</u> in support of UNCCD
Activity/Output 1.3: Contribution to the production of A glossary and a guide for implementing performance indicators (available after COP 9)	
Activity/Output 1.4: Finalized Format/ template for preparation of 4 th National reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Format/template, training modules and guidelines</u> for data collection and baseline • <u>Workshop</u> with regional partners to understand requirements and needs at national level
Activity/Output 1.5: Training modules and guidelines for data collection for baseline assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Training materials</u>
Activity/Output 1.6: Training in use of format/template for 4 th National Reports, through sub-regional workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Train regional and sub-regional trainers in Regional Technical Institutes to conduct workshops:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Africa x 4</i> ○ <i>Asia x 2</i> ○ <i>Eastern Europe x 1</i> ○ <i>Latin America and the Caribbean x 2</i> ○ <i>Northern Mediterranean x 1 (not funded by GEF)</i>
Component 2: "Baseline Assessment and Synthesis"	
Assessment of current baseline, synthesis and preparation of reports at national, sub-regional, regional and global levels	
Activity/Output 2.1: A comprehensive monitoring and assessment system for the UNCCD that will clarify <i>among others</i> the institutional set up needed in order to effectively engage in future periodic monitoring and assessment of performance (every 2 years) and impacts (every 4 years).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Review</u> of methods • <u>Workshop</u> on methods • <u>Monitoring and assessment systems</u> to pilot at regional, sub-regional and national levels
Activity/Output 2.2: Indicators -based reports (Performance) of baseline situations at national, sub-regional, regional and global levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Review</u> of methods • <u>Workshop</u> on methods • <u>Terms of reference and guidance</u> for national and regional performance assessments

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Assessment</u> of global situation for performance • <u>Coordination</u> of parties to conduct situation assessments at regional, sub-regional and national levels
Activity/Output 2.3: 4 th National reports; Synthesis reports on sub-regional, regional and global assessment of UNCCD implementation under the guidance of UNCCD Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Analysis</u> of 4th national reports submission • <u>Synthesis</u> of 4th national report • Incorporate feedback from CRIC (November 2010)
Component 3: "Knowledge Management and Dissemination" Knowledge Management System, Monitoring and Evaluation and Dissemination	
Activity/Output 3.1: Comprehensive capacity-building framework for reporting UNCCD implementation available by end of 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Needs assessment</u> of reporting capacity. • <u>Consult</u> partners on priorities
Activity/Output 3.2: Web-site portal developed at national or sub-regional level for storage and retrieval of information on baseline data, indicators, reporting guidelines and tools, best practices, and lessons learned.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Web portal</u> for knowledge management of UNCCD reporting (Harmonised with ongoing Rio Convention integration efforts) • <u>Pilot of</u> web portal • <u>Train trainers</u> on web portal
Activity/Output 3.3: Appropriate framework for assessing and reporting of performance and impact developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Systems and guidance</u> for UNCCD assessment and reporting of performance based on pilot lessons. • (Combine with <i>End of Project</i> evaluation; hand-over to UNCCD.)

Source: ToRs for Terminal Evaluation

1.2.5 Implementation Arrangements

17. The UNCCD PRAIS project is funded by the GEF. The **Implementing Agency** is UNEP/GEF, and the **Executing Agency** is UNEP-WCMC, based in Cambridge, UK.

18. The cooperation on the project between **UNEP/GEF** and **UNEP-WCMC** is based on an Internal Cooperation Agreement (ICA) established between the two UNEP's divisions. The ICA clearly articulates their respective roles and responsibilities and provides details of the reporting and financial management requirements of the project.

19. The **UNCCD Secretariat** and **GM** are both project clients (as institutions of the Convention they represent the Parties and are also beneficiaries, on their behalf, of some of the project outputs) and **Executing Partners** of the project, working in close cooperation with UNEP-WCMC in the delivery of the project. In addition to the respective Headquarters, they supported the execution of the project through the Regional Coordination Units. The Secretariat also provided catalytic funding to developing affected country Parties for the 2010 reporting of approximately USD 500,000.

20. The **RCs** are specialized institutions in the sub-regions/regions or at global level (represented in the region) with recognized mandate in Sustainable Land Management (SLM) and/or regional coordination and which have recognized experience of UNCCD implementation either at regional or global level. They played a key role as Executing Partners in the delivery of the activities of the UNCCD PRAIS project. These 14 sub-regional Centres were selected to perform essential roles in training and technical backstopping in support of Parties development of national reports using the PRAIS templates and guidelines, and in use of the PRAIS Portal. The centres selected were those likely to continue to play a major role in the reporting process beyond the 2010 pilot exercise. The main objective of involving RCs in the project is to develop the approach of having reference technical and/coordination institutions in each region for supporting UNCCD Country Parties in the implementation of the Convention. They should have some mechanisms that retain and share

institutional knowledge, including of the assessment and reporting process. The RCs were jointly identified by the UNCCD secretariat and UNEP-WCMC in consultation with the GM and UNEP/GEF. Specific agreements on roles and deliverables were signed with each centre to formalize their collaboration with UNEP-WCMC in providing direct support to their respective region in terms of organizing project activities and provide necessary technical backstopping during the project.

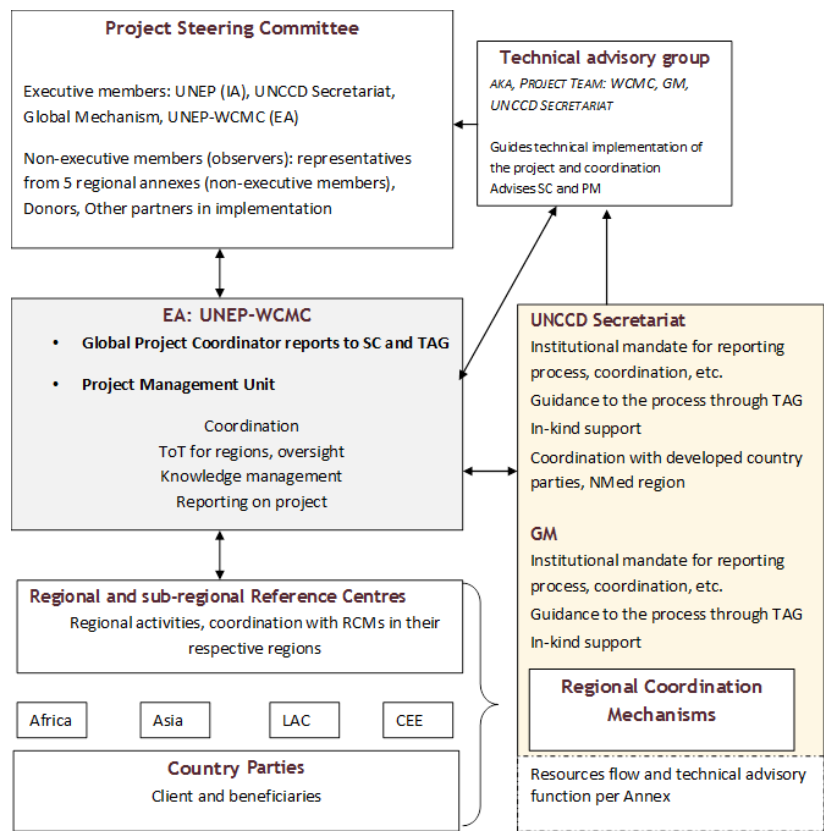
21. At the national level, UNCCD **National Focal Points** (NFPs), working closely with UNCCD National Coordinating Bodies (or similar coordination mechanism), have the overall responsibility for the implementation of the Convention at the national level, including the preparations of the UNCCD 4th National reports.

22. The organizational structure for the implementation of the project UNCCD PRAIS included as the highest level decision-making body, a **Project Steering Committee** (PSC) composed of UNCCD Secretariat, GM, UNEP/GEF, and UNEP-WCMC, and co-chaired by UNEP/GEF and the UNCCD Secretariat. The PSC provided strategic guidance on project implementation issues such as adaptive management, as well as the monitoring and review of progress on an annual basis.

23. The PSC and the Executing Agency were supported by a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to guide the technical implementation of the project and provide advice on technical matters. Under the UNCCD PRAIS the function of the TAG were carried out flexibly by Task Forces or Working/Technical teams constituted informally and on an ad-hoc basis as and when required by the project needs.

24. Figure 2 below shows the organisational structure

Figure 2: Project Organizational Structure



1.2.6 Modifications to Design

25. Some modifications to the design were made early in the Project execution as a result of the Inception Workshop and the recommendations of the first PSC. These reflect issues of the limited time frame for some activities, and clarification and rationalization of respective roles. These changes were documented and reflected in an updated Logframe that accompanied the PRAIS Inception Report. In particular, it allowed Component 3 to refer more explicitly to the development of the PRAIS Portal. Some minor modifications to Component 2 and 3 Outputs were introduced at a very late stage in the Project to clarify and incorporate COP decisions.

1.3 Evaluation Objectives, Scope and Methodology

1.3.1 Objectives

26. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy, the UNEP Evaluation Manual [5] and the Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluations [6], the terminal evaluation of the project “Enabling Paradigm Shift on Monitoring and Assessment within the UNCCD” is undertaken at the end of the project to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project and their sustainability. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, the GEF and their partners. Therefore, the evaluation will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation.

1.3.2 Key Questions

27. The evaluation will focus on the following sets of **key questions**, based on the project’s intended outcomes:

- a) To what extent has the project helped in building capacity of UNCCD Parties to fulfill the new UNCCD Reporting requirements, particularly under the new, indicator based Performance Review and Assessment of the Implementation System (PRAIS) and the newly established online reporting platform of the Convention?
- b) To what degree did the project contribute to strengthen the monitoring framework of the UNCCD by providing clear and consistent guidelines for reporting on the implementation of the Strategy?
- c) To what extent was the capacity-building and training strategy of the project, both at the global and regional level, successful (i.e. did training of trainers propagate training to national and sub-regional levels)?
- d) How successful was the project in supporting the UNCCD to establish a credible and verifiable baseline performance situation assessment that can be used by the UNCCD community for future planning of investments and actions (i.e. how successful was the project in mobilizing Country Parties to submit their reports)?
- e) To what extent has this contributed to a credible and widely accepted understanding of current state of implementation of UNCCD (based on the preliminary analysis of the newly collected information)?
- f) To what extent will the experience with the 2010 Reporting and Review process of the UNCCD be useful for further strengthening of the PRAIS system (through incorporation of documented lessons learned)?
- g) How successful was the project in implementing innovative Knowledge Management and monitoring and evaluation tools (i.e. PRAIS online reporting platform) and in building related capacities of affected Country Parties to assess performance of national action programmes (NAPs) as a means to combating Desertification Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD) and of UNCCD implementation?
- h) Did the project contribute to effective learning towards consolidation of the reporting

framework, including with regards to the future incorporation of the impact indicators?

1.3.3 Evaluation Criteria

28. Following the UNEP Evaluation Manual, this evaluation is assessing the project with respect to a set of evaluation criteria grouped in four categories:

(1) Attainment of objectives and planned results, which comprises the assessment of outputs achieved, relevance, effectiveness and efficiency and the review of outcomes towards impacts;

(2) Sustainability and catalytic role, which focuses on financial, socio-political, institutional and environmental factors conditioning sustainability of project outcomes, and also assesses efforts and achievements in terms of replication and up-scaling of project lessons and good practices;

(3) Processes affecting attainment of project results, which covers project preparation and readiness, implementation approach and adaptive management, stakeholder participation and public awareness, country ownership/driven-ness, project finance, UNEP supervision and backstopping, and project monitoring and evaluation systems; and

(4) Complementarity with the UNEP strategies and programmes.

1.3.4 Evaluation Process

29. The Evaluation was conducted under the overall responsibility of the UNEP Evaluation Office, by an evaluation team consisting of a Team Leader and one Supporting Consultant.

30. Evidence for the evaluation was gathered through consultations with key project participants and stakeholders using on-site interviews and discussions, telephone interviews and email correspondence. Where possible, on-site meetings were in small interactive groups, with discussions structured around the key questions listed above (Sec 1.3.2).

31. The on-site consultations included:

- Project management and participants at the Executing Agency - UNEP-WCMC, in Cambridge UK
- Supervision and management at the Implementing Agency, UNEP, including the Task Manager, Fund Management Officer, and GEF Coordination Officer, in Nairobi, Kenya
- Officers at 3 key RCs - IGAD in Kenya, CATIE in Costa Rica, ECLAC in Chile
- Project participants and clients at the Executing Agency and the UNCCD Secretariat
- National Focal Points of 5 countries - Germany, Kenya, Ecuador, Chile and Costa Rica

32. On-site discussions were conducted by the Team Leader during the period September 27 to October 10 2012 at:³

UNEP-WCMC in Cambridge, UK, where key contacts included:

Jon Hutton, Director

Jessica Smith (PSC), Senior Programme Officer – Land and Livelihoods, PRAIS Project Manager

Matt Walpole (PSC), Head, Ecosystem Assessment Programme

Murielle Misrachi, Assistant Programme Officer, Ecosystem Assessment Programme

Björn Schulte-Herbrüggen, Programme Officer, Ecosystem Assessment Programme

Alex Gee, Head of the Project Coordination Unit

Peter Herkenrath, Senior Programme Officer - Multilateral Environmental Agreements

³ Details in Annex 2

and, additionally from Cambridge by telephone - Paula Haddock, Training Manager, International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC)

UNCCD Secretariat in Bonn Germany, where key contacts included:

Luc Gnacadja, Executive Secretary
Massimo Candelori (PSC), Coordinator, Facilitation & Monitoring of Implementation Unit
Anja Thust, Secretary to the CRIC
Andre Neves, IT Specialist, FCMI Unit
Marcos Montoiro, NGO and Civil Society Liaison
Rui Zheng, Regional Coordination Function
Richard Byron-Cox, Capacity-building Officer, regional Coordination Function

and additionally, by telephone while in Bonn - Georg Richarz, GIZ, responsible for submitting the German National Report.

UNEP Headquarters and the Reference Centre and Focal Points in Nairobi, where key contacts included:

Segbedzi Norgbey, Chief Evaluation Office
Pauline Marima, Evaluation Office
Maryam Niamir-Fuller GEF Coordination Office
Adamou Bouhari, (Project Task Manager, PSC) Task Manager Biodiversity and Land Degradation
Rodney Vorley, Fund Management Officer UNEP/DEPI
Michael Carbon, Evaluation Office

Prof. Laban Ogallo, Director IGAD (Reference Centre)
Zachary Atheru, Programme Officer, IGAD
Francis Inganga, Chief Environmental Research Officer, NEMA (Kenyan National Focal Point)

33. On-site discussions were conducted by the Supporting Consultant during the period October 13 to October 18 2012 at:

UNCCD Regional Coordination Unit for LAC where key contacts included:

Heitor Matallo, Programme Officer
Jacob Acevedo, Associate Programme Officer

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) where key contacts included:

Guillermo Dascal, responsible for RC support in South America

Corporación Nacional Forestal (CONAF) where key contacts included:

Wilfredo Alfaro, Chile's National Focal Point of the UNCCD Convention

Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza (CATIE) where key contacts included:

Cristóbal Villanueva, responsible for RC support in Central America
Muhammad Ibrahim, Director Programa de Ganadería y Manejo del Medio Ambiente (GAMMA), responsible for RC support in Central America (by SKYPE)

Ministerio de Ambiente, Energía y Telecomunicaciones, Costa Rica where key contacts

included:

Mariano Espinoza, Costa Rica's National Focal Point of the UNCCD Convention
Renato Espinoza, Member Costa Rica's Commission on Desertification

Ministerio del Ambiente, Ecuador where key contacts included:

José Eduardo Estrella, Responsible of the preparation of Ecuador's National Report to UNCCD

34. In addition to on-site interviews and telephone contacts, Project documentation was reviewed. The project was very thoroughly documented throughout its progress and over 250 documents were made available for examination. The principal documents included:

- Project design documents, including the Project Identification Form (PIF), Prodoc, and Inception Report
- Progress reports, including PSC minutes and associated documents and the Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs)
- Financial Reports
- Agreements with RCs
- Reports of Training workshops, including workshop appraisals
- Lessons Learned summaries, and other reviews of the 2010 reporting experience
- All Project output products - indicators guidelines, manuals, communication products, syntheses ...

35. In addition, all CRIC and UNCCD official documents are available on-line and were referenced as needed.

1.3.5 Scope and Limitations

36. This evaluation is concerned with the Project "Enabling a Paradigm Shift Towards Monitoring and Assessment within the UNCCD" as defined by its Prodoc [4] and the revised Logframe presented in the Inception Report of June 2010 [2]. The Project started on 1 January 2010, and its original target end of June 2011 was extended to the end of December 2012, although most work finished earlier. In fact, the TE is being conducted about 5 months after major activities have been completed when memories may not be as fresh as desirable, causing some vagueness as to what activities were completed by the project, and which were actually follow-on activities funded from other sources. For practical purposes all significant project activities appear to have finished, and almost all Project funds were expended by June 2012, and so any PRAIS-related work done after that date is considered as post-project follow-on, or part of administrative and financial completion.

37. The performance and impact indicators developed to measure progress against the strategic and operational objectives of the 10yr Strategic Plan were developed by a process prior to the project and are taken as given. Neither the indicators themselves or the process to construct them will be critiqued in this evaluation. The project began with a review of the indicators and recommendations on refinement.

38. The relationship between the UNCCD Secretariat and the Global Mechanism has been under review and changing during the Project period, and is not a subject of the evaluation except as to any effect on the project implementation.

39. A reasonable, but limited, budget allocation and limited time frame for the evaluation have placed some practical limitations. Only a very small sample of national focal points could be visited for in-depth discussions, however, to quote from the Terms of Reference (Annex 1) for the TE - "The UNCCD PRAIS project provided support at a global level to the participating countries (a total of 119

under UNCCD) through RCs (a total of 14 institutions) - as opposed to provision of support at country-level. For this evaluation, therefore, it is reasonable to direct focus on the support provided by the Regional Centres or regional centres of excellence for the implementation of the project". Four RCs could be examined on-site and these were in Latin America and Africa, so there may be significant regional differences that we have not identified. On the other hand, the activities and results of all the RCs are extremely well documented and we expect that will provide sufficient evidence.

40. The availability of some contact people during the evaluation period was limited, due to a number of factors, but particularly the COP of the CBD in which many of the same individuals were involved, and the coincidence with the UNCCD 2012 Reporting and Review cycle in which all the NFPs were engaged - as well as the CRIC and the Secretariat. A brief email survey of NFPs was attempted with very modest returns, likely due to these pressures on their time. (Questionnaire and response summary in Annex 5).

2 PROJECT PERFORMANCE AND IMPACT

41. Project performance is evaluated in the following sections according to the four evaluation criteria introduced in Section 1.3.3.

2.1 Attainment of Objectives and Planned Results

2.1.1 Achievement of Outputs and Activities

42. There are three substantive Components to the Project, directed toward two overall Project objectives to:

- *Establish a scientifically rigorous and credible assessment of the performance of the implementation of the UNCCD at the national, sub-regional, regional and global levels, and*
- *Build/strengthen capacity and knowledge management systems for subsequent assessments and reporting.*

It is understood that the word "performance" in the first objective is meant performance as measured against the UNCCD 10yr Strategic Plan [1] target outcomes:

- Advocacy, awareness raising and education (3 outcomes)
- Policy framework (5 outcomes)
- Science, technology and knowledge (6 outcomes)
- Capacity-building (2 outcomes)
- Financing and technology transfer (5 outcomes).

43. The project Logical Framework identifies "SMART"⁴ objectively verifiable indicators for each "outcome" (most are identified in terms of outputs rather than outcomes) along with a baseline and targets, which provides a helpful framework for evaluating whether the planned results have been achieved. Each Component is analysed in the following sections. Particular emphasis has been placed on some key activities and outputs, so there is expansion of detail on the training through RCs of Component 1, the support for the first on-line reporting experience of Component 2, and the building of the knowledge management Portal of Component 3.

44. In the project plan, each identified Output corresponds one-to-one with the Activity to produce the Output with the only difference being the active verb used in the Activity. For example Activity 1.2 is "Finalization of Guidelines for assessment of baseline and best practices" leading to the corresponding Output 1.2 "Finalized Guidelines for ...". Table 2 in section 1.2.4, and the analysis that follows, use the form Activity/Output with the less active Output definition.

Component 1 - Review of indicators, and formulation of national, sub-regional guidelines and reporting formats.

45. It had the intended outcome – “Parties capacity (*to understand and use the reporting regime*) built by providing clear and consistent guidelines for reporting on the implementation of the Strategy”.

46. This Component set out to establish the reporting process - the Performance Assessment of Implementation System (PRAIS) - and importantly, training to build understanding amongst stakeholders of how to use the PRAIS for national reporting in the 2010 4th reporting and review cycle of the Convention. The descriptive short name for the Component indicated in the simplified diagram in the Project Inception Report is "Situation Analysis and Process Design".

47. Activities/Outputs 1.1 through 1.4 developed through a consultative and iterative process:

- 18 refined and improved Performance Indicators (previously defined and agreed by parties

⁴ Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound

through COP)

- a set of 6 reporting guidelines and accompanying reporting templates
- a glossary covering all the relevant terminology.

The finalized guidance documents were all translated into 6 UN languages and made ready to use for the subsequent training program.

48. The quality and success of this suite of materials is best judged through the results of the training that followed.

49. Activity/Output 1.5 produced training modules and further guidelines for data collection for use in Training of Trainers sessions. These covered three topics of relevance to national focal points:

- UNCCD Strategy and PRAIS monitoring Framework
- Performance indicators, Additional indicators and Best Practices
- Standard Financial Annex and Programme and Project Sheet.

In addition, a Training of Trainers Workbook was produced. Again all were translated into 6 languages.

50. Activity/Output 1.6 Utilized all these capacity-building resources in a critical and important process towards the success of the project - the training of national stakeholders in the use of the new approach to reporting to the UNCCD. This training was conducted through the use of 14 sub-regional RCs.

51. It is important to note that time frames were very short and governed by UNCCD official processes leading to the COP10 (October 2011) where the results of the first round ever of evidence-based reporting were to be presented. It was essential to have capacity built in the Parties at the national level as well as having the on-line reporting facility ready on time.

52. Critical to the planned training was the use of a group of sub-regional centres described in Section 1.2.5. The selection of these and the negotiation of 14 individual agreements was a very significant and necessary task accomplished in a short time frame by the Project Team. The process, although described by the Inception Report [2] as involving "*a lengthy, complex, and delicate period of negotiations*", proved to generate wise choices, due to no small extent by the appropriateness of the selection criteria applied, and the knowledge of the capacities of the various institutions held by the UNCCD, UNEP and UNEP-WCMC. Each Centre entered into a Small Scale Grant Agreement (SSGA) that defined the activities and outputs required, and specified reporting requirements. The first major task for the RCs was to host a training workshop for national delegates.

53. The training of trainers workshop was held in Rome 31 May–04 June 2010 [7], hosted at FAO and trained 32 participants from 14 RCs, along with another 20 from regional agencies. The course had 2 distinct components: A professional training contractor, International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC) presented material on training methodologies to build confidence in the trainers themselves, and the project team and resource people introduced the PRAIS concepts, indicators, templates, and reporting procedures (i.e. the content the trainers would use).

54. The sessions were well attended. Participants were engaged and evaluations were high for both the quality and content of the training, and the associated workbooks and other materials. Feedback from INTRAC indicated two minor concerns:

- Some of the delegates seemed to be at too high a level - that is, they were not likely to actually engage in training at their Reference Centre.⁵

⁵ Interview with INTRAC

- The INTRAC presentations emphasized interaction and engagement in the learning process, but the content presentations did not demonstrate those techniques.

Training was then subsequently carried out by the "graduates" of the training of trainers at the 14 RCs, mainly in early July 2010. In this process over 350 National Focal Points and other government representatives were trained in the subsequent weeks, spanning 143 Country Parties.

55. Full and detailed Training Workshop reports were prepared by each of the 14 RCs. Although training approaches and experiences varied, in all cases participant evaluations were high. The centres also subsequently provided technical support and advice throughout the reporting period to their sub-regional constituency. While helping with the capacity-building for reporting, it further helped to foster sub-regional connections for potential future synergies, and cooperative actions.

56. The situation in no two RCs was the same, but from the ones examined in some detail, it would seem that a common factor was enthusiastic participation and satisfactory results. There were also opportunities unique to each sub-region for support and expertise sharing.

57. The parties also contributed to project orientation and understanding through their regional representatives. Two meetings of chairpersons of the Regional Implementation Annexes of the Convention were convened in 2010, providing feedback on PRAIS implementation.

58. Ultimately the test of effective training programs is in the outcomes - the application of the increased capacity for the intended benefit. The enormous success of the program is reflected in the extremely high rate of report submission through the PRAIS Portal. The results were objectively high (as compared to previous reporting cycles using narrative reports) but particularly impressive because of the limited timeframe to absorb a completely new and complex approach. In addition an analysis of 50 non-reporting parties [8] indicated that very few non-responses were due to insufficient training.

59. In summary in spite of being a quickly assembled pragmatic grouping, the sub-regional Reference Centre approach proved extremely successful, with each centre responding enthusiastically and vigorously in effective training and technical support, and carrying out fully the terms of their SSGA within tight time frames, while contributing in-kind co-financing in the process.

All activities and results of this Component are considered to be **Highly Satisfactory (HS)**.

Component 2: Assessment of current baseline, synthesis and preparation of reports at national, sub-regional, regional and global levels

60. It had the intended outcome – (*having available*) “credible and verifiable information of current baseline performance situation for future planning of investments and actions”.

61. This Component was the logical follow-on to Component 1 in that it supported and facilitated the assessment of the information submitted in the 2010 Reporting cycle that would form a baseline for credible performance measurement, and through analysis of the lessons-learned, provide for improvements for future periodic monitoring and assessment. This would include iterations of refinement and improvement of the support materials, indicators, and procedures developed in Component 1. The descriptive short name for the Component indicated in the simplified diagram in the Project Inception Report is "Baseline Assessment and Synthesis".

62. Activity/Output 2.2 provided technical assistance to the Parties for the preparation and submission of national reports for the 2010 reporting cycle. An effective email-based Helpdesk was established and further support provided directly by the 14 RCs, the UNCCD Secretariat, the GM and UNEP-WCMC. Feedback from the NFPs has indicated that the support was in general very satisfactory. This, combined with the successful training program is reflected in the high rate of submission of Reports. The survey of non-responding Parties [8] indicated only a small proportion of Parties experienced technical barriers, and the majority felt that support from the RCs was sufficient. Overall, the PRAIS portal was regarded as adequate, but some technical issues were cited and

suggestions for improvement put forward. Streamlining the process of issuance of the password with the support of the Helpdesk would be particularly crucial.

63. Activity/Output 2.1 studied in-depth the lessons learned from the 2010 reporting experience. This was done in consultation with NFPs and the RCs (which each provided individual lessons-learned reports) and captured in a comprehensive Lesson Learned report.[9] This report formed the basis for a series of official documents the Project prepared for CRIC-10 to guide future periodic measurement and assessment of performance, including:

- “Iterative process: refinement of the set of performance indicators and associated methodologies” - ICCD/CRIC(10)/11
- “Guidelines for the preliminary analysis of information contained in reports from Parties and other reporting entities” - ICCD/CRIC(10)/14
- “Format and methodological guidelines for reporting by civil society organizations (2012-2013) - ICCD/CRIC(10)/13
- “Iterative process: refinement for the review and compilation of best practices, including methodological guidelines for best practices on sustainable land management”- ICCD/CRIC(10)/15
- “Draft format and methodological guidelines for reporting on best practices on funding and resources mobilization” - ICCD/CRIC(10)/16
- “Synergies in reporting under the Rio Conventions” - ICCD/CRIC(10)/22

64. The Lessons-Learned led directly to revisions and improvements of the templates for the 2012 round of reporting, and the accompanying guidance documents.

65. Activity/Output 2.3 supported the Secretariat and the GM in the preparation of synthesis reports on the sub-regional, regional, and global baseline assessment of the implementation of the UNCCD based on the information contained 4th National Reports. These synthesis reports were prepared and published by CRIC at each level for the 5 Operational Objectives, the best practices and financial flows. All of these were made available in 6 UN languages. In this way these first baseline syntheses using indicators received wide circulation and exposure. An additional study "Consideration of the iterative process relating to the assessment of implementation, including performance indicators, methodology and the reporting procedures" [10] provided further guidance on ways to move forward to improving the PRAIS process.

All activities and results of this Component are considered to be **Highly Satisfactory (HS)**.

Component 3: Knowledge Management System, Monitoring and Evaluation and Dissemination

66. It had the intended outcome – “Capacities of affected Country Parties to assess performance of national action programmes (NAPs) as a means to combating Desertification Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD) and of UNCCD implementation are enhanced”.

67. This Component essentially set out to develop and implement the PRAIS Web Portal, first as a Reporting tool, and then set the way forward as a knowledge sharing facility for stakeholders to assist implementation of the UNCCD and in sustainable land management investments⁶. The descriptive short name for the Component indicated in the simplified diagram in the Project Inception Report is "Knowledge Management and Dissemination".

⁶ The public interface was planned to be carried out by the UNCCD Secretariat through their own knowledge management system; it was not, therefore, strictly a project deliverable but rather the project was intended to feed into this.

68. Activities/Outputs 3.1 and 3.3 concerned the more technical aspects of establishing and understanding how to use the information being collected in the PRAIS database through the Portal - as indicated in Output 3.3 "appropriate framework for assessing and reporting performance and impact" - intended to lead to (Output 3.1) "Capacity for monitoring and assessment of the implementation of the Convention developed at the regional, sub-regional and national level".

69. This was achieved in various ways (in addition to the Lessons-Learned process of Component 2), for instance:

- Technical recommendations on an enhanced capacity-building strategy discussed at CRIC9 and submitted to COP 10 for decision.
- Report on analysis of the root causes for countries not reporting. [8]
- Lessons learned report [9] produced and consultations undertaken at CRIC9 side event and regional meetings in February 2011.
- Recommendations from the Lessons Learned report fed into official COP10 documents, such as "Guidelines for the preliminary analysis of information contained in reports from Parties and other reporting entities" for further strengthening of the PRAIS framework.
- Technical support provided for incorporation of project lessons learned in the process of refinement of UNCCD impact indicators.
- Technical support provided on "Implications for data management of introducing indicators into UNCCD reporting" [18].
- A review of good practice in data management and access for consideration of the 4th PRAIS PSC, to provide input to the IT Task Force work on the analytic and public access modules.
- Lessons learned from PRAIS fed into the improvement of the templates for the 2012 reporting and review process and contributed to the revision of the impact indicators templates and guidance.

70. In a separately funded project UNEP-WCMC conducted pilot testing of the feasibility indicators (a set of 11 land, ecosystem and livelihood indicators) in a selected group of Country Parties. Results of this study [11] and its key lessons and messages were presented at a side-event at COP10.

71. While there is no one clear consolidated output identified as a "Framework" for moving forward, the above listed outputs together adequately represent such a result that the UNCCD can take forward into future incremental improvements in the process.

72. Activities/Outputs 3.2 and 3.4 concern the actual technical building of the PRAIS Web Portal "...at national or sub-regional level for storage and retrieval of information on baseline data, indicators, reporting guidelines and tools, best practices, and lessons learned" and indeed a knowledge management system that empowers stakeholders to share information that will lead to improved SLM, and better informed decisions on investment flows at the national, sub-regional, regional and global levels.

73. There were some challenges to the development which may have led to a less than ideal result.

74. It was clear from the start of the project that time lines were very short for the technical building and implementation of the on-line Reporting Portal - constrained by the UNCCD COP/CRIC process. In the original Prodoc [19] only 10 weeks were allocated for the technical development. This was short because UNEP-WCMC anticipated (in the Prodoc) using a pre-existing system which had been designed for convention reporting processes and used with the Africa-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA), and intended for use with the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS). This system, based on a platform called Ruby-on-Rails (RoR), could be customized to meet the UNCCD requirements. Concerns were raised at the technical level as to the compatibility of such an approach

with the existing IT regime in the Secretariat. The alternative was introduced as a “non negotiable requirement” by the Secretariat⁷ to use an approach which required more programming from scratch, but would be based on technology (APS.net and Microsoft SQL) more familiar to the UNCCD’s IT staff. This approach required the unplanned engagement of an IT contractor, and caused postponement of plans for an analytical module. (The alternative scenario using existing technology would have enabled emphasis of the project to be on the analytical module development, which in turn could have been utilised by other Conventions.) Concerns for possible added costs and the need to postpone work on analysis functionality were well expressed in the Half Yearly Report of January to June 2010. In addition, the same Half Yearly Report noted concerns with poor performance of the IT contractor that was creating delays.

75. Technical concerns between the Secretariat and the GM also arose and came to a head at PSC meeting of May 2010, where it was confirmed that the Portal technology must be fully interoperational with the pre-existing GM FIELD (Financial Information Engine on Land Degradation) system.

76. It is a tribute to the spirit of cooperation and hard work of the Project Team that an operational Reporting System was available in time for the reporting cycle. However, there were some system bugs identified during the reporting process, as well as some concerns over user-friendliness and poor performance as reported in lessons-learned by the RCs. Unfortunately the Portal was only in a test mode during the training sessions, so on-line demonstrations experienced problems. It is always difficult to evaluate hypothetical situations, but it may have been that choosing the RoR-based ready made option might have produced a more user-friendly result in a more timely manner, and this may have been a missed opportunity for synergies with other conventions.

77. The extraction of information from the reports for analysis and synthesis of the 2010 reporting was done through specific custom programming to retrieve from the PRAIS database rather than through a standard query process.⁸ The result was, nevertheless, successful as far as producing these first set of assessments for presentation at COP and other fora.

78. Examination of IT Task Force documents and interviews with UNCCD Secretariat indicated that full interoperability with GM systems seemed to have had more technical difficulties than expected, but flow through of the Standard Financial Annexes (SFAs) and Programme and Project Sheets (PPS) to the GM was successfully accomplished.

79. The final stages of development of the Portal called for an "analytical module" as part of achieving Output 3.2 "Web-site portal developed at national or sub-regional level for storage and **retrieval** of information on baseline data, indicators, reporting guidelines and tools, best practices, and lessons learned."

80. Led by the Secretariat, an IT Task Force was formed to coordinate and resolve all the technical issues and proceed with this work. The Task Force proposed⁹ the analytical module would allow authorized users to query all aspects of the data contained in the reports, including the financial flows. In addition, at the same time it was to proposed to include within it a "public interface" with a restricted set of fixed queries, as part of the overall UNCCDs Knowledge Management System. At the 4th PSC meeting in December 2011 the IT Task Force indicated that interoperability issues were still not completely solved, and the Task Force was directed come up with a work plan for the analytical module and public interface to be on-line by the end of February 2012. This was by this stage led by the UNCCD Secretariat, to be accomplished using European Commission (EC) co-financing that had been released as part of the no-cost extension of the project until June 2012.

⁷ Technical Review and Validation Workshop for the UNCCD Draft Reporting Tools, February 2010

⁸ Interviews with IT staff at Secretariat

⁹ Minutes of IT task Force Teleconference of August 1, 2010

81. The PIR for the 2012 fiscal year reports that the "analytical module and public interface of the PRAIS portal have been revised and further developed," and the analytical module is indicated in the PIR summary performance table as "completed" by 30 June 2012 (similarly in the Project Final Report [20]). On the other hand, the Secretariat has indicated¹⁰ that an analytic module was developed on trial basis using Cognos (proprietary software from IBM), but it was found to be unsuitable. The current status of this development is uncertain.

82. The Secretariat has reconsidered proceeding with a public interface for the present time. A deliberation by the CRIC Bureau, 18 Feb 2012 [12], calls for "guidance" on data sharing to be sought from the next COP (Autumn 2013) before proceeding with a public interface, which will likely delay development until 2014.

83. This leaves access through the Portal by Parties to the information contained in the reports limited to read-only "PDF" files of the reports, from which data cannot be retrieved or analysed in any automated way. UNEP-WCMC undertook a mission to the Secretariat in order to assist them in defining options for data sharing, including those which do not rely on the public interface. That no solution for data sharing has as of yet been clarified is a significant shortfall in the delivery of the planned output.

This Component as a whole is considered to be **Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)**.

84. With respect to the **Achievement of Outputs and Activities criterion** as a whole, it is clear that almost all the Project outputs and activities were achieved as planned in a Satisfactory or better manner. The failure in Component 3 to provide data analysis or synthesis capability to the Parties through the Portal is considered a significant shortfall, and reduces the overall rating for this evaluation criterion to **Moderately Satisfactory**.

2.1.2 Effectiveness

85. Section 2.1.1 focussed on evaluating the extent to which the planned **outputs** were achieved. This section reviews the extent to which the intended **outcomes** were achieved as a result of the products and services delivered.

Component 1 - Review of indicators, and formulation of national, sub-regional guidelines and reporting formats.

86. Expected Outcome – "Parties capacity built by providing clear and consistent guidelines for reporting on the implementation of the Strategy".

87. The "capacity" referred to is the capacity of Parties to understand and use the new evidence-based reporting regime. There is ample evidence that this was achieved to a large extent, not the least of which, is the high percentage of reports submitted - especially from affected country parties that received the training support. Feedback from the training workshops and the Lessons Learned process have indicated a sophisticated understanding of the principles to the extent that many ways to strengthen the reporting process were identified by the Parties, and consultations with NFPs have confirmed that a number of countries have taken significant steps to adopt indicator-based national assessment processes and have configured data gathering systems to match.

88. On the other hand, some Country Parties lack sufficient resources which limits their capacity to change and respond, and supporting funding will continue to be needed for some time.

89. The training workshops were also effective in fostering cooperation and interaction amongst parties. Two examples of experiences from Latin America follow (more detail in Annex 7).

¹⁰ email discussion

90. ECLAC organized a training workshop in its headquarters in Santiago (Chile), where they have excellent facilities. Being a regional commission of the United Nations facilitated the call to the countries. The workshop included two very valuable elements:

- Short country presentations on the approach adopted to implement the Convention, and
- Analysis and discussion of the probable sources of information, methodologies to use, and the level of difficulty to prepare the different elements of the report.

Participants made a number of recommendations to improve the reporting tools and to facilitate the on-line reporting process. Importantly, the training workshop was a catalyst to foster networking and the exchange of experience and information.

91. A training workshop was held in CATIE's headquarters in Turrialba (Costa Rica). CATIE is a renowned regional centre with 30 years experience in rural development that carries out research, higher education training and community outreach in tropical agriculture and natural resource management and conservation. Their experience with training was valuable for the preparation and implementation of the workshop. A participatory methodology was designed and applied to facilitate interaction, involvement and knowledge exchange among participants. Participants discussed in depth the needs of information to prepare the national reports and ways to mobilize national support and local stakeholders. Also CATIE prepared a blog to facilitate the exchange of information and interaction of national focal points during the preparation of the reports. The workshop was a good mechanism to facilitate knowledge exchange.

Effectiveness of Component 1 - **Highly Satisfactory.**

Component 2: Assessment of current baseline, synthesis and preparation of reports at national, sub-regional, regional and global levels

92. Expected Outcomes – “credible and verifiable information of current baseline performance situation for future planning of investments and actions”, and “a credible and widely accepted understanding of current state of implementation of UNCCD”.

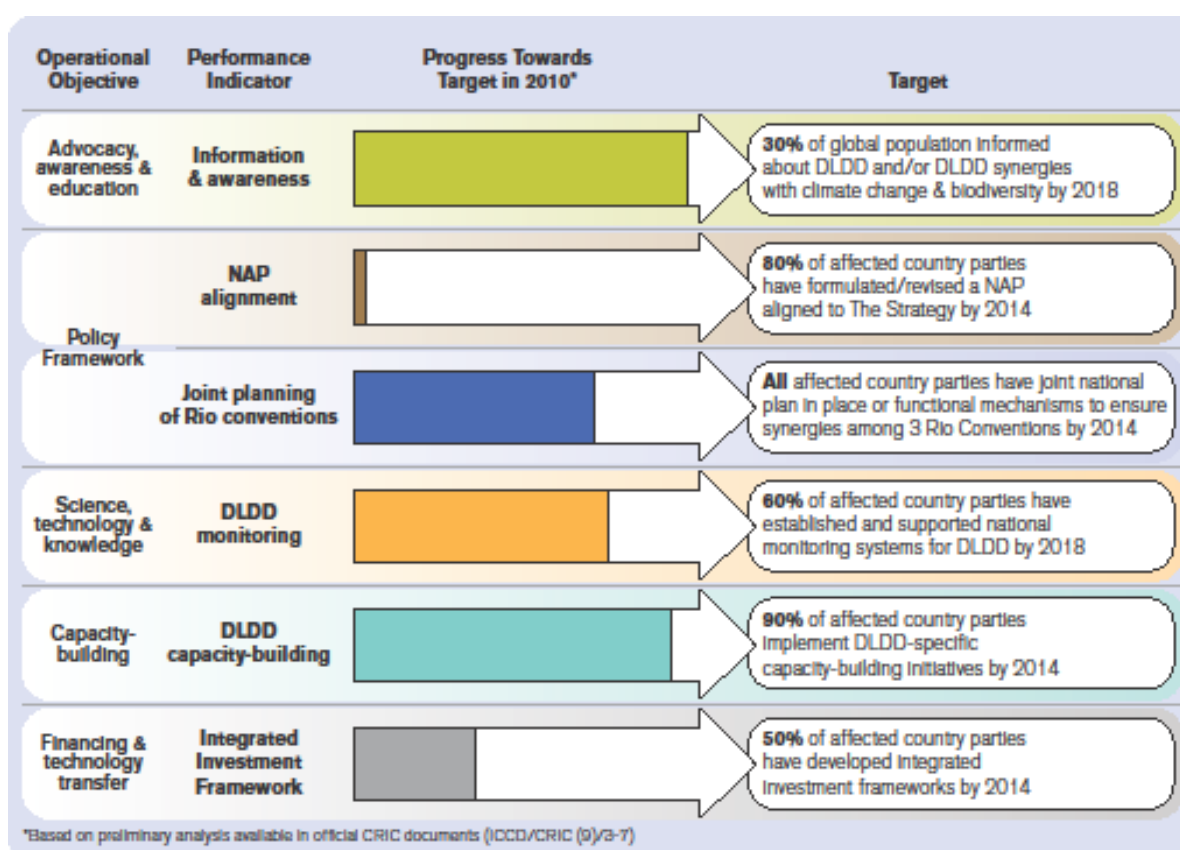
93. One aspect of the effectiveness of this component was the practical ease of use of the Portal for national report submission. In the LAC (Annex 7) experiences during the submission of reports were mixed, but the NFPs in particular reported recurrent technical difficulties, mainly slow response of the online tool and frequent failure during the process of saving information. In addition, major problems with the Spanish translation of the template resulted in long discussions about what was being asked and the real meaning of the indicators. As a result, many countries in the region opted to use the English template instead, which they found more comprehensible. One country, Costa Rica, would not do this on principle - refusing to endorse a document that was not in the country's national language¹¹. These concerns point to a moderation as well, of the effectiveness of Component 1 wherein the templates were developed and translated.

94. On the other hand, the high response rate to the reporting process indicated that most reporting entities successfully migrated from qualitative to quantitative accounting in a short time-frame.

95. In general, however, this outcome can be judged by the extent to which it was possible to extract from the submitted reports, credible and meaningful syntheses of progress towards the established targets for the performance indicators - and present them in a way that was easy to understand. This was successfully achieved by a suite of synthesis reports and a series of communication products. One excellent example is a summary diagram (Figure 3 below) illustrating the baseline assessment of progress towards the six operational objectives of The Strategy at the global level. (Source PRAIS Briefing Document No. 2 [13].)

¹¹ Interview in Costa Rica (see also Annex7)

Figure 3: Level of Progress towards UNCCD targets in 2010



96. This diagram represents the first credible assessment of progress of the UNCCD towards the targets of the Strategy. This is something that was never done, and **could not be done** before this Project. In addition, synthesis reports were separately prepared for each of the five Operational Objectives using the PRAIS Database, and for financial flows, at the global, regional and sub-regional levels. These were all submitted to and published through CRIC and via the Portal. This is a major step forward, demonstrating the effectiveness of the reporting process and design of PRAIS to enable the synthesis of comparable information at all levels and different aspects of analysis.

97. The word "credible" is used above, but must be employed cautiously at this point. For this first baseline reporting there were no validation steps undertaken - data was accepted as given. It was "comparable" in the sense that all Parties were working from the same guidelines, templates and glossary, and had similar training and technical support.

98. Evaluation of the effectiveness of this Outcome must recognize, however, the limits to validity and hence credibility, present in this first baseline given the recognized need for incremental improvement of data validation process. Some examples that weaken the credibility include translation problems of Guidelines and Templates, noted in the Spanish version by NFPs in the LAC (See Annex 7), and uneven interpretation of such terms as "national", and concerns over defining "affected area".¹² Data quality and completeness also varied across developed Country Parties. Consultations with the NFPs of Canada and Germany showed a stark contrast - Canada having filed a rather incomplete report, citing very high costs, and Germany submitting an extremely thorough report including hundreds of PPS forms.

99. Future clarification and refinement of the indicators and their measurement methodologies are needed to ensure better across-the-board comparability, a process that may take a few reporting cycles.

¹² Interviews with the Secretariat, and EA

A very positive sign is that the financial analysis conducted by the GM was done in consultation with the OECD Development Assistance Committee, and in collaboration with CABI.

100. A common complaint that arose in consultations in the LAC was that the new report format is very basic, essentially a questionnaire with a compilation of tables and data, with no analysis. There was an identified need to include a narrative section or policy brief that would provide context and meaning to the data. In that way it would be of more value to national and sub-regional audiences, serving to provide a rationale for the actions and policies being implemented, as well as a way of tracking performance.

Effectiveness of Component 2 – **Satisfactory**.

Component 3: Knowledge Management System, Monitoring and Evaluation and Dissemination

101. Expected Outcome – “Capacities of affected Country Parties to assess performance of national action programmes (NAPs) as a means to combating Desertification Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD), and of UNCCD implementation are enhanced”.

102. The baseline for this outcome is, of course, a very limited capacity in the past - NAPs were generally lacking measurable indicators, targets, or consistent repeatable assessments from year to year. Thus the PRAIS reporting regime, combined with automated means to submit reports and some limited access to reports of other parties, is evidence that the capacity has been significantly enhanced. Not only can Parties now assess their own progress in a systematic way, but can, with the aid of sub-regional, regional and global synthesis reports prepared by the Secretariat, position their progress against international norms.

103. Consultations with Parties, for instance in LAC, have indicated a spectrum of outcomes - some countries have adjusted NAPs and added national working groups and committees for data collection and integration. Others, however, continue to cite problems of lack of resources for data collection and reporting. A few have used the Portal to obtain the reports of comparable Parties in the region, but most have indicated no use of the Portal to **obtain** information (Annex 7). There is currently no means to count "hits" on the Portal or track usage to retrieve data even in the restricted way now possible.¹³

104. The synthesis reports were obtained by extractions from the PRAIS database by Secretariat and GM staff, using conventional semi-automated data retrieval tools not available through the Portal. Parties cannot access the data in this way.

105. The current lack of data access and analysis tools available through the Portal severely limits the capacity of Parties to make connections between investment flows and interventions to combat DLDD, or to extract knowledge benefits from other Parties experiences. Further enhancement of analysis capacity is anticipated to ensue in subsequent iterations of the Portal, which will enable the full potential for knowledge sharing to be realized. However, at this point, the limited data access by Parties lowers the evaluation rating for this Component from what would surely be highly satisfactory, to:

Effectiveness of Component 3 – **Moderately Satisfactory**.

Overall rating of Effectiveness of the Project – **Satisfactory**.

2.1.3 Relevance

106. Starting from the broad base of the Articles of the UNCCD, the project is centrally relevant to the objectives, strategies and programmes of the key players in the focal areas of SLM and land degradation. The obligation of the Parties to communicate to the COP for consideration at its ordinary

¹³ Interviews with IT staff at the Secretariat

sessions, through the Secretariat, "*reports on the measures that they have taken for the implementation of the Convention*" was established in Article 26 of the Convention.

107. The eighth session of the Conference of Parties (COP) of the UNCCD adopted the 10-year Strategic Plan (2008–2018) [1] to enhance the implementation of the Convention. The Strategy identified four strategic objectives and five operational objectives, and subsequently agreed on performance and impact indicators for assessing the status of implementation of the Convention. The Strategy is a very significant step forward for the Convention and logically requires the development of a performance review and assessment system, which is the central focus of the Project.

108. The PRAIS Project responds very directly to the naturally following Decision of the Conference of Parties that requested "*the Secretariat together with the GM and invites United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to prepare reporting tools for the fourth reporting cycle in 2010, and to facilitate and provide capacity-building on monitoring to affected country Parties, as required.*"¹⁴

109. The Project also is clearly relevant to the UNEP Medium-term Strategy (2010-2013)[14] that stresses, as does the Bali Strategic Plan on Technology Support and Capacity-building, the significance of collaborative efforts to build developing countries' capacity to implement environmental conventions.

110. The GEF 4 Strategic Objective 1 of the Land Degradation Focal Area [15] has the stated outcome (b) that "*institutions have the capacity to support SLM at local, sub-national and national levels. Regional and Trans-boundary institutions have the capacity to address and promote the management of joint resources (e.g. training, educational, monitoring and research capacities enhanced and extended to encompass ecosystem and other integrated approaches)*". The project contributed to this objective and the Strategic Programme 3 b) by supporting the affected countries, the developed countries, the International and inter-governmental organizations, in designing guidelines and conducting assessment on performance and impact indicators to ensure scientific based reporting on the implementation of the UNCCD. The project has contributed substantially to the capacity of Convention's institutions, Country Parties and other reporting entities to monitor progress against the achievement of the 10-year Strategy of the UNCCD at the global, regional and sub-regional level, specifically with regards to its 5 operational objectives, as well as financial flows for combating DLDD, and best practices on SLM. A baseline on implementation of the Convention has been established based on the set of approved performance indicators. The data collected is expected to contribute significantly to evidence-based decision-making amongst the Parties, resulting in increased resource mobilization for SLM and better implementation of National Action Programmes.

The Project relevance is **Highly Satisfactory**.

2.1.4 Efficiency

111. Based on document review (especially the various Progress Reports, financial reports and Project Steering Committee Minutes) and consultations with the Global Project Manager, Task Manager, UNEP Fund Management Officer, UNEP-WCMC Project Coordination Office, and others, it is clear that, in general, every attempt was made to operate the project in a most efficient manner. Financial controls were very complete - see Section 2.3.5.

112. Advantage was taken of pre-existing conditions and resources such as the existing IT infrastructure support in UNEP-WCMC and the Secretariat. The choice of UNEP-WCMC as the EA took advantage of the decades long experience of this organization in issues of reporting to conventions, indicators, environmental information management, governance of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), dryland issues, and so on, hence major efficiencies in project start-up and "learning curves" as staff were already very well informed of the issues and players.

¹⁴ COP9, Decision 13

113. Consultants were used judiciously (such as for some training and IT development), with much of the work by Executing Partners being done by full time staff members whose previous experience, expertise and familiarity with UNEP, GEF, and MEAs made for efficient use of resources.

114. The training-of-trainers approach through sub-regional institutions was, for a global-reach project, enormously efficient. The approach saves greatly on travel costs, rental facilities, interpretation costs, professional training fees and the like. The decision to proceed with a training-of-trainers at a single location resulted from a cost comparison of a proposal to hold four regional workshops¹⁵ that showed the single location option to be much more cost-efficient.

115. Based on review of financial reports, and consultations with the Global Project Manager and UNEP-WCMC Project Coordination Office, travel costs were kept to reasonable levels through the use of conference calls, teleconferences and Skype. The IT Task Force, for instance had no face-to-face meetings. Advantage was taken of side-events and "corridor meetings" at official meetings to have the travel serve multiple purposes.

116. On the negative side, very tight deadlines required more use of consulting resources, especially for IT development than might otherwise have been needed, particularly in the case of a technology decision not to use pre-packaged software for the Reporting Module. This invited some extra cost, as noted in the 1st Half-Yearly Report. Towards the end of the Project, development of the analytic module had a setback when a trial of a knowledge management technology solution (Cognos from IBM) was found to be unsuitable after effort was expended.¹⁶ This left the module incomplete by the end of the Project, and future resources may be required to achieve this output. While these types of problem are not uncommon in IT development, they perhaps could have been avoided through critical examination of functional requirements vs. the functional capacity of available software/hardware solutions. Further mediation could have been sought to investigate avenues of flexibility in the "non-negotiable" requirement presented by the Secretariat.

117. Overall, however, there was no evidence of significant wasted resources in this Project. The inefficiencies noted above are considered relatively minor. All finances were closely monitored, directly applied to producing outputs, and unspent funds returned as appropriate, e.g. from RCs.¹⁷

118. With regard to timeliness, the Project met the crucial deadline of getting the PRAIS Portal operational in time for the 2010 reporting cycle, although not without bugs and "teething problems".

119. The project had three "no cost" extensions - that is, extensions of time to complete the work, with no extra funds added. This meant that a planned 18 month project was ultimately extended to 36 months.

120. The original project completion date was June 30 2011. The first extension requested six more months (at no cost change) to the end of December 2011. This extension was required to ensure an adequate communication of project results in the build up to COP10 held in the Republic of Korea in October 2011, as well as to facilitate a more orderly closure of project activities, including preparation in July 2011 of the PIR report, closure of the project accounts and undertaking of the Terminal evaluation of the project in the margins of COP10 as a way to minimize cost and maximize impact of the independent evaluation. The request for extension also responded to the need highlighted by the PSC to align the duration of the on-going GEF project with an associated grant in the amount of €600,000 awarded by the European Commission as co-financing to support the 4th national reporting

¹⁵ 1st PSC Meeting - January 2010

¹⁶ Interview information with Secretariat

¹⁷ Confirmed by UNEP-WCMC Project Co-ordination Office

process of the UNCCD. This extension contributed greatly to the communication of results to a wide audience of stakeholders.¹⁸

121. Following this, a second no-cost extension was granted for an additional 6 months to the end of June 2012. The PRAIS project was at an advanced stage of implementation but this six-month extension was seen as an opportunity to undertake a limited number of communication and dissemination activities during the planning of the 2012/2013 reporting cycle that would incorporate impact indicators, and apply unexpended European Commission funding to additional work on the analytical module of the Portal.¹²

122. A third and final extension until the end of December 2012 was requested by the EA to *"allow the completion and dissemination of final PRAIS products"*¹⁹, as well as to complete administrative and financial closure activities. The substantive closure of the project was in August/September 2012 when the final communications activities called for in the work plan approved by PSC4 were completed.

123. The initial extension provided positive results, enabling good use of late arriving co-financing. The only detrimental effect of the latter two extensions was to give the impression of a lingering uncertainty to the completion of the project, and hence some confusion as to what activities were considered part of the PRAIS Project.

Project efficiency and timeliness were **Satisfactory**.

2.1.5 Review of Outcomes to Impacts

Project Outcomes

124. The Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) or "Theory of Change" seeks to analyse the pathway(s) from the immediate outcomes of the Project through to the ultimate impact - that is the Global Environmental Benefit. The approach asks that one steps back from the detail of Project Outputs, and immediate Outcomes in order to speculate on a pathway of events and socio-political changes that may occur in the years or even decades after the Project completion. There is, of course, no one unique correct conceptualisation. For the PRAIS Project we can see that the desired impact is not just the ability to assess performance of the implementation of the UNCCD, but to participate in the process of achieving the objectives of the Convention, that is *"to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa, through effective action at all levels supported by international cooperation and partnership arrangements, in the framework of an integrated approach..."*²⁰. It is perhaps stated better in the vision statement of the more recent 10 Year Strategic Plan [1] *"The aim for the future is to forge a global partnership to reverse and prevent desertification/land degradation and to mitigate the effects of drought in affected areas in order to support poverty reduction and environmental sustainability."*

125. The Global Environmental Benefit could therefore be expressed as "global reduction of Desertification Land Degradation and Drought (DLLD)". This ROtI analysis looks at the pathway from the Outputs and Outcomes of the PRAIS project through to the Impact and examines the logical chain of intermediate states and the drivers and assumptions needed to move the project outcomes to the ultimate impact, which may be years down the road.

¹⁸ PSC Meeting minutes and interview with Global Project Manager

¹⁹ Extension request letter of 11 July 2012

²⁰ from Article 2 of the Convention text.

126. It is convenient to summarize the 12 Outputs of the Project into 4 principal Outputs:
- (i) The design* of the Performance Review and Assessment of Implementation System (PRAIS) - consisting of the agreed harmonized indicators, the guidelines, templates, processes and procedures. (Combined Outputs 1.1-1.4)
 - (ii) Capacity-building of NFPs in how to use the PRAIS in national monitoring and assessment, and subsequent reporting of performance to the Convention. (Combined Outputs 1.5-1.6)
 - (iii) A baseline assessment of progress towards the Operational Objectives of the Convention using the indicator-based PRAIS - providing for the first time a reliable base of performance indicators harmonized across the Parties. (Combined Outputs 2.1-2.3)
 - (iv) A Web Portal for facilitating the submission of reports and providing a knowledge base for extracting analysis and synthesis - again for the first time, synthesis reports were prepared at the sub-regional, regional and global level. (Combined Outputs 3.1-3.3).

127. These four groups of outputs led logically to two major Immediate Outcomes:

- Countries gained the capacity to use the evidence-based indicators to measure and report performance in a consistent way.
- The baseline assessment and the PRAIS Portal led to the capacity to assess the performance of the UNCCD at the national, sub-regional, regional and global levels in a consistent and credible way, forming a knowledge base of baseline information that could be combined with investment flows and best practices to enable future planning of investments and actions.

128. This was recognized as only the beginning of a process that would create a "paradigm shift" (behavioural change towards evidence-based approaches to monitoring and assessment), and subsequently the availability of a knowledge base of scientifically rigorous, credible performance assessment data that could be combined with investment flows, best practices, and so on to enable integrated policy development and planning for SLM and combating DLDD. Because it is only the beginning, the UNCCD is dedicated to an **iterative process**. The UNCCD COP9 *"Requests the secretariat together with the Global Mechanism (GM) to use an iterative process to develop proposals for consideration by future sessions of the Conference of the Parties (COP), commencing with the tenth and eleventh sessions, in order to refine the set of performance and impact indicators and associated methodologies"*²¹ which will review the lessons learned after each reporting cycle to refine and closely define the indicators for scientific rigour, and improve data validation and quality management processes. This will lead through a sequence of intermediate states of ever increasing functionality of the Web Portal knowledge management system, and ever increasing quality of the data, until it can surely be said that the knowledge base is scientifically rigorous, credible, widely accepted, and other related adjectives.

Intermediate States and Drivers

129. This first intermediate state - "Credible science-based information on DLDD is widely available through a knowledge management system" - will be an important milestone on the pathway to the intended Impact. Moving from one intermediate state to another usually requires "drivers" and/or "assumptions" without which the transition may not occur. (Drivers can be influenced by the Project. Assumptions cannot, so those forces that are more than one step removed from the Project should naturally be considered Assumptions.)

* It is recognized that that the conceptual design of the PRAIS system as well as the definition of the indicators were developed through intergovernmental processes prior to the Project. "Design" here is used as shorthand for the steps needed to operationalize the concept.

²¹ COP9- Decision 13

130. The drivers needed to move from the immediate outcome to the first milestone intermediate state are additional resources for capacity-building of countries for adopting and strengthening data collection regimes and NAPs, and effort and resources in the continuing process of iterative improvement of the Portal, and the PRAIS process.

131. The next intermediate state sees the information base being **used** for informing and developing evidence-based policies and strategies. This will require organizational capacity-building particularly at the national and sub-regional level in order to effectively **use** the information for policy and planning purposes. In addition, in the spirit of the UNEP Medium-Term Strategy 2010-2013, collaborative mechanisms are needed for joining the UNCCD with related MEAs, related projects such as the LADA project, the collaborative science capacity-building of the Bali Strategy, and to country-driven initiatives.

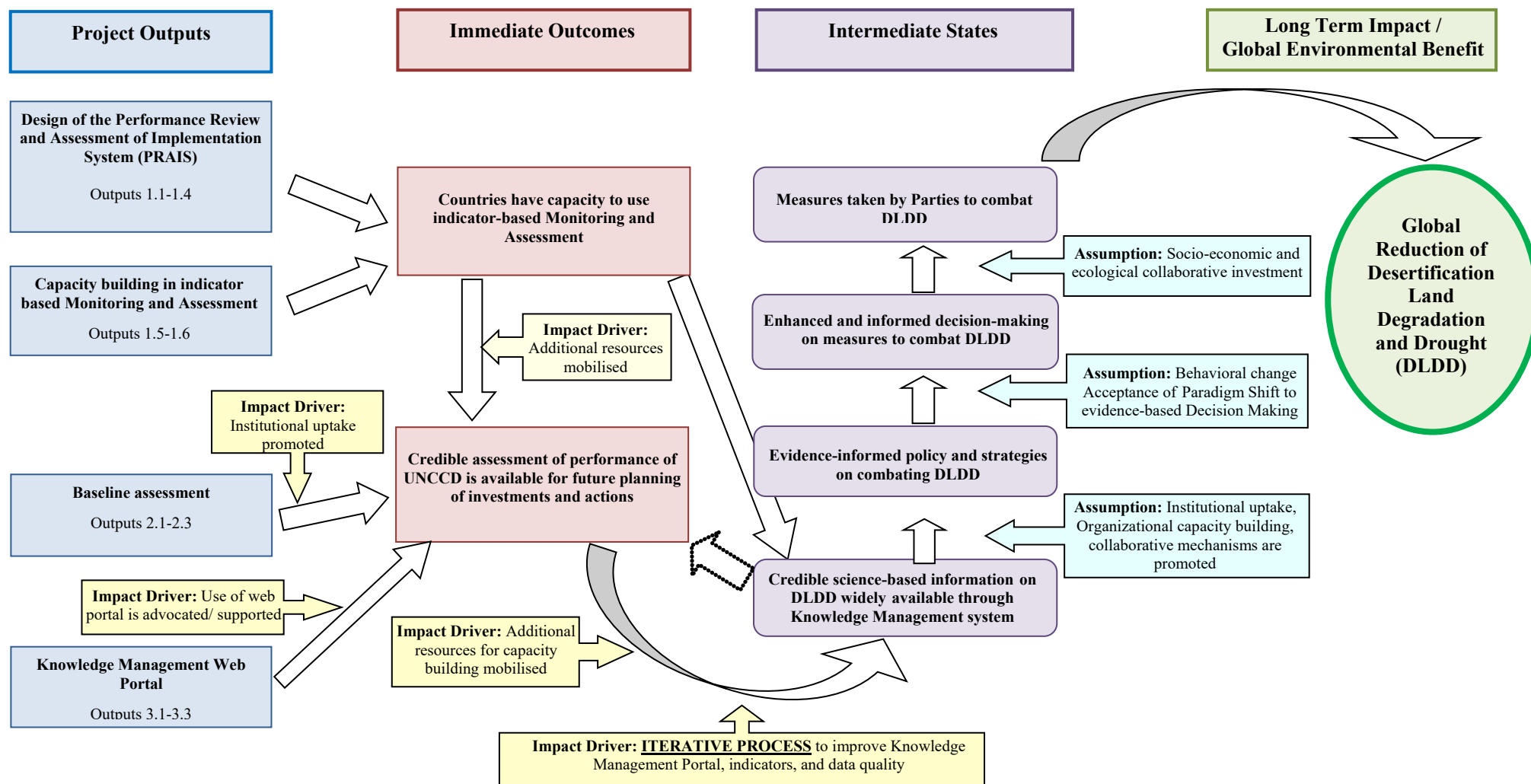
132. The next intermediate state sees an enhanced degree of informed decision-making, wherein decision-makers at all levels use evidence-based thinking in initiating measures for combating DLDD. That thinking requires a change of behaviour not only toward using indicator-based performance measures, but a paradigm that integrates socio-economic considerations of livelihoods and poverty alleviation, with food production, ecosystem management, and sustainable land management to use available investment flows optimally.

133. This advanced decision-making followed by collaborative (between social and environmental agencies and institutes) investment and action leads to the Global Environmental Benefit.

134. Figure 4 below graphically illustrates the Impact Pathway.

Figure 4: Impact Flow - Theory of Change for PRAIS Project

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Likelihood of progress toward intermediate states

135. At the completion of the Project, the Country Parties will have gained the capacity to use indicator-based monitoring and assessment for furthering NAPs to combat DLDD - gained through the capacity-building program of the PRAIS project and the first reporting cycle.

136. Secondly, parties will have **limited** access to the beginnings of a knowledge base of information on the performance (and increasingly on impacts) and investment flows for informed planning and interventions.

137. Achieving the first significant intermediate state of having **credible, science-based** information **widely available** through a knowledge management **portal**, requires an iterative process over a number of reporting cycles:

- to improve and refine the indicators and measurement methodologies, and data quality and validation, and
- to further develop the access and analysis functionality of the Portal, beyond that achieved by the Project.

138. The UNCCD is committed to this iterative process by COP9, Decision 13 under its permanent CRIC, and there are there are a number of processes commissioned to establish improved data validation and quality management.

139. As detailed in the Sustainability Section (2.2) below, there are potential barriers, both financial and socio-political, to sustained progress. The key required **impact drivers** are additional resources for capacity-building of Parties (in data gathering and quality assurance), and stable funding for the maintenance and improvement of the Portal, particularly to provide access and retrieval functionality for Parties.

140. The rating scale for "outcomes and progress towards intermediate states" for the ROTI analysis is described in detail in Annex 5 of the Terms of Reference for this terminal evaluation. (See full ToRs included as Annex 1 to this report).

Rating scale for Outcomes and Progress Towards Intermediate States²²

Outcome Rating

D: The project's intended outcomes were not delivered

C: The project's intended outcomes were delivered, but were not designed to feed into a continuing process after project funding

B: The project's intended outcomes were delivered, and were designed to feed into a continuing process, but with no prior allocation of responsibilities after project funding

A: The project's intended outcomes were delivered, and were designed to feed into a continuing process, with specific allocation of responsibilities after project funding.

Rating on progress toward Intermediate States

D: No measures taken to move towards intermediate states.

C: The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started, but have not produced results.

B: The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started and have produced results, which give no indication that they can progress towards the intended long term impact.

A: The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started and have produced results, which clearly indicate that they can progress towards the intended long term impact.

For the PRAIS project, Outcome Rating 'B' is exceeded, since the intended outcomes were delivered

²² The ROTI method (according to GEF) requires ratings for Outcomes achieved by the project and the progress made towards the 'Intermediate States' at the time of the evaluation. A project will end up with a two letter rating e.g. AB, CD, BB etc. The possible rating permutations are then translated onto the usual six point rating scale used in all UNEP project evaluations. For example, a project receiving an "AA" rating appears Likely to deliver impacts, while for a project receiving a "DD" this would seem Unlikely, due to low achievement in outcomes and the limited likelihood of achieving the intermediate states needed for eventual impact. (Refer to Annex 5 of the TOR, in Annex 1 of this report).

and there is **some** specific allocation of responsibilities after project funding - for instance commitment to the iterative process of improvement assigned to CRIC.

Similarly, the project has rating 'B' for progress towards Intermediate States, by providing **some** indication they can progress; for instance, work underway on improving verification procedures and adding impact indicators, but falls short somewhat of meeting the criterion for level A: "... which **clearly** indicate that they can progress towards the intended long term impact."

Hence a rating of "BB" which, according to the chart accompanying the rating scale²³, indicates that the probability of progressing to the intended long term impact should be rated as **Likely**.

141. Progressing to the subsequent intermediate stages is more speculative, and requires assumptions of institutional uptake and collaboration, along with a change of thinking (paradigm shift) to effectively make use of the capacity for enhanced decision making that scientifically sound integrated investment and performance data can offer. These assumptions are in concordance with the UNCCD vision, The Medium-Term Strategy of UNEP 2010-2013, the Bali Strategic Plan, GEF priorities, the Millennium Development Goals, as well as the broader concerns of FAO and multinational donors with ecosystem management, SLM, food security, poverty alleviation, and climate change. Provided the UNCCD can get past the first hurdle to the first intermediate state of achieving a truly credible and accessible knowledge base, this further progress would seem to deserve a **Moderately Likely** rating.

2.2 Sustainability and Catalytic Role

2.2.1 Sustainability

(a) Financial Resources

142. There was considerable anticipation of an immediate follow-on project or "PRAIS II" that would continue the capacity-building and support for incremental improvement of PRAIS, for instance in implementing the impact indicators. There were some hints of this in the original Prodoc, and many RCs agreed to participate on the expectation of funded follow-on activities. GEF eligible Parties too, expected further funding for reporting and NAP alignment. While some RCs have indicated a willingness to continue to be involved on a volunteer self-funded basis, others feel they cannot. The loss of momentum which had been built through the Reference Centre process is unfortunate, and may affect short term progress and long term sustainability.

143. There are indications that the proportion of reports submitted (submission in progress as this report is being prepared) to the 2012 cycle is considerably lower than in 2010. There are a number of factors that may be contributing to this, including the added impact indicators which require more complex national data collection, time limitations for submission, the coincidence of the CBD COP in the same time period, and reduced or late-in-coming funding support for reporting. However, the lack of capacity-building sessions and sub-regional support through the RCs (or equivalent) would certainly seem to be a major factor.

144. Currently the Portal is supported by one person funded by a donor. The Portal technology will become increasingly complex, and ensuring its technical sustainability requires adequate stable core funding for human resources and technology to operate, maintain and continuously **improve** the Portal.

145. On the other hand the PRAIS process is central to the fundamental principles of the UNCCD 10-yr Strategic Plan, so there is little doubt that core funding will continue for the incremental improvement of the functionality of the Portal. The pace of improvement in the quality, completeness and usefulness of the inputs from the Parties will depend on funding for continued capacity-building for reporting, alignment of NAPs and adjustment of national data collection regimes to indicator-based approaches. Funding for sub-regional mechanisms of support and capacity-building will be essential if

²³ Table 2 in Annex 5 of the ToR (Annex 1 to this TE)

momentum is not to be lost. The next few reporting cycles will be crucial to establishing long-term sustainability.

146. On the positive side, there are already underway, funded from various sources, a number of initiatives that parallel and support the incremental process, such as:

- a GEF LD EA "Umbrella Project" i.e. "Support to GEF Eligible Parties for Alignment of National Action Programs and Reporting Process under UNCCD", to assist countries in their report to the 2012 reporting and review process, and within this assistance from UNEP-WCMC (as well as the Secretariat and the GM) to provide a 'Helpdesk' on the impact indicators
- the Secretariat has concluded an agreement with FAO Statistics Division for the analysis of 2012 data and data quality improvements
- a Pilot Study on the feasibility of implementation of the 11 Impact Indicators which will add capacity to relate investment flows to impacts [11].

Synergistically, the UNEP/GEF Project "Facilitating National Reporting to the Rio Conventions" (FNR-Rio), also executed by UNEP-WCMC, is pilot testing integrated approaches to national reporting for the CBD, UNCCD and UNFCCC in least developed countries and small island developing states, with a particular focus on cooperation between the focal points, departments and agencies involved with the three conventions and the management of data and information underlying reporting.

Financial sustainability is rated as **Likely**.

(b) Socio-political Sustainability

147. There is apparent strong Party buy-in to the concept of evidence-based M&E demonstrated by the commitment through COP to the 10 Year Strategy Plan, the very strong response to the 2010 reporting cycle, and signs of willingness to adapt NAPs and national data gathering regimes to embrace this approach (through various types of donor-supported projects).

148. National institutional capacity in evidence-based assessment was increased during the Project which will form a base for further capacity-building in integrated SLM planning and intervention. Developed Country Parties (DCPs) now have an objective baseline reference for measuring national progress, and some limited data concerning the sub-regional and regional situations.

149. The Parties however are just beginning to adapt to the "paradigm shift" and continued socio-political support will require some demonstrable **benefits** from the process - for instance, knowledge sharing derived from the contents of the PRAIS Portal - which then can be applied nationally for better planning, and interventions for SLM and DDL, or to form partnerships with countries with similar needs and conditions. As it stands at the moment, there are no tools for parties to extract information such as best practices, from the collection of submitted reports. There is a strong need for an access interface, including tools for data analysis, synthesis and integration. (The current availability of the reports as read-only PDF files is not adequate.) In spite of Parties' commitment to, or acceptance of, the Strategy and its implications, there may still be a traditional resistance to sharing of information for fear that it may be misused, for instance in country to country comparisons. Parties must be convinced that the benefits of sharing outweigh the possible downside, and that protections will be in place for sensitive and strategic information.

150. Several Country Parties²⁴ have also pointed out that the indicator based reports are not sufficient for decision makers and national audiences. Politically they need accompanying narrative to explain the national significance of the indicators and the reasons for trends and the connections to

²⁴ For instance in the LAC - see Annex 7

proposed actions. Therefore they would like to have the ability to add an executive summary, or the like, to the formulaic template reports in order to get more buy-in from civil society. For example, Ecuador has decided to prepare and publish a narrative report of the 2012 cycle, as India did in 2010, since the template report is not adequate for local stakeholders and decision makers.

Socio-political sustainability is rated as **Moderately Likely**.

(c) Institutional Framework

151. Through the pragmatic Reference Centre process, the PRAIS Project significantly increased and strengthened sub-regional linkages between institutions dealing with SLM which will have continuing benefit after the project. The regional meetings were a very positive catalyst for networking and knowledge exchange among countries. It is clear that some sort of sub-regional network of supportive institutions is vital to on-going capacity-building and fostering sub-regional cooperation in data gathering and planning for SLM. Effort must be made to foster this type of cooperation before the momentum is lost.

152. Country Parties also face challenges in their own internal institutional arrangements. The span of data gathering required across the UNCCD Indicators is broad and cuts across traditional boundaries of national governance organizations, demanding as it does inputs from socio-economic ministries (health, income status, livelihood, productivity), scientific and resource sectors (agriculture, water, soil, forestry, biodiversity), and legal sectors (land tenure, land use regulation). The PRAIS process was again a catalyst to mobilize expertise, stakeholders and information within the countries. However, several countries have stated difficulties in sharing information between sectors, and reducing these barriers may take time and innovation.

153. The UNCCD is dedicated to an incremental approach [10] that will regularly re-examine progress towards improving the assessment of implementation, through a permanent body of the Convention, the CRIC. This means that regular review and implementation of lessons-learned feeding back into strengthening the Portal and PRAIS process will have mainstream attention. As well, the UNCCD is an enthusiastic participant in the Joint Liaison Group for the Rio Conventions (with UNFCCC and CBD) that is examining ways of harmonizing their reporting requirements.

154. Recently, the UNEP-WCMC, one of the foremost centres of expertise in harmonisation of reporting of MEAs, has signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) with the UNCCD. The MoC calls for informal annual work planning to identify specific proposals for collaboration and undertake joint fundraising with relevant partners. Some focus areas are capacity development to enable UNCCD Parties to effectively deliver, monitor and report on the implementation of the Convention, and analysis and documentation of data and other scientific evidence to support effective policy making in support of The Strategy.

Institutional framework sustainability is rated as **Moderately Likely**.

(d) Environmental Sustainability

155. One of the principal objectives of the UNCCD is to mitigate the effects of drought, and limit or reverse land-degradation. There is little doubt that climate change is likely to contribute to more frequent and prolonged droughts, and increased threats of land degradation. The effect on particular countries and regions may vary widely, and overall could impact negatively on the long term benefits of the Project by simply overwhelming efforts to combat DLDD. However, these threats reinforce the need for evidence-based assessment and an integrated global approach to SLM, that unifies three Rio Conventions in efficiently applying investment flows. Hence a growing impetus and urgency to moving forward with the outcomes of PRAIS and related processes.

Environmental sustainability of the PRAIS project is therefore rated as **Likely**.

2.2.2 Catalytic Role and Replication

(a) Catalytic Role

156. This is clearly an innovative and forward thinking project. It is the first major MEA to have on-line reporting, **and** to adopt evidence-based measurable indicators of performance and impact. Its whole intent is to create a "paradigm shift" - that is, *to catalyse a behavioural change* in assessment monitoring and management systems. This is a long overdue behavioural change and will take time - MEAs have been talking about both "harmonisation" of reporting between conventions, and considering how to measure progress toward the implementation of MEAs for at least two decades, and still most are mired in measuring process or administrative progress - how many Parties, how many actually submit reports, etc - against vaguely defined and non-standardized objectives with no baseline and little or no comparability.

157. The project has provided **incentives** through providing the capacity to effectively plan interventions and measure their impact and hence to propose efficient and effective intervention strategies (NAPs) that will attract increased donor investment.

158. There is adequate evidence that this has contributed to **institutional strengthening** both nationally and sub-regionally. Particularly the Training-of-Trainers program strengthened the sub-regional RCs in their understanding of evidence-based assessment, and integrated approaches to SLM, and what distinct role the institution can contribute. (See Annex 7 for examples). These changes are just beginning, but the national uptake of adaptation NAPs to integrate the indicator approach is positive and clear.

159. While it seems that expected follow-on financing for a PRAIS-II did not materialize, a number of related follow-on projects of **catalysed funding** are on-going, as noted in section 2.2.1 above. Certainly the uptake of evidence-based approaches to optimising investment flows, and measuring land degradation leading to SLM is improving, and this is encouraging to donors.

160. In terms of creating or discovering "**champions**" to catalyse change, the sub-regional RCs of this Project have supported and encouraged the change, and without doubt, were instrumental in achieving the results of this project (See Section 2.1.2 Component 1), although it is clearly the UNCCD itself that is the principal catalyst through its 10 yr Strategic Plan. The FNR-Rio project in which the UNCCD participates, may serve to spread the PRAIS approach through to the other related Conventions.

(b) Replication

161. Perhaps unusually, this Project started at the global scale, rather than with a pilot project in a few countries followed by broadening replication after initial findings and lessons learned. In this Project, the lessons learned are fed back to iteratively improve and ultimately reach the intended impact. There is broad replication potential for other MEAs to adopt the same course, starting with the other Rio Conventions. This is already happening through the Joint Liaison Group, and other MEAs are following the progress of PRAIS with interest. Through UNEP-WCMC and other agencies there is potential to seek integration and harmonization with other statistical and indicator-based programs such as FAO, OECD, the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership, the MDGs, and the UN Statistical Office. Continued successful improvement and demonstrated sustainability of the PRAIS Portal and build-up of a sequential knowledge base for tracking progress will greatly influence the extent to which this pioneering project is adopted and/or replicated by other MEAs.

162. Overall the PRAIS concept is ideal for adoption of both the concepts and techniques by other MEAs, and there is much potential for synergies and harmonization of M&A approaches at national, sub-regional, regional and global levels.

The catalytic role and replicability of this Project is rated **Highly Satisfactory**.

2.3 Processes Affecting Attainment of Project Results

2.3.1 Preparation and Readiness

163. The Project design was, in general, practical, logical and comprehensive (see Annex 8 for a detailed assessment of the Project design). The project context was well researched and described, and project management and control structures more than adequate. The Project Components as defined in the original Prodoc, and subsequently modified Logframe, were clear and realistic, with some exceptions:

- In retrospect, the timeframe proposed for the development of the online portal was unrealistically short having been governed by Convention process deadlines, and may have adversely affected the project's ability to complete its development and deployment within the allocated timeframe. This concern was recognized in the Project Inception, and required the initial focus of Portal development to be entirely on report submission functions, postponing any consideration of the retrieval and analysis functions until later in the Project.²⁵
- The specification of the expected outputs and outcomes of Component 3 with regard to knowledge management were rather vague, for example Outcome 3.2 was defined as "Web-site portal developed at national or sub-regional level for storage and retrieval of information on baseline data, indicators, reporting guidelines and tools, best practices, and lessons learned". This was open-ended with regard to what was meant by "retrieval" by or through the Portal, and may have contributed to an uncertain and/or incomplete result.

164. Country Parties were at varying degrees of technological and socio-political readiness and this was taken into account by the project plan, especially with the design of the capacity-building program through the training-of-trainers at the sub-regional workshops, customized to the level of readiness of the participating Country Parties²⁶.

165. The inclusion of the UNCCD Secretariat and the GM as executing partners was natural and logical and the respective roles of all partners were well defined in the Prodoc and confirmed in the project's Inception Report. An important preparation step early in the project was the establishment of partnership arrangements with the RCs. These agreements, with clearly specified terms of reference, ensured effective delivery of their outputs and services.

166. The Executing Agency, UNEP-WCMC was ideally suited and qualified for the project, and hence exceptionally pre-prepared to conduct the project. UNEP-WCMC have long experience and background knowledge with many MEAs, with dryland issues and SLM, as well as the requirements and policies of UNEP and GEF, **and** had on-going experience with the UNCCD, including an MoC. This meant short preparation times to begin effective project operations, in fact it should be noted that the EA was so well prepared that they began the project with forward self-funding **before** formal approval was granted, due to concerns about the tight timeframe. The history of involvement of UNEP-WCMC in decades of related projects inevitably ensured the incorporation of relevant past lessons into the project plan, and execution (such as experiences with on-line reporting to other conventions, described in the Prodoc).

Preparation and readiness was **Highly Satisfactory**

2.3.2 Implementation approach and adaptive management

167. The project management structure (fig 2, section 1.2.3) was conventional, solid, and appropriate to the project.

²⁵ Project Inception Report and 1st PRC Meeting

²⁶Evidence, for example, from RC experiences in the LAC - Annex 7

168. The Project Steering Committee (PSC) was co-chaired by senior level officers from UNCCD and UNEP. The first PSC meeting was in January 2010 - before the Project was officially approved, and served to decide on immediate priorities necessitated by the short time frame before the reporting requirement for CRIC 9 in November, and hence necessary adjustments to the Component outputs and broad schedule, leading to the Inception Workshop.²⁷ That meeting also served to clarify roles and ensure that the membership was at an appropriate high (policy) level, and determine that the Technical Advisory Group should be on an ad-hoc basis depending on the technical issues as they arose. The PSC met 3 more times during the Project, the second meeting particularly focused on successfully resolving what should have been a technical issue in the Portal development that had potential to escalate. Throughout the Project the PSC achieved the correct level of intervention at the policy level without interfering with operational project implementation. Examples include discussing needs for improved data quality and validation, and redirecting some resources to examine these issues²⁸, and recommending project no-cost extensions while prioritising the deployment of remaining funds during the project extensions²⁹.

169. The EA project management team and the Partners interacted frequently and positively in a spirit of full cooperation, especially as a result of the 2nd PSC³⁰. The project management team of the EA (UNEP-WCMC) consisting of the Global Project Manager and a group of experienced professionals with a range of expertise in Convention reporting and governance, environmental indicators, information management, SLM and dry land issues, was excellently qualified, organized and controlled, with good support from a Project Coordination Unit, financial officer, and a strong IT Unit. As well, the Secretariat and the GM had a high responsibility for a partnership role in project implementation through the direct provision of staff time, and the management of resources from the EC.

170. Adaptable management was shown as the project progressed, for example, to move resources determined to be redundant onto more urgent matters, particularly as co-financing was offered or realized. Signs of adaptive management started early by the commencement of the project before official approval, in mid-project where the decision was made³¹ to redirect funds allocated to a Resource Mobilization Expert judged to be no longer required, and late in the Project, to effectively utilize late EC co-financing to support the development of the analytical module of the Portal within a "no-cost" extension of the Project³².

171. As documented elsewhere in this report (Section 2.1.1 and 2.1.2), the approach of using the RCs to disseminate sub-regional capacity-building and technical back-stopping was very successful, almost surely due to the clear terms of reference and formal agreements with these institutions (strongly recommended by the 1st PSC, and negotiated by the EA project team).

Overall the implementation approach and adaptive management was **Highly Satisfactory**

2.3.3 Stakeholder participation and awareness

172. The evaluation finds that stakeholder participation was high throughout the project. Key partners were very closely involved through the project management structure, joint participation in events (such as CRIC and COP) and frequent informal contact and meetings. Collaboration between

²⁷ Minutes of the 1st PSC - January 2010

²⁸ Minutes of 3rd PSC - February 2011

²⁹ Minutes of the 4th PSC - December 2011

³⁰ Minutes of 2nd PSC, and interviews with EA and UNCCD Secretariat

³¹ Minutes of 2nd PSC May 2010

³² Minutes of 3rd and 4th PSC

partners throughout the Project was generally very good, as was needed to meet short timelines, although some tensions between the UNCCD Secretariat and the GM were noted.³³

173. Excellent communication materials were prepared and widely distributed through a range of methods, aimed at stakeholders and the general public. Following from the project communications strategy developed for CRIC9 and updated for COP10, project outcomes and lessons were communicated at COP10, including a series of three briefing papers highlighting the Project's "Process", "Results" and "Lessons" [19], five PRAIS indicator fact sheets available in all UN languages, the PRAIS brochure available in six UN languages and translated into Korean (COP10 host country), and two sets of posters (one poster per operational objective). A PRAIS video was showcased at the UNEP stand in English, French and Spanish. The PRAIS project, its outcomes and lessons were introduced to the specialized press at a media briefing.

174. Other PRAIS communication elements prepared on the road to COP10 included an online "dashboard" illustrating the progress towards the targets for a set of six performance indicators based on preliminary analyses available in official CRIC documents, and a world map locating the 14 PRAIS regional and sub-regional RCs. The material developed for these products was designed to be used by numerous outlets and media.

175. In July 2011, to reach a scientific audience, the project team made a poster presentation [16] on the PRAIS system at a European Science Foundation conference on "Dryland ecosystem functioning and resilience".

176. The UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in June 2012 presented another opportunity to enhance the dissemination of the project outputs. Lessons learned and experiences were consolidated and PRAIS communication materials prepared for dissemination at Rio+20. These included branded USB sticks containing a full set of communication products (video, brochure, fact sheets and briefing papers) in different languages and a second video was prepared and made available for Land Day focusing on the outcomes of the first round of reporting using PRAIS and the introduction of Impact Indicators into PRAIS from 2012.

177. A UNCCD "compendium" has been produced and will be published shortly. This is a comprehensive summary of the UNCCD progress towards effective implementation through better evidence- and results-based decision making, and aims to be a one-stop resource on this matter for a broad audience of Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD) managers and stakeholders. It incorporates initiatives beyond PRAIS but highlights the PRAIS project prominently in terms of the contribution in moving the Convention further towards evidence- and results-based management. It is planned for publication as UNEP-WCMC Biodiversity Series no. 34 with co-funding from Spain and the EC³⁴.

178. In addition to the dissemination of these materials, the means of engagement of the Country Parties was through the Sub-regional RCs and the associated training and technical support, a process that in most cases was very successful.³⁵

179. The sum of these visibility and communication efforts was very effective in raising awareness and interest in the concept and processes of evidence-based assessment and invited involvement with other global assessment processes, for example: with additional co-financing, the Executing Agency developed an input into the fifth Global Environment Outlook (GEO-5), a UNEP-led consultative, participatory process that builds capacity for conducting integrated environmental assessments. The input on PRAIS appears in Chapter 3, "Land" and comprises the main drylands aspect of the chapter.

³³ Minutes of Pre-Meeting to PSC2 May 2010

³⁴ Interview with UNEP-WCMC Project Manager.

³⁵ RC Workshop reports and Interviews with RCs.

The rigorous assessment process makes GEO products scientifically credible and policy relevant - providing information to support environmental management and policy development.

Stakeholder participation and awareness was **Highly Satisfactory**

2.3.4 Country ownership and driven-ness

180. The UNCCD is country-driven through its Parties; the Conference of the Parties has committed itself to the 10 Year Strategic Plan - fundamental to ensuring that the Convention is relevant and proceeds into the future successfully combating DLDD.

181. Consequent to this, as noted in section 2.1.1 above, there is strong country buy-in to the concept of evidence-based M&E evidenced not only by their commitment, through the COP to the Strategy, but as well by the very strong response to the 2010 reporting cycle, and signs of willingness to adapt NAPs and national data gathering regimes to embrace this approach (aided by various types of donor-supported projects). The UNCCD PRAIS project provided support at a global level to the participating countries (a total of 119) through RCs (a total of 14 institutions) - as opposed to provision of support at country-level. The principal means of engagement, therefore, of the Country Parties was through the sub-regional RCs and the associated training and technical support, and through GEF funding for assisting in reporting and NAP alignment (separate from the PRAIS Project). In that sense therefore the Project was not specifically country-driven, although the Country Parties to the Convention are the principal beneficiaries.

182. As outlined in section 2.3.3 comprehensive communication dissemination and the explicit solicitation of lessons-learned feedback from the NFPs effectively established a good sense of ownership and desire to have the project succeed. All of the 119 country Parties that submitted reports in 2010 invested national resources to the process, particularly for data gathering and consolidation, and strived to meet the reporting deadlines. While it is not possible to know how widespread it was, based on interviews with NFPs and RCs³⁶ it is clear that parties also committed additional resources into improved domestic processes such as national working groups and committees, and adjustments to NAPs, demonstrating commitment to the PRAIS process in the long term.

Country ownership developed during the project was **Satisfactory**

2.3.5 Financial Planning and Management

183. The budget by Project Component and UNEP budget lines was established in the Prodoc and subsequently adjusted, first by the project Inception Report, and then subsequently through the PSC as required. Throughout the Project the expenditures were monitored and controlled carefully.

184. The Evaluation had access to all financial reports of the Project and had demonstrations and explanations of the financial M&E within the Executing Agency on-site through the UNEP-WCMC Project Coordination Unit. At the working level there was verified weekly recording of staff time and monthly internal project level reporting, broken down by Component and line item.

185. UNEP-WCMC are very familiar with the requirements of monitoring and reporting to UNEP and GEF, and these were followed strictly. Discussions with the UNEP Fund Officer and GEF Coordination Office confirmed that all required reports were submitted on time and in the correct format, and no instances of waste or inefficiency were noted. In addition all UNEP-WCMC accounts are subject to external independent audit.

186. Funding to RCs was through well defined SSGAs (available to the Evaluation Team), with very specific terms of reference and reporting requirements. Required reports from the RCs were

³⁶ For example Costa Rica and Chile.

closely monitored by UNEP-WCMC. All unused funds were returned to the Project³⁷. The RCs were made aware that their reports could be subject to audit, but the EA found not reason to invoke this.

187. All financial reports were linked to project activities and progress, and were fully transparent. All progress reports and PSC meetings were accompanied by financial status updates. PSC meeting made or confirmed decisions as to any significant re-allocation of funds. (for example the 3rd PSC confirmed the transfer of some EC co-financing to UNEP-WCMC to cover SSGA costs, and the 4th PSC confirmed the allocation of small amounts of remaining funds to support communications/visibility and dissemination activities, as well as web portal data management).

188. Co-financing, much of it in-kind, was of major significance to the Project and was well documented by the EA Project Coordination Unit, with the assistance of the PSC. The Table in Annex 4, provided by UNEP-WCMC summarizes the co-financing. There was a consensus amongst those interviewed at UNCCD Secretariat, the EA and the UNEP Fund Management Office that the co-financing on this Project was more than usually relevant, that is, directed to core project outputs (as opposed to nominal co-financing that serves vaguely parallel projects and services).

The financial planning and management of the Project was **Highly Satisfactory**

2.3.6 UNEP Supervision and Backstopping

189. UNEP supervision was exercised through the Task Manager, the GEF Coordination Office, and the UNEP Fund Management Office. The Task Manager co-chaired the Project Steering Committee (with UNCCD Secretariat), with great positive effect on the Project. The UNEP Task Manager has also been particularly lauded for his tireless support for the project from assisting with Prodoc development through to re-enforcing communication efforts and project visibility at COPs and other events.³⁸ In his role as co-chair of the PSC (and on other occasions), he is also attributed with diplomatically defusing tensions that arose from time to time between the UNCCD Secretariat and the GM.³⁹

190. The UNEP-WCMC team has also indicated excellent support from the Division of GEF Coordination, where more senior support or guidance was needed, as the respect they had in the drylands community made their interventions in the project where mediation was required very effective.⁴⁰

191. The PIRs were thorough, detailed, outcome-oriented and factually correct, with the apparent exception of one item in Output 3.2 that listed in PIR_FY12 as completed "Analytical module of PRAIS portal developed (by the Secretariat and informed by IT Task Force)". This, and the related "Public Interface" were apparently not fully completed during the Project. Otherwise, reporting ratings, including those of risk, were fair and reasonable.

UNEP Supervision and Backstopping was **Highly Satisfactory**.

2.3.7 Monitoring and Evaluation

192. The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan as contained in the Prodoc and Inception Report [2] indicates compliance with UNEP standard monitoring, reporting and evaluation processes and procedures. It called for three Project Steering Committee meetings and as well as a Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE). Specific costs were identified for the Terminal Evaluation. All other costs including the MTE were incorporated into the project budget. At the first PSC Meeting, proposed by

³⁷ Confirmed by the UNEP-WCMC Project Coordination Office.

³⁸ Interviews with EA project team.

³⁹ See particularly the informal pre-meeting to the 2nd PSC Meeting -May 2010.

⁴⁰ Interviews and email with the Global Project Manager

the UNEP Task Manager, it was agreed to delete the MTE from the plan, citing the short time span of the Project.

193. The plan engendered a relatively dense and thorough process that involved:

Half-Yearly reports of which 3 were issued:

- January to June 2010
- July to December 2010
- July to December 2011

Project Implementation Review (PIR) reports of which 2 were issued:

- January 2010 to June 2011 (this report also served as the half-yearly report ending June 2011)
- July 2011 to June 2012

In addition there were less formal updates on progress prepared for each PSC meeting - of which there were 4:

- PSC1 January 2010
- PSC2 May 2010
- PSC3 February 2011
- PSC4 December 2011

A project Final Report was also prepared in October 2012.

194. Each of the Half-Yearly reports listed M&E activities for the period which included project team planning and M&E meetings held during various events, planned and ad-hoc Project team teleconferences, monthly progress reports from the RCs, and occasional specialized progress reports such as one on the Reference Centres of September 2010. [17]

195. The Logframe included "SMART" indicators for each expected outcome as well as baseline statements and end-of-project targets. In general these were well described, although a few were a bit weak on the measurable aspect. The PIR reports referred to the SMART indicators in assessing progress and they were used by the PSC to influence their actions and decisions on priority setting and fund reallocation.⁴¹

196. The lack of a Mid-Term Evaluation is not seen as important, since the first PIR which covered the start of project until end of June 2010 effectively replaced it, and was acted upon by the EA project team,⁴² and integrated into the deliberations of the 4th PSC Meeting.

197. Overall the evaluation finds that the Project was very well monitored and controlled. One lapse can be identified towards the end of the project - the lack of M&E of the IT Task Force work on the Analytic Module following the 4th PSC. At that meeting a workplan for 2012 was agreed and the IT Task Force was to "come up with a workplan for the analytical framework and public interface to be on line by the end of February" (2012).⁴³ Although the PSC agreed to continue until the end of the Project, no further meeting was held and there was no record of a review of a workplan from the IT Task Force, or monitoring of progress.

198. This last-minute omission obviates against an otherwise Highly Satisfactory evaluation rating.

Monitoring and Evaluation was **Satisfactory**

⁴¹ See for example, the 3rd PSC Meeting - February 2011

⁴² Interview with Global Project Manager.

⁴³ Minutes 4th PSC - December 2011.

2.4 Complementarity with the UNEP Strategy and Programmes

2.4.1 Linkage to UNEP's Expected Accomplishments

199. The UNEP Medium Term Strategy 2010-2013 identifies 6 cross-cutting thematic priorities. The PRAIS project has demonstrable links and expected outcomes that contribute to 3 of them:

- Thematic Priority - Climate Change:

Expected accomplishment a) *That adaptation planning, financing and cost-effective preventative actions are increasingly incorporated into national development processes that are supported by scientific information, integrated climate impact assessments and local climate data*

... is clearly supported by the PRAIS project goals of having credible and scientifically rigorous indicator-based assessment connected to investment flows and incorporated into NAPs

Expected Accomplishment d) *That increased carbon sequestration occurs through improved land use, reduced deforestation and reduced land degradation;*

...aligns with UNCCD goal of combating DLDD.

- Thematic Priority - Ecosystem Management:

Expected accomplishment (a) *That countries and regions increasingly integrate an ecosystem management approach into development and planning processes;*

(b) That countries and regions have capacity to utilize ecosystem management tools; and

(c) That countries and regions begin to realign their environmental programmes and financing to address degradation of selected priority ecosystem services.

... all align with UNCCD and PRAIS in enabling assessments to be linked to investment, planning and ecosystem conditions.

- Thematic Priority - Environmental Governance:

Expected Accomplishment a) *That the United Nations system demonstrates increasing coherence in international decision-making processes related to the environment, including those under multilateral environmental agreements;*

... links with PRAIS approach of having agreed standardized indicators and increasing harmonization with other agencies such as FAO and other related MEAs.

2.4.2 Alignment with the Bali Strategic Plan

200. The Bali Strategic Plan on Technology Support and Capacity-building, emphasizes the significance of collaborative efforts to build developing countries' capacity to implement environmental conventions. Using modern technology, a system of interoperable information among the biodiversity-related agreements offers unique chances to enhance MEA implementation if supported by capacity-building efforts for developing countries. It is expected that the governing bodies of the Agreements involved will recognize the value of the knowledge management work, including the role for Parties to test and use its outputs. This should support the value of the knowledge management work for strengthening the capacity of Secretariats such as UNCCD and, ultimately, the countries involved with managing natural resources.

2.4.3 South-South Cooperation

201. The sub-regionally organized capacity-building of the PRAIS project has facilitated and encouraged south-south cooperation. Many of the RCs (already interacting sub-regionally) found opportunities for additional and augmented collaboration, both within and beyond the UNCCD context.⁴⁴ In addition Country Parties were introduced to the capabilities of such institutions and are now more likely to join in cooperative initiatives in SLM.

Complementarity was **Highly Satisfactory**

⁴⁴ Interviews at IGAD in Nairobi, and in the LAC (Annex7)

2.5 Summary of Evaluation Ratings

Table 3: Summary Evaluation Ratings

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
Attainment of project objectives and results	The Project generally achieved its intended objectives and results.	S
Achievement of Outputs and Activities	Most outputs achieved very well, but the failure to implement data access and retrieval functions in the Portal is considered a significant shortfall of Component 3.	MS
Effectiveness	Outcomes mainly achieved, but data quality issues currently hamper credibility of assessments, and current Portal lacks tools for Parties to share knowledge.	S
Relevance	In the mainstream of relevance	HS
Efficiency	An efficient and well managed project	S
Sustainability of Project Outcomes		ML
Financial	There is a current hesitation in financial support to Parties for reporting, and for associated capacity-building - both of which will be needed over the next few cycles of reporting . Stable on-going funding for the Portal technology is required.	L
Socio-Political	Country uptake is reasonably good so far, but sustainability depends of seeing net benefits from the reporting Portal through incremental increases in knowledge sharing functionality	ML
Institutional Framework	There is no doubt the institutional framework of the UNCCD will continue, and capacity of national and sub-regional institutions has been enhanced by the project. Confirming some form of sub-regional networking to continue from the RCs would be valuable for long term sustainability	ML
Environmental	Climate change may cause threats that overwhelm efforts at combating DLDD, however, this may provide impetus and urgency to move forward with integrated global approaches to SLM	L
Catalytic Role	The Project has catalyzed national and sub-regional institutional and behavioral change. On the global level it has catalyzed interest in improvements and harmonisation of reporting regimes of other MEAs including the Rio conventions.	HS
Preparation and Readiness	A well prepared project with clearly defined objectives and with consideration of variable levels of readiness of Parties.	HS
Implementation approach	Good management structure and partnership arrangements. Management flexible and adaptive when needed.	HS

Stakeholder Participation and awareness	Stakeholder participation high throughout the project. Excellent and useful communication materials widely disseminated.	HS
Country ownership and driven-ness	Strong country buy-in to the principles of The Strategy. Project delivery mainly through sub-regional institutions, so not strictly country-driven	S
Financial planning and management	Very well planned and controlled	HS
Monitoring and Evaluation	M&E very thorough and well structured. Lack of mid-term evaluation considered unimportant given short duration, but lapse in oversight by PSC near end of Project regarding IT Task Force.	S
UNEP Supervision and backstopping	Full and appropriate participation.	HS
Complementarity with UNEP strategy and Programmes	Fully aligned	HS

3 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Conclusions

202. **Conclusion 1:** The PRAIS Project was directly in response to the UNCCD's 10 Year Strategic Plan and therefore of central relevance to achieving the strategic and operational objectives of the Convention by creating an on-going consistent, evidence-based means of assessing performance that will be of fundamental value to all stakeholders, and hence centrally relevant to the programmes and objectives of UNEP and GEF, in drylands, Sustainable Land Management, and DLDD. (Sec 2.1.3 and 2.4).

203. **Conclusion 2:** It is clear that the "paradigm shift" towards evidence-based monitoring and assessment has started to occur, although it will be a gradual process for it to be accepted and integrated into thinking (and hence planning) by all nations and at all levels. While there are obstacles, there is no suggestion of abandoning indicator-based reporting to return to non-comparable narrative qualitative approaches. The PRAIS project built the basis of a knowledge management system. However, it will be necessary to engage in a long-term and sustained effort to advance from the current level of information gathering into a full system of knowledge creation, retrieval, sharing and application. (Sec 2.1.2 para 86-90, 96-99)

204. **Conclusion 3:** Despite challenges of tight time frames, the reality of a global scope of parties with widely varying capacity, and complex relationships between partners, the PRAIS Project was largely successful in achieving planned outputs and positive outcomes. (Sec 2.1.1 and 2.1.2)

205. **Conclusion 4:** The PRAIS portal was successfully implemented for on-line input of systematic and comparable information of national reports providing an initial baseline of the status of the implementation of the Convention against the Strategic Plan Performance Indicators. As a consequence, for the first time in its history, the UNCCD will be able to count on information that is objective, quantifiable and increasingly comparable across countries. Preliminary analysis of the baseline reporting at the global, regional and sub-regional level has been successful, identifying trends and critical priority actions under each operational objective of the Strategy. (Sec 2.1.1 para 60-65, Sec 2.1.2 para 91-95)

206. **Conclusion 5:** There has been a significant enhancement of national capacities to conduct indicator-based assessment, to report progress against comparable and harmonized indicators, and to establish systematic national monitoring and assessment systems to inform UNCCD reporting, and for improved knowledge management. This increased capacity was reflected in a very high compliance rate amongst Affected Country Parties, contributing to the value of the baseline synthesis and accompanying synthesis of sub-regional, regional and global levels. (Sec 2.1.1 para 55-59, Sec 2.1.2 para 86-90)

207. **Conclusion 6:** The sub-regional "Reference Centre" approach for delivering capacity-building and technical support built a global partnership of 14 regional and sub-regional institutions in support of the reporting process, including delivery of capacity-building and technical assistance in the fulfilment of the new UNCCD reporting requirements to all affected Country Parties. At the national level, this has translated into the promotion of regional and south-south cooperation, and appreciation of available sub-regional institutional expertise. Considerable momentum was built during this process and there is enthusiasm amongst some sub-regional institutions to continue to be supportive of the objectives and programs of UNCCD stakeholders. (Sec 2.1.1 para 55-59, Sec 2.1.2 para 88-90, 2.2.1(c), Sec 2.4.3)

208. **Conclusion 7:** The widely participatory Lessons-learned process of the project served to provide essential feedback to the planned iterative improvement and refinement of the indicators and of the supporting guidelines and methodologies, and for improving the user-friendliness of the Reporting module of the Portal. These lessons were incorporated into preparations for the 2012 reporting cycle now underway, including revision of the impact indicator templates. This process is

expected to continue through subsequent reporting cycles for gradual improvement of the value and consistency of the data. (Sec 2.1.1 para 63-64, 70 and Sec 2.2.1 para 91-94)

209. **Conclusion 8:** The development of the PRAIS Portal technology was not a smooth process and had some difficulties at several levels, which affected the progress of the project, and the effectiveness of the Portal during the submission of the national reports. There will be an on-going need to improve the functionality and upgrade the technology. As noted in the PRAIS Project Final Report [20], "the complexities of managing and maintaining the platform should not be underestimated, particularly in terms of resources". Currently the resources for supporting the Portal technology are not derived from stable core funding, posing a financial sustainability threat. (Sec 2.1.1 para 73-82, Sec 2.1.2 para 105, Sec 2.3.7 para 196, Sec 2.2.1 para 144)

210. **Conclusion 9:** There is still work to be done to truly "*establish a scientifically rigorous and credible assessment of the performance of the implementation of the UNCCD at the national, sub-regional, regional and global levels*". The credibility of the approach is not firmly established yet, due to concerns with validation of the data reported, and of ensuring the consistency of methodologies of data collection. Nor is the scientific rigour yet complete and will require ongoing experience, scientific review and harmonization with other indicator based programs. The second part of this main objective "*to build/strengthen capacity and knowledge management systems for subsequent assessments and reporting*" has also only been partly achieved by the Project. The Portal has proven itself a viable and valuable aid for national **reporting**, but currently the tools for broader knowledge sharing by a range of stakeholders, including both Country Parties and CSOs, is not yet developed. (Sec 2.1.1 para 63-65, 78-82 and Sec 2.1.2 para 96-98, Sec 2.2.1(b))

211. **Conclusion 10:** Building on the initial success of the 2010 reporting cycle in a forward-looking process of continuous improvement is essential to the long term sustainability of the outcomes of the Project. There is a need to continue to build the confidence of the stakeholders in the ongoing net value, and for them to see improvements in the ease of use of the Portal (including full multi-language capacity, and ability to add a policy brief) and continued support in adapting and improving national processes. The uncertain future of the role of the sub-regional Reference Centres presents a risk of loss of momentum at a critical time. (Sec 2.1.2 para 92, 98, Sec 2.2.1(b))

212. **Conclusion 11:** It is argued that following the initial baseline reporting, future inputs will be incremental updates and hence a smaller resource burden. This may be offset significantly by the planned introduction of the impact indicators, which have more complex data assembly requirements and, at least initially, high cost burdens. Many Affected Country Parties therefore will continue to need financial support and further capacity-building for at least the next two reporting cycles. (Sec 2.2.1 and Annex 7)

3.2 Lessons Learned

213. **Lesson Learned 1:** A sub-regional network of centres of excellence can be extremely effective to deliver capacity-building and technical backstopping to global processes. Such a network should use institutions that already have a sub-regional (or regional) scope and relevant experience in the subject or process. Due to time constraints, the PRAIS Project used a pragmatic selection of such "Reference Centres" based on fixed criteria, and willingness to participate, and this proved to be very successful. A key factor to success is in defining clear terms of reference in signed agreements with the institutions. Starting with a training-of-trainers session, the approach delivered high quality capacity-building and additional benefits of increased sub-regional collaboration. A similar approach would be suitable for delivering capacity-building and technical or process support in projects involving Regional or Global data gathering, and reporting functions, or the development of collaborative national processes and long term actions. The alternative of large international collective training sessions, or large numbers of individual national training sessions, can be much more costly, less effective, and does not foster sub-regional connections, and self sufficiency.

214. **Lesson Learned 2:** The technical development of the PRAIS Web Portal, seemingly straight forward, encountered unexpected problems and delays leading to the lesson that the IT support component of projects, especially those involving a multi-user interface (e.g. a web portal), and several implementing partners can be more complex than expected. Thus the project design stage should analyse and consider the implications of:

- existing IT infrastructure (and its compatibility) and needs for interoperability
- the level and quantity of resident resource expertise
- institutional arrangements that might effect choice of a host organization
- the state of user needs definition, and functional specifications, for systems that have to be developed
- scope and type of user
- specific deadlines for on-line operation.

The project plan then should include, in addition to estimated technical development time, reasonable time estimates for the collaborative definition of requirements, for system testing, and for training in operation.

215. **Lesson Learned 3:** Preparing indicator-based national reports requires a large national effort. Countries have to mobilize a number of sectoral agencies and stakeholders to gather information. The way in which countries address this challenge is quite variable, opening an opportunity for knowledge sharing. Nevertheless, funding for the continued preparation of national reports is necessary and will need to be considered and strategically addressed at the project design stage.

3.3 Recommendations

216. **Recommendation 1:** A continuance of some incarnation of sub-regional network of affiliated centres of expertise like the PRAIS Project Reference Centres should be implemented for continued support of the Parties' evidence-based reporting to the Convention, and to facilitate networking and knowledge exchange. This should be done consistent with UNCCD Regional processes, but as soon as possible to benefit from the momentum and goodwill engendered by the PRAIS project.

217. **Recommendation 2:** A high priority should be placed on developing a fully functional Analysis Module for use by the Secretariat and GM and importantly, implement an access module with analysis tools (i.e. knowledge management tools) available to Parties and other authorized users of the Web Portal (at the same time, satisfying concerns over protection of sensitive data). The UNCCD should further consider a strategy to develop the current system into a full knowledge management system.

218. **Recommendation 3:** For the next few reporting cycles some parties will continue to need funding support and capacity-building for reporting (especially to add new impact indicators) and for adapting national data gathering and M&E regimes. The UNCCD, UNEP and GEF should consider needs and modalities for achieving this.

219. **Recommendation 4:** The Secretariat together with the CST should, in consultation with Parties, develop a data validation regime in order to increase credibility and consistency of indicators. This would entail procedural elements and tools built into the PRAIS Portal, as well as principles, guidelines, and recommendations to Parties on implementing national data quality management processes and systems. This could possibly be configured as a country-driven project to build capacity for data quality management for improved decision-making.

220. **Recommendation 5:** The UNCCD Secretariat should ensure that there are adequate on-going stable resources for operation, maintenance, and incremental improvement of the Web Portal, including both personnel and technology. There should be further investigation of what is required in the long term to have well coordinated IT technology and support for the Secretariat and the GM.

221. **Recommendation 6:** In addition to Recommendation 2, significant enhancement of the Portal reporting functions are required in the short term to make the process of more value to Country Parties. These include complete multi-language capability - including help functions and "FAQ", and improved translations of templates, guidelines and glossary, the inclusion of an explanatory section or policy brief to reports which explains the significance of the reported indicators, and puts in context the actions taken and policy responses, so that the reports have informative value for national audiences. In the longer term, consideration should be given to preparing methodological manuals for national data collection and quality management along the lines of those of the UNFCCC.

Annex 1: Terms of Reference of the Terminal Evaluation

Terminal Evaluation of the project “Enabling a Paradigm Shift towards Monitoring and Assessment within the UNCCD – Performance Review and Assessment of Implementation System (PRAIS)” (GFL-2328-2770-4B25)

I. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

A. Project General Information

Table 1: Project Summary

GEF project ID:	4017	IMIS number:	GFL-2328-2770-4B25
Focal Area(s):	Land Degradation (LD)	GEF OP #:	
GEF Strategic Priority/Objective:	LD-SP1, LD-SP2 & LD-SP3	GEF approval date:	03 February 2010
Approval date:	17 March 2010	First Disbursement:	19 April 2010
Actual start date:	01 January 2010	Planned duration:	18 months
Intended completion date:	30 June 2011	Actual or Expected completion date:	30 December 2012
Project Type:	FSP	GEF Allocation:	US \$ 2,545,454
PDF GEF cost:	n/a	PDF co-financing:	n/a
Expected MSP/FSP Co-financing:	US \$ 5,400,000	Total Cost:	US \$ 7,945,454
Mid-term review/eval. (planned date):	n/a	Terminal Evaluation (actual date):	June - October 2012
Mid term review (actual date):	n/a	No. of revisions:	0
Date of last Steering Committee meeting:	03 February 2011	Date of last Revision:	
Disbursement as of 30 June 2012:	US \$ 2,545,454	Date of financial closure:	N/A
Total co-financing realized as of 31 December 2010:	US \$ 3,318,00 (does not include UNCCD Secretariat co-financing which is still to be reported on)	Leveraged financing:	US\$ 1,052,000

B. Project Rationale

1. The project “Enabling Paradigm Shift on Monitoring and Assessment within the UNCCD” (hereinafter referred to as UNCCD PRAIS project) is a capacity building project in support of the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

2. The eighth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP8) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification adopted a 10-year Strategic Plan (2008–2018) to enhance the implementation of the Convention (The Strategy). This strategic plan was intended to provide a unique opportunity to address some of the Convention's key challenges, to capitalize on its strengths, to seize opportunities provided by the new policy and financing environment, and to create a new, revitalized common ground for all UNCCD stakeholders.

3. The main purpose of the UNCCD PRAIS project was to assist UNCCD Parties by building capacities for the 2010 Fourth Reporting and Review process of the implementation of the Convention. Its focus was on: (i) development of reporting tools based on the approved set of performance indicators established under the Monitoring and Assessment Framework of the convention, the so-called Performance Review and Assessment of the Implementation System (PRAIS); (ii) building capacities of affected Parties for the preparation of their fourth national reports; and (iii) establishment of an on-line reporting platform to facilitate the reporting process and improve knowledge management within the Convention. The project involved 14 sub-regional and regional institutions, with a recognized expertise in the field of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) and experience in implementation of the UNCCD in their respective regions that worked with Regional Coordination Mechanisms established under UNCCD and supported by staff provided by the secretariat and the Global Mechanism (GM). These Regional Reference Centers were expected to provide training, capacity building and technical backstopping to facilitate reporting and ensure adequate support throughout the process in their respective regions. Apart from indicator reporting, individual Parties were expected to report on investment flows as well as best practices, and provide additional information such as the status of the implementation of their respective National Action Programme and the iterative process of refinement of the PRAIS.

C. Project objectives and components

4. Based on the project Logical Framework Matrix (LOGFRAME)⁴⁵, the **main project objective** of the UNCCD PRAIS project is to support Parties to “*establish a scientifically rigorous and credible assessment of the performance of the implementation of the UNCCD at the national, sub-regional, regional and global levels, and to build/strengthen capacity and knowledge management systems for subsequent assessments and reporting*”.

5. The **long-term objective** of the UNCCD PRAIS project is to “*identify priorities for enhancing UNCCD's implementation, including on sustainable land management investments*”⁴⁶.

6. To achieve this long-term vision, four **strategic objectives** guide the actions of UNCCD stakeholders and partners in the period 2008-2018:

- (i) to improve the living conditions of affected populations;
- (ii) to improve the condition of affected ecosystems;
- (iii) to generate global benefits through effective implementation of the UNCCD; and
- (iv) to mobilize resources to support implementation of the Convention through building effective partnerships between national and international actors.

7. The UNCCD Strategy also identifies five **operational objectives** to guide short- and medium-term (3-5 year) actions that target the strategic objectives. The operational objectives are process-oriented and cover: (i) advocacy, awareness raising and education; (ii) policy framework; (iii) science, technology and knowledge; (iv) capacity building; and (v) financing and technology transfer.

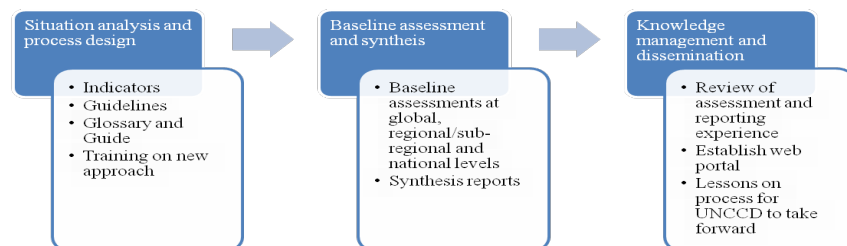
8. The project consists of three substantive technical components, as well as a dedicated project management component. The following **expected results** for each of the components are described in the project document and for the purpose of this evaluation, will be considered as the **intended outcomes** of the project:

Table 2: UNCCD PRAISE Project Components and Expected Results

Project Component	Expected Results/Intended Outcomes
Component 1: A review of indicators and formulation of national, sub-regional guidelines and reporting formats.	Expected Result 1: Parties capacity built by providing Clear and consistent guidelines for reporting on the implementation of the Strategy are available to country Parties
Component 2: Assessment of current baseline, synthesis and preparation of reports at national, sub-regional, regional and global levels.	Expected Result 2.1: Credible and verifiable information of current baseline performance situation for future planning of investments and actions
	Expected Result 2.2: A credible and widely accepted understanding of current state of implementation of UNCCD
Component 3: Development of a Knowledge Management System, monitoring and evaluation, dissemination.	Expected Result 3: Capacities of affected country Parties to assess performance of national action programmes (NAPs) as a mean to combating Desertification Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD) and of UNCCD implementation are enhanced

9. Figure 1 below outlines in a simplified manner the project intervention logic.

Figure 1: Simplified diagram of the project components and results



⁴⁵ See Project Document pp. 69-77, but also project Inception Report for the most updated version of the logical framework pp. 29-33.

⁴⁶ Project Document p. 30.

10. The original project duration was eighteen (18) months, with an expected completion in June 2011. The actual project completion is June 2012. The planned activities/outputs under each of the four components are presented in the table below.

Table 3: Project Key Deliverables

Component 1: Situational Analysis and Reporting Process Design	
Output 1.1: Sets of harmonized indicators for performance assessment of the implementation of UNCCD at national, sub-regional regional and global levels (available by COP 9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Review</u> sets of harmonized indicators. • <u>Recommendations</u> on indicators • <u>Consultative meeting</u> on guidance documents with experts and regional partners
Output 1.2: Finalized Guidelines for assessment of baseline and best practices using the COP 9 approved harmonized performance indicators and guidance's at national, sub-regional, regional and global levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Guidelines, formats and glossary</u> in support of UNCCD
Output 1.3: Contribution to the production of A glossary and a guide for implementing performance indicators (available after COP 9)	
Output 1.4: Finalized Format/ template for preparation of 4 th National reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Format/template, training modules and guidelines</u> for data collection and baseline • <u>Workshop</u> with regional partners to understand requirements and needs at national level
Output 1.5: Training modules and guidelines for data collection for baseline assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Training materials</u>
Output 1.6: Training in use of format/template for 4 th National Reports , through sub-regional workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Train regional and sub-regional trainers in Regional Technical Institutes to conduct workshops:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Africa x 4</i> ○ <i>Asia x 2</i> ○ <i>Eastern Europe x 1</i> ○ <i>Latin America and the Caribbean x 2</i> ○ <i>Northern Mediterranean x 1 (not funded by GEF)</i>
Component 2: Assessment of current baseline, synthesis and preparation of reports at national, sub-regional, regional and global levels	
Output 1.1: A comprehensive monitoring and assessment system for the UNCCD that will clarify <i>among others</i> the institutional set up needed in order to effectively engage in future periodic monitoring and assessment of performance (every 2 years) and impacts (every 4 years).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Review</u> of methods <u>Workshop</u> on methods • <u>Monitoring and assessment systems</u> to pilot at regional, sub-regional and national levels
Output 1.2: Indicators -based reports (Performance) of baseline situations at national, sub-regional, regional and global levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Review</u> of methods • <u>Workshop</u> on methods • <u>Terms of reference and guidance</u> for national and regional performance assessments • <u>Assessment</u> of global situation for performance • <u>Coordination</u> of parties to conduct situation assessments at regional, sub-regional and national levels
Output 1.3: 4 th National reports; Synthesis reports on sub-regional, regional and global assessment of UNCCD implementation under the guidance of UNCCD Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Analysis</u> of 4th national reports submission • <u>Synthesis</u> of 4th national report • Incorporate feedback from CRIC (November 2010)
Component 3: Knowledge Management System , M&E and Dissemination	
Output 3.1: Comprehensive capacity building framework for reporting UNCCD implementation available by end of 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Needs assessment</u> of reporting capacity. • <u>Consult</u> partners on priorities
Output 3.2: Web-site portal developed at national or sub-regional level for storage and retrieval of information on baseline data, indicators, reporting guidelines and tools, best practices, and lessons learned.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Web portal</u> for knowledge management of UNCCD reporting (Harmonised with ongoing Rio Convention integration efforts) • <u>Pilot of web portal</u> • <u>Train trainers</u> on web portal
Output 3.3: Appropriate framework for assessing and reporting of performance and impact developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Systems and guidance</u> for UNCCD assessment and reporting of performance based on pilot lessons. • (Combine with <i>End of Project</i> evaluation; hand-over to UNCCD.)

Component 4: Project Management	
Output 4.1: All project activities are completed satisfactorily leading to full and timely achievement of project objectives	

D. Executing Arrangements

11. The UNCCD PRAIS project is funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF). The **Implementing Agency** is United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)/GEF, and the **Executing Agency** is the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), based in Cambridge, UK.

12. The cooperation on the project between **UNEP/GEF** and **UNEP-WCMC** is based on an Internal Cooperation Agreement (ICA) established between the two UNEP's divisions. The ICA clearly articulates their respective roles and responsibilities and provides details of the reporting and financial management requirements of the project.

13. The **UNCCD Secretariat** and **Global Mechanism (GM)** are both project clients (as bodies of the Convention they represent the Parties and are also beneficiaries, on their behalf, of some of the project outputs) and **Executing Partners** of the project, working in close cooperation with UNEP-WCMC in the delivery of the project. In addition to the respective Headquarters, they supported the execution of the project through the Regional Coordination Unit and staff servicing the **Regional Coordination Mechanisms**.

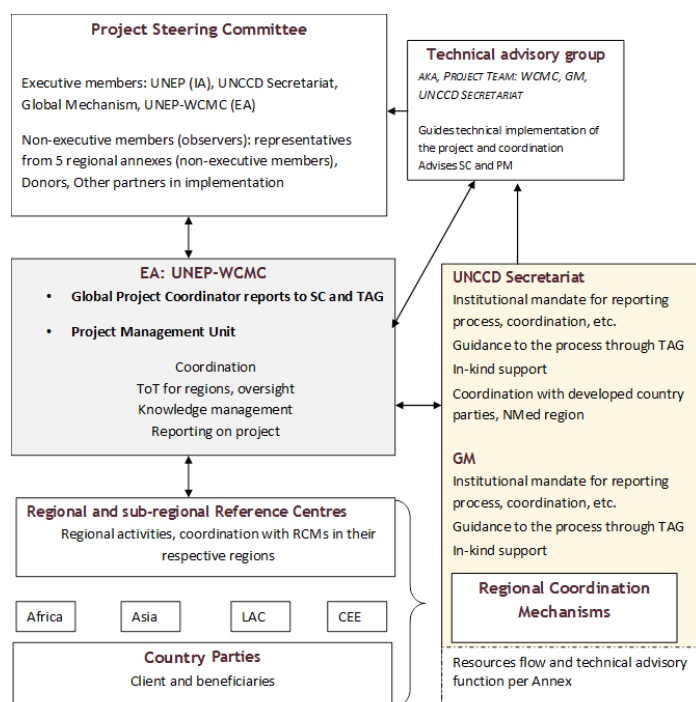
14. The **Reference Centers (RCs)** are specialized institutions in the sub-regions/regions or at global level (represented in the region) with recognized mandate in SLM and/or regional coordination and which has a recognized experience of UNCCD implementation either at regional or global level. They played a key role as Executing Partners in the delivery of the activities of the UNCCD PRAIS project at the global and regional level.

15. At the national level, UNCCD **National Focal Points (NFPs)**, working closely with UNCCD **National Coordinating Bodies** (or similar coordination mechanism), have the overall responsibility for the implementation of the Convention at the national level, including the preparations of the UNCCD 4th National reports.

The organizational structure for the implementation of the project UNCCD PRAIS included as the highest level decision-making body, a **Project Steering Committee (PSC)** composed of UNCCD Secretariat, GM, UNEP/GEF, and UNEP-WCMC, and co-chaired by UNEP/GEF and the UNCCD Secretariat. The PSC provided strategic guidance on project implementation issues such as adaptive management, as well as the monitoring and review of progress on an annual basis.

16. The PSC and the Executing Agency were supported by a **Technical Advisory Group (TAG)** to guide the technical implementation of the project and provide advice on technical matters. Under the UNCCD PRAIS the function of the TAG were carried out flexibly by Task forces or Working/Technical teams constituted informally and on an ad-hoc basis as and when required by the project needs.

Figure 2: Project Organization Structure



E. Project Cost and Financing

17. At design, the total project cost was estimated at US\$ 7,945,454 with US\$ 2,545,454 funded by GEF and US\$ 5.4 million provided by the UNCCD Secretariat, Global Mechanism and national governments contributions from country Parties. UNEP-WCMC provided an additional in kind contribution equivalent to US\$ 50,000.

18. Further mobilization of resources from bilateral donors was further envisaged and resulted in the mobilization of additional co-financing in the amount of EUR 600,000 from the European Commission.

F. Project Implementation Issues

19. The UNCCD PRAIS project provided support at a global level to the participating countries (a total of 119 under UNCCD) through Reference Centres⁴⁷ (a total of 14 institutions) - as opposed to provision of support at country-level. For this evaluation, therefore, it is reasonable to direct focus on the support provided by the Regional Centres or regional centres of excellence for the implementation of the project.

20. The Reference Centres (RC) coordinated with UNCCD activities at the regional level using regional coordination mechanisms established under the project. The RCs went through Training of Trainers and in turn were able to build capacity at country level by training National Focal Points (NFPs). The trained NFPs carry out reporting activities against set indicators and the final reports (key outputs) are made available online on a public domain. The effectiveness of the online reporting system is one of the main areas of interest to this evaluation.

21. The UNCCD does not have the mandate to demand verification of data submitted by countries, which suggests that it is not always possible to ascertain the quality and scientific soundness of the data represented in the country reports. Lessons learned from this evaluation could provide insights on appropriate mechanisms to help resolve the anomalies related to data quality.

22. Also of significance is the evaluation of the cooperation between UNCCD and the Global Mechanism (the financial body of the convention), which the UNCCD parties have given mandate to develop a common programme of work, in order to enhance their cohesiveness and collaboration. The evaluation should strictly be limited only on the issues related to the present project implementation.

II. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE EVALUATION

A. Objective and Scope of the Evaluation

23. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy⁴⁸, the UNEP Evaluation Manual⁴⁹ and the Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluations⁵⁰, the terminal evaluation of the The project "Enabling Paradigm Shift on Monitoring and Assessment within the UNCCD" (hereinafter referred to as UNCCD PRAIS project) is undertaken at the end of the project to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project and their sustainability. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, the GEF and their partners. Therefore, the evaluation will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation. It will focus on the following sets of **key questions**, based on the project's intended outcomes, which may be expanded by the consultants as deemed appropriate:

- (a) To what extent has the project helped in building capacity of UNCCD Parties to fulfill the new UNCCD Reporting requirements, particularly under the new, indicator based Performance Review and Assessment of the Implementation System (PRAIS) and the newly established online reporting platform of the Convention established by the same project? To what degree did the project contribute to strengthen the monitoring framework of the UNCCD by providing clear and consistent guidelines for reporting on the implementation of the Strategy and to what extent was the capacity building and training strategy of the project, both at the global and regional level, successful?

⁴⁷ The PRAIS project succeeded in building a global partnership in support of the reporting process by mobilizing a network of regional and sub-regional institutions referred to in the context of project as Reference Centres),

⁴⁸ <http://www.unep.org/eou/StandardsPolicyandPractices/UNEPEvaluationPolicy/tabid/3050/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

⁴⁹

<http://www.unep.org/eou/StandardsPolicyandPractices/UNEPEvaluationManual/tabid/2314/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

⁵⁰ http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/TE_guidelines7-31.pdf

- (b) How successful was the project in supporting the UNCCD to establish a credible and verifiable baseline performance situation assessment that can be used by the UNCCD community for future planning of investments and actions (i.e. how successful was the project in mobilizing country Parties to submit their reports)? To what extent this has contributed to a credible and widely accepted understanding of current state of implementation of UNCCD (based on the preliminary analysis of the newly collected information)? To what extent the experience with the 2010 Reporting and Review process of the UNCCD will be useful for further strengthening of the PRAIS system (through incorporation of documented lessons learned)?
- (c) How successful was the project in implementing innovative Knowledge Management and monitoring and evaluation tools (i.e. PRAIS online reporting platform) and in building related capacities of affected country Parties to assess performance of national action programmes (NAPs) as a mean to combating DLDD and of UNCCD implementation? Did the project contributed to effective learning towards consolidation of the reporting framework, including with regards to the future incorporation of the impact indicators?

B. Overall Approach and Methods

24. The terminal evaluation of the UNCCD PRAIS Project will be conducted under the overall responsibility of the UNEP Evaluation Office. It will be an in-depth evaluation using a participatory approach whereby the UNEP/GEF Task Manager, key representatives of the executing agencies and other relevant staff are kept informed and consulted throughout the evaluation process. Both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methodologies will be used to determine project achievements against the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts.

25. The findings of the evaluation will be based on the following:

- (a) A **desk review** of project documents⁵¹ including, but not limited to:
 - Relevant background documentation, *inter alia* UNCCD 10-year Strategic Plan and Framework (the "Strategy") and other relevant UNCCD COP decisions;
 - The project documents, outputs, monitoring reports (such as progress and financial reports to UNEP and annual Project Implementation Review reports to GEF), minutes of PSC and technical level meetings, and relevant correspondence;
 - Reference Centres Reports and other project-related material produced by the project staff or partners;
 - Project Technical Reports;
 - Relevant material published on web-sites maintained by UNCCD, GM, GEF or UNEP.
- (b) **Interviews**⁵² with:
 - Project management, supervision and technical support such as UNEP/GEF Task Manager and Fund Management Officer, members of UNEP-WCMC, UNCCD Secretariat and the GM.
 - Representatives from the reference centres i.e. the Reference Centres established under the UNCCD PRAIS project;
 - Intended beneficiaries and users of the project outputs and other stakeholders involved with this project, namely selected UNCCD National Focal Points and/or Science and Technology Correspondents.
 - The consultants shall determine whether to seek additional information and opinions from representatives of donor agencies (including the GEF) and other organisations.
 - As appropriate, these interviews could be combined with an **email questionnaire** to assist in collecting information from the UNCCD Parties (115no in total) and Regional Centres (14no in total).
- (c) **Mission** to discuss with key project partners: The Consultants will visit the Executing Agency UNEP-WCMC based in Cambridge UK, the UNCCD Secretariat in Bonn Germany, and a combination of at least four Reference Centres and Country Parties.

C. Key Evaluation principles

26. Evaluation findings and judgements should be based on **sound evidence and analysis**, clearly documented in the evaluation report. Information will be triangulated (i.e. verified from different sources) to the extent possible, and when verification was not possible, the single source will be mentioned⁵³. Analysis leading to evaluative judgements should always be clearly spelled out.

27. The evaluation will assess the project with respect to a **minimum set of evaluation criteria** grouped in four categories: (1) Attainment of objectives and planned results, which comprises the assessment of outputs achieved, relevance, effectiveness and efficiency and the review of outcomes towards impacts; (2) Sustainability and catalytic role, which focuses on financial, socio-political, institutional and ecological factors conditioning sustainability of project outcomes, and also assesses efforts and achievements in terms of replication and up-scaling of project lessons and good practices; (3) Processes affecting attainment of

⁵¹ Documents to be provided by GEF are listed in Annex 5.

⁵² Live or through any other appropriate means of communication.

⁵³ Individuals shall not be mentioned by name if anonymity needs to be preserved.

project results, which covers project preparation and readiness, implementation approach and adaptive management, stakeholder participation and public awareness, country ownership/driven-ness, project finance, UNEP supervision and backstopping, and project monitoring and evaluation systems; and (4) Complementarity with the UNEP strategies and programmes. The consultants can add other evaluation criteria as deemed appropriate.

28. **Ratings.** All evaluation criteria will be rated on a six-point scale. However, complementarity of the project with the UNEP strategies and programmes is not rated. Annex 2 provides detailed guidance on how the different criteria should be rated and how ratings should be aggregated for the different evaluation criterion categories.

29. In attempting to attribute any outcomes and impacts to the project, evaluators should consider the difference between **what has happened with** and **what would have happened without** the project. This implies that there should be consideration of the baseline conditions and trends in relation to the intended project outcomes and impacts. This also means that there should be plausible evidence to attribute such outcomes and impacts to the actions of the project. Sometimes, adequate information on baseline conditions and trends is lacking. In such cases this should be clearly highlighted by the evaluator, along with any simplifying assumptions that were taken to enable the evaluator to make informed judgements about project performance.

30. As this is a terminal evaluation, particular attention should be given to learning from the experience. Therefore, **the “why?” question** should be at front of the consultants minds all through the evaluation exercise. This means that the consultants need to go beyond the assessment of “what” the project performance was, and make a serious effort to provide a deeper understanding of “why” the performance was as it was, i.e. of processes affecting attainment of project results (criteria under Section 3 of the TOR). This should provide the basis for the lessons that can be drawn from the project. In fact, the usefulness of the evaluation will be determined to a large extent by the capacity of the consultants to explain “why things happened” as they happened and are likely to evolve in this or that direction, which goes well beyond the mere assessment of “where things stand” today.

D. Evaluation criteria

1. Attainment of Objectives and Planned Results

31. The evaluation should assess the relevance of the project's objectives and the extent to which these were effectively and efficiently achieved or are expected to be achieved.

- (a) *Achievement of Outputs and Activities:* Assess, for each component, the project's success in producing each of the programmed outputs as presented in Table 3, both in quantity and quality, as well as their usefulness and timeliness. Briefly explain why the project was successful or less successful in achieving its different outputs, cross-referencing as needed to more detailed explanations provided under Section 3, which covers the processes affecting attainment of project objectives.
- (b) *Relevance:* Assess, in retrospect, whether the project's objectives and implementation strategies were consistent with: (i) UNCCD Convention text, 10-year Strategy and relevant COP decisions; (ii) the UNEP mandate, policies and strategies at the time of design and implementation; (iii) the GEF Land Degradation focal area, strategic priorities and the relevant operational program(s); and (iv) the project beneficiaries' needs and priorities.
- (c) *Effectiveness:* Appreciate to what extent the project has achieved its main objective to support Parties to “establish a scientifically rigorous and credible assessment of the performance of the implementation of the UNCCD at the national, sub-regional, regional and global levels, and to build/strengthen capacity and knowledge management systems for subsequent assessments and reporting”, and its intended outcomes as presented in Table 2. Briefly explain what factors affected the project's success in achieving its different outcomes, cross-referencing as needed to more detailed explanations provided under Section 3, which covers the processes affecting attainment of project objectives.
- (d) *Efficiency:* Assess the cost-effectiveness and timeliness of project execution. Describe any cost- or time-saving measures put in place in attempting to bring the project to a successful conclusion within its programmed budget and (if applicable) extended time. Analyse how delays may have affected project execution, costs and effectiveness. Wherever possible, compare the cost and time over results ratios of the project with that of other similar projects. Give special attention to efforts by the project teams to make use of / build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency.
- (e) *Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI):* Reconstruct the logical pathways from project outputs over achieved objectives towards impacts, taking into account performance and impact drivers, assumptions and the roles and capacities of key actors and stakeholders, using the methodology presented in the GEF Evaluation Office's ROtI Practitioner's Handbook⁵⁴ (summarized in Annex 6 of the TORs). Assess to what extent the project has to date contributed to, and is likely in the future to further contribute to: (i) the outcomes and possibly intermediary states the project has contributed to achieve (see the key questions under paragraph 23); (ii) the extent to which the

⁵⁴ http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/Impact_Eval-Review_of_Outcomes_to_Impacts-RotI_handbook.pdf

necessary impact drivers are present and assumptions surrounding the project are proved valid; and (iii) the current capacity and motivation of stakeholders to follow through what is needed to achieve the intended impacts.

2. Sustainability and Catalytic Role

32. **Sustainability** is understood as the probability of continued long-term project-derived outcomes and impacts after the external (i.e. GEF and UNEP) project funding and assistance ends. The evaluation will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the persistence of benefits. Some of these factors might be outcomes or outputs of the project, e.g. stronger institutional capacities or well maintained erosion control structures. Other factors will include contextual circumstances or developments that are not outcomes of the project but that may condition sustainability of outcomes. The evaluation should ascertain to what extent follow-up work has been initiated and how project outcomes will be sustained and enhanced over time. Application of the ROTI method will assist in the evaluation of sustainability.

33. Four aspects of sustainability will be addressed:

- (a) *Financial resources.* To what extent are the outcomes and eventual impact of the project dependent on continued financial support? What is the likelihood that adequate financial and economic resources⁵⁵ will be or will become available once the external assistance to the project ends? Are there any financial risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project outcomes and onward progress towards impact?
- (b) *Socio-political sustainability.* Are there any social or political factors that may influence positively or negatively the sustenance of project outcomes and progress towards impacts? Is the level of stakeholder ownership sufficient to allow for the project outcomes to be sustained? Are there sufficient public and stakeholder awareness, interest and incentives in support of the long term objectives of the project? Do the various key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow? Do the users of project investments have the necessary know-how to operate and maintain these investments?
- (c) *Institutional framework.* To what extent is the sustenance of the outcomes and onward progress towards impacts dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance? Are there any institutional achievements, legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes in place that will contribute to sustaining project benefits? Are the required systems for accountability and transparency and the required technical know-how in place?
- (d) *Environmental sustainability.* Are there any environmental factors, positive or negative, that can influence the future flow of project benefits? Do certain activities that affect the environment in the project area pose a threat to the sustainability of the project outcomes?

34. **Catalytic Role and Replication.** The catalytic role of UNEP and the GEF is embodied in their approach of supporting the creation of an enabling environment, investing in activities which are innovative and showing how new approaches and market changes can work. UNEP and the GEF aim to support activities that upscale new approaches to a national (or regional) level, with a view to achieve sustainable global environmental benefits. The evaluation will assess the catalytic role played by this project by to what extent the project has:

- (a) *catalyzed behavioural changes* in terms of use and application by the relevant stakeholders of: i) technologies and approaches show-cased by the project; ii) strategic programmes and plans developed; and iii) assessment, monitoring and management systems established at a national and sub-regional level;
- (b) provided *incentives* (social, economic, market based etc.) to contribute to catalyzing changes in stakeholder behaviour;
- (c) contributed to *institutional changes*. An important aspect of the catalytic role of the project is its contribution to institutional uptake or mainstreaming of project-promoted innovations in public and private services;
- (d) contributed to *policy changes* (on paper and in implementation of policy);
- (e) contributed to sustained follow-on financing (*catalytic financing*) from Government or other donors;
- (f) created opportunities for particular individuals or institutions ("*champions*") to catalyze change (without which the project would not have achieved all of its results).

35. Replication, in the context of GEF projects, is defined as lessons and experiences coming out of the project that are replicated (experiences are repeated and lessons applied in different geographic areas) or scaled up (experiences are repeated and lessons applied in the same geographic area but on a much larger scale and funded by other sources). The evaluation will assess the approach adopted by the project to promote replication effects and appreciate to what extent actual replication has

⁵⁵ Those resources can be from multiple sources, such as the public and private sectors, income generating activities, other development projects etc.

already occurred or is likely to occur in the near future. What are the factors that may influence replication and scaling up of project experiences and lessons?

3. Processes affecting attainment of project results

36. **Preparation and Readiness.** Were the project's objectives and components clear, practicable and feasible within its timeframe? Were the capacities of executing institution and counterparts properly considered when the project was designed? Was the project document clear and realistic to enable effective and efficient implementation? Were the partnership arrangements properly identified and the roles and responsibilities negotiated prior to project implementation? Were counterpart resources (funding, staff, and facilities) and enabling legislation assured? Were adequate project management arrangements in place? Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated in the project design? Were lessons learned and recommendations from the MTE adequately integrated in the post-MTE project approach? What factors influenced the quality-at-entry of the project design, choice of partners, allocation of financial resources etc.?

37. **Implementation Approach and Adaptive Management.** This includes an analysis of approaches used by the project, its management framework, the project's adaptation to changing conditions (adaptive management), the performance of the implementation arrangements and partnerships, relevance of changes in project design, and overall performance of project management. The evaluation will:

- (a) Ascertain to what extent the project implementation mechanisms outlined in the project document have been closely followed and were effective in delivering project outputs and outcomes;
- (b) Assess the role and performance of the various committees established and the project execution arrangements at all levels;
- (c) Evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency and adaptability of project management and how well the management was able to adapt to changes during the life of the project;
- (d) Assess the extent to which the project responded to Steering Committee, UNEP supervision and mid-term evaluation recommendations;
- (e) Identify administrative, operational and/ or technical problems and constraints that influenced the effective implementation of the project.

38. **Stakeholder⁵⁶ Participation and Public Awareness.** This consists of three related and often overlapping processes: (1) information dissemination between stakeholders, (2) consultation between stakeholders, and (3) active engagement of stakeholders in project decision making and activities. The evaluation will specifically assess:

- (a) the mechanisms put in place by the project for identification and engagement of relevant UNCCD stakeholders, and establish, in consultation with the stakeholders, whether these mechanisms were successful, and identify their strengths and weaknesses with respect to the achievement of the intended outcomes of the project;
- (b) the degree and effectiveness of collaboration and interactions between the various project partners and institutions during the course of implementation of the project;
- (c) the degree and effectiveness of any various public awareness activities that were undertaken during the course of implementation of the project.

39. The ROTI analysis should assist the consultants in identifying the key stakeholders and their respective roles, capabilities and motivations in each step of the causal pathway from activities to achievement of outputs and objectives, and ultimately to impact.

40. **Country Ownership and Driven-ness.** The evaluation will assess the performance of the UNCCD Secretariat, the Global Mechanism and the Governments of the various Parties to the Convention, namely:

- (a) in how far the UNCCD Secretariat, the Global Mechanism and the various national Governments have assumed responsibility for the project and provided adequate support to project execution, including coordination of the various departments involved in the project;
- (b) to what extent the political and institutional framework at the global, regional and national level has been conducive to project performance. This question should be largely answered through the ROTI analysis;
- (c) to what extent the GEF Grant Agreement has been observed;

⁵⁶ Stakeholders are the individuals, groups, institutions, or other bodies that have an interest or stake in the outcome of the project. The term also applies to those potentially adversely affected by the project.

- (d) to what extent the UNCCD Secretariat, Global Mechanism and the Governments have promoted the participation of communities and their non-governmental organisations in the project;
- (e) What factors affected country ownership and driven-ness, e.g. the institutional arrangements of the project or its intervention focus?

41. **Financial Planning and Management.** Evaluation of financial planning requires assessment of the quality and effectiveness of financial planning and control of financial resources throughout the project's lifetime. Evaluation includes actual project costs by activities compared to budget (variances), financial management (including disbursement issues), and co-financing. The evaluation will:

- (a) Verify the application of proper standards (clarity, transparency, audit etc.) and timeliness of financial planning, management and reporting to ensure that sufficient and timely financial resources were available to the project and its partners;
- (b) Appreciate other administrative processes such as recruitment of staff, procurement of goods and services etc. to the extent that these might have influenced project performance;
- (c) Present to what extent co-financing has materialized, including counter part (i.e. from Governments and beneficiaries) funding. The evaluation will provide a breakdown of final actual costs and co-financing for the different project components (see tables in Annex 3).
- (d) Describe the resources the project has leveraged since inception and indicate how these resources are contributing to the project's ultimate objective. Leveraged resources are additional resources—beyond those committed to the project itself at the time of approval—that are mobilized later as a direct result of the project. Leveraged resources can be financial or in-kind and they may be from other donors, NGO's, foundations, governments, communities or the private sector.

42. **UNEP Supervision and Backstopping.** The purpose of supervision is to verify the quality and timeliness of project execution in terms of finances, administration and achievement of outputs and outcomes, in order to identify and recommend ways to deal with problems which arise during project execution. Such problems may be related to project management but may also involve technical/ substantive issues in which UNEP has a major contribution to make. The evaluators should assess the effectiveness of supervision and administrative and financial support provided by UNEP including:

- (a) The adequacy of project supervision plans, inputs and processes;
- (b) The emphasis given to outcome monitoring (results-based project management);
- (c) The realism and candour of project reporting and ratings (i.e. are PIR ratings an accurate reflection of the project realities and risks);
- (d) The quality of documentation of project supervision activities; and
- (e) Financial, administrative and other fiduciary aspects of project implementation supervision.

43. **Monitoring and Evaluation.** The evaluation will include an assessment of the quality, application and effectiveness of project monitoring and evaluation plans and tools, including an assessment of risk management based on the assumptions and risks identified in the project document. The evaluation will appreciate how information generated by the M&E system during project implementation was used to adapt and improve project execution, achievement of outcomes and ensuring sustainability. M&E is assessed on three levels:

- (a) **M&E Design.** Projects should have sound M&E plans to monitor results and track progress towards achieving project objectives. An M&E plan should include a baseline (including data, methodology, etc.), SMART⁵⁷ indicators and data analysis systems, and evaluation studies at specific times to assess results. The time frame for various M&E activities and standards for outputs should have been specified. The evaluators should use the following questions to help assess the M&E design aspects:
 - Quality of the project Logframe as a planning and monitoring instrument; analyse/compare logframe in Project Document, revised logframe if any, and logframe used in Project Implementation Review reports to report progress towards achieving project objectives;
 - SMART-ness of indicators: Are there specific indicators in the logical framework for each of the project objectives and outcomes? Are the indicators measurable, attainable (realistic) and relevant to the objectives and outcomes? Are the indicators time-bound?
 - Adequacy of baseline information: To what extent has baseline information on performance indicators been collected and presented in a clear manner? Was the methodology for the baseline data collection explicit and reliable?

⁵⁷ Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound

- Arrangements for monitoring: Have the responsibilities for M&E activities been clearly defined? Were the data sources and data collection instruments appropriate? Was the frequency of various monitoring activities specified and adequate? In how far were project users involved in monitoring?
 - Arrangements for evaluation: Have specific targets been specified for project outputs? Has the desired level of achievement been specified for all indicators of objectives and outcomes? Were there adequate provisions in the legal instruments binding project partners to fully collaborate in evaluations?
 - Budgeting and funding for M&E activities: Determine whether support for M&E was budgeted adequately and was funded in a timely fashion during implementation.
- (b) **M&E Plan Implementation.** The evaluation will verify that:
- the M&E system was operational and facilitated timely tracking of results and progress towards projects objectives throughout the project implementation period;
 - annual project reports and Progress Implementation Review (PIR) reports were complete, accurate and with well justified ratings;
 - the information provided by the M&E system was used during the project to improve project performance and to adapt to changing needs;
 - projects had an M&E system in place with proper training, instruments and resources for parties responsible for M&E.

4. Complementarities with the UNEP strategies and programmes

44. UNEP aims to undertake GEF funded projects that are aligned with its own strategies. The evaluation should present a brief narrative on the following issues:

- (a) **Linkage to UNEP's Expected Accomplishments.** The UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS) 2010-2013⁵⁸ specifies desired results in six thematic focal areas. The desired results are termed Expected Accomplishments. Using the completed ROTI analysis, the evaluation should comment on whether the project makes a tangible contribution to any of the Expected Accomplishments specified in this UNEP MTS. The magnitude and extent of any contributions and the causal linkages should be fully described. Whilst it is recognised that UNEP GEF projects designed prior to the production of the UNEP MTS 2010-2013 would not necessarily be aligned with the Expected Accomplishments articulated in those documents, complementarities may still exist.
- (b) **Alignment with the Bali Strategic Plan (BSP)**⁵⁹. The outcomes and achievements of the project should be briefly discussed in relation to the objectives of the UNEP BSP.
- (c) **Gender.** Ascertain to what extent project design, implementation and monitoring have taken into consideration: (i) possible gender inequalities in access to and the control over natural resources; (ii) specific vulnerabilities of women and children to environmental degradation or disasters; and (iii) the role of women in mitigating or adapting to environmental changes and engaging in environmental protection and rehabilitation. Assess whether the intervention is likely to have any lasting differential impacts on gender equality and the relationship between women and the environment. To what extent do unresolved gender inequalities affect sustainability of project benefits?
- (d) **South-South Cooperation.** This is regarded as the exchange of resources, technology, and knowledge between developing countries. Briefly describe any aspects of the project that could be considered as examples of South-South Cooperation.

E. The Consultants' Team

45. For this evaluation, a team of two independent consultants will be hired from at least one of the sub-regions⁶⁰ covered by the UNCCD PRAIS project. The evaluation team will combine the following qualifications:

- Advanced university degree in environmental sciences, natural resource management, conservation, sustainable development, or related area;
- Extensive - at least 10-years' experience and proven track record with project evaluations; policy advice and/or project implementation in the field of international environmental governance, policies and institutions; capacity

⁵⁸ <http://www.unep.org/PDF/FinalMTSGCSS-X-8.pdf>

⁵⁹ <http://www.unep.org/GC/GC23/documents/GC23-6-add-1.pdf>

⁶⁰ North Africa, West Africa, Central Africa, East Africa, Southern Africa, South Pacific, West Asia, Central Asia, South Asia, Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, Central America & Western Caribbean, South America, Eastern Caribbean, Northern Mediterranean, and Central & Eastern Europe.

building; information management systems; monitoring and evaluation of environmental indicators. Experience with projects in the context of UNCCD and sustainable land management would be an advantage;

- Demonstrated experience with management and implementation of global projects and in particular with a particular emphasis on use of the internet to access information relevant to decision-making;
- Proficiency in English, and knowledge of other UN languages particularly French and/or Spanish, would be a distinctive advantage;
- Prior experience with UNCCD processes and knowledge of UNEP and GEF M&E policies and procedures would be an asset.

46. The **Team Leader** will be responsible for coordinating the data collection and analysis phase of the evaluation, and the successful production of the terminal evaluation report. (S)He will ensure that all evaluation criteria are adequately covered by the team and that the report content and format carefully follows the requirements of this TOR. Annex 8 provides a matrix which presents the distribution of responsibilities between evaluation team members (to be finalized in consultation with the Team Leader).

47. The **Supporting Consultant** will prepare a technical working paper that will be appended to the main report, the content of which will be agreed upon with the Team Leader. The Supporting Consultant is also expected to contribute to selected sections of the main report as agreed with the Team Leader, and provide constructive comments on the draft report prepared by the Team Leader.

48. *By undersigning the service contract with UNEP/UNON, the consultants certify that they have not been associated with the design and implementation of the project in any way which may jeopardize their independence and impartiality towards project achievements and project partner performance. In addition, they will not have any future interests (within six months after completion of their contract) with the project's executing or implementing units.*

F. Evaluation Deliverables and Review Procedures

49. The Team Leader will prepare and submit an **Inception Report** to the UNEP Evaluation Office ideally before starting fieldwork or desk based phone/email interviews. See Annex 1(a) for an annotated Table of Contents of the Inception Report.

50. The Inception Report lays the foundations for the main evaluation. Its purpose is to develop an evaluation framework that includes:

- A review of the quality of project design to help identify how project design impacts on project implementation and performance;
- An analysis of the project's theory of change, creating a baseline which can be used to assess the actual project outcomes and impacts (expected and unexpected) during field visits and interviews;
- A detailed plan for the evaluation process.

The main components of the inception report are:

51. Review of the Quality of Project Design: The review of project design is done on the basis of the project document and log frame. The Team Leader should also familiarize her/himself with the history and wider context of the project (details available on UNEP and GEF websites, etc.). The analysis should be used to complete the 'Template for assessment of the quality of project design' (in the Annex 7 of the TORs). The rating system follows the Evaluation ratings used for the main evaluation (described in Annex 2 of the TORs).

52. Theory of Change Analysis: Annex 6 of the TORs on Introduction to Theory of Change/Impact Pathways, the ROTI Method and the ROTI results score sheet describes in details the Theory of Change (ToC) approach. The Theory of Change analysis should be captured in a Theory of Change diagram, presented in this annex. The diagram can be shared with project stakeholders in the course of the evaluation, as a tool to aid discussion. **Please note that the ratings requested in the annex are not needed in the inception report's Theory of Change analysis. The team leader should complete the ratings after the field visits/interviews.** The updated ToC diagram and ratings would then be incorporated into the draft and the final evaluation reports.

53. Evaluation Process Plan: The evaluation process plan is based on a review of the project design, Theory of Change analysis, and also of the review of project documentation (listed in TOR). The evaluation plan should include: summary of evaluation questions/areas to be explored/questions raised through document review; description of evaluation methodologies to be used; list of data sources, list of individuals to be consulted; detailed distribution of roles and responsibilities among the evaluation consultants; revised field mission logistics (selection of sites to be visited) and schedule of evaluation activities.

54. The inception report will be submitted for review by the Evaluation Office according to the tentative evaluation schedule in Table 4 below and **before** the Consultant conducts any field visits.

55. **The main evaluation report** should be brief (no longer than 35 pages – excluding the executive summary and annexes), to the point and written in plain English. The report will follow the annotated Table of Contents outlined in Annex 1(b). It must explain the purpose of the evaluation, exactly what was evaluated and the methods used (with their limitations). The

report will present **evidence-based** and balanced findings, consequent conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations, which will be cross-referenced to each other. The report should be presented in a way that makes the information accessible and comprehensible. Any dissident views in response to evaluation findings will be appended in footnote or annex as appropriate.

56. **Review of the draft evaluation report.** The Team Leader will submit the zero draft report to the UNEP EO according to the tentative schedules to the UNEP EO and revise the draft following the comments and suggestions provided. The EO will then review the first draft report for comprehensiveness, and, when found acceptable, the EO will share the report with the UNEP Task Manager in the Division of Environmental Policies Implementation (DEPI) for review and consultation. The UNEP Task Manager will forward the first draft report to the other project stakeholders, in particular the Executing Agency and other partners (UNEP-WCMC, UNCCD and GM secretariats, and the Reference Centres⁶¹), for further review and comments. Stakeholders may provide feedback on any errors of fact and may highlight the significance of such errors in any conclusions. Comments would be expected within two weeks after the draft report has been shared with stakeholders. Any comments or responses to the draft report will be sent to the UNEP EO for collation. The EO will provide the comments to the Team Leader for consideration in preparing the final draft report. The Team Leader will submit the final draft report no later than 1 week after receipt of stakeholder comments. The Team Leader will prepare a **response to comments** that contradict the findings of evaluation team and could therefore not be accommodated in the final report. This response will be shared by the EO and the interested stakeholders to ensure full transparency.

57. Consultations will be held between the Consultants, EO staff, UNEP/ Environmental Policies Implementation (DEPI), UNEP/GEF Coordination Office, and key members of the project execution team. These consultations will seek feedback on the proposed recommendations and lessons.

58. **Submission of the final Terminal Evaluation report.** The final report shall be submitted by Email to:

Segbedzi Norgbey, Chief
UNEP Evaluation Office
P.O. Box 30552-00100
Nairobi, Kenya
Tel.: (+254-20) 762 3387
Fax: (+254-20) 762 3158
Email: segbedzi.norgbey@unep.org

59. The Chief of the Evaluation Office will share the report with the following persons:

Luc Gnacadja
UNCCD Executive Secretary
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D-53113 Bonn, Germany
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Email: lgnacadja@unccd.int

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⁶¹ As partners, these comprise specialized institutions in the (sub)regions with recognised mandate in SLM and recognised experience in UNCCD implementation at regional or global level.

Mr. Jon Hutton
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With a copy to:

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Head of Ecosystem Assessment
UNEP-WCMC
219c Huntingdon Road
Cambridge, CB3 0DL
UK
E-Mail: matt.walpole@unep-wcmc.org

60. The final evaluation report will be published on the Evaluation Office web-site www.unep.org/eou and may be printed in hard copy. Subsequently, the report will be sent to the GEF Office of Evaluation for their review, appraisal and inclusion on the GEF website.

61. As per usual practice, the UNEP EO will prepare a **quality assessment** of the zero draft and final draft report, which is a tool for providing structured feedback to the evaluation consultant. The quality of the report will be assessed and rated against both GEF and UNEP criteria as presented in Annex 4.

62. The UNEP Evaluation Office will also prepare a **commentary** on the final evaluation report, which presents the EO ratings of the project based on a careful review of the evidence collated by the evaluation team and the internal consistency of the report. These ratings are the final ratings that the UNEP Evaluation Office will submit to the GEF Office of Evaluation.

G. Resources and Schedule of the Evaluation

63. This Terminal Evaluation will be undertaken by two independent evaluation consultants contracted by the UNEP Evaluation Office. The consultants will work under the overall responsibility of the UNEP Evaluation Office and they will consult with the EO on any procedural and methodological matters related to the evaluation. It is, however, the consultants' individual responsibility to arrange for their travel, obtain documentary evidence, meetings with stakeholders, field visits, and any other logistical matters related to their assignment. The UNEP Task Manager and regional and national project staff will provide logistical support (introductions, meetings, transport, etc.) for the country visits where necessary, allowing the consultants to conduct the evaluation as efficiently and independently as possible.

64. The **Team Leader** will be hired for **6 weeks** of work spread over **August to November 2012**, to include desk studies, data collection, field missions, consultations (field visits, phone/internet interviews and correspondences), and report writing. (S)He will travel to UK, Germany, and Kenya to visit project stakeholders.

65. The **Supporting Consultant** will be hired for **4.5 weeks** of work, also spread over **August to November 2012**. (S)He will travel to Costa Rica, Chile, and Ecuador to visit project stakeholders.

66. The Consultant will submit the first draft report to the UNEP EO and revise the draft following the comments and suggestions made by the EO. The EO will circulate the revised draft to project partners and their comments would be expected within two weeks after the draft report has been shared. Any comments or responses to the draft report will be sent to UNEP / EO for collation and the Consultant will be advised of any necessary revisions.

67. The tentative schedule is presented in the Table below:

Table 4: Tentative Evaluation Timeline

Activity	Date
Start of contract	27 August 2012
Inception report to UNEP EO	14 September 2012
Consultative meetings: UNEP-WCMC in UK, UNCCD secretariat in Germany, ICPAC and ICRISAT-Nairobi (regional hub for Eastern and Southern Africa) in Kenya*	01-10 October 2012
Consultative meetings: CATIE Costa Rica* and ECLAC in Chile*	17-21 September 2012
Zero draft report to UNEP EO	12 October 2012
First draft report to UNEP EO	19 October 2012

Activity	Date
Collated comments by UNEP EO sent to consultant	5 November 2012
Final report and response to comments to UNEP EO	9 November 2012
End of contract	15 November 2012

* Wherever possible, the Consultant should make an effort to visit the National Focal Points in the countries visited while on mission.

H. Schedule of Payment

Fee Only Contract

68. The consultants will be hired under an individual Special Service Agreement (SSA) which is NOT inclusive of travel and reimbursable expenses such as international airfares, in-country travel, accommodation and subsistence, incidental and terminal expenses. Air tickets will be paid separately by UNEP and 75% of the DSA for each authorised travel mission will be paid up front. Local in-country travel, communication costs and other incidental expenses will be reimbursed on the production of acceptable receipts. Terminal expenses and residual DSA entitlements (25%) will be paid after mission completion.

69. The Team Leader will receive 40% of the honorarium portion of his/her fee upon acceptance of a draft report deemed complete and of acceptable quality by the EO. The remainder will be paid upon satisfactory completion of the work.

70. The Supporting Consultant will be paid the honoraria in one single payment upon satisfactory completion of their work. The Team Leader will advise the EO whether the Supporting Consultant has provided satisfactory inputs in the evaluation.

71. In case the consultants are not able to provide the deliverables in accordance with this TOR, in line with the expected quality standards by the UNEP Evaluation Office, payment may be withheld at the discretion of the Head of the Evaluation Office until the consultants have improved the deliverables to meet UNEP's quality standards.

72. If the consultant fails to submit a satisfactory final product to UNEP in a timely manner, i.e. within one month after the end date of their contract, the Evaluation Office reserves the right to employ additional human resources to finalize the report, and to reduce the consultants' fees by an amount equal to the additional costs borne by the Evaluation Office to bring the report up to standard.

Annex 1(a): Annotated Table of Contents of the Inception Report

Section	Notes
1. Introduction	Brief note of documents consulted in preparing the inception report.
2. Review of Project Design	Complete the Template for assessment of the quality of project design given in Annex 7 of the Terms of Reference. Data sources: background information on context (UNEP or GEF programme etc.), first phase of project – if any, project document, logical framework.
3. Theory of Change Analysis	The section should start with a brief description of the project context. The 'theory of change' should be developed using the process described in Annex 6 (Introduction to Theory of Change/Impact pathways, the ROTI Method and the ROTI results score sheet) of the TORs. The final ToC diagram can be designed on the basis of figure 3 in Annex 6. Outputs do not necessarily occur at the beginning of the process, additional outputs may occur at different stages of the process (for example to move from one intermediate state to another). The diagram can be represented horizontally or vertically. Data sources: project document, logical framework <u>and</u> a review of other project documents.
4. Evaluation Process Plan	This section should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Detailed evaluation questions (including new questions raised by review of project design and theory of change analysis).- Data Sources and Indicators- List of individuals to be consulted.- Distribution of roles and responsibilities among evaluation consultants (in case of larger evaluation teams).- Revised logistics (dates of travel and key evaluation milestones). The framework can be presented as a table for ease of use, showing which data sources will be used to answer which questions. Data sources: review of all project documents. Discussion with project team on logistics.

Annex 1(b): Annotated Table of Contents of the Main Report

Project Identification Table	An updated version of the Table 1 in Section I.A. of this TOR
Executive Summary	Overview of the main findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation. It should encapsulate the essence of the information contained in the report to facilitate dissemination and distillation of lessons. The main points for each evaluation parameter should be presented here (with a summary ratings table), as well as the most important lessons and recommendations. Maximum 4 pages.
I. Evaluation Background	
A. Context	A. Overview of the broader institutional and regional context, in relation to the project's objectives.
B. The Project	B. Presentation of the project: rationale, objectives, components, intervention areas and target groups, milestones in design, implementation and completion, implementation arrangements and main partners, financing (amounts and sources), modifications to design before or during implementation.
C. Evaluation objectives, scope and methodology	C. Presentation of the evaluation's purpose, evaluation criteria and key questions, evaluation timeframe, data collection and analysis instruments used, places visited, types of stakeholders interviewed, and limitations of the evaluation.
II. Project Performance and Impact	This section is organized according to the 4 categories of evaluation criteria (see section D of this TOR) and provides

<p>A. Attainment of objectives and planned results</p> <p>B. Sustainability and catalytic role</p> <p>C. Processes affecting attainment of project results</p> <p>D. Complementarity with the UNEP Strategy and Programmes</p>	<p>factual evidence relevant to the questions asked and sound analysis and interpretations of such evidence. This is the main substantive section of the report. Ratings are provided at the end of the assessment of each evaluation criterion.</p>
III. Conclusions and Recommendations	
A. Conclusions	<p>This section should summarize the main findings of the evaluation, told in a logical sequence from cause to effect. It is suggested to start with the positive achievements and a short explanation why these could be achieved, and, then, to present the less successful aspects of the project with a short explanation why. The conclusions section should end with the overall assessment of the project. Findings should be cross-referenced to the main text of the report (e.g. using paragraph numbering). The overall ratings table should be inserted here (see Annex 2).</p>
B. Lessons Learned	<p>Lessons learned should be anchored in the main findings of the evaluation. In fact, no lessons should appear which are not based upon a conclusion of the evaluation. The number of lessons learned should be limited. Lessons learned are rooted in real project experiences, i.e. based on good practices and successes which could be replicated or derived from problems encountered and mistakes made which should be avoided in the future. Lessons learned must have the potential for wider application and use. Lessons should briefly describe the context from which they are derived and specify the contexts in which they may be useful.</p>
C. Recommendations	<p>As for the lessons learned, all recommendations should be anchored in the conclusions of the report, with proper cross-referencing, and their number should be limited to 3 or 4. Recommendations are actionable proposals on how to resolve concrete problems affecting the project or the sustainability of its results. They should be feasible to implement within the timeframe and resources available (including local capacities), specific in terms of who would do what and when, and set a measurable performance target. In some cases, it might be useful to propose options, and briefly analyze the pros and cons of each option.</p>
Annexes	<p>These may include additional material deemed relevant by the evaluator but must include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluation TOR 2. Evaluation program, containing the names of locations visited and the names (or functions) of people met 3. Bibliography 4. Summary co-finance information and a statement of project expenditure by activity (See Annex 3 of these TORs) 5. Details of the project's 'impact pathways' and the 'ROti' analysis 6. Brief CVs of the consultants <p>TE reports will also include any formal response/comments from the project management team and/or the country focal point regarding the evaluation findings or conclusions as an annex to the report, however, such will be appended to the report by UNEP Evaluation Office.</p>

Examples of UNEP GEF Terminal Evaluation Reports are available at www.unep.org/eou.

Annex 2. Evaluation Ratings

The evaluation will provide individual ratings for the evaluation criteria described in section II.D. of these TORs. Some criteria contain sub-criteria which require separate ratings (i.e. sustainability and M&E). Furthermore, an aggregated rating will be provided for Relevance, effectiveness and efficiency under the category "Attainment of project objectives and results". Most criteria will be rated on a six-point scale as follows: Highly Satisfactory (HS); Satisfactory (S); Moderately Satisfactory (MS); Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); Unsatisfactory (U); Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). Sustainability is rated from Highly Likely (HL) down to Highly Unlikely (HU). In the conclusions section of the report, ratings will be presented together in a table, with a brief justification cross-referenced to the findings in the main body of the report. Please note that the order of the evaluation criteria in the table will be slightly different from the order these are treated in the main report; this is to facilitate comparison and aggregation of ratings across GEF project evaluation reports.

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
A. Attainment of project objectives and results		HS → HU
1. Effectiveness		HS → HU
2. Relevance		HS → HU
3. Efficiency		HS → HU
B. Sustainability of project outcomes		HL → HU
1. Financial		HL → HU
2. Socio-political		HL → HU
3. Institutional framework		HL → HU
4. Environmental		HL → HU
C. Catalytic role		HS → HU
D. Stakeholders involvement		HS → HU
E. Country ownership / driven-ness		HS → HU
F. Achievement of outputs and activities		HS → HU
G. Preparation and readiness		HS → HU
H. Implementation approach		HS → HU
I. Financial planning and management		HS → HU
J. Monitoring and Evaluation		HS → HU
1. M&E Design		HS → HU
2. M&E Plan Implementation		HS → HU
3. Budgeting and funding for M&E activities		HS → HU
K. UNEP and UNDP Supervision and backstopping		HS → HU
1. UNEP		HS → HU
2. UNDP		HS → HU

Rating of Attainment of project objectives and results. A compound rating is given to the category based on the assessment of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. This aggregated rating is not a simple average of the separate ratings given to the evaluation criteria, but an overall judgement by the consultants. Relevance and effectiveness, however, will be considered as critical criteria. This means that the aggregated rating for Attainment of objectives and results may not be higher than the lowest rating on either of these two criteria.

Ratings on sustainability. According to the GEF Office of Evaluation, all the dimensions of sustainability are deemed critical. Therefore, the overall rating for sustainability will not be higher than the lowest rating on the separate dimensions.

Ratings of monitoring and evaluation. The M&E system will be rated on M&E design, M&E plan implementation, and budgeting and funding for M&E activities (the latter sub-criterion is covered in the main report under M&E design) as follows:

Highly Satisfactory (HS): There were no shortcomings in the project M&E system.

Satisfactory(S): There were minor shortcomings in the project M&E system.

Moderately Satisfactory (MS): There were moderate shortcomings in the project M&E system.

Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): There were significant shortcomings in the project M&E system.

Unsatisfactory (U): There were major shortcomings in the project M&E system.

Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): The Project had no M&E system.

M&E plan implementation will be considered critical for the overall assessment of the M&E system. Thus, the overall rating for M&E will not be higher than the rating on M&E plan implementation.

Annex 3. Project costs and co-financing tables

Project Costs

Component/sub-	Estimated cost at	Actual Cost	Expenditure ratio
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component	design		(actual/planned)

Co-financing

Co financing (Type/Source)	IA own Financing (mill US\$)		Government (mill US\$)		Other* (mill US\$)		Total (mill US\$)		Total Disbursed (mill US\$)
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	
– Grants									
– Loans									
– Credits									
– Equity investme nts									
– In-kind support									
– Other (*) -									
TOTALS									

* This refers to contributions mobilized for the project from other multilateral agencies, bilateral development cooperation agencies, NGOs, the private sector and beneficiaries.

Annex 4. Quality Assessment of the Evaluation Report

All UNEP evaluation reports are subject to a quality assessment by the Evaluation Office. The quality assessment is used as a tool for providing structured feedback to the evaluation consultants. The quality of the draft evaluation report is assessed and rated against the following criteria:

GEF Report Quality Criteria	UNEP EO Assessment	Rating
A. Did the report present an assessment of relevant outcomes and achievement of project objectives in the context of the focal area program indicators if applicable?		
B. Was the report consistent and the evidence complete and convincing and were the ratings substantiated when used?		
C. Did the report present a sound assessment of sustainability of outcomes?		
D. Were the lessons and recommendations supported by the evidence presented?		
E. Did the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?		
F. Did the report include an assessment of the quality of the project M&E system and its use for project management?		
UNEP additional Report Quality Criteria		
G. Quality of the lessons: Were lessons readily applicable in other contexts? Did they suggest prescriptive action?		
H. Quality of the recommendations: Did recommendations specify the actions necessary to correct existing conditions or improve operations ('who?' 'what?' 'where?' 'when?'). Can they be implemented? Did the recommendations specify a goal and an associated performance indicator?		
I. Was the report well written? (clear English language and grammar)		
J. Did the report structure follow EOU guidelines, were all requested Annexes included?		
K. Were all evaluation aspects specified in the TORs adequately addressed?		

L. Was the report delivered in a timely manner		
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$$\text{Quality} = (2*(0.3*(A + B) + 0.1*(C+D+E+F)) + 0.3*(G + H) + 0.1*(I+J+K+L))/3$$

The Totals are rounded and converted to the scale of HS to HU

Rating system for quality of Terminal Evaluation reports: A number rating between 1 and 6 is used for each criterion: Highly Satisfactory = 6, Satisfactory = 5, Moderately Satisfactory = 4, Moderately Unsatisfactory = 3, Unsatisfactory = 2, Highly Unsatisfactory = 1.

Annex 5. Documentation list for the evaluation to be provided by UNEP/GEF

- Project design documents
- Project supervision plan, with associated budget
- Correspondence related to project
- Supervision mission reports
- Steering Committee meeting documents, including agendas, meeting minutes, and any summary reports
- Project progress reports, including financial reports submitted
- Cash advance requests documenting disbursements
- Annual Project Implementation Reports (PIRs)
- Mid-term Evaluation and associated action plans, (if any)
- Management memos related to project
- Other documentation of supervision feedback on project outputs and processes (e.g. comments on draft progress reports, etc.).
- Extension documentation. Has a project extension occurred?
- Project revision documentation.
- Budget revision documentation.
- Project Terminal Report (draft if final version not available)

Annex 6. Introduction to Theory of Change / Impact pathways, the ROTI Method and the ROTI Results Score sheet

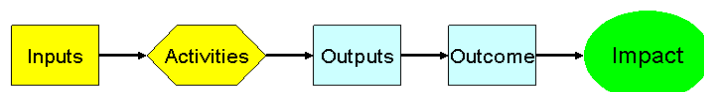
Terminal evaluations of projects are conducted at, or shortly after, project completion. At this stage it is normally possible to assess the achievement of the project's outputs. However, the possibilities for evaluation of the project's outcomes are often more limited and the feasibility of assessing project **impacts** at this time is usually severely constrained. Full impacts often accrue only after considerable time-lags, and it is common for there to be a lack of long-term baseline and monitoring information to aid their evaluation. Consequently, substantial resources are often needed to support the extensive primary field data collection required for assessing impact and there are concomitant practical difficulties because project resources are seldom available to support the assessment of such impacts when they have accrued – often several years after completion of activities and closure of the project.

Despite these difficulties, it is possible to enhance the scope and depth of information available from Terminal Evaluations on the achievement of results **through rigorous review of project progress along the pathways from outcome to impact**. Such reviews identify the sequence of conditions and factors deemed necessary for project outcomes to yield impact and assess the current status of and future prospects for results. In evaluation literature these relationships can be variously described as 'Theories of Change', Impact 'Pathways', 'Results Chains', 'Intervention logic', and 'Causal Pathways' (to name only some!).

Theory of Change (ToC) / impact pathways

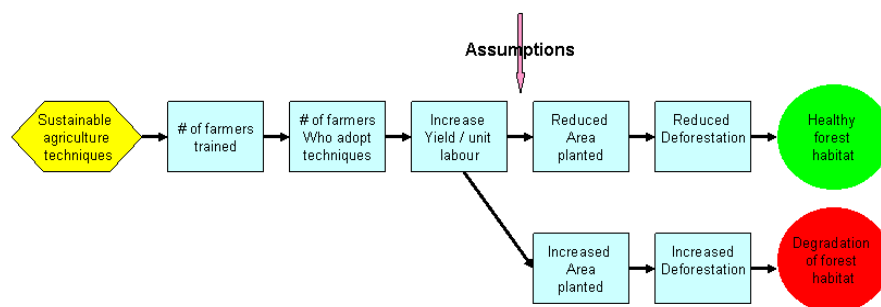
Figure 1 shows a generic impact pathway which links the standard elements of project logical frameworks in a graphical representation of causal linkages. When specified with more detail, for example including the key users of outputs, the processes (the arrows) that lead to outcomes and with details of performance indicators, analysis of impact pathways can be invaluable as a tool for both project planning and evaluation.

Figure 1. A generic results chain, which can also be termed an 'Impact Pathway' or Theory of Change.



The pathways summarise casual relationships and help identify or clarify the assumptions in the intervention logic of the project. For example, in the Figure 2 below the eventual impact depends upon the behaviour of the farmers in using the new agricultural techniques they have learnt from the training. The project design for the intervention might be based on the upper pathway assuming that the farmers can now meet their needs from more efficient management of a given area therefore reducing the need for an expansion of cultivated area and ultimately reducing pressure on nearby forest habitat, whereas the evidence gathered in the evaluation may in some locations follow the lower of the two pathways; the improved farming methods offer the possibility for increased profits and create an incentive for farmers to cultivate more land resulting in clearance or degradation of the nearby forest habitat.

Figure 2. An impact pathway / TOC for a training intervention intended to aid forest conservation.



The GEF Evaluation Office has recently developed an approach that builds on the concepts of theory of change / causal chains / impact pathways. The method is known as Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI)⁶² and has three distinct stages:

- a. Identifying the project's intended impacts
- b. Review of the project's logical framework
- c. Analysis and modelling of the project's outcomes-impact pathways

The **identification of the projects intended impacts** should be possible from the 'objectives' statements specified in the official project document. The next stage is to **review the project's logical framework** to assess whether the design of the project is consistent with, and appropriate for, the delivery of the intended impact. The method requires verification of the causal logic between the different hierarchical levels of the logical framework moving 'backwards' from impacts through outcomes to the outputs; the activities level is not formally considered in the ROtI method⁶³. The aim of this stage is to develop an understanding of the causal logic of the project intervention and to identify the key 'impact pathways'. In reality such process are often complex; they often involve multiple actors and decision-processes and are subject to time-lags, meaning that project impact often accrue long after the completion of project activities.

The third stage involves analysis of the 'impact pathways' that link project outcomes to impacts. The pathways are analysed in terms of the '**assumptions**' and '**impact drivers**' that underpin the processes involved in the transformation of outcomes to impacts via **intermediate states** (see Figure 3). Project outcomes are the direct intended results stemming from the outputs, and they are likely to occur either towards the end of the project or in the short term following project completion. **Intermediate states** are the transitional conditions between the project's immediate outcomes and the intended impact. They are necessary conditions for the achievement of the intended impacts and there may be more than one intermediate state between the immediate project outcome and the eventual impact.

Impact drivers are defined as the significant factors that if present are expected to contribute to the realization of the intended impacts and **can be influenced** by the project / project partners & stakeholders. **Assumptions** are the significant factors that if present are expected to contribute to the realization of the intended impacts but are largely **beyond the control of the project** / project partners & stakeholders. The impact drivers and assumptions are ordinarily considered in Terminal Evaluations when assessing the sustainability of the project.

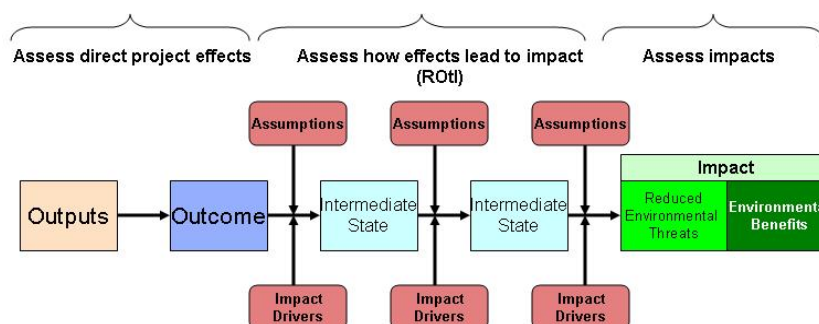
Since project logical frameworks do not often provide comprehensive information on the processes by which project outputs yield outcomes and eventually lead, via 'intermediate states' to impacts, the impact pathways need to be carefully examined and the following questions addressed:

- Are there other causal pathways that would stem from the use of project outputs by other potential user groups?
- Is (each) impact pathway complete? Are there any missing intermediate states between project outcomes and impacts?
- Have the key impact drivers and assumptions been identified for each 'step' in the impact pathway.

Figure 3. A schematic 'impact pathway' showing intermediate states, assumptions and impact drivers (adapted from GEF EO 2009).

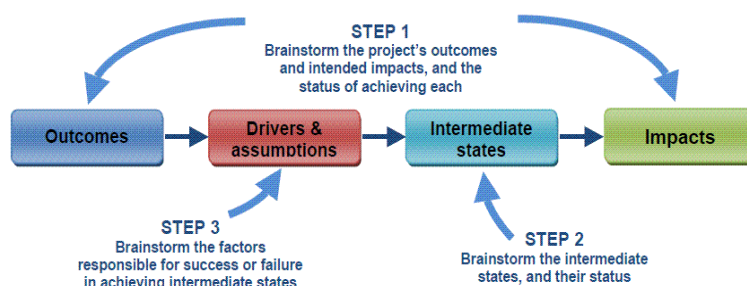
⁶² GEF Evaluation Office (2009). ROtI: Review of Outcomes to Impacts Practitioners Handbook. http://www.gefweb.org/uploadedFiles/Evaluation_Office/OPS4/Roti%20Practitioners%20Handbook%2015%20June%202009.pdf

⁶³ Evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources to generate outputs is already a major focus within UNEP Terminal Evaluations.



The process of identifying the impact pathways and specifying the impact drivers and assumptions can be done as a desk exercise by the evaluator or, preferably, as a group exercise, led by the evaluator with a cross-section of project stakeholders as part of an evaluation field mission or both. Ideally, the evaluator would have done a desk-based assessment of the project's theory of change and then use this understanding to facilitate a group exercise. The group exercise is best done through collective discussions to develop a visual model of the impact pathways using a card exercise. The component elements (outputs, outcomes, impact drivers, assumptions intended impacts etc.) of the impact pathways are written on individual cards and arranged and discussed as a group activity. Figure 4 below shows the suggested sequence of the group discussions needed to develop the ToC for the project.

Figure 4. Suggested sequencing of group discussions (from GEF EO 2009)



Once the theory of change model for the project is complete the evaluator can assess the design of the project intervention and collate evidence that will inform judgments on the extent and effectiveness of implementation, through the evaluation process. Performance judgments are made always noting that project contexts can change and that adaptive management is required during project implementation.

The ROTI method requires ratings for outcomes achieved by the project and the progress made towards the 'intermediate states' at the time of the evaluation. According the GEF guidance on the method; "*The rating system is intended to recognize project preparation and conceptualization that considers its own assumptions, and that seeks to remove barriers to future scaling up and out. Projects that are a part of a long-term process need not at all be "penalized" for not achieving impacts in the lifetime of the project: the system recognizes projects' forward thinking to eventual impacts, even if those impacts are eventually achieved by other partners and stakeholders, albeit with achievements based on present day, present project building blocks.*" For example, a project receiving an "AA" rating appears likely to deliver impacts, while for a project receiving a "DD" this would seem unlikely, due to low achievement in outcomes and the limited likelihood of achieving the intermediate states needed for eventual impact (see Table 1).

Table 1. Rating scale for outcomes and progress towards 'intermediate states'

Outcome Rating	Rating on progress toward Intermediate States
D: The project's intended outcomes were not delivered	D: No measures taken to move towards intermediate states.
C: The project's intended outcomes were delivered, but were not designed to feed into a continuing process after project funding	C: The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started, but have not produced results.
B: The project's intended outcomes were delivered, and were designed to feed into a continuing process, but with no prior allocation of responsibilities after project funding	B: The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started and have produced results, which give no indication that they can progress towards the intended long term impact.
A: The project's intended outcomes were delivered, and were designed to feed into a continuing process, with specific allocation of responsibilities after project funding.	A: The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started and have produced results, which clearly indicate that they can progress towards the intended long term impact.

Thus a project will end up with a two letter rating e.g. AB, CD, BB etc. In addition the rating is given a '+' notation if

there is evidence of impacts accruing within the life of the project. The possible rating permutations are then translated onto the usual six point rating scale used in all UNEP project evaluations in the following way.

Table 2. Shows how the ratings for 'achievement of outcomes' and 'progress towards intermediate states translate to ratings for the 'Overall likelihood of impact achievement' on a six point scale.

Highly Likely	Likely	Moderately Likely	Moderately Unlikely	Unlikely	Highly Unlikely
AA AB BA CA BB+ CB+ DA+ DB+	BB CB DA DB AC+ BC+	AC BC CC+ DC+	CC DC AD+ BD+	AD BD CD+ DD+	CD DD

In addition, projects that achieve documented changes in environmental status during the project's lifetime receive a positive impact rating, indicated by a "+". The overall likelihood of achieving impacts is shown in Table 11 below (a + score above moves the double letter rating up one space in the 6-point scale).

The ROTI method provides a basis for comparisons across projects through application of a rating system that can indicate the expected impact. However it should be noted that whilst this will provide a relative scoring for all projects assessed, it does not imply that the results from projects can necessarily be aggregated. Nevertheless, since the approach yields greater clarity in the 'results metrics' for a project, opportunities where aggregation of project results might be possible can more readily be identified.

Results rating of project entitled:							
		Rating (D – A)		Rating (D – A)		Rating (+)	Overall
Outputs	Outcomes		Intermediary		Impact (GEBs)		
1.	1.		1.		1.		
2.	2.		2.		2.		
3.	3.		3.		3.		
	Rating justification:		Rating justification:		Rating justification:		

Scoring Guidelines

The achievement of **Outputs** is largely assumed. Outputs are such concrete things as training courses held, numbers of persons trained, studies conducted, networks established, websites developed, and many others. Outputs reflect where and for what project funds were used. These were not rated: projects generally succeed in spending their funding.

Outcomes, on the other hand, are the first level of intended results stemming from the outputs. Not so much the number of persons trained; but how many persons who then demonstrated that they have gained the intended knowledge or skills. Not a study conducted; but one that could change the evolution or development of the project. Not so much a network of NGOs established; but that the network showed potential for functioning as intended. A sound outcome might be genuinely improved strategic planning in SLM stemming from workshops, training courses, and networking.

Examples

Funds were spent, outputs were produced, but nothing in terms of outcomes was achieved. People attended training courses but there is no evidence of increased capacity. A website was developed, but no one used it. (Score – D)

Outcomes achieved but are dead ends; no forward linkages to intermediary stages in the future. People attended training courses, increased their capacities, but all left for other jobs shortly after; or were not given opportunities to apply their new skills. A website was developed and was used, but achieved little or nothing of what was intended because users had no resources or incentives to apply the tools and methods proposed on the website in their job. (Score – C)

Outcomes plus implicit linkages forward. Outcomes achieved and have *implicit forward linkages* to intermediary stages and impacts. Collaboration as evidenced by meetings and decisions made among a loose network is documented that should lead to better planning. Improved capacity is in place and should lead to desired intermediate outcomes. Providing implicit linkages to intermediary stages is probably the most common case when outcomes have been achieved. (Score - B)

Outcomes plus explicit linkages forward. Outcomes have *definite and explicit forward linkages* to intermediary stages and impacts. An alternative energy project may result in solar panels installed that reduced reliance on local wood fuels, with the outcome quantified in terms of reduced C emissions. Explicit forward linkages are easy to recognize in being concrete, but are relatively uncommon. (Score A)

Intermediary stages:

The **intermediate stage** indicates achievements that lead to Global Environmental Benefits, especially if the potential for scaling up is established.

“Outcomes” scored C or D. If the outcomes above scored C or D, there is no need to continue forward to score intermediate stages given that achievement of such is then not possible.

In spite of outcomes and implicit linkages, and follow-up actions, the project dead-ends. Although outcomes achieved have *implicit forward linkages* to intermediary stages and impacts, the project dead-ends. Outcomes turn out to be insufficient to move the project towards intermediate stages and to the eventual achievement of GEBs. Collaboration as evidenced by meetings and among participants in a network never progresses further. The implicit linkage based on follow-up never materializes. Although outcomes involve, for example, further participation and discussion, such actions do not take the project forward towards intended intermediate impacts. People have fun getting together and talking more, but nothing, based on the implicit forwards linkages, actually eventuates. (Score = D)

The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started, but have not produced result, barriers and/or unmet assumptions may still exist. In spite of sound outputs and in spite of explicit forward linkages, there is limited possibility of intermediary stage achievement due to barriers not removed or unmet assumptions. This may be the fate of several policy related, capacity building, and networking projects: people work together, but fail to develop a way forward towards concrete results, or fail to successfully address inherent barriers. The project may increase ground cover and or carbon stocks, may reduce grazing or GHG emissions; and may have project level recommendations regarding scaling up; but barrier removal or the addressing of fatal assumptions means that scaling up remains limited and unlikely to be achieved at larger scales. Barriers can be policy and institutional limitations; (mis-) assumptions may have to do with markets or public – private sector relationships. (Score = C)

Barriers and assumptions are successfully addressed. Intermediary stage(s) planned or conceived have feasible direct and explicit forward linkages to impact achievement; barriers and assumptions are successfully addressed. The project achieves measurable intermediate impacts, and works to scale up and out, but falls well short of scaling up to global levels such that achievement of GEBs still lies in doubt. (Score = B)

Scaling up and out over time is possible. Measurable intermediary stage impacts achieved, scaling up to global levels and the achievement of GEBs appears to be well in reach over time. (Score = A)

Impact: Actual changes in environmental status

“Intermediary stages” scored B to A.

Measurable impacts achieved at a globally significant level within the project life-span. . (Score = ‘+’)

Annex 2: Evaluation Program

Missions by Evaluation Team Members

Team Leader Dr Ian K Crain

From home base in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada:

Date	Location	Activity
26/09/2012		Travel from Ottawa to London & Cambridge
27/09/2012 to 02/10/2012	Cambridge, UK	Consultations with EA - UNEP-WCMC, as well as INTRAC, and UK NFP, and making meeting arrangements with UNCCD
03/10/2012		Travel to Bonn, Germany
04/10/2012 to 05/10/2012	Bonn, Germany	Consultations with UNCCD Secretariat and CRIC. Also German NFP, and GM (by telephone)
06/10/2012		Travel to Nairobi, Kenya
07/10/2012 to 10/10/2012	Nairobi, Kenya	Consultations with UNEP (EO, GEF Coordination, Task Manager, Fund Management Office). Interviews with Kenyan NFP at NEMA, and RC at IGAD/ICPAC.
11/10/2012		Return travel to Ottawa

Persons contacted by the Team Leader:

Name	Organization	Location	Via
Jon Hutton	Director, UNEP-WCMC	Cambridge, UK	In person
Jessica Smith	PRAIS Project Manager, UNEP-WCMC	Cambridge, UK	In person
Dr. Matt Walpole	Head, Ecosystem Assessment Programme, UNEP-WCMC	Cambridge, UK	In person
Murielle Misrachi	Assistant Programme Officer, Ecosystem Assessment Programme, UNEP-WCMC	Cambridge, UK	In person
Dr Björn Schulte-Herbrüggen	Programme Officer - Ecosystem Assessment Programme, UNEP-WCMC	Cambridge, UK	In person
Alex Gee	Head of the Project Coordination Unit, UNEP-WCMC	Cambridge, UK	In person
Philip Bubb	Senior Programme Officer, Ecosystem Assessment, UNEP-WCMC	Cambridge, UK	In person
Jeremy Harrison	Head of Programme, International Policy and Strategy UNEP-WCMC	Cambridge, UK	In person
Peter Herkenrath	Senior Programme Officer, Multilateral Environmental Agreements, UNEP-WCMC	Cambridge, UK	In person
Paula Haddock	Training Manager, International NGO Training and Research Centre	Oxford, UK	telephone
Rachel Hemingway	UK Dept of for F and International Development, UK National Focal Point	Glasgow, Scotland	telephone

Shehrzad Sedigh	Canada International Development Agency, NFP for Canada	Ottawa, Canada	telephone
Luc Gnacadja	Executive Secretary, UNCCD Secretariat	Bonn, Germany	In person
Massimo Candelori	Coordinator, Facilitation & Monitoring of Implementation Unit, UNCCD Secretariat	Bonn, Germany	In person
Anja Thust	Secretary to the CRIC, CRIC	Bonn, Germany	In person
Andre Neves	IT Specialist, FCMI Unit, UNCCD Secretariat	Bonn, Germany	In person
Marcos Montoiro	NGO and Civil Society Liaison, UNCCD Secretariat	Bonn, Germany	In person
Rui Zheng	Regional Coordination Function, UNCCD Secretariat	Bonn, Germany	In person
Richard Byron-Cox	Capacity Building Officer, Regional Coordination Function, UNCCD Secretariat	Bonn, Germany	In person
Jamal Annagylyjova	Program Officer, Regional Coordination Unit, UNCCD Secretariat	Bonn, Germany	In person
Georg Richarz,	GIZ, responsible for submitting German National Report for NFP	Bonn, Germany	telephone
Dr Stefan Schmitz	German Fed Ministry of Economic Coop and Development (BMZ), German NFP	Bonn, Germany	telephone
Christina Wollesen	Global Mechanism	Rome, Italy	telephone
Segbedzi Norgbey	Director Evaluation Office, UNEP	Nairobi, Kenya	In person
Pauline Marima	Evaluation Office, UNEP	Nairobi, Kenya	In person
Maryam Niamir-Fuller	GEF Coordination Office, UNEP	Nairobi, Kenya	In person
Adamou Bouhari	(PRAIS TM), Task Manager Biodiversity, UNEP	Nairobi, Kenya	In person
Rodney Vorley	Fund Management Officer, UNEP	Nairobi, Kenya	In person
Michael Carbon	Evaluation Office, UNEP	Nairobi, Kenya	In person
Prof. Laban Ogallo	Director IGAD (PRAIS Reference Centre)	Nairobi, Kenya	In person
Prof Richard Odingo	University of Nairobi (advisor to IGAD/IVPAC)	Nairobi, Kenya	In person
Zachary Atheru	Programme Officer, IGAD	Nairobi, Kenya	In person
Ali Lavonga	Remote Sensing Officer, ICPAC	Nairobi, Kenya	In person
Inganga Francis	Chief Environmental Research Officer, NEMA (Kenyan NFP)	Nairobi, Kenya	In person

Supporting Consultant Segundo Coello

From home base in Quito, Ecuador:

Date	Location	Activity
07/10/2012		Travel from Quito to Santiago (Chile)

08/10/2012 to 09/10/2012	Santiago, Chile	Interviews with CEPAL, Regional Coordination Unit of UNCCD and Chile's National Focal Point
09/10/2012		Return travel to Quito
15/10/2012		Travel from Quito to San José (Costa Rica)
16/10/2012	Turrialba, Costa Rica San José, Costa Rica	Interview with CATIE Interview with Costa Rica's National Focal Point
17/10/2012		Return travel to Quito

Persons contacted by Supporting Consultant:

Name	Organization	Location	Via
Heitor Matallo	Programme Officer – Regional Coordination Unit for LAC, UNCCD	Santiago, Chile	In person
Jacob Acevedo	Associate Programme Officer – Regional Coordination Unit for LAC, UNCCD	Santiago, Chile	In person
Guillermo Dascal	Consultant. División de Desarrollo Sostenible y Asentamientos Humanos. Comisión Económica para América Latina (CEPAL)	Santiago, Chile	In person
Wilfredo Alfaro	National Focal Point of the UNCCD Convention. Corporación Nacional Forestal (CONAF)	Santiago, Chile	In person
Cristóbal Villanueva	Programa Ganadería y Manejo del Medio Ambiente (GAMMA). Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza (CATIE)	Turrialba, Costa Rica	In person
Ibrahim Muhammad	Líder. Programa Ganadería y Manejo del Medio Ambiente (GAMMA). Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza (CATIE)	Turrialba, Costa Rica	SKYPE
Jesús Mariano Espinoza Camacho	National Focal Point of the UNCCD Convention. Miembro Comisión Nacional Degradación Tierras. Ministerio de Ambiente, Energía y Telecomunicaciones	San José, Costa Rica	In person
Renato Jiménez	Miembro Comisión Nacional Degradación Tierras. Jefe Departamento de Suelos. Instituto Nacional de Innovación y Transferencia de Tecnología Agropecuaria (INTA)	San José, Costa Rica	In person
José Eduardo González Estrella	Scientific Focal Point of the UNCCD Convention. Ministerio del Ambiente	Quito, Ecuador	In person

Annex 3: References

This Annex lists the documents specifically referenced in the text of the Terminal Evaluation.

1. The 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018), (3/COP.8)
2. Inception Report UNCCD PRAIS project, “Enabling a paradigm shift on monitoring and assessment within the UNCCD” (FINAL - 16.08.2010)
3. Report of the Conference of the Parties on its ninth session, held in Buenos Aires from 21 September to 2 October 2009, Decision 13/COP.9.
4. UNEP Project Document, Enabling paradigm shift on monitoring and assessment within the UNCCD, approved 17 March, 2010
5. UNEP Evaluation Manual, <http://www.unep.org/eou/StandardsPolicyandPractices/UNEPEvaluationManual/tabid/2314/language/en-US/Default.aspx>
6. Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluations, http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/TE_guidelines7-31.pdf
7. UNCCD PRAIS Training of Trainers, Workshop Report, 31 May – 4 June 2010 Rome, Italy
8. Survey on challenges and constraints faced during the 2010 reporting and review process by country Parties that had not submitted their 4th national reports to the UNCCD by 25 February 2011, Saša Cvijetic, UNEP-WCMC, February – March 2011
9. From a Qualitative to an Indicator-based Monitoring and Assessment System for the UNCCD: Preliminary Lessons Learned from the PRAIS Project, Herkenrath P., Mapendembe A., Perez L. and Smith J, UNEP-WCMC: Cambridge, UK. (2011).
10. Consideration of the iterative process relating to the assessment of implementation, including performance indicators, methodology and the reporting procedures, Note by the Secretariat to CRIC9. ICCD/CRIC(9)/10
11. The UNCCD Impact Indicators Pilot Tracking Exercise: Results and Conclusions Schulte-Herbruggen, B, Mapendembe A , Booth, H, Jacques, M & Smith, J (2012) ... UNEP-WCMC Cambridge.
12. Report of the Meeting of the Bureau of the Committee for the Review of Implementation of the Convention (Bonn, Germany 17-18 February 2012), para 10
13. Fostering evidence-based decision-making in UNCCD implementation: Initial results from PRAIS reports in 2010, PRAIS Briefing Document No. 2, Figure1.
14. United Nations Environment Programme, Medium-Term Strategy 2010–2013, UNEP/GCSS.X/
15. GEF-5 Focal Area Strategies, www.thegef.org/files/document/GEF-5_FOCAL_AREA_STRATEGIES.pdf
16. The UNCCD's Performance Review and Assessment of the Implementation System (PRAIS): Generating country-driven baseline information to combat Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought, Poster paper presented at European Science Foundation Conference on Dryland ecosystem functioning and resilience, July 2011.
17. Progress Report on activities of PRAIS Reference Centres at the regional and sub-regional level, UNEP-WCMC, 01 September 2010.
18. The UNCCD Impact Indicators Pilot Tracking Exercise: Results and Conclusions, UNEP-WCMC and UNCCD, Cambridge UK, January 2012.
19. PRAIS Briefing Documents. 1. Process -Realising a paradigm shift in monitoring and assessment within the UNCCD, 2. Results - Fostering evidence-based decision-making in UNCCD implementation: Initial results from PRAIS reports in 2010, 3. Lessons - Implementing a new monitoring and assessment system for the UNCCD: Lessons Learned from the PRAIS Project
20. Enabling a paradigm shift on monitoring and assessment within the UNCCD, Project Final Report, October 2012.

Annex 4: Project costs and co-financing tables

Project Costs (based on the figures reported to UNEP/GEF up to 30 June 2012)

Source UNEP-WCMC Project Coordination Unit

UNEP Line	Component/sub-component	Estimated cost at design	Actual Cost	Expenditure ratio (actual/planned)
Component 1: Situational Analysis and Reporting Process Design				
Output 1.1: Sets of harmonized indicators for performance assessment of the implementation of UNCCD at national, sub-regional regional and global levels				
3301	Inception - first TAG and SC meeting with Consultative meeting on guidance documents with experts and regional partners	12,000	14,206.61	118%
5201	Preparation and dissemination of indicators (after review, in 1.3)	3,500	3,580.13	102%
Output 1.2: Finalized Guidelines for reporting of baseline and best practices (using the COP 9 approved harmonized performance indicators and guidance's at national, sub-regional, regional and global levels)				
5202	Preparation and dissemination of baseline assessment guidelines	3,500	3,580.13	102%
Output 1.3: Contribution to the production of a glossary and a guide for implementing performance indicators				
1201	Review of the indicators, guidelines, glossary and guide (with 1.1 and 1.2)	23,200	23,233.19	100%
5203	Preparation and dissemination of glossary and guide	5,000	5,114.48	102%
Output 1.4: Finalized format/template for preparation of 4th National reports				
1202	Review and consultation on the format/template	24,000	27,119.6	113%
5204	Preparation and dissemination of format/template for reporting	8,000	8,183.16	102%
Output 1.5: Training modules and guidelines for data collection for baseline assessment				
1203	Consultant to prepare and pilot training modules including use of guidelines (with 1.6)	28,000	29,746.21	106%

1204	Translation of training modules and all materials (glossary, guide, template/format) into 6 UN languages	35,000	41,264.92	118%
5205	Preparation and dissemination of training modules and data collection guidelines	12,800	13,093.06	102%
4301 (ex 5206)	Internet presence and communications	4,000	3,140.46	79%
Output 1.6: Training in use of format/template for 4th National Reports, through sub-regional workshops, Regional support for training activities				
1104	ToT Training of regional, sub-regional trainers (with 1.5); plus support	116,000	120,750	104%
1104	ToT expenses inc workshop	143,000	120,750	84%
Component total		418,000	413,762	99%
Component 2: Assessment of current baseline, synthesis and preparation of reports at national, sub-regional, regional and global levels				
Output 2.1: A comprehensive monitoring and assessment system for the UNCCD for periodic monitoring and assessment of performance (every 2 years)				
1207	Development of monitoring and situation assessment system for UNCCD including global, regional, national considerations and piloting at global level	136,000	132,892.01	98%
1601	Pilot assessment and global assessment	40,000	40,484.94	101%
1208 (ex 1105)	Piloting at national level of portal (by Regional Centres); customisation of training packages to regions	134,000	113,944.66	85%
3302	Review conference/workshop on monitoring and assessment methods (for all levels)	50,000	50,403.89	101%
Output 2.2: Performance indicators-based reports of baseline situations at national, sub-regional, regional and global levels				
1206	Training delivered at regional/sub-regional levels on PRAIS (with Reporting, Output 1.6)	100,000	106,921.75	107%
1602 (ex 1600)	Travel and subsistence for regional trainers	150,000	148,684.72	99%
1603 (ex 1600)	Regional coordinators' travel and subsistence	150,000	149,000.61	99%
1104	Supporting Baseline assessment at	224,000	241,500	108%

	regional/sub-regional level; combined with support to attend training			
1208 (ex 1105)	UNCCD Secretariat to coordinate the syntheses; 1 regional consultant per RTI to coordinate synthesis	55,000	55,000	100%
Output 2.3: 4th National reports; Synthesis reports on sub-regional, regional and global assessment of UNCCD implementation under the guidance of UNCCD Secretariat				
1210/5502	Compilation and analysis of showcase examples and process experience; Project Final evaluation and Auditing	64,000	44,824.03	70%
3304	3rd TAG and SC meeting	12,000	12,028.64	100%
1604	PMU travel to CRIC	20,000	20,066.92	100%
3305	Side event at CRIC	10,000	10,973.17	110%
Component total		1,145,000	1,126,725	98%
Component 3: Knowledge Management System, M&E and Dissemination				
Output 3.1: Comprehensive capacity building framework for reporting UNCCD implementation available by end of 2010				
1216	Capacity needs assessment [Global Technical Advisor]	24,000	18,223.35	76%
1217	Consultation and feedback on proposed capacity strategy [Global Technical Advisor]	32,000	31,383.83	98%
Output 3.2: Web-site portal and software developed at national or sub-regional level for storage and retrieval of information on base line data, indicators, reporting guidelines and tools, best practices, and lessons learned				
4103 (ex 4201)	PRAIS portal and software development and revisions	200,000	192,182.32	96%
1205	Translation of web portal and software into 6 UN languages / technical aspects on web esp for Chinese, Arabic	100,000	67,277.12	67%
4202	Equipment; software licensing; Any computers at demonstration sites of web portals and other necessary soft/hardware for portals to operate in countries	128,334	94,026.17	73%
3203	Regional training on portals delivered (including travel and subsistence); WITH INDICATORS TRAINING (plus finalisation of materials in 2011 for next round)	96,000	96,726.11	101%
4302 (ex	KM internet and communications expenses	60,000	71,433.33	119%

5207)				
Output 3.3: Appropriate framework for assessing and reporting of performance and impact developed				
1219	Analysis of lessons and preparation of guidance	66,400	65,397.22	98%
3306	2nd and SC meeting	12,000	12,274.75	102%
5208	Preparation and dissemination of lessons (draft and final)	12,720	6,069.32	48%
Component total		731,454	654,994	90%
Component 4: Project Management				
Output 4.1: All project activities are completed satisfactorily leading to full and timely achievement of project objectives				
5301	Communications, knowledge management & postage	7,500	1,701.54	23%
4203 (ex 4303)	Computers and equipment for PMU	7,500	4,684.56	62%
Project management unit and secretariat to the SC:				
1101	Project technical direction and coordination at global level: Responsibility to SC and TAG (15% of time to project coordination)	144,000	142,521.82	99%
1102	Technical support on assessment, reporting and capacity	48,000	46,590.1	97%
1103	Administrative and coordination support at global level	36,000	31,154.79	87%
1605	PMU travel and subsistence for monitoring project activities, other meetings	8,000	8216.23	103%
Component total		251,000	234,869	94%
TOTAL (US\$)		2,545,254	2,430,350	95%

Co-financing

Co financing (Type/Source)	IA own Financing (mill US\$)		Government (mill US\$)		Other* (mill US\$)		Total (mill US\$)		Total Disbursed (mill US\$)
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	
– Grants									
– Loans									
– Credits									
– Equity investments									
– In-kind support			2,450,000	2,586,000	2,500,000	2,682,000	4,950,000	5,268,000	5,268,000
– Other (*)									
– Cash	50,000	211,000			400,000	1,822,118.65	450,000	2,033,118.65	2,033,118.65
TOTALS	50,000	211,000	2,450,000	2,586,000	2,900,00	4,504,118.65	5,400,000	7,301,118.65	7,301,118.65

* This refers to contributions mobilized for the project from other multilateral agencies, bilateral development cooperation agencies, NGOs, the private sector and beneficiaries.

Annex 5: Survey of the experience of National Focal Points with the PRAIS Portal and reporting tools

INTRODUCTION

As part of the Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP GEF Project "Enabling a Paradigm Shift Towards Monitoring and Assessment within the UNCCD" (here on the PRAIS Project), an online survey was sent to National Focal Points (NFP) to have their opinion regarding the experience with the PRAIS project. This annex presents the results of the survey.

The Parties of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) adopted a performance review and assessment of implementation system (PRAIS) that was introduced in 2010. The new system is based on an indicator-based report template supported by reporting tools (e.g., reporting manual and guidelines) and a web portal (i.e., www.unccd-prais.com). The reporting tools and online reporting facilities were developed by the PRAIS project.

RCs were executing partners in the PRAIS project. They implemented training and backstopping activities in support of Parties during the 2010 reporting cycle to facilitate using the PRAIS templates, guidelines and web portal (here on the PRAIS portal). The RCs selected centres were those likely to continue playing a key role in the reporting process past the 2010 pilot.

NFPs received training and support from RCs during the 2010 reporting cycle, when PRAIS reporting and tools were introduced.

METHODOLOGY

A Questionnaire with closed-ended multiple-choice questions were prepared for NFPs and uploaded to the Survey Monkey platform⁶⁴ (it was set up to collect anonymous responses) and submitted to interviewees for online response.

The questionnaire for NFPs had nine questions and focused on their experience with the reporting tools, the PRAIS portal and the support from the RC. An open-ended question was included to have feedback regarding the major limitations they experienced during the 2010 reporting cycle. The questions were:

Did you participate in the 2010 and 2012 reporting cycles?

- Only in 2010 reporting cycle
- Only in 2012 reporting cycle
- In both 2010 and 2012 reporting cycle

For the 2010 reporting cycle please rate how useful were the online reporting tools and PRAIS portal

- Did not use it
- Very useful
- Moderately useful
- Slightly useful
- Not at all useful

For the 2010 reporting cycle please indicate the three major limitations that you experienced.

For the 2012 reporting cycle, how much have the online reporting tools and PRAIS portal improved?

- A lot
- A little
- Not improved
- It has worsened

Please indicate what you use the PRAIS portal for:

- To submit reports YES NO
- To obtain information YES NO
- To share information YES NO

For the 2010 reporting cycle, having a Regional Centre to provide training and technical support was:

- Very useful
- Moderately useful
- Slightly useful
- Not at all useful

Please rate the training and technical support that you received from the Regional Centre for the 2010 reporting cycle

- Did not have support from a Regional Centre
- Very good
- Good
- Neutral

⁶⁴ www.surveymonkey.com

- Poor
- Very poor

Did you maintained interactions with the Regional Centre after the 2010 reporting cycle

- Very much
- Considerable
- Somewhat
- Little
- Not at all

How necessary is the support from a Regional Centre for the preparation of the reports.

- Extremely necessary
- Very necessary
- Moderately necessary
- Slightly necessary
- Not necessary

An electronic mail message was sent to the NFPs explaining the purpose of the survey and providing the link to connect to the online questionnaire. The text of the electronic mail was:

Dear Madam/Sir

The PRAIS Project is undergoing its terminal evaluation. The project was funded by the GEF and implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

The project focused on (i) the development of the reporting tools to communicate information required for the performance review and assessment of implementation (PRAIS) process, (ii) building capacities of Convention Parties for the preparation of the fourth national reports (2010), and (iii) setting up the on-line reporting site (PRAIS portal: www.unccd-prais.com).

The evaluation team has prepared a quick online survey to gather valuable opinions from the Convention National Focal Points. To answer the survey please go to the following link:

We will greatly appreciate if you could provide your feedback by Tuesday 30th of October.

In anticipation of your kind comments.

Respectfully yours,

Ian Crain and Segundo Coello

Terminal Evaluation Team

The online questionnaire was open from 23 October 2012 until 30 October 2012.

RESULTS

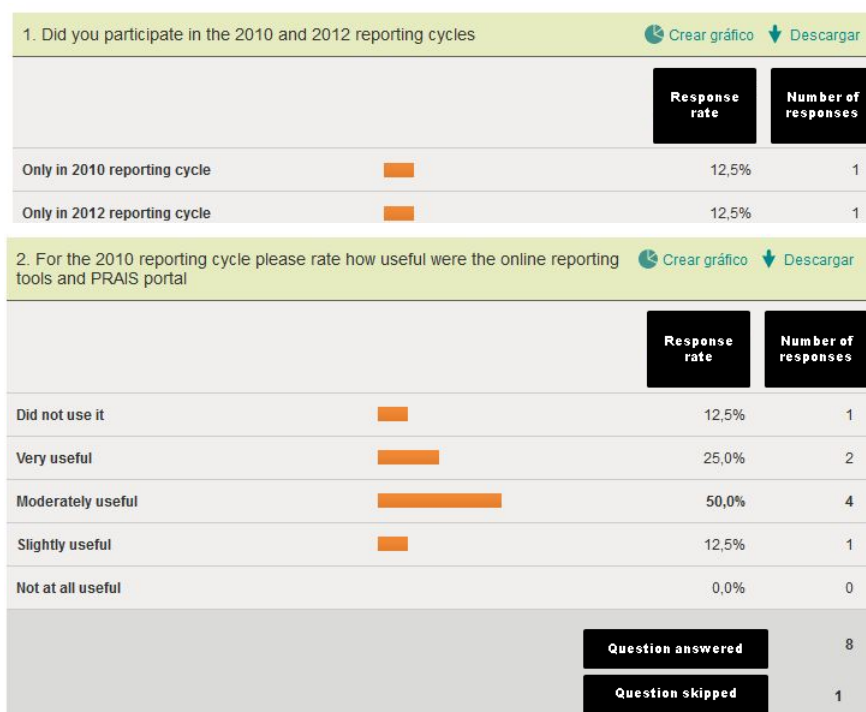
Two hundred forty nine electronic mails were sent (many NFPs had more than one electronic mail). Twenty five error messages were received, in which case the message was resent. Four out-of-office automatic responses were received.

One person responded that was no longer a NFP. Another person responded that could not respond the survey because it was in English.

There was a low response to the survey, only nine persons responded the online questionnaire.

Six out of eight persons participated in both 2010 and 2012 reporting cycle.

The usefulness of online reporting tools and PRAIS portal, during the 2010 reporting cycle, was ranked high.



The three main limitations during the 2010 reporting cycle were, in order of relevance:

FIRST

- Inability to delete already selected option
- It was not user-friendly.
- Technical problems with input
- The time available to develop the report
- Human resources at national level

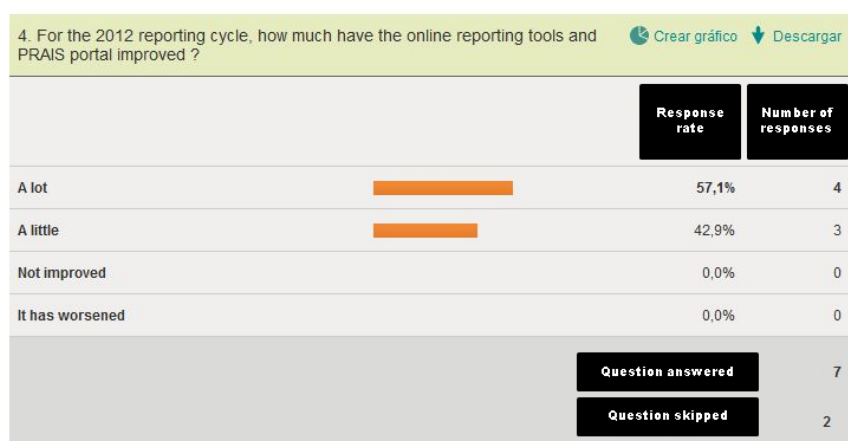
SECOND

- Very complicated submission of the report
- The website did not produce a report that could be easily understood by national stakeholders when it was printed out.
- No excel sheets for PPS and SFA
- The questions for 2008 and 2009 that we only know in 2011
- Cross sectoral coordination for reporting

THIRD

- The website constantly crashed.
- No possibility for usable data printout/pdf
- The time that we spend to access the PRAIS portal

The majority of NFPs that responded the survey mentioned that the online reporting tools and portal had improved for the 2012 reporting cycle.



The majority of NFPs that responded the survey indicated that the PRAIS portal is mostly used to submit reports and to obtain information:

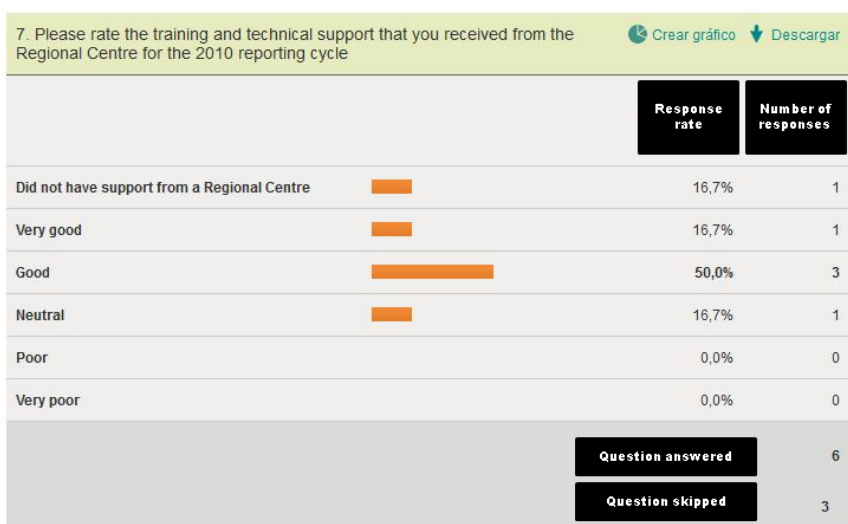
TO SUBMIT REPORTS: yes (7) no (1)

TO OBTAIN INFORMATION: yes (5) no (2)

TO SHARE INFORMATION: yes (1) no (6)

The support from the RCs was considered very useful and valuable. However a few NFPs maintained interaction with the RC after the 2010 reporting cycle.





Regarding the need of RC support, only one out of seven NFPs considered that this was not necessary.



Despite the small number of responses, the results are similar to what was found during in person interviews.

CONCLUSIONS

The responses from the NFPs are in line with the findings of the in person interviews.

NFPs had a number of difficulties during the 2010 reporting cycle, but this situation improved during the 2012 reporting cycle.

The main limitations reported are technical. However it was also mentioned (i) the effort needed to prepare the national report and (ii) that the template is not clearly understood by national stakeholders.

It was also mentioned that the PRAIS portal is seldom used to share information. Therefore it will be important that the portal develop facilities and tools to foster knowledge exchange.

The use of RCs was a functional mechanism, which NFPs considered useful and valuable. To support the on going process of change it might be useful to have a mechanism for sub-regional networking that facilitates the exchange of knowledge among NFPs.

Annex 6: Evaluation Team

Team Leader - Dr Ian K Crain

Dr. Ian Crain is a widely experienced international management consultant, policy advisor and project manager in the fields of resource and environmental information systems. The recipient of awards for excellence in science and public administration, his experience includes pioneering research in spatial information technology and a record of dedication and achievement in directing high technology organisations, policy development, capacity building, and the management and evaluation of international development projects. A career spanning more than 30 years has included the positions of Head of the famous Canada Geographic Information System (CGIS), founding Director of the UNEP's Global Resource Information System (GRID) in Nairobi, Director of Alberta's Land Related Information Systems project (LRIS), and Associate Professor in the Geomatics Engineering Department of the University of Calgary.

Dr. Crain is currently one of two Principals of the Orbis Institute, consulting to international agencies and governments on environmental policy and governance, information management and access, decision-making, database and GIS development and implementation, and related institutional strengthening and capacity building. Consulting projects have been conducted world-wide - for example, Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Canada, China, Chile, Indonesia, Kenya, Laos, Pakistan, Germany, Thailand, Vietnam and the UK - to provide policy advice, project management and evaluation in a range of application areas such as the environment, natural resource management, protected areas, sustainable development and land management, forest resources, State-of-the-Environment reporting, coastal zone management, biodiversity conservation, environmental governance, and international treaties and conventions.

Consulting clients have included, among others, the UN Office of Harmonization of Environmental Measurement, the World Conservation Monitoring Centre, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, United Nations Environment Programme, UN Economic Commission for Europe, Environment Canada, Canadian International Development Agency, Thai Royal Development Projects Office, North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation, the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat, Australian Department of Primary Industries and Energy, and the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs.

Dr. Crain has published widely on advanced spatial information systems, the evolving technology of information management, and environmental decision-making.

Supporting Consultant – Dr Segundo Coello

Dr Segundo Coello is a biologist with M.Sc. and Ph.D from Bangor University (UK). He has over 30 years experience working on sustainable development and natural resources management. He has worked in public, private and non-governmental sectors. He was the programme coordinator of the regional office for South America of the World Conservation Union (IUCN), headed the development unit of an oil company and was Undersecretary of Environment in Ecuador. In the latter years has worked with private financial institutions developing social responsibility systems and incentives to promote sustainable practices in micro, small and medium enterprises

He has been part of mid-term and final evaluation teams of a number of projects, including GEF projects, such as the terminal evaluation of the project "Control of invasive species in the Galapagos Archipelago" and the mid-term assessment of project "Institutional strengthening and systemic integration of sustainable development and biodiversity conservation in Galapagos (PROINGALA)".

Annex 7: Project Design Assessment

Relevance		Evaluation Comments	Prodoc reference
Are the intended results likely to contribute to UNEPs Expected Accomplishments and programmatic objectives?		HS Contributes to Climate Change a) Ecosystem Management a, b, c Environmental Governance a, b, c	Sec 2.5
Does the project form a coherent part of a UNEP-approved programme framework?		HS Clearly part of Ecosystem Management programme	Sec 2.1, 2.2
Is there complementarity with other UNEP projects, planned and ongoing, including those implemented under the GEF?		HS as above, compliments Ecosystem Management a, b, c and Environmental Governance a, b, c	Sec 2.1 - 2.7
Are the project's objectives and implementation strategies consistent with:	i) Sub-regional environmental issues and needs?	HS Directly addresses sub-regional needs for synthesized data for planning	Sec 2.4-2.7, 3.6, 3.6
	ii) the UNEP mandate and policies at the time of design and implementation?	HS Contributes to Climate Change a) and Ecosystem Management a, b, c	Sec 2.2, 2.4
	iii) the relevant GEF focal areas, strategic priorities and operational programme(s)? (if appropriate)	HS Priority LD, Operational programs LD-SP1, SP2 and SP3	Sec 1, 2.4, 2.5
	iv) Stakeholder priorities and needs?	HS	Sec 2.5
Overall rating for Relevance		HS	
Intended Results and Causality			
Are the objectives realistic?		HS Realistic and obtainable conceptually	Sec 3.2
Are the causal pathways from project outputs [goods and services] through outcomes [changes in stakeholder behaviour] towards impacts clearly and convincingly described? Is there a clearly presented Theory of Change or intervention logic for the project?		S The Theory of Change approach as recommended now was not in place at the time of this project design. However it is adequately addressed through a combination of the Logframe, Component descriptions and Results Framework	Sec 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, Logframe, and App 4
Is the timeframe realistic? What is the likelihood that the anticipated project outcomes can be achieved within the stated duration of the project?		S Timing was predicated on plans for 4th Reporting at COP10 and appeared tight given the wide ranging consultation required. 10 weeks only for the development of the Web Portal seems somewhat unrealistic.	App 5 and revised Workplan in Inception Report.
Are the activities designed within the project likely to produce their intended results		HS	Sec 3.3 and App 4 - Results Framework
Are activities appropriate to produce outputs?		HS	App 4 - Results Framework
Are activities appropriate to drive change along the intended causal pathway(s)		S Causal pathway not made specific but there is clear on-going structural support in UNCCD	App 4 - Results Framework
Are impact drivers, assumptions and the roles and capacities of key actors and stakeholders clearly described for each key causal pathway?		S but note above re causal pathways	App 4 - Results Framework
Overall rating for Intended Results and causality		S	
Efficiency			
Are any cost- or time-saving measures proposed to bring the project to a successful conclusion within its programmed budget and timeframe?		HS Combining workshops with other events	Sec 3.11
Does the project intend to make use of/ build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency?		HS for example utilizing FIELD KMS, and experience with CBD 4th National Reporting	Sec 2.1, 2.7, 3.3

Overall rating for Efficiency		HS	
Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic effects			
Does the project design present a strategy / approach to sustaining outcomes / benefits?		HS	Sec 3.8
Does the design identify the social or political factors that may influence positively or negatively the sustenance of project results and progress towards impacts? Does the design foresee sufficient activities to promote government and stakeholder awareness, interests, commitment and incentives to execute, enforce and pursue the programmes, plans, agreements, monitoring systems etc. prepared and agreed upon under the project?		HS Stakeholder awareness and participation clearly specified, including agreements with RCs	Sec 3.10, 3.11
If funding is required to sustain project outcomes and benefits, does the design propose adequate measures / mechanisms to secure this funding?		S Project outcomes are mainstream to UNCCD, so funding for sustainability is taken as given.	Sec 2.4, 3.1
Are there any financial risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project results and onward progress towards impact?		S There is always the concern that funds will be insufficient to support affected parties in their data gathering reporting efforts.	Sec 2.4, 3.8, 5
Does the project design adequately describe the institutional frameworks, governance structures and processes, policies, sub-regional agreements, legal and accountability frameworks etc. required to sustain project results?		S These are well described and are central to UNCCD but lack specificity	Sec 2.4, 3.8, 5
Does the project design identify environmental factors, positive or negative, that can influence the future flow of project benefits? Are there any project outputs or higher level results that are likely to affect the environment, which, in turn, might affect sustainability of project benefits?		HS The project is firmly planted in the mainstream of Strategic Plans of GEF, UNEP, GN, etc	Sec 2.3, 2.4, 2.7
Does the project design foresee adequate measures to catalyze behavioural changes in terms of use and application by the relevant stakeholders of (e.g.):	i) technologies and approaches show-cased by the demonstration projects;	HS Yes, demonstrations etc at COP 10	sec 3.3, 5
	ii) strategic programmes and plans developed	S Feedback and continued change is envisaged as per the UNCCD Strategic Plan and CRIC	Sec 3.3, 5
	iii) assessment, monitoring and management systems established at a national and sub-regional level	HS Encouraged as a result of Web Portal - Component 3	Sec 3.3, 5
Does the project design foresee adequate measures to contribute to institutional changes? [An important aspect of the catalytic role of the project is its contribution to institutional uptake or mainstreaming of project-piloted approaches in any regional or national demonstration projects]		HS Yes, this is integral to the Project See Project Objective.	Sec 3.3, 3.4
Does the project design foresee adequate measures to contribute to policy changes (on paper and in implementation of policy)?		S Seen as contributing to changing national policy e.g. National Action Plans	Sec 3.3, 3.4
Does the project design foresee adequate measures to contribute to sustain follow-on financing (catalytic financing) from Governments, the GEF or other donors?		HS As much as can be expected, follow on financing to support feedback and continuous improvement, and catalyzing change is expected as this is mainstream to UNCCD and CRIC	Sec 3.8
Does the project design foresee adequate measures to create opportunities for particular individuals or institutions ("champions") to catalyze change (without which the project		not applicable	

would not achieve all of its results)?		
Are the planned activities likely to generate the level of ownership by the main national and regional stakeholders necessary to allow for the project results to be sustained?	S Ownership by parties and other stakeholders may be mild - very difficult to get complete "buy-in" in this tight time frame.	Sec 3.10, 5
<i>Overall rating for Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic effects</i>	HS	
Risk identification and Social Safeguards		
Are critical risks appropriately addressed?	HS - Yes, thoroughly identified	Sec 3.4, 3.5
Are assumptions properly specified as factors affecting achievement of project results that are beyond the control of the project?	HS - Yes	Sec 3.4, 3.5
Are potentially negative environmental, economic and social impacts of projects identified	HS - appear to be few	Sec 3.5
<i>Overall rating for Risk identification and Social Safeguards</i>	HS	
Governance and Supervision Arrangements		
Is the project governance model comprehensive, clear and appropriate?	HS Yes, well described	Annex 6 M&E Plan, Sec 4 and Inception Rep
Are roles and responsibilities clearly defined?	HS Yes, well identified	Annex 6 M&E Plan, Sec 4 and Inception Rep
Are supervision / oversight arrangements clear and appropriate?	HS	Annex 6 M&E Plan, Sec 4 and Inception Rep
<i>Overall rating for Governance and Supervision Arrangements</i>	HS	
Management, Execution and Partnership Arrangements		
Have the capacities of partner been adequately assessed?	HS Yes	Sec 2.5, 5
Are the execution arrangements clear?	HS Yes, well defined	Secs 4 and 6
Are the roles and responsibilities of internal and external partners properly specified?	HS - Well defined	Sec 2.5, 4, 6
<i>Overall rating for Management, Execution and Partnership Arrangements</i>	HS	
Financial Planning / budgeting		
Are there any obvious deficiencies in the budgets / financial planning	HS No noted deficiencies	App1 and 2
Cost effectiveness of proposed resource utilization as described in project budgets and viability in respect of resource mobilization potential	HS Well considered, see notes under Efficiency	App 3
Financial and administrative arrangements including flows of funds are clearly described	HS Well described	App 3
<i>Overall rating for Financial Planning / budgeting</i>	HS	
Monitoring		
Does the logical framework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> capture the key elements in the Theory of Change for the project? have 'SMART' indicators for outcomes and objectives? have appropriate 'means of verification' adequately identify assumptions 	HS Yes all specified in the revised Logframe	Revised Logframe in Inception Report
Are the milestones and performance indicators appropriate and sufficient to foster management towards outcomes and higher	HS	App 6 and Logframe

level objectives?		
Is there baseline information in relation to key performance indicators?	HS	Sec 6, App 7
Has the method for the baseline data collection been explained?	HS adequately explained	Logframe
Has the desired level of achievement (targets) been specified for indicators of Outcomes and are targets based on a reasoned estimate of baseline??	HS in Logframe	Logframe, App 7
Has the time frame for monitoring activities been specified?	HS	Sec 6, App 5
Are the organisational arrangements for project level progress monitoring clearly specified	HS clearly outlined in M&E Plan	Sec 6 M&E Plan
Has a budget been allocated for monitoring project progress in implementation against outputs and outcomes?	HS	Sec 7 Budget
Overall, is the approach to monitoring progress and performance within the project adequate?	HS Yes, see M&E Plan	Sec 6 M&E Plan
<i>Overall rating for Monitoring</i>	HS	
Evaluation		
Is there an adequate plan for evaluation?	HS	Sec 6 M&E Plan
Has the time frame for Evaluation activities been specified?	HS	Sec 6 M&E Plan
Is there an explicit budget provision for mid-term review and terminal evaluation?	HS Yes in budget	Sec 7 Budget
Is the budget sufficient?	HS Yes	Sec 7 Budget
<i>Overall rating for Evaluation</i>	HS	

Annex 8: Evaluators' Response to the Review Comments on the First Draft

The first draft of the Terminal Evaluation was circulated for review and comment to the principal Project Partners. The returned responses were reviewed by the Evaluation Team and almost all of them were found to be acceptable and have been incorporated into the final document. Mostly the comments served to support and provide additional evidence or clarity to the findings, and a few noted minor typographical errors that were easily corrected. The authors are grateful for these improvements to the text.

The Evaluation Team also greatly appreciated the helpful comments and clarifications with regard to some aspects of the Portal development, and were mainly, but not completely in agreement with proposed changes.

The general comment was *"We found confusion around the PRAIS portal, namely (i) what role the project had to play vis the secretariat's knowledge management system which was to be developed in parallel, and (ii) how and when key decisions around the portal development were made"*.

We address these two points separately.

(i) what role the project had to play vis the secretariat's knowledge management system

Partner Comment:

"... the public interface was a role for the secretariat's KMS system, which the portal was only meant to feed in to. We do recognize that the analytical module of the portal was meant to be more fully developed within the project, with the capability to conduct analysis, but the public interface to the data was always envisaged as a seamless part of the UNCCD's planned system."

Evaluator comment:

An IT Task Force was formed led by the Secretariat, and the Task Force proposed (under Component 3.2) in their teleconference of August 1, 2011 to develop an analytical module that would provide for access (by Parties) to all of the PRAIS data. Further this would have a "public access interface" with "a limited and locked set of queries", i.e. a subset or more limited view of the data. These appeared to be both part-and-parcel of one system that proposed to use Cognos software from IBM.

At PSC4 (December 2011), the committee reviewed the progress of the Analytic Module and indicated:

- "The IT task force should continue focusing on the analytical module"
- "The analytical framework should enable users to have access to all data in PRAIS"
- "IT task force to come up with a work plan for the analytical framework and public interface to be online by the end of February (2012)"

Planned activities on the analytical module were included in the PSC workplan for 2012 under Component 3.2 running through to mid-May, with the Secretariat identified as the lead. The context indicated that this would be funded from the EC co-financing.

Work was carried out by the Task Force in early 2012 with a trial using the Cognos software, but this was found to be unsatisfactory (as indicated by Secretariat staff). The current status of the work is unclear. The end result is that the Portal can provide no useful access to Parties for retrieval, and hence no analysis of the data.

It may have been intended that the public interface was a separate issue in support of the overall Secretariat Knowledge Management System, but this was not explicitly indicated in

the PSC workplan. In any event, the Secretariat decided not to proceed with the public interface - as documented in a deliberation by the CRIC Bureau, 18 Feb 2012 [12], that calls for "guidance" on data sharing to be sought from the next COP (Autumn 2013) before proceeding.

Disposition in the Report:

Section 2.1.1 Component 3, paras 79-82 have been revised to clarify the situation, indicating:

- The UNCCD Secretariat was at that stage of the project responsible for the development of the Analytical Module (not UNEP-WCMC).
- The lack of an analytical module or other means of data retrieval through the portal was a significant shortfall.
- The public interface may not have been a planned deliverable of the Project.

In spite of indicating that they would "continue until the end of the project" the PSC never subsequently met after December 2011, nor did it follow up on the requested action item of a workplan for, or progress of, the analytic module. This had been noted in the first draft as a deficiency in Supervision and Backstopping in Section 2.3.6 of the report.

(ii) how and when key decisions around the portal development were made

Partner Comment:

"There are some factual errors around these two points in the assessment which I refer back to the ProDoc and the Validation Meeting report of February 2010 to clarify. Specifically, the decision not to use the already-developed 'online reporting tool' was introduced by the Secretariat as a "non-negotiable requirement" to the Validation Meeting..."

Evaluator Comment:

This clarification as to how (and when) the decision came about is greatly appreciated. In the spirit of harmony expressed in PSC2, we had employed more diplomatic language than "non-negotiable requirement", and yes, we had confused the timing.

Disposition in the Report:

Section 2.1.1 Component 3, paras 74 and 75 have been revised to reflect the reality of timing, and have used largely the language provided by UNEP-WCMC in the marked up version of the draft. Specific reference to the Validation Meeting has been made.