



---

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### Evaluation of the UNCCD Regional Coordination Units

Consultancy reference: **CCD/19/EDM/21**

#### Introduction

---

*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. Its 10-Year Strategy states as the vision "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". The Convention's 196 Parties work together to improve the living conditions for people in areas affected by land degradation, to maintain and restore land and soil productivity, and to mitigate the effects of drought. The UNCCD is particularly committed to a bottom-up approach, encouraging the participation of local people in combating desertification and land degradation.*

*Decision-making under the UNCCD is done at the Conference of the Parties (COP) that brings together all signatories to the Convention every two years. The COP is assisted by two subsidiary bodies: the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) and the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC). The work under the UNCCD is supported by two entities: the UNCCD secretariat that organizes the intergovernmental process and facilitates cooperation and information exchange among countries, development partners, the scientific community, the civil society and other key stakeholders; and the Global Mechanism (GM) that promotes the mobilization of resources for sustainable land management.*

#### Background

---

The implementation of the UNCCD is organized around five regional implementation annexes focusing on Africa (Annex I), Asia (Annex II), Latin America and the Caribbean (Annex III), Northern Mediterranean (Annex IV) and Central and Eastern Europe (Annex V). The annexes specify how the Convention will be implemented in each region and suggest the focus and content for regional action programmes. The actions carried out at the regional level are meant to "harmonize, complement and increase the efficiency"<sup>1</sup> of national actions. They may include regional policy coordination, capacity building, promotion of information exchange and science-technology cooperation, among others.

The Convention secretariat support to the regional implementation annexes has taken many forms over the years. The Regional Coordination Units (RCUs) were established in the follow-up to a 2009 decision of the UNCCD Conference of the Parties (COP), by which the COP requested the secretariat

---

<sup>1</sup> Article 11 of the UNCCD.

[https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/relevant-links/2017-01/UNCCD\\_Convention\\_ENG\\_0.pdf](https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/relevant-links/2017-01/UNCCD_Convention_ENG_0.pdf)



to support regional coordination mechanisms (RCMs) and defined that these RCMs could include RCUs among other elements. The COP further authorized the secretariat to provide one staff post per region within the regular budget, to support the RCMs.<sup>2</sup> Already prior to the 2009 COP, the secretariat had had staff working with the regions, but the COP decisions formalized their position within the secretariat structure and secured a minimum level of resources for their functioning.

Currently there are five RCUs, one for each regional implementation annex, as follows:

- Africa RCU hosted by Government of Morocco in Rabat;
- Asian RCU hosted by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok, Thailand;
- Latin American and Caribbean RCU hosted by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean in Santiago de Chile;
- Northern Mediterranean RCU hosted by the Government of Turkey in Istanbul, Turkey; and
- Central and Eastern European RCU that is located in the premises of the UNCCD secretariat in Bonn, Germany.

Each RCU consists of a regional coordinator. The African and Asian RCUs have some additional staff that are covered from voluntary contributions.

The RCUs are part of the UNCCD secretariat and thus follow with the secretariat's mandate. Their responsibilities can be roughly divided into two main categories: (1) supporting and "extending" the activities of the secretariat and the GM within each region, and (2) servicing the needs of regional coordination and collaboration. First of these has included, among others, assistance in the processes concerning national reporting to the UNCCD, facilitating the implementation of CoP decisions at the regional level through the specific regional initiatives and projects, delivery of regional information for UNCCD communication purposes and serving as the UNCCD contact point for the countries within each regional annex. In the second category, the RCUs have, for example, facilitated regional meetings and consultations related to the meetings of the COP and its subsidiary bodies, and provided UNCCD inputs in major regional events and meetings on topics relevant to the Convention.

The RCUs have generally had numerous tasks to carry out in both above-mentioned categories. At the same time, their exact purpose has not been well defined; rather their role has varied according to the changing urgencies and priorities of the secretariat and the GM. The diversity of Parties' views about the RCUs has further contributed to this lack of clarity: for the countries in each regional implementation annex, the RCUs represent both practically and politically essential support structure, while many donors seem to question their added value compared to one centralized secretariat office. The diversity of views has been reflected also in the COP debates about the operational modalities and resources for the RCUs, with some countries requesting significant upscaling of the RCUs and some others calling for further cost-efficiency.

---

<sup>2</sup> Decision 3/COP.9. [https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/sessions/documents/ICCD\\_COP9\\_18\\_Add.1/18add1eng.pdf](https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/sessions/documents/ICCD_COP9_18_Add.1/18add1eng.pdf)



Even though some key parameters for the RCU functioning have been identified by the COP, the UNCCD process, at the levels of both regional cooperation and global policy-making, would benefit from a better understanding of what the RCUs could and should do to optimize their contribution to effective implementation of the Convention. Against this background, the UNCCD secretariat is launching an evaluation of the RCUs, and this document outlines the terms of reference for an evaluator to carry out the evaluation process.

### **Objectives and main users of the evaluation**

---

The evaluation will make suggestions on the role and potential of the RCUs, with the aim to enhance their contribution and usefulness for the UNCCD. It will do this by analysing the current setting of the RCUs, studying similar regional coordination functions in other intergovernmental organisations, and on that basis, considering what kind of functions, requirements or other developments could be used for, and by, the RCUs.

The evaluation will be primarily for internal learning within the UNCCD secretariat. Its findings will help the Executive Secretary to make strategic decisions concerning the RCUs vis-à-vis the rest of the secretariat and the GM. They will also support the regional coordinators and their supervisor in planning and improving the functioning of the RCUs. The findings and conclusions that will be generated through the evaluation may be of interest and use also for other stakeholders working on the UNCCD and/or regional coordination functions, including those donors that have financially supported the RCUs.

### **Scope and approach of the evaluation**

---

As indicated above, the evaluation will have three main components:

1. An analysis of the RCUs
2. An analysis of similar regional coordination functions in other intergovernmental organisations
3. Consideration of possible approaches to developing the RCUs

The first component will look at the role of regional coordination under the UNCCD and in that context, carry out an organisational assessment of the RCUs, with due consideration of the capacity of the RCUs and the environment that they operate in. The assessment will include several aspects relevant to the performance of the RCUs, including at least

- The relationship with the secretariat and the GM (planning, coordination, sharing of resources);
- The relationship with the host organization (common themes, information-sharing, use of facilities, comparative advantages of the host);
- Cooperation with stakeholders in the countries and regions (planning of aims and priorities, cooperation mechanisms);
- Visibility and public relations; and
- Information management (from the headquarters and from the countries of the region: gathering of information, information analysis and formatting for different purposes, information sharing).



The purpose of the organizational assessment is to “map” the operational modalities and realities of the RCUs so that related strengths, challenges and needs can be systematically addressed. It will not measure the achievements of the RCUs, as currently there are no defined results expectations explicitly targeting the RCUs, against which such measurement could be carried out.

The second component will be about collecting similar information, as feasible, from regional coordination functions of other intergovernmental organizations, with focus on organizations whose mandate and working modalities are not very different from those of the UNCCD secretariat.

The last component will consider the findings of the organizational assessment of the RCUs and possible ways and means for improving their effectiveness, building on experiences in other processes. These considerations will be crystallized in one or more scenarios of what the RCUs could look like - their mandate, priorities, functioning and resources – each accompanied by an indication of the measures that would need to be taken in order to implement it.

The evaluation will be constructed around a set of questions that will be finalized at the beginning of the evaluation process. The overall key questions that the evaluation is expected to respond to are as follows:

- What could/should be the main objectives and goals to be achieved by the RCUs?
- What kind of factors/functions would increase the relevance and effectiveness of the RCUs?
- How could the resources needed for the effective functioning of the RCUs be secured?

### **Methodology and main deliverables**

The evaluation will be prepared in three main phases, which will be for inception, data collection, and synthesis and dissemination of findings. The main deliverables of each phase are presented in the following table.

Phase	Methodological focus	Deliverables
Inception	Structuring the evaluation Drafting of the theory of change	Inception report
Data collection	Study of documentation	Data compilation
Synthesis and dissemination	Synthesis and analysis of data Preparation of conclusions and recommendations Feedback from the UNCCD staff Finalization of the report	Summary presentation of main findings and conclusions  Evaluation report



The evaluation will start by study of key documentation on the role of regions under the UNCCD and the RCUs, such as relevant COP documents and decisions, and exchanges with the UNCCD secretariat and RCU staff. On this basis, the evaluator will prepare a provisional 'theory of change' for the RCUs, including information on possible outputs and outcomes consistent with the overall UNCCD results framework. The evaluator will also finalize the preliminary evaluation questions and define the approach and methodology for answering each question and prepare a work plan and schedule for completing the evaluation. The main features of the theory of change, the evaluation questions and methodological details, the approach and the schedule will be contained in the first deliverable of the evaluation, the inception report.

Data collection phase will involve a systematic analysis of documentation on the RCUs and regional coordination functions of other intergovernmental organisations. The evaluator will need to identify which regional coordination functions to study and how to access the needed information, large part of which is likely to entail research of online documentation. Data collection may also involve interviews of staff of other regional coordination functions, if needed. However, the evaluation will not include surveys or interviews targeting the UNCCD focal points or other main RCU "clients", or workshops or meetings beyond those with the UNCCD secretariat.

The synthesis phase will be devoted to the preparation of the final report. Based on the first data analysis, the evaluator will prepare a summary of findings and emerging RCU scenarios. This summary will be presented to, and discussed with, the UNCCD staff, with the aim to ensure factual correctness of the information contained in the assessment and to exchange views on the scenarios.

The final report will be submitted to the secretariat and published through regular UNCCD communication channels. All drafts and reports prepared during the assessment will be in English and submitted as an electronic version (Word document).

### **Selection of the consultant**

The evaluator will be recruited and supervised by the UNCCD Evaluation Office, while the RCUs and other UNCCD secretariat staff working on regional coordination will support the evaluation process by facilitating access to all relevant information sources and documents and providing feedback on the questions, notes and reports delivered by the evaluator.

The candidate should meet the following qualifications:

- Professional expertise in international development cooperation, including working at a regional or country office of an intergovernmental organization.
- Experience in conducting development evaluations or organizational performance assessments in an international context. Experience in such evaluations/assessments in the UN context will be an asset.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills; experience in producing high quality written reports.
- Fluency in English language.



---

The candidate to be selected may not have prior involvement in the activities that are being evaluated.

### **Indicative timetable**

---

The assignment will start as soon as possible, with the aim to have the first draft of the report available at the end of May 2019. The fee will be a lump sum based on the UN standards for consultancy remuneration, taking into account the level of expertise of the consultant and the workload for completing the assessment.

### **Submission of application**

---

Applications should be submitted by e-mail to [staffing@unccd.int](mailto:staffing@unccd.int) together with a cover letter and a current Curriculum Vitae (CV) and UNCCD Personal History Form (P11)<sup>3</sup>, specifying the position **CCD/19/EDM/21** in the subject line.

The [deadline for applications is 23 April 2019](#). Only applications submitted by the deadline will be considered.

Due to the volume of applications received, receipt of applications cannot be acknowledged individually. Please address your application as indicated above and please do not address or copy your application to an individual at the Secretariat. Candidates who do not receive any feedback within three months of the deadline should consider their application as unsuccessful.

---

Date of issuance: 09 April 2019

---

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/inline-files/UNCCD%20P-11%20Form\\_1.pdf](https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/inline-files/UNCCD%20P-11%20Form_1.pdf)